

FIELD TRIP TO AN HISTORIC HOUSE

Matthew Downey
Hewitt Institute, UNC
Greeley

OVERVIEW

Students will visit historic houses in their community to learn about the value and methods of historic preservation.

STANDARDS

- History Standard 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
- History Standard 3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Identify different historic houses that have been preserved.
- Describe how historic houses in Colorado have been preserved.
- Express values and opinions about the importance of historic preservation.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What are some of the houses from the 1800s that still exist today?
- How were these houses kept from being destroyed?
- What value do these houses have in helping us know about how people lived then?

MATERIALS

- A local historical site.
- Brochure or other printed information about the site

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce students to examples of historic houses available in your locality. For example, the metro-Denver area includes such early houses as the sod house at the plains Conservation Center (a reconstruction), the log and frame houses at the Littleton Museum, and the road station/farm house at Four Mile House Park. Late-19th and early 20th-century houses include the Molly Brown House, the Streer House at Belmar Museum, and Hiwan House in Evergreen.

Doing History/Keeping the Past
Inquiry Activities

2. Visit the historic houses that you want to feature, take photographs, and pick up brochures about the houses.
3. Divide the class into small groups and assign one historic house to each group. Give them the following questions:
 - Where is the house located?
 - Who is responsible for maintaining it?
 - What value does the house have in helping us know about how people lived in the past?
4. Ask the students to write a letter to the curator or director of the historic house. The letter should include the following:
 - Questions that students may have about the house.
 - Questions they may have about the curator and how he/she became a curator.
 - Their own thoughts about what the house means them.
5. Have students read to the class any responses they may receive.
6. Plan a field trip to one or more of these historic houses to let students experience the value of historic preservation first-hand.