

UNIT 3: ELEMENTARY -- UNITED STATES HISTORY

LEGACY FOR US TODAY: ELWHA

GOOD INTENTIONS (Freeing the Elwha: Lesson 5)

Instructional Support Materials:

[Good Intentions \(Lesson Plan 5\)](#)

Lesson Overview:

The Territory of Washington code of 1881 made it a crime for anyone to obstruct the passage of salmon in any waterway. When Thomas Aldwell built the lower Elwha Dam in 1912 it became clear during construction that the dam was an impediment to salmon. Aldwell failed to include a fish ladder or passage as required by law making the Elwha Dam an illegal dam. In 1913 Washington State fish commissioner, Leslie Darwin, found a loop hole in the 1881 law that allowed the Elwha Dam to function legally. In this lesson, students will read about the loop hole and the subsequent repeal of the 1881 law and its replacement by a 1914 law that allowed below dam hatcheries to be built instead of waterways. The Elwha Dam is important in that it set a precedent for dams in Washington. The students will then compare the early economic gain from the dam to the Olympic Peninsula in the form of hydropower with the loss of the salmon and write an editorial for *The Port Angeles Evening News* either supporting the dam or supporting the salmon.

Time: Two block class periods

Guiding Question:

How did an 1881 law in Washington interfere with the support of the building of the Elwha Dam and what was the consequence for salmon? What did the building of the dam do for the economy of the Port Angeles area?

NOTES: _____

