



Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

Corn Husk Dolls

School: Veterans Memorial School
Subject: American History

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Grade: K-6

Introduction:

Because I teach the Kids Come First Before and After School Program, I thought a lesson that I would be able to do with my students who are in grades K-6 would involve arts and crafts. In this lesson, we will be making corn husk dolls. This would address the Massachusetts Frameworks strand 3.12 which states that children in the third grade should know that objects of everyday life in the past tells us both how ordinary people lived and how life has changed. Teaching this lesson also uses what I have learned about colonial times during this course from such sites as the Saugus Iron Works and the Wenham Museum.

Objectives:

- Students will understand that toys could not be mass produced and purchased at stores as they are today and that they had to be made by hand from whatever materials were available.
- Students will be able to create a corn husk doll similar to those made by children in colonial times.

Materials:

- String
- Scissors
- Bucket of water
- Corn husks (fresh or dried, cleaned, and or relatively same size)
- Some small scraps of cloth [optional]

Procedure:

1. Soak dried corn husks in water until soft.
2. Give each student some string and about ten husks.



Sample Corn Husk Doll



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3. Put four husks together with the straight ends at the top. Using string, tie the straight ends together near the top then trim and round the edges with scissors.
4. Turn the husks upside down so the tied end is at the bottom, pulling the long ends over the tied end. Tie another string an inch from the top to form a head.
5. Roll another husk into a tight cylinder, tying a string around each end for the arms. Put the cylinder through the long husks just below the neck then tie another string under the part where the arms are to form a waist.
6. Criss-cross a husk around each side of the arms and neck to form shoulders.
7. Put four husks with straight edges together around the waist to form a skirt and then tie another string around the waist to hold the criss-crossed pieces and the skirt together on the doll.
8. To make legs for a boy doll, gather two husks from the skirt for each leg, tying strings around the thighs, the knees, and the ankles.
9. Finish by tying small strips of husk around the neck and waist to hide the string. You may use small scraps of cloth to dress the dolls.

Evaluation:

The goal is for the students to produce a finished doll so they will be evaluated on whether or not they actually finish the project. It doesn't matter how the doll looks or if it is done correctly. The experience of making the doll is what is important in this case.

References:

The website I used is: <http://www.teachersfirst.com/summer/cornhusk.htm>.