



BRUCE MUSEUM

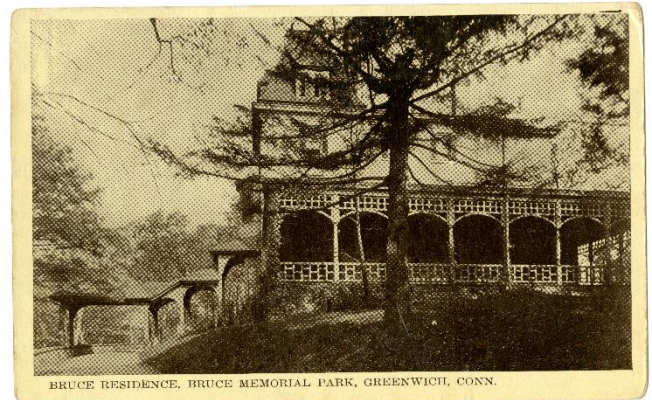
Travel 100 Years, Without Taking a Step: 21st Century Research

Bruce at Home Activity to Complement the Virtual Exhibition

[House on the Hill: The Changing Face of the Bruce Museum](#)

For Students in 3rd-8th Grade

Every place you visit has a story to tell, and the new virtual exhibition, [House on the Hill: The Changing Face of the Bruce Museum](#), provides a fascinating look at how the views of the Bruce Museum have transformed over the past century and a half. We welcome young learners to explore this online presentation, which features numerous historical images and anecdotes that tell the story of the evolution of the structure from its conversion from mansion to modern museum.



Once you've learned about the history of the Bruce Museum after [viewing the virtual exhibition online](#), you may be curious about some of the other buildings, monuments, memorials, and public spaces that you pass by every day. Timothy Walsh, the curator of *House on the Hill* and Collections Manager at the Bruce Museum, has this to say to budding historians:

“Historical research can be quite exhilarating. A historian is part detective, part mystery hunter, part scholar. Research can also be frustrating at times when source material is scarce, but that *Aha!* moment when you stumble across something amazing makes all the digging all worth it. Today, a great deal of historical research can be done online with digital collections, but there is nothing like handling original letters, photos, and objects that belonged to someone long lost. It is the only form of ‘time travel’ we have.”

Interested in starting a research project of your own? Use this guide to help you undertake your own in-depth research project, all about the topic of your choosing,

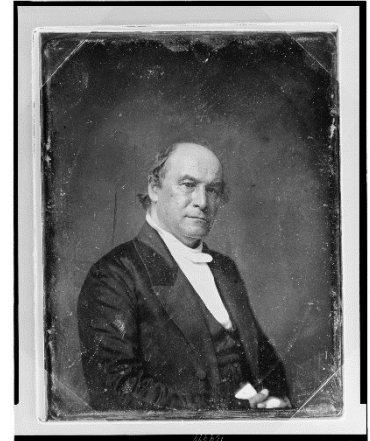


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Step 1: Narrow your focus topic (and stick to it!)

When Tim decided to research the history of the Bruce Museum, he had to make sure that his field of study was deep enough to be interesting, but not so deep that he got lost in all the details. He couldn't research every event or activity that had ever happened at the Bruce, and he couldn't research everyone who had ever been associated with the building.

One example of this was the Reverend Dr. Francis L. Hawks. He was the first owner of the building that was to become the Bruce Museum, but he was not involved with the conception of what was once his home into a museum. While research into Hawks (a very interesting figure in Greenwich history) was necessary, Walsh kept that work brief and to the point. That's why the first step in any research project will always be: **Narrow your focus topic (and stick to it!).**



The Reverend Dr. Francis L. Hawks: a fascinating person, but not the main focus of the *House on the Hill* exhibition.

Step 2: Decide how you want to conduct your research

Usually, research starts with a trip to the library or an historical society, or reaching out to local scholars. You might even choose to visit a museum, like the Bruce, to talk to an expert. Even when these places are closed, most have an accessible presence online that can help you research your topic. Below is a list of just a few digital resources that you can use to research your town and its monuments, memorials, buildings, and public spaces:

[Connecticut Historical Society Online Research Tools](#)

[Old House Web](#)

[National Register Bulletin: Researching a Historic Property](#)

[Landmark Society Research Resources](#)

[National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[National Register of Historic Places](#)



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Other ways to conduct your research:

- Visit your town website.
- Look up census data. (This page from the National Archives can get you started with census research: <https://www.archives.gov/research/census>)
- Connect with people who live in or nearby the property and ask them what they know. (Get permission from an adult to do this. Make sure you identify who you are and what you are doing.)
- Contact local realtors; they often have information about historic properties.
- Use the digital resources of local libraries.
- Visit websites such as www.hathitrust.org and www.archive.org for access to thousands of historical documents, books, and other information.
- Visit your local library digitally to find out if they have access to research engines like JSTOR.

Step 3: Decide the format you want your research to take

There are lots of different ways to present your research. The most typical is a report on paper, but there are other ways to tell the world about your project. Here are just a few:

- Visual timeline
- Poem
- Short story
- Written narrative told by a resident
- Website, much like the exhibition *House on the Hill*
- Walking tour, much like the [sculpture walking tour](#) on the Bruce Museum website
- A conversation or interview, either written or recorded
- A poster or tri-fold presentation
- A dramatization, such as a short play
- Create your own documentary. It doesn't have to be long!

You've got lots of ways to show off your talents as a budding researcher!



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If you aren't ready to dive all the way into your own research project just yet, take another look at the Bruce Museum, as it once was. Follow [this link](#) to a PDF line drawing of the Bruce Museum. This drawing is based on two images of the Bruce Museum, taken around 1910. Print out the image, color it in, and take a photo. With adult permission, post the photo to social media and add #brucemuseum, or send it to cflax@brucemuseum.org if you'd like it to be posted on the Museum's website.



Happy researching!