

LINDA – Fieldnotes – Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Subject: Conversation with Tom Goodridge, preparing for interview with Hadja Worley

Location: office

Time: 7:15-7:45

Tom and I met to talk about his work from 5:45-7:30. During that time Tom asked how the meeting with Hadja went, and I told him we were meeting tomorrow. After we finished with his work, we talked briefly about my project when I asked about Hadja.

Tom said that Hadja will be a great person to start with, since he is very politically oriented (my words) and wants support from institutions for community gardening. Also, Hadja and his wife Cindy have lived in Harlem for many years, long before recent gentrification. Hadja has not had the best experiences in school, so Tom suggests that I should ask about that. Tom also says that Hadja likes that we want to know what people are doing right in Harlem.

I told Tom that I presented on the gardens already, and Shirley Brice Heath had mentioned them before I presented. When I said her name Tom's eyes grew wide and he inhaled sharply, "She was *there*?" I told him that people came up to me afterwards to praise the work I am doing. I told him this both confessionally, since he knows I haven't talked with very many people, and also to let him know that people are talking about gardens. I gave him a brief synopsis, saying that I contrasted gardens with more formal, structured programs in terms of responsiveness, that instead of imagining who they are serving, gardens wait to see who shows up.

Tom also mentioned the Harvest Fair this Saturday "way out in Brooklyn." I asked if it was a Halloween oriented event, indicating that I had seen an announcement. He described it as a "country fair," where people bring strange squash, where there might be workshops. He mentioned that Classy Parker might give one of her canning workshops. He suggested that this would be a good place to see "community garden culture." It is a large event, and apparently happens each year, as he said he has never gone. He says he doesn't know how to get out there, that you need to take a subway and then a bus. He described this garden as a "big hot shot" garden, that a lot of teenagers work there and sell their produce. He called it an "urban farm" and indicated this is the extreme of production gardens. He promised to send me information, and asked if I wanted to receive other announcements. I told him I did.

He mentioned that Hadja's garden is under threat.

Tom also wanted to give me a copy of an article by Lenny Librizzi. He mentioned that Lenny was on the Council in the Environment

<http://www.cenyc.org/site/>

82P  
84P  
105P  
85P

**►What is the Council in the Environment of NYC? What is the Council on the Environment, Inc.? Why two organizations?**

The Council on the Environment of New York City is a privately funded citizens organization in the Mayor's Office.

He mentioned that CSAs came out of the Council. I asked what are CSAs, and he said community-supported agriculture. He told me I could look it up on the web.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml>

Community Supported Agriculture consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Typically, members or "share-holders" of the farm or garden pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production. Members also share in the risks of farming, including poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. By direct sales to community members, who have provided the farmer with working capital in advance, growers receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of much of the burden of marketing.

Tom belongs to a farm through CSA and gets vegetables delivered to his home. He spelled the name of Roxbury Farms for me.

<http://www.roxburyfarm.com/>

Roxbury is a community supported farm, one of the largest in the country, and the first to have a community in New York City. We grow vegetables, herbs, melons, and strawberries, for over 990 shareholders representing over 1000 families in four communities--Columbia County, the Capital Region, Westchester County and Manhattan--on 225 acres in Kinderhook, New York. (continued)

This led to him mentioning the man who guided a group of students through a project investigating where fresh vegetables could be purchased. I asked for his name, Raymond Figueroa, and he told me I could ask Hadja where to find this man. Tom also asked if there was anyone else I wanted to meet, and I mentioned the people in Harlem Urban Gardeners (HUG).

I asked if Hadja would be ok with me taping, or if I should get to know him better before taping. Tom said he would be comfortable with it, although I should ask right away. He said that Cindy can't stop talking, and I said that was good for me. He mentioned that Hadja and Cindy had been through a lot. [question: implication that they had also had a rocky relationship?] Tom described Hadja as a "warrior" for gardens.