

Home History

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Our Place in Time –Urbana Local History

Researching the history of our homes

Children will use the Champaign County Archives to research the history of their homes, learning when their home was built.

Materials:

Research Framework worksheet

Science and Social Studies notebook (or other place to take notes)

City Directories

Archive Computer Records

Any sources that are referenced

The friendly staff at the Champaign County Archives

Rationale: This is the meat of this unit. The children will be exposed to the vast amazing amount of information that is housed in the Archives. I want them to gain that perspective of themselves too. They are the latest page in the history book of our town. They will need to trace their address in the city directories until we can no longer find it. If their parents own their house they will find their parents names in the archives. The Archives have been wonderfully cross referenced so that we can find information from other sources in their computers.

Method: Call the Champaign County Archives and set up a date to make this visit. Send them a list in advance of the addresses that we will be looking up

Split the class into two or three groups depending on size. 12 kids is pushing the limits of size and materials available. If there are three groups, let one go on a walking tour of the neighborhood and the other explore the Urbana Free Library with adult supervision.

Show the children the City Directories. Teach them where the address guides are. The children in the Archives will start looking for their address in the City Directories which document homeowner history.

Take a few children to work on the computers if they have special or especially old homes. This will be known from having sent the addressed ahead.

Collect a photo if possible or at least a description or location on old map for final project.

When the children have found out the year (approximately) that their home was built, they are ready for the next lesson.

Assessment will be having a completed worksheet and knowing the year their home was built.