

The Scene on...

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PHOTO: JOSÉ GRISALES

park known as Van Cortlandt Stadium.

Presently, historic Van Cortlandt Park features the famous cross-country course, which runs across the park's plains and forest with distances of 3.1 and 5 miles. The park hosts the United States Cross-Country Championships, annual racing contests where people from all over the United States participate. Another feature is a bridle path for horseback riders and the finest horseback riding stables in the city. Within the park, there is the Van Cortlandt Golf

Course, which opened in 1895, and is the oldest public golf course in the United States. The park also has the oldest historic building in the Bronx, Van Cortlandt House Museum, which is filled with the Van Cortlandt family collections, relics and decorative furnishings. Indeed, the museum has become one of the city's historic houses and treasured landmarks. Not too far away from the museum is the man-made Van Cortlandt Lake, the largest fresh water body in the Bronx. In addition, there are

many nature trails that enclose the park such as the Croton Aqueduct (1.1 miles), which once was the city's extensive water-supply system, and the Old Putnam Railroad Track, the first line to link New York with Boston.

"I feel almost embarrassed that I've lived in New York all my life and I've never researched the history of the park," says Robert Rodriguez, co-founder of the Tito Puente Scholarship Fund. This private fund grants money to youngsters who are inter-

ested in pursuing a career in music or performing arts. Mr. Rodriguez, now retired, resides in Manhattan and frequently uses the park's facilities to play paddle ball as often as three days a week. "I should research and care more about the history of this park because knowing about it, would make me feel more personally connected," he adds.

Mr. Rodriguez believes that many people, including him, take too many things for granted.