

# **Historical Markers That Uncover Fairfax County's Past**

**A Project Based Learning (PBL) Unit  
Grades 4-6**

## PBL: Historical Marker Essential Learning

### Essential Learning Grades 4-6

*What do students need to know and be able to do?*

#### **Enduring Understandings**

1. History is the constructed (built/formed) understanding of the past.
2. We construct (build/form) our understanding of the past based on the voices and experiences we recognize, marginalize, or silence.
3. Recognizing the voices, experiences and achievements of people in our past whose stories have not been elevated or shared is important to our understanding of the past.
4. The people, groups, ideas, events, and systems we memorialize contribute to our understanding of the past.
5. The people, groups, ideas, events, and systems we memorialize represent values found in the present.

#### **Standard 1 Skills (2015 Virginia Department of Education *History and Social Science Standards of Learning Skills*)**

- Analyze and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents
- Interpret charts, graphs, and pictures to determine characteristics of people, places, or events
- Use evidence to draw conclusions and make generalizations
- Investigate and research to develop products orally and in writing

**Social Studies Performance Assessment**

Standards Based Rubric: **Elementary School - Historical Marker PBL**

**Historical Marker PBL:**

***How can you create a new historical marker that commemorates a local African American from Fairfax County's past who all people should know about?***

Score	4	3	2	1	Not Observed
<b>Accuracy of Content</b>	Used specific content and vocabulary to demonstrate <b>a thorough</b> understanding of local African-American history.	Used specific content and vocabulary to demonstrate <b>a consistent</b> understanding of local African-American history.	Used content and vocabulary to demonstrate <b>a limited</b> understanding of local African-American history.	Used content and vocabulary to demonstrate an <b>inconsistent</b> understanding of local African-American history.	
<b>Information Sources (.1a)</b>	Provided <b>detailed and connected explanations</b> to support thinking around <b>why</b> this local African-American history is significant.	Provides <b>connected explanations</b> to support thinking around <b>why</b> this local African-American history is significant.	Provides <b>limited explanations</b> to support thinking around <b>why</b> this local African-American history is significant.	Provides <b>little or no explanation</b> to support thinking around <b>why</b> this local African-American history is significant.	
<b>Questioning and Critical Thinking Skills (.1d)</b>	<b>Used and explained</b> information sources as evidence <b>to support</b> thinking.	<b>Used</b> information sources as evidence <b>to support</b> thinking.	<b>Identified</b> information sources connected to thinking.	<b>Attempted</b> to use information sources as evidence without clear connection to thinking.	
<b>Information Sources (.1a)</b>	<b>Made and explained connections</b> across time and place	<b>Made connections</b> between past and present events	<b>Made connections</b> to past events	<b>Identified</b> past and present events	

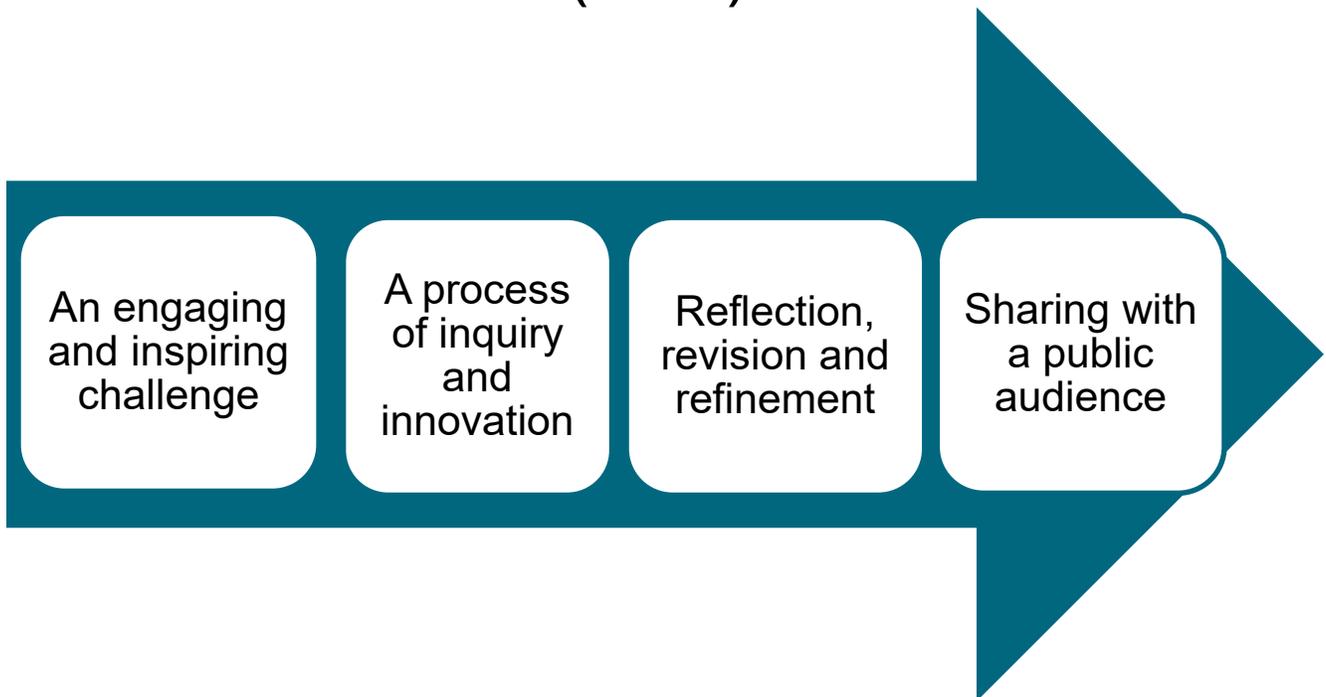
PBL: Historical Markers Student Checklist  
Adapted by FCPS from Virginia Department of Education



You can use the requirements from the rubric and any additional requirements you have to create a student checklist. This tool can be used to support student self-assessment throughout the project.

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Got it!</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Not yet!</b>
<b>Content</b>				
<b>Research</b>				

# The Process of Project Based Learning (PBL)



## PBL: Historical Markers Prepare for Success

### Portrait of a Graduate Skills

Throughout this PBL, you will use the following skills to be successful:



Communicator

I use digital tools to research and share ideas.



Ethical and Global Citizen

I participate in activities that benefit my community.

This entry event is intended to help activate and/or build background knowledge about historical markers. It is structured as a class dialogue with points for small group talk and resource exploration. Once students engage with the entry event, they are ready to think about the **Driving Question** and generate their **Need to Know** list.

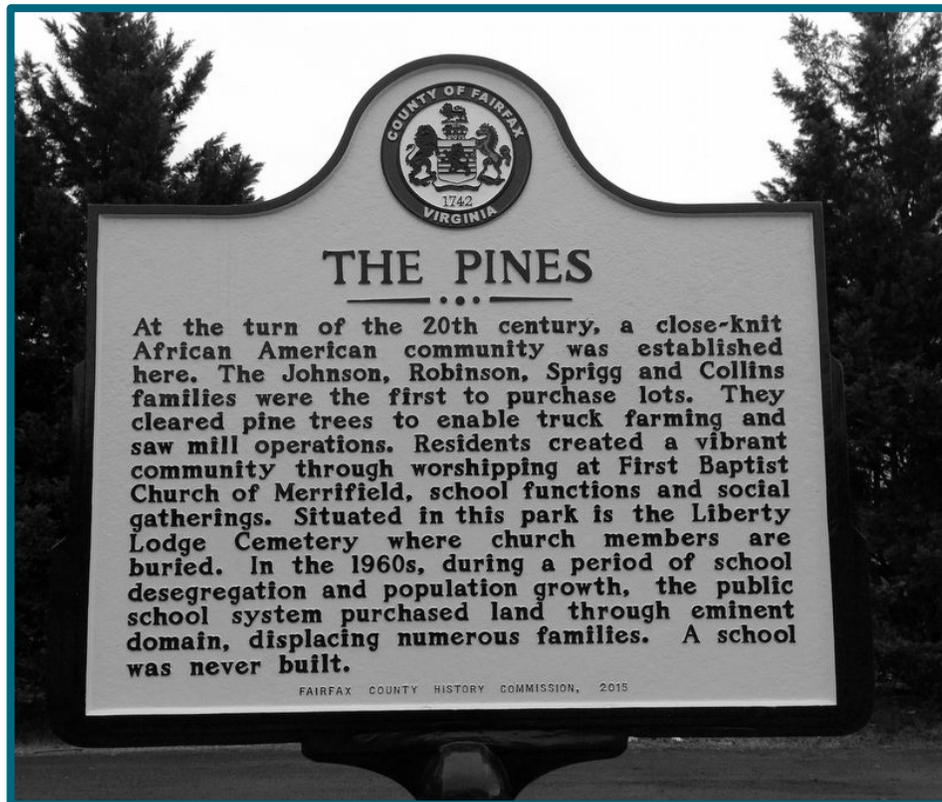
## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #1 - Entry Event



Look closely at this image.  
What do you see?

## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #1 - Entry Event

This is called a historical marker. Historical markers help to tell brief stories and point out facts about important events that happened in history or the people that contributed to them. They are placed in locations that are important to the event or to the person/people/group. There are many different kinds of historical markers across the United States. The example here is from Fairfax County.

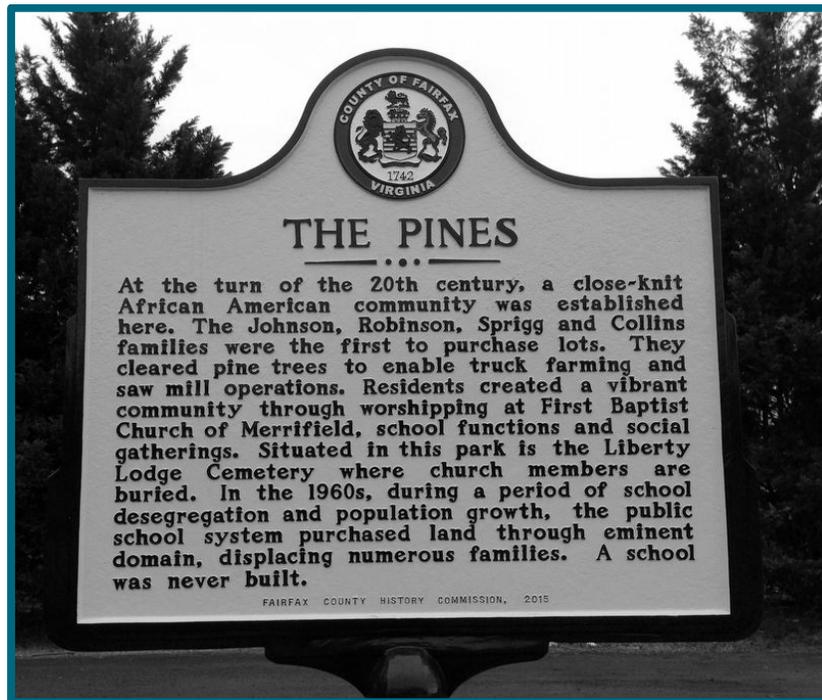


1. Have you ever seen one of these along the side of the road or in your community?
2. What are they?
3. What is their purpose?

## About Fairfax County's Historical Marker

**“Fairfax County's Historical Marker Program began in January 1998 when the Fairfax County History Commission approved a design and agreed to fund a distinctive marker for Fairfax County. While this marker was generally modeled after Virginia's roadside markers, by state code it had to have a distinctive appearance. With colors derived from George Washington's Fairfax Militia uniform, these buff and blue roadside markers are emblazoned with the Fairfax County seal.”**

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/historic/fairfax-county-highway-markers>



PBL: Historical Markers Activity #1 - Entry Event

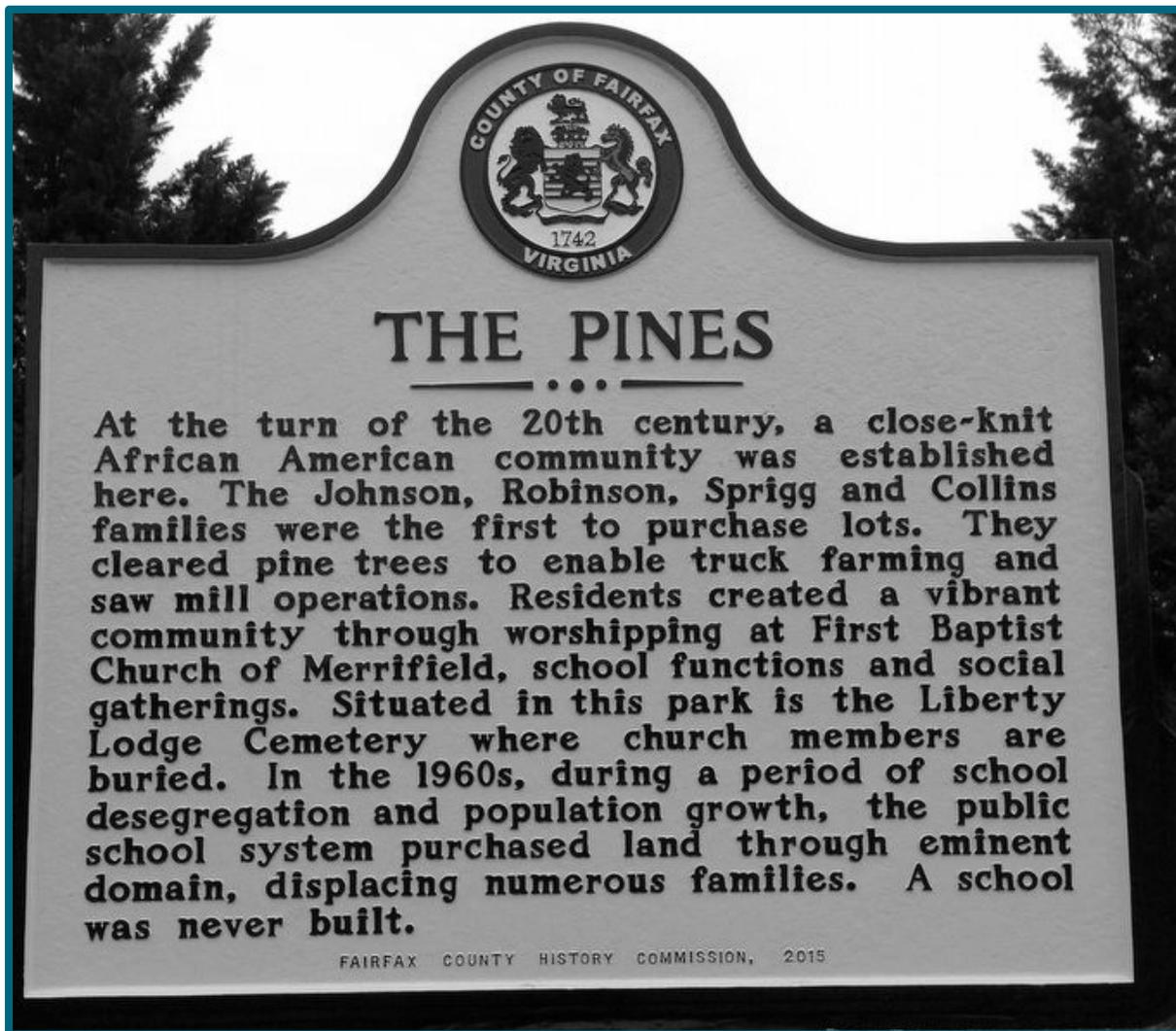


**This *historical marker* is located near the entrance of Pine Ridge Park in Annandale, VA. It was erected in 2016 by The Fairfax County History Commission.**  
***Let's learn more about it!***

## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #1 - Entry Event

Read this historical marker. Then invite students to complete the Project Zero thinking routine, [Step in, step out, step back](#)

([http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Step%20In%20-%20Step%20Out%20-%20Step%20Back\\_1.pdf](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Step%20In%20-%20Step%20Out%20-%20Step%20Back_1.pdf))



## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #1 - Entry Event

### Step In, Step Out, Step Back

Consider various strategies for engaging in this processing. This might include individual think time, individual writing time, partner or small group turn and talk time, and/or class dialogue.

<b>Step In:</b> Given what you read, what do you think the residents in this community might have felt, believed, known, or experienced?	
<b>Step Out:</b> What else would you like or need to learn to understand their perspective better?	
<b>Step Back:</b> Given your exploration of this perspective so far, what do you notice about your own perspective and what it takes to take somebody else's?	

## Step In Sentence Starters

- 1. Residents such as \_\_\_\_\_ might have felt \_\_\_\_\_ because ...**
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ from the historical marker makes me think that residents may have believed \_\_\_\_\_ because ...**
- 3. The historical marker says \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think that residents may have known ...**
- 4. I think some residents may have experienced \_\_\_\_\_ because ...**

## Step Out Sentence Starters

**1. I would like to learn more about \_\_\_\_\_ because  
...**

**2. I wonder what \_\_\_\_\_ would have been like.**

**3. I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ would have felt when  
\_\_\_\_\_ happened.**

**4. I have never experienced \_\_\_\_\_. This makes  
me wonder ...**

## Step Back Sentence Starters

- 1. I notice \_\_\_\_\_ about my own perspective.**
- 2. My own perspective is ...**
- 3. Taking someone else's perspective feels ...**
- 4. To take some else's perspective, I need to ...**
- 5. I am finding that I need to \_\_\_\_\_ in order to take someone else's perspective. This is important because ...**

**Why do you think it is important for Fairfax County to have its own historical markers?**

**Turn and Talk**

## Let's Take a Closer Look

### 1. Select a picture of a local historical marker.

- **Resource:** [Map and Primary Sources](https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=ba14ba6c3ec04705aa0e2ad5f7108bb0)  
(<https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=ba14ba6c3ec04705aa0e2ad5f7108bb0>)
- Consider picking one that is close to your school to build relevance so that students might make connections. You might also consider spaces within your own school that commemorate people or groups!

### 2. What do you learn from reading this marker?

- Use this example as a think aloud with sentences like “When I read \_\_\_\_\_ it helped me learn \_\_\_\_\_”

### 3. Why do you think it is in the community?

- “I think this marker is important to the community because ...”

## PBL: HISTORICAL MARKERS ACTIVITY #2 ENTRY EVENT

# Let's Explore! Historical Markers

Fairfax County History Commission Historical Highway Markers Map Tour

This story map tour includes each marker's name and text, a map of its location and images related to the marker. To view a full sized image, place your cursor over the image and select the double arrow in the upper right corner of the image. You can navigate by using the arrow to the left and right of the image or by clicking on any thumbnail image.

**Action at Annandale**

The roadbed for the unfinished Manassas Gap Railroad was located in this immediate area and crossed Indian Run creek in Poe Terrace Park. The stone bridge abutments are still visible. Financial problems caused work to stop on the railroad in 1857, but the roadbed provided a route that both the Federal and Confederate armies used during the Civil War. Where the roadbed crossed Little River Turnpike, approximately 200 Confederate cavalrymen overran a barricade defended by the 45th New York Volunteers on 2 December 1861. The skirmish ended when confederate troops from the 32nd New York Regiment joined the fight and the Confederates retreated west toward Centerville.

1 Action at Annandale 2 Bailey's Crossroads 3 Battle of Bull Run 4 Beulah 5 Beulah Baptist Church 6 Big Willow Branch 7 Centerville 8 Centerville Baptist Church 9 Chantilly 10 Chantilly 11 Centerville

<https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=ba14ba6c3ec04705aa0e2ad5f7108bb0>

1. Explore the [map of all of the current historical markers in Fairfax County](https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=ba14ba6c3ec04705aa0e2ad5f7108bb0)
2. Consider:
  - What does this resource tell us?
  - Why is that information important?
  - Why might the historical marker be in the community?

Use the next page for your thinking.

PBL: HISTORICAL MARKERS ACTIVITY #2 ENTRY EVENT

# Let's Explore! Historical Markers

- **Explore** 3 different historical markers
- **Consider** the positives, negatives, and interesting ideas related to historical markers that are currently commemorated.
- **Consider:** *What does this marker tell us? Why is it important? Why might the topic be commemorated?*

Title of Marker	Plus	Minus	Interesting

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #3 Entry Event

Do ALL important stories get shared, recognized, or uncovered?



Image 1: County Roadside Marker



Image 2: Wayside Marker



Image 3: State Roadside Marker

***Why or why not?  
What might stand in the way of more stories  
being shared?***

## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #3 Entry Event

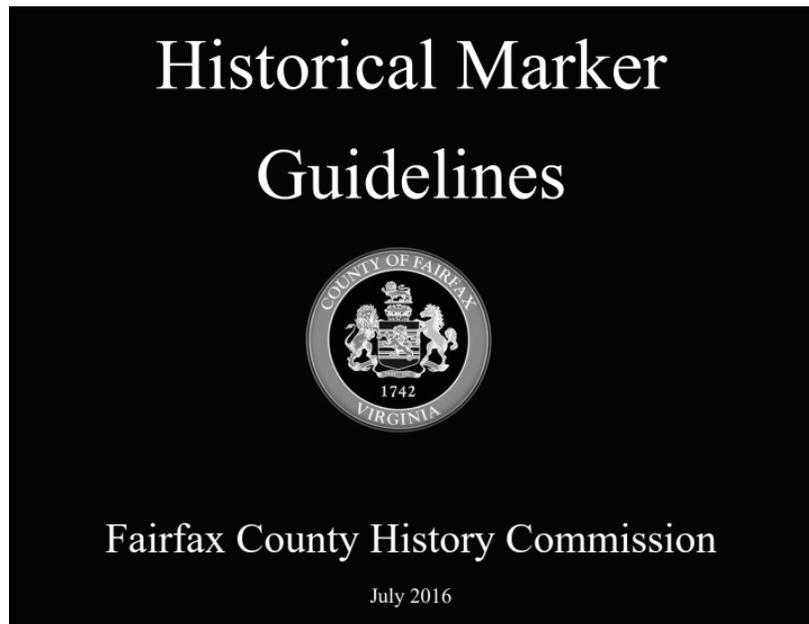
Who decides these are the stories that are remembered and shared?

### OUR MISSION



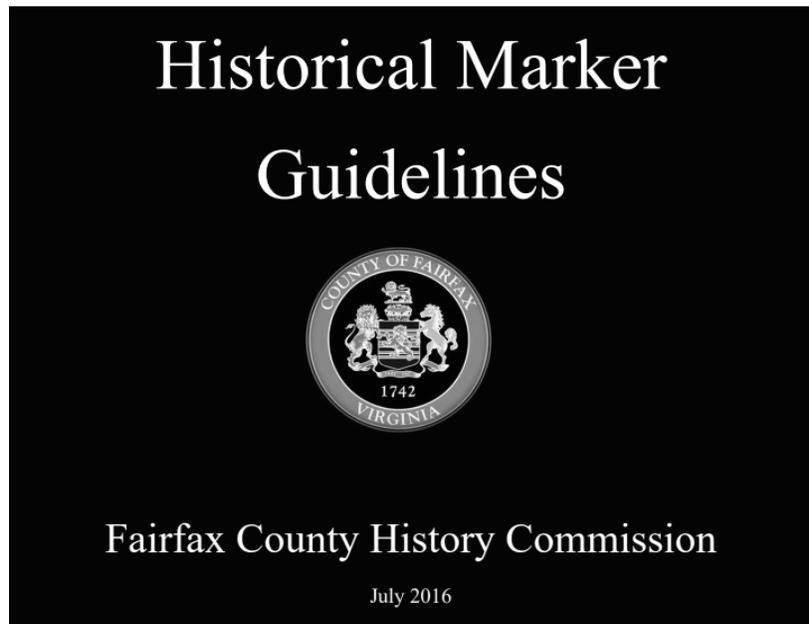
**The Fairfax County History Commission** was established by the County of Fairfax in 1969. We help identify, document, record, and preserve our county's historic past here in Northern Virginia. Our commission's 20 members are appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month. Our accomplishments and projects in progress are detailed in an Annual Report submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

The Fairfax County History Commission oversees the process for creating and installing historical markers. They have established guidelines for how to create a historical marker. One important part of the process is including research.



### Research:

Research into the history of the person, site, building, or event to which the marker refers is needed to ensure the accuracy of the information conveyed on the marker. Each statement provided on a marker should be supported by primary source documentation.



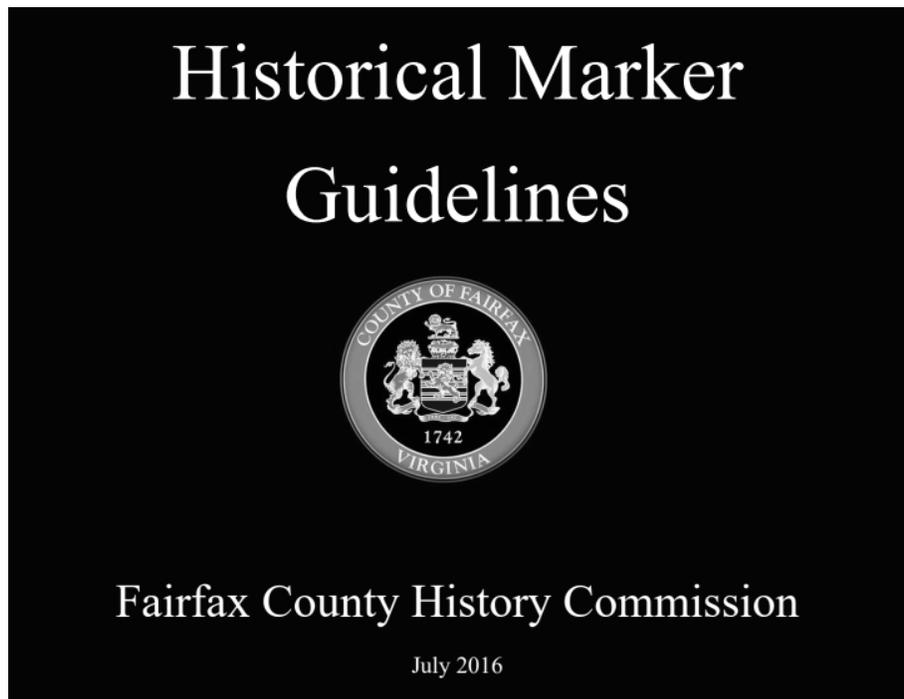
### Historical Content:

Fairfax County historical markers should commemorate **persons, sites, buildings, or events of local significance**. Living persons or events that occurred less than fifty years ago are ineligible for a Fairfax County marker. Exceptions may be allowed if the person, site, building, or event is considered by the Fairfax County History Commission to be of extraordinary historical significance.

Markers should provide information about the site where the marker is installed rather than providing historical information about nearby places. There should only be one marker at a site or nearby site pertaining to the same subject.

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #3 Entry Event

What if more stories, from different underrepresented groups, could be recognized?



**The Fairfax County History  
Commission needs your help!**

***How can you create a historical marker that commemorates the importance of an impactful African American individual, group, or event from Fairfax County's past?***

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #4 Driving Question

**How can you create a historical marker that commemorates the importance of an impactful African American individual, group, or event from Fairfax County's past?**



***What do you need to know to do this?***

**Add your questions here:**

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

<b>What will you do?</b>	<b>Details!</b>
<b>Choose a topic</b>	<b>Consider a topic that is meaningful to you, that you believe should be recognized</b>
<b>Research your topic and take notes</b>	<b>Use the graphic organizers to collect your research and refine your ideas</b>
<b>Make connections</b>	<b>Consider how this person, group, or story connects to other people, stories, or events</b>
<b>Develop and refine a product</b>	<b>What might be the best way to share your ideas?</b>
<b>Present</b>	<b>Present what you have learned to an audience</b>

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge



1. Initial Inquiry/Research: Choosing a Topic

What person, group, or event might you be interested in researching?

	Options	Why am I interested in this?	Where or how will I learn more?
First choice			
Second choice			
Third choice			

For my project I will focus on:

This is the most interesting/important to me because:

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

## 2. Inquiry/Research: Learning More

Use this graphic organizer to check student understanding of accuracy of content (1.a) and synthesizing and organizing information [\(1.c\)](#).

<b>My topic of interest is:</b>	
<b>What I already know</b>	
<b>What I need to learn more about</b>	
<b>I can learn more if I ...</b>	
<b>My next steps are...</b>	

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

### 3. Inquiry: A Deeper Look into My Topic

Use this graphic organizer to check student understanding of [information sources \(.1a\)](#), to check student understanding of accuracy of content (1.a), synthesizing and organizing information ([1.c](#)), and to select sources and demonstrating comprehension (.1j).

<b>My topic of interest is:</b>	
<b>Initial information I have found:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Where?</li><li>● When?</li></ul>	
<b>Circumstances or most important elements</b>	
<b>This topic is important because...</b>	
<b>Sources I used to research</b>	

## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

### Reflection: Portrait of a Graduate

1. Encourage students to reflect on one or more of these questions.
2. Consider how you might invite them to share their thoughts



I use digital tools to research and share ideas.



I participate in activities that benefit my community

**One digital tool I've used to research is \_\_\_\_\_ . It has helped me because ...**

**The digital tool that has helped me share my ideas the most is \_\_\_\_\_ . Here's how it has helped me ...**

**Learning about some untold stories of Black and African American people from Fairfax County is benefitting me because....**

**Helping others learn these stories will impact our community because ...**

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

**4. Inquiry/Research: Impact**

Use this graphic organizer to check student understanding of [connections across time \(.1g\)](#) and to check student understanding of [connections across time \(.1g\)](#).

<p><b>What might the community impact be if this topic is shared?</b></p>	
<p><b>How might someone today benefit from learning about this topic?</b></p>	
<p><b>What initial ideas do you have about what a historical marker could look like?</b></p>	

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

### 5. Historical Marker Research

Use this graphic organizer to check student understanding of [questioning and critical thinking skills \(.1d\)](#).

<b>Historical markers I explored</b>			
<b>They were interesting because...</b>			
<b>When were they established?</b>			
<b>What is the impact of more people knowing about this topic?</b>			
<b>The marker that is most impactful to me is ___ because ...</b>			
<b>This influences ideas for my own marker by...</b>			

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #5 Your Challenge

## 6. Historical Marker Planning

*Use this graphic organizer to check student understanding of accuracy of content (1.a) and explanation or statement (.1d)*

**My historical marker topic:**

**The community will appreciate this because...**

Important	This word is important to include because ...

## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #6 Time to Synthesize

Use this graphic organizer to check student understanding of [accuracy of content](#) and to check student understanding of accuracy of content and explanation or statement (.1d).

**You've researched topics, now you can take your information and turn it into your draft!**

1. INITIAL INQUIRY/RESEARCH: Choosing a subject			
Who or what group might you be interested in researching? Choose at least a first and second choice			
First Choice		Why are you interested in this?	Where or how might you learn more?
Second Choice		Why are you interested in this?	Where or how might you learn more?
Third Choice			
4. INQUIRY/RESEARCH: Impact			
For my project, I will focus on:	Why is this subject/story not more widely known?		
	What would be different if more people knew THEN?	What would be different if more people knew NOW?	
3. INQUIRY: A deeper look into my person/topic of interest			
My subject is:			
What basic information have you found? (Where? When?)			
What were the circumstances or most important elements?			
Why should this be known by all people?			
How might the public feel if they knew about this?			
What are your sources of information?			

How will you combine this information into your unique project?

What will you create to share your draft?

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #7 Reflection, Revision and Refinement



**Reflect on your project so far.**

**What can you do to make revisions and improvements?**

<b>The best part of my project so far is ...</b>	
<b>It is the best part because ...</b>	
<b>One thing I can improve is...</b>	
<b>This would improve my work because ...</b>	
<b>I can do this by ...</b>	

PBL: Historical Markers Activity #7 Reflection, Revision and Refinement



**Reflect on your project so far.**

**Which sources were most beneficial? Why?**

**What connections did you make between your topic and other people, events in history, or events today?**

## PBL: Historical Markers Activity #8 Share Your Work

1. Consider questions or stems that would best fit your classroom practices and student needs.
2. Encourage students to share and receive feedback on their work.
3. Add or remove stems based on what might be familiar to students.

### **In PBL, we share our creative ideas with an audience!**

<b>Questions for the presenter to</b>	<b>Questions/Stems for audience</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Why should this topic be recognized?</b></li><li>● <b>How and where should the topic be commemorated?</b></li><li>● <b>How would others benefit from learning about this topic?</b></li><li>● <b>What were the steps you took during the project?</b></li><li>● <b>What was meaningful to you about this project? Think about the entire process from research, to planning, to the presentation.</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Why is your topic important?</b></li><li>● <b>What were you surprised to learn?</b></li><li>● <b>Why is this the best choice for a historical marker?</b></li><li>● <b>Your ideas are important because . . .</b></li><li>● <b>The most interesting part of your presentation is . . .</b></li><li>● <b>One way you might improve your presentation for next time is to . . .</b></li></ul>