

# **Blood Money - The Making of Philadelphia's Heroes**

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## **Abstract**

*“Truth and reconciliation are not simultaneous. They are sequential. Tell the truth first, and it’s the truth that motivated you to understand what it will take to recover, repair, endure - and to reconcile. - Bryan Stevenson*

This is a 6 day unit for secondary students that focuses on Colonial Philadelphia and specifically Stephen Girard, who is considered by modern standards to have been the 4th wealthiest American in US history. This unit explores multiple issues of the time through exploration of Stephen Girard in particular. The issues explored include: China trade, Girard’s character through relationships with family, opium smuggling, segregation, slave rebellion in Saint Domingo/Haiti, slave trade, women in colonial America, and the yellow fever pandemic. As there are many markers, memorials and monuments dedicated to Stephen Girard throughout Philadelphia (as well as western Pennsylvania and New Orleans) ultimately, students will be asked to consider the role and responsibility of monuments, memorials, and historical markers in helping people engage with an honest/complete account of history, and how the current monuments to Stephen Girard reveal and obscure history.

## **Keywords:**

Colonial Philadelphia, Stephen Girard, China Trade, Slavery in colonial Philadelphia, Women in colonial Philadelphia, Girard College, Monuments and historical memory

## **Background**

Stephen Girard was born in 1750 France. Like his father before him, he became a mariner and traveled broadly by sea. Eventually, he came to Philadelphia in 1776 and decided to make Philadelphia his home. Girard began making his fortune with trade in the Caribbean. He traded commodities like sugar and coffee.

As a shipowner, trader, and banker, Girard was extremely wealthy. “Stephen Girard amassed enormous wealth as a merchant and banker; if his wealth is viewed as a percentage of GDP, he was one of the five richest men in American history.”<sup>1</sup>

Girard made much of his wealth through importation of plantation produced goods imported from Saint Domingo and the ownership of slaves in Saint Domingo, New Orleans and Philadelphia. When the slave rebellion occurred in Saint Domingo (now Haiti), Girard aided

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<sup>1</sup> Klein, Monica. “Stephen Girard” , Philanthropic History

slave owners in using his ships to take their valuables out of Haiti. The slave owners themselves died in the rebellion and Girard was able to then use the goods on his ship to buy more ships that allowed him to begin to engage in the lucrative China trade.

Girard made another fortune through the China trade where he illegally imported opium into China as the basis for his trading (the drug had been banned in China and he was illegally trafficking in drugs for trade).

Girard's investments from his wealth included investments in the US Treasury, investments in railroads and in real estate. He also invested extensively in coal mining in western Pennsylvania where a town named Girardville (named after him) became one location of the infamous Molly Macguire rebellions of miners.

Girard's personal life reflected equal complexity. He was estranged from most of his family. His marriage was an unhappy one - his wife was institutionalized for 25 years due to "madness." There is some belief that Mary Girard was not insane, but that Girard was anxious to remove her from the public and secure a divorce (he was not able to divorce her ultimately).<sup>2</sup>As to descriptions of Girard's personality by his contemporaries, according to an essay on the website American heritage:

"Philadelphians knew Stephen Girard, mariner and merchant, to be a miser and a misanthrope. They despised him for a cheat, and when he put his wife away in an insane asylum, they despised him for making a mistress of his housekeeper. Girard never sought a place in Philadelphia society, and he would not have been accorded one if he had, but then it would seem that he was virtually friendless by choice...Girard made his money by smuggling; by bribery; by profiteering in scarce commodities during the Revolution; by shipping wrongly labeled cargoes in ships supplied with false papers; by running opium into China; by being glacially slow in paying his creditors and instantaneous in dunning his debtors; by cheating his own brother; by selling cheap French vin ordinaire as expensive port because, he said, Philadelphians could not taste the difference. As one of his biographers wrote, Girard was "undisturbed by fine-spun theories of strict obedience to law."<sup>3</sup>

Given this description of the views of his character by his contemporaries, Girard's popularity after his death seems to have evolved from his status as an incredibly wealthy man who left the vast portion of his estate to a trust for the benefit of Philadelphia - or rather, a certain

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<sup>2</sup> Holland, Brenda. "Mad Speculation and Mary Girard: Gender, Capitalism, and the Cultural Economy of Madness in the Revolutionary Atlantic" by Brenna Holland. *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol 39, No. 4, Winter, 2019, pp. 647-675)

<sup>3</sup> Keats, John. *Legacy Of Stephen Girard*. American Heritage, June/July 1978, Volume 29, Issue

4. <https://www.americanheritage.com/legacy-stephen-girard>

segment of Philadelphia. His wealth allowed him to be praised in death in a way he probably never was in life.

### **Modern Cultural Context**

Far from being a “product of his time” it appears that Stephen Girard was known for having questionable morals and business practices. As well, during his time, there were many who challenged the morality of the slave trade, who called for abolition, or even in regarding human beings as chattel would not keep them in conditions similar to Girard’s notorious slave pens. As well, Girard knowingly broke laws - including the importation of opium to China. (The degree of the addiction that consumed China can be partially understood by the opioid crisis in the US - they are, in fact, the same drug). There were China traders at the time who refused to trade in opium and appeals from the Chinese government to stop importing opium, all of which would have been common knowledge in Girard’s time.

One of the reasons Girard never returned to France was that he owed a lot of money to different creditors and he was avoiding paying them back. <sup>4</sup> As well, he was known to change the papers on his ships to avoid the regulations required in trade with Saint Domingo.

In recent years, the knowledge of his choices that led to untold suffering leveled on masses of people begin to carry more weight as the wealth of the estate is far removed by the passing of time from the man at this point. As well, the means in which Girard enriched himself stains the money on which his philanthropy was built.

Perhaps the legacy of Girard that comes to mind in more recent years is the 1965 protest of Girard College, which at the time was restricted to “white boys” as was required in Girard’s will. The site of massive protests against racism, Dr. Martin Luther King himself spoke to a crowd of 10,000 people to protest the racially prohibited nature of Girard College. <sup>5</sup> Eventually, the college was forced to open its doors to nonwhite males and females as well.

Certainly, Girard’s legacy is complicated. After all, he did not need to leave his money to the city, he did not need to set up a school for orphans that his estate supports in perpetuity. He also was known for literally rolling up his sleeves during the Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia, caring for the sick. Ultimately, we will need to look at the primary documents of the time, and uncover what silenced voices we can to address the narrative that evolved over the last 230 years regarding his life, the choices he made, and to reconcile this complex legacy of an incredibly wealthy man whose fortune is stained with the blood of the oppressed.

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<sup>4</sup> Gares, Albert J. “Stephen Girard's West Indian Trade 1789-1812” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 72, No. 4 (Oct., 1948) , pp. 311-342 (32 pages) Published By: University of Pennsylvania Press

<sup>5</sup> Popkin, Nathaniel. *Remembering MLK In Philadelphia: Complexity And Courage*. Hidden City, January 16, 2012.. <https://hiddencityphila.org/2012/01/remembering-mlk-in-philadelphia-courage-and-complexity/>

## Unit Content

What is collective memory? How is it created? Whose story is told - and by extension - whose story is excluded and silenced? The creation story of the United States as a nation state begins largely in Philadelphia. Stories told about the founding of the nation and of the city are reflected in the names of places around Philadelphia. Names live on, as street names, school names, neighborhood names, plaques and statues throughout the city. The narrative around some of these people has been historically repeated in classrooms throughout the United States - Washington, Jefferson, Franklin. Others may only be known more specifically in Philadelphia.

One example of a Philadelphia story lives in the presence of Stephen Girard - a man who has two public elementary schools, a school for orphans, a street, a housing complex and even an entire town in Western Pennsylvania named after him. A man whose statue, now outside the Art Museum, at one-point graced City Hall. In fact, Girard College maintains [a web page](#) entirely devoted to featuring pictures of monuments and statues of Stephen Girard. A man who is still considered to this day one of the 5 richest men in US history.

When reading descriptions of Girard spread across websites and on historical markers, he is described as a merchant, a ship captain, and, most commonly, a philanthropist. On those websites that acknowledge his ownership of slaves, or his exclusion of anyone but “white males” from Girard College - the school he founded for “poor orphans”, or his choice of illegally pushing opium into China to maximize his profit with the China trade, or his institutionalization of his wife - he is described as a man of his time - that these flaws now visible in the 21st century were not flaws during his time.

This two-week unit will seek to help students utilize primary and secondary sources to dig into the creation of the Girard narrative and to have them consider why this particular narrative might have been created, how it was perpetuated, whose stories were not heard, and whether or not flawed historical figures were merely products of their time or were they people who took advantage of their time. We will also consider what factors contribute to creating “heroes” in a nation state - who is remembered? How do we know the truth behind stories we are told about who we are as a city? How is public memory created and then reshaped? Who is responsible for reshaping this narrative - in redefining the city’s heroes? And - perhaps most importantly - how can students use their knowledge and power to - literally and figuratively - make history?

Students in this unit will be asked to engage in investigations of primary and secondary source materials that outline various aspects of the Girard Legacy. They will explore the places in the Philadelphia landscape (as well as in Western Pennsylvania and Louisiana) that bear his name - historical markers, monuments, street names, town names, buildings. They will be asked to consider the full legacy of Stephen Girard - what has been memorialized and what has been erased.

The unit will cover a number of areas as it leads to the culminating project. Students will collectively read about Stephen Girard in the popular memory of Philadelphia. Then students will be assigned a particular aspect of Girard’s life and be given some guiding questions to read as they explore those particular aspects. These include:

- a) Stephan Girard's' business practices
- b) Stephan Girard and the slave trade
- c) Stephen Girard and opium smuggling
- d) Stephen Girard and Mary Girard
- e) The history of Girard College and the fight to desegregate

After investigating primary and secondary source information from each of these areas, students will work together to try and summarize the legacy of Stephen Girard that accounts for a more complete understanding of his complex history. This will culminate in a group performance task.

### **Enduring Understandings**

- Monuments, memorials and statues represent one way that communities and individuals both remember and celebrate the past as well as shape future generations' understanding of history.
- Communities, people in power and artists make choices about what parts of a particular historical figure, place or time is placed in the public memory and what parts are intentionally left out.
- Public recounting of history can be challenged and reimagined through civic action.

### **Essential Questions**

- 1) What purposes do monuments, memorial and historical markers serve? What impact do they have on us and the way we think about history? What do they reveal about our relationship with the past?
- 2) Who is responsible for creating the monuments or determining who is commemorated? What criteria should be used and how should decisions be made when erecting a monument?
- 3) What do the historical information and historical memorials that are missing reveal about U.S. history and culture?
- 4) What is the role and responsibility of monuments, memorials, and historical markers in helping people engage with an honest/complete account of history?

### **Final Performance Tasks**

The final performance task will be a group project. Students have a choice of several tasks.

## Teaching Strategies

The unit will begin with basic information shared with students in the form of student reading/responses to reading, teacher lecture and class responses to the initial information. There will be three general areas discussed: a) Memorials, monuments and markers: a summary of what these are, and the prevalence of these things in Philadelphia in particular, given Philadelphia's role in the founding of the United States; b) the role that memorials, monuments and markers play in both remembering and obscuring history, c) Stephen Girard: the prevalence and location of monuments, memorials and markers regarding Girard in the city and nationally and a summation of both what these things say about Girard and also general information about what is popularly known about Stephen Girard.

Students will then be given a particular area of Stephen Girard's life to investigate, both as individuals and then in small groups where students assigned the same topic will meet together to compare notes and conclusions based on their investigations.

Students will then be jigsawed into small groups where each member of the group has had the opportunity to research a different aspect of Stephen Girard's life. They will introduce this information to their group members.

Together, each group will use the collective information from the group members' investigations to come to a shared understanding of the history and legacy of Stephen Girard, choose a performance task to complete and complete the performance task.

## Classroom Activities

### Day 1

The teacher will help students a) define and distinguish between Memorials, Monuments and Markers.

- 1) Students will consider the purpose served in having public displays of historical memory. If a school is named after a person or is located on a street named after a person, ask students what they know about the person for whom these places are named. Or choose a street or area in the city to ask what students know about the person named (for example: Chew Avenue, Roosevelt Boulevard, Rittenhouse Square).
- 2) Distribute the brief reading from NEH entitled *Memorials, Monuments and Markers*. Ask students to work briefly with an elbow partner to make sure they understand the distinction between these three and ask them to identify one example of each in Philadelphia if they can. Have students share their thoughts.
- 3) Explain to students that there has been controversy over statues in Philadelphia in the past few years. Show either this video about the Columbus Statue: <https://youtu.be/1RCaZ4Zj5ss> or this video about the Rizzo statue: <https://youtu.be/BRRPCdHUd7Y>

- 4) Ask students what history was told by these statues and what history was not told. Ask students what purpose is served when public memory of history makes choices of what to include and what to exclude.
- 5) Ask students if they have ever heard of Stephen Girard or even the name “Girard.” For those students who have heard the name before, ask them in what context they have heard it. (They may say Girard Ave, Girard College, Girard Estates, etc.) Explain that for the next few days, they will be learning about Stephen Girard. Note that Stephen Girard’s name appears prominently throughout the city - there is a street (Girard Ave) an area of the city (Girard Estates), two public elementary schools, one private school, several statues and markers named after him. He also has a town named for him in Western Pennsylvania (Girardville) and a town named after him in Louisiana (Girard) as well as two streets in New Orleans (Girard Street and Girard Avenue).
- 6) Have students read the general overview of Stephen Girard that comes up when googling his name. (You may want to create a summary to show students from this article: <https://www.ushistory.org/people/girard.htm>) Ask students to identify what he was famous for based on the reading.
- 7) Have students count off 1 to 5. Distribute the readings to students according to their number. Have students do the reading and answer the questions for homework.
  - a) [Stephan Girard’s’ business practices](#)
  - b) [Stephen Girard and Mary Girard](#)
  - c) [Stephan Girard and the slave trade](#)
  - d) [Stephen Girard and opium smuggling](#)
  - e) [The history of Girard College and the fight to desegregate](#)

## Day 2

Divide students into groups depending on the number of the reading they did for homework. Have students discuss what they read and complete the questions on their reading.. Finally, have them write a headline for their group’s reading.

Bring the students back together and have them share the headlines their group generated. Have each group count off 1-5. Reassign students to new groups based on their new numbers. Make sure every group has at least one student from each of the reading groups.

Homework: Be prepared to share a summary of your reading with your group members.

### **Day 3**

- 1) Have students divide into their new groups. Each group should have at least 1 person for each of the 5 articles read. Also, distribute all the articles so every student has a copy of each of the readings.
- 2) Students should choose a recorder for the group who will record notes as students discuss their reading.
- 3) On newsprint, have students make 3 columns. Each student will present the article they read for homework and answer the 3 questions on the newsprint.
  - a) What is the issue?
  - b) What did your issue say about Stephen Girard?
  - c) What questions do you still have?
- 4) Allow each group enough time to summarize their article for the group mates and to record their answers to the 3 questions.
- 5) Have the groups bring their newsprint to the front of the room and choosing one issue at a time, have people from each group share their responses to that issue and the questions they still have.

Homework: Read through the 3 options for a group performance task. Come prepared to discuss which option you would like your group to do.

### **Day 4 and Day 5**

- 1) Give each group an opportunity to discuss the performance tasks. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to collectively agree on which task they will be working on.
- 2) Explain the students will have the next two days to work on the task together as a group. You will be collecting each group's finished product at the end of the period on day 5.

Note: Teachers may establish their own criteria for the performance tasks and create their own rubrics.

### **Optional Day 6**

Have each group present their completed performance task to the group.

### **Resources**

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## Appendix

Standards drawn from: The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History. National Council for the Social Studies

D1.4.9-12. Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

D2.Civ.6.9-12. Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

D2.Civ.7.9-12. Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others.

D2.Civ.8.9-12. Evaluate social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places, that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles.

D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

D2.Civ.12.9-12. Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.

D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's

perspectives.

D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

D2.His.7.9-12. Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

D2.His.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them..

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

D4.2.9-12. Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).

## Appendix

### Classroom Handouts

- 1) [Reading: Memorials, Monuments and Markers.excerpted from https://edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/landmarks-american-history-and-culture](https://edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/landmarks-american-history-and-culture)
- 2) [Final Performance Tasks](#)
- 3) [Stephan Girards' business practices](#)
- 4) [Stephen Girard and Mary Lum Girard](#)
- 5) [Stephan Girard and the slave trade](#)
- 6) [Stephen Girard and opium smuggling](#)
- 7) [The history of Girard College and the fight to desegregate](#)

### Reading: Memorials, Monuments, and Markers

Memorials, monuments, and markers offer people a glimpse into the past. Each section below offers information about what distinguishes these forms of commemoration.

## Memorials

Memorials can appear in a variety of forms, including parks, highways, forests, buildings, and observance days, among others. They are either erected or enacted to enshrine a memory of a singular person, a larger community, an achievement, or a historical event. Memorials can also be spontaneous and appear in the wake of tragedy or death. Some of these public fixtures preserve contested and controversial memories that fail to encapsulate the entire narrative.

## Monuments

Monuments serve as another type of commemorative public structure or site. Similar to memorials, monuments are constructed to acknowledge and remember a historical event, figure, or group, among others. Monuments can range from statues, sculptures, obelisks, to national park units. Today, monuments are perceived as being celebratory in nature and a tangible emblem of a unified belief or interpretation.

## Markers

Historical markers serve as another tangible reminder of the past. They often appear in the form of a plaque that is placed at a historically or culturally significant site or building. Many also appear alongside roads or in parks. Markers can be interpretive waysides, attached to a rock or a building, or mounted onto a post. Their ubiquitous presence throughout the nation coincided with the modernization of local infrastructure. Every state operates a historical marker program tasked with determining whether a nomination meets the established criteria.

The expansion of the interstate highway system following World War II encouraged families to tour the nation via the roads. This also facilitated an increase in state-sponsored historical marker programs.

Many of the memorials, monuments, and markers erected throughout the 20th century typify a traditional narrative that elevated the experiences of some. Events that occurred across the nation's landscape are more complex than what is often reflected in these public mementos of the past and these absences offer opportunities for learning about a richer and more inclusive U.S. history.

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/landmarks-american-history-and-culture>

## Excerpts from: “The Polly” by David S. Miller

From: Miller, David S. “The ‘Polly’: A Perspective on Merchant Stephen Girard.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 112, no. 2, 1988, pp. 189–208. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20092200>. Accessed 20 Dec. 2022.

“To Captain Edger, he provided even more explicit instructions. As the importation of flour was prohibited in St. Domingue (thus making Girard a smuggler), Girard had to prepare for the possibility that the vessel would be stopped and searched. If the Polly were to meet a “guarda costa or others,” he wrote Edger, and the crew were asked what the cargo contained, say “flour, rice and lard,” but add that “you are bound for St. Thomas, but having the misfortune of falling

to the lower of your port, together with your vessel being deep loading you did propose to sell your rice at Cap Frangois." Otherwise, Edger was simply to meet Jean Girard at the wharf and hand him his sealed instructions, remaining under Jean's command while in port." P. 190

"The Polly left the West Indies with 58 barrels and 108 bags of coffee, and 61 hogsheads of molasses. As was now standard practice, Edger manipulated figures on the bills of lading from St. Domingue, reducing his apparent cargo and paying less tax". P. 195

*Question: What do Stephen Girard's instructions to his Captain indicate about how his importation of goods to Saint Dominique was carried out. What were his business practices in this regard?*

"Edger advanced the crew a month's pay while at Cap Frangois, and this practice represented another departure from mercantile customs. Other traders usually paid their sailors a combination of wage and "privilege," "the right to load so many barrels or hogsheads on the outward and homeward voyage on the sailors' own account." This practice "was nearly universal, and it looks as though the privilege was considered more important than the money wage."

"Presumably, Girard did not want his men more concerned with their own loadings than with his. He paid them a straight salary to perform their specific duties. In mid-July 1789, Edger started the return voyage. Jean had loaded it this time with a larger return cargo: 56 casks of molasses, 11 barrels of sugar, and 53 barrels and 84 bags of coffee. On July 30, the Polly landed at Philadelphia.

"For the third adventure, Stephen Girard decided to load his ship entirely with flour; he bought 659 barrels and 163 half-barrels. Again, such a practice was practically unheard of; it would have been entirely too risky for most merchants to load a ship with only one commodity.

"Edger hired an entirely new crew, keeping on Sam alone. Perhaps because of the unique salary arrangements, or because of the rapidity with which the Polly performed, sailors usually did not stay in Edger's employ for more than a single voyage." P. 193

*Question: What does this passage tell you about how Stephen Girard treated workers on his ships - and why?*

"While the Polly was overseas in France, Stephen and Jean quarreled over the amount of commission due from her last voyage to the Indies. When the Polly had docked in St. Domingue, Jean had stored the cargo, as prices were rising. Since his own warehouse was currently occupied, he rented space in a competitor's and charged Stephen for that rent. Stephen refused to pay this surplus and dismissed Jean as his agent. Jean was furious and remained so for some time.

"After Aubert received this cargo, and quickly loaded a return shipment of sugar and coffee, the Polly was ready to sail back to Philadelphia. But at the last minute, an angry and malicious Jean Girard prevented the ship from leaving. "Immediately upon the arrival of your brigantine," agent Aubert would explain to Stephen, "your brother . . . took the precaution to file a protest..against the ship's return."

Jean met the surprised agents with his books in hand to prove that Stephen owed him money.

What the resentful brother had in mind was blackmail. "If you do not . . . pay me the 1725 livres which the Sieur Stephen Girard lawfully owes me," read Jean's ransom note, "I have decided to denounce the brig Polly ^ to expose you to the payment of a fine, and your correspondent to considerable loss." After a lengthy list of demands, Jean revealed his trump card: "P.S.," he added, "The official declaration [in the PollyJs present bill of lading] calls for 180 quintals of sugar and 7500 pounds of coffee, which is quite different from the cargo, which consists of at least 380 quintals of sugar and 20,000 pounds of coffee."

To Aubert's shock, the letter was accurate. Somehow Jean had discovered the intentional discrepancy and was threatening to reveal the fraud to the authorities. "What," asked agent Jean Baptiste Rouch in resignation, "was to be done in such a contingency?" The ship could not sail with the protest outstanding; the cargo had already been loaded and inspected; and the false documents had been filed with the custom house. "We therefore did not hesitate to sacrifice the 1725 livres, . . . and accordingly paid him the said sum at once."<sup>24</sup> Aubert and Rouch discovered that Jean had uncovered their bribes with a larger one of his own, leading them to conclude that their bribes on behalf of Stephen must be increased. "We are inclined to think that this is so, and that it is absolutely necessary to prevent a like occurrence in the future." pp. . 198-199

*Question: What does this incident indicate about Girard's business dealings? What does it indicate about his relationships with his family?*

Summary: Write a brief summary about Girard's business practices and what you believe they indicate about his character and values. Be prepared to share and discuss this with your group.

### **Timeline:**

June, 1777 - Stephen Girard marries Mary Lum, the orphaned daughter of a shipbuilder.

1787 - Stephen Girard begins an affair with Sally Buckham, who moved into his house as a housekeeper.

October, 1790 - Stephen Girard commits Mary to Pennsylvania Hospital's insane asylum

March, 1791 - Mary gives birth to a daughter. Stephen says he is not the father.

1795 (?) - Sally Bickham leaves Stephen Girard and marries another man.

1795(?) - Stephen Girard takes another mistress, Polly Kenton who is 26 years younger than him

1815 - After 25 years in confinement in Pennsylvania Hospital , Mary Lum Girard dies

**Excerpt from: Mad Speculation and Mary Girard: Gender, Capitalism and the Cultural Economy of Madness in the Revolutionary Atlantic by Brenna Holland. Journal of the Early Republic, Volume 39, Number 4, Winter 2019, University of Pennsylvania Press. pp. 647-675**

“In early 1785, Stephen Girard wrote despairingly to his brother Jean, then in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, “Despite my efforts, if it is not a physical ailment, it is of the mind. I fear to have lost forever the peace which a certain success should procure for life in this world.” Writing from Philadelphia, Stephen, a Franco–American merchant, was clearly troubled by limits on his success. But this was no commercial limitation...After eight years of marriage, Stephen and his wife Mary’s union had begun to deteriorate. Indeed, his primary concern in this letter stemmed from his domestic troubles. Commercial failure was not disturbing Stephen’s peace in 1785; the trouble was his wife. By the mid-1780s, Mary had gone mad.”

“Unfortunately, Mary’s own words, like those of many early American women, do not survive in the historical record. We will never know precisely what Mary thought about her condition...In the case especially of the correspondence between Stephen and his brother Jean in the mid- 1780s, almost every letter between the two brothers mentioned Mary’s “misfortune”—a telling word choice that cast Mary’s mental illness in a term that alluded also to fiscal risk and loss. This mercantile mindset—the meticulous accounting of profits and losses, the chronic anxiety that accompanied placing wealth in ships that crossed oceans, the careful posturing of reputation and credit through correspondence—decisively shaped Stephen’s actions toward his wife. “

“Beginning in 1787, Jean and Stephen discussed Mary more frequently and their correspondence points again to the interplay between gender, race, and speculation that characterized the cultural economy of madness. The brothers continued to plan their partnership and Jean, eager to join his brother in Philadelphia, expressed concern about Mary. In contemplating his relocation from Saint-Domingue, Jean made it clear that he did not wish to live in the same house as Mary. “You know that I do not care to live with your wife,” Jean wrote, “although it will mean an increase in our expenses.” ...Stephen responded to his brother’s complaints, writing, “You say you do not care to live in the same house with my wife. I cannot blame you for I am of the same opinion. I treat her properly but I despise her. She has been quieter lately, but still I hate her like the devil.”

*Question: In what ways would Mary’s state of mind be equated with the risk and loss of Girard’s business? What does this quote imply in terms of the position of women during this time?*

“For men, madness actually could be caused by speculation. A failed speculative venture had the potential to unleash passions that could rob a man of his money and, therefore, also his masculinity and his sanity. Evidence of men’s anxiety over speculation and madness can be found in newspapers, medical literature, and merchants’ correspondence. Merchants littered mentions of madness and anxiety, like those Stephen used to describe Mary Girard, throughout their correspondence. Such correspondence, according to historian Toby L. Ditz, both made and unmade men who struggled to find their place amid commercial failures, constituting men in the market as gendered subjects. For men, therefore, madness was intricately linked to both their masculinity and their economic fates.

“While speculation could make men mad, male physicians increasingly attempted to root diseases of the mind in the bodies of women and people of color. It is perhaps unsurprising that as white men felt vulnerable in an expansive market, they looked to cast that burden upon those with less power by making madness a female condition. Mary’s story illuminates this backlash as well. In Stephen’s letter from February 1785, he expressed disappointment not simply with his wife’s condition, but with the limits it placed on his “success.”

*Question: Speculation - the risks taken by business people, was identified as a primary cause of mental illness in men, while women and slaves were seen to have mental illness rooted in their bodies. What does this say about power between white men and women/slaves. What does it mean to root men’s mental illness to something involved with thinking, with choices made while women/slaves’ mental illness is rooted in something physical - biological?*

*(Stephen Girard owned a property in Mount Holly, New Jersey and decided to give the property to Mary)*

“Granting the Mount Holly property to Mary gave her a great deal of fiscal and political authority, suggesting that in this moment neither Mary’s gender nor her mental state precluded her from some degree of economic agency. Stephen’s decision to give the Mount Holly property to Mary, a woman he believed to be suffering from mental illness, at first glance seems like a questionable choice. However, Stephen remained concerned primarily with protecting his personal and professional interests in Philadelphia, which now included his mistress Sally. And by contractually granting Mary the Mount Holly estate, he gave his wife an ambiguously independent status. By removing Mary’s fiscal dependence on Stephen, this arrangement could be viewed as a quasi-divorce. This is all the more significant since at that time New Jersey’s constitution permitted women to vote.

“By early 1790, Stephen repeatedly paid to have Mary boarded out of home in Philadelphia. Receipts indicated that she stayed at a variety of boarding houses and though Stephen did not want Mary living under his roof, he could not have been happy with his wife staying all over town, especially when he received bills from a variety of caretakers.

“Aside from Mary’s madness, diagnosed by physicians according to the medical knowledge of their time, it is unclear what exactly motivated Stephen to take this more drastic step in 1790. Until that time, he had handled Mary’s situation with more traditional methods, many of them involving the help of Mary’s extended family. Stephen likely viewed Mary’s frequent stays at a variety of boarding houses as unsustainable. The cost to board Mary out in Philadelphia boarding houses hovered around £1 per week and usually included both boarding and washing of clothes.”

*Question: What does this passage say about the relationship of power, gender and financial control?*

“By the end of the summer, Stephen determined that boarding out was no longer a solution and that Mary needed more sustained attention. Dr. John Foulke related that he was “indeed very sorry to hear of a repetition of your distress from Mrs. Girard’s derangements and shall be happy to contribute everything in my power to her recovery.” With the help of Dr. Foulke, Stephen committed Mary to Pennsylvania Hospital in August 1790.

“Stephen likely found the slightly higher cost, just over £1 per week for Mary’s treatment and boarding at the Hospital, a more efficient investment. However, what happened less than a year after Mary’s admittance to Pennsylvania Hospital may shed more light on the situation.

“On March 3, 1791, Mary gave birth to a daughter, also named Mary. Stephen denied paternity and four days later, the baby was “put out to Nurse with John Hatcher’s wife at 10s per Week.” The baby lived only a few months; after she was stripped from her mother, baby Mary died on August 27, 1791. The timing of the birth suggests that Mary likely became pregnant just before her admittance to Pennsylvania Hospital. “

“...Only when Mary’s behavior threatened to make him a cuckold—the ultimate threat to a man’s reputation—did Stephen resort to confining her. Dr. Benjamin Rush’s recollections of the events surrounding Mary’s confinement in Pennsylvania Hospital and the birth of her daughter show how physicians struggled to make sense of the relationship between madness and the female body. “A lady in this city was cured of madness, by the birth and suckling of a child,” wrote Rush. “Her husband took the child from her lest it should contract its mother’s disease; in consequence of which her madness returned.” Rush identified the lady as Mary Lum Girard.

Some had suggested that Mary’s madness originated in the blame of childlessness since Mary and Stephen had no children, but now after giving birth, it was clear that it may not have been Mary who was infertile. “

*Question: The quote from Dr. Rush seems to indicate that he felt that Mary was not insane once she had her baby and was able to nurse the baby. Girard had the baby taken away from his wife, and her mental illness returned. Speculate about what you think might be the reasons behind Mary’s mental state and temporary recovery, about gender power relationships and how Mary’s insanity might be interpreted if looked through a modern lens.*

Mary Wollstonecraft’s novel, *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria* (1798) offers a productive entry into the cultural economy of madness, and by way of conclusion helps to locate the female perspective that is so often lost in sources on Mary Girard. Though Wollstonecraft’s novel follows the familiar eighteenth-century literary trope of the mad woman wrongfully imprisoned by her husband, *Maria* is also strikingly similar to Mary Girard’s life. Though no definitive link has been made, Wollstonecraft’s brother was in Philadelphia in the early 1790s, socializing with Girard’s merchant neighbors. Even though Wollstonecraft’s brother may not have shared the rumors that likely circulated about Mary Girard with his sister, the overlap remains intriguing. Both the real Mary and the fictional *Maria* were labeled mad by their merchant husbands and placed in asylums.

“In Wollstonecraft’s novel, the heroine, *Maria*, married a merchant, George Venables, after the death of her mother and the financial ruin of her father. *Maria*’s wealthy uncle arranged the marriage, but it turned out that George was less interested in marital harmony than in the riches of *Maria*’s uncle. It came as little surprise that the marriage was unhappy...” The origins of Mary and Stephen Girard’s marriage were different—Mary, a fatherless servant woman, did not have an inheritance like that of the fictional *Maria*. But although Stephen clearly did not marry Mary for her money, the role that money plays in both marriages is instructive. Both the real Stephen

and the fictional George sought to control the money in their marriages and became frustrated when they perceived that their wives got in the way.

“Wollstonecraft wrote that, “A woman . . . resigning what is termed her natural protector is despised and shunned, for asserting the independence of mind distinctive to a rational being, and spurning at slavery.” In another episode, when the fictional Maria gave birth to a child in exile before being committed to a madhouse and having her child taken from her, Wollstonecraft’s Maria, “mourned for her child, lamented she was a daughter, and anticipated the aggravated ills of life that her sex rendered almost inevitable, even while dreading she was no more.”

*Question: What is Wollstonecraft saying about women and how they are regarded if they seek independence from men. What were the social conditions that Wollstonecraft was questioning.*

Excerpt from: ‘Insanity of Mary Girard’ Examines Injustices and Twisted Mind-Set by Janice Arkatov, LA Times, March 15, 1992

[latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-03-15-ca-6685-story.html](http://latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-03-15-ca-6685-story.html)

When Mrs. Stephen Girard got pregnant by her lover in 1790, her husband took swift and immediate action. He had her committed to an insane asylum.

Direct from the truth-is-stranger-than-fiction files comes Lanie Robertson’s “The Insanity of Mary Girard,” opening Thursday at the Complex in Hollywood. A dramatic re-creation of the real-life story of a Philadelphia woman who spent the last 25 years of her life in a mental institution, the play is set on the first night of Mary’s confinement, alone in the basement psycho ward, strapped into a “tranquilizing” chair.

“It really takes place inside Mary’s mind,” said director Ben DeBaldo, who feels that the play is an indictment of men’s treatment of women and society’s treatment of the mentally ill. “There are five Furies who visit her--one moment sweet and nice, the next moment vicious.”

Each Fury also plays another person in her life: the warder, her mother, her husband’s mistress, Mr. Phillips (who runs the institution) and Mrs. Hatcher, whom Mary’s baby was given to. (It died a month after birth.)

At the center of the story are the Girards. He was a rich businessman for whom a Philadelphia bank, street and hospital are named. She was 10 years his junior. Frustrated over her inability to have a child, each had affairs--and Mary got pregnant. Unable to deal with his rage and humiliation, Stephen had her committed. That injustice aside, DeBaldo concedes that his protagonist was no angel. “The real Mary did have problems,” he said. “She could be violent, throw things. She broke a lot of dishes.”

Robertson stresses that it wasn’t necessarily Stephen’s great wealth that denied Mary her civil rights; at that time, any husband could claim that his wife was insane or violent and have her committed against her will.

The New York-based writer, last represented locally with “Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill” and “Stringbean,” was living in Philadelphia in 1976 when he first stumbled on Mary’s story. “I went to the hospital and looked through the ledgers, called ‘member’s minutes,’ ” he said. “Three months after Mary was put there, the hospital committee went to Stephen and asked to release her. He persuaded them to allow her to stay.”

Summary: Based on what you have read about the relationship between Stephen and Mary Girard, how would you summarize Girard’s attitude - and also the attitude at the time - regarding women, power and money? Using these excerpts, what is your impression of Stephen Girard’s character and values?

Read the following documents and review the images presented.

From: GIRARD THE SLAVE DEALER.: Double Tier of Slave Colls Found Beneath the Millionaire’s House. Los Angeles Times (1886-1922); Oct 28, 1906; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times pg. VII2

### **GIRARD THE SLAVE DEALER.**

#### **Double Tier of Slave Colls Found Beneath the Millionaire’s House.**

Workmen digging beneath Water street, Philadelphia, for the new tunnel station uncovered at a depth of 100 feet what is clearly an old slave prison. The pen is composed of narrow cells in three tiers, with three-foot corridors between the heavy walls

Heavy iron bars covered the windows, and in each cell were manacle supports. Directly above them is the house of Stephen Girard, the eccentric millionaire, who gave Girard College to Philadelphia and whose estate is now valued at hundreds of millions. It was in tearing down this house, which the traction company had bought from the Girard trust, that they came across the prison.

It has long been handed down in local history that Girard drove a brisk slave trade and that some of the basis of his fortune came from dealing in negroes. As soon as the discovery was made the board of trustees of the Girard trust flocked down to the dungeons. The cells run six to the tier. Each is large enough to hold six men packed in closely. The old Girard house is within half a square of the Delaware, and secret access by water would be easy. Girard believed in slavery, owned slaves and had many on his Louisiana sugar plantation.

SLAVE DUNGEON UNEARTHED: Subway Workmen Find Prison Under Stephen Girard's Old Home. Special to The Washington Post. The Washington Post (1877-1922); Oct 11, 1906; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post pg. 1



Philadelphia, Oct. 10

Subway workmen digging deep beneath Water Street above Market for the foundation of the new tunnel station, uncovered at a depth of 100 ft what is clearly an old slave prison. The pen is composed of narrow cells in 3 tiers, with 3-foot corridors between the heavy walls. Heavy iron bars covered the windows, and in each cell were manacle supports. Directly above them is the house of Steven Girard, the eccentric millionaire who gave Girard College to Philadelphia, and whose estate is now valued in the hundreds of millions. It was in tearing down this house, which the traction company had bought from the Girard Trust Company, that they came across the prison.

It has long been handed down in local history that Girard ran a brisk slave trade, and that some of the basis of his gigantic fortune came from the barter of the blacks.

Girard came to Philadelphia in 1776. In the War of 1812, he made his historic loan to finance the country in its war. The origin of his fortune has always remained a mystery.

The cells run 6 to a tier, each large enough to hold 6 large men packed in closely. The old Girard house is within half a square from the Delaware, and access would have been easy. Girard believed in slavery, owned many, and had many on his Louisiana sugar Plantation.

A curious circumstance connected with the discovery is that for years, a legend of haunting has hung around Old Water Street, between Market and Arch Streets. Stories of underground shrieks, chain rattling, blows, and all other time-honored manifestations have been told, and it is a fact that houses near the old Girard Place cannot be rented because of this.

**Images**



***Item Info***

**Item No:** pdcc00543

**Title:** Stephen Girard's Alleged "Slave Dungeons", Front & Market Streets.

**Historic Street Address:** Front & Market Streets

**Media Type:** Scrapbooks

**Source:** Print and Picture Collection

**Notes:**

Photograph shows cells believed to have been used for incarcerating people, in the partly demolished house at Front & Market Streets that belonged to Stephen Girard.

**Creation Year:** 1907

**Call Number:** A917.481 P536 v.6

**Creator Name:** Castner, Samuel, Jr., 1843-1929 - Compiler

Girard, Stephen, 1750-1831

From Free Library of Philadelphia, Digital collections



**William Nicholson Jennings, *Girard Slave Pens* (Louisiana, 1894). Photograph.**

This photograph depicts the slave pens on Stephen Girard's Louisiana plantation. In 1793, Girard funded and led a hospital for Philadelphia's poorest yellow fever patients. The thick walls and barred windows of this pen radiate a feeling of claustrophobia that contrasts sharply with that of the hospital.

From: The Library Company of Philadelphia

<https://librarycompany.org/dejavu/part2.html>

Henry Bry was an estimable friend of Stephen Girard of Philadelphia, so much so that Girard appointed him his agent to purchase land and slaves in Louisiana, and to open a cotton plantation, which agency Bry View Full Resolution F out for Girard, purchasing 400,000 acres of land of the DeMaison Rouge grant in Girard's name, and about 60 negro slaves in his own name to start the Girard plantation. The purchase of the slaves in Bry's name was by Girard's request and wish, as he believed that the knowledge of his ownership of slave property would operate to his injury in Philadelphia. Girard by his will gave Bry the use of this plantation and negroes for twenty years after his death—then the same to revert to the cities of Philadelphia and New Orleans; which bequest was carried out, as Bry lived over twenty years after Girard's death.

From: Newspaper by Ancestry:

<https://basic.newspapers.com/search/?query=Henry%20Bry%20stephen%20girard>

Accessed Dec. 10, 2022

CLIPPED FROM

The Ouachita Telegraph

Monroe, Louisiana

25 Aug 1888, Sat • Page 2

Excerpt from: <https://www.sunjournal.com/2005/06/02/bank-apologizes-owning-slaves-using-collateral/>

Poster June 2, 2005

Accessed Dec. 1, 2022

### **Bank apologizes for owning slaves, using as collateral**

By Joseph N. DiStefano, Knight Ridder Newspapers

PHILADELPHIA – Wachovia Corp., the nation’s fourth-largest bank, has asked African Americans to forgive the company for its history of owning slaves and using them as loan collateral. “We apologize to all Americans, and especially to African Americans and people of African descent,” Wachovia Chairman Kennedy Thompson said in a statement Wednesday.

Wachovia, based in Charlotte, N.C., came clean about the activities of its predecessor banks and their officers – including such prominent Philadelphians as Revolutionary War financier Robert Morris – under pressure from the cities of Philadelphia, Chicago and Los Angeles, which have passed laws calling on city contractors to disclose any history of making money from slavery.

Wachovia’s confession follows a January admission by JPMorgan Chase & Co. that a predecessor in Louisiana used slaves as loan collateral...Scholars of slavery were surprised and pleased by Wachovia’s report.

“Although it’s a late day, they should be saluted for their honesty,” said Charles Blockson, a scholar of slavery and curator of the Afro-American Collection at Temple University. “We all knew about (Stephen) Girard and the other bankers in Philadelphia, how they made money from slavery. But a lot of organizations and banks in the past have denied it. They had slipped it under the rug.”

...Wachovia’s predecessor bank in Georgia owned at least 162 slaves, and a South Carolina predecessor used more than 500 as collateral for loans, seizing some when their owners defaulted, according to a 111-page report prepared for Wachovia by History Factory, a corporate-research firm in Chantilly, Va.

Wachovia predecessors Philadelphia National Bank and Girard National Bank also “profited more indirectly from slavery” because they were run by, or invested in, people who made money from slavery under a broad test that included holding “U.S. government bonds during years when

the United States permitted and profited from slave labor directly through taxation,” according to the report.

...But the Ace report was questioned by slavery scholars because it did not deal with insurance of slaves carried between Caribbean ports, the major focus of Philadelphia finance and trade in the early 1800s.

(c) 2005, The Philadelphia Inquirer.

<https://www.sunjournal.com/2005/06/02/bank-apologizes-owning-slaves-using-collateral/>

Visit Philadelphia Online, the Inquirer’s World Wide Web site, at <http://www.philly.com/>

Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

### READING 1: **Lin Zexu: Letter to Queen Victoria, 1839**

(From: Copyright © 1995-2005, Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Longman, [https://wps.pearsoncustom.com/wps/media/objects/2427/2486120/chap\\_assets/documents/doc241.html#:~:text=Lin's%20letter%20to%20Queen%20Victoria,War%20was%20imminent.](https://wps.pearsoncustom.com/wps/media/objects/2427/2486120/chap_assets/documents/doc241.html#:~:text=Lin's%20letter%20to%20Queen%20Victoria,War%20was%20imminent.)

Accessed November 15, 2022)

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### About the Document

By the early 1800s, the opium trade dominated by British merchants produced millions of Chinese addicts. The opium trade increased steadily; between 1800 and 1821, 4,500 chests were shipped to and sold in China a year. In 1838, the number reached 40,000 chests. The result was a serious outflow of Chinese silver. The Qing government finally decided in 1838 to ban the opium trade, and Lin Zexu was appointed as imperial commissioner to supervise the operation. Lin arrived in Guangzhou in March 1839 and soon launched strong attacks on both addicts and smugglers. He also ordered confiscation of opium in foreign merchants' possession and burned as many as 21,306 chests.

Lin's letter to Queen Victoria was sent during his anti-opium campaign. Lin asked Queen Victoria to stop the sale of opium from India to China. In response to British merchants' request for protection, the British fleet was on its way to Guangzhou. War was imminent.

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### The Document

...Generally speaking, the succeeding rulers of your honorable country have been respectful and obedient. Time and again they have sent petitions to China, saying: "We are grateful to His Majesty the Emperor for the impartial and favorable treatment he has granted to the citizens of my country who have come to China to trade," etc. I am pleased to learn that you, as the ruler of

your honorable country, are thoroughly familiar with the principle of righteousness and are grateful for the favor that His Majesty the Emperor has bestowed upon your subjects. Because of this fact, **the Celestial Empire**, following its traditional policy of treating foreigners with kindness, has been doubly considerate towards the people from England. You have traded in China for almost 200 years, and as a result, your country has become wealthy and prosperous.

As this trade has lasted for a long time, there are bound to be unscrupulous as well as honest traders. Among the unscrupulous are those who bring opium to China to harm the Chinese; they succeed so well that this poison has spread far and wide in all the provinces. You, I hope, will certainly agree that people who pursue material gains to the great detriment of the welfare of others can be neither tolerated by Heaven nor endured by men. . . .

Your country is more than 60,000 *li* from China. The purpose of your ships in coming to China is to realize a large profit. Since this profit is realized in China and is in fact taken away from the Chinese people, how can foreigners return injury for the benefit they have received by sending this poison to harm their benefactors? They may not intend to harm others on purpose, but the fact remains that they are so obsessed with material gain that they have no concern whatever for the harm they can cause to others. Have they no conscience? I have heard that you strictly prohibit opium in your own country, indicating unmistakably that you know how harmful opium is. You do not wish opium to harm your own country, but you choose to bring that harm to other countries such as China. Why?

The products that originate from China are all useful items. They are good for food and other purposes and are easy to sell. Has China produced one item that is harmful to foreign countries? For instance, tea and rhubarb are so important to foreigners' livelihood that they have to consume them every day. Were China to concern herself only with her own advantage without showing any regard for other people's welfare, how could foreigners continue to live? Foreign products like woolen cloth and beiges rely on Chinese raw materials such as silk for their manufacturing. Had China sought only her own advantage, where would the foreigners' profit come from? The products that foreign countries need and have to import from China are too numerous to enumerate: from food products such as molasses, ginger, and cassia to useful necessities such as silk and porcelain. The imported goods from foreign countries, on the other hand, are merely playthings which can be easily dispensed with without causing any ill effect. Since we do not need these things really, what harm would come if we should decide to stop foreign trade altogether? The reason why we unhesitatingly allow foreigners to ship out such Chinese products as tea and silk is that we feel that wherever there is an advantage, it should be shared by all the people in the world. . . .

I have heard that you are a kind, compassionate monarch. I am sure that you will not do to others what you yourself do not desire. I have also heard that you have instructed every British ship that sails for Canton not to bring any prohibited goods to China. It seems that your policy is as enlightened as it is proper. The fact that British ships have continued to bring opium to China results perhaps from the impossibility of making a thorough inspection of all of them owing to their large numbers. I am sending you this letter to reiterate the seriousness with which we enforce the law of the Celestial Empire and to make sure that merchants from your honorable country will not attempt to violate it again.

I have heard that the areas under your direct jurisdiction such as London, Scotland, and Ireland do not produce opium; it is produced instead in your Indian possessions such as Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Patna, and Malwa. In these possessions the English people not only, plant opium poppies that stretch from one mountain to another but also open factories to manufacture this terrible drug. As months accumulate and years pass by, the poison they have produced increases in its wicked intensity, and its repugnant odor reaches as high as the sky. Heaven is furious with anger, and all the gods are moaning with pain! It is hereby suggested that you destroy and plow under all of these opium plants and grow food crops instead, while issuing an order to punish severely anyone who dares to plant opium poppies again. If you adopt this policy of love so as to produce good and exterminate evil, Heaven will protect you, and gods will bring you good fortune. Moreover, you will enjoy a long life and be rewarded with a multitude of children and grandchildren! In short, by taking this one measure, you can bring great happiness to others as well as yourself. Why do you not do it?

The right of foreigners to reside in China is a special favor granted by the Celestial Empire, and the profits they have made are those realized in China. As time passes by, some of them stay in China for a longer period than they do in their own country. For every government, past or present, one of its primary functions is to educate all the people living within its jurisdiction, foreigners as well as its own citizens, about the law and to punish them if they choose to violate it. Since a foreigner who goes to England to trade has to obey the English law, how can an Englishman not obey the Chinese law when he is physically within China? The present law calls for the imposition of the death sentence on any Chinese who has peddled or smoked opium. Since a Chinese could not peddle or smoke opium if foreigners had not brought it to China, it is clear that the true culprits of a Chinese's death as a result of an opium conviction are the opium traders from foreign countries. Being the cause of other people's death, why should they themselves be spared from capital punishment? A murderer of one person is subject to the death sentence; just imagine how many people opium has killed! This is the rationale behind the new law which says that any foreigner who brings opium to China will be sentenced to death by hanging or beheading. Our purpose is to eliminate this poison once and for all and to the benefit of all mankind. . . .

Our Celestial Empire towers over all other countries in virtue and possesses a power great and awesome enough to carry out its wishes. But we will not prosecute a person without warning him in advance; that is why we have made our law explicit and clear. If the merchants of your honorable country wish to enjoy trade with us on a permanent basis, they must fearfully observe our law by cutting off, once and for all, the supply of opium. Under no circumstance should they test our intention to enforce the law by deliberately violating it. You, as the ruler of your honorable country, should do your part to uncover the hidden and unmask the wicked. It is hoped that you will continue to enjoy your country and become more and more respectful and obeisant. How wonderful it is that we can all enjoy the blessing of peace!

Source: *Lin Wen-chung kung cheng-shu*, vol. 2, roll 3. This letter was dated August 27, 1839.

1. How does Lin Zexu compare the goods China trades with those from the West? How does he compare the motivations for trade between China and the West?
2. On what ground does Lin request Queen Victoria to order the end of the opium trade?

3. The importation of opium to China was legally prohibited and the effects of opioid addiction were well known. What does the continued importation of an illegal substance known to cause severe, debilitating addiction say about those traders (including Girard) who continued the practice in terms of a) their regard toward the Chinese government and its people and b) their regard toward trade?

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**READING 2: From: Philadelphia's Old China Trade and early American images of China, by Jonathan Goldstein. Pennsylvania Legacies(Vol. 12, Issue 1), May 2012. Historical Society of Pennsylvania**

Between 1784 and 1787, the voyages from Philadelphia of United States, Alliance, and Canton proved...that direct Asian trade could be profitable. In 1784, a consortium of merchants sponsored the journey of United States from Philadelphia to China.

...In December 1785, another consortium sent to Canton from Philadelphia to China with a cargo of ginseng and specie (Spanish silver). It returned to port on May 26, 1787, and its voyage was declared a major commercial success.

Encouraged by these successful experiments, the ever-cautious Stephen Girard, the merchant destined to be the most famous Philadelphia China trader, began to think seriously about co-investing in China voyages.

Girard was encouraged...by favorable US policies on overseas trade. Before the adoption of the national Constitution, individual states, including Pennsylvania, had levied tariffs on tea, and Congress passed its first tea tariff in 1789. These duties discriminated sharply in favor of goods brought to the United States on American ships, and particularly on those arriving directly from China. This preferential tariff contributed to the profitability of Alliance, Canton, United States, and Asia and encouraged Girard and other merchants to consider China voyages.

In 1795, Girard took the big step of commissioning the construction of his own fleet of ships specially designed for the China trade. He christened two of his ships North America and

Superb...Eventually Girard had a total of eight ships in the China trade and others sailing to different ports. He never owned more than six ships at a time, three or four of which returned to Philadelphia each year with cargoes worth an average of \$250,000.

To build his China trade, Girard searched for a commodity to trade in Canton beyond ginseng and specie. He quickly seized upon opium, which had already become a staple of the trade by the 1760s. For Americans, however, opium was not easy to acquire. Only on the rarest of occasions would the British or Portuguese share their Indian opium sources. Furthermore, opium was illegal in China and had to be smuggled in. There were other risks involved, not only in China, but en route in such ports as Manila in the Spanish Philippines, where the import of opium was also prohibited.

A system developed, however, that worked smoothly so long as no one was caught. "You are aware that the trade in opium is illegal," wrote Philadelphia and Wilmington merchant John R. Latimer from Canton in 1829 to his brother Henry. "The system is perfect. A dealer pays the money down and at the same time receives the order to go to the ships for it. We never see it. Foreign merchants reside here constantly who are known to have no other business than the opium. All the Chinese traders fee the officers regularly for their commerce and it is smoked by all, from the highest mandarin down."

Girard took all of these factors into consideration and put aside his earlier caution to trade in opium, which promised to boost profits. Fortunately for Girard, his fellow Philadelphians Benjamin Chew Wilcocks and William Waln discovered a non-British source for opium--the Ottoman Empire's Mediterranean port of Smyrna. Ottoman opium was also available in Hamburg and Amsterdam. Wilcocks and Waln demonstrated, in pioneering voyages of 1804-05, that Smyrna opium could be shipped to Canton and sold at great profit. Such opium was considered to be of poorer quality than Indian opium but found a market among those in China who could not afford the more expensive variety, making the drug more accessible to even more addicts.

Girard learned the intricacies of the China smuggling trade. Howqua, his agent in Canton, admonished him about the risks of the contraband trade.,, Nevertheless, Girard continued to make opium a staple of his China trade.

The cargoes that Philadelphians sent to China were more than a source of prosperity for many of their stateside owners and investors. Ships returned from China with tales of an exotic land and people and also with material goods. Philadelphians received their earliest visual images of the Chinese displayed upon artifacts that merchants such as Stephen Girard, Robert Morris, Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, and William Waln imported. Perceptions of China and the Chinese people were shaped not only by missionaries, mariners, and merchants but by the imagery on decorative arts. The early American China trade served as the vehicle for intercultural contact long before the mass media. The depiction of Chinese upon imported artifacts, and the reproduction of those images on domestic products, even antedated the large mid-19th-century immigration of Chinese to the United States.

...One final way in which Philadelphians encountered a romanticized visual image of China was in the so-called "Museums of Chinese Curiosities." Advertised as "edifying" collections and, indeed, providing visitors with an impressive and unique opportunity to learn about this distant land and people through actual objects, the displays also served to amuse and titillate onlookers and in most cases also turn a profit. The best known of these was opened in Philadelphia by China trader Nathan Dunn. Dunn's Chinese Museum was the first such systematic exhibit of Asian objects in the United States. Between December 1838 and 1841, when the exhibit moved to London, over 100,000 Americans paid to see Dunn's assemblage of gaily costumed Chinese mannequins arranged beneath silk banners and lanterns. In 1847-49, John Peters, a member of Caleb Cushing's US diplomatic mission to China, set up a second Chinese Museum in Philadelphia. Peters's museum also traveled, beginning in Boston in 1845 and moving to New York in 1849.

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**Reading 3: From Philadelphia and the China Trade 1682-1846, by Jonathan Goldstein. Copyright 1978 The Pennsylvania State University**

While "immoral" may not be an appropriate characterization of the opium trade, the "illegal" nature of the business, which many traders openly acknowledged, cannot be downplayed in deference to the mores of the age...

...Even before embarking on an opium trade of their own, American merchants were aware of the ongoing philosophical and legal conflict between Chinese officials and Westerners at Canton. Stephen Girard admitted that he had been informed that opium was "prohibited at Canton," yet he was also aware that "there is no difficulty in shipping" if the smuggler was prudent. The Chinese had not yet made any forceful showing of their determination to halt the trade, which continued virtually unimpeded. The major obstacle American merchants faced was that they lacked a ready source for very large quantities of opium. ...p.55

...By 1815, Chinese opposition to opium importation became more pronounced...A European correspondent of Girard...wrote him warily: "Till now reports of the European trade in China about to experience much difficulty has had no influence on this article [tea] here, but if they be confirmed an augmentation [of difficulty] may be expected."

The prospect of continued difficulty in prosecuting the opium trade and in resolving disputes with Canton authorities seem to have been the critical factors which induced Girard and John Jacob Astor, two of the most successful American China traders, to significantly scale down their China operations after the Terranova incident. Astor withdrew from the China trade entirely. Girard sent two more voyages to Canton, his final one in 1824. P. 61

Questions:

1. What factors led to Stephen Girard entering the China Trade?
2. *These duties discriminated sharply in favor of goods brought to the United States on American ships, and particularly on those arriving directly from China.* Remember that one of the reasons behind the Revolutionary War with Britain was the colonies citing "taxation without representation" and that one of the most famous rebellions in the colonies was the Boston Tea Party - where colonists dumped tea (from China) on British ships into Boston Harbor. After the Revolutionary War, why did the US create this duty structure for imports from China? How important was the China trade to the colonial US?
3. Girard used opium in his dealings with China, despite his knowledge that the Chinese government had banned the drug in China. Other Philadelphia China traders (for example, Nathan Dunn) refused to deal in opium, both on legal and moral grounds. Do you think Girard was merely "a product of his time" - doing what all other traders were doing? Should his actions in this regard be condemned now?

**Reading One: Excerpt from Philadelphia Tribune, 1965**

The Two Faces of Stephen Girard:

# Tycoon and Benefactor to Whites Was Slaver, International Thief

## Made Millions Shipping Africans Here in Chains

By CHRIS J. PERRY  
OF THE TRIBUNE STAFF

The unfair treatment which Stephen Girard's will imposes on Negroes is nothing compared to the tycoon's treatment of Negroes while he was alive.

The fact is that Girard, whose name is today respectably stamped on one of the city's largest streets, a bank, and one of the wealthiest private schools in the world, made his millions by shipping free Africans into slavery in the Americas.

And according to historians J. A. Rodgers and LaCoste, Girard actually stole outright some \$6-million in francs from Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro liberator of Haiti.

It is cruelly ironic but quite understandable that Girard didn't think the people he had been treating as animals all his life were worthy of being educated in his school.

But the fact remains that through the years, tens of thousands of white youths, some of whom were among the most influential businessmen in Philadelphia, received their education from a fortune founded on slave trading and international thievery.

Historians have recorded that while L'Ouverture was successfully defending his small island near Cuba from the forces of Napoleon Bonaparte, a feat which even the mighty powers of Germany and Russia were unable to do, he entrusted the treasury of his state to Girard, who had convinced

## Confiscated \$6-Million From Haitian Liberator

L'Ouverture he was a good friend.

However, when L'Ouverture went to a "peace-meeting" with Napoleon, he was promptly thrown into chains, and his political life was ended in a dungeon.

With Toussaint in chains, Girard apparently felt there was no need to return the \$6-million in francs held, and so kept them.

A study of Girard's usual "business methods" has even led some historical speculators to suggest that Girard himself might have urged the Negro leader to attend the "truce talk" with the French, knowing full well what fate awaited him.

Conservative estimates of the  
(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

# Stephen Girard : An International Thief and Slaver Made Millions Shipping Africans Here in Chains

(Continued from Page 1)

current value of the Girard estate place it well over \$100 million. If this historical light only a ridiculous, then, the estate owes Haiti a good many millions of dollars. And what compensation could the estate possibly pay to the thousands of Negroes and their descendants that Girard shipped into slavery? Allowing them to enter Girard College would be in this historical light only a ridiculous gesture.

But today's Negroes do indeed want their orphans to be able to go to the school along with white orphans. They would like a few hundred of their children to have a chance to leave the slums that are the direct result of a heritage of slavery and get equal education.

But the trustees of the Girard estate regard such a move as a violation of Girard's "sacred" will. It is their opinion that to modify the last commandments of a slave-monger and thief would be to invade the chapel of human dignity.

**Reading Two: Excerpt from: Brown, Steven P. "The Girard Will and Twin Landmarks of Supreme Court History." *Journal of Supreme Court history* 41.1 (2016): 7–20. .**

...It has been estimated that, at its peak and adjusted for inflation, Girard's fortune exceeded \$105 billion, making him one of the wealthiest Americans ever. He left the bulk of his fortune to the city of Philadelphia. Of that considerable amount, the will stipulated that the greatest proportion was to be used to create a "permanent college, with suitable outbuildings, sufficiently spacious for the residence and accommodation of at least three hundred scholars, and the requisite teachers and other persons necessary in such an institution."

The scholars of this college were to be drawn from the city's ranks of "poor white male orphan[s]" between the ages of six and ten, who would be boarded and educated at the school for free until the age of eighteen. The will's use of the term "orphan" actually referred to fatherless children...

...More than a century passed before the nation again turned its attention to the operations of Girard College. It did so, in large measure, because of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (The landmark suit that made segregation in education illegal). On May 28, 1954, just eleven days after the Court's decision in *Brown*, the Philadelphia City Council approved a resolution seeking a court ruling on the Girard Will's requirement that only white males be admitted to the college...With the backing of both the city and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, two young African American boys sought admission to Girard College from the Board of City Trusts, which administered the bequest. The Board declined to enroll them, however, citing the racial stipulations of the will.

The race-based provisions were upheld at the trial level and, on appeal, by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The latter noted that "it is one of our most fundamental legal principles that an individual has the right to dispose of his own property by gift as he sees fit." It went on to declare that, regardless of whether the city, the state, or even the entire country viewed Girard's gift as "arbitrary, unwise, intolerant, discriminatory, or ignoble . . ., [the estator] is entitled to his idiosyncrasies and even to his prejudices."

According to the court, Girard never empowered Philadelphia with any authority to use any of its governmental powers in the execution of his will. It was merely a trustee, and limited as such to the "same rights, powers, and duties, no more and no less, as those of any private individual or trust company acting as a trustee." The city of Philadelphia's fiduciary duty, it continued, was to carry out the terms of Girard's will...According to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, any trustee of Girard's bequest would be obligated to deny non-white children admission to Girard College.

...Five months later, the Supreme Court of the United States reversed and remanded the lower court decision with a tersely worded, five paragraphs...ruling that concluded with this unequivocal statement:

The Board which operates Girard College is an agency of the State of Pennsylvania. Therefore, even though the Board was acting as a trustee, its refusal to admit [the two boys] to the college because they were Negroes was discrimination by the State. Such discrimination is forbidden by the Fourteenth Amendment.

...To those who complained that the lower court's action had violated both the letter and spirit of the Supreme Court's directive, Pennsylvania's high court replied simply, "Had the Supreme Court so intended [the admission of the black children], it would have said so." It went on to chide the appellants' "effort to make a 'segregation' issue out of Stephen Girard's private charity." Doing so, the court continued, obscured the real issue: "the right of a person to bequeath his property for a lawful charitable use and have his testamentary disposition judicially respected and enforced."

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling was once again appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but this time the Justices declined to review the case. The Court's denial...effectively halted four years' worth of steady momentum to desegregate Girard College. It would take several more years, another seminal Supreme Court case, and a deliberate tactical shift before Girard opened its doors to minorities.

By the early 1960s, the president of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP, Cecil B. Moore, had grown impatient with the litigation-focused strategy utilized by Alexander and other city leaders. Moore encouraged a direct approach to influencing Girard's decision makers, and in the spring of 1965 he announced a campaign against the college itself.

On May 1, 1965, Moore's NAACP launched a protest against Girard's admission policies. Over 800 police officers, standing six yards apart around the entire circumference of the school, separated the initial group of some fifty picketers from the ten-foot-high stone walls surrounding Girard College. Over the next several months, the number of demonstrators swelled as they participated in one of the longest protests of the Civil Rights era. From May to December they picketed the school virtually twenty-four hours a day, drawing the attention of Girard officials as well as that of civil rights leaders and the national media. At a rally held in August, Martin Luther King, Jr., commended a crowd of some 5,000 protestors for their efforts and promised that not only Girard's but all the "walls of segregation will come tumbling down." The NAACP finally agreed to halt the protests when the city and state again filed suit against Girard in the latter part of December 1965.

...For more than a century, Lord concluded, the momentum of public character associated with the school was responsible for "the institutionalization of Girard College as a governmentally sanctioned center of racial bias."

In March 1968, the trustees lost their appeal of the district court decision in a unanimous Third Circuit ruling. Two months later, the Supreme Court denied certiorari to the case. That fall, four African-American children—William Dade, age eleven, Carl Riley, age eight, Theodore Hicks, age nine, Owen Gowens, age seven, and a nine-year-old boy of Mongolian descent, Buddha Ragcha Dalantinov—passed through Girard's storied entrance to join some 600 white classmates.

**Reading 3: "Girard College: Millions for Whites, Not One Cent for Negroes" Bricklin, Mark. Philadelphia Tribune (1912-); Philadelphia, Penn. [Philadelphia, Penn]. 04 May 1965: 3.**

"Girard College is ideally situated in a small oasis of beauty in the heart of a large metropolitan area." states the school's catalog. Another way of stating this might be "Girard College is a small oasis for a few privileged white youths squarely in the middle of a negro area where the children go to some of the worst schools in any large city."

...The Girard estate, from which the school is maintained, is worth about \$110 million.

Besides every conceivable kind of physical luxury, including two swimming pools, there is one teacher for every nine students. In stark contrast, nearby public schools do not even have libraries, let alone swimming pools, and teachers are assigned about 40 pupils each.

#### TAX EXEMPTS STATUS

Nevertheless, the school, as a "charity" for "poor, white, male orphans" enjoys a tax exempt status which saved it \$400,000 annually in real estate taxes alone. Earnings from investments are

also tax-free. The underprivileged people of the surrounding neighborhood make up for the school's exemption by paying for more taxes out of their pockets.

Although the school maintains it is segregated because Stephen Girard's will, drawn up in 1831, says it is for "white orphans", the school has shown that it is willing to stretch the articles of the will if it wants to.

The will calls for the school to be built on 12th and Chestnut Streets, but is nowhere near there. The school also allows children whose mothers are living to attend the school, although such children are not orphans, according to the dictionary. They have, in fact, found it so difficult to fill all the places with "poor, white, male orphans" that students are actively recruited from all over the country and enrollment is a mere 700. In 1929, more than 1,500 students attended the school.

Questions:

- a) Why do you think Stephen Girard included race as a criterion of who Girard College could serve?
- b) How did the black community respond to the segregation at Girard College?
- c) Why do you think Girard College came to be the site of one of the largest demonstrations of the Civil Rights era?

Performance Task 1: Redesigning Stephen Girard Statue

You have been given the task of re-envisioning a monument to Stephen Girard that includes a more comprehensive history than the statue that currently exists.

Read through the description on the Stephen Girard statue.

In your group, discuss what the statue shows and what is missing in the history of Stephen Girard.

In your group, discuss the statue itself - what the image depicts of the man. Consider how he is portrayed, the position he is in, the things that surround him.

As a group decide what you think should be included in a Stephen Girard monument. What content do you think is important? How should any additional content be positioned? How should Girard himself be positioned?

Redesign the statue. You may do your design either as a drawing or using clay. Include the words that would be present on the statue and how they would be placed.

Include a narrative about your statue. The narrative should include:

A description of the elements you want to include in your statue and why

A description of the statue itself (similar to the ones in the attached resource from the Smithsonian Museum and the one from Waymarking).

A description of the placement of the statue - how do you want the broader community to interact with the statue?

Performance Task: Stephen Girard Statue

History



Bronze statue sculpted by J. Massey Rhind

Original installation:

Plaza outside City Hall in 1897

2nd installation:

Moved to Reyburn Plaza in 1928 (currently the site of the Municipal Services Building).

Current location:

Relocated to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, west end, in 1977

From the Art Inventory Catalogue of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

<https://siris-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1330136B0C007.22639&profile=ariall&source=~!siartinventories&view=subscriptionssummary&uri=full=3100001~!21663~!5&ri=1&aspect=power&menu=search&ipp=20&spp=20&staffonly=&term=stephen+girard&index=.G>

“Standing portrait of Girard dressed in a long jacket, buttoned vest, high necked shirt, and a tie around his neck. He stands in a casual position with his proper left hand on his waist and his proper right foot slightly forward. He holds his glasses in his proper right hand. He stands on a tall square base adorned on the front with a carving of a Girard's famous ship, the Water Witch. The sides of the base are adorned with bronze plaques symbolizing Girard's career as a merchant and a mariner and as a philanthropist.”

From Waymarking.com

[https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMDTYF\\_Stephen\\_Girard\\_Philadelphia\\_PA](https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMDTYF_Stephen_Girard_Philadelphia_PA)

“The statue is of bronze and resides on a granite base. The inscription reads:

Philadelphia's

Greatest Philanthropist

Erected By

Alumni of Girard College

And

The People

Of This

City And Commonwealth

1897

“(There are) two relief plaques inset into the granite base. The first bronze, relief tablet features a merchant vessel with men in front of it, presumable one of the men being Girard. The second tablet is held vertically and is rather strange. There are little men and very large women by comparison. I cannot fathom why this is. It is rather comical to look at. The back has a Greek revival building which resembles an old bank or some other important financial institutional building.”

Community Interaction

Stephen Girard’s name and image are ubiquitous in Philadelphia. The Girard Bank no longer exists, having been purchased by Mellon Bank. However, Girard College, Girard Estates, Girard Avenue, and the Stephen Girard Elementary School in South Philadelphia all bear his name. In fact, his name is a common fixture throughout Philadelphia. While this particular statue sits in a less prominent space near the Art Museum instead of where it was originally placed at City Hall, his influence is broad. In fact, Girard College maintains a web page entirely devoted to featuring pictures of monuments and statues of Stephen Girard.

The statue was originally given great public prominence in being placed outside of city hall and then the Municipal Services Building. In its current location behind the Art Museum there is much less public interaction with this sculpture.

### Performance Task 2: Renaming Stephen Girard School

You have been given the task to petition the School District of Philadelphia to rename one of the two Girard schools in the District. You will need to do the following:

Read through the information and rules required to submit a name change for consideration. The link to the rules is [here](#).

Complete the School Name Request Form for the District

Prepare a slide presentation to give to faculty and parents at the Girard School to help convince them the name of the school should be changed.

Propose a new name for the school and give your reasons why the new name would be a better name for the school

### Performance Task 3: Create a Netflix Series

You have been asked to create a Netflix mini-series on Stephen Girard's life. This will be a 5 episode series - each episode will feature one of the articles read about Stephen Girard. You will need to create:

The cover slide for your series that features an overview of the series.

A descriptor of each episode with a graphic and a description of the episode.

A list of the main characters that will be in each episode

You can use this [template](#) in order to create your slides.

### Performance Task 4: Historical Marker

In 1993, a historical marker commemorating Stephen Girard was placed at 21st and Shunk Streets in Philadelphia. A webpage describing the marker is [here](#).

Read the excerpt from *Resistance in Paradise: Rethinking 100 Years of US Involvement in the Caribbean and the Pacific*.

Read the webpage describing the Stephen Girard marker at 21st and Shunk.

Similar to the Lapu marker in the Philippines, design a marker for Stephen Girard that tells history not revealed in the original marker. Accompanying the marker, write the descriptor that would appear on the state webpage that would describe the history of Stephen Girard that is behind your marker.

From: Resistance in Paradise: Rethinking 100 Years of US Involvement in the Caribbean and the Pacific. ( Wei, Deborah, Ed.; Kamel, Rachael, Ed. Resistance in Paradise: Rethinking 100 Years of U.S. Involvement in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Published by: American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia, PA.; Philadelphia School District, PA. Office of Curriculum Support. 1998)

On the small island of Mactan in the central Philippines, there are two plaques commemorating the same historical event.

One plaque was erected in 1941 and is entitled "Ferdinand Magellan's Death." It reads: "On this spot Ferdinand Magellan died on April 27, 1521, wounded in an encounter with the soldiers of Lapulapu, chief of Mactan Island. One of Magellan's ships, the Victoria, under the command of Juan Sebastian Elcano, sailed from Cebu on May 1, 1521, and anchored at San Lucar de Barrameda on September 6, 1522, thus completing the first circumnavigation of the earth."

The second plaque was erected in 1951 and is entitled "Lapulapu." It reads: "Here, on 27 April 1521, Lapulapu and his men repulsed the Spanish invaders, killing their leader, Ferdinand Magellan. Thus, Lapulapu became the first Filipino to have repelled European aggression."

The information on both of these plaques is accurate: each one is describing a different aspect of the historical truth...In the case of the two plaques on Mactan, the first one was erected in 1941, when the Philippines was still a U.S. colony. The second plaque was put up in 1951, after the Philippines became a formally independent country. Think about the difference between these two plaques in how the facts are presented. How might the change in the political status of the Philippines affected the wording of the plaques?



