Witness STONES

How do you combine student research about local slavery, biographical writing, and civic engagement in an exciting standards-based educational unit? The Witness Stones Project is a one of a kind activity where students (grades 8-12) become historians and biographical writers restoring the history and honoring the humanity of enslaved persons who helped build our communities. The activity culminates in a public installation ceremony!

Inspiration: Stolpersteine Project in Berlin were Jews are remembered by placing an inscribed stone at the place where they lived before being deported and murdered during the Holocaust. We combined that concept with research on local slavery to help us remember our past where we did not uphold the lofty words our country was founded on.

Big Idea: Create educational unit where students use local primary and secondary documents to research and analyze local slavery, investigate individual enslaved persons, and restore the history of the enslaved by writing their stories using five themes of slavery:
- Dehumanization
- Treatment of enslaved
- Paternalism
- Economics of slavery
- Agency and resistance

Install a stone bearing witness to our history of slavery locally

Educational Units: Social Studies
- American Slavery (1-2 weeks) (optional)
- Southern New England Slavery Jigsaw (2 weeks)

Language Arts
- Biographical Writing (1-2 weeks) (optional)
- Biographical Sketch of Locally Enslaved Person(s) (2 weeks)

Civic Engagement: Opportunities to explain project to public
- Presentations on local slavery
- Panel discussions for project information and public comment

Public Installation Ceremony with:
- Local politicians, educational leaders, local clergy
- Gospel music (School Chorus)
- Keynote speaker, Student essay winners
- Installation of stones listing names and skills of locally enslaved

More Information: Please visit our website at WitnessStones.org, check out our news story at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3msg_zcC04&t=5s or visit our **Contact Page** to start the project in your community!