(Dis)Placed Urban Histories Manifesto

March 2018

Place is central to identity and places influence people; people don’t just influence the place.

Getting acclimated to and familiar with a neighborhood gives you a crucial insight into that neighborhood.

A place doesn’t have a single narrative. It depends on who you ask and what time period you’re looking at.

It takes a lot of different perspectives in order to understand a place.

Viewing history from the perspective of someone involved gives you a clearer sense of the historical moment.

A dominant narrative of a place can obscure individual realities and experiences.

Dominant narratives can also harm the people who live in that place and this harm can resonate for decades to come. So it’s important to try to put yourself in the shoes of the people living in the time period and place you are studying before making claims about their lives.

Given a specific time and place, people have justified viewpoints.

The process of renaming and relabeling places is not new and we need to be careful about assuming it is.

A historian cannot be neutral and neither is history.

Historical narratives should be open-ended and allow for multiple interpretations.

History is shaped by those who power favors most.

Community organizations can strengthen their neighborhood’s ability to self-determine and self-plan. They can also be places of vibrancy and knowledge-keeping.

There is a lot of information you can access publicly and for free through the library if you know how to find it.

You need to do your research on a neighborhood before you can advocate for it. You don’t need to have a direct link to a specific cause.

Research is trial and error a lot of the time.

Seeing a neighborhood through the eyes of long-time residents or people who work there gives you an incomparable perspective.

Development and improvement needs to take into account what residents want.

Importance of art-making in claiming space for a community.

Important to understand what initiatives are already underway to improve the Bronx and that some, like the Young Lords, used interethnic alliances to advocate for a neighborhood.

Community organizations can preserve, beautify, and advocate for the community’s own culture.