

Hughes Academy



General History



Located behind the Orange County Board of Education building on 200 E King, the Hughes Academy was founded in 1845 by Samuel Wellwood Hughes. The Academy held classes in this building beginning in 1864. The building was originally located six miles north of Hillsborough, but was relocated at an unknown date. The Academy operated as a boarding school, with students living on site, learning a classical curriculum including Greek, Latin, reading and math to all age levels. Around 30 to 40 students

attended at a time, with sometimes as many as 50 students in the one schoolroom. Tuition ranged from \$15 to \$25; approximately \$466 in today's currency. Most students who graduated from the Hughes Academy went on to study at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill.

The Hughes Academy did allow girls to attend as long as they found lodging in town, which was seen as progressive at the time. When Samuel Hughes died in 1884, Cedar Grove took over the Academy from 1884-1901. Samuel's daughter, Annie Lavalette Hughes ran the Academy and school from 1901 until 1914.

Schools in the 1800s would have been very different from today. Students of all grades and ages would have been taught by one teacher in the same classroom. There was no electricity and windows were large to let in light and fresh air. Students would have learned using small chalkboards. There was no staff at the Hughes Academy, so students would have done all of the cleaning and cooking at the school.

Further Exploration

Students can continue this lesson by visiting the Hughes Academy located behind the Orange County Board of Education. While the building itself is closed to the public, visitors can still visit the grounds.

Students are encouraged to look at the building and compare it to their own schools. The windows are wide to let in light and fresh air, and the bell on top of the roof would have signaled the start and end of the lesson, much like in schools today.

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Questions to consider

- What does the building look like?
- Does it look like your school? How is it different?
- How have schools changed since the early 1800s? Has anything stayed the same?

Activity: Create your own antebellum game at home!

Children in the 1800s didn't have television, iPads, computers or phones. Most of their free time was spent outdoors or playing games. Favorite antebellum games were simple and were often made with leftover materials at home. These games included: ball in cup, pick up sticks, jacks, marbles, stilts, rolling hoops and yoyos. Other popular games that we still play today were checkers and chess. What around your home comes from the 1800s?

Now it's your turn! Create a game that children could have played in the 1800s. Keep it simple. Remember: no technology!

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