



Dear future instructor,

My name is **Anna Booker**. I teach **History** at Whatcom Community College. My interest in the Salish Sea is an outgrowth of my interest in history and urban ecology. Not long after moving to Bellingham in 2003, I learned that the Port of Bellingham was embarking on a long-awaited cleanup and re-envisioning of 137-acres of Bellingham’s downtown waterfront. This was itself, due to a long-term process of deindustrialization along the waterfront, which peaked in the 1960s but continued through the closure of the Georgia Pacific’s pulp, chemical and tissue operations in 2007. As part of an initial effort to document these ongoing changes, and to consider repurposing historic buildings, my students and I created a digital history project about the transformation of Bellingham Bay over the last 150 years. That project was a jumping off point for creating public history projects (like this activity) that inspire students to investigate and rethink the diverse voices, interests, and stories that contributed to our built environment.

I created this learning activity for **U.S. History II** which covers the period between the War of 1812 and World War I. This activity can be used in class sizes up to **30 students**. The learning environment needed for this activity includes **a laptop computer**. The discipline(s) and area(s) of study activated by this activity include **History and Geography**.

By the end of this learning activity, students should be able to **(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**:

- Learning Domain 1: Develop skills for expressing information and sharing stories about the Salish Sea

- Learning Domain 2: Examine complex layers of human history and experience in the Salish Sea

Here is how I carried out this activity:

This project was taught over the course of four-weeks and I broke it down into three assignments. In **Step 1**, students listened to my background lecture about the Bellingham Working Waterfront Map, explored the map, and answered questions about local and regional history and geography. Students were asked to use the resources embedded in the assignment to write-up answers to questions, like: *What were the major industries in Bellingham in the late 1800s and early 1900s? When were the mudflats filled to construct homes and businesses on the waterfront? Who cared for and managed these lands and waters for thousands of years prior to the arrival of white settlers? What ethnic groups worked on Bellingham’s Waterfront prior to 1920?* Students were then asked to critically explore examples of racism in our past and present by answering guiding questions for “Bellingham from Below” (Professor Josh Cerretti) and comparing it to a digital walking tour of the City of Bellingham. [Note: links to all of the above are included below in the references section.]

Historic Walking Tour Evaluation

Criteria	Rate (1-5)	Explanation
Does the tour provide historical context? Do the visuals and text relate to the socio-political, economic, religious, ethnic, and gender history of the place presented?		
Does the tour explain why a specific location was selected, and if so, is the relationship between the people presented and the changes to the built environment and landscape described?		
Does the tour critically analyze and expose racism in the past and present? Does it create a color-conscious rather than a colorblind past?		

Source: This table is modified and adapted from Stone, Laura M. (Laura Marie), "History at Hand: An Analysis of Self-Guided Historic Walking Tours in Whatcom County, Washington" (2016). *WWU Graduate School Collection*. 539. <https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwuet/539>

In **Step 2** of the project, students were asked to Investigate the Arch of Healing and Reconciliation located in front of City Hall and next to the Bellingham Public Library. If they couldn’t go there physically, they were asked to read about it on the website and answer these questions using the resources provided: *What is the purpose of the arch?* Students then read

Paul Englesberg's article about the Bellingham Riot of 1907 published in *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, reviewed lumber statistics for the region, watched "We Are Not Strangers," and listened to a KUOW report about Sikh farmers in Whatcom County today. Guiding questions included: *What brought South Asians to Bellingham in 1906? Why were they threatened and chased out of town in 1907? Who was ultimately held accountable for the riot? What was the response of local and national media to the riot? What was the response of organized labor to the riot? What was happening regionally at this time with regards to the Asiatic Exclusion League? What is the connection between the 1907 Riot and U.S. lumber statistics? Were you surprised Dhaliwal had never heard of the riot (100 years later)? Is it important for him to remember? If so, why?*

Finally, in the last part of the project, **Step 3**, students get to "do history" by identifying a location for their historical marker, selecting an image, and writing a caption and interpretive text that connects the story of people to a place at a particular moment in time. Below are the instructions for creating the historical marker:

1. Select one image from the Google [slides \(Links to an external site.\)](#) [open link in a separate tab] that you would use for the virtual historic walking tour. When considering your image, keep in mind that this is a visual aid that will help the public connect the forced removal of Bellingham's Punjabi community to specific geographic locations, e.g. the lumber mills operating on the Waterfront, the train depot, or the Old City Hall.

2. Take a screenshot of the image you selected and embed it in the same discussion post.

3. Write a 1-3 word caption below the photo.

4. Identify where you would locate the historical marker. **Drop a pin on a google map and share the link.** I'm including instructions for how to pin on a map (I created a short video with instructions). For your location, identify the street corner or intersection where you would put the pin, for example, you might choose the Old City Hall on Prospect Street.

5. Below the image, caption, and the link to the google map, write a historical marker (100-150 words max). The challenge in this type of assignment is to write a description that someone with no historical knowledge can easily grasp without it being bland and obvious. This is a hard (but doable) assignment! Below is the **criteria that you will need to address in your historical marker text**:

- Location: Consider Bellingham's location in relation to Canada and Asia. Who was working at the mills and where was the lumber from these mills being shipped?
- Historical context: What was happening at the time of the riot (the early 1900s) with regards to immigration and labor in the United States?
- The event: What happened? Who led the riot? Why? What was the immediate outcome?
- Legacy: What were the long-term consequences of the event?

6. Replies: Reply to a minimum of five classmates. In your reply, provide constructive feedback about whether the marker addresses the criteria you used for the walking tour.

- Does the historical marker provide historical context?
- Does the historical marker explain why a specific location was selected, and if so, is the relationship between the people and the landscape described?
- Does the historical marker critically analyze and expose racism in the past and present?

Here is how I assessed students' learning for this activity: Students submitted three separate assignments for this project: a walking tour evaluation, a reading log, and a historical marker, which was posted to a class discussion. Grading rubrics for each of these assignments were linked to the assignments in Canvas.

Historical marker examples that received full credit:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1P-JDuTRdCGG7b_mudvrRQLGIzplod8iT-k3uGCGKGk4/edit?usp=sharing

Here are the references for materials used in this activity **FULL CITATIONS & LINKS FOR REFERENCES**. Below are materials I created for this activity, including **LIST ANY RUBRICS, RENDERINGS, ETC.**

Booker, Anna. "Contested Boundaries: On the Waterfront" [Cue to 19:00-56:00] Presented at Whatcom Museum. YouTube. Fall 2018.

<https://youtu.be/cZObZlehM6A?t=1151>

Booker, Anna, Sarah Yates and Lucas Robinson. *Bellingham Working Waterfront GIS Map*. 2016

<http://arcg.is/1mLLaL>

Booker, Anna and Paul Englesberg. "Bellingham Riot Images" Powerpoint. 2020.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Za2QReFveFecDLZz0y9sYUqdUFOBWKQq/view?usp=sharing>

"Downtown Bellingham Historic Walking Tour." *City of Bellingham*. 2017.

<https://bellingham.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=c36de675c0154899accf20641f432d86&webmap=f2ca764b299349cfa48a06039f2fa036>

Cerretti, Josh. "Bellingham History from Below." Vimeo. 10 November 2022.

<https://vimeo.com/478750052>

Englesberg, Paul [The 1907 Bellingham Riot and Anti-Asian Hostilities in the Pacific Northwest](#) *Walden*, 2015.

https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1062&context=cel_pubs.

“The Timber Supply of the United States.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Circular 166. 1909.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HIjm3L-HPGNYNAbhhDD8BqOrwzpEBeFu/view?usp=sharing>

“We are Not Strangers Documentary about the Bellingham Riot of 1907.” YouTube. Fall 2014.

https://youtu.be/mvn_LpXj694

I encourage you to try this with your students because **students appreciate applying historical knowledge and skills to a setting beyond the classroom.** The skills practiced in this project are: 1. Synthesizing and interpreting complex material and 2. Crafting a well-supported historical narrative for a variety of audiences.

Several students shared why they appreciated this assignment in their final take away videos.

Comments included:

“I made connections to what we are seeing today with discrimination and scapegoating of immigrants.” - Ali

“I learned a lot of Bellingham history that I didn’t know and now I think about the place I live in a different way. I am more connected to my home.” - Ethan

“Learning about our town’s history and everything surrounding it was definitely impactful. I’ve grown up here and this was all new to me. Looking at an issue from many different viewpoints is something I will take away from this class.” - Kaia

“A big reason why I learned so much, and why it impacted me, was because it was about the City of Bellingham. I’ve lived in Bellingham my whole life and I thought I knew about its history, even its racist past..learning that Asian immigrants weren’t allowed in Bellingham really was eye opening for me. This place that has always been safe for me clearly hasn’t been safe for others. In a lot of classes you learn about history from all over the world, but it can be hard to relate to it...this quarter learning about the Bellingham Riot, that was really relatable to me. I know these areas in town...and I don’t want something like that to ever happen again.” -Aidien

Some things I encourage you to keep in mind include:

This project involves topics that may be upsetting for students to discuss in a deep and meaningful way. I launched it mid-quarter and provided extensive feedback and time for reflection after each assignment.

I would like to thank **PEOPLE, PROJECTS, OR SUPPORT** that shaped this activity.

Paul Englesberg

Wes Gannaway

Jeff Jewell

If you have questions about this activity, please **contact abooker@whatcom.edu**

Best wishes,

Anna Booker