

Learning Places Fall 2015

# SITE REPORT

## DUMBO and Farragut Houses



STUDENT NAME

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## INTRODUCTION

We visited DUMBO and the Farragut Houses in the Vinegar Hill section of Brooklyn. Our purpose was to look at the architecture and begin talking about our Farragut Houses project. We took many photos and made notes about the buildings we saw and

the layout of the streets. It was striking how different the Vinegar Hill neighborhood was from the projects, and how quickly the cityscape changed: it felt like crossing over into a different world.

## PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

I live in Manhattan and have never visited the Farragut Houses in Vinegar Hill before. I've been past the Navy Yards, but am most familiar with the parts of Brooklyn around City Tech. From previous research, I do have some information about transportation in the area. I know there were several trolley lines as well as several elevated train lines in that area before the projects were built. But though I know about trains, I know very little about the area on the ground. I know above and below it—but on it, almost nothing. I have never lived in any projects, but the projects on Avenues C and D in Manhattan are not far from my home in Stuyvesant Town. They are not very highly spoken of, but many students in my middle school lived there and some of them of them were really great. Some weren't, of course, but that's true everywhere. I assume the people living in the Farragut Houses are as nice, and as not nice, as people everywhere else.

I'm excited to see this area on the ground and see if it matches up with my assumptions about it. I'm not nervous at all. I might be nervous if I was exploring this area all alone in the middle of the night, but in the daytime with a group –there's nothing at all to worry about.

I'm a New York City kid and love discovering new neighborhoods. I'm looking forward to this trip.

## SITE DOCUMENTATION



## SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Gold Street was very wide.
2. The projects seem to be the line between DUMBO and the rest of Brooklyn, a sharp dividing point.
3. The buildings in the Vinegar Hill neighborhood seem very old, based on their construction and the materials used.
4. The Farragut Houses look like standard 1950s New York City housing project construction.
5. Historic streets were demolished to make superblocks for the projects.
6. I didn't notice a lot of restaurants or supermarkets around the projects.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA

Subject	Data
Number of residents	3,440 (approximate)
Number of apartments	1,390
Number of buildings	10
Height of buildings	13 and 14 stories
Size of complex	16.61 acres
Date completed	April 30, 1952

## QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

### QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Gold Street so wide?
2. Before the projects were built, what was there?
3. Before the projects were built, how efficient was transportation to the area?
4. How efficient is transportation to the area now?
5. Is living there safe?
6. Do the people in the projects feel isolated?

### HYPOTHESIS:

1. There was probably a trolley line or elevated train running along or above Gold Street.
2. There was probably a transit hub in the area: Brooklyn el trains were converging nearby because they went over the Brooklyn Bridge or served the Fulton ferry.
3. I think the people in the projects might feel isolated, not a real part of the surrounding neighborhoods.

## SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

It was very interesting visiting the Farragut Houses and Vinegar Hill. I'm particularly interested in researching transportation in the area, partly because I'm interested in transportation in general and partly because this area was near what was once the biggest transit hub in Brooklyn. I enjoyed exploring the area and was struck by how sharp the line was between DUMBO and the projects; the neighborhood changed abruptly from charming old buildings to bleak modern high-rises in just one block. We didn't really meet any people, so I don't feel I got a sense of what living in the neighborhood would be like, but I did get a sense of what the area and buildings looked like.

## REFERENCES TO EXPLORE HYPOTHESIS

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