

## 2. The Glacial Moraine in Jamaica, Queens

Long Island and Staten Island are products of the last Ice Age when a continental glacier moved south bringing massive amounts of debris from New England. When the ice melted the debris was left in huge piles. The hilly southern edge of the pile we call the terminal glacial moraine. Further south the land becomes completely flat derived from smaller particles washed off the moraine. The plain was frequently flooded. Between these features, at the foot of the glacier, land is mostly flat but water is still channeled. Streets like Jamaica Ave in Queens, and Hylan Blvd in Staten Island became natural transportation corridors. On this walk note the different roles played by Jamaica Ave and parallel streets: Highland Ave, Hillside Ave, Archer Ave, and 94 Ave.

Begin at rear exit (168 St and Hillside Ave) from F train at 169 St station. Walk north (uphill) on 168 St to Highland Ave. Note new housing and mosque north on 168 St but turn left (west) on Highland Ave. (Who lives here?) Note new housing and highrise apartments at 167 St. (What do you think they replaced?) Enter Tilly Park on the north side of Highland Ave near 166 St. Note Spanish-American War Memorial and Jamaica H.S. beyond the pond. Continue west on Highland and note view of downtown Jamaica at 164 St. Continue west on Highland/as it winds downhill joining Parsons Blvd and then Hillside Ave. (Why doesn't it continue? Where is Parsons Blvd coming from?)

Head south to Jamaica Ave on Parsons Blvd where some of the older urban institutions of downtown Jamaica are located. Pass turn of the century row houses and a classy walkup apartment building. View the Catholic Church and Parish Hall, the former Family Court (originally the Queensboro Public Library and now being reconstructed into condos!) the YMCA and formidable 1960's apartment towers. On the last block of Parsons pass the Grace Church Cemetery on the right. Turn right (west) on Jamaica Ave. and stand in front of the Episcopal church (establishment and cemetery date to 1701). Not long after, Jamaica Ave was laid out by the British as a through road designed to defend Long Island.

Across Jamaica Ave note subsidized redevelopment efforts. To the east is a new multiplex and mall, a continuation of the shopping district in that direction. Directly across the street is a Social Security Bldg with a few thousand jobs. Beyond the LIRR tracks is the new campus of York College (CUNY). Continuing west to 153 St, view King Manor, the home of Rufus King (one of the first NYS senators) now a museum and park. Across from the park is the new Family Court building. Turn left (south) on 153 St along side Family Court. At Archer Ave go slightly to the right of the subway entrance and walk through the tunnel under the tracks.

On the other side of the tunnel, turn right (west) on Beaver Rd. to 157 St. Note wholesale food markets and ironworks. (Why has the landscape changed so dramatically?) The curve on Beaver Rd traces the shoreline of a beaver pond in colonial times. At 157 St note the tracks of the Montauk line of the LIRR diverging from the main line. Turn right on 94 Ave. At 154 St the separation of tracks has begun with Montauk trains on the lower level. (From what era are the industrial buildings visible along 94 Ave) Continue on 94 Ave to 148 St where (looking south) there are some remnants of middle class houses from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Continue on 94 Ave to Sutphin Blvd. On the SE corner is a vacant plot, remnant of an old wholesale food market. On the NW corner is the terminus of the JFK-Jamaica monorail and a new office building. You can use escalators to take you to the entrance of the AirTrain and then cross above all the LIRR tracks to elevators that take you to street or subway levels. Use the LIRR or the E/J trains at the Sutphin/Archer intersection to take you where you are going.