

Morningside Heights & Harlem



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“Students and professionals of all kinds flock to the area for good property values and increasing opportunity.”

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS & HARLEM

Full of History and Legend

Harlem is the section of Manhattan that lies north of 110th Street and south of the Harlem River, bounded by Fifth Avenue to the East and Morningside and St. Nicholas Avenues to the West. Rich in cultural significance, Harlem has undergone numerous transformations in the history of American life. Filled with some of the world’s most distinctive brownstone architecture and renowned artistic institutions, Harlem today draws students and professionals to its treasure trove of opportunity



Today, Harlem continues to enjoy a resurgence of popularity. Even former President of the United States William Jefferson Clinton has chosen to establish his private office in Harlem.

and property investments, centered around a renaissance in development at 125th Street. Adjacent to this area, from about 106th Street to about 123rd Street between Morningside Park and Riverside Park, is Morningside Heights. This area is full of rich history and cultural attractions supported by the large number of students, academics and families that keep the area welcoming and vibrant.

Neighborhood History

The Harlem of today was originally settled by Dutch farmers who dubbed the area Nieuw Haarlem in 1658 after the Dutch city of Harlem. Since it was so far removed from the more settled areas of New York during the Dutch, British and colonial periods, the area mostly remained an autonomous village. The flat, rich, eastern portion was utilized as fertile farmland, while some of New York’s most illustrious early families, like the Delanceys, Bleekers, Rikers, Beekmans, and Hamiltons kept large estates in the high western section of the land.

While much of the land was left untouched in the early 1800s, many of the farms suffered from decades of cultivation and depletion and were abandoned, leaving great estates to be sold at public auctions. It is then that the area became a refuge for those seeking cheap property and living space, especially immigrants, who gathered in the scattered shantytowns. Transport was by horsecar lines and a steamboat that ran summers from 125th Street to Peck Slip.

With the advent of newer and far better modes of transportation, in addition to the waves of increasing population following the Civil War, Harlem began to enjoy a transformation, becoming a middle- and upper-middle class neighborhood in the 1880s. Though the New York and Harlem Railroad had been in operation from lower Manhattan to Harlem since 1837, service had been unreliable, making the

trip uncomfortably long. The true catalyst for new residential development came with the arrival of three elevated rail lines which, by 1881, traveled as far north as 129th Street, and went even further north by 1886.

First, tenements were built in East Harlem and apartments extended north from the Upper West Side. The population became increasingly German, with much of the housing consisting of brownstones. Between 1898 and 1904, several attractive “new law” tenements and spacious elevated apartment buildings sprang into existence, driven by the addition of extended subway lines along Lenox Avenue. During this time, the area between 110th and 125th Streets attracted many eastern European Jews seeking to escape from the tenements of Manhattan’s Lower East Side. At this time, the black population was increasingly drawn to areas around 135th Street, which had far less racism and violence than other parts of the city. Though such organizations as the West Side Improvement Association tried to exclude blacks, they had little impact, as real estate agents welcomed all tenants willing to pay full rent for vacant apartments.

The Harlem Opera House was established in 1889 to service the growing Harlem population, and the Afro-American Realty Company of Philip Payton was particularly active in encouraging more black tenants to move to the neighborhood between 1904 and 1908. Several black churches began to form, including the St. James Presbyterian Church, which moved to Harlem from West 51st Street in 1914. And because it had the second largest Jewish population in the United States next to the Lower East Side, Harlem also gained a number of significant synagogues, including the Institutional Synagogue, founded in 1917 by Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein.

By World War I, Harlem was experiencing another decline, due to severe overcrowding. Jews relocated to newer neighborhoods on the West Side and in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Many of the large synagogue buildings were sold to churches during the 1920s and 30s. During this time, the number of blacks in Harlem increased to more than 200,000, mainly coming from the American South and the Caribbean. Soon the area attracted blacks from throughout the nation as economic opportunities continued to increase, coupled with a burgeoning cultural life.

The literary movement known as The Harlem Renaissance was launched by such prominent Harlem writers as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston, making Harlem the urban cultural center of black America. Unique, distinctive painting styles were founded, while new forms of theater, dance, and comedy performance gained popularity at the Apollo Theater. Jazz music was born in the late 1920s from the efforts of early piano greats James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, and Willie Smith. For the next 25 years, such musicians as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Chick Webb performed big band jazz at Harlem nightclubs.

By the 1940s, the local branch of the YMCA had become a meeting place for black intellectuals, artists, and writers. The musical jazz style “bebop” was developed by local musicians like Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk, and in its heyday, Harlem enjoyed its place as a symbolic neighborhood for black success and independence. Harlem was also the center for many outstanding black-owned businesses and political activity.

By the 1960s, the center for black cultural life had changed to Greenwich Village. Civil rights protests, demonstrations, and riots plagued Harlem through the 1970s, along with a decline in high school graduates. But in 1989, Harlem once

Schools

A. Philips Campus High School,
Convent Avenue & 135th Street

Bank Street College of Education,
610 West 112th Street

Barnard College,
3009 Broadway

Boricua College,
3755 Broadway

College of New Rochelle,
144 West 125th Street

Columbia University,
2960 Broadway

CUNY- City College,
138th Street & Convent Avenue

Dance Theater of Harlem Inc.,
466 West 152nd Street

Harlem School of Technology,
215 West 125th Street

Harlem School of the Arts,
645 St. Nicholas Avenue

IS195 Roberto Clemente School,
625 West 133rd Street

Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 3080 Broadway

JHS043 Adam C. Powell School,
509 West 129th Street

Manhattan School of Music,
120 Claremont Avenue

New York College of Podiatric Medicine, 1800 Park Avenue

PS028 Wright Brothers School,
475 West 155th Street

PS036 Margaret Douglas School,
123 Morningside Drive

PS046 Tappan School,
2987 Frederick Douglass Boulevard

PS123 Mahalia Jackson School,
301 West 140th Street

PS125 Ralph Bunche School,
425 West 123rd Street

PS133 Fred R. Moore School,
2121 Fifth Avenue

PS144 Hans C. Anderson School,
134 West 122nd Street

PS149 Sojourner Truth School,
41 West 117th Street

PS153 Adam C. Powell School,
1750 Amsterdam Avenue

PS161 Pedro A. Campos School,
499 West 133rd Street

PS175-IS Henry H. Garnet,
175 West 134th Street

PS180 Hugo Newman School,
370 West 120th Street

PS185 John M. Langston School,
20 West 112 Street

PS192 Jacob H. Schiff School,
500 West 138th Street

PS194 Countee Cullen School,
244 West 144th Street

PS197 John Russwurm School,
2230 Fifth Avenue

PS200 James Smith School,
2589 Seventh Avenue

PS207 Norbert Rillieux School,
41 West 117th Street

PS208 Alain L. Locke School,
21 West 111th Street

PS241 Family Academy,
240 West 113th Street

PS76 A. Philip Randolph School,
220 West 121st Street

PS92 Mary M. Bethune School,
222 West 134th Street

PSIS223 Mott Hall School,
West 131st Street & Convent Avenue

Rice High School,
74 West 124th Street

**Teachers College, Columbia
University,** 525 West 120th Street

Wadleigh High School,
215 West 114th Street

Restaurants/Bars

Amy Ruth's, 113 West 116th Street between Lenox & 7th Avenues, is the type of homey, unpretentious restaurant that you might expect to find in the Deep South. Attracting neighborhood locals and Harlem celebrities, this neighborhood favorite stays busy from breakfast all the way through to late night dinner. 212. 280. 8779

again gained in stature with the election of Mayor David N. Dinkins, the first black mayor of New York City.


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Notables

Morningside Heights Just north and west of Central Park is Morningside Heights, where a cultural outpost grew at the end of the 19th century, thanks to the emergence of the relocated Columbia University, St. Luke's Hospital and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The cluster of academic and religious institutions that developed here somehow kept these blocks stable during years when the surrounding neighborhoods were collapsing. More recently, West Side gentrification has reclaimed the section to the south, while areas north and east have not changed much. This is an uptown student neighborhood mainly; while less trendy than the Village, it remains fun, friendly and intellectual.

Boys Choir of Harlem, 2005 Madison Avenue between 127th & 128th Streets, is a complete educational center that utilizes music as the motivator and catalyst for engaging students in the learning process. Music is the vehicle through which the students transfer their higher skills to academics, imagination and creativity. The center teaches students positive behaviors, social abilities, verbal and communications skills. Performances by the students of the Boys Choir of Harlem are world-renowned.





*Low Memorial Library, Columbia University.
A gift of Seth Low, former Mayor of Brooklyn
and Columbia President in 1890.*

Bayou, 308 Lenox Avenue between 125th & 126th Streets. As the name implies, Bayou is a distinctly Cajun dining experience. It serves up everything from crawfish etouffee to cornmeal-crust oysters and has been noted as some of the best southern fare outside of New Orleans. 212. 426. 3800

Cotton Club, 656 West 125th Street & Twelfth Avenue, is where couples go to swing dance in a recreation of the fabled Jazz Age nightclub. 212. 663. 7980

Kitchenette Uptown, 1272 Amsterdam Avenue between 122nd & 123rd Streets, is a homey, "country in the city" comfort-food spot renowned for its bunch. 212. 531. 7600

Lenox Lounge, 288 Lenox Avenue 125th Street, has been in business since 1939, offering live nightly music in a deco décor. 212. 427. 0253

Londel's Supper Club, 2620 Frederick Douglass Boulevard between 139th & 140th Streets. A charming destination, Londel's is known for excellent Soul Food, great atmosphere, and an extensive but inexpensive brunch. 212. 234. 6114

Miss Mamie's Spoonbread Too, 366 West 110th Street, between Manhattan & Columbus Avenues, is the sibling to Miss Maude's. Featuring the same hospitable feel and downhome menu, Mamie's is a favorite of everyone from Columbia students to adventurous businessmen and Bill Clinton. 212. 865. 6744

Miss Maude's Spoonbread Too, 547 Lenox Avenue at 137th Street, has a succulent menu of favorites including catfish, collard greens, smothered chicken, southern style meatloaf and candied yams, all in a homey atmosphere decorated with vintage Harlem photographs. 212. 690. 3100

Rao's, 455 E 114th Street at Pleasant Avenue. This legendary family-style Italian restaurant serves celebrity regulars like Martin Scorsese, so patience is in order when trying to get a reservation. 212. 722. 6709

Slice of Harlem, 308 Malcolm X Boulevard. Aptly named, Slice of Harlem serves up tasty slices of Harlem's best pizza. 212. 862. 4089

St. Nick's Pub, 773 St. Nicholas Avenue, between 147 & 148th Streets, is a place to go to hear live jazz and

blues in a great environment.
212. 283. 9728

Sylvia's, 328 Lenox Avenue, between 126th & 127th Street, is a boisterous soul food favorite offering weekend jazz and gospel brunches.
212. 996. 0660

Museums/Galleries/Theaters

African American Wax Museum, 318 West 115th Street, between Frederick Douglass Boulevard & Manhattan Avenue. Created by Raven Chanticleer, the museum features wax figures of notables such as former NYC Mayor David Dinkins, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X.

Apollo Theater, 253 West 125th Street & Eighth Avenue. Built in 1914, The Apollo Theater is a place of legend where many of the greatest comedians, dancers, and musicians got their start. It played a pivotal role in the development of bebop, rhythm & blues, modern jazz, gospel, soul, and funk, and is still a pacesetter today.

The Black Fashion Museum, 155 West 126th Street between Malcolm X & Adam Clayton Powell Boulevards, displays costumes from black theater & film productions. Visit by appointment only.

Harlem Opera House, 207 West 125th Street at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard. Opened in 1889 by Oscar Hammerstein, it was purchased in 1922 by Frank Schiffman and Leo Brecher. The Opera House is a grand arts structure with 1540 seats.

Magic Johnson Harlem USA Theaters, a movie house at West 124th Street & Fredrick Douglass Boulevard

Museum of The City of NY, 1220 Fifth Avenue & 103rd Street, is a private, not-for-profit educational corporation founded in 1923 for the purpose of presenting the history of New York City and its people as a learning resource. The Museum fulfills its mission through exhibitions, educational activities, and publications and by acquiring, preserving, and documenting original cultural materials that reflect New York City's history. In carrying out its mission, the Museum provides New Yorkers and visitors an understanding of the individual and shared heritages that have characterized New York City, and the sense of identity that is essential to the well being of all



The famed Sylvia's restaurant on Lenox Avenue



Grant's Tomb on Riverside Drive

members of the community.

Studio Museum in Harlem, located on 125th Street (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard) between Lenox Avenue & Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevards (Seventh Avenue), offers guided tours by appointment, workshops, readings, concerts, lectures, symposia, seminars, a museum/school cooperative program, community out-reach lectures, research, documentation, films, and membership programs.

Parks

Jackie Robinson Park, bounded by West 145th & 155th Streets, Edgecombe & Bradhurst Avenues. The historic park opened as a playground owned by the city in 1911. Today, it offers swimming, concerts, volleyball, rollerskating, basketball, and more. In 1978, the park, originally called Colonial Park, was renamed after Brooklyn Dodger Jackie Robinson, the first African American Major League baseball player.

Marcus Garvey Park, between 120th & 124th Streets and Madison Avenue & Mt. Morris Pk. West, is one of the oldest public squares in Manhattan. The Park dates back to the 1811 Commissioner's Plan for Manhattan, but it officially opened in December of 1840. Originally known as Mount Morris Park, it was renamed by the City Council after black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey in 1973. It includes a swimming pool, recreation center and amphitheater.

Riverside Park, spanning more than four miles along the Hudson River's shoreline. Riverside Park begins just west of Lincoln Center and continues to the northern edge of Morningside Heights. The park winds through a series of promenades and exotic flora with cycling, skating and walking paths.

St. Nicholas Park, between 127th & 141th Streets, Edgecomb & St. Nicholas Avenues, is a 24-acre Urban Nature Park owned by York City Council and managed by a local community group called 'The Friends of St Nicholas Fields,' a registered charity. The 'friends' and many other supporters have planted thousands of trees, created a butterfly walk, and built an adventure playground, a mini Stonehenge and a BMX track.



Shopping

Bola International Boutique,
2 West 125th Street 212.831.7199

Clothes Art,
228 West 135th Street 212.694.3590

Harlem Collective,
2533 Frederick Douglass Boulevard
212.368.0520

**Harlem USA Retail and
Entertainment Center,**
125th Street & Frederick Douglass
Boulevard 212.662.8999

Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market,
Fifth Avenue between 115th & 116th
Streets 212.987.8131

Gyms and Health Clubs

New York Sports Clubs,
2311 Frederick Douglass Boulevard

NYC Fitness,
3552 Broadway

Serge Gym,
104 West 145th Street

YMCA of Greater NY: Harlem,
180 West 135th Street

Dance Theatre of Harlem, 466 West 152nd Street, between Amsterdam & St. Nicholas Streets. Famous as America's first culturally diverse neo-classical ballet company, Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) was founded in 1969 by Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook. The company is now widely recognized as a major cultural institution encompassing a world-class ballet company, a school of dance, and a national and international arts education and community outreach program.

Grant's Tomb, Riverside Drive & 122nd Street, is where Civil War general and two-term president Ulysses S. Grant and his wife Julia Dent Grant lay to rest. Opened in 1897, nearly 12 years after Grant's death, it was a more popular sight than the Statue of Liberty until the end of World War I. The towering granite tomb is the largest mausoleum in North America, and it is engraved with "Let Us Have Peace," in remembrance of Grant's speech to the Republican convention upon his presidential nomination.

Morris-Jumel Mansion, Edgecomb Avenue between West 160th Street & West 162nd Street, is one of the only remaining buildings constructed before the American Revolution. Built in 1765 as a summer retreat for British Colonel Roger Morris and his wife Mary Philipse, this giant home features a two-story portico and long octagonal wing that is the first of its kind in America, making it a fine early example of the Palladian style architecture. With the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, the Morrises vacated the premises and it became headquarters to George Washington. French Merchant Stephen Jumel and his wife Eliza bought the estate in 1810 and lived there until 1865. The City of New York purchased the land in 1903 and restored nine period rooms.

Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street. A colossal cathedral, and the largest church in the United States, it has a 601-foot-long nave that holds about 5,000 worshipers and a 162-foot-tall domed crossing. The cathedral is also the principal church of the Episcopal diocese of New York. Five portals arch over its entrance doors, the central one depicting St. John witnessing the Transfiguration of Jesus. The cathedral's first cornerstone was laid in 1892, then a major architectural direction change came in 1911 at the hands of Ralph Adams Cram, who made a drastic switch from the Romanesque-Byzantine design and insisted on a French Gothic style. Evidence of both periods can be seen. The spectacular Great Rose Window in the western façade is made from more than 10,000 pieces of colored glass, and is the largest stained-glass window in the United States. Along with Sunday services, the cathedral runs many community outreach programs, has changing museum and art gallery displays, supports artists-in-residence and an early music consortium, and presents a complete calendar of non-religious concerts.

Duke Ellington Circle, 110th Street & Fifth Avenue. This memorial to the Duke stands 25 feet tall and overlooks Central Park. The sculpture of Edward Kennedy Ellington is the first monument in New York City dedicated to an African American and the first memorial in the United States to Ellington. A composer, orchestra conductor, and musician, "Duke" Ellington elevated jazz to what is considered to be the most American of art forms.

Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway between 122nd & 123rd Streets. Founded in 1887 to train Conservative rabbis and encourage the traditions of Judaism in America, the seminary also trains cantors and has been admitting women since the 1970s.

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