



Mabee Farm Historic Site

History Mysteries Teacher Packet

Overview

The Mabee Farm Historic Site presents a unique opportunity to stand at the site of over three hundred years of history. The Mabee family lived and died here; ran a working farm and inn, raised their children, owned slaves, and watched New York's history happen around them. Their buildings, documents, and artifacts remain behind to tell the story of their lives. Perched on the banks of the Mohawk River, their farm offers a picturesque setting to learn about this family and how their story reflects the history of this area.

Goals

The Colonial Kids field trip at the Mabee Farm Historic Site is a hands-on, interactive tour that gives students the chance to understand more about the Mabee family, life on the frontier of New York, the agricultural ways that they used to support themselves, and the Native Americans, African slaves, indentured servants, and other settlers in the area. Through the lens of the daily life of the children who lived and worked here, students will gain a better grasp of New York state history, local history, and the connections to their own lives.

Students will leave Mabee Farm with an orientation of the historic site, an understanding of the use of primary source materials and artifacts in the understanding of history, and a basic grasp of how to use similar objects in other historic inquiries. The tour will also emphasize the newly adopted Common Core Standards. These standards have been adopted by 45 states, including New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Vermont.

What to Expect

Location

Students should be dropped off at the main entrance to the new George E. Franchere Educational Center. The tour will lead students through the museum grounds, and will conclude at the Educational Center. The site is located at 1100 Main Street (Route 5), Rotterdam Junction, just off of I-890.

Size

School groups of any size can be accommodated. Students should be broken down into five groups prior to arrival unless otherwise instructed during your booking. At least 1 chaperone is required for every 10 students.

Activity

Field trips to Mabee Farm begin with an introduction in the George E. Franchere Education Center. Here, students and chaperones will learn briefly about the site's history, its layout, and will drop off lunches before heading out onto the grounds. Throughout the day, students will rotate through thematic stations across the site. For the Colonial Life tour, these stations will highlight different aspects of daily life in the early part of American History.

New York State Standards

The Mabee Farm school programs have been recently redesigned to align with New York State's new curriculum standards. Below is a list of standards that will be met by the basic program. If you wish to gear your visit towards a specific standard, please inform the museum staff as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Every program presented is unique. Students ask different questions, conversations move in a different way. In addition, staff and volunteers with a wide variety of areas of expertise are available on different days. As such, two different schools coming on two different days will not have an identical program.

All programs will fulfill the following standards:

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Key Idea 1

The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American

Key Idea 2

Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

Key Idea 3

Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Standard 3: Geography

Key Idea 1

Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. (Adapted from The National Geography Standards, 1994: Geography for Life)

Key Idea 2

Geography requires the development and application of the skills of asking and answering geographic questions; analyzing theories of geography; and acquiring, organizing, and analyzing geographic information. (Adapted from: The National Geography Standards, 1994: Geography for Life)

Standard 4: Economics

Key Idea 1

The study of economics requires an understanding of major economic concepts and systems, the principles of economic decision making, and the interdependence of economies and economic systems throughout the world.

Key Idea 2

Economics requires the development and application of the skills needed to make informed and well-reasoned economic decisions in daily and national life.

English Language Arts and Literacy

Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

Students will listen, speak, read, and write for information and understanding. As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Students will listen, speak, read, and write for critical analysis and evaluation. As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others using a variety of established criteria. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted

conventions of the English language to present, from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information and issues.

Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction

Students will listen, speak, read, and write for social interaction. Students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for effective social communication with a wide variety of people. As readers and listeners, they will use the social communications of others to enrich their understanding of people and their views.

Other standards that may be met during a typical tour, or can be requested by teachers in advance of their tours, include:

The Arts

Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

Career Development and Occupational Studies

Standard 2: Integrated Learning

Standard 3a: Universal Foundation Skills

English Language Arts

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences

Standard 1: Personal Health and Fitness

Standard 2: A Safe and Healthy Environment

Standard 3: Resource Management

Math, Science, and Technology

Standard 1: Analysis, Inquiry, and Design

Standard 2: Information Systems

Standard 3: Mathematics (Revised 2005)

Standard 4: Science

Standard 5: Technology

Standard 6: Interconnectedness: Common Themes

Standard 7: Interdisciplinary Problem Solving

Background Information

The Mabee Farm Historic Site is a special place where you can learn the story of one family across many generations. The story begins with a man named Jan Mabee. His parents were from The Netherlands, and immigrated to America. Jan was born in New Amsterdam in the year 1654, and moved north to Schenectady. There, he met a girl named Annjette, and around 1681, they married and started a family.

In 1705, Jan bought land from his old neighbor, Daniel Van Antwerpen, eight miles away from Schenectady along the Mohawk River. Daniel had a fur trading post, and sold Jan the western half of the property so he could build his family home. Jan built a house out of stones from the river, a home where his family would live for generations to come. From that point until the year 1999, when the Mabee family gave the land to the Schenectady County Historical Society, it never left the family.

During the years in between, the family built new buildings, tore down old ones, and made many changes to those they left standing. Today, if you walk through the 1705 stone house, you can see many of the changes the family made. These include things like holes for stovepipes, an indoor toilet, and even light bulbs. At the same time, you can still see what the house might have looked like when it was first built, because the beams and the floor are still the originals, and the big fireplace looks very similar to what it did in 1705.

Connected to the stone house by a 19th Century porch is the Inn the family built to attract customers traveling along the Mohawk River. It was built before the Erie Canal, and in fact, the men who helped plan out the canal, like Phillip Schuyler, even stayed in the Mabee Inn. Today you can see what the tavern room of the inn might have looked like around 1800.

Next to the stone house is the brick house. This building was used as a summer kitchen. This meant that you did not have to heat up your whole house during the summer when you cooked food over the fireplace. The upstairs was also a room for several different mother in laws of the family, after their sons married and moved into the stone house.

Across the site from the houses sits our big Dutch barn. It is not the original Mabee barn, but it is very similar to what the family used. The Nilsen family in Johnstown, New York, built it and we brought it here so visitors could see what the family's barn probably looked like. It has big beams called h-bents stretching across the middle, and has a wide-open floor. That is where the family would remove the kernels of wheat from the chaff, a process called threshing.

What is special about the Mabee Farm is that the Mabee family was just like most families today. They were not a big political family, they were not rich, and they were not anyone famous. They were just a regular family, much like the rest of us. Most homes that belonged to regular families from the early 1700's have not survived. If you were someone famous, people probably worked to save your home so future generations knew who you were. For regular people, that rarely happened. That is why this home is so special. It shows you what life for a regular family, a family like your family, was probably like over 300 years of American history.

When Jan Mabee purchased the land in 1705, he and his wife Annjette had ten children. Two of those children are the focus for the Colonial Kids tour; Abraham and Maria. In 1705, when the family moved from Schenectady to the land called Woestina, which means wilderness in Dutch, Abraham was 10 years old and Maria was 5. This program will give your students the chance to step into their shoes, try a hand at their chores, and learn more about the history of the area through the eyes of the Mabee children.

Pre and Post-Visit Materials

The following materials are designed to enhance your students' learning experience during their time at Mabee Farm. The pre-visit activities will prepare your students for their visit and introduce them to the history being presented. These activities will help students to begin thinking about their visit and to give them an idea of what they can expect to see and learn. The post-visit activities will allow your students to recall their time at Mabee Farm, and to connect it to their own lives.

Feel free to share any and all of these materials with your designated chaperones. The more engaged they are throughout your visit to Mabee Farm, the better and more enjoyable the program will be for them and for your students.

Pre-Visit Activities

Pre-Visit Activity #1: Primary Sources

Rather than simply presenting students with all of the information, we like encourage students to think about how we know what we know. Much of the history of the Mabee Farm comes from looking critically at primary

source documents.

By asking your students to look carefully at the reproduction document provided in the student packet, they are following the same steps our curators follow when investigating the history of the Mabee family. Encourage your students to think about the questions accompanying the document and discuss the good and the bad of using such documents together as a class.

Standards Met:

English Language Arts and Literacy

R.1-R.3: Key Ideas and Details

R.4-R.6: Craft and Structure

R.7-R.9: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

R.10: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

R.11: Responding to Literature

L.4-L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 4: Economics

Pre-Visit Activity #2: Reading Objects

With the dual purpose to encouraging students to be gentle with museum objects and to think about them in a critical manner, this activity asks students to describe an object in their home or in your classroom. Students should fill out answers to the questions listed, as far as they know them.

An important lesson to learn from this is that, often, we don't know all of the answers about our objects. Encourage students to consider how best objects should be handled to prevent damage. Should they be picked up and moved around? Should they wear gloves to pick them up? If time allows, ask students to compare objects with each other, especially if they used classroom materials. While visiting Mabee Farm, ask students to remember the questions they answered for this activity while looking at the collections and exhibits.

Standards Met:

The Arts

The Arts

Standard 3 Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

English Language Arts and Literacy

W.2-W.3 Text Types and Purposes

W.4 Production and Distribution of Writing

W.8-W.9 Research and Build to Present Knowledge

W.11 Responding to Literature

L.4-L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Mathematics, Science, and Technology

Standard 5: Technology

Standard 7: Interdisciplinary Problem Solving

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Pre-Visit Activity #3: What's In Your House?

The Schenectady County Historical Society's Grems-Doolittle Library has a wealth of information on the history of the county and on the Mabee Family. This document, although from after the Colonial period, offers students a look into the lives of people from the past. Included in this packet is a reproduction of the 1824

inventory of Jacob Mabee. If they would like to, students are more than welcome to develop a list of items off of the inventory.

Some of these are items that students likely have in their homes today (i.e. pillows and tables), while others are unusual items today but are ones they may see during their visit (i.e. butter churn and spinning wheels). Students should create a list of things that they have in their own home, and then use the two lists to create a Venn diagram. This is a great way to discuss differences between their lives and the lives of the Mabee family.

Standards Met

English Language Arts

R.1-R.3: Key Ideas and Details

R.4-R.6: Craft and Structure

R.7-R.9: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

L.4-L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 3: Geography

Standard 4: Economics

Pre-Visit Activity #4 and Post-Visit Activity #1 - KWL Chart

An effective way of gauging your students' prior knowledge of the subject of their field trip is a Know, Want to know, Learned chart. Using these charts, students can develop questions they have that can be asked and answered during their time at Mabee Farm. In the first column, students should write what they can recall about New York in the Colonial period. This can be done after utilizing the history and background booklet provided. In the second column, they should write out what they would like to learn, and specific questions to ask during their visit. Once students return from their trip to Mabee Farm, they should fill out the third column of their chart. This can highlight potential follow-up areas, whether in the background materials given or through a letter or email to the museum. We are always happy to continue the conversation.

Standards Met

English Language Arts

L.4-L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Post-Visit Activities

Post-Visit Activity #2: Colonial Trades and Professions

After returning from Mabee Farm, ask students to consider the professions that they learned about while on site. These can include blacksmiths, farmers, broom makers, innkeepers, and others. Through the activity, they will be asked to determine what goods or services these professions provided, and to reflect personally on their own thoughts about them. Encourage students to place themselves in the shoes of past individuals and to consider what their lives would have been like in each job. Although the lesson is structured as a written activity, it can easily be converted to a dialogue between students.

Standards Met

English Language Arts

W.2-W.3 Text Types and Purposes

W.4 Production and Distribution of Writing

W.8-W.9 Research and Build to Present Knowledge

W.11 Responding to Literature

L.4-L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 4: Economics

Post-Visit Activity #3 : Create Your Own Museum

Activity

In this activity, students should choose four objects that they believe represent themselves. In the boxes provided or on another piece of paper, have students draw out a representation of that object. This can connect back to objects described in the first pre-visit activity.

After they have selected and drawn their items, ask them to consider why they chose what they did and how people will view them through those objects. For curators in museums, constructing exhibits is all about choosing objects that elicit certain responses or guide thoughts in order to get a message across. If time and space allows, ask students to create a physical museum exhibit, bringing in objects from home and displaying them in small boxes. Their classmates can attempt to determine who each box belongs to based on its contents and their representation.

Standards Met

The Arts

Standard 3 Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

English Language Arts

W.2-W.3 Text Types and Purposes

W.4 Production and Distribution of Writing

W.8-W.9 Research and Build to Present Knowledge

W.11 Responding to Literature

L.4-L.6 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Suggested Readings

The following books make excellent companions to your visit to the Mabee Farm Historic Site. These books will supplement the experiences your students have while on the grounds, and will help further their understanding of the life of children in the Colonial period.

Cooney, Caroline B. *The Ransom of Mercy Carter*. : New York: Laurel Leaf, 2002. Grades 7-12.

This historical fiction novel depicts the attack in 1704 on the English settlement of Deerfield, Massachusetts. Eleven-year-old Mercy and her family and neighbors are captured by Mohawk Indians and their French allies, and forced to march through bitter cold to French Canada, where some adapt to new lives and some still hope to be ransomed.

Edmonds, Walter D. *Drums Along the Mohawk*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997. Grades 9-12.

This classic novel, originally written in the 1930's, depicts the lives of a Mohawk Valley couple during the American Revolution. Made famous by a number of movie retellings, the original book is dated yet shows an interesting perspective on the area.

Gibson, Karen Bush. *New Netherland: The Dutch Settle the Hudson Valley*. Newark, DE: Mitchell Lane Pub Inc, 2006. Grades 3-8.

A short concise overview on the Dutch and how they settled New Amsterdam. A good overview of the beginnings of New Amsterdam, i.e. New York.

Hakim, Joy. *From Colonies to Country*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Grades 4-8
Covers American history from the French and Indian War to the Constitutional Convention. Includes chapters on women and children during the Revolution and ideas leading to the framing of the federal Constitution. Includes maps, illustrations, prints, quotations, and a chronology. A Teacher's Guide is available.

Miller, Brandon. *Dressed for the Occasion: What American Wore 1620-1970*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 1999. Grades 4-8

Using material culture studies, sociology, and anthropology as a springboard, the book describes the reciprocal relationship between what colonial people wore and how they viewed themselves and others.

O'Conner, George. *Journey Into Mohawk Country*. New York: First Second, 2006. Grades 7-12.

Based on the original diary of the 23 year old Dutch fur trader Harmen Meynderts van den Bogaert, this graphic novel makes the story of the fur trade in North America come to life through striking illustrations and first-hand accounts.

Saari, Peggy, ed. *Colonial America: Primary Sources*. Detroit: UXL, 2000. Grades 4-8

Reference/anthology work of twenty-four period documents. Consists largely of diary entries, poems, and first-person narratives.

Swerling, Beverly. *City of Dreams: A Novel of Nieuw Amsterdam and Early Manhattan*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Grades 9-12.

This novel tells the early story of New York's transition from Dutch to British to American through the perspective of two rival families over their first 100 years.

If at any point you have any questions about this material or your trip, please do not hesitate to call 518-887-5073 x 104 or email educator@schenectadyhistorical.org.



Program Stations

Pavillion (Lunch)

Program Start

Student Drop-Off

Bus & Chaperone Parking

Mabee Farm
Historic Site

Mabee House Rd

To Rotterdam Junction

River Rd

Main St to I-890/I-90