



## Teach Local History

### Your Connection to Education

New York State curriculum includes local history in second and fourth grades. Students explore local history through Flat Stanley projects in second grade and go into more depth in fourth grade. These are some ways you can become involved:

#### Begin by:

- ◆ Talking with elementary teachers about how you can help them present local history to their students.
- ◆ Asking teachers what they would like from you.
- ◆ Giving teachers your ideas and providing your contact information.

### For Second Grade Students:

Second graders may end the year with a Flat Stanley project. Flat Stanley is a character in a popular series of books written by Jeff Brown. Students color and cut out a Flat Stanley image to take to the place they choose to learn about. Some students take a “selfie” with Flat Stanley at the location as they find answers to a set of questions they submit for their project. Flat Stanley can also be used to connect children around the world.

To assist the teacher with a Flat Stanley project you:

- ◆ Might visit the school to talk with the students about some of the places they can take Flat Stanley, giving them some history about the different locations to stimulate their interest.
- ◆ Can tell them they can always visit your office for help answering the assignment questions. You can prepare for their visits by researching the answers ahead of time and having enough responses so each child doing the same location doesn't submit the same responses.
- ◆ Can provide photos of how the place looked in the past.
- ◆ You can develop interesting programs to take to the class room that focus on local history or present the information at your office, library, or local museum.
- ◆ Give a copy of your answers about a location to that location. For example give the Police department the answers you compiled so they can use them for students who visit them.

For more information about Flat Stanley see: <https://www.flatstanley.com/about>

### Fourth Grade Students:

You may be asked to present a local history topic to one or more fourth grade classes. The teacher may have a specific topic in mind that supports a scheduled lesson or you may be asked to suggest a topic.

In either case be sure to ask:

- ◆ How long the presentation/"lesson" should last?
- ◆ What format is preferred? For example, a casual conversation, a PowerPoint presentation, a hands-on demonstration, or a combination.
- ◆ What type of equipment do you need to bring? For example, can you bring a flash drive containing a PowerPoint or images to display on the classroom white board or do you need to bring your own laptop.
- ◆ What the procedure is for entering the school building.

**Note:** If your town has a Museum or Youth library program, you may be able to use the presentation/lesson in combination with one of their programs to reach a broader audience.

### Some examples of programs for fourth graders are:

- ◆ One-room schools—what they looked like inside, the books used, games played at recess, rules, transportation to school, etc.
- ◆ A "Then and Now" of what the community looked like.
- ◆ A comparison of General stores to today's grocery stores—what they looked like, the goods they sold, etc.
- ◆ After-school and summer activities of children their age compared to 50-100 years ago.
- ◆ Maps of the community showing the changes; roads, housing developments, business districts, placement of schools, etc.
- ◆ Early farms and small businesses of 100 years ago.
- ◆ Examples of how technology changed the muni; electric lights, indoor plumbing, the automobile, cable television, etc.
- ◆ The ever-popular major event or disaster.

### Middle and High School Students:

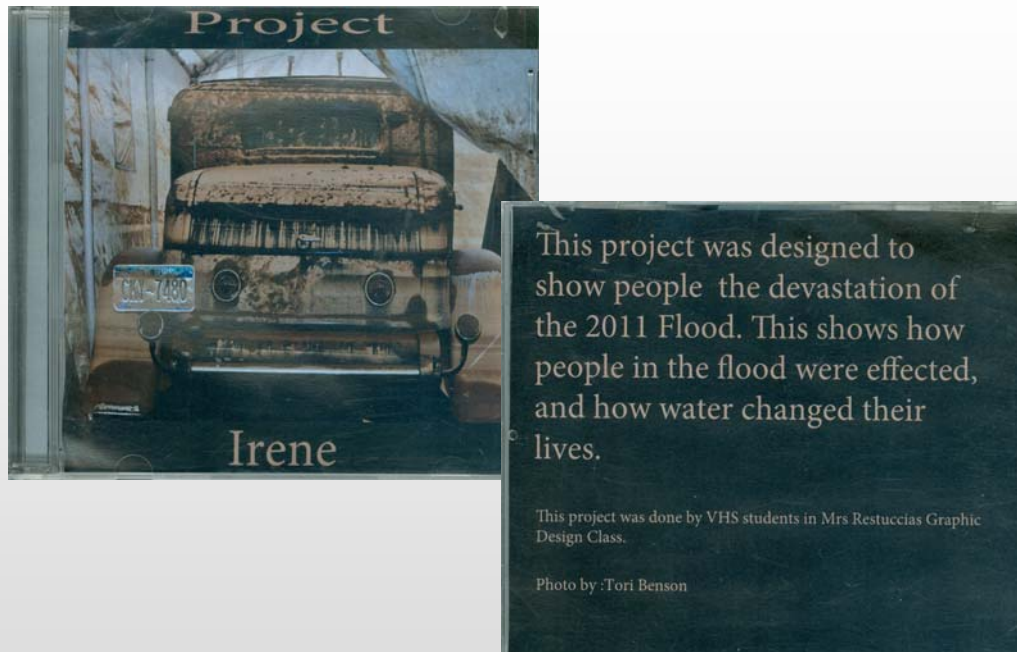
Although local history may not be part of the curriculum of middle and high school, there are opportunities to incorporate local history into other courses such as media, government, engineering, art, and the humanities by teaching students how to:

- ◆ Conduct oral histories.
- ◆ Research a property.
- ◆ Develop a project for re-using a historic property.
- ◆ Begin family history research.

Good communication with your municipal school district will open opportunities to keep local history in the curriculum.

### Other Possible Connections:

Ask whether your school has a history club or participates in activities that involve historical aspects of the community. Clubs, scouts, and church volunteer groups may conduct cemetery tours, research veterans, or assist at the local museum. These are opportunities for you to introduce local history to students of all ages.



Student oral history project.