



## School Days

The *School Days* program recreates a late 19<sup>th</sup> century school day in the original 1877 one room Nassakeag Schoolhouse. The program provides students the opportunity to discover what life was like in a rural 19<sup>th</sup> century Long Island community and compare it to today. Through discussion, role-play and hands-on activities in an historic classroom, students learn about the history of schools and school communities.

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

Set the stage for your class: discuss 19<sup>th</sup> century farming communities, the role of family members in various aspects of farm life, the importance of seasons.

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.

Plan to bring lunches, but remind students that, in the 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Prepare the New England Johnny Cake recipe that is included and bring it as part of your "dinners." 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.

Have the class memorize the poem "The Johnny Cake" (grades 2 and 3), or "The Village Blacksmith" (Grades 4 and up). Both poems are included here. Memorization and recitation were common 19<sup>th</sup> century teaching methods. Time will be set aside to hear the recitation of the poem.

Become familiar with the following vocabulary:

- Harvest – the gathering of crops
- Kindling – small pieces of wood used to start a fire
- Copy book – notebook used for penmanship practice
- Slate – small board made of slate
- Buck Saw – An H shaped saw that can be used by two people
- Scratch or Dip pen – metal tipped ink pen
- Diary – a daily record of events and observations

## The Johnny Cake

This is the seed,  
So yellow and round,  
That little John Horner hid in the ground.

These are the leaves,  
So graceful and tall,  
That grew from the seed so yellow and small

This is the stalk  
That came up between  
The leaves so pretty and graceful and green.

These are the tassels,  
So flowery, that crowned  
The stalk, so smooth, so strong, and so round.

These are the husks,  
With satin inlaid,  
That grew 'neath the tassels that drooped and  
swayed.

This is the silk,  
In shining threads spun:  
A treasure it hides from the frost and the sun.

This is the treasure, --  
Corn yellow as gold, --  
That satin and silk so softly unfold.

This is the cake,  
For Johnny to eat,  
Made from the corn so yellow and sweet.

## The Village Blacksmith Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I.  
Under a spreading chestnut tree  
The village smithy stands;  
The smith, a mighty man is he,  
With large and sinewy hands;  
And the muscles of his brawny arms  
Are strong as iron bands.

II.  
His hair is crisp, and black, and long;  
His face is like the tan;  
His brow is wet with honest sweat;  
He earns whate'er he can;  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man.

III.  
Week in, week out, from morn till night,  
You can hear his bellows blow;  
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
With measured beat and slow,  
Like a sexton ringing the village bell  
When the evening sun is low.

IV.  
And children, coming home from school,  
Look in at the open door;  
They love to see the flaming forge,  
And hear the bellows roar,  
And catch the burning sparks that fly  
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

V.  
He goes on Sunday to the church,  
And sits among his boys;  
He hears the parson pray and preach;  
He hears his daughter's voice  
Singing in the village choir,  
And it makes his heart rejoice.

VI.  
It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
Singing in Paradise!  
He needs must think of her once more,  
How in the grave she lies;  
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes  
A tear out of his eyes.

VII.  
Toiling--rejoicing--sorrowing--  
Onward through life he goes;  
Each morning sees some task begin,  
Each evening sees it close;  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's repose.

VIII.  
Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,  
For the lesson thou has taught!  
Thus at the flaming forge of life  
Our fortunes must be wrought;  
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
Each burning deed and thought.

