



THE PRESIDENT JAMES K. POLK STATE HISTORIC SITE

EDUCATOR PACKET

2022 - 2023





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WELCOME

We are very excited that the 2022-2023 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 offering digital options 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.

Finally, our full slate of events, resources, and programming can be found at 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

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."

LENGTH: 1.5 HOURS
COST: \$6/STUDENT

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.

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.

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)

"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

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 only on site specific dates throughout the year. Contact us to check current dates. 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**

A man dressed in 18th-century attire, including a black tricorn hat, round glasses, a grey waistcoat with brass buttons and a bone handle, and white breeches with white stockings. He is holding a long rifle. The background shows a grassy area with trees and wooden picnic tables.

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.

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.