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Mystic's GeoHistorian Project Launching in May

Mystic Middle and Stonington High students, as well as home-schooled kids, worked with the Mystic River Historical Society for a year on this.

Posted by [Elissa Bass](#), April 23, 2013 at 01:29 PM

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A screenshot from the Mystic River Historical Society's GeoHistorian video project.

The [Mystic River Historical Society](#) will launch a 'GeoHistorian' project on Saturday May 4 in collaboration with local middle and high school students that is designed to "help make history more accessible and fun for school-aged students."

Since last September, the students from [Mystic Middle](#), [Stonington High](#) and the Independently Educated Scholars of Mystic and

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Stonington have worked with local historians to research historic buildings in Mystic and create short informational videos about each one.

On Saturday, May 4, 2013 at 11 a.m., the Historical Society and its collaborators are launching the GeoHistorian Project at the Mystic River Park in downtown Mystic. The project, led by Society member Cathy Marco, celebrates the Society's 40th Anniversary and Mystic's historic and colorful past.

"For the Mystic River Historical Society's 40th Anniversary this year, we wanted to give something back to the community that supports us," said Lou Allyn, the Society's President, in a press release. "When Cathy explained the project to us last year, our Board and members embraced it enthusiastically. We are very proud of the students involved in the project and thank their teachers and coaches for their hard work."

The GeoHistorian Project was conceived by two professors at Kent State University in Ohio to help make history more accessible and fun for school-aged students, the press release said. Towns around the country have used the information the professors have shared to help their own young GeoHistorians. Mystic resident, Cathy Marco, spearheaded the effort.

Because the Mystic River Historical Society was having their 40th anniversary, I thought we should do something unique," Marco said. "I came upon this as a project. I got in touch with (the Kent State professors). I thought, 'this is a community where it should be fantastic."

Students in the Mystic Middle May/Junes program worked with high school media studies students to do the research and create the videos. The students worked with Society members, including Curator Emeritus of [Mystic Seaport](#), Bill Peterson, insuring the accuracy of their information.

The videos are accessed through the Society's YouTube feed by using the QR code located on the GeoHistorian decal that will be placed on each site's window or door on Thursday. The QR codes are displayed in an image designed by Stefanie Lantz of Kindspin Design. A QR reader on any smartphone, iPad or tablet can scan the QR code and be immediately directed to the video about the building. You can also [watch the videos via the historical society website](#).

The videos utilize old photos and students voiceover the story behind the buildings, which include the Gilbert building and the Tift block (as well as 4 other buildings) on the Groton side. On the Stonington side, the [Mystical Toys](#) building and [Whalers Inn](#) are featured as well as four other buildings.

The Mystic Middle School students were led by teacher Lauren

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McGugan. The Stonington High School students were led by Tim Chokus. The Independent Scholars worked with Jennifer Pryor. Each group met regularly to work on the project which included a field trip to Mystic.

“It was so wonderful to watch the high school students mentor the younger kids through the project,” Marco said. “Of course they all had to do it for a grade, but it was entertaining and educational. The students got exposure to volunteers, to the history, they learned about what was in their backyard.”

Marco said she approached Groton, Stonington and Pine Point schools as well as home-school families, a year ago to launch the project. She ended up with Stonington and the home-school students committed. She said coincidentally that the middle and high schools had an initiative to create a program in which students worked together and she credited Mystic Middle Principal Jennifer McCurdy with spearheading the collaboration.

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
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
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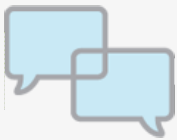
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