

American Studies 335
New England
Roger Williams University
CAS 228
M, W. & F 11:00-12:00
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Week of September 22, 2008

For *Monday, September 22*

Having begun our study of New England with a brief look at the English who settled here first, we turn our attention to the kind of place they built once they got here. The New England Village is perhaps the signature landmark on our cultural landscape, and we'll explore its development.

I know that you're busily working on your first paper (you are, aren't you?) so I'm not going to give an extensive reading assignment for this day, but I do want to get a look into the next text for the course, Joseph S. Wood's *The New England Village*.

Read, in *The New England Village*,

Introduction: "As a City upon a Hill". pp. 1 - 8

There are some important concepts here, though there are not a lot of pages to consider. Wood's general thesis is contained on pp. 3-5, commencing with the paragraph which begins "the story". It is important to note how Wood interprets the creation of the "Village Myth". The idealized village which features in popular art is a conscious creation of later times (including ours), and not the historic "real thing". You may need to consider what a myth is, to get the full impact of what Wood is trying to say. A myth is sometimes called an "operant truth"--something which is not objectively true, but we act upon it as if it was true. (If you follow the link, scroll down to the American Heritage Dictionary definition, meanings 3 and 4. They're closest to what Wood and I mean

My guess is that most if not all of you will be encountering your first cultural geography book in Wood's monograph. It shouldn't cause you too much trouble. The language is modern (which should come as a relief), it is illustrated (and the illustrations are important), and the terminology is not too technical, though it may take some getting used to, in the beginning. So will the types of charts and maps Wood uses. **You will need to have your text with you each and every class! Starting with this one. I want to introduce some of the kinds of maps Wood uses, and I can't do that unless you have examples in front of your nose.**

For *Wednesday, September 24*

Read, in Joseph Wood, *The New England Village*,

Chapter 1, The Colonial Encounter With the Land, pp. 9 - 51.

Notes on Reading.

This chapter is longer than most of Wood's chapters, so give yourself ample time to absorb it. There are a number of concepts to acquaint yourselves with, including "Cultural Ecology" (p. 10), the land types mentioned (*intervale*, *marsh zones*, *meadow zones*, etc.), the "Town System", (p. 38 and following), and the distinction between "**nucleated**" and "**dispersed**" systems of settlement. Understand, too, the concept of "*settlement by replication*", and the reason(s) why it became the principal process of development of New England throughout the colonial and early national eras.

There are a lot of illustrations in this chapter, and they need careful study...especially the types with which you are less familiar. You will find it helpful to use the photographs in conjunction with the topographic maps, as these will help you translate the map symbols. Make sure you understand what an "*Isochronic Map*" is (p. 35). understanding the prefix "iso" will help, and this will also make the topographic maps easier to understand

Wood continues his general practice of stating his chapter thesis at the outset of the chapter (pp. 10-12). Check your understanding of it by seeing if you can paraphrase it in your own words.

For *Friday, September 26*

Treasure Hunt Time. After having read *Wood*, I want to look through the various websites I've provided in the *Documents* section on Blackboard to see if you can find one (or more) illustrations of the kind of thing about which he is speaking. Upload the illustration to your journal, and write an informal paragraph about what the picture illustrates or why you find it interesting.