

## General Tour Lesson Plan



**Grade levels:** 4-8

**Social Studies GLE's:**

4<sup>th</sup> grade--Analyze how physical characteristics of a region shape its economic development (4.5.2)

5<sup>th</sup> grade--Describe ways in which location and environment influenced the settlements and land use in colonial America (5.5.1)

6<sup>th</sup> grade--Analyze the relationship between geographical features and early settlement patterns using maps and globes. (6.2.1)

7<sup>th</sup> grade--Explain reasons for the expansion of slavery in the South after 1800 and describe the life of enslaved African Americans, and their responses to slavery (7.3.5)

8<sup>th</sup> grade--Identify and describe economic, social, and political characteristics of Louisiana during the Antebellum/plantation economy, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction eras (8.2.6)

**Focus:** Sugar production & plantation life in South Louisiana during the Antebellum Period

**Overview:** Students will take an interactive journey through time as they visit different historic structures at the West Baton Rouge Museum. They will gain an appreciation of what life was like as they engage in various hands-on activities that mimic chores on an actual plantation. They will learn about the processes that change sugar cane into sugar products and the importance of the sugar industry to the area both historically and in modern times. By the end of their visit they will be able to identify the structures associated with a sugar plantation; identify key dates and figures associated with the plantation era in South Louisiana; identify sugar cane as an important cash crop; and discuss the type of activities undertaken by those engaged in the work of a sugar plantation.

**During the tour, students will visit the following structures:**



- **The Aillet House** (c. 1830): The Aillet House was built in 1830 by Jean Dorville Landry, an upper-middle class sugar plantation owner. Landry was a second generation Acadian exile. His grandparents were expelled from Nova Scotia by the British in 1755 during the *Grand Dérangement* or, in English, the *Great Upheaval*. Landry owned roughly 186 acres of land and, by 1860, owned 28 enslaved laborers. Upon Landry's death in 1864, his children sold the land. The land changed hands multiple times until finally, in 1880, Anatole Aillet purchased the land. The Aillet family would live in this house for the next 100 years until 1980. The house was moved to the museum campus in 1990.

- Students will polish silver at this station and come to understand the types of activities that transpired in the plantation's "big house."



- **Allendale Enslaved Worker Cabin** (c. 1850): This cabin, originally located at Allendale Plantation, was home to 2 enslaved families, one living on each side of the cabin. Allendale was owned by Henry Watkins Allen, who was a General in the Confederate Army and was the last Governor of Confederate Louisiana. At the onset of the Civil War, Allen owned 160 slaves who lived in about 22 slave cabins. One slave, Valery Trahan, was brought to the front lines of the Civil War by Allen. Valery was Allen's butler and, when Allen was Governor, he was granted his freedom and continued to work for him as a paid laborer. After the war, Allen fled to Mexico and Valery traveled with him until the Mexican border. There, Valery turned around and headed back to Allendale to reunite with his wife, Lavinia Trahan who was an enslaved field-hand at Allendale. After the war, they had 2 children together, Valery Jr. and Allen.

- Students will churn butter and taste the product of their labor to understand the types of activities enslaved laborers engaged in in order to maintain life on the plantation.



- **Arbroth Mercantile Store** (c. 1880): The Arbroth Mercantile Store was located at the north end of West Baton Rouge Parish and was in operation until 1980. This store included a post office, a payroll office for Arbroth Plantation workers and a saloon, which was racially segregated. Major Martin Glynn purchased the plantation shortly after the Civil War and raised sugar cane and cotton on 3,200 acres of land spread across 3 plantations. By the 1940's, the plantation had transitioned to raising cattle. The store remained in the hands of the Glynn family and their descendants until 2009

when the store was moved to the museum grounds.

- Students will engage in a scavenger hunt to gain a greater appreciation of the types of products available to plantation workers living on the plantation, the cost of those products in proportion to weekly salaries.

- **Sugar Taste Test in the Museum's Sugar Gallery:** Students will view the Museum's historic 1904 Mill Model and discover the processes that turn the sugar cane juice into syrup, molasses, crystallized granules, and powders. They will taste six products made from one of Louisiana's most important agricultural crops.





### **Pre-Visit Preparation:**

Teachers should engage students in a discussion of antebellum Louisiana and introduce the concept of the plantation system. Teachers should cover concepts such as cash crops and the need for a large labor force in the production of sugar cane. That labor force came in the form of importing enslaved Africans to work the crops and harvest and process the cane. Because cane is a more labor-intensive crop, many more enslaved laborers were needed as compared to the production of tobacco or cotton. Self-sufficiency of plantations is a concept that will be addressed during the tour and teachers may want to introduce it prior to visitation.

### **Post-Visit Activities:**

***Essential Question:** How did sugar production contribute to the organization of the plantation system in Louisiana (in terms of the physical layout of plantations as well as to the division of labor)?*

### **Post-visit Activity 1**

**What do you remember from your visit? What was the typical sugar plantation like? Where did the field-hands live? Where did the owner and his family live? Plantation properties in Louisiana were peculiarly shaped—long and narrow—for a reason. Why? Where were the fields? What else might be located on the property? Work with a partner to conduct some research to fill in the information that you may have forgotten or that was unavailable to you during your visit to complete the following activity:**

**Task:** Using a large poster board or sheet of drawing paper reproduce a typical sugar plantation layout. Show where it is located in relation to the Mississippi River. Label the different buildings. Attach an explanation of how the plantation operated on the back with a short description of the labeled buildings. Make sure to name your plantation. You may draw, use images cut out from magazines, or use your own photos taken during your visit to complete the project.



## **Post-visit Activity 2**

**Most sugar plantations in South Louisiana had to be self-sufficient. Discuss with a partner what that concept means. What did self-sufficient mean in terms of the types of work that had to be done on the plantation? What types of activities did enslaved workers do besides working in the sugar fields? What types of work did the plantation owners and their families do? Where did they do these activities? Working with a partner, complete the following graphic organizer to help you identify who did what on a typical South Louisiana plantation. You may have to conduct a little research to complete the activity. Use the worksheet provided.**

**Task:** Working with a partner, complete the worksheet provided by writing in the name of an activity that would have been completed by that group of people under the appropriate column heading. List at least five different activities for each column. Feel free to list additional tasks that you may have learned about on your visit or from your research.



