



## **AMERICA 250: TELLING TROY'S STORIES**

### **Oral History Project for Students – Grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>**

In addition to telling stories of historic people, buildings, and objects, Troy Historic Village also wants to tell the stories of people who live in Troy today. We are collecting oral histories from people in Troy – and that includes students like you! Oral histories are a way of collecting real stories from people and so for the future. Oral histories can help us understand the way that people lived in different times and places.

One of the ways people learn about the past is by reading things people left behind like journals and letters. Troy Historic Village is going to display the poster you make and then keep it in our archive (the place museums store their important stuff) so that people in the future can learn about what life was like in Troy in 2026.

### **Directions**

We are asking 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in Troy to make a museum-style interpretive sign about any part of their lives in Troy. You should write a few sentences to a paragraph about the story you want to share, and you can also include photos or drawings on your interpretive sign.

Museum exhibits are used to tell stories about people and places. They can be collections of photographs or art, or they can be an object or an entire building. Exhibits typically have an interpretive sign. These signs are usually only a couple of paragraphs and tell a short story about the exhibit including why it matters to the story the museum wants to tell.

Troy Historic Village has interpretive signs for its historic buildings. These signs tell visitors about how those buildings were used in the past and who built, lived in, or worked in them, and why those buildings are important to telling the story of Troy.

Your interpretive sign should be about a real place, person, or event in Troy. You can include your own opinions or feelings, but the story should be truthful. If you are writing about a person, you can ask them for details about their story. If you are not sure if your story takes place in Troy, you can ask a grown-up to help you check. You are welcome to write or type your story on another paper and attach it to the sign.



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Your sign can answer any of these questions:

1. What is a memory or story you have about your life in Troy? What makes Troy special for you? Think about your neighborhood or your favorite places in Troy.
2. Do you have a favorite story from your family in Troy? What makes Troy special for your family? Do you know why they chose to live here?
3. Is there a place in Troy that you want to remember and share with others? If you were going to show a visitor your favorite part of Troy, what story would you tell them?
4. What is the story of your family coming to live in Troy? Some families have been here for generations, and some are very new. Both are great stories and we would love to hear them.

### Examples of Student Histories:

This story tells about a place and an event that happened in Troy. It describes the place and includes details about what makes it important to the writer:


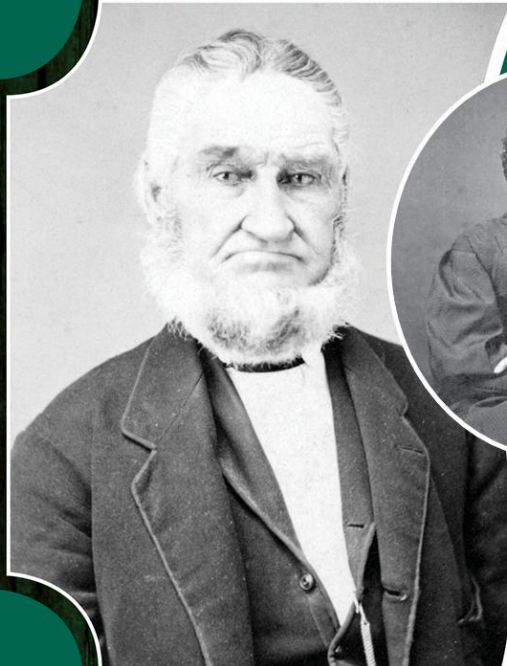
*When I was in first grade, I lived in a house in Troy that had a little forest behind the backyard fence. There was a little stream in the forest and there was a small bridge across it made of two bendy wooden planks. Kids on either side of the stream, like my best friend and myself, could visit each other. If we followed the stream through the forest we could get to the Rouge River, where we would feed breadcrumbs to the fish and look for the huge snapping turtle that lived under the big bridge on Beach Road. I only saw it once. One day I watched the work crew put a sign where the river went under the road that said, "Rouge River Main Branch: Ours to Protect." My mom told me it was to encourage people to keep the water clean.*

Your story can also be in the third person, about a place or someone you know. This story is about a place and a community:

*In the fall of 2002, some of the first graders at Schroeder Elementary found a small hole in a grove of trees near the playground blacktop. They decided to start digging to see how deep the hole could get. It was their favorite recess activity. They used sticks and rocks and their hands to dig the hole, and the dirt was always dry and dusty. When the ground froze that winter, they stopped digging and then in the spring it was too muddy and their teachers asked them to stop digging.*

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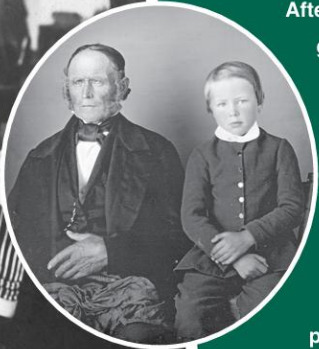

### Examples of Museum Interpretive Signs:



### Settler's Cabin

Built circa 1840

From Presidents to the common man, early Americans called log cabins home. Alva Butler walked 360 miles from New York to Buffalo; then sailed to Detroit. He settled in Troy Township and built a cabin near an Indian trail. That home was smaller than this settler's cabin, but he and Hulda raised six children in its single room. To improve relations with local Native Americans, Hulda baked extra bread and left the door unlocked so they could help themselves.



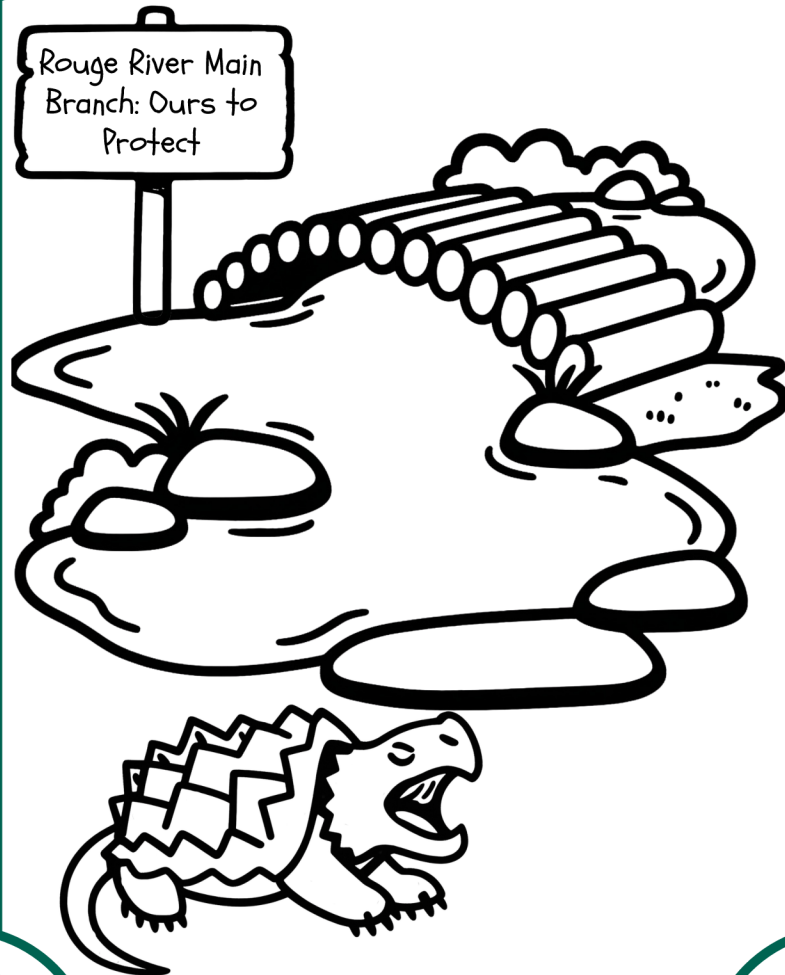
### Caswell House

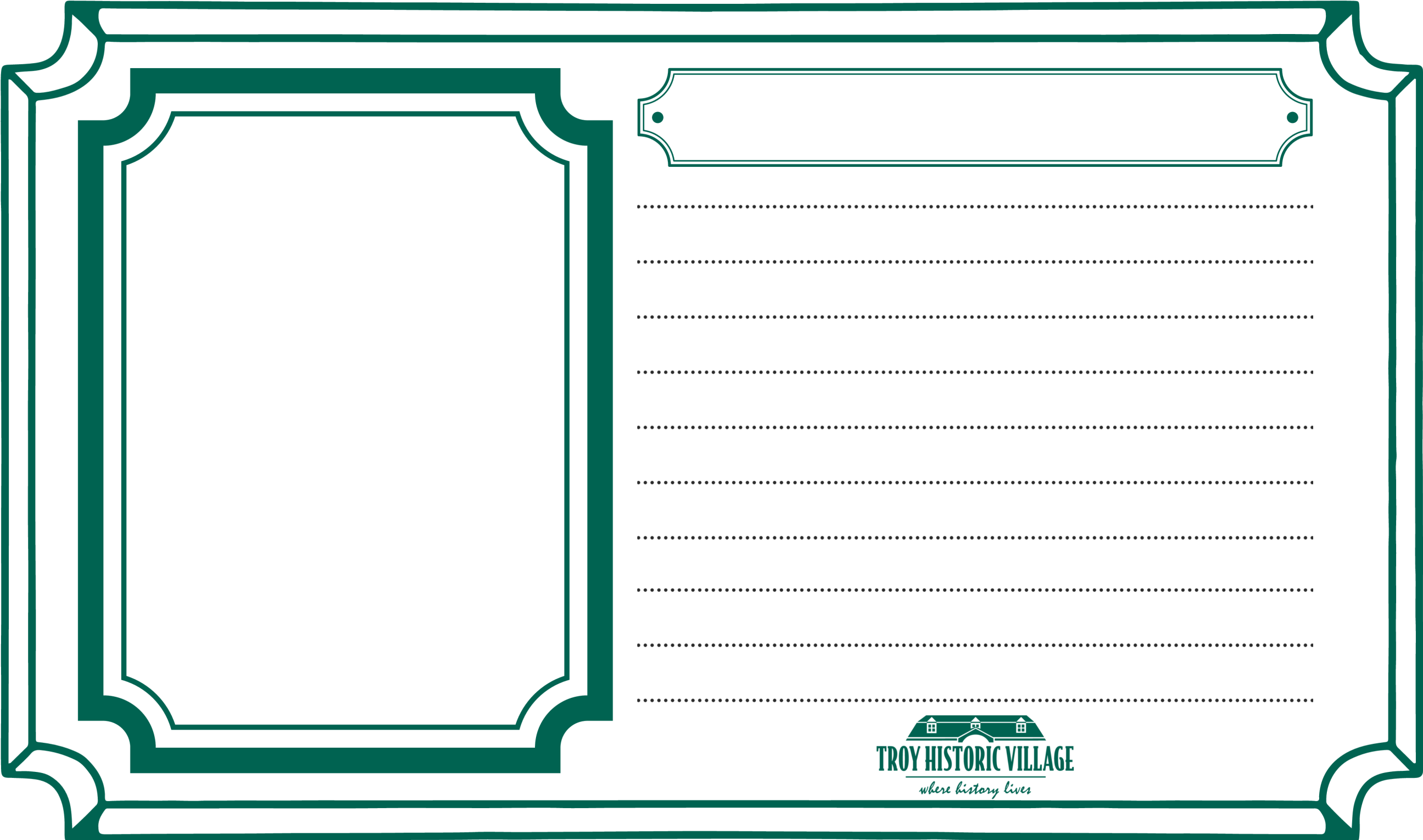
Built circa 1832

After a long life, pioneer Solomon Caswell gave his lovely home to his son George, pictured here with his father. Later George's children inherited the home. William and Inez were both school teachers and neither married. When they passed away, the home became the first addition to the Troy Historic Village. See Inez in this rare interior photo, writing a letter or lesson plan at her table. Read some of her letters in the everyday parlor.

# Lydia

When I was in first grade, I lived in a house in Troy that had a little forest behind the backyard fence. There was a little stream in the forest and there was a small bridge across it made of two bendy wooden planks. Kids on either side of the stream, like my best friend and myself, could visit each other. If we followed the stream through the forest we could get to the Rouge River, where we would feed breadcrumbs to the fish and look for the huge snapping turtle that lived under the big bridge on Beach Road. I only saw it once. One day I watched the work crew put a sign where the river went under the road that said, "Rouge River Main Branch: Ours to Protect." My mom told me it was to encourage people to keep the water clean.





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A series of ten horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, providing a guide for writing a paragraph or several lines of text.

