




**MALAGA ISLAND  
FRAGMENTED LIVES**

MAINE STATE MUSEUM

\*Small wonder Maine wishes to forget Malaga.  
It is still a bad nightmare in the minds of those  
who knew it well.  
— Lewiston Evening Journal, 1835

John East, Malaga Island, Maine, circa 1810 / Courtesy of Peter Roberts



# **MALAGA ISLAND FRAGMENTED LIVES**



## **A curriculum for middle school students**

-developed from the research for the *Malaga Island, Fragmented Lives*  
exhibit, on view at the Maine State Museum

May 19, 2012 through May 26, 2013

## **Education materials generously funded by:**

Emanuel and Pauline A. Lerner Foundation and Davis Family Foundation

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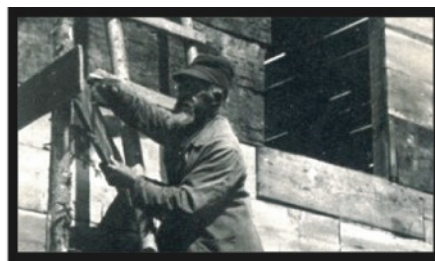
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# MALAGA ISLAND FRAGMENTED LIVES



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### Purpose:

Collectively, the lesson plans encourage a comparison of fiction and non-fiction materials about the historic events that occurred on Malaga Island, Maine, encourage skill-building in critical thinking and source evaluation, explore Malaga's place in a complex ecosystem, and strengthen understanding of the scientific process. All curricular materials are designed to assist students in achieving Maine Learning Requirements and Common Core Standards at the middle school level. Refer to the Bridging Document for details.

### Lesson Plan Sequence

This curriculum has been designed to support cross-disciplinary teaching (language arts, social studies, science) and to allow teachers to adapt to various time constraints that they experience in each school district. Towards that end, all teachers are encouraged to begin with Lesson 1; the lessons that follow can be used in a sequence, isolated and used selectively, or used collaboratively by multiple teachers.

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Lesson 1: | Introduction to Malaga Island: Primary Sources & Fragmented Lives                                |
| Lesson 2: | Visual Literacy and Images of Malaga Island  |
| Lesson 3: | Media Literacy, Citizenry, and Conflicting Accounts of Malaga Island                             |
| Lesson 4: | Going Beyond "Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy": Revisiting Malaga Island with Civil Action |
| Lesson 5: | Archaeology and Environment on Malaga Island: Understanding Scientific Process                   |

### Summary

Malaga Island is located at the mouth of the New Meadows River in Phippsburg. Bear Island lies 100 yards to the west and the small fishing village of Sebasco is about 300 yards to the east. Like much of the Maine coast, 42-acre Malaga Island is rocky and rugged. The shell beach on the north end was the location of several settlements, beginning with Native Americans who inhabited the island within the last 1,000 years. Little is known about how these first inhabitants lived; considerably more is known about Malaga's later residents – the mixed-heritage community that occupied the island's north end from the 1860s to 1912.

The probable origins of Malaga Island's historic community trace back to one African American man, Benjamin Darling. He purchased Horse Island (now known as Harbor Island and located near Malaga Island) in 1794. Darling's descendants and their families soon settled on numerous islands throughout the New Meadows River. Although records are not clear, Henry Griffin and Fatima Darling Griffin,

with their family, were most likely the first to live on Malaga Island, setting up house on the east side in the early 1860s.

In the early 1900s, the Malaga Island community found itself caught in a time of great change for Maine. A poor economy, the decline of the fishing and ship building industries, a boom in real estate prices, and thriving social reform efforts all affected Malaga. At the same time, the island residents became victims of the eugenics movement, a popular theory that the poor, immoral, or criminal were born that way due to heredity. The eugenics movement was widely accepted as fact throughout the early 1900s and included many advocates such as heads of state, teachers, religious missionaries, journalists, and scientists. The press publicized a common belief that the only way to help Malaga Island's residents, and improve tourism and property values on the Maine coast, was to dismantle the community.

Christian missionaries from Malden, Massachusetts, Captain George and Lucy Lane, began to visit Malaga Island during the summer of 1906. The Lanes focused their missionary efforts on educating the children of Malaga Island. They actively raised funds to build a permanent school on the island and help pay for food and clothing.



Although efforts were well underway to improve living conditions on Malaga Island, the notoriety of the island community in statewide and regional newspapers gave Phippsburg a bad reputation, just as the tourism industry was beginning to grow in Maine. Newspapers put forth commonly held beliefs that the individuals living on Malaga Island were degenerate and needed assistance in order to survive. The stories of Malaga Island, and the actions of both the town of Phippsburg and State of Maine to evict the community, were reported throughout the New England region and in nationwide publications such as Harper's Magazine.

As early as the 1890s, efforts were underway in Phippsburg to rid itself of the Malaga Island community. Legal disputes continued until Maine's state government became involved. Governor Frederick Plaisted visited Malaga Island in 1911, along with his Executive Council, to see the island for himself. During his visit, Plaisted remarked, "the best plan would be to burn down the shacks with all their filth. Certainly the conditions are not creditable to our state, and we ought not to have such things near our front door, and I do not think that a like condition can be found in Maine, although there are some pretty bad localities elsewhere." (Brunswick Times Record, July 21, 1911)

In 1911, the State of Maine ruled that Malaga Island was owned by the Perry family of Phippsburg, who, in turn, filed papers to have the islanders evicted. On December 9, 1911, a doctor and member of



Governor Plaisted's Executive Council signed papers committing eight Malaga Island residents to the Maine School for the Feeble Minded.

Early in 1912, the State of Maine purchased Malaga Island from the Perry family for \$400. Residents were told they must vacate the island by July 1, 1912. No alternative homes were provided or suggested, but when the state representative arrived on Malaga Island on July 1st, he found all the houses were gone – dismantled and removed by the residents themselves. To complete the eviction, the state exhumed the cemetery remains on Malaga Island, combining seventeen individuals into five caskets, and moved them to the cemetery at the Maine School for the Feeble Minded.

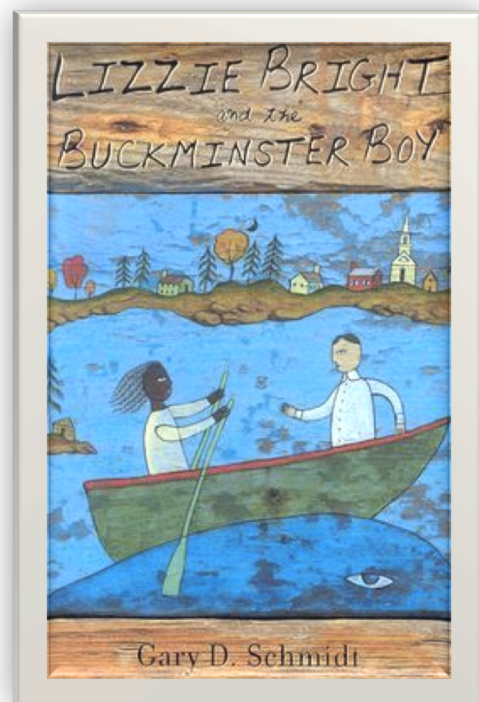
For decades, generations of descendants felt the need to hide their Malaga Island ancestry. The term "Malagite" became a racial slur commonly used on Maine's coast. Descendants experienced prejudice and slander through the years since 1912, causing many to deny any connection to the notorious island. As time passed, attitudes shifted among both the Phippsburg community and descendants. Now scattered across the nation, current generations are discovering their family history and connecting with one another through social media.



Malaga Island offers a rare example of an ethnically-diverse, historic, coastal community where the homesteads of specific families are known; this has allowed U. of Southern Maine archaeologists to excavate house sites and add their understanding of island life to our study of the tragic events that transpired there. Documentarians from the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies gathered family memories from Malaga descendants, further enriching this story. The Malaga Island: Fragment Lives exhibit marked 100 years after islanders' lives became sensationalized in local/regional news and government reports, and residents were evicted.

The research conducted for developing this exhibit offers middle school teachers and students an ideal opportunity to pursue the intersection of social studies, language arts, and science in Maine. These curricular materials were designed to use in conjunction with the Maine State Museum's "Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives" exhibit; however, they are also designed to stand on their own, using primary sources (provided here or available online) or the historical fiction novel "Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy."

In 2011, the Maine State Museum received permission from Phippsburg resident Peter Roberts to use his extensive collection of historic



photographs of Malaga Island residents. Following years of archaeological excavation by the University of Southern Maine, in 2011 the Maine Coast Heritage Trust donated its Malaga Island collection to the Maine State Museum for preservation and exhibition. In addition, research for the exhibit uncovered documents from the Maine State Archives and the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Collectively, these comprise the primary sources or “evidence” available for student inquiry.

#### **Online Teacher Resources – Malaga Island:**

Malaga Island Radio Documentary “A Story Best Left Untold” - [www.malagaislandmaine.org](http://www.malagaislandmaine.org)

Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives exhibit -

[www.mainestatemuseum.org/exhibits/malaga\\_island\\_fragmented\\_lives/](http://www.mainestatemuseum.org/exhibits/malaga_island_fragmented_lives/)

Maine Coast Heritage Trust - [www.mccht.org](http://www.mccht.org)

Maine Memory Network “Institutional Care: From ‘Feeble-Minded’ to ‘Disabled’” -

[www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/301/slideshow/307/display?use\\_mmn=&prev\\_object\\_id=567&prev\\_object=page&slide\\_num=1](http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/301/slideshow/307/display?use_mmn=&prev_object_id=567&prev_object=page&slide_num=1)

Maine Memory Network – Malaga Islanders with missionary image -

[www.mainememory.net/search?keywords=malaga&submit=SEARCH](http://www.mainememory.net/search?keywords=malaga&submit=SEARCH)

Maine Memory Network – “1870-1920 The End of the Ocean Highway” -

<http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/905/page/1316/display>

#### **Online Instructional Resources:**

- Teaching Tolerance [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)
- Facing History and Ourselves [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)
- Library of Congress’ Teaching With Primary Sources Program [www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/)
- American Memory Project [www.memory.loc.gov/learn/](http://www.memory.loc.gov/learn/)
- Primary Source Learning [www.primarysourcelearning.org/](http://www.primarysourcelearning.org/)
- Smithsonian Sources: Resources for Teaching American History [www.smithsoniansource.org](http://www.smithsoniansource.org)
- The National Archives [www.archives.gov/education/](http://www.archives.gov/education/)

#### **Books**

Seeking History: Teaching With Primary Sources in Grades 4-6 (2000) Monica Edinger. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Making History: A Guide to Historical Research Through the National History Day Program (2006) National History Day (The Making History Set includes: A Guide to Historical Research, The How to Create a Historical Documentary, How to Create a Historical Paper, How to...)

Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms (2011) Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Maine’s Visible Black History: The First Chronicle of Its People (2006) H.H. Price and Gerald E. Talbot. Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House Publishers.

Choosing to Participate (2009) Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc. Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc.

# MALAGA ISLAND FRAGMENTED LIVES



## Bridging Document Malaga Island Curriculum to Maine Learning Results and CCSS

The Maine State Museum developed the Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives curriculum in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education. Consequently, the learning objectives of the Malaga Island curriculum meet both Maine Learning Results and the Common Core State Standards. The Department of Education clarifies that:

“The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects **do not replace** the Maine Social Studies Learning Results, but, rather, complement them. CCSS support a shared responsibility for students’ literacy development and emphasize that, while students learn to read and write in ELA, they apply and develop specific literacy skills through engagement in social studies content.”

(<http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ss/standards2.html>).

Adopted by the Maine Legislature in March of 2011, the CCSS for ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects and Math provide a vision for what it means to be a literate person, prepare all students for college/career, and develop literacy skills in all subject areas. CCSS maintains that Social Studies students should be provided with authentic opportunities to apply and develop their literacy skills through engagement in social studies content.

According to Kristie Littlefield, one initiative of CCSS is to avoid shying away from challenging texts, texts with more complexity, and primary sources. This entails building skills of interpretation - who wrote this, where did it come from, what is the purpose/bias/perspective implicit or explicit, how do multiple sources align or conflict? According to Library of Congress' Teaching with Primary Sources:

"Primary sources are integral to helping students achieve the CCSS. The standards require students to digest and apply information using discipline-specific skills, such as analysis, comparing sources, persuasive writing, and research. Students generate questions, take and organize notes, find, analyze, and cite sources. Additionally, learning new content vocabulary is essential, as is the ability to compare historical interpretations and form hypotheses."

Reading, Writing, Speaking/Listening, and Language are the four strands of College and Career Readiness. These strands integrate well with both social studies and science instruction. The chart below indicates how the Malaga Island lesson plans, respectively, support CCR anchors and the MLRs. CCSS for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 parallel the CCSS ELA Standards. Both use the use College Career Ready Anchor Standards and include grade span standards particular to the discipline(s).

CCSS and MLR Standards – Language Arts, Social Studies, Science	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
CCR Reading 1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from text both primary and secondary sources		✓	✓	✓	
CCR Reading 3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution (e.g., write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events).				✓	
CCR Reading 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone	✓		✓	✓	
CCR Reading 7: Integrate visual information (charts, graphs, photographs, maps) with other information in print.		✓			✓
CCR Reading 8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgement.	✓	✓	✓		
CCR Reading 9: Compare/contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics e.g. Analyze relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.			✓	✓	
CCR Writing 1: Write argument to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.		✓	✓		
CCR Writing 7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.				✓	
CCR Writing 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility of each source and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism			✓		
CCR Writing 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.			✓	✓	
CCR Language 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meanings of words and phrases.	✓			✓	
CCR History: Compare and contrast the reliability of information received from multiple sources (e.g. newspapers, radio or TV, biography, historical narrative) to assess an historical issue.			✓	✓	
CCR Civics and Government 5: Evaluate the role of the media and public opinion in US politics, including ways the government and media influence public opinion			✓		
MLR Social Studies A1-3. <i>Researching, Developing Positions, Making Decisions, and Taking Action on Current Social Studies Issues using Social Studies Knowledge and Skills</i>			✓	✓	
MLR Social Studies D2. . <i>Individual, Cultural, International, and Global Connections in Geography</i> Students understand geographic aspects of unity and diversity in the community, Maine, and regions of the United States and the World, including Maine Native American communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students will learn how geographic features such as river courses and coastlines unite communities and regions and support diversity</li> <li>• students will discover the impact of a geographic feature, such as a river, upon the daily life of a community</li> <li>• students will learn how the geographic position of Malaga Island shaped the island community's experience with the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> c. tourist industry</li> </ul>	✓			✓	



<p>MLR Social Studies E1. <i>Historical Concepts, Themes and Patterns</i> - Students understand various major eras in the history of the community, Maine, and the United States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students learn about how Maine experienced the development of the industrial United States, 1865-1914</li> <li>• students analyze past human experience based upon various historical evidence, print and non-print</li> </ul>			✓	✓	
<p>MLR Economics C1. <i>Economic Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns</i>- Students understand personal economics and the basis of the economies of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students will learn how entrepreneurs and other producers of goods and services in Casco Bay helped satisfy the entertainment/leisure/educational wants and needs of consumers in a market economy by using natural, human, and capital resources.</li> <li>• Production and exchange of goods</li> <li>• Commercial and subsistence fishing</li> </ul>	✓			✓	
<p>MLR Civics B3. <i>Individual, Cultural, International, and Global Connections in Civics and Government</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students understand political and civic aspects of unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and various world cultures including Maine Native Americans.</li> <li>• Explain basic constitutional, political, and civic aspects of historical and/or current issues that involve unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and other nations.</li> </ul>			✓	✓	
<p>MLR Science A1. <i>Unifying Themes - Systems</i> – Students explain interactions between parts that make up whole man-made and natural things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students learn how riverine and marine ecosystems are interconnected</li> <li>• Students learn how fisheries regulation intends to protect an ecosystem</li> </ul>	✓				
<p>MLR Science B1. <i>Skills and Traits of Scientific Inquiry</i> – Students plan, conduct, analyze data from, and communicate results of investigations, including fair tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students pose investigable questions and seek answers from reliable sources of scientific information and from their own investigations;</li> <li>• Students use simple equipment, tools, and appropriate metric units of measurement to gather data and create a histogram;</li> <li>• Student use data to construct and support a reasonable explanation;</li> <li>• Communicate scientific procedures and explanations</li> </ul>					✓
<p>MLR Science C2. <i>Understandings About Science and Technology</i> – Students describe why people use science and technology and how scientists and engineers work</p>					✓
<p>MLR Science C3. <i>Science, Technology, and Society</i> – Students identify and describe the influences of science and technology on people and the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students describe how the archaeological excavation of house sites on Malaga Island has changed how the historic community</li> </ul>					✓

is represented					
MLR <i>Language Arts A1. Reading - Interconnected Elements</i> – Students read and draw conclusions from texts, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, by applying their knowledge and strategies of comprehension, vocabulary, alphabets, and fluency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students read age-appropriate essays provided and use the Vocabulary Worksheets</li> </ul>	✓				✓
MLR <i>Language Arts A3. . Reading - Informational Texts</i> – Students read, paraphrase, and summarize information texts, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, for different purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students read primary sources, including historic articles from turn-of-the-century Maine newspapers</li> </ul>			✓		
MLR <i>Language Arts B1 Writing – Interconnected Elements</i> – Students use a writing process with an emphasis on the development of a central idea, for a variety of audiences and purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students use the Graphic Organizer provided to write a letter to the Governor as though they were a Maine citizen in 1912</li> <li>students write a newspaper article using various sources</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓	
MLR <i>Language Arts B2 Writing Narrative</i> – Students write narratives that relate events, ideas, observations, or recollections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students write their own version of a part of the Lizzie Bright novel</li> <li>students write creatively from historic photographs</li> <li>students will summarize interpretations of their archaeological data</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓	✓

# MALAGA ISLAND FRAGMENTED LIVES



## Lesson 4 Going Beyond *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*: Revisiting Malaga Island with Civil Action

### Instructional Resources

*Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* (2004, Clarion Books) – Gary D. Schmidt

Student Readings from Lesson 1 (if they have not yet been used)

Fact and Fiction Vocabulary Sheet

Spotting Stereotypes Graphic Organizer

Primary sources (provided)

- Archival “Pauper Records”
- Photographs, historic newspaper

Civil Action Letter Writing

- Persuasive Writing Strategy Guide <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/persuasive-writing-30142.html>
- Persuasion Map Planning Sheet  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson875/PersuasionMapPlanning.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson875/PersuasionMapPlanning.pdf)
- Persuasion Map interactive  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion\\_map/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/)
- Online Letter Generator  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter\\_generator/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter_generator/)
- Persuasive Letter Rubric  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson875/PersuasiveLetterRubric.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson875/PersuasiveLetterRubric.pdf)

### Teacher Resources

Teaching About Stereotypes <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/understanding-stereotypes.cfm>

Uncomfortable History

[http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/1418/page/2082/display?use\\_mmn=](http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/1418/page/2082/display?use_mmn=)

African Americans in Maine

[http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/793/page/1203/display?use\\_mmn=](http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/793/page/1203/display?use_mmn=)

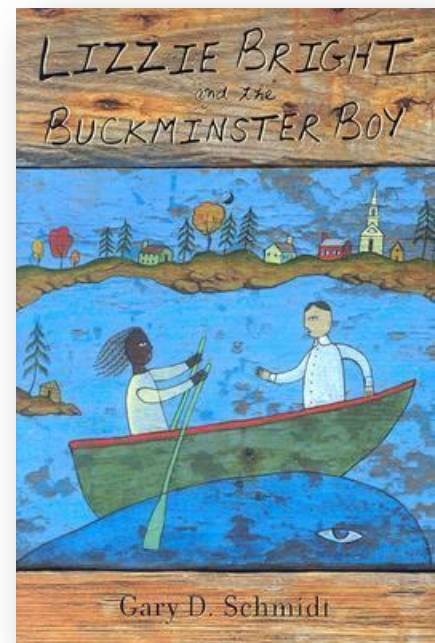
Malaga Island History Revisited by Descendants

[http://www.coastaljournal.com/website/index.php?view=article&id=2833:malaga-island-history-revisited-atdescendants-gathering&option=com\\_content&Itemid=100070](http://www.coastaljournal.com/website/index.php?view=article&id=2833:malaga-island-history-revisited-atdescendants-gathering&option=com_content&Itemid=100070)

### Background Discussion

Maine State Museum Curriculum

Gary D. Schmidt is an American author of children's books, both fiction and nonfiction, including two young adult novels. A professor of English at Calvin College, Schmidt was awarded the Newbery Honor for *Lizzie Bright* in 2005, among other awards; it remains a popular teaching resource for both English Language Arts and Social Studies classes. Schmidt was inspired to write this book when vacationing with family near Phippsburg, Maine; there he heard about the community of people with diverse ethnic backgrounds who were forced from their island home in 1912. His tale is based upon factual history, but elements of it were fictionalized for dramatic effect. *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* provides an excellent opportunity to pursue an understanding of the difference between fact and fiction and also to understand that the challenges of segregation and prejudice were an experience in the North as well as in the South, even during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is also an opportunity to reflect upon the causes of poverty related to economic and ecological change (see Lesson 5).



**Note: This lesson plan presumes that students have completed Lesson 1.**

### Essential Questions

- What is the difference between fact and fiction? Between plot and history?
- Where is Malaga Island and what is significant about its history?
- How do you compare historical fiction with primary sources?
- What are stereotypes and how can we recognize prejudice in a text?
- How does the novel depict racism in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Maine?
- How might civil action in 1912 have changed the history of what happened to the Malaga Island community?
- How do you write a persuasive letter to a government official?

### Plan of Instruction

1. Have students work on the vocabulary worksheet and discuss the differences between **fact** and **fiction**, **plot**, and **history**.
2. Encourage a close literary analysis of **stereotypes** in the novel by doing the following:
  - Assign individual chapters or page ranges to different groups of students;
  - Using the Spotting Stereotypes graphic organizer, ask each group to focus on passages about Malaga Island residents in their specific chapter. What adjectives and verbs are used to describe them? What tone is conveyed? Repeat this exercise for the mainland characters.
  - Compare and contrast the two sets of data. Engage students in conversations about differences in these representations. In what ways has the author revealed how he feels about **prejudice**?
3. Compare *Lizzie Bright* as literature with primary source documents that document what life was like in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for Malaga Islanders in Maine. Encourage students to compare and contrast passages from *Lizzie Bright* with primary sources. Tell students: *Let's compare the historical fiction and the history.*

**Fact vs. Fiction Comparison #1: look at the passage below from p. 178 of *Lizzie Bright* that depicts the eviction as though it was a nighttime mob that razed and set fire to the Malaga community:**

Now compare this fictional passage with two primary sources below, a newspaper account on the left

His high above town, Turner could see lanterns moving up and down and across Malaga—some in a line down by the coast, some clustered more toward the island's far side, blinking on and off and on again as they passed stands of trees. There must have been fifteen, twenty of them. Then the lanterns on the far side seemed to come together and grow suddenly brighter, until Turner realized that it wasn't lanterns he was seeing—it was a full fire shining a weird orange on the island's snow.

Then the door at the bottom of the stairs slammed shut so hard that the glass rattled around him.

He abandoned the starlight and scrambled down the dark steepness, shouting like the enraged Aeneas until he fell against the door, which did not yield. He stood and pounded, then sat back against the stairs and kicked at it with both feet.

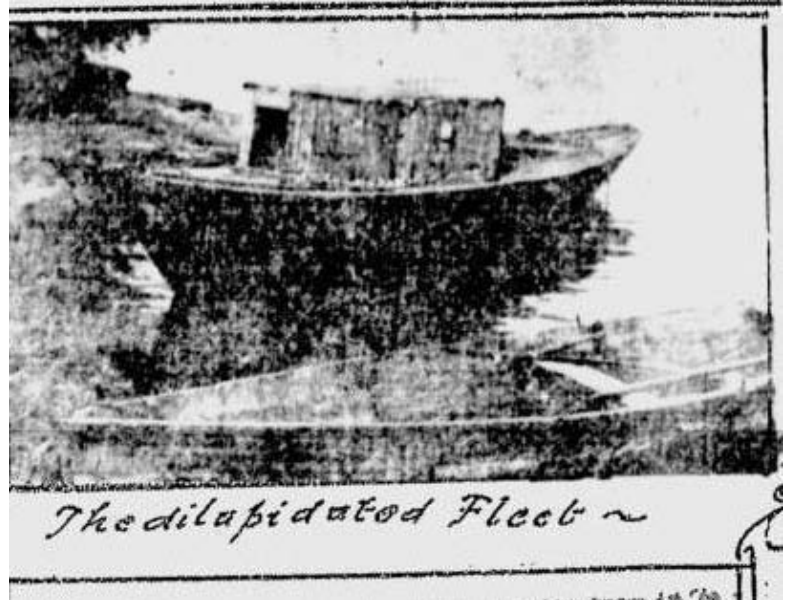
"Strike three," he heard a voice say on the other side of the door. "You're out." Then footsteps down the stairs.

Turner pounded again, but the door had been bolted.

Breathless, Turner ran back up into the light of the cupola. Out on Malaga Island, the orange light flared higher, and a line

and a photograph on the right. These sources point toward Malaga residents exerting some control over the manner in which they responded to the forced eviction. The excerpt from the Bath Independent documents that Malaga resident – Jim McKenney – disassembled his house and moved it by boat to another location. The photograph on the right with the somewhat sarcastic caption "the dilapidated fleet" documents the boat used as a house boat when the Tripp family left Malaga; several subsequent newspaper accounts document that the mother of the Tripp family died in a storm with her children tragically clinging to her.

"Uncle Jim McKenney is taking down his house today and Professor Eason will go next. If you know of any place where I can crawl in with my wife and five kids and my old peg-leg please let me know." (Nelson Leighton McKenney, submitted to the *Bath Independent*, March 9, 1912)



- **Ask your students to reflect:** How would it have changed the book if the author had followed the actual history of the eviction, rather than having the plot climax with the mob scene?



- **Fact vs. Fiction Comparison #2:** What does the novel say about sources of food for Malaga Islanders (e.g., scenes with Lizzie clamming). Compare these scenes with two types of primary sources – artifacts and historic documents. Artifacts include clamshells, the bones of ducks, deer, and other mammals, teacups, fish hooks, spoons, and glass bottles. Historic documents include this receipt for goods purchased by the State of Maine for Malaga resident Eliza Griffin showing purchases from sausage and pork to potato, oil, and soap. What can we learn from these primary sources tell us about what islanders ate and their need for charitable support?

Sabasco June 3 1907

M. State of Maine

To W. Ridley Dr.

Terms. Goods del'd. Eliza Griffin

\$1.50 per week

Billheads N° 90

June & July	Oil .08	12	13	29	25	35	13	1	26	
	Sausage	Potato	fish	beef	Medicine	tea				
	Pork	24	25	15	25	25	25	1	32	
	Beef	15	25	10	25	25	13			
	Salmon	23	15	25	10	25	25	1	36	
	Pork	35	12	15	13	25	25	1	50	
	Beef	108	13	12	30	25	10	1	32	
	Oil	22	10	13	30	25	10	1	36	
	Salmon	22	25	15	13	25	10	1	10	
	Pork	50	30	06	25	13	30	34	2	08
Beef	25	25	20					7	0	12 00
Paid										
F. W. Ridley										

- **Fact vs. Fiction Comparison #3:** Ask your students: *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* depicts Malaga Islanders primarily avoiding the town or sneaking around in town in order to visit people. Compare this depiction with the historic document – the store receipt of Comparison #2 -showing evidence about islanders purchasing supplies from a store. In addition, compare the novel's depiction with the button artifacts – artifacts recovered by the hundreds by archaeologists – that remain as evidence that Eliza Griffin worked as a laundress washing the laundry of mainlanders to earn money.



**For discussion or a writing assignment:** how would literary scenes involving islanders making purchases at a general store or taking in laundry to wash have changed the novel?

- **Fact vs. Fiction**  
**Comparison #4:** Identify scenes involving Lizzie's home or that imply what a home might be like on Malaga Island. Then consider the photos of the Malaga homes provided, compare and contrast with the novel.



View from a tarpaper house on Malaga Island looking toward the Phippsburg mainland, circa 1910

*Courtesy of Peter K. Roberts*



Unidentified young girl on Malaga Island, circa 1910

*Courtesy of Peter K. Roberts*

4. Discuss with students how, in the early 1900s, the relationships between African American people and Caucasian or white people were vastly different than they are today. How does the book show what race relations were like in Phippsburg, Maine in 1912? How does **racism** affect how the town elders behave? How does racism affect the behavior of islanders? What do people do (or not do) because of the prejudice that exists?
5. Help them understand that civil action plays an important role in how public officials respond to challenges. Ask students to consider: *how might things have gone differently if citizens had challenged the eviction in 1912?*
6. **Assignment:** Have students take on the role of a Maine citizen in 1912. Using instructional resources recommended, students will write persuasive letters to Maine Governor Frederick W. Plaisted. Ask students to choose to support or oppose the evacuation of Malaga Island as a citizen might have in 1912. Either way, they must describe the situation of Malaga Island residents and outline steps for action that they feel will address their situation.

**Extension Activity 1:** Consider asking students to use one or more of the primary sources as inspiration to write a new chapter or rewrite the plot of an existing chapter or the ending of the book.

**Extension Activity 2:** Ask students to consider: When Turner plays the last game of baseball, he does not hit the last pitch, even though the community members in the audience know that he had the ability to avoid a third strike. When Willis asks him why he didn't hit the ball, Turner answers: "Because everyone expects green shutters." (p. 143) What does he mean by this statement? How does the use of color on the houses relate to the themes of prejudice and "fitting in" to society?