These lessons for a high school social studies class use local history to help tell the story of how the frontier experience in this particular community compared with national trends. Students carefully analyze photographs of own community to analyze the historical continuities and changes present in their immediate surroundings. Activities include small group discussions, a field trip, and a long term project.

HISTORY OF McBAIN AND OTHER AREA COMMUNITIES

Setting: An American history survey class of 17 sophomores and probably some additional international students. This particular group is collectively not very motivated and as a whole is of lesser ability than most other classes at NMCS. The strongest sophomores will not be taking U.S. history this year. Aside from the international students, most students were born and raised and still reside in McBain and in neighboring towns or rural areas. The area overall is very rural. They are predominantly white, middle class, and Protestant.

This multi-day lesson on local history is part of a larger unit which has looked at immigration, urbanization and the movement into the Plains.

Day 1—Divide class into groups of four or five. This will be done with interest given to ability, gender, and hometown of the student.

2) Distribute pictures of McBain to each group. (Some of these are my pictures from The Waterfront, McBain Centennial Special Insert, 1976; some are found at: http://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/7511 and are also power point slides. To allow individual groups time to sufficiently view each photo, I will provide the website and I will print these pictures as well. Students must answer the following questions (Questions are included with copies of pictures, but are included here as reference.):
   1) What do you observe in these pictures about (a-c) from McBain’s early history?
      (a) the people; (b) objects (building, technology, etc.); (c) activities.
   2) What inferences can you make about McBain from your observations?
   3) What did you already know that these pictures confirmed? What more would you like to know or what questions do you now have and how can these questions be answered?
   4) How is today’s McBain the same as it was portrayed in early pictures? How has it changed?
   5) If you had to choose four pictures to show someone the early history of McBain, which ones would you choose and why?

3) Groups share observations, inferences, insights, and the four pictures they would choose.

4) Give the readings (primary and secondary) on McBain. Students must identify each reading as a primary or secondary source and must note what can be learned from each article or account. All students will read articles from The Waterfront on McBain’s centennial and “Missaukee County
Settlers” from Missaukee County Family Histories (pp. 90-92). Students will divide the readings from Netherlanders in America (pp. 537-541, 787) and from Missaukee County Family Histories which have to do with McBain (pp. 40, 42, 93, 184-185, and 198).

Day 2—We will return to yesterday’s groups and begin by sharing information from the personal accounts on which labor was shared. When groups are finished with this (10-15 minutes), we will bring the class together for a brief discussion and question time.

Following this discussion time, each group chooses one of the following places to which to compare McBain’s history:
Marion
Lucas and Highland
Falmouth
Vogel Center
Cadillac

Each group must do at least 4 oral accounts and research primary and secondary documents (some that I have provided for each town and some from internet or library sources). The rest of the hour is spent with me answering questions about this assignment and groups dividing labor and talking about how to accomplish their presentation.

(Throughout the quarter each student must do something extra in order to get an A. Many options for the extra 15% of the quarter grade occur during this unit. Examples are a comparison of McBain’s early history with one other early Dutch settlement (Holland, Pella, South Dakota, California, Colorado, Texas), reading Eighty Acres, a Little House book, or doing immigrant interviews. Several of the other possibilities also come from this seminar.)

Day 3—I will cover the town that no group chose to cover. This will be with the intent of giving information and, just as importantly, of modeling how their presentations are supposed to work. Grand Rapids Public Museum instructions will also be given as tomorrow is a field trip to examine the history of Grand Rapids. (Because the trip takes two hours each way, we also will visit the Gerald Ford Museum. This museum has its own set of questions not included here as it does not fit in with this current lesson.) Students will need to write about what they learned from this visit. (See page 5 for a copy of specific questions that must be answered.)

Days 4—Grand Rapids Public Museum and the Gerald Ford Museum field trip.

Days 5-6—Normal class activities about immigration and urbanization; on day 6 students will also have the opportunity to meet within their groups and make sure that they are ready for their presentations.

Day 7 (and part of 8?)—Group presentations on Cadillac, Marion, Vogel Center, Lucas/Highland, and Falmouth.
**MCBAIN PICTURES**

1) What do you observe in these pictures about (a-c) from McBain’s early history? (a) the people; (b) objects (building, technology, etc.); (c) activities

2) What inferences can you make about McBain from your observations?

3) What did you already know that these pictures confirmed? What more would you like to know or what questions do you now have and how can these questions be answered?

4) How is today’s McBain the same as it was portrayed in early pictures? How has it changed?

5) If you had to choose four pictures to show someone the early history of McBain, which ones would you choose and why?
McBain Readings Summary Sheet

For each article or account that you read note the title and type of source (primary, early secondary, secondary) and give a short summary of what the article told you about McBain.
Local History Group Work—Research and Presentation

For this part of the unit on local history each group will need to research one local community and compare the settlement and development of that town to the settlement and development of McBain. This research must include at least four interviews of people who can describe the history of your town and a consideration of primary (or early secondary) and secondary sources. Part of your grade for this project will be an annotated bibliography in which you list the source, what type of source it is, and a short summary of what your group got from that source.

The following sources may prove valuable in your research. In some cases I have made photocopies (mostly when the materials are mine and others may want the source).

- Marion: Marion Centennial Book Committee. Marion: 100 Years Moving Ahead, 1988, found in Lake City Library.
- Falmouth: copies of pages 5-6, 64-65, 86, 101, and 169-170 from Missaukee County history; pp. 272-274 from Dutch Immigrant Memoirs. Hekman Digital Archives (http://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/7511) has some pictures as well.
- Lucas/Highland: pages 73, 80-81, and 84 from Missaukee County history; pp. 274-275 from Dutch Immigrant Memoirs. Hekman Digital Archives (http://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/7511) has some pictures as well.
- Vogel Center: pages 5-6, 52, 74-75, 79, and 80-81 from Missaukee County history; pp. 262-265, 272-274 from Dutch Immigrant Memoirs. Hekman Digital Archives (http://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/7511) has some pictures as well.
- Cadillac: Author Unknown. Cadillac: Its Past, Present, and Future, 1891? This is from the Lake City Library (Ardis Missaukee Public Library). This should prove quite useful to students who are in the group considering Cadillac’s history. Written in the late 1800s, it includes pictures, ads, and personal accounts of Cadillac. History of Cadillac, 1871-1900 written by W.A. Norton and found in the Cadillac Library should also prove useful.

For the oral histories, among the questions you might want to consider asking are:
1) How did the town start? (Interviewees may not know the answer to this one.)
2) What businesses were in the town at different times.
3) How was the town different at different times?
4) How many people lived here at different times?
5) What was entertainment in the town like at different times?
6) What were significant events or memorable events in the town’s history?
7) How do they know specific information—memory, parents/grandparents, etc.?
8) Add other questions as your interviewee takes you in other directions.

Each group will need to give a 10-12 minute presentation on their town. This presentation should include information taken from primary and secondary sources and written and oral sources. After this ten minute presentation the class will be able to ask questions and together we will consider how this town’s history compares with that of McBain. Your group will conclude with a 50 word or less statement comparing your community’s history to that of McBain. (This must be prepared ahead of time; after giving your statement you as a group may choose to alter it based on the contributions of other groups.)
Grand Rapids Public Museum Assignment

While there is much to see that is informative and interesting, your focus should be on two of the bigger exhibits.

First, of primary importance is the city streets of the 1910s exhibit. From what you see here, describe Grand Rapids of the early 1900s, including similarities and differences between a comparatively big city like Grand Rapids and a smaller city like Cadillac (or even smaller like McBain).

Second, focus on the Furniture City exhibit. Your assignment here is to write a general summary of Grand Rapids as the Furniture City and then to describe specifically one portion of Grand Rapids' history as the Furniture City (e.g. strikes).

The first of these should be between 250-350 words; the second 150-250 words.
Sources: All students will use the following:

Hekman Digital Archives—Pictures of McBain, Lucas, Cadillac, Vogel Center, Falmouth, Highland. [http://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/7511](http://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/7511). This site includes pictures of various Michigan communities (as well as communities from other states). The McBain pictures will be used for the class. The pictures from other local communities may be used by students from various groups.

Missaukee County Historical Society (compiled). Missaukee County Family Histories, 1983, second edition 2009. This is found at the Ardis Missaukee (Lake City) Public Library. This is a collection of family histories, many of which are simple genealogies with few details. However, the account of the John W. Herweyer family is a nice account of the crossing of an immigrant family and will be assigned when talking about immigration during this time.

Three pages (90-92) entitled “Missaukee County Settlers” will be assigned with the introductory McBain readings.

“The Spirit of McBain, 1877-1977” Special Section of Waterfront, June 29, 1977. This teacher-owned resource will be used for both its pictures and its narratives about McBain’s history. Students will receive copies of pictures from this newspaper section during the first activity and articles entitled “Early McBain Pioneers,” “The Great Lumbering Years,” “Life in The Early Days,” “Farming Comes to McBain,” and “The Outlaw of McBain.” Students will also read about the schools and churches of McBain and read the account of an original McBain family descendant who describes her knowledge of the town from its early years and as it looked in 1977.

Van Hinte, Jacob. Netherlands in America: A Study of Emigration and Settlement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the United States of America, Volumes 1 and 2, 1985. This is a translation of the original written in 1928 in Dutch. (Teacher owned book) All students will receive a copy of a small portion from this book (pp. 537-541 and one paragraph from p. 787) on the first day which they will discuss and on which they will take a quiz. Other portions of this book can be used especially by those students desiring to do their optional, extra assignment on a comparison of McBain with another Dutch settlement such as Sioux Center (IA), Holland (MI), Prinsburg (MN), or other settlements in South Dakota, Colorado, Texas, or California.

Van Haitsma, Chet (and his history class at McBain High School). McBain: Then and Now, 1997. This is in the McBain Public Library. Although it is not particularly well-done in terms of grammar and spelling, some of the basic facts as found in the beginning could be given to students as the context before reading the other resources on McBain.
Sources: Some students will use:

Author Unknown. *Cadillac: Its Past, Present, and Future*, 1891? This is from the Lake City Library (Ardis Missaukee Public Library). This should prove quite useful to students who are in the group considering Cadillac’s history. Written in the late 1800s, it includes pictures, ads, and personal accounts of Cadillac.

Jager, Ronald. *Eighty Acres: Elegy for a Family Farm*, 1990. (Teacher owned book) This book would be read as an additional source. It is the personal accounts of the author growing up in the McBain area during the 1930s and 1940s.

Lucas, Henry S. (selected and arranged by). *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings*, 1997 (originally published in two volumes in 1955). This teacher-owned book has a wealth of information about various Dutch immigrants and settlements. A section from volume 2, pp 262-265 will be good for students studying Vogel Center; another portion from pp. 272-274 will be useful for students in groups considering Vogel Center and Falmouth. Pages 274-275 will be useful for the group studying Lucas.

Marion Centennial Book Committee. *Marion: 100 Years Moving Ahead*, 1988. Written to commemorate Marion’s centennial, this account does a nice job of summarizing Marion’s history. It is found in the Lake City Library.

Massie, Larry B. *Voyages Into Michigan’s Past*, 1988. Found in the Ardis Missaukee (Lake City) Library, nothing in this book deals specifically with the communities that we look at. However, students may be able to use this book in their extra assignment.

Michel, Sara. *With This Inheritance: Holland, Michigan—the Early Years*, 1984. Found in Hekman Library (Calvin College), this source may be used for students in a comparison with Holland, Michigan. I have photocopied a few pages of this book.

Norton, W.A. *History of Cadillac, 1871-1900*, 1900. Found in the Cadillac Library, this should also prove useful. I have not checked this book yet.

Pieters, Aleida J. *A Dutch Settlement in Michigan*, 1923. Found in Hekman Library (Calvin College), this book may be used by a student who wishes to compare the settlement of McBain with that of Holland. Because of the distance to Grand Rapids from McBain, I have photocopied several pages of this book.