

## Colonial Survival & Civility

**Location** Durant-Kenrick House & Grounds, 286 Waverley Avenue, Newton

**Audience** Grades 3-12

**Run time** 90 minutes

**Essential Question** How did families survive in the colonial era?

### **Objectives:**

After completing this program, students will be better able to...

1. Use evidence to articulate multiple perspectives within the discussed historical period.
2. Express the importance of community and family to survival in the Colonial era
3. Articulate differences between daily life in Colonial era and their lives today.
4. Name the three groups of people living in Newton during the Colonial era.
5. Distinguish that the Colonial era was a distinct time period 100 years after first colonists arrived but before the Revolutionary War

### **Overview**

Students will...

- Explore a colonial house and answer focused questions
- Use colonial era tools to understand work that was done in order for people in that era to get what they needed to live.
- Play a game as a class to discover how colonial families survived through bartering and community relationships.

### **About your visit**

The Colonial Survival & Civility program is held in the museum's gallery space and outdoors. Please have your students dress for the weather. If you wish to conclude your program with a snack, please notify the staff in advance and plan for an additional 15 minutes. You must bring all snack supplies. In order to preserve the artifacts and documents on display, flash photography is not allowed in the museum.

### **About the museum**

At the Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds, you don't just look at history—you try it out for yourself. Here you'll find... a 1734 farmhouse, restored and renovated in 2013 with the addition of a large, modern educational space ; family-friendly museum with period rooms, interactive games and puzzles; historic gardens; stories about colonial life, the Revolutionary War, slavery, abolitionism, the birth of American horticulture, and the historic preservation movement.

## Suggested vocabulary

Homestead- a person's or family's residence, which comprises the land, house, and outbuildings

Domestic Animals- an animal of a species that has been domesticated by humans so as to live and breed in a tame condition and depend on humankind for survival.

Yoke & Bucket- Used to fetch water, a piece of wood that goes over the shoulders, with a bucket hanging on each side. →

Commonwealth- one founded on law and united by compact or tacit agreement of the people for the common good



Three sisters- corn, beans and squash grow in close proximity to form a symbiotic relationship that yields the most food per square foot of any farming method.

Barter- exchange (goods or services) for other goods or services without using money

Hearth- area in front of a fireplace

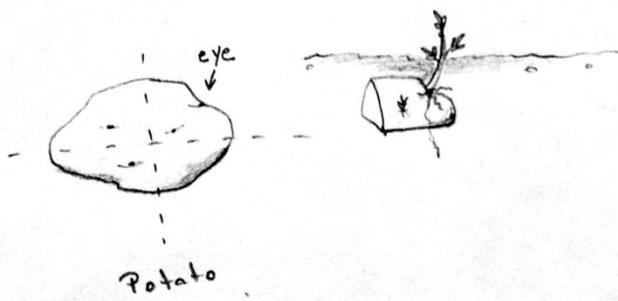
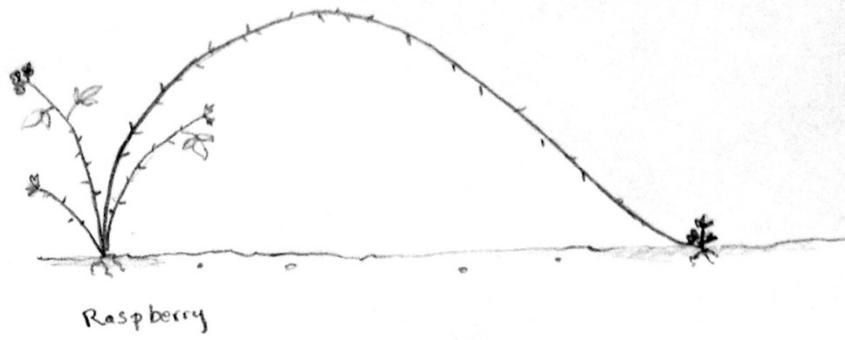
Parlor- formal sitting room

Slavery- condition in which individuals are owned by others, who control where they live and at what they work. Slavery had previously existed throughout history, in the United States slavery was primary a system in which those of European descent oppressed those of African descent

Native people- those indigenous to the United States who lived for thousands of years on the land and continue to do so today

Colonial period- 100 years after the arrival of the first English settlers, before the start of the Revolutionary War

Forms of creating new plants not by seed



## Suggested pre-visit activities

1. Ask students to make a list of chores they do at home, either individually or in groups. Have students compare their list to those below. What would your day as a colonial kid look like? What is the same still today? What is different? Tell students they will have a chance to try these chores first hand during the museum visit!

### Chores for boys and girls

- Sweep floors
- Make beds
- Wash dishes
- Pick up sticks
- Keep fire going
- Milk cows
- Feed cows, horses, oxen, goats and sheep
- Pick apples, pears and plums
- Pick wild berries and nuts

### Work girls did with their mothers

- Tend vegetable garden
- Salt meat and fish, dry or pickle vegetables, make fruit into preserves, make cheese and butter
- Make soap and candles
- Spin flax and yarn into thread and wool
- Make clothes and mend (repair) them
- Wash clothes and clean the house

### Work boys did with their fathers

- Plow with teams of oxen and cart dung (manure) to fertilize crops
- Mow meadow and made hay
- Harvest crops
- Press cider
- Store root vegetables
- Fell trees and haul them with oxen

2. Share the above list with your students, and have them think critically about what kind of work is no longer necessary today. Why do we not need to keep a fire going in our home? Then, have students discuss why we no longer need to do this work. We buy food and have refrigerators to keep it fresh. We buy clothes, soap, candles, etc. We heat our homes with gas or oil. We have electricity to light our houses. Remind students to be on the lookout for evidence of these chores and the tools needed to do them during the museum visit.

## Suggested post-visit activities

1. Try out food preservation for yourself! Colonists had needed to keep food fresh and store it for long periods of time. They pickled vegetables by soaking them in salt, water and vinegar. All kinds of fruit and berries were made into preserves by adding honey or sugar. Native Americans taught them to dry meat, vegetables and fruit. They dried berries, apple slices, corn, and green beans.

Leather Britches- nickname for dried stringbeans because they resembled men's pants hanging on a line

You will need:

2 pounds fresh stringbeans

8 cups hot water

Kettle

Colander

Large-eyed needle(s)

Fishing line

1. Snip off stems and tips of the beans with your fingers. Then wash the beans.
2. Bring water to boil. Add beans and cook for a minute.
3. Thread the needle with a fishing line. String the beans by sewing through one end of each bean. Keep them from touching each other.
4. Hang beans in a cool, dry place for about 3 days or until they feel crisp.
5. Store dried beans in plastic bags or sealed jars.
6. Before using beans in soups or stews, place them in a medium bowl and cover with boiling water. Let beans stand for about 2 hours to become plump.

Only wealthy colonists had steel needles. Others might have used needles of cheaper metal or fish bones. Instead of fishing line, linen thread made from flax was used to hang beans from the kitchen rafters. Water was boiled in a large pot over the fireplace.<sup>1</sup>

2. Step into the shoes of a Colonial kid, and practice letter-writing. Have students write a letter to a friend describing their houses, gardens, animals, the village and their daily lives. Include how things might smell, sound and feel as well as how they look.

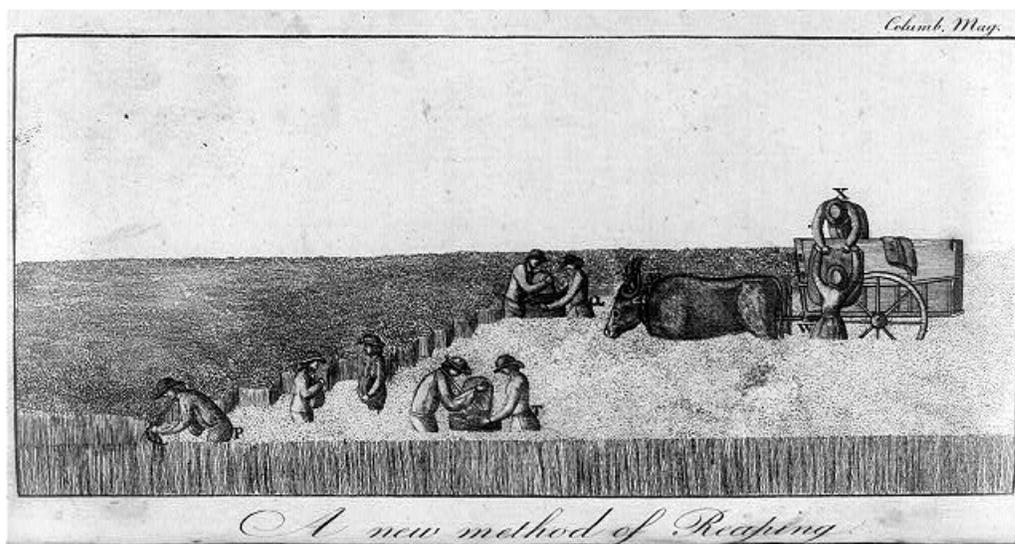
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<sup>1</sup>Ichord, Loretta Frances. *Hasty Pudding, Johnny Cakes and Other Good Stuff: Cooking in Colonial America*. Brookfield, CT, 1998. Printed by The Millbrook Press. Page 17.

## Colonial Daily Life

In the 18th century, everyone in Newton lived and worked on a farm. Even if a man practiced a trade as a blacksmith or miller, he still needed to farm in order to provide his family with food. Families were large, typically with six children. They often included grandparents, unmarried aunts and uncles since no one was able to live their own. By working together and trading with other farmers, colonists were able to get by.

Tax records indicate that the average farm had 4 cows, 2 horses, 2 oxen, 4 goats and sheep and an undetermined number of chickens. The average farm was 50 acres. About half of it was a wood lot, which provided fuel for heat and cooking. Most of the farm was dedicated to feeding the livestock: pasture for grazing and meadow for hay. Only about 3-4 acres was used for crops. Often a farm had a small orchard. Newton farmers traveled a short distance to Brighton or Boston to sell excess crops, cheese, butter and wood.



The Columbian magazine, or, Monthly miscellany. Philadelphia : Printed for Seddon, Spotswood, Cist, and Trenchard, 1788 (September). <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671568/>

There were several mills on the Charles River in Newton Lower Falls and Newton Upper Falls. A paper mill made paper from wood pulp, a sawmill cut logs into boards, and a gristmill ground grain into flour. Instead of grinding grain for themselves farmers brought it to millers who ground it for them. In return the miller kept some as payment and resold it.

At harvest time the whole family worked together. It was a laborious process to cut wheat, barley and oats with a sickle and beat it to separate the grain from the stalk. Everyone pitched in to make hay to feed animals in winter, cutting fields of grass and drying it. Records indicate that Newton farmers shared tools with neighbors.

## Colonial Kids

Children as young as three years old had chores. They swept floors, made beds and washed the dishes. Outside they weeded and fed the chickens. Four year old boys and girls were taught to knit. Young children picked up sticks and had the important job of keeping the fire going. Children also milked cows and spread manure on the fields to fertilize the crops. Older children helped feed the cows, horses, oxen, goats and sheep each day. Some children picked apples, pears and plums from their family orchards. They often picked wild berries and nuts.

Older boys worked by their father's side and learned how to manage a farm. The planting season began in April. Men plowed with teams of oxen and carted dung to fertilize the fields. In July and August the meadow was mowed and made into hay. Wheat, rye and barley were harvested. Late summer and early fall was the time to harvest corn, beans, squash and pumpkins. Cider was pressed in October. Root vegetables were stored in the root cellar in November. During winter months, men felled trees and hauled them with oxen<sup>2</sup>.

Older girls helped tend the vegetable garden, which grew outside the kitchen. The most common vegetables were onions, cabbage, carrots and parsley. There were also potatoes, leeks, cucumbers, squash, radish, spinach, turnips and lettuce. Herbs were grown for spice as well as medicine.

Girls learned to preserve food: salting meat and fish, drying vegetables or pickling them and making fruit into preserves. To preserve milk they made cheese and butter. They made soap and candles and spun flax into thread and yarn into wool to make their own clothes.



The plan of a farm yard - venerate the plow.

Trenchard, James, 1747-, engraver. [1786]

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671570/>

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<sup>2</sup>Fuhrer, Mary. Colonial Families of Newton, Mass: Research for Newton Public Schools Third Grade Curriculum Project. 2006. Pp 16-17.

## MA History & Social Studies Curriculum Framework

### Grade 3

#### Concepts and Skills

##### History and Geography

1. Explain the meaning of time periods or dates in historical narratives (decade, century, 1600s, 1776) and use them correctly in speaking and writing.
2. Observe visual sources such as historic paintings, photographs, or illustrations that accompany historical narratives, and describe details such as clothing, setting, or action.
3. Observe and describe local or regional historic artifacts and sites and generate questions about their function, construction, and significance.
5. Describe the difference between a contemporary map of their city or town and the map of their city or town in the 18th, 19th , or early 20th century.

##### Economics

9. Define specialization in jobs and businesses and give examples of specialized businesses in the community.
10. Define barter, give examples of bartering (e.g., trading baseball cards with each other), and explain how money makes it easier for people to get things they want. Barter is the direct exchange of goods and services between people without using money. Trade is the exchange of goods and services between people.

#### Learning Standards

- 3.5 Explain important political, economic, and military developments leading to and during the American Revolution.
  - a. the growth of towns and cities in Massachusetts before the Revolution
- 3.8 On a map of Massachusetts, locate the class's home town or city and its local geographic features and landmarks.
- 3.9 Identify historic buildings, monuments, or sites in the area and explain their purpose and significance.
- 3.11 Identify when the students' own town or city was founded, and describe the different groups of people who have settled in the community since its founding.
- 3.12 Explain how objects or artifacts of everyday life in the past tell us how ordinary people lived and how everyday life has changed. Draw on the services of the local historical society and local museums as needed.

### Grade 4

#### Concepts and Skills

##### History and Geography

3. Observe and describe national historic sites and describe their function and significance.

##### Economics

6. Define and give examples of natural resources in the United States.
7. Give examples of limited and unlimited resources and explain how scarcity compels people and communities to make choices about goods and services, giving up some things to get other things.

#### Learning Standards

##### Regions of the United States

4.11 Describe the climate, major physical features, and major natural resources in each region.

#### Grade 5

Concepts and Skills

History and Geography

1. Identify different ways of dating historical narratives (17th century, seventeenth century, 1600s, colonial period).

Learning Standards

5.6 Explain the early relationship of the English settlers to the indigenous peoples, or Indians, in North America, including the differing views on ownership or use of land and the conflicts between them (e.g., the Pequot and King Philip's Wars in New England).

The Political, Intellectual, and Economic Growth of the Colonies, 1700-1775

5.10 On a map of North America, identify the first 13 colonies and describe how regional differences in climate, types of farming, populations, and sources of labor shaped their economies and societies through the 18th century.

5.11 Explain the importance of maritime commerce in the development of the economy of colonial Massachusetts, using the services of historical societies and museums as needed.

A. the fishing and shipbuilding industries

B. trans-Atlantic trade

C. the port cities of New Bedford, Newburyport, Gloucester, Salem, and Boston

#### Grade 7

Concepts and Skills

History and Geography

1. Compare information shown on modern and historical maps of the same region.

2. Use correctly the words or abbreviations for identifying time periods or dates in historical narratives (decade, age, era, century, millennium, AD/CE, BC/BCE, c., and circa). Identify in BC/BCE dates the higher number as indicating the older year (that is, 3000 BC/BCE is earlier than 2000 BC/BCE)

4. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and describe how each kind of source is used in interpreting history.

5. Identify multiple causes and effects when explaining historical events.

#### Grades 8-12

Concepts and Skills

History and Geography

2. Identify multiple ways to express time relationships and dates (for example, 1066 AD is the same as 1066 CE, and both refer to a date in the eleventh or 11th century, which is the same as the 1000s). Identify countries that use a different calendar from the one used in the U.S. and explain the basis for the difference.

7. Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

8. Interpret the past within its own historical context rather than in terms of present-day norms and values.

10. Distinguish historical fact from opinion.

## Selected bibliography

Barrett, Tracy. *Growing Up in Colonial America*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1995.

Fuhrer, Mary. *Colonial Families of Newton, Mass: Research for Newton Public Schools Third Grade Curriculum Project*. 2006.

→ Read this at the Larner Library at Durant-Kenrick House (free admission with your MTA membership!)

Hinds, Kathryn. *Daily Living*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Focus, 2008.

Nardo, Don. *Daily Life in Colonial America*. Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2010.

Roberts, Russell. *Life in Colonial America*. Hockessin, Delaware: Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2008.

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Tunis, Edwin. *Colonial Living*. Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1957

## Online Resources

Morse Earle, Alice. *Home Life in Colonial Days*. 1898.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22675/22675-h/22675-h.htm>

Sweetser, Moses Foster. *King's Handbook of Newton, Massachusetts*. Newton: Moses King Corporation, 1889.

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Winslow, Anna Green. *Diary of Anna Green Winslow: a Boston school girl of 1771. 1759-1779*; Earle, Alice Morse, 1851-1911 ed.

<https://archive.org/details/diaryofannagreen1894wins>

Britannica Library

<http://library.eb.com/levels> *using your local library for access*

E-book released in 2007 for Project Gutenberg

Earle, Alice Morse. Life in Colonial Days. Originally published in 1898

Colonial Williamsburg

Provides information and activities for students, lesson plans and resource library for teachers

<http://www.history.org/>

Memorial Hall Museum <http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/>

Offers interactive activities, extensive images of artifacts, lesson plans and more

Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Inside This House, an 18<sup>th</sup> century house in Ipswich, MA

<http://amhistory.si.edu/house/default.asp>

Boston: 1775

History, analysis, and unabashed gossip about the start of the American Revolution in Massachusetts.

<http://boston1775.blogspot.com/>