

# The Lens of the Local: Teaching an Appreciation of the Past through the Exploration of Local Sites, Landmarks, and Hidden Histories

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THE SLIM VOLUME, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*, by Harvard University landscape historian John Stilgoe, was one of the most transformative books I read in graduate school. It may come as no surprise to readers of this journal that this text was *not* assigned in a history course, but rather as a required text in an Introduction to Cultural Studies course taught by a professor in the English Department. Throughout the volume, which is aimed at a public audience, Stilgoe encourages his readers to get outside, explore (preferably on foot), and experience the wonders of the landscape, uncovering, in the process of close observation, the secrets of the built environment—present and past. Stilgoe is an advocate of unplugging from technology and reconnecting with our surrounding environments, and early on in his introduction, he explains how the benefits of such exploration can be brought into the classroom: “Students with no particular interest in schoolroom history involving presidential elections, treaties, and wars often awaken to the richness of spatial or visual history, simply because objects and even landscapes from the past have shaped their lives and



**Figure 1:** Ruins of the Mill Wheel at the site of the Oriental Powder Company, Windham, Maine. Photo Credit: Libby Bischof.

shape them still.”<sup>1</sup> More than any other pedagogical insight that I have encountered before or since, Stilgoe’s observation continues to shape my approach to teaching history to undergraduate students—first at Boston College and now at the University of Southern Maine.

Stilgoe’s observation has been proven true time and again in my classroom as a variety of students (majors and non-majors alike), bored with dates, chronology, rote memorization, and textbooks, awoken with interest to discussions and lectures about local history and field trips to local historical sites. For example, I find that a class field trip to the Cumberland-Oxford Canal and Oriental Powder Mill historic site, located on the borders of Gorham and Windham, Maine, is a far more dynamic way to teach and discuss the transportation and market revolutions of the early nineteenth century with my U.S. History survey students than an illustrated in-class lecture about the distant Erie Canal. When students walk the banks of the canal’s towpath and look at ruins of the powder mill (see **Figure 1**) that supplied a large amount of gunpowder for both the Crimean and Civil Wars, they are able to understand better the technological advances



**Figure 2:** The Tate House, built in 1755, Portland, Maine. Photo Credit: Lucie Tardif, former History of Maine student. Reprinted with permission.

of the era and are also capable of tangibly connecting a local story with events of national and global significance. Similarly, when my introductory Colonial American History course students visited the Tate House in Portland, Maine, built in 1755 (see **Figure 2**), they were able to envision family life in the late eighteenth century in a far more concrete manner than if they had just read a textbook chapter about colonial life in New England.

As W. Guy Clarke and John K. Lee explain in “The Promise of Digital History in the Teaching of Local History,” their 2004 study, “The study of local history enables students to connect to the major themes historians use to organize the past. Studying local history combines the benefits of authenticity and active engagement. Local history inquiry also provides especially fertile ground for improving students’ ability to contextualize their historical thinking, and, in turn, engage in self-reflection.”<sup>2</sup> In my own experience in teaching and *doing* local history with students over the course of the last decade, I have consistently found that when students are given the opportunity to actively engage with the past in a familiar environment, they are

more likely to model the work of professional historians, engage in the historical process, and retain the knowledge they gained well beyond the scope of a semester's coursework. If part of our job as history educators is to prepare students to be informed, literate, active, and analytical citizens of their communities, then what better place to start than with encouraging them to really learn and contextualize the history of their own communities? To this end, this article explores student responses to a semester-long local history assignment—ten local history site visits and write-ups—given every year in my History of Maine course. Although a local history assignment certainly makes pedagogical sense in a course about local history, I argue that the benefits of engaging in local history with students transcend both historical specialization and education level. Similar assignments and activities can be done with elementary, middle school, secondary, and college students.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Local History Assignment: Site Visit Journals for History of Maine**

As a nineteenth-century United States cultural historian, I teach a variety of U.S. History courses at the University of Southern Maine (USM), a mid-size public regional comprehensive university largely comprised of students from the state of Maine. Although I assign local history assignments to a variety of my survey-level and more advanced classes, for the purposes of this article, I am focusing on a substantial local history project I annually assign to my HTY 360: History of Maine students. History of Maine is an upper-level history elective that is also open to students from other disciplines. The course traces the rather complex history of Maine from pre-history to the present, beginning with the Native American populations who first settled the land 12,000 years ago, and emphasizing the territory as a contested site of English and French colonization and empire-building until the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars of the eighteenth century. We study Maine's bid for separation (from Massachusetts) and statehood, realized in 1820, and Maine's important role in social reform movements of the early nineteenth century, including temperance, abolition, and woman's suffrage. We also spend a great deal of time on the development of Maine's natural resource economy—including lumber, shipbuilding,

fishing, ice harvesting, granite, and agriculture—as well as how the subsequent decline of many of these industries after the Civil War led to Maine’s economic reliance on tourism, and the development of the still-present “Maine myth”—the often touted notion that Maine is a historic, pristine environment, perfect for relaxation and disconnecting from the trials of urban civilization, a place somehow frozen in time. We study transportation innovations, politics, and Maine’s relationship with the larger United States throughout the twentieth century, ending the course with many discussions on contemporary Maine issues. Readings vary from popular texts such as Colin Woodard’s history of coastal Maine, *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier*; Bunny McBride’s beautifully woven histories of Wabanaki women in Maine, *Women of the Dawn*; Sarah Orne Jewett’s popular 1896 novella, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*; James Leamon’s *Revolution Downeast: The War for American Independence in Maine*, as well as a variety of monographs and scholarly articles concerning colonization, social reform movements, and Maine’s natural resource industries, tourism, and politics.

Taught at least once per year, the class consistently fills or over-enrolls the cap of thirty students. While the majority of the class consists of History majors and minors, I frequently have students from the Education, Political Science, English, Communication and Media Studies, French, and Geography-Anthropology Departments, as well as students from the Tourism and Hospitality major. It also tends to be a popular course for international students studying abroad at USM. The course sometimes attracts interested university employees and members of the general public. As a result, the class composition is generally diverse in age, academic interests, and overall perspective. The course works best when it comprises students who hail from a variety of Maine communities—Northern, Southern, Central, and Coastal—as well as students “from away,” though I, of course, have no control over that distribution.

In an average class, at least 80% of the students are native to Maine. Maine is a state whose economy relies heavily on tourism, and many of my students are locally employed in the service industry. Given the fact that most of the students are from Maine, and that many are both weary and leery of tourists, I find that significant numbers of them have never visited many of the historical sites, parks, museums,

local historical societies, historic houses, monuments, landmarks, and cemeteries that dot the landscape of Southern Maine, where the University is located. As is so often the case in a popular tourist locale, the people who live in the community rarely go to the so-called tourist attractions or historic sites, except when people from out of town visit. The project for the local history site visit is designed to help break down barriers and preconceptions (“these sites are only for tourists”) and encourages students to visit and study places that they pass by every day in order to gain a fuller and richer understanding of Maine’s history. Over the course of the semester, all students must choose ten local historical sites and visit these sites in person. USM has both a substantial residential and commuter population, with three campuses—in the city of Portland, the city of Lewiston, and the town of Gorham (located twenty minutes west of Portland). A shuttle bus connects the Portland and Gorham campuses. Even if a student does not have access to a car, there are ample local sites of historical interest within walking distance of all of the campuses to satisfy the terms of the assignment. As an addendum to their course syllabus, students are also given a substantial list of recommended potential sites (over seventy-five), including, but not limited to: museums, parks, historic houses, monuments, historical societies, history trails, cemeteries, forts, and lighthouses. It is also made clear that students are welcome to explore their own hometowns when home for the weekend or on a break, and they are encouraged to choose sites *not* included on the list, provided that they can argue for the historical significance of their chosen site. This freedom to choose particular sites allows them additional ownership and agency within the scope of the assignment, and also adds to my own knowledge of Maine’s history, as students frequently choose to visit heretofore little-known sites from their hometowns.

Whenever possible, the students are encouraged to connect their site visits with events, people, and themes from the course and assigned readings that they are interested in. For example, in recent years, I have found that many of the students are interested in changing modes of transportation in Maine, and popular sites have included various bridges around the state, the Trolley Museum in Old Orchard Beach, the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum in Portland, the Riverton Trolley Park in Portland, the Sandy River Rangeley Lakes Narrow Gauge Railroad (still in operation), and the

Owls Head Transportation Museum in Owls Head, Maine. Journal entries on transportation history tend to provide interesting glimpses into the ways in which Maine residents have adapted land use over time. In a journal entry from the fall of 2013, a senior History major visiting home for the weekend decided to visit the Two Cent Bridge—purportedly the last toll footbridge in the United States—located on the Kennebec River between Waterville and Winslow, Maine. After describing the history of the bridge, which was built in 1901, he wrote:

Toll footbridges mark a time when employment was highly localized and both the means and need for transportation were limited. With major factories in both Winslow and Waterville, many workers would simply seek freedom to move between these two places. Toll footbridges such as this one would have increased the scope of labor markets, with the means of finding employment and getting between the two towns being readily available. The tollhouse itself... is on the Waterville side of the bridge. These days the small tollhouse is empty, and the bridge has been free for passage since 1960. It is owned by the city of Waterville, and is often traveled by those seeking scenic walks that span across the two towns it connects.<sup>4</sup>

His entry reflects a sophisticated understanding of the links between labor and transportation, as well as a solid grasp of change over time vis-à-vis the repurposing of a once heavily trafficked transportation site into a recreational site—a very common phenomena in Maine, especially with the recent proliferation of multi-use trails across the state that follow former railroad lines. Each week, as the class moves through various units in Maine history, I remind students of the site visit assignment and suggest sites relevant to the course content for the week. So, for instance, as we study Maine in the Revolutionary War era, students are encouraged to visit Portland's waterfront, burned to the ground in a 1775 attack by the British, or, later in the course, when we focus on the development of tourism as a substantial piece of Maine's economy, to visit some of the grand hotels in Southern Maine towns like Wells, Old Orchard Beach, and Kennebunkport, or to travel to Freeport to the L.L. Bean headquarters, or even up to Acadia National Park.

In addition to visiting the ten sites, students must perform two tasks for each site visit. First, they are required to take notes at the site and record the current condition of the site, including what they

see, who else is visiting, whether or not the site is well maintained, and other general observations. When they return from the site visit, they must conduct some historical research to determine the history of the site and its local, state, and national (if relevant) significance. This research can be done using class textbooks, guidebooks, the Internet, the library, or even (given the presence of guides, docents, interpretive panels, or brochures) at the site itself. Once the students finish the visit, the observations, and the historical research, they must then do a write-up for each site that includes the history of the site, their observations while visiting, and the larger historical significance of the site. Write-ups average 500-750 words per site visit.

Students are given two choices in terms of how they want to present their site visits: they can keep a physical journal (either handwritten or typed) that they pass in, or they can do their write-ups on a blog. In the spring semester of 2008, when I began giving this assignment, roughly 10% of the class chose to blog; in the fall of 2013, roughly 85% of the class chose to blog. Over the course of the past five years, I have found that as students are increasingly at ease with digital forms of expression, they prefer to keep a blog. At the start of the semester, I provide a list of free blogging services, such as Blogger, Tumblr, or WordPress, and walk students through setting up an account. Once they set up their blog, they e-mail me a link to the site, and I set up a spreadsheet with all of the URLs so I can easily access and track the assignments. Students have the option of making their blog private, so only the student and the instructor can see it, or they can share it with the public. When a student cites a source in the historical significance section, they must include either a footnote, a bibliography, or a hyperlink in their entries. Students are also required to provide proof of each site visit—this is most often done with a cell phone photograph of the student at the site, but sometimes comes in the form of a ticket, a signed brochure, or even an official letter from a park ranger. I also encourage students to visit sites in pairs, or to bring along friends and family members, which many do. Students who create their site visit journals on blogs also tend to illustrate each entry with a variety of images beyond the required proof of visitation.

This assignment is worth 25% of a student's grade for the History of Maine course. In addition to the local history site visits, and fairly extensive course readings for class discussion, each student must

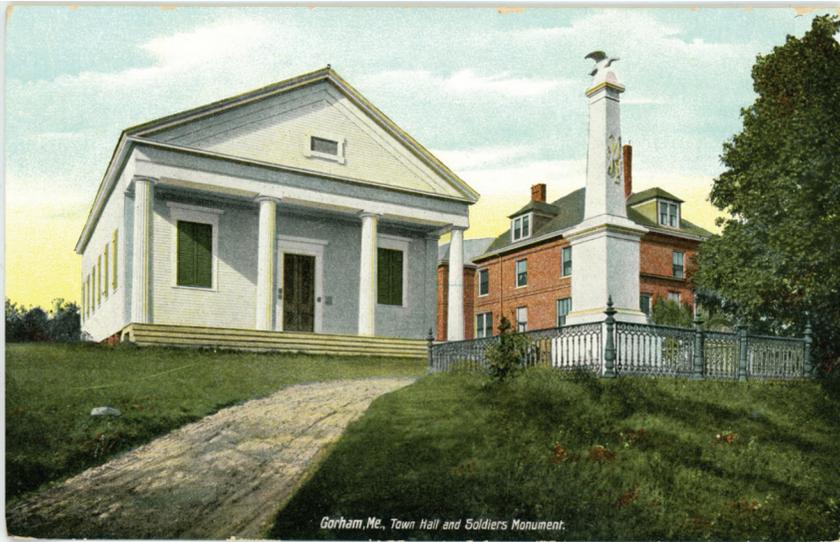
complete two short reading response essays, a take-home midterm examination, a primary source review and analysis, a creation of a historic postcard, and a final project exploring any aspect of the history of Maine from prehistory to the present. The final project can take many forms, including a traditional ten-page research paper, a website, a visual anthology, a radio or video documentary, or a service-learning project. The service-learning project has become increasingly popular with my students in recent years. This option requires the student to volunteer fifteen hours of their time to a local organization (recent sites included the Preble Street Soup Kitchen, the Portland Trails Organization, and local K-12 afterschool programs) and then write a short reflection about their experience and the importance of their chosen organization's work to Maine's past and present. Many of the students who engage in the service-learning project also make their volunteer experience an integral part of their site visit journal, which I encourage.

All of my course assignments (See abridged syllabus in the **Appendix**), including the site visit journal, are aimed to increase the student's knowledge and understanding of Maine's past, to connect the student with their local environment, and to reflect upon how the past can inform us and help to solve some of Maine's most pressing contemporary issues—outmigration of young residents, poverty and hunger, job training and creation, environmental conservation, energy policy, and civil rights issues, among many others. The overall theme of my History of Maine course rests in its subtitle, "The Way Life Should Be?" a play off of Maine's popular "The Way Life Should Be" slogan aimed at tourists. To this end, a continual issue raised throughout the course by both the students and myself is the profound differences between the marketed version of life in Maine for the prospective tourists versus the actual lived experiences of Maine's residents (past and present)—particularly the majority of those who struggle to make ends meet in a cold climate and challenging economy. In some ways, the site visit journal assignment is a way for students to work to reconcile the state's past with *their* present, and to look for interesting intersections, thus solidifying their own community connections and encouraging them to become more fully invested in Maine's present and future.

Like any assignment given to a diverse group of undergraduates, the final site visit journals vary in terms of quality. The journals are



**Figure 3:** Gorham, Maine, Civil War Monument, erected 1866. Photo Credit: Libby Bischof.



**Figure 4:** Historic postcard of the Gorham, Maine, Civil War Monument, erected 1866. Image Credit: Courtesy of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine. Reprinted with permission.

collected—either physically or virtually—twice a semester, and each entry is worth ten points and graded on a scale of 0-10 (best). I weight the assignment heavily (25%) so students will take the site visit journal seriously. The assignment is presented to students as part of the syllabus on the first day of class; I make it clear that because we are studying local history, we must also use the surrounding environment as our classroom—not only for the site visit journals, but also for other class field trips as well. If we visit a site together as a class, such as the Maine Historical Society, Portland Museum of Art, or the Gorham, Maine, Civil War Monument (see **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**), I encourage students to include that site as one of their ten site visits. Of the dozens of assignments I give over the course of the semester, I must admit that I take the greatest pleasure in reading the site visit journals and blogs for History of Maine. As students immerse themselves in the assignment throughout the semester, their write-ups become more detailed, their historical analysis sharpens, and themes begin to emerge in their work. For instance, I have had students begin a journal with one site in their hometown, and then

end up doing all ten site visits there. Some students have decided to explore only parks or cemeteries, while others have focused on war memorials, coastal sites, or on issues of conservation and sustainability. The broad scope of the assignment allows students to follow their own interests. For instance, the course itself is not heavy on military history, but a student interested in military history could easily visit ten sites with a connection to Maine's military past. An art student could visit artist colonies, museums, or artists' houses, etc. The students who are Maine natives also tend to visit at least one site that they remember visiting as children. To this end, one of my students returned to the site of the Mayall Woolen Mill on Megquire Road, in the rural town of Gray, Maine. She wrote:

My first memory of the Mayall Woolen Mill is from around 1969. I was with my paternal grandparents driving up and down Mayall road trying to locate some of the brick and stone ruins. Unfortunately we never found the site because of the dense undergrowth covering the area. Later, around 1975, I became aware of the site as a drinking spot for local youth. Trash and broken beer bottles littered the remains of the granite foundations...the remains of the mill were a sad and poorly used piece of Maine history. Today, however, the Mayall Woolen Mill is a Maine State Historic Site. The brush, as well as some trees, have been cleared from the area. Rough paths run through the site...informational signs and interpretive panels are also located adjacent to the Megquire Road.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, the site of the Mayall Woolen Mill has changed dramatically over the years, and to highlight these changes, the student included a picture of herself standing next to the large interpretive historical panels as well as a historic postcard of the mill still functioning at the turn-of-the-century. The remainder of her entry elaborated upon the history of the mill, its relation to the town of Gray, and her pride in the fact that the site was now accessible to a new generation of residents and visitors. The notion of studying change over time is sometimes a difficult concept for students, especially non-history majors, but when they can physically document and recall some of these changes, they become more connected to the ebb and flow of history.

The assignment is not without its challenges, however, and many of these challenges arise when helping students navigate methods of understanding, interpreting, and, at times, mediating conflicting

or difficult histories of the sites they encounter, or, more frequently, how to gain access to information about historical sites that have been abandoned or forgotten. Within these difficulties come some of the more interesting teachable moments in the class. Around the times of the semester when the journals are due, I will often start the class by asking if anyone wants to talk about a recent site visit. What typically comes up in these informal class discussions is an explanation of how the student was able to write a lot about what they saw at the site, but that he or she is having a hard time finding additional information on the site's history. These are important moments of intervention and offer opportunities to more fully explore how historians track down sources. Like many of their peers, my students look to the Internet to help them track down more about their sites (first stop, Google). For well-known historic sites, like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's boyhood home or the United States Custom House (both in Portland), search engines quickly lead the students to websites maintained by the city or the Maine Historical Society, where they are able to locate detailed and factual information. But for less well-known sites, like neighborhood cemeteries, abandoned mills, and older homes not on the National Historic Register, the search engines do not return the requisite details needed to complete the assignment. This is where I will take the time to model search engines as a starting point for research on the history and significance of local historical sites, but not the ending point. I teach students how to explore library databases for scholarly articles, how to visit and seek assistance from local archives, museums, and historical societies, and advise them about what books on Maine history might be relevant for their site. We also frequently consult the Maine Historical Society's excellent online resource, the Maine Memory Network at <http://www.mainememory.net>. Touted as the state's "digital museum," the Maine Memory Network (MMN) is a readily accessible online source that provides access to thousands of historic items belonging to over 260 organizations from across the state of Maine. The items always include contextual material, and are frequently linked with town histories and how the items are situated within Maine's history. The curator of the MMN, a public historian, also visits my class at the start of each semester in order to familiarize the students with the inner workings of the site. As students become more comfortable with the site, they frequently include older images of their historical

sites housed on the MMN in their journals as interesting points of comparison and historical analysis.

In these class discussions about how to best put together the narrative aspects of the site visit journal, we also talk about what to do when a student finds conflicting information about a site's history in various sources—anything from differing dates to wildly diverse interpretations of history and significance. We work together to scour bibliographies, footnotes, and other reference materials for common sources in an attempt to solve the point/s of contention, but ultimately, as the student crafts his or her own interpretation of the historical site they chose to visit, they must mediate these conflicts themselves, and make a choice about the evidence that best supports their interpretation of the site. Whenever possible, I encourage students to include multiple perspectives in their own historical narratives, especially in regards to how sites have been used over time, and by whom. This is especially important in early colonial sites (e.g., Fort Popham in Phippsburg, Maine, the original site of the Popham Colony, first settled by the English in 1607) in regards to settlement and trade patterns with the Native Americans and later territorial conflicts with French explorers and fur traders.

Additionally, Maine, like most places, has its controversial and painful historical moments that students must also reckon with when doing their site visit journals. One that comes up frequently is the tragic story of the mixed-race residents of Malaga Island, a small island in the Midcoast area of Maine, who were evicted from their homes by the state in 1912. This was, according to the documentary, *Malaga Island: A Story Best Left Untold*, “an act motivated by economics, racism, eugenics, and political retribution.”<sup>6</sup> Students encounter this story when they choose to visit Pineland Farms, which is now a popular multi-use site for family recreation, a local farm market, office buildings, a retreat and conference center, and a large dairy. Pineland, however, was once the campus of the Maine School for the Feeble-Minded, which opened in 1908, and some of the residents of Malaga were removed to the institution, and the island's dead were removed and re-interred in the Pineland Cemetery. Students who visit Pineland and find out more about the history of the campus are often shocked by the connection with Malaga, as well as the history of the institution. The many stories of Malaga Island, not discussed in any great detail in Maine for many years, are

now far more well-known thanks to the genealogical and recovery work of Malaga's descendants, recent archeological excavations of the island, as well as the aforementioned documentary and an excellent exhibition at the Maine State Museum in 2013. The island is now a preserve owned by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Many students have a hard time reconciling this part of Maine's past with their own understanding of the state, but that is part of the value of these site visit assignments—they reveal so many of Maine's well-known and hidden histories—and allow students to emerge with a more complex understanding of the state's past, and the way that the telling and retelling of history changes—often drastically—over time. I could continue ad nauseam about the benefits and drawbacks of an assignment I created, but the true evidence in support of the success or failure of the assignment necessarily originates from the students who completed the ten site visits; their assessments of the assignment are valuable indicators of the potential of local history work in the K-12 and post-secondary classrooms.

### **Assessment and Student Feedback**

Under the pretext of preparing for this article in the Summer and Fall of 2013, I sent out a mass e-mail via our course management system requesting feedback from students who had enrolled in History of Maine in Fall 2011 and Spring 2013. I chose to include the Fall 2011 group because nearly two years had passed since they completed the assignment and I wanted to see what, if anything, they retained. For the Spring 2013 group, I knew the assignment would be fresh in their minds, as they had just completed it three months prior. In the e-mail communication, I informed the students I was writing an article about the site visit assignment and asked them to respond to my e-mail with a summary of their experiences completing the site visits and write-ups, as well as any positive or negative experiences they had with the assignment and any additional commentary or feedback they wished to provide. I sent the e-mail to sixty-three students; much to my surprise, within twenty-four hours I had received over twenty responses—many from students who had already graduated from USM. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, and incredibly revealing regarding the lasting effects and the deep and meaningful connections made while doing local history as an undergraduate.

What follows is an assessment of the site visit assignment from the perspective of a variety of undergraduate students. In general, their comments included fond remembrances of the course and their fellow students, a deep engagement and sense of ownership and pride in regards to their site visit journals, gratitude for the opportunity to connect with and learn more about their local communities, and—much to my surprise and interest—discussions about how they shared this work with friends and family, and how some have continued the site visits and write-ups long after the conclusion of the semester.

One thing I was conscious of when first giving this assignment was the fact that it was going to take more time than an average course assignment, especially when factoring in travel time to various sites. Many of my students work full-time while attending classes, and many have family responsibilities as well. To this end, one student expressed an initial concern about the time factor. She wrote:

At first I was leery due to the fact that I feared it would be time consuming, but I found that my experience with the site journals was very eye opening. I had visited many of these sites before, but never thought to look at them in a factual, historical form. I found interviewing people at the sites where local people were available to be most illuminating and I learned many anecdotes that I was later able to research and use in my journals. I loved doing these journals so much that I am going to continue to write on my blog. I have found it to be a helpful tool in illuminating to my family and friends the historical background of their favorite “tourist places.” While I won’t be able to do it as consistently as we did in class, every place I have visited this summer I have continued to do research on to write up future blog entries. I also hope to be able to use something like this someday in my future classrooms.<sup>7</sup>

This student’s response to the assignment is quite revealing in a variety of ways. She, like many other students, returned to familiar places, and looked at them through a different lens—the lens of actively doing local history as opposed to being a passive visitor. It is clear from the e-mail that she consistently modeled the work of a historian when observing the site and collecting her research, especially in regards to interviewing people who were staffing or working the sites. Particularly gratifying to me are her final two comments, which convey the lasting impact of the assignment—that

the student continued with the site visit blog entries beyond the end of the course and that, as an Elementary Education major, she intends to model this activity in her own classroom. This student was not the only one to discuss the impact of the assignment beyond the end of the course. Because of the digital nature of the blog entries, even if the students never add to the journal again, the URLs frequently remain active. To this end, a 2011 student remarked:

Admittedly, this project was a lot of work, but it was also one of my favorite projects during my undergraduate career. Unlike other projects—which are now stored in a closet never to be seen again—this one remains on the Internet for the whole world to use. In fact, 47 people have viewed it this month (August 2013) and my post about Fort Baldwin is a top-ten Google Search result. This doesn't make me famous, but it does mean that my work is useful to those interested in the subject. Other classwork I've invested time in will never be seen by anybody and, thus, has no use value.

This response, from a male Sociology major, raised an issue I had not given much thought to—the long-term benefits of a born-digital assignment in terms of helping others gain information about a particular historical site. For this student, the satisfaction of a job well done has continued two years beyond the end of the course, as he still checks in on his blog and cites its popularity on Google as evidence of the usefulness of his work. It is clear that use value is important to this student, who laments that the bulk of his college assignments remain tucked away in storage and rarely consulted. An important by-product, then, of the site visit journals done in blog form is the addition of my students' work on the history and significance of local historical sites to the larger body of material available on the Internet to both the casual and serious researcher.

Another comment common to many student evaluations of the project concerned the benefits of learning from physical site visits as opposed to in-class lectures or textbooks. A female French major from the 2011 cohort recalled:

I absolutely loved the site visits that we did for class...I think personally visiting sites, and having to do enough research to write an article about them helped me learn more than if I had just read about them in a book. The places I visited expanded my knowledge of Maine's history, especially in the areas of conservation, the arts, and minority populations...

Letting us post our articles in blog form tied it together nicely as well. I still go back and look at mine sometimes. It turned out to be work I could be proud of.

Many students likewise expressed continued pride in their site visit journals; on the whole, I was also struck with the thoughtful and reflective nature of their responses to the assignment, even two years later. To my mind, this speaks to a heightened level of engagement both with the history of the sites they visited as well as the creation of their own interpretations of the sites.

Regarding the benefits of physical activity and personal exploration, another student from the 2013 cohort wrote:

As an education major with little experience in the subject of history, I loved getting out into the community and learning about my surroundings. It was refreshing to leave the confines of the library and spend some time exploring and learning new things about my hometown...

I consider the History of Maine site visit blog one of the most well-rounded assignments I have received in quite a while. In the few months since the assignment, I have made references to my historical site visit experiences in my work, school, and family life.

In a similar vein, another of her classmates recalled:

I found the out-of-classroom historical site visits to be incredibly valuable. To be taught Maine history through books, slideshows, and discussion is all well and pleasant, but to have that knowledge and to go see proof of it in real life makes local history a lot more tangible, and therefore, easier to understand and appreciate.

As previously mentioned, in their 2004 study, Clarke and Lee lauded the potential of local history in regards to deepening a student's self-reflective capabilities. The above quote serves as further evidence for their contention, as this student, a female History major from the 2013 cohort, is clearly able to articulate how a greater appreciation and understanding of history was facilitated by the tangible connections brought forth through direct interaction with historic sites and landscapes.

Student responses also indicate the effectiveness of one of my larger and more esoteric goals for the project—promoting active citizenship and a deeper engagement with the students' local communities. To this end, a female History major from the 2013 cohort explained:

For the historical site project, I chose to focus on sites in my hometown. It was a great experience. Having lived there my whole life, I was surprised how much I didn't know. At first I thought it would be difficult to find ten historical sites, but I kept stumbling upon one historical marker after the other that I had never noticed before or just never bothered to stop and read.

This assignment encourages students to pay closer attention to their physical surroundings, and asks them to be constantly vigilant for both hidden historical landmarks as well as those they pass by every day. The student, a lifelong resident of the small town of Eliot, Maine, was able to gain a deeper connection to her hometown through the completion of her site visit journal. In her e-mail, she also related to me that she was continuing to research an interesting female leader from her town's past that she first encountered on her site visits, and, even though she has already graduated, the student intends to write a research paper on the life of this woman and her significance to Maine's history. Similarly, a male Political Science major from the 2011 cohort recalled:

[T]he visits were actually really enjoyable and educational. I happened to be in Sanford that year and visited a number of places that really informed me about the history and culture of Sanford. For example, I visited the Sanford/Springvale Historical Society and got some really in depth and interesting information about the history of the many abandoned mills in Sanford.

In addition to connecting students to local landscapes and landmarks, for many students, the assignment also brought them into contact with the men and women who staff local libraries and historical societies, who are, by and large, quite pleased to help the students research the historical significance of their chosen sites.

Students frequently commented on the retention of the knowledge gained from doing their site visits. One Education major from the 2011 cohort wrote:

Two years later I still remember all of the places I visited and what I learned about them. I still talk about them when I pass by them. "Did you know Frederick Douglass spoke here?" "Did you know that over a third of the gun powder used by the Union in the Civil War was produced in Gorham?" It was just a lot of fun for me. This class really opened my eyes to a lot of fascinating places I wouldn't have otherwise been motivated to visit in college. I felt excited and

motivated to go on my “history adventures,” and just as excited to share them in class that week. I got the impression that everyone in that class shared the same enthusiasm.

Similarly, another male History major from the 2013 cohort responded:

Working with the journals and being away from the textbooks was a fun and educational way of learning about some of Maine’s historical landmarks. Going to see the places before I did the research on them gave me a deep appreciation of the subject I was researching. Doing the online journal format was a new and exciting way of doing a “report” on historical places or landmarks. I found that after I had visited a place and then doing the research on that subject made the new information I had learned about Maine and its history was then retained better than just reading it out of a textbook.

He was not the only one to notice the differences in the retention of information between textbook reading and hands-on interactive learning. An Education major from the 2011 cohort recalled:

It was a lot of fun being able to decide which historical sites I wanted to visit and research instead of being told which ones to use. I learned a lot of history about my hometown that I did not know before, and it was so much more beneficial than reading from a textbook. The history stuck with me more than a textbook because I could see and touch history instead of just reading about it and trying to remember everything.

These responses and others revealed to me another unexpected (but welcome) by-product of the assignment, and I think one of the main reasons that the students recall the assignment and their experiences visiting their chosen sites in such vivid detail was because it was *fun* for them. To this end, as a female Media Studies major and member of the 2013 cohort expressed:

The historic site visit journal assignment was a great deal of fun...It was particularly thrilling to visit my favorite American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s boyhood home at last, even though I’ve lived in Portland nearly 30 years and worked next door to the home for over a decade! Working on this assignment pushed me to see things I otherwise have missed.

One of my end goals with this assignment is always to teach students new techniques for reading and seeing their daily landscapes,

which includes, first and foremost, the act of stopping and taking the time to look at, and then find out more about their surroundings. Once students get in the habit of stopping and looking, they can then work to reveal the sometimes hidden and layered histories of places they pass by daily.

### Conclusion

In some ways, the site visit journals for History of Maine, particularly the blogs, serve as a form of public history—the students act as public historians when they interpret and present the history of their chosen sites to their class and the wider Internet community.<sup>8</sup> In their “Best Practices in Public History for Undergraduate Students,” the National Council on Public History (NCPH) recommends: “History Departments should encourage faculty to engage students in the community through public history. Benefits include: highlighting the strengths of their department to university and college administrators; increased student achievement; and eligibility for numerous grants that support service learning.”<sup>9</sup> With this assignment, I send at least thirty students a year out into local Maine communities. They frequently engage in conversations with tourists, site managers, librarians, archivists, and community members. In terms of increased student achievement, I have found that students who have trouble with more traditional course assignments (exams, essays, etc.) tend to perform well on the site visit assignment. I attribute this increased performance to the hands-on aspect of the assignment, as well as the sense of “ownership” students take on in regards to the design and presentation of the project. In addition to promoting engagement in the local community, the assignment can also foster career discernment, especially for History majors. As one female History major from the 2011 cohort recalled:

I liked the experience of doing site visits. First of all, people like talking to students about what they do and how they got there, so the interactions with employees of any particular site were really valuable. I remember spending a lot of time on site visits thinking, ‘I could be happy doing this. I wonder how you go about obtaining employment at [xyz].’ At that point in my degree, it was helpful to consider what directions it could take me.

This student went on to intern at the Portland Museum of Art, one of her site visit locations, the following semester.

Admittedly, for some students, the site visit assignment is just another assignment, something that must be completed to receive a grade in the course. For other students, however, the assignment is an act of discovery, or, in some cases, re-discovery, and an opportunity to reconnect with their local communities. At its best moments, the assignment fosters a greater appreciation for the importance of place in our daily lives, and the importance of history in our understanding of the places we call home. To this end, one female History major from the 2013 cohort wrote:

The site visit blog was an incredible way to rediscover the city I grew up in. The interactive nature of this assignment promoted knowledge, pride, and love of place. Furthermore, I developed literal and figurative connections with local entities—I conversed with local librarians, explored local monuments, appreciated local cemeteries, supported local renovation efforts, and realized the multiplicity of local histories that were glossed over in high school social studies classes.

She finished her comment with a very telling statement, and one that was not unique to her personal experience, but was a common reflection: “Most importantly, I learned from this assignment that history is relevant.” Not only is history relevant, but the process of continually giving and grading this assignment for the past eight years has reinforced to me that it will only continue to remain so if we can encourage a new generation of students to actively learn about the past and become stakeholders in preservation. As I completed this article at the end of the Fall 2013 semester, I had just finished reading through another series of site visit journals from a new cohort of History of Maine students. I read dozens of entries during finals week, but one paragraph, from a senior English major, has really stayed with me. She wrote in her final entry in response to her newfound knowledge about the Gorham, Maine, Civil War monument:

This project has been both enlightening and somewhat depressing. There are so many historical things around this great state that have been forgotten. So many influential and important people that aren't recognized anymore, landmarks that are overgrown and destroyed. I may only be a History minor, but this project has made me want to see these historical sites revived and restored, acknowledged again!<sup>10</sup>

At the very end of his prize-winning study, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*, Sam Wineburg observes that “The calculus classroom may be the site where we learn advanced mathematics, but we learn history everywhere—school hardly possesses a monopoly.”<sup>11</sup> When we teach students to employ what I call the “lens of the local,” and when we encourage engaging contemporary landscapes in the study of the past, we remind students that history lives beyond the textbook, beyond the museum, beyond the classroom, beyond the Internet. It lives in our local landscapes, and it deserves to be acknowledged, recognized, and passed on to subsequent generations, in the hopes that they, like my senior English major, will become involved in the cycle of preservation. While not every history course lends itself easily to the inclusion of local history, I encourage readers, college instructors, and K-12 professionals alike, to think about places that you can include site visits and local history activities within your curriculum. Your students will demonstrate a whole new level of engagement with and retention of material, and you will give them valuable experience modeling the work of historians in their own lives—skills they can employ throughout a lifetime of learning.

## Notes

1. John Stilgoe, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining Historical Awareness in Everyday Places* (New York: Walker and Co., 1998), 6-7.

2. W. Guy Clarke and John K. Lee, “The Promise of Digital History in the Teaching of Local History,” *The Clearing House* 78, no. 2 (November-December 2004): 84.

3. It is important to note at the outset of this article that the major body of evidence for the claims I make throughout the article does not come from established experts in the field, but rather from the reflections of students who completed the assignment the article focuses upon. The level of insight in the self-reflections generated by my students who engaged in local history over the course of a semester supports Clarke and Lee’s contentions about the importance of including local history in a variety of classroom experiences in both the K-12 and collegiate levels.

4. Caleb Vick, “The 2 Cent Bridge,” *Defining Dirigo* (blog), 25 December 2013, <<http://definingdirigo.blogspot.com/2013/12/the-2-cent-bridge.html>>.

5. Beth Monsivais, “The Mayall Woolen Mill,” student journal entry, *Maine: Historical Site Visits*, Fall 2013, 3-4.
6. *Malaga Island: A Story Best Left Untold* is a radio and photo documentary produced by WMPG-FM and the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, and can be viewed at <<http://www.malagaislandmaine.org>>. See also “Malaga Island, Fragmented Lives—Educational Materials” at the Maine State Museum website: <[http://www.mainestatemuseum.org/exhibits/malaga\\_island\\_fragmented\\_lives\\_-\\_educational\\_materials/](http://www.mainestatemuseum.org/exhibits/malaga_island_fragmented_lives_-_educational_materials/)>.
7. This, and all subsequent student quotations, are from e-mail communications sent to the author in August 2013 in response to a request for feedback and information from History of Maine students about their experiences completing the site visit journal assignment during the Fall 2011 and Spring 2013. All students gave permission to cite their e-mails in the article, but to protect their identities for privacy purposes, I have chosen to refer to them simply as “student” with the proper gendered pronouns throughout. Whenever possible, I also refer to their major.
8. As those who engage with and do Public History know, definitions of Public History can be particularly fraught. See Robert Weible’s “Defining Public History: Is it Possible? Is it Necessary?” in *Perspectives on History* 46, no. 3 (March 2008), for a thorough discussion of conflicting definitions and uses of Public History. For the purposes of the History of Maine site visit assignment, I prefer the simple definition—“history outside the classroom”—offered by Briann Greenfield and Bruce Reinholdt in “Teaching American History the Public History Way,” (December 2009) published on the National Council on Public History “Teaching and Learning” section of the website under “New Directions in Training,” <<http://ncph.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Grad-Undergrad-Greenfield-Reinholdt-Article.pdf>>.
9. NCPH Curriculum and Training Committee, “Best Practices in Public History: Public History for Undergraduate Students,” National Council on Public History (October 2009), 3, <<http://ncph.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Undergrad-Best-Practice.pdf>>.
10. Christina Blair, *Christina Explores Maine* (blog), <<http://collegemainahlife.blogspot.com>>.
11. Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001), 250.

## Appendix

### Abridged Course Syllabus

#### **HTY 360: History of Maine (The Way Life Should Be?) Professor Libby Bischof, University of Southern Maine**

“There it was, the State of Maine, which we had seen on the map, but not much like that. Immeasurable forest for the sun to shine on, that eastern stuff we hear of in Massachusetts. No clearing, no house. It did not look as if a solitary traveler had cut so much as a walking stick there. Countless lakes...and mountains also, whose names, for the most part, are known only to the Indians.”

—Henry David Thoreau, *The Maine Woods* (1864)

“Persons who are not native to this locality are ‘from away.’ We are from away ourselves, and always shall be, even if we live here the rest of our lives. You’ve got to be born here—otherwise you’re from away.”

—E. B. White, “Maine Speech” (1938)

#### **Course Description:**

This course surveys the social, cultural, political, and economic history of Maine and its varied inhabitants from prehistory to the present. Focusing on issues of land, labor, and immigration; interactions between Maine natives and those “from away”; production of goods, natural resources, the environment, and the idea of Maine as “Vacationland” and as a retreat and source of inspiration for artists and writers, we will spend a semester together discussing the varied meanings and understandings of the official state motto, *Dirigo* [I lead]; the license plate state motto, “Vacationland”; and the tourism state motto, “The Way Life Should Be.” Students will be encouraged (read: required) to get to know Maine History both in and outside of the classroom, and we will, as often as possible, use the varied environments and residents of Maine as our classrooms and teachers.

This semester, we will use the Gorham campus as our home base, but will also travel to the Portland Campus as well as other sites in and around Portland during our class time. Pay careful attention to the calendar in regards to where we are meeting during any given class period. I know that many of you are from Maine, and I hope that if this is the case, you take away greater appreciation for and an expanded knowledge of the people, the built and natural environments, and the living history that surrounds you. While our approach to the History of Maine will be largely chronological, when opportunity presents itself, we will take advantages of trips and site visits that may not have to do directly with the time period. I encourage you to look for themes in Maine history throughout the semester.

**Required Texts (All Available at the USM Bookstore or Online):**

Stephen Hornsby and Richard Judd, eds., *The Historical Atlas of Maine*  
 Colin Woodard, *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Fight for a Forgotten Frontier*  
 James Leamon, *Revolution Downeast: The War for American Independence in Maine*  
 Elizabeth DeWolfe, *The Murder of Mary Bean and Other Stories*  
 Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*  
 Monica Wood, *When We Were the Kennedys: A Memoir from Mexico, Maine*

\*\*Additional primary and secondary sources frequently will be handed out in class or posted on the class Blackboard Website. Always consult course calendar for scheduled readings. Your supplementary text, “Maine History Online,” can be found on the Maine Historical Society’s Maine Memory Network website.\*\*

**Grading and Assessment:**

Class Attendance and Participation: 20%  
 Short Reading Reactions (2): 10%  
 Maine Postcard Assignment: 5%  
 Maine Memory Primary Source Evaluation: 5%  
 Midterm Take-Home Exam (3 short essay questions): 15%  
 Maine Site Visit Journal or Blog: 25% [10 entries/10 pts. per entry]  
 Final Project (Serves as your Final Exam): 20%

**Class Attendance and Participation:**

Participation is an essential part of your success in this course. My expectation is that you will do the reading and actively engage in weekly discussions. Participation takes many forms—it is not just answering a question that is asked of you. Please feel free to ask questions and challenge one another. I realize that for many people, speaking up in class can be difficult. I am happy to help you work on ways to improve your participation. If you have issues speaking up in class, please let me know sooner rather than later. It is very difficult to participate in class discussions if you are not there; I take attendance every class period. Three unexcused absences will significantly lower your participation grade.

**Short Reading Reactions:**

As a way to keep your reading on track, and to make sure you are comprehending and analyzing the assigned materials, you will have two short analytical reading reaction essay assignments throughout the semester. [There are FOUR choices—All students have to do the first essay on the Lobster Coast and then you can choose your second essay]. These reactions will be no more than two

to four pages in length, depending on the assignment, and each reaction will have its own specific instructions. Please see the course calendar for due dates and details. I will also give you a detailed reading guide with questions for discussion for each reading assignment.

### **Maine Postcard Assignment:**

You must create a picture postcard of Maine. It can be historical or contemporary. It can represent the whole state, or just a small part. It needs to be postcard size with a standard postcard backing—it should be ready for postage. You must also create a greeting on the back of the postcard—if it's a historical postcard, it should be a historical greeting. Leave the address portion blank.

### **Midterm Examination:**

The Midterm Examination will ask you to analyze both images and texts in the larger context of what we study throughout the semester, and to write short essays answering specific questions. You will have a choice of essay questions and will be encouraged to use your textbooks. The Midterm will be TAKE-HOME.

### **Maine Site Visit Journal (or Blog):**

\*You must visit ten “historical sites” in the greater Portland area [or any other areas of Maine if you happen to find yourself there] before the end of the semester. At least one of these sites should have something to do with conservation, preservation, or environmental issues in Maine [e.g., State Parks, Portland Trails, Gilsland Farm/Audubon in Falmouth, etc.]. You may also attend one external talk/program/lecture and count it as a site visit. I'll announce programs of interest throughout the semester.

\*GOALS: I really want these journal visits to make you more active and aware members of your communities and to foster ties to the places where you live, work, and go to school. When you visit sites, TALK to people, ask questions—especially about the larger significance of these sites for Maine history, and, in some cases, U.S. history. Think about why they have been preserved for future generations, and who is preserving them.

\*You must obtain proof that you went to the site [a cell phone picture of you at the site is fine, as is a ticket, signed brochure, etc.].

\*You must do a journal entry for each of the ten sites. There are essentially two parts to the entries: A) a physical description of the site, and a description of your observations at the site [who was there, how well it was taken care of, how well-marked, what you learned, etc.], including site name and when you visited; and B) a few paragraphs about the historical significance of the site—

including FACTS and historical information about the site [date built/different uses if appropriate] and what it commemorates/reveals about the larger history of Maine. For Part B, you will want to consult resources such as brochures, websites, general histories, etc., for the details about the site. Please include a list of resources you used at the bottom of your site entry.

\*You may set up the journal entirely as you like as long as you are consistent. You could do it all in a notebook, where you handwrite observations of the site, and later go in and handwrite a more formal evaluation of the site. You could do a journal for initial observations and then type up the more formal site evaluation. Alternatively, you could create a blog, typing a longer entry (including Parts A and B) for each of the ten site visits.

ALL ENTRIES [INCLUDING PARTS A and B] MUST BE A MINIMUM of 2 typed pages or 3 handwritten pages.

\*TIPS: Always bring a student ID with you. Bring a friend or family member for company if you like. Ask questions of people working at the site (if any). START THE JOURNAL EARLY IN THE SEMESTER—many of the outdoor sites CLOSE IN OCTOBER and open again in April/May. It is fine to do multiple entries for one day—i.e., you may go into Portland on a Saturday, go to the Portland Museum of Art, the Maine Historical Society, and then walk to a few of the monuments—that’s absolutely fine (and encouraged).

JOURNALS WILL BE COLLECTED/GRADED ON TWO DIFFERENT DATES OVER THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER—SEE CALENDAR!!

### **Potential Sites for your Journals:**

[Note: Abridged list; on the full syllabus, I list about 75-100 sites.]

Maine Historical Society Museum, 489 Congress St., Portland  
Monday-Saturday, 10am-5pm; Sunday, 12pm-5pm [Year-Round].

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House (owned by MHS), 489 Congress St., Portland  
The tours end at the end of OCTOBER. Monday-Saturday, 10:30am-4pm; tours on the hour, first tour at 10:30am; Sunday, 12pm-4pm; tours on the hour.

Portland Museum of Art, 7 Congress Square, Portland  
Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm, Fridays open until 9pm. FREE WITH USM ID.  
The McLellan-Sweat House (1801) is also owned by the museum (counts as separate site).

Museums of Old York [Museum, Tavern, Old Gaol, Hancock Warehouse, etc.],  
York St., Rte. 1A, York  
Monday-Saturday, 10am-5pm until Columbus Day. House tours have varied hours, but you can go all year.

Maine State Museum, 83 State House Station, Augusta  
Tuesday-Friday, 9am-5pm; Saturday 10am-4pm; Sunday 1pm-4pm.

Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village, Rte. 26, New Gloucester  
Museum and Tours of the Community available until Columbus Day. Tours every hour starting at 10:30am, last tour 3:15pm. [This is an AMAZING place!]

Portland Freedom Trail [African-American History], Portland  
Visit the website for a downloadable walking guide: <http://www.portlandfreedomtrail.org/>.

Riverton Trolley Park, Forest Ave. and Riverside St., Portland

Our Lady of Victories Monument, Monument Square, Portland

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Monument, Junction of Congress, State, and Pine Sts., Portland

The Maine Lobsterman Statue, Canal Plaza, at the corner of Temple and Middle Sts., Portland

Eastern Cemetery, Congress Street, Portland

**Final Project (This also counts as your final exam):**

Topic: The final project is an opportunity for you to research and work on an aspect of Maine History of particular interest to you. I am open to a wide variety of topics and approaches, and would be happy to meet with students individually to discuss potential topics, source materials, and project ideas. There are a few different options for this project, and you should feel free to choose the one you are most comfortable with regarding your interests. Topics should, however, be fairly narrow. First, think of a historical era you might be interested in (e.g., Civil War Maine, European/Native American Relationships, Colonization, Maine as a Frontier, Revolutionary War, late nineteenth-century development of “Vacationland,” etc.) or a specific part of Maine’s history that has developed over time (e.g., conservation of natural resources, fishing/lobstering, timber, mills/factories, potato or blueberry crops, reform movements such as prohibition, etc.). You may also be interested in a specific person or place important in some way to Maine history, and that would be a fine approach too (e.g., a historical landmark like a lighthouse, bridge, or industry such as Bath Ironworks; or an author, artist, soldier, or politician, such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Sarah Orne Jewett, Neal Dow, Joshua Chamberlain, Edmund Muskie, etc.). Once you find an era or general area of interest, you should then narrow down the specific focus and approach you would like to take. You should look at the Maine Memory Network from the Maine Historical Society when brainstorming for ideas (<http://www.mainememory.net/>).

### Option I: TRADITIONAL RESEARCH PAPER

If you choose to write a research paper for your final project, the end result should be a well-researched ten-page paper on a topic of your choice relating to some aspect of Maine history. The paper will address the significance of your topic to Maine history, and will be typed and double-spaced in 12 pt. font using Chicago Style footnotes and citations. You must consult and utilize a minimum of six secondary sources and four primary sources when writing the paper.

### Option II: ALTERNATIVE PROJECT (EXAMPLES BELOW)

A. Develop a useful website relating to Maine History (with images, historical content, and a section detailing the larger significance of your topic). You must include an annotated bibliography.

B. If you are inclined to literature, poetry, or prose, or to other types of primary sources, you could make up your own anthology of Maine literature and/or primary source documents surrounding a specific topic or issue. You will need to choose ten relevant readings and put them together as if you were publishing an anthology, including a table of contents, a two- to three-page introduction, a paragraph introducing the significance of each source, and an appendix with brief biographies of your chosen authors. You must also include a bibliography.

C. If you are inclined towards visual history, you may compose a visual anthology related to a Maine topic of your choice, utilizing paintings, drawings, photographs, historic postcards, etc. This should also include a table of contents, a two- to three-page introduction, a paragraph introducing each image, an appendix with a paragraph biography on each artist, and a bibliography.

D. If you are interested in service learning, you may volunteer fifteen hours of your time to an organization in the greater Portland area. Such projects can range from trail mapping and clean up, to volunteering at a soup kitchen, or working to tutor ESL learners at a local school. The Office of Community Engagement and Career Development will assist you in finding a volunteer placement. You must keep a record of your time volunteered, provide a note from your supervisor at the end of the project, and write a two- to three-page report on your organization, how it is significant to Maine, and the services you performed.

E. You may also propose an alternative project of your own design (e.g., in the past, I have had students do radio or film documentaries). See me for details.

**Course Calendar:**

Week One: Introductions, Syllabus, Maine Survey, “Images of Maine”

Week Two: The “Maine Myth,” Demographics, and The Maine Memory Network

Week Three: The Lobster Coast and Maine’s First Settlers

Week Four: Maine’s Native Peoples

Week Five: Maine in the Age of Discovery and Early Colonization

Week Six: French and British Settlements, Frontier Wars, Revolution

Week Seven: The Origins of Maine Statehood

Week Eight: Reform Movements in Maine

Week Nine: Land, Labor, and Immigration: An Exploration of Industry and Maine’s Natural Resource Economy

Week Ten: Maine and the Civil War

**\*\*FIRST COLLECTION OF JOURNALS—STUDENTS MUST HAVE A MINIMUM OF FIVE ENTRIES COMPLETED!\*\***

Week Eleven: Maine on Film

Week Twelve: The Gilded Age in Maine: The Making of Vacationland

**\*\*MAINE POSTCARD ASSIGNMENT DUE\*\***

Week Thirteen: Maine in the 1920s-1940s

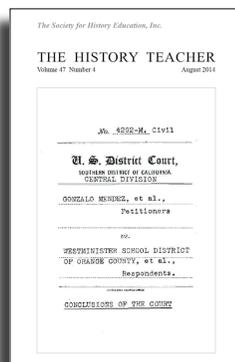
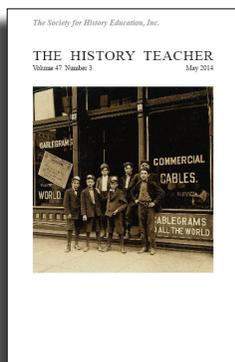
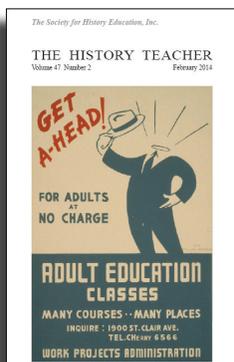
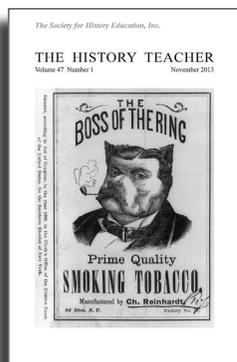
Week Fourteen: Changing Maine and Maine’s Hidden Histories

Week Fifteen: Last Class/Maine Food and Cultural Heritage



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