

## School Days

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### What should my class do before we visit?

1. **Set the Stage:** Discuss 19th century farming communities, the role of family members in various aspects of farm life, the importance of seasons.
2. **Dress:** Consider asking children to dress in a post-Civil War style. Many boys wore short pants or knickers with suspenders, a button down shirt and a straw hat. Girls wore dresses below the knee, low boots, an apron or shawl, and a straw hat or bonnet.
3. **Plan your dinner:** You'll eat lunch while at the museum, but remind students that, in the 19th century, the noon meal was called "dinner."

Students may wish to bring food and drinks similar to those that children carried to school more than 100 years ago. Keep in mind which foods might be available on Long Island. Children enjoy carrying their "dinners" in baskets, tin pails or tied in cloth. Try to avoid modern packaging.

Prepare the New England Johnny Cake recipe that is included and bring it as part of your "dinners."

4. **Learn a Poem:** Have the class memorize the poem "The Johnny Cake". The poem is included here. Memorization and recitation were common 19th century teaching methods. Time can be set aside to hear the recitation of the poem in the schoolhouse.
5. **Vocabulary:** Have students learn the vocabulary words below. These words will be used during your time at the museum.

### Vocabulary

<b>Harvest</b>	The gathering of crops.
<b>Kindling</b>	Small pieces of wood used to start a fire.
<b>Copy book</b>	Notebook used for penmanship practice.
<b>Slate</b>	Small board made of slate used to practice lessons.
<b>Buck Saw</b>	An H shaped saw that can be used by two people.
<b>Dip pen</b>	Metal tipped pen dipped in ink.

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### Recipe for Johnny Cakes

Prep: **10 minutes** Total: **30 minutes** Servings: **12**

#### Ingredients

2 cups fine-ground yellow or white cornmeal

1 tablespoon sugar

1 ½ teaspoon salt

2 cups boiling water

½ cup milk

Butter (for the pan)

#### Steps

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together cornmeal, sugar and salt. Pour in boiling water and mix until you form a paste.
2. Gradually add in milk and stir, stopping occasionally to check the consistency of the batter. It should feel like thin mashed potatoes. (You may not need all the milk, or you may need a little more than 1/2 cup to get the right consistency)
3. In a cast-iron skillet or on a griddle, melt 1 tbsp butter. Spoon tablespoonfuls of the batter onto the skillet, spreading them out to about a 2-inch diameter. Cook on each side until golden brown, about 4-6 minutes. Make sure you have a generous layer of butter on the bottom of the skillet or griddle when making these so they soak up the flavor.
4. Serve warm with syrup or your favorite pancake toppings.

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### **The Johnny Cake**

This is the seed,  
So yellow and round,  
That little John Horner hid in the ground.  
These are the husks,  
With satin inlaid,  
That grew 'neath the tassels that drooped and  
swayed.  
These are the leaves,  
So graceful and tall,  
That grew from the seed so yellow and small  
This is the silk,  
In shining threads spun:  
A treasure it hides from the frost and the sun.  
This is the stalk  
That came up between  
The leaves so pretty and graceful and green.  
This is the treasure, —  
Corn yellow as gold, —  
That satin and silk so softly unfold.  
These are the tassels,  
So flowery, that crowned  
The stalk, so smooth, so strong, and so round.  
This is the cake,  
For Johnny to eat,  
Made from the corn so yellow and sweet.

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### What should my class do after the visit?

1. **Review.** Look at the class photo from the Nassakeag Schoolhouse. Who were you when you visited the museum?
2. **Discuss.** What is different about being a student in the 19<sup>th</sup> century than being a student today? What is the same? Would you want to be a student in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? Why or why not?
3. **Write.** Imagine you were a student at the Nassakeag Schoolhouse in the year 1890. Create a journal entry that tells all about one day at your school. Include as much detail as possible about what you did, who you spent time with and what your school looked like.



Nassakeag Schoolhouse, c. 1890

**School Master (far left):** Ben Robinson.

Students from left to right.

**Windows:** Kate Wood, Sarah Rowland, Maud Smith, Sadie Danbury, Olive Darling

**Third Row:** Flossie Winters, Annie Fallon, Cleveland Davis, Ralph Hawkins, George Beach, Lillie Davis, Will Calahan, Rom Hawkins, Henry Rowland

**Second Row:** Laura Rowland, Eslie Davis, Bessie Freeman, Jennie Freeman, William Pfeifer, Edward Beach, Manley Smith, Warren Rowland

**Front Row:** Ben Pfeifer, Ed Calahan