

HISTORIC NEWBURGH: A LOCAL HISTORY INVESTIGATION

By Kathy A.W. Voegel

GRADE LEVEL: Middle School

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8600 University Boulevard
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(812) 465-7014

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Submitted by
Kathy Voegel
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"The farther you look back, the farther you can see ahead"

OBJECTIVES

1. BY EXAMINING LOCAL HISTORIC SITES STUDENTS ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO "EXPERIENCE HISTORY." STUDENTS CAN TAKE A SECOND LOOK AT WHAT THEY LOOK AT EVERY DAY AND LETTING THEM SEE IT - REALLY SEE IT - FOR THE FIRST TIME.
2. BY UNDERSTANDING WHAT HE SEES PERHAPS THE STUDENT WILL SEE THE UNFAMILIAR IN THE FAMILIAR AND GAIN AN APPRECIATION AND CURIOSITY ABOUT THE UNKNOWN IN THE KNOWN. THIS APPRECIATION OF LOCAL HISTORY - IN THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE, THE PRESERVATION OF A COMMUNITY'S HERITAGE. STUDENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE THINGS THEY KNOW IN 1991 AND EXPERIENCE THOSE OF AN EARLIER PERIOD.

THIS PACKET HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS. THE MATERIALS ARE FLEXIBLE AND COULD BE USED WITH STUDENTS OF MANY DIFFERENT AGES. DEPENDING ON A TEACHER'S PREFERENCE OR PURPOSE THIS PACKET ON NEWBURGH, INDIANA CAN BE USED IN MANY WAYS. IT CAN BE USED AS A SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITY FOR ANTEBELLUM AMERICA OR POST CIVIL WAR SMALL TOWN "AMERICA." IT CAN BE USED AS AN ENRICHMENT PROGRAM TO STIMULATE CURIOSITY. STUDENTS CAN DESIGN TOPICS THAT INTEREST THEM. MORE SPECIALIZED ENRICHMENT TOPICS SELECTED COULD ENHANCE OUR STUDY OF NEWBURGH. THESE COULD BE INSTITUTIONAL HISTORIES (CASTLE JR. HIGH, ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH), ORAL HISTORIES, FAMILY HISTORIES

This study of Newburgh, Indiana can be used to make history class more meaningful and relevant to our students. History is a record of real people and their activities. Local historical investigation can be an avenue to "touch" those "real people." History after all is not the story of "great" men and "great" women. History is the story of ordinary men and women, who sometimes take extraordinary steps to meet the challenges they face.

By focusing on our local history we can reconstruct the past, measure progress or change over a period of time and analyze the cause and effects of events and actions of the people who lived in Newburgh, Indiana. Glenn Black describes Newburgh as a village somewhat different, from other parts of the state. Newburgh in the 1850's to the 1980's was the largest riverport between Cincinnati, Ohio and New Orleans.

Introduction:

Describe the bustling, energetic Newburgh - 50 years old in 1853 as described in the Warrick Democrat. Newburgh was an important shipping point on the Ohio River - at which "all bots, both large and small, stop to pick up or discharge freight and passengers...boats are arriving and departing almost every hour of the day."

List a few of the packet ships which made Newburgh a regular port of call on their way to New Orleans, Pittsburgh, or Louisville, Kentucky (the Lexington, Columbian, Bostona, Atlantis, Oregon, the Alexander Scott, and the Gem). Three of these packets were built in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

On January 18, 1851, the J.M. Niles "took on board, for New Orleans, about 1200 sacks of corn...every store-house in town is full of reight, awaiting shipment to New Orleans." The next day, the Lexington took "20 hogsheads of tobacco, 4 bannels of eggs, 800 sacks of corn; the Belle Key took 145 bannels of land, 322 sacks of corn, and two barrells of eggs; and the Lexington took 450 sacks of corn and delivered 12 casings of medicine from Louisville." From newspaper accounts most boats took on a "few head of cattle" at the same time as the other commodities. Nearly 17,000 pounds of "dressed" flax and 165 bushels of flaxseed were produced at nearby farms. Also entered on the ledger books was the entry of "6 pounds of silk cocoons!"

Calvin Frary, publisher of the Warrick Democrat, in his editorial comment on the town and it's future potential was enthusiastic. He estimated the population of Newburgh in 1850 "just short of six hundred" and the increase in business has been much greater." He also asserted in the editorial that "the business done in Newburgh during the business portion of the year...greatly exceeds that of any other town, of twice its size, in southern Indiana."

As we focus in our classroom on topics that each student wants to pursue the following general topics are given. The questions that follow suggest a wide range of direction for the "historian" or "researcher."

Family History

- Who were family members?
- How did the people meet who eventually formed a couple?
- What was the social and economic status of each member? Was there a difference? What was the effect?
- Was the courtship local or long distance?
- What were the roles of men and women in the family?
- How and by whom were decisions made? Did males and females have different areas of responsibility for decision-making?
- How was the birth of children spaced?
- Where were the children born?
- Draw a family tree
- What role did friends, neighbors, professional health care workers play in childbirth?
- Family portraits (harvest day, fiftieth wedding anniversary, church dedication, baptism...)
- How has child rearing changed and the roles of mothers and fathers changed over the years?
- What expectations were made and responsibilities given to teenagers?
- On what basis and at what age were teenagers considered to be adults?
- How did relationships between parents and children change as parents aged?
- What family crises occurred and how were they handled?
- Has the family had any dominant figures, superstars, outcasts? How are men and women viewed in this family?
- Who cared for the sick, aged, or dependent family members?
- What did family members look like?
- Were there any recurring physical characteristics (height, weight, complexion, or distinctive features) that made family members look alike?
- Did individuals or the family as a whole suffer from any chronic illnesses, or hereditary health patterns?
- Were "home remedies" commonly used or passed along through the generations?
- Where has the family lived?
- Who first migrated to the United States or to Newburgh?
- What country did your family come from?
- Do you have lots of relatives living in the same neighborhood or community?
- How did members of your family earn a living?
- How did the family's work change through the years? Did family members help each other in obtaining jobs or inheritance?
- Was agriculture a part of your family's history?
- Do your grandparents live on a farm, live in a small town, live in an urban area or in a subdivision?

A more telling description was that "\$120,000 to \$135,000 per year was being done by only three of the larger merchants.

There was "one pretty extensive clothing store, one clothing and dry goods store, two drug stores, two grocery and provision stores and a tinning and stove establishment." Newburgh also boasted of a "liberal proportion of enterprising and industrious mechanics, such as harness makers, saddlers, boot and shoe makers, wagon makers, coopers, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc..." There were two steam "flouring mills in operation which turned out "not less than 12,000 barrels of flour..." and the "steam saw mill" which was one of the best in the "western country." The Vincennes Sun even had an advertisement for the steam saw mill in 1853. The steam saw mill cut "1,500,000 feet of lumber" annually.

Houses and new business buildings were going up. The Central Plank Road from Newburgh to Boonville and Lynnville was under construction, and financed by private money raised largely in Newburgh. A charter was obtained in 1851 for "organizing a company to be called the Newburgh and Vanderburgh Railway Company." The Railway was to connect Newburgh with the Evansville and Illinois Railroad, at the nearest and most practicable point."

In 1852 there was a meeting of citizens to consider "the possibility and propriety of a survey and estimate of a branch of the Wabash and Erie Canal from Newburgh." Such a branch was estimated as being no longer than "five miles in length" and could be constructed at a cost which would "fall short of \$27,000." The good citizens of Newburgh urged for a branch of the canal because "six canal boats passed this place on Friday morning last, bound for Evansville - where boats are concentrating preparatory to the opening of the great canal." They probably felt that they would be isolated by the canal and the evidence of progress and prosperity floating away from them! The branch was not funded and just as well.

Newburgh had its own music school on the Ohio River. "Piano forte, guitar, etc ... is taught for \$10.00 a quarter, with an "additional charge of two dollars for the use of instruments by Mrs. Alicia Dunning. Students can look at photocopies of her ledger and music appointment book. She had students as far away as Lynnville, Chrisney, Grandview and Poseyville. Research on Mrs. Dunning will be given to two students who may use manuscript census to find more information. Students can track down where the lessons were given and take pictures. Students will post this material on the photo display and give their brief interpretation of facts.

The Delaney Academy in Newburgh was a very successful

school which held "regular five month sessions each beginning the 2nd Monday in February and September." The curriculum was made up of "Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Geography with the use of globes; English Grammar, History, and Composition; Mental and Moral Science, Mathematics, Astronomy; Chemistry and Natural Philosophy with the use of Apparatus; Greek and Latin Languages." A small fee and "good" boarding could be obtained in private families at \$1.75 to \$3.50 per week. Rev. Mr. Cowan was the master teacher credited on the handbill.

Students will make a time line with clothes line and string up dates on bulletin board along with example school papers from 1850, 1900, 1950 and 1990. Boonville diaries, Grandparent's grade cards, parents and present day report cards can be included. Historical inquiry by 2 students to be made to see just how curriculum compared. What subjects were most important? What was most important in that time period? How have things changed? How have things stayed the same?

Census information will give teacher's salary, Knox county teacher's contract 1850, 1900, 1950 and 1991! Many conclusions can be gained by looking at local education. What are some good or positive aspects of education in the 1850's - what are negatives for each time period?

Students become historians and try to use historical inquiry methods and investigative reporting to interpret what Historic Newburgh was like.

Castle Jr. High students, Boonville Jr. High and Tecumseh high students will join together in assisting with festivals in Newburgh, Boonville, and at Thresherman Park.

Castle Jr. High students will meet the second Tuesday of every month for the Civil War Roundtable held at the Library. Junior Historians will visit historic sites on weekend with reenactment group.

The Delaney Academy class photographs could also be used for historical inquiry by junior high students. By looking at photographs of 1870, 1930, 1960 and 1991 students can find clues as to personalities with a magnifying glass, economic circumstances and evaluate what is the same and what is different. Examples of historical investigation results would be comments like "black and white (camera sophistication), boys and girls, segregation, integration (races separate), no smiling, out of doors versus indoor shots." By being the researcher the student can become the interpreter. College yearbooks might also be of interest to students to compare extra curricular activities at the junior high level and putting them in historical perspective.

"Cotillion Parties" at Hazen's Hotel or at the Mr. Spitz Washington Hall" together with annual visits by Spaulding and Rogers Circus with performances given on a "Floating Palace - a Vast Amphitheater...with 100 arm chairs, 500 cushioned settees, and 1000 gallery seats..." provided entertainment. Comparing the entertainment of today, the Shrine Circus, Movie theatres, concerts given at Mesker Amphitheatre and the Delta Queen Paddleboat - linkage with the past is evident.

Also well attended in the Warrick Democrat reports were the "Lectures on Phrenology, Magnetism, Hypnotism, Homeopathic Medicine and debates with Herodic practitioners." The more exotic astrology was given by "Madam Casler." Political debates, semi-annual "exhibitions" by students at the end of the terms at Delaney Academy, and artist displays on the riverfront. Itinerant "daguerneotype artists" also put in an occasional appearance in Newburgh.

An extended view of Newburgh can be made to include historical research into:

Land Sale bill 1803 - John Sprinkle
take the Land Sale bill and look at the sale of land from the point of view of the indians and then look at the sale bill from the settler's perspective.
STudents can feel what Indians felt when land was taken away. Encourage a study of the Indian Removal Policy of Indiana and U.S. Government

Newburgh property tax statement can be studied to decode the legal description as provided for the stipulations of the Land Ordinance of 1785.
2 students could plot out Ohio Township and Boon Township

Mr. Don Baker of Newburgh Public Library will assist Castle Jr. High students learn interview techniques in making Oral History tapes for Warrick County residents and providing space for tapes in the Warrick County room.

How has changing technology affect your family? When and how did cars, refrigerators, telephones, radios, vacuum cleaners, televisions, microwave ovens, and so forth come into use, and what impact did they have in your family?

What kind of social activities did the family engage in? How did they participate in the community? How were holidays and special occasions observed? What were the attitudes toward people in the community of other religions, different ethnic or racial backgrounds, or lower and higher economic status?

What sort of educational training took place within your family?

What value did your family place on formal education?

Did expectations differ for boys and girls?

What level of schooling did family members achieve?

What schools did they attend?

Did they serve apprenticeships, undergo special training?

What do they remember about their teachers?

What was the nature and extent of military service by family members?

What did they do during WWI, WWII, Korean War, or Vietnam War?

Do they have experiences with defense plants, war information propaganda, rationing, price controls, war bond drives, and changes in the community?

How did wars disrupt their lives?

Did family members ever become involved in community activities, reform movements or local governments?

What are their attitudes toward politics, political parties, and prominent local, state, and national political figures?

What is their political outlook (conservative, moderate, liberal, radical?)

Do they or did they participate in party activities?

Think about a favorite old house or apartment building that is a part of your family's past. Or select a house or apartment building in Newburgh:

When approximately was the building built?

Who constructed the building?

What was its architectural style?

How many rooms did it contain?

Did the building have porches or balconies?

What are the dimensions of the house or of the rooms?

How was the building heated, cooled, and lit?

Did the building have fireplaces?

How was the property around the building used?

(farm, yard, garden, parking, business)

Who lived in the building?

Are there similar houses in the neighborhood?

Where did the residents go to work, shop for groceries, worship, seek entertainment or recreation, or go to the doctor?

What cultural institutions (museums, libraries, theatres, performing groups, broadcasting stations, and churches are found in Newburgh?

What religious groups and denominations have been present in the community?

How did Newburgh get its name?

What are the geographical features of the Newburgh community?

What are the boundaries of Newburgh?

What is the population found in the census?

1 student can prepare a graph showing the rise and fall of the population?

He can also prepare a narrative for the graph showing what events triggered population increases and declines

When did the town of Newburgh get electricity, telephones, surfaced roads? What transportation systems have served Newburgh? How has the transportation system affected population shifts?

What architectural styles have been predominant in Newburgh?

What factors have affected the location of commerce, industry government buildings

Has Newburgh been affected by juvenile delinquency, prohibition, strikes, civil rights and antiwar demonstrations, gambling, or white collar crime?

Primary Documents

Documents to help interpret our local history are letters, diaries, journals, and manuscripts. Newspapers, books, magazines, and pamphlets are printed primary sources. Marriage licenses and certificates can give factual and legal information. By experiencing history and interpreting the story based on real events, the students can also help gather and preserve rudimentary artifacts.

Photographs can look at a community like Newburgh through a camera lens. Compare and contrast Newburgh and neighboring Evansville. Students will ask themselves why Newburgh grew and then why did it decline in importance in Southwestern Indiana. Why did Evansville become the dominant city in Southwestern Indiana.

A history of Alcoa Operations in Warrick County may be written by a student who has an interest in the aluminum industry and access to individuals by virtue of a family member being employed on site.

On successive Saturday's students will take photographs and write narrative for a walking tour of Newburgh that highlights sites of interest for junior high students. Students will then prepare themselves for a future role as docents in Warrick County.

The students may also be interested in writing a narrative describing the growth and development of the suburb of Newburgh named "Paradise."

- What important institutions make up the neighborhood?
(parks, grange halls, VFW hall, churches, taverns,
libraries, schools, stores, country stores, malls,
hospitals, banks; others)
- What ethnic, religious, occupational, social and economic
groups are found in Newburgh?
- What has caused people to move into and out of the neighbor-
hood of Newburgh?
- How has the neighborhood changed (borders) in the last 50
years?
- What types of festivals, parades, celebrations or parties
are there in Newburgh?

Schools, Businesses, Churches

- When, how, and why was this institution formed?
- What kind of facilities, curriculum and extra-curricular
programs?
- How does the facility reflect community attitudes toward
education and the school system?

Students will interview and build a file on the background
of the building and development of Castle JR. High School.
Former school trustees, teachers, administrators will
give us a link to the past. The three Castle Schools
located in Paradise are extremely important to the
community. How did the history of the Castle feeder
system develop?

The 1937 flood affected Newburgh and the city of Evansville
because of their proximity to the Ohio River.
An aerial shot gives a different perspective of the
winding river and the comfortable river town we know
as Newburgh. A birdseye view of the town is a favorite
trip for students.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING

1. CALL OR WRITE TO THE INTERVIEWEE WELL BEFORE YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW. EXPLAIN YOUR PLANS AND PURPOSE OF YOUR PROJECT AND SET A FOR YOUR INTERVIEW.
2. GATHER AS MUCH BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSON AS YOU CAN AND FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF THOROUGHLY WITH THE TIME PERIOD YOU WILL BE ASKING ABOUT
3. OUTLINE YOUR MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST FOR YOUR INTERVIEW. BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR QUESTIONS. IF YOU CHOOSE TO WRITE OUT QUESTIONS BE FLEXIBLE
4. IF YOU PLAN TO USE A TAPE RECORDER, BECOME THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH ITS OPERATION. PRACTICE WITH SOMEONE BEFORE GOING TO YOUR INTERVIEW. PREPARE A KIT OF MATERIALS THAT YOU WILL WANT TO TAKE WITH YOU TO THE INTERVIEW: YOUR NOTES AND INTERVIEW OUTLINE, PENS AND PAPER, A NOTEBOOK, AN EXTENSION CORD, AND EXTRA TAPES.
5. BEFORE YOU GO TO THE INTERVIEW GIVE THE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION: NAME THE INTERVIEWER, THE RESPONDENT, THE DATE, THE PLACE AND THE SUBJECT OF THE INTERVIEW.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

AVOID ASKING QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ANSWERED WITH A SIMPLE YES OR NO. USEFUL LEADS INCLUDE: "WHAT LED UP TO...", "TELL ME ABOUT..." WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN..." AND " I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR OR KNOW ABOUT ..."

LISTEN

START WITH NONCONTROVERSIAL MATTERS, BUILD UP TRUST, SAVE MORE DELICATE TOPICS UNTIL GOOD COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.

ASK INTERVIEWEE TO LOOK THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER MEMORY-PRODUCING MATERIALS BEFORE THE INTERVIEW.

AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW, REPEAT THE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION, THE INTERVIEWER, THE RESPONDENT, THE DATE, THE PLACE AND THE SUBJECT OF THE INTERVIEW.

TAKE NOTES

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

SECURE THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE RESPONDENT TO USE THE TAPE AND THE TRANSCRIPTION.

TRANSCRIBE THE WORDS OF YOUR INTERVIEW.

RECORD THE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION IN WRITING ON A CARD TO BE PLACED IN AN INTERVIEW FILE. ON THE SAME CARD SHOULD BE A SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED, ALONG WITH THE TIME IN THE INTERVIEW WHEN DISCUSSION BEGINS.

STORE THE TAPE IN A PLACE WHERE IT CAN BE PRESERVED WITHOUT DAMAGE, LOW HUMIDITY AND TEMPERATURE THAT AVOIDS EXTREME HEAT OR COLD.

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