

Historical Perspectives - Tour Outline

INTRODUCTION – 20 minutes

In the Café, Auditorium, or Wrigley Hall

- After the staff member has greeted the teacher, introduce yourselves as a docent.
- Set common rules, if it hasn't already been done. These are the rules teachers are provided in the pre-visit tour guide packet:
 - Please walk. Running is dangerous to both you and the artifacts in our museum.
 - Leave all food, beverages (including water), gum and pens in your bus or car, or in the designated lunchroom. Please point out trash cans for gum – because gum is not good for museums!
 - Please use inside voices. Screaming and yelling hurts our ears!
 - Please look with your eyes and not with your hands. Touching our exhibits and artifacts damages them. Please don't touch any buttons in the exhibit areas unless the docent asks you to.
 - Ask questions! Museum staff and volunteers are eager to help. Please raise your hand to ask a question or to answer the docent's question.
 - Be open-minded and have a good time!
 - Cameras are allowed, but please don't disrupt the tour to take photos.
 - Ask the adults to follow behind the children and keep the group together.
- Give the group an overview of what they will see on the tour. Say something like, "Today we'll be visiting the museum's exhibits. We're going to go back all the way to 1701, and then move forward to today. That's over 300 years of history here in Detroit. That makes Detroit the oldest major city in the Midwest. Detroit is where it all started in Michigan and the Midwest. I have a lot of stories to tell, but we only have a short time together, so I need you to listen closely as we explore the people, businesses, and cultures that created our region."
- Move to one of the following areas of the tour:

DETROIT'S FOUNDING – 10 minutes

In Kresge Hall

- Explain the significance of the beaver as the primary reason Detroit was founded. Touch on the fur trade, but remember you will cover this more thoroughly in the *Frontiers to Factories* exhibit.
- Talk about the different cultures that once "owned" Detroit and southeast Michigan, starting with the French, then the British, then the Americans.
- Show the Detroit flag. Explain that the flag is made of sections of the flags of the nations who have ruled Detroit.
 - The white Fleur de lis represents France. In particular, the flower represents King Louis IXV, who authorized Detroit's founder, Antoine Cadillac, to start a settlement at Detroit. They ruled Detroit from 1701-1760.
 - The Red flag with the gold lions represents Britain. Britain took over possession of Detroit in 1760, after the French lost a war between the two countries. Britain also controlled Detroit from 1812-1813, after they beat the Americans in the War of 1812.
 - The Blue flag with thirteen white stars represents the American occupation of the city from 1796 – 1812.
 - The Red and White Stripes represent the American re-occupation of Detroit after 1813 to the present day.
- Show the Detroit seal. Explain that the images and Latin words tell a story.
 - In the middle are two women. The woman on the left is looking over her shoulder at the city of Detroit on fire. This refers to the fire of 1805 that destroyed the city. The woman on her right is comforting her, and gesturing behind her to a new, grander city that was built upon the ashes.

- There are two phrases in Latin inscribed on the seal. The first, “Speramus Meliora” means “We hope for better things.” The second, “Resurget Cineribus”, means “It shall rise from the ashes.”

FRONTIERS TO FACTORIES – 30 minutes

In Kresge Gallery

- Use the explorer interactive map to illustrate Detroit’s strategic location on the Great Lakes. Use the buttons to explain the waves of exploration and the routes and difficulties each encountered with the geography.
- Explain who Cadillac was, what his purpose was in settling Detroit, and why he named the settlement Detroit. If you are running ahead of schedule, show the Cadillac film.
- Move to the Native American area of the exhibit. Explain the mixing of European and Native cultures as a result of the fur trade. Ask the students to point out objects on the Native mannequin that are European. In the trading post, ask them to point out European and Native American items.
- At the settlement diorama, point out Fort Lernoult/Shelby and note that this was what Detroit looked like prior to the fire in 1805. Explain the importance of having access to the river, and use the ribbon farm mural between the trading post and land office to talk about French farming techniques.
- Move over to the text panel that features a drawing of the 1805 fire and the Woodward plan. Explain that the fire destroyed the city, and that a Judge named Augustus Woodward came up with an idea for a new plan, based on designs for the new U.S. capital in Washington D.C. Explain that the plan was never fully adopted, but many of the streets we know today are a result of this plan, including Woodward, Jefferson, Grand River, and Michigan Avenue. Woodward’s plan is the reason it’s still so hard to drive around downtown Detroit.
- Around the corner, talk about immigration to Detroit. Show them the panel with the quote about Michigan land: “Don’t go to Michigan, that land of ills.” Explain that settlement in Detroit began to take off with the opening of the Erie Canal in New York State. It made it easier and less expensive for families to move to the Michigan frontier.
- Briefly touch on the number of different cultures that began to arrive in Detroit in the mid-19th century. You may choose to use the “From Many Places” touch screen to have the students choose an ethnic group they can learn more about. If not, explain that large numbers of Irish immigrants and German immigrants began to flood into Detroit at this time, looking for work and for land. They were followed over the next 50 years by many different ethnic groups.
- Stop briefly at the “Commercial City” panels and discuss the importance of natural resources on the development of Detroit. Allow the students to touch the iron and copper ore samples. Also talk about the lumbering industry. Explain that these resources enabled Michigan to build factories and foundries to help develop these natural resources into items that people used on a daily basis. Consider asking them if they know of any items that they use today that are made out of iron or copper (cooking skillets, old pennies, etc.)
- Talk about how that new industries such as ship building, stove making and railroad car building grew in Detroit because of the access to natural resources. In order to fill the need for workers in these industries, many more immigrant groups moved to Detroit. Show one of the Working in Detroit films.
- Explain that these early industries prepared Detroit to become the Motor City.
- If time permits, show the Frontiers to Factories video.

MOTOR CITY – 20 minutes

Motor City Exhibit

- Explain that early industrial developments in Detroit, stove manufacturing and railroad cars, made it the perfect place to build cars.
- Ask them who invented the car – and explain that it wasn’t Henry Ford. German Karl Benz invented the first gasoline powered car. Ask them if his name sounds familiar – Mercedes Benz. Explain that Mercedes was the first name of daughter of one of Benz’s engineers.

- Charles Brady King's car – First automobile in Detroit. Explain that it looks like a wagon. Ask students why that is. Ask them what he did to make it go from a car pulled by a horse to an automobile: Engine, Steering wheel, pedals, bike chain, engine.
- Show the reproduction Ford Model T. Explain how it had a larger impact on America than any other Detroit product before or since. If time permits, ask a volunteer to crank the engine, and allow for photo opportunity.
- Move to the Oldsmobile section. Ask which they think is older – the Model T or the Oldsmobile? Explain that the Olds came before the Model T, and point out that it is more wagon-like.
- Explain that the Oldsmobile was built by hand and it took 12.5 hours to build one car. Explain that the Model T was the first car produced on the assembly line and it took only 93 minutes to build a car.
- Question for H.S. students – where did the idea for the assembly line come from? Train, fresh meat from Chicago. One of the inspirations of Assembly line was the disassembly line in butchering animals in Chicago.
- Assembly line activity with kids.
 - Take on a Henry Ford persona. Ask for kids to work for you. Boys only, girls could make seats, but not work on the line.
 - Pick one kid to be a car, and then tell 2-3 others to put parts on the car. (DON'T TOUCH THE CAR! If you do, you are fired.) Talk about how long it took to make a car this way, because each worker had to go to different parts of the shop to get the pieces.
 - Then, demonstrate the assembly line by lining up workers in two rows and have the car walk between them.
 - Move into a discussion about labor. Speed up the assembly line to show how they had to work fast for hours and hours each day with few breaks. Take one kid off the line and make them the Foreman. Fire a kid for not doing anything wrong – but give someone else the job who is friend of the family. Talk about the union – kid who is fired becomes the union rep. They watch the foreman to make sure he doesn't trample on rights of the workers.
- Ask them who the big Detroit automobile manufacturers are today. Then, show them the list of car companies in 1900 compared to today. Explain that competition drove many of these out of business, but some merged to form bigger companies. i.e. General Motors – many of their car lines were once independent car companies.
- Explain that a second wave of newcomers and immigrants and people migrating from the South – created a huge population of unskilled workers who were needed to operate the massive manufacturing plants for automobiles and other products. 1925 – Immigrants on assembly line – 62 countries represented 81 languages.

THE STREETS OF OLD DETROIT – 20 minutes

- On the way into the exhibit, set the mood. Explain they are going back in time. Two things they can look for to help them know when they are in time: What are streets made of? How did they light the streets?
- **1840**
 - In the 1840s, explain that Detroit grew from a population of about 10,000 to about 30,000 because transportation routes opened. Tie this to what they learned or will learn in Frontiers to Factories. (Erie Canal, steamboats)
 - What do you see that's different from Detroit now?
 - Talk about how the cobblestones were real from a real street. Because of the abundance of stones left in Michigan as the glaciers receded, cobblestones were a cheap and easily available material.
 - To start a cobblestone street, a straight line of stones was laid down in the center of the street as a baseline to guide the men laying the stones.
 - Explain that the lights used oil, and had to be lit every night by a lamplighter. The "prongs" on the side of the lamp post is where he'd set his ladder.
 - Print shop –

- It did job printing such as menus, leaflets, legal documents, announcements, posters, and notices.
- Before the typewriter, printing was the only way to produce multiple copies cheaply.
- Detroit had a number of daily, weekly, and monthly publications; it's possible that this kind of establishment also printed a newspaper.
- Capital letters were usually stored in the upper portion of some type-storage cases and became known as upper-case letters.
- Type was set by hand, upside down and backwards.
- Clothing Emporium –
 - There were a lot of tailors and clothiers in the city in the 1840s.
 - This was just the beginning of "Ready-to-Wear" clothing based on standardized sizes developed for the army during the War of 1812. Before this, people made their own clothes.
 - Shipments of clothing came either from back east, or clothiers might hire local people to sew for them.
 - Show the top hat and explain it is made from Beaver fur.
- Blacksmith –
 - The blacksmith got his name because he works with iron or black metal, as opposed to silver, gold, or copper.
 - The smithy is the building where the smith works – not the smith himself.
 - Normal equipment includes:
 - A forge is where the iron is heated.
 - The bellows on the left side feeds air into the forge to make the fire hotter.
 - The anvil is where the iron is beaten into shape.
 - The wall behind the forge and the over ceiling above it are plastered to reduce the chance of fire.
 - The smith's principal tool was the hammer, and he had a variety of types and sizes. He had many tools for various jobs, all specialized for specific shapes and purposes. Some of the most common were tongs, pincers, files, snips, and swages to shape and bend the metal.
 - In the 19th century, the smith was a kind of early hardware store, except that the smith actually made the items he sold. He was expected to be able to create or repair anything made of iron. This included door hinges, latches, locks, ornamental gates and railings, agricultural tools and machinery, candle holders, lantern holders, kitchen tools and utensils

- **1870**

- Start by asking what the differences the kids see. Talk about how business and industries were making Detroit a wealthy town and they could afford more fancy goods.
- Streets were made of logs that were sunk upright into the ground. The space between the blocks was filled with dirt, and topped off with tar to provide a waterproof coat. The cedar streets were easier to walk on, but would also catch on fire if a building was burning.
- Streetlights were not much different from 1840. They now burned gas. Electric lights came closer to 1900.
- Point out the fronts of the stores. They were more decorated and nicer. Point out the types of stores - Fancy goods, sewing machine, shoes – These stores sold expensive items, many of which came from the East coast or Europe.
- Fire house
 - This exhibit represents a pumper company. Organized firefighting capabilities were important at a time when most heating, cooking, and lighting involved some kind of open flame.
 - Have the students look at the Engine. Has them guess what it was for (pumper for water to put out fires.) Ask them how it was moved to fires. Have them listen for the horses neighing

if they don't get it right away. Explain that cars were not invented yet, and they needed horses to take pumpers like this to a fire.

- The steam engine provided the pressure necessary to force the water through the hoses with enough power to reach the fire. The water source could be a hydrant or the end of the hose could be lowered into a steam, an open well, or any large supply of water.
- The water was drawn in through the large hoses which attached to the larger pipes on either side of the pumper. The smaller, canvas hoses were attached to the smaller pipes on either side of the pumper.
- This fire engine was used in Detroit until 1927.
- Shoes –
 - Most shoes were made with no difference between the right and the left shoe. The concept of a left and right shoe only occurred after shoe manufacture became a machine process.
 - Shoes were a big business in Detroit in the late 1800s. By 1879, Detroit had 12 companies that made boots & shoes, and 113 different shoe stores.
- Toy store –
 - Send the boys to the boys side, girls to the girls side. Think about what kind of jobs do the toys prepare them for? Which has the better toys?
 - Girls toys: Early easy bake ovens - cast iron stoves you could actually build a fire in. These came with pots, pans, skillets, and all the necessary hardware. Small, working sewing machines could be used to make clothes for the dolls, which could be washed in the scaled-down wash tub.
 - Boy's Toys - Toys that taught included steam boilers that could run miniature saw mills, building blocks shaped like architectural elements, farm machinery, and print sets.
- Barber shop –
 - The barber shop was a center of male social activity in the 19th century. It was one of the places where men gathered not only to get their hair cut and beards trimmed but also to discuss politics, finance, and current events.
 - Men who visited Detroit, often from distant cities, went to the barber shops where they brought news of what was happening in other places. The barber heard all the important news and shared it with his customers.
 - The red and white barber pole is a symbol of a barber. It dates back to the mid-1880s when barbers also worked as minor surgeons. The red represents blood, and the white represents bandages.
 - Most men didn't shave every day; only for special occasions or as they needed to. A shave would cost ten cents and a haircut fifteen cents – that's twenty-five cent or two bits.
 - Most of the barbers in Detroit at this time were African-American, and many were able to earn enough money to become leaders in the community.
 - Our barber is based on Albert Hill, a successful businessman and politician who had a shop in the Russell House in the 1870s. The location in the Russell Hotel afforded Mr. Hill the contacts he needed to become one of the leading Detroit African-Americans of the 1870s and 1880s.
 - He was the first Internal Revenue Gauger (tax assessor) in Michigan and ran for the state legislature.
 - He amassed a good deal of money, and he was estimated to be worth as much as \$40,000; the equivalent of nearly half-a-million dollars by current standards.

- **1900s**

- At the turn of the century, there were approximately 290,000 residents in Detroit and its suburbs, an increase of 85,000 since 1890.
- Streets, lights, sounds – show the diversity of transportation.
- Bike club – change in transportation. Streets improved for bikes.
- Drug Store –

- There were several drug stores in the Detroit area around the turn of the century. Henry C. Reinhold, whose pharmacy diplomas hang in the store, opened the Reinhold Prescription Pharmacy in 1896.
- Drug Stores at the time carried such items as: drugs, chemicals, oils, fancy toiletries and goods, surgical instruments, cigars, fine stationery, and even included soda fountains where patrons could relax and catch up on small talk and/or current events.
- Pharmacists sold ready-made medicines, called patent medicines, but also made their own medicines using chemicals and other ingredients.
 - They would mix powders and chemicals based on a recipe with a little alcohol in a mortar and pestle. They would smash it until it was a paste.
 - Then, they'd roll it out like play-doh into a long and even rope.
 - They would use the pill cutter to cut it into small pills, which they would give to the patients.
- Mr. Vernor's picture is on the counter – He was Michigan's first registered pharmacist and became rich with Vernors soda.
- Kresge's –
 - Was a 5 and 10 cent store, where nothing in it cost more than 10 cents. Ask if that sounds familiar to any stores from today. Dollar store.
 - Sebastian S. Kresge opened his first store in Detroit in 1897. Eventually, his business would turn into today's Kmart (Kresge-mart).
 - He believed in an "open display" policy. He felt that there should be no vacant space on any of the shelves. He believed this would entice consumers into buying items since they were so readily on display.
 - The shelves were stocked primarily items such as cloth, clothing, threads, etc., but also contained a few frivolous items to entice impulse purchases.
 - Play a guessing game of objects with the students. Chamber pot is popular.

Glancy Trains is a reward.

CONCLUDE TOUR

Please return the group to Wrigley Hall or the Café where they started.