

American Journey

From Staff Development to Student Achievement In the Study of American History

Partners

**New York City Department of Education
Gotham Center for New York City History/City University of New York,
City Lore, the Historic House Trust, Henry Street Settlement,
The New-York Historical Society and
The Brooklyn Historical Society**

PROGRAM ABSTRACT

New York City Department of Education and cultural partners are developing, documenting, evaluating and disseminating a professional development program that instructs public school teachers in basic concepts of American and New York City history. The *American Journey* program is funded with a Teaching American History grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The program is a collaboration among the Gotham Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), City Lore, the Historic House Trust, Henry Street Settlement, the Brooklyn Historical Society, The New-York Historical Society and other historical societies and museums across the city. The combined expertise of these organizations is bringing to teachers and their students the essential content of American and local history in an immediately accessible framework.

The foundation of the *American Journey* program is a series of professional development courses for grade 4 through 8 teachers. The program includes Summer Institutes for teachers in elementary and middle schools and Fellows sessions throughout the academic year for selected middle schools teachers. Both teach basic concepts, content and chronologies of American history, demonstrating how they are illustrated by some local examples. They also show how these histories, both national and local, can be brought into the classroom through informed teaching and engaging methodologies. The program aims to provide models for the centralization and systematization of the teaching of American and New York City history throughout the school system.

The *American Journey* program will also establish a web-based History Education Network for Grade k-12 teachers. It will support and disseminate the history instruction, content and methodology emerging from the professional development courses, the experience of other Teaching American History Grant recipients, and the vast range of resources available from the networked groups to encourage new teaching and learning in the classroom. The Network is developing a partnership and providing history resources to City Hall Academy and also encompassing professional assemblies such as the Gotham Center's Teaching History Conferences of 2001 and 2003 that will be models for the third conference to be held in 2005.

The *American Journey* program targets teachers in schools that are not served by other enrichment programs, including other Teaching American History programs. The program identifies other under-performing schools and schools with a preponderance of under-trained teachers. The program builds on relationships and experience developed over many years between schools and the participating cultural organizations. The program is evaluated by The Edwin G. Michaelian Institute for Public Policy and Management of Pace University using a quasi-experimental design with a treatment group and a pre-test/post-test non-equivalent control group model. The research will address two questions: What are the effects of the *American Journey* on a group of New York City seventh and eighth grade school teachers? What are the effects on different learner groups of exposure to *American Journey* on trained teachers?