

BOROUGH OF THE BRONX



Welcome to the Bronx, one of New York City's "must see" communities. It's a place of world-famous attractions, diverse artistic expression, miles of parks, and over 60 landmarks and historic districts. It's where people like Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain lived – and where break dancing and salsa music were born.

Adolfo Carrion, Jr., Bronx Borough President

Of New York City's five boroughs, the Bronx is the only one that is actually on the mainland of the United States. At 42 square miles, it's twice the size of the borough of Manhattan and equal in size to the cities of Paris and San Francisco. The more than 1.3 million people who reside in the Bronx, living side by side in the same neighborhoods in friendly harmony, trace their origins to just about every inhabited continent on the globe. Parks cover 25% of the Bronx, establishing it as the borough of parks. Home of 14 institutions of higher education, the Bronx is also known as the borough of universities. For the two and a half centuries since its first European settler – a Swede by the name of Jonas Bronck – arrived from the Netherlands in 1639, the Bronx was largely a rural area with scattered villages here and there. Then, in 1874, New York City annexed its western half, and, in 1895, it took over the half to the east as well. In 1898, with the origin of the city's borough system, the borough of the Bronx was created, named after the river that flows down its center.

The construction of the subway system from 1904 to 1933 provided a swift and inexpensive way for millions of people to escape from overcrowded Manhattan neighborhoods to reside in comfortable apartments and homes with many amenities, amidst trees and grass. Today's public transportation system, with buses connecting to subway stations, affords visitors easy access to all neighborhoods in the borough and to its many

cultural treasures – those that are well known, such as the Bronx Zoo, the New York Botanical Garden, Yankee Stadium and The Woodlawn Cemetery, as well as those still undiscovered by many who journey to New York City. To the uninitiated and the unaware, the Bronx will be a delightful surprise.

Lloyd Ultan, Bronx Borough Historian

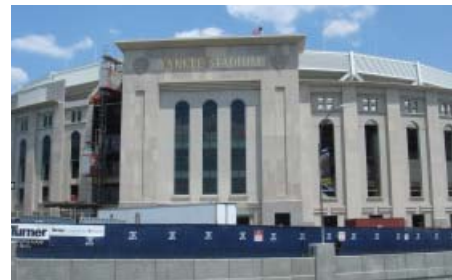
TOURING THE BRONX – YANKEE STADIUM AND BEYOND

YOUR GUIDE – Lloyd Ultan is the Bronx Borough Historian. He is the author of numerous books on the Bronx including *The Beautiful Bronx 1920–1950*, *The Bronx: It Was Only Yesterday, 1935–1965* and *Bronx Accent: A Literary and Pictorial History of the Borough*.

START – Take the 4, B or D trains to 161 Street – Yankee Stadium.

Yankee Stadium and Grand Concourse Walking Tour

I. YANKEE STADIUM – E 161 St & River Av



Since it opened in 1923, Yankee Stadium has been home to the New York Yankees. Nicknamed "The Bronx Bombers," the Yankees have dominated baseball

by winning more World Series than any other team, with such great players as Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle. In 2009, the new Yankee Stadium will open across the street from the old ballpark, at which time the old stadium will be converted into a park and playing field for neighborhood use.

Tours of Yankee Stadium can be arranged by calling 718 293 4300 well in advance of your visit and asking for the tour office.

From Yankee Stadium, walk up E 161 St to the Grand Concourse.



THE GRAND CONCOURSE

The boulevard was designed in the 1890s by Louis A. Risse, who modeled it after the Champs Elysees in Paris. When it opened in 1909, there was a grand entrance at 161 St, (later redesigned to become Joyce Kilmer Park). Risse's design introduced what was then an innovation for an urban thoroughfare – grade separations, with major streets crossing beneath the Concourse to avoid traffic jams. It was the forerunner of the modern highway cloverleaf.

For most of its length, the Grand Concourse is flanked by five- and six-story apartment buildings designed in the 1920s

eclectic and 1930s Art Deco style with large rooms and the latest amenities of the period. From the 1920s to the 1960s, these apartments were home largely to Jewish people who had attained status and wealth. To live in these elegant buildings with their uniformed doormen was a symbol of economic and social success; in those days, the Grand Concourse was equivalent to Manhattan's Park and Fifth Avenues. Starting in the 1950s, diverse ethnic groups also moved to the Grand Concourse, reflecting the rich cultural heritage that the borough symbolizes to this day. The boulevard south of Mount Eden Av is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2. THE BRONX COUNTY BUILDING

SW corner of 161 St & Grand Concourse



Erected in 1932, the Bronx County Building houses the offices of the Bronx Borough President, County Clerk, County Surrogate, and the judges of the Bronx Supreme Court. On the third floor is a sculptured frieze by George Keck. The high-relief allegorical blocks flanking

each entrance are by a consortium of sculptors, led by Adolph Weinman. Behind the wall on the corner of the street is the arch from the bridge at Chateau Thierry, where Americans blunted the German offensive in World War I, turning the tide of the war.

THE BRONX WALK OF FAME

Beginning at 161 St and running south along the Grand Concourse, this series of colorful street signs attached to light poles honors famous Bronxites. Among the more than 70 inductees are Diahann Carroll, The Chantels, Bobby Darin, E. L. Doctorow, Ray Barretto, Mary Higgins Clark, Rita Moreno, Regis Philbin and Colin Powell.

3. THE CONCOURSE PLAZA HOTEL

NE corner 161 St & Grand Concourse

Erected in 1923, the Concourse Plaza once served as the social



center of the Bronx. Important family celebrations, business meetings and political events were held here – including some attended by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy. Because of its proximity to Yankee Stadium,

it was a home away from home for both Yankee players and members of other teams. Since the 1980s, it has served as a senior citizen residence.

4. JOYCE KILMER PARK

NW corner of 161 St & Grand Concourse

Joyce Kilmer Park was named after the poet who wrote “Trees” and who died fighting in World War I. Note the fountain overlooking 161 St created by Ernst Herter and donated by the Empress Elizabeth of Austria in honor of the German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine and his beloved poem, “Die Lorelei.”

Turn left at 161 St for a brief stroll along the Grand Concourse.

5. THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS

1040 Grand Concourse at 165 St



Since it opened in 1923, BxMA’s permanent collection has been unique in its focus on contemporary works by artists of African, Asian and Latin American descent.

BxMA’s collection policy, initiated in 1986, demonstrates an ongoing commitment to exhibit, preserve and document the work of artists not typically represented in more traditional museum collections. Info: 718 681 6000.

6. ANDREW FREEDMAN HOME

Grand Concourse btwn 166 & McClellan St, on your left

Named for the man who endowed it in his will, the historic Andrew Freedman Home was erected in the 1920s to house elderly people who were once wealthy, but who had lost all their money, so that they could live their lives in the manner to which they had become accustomed. It now houses several social service and educational organizations.

7. THE FISH BUILDING

1150 Grand Concourse at McClellan St



The entrance to this Art Deco apartment house is flanked by an attractive mosaic mural of tropical fish. Designed by Horace Ginsbern, it is often called the “Fish” House or the “Fish” Building by local residents.

The Grand Concourse Bus Ride

At 167 St, board the Bx1 bus for a ride up the Grand Concourse, the backbone of the Bronx. The ride provides a sample of the variety of cultures, architecture and attractions the Bronx offers. The route ends at the 231 Street Subway Station where one has the option of returning to Manhattan or taking the bus to Wave Hill, a 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades.

LOEW’S PARADISE THEATER

2431 Grand Concourse at 187 St

... on your left

Now the Utopia Paradise Theater, it opened as the Loew’s Paradise in 1929. As Seth Kugel, writing in the *New York Times*, described it, “The Paradise was the venue where generations of Bronxites chose





between watching first-run films and a first kiss on the balcony.” The Paradise was one of the ‘atmospheric’ cinemas designed by John Ebersohn whose goal, according to Kugel, was “to transport Bronx residents to a Baroque Italian garden adorned with marble pillars, statues, tapestries, and even a goldfish pool and a night sky with twinkling stars and moving clouds.” Nor was Loew’s just for films. Bob Hope, George Burns and other stars of that caliber performed on its stage, and countless Bronx high school and college students received their diplomas there. Today it is used for live performances, boxing matches and music video production.

FORDHAM ROAD

Fordham Rd is the center of the largest commercial district in the Bronx. On the SE corner is the Wagner Building, where John F. Kennedy held a rally during his 1960 presidential campaign. On the NW corner sits the yellow-brick building that for many years was home to the Alexander’s Department Store, a Bronx-based establishment that once held the record for more sales per square foot than any other department store in the nation.

EDGAR ALLEN POE COTTAGE

Grand Concourse & E Kingsbridge Rd ... on your right

Located at the north end of Poe Park is the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, the last home of the literary legend. This is where Poe wrote “Annabel Lee” and “The Bells.” The bandstand at the

southern end of the park, used for swing music and dancing in the “big band era,” still hosts occasional concerts. The Cottage is undergoing a major renovation and restoration during 2008-2009, and a state-of-the-art visitor’s center, designed by world-renowned architect Toshiko Mori, will be constructed in the park. Open Saturday, 10:00am to 4:00pm and Sunday, 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Info: 718 881 8900.



NORTH OF KINGSBRIDGE ROAD

North of Kingsbridge Rd, the Grand Concourse reverts to its residential character. At the SW corner of 196 St, *on your left*, is the brown brick apartment house where film director **Stanley Kubrick** spent his teenage years. At 202 St, *on your right*, is the apartment house where **Art Donovan**, the Football Hall of Fame player for the old Baltimore Colts, grew up. North of 205 St, *on your left*, on a rock outcropping between two houses, is the shrine where, in the 1940s, a boy saw a vision of the Virgin several times, attracting worldwide attention and crowds of people.

At the end of the Grand Concourse, the bus turns left onto Mosholu Parkway. The Parkway was designed in 1888 as a link connecting Van Cortlandt and Bronx parks so that people could travel from park to park without having to leave a park-like setting.

JEROME AVENUE

At Jerome Av, the bus passes under the elevated structure of the Lexington Av/Jerome Av No. 4 subway line. Jerome Av was named for Leonard Jerome, a flamboyant entrepreneur and speculator known as “The King of Wall St.” His daughter, Jenny Jerome, was the mother of Winston Churchill. Just beyond the elevated line, *on your left*, are two gray high-rise, free-form apartment houses known as **Tracy Towers**. They are the tallest buildings in the Bronx, and were designed by noted architect Paul Rudolph.

DeWITT CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL ... on your left

Just past Tracy Towers is DeWitt Clinton High School. It was named after former New York Governor De Witt Clinton, the driving force behind the building of the Erie Canal in 1825 that ran between Lake Erie and the Hudson River and which

transformed New York Harbor into the chief port in the U.S. Ralph Lauren, James Baldwin, George Cukor, Burt Lancaster and Sugar Ray Robinson are among the graduates of DeWitt Clinton.

THE JEROME PARK RESERVOIR ... on your left

Past the high school is the Jerome Park Reservoir, part of New York City's water system. It replaced the Jerome Park Racetrack, where the Belmont Stakes was run from that famous race's inception in 1867 to the year the track closed in 1890.

AMALGAMATED HOUSES ... on your right

As the bus turns onto Sedgwick Av, there are two high-rise apartment houses that are part of the Amalgamated Houses. Amalgamated is the oldest limited-equity housing cooperative in the United States. Sponsored by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, it is the first co-op created by Abraham E. Kazan, known as "the father of cooperative housing in the United States."

Get off the bus at W 231 St and Broadway. From here, you can return to Manhattan on the I train or continue your journey to Wave Hill.

Wave Hill

To get to Wave Hill from Manhattan, take the I train to the 231 St stop and transfer to the Bx7 bus for the short ride to Wave Hill. Get off the bus at 252 St.

Along the way to Wave Hill, the bus passes through Riverdale,



the most affluent section of the Bronx. At 239 St, *on your left*, at the center of a traffic circle, is the **Riverdale Memorial Bell Tower** commemorating those from the surrounding neighborhoods who died in World War I. After the bus goes under

the underpass, the next several blocks, *on your right*, mark the boundary of the beautifully landscaped community of Fieldston where singer Carly Simon grew up. At 252 St, as you exit the bus, is **Christ Church Riverdale**, an Episcopal church designed in 1866 by Richard Upjohn. The funerals of Lou Gehrig and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia took place here.

To walk to Wave Hill from the bus stop, cross the Henry Hudson Parkway at 252 St and walk to Independence Av. Notice the fine homes with their meticulous landscaping. At Independence Av, turn left. The large house at the corner, *on your left* – now altered and enlarged – served as the home of young John F. Kennedy while his father was the head of 20th Century Fox. The Wave Hill estate is behind the fence *on your right*, the entrance is at 249 St. On this 28-acre estate sit two mansions. Wave Hill, the older of the two, was built in several stages from 1844 to 1928, while Glyndor II was erected in the early 20th century. At various times, Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain and Arturo Toscanini resided at Wave Hill, and it once served as the British Embassy to the United Nations. Today, its landscaped grounds boast a botanical garden and nature walks, art galleries within the mansions, and occasional musical performances, along with a magnificent view of the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades on the opposite shore. Info: 718 549 3200.

As you exit Wave Hill, walk along 249 St to Henry Hudson Parkway to return to the Bx7 bus.

CITY ISLAND

Take the 6 train to the Pelham Bay Park Station. Transfer to Bx 29 bus marked City Island. The best way to explore City Island is to take the bus to the last stop then walk back

along City Island Av to the bus stop just before the City Island Bridge to return to the Pelham Bay Station.

Also, the Bronx Seaside Trolley operates on the first Friday of each month from 5:30pm until 9:30pm from Pelham Bay Station at the Bx29 bus stop, departing each hour on the half hour to Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum for guided tours and then to City Island where restaurants and galleries offer discount with a trolley ticket. This program is free. Info: www.bronxtrolley.com.

On the way to City Island, the bus passes through **Pelham Bay Park**, the largest park in New York City. It contains two wildlife refuges, two full municipal golf courses, hiking trails, a stable and bridal path, a bicycle path, Orchard Beach, and the historic Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum.



City Island is both geologically and spiritually a bit of New England. Called Minneford Island by English colonists, it got its current name in the 1760s when speculators envisioned it as a port that could rival New York on the tip of Manhattan Island. City Island Av, the main street, is filled with

seafood restaurants of every description that attract visitors from throughout the metropolitan area. At the island's center are art galleries and antique stores. Residents born on the island proudly call themselves clam diggers, while calling others who were born elsewhere, but who now live on the island, mussel suckers.

THE BRONX ZOO, THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ARTHUR AVENUE

Both the 2 and 5 trains go to the Bronx Zoo. Close by is the New York Botanical Garden and Arthur Avenue, the Bronx's "Little Italy."

As the train emerges from under ground, you are entering the South Bronx. The area between the Jackson Av and Freeman St stops was once made infamous by images of President Carter

standing among debris at Charlotte St and Howard Cosell's remark made during the 1977 World Series that "the Bronx is burning." Today, as is evident from looking out the window, the Bronx has undergone a dramatic renaissance that has, among other things, transformed Charlotte St into rows of beautiful ranch-style homes, which can be seen *on your left* as the train leaves the Freeman Street Station.

THE BRONX ZOO

Exit the train at the West Farms Sq-E Tremont Av Station, then walk along Boston Rd to the entrance. On your right at 180 St is the southern tip of Bronx Park where you can view a picturesque waterfall that powered a mill on the west bank of the Bronx River from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

The Bronx Zoo is the largest urban zoo in the world. Since it rescued the American buffalo from extinction in the early 20th century, it has been dedicated to preserving endangered species. Most of the animals are displayed in exhibits that emulate their natural habitat. See especially the Congo Gorilla Forest, Tiger Mountain, Madagascar, Jungle World, the African Plains, Wild Asia, the Himalayan Highlands, the World of Birds and the Aquatic Bird House. Info: 718 367 1010.

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



The New York Botanical Garden is adjacent to the Bronx Zoo. To get there from the zoo, exit through the ornate Rainy Memorial Gate onto Fordham Rd, turn left and walk to Southern Blvd, then turn right, and the main

entrance is a short walk from there. If you choose to visit only the Botanical Garden, take Metro North from Grand Central Station or 125 St and get off at the Botanical Garden Station.

The Garden has the last remaining part of the forest that once covered all of New York City, as well as outdoor floral and plant

displays that change with the seasons. See especially the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, the huge glass house modeled after the Royal Botanical Garden at Kew that displays rain forest and desert plants in indoor controlled climates; the Bronx River gorge; and the Lorillard Snuff Mill, the oldest factory building in New York, erected about 1840, now a restaurant. Info: 718 817 8700.

ARTHUR AVENUE



Not far from the Bronx Zoo and the New York Botanical Garden is Arthur Avenue, New York City's true Little Italy. To get there, walk five blocks from Southern Blvd along Fordham Rd to Arthur Av and turn left.

Called Belmont, the heart of this neighborhood is the intersection of Arthur Av and 187 St. Immigrant Italians first settled here in the 1890s to be near jobs they obtained building the Bronx Zoo. Many of the families and family-run businesses have been in the neighborhood for three generations. The area abounds with good restaurants serving Italian cuisine, as well as Italian bakeries and pastry shops. The **Arthur Avenue Market** in the *middle of the block south of 186 St* was built in 1940 to take the local Italian pushcart peddlers off the street where they could still peddle their goods. Fresh fruit and vegetables can be purchased here, as well as meat and other goods. Dion and the Belmonts named themselves after Belmont Av and the film *A Bronx Tale* was set here, although it was actually filmed in Astoria, Queens.

To return to the West Farms-E Tremont Av Station from the Bronx Zoo or the New York Botanical Garden, take the Bx9 bus at the corner of Fordham Rd and Southern Blvd. From Arthur Av, get on at 187 St and Southern Blvd.

THE WOODLAWN CEMETERY

Take the 4 train to the Woodlawn Cemetery, the last stop on the line. The entrance to the Woodlawn Cemetery is across the street from the station. Ask the guard at the gate for a map of the grounds.

Along the way at 161 St you will catch a stunning glimpse of **Yankee Stadium** *on your left*. Also, *on your left*, at Kingsbridge Rd, the train passes another Bronx landmark, the **Kingsbridge Armory**. Built in 1917 for use by the National Guard, its drill field is the size of four football fields and is said to be the largest in the world. It is now being redeveloped for alternate uses.



The Woodlawn Cemetery is a 400-acre facility opened in 1863 as a picturesque, nature-dominated rural cemetery. Amid the curving walkways, massive trees, manicured lawns, and flowering shrubs can be found palace-like mausoleums of the wealthy with stained glass windows and statuary, and simple gravestones of

what, at first glance may appear to be ordinary folks. In fact, Woodlawn contains a Who's Who of famous Americans including such captains of industry as Herman Armour, John W. (Bet-a-Million) Gates, Jay Gould, J. C. Penney, Madam JC Walker and F. W. Woolworth; musicians and entertainers Irving Berlin, George M. Cohan, Miles Davis, Edward Kennedy (Duke) Ellington, W.C. Handy and Victor Herbert; women suffrage leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton; New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia and master builder Robert Moses; authors Clarence Day and Herman Melville; war hero Admiral David Farragut; lawman William 'Bat' Masterson; cartoonist Thomas Nast; and journalists Nelly Bly, William Pulitzer and Damon Runyon.

SOUTH BRONX CULTURAL CORRIDOR TOUR

Any true New Yorker knows that the best way to get to Yankee Stadium is to take the subway to 161 St, but how many of these experienced urban travelers know that if they got off one stop before 161 St, they would find themselves amid a cultural smorgasbord, most of which is a short walk from the 149 St-Grand Concourse subway station. This major public transportation hub (2, 4 and 5 subway; BX1, and BX19 buses) is the epicenter of what has become the South Bronx Cultural Corridor - a mecca for artists and a new destination for culture seekers.

YOUR GUIDE – Bill Aguado is the Executive Director of the Bronx Council of the Arts.



If you exit on the downtown side of the subway station you'll find yourself directly across the street from the **Longwood Art Gallery**, the contemporary art program of the Bronx Council on the Arts. Its cutting edge exhibits draw visitors

from throughout the city and tourists from all over the world who want to see the work that emerging young artists are making in the land where Hip-Hop was born. Longwood is housed within the campus of Hostos Community College at 450 Grand Concourse. Info: 718 518 6728. The College is also home to the **Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture**, a state-of-the-art performance facility featuring music, dance and theater artists of national and international renown.

Walking back the one block to 149 St, on the NE corner is the **Bronx Central Post Office**. The lobby contains several Depression Era murals by Ben Shahn depicting workers performing various jobs.

Across the Grand Concourse at 149 St, one can find the Bx1 bus heading south.

A short ride will leave you smack in the middle of the burgeoning arts and antiques district known as “SoBro,” that stands for SOuth BRONx. Because of the low rents and proximity to Manhattan, this area is fast developing into an artist community with galleries, antique shops and trendy restaurants much the same as SoHo, Chelsea and TriBeCa once did.

Mott Haven, as this area is officially known, is one of the oldest settled areas of the Bronx. Purchased in 1841 by Jordan L. Mott, iron founder and inventor of the coal burning stove, he envisioned it as what is today called an industrial park. It was also once known as “Broncksland,” named after the farm of Jonas Bronck, a Swedish settler who gave his name to the Bronx River, from which, in turn, is derived the name of the Bronx.

For a walking tour of the neighborhood, exit the bus at the
322



final stop, 138 St and Lincoln Av. Cross the street, turn right and walk down Lincoln Av to Bruckner Blvd.

On your right, at No. 1 is the **Bruckner Bar and Grill**, a popular eatery that supports an art gallery and holds regular poetry and music

events. As you turn left from there, walking along Bruckner Blvd, you will find the **The Gallery Lounge** at No. 26 which celebrates fine food, art, music and drink. The cavernous **Kelly's Furniture Warehouse** at No. 20 occupies the site of Jonas Bronck's 1639 farm house, and a few blocks down at No. 50 is the **Haven Arts Gallery**, which features the works of emerging artists. Turn left on Alexander Av and you enter the Bronx Antiques District, with shops that, on the weekends, attract customers from the entire metropolitan region for the quality of their merchandise and their bargain prices. At 138 St is **St. Jerome's Roman Catholic Church**, erected in 1899 by the wealthy Irish who once resided here. Cross 138 St and enter the Mott Haven Historic District, once called the Irish Fifth Avenue, a survivor of the elegant and urbane world of 19th-century Mott Haven.

To return to Manhattan, take the subway at 3 Av-138 St Station or take the Bx1 bus at 136 St-Lincoln Av for a ride up the Grand Concourse. (See page 310.)

On the first Wednesday of each month, visitors can forgo conventional transportation (and the cost) by riding the Bronx Culture Trolley, operated by the Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) with the support of the Bronx Tourism Council. On First Wednesdays, the trolley makes three loops visiting these areas with bonus attractions thrown in for good measure. Info: www.bronxarts.org. For more things to see and do in the Bronx visit the Bronx Tourism Council's website at www.ilovethebronx.com.