BROOKLYN CONNECTIONS

BUSHWICK
PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Student Name
INTRODUCTORY READING

Settled by the Dutch about 1660, Bushwick was originally an agricultural community whose farms and tobacco plantations produced for the New York market. The area was then heavily wooded and included present day Greenpoint and Williamsburg. Its name is derived from the Dutch word Boswijk, meaning “Town of Woods.” The community remained predominantly agricultural until the 1830s when speculators began buying tracts for residential use.

The original Dutch settlers were followed by German and Austrian immigrants who arrived in the middle of the 19th century when the area was being developed. Eventually, the German population was joined by a few English, Irish, Russian and Polish settlers, some of the Jewish.

In the decade following the Depression, large numbers of Italians, generally lower-middle-income workers, moved into the area prompting many middle-income German residents to move to Queens and other areas. By 1950, Bushwick was the second largest Italian-American community in Brooklyn.

During the period between the two World Wars, Bushwick enjoyed its greatest affluence. Streets were spotlessly clean, homes impeccably maintained. It had also become a popular entertainment district. The Bushwick Theater on Broadway between Palmetto and Woodbine Streets ranked second to New York City’s Palace for Vaudeville. The Claridge Hotel provided excellent accommodations for guests seeking a comfortable weekend in a country-like setting.

1. Document 1 is a map. Find the compass rose on this map. What direction is Bushwick?

2. According to Document 1, what is another way to spell “Bushwick”?

3. What two bodies of water are next to Bushwick on this map?

4. On Document 1, the name “Bushwick” is written the same size as the name “Brooklyn”. From this, what could you infer about the area known as Bushwick?

---


*Summary:* Rendering (lithograph) of facades of Bushwick Church and Bushwick Town House with "Liberty Pole" in right foreground, two trees, and a third unidentified building in background.
1. Examine Document 2a. What do you think these buildings are made of?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

2. Looking at Document 2a, who do you think would have lived in or used these buildings? What would they have done for their job? Why do you think this?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

3. Examine Document 2b. According to the title, what kind of building is this?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

4. Compare the church in Document 2a and in Document 2b. How are they similar? How are they different?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Document 2a and 2b

Bushwick Primary Source Packet

1. Look at the house in Document 3a. Describe what the house is made of, and how it is built.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

2. Look at Document 3a and describe the space around the house. Are there other buildings close by, or other land that would be used for something else?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

3. Look at Document 3b. Compare this house to the house in Document 3a. How is it the same? How is it different?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

4. Compare the houses in Document 3a and 3b to houses you see in Brooklyn today. How are they the same? How are they different?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Document 3

Bushwick Primary Source Packet
BUSHWICK AS IT IS.

Its Extensive Cattle Yards and Factories—Progress Evident since the Inception of the South Side Railroad—The New Sewer Commenced.

With the flight of years, and the gradual reaching out for building and factory sites beyond the cramped limits of the densely populated portion of the city, the Sleepy Hollow air that was always to be recognized about that section of the Eastern District known as Old Bushwick, has rapidly succumbed to the force of business enterprise, and where comfortable farm houses only were to be seen, now, loom up in every direction large and substantial buildings, used in various mechanical pursuits, the principal of which are devoted to the manufacture of rope and lager beer.

Farmers have been forced to seek more congenial quarters at a greater distance, and their land has been divided up into lots, the most of which are built upon and occupied by the families of those who labor in the adjacent works. Nearly contemporary with the building of the South Side Railroad and preceding it but a brief time, a new enterprise was started in the vicinity of its

Bushwick Primary Source Packet
1. Read Document 4. What does the article tell you about how Bushwick changed during the late nineteenth century?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Do you think the author of Document 4 is happy with this change? Why or why not?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. According to Document 4, what types of people are moving in to the houses that were built on the old farmland?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Describe what businesses you think are now moving into the neighborhood.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Document 4

**Brooklyn Connections**
**Document 5a:** Help wanted ad. Brooklyn Daily Eagle. 21 August 1907.

```
CLEANING, a girl; Swedish or German. Bushwick Hospital, corner Howard av and Monroe st.
```

**Document 5b:** Apartment for rent. Brooklyn Daily Eagle. 29 January 1927.

```
8TH ST, 292—South Brooklyn; one block from B. M. T. stations; nicely furnished; rooms; all conveniences; excellent meals, German style cooking; $10.50 weekly.
```

**Document 5c:** Apartment for rent. Brooklyn Daily Eagle. 29 January 1927.

```
BUSHWICK SECTION—535 Quincy st; nicely furnished rooms, well heated, good German meals. BUSHwick 1343-J. $ 26-7
```

**Document 5d:** Job search ad. Brooklyn Daily Eagle. 11 Sept 1931.

```
YOUNG WOMAN to work on counter in bakery; speaks English, German; Bushwick section preferred. Mary Bamgart, 1081 Madison St., Brooklyn.
```


```
CHAMBERMAID AND WAITRESS, WHITE, GERMAN, 709 BUSHWICK AVE.
```
1. Document 5a is a newspaper ad to hire someone at Bushwick Hospital. What kind of person would they like to hire?

2. Document 5b and 5c are both ads for apartments in Bushwick. What kind of food would you eat if you rented this apartment? What else do these apartments have?

3. Document 5d and 5e are advertisements placed by people looking for work. What language do they both speak?

4. What do documents 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, and 5e all have in common?

Document 5

Document 6b: *Uriah Ellis, Dr.* 1885. Brooklyn Collection Letterhead Collection, Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

Document 6d: Bacon & Co. 1898. Brooklyn Collection Letterhead Collection, Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.
Bought of Bacon & Co.

Wholesale and Retail

Coal

Family Coal a Specialty

Main Office: Reid Avenue, Corner DeKalb

MAY 17 1898

1898

1 Bushwick

310.16

737
1. Examine Document 6a. This is a receipt. What kinds of things does the Bushwick Glass Works sell? List four.

2. Examine Document 6b. According to this receipt, what kind of business does Uriah Ellis have? What was the total amount of this receipt?

3. Look at Document 6c and 6d. What is the address on each of these?
   6c:
   6d:

4. Look at Document 6c and 6d. What does each business do or sell?
   6c:
   6d:

5. What do documents 6a, 6b, 6c, and 6d tell you about business in early Bushwick?
1. Document 7 is an atlas page. Write the names of three streets that you recognize:
   •
   •
   •

2. What business names do you see written on some of these buildings? List 4:
   •
   •
   •
   •

3. Each block on this atlas page has a large number on it. What streets surround block 1053?

4. This atlas page shows some names written across several blocks: Abraham Vandervoort, Hendrick Snydam, and more. What would you infer that these names mean?

Document 7
**Document 8:** “Ibert Residence at Bushwick & Gates Avenue.” 1911. Brooklyn Daily Eagle photographs, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Collection.

2. Does the house in Document 8 look like something you might see in Bushwick today? Why or why not?

3. Bushwick Avenue was known as Brewers Row. Some brewery owners lived in houses like the one depicted in Document 8. What does this tell you about how profitable the beer industry was for some people?

Document 8

BROOKLYN CONNECTIONS

Bushwick Primary Source Packet
1. Look at Document 9a. Describe the exterior of the Bushwick Theater.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Look at Document 9b. Describe the interior of the Bushwick Theater.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. The Bushwick Theater started as a **vaudeville** theater (live performances) and turned into a movie theater in 1930. What do you think it was like to watch a movie in the Bushwick Theater in the 1930s, right when "**talkies**" became popular?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. This building is now Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology. What part of this school do you think the theater is used for? Why do you think that?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Document 9a & 9b**

**Bushwick Primary Source Packet**

**Summary**

Bushwick urgently needs almost every type of community facility and service — vest pocket housing, schools, health services, parks, supervised recreation activities, language classes, low-interest loans to encourage improvement of private property, social services for every age group, cultural activities, libraries, more job opportunities and training programs and improved sanitation and police protection.

Bushwick’s decline began almost overnight, and relatively little has been done because its problems were over-shadowed by the enormous problems of neighboring slums. Assistance must be provided quickly.
1. In 1950, according to the graph in Document 10, who lived in Bushwick? In 1970, according to the graph, who lived in Bushwick?

2. What do you think might have caused the shift in population?

3. Why does the summary say that relatively little had been done to alleviate Bushwick’s problems?

4. From what you see in your neighborhood today, do you believe that Bushwick got the services that the report suggested?

Document 10

Brooklyn Connections

Bushwick Primary Source Packet


Bushwick: Nothing To Lose

BY PAUL DELANEY

In the mid-1960's, the Bushwick section of Brooklyn was refused model city status because, based on 1968 census data, Federal officials considered it predominantly white and non-poor. Community leaders argued that the statistics were outdated and often took their own census to prove their point in order to qualify for antipoverty programs. Ten years ago, looters in Bushwick poured into the darkness and put their neighborhood in the news as one of the worst slums in the country.

Many Americansreply, erroneously, the slum label to black concentrations in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Chicago's South Side and Watts in Los Angeles. But Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant have neighborhoods that are as fine looking and charming as any in New York. Chicago's South Side includes fashionable Hyde Park, "Pill Hill," where many physicians live, and other middle-class neighborhoods. And in a visitor knows he is in Watts, he might not realize it is supposed to be a slum ghetto.

But the 209-block area of Bushwick leaves no doubt about its qualifying as a gauge of the typical slum of the Seventies. Once the home of more than 200,000 persons, fires, crime and fear have driven out those able to leave and only 84,000 are left. Of those, 60 percent are Hispanic and 60 percent are black, with the remaining comprising a small working-class Italian enclave—most of the 8 percent of the families making $6,000 or more.

The 95 percent owning under $10,000 are black and Hispanic families that live mostly in two- and three-story wooden structures with imitation brick siding that is falling off many of the homes. Almost every household contains more than one family. Over 30 percent of the residents are unemployed. More significantly, 30 percent of the young is probably twice as high, according to James B. Carroll, executive director of the Bushwick Neighborhood Coordinating Council. Mr. Carroll said that more than 60 percent of the residents get some public aid.

Mr. Carroll, as well as scores of residents and businesses, echoed the despair evident in the section. The streets with pot holes, the abandoned litter and all the usual social needs serve as further proof. Residents feel that official New York cares little for the people.

When the lights went out on July 13, stores and shops along Broadway were looted. The next day, continued until police reinforcements arrived, national television audiences saw looters calmly carrying away safes, chairs and stereo sets, pushing grocery carts loaded with food as though it were a weekly shopping trip. Stuffed toys, clothing and other items.

New Yorkers and others were horrified by the scene. The looters were called animals, even by some of their neighbors. Recalling the festival atmosphere during the blackout of 1965, New Yorkers expected a repeat of that November night of kindness and helpfulness. The question is still being asked, why did some persons take time from the streets to do damage?

"Things are different now. A few dozen think it's a joke, but times are harder for those who are poor," Mr. Carroll said.

"They did it because it was easy. They set up for it. Under normal conditions there are nose snubblings every day and some burglaries every night. People feel the cheap stores rip them off all the time. The blackout provided the people the chance to rip off the stores. They didn't know what they were doing, they didn't understand, but it hit them in a couple weeks so it became a good food and it was done out of food."

"There was no moral judgment of whether the looting was right or wrong; there was no remorse about it. Neither, however, did leaders attempt to justify it."

Regardless of the explanations, certain actions you can't justify under any circumstances," said Juan Cruz, sales manager for Popular Ford Company which has been in Bushwick for 30 years.

But, he added, "it doesn't take much to get people here in the streets. It's been in the works for a long time and the key is survival. It's not a matter of pride. It's that nobody's doing anything about the problem."

Today, Bushwick is back to normal. The plight of its citizens was no different a couple days after the blackout than it was a couple days before, except that some residents had a little more unexpected money on the table and a few unanticipated articles of clothing. But the unemployment still stands around one percent. The people are still around on street corners and play cards in the shade.

Paul Delaney is an assistant national news editor for The New York Times.
Document 11b Adaptation:

Bushwick: Nothing To Lose

In the mid-1960’s, the Bushwick section of Brooklyn considered predominantly white and non-poor. Community leaders argued that this information was outdated, and took their own statistics to prove that they qualified for antipoverty programs. Ten nights ago, looters in Bushwick poured into the darkness and put their neighborhood in the news as one of the worst slums in the country.

The 200-block area of Bushwick leaves no doubt about its qualifying as a gauge of the typical slum of the seventies. Once the home of more than 200,000 persons, fires, crime and fear have driven out those able to leave and only 134,000 are left. Of these, 50 percent are Hispanic and 40 percent are black, with the remaining comprising a small working class Italian enclave—most of the 5 percent of the families making $10,000 or more.

The 95 percent earning under $10,000 are black and Hispanic families that live mostly in two-and-three-story wooden structures with imitation brick siding that is falling off many of the homes. Almost every household contains more than one family. Over 30 percent of the residents are unemployed.

When the lights went out on July 13, stores and shops along Broadway were looted. The next day, it continued until police reinforcements arrived. National television audiences saw looters laughingly carting away sofas, chairs and stereo sets, pushing grocery carts loaded with food as though it were the weekly shopping trip, and stuffing bags with clothing and other items.

New Yorkers and others were horrified by the scene. The looters were called animals, even by some of their neighbors.

“They did it because it was easy to do. Under normal conditions there are purse snatching every day and home burglaries every night. People feel the cheap stores rip them off all the time. The blackout provided the people the chance to rip off the stores.

Today, Bushwick is back to normal. The plight of its citizens was no different a couple days after the blackout than it was a couple days before, except that some residents had a little more unexpected food on the table and a few unanticipated articles of
clothing. But the unemployed still stand around on street corners or play cards in the shade.
1. Look at the photograph in Document 11a. Describe the man in the front of the image, as well as the people in the background. What are all these people doing?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. Document 11a shows a blackout in Bushwick, when the electricity went off across New York City. According to the photo caption, when did this happen? How long did it last?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. Read the adaptation of Document 11b. According to this article, how much money do 95% of families in Bushwick earn at this time?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

4. According to Document 11b, why did looters take things from stores during the blackout?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
James Paternoster remembers a time not long ago when all his neighbors on Hart Street in Bushwick were Italians. Some would gather at one of the many outdoor coffee shops that dotted Knickerbocker Avenue; others would play bocce at Maria Hernandez Park.

Even when Bushwick’s Italians began moving out en masse during the late 1970’s, this small sliver on Hart Street between Cypress and St. Nicholas Avenues remained a bastion of the old neighborhood.

Now, though, many Italian residents have left to live with relatives on Long Island, and others have simply died. Only a handful of men still play bocce, and there are fewer than five coffee shops left on the avenue.

But if the Italianness of Hart Street is fading away, it remains an unusual enclave nonetheless: The Filipinos, Indians and other Asians who have moved onto the street have created what is perhaps the most diverse mix ever to live in Bushwick.

“It is getting more immigrants these days,” said the Rev. James Kelly, who has been at St. Brigid Church for 34 years. “I think it’s good for the area. It brings a certain amount of stability in that people are willing to work.”

Mr. Paternoster, 78, who has lived on the street of one-story brick homes for about 30 years, added: “This is the best block in the neighborhood. If I were to sell my house, where would I go?”

According to the 1990 census figures, there were 8,431 Italian residents in Bushwick in 1980, but a decade later, only 3,119 remained. Residents and others say that since the census data were taken back in 1989, many more have left.

Father Kelly said that as the Italians began to leave for the suburbs, Bushwick became another symbol of urban neglect. Buildings were left vacant and others burned down. Graffiti blanketed the area.

But through it all, Hart Street managed to maintain its suburban-like feel. City officials named the street a “model block” in 1980.

“When the changes came to Bushwick, there was no blockbusting over there,” explained Father Kelly. “It was somewhat isolated and they were one-family homes.”

It is exactly that environment that kept the Italians there for so long and has been the lure for new arrivals. Every house has a small patch of lawn in front where vegetables and flowers grow.

“It’s an ideal place for us,” said Sabeetha Mathew, a native of India who moved to Hart Street two years ago with her family. “It's quiet and the trains are not too far.”
1. When does the Document 12 that Italians began moving out of Bushwick?

2. What communities began to move into the neighborhood as the Italians began moving out?

3. Why did Sabeetha Mathew feel that Hart Street was a nice street to live on?

4. What might be challenging about moving from a neighborhood that you’ve lived in for many years?

Document 12
New York is the state with the fourth largest Hispanic population in the nation, with over 70% of all Latinos residing in the New York City Metropolitan area. In the borough of Brooklyn, the Bushwick neighborhood has the highest concentration of Latinos. Since 1990, the Latino population in this particular community district has increased by almost 15%. As indicated in Figure 1, in 1990, Latinos accounted for approximately 66% of the total population in this district, and approximately 69% in years 2000 and 2007. The number of Asians also increased over the 17-year period examined, comprising 3% of the total population in 1990, 3.5% in 2000, and 3.8% in 2007. The non-Hispanic White population showed the greatest increase, from 5.3% in 1990 to 7.8% in 2007. On the other hand, the percentage of the population who are non-Hispanic Blacks decreased from approximately 25% in years 1990 and 2000 to 19.6% in 2007.

Figure 3
Latino Nationalities in Brooklyn Community District 4 as a Percent of the Total Latino Population, 1990-2007
1. From Document 13, which group has seen the most significant increase from 1990 – 2007?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

2. How has the Latino community changed from 1990 – 2007?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

3. Why might it be helpful to have statistics when studying neighborhoods?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

4. What might the downside be to only using statistics?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Document 13

Bushwick Primary Source Packet
GLOSSARY

**Agricultural:** Related to farming or agriculture

**Alleviate:** To reduce pain or trouble

**Depict:** To show in a picture, painting, or photograph

**Economic:** Relating to the economy, often money

**Succumb:** To stop trying to resist something

**Talkie:** A movie with a synched soundtrack, the opposite of a silent film

**Tract:** An area of land

**Vaudeville:** A form of performance, often live performers doing tricks and singing songs and popular before the age of movies