

Vermont Historical Society Museum
Freedom and Unity: One Ideal, Many Stories

Focus Activity: For Your Students, during their Exhibit Tour

Choose One of the Following Focus Activities.

Please e-mail [Victoria](mailto:Victoria.Hughes@vermonthistory.org) your selection before the date of your visit. Your tour guide will lead the Focus Activity you choose. It will take place in a related exhibit space, and will last approximately 15 minutes.

1. Abenaki Daily Life

The land we now call New England had human inhabitants for perhaps 12,000 years before Europeans came. In the region that is now Vermont, the native people are called Abenaki – meaning People of the Dawn, because they dwelt in the east, where the sun rose.

Sitting in the authentic, reconstructed *kwiniwigwam*, or bark meeting house, students will examine the tools and materials used by the Abenaki people during the era of initial contact with traders and settlers in the 1600s.

2. Merinos to Mittens

In the early 19th century, Vermont saw a great “sheep boom.” Imported Merino sheep had thick, soft wool that brought great profit to Vermont’s farmers when marketed at the burgeoning woolen mills of New England.

Gathered near a mural depicting these early sheep farms, students will learn about the value of wool and its characteristics. They will be handling sheared, washed wool, and will try carding and spinning. Students will discuss who did this work in the early 19th century, as well as the knitting and weaving of garments.

3. Meaning in Morse Code

We are so used to exchanging instant messages, whether it is with a cell phone, e-mail, or a regular phone. Before these devices came along, messages could be sent by electric “telegraph.”

While visiting the railroad station master’s office, students will use a telegraph machine to learn the dots and dashes of Morse Code. Students will have the opportunity to send a message in Morse Code and translate a message from Morse Code.

Let us know your choice: e-mail victoria.hughes@vermonthistory.org or call (802) 828-1413