

NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOODS

East Harlem



New York
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Library



STUDY GUIDE

Created by **Rebecca Krucoff** for the Teaching & Learning Division, The New York Public Library.

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East Harlem, which runs from 96th Street to 142nd Street and from the Harlem River to Fifth Avenue, is the northernmost neighborhood on the east side of Manhattan.

The area is the subject of the second in a series of neighborhood history guides created for teachers and students by The New York Public Library (NYPL). The neighborhood has served as home to tens of thousands of residents and has been the setting of turning points in countless individual New York stories, many of which started somewhere else in the world. The neighborhood has also played an important role in shaping New York City and the United States.

It is no accident that so many newcomers to the country found their way to this expanse of land on this side of Manhattan island. The availability of jobs, transportation, inexpensive housing, construction and development opportunities, as well as politicians who encouraged settlement, all combined to make East Harlem an affordable and accessible area to new arrivals. The story of East Harlem encompasses a rich and textured history of immigrant and migrant settlement interspersed with urban development, the rise of famous politicians, economic and social struggle, and activist movements.

This guide is meant to aid in a study of the nation's story of immigration and urbanization, in an examination of New York City history, or as a neighborhood case study. The goal of the guide is to supplement these narratives with the rich collections of The New York Public Library and to bring to light new resources for teaching these topics. All of the resources in this guide can be found in the magnificent collections of The New York Public Library. Each chapter in *New York Neighborhoods: East Harlem* focuses on one type of primary source and the ways in which that source

illuminates the history of the neighborhood. By using this guide, students will have an opportunity to conduct research with historic maps, census data, photographs, and manuscripts. Each chapter has a short introduction, followed by a collection of resources, their provenances, methods for interpretation, and suggested activities.

For more information on this or related topics, search NYPL collections at www.nypl.org.

How to Use This Guide

Essential Questions to Guide a Unit of Study

This guide includes a variety of maps, census records, photographs, and manuscripts, all found in the collections of The New York Public Library. Each chapter focuses on one type of resource and offers specific strategies for interpreting the information one can glean from the material. The evidence students collect will lead to discoveries about the history of the neighborhood of East Harlem, as well as more general themes in New York City and American history. As you go through this guide, it is useful to keep the following Essential Questions in mind:

- What are the patterns of city growth?
- How and why do cities change over time?
- How can images and text illuminate how the city has changed over time?
- Are changes that occur in cities consciously or unconsciously created?
- What role do neighborhoods play in city life?

How to Make the Most of This Guide

Each chapter of this guide focuses on a particular group of primary sources and the attendant themes associated with the growth of East Harlem. A contextual overview introduces every section; it is followed by a series of resources from the NYPL collection, strategies for interpreting primary sources, and suggested activities. A sequence of leveled questions is provided in every chapter.

Along with the specific suggestions and questions in each chapter, we have provided more general lesson activities that can be used for a critical inquiry of primary sources. These activities include methods for making observations and drawing inferences, comparing and contrasting documents, and developing connections between sources. These general activities can be used throughout this guide and can be adapted for use in groups, by different age levels, and to differentiate materials for instruction. These lesson suggestions are included in the following segment.

All of the images in this guide can be found on the accompanying CD, which can be displayed on a Smart Board or used with an LCD projector. You can also print images from the CD to use with your class.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FOR RESOURCE ANALYSIS

Observation/Inference Chart

This activity helps students practice observations before drawing conclusions. It helps students to slow down their thinking so that they can base their opinions on facts. It builds on the observations and analysis of a large group, thus helping students see the benefits of hearing others' perspectives on a topic. It can also serve as an excellent jumping-off point for generating questions.

This exercise works best with a visual document.

Project one of the images from the CD onto the Smart Board or use with the LCD projector. Ask students to look at the document and, using a simple chart (Graphic Organizer 1, p. 8), write down their observations. They should categorize them into "observations" (facts) and "inferences" (opinions based on what they observe). Observations are something that all viewers can agree on. Inferences are particular to the viewer and reflect the viewer's beliefs and experiences. After approximately 10 minutes, ask students to share their observations and inferences in a round-robin manner. You can ask students to clarify their inferences by asking, "What did you see that makes you say that?" After gathering the class's observations and inferences, you can discuss: What more did we see in the document as we went along? What themes were raised? What new questions were asked? Did hearing others' observations make you see the document differently? Are all of the observations truly based on evidence?

Compare and Contrast

Choose two or three resources from the guide for students to compare and contrast using a Venn Diagram (Graphic Organizers 2 and 3, p. 9). Look for differences in materials, points of view, representations of people

and places, and ideas represented. Then share students' responses as a class, or ask students to write a short statement reflecting what they learned by comparing the two works.

Find the Connection

Some of the resources in specific sections clearly relate to and respond to one another. Students can find deeper meaning by working to discover how the resources connect. Try putting several resources together in a folder and giving the folder to small groups of two to four students. Ask students to consider the theme of the section they are studying and see what connections they can draw from this series of resources. You might want to provide guiding questions for students based on the ones included in each section.

Jigsaw

Give individual students or pairs of students one document each from a section. Ask students to answer the questions that accompany that particular document. Have students pair with a new partner and share their discoveries, with the goal of coming up with a connection between their two documents. Students can then share their connection and documents with the class at large.

Connections to the Standards: Common Core, New York State

New York Neighborhoods: East Harlem aligns itself closely to the Common Core Standards (CCS) and its emphasis on students interacting with and learning from informational texts. Following the strategies in this guide encourages students to make and evaluate claims by differentiating between which statements can and cannot be supported by specific sources. By focusing each chapter on one type of primary source, the guide places students in the role of a historian and asks them first to observe information, then to analyze and draw inferences from their observations, and finally to evaluate which claims can and cannot be drawn from their research.

An Example

Chapter 1 focuses on historic maps of East Harlem. By examining them, students will be able to draw conclusions about physical changes to the area and changing technology and community needs. Questions might arise about changes in what groups of people live and work in the neighborhood over time. Demographic information, which is discussed in Chapter 2: Census Records, might help answer such questions.

Teachers can encourage students to evaluate each group of sources for the information they can and cannot provide about East Harlem. Students can develop arguments about the growth of the neighborhood, generate questions, and use each succeeding chapter to add to or clarify what they hope to discover. In this way, the story of East Harlem unfolds more completely from chapter to chapter.

CONNECTION TO NYS STANDARDS

1.1 History of the United States

- Know the roots of American culture and how different people played a role in creating it

1.2 History of the United States and New York

- Study important ideas, cultural beliefs, and interactions of people from a variety of perspectives
- Gather and organize information about the traditions transmitted by various groups living in their neighborhood and community
- Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States

1.3 History of the United States and New York

- Classify information by type of activity: social, political, economic, technological, scientific, cultural, or religious
- Complete well-documented and historically accurate case studies about individuals and groups who represent different ethnic, national, and religious groups, including Native American Indians, in New York State and the United States at different times and in different locations

- Describe how ordinary people and famous historic figures in the local community, the state, and the United States have advanced the fundamental democratic values, beliefs, and traditions expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the New York State and United States constitutions, the Bill of Rights, and other important historic documents

1.4 History of the United States and New York

- The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments
- Consider different interpretations of key events and/or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts
- Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and state
- View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts

3.2 Geography

- Ask geographic questions about where places are located; why they are located where they are; what is important about their locations; and how their locations are related to the location of other people and places (adapted from National Geography Standards, 1994)

LINKS TO THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions from the text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning and tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and to the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

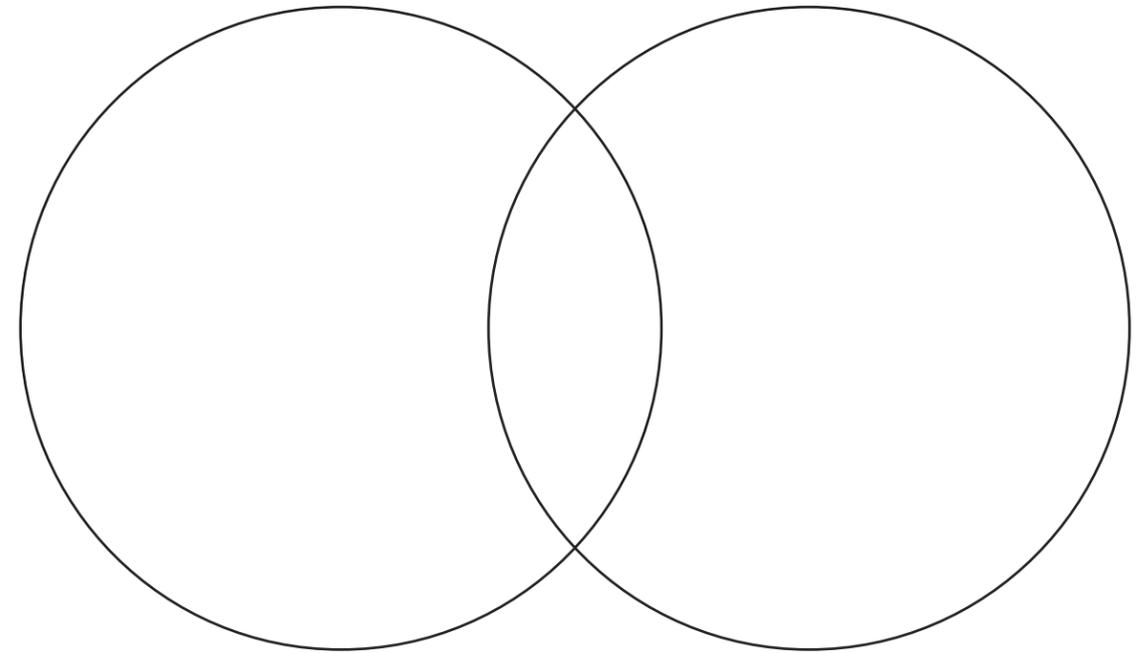
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the kind of reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches different authors take.

Observation/Inference Chart

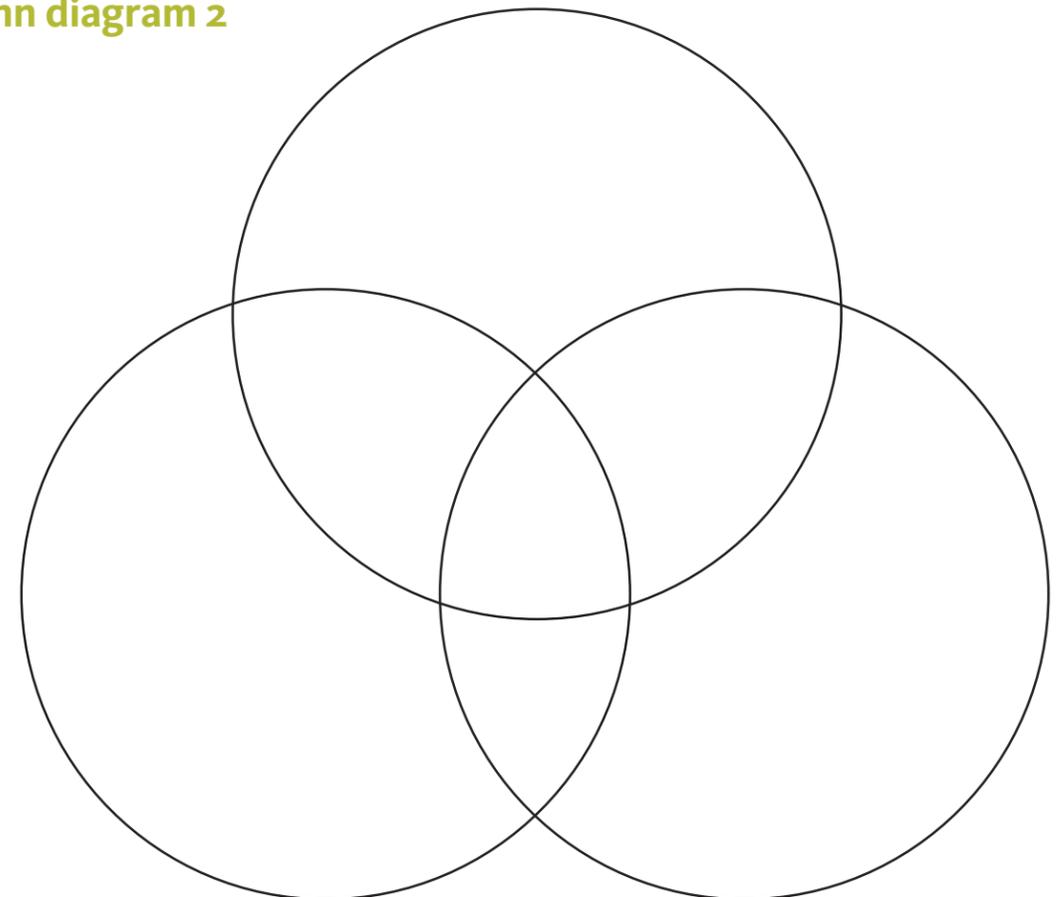
Observations	Inferences

Questions

Venn diagram 1



Venn diagram 2



Glossary

Observation: an act of noting or recognizing a fact

Inference: a conclusion derived from facts

Depiction: a picture representation

Perception: a way of seeing things based on your own point of view or on the five senses

CHAPTER 1: MAPS

Industrial Revolution: a period of rapid change in the economy due to a general introduction of power-driven machinery and important changes in methods of production from handmade to factory-made

Industry: a manufacturing activity or systematic labor for some useful purpose

Residential: used as a residence or home

Commercial: used for commerce or business, including stores and offices

Atlas: a bound collection of maps

Plate: one map in an atlas

Map Key: a guide to the specific symbols on a map, often located in a corner of a map or on the first page of an atlas

Storefront: a small store located on the ground floor of a building, usually with windows facing the street

Street Grid: a type of city plan in which streets run at right angles to each other, forming a grid

Developer: one who invests in the growth of or construction of real estate

Tenement: a multifamily dwelling or a rented apartment. In New York City, the word tenement came to be associated with a substandard, multifamily, walk-up apartment building

Slum Clearance: the acquisition and demolition of land perceived to be “slums”

Amenities: features that make a neighborhood attractive to live in, such as transportation, restaurants, stores, and parks

Public Housing: government-funded housing for low-income families

Fiorello La Guardia: mayor of New York City for three terms from 1934–1945

CHAPTER 2: CENSUS RECORDS

Census: a count of the population. In the United States, a federal census is taken every 10 years

Enumeration District: a unit of census survey

Population: the whole number of people or inhabitants in a country or region

Demographics: statistical characteristics of human populations

Immigrant: one who moves from one country to another

Migrant: one who moves from one place to another, often within a country

Occupation: the principal business of one’s life

Trade: the business or work in which one engages regularly

Household: those who live under the same roof

Template: a guide, pattern, or mold

CHAPTER 3: PHOTOGRAPHS

Candid: in a photograph, subjects who are acting naturally

Posed: in a photograph, subjects who are styled to position themselves in a specific way

Portray: to make a picture of

Point of View: the position from which something is considered or evaluated

Mom-and-Pop Business: a small, family-owned business, often one-of-a-kind, such as a grocery store, serving a local community

Pushcart: a type of cart that served as a movable store and sold such things as fruits and vegetables, clothing, hardware, etc.

Vendor: one who sells goods

Structure: something that is constructed. On the street, this can include apartment buildings or offices, houses of worship, bridges, and other large constructions

Street Furniture: small structures on street level, such as garbage cans, lampposts, benches, etc.

Glossary (cont.)

Ethnography: the study and systematic recording of human cultures

CHAPTER 4: MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscript: a written or typewritten composition or document, as distinguished from a printed copy

Great Depression: the severe economic downturn that took place in the decade preceding the World War II (1930s)

Residents: people who live in an area

Vito Marcantonio: a congressman who represented East Harlem in the House of Representatives in the 1930s and 1940s

Social Reformer: one who wants to put an end to social wrongdoing by introducing improvements or alternative courses of action

Radical: tending or disposed to making extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions

Memorandum: an informal, diplomatic (polite) note of communication

Vermin: small, common, harmful, or objectionable animals or insects (such as lice or fleas)

Rickets: a disease that most often affects the young and results in soft, weak bones

Dwelling: a place where one lives

Housing Authority: an organization that runs and oversees public housing

Delinquency: conduct that is out of accord with accepted behavior or the law, often applied to adolescents

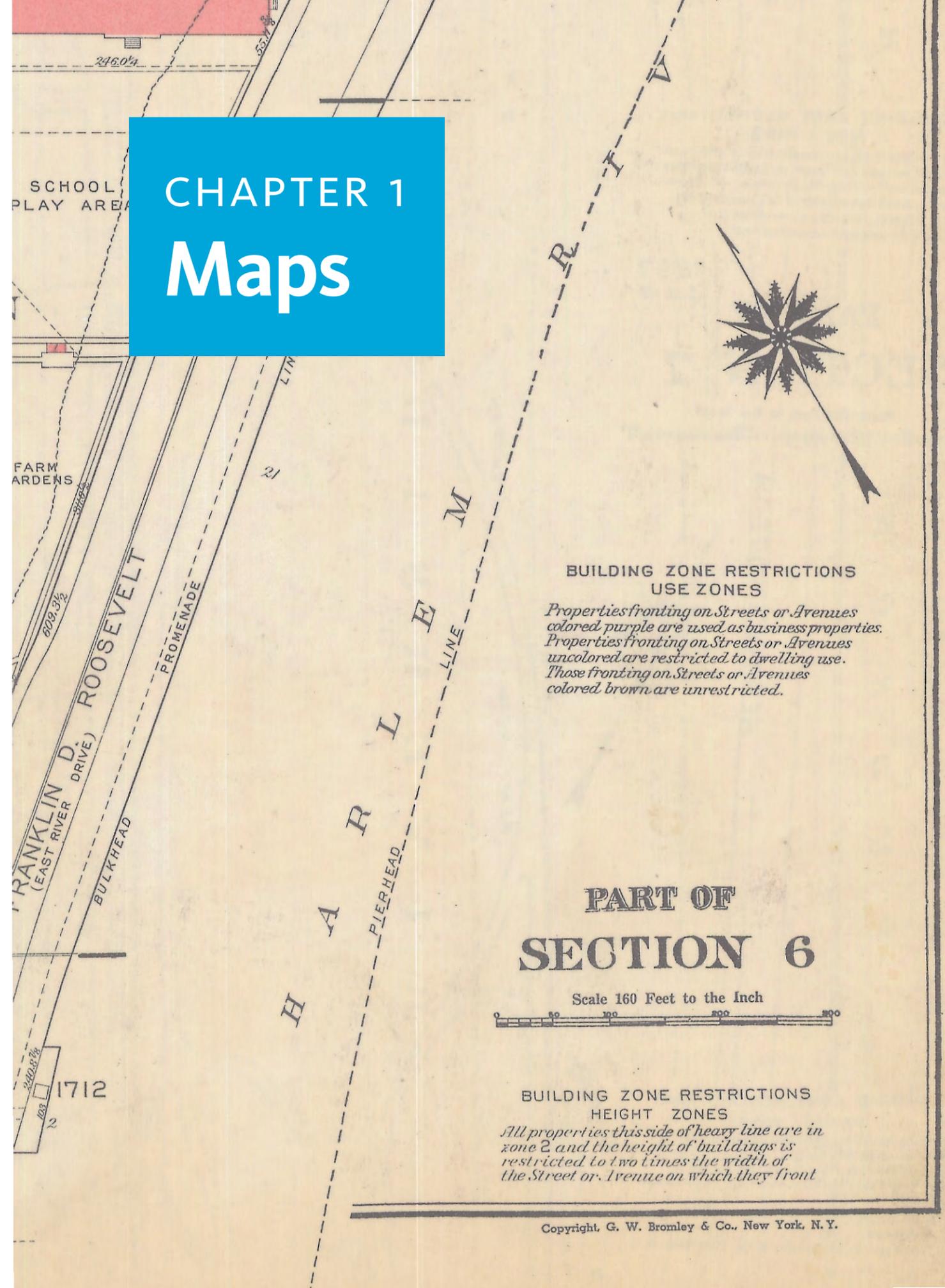
Slum: an area, usually urban, that is perceived as impoverished, unhealthy, and unsafe. At times, these characteristics are attributed solely to the area’s environment; at other times, they are attributed unfairly to the area’s residents as well

Extensions

New York Neighborhoods: East Harlem provides a case study of one New York neighborhood. The methods used to examine this neighborhood can be adapted and extended for use in your own community. If you are interested in learning more about East Harlem or exploring your own area, try some of the following ideas:

- Collect any research questions raised by students throughout their use of *New York Neighborhoods: East Harlem*. Ask students where they think they could find the answers to their questions. Organize further research using NYPL's digital collections (www.nypl.org) or other online or textual resources.
- Make connections to today by looking at the current census data of East Harlem. Or look at census data of your own neighborhood from the past and the present (www.census.gov/schools/for_teachers).
- Take a walk in your school's neighborhood to gather data on the types of buildings in your community and what they suggest about community needs and/or planning issues. Categorize which buildings are older and newer, and how they compare and contrast in terms of materials and usage.
- Gather historic maps of your own community (www.nypl.org) to compare with maps of the area today.
- Make a map of your community using information gathered on a neighborhood walk and using the Bromley maps as a model. Ask students to write about how this map reflects the community's needs, technology, and city planning.

- Photograph your community and its residents and write labels for the photographs that provide contextual information about the neighborhood.
- Arrange for longtime residents to speak to your class about your school's neighborhood and how it has changed over time.
- Use the "Community Data Portal" or the "New York: A City of Neighborhoods" map, which are both available through the New York City Department of City Planning (www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/home.html).



In the mid- to late-19th century, the industrial revolution was at its height in the United States. Business was booming, factories were growing, and immigrants were arriving in the United States en masse to find work. The growth of industry yielded an explosion of new technology and new white-collar sectors, which helped service and sustain the expanding commercial trade that accompanied burgeoning industry.

As wealth began to concentrate among factory owners and managers, one of the most important services they demanded was insurance. This, of course, protected property owners from accidents, fire, and other damage that could potentially compromise the flow of business. Beginning in the 1850s, insurance companies began hiring mapmakers to document urban neighborhoods to aid in calculating property values to price premiums of fire-insurance policies. These maps, separated into quadrants of blocks, provided an intricate, bird's-eye view of every structure within a specific area, as well as information about the material it was constructed from. The maps also included the names of businesses, house numbers, the number of stories per building, and a variety of other information—all in beautifully hand-rendered, expert detail. The maps protected the insurance companies and

the business owners alike: the insurance companies could assess the specific risks involved in protecting particular businesses and avoid setting premiums too low; business owners could get enough information to avoid agreeing to premiums that were too high. In an age of wooden buildings, flimsy fire escapes, and a volunteer-only fire department, the fear of a devastating fire was very real and immediate. Fire insurance, therefore, helped to alleviate some of the property owners' anxieties.

One mapmaking company, G. W. Bromley & Co., began publishing a series of atlases of New York City beginning in 1879. The company continued to make fire-insurance maps until the 1990s. To organize its atlases, Bromley & Co. sectioned Manhattan into plates, each with a number and corresponding to a specific group of streets. The company remained consistent in its numbering system over time, so researchers can follow one plate number throughout the years and see the changes in a neighborhood, block by block. Every Bromley atlas has a key that helps viewers read the maps. The key identifies the types of construction materials and points out a number of other elements, including old farm-property lines, public-transportation routes, and the characteristics of each building, including the number of floors and whether it had a basement or storefront.

Like many urban neighborhoods, East Harlem was once a string of farms, which ran haphazardly across the swath of land that now inhabits the east side of Manhattan north of 96th Street. In 1811, the Commissioners' Plan for the City of New York divided these farms into a street grid; as developers and landowners sought to increase the value of their property, streets were laid out and buildings were erected. Eventually, the land was developed into blocks of tenement-apartment buildings, many of which had storefronts on the ground floor. The streets with tenements stretched from the Harlem River to Fifth Avenue and from 96th Street to 142nd Street, and served as home for people arriving in New York from all over the world (see Chapter 2: Census Records). In response to slum-clearance mandates that began in the 1940s,

East Harlem launched an ambitious project of developing public housing (see Chapter 4: Manuscripts). The neighborhood now has one of the densest areas of federally funded housing in New York City. The creation of federal-housing programs brought along with it the destruction of many of the older tenements and ushered in numerous other changes. These stories can be observed or inferred from the Bromley maps that are collected here.

A Guide to Using Maps

Maps are depictions of land that often denote boundaries, land formations, transportation routes, ownership, street layout, etc. Maps are always created with a specific purpose, and it is useful to consider the reason a map was made and who made the map before examining it closely.

When working with maps, it is useful to keep the following questions in mind:

- *When was this map made?*
- *Who made this map and for what purpose?*

Fire-insurance maps tell us about land use. Land use is a term planners and others use to refer to what types of structures are built and where, what materials they are made from, how large or small they are, and what they are adjacent to. The term can also relate to the community's needs. The types of amenities, services, and housing viewers can identify on a Bromley fire-insurance map provide clues to how the city and community use the land in their area and can raise questions about whether that land is being used adequately and fairly.

The following are some general trends to notice when looking at the series of Bromley fire-insurance maps collected here:

- In maps from 1916, some streets do not have any buildings. On blocks that do have buildings such as tenements, most are made of brick and placed side by side. This building density allowed property owners to earn the most income from the least amount of space on the expensive Manhattan land. Industrial buildings, such as those owned by Consolidated Edison,

also exist in the neighborhood. Most of the industrial buildings, many of which housed important jobs for the community, are located adjacent to the river. Because the river was essential to the flow of materials in and out of factories, proximity to it was key for many New York-based industries. Public schools and other important public and private institutions are also labeled on the maps. Stores occupy the ground floor of many buildings, which suggests that the community is one in which neighbors are familiar with one another, shop at local stores, and work as close to home as possible, traveling by foot to get from place to place. For those who needed or wanted to travel farther afield, public transportation—evident in the elevated trains running along Second and Third avenues—was available as well.

- The 1934 maps generally resemble the 1916 maps. Some businesses had changed, more garages are evident, and there is less industry. More land is dedicated to housing. Large buildings constructed during the Progressive-era, such as the Museum of the City of New York on Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street and a children's shelter run by the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, are present; these organizations and their structures reflect the success of industrialists and their philanthropic pursuits and the ideals of social reformers.
- By 1955, we see the impact of slum-clearance activities, which were the result of the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954. Slum clearance was intended to eliminate dilapidated, unsafe housing—the tenements—and, in their place, construct new, modern, often publicly funded housing for the poor. With the clearance of tenements, local stores that were located on the ground floors of these buildings were eliminated as well. Community centers, new supermarkets, and hospitals, all of which are evident in these maps, replaced the smaller commercial spaces. More public schools and trade

schools also appear. Elevated trains, which were prominent in previous maps, have been replaced by the subway. By 1967, public housing appears to account for about half the occupied space in the area.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE MAPS (CONNECTION TO CCS: DEVELOPING CLAIMS)

This chapter includes five plates from the Bromley maps dating from 1916, 1934, 1955, and 1967. Students in pairs or small groups can look at one set of maps, all of the same plate number, to compare and contrast over the years. By following the suggestions and questions below, students will be able to make observations and inferences from their series of maps, develop questions, and draw conclusions about changes in the neighborhood over time. Finally, by developing their own questions, students will be in a good position to make connections to the sources in the following chapters, then continue their research further.

Along with the suggestions below, you may choose to use any of the activities in the How to Use This Guide section. Observations and inferences made from one map could lead to a rich class conversation. The Venn diagrams provided can be substituted for the charts that follow this section, and might be especially useful for younger students.

1. Put the maps in chronological order.
2. Compare and contrast each column of blocks from the top to the bottom of the page, paying close attention to the actual structures identified. Make a note of the building type and its role. Think about who might be served by these buildings.
3. How much of this space is devoted to residential structures? How much is industrial? How much is commercial?
4. Use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast how the block has changed. How has it stayed the same?

Further questions to consider, as a whole class, in small groups, or individually:

1. What might be some reasons for changes in the area?
2. How might changes reflect new needs of the community? New technology? New values?
3. How might these changes reflect larger trends in society?
4. What might be some advantages to the changes? What might be some disadvantages?
5. Based on the types of changes observed over time, what kinds of structures might we find on a map from 1987, made 20 years later than our last map?
6. Can you imagine what a map of the neighborhood today might look like? What do you think might be the same? What might be different? What do you think might look different but serve a purpose similar to any of the structures on the historic maps?
7. What might be some community needs we have today that are not reflected on these historic maps?
8. What are some questions we can ask about this neighborhood based on what we have observed?
9. Based on your ideas of how the city and the world are still changing, if someone were to make a map of this neighborhood 20 years from now, how might it be different?

Map Activity

1. Fill in several of the streets and avenues from your map on the template provided below.
2. Compare and contrast each column of blocks from the top of the page to the bottom. Pay particular attention to the different kinds of buildings you see.
3. Fill in some of the specific types of structures you see in the spaces below (for example, apartment building, school, garage, etc.).

Year: 1916

Plate Number: _____

Section Number: _____

4. Who uses these different kinds of structures (students, families, car mechanics, etc.)? _____

Map Activity

1. Fill in several of the streets and avenues from your map on the template provided below.
2. Compare and contrast each column of blocks from the top of the page to the bottom. Pay particular attention to the different kinds of buildings you see.
3. Fill in some of the specific types of structures you see in the spaces below (for example, apartment building, school, garage, etc.).

Year: 1934

Plate Number: _____

Section Number: _____

	_____ STREET	
	_____ STREET	
AVENUE	_____ STREET	AVENUE
	_____ STREET	

4. Who uses these different kinds of structures (students, families, car mechanics, etc.)? _____

Map Activity

1. Fill in several of the streets and avenues from your map on the template provided below.
2. Compare and contrast each column of blocks from the top of the page to the bottom. Pay particular attention to the different kinds of buildings you see.
3. Fill in some of the specific types of structures you see in the spaces below (for example, apartment building, school, garage, etc.).

Year: 1955

Plate Number: _____

Section Number: _____

	_____ STREET	
	_____ STREET	
AVENUE	_____ STREET	AVENUE
	_____ STREET	

4. Who uses these different kinds of structures (students, families, car mechanics, etc.)? _____

Map Activity

1. Fill in several of the streets and avenues from your map on the template provided below.
2. Compare and contrast each column of blocks from the top of the page to the bottom. Pay particular attention to the different kinds of buildings you see.
3. Fill in some of the specific types of structures you see in the spaces below (for example, apartment building, school, garage, etc.).

Year: 1967

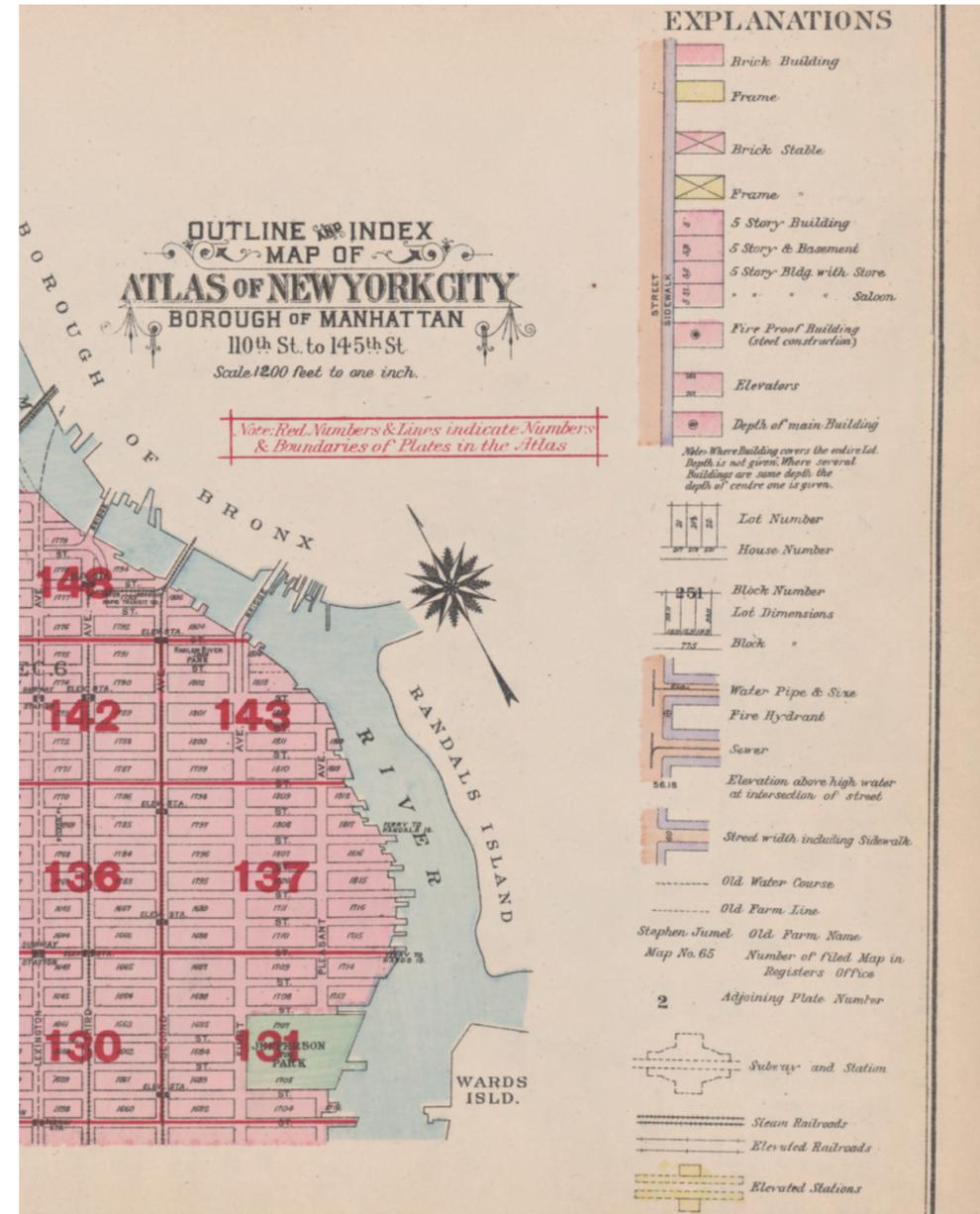
Plate Number: _____

Section Number: _____

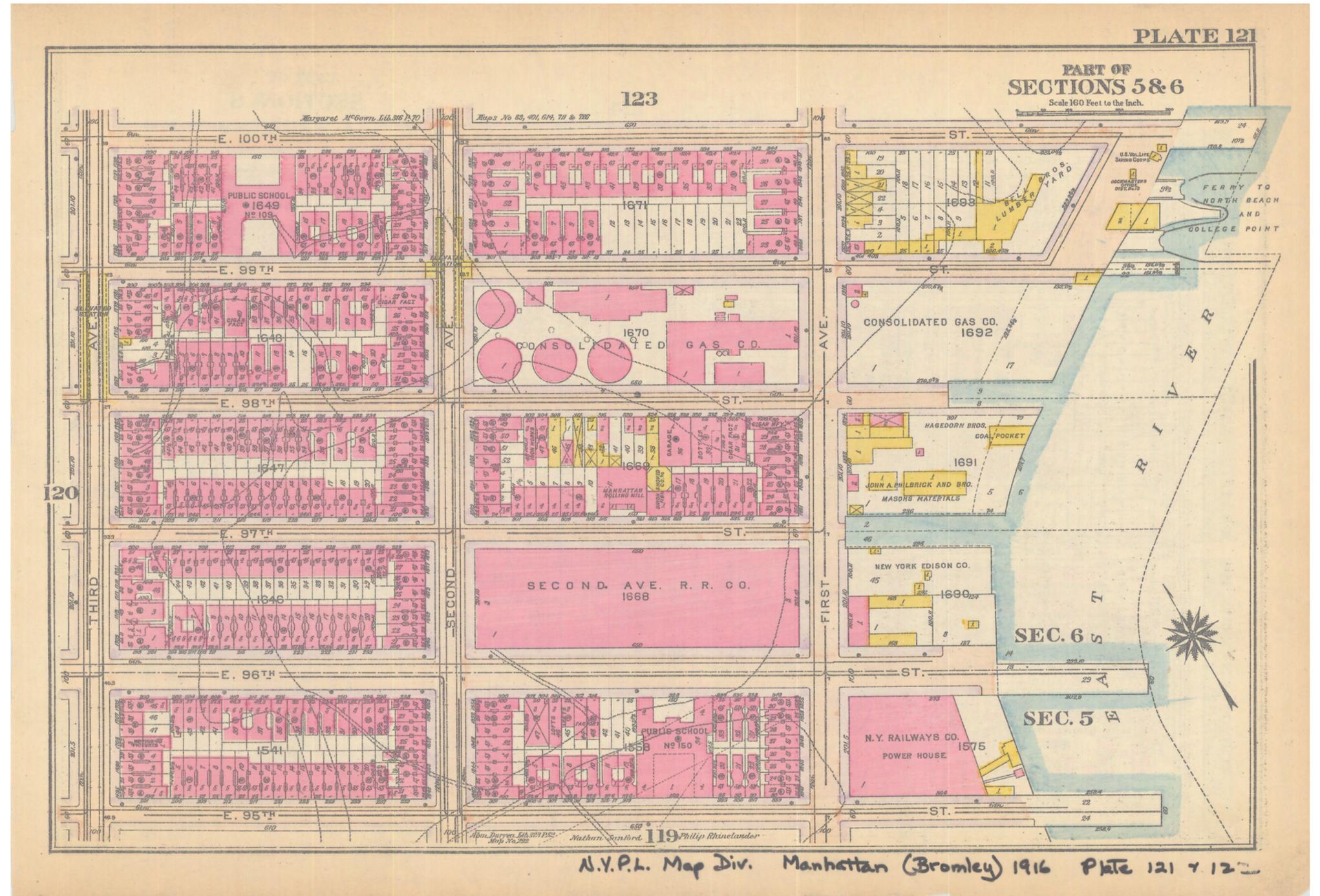
	_____ STREET	
	_____ STREET	
_____ AVENUE	_____ STREET	_____ AVENUE
	_____ STREET	

4. Who uses these different kinds of structures (students, families, car mechanics, etc.)? _____

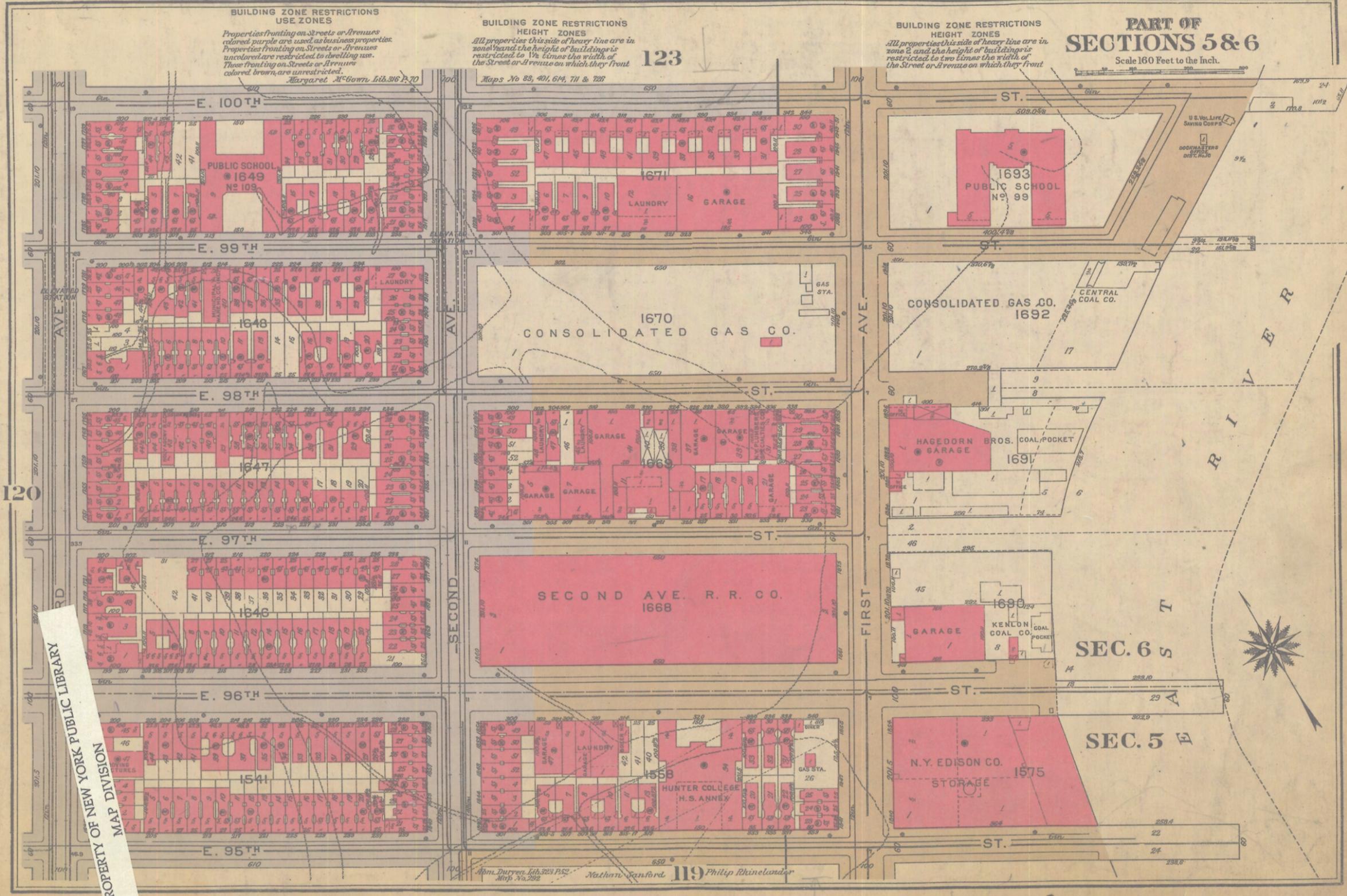
Key for Map Activity



G. W. Bromley & Co. *Atlas of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York*. New York, 1916.
NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division. Digital ID: 1511721.



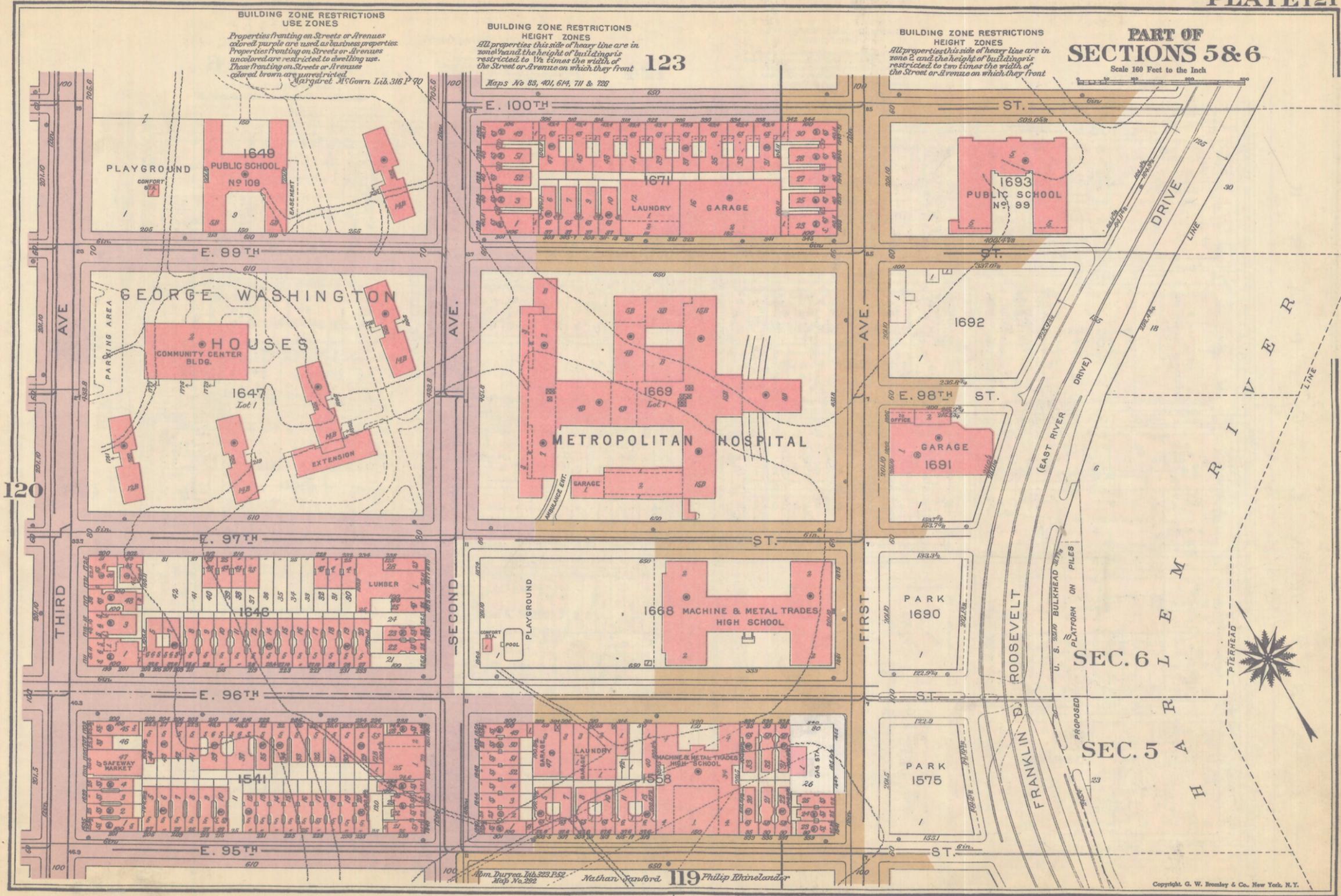
G. W. Bromley & Co. *Atlas of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York*. New York, 1916.
NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division. Digital ID: 1512306.



G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book. New York, 1934.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

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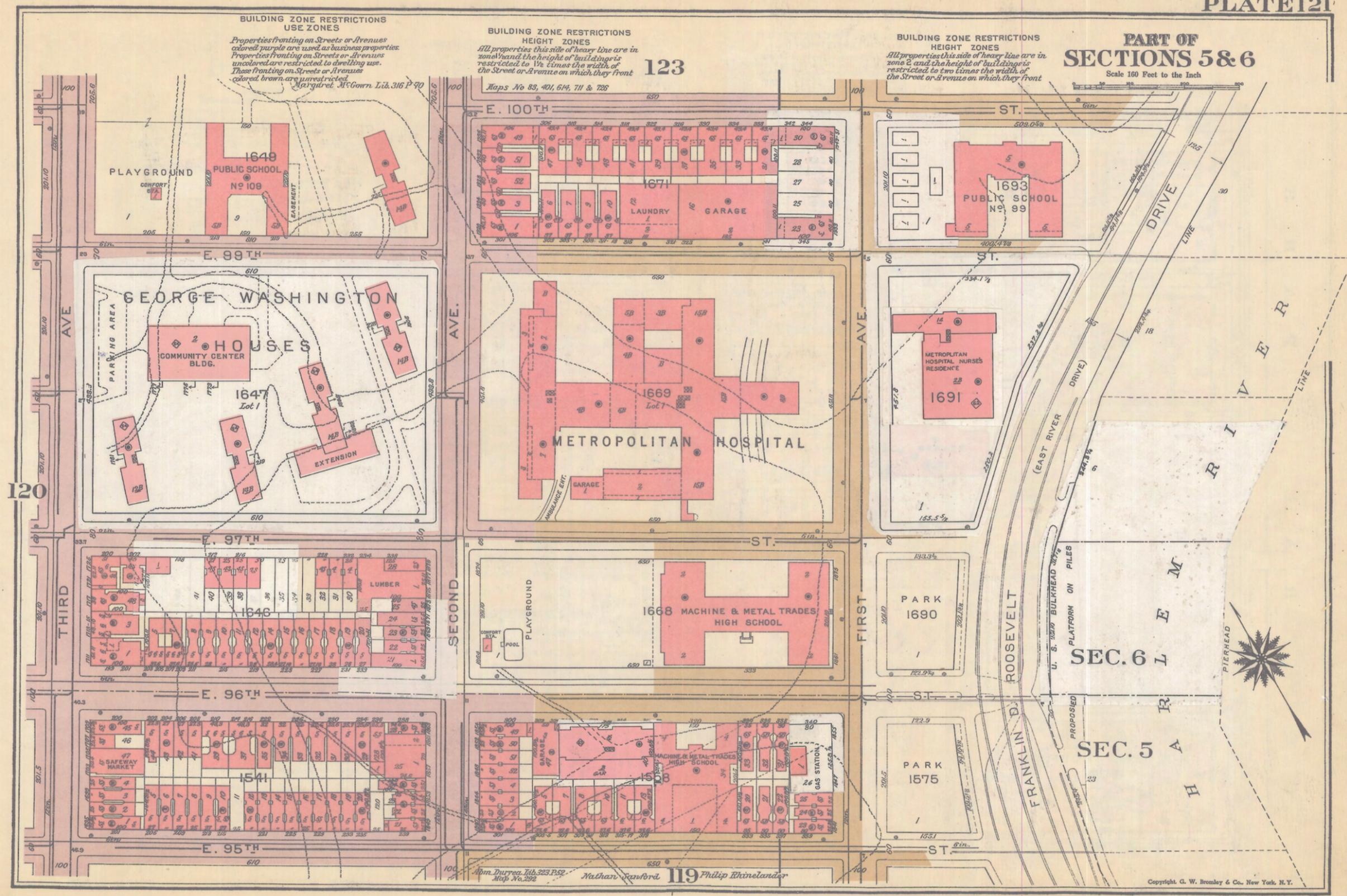


MANHATTAN 1955

G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1955.

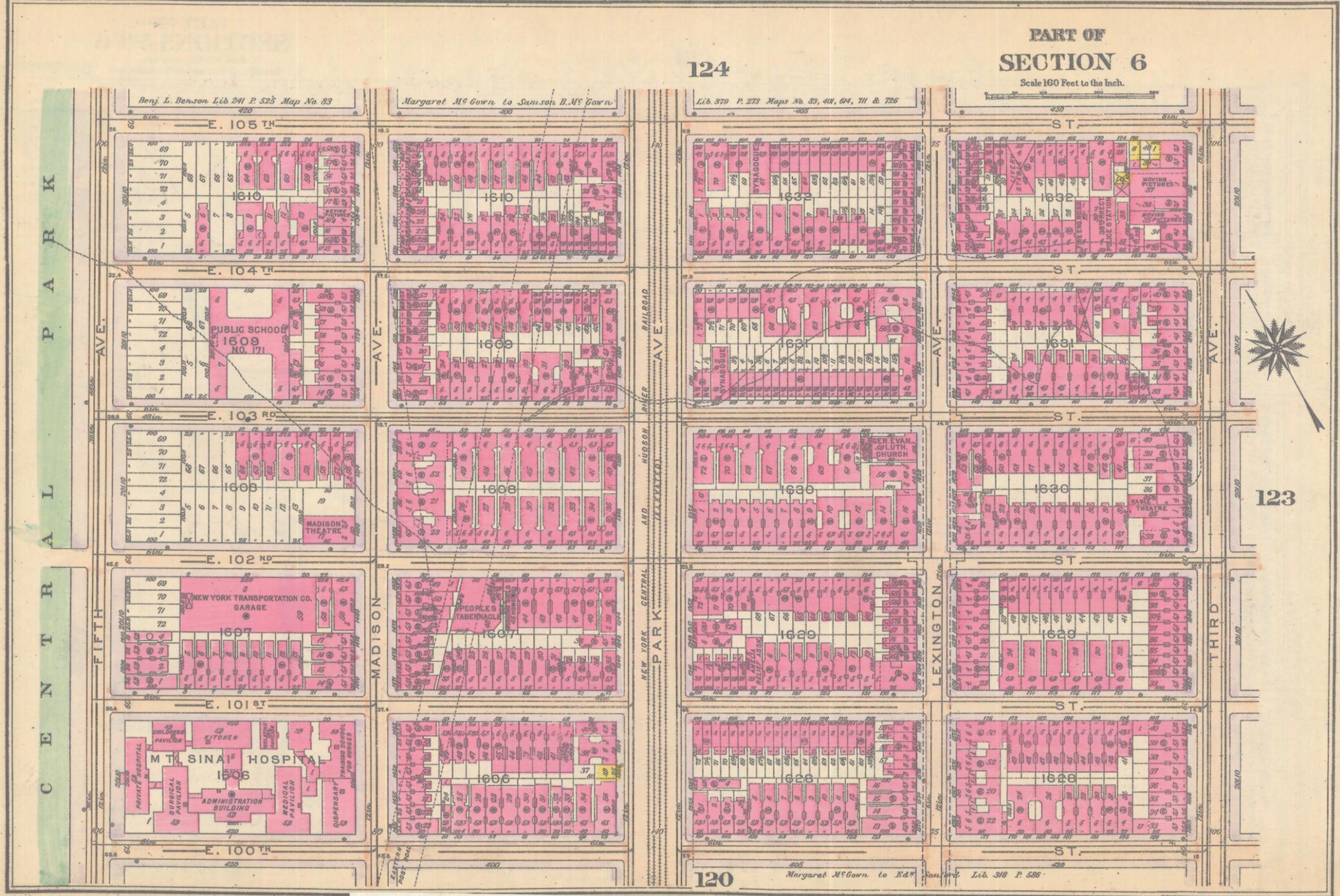
NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

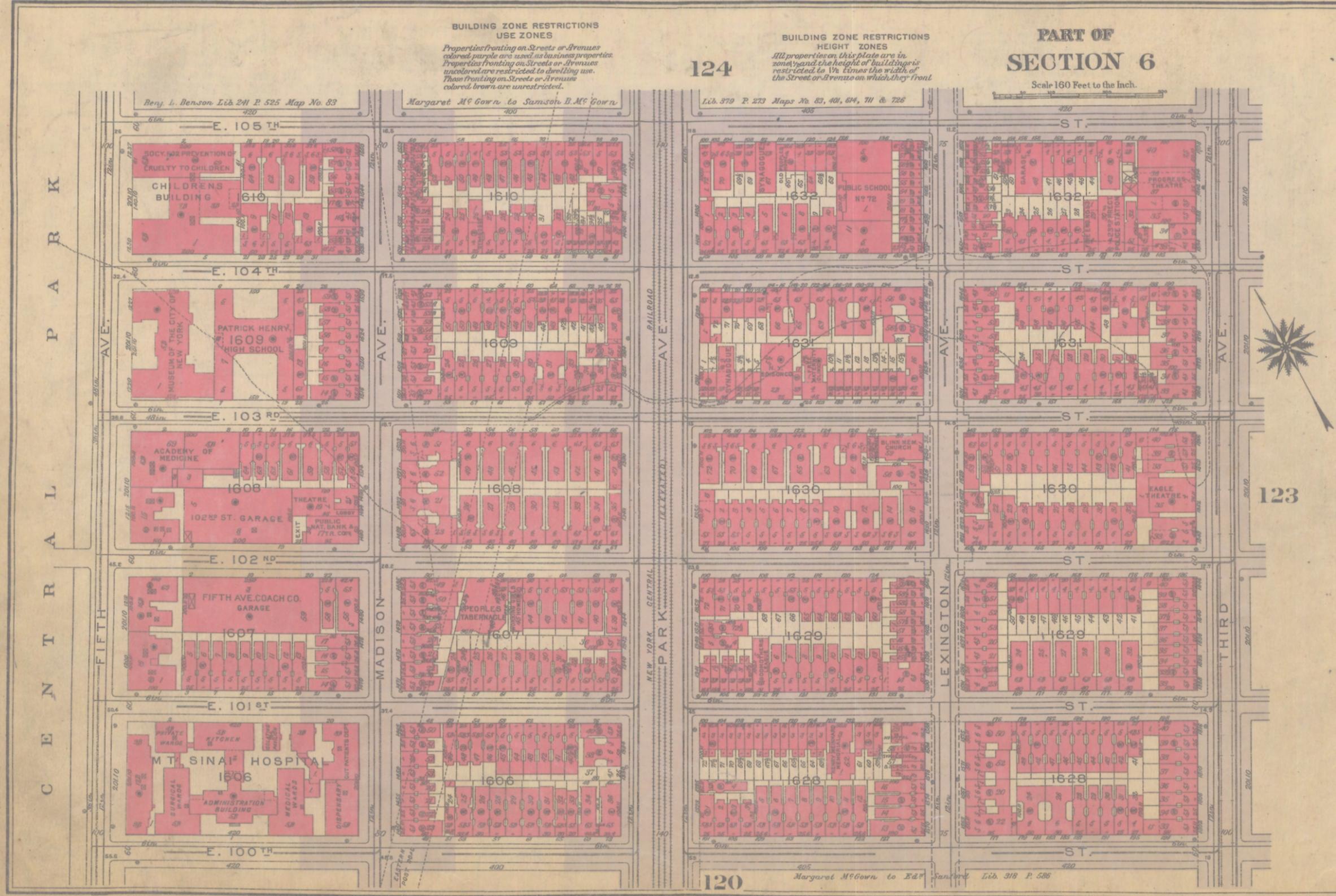
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Manhattan Bromley 1967

G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1967.
 NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.
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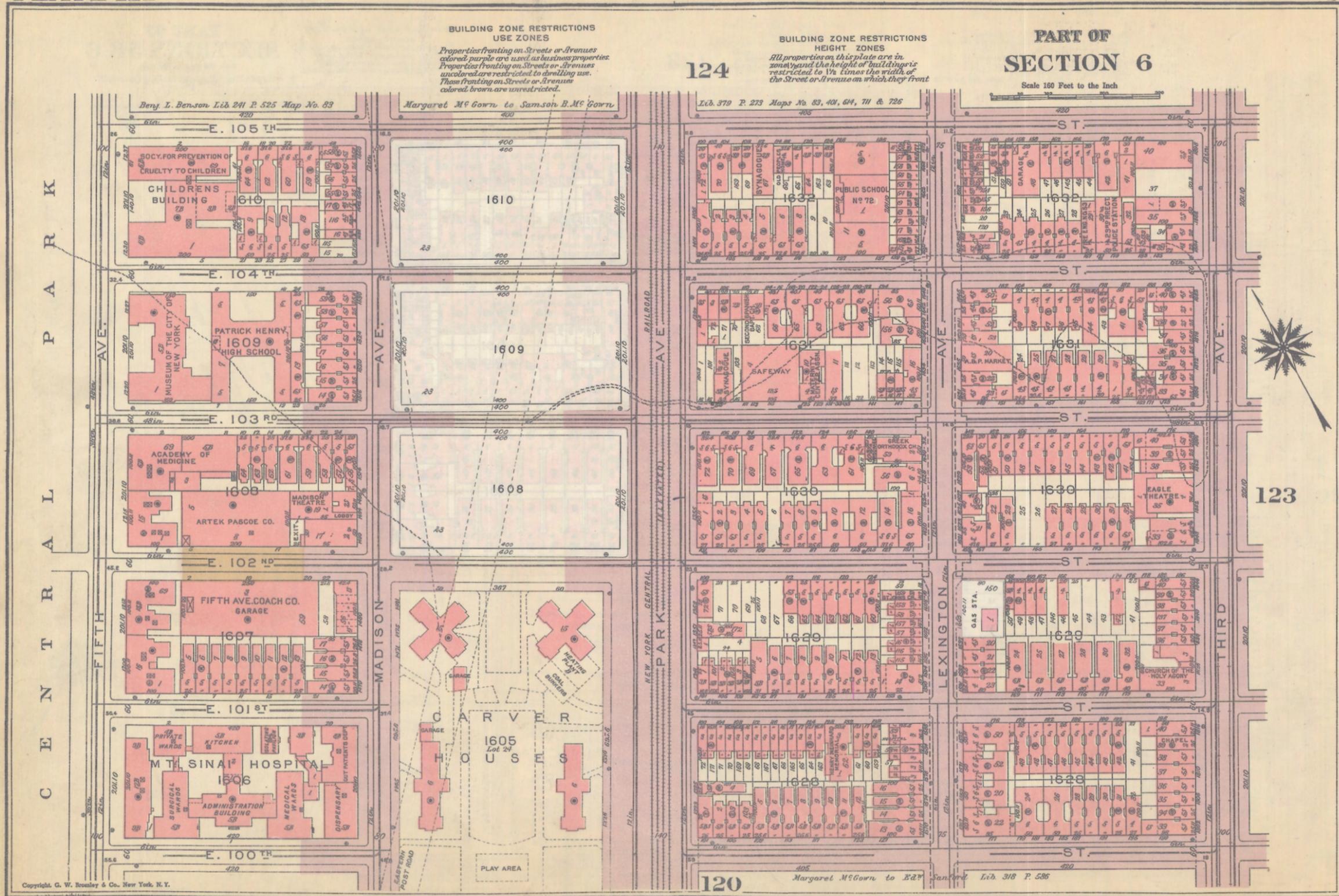




G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book. New York, 1934.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

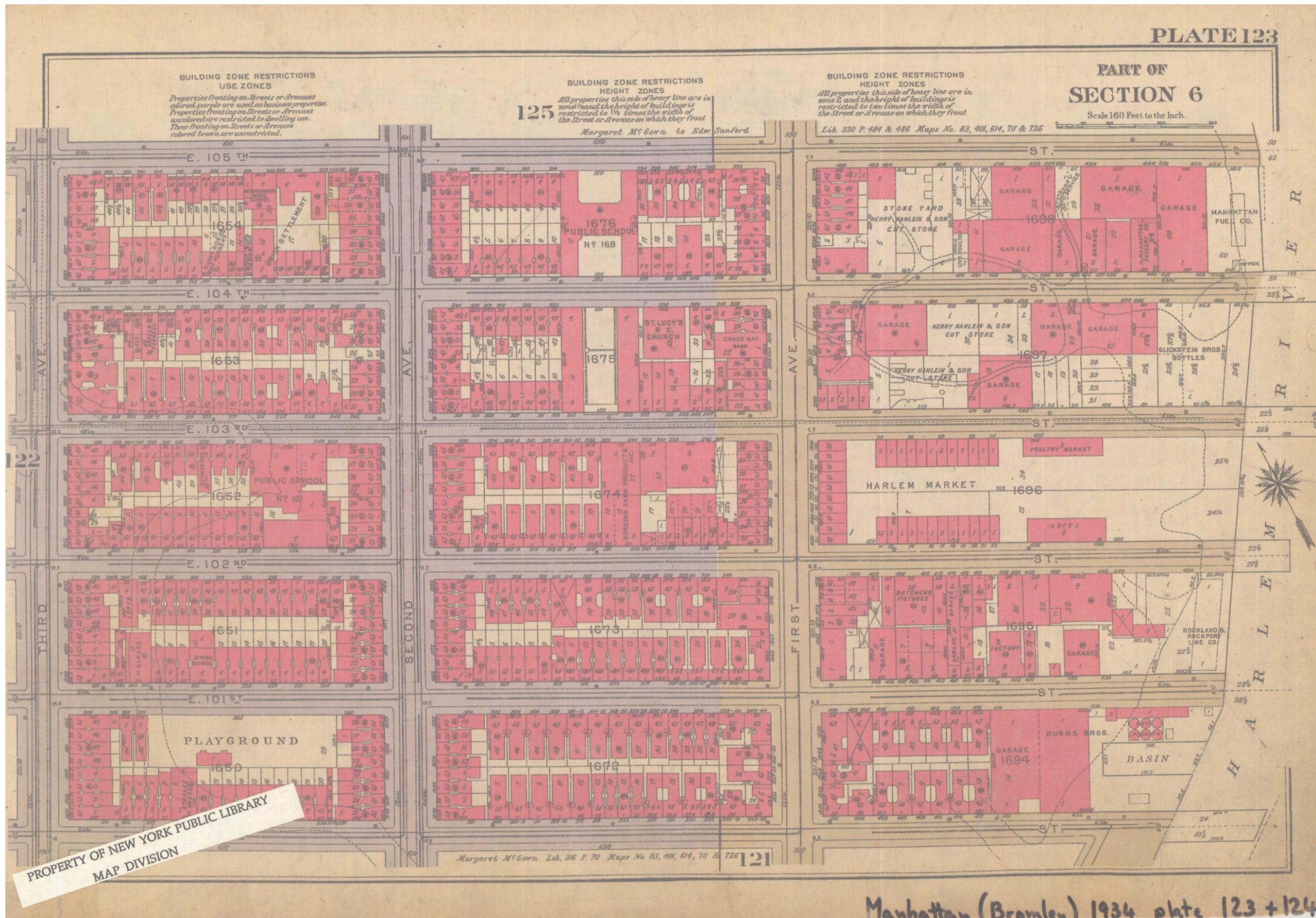
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G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1955.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

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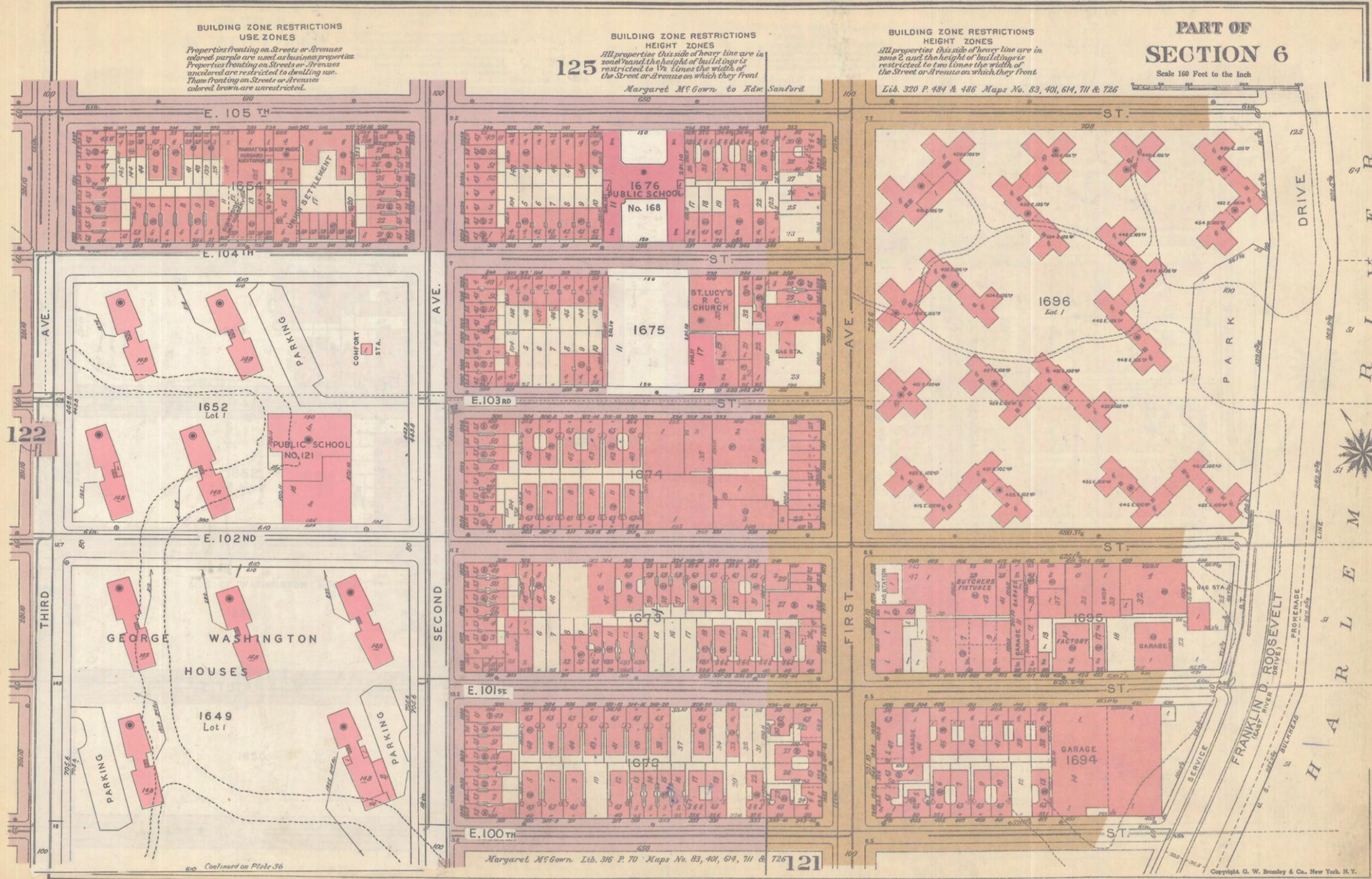


G. W. Bromley & Co. *Manhattan Land Book*. New York, 1934.
 NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.
 Use of Plates 121, 122, 123, 124 and 125 of the Bromley maps from 1934, 1955 and 1967 reprinted/used with permission from The Sanborn Library, LLC.

Manhattan (Bromley) 1934 plate 123 + 124

PART OF SECTION 6

Scale 160 Feet to the Inch



Continued on Plate 36

Margaret M'Gown Lib. 316 P. 70 Maps No. 83, 401, 614, 711 & 726

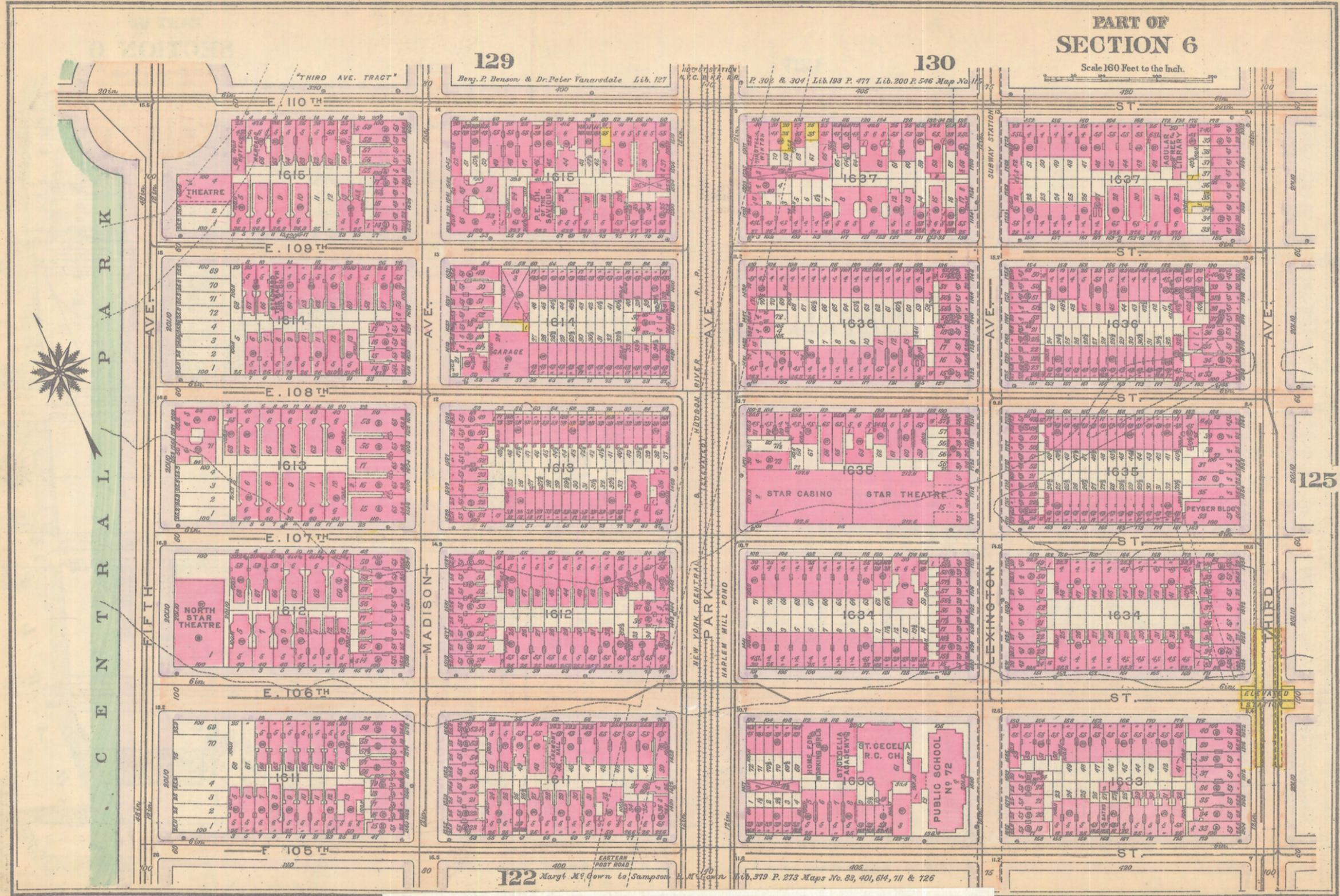
Copyright G. W. Bromley & Co. New York, N.Y.

123 + 124
MANHATTAN 1955

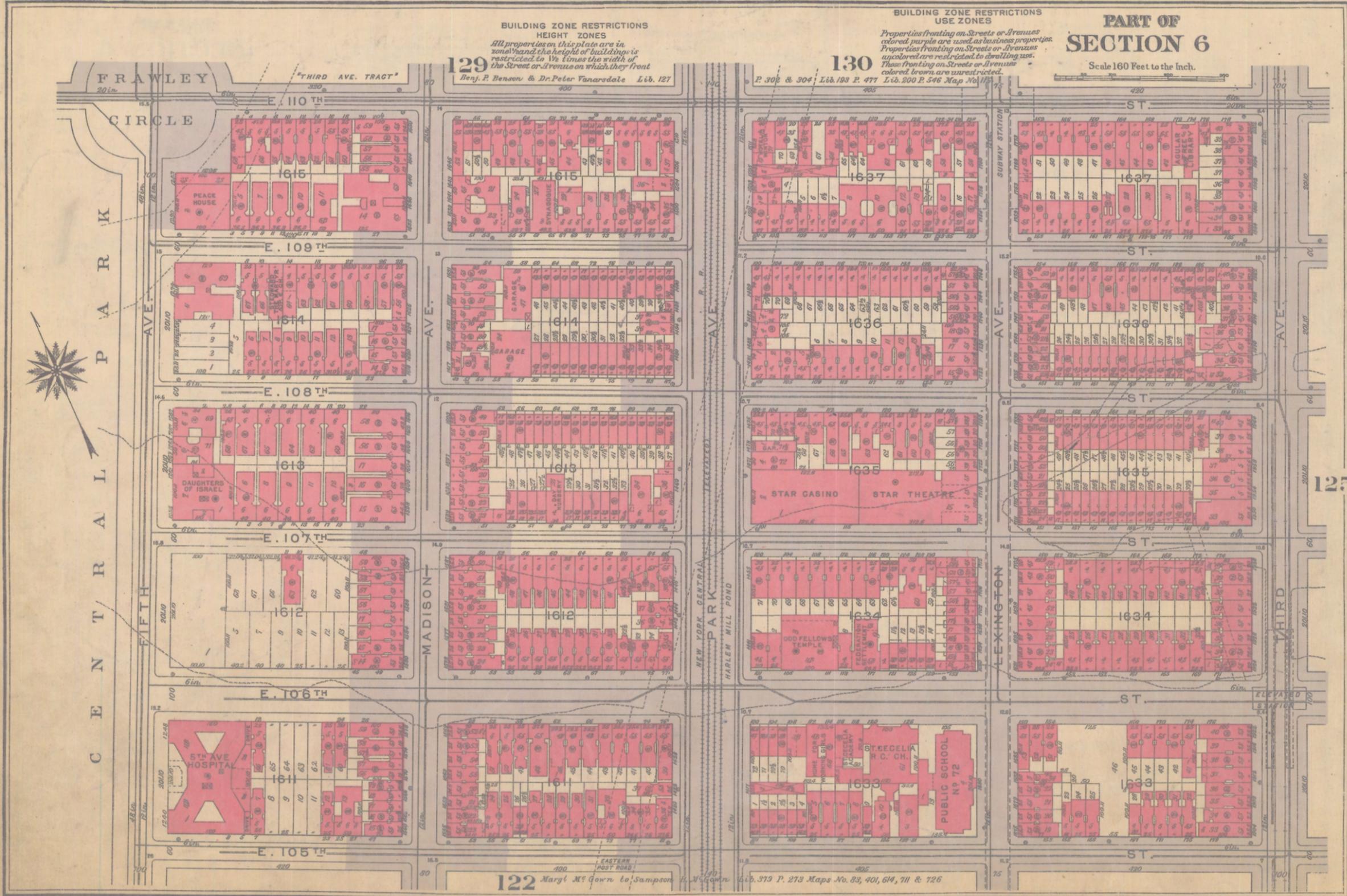
G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1955.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

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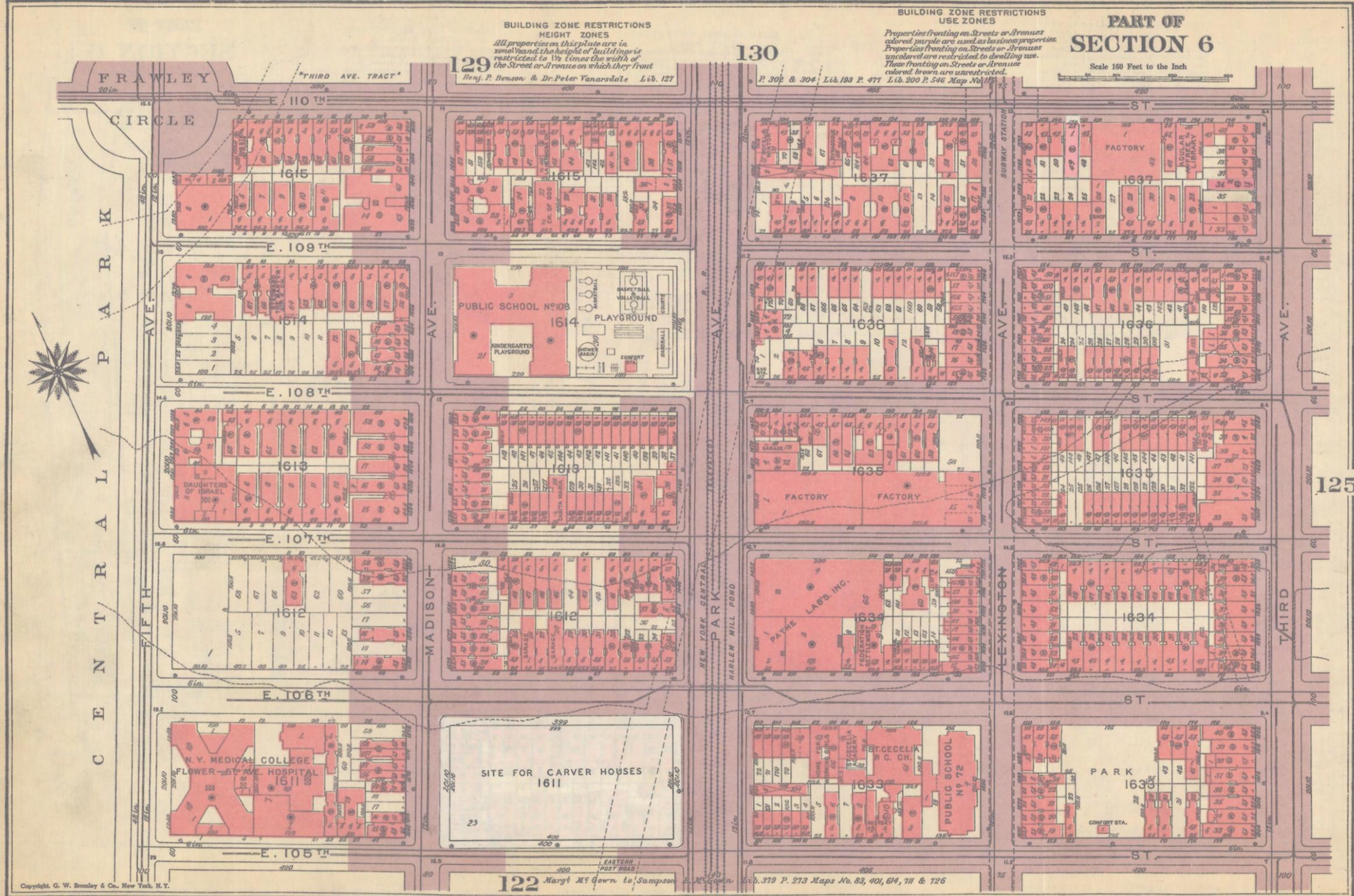
Conservation treatment has been carried out with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1990



G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book. New York, 1934.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

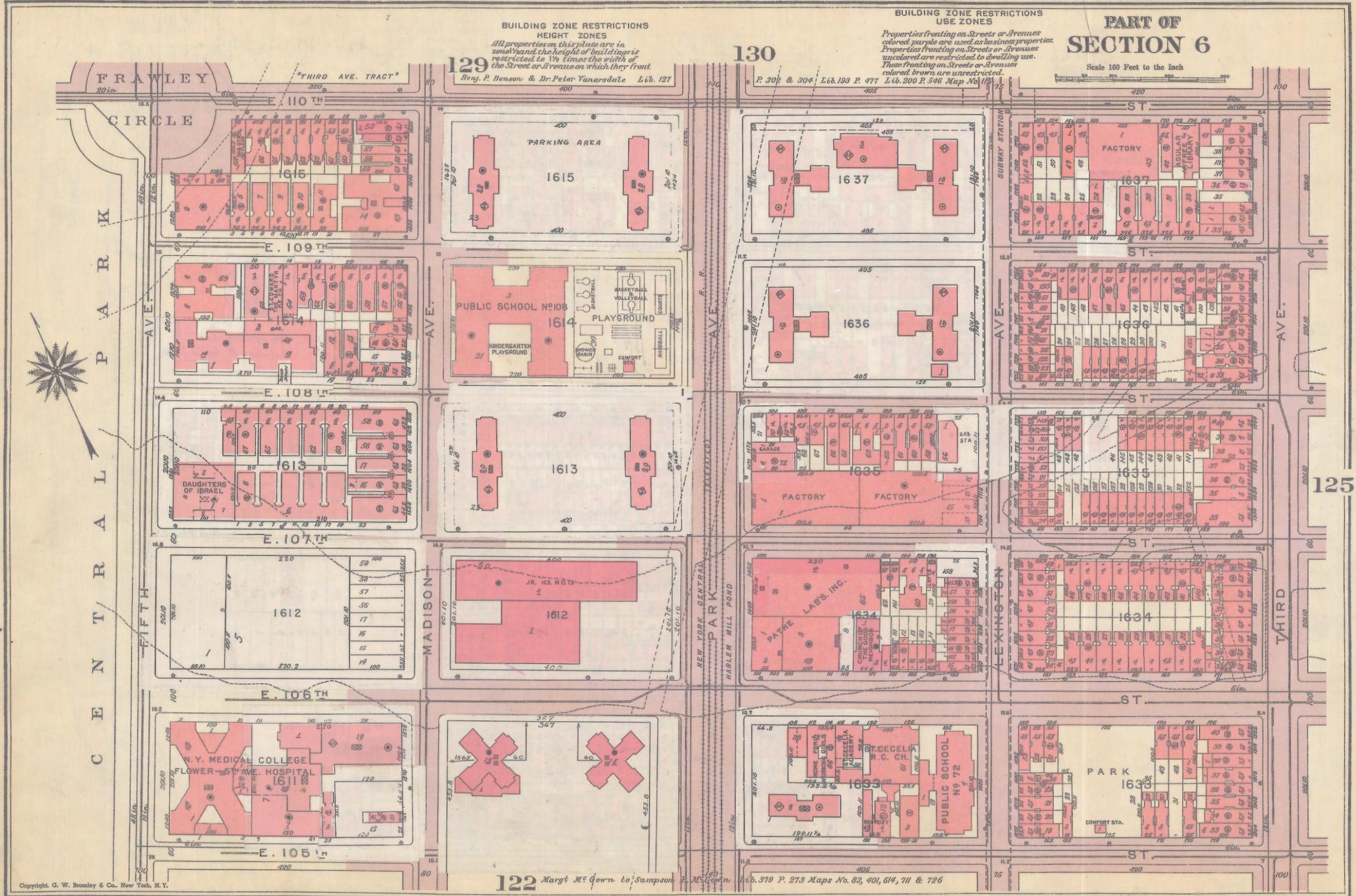
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G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1955.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

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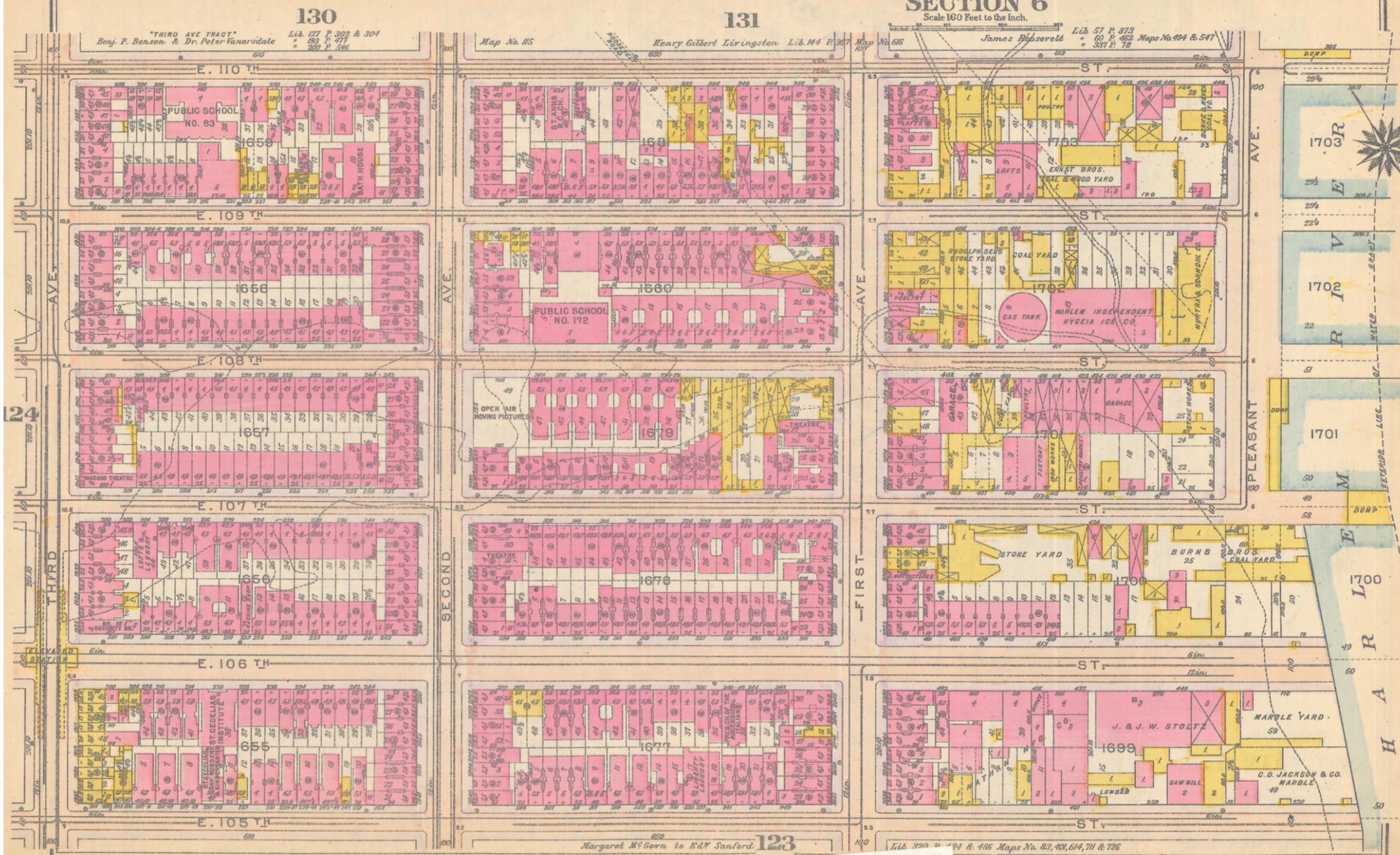


G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1967.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

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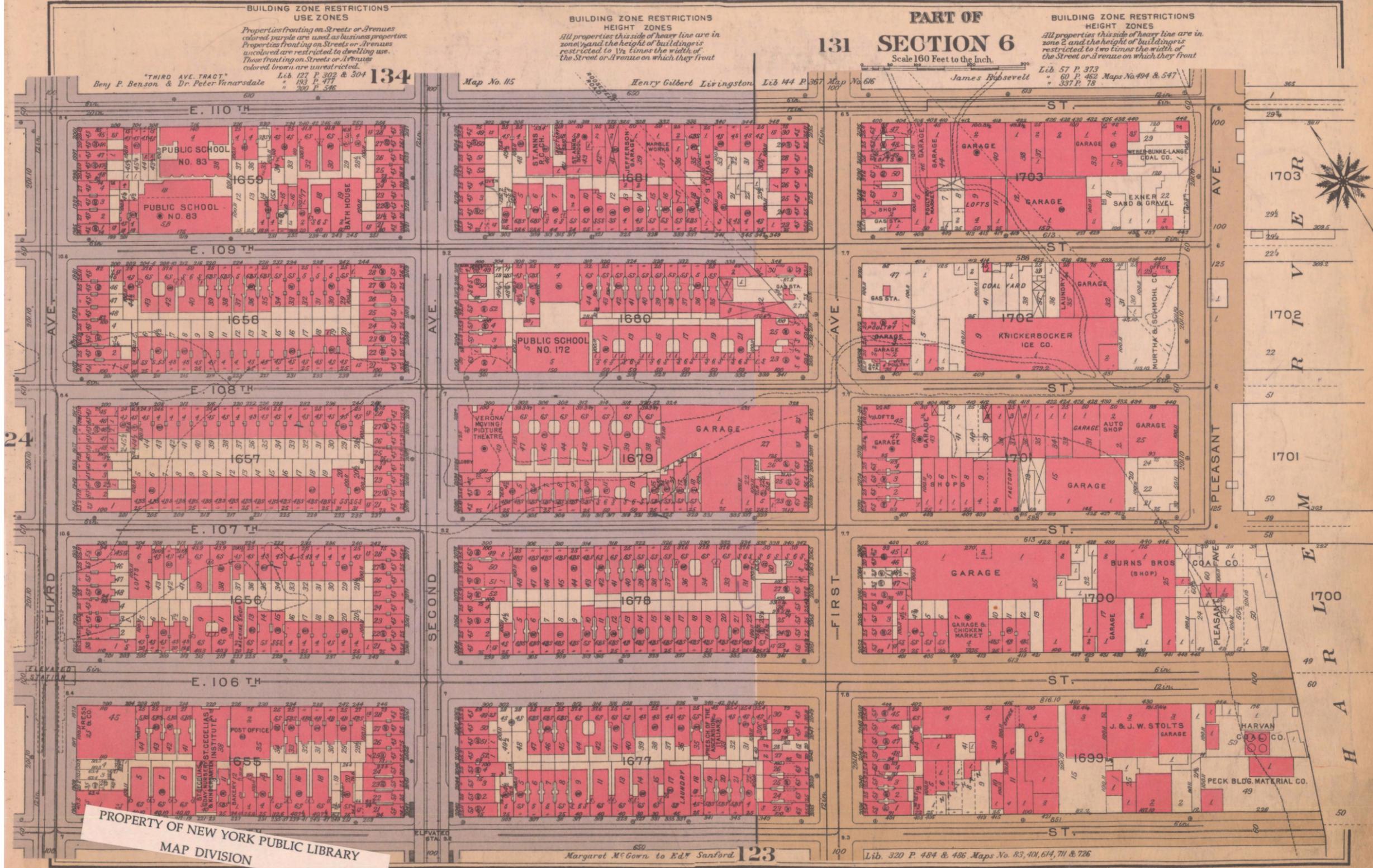
PART OF SECTION 6
Scale 160 Feet to the Inch.



Conservation treatment has been carried out with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1990

N.Y.P.L. Map Div. Manhattan (Bromley) 1916 Plate 125 & 126

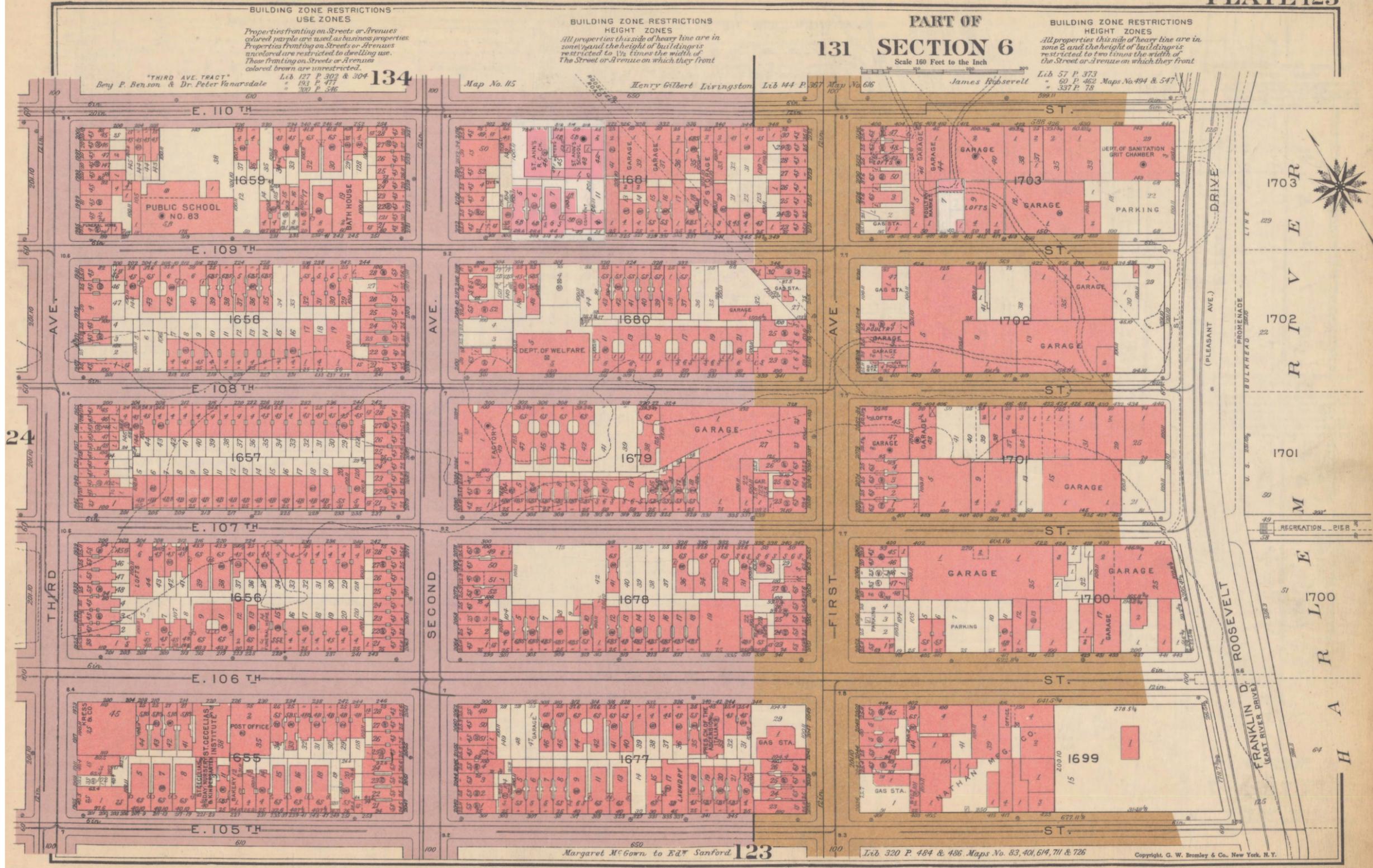
G. W. Bromley & Co. Atlas of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York. New York, 1916.
NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division. Digital ID: 1512292.



PROPERTY OF NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
MAP DIVISION

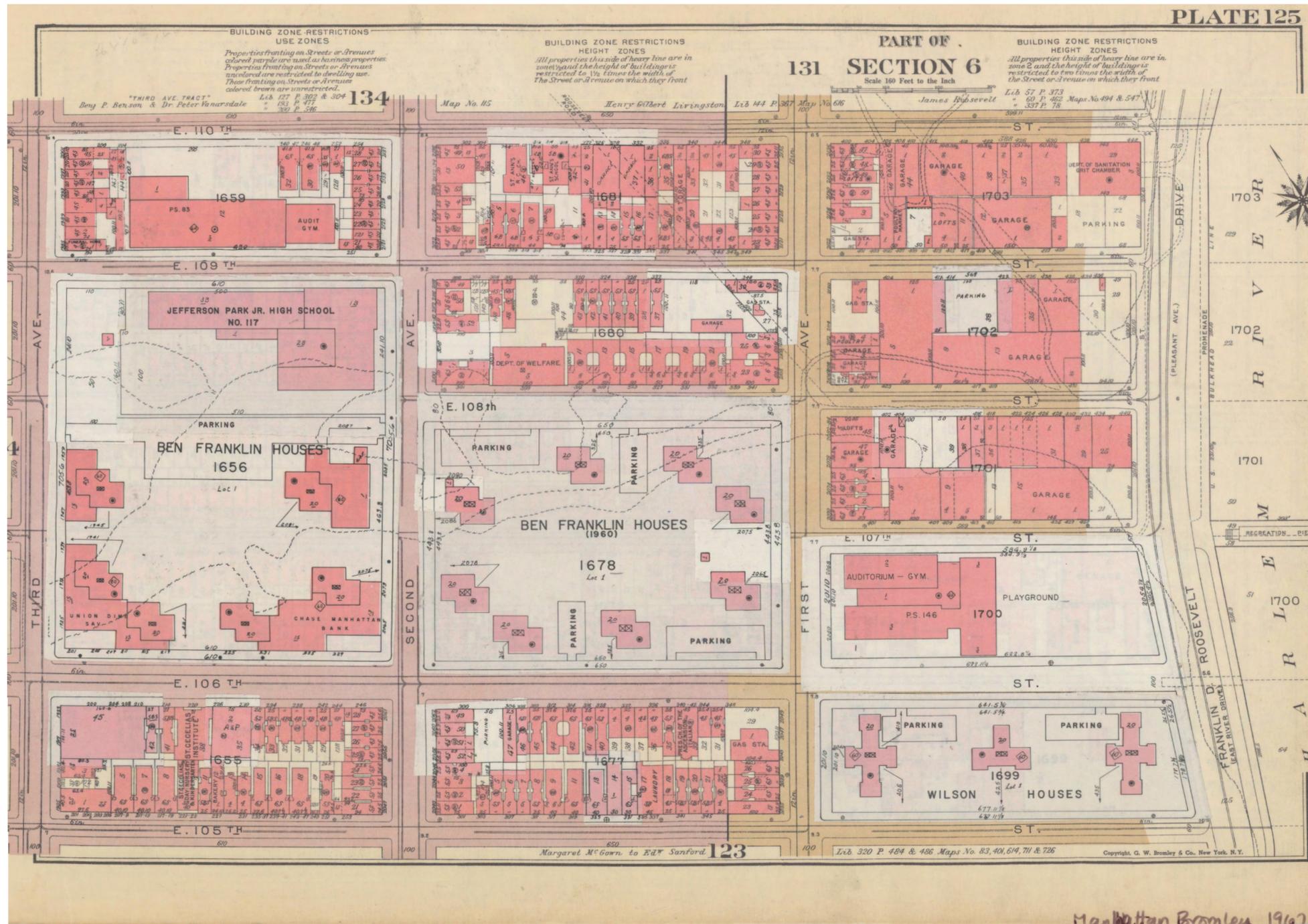
Manhattan (Bromley) 1934 plate 125 + 126

G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book. New York, 1934.
 NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.
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MANHATTAN 1955

G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1955.
 NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyar Map Division.
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Manhattan Bromley 1967

G. W. Bromley & Co. Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York. New York, 1967.

NYPL, The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division.

Use of Plates 121, 122, 123, 124 and 125 of the Bromley maps from 1934, 1955 and 1967 reprinted/used with permission from The Sanborn Library, LLC.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
FIFTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1930
POPULATION SCHEDULE

Enumerated by me on *April 8, 1930, J.H.*

CHAPTER 2
Census Records

NAME	SEX	AGE	MARRIAGE	BIRTH	PLACE OF BIRTH	RACE	CITIZENSHIP, ETC.	OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY	INDUSTRY
ad R 24	M	24	no	1886	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 25	M	25	no	1887	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 26	M	26	no	1888	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 27	M	27	no	1889	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 28	M	28	no	1890	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 29	M	29	no	1891	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 30	M	30	no	1892	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 31	M	31	no	1893	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 32	M	32	no	1894	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 33	M	33	no	1895	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 34	M	34	no	1896	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 35	M	35	no	1897	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 36	M	36	no	1898	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 37	M	37	no	1899	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 38	M	38	no	1900	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 39	M	39	no	1901	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 40	M	40	no	1902	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 41	M	41	no	1903	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 42	M	42	no	1904	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 43	M	43	no	1905	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 44	M	44	no	1906	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 45	M	45	no	1907	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 46	M	46	no	1908	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 47	M	47	no	1909	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 48	M	48	no	1910	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 49	M	49	no	1911	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 50	M	50	no	1912	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 51	M	51	no	1913	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 52	M	52	no	1914	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 53	M	53	no	1915	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 54	M	54	no	1916	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 55	M	55	no	1917	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 56	M	56	no	1918	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 57	M	57	no	1919	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 58	M	58	no	1920	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 59	M	59	no	1921	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 60	M	60	no	1922	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 61	M	61	no	1923	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 62	M	62	no	1924	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 63	M	63	no	1925	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 64	M	64	no	1926	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 65	M	65	no	1927	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 66	M	66	no	1928	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 67	M	67	no	1929	New York	White	1907	none	Builder
ad R 68	M	68	no	1930	New York	White	1907	none	Builder

One of the greatest battles the framers of the U.S. Constitution fought when deciding the terms of the nation’s founding document resulted in the Great Compromise of 1787. The framers fell into two camps—those who believed each state should receive equal representation and those who believed states should be represented in proportion to their total population.

The Great Compromise led to the system of government we have today: a two-house legislature. In the Senate, there are an equal number of representatives from each state (two), while in the House of Representatives, the number of representatives from each state corresponds proportionally to that state’s population. In order to determine an accurate count of each state’s population, the Constitution mandated a decennial (every 10 years) census of the United States. The first census was taken in 1790. In addition to establishing how many people lived in each state and thus how many seats in the House each state was entitled to, the census figures would also influence the number of electoral votes a state would hold in presidential elections and determine amounts of federal funding a state could receive. This has been the official role of the United States census to this day.

Census records from East Harlem in the years between 1900 and 1930 provide a great deal of information about the community. During these years, the population of the United States, and specifically New York City, increased rapidly as immigrants poured into the country in larger numbers. The censuses of 1900 through 1930 noted residents’ primary spoken language, as well as occupation and trade—information that was intended to provide a clearer picture of the nation’s newcomers. In later years, these categories became too cumbersome to record and were no longer included in census tallies. Hence, the 1900 to 1930 census records provide a uniquely detailed account of who was living in East Harlem at the time, which makes it possible to develop a strong profile of the community. One can see that the neighborhood was populated mostly by immigrants, the majority of whom were from Western Europe (England, Germany, Austria, Finland) and Eastern Europe (Russia, Poland, Ukraine). The early records show they also came from Southern Europe (Italy), and data from the later years documents the presence of immigrants from Puerto Rico (spelled Porto Rico in the census documents). Those residents born in New York City generally had parents who had immigrated or migrated from other places. Households often had boarders, single men or women who worked a variety of jobs. Some of the occupations held by residents of East Harlem in these years include dry-goods merchant, tailor, stonemason, bartender, elevator operator, busboy, cigar roller, seamstress, butcher, and bookkeeper.

A Guide to Using Census Data

Census records provide demographic information. They tell us who was living where at a specific point in time. By comparing census data of the same block over time, one can observe patterns of migration and notice which populations are moving in and out, where people are coming from, what types of jobs they held, and (for some periods) which languages they spoke, among many other trends. Historically, census data has been collected by enumerators who travel on foot and record their findings by hand. It is useful to consider how this human touch on the census might affect the acquisition and accuracy of the data.

Census data gives us a close, detailed look at a community. While maps show us physical changes over time and hint at community needs, census records begin to flesh out the story of the individuals who live in a place.

When working with census data, it is useful to keep the following questions in mind:

- When was this census data collected?
- How do the questions asked reflect the values and social issues of the time period in which it was taken?
- Does the information collected link to and reflect societal trends?
- Do you think the information recorded in the census is influenced by the human actors who collected it? How?

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE CENSUS RECORDS (CONNECTION TO CCS: DEVELOPING CLAIMS)

Census records from 1900, 1920, and 1930 share many traits. They also have a few stark differences, most significantly the inclusion of the “radio set” and “veteran” categories on the 1930 census. We have provided blank census forms from each of the years to offer a clearer view of the categories of information and aid in analyzing the data. Census maps from the years provided were handwritten, which resulted in errors. Like today, census takers had to contend with residents who weren’t at home or who wouldn’t respond to a knock on the door. Thus, while census records provide a great deal of information, they inherently lack information as well.

Each census record has a street address. The records in this guide correspond to Plate 125 of the Bromley maps in Chapter 1. As you examine these records, make sure to go back to that set of maps and look at the block where these people were living. You will notice that by 1955, the apartments listed in the records have disappeared. This raises a new set of questions about migration patterns as well as urban planning—questions that will perhaps be answered by examining the manuscripts in Chapter 4. By piecing all of the sources

together, students can begin to formulate a deeper story of the life that was lived in East Harlem in the early- to mid-20th century.

Suggested Activities:

The census records in this chapter are dated 1900, 1920, and 1930. In addition, there are blank versions of each census record, which clarify the categories of questions the census takers asked residents. In small groups or pairs, students can look at a set of census records from the same year or at records from all three years to compare and contrast. We have provided guiding questions and charts to help students record and compare their findings. By following the suggestions and questions below, students will be able to make observations and inferences from their set of records, develop questions, and draw conclusions about changes in the neighborhood over time. They can categorize their findings about differences over the years, then use the detailed information they’ve gathered to imagine what life might have been like for the people listed as living in East Harlem in the first half of the 20th century. Encouraging students to develop their own questions along the way will help them make connections to the sources in the preceding and following chapters and continue further research on their own.

Along with the suggestions below, you may choose to use any of the activities in the How to Use This Guide section. Observations and inferences made from one census page could lead to a rich class conversation. The Venn diagrams provided can be substituted for the charts that follow this section, and might be especially useful for younger students.

1. Look over the blank templates from 1900 through 1930 and familiarize yourself with the categories on each record. Which categories remain the same throughout the years? Which categories were changed or added over the years? What is being asked, and why might that be important? What do you predict you might discover by looking at the records of one community over time?

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

B

State New York
County New York
Township or other division of county Borough of Manhattan
Name of incorporated city, town, or village, within the above-named division, New York

SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

Supervisor's District No. 1 Sheet No. 2
Enumeration District No. 903

Enumerated by me on the 1st day of June, 1900, Emil Buttkamer Enumerator.

Table with columns: LOCATION, NAME, RELATION, PERSONAL DESCRIPTION, NATIVITY, CITIZENSHIP, OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION, EDUCATION, OWNERSHIP OF HOME. Includes handwritten notes like '212 East 106th Street' and '106th Street'.

1900 Census: 212 East 106th Street

Ancestry.com. 1900 United States Federal Census [online database].

Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

B

State New York
County New York

SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

Supervisor's District No. 1 Sheet No. 1
Enumeration District No. 903

Township or other division of county Borough of Manhattan Name of Institution, X
Name of incorporated city, town, or village, within the above-named division, New York

Ward of city, X

Enumerated by me on the 1st day of June, 1900, Emil Brettheimer, Enumerator.

IN CITIES.	LOCATION.	NAME	RELATION.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION.								NATIVITY.			CITIZENSHIP.	OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.					OWNERSHIP OF HOME.				
				Sex.	Age.	Color or race.	Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced.	Number of years married.	Number of live issue.	Number of born alive.	Number of born dead.	Place of birth of this person.	Place of birth of father of this person.	Place of birth of mother of this person.			Years of schooling.	Can read.	Can write.	Can speak English.	Owned or rented.		Owned free or mortgaged.	Value of house.	Number of farm animals.	
51	191 8 11	Rudolph Adler	Head	M	45	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Germany	Germany	Germany	1853 47	Cigar dealer	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
52		Adelaide	Wife	F	45	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Germany	Germany	Germany	1854 46		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
53	12	Rudolph Adler	Head	M	16	White	Single					New York	Germany	Germany		Cigar Manufg	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
54		Elise	Wife	F	16	White	Single					New York	Germany	Germany			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
55		Charles	Son	M	15	White	Single					New York	New York	New York		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
56		William	Son	M	12	White	Single					New York	New York	New York		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
57	1925 9 13	Leckner William	Head	M	48	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Germany	Germany	Germany	1877 23	Saloon keep	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
58		Mary	Wife	F	48	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Germany	Germany	Germany	1877 23		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
59		Grotzowen Gustav	Boarder	M	25	White	Single					Germany	Germany	Germany	1879 21	Bar tender	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
60	204 10 14	Early Margaret	Head	F	42	White	Married	1	0	1	0	New York	Ireland	Ireland		Boarding Hou	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
61		Isabel	Daughter	F	15	White	Single					New York	New York	New York		Student	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
62		Joseph	Son	M	13	White	Single					New York	New York	New York		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
63		Frank	Son	M	9	White	Single					New York	New York	New York		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
64		Dougen, Letic	Boarder	F	37	White	Single					New York	Ireland	Ireland		Silk Maser	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
65		Wright, James	Boarder	M	35	White	Single					England	England	England	1863 37	Stone Cutter	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
66		Schramm, Paul	Boarder	M	33	White	Single					Germany	Germany	Germany	1867 33	Drum	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
67		Widmore, Henry	Boarder	M	26	White	Single					New Hampshire	New Hampshire	New Hampshire		Carpenter	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
68		Ericsson, John	Boarder	M	27	White	Single					Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	1873 27	Pianomaker	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
69		Paulson, Oscar	Boarder	M	22	White	Single					New York	Sweden	Sweden		Carpenter	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
70	208 11 15	Zuckerman Harry	Head	M	42	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russ Poland	Russ Poland	Russ Poland	1858 42	Slaughterer	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
71		Mary	Wife	F	39	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russ Poland	Russ Poland	Russ Poland	1859 43		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
72		Monel	Son	M	18	White	Single					Russ Poland	Russ Poland	Russ Poland	1882 18	Work	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
73		Pauline	Daughter	F	11	White	Single					New York	Russ Poland	Russ Poland		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
74		Henry	Son	M	8	White	Single					New York	Russ Poland	Russ Poland		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
75		Frank	Son	M	6	White	Single					New York	Russ Poland	Russ Poland			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
76		Sarah	Daughter	F	3	White	Single					New York	Russ Poland	Russ Poland			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
77		Essie	Daughter	F	2	White	Single					New York	Russ Poland	Russ Poland			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
78	11 16	Newmark, Henry	Head	M	43	White	Married	1	0	1	0	New York	Russ Poland	Russ Poland		Roofer	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
79		Mary	Wife	F	41	White	Married	1	0	1	0	New York	Austria	Austria			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
80	17	Holz, Adver	Head	M	42	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Roumania	Roumania	Roumania	1858 42	Jeweler	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
81		Olga	Wife	F	34	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russia	Russia	Russia	1871 28		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
82		Louis	Son	M	6	White	Single					New York	Roumania	Roumania		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
83		Mentz, Henriette	Boarder	F	22	White	Single					New York	Germany	Germany		Milliner	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
84	18	Kalapa, Michael	Head	M	33	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Austria	Austria	Austria	1867 33	Bookbinder	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
85		Anna	Wife	F	31	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Germany	Germany	Germany	1878 22		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
86		Herbert	Son	M	7	White	Single					New York	Austria	Germany			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
87	19	Feidtelberg Jacob	Head	M	49	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russia	Russia	Russia	1851 49	Tailor	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
88		Johne	Wife	F	47	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russia	Russia	Russia	1854 47		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
89		Philip	Son	M	12	White	Single					Russia	Russia	Russia	1888 12	At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
90		Ida	Daughter	F	10	White	Single					Russia	Russia	Russia	1890 10	At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
91		Willie	Son	M	5	White	Single					New York	Russia	Russia		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
92		Keery	Daughter	F	3	White	Single					New York	Russia	Russia		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
93	20	Lehikama, Marcus	Head	M	49	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russia	Russia	Russia	1851 49	Tailor	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
94		Emmie	Wife	F	46	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Russia	Russia	Russia	1854 46		0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
95		Emma	Daughter	F	8	White	Single					Russia	Russia	Russia	1892 8	At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
96		William	Son	M	12	White	Single					Russia	Russia	Russia	1888 12	At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
97	21	Brockman Isaac	Head	M	41	White	Married	1	0	1	0	New York	Germany	Germany		Compositor	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
98		Margaret	Wife	F	36	White	Married	1	0	1	0	Connecticut	Poland	Poland			0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
99		Rebecca	Daughter	F	8	White	Single					New York	New York	Connecticut		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				
100		Lizzie	Daughter	F	6	White	Single					New York	New York	Connecticut		At school	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Owned				

1900 Census: 204, 208 East 106th Street (also includes 1921 and 1925 First Avenue)
 Ancestry.com. 1900 United States Federal Census [online database].
 Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

STATE New York
 COUNTY New York
 TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY New York City

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
 FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1920—POPULATION

69 [D1-578] SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICT NO. 1 SHEET NO. 18 A

NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE Borough of Manhattan
 WARD OF CITY 2, D 18

NAME OF INSTITUTION _____ ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE 21 DAY OF January 1920. Paul Billie ENUMERATOR.

PLACE OF ABODE	NAME	RELATION	SEX	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	CITIZENSHIP	EDUCATION	NATIVITY AND MOTHER TONGUE						Whether able to speak English	OCCUPATION				
							PERSON		FATHER		MOTHER			Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as engineer, salesman, laborer, etc.	Industry, business, or establishment in which at work, as cotton mill, dry goods store, farm, etc.	Employer's salary or wage worked, or working on own account.	Number of farm schedule.	
							Place of birth.	Mother tongue.	Place of birth.	Mother tongue.	Place of birth.	Mother tongue.						
210	Magnet Lake	Daughter	F	W 3			New York		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
211	Howardville Morris	Head 2	M	W 65	1851	1904	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none	Packer	W		2426
	Anna	Wife	F	W 58	1862		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Joseph	Son	M	W 28	1891		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 25	1894		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 23	1897		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 21	1899		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 19	1901		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 17	1903		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 15	1905		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 13	1907		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 11	1909		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 9	1911		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 7	1913		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 5	1915		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 3	1917		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 7	1913		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 1	1919		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 7	1913		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 5	1915		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 3	1917		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 9	1911		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 11	1909		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 3	1917		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
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	Isidore	Son	M	W 1	1919		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 11	1909		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 9	1911		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 7	1913		Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	Russia	Jewish	no	none				
	Isidore	Son	M	W 5	1915		Russia	Jewish</										

Census Activity

FIRST LOOK EXERCISE: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. List all the countries where people were born.
2. How many were born in the United States? How many were foreign born?
3. Of those born in the United States, how many have parents also born in the United States? How many have parents born in other countries?
4. From which general areas of the world are people immigrating (Eastern, Western, or Southern Europe, Caribbean)?
5. When are people moving to New York City?
6. What languages do these people speak?
7. What are the occupations listed?
8. What trends are you beginning to notice? What are some questions you can ask about these trends?

Year of census record	List of countries where people were born	Number of people born in the U.S.A	Number of people foreign born

Date range of arrival in U.S.A	Languages spoken	Occupations	Skilled or unskilled labor

ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. How do the areas of the world that people are immigrating from change over time? Why might that be so? Can you begin to notice trends of where people are coming from and when?
2. Of those born in the United States, how many have parents who were also born in the United States? How many have parents who were born in other countries? Why might this be so?
3. How do the languages of the residents provide more information about their backgrounds?
4. Are the occupations listed classified as skilled or unskilled labor? Does a person require an education or not? Does a person need to speak English or not? Are these occupations needed by small businesses or large manufacturers? Who is working and who is not? Why might that be so?
5. Do the job types change over time? If so, how might that reflect changes in technology and community needs?

Census Activity

SECOND LOOK EXERCISE: ONE BUILDING

1. Choose a year of the census to study in more detail. Find a building address with a longer list of residents. How many households were counted as living in this building? (Look for the number of times “Head” appears in a column. This means “head of household,” and generally it is the father of the family or head male.)
2. Where do the people in these families come from? Which members of the family, if any, were born in the United States, and which were born elsewhere?
3. Look back at Plate 125 of the Bromley maps from the years 1916 and 1934. Can you find the building number on these maps? How many floors does the building have? Count the number of families that live in the building; based on that figure, what is the minimum number of apartments in the building?
4. What are some occupations of the building’s residents?
5. What trends are you beginning to notice? What are some questions you can ask about these trends?

Building address and year	Number of families	Part of the world families come from	Number of floors in the building; minimum number of apartments	Occupations of the residents

ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. What might it have been like to live in this building at that time? What might some of the challenges have been? Some of the benefits? How does it compare to where you live?
2. Compare your findings of your census year to the other two years. How did the backgrounds of the building’s residents change over time? Do you notice any patterns of who is living in which buildings? Why might this be so?
3. Look at the Bromley map from 1967. Imagine you grew up on 106th Street in the 1930s and are coming back to the neighborhood for a visit. What changes would you notice about your neighborhood? What social factors might have prompted some of these changes?
4. What picture of life in East Harlem do you get from the census data? What more do you want to know?
5. Does it answer any of the questions you raised when examining the East Harlem maps in Chapter 1?

Census Activity

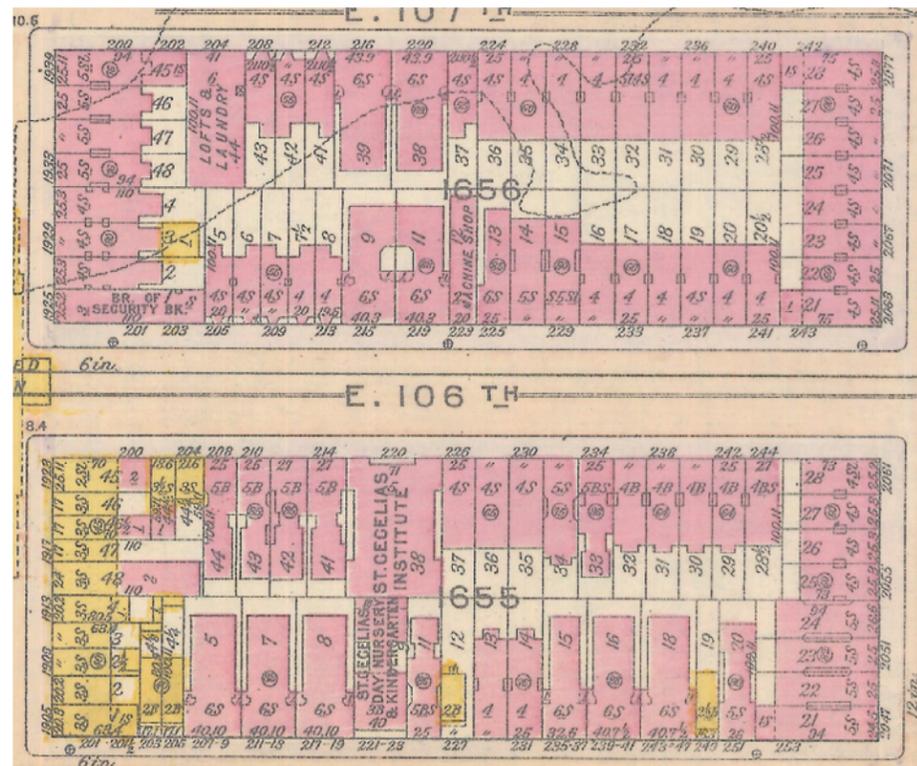
THIRD LOOK EXERCISE: CREATE A WRITTEN PORTRAIT

Imagine you are one of the people living in this building at a particular time. Using details you have discovered from your census data and map research, write a biographical sketch of who you are. Create a journal entry for one day in your life.

Remember to look back at the map key in Chapter 1 to help you draw more information from the section of the map included here.

Questions to Consider

1. What would your name be?
2. How old would you be?
3. Who might you have played or worked with?
4. What might you have done for fun?
5. Where might you have gone to school or work?
6. Where might you have shopped for groceries?
7. Where might your parents, older siblings, spouse, or neighbors have worked?



ORGANIZE YOUR DATA

1. Use the Venn diagram template provided in the How to Use This Guide section to compare and contrast the census data from 1900, 1920, and 1930.
2. What trends can you observe about how demographics in East Harlem changed over time? Make a list of these trends.
3. Can you speculate about the causes for any of these trends?
4. We know from our map observations that the neighborhood changes greatly from the early- to mid-1900s. How might this affect the population of East Harlem?

CHAPTER 3

Photographs



The first handheld camera was invented in the late 1880s by George Eastman, an amateur photographer who grew up in Rochester, New York. It was not until after World War I and the invention of 35mm camera technology, however, that most people could easily find and afford cameras for personal use.

The 35mm camera was lightweight, easy to carry, and gave its user the ability to take a large number of photographs in succession using a single roll of film. These improvements made the camera a favorite among professional and amateur photographers. Only recently was the 35mm camera replaced in popularity by digital cameras, which do not require cumbersome rolls of film or chemical development. Still, even today, many people prefer the look and feel of photographs taken on film.

Scores of photographers used the 35mm camera to document the life of New Yorkers. New York City provides vibrant scenes of street life with a cast of characters often engaged in interesting activities. A photographer with a good eye can turn an ordinary New York scene into a compelling photographic moment. Photographs offer clues to the past by providing details about what people, places, and objects looked like at specific times. Photographs can also offer the viewer an emotional connection to people depicted in the images by capturing real people engaged in activities familiar to all of us. Viewing one photograph can be a profound experience, though the information one photograph provides can be limited.

Looking at a series of photographs from one photographer, however, or examining several photographs of one location, can provide a historian with rich period data.

This chapter includes two sets of photographs taken in East Harlem in the 1940s and 1950s, both of which come from the collections of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, one of The New York Public Library's research libraries. The first set of photographs is from a series taken at the Park Avenue Market, now known as La Marqueta, in the first decades after it opened in 1936. The second set was taken by Rómulo Lachatañeré, who captured street scenes of local residents.

In the 1940s and 1950s, East Harlem was a neighborhood in transition. The Italian and Russian Jewish communities that had made up the majority of its population were migrating to other parts of New York City and beyond, while newcomers, primarily from Puerto Rico, were moving in to replace them (see Chapter 2: Census Records). In addition, the neighborhood's landscape was changing as tenement apartments, condemned by slum-clearance mandates, were torn down and replaced with modern public housing (see Chapter 4: Manuscripts). The photographs included here capture the lives of East Harlem residents during this transitional period, and help provide us with details of daily life that aren't visible in the more abstract census records and historical maps we studied in the previous chapters.

Source:
Newhall, Beaumont. *The History of Photography*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1981, pp. 155–156.

A GUIDE TO USING PHOTOGRAPHS

Unlike the maps and census records discussed in the preceding chapters, photographs capture one moment of life, as seen from the point of view of one person, the photographer. Because they are visual documents, they provide unique details about what places, people, and objects looked like in the past. In this way, they are highly informative in developing a robust picture of life. Nevertheless, because of their specificity, photographs can raise as many questions as they answer.

When examining photographs, it is important to keep the following questions in mind:

- When were these photographs taken?
- Who was the photographer?
- For what purpose were these photographs taken?
- Who was the intended audience?
- Are these photographs candid or posed?
- How does the point of view of the photographer influence our understanding of the photograph?

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE PHOTOGRAPHS (CONNECTION TO CCS: DEVELOPING CLAIMS)

Park Avenue Market Scenes

New York City, more than any other metropolitan area in the United States, is a walking city. The abundant public transportation and numerous mom-and-pop businesses that line its streets create an atmosphere that encourages locals to look for what they need near where they live and work. Many storefronts are still located on the ground floors of residential buildings, and this integrates small businesses into the neighborhood even further. It's common to find that families who live in buildings right next to one another use different newsstands, dry cleaners, and coffee shops—if only because there are so many options within convenient walking distance. Less common in New York City are indoor shopping centers that house a variety of stores (in other places, shopping malls serve as homes to multiple businesses). In the New York City of the early-20th century, many neighborhood shopping areas were located on the city's streets and were

notable for their heavily laden pushcarts that sold everything from peanuts to shoes to hardware. Starting in the 1930s, the combination of the development of public housing projects and Mayor Fiorello La Guardia's initiative to move pushcarts from city streets to indoor areas changed the character of shopping in East Harlem. The Park Avenue Market played an important role in providing shops and a community gathering space for the neighborhood's residents. Looking back at the maps included in Chapter 1, you can see that many of the buildings once included storefronts on the ground floor, but that these began to disappear once larger public housing projects were built beginning in the 1940s. In addition, in the 1916 and 1934 versions of Plate 123, one area between 102nd and 103rd streets east of First Avenue is labeled "Harlem Market," which suggests a possible outdoor vending area.

The following photographs of the Park Avenue Market, taken in the 1940s and 1950s, display the diverse population of East Harlem, the popularity of the market, and the wide variety of goods available to the community's many needs during that period.

Note the following specifics in this collection of photographs:

- The market has an outdoor seating area, which provides a place for visitors to relax and socialize.
- Shoppers and vendors at the market represent different races and ethnicities.
- Many shoppers are “dressed up” for shopping in high-heeled shoes, hats, and overcoats.
- There is a variety of food available from different regions and parts of the world.
- Each vendor sells one specific item: sweet potatoes, shoes, jewelry, fish, cloth, grapes, etc.
- The market is busy and well populated.
- Along with food, jewelry, and staples such as cloth, the market was also able to support vendors such as the “Good Luck Fortune” vendor outside the main area.
- Families, as well as individuals, go to the market.

This collection of photographs is well suited for using the Observation/Inference activity described in How to Use This Guide. In addition, you can split the students into groups and give each group a folder with the collection of images, then ask them to base their answers to the following questions on their observations.

GUIDED QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING AT PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PARK AVENUE MARKET

1. Make a list of all the goods being sold at this market. Do you buy any of these items? Where do you buy them?
2. How is this market organized? What might be the purpose of the outdoor area?
3. Who is shopping here?
4. Compare this market to your local supermarket. How is it the same? Different?
5. What are the benefits and drawbacks of shopping at the indoor market compared with the supermarket?
6. Compare this market to your local corner store. How is it the same? Different? What are the benefits and drawbacks of shopping at the indoor market as opposed to the corner store?
7. How far would you travel to shop at a market like this?
8. In many neighborhoods in New York City, residents shop in their local stores, which are often located on the ground floor of apartment buildings. Look back at the maps in Chapter 1 from the years 1955 and 1967. What is happening to the local stores? How might this market address the community's needs?
9. Do you think a market like this would be successful today? Why or why not? What might it sell?
10. Who might have taken these photographs? For what purpose?
11. Do you think these photographs were candid or staged (posed)? What elements of this photograph help you formulate your conclusion?
12. What image of community life do these photographs give us? What more do you want to know about the community?

Then and Now

PARK AVENUE MARKET TODAY: LA MARQUETA

The following description of La Marqueta is from the Place Matters site of City Lore (www.placematters.net), and is reprinted with their permission.

La Marqueta is an enclosed marketplace in East Harlem that has long served this neighborhood's diverse and changing population—from the Italian immigrants of the 1930s to the primarily Latino residents of today. Over the years it has been both a much-needed inexpensive shopping spot and an important social gathering place. Originally called the Park Avenue Market, La Marqueta was established by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1936. Created as a way to regulate and control the many pushcarts that plied the streets of East Harlem, the market was designed to give permanent homes to 450 pushcart vendors in a series of five simple glass and steel structures underneath the New York Central Railroad. Residents of East Harlem quickly adopted the market as an essential resource—just four years after it was established the market was serving 25,000 patrons a day. Its success also helped LaGuardia establish other similar enclosed markets around the city.

Soon after the creation of the market, a large number of immigrants from Puerto Rico began moving into East Harlem, which had previously been a primarily Italian-American and Jewish neighborhood. It was at this time that the market became known as La Marqueta, although it still retained many of its original Jewish and Italian vendors. These vendors adapted to changing times by learning Spanish and adding new types of produce suited to Caribbean cooking. As the years passed, in addition to neighborhood residents, the market also attracted Caribbean immigrants from around the city as well as Africans, many of whom worked at the United Nations. For many years the market was also the center of neighborhood life, a place to exchange news and gossip as well as obtain job leads. “Maybe culturally that is something we carried from the old country to the new country,” says Felipe Colon, a longtime East Harlem resident and proprietor

of La Fagon Café. “There were hardly any Puerto Rican merchants in La Marqueta,” Colon adds, “but yet that used to be a social meeting place, especially Saturdays. We used to go there, see people from the hometown and... find out who would be coming over from Puerto Rico, who got married, who gave birth, who was baptized, everything—our social life.”

La Marqueta thrived until the 1970s, when many businesses moved to Lexington or Third avenues, the new heart of commerce in the neighborhood. A fire in 1977 destroyed one of the market's buildings and the others began a period of deterioration. Repeated efforts at revitalization and renovation begun in the 1980s failed to change the fortunes of the market, which dwindled to only 12 merchants by 1992. As of 2011, only one of the five market buildings remains open with 10 active vendors, although the building has been renovated and remodeled. Despite its dramatic decline, several long-time vendors remain and many loyal customers who have not lived in East Harlem in years return regularly to shop at La Marqueta.

Sources:

- Colon, Felipe. Interview by Laura Hansen for Place Matters. April 29, 1999.
- Harlem Magazine*. “Model Pushcart Market Suggested.” November, 1930.
- Michelmore, Peter. “Caribbean County Fair on Upper Park Avenue.” *Daily News*, February 10, 1974.
- Moore, Keith. “La Marqueta Face Lift in the Works.” *Daily News*, September 25, 1987.
- The New York Times*. “East Harlem Market Burns; Conrail Service Is Cut.” July 5, 1977.
- The New York Times*. “Trying to Revive La Marqueta.” December 12, 1993.
- The New York Times*. “La Marqueta Dream Fades.” November 19, 1995.
- Quinones, Gloria. Interview by Laura Hansen for Place Matters. April 29, 1999.
- The City of New York Department of Markets: Activities of the Department. New York City, 1940.



IMAGE 1. Fish market, Park Avenue Market
Vondel Nichols. NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research
in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.

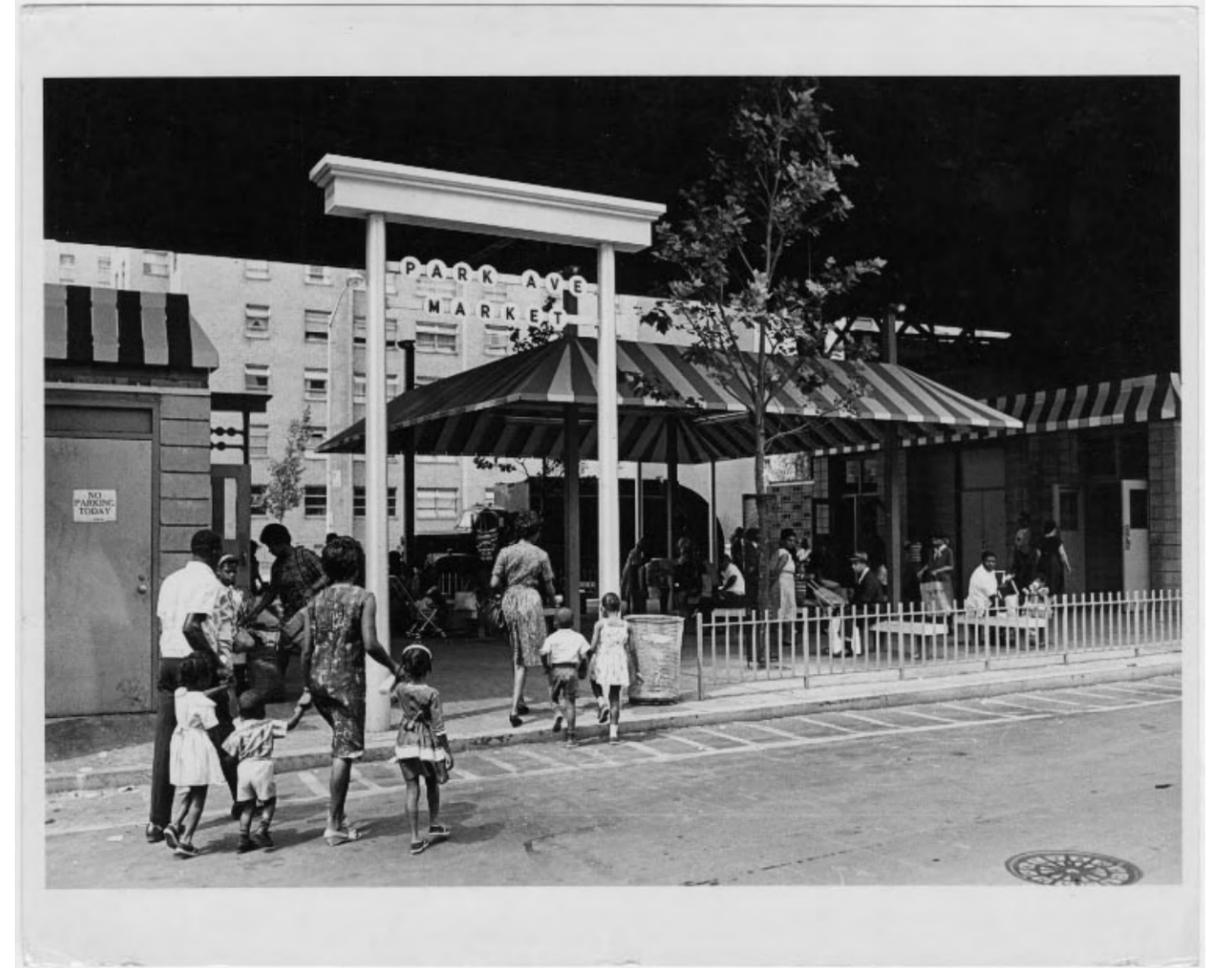


IMAGE 2. Park Avenue Market being visited by families
News Voice International, Schomburg Center for Research
in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.
Digital ID: 3990809.



IMAGE 3. "Park Avenue Market - Curtain material and drapes"

Vondel Nichols. NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.



IMAGE 4. "Park Avenue Market - Yams, plantains, cassava, papaya - tropical fruit and vegetables"

Vondel Nichols. NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.



IMAGE 5. Fortune teller with cockatoo at the Park Avenue Market

Vondel Nichols. NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.

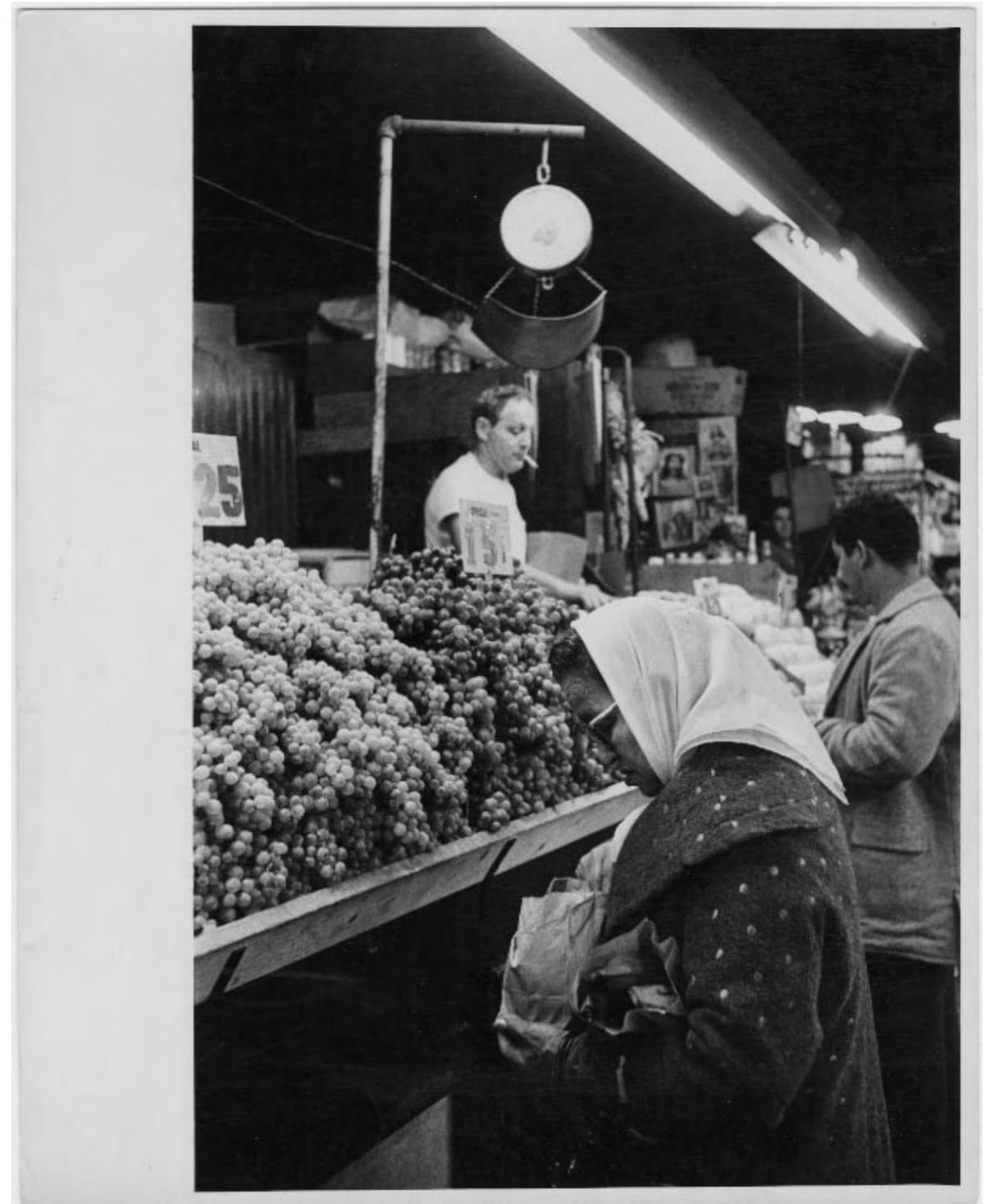


IMAGE 6. "Park Avenue Market" - Customers at grape stand

Ed Bagwell. NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.

Digital ID: 3990813.



IMAGE 7. "Park Avenue Market - Jewelry"

Vondel Nichols. NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division.

**PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY
RÓMULO LACHATAÑERÉ**

In New York City, much of life happens in the street. Neighborhoods are often crowded with buildings and stores and relatively little parkland exists. Hence, residents can be creative about where they connect and how to use the outdoor space they have. The following set of photographs taken by Rómulo Lachatañeré documents residents of East Harlem, primarily children, making use of outdoor space. We have little information about Lachatañeré's purpose for taking these photographs, but the moments he captured and his clear delight and sympathy for the children in them do provide us with specific period details and help us to continue our research about life in East Harlem in the first half of the 20th century.

Rómulo Lachatañeré

Rómulo Lachatañeré (1906–1952) was born and raised in Cuba. Though he was trained as a pharmacist, Lachatañeré became interested in ethnography and was the first Afro-Cuban intellectual to write extensively on Afro-Cuban religious practices. After immigrating to the United States in 1939, Lachatañeré continued to pursue his interest in Afro-Caribbean culture; he wrote what would become an important essay on the religious beliefs of Afro-Cubans, as well as articles for popular Spanish-language magazines and newspapers. He also became actively involved in economic and human-rights issues. After World War II, Lachatañeré attended the Germain School of Photography on the G.I. Bill, which helped finance the education of many American veterans returning from the war. In the 1940s and 1950s, he began documenting the street life of East Harlem, capturing the experiences of the neighborhood's residents in a frank and sympathetic manner. Many of his photographs depict children—playing, arguing, working, sitting on stoops,

and participating in all aspects of daily life. Lachatañeré married his wife, Sara, also from Cuba, in the United States. He is survived by his daughter, Diana Lachatanere, who curates the Manuscripts, Archives & Rare Books Division at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Source:

Lachatanere, Diana. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Photograph Activity

Give each pair or small group of three to four students images from the set of photographs by Rómulo Lachatañeré on the following pages. Ask students to list the following:*

1. Activities in which people are engaged.
2. Locations where these activities take place.
3. Types of buildings and stores they see.
4. Other details they notice, such as clothing or street furniture (lampposts, fire hydrants).

**As an alternative, you can ask each student or group of students to look at the set of photographs for one of the categories, answer the accompanying questions, and then share their information with other students. All students can then come together to answer the last set of questions as a team.*

Activities	Locations	Types of buildings and stores	Other noticeable details (clothing, street furniture, signs, etc.)

Then, using each category as evidence, ask students to answer the Analysis Questions on the next page.

ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Activities

1. What can these photographs tell us about the lives of children in East Harlem in the 1950s?
2. Which activities might qualify as “play”? Which activities might qualify as “work”?
3. How might that compare with how children play and work where you live?
4. How are people dressed? What information does that provide about the neighborhood, time, and place depicted in these photographs?
5. Which communities do you think are living in East Harlem at this time? Look back at the census data covered in Chapter 2. What additional information can that provide for us?

Locations

1. What are the main locations where we see children in these photographs?
2. Why might children be active in these particular locations?
3. Can you imagine anywhere else these activities could take place?
4. Where do children play and work in your community?
5. How might children’s play spaces and workplaces be different in a location outside the city?

Buildings, Stores, and Details

1. What types of buildings do you see in these photographs? What do you think they are used for (for example, homes, businesses, schools, etc.)?
2. What types of stores or businesses do you see in these photographs? Do you have any of these same types of stores or businesses in your community? What do these stores and businesses imply about the needs of East Harlem residents?
3. What do the structures, street furniture, and other details pictured tell us about living in a city at this time?
4. What are some other questions you can ask to find out more information?

Other Questions to Consider

1. What might the photographer be trying to communicate?
2. How might these subjects (people in the images) have been portrayed differently?
3. Are the shots candid or posed?
4. Who might have been the intended audience for these photographs?
5. If you were to document yourself or children in your community, what might you photograph to help people understand your community life?
6. Which photograph is your favorite? Why?
7. What assumptions might you make from just looking at the photo that you realize might be wrong when you compare it with the other evidence you have?

Writing Prompts

1. Choose one character. What do you think he or she is thinking?
2. What happens next? Write a short story or journal entry about this moment and what happened before and after.
3. Choose one photograph. Imagine you are having a conversation with a person in the image. What might you ask him or her? Write a dialogue.
4. Choose an image. Imagine you are standing within the image. What do you hear? Feel?



IMAGE 8. Group gathered on a stoop

© Diana Lachatanere.

NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.



IMAGE 9. "Eastside"

© Diana Lachatanere.

NYPL, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.



IMAGE 10. "Park Avenue"

© Diana Lachatanere.

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Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.



IMAGE 11. Children under a sprinkler

© Diana Lachatanere.

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Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.

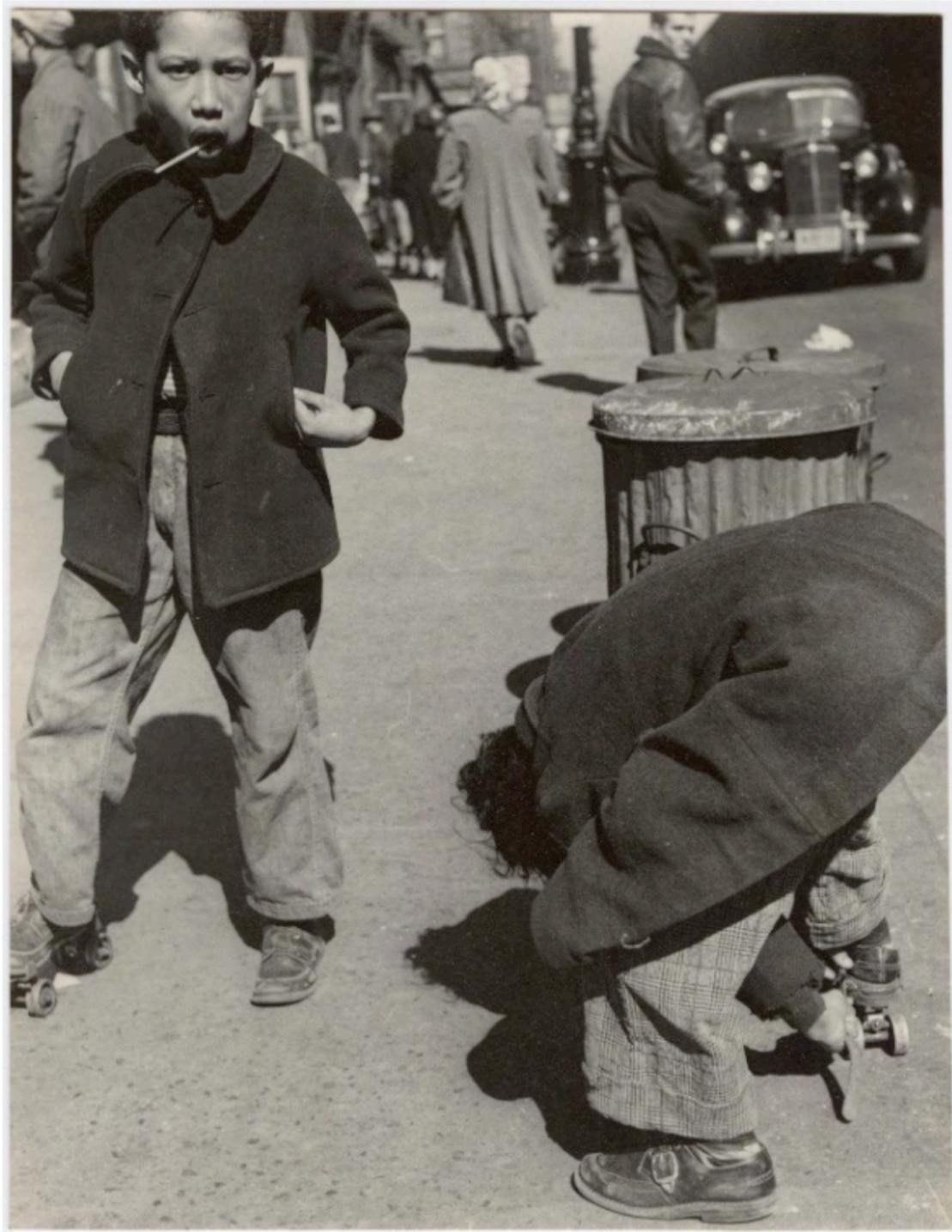


IMAGE 12. "105th Street"

© Diana Lachatanere.

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Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.



IMAGE 13. Young girl in a vacant lot behind a tenement

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Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.

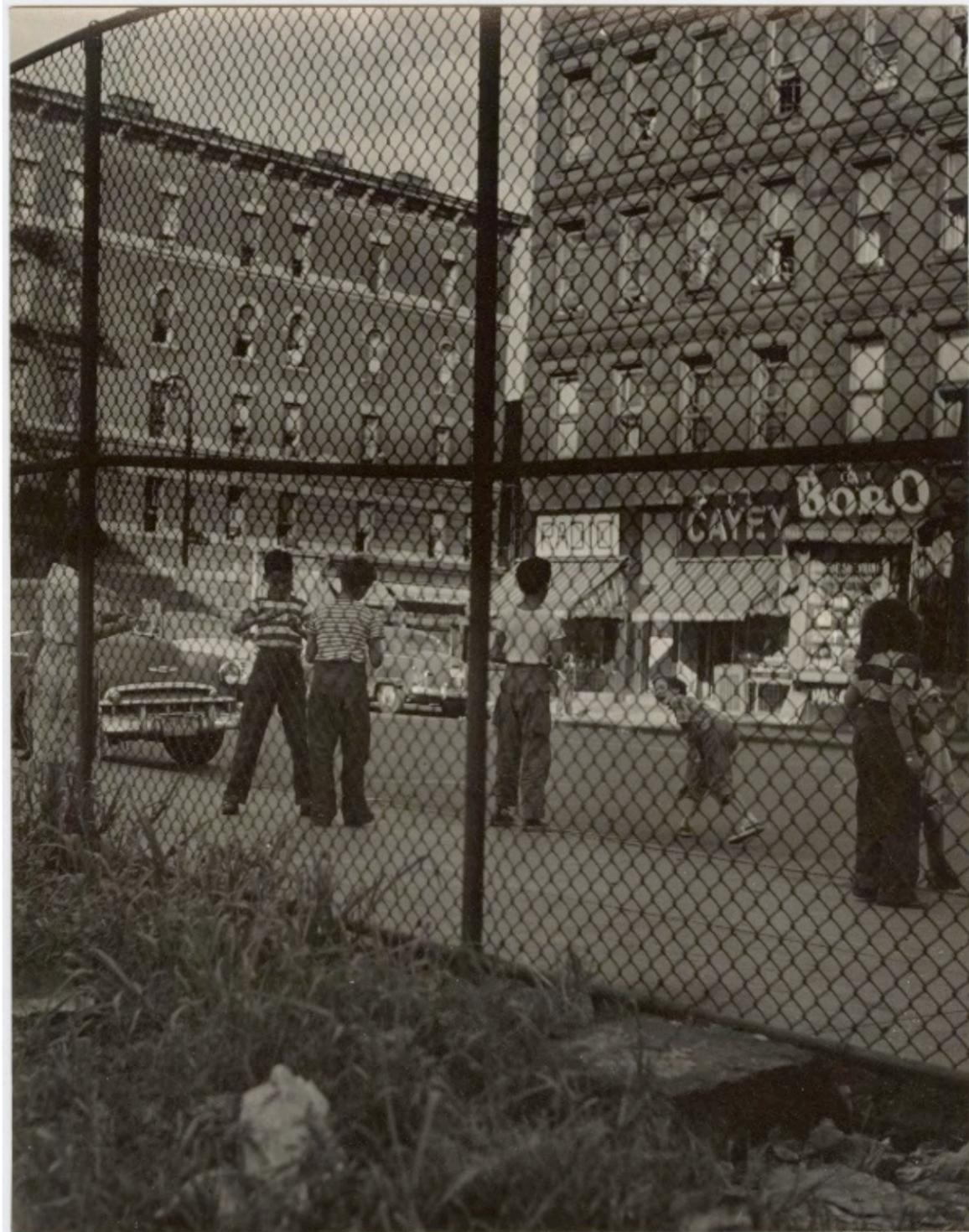
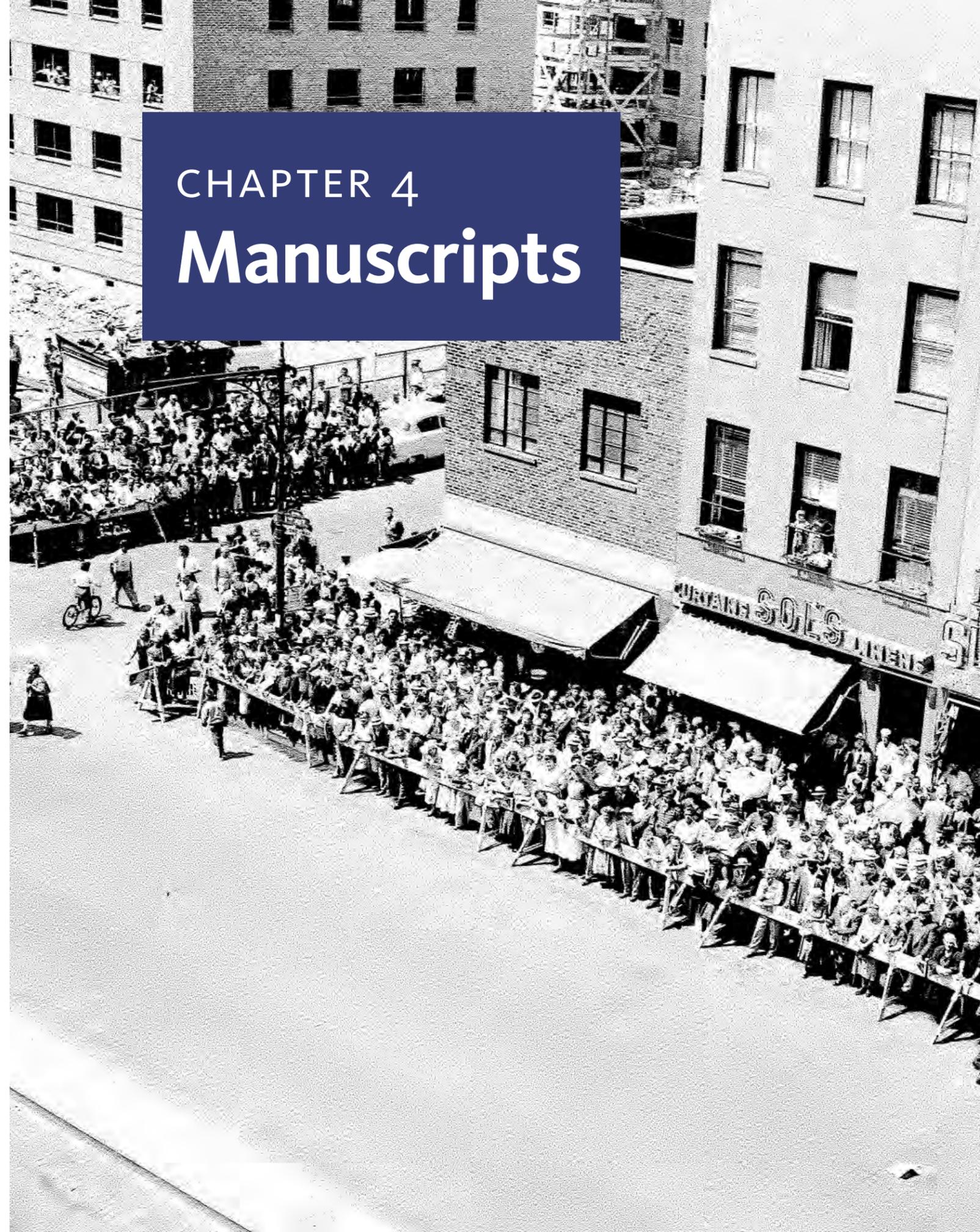


IMAGE 14. "Madison Avenue"

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Photographs and Prints Division, Rómulo Lachatañeré Collection.



CHAPTER 4 Manuscripts

By the 1930s, the neighborhood of East Harlem was home to more than 233,000 residents, many of whom had recently arrived from other parts of the world, primarily from Italy. A growing population of immigrants from Puerto Rico and the American South joined their foreign-born neighbors between 1930 and 1940.

Upon arriving in East Harlem, these families and individuals settled into tenements, most of which were built quickly and shabbily in the latter part of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th. In general, these tenements lacked many basic necessities; there was little light, often no heat, and rarely either running water or indoor plumbing. Apartments were small and overcrowded. Families struggling with Depression-era wages and lack of steady work “doubled up” or took in lodgers to help defray the cost of rent (see Chapter 2: Census Records). Space was limited, privacy more so. As a result of the cramped living conditions, disease spread easily. Worse, many of the buildings—now decades old and of slapdash construction to begin with—were beginning to fall apart. Into this desperate situation arrived a new plan for solving these problems: the creation of government-funded public housing.

When the plan was proposed in the 1930s, public housing was seen to be a promising solution to the specific housing issues that city residents were facing. Today we can see that many unforeseen complications arose, and that the assumptions reformers held about the ability of new housing to solve the trenchant problems of poverty were naive. These complications and assumptions are addressed later in the chapter.

The New York Public Library holds large collections of manuscripts—papers, letters, lecture notes, speeches, memorandum—that once belonged to individuals or organizations. One significant collection is that of Congressman Vito Marcantonio, a popular, progressive politician in the 1930s and 1940s, who was born and raised in East Harlem. Marcantonio’s papers reveal a great deal about the congressman’s devotion to his community and to the more general cause of civil rights. In this chapter, we are focusing on a very small selection of documents in the Marcantonio file—those relating to the creation of public housing in the neighborhood. The manuscripts included here are primarily correspondence and reports; the reports make a case for why public housing was felt to be necessary in East Harlem, while the letters show the impact of public housing on a few neighborhood residents.

Supplementing these records are excerpts from the annual reports of the Aguilar branch of The New York Public Library. The Aguilar Library annual reports document yearly changes in the East Harlem community and are a particularly good resource for learning about changes in the neighborhood over a long period of time. These reports round out the story presented by the Marcantonio papers by focusing on the people living in East Harlem at the time public housing was being planned and built.

As we see in the Bromley maps in Chapter 1, by 1955 many tenements in East Harlem had been replaced by public housing. A visit to the neighborhood today confirms that the housing remains. The creation of public housing had a significant influence on the neighborhood, both economically and socially. It brought in many new tenants and pushed others out. It led to the loss of local stores and increased business for the remaining ones. In the following documents, we learn the history of this development and the rationale for implementing it. We also gather more information on trends that affected the area and the daily life of the neighborhood’s residents.



Funeral of Vito Marcantonio, First Avenue, East Harlem, 1954. NYPL, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Vito Marcantonio Archive.



Congressman Vito Marcantonio in his office at 1480 First Avenue, East Harlem, 1946. NYPL, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Vito Marcantonio Archive.

A GUIDE FOR USING MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscripts are handwritten or typed documents such as reports, diaries, letters, and notes that are generally not meant to be published for a wide audience. Due to their often informal nature, manuscripts can provide an intimate look at a writer's world, including details of daily life and personal observations. When more formal manuscripts such as reports are examined, they can also yield useful information about social perceptions and factual data at different times in the past.

Some questions to consider when examining manuscripts:

- What type of document is this?
- When was it written?
- By whom?
- What was the intended audience?
- Is this document formal or informal? How does that affect how we think about the information it provides?

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE MANUSCRIPTS (CONNECTION TO CCS: DEVELOPING CLAIMS)

During the Depression, New York City politicians began to advocate for the creation of a low-income public housing program; they believed it would be a good solution to the substandard conditions in the tenements and ramshackle apartment buildings in which many New Yorkers lived at the time. When the idea of public housing was first introduced by social reformers decades earlier, it was heralded as a way to address the needs of the many New Yorkers who lived in crowded dwellings with poor ventilation, little light, and often without hot water, plumbing, and basic sanitation. Such conditions led to high rates of disease and infant mortality, and many argued that crime and juvenile delinquency were also exacerbated by the squalid environment. In contrast, public housing, which would be financed through a combination of federal, state, and municipal funds, would be built in a modern style and provide clean, spacious, light-filled, heated apartments to working families. For many city residents, the promise of public housing would mean access to affordable, comfortable, and safe homes for

the first time. It was a popular idea that many people, from government officials to the tenants themselves, passionately supported.

One vocal advocate of public housing was Congressman Vito Marcantonio, who represented East Harlem in the United States House of Representatives in the 1930s and 1940s. In his manuscripts, we find various documents that chart the development of this idea as it relates to East Harlem. *Housing in Lower East Harlem*, the report from Marcantonio's file included in this chapter, makes a strong argument for the creation of public housing and supports that position with detailed evidence. Not only does the report provide an important piece of research in our developing story of the neighborhood, but it also serves as a model for students to craft their own persuasive arguments. As you look through the documents, consider what facts the writers use to support their claims and how those facts are presented. Ask students to evaluate whether the documents make a convincing case for the development of public housing in East Harlem, then ask them to apply what they have learned to their own arguments.

VITO MARCANTONIO ARCHIVE

Biographical Note

Electurally one of the most successful radicals in U.S. political history, Vito Marcantonio was born to Italian immigrants in 1902 in the same East Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan that he represented in the U.S. House of Representatives for seven terms. He graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School, New York University, and New York University Law School. While he was still in high school, he became active in the East Harlem community and caught the attention of Fiorello La Guardia, then president of the city's Board of Aldermen.

Marcantonio made his political debut in 1924 as the manager of La Guardia's campaign for reelection to Congress for the East Harlem district. He became a law clerk in La Guardia's law firm and spent the rest of the 1920s mastering the complexities of New York City politics. In 1930, he was appointed assistant U.S. Attor-

ney; in 1934, when La Guardia became mayor of New York, Marcantonio ran as a Republican for La Guardia's former seat in Congress and defeated the Democratic incumbent. Two years later, Marcantonio was defeated by the Democratic candidate in a landslide, but he returned in 1938 and ran on both the Republican and American Labor Party tickets. By skillfully exploiting local political alliances and working indefatigably for his constituents, Marcantonio survived being expelled from both the Republican and American Labor parties, and stayed in Congress until 1950.

In 1950, Marcantonio successfully defended W.E.B. Du Bois against the U.S. government's charge that Du Bois had failed to register as the agent of a foreign power. He also acted as one of the attorneys for the U.S. Communist Party in hearings before the Subversive Activities Control Board. In 1954, he announced his return to politics as an independent candidate for his old congressional seat, but he died before he could begin his campaign.

Prepared by the Manuscripts and Archives Division.

For more information on Vito Marcantonio or related topics, visit www.nypl.org.

Marcantonio Manuscripts

The manuscripts from Marcantonio's files included in this chapter consist of excerpts from the 1939 report *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, written for the congressman; a memorandum written to the congressman in the same year; and three pieces of correspondence to or from Marcantonio. Together, these documents provide evidence that neighborhood residents were living in very difficult circumstances, and they reiterate the claim that public housing was a necessary and beneficial improvement to the neighborhood. Through an examination of this evidence, we can begin to better appreciate the social values, realities, and aspirations shaping people's lives during the Depression. Although it was certainly a challenging and desperate time for many New Yorkers, it was also a fertile era for social programs, including public

housing, that were meant to improve the lives of the poor. It is important to remember this as we consider the issues facing public housing today.

The first housing project in East Harlem, the East River Houses, opened in 1941. It is this project that the papers here primarily address. As you read through these documents, look back at Plate 123 of the Bromley maps in Chapter 1. These maps directly correspond to the areas discussed in the manuscripts. In addition, you might want to review the census records in Chapter 2 to see who was living in the areas affected, and/or review the photographs in Chapter 3 to get a better picture of specific individuals and neighborhood characteristics at this time.

Questions for interpreting the resources are included and can be looked at individually or in a group. The text is at different levels of complexity, and lends itself to differentiated instruction. You might choose to divide the documents for individual students, or have groups of students each receive a folder with a variety of sources from the set. Taken together, the documents illuminate the story of public housing development in East Harlem in the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, you might want to try some of the suggested activities in the How to Use This Guide section of the resource. As students read the documents, the accompanying questions ask them to consider the point of view and word choice to better understand how the author's arguments were formed. As a culminating activity for this chapter, you might ask students to summarize the arguments made and to evaluate their effectiveness. Students may also use the documents in this guide, as well as items they collect through individual research, to formulate alternative arguments.

DOCUMENT 1. Excerpt from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

The lack of fresh air and light has a depressing effect on well-being and vitality and may often result in anemia. Darkness conceals dirt and infection and thus favors disease generally. Dirt and slovenliness breed vermin. Lack of light lessens resistance to disease. Autopsies on children in Dresden, Germany show that of those born in the Fall who die in the Spring, 96 percent have rickets, while of those born in the Spring who die in the Fall, almost none have.^{9/}

The Committee of Housing and Regional Planning in 1924 reported to Governor Smith that rickets, which is the result of two causes-- lack of certain necessary elements in the diet and inadequate sunlight is definitely a disease resulting from poor housing conditions. In many cases slum dwellers are forced to spend as much as 40 percent of the total family income for rent. This results in inadequate food and inability to pay for medical care and services.^{10/}

DOCUMENT 2. Excerpt from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

Overcrowding increases susceptibility to contagious diseases and also has an adverse effect on the nervous system.^{11/}

"Crowding" has been defined as "more persons than rooms", and "overcrowding" as "twice as many persons as rooms".^{12/} In the writer's opinion these definitions are vague. One has no idea of whether or not the kitchen has been included in the room count.

Overcrowding manifests itself in the following ways: the crowding of large families into a tenement of two or three rooms or into a single furnished room; the taking in of lodgers to share quarters too small for privacy. Frequently this means that children of both sexes are forced to sleep several to a bed in the same room or bed with their parents, or in the same room with lodgers.^{13/}

An examination of the effects of poor housing on morals will complete the deplorable picture.

Overcrowding, in addition to being a menace to good health, is one contributing cause of delinquency. The lack of play space and cramped quarters at home force tenement house children to the streets and out of their mothers' sight and care.^{14/}

Table A-1.- HOUSING IN LOWER EAST HARLEM, 1934 BY CENSUS TRACTS^a

Data reported	Census tract numbers ^b											Group		Lower East Harlem ^c	
	168	174	184	186	172	182	164	170	180	188	182	178	A ^d		B ^d
Number of structures	575	360	455	354	457	389	344	397	366	467	69	339	1,186	3,004	4,190
Type															
single family	4	3	4	12	4	18	0	2	5	12	3	15	11	73	84
two family	5	1	0	1	1	5	0	2	2	26	1	27	5	64	68
multiple dwelling	241	279	388	261	500	204	321	372	397	308	90	283	1,060	2,224	3,374
other ^e	25	67	23	60	132	162	13	20	82	121	6	43	180	635	743
Age															
less than 10 years	6	3	1	0	21	6	1	4	1	1	2	0	6	49	57
10 to 20	0	4	6	2	0	6	1	1	1	2	5	4	8	26	34
20 to 35	39	19	29	23	46	23	73	41	33	14	21	57	170	231	421
35 and over	226	325	389	302	350	353	269	351	349	449	51	279	1,000	2,679	3,679
Conditions															
first class	19	49	29	66	44	46	15	47	24	77	2	53	86	300	468
second class	233	290	296	190	317	286	178	229	231	185	14	134	672	1,633	2,555
third class	21	68	84	71	61	68	144	113	96	185	43	52	403	645	1,043
fourth class	0	3	14	15	5	17	7	3	13	20	0	12	23	56	109
Number of family quarters in structures for															
single family	3,836	3,821	4,797	3,351	3,174	3,419	5,423	5,266	4,625	4,264	827	3,002	16,134	29,694	45,518
two families	4	3	4	12	4	18	0	3	6	12	3	16	11	73	84
multiple dwelling	3,771	3,745	4,765	3,275	2,973	3,154	5,393	5,219	4,401	3,921	822	2,933	15,940	28,438	44,373
other	55	71	27	62	139	237	30	30	213	299	0	99	272	1,039	1,511
Number of occupied dwellings without															
central heat	411	515	666	1,036	1,641	964	2,616	3,409	2,633	1,230	648	1,622	9,454	9,336	17,782
running hot water	13	31	61	154	233	128	313	395	263	109	70	459	1,334	1,612	3,943
sub or shower	114	133	294	401	533	368	2,464	2,715	2,320	1,169	478	974	7,875	4,047	11,922
private indoor toilet	120	109	243	432	714	347	2,723	2,225	1,466	746	162	504	5,695	3,240	8,935
Total number of persons living in dwellings	13,371	14,615	20,865	10,817	11,967	11,419	14,010	15,284	13,901	13,096	2,228	10,892	48,030	106,040	151,970
Number of families	13,369	14,592	20,832	10,782	10,944	11,296	14,010	15,253	13,453	13,068	2,223	10,116	44,942	104,649	149,491
Family quarters consisting of ^f															
1 room	3,509	3,533	4,131	2,804	2,809	3,047	5,963	4,163	3,397	3,324	863	2,544	12,075	25,517	37,592
2 rooms	3,332	3,225	4,043	3,779	2,847	2,936	3,674	4,041	3,397	3,225	890	2,269	11,622	24,392	36,174
3 rooms	2	4	4	4	0	1	12	11	5	5	1	4	29	22	31
4 rooms	45	69	63	33	57	46	214	210	95	109	13	23	532	437	969
5 rooms	325	540	564	692	630	480	1,693	1,280	940	975	156	331	4,101	4,593	8,639
6 rooms	1,402	1,106	1,453	994	766	1,345	2,456	1,911	1,635	1,122	271	549	6,332	9,102	14,434
7 rooms	992	782	1,256	333	796	690	430	572	424	321	47	867	1,473	6,732	8,506
8 or 9 rooms	511	696	675	207	447	366	21	50	213	265	29	185	318	5,416	3,734
10 or more rooms	49	40	0	3	9	34	6	4	16	19	3	8	21	122	133
	8	8	2	6	2	4	1	5	2	16	0	11	6	53	59

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DOCUMENT 4. Excerpt from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

CHAPTER III
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There were at least 35,000^{1/} persons living in dwellings without any improvements in 1934. The general housing condition of Lower East Harlem is now much worse. About 200 (enumerated by writer) structures have since been demolished giving the area an appearance of extreme blight and causing further overcrowding in the remaining structures.

The City of New York is probably finding the area an economic^{2/} and social loss. So well situated an area ought not to fall into disuse and decay. The social loss is infinite. As a measure for self-defense against both types of loss, the City must undertake immediate and drastic action.

Tract #162^{3/} which at present is one stretch of unused vacant lots, garages, and unused warehouses and factories^{4/} was populated in 1934 by 2235 persons living in 59 structures of which only 16 were in first and second class condition. There is not one public or semi-public structure in this tract.

A United States Housing Authority housing project renting at about \$5.00 per room covering tract #162 would be ideal. All the present structures can be bought and demolished for much less than any equivalent area in Lower East Harlem; only 2235 persons need be moved during construction; the East River view has been beautified by the East River Drive, the Tri-borough Bridge, and a renovated Randalls Island; it is

^{1/} Persons living in area "A" multiplied by percent of dwellings without private indoor toilets, plus estimated number in this type of dwelling in "B".

^{2/} The cost of fire fighting, demolition, street cleaning, waste removal probably exceed the total real estate taxes collected.

^{3/} See Figure 1, p. 2

^{4/} The R. P. I. gives the following data on the kind and number of non-residential structures: Lofts, 8; Offices, 0; Warehouses, 41; Stores, 15; Rooming Houses, 5; Factories, 30; Commercial Garages, 26; Institutions, public or semi-public, 0; Others, 16. There are also 19 vacant parcels.

DOCUMENT 3. Table A-1 from the report *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939
Pay particular attention to census tract 162, which figures prominently in the following documents.

NYPL, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Vito Marcantonio Archive.

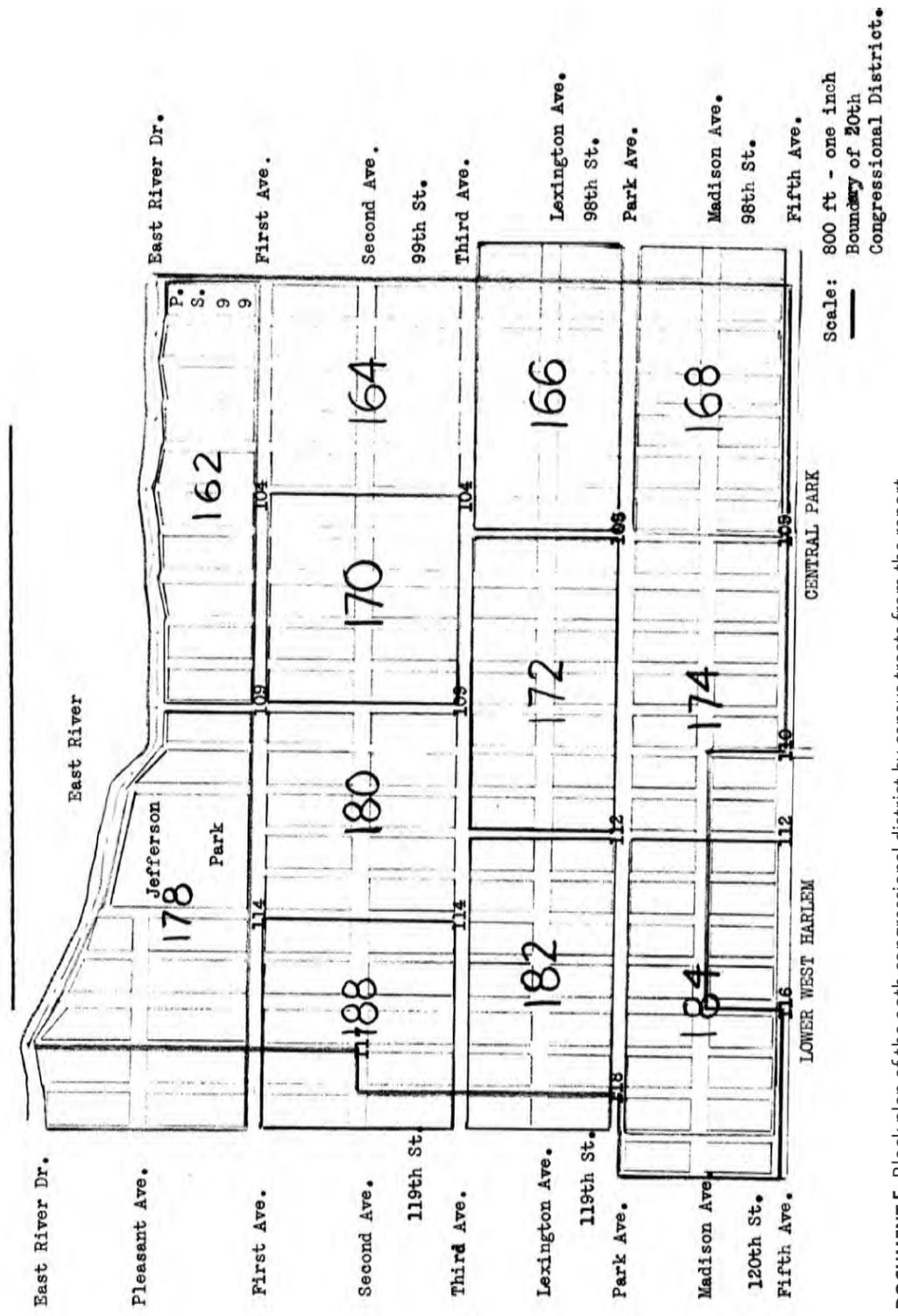
an area naturally separated from the remainder of the neighborhood; its plots could be used for dwelling structures only since the southern end of the tract is bounded by Public School #99 which has very large play-grounds and its northern boundary is not far from Jefferson Park^{5/} its location is ideal for traveling to and from places of employment. More than 82 percent of its present wage-earners spend less than 40 minutes going to work.

If the structures of the project covered but 33 percent of the land and housed 250 persons per acre, the project could house 7500 persons. Assuming that the present dwellers of the tract all moved into the project, 4500 other persons could be accommodated. This would take care of only about 20 percent of the persons in extreme need of housing.

A project of this sort is an absolute immediate necessity. At least 56,000^{6/} and probably 100,000^{7/} or approximately half the persons in Lower East Harlem must be re-housed in government housing and long time housing and regional plans to accomplish this end must now be made.

^{5/} If the two southernmost blocks of Tract #178 were included, the project would house about 1,500 more persons and face the Park on its north.
^{6/} Estimated number of persons dwelling in apartments renting for less than \$5.00 per room per month.
^{7/} Estimate of number of persons dwelling in apartments renting for less than \$6.00 per room per month.

Figure 1. - BLOCK PLAN OF 20th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT BY CENSUS TRACTS



DOCUMENT 5. Block plan of the 20th congressional district by census tracts from the report *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939 (These tracts correspond to the area shown in Plate 123 of the Bromley maps in Chapter 1.)

DOCUMENT 6. Excerpts from Memorandum to Representative Marcantonio, February 20, 1939

February 20, 1939.

Memorandum to Representative Marcantonio

For your information and guidance relative to the contemplated Slum Clearance Project in East Harlem, the following facts are herewith presented.

Past Slum Clearance Projects was not effective as most of the people disposed went to other slum areas, overflowing and creating new ones. Not many families move from the neighborhood, due to business, friends and relatives, work close by etc. In the past the East Harlem section has been the logical location for unskilled workers and immigrants to live due to short distance to work, shoppes close by etc. Today new machinery now requires more skilled workers and these should have decent living quarters.

The remodeling and repairing of tenement house is profitable only to a certain point i.e. for the next 10 years, after which the slum area is in a worse condition than before. The number of owners in one square block are many and alterations will be many and some too expensive to make. Some will improve and some will not. Result after a few years, all bad.

Some of Densest Census Tracts in Manhattan

No. 182. Upper East Side
E. 112 St. to 119 St. Third Ave. to Park Ave.
18,998 persons 730 persons per acre.

No. 164. Upper East Side
E. 99 St. to E. 104 St. 1st Ave. to 3rd Ave.
17,518 persons 630 persons per acre.

Private ownership of each individual tenement house makes for inefficiency of mortgage, management, repairs etc. thereby causing higher rents and less repairs, made causing the tenants to suffer. Most privately constructed tenements were cheaply built due to owner trying to get large first returns due to large risk involved on account of fast deterioration, changing tenants, changing neighborhoods, conflicting uses, high mortgage rates etc. Slum areas also created due to lack of enforcing adequate laws governing sanitation, protection of life and limb, building codes, zoning laws etc.

The Federal Government, together with the city and state governments should sponsor and construct slum clearance housing projects because:

1. Private corporations will not and cannot build houses in slum areas to house the lower income people.
2. The health of such a great number of persons residing in this slum area should be everyone's concern.
3. Will be cheaper in the long run to taxpayers due to less police protection, fire, regulations, court costs, jail up-keep etc. that is additionally required for slum areas than under better living conditions.
4. Creates work for the unemployed, also a dividend paying project as already proven by previous projects.
5. Helps pave the way for business recovery.
6. Increasing population and immigration are causing present conditions to be worse. Better areas are being turned to slums due to families doubling up; also nearness of slums.
7. Cost of living rising and wages steady, causing considerable hardship on low income group. Adjustments between the two extend over a long period of time.
8. Property values falling off more rapidly than otherwise necessary due to vacancies, no business uses in neighborhood, etc.

DOCUMENT 7. Letter from Congressman Vito Marcantonio to Louis Lopez, a constituent and resident of Marcantonio's congressional district, October 2, 1939

VITO MARCANTONIO
20TH DIST. NEW YORK

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

October 2, 1939

Mr Louis Lopez
180 East 79 Street
New York, New York

My dear Mr Lopez:

By this time you have already read in the press of the housing project which will be built in East Harlem. The application for this project was made February 25, 1939.

The total cost of the project will be \$7,638,000 of which the Federal Government has made a loan of \$6,631,000. The site will be from the north side of 102nd Street to the south side of 105th Street, from the east side of First Avenue to the East River Drive. It will house 1,326 families.

It will consist of 14 six story buildings with apartments of 2½ to 6½ rooms. The rent will be no more than \$5.00 per room. Each apartment will be supplied with a Frigidaire, gas range and all modern equipment. The basement of the buildings will be used for a gymnasium and other recreational purposes.

At the southeast corner of the project there will be a park consisting of 42,000 square feet. There is also a possibility of a foot bridge from the project to Wards Island which will become a park.

I take this occasion to thank you as a member of the Harlem Legislative Conference for your cooperation and effort in this achievement which will bring a measure of happiness to the people of my district.

Sincerely yours,

Vito Marcantonio

DOCUMENT 8. Letter from Concette Augone to Congressman Vito Marcantonio, March 18, 1942

Seton Hospital
St. James Pav.
Riverdale, N.Y.
March 18, 1942

Dear Mr. Marcantonio:

You once wrote to me and said, that if I ever needed any advice or help, which I need at the present time, I should let you know.

We are living in the project houses at 433 East 102 St.

I am twenty-two years of age, and the six and a half room apt. is under my name. At that time, we were six in the family including my mother and father.

Six months ago, I was stricken with Tuberculosis and had to come to a sanitorium.

My sister Antionett age sixteen, left High School to go to work.

Approximately a month ago, my brother Louis got married.

My parents are worried about having to give up the apt, on account of my brothers leaving. Therefore we are left with an extra room, in a way we aren't.

My father suffers with Asthma and heart trouble, he was in City Hospital for four months. My mother also has heart trouble, and high blood pressure. Since we have the empty room and my father, is able to rest better when sleeping alone, my mother now occupies the empty room.

Mr. Marcantonio, please don't let us leave the apt, for a five and a half room one. It would break my families hearts to leave it.

I am praying that I'll be home soon and I'll need a lot of fresh air and sunshine, which I get plenty of in our present apt.

I am worried what will become of my family. Please look into the matter and try to let us stay in the same house.

Kindly let me know as soon as possible. Please don't let me worry.

If you will grant me this request, I shall never forget what you have done for us.

Thanking you from the bottom of my heart I remain,

Respectfully yours,
(Miss) *Concetta Augone*

DOCUMENT 9. Letter from Congressman Vito Marcantonio to Jacinto Garcia, December 7, 1948

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
 Washington, D. C.

Please reply to
 1484 First Avenue
 New York 21, N. Y.

December 27, 1948

Mr. Jacinto Garcia
 154 East 103rd Street Apt. 4 W
 New York, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Garcia:

I have been informed by my secretary, Mr. Medina, of your housing problem.

Please be advised that I have written a strong letter in your behalf to the Manager of the James Weldon Johnson Houses, informing him that your family has been forced to separate because you have been unable to find large enough housing accommodations, and urging that your family be assigned an apartment soon.

I assure you that I did my very best to emphasize your desperate situation. However, I do not want to give you any false hopes. I do not control this matter. The assignment of apartments rests entirely with the New York City Housing Authority, over which I have no control or jurisdiction. All that I can do is to present the facts in your case as strongly as possible. This I have done to the best of my ability.

Unfortunately, the New York City Housing Authority has not given the people of our area the consideration they deserve. As a Congressman, I have no jurisdiction over the New York City Housing Authority. It has done as it pleased and I have found that many worthwhile and deserving cases have not been given attention.

I intend to make a strong protest against this situation. As you know, I have been fighting consistently for public housing. The Republicans and Democrats in Congress refused to pass any public housing legislation whatsoever. I shall continue to fight along this line until we win.

Please remember, I am always anxious to be of service to you.

Sincerely yours,

W. Marcantonio
The man I should have called a jet

NYPL, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Vito Marcantonio Archive.

Questions to Consider: Vito Marcantonio Archive

In preparation for studying the documents in this section and for answering the guiding questions that follow, we suggest introducing some basic information about Congressman Vito Marcantonio. A short biography of the congressman is included in this guide. For further information about Congressman Marcantonio or related subjects, go to www.nypl.org. We also strongly recommend revisiting the maps in Chapter 1. Comparing Plate 123 from 1934 with Plate 123 from 1955 will highlight many of the specific issues raised in the Marcantonio documents and provide students with a concrete picture of how the neighborhood of East Harlem physically changed over time. At the end of the questions regarding the manuscripts in this chapter, we have included questions for students to compare these two maps.

DOCUMENT 1. Excerpt from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

1. What type of document is this?
2. Based on the information in this document, list four negative effects of lack of light. How is this related to poor housing?
3. What are some other problems residents in these houses face?
4. Which of these problems have short-term effects? Which have long-term effects?
5. What might be some larger social issues that have caused these problems?
6. Can you find evidence of where the author is appealing to the reader's emotions?
7. What might have been the motive for writing this document?
8. For whom do you think this document was written?
9. What are some solutions you could imagine to solve these problems?

DOCUMENT 2. Excerpt from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

1. What type of document is this?

2. How is "crowding" defined?
3. Why are so many people living in so few rooms?
4. What might be some reasons why families don't have more space?
5. State three negative effects of "crowding."
6. Which of these problems have short-term effects? Which have long-term effects?
7. What might be some larger social issues that have caused these problems?
8. Can you find evidence of where the author is appealing to the reader's emotions?
9. What might have been the motive for writing this document?
10. For whom do you think this document was written?
11. What are some solutions you could imagine to solve these problems?

DOCUMENT 3. Table A-1 from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

1. What type of document is this?
2. For what purpose might this document have been made?
3. What categories of information are listed on this document?
4. Find census tracts 162, 164, 170, and 180 and look at the data for these census tracts:
 - Which type of dwelling is the most existent in these tracts?
 - What is the majority age of the buildings in these tracts?
 - Which tract has the highest number of dwellings without central heat, running hot water, tub or shower, or indoor plumbing?
 - Which has the highest number of people living in the dwellings?
5. According to this data, which census tracts appear to have the most problems?
6. Can you write a sentence summarizing the problems you observe in these areas?
7. How effective a document is this in providing evidence to support a claim that public housing was needed in East Harlem?

8. If you were a resident in one of these areas, how might you respond?
9. If you were a city planner or a government official, how might you respond to these problems?
10. Look back at the census records from 1930. These were the residents living in census tract 164. How might their lives have been affected by the facts of this report?
11. Look back at Plate 123 of the Bromley maps. These correspond to the exact areas of census tracts 162 and 164. What do you notice about how these areas change over time? Why do you suppose this is so?
12. In what ways might their lives have been improved by the changes to the neighborhood? In what ways might their lives have been made harder?

DOCUMENT 4. Excerpt from *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

1. According to this document, what are some housing problems residents are facing in 1934?
2. According to this document, what would be a solution to these problems?
3. What would need to happen to accomplish this project?
4. Find three reasons why this solution would be beneficial to the residents and community of East Harlem.
5. What might be some drawbacks to neighborhood residents?
6. Of the arguments presented, which do you think is the most persuasive? Why?
7. Can you find any words or phrases the author used to strengthen the persuasion of his argument?
8. Can you think of any alternative solutions to the housing problems residents are facing?
9. What might be the motive of writing such a document?
10. For whom might this document be written?

DOCUMENT 5. Block plan of 20th congressional district by census tracts from the report *Housing in Lower East Harlem* by Abraham Kavadlo, May 15, 1939

1. What type of document is this?
2. For what purpose might this document have been made?
3. Can you find census tract 162? What is its exact location?
4. What are some other census tracts nearby?
5. If you were to live in this area of the neighborhood, what might be some benefits?
6. If you were given the charge of building something on this plot of land that would benefit the community of East Harlem, what might you build?

DOCUMENT 6. Excerpts from *Memorandum to Representative Marcantonio*, February 20, 1939

1. What type of document is this?
2. To whom was this document written?
3. Why was it written?
4. What do you think “slum clearance” means?
5. According to this document, what did not work about slum-clearance projects in the past?
6. What are some reasons why it hasn’t worked for individual tenement owners to address the problems in their buildings?
7. How many people were living in census tracts 182 and 164? Why might these facts be stated (think back to documents 1, 2, and 3)?
8. According to this document, how will slum clearance housing projects help the following groups of people:
 - Residents
 - Taxpayers
 - Unemployed
9. Where can you find evidence of the writer’s attitudes towards people in the community? What do these attitudes tell us about societal issues or values held at the time?

DOCUMENT 7. Letter from Congressman Vito Marcantonio to Louis Lopez, a constituent and resident of Marcantonio’s congressional district, October 2, 1939

1. Who wrote this letter? To whom was it written?
2. When was this letter written?
3. According to this letter, what are some of the benefits of the new housing project?
4. How does Congressman Marcantonio feel about the new housing project? What is your evidence?
5. Why might Congressman Marcantonio have written this letter to Mr. Lopez?
6. How important is it for a congressman to communicate with his constituents about public matters?

DOCUMENT 8. Letter from Concette Augone to Congressman Marcantonio, March 18, 1942

1. Who wrote this letter? To whom was it written?
2. When was this letter written?
3. Where is the letter being written from? Why is the author of the letter there?
4. What is the request the author of the letter is making? Why is she making this request?
5. How does the author feel about her apartment? What specific phrases provide evidence for how she feels? Can you find her apartment on Plate 123 of the Bromley map of 1955?
6. What does this letter suggest about the author’s relationship to Vito Marcantonio? What does it suggest about Congressman Marcantonio’s relationship with his constituents?
7. What do you think happened as a result of this request? Why?

DOCUMENT 9. Letter from Congressman Vito Marcantonio to Jacinto Garcia, December 7, 1948

1. Who wrote this letter? To whom was it written?
2. When was this letter written?
3. This letter is a response to an earlier request. What was the nature of that request?
4. Summarize the main idea of this letter in one or two sentences.
5. What does this letter suggest about how the residents of East Harlem feel about public housing? What phrases in the letter can you use to support your idea?
6. How would you describe the tone of this letter? What words or phrases can you use to support your idea?
7. What does this letter suggest about the author’s relationship to Vito Marcantonio? What does it suggest about Congressman Marcantonio’s relationship with his constituents?
8. What do you think happened next?

Questions for comparing Bromley maps Plate 123 from 1934 with Plate 123 from 1955

1. Look at the map from 1934. What types of structures exist in this area?
2. Compare document 3 to document 4. It is the same section of East Harlem in 1955. How has the neighborhood changed?
3. What do you suppose has happened to bring about these changes?
4. Do the maps provide enough information to explain the changes?
5. What else might we need to know? Can any prior knowledge be applied to our understanding of the causes of the changes?
6. What might be some of the effects of these changes on neighborhood residents?

Epilogue

In her classic 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, urbanist and writer Jane Jacobs argued that the reformers, planners, and politicians who had worked so hard to create public housing in the 1930s and 1940s had failed to clearly understand the organic functions of city life. Much of city life—its streets, its everyday interactions, its commerce, and its play—is disorganized, improvisational, and informal (see Chapter 4). This, she suggested, was part of what made a city dynamic; it was not, as so many planners declared, the source of its troubles. By eliminating the small shops and dilapidated dwellings that were plentiful in East Harlem before the 1930s (which we read about in Chapter 1), reformers also cleared away social ties, allegiances, spontaneity, and creativity. One tenant of an East Harlem public housing project agreed, regretting that “Nobody cared what we wanted when they built this place. They threw our houses down and pushed us here and our friends somewhere else...the big men come...and say, ‘Isn’t it wonderful? Now the poor have everything!’”

Both critiques like those of Jacobs and the anger expressed by this East Harlem resident have continued to burden the legacy of public housing. In the decades since its construction, the housing has suffered from inadequate funding, poor maintenance, and negative media attention. In addition, the physical concentration of social challenges that often accompany poverty have diminished the hope and confidence that first gave life to the public housing idea. Documents such as the ones included in this guide help explain why public housing was built and why many people still believe in the basic premise of low-cost, government-assisted housing for those in need. Although large-scale housing similar to the type built in East Harlem in the mid-20th century is no longer a popular way to provide shelter for the poor, other government programs exist. These continue to be essential in ensuring that New Yorkers have the opportunity to live in safe, clean, and affordable homes.

For more on public housing, see:

New York City Housing Authority:

www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/home/home.shtml

Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era*

Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century*

Peter D. Eisenstadt, *Rochdale Village: Robert Moses, 6,000 Families, and New York City’s Great Experiment in Integrated Housing*

AGUILAR LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORTS

The Aguilar branch of The New York Public Library originally opened as a private library in East Harlem in 1886. It was incorporated into the greater New York Public Library system in 1905. The library was named after Grace Aguilar, a Sephardic Jewish writer, and was one of several Aguilar libraries, which were opened to serve the needs of a growing Jewish immigrant population, first on the Lower East Side, and later in Midtown and East Harlem. After Aguilar became part of NYPL, its librarians were required, like other branch librarians, to produce an annual report on the library and its community. The reports generally include a description of the population that uses the library and also records information about the area’s changing landscape, including new construction. Throughout the years, the library and its staff have witnessed an incredible number of changes in the immediate neighborhood, many of which reflect broader transformations taking place throughout New York, the nation, and beyond. In the following excerpts, librarians working at Aguilar in the 1940s and 1950s narrate such changes.

As you read these excerpts, look back at the census records (Chapter 2) and the photographs (Chapter 3) from this period for corresponding information.

Document 1. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1941

The greatest need at Aguilar is for a really good Spanish collection. Although a Spanish circuit would be invaluable to us, we are far beyond the point of depending entirely on circuit. We need a collection of our own, as well. In the three years that I have been here, the number of Spanish readers, in both adult and children's departments, has steadily increased. Our current registration shows a large proportion of new Spanish readers, many of them new not only to the neighborhood and to the public library, but new to the city and to the country. Miss Belpré has had several large public school classes of Spanish children, none of whom has been in this country more than a month. You may imagine how greatly they enjoy her stories and book talks in Spanish and how glad they are to find books in a language they can understand. The fact that the Spanish are not really welcome in this once completely Italian neighborhood, makes it all the more important for the library to do its best for them. I am still hoping that, in the not too distant future, we may have a real Spanish department at Aguilar, comparable to the Italian. I should like to use the whole balcony for the circulating Spanish collection and the little room off the balcony, formerly a browsing room, as a Spanish reading room. It could be made really attractive, a place where our Spanish readers could feel at home.

Document 2. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1943

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1943
Aguilar Branch

To Miss Esther Johnston
Acting Chief of the Circulation Department.

The year 1943 ends on a more optimistic note than did 1942 for the community which the Aguilar Branch serves. Since Italy has joined the Allied cause, our Italian friends appear less depressed and are eager to read again. Continued employment of adults has meant a better fed, better clothed public. Adjustment to the many changes in their home life seems to be effected and our readers are less tense and more stable than they were. The long hours of work continue to keep many from using the library.

Document 3. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1943

The community, east of Third Avenue, continues to be Italian, to the west, Puerto Rican, other Latin Americans, and American Negro. The past year, if transfers are an indication, has shown a steady trek of Puerto

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Aguilar Branch

Ricans to the Bronx, to the Mott Haven and Woodstock neighborhoods. In the branch, there are many more American Negroes. The residents of the East River Houses who use the branch, represent all nationalities. Last spring the Housing Authority released plans for a post war project between Park and Third Avenues, 112th to 115th Streets, especially for Puerto Ricans. There is no way to predict, with the changing scene, who will live there. A new elementary parochial school, the Commander John Shea, opened this fall on 111th Street near Lexington Avenue. Its pupils are largely Puerto Ricans.

Document 4. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1943

In connection with work with Spanish readers, the card printed for us by the Public Relations Office has proved very useful. One is given to each Spanish speaking child as he joins the library to take home to his parents. Many have returned with the card and have been delighted in finding favorite authors on the shelves.

Invitación a nuestros vecinos
Vengan a
- La Biblioteca Pública de Nueva York
- Aguilar Branch
174 East 110th Street.

Aquí hallarán una colección de libros y de revistas en español que les interesarán y que podrán llevar para uso en el hogar. (Traigan identificación y les daremos una tarjeta.)

La biblioteca está abierta todos los días con la excepción del domingo.

Todo es gratis
Vengan!

Document 5. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1944

During the year, an effort was made to relate the exhibits to local interests. Miss Robinson has developed a flare for discovering material and talent and arranging attractive exhibitions. Mr. Joseph Burger, a neighboring business man, loaned a part of his collection of shoes. In connection with the exhibit, he spoke to a group of young people about his collection which covers a period from 3000 BC to the present. A hobby show organized by the two junior high schools for boys in East Harlem was appreciated by all. Hobbies which could not be pinned up on the wall were featured on two days. One day, three carrier pigeons bearing invitations to the exhibit, were released by their proud owners from the steps of the library; on another day, a boy tap-danced in the room.

Document 6. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1951

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

AGUILAR BRANCH

FIVE YEAR REPORT

1951

East Harlem has undergone many changes in the past five years. The 1950 census figures show an increase of nearly 9,000 population in the previous decade. In the past five years, the peak of the Puerto Rican migration was reached. All the problems of health, housing, education, delinquency and crime which crop up under conditions of change have been experienced, studied and in some cases solved. Housing has been stressed. The James Weldon Johnson Houses were erected and have been occupied for two years. The Carver Houses are under way, the tenants on the sites of the George Washington and Jefferson Houses have received notice to vacate. This means clearance of badly run down slums.

Document 7. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report, 1951-52

Thanks to Miss Ferrigno and Miss Bonilla, the Italian and Spanish collections are fresh looking and as well rounded as possible. It is natural that the use of the Spanish collection is increasing while that of the Italian collection is less. Many of our Italian readers are moving from East Harlem. They are substantial citizens who are buying homes outside the area as they are forced to vacate apartments which are to be razed for a new housing project. The Puerto Rican population is increasing and my guess is that the immediate neighborhood is 85% Puerto Rican now. A sampling of the new registrants shows 80%. As these people are not omnivorous readers but content to borrow a book or two at a time, we cannot anticipate a sudden rise in the adult circulation. Recently, a little girl brought her aunt, newly arrived from Puerto Rico, to join the library. As she showed her about the library, she was overheard emphasizing that the books were all free.

Document 8. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1957

A familiar sight on the streets in our neighborhood is the orange tool cart surrounded by wooden barricades. Below the street surface a Con Edison construction gang is at work. One day a young student, to the library and asked for a book about a scientist. The librarian asked, "How would you like a biography of Edison?" "Oh yes, Con Edison," replied the boy. That will be fine". We hope that after reading the biography the young man will discover that the name is Thomas Alva instead of Con.

Document 9. Excerpt from Aguilar annual report 1955–56

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
Aguilar Branch
Annual Report 1955 - 1956

To Mr. Cory:

Part I - Of men, books and the library.

May 1st marked the completion of sixty years of library service to the readers of this neighborhood. This year also marked the demolition of the Third Avenue El which during those six decades had shaken the building everytime the cars thundered by. The peace that now exists is wonderful! During this year, the Italian collection which for forty years has been associated with Aguilar was transferred to the Donnell Foreign Language Center. A small basic collection supplemented by books from the Central Circuit Collection is expected to meet the needs of the decreasing number of Italian readers in the community.

As we consider the past year, the emphasis on the Spanish books and the Puerto Rican readers comes to mind. All summer and fall, we were concerned with the preparation of the Puerto Rican list which finally appeared as the February number of the Branch Library Book News. That the list meets a need is a satisfaction to all who worked on it. As a result of the favorable publicity in local and San Juan papers, the branch has been enriched by gifts of books and pamphlets by Puerto Rican authors and agencies.

Questions and Writing Prompts: Aguilar Annual Reports

The following questions can be used as a guide for interpreting all of the excerpts in this section:

1. Who is moving to East Harlem after 1950? According to these reports, why is this new population moving to the neighborhood?
2. Who is leaving East Harlem at this time? According to these reports, why are they leaving?
3. Why might these communities be attracted to East Harlem?
4. In what ways are the new populations similar to the older residents? In what ways are they different?
5. What types of challenges are these new communities facing?
7. Where can you find evidence of librarians' attitudes toward these new communities? What do these attitudes tell us about the librarian's role in the community or about societal issues at the time?
8. Aside from demographic changes, what other types of changes are taking place in East Harlem?
9. How are the physical and demographic changes related?
11. Are there patterns of neighborhood growth, either in population or geographical boundaries, that you can identify that were addressed in earlier years?
12. In what ways is information in the library's annual reports a good measure of neighborhood change? In what ways is it limited?
13. If economic, political, and economic forces all shaped the development of East Harlem, which of these do you think had the greatest impact? Which had the least? Why?
14. Predict the future. How might the neighborhood look 50 years from today?

