



## **Unit: Discovering the 9th Street Market: A Treasure Hunt for Clues to the Past**

### **Introduction:**

Amid the bustling crowds of shoppers bargaining for fresh produce or wares, one can find countless clues to the past hidden in the commercial landscape of the 9th Street Market. These clues provide insight into the rich 100-year history of work and daily life in this vibrant market. This treasure hunt activity is designed to get students to explore 9th Street and use these clues to the past to understand the history of the market and the transformation of its businesses and neighborhood over time.\*

### **Background Readings**

“The Ninth Street Market and South Philadelphia: Personal Connections, Particular Views, Past Times, and Embodied Places,” by Joan Saverino, *Pennsylvania Legacies* November 2007. (pdf) - <http://www.philaplace.org/download/object/3608/>

### **Student Resources**

Treasure Hunt Map - <http://www.philaplace.org/download/object/3610/>

Treasure Hunt Activity Sheet - <http://www.philaplace.org/download/object/3611/>

### **Pre-Activity**

Prior to visiting the 9th Street Market, have students read the secondary-source materials. Draw upon the background readings to present an overview of the history of the market. Introduce the 9th Street Market as one of the nation’s oldest open-air markets, established around the turn of the 20th century by Italian immigrants who sold fruits, vegetables, and meats from carts and stands. Highlight that the early commercial activities of the market were shaped by the factory life that surrounded 9th Street. Although the market was the social and commercial heart of the Italian community, it always reflected the larger ethnic mix of the neighborhood. The early market was populated by Jewish vendors who specialized in fabrics and household items. Today’s market is home to a variety of businesses that reflect the changing ethnic composition of the neighborhood. It maintains many of the same qualities of the early market and remains an important commercial and social fixture in South Philadelphia. On Saturdays, 9th Street comes alive as street vendors hawk their wares and shoppers bargain for fresh produce.

### **Market Tour Activity**

(1) Present students with a map of the market as well as the treasure hunt sheet. Review directions for the activity. Explain to students that they will be searching for clues that



reveal the history of the businesses and people who populated the market almost a century ago. They will also make observations about and comparisons to the market today.

(2) The treasure hunt activity begins at the corner of 9th and Washington. As students walk north, they should use their maps as well as their question sheet to locate their first stop. Each number on the map corresponds to the next clue on their question sheet and designates the order that the students should follow.

(3) Where appropriate, teachers should pause to place the information in the larger historical context and to connect to the previous day's discussion regarding the early history of the market. Students should note the commercial and ethnic diversity that they encounter as they experience the market.

(4) Teachers may also consider speaking directly with some of the store owners. It is recommended teachers contact business owners in advance and if they are not busy, they will often spend time talking with your class.

### **Post-Activity**

Have students complete the market worksheet. Review responses and discuss what living and shopping along the 9th Street Market 80-100 years ago must have been like. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- How does today's market compare?
- How are the changing patterns of settlement and ethnicity in the larger neighborhood reflected in the commercial landscape of the market?

Perhaps begin by creating a list of features of the early market. The list should include: slaughterhouses, pushcarts and sidewalk vendors, a multitude of butcher shops each catering to the diverse regional and cultural needs of its largely Italian and Jewish customers, and the larger cultural institutions that surrounded the market such as churches and settlement houses. Generate a list for today's market: fewer butcher shops and street vendors, more diversity in the types of businesses—from the newer, trendy establishments to the long-standing Giordano's Produce business. Discuss the presence of Italian, Mexican, and Southeast Asian stores in the market and what this indicates about the larger population. Draw upon the background readings to discuss contemporary patterns of immigration and settlement.

*\* This treasure hunt activity requires students to go inside of some of the 9th Street businesses. Teachers should be mindful that some of these businesses have space constraints or might be bustling with customers and therefore unable to accommodate large groups. It is recommended that students visit the sites in smaller groups.*



## **Unit Overview**

### **Skill Objectives:**

Depending on how teachers use the materials, students will:

1. Learn to interpret primary source material
2. Develop critical thinking skills
3. Understand how and why the interpretation of history and historical events changes over time
4. Develop creative and historical writing skills
5. Develop time line and cartography making skills

**Content Objectives:** Depending on how teachers use the materials, students will

1. Learn how, why, where, and when immigrants came to Philadelphia and the gross differences between immigrant populations' urban settlements and their change over time
2. Learn how immigrants fit into the larger context of immigration and ethnic history
3. Understand the role of place in the development of immigrant communities
4. Learn about oral history and its importance in the study of immigration history
5. Learn about issues of social reform and Americanization, the settlement movement, and its history in Philadelphia

**Teaching Time:** Two 50-minute periods

**Grade Level:** Middle School to High School

**Historical Time Periods Addressed:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century as well as the present

**Disciplines Encompassed:** History, Geography, and Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening



**PA Standards:**

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening: (1.2.8: A; 1.4.8: B, C; 1.5.8: A, B; 1.6.8: A, C, D, E; 1.8.8: B, C)

History: (8.1.12: B, C, D; 8.2.9: A; 8.2.12: B, C, D; 8.3.12: B, D)

Geography: (7.1.9: B; 7.3.9: B, C, D; 7.4.9: A)



## Resources:

D'Angelo, Sonny. *And Now We Call it Gravy" Recipes and Memoirs of the Italian Market*. Copyright © 2000 by Sonny D'Angelo. [self-published]

Golab, Caroline. "The Immigrant and the City: Poles, Italians, and Jews in Philadelphia, 1870-1920." In *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower Class Life, 1790-1940*. edited by Allen F. Davis and mark H. Haller. Philadelphia: TempleUniversity Press, 1973.

Juliani, Richard N. "Social Reform through Social Service: The Settlement Movement in South Philadelphia." *Pennsylvania Legacies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (November 2007): 22–29.

Juliani, Richard N. *Building Little Italy: Philadelphia's Italians Before Mass Migration*. University Park, PA: The Penn State University Press, 1998.

Juliani, Richard N. *Priest, Parish, and People: Saving the Faith in Philadelphia's "Little Italy"*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Luconi, Stefano. *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia*. Albany, NY: StateUniversity of New York Press, 2001.

Saverino, Joan. "The Ninth Street Market and South Philadelphia: Personal Connections, Particular Views, Past Times, and Embodied Places." *Pennsylvania Legacies*, vol 7, no.2 (November 2007): 14-21.

Sitarski, Stephen M. "From Weccacoe to South Philadelphia: The Changing Face of a Neighborhood." *Pennsylvania Legacies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (November 2007): 6-13.

## Websites:

Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies. "Italian-American Traditions: Family and Community." Online exhibition of The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies.

<http://www2.hsp.org/exhibits/Balch%20exhibits/italian/italian.html>

Philadelphia's 9th Street Italian Market. "About Philadelphia's 9th Street Italian Market."

Available at: <http://www.phillyitalianmarket.com/market/9thstreet.htm>

United Communities Southeast Philadelphia. United Communities Southeast Philadelphia History: [http://www.ucsep.org/about\\_us.html](http://www.ucsep.org/about_us.html)