Name: __________________________________________

Adaptation

Cypress Hills was settled in the early 1700s as a part of New Lots of the town of Flatbush. African American slaves farmed the area for Dutch, French, Huguenot, and English landowners, and the community remained rural until the 1800s. One of the first signs of development was the construction of the Jamaica Plank Road (1807), a wooden structure along what is now Jamaica Avenue: two of the road’s toll gates were within today’s Cypress Hills. Fulton Street was also laid out in the early 1800s.

When Union Course racetrack was constructed in 1821, just over the county line in Queens, settlement spread to Brooklyn. A community called Union Place, with roadhouses, blacksmiths, retail shops, and hotels, sprang up to meet the demand of the gamblers, sightseers, and new residents. By 1835, John Pitkin, a merchant from Connecticut, was developing farms in an attempt to build a manufacturing city that he named East New York.

The Long Island Railroad has also begun to serve the area with a line called the Great Eastern Railroad, on tracks that, although nearly inaccessible today, still exist under Atlantic Avenue. These tracks were once elevated west of Warwick Street. As reaching Cypress Hills via public transportation became easy, residents were attracted to the area.

In 1852 the town of New Lots, which encompassed Cypress Hills, was incorporated. The New Lots Town Hall, built in 1873, still stands on Bradford Street, although it has sense become an apartment building. In the mid-1800s, cemeteries north of the neighborhood, including the federal Cypress Hills Cemetery (1848), were planned and developed. It is not certain whether the neighborhood takes its name from this cemetery; possibly both were named for the trees that grew on the local hills. Eighteen cemeteries were eventually developed around and within Cypress Hills.

In 1886 the City of Brooklyn annexed the town of New Lots, including what is now Cypress Hills. By the early 1920s, almost every block of the neighborhood was filled with houses, and by the mid-1920s apartments were even being constructed above Fulton Street stores.

The population has changed grown with the neighborhood. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Cypress Hills was inhabited primarily by Americans of German, Irish, Italian, and Polish descent. This ethnic mix remained primarily the same until the middle of the twentieth century, when African Americans, Central Americans, and South Americans moved to Cypress Hills. Today, Haitian, Jamaican, Indian, Pakistani, Korean, and Chinese residents also call Cypress Hills home.
DOCUMENT 1: Print. *Toll Gate*. 1848. Print. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library,
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the scene in DOCUMENT 1.

2. The title of this image is *Toll Gate*, meaning the structure in the back of the image was where people would pay money to take the Jamaica Plank Road (now Jamaica Avenue). What type of people do you think took this road?

3. What was the area along the road like in the mid-1800s?

4. What do you think is in the barrel in the image?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How was this image created?

2. Describe the scene depicted in the image in detail. Use the caption at the bottom of the image for clues as to what is happening.

3. Cypress Hills Cemetery opened in 1848 and was recognized as one of New York’s most bucolic cemeteries, the land specifically chosen for its beauty. Do you think the opening of the cemetery affected the new stores that opened around it? Why or why not?

4. Why do you think Cypress Hills Cemetery was chosen for the depicted event?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The Union Race Course was a horse racing track situated between what is now 75th and 80th Streets in Cypress Hills. When did it open and what type of businesses did it attract? (Refer to your introductory reading for help.)

2. Why do you think the race course was built so far outside of town?

3. The village of Unionville, later to become the base for Cypress Hills, developed alongside the track. Why do we not call Cypress Hills ‘Unionville’ today?

4. What are three questions you still have about Unionville or the Union Course Track.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Today people refer to this branch of the Brooklyn Public Library as the Arlington Branch. What was it originally called?

2. Who was asked to speak at the opening ceremony? Why do you think those people were asked to speak/attend?

3. The money for the Arlington Branch was donated by a wealthy philanthropist named Andrew Carnegie. In total, Carnegie allowed NYC to build 67 libraries and helped build over 1,700 libraries nationwide. Why do you think Carnegie might have done this?

4. List three questions you still have about the Arlington Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library or Mr. Andrew Carnegie.
**DOCUMENT 5a & 5b:** Photographs.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the buildings in DOCUMENTS 5a and 5b.

2. Both school are very large. Why do you think they decided to build the schools so big? What does that say about the neighborhood?

3. Both PS 65 and PS 108 are landmarked and on the National Register of Historic Places. This means they're protected from being torn down. Why do you think these buildings were chosen to be protected?

4. Should these buildings have been landmarked? Why or why not.
DOCUMENT 6: Photograph. “Rubber mutes the early morning noise of milk delivery.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The Borden’s Milk Company used to have a massive factory on the corner of Schenck Avenue and Atlantic Avenue* where they bottled milk. The wagons in DOCUMENT 6 are milk delivery wagons. What is the main difference between the two wagons?

*The pictured factory is not of the Cypress Hills factory.

2. What does the title of the image suggest as the reason for the updated wagons?

3. Why do you think milk was still being delivered by horse and wagon in 1934, when cars were readily available?

4. Would you have enjoyed being a milk delivery driver? Why or why not?
NO HAY NEGOCIO COMO EL DE ZAPATOS

¿Por qué viajar a Manhattan y otros lugares urbanos para comprar zapatos para usted y su familia? No hay mucho para comprar en los grandes centros comerciales. Pero hay muchas tiendas de zapatos en el vecindario de Cypress Hills. En la tienda de George’s Shoes, puede comprar zapatos casuales, botas, botines, botas, sandalias, zapatos de vestir, y más. La tienda ofrece un gran surtido de zapatos para hombres y mujeres, y algunos ofertas especiales. La tienda está ubicada en la Calle del Mercado, próxima al parque. Los propietarios tienen mucho conocimiento sobre los zapatos, y pueden ayudar con cualquier pregunta que tenga. La tienda está abierta de lunes a viernes de 9 a 5. La tienda también ofrece servicios de reparación de calzado.

SHOE BIZ ISN'T ONLY IN MANHATTAN

Why travel to Manhattan, or other neighborhoods, to buy shoes for you and your family? There is no reason, once during the last two months the customer has more for these new shoes stores right here on Fulton Street in Cypress Hills. And new shoe stores, such as Sneaker Scene, have opened on Fulton Street, and you can enjoy them while shopping.

The Sneaker Scene offers a variety of shoes, such as shoes, boots, sneakers, sandals, shoes, and more. The shoe boutique at Carter Place near Pine Street has affordable women’s shoes by various brands, including Viva, Bella, B & M. Fulton Leather Imports, a fancy store with elaborate window displays, features Italian leather shoes and handbags. The store’s owner, Rocky Davis, says in Naples and Florence, Italy, a few times a week to import merchandise. If you are looking for a “sneaker store” it is definitely Sneaker Scene.

Art Collins, one of the owners of Sneaker Scene, says Fulton Street is a great place to have clothing, because of the foot traffic and the availability of shoes. Collins also notes that many other businesses have opened up nearby, such as the owner of E.J. Haasheen, who has a lot of business. We are really happy, he recently started out,” said the owner of E.J. Haasheen, who has a lot of business.

Continued on p. 3

¡Vea Relatos Navideños Comenzando en la página 4!
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What two languages are represented in DOCUMENT 7.

2. Why do you think the Cypress Hills Local Development Corp. put out a newspaper in two languages?

3. What does this document tell you about who was living in Cypress Hills during the mid-1980s?

4. What else might you learn about Cypress Hills if you were able to read the entire newspaper?
Battle for vet bldg.

Structure slated for demolition

BY ROBERT FLEMING

In a last-ditch effort to sway sentiment from a plan by the federal government, residents of Cypress Hills are battling to save a century-old historic building from the wrecker’s ball with a pitch to local businesses and politicians.

Michelle Neugebauer, the executive director of the Cypress Hills Local Development Corp., said the all-out drive is designed to sidetrack a plan by the Veterans Administration to tear down the lodge building in the Cypress Hills National Cemetery next summer.

The projected cost of demolishing the structure, located in the cemetery at Jamaica and Hale Aves., is $38,000. The projected rehabilitation cost would be nearly $120,000.

“I don’t understand why they want to tear it down,” Neugebauer said. “We have talked to the Veterans Administration, but they are set on demolishing the building. They don’t think its rehabilitation is worth the cost.

“But it’s a historic building, and we would like to see it placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Cypress Hills National Cemetery is the only national cemetery in New York City. It is one of 12 burial sites established by an act of President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 for a final resting place for Civil War dead.

More than 20,000 fallen veterans have been interred there. The lodge building was constructed in 1887 to house a caretaker for the grounds.

The brick-and-stone building, with its original facade and fittings, was closed in 1977. Vandals set it ablaze two years ago and it suffered considerable damage. The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation’s proposal is to rehabilitate the lodge for use as an apartment for a needy veteran, a museum, and a neighborhood conference facility.

The rehabilitation push will move in high gear Nov. 13 with a tour of the lodge for local politicians, bank officials, and representatives of utility companies and foundations. Residents of the community are hoping to raise funds and to get a congressional commitment to halt the demolition.

‘Symbol to youth’

“We are outraged that the Veterans Administration would even consider demolishing the building,” said State Assemblyman Thomas Catapano (D-Cypress Hills, East New York, and Bushwick), a major supporter of the drive.

“For years, it has been the symbol to the young people of Cypress Hills and the families of those brave veterans that we have not forgotten them.

“We are now calling on the government, the private sector, and interested citizens to join us in honoring those valiant men and women by saving the building from the bulldozers.”
Transcription of “Battle for vet bldg.”

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the Veterans Administration want to demolish the building instead of restore it?

2. What argument did the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation make for keeping the building?

3. What did the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation plan to do with the building if they were able to save and restore it?

4. Based on the article, who do you agree with, the Veterans Administration or the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation? Why?
To his neighbors on Essex Street in Cypress Hills, Eddie Marks was crazy. Back in 1986, the 21-year-old Marks, who had grown up on the block, suggested that it would be a good idea to transform the vacant lot on the corner into a community garden. The neighbors, calling Marks a wild-eyed optimist, looked at the garbage-strewn lot and suggested that, even if the garbage were cleaned out, it wouldn’t last a day. But Marks, now 24, had the last laugh. With the help of Operation Green Thumb and a group of energetic youngsters, the Essex St. Neighbors Block Association’s garden was cited by the Citizens Committee for New York City at its annual awards dinner.

“I was in China as part of a student exchange program with City College when I got a letter that we had been selected for the honor,” said Marks. “I still had several weeks remaining in China, but I wouldn’t want to get home.”

While there had been a block association on Essex St., Marks said it had dissolved over the years. “We always had block parties when I was growing up, and they sort of stopped. We organized one for the kids on the block and from that we discussed the garden.

The more skeptical neighbors were convinced the garden wouldn’t last past the first winter. But now it is the centerpiece of the community. The garden is used now for community run theatrical events, concerts, dance performances and activities for children.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did citizens of Cypress Hills call Eddie Marks a “wild-eyed optimist”?

2. As of 1989, what was the garden used for?

3. Why do you think Marks thought having a community garden would help the neighborhood of Cypress Hills?

4. Can you think of a place in your neighborhood that needs to be cleaned up? Where is it and what would you do with the space once it was clean?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. DOCUMENT 10 shows the old Borden’s Milk Factory at the corner of Schenck and Atlantic, now boarded up and abandoned. Describe the building as it looked when it was first created.

2. What does the tilework (shown in the smaller image on the right) depict and what does it tell you about this building’s past?

3. If you could do anything you wanted with this building, what would you do with it?

4. If this building was remodeled to better serve Cypress Hills, what might the building be turned into?
VOCABULARY:

Huguenot: French Protestants who fled France in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

Bucolic: Pastoral, rural, pristine

Depict: To show

Philanthropist: Someone who donates a great amount of money to good causes

Sentiment: A thought or attitude influenced by feelings

Valiant: Bold or brave

Skeptical: Doubtful