



**FOUR CENTURIES OF  
UNION COUNTY HISTORY  
Lesson Plan Packet**

**UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs  
633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202  
908-558-2550 FAX 908-558-2652 NJ Relay 711**

[culturalinfo@ucnj.org](mailto:culturalinfo@ucnj.org)

[www.ucnj.org/4c](http://www.ucnj.org/4c)

**THIS PACKET CONTAINS:**

- **Lesson Plan associated with historic sites in Union County**

**Bulletin Board Map Activity  
Time Line Activity  
Thematic Clustering Activity  
Thematic Clustering of Historic Sites (TC1-TC3)  
Family Life Activity  
Compare and Contrast Activity  
Passport/Time Traveler Certificate Activity  
Photo Sheets of Historic Sites (4)  
Teacher's Key  
Evaluation Form/return  
Glossary of Unfamiliar Words (G1-G6) Historic  
Site Information Sheets (27)**

- **Programs and Services of the Union County Office  
of Cultural and Heritage Affairs**

# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## Lesson Plan: Bulletin Board Map Activity

- Objectives:
- ◆ Make students aware of historic sites located in Union County.
  - ◆ Re-enforce map location skills.
  - ◆ Work cooperatively in small groups.

- Preparation:
- ◆ Photocopy the photo sheets of the sites and the Historic Site Information Sheets as needed.
  - ◆ Cut lengths of yarn or string.

### Procedure:

Separate the class into small groups to encourage cooperative learning practice. Divide Historic Site Information Sheets among the groups. Allow time (about 20 minutes) for the students to read the Sheets, cut out and match the photos with the sheets and find 3 important and interesting facts about each site.

Place the county map (provided) on the bulletin board. After the groups have completed their research, come together as a class. Allow each group time to locate their site on the map. Pin one end of a piece of yarn or string to that point and attach the other end on the picture of the museum and place the site photo on the bulletin board. Move from group to group until all the photos have been attached to the bulletin board. Class discussion about the historical significance of each site should follow.

# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## Lesson Plan: Time Line Activity

- Objective:** ♦ Make students aware of the passage of time by creating a linear graph that shows the development of Union County over four centuries – 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. This activity lends itself to team teaching with your school's art teacher.
- Preparation:** ♦ This activity may be an individual or group project. Photocopy the photo sheets of the sites and the Historic Site Information Sheets as needed.
- Not Included:** ♦ Contemporary photos of your school and other local buildings.

### Procedure:

Instruct the students to read the Historic Site Information Sheets and make a list of the historic sites by the century in which they were built. Have the students draw a long, thick line on a large sheet of plain paper or poster board.

Make segments along the line, the length of each segment proportionate to the number of buildings constructed in that century. Label the segments to indicate the centuries.

Ask the students to tape or glue the photos of the sites to their proper place along the Time Line. Glue or tape a picture of your school and other local buildings to the correct location on the Time Line to show the relationship of the past to the present day. Suggestion: students may bring in a photo or draw a picture of their own house and position it according to the year or approximate date it was built. You may wish to share this activity with your art teacher.

# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## **Lesson Plan: Thematic Clustering of Historic Sites (To be done in conjunction with the Time Line Activity)**

**Objective:** ♦To have the students think about, discuss and come to an understanding about the periods of Union County's history. The historic sites in the county are primary sources of history – the actual homes where people lived, worked and raised their families and the actual places where local significant historical events happened.

**Preparation:** ♦Have the students complete the Timeline Activity.

**Procedure:** ♦Divide the students into five groups and have each group research a Cluster time period. Instruct each group to study the following topics as they occurred in their assigned Cluster time period: architecture, education, clothing, fun and games and shopping for family needs. Students may collect photos or artifacts or may make drawings to represent their research.

After the groups have completed their research, lead them in a discussion about their findings. Compare the progress in each area of research with what happened in the next Cluster. Compare with what the students experience in their lives.

# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## Thematic Clustering of Sites

Thematic clustering creates context for four centuries of Union County history. The sites in each Cluster relate life and events during a particular time. By learning the history of each Cluster and by looking at them collectively, you will understand and appreciate life in Union County today.

As buildings were altered over the centuries to meet changing needs and styles, some sites appear in more than one Cluster in the Union County: Across the Centuries. Refer to the site name and number in the Union County: Across the Centuries and turn to the site's page to learn its location.

### EARLY ARISTOCRACY

1665-1812



The English government encouraged settlement of the new country through the sale of land grants. Many families, who had already emigrated from England, moved from Long Island and Connecticut to establish settlements throughout New Jersey.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Elizabethtown had grown into a prosperous community of seven or eight hundred inhabitants. Statesmen and leaders of the emerging nation and their families enjoyed life on estates in large houses surrounded by gardens and apple and peach orchards.

Get a glimpse of the birth of our nation and the aristocratic way of life by visiting: **Boxwood Hall, First Presbyterian Church; Bonnell Homestead & Belcher Ogden; Frazee House; Liberty Hall.**

### FARM LIFE

1686 – 1840



While the city life of Elizabethtown flourished, outlying areas were largely agricultural. One hundred fifty families tended 40,000 acres of farmland.

Life on the farm was demanding on all members of the family with tiring chores for the head of the household, the youngest of children and everyone in between. Farm families had to produce every necessity of life – shelter, food and clothing – while caring for their land, crops and animals.

Step inside authentic farmhouses and experience the challenges and rewards of life on an eighteenth century farmstead: **Dr. William Robinson Plantation; Woodruff House/Eaton Store; Salt Box Museum; Plainfield Meeting House; Carter House; Miller-Cory House Museum.**

## REVOLUTIONARY FRONT LINE

1763 – 1783



Everyday farm life was interrupted by skirmishes and battles between British and Colonial troops fighting for independence from England. While most people believed in the patriot cause, others (Loyalists or Tories) supported the King. After 1776, active Loyalists went to Staten Island, which was held by the British, or to Canada.

Driven by their desire for freedom, many men left their families and farms to join the Continental Army. Numerous raids, battles and skirmishes occurred throughout the area. The Battle of Connecticut Farms (in what is now Union Township) and the Battle of Springfield, both in June 1780, marked the close of the war in New Jersey.

Abraham Clark, farmer and self-educated lawyer, was a delegate to the Second Continental Congress, where he voted for and signed the Declaration of Independence demonstrating that leadership, even in Colonial America, did not depend on wealth or birth.

Learn about this troubled time in our nation's history by visiting: **Drake House; Abraham Clark House; Ash Brook Reservation; Osborn Cannonball House; Cannon Ball House; Caldwell Parsonage; The Connecticut Farms Church.**

## COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

1820 – 1920



Stagecoaches made regular trips along the King's Highway (St. Georges Avenue) and the Old York Road (Route 28). The Stage House Inn in Scotch Plains (still operating as a restaurant) and the Merchants and Drovers Tavern in Rahway were centers of commerce in the early 1800s, witnessing business transactions, elections, public meetings and entertainment.

The Elizabethtown area became a major manufacturing center and transportation corridor due to its proximity to New York and Philadelphia. Industries developed near water and rail to move their goods to major markets. Workers left farms for better paying jobs in towns and cities.

With the first railroad charter in 1830, the economic life of the county was greatly affected. Three major railroads ran through the county, opening farmland to developers. Horse-driven wagons and stagecoaches gave way to steam locomotives, accelerating the growth of towns and cities.

In the late 1800s, development of Hillside, Roselle Park, Kenilworth, Rahway and Linden flourished as industries attracted new workers. Housing was built nearby to accommodate the growing number of workers and their families.

The impact of early industry in Union County may be experienced by visiting: **the Deserted Village of Feltville-Glenside Park; Historic Fanwood Train Station Museum; Woodruff House/Eaton Store; Nitschke House; Merchants and Drovers Tavern; Union County Performing Arts Center; Roselle Park Museum.**

## **VICTORIAN RESORTS AND SUBURBS 1837 – 1920**



Rapid industrial growth in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave an emerging managerial class wealth and leisure time. Victorians idealized the rural life and city dwellers looked to the hills and farms of New Jersey for vacation accommodations.

In the 1880s, residents of New York City boarded trains to Plainfield, where they were guests at the city's five resort hotels. Executives of the Central Railroad of New Jersey saw the opportunity for development and promoted housing subdivisions in Plainfield, Fanwood, Westfield, Cranford, Roselle and Roselle Park. Summertime vacationers became year-round residents with twenty-two daily trains carrying them to and from the city.

Watchung Mountain communities served by the Morris and Essex Railroad were especially attractive vacation destinations. Summit contained lavish hotels catering to affluent visitors and, a short distance away, Glenside Park offered a rustic retreat. Eventually many of these vacationers built substantial houses in the "Hill City" and a suburban community was born.

The long reign of Britain's Queen Victoria influenced all facets of life and culture throughout the western world. The classical ideal gave way to the romantic. The picturesque and the complex replaced simplicity and balance. Passion, grandeur and lack of restraint were expressed in art, architecture and landscapes. Variety of color, material and design won favor.

Victorian architecture included a number of styles, each experiencing a short period of popularity during the forty-four years of the Queen's reign. Many examples of such residential architecture may be found throughout Union County.

Garden and cemetery planning was also influenced by the Victorian aesthetic. Park-like cemeteries contained a variety of funerary stones and monuments, often decorated with statues and other sculptural embellishments.

To learn more about the Victorian Era, visit: **Deserted village of Feltville-Glenside Park; Littell-Lord Farmstead, Crane-Phillips House; Evergreen Cemetery; Deacon Andrew Hetfield House; Drake House; Rahway School for "Colored" Children; Shady Rest Country Club; Reeves-Reed Arboretum; Summit Playhouse; Twin Maples; Reeves History & Cultural Resource Center.**

## FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

### Lesson Plan: Family Life Activity

To be completed in conjunction with the Time Line Activity.  
Refer to Thematic Clusters in the Union County: Across the Centuries.

- Objective:**
- ◆ Have students come to an understanding about the periods of Union County's history. The historic sites in the county are primary sources of history – the actual homes where people lived, worked and raised their families and the actual places where significant local events happened.
- Preparation:**
- ◆ Have the students complete the Time Line Activity.
- Procedure:**
- ◆ Divide the students into five groups and have each research a Cluster time period. Instruct each group to study the following topics during their assigned Cluster time Period: architecture, education, clothing, fun and games and shopping for family needs. Students may collect photos or artifacts or make drawings to represent their research.
  - ◆ After the groups have completed their research, lead them in a discussion about their findings. They might even put on a skit. Compare the progress in each area of research with what happened in the next Cluster. Compare with what students experience today.



# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## Lesson Plan: Compare and Contrast Activity

- Objective:**
- ◆ Have the students think about and express the relationship (similarities, differences) between one historic site described in the Historic Site Information Sheet and one building existing in their present day world.
- Preparation:**
- ◆ Photocopy the Historic Site Information Sheets as needed.
- Procedure:**
- ◆ This activity may be accomplished as a class activity or by students working independently. The activity may be expressed in any form desired – composition, visual art, poetry, etc.
- Examples:**
- Dr. Robinson House/student's doctor's office
  - Eaton Store/supermarket, convenience store
  - Miller-Cory House/student's house or apartment
  - Merchants and Drovers Tavern/hotel or motel

# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## Lesson Plan: Passport to Discovery Activity

- Objective:** ♦ To encourage students to personally experience historic sites in Union County.
- Reward:** ♦ **Time Traveler Certificate and Commemorative Patch** from the County of Union; completed **Passport** .
- Preparation:** ♦ Discuss FOUR CENTURIES IN A WEEKEND with the students and show them the book describing the history and locations of each historic site. Additional copies of UNION COUNTY: ACROSS THE CENTURIES booklet are available at each site or call the Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs at 908-558-2550.
- ♦ Passports will be available at each site
- Procedure:** ♦ Any student who visits historic sites during FOUR CENTURIES IN A WEEKEND, and has his/her Passport stamped at each of those historic sites, will receive a Time Traveler Certificate from the County of Union and a “I traveled Four Centuries in a Weekend” commemorative patch. The tear-off information page inside the Passport should be mailed to:

County of Union  
Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs  
633 Pearl Street  
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

# FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

## Photo Sheets

These photos are to be used with the

- Bulletin Board Map Activity
- Time Line Activity

*More Images are available at [www.ucnj.org/4C](http://www.ucnj.org/4C)*



**Deserted Village of  
Feltville-Glenside Park**



**Littell-Lord Farmstead**



**Dr. William Robinson Plantation**



**Crane-Phillips House Museum**



**Boxwood Hall State Historic Site**



**First Presbyterian Church  
of Elizabeth**

PHOTO SHEET No. 2 of 4



**Nathaniel Bonnell Homestead &  
Belcher-Ogden Mansion**



**Historic Fanwood Train Station**



**Evergreen Cemetery**



**Woodruff House  
Eaton Store Museum**



**Oswald J. Nitschke House**



**Deacon Andrew Hetfield House**



**Salt Box Museum**



**Drake House Museum**



**Plainfield Meetinghouse**



**Merchants and Drivers Tavern**



**Rahway School for Colored Children and the African American History & Heritage Center**



**Union County Performing Arts Center**



**Abraham Clark Memorial House**



**Roselle Park Museum**



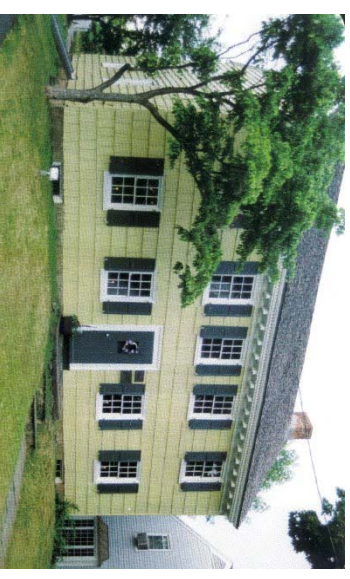
**Ash Brook Reservation**



**The Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House**



**Osborn Cannonball House**



**Cannon Ball House**



**Carter House**



**Reeves-Reed Arboretum**



**Summit Playhouse**



**Twin Maples**



**Caldwell Parsonage**



**The Connecticut Farms Church**



**Liberty Hall Museum**



**Miller-Cory House Museum**



**Reeve History & Cultural Resource Center**

FOUR CENTURIES OF UNION COUNTY HISTORY

Lesson Plan Packet Evaluation Sheet

The Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs is very interested in your impression of the Lesson Plan Packet. Please complete this form and return it to the Office at 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202 or fax to: 908-558-2652. Thank you very much.

Did you use the lesson plan with your class in its entirety?

Yes       No, only in part.

Please describe \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The **Four Centuries of Union County History** lesson plan contained sufficient information to cover the topics.

Yes       No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the students' response to each of the components of the lesson plan using a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.

Map Activity                      \_\_\_\_\_  
Compare/Contrast                \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Life Activity               \_\_\_\_\_

Time Line Activity                \_\_\_\_\_  
Passport Activity                 \_\_\_\_\_  
Thematic Clustering              \_\_\_\_\_

Which activity did you students enjoy most \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The material covered in the lesson plan complemented classroom curriculum.

Yes       No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did your students visit one or more sites as a result of this lesson plan?

Yes       No

Did you visit one or more sites as a result of this lesson plan?

Yes       No

Would you be interested in another lesson plan at some future time?

Yes       No

Suggested topics \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

General comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by (optional)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_