



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

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The Victorian Age—A People in Search of Themselves as Seen Through Their Architecture

Guide for Curriculum Unit 91.01.04

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In 1979, as a member of the Institute seminar “Remarkable City, Industrial New Haven and the Nation, 1800-1900,” I developed a unit entitled, “New Haven and The Nation, 1865-1900: A Social History - Labor, Immigration, Reform.” This unit dealt with the “other” side of life in the city—the poor, slums, tenements, and the problems of the laboring class. This year’s unit covers the life style of the middle and upper class of New Haven. The attitudes, values and beliefs of these people of “The Victorian Age—A People in Search of Themselves Through Their Architecture.”

The New Haven area is rich in Victorian architecture, designed by some of the most renowned architects of the age. The homes of the area reflect the images of the past, giving a distinct character of “place.” “Seeing” architecture in our city for the first time, students can learn to develop an understanding of how architecture reflects the hopes and dreams of the people who lived in the area, making New Haven and our region what it is today.

This unit is designed to show the richness of the area’s Victorian past by using the varied styles of architecture as a way of understanding the culture or life style, of the age. By using two types of visual aids, slides or various styles and a walking tour, I hope students will be stimulated and gain not only an understanding of the Victorian Age but also take a new pride in their city as a unique region of the United States.

(Recommended for Social Studies and Connecticut History, grade 6, and American History, grades 8-12)

Key Words

American Architecture New Haven Connecticut History Nineteenth Century General Social Westville

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