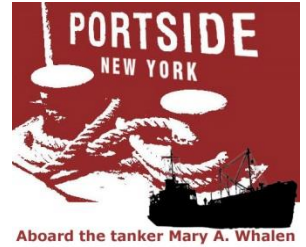


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: Tues, 10/25/16

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Red Hook WaterStories 1.0 website is live at www.redhookwaterstories.org

On the occasion of the 4th anniversary of superstorm Sandy, PortSide NewYork launches Red Hook WaterStories, which has extensive information on flood preparation, resiliency planning and the effects of Sandy in order to benefit the Red Hook community. In 2013, PortSide won a White House “Champions of Change” award and honors from the New York State Senate for Sandy recovery work.

Red Hook WaterStories is a major addition to Brooklyn and NYC heritage.

This is a digital museum that covers 400+ years of Red Hook waterfront history - NYC’s maritime story in microcosm - and reveals forgotten and overlooked stories from this evocative neighborhood. It’s a resource for locals, tourists, history buffs, urban-planners, educators, investors, and flaneurs. More content to come! This is Red Hook WaterStories 1.0. The site includes:

- A digital museum about our waterfront past and present. Extensive historical research with vintage articles, maps and illustrations. You can read the original sources plus essays written by our team.
- It brings the maritime story up to the present by including:
 - Descriptions of [all current maritime businesses](#) with vessels here
 - Real time data on those vessels (donated by Marine Traffic)
 - A seamless blend of a NOAA mariners chart with a land map, plus an [intro to reading a chart](#) for non-maritime users
- Oral histories by the PortSide team and others
- All Red Hook retail, arts, non-profits, schools, recreation
- Resiliency and flood prep info
- Transit info (Citibike docks, bus stops) updated in real time
- Art & literature inspired by our waterfront
- PortSide’s flagship MARY A. WHALEN is included for having a long Red Hook pedigree.

Some examples of the content: Do you know about the Barnacle Library, that had thousands of actual barnacles? Ever hear of Mrs. Commodore Hamilton, who was the equal of men as a barge captain in the 1890s? Learn why Abraham Lincoln made a point of having the slave ship ERIE sold, right here in Red Hook, and its captain hung. Looking to better understand marine weather and prepare better for the next flood? Discover that renewable energy, in the form of mills powered by the tide, was big in Red

Hook for 200 years. Want to know how many Red Hook trees were damaged by Sandy? We have the real story on why Buttermilk Channel has that name. Did you know that Red Hook was the Plymouth Rock of the Puerto Rican community in NYC because ships from the island docked here? Learn about Louis Heineman, the “Patriarch of Red Hook.” And, yes, we have cat WaterStories!

What this accomplishes: explains contemporary and historic maritime activities and shows their relationship to the larger community and its issues; promotes the neighborhood; boosts cultural tourism; (attracts visitors by telling the history of the place); supports retail establishments and hotels; makes Red Hook more resilient; helps inspire community-sensitive investment; fosters local pride and greater understanding within the community; offers a gold mine of content for teachers and students.

Technical aspects & user experience: The powerful internal search engine of Omeka helps users find content, and creates an interactive map. The site has special features for the mobile user, including data on the map such as real-time transit updates for Citibike and bus and a “you are here” blue dot.

Physical component: PortSide will be installing stickers in store windows to alert people out in the neighborhood that that Red Hook WaterStories exists as a local guide.

Important resiliency components:

An extensive Resiliency section at <https://redhookwaterstories.org/tours/show/9> includes an overview of all the major Red Hook resiliency plans, maps about sewers, buried streams, Sandy flooding and more. It includes

1. a flood prep information for residents and businesses
<https://redhookwaterstories.org/items/show/1555?tour=9&index=2>.
2. **a new vehicle flood evacuation app.** Shortly after Sandy, PortSide identified the need for a flood evacuation plan for vehicles. Current evacuation plans focus on people, but where are vehicles supposed to go in a city where parking spaces can be hard to find? At the 2016 Red Hook Hackathon hosted by Pioneer Works, PortSide worked with hackers to create a working model of an app
<https://redhookwaterstories.org/items/show/1571?tour=9&index=4>

The lead was Ed Borden of Scriptr.io. Scriptr is an IoT (internet of things) application development platform company. Scriptr.io’s engine runs the app for HighGround.nyc, a system that helps manage real-time vehicle evacuation during emergency flooding situations. The app won “Best in Transportation” at the Hackathon and demonstrated that IoT systems can be effectively used to manage a long-standing problem facing flood-prone areas. HighGround.nyc as featured on the devpost website as a staff pick.

QUOTES

PortSide New York's President Carolina Salguero says, "PortSide is putting coastal history into resiliency - that has been a missing piece - as we continue to use new media to educate diverse audiences about waterfronts past and present, with an eye to shaping NYC's future. We are particularly grateful for the pivotal seed money from Councilman Carlos Menchaca that took our years of work on Red Hook WaterStories to new levels and supported the creation of this unique community guide and resource."

Councilman Carlos Menchaca says, "Red Hook's deep history and vivid present are well represented by Red Hook WaterStories. Local cultural treasure, PortSide New York, has created an innovative program that residents and visitors can use to understand our neighborhood. Are you curious about our maritime history or how public housing replaced wretched shantytowns? Would you like to plan a day trip or find a Red Hook venue or artisan? Are you studying New York's planning for long-term resilience and Red Hook's relationship to the water? Use Red Hook WaterStories' innovative Web site, attend an event, or contribute your own stories and help write Red Hook's next chapters."

"Red Hook WaterStories is a terrific addition to an already great neighborhood," said **Brooklyn Chamber President and CEO Carlo A. Scissura**. "Thanks to this extensive listing of retailers and community resources, residents and visitors alike will be able to get more out of Red Hook than ever before."

Craig Hammerman, District Manager, Community Board 6 "The history of Red Hook mirrors the history of America--from the arrival of European ships to the building of a thriving port to the defense of our nascent nation. Our maritime heritage reflects huge swings of investment and neglect, especially the recreation, commerce and transportation uses of our blue space. Red Hook Water Stories preserves an essential part of our local history. A story which is still being written."

Aran Baker, of Red Hook Check-in. "Mapping Red Hook assets, as RHWS does, is very important to the larger readiness and resiliency efforts."

<https://www.facebook.com/RedHookCheckin/?fref=ts>

The Norwegian Immigration Association, Inc. (NIA)- "This website contains revealing details of the lives of Norwegians in Red Hook- a dominant population group in the area from the 1870's to 1920," niahistory.org

Lee Gruzen, Director, New York Ship Lore & Model Club "Cheers to PortSide New York's fresh, practical and gorgeous new resource for discovering the 400-year continuum that's living, dynamic Red Hook."

Special thanks:

Red Hook WaterStories 1.0, is **dedicated to Ann Gaffney of Brooklyn Heights**. Since 2012, Ann Gaffney has opened her heart, home, wallet, rolodex and library on behalf of PortSide NewYork. A transplant from Washington, DC who moved to Brooklyn in 1968, Ann is now an ardent Brooklyn patriot and champion. She is a preservationist of note. She is a founding member of the Historic Districts Council and on the board of Green-wood Cemetery. She and her partner Bronson Binger received a 2011 Mickey Murphy Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Historic Districts Council. Ann loved the Brooklyn Heights working waterfront that was still active when she moved to Brooklyn “it looked like a Richard Scarry drawing with every form of transportation moving down there.”

Red Hook WaterStories is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and Councilman Carlos Menchaca, and support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

About PortSide NewYork www.portsidewyork.org

PortSide NewYork is a living lab for better urban waterways. PortSide brings WaterStories to life. PortSide shows how to combine the working waterfront, public access and community development. We bring the communities that are ashore and afloat (closer together to the benefit of both).

Our goal is to create a maritime center with programs and services for the general public and the working waterfront. PortSide NewYork currently delivers water, waterfront and maritime-themed programs, services and advocacy, working both on and off a historic ship, the tanker MARY A. WHALEN.

Since superstorm Sandy, PortSide NewYork has been a key player in recovery and resiliency work. Our Sandy recovery efforts in Red Hook won us a White House “Champions of Change” award and honors from the New York State Senate. Our President Carolina Salguero was appointed to the Red Hook committee of the NY Rising Program and contributed many elements to its Red Hook’s resiliency plan.

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