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ABSTRACT

Essays in this special issue of the "Journal of Family History" focus on the teaching of family history by using artifacts. The articles were written by the staff at Old Sturbridge Village (OSV). The first article discusses how family history is taught at OSV. Students study a real family using demographic information and artifacts such as documents, paintings, and houses. They obtain a picture of family life as they participated in activities such as spinning wool, chopping wood, and cooking over an open fire. The second article shows how photographs and paintings can be used in the classroom. Suggestions on how to analyze a photograph, how to select photographs for the classroom, and how to design teaching activities are offered. The third essay discusses the value of using the historic house as a primary source for the study of family history. It provides activities and strategies for a study of an historic house that reveal values and lifestyles of families. The fourth essay discusses using probate inventories as a way of reconstructing aspects of the past. Salem Towne's records inventory is used as an example. The last essay discusses how political speeches, Supreme Court opinions, and foreign travelers' accounts can be used in the teaching of family history. Each essay includes an annotated bibliography. (Author/NE)

Teaching Family History: Papers from Old Sturbridge Village.

Old Sturbridge Village
Musuem Education Department

Journal of Family History
Studies in Kinship, Family and Demography

The essays on teaching methods in family history were written by the staff of Old Sturbridge Village as part of the History of the Family project at Clark University which is directed by Tamara K. Hareven and which is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency. These essays are reproduced with the permission of the National Council on Family Relations.

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PAPERS FROM OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE

FOREWORD

The special section of this issue on the teaching of family history using sources of material culture was generated through a joint program at Clark University and Old Sturbridge Village which was intended to develop and test approaches to teaching in this newly developing field. The program at Clark University, "The History of the Family. Teaching Strategies," was launched in 1975 in collaboration with Old Sturbridge Village and the American Antiquarian Society. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, it aimed at formulating methods for teaching the history of the family by involving undergraduate students in the reconstruction and interpretation of historical experiences directly from sources. Old Sturbridge Village provided an ideal setting because of the conscious effort by its staff to use material culture and to recreate the physical settings of community life, work, and family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most importantly, the educational program at the Village afforded students the opportunity for role-playing. Thus they could experience first-hand what family and work activities may have been like in the past.

The approaches presented in the essays which follow were tested in undergraduate seminars at Clark University, where students were intensively engaged in research in primary sources and the interpretation of these sources, in conjunction with field trips to Old Sturbridge Village.

One of the purposes of the program was to share these approaches with college teachers around the nation. The teaching methods at the Village were presented as part of this program first at a regional colloquium for college teachers in Old Sturbridge Village and later at a regional seminar for college teachers in the South which was held at Airlee, Virginia in 1979.

Although most of the materials presented here are limited to the experiences of rural communities in New England, the concepts which they represent are relevant to different regions. Most important in this respect are the opportunities for collaboration between universities and other local cultural institutions. These essays represent an initial effort to grapple with the problems, practical and theoretical, encountered in interpreting the material remains from the past in the broader cultural context of the society which produced them.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Educational Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities for its generous support for the History of the Family Program. I am especially grateful to Richard Rabinowitz, former director of the education division of Old Sturbridge Village and to Richard Ekman, then assistant director of the education division of the N.E.H., both of whom had encouraged the idea for such a program and helped shape it initially. I am also grateful to Dr. Blanche Premo, assistant director of the N.E.H. educational division for her continuing help. My thanks also to Ellen Rothman and Warren Leon of Old Sturbridge Village who have coordinated the activities between Clark and OSV, and to Warren Leon who coordinated the writing of these essays.

—Tamara K. Hareven,
Editor of the *Journal of Family History*
and Director of the History of the
Family Program, Clark University

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Darwin P. Kelsey*

Many readers of the *Journal of Family History* may well ask, "What is Old Sturbridge Village?" Many answers are possible, and usually a great diversity of opinion is the norm. Most people who encounter "The Village" tend to describe and define it in terms of their own personal perceptions and interests—or some pragmatic relationship to it. Academic scholars often know it primarily through the writings of its staff, or the special strengths of its research library. Museum curators may know it best for one or another category of its artifact collections, which number around a million objects. Schoolteachers often perceive it as a place to make history come alive for their students. Some visitors term it a restored town, a recreated community, or an outdoor museum; still others are convinced that it is a recreational facility or a tourist attraction. And the local community knows it as a major employer. Each such perspective is quite reasonable in its own way.

Old Sturbridge Village is also "officially" a private nonprofit educational corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is governed by a board of trustees; and a staff of over 500 administers and operates the museum's programs. Its physical facilities, located in the central Massachusetts town of Sturbridge, consists of approximately 1,250 acres of land and over 100 buildings. Approximately a tenth of this area is directly devoted to educational programs and their support.

The Village's fundamental purpose is to assist present and future generations to realize a fuller understanding of their own time and circumstances by vividly portraying, for their benefit, the history and culture of rural New England—particularly those years from 1790 to 1840 when the region was at the forefront of technological, economic, social, and cultural changes remaking American society.

Since opening to the public in 1946, the museum's primary tool for accomplishing its purpose has been a "model village intended to show visitors how their ancestors actually lived and worked." This exhibit area, as it exists at present, attempts to simulate the physical landscapes and everyday activities characteristically found in the villages and countryside of rural New England towns during the 1830s. Along a mile and a half of country roads and lanes are found over 40 houses, farms, shops and other buildings with their gardens, orchards, meadows, croplands, woodlots, millponds, mills, covered bridges, miles of fences, and scores of livestock. Taken as a whole, the exhibit area tries to integrate all such individual and potentially disparate elements, blending them to model the process of "community in change"—humanizing, personalizing, depicting concretely the beginnings of the nation's transformation from rural-agricultural to urban-industrial.

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The physical environment of this re-created community provides a vivid and tangible context for understanding intangibles such as religious revival, social improvement, education, or family life. The accompanying articles demonstrate effective teaching strategies for maximizing this type of learning in carefully structured college and school programs. For general visitors, as well, the Village is increasingly trying to focus visitors' experience on *people and their culture—both material and nonmaterial.* That, we feel, is an important synthesis and worthy goal still seldom attempted in the museum and academic worlds.

STUDENTS AND FAMILY HISTORY: THE VIEW FROM OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE

Pamela E. Beall, Warren Leon, Peter S. O'Connell, and Ellen K. Rothman*

What did the apple-picking season mean to Beulah Freeman, a thirteen-year old girl in Sturbridge, Massachusetts in 1820? "The apples are delicious this year but we don't have as many as usual because of the spring storms. Last Friday and Saturday the whole family did nothing but pick apples all day long. I think the boys were glad to have a change from haying! And for my part, it was nice to be able to sit around the kitchen table together for dinner at noon instead of carrying food for the men in the fields."

At least that was what a college student imagined in the course of her study of family history at Old Sturbridge Village. Describing the division of tasks in the Freeman family and speculating about Beulah's feelings regarding her work helped the student clarify her understanding of early nineteenth-century family life.

Requiring a student to place herself in Beulah Freeman's shoes might seem naive when compared to the conventional college or high school assignment. In fact, the approach to family history which includes this assignment not only stimulates student interest and involvement in the issues of family history, but enables students to understand and discuss sophisticated theory.

The rationale for the way family history is taught at Old Sturbridge Village has developed in response to experience. Each year more than 2,500 college and 12,000 high school students come to this outdoor museum depicting daily life in rural New England between 1790 and 1840. Many classes make the museum visit the focal point of one or two weeks' course work. The staff of the Museum Education Department, including the authors of the following articles, were excited by the growth of research in the history of the

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Peter S. O'Connell is Assistant Director of the Museum Education Department at Old Sturbridge Village and coordinates the museum's teacher training programs. He recently completed a two-year project to make museums more accessible to high school students and published his findings in *Adolescents and Museums* (1979).

Ellen K. Rothman, formerly Coordinator of College Programs at Old Sturbridge Village, at present holds a postdoctoral fellowship at Brandeis University where she teaches in the Basic Studies program. She is completing a study of courtship and the transition to marriage in nineteenth-century America and is co-editing a document collection on intimacy in the American past.

family and felt committed to exposing the large numbers of students and faculty with whom we came in contact to the findings and methods of the field. Moreover, support from the National Endowment for the Humanities History of the Family Program at Clark University gave us the time and resources to undertake this task.

Unfortunately—but understandably—our enthusiasm for the new family history scholarship did not necessarily translate into effective teaching. Students did not leave Old Sturbridge Village with an adequate understanding of family history. As we discussed our frustrations among ourselves and with teachers, it became clear that there were two interrelated problems. First, the issues and concepts we were trying to convey were too abstract. Introductory students who did not have any conception of the day-to-day life of family members in the nineteenth century viewed such ideas as the life cycle, the impact of technological change, the nuclear family, and kinship as meaningless terms to be memorized. For them discussion of these concepts was an academic exercise unconnected to the real world. "Family," a very immediate and personal experience in students' lives, had been turned into something remote and abstract. In order to avoid this, we would have to show students how to link material and written sources with concepts and theories.

The second problem stemmed in part from the first. Students tended to be passive and thereby avoided thinking about the material we presented them. They did not experience the learning process that comes from active involvement in the analysis of a new set of ideas and issues. This situation was far from unusual; student passivity is a general problem that teachers confront in all their courses. Yet, the manner in which the subject of family history was presented had given students little choice but to be passive recipients of received wisdom.

To address these problems, we redesigned the way we taught family history. Rather than begin with a general and hence abstract concept of the family, we studied a few concrete real families,[1] such as the Freemans. We used a wide variety of sources to illuminate each of them. Students were presented with demographic information and then artifacts, documents, paintings, and houses. Each type of source revealed new information about the family and raised new questions and issues for discussion. Students connected the various materials in order to build an integrated picture of family life as lived by a specific historical family.

By selecting rich sources that we knew would reward careful analysis, we in effect created the ideal research experience in which all the relevant pieces have been collected and all the unnecessary data discarded. The material was sufficiently discrete and specific so that students could master it. Once they were confident that they understood their assigned family, they were more receptive to and even anxious for discussion of general and theoretical issues.

Of course, this laboratory experience is not the same as a real research project. As British historian W. B. Stephens (Palmer, 1979:146) has written, "To compare the mature work of historical research with the exercises conducted by [students] from limited and pre-selected material . . . is the sort of claptrap that brings the scholarship of educationists into doubt." Yet a controlled laboratory experience introduces students to the types of materials that historians use in research and develops the ability to analyze them. Students

[1] In this context we are using family to mean coresident household and are studying it over the life cycle.

learn to base their generalizations about family life on specific historical sources.

Presenting students with data about a specific family made family history concrete, but it did not solve the problem of student passivity. To insure that students engaged in the process of historical investigation, we needed activities that encouraged involvement and awareness. We believe these activities account for the success of our approach. Certainly we have not discovered a panacea that inevitably produces stimulating and fulfilling educational experiences. We continue to experiment with new methods and materials in collaboration with college and high school teachers. But we know that students who now visit Old Sturbridge Village both develop important skills and better understand the issues of family history.

Although Old Sturbridge Village's carefully constructed exhibits on rural life simplify our task, the teaching strategies we use in this environment can be adapted profitably to other settings. The following is a step-by-step analysis of the way we teach an extended unit on family history. We use this unit each summer in a two-week workshop for public school teachers and in a course we offer at a local college. When classes from other colleges or high schools come for one or two-day visits, we focus on particular aspects of the whole study and divide responsibility for different activities and materials with the teachers. Teachers unable to bring their classes to Old Sturbridge Village can use the description below as a model and incorporate pieces of it into their courses or units in family history.

Starting With The Present

Historians generally start with a point in the past and move forward in time. This seems a natural way to analyze the process of historical change because it reflects the sequence in which things happened. However, it is not always the best way to teach, since it does not give students a personal context for analyzing historical material. Students need help in formulating questions to ask of the past, and they want evidence by whose study they can better understand their own lives. At Old Sturbridge Village we therefore welcome comparisons between the present and the past.

In selecting initial activities we seek to generate data and hypotheses about family life in the present. We might ask students to map the neighborhood in which they grew up or complete a questionnaire on their adolescence that collects information on experiences such as first job, first date, and other anxious moments. We often take a survey of the family demography of the class to discover the average family size, marriage age of students' parents, and the age span among siblings.

Although we ask students to exchange this information to initiate discussion and to make generalization possible, we point out that recounting tales of one's life is not an end in itself. We do not want students to get so wrapped up in themselves and in exchanging their feelings that they lose track of larger issues. They instead look at their lives analytically and search for general patterns.

Students have a starting point for investigating the past when the data generated on present family life enables them to ask. How and why was childhood in the early nineteenth century different from today? How and why did courtship in the nineteenth century differ from today? What difference did it make to people's lives that average family size was larger in the nineteenth century than it is today?

We know this process works from student comments, such as this one from a young woman: "I did a lot of comparing of my life to the life in the 1820s and found that I take a lot of things for granted. I found myself looking deeper into my own

life. . . . I also found going back and learning more about the past made questions come to mind on things now and what it would be like in the future." By initially encouraging students' personal interest and awareness of historical change, we found it easier to teach them a more profound understanding of the past.

Demographic Information: Family Role Cards

The first historical materials we give students are quantitative. To make the study concrete and manageable, we delay the introduction of aggregate data and instead use a sample of thirty-five families from among the 320 in the town of Sturbridge in 1820. A demographic analysis of the community, including family reconstructions, enables us to give students several types of information on each family. On three cards (see Table 1) we present the composition of the household in 1820, along with the occupation of the head of household; the family's demographic history reconstituted from birth, marriage, and death records, and other sources, and the family's wealth and economic standing according to the 1824 town tax list.[1]

When using these cards with a class, we divide the students into small groups. We have found four or five persons per group best for both lively discussion and active individual participation. Each group focuses on a different family and each student concentrates on a different member of the family. We ask the students what they can deduce about the individual and the family from the data on the cards. For example, a student looking at Silas Freeman, the oldest child, could ask: How might his experiences growing up and his relationship to his parents be different from those of his younger brothers and sisters? Why might he have married at the age he did? Where might he have met his wife? What factors might have determined his choice of occupation?

The students thus start with an individual and work outward to consider the impact of certain historical forces on his or her life. They are not expected actually to play the role of the individual, but instead they are encouraged to imagine and speculate about the person. Many of the questions we ask might initially appear more statistical than speculative. At what age did family members die? How old were the parents when the youngest child left home? How soon after marriage was the first child born? What was the spacing between births of the children? Discussion of possible explanations for these numbers produces tentative hypotheses based on analysis of the data.

We have found that if students have been divided into five or six families and then get back together to pool their information, they will develop many important generalizations about family size, composition, the life cycle, and other aspects of family life in rural New England. Students speculate on the divergent feelings, experiences, and behavior patterns that make each family distinctive. When presented with the averages and totals for the entire town of Sturbridge, they can compare the particular family they have studied to the norm and discuss possible reasons for differences. Later, they will return to this demographic data to reevaluate it in light of further information.

Artifacts

Artifacts, especially sturdy reproductions, enable students to take their investigations a step further. Each student is given an object that his or her assigned indi-

[1] Some of the findings of this study have been published in Osterud and Fulton, 1973-481-494

[1] A set of cards on 35 households and families is available in Old Sturbridge Village, 1973.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FOR TEACHING.

A. Freeman Household in 1820

Husband: Pliny Freeman	Age 40	Occupation: Farmer
Wife: Delia M.	Age 39	
Son: Silas Marsh	Age 17	
Son: Pliny	Age 14	
Daughter: Beulah	Age 13	
Daughter: Delia	Age 10	
Daughter: Florella	Age 8	
Daughter: Augusta	Age 5	
Son: Dwight	Age 1	

B. Freeman, Pliny

Occupation: Farmer

Real Estate: in 1824

1 House and Barn, 70 Acres Improved Land	$500.
59 Acres Unimproved Land	$300.
Personal Estate:	
1 Horse, 2 Oxen, 6 Cows, 1 Young Cow, 2 Calves, 2 Swine	$164.
Total Taxable Estate:	$964.

Rank on Tax List: 117/320, Second Fifth

C. Freeman Family

Husband:	Pliny	b. 9/24/1780	d. 10/10/1855 in Webster, Mass.
Wife:	Delia	b. 4/21/1781	d. 3/20/1839
Married:	10/5/1802		
Children:	*Silas Marsh*	b. 8/7/1803	m. 3/27/1831 to Maria R. Upham of Sutton, Mass. d. 11/4/1880 in Millbury, Mass.
	Pliny	b. 4/14/1806	m. 9/8/1835 in Cleveland, Ohio d. 11/2/1894 in Geneseo, Illinois
	Beulah	b. 12/6/1807	m. 4/1/1832 to Walter S. Rosenbrooks d. 7/5/1835 in Oxford, Mass.
	Delia	b. 4/4/1810	m. 4/4/1833 to John S. W. May of Leicester, Mass. d. 11/2/1864 in Webster, Mass.
	Florella	b. 5/26/1812	m. 12/11/1833 to Bradford Baylis of Southbridge, Mass. d. 11/27/1876 in Bristol, Penna.
	Augusta	b. 12/25/1815	m. 3/30/1841 to Holowell A. Perrin
	Dwight	b. 1/15/1819	m. 6/14/1852 in Webster, Mass.
2nd Wife:	Mrs. Mary Pease Widow	b. 8/7/1784 Boston, Mass.	d. 2/3/1850
Married:	7/1/1840		
Children:	None		

vidual might have used in daily life. When we have full probate inventories for a family, we can be certain of its possessions. Even without such records, pairing objects with people is not difficult. An awl might go with a shoemaker, hand cards for combing wool with a twelve-year-old girl, a tin milk pan with a farm woman, and a newspaper with a printer's apprentice.

No matter what the artifact, the student's task remains the same—to find out as much as he or she can about the life of a person who might have used it. Students ask how the object was used, when, and where. In the case of the wool cards, additional questions might include: Were they difficult to use? Why would a twelve-year-old girl be given the task of carding wool? What training was required to do

it? How were the cards made? Why were they made from a particular material? How might the girl have obtained them?

After analyzing the object they have been given, each student reports his or her conclusions to the other members of the family group. Together they discuss how their findings flesh out the picture of the family they are investigating. Although many other activities are possible with artifacts, the brief exercise above introduces students to the material culture of family life and to a range of issues not raised by demographic data. They become more sensitive to the rich potential of artifacts as historical evidence.

Personal Documents

Diaries, autobiographies, letters, and other primary sources are used in a similar way. Each student is given one or two documents relevant to the person they are investigating. We try to select material that deals with important family activities and issues. Students are asked to examine family roles and to speculate upon the significance of the issues to the family. Someone focusing on Pliny Freeman, for example, might be given the letter Freeman sent to his children upon the death of his first wife. In it he writes: "I am about to be left alone. . . . I wish Augusta would come home and live with me if she thinks she can be contented to live a lonely life." Upon analysis, the entire letter reveals more of Freeman's attitudes towards aging and his sense of both the nature and limits of his children's responsibilities to him.

Of course, every resident of the town of Sturbridge in 1820 did not leave behind a set of letters or an autobiography. Where such documents exist, as with the Freeman family, we use them. In the majority of cases where family papers are not available, we find a substitute—a document produced by someone whose age and experiences were similar. We remind students to distinguish between the author of the document and the role character from Sturbridge—they are similar but not identical. We, in fact, ask students to determine ways in which the two individuals were different. The document can then be used to illuminate the types of issues their Sturbridge individual might have faced. They can speculate on how he or she would have related to the issues and events referred to in the document.

Thus, if a student is investigating the life of a twenty-year old woman living at home on her family farm in Sturbridge, we use the diary of Pamela Brown, which was written by a young woman on a farm in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. The following are typical entries:

> *Wed. April 12th.* Pieced a bed quilt of old calico.
>
> *Thurs. 13th.* Went to Cephus Wilder's with Susan Had an excellent visit and all the sugar we could eat.
>
> *Fri. 14th.* Mended my summer stockings. Worked about house, etc
>
> *Sat 15th.* Did up some woolen blankets, etc. Mother was gone.
>
> *Sun. 16th.* I staid with Mrs. Beadell last night. She had a daughter born yesterday Sally Morgan came today and I came home. Read "Laphete in Search of a Father." Read till most midnight and did not get through after all.
>
> *Mon. 17th.* Washed The washing was large and I got very tired. Mrs. Carter stays here tonight (Bryant and Baker, 1970:72).

The criteria for selecting a diary are different from those for a letter or an autobiography. With a diary we seek to demonstrate the rhythm and nature of daily life rather than a single dramatic issue. When we confront students with a day-to-day account, we instruct them to analyze what activities the person engaged in, when, and with whom. In addition, we ask why the diary was kept and what it reveals about the writer's attitudes and feelings.

Whether they are diaries, account books, or letters, we want the documents to answer some student questions about nineteenth-century family life, while they also stimulate students to ask additional ones. Intensive study of a few documents produces the most thoughtful probing. It also develops students' skills at textual analysis and encourages lively interchange between group members since each student has different information and a different perspective to contribute.

Paintings

By this stage in their study of family life in early nineteenth-century New England, students are developing a mental picture of their assigned family. The different sources start to fit together. Both to help them visualize what their family might have looked like and to erase stereotyped images of people's appearances in the past, we introduce paintings.

The number of early nineteenth-century families whose portrait paintings survive is, of course, limited. It is impossible to find a painting for each of our thirty-five Sturbridge families or even to find adequate substitutes. A slightly different approach is therefore required.

We give each group of students copies of ten or twelve family portraits from the early nineteenth century. We ask them to sort through the pile of pictures and select one which they feel comes closest to the family they are studying. Are there any ways to tell the subjects' age, occupation, or social status? If so, are the people depicted of the correct ages, occupations, or economic strata to match the Sturbridge family? Do their personalities seem similar to those one imagines for members of the latter?

The follow-up discussion is inevitably lively as students discover that some of their assumptions about the paintings are wrong. It is often difficult to distinguish a farm family from a doctor's family or that of a cabinetmaker. This leads into analysis of artistic conventions, style, and self-image in the nineteenth century. We raise methodological issues which suggest ways to look at and evaluate visual evidence. Thus, the introduction of paintings into our study of Sturbridge families leaves students with new questions, while it gives them a better image of what their assigned family might have looked like.

Activities

By engaging in an activity typical of a nineteenth-century family member, students synthesize and visualize the ideas developed from examining artifacts and documents. Through participatory activities, students relate objects to the ways in which they were used and experience first hand events in diaries and letters.

College and high school students at Old Sturbridge Village have spun wool, woven cloth, chopped wood, built fences, flailed and winnowed corn, and cooked a meal over an open fire. We have found that these older students often become as excited by a chance to participate in a nineteenth-century activity as do those in the elementary grades. This direct experience is often the most memorable part of their study of family history.

The purpose of all this activity is more than entertaining and motivating the student. When studying families of early nineteenth-century rural New England, students are dealing with a lifestyle and a set of family patterns different from their own. The closer students come to *feeling* these patterns through experience, the greater the chance that they will understand and articulate ideas about life in the past. One student unconsciously knew the theory behind the process when he remarked after a museum visit. "What we learned will stay with us a lot longer than just reading it out of a book because we experienced it."

To help students make the connection between physical activities and intellectual understanding, we have slide presentations and discussions before and after the activities. Before learning to spin wool, students view a series of slides tracing the textile process from sheep to clothes; later they discuss what spinning revealed about the nature of women's work on the farm.

The Museum

The class is now ready to move into the museum environment. At Old Sturbridge Village, where a rural New England community of the 1830s has been re-created, students see artifacts in their settings, examine spacial relationships within and between houses and shops, observe nineteenth-century activities being performed, and interact with costumed museum staff. We encourage students to use all of their senses.

Class members are directed to different locations in the museum depending upon the focus of their investigation. Someone studying eight-year-old Florella Freeman makes the schoolhouse an important stopping point. To learn about Florella's father, Pliny, requires visits to the store and meetinghouse. All those in the Freeman family group give particular attention to the Freeman farmstead, which includes a working historical farm and the family's actual house restored to its condition in 1830. Students investigate family members' work tasks and living conditions, as well as such issues as privacy and the physical interaction between parents and children. In general, they are asked to look at the broad question of which family member did what, when, and with whom. What might five-year old Augusta have been doing when her mother was cooking dinner? When was the parlor used and by whom?

In the case of the Freeman family, the transition from looking at demographic information and documents to the museum is particularly easy, since the family's home is a museum exhibit. Most families have not had their home preserved as it was in 1830. We therefore ask students to develop insights from the available museum exhibits and apply them to the family they are studying. A group investigating the Coreys, members of the Sturbridge elite and the second-wealthiest family in town, will be directed to the Towne family home, an exhibit that represents a family of equivalent wealth and status. Those investigating Rev. Otis Lane's family will be sent to the Parsonage, a home much like the one the Lanes might have owned. Thus, even when the home is different, students can use it to investigate the family's general living conditions and to determine factors affecting family life.

All the preparatory work before the museum visit enables students to be more intelligent observers and analysts. Documents, artifacts, and paintings will have raised many questions about nineteenth-century family life while they also provide information and ideas. Students can then use the artifacts, spaces and staff in the museum to begin to answer these questions and test their hypotheses.

The End As a Beginning

The museum visit is a major focal point of each class's study of family history, but it does not end it. It in fact makes further study more desirable and meaningful. The students first sum up and discuss what they have learned so far. By the time they return from looking at the houses and other museum exhibits, they feel they have developed a first-hand understanding of their early nineteenth-century family. Beulah, Pliny, and Delia Freeman have become real people with quirks, traits, and feelings. Students will have imagined what their own lives would have been like if they had been living in a family in Sturbridge. When they write an

essay from the point of view of the individual they were investigating, they often capture the texture and many of the details of early nineteenth-century family life.

Discussion builds on these insights. Each group compares its family to the others; they analyze how and why the Freemans are different from the Lanes or the Coreys. The class as a whole develops generalizations that hold for all the families studied and qualifies them by identifying factors which produced differences between families.

The students are also ready to assimilate and analyze additional material. The documents, artifacts, and the museum stimulate the students to develop and think about many questions about family life, but do not answer all of them. In some cases, the five- or six-family sample is too small. Other questions require comparison of nineteenth-century rural New England to other rural settings, to urban communities, or to other time periods. Often, further research and training is necessary before the students can interpret more completely the sources with which they have been presented.

The students' desire for answers and further information enables us to send them to monographs, theoretical essays, and additional primary sources. Students intrigued by the paintings they used but unsure of their historical implications might be directed to read material on portrait painting in the nineteenth-century and the interpretation of visual evidence. With proper guidance, students realize that some of their conclusions based on the Sturbridge families are either wrong or do not apply to other families. Perhaps the material they looked at encouraged them to make an unwarranted hypotheses, or they reasoned incorrectly from the evidence.

While we may clarify misconceptions, students can use their understanding of the Sturbridge families to qualify the ideas and generalizations of others. They frequently become critical and enthusiastic readers who evaluate the assumptions behind historians' arguments and compare the author's conclusions with those they arrived at while investigating their assigned family. They learn that historians' broad generalizations about family patterns ignore the small, particular differences they discovered in examining individual Sturbridge families.

In general, students completing a study of family history at Old Sturbridge Village have the resources for analyzing additional material. If asked how textile mills changed family life, they can ask: What would a textile mill in Sturbridge have meant to the Freemans? Whose work would it have changed? How would parent-child relations have been affected if one of the daughters went to work there? Will the life of the son be different from the life of the father?

An approach to teaching family history similar to the one we use at Old Sturbridge Village requires time and effort. Initially, there may be confusion and anxiety. But all successful classes require time and effort. One can begin on a small scale with simple activities and then expand on them. The articles that follow suggest ways to integrate documents, houses, and pictures into courses on time periods and regions other than nineteenth-century New England.

Five general guidelines, however, have emerged from our experiences teaching family history at Old Sturbridge Village.

1. Give students a context in which to fit family history materials and concepts. We recommend comparisons between the present and the past as the most useful starting place.

2. Organize materials so that students can relate different types of sources to each other. They can then learn about historical evidence and research methods.

while they are also learning the content of family history.

3. Keep students' tasks focused and manageable. Select materials that enable students to speculate and make meaningful hypotheses.

4. Do not close off speculation or creative thought in the early stages of a family history study by presenting too many qualifications and too much information. Instead, get students to reason from the evidence at hand, even though it may be imperfect. Gradually add more information. There is time later to clarify misconceptions and to correct hypotheses that may follow logically from the limited data students have, but which are nevertheless misinterpretations or misleading as generalizations.

5. Most importantly, try to get students to experience the past, to relate it to themselves. Where activities of this sort are impossible, develop strategies to encourage students to use their imaginations to place themselves in the past.

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PICTURING THE FAMILY: PHOTOGRAPHS AND PAINTINGS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Warren Leon

Perhaps in this age of visual media people are becoming more attuned to pictures than the printed word. Nevertheless, most of our experiences with visual materials do not prepare us to analyze paintings and photographs as historical sources. Television and movies present pictures in narrative form. No image stays on the screen very long. To use photographs and paintings to study family history, we must observe things we do not have time to look for when watching moving pictures.

Our day-to-day contact with photographs and paintings does not help us very much, either. We do not ordinarily give sustained attention to individual pictures except those in art museums or art books. In books and newspapers, words convey the ideas and leave the pictures to illustrate points made in the text. On the other hand, magazine photo essays overwhelm us with images. With the home photography boom, many people do not even give much thought to photographs they take themselves. A family on vacation may shoot one-hundred pictures and then show all of them to friends back home in a ten or fifteen-minute period.

This article will suggest ways in which teachers of family history can use pictures. Because photographs and paintings present somewhat different problems, I will consider them separately. I shall start with photographs and discuss their peculiar limitations and possibilities as teaching tools. I shall follow this with suggestions on how to analyze a photograph, select photographs for the classroom, and design teaching activities. The last section of the article will apply some of these ideas to paintings, while it highlights the differences between the two media.

Photographs

Although photographs may appear to be undistorted slices of reality, teachers must use them cautiously as historical evidence. Both photographers and their subjects shape the image that gets recorded. A slum apartment photographed by its landlord will look different if seen from the perspective of the family living there or of a housing reformer. In the pictures we ourselves shoot or sit for, we inject our point of view by the clothes we choose to wear and the way we pose and arrange the scene. As subjects, we may try to present ourselves as we would like to be rather than as we are. We occasionally tamper with reality for amusement by posing in a strange style or setting. Documentary photographers, too, as William Stott has shown (1973:58-62), are faced with significant choices and infuse their pictures with their own values.

In those cases where the photographer does not try consciously to make a point, the conventions of photography often make pictures difficult to decipher. At weddings, for example, family members

*The author would like to thank Cynthia Robinson, Roy Rosenzweig, my colleagues at Old Sturbridge Village, and the editors of this journal for their helpful criticisms and suggestions.

and the photographer know that certain poses are normal and expected. If the groom's aunts and uncles are included in a wedding picture, does this mean that they are a significant group of kin in his life or that they are merely respecting convention?

The nature of the photographic medium insures that only certain aspects of the world are recorded. The camera's range was narrowest in the nineteenth century. Since the subject of a daguerreotype, for example, had to remain motionless for up to twenty minutes, only certain poses and facial expressions were possible. The daguerreotypist could not capture family members working or playing in the home. Moreover, photographs mislead us by presenting a static, instantaneous view of the past. Historian Barry O'Connell (1976:4) notes that "we cannot know—though we may occasionally wonder—what came before or what happens after the image in the photograph. The image by its flatness and precision persuades us to accept the moment it portrays as the essential one." Yet, in the unlikely event that a family argument were photographed, a single image could not explain the meaning of the dispute.

The classroom study of photographs is important precisely because they only show a select portion of the past. Students have, of course, heard that a picture is worth a thousand words and may view photographic evidence as peculiarly objective and complete. If nothing else, photographs in a family history class can make students more aware of their problematic nature as an historical source. By becoming more critical observers, students will guard against inflated claims for visual evidence.

But other family history sources, statistics, government records, diaries, oral histories, also have biases and weaknesses. Good historians determine the limitations of their sources and compensate for them. Although the visual representation of past family life may be less familiar to historians than literary or statistical ones, teachers and students eliminate an important window on the past if they dismiss it. Photographs, despite problems, raise some of the subjective issues that are difficult to get at with other sources. For example, pictures help reveal families' self-images and how they wish to portray themselves. Photographs also illuminate important family history issues normally studied with the more conventional tools of the social historian. A study of transitions within the life course might thus include pictures. But which transitions do family members record and why? Why is high school graduation so well photographed, for example? Why did families in a Wisconsin town in the 1890s take pictures of children who died (Lesy, 1973:32-35)?

Photographs are particularly relevant to family historians since they play such a large role in family life. The invention of photography in the nineteenth century made it possible for many people to document their own appearance and that of their kin, and to leave this record for their descendents. As a result, a family's folklore and remembrance of the past often revolve around photographs (Kotkin, 1978:6). They have become for many the most important symbol of a family and its history. In fact, photographic images are so powerful that they may supersede or confuse people's memories.

Photography has become a particularly important part of such central family events as births, weddings, and holidays. For many people, picture-taking certifies the events' importance and reality. To understand how families celebrate themselves and to study the meaning of family events, the role of photography

and the photographs themselves must be examined. But there is perhaps an even more compelling reason for including photographs in a family history course. Their immediacy promotes student interest in family history and stimulates questions that can be researched in other sources.. Photographs prompt reaction and comparison to students' own lives.

* * *

To use a photograph in the classroom begin by treating it as you would a letter, diary, or other document. The teacher and student should first determine what can be learned about the production of the document just from looking at it. Why was it made? How were the various people in the picture connected to each other? Did a professional photographer or an amateur take it? Did the photographer control the content or did the persons or persons being photographed? What was the photographer and subjects' point of view? What photographic process was used and how did it affect the picture's content?

Although answers to some of these questions will remain speculative, they provide a context and backdrop for further analysis. Consider the copy of the family photograph in Figure 1, for example. The original print would tell more about the photographic process, but several blurred people and the horse's head indicate that a long time exposure was required. The subjects were therefore limited in how they could pose and the picture was probably carefully staged. This suggests the intentional inclusion of the woman by the gate and a connection between the house and the people in the carriage. Moreover, there are so many people in the carriage that its occupants were not likely going anywhere but instead just wanted a picture of it.

A good way to encourage students to read a picture carefully is to ask them to date it. Even if the teacher knows the answer, students can sharpen their ability to analyze visual images by speculating about when a photograph was taken. They may not be able to tell its last possi-

Figure 1 Courtesy of the National Endowment for the Humanities Community History Program at LaGuardia Community College and Dora Geipel.

ble date, but they can at least decide on the earliest one. In Figure 1, the clothes, hair styles, horse and buggy, unpaved street, architecture, photographic process, and the style of the picture itself all provide clues. Studio portraits only include some of these types of evidence, but pictures of interiors of homes may include such others as appliances, heating and lighting devices, furniture, toys, floor coverings, and decorations. Both the material and the style of objects can be considered.

Another way to read a photograph is to take an inventory of everything in it. Such a list focuses attention on incidental details. In our sample picture, the woman by the gate is wearing an apron but no hat, one shutter is open on the third floor, and all the trees to the right of the house seem to be young and of the same size. Once the list is complete, the irrelevant information can be discarded and the rest analyzed. What is the significance of the awnings on the house? How many objects are made of wood? How do the clothes and facial expressions of the three women compare? Enlargement of a specific part of a picture, such as the carriage, is often helpful.

Inventorying and dating encourage students to be careful and systematic, but analysis of a picture also requires imagination and speculation. Before looking at any historical photographs, you might ask students to bring in ones of themselves. Ask them why the pictures were taken, what they can recall thinking at the time, and what happened both before and afterwards. Then apply similar questions to an old photograph by asking the students to imagine they are either one of the subjects or the photographer. What is the person thinking and feeling? What is his or her relationship to the situation, to other people pictured, and to the act of photography? A short essay in the first-person will help students to be both creative and thorough.

If a photograph was taken without the subject's knowledge or shows an uncompleted action, such as a boy running while holding a rooster, a couple dancing, a girl learning to ride a bicycle, or a family on a picnic, ask students to imagine both what took place before the moment captured, as well as what they think will happen afterward. Such exercises in imagination not only make students more comfortable and creative in their use of photographs, but also stimulate them to develop questions about family history. Moreover, the process of speculation can teach caution by raising the issue of how much one can know for certain when looking at a picture and how much is open to various interpretations.

* * *

Students can move beyond speculation when they examine a family photograph in relationship to other sources. Family papers, genealogies, census manuscripts, and oral history may make it possible to pinpoint family members' names, ages, and occupations, as well as the family's ethnicity, background, and social status. The socio-economic position and aesthetic values of the photographer can sometimes be investigated. The history of the picture itself is also revealing; different conclusions are suggested by a photograph that hung over a fireplace than by one that sat ignored in an attic. Similarly, it helps to know whether the family in question had only a single photograph of itself or many.

With this sort of information, the photograph in Figure 1 becomes a revealing document showing the relationship between family, work, social status, and the community. The picture was taken at the turn of the century by Paul Geipel (Community History Program: *passim*).

Since he was a member of the family pictured, some possible explanations for the lack of men can be eliminated. The people in the carriage are his wife, children, and mother. They are in front of the house of the mother, Louisa Geipel, in Astoria, a rapidly expanding section of Queens, New York. Louisa had emigrated with her husband, August, from Germany in the 1870s. They served Astoria's German immigrant community, he as a saloon keeper and she as a midwife. For Louisa, the buggy was more than a convenience and status symbol, since she used it to visit her patients. The Geipels' jobs gave them material comfort and social standing in the immigrant community; their house and property symbolize their position. The picture clearly shows that the Geipels felt comfortable drawing attention to themselves and their success. The woman at the gate is their domestic servant and the picture may reveal the nature of the relationship between her and Louisa Geipel. Finally, records of Louisa's work as a midwife make it possible to link the picture to the experiences of the women and families she served. Yet even with this rich photograph, there are limits to what can be said about a single image.

Comparison of several photographs enables students to extend their analysis. They can then discover patterns and distinguish unusual images. Determining the impact of a photographic process or artistic convention on the final image is also easier when done comparatively. Naturally, a well-documented collection from a single family provides a good starting point for comparison. With a picture of August Geipel and his saloon, students can contrast home to workplace.

The large number of pictures in many families' collections means that they must be studied systematically if students are to make meaningful comparisons. A good approach is to focus on a specific person. How does his or her physical appearance change over time? What about styles in clothes, hair, and personal grooming? Is he or she always photographed with the same people? Once any changes are identified, students can attempt to explain them. Are they the result of change in the person's socioeconomic position or aspirations? Do broader social trends and fashions account for them? Evidence might be found both in pictures themselves and in other sources. In turn, when documents reveal significant developments in the person's life, the class can see if they are reflected in photographs.

A location rather than a person can provide a meaningful sample of pictures. If several generations of a family lived in the same house, select all the pictures taken in the parlor or kitchen. How did the room change? How did family members use it? Students can go to the site itself to collect additional data and to compare the present with the past.

A theme can also be the basis for selecting pictures from a family photograph collection. With the gradual but relentless expansion in the quantity of snapshots by amateur photographers, the number of themes to analyze in a family collection is generally largest for recent generations. Certain themes (sickness, conflict, anxieties) do not normally appear in photographs (Challinor, 1978.118), but one can focus on those that do. Aspects of childhood, for example, are heavily photographed and therefore suited to analysis. Events, such as weddings, birthdays, and holidays, also make for interesting comparisons. Historian Joan Challinor suggests (1978:119) selecting a subject and arranging all the photographs on it by date to find patterns.

> You may observe that things change gradually over time or remain pretty much the same. You may also find that change takes

place in sudden leaps or seems random with respect to time, following no simple chronological pattern. Snapshots may even reveal family members reverting to the styles and practices of an earlier time.

A family album presents special problems and opportunities, since it reflects a peculiar selection process. The family member compiling the album often includes some snapshots and discards others. Captions of family memorabilia are frequently added. But it is this process of selection and composition which becomes the subject of analysis. To decipher the album, one should ask: What was the compiler's relationship to the people in the photographs? Does he or she reveal his or her purpose and attitudes by which pictures are included and discarded, through the ordering and arrangement of the pictures, or through captions and comments? What story was he or she trying to tell? After hypothesizing about the composition of the album, one can better analyze the pictures in it by theme or person.

To stimulate discussion and understanding of the selection process, teachers can present students with a family photograph collection and ask them to create a small album from it. They should explain why they included particular pictures and how the album differs from the collection as a whole. Students' own family pictures can also be the basis for an album and commentary.

* * *

Many family photographs in books and archives are unidentified. In other cases, little is known beyond the location of the picture or the subjects' names. Although it is, of course, preferable to have collateral information, some historians are too quick to discount the utility of anonymous pictures. A few of the general organizing principles that work with a family's collection are also applicable here and enable one to develop an historically significant group of photographs.

A specific theme, such as a family event, provides a good focus. Thirty pictures of family Christmas celebrations in the midwest in the 1920s would provide a useful sample for student analysis. Generalizations based on anonymous photographs of families on vacation in the Berkshire Mountains could withstand scrutiny if the number of pictures were large enough and the statements about them narrowly focused. With sufficient photographs, comparisons can be made across time.

Teachers can also use important social variables to divide up the pictures. How do a dozen group portraits of Italian immigrant families in New York City at the turn of the century compare to a dozen pictures of Jewish families? How are Massachusetts mill workers' families portrayed in pictures in comparison to mill owners' families? Compare, for example, photographs of Irish weddings in New England with those of Yankee weddings at the same time. In trying to account for differences in the pictures, students would have to consider the interaction of styles, socio-economic variables, artistic convention, and the technology of photographs.

Some of the most exciting student work comes when a teacher asks them to make selections and choices. If presented with a large group of pictures of immigrant families, which five would they select for a museum exhibit? It is, of course, important to ask students to explain and justify their choices. In effect, this assignment is comparable to the construction of a family album, substituting anonymous pictures. Students might also produce a slide series or even a slide-tape presentation Such projects ask students to think about the presentation of history and encourage them to analyze the way visual images are selected for the books they read and the

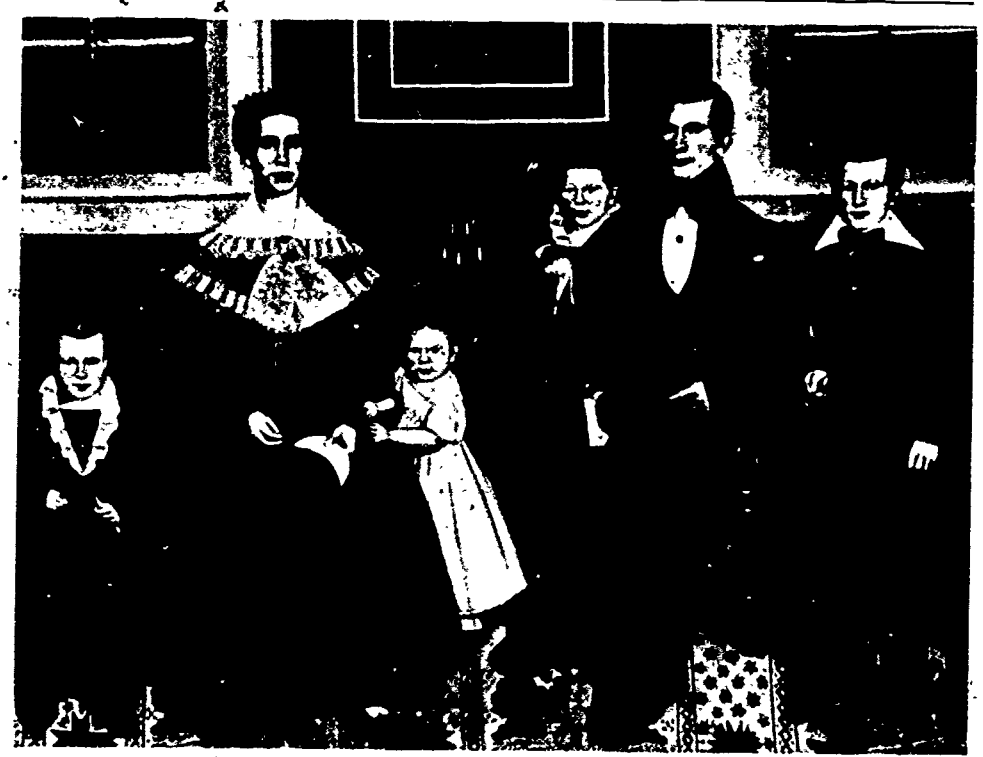
films and exhibits they see. By actually producing a ten-minute slide-tape on the impact of the Depression on family life or on changing styles in home decoration, students experience the difficulties of translating a complex subject into a brief visual presentation. An ambitious class can even present its completed slide-tape for teachers to use in the local public schools or can create an exhibit of photographs and analysis for the college library or local historical society.

Paintings

It is more difficult to integrate paintings into family history courses than photographs. Because there are fewer paintings, teachers may not be able to find enough pictures to deal with a particular topic. There are, for example, too few portraits of servants in eighteenth-century New York for a classroom study. Nevertheless, paintings can illuminate certain family history issues and they are an essential source for the era before photography.

Many factors influence a painting's content. The painter's intent plays a role, as does the subject's wishes (if the picture is a portrait). Artistic convention, the amount of time the artist took to paint the picture, and his or her talents all contribute to the final product. Erastus Field's 1839 portrait of the Moore family (Figure 2) in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts illustrates the difficulties of analyzing paintings. There are many possible explanations for aspects of the picture. The children's hairstyles, for example, might have been painted as they were because the children wore their hair that way, because the painter of the family decided such hairstyles would be more stylish or

Figure 2. The Moore Family by Erastus Field. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



attractive than the actual ones, because the conventions of contemporary portraits dictated the children's hair be thus shown, because the artist did not wish (or was not paid) to spend very much time on the painting and chose the most expedient hairstyles, or because the artist was not very versatile and painted the only hairstyles he could. Clothes, facial expressions, and furnishings are similarly open to numerous explanations. Moreover, the painting by itself does not reveal whether or not Field included the entire family or controlled its content.

This complexity should not make teachers abandon the classroom use of paintings. It instead argues for presenting enough information so that students can place a picture into context and read it intelligently. Unlike many family photographs, paintings are generally well documented. In the case of the Moore family, we know in fact that the man was a thirty-five year old hatter and traveling dentist in Ware, Massachusetts, while the woman, his wife, was thirty-two. The ages of the children are known, and the two youngest were the woman's orphaned niece and nephew. By viewing other contemporary portraits, reading up on nineteenth-century portrait painting, and perhaps researching Field's other work, students could begin to distinguish the unique from the conventional in aspects of the Moore family portrait and could eliminate at least some possible explanations for the appearance of the hairstyles, clothes, and furnishings. They could determine what in the painting was a function of artistic convention or of the artist's style and abilities. If students went to the Museum to look at the original painting rather than a print, they would discover that the people were painted almost life size and could then better speculate on why the picture was painted, where it might have hung, and how the family might have reacted to it.

Students would get the most out of the Moore family portrait when it is compared to other pictures of New England families in the 1830s. Even though poor families did not often sit for portraits, one can find portraits of people from some different social and economic groups. Students could then study how portraits other than of the Moores' treat extended kin, how different children are portrayed, how the men compare to the women, and whether a farmer or lawyer's family looks like a dentist's.

* * *

Portraits are probably the easiest and most useful paintings to introduce into family history classes. Interesting, well-documented examples appear in the many published art histories and exhibit catalogues. Moreover, portraits have a clearly-defined structure and their format makes it easy to compare pictures and to generalize from a group of them.

For most places and historical periods, one can assume that portraits were painted in exchange for payment from the sitter, so the artist had an incentive to please his or her subjects. The pictures thus tend to represent how people would like to be seen rather than the way they necessarily were. Portraits tell more about people's self-image and aspirations and artists' views of society than about everyday behavior and appearance. Yet perceptions and attitudes are an important subject that may not be revealed in the same way through other sources.

Guidelines for analyzing portraits and for grouping them for class activities are similar to those for photographs. In either case, it is important to ask about the production of the document. Dating and inventorying are worthwhile activities; an inventory of the Field painting, for example, would facilitate a full analysis of the picture.

To stimulate student interest, a teacher

might start with a speculative exercise. Give students a group of ten portraits and distribute descriptions of the people in the paintings. Then ask students to match the pictures to the descriptions. Because such matching is not easy, the exercise encourages discussion. It also helps students to understand the difficulties of analyzing portraits and challenges their stereotypes of the way people looked in the past. After the paintings have been correctly identified, students can more sensitively discuss reasons for any similarities and differences.

Objects in portraits are especially interesting to study. Painters commonly showed people with objects that were important to them or symbolized their lives: witness the Moore family portrait. Although one can not always tell whether the artist or the subject chose the props, comparison between those in various paintings is possible and meaningful. Objects can be grouped by the age, sex, occupation, or class of their possessors. They are often a key to understanding the artist's intent and the subject's self-image.

This same mode of analysis can be profitably applied to photographs. In either case, it helps to prepare students with an introductory activity. Ask them to imagine they are going to have their portrait painted and must choose one object to represent their life. Then list all the choices and discuss their individual and collective significance.

* * *

Genre painting, "an artist's commentary on a commonplace everyday activity or ordinary people, painted in a realistic manner," should be of interest to family history teachers (Williams, 1973:16). Yet it must be used cautiously. Only certain subjects appear in genre paintings, and these are often treated sentimentally or comically. Furthermore, American artists often followed European formulas (Hills, 1974:2-4). Genre paintings can nevertheless still be used in two ways. Teachers and students can analyze them as documents of intellectual history and determine the image of family life they present. Productive topics would include, for example, artists' views of the slave family or the changing image of farm families between 1850 and 1900.

One can focus on incidental details in genre paintings. In the 1850s painting, "The Windmill," in the collection of the New York Historical Society, the artist, Francis William Edmonds, depicts a kitchen in which a child and man play with a small toy windmill the man has whittled. A small curious dog looks on. The composition of the painting creates a playful romantic image. But let us consider some of the objects in the modest kitchen with its bare wood floors. An iron cooking stove is built into the fireplace and a water heater stands next to it (Peterson, 1971:85). Edmonds would not have included these objects if it were not feasible for them to appear in an unpretentious kitchen in the 1850s. Otherwise viewers would have found the painting strange and disconcerting, which was certainly not Edmonds' intention. The painting, like many other genre paintings, can therefore be used in a study of the physical setting of family life.

* * *

Whether they be genre paintings or portraits, daguerreotypes or snapshots, pictures can play an important role in family history courses. With careful preparation, they not only provide information and insights unavailable elsewhere, but also raise important questions and motivate students to pursue answers in more conventional materials. I urge teachers to use them.

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Photographs. Teachers planning to introduce photographs into family history classes might consider one of many theoretical statements on photography. Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977) is a provocative collection of essays analyzing the nature of the medium. It is judiciously reviewed by Harvey Green in *Winterthur Portfolio* (Summer, 1979), 14:209-211. John Szarkowski in *The Photographer's Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966) suggests five important characteristics of photography.

The utility of photographs to social historians is evaluated in Barry O'Connell, "The Photograph as a Source of Social History," Unpublished paper, Society of American Archivists, October, 1976; Oscar Handlin, "Seeing and Hearing," in *Truth in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); and "Photographs as Symbolic History," Alan Trachtenburg's introduction to *The American Image: Photographs from the National Archives, 1860-1960* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979). Marsha Peters and Bernard Mergen, in "'Doing the Rest': Uses of Photographs in American Studies," *American Quarterly* (Bibliography Issue, 1977), 29:280-303, not only discuss the possibilities and limitations of photographs for researchers, but present topics to pursue and report on two college history courses that emphasize photographs. The most ambitious efforts to use photographs for historical analysis are two books by Michael Lesy, *Wisconsin Death Trip* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973) and *Real Life: Louisville in the Twenties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976). Although Lesy wrenches documents out of context and does not provide sufficient information on his selections, his provocative books demand careful consideration from teachers and students.

The most useful treatment specifically of family photographs as historical tools is Joan Challinor's "Family Photographs" in Allan Lichtman, ed. *Your Family History* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1978). Although written for the individual researching his or her own family, the suggestions are equally valuable to teachers. Lichtman and Challinor's book *Kin and Communities: Families in*

America (Washington. Smithsonian Institution, 1979) includes a symposium on the interpretation of family photographs. Amy Kotkin's "The Family Photo Album as a Form of Folklore," *Exposure* (March, 1978), 16:4-8 is a good treatment of a narrower subject.

Textbooks that stress the analysis of visual evidence provide ideas for teachers. A high school textbook by Allen Kownslar *et al.*, *Discovering American History* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969) helps students to read photographs, as do the captions to the pictures in Jim Watts and Allen F. Davis, *Generations: Your Family in Modern American History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, second edition, 1978). See also, Matthew Downey, "Pictures as Teaching Aids. Using the Pictures in History Textbooks," *Social Education* (February, 1980), 44:93-99.

The Small Town Sourcebook and *Guide to The Small Town Sourcebook* (Sturbridge. Old Sturbridge Village, 1979), local history curriculum materials based on photographs and paintings, are directed to elementary and junior high school teachers, but the ideas can be adapted easily to other levels. The "History Packages" of the National Endowment for the Humanities Community History Program at LaGuardia Community College suggest ways to use photographs with other primary sources in case studies of individual families.

There are numerous histories of photography. A good starting point is Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (New York. Museum of Modern Art, 1964). Much of the published history, however, ignores home photography and the social meaning of family photographs to focus on professional photographers and pictures as art. The material on the twentieth century, when most family pictures are the product of amateurs and family members rather than professional photographers, is therefore not very helpful to teachers of family history. A few scholars have treated photography in the nineteenth century in terms of social history, although not necessarily of family history. Among the most interesting efforts are Edward W. Earle, ed., *Points of View: The Stereograph in America—A Cultural History* (Rochester: Visual Studies Workshop, 1979); Richard Rudisill, *Mirror Image: The Influence of the Daguerreotype on American Society* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971); Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., reprint edition, 1964); and Alan Thomas, *Time in a Frame: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century Mind* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1977), which includes an insightful chapter analyzing four family albums. On a more narrowly focused twentieth-century topic, see William Stott, *Documentary Expression in Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

A number of reference works offer information on the various nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographic processes and discuss techniques for collecting, caring for, and restoring old pictures. The best are Margaret Haller, *Collecting Old Photographs* (New York: Arco Publishing, 1977), Robert Weinstein and Larry Booth, *Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977); and William Welling, *Collectors' Guide to Nineteenth-Century Photographs* (New York: Collier Books, 1976). David Weitzman's *Underfoot. An Everyday Guide to Exploring the American Past* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976) and Thomas Davies' *Shoots. A Guide to Your Family's Photographic Heritage* (Danbury, NH: Addison

House, 1977) describe easy procedures for copying pictures with a 35mm. camera. The latter book focuses on technical aspects of old photographs and is not as rich a resource for the family historian as the title would suggest.

The collection and publication of historical photographs is rapidly becoming a small industry. Teachers can use pictures in these books as primary sources for family history classes. Among the most relevant collections are Catherine Hanf Noren, *The Camera of My Family* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976); Barbara Norfleet, *Wedding* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1979); William Seale, *The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors Through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975); Jeffrey Simpson, *The American Family: A History in Photographs* (New York: Viking Press, 1976); and George Talbot, *At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977).

Student work with photographs might lead to either oral history or slide-tape production. A number of books and articles can guide the novice through the former subject. For starters, see James Hoopes, *Oral History: An Introduction for Students* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979). A good example of using photographs in conjunction with oral history interviews is Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). On slide-tapes, see C. Steward Doty, "Organizing an Individualized History Media Production Course," *Social Studies* (July-August, 1976).

Paintings. Although paintings' potential value for family history teachers has been little explored, a few scholars have made rewarding use of them. Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life,* trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) has had the most impact on family historians and demonstrates well the richness of paintings as sources. The cautious reader's skepticism of aspects of his argument should also reveal the limitations of pictures. For another suggestive study, see Carol Duncan, "Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in French Art," *Art Bulletin* (December, 1973), 55:570-587. The narrative in Anita Schorsch, *Images of Childhood: An Illustrated Social History* (New York: Mayflower Books, Inc., 1979) is too heavily based on a few secondary works to be of great interest to family historians; yet the author includes 128 well-chosen pictures from fifteenth-century Europe to nineteenth-century America and comments on them provocatively.

In *Americans at Home: From the Colonists to the Late Victorians* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), Harold Peterson reproduces over two hundred art works. He analyzes them for what they reveal of interior design and thus provides a model of how to look at pictures for their incidental details. His introduction suggests some of the strengths and weaknesses of paintings as sources.

Joshua Taylor, *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) presents an art historian's sound advice on how to read a painting. The same author has written a brief, more specialized book, *To See is To Think: Looking at American Art* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975), which focuses on a few aspects of American art, including portraits. Another analytical framework is presented in the broad-ranging essays by John Berger *et al., Ways of Seeing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972). Although John Kowenhoven's

Columbia Historical Portrait of New York: An Essay in Graphic History (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1953) does not emphasize family pictures, study of this book is a delightful way to become a more sensitive interpreter of paintings, engravings, and other visual images.

There are, of course, numerous surveys of art history and studies of individual styles, painters, and paintings. Most useful for family history teachers are those that attempt to place art into historical context and that define their scope broadly enough to include folk art and itinerant painters. For the United States, good surveys to start with are Oliver Larkin, *Art and Life in America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, revised edition, 1960) and Richard McLanathan; *The American Tradition in the Arts* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968). More specialized studies that are sensitive to art's social context include Alfred Frankenstein, *The World of Copley, 1738-1815* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1970), and a pamphlet by Nina Fletcher Little, *Country Art in New England, 1790-1840* (Sturbridge: Old Sturbridge Village, second edition, 1965). Neil Harris in *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860* (New York: George Braziller, 1966) treats the relationship between art and society from the vantage point of the cultural historian.

Some art historians have looked at paintings as documents of intellectual and cultural history. Among the studies relevant to family historians are Ellwood Parry, *The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590-1900* (New York: George Braziller, 1974) and Mirra Bank, *Anonymous Was a Woman* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1979), which juxtaposes art with selections from literary sources to illustrate themes in women's lives.

Hermann Warner Williams, Jr., *Mirror to the American Past: A Survey of American Genre Painting, 1750-1900* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1973) and Patricia Hills, *The Painters' America: Rural and Urban Life, 1810-1910* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974) both look at genre painting. The former is more comprehensive, but the latter is appealing because of its reluctance to assume that paintings necessarily reflect reality.

PUTTING THE HISTORIC HOUSE INTO THE COURSE OF HISTORY

Peter S. O'Connell

> We have dealt thus long on the old parsonage because it was a silent influence, every day fashioning the sensitive, imaginative little soul that was growing up in its own sphere of loneliness there. . . . [E]very day, as the little maiden grew, some quaint, original touch was put in the forming character by these surroundings (Stowe, 1878:178-179).

> Notwithstanding all we have done to modernize the old house, we seem scarcely to have disturbed its air of antiquity. . . . There are dark closets, and strange nooks and corners, where the ghosts of former occupants might hide themselves in the day time, and stalk forth, when night conceals all our sacrilegious improvements (in Stewart, 1932:150).

To understand the value of a field study of an historic house to students of family history, we need only reflect on what our own houses say about us. If one of our homes were selected as the site for a museum exhibit on a late twentieth-century family, we would realize at once how much our houses materialize our way of life. We stamp our personalities and values on our living spaces by the way we organize furniture, decorate walls, furnish shelves, or arrive at a comfortable level of clutter and cleanliness. In making these decisions, each of us is influenced by advertising, by the range of goods available at our income level, by technology, and by current fashion. Our houses and furnishings express feelings and values that may not be explicit in other aspects of family life.

Houses also have histories of their own which can influence new tenants. In his journal, Nathaniel Hawthorne describes how previous owners continued to inhabit metaphorically the Old Manse, the house he and his bride, Sophia, rented shortly after their marriage. This venerable house, the ideal living environment for the Hawthornes, contributed to their happiness and nurtured Nathaniel's writing. While the Old Manse influenced the Hawthornes, they in turn were leaving traces of themselves in it by remodeling the parlor and writing notes to each other on the window of the study using Sophia's diamond ring (Kraft, 1979: 28).

Thus the houses that provide the settings of family life are important primary sources for the study of family history. Until recently, however, social historians have neglected them to concentrate on diaries, letters, vital records, and other documents. In a similar way, literary historian Stephanie Kraft notes that although she passed Emily Dickenson's house often and saw visitors "come to spend quiet moments in contact with their sense of the poet's life and art," she had never thought about authors' lives in relation to their homes (Kraft, 1979:9).

Historic homes have been the province of local preservation groups and architectural historians, who deserve credit for

most historic house museums in our communities. In turn, the furnishings and interpretations of the houses reflect the interests of these historians. Most houses are preserved because they were lived in by persons of note, because they represent the best of a particular architectural style, or for both reasons. Consequently, curators furnish the rooms with the best chairs, tables, mirrors, and fabrics; staff members focus on the accomplishments of the famous inhabitants, or upon the origin and style of the furnishings.

If these houses delight teachers of fine art and architectural history, they can frustrate students and teachers of family history. They are the houses of the elite; although servants quarters may be included, the servants are anonymous, as are the ordinary people who were neighbors of the great. There is little evidence of children, social activities, interpersonal conflict, or the everyday routines of family life. Certainly there is none of the clutter found in most lived-in residences. In many cases, the house furnishings take on meaning only through the notable occupant's accomplishments: here is where Franklin was born, Twain wrote, Washington slept, or Gould created his empire. Instead of calling up images of daily life from the past or raising questions about it in the student's mind, the houses are monuments to dead heroes, illustrations in a history text. They promote reverence rather than inquiry.

Many houses and their staffs do more than worship the past, of course. Conscious of the need to interpret a variety of topics to visitors, the staff endeavors to be accurate, interesting, and flexible. A growing number of houses reflect the average family's way of life, or at least the staff is prepared to discuss ordinary family life. Some museums demonstrate activities, use role playing, or offer special exhibits to engage their visitors in historical inquiry. Many would welcome the interest and help of family historians in developing programs and resources for students.

A case study in family history focused on a historic house does not come about automatically or easily, however. Even when the teacher and museum staff work cooperatively and are excited about the potential of a historic house study, students may have difficulty in learning in a museum or a house. They have little experience in making inferences from objects, in imagining themselves as historical characters, or in connecting a specific family's experience with generalizations in a text—what writer Flannery O'Connor called "seeing small history in a universal light" (in Kraft, 1979:11). And even though scholars increasingly recognize the relevance of historic houses and their furnishings to the study of family life, students may not.

Yet, with careful planning teachers can overcome these obstacles and use field study to give students a stimulating introduction to historical investigation and research. The skills, insights, and enthusiasm students develop more than reward the time and effort a teacher must invest to organize such a study. In a well-planned study, students see the historic house as a vivid and concrete document. The house stimulates feelings, provides evidence of family activities and patterns, generates questions to investigate further, and encourages students to connect one family's experience with the more general forces affecting families in a particular time, place, and economic situation. One student reacted this way: "I think my mind was more stirred and taken back by history in this past week than in the past twelve years of school. My curiosity was awakened. I found myself looking deeper into my own life since I was looking at a life of someone else." This article will pose questions to consider and suggest re-

sources and activities to realize the pedagogical potential of an historic house.

Defining the Teaching Function of the House

Like a good research project, a successful field experience for students depends on a strong conceptual framework, knowledge of the relevant resources, and proper sequencing of problems to investigate. If the students are to understand how to use a particular house, they must know who the family occupants were in the context of time, place, occupation, and family history. They must receive enough orientation to know what questions to ask or what hypotheses to test. A teacher must determine at the outset which historic site will best accomplish the course objectives and then visit the site to plan the field study.

In the initial investigation, the teacher needs to discover who lived in the house, when, under what circumstances, and in what relationship to the community. Most houses have an already established identity, one which probably can be researched through the museum's collections. While visiting the site, the teacher will also want to gather resources to recreate the historical context of the family's neighborhood and community and talk with staff about topics and teaching techniques with which they feel comfortable.

Diaries, letters, recollections, oral histories, census data, and vital statistics are basic resources for studying the family. Town meeting minutes, school reports, church records, voluntary association minutes, and other public records usually contain information on the elite families whose houses are so often preserved; they also provide background when a teacher wants to use a community issue as a tool for examining changes in family life. If a family's records are spotty and public documents are unhelpful, sources reflecting the lives of people similar to those of the historic house's inhabitants can fill the gaps.

The nature of the particular family will help determine the approach to use in creating a case study of one family's life. With historic houses associated with businessmen, a teacher can involve students in a research project that links family to work and economic structure. In preparing such a study, the teacher would want to visit both the house and the place of business, if it survives, and look for any existing company records. Such records, in conjunction with census manuscripts, vital statistics, and maps, can help identify individual workers. The teacher can then have students compare and contrast family patterns of the businessman and those who worked for him. If the family employed servants, such published sources as housekeepers' manuals and ladies' magazines will enable students to integrate the servants into their understanding of family life.

If the owner of the house was an author, the author's notebooks and other writings will be useful in establishing a context for students. For example, *Old Town Folks* and *Poganuc People*, two of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novels, provide excellent descriptions of family life in early nineteenth-century New England based on the author's experiences growing up in Litchfield, Connecticut.

A given community may have more than one historic house or a class may be able to visit a living history museum with several houses. Old Sturbridge Village, for example, includes five residences moved from various New England towns and placed in a recreated community of the 1830s. Two of these houses are interpreted on the basis of the lives of their original inhabitants. Because the original

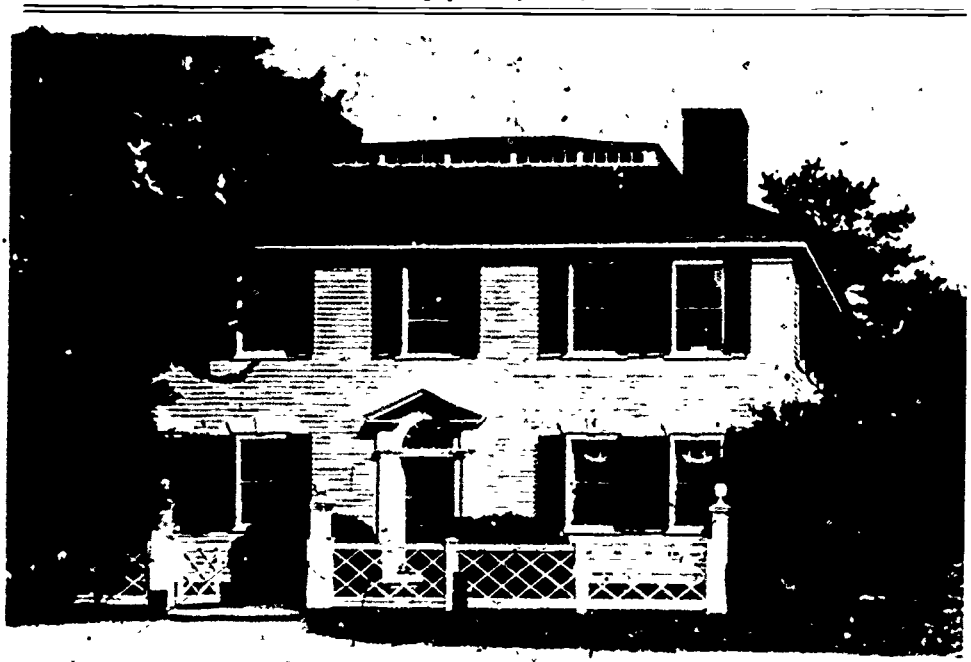
families of the other houses were not appropriate to their location in the museum village, the museum staff has associated new families with the houses. The new occupants were chosen to represent a certain economic range, stage of the life cycle, set of occupations, and level of education. Based upon analysis of probate inventories, the houses are furnished with artifacts representing an appropriate life style. In such a recreated village or whenever several houses can be visited, students can analyze patterns common to all families, while formulating explanations for differences based on wealth, education, occupation, or family structure.

Teachers can accomplish a similar result even if they have access to only one historic house museum. A teacher first selects five probate inventories representing different occupations, stages of the life cycle, or economic levels (see Appendix for one example). Using an historical map, he links the inventories to houses in the community which survive from the appropriate period, but are not open to the public. The class then visits the historic house museum. In small groups afterwards, students observe the outside of one of the other houses, mentally furnish it from the inventory, and compare and contrast life in the two households. This approach is especially useful when students live in the community and then can analyze houses they see every day but have never given much thought.

Case Study of the Towne Family of Charlton, Massachusetts

The Towne family home, which was moved from Charlton, Massachusetts, to Old Sturbridge Village is typical of preserved houses. It was built by a locally prominent family in the finest architectural style of its time (see Figure 1). It also illustrates well the potential of historic houses for family history.

Figure 1. Towne House. Old Sturbridge Village photo by Henry E. Peach.



Salem Towne, Sr., its builder, was a prosperous farmer, member of the Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Mason, local officeholder, and his town's regular representative to the Massachusetts legislature. After his first wife died within a year of their marriage, Towne remarried and had seven children. By 1796 his second wife had died, he had remarried a widow with two children, and built his fashionable new house. In 1804, his son, Salem, Jr., married Sally Spurr of Boston and moved into the house where they had ten children over the next twenty-five years. Salem, Jr. was elected to the State Senate in 1821 and 1822 and was often away from home surveying land in Maine. During his absences, he left the management of the household and farm first to his father and then to his wife. Family documents and town histories indicate that the Townes were active in local reform movements, entertained guests (the Masons met regularly in the house before 1806), held parties, and kept up with state politics and Boston fashions.

Rather than have students examine the whole history of the family, I use the Towne house in a more limited way. I focus on the period between 1820 and 1835 when the family experienced much change and when reformers began to advocate new roles for women, new ways to rear children, and increased emphasis on formal education. During those years Salem, Sr. and his wife died, four children were born to Sally and Salem, Jr., and the older children went off to academies and colleges.

I assign each student one member of the Towne family to investigate and ask him to examine activities and changes in that person's life. I encourage students to consider the effect of such factors as birth order, wealth, sex, and changing cultural values on the individual. I further divide the class into small groups to gather background information on such topics as education, work, leisure, voluntary associations, fashion, and decorum. I also include a small research task in which students check various public records for mention of the Towne family. Data thus generated can then be used with other students.

Planning the Sequence of Investigation

After clarifying the family's identity and defining its function in the course, the task is to develop activities that bridge the gap between student experiences, the house as a resource, and the objectives of the course. The emphasis here is on student activity, since it is through the actions of students that a teacher's plan becomes a reality. For the beginning section of a course involving field study in a house museum, it is helpful to establish an intellectual context for students by describing the focus and purpose of the field study. I have found it useful to demonstrate the importance of understanding a house and its furnishings by having students examine mentally a house in their own lives. I ask them to sit quietly and recall from memory a house and room they remember with fondness. Then I ask the students to focus on a single object and to associate with it a person or experience. Students then write their recollections of the smells of a grandmother's kitchen, the feeling of sitting on a stiff old couch or of reading musty books, the view from the tower of a victorian mansion, or other impressions. More importantly, they think of people and recollect activities, routines, traditions, and arguments that occurred in the rooms. Students are inevitably surprised by the multitude of associations stimulated by merely imagining a physical environment.

Subsequently, when I ask the students to imagine that the space they remembered

has now been cordoned off as a museum exhibit, and interpreted by a stranger, they readily understand the potential power of objects in context to the imaginative eye of the informed observer. Removed by a step or two from their own rooms, the students begin to examine why the room was furnished the way it was, who used the artifacts, what impact technology had, how the parents viewed children, and the extent to which the family was representative of other families.

This activity, and others like it, helps students to develop an analytical framework for comparing families and to realize more fully the importance of the emotional dimensions of family life. Finally, in contemplating the difficulty an outsider would have in understanding all that could be learned from their personal spaces, students realize that they need to acquire basic information about families in the past before they can imagine activity associated with specified objects. In the museum world, imagining activity from objects in context is called room reading.

Learning to read a room is easiest if students start by analyzing a space with objects familiar to them. As an alternative to the activity described above, students might compile an inventory of a room at home, inventory their own possessions, or keep a diary of their activities, noting especially their interactions with objects. Students can also look at a magazine picture of a room and mentally refurnish the room as if their own family lived in it. The historical mapping activities described below can be used with contemporary rooms to develop the skill of room reading.

I have found it useful to ask students to discuss a room on the basis of four quickly-shown slides which simulate the way a museum visitor often glances at an exhibit and moves on. After students make statements about the room, they look at close-ups of the objects in it and refine their observations. Other teachers have successfully asked students to write about individual objects in order to sharpen skills of observation. Whatever strategy is used, teachers will want students to discuss objects as evidence of human activity and as stimuli that raise questions for further investigation. Students should be able to imagine themselves in a room using its objects, having conversations with others, or looking out a window on the passing scene.

After these introductory room-reading activities, I show students slides of the Towne house to make them familiar with the family and the house's architecture and furnishings. In addition, I outline the schedule of activities for the visit, define the students' roles, and describe tasks to be accomplished after the visit. This procedure gives students concrete understanding of the function of the house visit.

Activities and Strategies in the Museum

Some activities and strategies are especially useful because they are adaptable to any set of teacher objectives. They fall into four general areas: 1) room reading, 2) participatory activities and museum staff craft demonstrations, 3) mapping and organizing data, and 4) museum staff and student role playing.

Room Reading. Room reading in an historic house is simply an application of the techniques students used in analyzing their own spaces. Students, through observation of the room and discussion with museum staff, gather information about room use, family interaction, or attitudes towards fashion and style. Thus, in looking at the front parlor of the Towne house (see Figure 2), students see the family's public space ready for visitors with its printed wallpaper, furniture from Boston,

Figure 2. Towne House Parlor. Old Sturbridge Village photo by Henry E. Peach.

and a china teaset ready for company. They imagine such social events as the minister calling to discuss the upcoming maternal association meeting with Sally Towne, a dinner party adjourning to the parlor for coffee and conversation, or daughter Mercy's friends listening to her play a song she recently learned at the academy. Students discuss how the Towne's less wealthy neighbors would have reacted to their clothes and furnishings in the latest styles.

The objects stimulate questions to be pursued through conversation and speculation with museum staff. Students and museum staff occasionally get sidetracked into discussions about the history of objects themselves and may need to be reminded to use objects as evidence for statements about family life. Implicit in the strategy of room reading is the students' ability to imagine themselves in the space and to sense how the space affects a person's activities. They consider which family members would have used the room, for what, when, with whom, and how.

Activity. Activity either through museum staff demonstration or student participation serves two purposes. Students begin to collect different kinds of evidence—the rhythm and pace of work, the kinds of labor required in the absence of contemporary technology, the sense of completed work, or the impact of weather. Activity also brings a museum

alive for students, breaks down barriers of formality, and makes it easier for students to interact with staff. Activities need not take a long time or be highly elaborate. The opportunity simply to card wool, participate in a school lesson, to write with a quill pen, or churn butter pay high dividends in student learning with little investment of time. College and high school teachers often think student involvement in activity is unnecessary; others fear that students will think activities are too elementary—suitable only for younger people. In fact, students find cooking, spinning, and auguring to be rich, stimulating experiences and rank them high in course evaluations. Activities bring the investigation to life and add emotional content to an otherwise intellectual exercise.

Mapping. Once students have gathered basic information, they must begin to organize the data and make more general statements about family patterns. Mapping activities contribute to this process. Prior to a museum visit instructors might give students blank floor plans of the house and a family probate inventory (see Appendix). Students imaginatively furnish the house from the inventory. The Salem Towne, Sr. inventory, for example, mentions such items as four tables, 38 chairs, a washing machine, 28½ pairs of sheets, four mirrors, and a clock. In attempting to assign these items to their proper spaces, students might wonder why the family had so many chairs or what a washing machine looked like. At the museum, they compare their hypotheses with the museum house furnishings. This activity is especially valuable when a historic house's furnishings do not fully reflect the way the house would have looked at the time the family lived in it. The inventory helps students compare the restored house to the actual one.

In the museum, students might gather information about work and sex roles as the basis for filling in the floor plans later in the classroom using different colors for male and female work activities. For the Towne family of the 1830s, this activity suggests that female activities took place in and around the house; processes begun by males were often finished by females; and the family as a whole was rarely in the same room together during the day. Students also list the activities of the men, women, and children for a typical day in each of the four seasons to assess the impact of seasonality and to analyze the rhythm and pattern of people's work. Other maps might compare the lives of adults and children. If students focus on several types of families, mapping encourages more complex comparisons of the relationships between family life and economic stratum, household composition, and occupation.

A different mapping strategy can be used in raising questions about relationships between families in the community. In preparing for a museum visit, a teacher might ask students to sketch a map of the neighborhood in which they grew up. Discussions afterward usually involve students' observations about boundaries, the families they played with and those they avoided, where the neighborhood "hang-out" was, and where the mean family with the dog lived. Students can then map the historic house family's social interactions through the use of a historical map, pictures, excerpts from town histories, and diaries or letters. The view from an upstairs window of the historic house can give students a concrete sense of the landscape and community context in which the family lived.

A family's economic interactions can be mapped using the house's physical furnishings. Students determine which objects family members made themselves,

which they bought or traded for in various places in the community, and which they acquired elsewhere. An inventory can be used in a similar way after the museum visit.

Roles and Role Playing. The technique of role playing is an interesting and powerful way to help students link the patterns of one family's life to others in the community and with national or regional forces affecting family life. A teacher should select topics to investigate that are both interesting to students and important to the understanding of a culture. Within each of these topics, the teacher can then select events or conflicts that put students in the position of an historian who gathers information, makes hypotheses, and tests them against data from a variety of sources and against the ideas of his or her peers. At the same time, they are actively involved in assessing the impact of change on human beings.

Carefully selected issues define a task for students and a procedure for carrying out the task. Students can exercise creativity in carrying out the task and are in control of the learning. Moreover, the issue creates a need for data and suggests a way of organizing the data to arrive at a position. The historic house then has a clearly defined function: to suggest relevant evidence and to provide the opportunity to speculate with staff.

A family's papers often suggest appropriate issues. In the case of the Townes, Salem Jr. (Towne Papers, OSV) wrote Sally in August of 1831 about the great progress of the temperance movement in New Hampshire and remarked that advocates of "temperate drinking" like his uncle would be convinced that their doctrine was "unprofitable and ruinous." Students have consequently developed a role dialogue between Salem and his uncle about the effect of drinking on family life. A letter in which Salem recounts breaking through an iced lake and almost drowning stimulates students to explore the impact of a parent's death on the family. The issues posed at the Towne House have been individual and personal (a decision to marry, whether to give up the use of alcohol), familial (education and discipline of children, a crisis in health or finance), social (how to dress, whom to invite to a party, whether or not to join a benevolent society), religious (what church to join), economic (building a house, work choices by family members, responding to a depression), and political (should Angelina Grimké be allowed to speak about abolition).

Role playing in a historical setting can take several forms:

a) *Problem-Solving Discussions*. In this case neither the staff nor the students are in role. Instead they speculate together about how the family of the specific house might have perceived an issue or event. They make inferences on the basis of physical evidence, documents, and secondary sources. Thus, students and staff of the Towne house discuss whether the family might invest substantial resources in the cultivation of silk worms, a popular though unworkable project of the times.

b) *First-Person Interpretation*. Using this technique, a museum staff member, in role and after consultation with the teacher, presents information to the group about the living spaces and about particular events, choices, and issues occurring in the family or community. The staff member might invite students to examine a recent purchase, read a letter, or ask their opinions on a matter of concern. At Sturbridge, Towne house interpreters move in and out of role to provide questions and to speculate with students about the answers. If students are role playing, they might speculate about their own points of view, challenging the museum

staff or supporting them against other members of the group. At Plimouth Plantation, interpreters stay steadfastly in role, inviting and cajoling students to think like pilgrims and to ask such questions as a visitor would have asked in 1627.

c) *Scripted Historical Drama.* The purpose of historical drama is to present information to students and to provoke discussion. At Old Sturbridge Village, interpreters have developed role play "moments," scenes set in a room and based upon documented sources. In the Towne house, students have observed conversations between two sisters discussing the change in a young woman after her marriage, between Sally Towne and her servant in which Sally describes the way to serve a dinner according to contemporary custom, or between one of the Towne's sons and a friend about religious conversion. Other dramas could include recreations of quilting or sewing parties, women's charitable society meetings, recitation of school lessons, or discussion by two daughters planning to have a social.

The "moments" are extremely effective with students. Students are impressed with their authenticity, sympathetic to one or another of the characters, and curious about the outcome. Usually the mini-dramas are intentionally incomplete and are followed immediately by discussion between museum staff, teachers, and students. Students are invited to bring their knowledge of general historical forces to bear on the specific situation to predict the outcome.

In most cases, the scripted dramas are based on actual situations described in diaries, letters, or public documents. Their success rests in part on the abilities of the museum staff and upon the presence of conflict and lack of resolution in the situation. Teachers can use similar techniques in the classroom; emotional involvement compensates for any lack of dramatic training.

Conclusion

In the classes that follow the visit to the historic house museum, the teacher can reconnect student investigation to more general course objectives through discussions, lectures, research projects, writing assignments, or through variations of the activities described above. Students might write an essay in which they describe a day in the life of the family who lived in the historic house, react to an issue affecting the family's life, or analyze a room in the house. Students might reconstitute other families in the community and compare their lives to those of the residents of the historic house. In these follow-up classes, the teacher can involve students in discussion about more general research and can correct errors and misconceptions. Students will participate with greater understanding because the historic house will have helped bring the issues of family history into focus.

In this way, a well-planned study of an historic house can reveal the values and life styles of families in the past much as our own houses illuminate aspects of family life in the present. To overcome the shortcomings of historic houses and to convert them into rich teaching resources, one must first specify the family that lived in the house and search out related (or appropriate) sources, teach students room-reading skills and provide background information, and finally design activities that enable students to imagine how the house would have been lived in and used by a family in the past. When students see a historic house as a setting for family life, it will have become a valuable, even essential, component of a course on family history.

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Lizabeth Cohen focuses on the Parsonage at Old Sturbridge Village in "How to Teach Family History by Using an Historic House," *Social Education* (November-December, 1975) 39:466-469. There is a sample room-reading in "Reading a Room: A Primer to the Parsonage Parlor" by Marcia Starkey and Lizabeth Cohen in *The Rural Visitor* (Summer, 1975), 15:10-11. See also Lucius and Linda Ellsworth, "House-Reading: How to Study Historic Houses as Symbols of Society," *History News* (May, 1980) 35:9-13.

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Several historians of the family have made extensive use of houses. John Demos' *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) is probably the best known example and is a good model. See also Clifford E. Clark, Jr.'s "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Summer, 1976), 7:33-56.

John B. Jackson, "The Westward-Moving House: Three American Houses and the People Who Lived in Them," in *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson* (Amherst: University of Massa-

chusetts Press, 1970) is a lively and fascinating essay that links family life-styles and values to changing house styles. It suggests how one can imaginatively "read" a house in terms of family history. Josephine Johnson's autobiography, *Seven Houses: A Memoir of Time and Places* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973) has similar goals.

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Theoretical essays on the importance of incorporating artifacts into social history research provide background for those wishing to teach with artifacts. See especially John Kouwenhoven's entertaining and insightful essay "American Studies: Words or Things?" in *American Studies in Transition* by Marshall Fishwick, ed., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964); Harold Skramstad, "American Things: A Neglected Material Culture," *American Studies: An International Newsletter* (Spring, 1972), 10:11-22; and two articles in a collection edited by Ian Quimby, *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1978), which relate explicitly material culture and artifacts to the new social history—Brooke Hindle, "How Much is a Piece of the True Cross Worth," pp. 5-20, and Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," pp. 41-64.

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Environmental psychology can help one to understand better the ways in which a dwelling both reflects and shapes its occupants' values and interpersonal relations. Good starting points are Robert Sommer, *Personal Space. The Behavioral Basis of Design* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969), and Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966). See also Harold Proshansky, William Ittleson, and Leanne Rivlin, eds., *Environmental Psychology: People and Their Physical Settings* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 2nd ed., 1976) and David Cantor and Terence Lee, eds., *Psychology and the Built Environment* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974).

The work of architectural historians is relevant to teachers of family history. James Fitch, *American Building: The Historical Forces that Shaped It* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 2nd ed., 1973) is probably the most useful survey for the social historian. Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975) is an interdisciplinary study that combines anthropology, history, folklore, and art. Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and Charles Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstones: New York Row Houses, 1783-1929* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972) treat social history as well as design.

David Handlin, *The American Home. Architecture and Society, 1815-1915* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979) both traces changes in domestic architecture and examines the ideas of the architects, theorists, and writers responsible for them. Since their work reflected their understanding of the meaning and nature of family life, the book illuminates an important aspect of family history. See also Jan Cohn, *The Palace or the Poorhouse. The American House as a Cultural Symbol* (East Lansing. Michigan State University Press, 1979).

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William Seale, *Recreating the Historic House Interior* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979) presents the curator's point of view and gives a sense of how museums and historical societies furnish houses The book includes an excellent bibliography on kitchens, furniture, lighting, and other aspects of material culture related to American houses.

APPENDIX: SALEM TOWNE'S PROBATE INVENTORY, AN ASSESSMENT

Caroline Fuller Sloat*

Probate records are the final accounting for an individual after his or her death. They are among the most easily located public documents that can be used for historical study. The probate process winds up the business and financial affairs of the deceased. Historians involved in house restoration and interpretation use these records as part of the cluster of available resources. However, a single inventory can be misleading, whether as a guide to furnishing or evaluating a museum restoration. We have no way of knowing how and in what way the house might have changed even in the few weeks between the death and the inventory. The households of elderly people often become less fully furnished and do not express the interests and activities of their younger years. Despite this, students of history in academic settings should find probate records useful in reconstructing aspects of the past.

An important way to learn how a family might have lived is to know its possessions. Often the only complete list of property is the probate inventory, part of a large file of documents that might include the judge's appointment of the executors of the estate, the will, lists of items selected by the widow, auction lists, appointment of guardians of minor children, bills charged to the estate, permission to sell real estate or other property to cover expenses, and the final administration and closing of the case. The family of the deceased and his debtors and creditors all had to be taken care of through the legal process. These records might be found collected together in an envelope—flat or bulging, depending on the complexity of the case—or copied into volumes maintained by the probate registry. With luck, the records of a given individual are complete. Unfortunately, many estates, particularly those of women and young adults, were never admitted to probate.

New England probate registries are in the county seat in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire and the town clerk's office in Rhode Island. Connecticut and Vermont are divided into probate districts that may include one or more towns. Most public records have been microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons); copies of the films may be purchased from them.

Just what can be learned about an individual from his probate case varies from one case to another. In the best possible circumstances, the inventory will tell all about his real estate, the tools of his trade, his financial position, household furniture, and distinctive personal possessions. Salem Towne's inventory was not this complete. We do not know why par-

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ticular items were included or excluded. The law was not precise about how an inventory was to be made. For instance, the law did not require that the clothing of the deceased be itemized unless it was worth more than $100, but frequently garments were described. Towne's "wearing apparel" was scrutinized when the inventory was made, but apparently the "particulars left with the executors" did not survive to be included in the final record. Only the clothing of family members and food for the survivors could be omitted according to the legal guidelines.

Salem Towne's inventory does not show much about his occupation and makes it hard to create a profile of his business affairs. He owned a substantial amount of real estate, just under 300 acres valued at almost $9,000. This puts him among the wealthiest landowners in the area even though it seems as if the home farm with the dwelling house, barns, and outbuildings are not included in the inventory. If his property, his livestock, and the crops that should have been filling the barns in September had been included, the total value of the estate would certainly have gone into five figures. However, we know from Towne's will that he left his son, Salem, 179 acres of land, "all of my neat stock [and] farming tools." Also lacking from the inventory is a list of debts owed to him, which are his assets. This common feature of inventories provides clues about the people and sums of money involved in the deceased's business dealings.

Towne's interests are not evident from the inventory. "His library of books" and the pair of card tables provide hints about him as a person, but his will, which he wrote himself, is much more specific. In it, he left to Salem, "all my law books including the Acts and Resolves of the Legislature." To one of his granddaughters, he left his "larger new Quarto Bible." Towne had also played a prominent part in the construction of the center meetinghouse in Charlton and had continued to support it. Many inventories include the meetinghouse pew among the real estate listings; while Towne's does not, he owned several and directed his four daughters "to make their choice out of all the pews I own according to seniority."

The Towne listing is devoted primarily to details of about $400 worth of household furnishings. These are quite modest furnishings for a man with a net worth as great as Towne's and does not include enough furniture to equip his house fully. We must assume that Salem senior and his wife, Sabra, shared the house with the junior Salem, his wife, Sally, and their children. We do not know whether the two families lived in separate parts of the house or if the furnishings were intermixed, so that Sabra or Sally went through the house with the appraisers to inventory the furnishings which belonged to the older couple.

This could have been determined more easily had the inventory been made a few decades earlier, for the eighteenth-century custom was to take a room by room inventory, in which each was named either by function or location in the house. While this is rare in the nineteenth century, the divisions between rooms and floors of the house can sometimes be perceived in the listing. The Towne possessions would seem to furnish two rooms on the main floor and several bedrooms on the second floor. In fact, the rooms downstairs have such large closets, that virtually all the tablewares listed could have been stored in one. There may have been a sitting/dining room and a kitchen on the ground floor, but the second floor was not as simple. We do not know how the six beds were arranged and who might have slept in them.

There are abundant supplies of bedclothes, but other than quantity we have no clues about their color or style. The

parlor carpet and window curtains listed in the Towne inventory would not be commonly found in poorer households, so these are signs of status in a rural community as befits a house of this scale. The pewter is listed by its weight alone, probably scratched after years of household use and valued very differently from today's antique market. A set of chinaware in addition to the crockery, the many pieces of silver, and the pewter indicates the importance of the well set and attractive table, spread with one of many table cloths.

When Sabra Towne selected the items she wanted from the estate (Towne Papers, 1825), she took the three most valuable beds. The term "bed" meant the feather bed (mattress) when this inventory was taken. The feather bed, frequently weighing about fifty pounds, was often among the most valuable items in the house. The bedstead and cord referred to the wooden furniture and the rope on which the mattresses were laid. Mrs. Towne also took linens and enough furniture and cookware to continue to keep house for herself on a more limited basis than before her husband's death.

This inventory does not include any stored foodstuffs. Although farm crops and stored foods are mentioned in some inventories, the law exempted "such provisions and the other articles as shall be necessary for the reasonable sustenance of the widow and family of the deceased" (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1836:428-429). The kitchen seems to be reasonably well equipped for fireplace cooking. There are pots and kettles to hang over the fire, several frying pans, a skillet, gridiron, toasting iron, and a tin oven to use at the hearth. The bread trough is for mixing the dough and leaving it to rise, while the long handled peel is for removing hot baked goods from the oven.

Inventories may be studied for the information actually there, but they should also be used in conjunction with other historical materials. It is often hard to know whether an item or group of furnishings has been omitted because it was overlooked, recently removed, or never there. It is probably a myth that every family had a Bible, given the evidence from probate inventories. Did every house have a spinning wheel? Probably not, but we know from the correspondence of Salem Towne junior that his daughter, Mercy, knew how to spin. Yet no wheel is listed in Salem senior's inventory, nor should one necessarily be in a house furnished like Salem and Sabra Towne's. Should all historic houses be furnished with curtains on every window and a carpet on every floor? Inventories again suggest not. One must conclude that as a source, the probate inventory describes all or part of an actual situation; learning how to evaluate a document for the moment it describes is a significant historical activity.

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Inventory of Estate of Salem Towne, Sr., Sept. 12, 1825
(Worcester County Probate Records)

Real Estate		
the Phillips lot with the building containing 148 Rods of land we appraised at [recd in 1803 for $400 debt]	$1200.00	
26 acres called the Martin lot at	1000.00	
8 acres with the Buildings the City lot at	500.00	
47 acres of Woodland Called the Williams Lot	1500.00	
70 acres of wood & pasture Called the Worth lot	1120.00	
about 15 acres of Meadow Land called the Williams Meadow [bought May 27, 1819]	250.00	[382.81]
46 acres called the Barton Lot	1150.00	
26 acres called the Saine name	650.00	
about 50 acres adjoining the home farm	1500.00	
	$8870.00	
Personal Estate as Follows		
Carpet in the Parlor 6, window Curtains 1		7.00
looking glass 1.50, 1 pr Card Tables, 8 Cherry Table 3		12.50
Small do 2, 1 Server 1.50, 11 Dining Chairs 3.66		7.16
9 old arm Chairs 5.25, 15 old kitchen Do. 1.87		7.12
3 old arm Chairs 1, Dining Do. .67, 1 gow [*sic.*] do. 6		7.67
fire set 1.50, Trunk and Basket .50, 2 large Pitchers .67		2.67
Sett Chinaware 16.00, 2 Block tin Teapots 3.50		19.50
Crockery ware 2.38, dipper & castor 2, Sugar Tongs & Spoons 1		5.33
15 silver tea spoons 6, 8 wines .60, 7 tumblers .75		7.35
cruets & servers .31, 2 Candlesticks 1.50, 5 Iron do. .75		2.56
Baskets, Bottles, & Jugs &c 1.75, Phials & other Bottles .97		2.72
4 tin pails & 17 Tin pans 3.67, Coffee pot & old tin ware 1.33		5.00
27¾ lb. of Pewter & 7 old Spoons 7.48, warming pan & teapot 1.50		8.98
6 Baskets 1.50, knives & forks 2.42, wooden dishes .36		4.28
Stove Steelyards & Bellows 1.75, 2 fire shovels & tongs 2.50		4.25
1 pr and irons 1.75, Brass Clock 25, 2 Tables 3		28.75
old Candlestand looking glass & 2 Brushes 1.37		1.37
3 old drawers 3, 2 Tables 3, Cloth Frame .75		6.75
1 Bureau, 3, 2 pails .33, 2 porrige pots 1.25		9.58
1 Dish kettle .67, 2 Tea do 1.50, small Do & fry pan .75		2.92
2 small Brass Do & Skillet 1.25, 1 flax comb 1		2.25
Salt morter Trays &c .50, 3 flat irons .50, grid & tost Iron 1.50		2.50
old Brass kettle 2.50, Tin oven 1.25, old hat .50		4.25
Bread Trough & peal .75, 1 pr large andirons 2		2.75
Skimmer Roling pin & sink .97, 4 old tubs 1.60		2.57
washing machine .50, small steelyards .25, old Chest .50		1.25
3 chests 2.25, 1 Cherry Table 3, old Do & Trunk 1.25		6.50
4 Towels 2, 9 Table Cloths 11.25, 5 Towels 2		15.25
11 Towels 1.91, 2 Table Cloaths 1, 8 pr pillow cases 4		6.91
28½ pairs Sheets 24.95, 22 pairs Pillow Cases 4.50		29.45

6 Blankets 15.83, 1 Coverlet 6	21.83
18 Blankets 20.99, 1 Bed quilt 4, 2 Do 2	26.99
5 old Do 3.25, 2 pairs Sheets & 2 pairs Pillow Cases 2	5.25
Best Bed Bedstead & Cord and under Bed	19.25
one Do Do Do 8, 1 old Small Do 3.00, 1 Do 8.00, 1 Do 12.00	31.00
1 Do 13.00, Side Saddle 8.00, 2 looking glasses 1.75	22.75
4 window curtains .33, piece Baize .50, Tow yarn 3.20	4.03
1 table .75; 1 pr worsted Combs 1.00, Sundry old things .83	2.58
8 close stools 1.50, his Library of Books &c 7.50	9.00
Bake pan .75	.75
his Wearing apparel the Particulars left with the executors appraised at 37	37.00
	$9277.62

Sept 12, 1825

Jonathan Davis
Peter Butler — Appraisers
Jeremiah Kingsbury

Excerpts from Salem Towne's Will
(Worcester County Probate Records)

1. I give & bequeath to Sabra my beloved wife the use & improvement of one-third part of my estate real & personal (so long as she remains my widow and no longer) and should she marry again, I then on such marriage direct my executor hereafter named to pay her the sum of four hundred and twelve dollars and seventy five cents; which provision if she accepts thereof is to be in full satisfaction for her dower and thirds in my estate and is in conformity with the contract made between us . . . prior to our intermarriage (Dec 6, 1792)
2. Salem Jr. 179 acres land, all my neat stock, farming tools & wearing apparel. All my law books including the Acts and Resolves of the Legislature and one fifth part of all my other books.
3. Ruth Wheelock [daughter]—the interest on $1500 to be paid annually . . . and should she marry again, her husband should not intermeddle with the said interest.
4. Daughters Elizabeth Rindge, Pamela Rider and Augusta Lamb the interest of $1500 being $90 (without any intermeddling of their husbands)
5. $1000 real estate to each daughter.
6. Daughters—Pew in centre meetinghouse to make their choice out of all the pews I own according to seniority, residue of pews given to Congregational Society of Charlton
7. Daughters—all household furniture and books not otherwise disposed of.
8. Grandsons—Wm Salem Weld & Pascal Paoli Deming Weld & Edwin Weld sons of Granddaughter Polly Weld deceased 68 acre Boston place to be divided equally
9. Granddaughter—Lucy Moore Towne Fitts my bureau that was intended for her mother & my larger Quarto Bible—At age 21 or marriage—$700 & interest beginning one year following his death

10. Small legacy for each of his children from Richard Moore late of Oxford which came into Towne's hands as their natural guardian . . . If any of the children receive a part of this legacy it should be deducted from the portion willed to them by Salem Towne.
11. All bequests subject to contract made between Sabra and Salem. She has privilege of selecting any articles of household furniture or other species of personal effects for her use.
12. Residue after settlement of accounts to Salem, and daughters to be equally divided between them.

THE WRITTEN RECORD

Ellen K. Rothman

> April 2, 1835
>
> In keeping a journal I at first did it because my sisters kept one—afterwards I wrote because it was the wish of my mother and now it is done not only to serve as means of being employed about something useful and proper but because it is a source of pleasure to me—"In after Life" said my Mother, "You will read with pleasure what you are now writing" and even now I am much interested in what I wrote a year or two ago—In the pages of [my journals] there is probably little, perhaps nothing that would amuse any save myself; but as they were written for no eye save mine, if they amuse my mind or gratify [illegible] eye their purpose will be accomplished Therefore, I begin my next book as I began my last —My purpose being (as may be very plainly seen by reading it) to keep an account of the most important things that happen in our family—Together with the births, deaths, and marriages of our friends and acquaintances."
>
> Louisa Jane Trumbull [age 12] (OSV, 1978a: 2).

If the artifacts, photographs, and buildings discussed elsewhere in these essays seem somewhat exotic to the college teacher of family history, the documents featured in this section may appear too familiar to be worthy of special note. Indeed, primary source documents—political speeches, Supreme Court opinions, foreign travelers' accounts—have long been part of the standard repertoire of undergraduate history teaching. While courses on political, religious, and intellectual history have often included primary sources—how many students have missed at least a taste of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* or de Tocqueville?—teachers of family history have had to look beyond the traditional and most easily available sources to find materials that provide a sense of immediacy and a context for the issues that concern them. Fortunately, as research and teaching in social history have burgeoned over the past ten years, publishers' catalogues and bookstore shelves have swelled with collections of primary source documents put together to illustrate and amplify the study of the family.

Many high school and elementary level curricula have similarly been revised to highlight personal accounts or other primary materials. Where once most elementary and secondary students met a primary source only as the enemy in a struggle to memorize the Gettysburg Address, now many children learn to analyze historical documents as early as the fourth grade. Inquiry method social studies has emphasized this approach, but other more traditional curricula also recognize the value of primary sources as teaching tools.

Given the increasing popularity of primary materials among history teachers on all levels, why have we put them here alongside the relatively little-used resources of paintings, photographs, and buildings? In spite of widespread acceptance of primary sources in elementary and secondary schools, and the proliferation of published collections emphasizing social history, many college teachers of family history still consider it difficult,

impractical, or inappropriate to use documentary materials; many of those who do, give them at most a tangential role in their courses. Over the past six years, collaboration with college teachers and our own field study teaching at Old Sturbridge Village have demonstrated to us the value of making primary sources an important and well-integrated part of historical study, both in the classroom and in the field. We have experimented with different kinds and combinations of documents and have developed a number of approaches that use primary sources to engage students in thinking about the past. The following essay begins by suggesting ways in which documents can be integrated into classroom teaching and then offers an introductory list of sources for the study of family history on the college level.

A Sampler of Activity Suggestions

Most primary source documents students encounter in college study are presented as a basis for group discussion. Although we by no means discount the value of class discussion, we view it as the beginning of the process of fully integrating documents into classroom teaching. Our experience suggests that the most effective way to do this is to create opportunities for students to analyze documentary materials and to develop historical hypotheses based on the analysis. This requires strategies both for using individual documents and for organizing groups or sequences of materials.

An individual document allows students to develop a personal perspective on the past. The key is to get them to slow down and take a careful, detailed, even line-by-line look at it. A diary like the one kept by Zadoc Long, a young storekeeper in Buckfield, Maine records the births and early experiences of his children (Long, 1943:75-76):

> August 16, 1825. My wife has been sick and I have had a day of great anxiety and suspense; but never did a day give birth to joy more complete. She presented me, about sunset, the finest little girl that ever was seen.
>
> August 25, 1825. My wife is comfortable. The little girl is in fine health—will not be nursed from the breast but drinks milk out of a cup as handily as anyone can . . .
>
> March 16, 1827. Little Julia Davis is 19 months old today. She speaks many words so as to be understood, and appears of mild and obedient disposition.

Students working with Zadoc Long's journal can trace the birth of his four children, their naming, weaning, illnesses, first days of school; in doing so they acquire a concrete understanding of larger questions about child-rearing, family size, infant mortality, and other issues of concern to family historians. Students can edit the diary to illustrate one aspect of family life or compare data on several different family events.

Other diaries demand different approaches. In 1819, 22 year-old Harriet P. Bradley lived with her parents and two unmarried brothers for most of the year and boarded with other families during the term she taught school. In her diary, brief descriptions of work and social activities—"July 16th-kept school, worked muslin, called at Mr. H[olcomb]"—are interspersed with occasional reflective comments (OSV, 1978c:3):

> Friday [October 21st, birthday]—This day begun a new year with raised expectations and with a renewed determination to spend the remainder of my days in a holy life. Most merciful God grant that I may spend the remainder of my days in a manner pleasing to Thee. Spun, visited at Aners [married brother] with Brothers and Sisters, Parents. It is but a little while that we can enjoy all these blessings. O may we but rightly improve them.

Students could list Bradley's activities over a period of time and then group

those she did alone, with members of her immediate family, with other kin, and with unrelated people; they could also analyze her time in other ways, by the age and sex of her companions, for example, or seasonal patterns. In addition, they might compare her social activities while at home with the period when she boarded out. Such list-making is not an end in itself; rather, it is a way for students to identify patterns and to develop generalizations about the diarist's life.

Although diaries lend themselves easily to this kind of analysis, and are among the most accessible primary sources, they are by no means the only documents teachers can use as the basis for student inquiry. Autobiographies often offer more detailed narrative and more subjective impressions than diaries. Students could, for example, read Mary Livermore's *The Story of My Life* and "The Life and Biography of Silas Felton as Written by Himself" to compare how two young New Englanders made the transition from school to work. Mary Livermore (1899:162) remembered her feelings when she finished school at fourteen:

> It was very slow and irksome to my impatient spirit to await my father's slow decision concerning the next step of my training, and very soon I had formulated plans of my own, and promptly proceeded to execute them. I sought the establishment of a well-known dressmaker in the neighborhood, and bargained with her to teach me her trade . . . My father frowned on this scheme, but my mother favored it. If I learned nothing else, I should now be compelled to learn to sew. The months that followed were very severe, and very wearisome.

Silas Felton, the son of a Massachusetts farmer, recounted his experiences (1959: 126-127):

> When I arrived to an age sufficient for Labour I followed working with my father upon the farm, except such times as we had a School kept near us, which I generally attended. . . . From fourteen to nineteen I followed the schools only part of the time they kept, but practised carrying my book home on the evenings, to study, because I was generally ambitious to excell in learning. When at School I was pleased with the business, but when at work at home the hours seem'd to glide slowly along.

Students might look for differences and similarities in Mary and Silas's experiences as they approached adulthood and might compare and contrast them with their own.

Autobiographies, of course, reflect the selective memory and the self-perception of the writer. Correspondence, although less widely available than either diaries or autobiographies, conveys a sense of immediacy and of interaction. Where only one side of a correspondence exists, students can imagine and support hypothetical responses. How might Horace Stone have answered his cousin Mary Hale's teasing letter (OSV, 1978b:1)?

> I think you ask too much to have a Wife sent you, for I think the *Vermont Girls are worth coming after.* As it is Leap Year, I think that there can be no harm if *you* make proposals instead of a fair sex [sic]. Is it possible that you fear being called a *batchelor* [sic]? Or are you afraid some *fair one* will offer her hand and heart and thereby rob you of that name? I really believe your old complaint troubles you, vix. [sic] *the Blues.* Forgive me if I have trespassed too much on your tender feelings for I have no evil motive in view.

Here students would need to imagine the nature of Horace and Mary's relationship. Where both sides of a correspondence exists, students can use the material to reconstruct the individual concerns and circumstances of the writers and the nature of their relationship.

Literary sources are not the only ones that provide a basis for student analysis and speculation. Household inventories, for example, allow students to make connections between material culture and documentary evidence. They can categorize an inventory's contents by function

—work, decoration, food preparation—or by means of production—household, craftsman, machine. They can divide necessities from luxuries, or objects with monetary value from those with personal significance. Matching up family members with specific objects illuminates family roles and activities; assigning objects to rooms suggests the spatial configuration of family life. Where a museum collection is available, students can identify and study examples of artifacts that appear on the inventory. To synthesize their findings, they might write a description of the family based solely on the objects it owned.

Most primary source documents, whether inventory or autobiography, shed light on more than one issue. If one wishes students to explore the economic role of an up-country storekeeper, one selects passages from Zadoc Long's journal different from those he would choose if he were focusing on childrearing. For best results, a teacher should edit and re-type the documents before assigning them; this requires definition of the focus of the students' inquiry in order to decide on the most appropriate documents and how to group them. There are several ways to organize a package of materials. A case study approach is one possibility. For Zadoc Long this would mean selecting additional documents to illuminate his family, work, and community life. Maps of Maine, Long genealogies, census and tax records would enable students to establish his demographic, economic, and geographic circumstances. Or Zadoc Long could be taken as representative of a type of early nineteenth-century New Englander and his diary used in conjunction with sources that illuminate the situation of someone like him. This might mean putting together advice literature, schoolbooks, magazines, and novels that might have been found in a household like the Longs'; or it might involve concentrating on their physical surroundings by assembling inventories, account books, floor plans, paintings, and household artifacts of a family in a similar situation.

Perhaps the most widely known and innovative case-study approach to primary source documents is the workshop course developed at the University of Wisconsin and used by Paul Boyer, Stephen Nissenbaum, and other members of the History Department at the University of Massachusetts. For an entire semester, students examine a single dramatic event, such as the Salem witchcraft trials or the Henry Ward Beecher adultery scandal, using a wide range of sources in their investigation. As Nissenbaum (Botein, 1977:61) has noted, "This means that students can learn [about] the *individual people;* in a relatively short period of time they can become deeply familiar, even expert with actual people and their lives." For an incident to justify a semester's study, it must be interesting in its own right and also shed light on the broader culture and society in which it took place. Thus, in the course built around Lizzie Borden's 1892 axe-murder and trial in Fall River, Massachusetts, students use "her experiences as a prism through which to view some of the problems faced by American women in the late nineteenth century" (Botein, 1977:62).

An alternative approach is to select a particular historical problem (as opposed to an event) and have students formulate and test hypotheses as scholarly researchers do. This might mean gathering documents on a particular issue, such as sex roles, intergenerational conflict, or class differences; or it might mean selecting sources that allow students to focus on a family decision such as marriage, emigration, or work choice. Materials that lend themselves to this kind of teaching necessarily reflect criteria different from those

used to judge value for scholarly research. The more accessible the document—the easier it is to identify its point of view—the more likely it is to provoke and sustain student inquiry.

The Museum Education Department at Old Sturbridge Village has designed a series of resource packets that use a thematic organization. The resource materials serve as the basis for many of the learning activities in which college students participate while at the Museum. Several of the packets, developed in cooperation with the *History of the Family Program* at Clark University, deal with the life cycle and include sources on "Childhood," "Youth," "Courtship and Marriage," and "Death and Aging." The reminiscences, letters, and diaries (including Silas Felton's and Harriet Bradley's) in the material devoted to youth provide a basis for comparing the coming of age of young people in varied circumstances: How do the experiences revealed in the packet differ? What might explain the differences? What do the youths have in common? After working on questions such as these, students can begin to develop generalizations about youth in early nineteenth-century New England.

The documents on a topic can be of a similar type, as in the collection of first-person accounts about youth. Alternatively, one can combine different kinds of documents. "Courtship and Marriage," for example, includes both personal and literary materials so that students can measure the advice given in prescriptive literature against people's experiences, behavior, and private attitudes. Such a combination of materials has the advantage of helping students to grasp the difference between documents that record an author's self-conscious judgments and pronouncements of what *should* be and those that reveal, in the words of an individual, what *was*. Understanding the important distinction between the author as expert and the author as actor in everyday life gives students an important tool for further historical inquiry.

A third way to use primary sources in college teaching is to structure a research experience. Students carry out the first stages of a scholarly research project: the identification and collection of appropriate material. They might be given a topic and an assortment of relevant material to examine, with instructions to select two or three documents they feel have particular importance. Rather than synthesizing the material and writing a traditional research paper, students might explain the significance of the documents they selected and justify their choices.

Students' research into their own family's history combines this research model with the case study approach. When students record reminiscences from their own families, they are generating documents inherently interesting to them. Sometimes their efforts also uncover materials such as report cards, autographs, and scrapbooks, photographs, financial accounts, and correspondence that provide a data bank for the development and testing of historical hypotheses.

Once having decided on an approach, the teacher has to establish a sequence of investigation that gets students involved in the material. The challenge for the teacher is to stimulate and to direct the investigation. Assigning one document to the whole class is usually a good start. Have students analyze it carefully from several points of view: What does it say about the writer's relationship with his or her family, peer group, and community? What evidence does it provide of schooling, work, and leisure time? What family relationships does the document illuminate? What signs of historical change can be found? After the class has worked together on one document and shared its

findings, a teacher might continue by dividing students into two- or three-person teams, each of which takes responsibility for the analysis of either a small set of documents or one longer document. These team efforts might result in written or oral discussions on an issue common to all of them—parent-child relationships perhaps—or in more dramatic presentations, such as debates, role playing, or improvisational scenes. Another way to develop students' understanding of diaries and other personal documents is to have them produce their own. They might write a diary account in the style of one they read or describe a day in the life of a person who gave only a sketchy account in his or her diary. To emphasize the differences between sources, an imaginary diary could be written for a person who left an autobiography, or vice versa. Whatever the strategy, analysis of the nature and limitations of the documents used must be an important part of student primary source investigation.

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Documentary Histories. Now that ordinary, sometimes even anonymous, Americans warrant scholarly attention, publishers have issued collections to document their experiences. The first of these to be of special value to the family historian was Robert Bremner *et al., Children & Youth in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 3 Vols., 1970-1977). More recently, as women's history has emerged as a distinct field for research and teaching, related documentary collections have also appeared in print. Nancy Cott's *Root of Bitterness. Documents of the Social History of American Women* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1972) is organized chronologically; and Gerda Lerner's *The Female Experience: An American Documentary* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1977) uses a thematic approach. Lerner's *Black Women in White America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972) is another resource for inquiry into women and black families in general; the various collections of WPA slave narratives provide rich material on black families. Immigrant families are represented by documents in many of these collections, but others deal specifically with newcomers to America: Thomas Wheeler, *The Immigrant Experience: The Anguish of Becoming American* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1972); Oscar Handlin, *Children of the Uprooted* (New York: George Braziller, Inc. 1966); and David and Susan Allmendinger, *The American People in the Industrial City* (West Haven: Pendulum Press, Inc., 1973).

The Old Sturbridge Village Resource Packets[1] make available selections from a

[1]Available from the New England Bookstore, for more information contact Museum Education, Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts 01566.

range of published and manuscript sources on life in early nineteenth-century rural New England. The packets are organized thematically and include documents that have been edited for classroom use, suggestions for using them with students, and background information. They can be made part of the course reading list and ordered by the college bookstore or by the library for reserve reading.

Published Primary Sources. Several nineteenth-century accounts have been reprinted: Lucy Larcom's *A New England Girlhood,* Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The American Woman's Home,* Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Herland* are among the most helpful to the family historian. Many more can be found only in larger or more specialized libraries, but most colleges or universities are likely to own at least a few autobiographies and diaries that shed light on the writer's family experiences. The bibliography below includes several we have found most useful with college students. Selections from these sources can be handled as reserve reading assignments or made the basis for students' individual reading, research projects, or both.

In addition to personal sources, there are public records which are also revealing of family history. Newspapers are especially rich in evidence on the educational, legal, and recreational aspects of family life in the past as seen from a local point of view. Magazines reflect more general patterns of family life; students often find them interesting to explore for data on perceptions and expectations of mainstream family values. Magazines offer several different kinds of sources at once: visual materials (illustrations and advertisements), commentary (editorial and advice columns), and fiction. Popular periodicals are particularly rich in the last two. Advice on many questions of concern to families—from the proper way to discipline children to the economics of wallpaper—fills magazine columns from the early nineteenth century to the present. Stories that suggest common experiences or perceptions of family life appear with the same continuity.

Many college, university, and public libraries may have limited magazine holdings before 1900; in these cases, samples of prescriptive and fictional literature from the earlier (as well as later) periods can usually be located in the general collection in the form of advice books and novels. Students may already be familiar with many novels relevant to family history; after all, *The Scarlet Letter, Tom Sawyer, Main Street,* and countless other staples of high school and undergraduate English courses can profitably be read for what they reveal of the author's view of family life in a past time and place. There are other less well known works that can be analyzed in a similar manner—many of Harriet Beecher Stowe's later novels, for example.

Local or town histories might seem at first glance to have little potential for the family history teacher, but in fact they often include long selections from reminiscences, genealogies, correspondence, or diaries of local people, as well as descriptions of the religious, social, and economic life of the families who settled the area. The *Proceedings* of national (such as the American Antiquarian Society), regional (the Western Reserve Historical Society), and local historical societies should not be overlooked as sources for personal accounts, especially diaries and reminiscences. Individual and family records preserved by antiquarians and archivists rather than commercial publishers are often the work of people who are less famous, and therefore are often more useful to a class in family history.

Of the bibliographic tools that help in finding relevant published primary sources, the most valuable for teachers of family history are: William Matthews, *American Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of American Diaries Written Prior to the Year 1861* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945); Louis Kaplan, *A Bibliography of American Autobiographies* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962); Richard Lillard, *American Life in Autobiography: A Descriptive Guide* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956); and Frank Freidel *et al.*, *Harvard Guide to American History* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2 Vols., revised edition, 1974).

Unpublished Sources. There are few historical societies, no matter how small, that do not maintain at least a modest collection of manuscripts and other papers. Students who are investigating families in a particular community should always check the local historical society for reminiscences, account books, diaries, and correspondence. Another resource for teaching family history is the quantitative material utilized by historians: local societies and libraries are often the best places to look for these sources. City directories, with their year-to-year entries by residence and occupation, exist for many communities as early as the mid-nineteenth century and allow students to trace an individual family or the use of a particular structure over time. Students can study the changes in the number and ethnicity of the occupants of a house that is still standing, for example. Teachers whose syllabi include secondary works based on directories might photocopy pages from a directory, perhaps those describing a particular street at five ten-year intervals, to show students the data on which such work is based. Other sources for quantitative investigations of family history, vital records and census reports, in particular, can also be found in public libraries and historical societies. These too can be used to give students first-hand experience with the evidence on which much family history depends.

When students will be using a local historical society, it is a good idea for the teacher to make contact ahead of time. These organizations are frequently understaffed; their hours may be limited, so it is sometimes necessary to work out special arrangements. Some of the larger societies interview student researchers, and a few have policies that restrict undergraduate use. For these procedural reasons, and because society staff can usually be helpful in proportion to how much they know about a project, it is advisable for a teacher to pave the way for any students who will be using a local society's resources.

There is one other category of unpublished primary sources with potential for the teaching of family history: government records located in the public archives of a town, county, or state. Some towns maintain only informal archives—horror stories about eighteenth-century tax lists buried beneath cases of disinfectant are all too true—but even these prove to be rich resources for teachers and students in search of family history. Town halls, county court houses, and state archives are all sources for the probate inventories, tax rolls, and court depositions from which much family history can be learned. However, of all of the sources discussed here, these are likely to be the most inaccessible, both physically and methodologically, to undergraduate researchers. Still, teachers may in their own research encounter documents that can be adapted for classroom use.

Teachers of family history need not then limit themselves to Alexis de Tocqueville and Benjamin Franklin. Educational

and commercial publishers, historical societies and libraries, government archives, and students themselves all offer abundant primary sources for the study of American family history.

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