

LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY GUIDE



put YOUR history on the map

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Local Historical Society Guide

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Introduction

"If you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are."

Wendell Berry



Norwich Historical Society

Educators share a common goal: to nurture historically literate students - young people who not only grasp the broad arcs of history but also understand how those events continue to shape the world around them. Often, though, the scope and pacing of our curriculum leads to a focus on sweeping narratives: global conflicts, economic transformations, political revolutions, and the figures who left their mark on nations. Too often, in the push to cover “what matters,” local history is quietly left behind. This omission raises an important question: Are we truly equipping our students to see themselves as part of the historical narrative if we overlook the stories rooted in their own neighborhoods and communities?

The past belongs to us all. Most history is a common language that we speak because it is a collection of experiences that bind us all together to time and space. History is made through doing, captured and held in objects, photographs, ledgers, and books. History is buried in stone walls, embedded in maps, and shared through story. History is in the public domain making it accessible to all who are curious. Local history, by its very nature, is perhaps the most accessible because it is the closest to home.

Local history is the framework in which to practice cultural history in an attempt to understand an area's distinctive flavor. Despite its limited geographical focus, it is the political, social, and economic history of a community. Local history provides the opportunity to drill down into demographics, examine town planning and see the way that infrastructure and architecture punctuate time periods. Communities are keepers of historical events and the people who helped to define the place throughout the decades. Whether overt or hidden, choosing to study local history drives at understanding why a particular area has come to be what it is today.

Introduction

What better way for students to gather a sense of place than through the study of local history? In the digital age, accessing archival material online is easier than ever. The ability for material objects to root people in history is an irreplaceable experience. Who better to help guide students to these items than local historians at local historical societies?

For the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the All-In project is a place-based learning opportunity for Vermont students tied to the C3 Framework of Social Studies Standards. Educators and students will study local history in partnership with local historical societies. Through inquiry-based research, students will uncover the enduring history that makes their home unique and share it on a ArcGIS interactive map housed on both the Vermont Historical Society and the Vermont History Explorer websites. The goal is to have all 252 towns and cities represented by the end of the commemoration year 2026.

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States National Park Service (NPS) under assistance agreement (P24AC02271) to NEIWPC in partnership with the Lake Champlain Basin Program.



Relevance to the Semiquincentennial

Studying local or nearby history takes on special significance during the semiquincentennial year - a moment marking 250 years since the founding of the United States of America. While national narratives often dominate commemorations, it is in the histories of towns, neighborhoods, and communities that the broader story becomes personal, tangible, and real. These local histories offer a lens through which we can see how larger events shaped and are shaped by ordinary people in specific places.

Engaging with nearby history allows us to reconnect with the lived experiences of those who came before us, grounding abstract ideas like freedom, struggle, and change in familiar landscapes.. During a year that invites collective remembrance, turning our attention to local history ensures a richer, more inclusive understanding of the past - one that acknowledges complexity, honors community memory, and fosters a deeper sense of place and belonging.

In a time when the past can feel distant or even irrelevant, exploring local history offers a way to make meaning of this milestone year. It reminds us that history isn't just something that happened elsewhere; it happened here, in our backyards, and it continues to shape the world we inhabit today.

250th Themes

The American Revolutionary era changed North America and the world in profound ways. This is a time for Americans to learn about our past, celebrate our successes in freedom and bravery, and think about the times we've faced (and continue to face) unfairness, racism, and violence. This once-in-a-lifetime event is a chance to examine our whole history and work towards strengthening our communities, and in turn, working towards improving our world.

It's also an opportunity to improve how we study history to make sure that future generations gain a more complete understanding of history. The Vermont Historical Society has adopted the American Association for State and Local History's (AASLH) themes to help students and teachers think more deeply about the last 250 years of history (<https://aaslh.org/programs/250th/>). These themes act as a jumping off point for students as they begin to contemplate what history means to them in their own lives currently, but also it can spawn questions about the ways in which their towns evolved over time.

Relevance to the Semiquincentennial

AASLH 250th Themes

Unfinished Revolutions

The struggle for freedom, fairness, and justice has a long and complicated history in the United States. People have worked hard in many ways - through politics, organizing, protests, and even wars - to help America live up to its ideals. U.S. history isn't a smooth path of progress. It's a complicated mix of successes and failures. The fight for freedom started before 1776 and continues today.

Power of Place

Looking at history through the lens of "place" helps us understand the past better. It makes us think about the land and areas we now call the United States in a deeper way. Looking at how Indigenous peoples have connected with their land, how communities use land and water, and how expansion and colonization affected different groups of people. This theme helps us examine our natural world and built environments..

We the People

What does it mean to be part of "We the people?" Who belongs to the nation, and what citizenship means, has changed since the founding of the United States. Many people have all been left out of full participation in the country's political, economic, and cultural life throughout history. Over time, different groups have worked hard to be included and to make the nation fairer for everyone.

American Experiment

The leaders who started our country didn't have all the answers. Even though they created new ideas like representative democracy and rights for everyone, they understood that the birth of a nation was a big experiment. They hoped future generations would make improvements to what they started. The 250th anniversary is a great time to think about how our government and democracy began, and how it has changed over time.

Doing History

How do we get people to become interested in history? We invite them to engage! Let's talk about what history is, how we learn about it, and why it's important. By showing how we study the past, we can help people understand how new questions and ideas change what we know about history. Participating in conversations with others about history has the potential to strengthen our communities and work towards creating a more perfect union.

Relevance to the Semiquincentennial

250th Themes

Vermont has a any number of historical moments, stories, people, and topics that fit the 250th themes. Below is just a small sample to get you started.

Unfinished Revolutions
◦ Vermont's 1777 Constitution ◦ Women's Suffrage in Vermont ◦ Civil Rights Activism in the 1960s and 70s ◦ Vietnam War Protest in Vermont
Power of Place
◦ The Abenaki Connection to the land ◦ The Vermont Marble Industry ◦ Champlain Canal and Lake Champlain ◦ Natural Disasters and Response: Flood of 1927, Year without a Summer, etc. ◦ Architectural Design/Feature Unique to Area
We the People
◦ Individuals Who Leave a Mark on a Community: Alexander Twilight, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Governor Deane Davis, etc. ◦ Refugee Resettlement in Vermont ◦ The Granite Industry in Barre and Immigrant Workers
American Experiment
◦ Vermont as an Independent Republic (1777-1791) ◦ Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys ◦ The Council of Censors ◦ Town Meeting Tradition: what has been important to specific towns/areas?

Vermont's Educational Landscape

Social Studies & History Education in Vermont

Over the past 10–15 years, social studies and history education in Vermont has shifted from a primarily content-driven model toward a broader emphasis on inquiry, critical thinking, and civic engagement. Vermont schools now ground their instruction in the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. This framework emphasizes helping students think and work like historians.

A major change in this period is the move away from simply covering historical facts toward building transferable skills. Earlier expectations were heavier on memorization and broad survey content. Today, students are increasingly expected to investigate history, understand multiple perspectives, and communicate conclusions. Even at the elementary level, standards encourage students to explore questions about change over time, compare life in the past and present, and analyze primary sources. This reflects a national trend, but Vermont schools have adopted it more intentionally in recent years.

Another notable shift is integration with literacy and inquiry-based instructional models. Especially noticeable in middle school, history is often integrated into humanities instead of being taught as a discreet content area. In many districts, social studies is now tied closely to informational reading, writing, and research skills. Students may analyze historic photographs during literacy blocks, write evidence-based essays about past events, or use geography and statistics in interdisciplinary projects. This ensures social studies remains part of the curriculum even as elementary classrooms face pressure to prioritize reading and math.

Professional development opportunities have also expanded. Groups such as the Vermont Alliance for the Social Studies (VASS) now offer more consistent training, networking, and resources than were available a decade ago. Teachers are more likely to collaborate across districts, access statewide classroom materials, and participate in workshops connected to inquiry and primary source skills.

Overall, social studies and history education in Vermont has shifted toward deeper thinking, authentic exploration of the past, and civic readiness. Students are encouraged to behave as young historians: questioning, investigating, corroborating, and forming evidence-based conclusions. At the same time, Vermont's unique culture and local history have become stronger components of classroom learning. These changes support a more engaging, relevant, and skills-focused vision of social studies for Vermont's K–12 learners.

Vermont's Educational Landscape

An Overview

C3 Standards

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards emphasizes inquiry-based learning, disciplinary thinking, and civic engagement. The C3 Framework was launched in 2013, with several states using it as a guiding document, and/or leaning on parts of it to inform state standards. Vermont is the only state, however, that has embraced the C3 Framework as its social studies standards full-stop.

Historical research is a direct way for students to practice the work of historians - to practice doing history. From asking questions in kindergarten to evaluating historical claims in high school, students move from wonder to wisdom, developing both knowledge and the tools to think critically about the past.

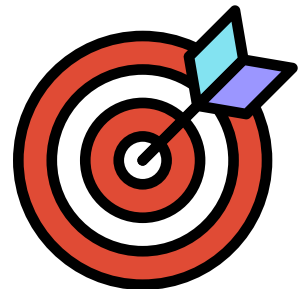
Clearly, historical research evolves significantly from kindergarten through 12th grade, reflecting students' growing cognitive abilities, literacy skills, and emotional maturity. Research will look very different in terms of content and complexity, reflecting developmentally appropriate expectations throughout various grade bands.

Historical Research Skills Connection to C3 Framework

Shared Learning Outcomes or Targets

All students will:

- Conduct meaningful historical research using authentic, local sources
- Apply critical thinking to understand change, continuity, and perspective
- Develop and communicate historical arguments supported by evidence
- Reflect on how local stories contribute to broader historical narratives and civic identity



Vermont's Educational Landscape

Historical Research Skills Connection to C3 Framework

Kindergarten through Grade 2: Building Curiosity Through Story & Observation

In the earliest grades, historical research is less about finding and analyzing sources, and more about experiencing the past in accessible ways. Young learners explore history through storytelling, images, objects, and guided conversations.

Grade 3 through Grade 5: Asking Questions & Exploring Evidence

At this level, students begin to ask more structured historical questions and investigate answers using accessible primary and secondary sources, such as photographs, newspaper clippings, oral histories, and local landmarks. They practice sorting information, identifying point-of-view, and recognizing cause-and-effect relationships. Research becomes an inquiry process where students start to organize evidence and share findings through writing, speaking, or presentations.

Grade 6 through Grade 8: Deepening Analysis & Building Context

Middle school students learn to frame research around compelling questions, gather and evaluate a range of sources, and consider historical context, bias, and reliability. They engage in comparative analysis, track change and continuity over time, and develop arguments supported by multiple types of evidence. Students also begin to explore how local histories intersect with national or global events, using digital tools and more sophisticated archival materials to present findings.

Grade 9 through Grade 12: Conducting Independent Research & Civic Reflection

High school students take greater ownership of the research process - posing original questions, identifying and accessing diverse sources, and applying disciplinary thinking to develop complex historical interpretations. They critically analyze competing narratives, use archival research tools and databases, and produce evidence-based arguments in a variety of formats. Through the study of local history, students explore how personal, and community stories connect to broader civic and historical themes, preparing them for engaged citizenship and lifelong inquiry.

Vermont's Educational Landscape

Why Historical Research Matters in K-12 Classrooms

Those who study and teach history are often drawn to finding connections across time and human experience. Though historians may focus on a single facet of history, they often seek to understand the interrelatedness of people, events, and ideas.

Students, however, don't always share this instinct. In a fast-paced, short-form, consumer-driven culture of immediacy, the past can feel remote or irrelevant. The rupture from historical continuity doesn't register as a loss, mostly because it isn't felt personally. (Kammen 1996, 101).

From asking questions in kindergarten to evaluating historical claims in high school, students move from wonder to wisdom, developing both knowledge and the tools to think critically about the past. Introducing historical research across all grade levels builds critical thinking and civic awareness. It fosters inquiry, encouraging them to move beyond memorization to ask questions, investigate sources, and form evidence-based interpretations. These skills apply across subjects and into life beyond school. Even young learners can begin with age-appropriate projects that spark curiosity and emphasize storytelling while fostering a sense of competency in their abilities as a researcher. Mostly importantly, research shows students that history is dynamic, relevant, and belongs to them too. While researching in their communities, they learn who tells the story, why it matters, and how it connects to their lives.

For teachers, research projects not only support inquiry-based learning which students find intrinsically motivating, but it also opens doors to interdisciplinary connections with literacy, civics, science, and the arts. When students explore meaningful topics to them, they gain academic confidence and a stronger sense of agency. Historical research doesn't just become an "add-on," but a powerful tool for nurturing thoughtful capable learners at every stage of K-12 education.

Historians Erin Aoyama and Allison Mitchell offer useful strategies for finding and working with primary sources, along with activities that support place-based learning. In their video, part of the Investigating Local History Teacher's Guide on EDSITEment, they demonstrate how exploring local history can help students better understand their communities and the issue they face today. It may be a great source to orient you to the types of opportunities that the "All In Vermont" project holds.

[Investigating Local History: Place, Memory, and Perspectives](#)



Vermont's Educational Landscape

Local history, much like the broader discipline it belongs to, invites a nuanced exploration of human experience. Its study tends to be more intimate because it focuses on the particular: the streets we walk, the buildings that have stood through generations, the quiet revolutions within families, neighborhoods, and towns. Those who delve into local history are drawn to the texture of everyday life, uncovering how national movements echo in parish records or how global conflicts reshaped a single village. In tracing these smaller arcs, local historians reveal the profound with the familiar, showing how the lives of ordinary people are woven into the larger story of humanity.

Including local history in the classroom allows students to see the past not as a distant abstraction, but as something lived and felt in the very places they know. It roots historical inquiry in the familiar, fostering a deeper sense of connection, relevance, and agency. It invites students to see themselves as part of history's ongoing narrative rather than merely observers of it.

Why Local or Nearby History for Soft Skills?

Stronger Sense of Identity and Belonging

Understanding the history of where you live helps students feel more connected to their community. It's one thing to learn about ancient Rome or the American Revolution, but when students recognize street names, buildings, or neighborhoods, they light up! When they learn about the people, events, and places that shaped their own town or region suddenly, history isn't abstract, it's about them. When kids realize their town was part of something bigger like the Civil Rights Movement, the Dust Bowl, and immigration waves, they see themselves in history. They connect with place - with "home."



Representation and Inclusion

Mainstream history often leaves out marginalized voices. Local history can highlight stories of Indigenous communities, immigrants, labor movements, or local heroes who don't typically show up in textbooks.

Vermont's Educational Landscape

Why Local or Nearby History for Hard Skills?



Critical Thinking and Research Skills

Teaching local history often means digging into lesser-known stories. Studying local history often involves digging into investigating primary sources - old newspapers, maps, interviews, public records - which builds real-world research skills and teaches students how to interpret different perspectives. Teachers can guide students through real research: interviewing elders, analyzing old photos, interpreting conflicting accounts. That's where deep learning happens.



Connection to Larger Historical Narratives

Local stories often reflect bigger national or global themes - wars, migrations, economic booms and busts. It's a great way to show students that history isn't just something that happens "out there." History happens everywhere. In actuality, history is being made all the time.



Engaged Citizenship

Local history brings politics and civic engagement closer to home. Students who know their community's past are often more likely to care about its future - voting, volunteering, or even running for local office someday.

Vermont's Educational Landscape

Inquiry-based Learning

Inquiry-based learning places students at the center of the learning process by engaging them in asking questions, investigating, constructing knowledge, reflecting, and communicating results. This shift from a teacher-led, fact-delivery model to one of student exploration has been shown to improve a range of educational outcomes. Educational research scholars found that “inquiry-based learning can be more effective than other, more expository instructional approaches as long as students are supported adequately” (Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016)

21 st Century Skills
Inquiry-based learning asks students to design investigations, generate questions, interpret sources, and present findings, it aligns well with critical thinking, problem-solving, self-regulation, and collaboration. These are exactly the kinds of competencies many high-education and workforce contexts demand.
Adaptability & Skills Transfer
When students engage in inquiry, they learn how to learn. They ask meaningful questions, iterate on findings, examine evidence, and reflect on outcomes. The cognitive and meta-cognitive skill-set supports learning in new domains, beyond the specific content of a single class.
Implementation Matters
Research underscores that inquiry-based benefits are, in fact, conditional. Analysis concluded that guidance and scaffolding are key: “...as long as students are supported adequately learning improvements occur.” (Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016) Without adequate scaffolding, the open-endedness of inquiry can lead to confusion, inefficient learning, or superficial outcomes.
Deeper Contextual Understanding & Retention
By engaging in investigations—such as examining local archives, interpreting historical artifacts, or comparing multiple narratives—students develop more robust mental models of historical events and cultural phenomena, enhancing both retention and critical thinking. Inquiry-based projects in humanities classrooms also encourage students to make connections between past and present, fostering not only knowledge acquisition but also civic awareness and ethical reasoning (Bain, 2005).

Vermont's Educational Landscape

Place-based & Project-based Learning Together

When educators integrate the tenets of place-based learning (which roots learning in local contexts: environment, community, culture) with project-based learning (which organizes instruction around inquiry, authentic problems, student-produced artifacts), the result is a richer, more relevant, and more engaged learning environment. Several strands from the research support this synergy.

Project-based learning alone gives students real-world, inquiry driven tasks. Place-based learning grounds those tasks in the student's own community or physical environment. For example, one academic article suggests “Connecting students with issues, experts, and allies right in their own backyard is a highly effective way to make project-based learning more authentic and immediate” (Herrmann, 2021, para. 2) When students are solving a project that ties directly to the place they inhabit, the sense of ownership, purpose, and motivation escalates. In fact, research indicates significant academic benefits. For example, students in PBL “made contributions to their local community and showed growth on measures of achievement” (Condliffe et al., 2017, 13). Combining this with place-based roots means the “local contribution” is genuine and not just metaphorical.



Courtesy of: Naples New York Historical Society

Place-based learning emphasizes embedding content in locale, in turn, supporting student identity, belonging, and civic agency. Research on place-based STEM projects noted that participants had “...improved academic performance, and increased first-year persistence” when learning was anchored in local culture and environment. (Johnson et al., 2020) When project-based tasks are layered on that foundation, students are given local relevance stacked on structured inquiry, iterative design, and production which can strengthen identity, belonging, and agency outcomes even more.

Vermont's Educational Landscape

Place-based & Project-based Learning Together

Project-based learning thrives when the question is open-ended and requires final products that are public. Place-based learning thrives when students engage with their community, environment, and context as a resource. One recent study described the integration of these two educational models, noticing “community...focused PBL units... engaged students with authentic adult community connections through field trips, engagement with community experts, or community improvement projects.” (Lieberman et al., 2021, 6). This kind of work captures the strength of both and together they align academic content, student motivation, community relevance, and real-world action.

When marrying both, extra attention may be needed. The project must be deeply rooted in place. Student investigations grounded in community, “greatly enhanced the learning and teaching experience” when they included student voice, community partnership, and authentic problem solving. (Greely & Haines, 2016, para. 6). In other words, when project-based learning is built with place in mind, outcomes are amplified

In Practice: here is an example of what a student in Barre may experience.

Students could examine local archives and collections by partnering with the Barre and Vermont Historical Societies. Educators may choose to explore local landscapes like mills, quarries, and town halls. They may schedule a field trip to the Vermont Granite Museum. Further, students may engage with community memory by listening to recorded oral histories, or by conducting interviews. [place-based]

A topic focus will begin to develop after interacting with these various sources. Questions will begin to blossom. Each student will be prompted to ask a compelling question like: How did the Barre granite industry shape our town's migration, labor, and identity? This question will lead to others which will lead the student to investigate more sources to research. In the end, all of their learning will culminate in a final project to be submitted and housed on the public-facing ArcGIS map for all to read. [project-based]

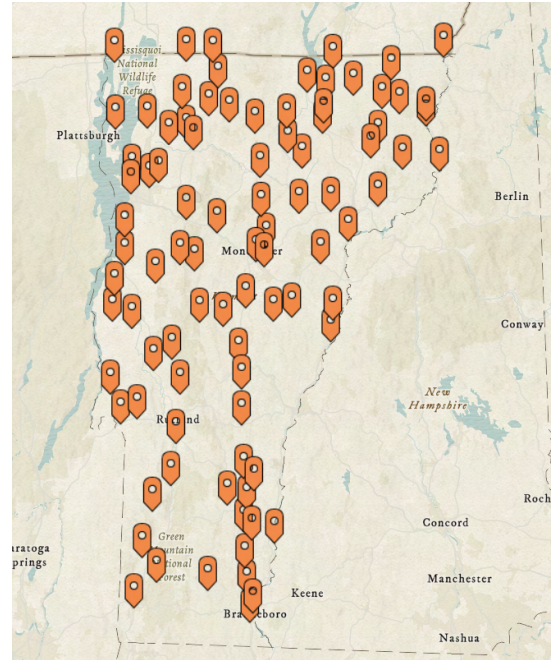
In sum, combining place-based and project-based learning creates a pedagogical synergy. As they investigate, they learn historical content and analyze their findings. The “place” acts as an anchor because students are studying the very places they live and using real sources from their own community. The “project” structures inquiry and student production because their work connects to their town and the people who live in it, students often feel a stronger sense of ownership and engagement. Together, they more powerfully support deeper student learning and real-world connectedness than either alone.

Local History Partnerships

Finding Your Local Historical Society

Did you know Vermont is home to nearly 200 local historical societies? Each one works towards preserving and interpreting the history of its own community. The Vermont Historical Society recognizes local societies as essential caretakers of our state's shared past and has supported this work since 1953 through the informal League of Local Historical Societies and Museums (LLHSM). To help communities stay connected, the Vermont Historical Society offers an interactive online directory. By exploring the map, you can find fellow organizations, their locations, and contact information.

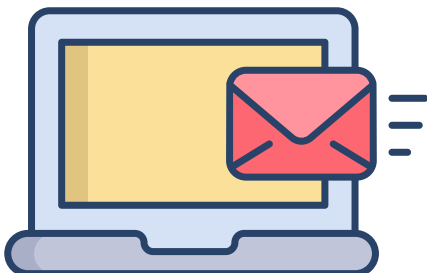
<https://vermonthistory.org/local-vermont-historical-societies-and-museum-directory>



Other History Keepers

With so many local historical societies, chances are good that one exists in your community. But if not, there are often other organizations or groups that also help preserve your local history:

- Local Libraries
- Town Clerk/Town Office
- State Historic Sites
- Colleges/Universities
- Other Museums
- Local Newspapers



Contact us if you have any problems locating or engaging with your local history community.

outreach.educator@vermonthistory.org
director.outreach@vermonthistory.org

Building Partnerships

Connecting with Schools

Local historians can play a vital role in enriching K-12 education by bringing the stories, artifacts, and perspectives of a community directly into classrooms or by hosting field trips to local historical societies and/or libraries. To connect with teachers, principals, and curriculum directors, historians must approach outreach thoughtfully, building relationships that emphasize collaboration and mutual benefit.

Principals and assistant principals often oversee curriculum planning within buildings. They also often orchestrate PD opportunities for their teachers. They may be the best avenue to connect historians with individual teachers, or provide guidance on the best ways to introduce new programs to staff. A clear, concise email that highlights the historian's expertise, the educational value of their offerings, and examples of prior successful school partnerships can help to capture attention. When teacher emails are not readily available online, the school's main office or administrative assistant can usually provide a point of contact. They may be willing to put flyers in teacher mailboxes, as well.



Another productive avenue is parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) or similar parent groups. These organizations are often deeply invested in enhancing student learning and may be enthusiastic partners for funding (including transportation costs), promoting, or even hosting workshops. Attending a PTO meeting, presenting a brief information talk, or sending materials to be included in newsletters can help historians build awareness and support within the school community. Social media and school websites may also be a tool for reaching out indirectly, and offering resources.

Educators are often spread thin. If historians encounter challenges, such as non-responsive staff, limited access to teachers, or scheduling conflicts, persistence combined with flexibility will be key. Following up politely after an initial contact is appropriate, as many working within schools are managing multiple responsibilities. Demonstrating a willingness to adapt to educators' curricular needs and timelines shows respect for the classroom environment and increases the likelihood of productive partnerships. Further, extend your point-of-entry to include other possibilities like an independent study, afterschool club, or library program partnership.

Ultimately, effective outreach is built on clear communication, patience, and a genuine understanding of the school community's goals. By taking these steps, local historians can become trusted resources who make history come alive for students and teachers alike.

Building Partnerships

We understand that historical societies vary widely. Most of these groups are volunteer organizations without a full-time staff. Some focus more on genealogy, others on material culture, local industries, or underrepresented histories. Often these local historical societies house resources that are not available anywhere else – online or otherwise. Inarguably, they are invaluable resources to our communities.

It is the hope of the Vermont Historical Society that the *All In Project* can stitch together a rich tapestry of information for the benefit of all Vermont residents and those who love to visit our state.

The Value of Local History Engagement Extends Through Adulthood

The value of engaging with local history extends beyond the classroom. According to a 2019 survey of Vermonters:

- A majority of adults enjoyed learning state/local history in school
- There is a measurable relationship between interest in history and community engagement, including increased beliefs that citizens can make a difference in their communities.
- Those who engage in local history are more active and engaged in their communities, are more likely to volunteer, attend civic events, and donate money to charity.

Conducted by the Social Opinion Research Lab (SORL) at Castleton University on behalf of the Vermont Historical Society



Students visit Woodstock History Center

When engaging with youth, it is important to recognize what can be expected from working with specific age bands.

The next four pages are designed to help orient and focus offerings when working with specific age groups.

Please note that these are made with the average student in mind. Educators will know how best to adapt these to meet the needs of their specific students.

Primary Grades (K-2)

Research Skills

- Ask simple questions about the past
- Identify basic differences between past and present
- Observe and describe objects or images
- Begin to distinguish between real and fictional historical stories

How It Presents in the Classroom

- Listening to read-aloud of historical fiction, historical documents, or biographies
- Observing photographs, maps, or simple objects and describe what they see
- Asking questions like “What was it like?” or “How was life different back then?”
- Engaging in hands-on learning through craft
- Building “past and present” comparisons

C3 Framework Dimensions

- **D1.1.K-2:** Ask and answer questions
- **D2.His.1.K-2:** Sequence Events
- **D2.His.2.K-2:** Compare past and present
- **D4.2.K-2:** Present Findings through speaking, drawing, or storytelling

Local History Activity Examples

- Create a *Community Helpers Timeline* showing how different community helpers (like firefighters, teachers, doctors, or mail carriers) have supported the community over time.
- Make a class mural called *Our Town: then and now* showing changes
- Exhibit photographs of older buildings in town. Then, draw and label pictures of their favorite local places (library, park, store).
- Match “Then and Now” photographs by sharing old photographs of their town and comparing them to how things look today. Students can create a Venn Diagram to compare similarities and differences.
- Design a *Local Landmarks Picture Book*. Students illustrate a book featuring important places around town and write one sentence per page explaining the importance of each place or describe an architectural feature.

All In Vermont Project Ideas

The Stories Objects Tell: Using simple artifacts from a museum or home, students learn that every object holds clues about who used it and how it was made.

- What can this object tell us about the person who used it?

People Who Helped Our Community: Students learn about past and present community helpers such as teachers, farmers, or firefighters.

- How have the ways people help our community change over time?

Vermont Seasons and Traditions: Students learn how seasonal activities like sugaring, farming, or festivals have deep roots in local history.

- What traditions do we still celebrate that people long ago enjoyed too?

Upper Elementary (3-5)

Research Skills

How It Presents in the Classroom

- Use simplified primary and secondary sources
- Begin comparing perspectives
- Ask “why” and “how” questions

- Reading excerpts from letters, diaries, or other historical documents (script may need transcription)
- Comparing different accounts of the same event (with teacher support)
- Using simple research tools like library books, websites, or museum resources
- Asking questions like “Why did this happen?” or “What did people believe?”

C3 Framework Dimensions

- **D1.2.3-5:** Generate supporting questions
- **D2.His.9.3-5:** Summarize how sources can be used
- **D3.1.3-5:** Gather relevant information
- **D4.1.3-5:** Construct basic arguments

Local History Activity Examples

- Read excerpts from historical letters or diaries. Then, create a timeline of important events from life during a specific moment in history. Alternatively, if there is a collection of diaries or ledgers, is it possible to create a timeline of significant changes seen in the community?
- Students create maps of their neighborhood showing historical or meaningful places.
- Examine postcards from the past. Write and illustrate a postcard “sent” from a historical moment in their area - like the day the first train arrived, or during a big festival or fair from 50 years ago, etc.
- Analyze historical photographs or simple newspaper clippings

All In Vermont Project Ideas

- Jobs and Work in Our Town:** Students investigate local industries like logging, quarrying, dairy farming, or mills.
- What kinds of work built our community?
- Town Names and Landmarks:** Students research the origins of place names, covered bridges, or town greens.
- What stories do these landmarks tell about who lived here and what they valued?
- A Town Celebration:** By studying old fair posters, parade photos, or oral histories, students learn about local traditions.
- What do these events tell us about community values?
- Music and Storytelling in Vermont:** Students examine song lyrics, instruments, or folktales collected locally.
- How do stories and songs preserve history?

Middle School (6-8)

Research Skills

How It Presents in the Classroom

- Distinguishing between primary and secondary sources
- Considering bias and purpose in historical documents
- Synthesizing information from multiple sources into coherent arguments

- Developing focused historical questions
- Analyzing primary and secondary sources with attention given to perspective
- Using digital archives and curated databases
- Creating claims supported by evidence

C3 Framework Dimensions

- **D1.1.6-8:** Develop compelling questions
- **D2.His.13.6-8:** Evaluate reliability
- **D3.2.6-8:** Evaluate reliability
- **D4.1.6-8:** Use evidence to support claims

Local History Activity Examples

- Select someone from the area who made an impact - could be a historical figure, civil rights activist, artist, etc. After doing research about them, create a mini-documentary about the impact they had on the community.
- Recreate a newspaper front page from a local event (i.e. the founding of a factory, a major storm, a protest, etc.). Include “articles,” photos, headlines, and editorials.
- Select a historical building, or a neighborhood, in your area and explore its past. What was it originally? How has it changed? Write a fictional short story from the building’s point-of-view or create a zine that focuses on a specific time period.

All In Vermont Project Ideas

The Rise and Fall of Vermont’s Railroads: Students explore how rail lines connected small towns to national markets (maps, schedules, photographs) to analyze economic shifts and changing patterns of settlement.

- How did railroads change where people lived and worked?

The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Great Depression: Students uncover how New Deal programs reshaped Vermont’s landscapes and provided jobs during economic hardship (photographs, camp reports, oral histories).

- How did New Deal programs reshape Vermont’s landscape and economy during the Great Depression?

Immigration and Identity in Vermont’s Towns: Students investigate how immigrant groups influenced Vermont’s culture and economy and how communities adapted to new populations (church records, census data, maps, oral histories).

- How did new immigrant groups shape Vermont culture and industry? How were they received by established residents?

High School (9-12)

Research Skills

How It Presents in the Classroom

- Distinguishing between primary and secondary sources
- Considering bias and purpose in historical documents
- Synthesizing information from multiple sources into coherent arguments

- Developing these statements and sustained historical arguments
- Understanding historiography and sustained historical arguments
- Communicating findings clearly through essays, presentations, or multimedia

C3 Framework Dimensions

- **D1.1.9-12:** Develop questions about enduring issues
- **D2.His.16.9-12:** Use multiple sources in arguments
- **D3.3.9-12:** Integrate evidence
- **D4.2.9-12:** Present findings through writing, speaking, or digital media

Local History Activity Examples

- Choose a current issue (housing, transportation, immigration, environmental concerns and research its historical roots in the community. Then, write a paper or create a presentation that traces the history and show how the past affects the present.
- Create a Walking Tour Guide. Design a walking tour of a neighborhood, complete with historical stops, background information, and QR codes or audio narration. Partner with your area's tourism board, or welcome center.
- Observe local monuments, museums, historic sites, and town signs. Investigate whose stories are missing and write proposals for new exhibits, plaques, or public art to include more voices (Indigenous Communities, immigrants, BIPOC, LGBTQ+).

All In Vermont Project Ideas

Vermont in Wartime: Students explore home-front life, antiwar movements, and soldiers; experiences through letters, newspapers, and archives

- How did Vermonters experience and interpret global conflicts from their local communities?

The Economics of Change - Tourism, Agriculture, & the Modern Vermont Brand: Examining business records, advertisements, and public policy, students trace how Vermont's image as being "green" has evolved.

- How has Vermont's self-image been constructed and what realities lie beneath that brand in your local community?

Public Memory and Monuments: Students investigate local memorials, statues, or historical markers to understand how public memory is shaped and contested.

- How do public monuments reflect changing ideas about who and what deserves remembrance?

Building Partnerships

Planning for Student Visits



Danville Historical Society

Plan Well in Advance

When partnering with schools, it's important to remember that preparing for a visit takes time. Scheduling classroom or school visits well in advance allows your organization to gather materials, coordinate volunteers or staff, and ensure the experience is meaningful for students and educators alike. Planning ahead sets everyone up for a smooth and successful program.

When preparing to host K–12 field trips at your local historical society, there are many logistical, safety, and educational considerations to ensure a smooth and productive visit. Here's a detailed breakdown:

Space and Visitor Flow

- **Classroom or Program Space:** Ensure there is an area large enough for the group to gather, take notes, and engage in discussions or activities. Consider movable chairs/tables or multipurpose rooms.
- **Exhibit Space:** Evaluate whether exhibits can accommodate a group safely without overcrowding. Consider “station rotations” if the group is large.
- **Clear Pathways & Safety:** Check that hallways, stairs, and exits are clear. Make sure fire exits are accessible and that students can move safely between spaces

Transportation and Parking

- **Bus Drop-Off and Parking:** Verify that buses have a safe area to pull up for loading/unloading without blocking traffic. Provide clear instructions for bus drivers, including turn-around areas.
- **Parking Availability:** Confirm enough parking for chaperones and staff vehicles. Consider whether parking fees or permits are needed.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure entrances are accessible for students with mobility needs, including ramps or elevators if applicable.

Building Partnerships

Planning for Student Visits

Archival Materials and Object Handling

- **Safe Handling Policies:** Prepare clear rules for students and teachers regarding touching objects. Most historical societies will require gloves for certain artifacts and may limit handling to staff or supervised activities.
- **Storage & Display:** Keep fragile or valuable items out of reach, behind barriers, or in secure display cases.
- **Hands-On Activities:** Offer reproductions, or digital versions of artifacts to give students a tactile experience without risking damage.
- **Training for Staff/Volunteers:** Ensure staff or docents understand proper object handling and can supervise student interactions safely.

Supervision and Staffing

- **Chaperone Ratios:** Set a clear adult-to-student ratio (commonly 1:5 to 1:10 depending on age). Communicate expectations to teachers.
- **Staff Availability:** Ensure enough staff or volunteers are present to guide tours, manage hands-on activities, and respond to emergencies.
- **Emergency Procedures:** Provide teachers with a brief on fire exits, first aid kits, and who to contact in an emergency.



Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

Scheduling and Timing

- **Length of Visit:** Keep in mind younger students have shorter attention spans (typically 45–60 minutes for elementary students, longer for middle/high school).
- **Transition Times:** Include extra time for restroom breaks, walking between exhibits, and entering/exiting the building.
- **Lunch/Break Areas:** Provide guidance if students will bring snacks or need a place to eat.

Building Partnerships

Planning for Student Visits

Educational Preparation

- **Pre-Visit Materials:** Share worksheets, discussion questions, or background readings with teachers to prepare students.
- **Age-Appropriate Content:** Tailor the visit to the students' grade level and prior knowledge. Avoid overly complex terminology or fragile materials for younger students.
- **Interactive Opportunities:** Include stations or activities that allow students to engage with history hands-on (e.g., map analysis, archival research exercises, artifact observation exercises).



Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

Communication with Schools

- **Field Trip Guidelines:** Share clear policies on arrival/departure times, expectations for behavior, and items students should bring (notebooks, pencils, water).
- **Forms & Permissions:** Confirm that all necessary forms (school permission slips, photo waivers) are handled by the school.
- **Contingency Plans:** Be ready to adjust in case of bus delays, inclement weather, or last-minute schedule changes.

Evaluation and Feedback

- **Follow-Up:** Provide teachers with post-visit discussion questions, activity sheets, or ideas for classroom projects that connect to the visit.
- **Feedback:** Ask teachers and students what worked well and what could be improved for future visits.

Building Partnerships

Bringing Local History to a Classroom

Sometimes the most effective way for students to access local history is not through a field trip, but by having the historian visit the school instead. In many communities, scheduling and transportation present real barriers. Busses may be unavailable, too costly, or needed for other routes. Educators may have limited flexibility in their daily schedules. Or, multiple classes may want to participate at once, making logistics complicated.

When a local historical society has limited open hours or relies on volunteer staffing, it may also be difficult to accommodate large groups or offer supervision and programming during the school day. In rural areas, long travel distances can make a visit to a nearby society impractical. Additionally, many historical societies are housed in small buildings or converted historic structures that simply cannot hold an entire class, let alone several at once. Narrow hallways, limited seating are, or small exhibit rooms may work well for the public, but may not be appropriate for larger groups of students. In these cases, a school visit allows every student to engage meaningfully with artifacts, primary sources, and stories from their community without overcrowding or safety concerns.

By bringing materials, replicas, hands-on activities, and digital tools directly to classrooms, historians remove barriers that might otherwise prevent participation. School-based visits ensure equitable access to local history, support educators' curriculum goals, and create opportunities for deeper, sustained learning - even when physical space or transportation makes traditional field trips impossible. The next pages will help orient those who wish to take this path towards connecting with students in schools.



Components of Bixby Memorial Library's Mobile Museum History Kit:
War and Its Aftermath

Building Partnerships

Bringing Local History to a Classroom



When making decisions about collections items you may bring to a classroom, consider the following: If you wouldn't want the object dropped, spilled on, or bumped while being passed around by a room of energetic students, bring a reproduction. Originals are for supervised, stationary viewing.



Transport & Protection of Materials

- **Secure packing:** Use padded boxes, archival folders, acid-free sleeves, or foam padding to prevent shifting during transport.
- **Climate considerations:** Cars and classrooms can get hot or cold. Keep materials out of direct sunlight, avoid hot car interiors, and avoid damp spaces.
- **Separate “handling” and “no-touch” items:**
 - Valuable or fragile originals stay in protective enclosures and are shown, not handled.
 - Allow students to interact with reproductions, facsimiles, or 3D prints to reduce risk.

Storage & Display at the School

- **Controlled display area:** Use tables away from open windows, heaters, or radiators.
- **Barriers or cases (even temporary):** Plexiglass sneeze guards, display covers, or simple “do not touch” signage help.
- **No food or drinks near objects:** ask teachers to announce this clearly before the visit.

Classroom Layout & Student Movement

- **Object display consideration:** Ask for a room with tables, not just desks, if possible. Desks may separate and the possibility of objects being at risk is greater
- **Arrange stations:** This can prevent crowding and small groups rotate rather than 25 students surrounding a single item.
- **Space around objects:** Keep exits and pathways clear so students aren't brushing against materials while moving.

Building Partnerships

Bringing Local History to a Classroom

Clear Object Handling Policies

Schools are busy environments. As the historian, you are responsible for knowing what policies your organization has in place for transport and care of your collections materials. Here are some things to keep in mind.

- **Before bringing anything out of boxes, explain:**
 - Who may touch objects (students, teachers, or only the historian)
 - Whether gloves are required (cotton for objects, nitrile for photos/paper when needed)
 - How objects are lifted, supported, or passed
 - How many students can gather around at once
 - **Tip:** Let students handle reproduction artifacts while originals stay protected. This keeps the experience tactile and engaging without risking damage.
- **Security & Supervision**
 - Avoid leaving objects unattended.
 - Make sure teachers and chaperones know their role in supervising handling and movement.
 - Using an inventory list to pack before you leave the historical society and before you leave the school to ensure that every item is accounted for before transport.

Educational Planning

To make sure the objects are used purposefully, here are some ideas to prepare in advance.

- **Provide a short orientation:** what are these objects, how old, why important?
- **Build in structured observation tasks:** sketching, noticing details, asking questions.
- **Bring printed primary source packets or high-resolution images:** This enable students to work without physically touching originals, if that is something of importance to your organization.

Building Partnerships

Sample Email - General

Subject: Bringing Local History to Your Classroom

Dear [Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a local historian with [Organization]. I am reaching out because I would love to partner with your classroom to help students explore and research the history of [Town/Region/Community].

I offer [brief description: e.g., hands-on artifact workshops, guided research sessions, oral history projects, or virtual archive tours] that align with [grade level/subject] standards. These activities give students a chance to work with primary sources, analyze historical evidence, and develop critical thinking and research skills. Past projects have included [brief example, e.g., “creating mini-exhibits on local landmarks” or “interviewing community members to document neighborhood history”].

To make this experience most valuable for your students, I’d love to learn a little about your classroom needs:

- What topics or units are you currently covering that could connect to local history?
- What grade level or abilities should I tailor materials for?
- Do you prefer in-person visits, virtual sessions, or a combination?
- Are there any logistical considerations I should know about, such as class size or technology access?

I am happy to provide all materials and support needed and can work around your schedule and curriculum requirements. If this sounds of interest, I’d love to set up a brief call or email exchange to discuss possible ways we can collaborate.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to bring local history directly into your classroom. I look forward to the possibility of working together!

Best,

[Your Name]

[Organization, if applicable]

[Phone Number] | [Email Address] | [Website, if available]

Building Partnerships

Sample Email - All In Vermont project

Subject: *All In Vermont* - a local history research opportunity for your students

Dear [Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name] and I work with [Organization]. I'm reaching out to invite you and your students to participate in the *All In Vermont: put YOUR history on the map* project hosted by the Vermont Historical Society. It is a statewide, place-based learning opportunity designed especially for Vermont classrooms.

What the project is about:

- Students research the history of their own town or city, its people, industries, events, culture, and share their findings on an interactive map that's part of the Vermont History Explorer and VHS websites.
- The goal is for as many of Vermont's 252 towns and cities to be represented by 2026.
- It aligns with inquiry-based social studies frameworks (e.g., C3) and encourages students to engage with primary sources, local heritage, and geographic/spatial thinking.

How it could fit your classroom:

- I'd love to partner with your class (grade level ____) in a format that works best for you. It could be a one-off visit, a short project series, or full-unit integration.
- Materials (including an Educator Guide) is available now to support you.
- We can tailor the experience to meet your students' readiness, technology access, and time constraints.

If this sounds of interest, you can find out more specific information here:

<https://vermonthistoryexplorer.org/allinvermont>

Additionally, I'd be glad to schedule a brief call or we can communicate by email about the ways we can partner. I look forward to exploring how we can bring your students into this exciting journey of local history. Thank you for considering this opportunity. I'm excited about the possibility of collaborating with you and your students to our local history into this public forum.

Regards,

[Your Name]

[Title / Role, Vermont Historical Society]

[Phone Number] | [Email Address]

Project Components

An Overview

K-12 students will produce *All In Vermont* project entries that will be placed in a single ArcGIS map. Housed on the Vermont Historical Society and Vermont History Explorer websites, the public will be able to click on a marker associated with a specific town to learn more about that area's rich history.

At its core, the *All In Vermont* project is designed to be adaptable. To inspire participation, it is imperative that the project can be easily integrated into classroom curriculum. Educators know their individual students best. Therefore, they are empowered to adjust the research project in the ways necessary to meet the needs of each child they teach. As a result, student entries will vary by grade, classroom, and skill level.



Besides meeting the needs of students, it was also important that educators are able to create a project-based experience that fits within their own timeline. Educators will decide to either curate a specific grouping of templates for their students, or to allow their students to decide which templates to use on their own. Kindergarten teachers may just require one template with a hand-drawn image and a matching sentence. In order to make it possible for all public, private, and homeschool students (K-12) to participate, student entry flexibility is paramount.

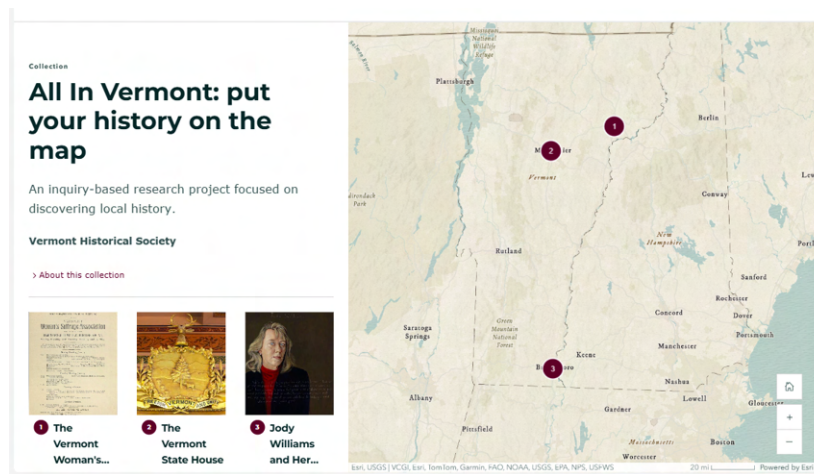
Not every town is home to a historical society, nor is every area populated (like our gores). Isn't it part of Vermont lore that we make due with what we have? It is our sincere hope that together we can support all students who wish to participate. If you know of any resources not obviously available to students and educators alike, please offer your knowledge. Who knows? Your assistance may just be what is needed to find a way through an obstacle.

All of Vermont's history is valuable and worthy of exploration. Just like the history of Athens differs from that of Pittsfield, we expect that entries will showcase diversity as well. Expect the *All In Vermont* map will be populated over time. We hope that everyone will be inspired to visit, and revisit again, to continue to learn more about our "brave little state."

Project Components

What is ArcGIS Storymaps?

ArcGIS StoryMaps is an online storytelling platform that allows users to combine narrative elements like text, images, video, and audio to create engaging, place-based stories. For the *All In Vermont* project, this platform offers a dynamic way to showcase student research and connect their work directly to the Vermont towns they study by pinning it to a map of Vermont. StoryMaps allows us to build immersive, scrollable stories that feature interactive static maps alongside student writing, photo galleries, video or audio clips, quotes, and even timeline or sliding panel layouts.



As the project grows, each town will appear as a point on the map, linking site visitors to a student-created window into that community's local history. The result is a visually rich interactive archive of Vermont stories as shared by students.

In this guide, we provide templates for the available features that the All In Vermont project will be using. Students may use one or more templates to showcase their local story. By offering this “plug and play” approach, educators can not only create a project structure developmentally appropriate for their grade, but they can also differentiate project expectations based on specific learner needs.

ArcGIS Templates

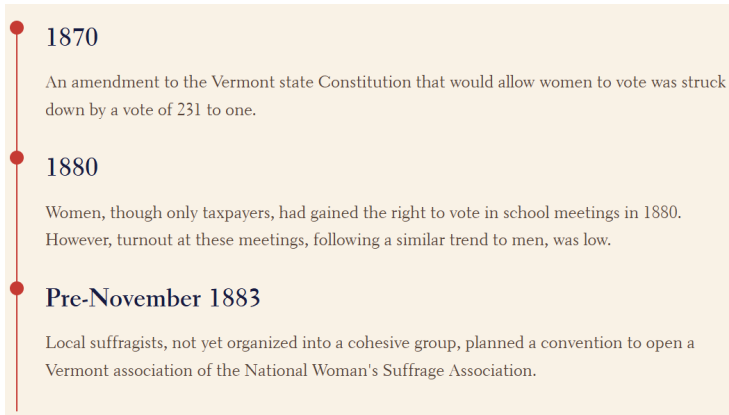
On the following pages, you'll find six StoryMap templates created for student projects. Each provides prompts and suggested structure to help students organize their research and present their findings clearly. Educators may allow their students to use one or several of these templates, depending on their students' needs and how the project is being assigned. The brief descriptions below offer an overview. Reviewing these can help orient you to the structure that students will be building from the materials you share to share their Vermont story.

Project Components

Timeline Template

"This timeline will show you the important events in [topic]."

Example:



Best for:

- Sharing historical events in order
- Demonstrating change over time

Each timeline entry needs:

- Date/year
- Event title
- Short text description

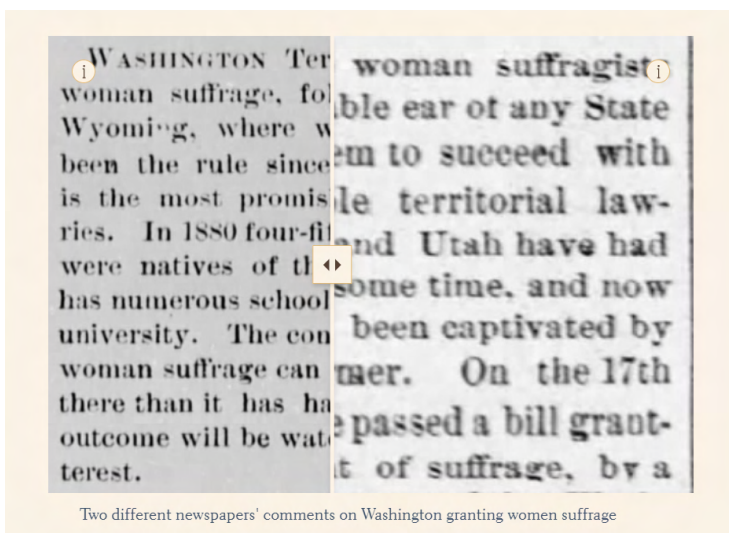
Prompts to consider:

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Why does it matter?

Compare Template (swipe or side-by-side)

"Let's see how things have changed or how two things differ."

Example:



Best for:

- Before and after
- Past and present comparisons (then and now)
- Rural and urban

Each compare entry needs:

- Two images or maps
 - label image A and image B

Prompts to consider:

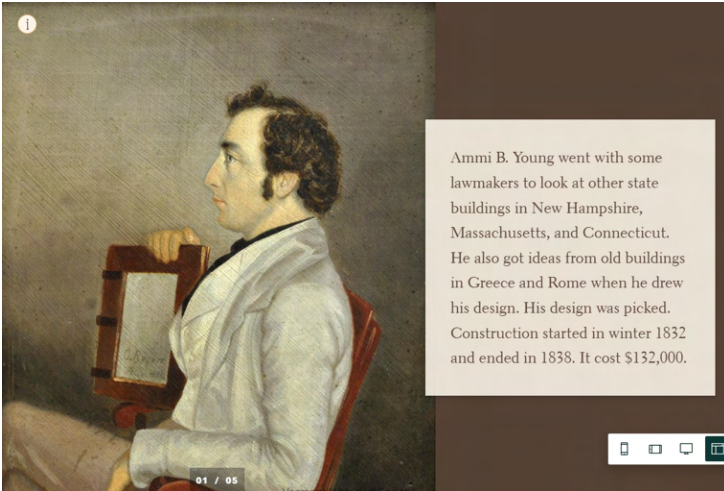
- What is different between these images or maps?
- What stayed the same?
- Why do these changes matter when talking about [topic]?

Project Components

Sidecar Template (for multimedia & text stories)

"Let's take a journey through the story of [event/person/place]."

Example:



Best for:

- Telling a story step-by-step with visuals and explanations

Each sidecar entry needs:

- An image related to corresponding text
- Source information for image
- Text block

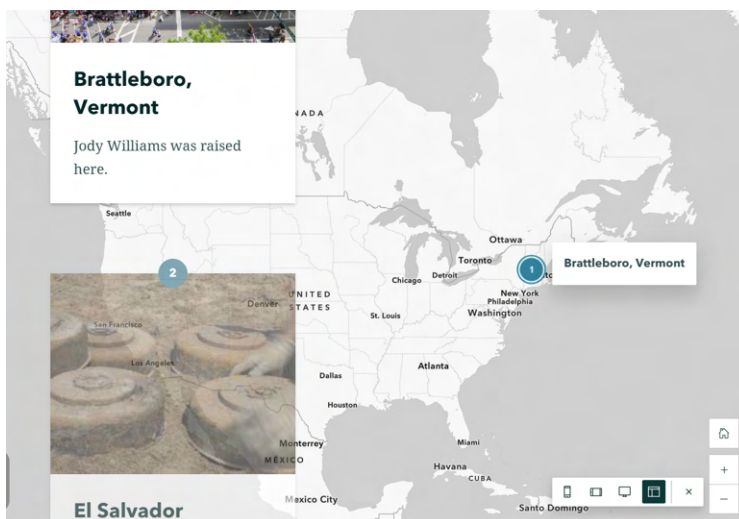
Prompts to consider:

- What happened?
- Why is this important?

Guided Map Template Map (Embed & Explanation)

"This map will help the audience understand [topic] better."

Example:



Best for exploring:

- Geography
- Migration
- Environmental changes

Each guided map section needs:

- An embedded map
- Source information

Prompts to consider:

- What does this map show?
- What do you notice and why is important to the overall story?

Project Components

Image Gallery Template

"Here are some photos and what we learned from them."

Example:



At The Rutland Fair In The 1940s; Courtesy of Rutland Historical Society

Best for:

- Providing context
- If it does not help to tell the story, consider if its relevant to include

Each image block needs:

- An image
- Source information for image

Prompts to consider:

- What is represented in the image?
- What did we learn from it?
- How does it enhance the story I'm telling?

Audio/Video Template

"Let's hear and see what [topic] is all about, first-hand."

Examples:



Tucker Hill looking at Bragg Hill; Courtesy of the Watsfield Historical Society



Interview with Willis and Erlene Bragg - Vermont Folklife Center Digital Collections (FC1992-0008)



Vermont Historical Society Collections Video: Jack Jumper

Best for:

- Oral histories
- Music/performances
- Action

Each section should include:

- Audio/visual clip
- Transcript or text description

Prompts to consider:

- Who is speaking?
- What are they saying/showing?
- How important is the overall story?
- Are there parts that can be edited for greater focus on [topic]?

Project Components

Submission Guidelines

The *All In Vermont* project invites students across that state to investigate local history using primary sources, community stories, and archival materials. As students work with your collections - whether through field trips, classroom visits, interviews, or research in your archives - they will submit a final project that contributes to this statewide story.

The submission guidelines below show what educators and students are required to provide. Reviewing these requirements can help your organization understand how students will use the materials you share, what formats are acceptable, and what project components must accompany their research. This can also guide your society in preparing resources, clarifying usage rights, and supporting students as they complete their projects for inclusion on the ArcGIS statewide map.

Cover Sheet	• Student name(s) & Grade level • School name • Submitting teacher's name and contact information • Town researched • Local Historical Society or history partners used during project
Completed Project Template(s)	• Official templates must be used and submitted electronically ◦ If more than one template is used, please create one PDF with the pages in the preferred order
Media Files (if included)	• Photos: JPEG - no more than 10 MB or 5,000 pixels (both height and width) • Audio: MP3, WAV - no more than 50MB, smaller will run smoother • Video: MP4, MOV - no more than 50MB, smaller will run smoother ◦ All media's format should be labeled clearly .xxx • All media should be relevant to the project • All media should be credited with where it was found/sourced • Basic captions are optional
Photo Release Form	• Submit if student(s) appear in images or videos • Must be signed by a parent or guardian • One form per student whose image or voice is included in the project

Student Research

Introduction

Local historical societies hold powerful stories. Like previously mentioned, these stories are preserved in letters, ledgers, photographs, objects, and oral histories that may not exist anywhere else. As more Vermont schools seek hands-on learning experiences rooted in their own communities, primary sources in local collections are becoming essential tools for teaching students how to think like historians.

The following section was originally written for classroom educators, but it is equally valuable for local historical societies reviewing their collections and planning student programs. Whether students visit your site, or you bring materials into schools, understanding how young learners explore primary sources will help LHS members choose items that are both engaging and educational.

You do not need to be a trained educator to support student learning. By sharing the stories behind your archival materials and guiding students in asking thoughtful questions, you give them opportunities to practice the crucial skills of historians.

The following pages highlight different kinds of primary sources. As you consider your own collections, this portion can help you:

- Identify which materials are safe and appropriate for students to handle or view
- Select objects that spark curiosity and conversation
- Introduce students to historical thinking through close observation and questions
- Provide context that enriches understanding
- Acknowledge bias, missing voices, and limitations in sources



Courtesy of: Waterbury Historical Society

No two communities share the same history. No two communities collect the same history. When students learn from the materials preserved in your collections, they see history not as something from which they are far removed. Instead, they see history as something lived in their own town, by people who walked the same streets and shaped the same landscape. Your collections bring the past to life in a way that no textbook can.

Student Research

Types of Historical Sources

Primary Sources

A primary source is a firsthand piece of evidence created during the time under study - something that offers a direct window into a historical moment. It may be a letter, photograph, diary, newspaper article, speech, map, artifact, or even an oral history. In sum, it is anything created by someone who experienced or witnessed the event.

Primary sources are invaluable to a researcher because they are unaltered by time. Primary sources allow a researcher to discover history first hand, through the words, artifacts, and images of the people who lived it. They can provide facts and details about a particular topic, and some may even offer a “flavor” for a particular person or event through anecdotal story.

For teachers, introducing students to primary sources can transform the study of history from passive learning into active discovery. Students engage with history as detectives by analyzing, questioning, and interpreting evidence for themselves. Using primary sources in the classroom involves guiding students to observe closely, ask critical questions, consider the creator’s perspective, and place the source within its broader context.

It’s also important to help students recognize the limitations and biases that every source may carry. When used thoughtfully, primary sources don’t just teach content. They build inquiry skills, deepen empathy, and help students develop a more personal and nuanced understanding of the past.

Primary Source Examples

- Artifacts
- Autobiographies
- Government records
- Interviews with participants
- Letters
- Manuscript collections
- Music from the period
- Newspapers from the era
- Original film footage
- Photographs



Student Research

Types of Historical Sources

Secondary Sources

A secondary source is a work that interprets, analyzes, or synthesizes information from primary sources and other evidence to tell a story or make an argument about the past. These sources are typically created after the events they describe and include things like textbooks, scholarly articles, biographies, documentaries, or museum exhibits.

Primary sources are generally from only one perspective. Therefore, they can be conflicting and contradictory. Secondary sources can be helpful in clarifying the discrepancies because they have the benefit of distance, and therefore more objectivity.

Secondary sources serve as essential tools for helping students understand how historians construct meaning from evidence. They provide context, key themes, and introduce multiple perspectives which are especially valuable when students are still learning how to navigate the complexity of historical narratives. Using secondary sources in the classroom helps students practice skills like comparing interpretations, identifying author's bias or purpose, and evaluating the reliability of information.

Just as with primary sources, it's important to approach secondary materials critically by asking who created them, when, and for what audience. Incorporating secondary sources allows for rich discussions about interpretation and perspective, and offers a scaffold for students as they develop their own research-based arguments.



Secondary Source Examples

- Biographies
- Books about the topic
- Encyclopedias
- History textbooks
- Interviews with scholars or experts
- Media documentaries
- Websites

Student Research

Types of Historical Sources

Digital Collections

The internet offers unprecedented access to historical sources like primary documents, scholarly articles, digital archives, and multimedia materials that can deeply enrich our understanding of the past. Yet engaging in historical research online requires a thoughtful balance of curiosity and critical discernment. While many reputable and well-vetted resources exist, such as government and educational websites, the internet is also saturated with misinformation and content that lacks proper fact-checking. Even credible sources can reflect particular biases or institutional perspectives, making it essential for researchers to approach all information with a careful and questioning eye.



One key consideration is the credibility of sources. It's important to model and teach the practice of evaluating websites based on their authorship, institutional backing, and purpose. Yet, even within reputable sources, it's important to ask: whose voices are included and whose are missing? These questions help surface gaps in the historical narrative.

Another essential element is understanding the context in which sources were created. Digital access can make it easy to read documents without considering their original social, political, or cultural environments. Students who gain an understanding that historical materials are not just data points, but instead are objects shaped by specific moments in time.

Student Research

It is best practice to encourage students to reflect on the ethical use of digital materials. Citing digital sources accurately, respecting copyright restrictions, and being sensitive to culturally and historically significant materials is paramount.

Digital research offers a chance to diversify the historical lens. Online access can bring in global perspectives, voices of marginalized communities, and alternative narratives that might not appear in traditional textbooks. Used thoughtfully, online research can help teachers present a richer, more inclusive view of the past.

Another thing to consider is that some historical sources live only in the physical spaces where they were created and preserved, tucked into the archives of local historical societies, handwritten in ledgers or recorded in fragile newspapers and photographs that never made their way online. These materials offer insights that cannot be found elsewhere. Examining a mix of both digitally and locally available resources can give students a broader understanding of their topic.



Stowe Historical Society

Student Research

Types of Historical Sources

Oral History

Oral history is a method of collecting, preserving, and interpreting historical information through recorded interviews with people who have personal knowledge of past events. Oral histories are less about “verifiable facts” and more about how people experienced and interpreted events, leaning into the personal and emotional depth to historical study. They are especially valuable for capturing voices, experiences, and perspectives that may be missing or underrepresented in written records. Interviews are usually audio or video recorded, transcribed, and often archived which can connect students with living history.

In his book entitled *Doing Oral History*, Donald Ritchie explains:

An oral history interview generally consists of a well-prepared interviewer questioning an interviewee and recording their exchange in audio or video format...These interviews may be used for research or excerpted in a publication, radio or video documentary, museum exhibition, dramatization or other form of public presentation. Recordings, transcripts, catalogs, photographs and related documentary materials can also be posted on the internet. (Ritchie, 2015, p. 22)

Oral history is a great source for students researching history because it provides personal, firsthand accounts that bring the past to life in ways traditional sources often can't. Further, oral history lets students explore local or family history, making research more personally meaningful and culturally relevant. Lastly, interviewing someone or listening to oral histories is often more engaging than reading a textbook. It helps students develop research, communication, and analytical skills.

Skills students may develop by conducting oral history interviews:

- Critical thinking and questioning
- Empathy and perspective-taking
- Research design and project planning
- Communication and storytelling
- Historical interpretation and civic engagement



Courtesy of: Bells Elementary School, D.C.

Visit the Oral History Association Educator's Resource for more information:

<https://oralhistory.org/educators-resource/>

Another resource, Vermont Folklife Digital Collections: <https://vtfolklifearchive.org/collections/>

Student Research

Getting Started

Approaching a research project from a primary source, like an object, is a powerful way to build critical thinking, curiosity, and research skills. Here is an example as to how to help students begin:



Civilian Conservation Corps Patch
Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

Step 1: Observe the Object Carefully

Encourage the student to study the object closely using their senses (sight, touch - if allowed, and sometimes even sound or smell). Ask questions:

- What do you notice first?
- What materials is it made of?
- Are there markings, labels, or signs or wear? If there are, what do you want to know about them?
- Does it look handmade or mass-produced?

*Tip: drawing or photographing the object may help to deepen observation.

Step 2: Ask Open-Ended Questions

Now, begin the inquiry by generating questions about the object. Focus on asking why, how, and what questions:

- What was this object used for?
- Who might have used it?
- Why was it made this way?
- How did it end up here?
- What does it tell us about the time-period or culture it comes from?

*Tip: encourage curiosity - even speculative or unusual questions are valuable at this stage.

Primary Sources

Using Archival Materials with Students

Archival primary sources provide direct insight into the thoughts, decisions, and events of the past. For students working on historical research projects, these sources offer a chance to explore the exact words and ideas of historical figures, allowing them to see history from an insider's perspective.

However, these materials may not present the full story. They often reflect the views of those in power, meaning voices of marginalized groups may be underrepresented or missing altogether. Language may be outdated or reflect values that are no longer acceptable. Documents can also be intentionally misleading or incomplete, depending on the author's goals. For a well-rounded understanding, students could combine primary and secondary sources to provide interpretation and context.

When working with archival materials as primary sources, it is essential to read them with a careful and questioning mindset. These documents are not just records of fact but are reflections of how people viewed and made sense of their world at the time. You can help students to understand and interpret archival materials by helping them answer the following questions:

What is the Source

- Knowing who created or wrote the document helps students understand the perspective being presented and any potential bias. Was the author a politician, soldier, activist, or private citizen?

Why Was it Written?

- Understanding the document's purpose helps interpret its tone and content.
- Was it intended to record facts, persuade an audience, or express emotion?

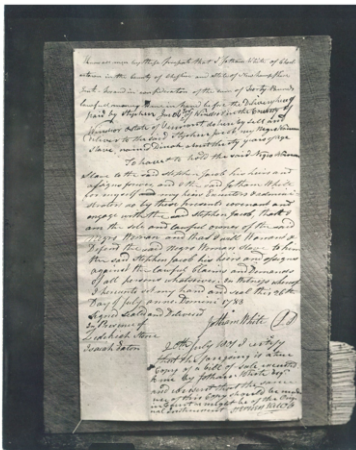
What is the Context?

- Consider the historical moment - social tensions, wars, movements, or cultural shifts - to fully understand the significance of the document.
- What was happening in the world when the document was created?

Primary Sources

Historical Documents

Created by people who lived through the moments we study, through letters, laws, speeches, or records, historical documents let students encounter history in the words of those who shaped it. Whether reading the Vermont Constitution, a farmer's daily journal, or a wartime letter, students gain a deeper understanding of the forces at play and trace how ideas developed and how individuals within communities experienced their world. Engaging with these documents helps history feel immediate, real, and deeply human. These sources also help students practice critical reading skills, develop arguments, and support their research with concrete evidence straight from the past. Students learn to ask deeper questions and think like historians. They develop the tools to understand how history has been written, preserved, and debated over time.



Bill of Sale of a "Negro Woman Slave"
<https://digitalvermont.org/items/show/1848>

Use Historical Documents Thoughtfully

As with all primary sources, it's important for students to engage with historical documents critically. While these texts offer valuable firsthand perspectives, they are also shaped by their context, purpose, and audience. A speech might aim to persuade or inspire. A legal document might reflect the political power dynamics of its time. A personal letter may only capture one side of a much larger story. That's why it's essential to ask not just what the document says, but why it was created, who created it, and for whom.

Limitations

Historical documents may not present the full story. For a well-rounded understanding, students could combine primary and secondary sources to provide interpretation and context. When working with historical documents as primary sources, it is essential to read them with a careful and questioning mindset. Keep the following points in mind when analyzing historical documents:

- **Consider the Source:** Knowing who wrote the document helps students understand the perspective being presented and any potential bias. Was the author a politician, soldier, activist, or private citizen?
- **Why Was it Written?** Understanding the document's purpose helps interpret its tone and content. Was it intended to record facts, persuade an audience, or express emotion?
- **Context is Key:** Consider the historical moment - social tensions, wars, movements, or cultural shifts - to fully understand the significance of the document. What was happening in the world when the document was created?

Primary Sources

Photographs

Today, making and accessing photographs is faster and more effortless than ever before. In contrast, photography in the past was a slower and more deliberate process. The earliest daguerreotypes and wet-plate glass photographs were cumbersome to make with large wooden cameras that weren't easy to maneuver, and dangerous processing chemicals. Access to owning a camera or hiring a skilled photographer was limited to those who could afford them. While older photographs may be limited, there is still an abundance of photographs available for perusal at any given moment. There is also much variation in the organization and quality of photographs. At times, that can be a cause of frustration if they are not labeled with useful information to the viewer. Even so, photographs have so much to teach.

Looking Versus Reading Photographs

There is a subtle but powerful difference between looking at a photograph and reading a photograph. When someone looks at a photograph, they are taking it at a surface level. The individual might notice the subject, colors, composition, or general mood. Looking at a photograph is more about observation and first impressions.



Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society,
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017784414/>

This close looking example is from a Vermont Historical Hands-on History program:

“This a black-and-white photo of what appears to be two adults, three younger kids, and someone who could be an older child or a young adult. It appears they are in their kitchen. Their clothes look well-used. They wear a range of expressions on their faces.”

Primary Sources

Photographs

Reading a photograph invites someone to go deeper by analyzing and interpreting what the image is saying - understanding its context, symbolism, and message. Reading a photograph leans on inquiry to ask critical questions, like one would while reading a text.



Some examples may include:

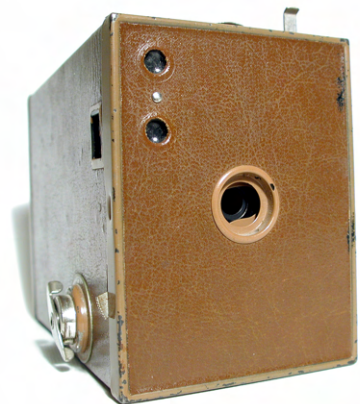
- Who took this photo and why?
- What is happening in the background?
- What emotions or power dynamics are at play?
- What's missing or excluded from the frame?
- How does this image relate to its historical or cultural context?

Expanding on the example from the previous page:

“It looks like this could be a photograph of a family. Perhaps, another family member took the photograph. Although, photography could be expensive so they may not own their own camera. The interior of the house and clothing are well worn, suggesting that they may be of modest means. It looks like they have some essentials, but not a lot extra. The scene might reflect certain financial struggles, but some of their facial expressions suggest a lightness. Other expressions are more subdued.”

Adding another detail could enhance or change what can be read from the photograph. For this photo, that could include:

- Asking the students what they know about the Great Depression.
- Informing students that it was a worldwide economic crash, which caused businesses to close and many people to lose their jobs. The price of milk dropped, which meant some rural Vermont dairy farmers lived in poverty, especially those who farmed on marginal land.
- Sharing that this particular photograph shows a family of farmers in Bradford, Vermont, in 1939. In order to receive help from the federal government, they had to let a photographer take their pictures. (Russell Lee photographed the family but did not record their names.)
- Engaging in a class discussion about the topic.



Primary Sources

Photographs

Historic Research

Photographs are incredibly valuable in historical research. Not just pictures, photographs are primary sources that offer visual evidence of the past. Historians use them in a variety of ways.



Visual Evidence of People, Places, Events

Photos can capture real moments in time - how people dressed, what their homes or workplaces looked like, and what was happening during specific events.

Clues About Daily Life

Photos often show details that written records leave out like tools people used, the layout of a room, or the way people interacted. Even an old family photo can reveal information about socio-economic class, gender roles, or cultural traditions.

Supporting or Challenging Written Sources

Photographs can confirm or contradict content in written documents. Historians use photos to cross-check stories, especially when there are biases or gaps in written records. Example: If a newspaper said a protest was "small and peaceful," but a photo shows a large crowd and tension with police, that changes how we interpret the event.

Understanding Historical Context

Photographs can help people visualize the broader context like urban development, segregation, war zones, disaster impact, and more. Even things like advertising signs or storefronts in the background can give hints about the era in which the photograph was taken.

Triggering Memory & Oral History

Photos are great tools for interviews. They can spark memories and help people tell stories about the past that might otherwise be forgotten.

Primary Sources

Prints & Drawings

When students in K-12 explore prints and drawings from the past, they go beyond reading words in a textbook and begin to read history itself. These visual sources offer direct windows into a time and place, capturing moments, people, and landscapes that written documents might overlook. By studying the details, like clothing, setting, and expressions, students begin to develop questions: Who made this and why? What does it show us about the community? When that history is local, it connects them more deeply to the places and people around them, helping to build a sense of identity, curiosity, and civic awareness.

Historic Research

Students can use prints and drawings for historic research by treating them as visual text or objects to be read, questioned, and interpreted. Just like reading a diary or newspaper from the past, reading an image means observing it closely. A drawing of a town square, for example, can reveal what building stood there, what transportation may have been used, and how people gathered. By asking careful questions, students begin to uncover the layers of meaning behind the artwork. They can compare images over time to track changes in a neighborhood or see how different artists or communities represented the same event. They can pair or layer visuals with maps, letters, or oral histories to build a fuller picture of the past. In this way, prints and drawings become more than just depictions or renderings, they become active sources of evidence, guiding students as they piece together the story of local history.



Landscape print showing a valley from above in Woodstock, VT by George Taylor Plowman.
Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

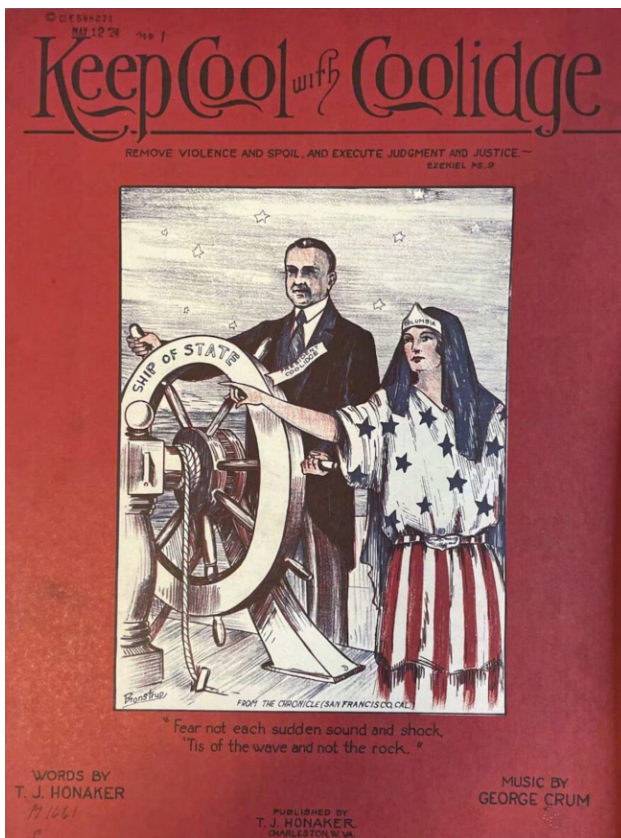
Primary Sources

Prints & Drawings

Limitations

There is a quiet complexity in using print and drawings for historical research simply because there are a set of limitations that students must learn to navigate. Unlike photographs, which often capture a moment as it appeared, prints and drawings are shaped more directly by the artist's perspective, intention, and imagination. What is shown in the image may reflect not just reality, but opinion, symbolism, or even propaganda. The artist chooses what to include and what to leave out, and those choices can distort or idealize the scene. A drawing of a bustling main street may omit signs of poverty or conflict, presenting a version of the past that is polished or incomplete. Another limitation is context. Without understanding when, why, or for whom the image was made, students might misinterpret its meaning.

It's also important to remember that not every part of the community was equally represented. Some voices, faces, and places may be missing altogether. Recognizing these gaps is part of learning. Even the silences in prints and drawings can help students think more critically about the past and about how history is told and shared.



This sheet music cover depicts Calvin Coolidge steering the “Ship of the State” alongside Columbia, who is the female personification of the United States. It has his famous slogan “Keep Cool with Coolidge” at the top, and portrays him as collected and in charge of where the country is going.

Keep Cool With Coolidge, cover of sheet music, published by T. J. Honaker, 1924
Courtesy of: Library of Congress

Primary Sources

Material Culture



Hand Blender
Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

Material culture offers a tangible link to the past, inviting people to imagine how things looked, felt, and functioned in their original context. A worn shoe, a handcrafted bowl, or a faded Air Force uniform can tell us about the values, technologies, and daily experiences of those who used them. Studying these items allows historians to piece together stories that may be overlooked, revealing the textures of daily life in an environment, and the silent details that shaped them.

Turning our attention from words and photographs to material objects invites a move from abstract concepts to direct, sensory engagement with the past. While language and images often represent ideas or emotions, objects exist in the physical world. People can use their senses to interact with objects - touching, measuring, examining, and comparing. Objects from the past may include tools, clothing, furniture, art, and everyday items.

Object Categories

Robert G. Chenhall developed a common nomenclature for classifying man-made objects, which remains the standard cataloging tool for thousands of museums and historical organizations. Chenhall's system breaks objects into meaningful categories that help researchers, curators, and students better understand the role these items played in everyday life. When exploring local history, students may encounter a wide range of historical objects that fit into these categories, helping to tell the story of a town's past. These might include structures like buildings or bridges that shaped the physical landscape, or furnishings and fixtures that once filled those spaces. Personal items such as clothing or grooming tools provide insight into individual lives, while tools and equipment reveal the work and skills practiced in a community. Communication objects like signs, books, or newspapers show how people shared information, while items related to transportation reflect how goods and people moved. Art and decorative pieces, recreational objects, and societal artifacts help illustrate cultural expression and shared identity. Even simple packages and containers, like bottles or crates, can offer clues about daily routines and trade. Approaching an object as part of historical research involves more than just observing what it is. It requires asking thoughtful questions about what it means, how it was used, and what it reveals about the time and people it came from.

Primary Sources

Material Culture



Sheep sheers possibly used at the Kent Tavern in Calais, VT.
Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

E. McClung Fleming, of the Winterthur Museum in Delaware, created a model for examining objects in a thoughtful and structured approach that encourages researchers to look beyond the surface of an artifact and ask deeper, more interconnected questions. His model outlines five basic properties that guide inquiry, offering a kind of roadmap for understanding how an object fits into its historical, cultural, and functional context. These five properties are:

History	This involves tracing the object's life story like when and where it was made, who made or used it, and how it moved through time. Studying its history helps situate the object within specific events, social contexts, or personal narratives.
Material	By identifying what the object is made of (wood, glass, metal, fabric, or another substance) we begin to understand both the resources available to its makers and the cultural or technological significance of those choices.
Construction	Looking at how the object was made (methods, techniques, and tools used) reveals not only craftsmanship but also broader patterns in labor, industry, and technological advancement. Construction also helps identify whether the object was mass-produced or handcrafted.
Design	This refers to the object's form and appearance, including its shape, color, decoration, and overall aesthetic. Design choices often reflect cultural values, artistic trends, or practical needs, offering insight into both function and meaning.
Function	Examining how the object was used (what it was meant to do, how it was handled, and by whom) grounds it in everyday life. Function connects the object to human experience, revealing how people interacted with their environment and with each other.

Primary Sources

Material Culture

Together, these five properties create a kind of interpretive formula. They don't exist in isolation; rather, they are deeply interrelated. Fleming suggests performing four operations of analysis on the object's five properties. The four operations include:

Identification	This first step involves recognizing what the object is - its type, form, and purpose. Identifying the object is crucial, as it sets the foundation for understanding its context and function within its specific time and culture.
Evaluation	Once identified, the object is classified into appropriate categories based on its characteristics. This involves grouping the object by type, material, function, or any other relevant criteria. Classification helps organize objects in a way that connects them to similar items, revealing broader cultural and historical patterns.
Interpretation	Interpretation goes beyond simply identifying and classifying the object. It requires analyzing the object's meaning - how it reflects the social, cultural, and technological contexts of its time. This operation asks why the object was made, what it tells us about its creators and users, and how it connects to larger historical narratives.
Cultural Analysis	The final operation involves comparing the object to other similar objects or to other historical sources. This helps place the object in a broader context, revealing common trends or unique variations. Comparison allows for a deeper understanding of the object's significance and its role in history.

For example, the material of an object might influence its construction, which in turn shapes its function. Its design might reflect cultural values at a particular moment in history. By weaving these elements together, Fleming's model helps people move beyond simply identifying an object. It encourages individuals to understand how it lived in the world, and what it can still teach everyone about the people who made and used it. (Fleming 1981, 157)

Primary Sources

Material Culture

Considerations

Studying objects can be a challenging exercise, but it is not an impossible task. Objects offer historians a tangible link to earlier cultures, revealing not only how people lived but also the events, values, and circumstances that shaped their creation. Though they are important touchstones, there are some considerations to take into account. To begin with, we should be careful not to expect a single object to reveal too much about the people who made or used it. It's important not to let one artifact stand in for a broader culture than it truly represents. Likewise, it shouldn't be studied in isolation, detached from the cultural context that gives it meaning. Sometimes, objects are viewed only through the lens of their function, overlooking their aesthetic qualities. Other times, they are automatically placed on a scale of progress - from primitive to modern - a perspective that can be not only limiting, but also misleading or historically inaccurate. It is important that professional and amateur historians approach objects carefully and with the ability to observe their bias to avoid its influence. (Kyvig and Marty 155-156)

An Object is Just an Object Without Context



If you are familiar with Vermont's dairy industry, then you may be familiar with this object - a butter mold made of wood and steel. In the 18th and 19th centuries, butter served almost like currency for farmers, who often traded it for groceries, clothing, and other necessities. Those who took pride in their craftsmanship wanted a way to distinguish their butter and ensure they were fairly rewarded for their skill. Carved wooden butter molds provided that opportunity. Imprinting each batch with a distinctive mark signaled to buyers they were getting butter from a specific farmer.



Courtesy of: Vermont Historical Society

What is not obvious is that this butter mold came from Riverside Women's Reformatory which operated between 1921-1936 in Rutland. Lena Ross became the first superintendent of the women's reformatory. The majority of women at the Reformatory were serving time for "crimes against morality." Of those, nearly all had been

imprisoned for adultery or cohabitation. To much public acclaim, Ross instituted progressive programs for the rehabilitation of women offenders. Women ran a laundry, tended a large garden, and hosted meals for the public. The same women who were "skill-building" also were subjected to Eugenics Survey field investigator's IQ tests for the Vermont Commission on Country Life Committee on the Handicapped. In this example, a simple butter mold connects to a larger story.

Field Trip Host Checklist

Please use this to plan for school visits to your organization.

SCHOOL:
CONTACT:

DATE OF VISIT:
GRADE:

OF STUDENTS:

ARRIVAL & SPACE

- ☐ Bus drop-off spot identified and communicated
- ☐ Parking for chaperones available, if necessary
- ☐ Welcome space ready for whole group
- ☐ Clear paths between exhibits/rooms
- ☐ Bathrooms unlocked and accessible
- ☐ Accessibility needs confirmed (ramps, elevators, seating)

STAFF & SUPERVISION

- ☐ Adequate staff/volunteers assigned to groups or stations
- ☐ Chaperone ratio confirmed
- ☐ Emergency exits reviewed
- ☐ First aid kit available
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers exchanged, if necessary

OBJECTS & ARCHIVES

- ☐ Handling rules explained (no touching or gloves)
- ☐ Fragile items secured
- ☐ Hands-on replicas or printed object worksheets made (if using)
- ☐ Off-limit areas clearly marked (e.g. storage areas)

PROGRAM PLAN

- ☐ Activities prepared for specific grade level
- ☐ Rotation/timing schedule set
- ☐ Materials ready (clipboards, pencils worksheets, etc.)
- ☐ Snack/lunch area designated
- ☐ Weather plan created, if necessary

DEPARTURE & FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Educators have an exit plan for students
- ☐ Thank-you message sent within 48 hours
- ☐ Feedback requested

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Educator Information Sheet

Preparing for Your Visit

What to Expect	
Students will explore primary sources (archival material, objects, and stories) connected to our community's history. The visit may include guided tours, hands-on stations, and time for questions or reflection. Please reach out to your main contact to confirm how best to tailor the visit to your needs.	
Before You Arrive	Arrival Information
• Review any pre-visit materials or vocabulary we have shared • Prepare students for museum expectations (see student behavior section below) • Let us know about accessibility needs or allergies • Are there behavioral supports that would be helpful, like a peaceful place to sit away from the group?	• Bus drop-off location: _____ • Parking instructions: _____ • Estimated visit length: _____
What Students Should Bring	Photography
• Pencils and paper / notebooks • Comfortable walking shoes • Weather-appropriate clothing if outdoors • Clipboards (if available)	☐ Allowed in exhibit spaces ☐ Allowed in certain areas only ☐ Not permitted due to fragile materials (We will clarify this upon arrival.) ☐ Do students have signed photo releases
Chaperones	Questions or Needs?
• Please ensure there is an adult-to-student ratio of at least: ◦ K–5: 1 adult per 6–8 students ◦ 6–12: 1 adult per 8–12 students • Chaperones will supervise movement through exhibits, help with small groups, and reinforce museum expectations.	• History Partner Contact Name: _____ • Preferred Email: _____ • Preferred Phone Number: _____

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1

Look with your eyes, not your hands

Many objects are old, fragile, and irreplaceable.

2

Walk, don't run

We want everyone, and every collection item, to stay safe.

3

Use inside voices

Others may be working or visiting and sharing our space.

4

Stay with your group

If you need to visit another room, like the bathroom, just ask.

5

Ask questions

Historians are curious. We love when you wonder!

6

Treat the collection with respect

You are helping preserve history for others.



You are a historian today.

Thanks for helping us take care of our community's history.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1

Objects & archives are not to be touched unless staff invites you to handle them

There will be specific instructions, so please listen carefully.

2

Stay with your assigned group & follow staff directions at all times.

Your chaperones may be able to assist you.

3

Use appropriate volume.

Some research areas may require quiet voices and conversations.
Be respectful of others around you.

4

Food, drinks, & gum are prohibited.

Ask your host where you may store and/or consume these items.

5

Photography is only allowed where indicated.

Clarify where and when you can take photos.

6

Ask questions, take notes, & participate.

You are engaging with real history. Your curiosity matters.



By respecting these expectations, you help protect historical materials and make the visit valuable for everyone.

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