

Reading a Town's Memory

GRADES 3-5 · HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS · MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

How does a small town remember its people, and what can a list tell us, and not tell us, about the past?

Two 45-minute class periods

Long ago, many people from Manchester-by-the-Sea worked on ships. Some sailed to faraway places to trade. Some went fishing. Some of them went to sea and did not come home. In 1895 the town printed a history book, and in the back of it is a list of the names of people from Manchester who were lost at sea. In this lesson you will read that list like a historian, count the names like a mathematician and think about what a list can tell us and what it leaves out.

Primary source

R1. Names of Persons Lost at Sea (selected parts)

Transcribed from a scan; spelling as printed. Parts of the list are left out where you see [...].

NAMES OF PERSONS LOST AT SEA.

In order to secure as full a list as possible of those who have been lost at sea, a request for information was published in Salem, Gloucester and Boston papers as well as in the Manchester Cricket. As the result of this inquiry the following list is appended, which is probably as complete as can now be made. Special thanks are due to John T. Hassam, Esq., of Boston, for valuable assistance, also to William H. Tappan, Esq. A number of names have been furnished by the Church Records, as kept by Rev. Benjamin Tappan, 1745-1790; others have been gathered from various sources.

1748. Benjamin Allen, William Hassam.

1749 or '50. Benjamin Hassam, on a voyage to Lisbon.

William Lee, Isaac Presson, on a voyage to Lisbon.

[...]

1754. Amos Allen, John Tarring, Robert Safty, Joseph Safty, Thomas Hoole, coming from Virginia.

[...]

1772. Daniel Edwards, Samuel Edwards, Samuel Perry, Frank Silva, Benjamin Hilton, coming from the West Indies.

1773. Edward Lee and "five others."

[...]

1780. Jacob Allen.

[...]

1843. John Cheever, Rufus Cheever, Hillard Morse, David Hall, Nathaniel Morgan, Merritt Lennon.

[...]

1894. Edward W. Leach.

[...]

The above list gives nearly or quite 130 between the years 1717 and 1894. How many names are lacking appears from the record made by Rev. Benjamin Tappan, November, 1774: "N. B. About 97 have been lost at sea and buried in distant ports since I came to town" (1745).

Source: D. F. Lamson, History of the Town of Manchester, Essex County, Massachusetts, 1645-1895 (Manchester: published by the Town, 1895), Appendix L, pages 358 to 361. Scan from the University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries copy on the Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/historyoftownofm00lams>. Rights: Public domain (published 1895)

Summary by Cape Ann Current

R2. The same source in plain words

The author of the book was a minister named D. F. Lamson. He wanted the list to be as full as he could make it. So he asked for help in newspapers in Salem, Gloucester and Boston and in the Manchester Cricket, the town's own paper. He thanked two men who helped him. He also used old church records kept by another minister, the Rev. Benjamin Tappan, from 1745 to 1790.

Each line of the list starts with a year. After the year come the names of people from Manchester who were lost at sea that year. Some lines add a short note, such as where a ship was sailing from or to. The list starts in 1717 and ends in 1894.

At the end, Lamson says the list has about 130 names. Then he says some names are probably missing. He knew this because in November 1774 the Rev. Tappan wrote that about 97 people had been "lost at sea and buried in distant ports" since he came to town in 1745. ("Distant ports" means harbors far away.)

Words to know: "voyage" means a long trip by ship. "Lisbon" is a port city in Portugal. "The West Indies" are islands in the Caribbean Sea. "Esq." and "Rev." are titles, like "Mr." "Jun." means "Junior."

Source: Written by Cape Ann Current for this lesson, based on Lamson (1895), pages 358 to 361
<https://archive.org/details/historyoftownofm00lams>. Rights: Cape Ann Current; free to use in classrooms

Data table

R3. Name cards: every year line in the list

Each row is one line of the 1895 list. Names in a row are separated by semicolons (;). Square brackets [] mark words we added because the book does not print a first name. Words in quotation marks, like "five others," are the book's own words.

Card	Year as printed	Names printed for that year
Card A	1717	John Peirce
Card A	1719	Ezekiel Knowlton
Card A	1748	Benjamin Allen; William Hassam
Card A	1749 or '50	Benjamin Hassam; William Lee; Isaac Presson
Card A	1752	Ezekiel Allen; Mallaca Allen; Azariah Allen; Joseph Allen; Jonathan Hassam
Card A	1754	Amos Allen; John Tarring; Robert Safty; Joseph Safty; Thomas Hoole
Card A	1756	Ambrose Allen; Moses Trask; Jacob Lee; Daniel Davidson; William Ireland; John Ayers; James Allen
Card A	1757	Daniel Leach; Israel Morgan
Card A	1758	Joseph Allen; John Day; Simeon Wilson; John Driver; Richard Lee, Jun.; John Dennis; Josiah Lee; John Sears; Samuel Morgan, Jun.; Joseph Lee
Card A	1759	John Hassam; Lewis Degan; John Badcock; Moses Bennet
Card B	1760	William Bennett; Aaron Dennis; Robert Leach
Card B	1765	William Edwards; Samuel Carter; Samuel Jones
Card B	1767	Benjamin Allen; Thomas Ayer; Benjamin Allen; Ezra Allen; John Leach; Richard Kitchin; Timothy Dounaway; Joseph Easty; John Marshall; Josiah Hassam
Card B	1768	Benjamin Andrews; Charles Leach; Daniel Foster

Card	Year as printed	Names printed for that year
Card B	1770	Amos Allen; Thomas Allen; Bartholomew Allen; Jacob Allen; Crispin Joynt; Jacob Lee
Card B	1772	Daniel Edwards; Samuel Edwards; Samuel Perry; Frank Silva; Benjamin Hilton
Card B	1773	Edward Lee and "five others"
Card B	1774	Benjamin Masters Allen; Charles Hill; Moses Bennett; John Easty; John Morse; Edward Lee; Amos Morgan; Samuel Lee
Card C	1776	Daniel Morgan; Daniel Ober; Nicholas Babcock; James Pittman; John Allen; John Carter; [first name not printed] Tucker; Amos Allen; Daniel Brown; Jacob Lendall; Simeon Webber; Azariah Allen; James Morgan; Andrew Brown; Dr. Joseph Whipple; Andrew Leach and "ten others"
Card C	1777	Captain Jeremiah Hibbert; John Allen; Azariah Allen
Card C	1780	Jacob Allen
Card C	1781	Samuel Edwards
Card C	1783	Amos Hilton
Card C	1787	Thomas Allen; Malachi Allen
Card C	1793	Arthur Allen
Card C	1796	Amos Hilton
Card C	1798	Luther Allen; Jacob Perry
Card C	1801	John Lee
Card C	1803	Isaac Allen; William Hassam
Card C	1821	John Hooper
Card C	1823	Capt. William Babcock

Card	Year as printed	Names printed for that year
Card C	1824	Daniel Allen
Card C	1827	(Sept.) [first name not printed] Hassam
Card C	1829	Josiah Hassam
Card C	1830	Joseph Killam
Card C	1838	John W. G. Allen
Card C	1843	John Cheever; Rufus Cheever; Hillard Morse; David Hall; Nathaniel Morgan; Merritt Lennon
Card C	1844	Horatio Allen
Card C	1852	George F. Allen
Card C	1877	Edward L. Wheaton; Charles Allen
Card C	1894	Edward W. Leach; Vincent R. Burgess

Source: Names as printed in D. F. Lamson, History of the Town of Manchester (1895), pages 359 to 361; table compiled by Cape Ann Current. Short notes about voyages are left out; only years and names are shown. <https://archive.org/details/historyoftownofm00lams>. Rights: Public domain (published 1895); table arrangement by Cape Ann Current

A1. Read the list like a historian

Use Reading 1 and Reading 2. Answer with a partner. Write short answers.

1. What is the first year in the whole list? What is the last year?
2. Look at the line for 1754. How many names are printed? Where were these men coming from?
3. Find one place in Reading 1 that is far away from Manchester. What does that place tell you about the work people from Manchester did?
4. Who did the author, D. F. Lamson, ask for help when he made the list? Name two.
5. Look at the line that starts "1749 or '50." What do you think "'50" means? Do we know the exact year for these names?

6. Look at the line for 1773. How many names are printed? How many people does the line talk about in all?

A2. Tally the names

Your group gets one name card (Card A, Card B or Card C) from Reading 3. Read each line. Find the period the year belongs in. Make one tally mark for each name that is printed. Say each name quietly as you mark it. Follow the special rules. When you finish, count your tally marks and write a number for each row. Then trade with a partner to check.

1. Periods: 1700 to 1749; 1750 to 1799; 1800 to 1849; 1850 to 1899.
2. Special rule 1: Names on the line "1749 or '50" go in the row called "Not sure (1749 or 1750)."
3. Special rule 2: Words like "five others" or "ten others" are not names. Do not tally them as names. Write the number of people they stand for in the row called "People counted but not named."
4. Special rule 3: A name with a missing first name, like "[first name not printed] Tucker," still counts as one name.
5. Special rule 4: If the same name appears twice, tally it twice. The book printed it twice, and we do not know if it is the same person.
6. Write your card's totals in the class tally table.

A3. Draw a scaled bar graph

Use the class totals for the names in each period. On grid paper, draw a bar graph where each square stands for 10 names. Half a square stands for 5 names. A bar can stop between two lines. Use a ruler.

1. Give your graph a title.
2. Label the bottom of the graph with these categories in order: 1700 to 1749; Not sure (1749 or 1750); 1750 to 1799; 1800 to 1849; 1850 to 1899.
3. Number the side of the graph by tens: 0, 10, 20, 30 and so on, up to 100.
4. Write a key: 1 square = 10 names.
5. Draw one bar for each category.
6. Under the graph, write one sentence that says what you notice.

A4. How many more? How many fewer?

Use your bar graph and the class tally table. Show your thinking with a number sentence.

1. 1. How many more names are in 1750 to 1799 than in 1800 to 1849?
2. 2. How many fewer names are in 1850 to 1899 than in 1800 to 1849?
3. 3. Two steps: Add the names in every category except 1750 to 1799. How many more names are in 1750 to 1799 than in all the other categories put together?
4. 4. Suppose a historian proves the "Not sure" names belong in 1700 to 1749. How many names would that bar show? What if they belong in 1750 to 1799 instead?
5. 5. How many people does the list count but not name? Add them to all the names. How many people does the list talk about in all?

A5. What the list tells us and what it leaves out

Make a T-chart. On one side write "The list tells us." On the other side write "The list leaves out." Use the questions to help you. Then answer the last question.

1. Does the list tell us the names of people? The years? The exact days?
2. Does the list tell us how old the people were? What their jobs were? What their families were like?
3. Does the list name every person who was lost? Look for "five others" and "ten others."
4. Who made the list, and in what year? Could one person in 1895 find every name from long ago?
5. In November 1774 the Rev. Tappan wrote that about 97 people had been "lost at sea and buried in distant ports" since 1745. Lamson's list has 77 names for the years 1748 to 1774. About how many names might be missing? Show your number sentence.
6. Why do you think the period 1750 to 1799 has the most names? Give one idea, and say what other evidence you would need to be sure.

Talk about it

- Why would a town print a list of names in its history book? Who might read it?
- The list says where some ships were coming from: Virginia, Lisbon and the West Indies. What does that tell us about the work of the sea in Manchester long ago?
- Some years have many names and some have only one. Does a tall bar mean more people were lost, or could it mean someone kept better records that year? How could we find out?
- Mr. Lamson asked newspapers and church records for help. Why might a list made from many sources still miss some names?
- How does your family or your school remember people who are gone? How is that like or unlike this list?

Show what you learned

Make a Memory Graph page. Turn in (1) your scaled bar graph with a title, labels and a key; (2) your answers to two "how many more" or "how many fewer" problems from Activity A4, with number sentences; and (3) a museum

label of three sentences that could hang next to your graph. Sentence 1 tells one thing the list shows. Sentence 2 tells one thing the list leaves out. Sentence 3 tells how the town of Manchester remembered its people.

Points: 20