**1c Page 15 READING TEXT**

Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Blood lines

America itself is well-known for being a melting pot of different ethnic groups and cultures, but nowhere is this diversity more pronounced than in Queens, New York. Here, second-generation Puerto Ricans live alongside third-generation Greeks and first-generation Koreans, all united by a common feeling of pride in their American identity.

However, they are also proud and curious about their ancestral roots. *National Geographic’s Genographic Projec*t, known also as the Human Family Tree, set out to trace the origins and common ancestry of the various immigrants in this community by examining their genetic makeup using a simple DNA test. The study was well supported by local residents, but often what was of more immediate interest to people was something which intrigues us all: the history of our recent ancestry. In other words, how their grandparents and great-grandparents arrived in America, and what brought them there in the first place.

One recurring theme among immigrants seems to be the hard work and sacrifices that went in to building a new life and how their descendants now feel a duty to honour their efforts by working hard too. Here are two Queens residents’ stories.

**Richard, 38**

My great-grandfather Tomas came to America from Poland when he was fifteen. His mother had become ill and died, and his father remarried to be able to take care of his seven children. Tomas didn’t like his stepmother, so he ran away to Belgium, where he boarded a ship to America – without a ticket. He was clearly something of a free spirit. Arriving in America with nothing, he got a job on the railroads in California. Then one day he saw an announcement in a newspaper that was read by immigrants. It was from his brother in New York who was also seeking his fortune in America and was looking for him. Tomas got in touch and they had an emotional reunion in New York, where Tomas subsequently settled. This is the story that my grandmother has passed down to us, to my parents and all my aunts and uncles. She is an amazing woman and the head of the family, I suppose; the one who holds us all together. She’s actually quite forgetful now, but she never forgets family details. What that has meant is that all of us – brothers, aunts, cousins – have a strong family bond and a strong sense of belonging to a group that has struggled and fought together to succeed here.

Life

**Tanja, 29**

I’m a first generation American. Both my parents came here from Jamaica, where getting a good education is a must. My mother always says that people may take everything away from you, but they can never take away your education. My father was a nurse in Jamaica, but he had an ambition to be a doctor in the US; when he first came here, he studied during the day and went to work at night. My parents have a strong work ethic. My mum has always worked as a nurse, but at the same time has always been very involved in our lives also, helping with our studies and following our careers with interest. Both my sister and I have followed them into the medical profession and now I’m working as a doctor at the Mount Sinai hospital in Queens. I don’t know if that kind of dedication is genetic or just something that you learn from your parents, but that desire to get ahead … we’ve certainly both inherited it. The great thing about America is that it gives you the opportunity to live those dreams too.