

Name: _____

Date: _____

A Walk Through History at The Battery

Follow the blue trail marked on the map below. As you stop at each numbered area, read the story and explore the prompts in the corresponding numbered section of this packet. You can write notes on your thoughts for each prompt, or discuss it with your companions. Please remember to follow all social distancing guidelines while at The Battery. We hope you enjoy your visit!



THE BATTERY

1 By the Labyrinth:

Archaeological records suggest that the first humans to come to this part of the world arrived after the last ice age, around 10,000 years ago. Multiple native tribes lived in the surrounding area for thousands of years, and the Lenape tribe was the first nation to live on this island, calling it Manahatta. The island was an ecological wonder at the time, due to its location at the meeting point of two rivers, supporting a wide variety of plant and animal life. The Lenape people hunted and gathered plant materials to feed their community and provide them with the tools, clothing, and materials that they used every day. They used young sapling trees to construct homes, covering them with bark and animal skins and leaving openings in the roof to allow the smoke from cooking fires to escape. They traded materials with other First Nations in the surrounding area, including the Haudenosaunee, the Mohicans, and the Shinnecock. Today, most Lenape tribe members live in Delaware and New Jersey, honoring their cultural traditions while making use of modern conveniences. Some of the plants you see in this area of the park are the same species that existed here thousands of years ago. **Can you find all four of the following native plants in this area of the park?** If it's winter, look for evidence of their fallen leaves.



SHADBUSH

When this tree bloomed with white blossoms in late spring, it signalled to the Lenape that the shad were swimming upriver and it was time to fish. Additionally, the berries are edible when ripe.



MILKWEED

The Lenape used the tough inner bark of the milkweed plants to wind into twine, making strong rope and fishing nets.



ELDERBERRY

The Lenape people ate the berries of this large shrub and made medicine from the bark of the plant to treat cuts and wounds.



OAK

The Lenape people ground oak acorns into flour for cooking, and used the long, tall trunks of these trees to make canoes for fishing and travel.

2 Verrazzano Statue:

Giovanni da Verrazzano was an Italian who sailed on an exploratory journey in 1524 under the patronage of the French king, Francis I. The goal of the trip was to find new trade routes that would allow France to access eastern Asia without the long and difficult journey across land. Verrazzano's trip across the ocean took nearly two months, and then Verrazzano and his crew sailed along the Atlantic coast from what is now North Carolina to what is now Newfoundland in Canada. In his records of the trip, Verrazzano wrote that this harbor and future site of The Battery was "a very agreeable site located between two hills between which flowed to the sea a very great river." Verrazzano was the first European to be credited with "discovering" what is now New York, though of course the Lenape tribe had already been living here for thousands of years. In the statue, the figure in front of Verrazzano represents Discovery, with the book of History at her feet. What symbolism do you see in the statue's sword pointing to earlier pages in the book, before the date of 1524?

3 The Netherlands Memorial Flagpole

In the early 1600s, Henry Hudson sailed to this area from England and found great potential for beaver trapping and trading. The possibility of profits from resources here drew interest from the Dutch, and inspired commercial expeditions and early settlement. On behalf of the Dutch West India Company, Peter Minuit bartered with a Lenape tribe to “purchase” the island known as Manahatta, in an exchange worth roughly 60 guilders at the time, equivalent to somewhere between 20 and 1,000 dollars in today’s currency. In fact, the Lenape people had no concept of “selling” the land. They considered themselves caretakers, not owners, of the island, and believed that the trade symbolized that they would share the land with the Dutch. In the early years of colonization, the Lenape helped the Dutch settlers learn survival skills in their new environment, but over the century or so, the Lenape population was driven out of Manahatta. Many died from diseases brought by the Europeans because their bodies hadn’t developed immunity against them, and others were killed or forced out by Dutch and then English settlers.

The image on the flagpole is of a Dutch settler trading goods with a member of the Lenape tribe (though it’s important to note that the image of the headdress is not historically accurate; such headdresses were worn by members of western tribes, and not by the Lenape people). Based on the story above, how did the groups disagree about what the trade meant? How would you have solved a disagreement like that?

4 The Battery Urban Farm

When the Dutch started settling here in the 1600s, they brought their own practices from home and also learned new skills from the Lenape people. Though they could trade the furs they were trapping for other goods, much of what they needed they had to grow themselves, on small farms not much larger than this one. If you were settling here like the Dutch in the 1600s, what would you need to grow or find in order to survive the cold winters? Draw a map of your ideal homestead here:

5 Castle Clinton National Monument

This building has been located here in some form for more than 200 years. It was built in 1807, after the Revolutionary War, as a fort to protect against future invasions from the British. It was never used in battle, and was eventually repurposed into a performance space, then an immigration depot, and later New York's first aquarium! While the building served as the immigration depot, immigrants would arrive here and enter the building to register, find jobs and housing, and connect with waiting family members.

South of Castle Clinton, find the statue of **The Immigrants**, by sculptor Luis Sanguino, and pick one of the figures to focus on. Consider why you think the artist chose to depict them that way. How does this statue represent the experience of immigrants? Write your thoughts below:

6 In the Bosque

Over the course of the 1900s, tunnel and subway construction closed down this park for years at a time. By the 1970s, New York's birthplace had declined into an area of trash, broken benches, and dying trees. A New York resident named Warrie Price saw the need for more care for the park, and in 1994 founded The Battery Conservancy, an organization dedicated to reviving and beautifying the park. Over the years, the Conservancy completed plantings and construction to build the park into what you see today, and it continues to improve the site each year.

Notice the many different ways that people are using this public space. Why do you think it's important to maintain public parks in NYC? List three reasons:

One of the challenges of managing public space in lower Manhattan is preparing for the threats of climate change. Since this area you are standing on is landfill added in the 1850s, it is close to the level of the seawater and is susceptible to large waves and floods during storms. In 2012 during Hurricane Sandy, the waves flooded most of this area where the trees are. With climate change comes sea-level rise, which will cover this low-lying land with water. Future storms will cause even more flooding. How would you protect this park from future storms?

7 Playscape

This construction site is will soon be The Battery Playscape, a new playground filled with plants and features focused on sustainability. As you finish your walk through the history of this area, now is a great time to consider what's in store for the future of the space. If you were in charge of the design, what elements would you include in a new play space for the park? Draw a map and label the important parts.

Thank you for visiting! We hope you enjoyed exploring the park.
Check out our other visitor guides and more at www.thebattery.org

Email education@thebattery.org with questions or for list of image sources.