

Local History in the Classroom

A beginning guide for Dan River Region teachers and historical organizations



About History United:

History United is a community coalition dedicated to promoting understanding of a shared past through collecting and curating local stories of the Dan River Region. Creating a future for our past, History United inspires the Dan River Region community in telling our stories and weaving an inclusive narrative.

Why bring local history into your classroom?

Enliven the past for your students

Engage with your community

Create relevance for our present lives

How History United can help

Connect historical organizations, libraries with teachers and students

Support collaborative projects that highlight local history for students

Identify local history resources and partners

Teachers How to get started:

1. **Connect with History United**
 - a. Attend a History United meeting to find out about local history resources
2. **Think about the structure** of your curriculum
 - a. What are the state's education guidelines?¹
3. **Explore** relevant local stories that will inform important themes, topics and concepts according to state guidelines
4. **Identify the stories** that bring relevance to the material you will cover in class
 - a. Develop a national and local timeline for the material ²
 - b. Engage with one or more historical organizations to help provide primary materials, historic tours, or a collaborative project that dovetails with the local history you cover in your class
5. **Allow students to reflect** on local and present day relevance
6. **Bask in the glory** of having engaged students with history.

Organizations How to get started:

1. **Connect** with History United
 - a. Attend a History United meeting to meet area teachers
2. **Think** about the local story or stories your organization tells best
 - a. How can students not only learn this story, but also help you tell it?
3. **Identify** archives, programs or other resources that teachers could use in their classrooms
 - a. Provide finding aids, guides for these resources to local teachers
4. **Bask in the glory** of having the next generation know & appreciate local history.

¹ <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/state-standards>

² <http://www.historyunited.org/timeline>

For example:

Let us take a typical 11th grade US History Class in Virginia that follows this standard:

VUS.1 Indicator / Standard The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to:

State Standard/Indicator/objective	Question	Community Partner	Classroom
VUS.1a) Indicator: Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art to increase understanding of events and life in the United States	How did soldiers from Pittsylvania County experience the Civil War? What do their local stories tell us about the national consequences of the Civil War?	Danville Historical Society: Civil War letters of Confederate Pvt. Joseph Payne to his wife Delphia Jane Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read/transcribe letters in contrast with a Yankee soldier's diary or letters home. Students use letters as primary source material for a research paper.

Or let us take a typical 11th grade US History Class in North Carolina that follows this standard:

NC.3. Course / Competency Goal: African American Studies The learner will demonstrate an understanding of African American life and cultural contributions through 1860.

State Standard/Indicator/objective	Question	Community Partner	Classroom
3.04. Competency Goal / Objective: Identify the contributions of African Americans in science and the arts.	In what ways did African Americans thrive in the US before the Civil War?	Thomas Day House: Explore the life of free black craftsman in Milton, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students tour the Thomas Day House Students explore online exhibits³, other resources & write brief paper re: how Thomas Day's craft boosted his social prominence in Milton.

³ <http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/online/day/>

Local Resources

Local organizations, programs

Organization	Historical subjects	Other Resources & notes
Caswell County Historical Association and Richmond-Miles Museum http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ncccha/	History of Caswell County; tobacco; genealogy; local artist Maud Gatewood; slavery; military history	Contact for tours of historic Yanceyville Courthouse
Danville Historical Society www.danvillehistory.org	Archives of Danville history; community programs	Guided walking tours of historic neighborhoods, such as Millionaire's Row and Holbrook Ross ⁴ ; extensive photography collections from mid-twentieth century Danville; Annual Holiday Tour of Historic Homes
Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History www.danvillemuseum.org	Civil War history; African American experience	Controversial Confederate Flag Monument; history research library; Camilla Williams collection
Danville Public Library www.readdanvilleva.org	Houses Danville newspaper archives (microfilm); Genealogy	Ancestry.com subscription, extensive & free classes on genealogical research
Danville Science Center dsc.smv.org	local rail history	Located in old train station
Gunn Memorial Public Library http://www.caswellcountync.gov/library	Genealogy	Ancestry.com subscription
High Street Baptist Church	Central in Danville Civil Rights Movement	Not currently a museum, but they do have collections; contact HU for info.
Langhorne House www.facebook.com/pages/Langhorne-House	Birthplace of the first woman in British Parliament, Nancy Astor & early 20 th century cultural icon Gibson Girl Irene Langhorne Gibson	Tours of the historic house
Pittsylvania County Historical Society http://www.pittsylvaniahistoricalsociety.org	Archives of Pittsylvania County history; Native-American history; Revolutionary War; Civil War	Involved in the Tobacco Barn Preservation Project led by Preservation

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFYHM1iwFxY>

		Virginia ⁵ ; sometimes lead bus tours of historic sites
Pittsylvania Public Library System & History Research Center and Library http://hc.pcplib.org	Genealogy; oral histories of Veterans, tobacco industry	Ancestry.com subscription, assistance with genealogical research
Schoolfield Museum www.facebook.com/pages/Schoolfield-Museum-Cultural-Center-Schoolfield-Preservation-Foundation	History of the Schoolfield mill village and community	House extensive archives of unindexed materials
Simpson Funeral Museum simpsonfuneralmuseum.com	History of funeral practices	One of two funeral museums in the United States
Tank Museum www.aaftankmuseum.com	Tank and War Memorials	
Thomas Day House www.thomasdayhouse.org/	History of free black craftsman in antebellum South, Thomas Day; slavery; industry	Tours feature Thomas Day furniture and woodworking shop
Wendell Scott Foundation http://www.wendellscott.org/timeline/	Legacy of Danvillian Wendell Scott, first African American inducted into the NASCAR hall of fame.	No known museum. Contact HU for archive info.

⁵ <http://preservationvirginia.org/programs/tobacco-barns-protection-project>

Online Resources

Local and national resources to bring local history in the community

Resource	Historical subjects	link
Danville/Pittsylvania County Virginia History	Facebook group for discussions/sharing of local history (must request to join)	https://www.facebook.com/groups/158450560896824/
Doing History	Great site that answers questions about finding primary sources in the community, how to use these sources with students and connecting a local narrative with a larger national story.	http://doinghistory.org/site/?page_id=159
History United	Narrative histories of the region told by everyday people	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvIR9qya4aPcPvD11c6OqfA
History United	Timeline of local history	http://www.historyunited.org/timeline
Library of Congress-Teaching Resources	Teaching resources for local history	http://www.loc.gov/teachers/additionalresources/relatedresources/ushist/special/local.html
Photo History of Pittsylvania County, Va	Facebook page that shares memorabilia of Pittsylvania County history	https://www.facebook.com/pcvaph15
Sounds Around Virginia	Local history and culture; tobacco; railroads; architecture; Civil War; textiles; African-American history; prominent figures	https://www.youtube.com/user/visitdanvilleva
Teaching History	overall great resource for project ideas, teaching methods & classroom content	http://teachinghistory.org
Teaching Tools For Local History	Massachusetts Studies Project with local history resources/ideas for class instruction	http://www.msp.umb.edu/LocHistoryTemplates/