

## Start a “history harvest” allowing university students to work with their locality in documenting family and community history.

*Audience for this recommendation:*

Educators; Civic leaders; State Humanities Councils.

“History harvests” are an idea innovated by historians at the University of Nebraska--Lincoln (UNL). William G. Thomas III, Patrick D. Jones, and Andrew Witmer write:

“We have involved our students in this exciting and rewarding work at the intersection of digital history and experiential learning by organizing History Harvests—community events in which students scan or photograph items of historical interest, brought in by local institutions and residents, for online display. Since the project started in 2010 at [UNL], these events have generated significant community involvement and media interest and proved extremely popular with our students, who have described their participation as challenging, rewarding, and transformative.” ([“History Harvests”](#))

WE1S’s study of the media shows that the humanities appear to the public to be siloed in the academic world (see [KF-5-2](#)). Structured activities for students organized through curricula that bring them into the community to gather materials and then learn to research, document, and digitize them are an effective way for the humanities to bridge from the academy to society, including to the communities of first-generation students, racial/ethnic groups, and immigrants whose heritage is crucial to local and national history.

### Try this:

→ **Follow the step-by-step suggestions originated by the U. Nebraska--Lincoln historians for planning history harvests,**

**integrating them with courses for higher-ed students, and working with the community.** (See [“History Harvests”](#))



**Crop harvest, Jefferson County, Oregon** (Gary Halvorson, Oregon State Archives)

→ **Collaborate with research librarians and university scholars across disciplines to instruct students in how to document oral histories and artifacts.**

→ **Work with digital humanities scholars to show students how to digitize, annotate (using digital metadata standards), deposit, and share their “harvest.”**

→ **Form teams of students to design social-media and civic campaigns to circulate the results of harvests back to the community for local events, schools, libraries and museums, etc.**

#### Resources

**Research backing up this recommendation:** [KF-5-2](#)

\* Thomas, William G., Patrick D. Jones, and Witmer, Andrew. [“History Harvests: What Happens When Students Collect and Digitize the People’s History?”](#) (2013)

\* Georgini, Sara. [“Spring at the ‘History Harvest’](#)” (2013)

\* [History Harvests](#) site (examples of harvests & reference materials, course syllabi, etc.)

\* **Related materials:** WE1S Bibliography: [Public Humanities](#)