

**Images of Nature and Culture-Honors
Fall 2015
Dr. Murphy**

MAKING PLACE PAPER (5-6 PAGES—1250-1500 WORDS; 2- 3 SOURCES)-- LEARNING GOALS ADDRESSED: II, III, AND IV.

**First draft: October 22nd Thursday
Classes cancelled for individual conferences: Tuesday, October 27th
Final Draft due: Tuesday, October 29th**

Rationale and Directions for Assignment

For this longer essay, your focus is to write about a place (a physical place, ideally one that involves the outside) that has significance for you. The place could be a landmark, your hometown, a beach, a national park, etc. It should be a place that one could locate on a map, which has some written information associated with it. It could have historical, environmental, or social significance. In the first part of your essay, develop a description of the place in which you bring it alive for your reader. You could do this by writing about a specific memory or memories about the place, or by describing the place and all of its components: physically, spatially, or its evolution over time. In your description, use sensory detail—help your readers experience this place through details and images that appeal to their senses: touch, sight, sound, smell, taste. In the second part of the essay, discuss the social, historical, and/or environmental importance of this place. Why should it be preserved and/or maintained? What important function does it serve in the community in which it is situated to the people who will continue to use it? This is the question you should be posing as your thesis, and answering through the course of the essay. Here, you are taking a stand on the importance of the place and convincing your audience of college readers that it is worth preserving and maintaining. You are then supporting your assertions with evidence from your sources and your own logical reasoning. For inspiration, consider the writers we have read for this unit, all concerned the notion of place: Thoreau, Red Jacket, Leopold, Carson, Dillard, Oliver, Hill, Walker, and Pollan. Also see the sample student essay that I provided as a reference.

Research and Sources:

Your research for this assignment may include primary sources, secondary sources, or both. They may include the following: a map, a history, a news item, an interview (your Bedford handbook has some very useful information about conducting interviews). Other sources you may include: visual ones: photographs or paintings, for example, and relevant, trustworthy web sites. You are required to have at least two sources, as well as an MLA style works cited page. If you have an idea for another source not included above, please ask me. Please see your syllabus for general guidelines about formatting your paper.

Throughout your essay, you must use at least three meaningful quotations from your sources and discuss their significance and relationship to your own discussion and reflection.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING SOURCES:

Here are some of the many outside sources available to you to learn more about your chosen place and the changing landscape of the place, as well as environmental issues that threaten these places.

- Check out the New Books shelf in Griswold Library for recent publications about big environmental issues that could be or have effected this place—search by issue, NOT specifically about your place: water quality issues; deforestation, urbanization/suburbanization, climate change, etc.
- Look at old photographs of your chosen place. Nothing is better than a picture for helping you see a past place and relate it to the present.
- Look at a series of maps of your chosen place to see how it has changed over time. Aerial photographs might also be very suggestive if they're available.
- If you've chosen an urban place or town, check out the amazing collection of bird's-eye views, most published during the nineteenth century, that have been digitized on the Library of Congress's American Memory website. The URL for these is: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html> Check under "Cities and Towns" and search for the place about which you're writing, but don't hesitate to explore other parts of the website as well. The American Memory website is an extraordinary source for digital documents: photos, maps, texts, almost anything you can think of.
- If you want to go even further back in time, you could look at the original land survey records
- Visit the Historical Society of the town where your place is located.
- View the town census. The census will tell you who lived in a place, their family relationships, their birth places, their occupations, etc.
- Track the changing population of the place using censuses.
- If you're studying an urban area, look at old city directories, which often list the residents and businesses of a community not just alphabetically but according to their street address. A directory enables you almost literally to walk down the same street in the past that you've walked down in the present, seeing how the people and businesses have changed in the interval.
- Look at old county atlases or histories for your place.
- And of course: talk with people who have lived in your place for a long time.