

Lesson Plan

Maps and Local History

This is an adaptation of a lesson plan prepared by Rose Marie Marinace while participating in the New Hampshire Historical Society's New Hampshire History Summer Institute.

What Students Learn

Through the use of both old and recent maps, students will learn about the history of the town they live in. They will observe and make connections between geography and human activity over time and gain knowledge of changes in borders and roads and the influence of individuals and families in local history.

Procedures

Provide students copies of the assignment (see “Assignment Sheet: New Hampshire History in Old Maps.”) and town maps from 1892 and if possible, from 1986. (If the 1986 edition of Delorme Publishing Company's *New Hampshire Atlas and Gazetteer* is unavailable, you will have to choose another recent map and make adjustments to the lesson. The 1986 edition contains road and place names and includes human features, like farms and cemeteries, which are missing from more recent editions of this resource.)

Guide students through the assignment, encouraging observation over quick completion. (Allow students to complete the assignment for homework if necessary.)

This activity is well suited to extended study, too. Students might research important town buildings—taverns, the oldest home in town, the town meeting house, libraries, their own homes, etc. They may also research town or family graveyards or the establishment and development of the town: important people, events, roads, and building projects, for example. (See the “Guide for Researching Buildings and Towns.”)

Lesson Materials

An Assignment Sheet subtitled “New Hampshire History in Old Maps”

A Research Help Sheet titled “Guide for Researching Buildings and Towns”

Bibliography

Most entries, as well as other teacher resources, are available through the New Hampshire Historical Society's Tuck Library and its Museum Store. Topographical maps available on-line through the University of New Hampshire Library may also prove useful.

New Hampshire Atlas & Gazetteer. Freeport: Delorme, 1986. [This resource is available in later editions, too. The teacher happens to prefer this edition. See notes above.]

Old Maps of Belknap County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1985.

Old Maps of Carroll County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1988.

Old Maps of Cheshire County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1990.

Old Maps of Coos County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1989.

Old Maps of Grafton County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1989.

Old Maps of Merrimack County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1981.

Old Maps of Rockingham County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1981.

Old Maps of Rural Hillsboro County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1981.

Old Maps of Strafford County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1985.

Old Maps of Sullivan County, New Hampshire in 1892, The. Fryeburg: Saco Valley Printing, c1989.

University of New Hampshire Library. Government Information Department: Digital Collections. <http://docs.unh.edu/digital.htm>.

Assessment Tools and Techniques

Follow up the activity with a full class discussion based upon students' completion of the assignment sheet. Prime the discussion as necessary with such questions as the following:

1. Has the town changed significantly?
2. Have borders changed? Roads?
3. What are "important" family names?
4. Why have things changed (or not changed)?
5. What is different economically or socially over the past 100 years?

If you wish, follow this lesson with a research project, see the handout "Research Guide." The project may take any of several forms: a paper, a poster, or a class "museum," for example.

Assignment Sheet: Using Maps to Study Town History

Work with the two maps of your town that you have been given, one from 1892 and one more recent.

Your name: _____

The town: _____

The county: _____

1. Locate where your house would be on both maps and mark the spots.
2. Is your house already on either map?
 - a) 1892
 - b) recent map
3. Transfer names of roads and geographical features (coves, hills, lakes, rivers, groves, etc.) from the current map to the same features that existed on the 1892 map.
 - a. Have the names of any geographical features changed?
 - b. Which ones? (What were they in 1892? What are they now?)
 - c. Do any roads or features on today's map get their names from residents/family names from 1892?
 - d. Which ones?
4. Draw in new/current roads on the 1892 map in red.
5. On the 1892 map, color in or outline in green any roads that do not appear on the recent map. Some of these old roads are no longer passable by car but you may be able to find them and hike on them if they are not posted with "No Trespassing" notices.
 - a. Did any of these old, now-forgotten roads have houses on them in 1892?
 - b. Does there seem to be any way to get to the unused road today to discover if any remains of that house are left?
6. What have you observed about changes in your town over the last 100 years just from looking over these maps?

Using Maps to Study Town History: A Guide for Researching Buildings and Towns

Questions to address in your paper (questions may vary depending on if you are researching a building or a town)

- What do you want to know about a building/town that makes it interesting?
- What do you want to know about a building/town that makes it part of history?
- What types of materials were used/available?
- What type of construction techniques do you find?
- What sorts of architectural styles/features do you find?
- Are there indications that modifications have been made?
- What is original vs. a remodeling effort?
- How old is it?
- Who built it? When? Why?
- Who lived there/owned it/used it until now'?
- What is the personal history of these people?
- How do changes in the house/building/town reflect both the history and circumstances of both the era and the individuals?

Where to look for information:

- **Registry of Deeds at the County Courthouse (for buildings)**
Here you will find a history of ownership in the deeds to a property. You are most interested in the names of the owners and their dates of ownership. To research a deed you need to know the name of the people who own the property NOW; clerks at the registry can help you look that up to start. Somewhere in the deed will be a reference to the names of the person/people from whom the current owners purchased the building, and where and when those people got it. The deed will refer to a book and page number; if you look up that book and page number, you will see that it refers back again to earlier owners and to another book and page number, and it will continue back and back and back like this until...? This task will take about four hours, more or less, depending on the age of the building and the number of changes in ownership.
Deeds record only the ownership of property, not the existence of specific buildings, so you will still have some detective work ahead of you. While you are at the County Courthouse, you may wish to see if you can find town maps or surveys of the property done in the past. You may even want to check out the wills of the people who lived in the house. These records also are kept in the County Courthouse.

- **Town Library (for towns or buildings)**

The librarian at your local library should be able to direct you to a few volumes pertaining to your town's history. Even if you are confining your research to a building, you will want to put it into the context of the town's history. Look for names of people who had anything to do with the development of your town (and for names of the people you found in the deeds, if you are researching a building). Find the major events and people who made the town a town; this can be overwhelming because it has already been done for you and the volumes are usually long and old.

- **Historical Societies (for towns or buildings)**

If your town has no historical society or if the organization has no hours posted, ask the town librarian for the name and phone number of someone who serves—officially or unofficially—as town historian. You may need to make time to go over to some elderly person's house to have tea and cookies and plow through old documents and photographs that he or she has saved for years waiting for someone like you to come along and ask about them. These people will be delighted to share their knowledge and will be a very rich source of information for you. Don't forget, too, to check with the New Hampshire Historical Society. Your teacher can help you access the wealth of information available to you through this resource located in Concord, NH, but also available on the Internet (<http://www.nhhistory.org>)—including town histories, maps, and accounts of interesting persons and events. Also visit the University of New Hampshire's website for access to topographical maps: <http://docs.unh.edu/digital.htm>.

Curriculum Information

Information relating to the *New Hampshire History Curriculum* refers to the K-12 resource in two volumes developed by the New Hampshire Historical Society in partnership with Public Service of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Department of Education, and the New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies. The K-6 volume is available on-line through the school programs section of the Society's Web site (<http://www.nhhistory.org>).

Grade Level

Middle School and High School

New Hampshire Social Studies Standards

Geography 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; US/NH History 5

New Hampshire History Curriculum Focus Topics

Boundaries; Natural Environment and People

New Hampshire History Curriculum Eras

1870–1900: Development of the Industrial United States