

*Teaching Local, Community, and State History: Challenge to Historic Sites*  
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The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (SHPO) at Peebles Island State Park currently is preparing the 2007-2011 NYS Historic Preservation Plan in compliance with National Park Service guidelines related to SHPO's federal funding. In the past few months, SHPO has sought public input in a variety of ways, including meetings with planning organizations and a series of 12 regional outreach meetings across the state. Preliminary results indicate a need to better incorporate local history and preservation into the education system.

These presentations will provide an opportunity to discuss what has been done and what is still needed to do.

## IHARE

### Mission Statement

*The Institute of History, Archaeology, and Education, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding the knowledge and appreciation of human cultures from ancient times to the present through a array of student, teacher, and public programs and activities.*

#### The goals and objectives of the organization are to:

1. promote the inclusion and development of history and archaeology in the k-12 curriculum;
2. increase the public awareness of the benefits of archaeology and history through public programs;
3. provide history and archaeology enrichment programs at the k-12 level;
4. develop, implement, and teach history and archaeology programs for teachers by working with the schools and teacher centers;
5. work with educational institutions of higher learning, government organization, cultural institutions, and professional archaeological and historical organizations to develop, promote, and implement archaeological and historical programs.

## Upcoming Events

### MARCH 2

**The Merneptah Symposium: The Pharaoh Who Mentioned Israel** –  
*Ellen Morris* — Columbia University  
*Colleen Manassa* — Yale University  
*Peter Feinman* — IHARE

### MAY 31-JUNE 6

**Battle of Saratoga Teacherhostel™**  
*Saratoga National Historical Park*

**JUNE 27-JULY 1 – The American Revolution Teacherhostel™**  
*West Point and historic sites*

**JULY 15 – Somers Historical Society Teacherhostel™**

**JULY 19-JULY 25 – Rivertowns of Westchester Teacherhostel™**  
*Hastings to Sleepy Hollow*

**JULY 28-JULY 31 – Greater Catskill Region Teacherhostel™**  
*Delaware County to Mohonk Mountain House*

**AUGUST 4-AUGUST 8 – Forts of the Empire State Teacherhostel™**  
*Forts Edward, Ticonderoga, William Henry and Crown Point*

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# IHARE

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## Teaching Local, Community, and State History: Challenge to Historic Sites

The following proposal was submitted to the Upstate History Alliance (NY) for its annual conference in April in Albany of historic organizations.

Teaching local, community, and state history is required in our public schools according to the New York State Education Department standards. This requirement raises multiple issues which need to be addressed concerning the success of fulfilling these requirements:

1. How are teachers instructed in the content information related to the teaching of local, community, and state history?
2. Are teachers required to demonstrate proficiency or competence in these areas?
3. How can statewide testing account for local and community history?
4. If American history can be taught in elementary, middle, and high schools, then why is a student visit to a local historic site in fourth grade considered sufficient?
5. In schools where both the teachers and the students are new to the community, will they consider local historic sites to be part of their own heritage and worth preserving and maintaining?
6. In a time of globalization where people are linked via the internet to people and places around the world including to people they may never have met, how do we root people in their own communities?

At present, historic sites are buffeted from many directions. The traditional

and long-time volunteers and staff often are not being replaced by the next generation; buildings require repair and maintenance; new technologies need to be integrated into the resources of historic sites; and attendance is down. Given the dependence on taxpayer dollars and community membership and donations, there is an urgent need to have taxpayers and citizens feel historic sites are relevant to their own history. If the site is considered irrelevant, then it will not be supported. Schools provide one of the best ways to develop such a commitment provided contacts are not limited to the obligatory 4th grade visit that principals and superintendents check off their to-do lists.

Two different sets of experience will be presented in this session. Teacherhostels™ are programs offered by the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Education (IHARE) to teachers for professional development credit which are designed to bring teachers to the historic sites. Typical responses are: (1) I didn't know that was there, (2) I drove by it a thousand times without stopping, and (3) I haven't been there since fourth grade. Teachers who bring classes to historic sites often are so busy with supervisory responsibilities that the visit is not the learning experience it should be. Teacherhostels represent collaborative efforts among the historic sites and between the educators in schools and historic sites.

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*Please fill out the form on the reverse side and return with your donation/membership check made payable to IHARE.*

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*Please allow 4-6 weeks for your membership gift to arrive.*

*Thank you for your support.*

For more information,  
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# Illegal Aliens in the Ancient Near East

The following text was presented at the Westchester Council for the Social Studies at the annual conference on December 7, 2007, and will be presented at the New York State Council for the Social Studies conference in Buffalo in April, 2008.

Illegal aliens did not begin in the late 20th century. Already in the 20th century BCE, the civilized peoples of the ancient Near East encompassing Egypt to Iran, were addressing this issue. Consider the words of the anonymous "The Marriage of Martu," written approximately 4000 years ago by a Sumerian in what is today southern Iraq. In the text, the male Martu, with the same name as his people, falls in love with a woman from the right side of the tracks. He then demonstrates his prowess in athletic competition (as if Hollywood invented this storyline!). A girlfriend warns her friend not to marry someone beneath her from the wrong side of the tracks describing Martu as follows:

- one who lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain,**
- who digs truffles at the foot of the mountain**
- who eats raw foods,**
- who has no home during his lifetime, and no tomb at his death.**

*Civilized human beings build permanent shelters; the Martu live exposed to the elements*

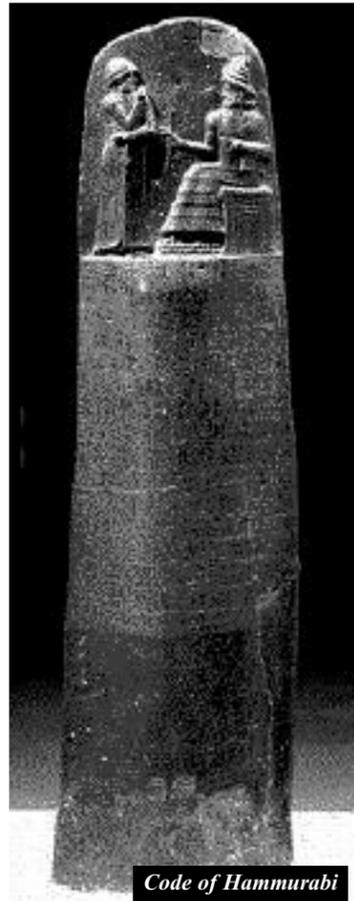
*Civilized human beings grow their food; the Martu forage for food as if farming had never been invented.*

*Civilized human beings cook their food using fire; the Martu eat their food raw the way animals do.*

*Civilized human beings have fixed shelters in both this life and next; the Martu have no permanent homes in either world and do not bury their dead, again living just like animals.*

As we read this poem millennia after its creation we learn not so much about the Martu way of life as we do of the Sumerians. The poem provides insight into the Sumerian culture. The Sumerians were proud of the civilization they had created, of its longevity, of its

achievements, of its culture. They looked down on people who apparently lived as all human beings once had, as animals. Then in the Neolithic Age when agriculture and cities emerged on the ancient Near Eastern landscape in cities like Jericho in modern Israel to Uruk where Gilgamesh reigned. Biologically the Martu may have been human, meaning if a Sumerian and Martu mated a child would be born, but culturally they were animals. Therefore the Sumerians acted to prevent these people from overrunning their land: they built a wall to keep them out, a true line in the sand intended to keep out the riff raff and to preserve the civilized way of life.



Code of Hammurabi

The wall failed to keep the Martu out. In fact the poem ends with the declaration by the Sumerian woman that she will marry Martu! The Martu settled along the Euphrates River particularly in a city called Babylon. That city eventually became the cultural center of the land as the Sumerian cities died out. The Martu proceeded to adopt the ways of their Sumerian predecessors, to learn their culture, to tell their stories, and to link themselves to great Sumerian kings of the past such as through the Sumerian King List, a primary source document which contains a reference to the Flood. The Sumerian culture of the 3rd millennium BCE became the Martu culture of the 2nd millennium BCE. We know about the former in part because the latter perpetuated their legacy and hallowed their traditions.

Today we usually don't speak of the Martu. The Sumerians had no vowels so *mrt* sometimes is written in English as *martu*. Frequently it is written as Amorite, a name that may be more familiar. The most famous Amorite or Martu is Hammurabi who adopted the Sumerian practice of promulgating law codes. Hammurabi appears in every textbook on the ancient Near East but his background as a descendent of illegal aliens who were regarded as animals is never mentioned.

## Participants' "Review"

**To: Dena Davis, Semitic Museum, Harvard University**

I'm not sure if you will remember me or not, but I came to the recent Mesopotamia Workshop co-sponsored by IHARE. It was really outstanding! I have been to so many workshops which ate up lots of time to yield only a few helpful hints. Those make this one stand out even more, because I gained so much! Every part was well presented and totally fascinating to me. You also thrilled my non-educator friend, Michelle. She not only raved about how interesting the material was, but about how friendly and open everyone was (unlike many of her own professional workshops). I wanted you to know your hard work was appreciated!

— Patsy Beaver  
Windham Middle School, Windham, NH

**To: Dena Davis, Semitic Museum, Harvard University**

Thank you so much for an amazing experience. As a Global History teacher with little training in the Ancient World, this workshop was inspirational. I hope to return for more great lectures and activities. Special thanks for your great hospitality.

— Jenn McDonald  
Fayetteville-Manlius High School, Manlius, NY

**To: Dena Davis, Semitic Museum, Harvard University**

I wanted to thank you for the excellent workshop this past weekend. Both Katie Meislahn and I talked about how it invigorated our hunger to return to archaeology. I would love to learn more about the possible opportunity to participate in Harvard's dig at Askalon, Israel. Once again thanks for an inspirational weekend.

— William Reilly  
Bethlehem Central Middle School, Bethlehem, NY



Participants standing in the courtyard of the 2-story Israel House



Israel House at the Semitic Museum

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