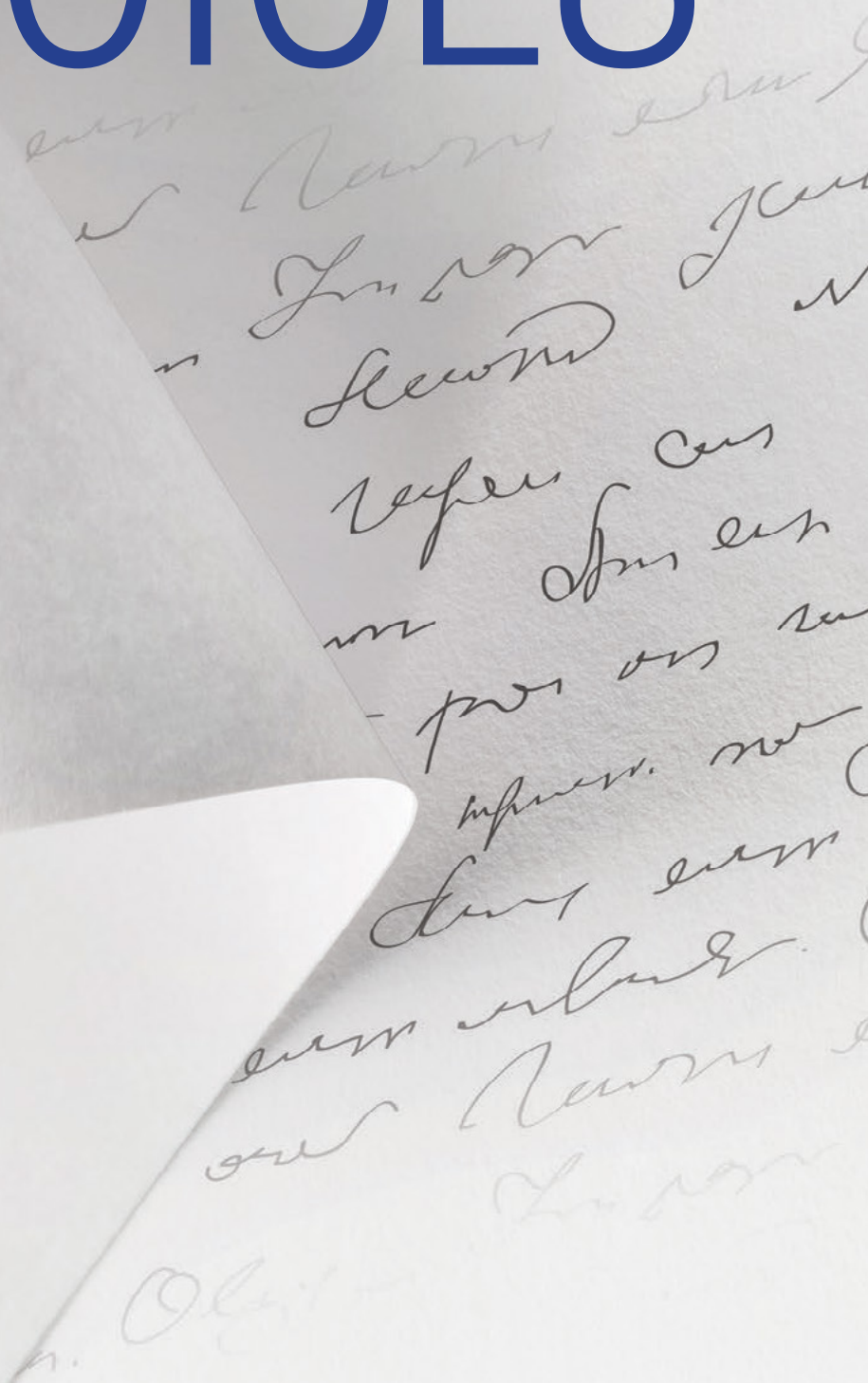


HIDDEN VOICES

**Untold Stories
of New York
City History**



NYC Department of Education

Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor

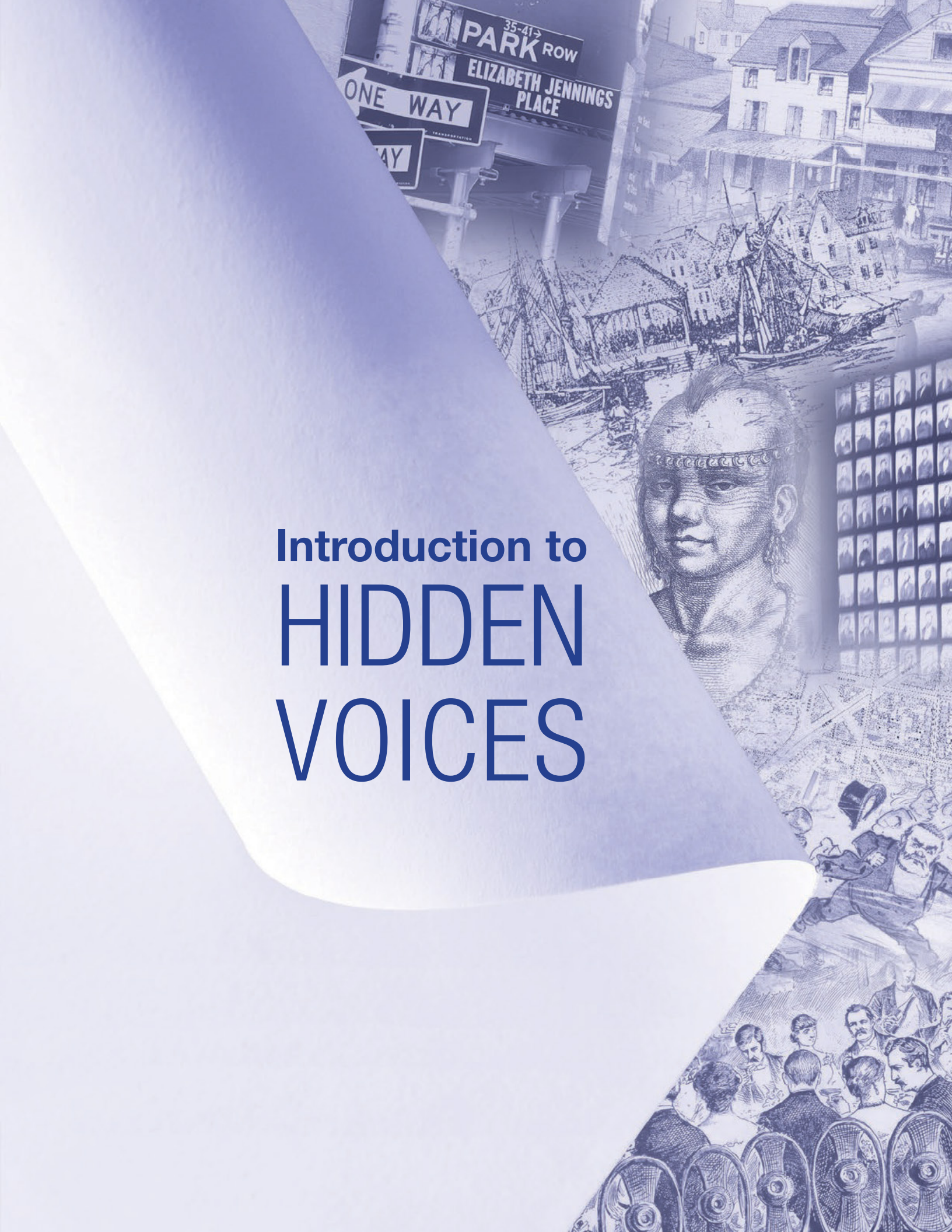
Dr. Linda P. Chen
Chief Academic Officer

Phil Weinberg
Deputy Chief Academic Officer
Division of Teaching & Learning

52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Table of Contents

The <i>Hidden Voices</i> project	3
What Are Hidden Voices?	5
People Power: Finding the Hidden Voices in New York City History	6
Historical Significance	10
Culturally Responsive Approaches	12
Bringing Hidden Voices into the Curriculum	15
How to Use the Resource Guide	17
Port City Voices	21–93
Historical Context	23
Penhawitz	27
Maria Van Angola	34
Livingston’s Runaway	40
David Ruggles	47
Fredericka “Marm” Mandelbaum	54
Emily Warren Roebling	59
Eliza Jennings Graham	65
Jennie June	71
Wong Chin Foo	80
Susie Rocco	88
World City Voices	95–141
Historical Context	97
Florence Mills	101
Kahlil Gibran	106
Antonia Pantoja	113
Elsie Richardson	120
Larry Kramer	128
A.J. Gogia	134
Extension Activities	139
Works Cited	145
Image and Document Credits	146



Introduction to
**HIDDEN
VOICES**

The *Hidden Voices* Project

The *Hidden Voices* project was initiated to help NYC students learn about and honor the innumerable people, often “hidden” from the traditional historical record, who have shaped and continue to shape our history and identity.

The New York City Department of Education is committed to supporting learning environments that reflect the diversity of New York City, as outlined in the *Diversity in New York City Public Schools* policy statement. We believe all students benefit from diverse and inclusive schools and classrooms where all students, families, and school staff are supported and welcomed. This work is essential to the Department of Education’s vision of Equity and Excellence for All NYC students. DOE initiatives, as well as frequent, intentional conversations centered on respect, social justice, and equity are the vehicles we are using to create an equitable culture throughout the DOE and our school communities. As a key component of that work the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, & Professional Learning, within the Division of Teaching & Learning, develops high quality instructional resources that are culture and gender inclusive, are accessible, and offer students opportunities for deep cognitive engagement. These resources also provide teachers with support in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy that values the families, knowledge, and experiences of students.

The *Passport to Social Studies* curriculum is the citywide curriculum developed by NYC educators that provides teachers with resources to expose students to the diversity of multiple perspectives and to foster the historical thinking skills necessary to develop an understanding of the past and how the past influences our present and future. The *Passport to Social Studies* also helps educators cultivate civic responsibility and awareness, nurture inquiry and critical thinking, and employ culturally responsive practices.

This resource guide is aligned to the *Passport to Social Studies* curriculum, and can help teachers facilitate and explore inclusive learning experiences that validate the diverse perspectives and contributions of underrepresented individuals and groups. The resources included in *Hidden Voices* encourage educators to honor the complexity of culture, develop

respect for differences, teach from multiple perspectives, and ensure that instructional materials reflect a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Teaching students the different, and often conflicting, concepts and issues that impact diverse groups in the United States, and New York City specifically, will help them better understand the factors that contributed to the birth, growth, and development of the nation, and to develop empathy for the points of view and perspectives within various groups.¹

The *Hidden Voices* project is a collaboration between the New York City Department of Education and the Museum of the City of New York. The special opportunity to partner with the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) has made simpler the challenge of how to choose from the wide range of underrepresented people across time. Using MCNY's noteworthy *New York at Its Core* exhibition, the museum's first-ever permanent exhibition of New York City's 400-year history, we selected lesser-known New Yorkers in order to capture the diverse and complex nature of New York City's history in an inclusive way. The voices featured in this instructional resource are just some examples of the range of people who can, and should, be integrated within the broader historical narrative.

**The *Hidden Voices* project is a collaboration
between the New York City Department of Education
and the Museum of the City of New York.**

¹ "Education and Diversity." James A. Banks, Peter Cookson, Geneva Gay, Willis D. Hawley, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Sonia Nieto, Janet Ward Schofield, and Walter G. Stephan *Social Education* 69(1), pp. 36–40 © 2005 National Council for the Social Studies <https://www.socialstudies.org/publications/socialeducation/january-february2005/education-and-diversity>

What Are Hidden Voices?

Often in traditional teaching and learning of history, diverse figures are excluded from the shared historical narrative. In this instructional resource, a hidden voice represents a person or a group of people whose experiences have been historically underrepresented in narratives, textbooks, and other media. These exclusions mean that students are not learning the full story of our past. As a result of this exclusion some students may wonder, “Where am I in history?” By using an inclusive approach to teaching social studies, students’ understanding of history and their sense of place in America’s historical narrative is enriched and strengthened. Intentionally including “hidden voices” gives students personal connections to the events, people, and movements that make history and can create entry points for learning about important historical themes in a way that sparks the interests of New York’s heterogeneous community.

“Where
am I in
history?”

Surfacing hidden voices and integrating them into the curriculum does not mean we ignore traditional historical figures or attempt to diminish their importance. Students should still learn that George Washington was inaugurated as the first president on the balcony of Federal Hall in 1789; but, they should know that other people were *also* there. Consider the women and children who stood there watching as Washington took his oath of office. What were the thoughts and feelings about the future among African American free and enslaved people who were present? Discovering hidden voices and their important perspectives and experiences enriches and deepens our understanding of New York’s history and the individuals and groups of people whose contributions to our city and nation are significant, but whose voices are either unheralded, unrecorded, or forgotten over time.

The representative examples of the hidden voices included in this resource guide are by no means definitive or exhaustive. The guide highlights the stories of sixteen people—sixteen New Yorkers who helped make New York City a city like no other. Their voices will enhance students’ appreciation for, and widen their awareness of, America’s diverse and collective history.

Historical Significance

There is so much about the past that is forgotten. Often students are presented with narratives of the past with limited or one-sided perspectives. Students are taught to associate history with symbolically famous or important individuals and events. More often than not, these individuals were the ruling elite of a particular time and place. This limited view of history has led students to the clichéd, but incorrect, understanding that “history is written by the victors.” This view implies that there is only one history of the past and that history is just a re-telling of accepted facts. History, however, is so much more. History is based on interpretation of past events, which leads to a richer and more complex understanding for students. Foremost in re-evaluating the past is the discussion of historical significance. The *Hidden Voices* project challenges teachers and students to add lesser-known, yet equally important, voices and actors to an ever-evolving historical narrative. Ultimately, the *Hidden Voices* project inspires students to advance their own understanding and ask their own questions about what people and events are worth remembering and why.

Understanding historical significance involves gathering and selecting evidence to sift through the past to choose what voices are heard and what facts are presented. The *Historical Thinking Project* writes, “There is much too much history to remember all of it. So how do we make choices about what is worth remembering? Significant events include those that resulted in great change over long periods of time for large numbers of people. World War II passes the test for historical significance in this sense. But what could be significant about the life of a worker or a slave? What about my own ancestors, who are clearly significant to me, but not necessarily to others? Significance depends upon one’s perspective and purpose. A historical person or event can acquire significance if we, the historians, can link it to larger trends and stories that reveal something important for us today.”² Teaching students to make a case for historical significance means teaching them to apply social studies practices and think like historians to truly “do” history.

² “Historical Significance.” *Historical Thinking Project*. Accessed April 13, 2017. <http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-significance>.

**There is much too much history to remember all of it.
So how do we make choices about
what is worth remembering?**

The Historical Thinking Project

Scholars in history education have identified five major criteria for determining historical significance. However, it is important to recognize that not all criteria need to be satisfied for significance to be established, nor is there a specific number of criteria to be met. Rather, assessing historical significance is an argument that someone can present to make a case for including a particular person, group, or event within a historical narrative. In teaching this practice to students consider whether, after weighing all of the criteria, the event, person, or group should be considered significant. Of course, the most important element is the student's ability to ground their argument in strongly chosen evidence. The following criteria are adapted from *The Historical Thinking Project* and *Thinking Historically*³ by Stéphane Lévesque:

- **Importance (Historical Empathy):** One measure of significance is to understand the significance of an event or occurrence to those living at the time. Were people aware of the importance or impact of an event, person, or group? Try to avoid *presentism* (seeing the past through the lenses and values of the present) and instead try to empathize with the people in the past to more clearly assess importance to them.
- **Profundity:** Profundity measures how deeply people were impacted. It does not consider differences in perspectives because some people may view an event more positively while others may view the event more negatively. A particular event could have been important to many people with differing perspectives about it.
- **Quantity:** Quantity considers the number of people affected. However, an event is not necessarily significant simply because large numbers of people were affected. An event affecting fewer people can still be significant.
- **Durability:** The impact of past events on subsequent events and the present is the measure of how durable an event is. Does it still matter over time? However, significance is not dependent on the duration of an event. A short-lived historical moment can have great significance.
- **Relevance:** Relevance examines the significance of an event to the present, but different groups debate it. Some worry that it is a *presentist* approach and focuses too much on current events, but others find great value in how the study of the past “can be useful to... understanding... current affairs and potentially illuminating for the future.”

3 Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

Culturally Responsive Approaches

Effective teaching that truly meets the needs of students requires that educators are responsive to the culturally diverse makeup of their classrooms; engaging students in ways that are meaningful and culturally relevant. As students find meaning in their learning they better understand the content and are able to connect it to their daily lives. In order for students to connect and make meaning, they must use their full cognitive resources which are best stimulated through culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culturally responsive teaching includes learning within the context of culture. Our culture informs the way we learn and process information. For example, students from some cultural groups prefer to learn in cooperation with others, while others prefer to work independently.⁴ Culturally responsive approaches are less about building cultural or racial pride and more about recognizing and planning for students' cultural ways of knowing. Another example is understanding that many diverse students come from oral cultural traditions. This means their primary ways of knowledge transfer and meaning-making are oral and active. It's a common cultural tradition that cuts across racial groups. Each of these cultural groups uses the brain's memory systems for turning information into usable knowledge.⁵ At the heart of culturally responsive teaching is the recognition that culture is central to learning and processing and applying information.

Culture plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of people. Teachers should plan lessons so they reflect ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to the students. Teaching that acknowledges, responds to, and considers culture offers deep learning and full, equitable access to education for all students.⁶

Curricular decisions with the goal of being culturally responsive sometimes result in the use of resources and add-ons that meet a multicultural or social justice objective. While these instructional resources have the potential to be valuable, they can only be truly effective when presented in a space where students can develop comprehension and build understanding

4 Brown University. *Teaching Diverse Learners: Culturally Responsive Teaching*. <https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/strategies-0/culturally-responsive-teaching-0> Accessed May 8, 2018.

5 Zaretta Hammond. *3 Tips To Make Any Lesson More Culturally Responsive*. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/culturally-responsive-teaching-strategies/>. Accessed May 8, 2018.

6 Brown University.

...content about the histories, heritages, contributions, perspectives, and experiences of different ethnic groups and individuals, taught in diverse ways, is essential to culturally responsive teaching.

Geneva Gay, Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice

in an authentic, culturally appropriate manner. A common misconception is that culturally responsive teaching involves tying a lesson's content to students' racial or cultural background or that it is the same as multicultural or social justice education. Although elements can overlap, they are not interchangeable; each one approaches diversity from a completely different angle. When a teacher can recognize that students' meaning making is directly connected to their culture, and can use that knowledge to promote effective information processing and relationship building, then a teacher is being culturally responsive (*Hammond, 2015*).

Consciously improving student learning by creating a culturally responsive classroom requires a variety of pedagogical choices and curricular content. In her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Geneva Gay writes, "content about the histories, heritages, contributions, perspectives, and experiences of different ethnic groups and individuals, taught in diverse ways, is essential to culturally responsive teaching" (*Gay, 2010*). The *Hidden Voices* project provides teachers with resources and strategies that reveal different individuals and cultural groups and their impact on the historical content traditionally taught in schools. It is essential that the inclusion of these hidden voices in the classroom be authentic.

Each of the *Hidden Voices* profiles includes correlations to the *Passport to Social Studies* curriculum, pointing out where in the NYC DOE Scope & Sequence each person's story fits. The lives of the people that make up the *Hidden Voices* project are not peripheral to our shared history, they ARE our shared history. Teachers should center these stories within the appropriate historical context and use them to enrich their practice, and in turn, students' knowledge and experiences. This resource provides New York City's students with more opportunities to connect to social studies content, as their brains are constantly searching for personal connections in order to make meaning of what they are taught, and it gives New York City's teachers more resources from which to build culturally responsive classrooms (*Jackson, 2015*).

While curricular content is essential for culturally responsive pedagogy, it cannot stand alone. The *Hidden Voices* project is one resource of many that can make up a teacher's culturally responsive toolbox, but the manner in which these hidden voices are utilized in the

classroom, and the choices teachers make as students react to and process the stories of these New Yorkers, will be what truly creates a nurturing and safe space for learning. Teachers should acknowledge that for much of our nation's history there has been an accepted dominant narrative that has excluded the contributions of many Americans, and that this has perpetuated the racialization that continues to permeate our society and our students' lives. As students learn about the variety of ways in which voices have been silenced throughout history, teachers should allow for class discussion and provide space for students to process the new content they are learning.

Culturally responsive teaching seeks to prepare students to be independent learners by optimizing engagement and allowing them the opportunity to process difficult information in a safe space. Teachers should plan to vary their teaching approaches to accommodate the diverse learners in their classrooms. Using discussion protocols, thinking maps, and encouraging accountable talk where students can discuss differences between individuals are just a few of the ways teachers can support students in processing content. It should be noted, however, that the activities and content used in a classroom are a means to an end; and it is through helping students become critical thinkers and independent learners, making purposeful and meaningful connections to students' cultures, and deliberate relationship building that a teacher truly engages in culturally responsive practice.

***Hidden Voices* allows students to find their own voice
as they become analysts of the past and make connections
between the past and the present.**



Wong Chin Foo

Speaking Up for Chinese New York

Focus Questions

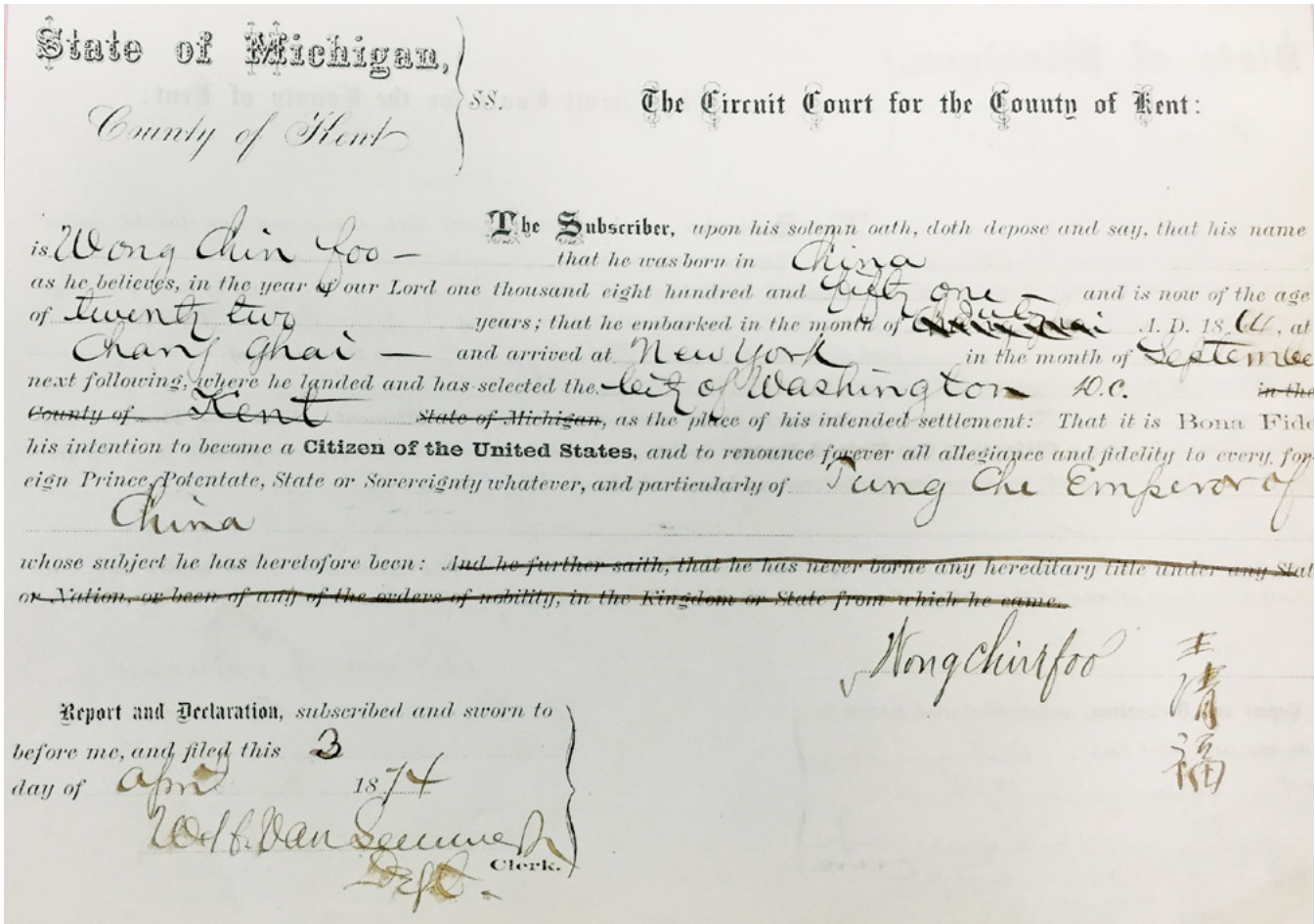
In what ways does the political system of the United States address the needs of the diverse people of the nation?

What were the ways that industrialization changed America?

How did immigrant groups use newspapers to support assimilation and cultural preservation?

Why were ethnic enclaves important to the development of American cities at the turn of the 20th century?

Wong Chin Foo (Wang Qingfu 王清福) came to New York in the 1870s looking for opportunity. Instead, he found a city where many people held racist stereotypes about immigrants like him. Wong became an ardent activist and one of the most famous Chinese Americans of his day.



“We... appeal for an equal chance in the race of life in this our adopted home—a large number of us have spent almost all our lives in this country.”

Wong Chin Foo, 1893

Drawn by the prospect of reliable work, Wong Chin Foo and other new arrivals established the seed of a new ethnic enclave—a cluster of groceries, boarding houses, and laundries near Chatham Square. By 1890 Chinatown had become a distinct neighborhood and there were more than 2,500 total Chinese-born residents throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn. In 1888 he wrote of the neighborhood, “The cosmopolitan tendency of New York is rapidly developing little foreign cities. Everyone knows the French, German, and Irish districts. But the most interesting to Americans is Little Hong Kong.”

In this neighborhood, beginning in 1883 Wong Chin Foo published his newspaper, the *Chinese American*, at 189 and 191 Chatham Square in 1883. The publication, directed towards New York’s growing Chinese community,

was probably the first public use of the phrase “Chinese American.” Chinese workers often roomed together in local boarding houses. Since most migrants tended to be young single men, the early Chinese community in New York was disproportionately male. Wong Chin Foo claimed that by 1888 New York’s Chinatown was home to “eight thriving restaurants” that could prepare Chinese meals with “almost the same skill” as the best eateries in Shanghai. “These places are most thronged on Sunday,” he wrote, “when the Chinese laundrymen of New York ... come in for a general good time.” Photojournalist Jacob Riis ventured into Chinatown and other poor neighborhoods in the 1890s as part of his quest to document “How the Other Half Lives.” Riis noticed that residents used telegraph poles as the “official ‘organ’ of the colony”—a central place to post notices and information to the community. Wong counted 40 Chinese gambling shops in New York, many featuring “fantan,” a coin and dice game. “Chinamen seem to have all been born Wall Street men,” he declared. “It is as difficult for the police to stop” them from gambling as it would be to “stop the great yellow waters of the [Yellow River] from overflowing.”

Chinese migrants coming to New York in the late 1800s faced serious obstacles. Competition for jobs often translated to racial strife as nativists cast new arrivals as exotic others, somehow less than human. These tensions culminated in the passage of the federal Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, which barred all new immigrants from China, with very few exceptions. It was not repealed until 1943.

“The cosmopolitan tendency of New York is rapidly developing little foreign cities. Every one knows the French, German, and Irish districts. But the most interesting to Americans is Little Hong Kong.”

Wong Chin Foo, 1888

In the face of such prejudice, Wong Chin Foo made himself an unofficial spokesman for the Chinese community. Wong fought to dispel anti-Chinese stereotypes through his writing and activism. Wong's efforts, however dogged, did not end anti-Chinese bias. Discriminatory laws and attitudes would remain the norm for years to come. But the enclave that Wong helped build in New York kept growing—up to a population of 6,300 by 1900. Chinatown became a haven, one of the few places with a dense enough Chinese population to offer a familiar language, culture, and the hope of economic support.

Over the past century, Manhattan's Chinatown has blossomed from its initial core around Chatham Square to an extensive swath of city blocks stretching across the southern part of the island. New Chinatowns have also emerged throughout the other boroughs, especially in Flushing and Elmhurst in Queens, and Sunset Park and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn.

Source: Adapted from the New York at Its Core exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York

Passport to Social Studies Curriculum Connections

Grade 1

- **Unit 1:** Lesson 10: Monuments Celebrate History

Grade 2

- **Unit 3:** Lesson 7: Why People Move

Grade 4

- **Unit 4:** Lesson 8: What Is Freedom?

Grade 5 United States Case Study:

Day-by-Day Planner

Day 14: Struggle for Equality and Civil Rights

Grade 8

- **Unit 2:** Lesson 4: Coming to America
- **Unit 2:** Lesson 5: Immigrant Experience
- **Unit 2:** Lesson 7: Nativism, Assimilation, and Cultural Preservation
- **Unit 2:** Lesson 8: The Chinese Exclusion Act
- **Unit 2:** Lesson 10: Immigrant Experience Article

Grade 11

- **Unit 3:** Post-Civil War America Industrialization, Urbanization, and the Progressive Movement

Thinking About:

Wong Chin Foo

Why did Wong Chin Foo move to the United States? **E/M/H**

Why did Wong Chin Foo publish the *Chinese American* newspaper? **E/M/H**

What role did immigrant newspapers play in the lives of immigrants in NYC in the late 1800s? **E/M/H**

How did Wong Chin Foo fight to change New Yorkers' minds about their stereotypes about Chinese immigrants? **E/M/H**

Do Wong Chin Foo's life and experiences support the idea that immigration in post-Civil War America better fit the salad bowl or melting pot metaphor? **E/M/H**

Would you describe Wong Chin Foo as a civil rights activist? Why or why not? **E/M/H**

How did immigrant groups incorporate American democratic values into their struggle to win rights? **M/H**

Related Vocabulary

Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), cosmopolitan, discrimination, exotic others, nativists/nativism, naturalize, organize, province

Additional Resources

The Cosmopolitan, Volume 5, "The Chinese in New York," by Wong Chin Foo (1888)

"A Chinese-American Merchant's Blistering Arguments Against Chinese Exclusion,"
by Rebecca Onion, *Slate*

The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo by Scott D. Seligman (2013)

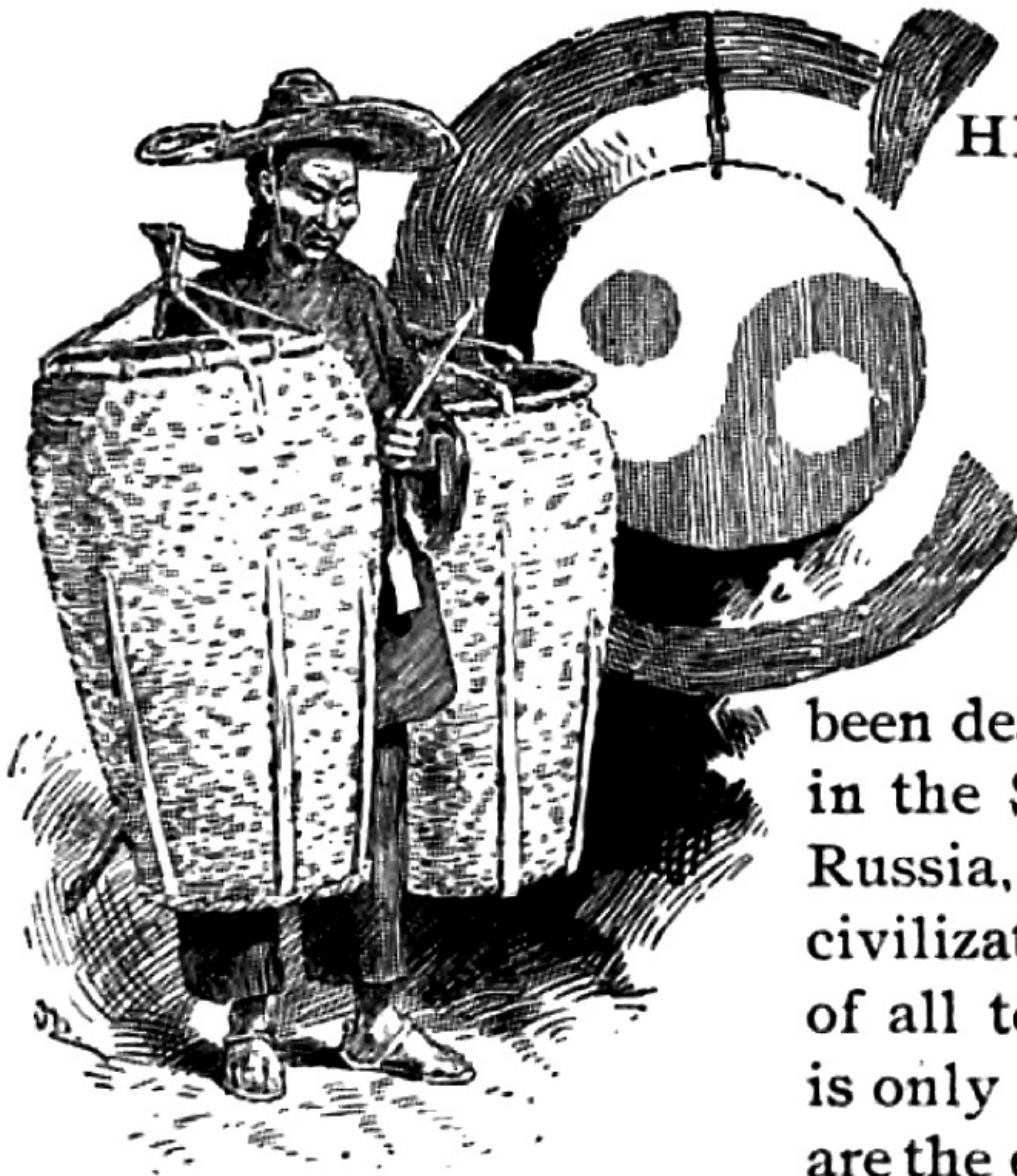
Coolies by Yin and Chris Soentpiet (2003)

Landed by Milly Lee and Yangsook Choi (2006)



THE CHINESE IN

BY WONG CH



HINATOWN

“Melican
posed of
men, and
of New
cities, an
water-wa
and Irish

been described in
in the Spanish qu
Russia, Africa, an
civilizations brou
of all to America
is only a recent in
are the exact antiq
as well as geogra

mourning, writes perpendicularly, places his far
grandfathers did, and in the eyes of a Yankee

APPEAL

OF THE

Chinese Equal Rights League

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR

EQUALITY OF MANHOOD.

禁註映詰
例冊相駁

PRICE, 10 CENTS.

PUBLISHED BY THE

CHINESE EQUAL RIGHTS LEAGUE,

42 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

J. A. CUMMINS PRINTING CO., 332 WASHINGTON ST., BOSTON.

Document Analysis

This political cartoon, originally appearing in *Puck Magazine*, a popular periodical at the turn of the 20th century, illustrates the anti-Chinese sentiment that Wong Chin Foo fought against. The racist depictions of Chinese Americans and Irish Americans were intended to serve as a “warning” about Chinese migration from California to the east coast of the United States, and, importantly, to create divisions between people of Chinese descent and the Irish and Irish Americans in New York City. In several panels in the cartoon, stereotypical Chinese characters take jobs that were often identified with people of Irish descent or physically replace them in locations such as Mott Street where Irish people lived. The center panel of the cartoon, which depicts people of Chinese descent



- What aspects of this cartoon help you to understand the creator’s potential biases? **M/H**
- What is the message of this cartoon? Why do you think that? **M/H**
- In addition to the racist depictions of the Chinese in this cartoon, what additional nativist beliefs does this cartoon depict? **M/H**
- What are some ways that people challenged the beliefs depicted in this cartoon during the late 1800s? **M/H**