Old Fort Western
September 2022 - August 2023
Homeschoolers Guide to Educational Programs

Representing over 300 years of early Maine and New England History

Owned by the City of Augusta since 1922, Old Fort Western is a non-profit organization funded through City appropriation, admission fees, program fees and private donations.

Call us today at 626-2385 or go to www.oldfortwestern.org
Dear Educator:

Fort Western’s mission is to “preserve, protect and interpret this National Historic Landmark Fort, Store, House, & Tenement.” As Interpreters of the Fort, we strive to educate the public about the significance of Fort Western and its environs in Maine and American History. Our programs use spaces in and around the 1754 garrison and outbuildings. Their design engages all the senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. We offer hands-on programming that immerses students of all ages in life as lived in the 18th century. We use all the available resources, i.e., written documentation (letters, journals, account books, correspondence, etc.), material culture (Howard Family objects and furniture passed down and donated as well as archaeological collections of Fort Western, Fort Halifax, and Fort Richmond) and oral history (stories passed down through time) to form a solid basis to historical interpretation.

Like everyone else, Fort Western needs more trained staff which is placing constraints on how we schedule. Once we would have multiple programs conducted simultaneously, we now have to limit programming to one program at a time, up to 40 students.

Experience life in the 18th century at Old Fort Western!

Sincerely,

Linda J. Novak, Director/Curator

Old Fort Western Educational Programming At-A-Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Life in the 18th Century</td>
<td>All Grades</td>
<td>Fort Garrison, and Grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life as a French &amp; Indian War Soldier</td>
<td>Grade 4 &amp; Up</td>
<td>Fort Garrison, Blockhouse &amp; Parade Grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Western - A Time Line</td>
<td>Grade 4 &amp; Up</td>
<td>Fort Garrison &amp; Grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution! Benedict Arnold’s March through Maine</td>
<td>Grade 5 &amp; Up</td>
<td>Grounds outside Fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How We Know What We Know</td>
<td>Grade 5 &amp; Up</td>
<td>Learning Gallery/Classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While visiting Old Fort Western in Augusta,

Why don’t you visit the First Amendment Museum or the Maine State House.

Remember The State Museum is closed until further notice.
Daily Life in the 18th Century
All Grades

This program will immerse students in 18th-century daily life. Students participate in a hearth-based activity, such as food preparation; a wood-related activity, such as sawing and chopping wood; a textile-related activity, such as weaving, carding, and spinning wool; and a bed chamber activity where they make an 18th-century "bed" and learn about public and private space. For Grades K through 2, a dame school station may be substituted for the wood station. For Grades 4 and up, Shopping at the S & W Howard Store or Going to School stations may replace other stations or be added as needed. The design of these activities is to help students better understand the nature of daily life among ordinary citizens in post-Revolutionary Maine. Other activities, such as games and gardening, may be added or substituted depending on group size, weather, or season; upon request, we can substitute bartering at the store as a station.

Life as a French & Indian War Era Soldier
Grade 4 and up

Participants will learn about the events that led up to the French and Indian War (The Seven Years War), the life of a provincial soldier in service to the King, and discuss life on the Kennebec from Cushnoc to Fort Western (1628-1767). As members of James Howard's Company, they will explore the cause and effect of the French & Indian War before the American Revolution and experience the daily living conditions of the soldiers during that time in the orderly room and the barracks. They will also learn about the soldiers' mission and how they prepared to defend the Fort as they drill on the parade grounds and learn cannon firing protocol in the blockhouse. Note: Please allow two hours for this program.

Fort Western – A Three Century Time Line of New England History
Grade 4 and up

This timeline program is station-based and takes the participant through the different periods of the Fort with an underlying focus on survival needs. The Pilgrim Trading Post at Cushnoc (1628-1649) site teaches about barter and early trade on the Kennebec River. The French & Indian War Era Fort (1754-1767) station explains how the Fort was necessary for settlement and economic stability in the Kennebec Valley region. In a visit to The S & W Howard Store (1767-1807), how interdependence develops into a global economy stemming from the "wants" and "needs" of the settlers is investigated. A visit to the Howard Family Home (1770-1850) emphasizes the new nation's growth and prosperity. Finally, a visit to the Tenement apartment (1850-1919) discusses how the Fort became housing for the Augusta workforce and how survival needs again take precedence. Please Note: This is only partially hands-on. Stations within the museum spaces limit the ability for hands-on activities. The design of each station is to immerse the students in how life changed through time and includes a discussion of the geography and development of the Kennebec Valley as well as an overview of Fort Western's place in the history of Maine and New England. Note: Please allow two hours for this program.
**Revolution! Benedict Arnold’s March Through Maine**  
**Grade 5 and Up**

The program takes place in the area outside the Fort and focuses on what it was like to be a soldier marching with Benedict Arnold to Quebec. When students arrive, they will be assigned a company. The leader will provide background information on the outcomes of the French and Indian War that lead to Benedict Arnold and his troops coming to Fort Western. They will then march around the Fort carrying supplies, build an encampment, make fire, and discuss the proposed route to Quebec using the Montressor Map. In closing, the students will compare and discuss the proposed route Arnold's Army planned to take with the difficulties they encountered on their way to Quebec. Please allow two hours for this program. Please Note: This is a follow-up program to Life as a French & Indian War Era Soldier.

**How We Know What We Know:**  
**Grades 5 & 6 (basic concepts)**  
**Grades 7 to 12 (in-depth concepts and analysis)**

This program helps students explore how written documentation, material culture, and oral history, used in collaboration, help form a sound basis for historical interpretation. More specifically, this program allows the student to explore how we combine these three sources to understand how historians interpret historical events and how we learn about social, technological, and economic change. Please schedule two hours for this program; it begins in the Old Fort Western Learning Center in City Hall and ends with a mini tour of the Fort.

The Participants will:

Handle and decipher written documents and learn the difference between primary and secondary sources.

Participate in a "word-of-mouth" oral exercise to discover oral history's value and potential pitfalls.

Learn how material culture helps corroborate written documentation and oral history by:

- Handling historical objects and using them to date chronologically.
- Participating in an archaeological "dig-in-miniature" to analyze artifact assemblages and use them with other material objects to learn about relative dating.

This program is designed for fifth grade and up and is done in the Old Fort Western Learning Gallery. There will be a brief tour of Fort Western and its environs but only if a two hour or more time block is scheduled.
Pre-scheduled Fort programs are offered anytime to Public, Private, and Homeschools, camps, and childcare facilities except during winter shutdown from November 22, 2021, through April 21, 2023. To schedule, call 626-2385.

All the programs offered at Old Fort Western have a hands-on component that provides facts, concepts, processes, and procedures.

Location: Fort Western utilizes the 1754 National Historic Landmark “Garrison,” restored parade ground, watch boxes, blockhouses, blacksmith shop, garden, perimeter palisade, and outlying areas. Different programs take place in different parts of the Fort. Note: Please read the program descriptions carefully; each program utilizes only certain areas of the Fort.

Clothing: The garrison and blockhouses of Fort Western are not climate controlled. Program participants need to dress appropriately for the weather and season. We will ask any child inappropriately dressed (i.e., hoodie & flip-flops in November) to sit out the program with a chaperone in a heated area or on the bus.

Cost: The charge per person for one program is $8.00. The price for a homeschool group doing multiple programs is $7.00 per person per program. The Program Coordinator is free of charge. We ask that only children that are school age and are involved in the program attend. There is a minimum fee for small groups (10 people or fewer) of $80.00. Payments for Fort programs are due on the presentation day by cash, credit card, or check made out to Old Fort Western Fund unless other arrangements have been made.

Group Size: Size depends on the program(s) chosen. Rooms and spaces in the Fort tend to be small, so if your group is more than 12, we will request that you divide into evenly-sized sub-groups, which will rotate through activity stations. We will let you know how many subgroups you need via e-mail. Occasionally staffing and logistic issues arise, necessitating adjusting your group numbers upon arrival. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience.

Special Needs Students: Please let us know if you have any special needs students. Since this is an original 1754 structure and most programs utilize both the upstairs and downstairs, it is difficult for students who use wheelchairs to access all the stations. If we know in advance and depending on the program, we may move all stations to the ground floor.

Cell Phone and Photography: Chaperones and students must leave all technology on the bus, i.e., cell phones, I-pads, computers, etc. Teachers are allowed the use of cell phones and can take pictures inside the Fort. Please ask the staff’s permission before taking their photo. Video recording is prohibited.

Program Duration: Programs are usually 90 minutes to 2 hours long based on your school’s needs, program demand, and staffing requirements. Once scheduled, however, it is essential to be on time as the daily schedule may have other programs from other schools using the same staff and spaces as used in your program. If, for some reason, you will be late, please call as soon as possible to let us know. Depending on the other programs scheduled and your timetable, we may be able to deliver the program in its entirety; however, if you are more than 15 minutes late and we have other programs scheduled after yours, we
will proceed as planned and stop at the scheduled time; as a result, students may not be able to visit all the stations planned.

**Cancellation:** If you need to cancel for some reason, you need to let us know within 24 hours of the program so we can contact our staff. If you do not show up and the team scheduled for your program is set up and waiting for you, we will have to bill you for the cost of staff time. This cancellation policy does not include school cancellations due to snow.

**Confirmation:** The logistical details for all pre-scheduled programs are confirmed in writing by e-mail. Occasionally we can send confirmation by regular mail if required.

**Gift Shop:** A gift shop visit is only available after completing your program.

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**News from Fort Western**

We are excited to announce that $207,000 in Congressional funds have been allocated to help build the Pilgrim Trading Post at Cushnoc. The original trading post was erected in 1628 and was the most successful one built by the Pilgrims and raised enough money to pay back the Pilgrims' backers.

Also, our new blacksmith shop and forge are operational and will be added to Fort Western Programs wherever applicable.

In celebrating Maine's Bicentennial, Fort Western hosted The Bicentennial Lecture Series. The ten-part series covers 13,000 years of Native American History in Maine through Maine’s Familiar Civil War. Go to [http://www.vimeo.com/showcase/oldfortwestern](http://www.vimeo.com/showcase/oldfortwestern) to view them or access them through the City of Augusta/Old Fort Western web page by clicking the Bicentennial Lecture Series button on the left navigation panel.

Thank you.