In the Fall of 2011...

Mr. Sandoval’s 9th grade U.S. History class, along with CUP and CUP teaching artist Stephen Fiehn, set out to identify what federalism looks like on a local level.

We had all heard about the famous historical debates regarding states’ rights and the importance of a national government, but for some reason, it seemed far away, elsewhere. With this feeling in mind, we began our investigation looking for signs of federalism in our immediate surroundings, so that we could experience it first-hand.

We started small and began by looking for signs of federalism in our wallets.

Then, we took to the streets looking for some evidence of what federal, state, and city government involvement looks like in Bushwick.

After that, we took our investigations to neighborhood stores and visited a bodega, a liquor store, an Army recruitment office, a bank, a pharmacy, and a supermarket.

Our method was simple: Look intently, go where our curiosity takes us, ask lots of questions, and work to communicate our findings to others.

This book is a field guide to what we found. In it, maybe you’ll see something you’ve noticed before in your own neighborhood, but never stopped to think about.

We hope that by reading about our adventure, you will gather some simple tools to start your own investigations.

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) uses the power of design and art to increase public participation in shaping the places where we all live.

City Studies are CUP’s project-based in-class and afterschool programs that use design and art as tools to research the city. To learn more about CUP, visit welcometocup.org

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FROM THE DESK OF A HISTORIAN

“Federalism is a process that relies on the balance of power between federal and state governments over the same geographical area. Federalism is at work in our everyday lives, especially in our businesses, schools, sanitation, and police departments. Our citizens rely on federalism in order to improve our schools, public transportation, re-cement the sidewalks, or keep our food safe to eat. We can see federalism at work all around us – just look at anti-discrimination laws, posted on bus stops so anyone can travel on the bus; and watch out for signs illustrating the laws that protect workers from injury at construction sites. Federalism allows for our city and state governments to address areas of safety, business and education, which the national government would miss since we are such a large country. Washington D.C. can not address it all, so federalism allows each local and state government to create their own solutions to our everyday concerns, and improve the rules and laws that affect us daily.”

- Jorge Sandoval

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WE TOOK A WALK AND LOOKED FOR TRACES OF GOVERNMENT ON THE STREET

ITEM: Residential Mail Box
LOCATION: Palmetto (between Irving and Knickerbocker)
GOVERNMENT: Federal
AGENCY: United States Postal Service
LINK: USPS delivers letters to this mail-box

ITEM: License Plate
LOCATION: Palmetto
GOVERNMENT: State
DEPARTMENT: Motor Vehicles
LINK: License plates are mandatory, and registered with the state

ITEM: Public Pay Phone
LOCATION: Wyckoff (between Myrtle and Putnam)
GOVERNMENT: Federal
DEPARTMENT: Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
LINK: People contact the FCC for unresolved interstate complaints

“The department [USPS] helps people get things such as letters, notices, and purchases.”
- Princess Bordes
ITEM: Fire Truck
LOCATION: Wyckoff Food Bazaar Parking Lot
GOVERNMENT: City
DEPARTMENT: Fire Department of New York
LINK: The Fire Truck is a tool used to respond to fires and other emergencies.

ITEM: Garbage Can
LOCATION: Corner of Irving and Gates
GOVERNMENT: City
DEPARTMENT: New York Department of Sanitation
LINK: Public trash bins help keep the city clean.

ITEM: EBT Sign (Food Stamp Program)
LOCATION: Gates (between Irving and Myrtle)
GOVERNMENT: Federal
DEPARTMENT: United States Department of Agriculture
LINK: USDA provides assistance to low income people through food stamps aka SNAP

ITEM: Restaurant Letter Grade Inspection Sign
LOCATION: Gates (between Irving and Myrtle)
GOVERNMENT: City
DEPARTMENT: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
LINK: Communicates the results of sanitary inspections by NY State.

“If it wasn’t for sanitation, the city would be dirty.
Everyone would litter.”
-Trisha Cotto
LIQUOR STORE

BEER
- Not sold in stores because you need a different license.

WINE
- Sutter Home (state) made in California (state).
- Government warning (federal).

LIQUOR
- Smirnoff (made in the U.S.)
- Can be sold.
- Government warning (federal).

SUPERMARKET

BEER
- Beer is located in the Food Beverage section in Lane A.
- Brands like Budweiser, Michelob, Corona, Coors Light, Heineken, and Modelo.
- Some may require only sell wine and beer.

LIQUOR
- They don't sell liquor at groceries stores because the state won't allow it.

WINE
- Not allowed because of pregnancy warning.
- Government regulates who can drink.
- Government regulates those who can drink.

Drawing by Blanca Cruz
WE VISITED...
a liquor store, supermarket,
and bodega to find out about
alcohol regulations in New York.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT:

STATE
• New York State Liquor Authority

FEDERAL
• Department of Health and Human Services
• Surgeon General

DID YOU KNOW...

There is a National Drinking Age of 21?
The National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 required all states to raise their
minimum age for purchase and public possession of alcohol to 21, but the U.S.
Constitution grants states the right to regulate alcohol sales.

So, how does the Federal Government enforce this?
States that do not comply receive less
highway funding under the Federal Highway Aid Act. Today, all 50
states are in compliance.
WHAT WE FOUND AT THE BANK:

“My object is a poster I found in the bank on the wall. Some things I found on the poster told me a little about the CRA (Community Reinvestment Act). The CRA is a Federal law. It was made to encourage banks and savings associations to help meet the needs of low income neighborhoods.”

- Melika Price

“The object that I found was a document that says U.S. regulation requires that nationally chartered U.S. banks [have to] make this notice available. I found this document in Citibank... it’s associated with FDIC, that stands for Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. It also said, ‘all funds in a non-interest transaction account are insured in full by the FDIC from December 31, 2010-2012’.”

- Princess Bordes

DID YOU KNOW?

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was created under the Dodd-Frank Act. One of the ways CFPB protects consumers is to make sure banks do not provide misleading information about risky loans and credit cards.

RESEARCHING the BANK

Securities and Exchange Commission:

Established: 1934
A part of the Federal Government
Mission: Protect investors, maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets, and facilitate capital formation

FDIC:

Established: 1933
(in response to thousands of bank failures in the 1920s and early 1930s.)
A part of the Federal Government
Mission: To insure deposits, supervise financial institutions, and manage failed banks
The object I sketched out was a flag. The flag for me means that there is unity in the armed forces recruit center... The flag also connects to the federal government.” -Christian Fuentes

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The No Child Left Behind Act requires the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of 11th and 12th grade students to military recruiters that request this information, except where the parent or student opts out. DOE’s Chancellor’s Regulation A-825 says that school principals must distribute opt-out forms every fall to students, and parents of students in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The 1996 Solomon Amendment provides the Secretary of Defense the power to deny federal funding to institutions of higher learning if they prohibit or prevent military recruitment on campus.

**RESEARCHING the ARMY RECRUITMENT OFFICE**

**New York City Recruiting Battalion:**

Established: unknown

A part of the U.S. Army and Department of Defense

Mission: To staff the Army

The Battalion targets a recruiting base of more than one million people focusing on 607 high schools, 115 post-secondary vocational technical schools and 97 colleges & universities.

**U.S Department of Defense:**

Established: 1949

A part of the Executive Branch

Mission: To provide the military forces for war, to deter war, and to protect the security of the U.S.
WHAT WE FOUND AT THE SUPERMARKET:

STATE
• New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

FEDERAL
• Food and Drug Administration
• U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

“I found Chef Boyardee’s spaghetti and meatballs in the back of aisle four. I picked this item because there was something on it that said U.S. inspected and passed by the DOA (Department of Agriculture). They make sure the food is good enough to eat.”
- Najee Santos

This steak was spotted in the supermarket and it had a “USDA” sticker on it. The supermarket needs a special license from the state to process meat and can be subjected to random sanitary inspections by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

“This Frosted Flakes Box was found at Food Bazaar supermarket. I have learned based on this product that the Dept. (FDA) is very secure... they care about how this cereal is made.”
- DaysyQuiroz

“I found the soup in the supermarket. I found proof of the government because of the sell by date (FDA). This is to protect consumers. The government plays a great role in how we live and what we eat.”
- Noelia Taveras

“The USDA is checking the food to see if it’s safe.”
- Isa Verdes

RESEARCHING the SUPERMARKET

The USDA
Established: 1862
A part of the Executive Branch
Mission: To provide leadership on food, agriculture, resources, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management

FDA: Office of Foods
Established: 1906
(as a result of the Pure Food and Drug Act)
A part of the Department of Health and Human Services
Mission: To protect consumers
“To protect us and keep us from eating bad food and to keep drugs from killing us... because a supermarket has a bunch of food from all over.”
- Yordy Ortega
The FDA regulates labeling and makes manufacturers put supplement facts and expiration dates on all vitamin bottles. The label also said "This statement has not been approved by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, cure or prevent any disease."

This is medication that can only be used with a prescription. It was found behind the pharmacy counter at Ralph Prescriptions. The FDA approves it to treat a disease or illness and regulates what is on the label. The State Board of Pharmacy regulates how the medication is dispensed.

"The object I sketched out was Tylenol. I found this at the pharmacy. Only adults and children over 12 years could take one tablet. Tylenol also connects to the Federal government because the federal government deals with drugs."

-Luis Zeron

**What We Found at the Pharmacy:**

**Federal**

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

**State**

- New York State Board of Pharmacy

**Researching the Pharmacy**

**FDA: Office of Medical Products and Tobacco**

*Established: 1906 (as a result of the Pure Food and Drug Act)*

*A part of the Department of Health and Human Services*

*Mission: To protect consumers. Regulates most food products as well as drugs used by humans and animals. Protects against misbranding*

**New York State Board of Pharmacy**

*Established: unknown*

*A part of the New York State Department of Education*

*Mission: Handle pharmacy licensing and set standards for the education and practice of pharmacists in New York State*
What will you investigate?

My home town is not safe because the police don’t do anything. What can I do about it?

I want to visit a school or a police station. How does the government affect me, my family, and my community?

I would like to go to the police department to find out about laws they have. Why are they allowed to abuse people or do any states or place for the police to abuse people if refused to do what they want?