

**BROOKLYN**

**CONNECTIONS**



**WEEKSVILLE**  
PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Student Name



**INTRODUCTORY READING** Maynard, Joan Bacchus and Craig Steven Wilder. "Weeksville." *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. 2nd ed. 2010, pp. 1392.

### ***Adaptation***

Weeksville is a former neighborhood in Brooklyn, bounded to the north by Fulton Street, to the east by Ralph Avenue, to the south by Eastern Parkway, and to the west by Troy Avenue.

The area was settled by blacks shortly after the **abolition** of slavery in New York State in 1827 and grew during and after the Civil War. It was named for James Weeks, a settler who moved there from Virginia in 1838; his property was formerly part of the vast **estate** of the Lefferts family.

Susan Smith McKinney-Steward, the first black female **physician** in New York State and the third in the nation, was born in 1847 in the neighborhood, which was first shown on a map in 1849; the main street was Schenectady Avenue south of Atlantic Avenue.

The residents sheltered many of the black victims of the **New York City Draft Riots** in 1863, and several soldiers who fought with the New York regiments of the United States Colored Troops came from this district. The area was once the site of the Howard Colored Orphanage Asylum, the Zion Home for Aged Relief and the African Civilization Society.

It lost its identity during the rapid growth of Brooklyn after the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. From about 1968 the name of Weeksville was revived, amid a growing interest in local history, historic preservation, and black heritage.

The Hunterfly Road Houses, a city **landmark** at 1698-1708 Bergen Street, are the only surviving houses of a group built parallel to a seventeenth century road. The Bethel Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church (1847) and the Berean Missionary Baptist Church (1851) still serve the neighborhood; Colored School no. 2 (1847) became Public School 243 (the Weeksville School).





Document 1A - Colton, J.H. "Map of the Country Thirty Three Miles around the City of New York." 1852.





Document 1B - "Weeksville Brooklyn Map." *Weeksville, Brooklyn*, Wikipedia, 30 Aug. 2009.

1. Take a look at DOCUMENT 1A. What year is it from?

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2. List 3 towns you see on DOCUMENT 1A:

a)

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b)

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c)

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3. Circle Weeksville on DOCUMENT 1A and describe where it's located:

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4. DOCUMENT 1B is a modern map of Weeksville's location. What Brooklyn neighborhoods border it?

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5. What do you think the "Hunterfly Road" track represents on DOCUMENT 1B?

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**Document 1A** - Colton, J.H. "Map of the Country Thirty Three Miles around the City of New York." 1852.  
**Document 1B** - "Weeksville Brooklyn Map." *Weeksville, Brooklyn*, Wikipedia, 30 Aug. 2009.







**Document 2A** - Weeksville Lady Tintype, ca.1880. "Weeksville Bash at BAM." 9 Sept 1973. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



*Anonymous couple.* Photograph found during the Weeksville excavations.  
By courtesy of The Weeksville Society and The Long Island Historical Society.

**Document 2B** - *Black History, A Celebration at the Brooklyn Museum.*  
Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Describe the person in DOCUMENT 2A:

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2. Describe the people in DOCUMENT 2B:

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3. DOCUMENT 2A and DOCUMENT 2B are pictures of previous Weeksville residents. What can you infer about Weeksville based on the manner in which these individuals are dressed?

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4. Are the people in the photographs dressed differently than people today? What has changed and what has stayed the same? Be specific.

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**Document 2A** - Weeksville Lady Tintype, ca.1880. "Weeksville Bash at BAM." 9 Sept 1973. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

**Document 2B** - *Black History, A Celebration at the Brooklyn Museum*. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



## First Black Woman Doctor

BY BERTELLE BERRY

Dr. Susan McKinney Steward, a native Brooklynite, was the first Black woman to become a physician.

She began her studies in the

New York Medical School for Women and Children, where she was a valedictorian of her graduating class.

Dr. Steward was the only female in her class at Long Island College Hospital, where she did post-graduate work.

### Aged People

She was one of the founders of the Woman's Royal Union of New York and Brooklyn, as she was very interested in the progress of women in medicine. Dr. Steward also was a board member of the Brooklyn Home for Aged Colored People and a member of the Kings County Homeopathic Society.

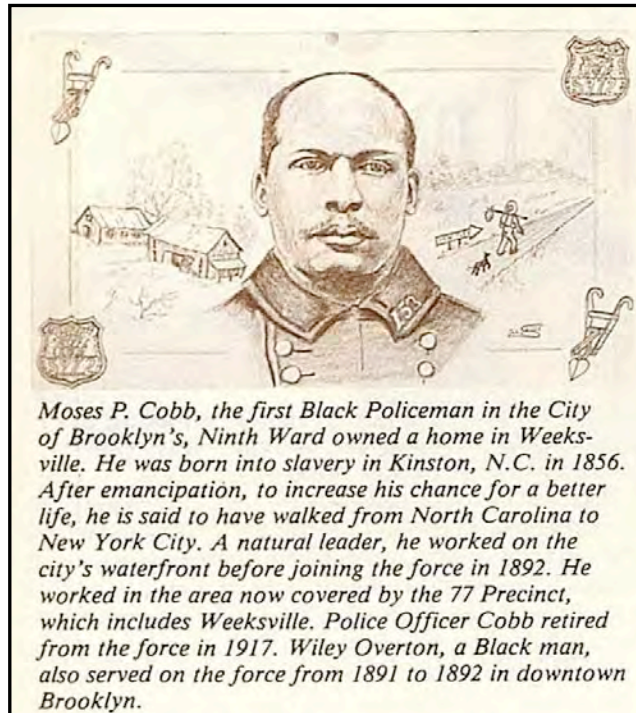
She was married to the Reverend T.G. Steward, a U.S. Army chaplain and instructor at Wilberforce University. Wilberforce



DR. SUSAN MCKINNEY STEWART

then became her home. She died in 1918.

**Document 3A** - Berry, Bertelle. "First Black Woman Doctor." *New York Amsterdam News*, 18 May 1974.



*Moses P. Cobb, the first Black Policeman in the City of Brooklyn's, Ninth Ward owned a home in Weeksville. He was born into slavery in Kinston, N.C. in 1856. After emancipation, to increase his chance for a better life, he is said to have walked from North Carolina to New York City. A natural leader, he worked on the city's waterfront before joining the force in 1892. He worked in the area now covered by the 77 Precinct, which includes Weeksville. Police Officer Cobb retired from the force in 1917. Wiley Overton, a Black man, also served on the force from 1891 to 1892 in downtown Brooklyn.*

**Document 3B** - Maynard, Joan, and Gwen Cottman. *Weeksville, Then & Now: The Search to Discover, the Effort to Preserve, Memories of Self in Brooklyn, New York.* Society for the Preservation of Weeksville & Bedford-Stuyvesant History, 1983.

1. According to DOCUMENT 3A, who was Susan McKinney Stewart?

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2. Why do you think Susan McKinney Stewart's achievements are important to Weeksville's history?

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3. Who was Moses Cobb, according to DOCUMENT 3B?

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4. Why did Moses Cobb move to Weeksville? What opportunities do you think Weeksville gave to former slaves like Cobb?

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# Weeksville Negro Church Reaches Age of 90 Years

## Bethel African Methodists to Mark Anniversary by Elaborate Program

Who knowsh where Weeksville is? For the benefit of the puzzled, Weeksville is in Brooklyn, settled as a village over a century ago and named from James Weeks, the first colored Freeman to purchase property in that section. The old village of Weeksville lies between what is now Howard Ave., Sumner Ave., Bergen St. and Decatur St., and has at least 15 Negro churches grown from the one church founded 90 years ago.

The Bethel African Methodist Church was established in 1845 under the direction of Bishop Paul Quinn and laid its cornerstone June 15, 1845. Three churches have been built, the present site being Schenectady Ave. and Dean St. The church from the beginning has stood as a church, a school and a social center for the colored population which now numbers 15,000 in its adult church membership, with a church property valuation of over \$250,000.

### Loyal Americans

Members of Bethel Church have served in three wars in Uncle Sam's service. Frank Jackson, now an old man and senior steward of the church, served on the U. S. S. Trenton which escorted General Grant on his famous tour around the world.

The 90th anniversary program will open on Sunday, March 31 and continue through April 14 with outstanding leaders, both Negro and white co-operating. The Rev. Louis Harding Midgette, pastor, was born in the South and trained in the North and was converted by Mr. Jackson, then his Sunday School teacher. He is a graduate of Lincoln University, Drew Theological Seminary and Y. M. C. A. College at Springfield, Mass.

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1. Where does DOCUMENT 4 say Weeksville is located?

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2. What is this document celebrating?

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3. Why do you think this celebration is important to the Weeksville community? Do you think there are many Black churches that are as old as Bethel African Methodist Church? Why or why not?

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4. According to the document, what contributions have members of Bethel African Methodist Church made to their country?

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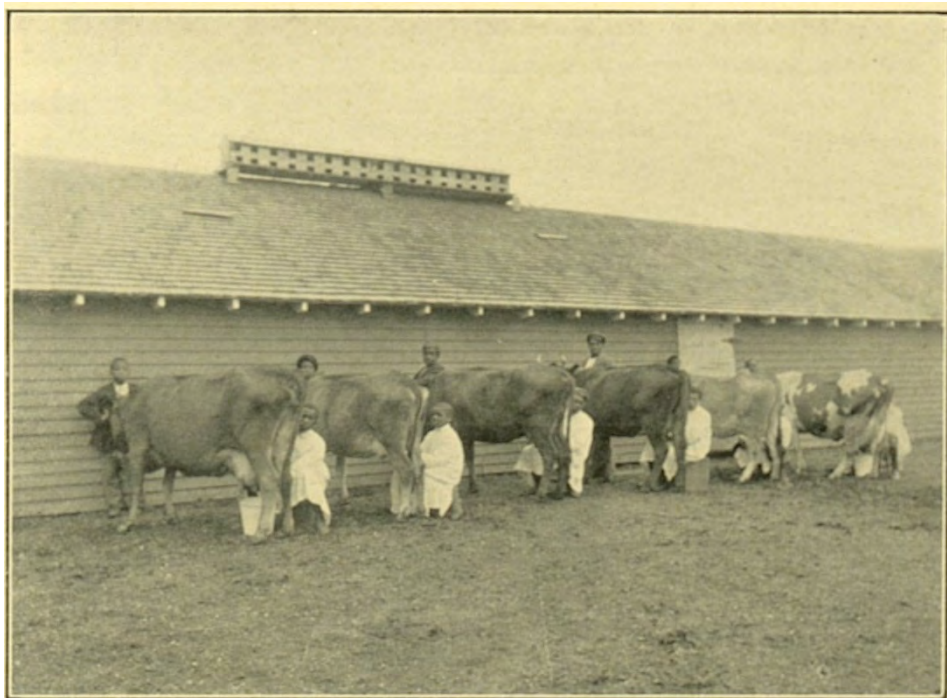
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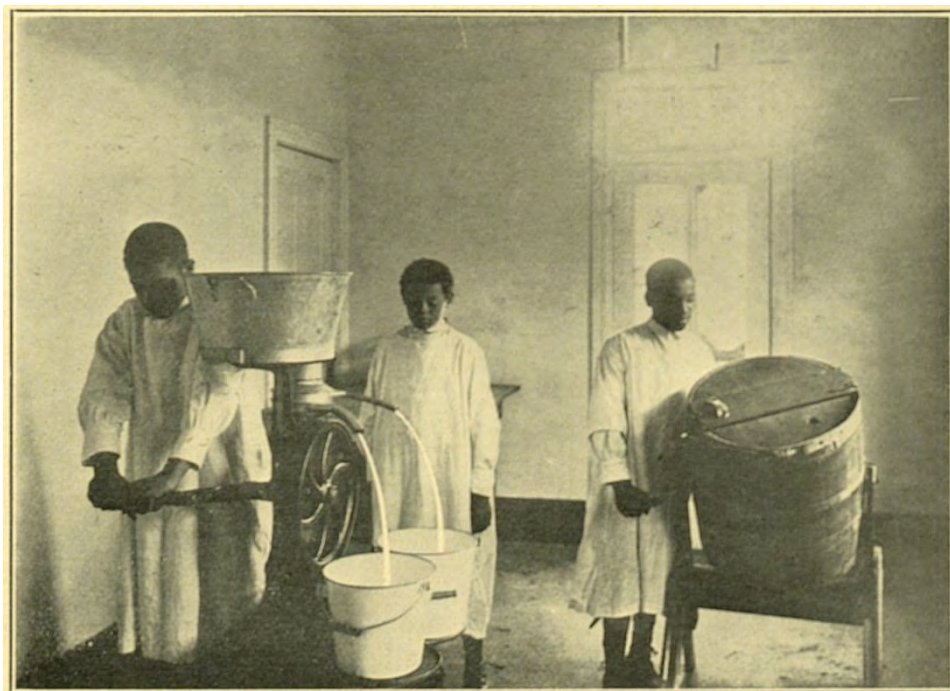
Document 4 - "Weeksville Negro Church Reaches Age of 90 Years." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. 16 Mar. 1935.





Boys Milking in Barn Yard

**Document 5A** - "Boys Milking in Barn Yard." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.* 1912.



Boys Separating Cream and Churning

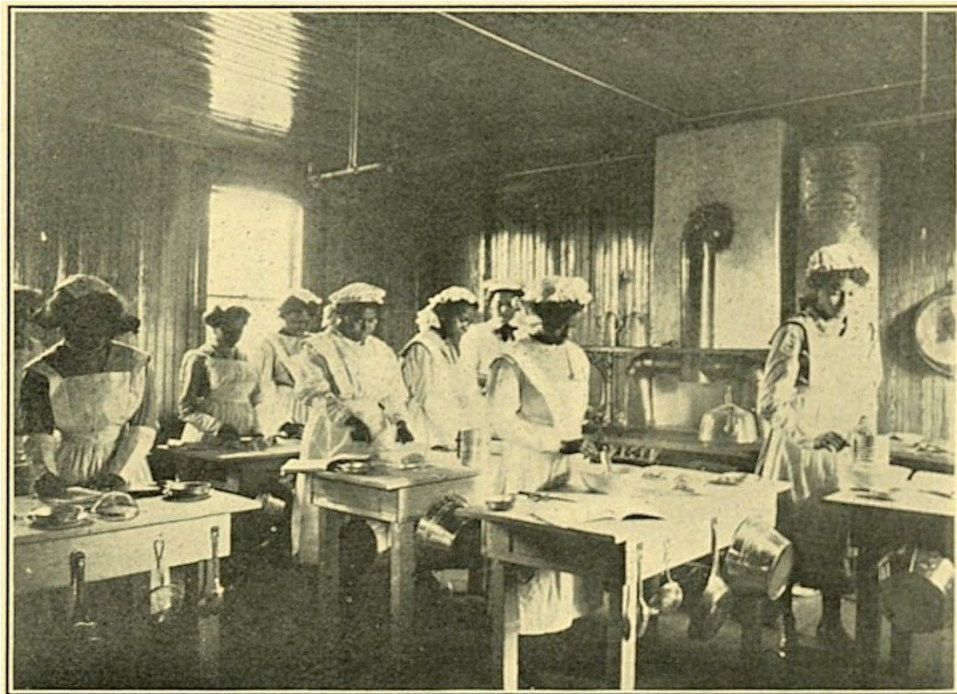
**Document 5B** - "Boys Separating Cream and Churning." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.* 1912.





Making Mats of Corn Shucks. Directed by Domestic Science Teacher

**Document 5C** - "Making Mats of Corn Shucks. Directed by Domestic Science Teacher." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum. 1912.*



Cooking Class

**Document 5D** - "Cooking Class." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum. 1912.*



1. DOCUMENTS 5A-D come from an asylum, or an institution that offers shelter and support to certain types of people. What was the name of this asylum? Where was it located?

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2. According to the images, who did this particular asylum serve?

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3. What skills did the asylum teach the children?

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4. Why do you think it was important to have an orphan's asylum in Weeksville?

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**Document 5A** - "Boys Milking in Barn Yard." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.* 1912.

**Document 5B** - "Boys Separating Cream and Churning." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.* 1912.

**Document 5C** - "Making Mats of Corn Shucks. Directed by Domestic Science Teacher." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.* 1912.

**Document 5D** - "Cooking Class." *Review Covering Forty-five Years of Work of Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.* 1912.

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## THE EXCITEMENT IN BROOKLYN.

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COLORED PEOPLE ALARMED.

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THE LOCAL MILITIA ORGANIZING.

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The Authorities on the Alert-

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Organizing to Resist the Draft.

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NEW YORK RIOTERS BRINGING THEIR  
PLUNDER TO BROOKLYN.

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Affairs in this city remain quiet and orderly. No attempt appears to have been made to create a disturbance. Those inclined to aid in disreputable scenes proceeded to New York and left us in the enjoyment of peace.

### THE COLORED PEOPLE.

The colored people are beginning to show themselves again in the streets this morning. Yesterday whole families vacated their residences in some parts of the city, and went off somewhere to secure safety. Some men were chased and beaten, but nothing that could be called serious occurred. A black man going along Hudson avenue was attacked and chased some distance. He belonged to the Navy. A number of persons placed themselves between the pursuers and the negro, and he escaped and got inside the Navy Yard gate in safety. Pink row, in Canton street, is entirely vacated. It was occupied by colored people. They have gone, no one knows where. The same is the case in some other localities abounding in colored folks; but, as we stated previously- nothing of a very serious character occurred, and the black people were much more alarmed on account of the scenes in New York than from actual violence or threats of harm here.

### Adaptation

#### THE EXCITEMENT IN BROOKLYN.

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Document 6 - "The Excitement in Brooklyn." *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 15 Jul 1863.

In 1863, during the Civil War, there was a **draft riot** in New York City. Men were conscripted, or forced, by the government to sign up to fight in the war. Some white people, many poor and working class, blamed Black people for this and took out their anger on Black New Yorkers.

1. What can you infer **DOCUMENT 6** is about from reading its headlines only?

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2. What city is **DOCUMENT 6** talking about? Does the article describe there being much violence there?

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3. According to this document, what were the white rioters doing to **Black** people?

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4. What **DOCUMENT 6** doesn't tell you is that many frightened **Black** people fled to Weeksville during this time. Why was Weeksville a safe place for them?

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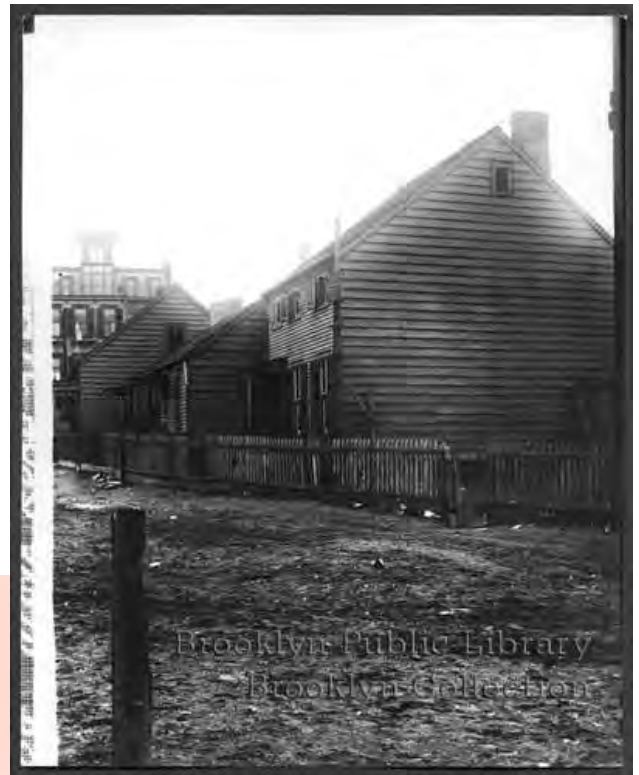
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**Document 6** - "The Excitement in Brooklyn." *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 15 Jul 1863.

**Document 7A (right)** - Austin, Daniel Berry. *Clove Road at Bergen St.* 190-. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn.


**Document 7B (below)** - *Save the Memories of Self.* Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn.




**Society for the Preservation of  
WEEKSVILLE and Bedford-Stuyvesant History**

P.O. BOX 120, ST. JOHN'S STATION, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11213 TEL. 756-5250

*Save the Memories of Self*

Today there are four wooden buildings still standing along the former alignment of Hunterfly Road which were within the boundaries of old Weeksville. They are New York City Landmarks and are on the National Register of Historic Places in the United States. Since 1968, when Old Weeksville was rediscovered, the efforts to learn about this early community have included archaeology, oral history, curriculum development and filmmaking. 

The idea for making a museum of African-American History in the old houses came from the children of Public School #243, the successor of old Colored School #2 of Weeksville. Now after more than a dozen years of effort, the Weeksville Society owns the historic site, with one building housing its office, another completely restored and the remaining two undergoing restoration.

Children, senior citizens, parents, teachers, people from the neighborhood and outside the area, as well as private foundations and government agencies have been a part of making the dream a reality. 

The goal of the Weeksville Society is to restore these buildings for use as a museum of African-American History because it believes that knowledge of our culture, heritage and contribution to this society will enable us, especially our children, to grow with the pride, self confidence and dignity which is essential for the survival of the total society.

*As Brooklyn grew bigger in the 1900s, much of Weeksville merged into the neighborhoods surrounding it and almost disappeared entirely. However, in 1968 some pieces of Weeksville were rediscovered.*

**1. According to DOCUMENT 7B, what remains of Weeksville today?**

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**2. This document was written by the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford-Stuyvesant History. What does this society hope to build?**

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**3. Why does the society think it's important to restore the Weeksville houses?**

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**4. Why do you think it's important for people to know about Weeksville? What do you think Weeksville means to Black people living in Brooklyn today?**

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**Document 7A** - Austin, Daniel Berry. *Clove Road at Bergen St.* 190-. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn.

**Document 7B** - *Save the Memories of Self.* Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn.



## GLOSSARY

**Abolition:** the abolishing of slavery

**Abound:** full of

**Adaptation:** to modify or rewrite based on the original text

**Cornerstone:** a stone laid in the corner foundation of a newly built building

**Disreputable:** disorderly

**Draft Riots:** took place in New York City July 13–16, 1863, violent disturbances led by working-class men in Lower Manhattan, who were upset by new laws passed by Congress to draft, or force them, to fight in the American Civil War.

**Estate:** the possessions or property of a person; especially a person's property in land

**General Grant:** Union general during the Civil War and later 18th president of the U.S.

**Landmark:** an important building or monument

**Locality:** neighborhood or place

**Physician:** a doctor

**Pursuer:** a person who follows or hopes to capture someone else

**Uncle Sam:** personification, or representation, of the U.S. government

**Vacate:** leave