

THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

- 1) **What is the African Burial Ground and what role does it play in the history of New York?**
- 2) **What was the controversy surrounding its discovery?**
- 3) **Where is the African Burial Ground located and what does its future hold?**

4) **An Essay Contest on Finding Our Roots:**

On Your Racial/Ethnic/Cultural Identity

In her new book Creating Black Americans, historian Nell Irvin Painter wrote: “Much culture and history distinguishes African Americans from Americans who are not of African descent and much culture and history connects people of African descent across political boundaries. Obviously there is a good deal more to African Americans than mere American-ness” (3-4). In an interview, playwright August Wilson, author of ten plays on African American life and culture, stated: “We are Africans who have been in America since the 17th century. We are Americans, but...first of all we are Africans.” Whether you were “born in the U.S.A.,” a reminder of Bruce Springsteen's song, or if you or your parents or ancestors immigrated to America, you have a unique background. It is that background and your response to it which you are called upon to write about.

Include the following ideas in a well organized essay of 650 - 700 words: With what racial/ethnic/cultural group do you identify? Give as much background as you can from your family tree. When did you begin to learn about this identity? How and from whom? What specific circumstances do you remember? Which dimensions of your racial/ethnic/cultural identity are the most empowering aspects of your identity and why? What do you like most about your racial/ethnic/cultural heritage? What dimensions of it are the most troublesome and difficult aspects of your identity and why? Are there any painful experiences associated with your heritage that continue to affect your identity today? What are the benefits of racial/ethnic/cultural identity and what are the drawbacks? End your essay with a statement of how you feel about your

racial/ethnic/cultural identity. **Format requirements:** Computer generated; double-spaced; Arial 12.

DUE DATE: APRIL 3. If you are in an English class, give your essay to your teacher. If you are not in an English class, you or your teacher will submit your essay to Mr. Richard Austin (M 204). Prizes will be awarded for the best essays, including publication in the LaGuardia Literary Magazine.