

To Preserve or Not Preserve:¹

Do you need to visit the Locust Grove Schoolhouse to understand its history?

In this lesson, children will learn about the practice of historic preservation and the protection of historic cultural resources and will consider and possibly debate the importance of preserving the Locust Grove Schoolhouse.

Curriculum Alignment:

8.2.3.B. Identify and describe primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in Pennsylvania history (artifacts; architecture; and historic places).

8.1.4.B: Distinguish between fact and opinion from multiple points of view, and primary sources as related to historical events.

5.2.4.D: Describe how citizens participate in school and community activities.

5.3.4.F: Explain how different perspectives can lead to conflict.

5.3.4.G: Identify individual interests and explain ways to influence others.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

Understand that the Locust Grove Schoolhouse building is a primary resource. Form an opinion on the historic preservation of one-room schoolhouses.

Setting the Stage: Guided Discussion

Help the students to think about how much they have learned about Chester County 100 years ago, and about preserving this history through historic buildings and landscapes. Generate some guesses and predictions about saving or neglecting historic buildings. First establish whether the group has visited, will visit, or will not visit the Locust Grove Schoolhouse. Follow the discussion guide appropriate for your group.

Ask the students that have visited:

How old are the walls of Locust Grove Schoolhouse that you actually touched? What was the best thing you learned at the Schoolhouse? Was the classroom bigger or smaller or the same as you thought it would be? Did anything become clearer or did you understand anything about the students or the Schoolhouse differently once you were there? Do you need to visit the Schoolhouse to understand the Locust Grove School? Do you need to see real old objects and old buildings to understand your local history? [*The schoolhouse is at least 141 years old. It took its current form in 1870. The architecture is a typical example of masonry (stone) one-room schoolhouse construction in rural Pennsylvania.*]

¹ Inspired by activities created for the Freeman School in Nebraska, Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan: Historic Preservation Activity at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/80homestead/80putting.htm> (accessed August 2011) and Education World: Lesson Plans at http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/webquest_orig/webquest_orig001.shtml (accessed August 2011).

Why would someone tear down a historic one-room school? [*Guide the children to think about growth and development and modernizing a community.*] Do you think any builder or carpenter can fix up a historic building or do you need special workers? [*Lead the children to discuss the possibility of ruining or covering up historic parts of the building, and what happens when a historic element is lost?*]

Ask the students that have not visited:

Does anything about the Schoolhouse or lessons confuse you? Estimate how big the one-room school is? Is it bigger or smaller than your classroom? If smaller, walk out the size you think the schoolroom was? If bigger, walk out the door and into the hallway to show the size of the Locust Grove Schoolhouse classroom? [*The one-room classroom is 22 by 34 feet.*] Do you think the blackboards were bigger or smaller than yours? Do you think the windows were bigger or smaller than yours? Give reasons why you made these guesses.

Why would someone tear down a historic one-room school? [*Guide the children to think about growth and development and modernizing a community.*] Do you think any builder or carpenter can fix up a historic building or do you need special workers? [*Lead the children to discuss the possibility of ruining or covering up historic parts of the building and what happens when a historic element is lost?*]

If possible, record students' ideas for all to see.

Lesson:

Activity 1:

Ask the students to consider the Locust Grove Schoolhouse as a primary source like the Census or the attendance books. If the students visited the Schoolhouse, ask them to remember touching the outside of the building and sitting inside the building or on the porch. If they did not visit, ask them to think about the photos they saw, both old and new.

Now take a vote. Select three regions in the classroom for children to stand based on their opinion. Ask all the students who believe that the Locust Grove Schoolhouse (LGSH) should be preserved and restored to look like it may have looked in the late 1800s to stand in one location. Ask all the students that think the LGSH should be fixed up, but used for some other purpose, like a house or library or business, to stand in another location. Finally ask all the students who believe the LGSH should be torn down and not restored to stand in yet another location. Have a secretary record the vote results on a board for all to see.

If the groups are balanced proceed. If not, figure a way to reorganize by asking students to swap groups for the activity only—they don't have to really agree with the other group.

Read the following description of each group:

Group One is in favor of preserving the schoolhouse as a schoolhouse for the public to visit.

Group Two is unsure about what to do with the property; they want to keep the building but are open to different ideas about its use.

Group Three is in favor of demolishing the building, and using the land for another purpose.

Have the students sit in their new groups.

Have the students the write down answers to the following questions:

Brainstorming:

- What is the purpose of the historic Schoolhouse building?
- How does it function in the community?
- Does it help or hinder the community?
- Does the building interest many or a few members of the community?

- What would be lost (besides the building) if the building were demolished?
- If the building were demolished or moved would the land have a different purpose or value?
- What would you do with the land?
- Would the land remain open?
- Would a new building or buildings replace the Schoolhouse?
- Would the new building or buildings be important to many or a few community members?

- Is the building in good condition?
- Does the building require lots of maintenance and upkeep?
- What is the best purpose for the building?
- What is the most creative use of the building?

Next:

After considering all the answers to the questions above, what does your group suggest should be done with the building? Plan to explain your ideas to the entire class. When you share your suggested use for the building and land, try to persuade others that your idea is the best. Do you need drawings to help explain it to others? Do you need a chart to convince others? Create any visual aids to help explain your suggestions.

Reinforce and expand the observations (guided discussion):

After each group has presented their conclusions, discuss the potential benefits and potential negative impacts of their proposed solutions. Consider the economic, social, and environmental impact of each solution. Try to help the children see how challenging preservation can be when one group sees value in the old and another group sees value in the new and modern only. Help the children to see that they were able (if they visited) to learn about the school by using the building just as children 140 years did, and so they might see that the building helps the community that way. While others, that did not get that experience, might see it as old or in the way.

Closing:

After each group has presented their ideas to the class and the guided discussion, complete the lesson by having the whole class vote again, as they did at the beginning. Have the secretary record the vote again. Have the numbers changed at all?

General Resources

1. Raymond Bial, *One Room School*. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children: City Unknown, September 1999. [For ages 8-12, grades 4-6.]
2. Paul Rocheleau and Verlyn Klinkenborg, *The One-Room Schoolhouse: A Tribute to a Beloved National Icon*. Publisher: City, October 2003.

Resources for Lesson Plan Activities

1. EDSITEment! Lesson Plans: Reading, Writing, and 'Rithmetic in the One-Room Schoolhouse, October 6, 2010 at <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/reading-writing-and-rithmetic-one-room-schoolhouse> (accessed August 2011). [For photo activity.]
2. Education World: Lesson Plans at http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/webquest_orig/webquest_orig001.shtml
[preserve or not to preserve]
3. Explore PA History: Teach PA History, One Room Schoolhouse in Pennsylvania at <http://explorepahistory.com/viewLesson.php?id=1-D-46> (accessed August 2011).
Artifact Lesson with photos:
http://explorepahistory.com/kora/files/1/13/1-D-46-274-ExplorePAHistory-a0l7n2-a_464.pdf
http://explorepahistory.com/kora/files/1/13/1-D-46-194-ExplorePAHistory-a0l7n2-a_514.pdf
People Lesson with photos:
http://explorepahistory.com/kora/files/1/13/1-D-46-272-ExplorePAHistory-a0l7n2-a_489.pdf
Worksheet for Comparing Schools:
http://explorepahistory.com/kora/files/1/13/1-D-46-263-ExplorePAHistory-a0l7n2-a_498.pdf
Venn Diagram Activity:
http://explorepahistory.com/kora/files/1/13/1-D-46-265-ExplorePAHistory-a0l7n2-a_496.pdf
Educational Artifacts:
http://explorepahistory.com/kora/files/1/13/1-D-46-198-ExplorePAHistory-a0l7n2-a_504.pdf
4. Harn Homestead & 1889ers Museum: Wearing Historical Clothing and Historical Lunch Activity, p. 13-14. Rules and Behavior, p. 18.
<http://www.harnhomestead.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=pCJkKhB1t5c%3D&tabid=68>
[For Topics: old fashioned game ideas and procedural examples.]
5. Iron Hill School: An African-American One-Room School, Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/58iron/58about.htm>
(accessed August 2011). [For topics: oral histories and history of your school.]

6. Freeman School in Nebraska, Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan: Historic Preservation Activity at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/80homestead/80putting.htm> (accessed August 2011) [For topic: to preserve or not to preserve?]
7. Megan McMahon and Katie Jones, The One-Room Schoolhouse: An Educational Unit (seven days) for the Oak Grove School restoration, 2007, at <http://welcome.georgiasouthern.edu/garden/oakgroveschool.fullunit.pdf> (accessed August 2011).
8. Northern Illinois University, College of Education: Blackwell Museum Sample Lesson Plans (1900s) at <http://www.cedu.niu.edu/blackwell/oneroom/samplePlan1900s.shtml> (accessed August 2011) [For topics: games, lessons, and photo ideas.]
9. Smithsonian Museum of American History, Behring Center: Taking America to Lunch at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/lunchboxes/index.htm> (accessed August 2011).