

teachers

Book Study Groups

What is the role of fiction in helping students to understand history?

Who: Teachers of grades 4-8 in schools along the Connecticut River Watershed.

What: Local book study groups, led by Nick Boke of the Vermont Reads Initiative, looking at the theme of Migration and Settlement in early American history. Books include: *The Unredeemed Captive*, *Captive*, and *Riding Freedom*.

When: First meeting on September 25th from 4:30-6:00. Three additional meetings to be scheduled from October-December.

Where: First meeting to be held for everyone in White River Junction. After that, small groups will meet locally.

Enrollment is limited to 30 people across our geographic area on a first-come, first-served basis. We hope to run one group in the northern section, one central, and one south. Exact location will depend upon who enrolls. Flow of History will offer a \$250 stipend to teachers who attend all sessions and write a short reflective statement. Books are provided. For more information, e-mail tavalin@sover.net or call 802-463-4280.



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news

THE FLOW OF HISTORY BEGINS

a history education network along the Connecticut River watershed

The US Department of Education has awarded a three-year, \$997,000 grant to a group of cooperating partners along the upper CT River to enhance the study of American history by making links between national and local history. Under the federal program, called Teaching American History, schools across the nation are learning more about the country's origins. This grant gives our region the opportunity to join the effort and add some regional flavor!

Why the upper Connecticut River watershed?

Cooperation between towns up and down the river from southern Connecticut to northern New Hampshire has been happening for over 50 years, beginning with the Greenfield, MA based Connecticut River Watershed Council. (<http://www.ctriver.org/>) This cross-agency, cross-state collaboration was taken to a new level in 1989 with the Joint Commissions of Vermont and New Hampshire and their mission to "preserve and protect the resources of the Connecticut River Valley, and to guide its growth and development." (<http://www.crjc.org/>)

The primary focus of these and other companion groups has been on environmental preservation and tourism. In 1998 the White House recognized the Connecticut River as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers. The designation boosted tourism and spawned a bi-state route for a new Connecticut River Byway (www.ctrivertravel.net/)

Seeing the flurry of community interest regarding the river and its larger watershed, the developers of The Flow of History proposal decided to add a history education layer to the existing initiatives that would benefit teachers, students, and the community at-large. The federal grant is our first step.

Where are you located?

The Flow of History has a public presence and a telephone at the newly opened Waypoint Interpretive Center in Bellows Falls, VT. Sharing services with one of the Waypoint Centers and the Greater Falls Chamber of Commerce will help us stay apprised of each other's efforts. The project director lives and works from her home in Putney. The assistant director teaches part-time in Peacham and lives in Newbury. Similarly, most Advisory Council members live up and down the river.

Who are the grant partners?

The grant is a collaboration among Peacham School of the Caledonia Central Supervisory, the

Vermont Alliance for Social Studies, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, the Northeast Kingdom School Development Center, the Vermont Rural Partnership, and the WEB Project.

With all this talk about Vermont towns, is New Hampshire included?

New Hampshire teachers are welcome to join our offerings. We are looking for ways to strengthen ties with NH schools and would appreciate suggestions from NH teachers about their professional development needs in American history.

What do you offer?

- summer institutes that follow important themes in American history, tied to the Connecticut River Valley
- an opportunity for local historical societies to work with educators to build local resources connected to major themes in American history
- an opportunity for educators to receive support for local follow-up after attending summer institutes and history workshops
- book groups, with a selection of fiction and nonfiction, highlight stories about American history
- public events that raise awareness of the river's heritage

How can I find out more?

Phone: 802.463.4280 E-mail: tavalin@sover.net
Web: <http://www.flowofhistory.org>

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Playing with History: The New Hampshire Grants

An Interview with Cindy Daly by Susan Bonthron

When the Historical Society of Dummerston asked for school participation in Dummerston's 250th birthday celebration, social studies and language arts teacher Cindy Daly and 10 student volunteers from the sixth grade stepped up to the plate.

One of the ideas the Historical Society had was to have the students do a reenactment of the signing of the town charter, and that's what Cindy volunteered for. First she contacted Tom Johnson, who is a friend as well as president of the local Historical Society, and asked him what resources he had. "He handed me a piece that he had written for the town report about the signing of the Charter, and a map of what the lots looked like when they were laid out. That's what we started with."

Cindy sat with Tom and had him tell her the story of the town charter. "I made a flow map of the sequence of events, and tried to get more information. I knew the Green Mountain Boys had been up to something, and that there had been a land grant dispute that involved them, and that the Revolutionary War came at a time when they would have legitimate cause to fight. But I didn't know the finer details. So I got him to tell me the story and made a thinking map out of it. I took the Vermont stuff I'd used in the past and tried to piece together a story to give it a little more background. I called a retired teacher who I knew was active in the Historical Society in Marlboro and asked

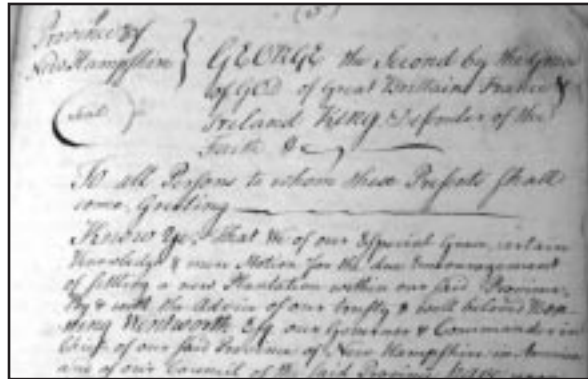
her about land grant charters. "What did it mean to have a charter? What was it exactly?" She said, "I'll call around, I'm not sure."

Cindy's friend spoke to Marlboro Historical Society people. When two people told her she should call Gregory Sanford, the State Archivist, she knew that Gregory must be a significant resource. "I'd seen him do a presentation for the Vermont Bicentennial. He's wonderful," said Cindy. "He gave me the ideas that gave the piece some pizzazz. He taught me what a land grant was." As the keeper of the state records, Gregory shares office space with the Secretary of State in Montpelier. He told Cindy, "We're moldering here Monday through Friday 9 to 5—we wish people would call us!"

"We had less than two weeks from first hearing about it to a finished performance. Retired teacher Winnie Vogt, provided wonderful classroom support. I had the students read what I wrote. They changed words in it to keep it on a

6th grade level, including replacing words that were hard to pronounce."

I asked Cindy what the learning process was like for herself and the students. She described learning about how the equivalent lands exchange came about because Massachusetts had wanted its borders to be straight lines on both its northern and southern borders. In order to obtain a certain piece of land, they traded an "equivalent" piece of land further north. These equivalent lands included



The same basic template was used to quickly issue Wentworth charters to towns in the New Hampshire Grants from 1749-1761.

Brattleboro, Dummerston, and Putney.

"The kids learned a lot of history from this. I'd get off the phone and say we've got to change page two, because it turns out..." The students saw that a place's own history couldn't just be found by reading a history textbook: They and their teacher conducted primary research, read old documents such as the Charter and reworded them in language they could understand.

"We ended up with a 20-minute performance that we presented at Old Home Day, the 250th Town Charter Celebration. We performed it in front of an audience of community members at the Congregational Church. The performance began with girls in costume quilting and talking. Boys joined the conversation wearing tri-corner hats, with green plumes for the Allen brothers. Governor Benning Wentworth sported some gold braid and carried a purse as well, which he patted smugly as the tale recounted how many lots of prime,

river frontage the Governor got to keep or sell. In the grand finale, each actor got a line as the group summarized the story of the land grant charters: "And so our land progressed from wilderness to the possession of England, then France, Holland, and back to Great Britain. From territory belonging to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, to an independent republic with towns joining us from both New Hampshire and New York, to our final and enduring status as the 14th state in the United States of America." One enthusiastic audience member said, "I never understood this so clearly before. Can I have a copy?" Cindy suddenly found herself being regarded as a historian.

Later that summer, Cindy was enrolled in a course on web page design. "Creating that story was a lot of work," Cindy recalled. "So rather than just put it in a drawer, I decided to take the script and make a sample web-based unit out of it for my course. A few of my students have helped me. I am cross-referencing it with sites that are age-appropriate for middle schoolers." Her sample unit is called "Vermont Boundaries and the Land Grant Charters" and will eventually

appear on the web. To create it, Cindy combined paperwork that came out of a social studies summer institute for fifth and sixth grade teachers, along with Vermont social studies standards, and her own work on the Land Grant Charters. The site will include a list of books that tie in to history units, and includes a brainstormed list of best practices for social studies that emerged from work at the institute.

Like the story the students helped write and produce, Cindy's web-based unit reinforces that history isn't just a collection of dry dates in a textbook. It can be discovered and explored by students in town maps and documents, by talking to local and regional experts, and through their own reading and on-line research. We look forward to the new lessons of history that our future student historians discover and produce with the help and guidance of teachers like Cindy Daly.

Communities as Classrooms: The Village Quest

By Steve Glazer

For over eight years, Upper Valley teachers and students have been creating Valley Quest treasure hunts as a way of studying their home ground and celebrating community life. At least 140 Quests spread across 45 Vermont and New Hampshire towns.

Over the past two years, Quest-making as an educational process has deepened considerably, as a result of strategic partnerships, the support of community institutions, and the grant making of regional initiatives.

Valley Quest now offers a field-tested, standards-based unit called Village Quest, funded in part by the Flow of History. The Village Quest is a series of eight lessons, adaptable to Grades 4-8. Through these lessons, a class utilizes historical and contemporary maps, field study, primary and secondary resources, and interviews with community elders to create a treasure hunt that captures and shares the hidden stories of "movement and settlement" embedded in the village landscape.

In spring of 2003, utilizing the Village Quest model, Marguerite Ames of Marion Cross School and Kim King Zea of the Norwich Historical Society led Marguerite's sixth grade class to develop the "Lewiston Quest" in the area just west of the Ledyard Bridge (linking Norwich with Hanover, NH). Students learned that Lewiston, on the banks of the Connecticut River, was one of the earliest settlements in Norwich. Later, with the coming of the railroad, Lewiston developed into a thriving depot and village. Then, with the coming of the I-91, most of Lewiston was plowed under and burned to make way for the interchange and off ramp to the new Ledyard Bridge. Utilizing a 1913 fire insurance map, students hunted for the "footprints" of the ice house, creamery, coal shed, store and cider mill. They learned more about these businesses at the Norwich Historical Society, and from interviewing a half-dozen community elders. Their Quest leads contemporary visitors to Norwich through a lost "ghost town" and a chapter of Lewiston history.

Support from the Walker Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation has placed these units in elementary schools across New Hampshire, while a grant from the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation will deliver the units to the 35 Vermont elementary schools in the Upper Valley region.

Copies of the 47-page Village Quest Unit are also available for purchase for \$10 plus \$2 postage. For more information about the Village Quest, contact Steve Glazer at 802.291.9100, email Steve@vitalcommunities.org, or visit www.vitalcommunities.org.



With major portions left intact, Ben Thresher's Mill in Barnet, Vermont provides the perfect site to explore for clues about early settlement. Peggy Pearl of the Fairbanks Museum will lead a teacher workshop on October 6th that begins at the mill and continues into the town of Peacham. For more information, e-mail Lynn Talamini (lynnntalamini@hotmail.com) or call 802.592.3513.

This workshop, and others like it, will be offered throughout the school year in various locations along the Connecticut River watershed. For more information about future workshops, e-mail Fern Tavalin (tavalin@sover.net) or call 802.463.4280.

Flow of History

**Two Day
Museum Workshop:
Movement and Settlement
Professional Development
Opportunity For Teachers
No Fee • Recertification Credit**

Day One

**October 6, 2003
9:00-3:00**

Day Two (date) to be determined by the group

Begin the day in Barnet, VT at Ben Thresher's Mill with Peggy Pearl. Tour this site and look for clues of early settlement. Learn about the mill and its early uses as a sawmill, carriage-making shop, cider mill, wooden tub factory, and blacksmith shop.

Lunch will be provided at Peacham School where you will meet with Lorna Quimby, Town Historian.

Afterwards, meet archivist and author of *Roxanna's Children*, Lynn A. Bonfield. Learn about the movement and settlement of Roxanna Brown Walbridge Watts and her descendants through the use of letters and diaries of this 19th century Vermont family farm.

End the day with a Historic Barn Tour in Peacham.

To register, contact Lynn Talamini at Peacham School, 802-592-3513 or lynnntalamini@hotmail.com



CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY SETTLEMENTS 1691-1791

AN ENGLISH VIEW

By Jere Daniell, August 2003

Anchor yourself in 1691. Imagine yourself an English man or woman living in the most northern valley community created by Europeans— Northfield, Massachusetts. And you're thinking of settling still further up the river...

Most likely, you forget the idea. Too risky. War between the French and English has just begun. Native People will likely join the Catholic French— both in your Protestant eyes, allies of the Devil— to destroy whatever buildings you erect and crops you plant. They will kill or capture you if possible. Even if they don't, you can't get clear title to whatever land you improve. The existing system of land distribution starts

with the British colonial government which grants property in the form of a town to a group known as town proprietors, who then divide the property among themselves. In 1691, no towns above Northfield have been granted. Indeed, it isn't even clear which colonial government has the authority to do the granting. Massachusetts claims ownership up to present-day Charlestown, but a few years back the

English government created a colony called New Hampshire which might also claim jurisdiction. So, wisely, you decide to stick close to home.

In the mid 1730s one of your grandchildren tells you he's thinking about making the move you didn't make. Circumstances have changed. To begin with, France and England have been at peace for twenty years. In part because of that,

sonably be sure purchases would remain valid. All towns on the east side had unchallenged New Hampshire charters. Even though the home government in 1764 decided what is now Vermont belonged to New York, that colony offered, at a price, to confirm charters made by New Hampshire. Nine of the riverine towns accepted the offer. The others won out when the American Revolution resulted in Vermont's self-creation: Vermont officials supported the original New Hampshire grants. Few individuals who purchased land in newly settled valley towns, especially after 1777, had to defend their purchase in court.

A third factor was the land itself. Much of the immediate valley had once been a huge glacial lake which, when it receded, left rich soils suitable for farming. In addition, the river made

transportation up and down the valley easy. People, in fact, kept moving north long after our closing date of 1791.

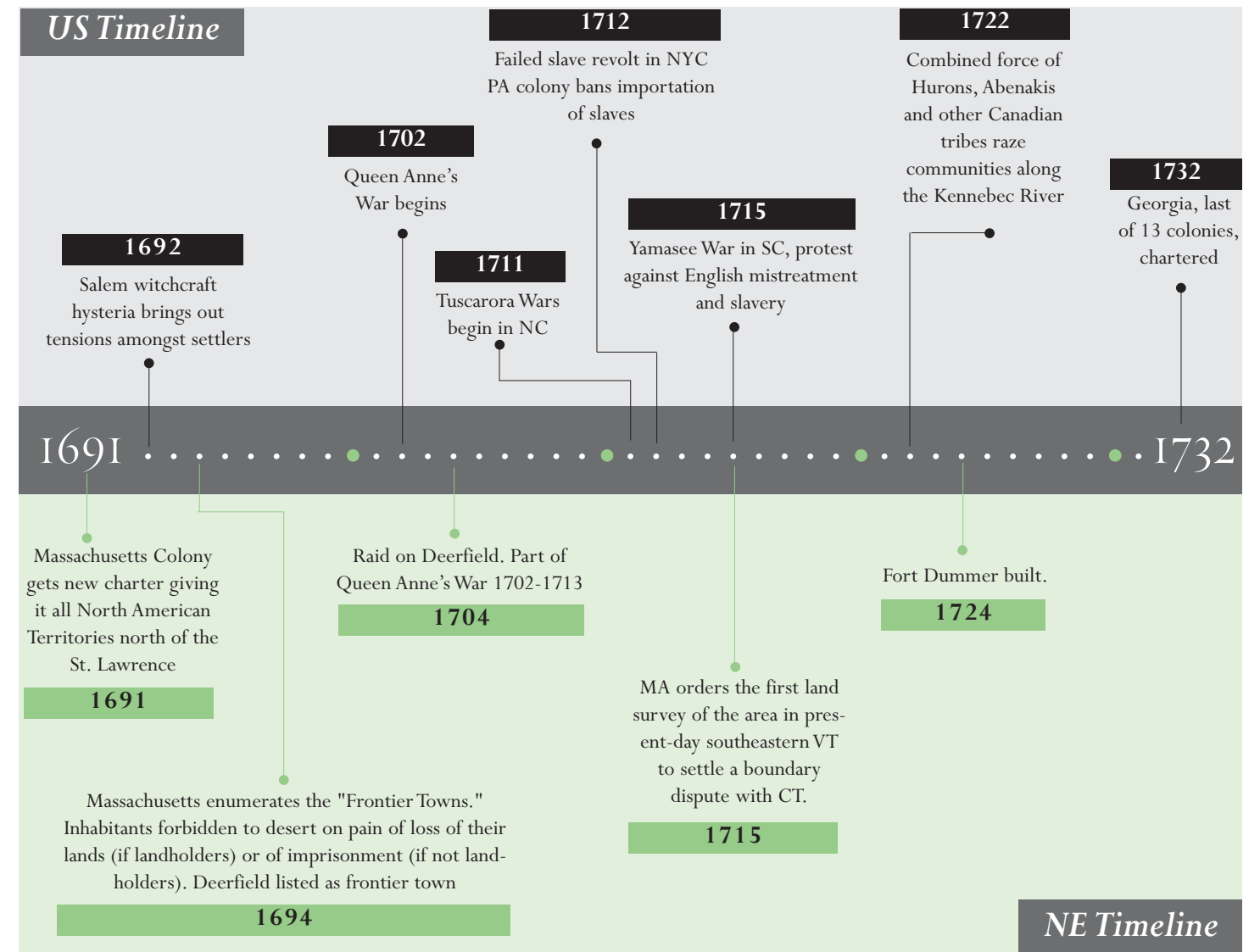
The final factor facilitating migration was the appropriateness of the town form of government to community formation. The overwhelming majority of migrants were from New England where towns had been the norm since the 1630s. All they had to do was copy the familiar. They divided common lands, built roads, hired ministers, erected meeting houses, and prided themselves in their accomplishments. Rich land, good transportation, familiar governmental institutions and common purpose all help to explain why the Connecticut River Valley towns developed so quickly once barriers to settlement were removed.

The Flow of History Advisory Committee selected the topic of Movement and Settlement as this year's theme. The English perspective was only one of many represented at our summer 2003 institute. Look online at www.flowofhistory.org after November 2003 for others stories, told from the point of view of French traders, Native Americans, those with forced migration, and later waves of immigrants to the United States.

Jere Daniell is a professor emeritus of Dartmouth College, Department of History. He presents an overview of the topic. For local details, investigate the specific stories of your own town's settlement. How does your town's development parallel the general story? How does it differ?



By the end of the 1700s, development in the southern portion of the upper Connecticut River shifted the landscape from forest to open field. Although this photo was taken in the late 1800s, it gives a sense of how open the valley used to be. Photo courtesy of the Putney Historical Society.



wealthy investors have begun to show interest: two of them, William Brattle and William Dummer, have purchased whole townships expecting to profit by selling their land to individuals. Massachusetts has already granted five townships along the river's east bank (Hinsdale, Chesterfield, Westmoreland, Walpole, and Charlestown) and is rumored to be repeating the process across the river. To be sure, some risks remain. The boundary issue hasn't been resolved and it might turn out that the grants made by the Bay Colony have no legal standing. And relationships between England and France might turn sour again, triggering renewed fighting along the northern frontier. But these risks seem small when weighed against an increasingly clear new factor: good land is no longer available locally. You have had seven children and now have over twenty grandchildren with more

The boundary issue hasn't been resolved and it might turn out that the grants made by the Bay Colony have no legal standing. And relationships between England and France might turn sour again...

on the way.

Your neighbors have been equally productive. Everyone farms. You urge your grandson to make the move. You'll even give him the money to purchase a "right" (roughly 300 acres) in one of the new towns. He says he'll do it.

Many others made the same decision. Settlement along the Connecticut River north of the current Massachusetts border began in the mid-1730s.

Unstable Beginnings: 1730-1760

They came as individuals and as families, cleared land, planted crops, and met as proprietors and town inhabitants to plan their collective future. But events conspired against them. France and England went to war again in 1740; raids began soon thereafter. About the same time, the home government drew a new Province Line (the same line that exists today) which invalidated all the town grants made by Massachusetts north of the line. No one could be sure what the decision meant for individual property ownership. Not surprisingly, many recent migrants returned to the towns they had left.

A second pulsing of settlement took place at mid-century. Hostilities stopped in 1748 and by then a strong fortification had been constructed in the old Massachusetts township #4

(Charlestown, NH). Fort #4, in combination with Fort Dummer on the west bank, promised improved protection. Even more important, New Hampshire made clear its intention to encourage new settlement. Its governor, Benning Wentworth, assumed the colony extended west of the Connecticut and in 1752/53 granted corporate charters to Hinsdale (which included today's Vernon), Brattleboro, Chesterfield, Dummerston, Westmoreland, Putney, Walpole, Westminster, Rockingham, and Charlestown. The new town proprietors included most of the individuals who had improved property under the old Massachusetts grants, and, in general, made clear New Hampshire's intention to make land available to anyone who wanted to develop the river valley. Even the last of the frontier wars, which began in 1754, did little to undermine

New Hampshire's campaign. Most of the fighting took place elsewhere. All future military dangers ended when the English, in 1759, captured Quebec and the following year France surrendered all Canada.

It's impossible to know how extensive settlement was along the river when Quebec fell. The first time anyone counted heads wasn't until 1767. That census had about 2,500 inhabitants in the towns just on the east bank. My guess is that had a census been taken the summer of 1760, the figure for both sides of the river would have been under 1,000.

An Explosion of Settlement, 1760-1791

Nothing could hold them back. When the first federal census was published in 1791 (the same year Vermont became the nation's 14th

state) 52 of the 53 towns presently bordering the river had both corporate charters and inhabitants. New Hampshire had granted the bulk of the towns, most of them in the early 1760s. The census showed a total population of over 36,000 and the real number was probably much higher. Westmoreland, at 2,018, had the most people; thirteen different towns had over 1,000.

Several factors accounted for the explosion. Of basic importance was continued population pressure. New England families still had the largest number of surviving children in North America, and probably the world. Most of the first stage settlers had come from nearby towns in Massachusetts. After 1760, Connecticut and southeastern New Hampshire added to the flow. A second factor was certainty of land titles. In the valley, unlike, for example, New York and northern Pennsylvania, one could rea-

