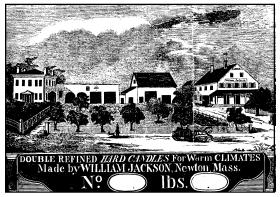
Nineteenth-Century Family Life

Pre- and Post- Visit Materials

Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead



Candle factory label, drawn by Ellen Jackson, c. 1840

The Nineteenth-Century Family Life program allows students in grades 3 and up to explore the home life of Newton's Jackson family in the nineteenth century. Students are introduced to William and Mary Jackson, their 14 children, and life at the Homestead. Through a hands-on, cooperative, group-learning experience, students handle and identify artifacts and documents that reveal the story of life in the mid-1800s. Students receive a take-home project that lets them reconstruct a day in the life of a nineteenth-century family. This is an ideal program for groups studying family life and nineteenth-century history.

About Your Visit:

Parking is available on Washington Street and Jackson Road. Groups arriving in buses may be dropped off at the museum's driveway, but please do not park there. The *Nineteenth-Century Family Life* program is held in the original kitchen and in the Newton History Gallery; the program lasts about 70 minutes. Please note that there are no longer any period rooms, including the bedroom, at the Newton History Museum. Have your group divided into four smaller groups prior to arrival; this will facilitate the hands-on portion of the program. In order to preserve the artifacts and documents on display, flash photography is not allowed in the museum.

About the Museum:

The Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead features exhibits and programs on Newton, one of the country's earliest railroad suburbs, and on the 1809 Homestead itself, a stop on the Underground Railroad before the Civil War and home to the family of William Jackson throughout the nineteenth century. The Museum offers a wide variety of education programs for all ages that highlight the history of American people and culture using the city of Newton as a case study. The programs engage students in active learning through observing, discussing, and participating in hands-on activities.

The Jackson Family and The Jackson Homestead:

Edward Jackson, one of the earliest settlers in Newton, arrived in 1642 from London. In 1646 Edward purchased a 500 acre farm covering much of what is today Newton Corner and Newtonville. On this land he built a saltbox house in about 1670.

The Jackson family prospered and grew. In 1809 Timothy Jackson, Edward's great, great-grandson, removed the saltbox and reused parts of it to build the larger and more elegant Homestead that still stands today. This Federal-style house, marked by its symmetry, was a fine, middle-class house for its time.

Timothy's son, William, was living in Boston when he inherited the house. He returned to Newton in 1820, with his family. William was involved in local and state government, was a prime mover in the creation of the Newton Temperance Society, and foresaw the possibilities for suburban development in Newton. He played a major role in attracting the first railroad to Newton, the one that would run in front of his home.

He also moved the tallow (animal fat) soap and candle manufactory, started by his father, from Boston to the Homestead (see the candle label on the front). In addition, William, his daughter Ellen, his brother Francis, and the rest of his family were active in the Abolition movement. The Homestead was a documented stop on the Underground Railroad.



Saltbox house as drawn by Ellen Jackson, 1894



The William Jackson Family, 1846

The Changing Nature of Family Life in Nineteenth-Century New England:

The nineteenth century was a period of great change in New England society and family life. In 1800, most New Englanders lived in rural agricultural communities. Families supported themselves with little outside help. Fathers did seasonal work in the fields and practiced trades such as blacksmithing or carpentry. Mothers raised children; tended the homes, kitchen gardens, and dairies; and made the family clothes. Children helped with various tasks around the home and farm. Surplus produced by the family would be traded to obtain those things the family could not make itself.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, new modes of transportation, the growth of cities, the rise of manufacturing, and the decline of wide-spread agriculture — all interconnected — changed these family roles. Women's work in textile production was now performed in mills. Men increasingly worked away from home, earning money to buy what the family needed. Children, whose labor was no longer central to family survival, could attend school more months of the year. The focus of the family was shifting gradually from production to consumption.

Suggested Vocabulary:

Abolitionist: a person who believed slavery, the owning of one person by another, should be stopped

acre: a unit of area equal to 4,840 square yards

beehive oven: an oven with a domed top, shaped like a natural beehive

curator: a museum worker who takes care of artifacts and documents, creates exhibits, and shares

information with people who visit the museum

ell: an extention, generally at right angles, to a building

Federal-style: a house style characterized by, among other things, symmetry (balance) in form and elliptical fan lights above the doors

homestead: a home and nearby land where a family lives

manufactory: a place where goods are made, from raw materials, either by hand or by hand-powered

tools and equipment

nineteenth-century: the 1800s

saltbox: a box used to store salt for preserving and flavoring food; a saltbox house has a roof and shape

that look like the typical saltbox (drawing to the left)

tallow: animal fat

Underground Railroad: a loosely connected series of "stations" or "stops"—houses, stores, farms,

churches — where runaway slaves could hide as they were escaping from slavery

Suggested Pre-Visit Activities:

- 1. Provide a context for nineteenth-century family life, which changed drastically between 1800 and 1899, by making a timeline of important American and World historical events during the century; see the bibliography for some sources to use. Students should begin to realize that this century was full of change: Industrial Revolution, Civil War and Emancipation, the growth of cities, and the decline of farming.
- 2. Have students compare and contrast family life in the nineteenth-century and today. Pre-visit: make lists or draw pictures, either individually or as a class, of what the students and their families do in a typical day. Think about schedules, transportation, technolgy, and material culture. Post-visit: students can use what they have learned at the Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead and the sources listed below to draw their conclusions.
- 3. Integrate math and geography by having students outline 500 acres surrounding their school, on a map of their neighborhood; this will help them understand the size of the original Jackson farm.

Suggested Post-Visit Activities:

- 1. Use the take-home project on the back of the worksheet students completed during their visit. Have students create a list, and then a story, about a day in the life of the person whose artifacts they explored while at the Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead.
- 2. Historians learn about the past through the documents and artifacts people leave behind. Students can help future historians by creating their own family trees, keeping a journal, drawing pictures, or taking photographs of their neighborhoods and families. Create an exhibit that features these documents.

Selected Teacher Bibliography

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Selected Student Bibliography

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Hakim, Joy. A History of US Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993-1994. Titles include: The New Nation (Book 4); Liberty for All? (Book 5); Reconstruction and Reform (Book 7); and An Age of Extremes (Book 8). (upper elementary/middle school)

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