

HUNTS POINT SLAVE BURIAL GROUND (HPSBG) PROJECT
LESSON: USING NEWSPAPERS TO EXPLORE HISTORICAL HUNTS POINT

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Focus of the Lesson: What can an historic newspaper article teach us about the history of a place?

Common Core Learning Standards:

- RI.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- RI.3.3: Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
- RI.3.7: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- SL.3.2: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Additional Standards and/or Scope and Sequence:

- Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) implement “standards for K–5 reading in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are integrated into the K–5 Reading standards.” Please visit the CCLS home page for further information (<http://www.corestandards.org/>). For further guidance and alignment, please see the NYS Social Studies Standards and NYC Social Studies Scope and Sequence, which are accessible from the HPSBG website.

Connection to Prior Teaching: Students should possess an understanding of Hunts Point’s relation to the world, such as a neighborhood within New York City’s borough of the Bronx. Additionally students should understand the difference between past/historical/then and present/modern/now.

Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Clippings and guiding questions from the following *New York Times* articles (one per student):
 - “Drake’s Tomb in the Bronx,” from October 11, 1903
 - Charles de Kay’s Letter to the Editor, from March 28, 1909
 - Harry A. Guiremand’s Letter to the Editor, from September 26, 1907
 - NOTE: Complete articles attached at the end. Also accessible online from *New York Times* digital archives.
- “Historians Collaborate and Share!” (one per group)

Lesson Procedure:

- **Introduction:**
 - Activate prior knowledge through a “do now.” Prior to this lesson (such as the beginning of the school day), instruct students to write a paragraph that describes what is happening in the classroom at the exact moment.
 - Revisit the student writings at the beginning of this lesson. Emphasize the fact that what students wrote was happening in the present when they wrote them. However, now when the paragraphs are read, the events described are historical, having taken place prior to the present.
- **Guided Practice:**
 - Introduce the concept that historians learn about the past by reading newspaper articles from the historical time period they want to study.
 - Display the complete article, “Drake’s Tomb in the Bronx.” Provide scaffolds by describing the publication, date, title of the article, and purpose of the article.

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- Next, introduce the clipping and guiding question. Discuss the set up of the page by asking, “How is this paper set up?” Highlight the following information to assist students:
 - Publication, Date, and Title of the Article
 - Location of the Article
 - Vocabulary to Know
 - Questions to Answer About the Text
 - Questions I Have About the Text
- Set the scene for today’s historical investigation. Remind students that they will collaborate as historians to learn about the past in Hunts Point. Remind them that they will report their findings to each other at the conclusion of the lesson.
- **Independent Exploration:**
 - Set up students into small groups with one clipping and guiding question worksheet. Encourage conversation and investigation.
 - Circulate amongst the groups to assess what students understand and struggle to grasp about obtaining information from newspaper articles.
 - Model informational literacy reading strategies, such as rereading, using the vocabulary section, and asking questions of the text.
 - Encourage students to articulate questions about the information located in the text that deepens their knowledge about the HPSBG Project.
- **Differentiation:**
 - Utilize pictures to develop vocabulary for English Language Learners (ELLs) and struggling readers.
 - Allow students to work in small groups to develop answers and questions for the articles.
 - Model the use of the “Vocabulary to Know” section. Try replacing the tricky word with the words in the definition.
- **Summary and Share:**
 - Provide each group with a copy of the “Historians Collaborate and Share!” reflection sheet to complete.
 - Each group should share their discoveries based on the article.
 - Draw connections to prior knowledge that students have learned as they participate in the Hunts Point Slave Burial Ground Project.

Assessment: Teacher will look at students’ worksheets for the following: a) accuracy of information gathered; b) connection to prior knowledge of Hunts Point; and c) finding themes of interest within the student questions to serve as a hook to introduce additional HPSBG topics.

Follow Up:

- This lesson can be utilized multiple days utilizing various historical texts.
- Develop a class history journal. Each day select a pair of students to record the key events of class’s day. At the end of each week or month, spend some time reviewing the class’s important events, or, in other words, the history of the class.
- Alternately, develop a class timeline, which tracks the key events of the class. Display the continually updated timeline in a visible location so that students can track the history as time moves forward during the school year.

Attached Resources: See attached article worksheets and associated articles.

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Publication	Date	Title of the Article
<i>New York Times</i>	October 11, 1903	“Drake’s Tomb in the Bronx”

The low marshy meadows that extend from the Hunt burying ground to the East River offer just the chance for a park (which might well carry the name of the young poet) embracing this hillock and a stretch of the river shore. The

Vocabulary to Know

marshy meadows: land that is sometimes full of water and sometimes dry

extend: to go from one place to another place

hillock: a small hill or mound of land

shore: the edge where water, such as a river, touches land

Questions I Have About the Text

Questions to Answer About the Text

1. When was this article published?
2. What does this article describe?
3. What does the author think should happen to this land?

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Publication	Date	Title
<i>New York Times</i>	March 28, 1909	Charles de Kay's Letter to the Editor

Dear Mr. Hall:

It was proposed some years ago to form a park in the Hunt's Point neighborhood, to be called Drake Park. I and others appeared before the Aldermen of the Bronx to explain the conditions and give reasons why Drake, identified as he was with New York, and especially with the Bronx region, (you will recall his charming lines to the River Bronx.) would be particularly fitted to give a name to a park. It was understood then that the park was laid out so that the knoll on which the little burying ground lies, would fall within the boundaries of the park, and that the design had been accepted and the park was to be formed.

Vocabulary to Know

proposed: an idea that someone suggests

Alderman: elected city government official

knoll: a small hill surrounded by flat land

boundaries: the borders or perimeter

Questions I Have About the Text

Questions to Answer About the Text

1. Where does this article discuss?
2. What should the park be named?
3. What should be placed inside the park boundaries?

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Publication	Date	Title
<i>New York Times</i>	September 26, 1907	Harry A. Guiremand's Letter to the Editor

This little graveyard is dear to the hearts of many Bronx residents, and it was hoped when the appropriation was announced that immediate steps would be taken by the city to acquire it and improve its condition. As yet nothing has been done, however.

Four or five years ago one could repair to this place and be as far removed from the noise of the city as though a hundred miles away. Spacious old mansions skirted the road leading to the burying ground, and large trees shaded them. A herd of cows could usually be seen browsing in a meadow near the cemetery.

Vocabulary to Know

appropriation: money used for a purpose by government

acquire: to make something your own

spacious: having lots of space

mansions: large houses owned by the wealthy

Questions to Answer About the Text

1. What is the subject of this text?
2. What types of houses used to be in the area?
3. What type of animals used to be in the area?

Questions I Have About the Text

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Historians Collaborate and Share!

Directions: Your group will use these questions to present your findings to the other historians when we finish today's investigation.

What was the main idea of our historical article about Hunts Point?

What did we learn about the history of Hunts Point from investigating this article?

What questions do we now wonder about the history of Hunts Point from this article?

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will be sure to make them necessary. The low, marshy meadow, that extends from the Hunt burying ground to the East River offers just the chance for a park (which might well carry the name of the young poet) embracing this hill, lock and stretch of the river shore. The idea of building in one and the same spot the bodies of two friends who were so close in life and gave a touch of romance and literature to the busy little City of New York in the early part of the last century is in itself excellent. But it would be more reasonable to bring REALECK to his home TORRANCE in the Borough of the Bronx.

Though PIER GREENSB REALECK was born in Connecticut, his life was passed in New York and his home was won here. He is as distinctly a New York poet as DRACKE, and his statue, a poor thing, but our own, stands in Central Park. DRACKE's reputation is the series of bright stanzas in verse which appeared in *The Evening Post* over the names of CROKER and CROKER, JR., and it was the emotion over the premature death of DRACKE by consumption that woke REALECK. Those lines which carried him far above his ordinary level, lines which have enriched English literature!

Grieve no the turf above thee,
 Friend of my better days;
 None know like thee but to love thee,
 Nor name thee but to praise.

The creation of one poet for another is a striking thing in the history of literature, but in the case of REALECK his warm affection for DRACKE's personal charm was dulled by his estimate of his genius. That quality of exquisite fancy which is shown in "The Clipped Day" is rare in any country and in any age. DRACKE's unique place in English literature is only beginning to be understood; but REALECK knew that he should have been cut off before he had a chance to impress the world with his genius added brightness to the show. It would cover New York with edifices and contempt if her citizens should pass with the monument of DRACKE without a protest.

Nowhere more than here should efforts be made to keep before the public the memory of men who sought the higher things in life; nowhere should literature, art, music, receive the enlightened support of citizens as a counterweight to the grinding monotony of commercial things, the worship of wealth, the attainments of comfort. It is fine to see that there are some here who are moved to protest by the suggestion that you deprive them of the monument to a rare spirit of poetry who is their. Short-sighted and contemptible indeed would be the people who met such a proposal with indifference! But the compliment offered the memory of the poet will be felt and the man who offered it will deserve thanks for calling attention to the opportunity given to our Department of Parks. As to the removal of DRACKE's body and monument—that is out of the question. It was his wish to be buried among the people he loved. There is no reason to suppose that the wish will ever be disregarded, unless, with a brutality that hardly belongs to a past age, the city authorities should prefer to sweep the lonely little burial ground off the face of the earth.

DRACKE'S TOMB IN THE BRONX.

The proposal of Mr. BUROUND D. BISHOP to remove the remains and simple monument of JOSEPH RODMAN DRACKE from the little burial ground of the Hunt family near Hunt's Point to the last resting place of PIER GREENSB REALECK in Connecticut is a generous and kindly thought. The descendants of the New York poet and the people of Westchester County will not fail to recognize the spirit of the offer and thank Mr. BISHOP for his kindness. The relatives have not been heard from, but their answer can be only one word: "The people of that part of Greater New York where DRACKE's body lies have at once expressed themselves in the press in glowing terms.

It would be surprising indeed if such a move, however helpful and kindly meant, should not be declined with thanks. New York has allowed too many historic spots to be obliterated. In the portions not yet built over there are opportunities offered to preserve such associations and the case in point is luckily one which coincides with the tendency to provide breathing spaces in the shape of large or small parks where the march of the city

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<i>New York Times</i>	March 28, 1909	Charles de Kay's Letter to the Editor

RODMAN DRAKE PARK

Dear Mr. Hall:

It was proposed some years ago to form a park in the Hunt's Point neighborhood, to be called Drake Park. I and others appeared before the Aldermen of the Bronx to explain the conditions and give reasons why Drake, identified as he was with New York, and especially with the Bronx region, (you will recall his charming lines to the River Bronx,) would be particularly fitted to give a name to a park. It was understood then that the park was laid out so that the knoll on which the little burying ground lies, would fall within the boundaries of the park, and that the design had been accepted and the park was to be formed.

That decided the family not to remove the monument to some place in New York, where it would be better cared for and protected from vandals and souvenir hunters. But nothing seems to have been done.

The promised Drake Park appears little better than an amiable suggestion, so that I, for one, am more and more of the opinion that some such disposition should be made of the grave and its contents. Unless the city proposes in earnest to form this park, I think the monument should be removed by the family.

If, however, there is a determined purpose on the part of the citizens of the Bronx to honor Drake by forming this park, I should give my vote to keep the remains where they are, and to place the monument and grave in the hands of the Scenic and Historic Society, which already has done so much to further the preservation of natural scenery and historical landmarks in and about New York. I do not doubt that other descendants of the poet, who are equally interested and fully as competent as I to decide the question, will be found to agree with me. I shall be glad to obtain their consent. CHARLES DE KAY.

The New York Times

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Publication	Date	Title
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To the Editor of The New York Times:

In the early Spring of this year the Board of Estimate and Apportionment voted the sum of \$25,000 toward acquiring and making a public park of the Hunt's point graveyard, where the poet, Joseph R. Drake, is buried.

This little graveyard is dear to the hearts of many Bronx residents, and it was hoped when the appropriation was announced that immediate steps would be taken by the city to acquire it and improve its condition. As yet nothing has been done, however.

Four or five years ago one could repair to this place and be as far removed from the noise of the city as though a hundred miles away. Spacious old mansions skirted the road leading to the burying ground, and large trees shaded them. A herd of cows could usually be seen browsing in a meadow near the cemetery.

Now all is changed. The continuation of the Subway on Westchester Avenue has brought many people into this section, and the value of land has greatly increased. Many changes have been effected in this vicinity. Many of the large trees have been cut down; the old mansions are being wrecked; modern houses are in process of erection, and the fields are being cut up into building lots. There is now a continuous blowing of whistles and chugging of steam drills. The value of the land is constantly advancing, and within a few years this burying ground will be surrounded by dwelling houses and factories, therefore it should be acquired and improved immediately by the city.

For a city so rich historically, New York has few landmarks to remind us of former times, and this little graveyard will be a valuable addition to the meagre list. Most of the headstones are over seventy years old, and many more than a hundred. Drake's monument is conspicuously located at the entrance of the cemetery. It is a plain marble shaft inclosed by an iron railing. The inscriptions on the stones are those in vogue a century ago. Many of the Hunts, who formerly lived in this section, are buried here. The headstone of Thomas Hunt, who fought with Washington in the Revolution, is inscribed as follows:

In memory of
 THOMAS HUNT,
 who departed this life
 July 4th, 1808,
 in the 81st year of his age.

He possessed all the cardinal
 virtues in an eminent degree.
 He was temperate, brave, patient, and
 Just.

The solid rock shall sink beneath the
 iron hand of Time, but virtue dwells with
 Immortality.

The reading of such inscriptions turns the thoughts away from the distractions of present-day affairs, and results in beneficial reflection. Not only does it promote serious thought, but it exercises the imagination, and the imagination of the materialistic, money-mad New Yorker is not sufficiently exercised.

HARRY A. GUIREMAND.
 New York, Sept. 26, 1907.