TEACHING
with
HISTORICAL
RECORDS

Kathleen Roe

The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Cultural Education
State Archives
Albany, New York 12230
1981
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by
Kathleen Roe
New York State Archives

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FOREWORD

Teachers of social studies face the challenge of helping students develop a sense of history and place. Young people have a natural curiosity about the past, and the complexities and rapid changes of modern life provide added incentive to understand historical development. An understanding of the community and its development contributes to students' feelings of belonging and being a part of a social group. Recently, historians, teachers, and archivists have stressed the need to study local history to develop this sense of time and place. Historical records provide the best evidence of social, political, economic, and other phases of community development, and their analysis and study by students can constitute a sound learning experience.

The New York State Archives has prepared this manual to assist teachers in locating and using historical records in social studies education. The Archives has the mandate to preserve and make available historically valuable State government records, to assure the preservation of local government records, and to provide advice on the preservation and use of historical records generally. A unit of the Office of Cultural Education in the State Education Department, the State Archives views the preservation of historical materials not only as a means of remembering the past, but as a resource for interpreting the past in the light of present needs and future challenges. This publication is a natural result of the Archives' concern with historical records and the broader concern with facilitating social studies education.

Kathleen Roe, Archivist II with the State Archives, prepared this publication. Several other individuals deserve special thanks for their contributions. Cornwall Central School District Superintendent R. Lancaster Crowley, Director of Curriculum David Burpee, and several teachers of the district provided advice on the specific needs of teachers and acted as a "test group" for many of the ideas suggested in this manual. Ross McGuire of the Broome County Historical Society and Warren Broderick of the Lansingburgh Historical Society provided access to their collections and suggested some of the samples included.

We hope this publication will be of assistance to teachers, local historians, archivists, and others concerned with improving the use of local cultural resources in education.

Robert J. Maurer
Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education
INTRODUCTION

Young people and local history can be an exciting combination. The opportunity to become intimately involved in the past is available from historical records, which include such diverse material as the diaries, letters, photographs, tax rolls, and other documents that were part of history as it happened. Students can learn both the fact and feeling of history from the perspective of those who lived the events of the past by reading and viewing historical records. These documents also explain to eager young minds the links between specific individual actions and the larger generalizations of history.

Teaching With Historical Records provides advice on using historical records in elementary, junior high, and high school social studies and history courses. It is aimed both at teachers seeking material to supplement standard texts and lectures, and at historical records custodians interested in promoting wider use of their holdings.

The use of archival records in the classroom is not a new idea. British Local Records Offices have worked with teachers since the 1950s to prepare collections of documents for classroom use. In the United States, individual teachers acting on their own have for many years had classes study selected documents. At the national level, the National Archives distributes teaching packets covering such topics as the Depression, World War I, and World War II. These kits include recordings, facsimile documents, maps, and photographs. The National Archives also runs workshops for teachers, covering classroom use of these packets and instructions on how teachers can assemble their own local packets.

A more widespread approach to the classroom use of archives dates from the Bicentennial, which rekindled public interest in national, state, and local history and historical sources. Bicentennial teaching packets were developed in several states, including Georgia, Iowa, and New York. New York State's history resource packet, Moving On, published by the Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development of the State Education Department, includes facsimiles of census pages, grand jury indictments, town records, and other materials, all focusing on the theme of the law and its relation to life, liberty, and property.

Several local organizations in New York have also prepared publications or packets of documents for use by educators. One innovative example is What They Wrote: 19th Century Documents from Tompkins County, New York (Ithaca, 1978), by Carol Kammen and the DeWitt Historical Society, which reprints historical documents and newspaper articles on Tompkins County. Brooklyn
Rediscovery, a program of the Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance, organized a comprehensive local history educational program that includes neighborhood architectural studies, oral history projects, and identification of historical materials for use in the schools.

A few commercial publishers are marketing teaching packets based on documentary sources. Perhaps the best known is the Jackdaws series published by Clark, Irwin and Co., Ltd., featuring attractive facsimile reproductions.

These efforts can be a good resource for ideas on format, content, and use of historical records packets. However, there is no simple formula for creating an exciting, educational set of materials. Reading levels, teaching styles, and the kinds of resources available all vary. This manual combines theoretical discussions of how to integrate historical records into teaching activities, with practical examples that demonstrate specific uses of records.

The manual is organized into four parts. The first discusses objectives of classroom use of historical records. The second provides suggestions on how to locate community resources, how to identify and arrange useful material, and how to interpret and test them. Part three--Sample Uses of Historical Records--constitutes the most important section of the manual. It includes discussions of the historical information that can be derived from several types of records (personal papers, business records, local government records, maps, photographs, broadsides, and census records); facsimile samples from each of these categories; and suggested questions and other teaching activities that might be based on such records. The last part contains suggestions for further reading.
I. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Using historical records in the classroom can help teachers to meet the educational objectives identified by recent revisions in the New York State social studies curriculum. A major goal of the revised curriculum is to prepare students to be informed, thoughtful participants in society; exposure to primary sources can help students learn the historical, critical thinking, and social skills necessary to achieve this goal.

Students can acquire a better understanding of historical knowledge by using original sources, which provide evidence to test general statements and theories in history. For instance, students might compare election records with census records and compile statistics which test the validity of such historical generalizations as the assertion that immigrants tended to vote for the Democratic Party in the early 1900s. This experience will have more impact than reading a few lines in a textbook because students will have analyzed information and arrived at conclusions themselves.

By assessing historical documents students learn the critical thinking skills of weighing and interpreting evidence, as well as the ability to draw conclusions from primary source materials. Eyewitness accounts of the draft riots in 1863, for example, vary greatly in their reports of who did what and why. By discussing these variations and trying to explain the differences, students can share the difficulty of sorting out conflicting evidence, trying to perceive prejudices, and coming up with an interpretation of the event.

Along with critical thinking abilities, social skills also may be developed as students learn to make political and ethical choices. Textbooks sometimes present evidence in a manner suggesting that the issues are very clear and definite. An investigation of the varied opinions and evidence that led to decisions and actions gives students more experience in seeing options and alternative solutions to problems and helps them arrive at their own judgments.

Looking at events in the past also will give students an understanding of their community. They can see how various groups have--and have not--worked together, and what effects this has had on the development and character of a community. Even if they do not always remain members of that specific community, students can still relate their knowledge of how communities function to other places they eventually might live. This knowledge can help them to define their own place in community and society and encourage them to participate more actively in the life and decisions of the community.
II. LOCATING AND USING HISTORICAL RECORDS

Identifying historical resources to use in the classroom undoubtedly seems like a labyrinthine task, especially because archives and records offices are often thought of as places accessible to only a select few. In fact, there are tremendous resources readily available in such locations as historical societies, libraries, government offices, archives, and even grandma’s attic. The problem is more often that of limiting the amount of material used than of failing to locate usable records.

RECORDS REPOSITORIES

A number of institutions within any locality may keep historical records. Local historical societies exist in many communities, and their records holdings range from a modest boxful to a large facility with many collections. The size is less important than the availability of valuable records. Historical societies are an excellent resource for personal papers, photographs, business records, broadsides, and maps. Local libraries, especially those with local history rooms or special collections sections, also may have historical resources, including printed histories, newspapers, photographs, maps and atlases, and sometimes manuscripts. Many large libraries have extensive collections of historical records.

The records generated by local governments and found in local government offices are a valuable resource. The condition and availability of these records varies greatly from community to community. Teachers should begin by contacting the official records custodians, i.e., town, village, city, and county clerks, to discuss what records exist and how they may be used. Most local governments do not maintain indexes or guides to their historical records, so considerable perusal of the records may be necessary to find suitable material. However, some local governments have instituted formal archives programs and their historical records are maintained separate from other materials and are described in detailed guides which make it easy to locate desired information. Several of these archives were organized under the Local Government Archives Program of the New York State Historical Records Advisory Board, described in the Appendix.

There are also a number of regional repositories where materials relating to a local area may be found. A number of colleges and universities have special collections sections or archives and collect local history-related materials. In addition, there are subject-related archives in areas such as labor and ethnic history which may have material on that subject relating to specific localities.
On the State level, two units of the New York State Education Department hold records which may be useful in developing a local curriculum. The State Archives preserves and makes available the permanently valuable records of State government. Many of these records have information concerning specific localities, especially in relationship to those areas regulated by the State, such as grants of State-owned land; conditions in factories, poorhouses, asylums, and orphanages; and the construction of highways and canals. The Guide to Records in the New York State Archives can be consulted for information on historical records of State government. The State Archives also holds microfilm copies of selected local government records, which may be borrowed on Interlibrary Loan. These records are described in Local Records on Microfilm in the New York State Archives. The Manuscripts and Special Collections Section of the New York State Library collects a state-wide range of personal and private organization records. Many of their collections relate to specific geographical areas, particularly upstate. The Section also has a large map collection which includes many atlases, manuscript maps, and topographical maps.

LOCATING RESOURCES

A good way to begin the search for records is by contacting the local historian. By law, every town, village, city, and county in New York State must have an appointed historian. This individual should be knowledgeable about the location of historical resources relating to the community. The historian might even collect records or might work closely with a local government archives, local historical society, or a museum having historical records. The local historian can also provide answers to some of the terminology problems encountered, or explain some of the local history behind a document. Many local historians are willing to make classroom presentations on various historical subjects such as home crafts, local historic sites, and historic clothing. The names of current local historians may be obtained from the Division of Historical and Anthropological Services, New York State Museum, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230 or from local municipal offices.

Another starting point for identifying local repositories and the kinds of material they have is the Historical Resources Center at Cornell University. The Center is presently conducting a state-wide, county by county, survey of historical records held by local archives, historical societies, museums, and libraries. The survey, which has been completed for most of central and western New York, results in the publication of county inventories that are available from local or regional libraries.
In addition, there are several bibliographic aids which identify many repositories and their holdings. These include:

National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States. (Washington, D.C.: National Archives & Records Service, General Services Administration, 1978.) One section of this guide is devoted to New York State. Entries on repositories are arranged by locality, and include information on names and address, hours, copying facilities, materials solicited, and descriptions of holdings.

Philip M. Hamer, ed. A Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.) This Guide has been superseded by the NHPRC Directory, but it can be used if the latter is unavailable. Arranged by location, it lists addresses and holdings of repositories.

Donna McDonald, ed. Directory of Historical Societies and Agencies in the United States and Canada. (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1978.) Also organized geographically, this Directory gives information on location, founding date, staff, publications and major programs, and period of collections.

National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1959-present.) Compiled annually, the catalog is arranged alphabetically by collection title but has indexes which make it possible to locate local materials. Many local repositories do not submit information for the catalog, but it can be helpful to identify collections in major repositories.

A less institutionalized, and somewhat more chancy way to locate records is to haunt local bookshops, flea markets, and auctions for personal papers, business advertisements, and photographs that often can be bought very inexpensively. Students can also be sent out on "attic searches" with the aim of locating useful records in their own home. This is a good way to turn up old magazines (they have good advertisements), newspapers, photos, business records, yearbooks, grade cards, and other memorabilia which can be copied and returned to the family.

USING REPOSITORIES

Once potential resources have been identified, the compiler of historical resources needs to be prepared for doing research
in the "strange land" of a manuscript library or archives. There
are a number of standard procedures that many repositories follow,
and while they may seem picky or unnecessary at first, they are
based on real needs, rather than a desire to harass the researcher.
Repository procedures may be unfamiliar, but there are special
types of guides and catalogs to help the researcher identify
materials.

It is common when using archival records to be asked to
follow a few special rules. Because theft and mutilation of
documents is a growing problem, researchers are often asked to
identify themselves, leave coats, purses, briefcases and the
like in a locker, and to bring only paper and pencil into the
research area. Pencil is required since accidental marks may be
erased, while a pen will do permanent damage. Some archives also
restrict the number of documents they will allow a researcher to
have at one time, and most have special forms to fill out to
request the material. The records should be kept in the order in
which they appear, since there might be a specific arrangement.
Sometimes special restrictions may exist on access to records,
because of the "sensitive" information in them or because the
records themselves are fragile. Finally, smoking and food are
banned. While the rules sometimes seem restrictive, they are the
result of an effort to preserve the records in the best condition
possible.

The kinds of location tools available for historical records
vary among different repositories. Because of the diversity of
origin and format of historical records there is no standard
classification system. The result is that the researcher needs
to find out how each repository makes its records accessible.

There are several standard kinds of access tools which the
researcher may encounter. Many libraries and archival reposi-
tories have printed summary guides, explaining what collections
or record series they have. These guides may simply list the
titles of each series or collection, or they may give a more
detailed description of the contents. There also may be unpub-
lished finding aids, such as typed lists of the general contents
of a collection or record series. Some repositories have a de-
tailed type of finding aid called a calendar, which is an item-
by-item summary of each document in a collection. In addition,
many libraries and archives have card catalogs, similar to the
library system, which give name, subject, and place access to
their records. Whatever system is used, the researcher should
not be reluctant to ask for guidance and assistance from staff
members. Bashfulness will only defeat the researcher, for the
strange codes, colors and annotations used in finding aids at
various repositories are difficult to decipher without an inter-
preter. Staff are generally available (although sometimes
harried and busy) to explain how to locate materials, but the
researcher should not feel embarrassed to ask for additional explanations and help. Often when informed of the nature of the project, archivists or librarians can steer the researcher to records that will be useful.

PREPARING RECORDS FOR CLASSROOM USE

Once documents have been identified, there are a number of ways to make them available to students. A very simple method is to make a photocopy of the record and make additional copies for classroom use. This has several advantages: it is comparatively inexpensive; it reproduces the document as it really is, complete with original handwriting, markings, etc.; and copies can be made for each student. A good copy machine will even make nice reproductions of photographs. To maintain the longevity of these copies, they can be covered with contact paper, or laminated or put in plastic folder pages.

If photocopies cannot be made, some repositories can photostat records. These are more expensive, but produce excellent reproductions of material that might not be copyable otherwise, such as pages in bound volumes or large size materials. The photostat can then be photocopied.

Another alternative is to take a photograph of the document, as long as repository rules permit this. A 35 millimeter camera can be used with a copy stand to produce a good copy of a document, which can then either be used as a slide and shown with a projector, or can be made into an enlarged print and again photocopied.

If a copy cannot be made, or if the original is in such poor handwriting or condition that it is unreadable, a typescript may fill the need. Presenting the document in this way loses a little of the "flavor" of the original, but may be easier to read. In such cases, it would be good to let the students at least see a copy of the original so they have some idea of what it looked like. Or if the teacher can find (or become) a good writer of old style handwriting, a simulated copy can be made.

Many archives and libraries are also microfilming some of their records to preserve both the information and the record. In such cases, it may be possible to have a copy of the microfilm made for classroom use. Fees charged for microfilming services differ, but it is not always expensive. If microfilm readers are available, it is an excellent way to have a lot of information available for students to use, especially with statistical records such as the census.
Once copies of the documents have been made, there are a number of alternatives for putting them together into a set. Groups that have been able to tap a good financial resource sometimes have the documents bound. Binding prevents loss of documents, but it lends an air of "textbookishness" to the documents, which is contrary to their natural state, and it also prevents the addition of new documents that are located later, or the elimination of documents that are "flops." To avoid some of the pitfalls of bound volumes, it may be preferable to keep the documents in a looseleaf binder, in file folders, or in paper envelopes.

**TESTING NEW IDEAS**

Perhaps the most important caution about finalizing materials is not to do it prematurely. Before extensively adapting curricular and instructional patterns, it is helpful to try out a few documents with students in order to become comfortable with the format. A trial period will also provide some insights into the kinds of documents and lessons that get the best responses, and the unanticipated problems that may arise. Having done that first, selecting additional documents and developing lessons will have a sounder basis in reality.

The most important thing is to have a flexible format that will accommodate additions, changes, and adjustments to meet the varying needs of the students from year to year and from class to class. In schools where several teachers are using documents in the classroom, resource files have been set up with documents arranged by subject, along with teaching suggestions and activities contributed by the various teachers.

Many professionally published packets and documents have been developed, and teachers tend to think their own efforts should aspire to that "slick" look; this is not necessary. Documents developed will vary greatly from area to area depending on the resources available, the teaching techniques used by the individual teacher, and the needs of the students. It is more important that documents be useable than that they be attractive.

**INTERPRETING RESOURCES**

Despite all the advantages of historical resources, there are questions and problems that inevitably arise. Unfamiliar terms and abbreviations, unusual formations of letters in handwritten items, and incompleteness of data can plague even the veteran user of historical records.
Terminology can prove difficult, particularly in older records. Local government officials such as fence viewers or overseers of the poor may be unfamiliar, as are legal terms such as "earmark", "chattel mortgage", "quitrent" or "indenture", or household words such as "flatiron", "soapstone","bedwarmer", or "chamber pot". No teacher or historian should feel responsible for being able to define all of these things at a moment's notice--regardless of how much advance research and preparation the teacher does, some eager student will invariably ask about the one item that was overlooked, or about some nuance that emerges from his or her own fertile mind. Instead of being a source of all answers, the teacher should become a source of guidance as to where and how to find out. The resources for locating local history information, therefore, should be checked out in advance. These resources may be printed, but people can also be a valuable source of information. Local government officials, lawyers, craftsmen, and professional people can easily recognize terminology that is inexplicable to most students. Grandparents and older citizens may also be useful human resources. Knowing where to go to find information and learning to solve such minor mysteries can be as useful to students as the specific piece of information itself; they not only acquire the knowledge, but also the ability to learn on their own, without the teacher as constant interpreter.

During the process of analyzing historical records, students often ask teachers to explain what "really" happened or to indicate the "correct" interpretation of a historical phenomenon. Students may seek these explanations because they are used to textbook history which tends to make all historical occurrences seem precise, definable, and simple. The study of historical records can show students that history is complex and that simple answers or explanations are not always available. The traces of history left in the form of original records are ultimately a frustrating and amusing patchwork of opinions, misconceptions, exaggerations, and understatements. Recognizing this is an important step forward for students (and for some adults as well). In fact, learning to weigh information and draw logical conclusions will be a useful skill students can apply to contemporary situations as well as past ones.

CONCLUSION

Historical records can fill a vital role in social studies education. As society becomes increasingly complex, people have a greater need to find things with which they can identify; this is particularly true for young people. A sense of community and the individual's role in that community can fill that need, and local history becomes an important element of education.
Learning local history from historical records can be an exciting, educational adventure. To share the laughter and pain of daily life, to witness the growth of a community through its government, schools, businesses, and institutions is to truly recapture the human experience.

Teaching local history, however, requires special skills and materials which have generally not been made part of standard education for teachers. The intention of this manual is to provide a general guide to development of local history materials and the skills necessary to implement their use in the classroom. In the following section, specific examples show how this can be done. The samples have been selected from communities throughout the state to illustrate the variety of records that are available. Many kinds of records exist which are not included, and a plethora of activities and lessons can be planned which have barely been hinted at here. It is the assumption throughout that teachers will have special needs in their own communities and classrooms, so that, having been introduced to the general concepts, they can make the necessary adjustment. If questions or problems do arise, staff of the State Archives are available to provide advice.
III. SAMPLE USES OF HISTORICAL RECORDS
In the course of everyday existence, people produce a fascinating array of records which later allows students to "peek" into the past. The collections which survive in historical societies or archives may range from a few items to hundreds of boxes. The range of personal papers is as extensive as the individuals who produce them. It is common to find letters, diaries, and recollections, memorabilia such as theater programs, greeting cards or scrapbooks, as well as family financial records, and legal documents in the form of indentures or land deeds.

Imagine the delight of students sharing the confidences of a young woman to her diary about life as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse and the joys and problems of her job, or the sense of loss they feel after reading a World War I soldier's letters home that end with the impersonal government telegram informing the family of his death. By sharing in the experience of people in the past, students can come to recognize history as an array of real people, not a parade of mummified museum pieces.

Letters and diaries provide an intimate look into daily life, but there are many other sources of information as well. Cookbooks provide a window into the historic kitchen, where food had to be prepared in thermometer-less ovens. (Judging the correctness of an oven's temperature could be risky business. Some women favored the thrusting of an arm into the oven, with the depth to which it could comfortably reach being the determinate. Some particularly brave New Yorkers stuck their whole head in, judging temperature by how long it took to make their eyes get dry!) Recipes called for such questionable amounts of ingredients as a "pinch of salt" or "shortening the size of an egg". Ration cards bring home the severity of war years. Invitations to parties, theater programs, and sheet music remind students of family entertainment before electronic contraptions. Greeting cards and valentines reflect earlier holiday traditions.

There is a wealth of human history to be found in the traces left by individuals. A surprising amount of paper records are produced and kept by individuals in their lifetime, and almost any of these remains can be used to bring students literally into history.
LETTER FROM EMELINE HICKS

Chili, New York: 1839

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Note the discussion of Enos moving to Russia. This is not the country, so check a gazetteer of New York or the United States to find out its true location.

2. Compare the date of birth for baby Elizabeth with the date of the letter. How long was it before her sister found out? How does this compare with present attitudes toward the birth of children? Why may it have taken so long for Emeline to tell her sister?

3. Note the mention of death by drinking cold water. Why did people think that?

4. Note the mention of going to Michigan. This would be a good point for discussion of western movement via the Erie Canal.

5. Note the mention of one of the Sibley girls "experiencing religion." What does this mean? What present day phenomena may this be similar to?

6. Note the spelling and punctuation problems in this letter. What does it tell about the level of education available?

Extended Activities

1. Having found the village of Russia, have students check the names of towns, villages, and cities in the county and see how many were named either after places in Europe or towns in New England from which people may have migrated. A similar activity can be done with place names in Michigan, many of which were named after New York places—e.g. Ithaca, Michigan; Troy, Michigan. This can show population movement and origin of settlers.

2. Imagine you are Allice Barber and write your response to Emeline's letter.

3. Research medical practices and health ideas in this time period. How often were doctors available? How much training did they have? What home remedies did people use?
Dear Sister, I now take this opportunity to write a few lines to you. I have neglected writing on the account of Mother, she has told of coming down here. She talks of coming down there this fall but she thinks it is a chance if she comes. Enos talks of going to Apple and he don't know if he'll move there. I would inform you that we are well excepting bad with we have yet a little blue egg yet. Her name is Susan Elizabeth she was born the 30 October. Roland has gone home with Mother to stay a week. Enos has gone to keeping house he lives two or three miles from here Joseph works for her likely yet I don't hear very thing about going to Michigan lately. I expect he will be land some where before long. the fruit is all killed here excepting apples it has been very dry here it is a severe time of health here at present. I have heard a number death by drinking cold water. we have not heard very thing from Newport since we wrote to you we want to see you all very much. Remont you to come and make me a visit. one of ourd bee girls has performed religion and he is a great opposer. I want you to write soon I have no news to write. I must draw to a close by subcribing myself your friend and Sister

Odelie Barber
August 16 97

Emeline Licks

John Barber
1897

Joseph Licks
INVITATION TO RECEPTION

Stephentown, New York: 1855

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Have students find out what a "donation visit" was, and why it took place.

2. Note the form of address used--e.g., "C. Moffitt - and Lady." Discuss the changes and variations in address used over time, and why they occur.

3. What might be the roles of the Committee of Arrangements and the Committee for the Evening?

4. Why is this visit being held twice? Also note the day of the week when it is being held. Discuss the difference in scheduling of receptions and events between an agricultural and an industrial society.

Extended Activities

1. Using the committee members' names as clues, have students check contemporary newspapers, church records, and personal papers to see if they can determine whether Rev. Bronson was connected to a specific church, or to a special cause such as abolition or foreign missionary work.

2. How many churches were there in Stephentown at this time? Have students research the origins of different congregations and the kinds of activities they sponsored in the community.

3. Using census records, assessment rolls, and business directories, compile information on the committee members. Then try to draw generalizations about their economic and social status, ethnic background, age, and occupations.

4. Have students imagine they are Rev. Bronson and write a journal entry for the evening of January 31, 1855.
DONATION VISIT.

The Rev. M. C. Bronson, will receive his friends on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 1855, at One and Six o'clock P. M.

Mrs. Bronson.

Committee of Arrangements.

C. Moffitt - and Lady, A. Gardner E. A. Carpenter
C. P. Carpenter

Committee for the Evening.

BUSINESS RECORDS

One of the advantages of a capitalistic society is that it generates a massive array of private business records, many of which survive for later educational uses. Records are created by multinational corporations and "Mom and Pop" groceries, by managers and workers, by producers and consumers. They reflect the economic conditions of an era, the methods of production, and the living conditions of the working force.

Advertisements for merchandise provide many clues to how people lived. There are word-mysteries to untangle regarding the nature of various products, and advertising styles provide a great deal of social commentary. The cementing of sexual stereotypes, for example, can be seen as women in the Gilded Age are pictured as weak and frail (unlike the robust pioneer women) and in need of such conveniences as an electric motor washer which not only cleans clothes but "saves women's lives".

Ledgers and account books from stores show a different method of purchase and payment from what is commonly encountered. Students can see how people kept running accounts with a store and that they bought in large quantities, in contrast to current afternoon trips to the supermarket. These facts provide insight into the influence of transportation on shopping patterns, the need for storage systems for large amounts of materials, or the lack of ready cash in agricultural areas.
Records relating to employees show such things as wages, job requirements, and practices of hiring and firing. The reality of discrimination becomes starkly apparent when job announcements include a statement of the ethnic groups not permitted to apply, or when dismissal reasons are listed as "A Pollack" or "Irish & Drunk."

Bills for goods indicate both the variety of goods sold and the cost of merchandise. Since many include the address of the business, they can be used to study development of business districts and uses of buildings. They also are often imprinted with detailed drawings of the type of merchandise sold or of the building where the store is located, thereby providing useful visual information as well.

Business records lend themselves to studies of economic conditions at any given time, providing information students can compile and correlate on wages and prices. In addition, they are an excellent resource for studies of the nature of working life for all levels of society, as well as the growth and development of our economic system.
NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF REYNOLDS, ROGERS & CO.

Binghamton, New York: 1890

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What does "an unconditional surrender" refer to?
2. Why was this circular distributed?
3. What is the attitude of management toward the workers? List specific phrases that show this attitude.
4. Would the workmen agree with this circular? What might be the attitude of the people who read it?
5. If management had lost the strike, how do you think this circular would differ?

Extended Activities

1. Using contemporary newspapers, find out what the causes of this strike seem to have been. Notice whether the reporting is pro-labor or pro-management; this can bias the information. What were the workers' demands? What were the demands of management?
2. After researching the background of this strike, have students divide into groups representing labor and management and try negotiating a settlement.
3. Write this circular as it might appear if the workmen wrote it.
4. Have students interview people who have been involved in strikes, including both workers and management, and compare their comments to reports of strikes in the past. Students might then try to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in attitudes toward labor/management negotiations.
TO OUR CUSTOMERS AND FRIENDS:

We have sent you several circulars during this long strike, in order to keep you posted as to the prospects, and in each case have given the situation as near as we could foretell. You no doubt have seen by the Associated Press Dispatches that what there was left of the strike was declared off last Sunday, Oct. 5th.

"AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER" was the only course left for the agitators and leaders to pursue, as the Manufacturers have systematically fought this the longest strike of its size this industry has ever had in America, and the results were that at the end of fifteen weeks, all the factories were nicely running with a class of help that they could depend upon in the future.

We shall ship orders now on our books as rapidly as possible, in the order they come, and would ask you to please place our samples in the hands of your agents at once. In case you need new samples, please inform us and we will forward same.

KINDLY SEND IN YOUR ORDERS with dates for shipment as soon as possible, as we shall produce from seventy-five to one hundred thousand cigars a day, and shall try to be prompt in our shipments.

We are pleased to acknowledge the receipt, already, of a great number of letters of congratulation, with large orders enclosed. These many letters of encouragement and the generous treatment we have received from our many valued customers, together with the moral support our citizens and business men have given us, the justice of our laws (so long allowed to sleep in similar cases,) but so vigorously prosecuted by our able attorneys, and the unselfish, honorable and square manner our brother Manufacturers have stood by each other all through, has helped to win this strike and maintain the true American principle we so persistently fought for, the right of every man to manage his own business in his own way.

Believing this to be the end of strikes in Binghamton for some years to come, and that Binghamton is now on the eve of her brightest future, as the trade know well what they can depend on, and her products have proved their value. We would ask a further continuance of your valued trade.

Very sincerely yours,

REYNOLDS, ROGERS & CO.
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. List the kinds of items sold by these businesses. Identify the ones that are unfamiliar.

2. Do these companies still exist today?

3. The cigar manufacturer includes many rules on his bill. What do they mean? Why did they have such rules? How do businesses today handle problems like goods stolen or damaged in transit?

4. The bills show horses and wagons as transportation for the goods. Students may consider how this will affect the distance goods can be transported, especially perishables. They might also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of horse and cart as compared to trucks, trains, etc.

Extended Activities

1. Find out whether these buildings still exist; if so, what changes have been made in the use and style of the building?

2. Using a number of such bills and receipts, or city directories, identify various businesses on a contemporary map, then decide where the main parts of the business district were located, such as shopping areas and manufacturing areas. Identify the same areas for the present. Try to explain why they have developed where they did (e.g., nearness to a river or source of raw materials) and why they may have changed.

3. Have students select a local business and research its history, including production, marketing, and employment practices. Then invite a representative of the business to the classroom to discuss his or her work with the students.
All claims for deductions must be made immediately on receipt of goods.

This bill becomes due immediately when purchaser suspends payment, removes, or is closing out.

N. B. After obtaining a receipt for goods shipped in good order, our responsibility ceases and claims for damages or breakage must be made of the Transportation Company. We cannot be responsible for goods stolen while in transit.
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What is manufactured ice? Other sources of ice might be discussed at this point.

2. Why was ice sold in large blocks instead of cubes?

3. Why was selling ice such an important business? What other methods of preserving foods were used? When was the refrigerator first introduced?

4. Note the telephone numbers given. Why were there so few numbers? When did the present system of numbers begin to be used?

Extended Activities

1. Have students interview adults in the community who remember iceboxes and the iceman. Make a collection of anecdotes about this phenomenon.

2. Have students research how ice was manufactured and harvested.

3. Have students who enjoy drawing or enjoy photography compile a visual history of the evolution of the icebox. Other students with a scientific or mechanical talent might try designing and constructing an icebox. Various designs might be tried to see which keeps the ice cold for the longest time.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Government records are full of unique and fascinating insights into the past. Some of the best information on everyday citizens is compiled in the process of governmental business, and is not the sort of thing people themselves would record—especially those who could not write, or could not write in English.

Every governmental unit, whether town, village, city, county or borough, has a supervising body, and the records they create, such as minutes of meetings, are a tremendous resource. The minutes of a town board, for example, relate information on laws passed, which can be very interesting. Students may wonder why in the nineteenth century it was required that pigs have rings in their noses, or why fences had to be four feet four inches high. In more modern records, students may be surprised—if not a bit amused—to read of a petition to the village board of trustees during the 1960s requesting that bikini bathing suits be banned at the local swimming pool.

Records of specific officers like the Town Clerk, Fence Viewer, Overseer of the Poor, or the Commissioners of the Highways also may arouse curiosity. The importance of land and property becomes clearly apparent in the Town Clerk’s recording of earmarks, destruction of property by animals, and redemption of impounded strays. Students who cannot conceive of a world without social security, welfare, and medicaid may be surprised to learn of "poor relief" practices in the past, including almshouses and orphanages, or monetary payments only after the individuals have been certified by the Overseer of the Poor as unable to support themselves. It gives students an idea of alternative systems to contemporary ones, and they can personally weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The variety of local government records is extensive. Licensing records can provide information on everything from street peddlers to child labor. Wills and chattel mortgages often have itemized lists of real and personal property owned by individuals, providing data for reconstructing daily life. Election records show who the active citizens of a municipality were and what its political nature was. Information on slave manumission helps to fill an important gap in the understanding of conditions for blacks in the North.

Local public schools are a part of the local government, and school records will give students particular delight. Old attendance records show a pattern in rural areas that is very different from today, with older students attending only during
seasons when they were not needed to work on the farm. A particularly good experience in historical realism is to introduce students to old school lessons and copybooks, then have them spend a day doing the same kind of lessons. Complaints about boring classes plummet after students have had a day of ciphering, memorization, recitation, handwriting practice, and copying from the board. At the same time, they will realize the constraints on education caused by limited availability of books, paper, pencil and, occasionally, human mercy. (Realism extending to dunce caps and switches is not recommended.)

Local government records can reflect a great deal about how people developed, ordered, and supervised their society. These records show what things were of importance to people and the ways in which communities coped with their environment. As a record of societal interaction, local government materials are unparalleled and hold many hours of fascination for the student.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judges of the Peace</td>
<td>Thomas Corrada</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eliza Nepea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>John Sturr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>Luke S. Jeff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>Joseph Beck</td>
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<td>Asahel Vickery</td>
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<td>Joseph Bailey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioners of Highways</td>
<td>Caleb Goodspeed</td>
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<td>Samuel Smith</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Edmund Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseer of the Poor</td>
<td>Joseph Galt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Joseph Beale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioners of Schools</td>
<td>John Welling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Andel Wingfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustees of the School</td>
<td>Peal Brown</td>
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<td></td>
<td>William B. Chapman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspectors of Common Schools</td>
<td>Francis Harwood</td>
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<td>Luke Shreft</td>
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<td>Durwood Shreft</td>
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<td>Collector</td>
<td>Robert Metre</td>
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<td>Zebulon Moore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>John C. Grimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constables</td>
<td>Sherman Brown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Identify the responsibilities of each official.
2. Who is the most important official?
3. What are common schools?
4. Why are there so many overseers of the highways?

Extended Activities

1. Obtain lists of town officials for every ten (or twenty-five) years until the present. Chart the changes in the number and kinds of officials. Try to draw conclusions about the changes in size and responsibilities of town government over the years.

2. How many of the family names listed among the officials are names of families still in the town today? Do these families remain active in government over the years?

3. Have students locate the town officers in the State census and identify their ages, nationality, and occupations. Then check the same information for a series of years to see whether certain patterns develop.

4. Have each student choose a town officer and research the responsibilities of this official. Then reenact a town meeting with each student presenting a report. This activity can be done for both a past and a present town government meeting. Students might also attend an actual meeting of the town government.

5. Arrange a class field trip to the town hall or the Town Clerk's office. Afterward, ask students to report on how records of town business are kept now and why the records are important.
List of Officers Continued

Bishop A. Board, Surveyor of Weights and Measures

Overseers of Highways

District No. 1: General Survey

1. Rev. C. E. Godbey
2. A. T. Smith
3. George L. G. Moore
4. John D. Scott
5. John B. Sharkey
6. Andrew Henry
7. Harry J. Smith
8. J. B. Thresh
9. Samuel M. Dwayne
10. Charles S. German
11. W. P. M. Jone
12. William J. Haralson
13. Philo Godfrey
14. Joseph Blanchard
15. Elias M. Foster
16. Leonard Blanchard
17. Gilbert Buckingham
18. Harry W. Underwood
20. Elsie Bone
21. George Davis
22. William England
23. John Clum
24. William K. Price
25. William Price
26. Joseph Price

All of which I certify.

City of alliance
Latton Clark
RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE POOR
TOWN RECORD BOOK
Little Valley, New York: 1904

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What seems to be the attitude of the town board toward the county board of supervisors?

2. What does "temporary or outdoor relief" mean?

3. The law says the Overseer of the Poor is to inquire into the state and circumstances of the applicant. What kinds of conditions were considered severe enough to warrant relief then? What conditions are now? How do they compare?

4. Based on costs at the time, is $50.00 a small or large amount of money?

Extended Activities

1. Have students imagine they are the Overseer of the Poor and describe their feelings about the job.

2. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of this system of helping poor people. Then make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of the present welfare system. Compare the two--what similarities do they have? What differences? Which seems better?

3. Based on real statistics, but using fictitious names, give students several sample cases of applicants for relief from the Overseer of the Poor. Have them decide whether to grant relief or not, and if so, how much.

4. Have students write a dialogue between the Overseer of the Poor and an applicant for relief.
The Resolution as adopted is as follows:

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Cattaraugus having failed to make any rules or regulations in regard to the manner of furnishing temporary or outdoor relief to the poor of the several towns in said Cattaraugus County, as provided by Section 13 of the "Poor Law;"

AND WHEREAS, authority is conferred upon the Town Boards of the several towns in the State to adopt such rules and regulations in the event that the Board of Supervisors shall have failed to adopt such rules and regulations,

Therefore be it RESOLVED that whenever any person in the Town of Little Valley shall apply for relief to the Overseer of the Poor of said Town, such overseer shall inquire into the state and circumstances of the applicant, and if it shall appear to him that the person so applying requires temporary relief such Overseer of the Poor may furnish such temporary relief from time to time as in his judgment and discretion may be necessary and it shall not be necessary for said Overseer to apply to the Supervisor of said Town to examine into the circumstances of the case, nor shall it be necessary for said Overseer to obtain the order in writing or otherwise from the said Supervisor or from the County Superintendent of the Poor authorizing the expenditure of the money for such temporary relief; Provided however, that said Overseer shall not expend in excess of the sum of Fifty Dollars ($50.00) in any one year for the relief of any such poor person, except upon the written order of the Supervisor of said Town authorizing the expenditure of such excess, such written order to be obtained monthly from the said Supervisor in the case of the expenditure of any sum in excess of Fifty Dollars ($50.00) as aforesaid.
Maps are an important resource for teaching, providing both visual and factual information on a given location, and they can be used independently or in conjunction with other records. Since mapping was a necessity for land claims and travel, maps exist as far back as the early settlements and are among the most regular and consistently available resources. There are many varieties which can be of use to teachers, including both manuscript and printed maps, state, county, and city atlases, birds-eye views, topographical maps, and insurance maps.

Many early maps appear in manuscript form—that is, they are hand drawn. There are manuscript maps of the entire state, but more frequently of regions, towns, villages, and even individual land holdings. The amount of information varies, depending on the scale of the maps, from simple boundary maps to very detailed maps showing features such as bridges, roads, factories, houses, and other structures. The accuracy of these maps varies, and students might consider the difficulty of map making in the time before airplanes and unobstructed views were possible.

The first state-wide atlas for New York was completed in 1829 by David N. Burr. His Atlas of the State of New York includes a map for each county with information such as town lines, stagecoach roads, and sites of flour and sawmills, forges, churches, and factories.

There are also county atlases for virtually every county in New York State, many of which were produced around 1876 for the nation’s centennial. These include maps of the county, towns, and villages, generally giving information on property ownership, location of buildings, roads, businesses, and other details. Many county atlases were sold by subscription, so the compilers often included additional information that related to these subscribers, such as biographical articles on important people in an area and pictures of homes and businesses.

Another useful type of map is the topographical map published by the U.S. Geological Survey. This type provides information on topographic features of the landscape including heights of land, water courses, lakes, buildings, and roads. Several topographical maps dating from the late nineteenth century to the present may be used in conjunction with other maps of the same area to trace the changes in natural and built environments.

Insurance maps are also an excellent resource. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company was a major producer and there are Sanborn Insurance Maps for many areas as early as the 1870s and extending
into the twentieth century. Compiled for insurance purposes, they provide detailed descriptions of buildings and industries. Information is included on the construction of buildings (brick or frame), the location of fire walls, type of cornices, type of windows, and material of which the roof is constructed.

In the mid to late 1800s, bird's-eye views or panoramic maps were drawn for many municipalities. These maps provide a minia­turized view of the area, including surprisingly detailed and accurate representations of houses, factories, parks, rivers, and roads.

Maps can be useful for the information they provide on land ownership, as well as on the location and form of buildings, transportation routes, and the physical size of municipalities. They are also useful as a comparative gauge of the municipal growth, development, and decline over time, and they provide a broader understanding of the physical environment in which historical developments take place. A map is truly an example of a picture being worth a thousand words.
MAP OF TROY

Rensselaer County, New York: 1817

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Have students locate this section of the Wynantskill on a modern map. How does its course seem to have changed over the years?

2. What industries are on this map? Why are they located on the banks of the Wynantskill?

3. What kinds of transportation routes are shown on this map?

4. Are any of these buildings still in existence? If so, how are they used now? If not, what is located there?

5. How does this map differ in content and quality from the kind of maps drawn today? Why have these changes occurred?

Extended Activities

1. Use geological maps to determine what kinds of minerals and natural resources are available in this area. Have students investigate the relationship between resources and industrial production.

2. Use the Federal Census Schedules of Manufacturing for 1820-1880 and chart the industrial growth or decline in this area. Draw conclusions about the amount and type of industry in various years, and possible reasons for the changes that take place.

3. Use contemporary newspapers, business records, or city directories to find information on the industries shown on the map. Have students use this information to write histories of the companies.

4. Organize students into small groups and assign each group the task of preparing a map of a particular neighborhood or area near their homes.
MAP OF FISHKILL-ON-HUDSON

Dutchess County, New York: 1867

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Based on the business directory, what kind of economic area may this be?

2. Identify the industrial areas, the shopping areas, and the residential areas. What reasons can be given for the geographic location of each?

3. Find the railroad and explain why it is located there.

4. Why is Stephen Mapes both a druggist and dentist? Explain why James Member sells groceries, ice cream, and runs the Oyster Saloon. How do these businesses differ from present day?

5. Note that some streets are laid out in a grid pattern, while others are random and wandering. Try to explain why this might happen.

Extended Activities

1. Locate a series of maps of the town up until the present (e.g., 1890, 1930, 1960, 1980). Compare the size over this time—if it grew, in what direction and why? Do the street locations change? Does the business district move? Where? Why?

2. Using the 1865 State census, identify the people on the map by occupation and birthplace. Do any neighborhood patterns emerge?

3. Research one of the businesses listed in the directory. (City directories may be helpful here). Do any still exist? When did they go out of business?

4. Do any families still own the same property today?

5. Using the current yellow pages in the telephone book, look up the types of businesses listed in the business directory. How many are there now of each?
Fishkill Landing
Fishkill on the Hudson, P. O.
"Business Directory."

AGENTS.
Markin, Jas., Real Estate Agent, Bank Building.

ATTORNEY.
Hooton, H. H., Counselor at Law, Bank Building.

BANKS.
Beattie, W., President 1st Natl. Fishkill Landing.
Oakley, W. C., Cashier 1st Natl. Fishkill Landing.

CARPENTERS AND BUILDERS.
Bogardus, Samuel, Builder, 9 South avenue.
Bogardus, Alfred, Carpenter and Builder, Main street.
Booth, John, Carpenter and Joiner, Cross street.
Casey, Samuel, Builder, Main street.
Murray, Jas., Carpenter Willow street.
Wilson, E. W., Carpenter and Builder, Beacon street.
Walsh, J. Y., Carpenter and Builder, Elm street.
Turwiller, J. J., Carpenter, and Joiner, Dewitt street.

DRUGGISTS AND DENTISTS.
Maver, Stephen, Druggist and Dentist, No. 9 Main street.
Mawth, A. Theodore, Chemist and Apothecary, No. 4 Ferry street.

EDITORS.
Spaigt, J. W., Editor Fishkill Standard.

GROCERS.
Clark, Bernard, Groceries and Liquors, foot Main street.
Member, James E., Groceries, Ice Cream and Oyster Saloon, Main street.
Main street.
Van Deusen, L. & Son, Grocers, Gold Spring road.

HOTELS.
Berry, C. L., Prop't Newburgh Bay Hotel, Long Wharf.
Mayer, Jr., Louis, Prop't Mayer's Hotel, opp. R.R. depot.
Traver, H. E., R.R. Station House at R.R. depot.
Wood, W. W., Prop't O'Gara House, Main street.

SHOPS AND STORES.
Clark, Samuel, Groceries and Provisions, foot Main street.

C. L. Prop't Newburgh Bay Hotel, Long Wharf.
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs can be an important element in helping students gain a concrete view of the past. They provide the visual image that animates historical fact. Photographs help bring historical figures out of the realm of disembodied spirits by giving them faces and expressions. They present actual images of times past, providing information for further investigation, and serve as the basis of a visual understanding of history.

The visual concept of days past that students have received from television and movies might be the cause of as much misinformation as information. Period photographs can do much to portray people and locations in a realistic way, minus Hollywood hairstyles, dazzling capped teeth, and attractively quaint (and always comfortable) homes and towns. The hardships and realities of everyday life are essential elements of the past that students need to recognize. When comparing portraits, students may realize that people kept their mouths closed because dental care was rare well into the twentieth century—hence the perhaps misleadingly grim countenances. They might become more understanding of the growth of the women’s movement and the "bloomer" girls when they consider the problem it was to clean house (especially scrubbing floors) in the voluminous skirts and petticoats of the late nineteenth century.

Photographs of towns similarly can lend a more realistic sense of the physical environment; stereopticon views, in particular, can be an exciting peek at historic streets and activities. A valuable resource is the work done by photographers such as Matthew Brady and Lewis Hines who went beyond the flattering portraits and town vistas to capture some of the grimmer scenes of life. Photographs of the late nineteenth and the twentieth century show working conditions in factories, home life in middle and lower class areas, and general life styles among the non-elite classes.
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Note the three kinds of transportation routes shown in this picture: the canal, railroad, and road. Have students list the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of transportation.

2. Note that this is an industrial area. What are the advantages of all the industries being located near each other?

3. Why are all three transportation routes located so close to each other? Why are they located near the industrial area?

4. Notice the geological features. What kinds of problems may that have caused in the building of transportation routes?

Extended Activities

1. Try to locate this area at present. How has it changed? Are any of the buildings still standing? What changes have there been in the transportation routes, and why may these changes have occurred?

2. Have students imagine they are a passenger on a canal boat passing through the locks. Describe Little Falls as you pass through.
MAIN INTERSECTION OF BERLIN

Rensselaer County, New York: 1885

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What stores can you identify in this picture? Are they still in operation today?

2. How do these buildings differ from those built today? Of what kind of material are they probably built? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of constructing buildings from locally available resources and from materials brought in from a distance; include a consideration of architectural styles.

3. How many of these buildings are still standing? Are they still used as stores?

Extended Activities

1. Compare pictures of the main street of Berlin to other New York communities at about the same time. Does it differ architecturally? Does it reflect a different economic level?

2. Imagine you are one of the people in the photograph and write an article for the newspaper on the photographer taking the picture, why it was taken, what it shows, etc.

3. Choose one of the buildings in the photograph and research it, then either write a short history of the building or write a history of the town through the "eyes" of the house.

4. Bring students on a walking tour of the area where this photograph was taken. Are there features in the photograph that are still recognizable?
BROADSIDES

Broadsides are an important resource for classroom use because they are both visually appealing and contain a great deal of information. They are printed sheets intended to be posted to provide the public with information on a variety of subjects. Broadsides were heavily relied on as a communications medium when newspapers were published less frequently and had limited circulation, and prior to the electronic media age. As a result, they are clear, concise, and tightly packed with information. For elementary and junior high school students, or for problem readers, this can be a particular advantage.

Broadsides are in many ways the forerunners of modern day posters, but they present much more enticing verbal details than present day picture-oriented posters. They were issued in a wide range of sizes, styles, colors, and for a variety of purposes. Some were intended to announce important news events such as the outcome of Civil War battles, or the sale of State lands. Others were intended to make citizens aware of necessary information on concerns like public health. In the 1840s, for example, broadsides were used to inform citizens of board of health regulations relating to cleanliness of streets and disposal of garbage and sewage in order to prevent the spread of cholera.

Other broadsides were vehicles for political statements of local concern, ranging from the competence of officials to the merits of political parties. Broadsides were also used to advertise businesses, schools and products, and therefore contain much implicit information on social mores and habits. Of particular interest are broadsides used to
promote leisure activities. Broadsides for the theater, circuses, fairs, chautauquas, and concerts provide insights on the types of entertainment available to people, and provide interesting similarities as well as contrasts to contemporary leisure activities. They also suggest the social attitudes and stereotypes predominant in given eras.

In addition to containing historical information, broadsides are useful to discuss as a form of communication. Students raised in a technological society are accustomed to a bombardment of information at the turn of a dial, the flip of a switch, or in extreme circumstances, a trip to the corner store for a newspaper. It is useful to note the contrast between this and the pace of society where news does not arrive for days if not weeks, and then only in more limited amounts.

Broadsides cover an extensive range of formats and subject areas, and can be found to illustrate virtually any aspect of life. Their straightforward approach, with emphasis on information and impact, make them a lively teaching tool.
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What is store pay? This is a good example on which to base a discussion of various methods of exchange and of the company store system.

2. What are journeymen and workmen? How do they differ?

3. Why would these workers want to change to a system of cash payment?

4. List the advantages and disadvantages of each payment system.

Extended Activities

1. Have students prepare speeches to be delivered at the meeting, some in favor and some against the store pay system.

2. Have students do research to find out what the apprenticeship system involved. They might also contact unions where apprenticeship systems still exist and compare present day ones to those of the past. A union official (or perhaps a panel of workers, one from each level of the system) may be willing to come into the classroom to discuss apprenticeship.

3. Have students imagine they are workers present at the meeting. Then make tape recordings of each student describing the meeting to his or her family.

4. Assign students to research the history of the brush factories. How important was this business to the economy of the area? Does the business still exist? Was the workers' effort to abolish the store pay system successful? If so, what effects did this have on the brush manufacturers and on the community as a whole?
RALLY FOR CASH!

GREAT MEETING

AT LANSINGBURGH, TO-NIGHT.

The Journeymen and Workmen employed in the BRUSH FACTORIES of Lansingburgh are requested to attend a Public Meeting to be held

This, Saturday Evening, April 23d,

AT MORRIS HALL, Luke Read's Hotel,

To adopt such measures as may be deemed necessary to abolish the present system of Store-Pay, and establish a Cash system in its place.

Good Speakers will be in attendance. The Meeting will commence at half-past 7 o'clock. Come one! Come all! Now is the time or never.

W. BARTLETT,  
J. MCDONALD,  
THOS. CURRAN, Jr.  
E. PLUCKROSE,  

Committee.
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. Why is this play being held in the Olympic Saloon?

2. What do the following words mean: waggaries; delerium tremens; a Washingtonian; farce?

3. Why has the manager included the statement that "strict order will be preserved"?

4. Why do you think plays like this were presented?

5. Compare this program to a present-day theater poster. What similarities and differences are there? What do the differences reveal about the time periods?

Extended Activities

1. Take a modern play and make a broadside for it in the style of this one; then make a modern version of a poster for "The Drunkard."

2. Find out what kinds of cultural activities were available to people at this time and in later years, such as minstrel shows, vaudeville, chautauquas, wild west shows, and circuses. Have students try to draw generalizations about the amount of leisure time people had, and how their interests changed or did not change through time.

3. Have students imagine they are actors or actresses in the play and describe the audience that they see from the stage.

4. Divide the class into four groups. Based on the "Synopsis of Plot" in the broadside, assign each group to prepare a brief script for one of the four acts. Then have each group in turn perform their script.
OLYMPIC SALOON, LANSINGBURGH!

Third Night! Tuesday, October 19th.

The first representation of the beautiful Moral Drama of "The Drunkard" having met with such unqualified success and favor, and owing to the numerous requests to have it repeated, the Manager would respectfully announce that the GREAT MORAL DRAMA OF THE DRUNKARD will be repeated on Tuesday, Oct. 19th, with the original cast of characters.

This Evening, Tuesday, October 19th, '52, will be Presented,

The Drunkard, OR THE FALLEN SAVED!

Edward Middleton, Old Cribbs, Rev. Man, Loan, Mary Middleton, Miss Spindle, Mrs. Wilson, Mr. J. E. Nichols, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Wemyss, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Howland, Mrs. Holmes, Miss Spindle, Mrs. Martine, Miss Osborne.

SYNOPSIS OF PLOT, INCIDENTS, &c.

ACT Ist—Deep designs of Lawyer Cribbs to ruin Edward Middleton. Miss Spindle's idea of propriety and gentility; goes to a regale. Bill Dawson’s magnanimous Middleton’s proposal to Mary; they are united in marriage.

ACT 2nd—Lapse of three years. Bill Dawson sees the Will buried by Cribbs. Lawyer Cribbs fears Bill Dawson. No friend to Cribbs. Middleton’s first glass; forgets his home, and falls a victim to the arts of Cribbs.

ACT 3d—Two years lapse of time. Middleton an habitual drunkard, intoxicated in the street. Cribbs a forger, [the guilty know no peace.] Mary a wretched wife; relates the story of her wrongs; her mother’s death. Middleton takes himself from his house, and leaves his wife and child alone with the dead; his property is sold, and his wife goes to Boston in search of him.

ACT 4th—Two years lapse of time. Middleton laboring under Delirium Tremens. Mary Middleton and child turned into the street by the instigation of Cribbs and Miss Spindle. Middleton a beggar on the highway; meets with a Washingtonian; resolves to reform; signs the pledge. Mary Middleton a wanderer; she falls down in the highway exhausted; no friend near but her child; her husband finds her destitute. The joy of the wife ad child. Miss Spindle becomes the wife of Cribbs. Bill Dawson digs up the will; the disclosure. Cribbs denounced a forger and a villain. The triumph of VIRTUE over VICE.

SONG, COMIC SONG, FAVORITE BALLAD, Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Chapman, Mrs. Martine.

To conclude with the Laughable Farces of the TWO BONNY CASTLES.

Mr. Vaugha, Mr. E. Chapman, Mr. J. James Johnson, Mr. J. B. Nichol, Mr. Howland, Mrs. T. C. Wemyss. Mrs. Howland, Miss Spindle, Mrs. Martine, Miss Osborne.

The Lansingburgh Brass Band, having kindly volunteered their services during the stay of this company, will discourse some most ELOQUENT MUSIC.

[Admission, single tickets $1.00 cts. One Ticket admitting a gentleman and two ladies, 50 cents. Children accompanied by their parents 12-2 cts.]

NO POSTPONEMENT on any account whatever.

Doors Open at 1:45 to 7 O’clock—Curtain Rises at 8 O’clock.

STRICT ORDER WILL BE PRESERVED.

D. REDDEN, Manager.
CENSUS RECORDS

Census records contain a variety of information that is extremely useful for teaching purposes. Censuses were taken by both the federal and state governments and usually included information about individuals, industry, agriculture, mortality, schools, and property. They are an excellent resource for providing aggregate information on the population; reflect who the "common" people were, as well as the wealthy; and provide data on such things as family relationships, the ethnic composition of the neighborhoods, the occupations of men and women, and the size of households.

The federal census was taken at ten-year intervals, beginning in 1790, and census records are available for most New York counties through 1900. For reasons of personal privacy, later federal census records are closed to public use. Included in the federal census are a number of different schedules, the most familiar of which is the population schedule, which records information on individual residents and often includes data on place of residence, names of all individuals in the household, occupation, sex, age, and place of birth. There are also a number of special schedules which record a variety of useful statistical information concerning agriculture, industry and manufacturers, mortality and social institutions. Federal censuses for the period 1790-1900 have been microfilmed and may be borrowed from the federal archives and records center system through the New York State Interlibrary Loan (NYSILL) system available at local public libraries.

The State of New York also conducted censuses at ten-year intervals from 1825 to 1875, then again in 1892, 1905, 1915, and the last in 1925. These are population censuses, and generally give information on individuals, including places of residence, names and relationships of all individuals in the household, sex, age, occupation, and place of birth. The State census records are organized by county, and within that, by municipality. The records for each county are maintained by the respective county clerk. Unfortunately some of these records have been lost or destroyed, so it is useful to contact the particular county clerk's office to determine which records are available. Extant State census records have been microfilmed and are available for inter-library loan use from branch libraries of the Genealogical Society of Utah. (For the address of local libraries write to: Genealogical Society of Utah, Branch Libraries, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150.)

Census records are an excellent teaching resource available for every area and can be obtained relatively inexpensively. They are a tremendous source of large quantities of information useful in doing a variety of analytical studies.
## Microfilmed Census Records at the Genealogical Society of Utah

### Listing of Federal and State Census Holdings

For New York by County

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*Manuscript index for that year*
STATE POPULATION CENSUS
Kings County, New York: 1915

Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What is the composition of families? Are they nuclear or extended families? How many include one parent? Both parents?

2. Based on the occupations of the people, do you think this is a wealthy, middle class, or lower class neighborhood?

3. What do the various occupations involve (e.g., brick mason, laborer, milk peddler)? What kind of occupations do men have as compared to women? What is the percentage of working women?

4. Are most husbands and wives of similar age?

5. Does one ethnic group seem to dominate the neighborhood? Are most of the people born in the United States?

Extended Activities

1. Take an area of several blocks and compile statistics on the number of families and their ethnic origins. Identify areas on a contemporary map which have a dominant ethnic character.

2. Compile statistics on ethnicity and jobs to determine if there is any noticeable change.

3. Choose one family in the census. Do research on the kind of jobs they did, the happenings in the area where they lived, and economic conditions for people in their social class. Then do one of the following:

   Imagine you are one of the family members and write diary entries for a week reflecting your life.

   Write a dialogue between family members at a dinner table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERMANENT RESIDENCE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>RELATION</th>
<th>COLOR, SEX, AND AGE</th>
<th>NATIVITY</th>
<th>CITIZENSHIP</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
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<td>Italia</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Son</td>
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<td>Hauk</td>
<td>Head</td>
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<td>W 55</td>
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<td>Lauchlan</td>
<td>Boarder</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask/Points to Consider

1. What percentage of the people who died were adults? Children?

2. What diseases did they die of? Are these diseases familiar to people now?

3. Do most people seem to be ill for a long or short time before they die?

4. Are there certain months when there is a high number of deaths? If so, what reasons could there be for this?

Extended Activities

1. Using old medical books, find out what the treatments were for the diseases described in this schedule. How would they compare to medical practices now?

2. What kind of medical training did doctors receive in the 1860s? What about nurses? What were hospitals like?

3. Using trade catalogues, advertisements, and newspapers, find out what kind of medicine was available and how it was sold. What kinds of medicines were used for various illnesses? Are they still available today? Why or why not?

4. Using the 1880 and county mortality schedules for other years, have the students compile and compare statistics on the average lifespan of people during the nineteenth century. Compare these findings with present-day expectations of longevity.
## Schedule 5

Persons who **Died** during the Year ending May 31, 1880, enumerated by me in

**Lucre, State of New York**, Arthur B. E. Maillesport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the person deceased</th>
<th>Personal Description</th>
<th>What was the civil condition of the person who died?</th>
<th>Nativity</th>
<th>Nativity of Father of this person born?</th>
<th>Where was the Mother of this person born?</th>
<th>Profession, Occupation or Trade</th>
<th>The month in which the person died</th>
<th>Disease or cause of death</th>
<th>How long a resident of the County?</th>
<th>Number of Family in same household</th>
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- **Note:** The table provides a snapshot of the demographic and vital statistics of individuals who died during the specified period in the given county. The data includes the name, marital status, nativity, profession, occupation or trade, and cause of death, among other details.
IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Books and Articles

The following books and articles can be consulted for ideas and information on using historical records in education. They discuss various aspects and approaches which may be useful.


Sample Materials

The following items are publications, learning kits and facsimile packets involving historical records. They may be obtained from local libraries or university curriculum labs. The selection given here provides examples of various approaches to the use of historical records.


APPENDIX

Local Government Archives in New York State

The Local Government Archives Program is a pioneer effort to encourage and help underwrite the establishment of model local government archives across New York State. Funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the program is administered by the State Archives on behalf of the State Historical Records Advisory Board. Thirteen localities were chosen as sites for model local government archives:

1. Town of Amherst, Erie County
2. City of Rochester, Monroe County
3. Town of Hornby, Steuben County
4. City of Oswego, Oswego County
5. City of Syracuse, Onondaga County
6. City of Gloversville, Fulton County
7. City and County of Albany
8. Town of Grafton, Rensselaer County
9. Cornwall-on-Hudson, School District, Town, and Village, Orange County
10. Town of Southampton, Suffolk County
11. Suffolk County
12. City of New York, Department of Records and Information Services
13. Village of Ocean Beach, Suffolk County
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