



Discover Portage Road Lesson Plan

Trott Vocational High School (James Fullerton Trott)

Subject Area: Social Studies

Grades 9-12

Subject Area: Social Studies

New York State Social Studies Learning Standards

Standard 1

History of the United States and New York

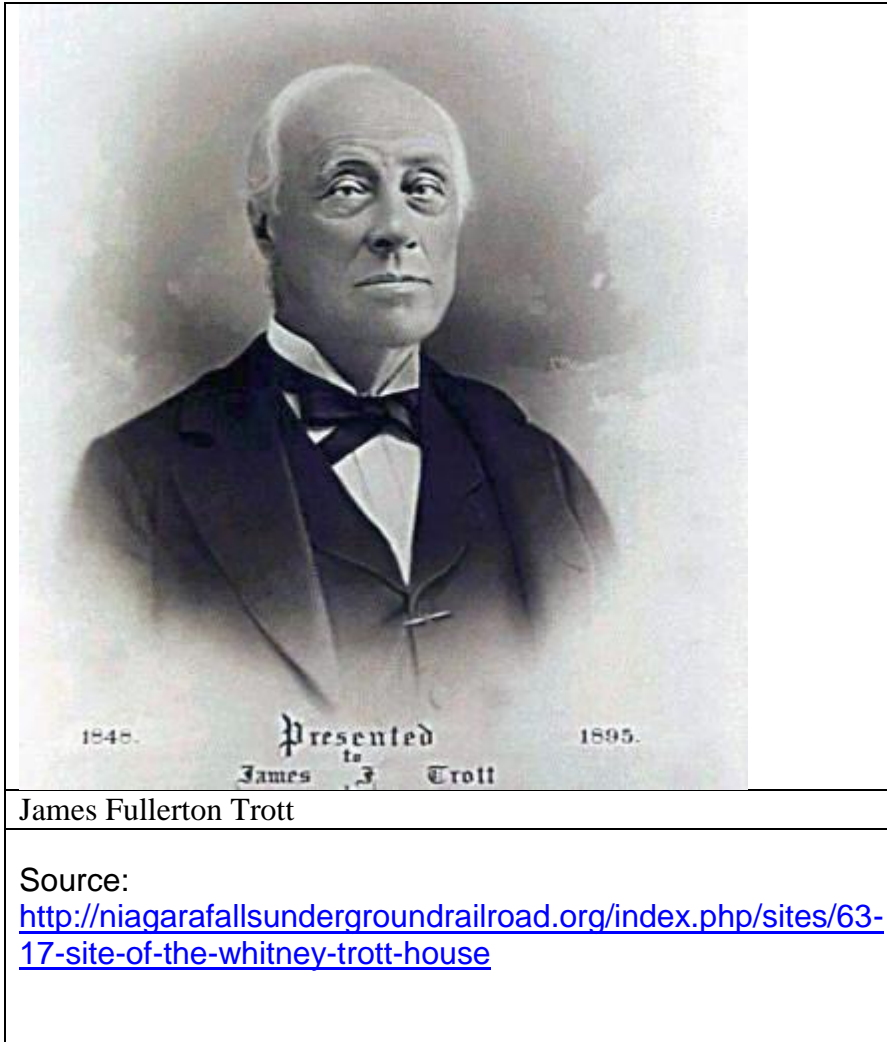
Students will:

- **Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.**
- **Distinguish between near and distant past and interpret simple timelines,**
- **Investigate key turning points in New York State and United States history and explain why these events or developments are significant.**
- **Gather and organize information about the important achievements and contributions of individuals and groups living in New York State and the United States,**
- **Prepare essays and oral reports about the important social, political, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural developments, issues, and events from New York State and United States history.**

Overview

Trott Vocation High School, located at 11th Street between Ashland and Elmwood Avenues., provided many Niagara Falls residents with formal and vocational education. “Schools Bells Ring,” compiled and written by Patricia Wilson Rice, noted that “Trott was dedicated on March 11, 1929 and named for James Fullerton Trott.” Mr. Trott was elected as a trustee of School District Number 2 of the Town of Niagara in 184. In 1856, he was elected as one of the six original members of the Board of Education to the Union Free School District. After the incorporation of the City of Niagara Falls in 1892, Mayor Wright appointed Mr. Trott to the City Board of Education. Because of his total of 56 years of service to education, Mr. Trott earned the title “Father of our Schools.”

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James Trott had ties to the Cataract House situated on Main Street on the banks of the Niagara River. The Cataract House was operated by Parkhurst Whitney, Trot's father-in-law, from 1825 to 1845. The Cataract House was one of the two largest hotels in Niagara Falls. It was operated by Solon Whitney and sons-in-law James Trott and Dexter Jerauld from 1845 until the later 19th century. Notably, Mrs. Trott named the Niagara River steamer, built in 1847 and dedicated at the landing below the ferry dock, as the "The Maid of the Mist."

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Site of the Whitney-Trott House1 Main Street across from Chilton Avenue Built 1861

Chilton Avenue in 1895 was the first paved street in Niagara Falls. Until their deaths, James and Celinda Whitney Trott continued to live in the family. On January 4, 1892, Celinda Trott died. James Trott died in 1898. James P. and Elizabeth C. Trott, children of Celinda and James P, inherited the house. Because neither James nor Elizabeth ever married, their brother John Winslow Trott inherited the family home after their deaths. The Kellogg Motor Company purchased the house in 1927. It demolished the building in 1949, replacing it with a Kellogg Motor Sales used car lot.

Source: <http://niagarafallsundergroundrailroad.org/index.php/sites/63-17-site-of-the-whitney-trott-house>

Vocational training was not offered in any day school program in Niagara Falls before 1919. In September, 1919, 32 pupils were enrolled in a machine shop class in the basement of 24th Street School. In 1920, an electrical shop course was offered at Niagara Street School. Later, a vocational advisory committee consisting of members of labor, industry and the board of education was formed. With the assistance of the Employer's Association of Niagara Falls and various trade unions, in 1923 an apprentice training program was established.

Because the student enrollment kept increasing, the Niagara Falls Board of Education decided to build a new vocational school in 1927. A contract was awarded to Laur and Mack Building Company. On opening day, The Niagara Gazette described it as "a hub of sorts — centrally located so that it could be easily reached from any part of the city." According to school officials, Trott Vocational High School was the city's "monument to industrial evolution" and "a great and useful civic servant".

Because its design combined a typical school and factory design, school was reflected real life industrial conditions. Forty-eight rooms included shops, classrooms and other amenities such as a cafeteria, gym, library and pool. In June, 1931, the first graduating class consisted of 17 boys. By 1939 enrollment was 779 students. Trott was selected to form the Works Project Administration program locally.

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Trott Vocational School was built in 1929. At the dedication, Dr. Lewis A Wilson, assistant commissioner of Vocational Education stated “the school is organized to meet the educational need of the people of this city, who are interested in preparing for vocational services and to assist those employed in industry that need additional training.” He added, “it will prepare many boys and girls to meet the ever increasing demands of industry and commerce as well as “provide an aid to thousands of adults who must secure additional training to keep abreast of changing industrial conditions or those who wish to prepare for a better position in industry.”

A three-story brick building, Trott Vocational School boasted 43 classrooms, an auditorium and gymnasium and pool. Additional shop sections were added in 1960 making the total costs including land, building and equipment at \$520,625.06. Harmon L. Gregory was the first principal. William Jack joined the teaching staff at Trott Vocational in 1930 as a business instructor. He left in 1942 to become principal at Niagara Falls High School.

Returning veterans in January of 1946 attended Trott in a section on the top floor that was designated strictly for them. This portion of the school had a separate curriculum from the high school downstairs to help the veterans learn a trade and obtain employment. According to a Niagara Falls Gazette article, more than 400 veterans from all over Niagara County took advantage of this opportunity. Trott also held classes in the evening for 18-30 year olds who took advantage of apprenticeship training in various trades such as millwright skills, chemistry, drafting, welding electrical and others. Over the years, girls enrolled at Trott to study cosmetology and practical nursing. The wide range of educational opportunities fulfilled the original vision and mission that Dr. Lewis Wilson’ stated at the school’s 1929 dedication.

Hundreds of alumni, the 50th Anniversary of the school was held in December, 1978. A special historical slideshow was presented by veteran teachers Bernard Chekhov, Edward Hudspeth and John Kovach. Over the years, auto repair and food service had been added to the curriculum which still included drafting and structural design and cosmetology.

Activity

Students will:

1. Acknowledge that Trott Vocational High School was selected to form the local Works Progress Administration Program,
2. Access *Works Progress Administration* at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works_Progress_Administration,

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3. Explain, in a brief essay, how the Works Progress Administration Program helped individuals during the Great Depression

References

Higgs, Norma. "HIGGS: Trott Vocational through the years". *Niagara Gazette*. June 10, 2013 at <http://www.niagara-gazette.com/opinion/x557573501/HIGGS-Trott-Vocational-through-the-years>

Higgs, Norma "HIGGS: More about Trott Vocational". *Niagara Gazette* June 17, 2013 at <http://www.niagara-gazette.com/opinion/x1912987500/HIGGS-More-about-Trott-Vocational>

Site of the Whitney-Trott House. *Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area* at <http://niagarafallsundergroundrailroad.org/index.php/sites/63-17-site-of-the-whitney-trott-house>

Works Progress Administration at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works_Progress_Administration