**Historical Thinking Concept #1 – Historical Significance**

* **The past is everything that ever happened to anyone anywhere**. There is much too much history to remember all of it. So how do we make choices about what is worth remembering?
* Significant events include those that resulted in great change over long periods of time for large numbers of people. World War II passes the test for historical significance in this sense. But what could be significant about the life of a worker or a slave? What about my own ancestors, who are clearly significant to me, but not necessarily to others?
* Significance depends upon one’s perspective and purpose. A historical person or event can acquire significance if we, the historians, can link it to larger trends and stories that reveal something important for us today. (*The Big 6 Historical Thinking Concepts*)
* This means that both “It is significant because it is in the history book,” and “It is significant because I am interested in it,” are inadequate explanations of historical significance.

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| **Ways to Measure a Person/Event According to Significance**   * How were people impacted by that person/event? * How many people were impacted? * How long lasting was that impact? * Did it bring about change? |

