



THE PRESIDENT JAMES K. POLK STATE HISTORIC SITE

# EDUCATOR PACKET

2021 - 2022







# WELCOME

We are very excited that the 2021-2022 school year is here!

For many of you, student field trip experiences are an instructional cornerstone for your classrooms. Over the years, the President James K. Polk State Historic Site staff has worked diligently to provide you with engaging curriculum-based field trip experiences. We continue to strength and expand our educational offerings by offering virtual field trip options and digital content to supplement your classroom learning.

This school year, as in past years, funding for field trips may be available through various community organizations. Title I schools are also encouraged to contact our staff directly about funding availability through the Friends of President Polk's Birthplace.

Any member of my staff would be more than willing to speak with you about our field trip options, potential field trip funding, and date availability. All of our programming is designed with North Carolina Essential Standards at their core. If you would like to customize your tour experience to meet your classroom needs, we would be happy to work with you. You may reach us at (704) 889-7145 or [polk@ncdcr.gov](mailto:polk@ncdcr.gov).

Finally, our full slate of events, resources, and programming can be found at [www.jameskpolk.net](http://www.jameskpolk.net).

I look forward to working with you and I hope to personally speak to each of you. Best of luck in the upcoming school year!

*Scott Warren*

**SITE MANAGER**

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## THE SPIRITED AGE: STEAM IN PRESIDENT POLK'S DAY

LENGTH: 2 HOURS | COST: \$10/STUDENT | 4TH, 5TH, 6TH

Explore the exciting era just before President Polk took office, when steam was powering the explosive growth of the nation, artists were creating new and experimental works that depicted the natural world, and new settlements were creeping closer and closer to the Pacific coast. During this two-hour long program, students will explore the Spirited Age through three hands-on stations that encourage creative thinking, reveal the connections between engineering, science, math, art, and history, and encourage learning through fun experimentation!



**"INCORPORATE(S) A HANDS-ON LEARNING AND DISCOVERY APPROACH TO LEARNING."**

FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER

### It's Your Destiny

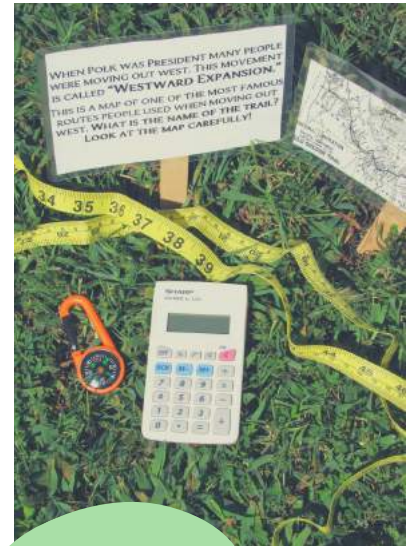
Learn about Manifest Destiny, a key theme of Polk's Presidency that spurred the expansion of the nation, who was taking part, and understand the importance of maps as these groups of people increasingly hit the road. These concepts will be reinforced with an orienteering-style activity where students will use measurements, math, and directional navigation to follow a set of directions around the site.

### STEAM into the Future

Steam trains played a major part in powering the industrial and cultural advancements of the mid-19th century. During this station students will hear about the development of this important technology, learn the formula to find exactly how much power a horse has, and use that knowledge to determine their own horsepower!

### Naturally Artistic

During this station students will learn about different artistic movements of the mid-19th century, learn how the artists in some of these movements contributed to science, and experiment with using different natural materials to paint their own interpretation of the landscape.



**WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING**

**"THE STEAM CONCEPTS WERE WELL INTEGRATED INTO THE PROGRAM. ALL THE INSTRUCTORS DID AN EXCELLENT JOB."**

**"THANK YOU FOR A RICH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE."**

LENGTH: 1.5 HOURS

COST: \$6/STUDENT

The following options are available for students in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. Each tour includes our two historic structures onsite. You will then choose a third station from the options below. The material covered in each station will change dependent on the age of the students and the goals of the teachers.

## CORE TOUR

### Main House

Guided tour of the two-room reconstructed main residence. Here, students will learn about daily Mecklenburg County family life. Topics may include, but are not limited to, living arrangements; education; childhood chores; class status; and architecture of the home. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their experiences to those of a young James K. Polk, and note how early Mecklenburg County family life may have influenced present day Mecklenburg County.

## PLUS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

### History Detectives Matching Activity

Explore the museum exhibits, search for artifacts, and discover their names. Each group of students will have a worksheet with images of museum objects that they will need to find, ID based on exhibit labels or signage, and then fill in the blanks of the object name on their worksheet.

### Build Your Own Log-Cabin

Engage student creativity and utilize their fine motor skills! Students will work together to build miniature log cabins, discuss how and why they constructed their cabins the way they did, identify what natural resources were used to build cabins, and calculate how many resources they needed.

### Kitchen House

Students will learn about Mecklenburg County farm life and foodways in this structure. Topics may include cooking and foodways; kitchen gardens; childhood chores; use of farm resources; commerce and trade; and enslaved African-Americans. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their own experiences with the childhood chores, cooking techniques, and household structures of the 18th and 19th centuries.

"WE LOVED IT - VERY INFORMATIVE!"

"WE REALLY ENJOY COMING YEAR AFTER YEAR! THANK YOU!"

### Fibers of the Backcountry

Do your students know how the clothes they wear are made? Do they know that certain beetles are used to make dyes that color our cloth and even food? During this station, students will discover how animal and plant matter is turned into cloth by walking through the necessary steps to take fiber from a ball of fluff to a completed piece of cloth. (STEAM Concepts Highlighted)

WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

"THE KIDS LOVED HEARING AND SEEING THE SPINNERS SPIN WOOL AND COTTON."

The following options are available for students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. Each tour includes our two historic structures onsite. You will then choose a third station from the options below. The material covered in each station will change dependent on the age of the students and the goals of the teachers.

**LENGTH: 1.5 HOURS**  
**COST: \$6/STUDENT**

## CORE TOUR

### Main House

Guided tour of the two-room reconstructed main residence. Here, students will learn about daily Mecklenburg County family life. Topics may include, but are not limited to, living arrangements; education; childhood chores; class status; and architecture of the home. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their experiences to those of a young James K. Polk, and note how early Mecklenburg County family life may have influenced present day Mecklenburg County.

## PLUS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

### Museum Scavenger Hunt

Search the museum to answer questions that require careful reading of exhibit panels and object labels. After all groups have completed the activity, we will go over the answers and discuss what the students discovered on their hunt.

### Fibers of the Backcountry

Do your students know how the clothes they wear are made? Do they know that certain beetles are used to make dyes that color our cloth and even food? During this station, students will discover how animal and plant matter is turned into cloth by walking through the necessary steps to take fiber from a ball of fluff to a completed piece of cloth. (STEAM Concepts Highlighted)

### Kitchen House

Students will learn about Mecklenburg County farm life and foodways in this structure. Topics may include cooking and foodways; kitchen gardens; childhood chores; use of farm resources; commerce and trade; and enslaved African-Americans. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their own experiences with the childhood chores, cooking techniques, and household structures of the 18th and 19th centuries.



"LOVED THE QUESTIONS/ANSWERS AT THE END OF THE SCAVENGER HUNT."

"ACTUALLY SEEING ARTIFACTS IN PERSON (LETS) STUDENTS SEE HOW LIFE HAS CHANGED. (TOUR CONTENT RELATES MOST CLOSELY TO CLASSROOM FOCUS ON) COMMUNITIES' CHANGE OVER TIME."

WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

"WE ALWAYS LOVE OUR VISITS HERE! THANK YOU."



# PROGRAMMING DEVELOPED FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**LENGTH: 1.5 HOURS**

**COST: \$6/STUDENT**

The following options are available for students in the 6th grade and above. Each tour includes our two historic structures onsite. You will then choose a third station from the options below. The material covered in each station will change dependent on the age of the students and the goals of the teachers.

## CORE TOUR

### Main House

Guided tour of the two-room reconstructed main residence. Here, students will learn about daily Mecklenburg County family life. Topics may include, but are not limited to, living arrangements; education; childhood chores; class status; and architecture of the home. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their experiences to those of a young James K. Polk, and note how early Mecklenburg County family life may have influenced present day Mecklenburg County.

### Kitchen House

Students will learn about Mecklenburg County farm life and foodways in this structure. Topics may include cooking and foodways; kitchen gardens; childhood chores; use of farm resources; commerce and trade; and enslaved African-Americans. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their own experiences with the childhood chores, cooking techniques, and household structures of the 18th and 19th centuries.

## PLUS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

### Death and Dying

While death and dying are taboo topics today, the people of Polk's time were much more familiar with mortality. Students will first learn the background of the family cemetery, how it came to be located at the site, and who some of the people buried there are. Groups will then explore headstones in the cemetery to learn about the culture of death and dying in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, cemetery symbolism, and how death shaped greater Mecklenburg County society.

### Museum Scavenger Hunt

Search the museum to answer questions that require careful reading of exhibit panels and object labels. After all groups have completed the activity, we will go over the answers and discuss what the students discovered on their hunt.

### Fibers of the Backcountry

Do your students know how the clothes they wear are made? Do they know that certain beetles are used to make dyes that color our cloth and even food? During this station, students will discover how animal and plant matter is turned into cloth by walking through the necessary steps to take fiber from a ball of fluff to a completed piece of cloth. (STEAM Concepts Highlighted)

**WHAT TEACHERS  
ARE SAYING**

**"APPRECIATED THE  
OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS  
TO ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS."**

**"MY EXPECTATIONS WERE EXCEEDED."**

# FEATURED ACTIVITY

## THE HISTORICAL COOKING GUILD OF THE CATAWBA VALLEY

Learn about the foodways of the Backcountry during President Polk's lifetime from the Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley. These costumed docents are experts of open-hearth cooking and their presentation of the kitchen house offers students a unique opportunity to see history in action! As the Guild describes the seasonality of food, the methods of cooking, and the role that children played in the survival of the household, the smell of the smoke and the warmth of the flames from the hearth fire in the background adds an unforgettable element to your field trip.



**The Guild is on site the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from September through May. If you are interested in coming on a date the Guild is here, book early! Dates fill quickly.**






# ADD SOMETHING EXTRA

REPLACE YOUR STANDARD TOUR ADD-ON WITH ONE OF THESE SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR ONLY \$10 PER GROUP.

\*SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY



**Long-Rifle Firing Demonstration (All Grade Levels)-** Learn about the history of fire arms, their importance on an 18th century farm, the militia of the Backcountry, and more! Students will then witness the firing of an 18th century long-rifle by a highly experienced and safety-certified volunteer or staff member.

**19th Century Education (K-4th grade students)**—Learn how education in James K. Polk's time differed from what school is like today. What was taught, who the teacher was, and how you learned was quite different from today! Students will have a chance to test out their writing abilities using a feather quill and ink well.

## STAY FOR LUNCH!

Did you know we have picnic tables on site? All school groups are welcome to stay and eat their lunch in our picnic area. Simply let us know that you plan to eat lunch on site and we will be happy to provide you with trash and recycling containers.



# OUR HISTORY IN YOUR CLASSROOM

We understand that making a physical visit to the site can be difficult for some schools. That's why we are happy to work with our teachers to provide off-site educational resources that they can use in their own classrooms on their own time. Check out our options below and get in touch with any questions or to work on something special tailored to your classroom goals.

## ONE-TIME CLASSROOM VISITS AND MULTI-DAY RESIDENCIES

Most of the programs outlined on the previous pages can be modified to be presented by one of our staff or volunteers in your classroom. Please contact us to discuss options and fees.

## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

Are you looking for engaging virtual experiences for your students? Our virtual field trip options highlight inclusive discussions of the lives of children and adults, free and enslaved people, wealthy and yeoman farmers, women and men.



**Rates:** \$3.00 per student, \$20.00 minimum

Each virtual field trip is a 30 minute face-to-face interactive introduction to one of the key themes our site highlights. We are happy to coordinate with you to use the video conferencing platform you and your students are most accustomed to.



**CONTACT US AT [POLK@NCDCCR.GOV](mailto:POLK@NCDCCR.GOV)  
TO DISCUSS THESE AND OTHER OFF-SITE PROGRAM OPTIONS!**

## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP THEMES

**Historic Kitchen House  
Domestic Life in the Main House  
Fibers of the Backcountry**