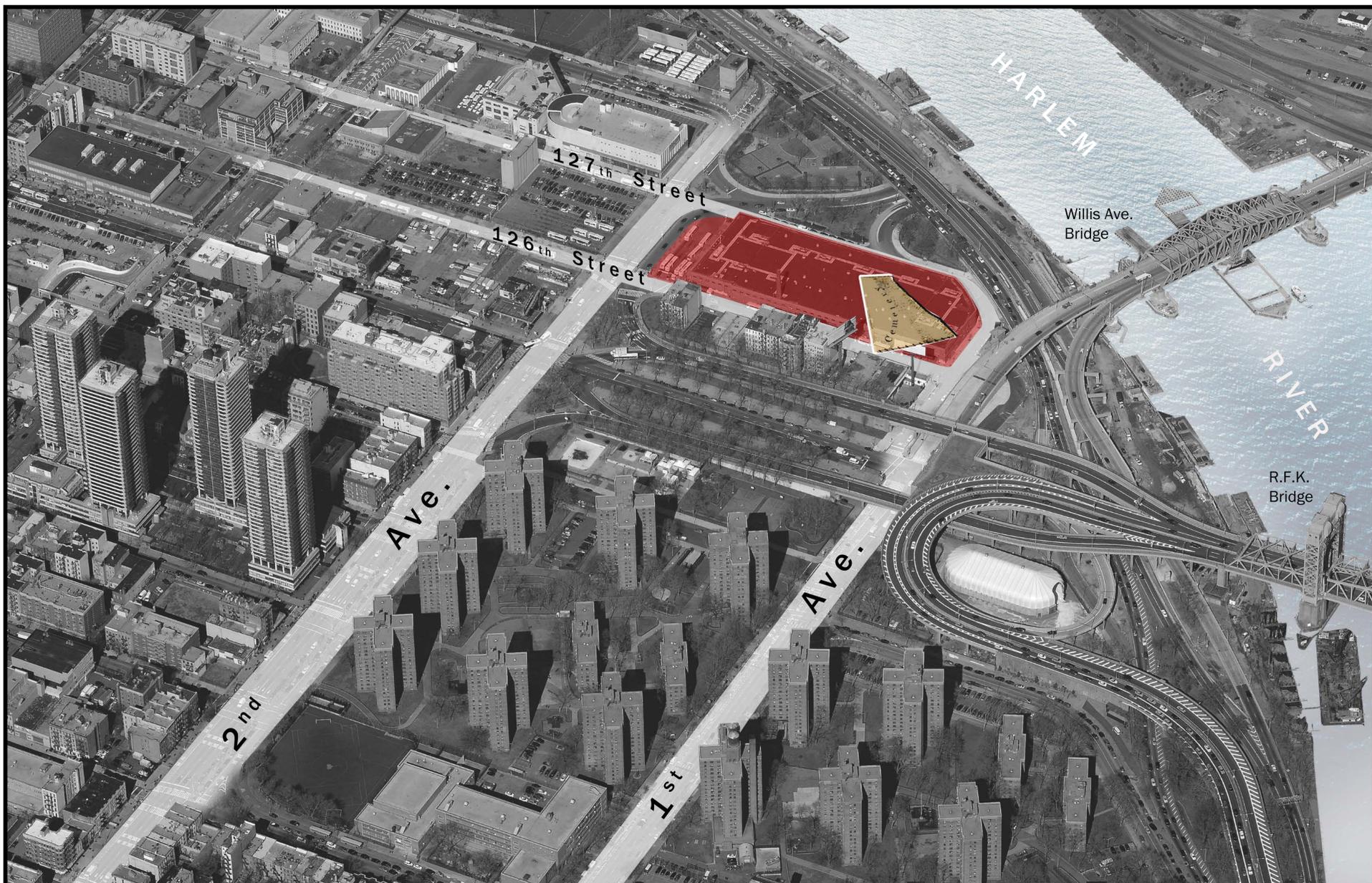


# HARLEM AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

TASK FORCE



Aerial view of the 126th Street Bus Depot (highlighted in red) and the historic boundaries of the Harlem African Burial Ground (highlighted in orange).

## Vision Statement of the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force

On this sacred indigenous tribal site near the Harlem River and East 126th Street, where the Village of Harlem was founded in 1660, lie the desecrated remains of both freed and enslaved Africans who helped build this village, city, and nation. The Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force seeks to create a profoundly visionary memorial that empowers and educates all to the continued local, national, and global struggles for social and economic justice and spiritual fulfillment.

## Mission Statement of the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force

Working with the City of New York, the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force seeks the creation of a vibrant memorial that is fully integrated into the social and economic fabric of East Harlem. The mission of the task force is to ensure that any new development on this sacred site be iconic in design and honor the lives and contributions of enslaved and free African colony and nation builders, their descendants, and indigenous people who inhabited Manhattan before the arrival of Europeans.

This unique waterfront location reveals Harlem's and New York City's rich history and inspires its social, economic and spiritual future. Its redevelopment incorporates openness, grace and innovation. Nearby Harlem River Park, Harlem River Drive, Willis Avenue Bridge, 2nd Avenue Subway, and the larger neighborhood are visually connected through elegant landscaping, architecture and urban design that highlights this place, embracing residents and visitors alike.

In this sacred memorial place, the spirits of those once forgotten will be remembered: their wisdom will be received and renewed, and their stories will take their rightful place in the rich American narrative.

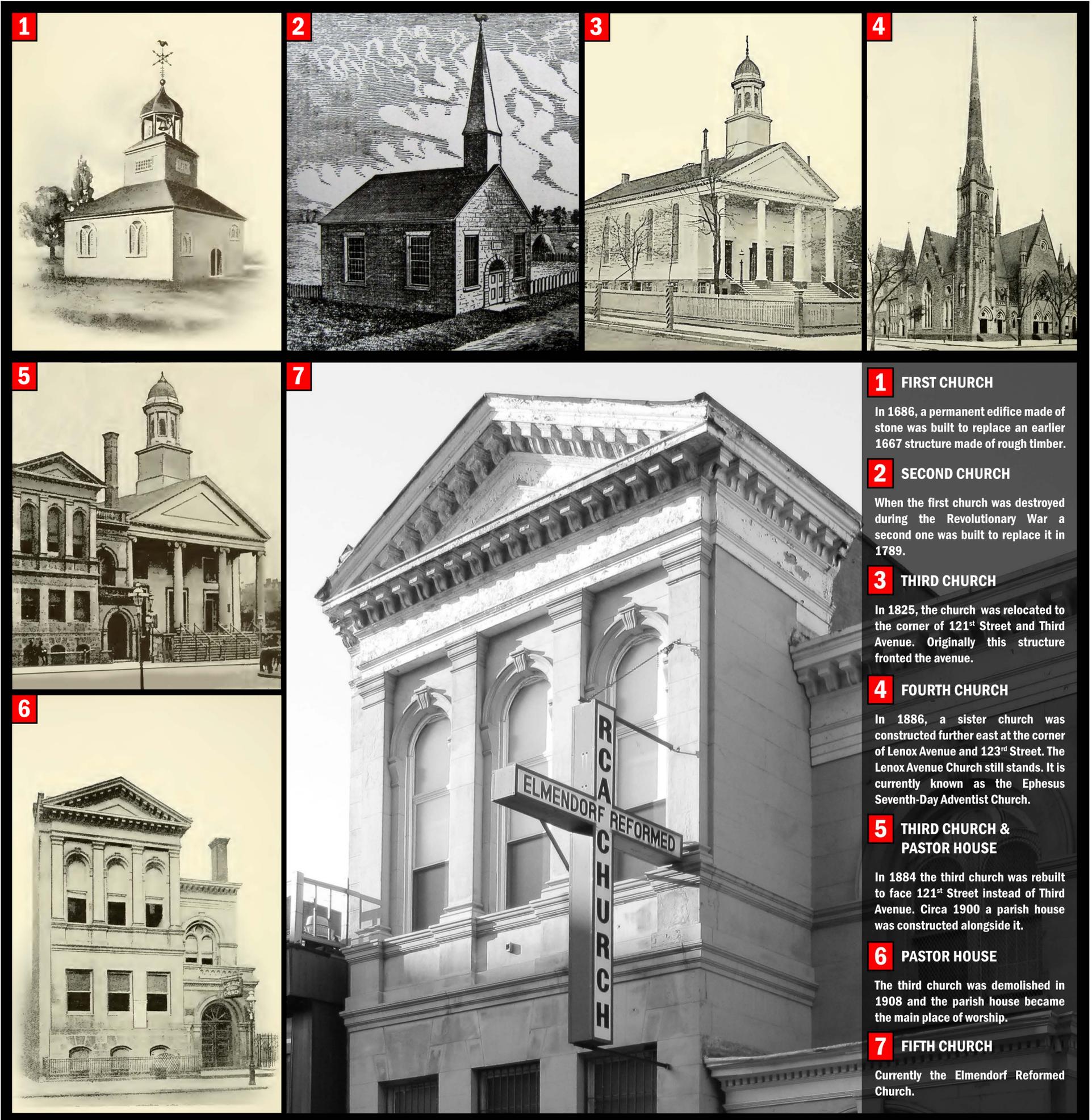


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# ELMENDORF REFORMED CHURCH

## *The Evolution of Harlem's Founding Church*



- 1 FIRST CHURCH**  
In 1686, a permanent edifice made of stone was built to replace an earlier 1667 structure made of rough timber.
- 2 SECOND CHURCH**  
When the first church was destroyed during the Revolutionary War a second one was built to replace it in 1789.
- 3 THIRD CHURCH**  
In 1825, the church was relocated to the corner of 121<sup>st</sup> Street and Third Avenue. Originally this structure fronted the avenue.
- 4 FOURTH CHURCH**  
In 1886, a sister church was constructed further east at the corner of Lenox Avenue and 123<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Lenox Avenue Church still stands. It is currently known as the Ephesus Seventh-Day Adventist Church.
- 5 THIRD CHURCH & PASTOR HOUSE**  
In 1884 the third church was rebuilt to face 121<sup>st</sup> Street instead of Third Avenue. Circa 1900 a parish house was constructed alongside it.
- 6 PASTOR HOUSE**  
The third church was demolished in 1908 and the parish house became the main place of worship.
- 7 FIFTH CHURCH**  
Currently the Elmendorf Reformed Church.

The Elmendorf Reformed Church (shown above in figure 7) is the oldest church in Harlem. It was originally established in 1660 as the Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem.

As New York City grew from small agrarian villages to a more industrialized, urban center, the Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem congregation expanded, requiring several relocations. By the early 1870s, both its cemetery for free and enslaved Africans known as the “Negro Burying Ground” and its cemetery for people of European descent known as “God’s Acre” had been sold. Many descendants of those buried in God’s Acre were contacted so that their ancestors’ bodies could be exhumed for re-interment in other cemeteries. In contrast, no arrangements were made for those of African descent. Their remains were left in the ground and the city was built on top of the Harlem African Burial Ground.



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# UPPER MANHATTAN

## Early 1600s to Mid-1800s

18th century topographical map of Upper Manhattan (N-YHS).

Modern Day Street Locations

155th ST.

145th ST.

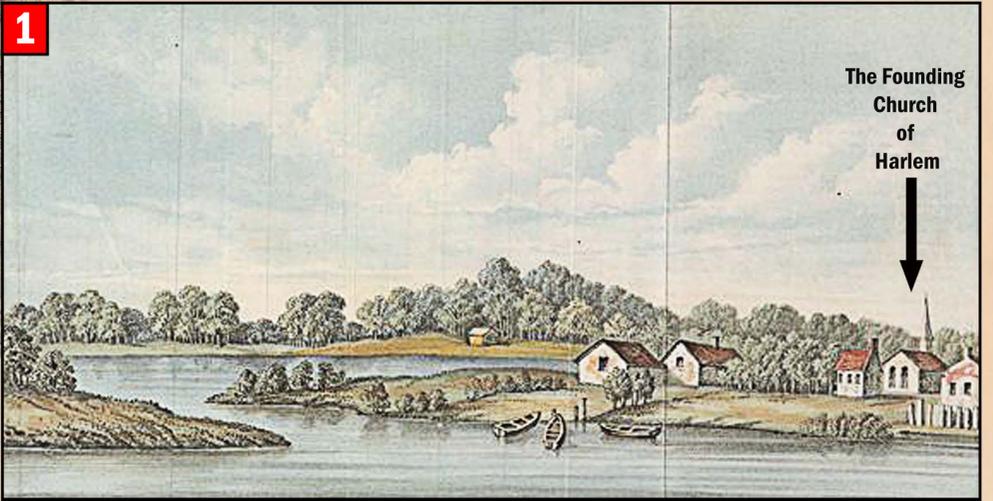
135th ST.

125th ST.

116th ST.

110th ST.

96th ST.



17th century view from Morissania (modern day Bronx) of the Village of Harlem (NYPL).

### THE VILLAGE OF HARLEM

Overlooking a gentle slope towards the Harlem River, the Village of Harlem was established by the Dutch on indigenous people's sacred land in 1660. Artifacts recovered in 1885 - which included arrowheads, flakes, and shell heaps - indicated that there was a camp or village in this area utilized for fishing as well as a possible location for river landing and trading.

The Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem (now the Elmhurst Reformed Church) created the quarter acre Harlem African Burial Ground here in the mid-1660's for people of African descent who had built, constructed and maintained the new colony's infrastructure. This burial ground was the first and only African cemetery in Harlem and the only known cemetery of its kind in Upper Manhattan. Even after the British assumed control of Manhattan Island in 1664, free and enslaved Africans continued to be interred here.

VILLAGE OF HARLEM



19th century panoramic view of the Village of Harlem from the middle of Manhattan (modern day Central Park North) (NYPL).



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# FARMING ESTATES OF HARLEM

Early 1800s to Mid-1800s

## Church & Farmlands

### MAP KEY



Historical Boundary of the Harlem African Burial Ground



Historical Boundary of the Cemetery for Persons of European Descent

1820 John Randel Farm Map (MCNY)



From the beginning, the Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem maintained two cemeteries: one for people of European descent and one for people of African descent. The Harlem River was wider than it is today and the river side of the Harlem African Burial Ground was located on marshy land that joined the wide tidal zone. Outside the village, the wealthiest members of the community maintained large properties and estates. One of these families, the Ingraham family, were prominent members of the Harlem Church going back four generations. Judge Ingraham was an elder in the Church, a member of the Church's governing body. Beginning in the 1830s, he leased the "Negro burying ground" from the Church as grazing land for his sheep and cattle, thereby beginning a long tradition of disrespect for this sacred site: funerals and burials took place as farm animals wandered on the cemetery.

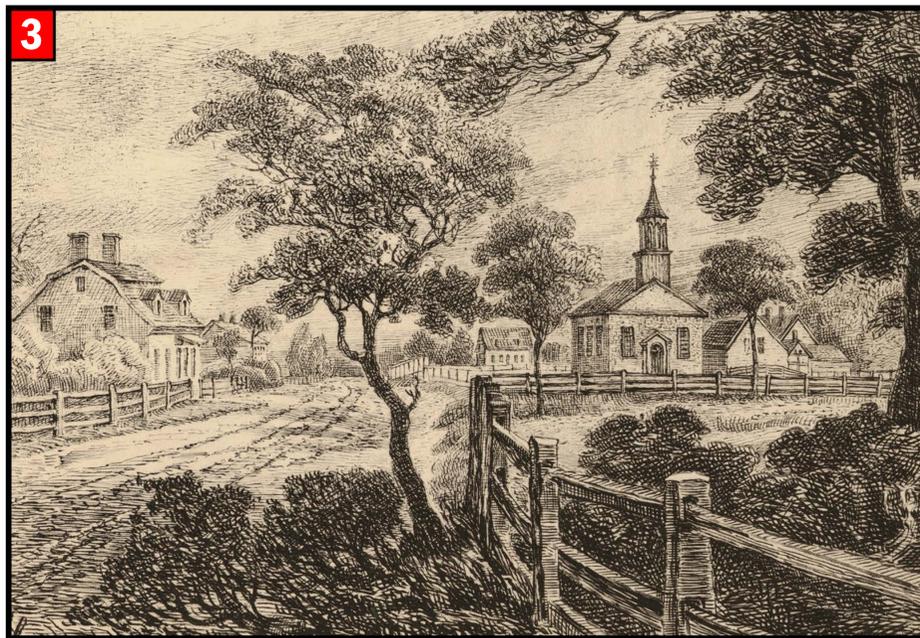


View from Church Lane of the Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem.



Home of Judge Daniel Ingraham, 1858 (NYPL).

Early 19th century view of the Village of Harlem from Church Lane / Old Harlem Road. The second church building of the Dutch Church of Harlem is seen in the middle-ground to the right (NYPL).



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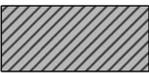


# SULZER'S HARLEM RIVER PARK

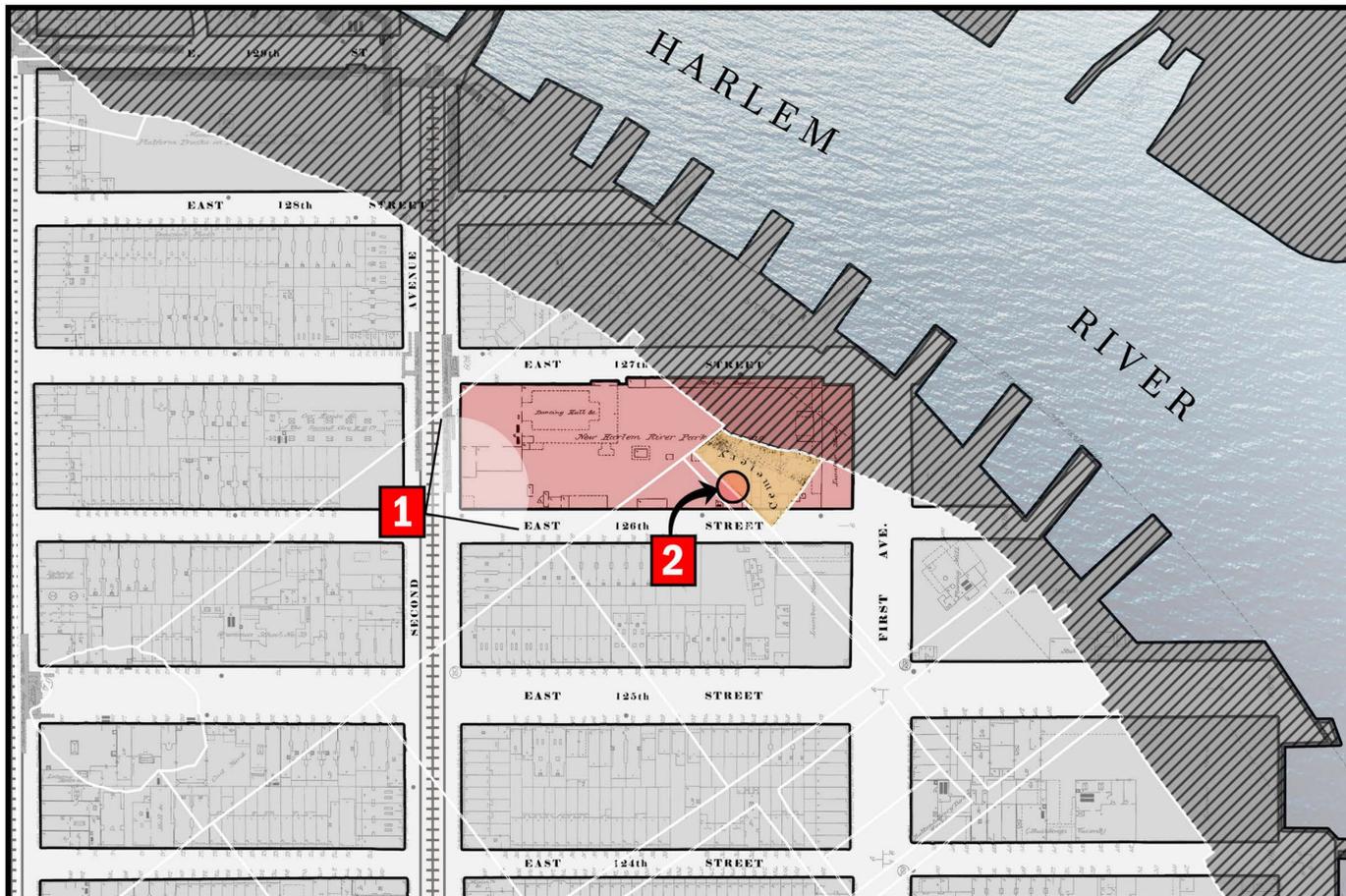
## 1885 to 1917

### Beer Garden & Casino

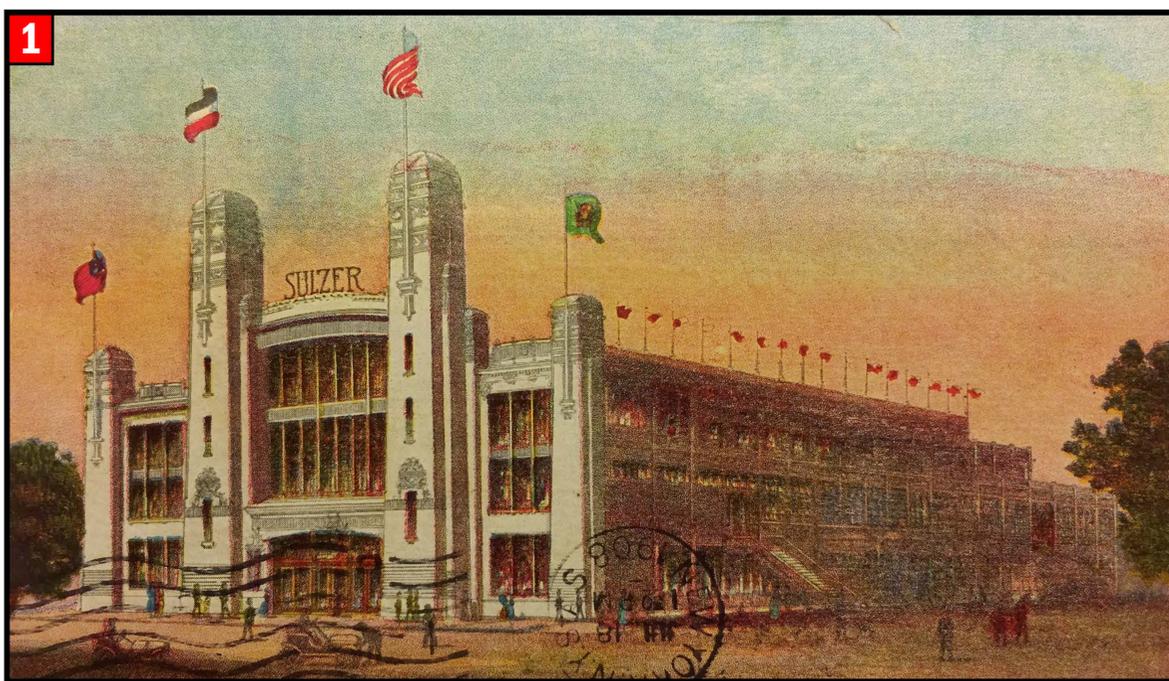
#### MAP KEY

-  Historical Boundary of the Harlem African Burial Ground
-  Project Site Block
-  Landfill - a method of creating more usable land here by depositing refuse and/or soil in the water

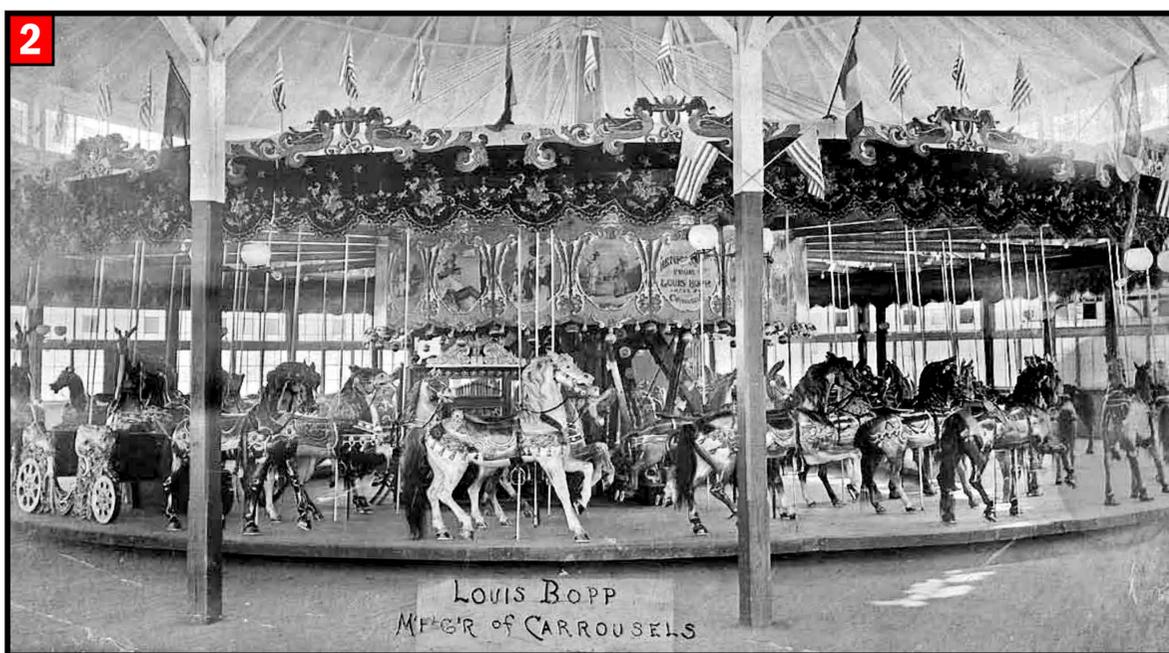
1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (NYPL)



By 1885, urbanization and the rectilinear street grid had arrived in Harlem. River life included commercial shipping, ferries, leisure boating and competitive rowing. The prominent German American Sulzer family opened one of New York City's most popular "beer gardens," Sulzer's Harlem River Park and Casino; its carousel was famous for its finely sculpted animals and bright colors. Groups of all sorts – Italian, Jewish, German, Irish and Spanish immigrant societies, as well as wrestling, archery, basketball, dancing, singing, dramatic, veterans and civic clubs – rented the Casino for private parties. These activities took place on top of the now forgotten Harlem African Burial Ground.



Tourist post card of Sulzer's Harlem River Park and Casino, view from Second Avenue (Carousel History).



Engraving of carousel designed by Louis Bopp within Sulzer's Harlem River Park (Carousel History).

Sulzer's Harlem River Park, Casino and Garden,  
 HARLEM MUSIC HALL.  
 Books open for Engagements for Balls, Banquets, Pic-Nics, etc.  
 OFFICE: 127TH STREET & SECOND AVENUE.  
 TELEPHONE: 144 HARLEM.

1892 Advertisement for the Harlem River Park (eBay post).



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# ARMY BARRACKS & MOVIE STUDIO

## 1917 to 1924

### Army Barracks; Cosmopolitan Productions

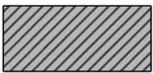
#### MAP KEY



Historical Boundary  
of the  
Harlem African  
Burial Ground

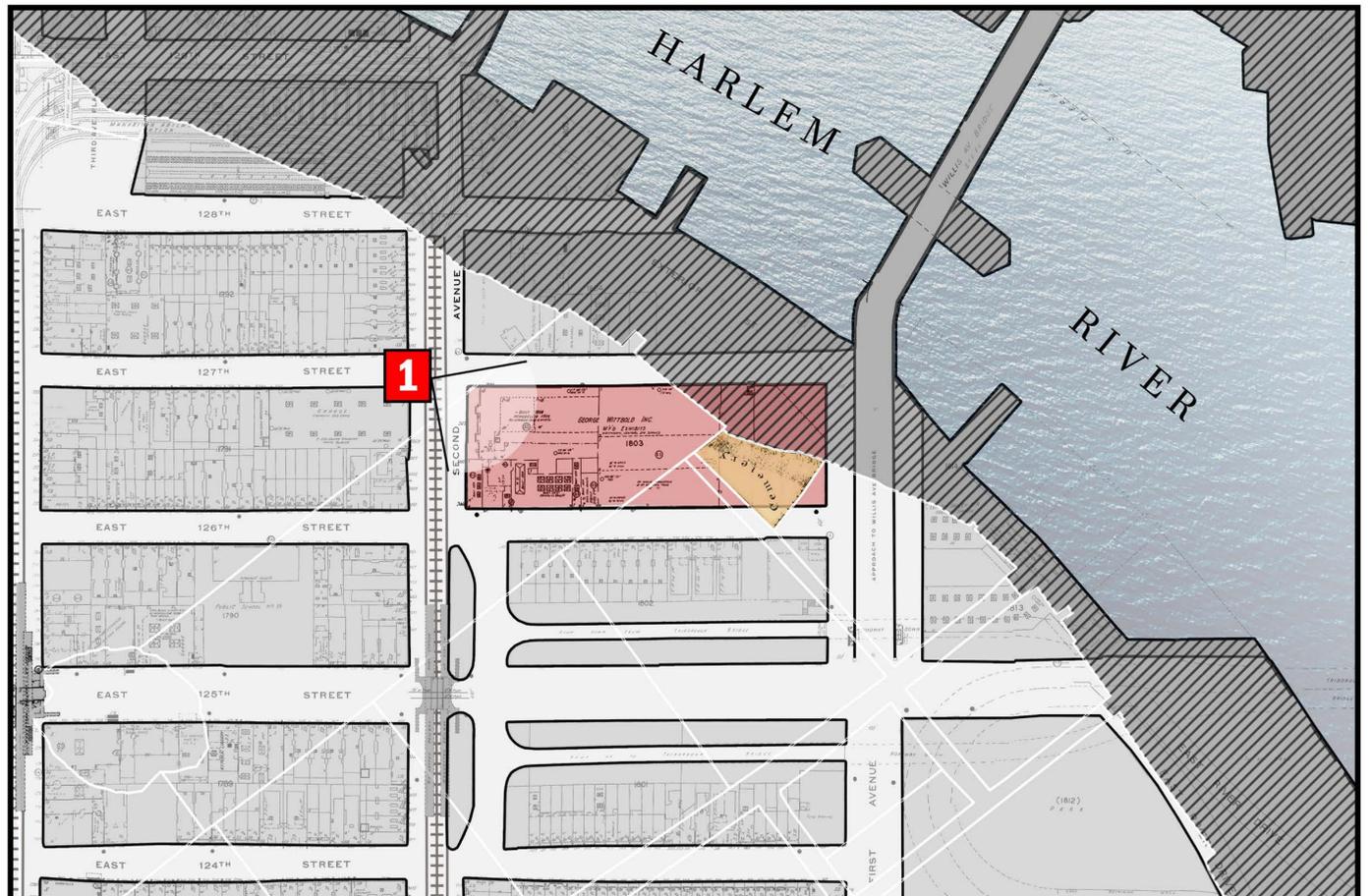


Project Site Block



Landfill - a method of  
creating more usable land  
here by depositing refuse  
and/or soil in the water

1933 Sanborn Fire  
Insurance Map (NYPL)



With the onset of World War I and the possibility of Prohibition, the Sulzer family sold the park and casino complex to the City. In 1917 and 1918, the building was converted to a barracks for the newly formed 15th New York National Guard Infantry Regiment, or 369th Regiment, an all black infantry unit with both white and black officers.

In 1918, multimillionaire and newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst bought the building, added another floor on top, and converted it to a movie studio, Cosmopolitan Productions. Interior spaces were redesigned as movie sets and more than forty major films, many featuring Hearst's mistress, actress Marion Davies, were made here; these movies represented the best final efforts of the silent film era.

The complicated work and daily lives of enlisted soldiers, army officers, movie directors, set designers, actors and actresses all took place in the large, frequently remodeled and increasingly industrial building that was built over the now many times desecrated "Negro burying ground."



**Cosmopolitan Productions  
movie studio building.  
c. 1923 (MCNY).**

These soldiers, ultimately known in the United States as the Harlem Hellfighters and in France as the Black Rattlers or Men of Bronze, fought valiantly against the Germans in World War I and were among the most decorated of all American units, receiving numerous medals for valor and heroism. c. 1918 (NYPL).



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# 126<sup>th</sup> STREET BUS DEPOT

## 1940s to Present

### N.Y.C. Transit Authority Bus Garage

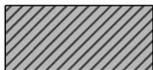
#### MAP KEY



Historical Boundary of the Harlem African Burial Ground

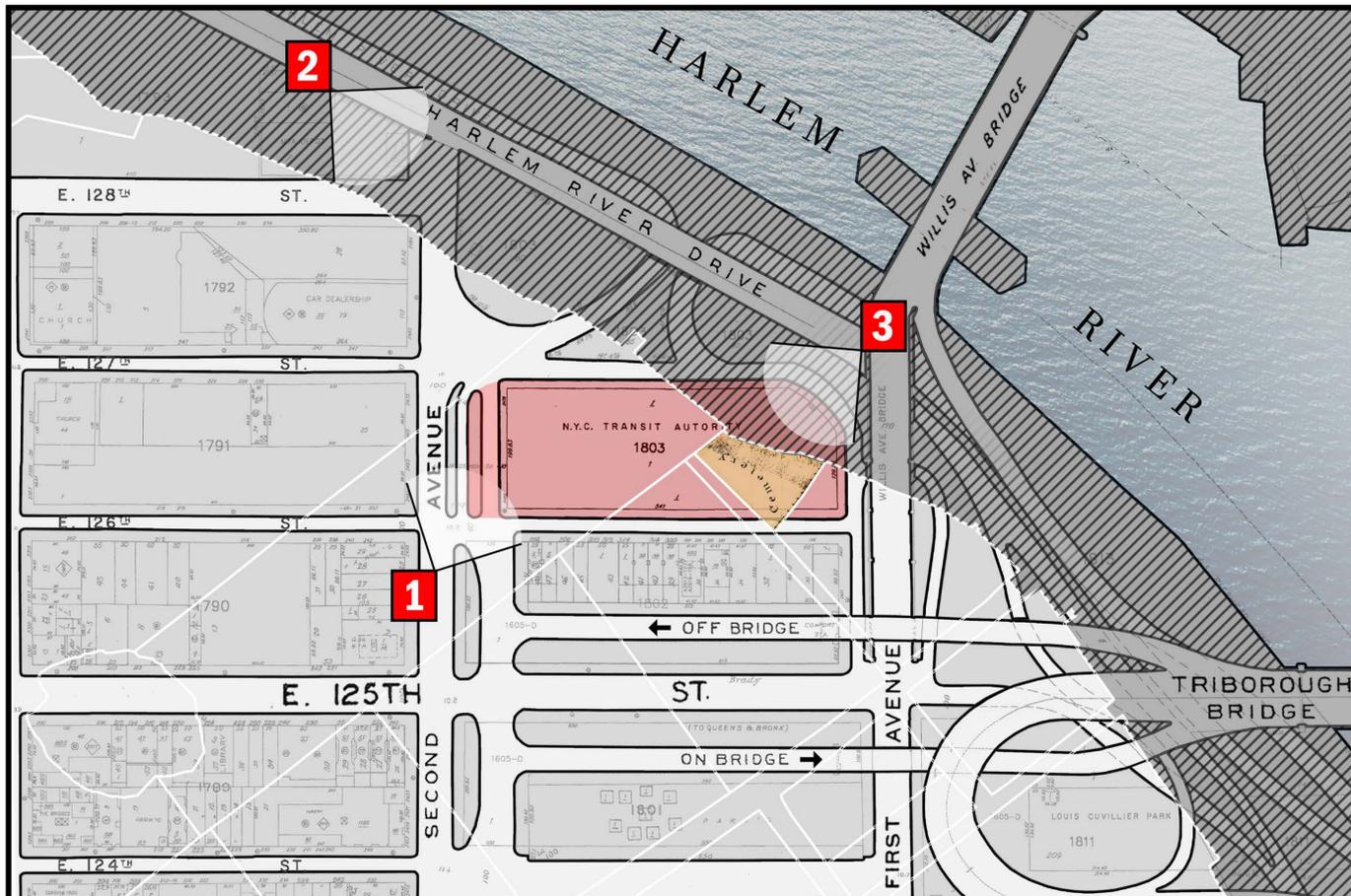


Project Site Block



Landfill - a method of creating more usable land here by depositing refuse and/or soil in the water

2014 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (NYPL)



After the Hearst movie studio closed and was torn down, the Third Avenue Railway Company built a trolley barn to house its trolley cars/buses, which were no longer connected to rails embedded in the avenue. In 1962, the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority (now New York City Transit Authority) purchased the privately controlled bus depot and the City of New York took control of the land. After acknowledgment of the existence of the colonial Harlem African Burial Ground under the depot, together with New York City Transit Authority's reassessment of its transportation infrastructure needs, the bus depot was vacated in 2015. Operations formerly conducted in the depot were moved offsite.



View of the bus depot from 2nd Avenue and 126th Street, circa 1940 (Photo, NYC Municipal Archives).



Aerial view of the bus depot looking East towards Randall's Island (Library of Congress).



View of the bus depot from the walkway on the Willis Avenue Bridge (Photo, Henry Ballard Terepka).



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# THE NAMES OF THOSE INTERRED

## IN THE *African burying ground at Harlem*

These individuals have been identified in historical records as those buried in the Harlem African Burial Ground. Described in documents as colored, Negro or African, these enslaved and free people sacrificed their freedom of movement, dignity and humanity to provide labor that fueled and helped to sustain all aspects of New York's increasing development and modernization. With continued research by members of the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force and associated scholars, the life stories and personal contributions of these individuals and their families will enrich our understanding of New York City history. Historical materials being studied include sources as varied as detailed sacramental notes composed by clergy, church financial ledgers, census data, city directories and local histories.

JANE ANTHONY  
FRANCIS ARMSTRONG  
(NO NAME) ARMSTRONG  
JOSEPH ATTINELLI  
BENJAMIN PEARSALL BENEDICT  
HENRY BLAKE  
(CHILD) BLAKE  
FRANKLIN BUTLER  
HERMAN CANON  
JANE CANON  
ROBERT CHURCH  
SARAH LOUISA COLE  
CHARLES B. CONNER  
HENRY B. EDWARDS  
MARY ELIZABETH FERGUSON  
ELIZABETH FRANCISCO  
WION FRANCISCO  
HENRIETTA FRASER  
ARETAS HAGERMAN  
CATHERINE AMELIA HAGERMAN  
GEORGE WASHINGTON HAGERMAN  
PHOEBE TAMAR CANON BLAKE HAGERMAN  
LYDIA ELIZA HAGERMAN  
ISABELLA IRVINE  
MARGARET JAPAN  
JACOB JEPAIN  
JULIA ANN JOHNSON  
WILLIAM LAIGHT  
GEORGE NICHOLS  
ROSEANNE NICHOLS  
DANIEL W. PARKER  
JANE PEARSALL  
CHRISTINE ROBINSON  
SUSAN SAYERS  
EMILY SCOLES  
WILLIAM SCOLEY SHAW  
MARY STEWART  
MARGARET WALKER  
ISRAEL WILLIAMS

# THREE GENERATIONS OF ONE FAMILY

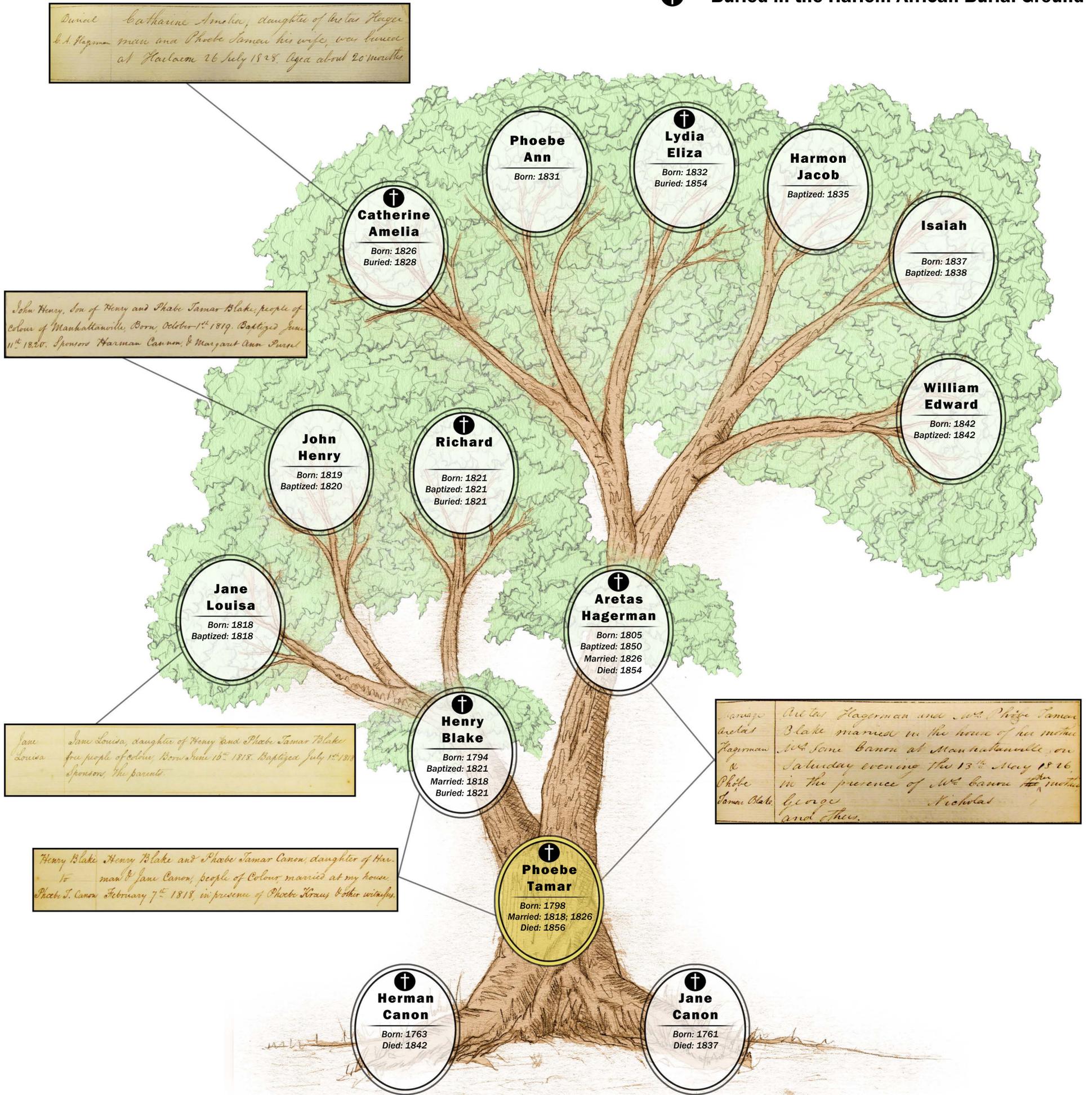
IN THE

*African burying ground at Harlem*

## PHOEBE TAMAR CANON BLAKE HAGERMAN

Three generations of the family of Phoebe Tamar are buried in the Harlem African Burial Ground. Her parents are Herman and Jane. Her first husband was Henry Blake. He was baptized as an adult when he was ill on the same day that the couple's new little baby Richard, also ill, was baptized. Both Henry and the little baby died almost immediately afterwards. Phoebe Tamar's second husband was Aretas Hagerman. He too, at Phoebe Tamar's insistence, was baptized as an adult and at his death was buried in the Harlem African Burial Ground. Altogether, Phoebe Tamar buried both of her parents, both of her husbands and three of her nine children in the Harlem African Burial Ground before she herself was buried there in 1856.

† Buried in the Harlem African Burial Ground



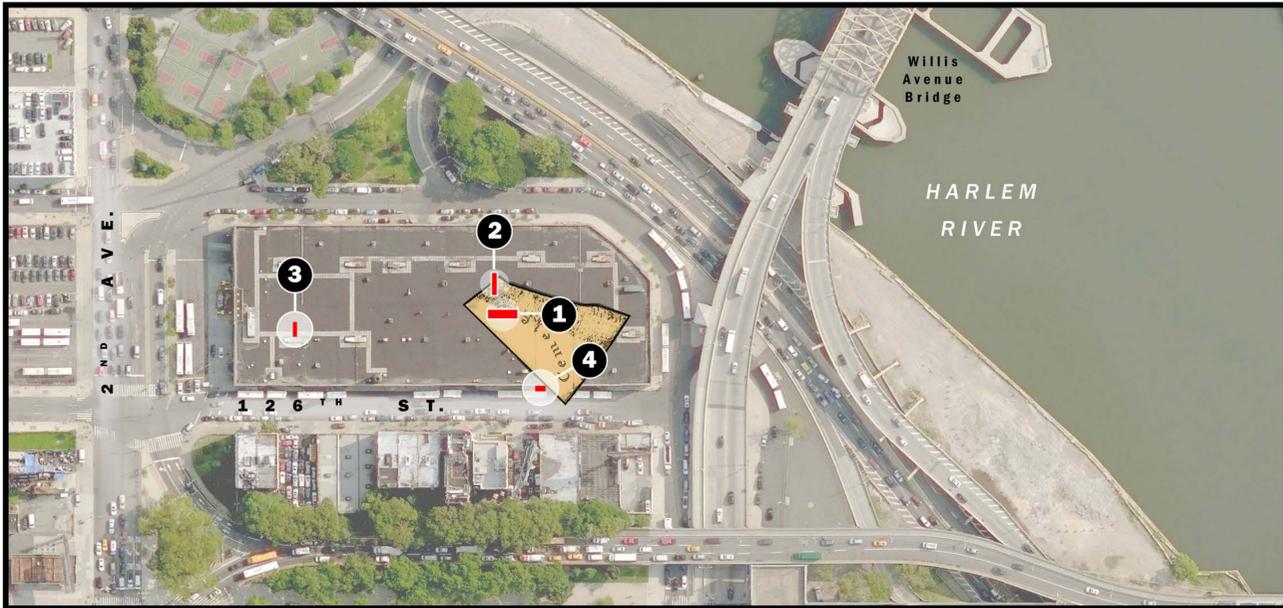
The archival records of St. Michael's Church (located on 99th Street and Amsterdam Avenue) and St. Mary's Church (located on 126th Street between Amsterdam and Broadway Avenues) contain information about three generations of one family buried in the Harlem African Burial Ground. Church records do not reveal every birth, baptism, marriage or death detail of every person, but they do give enough information to enable historians to form a complete picture.

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

## AT THE *African burying ground at Harlem*

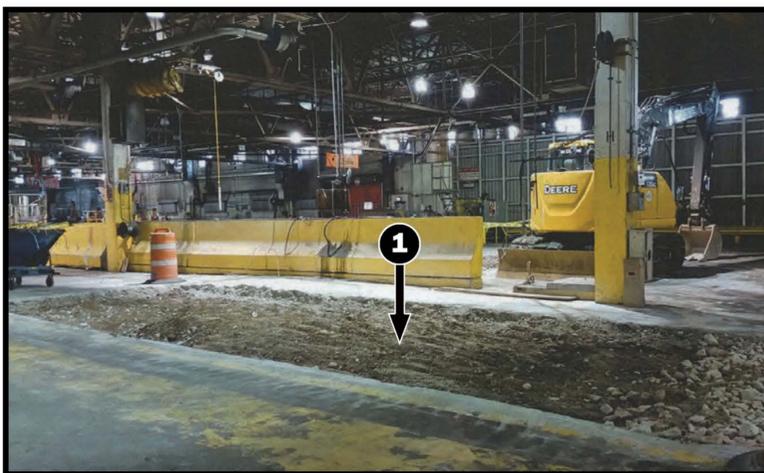
The New York City Economic Development Corporation hired environmental planning and engineering consultants, AKRF, Inc. to conduct a Phase I-B Preliminary Archaeological Investigation. Subsurface testing was limited in scope; its purpose was to identify the presence or absence of important buried resources. In Trench 2 (1 of 4 test pits excavated at the 126th Street Bus Depot), disarticulated human remains were found along with other archaeological artifacts. All recovered artifacts have been safely secured in accordance with approved city and state archaeological protocols.

City and state archaeological protocols dictate that an archaeologist must be on site when any future construction occurs.



### TRENCH LOCATION MAP

- Trench Locations & Their Respective Dimensions**
- 1** TRENCH 1 (38ft. x 13ft. x 6.5ft. depth)  
No evidence of former cemetery
  - 2** TRENCH 2 (6ft. x 25ft. x 9ft. depth)  
Disarticulated human skeletal remains
  - 3** TRENCH 3 (3.5ft. x 17ft. x 9.5ft. depth)  
No evidence of historic features
  - 4** TRENCH 4 (9.5ft. x 6ft. x 5.5ft. depth)  
No evidence of former cemetery
- Harlem African Burial Ground Historical Footprint**



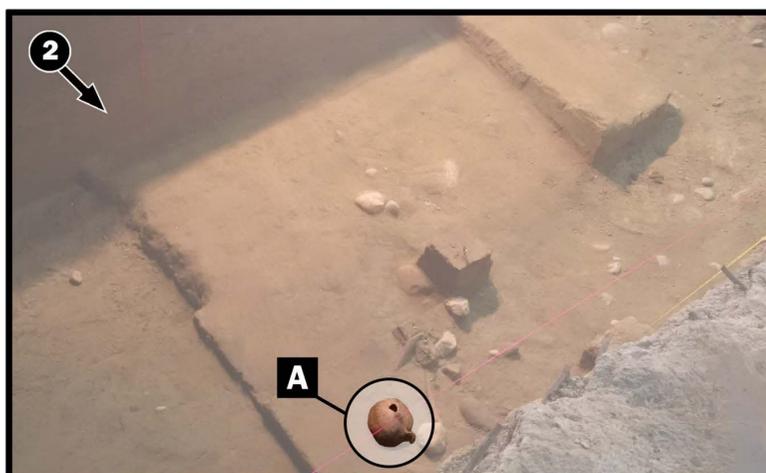
View of Trench 1 as the concrete floor is removed. (Photo, AKRF).



Trench 1 excavated to a level of four feet below ground (photo, AKRF).



Archaeologist locates a skull fragment in Trench 2 (photo, T. Lunke).



Skull fragment shown within Trench 2 (photo, T. Lunke).



Ceremony to bless remains and re-consecrate the Burial Ground, Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Singletary officiating (photo, T. Lunke).



Skull fragment found in Trench 2 packed in a white evidence box (photo, T. Lunke).

The medical illustrations in Figure A depicting the profile and top of a human skull is intended to identify the human remains shown in the adjacent photographs.

The medical illustrations in Figure B depicting the profile and base of a human skull is intended to identify the human remains shown in the adjacent photograph.

