

Collaboration and Conflict

The Outer Edges of Community Partnerships

Two Models of



“Neighborhood
Development”

Case Study: New City Community Press



New City Community Press

Publishing Community Voices

Our mission is to provide opportunities for local communities to represent themselves by telling their stories in their own words. We document stories of local communities because we believe their voices matter in addressing issues of national and global significance. We value these stories as a way for communities to reflect upon and analyze their own experience through literacy and oral performance. We are committed to working with communities, writers, editors and translators to develop strategies that assure these stories will be heard in the larger world.

Ethical/Political Basis for Community Publishing Partnerships

All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals.

Antonio Gramsci

To know a thing and not express it is all the same as if one knew it not.

Robert Burton

"The artist must elect
to fight for freedom
or for slavery. I have
made my choice.
I had no
alternative."

—Paul Robeson
Voice of the People
Apr 9, 1898- Jan 23, 1976



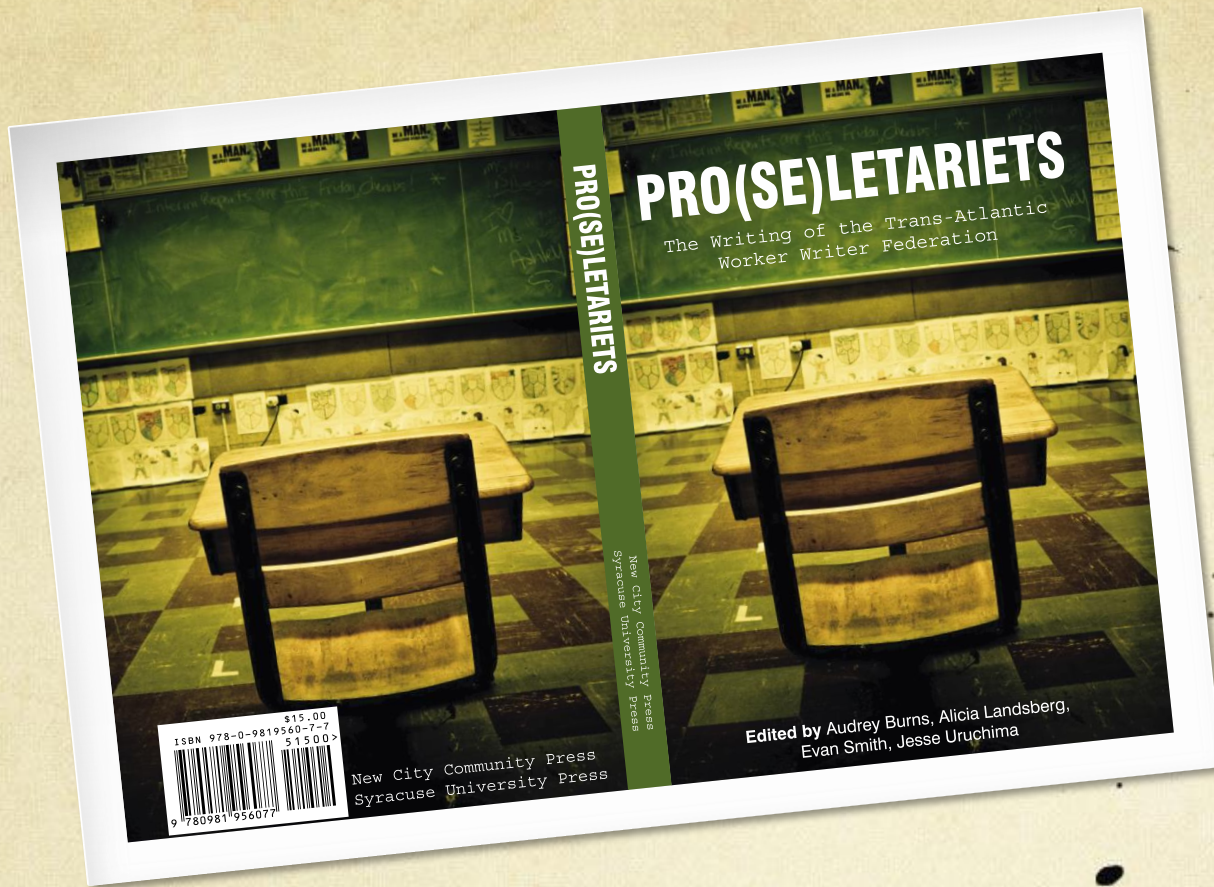
Primary Questions

What is the role of community-based literacy projects in supporting the development of organic intellectuals?

What is our role in supporting their collective work in neighborhood development?



Model 1: Collaboration



New City Press at the Writing Program, Syracuse University

First Year Writing
Minor
Major
Composition and Cultural Rhetoric

Syracuse University

Writing Curriculum

- **FYW 105:** Students will learn critical techniques of reading through engagement with texts that raise issues of diversity and community and encourage students to make connections across difference.
- **FYW 205:** Students will compose texts that investigate a focused topic of inquiry that raises issues of diversity and community and that offers multiple points of entry based on their interest and expertise
- **MAJOR:** Students develop a broad critical and historical understanding of composing as an act made possible by culturally diverse rhetorical traditions and writing technologies, possibilities that are ultimately shaped by social, political, religious, and economic factors.
- **GRADUATE:** Addressing written language in both academic and nonacademic settings, the Composition track is concerned broadly with scholarship on literacy and how it is taught and learned, used and transformed over time, with particular attention to the role of pedagogical and institutional practices.

Creating Literacy Dialogues



Syracuse City School District

- Write to Capture Ideas
- Write for Understanding
- Write & Revise
- Write for Teacher and Peers



Literacy Dialogues

School Culture

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Students Speak Out on In-School Suspension

How did this happen?
This question is at the root of a lot of good writing.

Authors often ask themselves how something occurred. What was going on at that moment? What if the people had acted differently? What might have happened then?

Authors then ask how to best write about what happened. If they are creative writers, they might choose a short story. If they are business people, they might choose a memo. If they are artists, they might draw something. Their goal is always to match the event with the style of communication that will best express what happened.

Sitting in the In-School suspension room, you might be asking yourself the same set of questions:

- ★ How did you end up in the In-School Suspension room?
- ★ What if everyone involved had acted differently?
- ★ How might things have been different?
- ★ How can I best explain what happened to others?
- ★ What's the best way to write about this experience?



During your time at In-School Suspension, we'd like you to use the writing prompts below to tell us what happened. At the end of the year, we will collect the best writing and publish it in a small book for everyone in the school to read.

THE BUSINESS WRITER

A business memo uses very neutral language to provide information to others in the company. Often, a memo describes a problem and offers possible solutions.

Business memos will typically have the same pieces:

- TO:** (This is the person who must read the memo)
FROM: (YOU)
RE: (This is a short statement on what the memo is about)
DATE: (This tells the person when you wrote the memo)

1st Paragraph – Here you describe the problem

2nd Paragraph – Here you provide a number of possible solutions

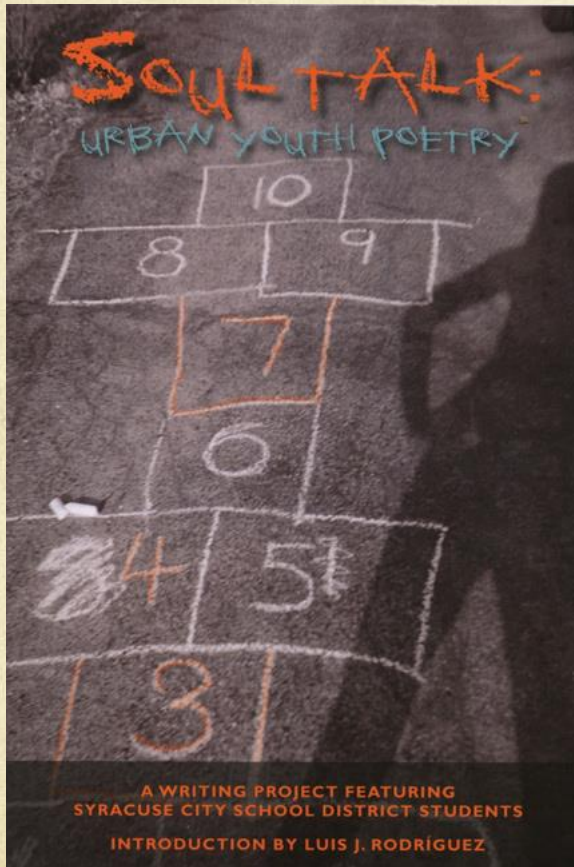
3rd Paragraph – Here you explain which of the solutions you believe is best

On the back of this piece of paper, write a business memo to your principal explaining what happened that caused you to be sent to In-School suspension. What other solutions might have been possible? Which would have been the best one? Why?

Be sure to use all of the pieces of a business memo.

Literacy Dialogues

Neighborhood Culture



Literacy Dialogues

School and Neighborhood



The Freedom Project

Project Partners



- Blodgett and Grant Middle Schools, Syracuse City School District
- Lorene Cary, Author, *FREE! Great Escapes from Slavery on the Underground Railroad*
- Community Partners – Syracuse Civil Rights Commission
- Reading and Language Arts, School of Education, Syracuse University
- Syracuse Teachers Association
- Special Collections/Archives, Syracuse University
- Writing Program, College of Arts and Sciences, Syracuse University

Project Goals

Create cross-institutional writing project which intersects with SCSD SS 8th Grade Benchmarks, First-Year Writing, Major, and Graduate program emphasis on writing informed by historical/cultural understanding

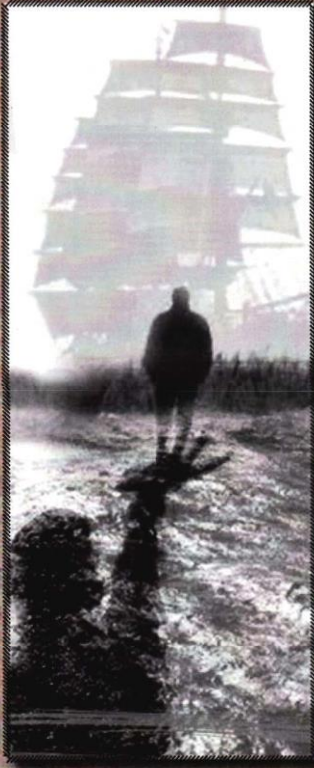
Embed writing project within disciplinary/core content area

Produce publication highlighting connections between public school, college, and professional writing


Develop assignments/curriculum to insure publications use in public school classrooms

Project Focus

History



Suppose you had to explain to someone who is unfamiliar with the history of slavery why it is so important for all of us to read and reflect on stories about slavery. What would you tell that person about slavery today? Are people still enslaved—in this country? In other countries? Are you in any way responsible for the freedom of others? What could you do in your daily life to make sure that others remain free?



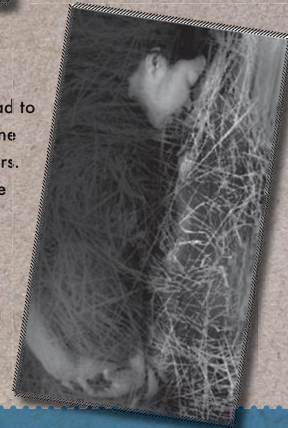
Citizenship



Think about the incredible determination it took for enslaved people to gain freedom. Remember John Thompson clinging to the top of the speeding train? Or the young woman who crouched in a wooden box as she was transported to freedom?



Think of a time when you had to make a difficult moral choice, one that affected both you and others. What allowed you to choose the right course of action?

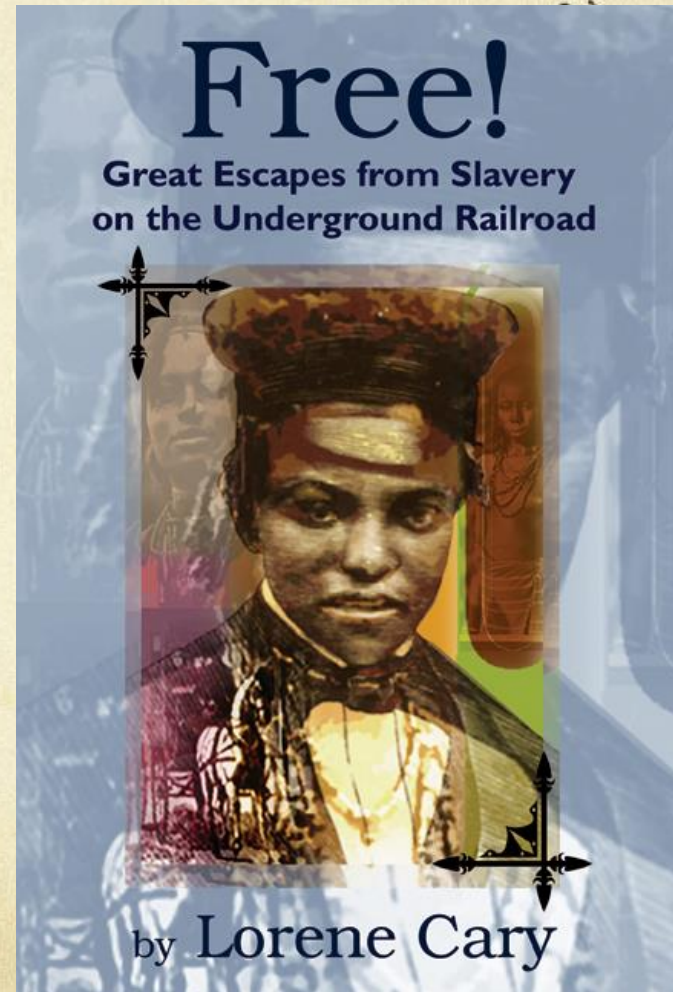


Why History and Citizenship?

- SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS
- Grade 8
- **Standard I:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- **Key Ideas:**
- 1. The study of NYS and US History requires **an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.**
- 2. Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs and traditions from NYS and US history **illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.**
- 3. Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in NYS and US history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.
- 4. The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: **explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.**

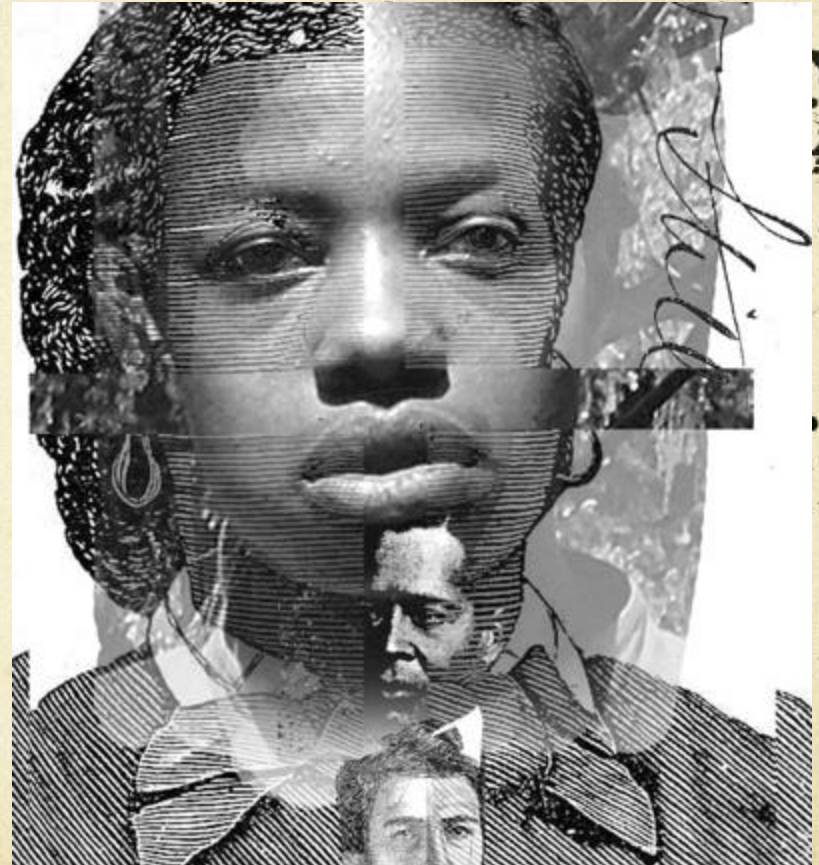
Project Components

- Schedule Weekly Meetings of Public School, CAS/SOE University Faculty
- Designate Undergraduate Classes linked to project (Peer Consultants)
- Designate Public School Student Populations and create appropriate writing prompts
- Graduate/Undergraduate Research Internships
- Financial Support from Syracuse Teachers Association and Syracuse City School District
- Primary Text Selection/Author Visit
- Support of New City Community Press



Literacy Components

- Academic-based Writing by Middle School Students
- College/Professor Research-based Responses
- Slave Narratives
- Historical Data
- Archival Photographs



Middle School

Alyssa K. Beir, Blodgett Middle School

Dear Readers,

It's important for all of us to read and reflect on stories about slavery. And I hope by the end of my letter you will understand why it's so important.

First, I'll tell you a little bit about slavery. The Portuguese first began to buy people as slaves in the 1400's. Slaves had to be crammed on a boat for several weeks. The crew on those ships never cleaned up any of the feces or the people who had died next to them. The [slaves] had to sleep next to a dead person.

People sometimes think that indentured servants and slaves are treated the same, but they were not. Indentured servants only have [to work] for a number of years and slaves are kept for life. Indentured servants' kids are free [and] don't have to work. Slave kids aren't free. They have to work just as hard as the parents.

Did you know that people are still enslaved today? But they aren't the same as they were back in the 1400's. Slaves today are forced into the sweatshops, prostitution, or to be someone's sex slave. There was a woman named Maria who came to live in Florida and was raped, forced to prostitute herself, and then threatened with violence if she tried to escape. And it's not just cases like Maria. There are cases even worse.

You and I could have been responsible for freedom of others. We could have just stood up for someone who was being judged because of their religion, race, or sex. In our daily life we could do simple things to make sure others remain free, such as looking for signs of someone being hurt or speaking up when we think someone is being treated unfairly.

Now readers, I hope that you are now familiar with the history of slavery and now understand why it's important to read and reflect on stories about slavery.

College

Linda Ahenkora, African-American Studies,

President, Student African American

The writing of these students demonstrates a possible step to a solution. We need to inform everyone about any particular situation that people of color are going through on a daily basis. If people are informed consistently then there should be no reason for people not to be or think proactively.

Why study History? History is what provides people of all ethnic backgrounds a foundation to depend on and reflect upon. As history changes it affects the future and present day lifestyles of all people. Yesenia Medina from Blodgett Middle School, made a tremendous point on stating that, "Life is not hard as to compared to enslaved people. Throughout African American history, we are introduced to the hardships and

scholars, we need to be aware of all these treatments so that we acknowledge the past and try to understand the present. Eugene Butler from Grant Middle School, also stated some important points. Students need to educate themselves in order to survive in our current country. Eugene stated, "People should know who important people were during slavery, who wanted to stop slavery, and why slavery started". It is sad to admit that different forms of enslavement continue today. Regardless, of where you are located, some type of enslavement still exists.

In the National Sacrifice of War pieces, the Student African American Society commends these students for speaking on sensitive issues like freedom and the War Iraq. As Leneisha Dotson from Grant

Middle School, stated, "Freedom can come in many ways, but it always comes at a price". Freedom does come at a price but when should it not be. In a democratic country we have the right to choose and deal with our consequences. As the war continues, people of the United States of America are dealing with the prevalent consequences of this war. Who knows how long we will be dealing with this war. As Desiree Depasquale from Grant Middle School, concludes that, "Soldiers are suppose to be fighting for freedom, but they are fighting for power". When will official and governmental agencies realize that the actual damage is taking place in our own backyards? When will all of this end?

Professional

Nancy Cantor, Chancellor

Syracuse University

Harriet Tubman, the former slave who brought many men, women, and children to freedom on the Underground Railroad, once said: "I freed thousands of slaves. I could have freed thousands more, if they had known they were slaves."

Knowledge is the first step toward freedom, and education is the first step toward knowledge. To promote freedom, now and in the future, we must study our history, discern its lessons, and discover its power to change our perceptions of ourselves and others.

"So you think life is hard?" Yesenia Medina asks in this volume. "Think again because hard is nowhere in your life."

She and other student authors consider the long and tragic history of slavery and then ask of today: Is everyone free? If not, who is responsible? And what, if anything, can we do about it? There are many answers.

We can refuse to go along. Alyssa K. Beir recalls the time her family and others of mixed race waited for tables at a Florida restaurant only to see Caucasian families, who arrived later, seated first. When the restaurant manager brushed aside protests from her father and uncle, they had the courage and dignity to take their families out the door.

To fight slavery, we must be able to recognize it. Eugene K. Butler correctly defines slavery as a situation in which "someone owns someone else." As he writes, slavery can take many forms: People can be locked in abusive relationships or trapped into prostitution. Or, as Daisy De Jesus writes, slavery can exist when Mexican immigrants work many hours for which they are not paid. It can exist in the African diamond mines for the same reasons.

What can we do about slavery? As Yorelis Pizarro suggests, we can read about it, reflect on it, and then perceive the ways that practices such as sex tourism promote it. We can write letters to support legislation against slavery in all of its forms. "I'm responsible for people's freedom," says D'Andre Dodd, "because when I write something about slavery, I feel that someone is reading it."

We can take action, as Jenna Quattropant did when she intervened to stop other kids who were beating up a girl and thereby taking away her freedom to walk down the street in peace. Or we can intervene like Ben Furbeck and his friends, who stepped in to stop people from beating up their friend Jake because he was African-American.

Tashia Reese is correct when she writes, "Slavery started a long time ago and it is still happening. Everyone should try to stop it." To know injustice, to fight injustice, we must learn about it, we must recognize it, we must reflect on it, and we must have the courage to take action as individuals or together.

Slave Narratives

Moore bought me from a man named McCaully, who owned me about a year. I fared dreadful bad under McCaully. One day in a rage he undertook to beat me with the limb of a cherry-tree; he began at me and tried in the first place to snatch my clothes off, but he did not succeed. After that he beat the cherry-tree limb all to pieces over me. The first blow struck me on the back of my neck and knocked me down; his wife was looking on, sitting on the side of the bed crying to him to lay on. After the limb was worn out he then went out to the yard and got a lath, and he come at me again and beat me with that until he broke it all to pieces.

He was not satisfied then; he next went to the fence and tore off a paling, and with that he took both hands, 'cursing' me all the time as hard as he could. With an oath he would say, 'now don't you love me?' 'Oh master, I will pray for you, I would cry, then he would 'cuss' harder than ever.' He beat me until he was tired and quit. I crept out of doors and threw up blood; some days I was hardly able to creep. With this beating I was laid up several weeks.

From

William Still' s Underground Railroad

Data

Excerpts from Timeline

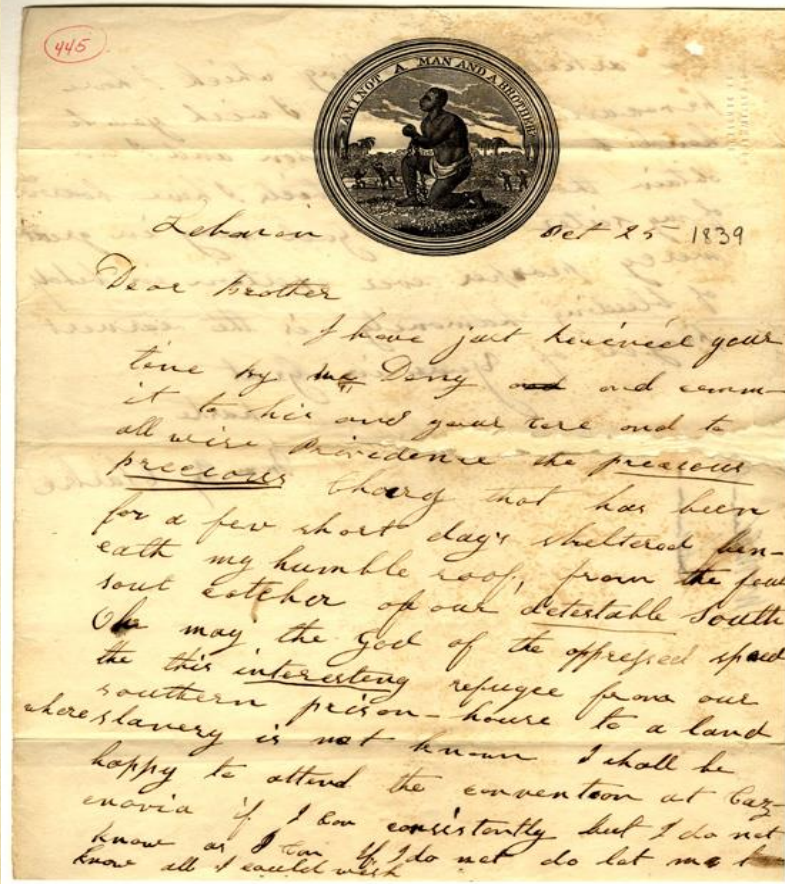
1501—African Slaves in the New World: Spanish settlers bring slaves from Africa to Santo Domingo (now the capital of the Dominican Republic).

1522—Slave Revolt: the Caribbean: Slaves rebel on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, which now comprises Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

1562—Britain Joins Slave Trade: John Hawkins, the first Briton to take part in the slave trade, makes a huge profit hauling human cargo from Africa to Hispaniola.

- 1581—Slaves in Florida: Spanish residents in St. Augustine, the first permanent settlement in Florida, import African slaves.
- 1619—Slaves in Virginia: Africans brought to Jamestown are the first slaves imported into Britain's North American colonies. Like indentured servants, they were probably freed after a fixed period of service.

Archival Photographs



FREEDOM!

A Community Dialogue



FREEDOM: A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

NEW CITY COMMUNITY PRESS, 2008

ALYSSA K. BEIR
BLOGGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dear Readers

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You and I could have been responsible for freedom of others. We could've just stood up for someone who was being judged because of their religion, race, or sex. In our daily life we could do simple things to make sure others remain free, such as looking for signs of someone being hurt or speaking up when we think someone is being treated unfairly.

I saw someone being treated unfairly once. It happened over the summer when I went to Florida to visit my family. My family and I were at a restaurant and there were a couple of open tables. There were two families that were all mixed race and three families that were all Caucasians. When the waiter came to seat the people, he sat the Caucasians first. My family and the other families had been waiting there longer. So my uncle and my father went to see the manager, but he told them just to wait like the other families. So we left and never came never went back.

Now readers, I hope that you are now familiar with the history of slavery and now understand why it's important to read and reflect on stories about slavery.

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1619—Slaves in Virginia—Africans brought to Jamestown are the first slaves imported into Britain's North American colonies. Like indentured servants, they were probably

1682—Hereditary Slavery—Virginia law decrees that children of black mothers "shall be bound or free according to the condition of the

1700—Slaves as Property—Describing slaves as real estate, Virginia lawmakers allow owners to bequeath their slaves. The same law

1712—Slave Revolt in New York City—Slaves in New York City kill whites during an uprising, later squashed by the militia. Nineteen rebels are

YESENIA MEDINA

BLODGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Did you know in the old days there was slavery? I bet you did, but did you know in certain parts of Africa slavery still exists? I am going to tell you a little bit about slavery.

[The] things these people went through are unbearable, getting killed, beaten up, or even worse. How would you feel if you were forced to not know how to read or even worse write? Enslaved Africans were forced to work very hard picking cotton in the fields and doing anything else their masters told them to do. If they didn't do as their masters said they were beaten with whips on their backs. It's unbelievable to even try to guess the pain African slaves went through.

Then there was the Underground Railroad, a passageway that sent slaves to freedom. For slaves to escape it wasn't as easy as you would think. Many problems occurred, for example, if their master caught them who knew what happened to them? Masters who caught their slaves beat, killed, or even worse, tortured them.

So you think life is hard? Think again because hard is nowhere in your life. Slaves had hard lives to deal with and your life can never be compared to as a slave's life.



1738—Slave Revolt: South Carolina—Crying "Liberty" some 75 slaves in South Carolina seize weapons and fire toward freedom in Florida then under Spanish rule). Crushed by the South Carolina militia, the revolt results in the deaths of 40 blacks and 50 whites.

1773—American Revolution Begins—Boston at the Massachusetts town of Lexington and Concord on April 19 spark the war for American independence from Britain.

1776—Declaration of Independence—The Continental Congress asserts "that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States".

1781—American Revolution Ends—Britain and the infant United States sign the Peace of Paris treaty.

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1784—Abolition Effort—Congress narrowly defeats Thomas Jefferson's proposal to ban slavery in new territories after 1800.

1790—First United States Census—Nearly 700,000 slaves live and toil in a nation of 3.9 million people.

1792—Fugitive Slave Act—The United States outlaws any efforts to impede the capture of runaway slaves.

1794—Cotton Gin—Eli Whitney patents his device for pulling seeds from cotton. The invention turns cotton into the cash crop of the American South—and creates a huge demand for slave labor.

CHANCELLOR NANCY CANTOR

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Harriet Tubman, the former slave who brought many men, women, and children to freedom on the Underground Railroad, once said: "I freed thousands of slaves. I could have freed thousands more, if they had known they were slaves."

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We can refuse to go along. Alyssa K. Beir recalls the time her family and others of mixed race waited for tables at a Florida restaurant only to see Caucasian families, who arrived later, seated first. When the restaurant manager brushed aside protests from her father and uncle, they had the courage and dignity to take their families out the door.

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We can take action, as Jenna Quattropid did when she intervened to stop other kids who were beating up a girl and thereby taking away her freedom to walk down the street in peace. Or we can intervene like Ben Furbeck and his friends, who stepped in to stop people from beating up their friend Jake because he was African-American.

1808—United States Bans Slave Trade—Importing African slaves is outlawed, but smuggling continues.

1820—Missouri Compromise—Missouri is admitted to the Union as a slave state. Maine as a free state. Slavery is forbidden in any subsequent territories north of latitude 36°30'.

1822—Slave Revolt—South Carolina Freed slave Denmark Vesey attempts a rebellion in Charleston. Thirty-five participants in the ill-fated uprising are hanged.

1831—Slave Revolt—Virginia Slave preacher Nat Turner leads a two-day uprising against whites, killing about 60. Militaries crush the revolt then spend two months searching for Turner, who is eventually caught and hanged. Enraged Southerners impose harsher restrictions on their slaves.

Tashia Reese is correct when she writes, "Slavery started a long time ago and it is still happening. Everyone should try to stop it." To know injustice, to fight injustice, we must learn about it, we must recognize it, we must reflect on it, and we must have the courage to take action as individuals or together. The FREEDOM! Project has explored and given voice to students at Grant and Blodgett middle schools who are thinking about these truths as their adult lives are just getting underway. I am proud that Syracuse University students and faculty have been part of this collaboration with students, teachers, and community residents, and I applaud them for this superb book.



1830—Congress Southern states equal abolitionists and forbid the mailing of antislavery propaganda.

1848—Mexican-American War Defeated, Mexico yields an enormous amount of territory to the United States. Americans then wrestle with a controversial topic: is slavery permitted in the new lands?

1847—Frederick Douglass's Newspaper Escaped slave Frederick Douglass begins publishing the North Star in Rochester, New York.

1849—Harriet Tubman Escapes After fleeing slavery, Tubman returns south at least 15 times to help rescue several hundred others.

Collaboration

Produced

- A University/Public School Partnership which created an artifact demonstrating the historical roots of racism/oppression in the USA and linking it to living situation of students and community

Did Not Produce

Any actual change in those living conditions; it was a form of rhetorical agency disconnected from actual political agency in *neighborhood development*.

What was the writing telling us?

"The artist must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative."

—Paul Robeson
Voice of the People
Apr 9, 1898- Jan 23, 1976





Part 2: Conflict



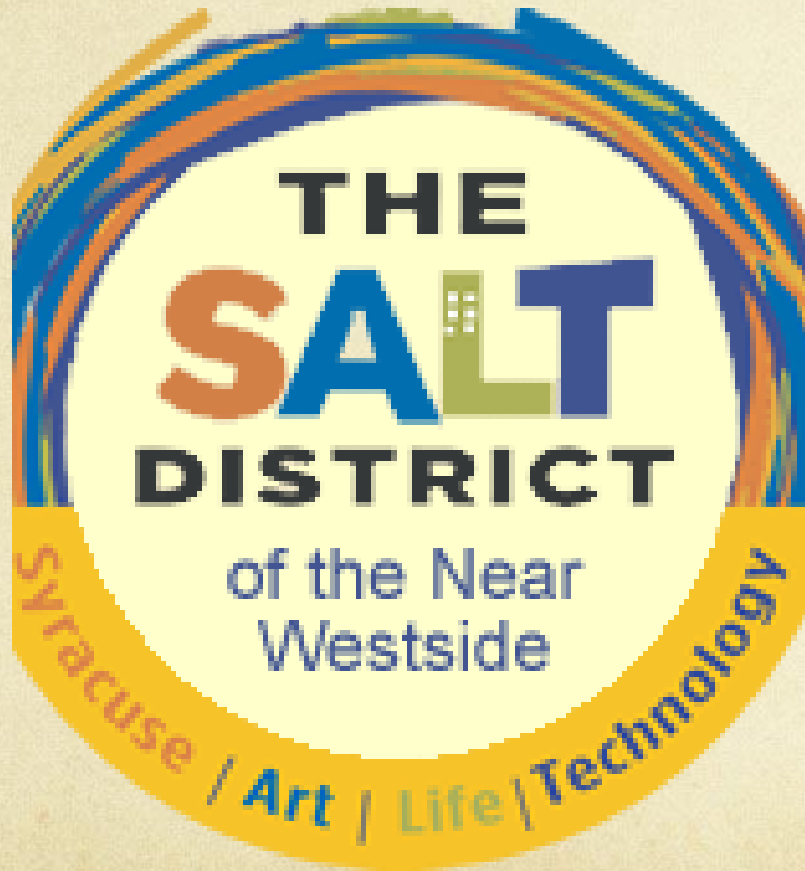
Returning to the Westside

Blodgett Middle School
located in
the
Westside of Syracuse*



*8th Poorest Census Tract in the
USA

“Westside” Becomes “Near Westside”



Discover the SALT District of the Near Westside, a place where art, lifestyle, technology, and emerging culture allow you to pursue your passions.

The SALT District is a project of the Near West Side Initiative, Inc. aimed at creating a new epicenter of artistic and cultural development in the Syracuse and Central Upstate New York area.

The meaning of the name comes from the acronym of Syracuse, Art, Life, and Technology, or SALT. But there is also historical meaning, in that the neighborhood was home to a salt works in Syracuse's early industrial history, and Syracuse has been referred to as The Salt City since those early days.



SALT/NWSI/S U

54 Million Dollars into 1 Sq. Mile

Support Artists/Culture

\$1 Houses (with credit approval)

Habit for Humanity (lacking credit)

Warehouse to Condo/CNY-TV

“Green Zone”

Goal: Community Controlled Effort



Near Westside Community on the Move

“Organic Intellectuals”

- Sponsored by Gifford Foundation and NWSI to create structural voice for residents

All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals.

Antonio Gramsci

**New City
Community
Press**

Publishing Community Voices

**“Freedom” /
Dialogue**

Concern About Representation

Engagement in Neighborhood

Leadership Development (Turn
NSWI Over to Residents)

Project Partners

- Writing Program
- Anthropology Department
- Hendricks Chapel Syracuse
- Syracuse Alliance for a New Economy (CBA)



Project Goals (Linked to Curriculum)

Survey Community Concerns (WRT 470/CRFP)

Provide Leadership Training to Address Concerns
(WRT 470, CCR 601)

Produce Community Publications That Articulate,
and Disseminate Solutions (WRT 255, WRT 301, WRT
400, CCR 601)

Westside Residents Coalition

The Westside Residents Coalition (WRC) is a culturally diverse, resident-based coalition of individuals and organizations that seeks to listen and give voice to, represent and advocate for residents who live in the area bounded primarily by West St., W. Onondaga St., Bellevue Ave., W. Fayette St., and S. Geddes St. WRC will move beyond this area as the coalition develops. We seek to do so inspired by the values of love, mutual respect, integrity, inclusion, democratic decision-making, and shared leadership. We expect that the WRC will work for the betterment of our neighborhood through coming together, outreach, coalition building and advocacy around issues of interest to residents such as empowering and educating youth, improving our neighborhood environment, increasing safety, improving access to job training and opportunities, achieving housing fairness, working toward economic justice, and improving information about all these matters.

Result?

All H—L Broke Loose

Response

- Westside Residents Coalition (They Live There)
- Community Picnic (Bring Politicians There)
- Police Delegation (Leverage Power Through Research)
- Control Narrative Through Writing/Publication



Where the multilingual
and multicultural
voices of the people
are heard.

Gifford Street Community Press

Writing Groups focused on community issues –
Surveillance Cameras
Youth Engagement
Jobs

Publications
Home – examining relationship between new/long term residents
Newspaper – community events, written by community members.

*Connected to Westside Resident Coalition
Supported by WRT Program, SANE*

www.giffordstreetcommunitypress.org



Old West st. before the 3-lane hi-way to nowhere.
poor sweet men scared bold alive
families of outsiders
daring to persevere in a new culture

Susan Hamilton



Dangerous Writing

Susan Hamilton, "Why the Near Westside is My Home."

Why?

- Writing Now Expresses Communal (*Not Individual*) Vision
- Connected Grassroots Community Led Organizing
- Part of Coalition working **with** NWSI to Foster Community Control of Redevelopment Projects

“We could take care of each other.”

Susan Hamilton

What are our goals as “Community Partners”?

- What does it mean to support a community’s efforts at defining “neighborhood development”?
- What is the role of “writing classes” in this work?
- When does the “pedagogical” become the political?

