



THE PRESIDENT JAMES K. POLK STATE HISTORIC SITE

# EDUCATOR PACKET

2023 - 2024





# WELCOME

We are very excited that the 2023-2024 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 strengthen and expand our educational offerings by providing digital resources 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 regarding funding availability through the Friends of President Polk's Birthplace, Inc., the friends group of the Museum.

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@dn-cr.nc.gov](mailto:polk@dn-cr.nc.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

## CONTENTS

STANDARD TOURS - GRADES K-2

2

STANDARD TOURS - GRADES 3-5

3

STANDARD TOURS - GRADES 6 AND ABOVE

4

FEATURED ACTIVITIES AND ADD-ONS

5 - 6

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.

**LENGTH: 1.5 HOURS**

**COST: \$8/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.

### 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

### 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.

### 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)

"WE LOVED IT - VERY  
INFORMATIVE!"

WHAT TEACHERS  
ARE SAYING

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

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

### Kitchen Garden Tour

Take a tour of our historic kitchen garden and learn about what the Polks grew, what these plants were used for, and how they were grown. Students will get to know a variety of herbs and their historical uses through hands-on experience.

### 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.

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: \$8/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.

### 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

### 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.

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

WHAT TEACHERS  
ARE SAYING

"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."

"WE ALWAYS LOVE OUR  
VISITS HERE! 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)

### Kitchen Garden Tour

Take a tour of our historic kitchen garden and learn about what the Polks grew, what these plants were used for, and how they were grown. Students will get to know a variety of herbs and their historical uses through hands-on experience.

# PROGRAMMING DEVELOPED FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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.

**LENGTH: 1.5 HOURS**

**COST: \$8/STUDENT**



## CORE TOUR

### Main House

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## 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.

### Fibers of the Backcountry

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### Kitchen Garden Tour

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**"VERY INFORMATIVE AND A  
WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE.**

**"MY EXPECTATIONS  
WERE EXCEEDED."**

**WHAT TEACHERS  
ARE SAYING**

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

# FEATURED ACTIVITY

## HISTORIC COOKING DEMONSTRATION WITH SUSIE WORCESTER

Learn about the foodways of the Backcountry during President Polk's lifetime from historic culinary expert Susie Worcester. Susie is an expert of open-hearth cooking and her presentation of the kitchen house offers students a unique opportunity to see history in action. Learn from hands-on activities as Susie 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.



**Susie is only on site specific dates throughout the year. Contact us to check current dates. If you would like to book Susie for a private demonstration for your group, contact us ahead of time to check availability. Private bookings are \$50**



# ADD SOMETHING EXTRA

## CLASS SOUVENIRS

For \$2/student, everyone will leave their fieldtrip with educational souvenirs including a presidential pencil and ruler!

**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. ( \$20 per demonstration. \*Subject to availability)

## 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 for free. Simply let us know that you plan to eat lunch on site and we will be happy to reserve the space and provide you with trash and recycling containers.