Journal of Geography

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjog20>

Field Work in Geography

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Published online: 20 May 2008.

To cite this article: Arthur P. Irving (1905) Field Work in Geography, Journal of Geography, 4:7, 288-289, DOI: [10.1080/00221340508986045](https://doi.org/10.1080/00221340508986045)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00221340508986045>

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outline map suggests nothing and the winds are not favorable to the location of a city at this place. There is the conclusion that places may develop in spite of harborage and in the face of unfavorable winds.

The above plan of map reading is carried out in detail under some headings while under others suggestions only are made. There is scarcely a limit to the expansion of such an idea. In part the article will offer nothing new. The study of maps and the extent of map work is largely the outcome of the individual decision of the teacher. It cannot be done safely by a teacher who approaches the task in uncertainty. Much more than is here presented may be done by a teacher sure of her steps and careful of her decisions. Some of it should certainly be woven here and there into the study of the grand divisions.

FIELD WORK IN GEOGRAPHY

BY ARTHUR P. IRVING

Buckingham School, Springfield, Mass.

THESE trips by classes of the Springfield, Mass., schools have been found very attractive and profitable. No attempt is here made to designate the schools that took the trips.

A ninth grade class walked a mile or more after school one day to the Connecticut River. There was an unusual amount of snow on the ground and the ice was just beginning to soften. Everything indicated a freshet in a few days. The pupils observed the conditions and got all the preliminary data for a study of the annual rush of water. For several days the newspapers were watched to learn of the progress of the river and a new interest was awakened. Unfortunately for this study the snow melted gradually and the river never made so little fuss over its spring duty.

At another season a ninth grade left the school at 3 o'clock. The street railway allowed half fare so the class of forty pupils went to the lower end of the city. The river had begun to drop from its high water mark. A special study was made of the muddy current and of deposit. Fertile fields along the river were shown as a result of this deposit. A long bridge over the river at this point offered a fine opportunity for observation. This trip took about two hours and cost five cents apiece.

One Saturday in June the class of eighty or more had a geographical picnic. A ride of twelve miles on the electrics brought us to the foot of a range of hills known as the Wilbraham Mountains. The walk from there up to the top of the range, 900 feet high, was merry with the joy of being out in the free country. The day was spent in a large grove of chestnut trees. A great variety of flowers were picked and the woods were thor-

oughly explored. The search for a spring for drinking purposes revealed many facts about drainage. The chief purpose of this trip was to show the pupils the broad expanse of the Connecticut Valley and to make real to them high and low land. It was also noticeable that the soil upon the heights was very thin and full of ledges while that about our homes is sandy. A ridge of trap rock that cuts across the valley above Holyoke was clearly seen. Perhaps the best lesson of the day was the very strong wind that blew up from the valley all day. This was so strong that the lunch had to be eaten in a sheltered place. When the descent into the valley was made a quiet condition of the atmosphere was found. This was a great day for the children. The expense was twenty cents apiece. Contour maps of the section were taken along.

Trolley rides by different schools are common here. Often the object is simply for pleasure but usually there is a definite object in view. A very efficient system of electric cars makes it possible to go all over the valley and view at little cost many points of geographical value. The most ambitious trip of this sort has been made yearly for three years by seventh grade pupils from three different schools. The trip is thirty-three miles in length and is full of historical and geographical interest. Two large cars are filled. The principal of one of the schools has charge of a car, an appointed monitor is at the outside end of the seat and every other detail is carefully worked out beforehand. A start is made from the city at eight o'clock. After crossing the river two or three times the party halts for dinner at the foot of Sugarloaf Mountain, a sandstone bluff. The lunch has been brought by the children in boxes. A wait is made here long enough to allow all to climb the mountain and get a good view of the river and country. The rest of the trip is of historical interest chiefly. Old Deerfield, famous in Indian wars, is thoroughly inspected just at a time in the lives of the children when it means the most. A total ride of sixty-six miles on the electric cars and the care of the large crowds of children is a feat that most of us shrink from. But it has been done for three years without a mishap and seems to have become a fixed thing in the school program. The cost to the children is fifty cents.

Attempts have been made to have an excursion down the river to salt water. This means a trip on the steam cars and on a boat but as yet the transportation rates are prohibitive.

A map is the best and most accurate means of expressing certain geographic facts. Children should learn to read a map as readily as a newspaper, that they may use maps intelligently in later years.