



# NEW UTRECHT & BENSONHURST PROJECT PACKET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

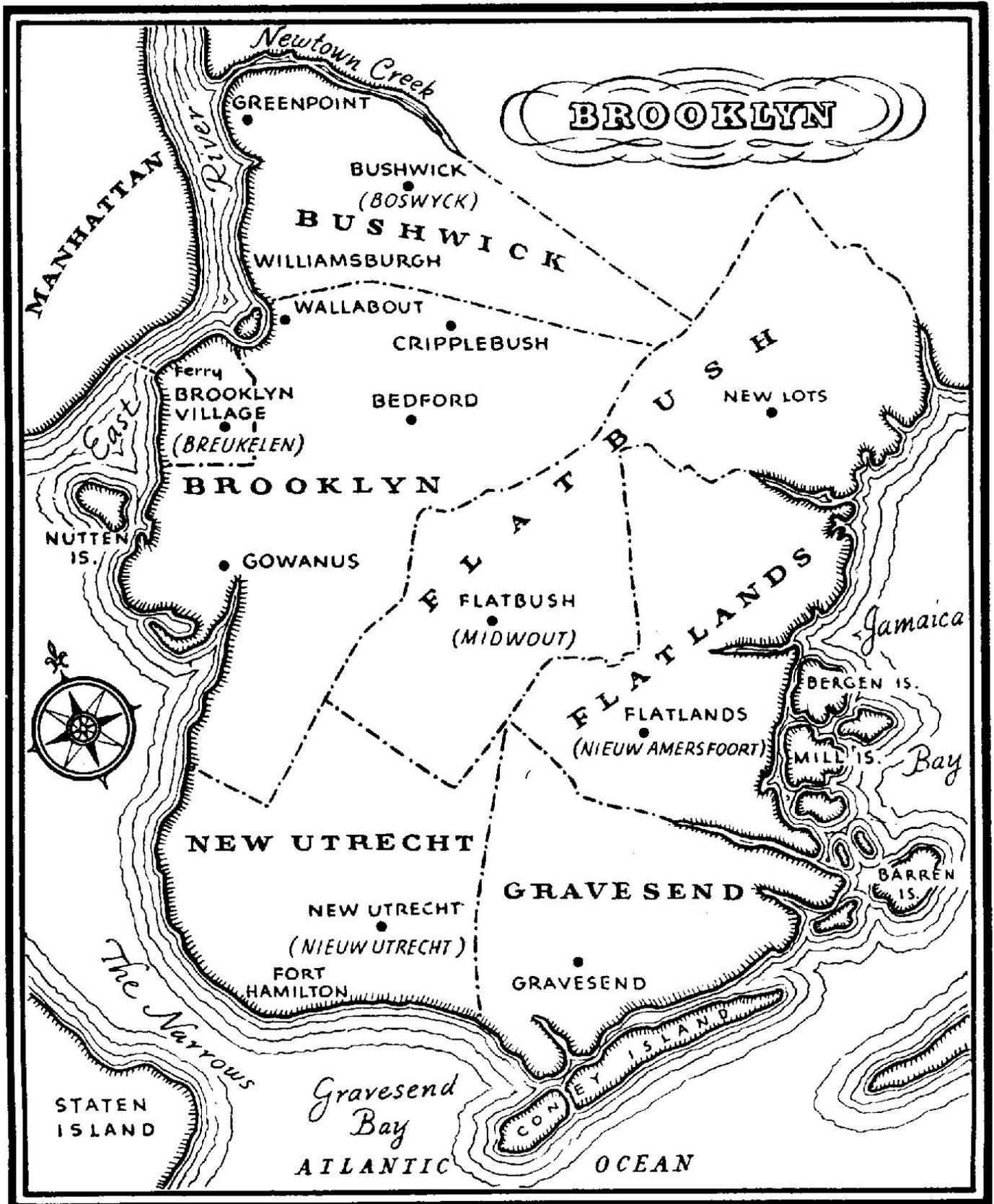


**INTRODUCTORY READING:** “New Utrecht.” *Encyclopedia of the City of New York*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Haven: Yale, 2012. Print.



Neighborhood in southwestern Brooklyn, lying within Bensonhurst. The land was inhabited by Nyack Indians in 1647 when the governor of New Netherland granted a deed to Anthony Jansen van Salee. It became one of the first six towns in Kings County and included what became Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, Dyker Heights, Mapleton, and Bay Ridge. The first European settlement was a house and a mill built in 1652 by Cornelius van Werckhoven (a schepen, or alderman, in Utrecht in the Netherlands), his two children, and their tutor, Jacques Cortelyou. After van Werckhoven's death in 1655 Cortelyou assumed leadership of the settlement, secured patents for land later occupied by Fort Hamilton, and divided the parcel into 20 plots of 0 acres (20 hectares) each, the last of which he reserved for the town's poor. In 1677 residents formed the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church: its building, erected in 1828, stands at 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 83<sup>rd</sup> Street.

By 1738 there were 282 inhabitants, of whom 119 were slaves. Farmers raised cattle and grew grains and tobacco. The population grew to 907 in 1810, 1009 in 1820, 2129 in 1850, and 4742 in 1880, as residents gradually sold land to developers who built suburban houses. The remaining truck farmers grew vegetables to sell to the growing population of Brooklyn. The opening of the Sea Beach, Coney Island, and West End steam railroads in the 1870s accelerated developments of the area as a suburb. New Utrecht lost its identity when it was annexed by the City of Brooklyn in 1894 and is now considered a small neighborhood of Bensonhurst.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**



1. What names on this map do you not recognize?

2. How does this map help you better understand early Brooklyn?

3. If you had to live in one of the original six towns, which one would you want to live in and why?

4. After looking at the map, what are two questions you have?

**DOCUMENT 2a:** Brown, A. View of the house in New Utrecht L.I. 1946. Print.  
Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

**2b:** Austin, Daniel Berry. *Van Brunt house, NE, 83 St. near 18th Ave., New Utrecht.* 1906.  
Print. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**



1. What is similar about the two houses?

2. What is different about the two houses?

3. Each house has a small building attached to the side. What do you think that room/building might have been used for?

4. **DOCUMENT 2a** depicts a scene nearly 200 years before **DOCUMENT 2b** was taken. Imagine **DOCUMENT 2b** in the time period of **DOCUMENT 2a**. What would be different? Describe it below using specific observations from *both* documents.

## New Utrecht Plans a Big Celebration.

The one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the evacuation of New York by the British soldiers, which will be celebrated in the former town of New Utrecht on November 25 next by the members and friends of the Liberty Pole Association, recently incorporated at Albany, is an event that is being talked of with considerable interest by the residents of the old town. The real celebration appertains to the erection of the

big liberty pole which was put up on the lawn in front of the present New Utrecht Reformed Church at Eighteenth avenue and Eighty-fourth street, immediately following the evacuation. As has been said before, the pole is the only liberty pole on Long Island, and is one of the few landmarks remaining to remind one of the fact that old New Utrecht had once been the stamping ground of the red-coated English soldiers. The old town still has a few old houses that are a matter of more than ordinary interest to the present residents.

When George Washington and his army struck the trail along Kings Highway, that old road was one of a few in the town. Old State's Lane formed a part of the highway. It extended from a point near what is now Fifteenth avenue and Main street through the present Dyker Heights section. When that residential place was laid out, the old lane was wiped off the map. Kings Highway, too, disappeared between Eighteenth and Twenty-second avenues about that time. The old Benson farm, which was purchased by James D. Lynch and developed into what is now known as Bensonhurst, and the Van Pelt farm, which was purchased and cut up into building lots by John Lott and George E. Nostrand, made it necessary to remove the old Kings Highway.



There are a few of the old houses, however, still standing along the line of the former highway, one of which is the old house occupied and owned by Townsend C. Van Pelt at Eighteenth avenue and Eighty-first street. The old Benson homestead is still in existence, on its original site at what is now Benson and Twentieth avenues. In this old house, now owned and occupied by Walter E. Parfitt and family, George Washington dined during his stay in those parts. One proud resident has a cribbage board made of a piece of the George Washington dining table.

The old town didn't appear to grow very fast in those days. The only means of reaching the village of Brooklyn was by stage through what is now Bath avenue and thence by an old road around the fortifications at Fort Hamilton.

Bath Beach and that part of the old town commenced to grow about 1880. The place was then known as Bath, but when the residents concluded to have a post office established the name was changed to Bath Beach.

Bath Beach was unable to get along without a police force, and Supervisor Fergusson sent word to Town Clerk Moore that he would receive applications. Detective Sergeant Thomas Mulvey, who was attached to police headquarters in New York City, lived in Bath Beach at that time. He was retired on half pay by the City Department and was appointed captain of the Bath Beach force. Jim Clinch, an old timer in the town, was made a sergeant. All prisoners were taken to the Town Hall in Fort Hamilton, where all the voting was also carried on, and some great fights took place there. When the Town of New Utrecht was annexed to the former City of Brooklyn Mulvey and Martin White, the latter having been appointed a captain of the Fort Hamilton police, fought to retain their rank in the city. Both failed, however, and they were reduced to patrolmen. They were made detectives, and Mulvey was later made a detective sergeant.

White is a detective in the Sheepshead Bay precinct.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**



1. Summarize the article in three to four sentences. What is the gist?

2. What is the significance of the liberty pole?

3. How did New Utrecht play a role in the Revolutionary War?

4. How did Bensonhurst get its name?

**DOCUMENT 4:** *F.W. Beers Atlas of Long Island, N.Y.* New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1873. Print.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Describe New Utrecht in 1873.

2. The names on the map represent the owners of the associated land. Which names do you recognize? Why?

3. There is a square of buildings next to which the Coney Island Railroad passes. What types of businesses might be on that square? (Remember, it's 1873.)

4. Which roads/features are still around today?

**DOCUMENT 5:** "Eighty-Sixth Street, Bensonhurst, Brooklyn." 190-?. Print. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



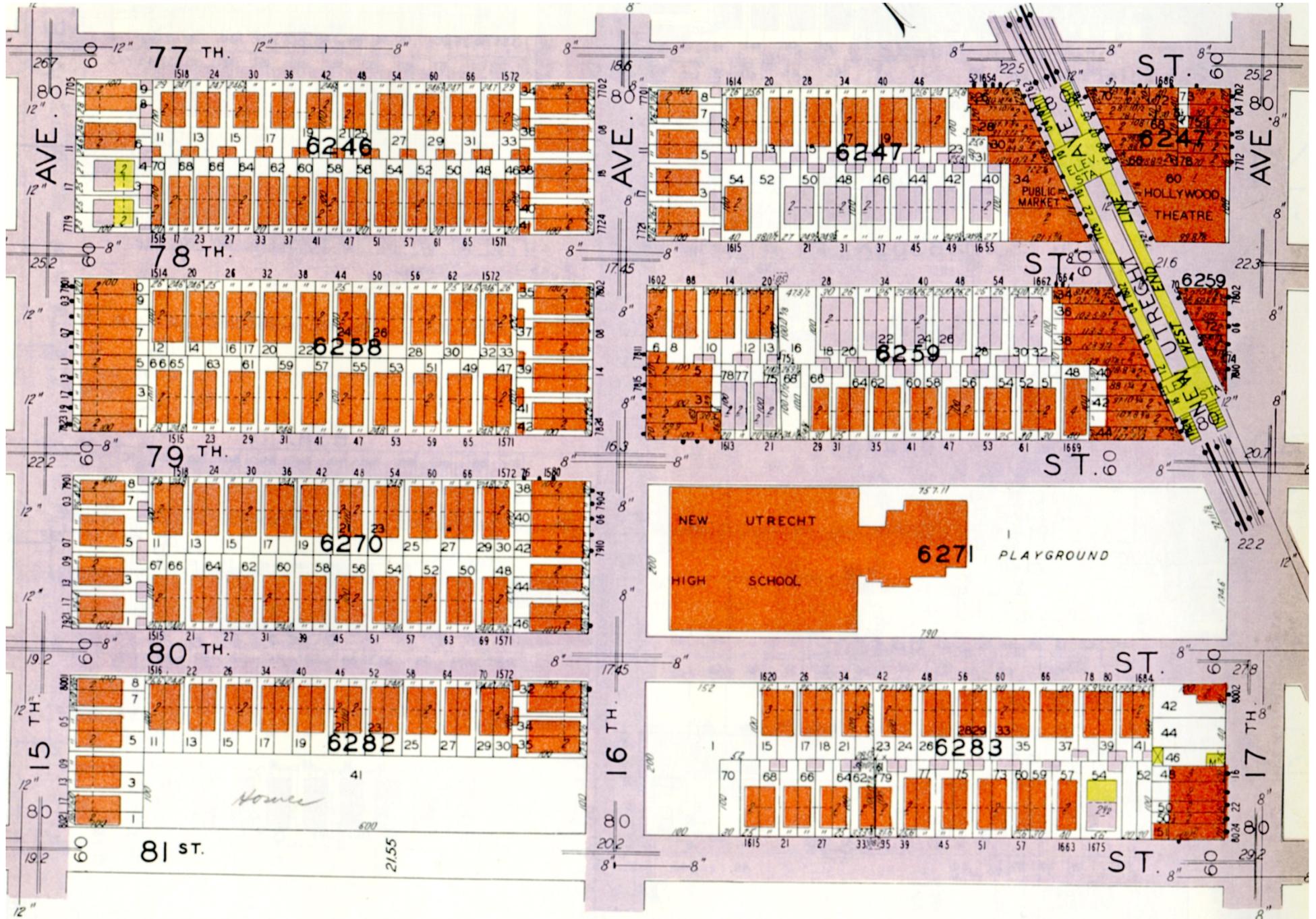
**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Describe the street scene.

2. What information from the postcard provides evidence that it was created in the early 1900s?

3. 86<sup>th</sup> Street looks quite different now. What are the most significant differences between 86<sup>th</sup> Street today and this postcard?





**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Looking at **DOCUMENT 6a**, how would you describe the area? (Note: orange buildings are brick, yellow are wood, and pink are concrete/stone.)

2. **DOCUMENT 6b** shows the same area, just under a decade later. What major differences do you see?

3. Why might the neighborhood have swelled so quickly? What might have been the cause?

4. What was on the block where New Utrecht High School was built in 1921?

5. There are many businesses under the train. What types of businesses were there in 1929? What types of businesses are there today?

**DOCUMENT 7a:** "Report Card, Albert Thusty." 1935. Print. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

Front

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DEPT. OF EDUCATION, THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
REPORT TO PARENT

NEW UTRECHT HIGH SCHOOL

WORK OF Thusty, Albert

TERM ENDING January 1935

Subject	Dates			NAME
English 58a)	75	85	90	Mrs. Silverberg
Latin, Greek, French				
Greek, French, German				
French, German Spanish				
Mathematics				
Science				
History and Civics 47a	90	90	90	Mrs. Kaplan
Typewriting 14	65	65	65	Mrs. Silverman
Bookkeeping 6	70	80	95	Mr. Goldberg
Stenography 32	80	75	78	Mrs. Spigel
P. T. 3	P	P	75	Earth
5				
174 1/2 = 21 1/2				
Absent				
Late				

YEAR CLASS SEC. ROOM  
3 5 208

*M. Chausse*  
PRINCIPAL  
for Passing Mark 65%

H. S. Form 15

Back

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year Class Sec. Room \_\_\_\_\_

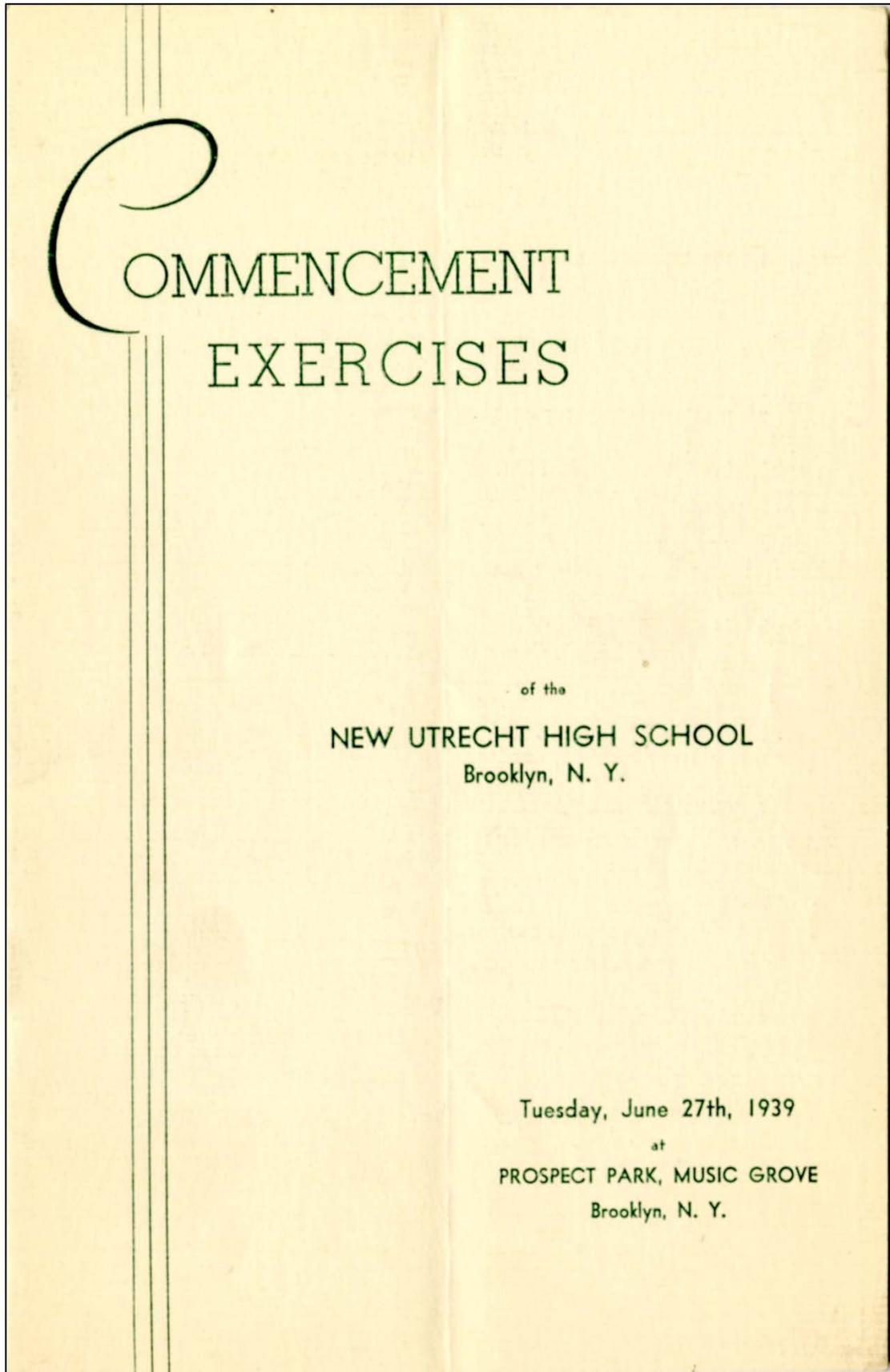
To the Principal: I have examined report of this date \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Remarks	Parent's Signature
10/22/30		Mrs. R. Thusty
12/10/35		Mr. R. Thusty

A or B Indicates satisfactory Work; C Unsatisfactory; D, Failure  
Honorably Discharged \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

H. S. Form 15 Principal

**DOCUMENT 7b:** "Commencement Exercises." 27 June 1939. Print. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



# PROGRAM

1. PROCESSIONAL  
Under the Double Eagle ..... Wagner  
National Emblem ..... Bagley  
BAND and BUGLE & DRUM CORPS.  
Samuel B. Charry, Director
2. READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES
3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG  
THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER
4. ADDRESS  
Lillian Karelitz, Leader of Girls' Arista
5. CONCERT NUMBER  
"Three Kings", Cornet Trio with Band ..... W. M. Smith  
School Band
6. ADDRESS  
Jerome Meslin, Leader of Boys' Arista
7. CONCERT NUMBER  
"The Spirit of Pageantry" ..... Fletcher  
School Band
8. ADDRESS  
Mr. David H. Moskowitz,  
Assistant Superintendent
9. AWARD OF PRIZES  
Dr. Maurice E. Rogalin,  
Principal
10. AWARD OF DIPLOMAS
11. SCHOOL SONG
12. RECESSIONAL  
"On The Mall" ..... Goldman

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

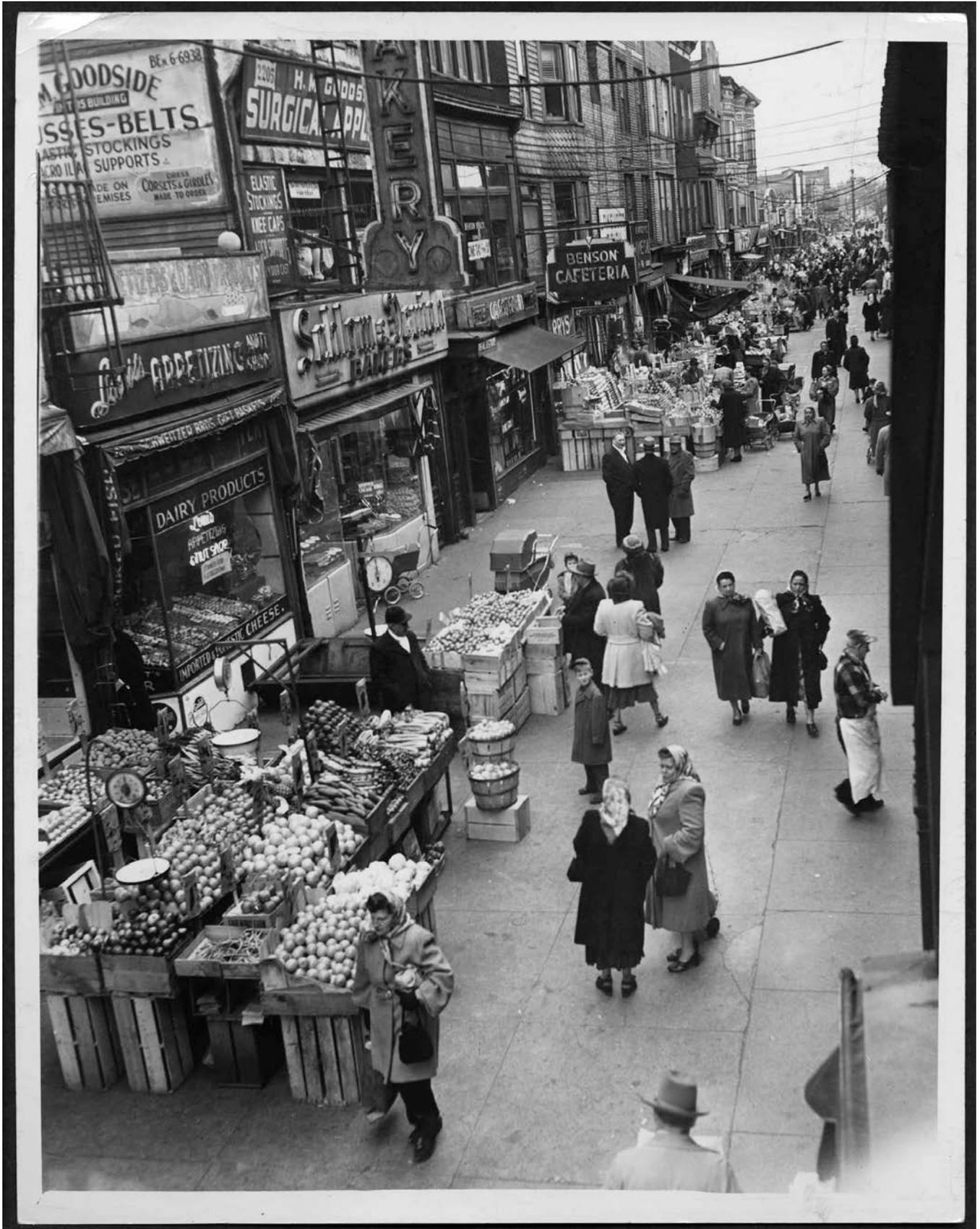
1. Looking at **DOCUMENT 7a**, are the classes offered in 1935 still offered today?

2. The back of the report card has a line entitled "Honorably Discharged." What might that mean?

3. Is there anything listed on the agenda on **DOCUMENT 7b** that you might not find at a New Utrecht High School graduation ceremony today? What is it and why do you think that?

4. After looking at the documents, what are two questions you have about going to school at New Utrecht High School in the 1930s?

**DOCUMENT 8:** "Shopping, No Problem." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 1941. Print.  
Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Make ten observations about the street scene. (Ten words, do not write in complete sentences.)

2. What types of things are being sold?

3. Make an inference: what season was this photo taken during? Support your inference with evidence from the photograph.

4. What is something in the photo that you would like to know more about?

# Mob's a familiar face on this B'klyn street

By **JERRY CAPECI**

Daily News Staff Writer

The 1400 block of 86th St. in Brooklyn was steeped in Mafia history and folklore long before the slaying of reputed Gambino underboss Frank DeCicco.

According to court records, mobsters from four families have long been involved in the goings-on at many of the businesses along the street between 14th and 15th Aves.

In the 1960s, maverick Mafia boss Joe Colombo was listed as a real estate salesman for Cantalupo Realty, at 1434 86th St., across the street from the site of DeCicco's murder. Owner Anthony Cantalupo was hauled before state committees but never was accused of any wrongdoing.

In the 1970's Cantalupo's son, Joseph, wore a wire for the FBI and spied on the mob for six years while working at his father's office.

Cantalupo tape-recorded mobsters in a Chinese restaurant down the block at 1406 86th St., gathering evidence that would later be used to prosecute Colombo family underboss Alphonse (Allie Boy) Persico and late Genovese crime family boss Frank (Funzi) Tieri.

During Tieri's racketeering trial in 1980, Cantalupo explained how Tieri invoked the name of Scarpaci's Funeral Home at 1401 86th St. to warn Cantalupo's uncle not to sell pizza at a restaurant that competed with one owned by a friend of Tieri.

"If your uncle thinks he's going to put pizza in Eddie Arcaro's (restaurant), he's better off putting pizza in Scarpaci's," Cantalupo quoted Tieri as telling him while pointing to the funeral home."

Baron Buick, at 1453 86th St., lost a few windows in the blast that killed DeCicco, but it suffered other kinds of violence at the hands of Colombo's oldest son, Anthony, according to a federal indictment filed in Brooklyn.

Colombo and his cohorts allegedly vandalized scores of Baron's cars when its owners resisted demands of monthly extortion payments, according to the indictment.

Before former mob boss Paul Castellano was executed last December, he often dined at Tommaso's Italian restaurant at 1464 86th St.—right next door to the social club that DeCicco visited minutes before he was killed in Sunday's bomb blast.

And last January, mob lawyer Martin Light told a presidential commission that Luchese family consigliere Christopher Furnari held court at the 19th Hole, a bar at 1401 86th St., which went out of business last year.

Yesterday, notwithstanding its checkered history, Jo Ann Fasulo, 33, who works at Cammareri Bakery at 1476 86th St., echoed many residents and workers and said she was "not afraid to go to work or shop on 86th St."

"Overall it is a very safe neighborhood," she said.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Summarize the article in three to four sentences. What is the gist?

2. What are some of the crimes committed by Mafia members described in the article?

3. This article is in response to the “slaying of reputed Gambino underboss Frank DiCicco.” After reading the article, what are two questions you have about Frank DiCicco or his death?

4. At the end of the article, a woman says that she still feel safe in the neighborhood. Why do you think she wasn't worried about the violence?

**DOCUMENT 9:** Dodin, Lev. *Columbus Day Parade #3*. 1997. Print. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



© Brooklyn Connections – Brooklyn Public Library

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. The annual Columbus Day Parade has been a fixture of Bensonhurst since 1981. What materials do you think were used to create the costume depicted in DOCUMENT 9?

2. If you saw a person dressed as Christopher Columbus with a massive head walking down the street on a normal day, what would your reaction be?

3. Why is Columbus Day so important to the Italian community? (If you're not sure, think about Christopher Columbus' ethnicity.)

4. The neighborhood demographics have changed drastically since 1981. How do you think the parade has changed since it began?

5. Have you been to the parade? If so, what did you see? If you have not been, would you like to go? Why or why not?

**DOCUMENT 10:** Thompson, Gabriel. "The United Nations of Brooklyn." *New York Times* 21 Oct 2007. Print.

### The United Nations of Brooklyn

*Bensonhurst, once branded as insular and bigoted, has emerged as the borough's equivalent of Jackson Heights, home to as many Russians as Brighton Beach, and as many Chinese as Sunset Park.*

Hudoykul Hafizov, a soft-spoken, slightly built immigrant from Uzbekistan, works as inventory manager at Silver Rod Pharmacy in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, and he has a favorite joke: "I person who knows three languages is trilingual. Someone who knows two languages is bilingual. But do you know what they call a person who speaks only one language?"

Pausing for a beat, Mr. Hafizov replied triumphantly to his own question, "American! Smiling broadly, he adjusted his reading glasses and returned to his typing.

Mr. Hafizov, who is 36 years old and emigrated in 2000 from the ancient city of Samarkand, himself speaks five languages: English, Uzbek, Russian, Tajik and Turkish. Despite his official title at the pharmacy, he like most of the 40 employees, is frequently summoned to play interpreter, to explain medication instructions or shipping options to immigrant customers who use the store's Western Union services to send remittance checks back home.

In microcosm, the little drugstore and its customers tell a striking and, in some respects, unfamiliar story of ethnic change. Bensonhurst, which sits snugly south of Borough Park and east of Bay Ridge, is in nearly every respect not what it used to be.

As recently as the 1980s, nearly everyone who worked at the pharmacy had been born in Italy, or least in Brooklyn. Over the last decade or so, this has changed. The pharmacy's work force now includes people from around the globe – from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Georgia and Russia, from Mexico and Panama, China and Korea, Pakistan and Bangladesh. A total of 16 languages are spoken in this single storefront on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue near 65<sup>th</sup> Street.

The diversity of the pharmacy's staff has both mirrored and been a response to the growing diversity of the neighborhood. People often talk about the melting pot that is 21<sup>st</sup>-century Queens. Yet other the past decade, and with little fanfare, Bensonhurst has evolved into one of the city's largest and most diverse immigrant communities.

Its two primary zip codes are home to more immigrants than any other neighborhood of Brooklyn – about 76,000 of the neighborhood's 158,000 residents are foreign born – more, even, than better-known immigrant destinations like Jackson Heights or Elmhurst.

Census data shows that Bensonhurst has as many Russians as Brighton Beach, and many Chinese as Sunset Park. About 10,000 Ukrainians call it home, along with 2,500 Latin Americans and almost as many Pakistanis. Two-thirds of Bensonhurst households speak a language other than English at home.

All of this might be surprising to many people, given that in 1989, less than two decades ago, Bensonhurst's reputation as an insular and sometimes bigoted neighborhood was cemented with the murder of Yusuf Hawkins. A 16-year old African-American from East New York, Brooklyn, Yusuf had been visiting the area to inquire about a used car when he was surrounded by a gang of white youths wielding baseball bats and shot to death.

Barely a generation later, the neighborhood that came to personify racial hostility has emerged to become the new face of the city's diversity. (The one exception remains African-Americans and African immigrants, excluding Egyptians, who continue to make up fewer than 1 percent of the residents, although whether this is due to the lingering effect of the Yusuf Hawkins shooting is difficult to determine.)

"You have all types of people here," Mr. Hafizov said, as he sat in the pharmacy's basement, surrounded by boxes of medication, and entered price codes into a computer database. "It makes you feel like a small fish in a big ocean."

### **Unlike Anywhere Else**

It is a testament to the insular nature of neighborhoods that when New Yorkers think of Bensonhurst, many still think only of Italians or perhaps Jews. Its very name suggests a place where the faces are wrinkled and white, where women trade recipes from the old country and men with names like Mancini and Scotto wax nostalgic about life on the docks.

But the neighborhood that was the setting for the 1970s television series "Welcome Back, Kotter," giving a young John Travolta his star-making role as the high school ringleader Vinnie Barbarino, has sense hemorrhaged Italians. From 1980 to 2000, half the residents of Italian descent left, and the number now is just under 60,000.

Isabel Moccia, who has worked at Silver Rod for 15 years, is one of the pharmacy's few remaining employees from Italy. "The small group of Italians that are still here, they're not happy," Ms. Moccia said. It is not that the neighborhood's indigenous Italians object to the newer arrivals, she said. "They're angry at all the Italians who have left. They say that they're greedy, that they just took the money and ran."

By flocking to Bensonhurst in the early 1900s, Italians transformed the neighborhood. Their departure is having an equally profound effect. "It's unlike anywhere else in the city," said Joseph Salvo, director of the population division at the Department of City Planning. "The key is that the Italian community was just so large and tight, and now that they're leaving, it's created the largest vacuum of housing availability in the city. And immigrants are the ones quickly filling the vacuum."

Across the street from [Milestone] Park sits the oldest institution in Bensonhurst, the New Utrecht Reformed Church, which has witnessed wave after wave of immigrants pass through its doors. Founded in 1677 by Dutch immigrants, the church was once visited by George Washington, and it was designated a city landmark in 1966. [Over the years, Chinese, Korean, and Russian congregations formed and held their own services.]

**DOCUMENT QUESTIONS:**

1. What immigrant groups lived in Bensonhurst in the mid-twentieth century?

2. What new immigrant groups have begun to arrive in the neighborhood?

3. What is your reaction to Isabella Moccia's comment: "They're angry at all the Italians who have left. They say that they're greedy, that they just took the money and ran."

4. Bensonhurst is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in New York City. What do you like about going to school in such a diverse neighborhood?

5. Bensonhurst's population has changed significantly over the last few years. In 20 years, what do you predict Bensonhurst's population will look like? Why do you think that?