

# WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER

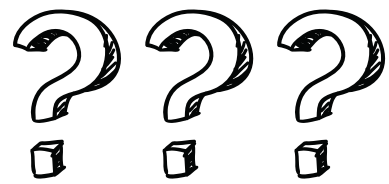
A CENTER OF BLACK HISTORY





# LESSON 1: PAST

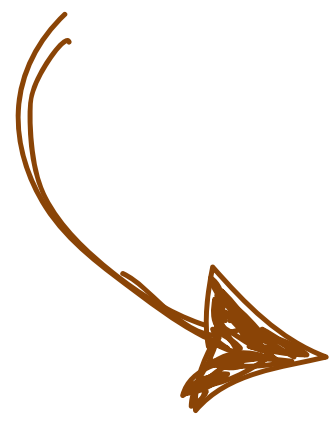
WHAT MAKES THIS A  
POWERFUL QUOTE?



*Everyplace has a Weeksville where ordinary people came first and labored to create a more hospitable living setting for their loved ones. The rediscovery and preservation of this local history provides a means of reestablishing a continuity with the past so that children armed with the knowledge of the contributions of their forbears can gain strength to meet the challenge of the future.*

*-Joan Maynard, Founding Executive Director of Weeksville Heritage Center*





## OBJECTIVE:

Participants will be able to identify Weeksville's impact on Brooklyn and New York City's history overall. They will understand the importance of preserving the space, connect Weeksville and Seneca Village as thriving Black enclaves, and discuss key members of Weeksville's community.



WEEKSVILLE  
HERITAGE CENTER



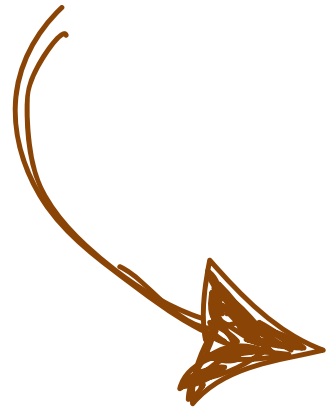


## **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

- What do we already know about Weeksville?
- What was happening in the US during the 1830s?
- How were the 1830s a time of great change, but also innovation?
- What was happening globally in the early 19th century?
- Who was James Weeks, the founder of Weeksville?
- Who was John Lefferts and what role did he play in the development of Weeksville?







# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WEEKSVILLE?

## KWL CHART


Using a piece of paper or download our worksheet to make a KWL (Know, Wonder, Learned) chart noting what you already know about Weeksville Heritage Center.

*Be sure to jot points that connect back to major turning points in New York State or American history.*





## VIEW:

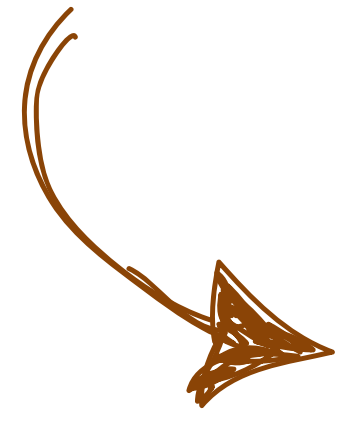


After watching the video, please add more to your KWL chart in the learned section, in addition to expanding on your wonderings!

[Uncovering New York City: Weeksville, Brooklyn | Secrets of the Dead | PBS on the history of Weeksville.](#)







# REVIEW:



The In Pursuit of Freedom project, specifically the Abolitionist Brooklyn section, to review some history of how Weeksville and Brooklyn came to be.

THEMES

RESOURCES



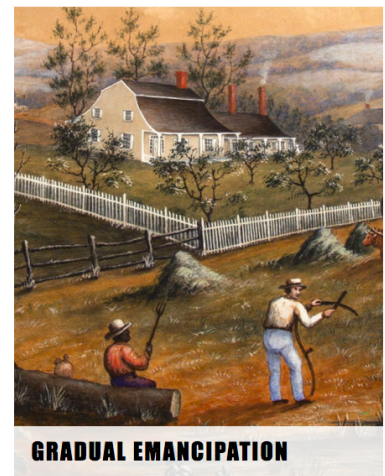
ABOUT

SEARCH

Introduction / Gradual Emancipation / Abolitionist Brooklyn / Crisis Decade / Civil War & Beyond / Timeline



INTRODUCTION

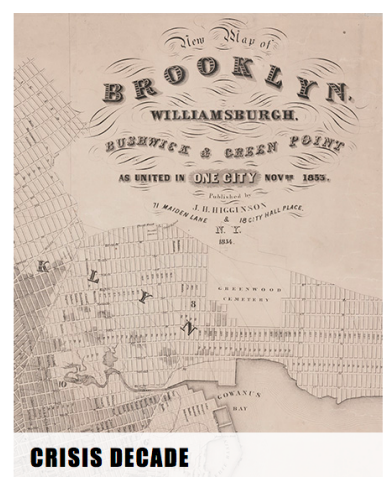


GRADUAL EMANCIPATION

In Pursuit of Freedom explores Brooklyn's anti-slavery movement from the end of the American Revolution to the early days of Reconstruction through photographs, census records, anti-slavery and local newspapers, maps and more.



ABOLITIONIST BROOKLYN



CRISIS DECADE



CIVIL WAR YEARS



TIMELINE



# DISCOVER:

➔ Using a printed or digital version of our map of Weeksville, plot where James Weeks' house is. We will be using this map to continue our journey through the history and legacy of Weeksville.

Located in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, the Weeksville Area is bounded by Fulton Street to the north, Troy Avenue to the east, Ralph Avenue on the west, and New York Avenue on the south

Founded in 1835, by James Weeks, a formerly enslaved stevedore from Virginia, Weeks seized the opportunity to acquire land, allowing Black New Yorkers to exercise voting rights.

White/Black Population of Brooklyn 1920-1990

Year	White Population	Black Population
1820	180,000	0
1840	190,000	0
1860	200,000	0
1880	210,000	0
1900	220,000	0
1920	230,000	10,000
1940	240,000	30,000
1960	250,000	70,000
1980	260,000	110,000
1990	280,000	120,000

James Weeks' Home

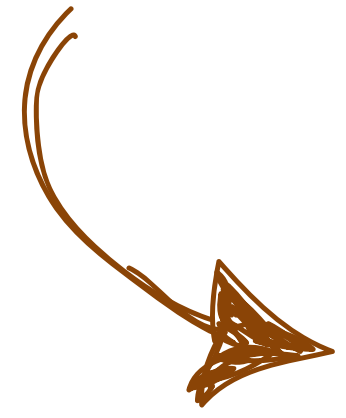
Hunterfly Road Houses

Hunterfly Road Houses, 1922

Weeksville Area, Brooklyn, New York







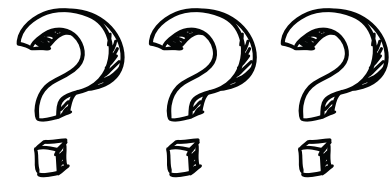
## FUTURE WONDERINGS:

- ➔ If interested in diving deeper into the origins of Weeksville and Brooklyn, consider exploring the following questions:
- Who is Henry C. Thompson and why did he get started in Black abolition?
  - Why is Weeksville named after James Weeks?
  - What is the current value of \$250 worth of land? What was the average annual wage for a Black man at that time?
  - What careers were available to Black men at the time of 1830s/1840s in New York City?



# LESSON 2: PRESENT

WHAT MAKES THIS A  
POWERFUL QUOTE?



“If you want to identify what a human community needs to be – anywhere in our world – Weeksville would be an excellent model.”

– Marcia Goldman, Former President Weeksville Board of Trustees



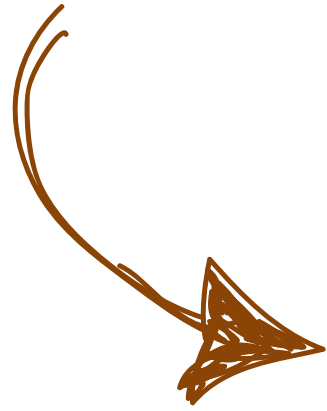




## GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What is the current mission of Weeksville Heritage Center?
- Who was Joan Maynard and how was she instrumental in resurrecting Weeksville?
- What programming and events have been done recently at the Center and how do they relate to the founding vision of the community as a space for Black people to safely grow and flourish?
- How did the Weeksville Heritage Center come to be?





## OBJECTIVE:

Participants will be able to examine the current Weeksville Heritage Center site and discuss the site's current impact on the local community, as well as identify how the current mission of the organization is continuing the legacy of Weeksville's founding.



WEEKSVILLE  
HERITAGE CENTER







## EXPLORE:

### The five W's of Weeksville:

Who  
What  
When  
Where  
Why

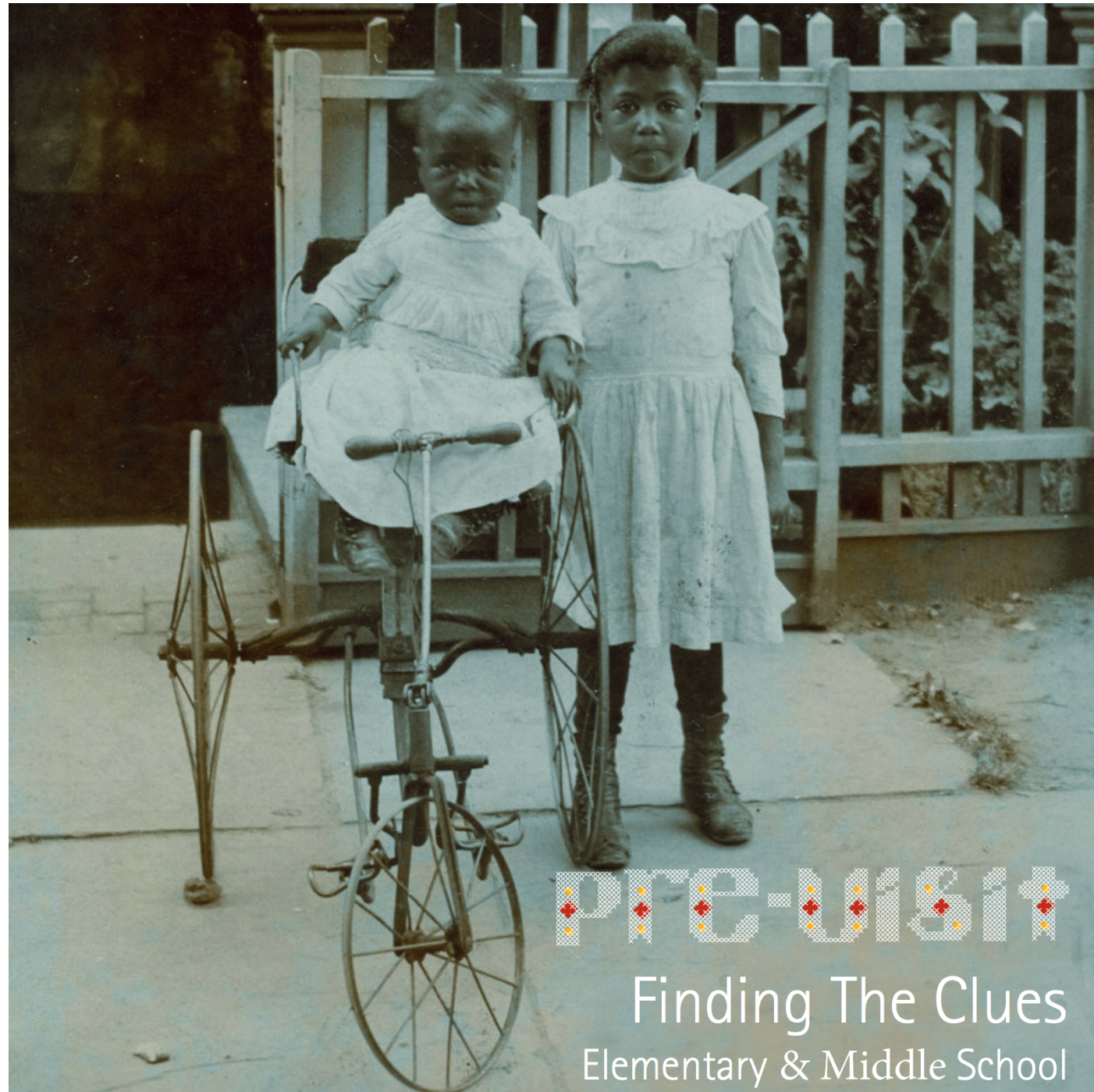
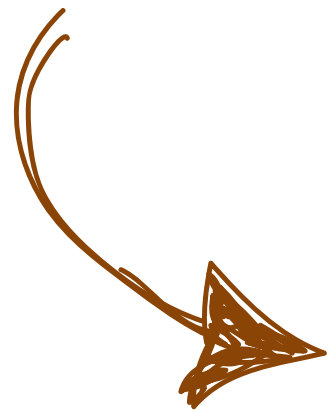
**IN-PERSON EXPLORATION:** It is incredibly important to visit Weeksville and attend one of their house tours. Each house has its own story and you should bring your handout (or pick one up onsite!) to make notes of what you learn from the tour. Once you finish the tour of the Hunterfly houses, join us for the next portion online

**VIRTUAL EXPLORATION:** [Vice TV of Messiah Rhodes' experience exploring the Weeksville Heritage Center](#)  
(next slide ) 



# WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER: PRE-VISIT PACKET

CLICK  
TO  
EXPLORE



## REVIEW:

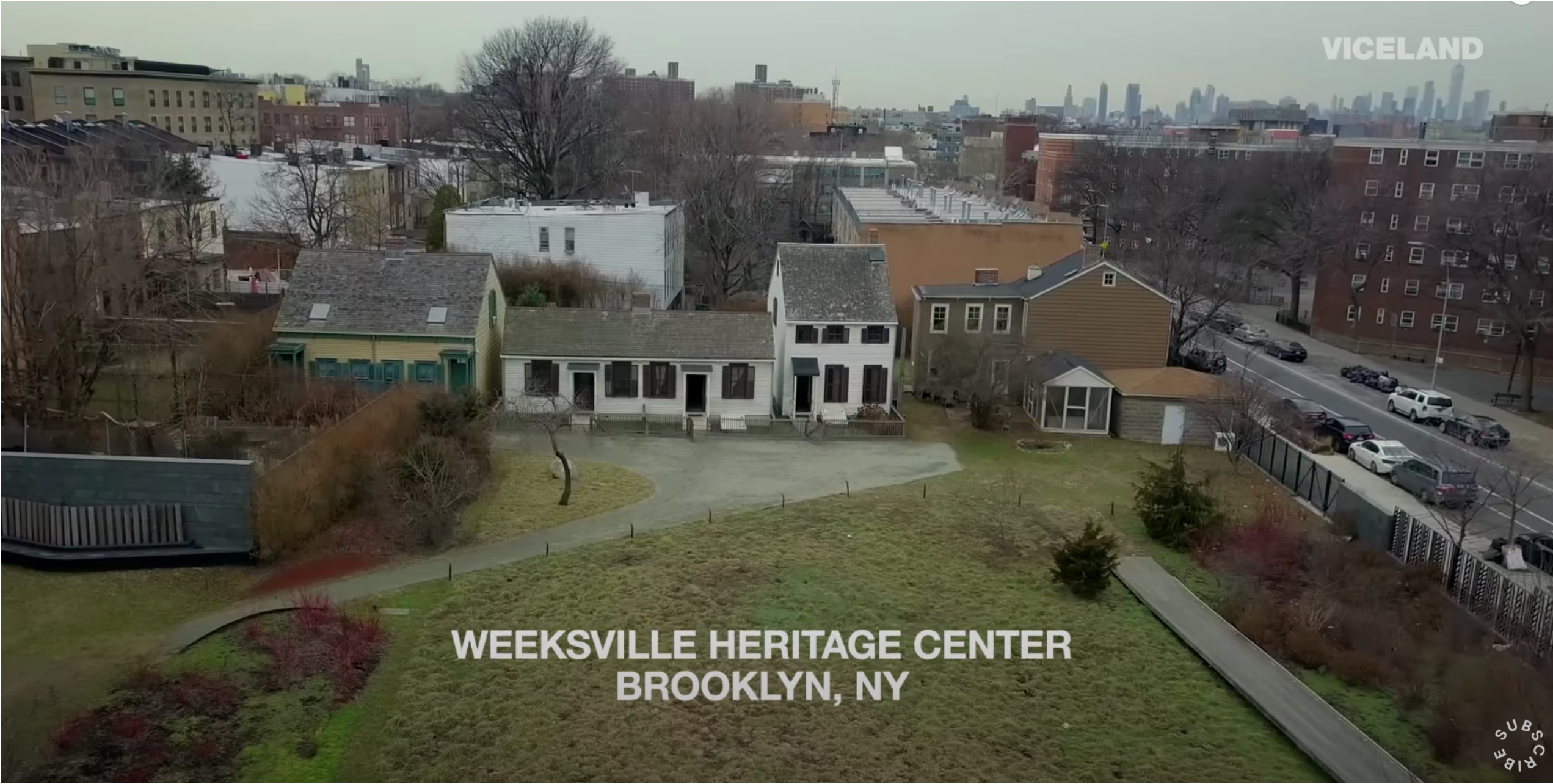
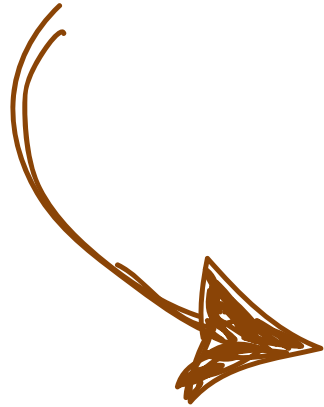
The Weeksville Heritage Center pre-visit booklet as it is chock full of primary source information and things to know before you visit the space either in-person or virtually: [Weeksville Pre-Visit Packet](#)



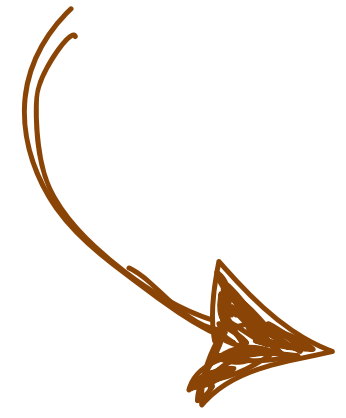


# WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER: VIRTUAL TOUR

CLICK  
TO  
VIEW







## FUTURE WONDERINGS:

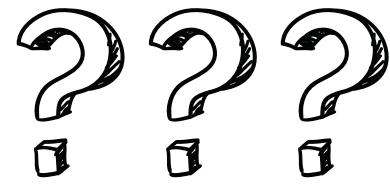
- ➔ If interested in diving deeper into the origins of Weeksville and Brooklyn, consider exploring the following questions:
- What is the significance of the Freedman's Torchlight?
  - What is the importance of the establishment of the grid system in Brooklyn to Weeksville?
  - Why would the founders of Weeksville prioritize education?
  - What role did women play in Weeksville?
  - What historic moments have a Weeksville connection in the 19th and 20th centuries?





## LESSON 3: FUTUTRE

WHAT MAKES THIS A  
POWERFUL QUOTE?



*“The historic site is a sight of memory, memory helps build identity, identity builds community. Community and institution building is really a form of resistance... Weeksville is a story of self-sufficiency, and self-determination, and entrepreneurship”*

*-Rob Fields, Former Executive Director of Weeksville*



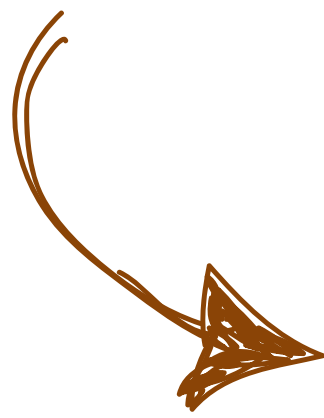


## **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

- As the city changes due to technological advances, shifts in population, and external forces like gentrification, what does it mean to preserve spaces like Weeksville?
- How can we envision a future for a historically Black site like Weeksville as NYC continues to evolve?



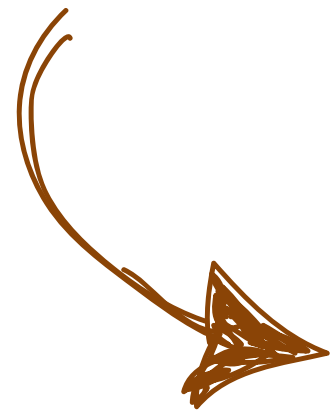




## OBJECTIVE:

Participants will be able to think critically about the role that Weeksville Heritage Center currently plays in its community and discuss ways the Heritage Center interprets the importance and impact of this historic site.





# TAKE NOTES!

**READ:** The W.E.B Du Bois short science fiction, AD 2150  
What have you learned about this futuristic NYC? What has already happened? What hasn't happened yet?


Chart out your own thoughts about the future. What technologies do you think will be available in 2150? What do you think will still be around? What do you think will happen?



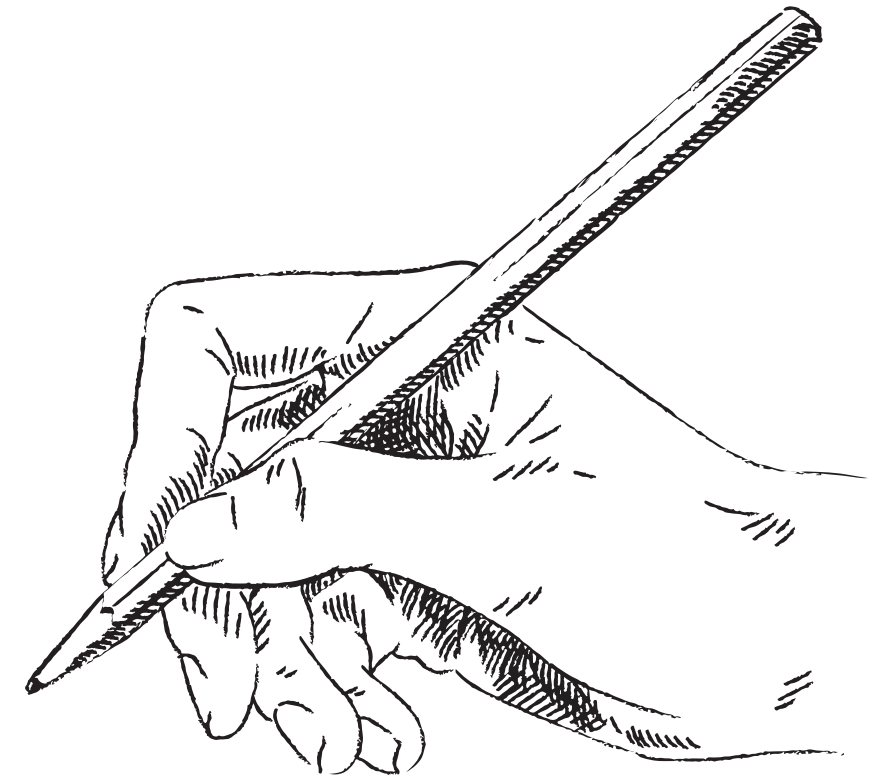


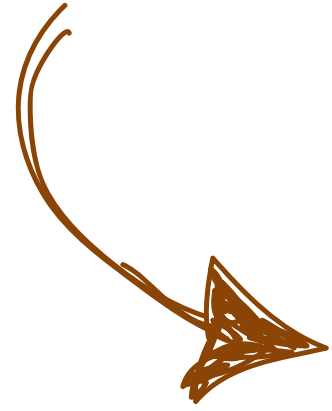


## CREATIVE EXTENSION:



Start drafting a travel poster or some other form of advertising for a futuristic Weeksville in the world that W.E.B Du Bois has created in his story. Using your notes from the reading and your own thoughts about the future, what images or text would you add to your futuristic advertisement for Weeksville? What images are you incorporating? What is being highlighted? Create your poster or other form of advertisement using the materials that excite you most or that you have on hand.



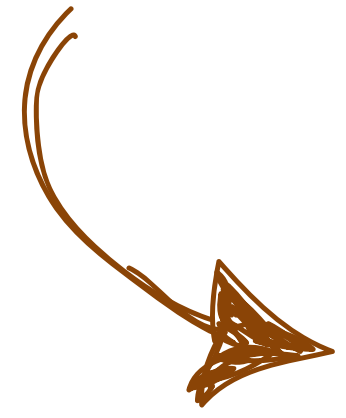


## **REFLECT:**

- What have you learned about Weeksville from these lessons?
- What do you need clarification on regarding what you have learned about Weeksville from these lessons?
- What did you find most surprising, intriguing, or challenging when learning about Weeksville?
- How do themes and ideas from these lessons about Weeksville relate to things you're learning in and out of the classroom?
- What would you like to know more about?







## **FUTURE WONDERINGS:**


- ➔ If interested in diving deeper into the origins of Weeksville and Brooklyn, consider exploring the following questions:
- What laws, programs, and entities currently exist to help protect historic sites? How could these be expanded upon in the future?





# WHO IS SUSAN SMITH MCKINNEY-STEWARD?

## CREATIVE EXTENSION:



Dr. Susan Smith McKinney-Steward was the first African American woman to earn a medical doctorate (M.D.) in New York State and the third in the United States. She was from Weeksville. (1847-1918)

VIEW: 1:24-1:39

[Mapping Communities: HueEnclaves | Weeksville](#)

Create a 1-page presentation about Susan Smith McKinney-Steward and her achievements. Consider the medium you would like to use for your presentation- PPTx, presentation board, artistic representation, poem, etc.







# WHO IS SARAH GARNET? CREATIVE EXTENSION:

➔ Susan's sister Sarah Garnet was an Educator, Activist, and the first Black Principal in the NYC School System. (1831-1911)

VIEW: 1:39-2:08

[Mapping Communities: HueEnclaves | Weeksville](#)

Create a 1-page presentation about Sarah Garnet and her achievements. Consider the medium you would like to use for your presentation- PPTx, presentation board, artistic representation, poem, etc.

