

## Hunt's Point: Using the Community as a Resource

### I. Some Geographical Aspects of Interest

- a. peninsula... the *Point* of Hunt's Point comes from the fact that the land here points out into the water, which is what a peninsula does
- b. marsh... before development the waterfront of Hunt's Point was marshy; for a better idea of what the land would have looked like, think the marshes that you pass on your way to Orchard Beach
- c. hill... the small mountain upon which P.S. 48 was built was the land formation that Native American settlers of this area used to name the land – Quinnahung, which meant “long, high place” in their language, a dialect of the Algonquin nation
- d. river... An alternative meaning for Quinnahung is “planting neck,” which is an allusion to the fertile land that was-and still is-Hunt's Point. The watery surroundings that account for this are the Bronx River, named for Jonas Bronck and the East River, which is not a real river, after all; and you don't look east to see it, either – you look south. When water moves in the East River, it does so because of the ebbing and flowing tide. For this reason, the East River is known, technically, as a tidal strait. On the other hand, the Bronx River – which we do look east to see – is a true river, with moving water that flows down from the hills and mountains of upstate New York.
- e. estuary... An estuary is a body of water that serves as a kind of buffer between fresh river water and salty ocean water. For this reason an estuary's water is brackish, or a mixture of salt and fresh water.

### II. Wildlife of Interest

- a. past... turkey, deer, coyote, wolf, bear, oysters, and my personal favorite, the rattlesnake (*FYI, in some parts of the Bronx, oysters are making a comeback!*)
- b. present... (*seen by me*) falcons, hawks, raccoons, horseshoe crabs (these spidery creatures are prehistoric!), bluebirds (bluejays – they sound like crows) and redbirds (cardinals, actually). I've actually held a yellow warbler in my hands that flew into a classroom here, exhausted as it was from its long migration.

### III. Native Americans of Hunt's Point

- a. The Weckquaesgeek Indians were a tribe of the Algonquin nation. Believe it or not, Hunt's Point Avenue was an old Weckquaesgeek Indian trail.
- b. You may be familiar with the story of how the Dutch bought Manhattan from the Indians for 24 dollars... Well, it was the English who bought Hunt's Point from Weckquaesgeek. Their names were Richardson and Jessup. Jessup was the father-in-law of Thomas Hunt, for whom the land is named.

### IV. Settlers/Settlement

- a. I highly recommend "The History in Asphalt" by John McNamara for those of you interested in knowing more about the earliest settlers of Hunt's Point, many of whom are remembered in the street names of Hunt's Point.
- b. Before Hunt's Point became the very urban community that it is today it was a rural one. The families that owned land here were generally wealthy and with business interests in New York City. Hunt's Point was the place for one's country estate. One of these mansions still stands at the intersection of Lafayette Avenue and Faile Street. Getting to and from Hunt's Point was not easy. One could walk, ride one's horse (*apparently, the Faile family was into racing their horses*), or sail one's boat.
- c. The construction of the railroad – the station for which still stands at the intersection of Hunt's Point Avenue and Bruckner Blvd. – and then the subway made it easier to get to and from Hunt's Point. Developers saw this and quickly bought up the land – *I've got pictures of some of the auction brochures* – and began construction of apartment buildings to house immigrant/working families.
- d. If you've the time and inclination, ask Ms. Mildenberger to tell you what it was like growing up in Hunt's Point. She'll make you wish you had, too.

### V. Parks

- a. Barretto Point Park... at the southern end of Barretto Street. They even have bathrooms!
- b. Riverside Park... at the eastern end of Lafayette Avenue. No bathrooms but wonderful views.
- c. Two community gardens on Barretto Street, one of which we have the key to get into. It's the nicer of the two, with a gazebo, apple, pear and cherry trees and an assortment of vegetables in the back, including corn, pumpkin, tomatoes, and lettuce. There's also some gardening tools to help keep the space green
- d. in Joseph Rodman Drake Park, at the intersection of Bryant Avenue and Oak Point, you will find the old Hunt family cemetery. Poet, Joseph Rodman Drake, for whom our school is named, was buried there.

## VI. Business

- a. Hunt's Point is home to the largest food distribution center in the world. There is the fruit and vegetable market ([www.terminalmarkets.com](http://www.terminalmarkets.com)), the meat market ([www.huntspointcoopmkt.com](http://www.huntspointcoopmkt.com)), and the newly relocated fish market ([www.newfultonfishmarket.com](http://www.newfultonfishmarket.com)). There's even a farmer's market in operation from the end of June to November! Uh-huh, Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- b. The banking business is alive and well in Hunt's Point. We have had representatives from both JPMorganChase (718-542-1299) and Citibank (718-328-6176) visit our school. Both branches are open to class trips, too.
- c. You maybe aware of the thriving recycling businesses in Hunt's Point, but did you know that we have manufacturers, too? Some of that recycled plastic may end up at *Gary Plastics* (1340 Viele Avenue, 718-893-2200), where they manufacture plastics; that recycled glass may have ended up at the *Corona Glass Corp.* (533 Coster Street, 718-861-8530), where they manufacture glass; That recycled paper? How about *Hi-Speed Envelopes* (1123 Worthen Street, 718-617-1600), where they make envelopes; or the *Long Island Paper Co* (1390 Spofford Avenue, 718-542-1100), where they make paper products; recycled metal? Well, there is a sheet metal manufacturer at 1371 East Bay Avenue, 718-893-6700.
- d. For fun, try the *Lasalle Ice Cream Co.* at 547 Manida (718-617-5922).

## VII. Community Organizations

- a. Hunt's Point Economic Development Corporation... contact (718) 842-1717
- a. Rock the Boat... contact (718) 466-5799
- b. Sustainable South Bronx... contact (646) 400-543
- c. The Point... contact (718) 542-4139

## VII. Government Offices

- a. Library... where Tiffany Street and Southern Blvd intersect, 718-617-0338  
(*the children's librarian there use to be available for in-school visits*)
- b. Police Department... 41<sup>st</sup> Precinct, at 1035 Longwood Avenue, 718-542-4771  
(*Sergeant Giga used to be the community-relations officer... maybe*)
- c. Fire Department... Engine 94, Ladder 48, Battalion 3, at 1226 Seneca Avenue  
718-430-0203 (*very friendly and accommodating bunch*)
- d. Post Office... 1291 Lafayette Avenue, 718-542-2094 (*not as friendly as the fire guys by a longshot, but still a place kids should know about*)