

PROGRAMS

Make history come alive with our interactive, immersive programs at Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center! Our programs connect the past and present for students in pre-K through high school through storytelling, hands-on activities, interactive lessons, and primary source investigation. Programs are led by experienced school docents and are customized for students of all ages and abilities.

KTM&HC offers both in person and virtual learning opportunities based on the core stories from our site. Students learn about local history in Ridgefield, Connecticut with connections to our national history – like the Battle of Ridgefield which was the only inland battle in Connecticut during the American Revolution. Programs also explore the larger themes of American society including race, gender, privilege, and opportunity. During onsite programs, students learn about the lives of the site’s past residents by visiting the rooms where they lived and by investigating primary source materials from our collections that pertain to everyday life at this site. Digital programs use live virtual interactions as well as the instructional technologies in Google Classroom to create interactive digital learning experiences.

Our school programs support the C3 Frameworks for Social Studies State Standards, Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks 2015, NY State Learning Standards, and Common Core Learning Standards.

"The Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center is not a field trip. It is an extension of my classroom. It is a vibrant, engaging, living curriculum that breathes the inquiry arc and C3 framework. All this, and it is local history. We are very lucky to be part of their program." –C. Petersen, Scotts Ridge Middle School, Ridgefield, CT

Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center In-Person School Programs

PROGRAM	PRE-K, K	1-3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12
Let's go to the Museum!	X					
Colonial Life		X	X	X		
Colonial Life Extension Activities		X	X	X		
Early Settlement	X	X	X			
The Battle of Ridgefield				X	X	X
The American Civil War <i>Focus on the home front and Ridgefield during the Civil War</i>				X	X	X
The Gilded Age <i>Ridgefield, the Gilberts, and the Gilded Age</i>					X	X
Race, Ridgefield, and the Resseguie Hotel <i>Examining 19th century race, gender, opportunity through the Arts and Historiography.</i>					X	X
Classroom Outreach: Colonial Life	X	X	X	X		
Classroom Outreach: The Battle of Ridgefield				X	X	X
Classroom Outreach: Ridgefield's 19th Century Inventors		X	X			
#HandsOnHistory: A rotating, interactive STEM exhibition of Museum artifacts during the month of October.	X	X	X	X	X	X

In Person School Programs

Elementary School Programs (PreK-6)

Through living history programs, students meet and interact with costumed interpreters portraying the residents of the Keeler Tavern during 18th century.

Let's go to the Museum!

Museum visit for our pre-school and kindergarten students that includes a walk through the tavern with a costumed docent, a lesson on museum manners, and provides opportunities for students experience colonial life. Tour can be tailored for students up through 2nd Grade.

Colonial Life Program

Esther's Kitchen & Timothy's Tavern

Meet Esther and Timothy Keeler, owners of the Keeler Tavern, as they introduce students to family and community life in Early America. Students make connections between life in Early America and the present day as they explore Esther's kitchen and help her prepare her herbs for a variety of uses, while Timothy introduces students to his tavern and post office, the center of town life.

Extension Activities for this program engage students through hands-on learning. The following activities can be combined for a unique experience depending on interest, time and season: colonial outdoor games or Tavern games; colonial dance; quill pen writing; embroidery; ice harvesting; story of enslaved Africans with a historic interpreter; period farm tools to learn about the planting cycle and dairy farming (STEM); early ledgers to learn about the interdependent economy that shaped colonial town life (STEM). Students can also debate whether or not to join the Revolution in the very same Assembly Room in which the citizens of Ridgefield would have discussed this issue!

Early Settlement Program

Students will learn about early 18th century life using Ridgefield as an archetypal New England town. Historic maps of Native American settlements, early European settlements, and Connecticut on the eve of the Revolutionary War will be compare to modern maps as students discuss the importance of natural resources. Students will also engage with costumed interpreters to participate in a bartering game, learn about the process of Ridgefield's settlement, and interact with a Native American interpreter. The principles of economics and geography are woven throughout the program to engage students in interdisciplinary learning.

Middle and High School Programs

Local history programs help students develop a sense of place and connection to their community. Local history is a powerful window onto the national stage - introducing students to national events that affected their own communities.

The Battle of Ridgefield

The Battle of Ridgefield, on April 27, 1777, was the only inland battle in Connecticut during the Revolution. To answer the question, "Who was victorious in the Battle of Ridgefield?", students meet and interact with six protagonists from the Battle of Ridgefield and study primary and secondary source documents, including letters, maps and newspapers. They also learn about field medicine and the challenges of war in the 18th century.

The American Civil War: Ridgefield during the Civil War

Anna Marie Resseguie kept detailed diaries of her life at the Resseguie Hotel (previously the Keeler Tavern) during the Civil War years. Students meet Anna Marie and five other protagonists to discover how the Civil War affected those at home in Ridgefield. They study primary source materials to learn about the Civil War's impact on Ridgefield and the nation. Through hands-on exploration of artifacts in the historic carriage barn, they learn about life on the home front during the war.

The Gilded Age: Ridgefield, the Gilberts, and the Gilded Age

Famous architect Cass Gilbert (credits include the Woolworth Building and the U.S. Supreme Court building) was the last noteworthy resident of the Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center property. He and his wife Julia moved into what he called the "Cannon Ball House" in 1907 and became active citizens of Ridgefield. Through studying the lives and contributions of these and other Ridgefield residents, students will discover how their own community's history exemplified aspects and challenges of the nation's industrial age.

Race, Ridgefield, and the Resseguie Hotel

Students watch a play and participate in dialogues, writing workshops, and lessons in historiography across the museum's 4 acre campus. The play, SISTERS, is based on the real-life stories of two women - one white and one black - who lived in the mid-19th century at the Resseguie Hotel (now the site of Ridgefield's Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center). It exposes the raw disconnects between "sisters" whose relationship was forever skewed by one of them having to live under a completely different set of rules, due solely to the color of her skin. *Please contact the museum for availability – education@keelertavernmuseum.org.*

CLASSROOM OUTREACH

Programs run one period (45 minutes) and are designed to be presented to one classroom with the exception of "The American Revolution and the Battle of Ridgefield" which can be presented as a large group lecture.

Colonial Life

In this outreach program, school program docents in costume lead students in examining artifacts from colonial times to learn more about life during that time period. Students also learn about the use of herbs and spices in everyday life through a sensory exploration of the most common herbs and spices used by colonial people. Additionally, docents will explain colonial clothing while dressing one boy and one girl in authentic colonial outfits.

The American Revolution and the Battle of Ridgefield

Students learn about the causes of and events leading up to the Revolutionary War and the Battle of Ridgefield. This classroom outreach program is customized according to the teacher's request. Possibilities including a whole-class presentation or small-group work on primary sources.

Ridgefield's 19th Century Inventors

Museum educators will challenge students to think like "history detectives" as they learn about two brothers in Ridgefield and how they exemplified 19th century inventors. Students will look at patents and handle real historic inventions. This program was designed in partnership with local teachers to support the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks for 3rd grade.

HANDS ON HISTORY & STEM

Exhibits rotate annually in October. Please contact the museum for more information on this year's exhibit. These programs adhere to the National Academy of Science's recommendations for out-of-school STEM experiences.

"Living off the Land" – Farming Practices

Through hands on activities, learn about historic farm tools and implements used in all stages of food production: preparing the soil, planting the seeds, tending the fields, harvesting the crops, and the final processing for food or animal feed. See how people harnessed the power of simple machines to engineer devices to reduce time and labor and increase yields.

"It Takes a Village" – 18th + 19th Century Trades and Village Life

Using the museum's collection of early daybooks and ledgers used to record cash and barter transactions, students explore STEM concepts in an historical setting with an emphasis on money, math, and merchants. Students will take a walk down Main Street through the exhibit to see how interdependent economies worked.

"Threading the Needle: From Field to Fabric" – Story of Textiles in Connecticut

From the shearing of sheep to the growing flax, follow the story of how innovative Connecticut people used natural resources to clothe themselves. STEM focused activities in the exhibit look at the chemistry of dyeing and the geometry of weaving during the 18th century.

Virtual School Programs

Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center Virtual School Programs

Interactive Virtual Learning (IVL) programs are a great way to engage with our stories when students cannot physically visit our site. Homeschool groups and learning pods are encouraged to book these programs as well.

PROGRAM	PRE-K, K	1-3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12
So you want to work in a Museum?	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colonial Life <i>Compare life in the 18th century to today.</i>		X	X	X		
Colonial Life Extension Activities		X	X	X		
Battle of Ridgefield <i>Brings the story of the American Revolution to life.</i>				X	X	X
Race, Ridgefield, and the Resseguie Hotel <i>Examining 19th century race, gender, opportunity through the Arts and Historiography.</i>					X	X
#HandsOnHistory: It Takes a Village <i>Explores interdependent economies in the 18th and 19th century.</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X

So you want to work in a Museum?

Many young learners participate in “career day” or other similar programs to help them understand their community while older students are encouraged to think about their future job possibilities. Join a museum educator in the historic tavern for a live virtual discussion about the role of a museum in your community and what it is like to work there. Students will have ample time to ask questions not only about work but also about the history of the site. *(This program is designed for 20 minutes of presentation with 15 minutes of Q&A.)*

Colonial Life

Curious to compare life in the 18th century to life today? Join our museum educators on a virtual field trip that explores life at the historic Keeler Tavern. Famous for the cannonball from the American Revolution still lodged in the building today, the tavern was a center point for life in the colonial town of Ridgefield, Connecticut. Students will interact through Google Meet or Zoom with a costumed interpreter presenting from inside the tavern’s kitchen. Through storytelling, maps, objects, and modern technology, students will learn all about how life in the colonial period was different – and similar – to life today.

Lesson plans, a pre-recorded tour, and extension activities are available on our website. Lessons and worksheets are also available in Spanish and can be requested by emailing education@keelertavernmuseum.org

(Recommended for grades 3-5. This program is designed to run 45 minutes: 20 minutes of presentation, 15-minute tour of the historic kitchen, and 10 minutes for Q&A.)

Colonial Life Extension Activities

This program is an experiential learning opportunity to augment the *Colonial Life IVL Program*. Teachers are able to order supplies for two activities, quill pen writing and making a herbal sachet, and can opt to book a live virtual session with a museum educator or lead the activities themselves. With the museum educator, students will learn

about the history and making of quill pens and see primary sources where the quill was used. The museum educator will also talk about culinary and medicinal uses of herbs during the 18th century while guiding students in making their sachets.

(This program is recommended in tandem with Colonial Life and runs for 45 minutes with a museum educator.)

Battle of Ridgefield

The *Battle of Ridgefield* brings the stories of the American Revolution to life – in the place where it happened! Lauded as the only inland battle in Connecticut, the Battle of Ridgefield left its mark on the Keeler Tavern quite literally – there is a cannonball from British cannons still stuck in the house to this day. This interactive virtual learning program includes details on the burning of Danbury and the actions of Benedict Arnold share from the Assembly Room of Keeler Tavern. The program is lead by a costumed educator using primary sources from the museum’s collection to bring the battle to life and challenge students to consider the benefits of staying loyal to England along with the costs of fighting for independence.

We recommend that teachers use the pre-visit QFT activity so that the presenter can craft the program around student questions and curiosity as well as their pre-knowledge about the American Revolution. Request this Google Forms activity by emailing education@keelertavernmuseum.org Additional resources for pre- and post- program activities are available on our website at: <https://keelertavernmuseum.org/education/history-at-home/>

(Recommended for grades 5-12. This program is designed to run 45 minutes.)

Race, Ridgefield, and the Resseguie Hotel

This program has synchronous and asynchronous components to enable students and teachers to engage with the difficult history of race. Students watch a pre-recorded play, SISTERS, based on the real-life stories of two women - one white and one black - who lived in the mid-19th century at the Resseguie Hotel (now the site of Ridgefield’s Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center). The play exposes the raw disconnects between “sisters” whose relationship was forever skewed by one of them having to live under a completely different set of rules, due solely to the color of her skin. Virtual lessons on historiography using key historical figures represented in the play, including John Brown and Harriet Beecher Stowe, help students uncover biases in the writing of our nation’s history. A live virtual lesson with a museum educator ties all the information together using objects and documents from the museum’s collection that pertain to the women who lived at the Resseguie Hotel and who are the main characters of the play. *Please contact the museum for availability – education@keelertavernmuseum.org.*

#HandsOnHistory: It Takes a Village

Every fall the historic barn at Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center comes to life with an exhibit using our collection of historic trades tools! *It Takes a Village* is an exhibit that explores the economy of Main Street in Ridgefield through the 18th and 19th century. Using maps, images, and tools from our collection which are featured in the exhibit, a museum educator walks students through a presentation on the interdependent economy of a New England town. Students will explore the popular myth of farms being self-sustainable and self-supporting by looking at the myriad of trades – from blacksmith to cordwainer – that were needed to keep a community thriving.

(Recommended for grades 3-5 but can be adjusted for older grades. This program runs for 60 minutes.)

RESERVATIONS

Phone: 203-438-5485

Email: education@keelertavernmuseum.org

Reservations are required for all groups and must be made at least 4 weeks in advance.

KTM&HC requires two weeks' notice for any changes to your scheduling. Cancellations must be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled field trip. There is no charge if your program is cancelled due to weather or unforeseen technical problems.

PROGRAM LENGTH

School programs last from 45 minutes to 4 hours, depending on the program chosen and whether or not extension activities are added. Programs can be tailored to individual needs and requirements. Please contact our education staff for more information – we'd love to be a resource for your classroom!

FEES

In-Person School Programs -

45 minute program: \$8/student.

3-4 hour program (all day): \$20/student.

Classroom Outreach Program: \$50/period, mileage contingent.

Teachers **FREE**; one adult chaperone per 10 students free for all programs.

Please note, due to the size of the historic rooms, we cannot host more than 4 adults per classroom.

Interactive Virtual Learning Programs –

45 minute lesson: \$75

Fees for extension activity supplies: \$5 per student

Please note that larger school groups (over 50 students) will need to book multiple IVL lessons.

Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center strives to provide equitable access to all our programs. Please contact us for more information on our Title 1 Initiative.

CONTACT US

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