

SETTLING THE MAINE WILDERNESS



Moses Greenleaf,

His Maps, and His Household of Faith, 1777-1834

Osher Map Library & Smith Center for Cartographic Education

www.usm.maine.edu/maps/home.html

Pre-Teaching Activity

Suppose you were given an opportunity to create an ideal life for yourself, in a community that was exactly as you'd like it to be! You can decide who and what would be in your new "town," incorporating services and resources that match your own needs and values. What would your perfect community look like? What resources would you need to survive and be happy?

You, the official town planner, are going to make a preliminary plan for the perfect community that will support life as you think it should be. You may sketch the perfect community, write a description of it, or make a list of all the key components. Be prepared to share your ideas and drawing with your classmates, explaining the specifics of your town. And, don't forget to give the town a name!

*** NOTE***

Although this activity may seem elementary, we urge you to provide time for students to complete it. The activity will introduce learners to the concept of community planning, and will prompt them to think about their basic needs and core values. As students share their rough plans, several ideas and opinions will emerge-- perhaps the merits of sustainable farming, organic gardening, recreational opportunities, health care, social and civic organizations, public education, or religious institutions. In later lessons, you can ask students to discuss the parallels between Moses Greenleaf's vision and work and the challenges they will face as they create their own ideal lives.

Segue to the Lessons:

We are going to learn about a man who actually did have an opportunity to create a town that matched his vision of what life should be like. In 1812, Moses Greenleaf became a land agent for William Dodd, a land owner from Boston. Moses moved to the interior region of the District of Maine, to settle a township that would enable him to live the kind of life he wanted for himself and his family. He believed that people could and should fashion a life that incorporated the things that they most valued, and he saw the land north of the Piscataquis River as a perfect place to create what he termed a "household of faith." In doing so, Moses affirmed Maine's promising future, and became one of the earliest promoters of what would become the state of