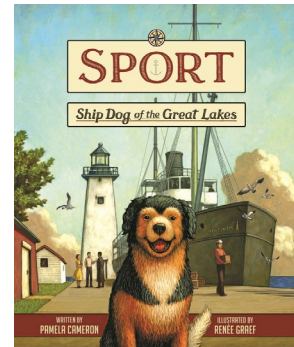


Sport: Ship Dog of the Great Lakes Discussion Guide

In 1914 crew members of the lighthouse tender *Hyacinth* rescued a stray puppy from the Milwaukee River and named him Sport. For the next twelve years, this charming rescue, believed to be a Newfoundland-retriever mix, lived the life of a ship dog, helping the *Hyacinth* crew as they carried supplies to lighthouses and maintained the buoys around Lake Michigan. Sport quickly became a valued companion to his crew and a recognizable mascot of the lake, making friends in every port.



Introduction (How to...)

This guide is intended for use with *Sport: Ship Dog of the Great Lakes*. It contains activities, vocabulary, discussion questions, and extensions for using *Sport* with your students. Please feel free to modify any part of it for use in your classroom.

What is historical fiction?

Talk to students about how **historical fiction** is a type of fiction that uses some facts based on research, blending them with made-up details to write a story. The author of *Sport* researched lighthouse tenders, the *Hyacinth*, and the story of the real Sport to write her book. One of the sources she used was a letter written by *Hyacinth* Captain Harry Maynard. Have your students read the letter on page 5 below. Ask them to identify facts they remember the author using in *Sport* and ask if they notice any differences between the facts in the letter and the story. Have them guess which details of the story the author might have made up. For example, we know from the letter that Albert and Clifford rescued Sport during a storm, but we don't know what they said at the time, so the author made up the lines of dialogue in that scene.

Vocabulary words

Have your students complete this short quiz to help assess their understanding of the vocabulary used in *Sport*. Or complete it as a class to introduce the terms. Teachers will need to make a copy in Google Drive before sending form to class.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xbgX30n2wVZ-rCO_bpB39qNKMI1WiZaue3BP2Mi1lm8/edit

Discussion questions

Content

- What clues did the captain use to tell what kind of dog Sport was?
- What does a “lighthouse tender” ship do?
- How do ships use their horns?
- What were some of the jobs Sport did?

Analysis

- How do you know that Sport was important to the crew of the *Hyacinth*?
- What are some character traits Sport has? (smart, brave, strong, fun, etc)
- What do you think might have been harder about raising a puppy on board a ship? What might have been easier?
- Why do you think ships at sea use the terms “starboard” and “port” instead of “left” and “right”?
- How did lighthouses make travel on the Great Lakes safer?
- Analyze this sentence:
 - “The engine shuddered as it powered up.”
 - What does shuddered mean in this sentence? Why would the engine shudder?
- Analyze this sentence:
 - “The children squealed in delight at the sight of a dog bringing them their supplies.”
 - What can you infer about life as part of a lighthouse keeper’s family? Would you like to live on an island in the Great Lakes?

Extension Activity - Nonfiction Primer

Use this short quiz to help your students understand the differences between reading fiction and nonfiction (Grades 3-5). Ask how nonfiction compares to historical fiction like *Sport*. Teachers will need to make a copy in Google Drive before sending form to class.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xbgX30n2wVZ-rCO_bpB39qNKMI1WiZaue3BP2Mi1lm8/edit

Extension Activity - Hazards of the Great Lakes

Travel on the Great Lakes could be very dangerous! Over time, safety measures were put in place to try and keep ships safe during their long voyages. You've read about several of them, including the lighthouses and buoys. People were also asked to help. The US Life-Saving Service established a rescue station in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, in 1880. From there, small, six-person lifeboats went out in the worst of weather to rescue sailors whose ships were in distress. Still, sometimes ships went down. These shipwrecks are studied by maritime archaeologists. Each shipwreck captures a moment in time from when it went down. This helps us understand the world as it was back then.



Photo by Tamara Thomsen

Imagine...

You are the captain of a ship on the Great Lakes. What would your life be like? What might you do to try to keep your crew safe? What might happen if you hit a bad storm? In your reading journal, write a short paragraph and draw a picture or two of your days at sea.

Extension Activity - Pets and Responsibility

Have you ever wanted a pet? Do you already have one? A dog to play fetch or a cat to pet and purr with? Maybe a mouse to teach mazes to or a guinea pig to cuddle with. Owning a pet takes work too, though! A good dog like Sport doesn't happen all by itself. What kind of training do you think Sport needed to live aboard a ship like the *Hyacinth*?



Photo by Kurt Griesemer

In your reading journal, list the different things Sport had to learn. Then, for the next list, think about the kind of pet you might want. If you already have a pet (or two or three or four), think of all the things that go into taking care of it.

Now list as many of the things that you can think of that your pet will need, from food to training, even

somewhere to go to the bathroom! What kinds of

things can you do for your pet? When will you need help? How do you want your pet to behave? Does it need a cage or kennel? A fish tank? Share your work with your elbow partner and talk about the different kinds of pets and needs they would have.

Extension Activity - Working Animals

Many kinds of animals work with and for people. Dogs, cows, even dolphins! Historically, horses provided fast transportation and the muscle to break up farm fields by pulling plows. We even named a unit of measure after them. Can you guess what it is?

As a working dog, Sport had several jobs on the ship. What kinds of jobs did Sport have to do? Can you think of any more jobs that dogs or other animals do? In your reading journal, make a list of all the different kinds of animals and the ways they provide a service to people. What would life be like without these animal helpers? Do you think we'll ever be able to replace animals and the jobs they do? Why or why not?

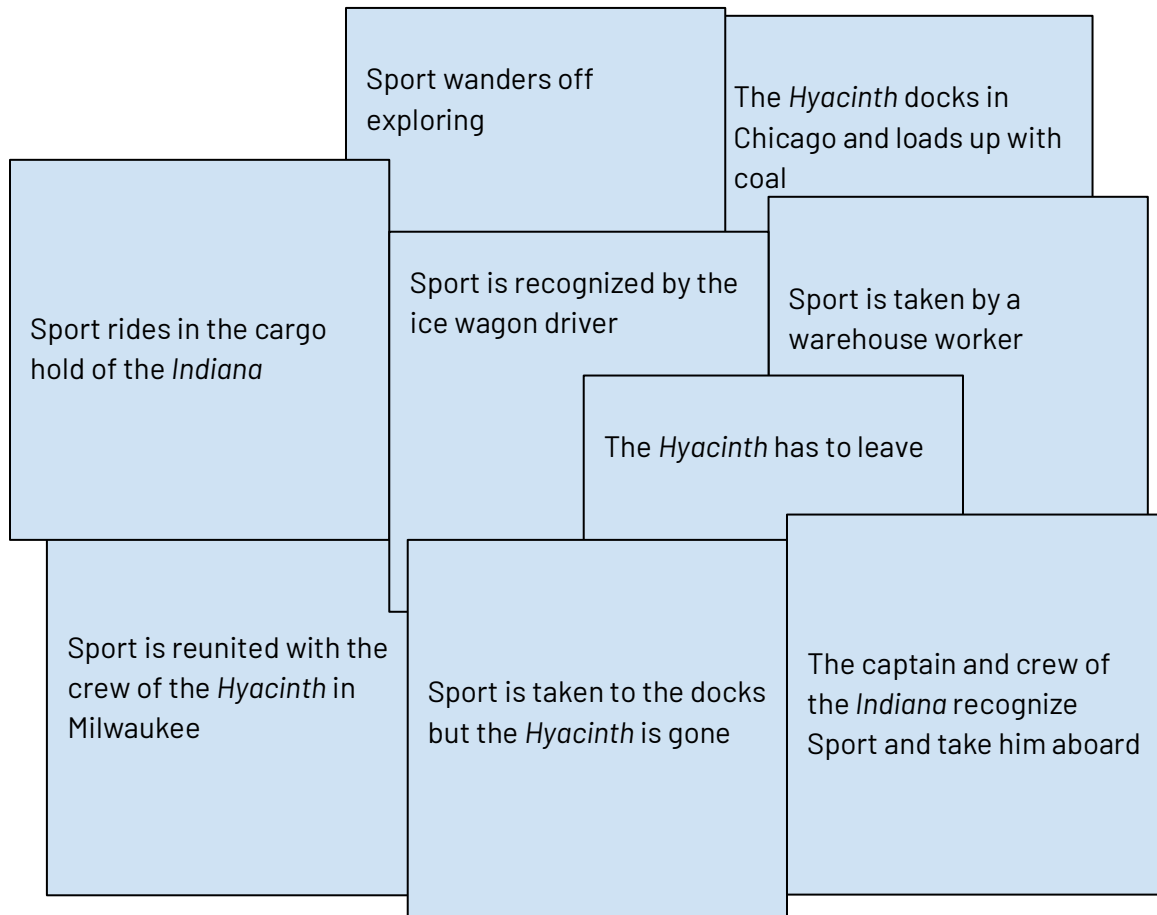


"German Police Dog" by blogdnd is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Write your answers here if you don't have a reading journal.

Extension Activity - Ordering

Label the boxes 1-9 in the order they happened.



Primary Source - Letter from Captain Harry W. Maynard

On August 13, 1926, a few weeks after Sport died of old age, Hyacinth Captain Harry W. Maynard wrote a letter to the superintendent of lighthouses in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The captain's letter appeared in the September 1, 1926, issue of Lighthouse Service Bulletin.

SIR: It has been suggested that I address a letter to your office giving some of the facts about Sport, our ship's dog, and some of the incidents of his life on board this vessel with an idea that perhaps he rates just a line or two in the Lighthouse Service Bulletin.

Sport was just a dog, but he was always a good dog and a good shipmate, a friend to everybody and everybody's friend. I do not think he had an enemy and I am certain that he had more friends, or perhaps I should say acquaintances, around the shores of Lake Michigan than any man on ship to-day.

Sport came on board this vessel back in 1914 when Engineer Albert Collins and Machinist Clifford Perry pulled him out of Milwaukee River during a thunderstorm. He was in a pitiful condition and practically skin and bones. He was rescued and fed, and, apparently from that minute on, never had a notion to leave the ship.

Many things have happened to Sport and he has figured in many of the happenings of the ship in the 12 years he spent on board, which is longer than any officer or member of the crew has been here. It will not do to go into all the details of his life, for they are many.

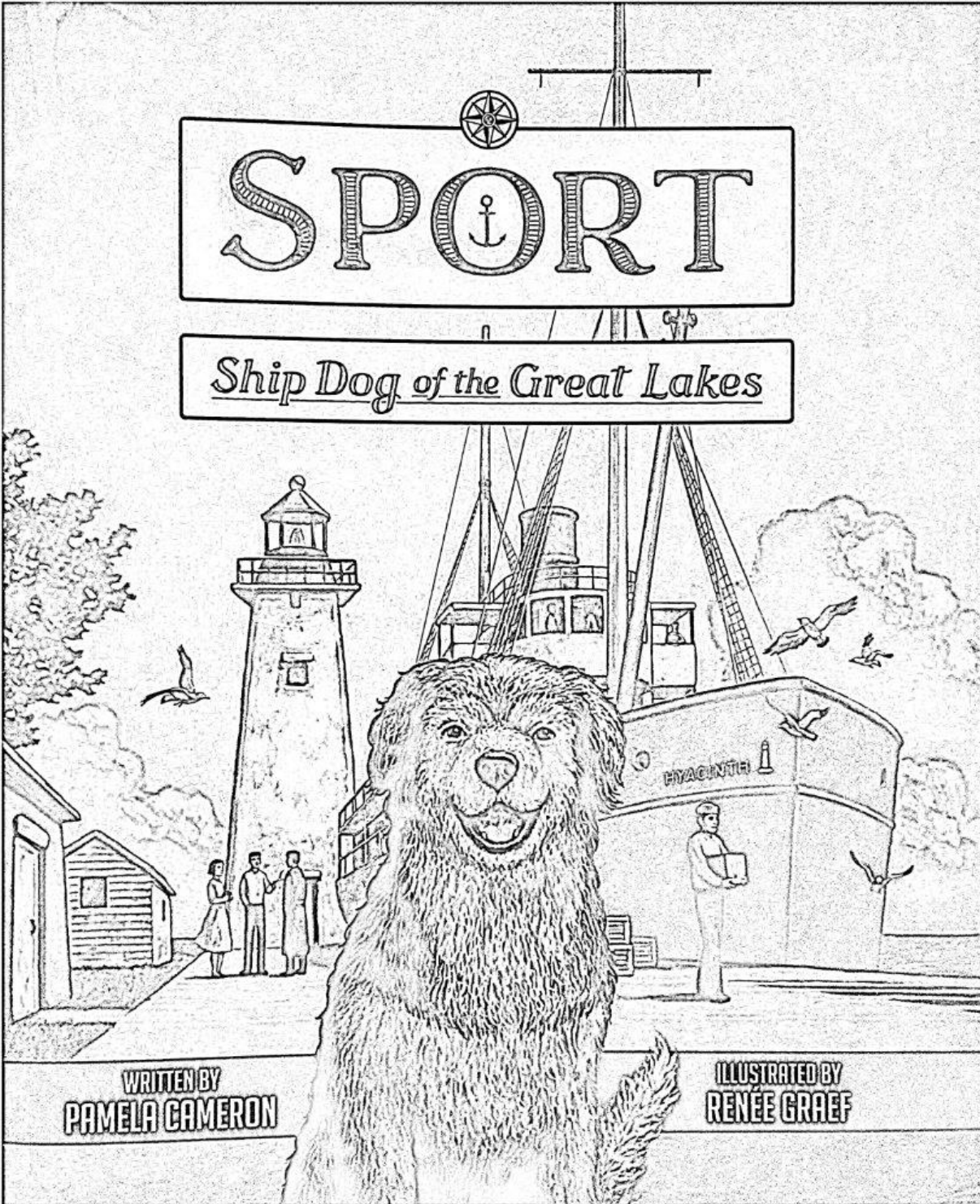
It is enough to say that when he was in his prime there was no place on the vessel he did not visit and nothing going on that he did not have a hand or paw in. He swam and played baseball with the boys, no boat could go ashore without Sport; on many occasions he has carried a heaving line to shore in the breakers when landing on the beach at some station with our scow.

He was lost in Chicago on one occasion and could not be found and we were a sad lot when we left Chicago without him and a happy lot when, on the second day in Milwaukee, the captain of the passenger steamer *Indiana* called me on the telephone to tell me he had Sport on board and to come over and get him. It was learned afterwards that some one had tied him up in a barn in Chicago and it just so happened that a man who had been a fireman on board was driving an ice wagon at this time and found Sport in the barn and brought him back to our Chicago pier keeper, who in turn gave him to Captain Redner on the *Indiana* to deliver to us at Milwaukee. All of which goes to show that he had friends everywhere.

Sport died of old age on July 19, 1926. He was sewed in canvas and buried at sea on the afternoon of the following day, 2 miles off Ludington, Mich. All hands were mustered on the spar deck where, with a few words for Sport to the effect that he had been taken from the waters and was now being returned to them, he was slid off the gangplank by a bunch of solemn-looking boys. He was given a salute and thus ended Sport, the best dog I have ever known.

Respectfully,

H. W. Maynard, Master.



Sport: Ship Dog of the Great Lakes Education Packet was created by Kurt Griesemer, Manager of Education Initiatives, and edited by Erika Wittekind, Wisconsin Historical Society Press. Questions about the packet? Email: education@wisconsinhistory.org