

HOW CAN PLACE BASED EDUCATION INFORM CHILDREN OF THEIR HISTORICAL ROOTS?

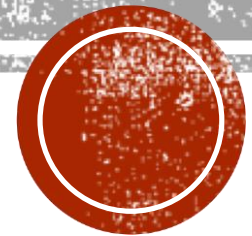
Ted D. R. Green, Ph. D., Professor, Webster University

Benjamin Williams, J.D., Graduate Student, Webster University

Thomas Zinselmeyer, MAT, Adjunct Faculty, Webster University

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NCHE National Conference, Washington, D.C.



OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION:

- We will explore the tenets of place based education and collaboration between museums, educators, and historical societies to engage early adolescent learners.
- This study will highlight social justice issues within the St. Louis area with content from archival research from the 1920's-1980's, historically significant locations, and the Dred Scott decision.



GOALS:

- To become familiar with and/or review tenets of Place Based Education and Historical Literacy.
- To share how a collaborative approach to teaching historical literacy can be achieved with museums, historical societies, and communities.
- To provide examples of historical content that focuses on social justice issues from a historic perspective.



How can we enhance historical literacy?

- Use *Historical Thinking Skills*:

Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Historical Analysis and Interpretation, Historical Issues- Analysis and Decision-Making, and Historical Research Capabilities

- Use NCHE's *History's Habits of the Mind* (we focus on these):
 - 1. Significance of the past...
 - 3. Historical empathy...
 - 4. Shared humanity...
 - 5. Change and consequences...
 - 10. People who made a difference...
 - 13. Evaluating evidence...



PLACE BASED EDUCATION (PBE):

Place-based education is the process of **using the local community and environment as a starting point** to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other concepts across the curriculum.

Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.

Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school. (emphasis added) (*Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities* by David Sobel, 2004).



BACKGROUND:

SUMMER ACADEMY AT WEBSTER UNIVERSITY:

A select group of 25 students from five schools across the St. Louis Metropolitan Area were invited to participate in a two week Summer Academy where they would be exposed to a number of different academic programs in a college setting



THEMES OF SUMMER ACADEMY:

Developing Knowledge and Skills in:
Historical Literacy
Leadership
Sustainability

How did we do this?

- Hands on activities and lessons as a means of introducing concepts.
- Exploration of Historic Sites through archival research, historical societies, and the National Park Service.
- Exploration of St. Louis area neighborhoods and hands on work involving environmental action.



COLLABORATION BETWEEN MUSEUMS, HISTORICAL SOCIETIES and EDUCATORS:

- As we saw from our definition of Place Based Education (PBE), engaging with community organizations is a vital part of the process.
- As such, when planning the educational activities for the Summer Academy, our educators sought out opportunities to collaborate with museums, historical societies and educators.
- You will see this as we describe for you what took place during the Summer Academy.



ARCHIVAL RESEARCH (Webster University) Lesson



Modeling...

Locally Significant:

RATIONALE FOR ARCHIVE EXPLORATION...

- To know Loretto College, Webster College and Webster University (WU) better
- Explore college/university by decade: 1920's-1980's
- Photographs, primary source documents, letters, yearbooks
- NARA template/LOC template
- Students selected favorite artifact, source from Archive Decades Boxes and did a short presentation
- Outcomes: Able to understand WU better and set the context for Webster Groves, (the community) and the Webster Park neighborhood



AFRICAN AMERICANS @ Webster College BEFORE 1954 BROWN V. BOE



INTEGRATION BEFORE OTHERS?

Daughter of WU's first black student shares mother's story

BY ASHLEY WESTBROOK



JANET IRENE THOMAS

Janet Irene Thomas, daughter of WU's first black student, shares her mother's story of integration at Webster College.

Webster College and its students have a rich history of Christian service through campus, regional and national organizations. It is a privilege to share the story of my mother, Janet Irene Thomas, who was the first African American student to attend Webster College in 1954.

My mother, Janet Irene Thomas, was born in 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri. She was the daughter of a prominent African American family. Her father, Dr. Thomas, was a well-known physician and community leader. My mother's early life was marked by the challenges of racial segregation in the South.

When she was 17, she moved to Webster College in Webster, Missouri, to attend high school. It was there that she met and fell in love with my father, a white student. Their relationship was a bold statement of love and acceptance in a time of deep racial division.

My mother's story is one of courage and faith. She faced discrimination and prejudice but remained steadfast in her belief in the power of love and the importance of education. Her presence at Webster College paved the way for other African American students and helped to create a more inclusive campus environment.

Today, I am proud to share my mother's story and to honor her legacy. Her story is a testament to the power of love and the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity.

Contact the writer: ashleywestbrook@gmail.com



Student representatives awaiting transportation to the Intercollegiate Convention at Lovette Heights College, Denver, Colorado.



Representing Webster in "Who's Who Among College Students in the United States": D. Wittges, P. McCann, L. AuBuchon, B. Banks, M. Schrader, D. Willard.

Athletic Association



The Athletic Association sponsors various sports teams and activities. It is a privilege to represent Webster College in these activities and to promote a healthy and active lifestyle among our students.

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Varsity teams, bowling, golf, swimming, tennis, basketball, and the annual Day and A. A. Banquet all contribute to the excitement of the A. A.'s program. We encourage all students to get involved in physical development, to sponsor athletic activities, and to promote a spirit of fellowship and sportsmanship.



BOARD MEMBERS

Back Row: P. Price, D. Winkler, M. Miller, T. Humann, C. Jackson
Front Row: Mia Matson, B. Banks, M. Schrader.

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Historically Significant Locations...

- **Local** significance, Neighborhoods...
Webster Park
- **Regional** significance, Shaw's Garden
(Missouri Botanical Garden)...
Henry Shaw
- **National** significance, Old Court House...
Dred Scot decision



Webster Park (Webster Groves Historical Society) Lesson



Locally Significant: TURN OF THE 19TH CENTURY NEIGHBORHOOD, Webster Park...

- Students observe first hand “Change over Time”
- Discussions on: Architecture, Sustainable Practices, Community
- Architectural styles
- Stories about who lived in different houses
- White Privilege
- Map of neighborhood
- Webster Groves Historical Society
- Century Homes
- Preservation Districts



Locally Significant: A SUSTAINABLE Neighborhood, Webster Park...

- Sustainability with porches, large yards, trees for cooling practices
- No AC, electricity was new, escaping the coal of downtown St. Louis, clean air
- Comparing neighborhoods...



Locally Significant: ARCHITECTURAL STYLES, Webster Park...

- Webster Groves Historical Society
- Preservation Districts
- Century Homes on Historic Walking Tour
- Variety of Styles:
- Queen Anne, Dutch Colonial Revival, Georgian, Federal, Tudor Revival



Tudor Revival



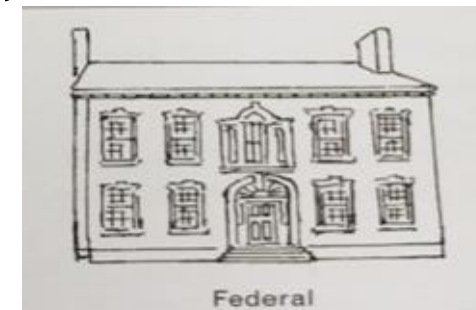
Queen Anne



Dutch Colonial Revival



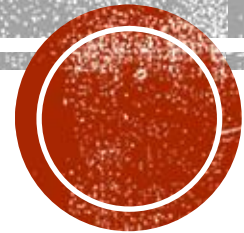
Georgian



Federal



Shaw's Garden
(Missouri Botanical Garden)
and the
Henry Shaw
Lesson



Regionally Significant: SHAW'S GARDEN, Henry Shaw...

- Henry Shaw's Home...Tower Grove Park and Missouri Botanical Garden
- Merchant/supplier who was wealthy
- View his material culture from mid-late 1800's
- Entertaining and influence on community
- Weave stories of staff and workers to keep up estate
- Employed variety of workers: Immigrants, Women and Tenant Farmers
- Revered by community





Tower Grove Park



Regionally Significant: SHAW'S GARDEN, The Backstory Henry Shaw...

- Viewed Missouri Botanical Garden static display with oral histories of the workers who supported “The Garden”, lower level
- Lifestyle supported by enslaved people, Irish immigrant workers and others
- Slave holder...Came from England where slavery was already outlawed
- Took advantage of our American system of enslaving people



Regionally Significant: SHAW'S GARDEN and Slavery Henry Shaw...

- First slave purchased in 1835, then few months later a second slave in 1836 and a third slave in 1838.
- “by this time one could readily conclude that Shaw had come to accept the slave system he had abhorred twenty years before.” pg. 36 W.B. Faherty, S.J.
- 1842 while in Europe Shaw was kept abreast of delivery and payments for his slave Bridgette Shaw ‘s son. “Shaw’s servants followed a social custom of the time and taken the family name of their owner with consent.” pg. 47 W.B. Faherty, S.J.
- Shaw’s slaves were listed in tax assessments with “clocks, watches and furniture” at the downtown residence.” pg. 65 W.B. Faherty, S.J.



Shaw's Garden (Missouri Botanical Garden) & The Henry Shaw Country Estate

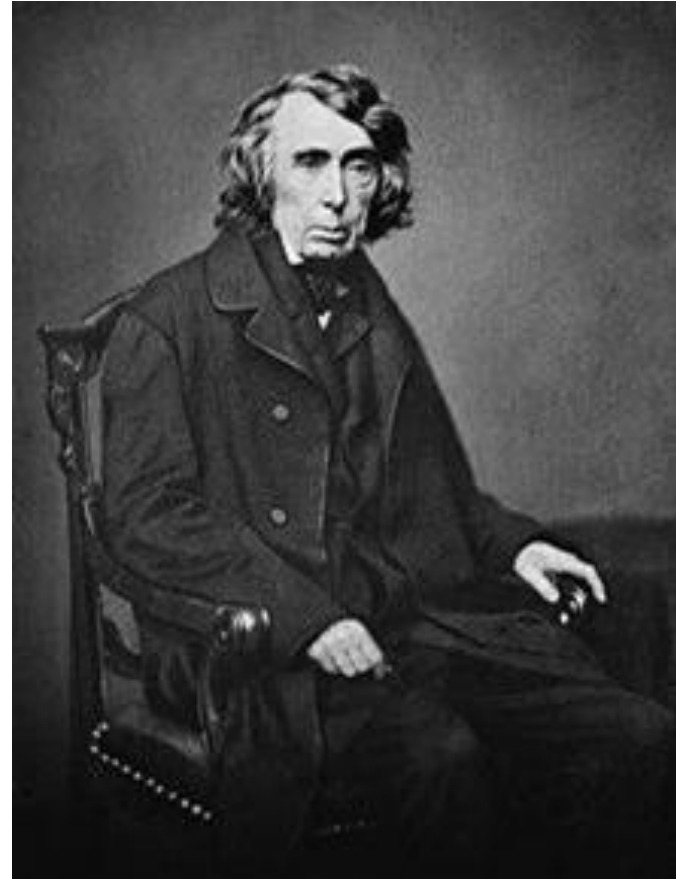


Regionally Significant: SHAW'S GARDEN and the Enslaved continued Henry Shaw...

- *“On 16 October 1850, Shaw paid \$600 at an auction for an adult slave named Sarah and her child. The seller was Marshall Brotherton, administrator of the estate of John T. Brown. At the end of the year the circuit court ordered Brotherton to put up for auction at the south front door of the courthouse on 2 January 1851 at twelve noon a thirty-year –old man by the name of Jim who had belonged to the same John T. Brown. On that date Shaw paid \$1,000 for Jim.” (pg. 65 W.B. Faherty, S.J.)*



The Old Courthouse (National Park Service) and THE DRED SCOTT DECISION Lesson



Nationally Significant: The Old Courthouse, DRED SCOTT Decision...

- Importance of local historical site to Dred Scott story (Old Courthouse in downtown St. Louis)
- Obvious connection to recent events in St. Louis (Unrest in Ferguson, Missouri and Black Lives Matter movement).
- Opportunity to have students explore tenets of historical literacy
- Students had the opportunity to view a gallery exhibit and video on Dred Scott, a collaboration between the educators and the National Park Service
- Students walked the courthouse steps where slavery auctions took place, physically walking in the footsteps of the past



Nationally Significant: The Old Courthouse, DRED SCOTT Decision...

- More on the Old Courthouse visit
- Allowed students the opportunity to experience actual courtrooms from the Dred Scott period and discuss the field of law with a St. Louis attorney.
- What do these places say about St. Louis at the time?
- What does it say historically about where the students live?



The Old Courthouse, NPS St. Louis, Missouri



<https://youtu.be/Cfy3H2I1ZTM>



CONCLUSION:

- Place Based Education (PBE) connects historic events with a sense of place...on a local, regional and national level
- Helps with understanding social justice issues by visiting real life sites
- As experts in the field, this is what you do, *you* help make the connection between historic sites (contextualization) and events in students/visitors understanding of human events
- Even with more social media and online resources, there is still a gap in Augmented (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR). The sense of place continues to be the “real deal” and helps students to “dig deeper”



March 2019 Update: Revisiting Social Justice

“Some of the content in historical photos, documents, yearbooks, and student newspapers is abhorrent and appalling, and we openly reject biased and racist views. We also acknowledge that it is part of our history...”



WU President, Provost and Chief Diversity Officer: Feb. 13, 2019

“In light of recent events in Virginia and other places, Webster University’s Emerson Library staff, including Dean Eileen Condon and Archivist Kathy Gaynor, reviewed materials this week in Webster’s archives, including yearbooks and other documents. Following their discovery and our meeting with them, we take the opportunity to issue this statement:

For archival purposes, Webster University preserves historical photos, documents, yearbooks and student newspapers. Scholars can access these materials to research past events at the institution and explore the context surrounding those events. Some of these materials include content which may be highly offensive by today’s standards. The photos and language in the materials published decades ago are reflective of the values and standards deemed acceptable at that time. Today many of us will find this content offensive and unacceptable.

Some of the content in historical photos, documents, yearbooks, and student newspapers is abhorrent and appalling, and we openly reject biased and racist views. We also acknowledge that it is part of our history, which is why we are preserving these offensive photos, documents and publications and letting them remain in their original forms. As an academic institution committed to critical analysis, we must honestly recognize these troubling views. To deny this history would be dishonest. We must shed light on past injustices and errors, analyze all the evidence, acknowledge how far we have evolved, and identify how much more needs to be accomplished in order to attain true equity and inclusion for our community.”

- Webster Journal Article:
- “Racist images found in old Webster yearbooks”. *The Journal. Vol. 72, Issue 11, Feb. 20- Mar. 5, 2019. pgs. 1-2.*



QUESTIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH...?



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