

[“Tools and Toolmaking in New England” at the 2022 Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife](#)

Announcement published by J. L. Bell on Monday, February 14, 2022

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

March 11, 2022

Location:

Massachusetts, United States

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Cultural History / Studies, Labor History / Studies, Native American History / Studies, Rural History / Studies

The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife (founded 1976) is pleased to announce the subject of this year’s conference, **“Tools and Toolmaking in New England,”** to be held in Deerfield, Massachusetts, on June 24-25, 2022, in partnership with the Early American Industries Association, Historic Deerfield, the Eric Sloan Museum, and the Public History Program at UMass.

The purpose of the Dublin Seminar is to serve as a meeting place where scholars of all kinds—academics, students, museum and library professionals, artisans, citizen historians, and committed avocational researchers—who share an interest in a specific subject can pool their knowledge and exchange ideas and methods.

The 2022 Seminar will include a keynote address, “Tool Stories,” by Steven Lubar, Professor of American Studies, History, and the History of Art and Architecture at Brown University, and author of a book in progress exploring the cultural history of tools.

Now accepting proposals for papers and presentations

The Dublin Seminar is now accepting proposals for papers and presentations that address the history and historiography of tools and toolmaking before 1900 in the region that encompasses present-day New England and adjacent areas of New York and Canada.

We encourage discussion of Indigenous Native American tools and technologies that predate colonial contact, colonial settler tools, archaeological finds, collections, and reproductions. The Seminar hopes to consider tools in the context of home, farm, and workshop in a variety of uses, including artisanal trades and settings of industrial production. Early examples of tools made and used in traditional trades and crafts employed in New England’s first mills also constitute an important area of interest.

Proposals might address any of the following questions:

- How did Indigenous people devise and adapt specific tools and technologies utilizing regional resources?

Citation: J. L. Bell. “Tools and Toolmaking in New England” at the 2022 Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife . H-Announce. 05-27-2022.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/9720028/%E2%80%9Ctools-and-toolmaking-new-england%E2%80%9D-2022-dublin-seminar-new>

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- How did Indigenous toolmakers resist, adapt, and/or incorporate European materials?
- What can the sharing and giving of tools tell us about relationships in the past?
- In what ways were tools and tool creation specific to age, gender, class, and ethnicity in New England before 1900?
- How were innovations in tool making and work processes devised, shared, and circulated among different groups?
- How did tools and their making affect lifeways and workstyles in the region?
- How did patent law and legal considerations impact tool making and tool design?
- How did small-scale tool making and use change in response to industrial systems?
- How was training in tool usage accomplished?
- How did innovations in tool making and work processes represent patterns of knowledge transfer and facilitate the adoption of new tools and methods?
- In what ways did the making and use of hand tools reflect the shift from agrarian landscapes and small farms to commercial centers and large-scale industrial systems?
- In what ways did tools lead to class stratification?
- Why and when did early tools become a focus for antiquarian collectors?
- In what ways did tools help shape, represent and/or transgress gender or other identities?

Additional topics might include:

- artisanal efforts to recover and recreate specific modes of individual tool-making
- the production and acquisition of commemorative and/or souvenir tools
- tools in children's or educational literature
- the ad hoc creation, adaptation, or application of tools
- the appearance of tools in fine or decorative arts
- tools as they are uncovered archeologically
- the hazards of tool usage, e.g. "tailor's cramp" and other conditions
- the alteration of tools to accommodate disabilities

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The Seminar encourages papers that represent interdisciplinary approaches and original research, especially those based on material culture, archeological artifacts, letters and diaries, vital records, federal and state censuses, as well as newspapers and magazines, visual culture, business records, oral histories, autobiographies, and public history practice or advocacy at museums, archives, and elsewhere.

“Tools and Toolmaking in New England” will be a hybrid conference, held in Deerfield, Massachusetts, and virtually online for those who choose not to attend in person, on June 24-25, 2022. It will consist of a keynote address and approximately seventeen lectures of twenty minutes each. Dublin Seminar presenters are expected to submit their papers for consideration to the *Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar* to be published about eighteen months after the conference.

To submit a paper proposal for this conference, please send (as a single email attachment, in MS Word or as a PDF) a one-page prospectus that describes the paper and its sources and a one-page vita or biography by March 11, 2022.

PLEASE SEND PROPOSALS TO: DUBLINSEMINAR@HISTORIC-DEERFIELD.ORG

For this call and additional information: <https://www.historic-deerfield.org/dublin-cfp>

Contact Info:

J. L. Bell

Contact Email:

dublinseminar@historic-deerfield.org

URL:

<https://www.historic-deerfield.org/dublin-cfp>