ALL STUDENTS are required to write a term paper presenting a brief but insightful history of a particular New England town (not a city), from pre-settlement Native Americans to the end of the twentieth century. The object of the assignment is twofold: first, to see how well the history of a single community reflects the broader trends we’ll be discussing throughout this course; and second, to hone our skills at transforming historical sources into practical history.

LENGTH

Papers should be at least twelve (12) but not more than fifteen (15) typed double-spaced pages in length (including notes and a bibliography, but not counting a separate cover page, maps, or illustrations).

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

All papers must have notes and a bibliography. You may use either footnotes or endnotes. Historical writing typically uses a lot of footnotes (see the readings). A reader should always be able to verify assertions made by historians (this is one of the ways that history differs from journalism). The paper should include a bibliography of all sources used.

STYLE

Style is arbitrary, but conventions have evolved over the years in the various scholarly disciplines. These conventions are for the convenience of the reader. By following the same style for all citations, you make it easier for your reader to identify the source of the information. Papers must adhere to the following format for bibliography and notes. As is the convention with most historical writing, all notes must appear at the bottom of each page or as endnotes, not imbedded in the text (i.e., Jones, 1956). At times you may want to combine several short notes into one longer note.

For items not shown below, more extensive examples are given in the following style guides (available at the O’Leary Library Reference area or online: see the course website):

- Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations
- The Chicago Manual of Style.

When in doubt about how to cite a particular source, feel free to ask me.

Use the following guide to format your bibliography and notes:

**Bibliography**

Books

Author(s). *Title: Subtitle*. No. of vols (if more than one). Place of Publication: Publisher, Date.


Articles (Journals and Magazines)


Articles (Newspapers)
Author. “Article Title.” Newspaper, Date.

Other Sources
“Pepperell Celebrates Its Centennial” (undated clipping at Pepperell Public Library).

Footnotes or Endnotes

Books
First Reference
1 Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City (Hanover, 1978), 35.
2 Ernest Hebert, The Dogs of March (Hanover, 1979), 112-15.

Later References
4 Hareven and Lagenbach, Amoskeag, 234-45.
5 Hebert, Dogs of March, 82.
6 Ibid., 91.
7 “Charter of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay,” 18-19.

Articles (Journals and Magazines)
First Reference

Later References

Articles (Newspapers)
First Reference

Later References
11 Barnicle, “Boston, Town without Pity.”
Other Sources

First Reference

12"Pepperell Celebrates Its Centennial” (undated clipping at Pepperell Public Library).


Later References

15“Pepperell Celebrates Its Centennial.”

16Smith interview.

17Massachusetts, “Official Website.”

ATTRIBUTION

All direct and indirect quotations must be properly cited. Not to do so constitutes plagiarism. A source should be identified for all historical facts (except those in common knowledge, such as the fact that George Washington was the first President), as well as for ideas borrowed from other writers (including the assigned readings).

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

All papers must contain at least one map of your town. It isn’t necessary to draw them yourself; photocopies or printouts of existing maps will do fine. If you refer to any named neighborhoods or streets in the text (i.e., Graniteville, Main St.), label them on a map. Be sure to include at least one recent (say, within the past 20-30 years) and, if possible, at least one historical map (the town as it was at some point in the past). Important: maps must indicate town boundaries.

Illustrations are strongly encouraged, but not mandatory. Provide captions for all illustrations. Make sure to give the source of any map or illustrations (and be sure to take credit for any original maps, photos, art, etc.). If you have photographic skills, why not include some pictures that provide a feel for the town? Some of my students in the past have taken pictures from the same point of view as an historic photo to show how much or little change has occurred over the past 50 or 100 years.

Maps and illustrations can be included in the back of the report, but they work better if they are as close as possible to the text that refers to them. If you have layout skills, use them!

CONTENT

Your task is to write a coherent narrative account that traces your town from the seventeenth century to our own time. I strongly suggest that you adhere to the following sample outline, modifying it when necessary to fit your town. If you want to try another approach, please clear it with me first.

You need not include all of these items—some may not apply to your community—but you should try to deal with the most important.

Sample Outline

I. Geography: what is the geographical setting of your town—seacoast, hill town, river valley—and how did that shape the town’s development? Describe any prominent bodies of water, harbors, mountains, or other prominent geographic feature.
II. Indians
   A. How did the Indians live in the area that would become your town, before, during, and after initial settlement?
   B. What became of the native population? When?

III. Colonial Period (to 1775)
   A. Where did the early settlers come from—directly from the old world or from some other part of New England? Did they come as individuals, families, or groups? What attracted them to the site? When did they arrive?
   B. When and how was the first church founded? Were any other churches founded in town? How many schools? Where were they located?
   C. How did the inhabitants make their living? If farmers, what did they produce?
   D. What role did warfare play in the history of the town? Was the town ever attacked or was it ever in serious danger?

IV. American Revolution and afterwards (1775-1799)
   A. Did the inhabitants of the town support the Revolution? How strongly? Were there any records of Loyalists in the town?

V. Nineteenth Century
   A. How did the population size change over the years? How do you account for these changes?
   B. What role did changing modes of transportation—roads, railroads, canals, streetcars—play in changing the town?
   C. How did the inhabitants make their livings?
   D. Did the ethnic makeup of the population change? If so, when and why?
   E. Were new churches established in town? When and why? Who did they serve?
   F. Education is usually the largest single expenditure of a town’s budget. How did the school system change? When did the district system end? When was a high school established?

VI. Twentieth Century
   A. How did the population size change over the years? How do you account for these changes?
   B. How did the automobile change your town? Were there electric trolleys? Where and when did they operate? Did the town retain any public transit?
   C. How did the inhabitants make their living? Where did people work—in town or elsewhere? What became of local industry (if any) and businesses? Farming?
   D. Did the ethnic makeup of the population change? If so, when and why?
   E. Were new churches established in town? When and why?
   F. Education is usually the largest single expenditure in a town’s budget. How did the school system change? When did the district system end? When was a high school established?
   G. When did the town acquire modern services like town water, sewers, gas, electricity?
H. When did the town adopt zoning and subdivision control? Why? Were there other changes in town government, such as limited town meeting or a town manager?

I. How would you characterize the town at the end of the 20th century: wealthy suburb, old factory town, exurban boom town, mass suburb, resort, etc.?

Make sure your account is balanced. You’re trying to sort out the most important features of your town’s history. Don’t devote 12 pages to the pre-Revolutionary period, then 3 pages to the last 200 years!

Some towns were established directly from lands taken from the Indians; others were established out of earlier towns. For example, the town of Groton, Mass., was established in 1655. It was much larger than the town of that name today. Over the years the towns of Pepperell (1753), Shirley (1753), and Ayer (1871), were created out of sections of the original town of Groton, and parts of Groton ended up in Harvard, Littleton, Westford, Dunstable, and even Nashua, N.H. If you were to write a history of, say, Ayer, you would NOT start the narrative in 1871, but rather with the founding of Groton. For the period between 1655 and 1871 you’d look at the history of Groton as a whole, emphasizing as much as possible that part which would become Ayer. On the other hand, if you were to write a history of Groton, you would not have to trace these other towns after they were set off from Groton, but you would have to consider them before while they were still part of the larger town.

SOURCES

You might be able to do all of your research for this paper online, but I wouldn’t count on it. The full text of most books written before 1922 can be found on the internet, but few after that date. Town historical websites vary widely. Some will only quote sections of published works rather than providing the entire text. In those cases, be sure to examine the book itself, either online or in print. Be particularly wary of sites prepared by elementary or middle school students, since these are almost always based on other secondary sources, which means you’re now three times removed from the original sources! Remember, just because it’s not online doesn’t mean you can ignore it.

The single most valuable print and microfilm sources are typically located in the local town library of the community that you are investigating. Most libraries have a local history room or collection (unfortunately, often open only infrequently), which will contain all or nearly all of the materials you will need. The Center for Lowell History, 40 French St., in Lowell (in the Mogan Center adjacent to Boardinghouse Park) has an extensive (but, alas!, noncirculating) collection of historical materials dealing with towns in the entire Merrimack Valley and beyond.

Also, the UML library provides access to Interlibrary Loan. This allows all UMass Lowell students to request directly books that are not in our libraries. You should be able to borrow many local histories using this service. Check the course website for more information under “Term Paper.”

When selecting a town, consult the following books in O’Leary Library Reference (1st Floor), which will tell you how much material is available:

- Connecticut: A Bibliography of Its History  F94.E1 1986
- Massachusetts: A Bibliography of Its History  F64.C65
- New Hampshire: A Bibliography of Its History  F34.C65
- Rhode Island: A Bibliography of Its History  F79.R58 1983
• *Vermont: A Bibliography of Its History* F49.B38 1983

Each of these volumes contains a town-by-town listing of all known materials. Some towns have pages of listings, others, only a few works. Don’t be discouraged if there appears to be an overwhelming amount of material—"you certainly don’t have to consult everything. You’re writing a 15-page paper, not a dissertation! Be selective. Use contents and indexes. Start with general histories, if they exist. Four or five good sources should be enough. Formulate questions (such as those above) and then try to find the answers in the sources.

Also bear in mind that near the end of the last century multi-volume histories were prepared for many of the counties of New England, and these include individual histories of each town therein. Many of these can be found in the Center for Lowell History, or ordered via Interlibrary Loan, or found online (see the course website).

For this assignment, secondary sources (i.e., town histories) should be adequate (you won’t have time to, say, read town newspapers). Feel free, however, to use whatever primary sources are available, such as town records, letters and diaries, published census records, old maps, and church records.

Avoid extensive direct quotations from your sources. Write, edit, revise. Grammar, literary style, and spelling will definitely affect your grade on this assignment, so do your best to write clearly.

**TIMETABLE**

**Thursday, March 27**

Prepare an annotated bibliography of sources and a tentative outline. The bibliography/outline must include the following:

• A copy of the pages for your town from the appropriate volumes of *the New England Bibliography* series (see Sources, above)

• An annotated bibliography of sources. List each source, using the style shown on this sheet. By an *annotated* list I mean that each source should have a line or two telling something about the source and how you plan to use it (e.g., “This is a comprehensive history of Smallville from its founding to 1850, and it provides detailed information on the earliest settlers.”)

• A reasonably detailed outline

**Thursday, April 24**

Paper due.

**FINALLY . . .**

Please don’t hesitate to see me if you have any questions. I would be happy to review your work at any stage. Bring questions to class or call me at (978) 934-4554 or email to Ronald_Karr@uml.edu.