

Field School Journals

A Guide for Writers

A requirement for all credit-seeking students in the field school is to keep a journal of fieldwork experiences. When we arrive at our initial rendezvous, everyone will be issued a composition book in which to write. Yes, you can write on your laptop and blog and Facebook and so on, but keep this handwritten journal as a detailed, blow-by-blow account of your experiences. At the end of the field school we'll ask you to turn it in, but we'll return it to you.

What Should I Write?

In general, chronicle your experiences, learning and otherwise, in the field. Tell the story, describe what you see and hear, record what you think about it. Here, too, are some specific elements to include.

1. Description, close and detailed. We are here to encounter examples of vernacular architecture. Observe and record. Make sketches and diagrams.
2. Transcription, including both pertinent comments and just interesting stuff. Listen to what people say and learn from it.
3. Narrative, the story of your encounter with things in the field. Tell the story as it unfolds.
4. Observations and comments, your own thoughts about things.

Remember that almost anything that happens is fair game. Most anything we encounter in western North Dakota is either the object of our study or part of the regional context. So scribble away.

Audience

Who are you writing for? Your fellow students, so that we learn from one another. Your instructors, who need documentation of your learning in the course. And the public, because this stuff is of public interest.