mLL

middle level learning

NCSS

"All History is Local"
Researching the Place Where You Live

John P. Dillon

The Honorable Thomas "Tip" O'Neil, former Speaker of the House, often proclaimed, "All politics is local." O'Neil knew whereof he spoke, having arisen from the political atmosphere described so well in Edwin O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah* (a book about "machine politics" that became a movie classic starring Spencer Tracey and directed by John Ford). For all of their less admirable qualities, big city political bosses did understand their constituents and what was happening on the street.

In a similar fashion, I like to say that "all history is local," at least because our understanding of the world, past and present, begins with what we experience for ourselves. All of us have a personal history, and our uniqueness can make each of us a splendid participant in the narrative of our own time and place.

In the middle grades, we teachers have a chance to help our students begin to make links between historical events and what they see as belonging to their own space and time. The history that we love and happily impart to our students begins, for them, with connections to their own family or neighborhood.

Childhood in the Bronx

I recently recorded my mothers' remembrance of our family's six-year tenure in a first floor apartment, on a narrow Bronx street.[1] Everyone knew everyone else, and "watchful eyes" seemed to be everywhere. The accessibility to all of the neighborhood parents was a decided advantage for Mom, but not always for we adventuresome urchins.

As I grew up, I observed Bronx neighborhoods in transition from one ethnic group to another. Recently, business has been flourishing, with *bodegas* replacing pubs, and coffee bars replacing five-and-dime stores. Barbershops once primarily owned by Italian Americans are now owned by Hispanic and African Americans.

I learned as a child that Italian immigrant stonemasons had salvaged stones from Jerome Racetrack as it was demolished and used the blocks to build their parish church. Jerome Avenue is known by Bronx kids today. Just who was this Leonard Jerome, whose name has been given to the avenue that divides east from west Bronx? Well, a connection to the Bronx awaits my eighth graders when they learn about Winston Churchill, the British hero and head of state during World War II: Churchill's grandfather was Leonard Jerome who lived from 1817 to 1891. Jerome was a flamboyant and successful stock speculator, known as "The King of Wall Street," having made and lost several fortunes. A patron of the arts, he founded the American Academy of Music.

The Word in the Street

Reflecting on this example, I have asked the youngsters to discuss their thoughts on the following proposition: "All streets should be named with letters and numbers only." Would it make any difference if there were no longer a "Jerome Avenue" or a "Broadway," but only a "J Avenue" and a "B Street," or—even more simply—just a "998th street" and a "999th street"? Certainly, it would be easier to orient oneself to a map if streets were so logically named. Would there be any disadvantage? Would anything be lost if we followed this proposition?

After discussing this introductory query, I assign students to research and write about a block on which they have lived. There's all sorts of interesting information awaiting students in the school library, city library, in the library of our urban historical society, and online. For example, how did Slattery Park get its name? Students who research the question will discover that Corporal Robert Slattery was the first New York City police officer killed in World War I, memorialized in 1937 when this playground was opened.[2] The playground still serves local families, and many young men developed as high school and college basketball players on its basketball court. One of these, Bob Santini, played for the local NBA franchise—the New York Knicks.

Parks and Preservation

Most Bronx students have strong personal connections with the five major parks in this borough.[3] These parks were created

Children playing with rings, ladders, and poles, Bronx Park, ca. 1916.

due to the initiative of John Mullaly, a newspaper journalist in the 1880s who advocated that public land should be set aside for these parks, one of which is Bronx Park, home of the Bronx Zoo and the Botanical Gardens.[4] These parks are connected by parkways, which were built not only to move traffic, but to provide environmental benefits; these greenways include adjoining paved paths for bikers, runners, and walkers. I assign students to research a topic and then write an essay, "My Favorite Time in _____ Park."

The Grand Concourse, the main artery in the Bronx, is modeled after the main artery in Paris. Louis Risse, a French immigrant, had the idea to make this ridge of land into a thoroughfare similar to the one dear to him in his native France. Students pause to think that someone's forethought more than 100 years ago preserved some green space that youngsters enjoy today.

This lesson also mentions a certain New York State assemblyman who advocated in the 1880s for the creation of these Bronx parks. Twenty years later, this legislator had become President of the United States. Theodore Roosevelt played a leading role in creating our National Parks system.

A Memorial

Sometimes events occur that influence the lives of the young people before us, and we can make a connection, whether happy or tragic, to a current lesson.

Yankee catcher and captain Thurman Munson died in 1979 at the age of 32 while trying to land his recreational plane. The accident affected all of us here in the Bronx as well as baseball fans everywhere. I was teaching at Henry Lou Gehrig I.S. in New York City at the time. The school, half a mile from the stadium, was the only building on the block with a street address. It was suggested that E. 156th St.,

between Morris and Sherman Avenues, be renamed for Thurman Munson. The youngsters circulated petitions and wrote letters to City Hall asking for the desired street change. Several months later, we received a letter from then Mayor Edward Koch inviting the eighth grade class to attend the signing of a bill into law proclaiming what the students had asked for. Three members of the eighth grade class were invited to make a presentation to the mayor, city legislators, and Yankee team representatives. It was truly a memorable experience.

A few months later, former Yankee catcher and the first Afro-American to play for the Yankees, Elston Howard, installed the new street sign at a small ceremony attended by some of my students. Gene (Stick) Michael invited these youngsters to tour the ballpark with him. They visited the dugout, dressing rooms, and stepped out onto the playing field. Those students are now young adults,

History on the New Side of Town

In America, the written record of local history might reach back as far as 400 years—or only a few decades. For example, in brand new neighborhoods where the streets have been given fanciful names like "Deer Meadow Brooke," there is, nevertheless, a story for students to investigate. Who was the developer that named these streets? What was the local government office that approved them? What was this land used for before townhouses were built? How long ago was this land a farm, a field, or a sierra?

These historical questions naturally lead into issues of geography, governance, and current events. For example, to what office would we petition if we wanted to change the name of a street? Into what waterway does the rainfall in our neighborhood drain? Who picks up the material for recycling every Tuesday? And whom could we call to get the broken swing in the playground at the end of our court fixed?

Children with sleds in Central Park, New York City, 1916.

and they are telling their kids about the experience. In years to come, they will tell their grandkids.

Looking Up

In the Bronx (as is true in every neighborhood), there's some new local history being written every day. Recently, for example, a small garden was built on the roof of our school. It seems to me that this event is an opportunity for all kinds of interdisciplinary learning; in the social studies, we can make connections to topics such as global warming, agricultural policy, international trade, and "smart growth" urban planning.[5] The city parks department is providing plants native to the Bronx for our garden, so we could also make links to the Columbian Exchange and discuss the influx of non-native species into our city.

The new garden will obviously need a name at some point. Now, there's an interesting question. What should we name our school's rooftop garden? 🌐

Notes

1. John P. Dillon, "Guest Meditation," *The Stockade Revisited* (Winter 2006), 3.

2. John P. Dillon, "Slattery Park: A Dedication," *Bronx County Historical Society Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring, 1989): 26-8.

3. "Parks History" (adapted from the booklet *Three Hundred Years of Parks: A Timeline of New York City Park History*) is available from the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation at www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about/parks_history/historic_tour/historic_tour.html.

4. Anna Schnitz and Robert Loch, "More Public Parks: The First New York Environmental Movement," *Bronx County Historical Society Journal* 21, no. 2 (Fall, 1984): 51-65; John Mullaly, *New York Times* (January 5, 1915), 15: 4.

5. Ted Mitchell, "Working to Improve Our Community: Students as Citizens and Town Planners," *Middle Level Learning* 25 (January/February 2006): 8-13.

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Online Interactive Mapping: Using the Panoramic Maps Collection

Marsha Alibrandi and Eui kyung Shin

"Remember where the train station used to be? Turn left at that corner."

Often, when giving directions, we assume familiarity with historical landscapes. We expect that the listener can adjust "layers of mental maps" from the past and present to imagine a specific location. By developing students' knowledge of historical landscapes, we deepen their abilities to understand our changing physical and social geography. Our students will help plan and build the landscapes of the future. They need to value and understand the land's past if they are to create socially and environmentally sustainable communities.

Many state curricula require the teaching of local history in elementary and middle grades. We would like to introduce teachers to a wonderful online resource for displaying images of local communities as they may have looked more than 100 years ago. We also suggest ways to analyze changes to the landscape by comparing these historical maps with current cartographic images.

By comparing images at MapQuest with those at the Panoramic Maps Collection at a Library of Congress website, students are moving to higher analytical skills beyond simple location and magnification. When students look at landscapes around them and ask, "Why is that there?" they must use critical and analytical thinking skills to evaluate spatial information. History, geography, science, math, and language arts are all used to understand and interpret the information presented in these maps.

The Panoramic Maps Collection

From the late 1840s until the early 1900s, artists drew "bird's-eye view" landscapes of hundreds of American cities and towns. These popular "panoramic maps" provide a detailed, if somewhat idealized, image of American communities from a past era. As the nation grew and aerial photography became possible, these maps were no longer fashionable, but today they are a teaching treasure. A map of your community (or at least one from your state) may well be in the Panoramic Map Collection, 1847–1929.

The landscapes were drawn as if viewed from a hot air balloon, which was the only aerial transport until 1903. Most of the research for the maps, however, was done on foot and with the use of existing maps. The drawings were painstakingly rendered and made into lithographs for mass production and sales. Five artists produced most of the maps in this collection.

Local chambers of commerce often funded these panoramic maps, with specific businesses paying for a featured image in the map's border art. Wealthy individuals, whose mansions might be shown in a detailed inset, underwrote some of the maps. Real estate agents and chambers of commerce used the maps with prospective buyers of homes and business properties. Some maps showed not only the existing city, but areas planned for development. People would hang framed panoramic maps of their towns prominently in their homes.

In the collection, there are maps from each of the 48 contiguous states, some of which have only one map (Arizona, Delaware, and Idaho) while others have hundreds (Pennsylvania has 208). There are also maps of communities in the Canadian provinces.

New York and Pennsylvania were the two most populous states between the years 1870 and 1890. Pennsylvania was a central rail hub, and many travelers passing through might have wanted a souvenir of their visit—a panoramic map! The activity described below involves maps of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from different decades in the 1800s. Teachers may also visit "The Learning Page" at the Library of Congress to glean other teaching suggestions for exploiting the Panoramic Maps Collection, at **memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/collections/pmap/.**

Today, the fine details on these maps can be enjoyed online. Students can zoom into a map to locate streets, neighborhoods, and specific physical features. If there is a map of your city or town, it will be fun to search for familiar places to see how they appeared more than 100 years ago. As chronicles of life in the past, each "picture is worth 1,000 words," but these are not photographs, nor are they drawn to scale. The foreground appears more spacious than distant areas in the bird's eye perspective. There are omissions and generalizations, as there are on any map. The artists tended to leave out unsightly aspects of the 1800s' landscape, such as coal smoke, muddy rural main streets, and trash dumps. But as imperfect windows into the past, these maps are a national treasure.[1]

Urbanization and the Industrial Revolution

Cities were often founded along a coastline or beside rivers that provided the pre-rail transport of products by ship. During the industrial revolution, industries and cities grew symbiotically. As new means of production and transportation were invented and built, cities grew in size and complexity. We can see these changes happening by examining historical maps.
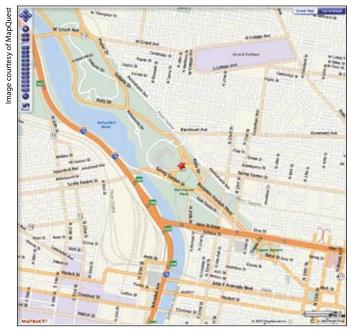
In the activity below, students compare maps of Philadelphia from 1839, 1871, 1876, 1887, and today that reveal changes in transportation and recreation. Built at the confluence of two great rivers, Philadelphia survived the transition from shipping to rail transport by becoming a major rail hub. Comparing the maps, students can see how the railways grew between those years, note other changes to the urban landscape, and think about how these changes reflect the needs of a growing population. Today's MapQuest images show that, in addition to industry and transportation, the citizens of Philadelphia have devoted part of the landscape to recreation, education, and the celebration of culture.

The Growth of Philadelphia: Going Back in Time from Today to 1839

With your students, investigate how a precise location changes over time by comparing current MapQuest images with Panoramic Maps and other historical maps at the Library of Congress. Both are free resources. In this sample activity, we look at maps of a specific location in downtown Philadelphia to see how transportation and land use changed over the years. Teachers can explore the Panoramic Maps Collection to see whether it is possible to do a similar activity using historical maps of their own communities.

Philadelphia Today

1. To begin, let's take a look at a map of the city of Philadelphia as it appears today. Go online to the home page of **mapquest.com**. Our anchor, or starting point, will be the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

2. First, you must enter information about what you wish to see. In the "Place Name" box, enter the phrase: "Philadelphia Museum of Art." Enter the rest of the address in the appropriate boxes: "2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy, Philadelphia, PA, 19130." Then click on the "Search" button. When the next screen appears, click on the "Map"
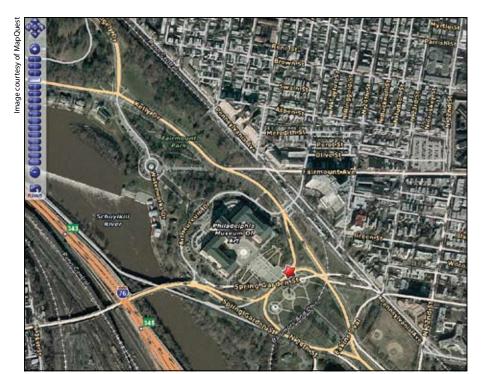

Image courtesy of MapQuest

MAP A

link under the first selection, "1. Art Museum Tickets," and examine the resulting map. [**MAP A**]

3. Notice the two tabs along the top of the map: "Street Map" and "Aerial Image." You are currently using the Street Map function. Click on the Aerial Image to see an image of this area created from one or more satellite images taken recently from space. What happens to the colors as the screen changes from map to satellite composite image? What is the color of the Schuylkill River in the latter image?

(It may appear to change color at various points, which may be due to small dams, sediment, changes in depth, or pollution.)

4. A red star appears near starting point, the Philadelphia Museum of Art building. Using the zoom tool in the upper left corner of the map, "zoom in" to view the building and grounds in detail. [**MAP B**, page 7] Just to the west (left on the screen) of the red star are steps shown in a famous scene in the film *Rocky*! This is the grand staircase leading up to the museum.[2]

5. Zoom back out again to "zoom level 12" (the third notch from the top) and notice Fairmount Park, the site of the nation's 1876 Centennial Exhibition. (More on that topic later.) See how Fairmount Park follows the curves of the Schuylkill River.[3]

6. Explore some of the different features of the landscape visible in this one image. For example, looking from left to right, one sees railroad tracks, an orange expressway, the Schuylkill River (most often pronounced "SKOO-kull"), a green space upon which sits the museum, and city streets. Ask students to pronounce, spell, and think about the name of the Schuylkill River. ("Schuyl" means "hidden" and "kill" means "creek" or "river" in Dutch. Recall that Peter Stuyvesant ruled New Netherlands from 1655 to 1664.)

7. With the hand symbol (the "pan" tool), click and drag the map to see the northern extent of Fairmount Park.

8. Now pan to the south to find the rail yard on the west side of the Schuylkill River at 30th and Market Streets (once 30th Street crosses Market, the name switches from South 30th to North 30th). [**MAP C**, page 7] Today, this is the Penn Central Rail Line. The name "30th Street Station" appears on the map if you move closer, clicking on zoom level 13. (For a brief history, see **www.30thstreetstation.com/history.htm**.)

9. Zoom out one more notch and click on the center of the map to get a wider view of this area. Pan toward the north until East Park Reservoir comes into view at the top of the screen. In the Aerial Image, the reservoir is divided into sections.

10. Click on the Map button to see more labels for land features.

Map B

Map C

What do these labels tell you about use of the land? (Look for the named educational, recreational, and medical facilities in view on this map.)

Now that we have some familiarity with this place, let's see what it might have looked like more than 100 years ago.

Historical Philadelphia in 1887

11. Let's examine a map of Philadelphia from 1887, at the U.S. Library of Congress Panoramic Maps Collection, **hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p.pm008300.** Just click on the map itself to have all of the viewing tools pop into place. Note that the orientation of this map is different from the MapQuest map. It isn't oriented to the north. Instead, west is at the top of the map. We can see the familiar right-angle grid of downtown streets nestled between the Delaware River (at the bottom of the page, or east) and the Schuylkill River (toward the top, or west).
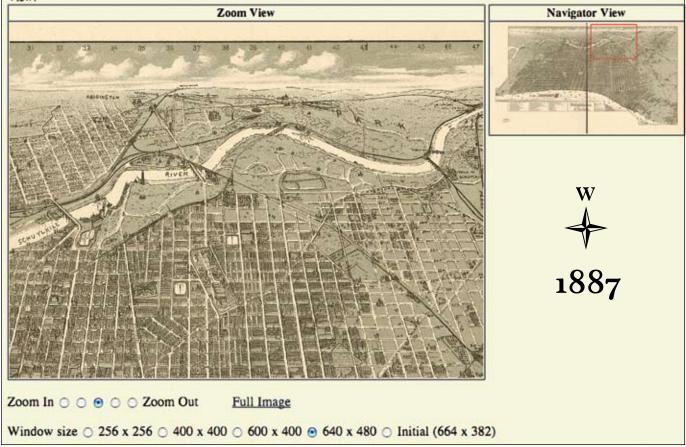
12. Can you find the same location on this map as we last viewed on the MapQuest map? On the larger map on the left side of the screen, zoom into the Farimount Park area by setting the zoom to the middle level, setting the frame to 640 × 480, and clicking on the section of the map as shown on page 8. [**MAP D**]. Look for landmarks—the reservoir and a cluster of bridges over the river—to locate the Fairmount Park area. Searching for landmarks is an essential skill, so don't rush to solve this puzzle for the students. Let them hunt. (See Hints on page 12.)

13. What are the various ways that the land was used in 1887? Find out by zooming in close and panning around the areas near the river. Several rail lines converge in a triangle on the southwestern side of the river in this view. There are many buildings on both sides of the river. Along the banks one can spy a tower and smoke stacks. A small ship appears along one bank. [**MAP E**, page 9]

14. In contrast to this industrial scene, we find a more park-like setting if we explore just to the north (toward the right side of the screen). We see many treetops along the river, with a few ornate buildings that could be mansions on the western side. The reservoir on the eastern side appears to be divided into three sections, as it is in the MapQuest map. The word "Park" appears in large letters above the trees to the west.

15. Why might this section of the riverbank make a nice park in 1887? (The river would be relatively cleaner before it passes south through industrial and residential areas.)

To change view, select desired zoom level and window size from the options below the Zoom View window and then click on the image. The display will be centered where you click. To move up, down, left, or right within a zoom level, click near the edge of the image in the Zoom View or select an area in the Navigator View. The red box on the Navigator View indicates the area of the image being viewed in the Zoom View.

Zoom View

Navigator View

W

1887

Zoom In ○ ○ ◉ ○ ○ Zoom Out   Full Image

Window size ○ 256 x 256 ○ 400 x 400 ○ 600 x 400 ◉ 640 x 480 ○ Initial (664 x 382)

Map D

Philadelphia in 1876

16. Click on **hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p.pm008293** to see an excellent panoramic map of the Centennial Exhibition at the Library of Congress. [**Map F**, page 9] Fairmount Park was the site of the nation's 1876 Centennial Exhibition, at which typewriters, a mechanical calculator, Bell's telephone, and Edison's telegraph made their public debut. This national birthday party presented the United States as a new industrial world power, soon to eclipse the might and production of every other industrialized nation.[4]

17. Zoom in to view rows of exhibition tents and buildings, most of which were erected only for this special event. Each exhibit site has a number. There is a key at the very bottom of the map, which can be read with the use of the second zoom level. ("36. New England Log House and Modern Kitchen," etc.)

Philadelphia in 1870

18. Let's examine a map of Philadelphia from 17 years earlier, 1870, at **hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p.pm008272** . This map uses a north orientation, similar to the MapQuest map. We see the city of Philadelphia nestled between the rivers.

19. Click on a location to the northwest in the Navigator View.

[**Map G**, page 10]. Again, we can see the reservoir with its three sections and railroad lines snaking along the western edge of the Schuylkill River, crossing at a bridge. Fairmount Park is clearly labeled, and the densely built city blocks stop at its edge.

20. Pan south by clicking on points on the Schuylkill River until the "Atlantic Oil Refineries" come into view on the east side of the river bend. "Point Breeze Gas Works" is just to the north. Across the river to the west, the "Phila. & Reading Rail Road" passes near "Oil Refineries."[5] What do these features this tell us about the economy of the area in 1870? (The coalmines and oil wells of Pennsylvania made the city of Philadelphia a center for fossil fuel refining and shipping.) [**Map H**, page 10]

21. Now, using the Navigator View, click on Petty's Island in the Delaware River, at a spot on the northeast side of the map. The Delaware is wider and deeper than the Schuylkill River, allowing for larger ships to navigate. What can we learn about industry and transportation in 1870 America from this one image? [**Map I,** page 11] (A railroad cutting diagonally across the map explodes into a web of rail lines leading down to individual docks on the river. Coal is being loaded onto ships at these "Coal Wharves" for delivery to factories in other cities. Coal and petroleum products from Pennsylvania were fueling the industrial revolution in North America.
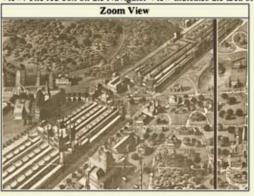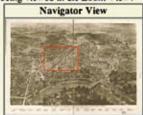
Map E

Grand bird's-eye view of the Centennial Exhibition grounds and the surrounding country:

To change view, select desired zoom level and window size from the options below the Zoom View window and then click on the image. The display will be centered where you click. To move up, down, left, or right within a zoom level, click near the edge of the image in the Zoom View or select an area in the Navigator View. The red box on the Navigator View indicates the area of the image being viewed in the Zoom View.

This imagery was compressed with the MrSID Publisher. View more information about the MrSID compression technology.

Download MrSID image (13079 kilobytes) | Bibliographic Information | Map Collections Home Page

Map F

The "Grain Elevator" reveals that agricultural products were also outgoing. One can see both sail and steam-powered ships plying the waters.)

Philadelphia in 1839

22. Let's examine one last image of the Philadelphia region from an earlier year, 1839, showing the development of the rail-roads when train technology was rather young, **hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3821p.rr005270**. How is this map different from the previous two maps? (It is a topographic, not pan-oramic, map; and it shows a broader view, with fewer details about the city.) The map encompasses nearly 100 miles, as opposed to the Panoramic Maps, which usually span just a few miles.

23. Philadelphia is a cluster of squares and dots on the far right (eastern) edge of this map. Click on the second zoom button, the 640 × 480 window size, and the far right side of the map to obtain a good view of Philadelphia. [**Map J**, page 11]

24. In 1839, the railroads have already left major markings on the landscape. Can students identify the names of the many lines weaving toward Philadelphia? (For example, "Philad'a. & Trenton RR," "Phila. and Reading Rail Road," and "Norrist'n. & Philad'a. RR.") Why are there fewer names today? (The railroad "barons" later in that century bought up and consolidated the railroad companies.)

25. Examine the elevation profile along the bottom edge of this map. [**Map K**, page 12] How does it work? (It shows the changing elevation of the Philadelphia and Reading Rail Road as it descends from the Allegheny Mountains in the west to Philadelphia in the east. In other words, it shows a cross section of the hills and valleys that are drawn in topographic relief just above on the paper). Imagine building these rail lines during the 1800s, only shortly after Lewis and Clark (who provisioned in Philadelphia) made their famous journey, mapping uncharted landscapes as they went.[6]
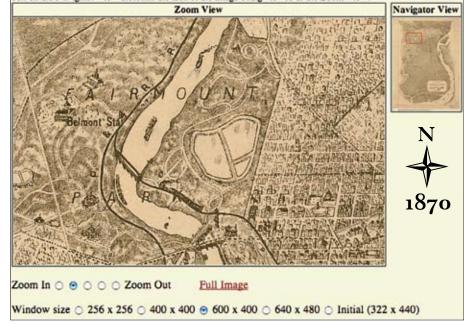
26. The reservoir at Fairmount Park does not appear in this drawing, but land along the western edge of the Schuylkill River is labeled "Fair Mt." Ponds in this area served as a reservoir for drinking water in 1839. People and industry wanted railroad transport, but they also needed clean water to drink.[7]

   In 1812 Philadelphia became the first city in North America, and only the second in the world, to provide fresh drinking water to its citizens as a government service. In 1815, the Fairmount Water Works along the banks of the Schuylkill River began pumping water out of the river into a large reservoir atop the "Fair Mount," where the Philadelphia Museum of Art sits today.
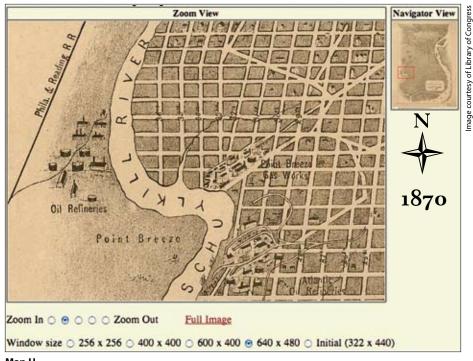
27. This raises an environmental question: Where do you suppose the city of Philadelphia gets its water from today? Do you think the "reservoir" that appears above "Waterworks Drive" on the MapQuest maps still provides drinking water for city residents? How could you find out? Think about your own water sup-

Birds eye view of Philadelphia and vicinity showing location of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad.

To change view, select desired zoom level and window size from the options below the Zoom View window and then click on the image. The display will be centered where you click. To move up, down, left, or right within a zoom level, click near the edge of the image in the Zoom View or select an area in the Navigator View. The red box on the Navigator View indicates the area of the image being viewed in the Zoom View.

Map G

Map H

ply. How is it protected from pollutants? (Water supplies are often located outside the cities they serve because pollution from residences, industry and manufacturing, and transportation vehicles contaminate local water resources.)

Final Thoughts

Now that you're familiar with navigating the panoramic maps, find U.S. historic sites that you've learned about in social studies, and then use both Panoramic and MapQuest maps to see how these places have changed over a span of more than 100 years. Explore your

Zoom View | **Navigator View**

PORT RICHMOND

PHILADELPHIA & READING

PETTY'S ISLAND

N

1870

Zoom In ○ ◉ ○ ○ ○ Zoom Out   Full Image

Window size ○ 256 x 256 ○ 400 x 400 ○ 600 x 400 ◉ 640 x 480 ○ Initial (322 x 440)

Map I

own municipality and neighborhood in their historical and current forms.

Parks and other places appearing on historical maps that are still visible on current maps have often been preserved through federal, state, and local laws and public funding. As we balance the needs of an expanding population, the places that we can afford to preserve become more valuable. As you think about the nation growing, you can literally see it happening by comparing maps in the Panoramic Map Collection with those from MapQuest. What features of the landscape in your neighborhood would you like to see preserved for future generations?

Topographical plan & profile of the Philadelphia and Reading Rail Road. J. Knight. Sc.

To change view, select desired zoom level and window size from the options below the Zoom View window and then click on the image. The display will be centered where you click. To move up, down, left, or right within a zoom level, click near the edge of the image in the Zoom View or select an area in the Navigator View. The red box on the Navigator View indicates the area of the image being viewed in the Zoom View.
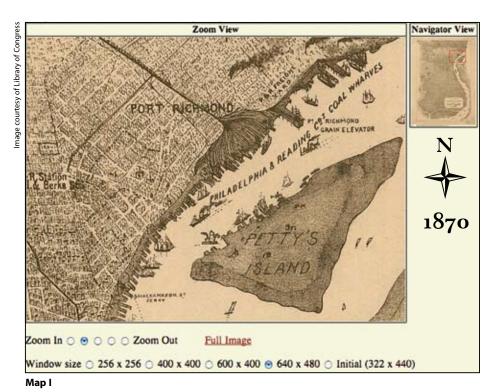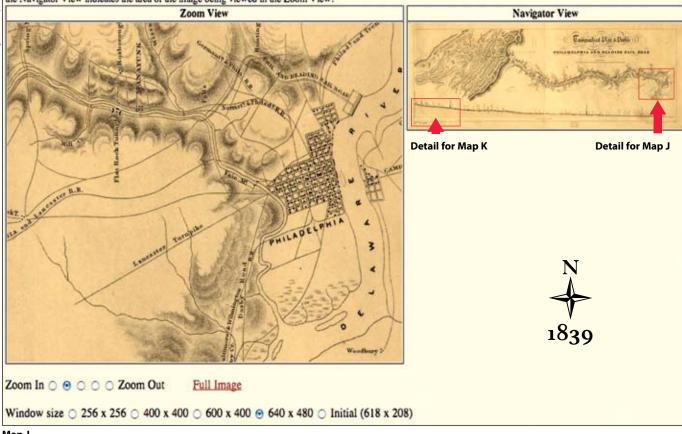

Zoom View | **Navigator View**

PHILADELPHIA

Detail for Map K   **Detail for Map J**

N

1839

Zoom In ○ ◉ ○ ○ ○ Zoom Out   Full Image

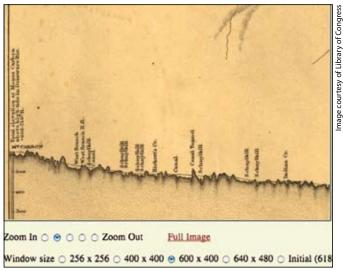Window size ○ 256 x 256 ○ 400 x 400 ○ 600 x 400 ◉ 640 x 480 ○ Initial (618 x 208)

Map J

Hints about Using Panoramic Maps

- The Search window at the Panoramic Maps website lets you to look for a historical map of your town or city. Click on the "Browse by Geographic Location" tab and select your state (or DC or Canadian province) by clicking on the map or the alphabetical list. If there are many maps available from one state, the locations will be listed 20 at a time. Scroll down to find the desired city or town. There may be more than one map available, allowing students to compare maps created over the years.

- To allow the whole class to view a map, we recommend saving an image in PowerPoint and then projecting it. The entire map can be downloaded directly using the "MrSID" tool at the bottom of the LC Zoom View (Library of Congress zoom view).

- Printing out maps is problematic because the whole map appears rather small (street names cannot be read) on the 8.5 × 11 inch sheet of paper. The collection is best enjoyed on screen or projected on the wall.

- To return to (or switch to) any map, use the direct URL listed on each Panoramic map's front page. At the very bottom of the page, the "DIGITAL ID" can be copied, pasted, and saved to a document or a browser as a favorite or bookmark. For example, the direct link for the Philadelphia 1887 map is **hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p. pm008300.**

- The task of identifying a specific location within a Panoramic Map is difficult because (a) most of the Panoramic Maps have no geo-referenced grids, although a few do, and (b) there is no search window. Finding a specific site requires looking at an inset (as we do in this article), locating unique landmarks such as rivers, or providing lengthy descriptions that name specific areas of the map and point to nearby landmarks.

- These activities require students to view landscapes in different representations. This is a typical real-life task involved in routine wayfinding or map-reading. MapQuest maps are "flattened" representations, whereas Panoramic Maps often have a curved-earth, "vanishing point" perspective and may have shading to indicate relief. These are all "hints" that can be "read" to understand the landscape.

For basic background on using online interactive maps, see Marsha Alibrandi, "How To Do It: Interactive Online Mapping," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 17, no. 3 (January/February 2005); Eui kyung Shin and Marsha Alibrandi, "How To Do It: Online Interactive Mapping Using Google Earth," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 19, no. 3 (January/February, 2007). These articles can be downloaded free by NCSS members at **www.socialstudies.org**

Zoom In ○ ● ○ ○ ○ Zoom Out   Full Image

Window size ○ 256 x 256 ○ 400 x 400 ● 600 x 400 ○ 640 x 480 ○ Initial (618

Map K

Notes

1. The panoramic maps collection is part of the larger American Memory Maps Collection (memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html) that is organized into seven categories: Cities and Towns, Conservation and Environment, Discovery and Exploration, Transportation and Communication, Military Battles and Campaigns, Cultural Landscapes, and General Maps.

2. To learn more about the Philadelphia Museum of Art, visit www.philamuseum. org/information/45-19.html.

3. To learn more about Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, a 9,200-acre riverside urban space, visit www.fairmountpark.org/HistoryIntro.asp, where there are many low-resolution images of this area.

4. The 1876 Centennial Exposition is celebrated at The Free Library of Philadelphia (libwww.library.phila.gov/CenCol/exhibitionfax.htm) and at the University of Delaware Library (www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/fairs/cent.htm).

5. To learn more about the Reading Railroad, visit www.readingrailroad.org/reading/ rdg_history.html.

6. From the Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia, supplies were shipped to Lewis and Clark for their exploration of the great western frontier. On June 10, 1803, the supply wagon passed through the gates of the Schuylkill Arsenal, and followed Gray's Ferry Road across the floating bridge at the Schuylkill River for points West. See www.explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=589.

7. For background about Philadelphia's water supply, see www.explorepahistory.com/ hmarker.php?markerId=589 and The Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, www.schuylkillriver.org/Philadelphia.aspx, which provides an interesting history for further study.

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"What's in a Name?"
Investigating Whom to Memorialize

Arlene Girard and Mary Beth Henning

Peter Jennings Way, Willa Cather Memorial Prairie, and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts have a common denominator: each of these places was named after a person whose work was important to society. But what makes a person worthy of having a street, park, building, stadium, or other memorial named after him or her? This inquiry question is relevant for fifth grade students who are assigned to classroom interdisciplinary teams named "Cortés," "De Soto," and "Vespucci." Traditionally, at the beginning of the school year, the fifth grade teachers in my (A.G.'s) school divide the classes into three teams. Teams names are used on a daily basis during various classroom activities, resulting in students' strong identification with the explorers. The accomplishments of these men are summarized in the chapters of our fifth grade textbook. But were these explorers worthy of having teams named for them? My fifth graders were about to grapple with this question for themselves.

Day One: A Current Issue

Scrutiny of a modern dilemma can be an excellent entrance to historical inquiry. Recently, Arnold Schwarzenegger, governor of California, and the most famous son of Graz, Austria, was faced with the decision of whether to grant clemency to Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a death row inmate. Williams, a former gang leader in Los Angeles, was convicted of murder in 1981, yet claimed innocence and became a spokesperson against gang culture, even writing a children's book that gleaned him a nomination for the Nobel Prize in literature.[1] Capital punishment is banned in Austria today, and Graz city officials, who held strong opinions against the death penalty, threatened to remove Schwarzenegger's name from the "Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadium" in Graz if he did not commute William's death sentence. The fifth graders considered this dilemma as they began their inquiry into the importance of honoring someone by name.

I created a PowerPoint presentation about the Schwarzenegger-Williams controversy to kick off this unit of study on "Whom Do We Memorialize?" My students were familiar with Arnold Schwarzenegger because of his film career and were immediately interested in the specifics of this current issue. The controversy itself was not difficult to understand, and it was a new and intriguing problem for them to explore.

Students were eager to share their viewpoints about the controversy. One student pointed out that Schwarzenegger had never been in Williams' situation, growing up on the roughest streets of Los Angeles, so the governor wouldn't understand Williams' actions, why he became a criminal, or whether his per-

sonal reform was sincere. (Williams was eventually executed on December 13, 2005, and Schwarzenegger's name was indeed removed from the title of the stadium.)

This discussion was instrumental in developing critical thinking skills that would be needed as our inquiry progressed. Students held opinions both for and against dropping Arnold's name, but their reaction to the pressure applied by the Graz City Council was particularly interesting. Many students considered this to be a separate issue—it seemed wrong for the legislators in Graz to try to manipulate Governor Schwarzenegger in this way. One student exclaimed, "It's California ruled by Austria!" We discussed the fact that naming (or removing the name from) something to memorializing a person could have all sorts of interesting implications for individuals, groups, communities, and nations.

As students left the room at the end of the period, I gave each of them an "exit slip" with tomorrow's key question written on it.

> "What qualities or achievements should a person have in order for a public place, (street, park, etc.), structure (building, bridge, etc.), or team (sports team or classroom group) to be named after him or her?"

Day 2: Who Is Worthy?

On the second day, students gathered into their three groups (of three students each) to begin working on an answer to the key question. Who deserves a memorial? Students commonly answered that the person should be nice, intelligent, have received an award, or have discovered or invented something. Many students also thought that this person should be famous. In the days ahead, I challenged students with the mission of applying their thinking skills to examine the lives of Hernán Cortés, Hernando De Soto, and Amerigo Vespucci to determine each man's worthiness of having a fifth grade team named after him. I invited students to add criteria to their list of requirements.

The class worked together to fill out the initial entries on a K-W-L (Know, Want to Know, and Learned) chart on the front board about the three explorers. Other than a basic fact or two, students recalled relatively little about these historical figures, although the students had indeed encountered them in earlier studies.[2] I was curious to see if the next two days would leave a more lasting impression on the students.

I then passed out a packet of information about the three explorers containing copies of primary and secondary sources. (Sidebar, p. 15) Each group received one packet and researched one explorer. I provided a T-chart to each student group, with space for listing an explorers' actions on the left and the group's opinion of each action on the right. After I modeled the use of the T-chart, students worked in their three groups for the remainder of class time, researching the lives and accomplishments of the three explorers using the packets of information, and recording their findings and opinions on the T-chart.

Would groups of fifth graders be able to read and comprehend excerpts from primary source documents that were written hundreds of years ago? I had some reservations: Would the students find the documents dull? Would the reading level be too difficult? Would antiquated words and syntax frustrate their efforts?[3] I moved about the classroom from group to group to see how their work was progressing. Students were surprisingly enthusiastic about reading the "real thing." A few students expressed appreciation after the lesson. Using text from primary historical documents became a source of motivation for the class. Including a strong reader in each working group provided peer-support. (An audio version of the text and a glossary of antiquated words could also be used independently by such groups to help with comprehending difficult texts.)

Day 3: Explorer Report Cards

After briefly updating the K-W-L chart as a class, students returned to their small groups and continued their research on the third day. As each group finished reading and discussing the material in its packets, I broke the class down into even smaller groups for completing a "report card" on each explorer. Students had the option of working independently or with a partner, and most chose to work with a classmate. Each pair of students weighed the strengths and weaknesses of an explorer on a card. The goal was to prompt students to view a historical figure as a real person, not as some sort of stereotype from out of a book. The report card was formatted in a similar style to their own student progress reports. It required the students to assess the explorer in relevant skills and behaviors—geography, bravery, leadership, cooperation, and respect—by ranking each on a four-point scale (1. Strong on this trait; 2. Meets the definition; 3. Shows some of this trait; and 4. Weak or absent). I also requested that students write a summary comment in a complete sentence on each card. Here are some of the comments that students made:

> Vespucci excels in geography and is a good leader. However, we think he should consider not having/using/trading/buying slaves. If he stops that, he'd be a great explorer.

> De Soto is making progress but he can do better. He is making progress with his bravery but he is not doing it with cooperation. And he needs better respect for others.

> Cortés had a lot of bravery to go against the Aztecs. Some bad things are that he was selfish because they gave him gold and then he had a war with them to get the rest of the gold.

I then discussed the scores and comments with the whole class. Students were eager listeners as they compared their classmates' ratings to their own scores for a particular explorer. One student even had his calculator in hand to compute the class's average score. (I've since made this math exercise a regular part of the lesson.)

Day 4: Making the Grade—or Not

The fourth day was the day of decision for the small groups that had worked together on the three packets. Should they recommend retaining the original team name? Had their research into the life of an explorer revealed that he was deserving of such memorializing? As part of the decision-making process, each group of students completed a proposal worksheet that asked the group to

- announce the final decision about a particular explorer,
- explain its rationale for that decision, listing the most compelling evidence, and
- state a general principal regarding who deserves memorializing.

During the oral reading of the proposals, the climate of the classroom was akin to the opening of a Grammy winner's envelope: there was a hushed tension just before the proposal was read and a spontaneous reaction once the decision was announced. It was a memorable moment when the groups' votes were tallied to determine if the team names would remain. The outcome? Cortés and De Soto were given the boot, but Amerigo Vespucci survived the day.

Reflections

The final activity of this unit was a one-page handout that included one question surveying students' opinion of this activity (What did you enjoy, or not enjoy, about this lesson?) as well as three questions briefly assessing what they had learned. (Did you learn new things about these explorers? Have your perceptions of explorers been altered? Did your response to the initial inquiry question change during the activity?) In regard to perceptions about the explorers, students were for the most part surprised that the explorers were at times ruthless in their pursuit of riches. A new requirement many students suggested was that anyone having something named in his or her honor must have a "clean record." One student offered advice to anyone who is considering naming something after a famous person:

> Choose wisely and do research on them because they may turn out to be different than you think. Also, check their criminal records before judging them. They need to be someone who isn't selfish and who is a good team leader. Make sure they don't just think of themselves.

The middle level learners also gained a more realistic view of historical figures. Although they may have felt disappointment and even shock at some of the actions taken by these explorers, they appreciated knowing the facts. And if "emotion is the glue that causes history to stick,"[4] then these students' passions were certainly aroused during this unit of study. Perhaps this experience will prompt them to remember that the people they read about in history textbooks were real people with strengths and weaknesses.

This inquiry project inspired students to be alert when learning social studies. Primary sources piqued their interest and then, through reading, writing, deliberating, and presenting arguments, the students took on the role of active researchers. Critical thinking skills were honed as they tried to reconcile the image of the heroic explorer with the evidence (which was not always flattering) gleaned from various sources.

The surveys revealed that the students were brimming with advice for anyone on a committee tasked with naming a place or object after a famous person. The common thread in students' words of wisdom was, "Think carefully before using anyone's name as a memorial." Finally, even at its conclusion, this unit of study left teacher and students with an interesting question: What historical figures *should* we choose to memorialize when naming our remaining two classroom student teams? 🖼

Notes

1. Williams, who co-authored several books warning young people to stay away from gangs, received an award for his good deeds on death row, complete with a letter from President George W. Bush, praising him for demonstrating "the outstanding character of America"; "Hometown Erases References to Schwarzenegger," (audiofile) *Day to Day*, December 27, 2005, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5070769; Ted Rowlands, Kareen Wynter, and Bill Mears, "Warden: Williams Frustrated at End" CNN (2006), www.cnn.com/2005/LAW/12/13/ williams.execution/.

2. Bruce VanSledright, *In Search of America's Past: Learning to Read History in Elementary School* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002).

3. Linda S. Levstik and Keith C. Barton, *Doing History: Investigating With Children in Elementary and Middle Schools* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005), 18.

4. James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 300.

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SOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Hernán Cortés

Primary source material: Cortés' letter to Emperor Charles V, www.britannica.com/hispanic_heritage/article-9433107

Accounts written by the Aztecs shortly after the conquest, www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/aztecs1.html

Other historical background: *Explorer*, in the Eyewitness series (New York: Knopf, 1991), has photographs of artifacts from Cortes' conquistadors and the Aztec culture.

Hernando Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico by Gina De Angelis (New York: Chelesea House, 2000) is a detailed account of Cortés' conquests.

Hernando De Soto

Primary source material: Account of the De Soto journey written by the King of Spain's agent, floridahistory.com/biedma.html

Other historical background: *Explorers and Discovery* by C. R. Sandak (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983) has a short biography. For a complete biography, see *The World's Great Explorers: Hernando De Soto* by Robert Carson (New York: Childrens Press, 1991).

Amerigo Vespucci

Primary source material: Vespucci's letters to Florence describing his first voyage, www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497vespucci-america.html

Other historical background: Online biographies of Amerigo Vespucci, www.studyworld.com/Amerigo_Vespucci.htm; and geography.about.com/cs/historicalgeog/a/amerigo.htm

A Picture is Worth 20 Questions

William B. Russell III

Teachers routinely pose questions to the class, but asking *students* to formulate good questions is a teaching tool that we often overlook. The questioning game discussed below not only helps students review lesson content, but improves critical thinking skills such as reasoning deductively and interpreting data.

Choose an image of a historical person, object, or event that is depicted somewhere in the textbook, on display in the classroom, or has been shown during a lesson. Be sure that you've discussed the image earlier in the unit of study, but *do not* call attention to it now. The example below uses a famous painting by John Trumbull, *Declaration of Independence,* as the basis of information about an historical event. The painting is a mural on the rotunda of the Capitol.[1]

Share a small amount of information with the class by posing a leading question or two. Then invite the students to pose questions that can be answered with "Yes" or "No" (or, if the teacher is unsure of the answer, it can be "I don't know," or "It's unclear.")

For example,
Teacher: There is a man at table. On the table there is a pen, and some paper. Who is he? Why is he there?

Student: Is he sitting at the table?
Teacher: Yes.
Student: Is he an old man?
Teacher: He is 39 years old.
Student: Is it present day?
Teacher: No.
Student: Is he the only person at the table?
Teacher: No.
Student: Was he president?
Teacher: No.
Student: Are the other people standing around the table?
Teacher: Yes.

The game continues until the students are able to answer the questions that the teacher posed at the beginning of the activity: In this case, the person is John Hancock and he is signing the Declaration of Independence.

This version of the 20 Questions game is easy to use and has endless possibilities. It motivates and excites students, and it leaves them wanting more. By only using yes/no questions, students are required to do all of the thinking, synthesizing what they know at each step with the next new bit of information and then formulating a new query.

References

Engle, Shirley H. "Decision-Making: The Heart of Social Studies Instruction," *Social Education* 24, no. 7 (November 1960): 301-304.

Turner, Thomas N. "Question Games for Social Studies," *Social Education* 45, no. 3 (March 1981): 194-196.

Welton, D. A. *Children and Their World*, 8th ed. New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

Note

1. Trumbull's painting, which hangs in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, DC, was painstakingly created, but it is not entirely historically accurate. See www.american-revolution.org/decsm.html and www.aoc.gov/cc/art/rotunda/declaration_ independence.cfm.

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Detail of "Declaration of Independence" by John Trumbull, 1819. Courtesy Architect of the Capitol.