

EXPLORING SENSE OF PLACE

Heritage Fellows represent many different places. Some came from other countries to live in and contribute to their American communities. Many elements contribute to each community's unique sense of place. The list below will help you think about how to document and describe your community. Use it to brainstorm and then refine thoughts for a Sense of Place essay or poem.

Language and dialect

Music and Dance (Where do people experience music or dance? Think about lullabies, playground songs, school fight songs, religious services, festivals, weddings, birthdays.)

Geography and Ecology (What are the population, climate, important landforms, waterways, man-made features, plants and animals?)

Landscape and Land Use (Where are schools, parks, farms, businesses, industries and neighborhoods?)

Religion (What religions are practiced? Where are religious activities held?)

Crafts and Decorative Arts (Are there crafts such as boats, baskets, pottery or quilts unique to your area? How are local buildings built and decorated?)

Celebrations (What are seasonal events? Is there a festival, homecoming, fair or parade? What about events associated with the cycle of life such as birth, coming of age, marriage? Where do these events occur?)

Foods (What are local food crops? Where is local produce sold, and what restaurants serve local specialties? What celebrations involve foods?)

Oral Narratives (Are there jokes, stories, tall tales, legends and anecdotes about the area?)

Naming Traditions (How did places in the area get their names? What do place names and street names say about local history and culture? What family names dominate in the white pages of the telephone book? For whom are schools named?)

Occupations (What are local jobs and work-related skills, customs, traditions, stories, jokes?)

Settlement Patterns (Who founded the place? Where did some current ethnic groups in town come from? Who are the newcomers? Where do they live? What brought different groups there?)

Adapted with permission from www.louisianavoices.org