

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

PRESERVATION
SPATIAL ENCOUNTER
& ANTI-RACISM

CONTENTS

4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7 INTRODUCTION

13 HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND ASSETS

DESIGN AND VISUAL ARTS

16

PERFORMING ARTS

18

LITERARY ARTS AND PUBLISHING

20

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

22

EDUCATION

24

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND CLUBS

26

SPORTS

28

RELIGION

30

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVISM

32

HEALTH

34

CULINARY ARTS

36

BUSINESS AND BANKING

38

UNDERGROUND ENTERPRISE

40

SPATIAL AND RACIAL SEGREGATION

42

45 KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL | CLAIMING SPACE 47

policies and practices of exclusion

48

claiming geographies

52

controlling property and assets

60

designing space

65

creating interactive space

67

HISTORICAL | SELF-DETERMINATION 74

political activism

75

forming prosperity and community well-being

77

artistic expression

82

counternarrating

86

confronting divides

91

CONTEMPORARY 95

changing and underrepresented publics

96

loss and survival

99

traditional tools of preservation

114

redefining agency and connections

119

123 PROPOSALS

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF LANGSTON HUGHES HOUSE
125

CHURCHES AS CONNECTOR SPACES
129

EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS IN HARLEM
132

INTERPRETIVE INSTALLATIONS OF THE RENAISSANCE BALLROOM
AND CASINO
136

RECLAIMING ENCOUNTERS:
REVIVING THE LEGACY OF BLOCK 2006
140

A BACKDROP TO THE COMING OF AGE:
135TH STREET SIDEWALK DESIGN
145

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OF UNDERREPRESENTED NARRATIVES
152

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION OF FEMALE SOCIAL CLUBS
159

"NEW CONNECTIONS, NEW PERSPECTIVES" WEBSITE
161

167 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND ASSETS
168

APPENDIX B: HISTORIC ASSETS DATA
256

APPENDIX C: CONTEMPORARY ASSETS
282

APPENDIX D: CONNECTOR ORGANIZATION INTERVIEWS
284

APPENDIX E: BIBLIOGRAPHY
286

APPENDIX F: IMAGE SOURCES
303

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This report was produced by Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP). The report compiles the findings of a semester-long Historic Preservation (HP) studio in the spring of 2021 at GSAPP. This is a studio premised on concepts of community-engaged research and learning as integral aspects of preservation practice. Students and faculty alike have benefited from the knowledge and perspective of a number of representatives of the Harlem community, whom the team would like to thank and acknowledge.

Save Harlem Now!

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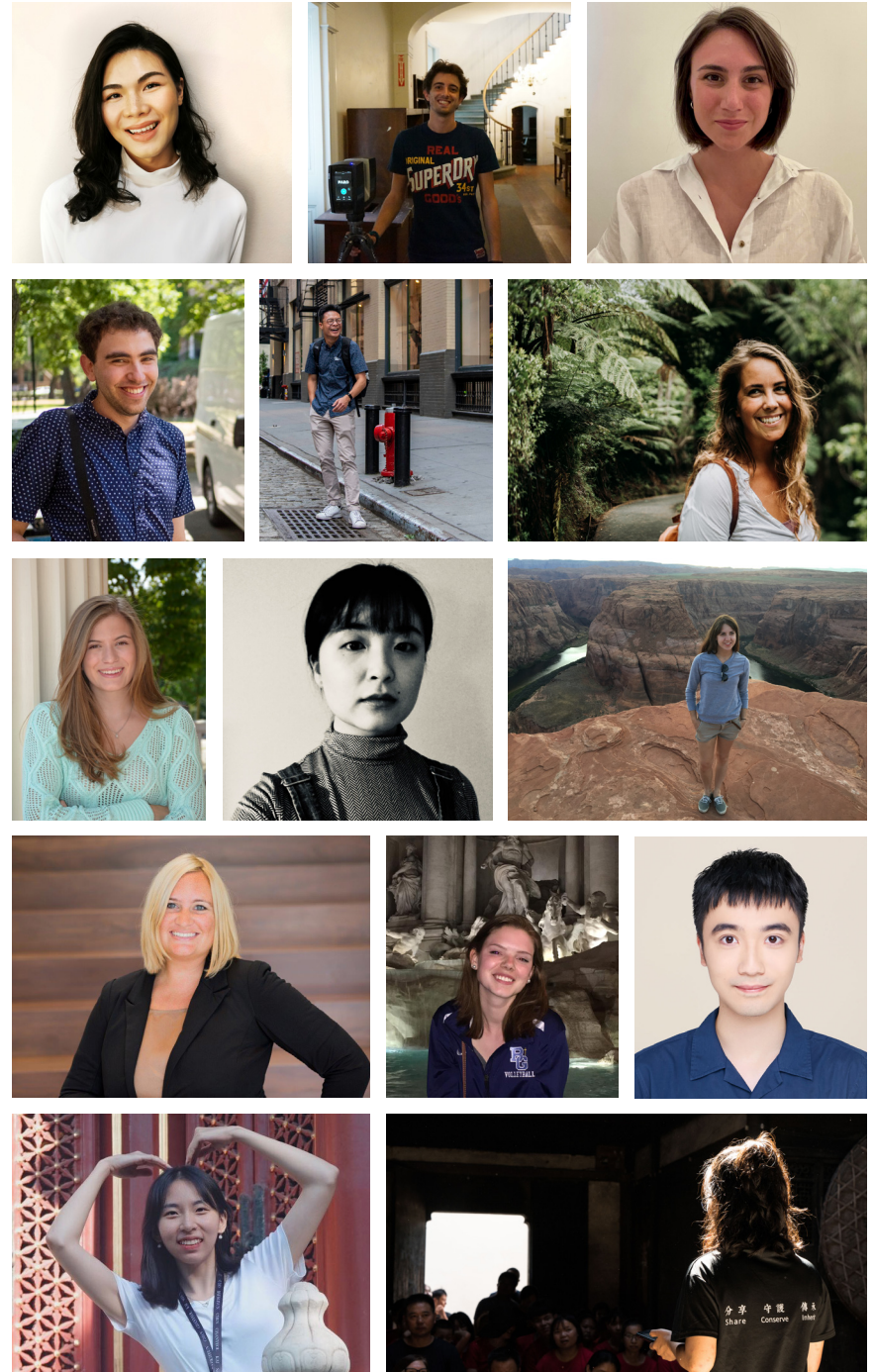
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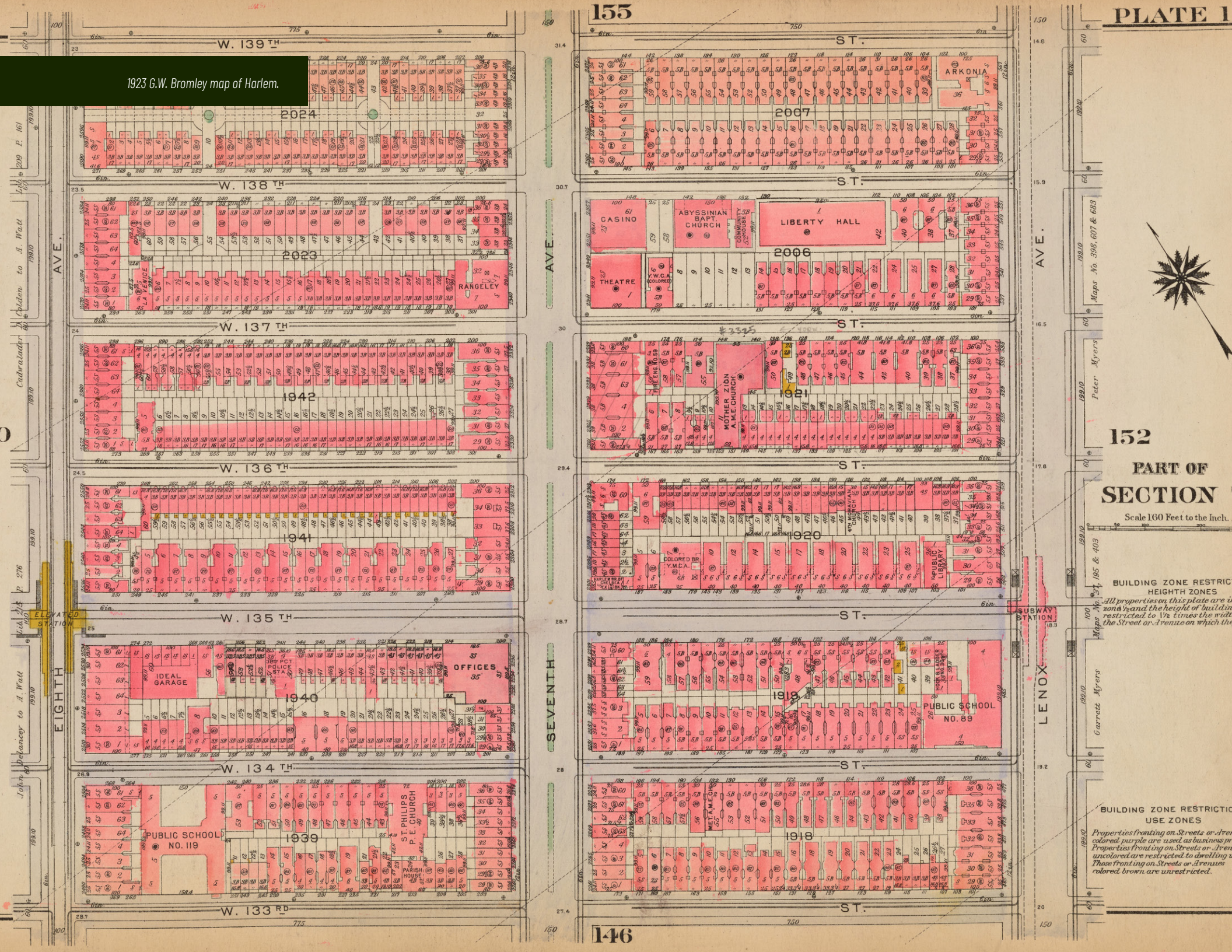
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Due to the pandemic, this studio was taught remotely with limited on-the-ground access. Students were spread geographically from California to China, and they worked against tremendous challenges to bridge the divides of time and space. The length of the semester was also shortened, abbreviating the time students had for research, analysis, and especially for the development of their final proposals. These limitations should be acknowledged, along with the students' dedicated efforts to creatively work through them.



Spring 2021 studio students pictured alphabetically (top left to bottom right).

60



INTRODUCTION

STUDIO AIMS, POSITIONALITY, AND INTENTIONS

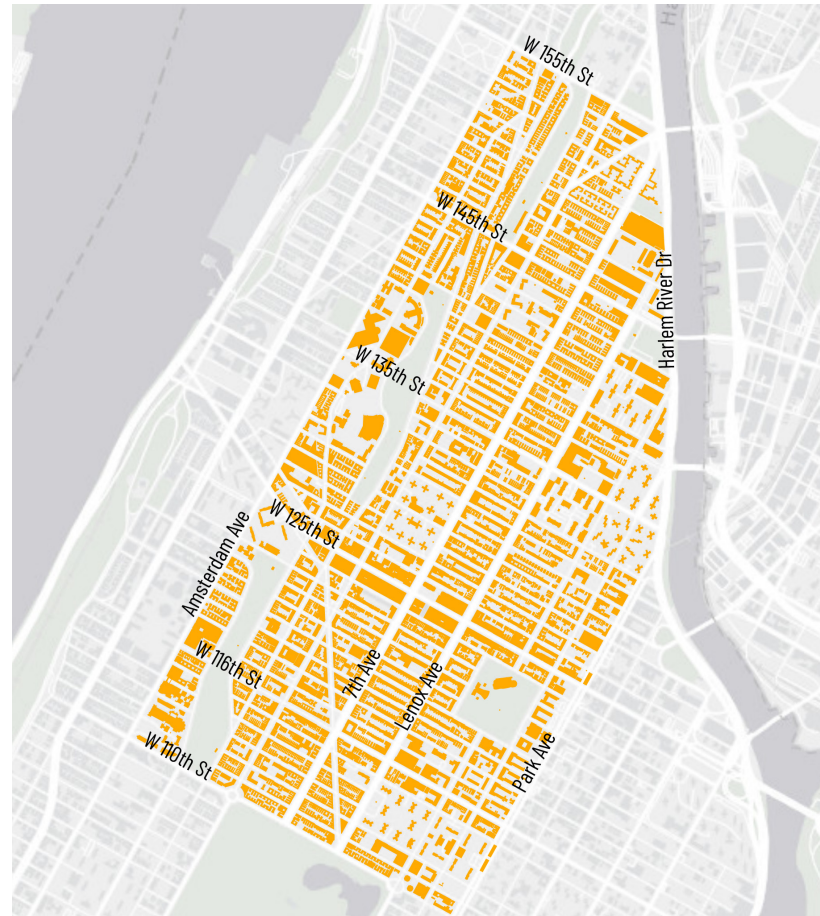
This studio is premised on the notion that preservation is not simply about saving places that still exist; it is about creating physical encounters with stories of the past, by delving deeply into social and spatial conditions and the forces that shape them over time. The work of preservation cannot rely exclusively on material – specifically, architectural – evidence, because the survival of many resources was constrained by longstanding legacies of racism and injustice.

The primary aim of the studio is to explore how the preservation enterprise – through existing tools and innovative approaches – can instrumentalize the heritage of the Harlem Renaissance as a tool for anti-racism and social justice.

As a learning experience focused on confronting anti-Black racism through preservation, faculty and students alike were conscious – indeed, self-conscious – of the fact that this studio was undertaken by a predominantly White program in a predominantly White university concerning the predominantly White field of historic preservation. The faculty intentionally pursued this scope to encourage students to explore their own positionality and that of the field, in order to confront legacies of racial injustice and to decenter Whiteness both within and through the preservation enterprise.

TERMINOLOGY

In terms of word usage and terminology, the studio team sought to be conscious of and conscientious about the historical and present uses of racial terms, particularly slurs and other derogatory language. In this history of racism and oppression, and the endeavor to strive in the face of such oppression, words and rhetoric provide an insightful window into the world of the past. However, as many of these words are offensive, archaic, or both, they garner strong negative connotations in the present day, and the team has taken care not to use them in ways that inadvertently perpetuate this system of oppression. The use of such language at times occurred in primary sources by Black writers who self-identified with these terms and perhaps even came to claim them for themselves. The team endeavored to use dated and potentially offensive terms only when absolutely necessary, and in an appropriate context, such as in the form of direct quotations.



POLEMIC OF “PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE” AND OF “STUDY AREA”

For the studio, the period of the Harlem Renaissance was loosely defined as 1917 to 1939 – broader than some have defined it, yet with the recognition that the significance of places, events, and people can rarely fit cleanly within a rigid timeframe. There are inherent limitations to isolating the Harlem Renaissance as the period of significance for the studio’s inquiry. Harlem’s dynamic history extends well before and beyond this particular era. However, the limitations of the academic calendar required faculty to set boundaries for the inquiry, which in turn allowed students to grapple with the relative value and limitations of the concept of “period of significance,” with respect to the values and narratives it represents.

In terms of study area, the studio began with a large geography encompassing much of northern Manhattan. As research developed and historic assets were identified, the team focused their study on Central Harlem, bounded by 110th Street to the south, 155th Street to the north, Amsterdam Avenue to the west, and Park Avenue to the east. Again, these geographic boundaries served to focus student research, and are not intended to suggest that Central Harlem was an island, and not connected to a larger, national dynamic. In broaching this study area, it is important to acknowledge the presence and continuing influence of Columbia University in Harlem. This institution has shaped and affected the makeup of Harlem, sometimes in exclusionary ways that have had negative impacts on generations of residents. Columbia's role in the neighborhood, however, was not an avenue of inquiry in this studio. Some examination of this relationship was undertaken in a previous studio focused specifically on Morningside Heights and Manhattanville, though further study is warranted.

METHODOLOGY

The studio started with fourteen historic themes, defined by faculty, which related to the Harlem Renaissance and its legacy. These themes sought to extend beyond popular perceptions of the Harlem Renaissance, which have predominantly centered around literature, arts, and political activism. The studio intentionally tried to look beyond the mythology and question longstanding assumptions of this period by taking a closer look at additional and counter narratives.

The team identified historic assets that related to each of the fourteen themes: namely, built spaces, open spaces (such as streets, and sidewalks), and event locations from the Harlem Renaissance period. Students then determined which assets had survived and which had been lost. Coupling this historical research with the present-day landscape, the team then collectively

METHODOLOGY

HISTORIC THEMES



**HISTORIC
ASSETS**



**CONTEMPORARY
ASSETS**

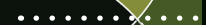


**SOCIAL-SPATIAL
ANALYSES**

Social Spatial Analyses
Narrative Analyses
Formal Analyses
Statistical & Descriptive Analyses
Publics & Demographic Analyses
Stakeholder Analysis

HISTORICAL
CHARACTERIZING THE
HARLEM RENAISSANCE

CONTEMPORARY
LEGACY AND BARRIERS
OF HERITAGE



PROPOSALS

identified contemporary assets within the study area, meaning organizations, institutions, and associations that serve as, or have the potential to serve as, connectors within a community. These contemporary assets or “connector organizations” have missions that build upon the legacies of the Harlem Renaissance, promote social justice, and/or intersect with the values of preservation. Interviews with many of these organizations were conducted in the second half of the semester to understand these relationships and the potential for collective action.

This asset-based research generated not only a list and geography of physical properties, but a platform from which to analyze the social-spatial characteristics of the Harlem Renaissance time period and its influence. Using a range of data and analyses – spatial, narrative, formal, statistical, descriptive, demographic – as well as community-engaged research, the team sought to better understand the complex histories and heritage of the Harlem Renaissance and the social-spatial circumstances that facilitate or inhibit their intergenerational transmission. By amalgamating and looking intersectionally at these analyses, the team identified a series of key issues to synthesize findings.

Utilizing these key issues as a foundation for action, students developed proposals with the goal of instrumentalizing the heritage of the Harlem Renaissance as a potential tool for anti-racism and social justice.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMING

In 1897, W. E. B. Du Bois published an essay in *The Atlantic* that explored the concept of “double consciousness,” expressing what he felt was the African American’s conscious experience of being both subject and object simultaneously, while navigating everyday life (Du Bois 1897).

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a [Black]; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois 1903).



W.E.B. Du Bois, ca. 1919.

This sense of “twoness,” as Du Bois stated, helped the team to better understand and raise more questions throughout the semester’s analyses, shedding light on such themes as self-portrayal and public perception, and informing research about changes in the built environment since the Renaissance. How does this inward feeling of “twoness” manifest itself in the businesses in the neighborhood and the demonstrations on the streets? And ultimately, what role does preservation play in this subject/object, double consciousness of the Black Harlemit?



S of interest underneath the Harlem Moon: A dozen Marabunga cigarettes guaranteed to give a three-day jag. If the Crab Man says "Top or Bottom" (meaning his basket) say "Bottom" and you'll get a "shorty" of gin. The white haired apostle who wanders about passing out benedictions and Hot Peanuts, the Harlem National Food. When there's no room on the dance floor, they just stand still and shake—that's the "bump."

THE café au lait girls which are the color of coffee and cream. The waiters who tap dance to and fro with trays bearing glasses of wine (liquids) and never spill a drop. The police dogs which the shakers hire for the Sunday Parade. The eternal Harlem question: "What's meaning 3-Pari-mutuel digits of the seventh race, which all Harlem bets on. Most of the gamblers pick their numbers from dream books.

A "RELIEF" MAP OF GREENWICH VILLAGE IN THE FEB. 1

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

HISTORIC ASSETS

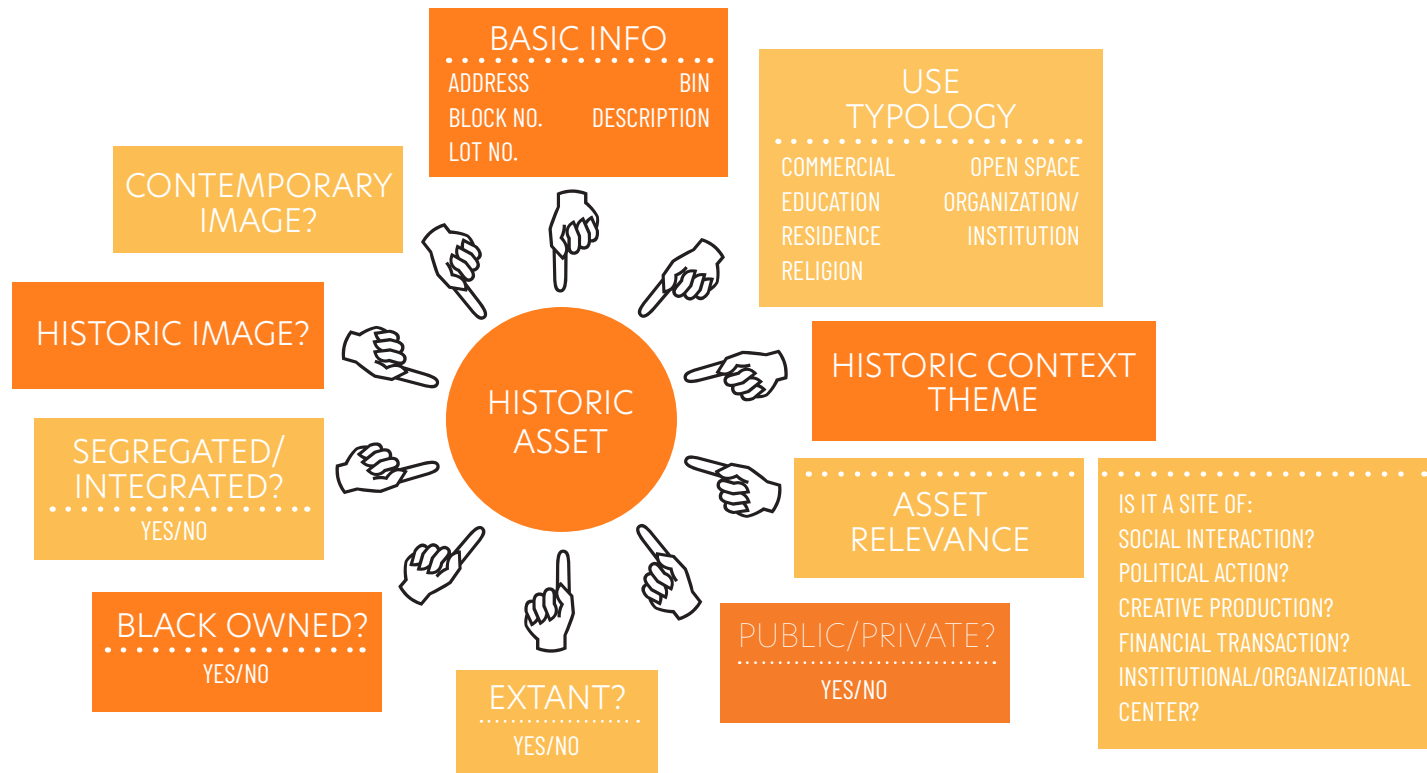
This studio used historic context analyses

as the starting point for examining the narratives associated with the Harlem Renaissance. This involved researching the history of the area and period to define important events, individuals, publics, stories, associations, institutions, and patterns in development.

Faculty pre-identified 14 themes associated with the Harlem Renaissance. While these do not encompass all of the complex stories of the period and its diverse publics, they purposefully expand beyond the core narratives of literature, the arts, and political activism that so dominate representations of the Renaissance. The intention was to query the period, its publics, and its places so as to confront longstanding assumptions and examine counter narratives.

HISTORIC CONTEXT THEMES

- > Design & Visual Arts
- > Performing Arts
- > Literary Arts & Publishing
- > Journalism & Media Perceptions
- > Education
- > Civic Organizations & Clubs
- > Sports
- > Religion
- > Political & Economic Activism
- > Health
- > Culinary Arts & Restaurants
- > Business & Banking
- > Underground Enterprise
- > Spatial & Racial Segregation



These historic context analyses provided a basis from which to identify historic assets, including significant buildings, event locations, places of memorable social interactions, and streets and open spaces where key political incidents happened during the Harlem Renaissance. Students did not limit this investigation to places that still exist today. Rather, to better understand if and how this place-associated heritage of the Renaissance was transferred across generations, students identified assets and then determined whether they survived or not.

These historic assets represent spaces claimed by Black publics, largely in response to the rampant discrimination that took the form of spatial segregation. Some of these spaces achieved Black ownership; others were in the public realm but were used for critical Harlem Renaissance activities. Many of these spaces exhibited multifaceted, intersectional uses that carry

over between historic contexts – for example, the use of church spaces for basketball and social clubs, or the role of 409 Edgecombe Avenue as a nexus of creative interaction between both writers and visual artists. Many of the buildings in which these activities took place no longer stand; many others still do. Focus on these spaces goes beyond their architectural, and even sometimes material, value. Yet the team still sought to engage these spaces – extant and non-extant – as potential places of physical, experiential encounter with the Harlem Renaissance as a means of reclaiming these spaces so critical to Black heritage.

A brief summary of each historic context theme follows, along with illustrations of some of its associated historic assets. More detailed and in-depth analysis of historic contexts and assets can be found in Appendix A; and the full inventory of assets can be found in Appendix B.

DESIGN AND VISUAL ARTS

CONTEXT

The convergence of Black artists and designers from across the United States in Harlem created new modes of Black expression that both lifted the visibility of self-realized Black art and ushered in an entirely new epoch in American art. Following the example of revolutionary sculptor Meta Warrick Fuller, artists like Aaron Douglas and Palmer Hayden incorporated a range of Afrocentric influences into their work – pioneering aesthetic counterparts to the Pan-Africanist writings of W. E. B. Du Bois as well as visualizing Black American modernity. These influences and aesthetics were distilled and streamlined into the mediums of both illustration and fashion. Architects Vertner Tandy and George W. Foster meanwhile founded the formal Black architectural practice in New York, and fulfilled the Harlem Renaissance’s physical legacy in the urban landscape.

Four categories of historical assets associated with visual art and design in the Harlem Renaissance survive in greater Harlem: studios and other work sites of creative production; residences of prominent artists and designers; sites of social interaction between creatives and dissemination of artistic ideas; and buildings designed by or housing site-specific Harlem Renaissance art and design.

ASSETS



Among the most noteworthy artists' studios to survive is that of painter William H. Johnson, which was located on the top floor of a parking garage at 311 West 120th Street (Jerry Jazz Musician and Ephemera Press 2013). 1940 tax photographs show a top story that has now been partially removed; the remaining portions of this top floor are likely the surviving remains of Johnson's painting studio.





Numerous homes of Harlem Renaissance artists and designers still stand, including the apartments of painters Aaron Douglas (409 Edgecombe Avenue, Apartment 7E) and Romare Bearden (154 West 131st Street), as well as the early-career apartment of architect Vertner Tandy (174 West 137th Street). 409 Edgecombe Avenue, an isolated high-rise pre-war apartment building overlooking Jackie Robinson Park in Harlem's Sugar Hill neighborhood, was home to dozens of famed African American figures between the 1930s and 1950s, including W. E. B. Du Bois and Walter Francis White (Urbanelli 1993).



The Romare Bearden and early Vertner Tandy apartments are both located in walk-up multifamily buildings on Central Harlem cross-streets; these apartments were all rentals. With the loss of both of Vertner Tandy's architectural offices (located at the site of Lincoln Center on the Upper West Side), the architect's long-term Striver's Row townhouse at 221 West 129th Street survives as the best built representation of Tandy's life outside of his designed buildings (Trow 1916; Trow 1925; New York Telephone Company 1948; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1934).



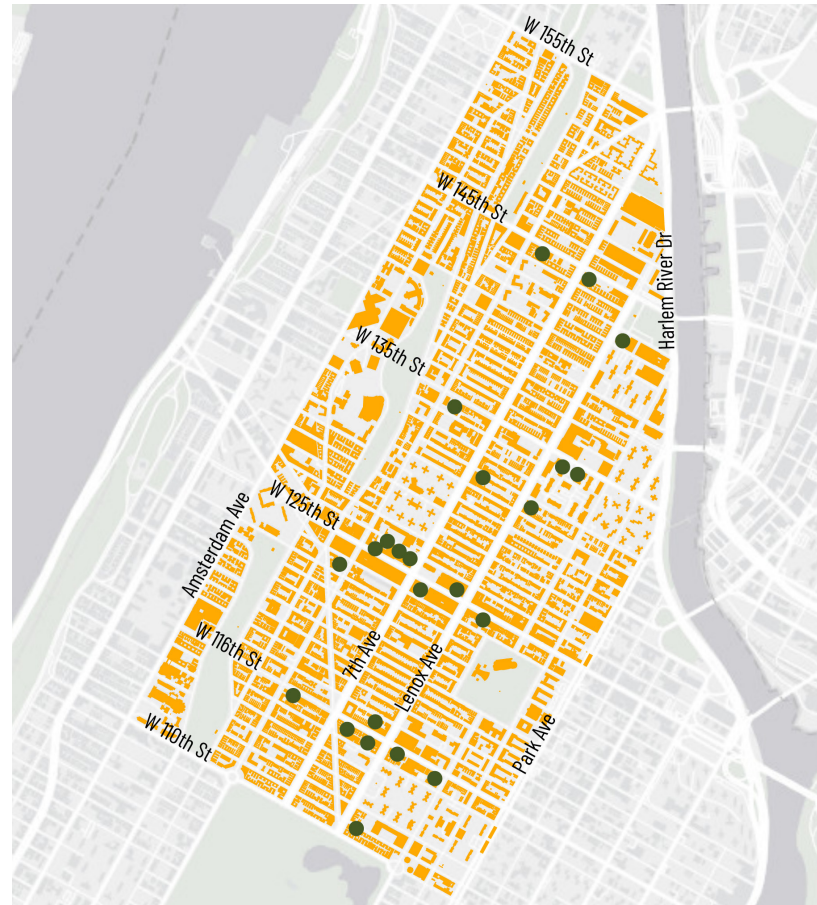
The list of identifiable architects associated with the Harlem Renaissance is short, but a good physical record endures of their designs – especially of Vertner Woodson Tandy, Harlem's most prolific Black architect in the Renaissance era. These designs, spanning the decades from St. Philip's Episcopal Church of 1910 to 1948's Ivey Delph Apartments, run the gamut from historicist to modern architecture in their brick-and-mortar encapsulations of Black-owned and Black-serving institutions (Anderson 2004). Of the visual arts in the Renaissance, architecture was the most exclusive: only relatively affluent Harlem institutions such as established Black churches (e.g. St. Philip's and Mother Zion) and the Imperial Elks Lodge had the means to commission building projects. The Black architecture of Harlem in this period, therefore, offers a highly compelling but inevitably incomplete record of the radical design creativity of the Renaissance. The Ivey Delph Apartments' outwardly Art Moderne design conveys Vertner Tandy's full embrace of futuristic architecture late in his career, as his commissions pivoted to socially minded housing.

PERFORMING ARTS

CONTEXT

Music, dance, drama, and film were central forms of creative production during the Harlem Renaissance. From the 1920s to the 1930s, Black migrants from around the nation participated in the entertainment productions in Harlem as audiences, performers, and creators (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 470). They were active in both informal and formal places of the Harlem built environment, such as nightclubs (“cabarets”), ballrooms, speakeasies, “Buffet Flats” – unlicensed clubs involving drinking and gambling in residences – and theatres. Behind the entertainment productions, it is clear that Harlem Renaissance entertainment culture was defined by social divisions, especially wealth and race.

ASSETS



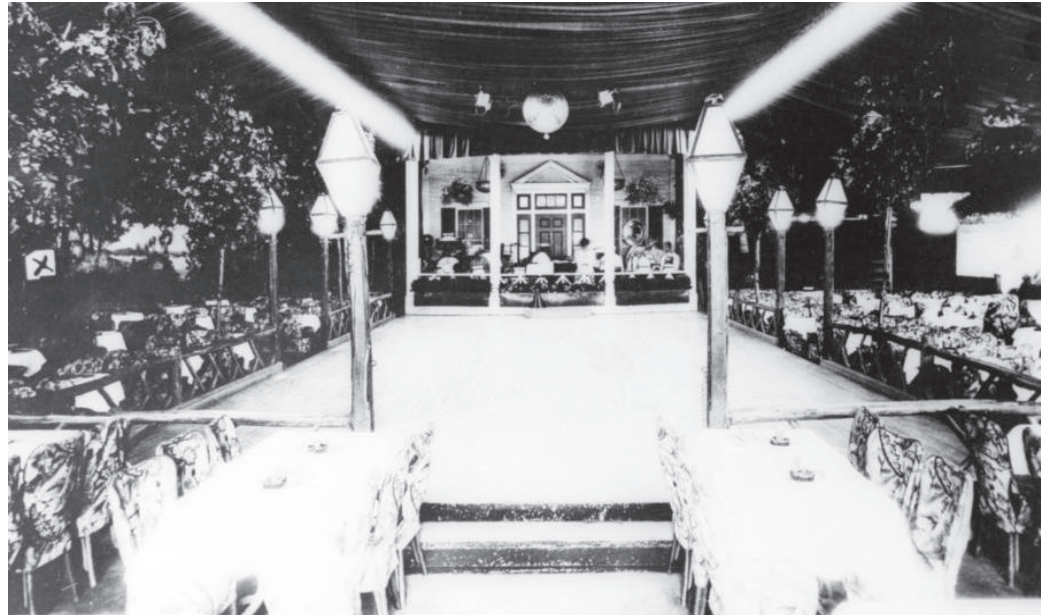
Most of Harlem's theaters were established before the 1920s and catered to a White clientele, especially those around West 116th Street and 125th Street. As the Black population rapidly increased during the Renaissance, some theaters integrated or served a primarily Black clientele. Most of these theaters were later demolished for new construction on the same site, including, for instance, the Lafayette Theatre, Douglas Theater, and Harlem Opera House. Extant theaters have been adapted as churches (Regent, Lincoln, and Oden Theaters), supermarkets (Roosevelt Theater), office and commercial buildings (like the Crescent/Gem, Alhambra, and Loew's Victoria Theaters). A few still function as theaters (such as the Apollo).



The Lincoln Theater, located at 58 West 135th Street seen with its historic facade (top) and after having been adapted as a church (middle).



The Roosevelt Theater, 2497 Seventh Avenue at 145th Street, is now used as a supermarket.



The Cotton Club, at 644 Lenox Avenue, was probably the most well-known nightclub of the Renaissance era. It was at that time, however, a Whites-only club featuring Black performers, including Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Ethel Waters, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and others. In 1936, it relocated to midtown Manhattan.



The Lafayette, at 2227 Seventh Avenue, was one of Harlem's leading theaters, and it was the first major theater to desegregate, allowing Black patrons to sit in the orchestra section. It was demolished in 2013. Next door to the Lafayette was Connie's Inn, at 2221 Seventh Avenue (Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard). Connie's was one of three major nightclubs on Jungle Alley and a rival of the Cotton Club. It featured Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller.

LITERARY ARTS AND PUBLISHING

CONTEXT

During the 1920s, literary arts and publishing were especially important for building the national image of Harlem. Many of the most influential Black writers of the early twentieth century spent time in Harlem or called it home. Poetry about Southern racism, books about passing in cities like Chicago, and famous plays about opportunity and struggle became a part of this cultural explosion in upper Manhattan. But the popular image of the arts in Harlem belied the struggles of the young writing generation. Economic challenges and housing insecurity caused many famous poets and novelists to navigate between the world of Harlem's upper echelon of society and their daily reality, meaning they attended lavish parties and social gatherings, but lived where they could and worked while they wrote to make ends meet.

ASSETS



The 135th Street Public Library served as an essential hub of the Harlem Renaissance literary community (depicted here c. 1940 and today, 2021). Librarian Regina Anderson Andrews organized after-hours events for writers, artists, and speakers. The library also had a small theater downstairs where writers and scholars could present, or playwrights could host a play or musical (below).





Many of the historic assets associated with the literary arts and publishing of the Harlem Renaissance were residences where salons and similar interactions occurred. A'Lelia Walker's studio, also known as the "Dark Tower," was an incredibly important place for Black writers to network with White patrons, like Carl Van Vechten, who could connect them to publishers. The mansion was a fusion of 108 and 110 West 136th Street, and was replaced by the Countee Cullen branch of the New York Public Library.



Iolanthe Sydney maintained a free rooming house for writers and artists at 267 West 136th Street (left, c. 1940), to liberate them from monthly rent responsibilities and allow them to focus on their creative work. Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Gwendolyn Bennett, and Bruce Nugent all stayed there. Wallace Thurman was also a resident, and immortalized the row house in his autobiographical novel *Infants of Spring*. The row house was torn down in the 1990s after demolition of a nearby property damaged the building.



Zora Neale Hurston eventually established her own residence at 108 West 131st Street (left, c. 1940), and the building still survives.

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

CONTEXT

The Harlem Renaissance saw an emergence of magazines, journals, and newspapers that were essential to the African American story in Harlem with national and, in some cases, international reach and influence. These publications were crusades against discrimination, brought attention to violence against African Americans, and spoke out about injustices of the time. They also featured African American art, poems, and photographs, providing new platforms of representation and creative expression. Newspapers and magazines portrayed African Americans as participants in modern life and highlighted achievements absent from White publications, and worked to counteract negative stereotypes and anti-Black racism.

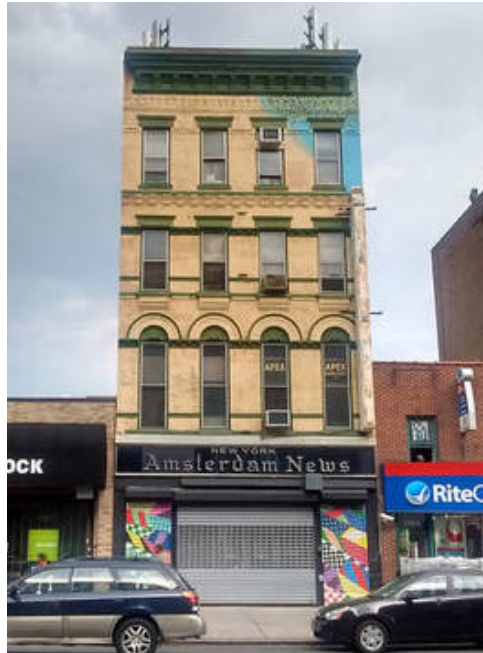
ASSETS



Key historic assets relate to newspaper and magazine offices, homes of the people who worked for the publications, and sometimes homes, which doubled as headquarters for publications. Negro World, the newspaper founded by Marcus Garvey, operated out of both 56 West 135th Street (left, c. 1940) and 26-38 West 135th Street (right, c. 1940) in the years 1918 and 1919.



The New York Age (1887-1853) referred to itself as “The National Negro Weekly” and moved to Harlem from midtown in 1914. It reported on local and national news, sports, art, and African American life topics. Economic opportunity and injustice were themes that editor James Weldon Johnson highlighted, noting in a 1914 editorial, “Every nationality is making money off the Negroes in Harlem—except Negroes” (Goldman 2020). The newspaper’s first Harlem offices were located two blocks down from Negro World at 230 West 135th Street. Editor James Weldon Johnson lived across the street at 185 West 135th Street (left, c. 1940).



The New York Amsterdam News (1909 – present) has been a critical force in civil rights issues, including the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign in Harlem during the Renaissance. The Amsterdam News regularly published the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and was the first African American paper to have all its departments unionized. They also hired African American women for various roles, including the groundbreaking Renaissance-era journalist and activist Marvel Jackson Cooke. The success of the publication caused them to grow and move to four different locations in Harlem, all of which were clustered around 135th Street positioning them near other newspapers such as Negro World and The Age. Their first Harlem office was located at 17 West 135th Street (far left, c. 1940) while their second was located at 2293 Adam Clayton Powell Jr Boulevard. Their third office was located one block south at 2271 Adam Clayton Powell Jr Boulevard while their fourth - and current office site - is located at 2340 Frederick Douglass Boulevard (close left).



The Crisis magazine was a seminal publication of the era edited by W. E. B. Du Bois (seen above, back right) with staff in the Crisis magazine office. Harlem newspaper stands served as critical venues for disseminating Black media (left).

EDUCATION

CONTEXT

During the Renaissance, Harlem was, according to sociologist Ira De A. Reid, “not so much the Mecca of the New Negro’ as ‘the maker of the New Negro,’” and “teaching constituted a way of articulating and fostering new consciousness as befit a new age” (Perlstein 2019). In order to build race pride and candid self-revelation (Watson 1995, 27), the New Negro Movement leaders, teachers, and artists embraced various, and sometimes differing, didactic philosophies as a means to Black self-determination. Education was integrally linked to the arts, literature, sports, religion, and economics, and the Renaissance saw the emergence of multiple institutions, programs, and approaches to learning.

Innovating Black women educators working in both public and private schools in Harlem in the 1930s sought to create spaces for Black children’s self-directed activity while fostering alternatives to the identities a racist world had assigned them.

*-Ansley T. Erickson and Ernest Morrell,
Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling
and Resistance in a Black Community, 2019*

ASSETS



By 1930, there were more than 24,000 school-age Black children in Harlem (Stephenson 2019c), and by 1937 there were seventeen public schools in Harlem. Many have since been demolished or replaced, including PS 5 at 122 Edgecombe Avenue (top), PS 89 at 485 Lenox Avenue, and PS 119 at 257 West 133rd Street, PS 90 at 220 West 148th Street (middle), PS 157 at 327 St. Nicholas Avenue, and PS 186 at 526 West 146th Street (bottom left and right), which were adaptively reused as housing. PS 186 also houses the Boys and Girls Club of Harlem.



Among the seventeen public schools in Harlem during the Renaissance, only ten to thirteen percent of the teachers were Black, with four schools having no Black teachers at all. Unable to secure a teaching job as a Black woman, twenty-year-old Mildred L. Johnson founded the Modern School. It was opened at the church she attended, St. Philip's Episcopal. Later, the school moved north to 153rd Street, 155th Street, and 163rd Street, and it operated for more than sixty years in Harlem's Sugar Hill (Association of Black Women Historians 2020). The image to the left shows one of two buildings comprising the Modern School in Sugar Hill, c. 1940.



Many organizations offered adult education programs in Harlem. The YMCA served as a central institution for such education, in addition to being a critical space for housing, sports, and more.



Many famous artists provided courses at their studios, including the Savage Studio of Arts and Crafts and the Toussaint Conservatory of Art and Music. Madame E. Toussaint Welcome, the sister of famed photographer James Van Der Zee, used her apartment at 253 West 134th Street as an educational space (left, c. 1940).



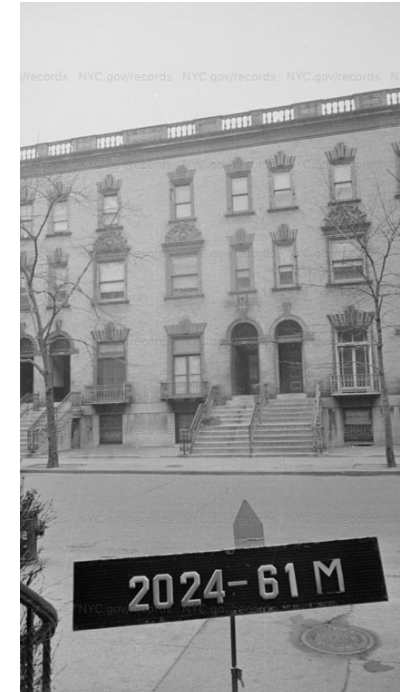
In 1930, the Franciscan Handmaids established St. Mary's Primary School at 8 East 131st Street, since demolished. The primary school was founded at the behest of parents with children in the nursery, who sought an alternative to the nearby neighborhood public school (Moore 2003, 14). The image above shows students and a teacher at St. Mary's Primary School.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND CLUBS

CONTEXT

The period of the Harlem Renaissance was a time of educational, intellectual, cultural, and social development for the African American community in Harlem, New York. The desire to meet people with similar interests and like-minds gave rise to the formation of clubs and organizations such as fraternal orders, civic organizations, social clubs, and more. As individuals of color were barred from joining most well-known organizations, they created all-Black versions of these organizations that helped provide financial and civic support for the surrounding community, as well as strong activism against racism and segregation.

ASSETS



Masonic lodges and fraternities catered to members of higher social classes, artists, writers, bankers, and college-educated individuals who lived in the Harlem area (typically all-Black, male-only). Large memberships drove an increase in branches that stemmed from the same organization and were grand in architectural presence. For example, the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World had five lodges located within the Harlem area by the end of the 1920s – the Henry Lincoln Johnson Lodge, the Imperial Lodge (top left), the Manhattan Lodge (top right, c. 1940), the Monarch Lodge (bottom left, c. 1940), and the Neptune Lodge.



The former real estate office at 252 West 138th Street was home to both the Coachmen's Union League Society Harlem branch and American Legion between the 1920s and 1930s, and was used as a rental space for local political clubs and civic organizations, including the Strollers Social Club, Bradhurst Republican Club, The Col. Charles Young Post No. 398, and the National Negro Business League (New York Age 1926a).



The New York Urban League, at 202-206 West 136th Street, was founded in 1919 and is still in operation. It was a critical resource for new arrivals to Harlem during the Great Migration, who were looking for employment and housing. The organization sponsored educational, recreational, and relief programs.



Fraternal organizations and social clubs would often use spaces of ballrooms and casinos to host dances and fundraisers that allowed organization/club members a chance to interact with the Harlem community. For example, social clubs like the Ziegfield Sports Club and the Tea Rose Social Club held dances at the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, pictured to the left, 1923. The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino was a Black-owned community space built in 1921, now demolished.

SPORTS

CONTEXT

As sports and recreation became an integral part of Harlem life, their operations were influenced by the lack of space allocated to their practices. White ownership in all aspects of recreational activity from available land, to professional team management and ownership, determined where recreational activities and sports were able to take place, and under what circumstances. The Black community in Harlem was forced to improvise, making arenas and playgrounds in whatever space they could and this creativity in the face of neglect changed the way sports and recreation were defined during the Renaissance.

ASSETS



In 1932 there were only four NYC parks and four public schools under the Board of Education with playgrounds open to students, but only during operational hours (Lovejoy 1932). Other City-provided recreational spaces were limited to a handful of closed-off streets and school yards that were only accessible in the summer. Referred to as “vacation playgrounds,” some streets and public school playgrounds were allocated as an afterthought for seasonal use, but maintained no permanent establishment in the community. PS 136, at 8 Edgecombe Avenue (above), provided one such vacation playground, and later hosted community basketball games.



Churches and social organizations like the Children's Aid Society and Urban League stepped in to provide more permanent spaces for children, many funded by the Rockefellers and other private agencies (Robertson 2018d). Pictured to the left is the Children's Aid Society Playground in Harlem located on the block between West 133rd and West 134th Streets and Lenox and Fifth Avenues, 1932.

In the 1930s as part of the New Deal, the city built two public pools and recreational facilities at Thomas Jefferson and Colonial Parks in Harlem (Gutman 2008, 534). While these parks were a positive shift toward better City-provided facilities, the pools were in neighborhoods with two very different demographics and became unofficially segregated, with Colonial Park (below, c. 1937) serving the Black community and Thomas Jefferson serving the White immigrant population.



The Alhambra Ballroom and Theater (right) was another multiuse venue that hosted basketball games. While this building survives, the owner filed for bankruptcy in 2020.



Because of the lack of permanent space allocated to recreation and professional sports in Harlem during the Renaissance, schools, theaters, ballrooms, casinos, and churches provided critical spaces, particularly for basketball. The Manhattan Casino (renamed the Rockland Palace in 1928, now demolished), at 280 West 155th Street, was Harlem's first major basketball venue (below, c. 1920).



The Harlem YMCA was a central space for sports, recreation, and more in Harlem, and consisted of two buildings. The original, at 181 West 135th Street, was constructed as a segregated, Blacks-only facility in 1918-1919. It became the YMCA Annex after a new building was constructed at 180 West 135th Street in 1931-1932 to meet a surging Black population (left, c. 1932).

RELIGION

CONTEXT

It would be difficult to overstate religion's role in supporting the people and cultures of the Harlem Renaissance. Facing racism and prejudice in the United States, a large portion of the Black population found solace and community within religious institutions. With the Great Migration of Black people moving from the south and the Caribbean to northern cities, religious institutions allowed these publics to commune and practice customs from their previous home. Religious thought and practice permeated throughout multiple facets of life including the arts, education, athletics, medicine, and civil rights and antiracism activism. Religious institutions claimed and provided a safe space for a community that lacked ownership of real estate, and actively supported the community of Harlem.

Religious institutions provided space for community action and engagement within the social networks of Harlem. Church leaders were dedicated to serving their marginalized communities, and many supported the fight for civil rights. The established churches with an abundance of members, such as Abyssinian Baptist, St Philip's Episcopal, and Mother Zion A.M.E., hosted speeches from civil rights leaders and writers including Langston Hughes and W. E. B. Du Bois (Watkins-Ownes 1996, 56-75). The churches were also used as a meeting space for the many local social clubs and leagues.

ASSETS



Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Adam Clayton Powell Sr., Abyssinian Baptist Church relocated to 132 West 138th Street in Harlem from midtown in 1923, where it continued to embrace civil rights activism as central to its mission.



St Philip's Episcopal Church is home to New York City's oldest Black Episcopal congregation. The church building was designed by pioneering Black architects Tandy & Foster in 1910. Many civil rights leaders spoke from its pulpit.



Harlem's Price Hall Masons standing on the steps of Mother Zion A.M.E.

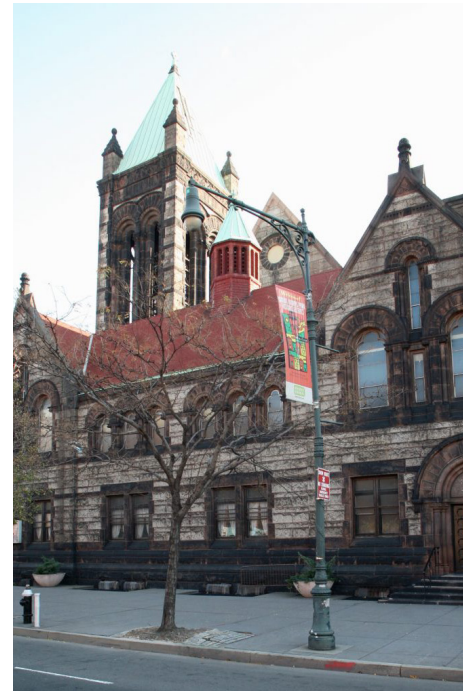
Father Divine, a controversial spiritual leader, established the Kingdom of Father Divine in the Harlem in the early 1930s, at 152 West 126th Street (no longer standing), preaching an Afrocentric form of worship and advocating for social justice through enterprise. The institution established Peace Missions across the country and purchased properties, such as hotels, grocery stores, and laundromats, as well as restaurants that were integrated. Pictured below is a Peace Mission-owned grocery store and delicatessen in Harlem, 1936.



Churches hosted a myriad of recreational activities including dances and sporting events, and brought the community together to celebrate and memorialize. Salem United Methodist Church was the venue of the funeral for poet and activist James Weldon Johnson and the 1928 wedding of Countee Cullen and Yolande Du Bois, daughter of W. E. B. Du Bois, which is remembered as one of the highest-profile society events of the Harlem Renaissance.



In 1928, journalist Ira Reid counted 140 churches in the 150 blocks of Harlem. While many churches occupied longstanding, purpose-built structures, there was a breadth of Christian and non-Christian institutions that occupied storefronts and basements, and moved frequently. One such example is the Church of God once located at 25 East 132nd Street seen above (building now demolished).



St. Martin's Episcopal Church served a largely Caribbean community, and under the leadership of Reverend John Howard Johnson, advanced the cause of social justice as well. Rev. Johnson was a founder of the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" initiative, a protest that encouraged Black residents to stop shopping at stores with discriminatory hiring processes on 125th Street (Saxton 1995). He also established the oldest church-affiliated credit union — the St. Martin's Federal Credit Union — in 1937, to help make it possible for African Americans to acquire mortgages.

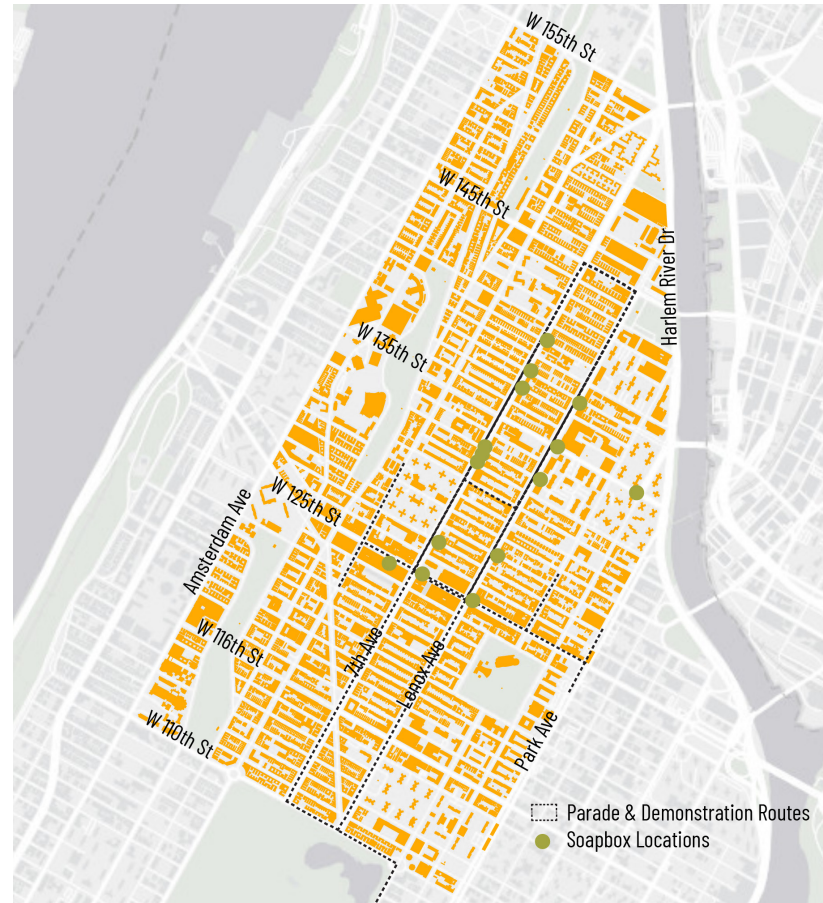
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVISM

CONTEXT

The existence of what came to be known as the “Black Mecca” was predicated on political and economic activism. Indeed, a tumultuous era had thrown the United States into an unprecedented world war, followed by a fiscal boom only to plunge America into an economic depression shortly after. While these themes broadly characterize the nation, they are often the narratives of a White America. Too often, the economic injustices and racial discrimination which also defined this era are not given similar weight within history yet are necessary to contextualize past events and provide a more inclusive American history. Looking toward Harlem during its renaissance, the political and economic activism present in the neighborhood were direct and not discrete responses to the cataclysmic events of the time.

Activism often results in movements and countermovements, creating various leaders in differing trajectories whose effects are far-reaching. Key players and protests crystallized the fruits of these men and women’s labors that typify the evolution of the Harlem Renaissance.

ASSETS



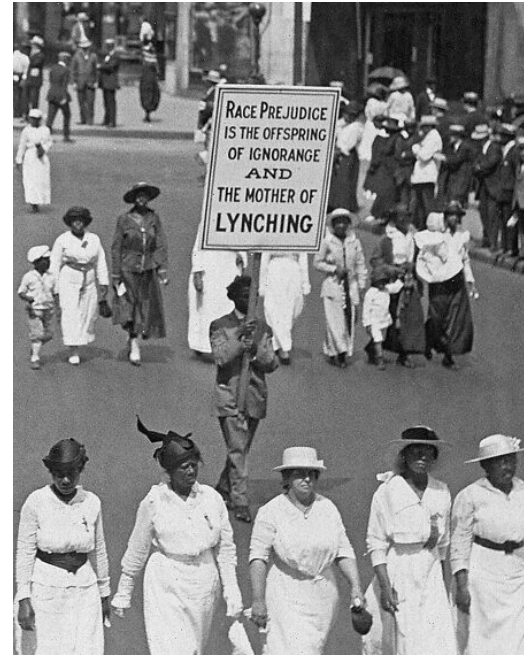
Activism during the Harlem Renaissance manifested itself predominantly on the sidewalks and streets of the neighborhood. While the streets were often understood as space available only to those who could afford an automobile (generally White people during this time), parades and soapbox activism reclaimed that space as a political statement and represents places of historic significance.



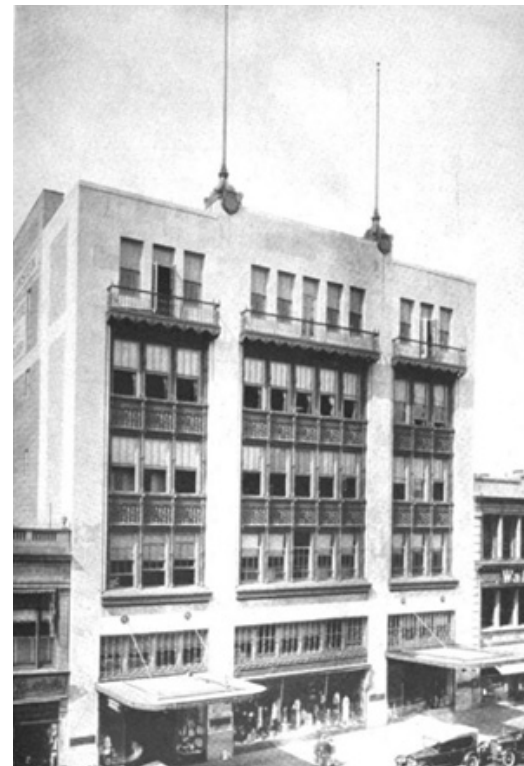
The 1919 welcome home parade for the 369th Infantry ushered in a new era in Harlem. The soldiers - known as the Harlem Hellfighters - marched up Fifth Avenue from 23rd Street to be greeted by throngs of Harlemites once they crossed into their neighborhood on Lenox Avenue above West 110th Street.



Marcus Garvey's notoriously loud UNIA Parades were held annually in August and consisted of Garveyites dressed in African National garb as well as groups such as the Black Cross Nurses (above, 1924).



The Silent Women's March in 1917 responded to the horrific treatment of Black people in St. Louis where 6,000 men, women and children were killed. The women and children of Harlem dressed in white to symbolize innocence as they marched through Manhattan along Fifth Avenue starting at 59th Street and marching South to 23rd Street.



The Don't Buy Where You Can't Work movement, from 1934-1935 involved the boycott and picketing of White-owned stores along West 125th Street such as Blumstein's Department store located at 230 West 125th Street (left). While the Black community in Harlem frequently purchased goods from such businesses, they refused to hire any Black employees.

HEALTH

CONTEXT

From the beginning of the Great Migration to the end of the Harlem Renaissance, the pursuit of racial and social justice in public health through representation, provision of city services, and community wellbeing was an impressive development in political empowerment. During the early years of mass Black urbanization, health issues, such as living conditions, tuberculosis, and access to healthcare, became part of the collective consciousness among Black Harlemites (Wilson 2009). Themes of skepticism and acceptance in both racial and technological areas encompass the evolution of healthcare during the Renaissance, as did economic injustice and unfair living conditions. Healthcare in this context includes both mental and physical health and junctures between religion and politics, as advancing public health in Harlem during the Renaissance relied heavily on community engagement through many types of institutions, including those religious and political.

ASSETS



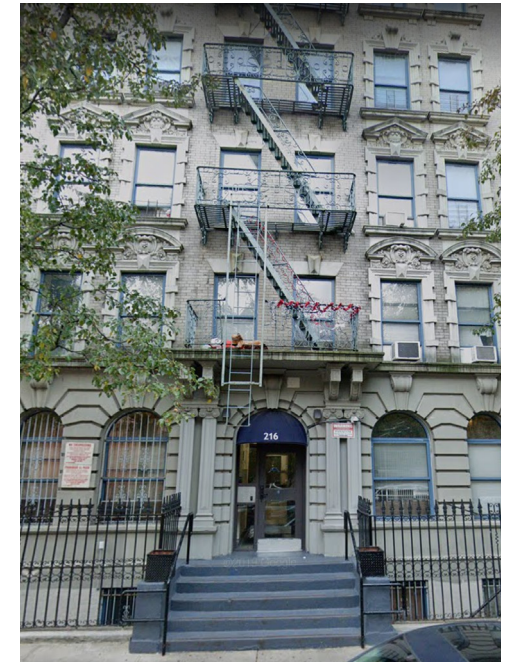
Throughout the Renaissance, Harlem Hospital (above, c. 1926) was ground zero for the effort to staff the hospital with Black professionals, and had galvanized the political block of African Americans. Harlem Hospital, an integrated facility, was the center of the lobbying efforts from partisan organizations and mayoral election campaigns for the primary cause of integration. Not only was Harlem Hospital eventually somewhat successful in the effort to fill the faculty with Black physicians and surgeons, but also was a center for Black professional credibility.



Black physicians, facing limited employment prospects, established their own hospitals to serve their community. The first independently owned all-Black hospital, the Edgecombe Sanitarium, opened in 1925, with only twelve beds for patients. The Edgecombe Sanitarium was meant for “those of considerable means” who were able to refuse treatment at the integrated Harlem Hospital. Therefore, this facility was not able to accommodate the larger mass of poor and sick patients. Later, the Vincent Sanitarium (left, c. 1940) with a private and semi-private capacity of up to fifty patients opened. The Vincent Sanitarium boasted modern equipment, such as an x-ray machine and an electrical call system.



Magico-religious workers advertised their services in Black newspapers such as *The New York Amsterdam News*, touting services such as magical cures for maladies, both physical and mental. Many of these magico-religious workers provided services independently, or were affiliated with local churches and spiritual organizations. Not all magico-religious workers professed their ability to heal, but were nevertheless deeply embedded in the communities they served. Many of them were referred to as “professors” and “doctors,” and were viewed as both health care providers and social workers. Their practices were generally in their residences. Pictured above is an example of a magico-religious storefront c. 1943 located at 351 Lenox Avenue. Many of these workers’ residences are still extant such as Mrs. E.L. Allen at 322 West 139th Street (close right) and Mrs. E.A. McCallister at 216 West 140th Street (far right), c. 1940 and today.

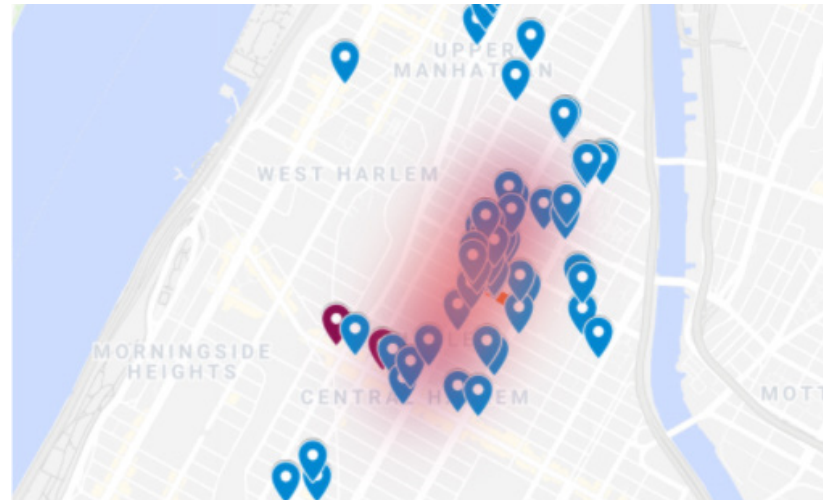


CULINARY ARTS

CONTEXT

The culinary arts in Harlem were a mixture of diverse cultures since its onset. With the Great Migration, Black populations encountered intercultural culinary creations since there were migrants from the southern states, the Caribbean, and West Africa – though not without prejudice. Southern food, for example, was associated with slavery by both the Black and White populations at that time. Challenged by social and financial barriers, these newcomers were often unable to open their own food businesses and instead started as cooks, servers, and bartenders. After World War I, many Black restaurants were established in Harlem, though the Depression forced many to close or to adapt their business, such as speakeasies and clubs serving more real meals rather than light snacks. Basement restaurants and street food vendors sprang up throughout the neighborhood. While open street markets were popular, many were closed by the city in the mid-1930s as a part of City-led modernization efforts. Food and the culinary arts were an important vehicle of creative expression and self-determination within the context of the Renaissance era.

ASSETS



The restaurants of the Harlem Renaissance followed the pattern of expansion of the Black neighborhood. Many historic restaurants, clubs, and speakeasies concentrated in Central Harlem, particularly on Seventh Avenue between 133rd and 135th Streets, though several notable clubs clustered around the middle-class area of Sugar Hill.



Street markets served as a vital source of food during the Renaissance, c. 1935.

Grocery stores and delicatessens were also an important food source during the Renaissance, c. 1940.



Harlem restaurants in the 1920s and 1930s were often co-located alongside clubs and speakeasies. Most dining venues were open twenty-four hours every day to accommodate the needs of patrons (New York Times 1912, 9). Many establishments known for their entertainment also served food, such as the Cotton Club, which boasted an eclectic international menu. The fabled Jungle Alley, on 133rd street between Seventh and Lenox Avenues (left, c. 1940), was home to more than twelve small speakeasies and eateries during the Prohibition Era of 1920-1932 (Taborn 2018, 67), including Tillie's Chicken Shack, the Log Cabin, and Gladys' Clam Shop, and it was an epicenter for musicians and jazz artists. Jungle Alley welcomed Black Harlemites as patrons, since many other establishments featuring Black performers only served a White clientele (NY Press 2015).



Quite a few restaurants during the Harlem Renaissance were operated by women or LGBTQ+ persons, like Gladys' Clam House and Pig Foot Mary. Tillie Fripp worked at The Nest, where she became famous for her cooking and opened her own restaurant, Tillie's Chicken Shack, also along Jungle Alley (above, c. 1940).



A series of clubs made their home at 773 St. Nicholas Avenue throughout the Harlem Renaissance and after (above left, c. 1940). Poospatuck Club was the first among them. It hosted many social events like the Tuskegee Alumni Association's "Hurdy Gurdy Dance," a regular dine and dance event. It became the Bowman Grill in the 1930s and Moonlight Bar in the 1940s (Taborn 2018, 132). The avenue also had other bars like La Mar Cheri, the Sugar Hill, and Lundy's, where remnants of its signage survive today (above right).

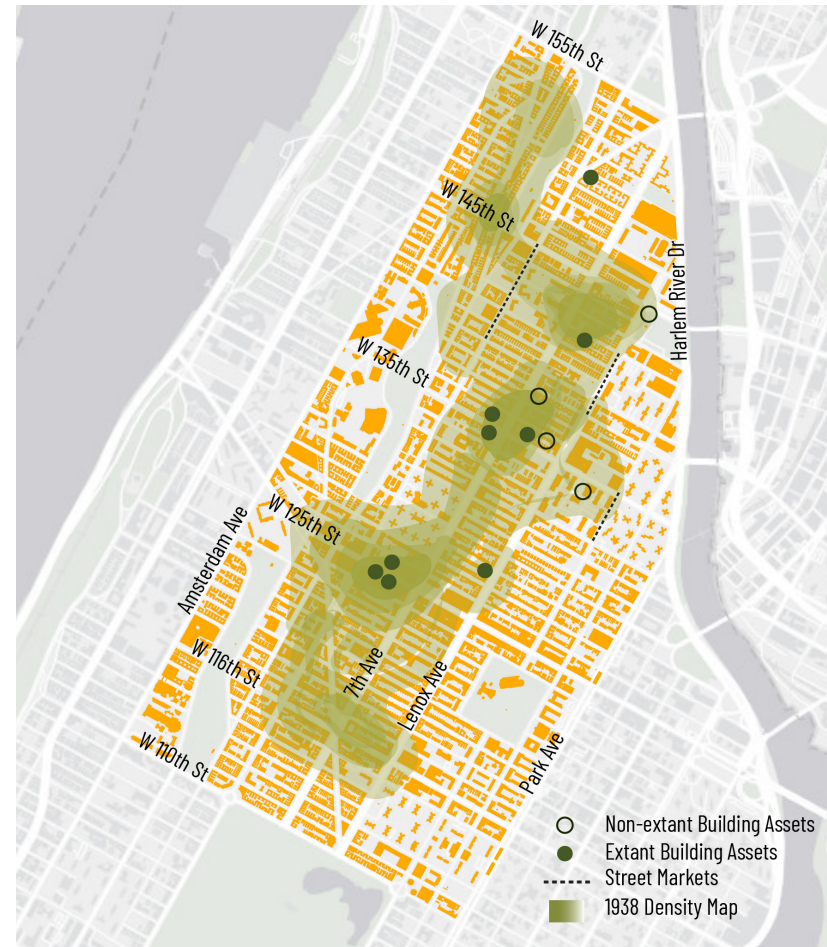


BUSINESS AND BANKING

CONTEXT

The business world of Harlem during the Renaissance demonstrated prosperity under severe racial restrictions. On the one hand, due to racism and discriminatory policies, the Black community owned only about one-fourth of all the businesses in Harlem, despite their dominance in demographic makeup. Unable to acquire leases or capital, most businesses existed as small-scaled shops of labor-intensive trades operating out of residential structures on cross streets. Nevertheless, Black businesses still managed to physically expand along with the population and geographic growth of the community, contributing to a dynamic street life as well as shaping the identity of the Harlem Renaissance. Black real estate developers claimed residential rights for the community, and succeeded in breaking some chains of spatial and social confinement. Beauty parlors emerged as the dominant trade in Harlem, highlighting Harlem's Black lifestyle. The first Black-staffed bank in Harlem was founded during the Harlem Renaissance, preluding the emergence of the Black-owned banks elsewhere, decades later. Many other Black businesses and street vendors provided trades and services to the community, curated Harlem's streetscape, and facilitated vibrant social life during the Harlem Renaissance. The story of Black business and banking during the Harlem Renaissance is deeply embedded into the community's struggle and evolution. The demographic and physical expansion of the community, the Great Depression, Black activism in the 1930s, redlining, and racism to the Black population all considerably shaped Black businesses in Harlem. Therefore, the story of Black business and banking should be seen as an integral part of the Renaissance narrative and be commemorated for its survival despite legacies of injustice.

ASSETS



Hardly any of the Harlem businesses listed in the 1920s and 1930s directories have survived to today; many of them cannot even be identified in the 1940 tax photos. While some buildings still stand, the ephemeral nature of the businesses themselves poses challenges to how the significance of and encounter with these historic assets can be instrumentalized through preservation.



Beauty parlors and barbershops were not only important businesses, but they were also critical places of social interaction. The Walker Hair Parlor and the Lelia College of Beauty Culture at 108-110 West 136th Street was the most prominent beauty parlor of Harlem, concurrent with the club hosted by A'Lelia Walker in the same Vertner Tandy townhouse, now demolished, which stayed under the Walker family's management until A'Lelia's death in 1931 (Robertson 2010a; Walser 2017). The salon was a prominent example of the hundreds of beauty industry workshops throughout the neighborhood during the Renaissance. Walker's beauty enterprise, along with its competitor, Apex, were nationwide operations led by Black female entrepreneurs. They expanded to multiple outlets, such as Madam C. J. Walker Beauty School and Beauty Shop (left, c. 1940), which opened at 239 West 125th Street, on a major Harlem thoroughfare previously predominated by White business owners; the Apex Beauty School operated at 200 West 135th Street at the intersection of Seventh Avenue (Robertson 2010a; Green 1938, 9); and the Ritzy Beauty Salon (right, c. 1938), an Apex parlor, at 351 Lenox Avenue. All of these buildings survive.



Dozens of real estate companies brokered and developed properties for the Black community in Harlem during the Renaissance. The most prominent was Nail and Parker Real Estate Inc., which operated at 145 West 135th Street; in the same row was the Nail and Parker Building (above, c. 1915), an apartment building owned by St. Philip's Episcopal Church that was rented to Black tenants (Simms 1923, 206).



In 1934, the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" boycott broke out at Blumstein's Department Store, 230 West 125th Street (above). A year later, the 1935 Harlem uprising started at S. H. Kress's Five and Dime Store at 258 West 125th Street (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013; Gray 1994). Both were White-owned businesses, and this activism brought about the emergence of Black-owned businesses on West 125th Street in the late 1930s. Both buildings survive today.

UNDERGROUND ENTERPRISE

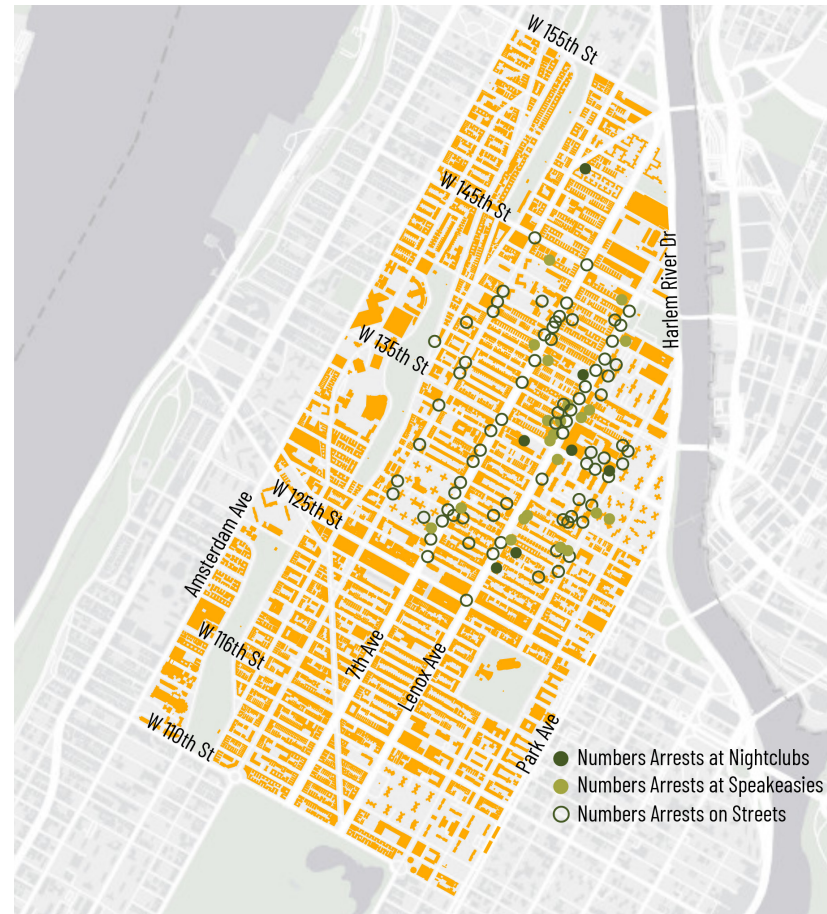
CONTEXT

A push for moral reform in New York City during the Renaissance era was precipitated by the Volstead Act and the Committee of Fourteen, an anti-vice group that crusaded against illegal drinking, gambling, and prostitution. As the rest of Manhattan's law enforcement buckled down, Harlem remained loosely patrolled and became a hub of underground activities. Many White entrepreneurs, who lived elsewhere in the city, opened businesses – nightclubs, speakeasies, etc. – in Harlem, where there was less risk of being shut down. Though the thriving nightlife created jobs for Black Harlemites, wages were low, rents were high, and there was limited access to lending capital. Alternative economies emerged to counter this racial and economic injustice.

[In] the absence of legitimate organizations that could provide jobs, ready capital and financial resources to a hard-pressed community... Numbers gambling enabled many African Americans to supplement low wages and secure economic security.

-La Shawn Harris, "Playing the Numbers: Madame Stephanie St. Clair and African American Policy Culture in Harlem," *Black Women, Gender + Families 2*, no. 2, 2008

ASSETS



Central to the economy of Harlem during the Renaissance was the numbers game. Stephanie St. Clair and Casper Holstein were two Black residents of Harlem who ran some of the most successful numbers operations. They not only employed many residents of Harlem, but also used their profits to support Black-owned businesses and Harlem charities, and to advance the political rights of the Black community. Numbers running was pervasive in Harlem, taking place on the street, in barbershops and beauty parlors, and in speakeasies. Activities seemed to be concentrated around the intersection of Lenox Avenue and West 136th Street, based on the location of numbers-associated arrests that occurred there.



Liberty Hall at 128 West 138th Street, originally the property of the UNIA, was a significant site of social interaction and political activism. When the UNIA was unable to pay off the mortgage and faced losing the property, Casper Holstein stepped in (New York Amsterdam News 1926). This was not enough to solve the UNIA's financial woes, and the organization ultimately disbanded. Holstein ended up buying the Liberty Hall building at auction "because he wanted to see the property remain in the hands of colored folk as a memorial to the movement which started there" (Fleming 1936). Holstein had hoped to sell the property to the YMCA "in order to 'have the satisfaction of knowing that on that site generations would develop into fine men, men of courage, men with love for their race'" (Fleming 1936). In the end however, the Monarch Lodge - for which Holstein was the exalted ruler - constructed apartment buildings, which they named Holstein Court, on the site of the former Liberty Hall. Also built on the site was a new clubhouse for the Monarch Lodge (Magill 1929).



Rockland Palace For Hamilton Lodge Ball

With a swishing of skirts, and much dainty wrist waving, the 69th Annual Masquerade Ball of Hamilton Lodge, No. 710, G. U. O. of O. F., passed into history last Friday evening. A crowd of 7,000 curious and amused spectators packed the Rockland Palace at 155th street and Eighth avenue, to witness this spectacle which is considered one of the outstanding social events of the season.

Police were hard pressed to keep in check the throngs which surged forward in their efforts to catch a good glimpse of the various "ladies" who arrived in gorgeous gowns to parade on this, their one big night of the year. Elaborately made up, and with all the feminine trappings, many of these "features of the evening" far outshone the real women present. Dancing in the jammed auditorium, although somewhat difficult, was encouraged by the rhythms of Ed Bonelli and his Lido Society Orchestra who played continuously. As usual, the crowd contained a very large percentage of whites from downtown, many of whom are regular attendants and participants in this affair.

The high spot in the affair occurred when the time came for the judging of the costumes and the awarding of prizes. Competition was extremely keen, the various contestants vying bitterly with each other in their efforts to attract the favorable attention of the judges.

First prize was finally awarded to a beauteous "damsel" to the great surprise of many of the spectators who, up until then, had actually mistaken the winner for a real woman. Awards were also made to other examples of the lengths to which eccentricity can be taken.

Worthy of mention was the fact that absolutely no disorder was reported during the affair, despite the crush of the crowd. Efficient police work eliminated most of the confusion in the crowds which were turned away from the doors as well as those inside.

The affair closed a bit earlier than usual, perhaps, as some wag remarked, "To give the 'girls' a chance to catch up on their beauty sleep—especially the losers."

THE NEW YORK AGE

The Rockland Palace Dance Hall at 280 West 155th Street - though now demolished - was a venue of the fabled Hamilton Lodge Ball (left, c. 1920). Established in 1869 by Harlem's Black social club, the Hamilton Lodge, this annual drag ball was an early and significant pioneer of drag culture. Though illegal during the Harlem Renaissance, by 1920 the drag ball had become well-known and well-attended - attracting White and Black New Yorkers and people outside of the LGBTQ+ community. By the mid-1930s, they had become incredibly popular, with thousands attending "Harlem's yearly extravaganza - 'The Dance of Fairies' - sponsored for the umpteenth time by Hamilton Lodge, Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, under the misnomer of a masquerade and civic ball" (Rouzeau 1934).

MID-SUMMER PARTY
GIVEN BY
Bobby & Hazel
at 39 West 129th Street, Apt. 1 A
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16th, 1931
— Peaches —
Ethel Bibbs, Majecta, Billie. Tay, Rose,
Gypsy, Percy Mae, Sylvia, Alice.
MUSIC BY FATS WALLER
Refreshments Served

The residential built environment of Harlem is rife with spaces that speak to this underground legacy. To supplement their income, many Black Harlemites hosted rent parties in their apartments, providing music and refreshments and passing the hat to meet the cost of housing. Some operated buffet flats: small-scale, illegal speakeasies in residences offering alcohol, music, gambling, and an environment free of the sexual mores of the time (Robertson 2019).

SPATIAL AND RACIAL SEGREGATION

CONTEXT

Spatial and racial segregation in early twentieth-century Harlem shows a very nuanced reality of African American life. On the one hand, exceptional social-political situations made Harlem a “Black paradise” in the Great Migration era and a center of flourishing African American culture; on the other hand, racial injustice and unequal developments persisted throughout the Harlem Renaissance, paralleling the systemic anti-Black racism across the country.

Although the Harlem Renaissance was a movement led by and for African Americans, its dependence on White patrons was also evident. The flowering of Black culture did not diminish social discrimination against the Black community in general. Harlem’s considerable working-class population continued to struggle under racial restrictions and segregation, and the tensions eventually led to a critical protest on March 19, 1935. From housing conditions to cultural identity, racial inequalities had been a long-standing issue for Harlemites, only to be intensified by the concurrent socio-economic crisis of the Great Depression.

Historic assets associated with this theme include public spaces under segregation, key residential properties during the “race war,” and institutions that confronted anti-Black restrictions.

ASSETS

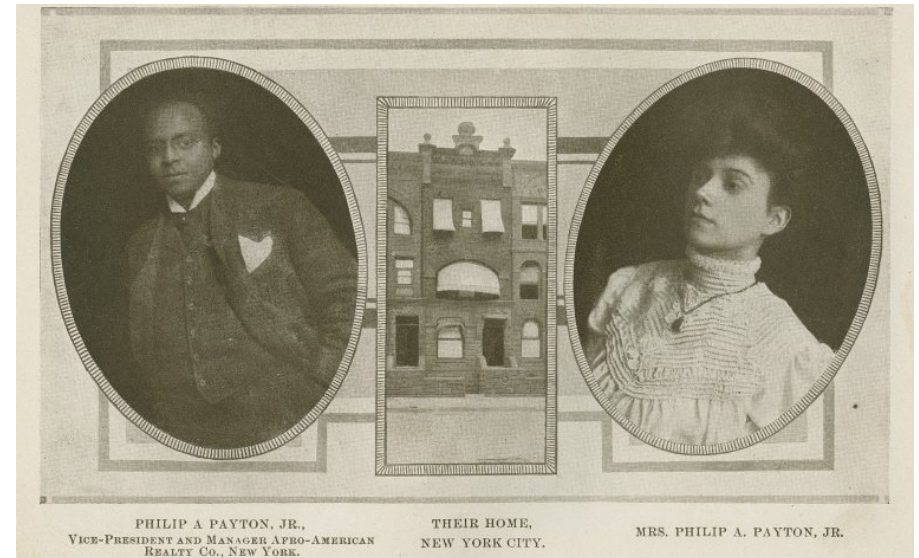


Certain blocks within Harlem were illustrative of the systemic racism and economic exclusion experienced by Black populations during the Renaissance. These injustices created inferior living conditions that then rationalized future slum clearance plans. By the 1930s, the block bounded by West 138th and 139th Streets and Seventh and Lenox Avenues (block 2007, left c. 1940) was the most densely populated block in all of New York City, with 620 persons per acre. In 1936, the block bounded by West 134th and 135th Streets and Seventh and Lenox Avenues (block 1919, above) was characterized as the “prize slum” of the city, as 301 families living in this block paid the incredibly high figure of 94% of their income for rent.

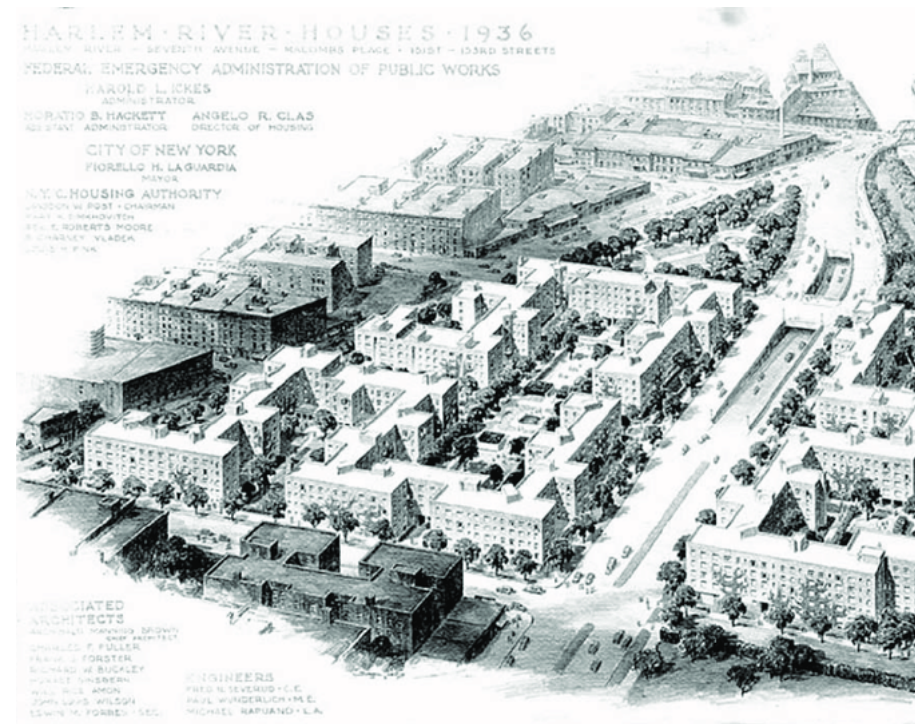
The Arkonia was one of the first modern apartment houses to accept African American renters, around 1900. Landlords forced White tenants out and raised the rent for Black renters because of greater demand (right, c. 1940).



Phillip A. Payton Jr. (far right) operated his Afro-American Realty Company at Lenox Avenue and West 134th Street, and purchased his home in 1903, when all other residents on the block were White.



Completed in 1928, the Dunbar was the first modern apartment building in New York City developed explicitly for African Americans (above, 1937).



Built in 1936-1937 at the end of the Harlem Renaissance, the Harlem River Houses were one of the first public housing projects in New York and was initially intended for the African American community in Harlem.

*Intersection of Lenox Avenue and
West 135th Street, c. 1920s.*



KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSES

Using the historic contexts and historic assets research as a foundation, the team embarked on a series of inquiries and analyses to further understand the social-spatial dynamics of Harlem's places, stories, and publics during the Renaissance era, and their implications from today's perspective. Using spatial, narrative, formal, statistical, descriptive, and demographic data and methods of research, students worked across the initial historic context themes to understand their interrelationships, overlaps, and distinctions. They also undertook interviews with representatives of contemporary Harlem assets – “connector organizations” – to understand how their missions build upon the legacies of the Harlem Renaissance, promote social justice, and/or intersect with the values of preservation, and to explore possibilities for shared interests and collective action.

The findings of these analyses were then synthesized into a series of key issues. Each key issue is examined in this section, building a body of evidence to support the development of collective action. In confronting the polemic of a discrete “period of significance,” two critical perspectives emerged:

HISTORICAL

Social-spatial conditions during the Renaissance characterized important histories and heritage, and influenced how such heritage could be passed on to future generations. These historical factors coalesced around two core concepts of the Harlem Renaissance: **claiming space** and **self-determination**.

claiming space

- > Policies and Practices of Exclusion
- > Claiming Geographies
- > Controlling Property and Assets
- > Designing Spaces
- > Creating Interactive Space

self-determination

- > Political Activism
- > Forming Prosperity and Community Well-Being
- > Artistic Expression
- > Counternarrating
- > Confronting Divides

CONTEMPORARY

Outcomes of the intergenerational transmission of Renaissance-era heritage from the vantage point of today shed light on the agency of the preservation enterprise and the potential for collaboration with community-based organizations.

- > Changing and Underrepresented Publics
- > Loss and Survival
- > Traditional Tools of Preservation
- > Redefining Agency and Connections

HISTORICAL

CLAIMING SPACE

POLICIES & PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION

- Nationwide Background: Racial Zoning
- Racism in Federal Housing
- Spatial Exclusion in Harlem
- Optimism vs. Barriers
- Economic Disparity

CLAIMING GEOGRAPHIES

- Community Diversity
- Spatial Impact of Demographic Inflow
- Spatial Expansion of Black Harlem
- Spatial Conflict as the Context of Social Conflict
- Demography + Political Activism + Business, 1915-1935
- Spatial Mobility

CONTROLLING PROPERTY & ASSETS

- Rent Inflation
- Housing Conditions
- Kitchen Privileges
- Housing Insecurity
- Meeting Housing Costs

- Free, Subsidized, and Sponsored Housing
- Business Ownership
- Banking and Real Estate
- Financing and "Underground" Economies
- Philanthropy

DESIGNING SPACE

- Architecture: Black Design and Ownership
- Public Art: Facilitating the Perseverance of Harlem
- Renaissance Arts Knowledge

CREATING INTERACTIVE SPACE

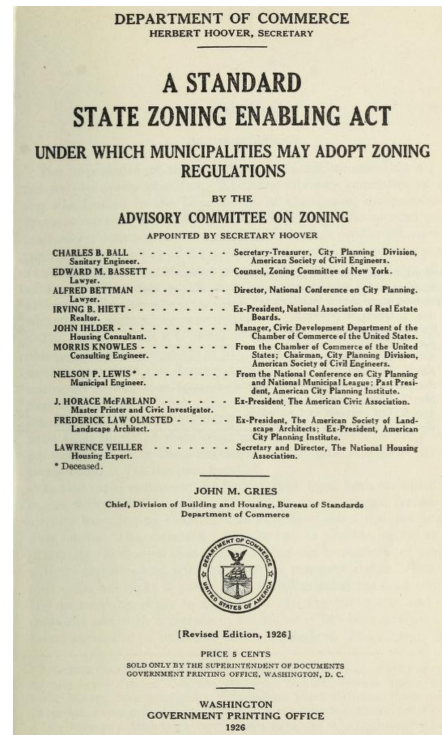
- Religious Institutions
- Library Workshops
- Home Salons
- Social Clubs and Civic Organizations
- Recreation and Playgrounds in Harlem
- Street Life
- Food Markets
- Soapboxes
- Parades, Protests, and Uprising

POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION

NATIONWIDE BACKGROUND: RACIAL ZONING

Certain segregationist trends were occurring nationwide that directly affected Harlem. These key racial policies were developed during the Renaissance and would create a foundation upon which a litany of racial policies and practices would not only emerge over time but also dictate the landscape in Harlem and throughout the United States. The 1866 Civil Rights Act had declared that housing discrimination was a residue of slave status. However, the Supreme Court used the Thirteenth Amendment to try to nullify this claim in 1883, when they agreed that Section 2 of the Thirteenth Amendment authorized Congress to “pass all laws necessary and proper for abolishing all badges and incidents of slavery in the United States,” but the Court did not agree that “exclusions from housing markets could be a ‘badge or incident’ of slavery” (Civil Rights Cases 1883; Rothstein 2017, ix). This decision was not rejected until 1968 in *Jones v. Mayer* when the courts revisited the 1866 Civil Rights Act (*Jones v. Mayer* 1968). Thus, housing discrimination had effectively been in practice in the United States for over a century in direct violation of this Act.

However, in 1917, the *Buchanan v. Warley* case determined that racial zoning was unconstitutional, which appeared to make the act of housing segregation illegal (*Buchanan v. Warley* 1917). This ruling created a push amongst segregationists to determine a way in which they could still implement racial zoning but reframed so as not to violate the law. Columbia Law School graduate and University of Chicago professor Ernst Freund advocated for racial zoning to now pose as an economic measure in order to sidestep the Supreme Court’s ruling. Freund was not only hailed as the leading authority on administrative law in the 1920s, but he was also a known, outspoken segregationist. Freund had stated that zoning’s goal was to prevent “the coming of [Black] people into a district,” saying that preventing this was “a more powerful reason to justify zoning than the creation of single-family districts” which had been the agreed upon justification for zoning (1929, 93). Similarly, the president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, Irving B. Hiatt authorized the publication of a code of ethics to the Association’s manual and model zoning ordinance in 1924. The code stated that “a realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood... members of any race or nationality... whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood” (Rothstein 2017, 52). People in positions of power

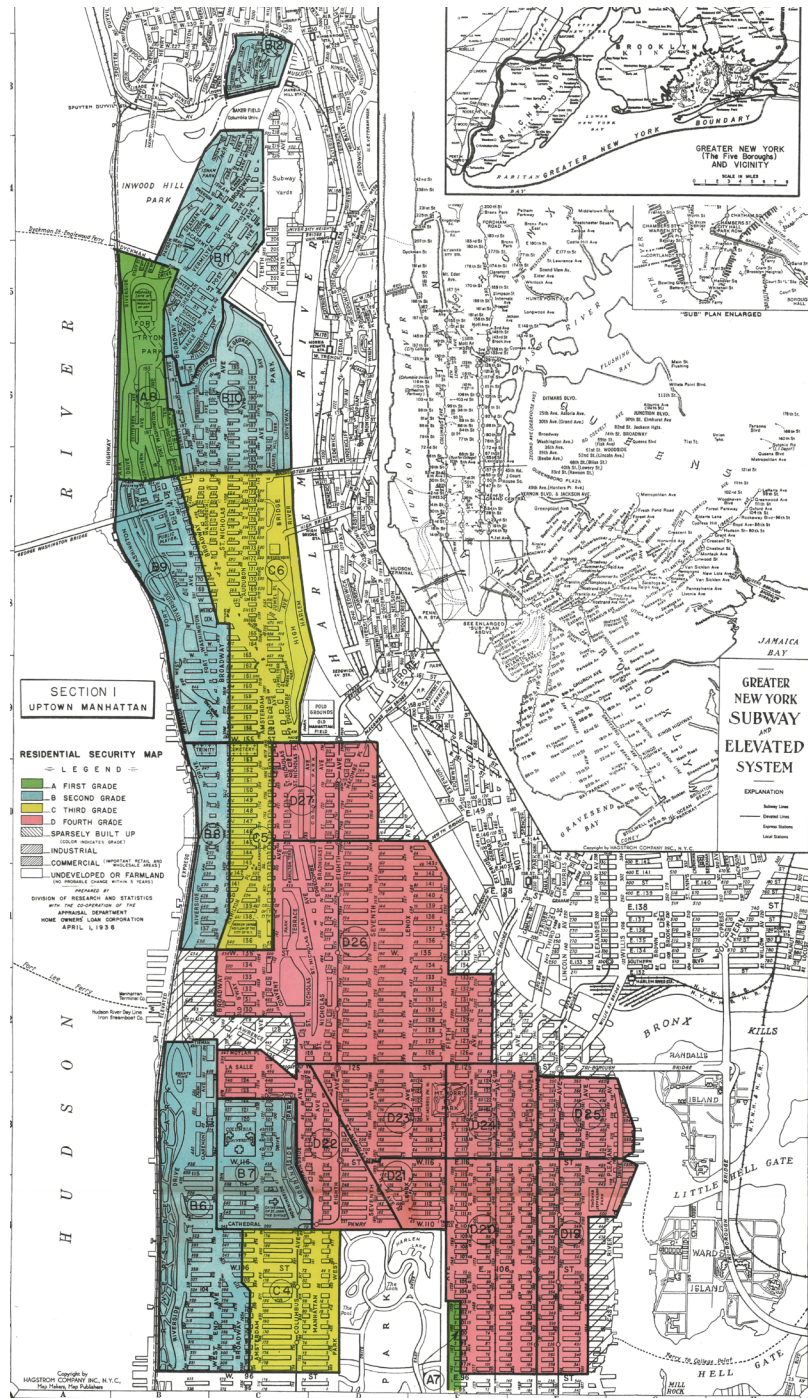


Frontispiece of the 1926 State Zone Enabling Act, with names listed of known segregationists Alfred Bettman and Irving Hiatt.

with segregationist ideals equated race with economic value – a mindset fundamentally rooted in the practice of slavery. These men were not sole actors, but rather representative of a pervasive system that operationalized racist policies within a legalized framework.

RACISM IN FEDERAL HOUSING

When the country plunged into the Great Depression in 1929, many looked to the presidential election of 1932 as a promise for change. Quickly meeting this moment, the newly elected Democratic president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, set to work implementing various programs through the New Deal and established the National Housing Act in 1934. Within this body, he appointed known segregationists to key positions. One such person was Alfred Bettman – formerly the director of the National Conference on City Planning. While he had been director in 1918, he established that “in any housing developments which are to succeed... racial divisions... have to be taken into account.... [If] you try to force the mingling of people who are not yet ready to mingle, and don’t want to mingle, a development cannot succeed economically” (Rothstein 2017, 51). Bettman was appointed to the National Land Use Planning Committee



Home Owners' Loan Corporation Map of Upper Manhattan, 1938.

which helped establish zoning throughout the country to “maintain the nation and the race” (Rothstein 2017, 52). Roosevelt also created the Federal Housing Administration in 1934. The Administration insured bank mortgages and performed its own appraisals of properties. Their standards included a Whites-only requirement, making racial segregation an official mandate of the federal mortgage insurance program. They published an Underwriting Manual in 1935 with the following instructions: “If a neighborhood is to retain stability it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes. A change in social or racial occupancy generally leads to instability and a reduction in values.... [I]mportant among adverse influences... are infiltration of inharmonious racial or nationality groups” (Rothstein 2017, 65; FHA 1936, Part II, Section 233; FHA 1935, Sections 309-12).

A foundational policy that would enable the continuous practice of racism in US policy and practice was the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), established in 1933. HOLC supported existing homeowners who could no longer make their payments. HOLC bought existing mortgages that were going to foreclose and issued new mortgages back to the homeowner with a fifteen-to twenty-five-year payback schedule. Included in the monthly payments was some principal and interest so that once the loan was paid off, the borrower owned the home. The interest rates were low, but the homeowners had to make regular payments, which initiated HOLC to assess risk. To do so, they hired local real estate agents to appraise properties – the self-same agents who had segregationist ideals built into their code of ethics. Thus, redlined zones became predominantly composed of Black residents (Rothstein 2017, 63). This nationwide background of segregation policy was not de facto but rather de jure in the US and had significant impacts within Harlem.

SPATIAL EXCLUSION IN HARLEM

By 1930, Harlem's Black population significantly increased while the White population that had previously existed there had largely relocated. Through police-assisted segregationist housing practices and policies, the growth of the Black population in New York City was confined to Harlem, where these communities faced exploitative housing costs and limited access to capital. The resulting characterization of the area as a “slum” would serve to rationalize the transformation of multiple individual blocks into new, “superblock” housing developments. The 1933 Slum Clearance Committee did not consult with residents of New York City, but rather with social workers, real estate agents, and other “specialists” in determining the study areas, which

included East Harlem, Harlem, and North Harlem, to identify “slums” – which, in addition to the condition of the building stock, were critically defined by the race of residents. These initial proposals to change these built environments were carried out in the decades following the Harlem Renaissance.

OPTIMISM VS. BARRIERS

In the 1920s, it became important for the Black community to establish an identity for itself after years of persecution and being viewed through the prejudiced lens of White America.

Black publications and leaders saw the need to uplift Black people and use Harlem’s growing community and their accomplishments as an inspiration for Black people nationally. In a 1925 *Survey Graphic* issue focused on Harlem, various essays discussed the present state of Harlem and its Black inhabitants. These texts helped the Black community situate themselves in this so called “Black Mecca” and find strength and opportunity in their community both economically and creatively:

The wash and rush of this human tide... is to be explained primarily in terms of a new vision of opportunity, of social and economic freedom, of a spirit to seize, even in the face of an extortionate and heavy toll, a chance for the improvement of conditions.... In Harlem, Negro life is seizing upon its first chances for group expression and self-determination (Locke 1925b).

The tone in the 1920s in Harlem was extremely optimistic, yet there was a looming acknowledgement of how White people pushed back on the flood of Black people to the neighborhood in the early 1900s. James Weldon Johnson wrote in *Survey Graphic* in 1925:

The whites paid little attention to the movement until it began to spread west of Lenox Avenue; they then took steps to check it. They proposed through a financial organization, the Hudson Realty Company, to buy in all properties occupied by colored people and evict the tenants (Johnson 1925).

As a response to this racist action by White people in Harlem, Philip A. Payton formed Afro-American Realty Company. As Black people continued to occupy space in Harlem, spreading further into so-called White territory, White

For generations in the mind of America, the Negro has been more of a formula than a human being – a something to be argued about, condemned or defended, to be “kept down,” or “in his place,” or “helped up,” to be worried with or worried over, harassed or patronized, a social bogey or a social burden. The thinking Negro even has been induced to share this same general attitude, to focus his attention on controversial issues, to see himself in the distorted perspective of a social problem. His shadow, so to speak has been more real to him than his personality.

–Alain Locke, “The New Negro,” *Survey Graphic*, 1925

people took stronger action, showing the early roots of redlining in Harlem. James Weldon Johnson continued,

Several white men undertook to organize all the White people of the community for the purpose of inducing financial institutions not to lend money or renew mortgages on properties occupied by colored people. In this effort they had considerable success, and created a situation which is one which has not been completely overcome, a situation which is one of the hardest and most unjustifiable the Negro property owner in Harlem has to contend with (Johnson 1925).

Weldon’s closing line that the racist policies were the “hardest and most unjustifiable the Negro property owner in Harlem [had] to contend with” is a sobering and ominous prophesy, as evidenced by how detrimental redlining, housing covenants, and other racist tactics were to the Black community and its ability to acquire wealth and own physical spaces.

ECONOMIC DISPARITY

When the Renaissance first began, the migration of the Black community to Harlem was widely encouraged. A nationwide portrayal emerged of a colony with opportunity and wealth to be shared. Dubbed the “Mecca” by the Black community and viewed as a separate community entirely by Whites, both groups acknowledged the potential for real estate and commercial prosperity in Harlem. The *New York Age* encouraged the Black community to “strike while the iron is hot” (*New York Age* 1918). Unfortunately, the prosperity of Harlem was limited by the economic challenges that the Black community had to face. Both formally and informally, White owners and legislators created a system that capitalized on the viability of Harlem at the expense of the Black community that lived there. The *New York Age* noted at the time:

At least 60 cents of every dollar spent in Harlem leaves never to return, and the people lack financial power to enter, maintain and successfully support commercial enterprises now controlled by Whites (New York Age 1934).

While the optimism of Harlem as a Black Mecca encouraged Black business owners to migrate there, the HOLC surveys presented a duality of both official and unofficial means to discriminate against Black-owned businesses. The HOLC surveys designated Harlem in official illustrated documents as a high risk, “hazardous” loan area and made capital-intensive ventures nearly impossible for Black business owners to pursue. The surveys also delineated all of Harlem as residential, ignoring and devaluing existing commercial activity that had been identified in other surveyed areas in New York. Black-owned business corridors within the bounds of the Harlem HOLC surveys were not recognized. While the focus of redlining was on housing lending, this omission disregarded critical mixed-used corridors that had already been in operation and made mortgages for businesses on the street level of those corridors even harder for Black business owners to obtain.

Other informal policies relating to opportunities created in the job and residential markets operated on discriminatory practices that were unofficial, but common in the neighborhoods of Harlem. Black employees were the last to be hired but first to be fired, and were consistently denied access to training or promotions. As a result of these discriminatory practices, the average income in Harlem was significantly less than that in greater Manhattan, and Black employees were often resigned to working lower wage positions. A study by the National Industrial Conference Board in 1926 found

that an industrial worker’s family of four needed thirty-three dollars a week to live “at a fair American standard.” President Hoover’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership found that the average earnings of a family in New York City during the 1920s was just over thirty-three dollars a week, but Harlem families earned an average of only twenty-five dollars per week. These discrepancies made economic mobility accessible to White business and landowners, while those who lived in the community faced barriers that prevented them from sharing in Harlem profits (Greenberg 1991).



Dawn in Harlem, by Winold Weiss.

CLAIMING GEOGRAPHIES

At once necessitated by and in spite of the racist systems of exclusion that constrained the nascent Black Harlem, Black Harlemites during the Renaissance reimagined their physical neighborhood to reflect their own needs and aspirations. This process, which involved a diverse range of Black communities, constituted claims to urban space that still anchor the neighborhood today.

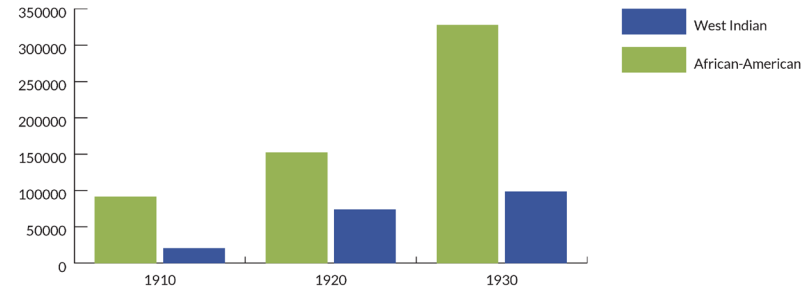


Map of the Great Migration, 1910-1930.

COMMUNITY DIVERSITY

The conception of Harlem as an African American center coincided with several notable geographic movements among Black communities at local, national, and international scales. First, the displacement of New York's long-standing African American community from the Tenderloin district on the West Side gave an initial impetus for the establishment of a new Black neighborhood for New York in Upper Manhattan. Second, the Great Migration – the widespread movement of African Americans from the rural Jim Crow-era South to industrial Northern cities that accelerated during the wartime manufacturing boom of World War I – introduced a fast-growing Southern Black population in the Harlem area. And third, in the wake of the nativist federal immigration rollbacks in the 1920s, immigration from English colonies, especially in the Caribbean, soared. As a result, the newly

West Indian Migration



Increasing population from the West Indies during the Harlem Renaissance. (Based on the Department of National Archives of the United States, New York City 1930).

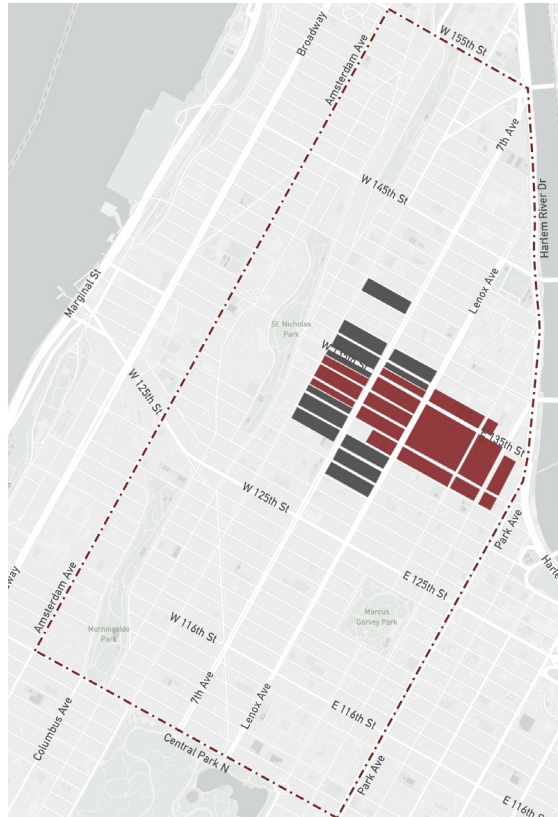
established Black Harlem became host to a number of disparate African American and West Indian publics who would live side by side in a dense urban setting during the Renaissance – a condition that resulted in the dramatic creative interaction and innovation that would come to define Upper Manhattan in the 1920s and 1930s.

SPATIAL IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFLOW

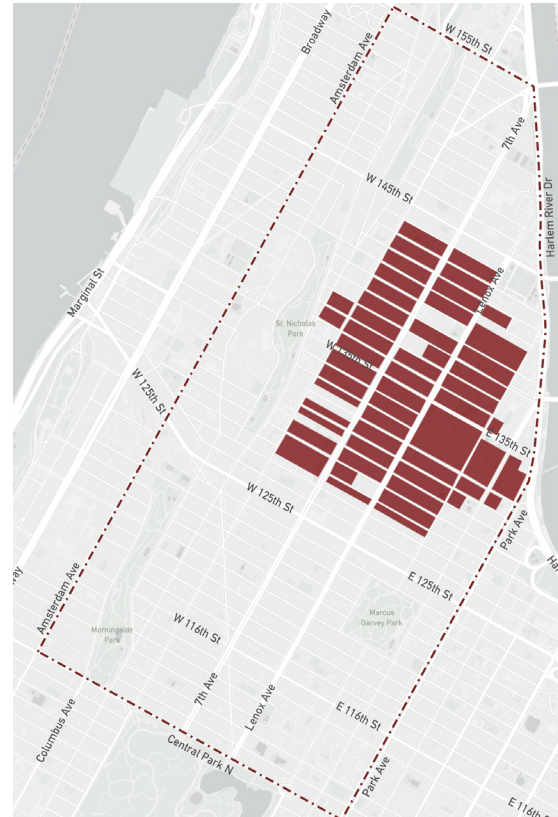
The surge of the Black population in Harlem had direct spatial implications. Existing research describes Harlem as an early Black “enclave,” which by the end of 1890s had developed at 135th Street and Lenox Avenue (McGruder 2015b, 38). In 1904, the newly founded Afro-American Realty Company acquired properties on 30 and 32 West 135th Street, opening up “good-quality Harlem buildings to Black tenants for the first time” (McGruder 2015, 48; Greenberg 1991, 14). In 1911, St. Philip's Episcopal Church implemented a million-dollar deal purchasing properties in Harlem including a row of ten new apartment houses on West 135th Street, constituting the largest single real estate transaction involving Blacks in the city's history (Osofsky 1971, 117; Feldman 2013). By 1930, the Black community populated nearly all of Central Harlem (Johnson 1930, 147).

This physical expansion and claim of neighborhood space did not come without conflict and obstruction. Neighborhood coalitions such as the Harlem Property Owners' Improvement Corporation (HPOIC) were formed in the 1910s to repulse the enlargement of Black neighborhoods. They used words like “invasion,” “crisis,” “Black hordes,” “enemy,” and other derogatory appellations to describe this demographic movement (Osofsky 1971, 105, 107). Property agreements were signed maintaining exclusionary provisions; for example,

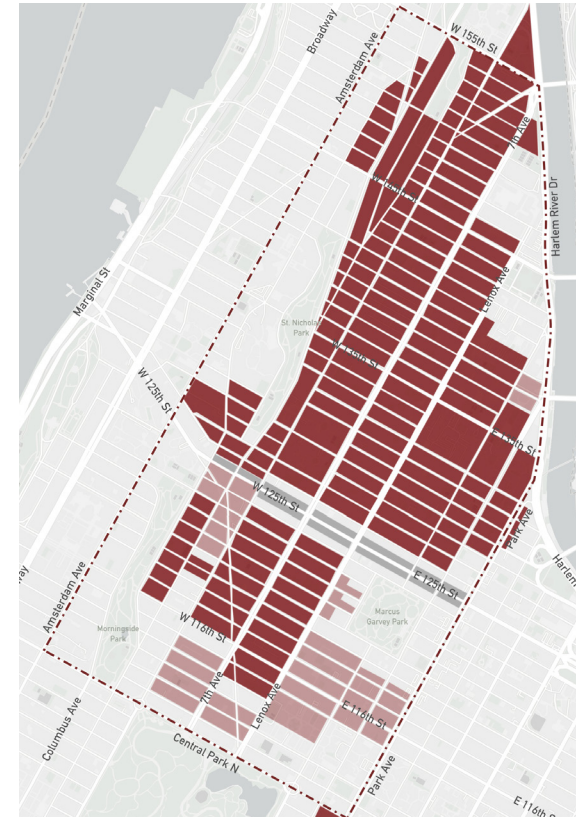
SPATIAL EXPANSION OF BLACK HARLEM



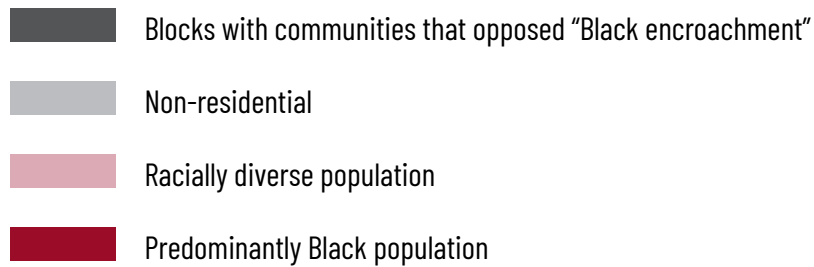
Harlem's demography, c. 1911. (Based on Steven Watson 1995).



Harlem's demography, c. 1925. (Based on James Weldon Johnson 1930).



Harlem's demography, c. 1930. (Based on James Weldon Johnson 1930).



preventing “the said premises to be used or occupied in whole or in part by any negro, quadroon, or octoroon of either sex whatsoever,” and Black realtors were contracted not to source houses on certain streets (Osofsky 1971, 106, 108).

Having defeated almost all the White neighborhood coalitions around the early center of the community, the major corridor of spatial conflict shifted toward West 125th Street in the 1930s. By 1930, Black neighborhoods had flanked West 125th Street (Johnson 1930, 147); but as they made up most sales of West 125th Street businesses like Blumstein’s Department Store, it was still almost impossible for them to be employed or acquire property along today’s “Main Street of Harlem” (Gray 1994; Johnson 1930, 147; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 864). This disparity can be seen as a trigger for the 1934 protests and 1935 civil uprising, as discussed later.

SPATIAL CONFLICT AS THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

Until the early 1930s, businesses along “the length of 125th Street” were almost exclusively White-owned and White-staffed. Almost all West 125th Street theaters were still segregated: Blumstein’s Department Store refused to hire Black cashiers or clerks, and Hotel Theresa did not accept Black customers until 1940 (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 864, 868; Gray 1994). The coexistence of drastically different streetscapes – as demonstrated by Black tenement buildings operated by Nail & Parker on West 135th Street and the almost entirely White-operated commercial strip on West 125th Street – reflects a de facto spatial and racial segregation that existed inside Harlem’s geography.

This spatial segregation served as an integral part of Harlem’s social, racial, demographic, and economic dynamics. As Harlem’s newly settled Black population was faced with a White population that controlled land, money, business property, and power, the conflict over physical space became one of the focal points in Black Harlem’s housing and business development, and later facilitated the outbreak of the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” protest at Blumstein’s in 1934, followed by the 1935 civil uprising, which started from S. H. Kress’s Store, just a few buildings west from Blumstein’s.

DEMOGRAPHY + POLITICAL ACTIVISM + BUSINESS, 1915-1935

The studio used a series of spatial analyses to graphically represent the correlation between different social-spatial realms. Mapping key social-spatial incidents during the Harlem Renaissance illustrates the transition of

political corridors in relationship to spatial conflicts shaped by the physical expansion of the Black population. In the 1910s and 1920s, Black parades took place along Lenox and Seventh Avenues, and proceeded into (1919 369th Infantry Parade) or started from (1920s UNIA Parades) the center of the Black community around West 135th Street; in the mid 1930s, multiple protests happened along West 125th Street, including “pickets organized by a coalition of church, fraternal, social, and political organizations” prior to the famous civil uprising (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 864). The spatial distribution of soapbox locations followed the same pattern of transition.

Similarly, the expansion of Black businesses was also closely in line with the physical expansion of the population. Black businesses started to emerge from the early center of the neighborhood along West 135th Street, then spread across Central Harlem, and finally occupied several venues on West 125th Street, as shown in the late-1930s *The Green Book* (Green 1938).

Overlapping the demographic, social-spatial, and business maps together, a clear pattern of correlation can be observed. As previous analyses have shown, these social-spatial dynamics impact one another as they converge and interconnect, portraying a multi-layered image of the Harlem Renaissance.

A key finding from the chronological spatial analysis is “Black Harlem’s Growth from West 135th Street” as the spatial narrative of Harlem Renaissance. As previously mentioned, West 135th Street was the central space of the late nineteenth-century “Black enclave” in Harlem, as well as a crucial location of early twentieth-century real estate development; moreover, it was also the central corridor of Black businesses that most often operated out of residences (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 868). It was from this early center of Harlem as a Black neighborhood that community members began to gradually claim space, narrative, and prosperity, and started their prolonged fight against racism. This trend of spatial expansion is also observed by multiple precedent studies (Johnson 1930, 147; Watson 1995, 2; Frazier 1939).

The significance of West 135th Street poses a counternarrative to the prominence of today’s West 125th Street. Although both streets have experienced considerable redevelopments and alterations, West 125th Street as a commercial strip remains Harlem’s main artery today. Rediscovering West 135th Street as Black Harlem’s central corridor and origin of prosperity during the Renaissance thus raises the question of revitalizing social-spatial encounters along this corridor and celebrating the Black community’s associations with the Harlem Renaissance, which will be further examined in the “Contemporary Key Issues” and “Proposals” sections of this report.

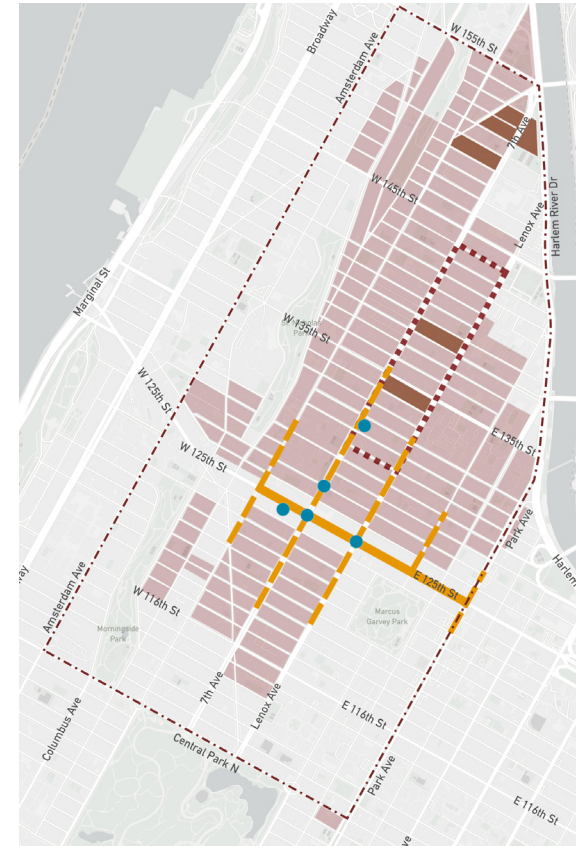
KEY POLITICAL INCIDENTS



Key political incidents in Harlem, c. 1915.



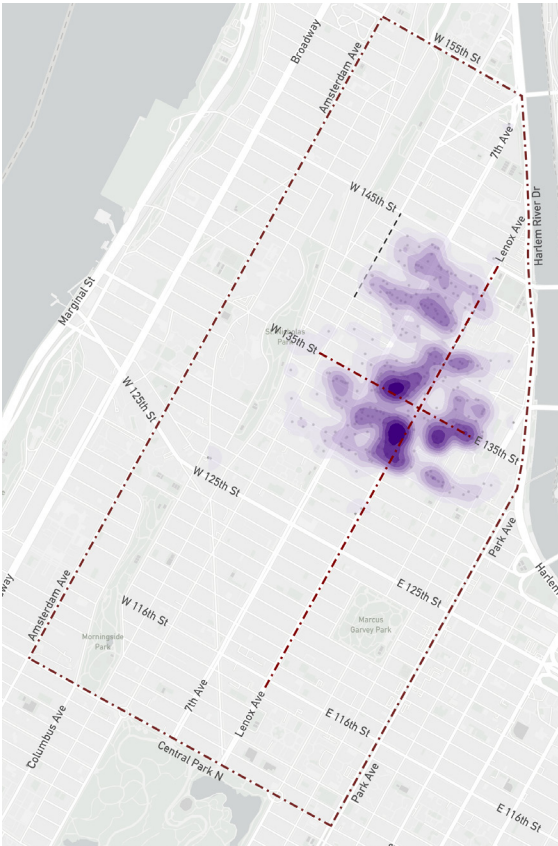
Key political incidents in Harlem, c. 1925.



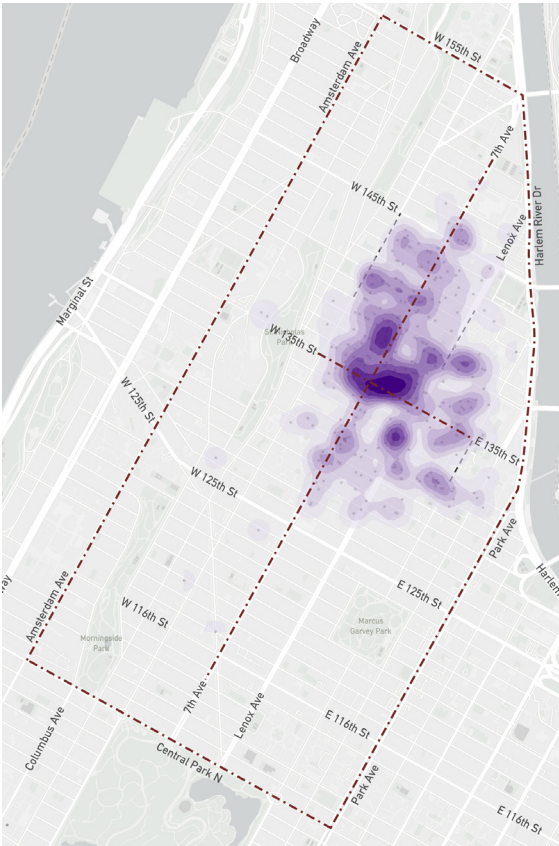
Key political incidents in Harlem, c. 1935.

- Expansion of Black population
- Blocks with significant Black population density
- Soapboxes
- 1934/35 Uprising
- Parades

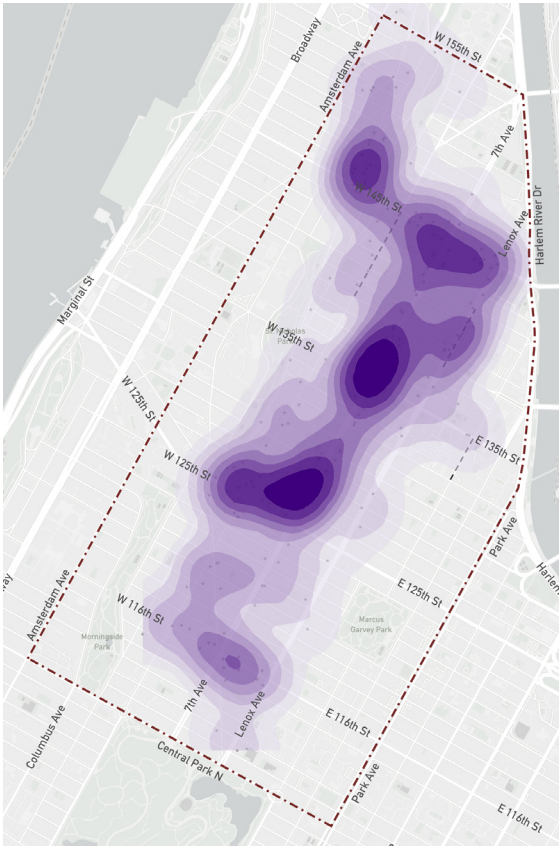
EXPANSION OF BUSINESSES



Expansion of businesses in Black Harlem, c. 1915. (Based on National Negro Business Directory System 1918).



Expansion of businesses in Black Harlem, c. 1925. (Based on Simms 1923).



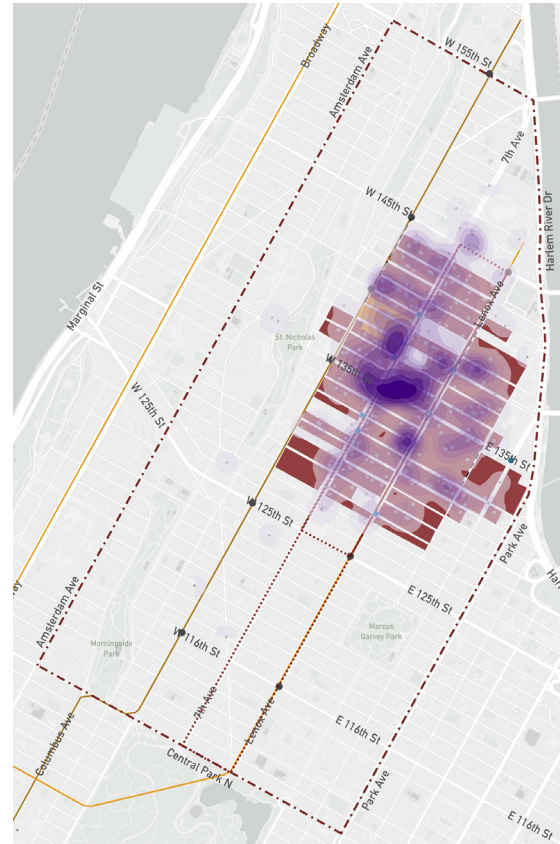
Expansion of businesses in Black Harlem, c. 1935. (Based on Green 1938).

-  Density of Black businesses
-  Street markets
-  Individual Business

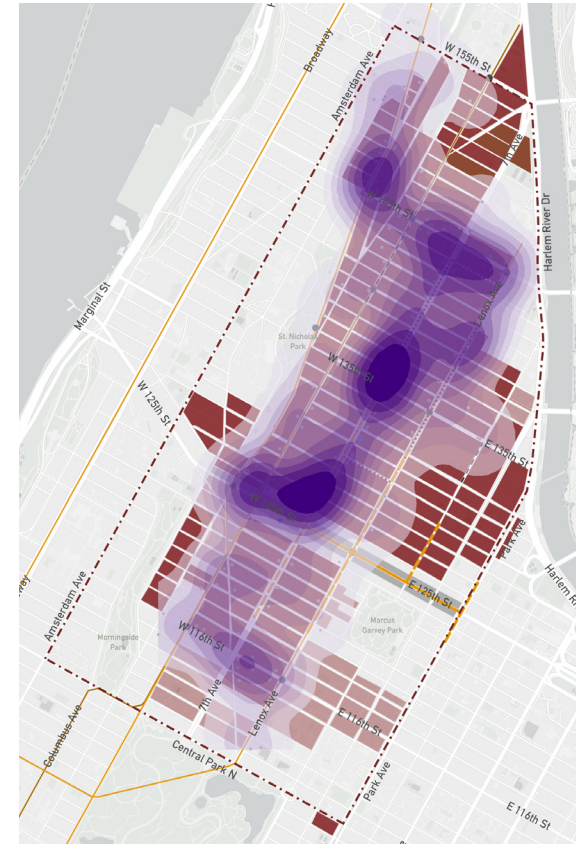
HARLEM'S DEMOGRAPHY + POLITICAL ACTIVISM + BUSINESSES







Spatial analysis overlay: Harlem's Demography + Political Activism + Business, c. 1915.



Spatial analysis overlay: Harlem's Demography + Political Activism + Business, c. 1925.

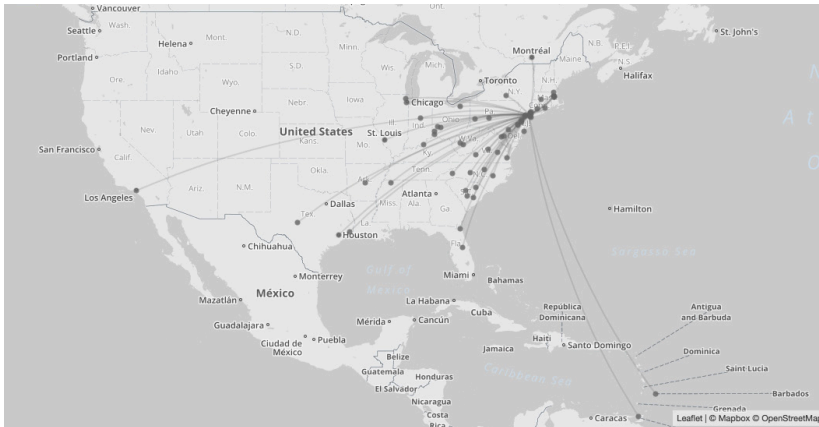


Spatial analysis overlay: Harlem's Demography + Political Activism + Business, c. 1935.

-  Density of Black businesses
-  Blocks with communities opposing "Black encroachment"
-  Black population / community growth
-  Parades

SPATIAL MOBILITY

Having analyzed patterns within Harlem's geography, the studio examined its flip side – spatial mobility. While Black Harlem expanded during the Harlem Renaissance, it is crucial to acknowledge that Harlem was never a closed district. On the contrary, multiple citywide, nationwide, and international demographic shifts demonstrated Harlem's spatial connections beyond its geography. Key trends include the inflow of Black populations, the presence of White patrons, and visitors from Black communities, both domestic and abroad.



Origins of visitors to Harlem in 1930 (from New York Amsterdam News, July 9, 1930).

IRT AND THE INFLOW OF BLACK POPULATIONS

Until the end of the nineteenth century, Harlem had been a predominantly White neighborhood. The transition to a “Black Mecca” was largely facilitated by real estate fluctuations after the construction of the IRT subway system in 1904. Following the IRT construction, the flurry of speculative development and the migration of the Jewish community forced local landlords to accept Black investors and tenants (Greenberg 1991, 14). This scenario was the preamble to Philip A. Payton’s successful operation of his Afro-American Realty Company, chartered in 1903, and the immense inflow of Black population, which later made up a “surprising” spatial transformation of “twenty-five solid blocks,” as described by James Weldon Johnson (McGruder 2015b, 53; Osofsky 1971, 105; Johnson 1925).



Transit infrastructure in Harlem, c. 1935. (Based on historic maps from Nycsubway.org).



Crowds outside the Lafayette Theatre for Lafayette's production of Macbeth, 1936.

WHITE PATRONS IN HARLEM

With its prosperous nightlife, Harlem attracted visitors from all over the city on a daily basis. A predominantly White crowd “came to Harlem each evening, emerging out of lines of taxis and cars and pouring out of the subway to throng Seventh and Lenox Avenues” (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 869). Some entered big clubs and theaters where Black performers catered to a predominantly, if not exclusively, White audience; some made their way to the neighborhood’s more racially-mixed nightclubs and speakeasies; some others sought sex, creating conflict with the Black community as they mistakenly approached unsuspecting Black females (Watson 1995, 124, 128; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 865, 869, 871). Moreover, White patrons also made up a significant minority at the desegregated Lafayette Theater, and attended basketball games at the Renaissance Ballroom (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 869).

HARLEM AS A DESTINATION

As the “Black Mecca,” Harlem also attracted Black visitors from home and abroad. Among them were tourists and people paying family visits, as well as summer students who were accommodated at YMCA and YWCA housing (Robertson 2018a). Perhaps the most significant group of visitors was those coming for national conventions of Black organizations. For example, the 1920 UNIA parade featured dignitaries from Liberia, as well as contingents from throughout the US and Caribbean, Canada, and Nigeria. Fraternities, churches, and civic organizations all held conventions in Harlem, some of them gathering thousands of participants (McKay 1948, 155-156; Robertson 2018a). All these connections enabled Harlem to become a critical node of the Black social-spatial network across the United States and even the Americas.



UNIA Parade organized in Harlem, 1920. View from the corner of West 135th Street and Lenox Avenue.

CONTROLLING PROPERTY AND ASSETS

While the national perception of Harlem attracted a new demographic with ambition and visions of opportunity, exclusionary institutions and racist practices sought to hinder the economic growth of the Black community in their mecca.

RENT INFLATION

White landlords not only charged Black residents more than the average rent in Manhattan, they charged them more than other demographic groups renting comparable apartments in the area. In 1919, Black renters paid on average eight dollars more for a three-room apartment than could be expected in White areas of New York. They also spent on average 45% of their total income on rent, while White households allocated only 20%. As the White migration out of Harlem was followed by the Black migration into Harlem, neither the size nor the quality of living conditions were upgraded, but rent in Harlem between 1919 and 1927 increased by almost 100%, from twenty-two dollars to forty-two dollars per month. In comparison, the rise between those same years in the rest of Manhattan was 10% (Greenberg 1991).

HOUSING CONDITIONS

The combination of high rents and low salaries in these neighborhoods led to crowded living conditions, as spaces had to be shared in order to be afforded. Neglect from White ownership resulted in poorly maintained apartments, often characterized by the New York Urban League as “poor” and “bad.” The League’s survey in 1927 found that one-fifth of those they spoke to lived without hot water, and over 10% reported not having a bath. A 1929 survey found that one-quarter of the tenements in Harlem violated Tenement House Department regulations (Greenberg 1991).

KITCHEN PRIVILEGES

Food, a daily necessity, became another tool aggravating discriminatory housing practices. Migrants from the South, the Caribbean, and West Africa not only had to live in poorly maintained tenements packed with multiple families, but also dealt with a system called “kitchen privileges.” This oppressive system controlled access to food through spatial regulation that controlled access to residential kitchens. Not every unit had a kitchen, and tenants who wanted to cook food in the tenements needed to pay an additional fee



Woman looking into icebox,
c. 1937 - 1939.

to utilize the facility for a certain time of the day or week. This added cost worsened their living conditions, as they already had to pay higher rents than their White counterparts. The cost was so high that tenants were forced to be creative in using cooking techniques requiring less energy. This circumstance, in part, contributed to the characteristics of “country” food, which incorporated frying and boiling. Moreover, many of these tenants did not have access to refrigeration, an increasingly standard technology for modern food preparation (Miller 2013, 40). This limitation meant those with kitchen privileges had to go to street markets more often, thus making open-space markets important venues for the neighborhood. Moreover, the issue of food inaccessibility also had an impact on the Black community’s eating behavior. Those who could not afford the “privilege” had no choice but to rely on restaurants and street food vendors.

HOUSING INSECURITY

High rents and increasing population density created housing insecurity for many Harlemites. A look into the life of famous writer Wallace Thurman helps characterize this insecurity. He changed apartments five times between 1925

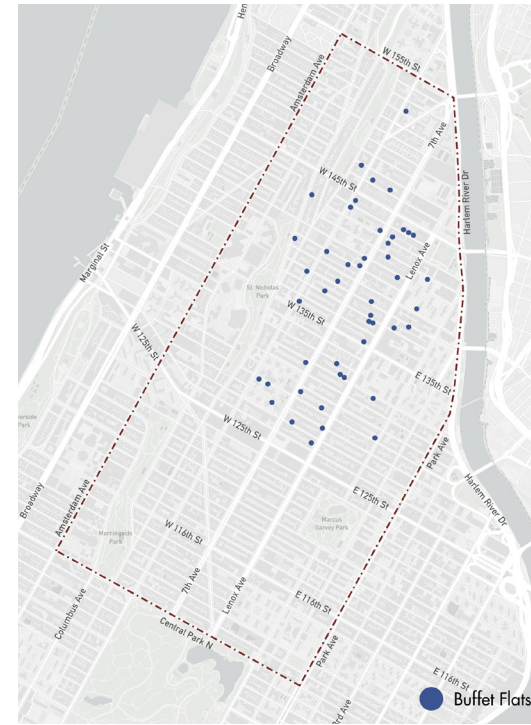
and 1926 before moving into the artists' free rooming house on 136th Street. Two of the living spaces where Thurman stayed, 666 St. Nicholas Avenue and 314 West 138th Street, were multi-family residences, and Thurman would have only occupied a portion of a single floor at a time. Langston Hughes mentions in a short essay about the Harlem literati that Thurman stayed at a free rooming house on 137th Street at one point during this year as well. An important note to mention is that Wallace Thurman was a young writer who was friends with many other writers in Harlem, including Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes, but he was one of the only young Black writers with a secure job. And when he decided to edit the publication *Fire!!*, the cost of printing was far too expensive for the group of college students and Thurman. While everyone agreed to pay fifty dollars each, none of his co-creators could afford to pay their shares, and the cost was far more than they expected, so every dollar from Thurman's paycheck went into paying the printing fee. Thus, free housing became necessary for the aspiring editor's survival (Hughes 2015, 5).

MEETING HOUSING COSTS

To meet high housing costs “rent parties” and “buffet flats” emerged during the Harlem Renaissance, and later became symbols of the period. As mentioned, low wages and high rents in Harlem forced Black Harlemites to find ways to supplement their income. Many families transformed a traditional nineteenth-century Southern social custom into the practice of rent parties in Harlem (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 582). “Buffet flats” operated as unlicensed nightclubs in apartments, and “rent parties” were, in some respects, the working-class counterpart to the literary and art salons that happened in residences of upper class Harlemites.

It is worth mentioning that “rent parties” were generally Black-only. With a cheap admission fee between ten cents to one dollar, Black guests could dance, drink, and gamble, while Black hosts hired musicians and collected money to meet their monthly housing rents. Music performances often brought lively atmosphere. Famous musicians who played at rent parties included Thomas “Fats” Waller, James P. Johnson, and Willie “the Lion” Smith (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 583).

Rent parties were ubiquitous among Black Harlemites. They raged every night of the week, although Saturday nights were the most popular time slot. During the 1920s, there once had been twelve “rent parties” within one block and five in one apartment building (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 583). This scenario can



Harlem buffet flats map, 1910s - 1920s.

be understood as another footnote of the economic injustice exerted on the Black community of Harlem. Besides supplementing the host's income, rent parties and buffet flats also provided a platform for Black entertainment and nightlife during the Harlem Renaissance and even until the 1940s. They also became a harbor for “underground” activities, such as gambling and drug use, raising controversies among Harlem Renaissance elites.

FREE, SUBSIDIZED, AND SPONSORED HOUSING

Out of the Black Harlemites' need for shelter came free, subsidized, and sponsored housing. Many artists and writers had difficulty finding work, which led community members to offer free rooms for temporary living. One of these venues was located on 137th Street, and another well-known one was 267 West 136th Street. The latter was the rooming house of the literati, a group of young Black writers including Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, and Wallace Thurman, who all had difficulty paying rent at other tenements. Iolanthe Sydney, a Black female philanthropist, offered free lodging to the artists to help them write the best work they could. Several of these artists had White patrons who supported them financially and who had

a great influence over their work. Charlotte Mason, Langston Hughes' and Zora Neale Hurston's patron, could leverage what each artist would do and where they would go by threatening to cut off funds, as she did at one point. These rooming houses were a response to such outside control, as a way for Black artists to write without restrictions (Aberjhani and West 2003; Hughes 2015; Encyclopedia of World Biography 2019).

The second YMCA was also built to meet the housing needs of Harlem. It offered rooms for a reasonable price and was generally the first place young men would go to after entering Harlem (Shockley 1998, 1-4). The YMCA is a nonprofit organization that has always relied on donations to fund major projects. Other than hosting meetings and recreational activities, the buildings were sometimes used as free housing for single men. The first Harlem branch, built as a six-story building at West 135th Street in 1916, was paid for in part by Julius Rosenwald (twenty-five thousand dollars of the total three-hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars). A decade after it was built, much more space was necessary to accommodate the overflowing number of incoming Black men arriving from the South. The seriousness of this issue pushed the Board of Directors to (slowly) raise over a million dollars to complete a new eleven-story building that could provide housing for single Black men. According to the *New York Amsterdam News*, the project funds came largely from the Rosenwald Fund, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and John D. Rockefeller, who donated nine-hundred thousand dollars to the organization with the condition that a portion of the money be allocated to the Harlem building (*New York Amsterdam News* 1933).

The Dunbar Apartments were built in 1928 to create quality housing at a lower-than-market price using the not-for-profit format. The project was completely based on private subsidies with no governmental assistance. Both the YMCA construction and the Dunbar Apartments had a great deal of sponsorship from John D. Rockefeller Jr. (Lasner 2017). So, essentially, there were two main drivers for Black housing in Harlem: wealthy White philanthropists who wanted to direct the community in a way that they deemed appropriate and local Black philanthropists who encouraged radical free thought and expression by providing unconditionally free housing.



267 West 136th Street, c. 1940.



The Harlem YMCA, c. 1940.



The Dunbar Apartments, 2588 Seventh Avenue, c. 1940.



Street vendor on Fifth Avenue, 1927.

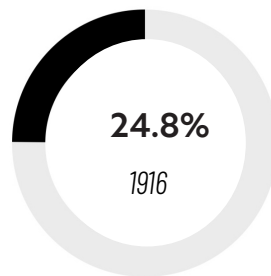


Beauty shop in Harlem, 1935.

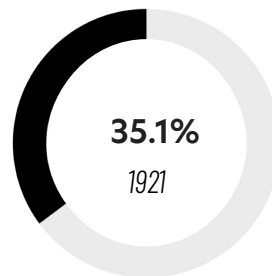


View of Lenox Avenue at 135th Street, showing businesses, pedestrians, and shoe-shine stands, taken March 23, 1939.

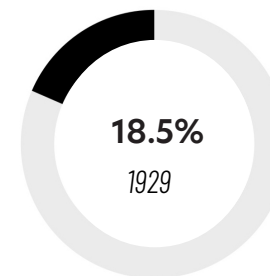
Black Business Ownership in Harlem



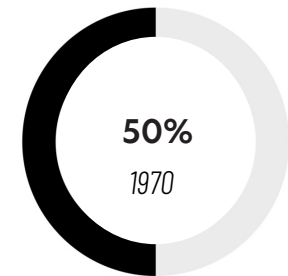
The New York Age Survey



The New York Age Survey



Greenberg, 1991



Victorisz and Harrison, 1970

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Aside from the Black population's claim to housing properties, Black businesses, as a key form of asset held by the Black community during the Harlem Renaissance, also became a major battlefield of property control. Despite Black Harlem's business prosperity during the Renaissance, Black business ownership fluctuated around 20-30% during the Renaissance due to racism and discriminatory policies (Robertson 2018b; Greenberg 1991, 27).

During the Harlem Renaissance, Black proprietors had great difficulty in acquiring business loans or renting space on White-dominated business arteries (such as Lenox and Seventh Avenues). Black workers did not enjoy fair employment and wages, and were forced to work overtime. These policies further blocked Black businesses' access to adequate stock and professional training, which restricted their competitiveness and choice of trades (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 868; Greenberg 1991, 24, 27; Robertson

2018b). All these conditions led to a situation where small-scale shops in low-cost and labor-intensive trades, which more than often operated out of residences on cross streets, had to compete directly with better-financed White businesses or "compete against one another for a small share of the market" (Robertson 2018b; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 868; Greenberg 1991, 27). As James Weldon Johnson put it, "it is idle to expect Black people in Harlem or anywhere else to build business in general upon a strictly racial foundation" (Johnson 1930, 283). Therefore, the survival and expansion of Black businesses could in itself be considered as a triumph that demonstrated the great resilience of the Black community during the Harlem Renaissance.

Two *New York Age* surveys in the 1910s and 1920s exemplified the spatial impact of discriminatory business policies in further detail. Business ownership on streets was significantly higher than on avenues, and only on West 135th Street and in the beauty trade did Black businesses gain a dominant proportion over White businesses (Robertson 2018b; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 868).



Staff of the Dunbar National Bank, Harlem, New York City, c. 1930.

BANKING AND REAL ESTATE

Among the various business industries during the Harlem Renaissance, two trades were of crucial importance to the Black community's claiming of space and assets: the banking industry and the real estate industry.

The first bank in Harlem to be managed and staffed by Black people was the Dunbar National Bank, which operated in the Dunbar Apartments between 1928 and 1938 (*New York Times* 1928b; *New York Times* 1938). Nevertheless, behind it was a White face: both the bank and the real estate project were funded by John D. Rockefeller Jr. Later establishments of Harlem's neighborhood financial institutions include the Carver Federal Savings Bank founded in 1948, when big banks still were not "lending money to anyone in Harlem" (Hevesi 2007; CBS New York 2020).

On the other hand, the generation of real estate developers after Philip A. Payton – Nail & Parker, John M. Royall, and William H. Roach, among others – "fathered a host of Black real-estate agents" who would become Black Harlem's largest professional group in the 1930 census (Anderson 1982, 62; Osofsky 1971, 119). By 1914, 37% of Harlem's tenements were run by Black agents; however, many of them were hired by White landlords, and Black landlords owned less than 5% of these properties (Osofsky 1971, 119; Reavley 2008, 190). This again reflects the presence of White capital and White land ownership behind the Black community. Nevertheless, despite this presence,

Black realtors did manage to own a total of sixty million dollars' worth of Harlem's real estate by the year 1925 (Greenberg 1991, 15).

FINANCING AND "UNDERGROUND" ECONOMIES

The barriers to traditional lending and investment required Harlem's Black community to develop alternative means of financing. Although the neighborhood was predominantly Black, many Black residents in Harlem had a difficult time securing jobs during the Harlem Renaissance. This lack of access to traditional institutional structures, caused by racism and discrimination in the work force, made it next to impossible for Black residents to secure economic stability, and led to the formation of alternative "underground" economies – such as numbers games, nightclubs, and drag balls. Though these were considered illegal activities at the time, many policy bankers and nightclub owners paid the New York Police Department to turn a blind eye.

These illegal activities nonetheless provided a lot of jobs and economic stability to the Black community in Harlem. They served as a "substitute for the legitimate financial institutions that were absent in impoverished communities[and]enabled many African Americans to supplement low wages and secure economic security" (Harris 2008, 57). Not only did the numbers games provide jobs for Black Harlem residents, but "gambling profits made it possible for many numbers barons to reinvest portions of their earnings back into impoverished Black communities" (Harris 2016, 64). Stephanie St. Clair and Casper Holstein, two of the great Number Kings and Queens, did this by employing many Black men and women as number runners – collecting policy slips and distributing money to the winners of the games – but also through foundations established and donations given, among other approaches.

PHILANTHROPY

Just as many businesses were funded using money made from these "underground" economies, many charitable donations were made with money earned from these "illegal" games. For example, Casper Holstein, in addition to being one of the greatest Number Kings in Harlem, was a major Black philanthropist whose influence extended beyond Harlem and the United States, using the money he made from these games to help those in need internationally. Meanwhile, Stephanie St. Clair – the Policy Queen of Harlem – also used her power and authority to give back to the community.

Holstein valued education and spent much of the money he earned paying for students' tuitions or donating to colleges that were important to the Black community. St. Clair used her power and authority to help get Black people the right to vote. She gained the respect of the members of her community, who admired her for employing many Black men and women and funding Black-owned businesses. She then used this trust that she had gained from her fellow Harlemites to try to protect her community by fighting for the Black vote and advocating for not only their rights, but also the rights of Black immigrants.

While St. Clair died a wealthy woman, Holstein died broke, mostly because of his willingness to invest in any person or organization that asked for help. Among the places Holstein helped financially were St. Vincent's Sanitarium, to which he gave money in the hopes that it might provide more opportunities for Black doctors; Howard and Fisk Universities, which he believed were of great value to Black youth; and the local and national Urban League, among other organizations.

Though they made much of their fortunes in what was considered an "illegal" manner, they were able to give back to their community in different ways, whether by empowering them politically or funding organizations that were important to them.



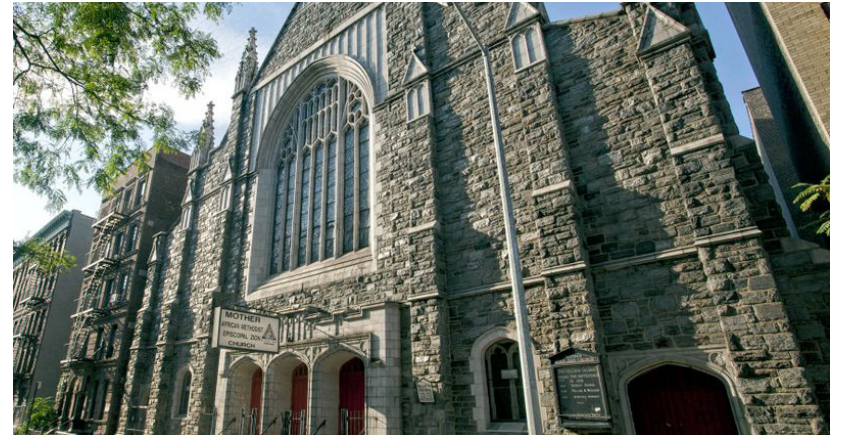
Casper Holstein.



Stephanie St. Clair.

DESIGNING SPACE

In the realms of architecture and public art, Black designers, at once lifted by the power of their own artistry and the support of their communities, obtained the agency to physically shape the Harlem neighborhood through their enduring visions of urban space.



Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church on West 137th Street was designed by Black architect George Washington Foster Jr. in 1923.

ARCHITECTURE: BLACK DESIGN AND OWNERSHIP

During the Harlem Renaissance, a small but powerful cohort of Black architects designed preeminent Black-owned landmarks for the neighborhood and claimed space in the architectural profession. Pioneering architects like George Washington Foster Jr. and Vertner Woodson Tandy in the 1910s and 1920s designed in academic architectural styles dominant in the overwhelmingly White American architectural profession in the early twentieth century – particularly, Collegiate Gothic (in their church designs, including St. Philip's Episcopal [1912] and Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion [1923]) and Georgian Revival (in Tandy's domestic architecture, including the Walker Townhouse). Tandy and Foster were each academically educated in the professional, Ecole des Beaux-Arts inspired architectural programs at the Tuskegee Institute, Cornell University, and Cooper Union (Anderson 2004; Mendelsohn 2004). With their training in the academy, Tandy and Foster translated their mastery of period revival architecture to the Harlem cityscape.

The Depression substantially altered the manifestation of Black architecture in Harlem. Tandy and Foster's careers were significantly inhibited by a drought of commissions, and only the rise of socially-minded public architecture in the New Deal era provided a revival for Black architectural work in Harlem. The Harlem River Houses, Harlem's first public housing project (and among the first federally funded housing experiments in New York) was completed in 1936 with John Louis Wilson Jr. as associate architect. The celebrated design launched Wilson's career as a preeminent architect of social housing in New York City in the mid-to-late twentieth century (Mendelsohn 2004). After the war, Vertner Tandy himself acquired a prominent role in the next wave of public housing development in Harlem as associate architect to the high-rise Abraham Lincoln Houses, built in 1945 (Anderson 2004). Tandy's final design, the 1948 Ivey-Delph Apartments of Hamilton Heights, was both socially and architecturally forward-looking as the first federally subsidized private housing for African Americans in New York and as the most stylistically Art Moderne design of Tandy's career. These accomplishments in Black-oriented housing commissions in the 1930s and 1940s would be succeeded in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s by a new generation of Black architects who would have prolific careers both in Harlem and around New York City.

PUBLIC ART: FACILITATING THE PERSERVERANCE OF HARLEM RENAISSANCE ARTS KNOWLEDGE

The Great Depression also posed formidable challenges to Harlem Renaissance visual artists, even those who had achieved acclaim in the 1920s. With the advent of the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Arts Project, a group of Black Harlem artists led by renowned sculptor Augusta Savage organized into the Harlem Artists Guild to politically pressure the WPA to financially support public art production and education for African Americans in Harlem. After the WPA bowed to the Guild's demands, Savage, with painter Aaron Douglas, founded the federally-funded Harlem Community Art Center, which quickly became the leading visual arts institution for late Depression-era Harlem after its establishment in 1937. Savage, who already had years of experience as a prolific arts educator with the Savage Studio for Arts and Crafts, realized the Harlem Community Art Center as a space for passing on Black knowledge of art creation to the next generation — including Robert Blackburn, Romaine Bearden, and Jacob Lawrence (Bey 2017; Library of Congress 2003).

The Works Progress Administration also sponsored one of Aaron Douglas' major works for the walls of the 135th Street Public Library (still extant in what

is now the Schomburg Center for Black Culture) – the epic mural series *Aspects of Negro Life* (1934) – as well as the Harlem Hospital murals *Magic and Medicine* and *Modern Medicine* by Charles Alston, *Pursuit of Happiness* by Vertis Hayes, and *Recreation in Harlem* by Georgette Seabrooke (1937) (Columbia University IRAAS 2006). These mural works, situated within major public institutional buildings within Harlem, provide sites of permanent spatial encounter with Harlem Renaissance visual art.



Sculptor and arts activist Augusta Savage stands with her piece Realization, c. 1938.

CREATING INTERACTIVE SPACE

The vibrancy and activity of the Harlem Renaissance was in part due to the multiple organizations and spaces that supported civic engagement and community interaction. Spatial and racial conditions in Harlem constrained and segregated Black residents, as did limitations on Black property ownership in general. The spaces in Harlem where Black publics could convene served as invaluable assets during the Renaissance.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

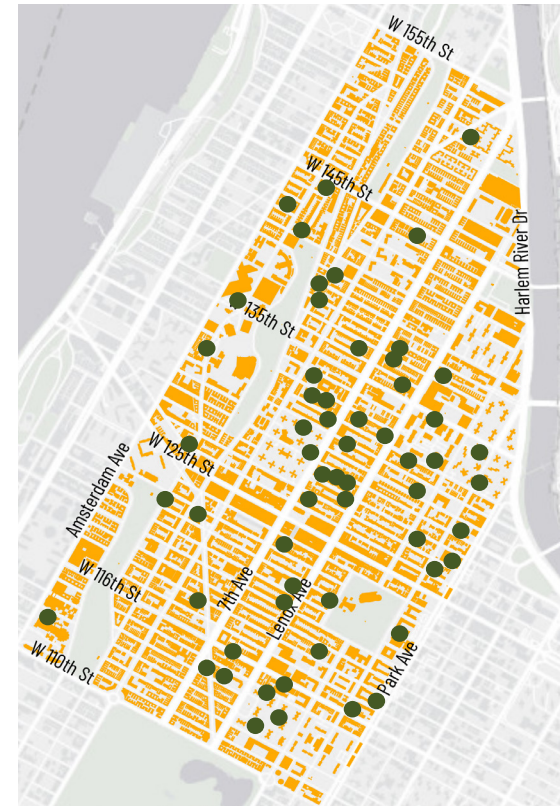
The first and exceedingly important type of organization that provided space in Harlem was religious institutions. Places of worship offered safe spaces where Black communities could meet, worship, and form supporting ties.



Choir at Abyssinian Church, c. 1928.

The map to the right demonstrates the prevalence of religious institutions during the 1930s. Each dot represents an established institution that held a degree of property ownership. Missing from the map is the multitude of smaller religious organizations that rented space. To illustrate religious spatial presence, in 1928, journalist Ira Reid counted 140 churches in the 150 blocks of Harlem (Robertson 2009a).

There were diverse publics present in Harlem during the Renaissance. This diversity is reflected in the myriad of religions present in the neighborhood.



*Religious Institutions in Harlem
c. 1930.*

During the Renaissance, there was a growth of Black Jewish temples and Islamic mosques; however, Christian churches held a dominating presence.

Churches utilized their spaces to support the needs of the community. It was common to use the grounds to house the homeless and orchestrate food drives. But the use of the Church space went beyond only helping those in need: the grounds were used for educational purposes, political rallies, and sporting events. Moreover, a burned church was turned into basketball courts and a place for children to play, demonstrating the repurposing of these key community institutions (Robertson 2009a).

Churches were predominant landowners in Harlem, but some congregations rented their space. Many of these churches were storefront churches that occupied the ground floor or basement levels of townhouses and commercial buildings. Storefronts afforded the growing number of migrant communities an intimate space to gather and maintain a connection to their previous home's traditions (Watkins-Ownes 1996).

LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

One of the most dynamic interactive spaces in Harlem was the library on 135th Street. Aside from functioning as a quiet space for Harlemites to learn or study, after hours events opened up a whole world of possibilities to the community. There was a large room in the basement of the library that could be used as an event space for talks, workshops, and plays. Many famous guests came to speak and interact with the community, which in turn brought attention to Harlem through news publications about the events. For example, writing workshops held by Regina Andrews made this an important place for fostering creative expression through the literary arts. Writers, both experienced and novice, would attend these workshops to network and learn from each other (Watson 1995; Whitmire 2014).



Exterior view of the 135th Street Library, c. 1940.

HOME SALONS

During the Harlem Renaissance, home salons arose as an essential means of sharing creative ideas, learning from peers, and fostering friendships. Salons provided opportunities for writers and artists to connect with other professionals in their fields, as public meeting space was limited and few had the means to rent or buy studios with event spaces. Three famous home salons for literary artists were located at the 267 West 136th Street rooming

house, Regina Andrews' shared apartment at 580 St. Nicholas Avenue, and the 409 Edgecombe Avenue apartment located on the western border of Sugar Hill. A'Lelia Walker also had a salon named the Dark Tower that lasted for about a year in 1928, and was known to host White patrons like Carl Van Vechten. One can imagine that the environment of these salons varied greatly depending on the apartment and host. It was the people involved that mattered most for these salons. Writers from various locations and with a variety of interests would showcase their work and offer critiques to their peers. The spaces were changeable, lively, and could take place in a kitchen or a shared living room (Aberjhani and West 2003; Hughes 2015; NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, n.d.; Encyclopedia of World Biography 2019; Pochmara 2011; Urbanelli 1993; Walser 2017; Watson 1995; Whitmire 2014).



Friends on the roof of 580 St. Nicholas Avenue included: Ethel Ray, Langston Hughes, Helen Lanning, Pearl Fisher, Regina Andrews, Rudolf Fisher, Luella Tucker, Clarissa Scott, Esther Popel, Hubert Delany, Jessie Fauset, Marie Johnson, and E. Franklin Frazier.

SOCIAL CLUBS AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Social, recreational, religious, political, and civil rights clubs and organizations were a staple in the Harlem community. Larger organizations were able to rent and own larger spaces, with membership fees acting as a significant income for masonic lodges and fraternities in the area. Smaller clubs would often rent out individual rooms at clubhouses, host dances and events at ballrooms, or hold meetings at members' homes. These social clubs would frequently change meeting locations based on who was willing to host the meeting at their home, transforming the function of residential spaces to act as social spaces.

RECREATION AND PLAYGROUNDS IN HARLEM

Much like the civic organizations and social clubs, athletic teams did not have spaces specifically allocated for their games. Organized sports and recreation relied on already established venues in the built environment to practice and followed the prevalent theme of spaces serving a multitude of purposes in Harlem. Churches, ballrooms, and casinos that occupied the largest real estate would allow teams to combine games with dances and parties, establishing an association of recreational sports like basketball with performances and the social organizations and religious groups that allowed them to share their space.

The lack of adequate recreational space was prevalent in both the public and private spheres. While private organizations were willing to share or donate their available real estate, public parks and recreational allocation in Harlem remained scarce. Slum clearance surveys of the area determined that one acre of land per five hundred persons was considered an adequate amount of space. However, the three highly populated areas surveyed in Harlem were all found to contain less than 21% of the adequate recreation established across Manhattan. Children were often resigned to playing in the streets, and those same surveys showed vehicular accidents were exceedingly high in the study area.

The city created seasonal public parks by closing off certain streets, and donated playgrounds, like that of the Children's Aid Society, were established in available lots. Throughout the Renaissance, indoor and outdoor recreational interactions changed based on the location where they occurred, and games adjusted to the environment they were subjected to. Communal charity and creativity in the face of neglect meant that churches became basketball courts, games became dances, parking lots became parks, and streets became playgrounds.

STREET LIFE

Stoops, fire escapes, and sidewalks were extended communal spaces where the Black community could congregate to escape crowded apartment conditions and socialize. Listening to the radio or watching and experiencing the neighborhood's sights and sounds were activities that took place in these spaces. Harlem Renaissance figures such as Zola Neale Hurston also saw these spaces as necessary to Black culture, since storytelling and the transfer of Black history were often done on the front porch. These extra

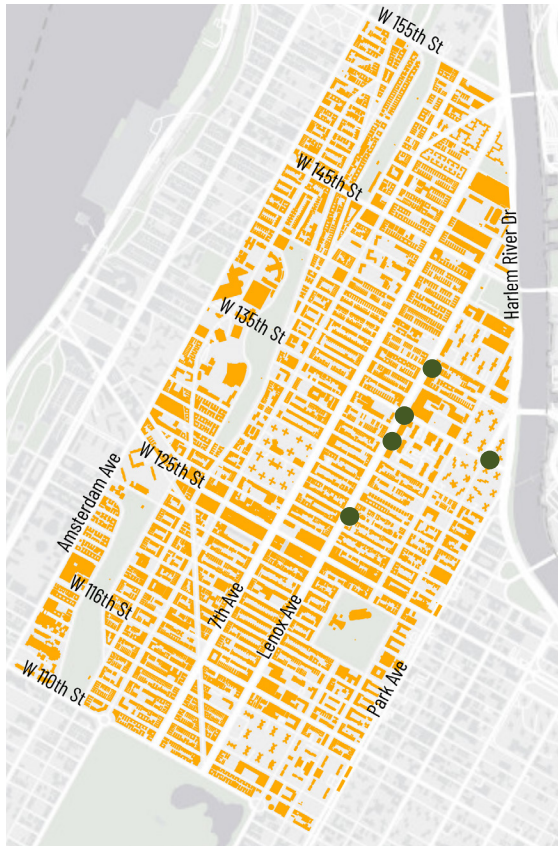


Harlem tenement in summer, c. 1935.

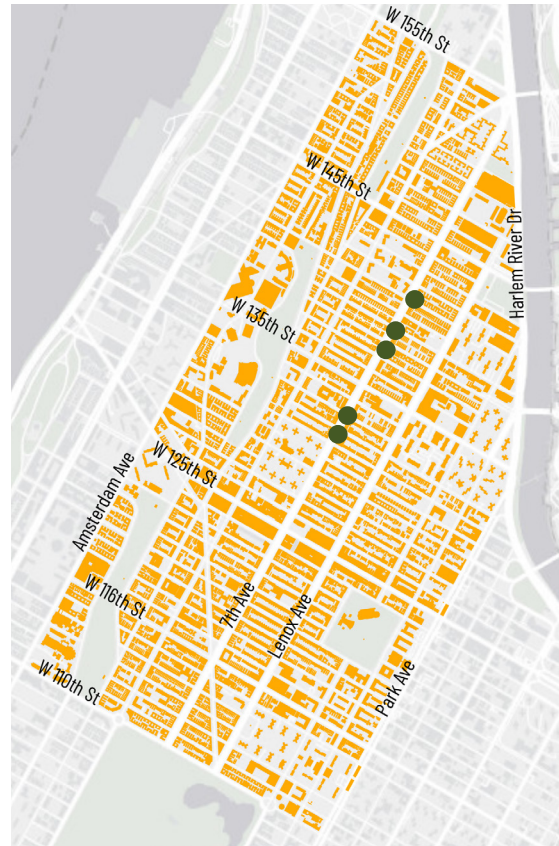
spaces became the backdrop of “meaningful moments” for Black people in Harlem (Burch 2018).

FOOD MARKETS

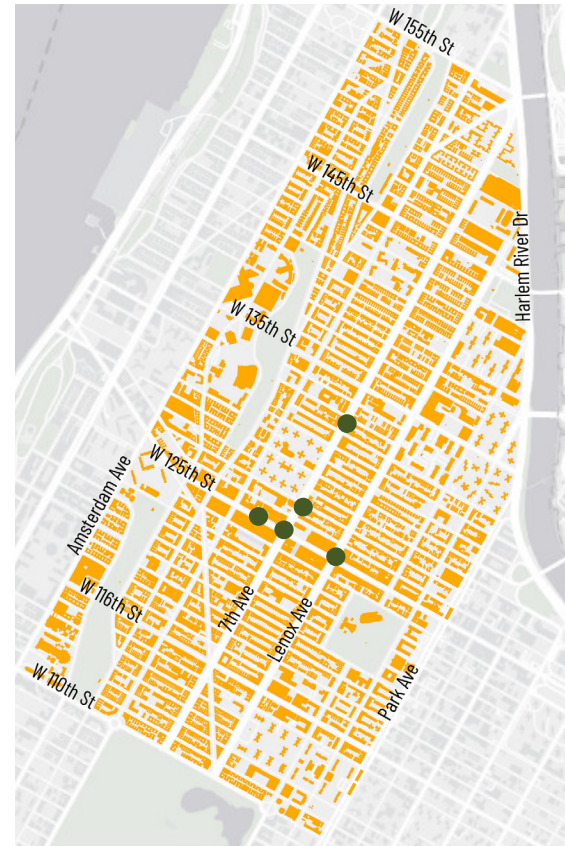
Because of the kitchen privilege system, many Black residents needed to grocery shop at street food markets frequently, making these spaces a major socializing venue for the community. There were three markets in Harlem, located on Lenox Avenue between 138th and 142nd Streets, Eighth Avenue between 139th and 145th Streets, and Fifth Avenue between 132nd and 135th Streets (*New York Amsterdam News* 1930a, 11). Most of the immigrants who knew how to cook or had a background as a cook for White households in the South started their entrepreneurship as food vendors in these markets, partly because these spaces had cheaper rents than restaurant spaces. In this sense, they facilitated a crucial continuity of culinary culture for immigrants, carrying “country” cooking traditions to the urban area of Harlem (Miller 2013, 38). It was a place offering accessible food for Black residents and augmenting community well-being. Although these spaces were predominantly owned by White residents at first, slowly more Black vendors established their businesses here.



Soapbox locations 1918-1924.



Soapbox locations 1925-1929.



Soapbox locations 1930-1939.

SOAPBOXES

The public space of the sidewalks provided room for soapbox speakers, who created even more interaction within the streetscape and showcased the expansion of Harlem's claim to space. Mapping the soapbox locations through time visualizes the evolution of this expansion, demonstrating how the points of interaction shifted from the eastern-most side of Harlem on 135th Street and Madison Avenue, then westward along Lenox and Seventh Avenues in the 1920s, to finally dotting along 125th Street in the 1930s. Since having an audience was a key factor for a speaker, co-location was critical; their locations are within close proximity to critical institutions and heavy foot traffic. The shifts in their location further demonstrate the pervading ideological themes of the time. For instance, the earliest soapbox on 135th Street and Madison Avenue in 1918 was near working-class establishments,

such as the street cleaning department, coal yard, and foundry with a palace casino on the southwestern side of 135th Street (Robertson 2010b). This would have provided the speaker an audience of laborers who would potentially be interested in the views expressed by men preaching class consciousness and labor rights, such as A. Philip Randolph and Hubert Harrison (Perry 2000).

In the 1920s, the soapbox step ladders moved westward, following the growth of the community. One prominent location on 135th Street and Lenox Avenue was also the site of the subway stop, and near the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library, Public School No. 89, and a number of residences along one of the first blocks to rent to the growing Black population. While soapboxes were characteristically farther north in Harlem, the 1930s saw the rise of these sites of interaction congregated around White-owned businesses along 125th Street (Robertson 2010b). The step ladders at these



Andy Razaf addressing a sidewalk congregation on West 125th Street and Lenox Avenue, c. 1938.

locations utilized the space to create tension between the sidewalk and the White-owned business behind, as depicted in this photo showing a man on the corner of 125th Street and Lenox Avenue, circa 1938.

The speaker has a captive audience of mostly men, with one woman standing in front. At the speaker's feet is an unfurled American flag and the words "Raz. D. Killer," which helps to identify him as the poet, lyricist, and editor Andy Razaf, who penned what has been considered by some the first song of racial protest titled "What Did I Do to Be So (Black and Blue)" (Columbia University Libraries, n.d.; Boyd 2018). This song was popularized by Louis Armstrong. Those who ascended the ladder were characteristically gifted in commanding their audience. They understood the importance of the cadence of their speech, the words they chose, and the way their voice paired with the built environment surrounding them. Looking closer at this photograph of Razaf,

one can witness how he has intentionally created a space of interaction. The stepladder has been placed in the gutter butting up against the sidewalk, affording his audience more sidewalk space. Note that his back is turned to the street, such that he is casting his voice not only to the sidewalk audience but also to the drug store behind. The glass door of the store is open at the moment of this photo – perhaps it is propped open because of the summertime heat, but this is not clear. His words are not just for the sidewalk but for those in the store as well. Taking into account the fact that most businesses along 125th Street during this time were White-owned, -staffed, and -operated, it is feasible that those employed in the store were White and potentially listening to Razaf's words as well. It also appears that there are tenants living above the store who are listening, as seen by the open window with a figure sitting down within the room. The "walls" of the space are thus not constructed of brick and mortar but are created by the length to which

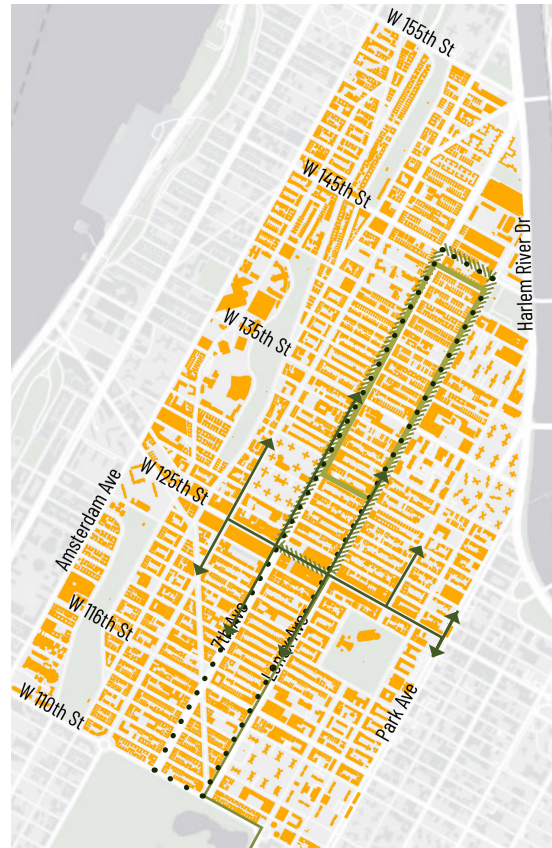
his voice can carry. This intentional arrangement of space created a discrete moment in time of tension and thought. Those in attendance on the sidewalk do not appear to be passing through; they have congregated to this outdoor pulpit as one would attend Sunday services. Contrast this with those who were staffed in the store, whose presence was not voluntary. The soapbox speaker could be compared to that of the Sunday preacher but without the constraints of any institution. Thus, the public characteristics of the sidewalk provided speakers unencumbered space where their radical thoughts could flow – claiming the sidewalk during these moments as their own.

PARADES, PROTESTS, AND UPRISING

While the soapbox provided public space for sidewalk congregations, the presence of parades and protests throughout the streets of the neighborhood turned the gaze of those on the sidewalks and within the buildings out along the key street corridors. Mapping the paths of parades and protests over time illustrates the ways in which the neighborhood was actively claiming space. Taking to the streets, whether in a parade or a protest, was a form of actively claiming space in territory that was characteristically White, because many who drove through the streets of Harlem in automobiles were not Black in the early days of individual car ownership. Thus, the sidewalk was predominantly Black space, while the street was White (McKay 1948).

When the UNIA parades took to the streets throughout the 1920s with their marching bands and motorcades carrying dignitaries from Africa and men and women dressed in African Legion garb, they took the street space with militant style. Also characteristic of the UNIA parades was their intentional marching through White neighborhoods as they continued to venture further and further south, demonstrating their belief in Marcus Garvey's famous call, "Up you mighty race!" (Corbould 2007). Thus, the expansion of the parade routes visualizes how the frontiers of Harlem pushed further south.

Noteworthy of the parades was their proximity to the establishments on the streets. The audience they chose to march in front of contextualized their views. For instance, a parade held by the Elks Lodge on August 24, 1927 marched west starting at West 110th Street and Fifth Avenue to Lenox Avenue, then marched north until West 125th Street, where they marched west for one block until turning north on Seventh Avenue to march up to West 149th Street. This route does a stair-step through Harlem, choosing a linear destination path encompassing the avenues populated by Black Harlem, utilizing West 125th Street only to make its way to the popular



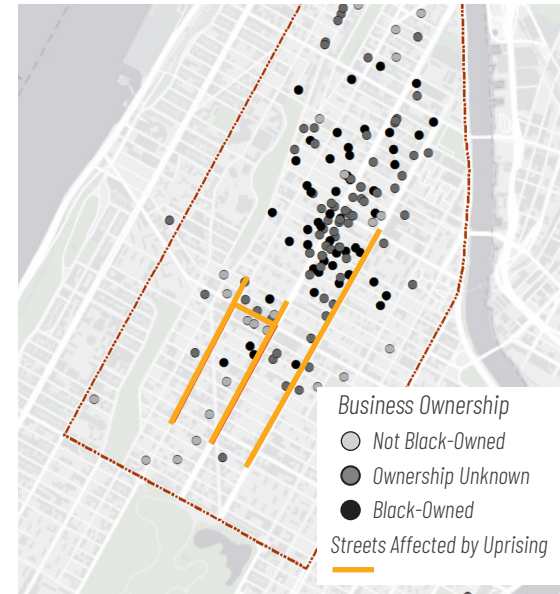
Parade and demonstration routes in Harlem 1917-1935.

Seventh Avenue. The buildings of Harlem were decorated with various celebratory bunting and banners for the 30,000 participants representing 800 Lodges. An estimated 100,000 onlookers watched as men and women mostly dressed in white with brass buttons marched for four hours. Twenty-five bands marched with the participants playing popular songs such as "Charleston," "Ain't She Cute," and "Me and My Shadow." They were also accompanied by thirty Black policemen (*New York Times* 1927).

Contrast this with the southern portion of the UNIA parades marching specifically along 125th Street before the Black community had grown that far south in Harlem. The intentional cacophony of their motorcades and marching bands called out to those who would presumably be in the White-owned businesses behind. The large, glass windows of the business would frame the men and women marching, clad in their militaristic garb. The UNIA parades took place during peak summertime heat in August before air-

conditioning had become widely popularized; thus, the doors and windows throughout the neighborhood would presumably open – possibly including those of the White-owned businesses along 125th Street. This allowed the sounds of the parade to penetrate throughout the buildings. While this is somewhat similar to Razaf's soapbox sermon detailed previously, the parade was not a liturgical sermon. It was movement, and it was the number of participants; it was what they wore, what they held, and above all, it was about their sound. Their sound claimed space and created forced interaction, whether the parade was visible to those in the community or not.

During the 1930s, the interaction between the community and the built environment reached a fever-pitch as the spatial environment had come to represent racist, exclusionary views. Many of the buildings claimed space in a landscape that they (or rather, those who owned them) increasingly refused to support. Of course, the buildings themselves were not racist but their owners were, and they used these buildings to implement their racism – specifically, the White-owned businesses along West 125th Street, which brought the owners money from the self-same patrons they refused to employ. Continuously taking from the community othered these structures in the environment. The beginning of the uprising commenced in 1934 during the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” boycott and picketing movement. The soapboxes were used to mobilize the community, while spaces such as St. Martin’s Protestant Episcopal Church formed the Citizens League for Fair Play and afforded the movement a space to meet and organize off the street (McKay 1948). This was key for those who were not initially comfortable with picketing but still believed in the cause. Once Blumstein’s agreed to begin staffing a percentage of their employees with Black people from the neighborhood, some were satisfied while others were not convinced this fully addressed the problem (McKay 1948). This skepticism turned to anger over time while neighbors did not see improvement in their community as White narratives characterizing Harlem as a slum continued to persist. White photographers such as Aaron Siskind published images of Harlem’s built environment, showing apartments boarded up or depicting tenements as disheveled and unkempt. These appeared without context, allowing consumers to infer from their own perspectives the state of Harlem. Thus, when the uprising broke out on March 19, 1935, it was not mindless hysteria as many newspapers described, but rather the boiling point of mounting discrimination towards a diverse community that had continued to be othered. The uprising was an existential reaction against those who controlled the land, the labor, goods, services, and the conditions under which they were produced (Dartmouth 2020).



Streets frequented during the Harlem Uprising of 1935 and proximity to businesses.

The buildings represented discrimination, and the intentional destruction of the 626 storefront windows of White-owned businesses demonstrated the community's understanding of this, as well as the power they were willing to wield in order to be heard (Robertson 2016). The glass storefronts were an important part of the streetscape in the 1920s and 1930s, so breaking them created a jarring scene along the main thoroughfares of the neighborhood. People from all walks of life, from showgirls to priests, took to the streets, where most of the destruction concentrated on 125th Street until 10:00 pm. After that, storefront windows along Seventh and Eighth Avenues began to be broken until midnight, after which a few, scattered groups out of the thousands in the streets started looting stores along Lenox Avenue. The events occurred as far north as 147th Street and as far south as 115th Street; however, those events that took place above 135th Street were isolated, occurring between 2:30 and 5:00 am. The encounters and violence in the streets were concentrated on the avenues between midnight and 2:30 am, occurring between the residents of Harlem and the White police officers who used excessive force (Robertson 2016). As we have seen, buildings had the potential to operate as places that afford space for community, as the home salons, the churches, the YWCA, and the YMCA had. These buildings, however, refused this form of community building. Significantly, these protests led to the emergence of Black businesses on West 125th Street in the late 1930s, such as a branch of Madam C. J. Walker's beauty school and parlor (Green 1938, 9).

HISTORICAL

SELF-DETERMINATION

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

- Ideological Diversity
- Institutional Support and Foundations
- Political Publications

FORMING PROSPERITY & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

- Education
- Health
- Spiritual and Scientific Practices, Technology, and Skepticism in Healthcare
- Business Development
- Food Industry

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

- The Visual Arts: An Interweaving of Black Aesthetics
- Fashion and Beauty
- Literary Arts
- Performing Arts

COUNTERNARRATING

- Sports
- Theater and Film
- Visual Arts: Narrating Through the Collage
- Literature
- Journalism
- Guidebooks and Journals

CONFRONTING DIVIDES

- Culinary Culture
- Performance Spaces and Participants
- Salons: Literature as a Connector
- Pushing Sexual and Gender Boundaries

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Harlem Renaissance was a time of political diversity, as seen in the numerous activists, publications, and movements of the time. Both radical and major-party politics took hold within the community, demonstrating the ideas and philosophies that better voiced the concerns of the Black community.

There was a large shift from the Republican to the Democratic party among the Black population during the 1920s, showcasing an overwhelming ideological shift. While African Americans in New York City were typically Republican following emancipation, they started to align with the Democratic Party around the turn of the century. The Democrats took further hold of African American voters during the 1920s (McKay 1948). For instance, in 1920, the Republican party claimed most of the votes in Harlem; however, by 1928 this had reversed, and the Democratic vote became the overwhelming majority. This alignment with the Democratic party held true throughout the Renaissance and is key to point out because it was the Democratic administration under Franklin Delano Roosevelt that would implement key policies that changed the landscape of Harlem. A key factor in this political shift can be attributed to the changing demographics of the region.

As previously stated, there was an increased number of immigrants from the West Indies to Harlem during the Renaissance, specifically between 1900 to 1924. While there was a 60% population increase of Black people in New York City from 1910 to 1920, at least half were from the Caribbean (Schomburg Center 2017). However, these numbers do not recognize those who immigrated from the US Virgin Islands. Similarly, many Caribbean women who immigrated to New York City during this time were classified as “nonimmigrant aliens” and were not counted among the permanent immigration statistics (Department of National Archives of the US 1930). These numbers also do not include the estimated 43,452 people born in the US to foreign-born parents, but by 1930, approximately 50% of the 150,000 Black people who lived in the US and were foreign-born or the children of foreign-born individuals lived in New York City (US Bureau of the Census 1934). While the exact number of those who came from the Caribbean is not known, available statistics clearly show that they comprised a significant portion of the population and thus had a marked influence on the neighborhood.

Those who had immigrated from the West Indies came from colonized territories where many had access to education and had not known what it was like to be a minority. After entering the United States, they encountered intense racial prejudice. Having come from a place where they had seen Black men in positions of power and respect, they “[did] not believe that the White man possesse[d] all qualities of excellence, and [was] suspicious of the White man generally” (Grey 1927b). Armed with this knowledge and privilege, they took these ideas to the pulpits, streets, and papers to help further raise awareness of class consciousness and race pride, resulting in a diversity of philosophies, as evidenced by the radical movements that also took hold within the community.

Each ideology mobilized a group of people that sought greater representation. The more radical movements actively confronted institutions of discrimination from philosophical frameworks that did not necessarily agree with one another. Such movements were manifested by the militant African nationalists, the integrationists, and the labor-rights-advocating socialists and communists.

One of the more vocal leaders during the Renaissance was the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Marcus Garvey. Born in Jamaica, Garvey initially founded the movement there with his first wife, Amy Ashwood. He officially organized the UNIA in Harlem in 1916, which quickly



The meeting place of the UNIA, Liberty Hall, at 120 West 138th Street, c. 1924.

garnered appeal throughout the lower economic classes of Harlem. The framework for this militant movement had initially been developed by Hubert Harrison, who formed the Liberty League and advocated for a race-first approach from his stepladder pulpit prior to Garveyism (Perry 2000). Garvey, however, was able to provide his movement with its own dedicated meeting space called Liberty Hall at 120 West 138th Street. The UNIA also had headquarters, first located at 36 West 135th Street within the Crescent Theater building, which then relocated to a larger space in 1919 in the heart of Black Harlem at 54-56 West 135th Street (Schomburg Center 2017).

This building afforded space for various operations aside from Garvey's popular speeches. It was in 1920 that the Negro Factories Corporation headquartered at Liberty Hall began providing loans and technical assistance to help struggling Black business owners develop small businesses. The Corporation helped found numerous ventures throughout Harlem: namely, a millinery store, a publishing house, a laundry, a restaurant, a tailor and dressmaking shop, and a chain of UNIA grocery stores (Schomburg Center 2017). These brick-and-mortar establishments were a manifestation of the ideological class consciousness that took hold throughout Harlem.

While the UNIA had become widely popular, there were some within Garvey's ranks who did not agree with his ideology and ultimately abandoned Garveyism for other movements with similar roots. The African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), founded by Cyril V. Briggs, rose up in opposition to Garveyism to advocate intently for labor rights and armed defense. The Caribbean activist, Richard Benjamin Moore, was a prominent member of the ABB, members of which aligned themselves with the Communist Party (Briggs 1920).

The Integrationist movement led by the NAACP did not see eye-to-eye with Marcus Garvey, either. So, when the FBI infiltrated the UNIA and arrested Garvey for mail fraud, NAACP co-founder W. E. B. Du Bois was not concerned with his deportation (Pusey 2019). Garvey's arrest and deportation facilitated the closure of all the businesses he had established. In 1927, Liberty Hall was saved from foreclosure by Casper Holstein – the well-known philanthropist numbers king of Harlem. However, Holstein only owned the land for a short time, selling it within the year. The Hall was demolished for new law tenements by 1930 (Stephenson 2011c). The closure of these businesses did not mean the end of the UNIA members' keen awareness of class and race pride, but rather it underscored these comprehensions.



Protest in front of the Abyssinian Church, 1930.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND FOUNDATIONS

While many of the activities regarding political activism took place on the street, these movements found support through the built environment of key institutions. Spaces such as St. Philip's Parish House, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, and the YWCA all offered safe havens where community members could meet and organize activities.

The church was a haven for political activism, thanks to active religious leaders and parishioners. Many religious leaders, like the well-known Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Sr., were members of the NAACP and helped organize protests. Pictured above is a protest outside of Abyssinian Church in 1930. Churches also provided space for activists such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes to speak to the public from the pulpit. Religious leaders were also providers for the community, such as Father Divine, who established housing for those in need, naming them "heavens." Father Divine established enough havens to make him one of the largest landowners in Harlem during the 1930s.

POLITICAL PUBLICATIONS

Each political movement had publications whose readership reached other cities, states, and some to continents, expanding the influence of Harlem's various philosophies. In 1910, Du Bois launched *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* as the official publication of the NAACP. Its readership had reached 95,000 households by 1919. The publication included works not only by Du Bois, but also Jean Toomer, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes, under the editorial direction of Jessie Fauset (Ovington 1984). UNIA's publication, *Negro World*, began publication in 1918 with a circulation of 50,000 to 200,000 copies per week. They published their papers in English, Spanish, and French, and they were edited by legendary soapbox speaker Hubert Harrison in 1920 before he branched off from Garveyism (Perry 2000). Cyril Briggs published *The Crusader*, which was originally concerned with advocating for communism but later became so heavily occupied by denouncing Marcus Garvey that it fell out of favor as a noteworthy communist publication (McKay 1948). However, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen's magazine, *The Messenger*, continuously preached labor rights and educated the public about socialism. Indeed, it was founded in part with monies from the Socialist party in 1917 and would become a primary source where Randolph wrote about the union he founded for the Black Pullman Car porters, which was called the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) (Johnson and Johnson 1974).

These publications educated the community and motivated them to join organizations, march in parades, protest, or take to their own stepladders. These political papers – oftentimes vehemently disagreeing with one another – operationalized political education as a vehicle for self-determination to confront social injustices.

FORMING PROSPERITY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

During the Harlem Renaissance, there were many institutions that tried to build equality and justice in Harlem. They not only proved that the needs of the community could be served, but also promised prosperity and community well-being.

EDUCATION

During this era, education was a key tool to build race pride and candid self-revelation. As Daniel Perlstein (2019) notes, “teaching constituted a way of articulating and fostering new consciousness as befit a new age.” The New Negro Movement's leaders, educators, and artists took various attempts in this attempt to build race pride and candid self-revelation (Watson 1995, 27).



A student learning sculpture in a Black artist's studio.

In the 1920s, “as the neighborhood’s population became almost entirely Black, so did its schools” (Perlstein 2019). As more and more people realized the racial inequity in existing public schools, the urge for new educational programs for Black students grew. Black teachers and artists started to open their own schools and studios.

This increase in private educational institutions marked, for the first time, an opportunity for Black educators and Black students to co-develop more just content and programs that were suitable for their cultural background and identity, which further established a legacy of mentorship and apprenticeship in Harlem.

As Michael L. Rowland (2000) wrote in his “African Americans and Self-Help Education,” adult education programs have a mainstream philosophical ideology focusing on “the personal growth of the individual or what is often referred to as ‘self-actualization’ or student-centered learning....” Rowland continues, “Self-help and adult education are part of the African American cultural heritage, as exemplified by such men as Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois.”

Booker T. Washington, as mentioned before, “believed that African Americans needed first to take care of their survival and safety needs and then worry about the more complex needs of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization” (Rowland 2000). On the other hand, W. E. B. Du Bois took a more aggressive approach concerning activism as a need of the Black community. At the time, there were three primary philosophies of education: assimilation, cultural survival, and resistance. These developed from the debate between survival and more complex needs of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Johnson-Bailey 2006).

According to the idea of education for assimilation, the education of African Americans focused on “basic literacy, elementary mechanical skills, and the rudimentary elements of service work. Programs such as the YMCAs directly chastised Negroes to be ‘alert,’ work hard, and rise above the ‘handicap’ of their race” (Johnson-Bailey 2006). With basic skills and education Black people could survive, yet they could not escape from the White citizenry’s dominance in society.

Education for cultural survival “embodied” the knowledge that African Americans of the Harlem Renaissance were a distinct cultural group that had unique mores and folkways. The proponents of this perspective celebrated

the literature, music, food, art, and existence of African American people as a triumph” (Johnson-Bailey 2006). Works by many Harlem Renaissance writers and artists can be viewed as examples of this theme.

Advocates of education for resistance expected that education would eventually lead to the full participation of Black Americans as persons of equal ability and background, and would result in the overthrow of segregation.

Programs that centered on resistance were more commonly sponsored on the local level and according to the data studies were always self-sponsored by African Americans. Typical programs that used education for resistance as their basis were citizenship programs that encouraged the new Black citizens to vote and run for public office and programs that promoted higher education and scholarly training over vocational training.

*-Juanita Johnson-Bailey, “African Americans in Adult Education: The Harlem Renaissance Revisited,”
Adult Education Quarterly 56, no. 2, 2006*

This debate of philosophical ideology was not limited to adult education; it also happened in primary and secondary education. Vocational education allowed Black students to fulfill their basic needs, yet it represented a type of inequality in treating the Black individual differently from the White. The key debate was about whether vocational education and progressive education enabled Black students to be more suitable for their roles in society, or hindered them from getting opportunities for equality.

HEALTH

Significant issues precluding further development in the quality of life for Harlemites during the Renaissance were related to public health. As Harlem was rapidly urbanizing and its Black population became the dominant demographic, growth presented issues in the provision of healthcare services.

Statistical evidence of these issues included infant mortality rates, and rates of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. From 1929 to 1933, Harlem had the highest tuberculosis mortality rate in the city (Wilson 2009, 25). Public health issues do not arise in a vacuum; housing conditions and crowding allowed these infectious diseases to proliferate. Additionally, as the training of doctors and healthcare provision in hospitals in clinics were segregated practices, Black Harlemites did not have access to an equal quality of healthcare, and untrained or ill-trained physicians frequently misdiagnosed ailments.

The efforts to further develop healthcare in this time were characterized by representation of Black doctors in integrated and previously segregated hospitals, the founding of hospitals for the Black community, the training of Black doctors, and the improvement of housing situations in Harlem. Harlem Hospital was ground zero for the effort to desegregate healthcare institutions in New York. At Harlem Hospital, discriminatory practices and the efforts to break them down were well-documented by the all-Black newspaper, *The New York Age*. A great deal of progress in the effort to staff healthcare facilities with Black professionals was in part due to lobbying and the efforts of organizations like Tammany Hall and Mayor Hylan to engage the Black voting bloc. In Harlem, healthcare was not merely a metric, but an aspect of life that Harlemites experienced through the lenses and means of politics, literature, and spirituality. During this time, tremendous progress was made in healthcare and quality of life. As the effort to desegregate hospitals, modernize medicine, and professionalize Black doctors continued, the Harlem community saw one of the biggest leaps in curbing the prevalence of disease and illness.

SPIRITUAL AND SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES, TECHNOLOGY, AND SKEPTICISM IN HEALTHCARE

In the transition to modern medicine, the past met the future with tensions surrounding technology. Skepticism and the push for autonomy were key issues that influenced perspectives on health care in Harlem. The advent of technology produced an equal and opposite reaction in the community in the form of alternative healthcare. Much like public health issues were interrelated with housing and living conditions, the attitudes toward institutional healthcare involved connections to spirituality and religion. "Magico-religious workers" practiced and treated community members for their unexplained physical and mental ailments with alternative methods, as embedded members of the community.

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Having just a limited time now, before he sails, he is urging all those seeking his advice to call now.

This may be your only chance—

POLICEWOMEN NAB PROF. DOMINGO

**Arraigned in Court on
Charge of Practicing
Medicine Unlicensed.**

"Professor" Akpandac advertises remedies (left), and undercover policewomen target "unlicensed" practitioner (above).

At the junction between healthcare, spiritual institutions, and community services, magico-religious workers had a great deal of presence in the Harlem community. Often called "professors," they would see clients in their homes, with a treatment for any malady. However, much like other unaffiliated and inadequately trained physicians, magico-religious workers were often arrested for practicing without a license. Although evidence is anecdotal, law enforcement officers were known to fake maladies to be treated by these spiritual healers, only to arrest them later.

By the end of the decade, the removal of these spiritual healers affected community cohesion. "Professor" Akpandac advertised his services in the *New York Amsterdam News*, offering "psychic and scientific readings and advice given - Egyptian and African formulae used." Akpandac has been advertised as "bringing peace, harmony, happiness, and joy where absent." Often, the removal of these magico-religious workers affected the community by forcefully removing what were viewed as legitimate options for care within the community. In this sense, community members felt targeted and left with fewer opportunities to seek care.

Along with the pressures to keep to traditional and alternative medicines, the introduction of new technologies in healthcare was greeted with mixed reactions among professionals and the general public in Harlem. Edgecombe Hospital installed an x-ray machine in 1929. Dr. U. Conrad Vincent was convinced that Black people deserved the same kind of cutting-edge modern equipment in hospitals. Dr. Rudolph Fisher was also an avid experimenter in new imaging techniques, and as a short story novelist, he was a rarity in the Harlem healthcare community. Fisher was aware of how lay Harlemites felt about the healthcare system, and wrote to educate. In this way, massive strides were made in the health of Harlem residents during this time. New technologies and political empowerment made modern and quality services available for the community. However, that transition was complicated by the skepticism and cynicism of institutional medicine and technology, as well as unfounded pseudo-intellectual racism, adding a layer of complexity in the overall field of healthcare at this time.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

As a form of self-determination, Black businesses constituted a dimension of prosperity in Harlem's Black community that is sometimes overlooked by the stereotypical perception of the Harlem Renaissance as focusing primarily on the arts. Industries like hair parlors, real estate agents, and street vendors served the community's needs and forged new economies peculiar to the Harlem Renaissance era. Although generally modest in scale and heavily burdened by racist policies, they showed great diversity in terms of trade and space.

A core instance of Black Harlem's business vigor was the proliferation of beauty parlors. The beauty industry made up nearly half of all businesses in Harlem, and beauty parlors outnumbered barbershops by several times. Among them, a key venue was Madam C. J. Walker's Hair Parlor and the Lelia College of Beauty Culture, operated in Madam Walker's townhouse on West 136th Street, which also functioned as a salon in the 1920s (Simms 1923; Robertson 2018b; Walser 2017).

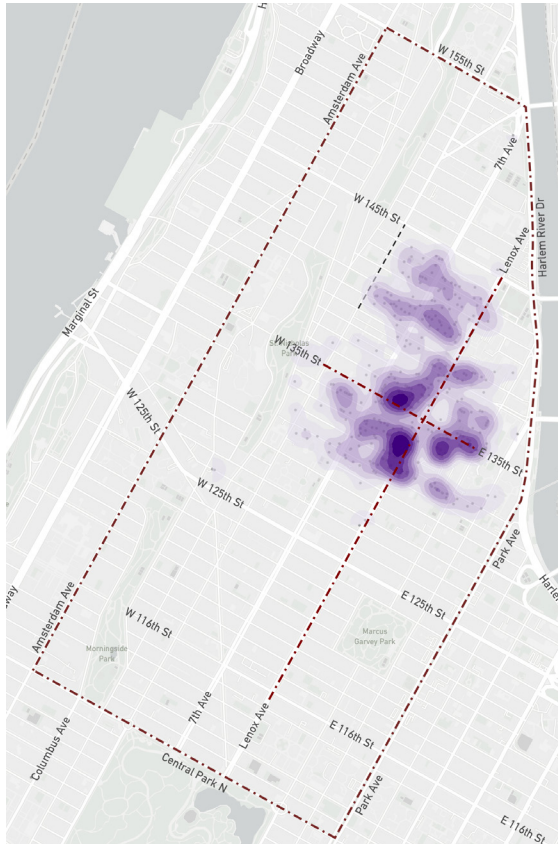
Paralleling the diversity of business trades was diversity in spatial distribution. During the Harlem Renaissance, West 135th Street, Lenox Avenue, and Seventh Avenue were the major thoroughfares of Black businesses; a transition of the main south-north corridor from Lenox Avenue to Seventh Avenue happened in the 1920s, accompanying the westward expansion of the community (Robertson 2018b; National Negro Business Directory System 1918; Simms 1923). Meanwhile, business clusters catering to different social classes were formed. For example, a 1921 *New York Times* report claimed Seventh Avenue beauty parlors to be more middle-class compared to their Lenox Avenue counterparts. A later WPA record in 1939 identified several more specific beauty parlor clusters, ranging from the "average Harlemite" parlors between 135th and 110th Streets, the "hometown" shops filling cross streets, "theatrical" parlors along Seventh Avenue, and "elite" parlors near Sugar Hill (Robertson 2010a).

The prosperity of Black businesses also had implications on the streetscape. Their density and diversity, power and agency were represented in the streetscapes of major business thoroughfares; these thoroughfares also became a window showcasing the unique vigor and glamor of the Harlem Renaissance.

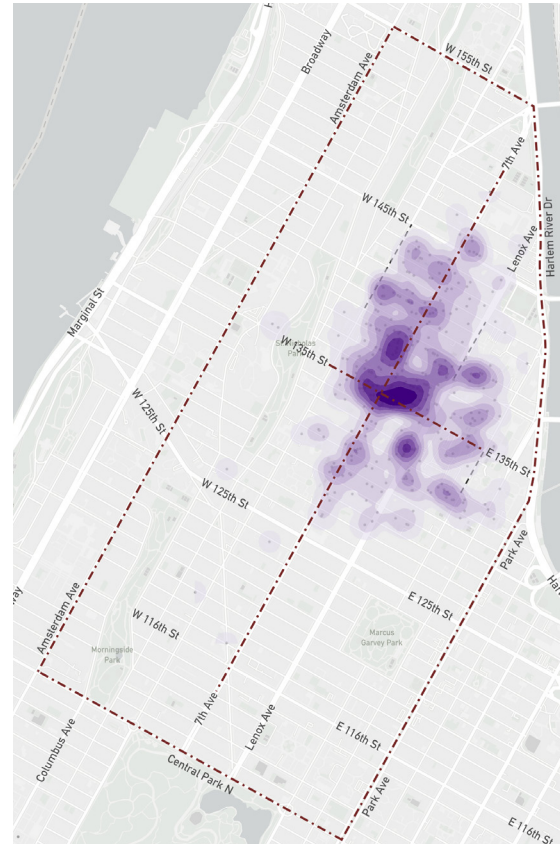


Map of segregated and desegregated hospitals during the Harlem Renaissance.

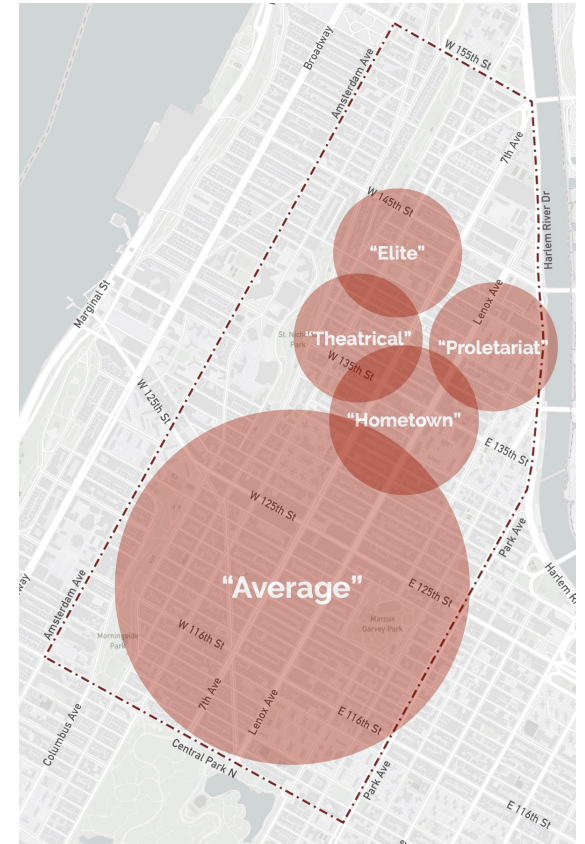
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Business expansion in Black Harlem, c. 1915. (Based on National Negro Business Directory System 1918).



Business expansion in Black Harlem, c. 1925. (Based on Simms 1923).



Clusters of hair parlors in Harlem, c. 1939.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Groundbreaking innovation in all mediums of artistic expression during the Renaissance – including the visual arts, fashion and beauty, literature, and the performing arts – was an invaluable means of Black self-determination and identity realization with worldwide, decades-spanning influence, and forged modes of livelihood for Black artists.

THE VISUAL ARTS: AN INTERWEAVING OF BLACK AESTHETICS

Parallel to other developments in the arts in Black American communities in the early twentieth century, Black visual artists became increasingly interested in implementing art as a medium of Black expression. This underlying political element, influenced in part by the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois, dispensed certain elements of the Western aesthetic canon in favor of Pan-African art. Among the earliest artists to pioneer the Pan-African revivalism that would become among the most tangible representations of Black American political struggles such as cultural renaissance (*Ethiopia Awakening*) and anti-racism (*Mary Turner*, named after the victim of the infamous 1918 lynching). Mary Schmidt Campbell (1987, 27) considers these two works as “among the earliest examples of art to reflect the formal exigencies of an aesthetic based on African sculpture.”

Black art arose from tensions existing between separatism and integrationism, folk art and propaganda, high art and popular culture, improvisation and text, and autonomy and solidarity.

–David Krasner, *A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theatre, Drama, and Performance in the Harlem Renaissance, 1910-1927*, 2002



Waiters at Small's Paradise, 1929.

FOOD INDUSTRY

Restaurants offering “country” food emerged in Harlem in the 1910s (Ososky 1971, 32). Because of the discriminatory housing practices that regulated access to kitchens, some Black immigrants depended upon restaurants. In this respect, restaurants were not only a key factor in forming businesses in Harlem, but also a critical venue for the community's daily subsistence. However, like the discriminatory practices in housing, these restaurants needed to pay higher rents than their White-owned counterparts. This challenge was also evident in property ownership. Most of the businesses were not owned by Black entrepreneurs; in fact, only one-fifth of all businesses in Harlem in the 1930s were owned by Black residents. Moreover, second-generation European immigrants held onto their ownership of property as absentee owners, which made it difficult for Black entrepreneurs to establish their businesses as well (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 280). Despite all these challenges, restaurants during the Harlem Renaissance emerged as significant venues, underpinning community well-being. They not only offered daily sustenance for Black communities, but also had a significant role in evoking a sense of place, an oasis in a new urban environment, a confidence booster, and a medicine for homesickness for new immigrants (Miller 2013, 38–39). They were key culinary connectors continuing “country” food traditions. Moreover, they also supplied jobs for the Black community. Black residents commonly worked as cooks, bartenders, and servers. In these respects, they possessed a power to pressure the markets to import and sell food products that were much-needed for immigrants to continue their culinary traditions in the urban area of Harlem (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 282). Many of the soul food restaurants today are direct descendants of these cultural places during the Harlem Renaissance.



The Ascent of Ethiopia (1932) by Lois Mailou Jones invokes depictions of art, dance, and music in conveying the arts renaissance of Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s.

Fuller was never a resident of Harlem, and her work came out of a formal academic arts education at both the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Arts and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. However, her pioneering of a Black aesthetic language in the visual arts cast a long shadow over the subsequent Renaissance. Driskell (1987, 108) emphasizes that, “Until Fuller, the aesthetics of the Black visual artist seemed inextricably tied to the taste of White America; more particularly, perhaps, to

subject matter and definitions of form derived from European art.” Although Fuller still made use of certain influences from White, Western art, she combined these influences with distinctly African motifs that revolutionized the practice of Black art in the US in ways not yet explored – and in ways that would be investigated to full realization by her Harlem Renaissance contemporaries and successors. *Ethiopia Awakening* embodies this practice, with its subject’s Egyptian headdress and mummy-wrapped legs evoking a new Afro-classicist response to European Beaux-Arts sculpture.

With Black artists still significantly funded by White patrons, some Harlem Renaissance art was conceivably distorted by the stresses of White expectations upon Black art. Palmer Hayden (1890-1973) and William H. Johnson (1907-1970) developed modes and subject matters of painting that both embraced the cultural nationalist side of the Renaissance art debate, and, paradoxically, found strong White patronage. Hayden and Johnson were especially interested in depicting the vernacular elements of Black culture, with visual references to folk art and folk stories. Controversially to contemporary and later Black art critics, Hayden and Johnson sometimes appropriated the racist caricature imagery of minstrels – a practice which, despite perhaps being invoked with a sense of irony by the artists, made them favorites of the Harmon Foundation and contributed to their popularity among White collectors who willfully misinterpreted their art as a naive, “folksy” reinforcement of racist stereotypes (Campbell 1987).

Reducing Hayden and Johnson’s work to its acceptability toward White patrons poses a misunderstanding and over-generalization of these artists’ aesthetic motives. Black artists working in every medium during the Harlem Renaissance found certain degrees of inspiration in Black folk culture and the African American vernacular. This was a practice of creative interaction between the artistic practices of a range of Black communities – historical and contemporary – and Harlem Renaissance arts circles.

FASHION AND BEAUTY

The Afrocentric imagery of Harlem Renaissance art also found physical manifestation in fashion. The Afro-Deco style not only embraced Pan-African scenery to create a new kind of Black futurism, but also pushed forward the mass distribution of Afrocentric beauty standards. Cosmetics mogul Madam C. J. Walker and her daughter A’Lelia Walker, made fortunes from their commercial promotion, largely through print advertising, of Black-centric beauty products, and significantly raised publicity and access for African

American women to attain the Afro-Deco and neo-Egyptian looks that rose to the fore (Goeser 2007). The financial success of the Harlem beauty industry, via the Walker cosmetics juggernaut and the neighborhood's thriving beauty parlors, facilitated an exceptional level of freedom and creativity in establishing wide-reaching, Black-centered standards of beauty and fashion. The expression of fashion in Renaissance Harlem was also realized through the neighborhood's public space. Seventh Avenue in particular was transformed into a promenade on Sundays by its throngs of stylish middle- and working-class churchgoers.

On the stretch between 138th and 125th streets, one recalled, "you would see every important person you ever knew." They paraded their furs and feathers, their form-fitting dresses and bright shawls, checkered suits and gay parasols, their white spats and silk handkerchiefs protruding from a breast pocket — even a freshly washed gingham dress or a Black suit looked fresh in the afternoon sun. Many wearing those elegant clothes earned less than \$100 a month in their jobs as waitresses, redcaps, and stevedores, and their sartorial aplomb owed a great deal to installment houses — and to the discounts offered by Harlem's ubiquitous "hot men." These local institutions offered strategies for achieving the public stylishness that was so valued in "lodge mad and procession wild" Harlem.

—Steven Watson, The Harlem Renaissance: Hub of African-American Culture, 1920-1930, 1995

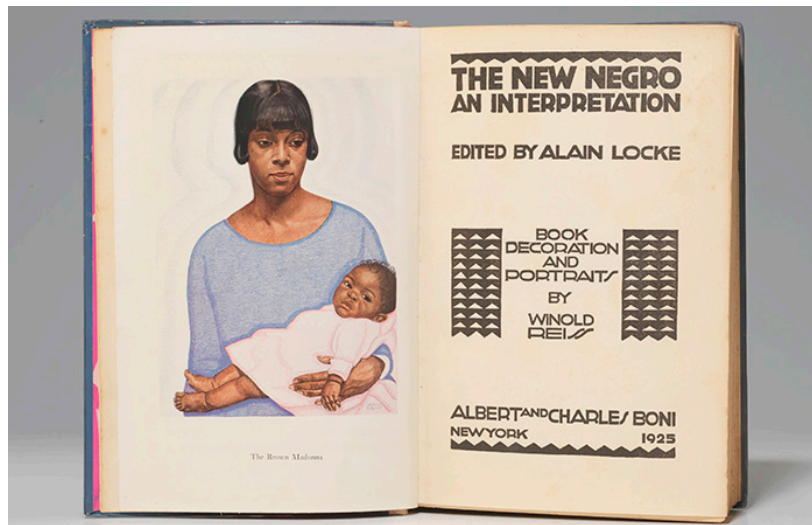
The displays of everyday fashion on Seventh Avenue, as well as the success and influence of the Harlem beauty industry, were both imperative upon the emboldened economic means of the Harlem Black community in the 1920s, which has been outlined in the previous section. The vast majority of participants in this expression of beauty and fashion were far from affluent, but their collective means achieved through new livelihoods and opportunities for expression empowered them to use beauty and fashion as a medium for self-realization.



Easter Sunday in Harlem.

LITERARY ARTS

Many of the literary works of the “Old Guard” leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Alain Locke, were a fusion of creative expression and anti-racist zeal. Du Bois and Locke’s powerful ideals helped guide creative expression for a new generation in and beyond Harlem, with values that grappled with self-determination and racial dignity. There was an important push toward liberation beyond the shackles of slavery, which became known as the “New Negro Movement.” In “Enter the New Negro,” Locke explains how perception is an important tool for power dynamics: when one group takes control of how another group of people sees themselves, they are in turn oppressing that other group. The only way to fight back is to reclaim that identity. The “New Negro” was an idea that changed the way many people perceived Black people, be it through art, politics, or healthcare. Black men, women, and children had been painted through stories, art, jokes, and adverbs as unintelligent, obedient, and goofy – but Locke wanted to end that perception by offering a more cultured human image to replace the imagery of the previous generation. Meanwhile, the Talented Tenth was an idea perpetuated by Du Bois, who essentially stated that there are perhaps a tenth of any population with the knowledge and talent capable of uplifting a community, and that it is the responsibility of this Talented Tenth to work towards that end. This was a call to increase education in Black communities to further develop the Black upper class (Locke 1925a; Du Bois 1903b).



Frontispiece of Alain Locke's *The New Negro: an Interpretation*.

PERFORMING ARTS

The Harlem Renaissance is often considered a literary and intellectual movement, but the burgeoning entertainment industries of music, dance, drama, and film were also key products of this movement.

Spirituals were mainstream Black music. Because spirituals were based on Southern religious traditions and formalized by African American composers, they were a sign of Black cultural pride. Some Harlem Renaissance leaders considered them as a force to uplift the race. Black popular music reached a new summit, despite the fact that it was not yet fully accepted by mainstream culture. Jazz and blues emerged as a medium to express Black identity. Their styles creatively adjusted to modern Black life in urban areas. In nightclubs and speakeasies, jazz featured improvisation and blues reflected Black social realities in cities. They vocalized Harlem's nightlife during the Harlem Renaissance and became famous nationwide. Black popular music would go on to have profound influence on popular music throughout the century.

Compared to jazz performances, dance was a more social activity in nightclubs to release daily pressure. Many new dance genres were invented by working-class Black Harlemites in ballrooms, speakeasies, and “buffet flats.” The Lindy Hop was the most famous dance. Ethel Waters was well-known for her “shimmy dance,” and Bill Robinson performed his trademark “stair dance.” These vernacular dance genres created in clubs and parties were not accepted as high art in formal theatres, but they epitomized the image of the working and lower classes of that time, thus contributing to Black urban culture and identity.

Black drama was at the forefront of the Harlem Renaissance. Accompanying the “race films” that were prevailing nationwide, Black theatrical works at the time artistically narrated African American stories and served as a means to “struggle for self-determination and the right to gain acceptance in commercial venues” (Krasner 2002, 3), as well as promoting an unbiased Black image on the stage and screen. Black theatrical works “consistently played a pivotal role in the evolution of Black Nationalism, which in turn led to indigenous Black theatres, the development of Black dramatic theory and the rise of Black performance, adding significantly to the Black cultural expression” (Krasner 2002,1).

These artistic forms were the media to seek and express the new Black identity, which intellectuals and leaders regarded as “modern.” But they

COUNTERNARRATING

The Harlem Renaissance marked a new opportunity for creative expression, but breaking through racial barriers bolstered double consciousness and complicated the definition of the Black identity.

SPORTS

As professional sports became more popular, travelling teams and athletes capitalized on the currency of Harlem's reputation as the center of Black culture and prosperity, but still struggled to find a space to define themselves in the public eye. To successfully leverage the Black capital of the world, athletes and teams had to exemplify an acceptable version of what the Black athlete should be. The Harlem Globetrotters, for example, began travelling the country in the late 1920s to become one of the most recognizable Black basketball teams in the nation. While they originated in Chicago and played few home games in Harlem, the team introduced the new sport of basketball to people all over the United States, on the understanding that the great Black community of Harlem was something worthy of recognition. Their style of play, however, was one of contention as they incorporated jovial tricks and acrobatics into their play to portray a non-threatening version of the Black athlete to their White audience. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (2007) noted that "The Harlem Globetrotters had become White America's image of what a Black basketball team should be. As long as Blacks were clowns, tricking rather than outsmarting their opponents... they were allowed to succeed."

The champion New York "Rens" basketball team was formed in Harlem 1923. They represented the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, a Black-owned and -operated business, and were managed by a Black owner. While their more professional and serious approach to basketball was good enough to beat the Globetrotters when they played with each other, the "Rens" did not survive long after the Harlem Renaissance, while the Globetrotters continue to play to this day.

In a similar attempt to appeal to a White national audience, Joe Louis, the heavyweight champion of the world, curated a subdued persona. Following the career of Jack Johnson, the first Black boxer to carry a national title who then faced incarceration shortly after, Louis was careful to portray himself with restraint and poise. He was sure to be seen reading the Bible, rarely speaking, never gloating, and never walking in public with a White woman. If his public



Dancers At Small's Paradise Club, Harlem.

still derived from African American folk minstrelsy in Southern rural areas, which was regarded as the old Black identity. Black modernity was defined by Krasner (2002) as, "the cultural milieu beginning around 1910, brought on by industrialization, a concomitant desire for self-determination, and resistance to racism." The "new standards and values in literature and art" aimed to fight racism. Influenced by both new and old, artistic expressions during the Harlem Renaissance formed a contradiction of two forces (Krasner 2002, 4).

Rich in cultural activity, Black modernity sought new ideas in art and performance; new standards of literary and dramatic theory; new artistic expressions; a new self-awareness; and a new explanation of the reality of life removed from the stigma of minstrelsy.

-David Krasner, A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theatre, Drama, and Performance in the Harlem Renaissance, 1910-1927, 2002



The Lincoln Giants, Harlem's all-Black baseball team, 1911.

persona and success in the ring against the German champion in 1938 did not solidify Louis as an American hero, his participation in the war effort did. Louis became a literal poster child for the American Black ideal, conforming to a non-threatening version of himself and enlisting to direct his ability to fight toward American enemies. He captured the hearts of the country and inspired the Harlem community. While he was not from Harlem, and only fought a few fights at the famed Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, his reception in the area was powerful enough to incite spontaneous celebrations so large that entire streets had to be blocked off. He married his wife in Harlem, and they were received by adoring crowds every time they walked the streets. Louis had a long and successful career that not only inspired the Black community, but paved the way for Black athletes to be more accepted in other sports.

Lack of representation in other sports during the Harlem Renaissance had almost as large of an impact as those that were making their way into the public eye. The Lincoln Giants, Harlem's all-Black baseball team, had struggled to succeed in the segregated leagues and was forced to desert Harlem by the early 1900s after the sale of their local stadium. In another example of access to space being denied for the Black community during the Renaissance, the Black capital of the world was no longer represented in the most popular sport in the world and the team was left out of the first athletic organization to integrate at the professional level. This would have been a pivotal stride in the battle for social justice, creating a national platform for Harlem to build an athletic narrative of pride and success, but the physical limitations of the Renaissance denied this progress.

Though baseball had been excluded from that narrative space during the Renaissance, the reputation of Harlem was able to later reclaim it. The Jackie Robinson Park and Recreation Center falls within the area of study and the Harlem YMCA hosted programs sponsored and taught by Robinson for decades following his first years in Major League Baseball. Robinson frequently commented on the adjustments he had to make when he first began playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1940s. Like Louis, Robinson's time in the military not only gave him agency with a White audience, but exposed him to what was expected if he were to successfully open the doors for Black baseball players everywhere. Cautioning his temperament was the only way to ensure his success. It was not until his career had ended and was no longer contingent on his ability to placate the White narrative of what he should be that Robinson became a civil rights activist and one of the most prominent figures in the anti-racist fight for America.

THEATER AND FILM

In the public awareness of Harlem, secular music and dance were popular culture, thought of as different from high culture, such as painting, literature, classical music, and sculpture, produced in salons and artistic parlors. However, secular entertainment forms were significant as well, because they were developed mostly by and derived from the lives of the working-class Black community in Harlem, thus representing African American culture and self-consciousness. During the Renaissance period, besides productions of high culture, Black music, dance, drama, and films portrayed Black daily life as well. Both composers and performers strove to enhance the status of the Black performing arts in order to inscribe the new Black identity on the national consciousness, which is the spiritual core of the Harlem Renaissance.

Harlem Renaissance artists believed that their works could contribute to social uplift and racial equity. In theaters, dramatists and performers thought the Black drama could be a means of struggling for new Black self-expression, in a period when the White-controlled, mainstream theatrical world continued to produce stereotypes of African Americans on stage. The new Black dramatists challenged degrading representations in the mainstream world by giving a more progressive image of Black people through their dramatic works, which were often shown in smaller, less commercial community theaters and catered to the Black clientele. W. E. B. Du Bois defined "race drama" as giving a new Black manifestation to the drama world. According to a 1926 article titled "Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre" in the Black magazine *The Crisis*, Du Bois specified four principles that African American theater must follow:



Fieldwork footage by Zora Neale Hurston, 1928.

race dramas should be “About us” – that is, with plots about Black life; “By us,” written by African American authors who by birth, affiliation, or both had an understanding of what it meant to be Black; “For us,” catering primarily to Black audiences; and “Near Us,” in Black neighborhoods.

“Race films” were a nationwide trend in the early decades of the twentieth century. While not directly associated with the Harlem Renaissance, they were a significant part of the context of as well as an influence on the Harlem Renaissance. Even though they were not involved in creating films, many Harlem writers, such as Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, and Zora Neale Hurston, gave critical analyses of race films and cinema. The Black press also involved Harlem Renaissance intellectuals in film criticism for its newspapers and magazines. Paul D. Miller, executive producer of a recent project named *Pioneers of African-American Cinema*, has said that “African-American culture was moving into warp speed with the prototype of the Harlem Renaissance, and the reclamation of identity through a cinema that acknowledged the trauma of the past and present to re-imagine the infinite possibility of a free future” (Moving Image Archive News 2016). The passion for “race films” increased considerably due to the Harlem Renaissance.

Similar to “race drama,” “race films” produced narratives counter to the mainstream. Before race films, the stereotyped Black characters in the

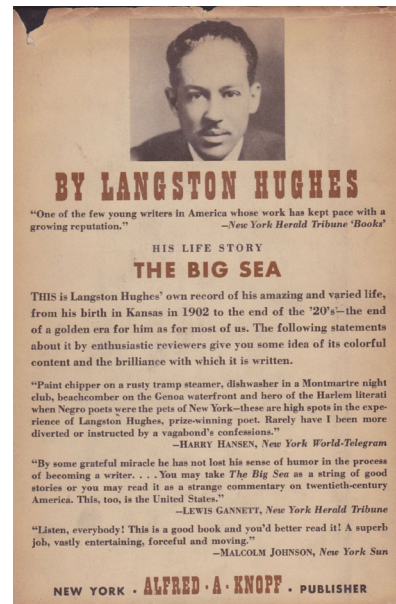
motion picture industry had been hard to change. Even before the African American outcry against D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, Black newspaper columnists had launched campaigns against the inferior Black image on the screen, but did not succeed in changing much. Some African Americans responded by producing their own films, which featured all-Black casts from the director to the performers, and showed an improved image of the Black community. “Race films” were popular with Black audiences from the 1920s to the 1940s, but are now little known.

VISUAL ARTS: NARRATING THROUGH THE COLLAGE

A critical motif of modernist art that Aaron Douglas and other Renaissance visual artists employed in their representation of claimed narrative was what Rachel Farebrother (2009) terms “the collage aesthetic”: the juxtaposition of disjointed images in ways that intentionally fractured the visual narratives and seamlessness of works of art. Utilizing a method popularized by European modernists Pablo Picasso and Benjamin Peret, African American painters such as Aaron Douglas, Romare Bearden, and Lois Mailou Jones implemented collage-like visuals to portray both the optimistic multifacetedness and the traumatizing fragmentation of Black American life (Farebrother 2009). In his aforementioned 1934 *Aspects of Negro Life* mural series for the 135th Street Library, Douglas invoked the collage aesthetic on a grand scale in his visual narration of African American history and empowerment.



Study for Aspects of Negro Life (1934) by Aaron Douglas combines a plethora of Black narratives and visuals in its epic retelling of African American history.



Book jackets for works by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes.

LITERATURE

W. E. B. Du Bois and Alain Locke started the movement of self-determination in the literary arts through the Talented Tenth ideology and the New Negro Movement, but many young writers in Harlem at the time decided that they did not want to limit their self-expression to what they considered to be a White man's prototype. They felt that the New Negro Movement was an attempt to mirror White cultural values with stories revolving around upper-class characters, chivalrous personalities, and socially acceptable lifestyles. But the young literati, a group of writers that included Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman, Countee Cullen, and more, wrote about the behavior that was often shunned by the Black community in Harlem. Their work embraced Pan-African art forms and heritage, as well as confronted lower-class narratives that were often left out of mainstream literature. They retook control of racial perceptions, especially the more egregious ones (Aberjhani and West 2003; Bolick 2003; Cottenet 2011; Huggins 2007; Hughes 2015; Pochmara 2011; Thurman 1926).

Fire!! was an opportunity to ignite creativity and self-expression in the young writers of Harlem with works that touched upon often hidden topics such as passing, LGBTQ lifestyles, and prostitution. It was created by a group of young,

financially unstable Black writers with the intention of inspiring the younger generation to embrace literature. Rather than assembling a publication full of narratives that many people in Harlem could not relate to, *Fire!!* offered the chance to share stories that were unfiltered and representative of many “hidden” publics that did in fact exist in Harlem. The paper did not succeed and faced many critiques from the Black community, especially from other publishing heads, like W. E. B. Du Bois; it also went relatively unnoticed by the White writing community outside of Harlem. The UNIA had a political publication called *The Negro World* that had a section named “Poetry for the People.” This was a platform for poets to express themselves, politically and emotionally. The publication also urged people to be active members of the Black community by supporting Garvey's Black Star Line and advocating to end lynching in the South (Covil 2019; Hughes 2015; Thurman 1926).

JOURNALISM

Publications allowed the Black community to express a political voice, as well as for Black writers, poets, activists, and artists to take control of the narrative. Black magazines such as *The Messenger* and *The Crisis*, and newspapers such as *The New York Age* and *New York Amsterdam News* encouraged the Black community to move up to Harlem. White perception of Black people in Harlem was often negative and disparaging. Much of the White community resented Black presence in the neighborhood and were vocal in local newspapers such as *Harlem Home News*: “We now warn owners of property... that the invaders are clamoring for admission right at their doors and that they must wake up and get busy before it is too late to repel the Black hordes...” (*Harlem Home News* 1911, as cited in Anderson 1982). Despite pushback from the White residents in Harlem, Black publications fought the narrative that the Black residents were bringing crime and problems to the neighborhood. *Survey Graphic* magazine spoke of a misrepresentation of the Black community in Harlem, calling such narratives “grotesque with the distortions of journalism” (Locke 1925b).

As more Black people migrated to Harlem, the narrative of the White media perpetuated an image of a dangerous, overcrowded neighborhood in squalor. The other narrative was that of the Black media combatting the White image of Harlem and building up the efforts of the NAACP and the “New Negro” movement by fostering a Black-forward narrative to uplift the race. *Survey Graphic* was one of the first publications to introduce the idea of Harlem as the “Mecca for the New Negro” (Locke 1925a). It recognized the complexity of the racial and economic makeup of Harlem saying, “Harlem is neither



Looking Upward by James Lesesne Wells.
Woodcut on paper, 1928.

slum ghetto, resort [n]or colony though it is in part all of them" (Johnson 1925). It goes on to say that "Negro life is not only founding new centers, but finding a new soul" and that in Harlem, "Negro life is seizing upon its first chances for group expression and self-determination" (Locke 1925b).

Without the publications of the Harlem Renaissance, there may have not been the same empowerment to the growing Black community in Harlem. Newspapers and magazines were crucial to the self-determination and uplifting of the Black community in Harlem. These publications portrayed the Black community as participants in modern life and highlighted achievements absent from White publications. For the first time, Black Harlemites had publications that would inspire them and relate to their daily lives. Publications fought against stereotypes and racist portrayals of the Black community by the White press and residents of Harlem. They also served as a medium to unite the community and push against inequities in employment, housing, and other economic challenges.

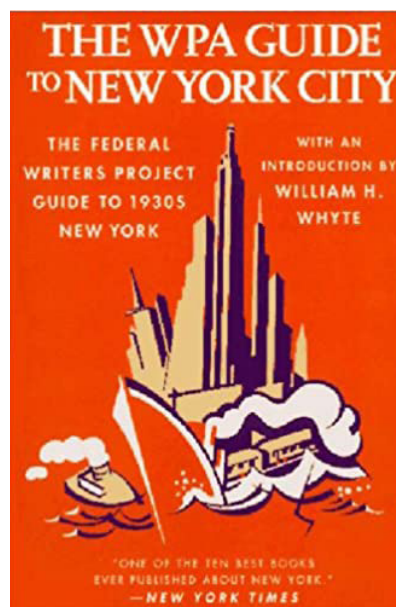
GUIDEBOOKS AND JOURNALS

Guidebooks and journals written during the 1920s and 1930s showed different perceptions of Harlem by various writers outside of Harlem. They demonstrated how these White writers supported, perpetuated, and challenged the narratives about Harlem.

Harlem was generally described as a destination for the White community to visit nightclubs, but Stephen Graham, in his *New York Nights*, said that the nightclubs in Harlem were where "moral standards are erased" (1927, 245). However, Helen Worden Erskine admitted in her *The Real New York* – "a guide for the adventurous shoppers, the exploratory eaters and the know-it-all sightseers who ain't seen nothin' yet" – that it was just one aspect of the many-sided locality of Harlem (1932, 356).

Some of these authors acknowledged the problem of inequality that Black residents were facing and the poor conditions they had to live in. Will Irwin stated in his *Highlights of Manhattan* that "the fairytales of equality which lured them north proved even in the beginning grotesquely untrue. For the labor-unions refused them membership, branded them as 'unfair'" (1927, 362). Hulbert Footner contended that "they are exploited by both the White and the more cunning members of their own race" in his *New York: City of Cities* (1937, 283).

The *WPA Guidebook* showed general perceptions of Harlem from inside and outside its communities. It showed that White people saw Harlem as an entertainment center; that Black graduates saw it as an opportunity where racial leaders could advocate their theories; that it was a mine of rich materials for artists; and that it was the spiritual capital of Black America (Federal Writers' Project 1982, 257).



Frontcover of a WPA Guidebook, 1939.

CONFRONTING DIVIDES

Given the polarities of the narratives above, another key issue that emerged during the Renaissance was that of confronting divides. Culinary culture, the performing arts, salons, and gender boundaries were key arenas in which Black and non-Black publics challenged segregation in Harlem.

CULINARY CULTURE

From the general perception of many guidebooks at the time, Harlem was seen as a major destination for nightlife. Food played a significant role in these venues. Food was a key component in socializing spaces, bridging communities within and outside Harlem. During the 1920s, where there was food, there were live performances. Thus, the coexistence of restaurants, clubs, and speakeasies was common during the 1920s and 1930s. These places were where patrons in Harlem and elsewhere within the city came to experience entertainment venues. These venues were concentrated on Seventh Avenue around 131st to 135th Streets. The nightclub map from the 1930s shows the proximity of these establishments. It featured famous restaurants like Tillie's Chicken Shack, Hot Cha Bar and Grill, and famous clubs like Cotton Club and Small's Paradise in these blocks.

Food was also a major factor in rent parties, social gatherings, and church communities. As can be seen in the Dark Tower, Alelia Walker's mansion where Black writers were able to meet White patrons from outside Harlem, food was crucial to the party. Later, as she started to collect money for food, many participants hesitated to join, and it marked the end of this social event. Black churches offered emergency food for immigrants transitioning to the urban setting and finding employment (Miller 2013, 39). Despite its major role in social spaces, food is usually overlooked in discussions of Harlem Renaissance heritage.

By contrast, food also reinforced social divides between new Black migrants and White communities and even urban Black residents. "Country" food, especially Southern cuisine, was seen as a reminder of slavery (Wallach 2019, 101-102). Specifically, pork and corn were seen as the food of the enslaved. For this reason, established urban Black residents tried to avoid these cuisines, othering these Black newcomers in their communities. However, with the onset of World War I, the perception towards country food changed. The 1917 Lever Food and Fuel Control Act limited the consumption of beef and wheat, and substituted them with pork and corn, the food of Black Southerners. As a

result, Southern cuisine was seen as patriotic. Slowly, Southern food became widespread and more accepted (Wallach 2019, 123).

Discrimination against "country" food further diminished during the Depression era of the 1930s, when communities needed to make sure that people had something to eat. There were efforts by many organizations to establish cooperative restaurants and grocery stores offering affordable food. New food inventions were generated around this time. There were "All-You-Can-Eat" restaurants springing up around Harlem and offering food for thirty-five cents. Restaurants moved to basements to get cheaper rent. Churches began to open their dining halls and sell cheap food to the public. There were push carts called "Whale Stations," selling cheap fish and chips along Seventh and Eighth Avenues (Poston 1931, 9).

FOOD AS RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Culinary culture in Harlem took on another role at midcentury. The role of food as a social bridge was particularly accented in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Black Power Movement began to take hold. The civil rights movement, which began to find momentum in the 1950s, together with other factors, played a vital role in racial consciousness of the Black communities. Food was a part of this collective racial sentiment. For this reason, those who had avoided country food were willing to have these kinds of cuisine out in public. This consciousness of their culinary tradition as a part of the civil rights movement led to the creation of "soul food" in the mid-1960s, an invented tradition that unified diverse and numerous communities. As Katharina Vester posits, "soul food is, strictly speaking, an invented tradition, as it presents a strategically simplified narrative of African American cooking that served the goal of unifying diverse and numerous communities into a political (and cultural) whole, evoking a sense of pride and achievement in its members" (quoted in Wallach 2019, 166). In this way, food was a connector that bridged the social differences between Black residents to create a collective sense of community in Harlem.



First Broadway hit Black musical drama, *Shuffle Along*, 1921.

PERFORMANCE SPACES AND PARTICIPANTS

The performing arts provided another arena for confronting divides. During and after the Renaissance, visitors from around the nation came to experience the atmosphere of Black jazz and blues because of their fame in Harlem nightclubs. Black music attracted both White and Black audiences.

Dancing became more popular as a social activity to release daily pressure within the working-class, Black Harlem community. The activity formed social bonds between Harlem communities. In nightclubs and ballrooms, music and dance were vehicles that enabled Black and White individuals to share one space.

In theater, more Black drama was shown in Lower Manhattan after *Shuffle Along* became a hit in 1921. Willis Richardson, Garland Anderson, Frank Wilson, Wallace Thurman, and Langston Hughes were prominent Black dramatists whose work was staged on Broadway during the Harlem Renaissance. Audiences in New York and around the United States showed an obvious and enduring interest in Black musicals and comedic performances (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 146). The Harlem Renaissance is noteworthy for a groundswell of interest in serious African American drama. Broadway theatrical works were also adapted to the Black tastes and showed in smaller Black theaters, illustrating the mutual permeation of ideas and interests in Harlem and greater New York City.

SALONS: LITERATURE AS A CONNECTOR

In a similar way to Black music, literature connected people inside and outside Harlem, as well as across income levels. Salons were important opportunities for young aspiring writers, such as Langston Hughes, to engage with mentors and network with well-known Black writers, like Alain Locke. Writers from Sugar Hill would attend the same salons as writers staying in free rooming houses, and similarly, White patrons from midtown could be invited to a salon on 136th Street at the Walker Mansion. Carl Van Vechten, a White writer and photographer, had close ties with the Harlem writing community and acted as a key connector to the White publishing world. Anyone could be invited to a salon, but education was a cutoff for access, which was why the library workshops and other educational opportunities were often supported by these salon-goers (Aberjhani and West 2003; Bolick 2003; Cottenet 2011; Huggins 2007; Hughes 2015; NYC LGBT Sites Project, n.d.; Pochmara 2011; Urbanelli 1993; Walser 2017; Watson 1995; Whitmire 2014).



Langston Hughes.



Alain Locke.



Harlem nightclub dancers, c. 1940.

PUSHING SEXUAL AND GENDER BOUNDARIES

Sexuality and gender expression also bridged divides between members and non-members of the LGBTQ community, as well as between Harlem residents and residents of lower Manhattan. Many writers of the Harlem Renaissance were recognized as gay, including Langston Hughes, who shielded his private life from the public. Though discrimination and bias towards the LGBTQ community was pervasive, it was possible to be more “openly gay” in Harlem, not only at drag balls, but also at cafes, dance halls, cabarets, and on street corners (Radesky 2019, 640). This was quite different from the rest of New York City, which still enforced laws that banned homosexuality. The Black gay community of Harlem originally gathered at rent parties and buffet flats, but this began to change with the increased popularity of drag balls, which became a central part of Harlem nightlife in the 1920s (Radesky 2019, 640-641). Although the LGBTQ community was more accepted and freer to express themselves in Harlem during the period, homosexuality was still technically illegal and drag balls were frequently investigated by the Committee of Fourteen, a moral reform organization which released a report with its observations in 1916 (Stabbe 2016).

Even though “drag queens appeared regularly in Harlem’s streets and clubs such as the Clam House and Cyril’s Café... nothing compared to the annual drag ball at Hamilton Lodge” (Radesky 2019, 640-641). This ball, hosted at the Rockland Palace Dance Hall in Harlem, attracted people from all walks of life – including Whites from lower Manhattan and people from outside of the LGBTQ community. This increased popularity and knowledge of the balls – which attracted a wider variety of patrons outside of the LGBTQ community and Harlem neighborhood – was due in part to the 1926 Broadway play, *Lulu Belle*. The annual Hamilton Lodge Ball was established in 1869 and organized by the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows – a branch of the Harlem social club, the Hamilton Lodge, which included Black middle-class men and was an equivalent of the Elks (Wilson 2010, 83). This annual ball, hosted at the Rockland Palace Dance Hall in Harlem, was one of the most popular and widely known drag balls in New York City at the time. Advertised as a masquerade and civic ball, there “[was] little in this advertisement to indicate that this ‘old-fashioned’ masquerade would offer anything diverging far from the standard garden-variety civic ball. Nevertheless, the ball was quite different from most others to take place...” (Wilson 2010, 83).

While balls were hosted by Black social groups, “...at least 50 percent in attendance were white, bohemians from Greenwich Village...” and many were

members of the upper class (Wilson 2010, 83). Drag balls became even more popular, attracting curious White people from further down in Manhattan, when the Broadway show *Lulu Belle* came out in 1926. The play, produced and directed by David Belasco, was based on Harlem nightlife and drag balls, which Belasco was said to have attended multiple times to try and replicate the same environment and setting in his play (Wilson 2010, 82).

The play had a major effect not only on Harlem drag balls, but the neighborhood in general. *Lulu Belle*, "...which was written, produced, and staged by white men and starred white actors in Blackface and Black actors in supporting roles, is particularly notable in that it sent whites scurrying in droves to experience 'authentic' Harlem nightclubs and to witness events like the Rockland ball firsthand" (Wilson 2010, 81). The Broadway production not only led to an increased number of curious White people in the Harlem nightlife and drag ball scenes, but also led to the creation of a speakeasy named after the main character, Lulu Belle, in Harlem. "At Lulu Belle's, a drag club, Black and white gay men and lesbians congregated nightly, and, similar to the Rockland drag ball, they parodied formal upper-class society functions" (Wilson 2010, 81).

Though these drag balls, and in particular those hosted by the Hamilton Lodge, already attracted patrons from outside of the LGBTQ community, the crowd became more diverse with the increased curiosity of the White population. As one source put it, "...the crowd [came to represent] a diversity of race and class [with] 'thousands of white spectators from Park Avenue to Greenwich Village [taking] part in the spectacle and [mingling] with the members of the third sex of both races'" (Wilson 2010, 85). These balls became known for the wide variety of people they attracted – not only of different sexual orientations and social classes, but also different races. "[At] a time when Harlem's most popular nightclubs, including the Cotton Club and Connie's Inn, denied entrance for [Black] patrons, these dances offered an occasion for the social commingling of Blacks and whites" (Wilson 2010, 86).

As these balls became more popular, attracting people "from all walks of life," they became overcrowded (Wilson 2010, 80). In 1933, six thousand people attended the Hamilton Lodge drag ball at Rockland Palace dance hall. These dances became so overcrowded that some attendees were refused entry, while others were shut down by the police and fire department for safety reasons. Eventually, a limit was put on the number of tickets that could be given out, especially at the annual drag ball hosted at Rockland Palace.



Press coverage of the Broadway show, *Lulu Belle*, and the increasingly popular Hamilton Lodge Ball.



Most reviews of the balls were positive, with many Black newspapers in Harlem extensively reporting on them. Many scholars believe that most members of the Harlem community were similarly accepting, arguing that "...the presence of drag queens in Harlem, and the coverage of the Hamilton Lodge ball in particular, illustrates a high level of tolerance for drag or performative gender transgression in the neighborhood" (Radesky 2019, 640-641). However, not all members of the neighborhood shared these feelings. Many Black members of the middle class, who believed in ideas of sexual control and racial uplift, "...saw the queer community as playing into racist understandings of African Americans as hypersexual, immoral, and sexually degenerate. They worried that the queer community undermined the work they did for racial uplift" (Radesky 2019, 641). Many churches in the neighborhood were similarly opposed to the drag balls. The same people who looked down on the dances similarly had negative views of the Broadway play *Lulu Belle*, which they thought "mocked the ideals of the middle-class family" that the community was striving to achieve, and therefore posed a serious threat to the "advancement of the race because of their 'low-class' morality" (Wilson 2010, 81-82). Despite a few opposing views, the dances and Broadway shows were relatively supported by the Harlem community.

CONTEMPORARY

CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS

- Changing Demographics
- Decentering Proximity to Whiteness
- Self-Realization of Women
- LGBTQ Communities: Resistance in Self-Expression
- Economically Disenfranchised Communities:
 - Legacies of Claiming Space and Power

LOSS AND SURVIVAL

- Historic Assets Overview
- Spatial Distribution and Analysis
- Characterizing Loss and Survival
- Critical Corridors
- Superblocks, Slum Clearance, and the
 - Unevenly Preserved Landscape
- Enduring Institutions

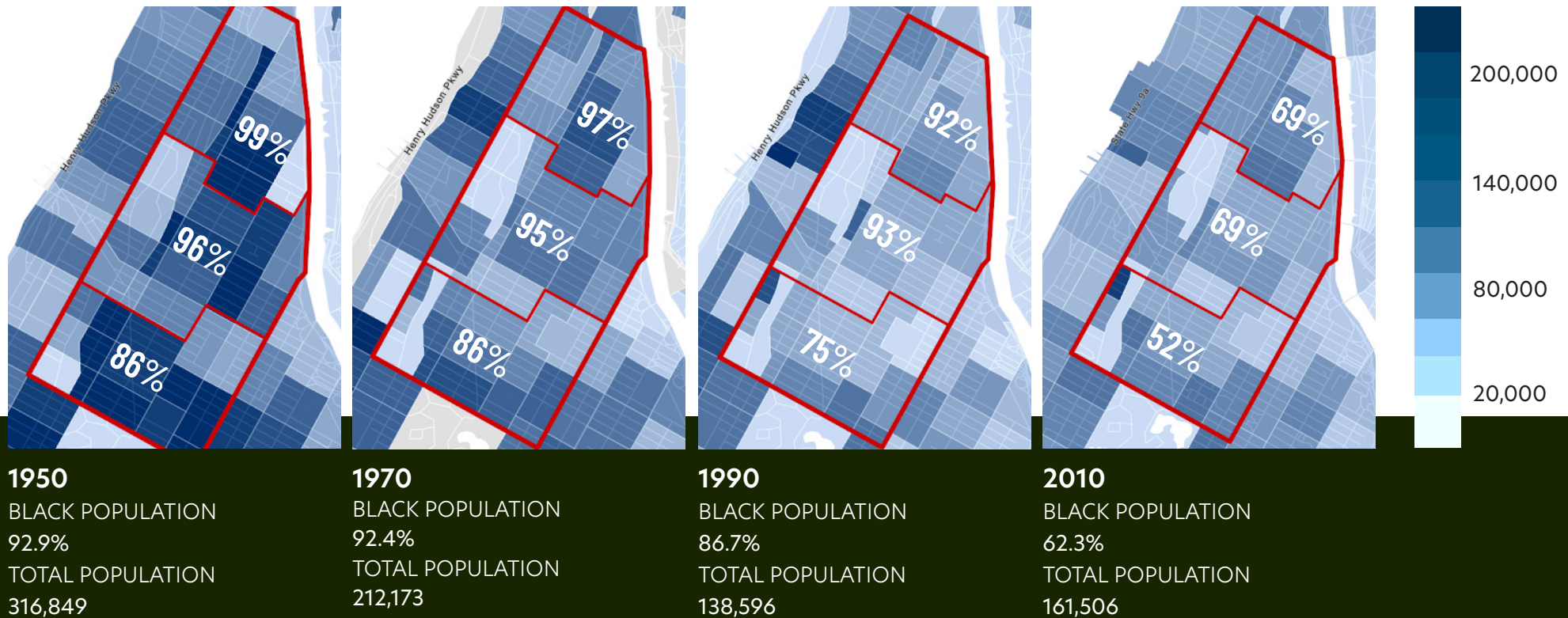
TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

- Designation and Listing
- Preservation Drivers
- Preservation Narratives of NYC Landmarks Designation
- Preservation Narratives of National Register Listing
- Memorialized Spaces

REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

- Connector Organizations
- Community Interviews
- Contemporary Narratives and Historic Assets
- Differing Perspectives
- Interactive Space Today
- Redefining Agency

CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Since the end of Harlem Renaissance, the overall population and population density of Harlem has changed dramatically.

Beginning in 1950, there was a steady decline in population numbers for forty years. This decline was drastic enough that by 1980, the number of residents had halved compared to thirty years prior. Through these decades, the pace of the declining Black population paralleled the shrinking total population (Social Explorer, n.d.). When the population began to increase in the 1990s, there was a break in this parallel, and the Black population has since continued to decrease.

To better understand the shrinking population related to the Black residents, the maps above relate the percentage of the Black population in three different sections of Central Harlem to the population density. The darker the blue, the more densely populated the area is. There is a large decrease in the Black population percentage between 1990 and 2010, with a notable 20% (Social Explorer, n.d.).

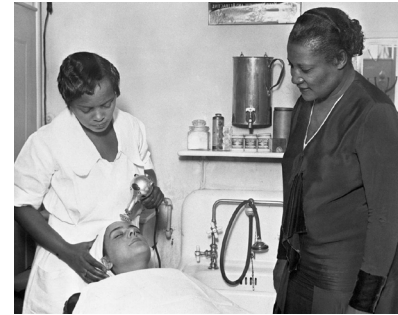
This shift in demographics suggests a displacement of the Black community within the neighborhood. This raises concerns for the loss of heritage that was connected to the strong Black identity of Harlem during the Renaissance.

DECENTERING PROXIMITY TO WHITENESS

The vast array of communities that constituted Renaissance Harlem have received unequal spotlights within prevailing narratives of Renaissance history. Some of the most frequently repeated stories of the Renaissance – especially those curated by White narrators in fields like preservation, which will be described later in more detail – concern aspects of Harlem that were most proximate to White publics, including White patrons, associates, and visitors to the neighborhood in the 1920s. The overrepresentation of these narratives has overshadowed the centrality of the social and political contributions of some of the Renaissance's more marginalized publics – including women, LGBTQ, and economically disenfranchised communities. These publics – sometimes the most distanced from White communities – are responsible for some of the most enduring legacies of the Renaissance over Harlem and the world, in the arts, business, social change, and political activism. These publics continue to be strongly rooted and organized in the neighborhood today.

SELF-REALIZATION OF WOMEN

The movement of Black self-determination promoted by male Harlem Renaissance writers and thinkers often excluded women (Wall 1995). As demonstrated throughout the historical key issues of the Harlem Renaissance identified by the studio, it is impossible to overstate the centrality of women to every facet of the era's innovation, prosperity, and influence in fields as diverse as business (Stephanie St. Clair), political activism (Grace P. Campbell), literature (Jessie Fauset), theater (Rose McClendon), and the visual arts (Augusta Savage). In the face of the double layers of racial and gender discrimination, women in all areas of social change organized among themselves to extend values of self-realization to women; in many cases, women became some of the most renowned and influential leaders of this era. The Harlem YWCA was a center for facilitating the distribution of knowledge and resources among Harlem's Black women, maintaining a trade school offering women courses in job training, business, and Black history and culture (Weisenfield 1994).



A'Lelia Walker



Amy Jacques Garvey



Augusta Savage



Grace P. Campbell



Jessie Fauset



Rose McClendon



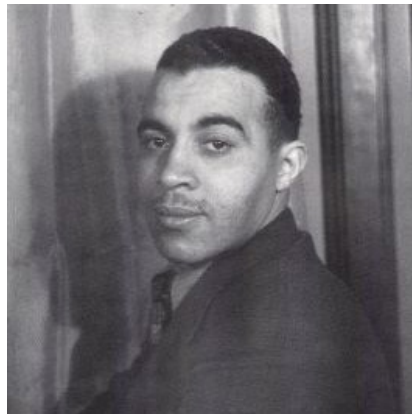
Stephanie St. Clair



Zora Neale Hurston



Gladys Bentley.



Richard Bruce Nugent.

ECONOMICALLY DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITIES: LEGACIES OF CLAIMING SPACE AND POWER

Economically disenfranchised communities contributed to consequential strains of political organizing during the Harlem Renaissance. With the soapbox as a lectern and the picket as an implement, working- and lower-class activists often took great risk to themselves in challenging systems of racial and economic oppression. Out of this era, they claimed Harlem spaces as their own and organized a powerful Black labor movement.

Racist policies and practices of economic exclusion in the 1920s left Harlem especially vulnerable to the effects of impoverishment during the Great Depression in the 1930s. In the face of starkly insufficient government support even during much of the New Deal, institutions such as the New York Urban League, as well as a range of Black churches from Abyssinian Baptist to the tiny second-story United Holy Church of America, supplied food and resources to Harlem residents in need on a no-questions-asked basis. Furthermore, to secure Black workers opportunities, rights, and working conditions, labor activists such as A. Philip Randolph pioneered the organization of Black labor unions including the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Trade Union Committee for Organizing Negro Workers (Greenberg 1991).

LGBTQ COMMUNITIES: RESISTANCE IN SELF-EXPRESSION

The Harlem Renaissance is striking for the space it afforded to the self-expression of LGBTQ communities. These communities, which were far from limited to drag culture, resisted pressure to adhere to sexual and gender norms from both White power structures and many Harlem Renaissance leaders. Within the setting of subversion and reimagining of Black identity that took place in concert with the New Negro movement, Black LGBTQ communities contested sexual and gender expectations that were still upheld by the New Negro vision. In this process, these communities forged their own distinct, intersecting sexual and gender subcultures that transcended the later binaries of gay and straight. LGBTQ artists, meanwhile, such as celebrated blues singer Gladys Bentley and writer Richard Bruce Nugent, used their livelihoods in the arts as a means of expressing their sexual and gender identities (Vogel 2015).

LOSS AND SURVIVAL

From today's vantage point, changes in Harlem did not only happen in the social and demographic realm. Multiple spatial modifications in urban, street, and building scales contributed to multi-layered and multi-factored conditions of loss and survival, as did historic policies and key community institutions.

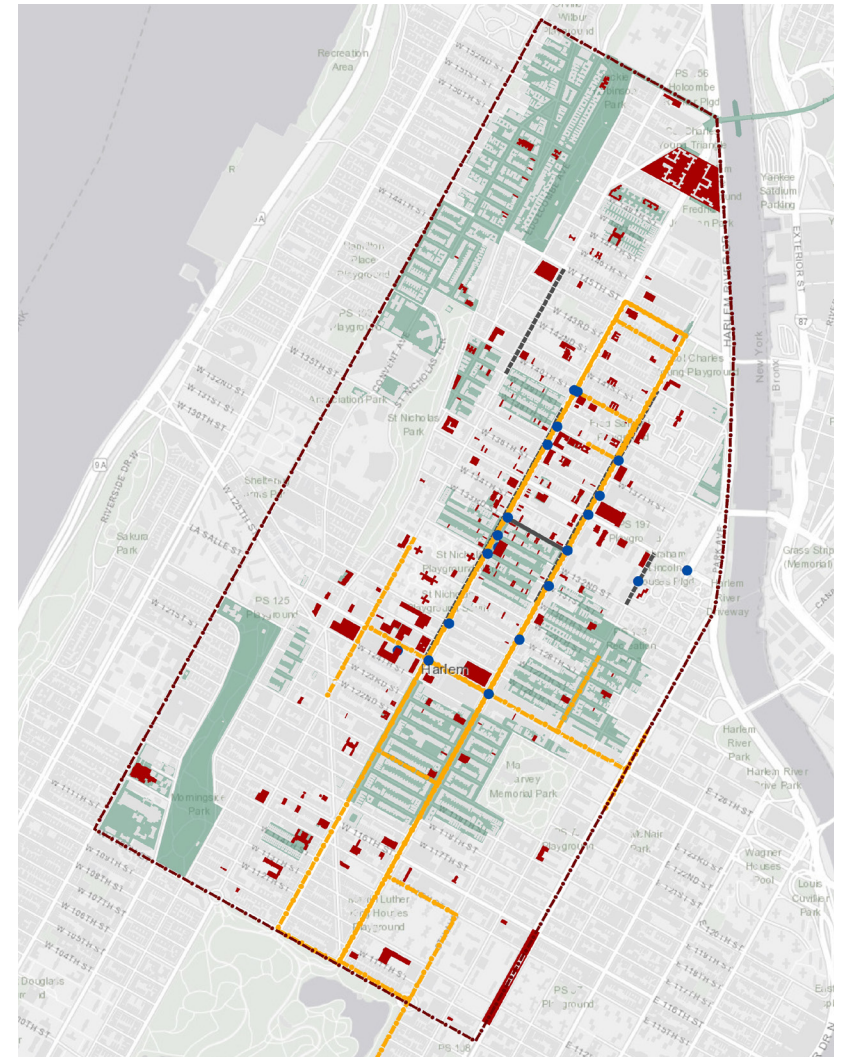
A collective identification and mapping of historic assets serves as the basis for analyzing the loss and survival of urban forms between the Harlem Renaissance and Harlem today, and for examining how different political contexts may have contributed to disparities among such loss and survival.

Due to the format of this studio, each of the fourteen colleagues identified social-spatially significant building assets and open spaces in the historic streetscape of Harlem under their assigned theme of historic context study. Assets were then registered into a spreadsheet incorporating fields of geographical information, social-spatial relevance, physical existence, segregation, and ownership by race. This information was then processed by the studio's spatial analysis group into a GIS database, which produced subsequent mapping products of spatial findings, navigating the team into further analyses of building asset loss and urban form change.

Identified historic assets were categorized into three typologies: building assets, open spaces, and designated areas. Echoing the theme of the studio – Preservation, Spatial Encounter and Anti-Racism – the team first looked beyond architectural merits and next extended the traditional architecture-focused scope of historic preservation to study the social-spatial connections and possibilities for revitalizing such connections. As a result, many intimate and ephemeral places of social-spatial interactions – such as parade routes, soapbox locations, playgrounds, and neighborhood businesses – are mapped as core assets of the Harlem Renaissance, with the intention to more carefully understand the legacies of the Harlem Renaissance and the barriers to preserving them in today's urban landscape.

HISTORIC ASSETS OVERVIEW

Shown here is the overall map of historic assets consisting of the three components of spatial inquiry: building assets, open spaces, and designation. The designation map reflects the existing preservation narrative about Harlem



BUILDING ASSETS

ALL BUILDING ASSETS

OPEN SPACES

SOAPBOX LOCATIONS

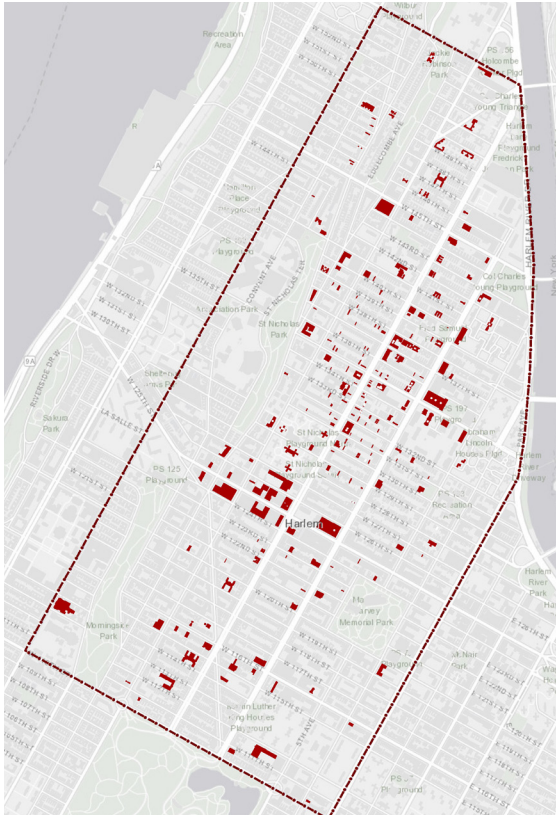
DESIGNATION

AREAS WITH ANY LPC / NR DESIGNATION (INCLUDING NR ELIGIBLE)

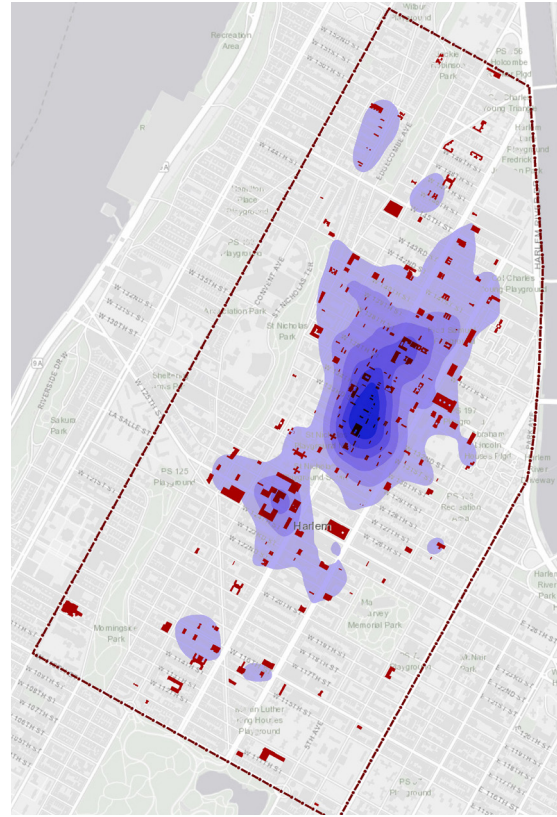
1934 PROTESTS & 1935 UPRISING

STREETS OF ECONOMIC / ENTERTAINMENT SIGNIFICANCE

OTHER OPEN SPACE ASSETS



AXIS



CLUSTERS

234 building assets of significance to the Harlem Renaissance era were identified through historic documentation. Only 92 survive today.

sections of social-spatial interaction, as previously discussed in the “Historic Context” and “Key Issues: Historical” sections of this report. Above these layers is the spatial distribution of building assets. For non-extant assets, the footprints of the current building on the lot are highlighted to label their locations.

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION AND ANALYSIS

Mapping as a spatial analysis approach visualizes spatial patterns such as clusters, corridors, and co-location in the distribution of individual assets, thus revealing and reinforcing the social-spatial narrative of the Harlem Renaissance.

For urban form and open spaces, the co-location of street corridors and blocks under different themes suggested the following: (1) the transition of the social-political corridor from Lenox and Seventh Avenue to West 125th

Street in the 1930s, as previously discussed in the political activism section; (2) the congregation of streets of entertainment and economic significance, such as “Jungle Alley” and the street markets, around the physical center of the Harlem community, between Fifth and Eighth Avenues and 130th and 145th Streets; (3) early restricted neighborhoods and later developments of Black settlements, such as “Strivers’ Row,” intersected with each other, and Black Harlem’s demographic center around West 135th Street remained under extremely high density and limited living conditions into the 1930s.

For building assets, a total of 277 entries represented by 234 buildings were identified throughout the collective research of the studio. Under an overall time-scope of the Harlem Renaissance defined by the period of study (1917–1939), their spatial distribution forms major corridors along Seventh Avenue and West 135th Street, and clusters around West 130–135th Streets and West 125th Street. These spatial patterns are further utilized in determining the critical corridors of Harlem Renaissance, introduced later in this segment.

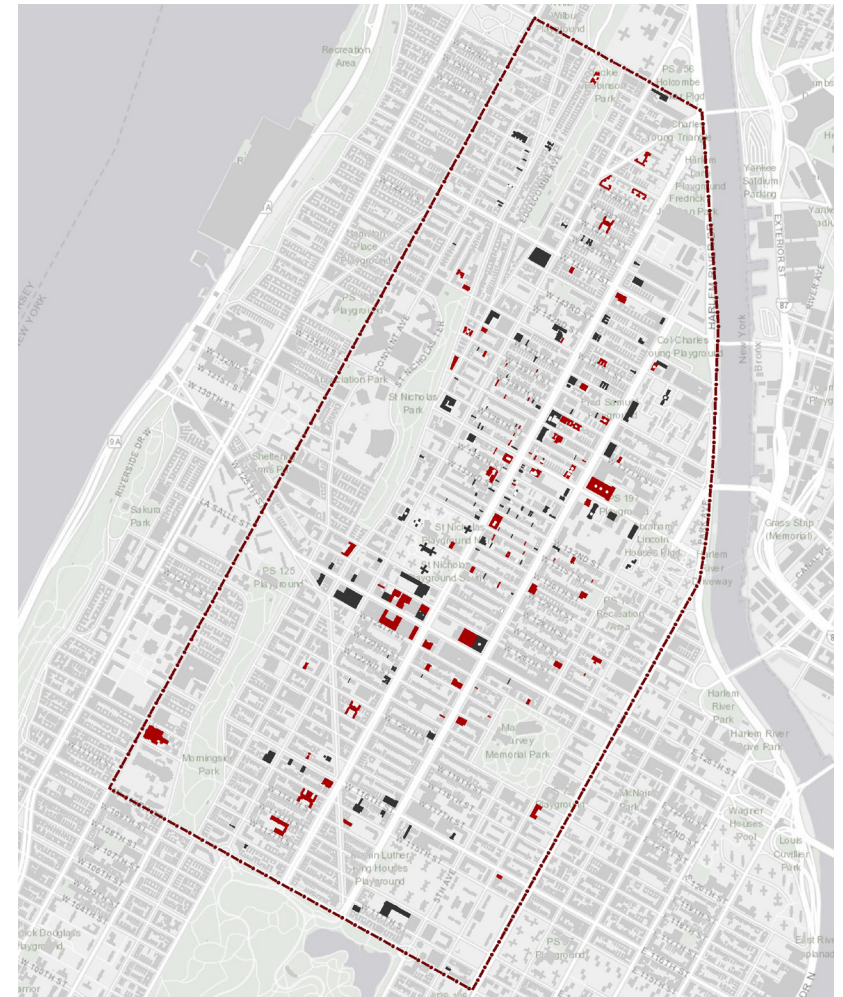
CHARACTERIZING LOSS AND SURVIVAL

Of all building assets identified in the study, **ninety-two (39.3%)** of them are currently physically extant. For the purpose of revitalizing possible social-spatial encounters, physical existence of the structure, rather than individual or institutional existence of the original occupier during the Harlem Renaissance, has been selected as the criterion for determining survival or loss. A mapping of extant assets and non-extant assets, represented by the current building footprints on their lots, shows that both the creation of superblocks and the more-random demolitions and redevelopments have caused the loss of the building assets of the Harlem Renaissance. This loss is further compounded by the ephemerality of identifiable historic characteristics, such as the loss of theater marquees at former theater structures and the loss of signage at former business structures.

In addition to looking at loss and survival in terms of geography, the team also analyzed loss in terms of the narratives or themes with which the asset was associated. A key finding is that survival rates of building assets vary significantly by narrative.

The assets with the highest rate of survival – at over 75% – were those associated with narratives related to Literature, Journalism, and Religion, all of which tend to be central to popular perceptions of the Harlem Renaissance. Assets with lower survival rates tended to be associated with narratives that are less dominant in the overarching story of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Sports, Business, and Education. While those with the lowest survival rates likewise tended toward non-dominant narratives, the high rate of loss of assets related to Entertainment and the Performing Arts seem anomalous. One possible explanation is that purpose-built structures, like theaters, might be more vulnerable to loss.

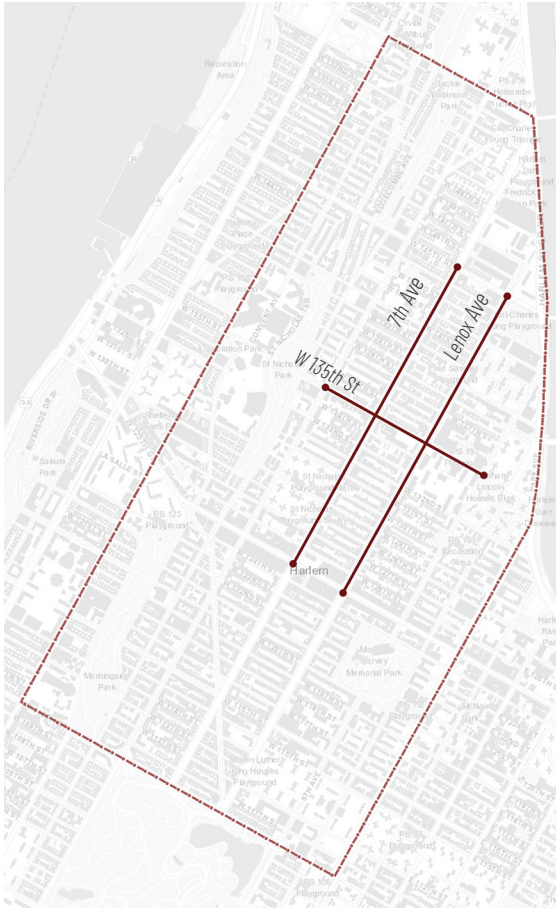
The ephemeral nature of building assets is demonstrated by not only the varying survival rates, but also by the varying quality of existing historic structures in terms of historic characteristics and identifiability of historic significance. For example, in a few cases, Harlem Renaissance businesses saved the signs outside their structures, which can still be encountered today – such as the Fane-Dumas Hotel sign at 205 West 135th Street. More frequently, businesses went out of operation without visible traces on structures they had previously occupied. Similarly, as famous as the 409 Edgecombe Avenue apartment building is, there has never been a plaque or any signage to facilitate the public's recognition of its historic significance in



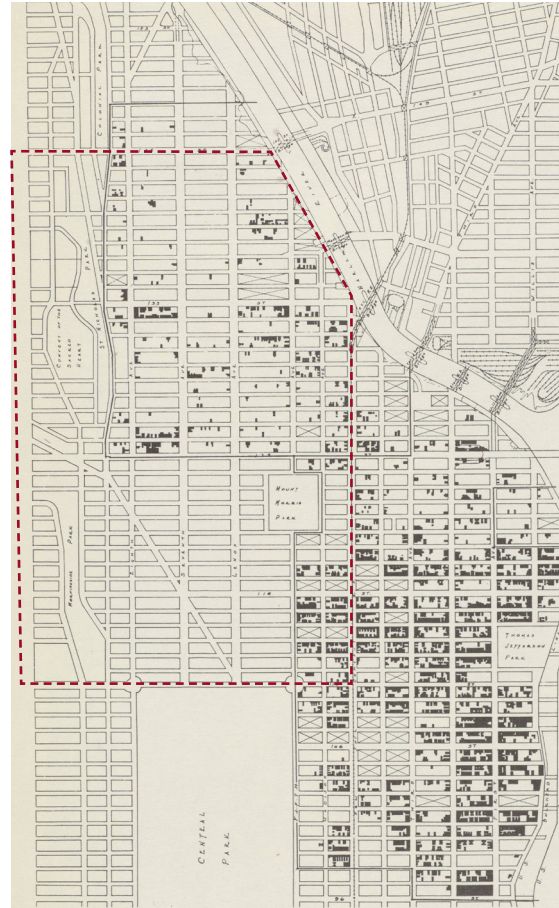
BUILDING ASSETS



today's streetscape. These situations bring about the necessity of interpreting historic building assets for effective social-spatial encounters. Moreover, several key assets – most of them specifically-built business structures – have been demolished in recent years, such as Hotel Olga and the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino.



Key street corridors.



"Bad Condition" structures in North and East Harlem, Slum Clearance Committee of New York Map, 1933-34.



Block-scaled redevelopments along West 135th Street (top), Lenox Avenue (middle), and Seventh Avenue (bottom).

CRITICAL CORRIDORS

Another dimension of the studio's spatial analyses involved identifying critical street corridors of the Harlem Renaissance. Different pieces of evidence have been integrated toward this identification: comprehensively comparing the mapping of building assets, businesses, and open spaces suggests that Lenox Avenue, Seventh Avenue, and West 135th Street were key corridors of street life during the Harlem Renaissance. This finding echoes the previous chronological analysis on the spatial expansion of Black Harlem, which suggested West 135th Street's central position in the spatial distribution of Harlem's Black community.

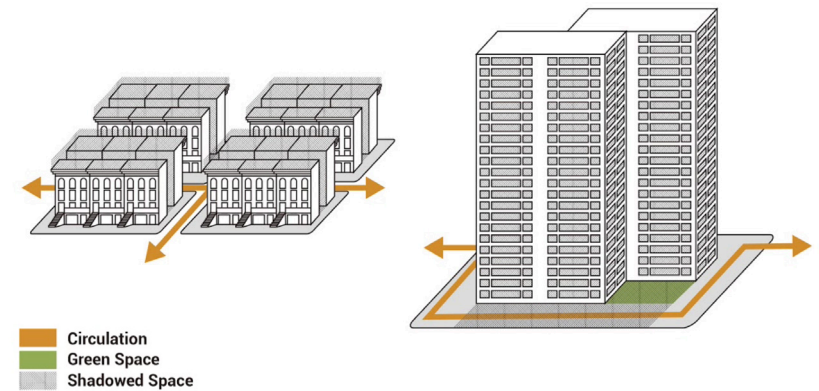
Building upon this evidence, three street sections are identifiable as critical corridors of Harlem Renaissance: West 135th Street between Fifth and Eighth Avenues, Lenox Avenue between 125th and 145th Streets, and Seventh Avenue between 125th and 145th Streets.

SUPERBLOCKS, SLUM CLEARANCE, AND THE UNEVENLY PRESERVED LANDSCAPE

Since the late 1930s, superblocks and block-scaled structures have emerged in Central Harlem and have significantly changed the historical streetscape of these corridors. These developments were partly rooted in or exacerbated by the government-led policies of slum clearance during the Harlem Renaissance.

A mapping of critical street corridors together with block-scaled redevelopments and proposed “bad condition” structures in the 1933-34 slum clearance map serve to inform this relationship. As discussed in the “Spatial Exclusion in Harlem” section, the slum clearance movement confined the Black population into the Harlem area and designated real properties in Harlem as “bad condition” structures or “slums” to be cleared. This led to the later development of public housing and civic infrastructure. The fact that West 135th Street was more susceptible to both proposed and executed streetscape changes than Lenox and Seventh Avenues – which were White-dominant arteries during the Renaissance – demonstrates certain selectiveness in urban form change, suggesting that labels from slum clearance efforts during the Harlem Renaissance helped to establish decades-long, repetitive patterns of large-scale, government-supported redevelopment, which, mainly through the forms of public housing and civic infrastructure (e.g. public schools, playgrounds, and hospitals), significantly altered the historic streetscape of Black Harlem. On the other hand, the loss of multiple community landmarks – among them the Savoy Ballroom, the Renaissance Ballroom, the Lafayette Theater, the Hotel Olga, and the Cotton Club – has also clearly reflected Harlem’s vulnerability to redevelopment, a situation deep-rooted in the social, spatial, and economic policies that could be traced to even earlier than redlining and slum clearance.

The unevenly distributed, block-scaled governmental redevelopments after the Harlem Renaissance, accompanied by more random individual projects, have caused various disparities in the preservation of the historic streetscape in today’s Harlem. Conditions of historic street walls differ from street to street, or even across different sides of the same street. With regards to the three identified critical corridors, a large portion of the streetscape on the south side of the West 135th Street corridor has been altered, as well as on the central section of Lenox Avenue near West 135th Street. Although there have also been superblock developments alongside Seventh Avenue, its central portion around West 135th Street is still largely intact.



Changing urban form and the inequitable effects on neighborhood circulation, access to street views, as well as the creation of green and shadowed space.

These changes in the historic streetscape not only changed spatial relationships and people’s activities and lifestyles, but also forged the repetition of unjust practices and established a structural legacy of racism. The power of eminent domain unfairly harmed the Black community in Harlem, under uneven institutional structures and power relations, by acquiring large tracts of land, razing tenements to the ground, closing the streets, and merging multiple blocks to form superblocks – both during the Renaissance and after (Murray 2016).

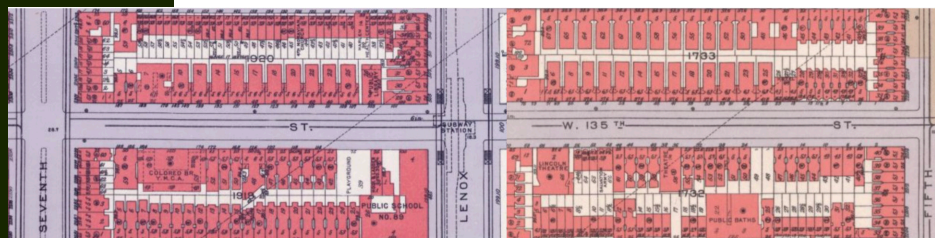
Another spatial implication of changes in Harlem’s streetscape lies in the modification of the street grid itself. The grid plan allows each building roughly the same potential for space. Superblocks undermine this equality. The equitable distribution of space in the street grid plan was undermined by policies and practices begun during the Harlem Renaissance; they completely altered the cityscape and devalued the significance of streets as interactive spaces.

The creation of superblocks changed pedestrian life and the relationship between people and the street. Instead of meeting on sidewalks, people were kept off the street and new activities appeared for internal public spaces formed by superblocks. Before the implementation of superblocks, people from each building had a view of the street; yet, with the rise of public housing and superblocks, many residents now can only see the space in between buildings.

WEST 135TH STREET CORRIDOR

As a crucial street corridor closely associated with Harlem's Black community, a significant portion of West 135 Street's street wall has been lost due to block-scaled redevelopment and the emergence of superblocks. Major post-Harlem Renaissance projects along the street include the Lenox Terrace residential complex (1958-1960), the Clayton Apartments (1963), the Henry. H. Garnet School (PS 175, 1963), the expansion of Harlem Hospital into a superblock between 135th and 137th Streets, and the accompanying construction of a middle school with a playground (1956; 1965; 2009; NYC ZoLa Data, n.d.). Generally speaking, the south side of the street has been subject to more severe alteration, while the central portion of its north side (between Lenox and Seventh Avenues) still retains its historic characteristics, featuring the historic 135th Street Library and a row of early tenement apartments opened for Black tenants, including the "Nail & Parker Building" (NY Public Library Digital Collections, n.d.).

Severe as the streetscape change is, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge the significance of new construction to the Black community of Harlem. These newly built schools and Harlem Hospital provided services to the neighborhoods around them. Lenox Terrace, as the first housing project in Harlem catering to upper-middle class Black tenants, became "Harlem's best address" and housed various famous Harlemites, including Nipsey Russell, Percy Sutton, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Governor Davis Peterson, and Congressman Charlie Rangel (Salles 2020). Moreover, individual developments such as the NY Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture celebrates the significance and historic connections of Harlem's Black community, and thereby serves as an anchor for the neighborhood.



Top: Historic map of West 135th Street (Bromley Fire Insurance Map, 1934).
Bottom: Current map of West 135th Street, 2021.

The streetscape-changing redevelopments achieved new social-spatial significance at the cost of wiping out the continuous scenery of prosperity embedded in West 135th Street's historic streetscape. As new construction continues and can be encountered on a daily basis, the spatial encounters of the historic streetscape of Harlem Renaissance have been greatly compromised. This situation raises the question of how to revitalize Harlem Renaissance spatial encounters along the West 135th Street corridor to create a symbiosis between the old streetscape and the new streetscape, an issue that will be further explored in the "Proposals" section.



Between Fifth and Lenox Avenues, south side, c. 1940.



Between Lenox and Seventh Avenues, Harlem YMCA, c. 1940.



Between Lenox and Seventh Avenues, north side (135th Street Library and Nail & Parker Building), 1915.



Between Fifth and Lenox Avenues post-Harlem Renaissance, the construction of Lenox Terrace, c. 1958.



Between Lenox and Seventh Avenues, Harlem YMCA, 2021.



Between Lenox and Seventh Avenues, north side (135th Street Library and Nail & Parker Building), 2021.

SEVENTH AVENUE

Another critical historic corridor that has undergone significant changes is Seventh Avenue. During the Harlem Renaissance, Seventh Avenue was a center of vibrant nightlife. It was nicknamed the "Boulevard of Dreams." In 1934, Seventh Avenue was widened because of its commercial and entertainment prosperity. It continues to be bustling today. This photo comparison demonstrates many changes, using the Alhambra Building in the yellow frame as a reference. The six-story Alhambra used to be the highest point, but now it is dwarfed by the state office skyscraper. The street interface material used to be dominated by warm-colored masonry and terra cotta built in classical forms, while now there are simple and modern forms with white and gray glass and metal facades. Street furniture, road lamps, traffic signs, and trees on roadsides have been added, making the streets more orderly.



Seventh Avenue, 1937.



Seventh Avenue, 2021.

WEST 125TH STREET

Similarly, redevelopment has dramatically altered the scale relationships of another key corridor: West 125th Street. Today, it is a commercial and cultural artery under governmental planning and still holds this narrative advantage within Harlem. This forms a contrast with the counternarratives of West 135th Street and Lenox Avenue, as discussed previously. This photo comparison elucidates the changes in building height, interface material, and street furniture along the same section of West 125th Street, as well as the removal of the elevated trains and trolleys.



West 125th Street, 1919.



West 125th Street, 2021.

"JUNGLE ALLEY"

Beyond primary arteries, other smaller but important corridors have undergone changes that also affected the intergenerational transfer of Harlem Renaissance's historic narratives. During the Jazz Era, there were at least twenty jazz clubs along West 133rd Street, which was well-known as "Swing Street" and "Jungle Alley." However, many of these clubs were forced to close after the Harlem Uprising of 1935, and this street was also impacted by the subsequent protest in 1964. Today, "Jungle Alley" has become a quiet residential street, with few traces of its storied past.



"Jungle Alley" 2021 street view with 1964 Uprising image overlay.



"Jungle Alley," residential district, 2020.

"STRIVERS' ROW"

There are also historic corridors preserved well since the Harlem Renaissance – "Strivers' Row" is an example. Strivers' Row refers to two residential blocks along West 138th and 139th Streets between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Many prominent Harlem Renaissance luminaries lived there. Today, the roadside trees have grown higher, but the historic characters of row houses are well preserved. These blocks were designated as an early historic district, and form a graceful vista and a main tourist attraction in Harlem.



"Strivers' Row," 1935.



"Strivers' Row," 2020.

THE RENAISSANCE BALLROOM AND CASINO

While the Harlem Renaissance is primarily recognized for literary and artistic contributions, many of the era's other narratives are underrepresented due to the physical loss of key built spaces. The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, for example, was central to communal pride and Harlem values during the Renaissance. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (2007) noted that the space "embodied the heart and soul of what the Harlem Renaissance was all about" and was "where many of Harlem's more dignified events took place," including the annual award dinners held by the NAACP's periodical, *The Crisis*, union and club meetings, concerts and entertainment, and basketball games. The Black-owned space was home to the Harlem "Rens," an all-Black champion basketball team named after the establishment, which was owned and managed by Black leadership and travelled the country proudly representing their home court.

Neighboring the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino was the Abyssinian Baptist Church, which has been identified as a key steward of Harlem. Constructed in 1922 on West 138th Street, it also neighbored the UNIA's Liberty Hall and the YWCA building. All except for the YWCA were Black-owned establishments and, just like the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, they too played key roles during the Renaissance in providing space for culinary arts, education, and political activism. Of these buildings, only the Abyssinian Church remains. Both the YWCA and the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino were demolished under the purview of the Abyssinian Development Corporation – highlighting its ability to persist but also underscoring the erasure of diverse and underrepresented narratives.



The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, c. 1925.



Construction of the Abyssinian Baptist Church looking southwest with views of the YWCA building (highlighted left) and the Renaissance Ballroom & Casino (highlighted right), 1922.

Upon the death of the building's owner, the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino building steadily fell into disrepair. Then, in 1991, Abyssinian's Reverend and founder of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, Calvin O. Butts, purchased the property with the intent to create a cultural space for Harlem. However, the building continued to sit unoccupied.

While the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission considered designating the building, Reverend Butts, alongside former Mayor David Dinkins and other notable members of the neighborhood, strongly advocated against the designation. They argued that they had plans to adaptively reuse the building for a large housing complex that would sit atop the original structure. The structure continued to sit unoccupied and a minor league basketball team for the State of New York even considered taking up residence, claiming the building to be the birthplace of the NBA; however, these efforts never came to fruition. In 2014, the developer BRP Corporations purchased the property and the lots surrounding from Abyssinian Development for fifteen million dollars. Despite a preservation battle with some members of the community who called its demolition a "genocide of culture," the "Renny," as the original Renaissance Ballroom and Casino was called, was demolished and turned into luxury apartments that now go by that same nickname.



Abyssinian Baptist Church, c. 2020.



The Rennie luxury apartments, 2021.

THE SAVOY BALLROOM

The creation of superblocks also precipitated the loss of crucial community landmarks, such as the Savoy Ballroom, demolished in 1959. The Savoy Ballroom was a special place for Black entertainers and spectators to gather, and the establishment brought life to the surrounding neighborhood. In this case of urban renewal, community interaction was lost both inside the building and on the street. The urban renewal project to create NYCHA housing ruptured the street wall, and previous interactions as well as important heritage were lost. Lost interactions and changed streetscapes raise questions about how such large-scale redevelopment, under the guise of community development and affordable housing, have continued patterns of racism and exclusion.



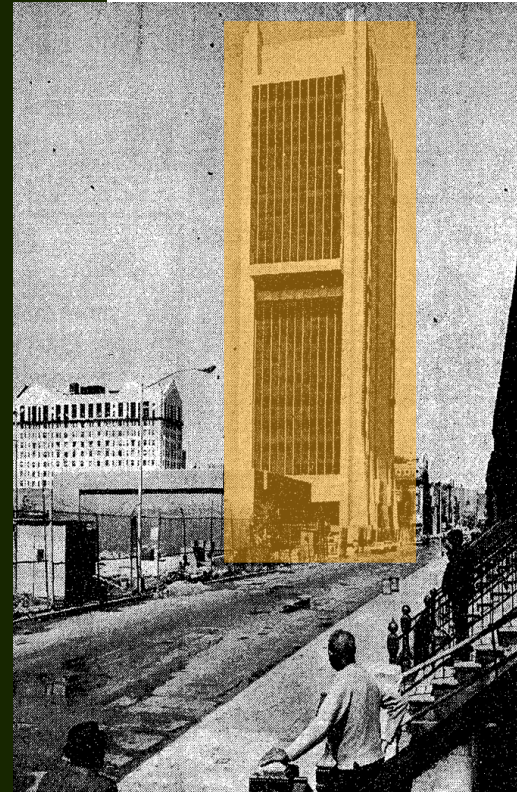
The Savoy Ballroom at night, c. 1950.



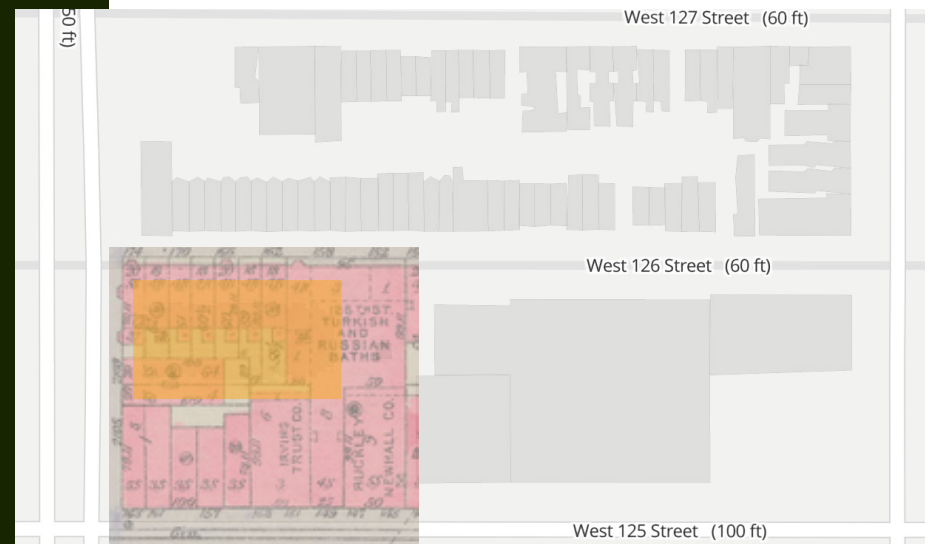
Original site of the Savoy Ballroom, 2021.

HARLEM STATE OFFICE BUILDING

One case that illustrates how the government acted as a developer within the neighborhood is the Harlem State Office Building, located at 163 West 125th Street. The building was fully constructed in 1973 and renamed the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building in 1983. To build this structure, a number of row houses, a Corn Exchange Bank building, and the Turkish baths were demolished. The construction also forced the African National Bookstore to relocate and disoriented the space where prominent soapbox speakers had mounted their stepladders during the Renaissance. The Brutalist structure, designed by the Black-owned and operated architecture firm Ifill Johnson Hanchard, was highly contested because it displaced a number of residents while claiming that it would provide jobs for the neighborhood. Many residents had doubts that this goal would be realized as seen in the statement recorded by the *New York Times* that “they’re talking about how many jobs this building’s gonna have, and when you come to look for one they tell you they can’t get none” (Hunter 1974). As shown by the row houses and nineteenth-century office building in this photo, the spatial environment has drastically changed. The building was set farther back within the lot, creating a plaza space between the office building and the street.



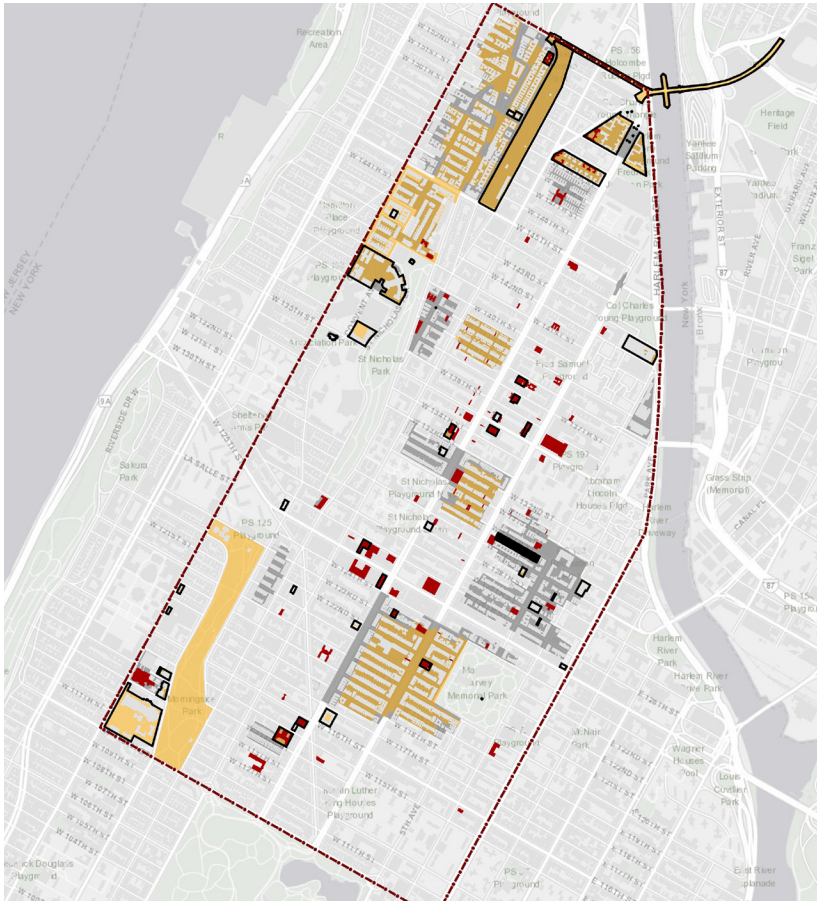
Harlem State Office Building, 1974.



Present-day building footprints with 1930 Sanborn map overlay and Harlem State Office highlighted.

ENDURING INSTITUTIONS

Enduring institutions were a recurring theme that emerged from interviews with connector organizations and community research. While all of the identified connector organizations have some link to the legacy of the Renaissance, there are a few that have deeper roots and longer histories that can be traced back even before this period of time. The way these institutions have formed bonds within the community and helped enhance the intellectual and physical establishment of Harlem fully demonstrates how a community can overcome great loss. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, as well as several other key connectors, characterize this trait of “support over loss” by constantly providing opportunities for community members to uplift themselves from situations of poverty and prejudice.



TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

DESIGNATION AND LISTING

Multiple endeavors to preserve the built heritage of Harlem have taken place in the past decades. A map of existing historic districts and designated properties (NYC LPC historic districts; LPC scenic and individual landmarks; and National Register listed and eligible properties) shows a relationship of both correlation and difference between the existing preservation narratives and the studio's stance on the heritage of the Harlem Renaissance. On one hand, several key historic districts and historic assets of the studio have been designated (e.g., "Strivers' Row" and the Dunbar Apartments); on the other hand, significant corridors such as West 135th Street have yet to be protected with historic districting, and there is only limited overlap between the studio's historic assets and the currently designated structures and areas.

Currently, there are ten NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) Historic Districts in the study area; among them are St. Nicholas (1967), Mount Morris (1971), Hamilton Heights (1974), Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill (2000), Central Harlem-West 130th-132nd Streets (2018), and their subsequent extensions. Each of their designation reports, to different extents, acknowledge Black residents' contributions to the history and historic significance within their perimeters.

Of the ninety-two extant building assets in the study area identified by the studio, fifteen are currently NYC LPC-landmarked. Among them are six religious institutions (Abyssinian Baptist Church, Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church, Harlem YMCA, Mother AME Zion Church, St. Philip's Episcopal Church, and St. Martin's Episcopal Church), four residential complexes (Dunbar Apartments, 409 Edgecombe Avenue, Harlem River Houses, and Langston Hughes House), two theaters (Apollo and Regent), and individual structures such as Hotel Theresa, the 135th Street Library, and Wadleigh High School. Given the properties currently designated, religion, literary arts, performing

CURRENT DESIGNATIONS



LPC INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS



EXTANT HISTORIC BUILDING ASSETS



LPC HISTORIC DISTRICT &
SCENIC LANDMARK

NATIONAL REGISTER /
NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBLE

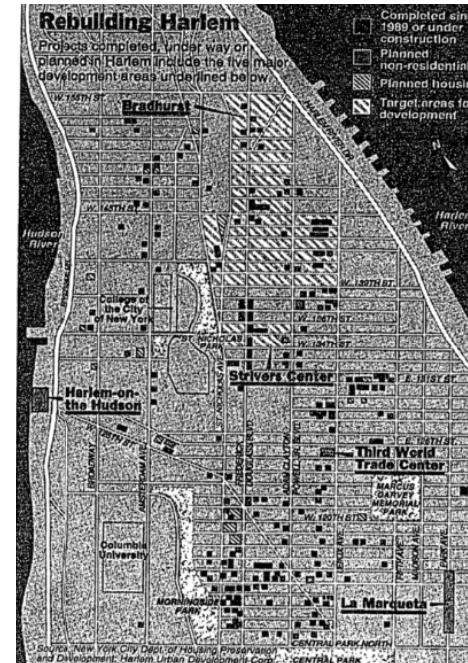
arts, and the residences of Harlem Renaissance luminaries have formed the preservation enterprise's mainstream narrative of the Harlem Renaissance. This raises the question of counternarratives and how to preserve a more balanced image of the Harlem Renaissance's cultural and spatial relics.

PRESERVATION DRIVERS

The LPC designations in the study area occurred in a cluster around the early 1990s. This paralleled the rise of Black narratives in designation reports, which reached a peak in 1993. This cluster of landmarking emerged due to various reasons. Starting from the mid-1980s, Harlem had been identified as a target for revitalization and redevelopment by the government. Housing was the top priority of the city at that time, followed by revitalizing commercial areas. The Bradhurst project was a centerpiece of this redevelopment. Located from 135th Street to 155th Street, the city owned 60% of buildings in the area, which contained about five thousand residential units. Half of that number was rehabilitated into affordable housing. In the map at right, the Black dots scattered all over Harlem represent buildings rehabilitated or under construction 1989 and 1994. The large, hatched area to the north was the main target area for development. The goal was to attract businesses and people back to Harlem after the outward emigration from the 1950s through the 1980s.

These redevelopments were made possible because of the administration of Mayor Ed Koch (1978-1989). In 1986, Mayor Koch started a revitalization plan for Central Harlem. He came up with a ten-year plan that poured five-point-one billion dollars into the area. Most of the projects were housing. The plan was continued by the following administration under Mayor David Dinkins (1990-1993). He was a Harlemit and the first African American mayor for New York City. Charles Rangel, a Democrat from Harlem, also supported the urban empowerment zone for Harlem.

All of these factors became a part of preservation actions in Harlem in the early 1990s. The LPC proposed twenty-five structures to be landmarked in Harlem in 1991, an unprecedented number. A force behind the designation was the new LPC chairwoman, Laurie Beckelman (1990-1993), whose main policy was to focus on underserved areas like Harlem. Another reason was that Mayor Dinkins was from Harlem. However, the designation process was not easy. "It was a nightmare. It was very difficult. People were exceptionally abusive. It was very distrustful," said Beckelman in an interview with the New York Preservation Archive Project (New York Preservation Archive Project

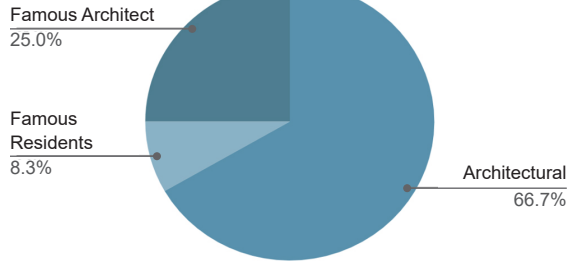


'Rebuilding Harlem' map from the New York Times, 1994.

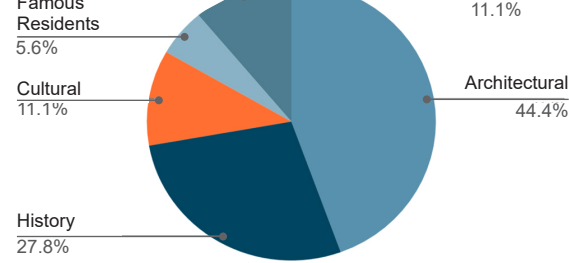
2011). She and the LPC worked closely with local leaders, including the Borough President, Ruth Messinger, and Reverend Calvin O. Butts, founder and chair of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, to make the public hearing possible. The hearing eventually took place during the day at the state building on 125th Street. However, the process was intensely inhospitable. Harlem residents yelled at the commission: "Why are we here, aren't we good enough to be downtown at City Hall? We are working people, why are we holding a hearing during the day? We work up here." More residents commented, "Why did you only start with these buildings, there is so much more, this is nothing. What you're doing here, how dare you do it this way?" After the hearing, the LPC had to work carefully with several organizations like the Landmarks Conservancy and the Municipal Art Society. Eventually, they managed to designate about half of those proposed.

However, the designation process was very slow in the Harlem residents' eyes. Only thirteen out of twenty-five proposed structures were landmarked from 1991 to 1994. There was no action taken on other buildings at all. They felt they were neglected again. Some residents took action to put pressure on the LPC. Among them was Michael Henry Adams, a local preservationist and a writer about historic Harlem. He said that "It is not a kind of racism where someone calls you a name.... It's the worst kind where they just ignore you. It is an

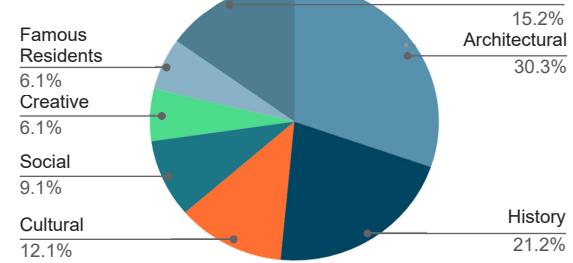
1960s



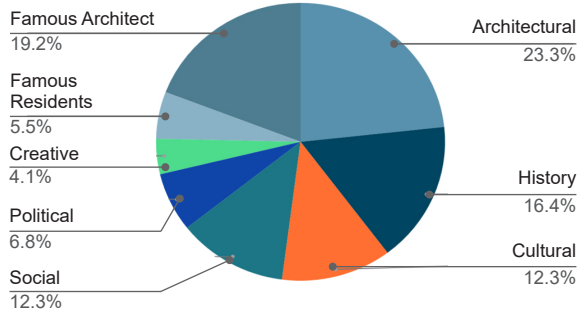
1970s



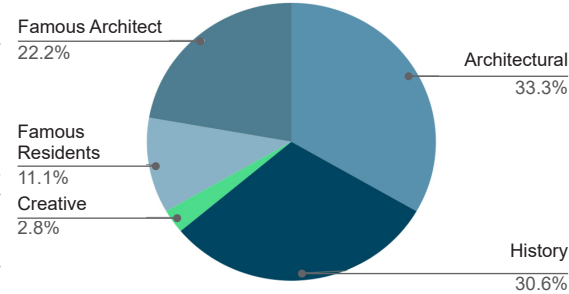
1980s



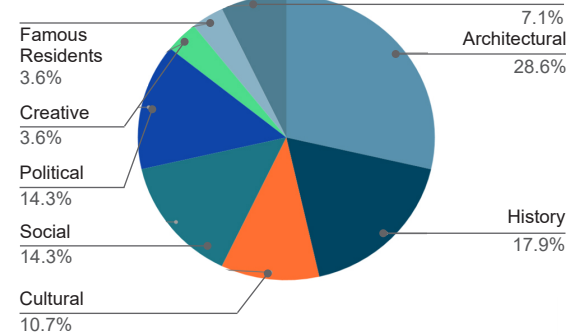
1990s



2000s



2010s



Diversity in the areas of significance in LPC designation reports, 1966-2020.

utter scandal that the incredible architectural and cultural heritages can be destroyed when we have a law in place to protect it. But it is being used in an inequitable way." This kind of preservation advocacy was not new in Harlem. In fact, before the 1990s, there were two organizations advocating for the preservation of Harlem's physical heritage – the Emanuel Pieterston Historical Society and the Upper Manhattan Society for Progress Through Preservation. They put pressure on the LPC to designate the 369th Regiment Armory and the Harlem River Houses, which were successfully landmarked in 1985 and 1975, respectively. Thus, there had been bottom-up efforts in Harlem too, not just top-down efforts.

Unlike the LPC, the National Register listings in Harlem were concentrated in the early 1970s to mid-1980s. Listed typologies around this time ranged from residential, like Langston Hughes' house, to religious structures, like St. Andrew Church, and commercial venues, represented by the Apollo Theater.

PRESERVATION NARRATIVES OF NYC LANDMARKS DESIGNATION

Since 1966, when the first structure was designated in Harlem, the significance narratives in LPC designation reports have become more diverse throughout the decades. In the 1960s, the reports were only about architecture, architects, and famous residents. Slowly, they came to incorporate other themes. By the 2010s, history and cultural, social, creative, and political value have emerged in designation reports as keywords.

Harlem has been the capital of Black America since the Harlem Renaissance, which has resulted in Black history appearing in nearly half of the designation reports. Many reports discussed how Harlem transformed into the most major Black neighborhood in New York City. However, the Harlem Renaissance is only discussed in about 9% of the LPC reports. The narratives representing the

Harlem Renaissance have focused on significant figures and leaders of Black communities at the time. For example, the Apollo Theater was designated because of the countless renowned artists who performed there, such as Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington; 409 Edgecombe Avenue was designated because of its luminary residents, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Aaron Douglas, and Thurgood Marshall; likewise, the Harlem Branch of the YMCA was significant due to its residents as well as the political actions that happened there.

Moreover, the critical issue of segregation was mentioned in only 8% of the designation reports. For example, the Jackie Robinson Play Center, designated in 2007, mentioned racism and redlining in its era. The designation report for Hotel Theresa mentioned its segregation of White and Black patrons before 1940.

Since its establishment in 1965, the LPC has designated 1,439 individual landmarks and 151 historic districts across New York City (Landmarks Preservation Commission, n.d.). These designations aim to protect buildings and sites that possess architectural, historical, and cultural significance. They are also a way to celebrate, recognize, and claim certain narratives that pertain to the place. In the study area, there are fifty-three individual landmarks and ten historic districts. In the first two decades of LPC, landmarks in Harlem were mainly religious structures, such as St. Martin's Episcopal Church and Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church. There were also places that were related to famous residents, including Hamilton Grange and the Langston Hughes House. Moreover, residential and commercial venues like the Dunbar Apartments and the Apollo Theater were designated as well. One can see a diversified nature in terms of the typologies of the designated buildings. The areas of significance that were discussed in the designation reports of the landmarks in the study area have grown more diversified throughout the decades.

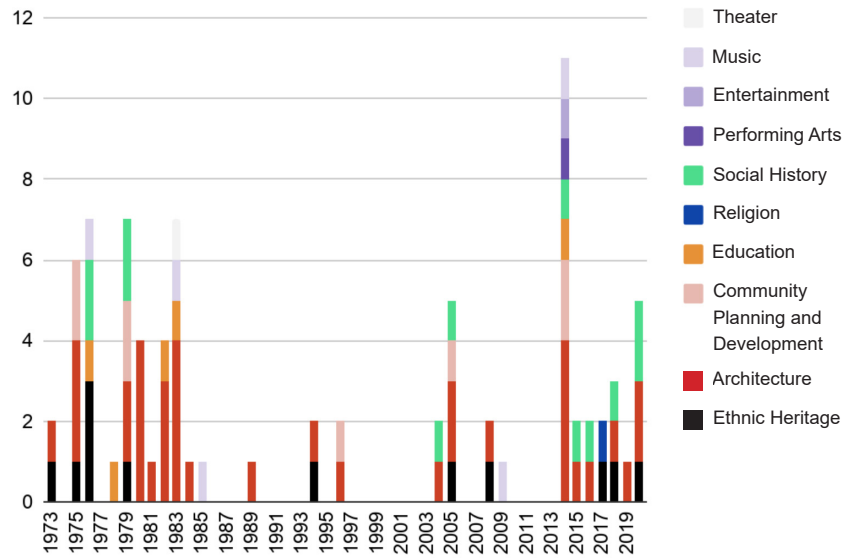
When it comes to famous figures in the foreground of the Harlem Renaissance landmarks, W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes have been mentioned the most. Other community leaders represented have included, but not limited to, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and Jimmie Lunceford. These names reflect dominant narratives in the preservation field when tied to the studio's fourteen historic context themes. Literary Arts and Publishing, Performing Arts, and Political Activism have been in the foreground, while other significant aspects, like Journalism and Business, were never mentioned. Landmark typologies pertaining to these figures were dominated



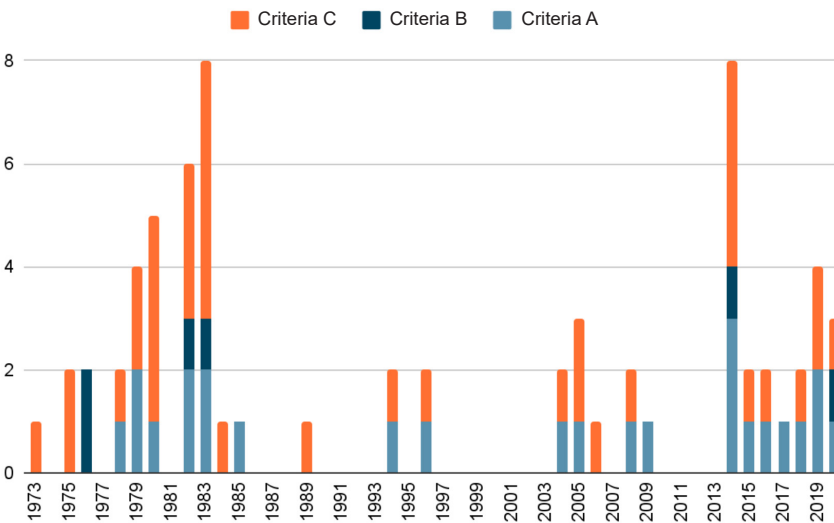
Famous individuals in LPC designation reports, 1966-2020.



Historic contexts represented in LPC designation reports, 1966-2020.



National Register significance narratives in the studio study area, 1973-2020.



Architectural significance (Criterion C) predominates in National Register listings in the studio study area.

by residential architecture, like the Langston Hughes House, 409 Edgecombe Avenue, and the Dunbar Apartments. There were two religious buildings – the Abyssinian Baptist Church and Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The LPC designations' limited representation of narratives and building typologies is a significant topic worth discussing further: for example, most of the luminaries discussed in the reports were men. Female and LGBT+ contributors were rarely mentioned. This raises questions about underrepresented publics in the designation reports.

PRESERVATION NARRATIVES OF NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

The themes of significance in the National Register of Historic Places have been more diverse. Besides architecture, narratives such as ethnic heritage, performing arts, entertainment, planning and development, and social history have also been represented. However, the reports were dominated by Criteria C, which emphasizes architectural significance. Moreover, when significance narratives were compared to the studio's fourteen historic context themes, Segregation and Design and Visual Arts came to the foreground, while other important themes, such as Performing Arts, Literary Arts and Publishing, and Political Activism were rarely mentioned.

MEMORIALIZED SPACES

Beyond designation, memorials and markers serve as another traditional tool of preservation. Based on a mapping of memorialized spaces, the studio found that only three of the non-surviving historic assets have been given physical monuments on their original sites to memorialize their stories: the Savoy Ballroom, the Big Apple Restaurant, and "Tree of Hope." For extant assets, only six of them have bronze plaques affixed to interpret their significance.

These memorials and markers facilitate spatial encounters with lost history, but most of the demolished historic assets, such as the Lafayette Theater, Rockland Palace, and hundreds of nightclubs during the Renaissance, are not noted or memorialized. They have just been replaced by new buildings with new functions, with no identifiability for visitors without previous research. Therefore, while there have been examples of the use of markers in Harlem, there are not many, and their use is not systematic or consistent. Markers still represent a potentially underutilized tool for instrumentalizing heritage and histories toward anti-racism.

REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

CONNECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Many organizations can be considered caretakers of Harlem, guarding both its community and its built environment. The studio identified fifty-three connector organizations through student research, sixteen of which provided interviews (see Appendices C and D).

The interviews conducted for the studio identified several clusters of missions among connector organizations, including funding, planning of tourism around historic districts, advocating for preservation (through art, advocacy, or a more traditional and hands-on approach), and community engagement and service. Confronting anti-Black racism has been an underlying mission of these organizations, no matter what orientations or approaches are utilized. Most organizations encounter the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance socially or spatially, as they work with the community. As their commitments often overlap, the organizations often work together. For example, SaveHarlemNow works with a wide range of organizations in their preservation advocacy; meanwhile, Harlem Week, organized every year by the greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, brings local businesses and arts together.

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

Each student had the opportunity to interview at least two of the identified key connector organizations. Interviews were driven by several pre-designed questions but were open ended, allowing additional questions more directed at understanding the specific role each organization plays in Harlem. Comparing and contrasting interview responses sheds light on how people and organizations establish connections with Harlem.

Interviewees were asked to provide three words to describe the Harlem Renaissance and the Harlem community today. On the Harlem Renaissance, the impressions mostly concentrated on its cultural significance as a critical period for arts and creativity. On today's Harlem, the impressions are still generally positive, but certain challenges are addressed – most typically, gentrification and other potential changes to the historic fabric.



Three words interviewees used to describe the Harlem Renaissance.



Three words interviewees used to describe Harlem today.



The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino before demolition, 2014.



LPC designated the Central Harlem Historic District, 2018.

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES AND HISTORIC ASSETS

Three of the historic structures mentioned most frequently in interviews are shown here: the Renaissance Ballroom, the Central Harlem Historic District, and the Marcus Garvey Park Fire Watchtower. The loss of the Renaissance Ballroom is still felt by community members, and several have gone as far as saying that they want it back. The Central Harlem Historic District and the Marcus Garvey Park Fire Watchtower were both mentioned in interviews as realized projects that were important to the community. The preservation of these buildings means more to Harlemites than just the survival of old buildings; it shows that the heritage and the community of Harlem are alive, and have been alive, for a long time.

The historic places and assets mentioned in the interviews centered around certain narratives. People see theaters and the performing arts as the most major symbols of the Harlem Renaissance legacy. Harlemites are also proud of the architectural features typical to the neighborhood, especially the brownstone row houses and Strivers' Row, their first historic district. The churches have acted as critical interactive spaces during the Renaissance and today, and in terms of parks and playgrounds, people want to preserve not only the physical environment, but also the namesakes (for example, the Marcus Garvey Park) to represent African American history and to empower anti-racist narratives.



The Marcus Garvey Park Fire Watchtower restoration, 2015.



The Victoria Theater.



REDEFINING AGENCY

Through public programming activities, many organizations are able to reconnect community members with the values of the Harlem Renaissance. They address social-spatial legacies of the Renaissance in various ways: among these approaches are Harlem Grown's work on local agriculture, Harlem Writers Guild's support for African American writers, Harlem School of the Arts reactivating memories of the performing arts, and Harlem Park to Park and Uptown Grand Central creating platforms for local businesses. These are just a few examples of a breadth of connector organizations redefining social agency and justice in Harlem today.

There are apparent intersections between these dynamic activities and historic preservation. There are more opportunities to break through the barriers between traditional preservation tools and redefined agency to empower the local community, which provides the impetus for the proposals in the next section.

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

While all of the connectors shared a great appreciation for the history of the Harlem Renaissance and the historical landscape that exists today, the approaches to embracing that heritage are sometimes in tension, especially pertaining to tourism development. The Victoria Theatre is a typical case. Some community members felt that the way that space was claimed was unjust, while business-oriented organizations felt that adaptive reuse projects could be great tools for revitalizing the community with tourism.

INTERACTIVE SPACE TODAY

The interactive space of Harlem during the Renaissance was characterized in the word cloud as dynamic. Today's connector organizations claim interactive space with a large variety of approaches; more importantly, these interactions each serve a different purpose, such as educating the community, promoting healthy exercise practices, providing entertainment, growing produce, and providing space for political gatherings. There is always a need for more space, and interviews provided insight into how some spaces have increased in demand. For example, because of Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter Movement, community members have utilized the parks more than ever for social gatherings and political movement meetings.

Lenox Avenue at West 135th Street, 1939.



PROPOSALS

Students developed nine proposal ideas for the Harlem community to consider, exploring how the heritage of the Harlem Renaissance – broadly defined – might be creatively encountered and instrumentalized to advance anti-racism. Proposals were sparked by conversations with connector organization representatives and underpinned by the evidence developed through the historic contexts and assets research, social-spatial analyses, and key issues examination. These nine proposals are diverse in scope and approach, ranging from spatial interventions to social and internet-based platforms, and they involve various methodologies to reimagine preservation, spatial encounter, and anti-racism. These proposals were crafted as “next steps” rather than comprehensive “solutions” or projects, and are intended to serve as inspiration for promoting dialogue and action.

LIST OF PROPOSALS

- > Adaptive Reuse of Langston Hughes House
- > Churches as Connector Spaces
- > Empowering Entrepreneurs in Harlem
- > Interpretive Installations of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino
- > Reclaiming Encounters: Reviving the Legacy of Block 2006
- > A Backdrop to the Coming of Age: 135th Street Sidewalk Design
- > Knowledge Transfer of Underrepresented Narratives
- > Intergenerational Connection of Female Social Clubs
- > “New Connections, New Perspectives” Website

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF LANGSTON HUGHES HOUSE

Jonathan Clemente, Jianing Wei

This proposal aims to create interactive space and improve community well-being through education in gardening, African American literature, and art. The proposed programs also aim to foster creative expression via literature and art, and provide a case for counternarrating the heritage of African American residences in Harlem. The house would remain a private residence with public activities for both the Harlem community and other visitors. This proposal relies on a multi-organization collaboration and includes a writers' and artists' residency, public programming and workshops, and a community gardening initiative.



Orthoimage of Langston Hughes House. 3D scanning survey from Spring 2021 Digital Heritage Documentation class, annotated by Jianing Wei.

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION

CLAIMING GEOGRAPHIES

CONTROLLING PROPERTY AND ASSETS

DESIGNING SPACES

> CREATING INTERACTIVE SPACE

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

> FORMING PROSPERITY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

> ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

> COUNTERNARRATING

CONFRONTING DIVIDES

CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS

LOSS AND SURVIVAL

> INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF HERITAGE

> REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

BACKGROUND, SIGNIFICANCE, AND RATIONALE

This row house with a brownstone facade on East 127th Street is where one of the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, lived for the last twenty years of his life. It is the most tangible symbol of his association with Harlem, and it is vital to Harlem's history.

Based on the studio's historic assets research, we mapped the residences of well-known figures of the Harlem Renaissance. There are a number in our study area, of which nineteen out of twenty-two are extant. Six of the surviving residences are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, are designated NYC landmarks, or both. However, none of these famous Harlemites' homes is open to the public to commemorate their former owners'

contributions to African American history and culture. The designation only applies to building exteriors, treating these historic residences as museum pieces of architecture rather than commemorating the people who lived there. We propose cultural programming in the Langston Hughes House to allow for more engagement with the space and Hughes' legacy, integrating the past and present, and giving people today an opportunity to encounter this history.

DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

We propose a semi-public space that includes a writers' residency on the upper two floors, a communal and exhibit space on the lower two floors, and "Our Block's Children's Garden" in the exterior gardens.



Langston Hughes and the "Our Block's Children's Garden," 1955.



Overview of proposal. 3D scanning survey from Spring 2021 Digital Heritage Documentation class, annotated by Jianing Wei.

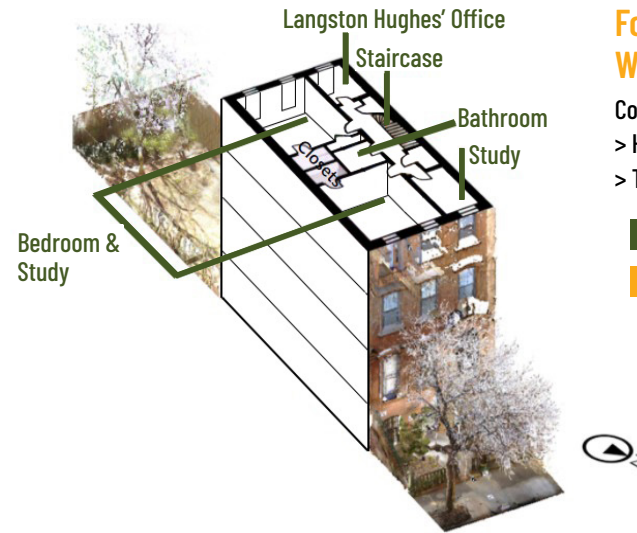
PROGRAMMING 1: WRITERS' RESIDENCY

The writers' residency would occupy the top two floors of the house. The residency would work in cooperation with a historically Black college or university (HBCU), such as Pennsylvania, Lincoln, or Clark Atlanta Universities, to find initial funding and select scholars. Langston Hughes attended Lincoln University (1929) and taught at Atlanta University in 1949, so these institutions could be vested collaborators. The nearby Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture on Malcolm X Boulevard at West 135th Street would serve as an important resource, as it already has a scholars-in-residence program. The Langston Hughes House residency could be an extension of that program.

The collaborating HBCU would create a scholarship that affords several recent graduates from the fields of creative writing, Black history, and the visual arts the chance to work on an anthology project while living in the Langston Hughes House. This would echo the legacy of the publication *Fire!!* and the now-demolished free rooming house on 136th Street, where many Renaissance-era artists and literati lived. This would afford space to contemporary scholars and artists to create works in the context of Harlem.

The graduate residents would be required to provide semi-weekly "private" tours of the house that could showcase Langston Hughes' office, which would be kept as a preserved space within the house. The scholars could also host rent parties, four times a year, in the tradition of the Harlem Renaissance as a means of augmenting funding.

The third floor would be a continuation of the residency program, dedicated more specifically to visual arts graduates. On this floor, we propose two bedrooms with studios inside, a separate studio, and a bathroom. The third and fourth floors would remain private, except for Langston Hughes' office during occasional tours. The anthology, produced by the artists and scholars as a product of their tenure in residence, could also be developed as an exhibition in the public event hall on the second floor.

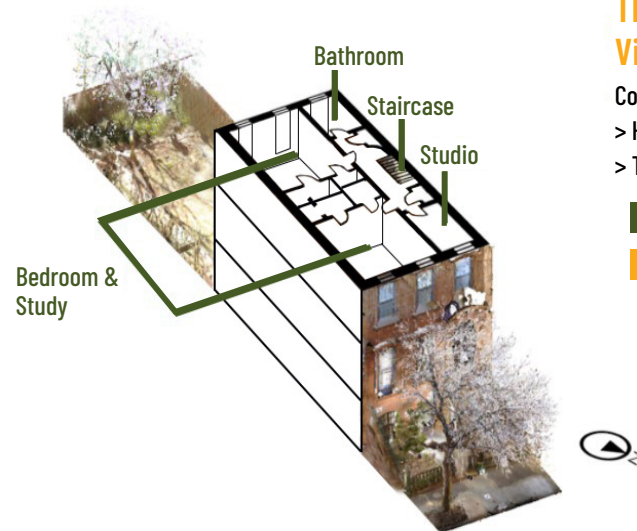


Fourth floor programming. 3D scanning survey from Spring 2021 Digital Heritage Documentation class, annotated by Jianing Wei.

The Writers' Residency: Fourth Floor Writing & Black History

Connector:

- > Historically Black College
- > The Schomburg Center



Third floor programming. 3D scanning survey from Spring 2021 Digital Heritage Documentation class, annotated by Jianing Wei.

The Writers' Residency: Third Floor Visual Arts

Connector:

- > Historically Black College
- > The Schomburg Center



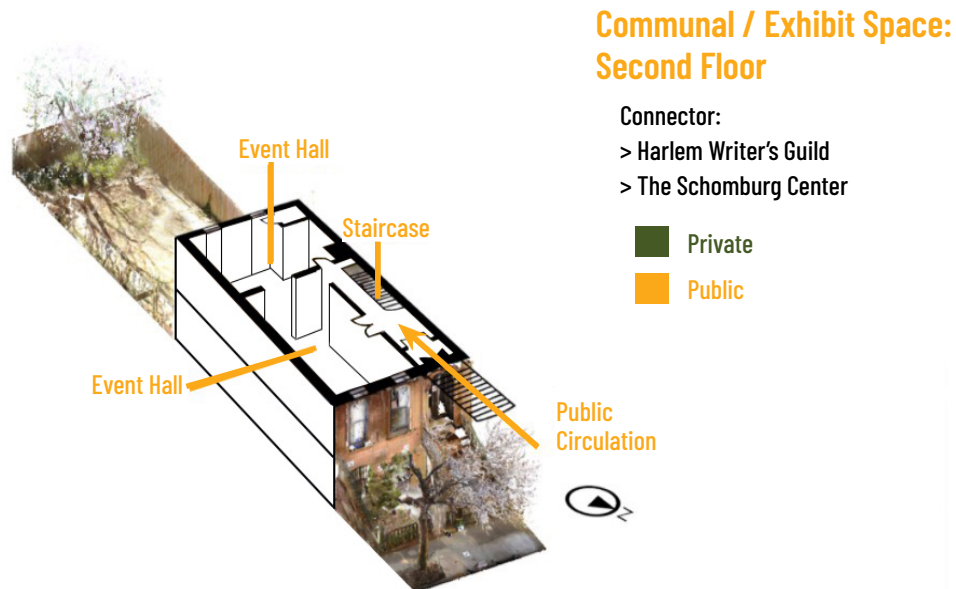
PROGRAMMING 2: EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

The second floor includes two large rooms, which could be used as event spaces to hold public programs. In cooperation with the Harlem Writers Guild, we suggest events for writers like salons, open poetry nights, and community writing workshops in this space. At the same time, the Schomburg Center could manage and provide materials for temporary public exhibitions related to African American Harlemites. Public exhibitions would be held periodically as part of an effort to make this house more meaningful for neighborhood residents.

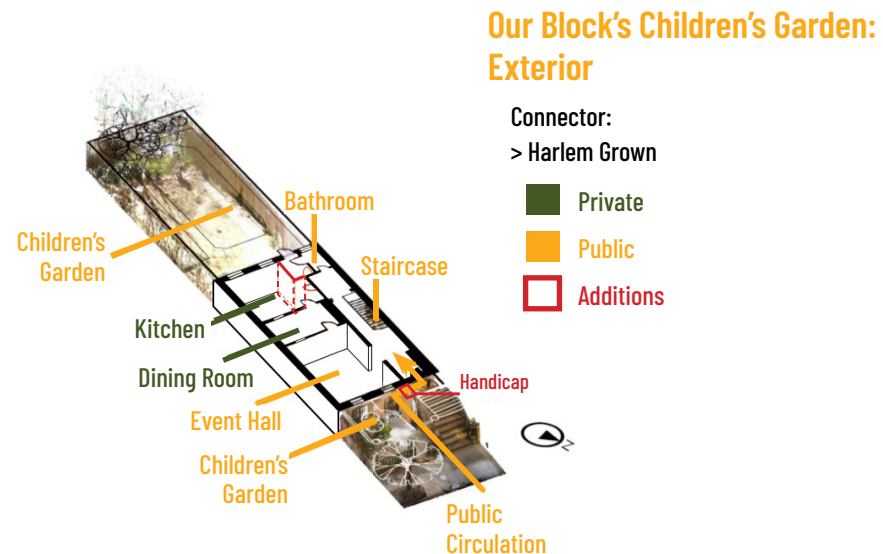
On the first floor, the parlor could be used as a smaller and more intimate event space for community and public activities. In the diagram, the public and private spaces would be separated by added partitions and doors, shown in red. The private portion refers to the kitchen and dining room spaces, for use by the writers in residence on the upper floors. Handicap accessibility from the exterior would need to be addressed if the first and second floors are made semi-public, but that is beyond the scope of this proposal. Interior accessibility between the first and second floors might be achieved through a stair lift, thereby minimizing change to the historic integrity of the space.

PROGRAMMING 3: OUR BLOCK'S CHILDREN'S GARDEN

On the exterior, a community garden would be created in the front and in the back of the house. This program attempts to honor Langston Hughes' memory by recreating what he called "Our Block's Children's Garden," which he established as a way to teach the children in his community about the importance of gardening for Harlem. An organization – hopefully Harlem Grown – would manage the garden, while the post-graduate scholars would work within the house. Harlem Grown already has teaching programs with their own gardens, and this could become an extension of that work.



Second floor programming. 3D scanning survey from Spring 2021 Digital Heritage Documentation class, annotated by Jianing Wei.



First floor programming. 3D scanning survey from Spring 2021 Digital Heritage Documentation class, annotated by Jianing Wei.

CHURCHES AS CONNECTOR SPACES

Jesse Kling

This proposal engages the role that Black churches in Harlem historically served to create key interactive spaces during the Harlem Renaissance. Within recent decades, a confluence of factors associated with demographic and social change has resulted in shrinking congregations within many of these historic churches. Simultaneously, mounting costs for maintaining historic church spaces, as well as real estate pressure, have imposed formidable strain upon already modest church coffers. By instrumentalizing both existing and potential new relationships between churches and community organizations, this proposal seeks to strengthen stakeholder investment in the vitality of Harlem's threatened religious spaces.

CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In outlining this proposal, it is imperative to acknowledge and consider a number of factors. First, because this proposal speaks to the involvement of religiously active church spaces, the potential use of such spaces may be limited by congregations' understanding of the sanctity of their space. Church congregations bear ownership of these spaces and worship there, and thus their interpretation of appropriate uses of church space must be the foremost consideration in any shared-space agreement. Of second consideration, churches can operate as exclusive spaces, and not all community members may feel equally welcome. Third, we must acknowledge that many churches in Harlem, such as Abyssinian Baptist Church and St. Philip's, are already engaged in certain forms of shared-space agreements. Thus, this proposal cannot be regarded as anything novel for Harlem; rather, this proposal seeks to extend an existing system by introducing it to new actors and stakeholders, with the intention of preserving historic church institutions and these institutions' connections to political activism, artistic expression, and community diversity within Harlem.

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PRECEDENTS

During the Harlem Renaissance, prominent religious institutions – such as Abyssinian Baptist Church, St. Philip's and St. Martin's Episcopal Churches, as

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ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

> COUNTERNARRATING

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TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

well as the religiously centered Young Women's Christian Association – served as important multi-use spaces for the Harlem community, encompassing uses that extended beyond religious activity. Each of these churches included both leadership and members who were deeply involved in political activism and activities to support Harlem's Black communities. For example, St. Martin's organized efforts in support of the 1934 "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign, geared toward exclusionary White-owned businesses along 125th Street.

Today, many of Harlem's historic Black churches continue to serve activities that fall beyond the sole realm of religion. St. Philip's Episcopal Church, for example, hosts its own credit union, available not only to parishioners but to

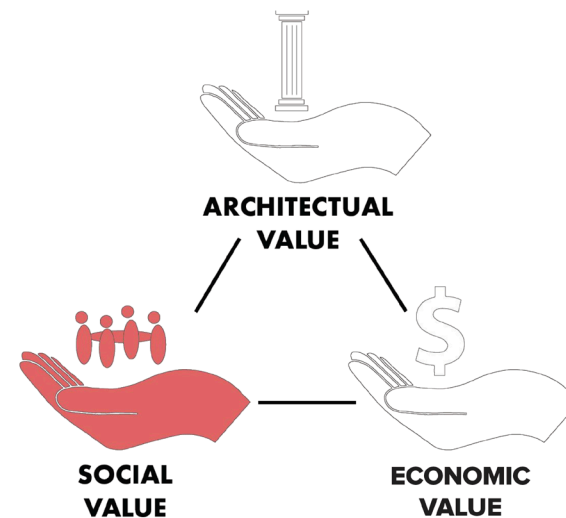
“anyone looking for affordable banking” (St. Philip’s Church, n.d.). Meanwhile, Abyssinian Baptist Church is affiliated with a number of nonprofit partner organizations, including Youth on the Move in the Community and the Abyssinian Development Corporation. The church’s website remarks that its “affiliates uphold its rich activist history and work to address the social and economic concerns that impact our community, our youth and the world” (Abyssinian Baptist Church, n.d.).

One church that may serve as an excellent example of a potential shared-space arrangement is St. Martin’s. Due to unsafe building conditions, the church itself has been closed to the public since 2018, though its parish still maintains an active congregation. The Parish of St. Martin’s and St. Luke’s bears ownership of its two eponymous Harlem churches; because both church structures are currently unfit for use, the parish has elected to sell St. Luke’s to raise funds for the restoration of St. Martin’s. As previously mentioned, St. Martin’s Church has a rich history in the political activism of the Harlem Renaissance period. Like St. Philip’s, it also maintains its own credit union, which has been active since 1937. After two disastrous fires in 1925 and 1939, the interior of the church was rebuilt twice; thus, the materiality of the interior of the church as it stands today is highly reflective of the church’s reconstruction circa 1940. Years after its reconstruction, the church commissioned renowned artist Romare Bearden – who trained as a young artist in Augusta Savage’s WPA-sponsored Harlem Community Arts Center in the 1930s – to design a mosaic, titled *The Tree of Life: Symbol of Salvation*, for its tower vestibule. More recently, the church participated in the Art in Sacred Spaces program in 2014 and hosted the Harlem Biennale (Gervasi 2016). The history of St. Martin’s thus demonstrates long-standing precedents for the multifunctionality of Harlem church spaces, including in the display of art.

With the razing of several of Harlem’s historic churches in recent years, including the Church of the Master on West 122nd Street for the construction of condominiums, and many more under financial and real estate pressure to sell their land to developers, the protection of the neighborhood’s surviving Black-owned churches is imperative (Columbia University GSAPP Historic Preservation Studio II 2017). Furthermore, twelve of the sixty contemporary Harlem stakeholder organizations identified in our Studio – including Harlem Park to Park and the New York Chapter of the National Organization of Community Architects – lack permanent addresses. As extant Black-owned spaces, churches have the opportunity to partner with some of these organizations, as well as other community organizations that may lack suitable space for events and congregation, to function as multi-use community venues as they deem appropriate.



The Tree of Life: Symbol of Salvation mosaic by Romare Bearden has long stood as a permanent installation within the tower vestibule of St. Martin’s.



In accordance with our studio’s perspective, this proposal prioritizes the preservation of Harlem’s historic Black churches as social assets.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

As a first step for involving churches in this proposal, a survey could be conducted through which church leadership could self-identify their interest in space sharing, highlight prospective community organizations they would consider partnering with, and outline which spaces they would be open to offer for part-time space sharing. Parallel to this first survey, a second survey comprehensively cataloging Harlem community organizations that lack permanent or sufficient space should be carried out; such a survey would also rely on the self-identification of spatial needs, as well as mission alignments, of these organizations. Established and well-endowed community organizations that may already have relationships with certain churches and stakeholders, such as the Harlem Arts Alliance and the Schomburg Center for Arts and Culture, could play a role in facilitating the inter-organizational process of partnership-building between churches and community organizations that are interested in participation. Church leadership and congregations would have the central role of determining how and to what extent they wish for their various spaces to be shared with potential partners.

A fundraising model to support church maintenance under this proposal takes inspiration from the “rent party” model of the Harlem Renaissance. Whereas in Renaissance rent parties, residents collectively organized events to raise funds for their housing, in this proposal church congregations and allied stakeholder organizations – such as the Harlem Arts Alliance and the Harlem School of the Arts, which could assist in engaging Harlem artists in public art opportunities – could collectively plan events to raise funds for maintenance, operation, and programming. This model seeks to maximize the number of stakeholders invested in the upkeep of church spaces to maximize community interest in fundraising.



The vast ceiling of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, currently closed due to need of repair, may pose an opportunity for the display of religiously compatible public art to coincide with the church's eventual restoration.

EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS IN HARLEM

Steph LeBlanc, Isabella Libassi, Valerie Smith

There is a rich history of business in Harlem and this historical narrative has been underrepresented in the transmitted legacy of the Harlem Renaissance. These narratives could be instrumentalized to draw increased focus and resources to contemporary Black-owned Harlem businesses to support financial empowerment and wealth accumulation. Dewardric McNeal, managing director and senior policy analyst of Longview Global, argues: “There isn’t a racial wealth gap but a racial wealth gulf” (Fox and Horch 2021). As this studio grapples with this country’s disturbing history of race relations and analyzes its manifestations in Harlem, this proposal seeks to address that gulf.



Recreation of Art Kane's photo A Great Day in Harlem, taken by Kwaku Alston for Netflix, 2018.

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Research done by the City of New York finds that “Entrepreneurship is one of the most viable and sustainable ways to close the racial wealth gap. Investing in programs to create and strengthen Black-owned businesses through adaptability, collaboration, and innovation can build family wealth for generations, strengthen NYC’s economic infrastructure, and help close the racial wealth gap across America” (BE NYC and NYC Small Business Services 2020). This three-part proposal addresses efforts underway to help new Black businesses incubate and thrive, as well as ways that businesses in operation for many years can continue to operate. It also seeks to generate ideas about how to further empower Harlem’s existing business community and inspire young adults to learn business skills early to plan for the future.

INCUBATING NEW BUSINESSES

Though NYC’s population is 22% Black, only 3.5% of NYC businesses are Black-owned. Multiple organizations – such as BE NYC, Harlem Commonwealth Council, and Harlem Business Alliance – have programs that help aspiring entrepreneurs through networking events, short-term loan programs, and workshops that provide them with the basic skills to start a business that will survive and thrive.

This aspect of our proposal targets aspiring Black entrepreneurs who are ready to start their business and are seeking tools and guidance. It would capitalize on existing programs and resources by developing a Harlem-specific partnership with BE NYC to provide networking events, roundtable conversations, and more. For example, a networking event that invites aspiring Black entrepreneurs and connects them with existing Black business owners in the neighborhood would be a great opportunity for inter-business exchanges. Such an event would also include key organizations that support small businesses, like the Harlem Commonwealth Council and the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce.

Building from the idea of a networking event and connecting established business owners with aspiring ones, we are also proposing a mentorship program, where existing Black business owners are matched up with aspiring Black entrepreneurs in Harlem, based on their industry. This program would help address one of the top challenges that most entrepreneurs listed while providing BE NYC with feedback – the lack of business guidance – and develop links between aspiring Harlem entrepreneurs and established Black business owners who have been able to survive despite legacies of exclusion.

SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES

Our proposal seeks to support existing businesses in Harlem through an increased focus on **owning space, reparations, and non-traditional paths to ownership**. Some existing organizations are already addressing these ideas and we hope to combine their work with other ideas being implemented in Harlem.

Black ownership of commercial space was a glaring gap during the Harlem Renaissance, just as it still is today. The need for Black proprietors to own their commercial spaces in Harlem is crucial to the longevity of their businesses. Recent studies that examined commercial spaces on West 125th Street show that “retail rents increased at a higher rate on Harlem’s main commercial corridor than anywhere else in Manhattan” (Krisel 2019). Owning commercial space is a complicated issue as developers continue to claim space in Harlem, the cost to own is extremely high, and opportunities are limited without large amounts of capital.



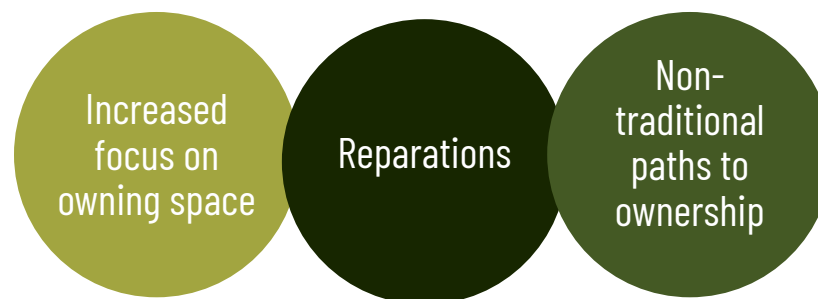
Late-owner of Sylvia's, Sylvia Woods.

Sylvia’s is a well-known Black-owned business in Harlem and a core inspiration for this portion of our proposal. Over the years, owner Sylvia Woods and her family have accumulated almost the whole block on which the restaurant is located and have had the opportunity to significantly grow their business through selling their products and cookbooks, along with other innovative growth tactics (Horne 2020). Sylvia’s has been able to navigate the challenges of rising rents due to its investment in a space back in the 1960s.

Similar to new businesses, existing businesses find access to capital to be a huge challenge. They need to continue investing to evolve their products, and the upkeep of their space is costly as well. They have marketing needs to acquire and reach new customers to stay relevant in the market. Many of the programs being developed by the City of New York and large banks, such as Citibank, will help address some of the capital needs for existing businesses (BE NYC and NYC Small Business Services 2020). We propose that a representative from Harlem be in conversation with the City of New York to make sure the resources available for existing business in relation to access to capital is rolled out to the Harlem community and communicated to its business owners. BE NYC's efforts could also be expanded to find ways to allow Black business owners to own their commercial spaces. Many organizations, such as the Harlem Community Development Corporation, are aware of this issue, and could have additional input on how to make changes to support the ownership of commercial space in Harlem.

Another effort that should be explored in depth are legacy business programs. There are programs in both San Antonio and San Francisco that may not directly address ownership of the space, but nevertheless take steps to help legacy businesses stay in business by providing resources. While more research is needed, a similar focus on Harlem legacy businesses could be beneficial, and this might be implemented with the help of the Harlem Chamber of Commerce. Research could be undertaken to identify possible legacy businesses in Harlem and draw support for Black-owned businesses in Harlem.

An organization operating out of Colorado called Buy the Block poses another compelling concept (Cortese 2018). This organization advocates for a community to collectively invest in a single block. This is accomplished using a syndication investment vehicle, whereby each investor contributes to the purchase of a building, collectively owns it, and benefits from the return on their investment through distribution of profit. Its goal is to allow the community to fight back against outside developers and gentrification, while also building wealth for themselves. Traditional syndication deals prevent people who are not high net worth individuals from investing through a strict accreditation process and set of rules including minimums for net worth and investment. By contrast, Buy the Block works with financial institutions and individuals to create syndications that do not require the traditional accreditation rules, so they have an opportunity to own property and gain equity in their own neighborhood.



We propose that a similar program be rolled out in Harlem in combination with efforts by the City of New York and other connector organizations. Goldman Sachs and Citibank, who already have Black-owned business initiatives, could also be brought in to help make these deals available to the community. Buy the Block's non-traditional approach seeks to level the playing field and creates investment opportunities specifically for Black communities facing gentrification. A partnership with the City of New York could facilitate these deals and locate potential properties. We hope that further exploration of non-traditional ways of owning property in Harlem would allow for prosperity and community well-being to be formed.

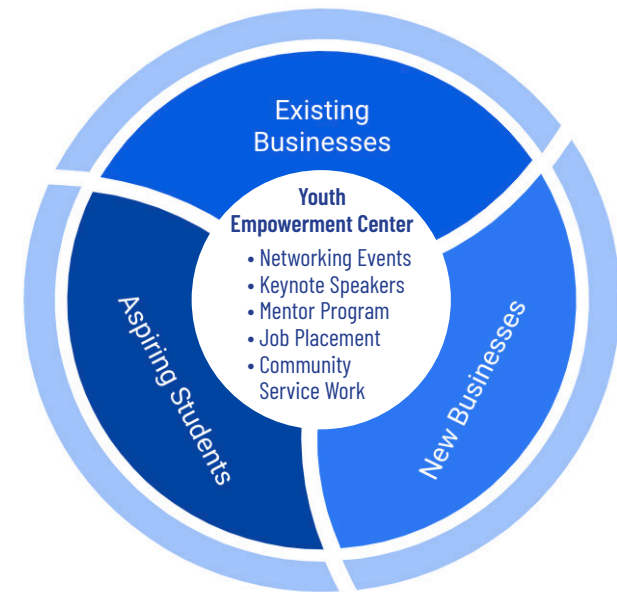
An additional part of our proposal for existing businesses is to start a conversation about reparations. The barriers confronted by the Black community in Harlem has had longstanding and wide-reaching effects in both home ownership and the ability to own commercial real estate. Urban renewal and other policies premised on racism should be reconciled in the form of compensation or creative ways to allow the Black community to reclaim space in Harlem. While helping Black businesses gain access to capital is one dimension, efforts need to be made to make amends for federal and local policies that systematically prevented Black publics from claiming space in Harlem. One organization that has already begun this conversation is Fourth Arts Block, or FABnyc (Rice 2021). Reparation funds could directly pay legacy Black businesses to help them own commercial space in Harlem and continue operations. Other cities, such as Evanston, Illinois, have already begun such efforts and could be used as a model in starting to close the wealth divide and create long-term prosperity in Harlem's Black community.

CREATING A SCHOOL-TO-BUSINESS PIPELINE

The third and final aspect of our proposal includes establishing a youth empowerment center for high school students and young adults to educate and inspire future entrepreneurs. We aim to purposefully reclaim the negative associations of the word “pipeline” with the carceral system by investing in creating new ones.

An aspect of our proposal that sets it apart from others like it involves educating the youth on the history of economics in Harlem. Unlike other curricula that focus on the literature and arts, which typically define the Harlem Renaissance, this curriculum would focus on the history of prominent figures who pursued both traditional and nontraditional routes of financial success for Black businesses during the Harlem Renaissance. It would illuminate the underserved narrative of successful economic ventures during that time that have been consistently left out of preservation efforts. It would utilize the entrepreneurial creativity of businesses during the Renaissance as a platform to build successful entrepreneurial plans for today. Units of study would emphasize the crucial dimensions of Black commercial enterprise and the injustice that comes from failing to recognize those successes. This would aim to inspire younger generations to pursue their own entrepreneurial efforts, and to educate them about the opportunities that were denied the Harlem community at that time. Students would come to recognize how institutions failed to support the Black community before them and learn about resources that are now at their disposal. This program would also help participants develop and identify their goals, equip them with the tools to pursue these goals, and connect them with other Harlem programs that can assist them in achieving financial success.

The success of this aspect of our proposal would be contingent on finding a space to host the youth empowerment and education platform. Business and economics in the Renaissance were built on finding creative, multidimensional ways to utilize available space, and continuing this tradition could not only educate the youth of Harlem on such practices, but also revitalize underused spaces. Churches were some of the most utilized venues for a multitude of purposes during the Harlem Renaissance. Connecting a program in need of space with organizations that have available space not only benefits both establishments, but also returns to the history at the core of our curriculum. Operating the youth empowerment and education platform from one or more underutilized church venue(s) within Harlem would revitalize historic structures and bring benefits back into Harlem. Staffing and management



of the center would require partnerships with already existing organizations that offer similar programs and could benefit from incorporating a youth curriculum aspect to their work. Based on our research and the studio's interview process, the Harlem Community Development Corporation and the National Urban League would be excellent candidates.

The youth empowerment center would serve as a hub for the multiple aspects of our proposal. Established businesses would be asked to work with students both in and outside of the center: owners with successful enterprises would come to speak as part of the curriculum, and the center would create a pipeline to feed interested young entrepreneurs into opportunities with business owners in Harlem, whether that be through part-time work, shadowing, or mentorship. New business owners would also be invited to attend those talks and could create connections with the students as well as the speakers who might serve to help their budding operations. This three-pronged approach to building community around businesses is targeted to reach entrepreneurs at all levels of career development to learn from one another, support one another, and help one another achieve long-term success. By employing various resources and connecting existing organizations, this proposal seeks to preserve the underrepresented entrepreneurial fabric of the Renaissance and assist Harlem's business community in reclaiming its rightful place in the neighborhood today.

INTERPRETIVE INSTALLATION OF THE RENAISSANCE BALLROOM AND CASINO

Christine Hotz, Ziyu Liu

As discussed earlier in this report, the demolition of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino has left a lasting impression on the Harlem community, as indicated by the frequent mention of this building among many of our interviewees. This proposal involves a series of temporary installations and events that represent the legacy of the Renaissance Ballroom and celebrate the original form and function of the building.



The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino in the 1920s.

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> LOSS AND SURVIVAL

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> REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino was a significant venue during the Harlem Renaissance. As an unsegregated institution, the Ballroom and Casino gave Harlem's Black community a stage to enjoy legendary musicians and a home for the first professional Black basketball team, the Harlem Rens. The owner, William Roach, was a Black businessman, an acquaintance of Marcus Garvey, part of the UNIA, and supported the mission of self-sufficiency in the community.

To represent the Ballroom and Casino's connection to the UNIA and its mission, we propose placing a large portion of our installations in Marcus Garvey Park. During the summer months, different installations and events would be scattered throughout the park. Organized programs, like basketball tournaments and stage shows, would take place in the park's facilities to represent the activities that took place in the Ballroom and Casino. Local businesses would be offered the opportunity to set up booths in the open space to sell goods and food.

In the center of the park is a large hill topped with a fire tower and paved space. This paved space would hold a reconstruction of the facade of the building, providing the park with a physical form of the Ballroom and Casino. This reconstruction would act as a memorial for the loss of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino. In the peaceful space atop this hill, visitors could observe the games on the basketball courts and shows in the amphitheater with the backdrop of Harlem surrounding them.

The goal of this space is to create a present-day encounter with the legacy of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino. With elements of the Ballroom and Casino diffused across the park, engulfed in the modern city, this proposal seeks to go beyond educating the public about the history of this beloved institution, instead performing an act of restorative justice. A reconstruction can acknowledge the importance of a place. Creating a juxtaposition between the memory of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino and today's Harlem, we might invoke an appreciation for the support that institutions like the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino can provide for a community.



Map of Marcus Garvey Park with programs outlined. Annotations by Ziyu Liu, 2021. Base map from Google Maps.

In reconstructing the façade, we understand the limits of erecting an entirely new structure. We began thinking about building installations that could be semi-permanent and still incorporate identifiable features, such as the North African-inspired tiles that capped the original building. An art installation by Hector Zamora at the Metropolitan Museum of Art inspired us to use terracotta to represent the bricks. They are lightweight and can be dismantled, but sturdy enough to reconstruct at another time. The reconstruction could also involve community-engaged design and fabrication, similar to the process employed to develop the mosaic benches surrounding Grant's Tomb National Memorial.



(Left) Installation by artist Hector Zamora at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Right) Mosaic benches at Grant's Tomb.

The high ground at the center of Marcus Garvey Park, sometimes known as "the Acropolis of Harlem," is a perfect site for this installation, as it offers an alternate form of spatial encounter with the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance. The proposed reconstruction would happen over the summer as a seasonal event. While an artist or architect may design the basic structure, children and families in the Harlem community would be invited to recreate the ornamental details inspired by the original design, as a more interactive process to educate and engage younger generations with the memories of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino.



Marcus Garvey Park Site



Renaissance Ballroom and Casino's Original Site

Installation concept diagrams. Courtesy of Ziyu Liu, 2021.

Throughout the summer, visitors would be able to interact with the installation structure as they participate in activities in the park. After the event, components of the installation would be moved to the original site of the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino at West 138th Street, where the luxury apartments “Rennie” stand today. Here on the sidewalk, the spatial encounter would be with not only the legacies of the historic building, but also the community vitality of Harlem today.

To encounter the historic structure and potentially heal the trauma of its loss, photographs, newspaper articles, and quotations by contemporary Harlemites could be projected on the street and building facade to conceptually recreate the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino. These projected installations could also include current commentary on the loss and memories of the building.

SPACE

Marcus Garvey Park
Alliance

BASKETBALL

Black Fives Foundation

PERFORMANCE

Harlem Drama Studios
Harlem School of the Arts
New Heritage Theater
Group

LOCAL BUSINESSES

NEIGHBORHOOD

SUPPORT

Harlem Park to Park
Community Board 10

Above is a preliminary list of possible partners that could help orchestrate the events. These institutions were suggested based on their association with either the neighborhood or the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino (like the Black Five Foundation), and because they represent an activity that historically took place in the Ballroom and Casino (like the performing arts organizations listed above).



Projections on reconstructed facade. Concept rendering. Created by Ziyu Liu, 2021.

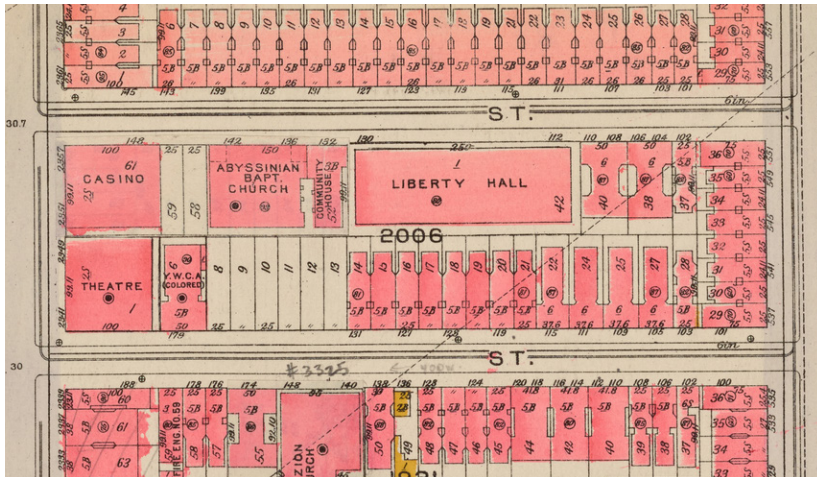


Projection on sidewalk. Concept rendering. Created by Ziyu Liu, 2021.

RECLAIMING ENCOUNTERS: REVIVING THE LEGACY OF BLOCK 2006

Lindsay Papke

Block 2006 is a site of critical loss of heritage from the Harlem Renaissance. Through a community-oriented initiative, this proposal instrumentalizes this heritage by allowing community artists to interrupt the block, so as to create intentional moments and encounters of counter-narratives that call out the loss and provide a space for community healing. Specifically, "Reclaiming Encounters" sets up a framework for a design competition with guidelines to facilitate these encounters, while acknowledging that this model may also be implemented in other locations of the neighborhood.



G.W. Bromley & Co. map of Block 2006, 1923.

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> ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

> COUNTERNARRATING

CONFRONTING DIVIDES

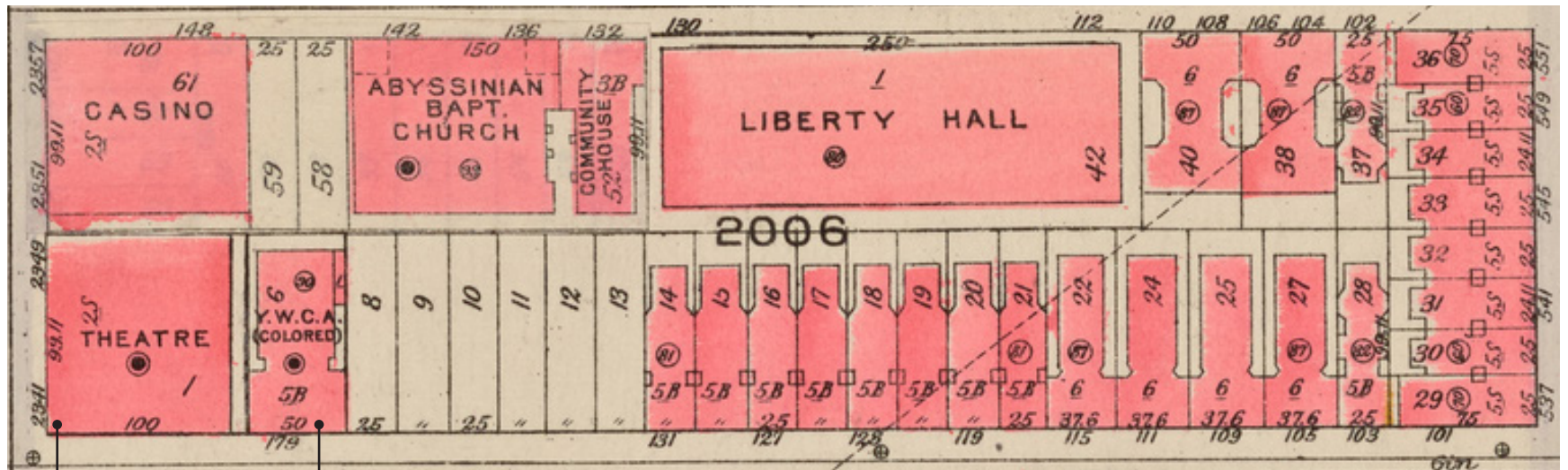
> CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS

> LOSS AND SURVIVAL

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF HERITAGE

> REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION



(Right) Harlem YWCA Building, West 137th Street, c. 1940. (Below) The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, c. 1939.



SITE LOCATION RATIONALE

The establishments from the Harlem Renaissance that comprised Block 2006 were vital points of interaction for the community. Specifically, these included the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, the Abyssinian Church, and Liberty Hall. Additionally, the streets and sidewalks surrounding the block were the sites of parades and soapbox speakers.

Beginning on West 137th Street, we would have encountered the YWCA which, by 1934, extended through the lot to West 138th Street. The YWCA building provided educational courses that extended beyond religious teachings for Black women in the neighborhood under the direction of Cecelia Cabaniss Saunders and Secretary Dorothy I. Height, who became a leading figure of the Civil Rights movement (Saunders Jones 2014). These leaders "demanded that white women in the city's YWCA understand the effects of America's construction of gender through the lens of race" (Weisenfeld 1994, 75). Saunders was keenly aware of the marginalization that Black women faced and spoke on what civil rights advocate and philosopher Kimberlé Crenshaw would later frame as intersectionality – a key concept of critical race theory. The YWCA was also noted as one of the most popular places to get lunch, not only because it was good, but because it was affordable (Adams, n.d.). The Abyssinian Church purchased the YWCA buildings in 1961 under the leadership of Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Contrast the erasure of this structure with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), whose 135th Street branch was



(Above) Garveyites gathering outside of the UNIA's Liberty Hall for a convention, 1924.
(Right) The Abyssinian Baptist Church, 1936.

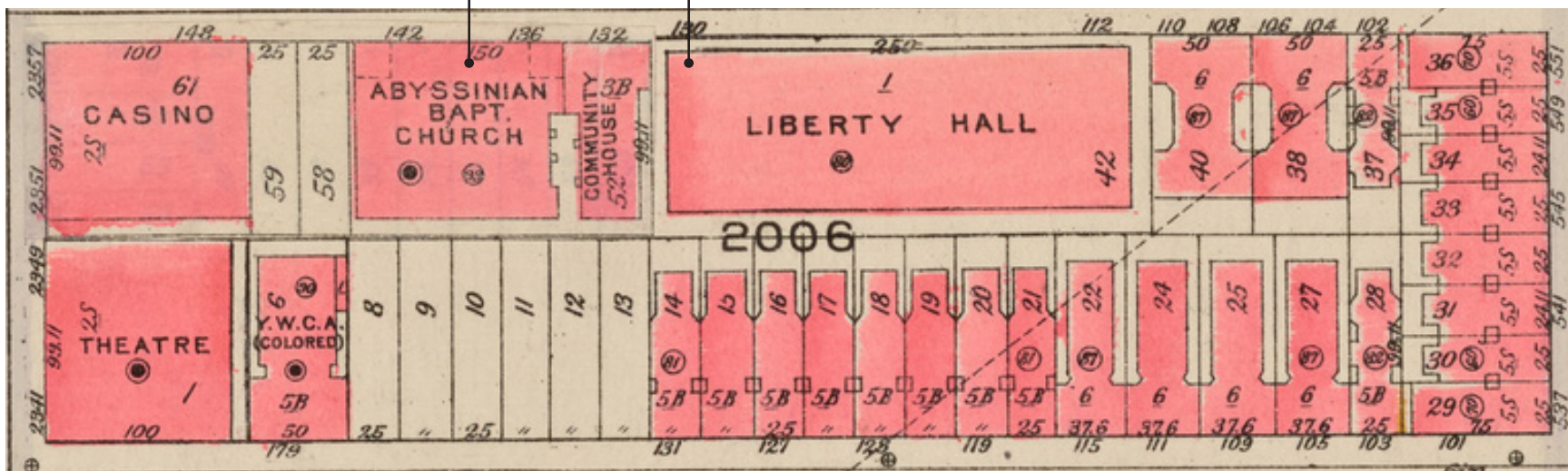


listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1976 and, as of 2016, both the current YMCA building and the original (across the street, now known as the Annex) were designated as a New York City Landmark (National Park Service 2021; Shockley 1998; Noonan 2016). This underscores the underrepresentation of Black women's narratives from the Harlem Renaissance.

Rounding the corner of Block 2006 northward to Seventh Avenue, we would have encountered the famed Renaissance Ballroom and Casino. This structure has been discussed previously in this report, and its cultural significance cannot be overstated. As we turn eastward and continue to West 138th Street, we encounter the Abyssinian Church. Highlighted as a fundamental site of interaction and empowerment, the cultural significance of this structure has likewise been instrumental in the development of Harlem although, as previously stated, sometimes facilitating controversial actions.

Located directly east of the church would have been the site of the UNIA's Liberty Hall. Thousands of Garveyites would gather here weekly to listen to Marcus Garvey deliver his famous speeches, such as "Up You Mighty Race!" (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture 2017). This building also marked the beginning and end of the UNIA parade routes. Furthermore, both the southeast and southwest corners of the block were the location of soapbox speakers.

Bearing all these historic assets in mind, the activity on Block 2006 is demonstrative of an ideologically diverse public and manifests the ways in which the Black community was establishing greater equity and representation during the Harlem Renaissance.





Present-day building footprints of Block 2006, annotated by Lindsay Papke, 2021.

- Sites of non-surviving historic assets
- Vacant lot

When we look at this landscape today, we immediately see how many of these historic assets have been erased. No longer the YWCA, no longer the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, no longer Liberty Hall. We also notice the demolition of row houses on the north side of West 138th Street, creating a series of vacant lots. As this report has laid out, the erasure of such significant historic assets is by and large a manifestation of the key policies and practices that operationalized forms of injustice throughout Harlem.

GUIDELINES

While this loss is obvious from a comparison of aerial maps, how do we encounter this loss today? How is this visualized and spatialized when one is walking on the street or driving by? Other than the Abyssinian Church, there are no visual markers.

By mobilizing alternative forms of preservation, this proposal instrumentalizes the history of the Harlem Renaissance while pushing back against erasure in a way that advances social justice by calling out the racist undertones that were operational in erasing this culture of Black empowerment from the landscape. Through engagement with the tradition of the arts – a fundamental characteristic of the Harlem Renaissance – an installation for these sites of conscience is proposed to effectively counter this loss, with preference given to works by artists from the community and those who have direct ties with Harlem. These encounters should not merely be an aesthetic experience, but must have an educational component so that the cultural heritage of the Harlem Renaissance is made known and passed on to whomever interacts with the site.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The installation must engage the surviving structures in a considered way to encounter the loss and provide a counternarrative accessible to the audience that moves beyond the sole use of a typical plaque.
- The marker should be accessible to the public and may take the form of, but is not limited to, a sculpture, vegetation or planting, sound installation, performance, light projection, or painting.
- Since Block 2006 represents a cluster of loss, it is anticipated that there will be various encounters on this site and each should be undertaken in an equitable manner. This may require interventions from multiple artists.
- The encounters should operationalize entry points to facilitate education within the community.

EXAMPLES

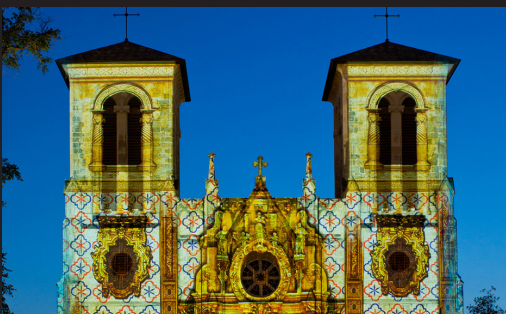
For reference, some examples of other projects that operate as sites of conscience include:



The footprints painted on the crosswalk commemorating the March to Montgomery, Alabama from Selma.



The place-based soundscape created by Graeme Miller, which galvanized the histories of displaced residents in East London.



The digital projection light show at the San Antonio Mission, which tells a visual history of the site.

Each of these examples demonstrates potential outcomes for Block 2006. The selected work could be a permanent or performance-based installation at the site, or even a purposeful planting acknowledging the potential to use the vacant lots on the north side of West 138th Street that provide a view of the buildings on Block 2006.

IMPLEMENTATION

The role the community must play in this initiative cannot be overemphasized. Following the memorialization model set forth by the Sites of Conscience organization (Naidu 2017), workshops should be held with key connector organizations, such as the Black Fives Foundation, the Harlem Arts Alliance, Save Harlem Now!, and Harlem Grown. This will facilitate a collective decision-making process to provide healing.

The Harlem Arts Alliance has been identified as a potential host for this design competition, and funding could be secured by an New York State Council on the Arts grant. A call for submissions, potentially facilitated by the Harlem Arts Alliance, would detail the guidelines of the project and establish the scope: temporary or permanent, but as defined by the community. After review by the organization and any other community organizations deemed necessary, artists would be selected for their proposed project.

It is anticipated that the installation would coincide with other key events in the area, such as the new Open Streets NYC initiative in which West 138th Street participates. Other potential events include Harlem Week and the Harlem Arts Stroll.

CONCLUSION

Through counternarrating and creating interactive space, this revival of culturally rich sites on Block 2006 operationalizes artistic expression to recognize loss and survival, as well as the changing and underrepresented publics of Harlem. Claiming this geography via site-specific installations intentionally preserves these histories, galvanizing them to function as a tool for social justice and anti-racism as they call out the erasure of a community's heritage. This form of memorialization is key to setting the historical record straight, potentially allowing a community to heal from injustices. However, these histories must be encountered first.

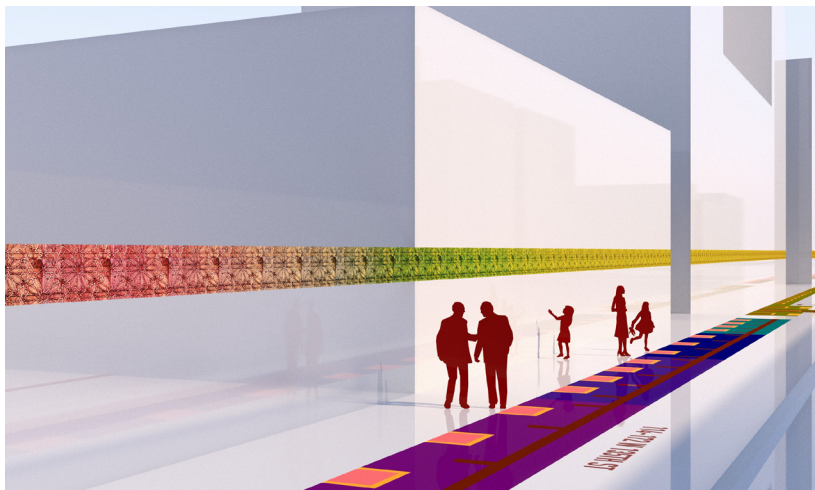
A BACKDROP TO THE COMING OF AGE: 135TH STREET SIDEWALK DESIGN

Chris Kumaradjaja, Ziming Wang

BACKGROUND, SIGNIFICANCE, AND RATIONALE

Corridor of the Harlem Renaissance: Spatial and Narrative Disparities

A critical finding of the studio's key issues analyses is the significance of West 135th Street as the central axis of Black Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance. West 135th Street was the center of the late nineteenth-century "Black enclave" in Harlem, as well as a crucial location of Philip A. Payton's early realty investments and St. Philip's Church's million-dollar apartment deal in 1911. Moreover, it was the primary corridor of Black businesses that most often operated out of residences (McGruder 2015, 38; Greenberg 1991, 14; Osofsky 1971, 117; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 868).



Concept rendering of the West 135th Street sidewalk design. Created by Ziming Wang, 2021.

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION

> CLAIMING GEOGRAPHIES

> CONTROLLING PROPERTY AND ASSETS

DESIGNING SPACES

CREATING INTERACTIVE SPACE

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

> FORMING PROSPERITY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

COUNTERNARRATING

CONFRONTING DIVIDES

CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS

> LOSS AND SURVIVAL

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF HERITAGE

> REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

> TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

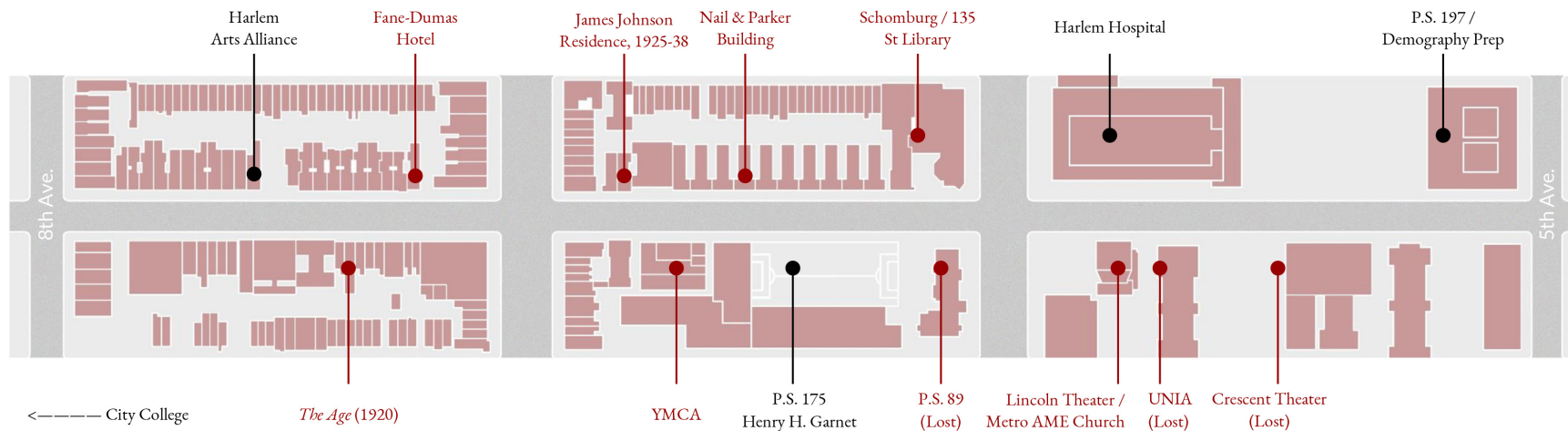


Diagram of the streetscapes on the “old” West 135th Street (in red) and the “new” West 135th Street (in black). Created by Ziming Wang, 2021.

The importance of West 135th Street in defining the growth of the Black community and the prosperity of the Harlem Renaissance has raised a counternarrative to the commercial strip on West 125th Street, which remained almost exclusively White until the 1930s and exists today as Harlem’s “Main Street.” By proposing an in-place spatial interpretation project along the sidewalk of West 135th Street, this proposal seeks to revitalize the street corridor by celebrating its association with the Black community and the Harlem Renaissance.

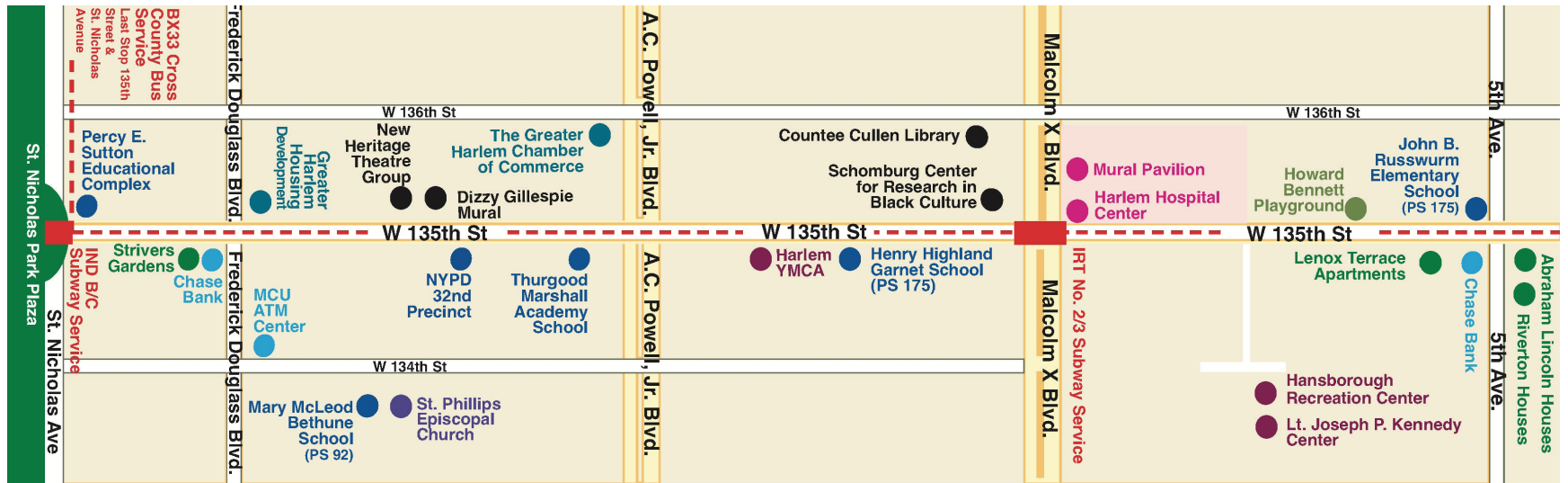
Loss of Streetscape and Spatial Encounter

As a critical corridor of the Harlem Renaissance, a significant portion of West 135 Street’s street-wall has been lost due to block-scaled redevelopment and the emergence of superblocks. As was discussed in the “Key Issues” section of this report, although many of these new developments hold great significance to Harlem’s Black community, they achieved this significance at the cost of wiping out legacies of prosperity, and thus the social-spatial encounters, embedded in West 135th Street’s historic streetscape. Along today’s West 135th Street, some historic structures are still standing – for example, the West 135th Street Library and the “Nail & Parker Building” (an early tenement apartment rented to the Black population) to the west – but are not readily recognized for their social-spatial significance.

Symbiosis of the “New” and the “Old” West 135th Street

We propose creating a symbiosis between the “new” and the “old” West 135th Street by bringing back and spatially displaying the historic streetscape.

From our interview with Mr. Voza Rivers, representing the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, the Harlem Arts Alliance, and the New Heritage Theater Group, we learned that both streetscapes have contributed to the lifecycle of a Harlemit. “A kid can be born in Harlem Hospital [c. 1887/1965/2009], go to the Elementary School [P.S. 175, c. 1957], Junior High, High Schools [Demography Prep c. 1956], the Swimming Pool [c. 1931], and the Arts Alliance [c. 2001]. At the top of 135th, you have the City College of New York [c. 1847]. On one street, a child can grow up. This is a historic walkway of iconic contributors to Harlem.” To visualize this interweaving narrative, we mapped the striking concentration of significant places – lost or extant, historic or contemporary – along the central section of the street. Along the new streetscape, the old one is inconspicuous, if not missing. Therefore, this proposal seeks to spatially signify the historic streetscape of the West 135th Street corridor in a way that resonates with today’s West 135th Street.



The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce's West 135th Street Development Initiative. Courtesy of The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce.

REVITALIZING SPATIAL ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE WEST 135TH STREET CORRIDOR

Multiple initiatives have been developed by the Harlem community to revitalize West 135th Street, both economically and spatially. The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce's ongoing West 135th Street Development Initiative focuses on fostering economic development, minority/women-owned business enterprise, and contemporary connector organizations in the arts and culture realm. Earlier, in the 1990s, there was a competition for sculptors to create plaques of Harlem's Black heroes that could be embedded in sidewalks. These plaques now decorate the sidewalk near the Harlem YMCA, depicting Harlem luminaries such as Machito Grillo and Billie Holiday. However, they have been defaced, and some of them have been stolen. Acknowledging these existing and precedent initiatives, this proposal seeks to work in collaboration with community organizations to build spatial interpretation onto these previous and ongoing endeavors.

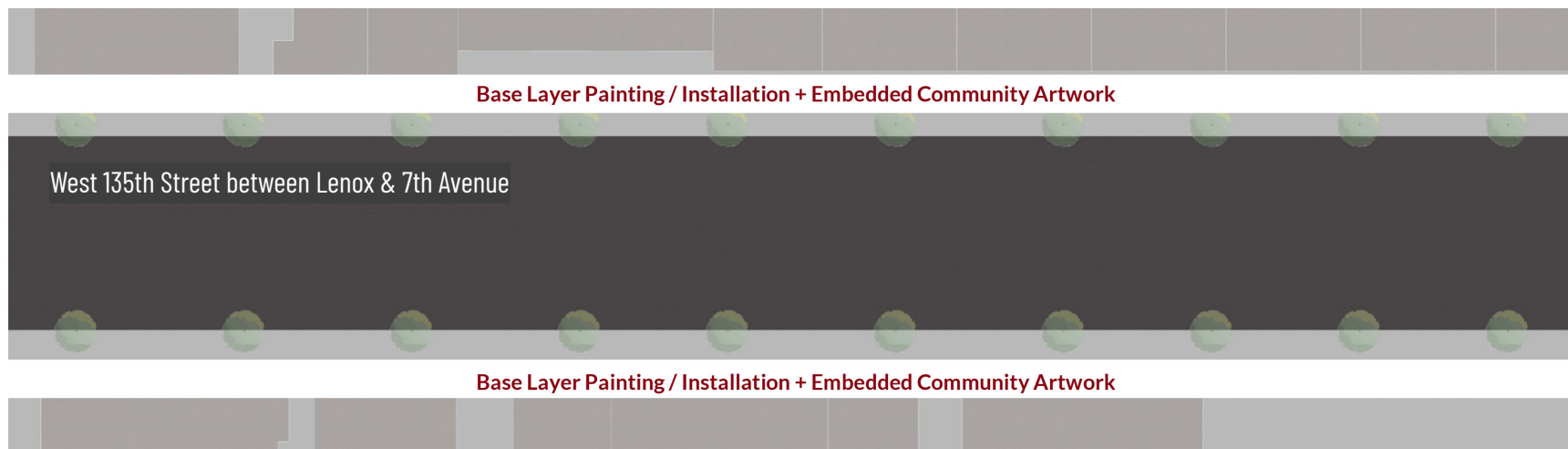
CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

As an in-place spatial interpretation project addressing the loss of urban forms and reimagining social-spatial encounters, our spatial concept is called the "sidewalk ribbon." We seek to enhance the function of plaques by



Existing plaques along West 135th Street and banners along West 125th Street.





Concept diagram of the "Street Ribbon." Created by Ziming Wang, 2021.

creating in-place interactions between plaques for luminaries and physical buildings along the street, as we observed that many of Harlem's luminaries had very close relationships with surviving or lost old buildings along the street: for example, Claude McKay with the Harlem YMCA, and Thomas "Fats" Waller with the former Lincoln Theater (now the Metropolitan AME Church, designed by Black architect John Louis Wilson Jr.).

Building on such connections, our spatial intervention would be a street-long installation on the sidewalk of West 135th Street that signifies its historic streetscape, evokes its historic narrative, and spatially displays its connection to the Harlem Renaissance. This installation would then serve as a platform for community-made or community-commissioned artworks, such as plaques for luminaries, street art, and embedded quotations. The intervention would enact comprehensive place-making with community participation, and further facilitate physical encounters of the street's cultural and historical prosperity.

The concept of a "sidewalk ribbon" is based on the goal of creating an experience of linear continuity along the sidewalk. Acknowledging the existence of numerous plaques and banners in New York City, including those along West 135th and West 125th Streets, we would attempt to reimagine the sidewalk in a more experiential way so as to bring more **intimacy, proximity,** and **continuity** to pedestrians. We hope this installation would narrate the story of the Harlem Renaissance just like a frieze in an ancient church or

palace does, while serving as a creative expression to reclaim a popular understanding of the street as a space providing "a backdrop to the coming of age."

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement this proposal, we have identified four phases: 1) the implementation of the "base layer" installation; 2) the implementation of permanent plaques; 3) rotation of temporary community artworks on a five-year basis; and 4) general maintenance. Each stage has a potential organizer and funding party, with additional community consultation in the first two stages involving permanent spatial interpretation. Aware of the existing initiatives to revitalize West 135th Street, we have identified the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce and the Harlem Arts Alliance as potential key connector organizations coordinating this project. Meanwhile, acknowledging the Harlem community and multiple significant cultural institutions along this street, we propose the project be developed into a potential collaboration with Harlem's cultural, civic, and preservation organizations, Community Board 10's Arts and Culture Committee, local businesses, and most importantly, the community itself.

Phase 1: “Base Layer” Installation

The first phase of the project would be the implementation of the “Sidewalk Ribbon” – whether it be an installation or an overall painting – as the base layer of spatial encounter and community art. We propose this stage to be potentially incorporated into the ongoing West 135th Street Development Initiative, with the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce acting as the organizing and funding party. Meanwhile, we envision that the development of the installation design would be carried out in consultation with residents, institutions along the street (NYPL Schomburg Center, Harlem YMCA, etc.), and neighborhood preservation organizations (e.g. Save Harlem Now!).

Phase 2: Permanent Plaques

Building on the base installation, plaques of Harlem luminaries would be applied. Acknowledging the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce’s commitment to street corridor revitalization and the Harlem Arts Alliance’s active advocacy of neighborhood arts initiatives, we have identified these two organizations as the organizer and funding parties for this stage. Meanwhile, we propose a community

PHASE I: “BASE LAYER” INSTALLATION

Organizer	Funding	Design Development
GHCC 135th Street Initiative	GHCC 135th Street Initiative	In consultation with residents /institutions along the street/ preservation organizations

PHASE II: PERMANENT PLAQUES

Organizer	Funding	Namelist & Design
GHCC Harlem Arts Alliance	GHCC Harlem Arts Alliance	Community nomination coordinated by HAA

PHASE III: TEMPORARY COMMUNITY ARTWORKS

Organizer	Funding
Harlem Arts Alliance (5-year, competition-based)	Sponsored by local businesses

PHASE IV: GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Supervisor	Funding
GHCC Harlem Arts Alliance	CB 10 Arts & Culture Sponsored by local businesses



Site plan of West 135th Street sidewalk design scheme 1. Created by Ziming Wang, 2021.

nomination process to determine the list of luminaries to be honored with plaques, and a process for community-commissioned plaque design and manufacturing, to be coordinated by the Harlem Arts Alliance.

Phase 3: Temporary Community Artworks

Rotating community artworks would add the final touch to our sidewalk installation design. We imagine a five-year, competition-based artwork selection process, organized by the Harlem Arts Alliance with funding sponsored by local businesses. In exchange, local businesses would be represented in the street art area, accompanied by community-made or community-commissioned paintings, quotations, installations, and more.

Phase 4: General Maintenance

Having identified the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce and the Harlem Arts Alliance as key connectors and organizers for this proposal, we envision these two organizations potentially supervising the maintenance of the installation. We propose the general maintenance to be funded by Community Board 10's Arts and Culture Committee, in support of an exemplary project in the creative use of art in public spaces. Additional funding may be acquired from local business sponsorships.

DESIGN SCHEMES

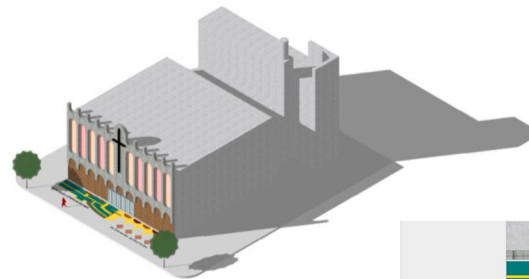
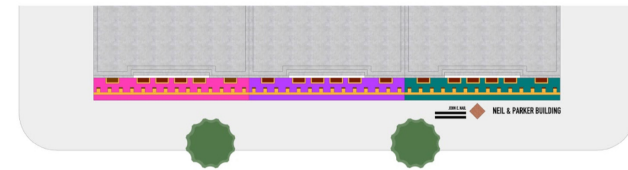
Scheme 1: Historic Streetscape Painting + Community Art

Under the conceptual framework developed above, we have produced two spatial design schemes. The first scheme features a linear painting of the historic streetscape during the Harlem Renaissance on the West 135th Street sidewalk, in exact correspondence with the current streetscape. This painting would enable visitors to examine both streetscapes as they walk along the street, and to see survival, continuity, change, and loss. Plaques of luminaries would be embedded beside the painting strip, according



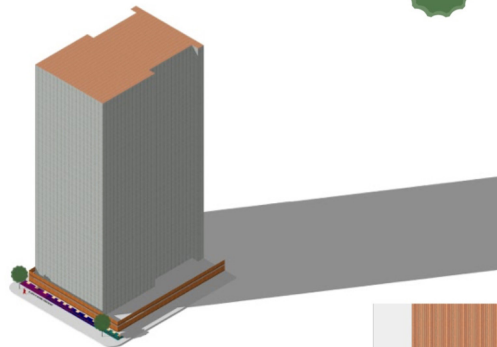
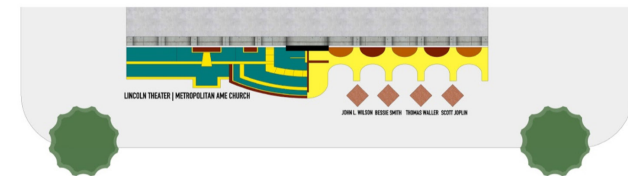
OLD BUILDINGS

145 West 135th Street
Nail & Parker Building



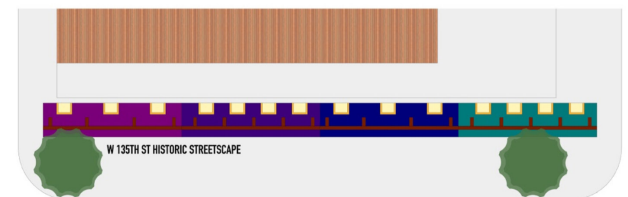
RENOVATED BUILDINGS

58 West 135th Street
Lincoln Theater
Metropolitan AME Church



SUPERBLOCKS

10 West 135th Street
Lenox Terrace



Spatial demonstration of West 135th Street sidewalk design scheme 1. Created by Ziming Wang, 2021.

to the luminaries' connection with the historic streetscape. Vacant spaces between buildings (as well as potentially designed breaks) would be reserved as areas for community artwork, which would engage community opinions about the Harlem Renaissance, as previously discussed.

This visual diagram demonstrates the design in relation to different types of buildings along the street today. When visitors walk by an old building (e.g., the Nail & Parker Building), they would see on the sidewalk the historic image of the building in comparison to its current condition, and find information about its association with Harlem Renaissance luminaries (e.g., John E. Nail and Henry C. Parker for the Nail & Parker Building). Walking by a redesigned or repurposed building (e.g., the Lincoln Theater or the Metropolitan AME Church), visitors would catch a glimpse of its previous life on the sidewalk, and connect with its cultural significance (Thomas "Fats" Waller, Bessie Smith, John Louis Wilson Jr., etc.). Walking along a superblock (e.g., Lenox Terrace), visitors would find the street's original scale and previous social-spatial encounters during the Harlem Renaissance. Potentially, we envision that the subject matter of community-commissioned artworks could be broader than our strictly defined period of study, and celebrate Black culture writ large in Harlem.

Scheme 2: Installation Art along West 135th Street

In this scheme, we would take a more biographical approach. We imagine an art piece, such as a graphic novel or painting series, installed across the length of the block. West 135th Street has been the backdrop to a Harlemit's life, past and present. This artistic piece would be an opportunity to create a visual biography or a graphic novel of a coming-of-age story within the blossoming Renaissance. There is a precedent and inspiration for this graphic biography: the great painter Palmer Hayden created a series on the life of John Henry, the legendary steel-driving man, as he came of age. Indeed, there are inspirations from previous works in literature and in museums, but how about placing something similar on the street? This "biography" may be about a real person or a fictional character whose experiences in Harlem have shaped their lives. Visually, we may be able to layer the lives of different generations over time; for example, we may include characters born in the 1890s, 1920s, and 1950s, experiencing historical events. We would leave the exact details of the narrative for local writers and artists to create, so as to empower local artists to create a story about the kind of life that has flourished and continues to flourish in Harlem. In the intergenerational transfer of heritage, this is a way for the residents to hold onto their roots

and the events and spaces that made them. We propose to implement an artistic piece in a linear form, either as a sidewalk painting or a horizontal frieze along one or multiple buildings, where one could walk on or along this narrative piece. The hope is that a young Harlemit would actually walk in the footsteps of a great luminary of the past.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

In response to our identified key issues, we anticipate this proposal to:

- > Spatially display the significance of West 135th Street in relation to the Black community and the Harlem Renaissance.
- > Revitalize social-spatial encounters along the street, creating a mental link between the present generation and the Renaissance generation and interpreting Harlem Renaissance-related cultural connections.
- > Serve as a platform for community collaboration, creative expression, and local artist empowerment.

Admittedly, there are reasonable concerns about the necessary Department of Transportation permits needed to implement our proposal, as well as the feasibility of potential collaborations among multiple community entities to both organize and fund the project. Nevertheless, as a spatial interpretation concept, we still anticipate the proposal to extend traditional strategies of preservation place-making, galvanizing art and design community members, and eliciting more experience and expression. Thus, this piece would serve as a platform to build **intimacy, continuity, and personal proximity**, as well as a continual reminder for young Harlemites to know the track of greatness they are on.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OF UNDERREPRESENTED NARRATIVES

Preme Chaiyatham

This proposal aims to address the fact that many narratives and publics from the Harlem Renaissance have been underserved, underrepresented, and un-valORIZED in many discussions about the era. Three underrepresented narratives have been addressed in this proposal as starting points for a conversation about these narratives and publics, and possibly others in the future. These include the culinary arts, women, and the LGBTQ community. The culinary arts were a major factor before, during, and after the Renaissance in the formation of prosperity and community well-being. Many women contributed to the artistic expression of the era through the visual, literary, and performing arts. Finally, the LGBTQ community, especially through those who attended the annual drag ball in Harlem before and during the Renaissance, has left its mark on contemporary culture.

BACKGROUND, SIGNIFICANCE, AND RATIONALE

Throughout our research, several historic themes were identified as significant to the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance. However, some of these themes have been eclipsed by more dominant narratives and have become background noise in discussions about this era. Many underserved publics have not been represented enough in the history of the Harlem Renaissance, as can be seen in designation reports by both the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission and the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, analyzing the spatial conditions in Harlem today demonstrates how much has been lost, not represented, not valorized, or not connected to the legacy and heritage of the Renaissance. For example, it is difficult for pedestrians to realize that the building on the southwest corner of Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and West 135th Street used to be Small's Paradise, which invented chicken and waffles; a parking lot on the southeast corner of Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 155th Street can hardly be recognized as

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DESIGNING SPACES

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> FORMING PROSPERITY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

> ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

COUNTERNARRATING

> CONFRONTING DIVIDES

> CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS

LOSS AND SURVIVAL

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF HERITAGE

REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION



Southwest corner of Adam Clayton Powell Jr Boulevard and West 135th Street, 2021.



A parking lot on the southeast corner of Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 155th Street, 2021.



162 West 133rd Street, 2021.

a major venue for drag balls since 1869; and a row house at 162 West 133rd Street does not receive recognition as the place where Billie Holiday began her career. These examples are minute in number compared to the many contributions of and narratives about these underserved publics.

For these reasons, this proposal aims to bring background narratives to the foreground in discussions about this time period. Campaigns to share these narratives, including **“Food for Thought,” “Drag Ball Story,”** and **“She was Here,”** would be temporary interventions to existing events in Harlem. These campaigns would present underserved narratives about the culinary arts, the LGBTQ+ community, and women’s history in Harlem. Events that may incorporate these campaigns are Harlem Restaurant Week (February and August), Harlem Pride (June), and National Women’s History Month (March), respectively.

The campaigns in this proposal aim to reinforce social-spatial connections, and to reclaim and celebrate spaces, their history, and the people associated with them. They would be a starting point for conversations that can elevate underserved narratives in Harlem, bring those narratives and publics to the forefront, and create a more inclusive discussion about the Harlem Renaissance.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Food for Thought” aims to augment culinary and spatial experiences and address food, an underserved narrative of the Harlem Renaissance and the daily sustenance upon which we depend, as a tool to raise awareness about the heritage of the Renaissance. Today, Harlem is famous for its many restaurants, but few people know about its legendary culinary history. Because of the kitchen privilege system employed in housing during the Harlem Renaissance, Black tenants needed to be creative and adapt their cooking. The culinary legacy of this discriminatory housing policy and other conditions during the Harlem Renaissance led to flourishing forms of culinary inventions, foodways, food markets, and restaurants. These legacies continued to play a major role as a collective heritage, employed during the civil rights movement in the 1960s to evoke a sense of Black community around the country.

By acknowledging this overlooked culture, the public would become aware of how food was exploited as a racist tool in the past, how Black communities adapted to the challenges of systemic racism through food, and how food bridged and united Black communities during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Telling these stories would help transfer knowledge about culinary culture and heritage constructed during the Harlem Renaissance.

Description

This proposal would take place in restaurants all over Central Harlem that participate in Harlem Restaurant Week, a two-week event held in February and August. Facts about food, culinary culture during the Harlem Renaissance, and discriminatory housing practices related to food would be presented to customers through print media, including but not limited to table leaflets, posters, and menus. These facts would be tailored to the food that each restaurant offers to optimize the engagement opportunity for customers.

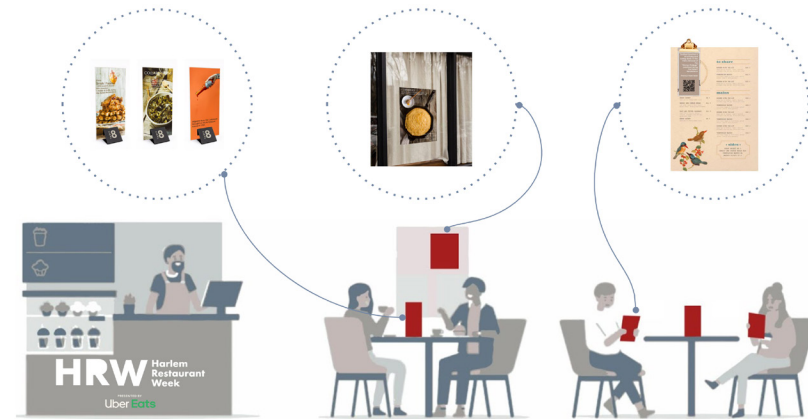
For example, the leaflets below show information about foodways and food created during the Harlem Renaissance. The legend of chicken and waffles, a dish served in almost every soul food restaurant, would be displayed with Smalls' Paradise, its place of origin. Collard greens would be presented as a continuation of the culinary tradition practiced in Africa, and hot pepper sauce would be identified as a product brought to Harlem by immigrants from the Caribbean. QR codes would be provided on each leaflet for customers curious to explore more about food history.

Posters would be placed throughout the neighborhood, not only to promote and invite customers to the restaurants, but also to educate the public about food. Many dishes from the countryside that found their way to Harlem would be presented with the names and addresses of restaurants that offer those dishes.

A small piece of paper clipped onto menus in each restaurant would have information about dishes on the menu; a QR code linking to the event website, which would contain more information about the history; and the legacy of that particular dish or restaurant.

Implementation

This proposal, taking place during Harlem Restaurant Week, would be implemented by many organizations. Restaurant Week is a collaboration among several organizers, including Harlem Park to Park, Frederick Douglass Boulevard Alliance, Uptown Grand Central, Union Settlement, Bradhurst Merchants Association, Explore West Harlem, Harlem Week, and Harlem Congregation for Community Improvement. These organizations receive sponsorship from, among others, I Love NY, Harlem Community Development Corporation, and the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce. With this funding, some portion could be allocated to produce these print media. The

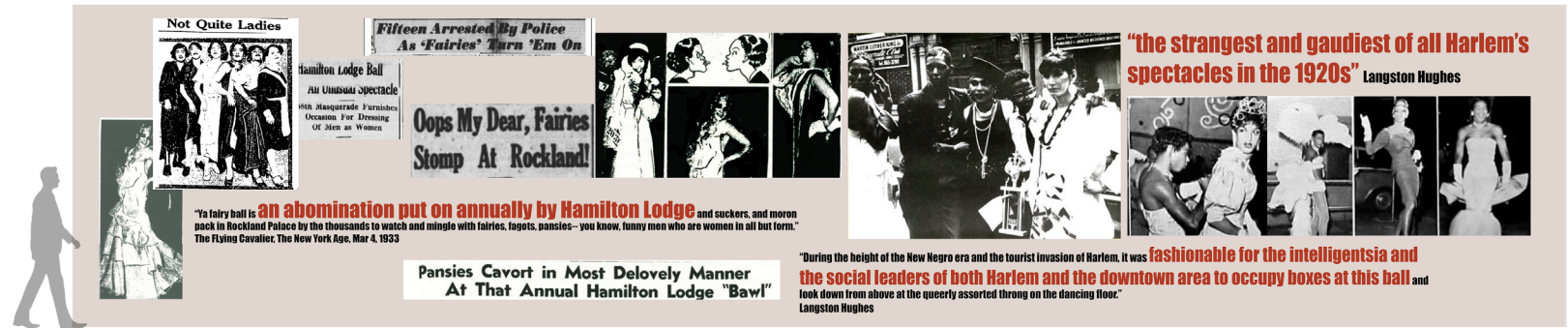


Food for Thought campaign overview. Created by Preme Chaiyatham. 2021.



Examples of print media for the Food for Thought campaign. Created by Preme Chaiyatham. 2021.

graphic design could be carried out by Sunbird Creative, a local marketing and branding agency in Harlem, who designed graphics for the Restaurant Week website, to ensure cohesive design throughout the event. Currently, there are twenty-two restaurants in our study area that participate in the restaurant week. The campaign would be implemented at these restaurants.



Zoomed-in detail of Drag Ball Story wall screen. Created by Preme Chaiyatham. 2021.

DRAG BALL STORY

The LGBTQ+ community has been a part of New York City throughout its history, despite its ephemeral and clandestine nature. Dressing in drag was part of the public expression of the community, and Harlem was an epicenter of this community as early as 1869. Rockland Palace (280 West 155th Street) was a major venue that hosted the "Hamilton Lodge Ball," organized by a Black fraternal organization, No. 710 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, which saw its peak in the 1920s. This annual ball was a location for the LGBTQ+ community to challenge social norms and authority by dressing as the opposite gender. It also confronted the racial divides created by segregation at that time, since many of the participants were White visitors from other parts of the city.

Although this annual Lodge Ball disappeared during the prohibition era, it flourished again in the 1980s and 1990s as drag ball culture. This culture was well-captured by the seminal work of Jennie Livingston's film, *Paris is*

Burning. The influence of this culture in Harlem is still palpable today in many TV shows, including *POSE* – a show that directly portrays ballroom culture.

This proposal aims to acknowledge the fact that drag balls have been a part of Harlem since the nineteenth century and continue to impact our culture today, centering these underserved narratives about the LGBTQ+ community in Harlem as a connective thread before, during, and after the Harlem Renaissance.

Description

This campaign would be a temporary intervention that would take place during Pride Month (June) at the former site of the Rockland Palace, which was located at 280 West 155th Street before its demolition in the 1950s. The site is currently used as a parking lot. A canvas screen presenting drag ball stories throughout the history of Harlem would be set up around the fence of this parking lot. The information would include newspaper clippings,



Drag Ball Story wall screen. Created by Preme Chaiyatham. 2021.

quotations from illustrious figures about the ball, and pictures of the balls. There would be two storylines for these screens. The first would be about Harlem before and during the Harlem Renaissance, while the second screen would be about drag ball culture during the 1980s and 1990s. An additional screen that is transparent and printed with the outline of the former Rockland Palace would help participants of Harlem Pride realize how the place looked in the past. The height of this screen would cover the entire existing fence (ten feet) so that pedestrians and automobiles can see the materials clearly.

Implementation

The Drag Ball Story screen would be set up during Harlem Pride in June. Harlem Pride has been the main organizer for this annual celebration, and accordingly, it could incorporate this campaign to its event. Harlem Pride has received funding from many sponsors, including but not limited to New York Presbyterian, Ryan Health, and Columbia Research Unit. The event has also received revenue from rental spaces at the event, such as organization tables, merchant tables, medical testing locations, and food vendors. Some of this revenue could be allocated for this campaign as well.



Drag Ball Story wall screen. Created by Preme Chaiyatham. 2021.

SHE WAS HERE

The names of multiple women who contributed to and shaped the Harlem Renaissance frequently came up throughout the studio's research. Their contributions were in various fields, including but not limited to the visual arts, literature, culinary arts, business, and journalism. However, their names have tended to disappear in narratives about the era as a whole, especially in landmark designation reports.

This proposal's goal is to bring awareness to the public of these women's contributions to the era and Harlem. It would also enhance social-spatial connections of the places associated with these women.

Description

This campaign would take place during National Women's History Month in March. The legacies of the women who shaped Harlem would be presented through physical, two-dimensional, life-size representations of these women, made from laminated acrylic with printed translucent film in between. These cutouts would be attached to individual metal plaques with a brief description

EXAMPLES OF NOTABLE WOMEN OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Below are some women to be incorporated into the campaign. It is worth noting that these names only represent a small portion of the contributions of this underserved public in Harlem. For a more comprehensive list, organizations can refer to *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* by Cheryl A. Wall.

C. J. Walker	Alice Dunbar-Nelson
A. Lelia Walker	Jessie Redmon Fauset
Billie Holiday	Angelina W. Grimke
Ella Fitzgerald	Nella Larsen
Zora Neale Hurston	Esther Popel
Georgette Seabrooke	Anne Spencer
Meta Warrick Fuller	Ida B. Wells-Barnett
Marvel Cook	Baker Smith
Gwendolyn B. Bennett	Josephine Baker
Marion Vera Cuthber	



"She was Here" figures in front of buildings. Created by Preme Chaiyatham. 2021.

of what the figure contributed to Harlem and a QR code that provides a link to the National Women's Month History website for additional information. The life-size figure aims to add more dimension to this encounter, and more intimacy to the place. It would connect pedestrians to the place, these women, and their legacy. They would be movable and would be placed in front of a building where a notable woman lived, where they worked, or where they performed. For example, the cutout of Madam C. J. Walker would be placed in front of her beauty school on West 125th Street, which was one of the first Black businesses along this street. Billie Holiday, along with Ella Fitzgerald, would be placed in front of the Apollo Theater, her residence, or a bar where she started her career.

Implementation

Currently, Harlem has no central organizer or event coordinator for National Women's History Month in March. However, organizations in Harlem that are related to these famous women, like the Apollo Theater Foundation, the Harlem Writer Guild, or the Harlem Arts Alliance, might collaborate in realizing this campaign.

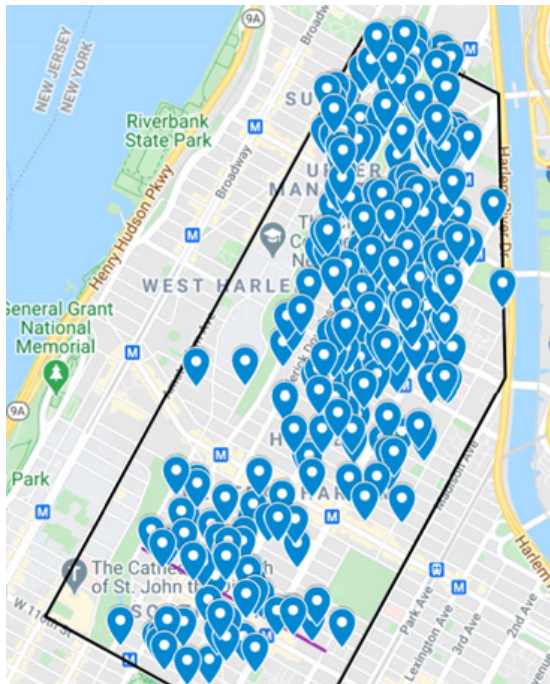


"She was Here" life-size figure. Created by Chaiyatham, Preme. 2021.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION OF FEMALE SOCIAL CLUBS

Meghan Vonden Steinen

This proposal calls for the creation of an interactive online portal to identify locations of civic and interactive spaces in the Harlem community during the Harlem Renaissance, specifically in residential spaces of female individuals. The interactive website would expand on the underrepresented female narratives from the Harlem Renaissance by plotting the residential locations of female social club meetings, the households where meetings were held, racial demographics of the household, and whether the residential building still survives today.



Locations of female social clubs at female households from 1927, 1931, 1935, and 1939. Map annotated by Meghan Vonden Steinen, 2021.

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION

> **CLAIMING GEOGRAPHIES**

CONTROLLING PROPERTY AND ASSETS

DESIGNING SPACES

> **CREATING INTERACTIVE SPACE**

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

> **FORMING PROSPERITY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

COUNTERNARRATING

CONFRONTING DIVIDES

> **CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS**

> **LOSS AND SURVIVAL**

> **INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF HERITAGE**

REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

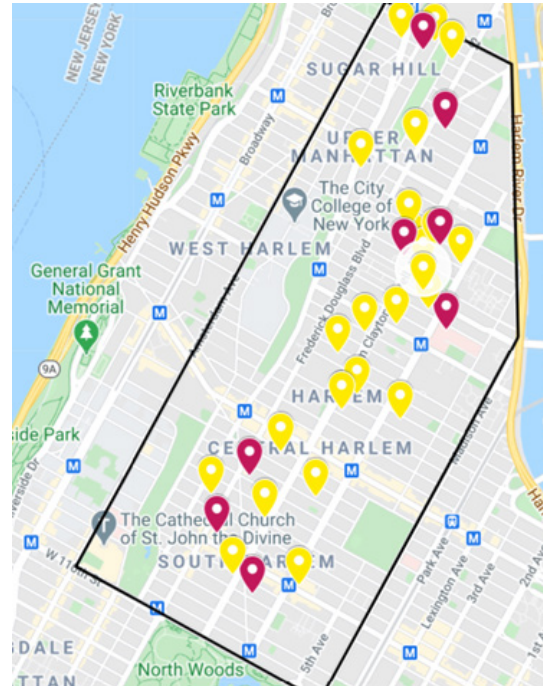
During my research on social clubs, it became evident how the nature of these organizations changed the purpose of residential locations into social spaces. I became interested in examining the ratio of male and female clubs that had temporary meeting locations. I began by examining the New York Amsterdam Club Chats' publications from 1927, 1931, 1935, and 1939, identifying residential meeting location announcements for 445 different locations in the studio study area. Of these 445 locations, the majority of clubs were female – 290, compared to the 155 that were male. Collecting the address and name of the occupant announced in the Club Chats for these locations, I began to examine city directory and census information to identify these women. So far, I have identified thirty-three of the listed female clubs in the Club Chats from these years, of which nine were women of color (shown as red pinpoints on the map).

This platform would be a space for descendants of these club women to connect and share information, providing a more rounded picture of social clubs during the Renaissance and balancing the predominantly male history of fraternal organizations and clubs known today.

Aside from an interactive map, the website would consist of four other sections: club history, a blog for individuals to share personal stories about these clubs and relevant events, an image gallery, and a section on existing female-led clubs and organizations that had permanent or semi-permanent locations during the Renaissance – such as the Hope Day Nursery, Inc. or the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (Tau Omega Chapter).

The website would engage members of the Harlem community in better identifying this information by combing through census and city directory records, facilitating community-engaged research, and connecting with local libraries and museums to better understand any known history about this period and these clubs. Partnering with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, as well as Save Harlem Now! and FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, would provide better insight into the cultural history of Harlem based on research, archived materials, and knowledge of the built environment.

The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, Harlem Children's Zone, and local high schools could assist in this proposal, which would further aim to develop college-level educational opportunities for high school students from underserved communities in their youth programs. I would hope to incorporate a few high schools and/or college students from the Harlem area



Locations of verified female social clubs at female households from 1927, 1931, 1935, and 1939. Verified by census and other documentation. Map annotated by Meghan Vonden Steinen, 2021.

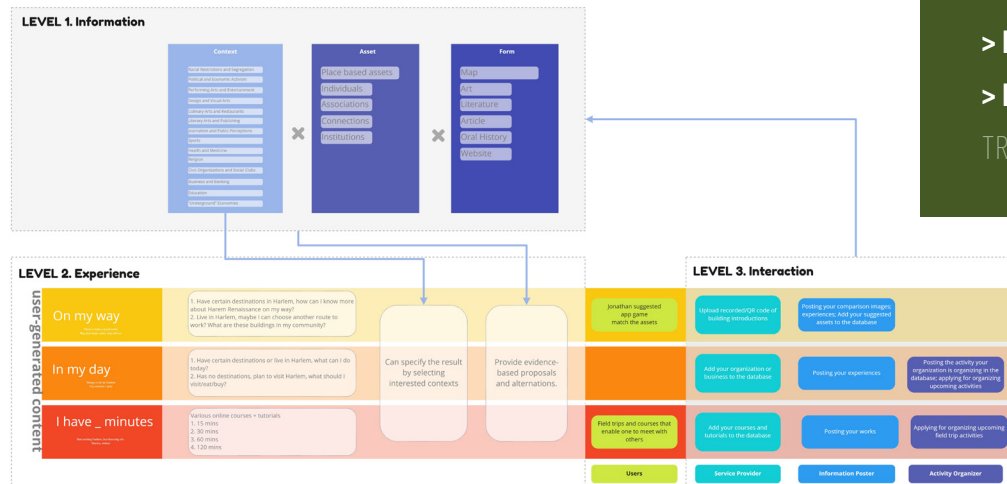
into this project, who could help with the research, such as by identifying the residential hosts and hostess of these club meetings, their locations, and connecting with descendants of those identified through academic, community-engaged research.

This research and information would provide more insight into the female narrative and social life in Harlem during the Renaissance, as well as add to the rich history of significant buildings identified in Harlem, such as the 409 Edgecombe Avenue apartments.

"NEW CONNECTIONS, NEW PERSPECTIVES" WEBSITE

Luxi Yang

The proposed "New Connections, New Perspectives" website is a peer-to-peer platform of ideas and services that aims to empower people to find their past and make connections. The proposal focuses on building a more equitable history and bolstering the intergenerational transfer of heritage, towards our studio goals of anti-racism and social justice. There are already many fabulous websites doing this; some are very focused, and others provide more connections and links. This proposal does not seek to replace any of them, but to make more connections and make them easier to find.



Overview of structure for website as created by Luxi Yang, 2021.

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION

CLAIMING GEOGRAPHIES

> CONTROLLING PROPERTY AND ASSETS

> DESIGNING SPACES

> CREATING INTERACTIVE SPACE

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

> FORMING PROSPERITY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

> ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

> COUNTERNARRATING

> CONFRONTING DIVIDES

> CHANGING AND UNDERREPRESENTED PUBLICS

> LOSS AND SURVIVAL

> INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF HERITAGE

> REDEFINING AGENCY AND CONNECTIONS

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF PRESERVATION

DESCRIPTION

The proposed website has three levels: **information**, **experience**, and **interaction**. The range of ideas and services of these three form a pyramid shape, becoming more specific and personalized as it approaches the top. The platform builds upon the concept of asset-based community development by emphasizing connections between individuals and organizations, and among organizations. It takes a peer-to-peer approach by using user-generated content.

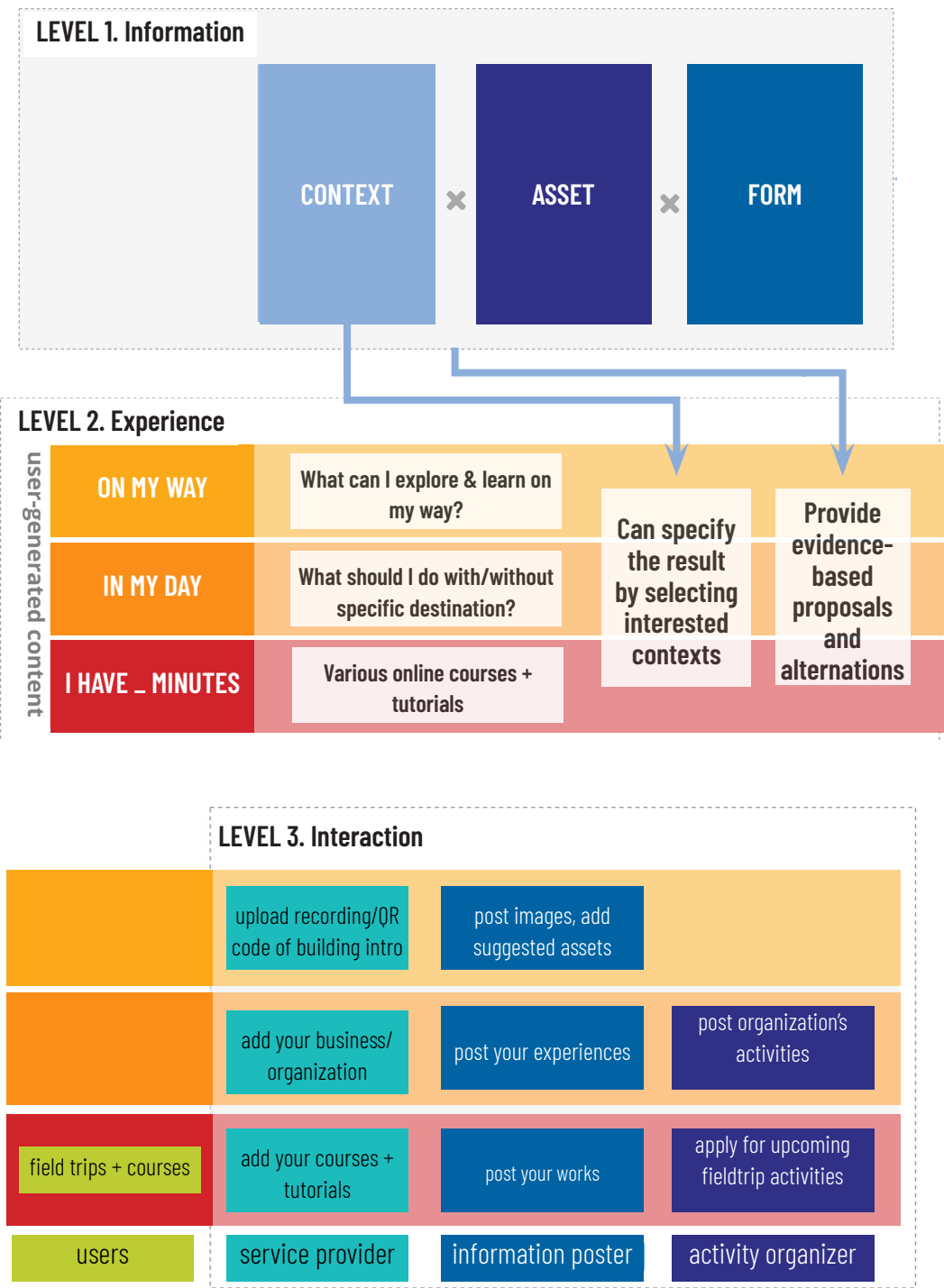
The database would contain different forms of information from various assets covering all the studio historic contexts. This would form the base of the platform and any user would be able to contribute to it.

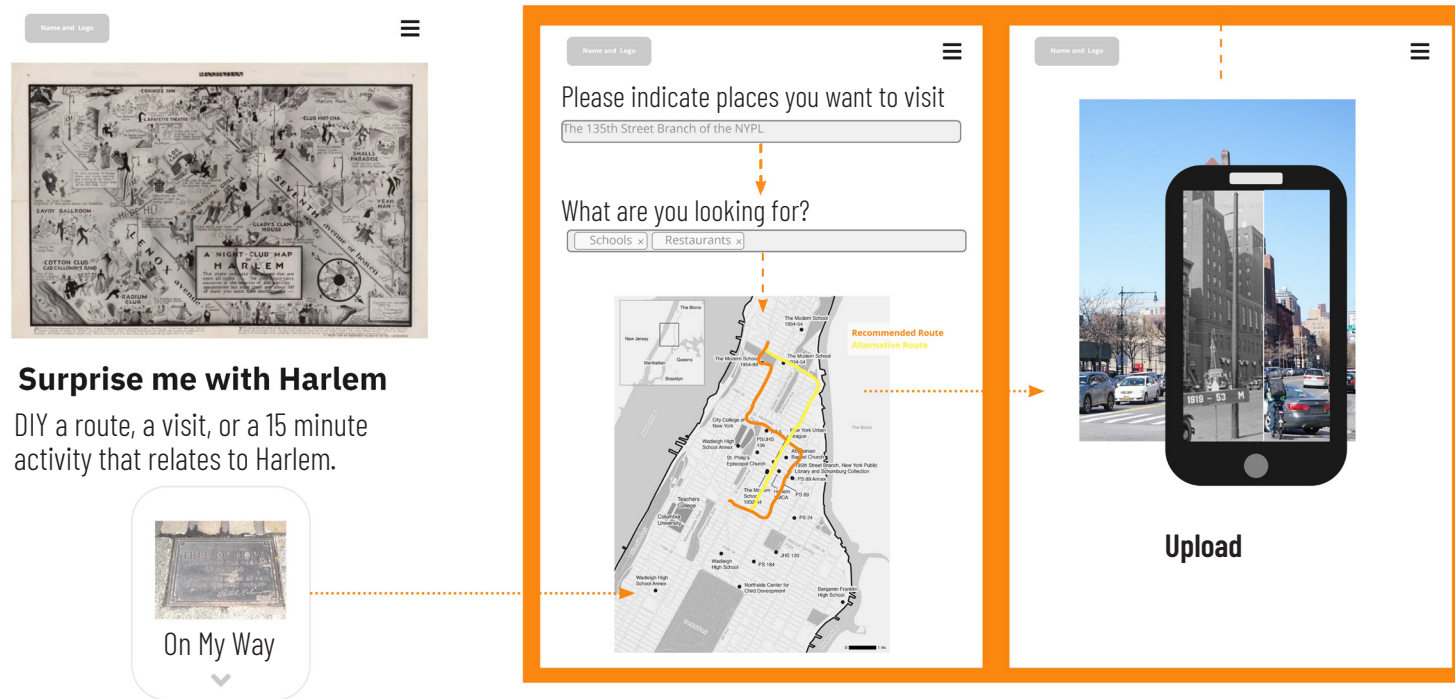
The experience would provide methods for users to explore key issues investigated in our studio, such as:

- > loss
- > survival
- > counternarratives

The interaction part would aim to exchange ideas and services.

(Top to bottom) How information, experience, and interaction are implemented in the structure of the website. Developed by Luxi Yang, 2021.



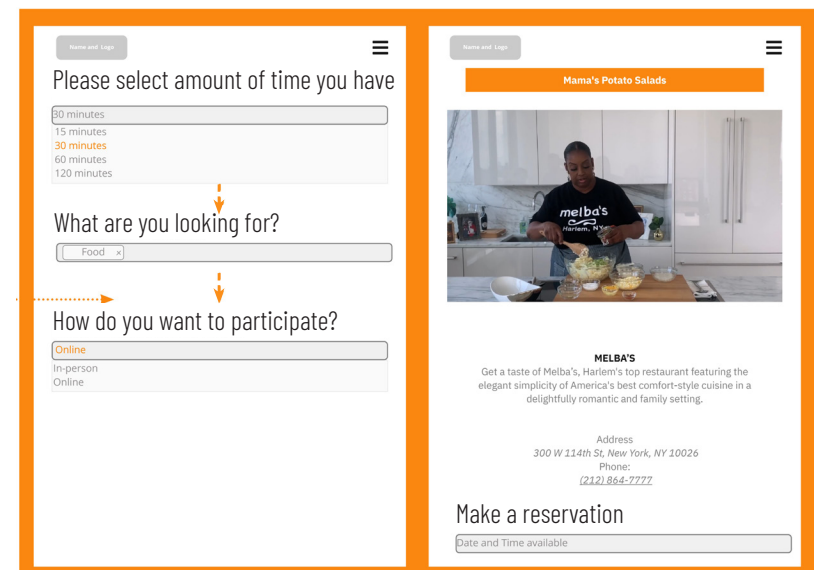


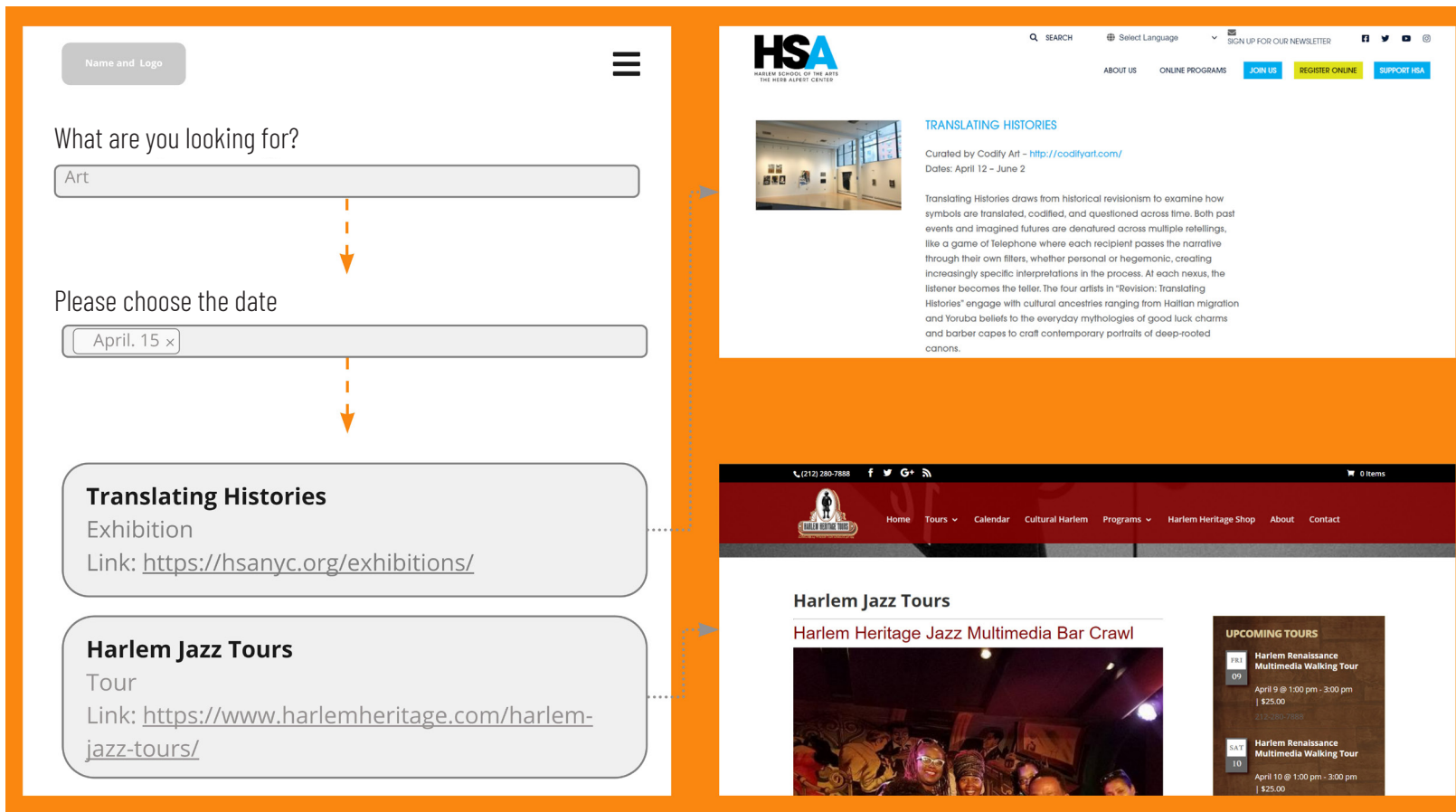
Examples of various user experiences with website. Developed by Luxi Yang, 2021 (above and bottom right).

Examples of User's Experience

The experience has three versions: the first is for tourists or other people looking for places to take a quick look. By inputting destinations, the website would provide you with recommended routes and alternatives, introduce you to the assets on this route, and let you play a game to take a photo at the site of a historic building, which would reveal the key issues of loss and survival in a very direct way.

The second version of the experience would involve specifying your interest and how much time you have to spend, and you would be provided an appropriate tutorial or online course related to Harlem and the Harlem Renaissance. For instance, if you are interested in food, you may find a video from a local restaurant teaching you how to make Mama's Potato Salad from the Harlem Week website, and information about the restaurant that provided this tutorial. This would enable users to learn about key historic contexts, like culinary culture.





Example of various user experiences with website. Developed by Luxi Yang, 2021.

If you are looking for things to do in Harlem, you could specify your interests or input the date, and the website would generate a suggested agenda for your day. Clicking on the links would allow users to check the details on the service providers' websites and to learn their stories, which would help users to build connections with historic assets and connector organizations.

IMPLEMENTATION

Connector Organizations

Organizations that may implement this proposal are Save Harlem Now!, Harlem Tourism Board, The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, Harlem

Week, or any other organization that would have the resources and a vested interest in promoting the inclusiveness of voices in Harlem.

Funding

Since this proposal is premised on a p2p (peer-to-peer) economy model, any individual, organization, and business could be potential partners. The funding for start-up and maintenance might come from grants, donations, and membership fees.

Name and Logo
Database
Experience
Interaction

Discover Harlem and legends from the Harlem Renaissance

New Perspectives, New Connections

Discover Now

Historical

Historical Contexts and Assets

Contemporary

Contemporary Contexts and Assets

Website interface. Developed by Luxi Yang, 2021.

Other Formats

Access to the website may be precluded if one does not have an internet connection or smartphone. One possible solution to avoid such exclusion would be to collaborate with "LinkNYC," a first-of-its-kind communications network with new sidewalk structures called Links, which provide public Wi-Fi and a tablet to access city services, maps, and directions. If data can be shared via the Links tablets, anyone in New York City could have access to the website content.

CONCLUSION

This is not a proposal that seeks to implement anything new or replace anything; the resources for this website already exist. It is just trying to build greater connections. We believe that everyone who loves Harlem should work together to form a platform full of opportunities and collective impact in fostering justice and anti-racism.

What Harlem has to offer

DIY a route, a visit, or a 15 minute activity that relates to Harlem

DIY now

On My Way

In My Day

I Have _ Mins

Join now

Share now

Join the database and share your story and service

Join now

Allan Rohan Crite's painting, *School's Out, 1936*.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND ASSETS

This collection of historic contexts covers fourteen narratives deemed significant to the period of the Harlem Renaissance, as identified by Columbia University GSAPP's Historic Preservation Studio II class. Under the guidance of faculty, the first-year preservation students explored these different narratives, while looking for connecting ideas across the fourteen themes. Multiple building assets associated with those narratives (extant and non-extant) were then identified and mapped to visualize and understand their geographic locations.

NARRATIVES

- > Design and Visual Arts
- > Performing Arts
- > Literary Arts and Publishing
- > Journalism and Media Perceptions
- > Education
- > Civic Organizations and Clubs
- > Sports
- > Religion
- > Political and Economic Activism
- > Health
- > Culinary Arts and Restaurants
- > Business and Banking
- > Underground Enterprise
- > Spatial and Racial Segregation

DESIGN & VISUAL ARTS

Jesse Kling

The Harlem Renaissance was a moment of incredible convergence in the visual arts. As Black intellectuals and creatives settled in Harlem in the first decades of the twentieth century, the neighborhood became an unprecedented nexus for Black expression – expression that found particular influence within sculpture, painting, illustration, fashion, and architecture. These different modes of design attracted personalities in the arts who took their mediums in differing directions, in accordance with patterns of patronage and clientele that had developed in the Harlem arts community in the 1920s and 1930s. Visual arts and design became tangible representations of the Harlem Renaissance to communities outside of Harlem, both Black and White, and facilitated the perseverance of the Renaissance's cultural developments in the greater Harlem community for decades after its purported demise.

SCULPTURE

Parallel to other developments in the arts in Black American communities in the early twentieth century, Black visual artists became increasingly interested in implementing art as a medium of Black expression. This underlying political element, influenced in part by the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois, dispensed certain elements of the Western aesthetic canon in favor of Pan-African art. Among the earliest artists to pioneer the Pan-African revivalism that would become among the most tangible representations of Black American political struggle and cultural nationalism was the sculptor Meta Warrick Fuller (1877–1968). A disciple of Du Bois' Pan-Africanism, Fuller's sculpture combined the allegory of classical Western sculpture with her own stylized interpretations of African sculpture. Works like 1914's *Ethiopia Awakening* and 1918's *Mary Turner* (A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence) invoke allegorical figures referencing both ancient Egyptian and sub-Saharan sculpture, while representing African American political themes such as cultural renaissance (*Ethiopia Awakening*) and anti-racism (*Mary Turner*, named after the victim of the infamous 1918 lynching). Mary Schmidt Campbell (1987, 27) considers these two works as “among the earliest examples of art to reflect the formal exigencies of an aesthetic based on African sculpture.”

Fuller was never a resident of Harlem, and her work came out of a formal academic arts education at the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Arts and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, both in Philadelphia. However, her pioneering of a Black aesthetic language in the visual arts cast a long



In *Ethiopia Awakening* (1914), Meta Warrick Fuller pioneered a Pan-African pastiche that would cast great influence upon the Harlem Renaissance visual arts in the following decade.

shadow over the subsequent Renaissance. Driskell (1987, 108) emphasizes that “until Fuller, the aesthetics of the Black visual artist seemed inextricably tied to the taste of White America; more particularly, perhaps, to subject matter and definitions of form derived from European art.” *Ethiopia Awakening* embodies this practice, with its subject's Egyptian headdress and mummy-wrapped legs evoking a new Afro-classicist response to European Beaux-Arts sculpture. Although Fuller still made use of certain influences from White, Western art, she combined these influences with distinctly African motifs that revolutionized the practice of Black art in the US in ways not yet explored – and in ways that would be investigated to full realization by her Harlem Renaissance contemporaries and successors.

Augusta Savage (1892–1962) was among the leading sculptors of the Renaissance-era generation that followed Meta Warrick Fuller. Savage, who had moved to New York from her home state of Florida in the early 1920s, obtained a formal arts education at the prestigious Cooper Union. By the middle of the decade, as she became renowned in the Renaissance for her commanding representation of Black bodies, she sculpted busts of famed Black thinkers, such as Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Du Bois. This high-profile work earned her the patronage of the Julius Rosenwald Fellowship to study in Paris, where she was so well-received in the arts community that she received two additional fellowships to remain in Europe for a total of three years (Smithsonian American Art Museum, n.d.).



Gamin (c. 1929), by Augusta Savage, conveys the sculptor's deliberate engagement with and mastery of the Black human form.



The Harp (1939) remains Savage's most renowned work, despite its unceremonious destruction after the New York World's Fair.

Upon Savage's return to Harlem in 1932, she became a high-profile arts educator, founding the Savage Studio of Arts and Crafts at 239 West 135th Street and joining the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors as its first Black member. In 1937, after being selected to serve as the inaugural director of the Harlem Community Arts Center, Augusta Savage was tapped by the 1939 New York World's Fair to sculpt a monumental representation of Black contribution to American music. A work two years in the making, Savage's sixteen-foot-high *The Harp* became among the sculptor's most celebrated works, even after its destruction following the closing of the fair (SAAM, n.d.).

PAINTING

Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) applied to painting what Meta Warrick Fuller had to sculpture. But where Fuller found inspiration in the French romantic realist and expressionist sculpture of the turn of the century, Douglas looked to modernism. One critical motif of modernism that Douglas and other Renaissance visual artists employed was what Rachel Farebrother (2009) terms "the collage aesthetic": the juxtaposition of disjointed images in ways that intentionally fractured the visual narratives and seamlessness of works of art. Utilizing a method popularized by European modernists Pablo Picasso and Benjamin Peret, African American painters such as Aaron Douglas, Romare Bearden, and Lois Mailou Jones implemented collage-like visuals to portray both the optimistic multifacetedness and the traumatizing fragmentation of Black American life (Farebrother 2009). In his 1934 *Studies for Aspects of Negro Life* mural series for the 135th Street Library (now the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture), Douglas invoked the collage aesthetic on a grand scale in his visual narration of African American history and empowerment.

Critically, Douglas' painting combined influences of modernism with the stylized, creatively interpreted visual motifs of Pan-Africanism pioneered by Meta Warrick Fuller in the previous decade. The convergence of inspirations in Douglas' painting resulted in a new visual language altogether for Harlem:

It was Douglas's desire as well to capture the essence of Black expression in a painterly formula. By closely observing the crowds of the Savoy Ballroom, the Dark Tower, and the many clubs where Black social climbers gathered nightly to see and be seen, the prowling artists began to find the images, if not the subject matter, he needed. The sounds of music were heard everywhere, according to Douglas. The spoken word flared through colorful poetic expressions from the pens of the well-trained writers who now saw Harlem as the most soulful city in the world. Indeed, all of the



One panel from Aaron Douglas' *Aspects of Negro Life*, an epic narrative mural series on permanent public display in the 135th Street Library.

activities of the White observers and Black participants in the Harlem Renaissance eventually got translated into some form of artistry. Yet, the themes that had recurred over a period of years in Douglas's work were not based on Harlem nightlife and Black entertainment. Instead, he chose to review Black history, religion and myth for the substantive sources that were at the core of the stylized subjects he created during the Harlem Renaissance. (Driskell 1987, 111)

The confluence of historicizing and contemporary themes in Douglas' highly stylized work also straddles the gulf between two diverging but simultaneous movements within Harlem Renaissance art: on the one hand, the assimilative instinct to raise the status of African American art to a common echelon with contemporary White American art, and thereby raise White acceptance of Black culture as American culture; and, on the other hand, the Black cultural nationalist movement to create a Black art world fully independent of and distinct from the oppression of White supremacy. Both of these movements were emphatically anti-racist in purpose, with the explicit goal of elevating Black cultural expression, as vocalized by W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, and Langston Hughes (McClintock 1998).

Harlem Renaissance painters (and, indeed, many other visual artists) were at once enabled and constrained by the system of patronage that funded their art. Foremost among the patronage infrastructure that financed the fine arts of Harlem was the Harmon Foundation, which was created after Renaissance writer and philosopher Alain Locke gained the ear of White real estate mogul William Harmon to direct White philanthropy toward the cause of Black art. The Harmon Foundation held annual competitions, offered fellowships (including the aforementioned two, granted to Augusta Savage in 1929), and exhibited artworks before White audiences within explicitly segregated spaces (for example, at Morningside Heights' International House in 1933, as well as in traveling exhibitions). Although the Harmon Foundation raised the visibility of African American artists within the White American arts scene, the foundation diluted and misrepresented the narratives behind their art through racial essentialism, condescension, and othering (Campbell 1987).

With Black artists still significantly funded by White patrons, some Harlem Renaissance art was conceivably distorted by the stresses of White expectations upon Black art. Palmer Hayden (1890-1973) and William H. Johnson (1907-1970) developed modes and subject matters of painting that

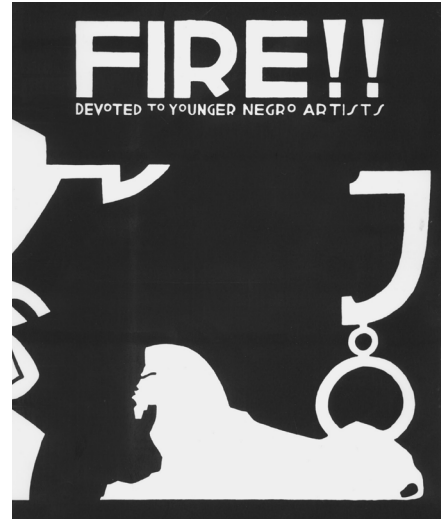
both embraced the cultural nationalist side of the Renaissance art debate, and, paradoxically, found strong White patronage. Hayden and Johnson were especially interested in depicting the vernacular elements of Black culture, with visual references to folk art and folk stories. Controversially to contemporary and later Black art critics, Hayden and Johnson sometimes appropriated the racist caricature imagery of minstrels – a practice which, despite perhaps being invoked with a sense of irony by the artists, made them favorites of the Harmon Foundation and contributed to their popularity among White collectors who willfully misinterpreted their art as a naive, “folksy” reinforcement of racist stereotypes (Campbell 1987).

ILLUSTRATION

Illustration was a crucial element of print culture in the Harlem Renaissance, and made for some of the most graphic representations of style, self-depiction, and public image in the era. Along with being among the most influential painters of the Renaissance, Aaron Douglas was also an incredibly prolific illustrator. His print works, which ranged from magazine covers to book jackets to magazine and book illustrations, distilled the stylized Pan-Africanism of his paintings into stark black-and-white silhouettes that were at once expressive, stylish, and distinctly modern. Caroline Goeser (2007) terms this new visual palette as “Afro-Deco.” Aaron Douglas, along with illustrators like Laura Wheeler, E. Simms Campbell, and Richard Bruce Nugent, incorporated streamlined Egyptian and Sub-Saharan motifs like pyramids, headdresses, and masks into their graphics, crafting a forward-looking, futuristic image of Black culture (Goeser 2007).

FASHION

The Afro-Deco imagery of Harlem Renaissance print illustrations found its physical manifestation in fashion. The Afro-Deco style not only embraced Pan-African scenery to create a new kind of futurism, but also pushed forward the mass distribution of Afrocentric beauty standards. Cosmetics mogul Madam C. J. Walker and her daughter A'Lelia Walker not only made fortunes from promoting Black-centric beauty products largely through print advertising, but also significantly raised the publicity and accessibility for African American women to attain the Afro-Deco and neo-Egyptian looks that rose to the fore (Goeser 2007).



Douglas' cover for the sole issue of Fire!! magazine is an example of the painter's bold graphic style as materialized in print.

In the 1920s, the epicenter of the Harlem elite fashion scene became A'Lelia Walker's salon within her 136th Street mansion, dubbed “The Dark Tower.” The Dark Tower presented a venue for fashion with over-the-top displays of luxury: “Everything in A'Lelia's parlor-cum-tearoom-salon represented the ostentatious best that money could buy: the designer was Paul Frankel; the carpet, Aubusson; the furniture, Louis XIV; the turquoise and amethyst paste tea service, Sevres; the drink, champagne” (Watson 1995, 143). Her guests wore clothing of a level of embellishment to match: writer Max Ewing remarked, “They do not stop at fur coats made of merely one kind of fur. They add collars of ermine to gray fur, or black fur collars to ermine. Ropes of jewels and trailing silks of all colors” (Watson 1995, 143-144).

A more accessible fashion venue for Harlemites was Seventh Avenue on Sundays after church, where even churchgoers of modest means could show off their best clothes: On the stretch between 138th and 125th Streets, one recalled, “you would see every important person you ever knew.” They paraded their furs and feathers, their form-fitting dresses and bright shawls, checkered suits and gay parasols, their white spats and silk handkerchiefs protruding from a breast pocket – even a freshly washed gingham dress or a black suit looked fresh in the afternoon sun. Many wearing those elegant clothes earned less than one hundred dollars a month in their jobs as waitresses, redcaps, and stevedores, and their sartorial aplomb owed a great deal to installment houses – and to the discounts offered by Harlem's ubiquitous “hot men.” These local institutions offered strategies for achieving the public stylishness that was so valued in “lodge mad and procession wild” Harlem (Watson 1995, 7).

ARCHITECTURE

Among the visual arts of the Harlem Renaissance, architecture was the most bound to academism. In the 1910s, pioneering Black architects like George Washington Foster Jr. and Vertner Woodson Tandy designed in formal architectural styles dominant in the overwhelmingly White American architectural profession in the early twentieth century – particularly, Collegiate Gothic (in their church designs) and Georgian Revival (in Tandy's domestic architecture). Reasons for such aesthetic choices were twofold: Tandy and Foster's clients, for one, tended to be affluent Blacks who sought formalist architecture that would usher them into the cultural elite; second, Tandy and Foster were each academically educated in the professional, *École des Beaux-Arts* inspired architectural programs at the Tuskegee Institute, Cornell University, and Cooper Union (Anderson 2004; Mendelsohn 2004).

The architectural profession, however, was far from secure or hospitable for Black architects during the Renaissance. Although Vertner Tandy had an impressive list of Harlem commissions in the 1910s and for much of the 1920s – including St. Philip's Episcopal Church (with George Washington Foster), the Madam C. J. Walker Mansion (as well as Walker's celebrated Villa Lewaro in Irvington, New York), the Imperial Elks Lodge, and Small's Paradise nightclub – work for him had dried up entirely between 1927 and 1945, after a local recession in Harlem and then for the entire duration of the Great Depression and Second World War. When Tandy's architectural work resurfaced in 1945, he was hired by the New York State Housing Authority as associate architect for Harlem's modern Abraham Lincoln Houses public housing project. Tandy's final commission was the sleek Art Moderne Ivey Delph Apartments in Hamilton Heights in 1948, which was the first federally funded housing development in New York City marketed specifically for African Americans (Anderson 2004).

CONCLUSION

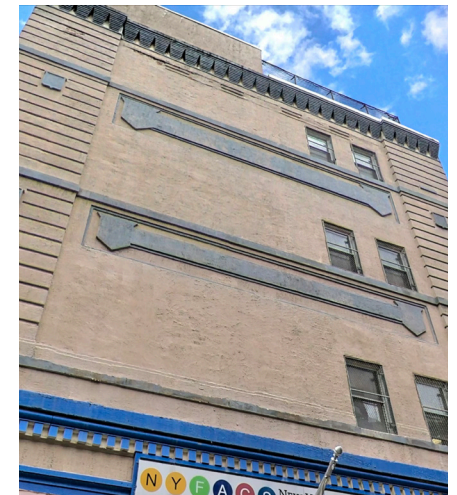
The physical mark of the revolutionary developments in the visual arts and design during the Harlem Renaissance is not always obvious from the street aside from a few important exceptions, including surviving architectural work and the Schomburg Center, which continues to hold a significant collection of Renaissance-era art. For much of the twentieth century, the visual arts and design in 1920s and 1930s Harlem have been sidelined within the American arts canon, obscuring many of the contributions of the era's artists and designers. The figures highlighted in this report are only among the most famous and well-documented of the time. Future historic preservation work

in the Harlem neighborhood must recognize the resources that survive from the arts movements of the Renaissance – especially from those whose legacies have been under-recognized in the cultural history of the city.

DESIGN & VISUAL ARTS HISTORIC ASSETS

Four categories of historical assets associated with visual arts and design in the Harlem Renaissance survive in greater Harlem: studios and other work sites of creative production; residences of prominent artists and designers; sites of social interaction between creatives and for the dissemination of artistic ideas; and buildings designed by or housing site-specific works by Harlem Renaissance artists and designers.

Among the most noteworthy artists' studios to survive is that of painter William H. Johnson, located on the top floor of a parking garage at 311 West 120th Street (Jerry Jazz Musician and Ephemera Press 2013). 1940 tax photographs show a top story that has now been partially removed; the remaining portions of this top floor are likely the surviving remains of Johnson's painting studio. Johnson also worked at the Works Progress Administration Art Project Studio at 110 King Street in Tribeca, which also survives but falls far outside of the studio's study area (US Selective Service System 1942). Johnson's 120th Street studio represents a relatively intact site of significant Renaissance artistic production within the Harlem neighborhood.



The location of William H. Johnson's painting studio, on the top floor of this parking garage, is visible in this 1940 tax photograph (left). Although the building is extant today, the top story has been removed (right).



409 Edgecombe Avenue, which continues to tower over Jackie Robinson Park today, may be unparalleled for the number of prominent Harlem Renaissance figures it was home to.

Numerous homes of Harlem Renaissance artists and designers still stand, including the apartments of painters Aaron Douglas (409 Edgecombe Avenue, Apartment 7E) and Romare Bearden (154 West 131st Street), as well as the early-career apartment of architect Vertner Tandy (174 West 137th Street) and, away from the studio study area, Palmer Hayden (218 West 17th Street) (University of Nebraska, n.d.; Jerry Jazz Musician and Ephemera Press 2013; Trow 1916; US Census Bureau 1940). 409 Edgecombe Avenue, an isolated high-rise, pre-war apartment building overlooking Jackie Robinson Park in Harlem's Sugar Hill neighborhood, was home to dozens of famed African American figures between the 1930s and 1950s, including W. E. B. Du Bois and Walter Francis White (Urbanelli 1993). The Romare Bearden and early Vertner Tandy apartments were both located in walk-up multifamily buildings on Central Harlem cross-streets; these apartments were all rentals. With the loss of both of Vertner Tandy's architectural offices (located at the site of Lincoln Center on the Upper West Side), the architect's long-term Striver's Row townhouse at 221 West 129th Street survives as the best built representation of Tandy's life outside of his designed buildings (Trow 1916; Trow 1925; NY Telephone Company 1948; US Census 1920).

Surviving sites of Renaissance creative interaction, specifically in the visual arts, are more limited. These sites predominantly pertain to fashion – for example, the stretch of Seventh Avenue between 125th and 138th Streets, where Sunday churchgoers promenaded in their finest clothes, and Salem United Methodist Church (211 West 129th Street), the site of Countee Cullen and Yolande Du Bois' extravagant 1928 wedding (Watson 1995). Another essential site of creative interaction in fashion was Hamilton Lodge (non-extant), which hosted some of the Renaissance era's most immaculate drag balls, uniting fashion with spectacle, performance, and transcendence of

gender. Journalist Edgar T. Rouzeau (1934, 2) of the *New York Amsterdam News* describes the performers' dress from one February ball: "Beula Martinez wore egg shell satin, Mattie Ginty was attired in white, Neil Hammond and Gene Harlow was dressed in old gold on a green background, and Bobbie, that ageless creature who reputedly is the dean of the Harlem pansies, was smart in a russet coat."

The list of identifiable architects associated with the Harlem Renaissance is short, but a good physical record endures of their designs – especially of Vertner Woodson Tandy, Harlem's most prolific Black architect in the Renaissance era. These designs, spanning the decades from St. Philip's Episcopal Church from 1910 to 1948's Ivey Delph Apartments, run the gamut from historicist to modern architecture in their brick-and-mortar encapsulations of Black-owned and Black-serving institutions (Anderson 2004). At St. Philip's, Tandy and his then-time partner George Washington Foster invoked a delicate Collegiate Gothic design (a style which Foster returned to in his design for the Mother AME Zion Church of 1923-25) to represent one of New York's oldest Black congregations. By contrast, Tandy's 1940s work is a striking departure from his period revival designs of the 1910s and 1920s. In the Ivey Delph Apartments, Tandy espoused a horizontal, streamlined expressionism that embraces its pale brick and concrete materiality. Of the visual arts in the Renaissance, architecture was the most exclusive: only relatively affluent Harlem institutions, such as established Black churches (e.g., St. Philip's and Mother AME Zion) and the Imperial Elks Lodge, had the means to commission building projects. The Black architecture of Harlem in this period, therefore, offers a highly compelling but inevitably incomplete record of the radical design creativity of the Renaissance.



The Ivey Delph Apartments (1948), Vertner Tandy's final design, was the first federally funded housing development in New York City geared to African Americans. Their outwardly Art Moderne design conveys Vertner Tandy's full embrace of futuristic architecture late in his career, as his commissions pivoted to socially minded housing.

PERFORMING ARTS

Jianing Wei

Music, dance, drama, and film were central forms of Black production informed by the literary and intellectual movement of the Harlem Renaissance. From the 1920s to the 1930s, Black migrants from around the nation participated in the entertainment productions in Harlem as audiences, performers, and creators (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 470). They were active in both informal and formal places of Harlem's built environment, such as nightclubs ("cabarets"), ballrooms, speakeasies, "buffet flats" – unlicensed clubs involving drinking and gambling in residences – and theaters. Behind these entertainment productions, it is clear that Harlem Renaissance entertainment culture was defined by social divisions, especially wealth and race.

MUSIC

African American music reached a new summit of popularity in the Harlem Renaissance. The main Black musical forms during this movement included spirituals, jazz, and blues, which originated in the South and became popular in the North along with the Great Migration. These musical forms gave voice to Harlem's nightlife.

Jazz and blues were classified as popular culture, which was different from high culture, such as painting, literature, classical music, and sculpture produced or discussed in salons and artistic parlors (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 470). However, these secular entertainment forms were significant as well, because they were developed by and derived from the lives of the working-class Black community, thus representing African American culture and self-consciousness. Influenced by intellectual leaders like W. E. B. Du Bois, composers and performers strove to enhance the status of Black music and establish their identity (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 471).

SPIRITUALS

Initially, spirituals were the religious folk music of enslaved Black peoples, created as early as the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Most spirituals were expressions of the Black community's kinship, religious beliefs, experiences, and hardships. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in addition to its presence in African American churches, the once-folk spirituals were more formalized on the concert stage through new choral and solo arrangements

by African American composers, such as Harry T. Burleigh and William Dawson. Spirituals were once regarded as the mainstream form of Black culture, because they were available at concerts just as art songs were. During the Renaissance, spirituals were "an important source of cultural pride and struggle expressed in poetry and other literature by Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and W. E. B. Dubois [sic]" (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 1143). Spirituals continued to be performed at concerts through the Harlem Renaissance and beyond, into the twenty-first century. However, it is worth noting that music was not only performed in concert halls and theaters, but also in informal venues, such as nightclubs, ballrooms, and speakeasies during the Renaissance.

Jazz and blues were commonly believed to best express Black identity, but the intellectual leaders of the Harlem Renaissance – W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Alain Locke, etc. – appreciated the influence that the concert-based spirituals by Harry T. Burleigh and Roland Hayes had on racial uplift. Meanwhile, they gave little concern to the popular Black folk music like jazz and blues, which they believed had little impact on racial uplift. As Samuel Floyd offered, "Initially, entertainment music, including jazz, was ignored or dismissed by Renaissance ["New Negro"] leaders in favor of concert music; the blues and other folk forms (except for the Negro Spiritual, which was held in high esteem) were rejected as decadent and reminiscent of the 'Old Negro'" (Floyd 1995, 108). On the contrary, the literary talents of the Harlem Renaissance, like Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Sterling Brown, advocated for jazz and blues in their writing. Hughes has been recognized as "a man who had much respect for and understanding of the music [jazz]." Indeed, Hughes once wrote, "let the blare of Negro jazz bands and bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing Blues penetrate the closed ears of colored near-intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand" (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 616).

JAZZ

Most curious visitors came to Harlem for Black jazz and blues. This music scene, characterized by both Black and White audiences, blurred racial boundaries (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 471). Jazz allowed musicians to improvise and create their own rhythms, and could accompany dancing and drama. Famous jazz musicians and bandleaders included Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, and Miles Davis. They performed at cheap, integrated basement speakeasies and Black-hosted "buffet flats," as well as expensive, White-owned, racially segregated nightclubs and ballrooms.



Duke Ellington was an influential jazz pianist, bandleader and composer. His time spent at the Cotton Club helped popularize the venue.



Cab Calloway and his orchestra succeeded Ellington's in 1930, furthering the Cotton Club as a distinguished fixture in Harlem's nightlife.

Segregated nightclubs and ballrooms allowed for Black performers, but forbade Black audiences. This was the case for clubs like Connie's Inn and the Cotton Club.

Bandleaders like Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway played a significant role in popularizing Black jazz. Duke Ellington, who first moved to Manhattan in 1923, started with a four-year gig with his band at the Hollywood Club on Broadway (Dugan 2020). Then, in 1927, his orchestra was hired by the Cotton Club in Harlem. During the group's long tenure there, the orchestra earned national fame through broadcasts and collaborations with other bands to produce classic works. By 1928, Ellington's orchestra had become premier jazz players in Harlem. They formed their own style, known as the "Jungle Style," that featured the members' honed skills (Dugan 2020). By the 1930s, Duke Ellington had gained a high reputation and had composed well-known jazz pieces, such as "Sophisticated Lady." From 1939 to 1961, he lived in Sugar Hill, an upper-class area of Harlem. Cab Calloway's orchestra replaced Ellington's at the Cotton Club in 1930, after Calloway had left the Savoy Ballroom, and introduced its trademark song, "Minnie the Moocher."

Aside from the bandleaders, solo musicians like Fats Waller were active as well. These solo musicians played music at rent parties in "buffet flats" – where Black tenants gathered and hired musicians to play to raise money for their rent – and nightclubs. There, they also composed music to accompany Black drama throughout the 1920s (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 471).

BLUES

Blues has a steady and melodic sound, filled with strong emotions. It was originally composed to express Black struggles after the Civil War. African Americans then brought the genre to Harlem in the Great Migration from the rural South. In Harlem, blues adapted to reflect urban social realities, including love, alcoholism, and economic independence (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 472).

The history of blues features the talents of many women, in contrast to jazz music, which tends to heavily represent men. Many famous blues singers were women, including Alberta Hunter, Ethel Waters, Edith Wilson, and Bessie Smith (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 472). Audiences could hear them singing in Harlem nightclubs and theaters, and beyond.



The Cotton Club in Harlem located at 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue from 1923-1936 served a Whites-only audience while employing Black performers.

The logo of Black Swan Records, designed by Harry Pace.



Ethel Waters recorded with Black Swan Records and was a popular performer at the Cotton Club.



Bessie Smith, known as the "Empress of the Blues," was a notable blues singer during the Harlem Renaissance.

Record companies also helped to disseminate these blues singers' voices to a growing African American market in Harlem. The practice of recording orchestra music developed alongside jazz and blues during the Harlem Renaissance. But while big bands ruled various nightclubs, blues singers dominated the recording industry. The popularity of the Black blues singers mentioned above contributed to a new nationwide branch of music records, called "race records." The first influential Black-owned company to record African American jazz and blues was Black Swan Records, established in 1921 by Harry Pace, a disciple of W. E. B. Du Bois. Its first office was on West 138th

Street in New York. Black Swan Records recorded many of the great artists of the Harlem Renaissance, like Louis Armstrong, Ethel Waters, and Alberta Hunter. However, most artists recorded with White-owned record companies, which played a significant but disproportionate role in publicizing and disseminating Black music. According to Pace, the competing White labels – such as Columbia and Paramount Records – attempted to "obstruct the progress and curtail the popularity of Black Swan Records" (*Dallas Express* 1922). Regrettably, Black Swan was bought by Paramount Records in 1923, and dissolved soon after. Nonetheless, Black Swan demonstrated the market potential of Black record labels and artists.

DANCE

African American dancers were pioneers in both theaters and nightclubs. There were not only professional performers, like John Bubbles and Bill Robinson, who danced on the stage, but also working-class Harlemites who danced to release their daily work pressure. People also went to more intimate venues, like rent parties and cellar clubs. Dance in Harlem was thus not only a performance, but also a social activity. At such informal venues, Ethel Waters became well known for her "shimmy dance," and Bill Robinson performed his trademark "stair dance." These vernacular dance genres created in clubs and parties were not accepted as high theatrical art, but epitomized the image of the working and lower classes of that time (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 472).

The Savoy Ballroom – established in 1926 and demolished in 1959 – was a central venue for Harlemites to dance, regardless of class and race. Opened by White entrepreneurs, the ballroom was managed by African American businessman Charles Buchanan (Engelbrecht 1983). It integrated both performers and audiences, which included members of the working class. Although differences in race and class separated them once again when the music and dancing stopped, a mixed group of people could dance to jazz music here. Black Harlemites gained a sense of recognition in the heterogeneous atmosphere of the Savoy, which inspired collective creativity. Many dance genres were created at the Savoy, like the Black Bottom, Shimmy, Truckin', Snakehips, and Suzy Q (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 472). Among them, the most popular and famous type was the Lindy Hop. Dancers improvised, just as the jazz players did, adding their own tempos: the Lindy Hop evolved into many forms, including West Coast Swing, Rock 'n' Roll, and the Boogie Woogie. The popularity of the Lindy Hop at the Savoy Ballroom led to a form of entertainment that merged live music with dance during the Harlem Renaissance.



The Savoy Ballroom at Lenox Avenue and West 140th Street, Harlem, c. 1950.

DRAMA

In the 1920s, Black theatrical works also began to prosper in Harlem to define Black identity and taste. The tradition of African American minstrels evolved into more serious forms of live theater portraying Black life, including musical revues, drama, and folk drama. These were not only shown in Harlem's theaters around 125th Street, but in the neighborhood's nightclubs and buffet flats, as well as theaters across the nation. Despite employing African American performers, White and Black audiences were segregated by seating area in the early 1920s, and some theaters even denied Black spectators entry by claiming to be "Whites only" establishments. The Black community fought for access to the theaters as the Black population increased in Harlem. As a result, once-segregated theaters increasingly adopted less discriminatory policies in the late 1920s and 1930s. In the mid-1920s, the main theaters catering to the Blacks were the Lincoln, Lafayette, and Alhambra Theaters (Monroe 1983, 63). The most representative integrated African American theater was the Lafayette Theatre. It was desegregated when it opened in 1915, allowing Black audiences to sit in the orchestra area instead of small balconies. The Lafayette often showed Broadway plays tailored to Black tastes, such as *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 473).

Playwrights had a vital part in the prosperity of literature and the arts during the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes, a writer and poet, wrote a number of plays for the Black community. Among them, *Mulatto* became a Broadway hit. Another landmark musical was *Shuffle Along* (1921) by Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, which catalyzed public interest in Black performers.

Several Black theater groups were founded during the Harlem Renaissance to encourage the creation of Black-written drama. W. E. B. Du Bois was the founder of the Krigwa Players, housed at the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 473). The playwrights in this theater company constantly pursued "the Black's own drama," which would reflect the reality of their own lives. Though the group did not last for a long time, it acted as an inspiration for other small Black theater groups. Other companies, like the Lafayette Players and Lincoln Players, performed high-quality plays. The Negro People's Theater similarly performed widely accepted Black dramas as well, while the Rose McClendon Players and the Pioneer Drama Group fought for racial equity in the theatrical field (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 1170). By the second half of the 1920s, both White and Black writers were creating Black revues that focused on Black life and were presented on Broadway.



Krigwa Players advertisement, c. 1926.

FILM

“Race movies” flourished in the Black community in the 1920s. Before then, the Black image on the screen tended to be negative. African Americans were either portrayed by White actors in blackface with burnt cork on their faces or represented as slaves in the films. They had no influence in the film industry. African Americans protested against their onscreen image for many years. *The Birth of A Nation* set off the most furious response, igniting African Americans to pursue an answer to that injustice and express Black self-consciousness more clearly (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 377). As a result, race movies became popular because of their positive portrayal of Black characters, and laid the foundation for Black theater ventures, whose contributions to the Renaissance has been discussed above.

William Foster was the first to produce motion pictures with an all-Black cast and crew in the 1910s. After Foster, more African American filmmakers made race movies for which the crew, the audience, and performers were all African American, and which would be presented in an increasing number of Black theaters (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 377). Oscar Micheaux was a prolific Black filmmaker whose work was often shown in Harlem Renaissance theaters. Micheaux closed his initial studio in Chicago and moved to Harlem permanently in 1926. Between 1918 and 1951, he produced nearly forty works that largely focused on Black middle-class life. His films include *The Brute* (1920) and *Temptation* (1936). Another Black filmmaker interested in depicting ordinary Black lives was actor and director Spencer Williams, who was active in the Black film industry in the 1930s. His films include *Harlem on the Prairie* (1937) and *The Blood of Jesus* (1941).



Posters for the “race movies” *Temptation* (left) and *Harlem on the Prairie* (right).

In race movies, actors were African American and the plots were about Black lives, which was sympathetic to a growing Black audience. This intended audience greeted these films with excitement, leading to the formation of many prosperous Black film companies before the Depression. However, they dissolved in the following decades and had almost completely vanished by 1950.

PERFORMING ARTS HISTORIC ASSETS

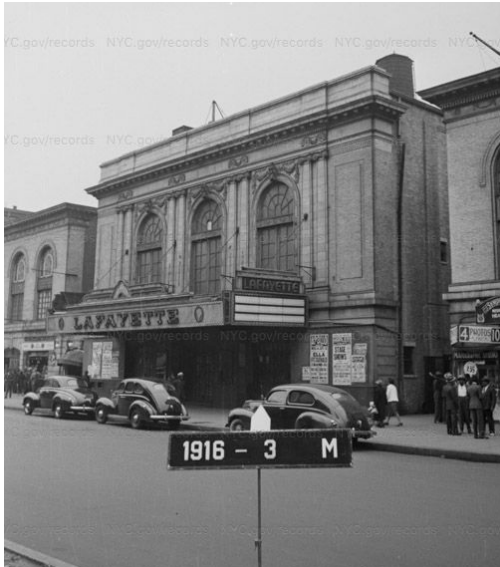
The performing arts and entertainment of the Harlem Renaissance included music, dance, drama, and film. Each of these categories were associated with different types of historic assets, as characterized below.

MUSIC AND DANCE

Jazz and blues were typically considered secular music genres. They were played mainly in informal venues like nightclubs, speakeasies, and buffet flats to accompany folk dancing and drama, but sometimes also in more formal venues, such as theaters to accompany musical revues. Famous venues included the Cotton Club (a nightclub), the Savoy Ballroom, and the Dunbar Apartments (in buffet flats).

The **nightclubs** in Harlem were social and entertainment spaces that mixed dining, drinking, and performances of music and dance. They were also called “cabarets” during the Harlem Renaissance. In addition to the performers, patrons also danced there. “The proximity of the patrons, the informal style of the performances, and amply flowing alcohol created public intimacy through physical and psychic contact” (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 908). For this studio, dance halls and ballrooms are both categorized as “nightclubs” due to their similarities. Most of these nightclubs were operated by White proprietors and catered to a White clientele, though their audiences became more racially diverse when the number of Black migrants increased in Harlem, such as at Small’s Paradise. There were large and well-furnished venues like Small’s Paradise and the Savoy Ballroom, as well as small and poorly ventilated ones like Edmond’s Cellar, which was in a basement and had to be closed in the summer (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 909).

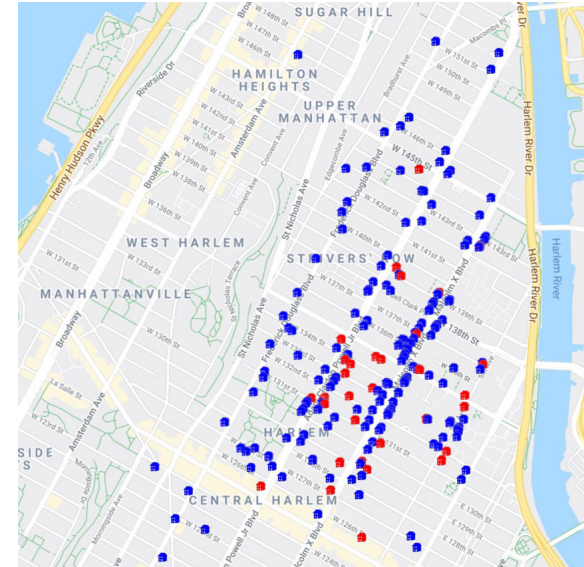
Speakeasies were “underground” venues, distinct from the nightclubs due to their offering of alcohol and gambling during the Prohibition era. There were over 500 speakeasies in Harlem at the peak of the Renaissance.



The Lafayette, at 227 Seventh Avenue (c. 1940), was the first major theater to desegregate, allowing Black patrons to sit in the orchestra section. It was demolished in 2013.



The Pace Phonograph Corporation at 257 West 138th Street was Harlem's first recording company, founded by Harry Pace and later sold to Paramount.



Nightclubs (shown in red) and speakeasies (shown in blue) during the Harlem Renaissance.

Buffet flats were more intimate venues operated by middle-class African Americans in apartment buildings. They featured “rent parties,” which became popular events and a main source of income to pay Black Harlemites’ rents. Because of the economic injustice in which African American renters in Harlem were subject to higher housing rents than White renters, the hosts of the rent parties charged admission fees that would help pay their rent. Black tenants hired musicians to perform at these events as part of the entertainment.

DRAMA AND FILM

Theaters were the main venues for Black Harlemites to see drama and race films, although nightclubs and buffet flats also hosted informal musicals. Race films were only shown in Black theaters run by African Americans. Black drama and films both employed Black performers and derived their plots from the daily life of Black peoples. The development of Black film was another story about the struggle for Black identity, as discussed above. As mentioned, the three earliest Black theaters in Harlem were the Lincoln, Lafayette, and Alhambra Theaters. The former two catered to the Black clientele when they opened; the Alhambra Theater was initially Whites-only and only opened to

Black audiences in 1926. Later, the Apollo Theater on West 125th Street, which featured many African American performers, turned from Whites-only to an integrated venue in 1934, and the Roosevelt Theater integrated after 1930.

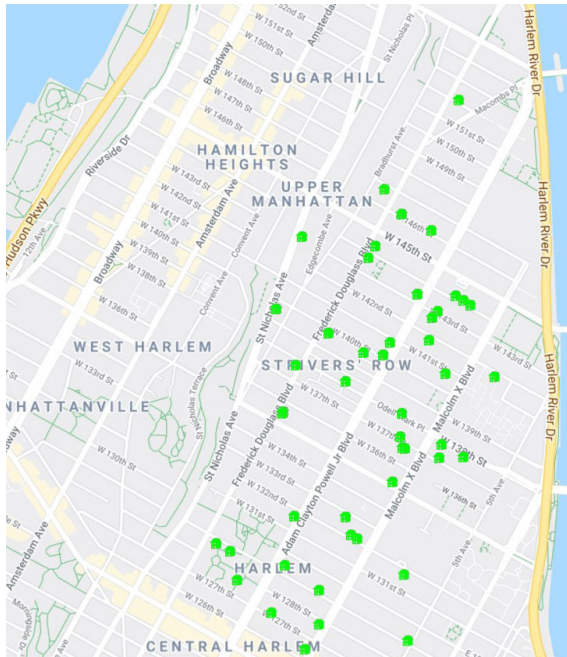
Geographic Distribution and Trends

NIGHTCLUBS AND BUFFET FLATS

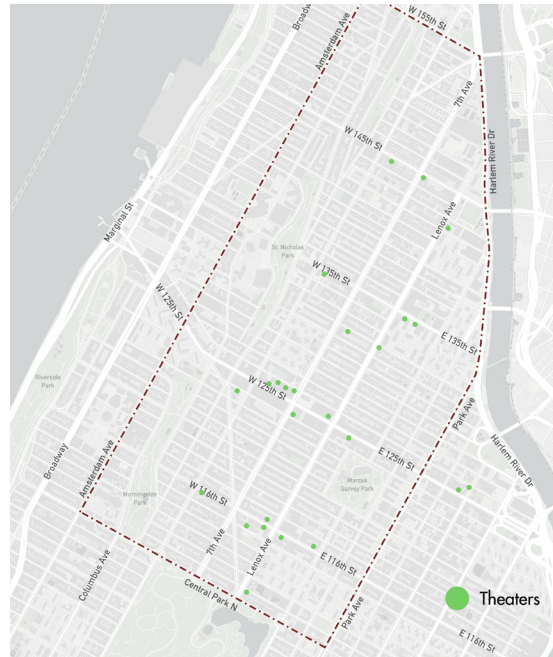
During the Harlem Renaissance, nightclubs were concentrated along Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues. Most of these were established in the 1920s. By the 1950s, almost all of them were gone. Black nightlife first centered on streets above West 130th Street, and later moved south to the area around 125th Street. In the map of Harlem’s theaters (following page), it is also clear that West 116th Street was a center for theater during the Renaissance. Buffet flats were distributed across streets along the long sides of blocks, and concentrated mainly in Central Harlem.

THEATERS

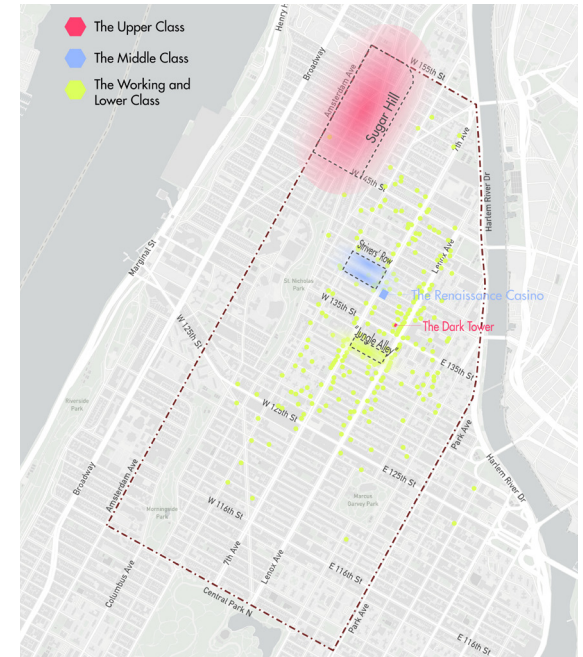
Most of Harlem’s historic theaters active during the Renaissance, especially those around West 116th Street and 125th Street, were established before



Distribution of buffet flats during the Harlem Renaissance.



Distribution of theaters during the Harlem Renaissance.



Distribution of social classes during the Harlem Renaissance.

the 1920s and catered to a White clientele. As the Black population rapidly increased in Harlem throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the theaters expanded southward from the initial center, above West 30th Street, to 125th Street. There, they fought for their rights to extend their prosperous commercial and entertainment scene to West 125th Street. Most of these theaters were later demolished for new construction on the same site, including, for instance, the Lafayette Theater, the Douglas Theater, and the Harlem Opera House. Many extant theaters have been gutted and reused as churches (such as the Regent Theater, the Lincoln Theater, and the Oden Theater), supermarkets (such as the Roosevelt Theater), office and commercial buildings (like the Crescent/Gem Theater [now a meeting hall], the Alhambra Theater hall [a leasable office], and Loew's Victoria theater [an office]), while some still function as a theater (such as the Apollo).

RESIDENCES AND SOCIAL CIRCLES

Class distinctions were reflected in residential spaces and the activities that took within them. Affluent leaders and artists – including W. E. B. Du Bois, Roy Wilkins, and Walter White – lived on **Sugar Hill** with people of high

status. Middle-class artistic leaders, including Paul Robeson, Countee Cullen, Clarence Cameron White, W.C. Handy, and Fletcher Henderson, lived on **Strivers' Row** (on both sides of West 138th and West 139th Streets between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and Frederick Douglass Boulevard). The Black poor and working class lived on **"Jungle Alley,"** the nickname for the blocks encompassing West 133rd Street between Seventh Avenue and Lenox Avenue and filled with dozens of nightclubs and speakeasies.

Along with residential distributions, social circles were also determined by class and race. Affluent artists gathered and held intellectual exchanges in **the Dark Tower**, a grand townhouse on the West 136th Street where A'Lelia Walker held lavish parties attended by poets, writers, artists, musicians, and activists of the Harlem Renaissance (Walser 2017). The elite class danced in formal ballrooms like the **Renaissance Casino**. The working class, which made up the majority of Harlem's African Americans, gathered in nightclubs and intimate venues, such as basement speakeasies and buffet flats, for entertainment (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 470–471).

LITERARY ARTS & PUBLISHING

Jonathan Clemente

In the 1920s, poets came to Harlem, and – unlike the older generation of Black poets and writers like James Weldon Johnson and W. E. B. Du Bois, often called “the Old Guard” – these artists were ready to dive into the Harlem experiment (Huggins 2007, 15–21). Writers like Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston pushed the limits of poetry and prose, in both content and form, and lived fairly similar lifestyles (Watson 1995, 34–50). More specifically, each one of these writers wrote for money, but also voluntarily contributed to the journal *Fire!!* in order to change how young Black Harlemites viewed their heritage, and each one of these writers lived in a free rooming house on 136th Street (Taborn 2018, 163). They even went to the same parties and attended the same writing workshops (Urbanelli 1993, 5).

Social networking was an incredibly important part of the literary arts and publishing field, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. It was nearly impossible to survive as a writer without a second job, and getting published without a network was just as unlikely. And while getting published was never quite easy for anyone, getting published was particularly challenging for Black writers living in Harlem who had something radical to say. This was because the New Negro movement, which aimed to depict Black Americans as highly sophisticated and good-natured citizens through art and action, dictated what could and could not be published. More specifically, Alain Locke, author of *The New Negro*, and his tight-knit group of upper echelon friends, had a

significant say in what could and could not be published. It was quite difficult to get published with content that embraced all-African heritage – especially if it fell within what the New Negro movement had considered “tribal” or “inappropriate” heritage that should be “overcome” – but it could be done (Taborn 2018, 163).

The first way was to self-publish. Self-publishing could cost several years’ worth of payments and was only possible with sponsorship, patronage, and group collaboration. One such instance of this was the journal *Fire!!*, created by Wallace Thurman in collaboration with other residents of 267 West 136th Street. The contributors included some of the most famous young writers, such as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Richard Bruce Nugent. The content included stories about gender roles (“Sweat”), Gay Harlem (“Smoke, Lilies, and Jade”), and Black prostitution (“Cordelia the Crude”). These were all highly radical and they pushed boundaries that many Black Harlemites were not comfortable having pushed, including Old Guard writers like W. E. B. Du Bois and Alain Locke (Thurman 1926, 9; Pochmara 2011, 111).

The second way to get a radical work published was by working with Jewish publishers. These publishers, like Alfred Knopf or Boni & Liveright, knew that there was an audience for novels about the darker side of Harlem and were, on many occasions, able to publish young Harlem writers. A writer would generally mail a sample of their work in or would submit their writing to a newspaper. However, there was another way to catch the attention of publishers, and that was by attending large parties where White patrons could serve as connectors for Midtown publishers and Harlemites (Cottenet 2011, 9). Patrons like Carl Van Vechten, for instance, regularly attended A'Lelia Walker's parties and was a part of her writing salon at “The Dark Tower.” He knew that there was a market for books about the darker side of Harlem; in fact, he later wrote one himself and lost the trust of many in the community for it. Nonetheless, befriending Van Vechten was how many writers, including Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman, got their start.

Parties and events were important staples to the Harlem social ladder, and attendance helped increase the chances of succeeding in a penniless profession. Sites for such social interaction included parties at A'Lelia Walker's residence at 108 West 136th Street, club meetings and dinners at the New York Urban League, and events at the 135th Street New York Public Library hosted by Regina Andrews (Walser 2017; *New York Amsterdam News* 1938a; Whitmire 2014, 35). Individual and shared living spaces could also be used for

Regina Anderson Andrews, librarian at the 135th Street Public Library.



social gatherings, often called salons. Salons were small, friendly meetings where artists could share their work, workshop ideas, and talk about how to sharpen their ideas. Regina Andrews had a particularly important salon called “Dream Haven” that hosted many famous writers and poets, such as Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alain Locke (NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, n.d.). A’Lelia Walker and Walter White would famously host parties where influential figures from all across the arts, politics, and financial sectors could crowd in to eat, perform, and network with each other. The difference between the parties and the writing workshops were that White patrons and publishers mostly connected through parties, while Black artists connected more intimately with one another in the smaller residences (Urbanelli 1993, 5; Walser 2017).

In addition to these social qualities, the physical space of Harlem that the writers inhabited was also marked by transience. Almost all artists seemed to live in “movable space,” constantly changing residences, never remaining in one place for very long. Rents in Harlem were especially high for Black renters, and working as a novelist full-time could not pay the bills. There were rooming houses where artists could stay for free, but they were not places one could mark as their home address (Watson 1995, 1-40). It is unclear whether writers were forced to leave or chose to, but many, like Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Claude McKay, traveled outside of Harlem throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Once a writer was published, traveling outside of Harlem would not damage their social status. Poor or not, the famous writers were a part of the upper echelon of Harlem. They interacted with influential figures like A’Lelia Walker and Carl Van Vechten and were in contact with publishers like Alfred Knopf and Boni & Liveright (Aberjhani and West 2003, 310-320; Cottenet 2011, 9).

LITERARY ARTS & PUBLISHING HISTORIC ASSETS

CHARACTERIZATION

Almost all of the historic assets associated with the literary arts and publishing of the Harlem Renaissance are spaces of social interaction and creative production. More specifically, writers attended workshops and parties, and wrote where they lived. They did not need any particular space for their craft; however, they did rely, to some extent, on their networks to get published and receive income. These networks connected writers to interested publishers in the mainstream publishing industry, which existed outside of Harlem and was controlled almost exclusively by White men, with the exception of editorials like *The Crisis*, edited by W. E. B. Du Bois (Huggins 2007, 21).



Ethel Ray Nance was the secretary of the publication *Opportunity*, and she shared an apartment with Regina Anderson Andrews and Louella Tucker at 580 St. Nicholas Avenue (left, c. 1940), which the roommates referred to as “Dream Haven.” Charles Spurgeon Johnson, the founder of *Opportunity*, had writers new to New York sleep on Nance’s couch.

The majority of spaces, including those of social interaction, were residences. A’Lelia Walker’s studio, also known as the “Dark Tower,” was an incredibly important place for Black writers to network with White patrons, like Carl Van Vechten, who could connect them to publishers like Boni & Liveright or Alfred A. Knopf. The mansion was on 108 and 110 West 136th Street, and by some accounts “was large enough to hold half of Harlem” – the residence had fine furniture, large open spaces, and an endless supply of food (Walser 2017; Cottenet 2011). This building is no longer extant. In its place today is the Countee Cullen branch of the New York Public Library.

The residence of Regina Anderson Andrews at 580 St. Nicholas Avenue hosted another important “salon.” This is where newcomers to Harlem could stay briefly and meet other writers who attended Andrews’ writing workshops. Zora Neale Hurston stayed on the couch here when she first entered Harlem, and Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen were among the regulars to the salon (Bolick 2003). This building is extant. It is a large and imposing structure, neither colorful nor decorative. The inside is not very spacious, but large enough for a small gathering of friends.

ISSUES, PATTERNS, TRENDS, AND GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATIONS

Many of the writers of Harlem existed in a sort of moving space. They never existed in one place for too long, perhaps because of financial difficulty or because they did not like being stagnant. Langston Hughes was a perfect example of this pattern. He moved from Mexico to Harlem to attend Columbia University, lived at the YMCA until he moved to the dorms at Columbia, worked as a messman on a riverboat fresh out of college, moved from apartment

to apartment to live with different friends, and did not occupy a permanent residence until the 1940s (Watson 1995, 50-52; Bowery Boys 2012).

There was a free rooming house for artists at 267 West 136th Street, where famous poets like Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Gwendolyn Bennett often stayed. The owner of the rooming house, Iolanthe Sydney, refused to charge rent to the artists. She apparently believed that when the artists were “freed” of the harsh realities of monthly rent responsibilities, they worked better and produced more significant works of visual art and literature (Bolick 2003; Aberjhani and West 2003, 242, 320). The fact that these famous writers needed free housing tells a great deal about the financial relationship between Black writers and White publishers. The row house, referred to as “Niggerati Manor” by many of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance, was a row house with stained glass windows. It is no longer extant, but was once the next-door-neighbor to the National Urban League.

The 135th Street Public Library was the center of Harlem’s literary scene, physically and metaphorically. Geographically, the majority of Harlem’s social hub was located in the 130s, especially for writers who wanted to be close to the Dark Tower. The library was the place that every writer went to regularly, so it was already an essential part of the community. But a librarian from Chicago, Regina Andrews, made the library even more important when she started hosting after-hours events for writers, artists, and speakers. The library downstairs had a small theater where writers and scholars could present, or playwrights, such as Regina Andrews herself, could host a play or musical (Whitmire 2014, 35; Aberjhani and West 2003, 320).

409 Edgecombe Avenue, also known as “The White House,” located on the eastern border of Sugar Hill. This was most famously the home of Walter White, and many writers attended parties or writers’ workshops here whenever possible. The environment was much different than that of the salons held at the 267 West 136th Street rooming house or 580 St. Nicholas Avenue. This was an upscale apartment for well-mannered, upper echelon writers. It is hard to say if the content discussed or even the attendees at these salons differed, but Langston Hughes and Claude McKay were regular guests (Urbanelli 1993, 5).



The Schomburg room at the 135th Street Library.

JOURNALISM & MEDIA PERCEPTIONS

Valerie Smith

Publications serve as a written record of thoughts, opinions, events, news, advertising, art, and other topics. Not only are they helpful from a historical, archival standpoint to understand what was happening during a specific period, but are also a means for communities to express its views and feature topics that are important to its culture.

African Americans began using publishing as a tool to have their voice heard and uplift their race after the Civil War. They made more progress with the written word and publications after 1868, when the Fourteenth Amendment allowed Black men to vote. This helped with the freedom of the press for African Americans (Carroll 2017). Newspapers of this time were often short-lived, operating around the time of elections for political motivation and closing down after an election had passed. However, by the late 1880s, newspapers and other publications began to gain longevity and purpose. These publications would usher in the Harlem Renaissance era and be a pivotal component for African Americans to find a voice and express their culture.

There were magazines, journals, and newspapers that were essential to the African American story in Harlem with national – and, in some cases, international – reach and influence. The publications of the Harlem Renaissance empowered the growing community of African Americans living in Harlem. Newspapers and magazines portrayed African Americans as participants in modern life and highlighted African American achievements absent from White publications. For the first time, African Americans had publications that would inspire and normalize their lives, apart from the White America that had subjugated them for so many years. They featured African American art, poems, and photographs, which provided new forms of representation of their communities, allowed for personal expression in the African American community, and highlighted talent. Meanwhile, the Harlem Renaissance publications were also crusades against discrimination, bringing attention to violence against African Americans and speaking out about injustices of the time.

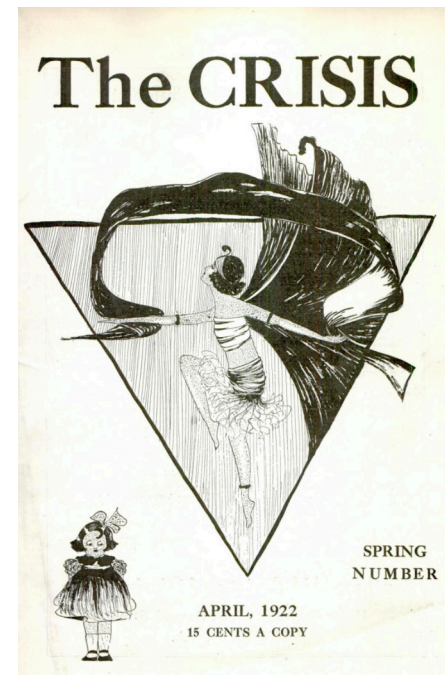
Editors and founders of these crucial publications saw an opening and a way to participate in mainstream and White-centric America through the written word and the arts (Lewis 1989), while at the same time differentiating from it.

Despite the negative perception of African Americans by White people living in Harlem, publishers continued to produce written records of their cultural and social life to counteract negative stereotypes and uplift their race. Today, we have those records to look at for a greater understanding of the struggles they faced and the immense amount of resilience and creative talent African Americans had during the Harlem Renaissance.

MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

The Crisis magazine was founded in 1910 by W. E. B. Du Bois. *The Crisis* was (and, today, still is) the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The magazine was published monthly at the downtown offices of the *New York Evening Post* and later at 69 Fifth Avenue and 70 Fifth Avenue.

The magazine covered local and national news, as well as feature stories written specifically for African Americans. Topics included in most issues were social uplift, crime, economics, “The Ghetto,” politics, the courts, opinion, civic pride, racial prejudice, book and periodical coverage, and the arts. Poems and editorials (many written by W. E. B. Du Bois) were also an essential part of the magazine.



Cover of *The Crisis* magazine, 1922.

Du Bois believed strongly in the importance of higher education for African Americans and periodically dedicated entire issues of the magazine to this theme. His dedication to higher education is also evident in the university advertisements and information about institutions that appeared at the beginning of magazine issues.

Jessie Redmon Fauset played an essential role as one of the editors of *The Crisis*. She helped bring attention to poets such as Langston Hughes, Arna Bontemps, and Countee Cullen by publishing their work. Du Bois said of the role of *The Crisis* in helping give a platform to African American writers that “[p]ractically every Negro author writing today found his first audience through the pages of *The Crisis*” (Johnson and Johnson 1974).

Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life ran from 1923 to 1949 as the National Urban League’s official publication. It was founded by Charles Spurgeon Johnson after he was hired as the research director for the Urban League. The address of the offices for *Opportunity* in 1925 is listed at 127 East 23rd Street, the National Urban League’s office.

Opportunity sought to include aspects of African American life that were left out of mainstream White journalism. The goal of the publication was to be an “assault upon the traditional errors of our tangled relations, in its equally dispassionate quest for truth, and in its revelation of the neglected aspects of Negro life” (*Opportunity* 1925, 2).

Cover of Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life,
June 1925.



An essential part of Black culture, especially during the Harlem Renaissance, that the magazine featured was the arts. The dedication to African American art can be seen in the publication’s calls for art, paintings, and photographs, featured at the front of many of the magazine issues.

The magazine ***The Messenger*** was co-founded by Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph in 1917. It was in production until 1928. *The Messenger* was influential in shaping African Americans’ political and intellectual identity during the Harlem Renaissance. It ran stories featuring middle-class African Americans who were successful professionally and in business. It was important for African Americans to have examples of African American professionals making a life for themselves despite White America’s attempts to keep them restricted to specific jobs and wealth levels.

Founders Chandler Owen and A. Phillip Randolph were both members of the Socialist Party. They believed that rights for African Americans should be taken by force if needed. These beliefs and their convictions about labor and socialism made the government nervous. The Department of Justice called *The Messenger* “[t]he most able and the most dangerous of all the Negro publications” (Pfeffer 2000). The pair later started featuring fewer political articles and more content about culture and art. However, disagreements within the organization kept it from having a long run as a publication.

NEWSPAPERS

The New York Age started in 1887 and closed down in 1953. The *Age* referred to itself as “The National Negro Weekly” and “The Home Paper” (Goldman 2020). The newspaper operated out of an office in Harlem after moving uptown from 247 West 46th Street in 1914. In 1920, its office was located at 230 West 135th Street.

The newspaper reported on local news and covered national sports, news, art, and other African American life topics. Economic development was a theme that editor James Weldon Johnson believed in strongly for the African American community. An editorial in 1914 said that “Every nationality is making money off the Negroes in Harlem – except Negroes” (Goldman 2020). Johnson’s concerns with African Americans’ economic growth used the *Age* newspaper as a tool during the Harlem Renaissance to express these views and inspire his race.

The *Age* was a driving force in the migration of African Americans up to Harlem from San Juan Hill and other New York areas. African Americans were being pushed out of other areas in New York, and living conditions were undesirable. The newspaper regularly published Harlem real estate information to persuade African Americans to move up to Harlem to establish a better life. Johnson once said that Harlem was “the most unique Negro settlement in the world” (Goldman 2020). He hoped others would take advantage of the growing culture and opportunity opening for African Americans in Harlem.

Another influential African American newspaper was the **New York Amsterdam News**. James H. Anderson founded the *Amsterdam News* in 1909 and sold copies of the newspaper for two cents. The newspaper was named after Amsterdam Avenue, near Anderson’s home at 132 West 65th Street in San Juan Hill. The newspaper moved to Harlem a few years later and had offices at 17 West 135th Street. In 1916, the newspaper was growing rapidly and moved to 2293 Seventh Avenue (today Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard). In 1938, the newspaper office moved to 2271 Seventh Avenue. Eventually, it found its home and current headquarters in 1940 at 2340 Frederick Douglass Boulevard (NY Amsterdam News, n.d.).

Like the *Age*, *Amsterdam News* focused on both local and national news pertinent to African Americans. Over the years, it has brought attention to critical civil rights battles, such as the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign in Harlem. It was the first African American paper to have all its departments unionized and hire African American women for various roles, including journalists. An important woman named Marvel Jackson Cooke made strides for Black women in the field of journalism during the Harlem Renaissance. She began her career in Harlem in 1926, when W. E. B. Du Bois hired her as *The Crisis*’ secretary. Two years later, she became the first Black journalist to work at the *Amsterdam News*. She lived at 409 Edgecombe Avenue, a site also discussed in the Visual Arts historic context. She interacted with many of the key figures of the Harlem Renaissance socially, professionally, and through her civil rights activism.

The *Amsterdam News* has been and continues to be truly influential in the African American community. Besides the *Chicago Defender*, the *Amsterdam News* was the only other African American newspaper to have its circulation tracked, and had a distribution of over 100,000 at its height of production (Public Broadcasting Service, n.d.). It regularly published the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois and Adam Clayton Powell Jr., and was one of the first newspapers to bring attention to Malcolm X (NY Amsterdam News, n.d.). The publications

during the Harlem Renaissance have left a permanent record for historians and others to study and understand the thoughts and goals of African American publishers and writers. The newspaper still exists today in the same location. The *Amsterdam News*’ current website says, “The New York Amsterdam News was started more than a century ago, with a \$10 investment. It has gone on to become one of the most important Black newspapers in the country and today remains one of the most influential Black-owned and -operated media businesses in the nation, if not the world” (NY Amsterdam News, n.d.).

The Negro World was founded in 1918 by the Jamaican activist Marcus Garvey. The newspaper was part of his movement called the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey was a controversial figure due to his nationalist views, and his newspaper was short-lived. While the publication was distributed nationally and internationally, France and Britain eventually banned the newspaper, and other governments became suspicious.

Garvey already had newspaper experience when he came to the United States in 1916. He distributed the paper to people in Harlem for no charge. He slipped copies under people’s doors (City University of New York, n.d.). While bold themes, such as “Negroes get ready,” and political coverage and ideas were a large part of the newspaper, *Negro World* is also credited with being the first African American newspaper to include book reviews. It also published short stories, plays, and important African American writings of the Harlem Renaissance (City University of New York, n.d.).

WHITE PERCEPTIONS OF HARLEM

The perception of Harlem and its African American community by the White press and broader New York can be classified into three themes: racial prejudice and the perpetuation of violence; fascination and curiosity; and respect and the desire to help African Americans advance socially, economically, and culturally.

African Americans were moving up to Harlem due to the encouragement of newspapers like the *Age* and in pursuit of a better life and community. In response, readers would write into White newspapers to express their horror and dismay about Harlem becoming more diverse. First, the residents fought the changing of the neighborhood, writing into newspapers such as *Harlem Home News* in 1911, “We now warn owners of property...that the invaders are clamoring for admission right at their doors and that they must wake up and get busy before it is too late to repel the black hordes...” (*Harlem Home News*

1911, quoted in Anderson 1982). They would also write into the *New York Times*, such as in 1912: “Can nothing be done to put a restriction on the invasion of the Negro into Harlem?” (Anderson 1982). They blamed the newcomers for crimes and formed a prejudice towards all African Americans moving to the neighborhood, even though many were upstanding citizens who held the same values, saying, “Harlem is evidently the burglar’s as well as the holdup man’s ‘meal ticket’ ...I favor lynching the scamps” (Anderson 1982). By the 1920s, White people were writing into newspapers like the *New York Times*, reminiscing on what they felt were better days before the neighborhood had changed: “I can remember, back in the fabulous golden nineties, when Harlem was neither Negro nor Italian” (Anderson 1982).

Meanwhile, some White people wanted to experience the cultural, social, and artistic scene of Harlem. For many, Harlem, like Paris, “answered a need for personal nourishment and to confirm their vision of cultural salvation coming from the margins of civilization” (Lewis 1989). Some salons for Harlem’s artists and writers were held in the homes of White people, including Carl Van Vechten’s home, first at 151 East 19th Street from 1915 to 1924, and then 150 West 55th Street (LGBT Historic Sites Project, n.d.). He was a prominent figure who demonstrated curiosity and fascination with African American arts and culture during the Harlem Renaissance. He once told a friend: “Jazz, the blues, Negro spirituals, all stimulate me enormously for the moment” (Lewis 1989). This gives the impression that African American culture was a trend for him that would eventually run its course (Lewis 1989).

As part of these salons, modeled after similar gatherings in Paris, African Americans were invited into White homes in Midtown and other areas of the city to share their art and poems with the spectators. This gave African Americans access and exposure beyond Harlem and the African American audience of their neighborhood. Many in the African American community disliked this dynamic and feared that White people were exploiting the Harlem culture, which is sometimes referred to as “Salon Exotica” (Brown 2000). Although Du Bois and others were outspokenly skeptical for this reason, some significant relationships were formed at salons. These relationships helped advance African Americans and allowed their literature and art to be noticed by the mainstream (Lewis 1989).

The third theme is the respect and desire to help African Americans advance socially, economically, and culturally. Some humanitarians helped uplift them and supported their publications and other endeavors by backing them financially or introducing them to people in mainstream media that would give them exposure. One example is Oswald Garrison Villard. He was an editor

for the *New York Evening Post*, an abolitionist, and a founding member of the NAACP board. Excerpts from the *Evening Post* in 1925 read less condescending than other publications speaking of ambition and pride for African Americans and their newfound home of Harlem: “Harlem... draws immigrants from every country in the world that has a colored population, either large or small.... Ambitious and talented youth on every continent look forward to reaching Harlem” (Anderson 1982).

All these perceptions in print and other media shaped the Harlem Renaissance. Although it was often difficult for the African American community to navigate these perceptions, it did its best to find a voice, largely through journalism and the written word, which they saw as a way into White society and a platform for their opinions, art, poems, stories, and achievements. The importance of the Black press and magazines during the Harlem Renaissance can be summed up in this statement: “If any newspaper was duty-bound to be a crusader, it was the Black newspaper. The very environment in which it was born and still exists dictated that the Black news vehicle vigorously wage campaigns to correct abuse and promote public welfare” (Pride and Wilson 1997).

JOURNALISM & MEDIA PERCEPTIONS HISTORIC ASSETS

Key historic assets relating to journalism during the Harlem Renaissance consist of sites of creative production, political action/reaction, and institutional/organizational centers. These categories and sites of interest relating to journalism can be found in newspaper and magazine offices, homes of the people who worked for the publications, and sometimes homes that doubled as headquarters for publications.

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE OFFICES

Negro World operated both out of 56 West 135th Street and 26-38 West 135th Street in the years 1918 and 1919. The locations are near each other, with one building separating them. The building in a 1940s tax photo shows that 56 West 135th Street was a tenement building. More research needs to be done to identify if the newspaper was run out of Marcus Garvey’s (or someone else’s) apartment or out of a first floor commercial space. 26-38 West 135th Street does not have commercial space visible in the 1940s photo; thus, the newspaper was possibly operated out of someone’s home.



The building where James Van Der Zee had his photo studio. 109 West 135th Street, c. 1940.



The first Harlem offices for the New York Age were located at 230 West 135th Street, c. 1940.

One of the photographers for Marcus Garvey (and possibly for his newspaper *Negro World*) was James Van Der Zee. He had a photo studio, Guarantee Photo Studio, at 109 West 135th Street. The building in 1940 shows commercial space on the first floor, though the studio may have been operated out of his home.

The *Age* newspaper's offices were located at 230 West 135th Street, two blocks down from *Negro World*'s. James Weldon Johnson, the *Age*'s editor, conveniently lived just across Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard at 185 West 135th Street. A 1940s tax photo shows the *New York Age* sign and first floor offices. The building was a row house with commercial space on the first floor.

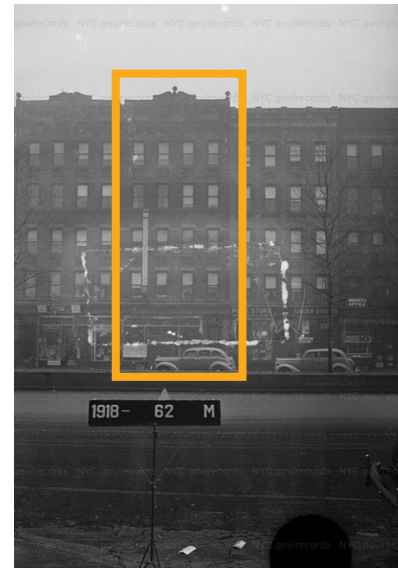
The *New York Amsterdam News* had four different locations in Harlem (pictured to the right). As its success grew, it expanded and moved to new offices. All were clustered around 135th Street and near the locations of the newspapers *Negro World* and the *Age*. Its first Harlem location was at 17 West 135th Street, then at 2293 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, and later at 2271 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard. Its current location became its office in 1940 and is located at 2340 Frederick Douglass Boulevard, which falls farther away from the original cluster around 135th Street. The first location was in a tenement, and the second location was at a row house. It is unclear if the newspaper operated out of commercial space on the first floor or not. The third location was in a large apartment building that also had first floor commercial spaces. The fourth and final location is the row house that the paper still operates out of today. The row houses seen adjacent to this building in the 1940s tax photo have been torn down.



The building of the New York Amsterdam News' first Harlem office located at 17 West 135th Street, c. 1940.



The building of the New York Amsterdam News' second Harlem office located at 2293 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, c. 1940.



The building of the New York Amsterdam News' third Harlem office located at 2271 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, c. 1940.



The building of the New York Amsterdam News' fourth Harlem office located at 2340 Frederick Douglass Boulevard, c. 1940.

RESIDENCES OF JOURNALISTS AND EDITORS

W. E. B. Du Bois lived at the Dunbar Apartments, located at 226 West 150th Street. The Dunbar Apartments was an important site of the Harlem Renaissance because of the figures who lived there, the businesses that operated there, and because it was one of the first co-ops for Black residents in Harlem. The Dunbar Apartments became a New York City landmark in 1970 and was added to the National Register in 1979. *The Crisis* magazine lists their headquarters as 70 Fifth Avenue and also 69 Fifth Avenue. This publication was the official publication of the NAACP and they did not have an office in Harlem. W. E. B. Du Bois later lived at 409 Edgecombe Avenue. Marvel Jackson Cooke, an important journalist who made strides for Black women (and worked for W. E. B. Du Bois and, later, the *New York Amsterdam News*), also lived at 409 Edgecombe.



One of the buildings where W. E. B. Du Bois lived in Harlem. 226 West 150th Street, c. 1940.



W. E. B. Du Bois later moved to 409 Edgecombe Avenue, c. 1940.



The apartment where the *Opportunity* secretary, Ethel Nance, let writers new to or visiting New York stay located at 580 St. Nicholas Avenue, c. 1940.

580 St. Nicholas Avenue was the apartment of *Opportunity* secretary Ethel Nance. Charles Spurgeon Johnson, the founder of *Opportunity*, had new writers he discovered who did not live in New York sleep on Nance's couch during their visit or until they found their own place if they had moved to New York. She shared an apartment with two other women: a typist from *Opportunity* and Regina Anderson, who worked for the 135th Street Library.

ASSETS OUTSIDE OF HARLEM

There are key sites such as the offices of *The Crisis* (as previously mentioned) and *Opportunity* that operated during the Harlem Renaissance but that were located outside Harlem. This presents a bit of a challenge as they were important to the history of journalism during the Harlem Renaissance. For further study, it would be interesting to understand more about these sites and if there was ever a consideration to move these offices up to Harlem. Ties to the NAACP and National Urban League, both located outside of Harlem, was likely the deciding factor for not moving to the neighborhood, but more study is needed.

The original office of the *New York Amsterdam News* operated out of James H. Anderson's home in San Juan Hill, later the site of Lincoln Center. While it was not included as a historic asset for this studio, it is an important asset to note. The location of Anderson's home near Amsterdam Avenue inspired the name of the newspaper, the *New York Amsterdam News*, which it still uses today.

CONTEMPORARY ASSETS

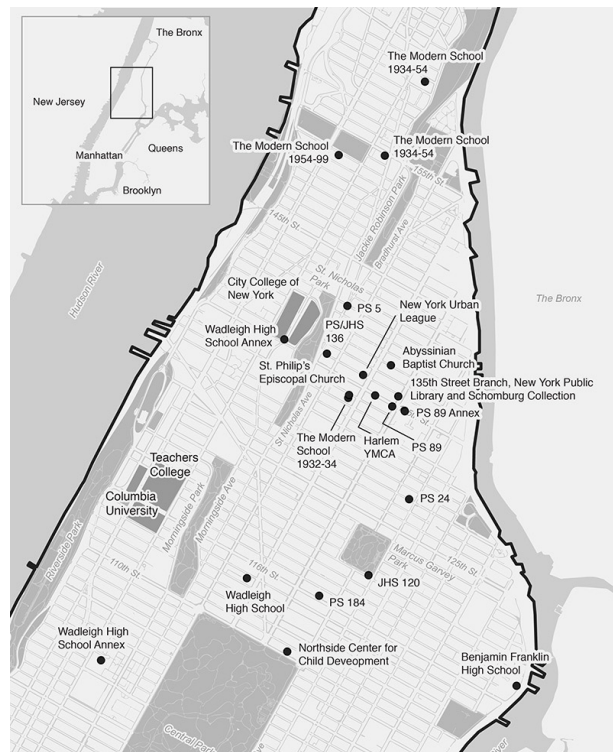
While many of the buildings listed above still survive, the organizations do not, with the exception of *The Crisis* and the *New York Amsterdam News*. There appear to be limited contemporary assets relating to journalism existing today that were in existence in Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance. With the emergence of the Internet, African American readers can get their news more easily from large national newspapers like *Afro American* in Baltimore and the *Chicago Defender*. However, the *Amsterdam News*' continued presence in Harlem, both physically and as an influence on the neighborhood's African American residents, should be explored.

Another direction to explore with current assets could be the physical presence of newsstands or publications on the streets of Harlem. While this research is difficult to conduct remotely, it would be interesting to explore physical newsstands that existed during the Harlem Renaissance and compare them to what exists today. One lead on newsstands has been Mike's Newsstand and Candy Land, which opened in 1932 and was located for many years on West 122nd Street and Lenox Avenue. Unfortunately, without being able to walk the streets of Harlem, it is challenging to understand if this newsstand still exists. As of 2012, Mike's lease was ending, and current Google images of the last known location do not show that his newsstand is in that location anymore. Creative ways of thinking about contemporary assets and journalism will need to be explored.

EDUCATION

Luxi Yang

During the Renaissance, Harlem was, according to sociologist Ira De A. Reid, “not so much the Mecca of the New Negro’ as ‘the maker of the New Negro,’” and “teaching constituted a way of articulating and fostering new consciousness as befit a new age” (Perlstein 2019). In order to build race pride and candid self-revelation, the New Negro Movement leaders, educators, and artists took various approaches (Watson 1995, 27). Education was integrally linked to the arts, literature, sports, religion, and economics – any development in these fields had the potential to influence education. Overall social trends and shifts affected both the public’s attitude toward education as well as the educational programs and institutions of the Harlem Renaissance, and in turn, education also influenced the development of the broader Harlem Renaissance and Harlem community in the 1920s. The following examines these trends and dynamics, and then examines the range of educational institutions.



Educational assets in Harlem.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

Differing Philosophical Ideologies

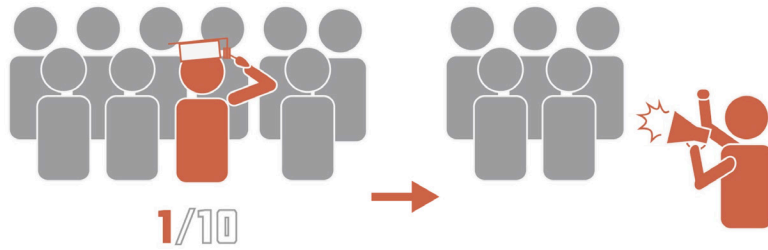
As Michael L. Rowland (2000) wrote in his “African Americans and Self-Help Education,” adult education programs mainly follow a philosophical ideology that focuses on “the personal growth of the individual or what is often referred to as ‘self-actualization’ or student-centered learning.... Self-help and adult education are part of the African American cultural heritage, as exemplified by such men as Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois [sic].”

Booker T. Washington “believed that African Americans needed first to take care of their survival and safety needs and then worry about the more complex needs of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization” (Rowland 2000). On the other hand, W. E. B. Du Bois took a more aggressive approach concerning the activism the Black community needed.

This debate about philosophical ideology was not limited to adult education – it also applied to primary and secondary school education. Vocational education allowed Black students to fulfill their basic needs, yet it also posed a form of inequality and discrimination in treating the Black students differently from their White counterparts. The key debate was about whether vocational education and progressive education enabled Black students to be more suitable for their roles in society, or hindered them from getting further opportunities for equality.

The Rise of Black Educators

One of the most crucial ideas about education during this time was the “Talented Tenth,” which referred to the one in ten Black men who have cultivated the ability to become leaders of the Black community by acquiring a college education, writing books, and participating in social change. In “The Talented Tenth,” W. E. B. Du Bois (1903b) argued the importance of college education. This concept greatly affected the Harlem Renaissance’s “forefathers and midwives,” college-educated African Americans who served as professors, teachers, mentors, and role models, and wrote articles to promote awareness about the importance of education in Black communities.



The Talented Tenth.

During the Renaissance, educators and artists – many of whom were female – developed new forms of education in order to teach students with the same cultural background as them. For example, Mildred L. Johnson opened a private school in Harlem to provide progressive education for Black students; Augusta Savage taught art to Black students, and later operated the Harlem Community Art Center to provide art workshops to the community; and Jessie Redmon Fauset edited *The Brownie's Book*, a magazine aimed at installing race pride in African American children and youth.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Schools

Stephen Robertson (2018c) summed up in his blog post about schools in 1920s Harlem:

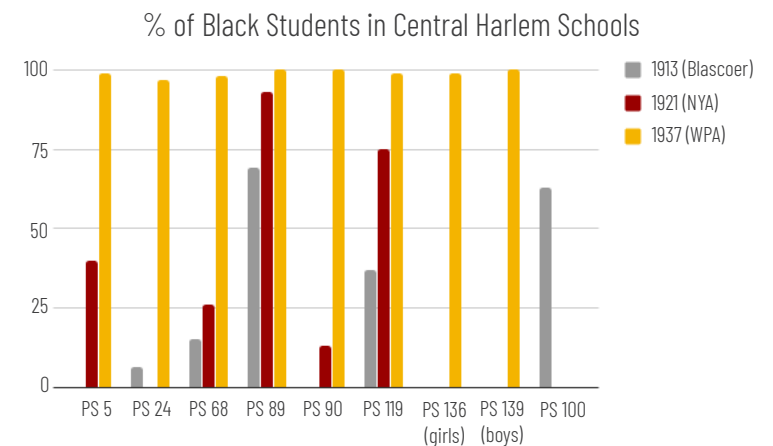
By 1930, there were more than 24,000 school-age Black children in Harlem. Five public elementary schools served the Black community in the 1920s, with two new junior high schools built in the 1920s, PS 139 (boys), which opened in 1924, and PS 136 (girls), which opened in 1925. The one secondary school located in Black Harlem in the 1920s was an industrial school for boys on 138th Street, which occupied the building that until 1914 had been PS 100.

In this context, education was highly resource-dependent. In the 1920s, “as the neighborhood’s population became almost entirely Black, so did its schools” (Robertson 2018c). With increasing numbers of Black students, most schools became overcrowded, suffered from overdue maintenance, while faculty

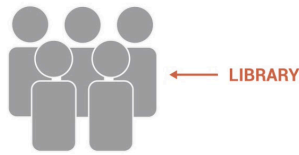
remained predominantly White. Aside from improving building conditions, the Board of Education faced another challenging question at the time: how could schools institute programs suitable for Black students?

Around the 1920s, various forms of remedial education were launched, including “character education, industrial training, and the expansion of social services” (Perlstein 2019). At first, these programs were supported by public leaders in Harlem’s African American community and parents, who also “valued administrators’ implementation of vocational curricula, even with an emphasis on lower-skilled work” (Perlstein 2019). Promoted by educator Booker T. Washington, this vocational education was believed to fulfill basic needs for survival and prepare Black youth for what limited work opportunities were available.

However, during the Great Depression, budget cuts severely affected schools in Harlem. Harlem families could no longer depend on schools as a place for free lunches, basic healthcare, and job training, or hope for updated facilities. Moreover, with fewer available job opportunities and fiercer competition, many African American associations and educators realized that vocational curricula limited possible occupations for African Americans, and so could be seen as a tool for segregation. Thus, “between 1932 and 1934, parents, teachers, church leaders, and various social welfare agencies serving the community, collaborated in a Harlem Parent-Teachers’ Committee to gather data on unequal conditions and to protest publicly” (Perlstein 2019).



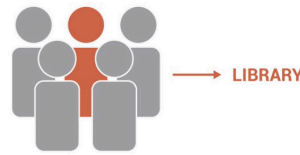
Based on Stephen Robertson’s “Schools in 1920s Harlem,” Digital Harlem Blog, July 16, 2018.



Introduce **the idea of 'library'**
to the community



Children's Reading Room (1926)



Librarians from the
community



Staff (1920)



A platform for the
community



All Black Drama (1926)

The 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library.

One important figure during this time was Elise Johnson McDougald, also known as Gertrude Elise McDougald Ayer. As the principal – and the first Black woman to ever attain this office – of PS 24, a primary school located at 22 East 128th Street, Ayer was among Harlem's best-known educators. Ayer emphasized child-centered progressive education over other subject-matter-focused educational curricula. Even during the 1930s, when Harlem condemned vocational schooling, Ayer maintained her programs:

"The trades do not welcome [Black youth]," she reasoned, "so we cannot concentrate on trade specialization." Instead, Black children needed an education that countered society's image of them. "Colored people lack inspiration because they don't know what their historical background has been," Ayer argued. "The Negro woman teacher" had "the task of knowing well her race's history and of finding time to impart it." Ayer insisted that PS 24 taught the Black student to "realize: 1. That, in fundamentals he is essentially the same as other humans. 2. That, being different in some ways does not mean that he is inferior. 3. That, he has a contribution to make to his group. 4. That, his group has a contribution to make to his nation, and 5. That, he has a part in his nation's work in the world" (Perlstein 2019).

Libraries

In the early 1920s, the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library, under the leadership of Ernestine Rose, played a significant role in the Harlem Renaissance movement. As a platform for resources and communication, the library launched a series of community arts programs and community outreach projects that included educational forums on politics, race, and labor, and provided space for African American artists and performers (Anderson 2003, 417).

In order to encourage use of the public library, a concept that many African Americans had not encountered before in the South, Rose organized lectures at churches and visited families to introduce them to children's books (Anderson 2003, 388). The efforts not only encouraged more people to visit the library, but also enabled young African American writers and artists to study from their role models and display their talents to the public.

It is worth mentioning that half of the librarians at the 135th Street Branch were well-educated Black women, including Regina Anderson Andrews. Many of them continued to work in library- and education-related jobs after leaving this library.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Private Schools

At just twenty years old, a young Black woman named Mildred L. Johnson found herself unable to secure the teaching job she wanted, and decided to establish a Black independent school called the Modern School.

Mildred L. Johnson studied at the Ethical Culture School and graduated from its Teacher Training Program. “The Ethical Culture School welcomed (a few) Black students, and many Black intellectuals and activists, Mildred’s parents among them, were attracted to its progressive pedagogy and politics” (Perlstein 2019). However, when she graduated, Johnson found that “no New York progressive private school employed Black teachers and none other than Ethical was willing to allow a Black student-teacher to apprentice in its classrooms” (Perlstein 2019). Johnson decided to “create spaces for Black children’s self-directed activity while fostering alternatives to the identities a racist world had assigned them” (Erickson and Morrell 2019, under “Introduction”).

The majority of the Modern School’s student population was African American. Johnson used the progressive education methods she had learned in the Teacher Training Department program and her own memories from grade school as an Ethical Culture student to inform her practice (Association of Black Women Historians 2020).

Religious Organizations

“On October 3, 1923, the Franciscan Handmaids opened the St. Benedict the Moor Day Nursery at 27 West 132nd Street. Grateful parents from all over Harlem welcomed the sisters and their nursery” (Moore 2003, 11). With no gender restrictions, the nursery welcomed kids, from nine months to six years old. The church believed that, if parents could witness and be “touched by the tender care of the colored sister,” they would want their children to attend a Catholic school even if they were not Catholic (Moore 2003, 11).

By 1930, the Day Nursery parents refused to send their children to the neighborhood public school, and requested that the sisters establish a first grade program (Moore 2003, 14). In response, the Handmaids established St. Mary’s Primary School at 8 East 131st Street. Later, the school experienced several expansions. At a dedication of one of these new schools, Francis Cardinal Spellman declared that there was “no school for the colored, no school for Whites, there were schools for children” (Moore 2003, 14).

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE “TALENTED TENTH”

The extent to which higher education helped the “forefathers and midwives” of the Harlem Renaissance (Watson 1995, 16) in their development may not be measurable. However, from the fact that most of them pursued higher education and many served as teachers in universities or high schools, it is evident that these African American scholars valued higher education.

More direct evidence includes the concept of the “Talented Tenth” proposed by W. E. B. Du Bois – attending Fisk, Howard, or Atlanta Universities was a marker of being part of the Talented Tenth (Watson 1995, 18). A graduate of Fisk University and Harvard College and a professor of history, sociology, and economics at Atlanta University (Watson 1995, 18), Du Bois believed in the power of education to transform the race, in contrast to Booker T. Washington’s humanistic philosophy.

Like Du Bois, other figures from the Harlem Renaissance also had notable educational credentials:

- Jessie Fauset graduated from Cornell University and became a French teacher at a high school in Washington, D.C. (Watson 1995, 20).
- James Weldon Johnson left the NAACP in 1931 to teach at Fisk University (Watson 1995, 22).
- Alain Locke studied at Harvard College and was the first Black Rhodes scholar at Oxford University. He taught at Howard University, and founded a student literary magazine, *The Stylus*, where Zola Neale Hurston published her first story (Watson 1995, 24).
- Countee Cullen attended New York University and Harvard University (Watson 1995, 80).
- Zora Neale Hurston attended Barnard College on a scholarship arranged by Annie Nathan Meyer, one of the school’s founders (Watson 1995, 67).

These educated leaders not only provided platforms (e.g., journals, magazines, salons, and dinners) for the Harlem community to articulate race pride, but they also served as role models and “official mentor[s]” to newcomers (Watson 1995, 25). Therefore, they raised awareness for the importance of education for African Americans both directly – by serving as professors, teachers, and mentors – and indirectly, through their writings and behavior.

EDUCATION FOR:

ASSIMILATION

CULTURAL SURVIVAL

RESISTANCE



ADULT EDUCATION

Three themes that related to African American education during the Harlem Renaissance were education for assimilation, education for cultural survival, and education for resistance (Johnson-Bailey 2006).

Education for assimilation limited the education of African Americans to “basic literacy, elementary mechanical skills, and the rudimentary elements of service work. Programs such as the YMCAs directly chastised Negroes to be ‘alert,’ work hard, and rise above the ‘handicap’ of their race” (Johnson-Bailey 2006). This perspective blamed African Americans for their enslavement – with basic skills and education, African Americans might have been able to “rise above the ‘handicap’ of their race,” although they would still not escape from the White citizenry’s dominance in society despite educational advances.

Education for cultural survival “embodies the knowledge that African Americans of the Harlem Renaissance were a distinct cultural group that had unique mores and folkways. The proponents of this perspective celebrated the literature, music, food, art, and existence of African American people as a triumph” (Johnson-Bailey 2006). Works by Harlem Renaissance writers and artists can be viewed as examples of this theme.

Advocators of education for resistance expected that education would eventually lead to the full participation of African Americans as persons of equal ability and background, and would therefore result in the overthrow of segregation. “Programs that centered on resistance were more commonly sponsored on the local level and according to the data studied were always self-sponsored by African Americans for African Americans. Typical programs that used education for resistance as their basis were citizenship programs that encouraged the new Black citizens to vote and run for public office and programs that promoted higher education and scholarly training over vocational training” (Johnson-Bailey 2006).

ART EDUCATION

The expansion of community art programs and art departments at historically Black colleges and universities in the 1930s allowed African American students to study art in a new way. Prior to this era, students who sought education in the visual arts worked under the tutelage of White or European artists (Bey 2017). For the first time, Black students had the chance to learn from African American artists who shared similar cultural backgrounds and treated similar subject matters as them.

Many famous artists provided art courses at their studios, including Augusta Savage's Savage Studio of Arts and Crafts:

With her network of influential friends, Savage's studio inevitably became an inspiring place, attracting many Harlem artists. This alone had a tremendous impact on many of her students who later came to prominence in the mid 20th century. To facilitate the growth of her art classes, Savage secured a \$1,500 endowment from the Carnegie Foundation. Shortly thereafter, through the additional sponsorship of the State University of New York, Savage incorporated adult education courses and expanded to include an additional facility and teaching staff. (Bey 2017)

Later, Savage formed the Harlem Artists Guild and the Harlem Community Art Center (Bey 2017), promoting art education to an even wider audience within the community.

The famous female director Madame E. Toussaint Welcome published an advertisement for her Toussaint Conservatory of Art and Music in *The Crisis* (Du Bois 1910, 2). Aside from painting classes, she also taught courses on music in her own apartment.

LITERATURE

Many works of literature during the Harlem Renaissance dealt with education as a central theme. For example, writers Jean Toomer and Nella Larsen – the latter a librarian at the Harlem branch of the New York Public Library – have written about the irreconcilability of Black humanity and oppressive southern Jim Crow schooling (Erickson and Morrell 2019, under "Introduction").

Magazines like *The Brownies' Book* instilled pride in African American children and drew on wider notions of childhood and progressive pedagogy current in the United States at the time. *The Brownie's Book* balanced the self-directed activity envisioned for progressive pedagogy with the need to transmit an alternative to the identities that a racist world had assigned Black children (Perlstein 2019).

THE CRISIS ADVERTISER

ONE OF THE SUREST WAYS
TO SUCCEED IN LIFE IS TO
TAKE A COURSE AT

**The Toussaint Conservatory
of Art and Music**

253 West 134th Street
NEW YORK CITY

The most up-to-date and thoroughly equipped conservatory in
the city. Conducted under the supervision of
MME. E. TOUSSAINT WELCOME
The Foremost Female Artist of the Race

Courses in Art

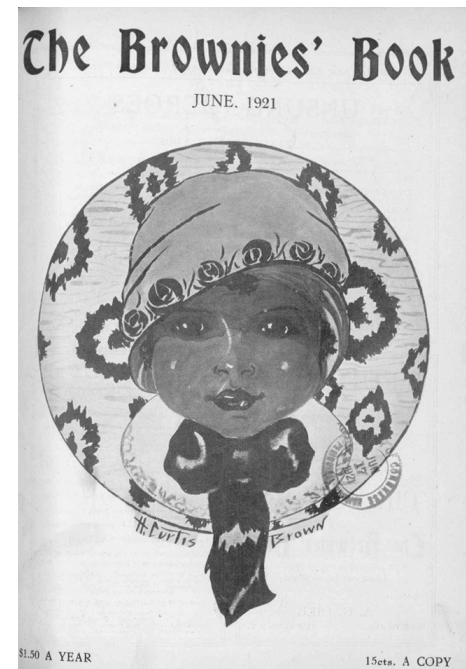
Drawing, Pen and Ink Sketching, Crayon, Pastel, Water Color,
Oil Painting, Designing, Cartooning, Fashion Designing, Sign Painting,
Portrait Painting and Photo Enlarging in Crayon, Water Color, Pastel
and Oil. Artistic Painting of Parasols, Fans, Book Marks, Pin
Cushions, Lamp Shades, Curtains, Screens, Piano and Mantel Covers,
Sofa Pillows, etc.

Music

Piano, Violin, Mandolin, Voice Culture and all Brass and Reed
Instruments.

TERMS REASONABLE

Advertisement for Madame E. Toussaint Welcome's school the Toussaint Conservatory of Art and Music in *The Crisis*, 1910.



The June 1921 cover of *The Brownies' Book*.

EDUCATION HISTORIC ASSETS

During the Harlem Renaissance, “teaching constituted a way of articulating and fostering new consciousness as befit a new age” (Perlstein 2019). Educational activities in Harlem from 1917 to 1939 were mainly held in schools, libraries, churches, and studios.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephen Robertson (2018c) noted that “by 1930, there were more than 24,000 school-age black children in Harlem” because of changes in residential patterns. In 1937, there were seventeen public schools in Harlem; among them, eleven were elementary schools, four junior high schools, and two high schools (one for girls and one for boys). Though teachers were not lacking overall, Black teachers made up only 10% to 13% of the total number of teachers, with four schools having no Black teachers at all. This not only prevented Black students from receiving adequate educational programs at school, but also contributed to racial injustice and discrimination. Black teachers faced great obstacles in getting jobs at public schools and did not have the chance to teach students with similar cultural backgrounds in a proper program.

Page 2

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN HARLEM

NUMBER	NAME	LOCATION
5	Alexander S. Webb (E.L.)	122 Edgecombe Ave. (140 Street)
10	The St Nicholas (E.L.)	133 St Nicholas Ave. (117 Street)
24	The Mt Morris (E.L.)	22 East 128 Street (Madison Ave.)
68	128 Street & Lenox Ave. (E.L.)	116 West 128 Street
81 & 120 W 120	119 and 120 Street J.H.	West of 7 Avenue
89	The Lenox (E.L.)	485 Lenox Ave. (135 Street)
90	The Riverside (E.L.)	225 West 147 Street (147-148 St.)
103	Elridge T. Gerry (E.L.)	49 East 119 Street (Madison Ave.)
113	UNDER CONSTRUCTION (E.L.)	
119	James Russell Lowell (E.L.)	257 West 133 Street (7-8 Avenue)
136	Harriet Beecher Stowe Junior High School (girls)	6 Edgecombe Avenue (135 Street)
139	Frederick Douglass Junior High School (boys)	139 St. E. 7-7th 140 West 140 Street (7-Lenox)
157	John Hancock (E.L.)	327 St Nicholas Avenue (126-127 St.)
170	111 and 112 Street (E.L.)	37 West 111 Street (Lenox Ave.)
184	J. Fenimore Cooper Junior H. School (boys)	31 West 116 Street (5 & Lenox)

HIGH SCHOOLS

Wadleigh High School (Girls) 215 West 114 Street (114-115 Street) (2) Annex Buildings

New York Industrial High (Boys) 21 West 138 Street (5 Avenue)

Page 3

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN HARLEM

School NUMBER	Student CAPACITY	PRESENT ENROLLMENT	NEGRO STUDENTS	% COLORED	% TOTAL TEACHERS	NEGRO TEACHERS	OTHER COLORED
5	2,507	2,321	2,320	98%	76	9	25
10	3,218	3,207	3,160	98%	71	4	18
24	1,148	1,293	1,185	97%	37	9	11
68	1,628	1,658	1,634	98%	48	10	16
81	2,070	1,900	1,900	100%	72	10	12
89	2,410	2,568	2,567	100%	62	31	20
90	2,962	2,682	2,682	100%	70	14	26
103	2,400	2,359	2,350	98%	66	0	12
113	UNDER CONSTRUCTION						
119	2,457	2,186	2,187	99%	60	13	29
136	1,477	2,494	2,480	99%	100	16	10
139	1,334	1,945	1,945	100%	66	25	35
157	2,556	2,211	2,200	99%	60	0	12
170	2,777	3,990	2,796	80%	103	3	6
184	3832	2,778	2,456	98%	95	0	12
Wadleigh	3,500	4,132	1,128	28%	135	2	11
Industrial	1,550	1,230	635	52%	45	0	10

Public school enrollment in Harlem, 1937.



Two of the seventeen public schools in Harlem, PS 89 at 485 Lenox Avenue (left - no longer extant) and PS 157 at 327 St. Nicholas Avenue (right), which has been adaptively reused as housing.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

In 1934, no progressive private schools in New York employed African American teachers, and only the Ethical Culture School allowed Black student-teachers to apprentice in its classrooms. Rising against this situation, “innovating Black women educators working in both public and private schools in Harlem in the 1930s sought to create spaces for Black children’s self-directed activity while fostering alternatives to the identities a racist world had assigned them” (Erickson and Morrell 2019, under “Introduction”).

As mentioned previously, Mildred L. Johnson established a Black independent school, called the Modern School. Unlike at the public school educational programs, the Modern School’s teachers focused on children’s self-directed activities and personal talents (Erickson and Morrell 2019, under “Introduction”). The school opened at St. Philip’s Episcopal, the church that Johnson attended, located near the 135th Street Library in the heart of Harlem. Later, the school made several moves north – to 153rd Street, 155th Street, then 163rd Street – and it operated for more than sixty years in Harlem’s Sugar Hill (Association of Black Women Historians 2020).

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In 1923, the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, an order of Black nuns, opened the St. Benedict the Moor Day Nursery at 27 West 132nd Street. With no restriction of gender or religious denomination, the nursery welcomed all children ages nine months to six years old. The nursery transitioned into one of the first preschool education programs in the United States. The institution survives, but the building has since been replaced.

In 1930, the Franciscan Handmaids established Saint Mary’s Primary School at 8 East 131st Street, seven years after establishing their Harlem-based nursery.

LIBRARY

The 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library, under the leadership of Ernestine Rose, was a pivotal institution of learning during the Harlem Renaissance, catering to and providing space for multiple publics.



St. Mary's Primary School located at 8 East 131st Street, c. 1940.



St. Benedict the Moor Day Nursery at 27 West 132nd Street, c. 1940. No longer extant.

STUDIOS

Many famous artists provided art courses at their studio, including Augusta Savage’s Savage Studio of Arts and Crafts by and Madame E. Toussaint Welcome’s Toussaint Conservatory of Art and Music (Bey 2017; Du Bois 1910, 2). The settings for these studios varied: Madame E. Toussaint Welcome taught courses in her apartment, while Augusta Savage set up her studio in a basement on 141st Street, loaned by one of her friends (Biddy 1988).

OTHER ASSETS

Adult education was also an important part of the Harlem Renaissance. Not only could it foster the development of liberally educated and engaged citizens, but it could also provide a pathway for the New Negro Movement, and Black cultural expression more generally, to move into the American mainstream (Nocera 2018). Advertisements for various vocational schools could be found in publications like *The Crisis*, but most of these schools were located outside Harlem.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS & CLUBS

Meghan Vonden Steinen

The Harlem Renaissance was a time of educational, intellectual, cultural, and social development for the African American community in Harlem, New York. The increase in desire to meet people with similar interests and like minds gave rise to the formation of clubs and organizations, such as fraternal orders, civic organizations, social clubs, and more. As individuals of color were barred from joining most well-known organizations, they created all-Black versions of these organizations that helped provide financial and civic support for the surrounding community, as well as strong activism against racism and segregation. An example in the Harlem study area was the establishment of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World in 1897, modeled after the all-White Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (African American Registry, n.d.).

During this period, clubs were split into male and female clubs, with few co-ed organizations. Club meetings – especially for female clubs – would frequently change locations between the homes of members, as most organizations could not afford to rent out a building space. Gender was not the only dividing factor when it came to group membership: Harlem experienced divisions between the African and Hispanic communities, different social classes, and within the Black community itself based on skin shades.

There were often social clubs or bridge clubs that were short-lived due to lack of membership and coordination (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 1132). Meanwhile, larger clubs often held large events, such as dances and fundraisers, at theaters and ballrooms throughout the Harlem area to engage with the broader community. Newspapers served as a means of communication between clubs and the community, informing outsiders of what organizations were doing, where they met, and who was involved.

Organizations and clubs that existed beyond the Renaissance – which continued to operate under their known identity, or merged with other organizations under a new name – continued to fight against racism in all facets of life: economic, social, educational, political, etc.

The annual Yuletide prom of Psi Society of New York will be given at the Renaissance Casino on Wednesday evening, Dec. 26. Ashton Blackman and Philip Beach are in charge of reservations.

The Tea Rose Social Club was entertained at the home of Mrs. V. Harriel, 141 West 144th street, last Wednesday. Plans were completed for the whist party to be given tonight at the home of Mrs. C. Allen, 446 West 151st street, apartment 42.

Two examples of announcements for past and future events in the "Club Chats" section in newspaper publications: the Psi Society of New York (top) and the Tea Rose Social Club both found in the New York Amsterdam News, 1928.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS & CLUBS HISTORIC ASSETS

Amid the educational, cultural, intellectual, and social development in Harlem during the Renaissance, the formation of social clubs and civic organizations became a staple for the community's thoughts, expression, and unity at sites located within the studio's study area. As most clubs were short-lived and transient in location, it is important to focus on those organizations with permanent locations to identify how they contributed to the Harlem Renaissance.

Similar to lower Manhattan, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other large cities across the country, Harlem became a site of fraternal and societal organizations with a political, social, and intellectual group consciousness that represented that of the broader community. Masonic lodges and fraternities with large membership numbers established branches that stemmed from

the same organization, and built architecturally grand lodges. For example, the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World (IBPOEW) had five lodges located within the studio study area by the end of the 1920s: the Henry Lincoln Johnson Lodge, the Imperial Lodge, the Manhattan Lodge, the Monarch Lodge, and the Neptune Lodge. Rather than spreading out geographically to offer greater access to the Harlem community, these Elk lodges were condensed within an area of approximately ten to fifteen blocks in Central and North Central Harlem.

The larger lodges of the Manhattan Lodge – No. 45 at 266 West 139th Street (New York Age 1926b), the Monarch Lodge at 245 West 137th Street, and the Imperial Lodge at 160-164 West 129th Street – contained clubrooms, offices, hallways, bars, and dance halls (Robertson 2010d). Members of these (typically all-black, male-only) lodges included members of higher social classes, artists, writers, bankers, and college-educated individuals who lived in the Harlem area (Wintz and Finkelman 2004, 1132).

The IBPOEW was not the only impactful masonic organization from the Harlem Renaissance; there were other organizations that often shared a building space. The King Solomon Masonic Temple, Inc. at 71-73 West 131st Street provided a permanent location for the Delta Chapter, No. 12 and the Eureka Chapter, No. 19 of the Order of Eastern Star (New York Age 1939, 4). St. Luke's Hall at 125-127 West 130th Street was home to the Independent Order of St. Luke (IOSL), which sought to identify and provide relief for African American needs (National Park Service, n.d.). The three-story Prince Hall Square Club at 115 West 131st Street operated as a club space for nearly ten years, often renting out rooms to other organizations that needed more permanent meeting locations.

The headquarters of civic organizations and social clubs were also used as meeting spaces for political action and civil rights activism. Larger organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, were able to rent and own larger spaces, while smaller organizations and clubs would often rent out individual rooms at halls and clubhouses or host meetings at members' homes. The former real estate office at 252 West 138th Street was home to both the Coachmen's Union League Society Harlem branch and the American Legion between the 1920s and 1930s, as well as a rental space for local political clubs and civic organizations, such as the Bradhurst Republican Club (New York Age 1926a).

Meanwhile, some organizations also strayed from their headquarters or club meeting spaces for particular events. Fraternal organizations and social clubs would often use spaces in ballrooms and casinos to host dances and fundraisers that allowed their members a chance to interact with the Harlem community. For example, social clubs like the Ziegfield Sports Club and the Tea Rose Social Club held dances at the Renaissance in 1932 and the Lido Ballroom in 1934 (New York Amsterdam News 1932a; New York Amsterdam News 1934). The Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, a Black-owned community ballroom built in 1921, was a particularly popular choice among Harlem social clubs, as it was well-known by the community and its proximity to public transportation made it ideal as a site of social interaction. The Hamilton Lodge hosted its annual drag show in 1930 at the New Manhattan Casino; this tradition dated back to the 1870s within the organization and only became illegal during the Harlem Renaissance (Truesdale 2018).

Further examination of the mentioned clubs and organizations, specifically the geographical concentration of secular organizations in North Central Harlem, would be worthwhile. Additionally, most newspaper publications of the Elks mention a sister organization called the "Daughter Elks"; it would be of great interest to investigate who the Daughter Elks were, where they were located, and their exact relationship to the IBPOEW.



The Metronome Club Banquet at the Independent Political and Social Association, c. 1941.

SPORTS

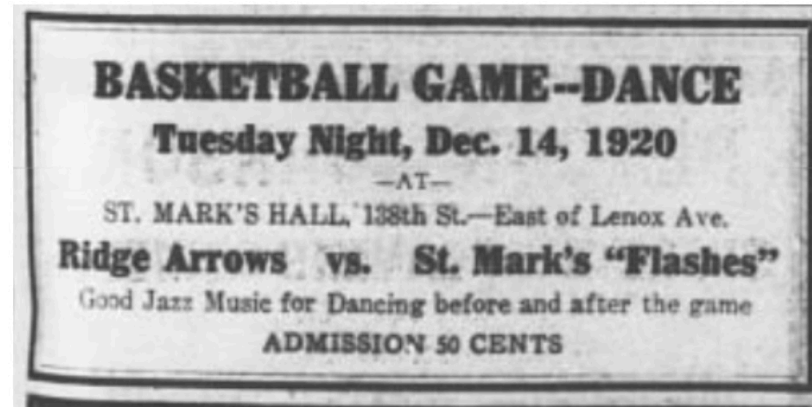
Steph Leblanc

As sports and recreation became an integral part of Harlem life, their operations were influenced by the lack of space allocated to their practices. White ownership in all aspects of recreational activity – from available land, to professional team management and ownership – determined where recreational activities and sports were able to take place, and under what circumstances. The Black community in Harlem was forced to improvise, making arenas and playgrounds in whatever space they could. This creativity in the face of neglect changed the way sports and recreation were defined during the Renaissance.

RECREATIONAL SPORTS

The development of sports within the larger societal context of the Harlem Renaissance can be seen in two spheres: recreational and professional. The recreational opportunity started simply with the ability to play. As the number of children hit by cars while playing in the street soared in the 1920s due to lack of access to recreational areas, playgrounds started to develop in schools, churches, and other community spaces. However, city resources were noticeably lacking compared to other areas of Manhattan (Robertson 2018d). Over the decade to follow, as community-run organizations – such as the Urban League and Children's Aid Society – provided recreational spaces like playgrounds, they also fought for city-funded parks and facilities (Robertson 2018d). As a result, some public park complexes complete with pool facilities were built in the 1930s at Thomas Jefferson and Colonial Parks; schools began to develop notably successful athletic programs, like that of the Public School Athletic League; and collegiate sports that shared spaces within Harlem became a spectacle of neighborhood interest. Popular recreational sports, like basketball, were played among many groups in the community, but were restricted by the spaces they had access to play in. Churches offered a popular option. The abundance of religious establishments in the area led to a surge in popularity among leagues at churches all over Harlem, and an opportunity for the sport to become more professional emerged.

Despite this progress offering further opportunities to Black athletes in the area, there was still a ceiling on the level of success that could be achieved. Recreationally, spaces to play in were minimal, and even free play at privately owned playgrounds was monitored by security guards employed by property



New York Age basketball announcement.

of control for the middle class to teach working-class immigrants “proper morals and standards of ‘American’ behavior, including capitalist values” (Peterson 2004, 148). So, while the Children's Aid Society and church playgrounds offered a necessary space that was lacking for children in the neighborhood, it came under the contingency that those establishments would foster their own sense of social control over how they wanted the neighborhood to grow. Regardless of the rules or limitations that came with playing a sport in a particular space, Harlem's dense population could not be selective in its use of recreational facilities, and was often resigned to playing anywhere possible.

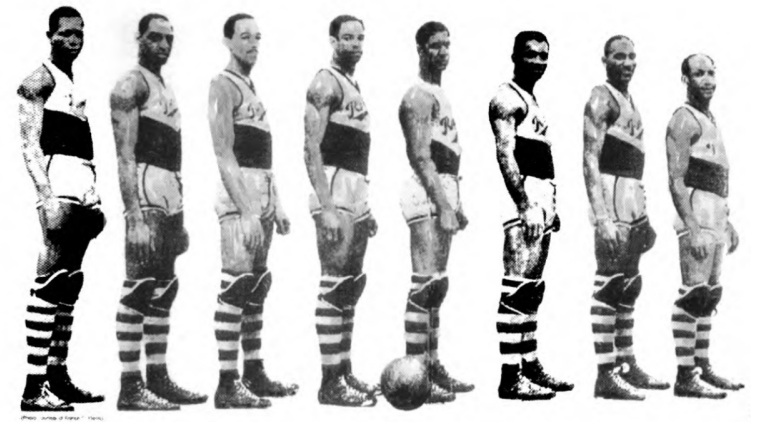
PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

As a profession and as a business, sports teams that were considered “successful” at the time typically had mostly White ownership and management and played in recreational spaces and performance arenas under White control, while Black players saw little of the profits being made (Goldfarb 2002). This was particularly evident in baseball, a traditionally White-operated sport. While it was considered to be the most popular sport in the nation at the start of the Harlem Renaissance, White field owners, team owners, and business managers had a difficult time reconciling profits from Black players and spectators. The Lincoln Giants, Harlem's all-Black professional team, changed ownership multiple times and eventually deserted their stadium when the owner sold it to developers in 1919. Once Giants games moved too far north to be convenient, new opportunities emerged for other local professional teams. The Harlem “Rens,” the first professional Black-owned athletic team, played



The Lincoln Giants.

basketball games at the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, a Black-owned space, under Bob Douglass, their Black manager. The team provided a sense of pride to its community as they dominated competitions against any race, and went on to win the first World Championship of Professional Basketball in 1939 (Abdul-Jabbar 2007). Since basketball was originally played in churches and dance halls, these games were typically followed by a dance, forging an association between basketball and performance as the sport developed professionally (Rayl 1996). Teams like the Rens and the Harlem Globetrotters played in casinos and ballrooms that would also host dances and performances. In his book, *On the Shoulders of Giants: My Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance*, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar noted the stark difference in the perception of basketball between those two popular Black teams, based on where they played and the audience they performed for. "The Harlem Globetrotters had become [White] America's image of what a black basketball team should be. As long as Blacks were clowns, tricking rather than outsmarting their opponents while speaking barely recognizable English, they were allowed to succeed. This was especially true if the profiteers of showmanship were Whites like Abe Saperstein, owner of the Globetrotters. The players were merely his field hands" (Abdul-Jabbar 2007, 166). The Rens, on the other hand, played for Bob Douglass, a Black West Indian immigrant who coached his all-Black team to play professionally and with dignity. Douglass chose to base his team at a Black-owned establishment for



The World Champion Harlem "Rens," 1939.

a community of Black fans because “[t]he Renaissance Casino and Ballroom symbolized the ideals of self-reliance and community values that the Harlem Renaissance was preaching” (Figure 3. Abdul-Jabbar 2007, 33).

The Harlem Renaissance was a complicated period of growth for racial inclusion in athletics. Opportunity was beginning to present itself to previously excluded communities, but limitations on those opportunities were still prevalent. Most professional athletic teams were in decline by the end of the studio's period of study, as other teams and league organizations remained inconsistent (Goldfarb 2002). The political and economic struggle between White and Black professional athletic leagues caused both to fail, but this period of struggle exposed those leagues to each other and laid the groundwork for integration in the following decades. While not all of the organizations established during the studio's period of significance lasted, they did create new spaces, both physically and symbolically, for Black athletes that had yet to exist. They drew attention to the need for inclusion in the recreational future of Harlem. The fight that came from recognizing these inequalities paved the way for the breakthrough in integrated sports that was to follow and helped define new arenas of play for Black athletes.

SPORTS HISTORIC ASSETS

In the Harlem Renaissance, public recreational space in Harlem was sparse in comparison to the rest of Manhattan. According to a study by the Slum Clearance Committee of New York, one acre of park or playground land per 500 persons was considered 100% adequate. Yet, in the three areas surveyed in Central Harlem, none provided more than 21% adequacy. According to the Children's Aid Society, by 1932 there were only four permanent city parks provided by the Parks Department, and four public schools under the Board of Education with playgrounds open to students during operational hours (Lovejoy 1932). Other City-provided recreational spaces were limited to a handful of closed-off streets and school yards that were only accessible in the summer. Referred to as "vacation playgrounds," some streets and public school playgrounds were allocated as an afterthought for seasonal use, but maintained no permanent establishment in the community.

Slowly, churches and social organizations like the Children's Aid Society and Urban League allocated more permanent spaces for children to play by building playgrounds, gifted by the Rockefellers and other private agencies (Robertson 2021). While these playgrounds were necessary additions to the community, they still followed the rules of managed playgrounds provided by the City, where there were designated hours of operation and security guards who ensured that rules of play were established.

Finally, in the 1930s as part of the New Deal, the City built two public pools and recreational facilities at Thomas Jefferson and Colonial Parks (Gutman 2008, 534). While these parks were a positive shift toward better City-provided facilities, the pools were in neighborhoods with two very different demographics and became unofficially segregated. The pool at Colonial Park was notably utilized by the Black community, while the pool at Thomas Jefferson Park catered more to the White immigrant population in the area and it was suggested that the pools were purposefully designed for that separation. Robert Moses, the New York City Parks Commissioner, who led the charge to build these pools in 1936, intentionally built the Thomas Jefferson pool without the same water heating system installed at the pool in Colonial Park based on the belief that "Blacks especially disliked swimming in cold water" (Gutman 2008, 534). These two pools in Harlem were intended to serve different demographics, and were designed to enforce that segregation.

In the world of professional sports, the lack of permanent space allocated to recreation in the Harlem Renaissance marked a time of transition. After

EXISTING CONDITIONS				ADEQUACY		
	AREA 6	AREA 7	AREA 8	100 PERCENT ADEQUACY	PERCENT OF ADEQUACY	
POPULATION	198,499	5,201	112,885		AREA 6	AREA 7
POP. AGES 5 to 14 incl	40,937	1,402	12,096		AREA 8	
TOTAL AREA IN ACRES	767.7	40.3	574.5			
PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS (Not incl. School Playgds)	81.37 ACRES	00 ACRES	39.18 ACRES	One Acre per 500 Persons	20.5%	00%
PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS (Not incl. School Playgds)	81.37 ACRES	00 ACRES	39.18 ACRES	10% of Total Area	106%	00%
PLAYGROUNDS AND SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS	522,720 SQ. FT.	23,394 SQ. FT.	294,117 SQ. FT.	25 sq. ft. per Child 5 to 14 incl	51.1%	66.7%
Census of 1930 Used. All Portions of Parks and Playgrounds within 1/8 mile of Area Boundaries are included in the Parks and Playgrounds of the Area.						

Maps and charts prepared by the Slum Clearance Committee of New York, 1936.



Renaissance Casino and Ballroom, 1927.

Olympic Field was demolished by developers in 1919, the popular all Black professional Lincoln Giants baseball team that played there was forced to move to other locations under their White ownership. The new fields were farther outside of Harlem, and lack of adequate transportation made getting to them too difficult.

An opportunity then emerged for a new sport to gain fans among the community (Goldfarb 2002). Basketball, a sport that historically began in YMCA and collegiate gymnasiums, was designed to foster leadership among young men in respected communities. This form of recreation was played all over Harlem in the numerous churches that were able to donate their valuable real

estate to Saturday night games. These games were typically followed by a dance and the association of basketball with performance informed the way the sport developed professionally (Rayl 1996). While the Renaissance Casino and the “Rens,” the all-Black professional team that represented the venue, both saw their downfall in the following decades, the legacy they created for the perception of Black athletes left a mark on the community forever. Notable NBA players remark a sense of gratitude for a team that fought for a future where Black basketball players now not only make up a large majority of the league, but are taken seriously as some of the greatest athletes of all time (Abdul-Jabbar 2007).

The distinction between place and play in basketball, and how the game was perceived based on the arena it was played in, parallels the way the game developed toward a culture of streetball. Exclusion from or lack of available basketball courts fostered a culture of athletes who altered the game to the spaces they could find to play in. “It is through this medium of sport, pickup basketball in particular, that these principally young black men, consciously or otherwise, carve a collective identity out of the unforgiving physical and economic landscapes that have come to characterize post-industrial US cities... These landscapes have increasingly told a tale of limited opportunity and the unfulfilled promises” (Mohamed 2017). Given the lack of extant recreational and professional athletic arenas, it may be necessary to redefine the standards for some historic assets locating their spaces and boundaries. Segregating recreation caused spatial divisions in the development of athletics during the Harlem Renaissance. Not allowing Black athletes to participate in sports did not prevent them from finding a way; it simply led them to create their own spaces to play. Games happened in churches, at dances, in ballrooms, in empty lots, in the street – anywhere possible. Not only did this create the divide between White and Black professional leagues that eventually led to both of their demise, but it also created a street culture that embedded itself in the Black identity of popular culture that still exists today. It has been said that professional basketball today would not exist without streetball and, in a community where children who just wanted to play once risked being struck by a vehicle, now resides one of the most famous park basketball courts in the world (Leitch and Boudway 2010).



Kobe Bryant at Rucker Park, 2010.

RELIGION

Christine Hotz

It would be difficult to overstate religion's role in supporting the communities and cultures present during the Harlem Renaissance. A large portion of the Black population, facing racism and prejudice in the United States, found solace and community within religious institutions. Religion offered space to practice traditional customs and fostered the growth of multiple unique cultures in Harlem. With the Great Migration of Black people moving from the South and the Caribbean to northern cities, religious institutions allowed these publics to commune and practice customs from their previous home. Religious thought and practice permeated throughout multiple facets of life, including the arts, education, athletics, medicine, and the movement towards Black anti-racism. Religious institutions claimed and provided a safe space for a community that lacked ownership of real estate, and actively supported the Harlem community.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

A myriad of religions and religious practices existed and developed in Harlem throughout the Renaissance. While Christianity was not the only religion present in Harlem during these decades, it arguably held a dominating presence. In 1926, a reporter named Ira Reid counted 140 churches in 150 blocks in Harlem (Robertson 2009a). Many of the migrating publics from the South and the Caribbean were practicing Christians, but gravitated towards different denominations. The migrating population from the South often favored Baptist Churches, while those from the Caribbean established and joined Episcopalian Churches. While this was a trend, it is important to note not all churches had homogeneous congregations from the same region. Regardless of denomination, churches provided space for migrating communities to meet and support one another.

The Great Migration from southern regions did not encapsulate all of the publics migrating to Harlem during the Renaissance, nor was Christianity the only religion practiced. The religious diversity among the populous of Harlem reflects a rich, diverse religious history. There was also a budding Ethiopian Jewish community. Along with the Black Jewish population, there was a Black Muslim population present in Harlem. These two religions can be traced back to regions of Africa or South America where these religions are prevalent, illuminating the ancestral roots of the publics who brought these practices to



Ethiopian Hebrews in Harlem, 1940.

While there was a diverse population migrating to New York, there was also migration within the city during the Harlem Renaissance as well. Since the establishment of the first Black churches in lower Manhattan in the early nineteenth century, there had been a move north as Black communities were displaced by the city's growing population. At the turn of the twentieth century, many Black churches were about to make their final move to Harlem from the neighborhoods known as the Tenderloin and San Juan Hill (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990).

RELIGION, COMMUNITY SUPPORT, AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Churches also hosted meetings of multiple community clubs and leagues like the Sons and Daughters of the Barbados (*New York Amsterdam News* 1947). The space of religious institutions was utilized for many purposes, housing activities such as sporting events, schools and community meetings. In addition to providing community space, religious leaders and congregates were able to mobilize the public for charitable deeds. They organized food banks, housing, and other important charitable acts during the poverty-stricken era of the Depression (*New York Amsterdam News* 1930e).

Religion also fed into support for the community by aligning with Black anti-racism movements. Because religious leaders were well educated and trusted by the community, they also often advised congregants on issues outside of religious concern, such as financial investments, and education (Watkins-Owens 1996, 56-75). In addition, religious leaders often spoke for and participated in civil movements and protests. Religious leaders, such as Adam Clayton Powell Sr. of Abyssinian Baptist Church, were active with the NAACP, and many civil rights leaders and writers, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, spoke to large crowds from the pulpits of churches throughout Harlem (Watkins-Owens 1996). The diverse nature of Harlem made it a hub for the evolution of religion to represent the Black community by tying African historical roots to religious teachings. George Alexander McGuire, who had close ties to UNIA leader Marcus Garvey, established the African Orthodox Church and wrote a book titled *The African Orthodox Church: Its Declaration of Faith Constitution and Canons and Episcopate*. In McGuire's religious practice and writing, he noted the strong ties between locations in Africa and the Bible, and encouraged the Black community to take ownership of the Christian faith that had been dominated by White interpretation. Similarly, Rabbi Mathew, founder of the Commandment Keepers of Harlem, also linked people of African descent with the religion of Judaism (Eaton 2009). Meanwhile, Marcus Garvey, founder of UNIA, was not a religious leader himself, but aligned closely with and supported the teachings of Islam, inspired by its strong African ties and anti-racist teachings (Bowen 2013, 39). Finally, there were charismatic religious leaders – sometimes considered cult-like – like Father Divine, who gained a following during the Renaissance and also preached messages of strong religious ties to the Black community, and whose followers also strove for racial justice (Mack 2008).

Religious institutions provided space for community action and engagement within the social networks of Harlem. Church leaders were dedicated to serving their marginalized communities, and many supported the fight for civil rights. The established churches with an abundance of members, such as Abyssinian Baptist, St. Philip's Episcopal, and Mother AME Zion, hosted speeches from civil rights leaders and writers, including Langston Hughes and W. E. B. Du Bois (Watkins-Owens 1996, 56-75). Churches were also used as a meeting space for many local social clubs and leagues. Sometimes these clubs had specific civil rights agendas, while others were clubs that formed through a connection to a common background, like the Daughters of the Barbados (*New York Amsterdam News* 1947).



Front-center left, George Alexander McGuire.



Women viewing an exhibit at Abyssinian Baptist Church in 1939.

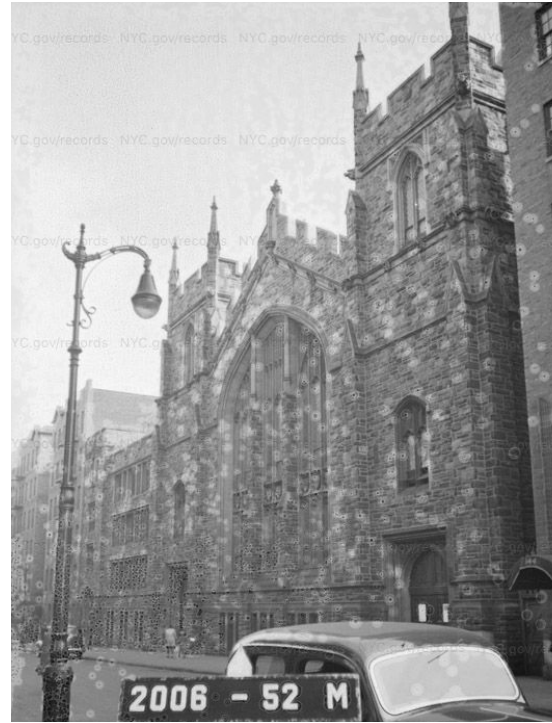
The Church provided space for educational purposes as well. Musicians who performed for religious services would often use the church facilities to give lessons (Spencer 1996, 453-460). Churches hosted a myriad of recreational activities, including dances and sporting events that brought the community together in a celebratory environment, proving that churches were not only concerned about charitable acts. Reverend John Howard Johnson was an athlete himself, and his church, St. Martin's Episcopal, hosted basketball games regularly. Johnson was also known for his dedication to the civil rights movement and was one of the founders of the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" initiative, a protest that encouraged Black residents to stop shopping at stores with discriminatory hiring processes on 125th Street (Saxton 1995). Many religious leaders in Harlem shared Johnson's passion for supporting their community's health, social engagement, and the fight for civil rights.

During the Harlem Renaissance, religious activity was entwined in many components of society, such that there were many community resources related to religious practice. The YMCA and YWCA, while not linked specifically to a single religious institution, were establishments that provided housing, space for public events, and classes for children. Representations of religious texts and traditions appeared throughout works of visual art and literature, and being affiliated with certain congregations could communicate social status (Spencer 1996), demonstrating the broad impact that religion had during the Harlem Renaissance. Ultimately, religious institutions provided a physical and social structure for the public to meet and converse. While charitable deeds were important, especially for a marginalized community during the Depression, religious institutions also performed a significant role in supporting a vibrant community in Harlem.

RELIGION HISTORIC ASSETS

CHURCH TYPOLOGIES

During the Harlem Renaissance, there were three prevalent and distinct forms of religious institutional structures, each communicating the changing demographics of Harlem and speaking to the populace of the Church. One form represents the influential Black churches in New York, dating back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. These religious institutions, such as Abyssinian Baptist Church and St. Philip's Church, consisted of large congregations that could afford to build brand new church structures and were some of the most influential religious institutions in Harlem.



Abyssinian Baptist Church, c. 1940.



St. Martin's Episcopal, c. 1940.

The second form consisted of Black congregations that purchased an already existing church structure in Harlem, such as St. Martin's Episcopal. As the White population began to leave the neighborhood, their church congregations went with them, leaving religious structures vacant and for sale for Black churches.

The third form of religious institutions that gained prevalence during the Harlem Renaissance was the storefront church. These were small congregations, often representing the migrating communities, that rented halls, storefronts, or basements of row houses to conduct religious services. A diverse variety of religious denominations present in Harlem, coupled with a rapidly changing population, made it commonplace for multiple denominations to occupy the same church structures throughout the decades of the Harlem Renaissance (Watkins-Ownes 1996, 56-75).

During the Harlem Renaissance, religious institutions were large and influential centers for community engagement and support. While the denominations and practices were diverse, the social drive amongst the institutions to better their community led to the formation of close ties between religious institutions and the civil rights movement in Harlem.



In addition to actual storefronts, religious institutions were also located in residential spaces that were converted to commercial use, c. 1938.



A mural by the children in the free class of the Federal Art Project at the 135th Street YMCA, 1936.



Reverend John Howard Johnson playing basketball for Columbia University, 1940.

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC ACTIVISM

Lindsay Papke

“It is probable that no one single phase of the Negro’s life in Harlem is as important as his political serfdom.”

- Edgar M. Grey, New York Amsterdam News, 1927

The existence of what came to be known as the “Black Mecca” of Harlem was predicated on political and economic activism. Indeed, a tumultuous era had thrown the United States into an unprecedented world war, followed by a fiscal boom only to plunge America into an economic depression shortly after. While these themes broadly characterize the nation, they are often the narratives of a White America. Too often, the economic injustices and racial discrimination which also defined this era are not given similar weight within history, yet are necessary to contextualize past events and provide a more inclusive American history. Looking toward Harlem during its renaissance, the political and economic activism present in the neighborhood were direct and not discrete responses to the cataclysmic events of the time.

Activism often results in movements and counter-movements, creating various leaders in differing trajectories whose effects are far-reaching. Key players and protests crystallized the fruits of these men and women’s labor that typify the evolution of the Harlem Renaissance.

A NATION AT WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD

As the country entered World War I, many African Americans enlisted to fight for their country overseas. Many activists viewed this negatively and decried America’s use of the Black man, who would be fighting for a country that still did not recognize his rights (Du Bois 1917; St. Philip’s Church 1986). This view was cemented in many people’s minds when hundreds of African American men, women, and children were killed by White men in East St. Louis on July 2, 1917 (Hurd 1917). There, the Black community of East St. Louis had been working jobs that White union men had refused, causing significant racial tension. The resulting race riot proved to leaders – such as Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Reverend Huchens Chew Bishop of St. Philip’s Episcopal Church – that the involvement of African American men in the war was deeply misguided (St. Philip’s Church 1986). Together, they met with other community leaders



Children marching in the NAACP “Silent Protest Parade,” 1917.

and organized the NAACP’s “Silent Protest Parade” on July 28, 1917. An estimated 8,000 men, women, and children silently marched down Fifth Avenue, starting at 59th Street and dispersing at 23th Street, carrying banners that read “Your Hands Are Full of Blood” and “Cain, Where Is Abel, Thy Brother?” The march was led by children, followed by thousands of women dressed in white to signify innocence, and men in suits following behind them. An estimated 20,000 African Americans lined the streets in solidarity, and it was reported that not a sound could be heard save for marching feet and the muffled beat of drums (*New York Times* 1917). This protest represented a moment when all Black organizations set their differences aside and marched as one.

Two years later, a much different demonstration took place, but again involved a majority of the African American neighborhood of Harlem. February 17, 1919 saw the return of the 369th regiment, also known as the “Harlem Hellfighters,” from World War I. The regiment had fought alongside the French in the trenches, but never with their fellow White countrymen due to the segregation laws in the army. The Hellfighters began their welcome home march at 61st Street and Fifth Avenue, walking in strict formation northward, turning west on 110th Street, and continuing north on Lenox Avenue. Upon crossing 130th Street, their band broke into the popular jazz tune “Here Comes My Daddy,” and the troops were met with “two howling walls of humanity” welcoming them home (*New York Age* 1919). While many did not agree with the involvement of African Americans in the war, everyone was happy that they had come home.

Hubert Harrison, the Father of Harlem Radicalism,
c. 1900-1927.



The streets of Harlem during the late 1910s also saw the proliferation of the humble soapbox speaker. Perhaps most notable was Hubert Harrison's corner at 135th Street and Madison Avenue, where he came to be known as the "Father of Harlem Radicalism" and an educator for the masses. While radical, Harrison's speeches skewed toward education, as well as teaching Harlemites the theory of evolution on sunny afternoons (Perry 2000). Harrison staunchly believed that it was up to the African American race to act for themselves rather than waiting on the White man to do this for them.

IDEAS FOR PROGRESS

The 1917 Silent Protest Parade and the 1919 369th Infantry March were significant not only because they marched through predominantly White neighborhoods, but they also both brought together African Americans from varying organizations to set aside ideological differences to protest and celebrate as one. However, this unity is not fully characteristic of the Harlem community, where many held divergent beliefs about what progress meant for their race. These differences further contextualize the mentality of the neighborhood and offer a glimpse into what this time of rapid growth embodied; the Harlem Renaissance is not to be confused as a movement of monolithic views.

These differences manifested themselves throughout the myriad political organizations formed by prominent activists. Firstly, the NAACP was founded on the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, February 12, 1909, by

sixty men and women, seven of whom were African American, including anti-lynching activist Ida Wells-Barnett and Harlem's Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois (Ovington 1984). The NAACP led calls for integration and prominently stood for anti-lynching laws. In 1910, Du Bois began the organization's first official publication, *The Crisis*, which reached a circulation of 95,000 households in 1919 under the direction of editor Jessie Fauset (Watson 1995, 18). The journal published works by the likes of Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Jean Toomer. Their words helped mobilize a movement that believed advancement for the Black race meant equality and integration within the current White society.

Others felt that focusing on integration was not the answer to advancement for the race; rather, the focus should be first on race pride. To this end, Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Harlem in 1917 as a bold African Nationalist movement that heralded capitalism as the means to independence and success. He blended his political beliefs with Christian religion to cast a wider net, but refrained from identifying the UNIA with any specific religious thought so as not to discriminate against anyone (Van Leeuwen 2000). Members of the UNIA met frequently in Liberty Hall at 128 West 138th Street to listen to evening talks by Garvey. At the UNIA headquarters, also located in Harlem, Garvey operated the Black Star Line, which heralded itself as an all-Black shipping company promising trips to and from Africa and the Caribbean.



Marcus Garvey chairing a UNIA meeting, 1923.

The summer of 1919 was deadly for Blacks in America. After the Black troops had returned home, many Whites anticipated a return to the same racial discrimination that had existed pre-war, while Blacks expected a newly realized equality amongst their fellow Americans. This erupted into what many have called the “Red Summer,” in which racial violence erupted throughout at least twenty-six different cities in America (McWhirter 2011). The horrors of the Red Summer facilitated a response by Black Harlemites to join ranks with organizations such as the NAACP and the UNIA. One year after the Red Summer, the UNIA held its first annual convention parade in August 1920 (Robertson 2011b). These parades were notoriously loud, with motorcades and numerous marching bands, and were met with mixed feelings, as illustrated by Zora Neale Hurston’s words:

Eight modest, unassuming brass bands blared away down Lenox Avenue. It was August 1, 1924, and the Emperor Marcus Garvey was sneaking down the Avenue in terrible dread lest he attract attention to himself. He succeeded nobly, for scarcely fifty thousand persons saw his parade file past trying to hide itself behind numerous banners of red, black and green. This self-effacement was typical of Mr. Garvey and his organization. He would have no fuss nor bluster a few thousand pennants strung across the street overhead, eight or nine bands, a regiment or two, a few floats, a dozen or so of titled officials and he was ready for his annual parade. (Hurston 1924)

Many participants held signs with phrases such as “Scattered Africa Unite” and “The New Negro Has No Fear.” Often, dignitaries from other countries participated, such as the Potentate Gabriel M. Johnson of Liberia and Supreme Deputy G.O. Marke of Sierra Leone (Van Leeuwen 2000). With motorcades, limousines, marching bands, and participants dressed in African Legion military regalia, the parade was a magnificent show of race pride. UNIA organizations such as the Black Cross Nurses and the UNIA Women’s Brigade were also prominent fixtures in their 1924 parade (Robertson 2011b).

Unique to the UNIA parades was their route. While they continued along the popular commercial corridors of Lenox and Seventh Avenues in Harlem, they made a point to travel farther south into predominantly White neighborhoods. In 1920, they marched north from Lenox and 135th Street, turning west on 145th Street to then march south down Seventh Avenue, venturing as far south as 125th Street before turning back north on Lenox. In 1922 and 1924, the parade followed a similar route, but marched even farther south to 110th Street (Robertson 2011b). Mapping these routes demonstrates how quickly Harlem grew during the 1920s, as the boundary of Black Harlem kept pushing to new frontiers.

The UNIA was vehemently denounced by notable leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois, who called Garvey a friend of the Klan after he had allegedly met with a Klan leader in Atlanta in 1922 (Simba 2007). Others who had aligned themselves with communist and socialist beliefs also actively spoke out against what they referred to as Garveyism. They believed that the race problem was a class struggle, and the solution could not be found by adhering to White man’s capitalism; rather, it required complete radicalization to succeed. They believed that equality was embedded within a Marxist framework, not within capitalism. For instance, the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) was a communist organization that formed within the UNIA. The ABB was initially interested in being a critical voice and advocate for the UNIA, but later broke away due to Garvey’s handling of the Black Star Line enterprise (Briggs 1920; African Blood Brotherhood 1922). The leaders of the ABB – Cyril Briggs and Claude McKay – published *The Crusader*, which circulated communist beliefs throughout the Black community. The ABB dissolved in 1922, and its members merged with the Workers Party of America (Solomon 1998).

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(A Peace-Loving, but Red-Blooded Organization)

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No loose-talking in the A. B. B. No cowardly compromises. No servile surrender of Negro rights. No illusion about the task before us. No attempt to operate without a program.

The AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD (A. B. B.) is the only EFFECTIVE protective Negro organization in the world, with the grandest lineage of any FRATERNAL organization in all history, dating from the dawn of history on the banks of the upper Nile and operating uninterruptedly through all the centuries in the ennobling ceremony of blood brotherhood which is practiced to this day in Central Africa.

The A. B. B. has posts throughout the United States, the West Indies, Central America, South America, and the Motherland, Africa. If you want to help yourself, if you want to help your Race,

IF YOU ARE IN REAL EARNEST

you will cut out and sign the accompanying application blank and mail it at once with enlistment fee of three (\$3.00) dollars, money order or registered mail, to:

CYRIL V. BRIGGS, Executive Head
AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD
 2299 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., U. S. A.

DON'T PUT OFF YOUR LIBERATION! SEND IN YOUR APPLICATION NOW!

CUT HERE

"ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE"
APPLICATION BLANK

I, the undersigned, Negro and proud of it, being fully cognizant of the value of organization and conscious of the obligation created for IMMEDIATE PROTECTION AND ULTIMATE LIBERATION OF NEGROES EVERYWHERE, and recognizing in the historic AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD the protective organization par excellence as demonstrated at times, etc. and the most effective Negro organization working for the liberation of the Negro Peoples of the world as evidenced by the successes that have already reaped the energetic application of its intelligent program, and further realizing the need of secrecy, centralized authority and enlightened and courageous leadership do hereby make application for membership in the said AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD and do hereby pledge myself, if accepted for membership, to energetically advance the interests of the AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD and the sacred cause of Negro Protection and Liberation in which it fights, and to faithfully carry out the instructions of the ABB LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, of the use for which it fights, and to give the respect and obedience to all my officers and courageously oppose lynching, discrimination, and all forms of oppression.

In witness of my earnestness in making application and my willingness to abide by the laws of the organization, I do hereby affix my true signature.

Signature of Applicant

Address

African Blood Brotherhood membership application, typically found in The Crusader.

Amy Jacques Garvey operated as the UNIA's office manager, Secretary General, and the editor of the organization's newspaper.



The UNIA was on the verge of dissolving in 1927 as a result of Garvey being sent to prison in 1925, then deported to Jamaica after his wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, successfully led an effort to have his sentence commuted (Simba 2007). Amy Jacques Garvey would continue the UNIA efforts after her husband's death in 1940 and is credited with its survival. She continued to build the association and was a key actor in the United Nation's adoption of the "Africa Freedom Charter" in 1944 (Espiritu 2007).

CLASS STRUGGLE

As previously noted, there were organizations formed within Harlem that were equally concerned with race equality and class consciousness, such as the African Blood Brotherhood. Similarly, A. Philip Randolph was a political activist in Harlem who aligned himself with the socialist movement. Like Hubert Harrison, he took to preaching his ideals from a soapbox, but soon moved to publishing *The Messenger* in 1917, which he co-founded with Charles Owens using monies received from the Socialist party (Kreiger 2008). Much like the ABB's publication *The Crusader*, this literature disseminated socialist thought and calls to action for economic justice. After publishing two well-received articles regarding unionizing, he took up the cause to found the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) in Chicago in 1925. Randolph worked tirelessly to promote the idea of unionizing as a means to end class struggle (Salter 2007).

Many African Americans distrusted unions and held fast to the belief that being employed by a White establishment in a high-profile capacity was sufficiently successful. Randolph felt this only continued the abusive slave-master relationship so many of his race had suffered from. This distrust was present during the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign, which took hold in Harlem from 1931-1934. This movement directly coincided with the Great Depression, when many in the neighborhood had become frustrated with their access to employment, specifically at the White-owned businesses along 125th Street. There were many leaders within the movement, ranging from religious leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell Sr., to supporters of the UNIA, and radical individuals such as Sufi Abdul Hamid, a self-proclaimed occultist, who represented a younger crowd of activists (McKay 1948). The Harlem Business Men's club called for boycotts and Reverend John H. Johnson of St. Martin's Protestant Episcopal Church helped create the Citizens League for Fair Play (Broderick and Meier 1966).

The Sufi and his followers, known as "the Sufists," immediately took to picketing and setting up soapboxes outside of Blumstein's and Kress' 5-10-25 cent store, and on the corner of Seventh Avenue and 125th Street. However, the religious leaders of Harlem were not initially convinced that picketing was the correct approach. In early 1934, Reverend Johnson attempted to reason with the manager of Blumstein's to employ Black workers, but to no avail. Frustrated, Reverend Johnson decided that the Sufi's methods were best and joined the ranks of picketers outside the store (McKay 1948). Other ministers soon followed, along with the professional men and women of Harlem. After picketing outside for one month, Blumstein's finally conceded, allowing a certain percentage of its department store clerk jobs to be held by African Americans. Unfortunately, this marked the end of the picketers' unity, as the Sufists went on to argue for setting up a labor union to protect the rights of these newly admitted workers, while the ministers and professionals decided they had received what they had fought for and went about deciding which local, debutante, light-skinned women should receive the jobs. Claude McKay summed up the mentality of those who opposed the Sufists when he wrote, "in the Negro world the field of salesclerk is especially privileged and the girl breaking into it may be a Harlem debutante. She is sure to belong to a professional family that looks askance at organized labor. Becoming a saleslady in a 'White' store is a novelty. It is a 'nice' position an item which will make the new column or even the headlines of the local Negro paper" (McKay 1948, 195). This illustrated the frustrations that Randolph had also spoken about when he referred to the African American's mental crutch that refused to see beyond the slave-master relationship.

BOILING POINT

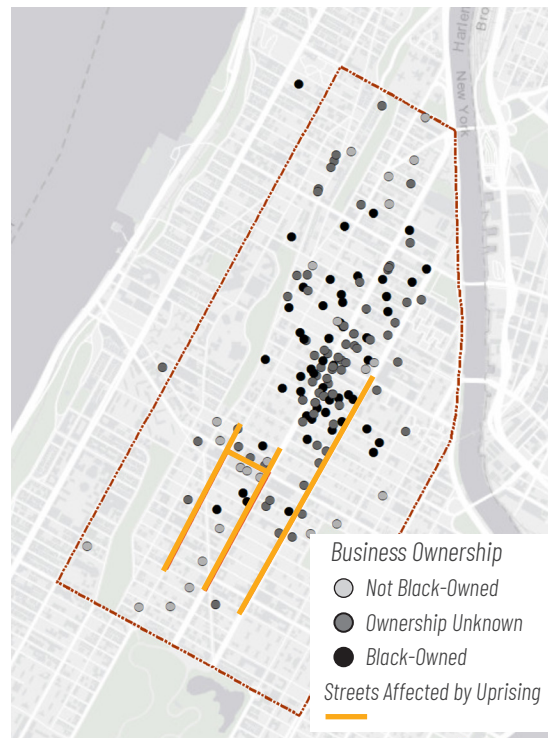
The “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” movement had mixed outcomes and resulted in little to no gains for the working-class men and women of Harlem. This frustration came to a head on March 19, 1935, when a young Puerto Rican boy was accused of stealing a pen knife from Kress’ 5-10-25 cent store at 258 West 125th Street. The boy was seen taken by policemen into a basement, where many assumed he was about to be beaten. Women and men never saw the boy leave, and questioned the police and store employees – some assumed that he had been killed (Wang 2007). The rumors spread like wildfire. Soon, crowds had come to 125th Street to speak out. When night fell, people from all walks of life – from ministers to Harlem playgirls – ran through the streets, breaking windows of White-owned establishments as an outward display of their frustration with a system that seemed to be consistently rigged against them (McKay 1948). The participants started at 125th Street, then dispersed north and south along Fifth, Lenox, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues, eventually moving as far south as 116th Street and reaching north to 145th Street (Robertson 2016).

The *Daily News* published a story the following day, depicting Harlem as having been taken over by “armed bands of [African-American] and [White] guerillas, swinging crowbars and clubs... assaulting every person of opposite color to cross their paths” (*New York Daily News* 1935). The paper published photos of damage and victims of violence, listing the names and addresses of those who had been injured or killed. They failed, however, to point out that the 700 White policemen called in to patrol the crowds shot and killed Lloyd Hobbs, a young man who was returning home from seeing a movie (Toole 2019). Another Black man, Paul Boytt, was shot by a policeman for allegedly getting ready to “strike Timothy Murphy, 28, [White]” (*New York Daily News* 1935). Ultimately, the White press did not report on the police brutality that was a driving factor for the protest, nor did they illuminate the impetus behind the intentional destruction of White-owned businesses who still were not hiring Blacks.

Claude McKay did report that the focus of the fighting was on the stores. People were hungry, needed jobs, and were struggling to survive amidst a Depression – the cries for equality had reached a fever pitch. The uprising lasted from March 19 to 20, and resulted in counts of 300 insurance claims by stores for 626 broken windows, with mixed reports on total cost in property damage (Wang 2008; Robertson 2018; Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

In an effort to quell the anger in Harlem, Mayor Fiorello La Guardia appointed a biracial commission to investigate the reasons for the uprising at the request of the NAACP’s Walter White. While the report was extensively undertaken, it was never issued by the government. It was not until 1969 that the full text was made public by Arno Press (Toole 2019). For many, the uprising marked the end of the Harlem Renaissance. An era of activism that began with the Silent Protest Parade in 1917 saw a community come together to show their White neighbors the reality of inequality. In 1935, the community came together again, but this time shaking its own neighborhood as if to say that the inequality had continued to persist in their own backyard. If they could not do something about it on their streets, then where did they really have sway?

The dense population of African Americans in Harlem provided a fertile ground for progressive thought and the power to voice differing beliefs. As the neighborhood expanded, so too did the number of leaders. The ability to communicate via the printed word and the humble sidewalk soapbox disseminated information to the masses, which in turn inspired community leaders who would go on to foster activist movements in the future.



Overall map of the 1935 Harlem Uprising.

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC ACTIVISM HISTORIC ASSETS

Activism during the Harlem Renaissance manifested itself predominantly on the sidewalks and streets of the neighborhood. While the streets were often understood as space available only to those who could afford an automobile (generally White people during this time), parades reclaimed that space as a political statement. Tracing the locations of these events through time provides insight into where the main corridors were located, and calls for a closer look into the reasons for the movement of these main corridors over time. Similarly, understanding what each demonstration represented and with what tactics – particularly, the role of sound – further contextualizes what Alain Locke’s term “the New Negro” meant for Harlem residents. It is noteworthy that the beginning of the studio’s period of significance is marked by a silent protest that marched south throughout White neighborhoods, while the end of this period is marked by a protest occurring all throughout Harlem, specifically damaging White-owned businesses. Mapping the relationship of the Black population to the White-owned businesses will be important, in addition to documenting the sound corridors and what effect the auditory experience of parades and protests would have had on various publics.

List of Significant Parades, Protests, & Boycotts

JULY 28, 1917 ————— SILENT PROTEST PARADE



NAACP Silent Protest Parade, 1917.

ORGANIZERS

NAACP (specifically, W. E. B. Du Bois), Rev. H.C. Bishop of St. Philip’s Church, Rev. F.A. Cullen of Salem Methodist Church, Rev. Charles Martin, James Weldon Johnson, and John E. Nail.

SUMMARY

The Parade responded to the July 3 East St. Louis massacre, when 6,000 African Americans were driven out of their homes and hundreds were killed (St. Philip’s Church 1986). Organizers in Harlem convened in the St. Philip’s Parish House (213 West 133rd Street) to plan the Silent Protest Parade. The march was led by children and women dressed in white, symbolizing innocence, followed by men in suits carrying signs. None of the participants spoke during the parade. An estimated 8,000 children, women, and men marched, while roughly 20,000 African Americans supported them from the sidewalk (*New York Times* 1917). While this was a site of social interaction in open space, this was not a jubilant affair and was meant solely as a political protest.

ROUTE

Fifth Avenue, starting at 59th Street and marching south to 23rd Street (Robertson 2011b).

FEBRUARY 17, 1919 — 369TH INFANTRY MARCH



369th Infantry March on Fifth Avenue, 1919.

ORGANIZERS / PARTICIPANTS

369th Infantry Regiment (also known as the “Harlem Hellfighters”); an all-black military band led by Bill “Bojangles” Robinson.

SUMMARY

The parade marked the return of the Harlem Hellfighters from World War I. The men formally marched through the Upper East Side, breaking into the song “Here Comes My Daddy” upon entering the streets of Harlem, where they were greeted with “two howling walls of humanity” (Watson 1995). This was a raucous moment of social interaction amongst Harlemites and gave faces to the Black American Hero.

ROUTE

Fifth Avenue, starting at 61st Street, marching up to 110th and turning west to march further north and into Harlem on Lenox Avenue (Watson 1995).

AUGUST 3, 1920 — FIRST ANNUAL UNIA CONVENTION PARADE (subsequent parades in 1922 and 1924)



Taking the streets in any form was a political action, and the UNIA parades were an exclamation of that political statement. UNIA Women's Brigade at the UNIA Annual Parade, 1924.

ORGANIZERS / PARTICIPANTS

Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), led by Marcus Garvey; Black Cross Nurses; and the UNIA Women's Brigade (in 1924).

SUMMARY

The first UNIA parade was held to commemorate the founding of the UNIA, and the UNIA continued to host parades in subsequent years. They were the most photographed due to their controversy and spectacle. Many participants held signs with phrases such as “Scattered Africa Unite” or “The New Negro Has No Fear.” These parades were a statement of race pride and a display of power and wealth, with participants parading through the streets in lavish limousines and men and women dressed in African Legion military regalia (Van Leeuwen 2000). These marches displayed the differing views of what it meant to achieve progress: Garveyites believed in the idea of placing their race first and characterized the “Back to Africa” movement. They were not concerned with integration like the NAACP, and aimed to succeed via modes of capitalism. Garvey's ideas were far-reaching and divisive. The UNIA parades held space for social interaction that spurred further

political reaction by groups such as the African Blood Brotherhood, who subscribed to race pride but felt that communism was a better solution to achieve their goals (Watson 1995).

ROUTE

These parades characteristically marched farther south than other parades to display Black pride in White neighborhoods. As Harlem expanded, so too did the annual parade routes. Starting at Liberty Hall (128 West 138th Street), the parade marched north up Lenox Avenue, turning west on 145th Street then marched south on Seventh Avenue to 125th Street in 1920. It would march as far south as 110th Street in 1922 and 1924 (Robertson 2011b).

JULY 4, 1930 ——— DEMONSTRATION BY 2,000 COMMUNISTS

ORGANIZERS / PARTICIPANTS

Attended by BIPOC and White communists.

SUMMARY

Consisted of a march and speeches in response to the killing of a local communist, Gonzalo Gonzales, by a police officer on June 30. The participants carried his coffin through the streets, stopping to listen to speeches.

ROUTE

Started at 308 Lenox Avenue (Communist Headquarters), then marched south down Lenox Avenue. Stopped to listen to speeches at 26 West 115th Street (Spanish Workers Centre), then marched farther south to 110th Street and Fifth Avenue, where they listened to a final two hours of speeches (Robertson 2011b).

1933-34 — “DON’T BUY WHERE YOU CAN’T WORK” MOVEMENT

ORGANIZERS / PARTICIPANTS

Reverend John H. Johnson of St. Martin’s Episcopal Protestant Church; Citizens League for Fair Play; supporters of the UNIA; Claudia Cabaniss Saunders of the YWCA; Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Sr.; Adam Clayton Powell Jr.; Sufi Abdul Hamid and his young followers, the Sufists.

SUMMARY

The movement was organized throughout the neighborhood in direct response to the unfair treatment of Black Harlem residents in employment practices. Leaders from various walks of life gathered their followers to confront the White-owned department stores along 125th Street in an effort to secure employment for their community in these establishments. After one month of endless picketing outside Blumstein’s department store, the White owner conceded to the workers’ and protesters’ demands to allow a percentage of his clerk positions to be held by African Americans. The younger, more radical crowd then called for the formation of a labor union to protect the newly won workers’ rights, while more conservative African Americans felt they had won the fight and abandoned any further agitation with the department store (McKay 1948).

ROUTE

125th Street; specifically in front of the White-owned department stores, such as Blumstein’s, between Fifth and Seventh Avenues (McKay 1948).

1935 ——— HARLEM UPRISING

ORGANIZERS / PARTICIPANTS

Men and women of Harlem (as far-reaching as ministers and playgirls), the Young Liberators, and the Young Communist League.

SUMMARY

When a Puerto Rican boy was accused of stealing from a Kress’ 5-10-25 cent store located at 258 West 125th Street, police took him to a basement, where some believed he would be killed. Rumors spread quickly with soapbox speakers from the Young Liberators and Young Communist League, and crowds packed 125th Street. Upon nightfall, men and women ran through the streets, breaking windows of predominantly White-owned stores. Claude McKay stated that the angry participants broke windows and those who were hungry took what they could (McKay 1948). While this was a culmination of the ever-mounting pressure between the unemployed Blacks and the White-owned department stores, this is also causally related to the Great Depression, which rendered nearly 50% of the Harlem population jobless. The protest lasted from March 19 to 20, and resulted in counts of 300 insurance claims by stores for 626 broken

windows, with mixed reports on total cost in property damage (Wang 2008; Robertson 2018; Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

ROUTE

125th Street (specifically in front of the White-owned department stores), then as far north as 145th Street and south to 115th Street along Fifth, Lenox, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues (Robertson 2018).

Buildings Directly Affiliated with Political Movements

213 WEST 133RD STREET — ST. PHILIP'S PARISH HOUSE



Site where the NAACP Silent Protest Parade was organized, 1917.

180 WEST 135TH STREET — YMCA

Provided a safe meeting place for political organizations to convene.

179 WEST 137TH STREET — YWCA

Provided a safe meeting place for political organizations to convene.

36 – 38 WEST 135TH STREET — UNIA NEWSPAPER OFFICE



Founded: January 1, 1919
Closed: November 1, 1926
Housed the Black Star Line headquarters, the UNIA headquarters, and UNIA's newspaper office for the *Negro World*. Also Housed Berry & Ross, Inc. – an African-American women-led company that manufactured some of the first Black composition dolls (Harlem World Magazine 2017).

128 WEST 138TH STREET — LIBERTY HALL

Purchased by Garvey in 1919 to hold evening UNIA meetings. Located next door to Abyssinian Baptist Church.

132 WEST 138TH STREET — ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Where Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Sr. and his son, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., helped organize the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” labor movement among his congregation.



2305 SEVENTH AVENUE ————— UNIA PUBLISHING & PRINTING HOUSE



Founded: January 1, 1922
Closed: December 31, 1922

56 WEST 135TH STREET ————— UNIA HEADQUARTERS

Founded: January 1, 1918
Closed: December 31, 1918

230 LENOX AVENUE ————— ST. MARTIN'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Site where Rev. John H. Johnson formed the Citizen's League for Fair Play and played a key role in organizing the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" labor movement.

409 EDGECOMBE AVENUE ————— "PARTY APARTMENT"

Home of Walter White, a key figure in the NAACP who called on Mayor La Guardia to investigate the 1935 Harlem Uprising. Site of many social events and parties.

List of Soapbox Locations

The soapbox afforded a spatial representation of the movement of the commercial corridor, as well as the evolving nature of Harlem residents' concerns throughout the period of significance.

LOCATION	YEAR	PARTICIPANTS
E. 135th St. & Madison Ave.	1917	Hubert Harrison
135th St. & Lenox Ave.	1918	A. Philip Randolph
W. 138th St. & Lenox Ave.	1921	Various
W. 133rd St. & Lenox Ave.	1921	Various
W. 128th St. & Lenox Ave.	1921	Various
W. 140th St. & Seventh Ave.	1925	Various
W. 138th St. & Seventh Ave.	1925	Various
W. 137th St. & Seventh Ave.	1926	Various
W. 133rd St. & Seventh Ave.	1926	Various
W. 132nd St. & Seventh Ave.	1926	Various
2227 Seventh Ave.	1926	Speaker arrested for naming the Lafayette Theater in a boycott. Initiated a free speech case (<i>New York Amsterdam News</i> 1926).
W. 127th St. & Seventh Ave.	1930	Various
W. 125th St. & Seventh Ave.	1933-1938	The Sufi and his followers; Various. Located in front of Lewis Michaux's African National Memorial Bookstore, which created an educational and political environment for all those passing by.
230 W. 125th St.	1933-1934	The Sufi and his followers
125th St. & Lenox Ave.	1933-1934	The Sufi and his followers

HEALTH

Chris Kumaradaja

From the beginning of the Great Migration to the end of the Harlem Renaissance, the pursuit of racial and social justice in public health through representation, the provision of city services, and community wellbeing was an impressive development in political empowerment. During the Great Migration, Blacks began to arrive in Harlem in large numbers and started to drastically change the racial proportions of the neighborhood. Unfortunately, high costs of living rendered medical care elusive and forced Harlem residents to choose between adequate living conditions and healthcare. Thus, during the early years of mass Black urbanization, health issues, such as living conditions, tuberculosis, and access to healthcare, became part of the collective consciousness among Black Harlemites (Wilson 2009). Themes of skepticism and acceptance in both racial and technological areas encompass the evolution of healthcare during this time. Healthcare in this context includes both mental and physical health and junctures between religion and politics. Overall, these themes and areas surrounding the development of healthcare during the Harlem Renaissance relied heavily on community engagement through many types of institutions, including those religious and political.

INSTITUTIONAL MEDICINE

The role of institutional healthcare facilities during the Harlem Renaissance was characterized by both independent movements to establish Black-owned institutions, as well as the integration of segregated or all-White hospitals in the neighborhood, such as Harlem Hospital. Blacks were also refused treatment at Sydenham, Community, and St. Luke's Hospitals (Wilson 2009). Outside of these facilities, Black physicians in private practice were largely unaffiliated with hospitals and operated from their homes. However, unaffiliated and often ill-trained doctors were insufficient for the needs of the Black community.

The effort to introduce Black staff at hospitals in Harlem was part of a larger political effort to engage African Americans in professional practice and city services like institutional healthcare. This period marked a critical turning point, in which healthcare catalyzed political activism and, as a result, partisan allegiances among the Black community. Harlem Hospital could be seen as ground zero for the effort to desegregate healthcare institutions. Particularly at Harlem Hospital, discriminatory practices and efforts to break

them down had been closely documented by the all-Black newspaper *The New York Age*. The newspaper had charged Harlem Hospital with discrimination as early as 1913, and continued to document the effort to staff Harlem Hospital with Black doctors well into the 1920s. The progress toward employing Black professionals at healthcare facilities was partly due to lobbying and the efforts by Mayor Hylan and organizations like Tammany Hall to engage the Black voting block (Wilson 2009, 66). Tammany Hall had leveraged the support of Blacks in order to reorganize Harlem Hospital. As a result, there was a considerable shift in Black voters, who changed their allegiance to the Democratic Party. Conversely, the Manhattan Medical Association, led by Dr. Charles Roberts, a Republican, coordinated with the Urban League and the NAACP and made a less successful attempt to integrate Harlem Hospital, getting only so far as to introduce Black nurses at Bellevue Hospital in 1921 and at Harlem Hospital in 1923 (Goldstein 1980, 192).

The argument for increased representation in a segregated landscape produced a divisive debate within the African American community. On the one hand, some argued that autonomy meant rejecting “White” standards, while on the other hand, others believed that integration was the most pragmatic step forward. Small Black-owned community hospitals like Edgecombe Hospital, established in 1925 at the corner of 137th Street and Edgecombe Avenue, sought to provide health services to the Black population without the politically fraught effort to integrate mainstream institutions like



Cartoon accompanying a list of demands for Harlem Hospital.

Harlem Hospital. Edgecombe Sanitarium was meant for those Blacks of “considerable means” who refused to be served at Harlem Hospital. Similar to the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign, Harlemites sought to prove their autonomy by refusing “White” services. Although a number of high-profile African American members of the community were treated at Edgecombe Hospital, it lacked the facilities to treat those of lower-income en masse, as it only had capacity for twelve patients. Meanwhile, the capacity of the neighboring Vincent Sanitarium was as high as fifty.

This vast effort resulted in the staffing of far more Black community members, even beyond the Harlem Renaissance. In 1929, seven of the sixty-four physicians and surgeons at Harlem Hospital were African American; now, people of color form the majority of the faculty (Harlem Hospital Residency Program, n.d.).

SPIRITUAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Much of what was considered healthcare during this time was intertwined with religious and spiritual institutions. In contrast to the advent of modern medical equipment, a growing number of “magico-religious workers” began to offer their services. Magico-religious workers refer to a broad range of individuals, including spiritual healers, who drew upon occult practices, religious beliefs, and other cultural traditions to provide solutions to health problems (Wilson 2009). These magico-religious workers included, but were not limited to, self-described healers, clairvoyants, fortune-tellers, magicians, mediums, “professors,” and spiritualists. During this time, they touted and peddled magical cures for all kinds of ailments, both physical and mental. In the mid- to late-1920s, these magico-religious workers advertised their services to Black newspapers, such as the *New York Amsterdam News*. Some of these workers were affiliated with larger religious and spiritual institutions like churches, but many of them practiced independently.

At the junction between healthcare, spiritual institutions, and community services, magico-religious workers had great presence in the Harlem community. Often, these “professors” would see clients in their homes, and would have a treatment for any malady imaginable. However, much like the unaffiliated and inadequately trained physicians, magico-religious workers were often arrested for practicing without a license. Although evidence is anecdotal, law enforcement officers were known to fake maladies to be treated by these spiritual healers, only to arrest them later. By the end of the decade, the removal of these spiritual healers affected community cohesion.

TECHNOLOGY

Along with the pressure to keep to traditional and alternative medicines, the introduction of new technologies in healthcare, like radiology, was greeted with mixed reactions among professionals and the general public in Harlem. Both intellectuals and laypeople among the African American community during the Harlem Renaissance grappled with a quickly modernizing but oppressive society, in which the intersections between technology and scientific racism – for example, through experimentation and eugenics – entered the collective consciousness. Jim Crow laws had haunted African Americans even in New York, where the trauma of experimentation on enslaved peoples along with the forced sterilization of the poor left an understandably deep-seated cynicism toward any medical practices that were not “Black.” This skepticism and cynicism toward institutional medicine, due to both its technologies and unfounded pseudo-intellectual racism, added a layer of complexity in the overall field of healthcare at this time.

For example, Edgecombe Hospital had installed an x-ray machine in 1929, but many mistrusted the new technology. However, Dr. U. Conrad Vincent was convinced that Black patients deserved cutting-edge, modern equipment in hospitals. In the face of skepticism that new medical technologies were part of the oppressive White system, doctors like Vincent felt that new technologies would help to improve the living conditions of Harlemites. Dr. Rudolph Fisher was also an avid experimenter in new imaging techniques, and as a short story novelist, he was a rarity in the Harlem healthcare community. Fisher was even more of a rarity in that he was aware of how lay Harlemites thought about healthcare. Fisher’s efforts to communicate his views on medical technology through literature will be discussed below.

IN MEDIA AND LITERATURE

The writers of the Harlem Renaissance provided an all-encompassing glimpse into many facets of emotional attitudes to contemporary events and topics in Harlem, including developments in healthcare. Writer Wallace Thurman’s work *The Interne* echoed a popular cynical conception of institutionalized healthcare. Thurman’s work focused on the disillusionment of a young medical intern, who had entered “Memorial Hospital,” a charity hospital and a depository for sick, disabled, and other “diseased misfits” (quoted in Waggoner 2017) modeled after Harlem Hospital. This hospital’s modern mechanization was depicted as only aiding the harvesting of dead, diseased bodies for experimentation. In *The Interne*, Thurman implies that the modern hospital



Rudolph Fisher.

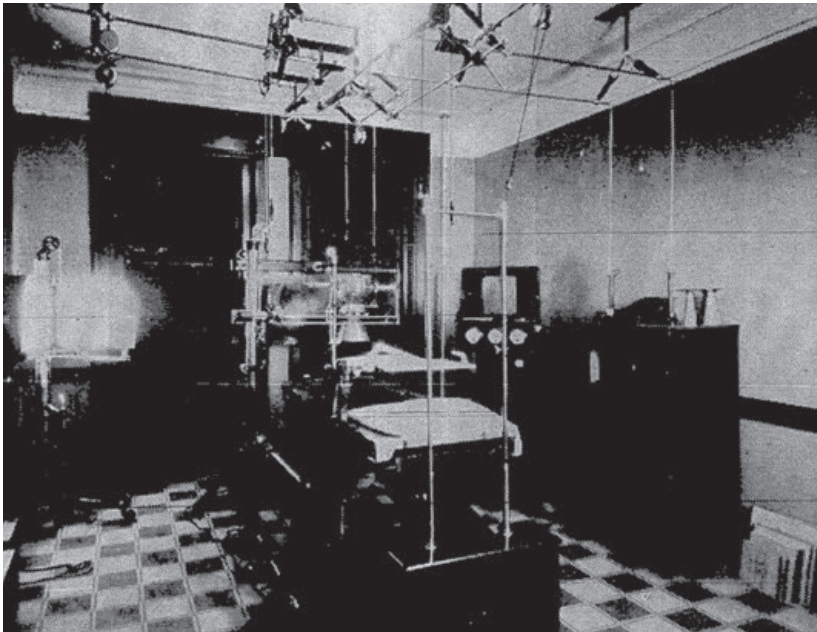
is a White one, and is not to be trusted. *The Interne* was one of Thurman's last publications; he later died of tuberculosis at Harlem Hospital, the very hospital he condemned.

On the contrary, Rudolph Fisher, a writer and physician with a practice at 2348 Seventh Avenue, took advantage of his unique background and his expertise in medical technology to produce works that had a far rosier view of medical technology. Fisher's short story, "Skeeter," depicted a layperson's view of a radiology exam room. Fisher was cognizant of the skepticism and fear of new technologies among the general public. In response to this perception, Fisher wanted to allay the fears of the general public with "Skeeter," which championed the revolutionary imaging technique in diagnosis. However, "Skeeter" was never published and its manuscript is thought to be lost. Fisher's writings and practice prove to be an outlier in the community.

HEALTH HISTORIC ASSETS

OFFICES OF MAGICO-RELIGIOUS WORKERS

Magico-religious workers advertised their services in Black newspapers, such as the *New York Amsterdam News*, touting services such as magical cures for maladies, both physical and mental. Many of these magico-religious workers provided services independently, or were affiliated with local churches and spiritual organizations. Not all magico-religious workers professed their ability to heal, but were nevertheless deeply embedded in the communities they served. Many of them were known as "professors" and "doctors." These magico-religious workers were often seen as both alternative doctors and social workers. Given their prominence within the Harlem community, the spaces that the magico-religious workers used as their offices can be considered historic assets.



Rudolph Fisher's radiology examination room.

BLACK-OWNED HOSPITALS

Black physicians, facing limited employment prospects, established their own hospitals to serve their community. The first independently owned all-Black hospital, the Edgecombe Sanitarium, opened in 1925, with only twelve beds for patients. The Edgecombe Sanitarium was meant for “those of considerable means” who were able to refuse treatment at the integrated Harlem Hospital. Therefore, this facility was not able to accommodate the larger mass of poor and sick patients. Later, the Vincent Sanitarium opened, with a private and semi-private capacity of up to fifty patients. The Vincent Sanitarium boasted modern equipment, such as an x-ray machine and an electrical call system.

Edgecombe Sanitarium

328 West 137th Street

Vincent Sanitarium

2348 Seventh Avenue

WHITES-ONLY HOSPITALS

African-Americans were primarily refused admission in these three hospitals in the Harlem area. Under special circumstances, they could be admitted on a restricted basis, based on whether a patient's disease was “of interest for study and teaching, research or clinical investigation for surgeons” (quoted in Wilson 2009, 62).

Sydenham Hospital

215 West 125th Street

St. Luke's Hospital

440 West 114th Street

Community Hospital

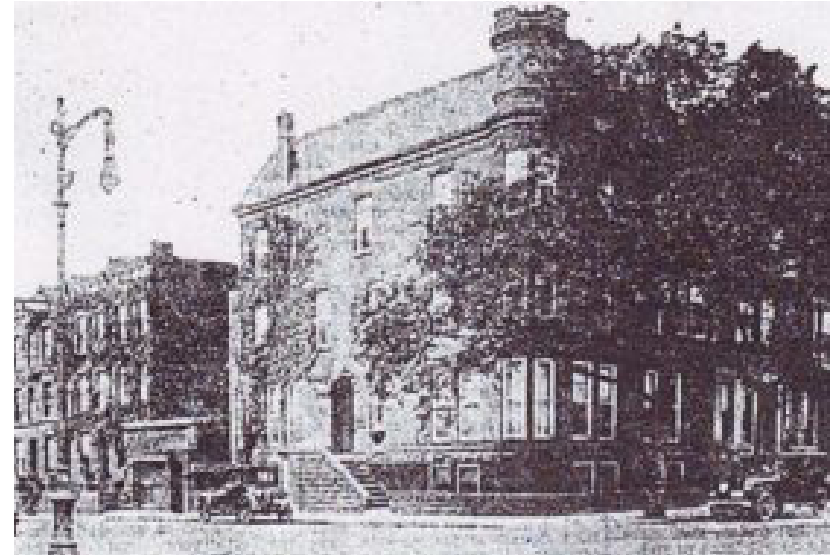
8 St. Nicholas Place

INTEGRATED HOSPITAL

Throughout the Harlem Renaissance, Harlem Hospital was ground zero for the effort to staff hospitals with Black professionals, which galvanized a political block of African Americans. Harlem Hospital was the center of the lobbying efforts from partisan organizations and mayoral election campaigns for integration. Not only was Harlem Hospital eventually somewhat successful in the effort to fill the faculty with Black physicians and surgeons, but it also was a center for Black professional credibility.

Harlem Hospital

504 Lenox Avenue



Edgecombe Sanitarium.



Harlem Hospital.

CULINARY ARTS

Preme Chaiyatham

The culinary arts in Harlem represent a mixture of diverse cultures. Before the influx of the Black population at the turn of the twentieth century, Harlem was home to many European immigrants who collaboratively intertwined their foodways to replicate and make available their cuisines in the new urban environment. After the Great Migration, Black populations encountered similar processes of intercultural culinary creation among migrants from the southern states, the Caribbean, and West Africa. Due to discrimination from White communities and within their own race, southern migrants' foods were not accepted at first. Both the Black and White populations at that time generally associated southern food with slavery. Combined with other social and financial reasons, these newcomers were unable to open their own food businesses early on. Instead, they started as wage earners, taking up jobs as cooks, servers, and bartenders. Gradually, they found many ways to promote their food in Harlem, and the conditions of World War I made southern food more accepted. After World War I, many Black restaurants were established. However, during the Depression era of the 1930s, many famous eateries found themselves out of business. Many venues needed to adjust to the situation: speakeasies and clubs began to serve more substantial meals instead of light snacks, while basement restaurants and street food vendors sprang up throughout the neighborhood. Meanwhile, street markets that had been popular since the 1910s were closed by the City in the mid-1930s as part of its modernization efforts. Despite such setbacks, the Harlem culinary world has continued to develop ever since, becoming a part of the civil rights movement during the 1960s as "soul food," which is promoted as Harlem's main cuisine today.

CULINARY DIVERSITY

Harlem was already home to many ethnic groups before the Great Migration of the Black population in the US. In fact, it was an area where extreme changes in population had occurred over time. By the late nineteenth century, diverse immigrant groups had already clustered in many parts of Harlem, separated geographically by their origins. The Irish settled on the riverbanks, Eastern and Central European Jews concentrated above Central Park, and the Italian quarter could be found in East Harlem (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 276). This amalgam of cultures played a vital role in the culinary scene in Harlem. Immigrants had endeavored to make this northern part of Manhattan their

new home through food, which in turn created intraracial culinary encounters. Influences across cuisines could be found in ingredients, methods, eating etiquettes, and aesthetics. This earlier Harlem demographic discovered many ways to prepare their food and cooperate within the community to make different foods available (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 276).

It was around 1890-1914 that Harlem experienced a significant increase in its Black population. In his study, Osofsky found that the Black population in New York City increased almost threefold from 36,183 in 1890 to 91,709 in 1910 (1971, 220). In 1910, there were 60,534 Black residents in Manhattan alone, 61% of whom had come from southern states, including Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida (Osofsky 1971, 18). Apart from southern migrants, there were also immigrants from the Caribbean and West Africa arriving through England, adding more complexity to the ethnic makeup of Harlem (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 279). The main motivations for immigrants to leave their hometowns included economic opportunity and fleeing social constraints, but little did they know that they would leave significant imprints on Harlem's food world.

THE BUSINESS OF FOOD

With the extensive arrival of Black immigrants, businesses in Harlem expanded to accommodate their needs. Restaurants began to serve "southern style" breakfast and dinner (Osofsky 1971, 32). Although restaurants and grocery stores serving the Black community started to appear in the 1910s, the majority of them were not owned by Black proprietors. In the 1930s, less than one-fifth of all businesses in Harlem were Black-owned (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 278). The Black community had difficulty establishing businesses for various reasons. First, Black businessmen could not afford property due to racial discrimination, which forced them to pay higher rent than their White contemporaries. In 1925, for example, Black tenants needed to pay twice as much as White families for the same apartment (Ross 1925, XX6). Moreover, disparate ethnic groups in Harlem created less homogeneous communities, which made it arduous to set up a business serving a diverse clientele. Southerners were from many different states, which had different cultures than those from the Caribbean, not to mention the Italian, Jewish, or Puerto Rican migrants who started to settle around Italian East Harlem in the 1920s. Lastly, second-generation European immigrants continued to hold on to their business as absentee owners, which meant that they still owned the business but did not live in the neighborhood. They adjusted their businesses to the needs of the Black community, selling African American southern food and

Black immigrant products along with European goods (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 280).

Because of these difficulties, Black workers could not become proprietors early on, instead starting out as wage earners. Cooks, waiters, and bartenders were common jobs for Black men. However, Harlem's Black communities successfully cooperated to find many ways to popularize their foods, both to the White population and the Black communities. Black Harlemites promoted their food through rent parties and social gatherings. Black cooks and servers also put pressure on the market to sell their products to restaurants (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 282). Finally, they peddled and catered dishes in their community. There was an open street market on the east side of Lenox Avenue between 138th and 142nd Streets, where Black vendors sold fresh produce and foods (*New York Amsterdam News* 1930a, 11). Some of them succeeded in becoming African American entrepreneurs. For example, Lillian Harris, known as "Pig Foot Mary," was a migrant from Mississippi who peddled southern food at the street market, saved money, and became a wealthier Harlemit. In 1925, writer James Weldon Johnson said, "Everybody knows Mary and her stand and has been tempted by the smell of her pig's feet, fried chicken and hot corn" (Freedman 2016, 279).

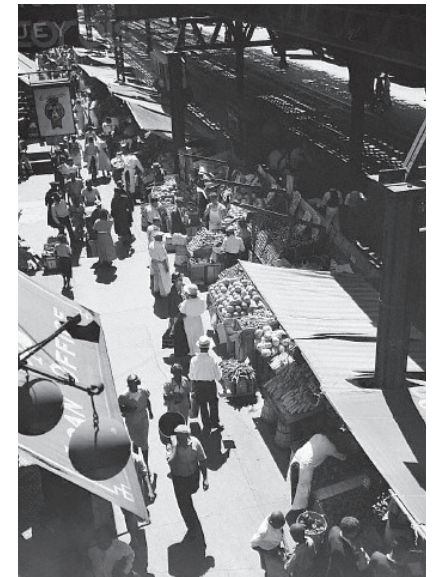
The open street market was a crucial part of culinary production in Harlem. The first, noted above, was opened in 1913 on the east side of Lenox Avenue between 138th and 142nd Streets, though was occupied mostly by White vendors. Due to its success, a second street market opened around 1915 on the east side of Eighth Avenue between 139th and 145th Streets. During this time, there was a growing number of Black-owned carts. In 1930, there were fourteen Black owners, while other carts were owned by White vendors with Black employees. Not long after the opening of the second venue, another market was established on the west side of Fifth Avenue between 132nd and 135th Streets. This venue was dominated by White patrons at first, but was soon taken over by Black customers who made it their primary market. The markets' main products were vegetables. A diverse set of shoppers, including those from the South and the West Indies, came to the market for its cheaper prices. However, there were many complaints about rigged weighing processes. Additionally, many critics condemned the markets' disorderly and dirty environment (*New York Amsterdam News* 1930a, 11). Despite these issues, the open street market remained popular until about the mid-1930s, when the La Guardia administration removed pushcart markets as a part of the city's modernization efforts (Cinotto 2013, 97).



Portrait of Lillian Harris or "Pig Foot Mary."



Street Vendors on Fifth Avenue, 1927.



Eighth Avenue Market.

CULINARY LEGACIES

Today, foods from the South are referred to and represented as “soul food.” However, the term was not known until the mid-1960s, and little do people know that it is the product of the cultural combination of West African, Western European, and Native American cooking practices (Freedman 2016, 272). In the 1920s, restaurants started to serve food from the South, advertising “southern” or “down-home” cooking for newcomers who did not have the equipment or enough space to cook food that would alleviate their homesickness (Freedman 2016, 278). Moreover, restaurants and street food vendors were vital in offering Black migrants access to food during the Harlem Renaissance, due to a discriminatory practice in housing called the “kitchen privilege” (Miller 2013, 40). This practice limited accessibility to food by charging additional fees to use kitchen spaces in tenement houses, which made Black residents rely on restaurants and street vendors for daily sustenance.

Despite the importance of these businesses, there was a class conflict between the middle-class Black urbanites and the working class from the South. Black Harlemites, who had already settled in the area after moving from other parts of New York City, had found a way to live in harmony with or at least gain tolerance from the White community. But with the influx of Black migrants from the South, they had faced the return of discrimination. As a result, they tried to find ways to separate themselves from these newcomers. One way of doing so was rejecting their food (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 277). In fact, southern food was regarded as a reminder of slavery. The food that these migrants brought from the South directly related to this issue, because it mainly contained corn and pork, similar to food consumed by enslaved persons during slavery and post-Emancipation (Wallach 2019, 101-102). The urbanites also opposed the idea of a distinct Black style of eating, as it suggested the idea of innate racial differences that would further intensify the perceived difference of the Black community. Thus, urban Black Harlemites discarded this type of food and described it as problematic. For example, *The Brownies' Book*, a magazine about Black history and achievement for children edited by Du Bois, exemplified various class and regional conflicts by delineating culinary cultural differences between the North and the South (Wallach 2019, 98-101).

Even with this cultural and social clash within the Black community, southern food persisted in Harlem. Despite opposition and suppression from the Black middle class, southern food gradually became the exemplary “Black” cuisine

in the northern cities (Wallach 2019, 109). To some extent, as Tracy N. Poe suggested, the endeavor of the middle class to alienate themselves from southern food might have, in fact, intensified the admiration of the cuisine for some migrants. They came to feel that their foodways were “unique and special” (Wallach 2019, 120).

The early twentieth century saw the weakening of the association between southern food and slavery. This was partly a result of the US entering World War I, a period when southern food came to be epitomized as a patriotic, American food. During World War I, the 1917 Lever Food and Fuel Control Act was decreed. It gave the president authority to regulate food consumption in the country in order to export rations to military bases in Europe. The government launched a propaganda campaign to promote voluntary food consumption, limiting beef and wheat – a common meal for urban cities – by substituting fish and corn (Wallach 2019, 123). Because southern food, brought to cities by southern migrants, already exceeded the government's austerity demands, the policy drastically changed the perception of southern cuisine as a sign of patriotism. Slowly, southern food became widespread – many restaurants serving southern food operated in the 1920s. They coexisted with clubs and speakeasies, which were concentrated on Seventh Avenue around 133rd to 135th Streets. Many of these restaurants offered both food and live performances. Similarly, clubs and speakeasies served meals as well.



A poster promoting food consumption during World War I, 1918.



Portrait of Ella Baker.

The cultural conflict over southern food had already waned by the Depression era of the 1930s, but a new concern arose as communities needed to make sure that people had something to eat. Many organizations formed to address these concerns. Among them was the Young Negroes' Cooperative League (YNCL), founded by George Schulyer in 1930. He aimed to link buying clubs and cooperative businesses to alleviate food shortage and poverty. Ella Baker, a community organizer, was hired as its national director. In Harlem, the Harlem's Own Cooperative sold low-cost milk to the Dunbar Apartment complex and erected a collective grocery store (Wallach 2019, 142).

The Depression also brought many inventions in food consumption. One of them was the creation of "all you can eat" restaurants throughout the neighborhood. They offered a set meal of meat, dessert, and coffee for only 30 to 40 cents. While many major restaurants needed to close due to financial difficulties, many "basement restaurants" sprang up because the rent was lower for these spaces. Speakeasies also needed to adapt. Normally, their kitchens served light snacks to accompany alcohol, their main product. During the Depression, they added real meals to their service, prepared in their existing kitchens – this change was successful, as patrons could also continue to have alcohol (Poston 1931, 9). Additionally, churches began to open their dining halls to the public. One popular spot was Father Divine's (George Baker) Peace Center. The main location was under the viaduct on 155th Street and Broadway, but there were several other locations throughout Harlem.

Father Divine offered a full course meal for only 15 cents, which became very popular among the working class during this time, even if the meal required diners to participate in religious practices, like saying "peace sisters, peace brothers" (Opie 2008, 91). Moreover, during the Depression, pushcarts selling cheap fried fish and potatoes – known as "whale stations" at the time – emerged along Seventh and Eighth Avenues. In 1931, there were thirty-five of these pushcarts along these avenues (Poston 1931, 9).

The success of southern food in Harlem led to the creation of "soul food" in the mid-1960s. Within the Civil Rights Movement, soul food provided a collective culinary culture that linked Black communities together. The word "soul" had previously been used in the Black church setting, referring to "brother" and "sister." However, in the mid-1960s, it was used to express ethnic identity (Freedman 2016, 279-280). As Katharina Vester posits, "soul food is, strictly speaking, an invented tradition, as it presents a strategically simplified narrative of African American cooking that served the goal of unifying diverse and numerous communities into a political (and cultural) whole, evoking a sense of pride and achievement in its members" (Wallach 2019, 166).

The domination of soul food in Harlem today was created in part by the heritage tourism industry. From 1997 to 2001, the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation funded eleven restaurants, most of which offered soul food (Lawson and Deutsch 2009, 274). Although southern food had been in the foreground of Harlem's culinary scene since the Harlem Renaissance, many historic restaurants and clubs at that time offered a diverse menu that included other cuisines. For example, the Cotton Club's menu in the 1930s offered Mexican, Chinese, and southern food (Freedman 2016, 260). There were also Italian, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Chinese restaurants dotting the area. The cultural production from the 1960s made a reductive image of Harlem's culinary scene and diverse ethnic culture.

CULINARY ARTS HISTORIC ASSETS

The geographic distribution of restaurants followed the expansion patterns of the Black neighborhood during the Harlem Renaissance. Many historic restaurants, clubs, and speakeasies concentrated in Central Harlem where Black residents began to settle in 1911, particularly on Seventh Avenue between 133rd and 135th Streets. There were some anomalies, including some Puerto Rican and Cuban restaurants above Central Park, which conformed with the settlement of the Spanish quarter in Harlem. Similarly, Italian restaurants were on the East side, where the majority of rural Italian immigrants lived, and

on Sugar Hill, the northwest part of Harlem, several notable clubs clustered around middle-class communities.

In many cases, Harlem restaurants in the 1920s and 1930s existed alongside clubs and speakeasies. Most dining venues were open twenty-four hours every day to accommodate the needs of patrons (*New York Times* 1912, 9). In fact, these entertainment establishments also served food along with alcoholic beverages, as can be seen at the Cotton Club, which boasted its eclectic food offerings. These dining venues were concentrated along Seventh Avenue between 133rd and 135th Streets. One of the places to go for good food and entertainment was 133rd Street between Seventh and Lenox Avenues, also known as “Jungle Alley” or the “Swinging Street.” It was a small thoroughfare packed with more than twelve small speakeasies and eateries during the Prohibition Era between 1920 and 1932 (Taborn 2018, 67). Thanks to the Volstead Act, many underground venues sprang up to offer food and drinks on this street during the 1920s, and became the epicenter for musicians and artists to socialize and develop what we call “jazz music” today. During the 1920s, these establishments also a place where Black Harlemites could escape segregation at Whites-only clubs, like the Cotton Club and Connie’s Inn (NY Press 2015). The Cotton Club, owned by White gangster Owney Madden,

had a very strong segregation policy, accepting only upper-class White patrons, even though its staff was African American. Its oppressiveness was further intensified by the portrayal of Black employees as “exotic savages or plantation residents” (Winter 2007). It remained segregated until its closure following the Harlem “Riot” in 1935. Similarly, Connie’s Inn, owned by German immigrant Conrad (Connie) Immerman, remained Whites-only until the Depression forced it to close. The site was reopened as the Ubangi Club, which featured LGBTQ+ performers like Gladys Bentley and Jackie Mabley (known as Moms Mabley) (Harlem World Magazine 2014a).

Jungle Alley perfectly demonstrates how restaurants and clubs coexisted during this period. The Nest, which was located on 169 133rd Street and has since been demolished, housed four businesses in the same building. There was the Rhythm Club II in the back, the Nest in the basement, the Barbecue Club on the second floor, and Dickie Wells restaurant at the front. Along the street, there were many other eateries and speakeasies, such as Tillie’s Chicken Shack, the Log Cabin, and Gladys’ Clam Shop.

These places served as sites for social interaction and creative production, as most of them were open twenty-four hours a day to accommodate the



Dickie Wells Restaurant, c. 1940.



The Nest building at 169 133rd Street before demolition, 2012.



Small's Paradise, 1925.

needs of their patrons. Live shows and music bands performed all night at these establishments – especially at the three most famous music venues, the Cotton Club, Small’s Paradise, and Connie’s Inn. Small’s Paradise was the only place among the three that served both Black and White patrons. It offered orchestras, singers, and dancers to its audience (Taborn 2018, 62). It was opened in 1925 by Edein Small, a basketball player in Harlem. The other two served only White patrons. The Cotton Club featured the most eclectic dining experience, which featured southern, Mexican, and Chinese food (Freedman 2016, 279). At Connie’s Inn, there were also comedian shows in addition to an orchestra, singers, and dancers.

A deviation from the concentrated dining and entertainment venues on Seventh Avenue was a group of eateries and jazz clubs on the top of Sugar Hill in northwestern Harlem. There were about seven major clubs and eateries in the area, mainly along St. Nicholas Avenue. One of the most famous among them was Jimmy’s Chicken Shack. Many famous Harlem figures used to work here, including the saxophonist Charlie Parker, Malcolm X, and Redd Foxx. The eatery was famous for its chicken, and was patronized regularly by many celebrities (Taborn 2018, 130). These venues served mainly the upper-middle class Black communities on Sugar Hill, an area named for the “cream and sugar” of African American society that lived there.



Jimmy's Chicken Shack Signage.



Jimmy's Chicken Shack, 1940.

773 St. Nicholas Avenue housed a series of night clubs throughout and after the Harlem Renaissance. Poospatuck Club was the first among them. It hosted many social events like the Tuskegee Alumni Association’s “Hurdy Gurdy Dance,” the organization’s regular dine and dance event that contributed to the Urban League, since many alumni were members of the League. Moreover, it was a place where famous pianists and singers did their shows. The establishment was called the Bowman Grill in the 1930s and Moonlight Bar in the 1940s (Taborn 2018, 132). St. Nicholas Avenue also had other bars, like La Mar Cheri, the Sugar Hill, and Lundy’s – only remnants of their signage remain today.

More ephemeral places included the street markets. They were all located in the upper part of Harlem, to the north of where restaurants concentrated.

Harlem’s culinary culture went hand in hand with the entertainment industry. Restaurants and nightclubs existed together spatially during the Harlem Renaissance and, in many cases, were merged into one establishment. These venues fostered culture that shaped the Harlem Renaissance, and were places where creative production was articulated and political movements were cultivated.



Black-owned Harlem grocery store interior, 1927.



Campbell, E. Simms. 1932 Speakeasies Map of Harlem.

Key Characteristics of Restaurants

- > Restaurants clustered along Seventh Avenue between 133rd and 135th Streets.
- > Restaurants coexisted with clubs and speakeasies; sometimes, they were part of the same establishment.
- > Restaurants offered entertainment, while clubs and speakeasies offered meals.

> White-owned restaurants, like Connie's Inn and Cotton Club, tended to serve only White clientele, while Black-owned businesses, like Dickie Wells' and Small's Paradise, were integrated. Apart from these examples, restaurants along 125th Street served only White patrons.

> There were some anomalies separate from the main cluster, including the group of eateries and bars on Sugar Hill.

> Quite a few restaurants were run by women or LGBTQ+ individuals, including Tillie's Chicken Shack, Gladys' Clam House, and Pig Foot Mary's cart.

BUSINESS & BANKING

Ziming Wang

Harlem's business world during the Harlem Renaissance demonstrated prosperity under severe racial restrictions. On the one hand, due to racism and discriminatory policies, the Black community owned only about one-fourth of all the businesses in Harlem, despite their dominance in demographic makeup. Unable to acquire leases or financial resources, most businesses existed as small-scaled shops of labor-intensive trades operating out of residential structures on cross streets. Nevertheless, Black businesses still managed to physically expand along with the expansion of the community, contributing to a vigorous street life as well as shaping the identity of the Harlem Renaissance. Black real estate developers claimed residential rights for the community, and succeeded in breaking some chains of spatial and social confinement. Beauty parlors emerged as the dominant trade in Harlem, highlighting Harlem's Black lifestyle. The first Black-staffed bank in Harlem was founded during the Harlem Renaissance, precluding the emergence of the Black-owned banks decades later. Many other Black businesses and street vendors provided trades and services to the community, curated Harlem's streetscape, and facilitated vibrant social life during the Harlem Renaissance. The story of Black business and banking during the Harlem Renaissance is deeply embedded within the narrative of the community's struggle and evolution. The growth in population and geographic expansion of the community, the Great Depression, Black activism in the 1930s, redlining, and racism toward the Black population all considerably shaped the circumstances of Black businesses in Harlem. Therefore, the story of Black business and banking should be seen as an integral part of the Renaissance narrative, and be commemorated for its survival in an environment where "it [was] idle to expect the Negro in Harlem or anywhere else to build business" (Johnson 1930, 283).

OVERVIEW AND CHARACTERIZATION

This section will investigate several core issues surrounding Black businesses during the Harlem Renaissance – business ownership, trade distribution, spatial expansion and distribution, etc. – in order to give an overview of and characterize their evolution. Multiple surveys, business directories, and existing research have been used as data sources, including the 1916 *New York Age* survey of business in Black Harlem (Robertson 2018b), the 1918 National Negro Business Directory (National Negro Business Directory System 1918),



"Street Vendor, Fifth Avenue, 1927."



"View of Harlem Barbershop, 1929."



"Lenox Fruit & Vegetable Market Being Picketed by Labor Union Supporter, Harlem, New York City, 1939."

the 1921 *New York Age* follow-up survey (Robertson 2018b), the 1923 *Simms' Blue Book* and National Negro Business and Professional Directory (Simms 1923), the 1938 *Green Book* (Green 1938), and the 1970 Economic Development of Harlem report (Vietorisz and Harrison 1970), as well as Cheryl Greenberg's research on Black Harlem during the Great Depression (Greenberg 1991) and Robertson, White, and Garton's research on 1920s Harlem (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013).

Business Ownership

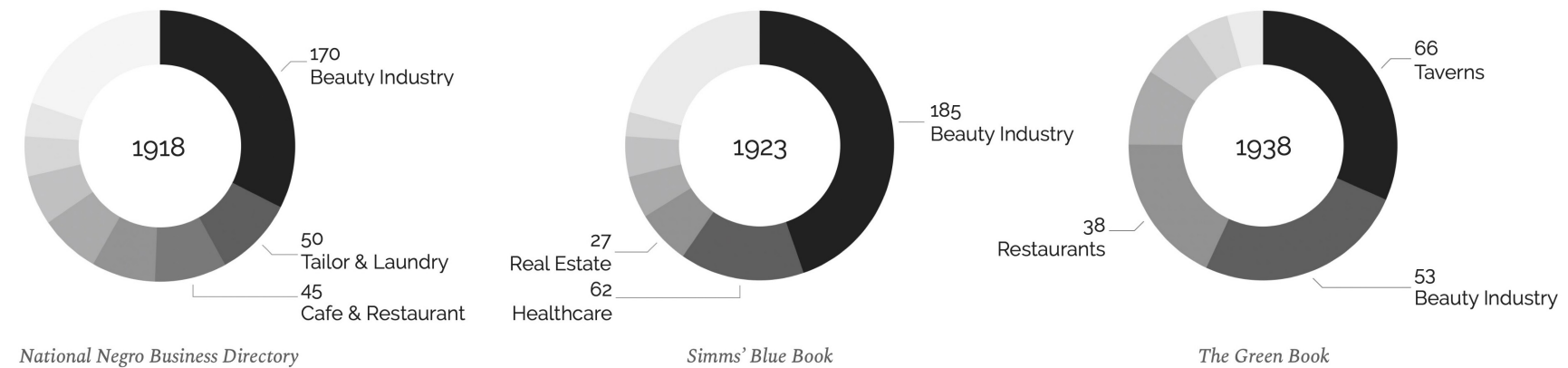
Despite the significant population expansion and the physical growth of the Harlem community, Black business ownership in Harlem fluctuated around 20% to 30% throughout the Harlem Renaissance. The 1916 New York Age survey visited several central corridors of Black Harlem (Fifth Avenue between 131st and 138th Streets; Lenox Avenue between 131st and 140th Streets; Seventh Avenue between 131st and 137th Streets; and 135th Street between Fifth and Seventh Avenues), and reported that only 125 of the 503 businesses visited (24.8%) were Black-owned (Robertson 2018b). The 1921 New York Age follow-up survey reported an increase in Black business ownership to 35.1% (234 out of 665), which then fell back down to 18.5% (1908 out of 10,319) in 1929 and did not reach 50% until the late 1960s (Robertson 2018b; Greenberg 1991, 27; Vietorisz and Harrison 1970, 37).

The disparity between the demographic dominance of the Black population and low Black business ownership in Harlem was largely due to strictly discriminatory policies, whereby White landlords refused to lease spaces and White banks refused to loan money to Black individuals (Robertson 2018b). This situation also shaped other aspects of Black businesses in Harlem (e.g., their scale, trade, spatial distribution, etc.), which will be discussed in detail in the “Racism in the Business World” section.

Trade Distribution

In the face of such a prohibitive business environment , Black businesses in Harlem still managed to grow and survive, and helped to shape the identity of the Harlem Renaissance.

The beauty industry was unquestionably the most prominent trade in Harlem during the Renaissance. Beauty parlors, hairdressers, and barber shops made up nearly half of all Black businesses in their heyday, making the beauty trade arguably the only trade in Harlem in which Black people gained dominance (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 868). This trend is evident upon examining the 1923 *Simms' Blue Book*, a compilation by lawyer James N. Simms that provided more than 550 entries of Black businesses in New York City, of which 418 were in Harlem. In Harlem, the beauty industry made up 185



Distribution of trades across Black businesses in Harlem.

entries, followed by doctors (51 entries) and real estate companies (27 entries) (Simms 1923; Robertson 2018b). Interestingly, most of the beauty businesses were beauty parlors, outnumbering barber shops and other enterprises several times (there were 161 beauty parlors listed in the Simms directory; see Robertson 2010a).

Other major Black industries in Harlem included labor-intensive trades, such as restaurants, laundries, and undertakers; professionals, such as real estate agents, lawyers, and doctors; and street vendors, who added economic vitality to Harlem's open spaces (Robertson 2018b; Robertson 2011a; Greenberg 1991, 27; National Negro Business Directory System 1918; Simms 1923; Green 1938). In particular, real estate agents had become the largest Black professional group in Harlem as of the 1930 census, accompanying the physical expansion of the community (Osofsky 1971, 119).

Spatial Expansion and Distribution

Harlem's business development during the studio's period of significance (1917-1939) built directly upon the demographic and economic evolution of the neighborhood. By 1914, around 50,000 Black residents populated a twenty-three-block area of Central Harlem (Osofsky 1971, 105; Watson 1995, 12). This community was centered around West 135th Street, where an early Black settlement can be traced back to the 1890s (McGruder 2015b, 38). The rapid expansion of the Black community in the early twentieth century was largely facilitated by progress in real estate development: in 1904, Philip A. Payton's newly founded Afro-American Realty Company acquired the properties at 30 and 32 West 135th Street, which "opened good-quality Harlem buildings to black tenants for the first time" (McGruder 2015, 48; Greenberg 1991, 14). By 1930, the Black community had claimed nearly the whole of Central Harlem, and by 1935, the Black population in Harlem had grown to around 200,000 (Johnson 1930, 147; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013).

Much of this population growth was due to the migration of southern-born and foreign-born Black population. Since 1910, southern-born Blacks had made up the biggest demographic group in Harlem's Black population; in 1930, only less than a quarter of New York City's Black population had been born in New York, while 18% of Manhattan's Black population came from foreign countries – mainly the Caribbean (Greenberg 1991, 16-17). Foreign-born Black immigrants were considered to be more willing to open up businesses. Among the big names in the business world during Harlem Renaissance, Madam C. J. Walker was born in Louisiana, while William H. Roach, Joseph H. Sweeney,

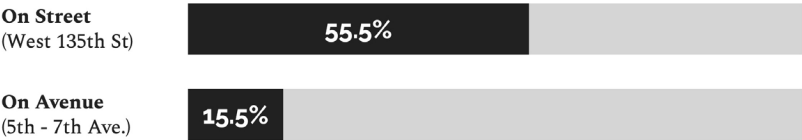
and Cleophus Charity – the founding partners of the Sarco Realty Holding Company – came from Montserrat and Antigua (Greenberg 1991, 17; Gray 2007).

Using the GIS software ArcMap to locate and compare entries in three Black business directories – the 1918 National Negro Business Directory (National Negro Business Directory System 1918), the 1923 *Simms' Blue Book* (Simms 1923), and the 1938 *Green Book* (Green 1938) – shows clear patterns of business expansion in Harlem. It can be noted that, in the late 1910s and early 1920s, Black businesses in Harlem were mainly clustered around West 135th Street, dispersed along Lenox and Seventh Avenues between approximately 130th and 145th Streets. By the late 1930s, Black businesses had occupied an area from Central Park North all the way up to West 155th Street, with its west boundary on Amsterdam Avenue and east boundary on Fifth Avenue. This pattern of expansion coincided with the physical expansion of the community, as discussed in the "Key Issues" section of this report.

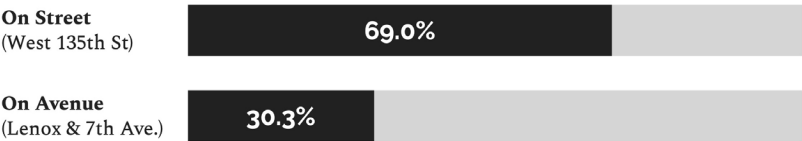
It is also noteworthy that, in the 1938 *Green Book*, several Black businesses finally started to emerge along West 125th Street. Despite its current status as the "main street" of Harlem, West 125th Street reacted slowly to the presence of the Black population, Black workforce, and Black patrons. Until the mid-1930s, most businesses along the street were White-owned, almost totally White-staffed, and refused to employ or train the Black population (despite profiting from a mainly Black clientele). Many theaters resisted Black patronage until the 1930s, and Hotel Theresa did not desegregate until 1940 (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013). This context gave rise to the 1934 "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" boycott and the 1935 Harlem "Riot," both of which broke out on West 125th Street and was aimed at White businesses (Gray 1994; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013; Toole 2019). Therefore, the emergence of Black businesses along this street can be seen as a result of the boycott and "riot." One of the businesses recorded in the 1938 *Green Book* was a branch of the Madam C. J. Walker Beauty School and Beauty Shop at 239 West 125th Street, not far from the S. H. Kress' Store at 258 West 125th Street where the 1935 "riot" broke out. The relation between political activism and business expansion has also been further examined in the "Key Issues" section of the report.

Alongside the physical expansion of Black businesses in Harlem, corridors and sub-clusters formed. These conglomeration of Black businesses show several trends that reflect both the impact of racial restrictions, as well as the diversity and prosperity of the Black community.

The New York Age Survey, 1916



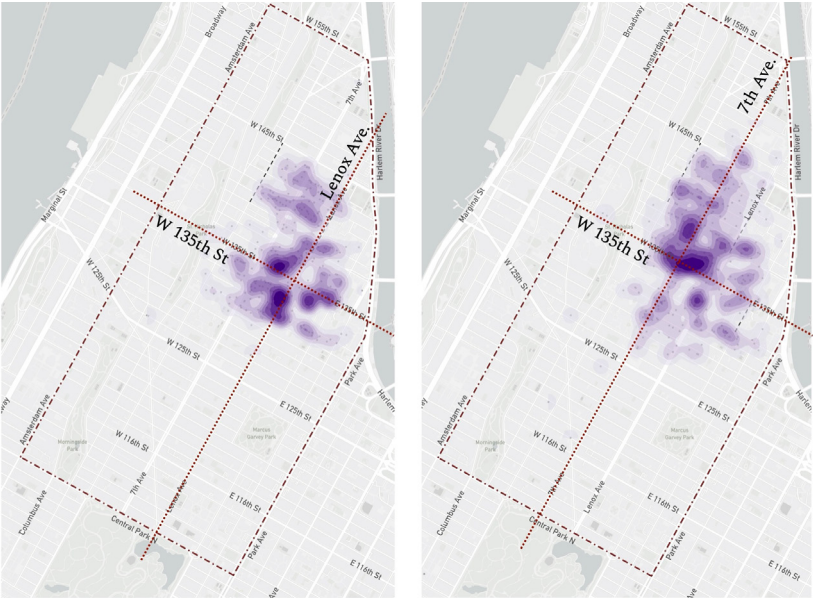
The New York Age Survey, 1921



Business ownership by street type.

Firstly, as Black proprietors had great difficulty obtaining leases to stores from White landlords or loans from White-owned banks to buy premises, most businesses operated out of residences on cross streets (Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 868). Both the 1916 and the 1921 *New York Age* surveys showed significant disparities in Black business ownership along avenues compared with streets. In the 1916 survey, Black business ownership was 55.5% along West 135th Street, compared to only 15.5% along Fifth through Seventh Avenues. In the 1921 survey, Black business ownership along West 135th Street was 69.0%, compared to 30.3% along Lenox and Seventh Avenues (Robertson 2018b). White landlords’ unwillingness to lease space to Black businesses was sometimes also reflected in newspaper reports (*New York Age* 1921a; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 878n28).

During the Harlem Renaissance, West 135th Street, Lenox Avenue, and Seventh Avenue were initially the major thoroughfares of Black businesses. However, the 1920s witnessed a transition of the business corridor from Lenox Avenue (named “the proletariat heart of the Black belt” by a 1921 *New York Times* report) to Seventh Avenue (christened “the Black Broadway” by writer Wallace Thurman), paralleled by the westward expansion of the Black community (Robertson 2018b; Robertson 2010a; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 867). The business corridors and their geographic transition can also be seen in the 1918 and 1923 business maps based on the distribution and density of the points, each indicating a business.



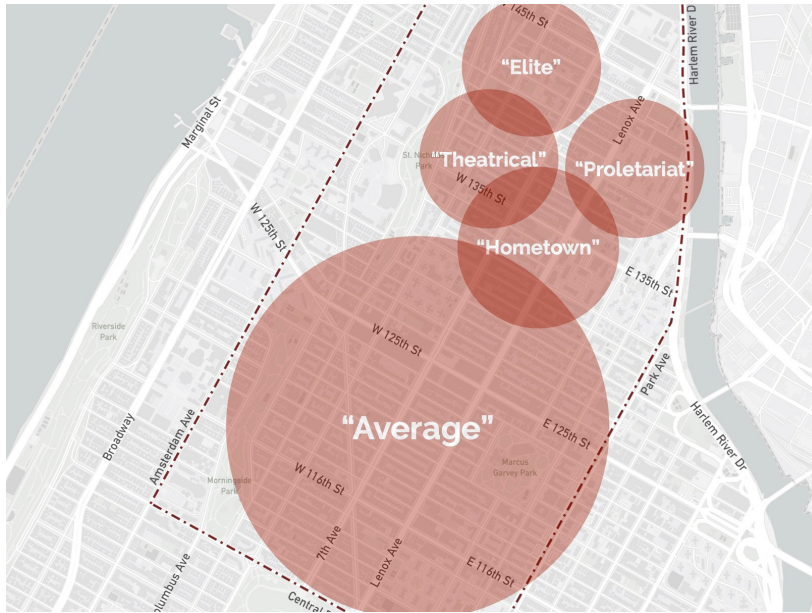
1918
National Negro Business Directory

1923
Simms’ Blue Book

Change in business corridors.



UNIA Parade, corner of 135th Street and Lenox Avenue, 1920.



Clusters of beauty parlors in Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance.

Accompanying the emergence of business corridors, businesses clusters catering to different social classes also came into existence. For example, a 1921 *New York Times* report claimed that Seventh Avenue beauty parlors were more middle-class compared to their Lenox Avenue counterparts. A later record in 1939 identified several additional beauty parlor clusters, ranging from parlors for the “average Harlemité” between 110th and 135th Streets and the “hometown” shops filling cross streets, to “theatrical” parlors along Seventh Avenue and “elite” parlors near Sugar Hill (Robertson 2010a).

The concentration of Black businesses, both in terms of trade and location, can be further demonstrated by advertisements in Black newspapers, such as the *New York Amsterdam News*. Key businesses, including Nail & Parker Real Estate Inc., the Dunbar National Bank, and John M. Royall Estate Co., were all frequenters of the advertisement section, where they were accompanied by numerous entries by other stores and professionals offering various services. The physical remnants of major Black business corridors have been unevenly preserved in today's streetscape. For example, Seventh Avenue (now Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard) between 134th and 136th Streets has remained largely intact, while the south side of West 135th Street between Lenox and Seventh Avenues has been significantly modified due to the construction of a high-rise residential building and a public school with a playground.

NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS ADVERTISEMENTS, 1920S

FOR RENT

Beautiful 3, 4 and 5-room Apartments for rent at 335 Edgecombe Avenue—Improvements, steam, electric lights, hardwood floors, French doors, tile baths. New law apartments; references; one year lease.

FOR SALE

West 122nd Street—10-family house. Rents \$9,800. All improvements; two toilets in each apartment. Long term mortgage. Other good features. Can be bought right. Seventh Avenue Apartment House, Bargain.

HARLEM REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE, Inc.
2203 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY
Telephone: Bradhurst 0270-0271

NAIL & PARKER, Inc.

OUR INVESTMENT DEPARTMENT CONTAINS BEST OFFERS IN HARLEM

Years of Experience Have Made Us Discriminating
Specialists in Choosing Best Propositions
We Are Specialists in Harlem and Colored Tenements Properties

Management of Properties Solicited
Collection Department, Over a Million Dollars Annually
145 WEST 135th STREET **Bradhurst 0670-0671**

YOUR NEW NEIGHBOR

THE DUNBAR NATIONAL BANK, although a new development in Harlem, was founded with the hope that it would be accepted as Harlem's own—toward this goal, in the few months of its existence, a very marked progress has been made. We cordially invite you to pay us a neighborly visit. Drop in any time for a talk.

“Lasting Courtesy to All”

THE DUNBAR NATIONAL BANK
2824 EIGHTH AVENUE
Founded by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

From top to bottom: “Harlem Real Estate Exchange Inc. (Advertisement).” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 22, 1926; “Nail & Parker Inc. (Advertisement).” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 1, 1929; “The Dunbar National Bank (Advertisement).” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 27, 1929.

The Great Depression

In between the years of growth and expansion, the Great Depression struck Harlem. During the Great Depression, a fourth of Harlem's Black population lost jobs, the majority of them relatively unskilled laborers. This impact was aggravated by racist and discriminatory policies, further affecting hundreds of white-collar workers who fell into the working class or joined the crowd of unemployed workers (Greenberg 1991, 42). Key local enterprises, such as Nail & Parker, went bankrupt during the Depression; nonetheless, the beauty industry demonstrated great resilience through the decline, and was perceived to be "depression-proof" (Robertson 2010a).

In the post-Depression years, many Harlemites relied on federal relief and WPA programs, along with other channels of support, such as temporary jobs and charity agencies, for survival. Many people consider the Great Depression and the 1935 "riot" to be signs of the end of the Harlem Renaissance. However, the same economic and social tensions carried on and spurred another "riot" in 1943, due to still inconsistent and insufficient social reform since the 1935 uprising (Greenberg 1991, 211).

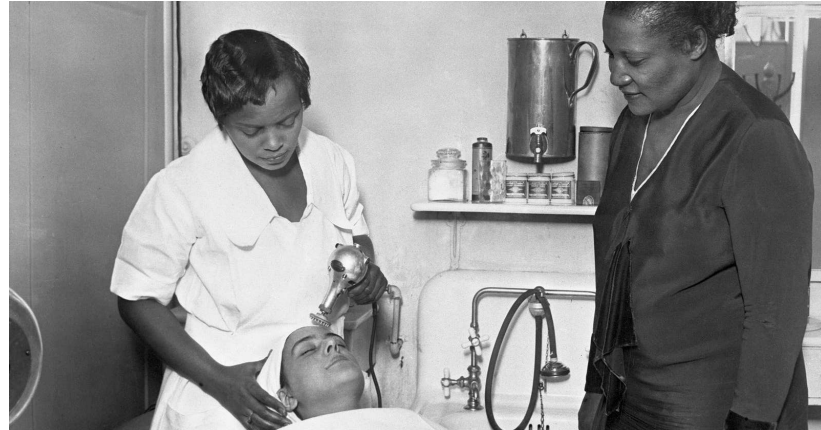
KEY INDUSTRIES: THE BEAUTY TRADE, REAL ESTATE, AND BANKING

The previous section of this historic context provided an overview of the business world during the Harlem Renaissance. This section will go on to examine three key industries of the Renaissance decades: the beauty trade, the real estate industry, and banking. The former was a unique achievement in Black lifestyle and businesses, while the latter two were central battlefields of the Black community's struggle to claim space and financial resources.

The Beauty Trade

With a vast number of enterprises forming various clusters around Central Harlem, the beauty trade – especially beauty parlors – was the primary industry of the Harlem Renaissance. The most prominent and elaborate example was the Madam C. J. Walker Beauty Shop on 108-110 West 136th Street. In a townhouse remodeled by architect Vertner Tandy, the Walker Hair Parlor and the Lelia College of Beauty Culture opened in c. 1916, leading to the establishment of hundreds of other beauty parlors and at least five other beauty schools in Harlem (Robertson 2010a; Walser 2017).

Beauty parlors not only served the community as a kind of business; in fact, they were also centers of social life. As was already mentioned, different



A'Lelia Walker, daughter of entrepreneur Madam C.J. Walker, supervises a facial in one of her mother's beauty parlors in Harlem, 1930.



Beauty Shop in Harlem, 1935.



Interior of a beauty parlor.

types of beauty parlors were located in different streetscapes, catering to various social classes. Harlem news, gossip, information about the events of the day, lingerie, and dance tickets were all exchanged in the spaces of beauty parlors. Some of them also became centers for the numbers game (Robertson 2010a).

The Real Estate Industry

Real estate developers played a vital role in bringing the Black population into Harlem. The generation of Black brokers and developers after Philip A. Payton – including John E. Nail and Henry C. Parker (Nail & Parker Inc.), John M. Royall, and William H. Roach (Sarco Realty & Holding Company) – came onto the stage in the 1910s and operated throughout the 1920s. These figures and companies “fathered a host of Black real-estate agents,” leading them to own sixty million dollars’ worth of real estate in 1925, and to become the largest Black professional group in Harlem in the 1930 census (Anderson 1982, 62; Osofsky 1971, 119; Greenberg 1991, 15). After Philip A. Payton Jr.’s death in 1917, the Philip A. Payton Jr. Company still continued to manage apartments for Black tenants until at least 1923 (Simms 1923).

John E. Nail (1883-1947) was probably the most prominent figure among his peers during the Harlem Renaissance. In 1907, he and Henry C. Parker, both former pupils of Philip A. Payton, started the firm Nail & Parker Associates. In 1911, Nail & Parker acted as the agent for St. Philip’s Episcopal Church’s million-dollar deal to purchase properties in Harlem, including a row of ten new apartment houses on West 135th Street – the largest single real estate transaction involving Black parties in the city’s history (Osofsky 1971, 117; Feldman 2013). By 1925, Nail’s business owned around fifty apartments in Harlem (Heung 2008). Nail was the first president of Harlem’s Negro Board of Trade, and held seats on the Real Estate Board of New York and the Housing Committee of New York – in each case, he was the only Black member (Heung 2008; Reavley 2008, 190). Nail acted as a consultant for President Herbert Hoover’s Committee on Housing during the Depression. Meanwhile, his own business went bankrupt in 1933. He started another real estate company named after himself in the same year (Feldman 2013).

By 1914, 37% of Harlem’s tenements were run by Black agents. Many of them were hired by White landlords or employers; Black landlords owned less than 5% of these properties (Osofsky 1971, 119; Reavley 2008, 190). This scenario raises the question of “hidden racism,” where White people still held control over what seemed to be a prosperous Black community; this will be discussed in further detail in the next section.



Established 1907

The Season’s Greetings

—FROM—

NAIL & PARKER, Inc.

REAL ESTATE

145 West 135th St.

New York City

Tel. Bradhurst 0670—0671

JOHN E. NAIL

HENRY C. PARKER

A 15-ROOM PRIVATE HOUSE

FULLY FURNISHED — FOR RENT

Owner will rent a 20-foot, 15-room private house, 4 toilets, 3 baths and electric, furniture and all for \$175 per month. Located on Convent Avenue, between 147th and 148th Streets.

Immediate Possession — Apply to

JOHN M. ROYALL

21 West 134th Street

From top to bottom: “Nail & Parker Inc. (Advertisement),” New York Amsterdam News, December 18, 1929; “John M. Royall (Advertisement),” New York Amsterdam News, October 8, 1930.

The Dunbar National Bank

The notorious exclusion of Black homeowners and businesses from obtaining bank loans lasted throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1938 HOLC (Home Owners’ Loan Corporation) “residential security” map, the whole of Harlem – from 110th Street to 155th Street – was redlined. Besides creating difficulties for Black businesses, this unavailability of financial resources also had a decisive impact, leading to low homeownership rates within the Black population nationwide (Badger 2017; Robertson 2018).



Customers wait in line at the Dunbar National Bank in Harlem, 1933.

But in the era of the Harlem Renaissance, there was one bank in Harlem that “operated mainly for the benefit of the negro residents” of the district: the Dunbar National Bank (*New York Times* 1928b). Opened in 1928, Dunbar National was the first bank in Harlem to be managed and staffed by Black people; nevertheless, there was, again, a White face behind it. The bank was founded by John D. Rockefeller Jr., and was located in the Dunbar Apartments at Eighth Avenue and 150th Street, a residential neighborhood also erected by Rockefeller himself (*New York Times* 1928b; National Park Service, n.d.). The Dunbar National Bank operated until 1938 (*New York Times* 1938).

The first Black-owned bank in Harlem was possibly the Carver Federal Savings Bank, established by William R. Hudgins and other Harlem leaders in 1948. Carver Federal Savings’ mission was to resolve Harlemites’ dire needs for home and business loans after World War II, when the big banks still “weren’t lending money to anyone in Harlem” (Hevesi 2007; CBS New York 2020).

RACISM IN THE BUSINESS WORLD DURING HARLEM RENAISSANCE

In contrast to the romanticized ideal of Black prosperity and success during the Harlem Renaissance, the business world in Harlem was still dominated not by Black, but White ownership, creating a strictly prohibitive environment for Black businesses to survive. Anti-Black racism was, in most cases, blatant and intense, but it was also further complicated by the presence of a Black

community that did not always support its own merchants and a group of Black realtors who alleged to stand in line (to some extent) with the existing norms of discrimination.

In the business world, examples of anti-Black racism included:

- White banks refusing business loans to Black customers;
- White landlords refusing to lease spaces to Black tenants;
- Unequal employment and training opportunities, low wages, and mandatory, long work hours for Black workers.

The difficulty of renting spaces and getting loans has already been examined by many researchers, and can be readily seen in reports by Black newspapers (*New York Age* 1921a; Johnson 1930, 283; Greenberg 1991, 27; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 868; Robertson 2018b). The hostility of White landlords over so-called “Black encroachment” had created an intense conflict in the 1910s, when White neighborhood coalitions like the Harlem Property Owners’ Improvement Corporation (HPOIC) intimidated Black realtors out of certain streets (Osofsky 1971, 108). Financial resources continued to be hardly available to Black businesses beyond the Harlem Renaissance, as the whole of Harlem was redlined in the 1930s HOLC “security map.”

Working conditions were also significant points of conflict and racial tension. In 1928, Black female laundry workers – mainly young girls – were forced to work from 7:30 am to 7:00 pm, six days a week, for half of the weekly salary of a White worker. Businesses on 125th Street refused to employ and train Black workers, leading to protests in 1934 and 1935 (Greenberg 1991, 6; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 873; Greenberg 1991, 24). Black workers in other cities, such as Chicago, faced the same scenario (WTTW, n.d.).

Discriminatory policies profoundly shaped Black businesses in Harlem, creating a prohibitive environment that confined their scale, trades, space, and ownership. Given the circumstances, Black businesses tended to be poorly funded, small-scaled shops in low-cost (and low-training), labor-intensive trades, which more often than not operated out of residences on cross streets. Black businesses had to compete directly with better-financed White establishments, or “compete against one another for a small share of the market” (Robertson 2018b; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 868; Greenberg 1991, 27).

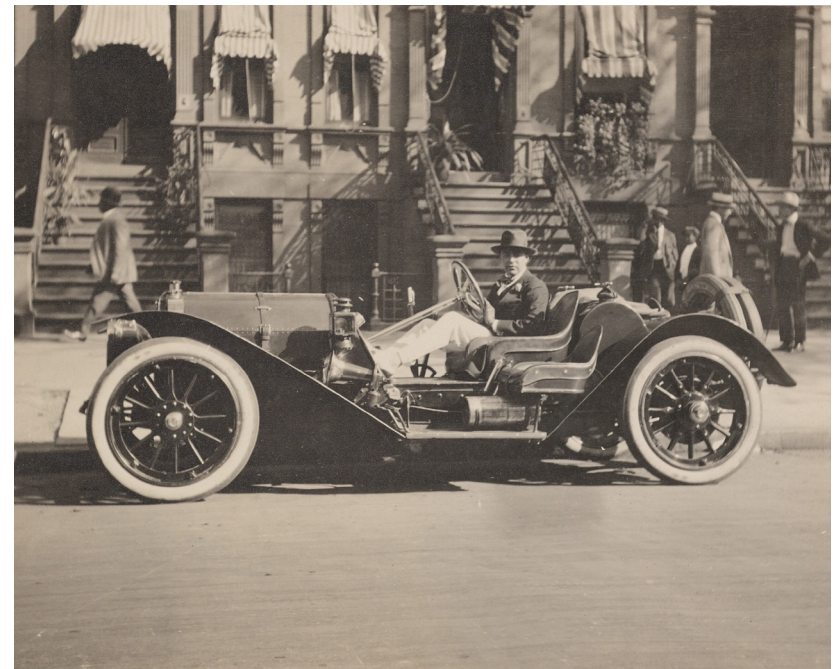
Power dynamics and discrimination within the Black community itself grew in this context, constituting an issue worth further examination and notice. More often than not, Black residents in Harlem chose to “walk right on by Black businesses, and into the stores of their White competitors.” Due to the discriminatory business environment, Black shops were poorly capitalized, not as well stocked, and not competitive in price, but the Black customers “would not support the race at the expense of their ability to consume equally, as Americans” (Anderson 1982, 67; Robertson 2018b; Robertson, Garton, and White 2013, 873-874; Greenberg 1991, 27).

Meanwhile, Black realtors, while helping the community to break some chains of geographic confinement, were also thought to stand in line with the discriminatory policy on housing rent. Philip A. Payton built his early business on “reliable Negro tenants who would willingly pay \$5 more than any White renter” (Anderson 1982, 11). By the mid-1910s, the situation had grown into a condition where “Black tenants in New York City had limited choices, and the real estate brokers, Black and White, were able to exploit their situation (and perpetuate it) by charging as much as people would pay” (McGruder 2015b, 181). In the fall of 1916, Black tenants in Harlem organized a protest targeted at Black real estate agents on rent increases of “\$4 to \$14 per month for apartments recently opened to colored tenants,” a movement supported by the *New York Age* and discussed throughout the community. Although the reactions to the rise in rents was reasonable, a recent study has shown that the increases were reasonable under inflation rates in the 1910s, and it should be also noted that some Black real estate agents were actually brokering properties for White landlords (McGruder 2015b, 178-183).

Despite all the tensions amongst Black residents and merchants, the main theme in the business world of Harlem was still one of anti-Black racism in a White-dominated socio-economic system. In fact, tensions between Black residents and merchants can be seen as an extension of anti-Black racism: Black shops were less competitive because they did not have fair access to capital and training, while segregation and the Black population’s lack of choices compelled realtors to charge higher rents. Further accompanying this complexity was the issue of “hidden racism”: White faces could not only be found as owners behind Black bankers and realtors, but they also disproportionately made up the majority of the 135th Street Police Station and 80% of Harlem’s public school teachers (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013, 868-869).

CONCLUSION

The story of Black businesses in the Harlem Renaissance was one of diversity and prosperity embedded in great struggle, not unlike the Black experience in other aspects of social and economic life during the first half of the twentieth century. Despite high underrepresentation in business ownership and strict limits brought on by racial discrimination, Black businesses succeeded in creating an identity for their population and claiming, as well as curating, spaces for daily encounters to happen. To a great extent, the spatial expansion of Black businesses paralleled the physical and demographic growth of the Black community in Harlem, which makes business and banking a unique perspective in examining the emergence and evolution of the Harlem Renaissance.



John E. Nail, 1915.

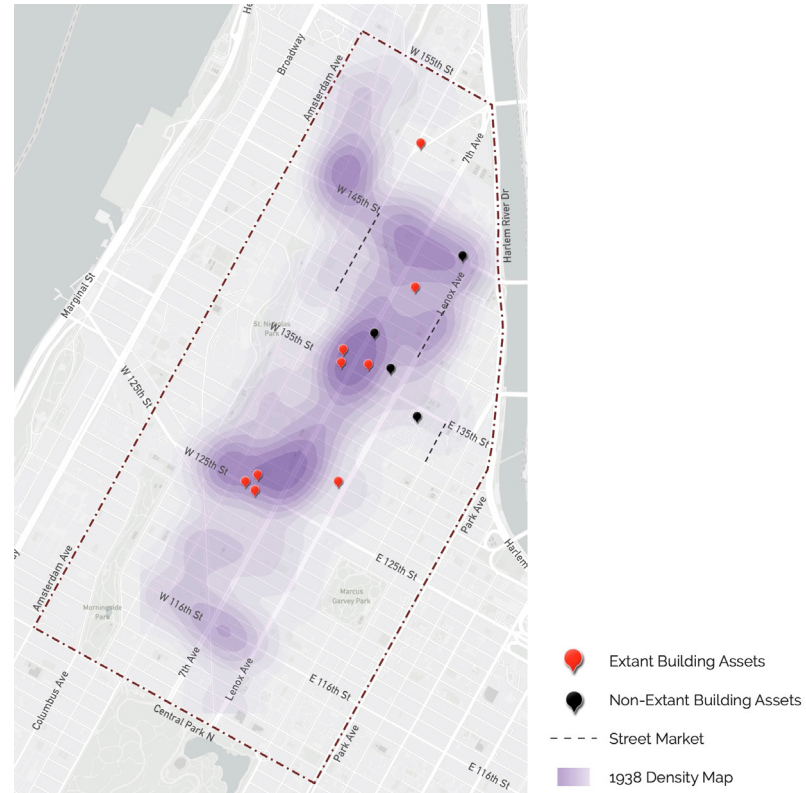
BUSINESS & BANKING HISTORIC ASSETS

CHARACTERIZATION

The story of Black businesses during the Harlem Renaissance both vividly manifested the Black community's resilience and vigor, and straightforwardly reflected the racism it encountered in the early twentieth century. Identifying historic assets related to business and banking have revealed some basic patterns about Harlem's Black businesses:

1. Behind each "star" (or "key") business, there were always dozens of small and obscure shops in the same trade, which were critical in founding the basis of the neighborhood's daily life during the Renaissance. For instance, the Walker Hair Parlor represented hundreds of beauty industry workshops that followed the expansion of the community and the characteristics of different streets. Similarly, the Nail & Parker Real Estate Inc. was only one of dozens of real estate companies that brokered and developed properties for the Black community.
2. Historic assets related to business tended to be ephemeral. Hardly any of the businesses listed in the 1920s and 1930s directories survive today; many of them cannot even be found in the 1940 tax photos. Therefore, the best opportunity for social-spatial encounter with these sites today relies on physical remnants of significant Black businesses. If we are lucky, we can still find signage outside repurposed structures, as in the case of the Fane-Dumas Hotel (now a women's shelter; see *Curious Uptowner* 2019); meanwhile, specialized built structures were often demolished for new development after years of vacancy or unsuccessful revitalization – as was the case for Hotel Olga and the Sarco Realty & Holding Company Inc. (located in the Renaissance Ballroom complex).

A total of sixteen entries were selected as historic assets for business and banking (see the assets map). They represented important players in key industries (beauty, banking, and real estate), in addition to three street markets, two Black hotels with social-spatial significance, and two White-owned stores that were targets in the 1930s anti-White-business protests and greatly influenced the racial dynamics in the business world of Harlem. Among the thirteen building assets, nine are still physically extant, although the street markets in Harlem ceased operation in the 1940s (Robertson 2011a). The following paragraphs will provide a more detailed introduction to these assets.



Business and banking assets..

BEAUTY BUSINESSES

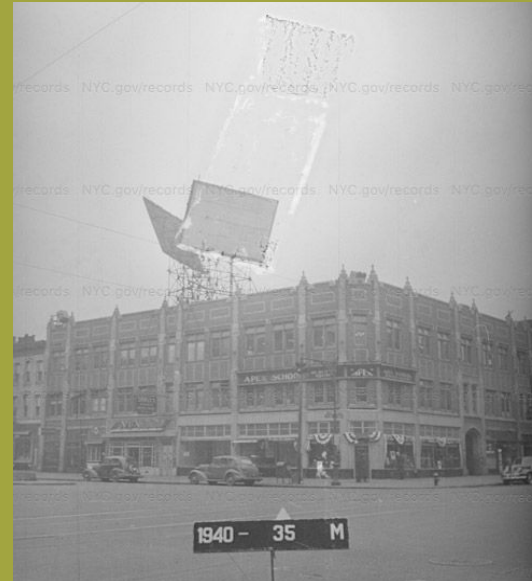
The Walker Hair Parlor and the Lelia College of Beauty Culture at 108-110 West 136th Street was the most prominent beauty parlor in Harlem, and coincided with the club hosted by A'Lelia in the same Vertner Tandy townhouse, which stayed in the Walker family until A'Lelia's death in 1931 (Robertson 2010a; Walser 2017). In the late 1930s (see Green 1938, 9), another branch of the Madam C. J. Walker Beauty School & Beauty Shop emerged at 239 West 125th Street, the major business thoroughfare previously predominated by White owners. Its fierce competitor, Apex Beauty School, operated at 200 West 135th Street at the intersection of Seventh Avenue (Robertson 2010a; Green 1938, 9). Both Walker and Apex were nationwide franchises led by female Black entrepreneurs, and both businesses were represented in the 1940 tax photos. Another business on record was the Ritzy Beauty Salon, an Apex Parlor at 351 Lenox Avenue, which also served as a numbers game headquarters in the late 1930s (Robertson 2010a).

Beauty Businesses Assets

HISTORIC AND PRESENT-DAY



Above: Madam C. J. Walker Beauty School & Beauty Shop, c. 1940.
Below: 239 West 125th Street (Google Street View, 2019).



Above: Apex Beauty School, c. 1940.
Below: 200 West 125th Street (Google Street View, 2019).



Above: New York Daily News, Ritz Beauty Salon ("A numbers headquarters at 351 Lenox Avenue in Harlem"), 1938.
Below: 351 Lenox Avenue (Google Street View, 2019).



BANKS

The Dunbar National Bank operated at the northwest corner of the Dunbar Apartments (2824 Eighth Avenue) between 1928 and 1938. The bank and the apartments were both funded by John D. Rockefeller Jr. (*New York Times* 1928b; *New York Times* 1938). Today, the renovated Dunbar Apartments complex is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and as a New York City Landmark, while its Eighth Avenue storefront is currently vacant and closed (NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission 1970; National Park Service, n.d.).

REAL ESTATE COMPANIES

The most prominent real estate agency during Harlem Renaissance was Nail & Parker Real Estate Inc., which operated at 145 West 135th Street near the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library. In the same row was Nail & Parker Building, an apartment building owned by St. Philip's Episcopal Church, that rented to Black tenants (Simms 1923, 206; see also *New York Amsterdam News* ads). Other major agencies included the John M. Royall firm of real estate agents at 21 West 134th Street, later replaced by the Lenox Terrace residential complex extant today; Sarco Realty & Holding Company Inc., led by West Indian entrepreneur William H. Roach, located in the same place (2343 Seventh Avenue) as one of its major investments, the Renaissance Ballroom and Casino, which was demolished in 2015; and the Philip A. Payton Jr. Company at 127 West 141st Street, which continued to manage Payton's apartments after his death in 1917 (Simms 1923, 206; *New York Age* 1921b; Kуска 2004, 120).

STREET MARKETS

In addition to businesses with fixed addresses, street vendors also contributed to the economic vitality of the Harlem Renaissance. The first street market in Harlem was established by the City in 1913 on Lenox Avenue between 138th Street and 142nd Streets. Within a few years, due to overwhelming demand, the market relocated to Eighth Avenue between 139th Street and 145th Streets. Soon after, another market opened on Fifth Avenue from 132nd Street to 145th Street (Robertson 2011a). Similar to Black shops and stores, there were more White than Black street vendors; nevertheless, street markets still grew into an important feature of the Harlem Renaissance (Robertson 2011a; Robertson, White, and Garton 2013).



21 West 134th Street, John M. Royall Estate Company, c. 1940.



2343 Seventh Avenue, Sarco Realty & Holding Company Inc., 1923.

Real Estate Companies

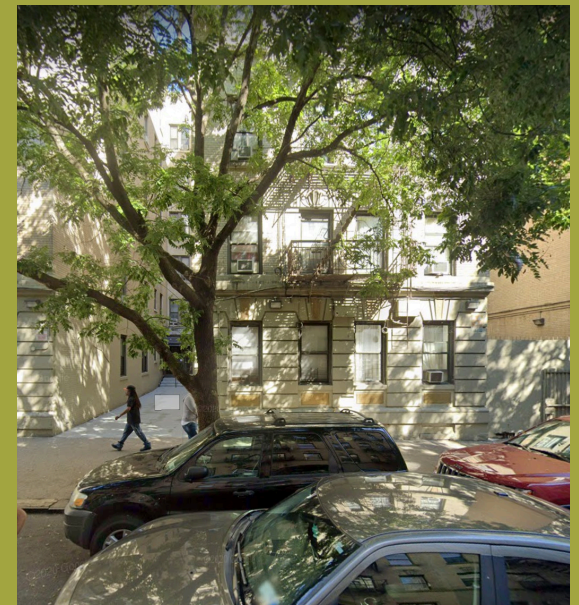
HISTORIC AND PRESENT-DAY



Above: View of the Nail and Parker Building, an apartment building that was rented to black tenants, 1915.
Below: 145 West 135th Street (Google Street View, 2019).



Above: 127 West 141st Street, Philip A. Payton Jr. Company.
Below: 127 West 141st Street (Google Street View, 2017).



BLACK HOTELS

Hotel Olga, operated by African American businessman Edward H. Wilson throughout the Harlem Renaissance at 695 Lenox Avenue, once attracted an international clientele of top celebrities, including Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith, until its recent demolition in 2019 (NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project 2019; Robertson 2018a). The neon sign of the Fane-Dumas Hotel, which opened in 1922 and was highlighted in the 1938 Green Book, still hangs at 205 West 135th Street (Green 1938; Robertson 2018a; Curious Uptowner 2019).

WHITE-OWNED STORES

In 1934, the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” boycott broke out at Blumstein’s Department Store at 230 West 125th Street; in the next year, the 1935 “riot” started at S. H. Kress’ Five and Dime Store at 258 West 125th Street (Robertson, White, and Garton 2013; Gray 1994). Both campaigns were targeted at White businesses, and brought about the emergence of Black businesses on West 125th Street in the late 1930s. Both buildings are extant today.

In understanding the significance of these business places, it is crucial to acknowledge that these sites were not only sites of business endeavors, economic activities, and financial transactions, but also central spaces for social-spatial encounters during the Harlem Renaissance. Hotels and White-owned stores marked both the cultural prosperity and social conflict of the Renaissance; beauty parlors were where Harlemites exchanged news, scandals, tickets, and lingerie, and participated in underground gambling (Robertson 2010a); street markets were particularly busy when residents shopped for their Sunday dinners (Robertson 2011a); and the Dunbar Bank was possibly a meeting place for the upper-middle-class Black residents of the Dunbar Apartments. All these places had a role in defining or reflecting the lifestyle in the neighborhood during the Harlem Renaissance.



Hotel Olga (Historic Advertisement, New York Age, 1923).



Left: Fane-Dumas Hotel, c. 1940.



Right: 205 West 135th Street, c. 2020.

Issues and Trends

In summary, the following are some observed trends and issues that are worth further investigation:

- > The geographic expansion of Black businesses along with the growth of Black neighborhoods;
- > The shift from Lenox Avenue to Seventh Avenue as the main business thoroughfare, and the emergence of business clusters in different streetscapes catering to different social classes (see Robertson 2010a).
- > The social-spatial significance of businesses, and their possible correlation with other scopes of significance (e.g., the literati circle of the Harlem Renaissance) and other incidents of social change (e.g., protests, boycotts, and soapbox speakers; transportation and infrastructure).

Paralleling these issues and echoing the patterns of businesses are some underlying questions:

- > How does the limited number of “star” businesses represent larger trends manifested by hundreds of neighborhood shops and services (e.g., geographic expansion and changing thoroughfares)?
- > How does the ephemerality of businesses influence how business-related assets are recognized, given that in many cases, the only “asset” that can be utilized today is a building with no physical signs or marks of its significance?



S. H. Kress' Store, c. 1940.



258 West 125th Street (Google Street View, 2019).

UNDERGROUND ENTERPRISE

Isabella Libassi

A push for moral reform in New York City – as evidenced by the Volstead Act and the Committee of Fourteen, an anti-vice group that patrolled nightclubs, drag balls, and other venues in search of illegal drinking, gambling, or prostitution – only led to increased underground activity, particularly in Harlem. In his article “Harlem After Dark,” published in the *New York Amsterdam News*, Edgar Grey argued that the negative effects of the “after dark,” or “underground,” economies in Harlem outweighed the positive effects, which included providing most Harlemites with jobs. He wrote that “[not] even a Puritan should object to the presence of well regulated night clubs in Harlem for the amusement and diversion of its population, but even a vulgar moron must see, if he has half an eye, that the present nightclubs are a decided moral liability to the community” (Grey 1927a, 16). However, as the rest of Manhattan’s law enforcement buckled down, Harlem remained loosely patrolled, as many police officers were willing to be bought off. As a result of this corruption in the police department, many White people, who lived further down in the city, opened businesses – nightclubs, speakeasies, etc. – in Harlem, where there was less risk of being shut down. Despite opening many businesses in the predominantly Black neighborhood, these White property owners mainly opened organizations accessible to White patrons only – with only a few exceptions that were open to both Black and White clientele – but which heavily relied on the Black population for employment. As a result of the large number of White businesses that moved into the neighborhood, many Black Harlemites were forced to turn to private residences as venues for underground activities. Many threw rent parties, which were meant to help the hosts raise money for rent, and operated buffet flats, which provided alcohol, music, gambling, and prostitutes; these events were predominantly open to Blacks only (Robertson 2019).

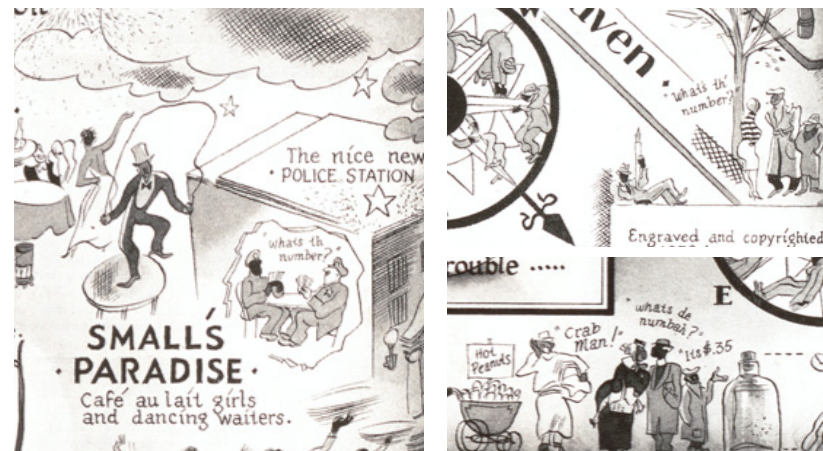
Though the thriving nightlife created many jobs in the neighborhood, the underground economy that gave back most to the Harlemites and had the greatest effect on the community was the number games. "The numbers game was significant to the economic survival and stability of African Americans during the early twentieth century. ...[Numbers] gambling was a 'substitute for the legitimate financial institutions that were absent in impoverished communities' and a 'response to the absence of legitimate organizations that could provide jobs, ready capital and financial resources to a hard-pressed community'.... Numbers gambling enabled many African

Americans to supplement low wages and secure economic security” (Harris 2008, 57). Stephanie St. Clair and Casper Holstein – two Black residents of Harlem who ran some of the most successful illegal policy operations – were able to not only employ many residents of Harlem, but also support Black-owned businesses, donate to Harlem charities, and fight for the political rights of the Black community. Though they obtained their money illegally, they used their profits to give back to society and their community.

POLICE CORRUPTION

With policy bankers and nightclub owners paying off their local law enforcement, illicit economies thrived in Harlem. Aware of the police corruption, many White people from lower Manhattan opened their own Whites-only organizations in Harlem. The "...notoriously selective enforcement of the law made Harlem a nightly destination not just for African-Americans but also for middle-class Whites in search of booze and urban thrills. And while Prohibition laws decimated the local saloon, they also inadvertently led to the emergence of large clubs with well-connected owners, who could reliably fend off raids by the vice squad" (Schulten 2019).

This corruption was noted in a 1932 map created by Elmer Simms Campbell, an African American who moved to New York City in 1929 (Schulten 2019). Not only does Campbell's map show the thriving nightlife ignoring the laws of Prohibition, but it also hints at the illegal numbers game and lotteries, as is communicated by people saying, "What's the number?" all over the map, including in the police station (Miller 2017). Campbell's portrayal of the



Details of 1932 Map of Harlem's Nightclubs.

police, shown sitting comfortably in a nice new station, conveys the police department's knowledge – and even involvement – in these illegal games. Their knowledge of the games is further supported by numerous historical newspapers and sources that sought to expose the corruption of the police department, claiming that the police accepted bribes and cash amounts to overlook nightclubs and policy operations.

The only way these illicit economies could survive was through political connections. "Since policy was illegal, it was in the interest of the bankers to form political alliances with local politicians, judges, and the police. ...From such political connections, Black policy leaders could possibly ensure that their runners or comptrollers would not be arrested or convicted for carrying policy slips or that their operation would not be shut down" (Harris 2008, 57). In a December 1930 *New York Amsterdam News* article, Stephanie St. Clair, the "Queen of Policy," exposed the corruption within the police department, admitting to have paid over \$6,000 to a lieutenant of the Harlem police (*New York Amsterdam News* 1930b). Though this bribe was meant to protect her and her policy organization, St. Clair claimed that her runners were constantly harassed by the New York Police Department (NYPD), and even St. Clair herself was arrested for possession of policy slips. So, despite paying the officers off, St. Clair was arrested and spent just under a year in a workhouse on Welfare Island (now known as Roosevelt Island) (Harris 2008, 60). After her release, St. Clair returned to her position as Numbers Queen, continued her illegal operations, and "[launched] a public crusade against the NYPD [exposing] law enforcers' participation in New York's multimillion-dollar numbers racket" (Harris 2016).

POLICY BANKING AND USING THE MONEY AND POWER FOR GOOD

Right beside St. Clair, running an operation of his own was Casper Holstein, a Black immigrant from the Virgin Islands, the owner of the Turf Club, and exalted ruler of the Monarch Lodge. While there were other policy bankers who made a fortune in Harlem from these illegal games, very few were able to hold on to their wealth, spending it all on flashy cars or real estate, among other things. By contrast, Holstein and St. Clair used their money to give back to the community and their authority for good. "Notwithstanding public criticism, Harlem's numbers racket had economic and cultural significance for New York's Black community. Gambling profits made it possible for many numbers barons to reinvest portions of their earnings back into impoverished Black communities" (Harris 2016, 64). Not only did St. Clair and Holstein do this by employing many African American men and women as number runners –

workers who collected policy slips and distributed money to the winners of the games – but also through establishing foundations and giving donations. St. Clair gained the respect and admiration of members of her community, who were impressed with her breaking of gender norms by controlling the mostly male numbers game. In addition, her neighbors admired her for employing many Black men and women, funding Black-owned businesses, and advocating for the rights of Black immigrants (Harris 2008, 54). With this authority, St. Clair tried to protect her community and fought for the Black vote. Using newspapers and the media, she posted advertisements in 1929 encouraging people to vote for the Democratic Party. She had recognized that "...although Harlem policy bankers had wealth, affluence, and the respect of their community, they did not have the political influence to safeguard their operations or protect their community" (Stewart 2010, 74). This had become abundantly clear after her arrest, but also in her struggle with White mobster Dutch Schultz for control of the numbers racket. As a result, "...St. Clair was pushing forward an agenda of Black voters voting for Democratic candidates that supported the goal of political empowerment for the residents of Harlem" (Stewart 2010, 74). She used the trust and respect that she had received from her fellow Harlemites to try and advocate for their rights.

Holstein, on the other hand, took a different approach: he paid for students' tuition, donated to colleges he never attended, and funded any organization that needed help, especially if it was important to the Black community. As one source put it, Holstein "...spent money like it was going out of fashion, but very little of it on himself" (White 2010, 152-153). For example, in 1928, "...when Fisk University was going through 'dog days,' Holstein, who never went to college himself, on learning of what Fisk meant to [African American] youth, sent his check for \$1,000. In like manner he... made several contributions to Howard University" (Fleming 1936). Similarly, when the UNIA was about to lose its building – Liberty Hall at 128 West 138th Street – Holstein stepped up and paid off its mortgage, claiming that he knew how important the building was to the Black community and that he wanted the organization to be able to continue its work (*New York Amsterdam News* 1927b). Holstein also spent the money he earned from his numbers organization to fund a literary contest for *Opportunity* magazine, while also donating to the local and National Urban League (White 2010, 154). Additionally, when plans for the Vincent Sanitarium in Harlem were announced, Holstein loaned \$20,500 "...because he saw it as an opportunity for [Black] doctors" (Fleming 1936). He not only donated to organizations and causes, but also personally handed out food baskets to the poor in Harlem yearly, and participated in charity work that reached outside of the Harlem community (Harris 2016, 64-65). Holstein was "...the only African

American with very deep pockets and a willingness to spend money on his fellow citizens” (White 2010, 154). Though he made a fortune operating these illegal games, he gave back to the community – and the world – through his philanthropic work, so much so that he died broke (*Afro-American* 1944).

Through the money they made from these illicit economies, St. Clair and Holstein were able to give back to their community in different ways – whether that be by empowering the community politically or funding organizations that were important to them.

PUSHING SEXUAL AND GENDER BOUNDARIES

In addition to being a center for nightclubs and illegal number games, Harlem acted as something of a haven for the LGBTQ community. Drag balls, which were begun in 1869 by Harlem’s Hamilton Lodge, were also considered illegal and formed another illicit economy in Harlem at the time. The Committee of Fourteen, a moral reform organization, frequently investigated these balls and released a report with their observations in 1916 (Stabbe 2016). By the 1920s, the balls were more well-known by the public and attracted a wider variety of patrons, both White and Black, outside of the LGBTQ community (Stabbe 2016). By the mid-1930s, these annual balls had become incredibly popular, with around 4,000 people trying to get admission to see “...the pansies... in full bloom [for] Harlem’s yearly extravaganza – ‘The Dance of Fairies’ – sponsored for the umpteenth time by Hamilton Lodge, Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, under the misnomer of a masquerade and civic ball” (Rouzeau 1934). Despite this relatively negative review from the period, Harlem became a center and safe place for the LGBTQ community.

CONCLUSION

Despite the desire to create a more “moral” city during this period, numerous underground illicit economies formed and thrived throughout Harlem. Although these operations were illegal, those who profited from them used the funds to create a lot of good and give back to the Harlem community through philanthropic work and political activism. Not only were colleges and hospitals funded because of the work of successful policy bankers, but safe havens for the LGBTQ society were created as a result of the work of organizations like the Hamilton Lodge, which hosted drag balls.

UNDERGROUND ENTERPRISE HISTORIC ASSETS

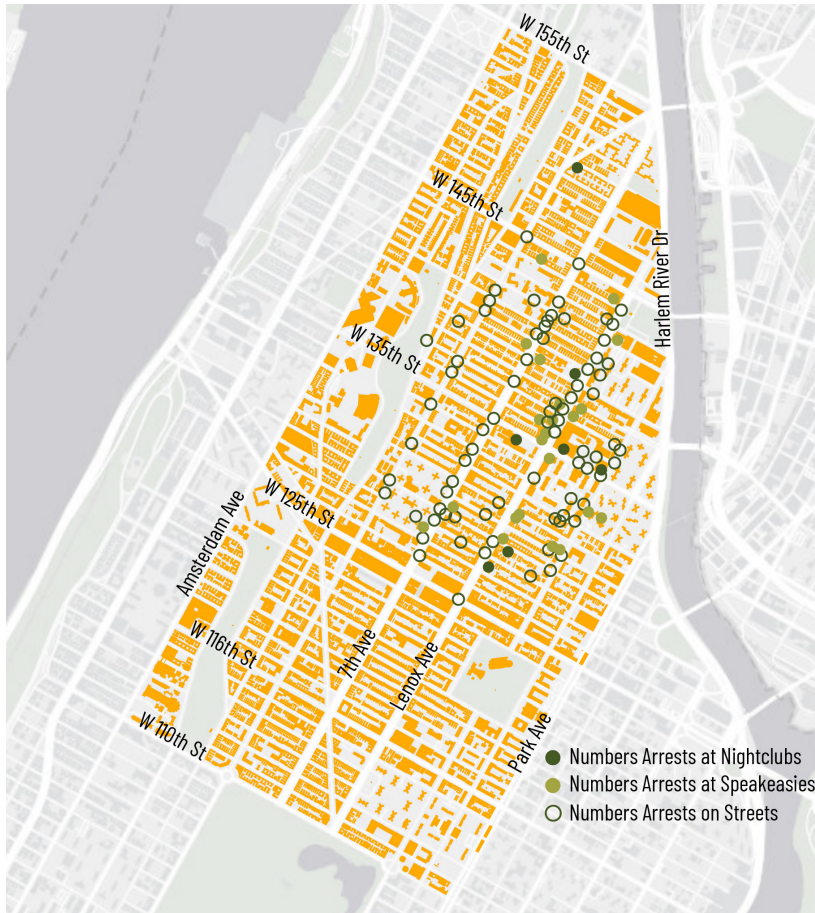
Though the historic assets associated with the “underground” economies vary in function and use, they are all connected either as sites where the illegal activity occurred or for being funded or created by someone who made their fortune through illicit economies.

Hamilton Lodge Ball, hosted at the Rockland Palace Dance Hall

The Rockland Palace Dance Hall at 280 West 155th Street – though now demolished – used to be the site of the Hamilton Lodge Ball. This event was a drag ball – begun in 1869 by Harlem’s Black Hamilton Lodge organization – and was considered illegal during the Harlem Renaissance. By 1920, the drag ball had become well-known and popular – attracting White and Black New Yorkers and people outside of the LGBTQ community.



Image of Rockland Palace Dance Hall, 1920.



Sites where number arrests occurred and where people got caught

All along Lenox Avenue, people were arrested on the street for possession of policy slips. A large number of arrests took place specifically at the intersection of Lenox Avenue and West 136th Street, possibly because of the large group of speakeasies lining Lenox. It appears that most of the numbers arrests occurred near speakeasies, rather than nightclubs, suggesting that speakeasies were a better place to conduct business. A map created by Digital Harlem also shows that most numbers arrests occurred at speakeasies, rather than nightclubs. The other possibility is that the nightclub owners had paid the police more money to look the other way. The location of these arrests could have also been affected by the race of the property owner.

Where the money made from the illicit economies went

A majority of the historic assets related to the “underground” economies of Harlem have to do with organizations created or funded with money made from the number games. For example, Vincent Sanitarium, which was located at 2348 Seventh Avenue, received a large donation from Casper Holstein – the greatest Numbers King of Harlem – who had hoped that the hospital would provide more opportunities for Black doctors (White 2010, 154). Though this private hospital in the center of Harlem was originally meant to provide more opportunities for Black doctors and more care options for Black residents – who had a limited number of medical facilities available to them – the hospital was quickly taken over by White patients and physicians. When Dr. Conrad Vincent, an African American doctor who originally founded the hospital, became ill in 1930 – just one year after opening the hospital – he was forced to sell it to a group of Black investors. By 1931, however, the hospital went bankrupt. Many blamed “...the limited number of residents with funds for private care, and the preference for white institutions [among] those with money to spend...” The hospital quickly fell into the hands of the White population (Robertson 2010c). By 1941, the hospital had closed, mostly because of competition from the nearby Edgecombe Sanitarium, and was turned into a recreation center for men in the armed forces (Malliet 1943).



Image of Vincent Sanitarium building, c. 1940.

Similarly, Liberty Hall at 128 West 138th Street, originally the property of the UNIA, was a site of social interaction, not to mention political action and reaction. When the UNIA was unable to pay off the mortgage, and was facing losing a property that had played such an important role not only for the UNIA, but also the Black community in general, Casper Holstein stepped in (*New York Amsterdam News* 1926). Nonetheless, a few years later, the UNIA was still not in a stable financial situation, losing multiple properties due to unpaid taxes, eventually leading to the organization's disintegration. Holstein ended up buying the property at auction "...because he wanted to see the property remain in the hands of colored folk as a memorial to the movement which started there" (Fleming 1936). Holstein had hoped to sell the property to the YMCA "...in order to 'have the satisfaction of knowing that on that site generations would develop into fine men, men of courage, men with love for their race'" (Fleming 1936). In the end, however, the Monarch Lodge – for which Holstein was the exalted ruler – constructed apartment buildings, which they named Holstein Court, on the site of the former Liberty Hall. Also built on the site was a new clubhouse for the Monarch Lodge (Magill 1929). The premises went from a social and political site, funded with money made from an "underground" economy, to a residential property and site of social interaction, still funded with money made from an "underground" economy. Though its function changed, its source of funding did not.



Above: Image of Holstein Court, c. 1940.

Below: Image of Holstein Court, present-day.



SPATIAL & RACIAL SEGREGATION

Ziyu Liu

Spatial and racial segregation in early twentieth-century Harlem shows a very nuanced reality of African American life. On the one hand, exceptional social-political situations made Harlem a “Black paradise” in the Great Migration era and a center of the flourishing African American culture; on the other hand, racial injustice and unequal developments persisted throughout the Harlem Renaissance, paralleling the systemic anti-Black racism across the country. Although the Harlem Renaissance was a movement led by and for African Americans, its dependence on White patrons was also evident. The flowering of Black culture did not diminish social discrimination against the Black community in general. Harlem’s considerable working-class population continued to struggle under racial restrictions and segregation, and the tensions eventually led to a critical protest on March 19, 1935. From housing conditions to cultural identity, racial inequalities had been a long-standing issue for Harlemites, only to be intensified by the concurrent socio-economic crisis of the Great Depression.

THE BLACK MOVE TO HARLEM

Harlem was profoundly shaped by discriminatory practices, especially as the African American population rapidly became predominant within the neighborhood. After the establishment of Jim Crow laws in the southern states, millions of Black southerners moved to northern industrial cities to escape both economic difficulties and racial discrimination. As a major industrial city that theoretically prohibited racial segregation, many saw New York as an ideal destination. Paralleling the first wave of the Great Migration between 1910 and 1930, Harlem experiences a rapid rise in population that made it a “Negro Metropolis” for African American communities, not only nationwide but also around the world. Immigrants from the Caribbean and West Indies also contributed to this increase in population, leading to the formation of a culturally diverse community (McKay 1948, 16).

The acquisition of real estate in Harlem was the most visible symbol of Black community control and self-determination throughout the Renaissance era. In the early 1900s, Harlem was the first neighborhood in New York where decent living conditions became available to African Americans, especially those in the middle class. At the turn of the century, most of the 60,666 Black New Yorkers lived in small and densely populated “ghettos,” the largest being



Migrant Streams during the Great Migration.

the Tenderloin and San Juan Hill in midtown Manhattan (Osofsky 1971, 12). In comparison, the freshly developed uptown neighborhood offered much better prospects for both residents and realtors.

With the effort of Phillip A. Payton Jr.’s Afro-American Realty Company, some homeowners on 134th Street started renting to a few Black tenants. The first two modern apartment houses open to them were the Victoria, at 138th Street and Lenox Avenue, and the Arkonia, at 139th Street and Lenox Avenue. However, realtors and landlords exploited Black tenants’ limited options for housing by doubling rents for their properties when Black tenants. Soon, more landlords began to force out White tenants and put their properties under the care of Black real estate companies (Tarry 1938, 4). Meanwhile, the Dunbar Apartments on West 149th and 150th Streets between Lenox and Eighth Avenues, completed in 1928, was the first modern apartment complex in New York City designed for African American tenants (NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission 1970, 1-3).

SEGREGATION DURING THE RENAISSANCE

However, Harlem’s transition into a predominantly Black community was not without turmoil. Ever since the first groups of Black tenants arrived, the construct of “Black invasion/White resistance” was widely used to describe urban changes in northern cities. By the 1910s, more and more White homeowners drew up racially restrictive covenants against Black real estate

REAL ESTATE RACE WAR IS STARTED IN HARLEM

Dispossessed White Men Ask
Negroes to be Allowed to Stay.

COLORED FOLKS RETALIATED

They Were Dispossessed First—Then
Formed a Real Estate Company
to Buy Tenements.

NEGRO INVASION THREAT ANGERS FLAT DWELLERS

Afro-American Realty Company
Buys 525 West 151st Street.

CALLS FOR COLORED TENANTS

Firm Notifies the Whites Now Living
in the House That They Must
Leave by Aug. 1.

NEGROES CAUSE TROUBLE

Defendant Agreed to Have
White Tenants Only, 'Tis Said.

PLAINTIFF WANTS DAMAGES

Decision Eagerly Awaited by
Protective Association
of Harlem.

Left to right: "Real Estate War is Started in Harlem." New York Times, December 17, 1905; "Negro Invasion Threat Angers Flat Dwellers." New York Times, July 21, 1906; "Negroes Cause Trouble." New York Tribune, August 31, 1913.

companies and churches as the number of Black residents increased rapidly. The Property Owners' Protective Association was the primary actor behind the deeds and lease covenants on buildings in Harlem (McGruder 2015b, 63). By 1913, over 2,000 White homeowners had signed a fifteen-year agreement to refrain from renting or selling their properties to African Americans; breaking the pledge could result in lawsuits. John G. Taylor, president of the organization, stated that there was "no discrimination against race or color," and that the members only wanted to protect their property values (*New York Tribune* 1913b, D1). However, the Association's campaign only set restrictions for "the colored," with no mention of rules against any other groups.

The Property Owners' Protective Association's influence did not last for long. In 1914, the purchase of two entire blocks of townhouses by middle-class Black residents solidified the public perception that the trend was no longer possible to prevent. The late 1910s saw a significant rise in Black residency and property ownership. By the end of the decade, almost two-thirds of the African American population in Manhattan lived in Harlem (McGruder 2015b, 177). Nevertheless, restrictive covenants continued to be enforced throughout the Renaissance. Even in the mid-1930s, WPA researchers observed that "Whites Only" signs on properties were still common in Harlem, and that many

landlords would raise rents to unreasonably high amounts for Black tenants to prevent them from moving in (Bryan 1936, 1).

Living conditions soon became an urgent challenge for Harlem, mainly due to the neighborhood's extremely high population density. By the 1930s, Central Harlem was the most congested neighborhood in all of Manhattan, with 620 persons per acre and over 3,000 living in one block (Tarry 1938, 13). Overcrowding resulted in limited public space and poor housing quality. Most low-income apartments were "railroad flats" built around or before 1900, offering little privacy and inadequate sanitary facilities (Gary 1937, 2). Children had to play on the streets, which tragically caused a high rate of traffic accidents and raised public safety concerns (Compton 2017, 59-63). The residents' lack of social and financial resources further exacerbated their living conditions. Black tenants typically paid over 50% of their income for their excessively high rents, leaving very little for property management or any form of improvement.

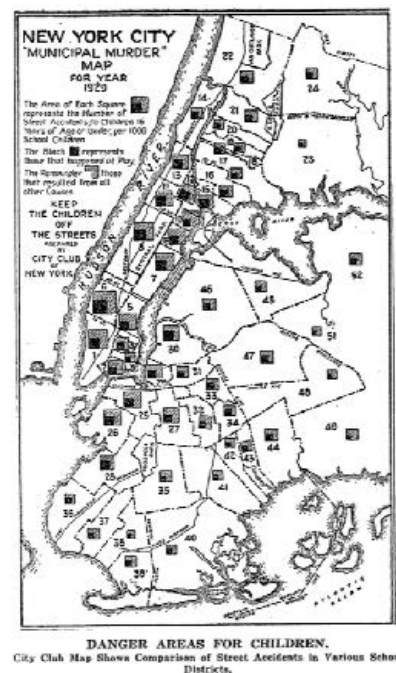
Formal and informal anti-Black segregation was also an often-neglected dark side of cultural life during the Harlem Renaissance. Segregated businesses, such as the Cotton Club, had Black entertainers performing for an exclusively

White audience. During the Prohibition era, the popularity of nightlife in Harlem greatly affected the local community. To quote Langston Hughes, “the influx of whites toward Harlem after sundown, flooding the little cabarets and bars where formerly only colored people laughed and sang, and where now the strangers were given the best ringside tables to sit and stare at the Negro customers – like amusing animals in a zoo” (Hughes 1940, 83).

CONTINUED SYSTEMIC RESTRICTIONS AND SEGREGATION BEYOND THE RENAISSANCE

Throughout the Renaissance, the city’s neglect of minority communities and inability to address public safety and sanitation problems catalyzed a growing perception of Harlem as a neighborhood notorious for crime and poverty. The 1933 Slum Clearance Committee of New York, intended to promote housing conditions, selected fourteen areas to be analyzed for clearance. Their choices systematically discriminated against disadvantaged communities, including African Americans in Harlem (Slum Clearance Committee of New York 1934, 78-97). Under the Federal Housing Act of 1949, two more slum areas were identified in Harlem: between Fifth and Lenox Avenues, from 132nd to 135th Street and from 139th to 142nd Street (New York City Committee on Slum Clearance Plans 1951, 9-12). In the 1950s, these areas were redeveloped into two housing complexes, Lenox Terrace and the Savoy Park Apartments. This redevelopment demolished many old tenements, along with places closely related to the Harlem Renaissance, including the Savoy Ballroom and Phillip A. Payton Jr.’s office on 134th Street.

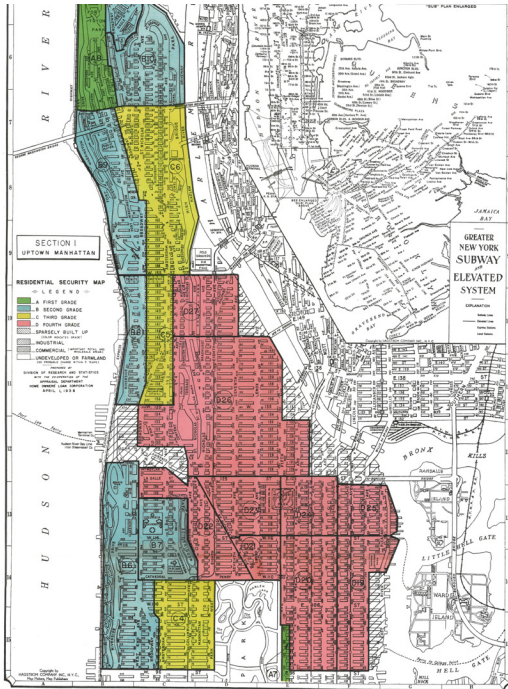
While the Slum Clearance plans and public housing programs only impacted limited areas, in the 1930s, it was widely believed that financial support from the Federal Housing Authority would offer a comprehensive remedy for Harlem’s housing problems (Gary 1937, 3-4). In reality, this funding ended up making conditions even worse, with the implementation of the systematic denial of services known as “redlining.” Home Owners’ Loan Corporation coded all of Harlem as a “fourth-grade” area, meaning that property owners within those areas were denied access to mortgage loans as well as financial support for property improvement. The system ultimately enhanced racial segregation and accelerated urban decay in Harlem and other American cities, and its legacy has continued to influence the communities today.



“Playground Appeal Cites Murder Map,” New York Times, July 21, 1930, 4.



Duke Ellington playing for a White audience in the Cotton Club.



The 1938 HOLC Map of Upper Manhattan.

SPATIAL & RACIAL SEGREGATION HISTORIC ASSETS

Historic assets associated with the theme of Spatial and Racial Segregation consist of three categories: public space under segregation; key residential properties during the “race war”; and institutions that addressed the anti-Black restrictions. The categories overlap with each other, and can also be considered as historic assets for other themes.

Representative sites for the African American community’s move into Harlem centered around Lenox Avenue and West 134th Street, where Phillip A. Payton Jr.’s Afro-American Realty Company operated. It was also in this area that early African American enclaves existed before 1900. Later residential developments directly addressing the Black community include the Dunbar Apartments and Harlem River Houses, which witnessed the expansion of the Harlem neighborhood and changes in housing typology.

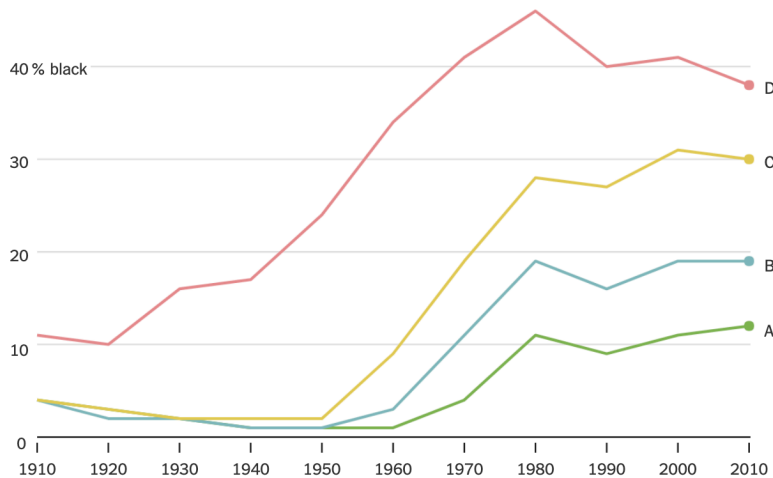
Although spatial and racial segregation was not uncommon during the Harlem Renaissance, the spatial components were usually informal and left few records. While it is hard to locate all the “Whites Only” housing from the Renaissance decades, key areas of conflict can be identified through historic newspaper articles. For instance, 136th Street from Lenox Avenue to Eighth Avenue was an area restricted against Black encroachment.

Places that represented the social issues linked to anti-Black restrictions are also notable. On Block 1919, also known as the “prize slum” of the city, 301 resident families paid the incredibly high figure of 94% of their income for rent in 1936. Mapping these areas can help characterize how discriminatory practices transitioned spatially over time, from individual tenements with rental conflicts in the early 1900s to systematically identified “slum” areas under the Federal Housing Act of 1949.

Institutions associated with the theme also represent the African American acquisition of real estate in Harlem. Some key organizations – for example, the Property Owners’ Protective Association – may have had its permanent offices outside of Harlem. Early institutions that helped with Harlem’s transition to a Black neighborhood are mostly real estate companies and nonprofit organizations, like the Consolidated Tenants League, which appeared later in the 1930s.

Redlined Neighborhoods Have the Highest Share of Black Residents

D-rated neighborhoods were considered ‘hazardous,’ A-rated neighborhoods the ‘best.’



Data from 149 cities mapped by the HOLC in the 1930s.

IMAGES OF SELECT SPATIAL AND RACIAL SEGREGATION ASSETS



127 West 141st Street. Home to Phillip A. Payton Jr. during his years working with Harlem properties. The mortgage was nine thousand dollars in 1903, when he purchased the row house and all the residents on the block were White.



Arkonia Apartments, c. 1940.



Block 2007, c. 1940.



West 134th Street "Slum." An image of the area identified by the New York City Committee on Slum Clearance in 1949 for redevelopment.

APPENDIX B:

HISTORIC ASSETS DATA

BUILDING ASSETS

NAME & ADDRESS	BLOCK	LOT	USE TYPOLOGY	HISTORIC CONTEXT	SITE OF:				RACIAL SEGREGATION	BLACK-OWNED PROPERTY	EXTANT
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
116th Street Theatre 132 West 116th Street	1825	51	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	
135th Street Branch, New York Public Library 103 West 135th Street	1920	26	Education, Entertainment, Organization/ Institution	Education, Performing Arts and Entertainment, Design and Visual Arts, Literary Arts and Publishing	●			●	Integrated	No	●
136th Street Rooming House ("Niggerati Manor") 267 West 136th Street	1942	6	Residence	Literary Arts and Publishing, Racial Restrictions and Segregation	●				Integrated	Unknown	●
409 Edgecombe "party apartment" 409 Edgecombe Avenue	2054	62	Residence	Political and Economic Activism, Journalism and Public Perceptions	●	●			Unknown	Unknown	●
Abraham Lincoln Houses 2175 Fifth Avenue	1757	1	Residence	Design and Visual Arts					Unknown	Unknown	●
Abyssinian Baptist Church 132 West 138th Street	2006	52	Religious	Religion, Sports	●	●		●	Integrated	Unknown	●
Albert Pointer 211 West 136th Street	1942	124	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	

Name & Address	Block	Lot	Use Typology	Historic Context	Site of:				Racial Segregation	Black-Owned Property	Extant
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
Alhambra Ballroom 2116 Seventh Avenue	1931	36	Entertainment	Sports, Performing Arts and Entertainment	●			●	Integrated	No	●
All Souls’ Church 88 St. Nicholas Avenue	1824	12	Religious	Religion	●	●			Integrated	Unknown	●
Amsterdam News (Location 3) 2293 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard	1919	62	Organization/Institution	Journalism and Media Perceptions				●	Unknown	Unknown	●
Amsterdam News (Location 4) 2271 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard	1918	61	Organization/Institution	Journalism and Media Perceptions				●	Unknown	Unknown	●
Amsterdam News (Location 5) 2340 Frederick Douglass Boulevard	771	6	Organization/Institution	Journalism and Public Perceptions		●		●	Unknown	Unknown	●
Apartment Arkonia 561-567 Lenox Avenue	2007	36	Residence	Racial Restrictions and Segregation	●		●		Integrated	Unknown	●
Apartment of Alberta Hunter 133 West 138th Street	2007	11	Residence	Performing Arts and Entertainment					Unknown	Unknown	
Apartment of Billie Holiday 108 West 139th Street	2007	41	Residence	Performing Arts and Entertainment					Unknown	Unknown	
Apartment of Billy Strayhorn 315 Convent Avenue	2050	21	Residence	Performing Arts and Entertainment					Unknown	Unknown	●
Apartment of James P. Johnson 267 West 140th Street	2026	7	Residence	Performing Arts and Entertainment					Unknown	Unknown	
Apartment of Romare Bearden 154 West 131st Street	1915	58	Residence	Design and Visual Arts					Integrated	Unknown	●
Apartment Victoria 544 - 552 Lenox Avenue	1735	1	Residence	Racial Restrictions and Segregation	●		●		Integrated	Unknown	
									Appendix B: Historic Assets Data 257		

Name & Address	Block	Lot	Use Typology	Historic Context	Site of:				Racial Segregation	Black-Owned Property	Extant
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
Cavalcade Grill 2104 Seventh Avenue	1931	27	Restaurant	Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●				Integrated	Unknown	
Chauncey Johnson 147 West 132nd Street	1917	13	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Chicken Bank Restaurant 2745 Eighth Avenue	2045	31	Restaurant	Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●				Integrated	Unknown	
Club Harlem African Room 388 Lenox Avenue	1727	1	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	●
Coachmen's Union League Building/Coachmen's Hall/ American Legion Hall 252 West 138th Street	2023	160	Organization/ Institution	Civic Organizations and Social Clubs	●	●		●	Unknown	Unknown	●
Communist Headquarters 308 Lenox Avenue	1723	4	Organization/ Institution	Political and Economic Activism	●	●		●	Integrated	No	●
Community Hospital 8 St. Nicholas Place	2053	106	Organization/ Institution	Health and Medicine	●			●	Whites Only	No	
Connie's Inn 2221 Seventh Avenue	1937	29	Entertainment, Restaurant	Performing Arts and Entertainment, Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●	●			Segregated	No	
Consolidated Tenants League 261 West 125th Street	1931	6	Organization/ Institution	Culinary Arts and Restaurants		●		●	Integrated	Yes	●
Cosmopolitan Tennis Club 443 Convent Avenue	2064	7502	Entertainment	Sports	●				Unknown	Unknown	
Crescent/Gem Theater 36 West 135th Street	1730	52	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	
Crown Theater 115 West 116th Street	1901	29	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	
Daniels Bar and Grill 2461 Seventh Avenue	2012	1	Restaurant	Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●				Integrated	Unknown	
Dickie Wells' Club 169 West 133rd Street	1918	6	Restaurant	Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●				Integrated	Unknown	
									Appendix B: Historic Assets Data 259		

Name & Address	Block	Lot	Use Typology	Historic Context	Site of:				Racial Segregation	Black-Owned Property	Extant
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
Jimmy's Chicken Shack 763 St. Nicholas Avenue	2063	31	Restaurant	Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●				Integrated	Unknown	
Joplin's Boarding House 251 West 131st Street	1937	11	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Yes	
Jos. H. Johnson 2525 Seventh Avenue	2015	5	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Joseph Hummel 16 East 129th Street	1753	64	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
King Solomon Masonic Temple, Inc. 71 West 131st Street	1729	105	Organization/Institution	Civic Organizations and Social Clubs	●			●	Unknown	Unknown	●
Kingdom of Father Divine 152 West 126th Street	1907	155	Religious	Religion	●	●			Integrated	Unknown	
Kress's Store 258 West 125th Street	1930	53	Retail	Political and Economic Activism		●	●		Integrated	No	●
L.A. Okie 249 West 130th Street	1915	1	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Lafayette Theater 2227 Seventh Avenue	1916	3	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●			●	Integrated	Unknown	
Langston Hughes' House 20 East 127th Street	1751	64	Residence	Literary Arts and Publishing	●				Integrated	Yes	●
Lenox Garden/Lenox Theater 14 Lenox Avenue	1594	7501	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	
Liberty Hall 128 West 138th Street	2006	49	Organization/Institution	Illicit Economies, Political and Economic Activism	●	●		●	Unknown	Yes	
Lincoln Recreation Center 160 West 146th Street	2014	55	Entertainment	Sports	●				Integrated	Unknown	
Lincoln Theater 58 West 135th Street	1732	65	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Integrated	Unknown	●
									Appendix B: Historic Assets Data 263		

Name & Address	Block	Lot	Use Typology	Historic Context	Site of:				Racial Segregation	Black-Owned Property	Extant
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
Monarch Lodge 245 West 137th Street	2023	12	Residence	Civic Organizations and Social Clubs	●	●		●	Unknown	Unknown	●
Monroe's Uptown Club 198 West 134th Street	1918	60	Restaurant	Culinary Arts and Restaurants	●				Integrated	Unknown	
Morningside Theater 2135 8th Avenue	1848	50	Entertainment	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	
Mother African Episcopal Zion Church 140 West 137th Street	1921	51	Religious	Religion, Design and Visual Arts, Sports	●	●		●	Integrated	Unknown	●
Mother Louis Judson Hall 169 West 131st Street	1916	7503	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mount Moriah Baptist Church 2050 Fifth Avenue	1724	36	Religious	Design and Visual Arts	●			●	Integrated	Unknown	●
Mount Olivet Baptist Church 201 Malcom X Boulevard	1905	29	Religious	Religion	●				Integrated	Unknown	●
Mr. A. D. Williams 398 St. Nicholas Avenue	1955	26	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mr. Cake 57 West 133rd Street	1918	29	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mr. F.A. Summers 111 West 130th Street	1915	25	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mrs. Catherine Murray-Brown 206 West 138th Street	2023	39	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mrs. D.W. 153 West 130th Street	1915	6	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mrs. E. A. McCallister 216 West 140th Street	2025	49	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
Mrs. E. Coleman 2441 Seventh Avenue	2011	1	Religious	Health and Medicine	●		●		Unknown	Yes	
									Appendix B: Historic Assets Data 265		

OPEN SPACES ASSETS

NAME & LOCATION	BLOCK	LOT	USE TYPOLOGY	HISTORIC CONTEXT	SITE OF:				RACIAL SEGREGATION	BLACK-OWNED PROPERTY	EXTANT
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
Olympic Field 1-30 East 136th Street	1760	1	Open space	Sports	●				Integrated	No	
“The Corner” 131 Street and 7th Avenue	N/A	N/A	Open space	Performing Arts and Entertainment	●				Unknown	Unknown	
1917 Silent Protest Parade Fifth Avenue from 59th Street to 23rd Street.	N/A	N/A	Open space	Political and Economic Activism	●	●			Unknown	No	●
1919 369th Infantry March Fifth Avenue and West 23rd Street to West 110th and turned West to march up Lenox Avenue into Harlem ending at West 145th Street.	N/A	N/A	Open space	Political and Economic Activism	●	●			Unknown	No	●
1920 First Annual UNIA Convention Parade Starts at 56 West 135th Street, heads north on Lenox Avenue, turns on West 145th, marches to Seventh Avenue, then turns south on Seventh to 125th Street. Turns east on 125th Street and marches back to Lenox Avenue.	N/A	N/A	Open space	Political and Economic Activism	●	●			Unknown	No	●
1922 Annual UNIA Convention Parade Starts at 56 West 135th Street, heads north on Lenox Avenue, turns on West 145th, marches to Seventh Avenue, then turns south on Seventh Avenue to 110th Street. Turns east on 110th Street and marches back to Lenox Avenue.	N/A	N/A	Open space	Political and Economic Activism	●	●			Unknown	No	●

BLOCKS: RACIAL RESTRICTIONS AND SEGREGATION

OUTSIDE OF STUDY AREA

NAME & ADDRESS	BLOCK	LOT	USE TYPOLOGY	HISTORIC CONTEXT	SITE OF:				RACIAL SEGREGATION	BLACK-OWNED PROPERTY	EXTANT
					Social Interaction	Political Action / Reaction	Financial Transaction	Institution / Organization			
NAACP Headquarters 70 Fifth Avenue	576	36	Organization/ Institution	Political and Economic Activism, Civic Organizations and Social Clubs	●	●		●	Integrated	No	●
W.P.A. Art Project Studio 110 King Street	598	58	Organization/ Institution	Design and Visual Arts					Integrated	No	●
William H. Johnson Apartment 218 West 15th Street	764	49	Residence	Design and Visual Arts					Integrated	Unknown	
Palmer Hayden Apartment 218 West 17th Street	766	55	Residence	Design and Visual Arts					Integrated	Unknown	●
The Harlem House (Out of Area) 311 East 116th Street	1688	45	Organization/ Institution	Sports	●			●	Unknown	Unknown	

APPENDIX C: CONTEMPORARY ASSETS

The studio team collectively identified contemporary assets within the study area, meaning organizations, institutions, and associations that serve as, or have the potential to serve as, connectors within a community. While not an exhaustive list, these contemporary assets or “connector organizations” have missions that build upon the legacies of the Harlem Renaissance, promote social justice, and/or intersect with the values of preservation.

CONNECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

- > Save Harlem Now!
- > Tahl Propp Equities
- > Marcus Garvey Park Public Art Initiative
- > Harlem Week
- > Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- > Harlem Stage
- > Fantasy in Color
- > Harlem Arts Alliance
- > The Studio Museum in Harlem
- > Harlem United
- > Abyssinian Church
- > Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce
- > The New York Urban League
- > Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Tau Omega Chapter
- > Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Epsilon Sigma Chapter
- > East Harlem Community Alliance
- > New York Amsterdam News
- > Harlem Grown
- > St. Philip's Church
- > UNIA-ACL Division 431 & 432
- > The Harlem Writers Guild
- > Harlem Pride

CONNECTOR

ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUED

- > People Against Landlord Abuse & Tenant Exploitation (P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.) Harlem
- > Harlem Children's Zone
- > Carver Federal Savings Bank
- > Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone
- > Harlem Business Alliance
- > Harlem One Stop
- > Harlem Park to Park
- > SCAN-Harbor
- > Communities for Healthy Food at West Harlem Group Assistance
- > New York Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects
- > Uptown Grand Central
- > The Frederick Douglass Boulevard Alliance (FDBA)
- > Taste Harlem
- > Harlem Tourism Board
- > Harlem's Fashion Row
- > Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- > The Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc.
- > Harlem Hospital Center
- > Harlem YMCA
- > Studio Museum in Harlem
- > New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
- > Parish of St. Martin's and St. Luke's
- > Perry Associates
- > NAACP
- > Community Kitchen and Pantry in Harlem
- > Harlem Repertory Theatre
- > Harlem Drama Studio, Inc
- > Harlem School of the Arts
- > New Heritage Theatre Group
- > New Stage Performance Space
- > Nu-African Theatre
- > Holstein Court
- > Harlem Education History Project
- > Harlem Youth Publishing Empowerment (HYPE)
- > Harlem World Magazine

APPENDIX D: CONNECTOR ORGANIZATION INTERVIEWS

The interviews sought to collect data about how the work of these organizations intersect with preservation, anti-racism, and the Harlem Renaissance, and to explore possibilities for collective action. The following served as baseline questions for the interviews; questions were augmented based on each organization's scope and mission.

CONNECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

The following connector organizations agreed to provide interviews to the studio, which were conducted in the second half of the semester.

- > Harlem Arts Alliance/ The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce
- > Uptown Grand Central
- > Harlem Community Justice Center / Court of Innovation
- > Harlem Community Development Corp
- > The Harlem Writers Guild
- > Harlem School of the Arts
- > The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce
- > Harlem Park to Park
- > Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- > Manhattan Community Board 10: Parks and Recreation
- > West Harlem Community Preservation Organization
- > Harlem One Stop
- > Save Harlem Now!
- > Marcus Garvey Park Alliance
- > Harlem Grown
- > Carver Federal Savings Bank
- > Harlem Tourism Board

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

> How does the history and current work of your organization connect to the broader values of confronting anti-Black racism and injustice?

> What do you/your organization see as priorities for promoting racial justice in Harlem?

> Are there particular publics within Harlem that you prioritize or serve in your work (for example, business owners, women, children, etc.), and if so, why? How large is your membership or constituency?

> Is there a particular geography/neighborhood within Harlem that you prioritize or serve in your work, and if so, why? Are their boundaries that you see as important?

> Are there particular organizations in the Harlem community with whom you collaborate in your work, and if so, how?

> How does your organization select or fund community-based projects, activities, or events?

> When you think about the Harlem Renaissance, what comes to mind? Could be person, place, event, art form, published work, set of ideas, etc., anything? [up to 5]

> If you had to pick three words to describe the Harlem Renaissance, what would they be?

> Before this interview, did you see a clear connection between the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance and the work of your organization?

-If Yes, explain?

-If No, do you think there is something to be further explored? If, so what?

> Before this interview, did you see a clear connection between the work of your organization and historic preservation?

-If Yes, explain?

-If No, do you think there is something to be further explored? If, so what?

> When you think about important or historic places to preserve or learn about in Harlem – whether associated with the Renaissance or not – what comes to mind? [up to 5]

> If you had to pick three words to describe Harlem today, what would they be?

APPENDIX E:

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