

The Youth Preservation League

In the town of Madison, Indiana, the Mayor's Office started an initiative in 2000 called the Mayor's Eagles in partnership with Edward Eagleston Elementary School, known locally as the Eagles, using the historical expertise of Historic Madison, Inc., and the resources of the Madison Public Library. Through this program staff of Historic Madison, Inc., Junior Preservation League introduces students to historic preservation, architecture, and Madison's built environment. Students tour historic buildings and, through a look-and-learn approach, are introduced to the many facets of historic preservation. This non-traditional way to look at Madison's architecture and design integrates creative activities to create fun and interesting ways of learning about old buildings and encourages the community to develop pro-civic attitudes and actions in youthful citizens. The students meet every fortnight after school in the spring when they walk out of their classroom and into their community to investigate, learn, and share the results of their investigations.

Historic Preservation

Educators ask their students to use inquiry to learn about the past, and students conduct investigations that allow them to experience analysis in antiquity. Students gather information from photographs to aid in their investigations of historical questions. Students use photographs, quarters of photos, skills, and direct experience to investigate history.¹ Each of these attempts at inquiry seek to encourage and develop social studies skills that will bolster democratic citizenship. Students start investigations to explore their world. The knowledge they gather helps them to compile information about how citizens live and work in the world.

Students use historical evidence when they are investigating the past. The students, swimming in a culture defined by popular media images, think about questions of evidence to find out about a time different from their own. Educators have studied upper elementary students to determine how the students think about historical evidence, how that evidence conflicts with images they see in media, and how issues relate to history.² Many of these investigations have depended upon students using primary sources in their interpretation of historical evidence. Students did not just examine the Hellenistic idea of beauty equaling goodness as defined by a popular media culture when looking at historical evidence. Instead, educators have provided students with many different primary source experiences to interpret, including photographs, diaries, family records, census data, and letters.³ Yet primary sources have not been the only way to study the past. Students did not just look at sources to determine if they are familiar to their popular culture, thereby selecting only comfortable evidence. Educators have succeeded in using oral history to analyze the past.⁴ And students have applied historical thinking to tasks linked to contemporary problems and situations. Regardless of the evidence used, educators expect historical thinking to be the outcome of the investigation. The possibilities for historical thinking lead down many roads, but some commonalities describe some aspects of historical thinking, including: the purpose for civic education, the primacy of analysis based on evidence, observation, deduction, and historical decision making.⁵ In a democracy, citizens need to look beyond the superficial, beyond the beautiful images of a popular media culture, and use evidence to determine truth behind the facade. The analysis the students perform by peeling away the obscuring veil of superficiality and examining evidence makes them more sophisticated learners, members

of media markets, and more complex thinkers. By using their historical thinking in examining source material, students apply their knowledge to historical situations and contemporary problems that require a thinking citizenry.

Students thus use the built environment as a method for learning social studies. The built environment, an artifact from the past utilized by the present, provides students with a physical connection to the past. Students can use their school site, create iconic representation through model-building, or look at transportation corridors when working with the built environment.⁶ When students use the built environment to study the interactions of these structures and the present-day problems faced by the owners of the structures, the students encounter a vivid array of modern societal issues. All of these build environments are artifacts on the landscape. Many educators use artifacts to help students think about the past, and educators use individual buildings as artifacts.⁷ Students use these artifacts to explore questions about the past and present-day situations similar to other situations citizens face in society. The architecture of individual buildings makes up the composite built environment in neighborhoods and communities. The architectural significance of buildings individually or blended into neighborhoods serve as a source of data in social history, or the students gather a sense of place from multiple media experiences.⁸ Citizens need to have a sense of place where they call home prior to being able to define other people at that place as having meaning to them. Once they have defined a place as their own, and defined a group of people as having common interests with their own, then they can start working for the common good. Hopefully, student find historic structures important enough to value preserving them.⁹ Educators still have major work ahead of them to define the importance of preservation education

and the lessons students should learn from this area in terms of citizenship education.

However, students develop creative thinking skills successfully when they use the built environment. The students can also use these developed skills in interpreting evidence and applying those lessons to either historical or contemporary problems.

Within the scope of democratic education, teachers using a social studies curriculum play the greatest single role of encouraging citizenship through a systematic and coordinated exploration of social issues. Teachers use curriculum and their knowledge of their students' individual qualities; their knowledge of the properties of the community are important in social studies education. The place of social studies in the curriculum and the inclusion of the children in society are both well established.¹⁰ Moving from children's place in the community to teaching about the curriculum requires teachers who both understand the children and the implementation of the curriculum. Most important, teachers need to be interested in teaching about democracy in their classrooms. In considering how democracy can be implemented teachers look to developing attitudes needed to discuss democracy with young children, discussion and learning activities, voting simulation, and debate.¹¹ Each of these ideas poses opportunities to learn more about government and citizenship education. Students get to explore their opinions about major questions in government and how the franchise has expanded over time. This political education helps students construct their own public voice as they learn about citizenship education in social studies.

The Mayor's Eagles

Each spring the Mayor's Eagles program meets with twenty-five to forty fourth and fifth grade students. A key to understanding the program is that the Mayor's Eagles

depends upon community partnerships. These partners may be non-profits or businesses that are interested, have something meaningful for students to do, or have the ability to help the students learn about the community. They include such groups as the Rotary, Kiwanis, or, in many cases, the Mayor's Eagles go directly to City Hall to do community service for the town. After school, the students help various groups and organizations. The jobs could include sweeping the sidewalk in front of a store, washing the windows, or helping with a store display. The service available through the Mayor's Eagles is a direct service to organizations and groups that need help in their offices or their businesses.

The Mayor's Eagles program works with the only downtown school and, since the students live downtown and go to school downtown, they are familiar with the buildings and the streets in their community. They do not need to be bussed because they walk right out the schoolhouse door and start their projects immediately without a ten-to twenty-minute bus ride. The students learned a lot about their community, and their parents get to learn a little about the community from the excitement the students bring home from this activity. At the end of the year, the Mayor's Eagles celebrated their accomplishments by inviting all the Eagleston Elementary teachers, parents, and staff to a ceremony where the mayor presented each group and organization with commendations. Each year from 100-150 people attend the event that attracts the attention of the local newspaper.

Historical Significance

In 2006 the Indiana Secretary of the Interior designated Madison's downtown a National Historic Landmark marking Madison as one of the most historically intact cities

in the United States. Commercial, industrial, residential, community, and institutional structures have all been preserved. Madison is a living, breathing city that, through the work of many people, has preserved its incredible nineteenth-century architectural heritage. It is up to individual citizens and property owners to protect their history. Because of that landmark designation, citizens have even more responsibility to discuss and protect Madison's significant architectural heritage.

The local Junior Preservation League got started via a suggestion by John Galvin, the President of Historic Madison, Inc. Years ago, he suggested a junior preservation league or junior docent associates to assist Historic Madison educate the public and help students learn about history through the historical properties that Historic Madison, Inc. owns, operates, and maintains. In 2000, Historic Madison, Inc. was finally able to hire a programs director to help take the ideas to reality. In 2004 Historic Madison, Inc., received a call from one of the elementary schools in Madison; the teachers wanted to do a special program related to history or historical architecture. The programs director seized the opportunity to start the Junior Preservation League and work with the schools. Historic Madison, Inc., personnel started an after school program to a group of Eagles by giving them tours of the historic sites, getting them up close and personal with buildings, having them do sketches of not just buildings but parts of buildings, and learning the basic terminology that an architect would use in describing a building. The genesis of the Junior Preservation League was learning about architecture on the streets of Madison.

Philosophy and Mission

Historic Madison, Inc., (HMI), is chartered as an educational institution, and fulfilling its mission of education is one of the major purposes for the existence of the

group. The members of the group benefit by knowing that the children sitting in one of the second, third, or fourth grade chairs at Lydia Middleton Elementary School may be the next mayor, city council members, or future governor. The members of HMI benefit by knowing that these citizens, future community leaders, and average Joe's are learning more about their community. This is a chance for everybody to participate. Those students who may not be really good at reading books and doing pencil and paper work get to working in a real-world environment with buildings. If they are going to be tomorrow's community leaders, they need to acquire a feeling as to why Madison is special, and then respectfully practice the wise use of the buildings, enabling future generations to become stewards of those properties.

HMI is interested in providing future opportunities for students, knowing that their investment of the community will impact them over the long term. The near-future opportunities are not lost on the members of Historic Madison, Inc., either. Perhaps there is a future HMI donor, member, volunteer, or perhaps there is a junior docent associates program that comes out of this in the junior or senior high school. Students who have come through this program might take the opportunity to lead tour groups or help HMI staff keep the properties open to the public. As in any educational endeavor, more informed citizens hold the promise of the future.

In a democracy, when so much of what happens today is based upon precedent from what has happened in the past, it is imperative that students know what has happened in prior years. It is critical for a nation of free citizens, who have a voice in their government, to understand the history of their country. These citizens must be able to make good decisions and choices when they consider public policy in their

communities. They can make informed choices and improve the country to provide a brighter future for all. These choices could center upon zoning, signage, easements, taxes, or community development.

There are many dimensions as to why members of Historic Madison, Inc., try to save buildings from demolition and tries to find new uses for them. The number one reason is that buildings are perhaps the most significant aspect of history people see every day. People work and live in buildings. Buildings have a history behind them, in terms of who designed them, who built them, why they were built, what was their original use, and how those uses changed over time. To a certain extent buildings become reservoirs of history in a community; important events take place in communities: births, deaths, weddings, funerals, elections, and community-wide celebrations. Those buildings become associated with the historical memory of the community; buildings pass the history of the community to the residents who live there. Buildings are critical to history. If many buildings are gone, then you do not really have a community.

The economic development aspect to reutilizing old buildings for new uses in Madison's economic development is deeply tied into preservation. The collection of buildings in Madison becomes a tourist attraction for people to see a slice of the country in the past. There are not many places where it is possible to see old towns in context, but in Madison people come and see a well-preserved nineteenth century walking city. They walk it, touch the buildings and feel it, enjoy it, and visit historic museums to get a sensation for how people once lived, worked, played, and suffered through illness and cures. In Madison, visitors see not only the homes of just the wealthy but also the homes of middle and lower class residents, because whole neighborhoods still survive intact. In

addition to the economic development aspect, there is the aesthetic aspect; buildings are not built today the way they were 100 or 150 years ago. Styles changed, and those styles inform people in the present about how people in the past viewed their environment.

In addition, there is an environmental or ecological part of saving old buildings. The current green movement in architecture recognizes that reusing historic structures preserves resources. Maintaining the current structures preserves a certain amount of energy, resources, and money that have been put into them over time. Preserving and reutilizing structures actually recycles far more than any one person ever could save individually in their efforts to recycle newspapers, glass, and plastics. Recycling brick, plaster, mortar, cement, and reutilizing everything over time, actually conserves it as an environmental resource and it keeps the community members from running out of space in landfills.

The staff of Historic Madison, Inc., wants students to value historic preservation in their community and to be willing to take action to preserve local structures. The promise of a new generation of preservation allies is very appealing to the aging membership of the group. The Director of Historic Madison, Inc., John Stacier, has said:

The idea is, "Can you touch these kids in the heart?" "Can you get across the sense of uniqueness and fragility of the historic resources here?" When they grow up, if they stay in town, they have a feeling of ownership and protection for those buildings. "Oh, I remember that building." "Oh, we can't lose that building." "You know someone wants to knock it down." "There was a fire there; we can rebuild it." "We can not lose that part of history because it is special." If they do not stay in the community wherever they happen to be, perhaps they take a bit of

Madison and their love for buildings with them. “Well, I did not grow up here, but this threatened building is special to this community, and we need to keep it. We need to reutilize it, and we need to incorporate it into modern development some way so that it still has a use.”

Not only will students participate in their home town, but potentially they will be active preservationists wherever they call home in the future. The staff of HMI hopes that their influence pays off in helping children to understand their sense of place. John Stacier has observed:

I think the most important thing in any educational endeavor is, can you affect the way they perceive their world? . . . Affective education, can you hit them in the heart? Can you get them to change their attitudes? Especially in the case of younger kids, can you get them to appreciate the history that surrounds them? I think that is the most important component of this whole project, and I think we have been very successful, in that because we see kids taking ownership. “That is my building.” “I know about that building.” “I know about the history of that building.” “I know what makes it special.” Whether they remember if it is a Doric or Ionic column . . . does not really make any difference. You can look in any book and learn that, but . . . it is hard to look in a book and learn a love for something. So if we can impart something . . . [about] why our community is unique, . . . special, . . . needs to be looked after, . . . maintained, and preserved so we can pass it on to people in the future . . . I think that is the most critical aspect.

Since the students are surrounded by history, they become students conscious of it and understand its significance. These students will then make the personal connection to local landmarks and see value in their preservation. It is important for children to learn that Madison is very unique, and the Junior Preservation League is one way to integrate that idea.

(Figure X.1)

Standards

Even though the program is extra-curricular it could be incorporated into the daily program of the schools because it meets the National Council for the Social Studies Standards (1994) especially for third and fourth grade local and state studies including:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Civic Ideals and Practices

Historic Madison, Inc. Contributions

The staff of HMI has made many contributions to the smooth administration of the Junior Preservation League. They have provided expertise, knowledge, and support in describing historic architecture. The staff has helped the students understand:

- How do you capture the look of a building?
- Why do buildings look different now?
- How do you look at a building?
- How do you learn about the history of something?
- What questions do you ask to learn about a building?

The staff has helped the students understand these questions as they built the program around these guiding questions. The staff members have made contacts with property owners to talk to students about the buildings on Main Street and prompt them with questions they can share with the students:

- Would you explain the history and interest of this building?
- How did you get involved in owning and operating a business in a historic building?

There has been an oral component in talking to the building owner. Students have learned that they can talk to a person in a building and how to ask questions of a person to learn about history. Some of the buildings have been owned by the same family for a long time, but some of the buildings have just been owned by that particular person for the last decade. These family members may not even be from this community, but students may ask them:

- You did some work on the building; can you describe what it was and why you did that?
- Why did you use the restoration practices you chose?
- What do you do here?
- Why did you start your business here?

One business and building owner of a men's shop on Main Street, run by a family for over 100 years responded, "Well, my great grandfather did it." Then he pulled out pictures of the store 100 years ago, and, amazingly, it almost looked the same today with different merchandise. While it was an interesting connection for the owner of the business to make with the students, it helped the students see the connections with this family to the past. Oral history, with the building or business owners, may well provide a perspective on why they have done business in Madison.

The HMI staff subsequently provided a one-hour focused, intense, and guided experience for the students. The students learned some of the different styles from the rich heritage of American architecture in Madison. The students started to use the historic district, passing through the various neighborhoods, looking at various buildings, and writing things down. During the walking part of the project, the students began to develop guided exploration of the historic properties, using tubes of paper, known as "zoomers," to "zoom in" on various aspects of the architecture. They select the aspects of the architecture that most intrigued them, and the "zoomers" help the students to focus by blocking outside details that might distract them as they discover another perspective. The students seem to have been engaged in the activity, using their little zoom tubes, and doing sketches.

The program is self-guided, in that it was a guided exploration within parameters. Students viewed architecture and buildings, but they focused on what was interesting to them. They draw what they think is interesting. Docents may ask:

- Are there any animals in the architecture?
- Are there any angels in the architecture?

In some cases in Madison there are angels and animals in the architecture.

- Does that catch your attention?
- What about that building is interesting?

Maybe there is nothing in that building that is interesting, but there is something else about the environment that students find interesting. There is a physical component of observing and drawing that comes naturally to some of the students. They are taking notes on architecture while they draw converting the shape into a graphic image.

In order to create this experience, there was a lot of planning and set-up work in between the sessions in order to make it all work out properly. Planning and gathering materials prior to the event needs to occur, as well as follow up from the events. Forty students in the original group required well-organized logistics and communication efforts in getting information to teachers and parents. Information needed to flow between school, the Mayor's office, homes, library, businesses, and HMI. To the students it all looks like it just happens, but it is the result of tireless planning.

There is no hard-cash funding. It is cash-in-kind, in terms of staff on both the schools and HMI's part. It is a type of supply budget with which many teachers are familiar. HMI provided the materials for the students to use, including some film, cameras, paper, and pencil. The students did drawings or took photos, and HMI staff

members developed them and printed out labels. These are not large expenditures, even for forty students.

There is the research component in the library, where the librarians help the teams of students do some research on particular buildings. Students learn that they need to dig through records, where they can find those records, and how to ask a question of a historic document. The Madison Public Library has a very good local history section, where there are newspaper clippings, maps, and photographs of the buildings. The HMI staff coordinated with Madison librarians to have computers and research terminals available for the students to do some research on the buildings.

All of these research materials need to be marshaled ahead of time and available for students. It must be structured, and it is part of the staff's and the volunteers' responsibility to make sure that students have a package of information available. For the students to learn about the building, the staff must have pre-arranged and compiled sources so the students have the opportunity to look at them and use what they think is interesting. If there is no information easily available on a building, then beginning fourth-grade student researchers will think there is nothing known about this building.

How It Works

Students get the chance to learn new skills and then, as part of the program to utilize the skills, to create a finished product, or an experience that they share with the community. The first year the students looked at HMI-owned and operated properties, where the students examined architecture and the different parts of the buildings. The students drew and described the buildings while learning some of the different styles of architecture. It is self-guided in terms of looking at a building while standing on Main

Street and examining one aspect of the building that interests the student enough to draw it. The first year product- note cards-produced from the students drawings of the structures that they saw, were reproduced and marketed as a fundraiser.

The second year, the students put together their research and displayed it on exhibit boards. Each group of students made foam core exhibit boards about their building with digital images on photo paper. The students used their research to create labels for the photos of their adopted building, and the HMI staff talked with the students about the different buildings. The students displayed their exhibit boards at the local library for the library patrons to examine the site that they had researched on Main Street, and then the students distributed to the exhibit boards to the property owners.

The students saw the final result of their work, and the property or business owner learned something about their building that perhaps they did not know. There is a nice dove-tailing of student endeavor in terms of historical research and community-oriented work.

The role of the teacher in this extra-curricular program is one of presence and support. During the two-year after-school program, where the teachers participated in the preparation of the students, they provided directions, such as:

- Here is what we are going to do.
- Here is where we are going to go.
- This is what we are going to learn about

The teachers did some pre-visit activities and re-enforcement within the classroom. In addition, they helped the students do some guided research. The teachers worked with the students to help support the HMI staff guide through the program. Like visiting many

major museums on field trips, the teacher and the museum educator worked together to plan the program for the students.

The program has been different each year. The great thing about this program is that there are many ways to teach about historic preservation, and that is why HMI did not replicate the same activities each year. Since the students are involved in the program two years in a row, it would be redundant for them, and there are lots of different ways to approach looking at old buildings and learning about them. There is not just one static way, and people have different points of view and opinions about the ways things should be done. This is a way to introduce students to a multi-dimensional look at historic structures. The Junior Preservation League will grow, evolve, and change. Many of the techniques used in looking at buildings will remain the same, but the finished products will change from year to year.

HMI staff have worked to contribute services that would support the conclusion to the public programming of the Mayor's Eagles experience. HMI has produced a DVD that provided a wrap-up event for the Mayor's Eagles. HMI has also contributed media exposure about the results of the program and directly communicated that information to the public. HMI has gone further; it has created a small presentation program about the Mayor's Eagles and the Junior Preservation League that the groups have used for various settings to educate people about the programs. Members of the community can now find out what the students have done for the community.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment of the students or the program, but the informal assessment is on the affective level and based on comments the students make. Of

course, the entire community evaluates the products the students have created, because the products are on display in the community library and in the respective businesses. Each student made visible contributions on their exhibit board. The community members looked for quality in the research done by the students. The students had accomplished a real task and displayed it for community approval before peers and parents.

Problems

The program has been effective with a small group of students in one particular school, but it is a very labor-intensive program. An organization cannot have large numbers at a time unless the organization has a large group of trained volunteers and staff leading it. Moreover, a lot of the work is outdoors so if the weather is bad then the group needs to reschedule and staff must be able to do a different activity than the one planned. Otherwise, carrying out the program, an organization needs to get more than one staff person; the organization needs to be able to train volunteers to lead these sort of guided explorations of the community. The staff and volunteers need to be able to follow the interests of the students, rather than offering an inflexible or rigid program. The staff or volunteers also require specialized knowledge of architecture and urban design. That is something that can be done, but HMI needs to work as an organization to broaden the program to other schools or groups.

Conclusions

Based on inquiry, the students work within the community to determine the history of buildings in their area. The Junior Preservation League provides an important service-learning type of program for the community. The community sets the scene for historical inquiry by students, and the students find the community the perfect site for

historical inquiry. Students use inquiry to conduct research about their selected building and create an informational display about it. In the inquiry project, it is the students' building, the students' project, and the students' display.

Students find further historical evidence in the buildings and streetscapes they explore as members of the Junior Preservation League. The information they find locally allows them to generalize about other locations and other events. The importance to the students means that they use historical evidence in their work. They work with the owner of the building and the local library history room to examine primary sources. They compile this information into their project to share with the community.

For teachers and museum educators, the Junior Preservation League is important in the development of preservation education initiatives. The teachers and museum educators have a meaningful way to help students use oral history. Teachers and museum educators combine multiple methodologies to create historical research projects when students engage in looking at oral history and the built environment. The students gather information and create a narrative based on these experiences. Teachers and museum educators create significant preservation education experiences for students in their local communities.

The Junior Preservation League is important for teachers and museum educators because it provides an example for elementary students to learn about democratic and citizenship education in their own communities. Students make contributions in recognizing the importance of historic structures in their community. Students help local historical preservation groups in their mission while the students are learning historical content and process. Students learn more about citizenship education when they learn

more about their community. Moreover, students learn more about themselves when they learn how they fit into democratic education.

NOTES

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