
CREATIVE HISTORY – KEYS TO LOCAL HISTORY

The focus of **Keys to Local History** is to help you learn about the history that is around you. This section discusses ways to think about what kind of questions to ask about your topic and where you can find resources to develop your research.

Because everyone approaches research differently and each project has many variables, this section is meant as a guideline to stimulate your thinking and improve your skills. Where appropriate, links will be made to other websites that provide more detailed step-by-step processes on particular topics.

THE FIRST STEPS

- Learn what kind of questions to ask and how to start researching.

ABOUT THE SOURCES

- Find out about primary sources, secondary sources and material culture
- Learn about the different primary sources, what you can discover in them, and where to find them
- Learn how to "read" primary sources and use them effectively

RESEARCH GUIDE

- Guidelines for how to research certain topics
- Ideas for organizing and managing your research
- Learn how to use primary sources effectively
- What you can do when you hit "brick walls"
- Reasons why it is important to you need to cite your sources

SHARING

- Ideas for creative ways of sharing your research with others.

SHARING YOUR RESEARCH

Part of the satisfaction of researching an historical topic is sharing it when it is finally done. It takes a lot of work to develop, analyze, write, and present your final analysis and product, so why not have fun with it? Below are ideas for sharing your research and knowledge with others, and suggestions on other ways you can make a historical contribution to your town. These activities could be developed for your personal curiosity, a classroom project, a family reunion, or for the community. Think of other creative ways you can share the interesting local histories. Email Creative History with your ideas so they can be added to the list!

- Liven up a school research paper with copies of photos, illustrations, maps, and documents
- Write an article about how accurately or inaccurately history is presented in mainstream movies
- Develop a short play on an historical event and perform it in class or for the community
- Ceate a history website that involves the entire class
- Check out: “Students as Historians” at History Matters:
[<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/browse/studhist/>]
 - Primary Research: Bringing History Closer to Home:
[<http://www.primaryresearch.org/>]
 - Develop a short documentary film to include on the website
- Write an article in your school or local newspaper
- Develop a visual classroom presentation with slides or models
- Create a group or individual tombstone transcription project
- Volunteer with a group to repair broken headstones in an old cemetery
- Write an article in your community or organization paper/newsletter
- Write and illustrate a family history to share at your family reunion
 - Film the reunion for “thank you” gifts
- Interview a family member or someone in retirement home about a time in their life
- Volunteer as a guide at a house museum
- Volunteer to transcribe or compile documents at your local history or genealogical society
- Develop a historical presentation or tour in conjunction with a community festival.
- Give a lecture with slideshow at your local history or genealogical society
- Write and present a walking tour to friends and family
- Volunteer at a living history museum as a re-enactor or interpreter