

BKBB Exhibit Guide

Creative Uses of Academic Resources

1852-2021

Creativity in School:

Creativity is an interesting process, something that young people have to struggle with. School, it seems to many, oppresses creativity. Many young students hate school because it doesn't encourage the sorts of creativity that they excel in. Even to those who have grown to the age of a college student, school can feel like an oppressive environment.

School doesn't have to be an oppressive environment for creativity, however. While academia does tend to move towards facts and figures, aspects of the world that many find stifling for their creative minds, it is in no way the only activity you can do within academia. Academia isn't just facts and figures, and once you enter into college more classes become available that allow you to expand your horizons. Any sort of class can be applied to creative purposes, which is what I'm writing about today.

So, what does it mean to proceed with creativity in the face of academia? Well, for me, it means always finding the creative solution to problems you encounter in the classroom. If there is an option to do a creative project, it is good to do it—whether your goal is to create a museum exhibit like the one at the Presbyterian Historical Society this guide is associated with, or to make a story out of primary or secondary sources.

Missionaries In Japan



Celia Shao

www.bkbbphilly.org/celia



Creative Uses for School Resources, Inspiration:

So, have you spent most of your time at school, or in any other academic setting, not finding any reason to celebrate or think creatively? Well, one of the greatest things to come out of school is the resources you gain through learning and the application of school life. Through being given these academic talking points you should slowly learn more and more that is good for you, and you should become better acquainted with the sorts of things your school does. I want to encourage you all to take another look at those resources that you have learned to use for class and think about how they could be used in a way that you would not originally think to use them.

For example, maybe you have learned to search for academic resources for your research papers. These archives, such as JSTOR and other resources you are given by your school,

are perfect sources of inspiration. Have you been studying the local customs of a tribe in Africa or South America? Then why not use those customs in your writing, whether you want to represent that culture or try and create new and fascinating cultures using ideas that you have learned about? Why not use these resources for your own world building?

History of a Black Presbyterian Church



Briana Anthony

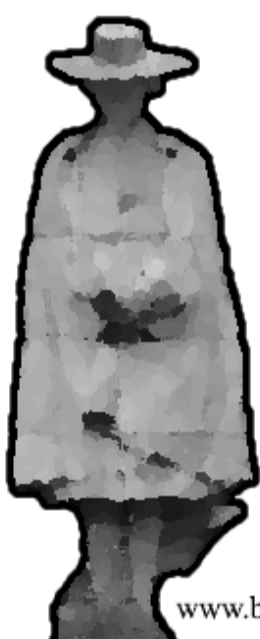
www.bkbbphilly.org/briana

Science Fiction Resources:

Are you a Sci-Fi nerd? Do you want to write the next season of *Star Trek*? Or maybe you want to be the next Asimov? Well one great way to become good at writing Science Fiction is to become more and more intimately familiar with the science on which it is based. Find papers on time dilation and use the actual math calculations to figure out your next time travel thriller. Or maybe look at your latest issue of *Popular Mechanics* and figure out how to write a story based on that. You can find those resources and more at your local library and many other places where books are gathered.

Science is a broad topic. Maybe you want to look into biology to help you discuss your group of genetically modified humans who can photosynthesize? Well, there are calculations for how much surface area a plant needs to create those energy-providing resources. There are several science museums and institutes in Philadelphia that can provide resources.

Or maybe you are trying to figure out the correct energy output of a Dyson Sphere? Well there's a calculation out there for that, just look up the papers that people have written to discuss exactly what output the sun creates at all times and how humanity can eventually harness that fundamentally powerful nuclear engine that sits in the middle of our Solar System.



White Statues Human Colors



Maya Holman

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Fantasy Resources:

You want to write Fantasy? There are tons of ways you can use academic resources for that. You can learn so much about the history and cultures of our world through the resources that we have access to as students. Cultures around the world have always had a fascination with the supernatural, and being able to think about the supernatural with gusto is a skill for those interested in Fantasy.

Have you ever needed inspiration for what style or look you want to go for? Maybe you should take a look at a rare book room. The Free Library of Philadelphia gives access to its rare book room to students who are prepared enough and able to prove it. This is a room that feels charged. The climate control that makes it safe to store books in the room also makes everything feel slightly unreal as you stay there. When you are allowed to touch, examine, and read rare books you can slowly understand what it's like for your character to read those magical tomes of knowledge that you've been preparing for so long—the beauty of books that are hundreds of years old, books containing paintings and other sources that make you feel charged with the magic of the thing.

Are you looking to work on a book that has the feel and majesty of Tolkien? Want to impress your friends with your world building and make everything seem extremely real? Why not take a look at linguistics, the profession that Tolkien spent his work hours with. The biggest thing that Tolkien did for his world was spend the time to build every language thoroughly.

Knowledge is an important part of creativity. The ability of people to learn and gain more knowledge allows us to become more and more interested in the processes that allow creative flourishing. Throughout my life I have continued to want to write Fantasy but I have always had this maxim in the back of my mind: The best authors are those who know what they are doing, such as Asimov and Heinlein, who were actual scientists before becoming Sci-Fi authors. I wanted to do the same with being a Fantasy author, so I took up the study of history, mythology, and mytho-history with a sense of gusto that none else could match!

Hearing Voices Echo

Point your finger
pull the trigger

You kill us.

Silenced.
Lumen
Lugo-
Roman



www.bkbbphilly.org/lumen

Using all Projects for Creative Extracurricular Activities:

I always try to use my school-work to help inspire what I am going to do in the future. Even this project, which is not necessarily for school but is definitely in the same ballpark, I plan on using for my own recreational projects. I came up with an idea the other day that I could get my players in my DnD game to really appreciate what I did and how I worked if I made use of this template to provide information rather than expositing in a way that I have come to know makes them exacerbated with my style.

Of course, I am still learning constantly about every process I need to be a creative person. I learn things through national pride, I learn through writing creatively in various unsuccessful ways. My abilities to write have been molded by online roleplaying, Dungeons and Dragons games, and Fanfiction. I am the prime example of what has been made of the modern American youth in recent decades, because I am the prototype for the Gen Z youngling who grew up on the modern internet. I learned from a very young age how to get around age blocks, how to find my way into the deepest darkest parts of the internet, and finally how to dig my way out when I'd done something incredibly stupid. I'm slowly learning to be better and better as time goes on and my creative writing is becoming better as I gain more experiences.

I will, of course, try to use anything I learn anywhere in my writing. That is, at least, if my 'learning' is coming through something that is intensely important to me. See, I am autistic and I have these things called 'special interests.' These are topics that I intensely learn about and try to use in every project I can. If you are autistic I encourage you to try and combine your special interests with whatever you are studying and see what comes out of it. I mean, right now, I'm allowing my special interest in creative writing and fiction to carry me into writing more and more for this fictitious newspaper that most people won't finish. My design skills make me happy to be alive and everything I've done will just make it better and better for the reader to experience just because whatever I leave will be intense for all of you.

It doesn't help, of course, that I am a contrarian at heart. If I was given these instructions outright, to try and learn thoroughly about a topic and then write about it, I would probably have trouble doing it until the very last minute. However, I think that anyone with an interest in creative writing should really look into the history and design process of the city around you. Here in Philadelphia the history is so rich that every neighborhood has signs designating historical buildings. I mean, I live in a historical building, on a site next to Laurel Hill Cemetery that has been occupied for over a hundred years. Sure it is not listed properly, but that's because of the money and financial impact of having such designations in your neighborhood. No matter what you do you'll need to keep up with the council and its processes and exceptions for your legal abode.

I want all of you who are reading this to succeed, everyone. Especially those of you who are reading this now, still going after all of my craziness has been revealed. Thank you, I love you all, and I hope you take my advice to heart.

Violet Oakley Mural Art



Doron Duke

www.bkbbphilly.org/doron

Final Thoughts:

So, what do I want to do now? Well, I really want to encourage you to meet the rest of the BKBB team. I can genuinely say that most of them have become fond acquaintances, and some have become good friends over the course of this project. I want you to experience their exhibits as they deserve, every inch of them is wonderfully planned and far more thought-out than my ramblings here. If you look on the back of this hand-out, you will see a small map of the Presbyterian Historical Society building and all the other exhibits made for the BKBB project, for which this is one. If those exhibits are taken down by the time you read this, please follow the links to find what they are about. I know you'll just love what the others have to say.

On the back you will also find a larger map of Philadelphia. It includes some marks made by myself of locations that I think you'll be interested in and that you can go and take a look at right now or in the future. I've included some extra notes on them, and truly I hope these locations inspire you, and I wish you more and more learning.

Thank you for everything that you've done, and for reading this today. Please know that while my writing isn't the best, I am extremely happy to be able to put it here for you to read, even if many of you will likely not read it at first. Thank you!

— Alexander Cameron Fox,
BKBB Exhibit Team



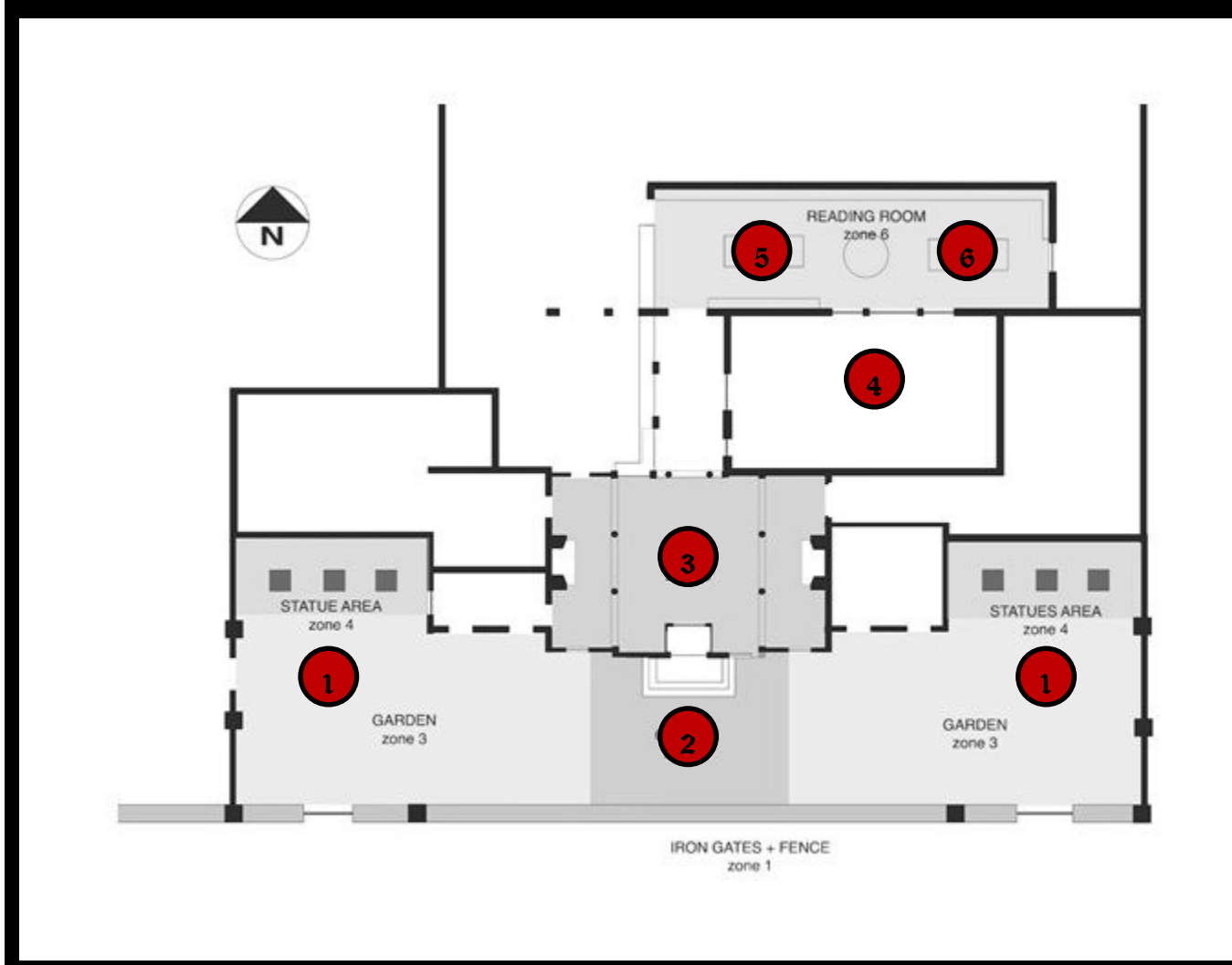
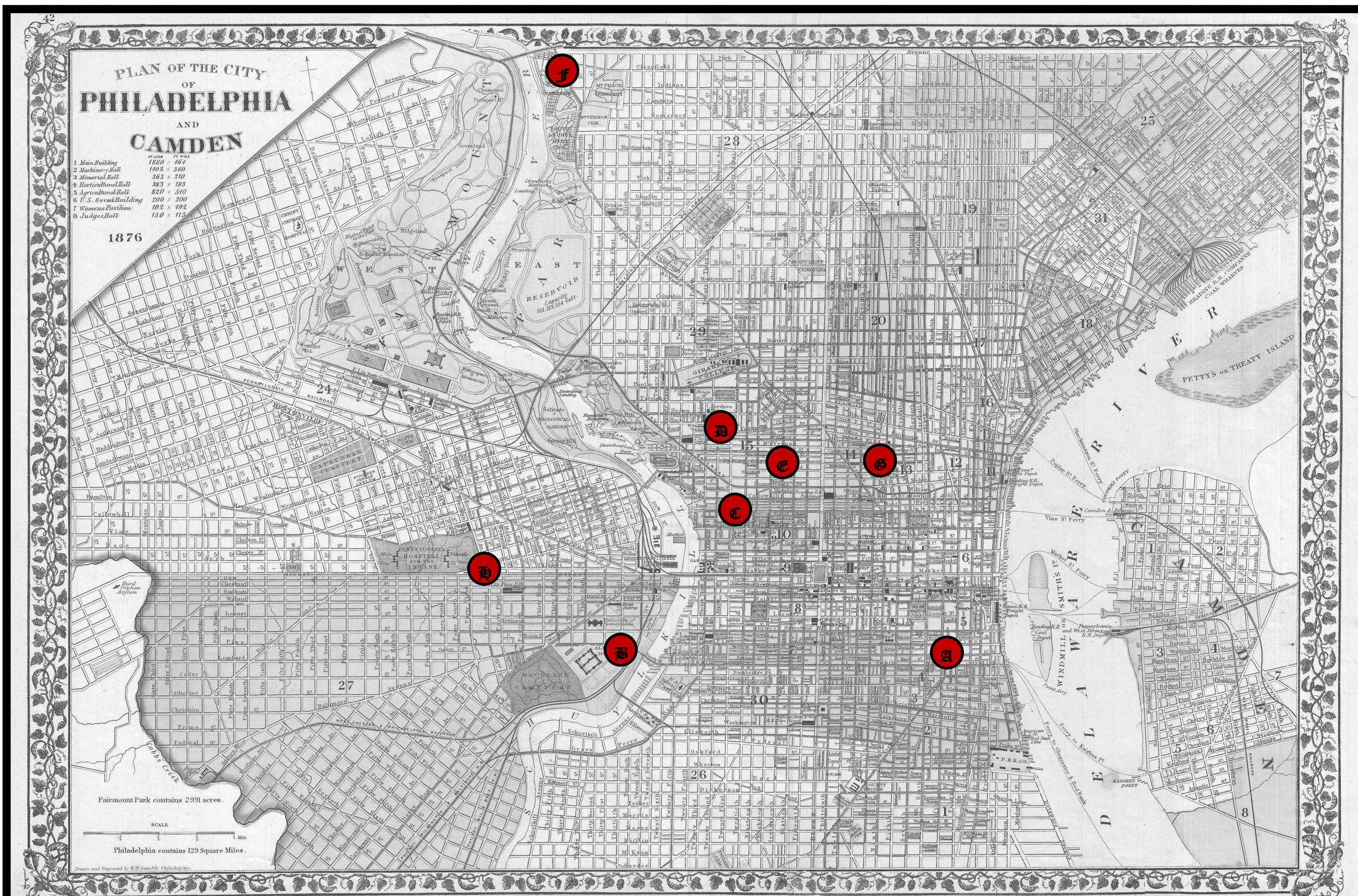
Stephanie Santoro

KEYWORDS:

Abolition
and
Revolution



www.bkbbphilly.org/stephanie



Map Key

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Colors of the Human Family | 10 Penn Museum |
| 2 History of a Black Presbyterian Church | 11 Free Library - Rare Books Room |
| 3 keyword: Abolition keyword: Revolution | 12 Eastern State Penitentiary |
| 4 Power in Voices (Of Sophia) | 13 Community College of Philadelphia |
| 5 Violet Oakley: Unifying Past and Present through Mural Art | 14 Laurel Hill Cemetery |
| 6 Christian Missions in Japan | 15 Edgar Allan Poe House |
| 7 Presbyterian Historical Society | 16 Lombard Central Presbyterian Church |

This project has been the summation of several efforts. The Presbyterian Historical Society connected with The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage through the Building Knowledge and Breaking Barriers (BKBB) collaboration. BKBB connected PHS to other groups, including students from Community College of Philadelphia (CCP).

I participated in a previous BKBB project with CCP, where my fiction writing class used PHS resources to inspire creativity. From that point I gained entry into the student

eye on everything, my connection with exhibit group, and also produced another project publication. That ended up being called "A Picture's Worth." I did the formatting and design work for the larger anthology book, and I am very proud of its result, which you can see at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3rFSASS>

A QR code is also provided below, alongside one that goes to my project page on the BKBB website. This project was really interesting. While we didn't always see eye to eye on everything, my connection with

the other exhibit designers really increased over time. I think that we were able to, in the end, create something of an experience that people could enjoy. I hope that my contribution is useful to those of you who actually choose to read it, but I think that what makes this experience important is just how usable everything is. Our message is about building knowledge, and we want everyone to know about what it is we intend to build.

Now for a few last minute links I feel are helpful to all of you.

Community College of Philadelphia website: ccp.edu

The Presbyterian Historical Society website: history.pcusa.org

The Building Knowledge and Breaking Barriers website: bkbbphilly.org

Once again I thank all of you, and I really hope that this project does what it says. All of us really went in different directions when it came to the prompt. Some of us went in directions of activism. Whether for feminism, abolitionism, or anything else, my comrades tried to tell you the story of people who broke barriers. Others discussed education and how important it is to bring leaning to communities here and around the world. And me, well, I had one thought, to try and make sure more people are creative.

Thank you!

**BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
BREAKING BARRIERS**



Building Knowledge and Breaking Barriers has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

