

IN-CLASS/ON-SITE ACTIVITY: THE CHANGING ARCHITECTURE OF THE HANDY HOUSE

Standard(s)/Unit Goal(s) to be addressed in this lesson:

RI.3.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a social studies lesson.

The architecture of the Handy House changed over time. By 1790, the simple farm house had been transformed into a fashionable, two-story, center-chimney house. The layout of the house changed dramatically. The chimney and its five fireplaces were now at the center of the home. For the first time, separate spaces were created for public and private uses. Formal rooms such as the parlor were reserved for receiving guests, conducting business, or for celebrating special occasions like weddings or observing somber services like wakes and funerals.

Somewhat fancy decorative elements were added to the exterior of the home such as a classical doorway with a closed pediment above it.



The outside of the windows now had molded window caps with mitered corners.



The most extensive changes occurred on the inside of the house. The exposed elements of the timber framing were now encased in finished woodwork.



The ceilings were plastered to hide the framing and corner cupboards and elaborate paneling were added to the walls.



Four-panel doors replaced the flat board doors.



A formal entrance lobby with a bannister with hand shaped balusters along its staircase was added.



Study the images with your students pointing out each element described. On your visit to Handy House pass out a flashcard with each image portrayed above on front and its explanation on the reverse. Ask the students to find their image inside or around Handy House. If they can tell you from memory what they see, wonderful! If not, ask them to read what is on the reverse of the card. Ask them to point out each detail described.