

# Oakland Cemetery Field Trip Guide for Grades 6-8

248 Oakland Avenue, SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

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## Dear Educators,

Welcome to Historic Oakland Cemetery! We are honored to introduce you and your students to Oakland Cemetery, one of Atlanta's oldest cultural and historic sites. Oakland Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 70,000 souls, including many Atlanta founders and noted citizens of Georgia. Every visit to this garden cemetery provides opportunities to learn about the historic past, be inspired by an outdoor gallery of Victorian art and architecture, and enjoy the picturesque views of Atlanta's oldest city park.

During your field trip, an experienced docent will lead you and your students through the cemetery's original six acres, the African American Grounds, Jewish sections, Confederate Memorial Grounds, and other burial areas. The rich and fascinating history of Atlanta will be revealed as tour groups progress through the cemetery. Students will discover that the celebrated and humble rest together at Oakland. Tycoon and pauper, black and white, powerful and meek, soldier and civilian—they are all here.

In the following pages, you will find an introduction to Oakland Cemetery, guidelines regarding your visit, and pre and post-visit activities designed to extend the learning experience. These activities and reflection questions will encourage creativity, engage critical thinking skills, and create opportunities for dialogue. The educational activities correspond to Georgia Performance Standards and Common Core State Standards. By participating in educational activities and exploring the historic landscape of Oakland Cemetery, students will be encouraged to forge connections between the past and the present.

We look forward to your visit!

## The Historic Oakland Foundation

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# FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

**Reservations:** All field trip requests must be made in advance through Marcy Breffle, Historic Oakland Foundation Education Coordinator.

**Tour Payment:** A \$30.00 deposit is required for group tours. Please mail a check within two weeks of making the reservation. The tour is confirmed when the deposit is received. The deposit is refundable if cancelled one week (five business days) before the tour date.

Tour Prices  
Students: \$6.00  
Adults: \$12.00

Final payment is due at the start of the tour and based on the total number of attendees. Please advise if the total number attending will differ substantially from the number reserved. Payment with one check or by credit card is preferred. For payment in cash, we request the group leader collect the correct amount from all participants at the start of the tour. There is a \$50.00 minimum fee for a group tour. *Tour proceeds support the mission of the Historic Oakland Foundation.*

**Parking:** Parking is available inside the cemetery or in the parking lot outside of the front gates.

- ❖ School buses and other oversized vehicles are not permitted inside the cemetery gates. Please unload and reload passengers outside the gates and park on Oakland Avenue, MLK, or in the lot across from the front gates.
- ❖ Parking inside the cemetery gates is extremely limited. Carpooling is encouraged.
- ❖ Inside the cemetery, please park on the asphalt and to the side to allow other cars to pass. No parking is allowed on brick walkways or grass.

## Tour Basics

- ❖ Tours are approximately 90 minutes in length. Please let the Education Coordinator know if you wish to change the tour length or focus on a particular subject.
- ❖ Please arrive at least ten minutes prior to the start time of your tour.
- ❖ Stick to the walkways and roads. Many of the retaining walls are over 100 years old, and were constructed with heavy stones.
- ❖ Stone rubbings are prohibited due to the fragile nature and age of the markers.
- ❖ This is an outdoor walking tour. Please plan accordingly for weather conditions and wear comfortable shoes.
- ❖ Damage to any aspect of the historic site becomes the liability of the individual (s) responsible. Should they be minors, the liability rests with the parent or guardian.

## School Groups

- ❖ One adult must accompany every 10 children (no exceptions). Chaperones should be instructed to spread out throughout the group and be responsible for each student's compliance with the rules and instructions given by the tour guide. Please inform all chaperones of the guidelines prior to arriving at Oakland.
- ❖ **Ask questions, be inspired, and have fun!**

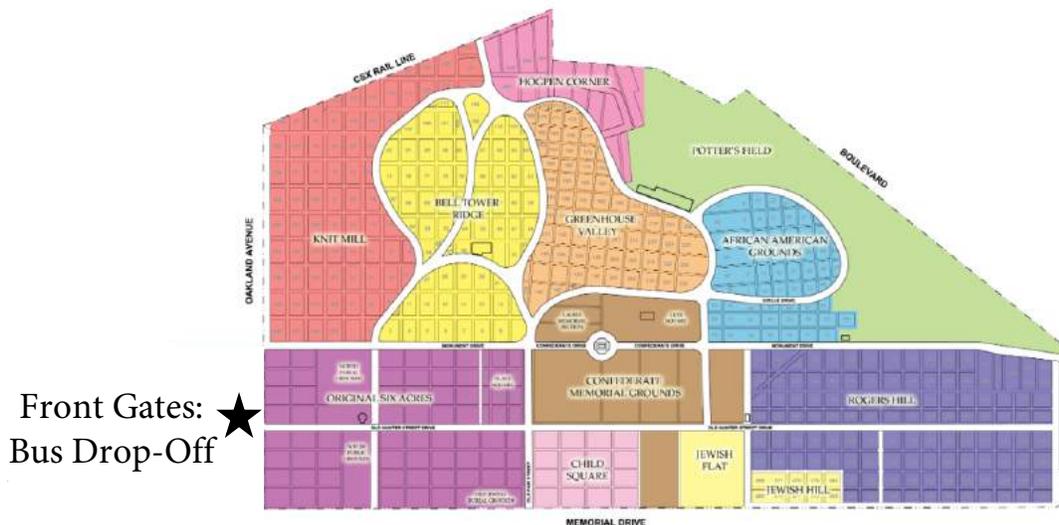
## ABOUT HISTORIC OAKLAND CEMETERY

Founded in 1850 by the City of Atlanta, Historic Oakland Cemetery was established when a small downtown graveyard proved to be insufficient for the city's growing population. Originally known as "Atlanta Cemetery," the six-acre green space eventually grew to approximately 48 acres. The cemetery reflects the diverse historical development of Atlanta; noted Georgians are buried next to ordinary citizens, former slaves have been laid to rest across from Confederate soldiers, and men and women transcend the social barriers of life to coexist in death.

Oakland may be the city's oldest public park and a local historic site, but it is also nationally significant as a garden cemetery. Made popular in the nineteenth century, the garden cemetery developed to meet the demands for both urban recreation areas and burial space. With naturalistic views and a landscape full of Victorian art and architecture, Oakland Cemetery is a unique cultural resource.

Oakland Cemetery is divided into several distinct character areas. Each character area provides insight into the social customs of past cultures and the daily distinctions of life that have been maintained in death. These character areas include the cemetery's original six acres, the Confederate Memorial Grounds, the African American Grounds, Potter's Field, the Jewish Flat and Hill sections, and other burial areas.

Once considered to be a rural outpost, Oakland Cemetery is now located in the heart of Atlanta. The City maintains the cemetery through a partnership with the Historic Oakland Foundation, a non-profit "friends of Oakland" organization founded in 1976. The Historic Oakland Foundation works to preserve, restore, enhance, and share the cemetery with Atlantans and visitors alike. Thousands of visitors come to Oakland Cemetery every year for recreation, research, and to learn more about Atlanta's rich history. Both a vibrant public park and a treasured historic resource, Oakland Cemetery is a unique site where visitors can honor Atlanta's past and celebrate its future.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### Pre-Visit Discussion Questions

- ❖ What is the role of a cemetery?
- ❖ What can Oakland Cemetery potentially tell us about the growth of Atlanta?
- ❖ Would Oakland Cemetery be considered a primary or secondary source?
- ❖ How do different cultures honor the dead? Provide examples.

**During your field trip, an experienced docent will lead you and your students through the cemetery's original six acres, the African American Grounds, Jewish sections, Confederate Memorial Grounds, and other burial areas. The following questions might be posed to students during their tour.**

- ❖ How do grave markers, burial location, or burial styles reveal the customs or culture of the dead? Provide examples.
- ❖ How did the Victorians convey messages about the dead?
- ❖ Oakland Cemetery is split into several distinct character areas. What can these character areas tell us about the development of Atlanta, the state, or the American South?

### Post-Visit Discussion Questions

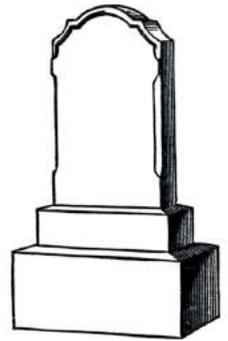
- ❖ What did you learn about the story of Atlanta by visiting Oakland Cemetery?
- ❖ What makes Oakland Cemetery a historic site worth preserving?
- ❖ Franklin Garrett (1906-2000) was the only official historian of Atlanta and a founding member of the Historic Oakland Foundation. He wrote "Old Oakland is Atlanta's most tangible link between the past and the present." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

## POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Epitaphs: A Dialogue with the Dead

Often inscribed on gravestones or memorial plaques, an epitaph is a short text that honors a deceased person. Epitaphs establish a continuing dialogue between the dead and the living. An epitaph can include biographical information, historical references, warnings, testimonies, words of comfort and hope, or prayers. A good epitaph can capture the essence of a personality. It can give insight into the life of an individual or convey the feelings of those who knew them best. Cryptic epitaphs leave more to the imagination. Several examples of Oakland epitaphs are below:

- ❖ James Calhoun (1811-1875)  
“Mayor of Atlanta. Surrendered City to Union forces.  
An able and faithful lawyer. A true and noble public servant. An upright and courteous citizen. A generous and warm-hearted friend. An affectionate husband and father. His life taken altogether was an imminent success and he left the world with friends, relations, and [a] City to mourn his loss.”
- ❖ Dorothy Louise Copeland Connally (1896-1977)  
“Her strength flowed from her beauty, intellect, and faith.”
- ❖ Captain A.H. Benning (1840-1904)  
“The sailor has returned home, from over life’s sea, and entered his last port, heaven.”
- ❖ Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. (1938-2003)  
“Mayor of Atlanta, 1990-1994 and 1974-1982  
Vice Mayor, 1970-1974  
A servant devoted to his family and friends and to the politics of inclusion for all Atlantans.”



For this activity, students will write their own epitaph. Students should consider how they would want to be remembered a hundred years from now. If a student is uncomfortable with writing their own epitaph, they can choose another historical figure or literary character to memorialize.

### Resident Research

Oakland Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 70,000 people, including many Atlanta pioneers, noted Georgians, and city residents. For this activity, students will pick a resident of Oakland to research. Using primary and secondary sources, students will create a project that will tell the story of their resident. Students should draw from a variety of sources and provide citations. A few example projects are listed below.

- ❖ Write an essay about the resident and how they are historically significant.
- ❖ Create an obituary for the Oakland resident.
- ❖ Write a song or rap about the resident.
- ❖ Create a comic book about the resident.
- ❖ Imagine that social media existed during the life of the resident. As your resident, complete an *Oakbook* profile page or post on *Oakstagram* (templates in Appendix).
  - ❖ *Oakbook*: Make sure to include a profile picture, biography, status updates, and posts about what’s happening in “your” life.
  - ❖ *Oakstagram*: Draw an image and post a caption about a significant event in the “your” life. Have other students comment on your post.

### Unveiling Victorian Sculpture

As students walk through Oakland, they will notice that the cemetery is also an outdoor gallery of Victorian art and architecture. In memorializing their dead, the Victorians would use headstones covered in symbols, beautiful monuments, and fascinating sculptures to express how they felt about the dead or reveal characteristics of the dead.

In this activity, students will identify a sculpture at Oakland and write a one-page reflection on the piece of art. Students should strive to answer the following questions:

- ❖ Describe the sculpture. What do you see? Is it a figure or an object?
- ❖ Describe the material, size, and other physical or visual aspects of the sculpture.
- ❖ Where is the sculpture located? Is it memorializing a specific person? If so, who?
- ❖ Are there any symbols on this sculpture?
- ❖ Does this sculpture have any religious or cultural elements?
- ❖ What idea/message is the artist, or the loved ones of the deceased, trying to get across to the viewer?
- ❖ How do you feel when you look at this sculpture?



If this information is available, students should identify the title of the sculpture, the date of creation, and the name of the artist. Students should include a photograph or they should draw their interpretation of the sculpture.

Students can also reinterpret the sculpture through another art form, such as music or dance. How would the Victorians, or artist, convey their emotions through music or dance?

## The Power of Flowers

Oakland Cemetery is often viewed as a green oasis located in the heart of downtown Atlanta. Timeless gardens, flowering shrubs, and dozens of different tree species occupy the historic landscape of this rural garden cemetery. Many of the plants found on the grounds are based on historic records and plants inventories from centuries past.

In memorializing their dead, the Victorians would often decorate gravestones with images and symbols to convey their feelings about the recently departed. This use of symbolism extended to plants and flowers. Rosemary would be planted for remembrance, cedar trees to represent a long life, weeping willows for sorrow, and ivy to indicate eternal friendship.

While visiting Oakland Cemetery, ask students to take note of the different plants, flowers, and trees they find. Students can then research the plants and create a brochure that highlights Oakland Cemetery's botanical life. Each entry should include the scientific and common name of the plant, an image, facts about its origins, historical use, and symbolism.



## APPENDIX

### Georgia Performance Standards

While participating in a school tour of Oakland Cemetery, students will gain a sense of the development of Atlanta, the state, and the American South. The following performance standards will be addressed:

- ❖ SS8H5: The student will explain significant factors that affected the development of Georgia as part of the growth of the United States between 1789 and 1840.
- ❖ SS8H6: The student will analyze the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia.
- ❖ SS8H7: The student will evaluate key political, social, and economic changes that occurred in Georgia between 1877 and 1918.
- ❖ SS8H11: The student will evaluate the role of Georgia in the modern civil rights movement.

### Post-Visit Activities and Corresponding Common Core Standards

#### Resident Research

- ❖ ELAGSE6RI1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE6RI2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- ❖ ELAGSE6RI3: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
- ❖ ELAGSE6W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- ❖ ELAGSE6W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- ❖ ELAGSE6W8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
- ❖ ELAGSE6W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- ❖ ELAGSE7RI1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE7RI2: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE7RI3: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

- ❖ ELAGSE7RI9: Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing the different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
- ❖ ELAGSE7W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- ❖ ELAGSE7W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- ❖ ELAGSE7W8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- ❖ ELAGSE7W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- ❖ ELAGSE8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE8RI2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE8RI3: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- ❖ ELAGSE8W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- ❖ ELAGSE8W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

### Unveiling Victorian Sculpture

- ❖ VA6MC.3: Interprets how artists communicate meaning in their work.
- ❖ VA6C.2: Develops fluency in visual communication.
- ❖ VA7MC.3: Interprets how artists create and communicate meaning in and through their work.
- ❖ VA7MC.4: Participates in dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- ❖ VA8MC.3: Demonstrates how artists create and communicate meaning in artworks.
- ❖ VA8MC.4: Participates in dialogue about his or her artwork and the artwork of others.
- ❖ VA7AR.2: Critiques personal artworks as well as artwork of others using visual and verbal approaches.
- ❖ VA7AR.3: Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.
- ❖ VA7C.2: Develops fluency in visual communication.
- ❖ VA8AR.1: Critiques personal artworks as well as artwork of others using visual and verbal approaches.
- ❖ VA8AR.2: Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.
- ❖ VA8C.1: Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- ❖ VA8C.2: Develops fluency in visual communication.



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Post

Post:

All Posts Wall Posts

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About Me

Birthday:

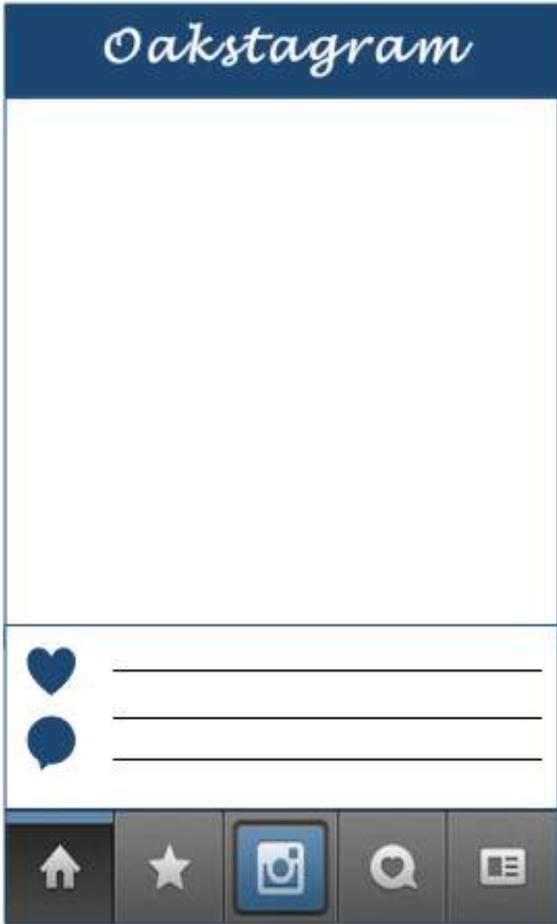
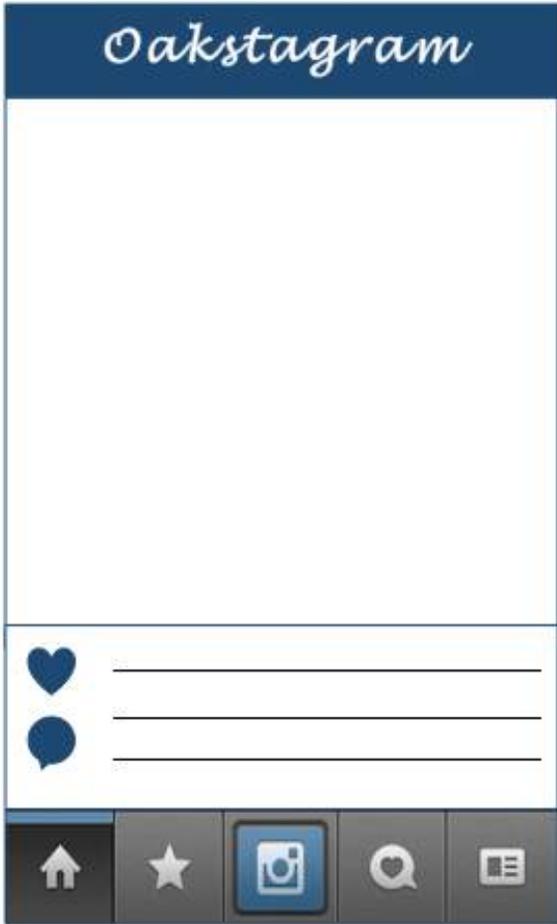
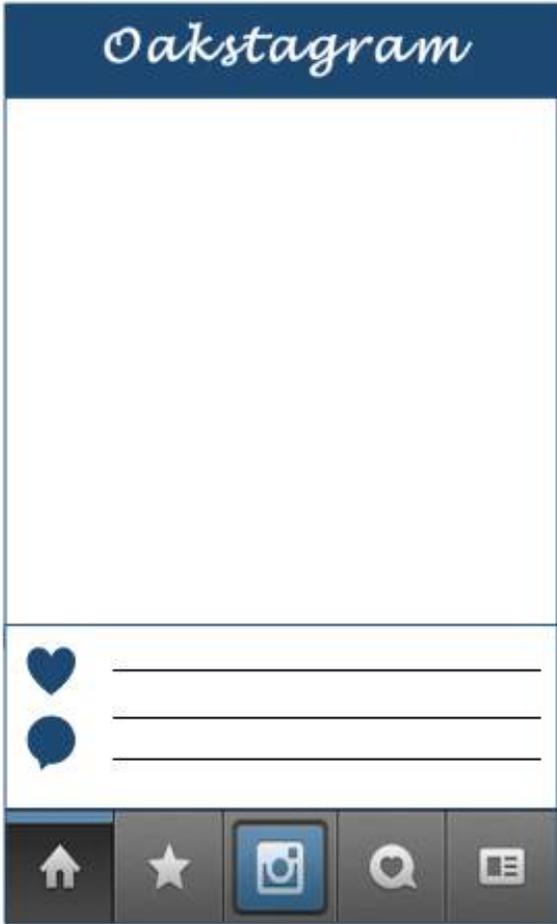
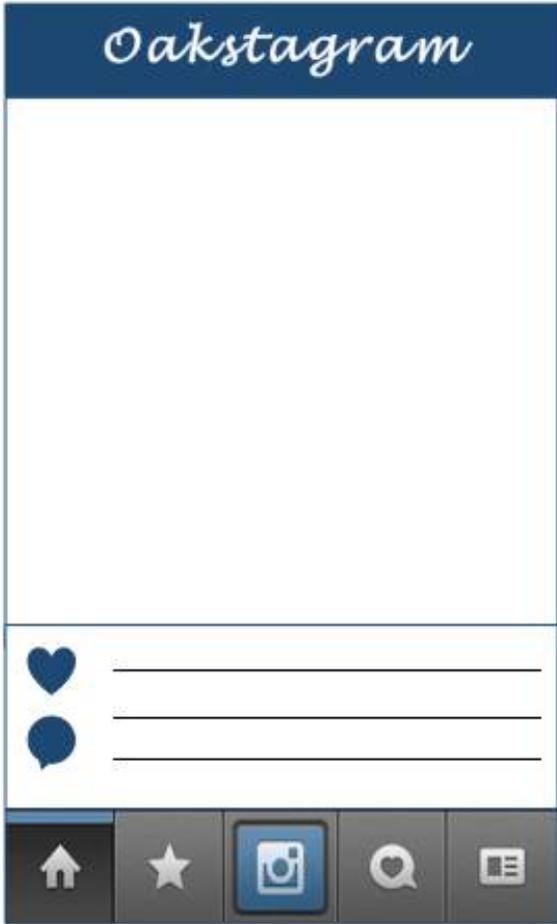
Family:

Hometown:

Current City:

Bio

Interests



Oakland Cemetery Field Trip Guides are designed and developed by  
Marcy Breffle, Education Coordinator, Historic Oakland Foundation.

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