



Material Culture

Learning to Read Buildings

What is Material Culture?

Definition: The study of how humans have shaped and built their world

What does this include?

- **How People Dressed**
 - The Clothing, jewelry, and accessories they wore
- **How they lived together**
 - The way they shaped the land into farms, cities and suburbs and created the kinds of shelters they needed to survive
- **Where they lived and worked**
 - The architecture and construction of their buildings as well as the relationships between buildings

Steps to learn to Read a Building

Step 1:

What is it made of?

- What materials were used to construct the building?
- Was it built using exotic materials?
- Did they use materials easily found locally?
- Do some of the materials look newer?



Step 2:

Who Made It?

- Examine the building closely, are there any markings or signatures to give us a clue who built it?
- Does it bare resemblance to any other buildings around it?
- Do newspaper articles or books mention the building?



Step 3:

How was it Made?

- Can you tell what tools were used?
- What kinds of paint was used?
- What style of construction is it?



Step 4:

How was it used?

- Was it used as a residence? As a business?
- How has its uses changed over time? Was it once a house and now a business?



Step 5:

Who used it?

- Did a family live there?
- Did the same business man own it?
- Was it a common place for people to meet?



Take Away

Use these Five Steps to Read the Building in Kernersville

For your Then & Now Projects, try to use these steps to learn more about the buildings you're taking pictures of.

Research materials can be found at the Kernersville Museum website:

www.kernersvillemuseum.org

Or

At the Kernersville branch library