



Title: “A Fair Field and No Favor”: Maine Farmers Dig in for the Long Run

Grade Level: 5-8

Time Allotment: 3 -45 minute periods

Overview: Farming in Maine has survived adversity over the centuries as a result of sheer will, hard work and the unwavering determination of its farmers. Historical changes have greatly impacted the farming community and adapting to these changes has been a critical factor in the survival of Maine’s farms. Through the video, *HOME: The Story of Maine: A Love for the Land*, and Internet resources, students will better understand the cause and effect of both natural and technological challenges facing Maine farmers.

Students work collaboratively as they critically examine primary sources such as letters, video footage and photographs. From these sources, they will gather data to use in a multimedia presentation in the form of an online slideshow or an iMovie. They will also plot dates of major historical events on a timeline as they make the connection between these events and the lives of the adaptable Maine farmers.

Subject Matter: Social Studies

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe the natural and historical challenges facing Maine farmers
- Analyze the cause and effect relationship between historical challenges and adaptive farming practices
- Examine and draw conclusions about daily life on a Maine farm using primary resources including video, letters, photographs and documents
- Plot major events on a timeline to better understand the chronology of farming in Maine

Standards:

From the Maine State Learning Results for Social Studies, grades 5-8, available online at <http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/ss.htm>

History

Students will be able to:

- Analyze the human experience through time, to recognize the relationships of events and people, and to identify patterns, themes, and turning points of change using the chronology of history and major eras.
- In interpreting current and historical events, students will evaluate the credibility and perspectives of multiple sources of information gathered from technology, documents, artifacts, maps, the arts, and literature.
- Formulate historical questions based on examination of primary and secondary sources including documents, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, artifacts, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams, and written texts.

CHRONOLOGY

Students will use the chronology of history and major eras to demonstrate the relationships of events and people

- Describe the effects of historical changes on daily life.
- Identify the sequence of major events and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and selected world civilizations.

English Language Arts

RESEARCH-RELATED WRITING AND SPEAKING

- Students will work, write, and speak effectively when doing research in all content areas.
- Collect and synthesize data for research topics from interviews and fieldwork, using note taking and other appropriate strategies.
- Use search engines and other Internet resources to collect information for research topics.

Media Components:

Video

HOME: The Story of Maine: *A Love for the Land*

Web Sites

<http://www.mainememory.net>

This online museum houses numerous primary source documents including photographs, letters, diaries, maps and charts. Students can create a login free of charge and create albums with graphics and text. These online albums can be e-mailed directly from the site.

<http://www.mainepbs.org/hometsom/p4letter.html>

This Maine Public Broadcasting site features a letter written by a Maine farmer to a woman he met at a Grange event. He describes farm life in western Maine.

<http://www.mainepbs.org/hometsom/p4org.html>

This Maine Public Broadcasting site includes primary documents- excerpts from agricultural periodicals of the late 1800's.

Materials:

For each student:

[Handout #1](#) Primary source Haying photograph

[Handout #2](#) Questions for online photographs, letter, and periodicals

[Handout #3](#) Questions for first part of videotape "Power to the Farmer"

[Handout #4](#) Graphic organizer for recording cause and effect data from video

[Handout #5](#) Farming timeline

[Example Rubric](#) Multimedia presentation assessment.

Prep for Teachers:

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on computers available in the classroom. If you have one on one computing, post the links online or have a print out available for students to bookmark the sites.

Prior knowledge: Student should be familiar with what constitutes a **primary source** document. Students should also be familiar with the concept of **cause and effect**.

Cue the videotape to the appropriate starting point.

When using media, provide students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, a specific task to complete and/or information to identify before, during, or after viewing of video segments, Web sites, or other multimedia elements.

Introductory Activity: Setting the Stage

Assessing prior knowledge is essential to a meaningful history lesson. This can be done by charting information that your students think they already know about a topic, and by having them make predictions based on primary source material. In this lesson, students begin by carefully examining one photograph provided on handout #1 and answering questions. Three other photographs will be chosen from the online digital library (Maine Memory.net) and students will record their observations after magnifying the photograph using the “zoom tool”. Some information is provided with the photograph and they will add their predictions to this.

Step 1) Ask students what they already know about farming in Maine. Have a large piece of chart paper to record responses. The answers will vary widely. If answers are incorrect, include them anyway and explain that this is a brainstorming activity with no right or wrong answers, and after careful research we may find that some answers may be more accurate than others. This is basically to gather prior information, and for students to refer back to when self assessing at the end of the project. If you do not have one to one computing, organize students in teams to complete the computer task together.

Step 2) Pass out Handout #1 and explain that this is a primary source photograph. They are to study the photo and answer questions as they record observations.

Step3) Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, by explaining that they will be going to an online museum at <http://www.mainememory.net> to select 2 other photographs for examination. After they “Enter” this site, they can create a login with a username and password. After logging in, have them type “farming in Maine” in the search box and over 100 documents will be available. After scrolling down through the photos, they can go to the next page to view more. Have them select a photograph that depicts a farming activity and click on it. After using the zoom tool to closely examine it, they read the short piece of information provided. Have them fill out the questions and record observations/ predictions. When they have finished, have them choose another photo for the same purpose. These photographs will provide clues in helping them understand how farming in Maine has developed over time. When finished, they log out but tell them to remember their password because they will be returning to the site later to create the presentation.

Step3) Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION by explaining to them that they will now go to <http://www.mainepbs.org/hometsom/p4letter.html> to view another primary source, a letter written by a farmer describing life on a Maine farm in 1937. On Handout #2 at the bottom, they will describe, in their own words, what work was like for a farmer in 1937. Step 4) Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION by explaining that the students will go to <http://www.mainepbs.org/hometsom/p4org.html> to read an excerpt from farm periodicals written in the 1800’s. Explain that this too is a primary source examined by historians to understand the past. Have them read, “Farmers Confront the Problem of Western Competition” 1876 and point out the problem created by this competition from the

mid west. Have them look for suggestions/ solutions provided by the various farmers who authored these articles. Have students record their answers and the dates provided.

Learning Activities:

Explain that the students will now be viewing a video entitled *The Story of Maine: A Love for the Land* that features the history of farming in Maine. Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** telling them they will be observing with the eyes and ears of a historian and recording the major changes in the type of power used to work the early farms in Maine. **Cue** tape where the interviewee is saying “Can you imagine acres and acres of hay being harvested by a man with a scythe? **Play. Pause** at the end of the sentence...”you could take care of more acreage as time went on and do more.” **Check** for understanding by going over the diagram with the three sources of power. (Oxen, horse, motorized vehicle) Ask them to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the three sources (oxen slow but better than by hand, horse faster, more production, gasoline engine able to increase the amount of milk delivered in much shorter time- disadvantage to wagon was that it held less) Ask them what farmers rely on today to power machinery and have them list various machines used on a farm today. (*Gasoline powered engines -tractors, bailers, cultivators...*)

Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** by asking them to listen carefully as the experts describe the life of an early farmer. Tell them to jot down any dates that they hear mentioned and note what they signify. These dates will be used later on a timeline. Fast forward to the part where the narrator says “European settlers began coming to the region almost 4 centuries ago...” **Play. Pause** when narrator says, “You worked until you dropped at night...music plays and there are farmers working in the fields. **Check** for understanding by asking students to describe the daily life of a farm family. (*Worked from sun up to sun down, no free time, chores all day, harvesting garden, oats, worrying about wood for winter...”it showed in their bodies and faces.*) Ask them how this compares to today’s farmers. (*Because of modern machines farmers have more free time but the work is still hard and there are long hours. If you have students who live on a farm, make sure to have them elaborate on their experiences.*)

Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** by asking them to listen carefully for a natural problem that impacted farmers. Pass out the graphic organizer and explain that they will write down the problem in the first bubble as a cause, and the effect will go in the second bubble. What farmers did to adapt to the problem will be written in the third bubble. **Play** from where you left off... narrator will say, “the hard work was paying off, by the 1820’s...**Pause** when she says, to attend high school required tremendous sacrifice.” **Check** for understanding by asking them what the problem farmers encountered. (*Roads were seasonal and impassable during the spring due to the rainy season*). Ask them what they entered in the second bubble for the effect. (*Transportation for goods to the markets in New York and Boston was difficult. The lack of transportation cause them to be isolated and basically “stuck”. It caused them to be uninformed of the latest farming*

practices) Ask them what they entered in the third bubble for implications or how did they adapt. (They did the best they could do but were remote and thus limited.)

Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** by asking them to listen for the invention that impacted Maine farmers. They will record their responses in the second set of cause and effect bubbles. Fast forward and **Play** at the point where the narrator says, “As the 1800’s progressed, incentive for change came only with economic crisis...” **Pause** when Clyde Berry is saying, “They were what we called activist groups today.” **Check** for understanding by asking what they filled in as the next big problem facing farmers. (*The railroad was connecting towns and regions across the country. The effect was that they now had big competition from mid west farms that had more favorable conditions and could grow more food and more cheaply.* Ask them what the farmers did to adapt. (*They banded together and formed agricultural societies, established agricultural fairs for exhibiting and sharing ideas, started an agricultural newspaper, formed the Maine Board of Agriculture and started the Grange, an organization that helped them lobby for better prices.*)

Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** by asking them to listen carefully for the third factor impacting Maine farmers. Fast forward to where the narrator is saying, “The railroad reached into every corner of Maine.” **Pause** when the narrator is saying “They were leaving on the very trains that brought stiff competition from the Midwest.” **Check** for understanding by asking them to share their last “factor” and its cause and effect. (The first electricity and the labor saving devices that resulted. This allowed more leisure time and lessened the work load tremendously.)

Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** by asking them to listen carefully to learn how Maine farmers managed to survive the competition. Fast forward to the part where Professor Judd says, “The people who stayed on did fairly well...” **Pause** when the farmer’s wife is saying “Some days you do just swimmingly.” **Check** for understanding by asking them how the farmers survived against all odds. (*They diversified and concentrated on crops such as hay, blueberries, sweet corn, eggs and Macintosh apples. Talk about how this is similar to the crops in Maine today. Show them on a large map of Maine and ask where in Maine these crops are grown today.*)

Culminating Activity:

This culminating activity will provide an opportunity for the students to synthesize the information they have gathered and use it to create an online slideshow or they may choose to create an iMovie. They will continue research on Maine farming and incorporate this information into the presentation. On the timeline they will plot major historical events of which they learned from the photographs, letters, periodicals, and video. If possible, an interview with a local farmer or grange member could be arranged and the information would enhance the presentation significantly.

Provide your students with a **FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION** by having them log back into their account at the Maine Historical memory museum <http://www.mainememory.net/> The slideshow feature is located to the right of the photographs and is very easy to set up. Text can be added to the slides and the entire slideshow can be e-mailed from the site. If they should choose to create a documentary in iMovie, they can access this [tutorial](#) Present your student with the following scenario:

“ Congratulations student historians, you have been selected to continue your research on farming in Maine. In your teams, you will be discussing the information you have gathered from the primary sources and the video, *A Love For the Land*. You will be preparing a slideshow online at the Maine Historical Society museum where you had a chance to look at photographs. This museum also houses journals and periodicals. Your teams will choose a specific topic on Maine farming to feature in your slideshow. Locating and interviewing a local farmer or Grange member could provide rich stories for your presentation. You may choose to explore iMovie as your presentation tool. Fill out the Maine farming timeline as you discover more dates that are important in the history of your topic. Good luck as you go forth seeking history.”

The Maine State Kids Page is a great place to begin your research

<http://www.state.me.us/sos/kids/allabout/products/products.htm>

Apple Harvest in Maine <http://www.getrealmaine.com/farms/aboutapple.html>

Blueberry Harvest in Maine <http://www.wildblueberries.com/>

Potato Harvest in northern Maine <http://www.maine potatoes.com/>

A Diary Farm in Maine Today <http://www.real-food.com/>

Maple Syrup Harvest in Maine <http://www.getrealmaine.com/fairs/maplesyrup.html>

The Grange <http://www.nationalgrange.org/about/states/maine.htm>

Maine Organic farms <http://www.mofga.org/>

Have the students work collaboratively on a topic of common interest and have them divide up the work so that they all are actively involved. Make sure that they incorporate information from the graphic organizer and the analysis of the letter and periodical excerpts. Create the assessment rubric with the students so that they have ownership and are clear on the expectations.

Cross-Curricular Extensions:

English

- Ask students to write open-ended interview questions for a local farm family or a Grange member from whom they can gather stories. Create a class newspaper in the style of the Farmers Almanac and have them write articles on their research topics. The interviews can also be featured. They could also assume the role of student reporters as they cover current issues facing Maine farmers.

Economics

- Ask students to brainstorm farm products in Maine and find out the market value of these crops. Discuss the concept of supply and demand in the free market system.
- **Community Connections:**
- Have students find out if the Grange is still an active organization in their town or region. Invite a member in to speak to the class. Grange members would also be a good audience for the student presentations.
- Find out if there is an agricultural fair in the area and write to the organizers for specific information regarding the history of the fair and types of exhibits featured throughout time.

Student Materials:

For each student:

Handout #1 Primary source [Haying photograph](#)

Handout #2 [Questions](#) for online photographs, letter, and periodicals

Handout #3 Questions for first part of videotape [“Power to the Farmer”](#)

Handout #4 [Graphic organizer](#) for recording cause and effect data from video

Handout #5 [Farming timeline](#)

