

A Geographical Analysis of Sites of African American History in Philadelphia

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Abstract

Philadelphia is lucky to be one of very few districts in the country to require its graduates to take African American History as a graduation requirement, yet in my own teaching of the course I have found that I don't rely on the plethora of local history nearly enough. This unit is meant to address that concern by asking students to pick a site of African American history in Philadelphia that relates to one of the major themes of the course and conduct three levels of analysis on that same site: a historical, archival analysis; a critical geographical analysis and an ethnographic analysis. Over the course of the unit they will compile their research and analysis into a cohesive presentation to demonstrate their learning not only throughout the unit but also the course. This unit will also allow students to see the similarities and differences between history as a discipline and other social sciences (namely geography and anthropology).

Key Terms

African American History, Geography, High School, Anthropology, Social Studies, Project Based Learning, Research

Content Objectives

Problem Statement

This idea came from an issue I've noticed in both my own teaching of the required African American History course as well as my students' awareness and knowledge of the city they call home. Although Philadelphia is one of the first school districts in the country to require African American history as a mandate for graduation, and even though I start my course every year with the "history of African American history in Philadelphia" and explore how students and parents in Philadelphia worked for decades to bring about this change, I have found that I don't take nearly enough advantage of the richness of Philadelphia itself in my construction of content and experiences for my students. One of my main goals as a teacher is to make my class relevant and engaging for my students, yet the city and streets that my students walk and explore every day are some of the best resources available to us and I don't use them nearly as much as I should. I have also found that many of my students don't know much

about the city they live in beyond their day to day experiences, even if they have lived here their entire lives. Where or not they remain in the city beyond high school does not change the fact that they deserve to know the richness of their city's history. The final problem I hope to address in my unit is one of teaching history more broadly. For many students, history feels like something totally separate from themselves for a number of reasons that I address more in depth below. This is a problem. History is and should feel relevant to all us, and this unit seeks to make that happen.

For many of my students, taking African American History in 9th grade is the first time they really see their own history and heritage reflected in a school history class. When they start my class I ask them to reflect on their previous experiences in history or social studies and many of them respond that past classes felt "boring" or "not relevant" to their lives. When I ask what they are looking forward to learning about in African American history, many of them answer that they are looking forward to more deeply exploring their own history and heritage. This unit aims to make the history we explore even more relevant, as it won't just be the actors they identify with but also the places they experience on a regular basis. It also seeks to build a personal connection for my non-Black students, many of whom are still very engaged in the course but may lack the direct connection that is so meaningful for my Black students. Regardless of their race, all my students live in Philly and have that experience and knowledge of the city to connect to and build off.

As a history teacher I've often found that regardless of their personal connection to or interest in a subject in history, students often see history as something separate from themselves. Even when studying a subject like African American history when many of them have family members or ancestors who experienced the events we are learning about many appear to still feel a disconnect. While they may be able to identify similarities between, say, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the Black Lives Matter movement of the 2010s, many struggle to see (or at least articulate) the connective tissue or cyclical pattern that they are both a part of. My hope is that by taking a place that they are familiar with and analyzing it through the same lenses we use throughout the year in class they will start to build those bridges between the past and the present and see themselves - not just their identity markers, but who they actually are - as an active participant in history.

The school I teach at is a project based school, and this unit is intended to be used as a project based unit to demonstrate both students' understanding of thematic ideas we've explored throughout the course as well as an opportunity for them to think about those same themes in different ways. Many students have been trained through experience to think of history as a memorization of facts about the past. This project will not only allow them to explore history through the lens of the present, but also to see how history connects with other fields and disciplines that often are not taught explicitly (or at all) in high school. It will expose them to other ways of examining the world that they

can pursue in college, if they so choose, or that might help them make sense of the world they live in regardless of those future educational pursuits.

Impact of TIP Course on Learning

Coming from an academic background in which I primarily explored these issues of race, class and gender through an anthropological and sociological lens, one of the most impactful parts of this course has been the exploration of these same ideas from the geographer's perspective. In an early class we learned about the critical concepts of geography, and while these are basic introductory concepts they were new and revelatory for me in the language they gave to ideas I had grappled with through my earlier work. These concepts of location, region, distance, scale and space and place helped me think about the history I teach in a new way, and even more so the language I use to teach it. I began to consider what it would mean to do geographical analyses of the historical sites we study. I have a personal affinity towards maps of all kinds, and started to think about what the analysis of maps and the geographical dimensions of historical sites would add to our understanding of history. From that first lecture I knew that a major goal of my unit would be to introduce my students to geographical thinking, as it's a skills that will serve them both in deep historical analysis as well as their own lives. These are skills that I hope to incorporate throughout my teaching and not just in this final unit by discussing, both explicitly and implicitly, the impact of these concepts on historical sites we study; for example, as we explore the Haitian Revolution, we will consider the country of Haiti as a location on the island of Hispaniola, as a part of the Caribbean region and the implications that held in the 18th and 19th centuries, its physical layout and the impacts of that on the revolutionaries, and more. These ideas will be integral to the project students complete in the unit described here.

The other idea that we discussed in a variety of ways throughout class that really stuck with me is the notion of “public space” and the ways in which we perceive it, shape it and intentionally (or unintentionally) encode or decode it. We explored the work of Stuart Hall, whose work focuses on the ways in which media intentionally encodes and communicates specific ideas to the public ([Hall, 1973](#)). He argues that media outlets not only have significant power to shape the discourse of the public, but in fact intentionally do so through a process of encoding and decoding. In class we applied his ideas to public spaces - how do these geographical sites intentionally encode information for visitors to decode and interpret in a specific way? This idea feels particularly relevant for thinking about historical sites and the messages that are (or are intentionally not) encoded in them. Philadelphia, a significant historical location itself in the context of American history writ large, does this in fascinating ways. Throughout the city (and state) there are numerous plaques that commemorate historical events, people and places. These markers are typically displayed on signs built in a meaningful location to that marker, and include a short message about the event that took place there. Residents and citizens can nominate sites to be commemorated and can report damaged or missing markers. In 2017 students

at an elementary school in West Philadelphia successfully lobbied for creation of a marker to commemorate the site of the MOVE bombing, which I will discuss further in the next section ([Tanenbaum, 2017](#)). The text of the marker reads: “On May 13, 1985, at 6221 Osage Avenue, an armed conflict occurred between the Phila. Police Dept. and MOVE members. A Pa. State Police helicopter dropped a bomb on MOVE’s house. An uncontrolled fire killed eleven MOVE members, including five children, and destroyed 61 homes.” ([“Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program,” 2021](#))

Our discussions about these ideas made me consider how this concept may be applied to historical sites, whether or not they are formally marked in some way. If they are (as is the site of the MOVE bombing now) - what message about that history and/or that place is being encoded? How is our perception of what happened in this space being shaped by the language used, the size and design of any memorial, the upkeep and access to said memorial? If a memorial exists separately from the actual site of an event what message is its location meant to send? If there is no formal marker (as was the case at the site of the MOVE bombing for over 30 years) what message is being encoded by those who would have the power to make such a monument? An absence of something is not neutral, just as it is nearly impossible to use completely neutral language. Our seminar’s discussions around this concept of encoding and decoding was crucial in my thinking about how I want my students to analyze the sites they will choose to focus on during this unit.

Elijah Anderson’s notion of the Cosmopolitan Canopy also helped shape my thinking on this. While I (and others) have much to say in terms of critique, his notion of urban spaces in which people of all races and backgrounds can come together without conflict and competition and remove themselves from their ethnocentrism (at least temporarily) helped me further consider the type of spatial analysis I want my students to do ([Anderson, 2012](#)). The distinction Anderson makes between ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism is instructive in thinking about the type of space a historical site might be. Who feels welcome there? Who assumes they have access to it? Does a site bring different people together? Is there a group of people or type of person who might stand out or be seen as other in that space? While I would dispute that a true “cosmopolitan canopy” as Anderson describes it can exist, I think the metrics he uses to determine them are helpful in evaluating a space.

Although her work is also flawed, Alice Goffman’s exploration of how an individual’s social position and identities might change how they interact with a historical site is also instructive for my unit and the analysis I will ask students to complete ([Goffman, 2014](#)). Goffman’s *On the Run* follows the lives of Black men in West Philadelphia as they navigate their entanglements in the criminal justice system, and portions of the book are devoted to the ways that they interact with public spaces (including courtrooms, hospitals and more) because of that status. If we are using the same principle to think about historical sites, especially sites that have intentionally

constructed memorials, we should consider the same idea to consider what messages are being “encoded” into a space. Take the statue of Octavius Catto at City Hall, for example: given its proximity to City Hall, police officers and the Philadelphia courts, would Goffman’s subjects or others in similarly precarious legal positions feel the same access and entitlement to that historical site as someone else might? Even for more “natural” (meaning less actively encoded or constructed) historical sites, we can ask ourselves the same question. If a memorial has not been actively constructed on a given site we can still ask ourselves who might feel comfortable navigating that space and how that changes our understanding of it as a whole. For example, how might a site of gentrification (such as the homes in the old Black Bottom neighborhood we discussed) be more or less accessible to some? How might previous experiences there change an individual’s understanding of that space? How might people use this same space differently.

Specific Content Objectives for Students

My primary content objectives are listed below, and explained more fully in the paragraphs following.

- Students will become familiar naming and applying the critical concepts of geography.
- Students will develop their archival and historical research skills.
- Students will understand the concept of ethnography and how it is used.
- Students will deepen their knowledge of Philadelphia history.
- Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of historical themes and apply that understanding to the research and analysis of an unknown historical event.

Much of the “active” teaching in my unit will be to prepare my students to effectively complete the place-based analysis by exploring different ways of doing that analysis. I intend for my students to become familiar with the critical concepts of geography discussed above and to be able to apply those concepts to any given site, both in their projects as well as future life and classes. In order to help them with this I also intend on introducing them to the concept and methods of ethnography. This will require some basic exploration of the discipline of anthropology, as well as the problematic ways anthropology has also been conducted in the past. The ultimate skill behind ethnography, though, is to try and pull back as much as possible in order to draw connections about what you’re observing and the deeper meanings of those observations. Students must learn to ask themselves “what do I see and what meaning does this hold,” which at its core is the same basic approach we use in analyzing textual historical sources.

In order to familiarize them with the idea of ethnography we will use the article “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema.” In this article, the author approaches basic American social routines (getting ready in the morning, going to the doctor, et cetera)

with the “objective” curiosity of an anthropologist visiting a culture new to them, describing actions like brushing one’s teeth with a level of exoticism we would not expect (Miner, 1956). Using this as a sample text, students will practice defamiliarizing the familiar, in order to ultimately conduct a thorough analysis of their chosen historical site.

Because my unit is less about content delivery than skill development and direct application of analytical thinking skills the other main “content” objective for my students is learning new research techniques and methods. Throughout our study of African American history over the course of the year we will have explored the following thematic ideas:

- **Historical Memory:** Who decides what history is told? What narratives of history are we familiar with and which ones are we not? When we do choose to remember history, how is it remembered? What do public monuments reflect and symbolize? These questions are focuses of our enslavement unit in particular, in which we deconstruct the mainstream narratives of enslavement.
- **State Control and Oppression:** How does the “state” or other systems of power construct and maintain systems of oppression? In what ways are institutions rooted in white supremacy and how do they work to maintain it? How do the actions (or lack of action) of governments and other institutions perpetuate systems of oppression. This is a theme that comes up in almost every unit, starting in our introductory unit about the social construction of race. We explore it particularly when thinking about what the state did (or did not do) in the years following the end of the Civil War and during the the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.
- **Migration and Blending of Cultures:** What is African American culture, and how is it unique? How have different cultures come together to form what we now think of as Black culture today? How has migration shaped the lives and experiences of African Americans? How is African American culture a part of a global Black diasporic culture? We explore these ideas primarily in two places: first, in our study of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the ways in which the constant infusion of kidnapped Africans helped enslaved people develop a unique culture, and again with our study of the Great Migration and how that population shift changed American life.
- **Cycles of Resistance, Progress and Oppression:** How have African Americans and other marginalized communities continuously and effectively resistance the oppression they have been faced with? What progress has been made because of this? In what ways are we repeating similar cycles of forward progress and then backlash? What are some theories of resistance and how have they been applied across place and time? Again, we explore these questions throughout all of our units but especially in looking at Reconstruction and the period of Redemption

following it, as well as the methods of resistance used throughout the entirety of African American history and how the same conflicts over methods of resistance show up in different forms.

Students will be familiar with all of these ideas and historical content by the time we start this final unit. What students will need to be able to do is to apply these themes to other historical events that we have not covered in class. In that light, students will be expected to learn and master new research skills in order to teach themselves about a local historical event that fits into one of these themes in the context of African American history. They will be provided with examples that they can choose from, or use an event they already have some knowledge of to research and analyze further. Some examples are listed below.

Themes	Sites of Exploration in Philadelphia
Historical memory	Octavius Catto Statue
Oppression by the state	-site of MOVE bombing -neighborhood that has been redlined -52nd street corridor
Migration and blending of cultures	-site of gentrification in Philadelphia (i.e. Bok High School) -Odunde festival
Cycles of resistance, progress and oppression	-1844 riots in Kensington and Southwark -integration of Girard College

Although the majority of this unit will be either student driven or application based, we will start with a class-wide study of the MOVE bombing. As a class we will explore the history of MOVE, the shoot-out with police in 1978 and the infamous 1985 bombing. We will use this history to model the steps of analysis students will take during their own project.

Teaching Strategies

As stated above, this unit will be taught at the end of the year (most likely during May). Because of this students will be familiar with general routines and expectations of the class, and none of that needs to be built into the unit. Throughout the course leading up to this point we will have covered a great deal of chronological history, from the arrival of the first Africans on the shores of the United States through issues affecting Black Americans today, but this unit will not rely on students' past historical knowledge

so much as their historical thinking. The sites they choose should be sites that they don't know much about and ones that we certainly haven't covered in the class.

My unit will be approximately three weeks long, seeing students four days a week. The first week will be focused on the theoretical framework, the second week on place-based and archival research, and the third week on analysis and exhibit building. See below for more details:

- **Week One:** We will start this week by framing the project and reflecting on the themes that will shape students' work of this project. Then, we will move into conceptual frameworking. First we will spend a day exploring the critical concepts of geography and doing some sample geographical analysis of sites we are familiar with, both historically but also in our daily lives. Next, we will explore the ethnographic method through a reading of "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," and practicing de-familiarizing the familiar. Finally, we will explore the concepts of encoding and decoding and practice reading historical monuments and markers for the messages they are trying to encode.
- **Week Two:** This week will be focused on students' individual research and exploration of their chosen sites. We will start the week by going over the details of the project itself, and students will select their historical sites and theme. As a class we will complete a model analysis using the site of the MOVE bombing as our exemplar. Then students will begin historical and archival research on their own site, meeting checkpoints along the way. They will be responsible for visiting the site independently to conduct the ethnographic and place-based research and analysis.
- **Week Three:** The final week of the unit will be focused on students completing analysis based on the research they have conducted and putting together a final exhibit to show their findings. The week will culminate in an exhibition where students will display the study of their places and share their analysis with viewers.

Given that this is a project based, cumulative unit the major evaluative tool and summative assessment will be the exhibition they create at the end. Since one of the goals of this project is to embed students (and myself) in Philadelphia history, I want them to be able to share that new knowledge with their community as well. To that end, their major assessment will be the creation of a public facing "exhibit" exploring the site they chose. This exhibit could take multiple forms, including but not limited to a poster, a website or a short documentary-style video. Their exhibit will be designed to answer the question "How does [chosen historical site] reflect [chosen historical theme]?" They will answer this question through the presentation of their historical research (what happened here?), their geographical research (why did it happen at this place?), and their ethnographic study (how has the history of this site been encoded and/or preserved?). They will be assessed using my school's standard rubric, which assesses students' achievement in the following five general categories (comments following each category are specific to this project):

1. *Knowledge:* Assessing the quality of students' archival research of their historical site. Do they thoroughly and accurately convey the history using a variety of sources?
2. *Application:* Assessing the quality of students' analytical work. Do they thoughtfully and correctly apply the critical concepts of geography to their historical site? Do they conduct a thorough ethnographic analysis?
3. *Design:* Assessing the effectiveness of their chosen presentation method. Does it convey the necessary information in a thorough, engaging and visually appealing way?
4. *Process:* Assessing students' engagement and effort throughout the process.
5. *Presentation:* Assessing students' ability to thoughtfully and thoroughly present their research and engage in conversation about their topic at the exhibit.

Along the way students will complete a great number of formative assessments and checkpoints as well. During the first week when we are exploring the theoretical frameworks for the project students will complete a daily activity that allows them to practice the analytical skills covered that day. When we transition to the part of the unit that is more focused on independent research students will have to submit regular checkpoints to show their progress after each day's work. This will allow me to monitor for students who might need extra support or redirection.

Classroom Activities

Lesson Plan One

Title: Introduction to Critical Concepts of Geography

Timeline: one 60 minute class period, completed in first week of unit

Materials Needed: PowerPoint for initial lecture, photographs (printed and virtual) for gallery walk, printed copies of graphic organizer for each student

Stated Objective: Students will be able to understand and apply the critical concepts of geography to analyze a particular site.

Essential Question: How can we use the critical concepts of geography in order explore the significance of a historical site?

Standards: PA State Standard 8.1.9.A: Compare patterns of continuity and change over time, applying context of events.

Step-by-step Guide to Completion:

1. *Opening Discussion:* Why does location matter? Why might an event that happens in one place be different from an event that happens in another? What makes one place different from another? Students will have time to independently brainstorm and collect their thoughts in response to these questions before discussing as a class (5-10 minutes).

2. *Direct Instruction:* Teacher will briefly lecture with definitions and an overview of the critical concepts of geography that we will be exploring throughout the period and unit while students take notes as reference.
 1. Location: how do we define where something is?
 2. Region: what surrounds a particular site? Can you be in multiple regions at once?
 3. Distance: what does a site's distance to or from other sites say about it?
 4. Scale: how does our understanding of a site change depending on the scale?
 5. Space and Place: how do we categorize and characterize specific sites?
3. *Independent Exploration:* students will independently rotate around the classroom as part of a gallery walk. Each station will allow them to explore one of the critical concepts more deeply. As they explore the different sites they will add to their notes on the concepts using a graphic organizer (see below). This organizer will serve as a reference point for them later on as they complete their own independent analyses.
4. *Guided Class Analysis:* Together as a class we will use the site of the MOVE bombing on Osage Street in West Philadelphia to model the type of geographical analysis the students will do for their own chosen site. Students will be familiar with the story of MOVE prior to this lesson.
5. *Exit Ticket:* What inferences could we make about the site of the MOVE bombing just from analyzing it geographically? How does this geographical analysis help connect it to a historical theme?

Graphic Organizer for Independent Exploration in step 3:

<i>Geographical Concept</i>	<i>Observations or questions about concept based on Gallery Walk Station(s)</i>	<i>Answer the analysis question for each concept after viewing all Gallery Walk Stations</i>
Location		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is challenging about pinpointing a location?
Region		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might the region a site is in elicit different responses? Can a site be in multiple regions?
Distance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might a site's distance to another site change how we perceive it? Give examples.

Scale		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does thinking about a site through different scales change our understanding of that site?
Space & Place		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the same site hold different meaning for different people?

Lesson Plan Two

Title: Introduction to Ethnography

Timeline: one 60 minute class period, completed in the first week of unit

Materials Needed: individual copies of “Body Rituals of the Nacirema,” links to video clips for student ethnographies (posted on Canvas or online learning platform), Chromebooks

Stated Objective: Students will be able to understand the uses and dangers of ethnography in order to complete their own.

Essential Question: What can we learn about a place by “defamiliarizing the familiar”?

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Step-by-step Guide to Completion:

1. *Opening Question:* What is something that you do that you think might be strange if an alien from outer space came and observed you doing it? What do you think they would say?
2. *Class Reading:* As a class, we will read excerpts from “Body Rituals of the Nacirema.” These excerpts will be selected to be the most relevant ones from the article. After we read, I will encourage students to guess what they might be talking about, and reveal it if no student correctly guesses. Students will briefly go back to one of the excerpts to “decode” it knowing what it’s actually describing.
3. *Direct Instruction:* brief lecture and overview of the field of anthropology and the method of ethnography. We will discuss some potential dangers of ethnography and the concepts of “othering” and “defamiliarizing the familiar.” Using the Nacirema example students will consider what meaning can be made from this process. What do these observations tell us about American life?
4. *Student Practice:* students will select a short video clip (from the news or a movie/television show - I will provide options or they can choose their own). With that clip they will write an ethnography of whatever they observe in the style of the Nacirema, emphasizing “defamiliarizing the unfamiliar.” They will also

think about what that ethnography might reveal about the place or event they are observing.

5. *Exit Ticket*: What can ethnographies reveal of a particular place? How might they help us notice or think about things that we might not otherwise be aware of?

Lesson Plan Three

Title: Encoding and Decoding

Timeline: one 60 minute class period, completed in the first week of unit

Materials Needed: Chromebooks, access to the Internet, individual copies of article, slide show of monuments

Stated Objective: Students will be able to understand the concept of “encoding” in order to analyze the use of public space and memorials.

Essential Question: What messages are encoded in public spaces and how do these messages shape our interaction with these spaces?

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Step-by-step Guide to Completion:

1. *Opening Activity*: Students will read an article from *The New York Times* entitled “They Are Their Own Monuments” ([Thackara, 2021](#)) about residents and artists in North Philadelphia who have reclaimed space in their neighborhood to create tributes to local heroes, events and communities. As a class we will discuss what message(s) about their community they are trying to send through their artwork, and what message(s) were being sent explicitly or implicitly prior to its creation.
2. *Direct Instruction and Class Analysis*: Brief lecture on the concepts of “encoding” and “decoding” as outlined by Stuart Hall. We will apply these concepts by looking through photographs of monuments and historical sites around the country (as many as possible that hold meaning to content we covered in class) and discussing as a group what messages are being encoded in these sites and whether those messages are implicit or explicit. We will make connections to literary analysis and historical source analysis, in which students
3. *Independent Practice*: Using the Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program website, students will identify a historical site in Philadelphia that has a Historical Marker built for it. Students will use the website to read the text of the marker, and then conduct independent research on that same site. Using their knowledge

from their research they will consider what message the Historical Commission was trying to “encode” about that event through their chosen language. They will also consider what gets left out, and what implicit messages those omissions send.

4. *Final Discussion:* Students will individually reflect on and then discuss the following questions.
 1. What happens if a significant historical site does not have any sort of marker? Is something being encoded? Who is making the decision to encode that message?
 2. What does it mean for a historical marker to be constructed on a site that is unrelated to the event being memorialized? What messages about that historical event or person are being encoded in that case? What are the benefits or drawbacks of doing this?

Resources

Additional Resources

In addition to the sources cited throughout the unit plan which are included below in the bibliography, here are a few additional resources that might be useful for students and/or teachers in implementing this unit.

- *Website:* [Monument Lab](#) is a Philadelphia based website that helps facilitate conversations about the role monuments play in our memory of the past and experiences of public spaces.
- *Website:* [Precious Places Community History Project](#) from Scribe Video Center. This project allows local neighborhoods and communities to tell their own histories of “precious places” in their neighborhood.
- *Book:* *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* by Kenneth Foote. This book explores the ways in which the United States has (and has not) remembered and memorialized its own history of violence.
- *Book:* *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* by Matthew J. Countryman. This book provides an in depth history of the Civil Rights Movement in Philadelphia for students or teachers who are looking at sites related to this topic.
- *Interactive Timeline:* [Timeline of police brutality](#) in Philadelphia from the Philadelphia Inquirer, for students and teachers interested in sites of violence and state oppression in Philadelphia.
- *Website:* “[Mapping the Legacy of Structural Racism in Philadelphia.](#)” This could be used either as a start for a student’s independent research or the maps could be used as part of the gallery walk in the geography lesson.

- *Interactive Website:* [A historical marker tour of Black Philadelphia](#) from the Philadelphia Inquirer. Could be used as part of the lesson on encoding and decoding or to help students find sites for their independent research.

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Appendix

High school social studies standards are relatively limited, as it is not a Common Core tested subject, but there are three state-wide standards that apply to this unit and the project students will complete. All are from the “Historical Analysis and Skills Development” category (African American history is not a state-wide course so the state does not have any specific standards for this subject). The relevant standards are listed below:

1. *Standard - 8.1.9.A:* Compare patterns of continuity and change over time, applying context of events.
2. *Standard - 8.1.9.C:* Construct research on a historical topic using a thesis statement and demonstrate use of appropriate primary and secondary sources.
3. *Standard - 8.1.9.B:* Compare the interpretation of historical events and sources, considering the use of fact versus opinion, multiple perspectives, and cause and effect relationships.

Students will achieve the first standard through their comparison of their historical research alongside their ethnographic and geographical study. They will consider historical and modern context to consider why that site was a site of change. The second and third standards will be addressed through their independent research on their chosen historical site and topic.