

Archaeological Study in New York City:

In an attempt to locate unmarked graves, the New Jersey Soil Staff recently completed detailed ground-penetrating radar (GPR) grid surveys at the Joseph Rodman Drake Park in Bronx, New York. The park is owned and operated by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, which acquired the three-acre parcel of land in 1909. When the city acquired Drake Park, it preserved a small cemetery. Research conducted by students from the nearby Public School 48 has revealed that the park also contains an unmarked *slave burial ground*. Working with the New York City Education Department and the federally funded Teaching American History Project, Richard Shaw (State Soil Scientist) and Edwin Muniz (Assistant State Soil Scientist) conducted GPR surveys within the park. The GPR survey revealed several subsurface “anomalies” in the area that is suspected to contain the *slave burial ground*. These areas of interest will be focal points for proposed excavations by archaeologists.

This study has greatly increased public awareness to the commitment of NRCS in identifying and protecting our nation’s cultural resources. The stewardship of cultural resources is an integral component of the conservation ethic that underlies NRCS’s mission. This study also emphasizes the value of technical soil services to our non-conventional customers. This opportunity has opened the doors for outreach to the urban community in Hunts Point, providing an introduction to NRCS that will led to a greater partnership with the local government agencies, schools, and community garden groups, and promoting healthier living in the city.



A small cemetery is located within Joseph Drake Park in Bronx, New York.



Edwin Muniz uses GPR to profile the subsurface for unmarked graves within the Joseph Drake Park.