

SG-2055

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Harlem African Burial Ground
other names/site number Negro Burying Ground; Negro Burial Ground; NYSHPO USN#06101.019103
name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 2460 Second Avenue not for publication
city or town Manhattan (Borough 1, Block 1803, Lot 1) vicinity
state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10035

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
national statewide X local
Roger Daniel Macky 11/29/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
DSHPD
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official Date
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
X entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:)
Janet A. Griffin 1/29/18
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
1	0	sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/cemetery

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

foundation: N/A
 walls: N/A

 roof: N/A
 other: N/A

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Harlem African Burial Ground (ca. 1667-1856) is located in Upper-Manhattan, New York City (Figure 1). The site is adjacent to Harlem River Drive near the Willis Avenue Bridge and the Tri-Borough Bridge (RFK Bridge) in a section of Harlem called "East Harlem."ⁱ Historic records indicate that the original, 0.25-acre cemetery was expanded several times. The nominated site, which consists of 1.24 acres, is currently located under the 126th Street MTA Bus Depot, a facility housed at 2460 Second Avenue (Borough 1, Block 1803, Lot 1) (Figure 2). The 126th Street MTA Bus Depot is a two to three story brick building, encompassing approximately 103,000 square foot (2.36 acre), built in 1947. The building has a partial basement extending along a portion of its East 126th Street side, while the rest of the building sits on a thick concrete foundation slab (Photos 1-4).

Archaeological investigations by AKRF have revealed a secondary deposit of human skeletal remains located in redeposited soils immediately to the east of the eastern boundary of the Burial Ground and undisturbed, original soils within the boundaries of the Burial Ground that may contain *in situ* burials. This evidence suggests that some of the soils originally present within the burial ground were used to fill in portions of the Harlem River during the mid-nineteenth century. The past environmental setting of the Burial Ground as documented in the historic record will be presented first, followed by a discussion of its current environmental setting, as documented by the March 2, 2016 Phase IB archaeological investigation performed by AKRF.

The nomination boundary has been drawn to encompass the full extent of the Burial Ground limits as they appear on the 1879 *Bromley Atlas* map (Figure 3) plus a 200-foot area along the eastern boundary of the cemetery where human remains were uncovered during an archaeological investigation. While these human remains are in a secondary context, they retain considerable data potential. As the Burial Ground ceased to be used as a place of interment by ca. 1856, the mapped 1879 limits are considered the maximum extent of the cemetery.

Narrative Description

Likely Appearance of the Property During its Period of Active Use (ca. 1667-1856)

On March 4, 1658, Harlem was officially planned in accordance with an order from the Council of the Netherlands and Director-General, Governor Stuyvesant, and included house lots and garden lots with associated farmland (Figures 4 & 5). The surrounding area was sparsely populated and rural, far removed from the more densely populated settlement of New Amsterdam on the southern tip of Manhattan. At this early date, the area that would become the Harlem African Burial Ground was occupied by seven individual lots. One of these lots was acquired by the First Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem (RLDCH) (now the Elmendorf Reformed Church), the oldest church in Harlem.

Per RLDCH historian Reverend Edgar Tilton (1910), the church erected its first edifice at the corner of what is currently East 126th Street and First Avenue in 1665, and a cemetery was established by 1668 behind the church to the north. A view of the church building in 1686 is provided in Figure 6. The Harlem River was wider than it is today and the river side of the Burial Ground was located on marshy land that was part of a

ⁱ East Harlem's boundaries are generally defined by East 96th Street to East 142nd Street and Fifth Avenue to the East River.

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wide tidal zone. The cemetery encompassed both a bluff area and this low-lying area to the east near the Harlem River.

From the beginning, the RLDCH maintained two burial grounds: one cemetery for people of European descent and a ca. 0.25 acre cemetery for people of African descent. As the cemetery's boundaries expanded, this segregation became more apparent. The northern portion of the cemetery (in what is currently East 126th and 127th Street, First to Second Avenues) was reserved for the interment of free and enslaved Africans. The more southerly portion of the cemetery (today, East 124th – East 125th Street, First to Second Avenue), also referred to as "God's Acre," was reserved for the burial of people of European descent; some of whom were church officials and representatives of the Upper-Manhattan Governing Body. The relationship of these cemeteries to each other is shown in Figure 7.

In 1664, Manhattan Island and the Village of New Harlem fell under the control of the English. During a British raid, the RLDCH Church was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt a few blocks to the south and a new cemetery was established south of East 125th Street in 1686 (Tilton 1910). The locations of the two original cemeteries remained unchanged and the Harlem African Burial Ground was expanded. Unfortunately, no historic accounts exist that describe the appearance of the Burial Ground or how the graves were spatially arranged. While the Harlem African Burial Ground is directly associated with the first church of Harlem, other churches also buried people of African descent in this cemetery.

The 1811 Commissioner's Plan reorganized the streets of Manhattan Island, which affected the Village of New Harlem. As noted by Schneiderman-Fox (2001:9-10) "Street regulations called for extensive grading and filling, removing massive rocks and boulders, and tearing down existing houses located in the path of proposed roadways." While the Commissioner's Plan took decades to fully implement, it had a dramatic effect on existing properties and cemeteries as early as the 1850s. In addition to leveling the ground surface, portions of the Harlem River were filled in between the 1850s and the early twentieth century to create additional lots. In the end, Harlem's valleys, cliffs, hills and impressive vistas were forever lost.

Outside the Village of Harlem, the wealthiest members of the community maintained large properties and estates. One of these families, the Ingraham family, was a prominent member of the RLDCH going back four generations (Figure 7). Judge Ingraham was an elder of the church and 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 burial site. During this time, the interment of people of African descent continued.

In 1853 the church confronted a major financial crisis and a resolution was adopted authorizing the sale of the "Negro burying ground" to the highest bidder for no less than \$3,000. A portion of the cemetery was sold to Daniel Ingraham and the remainder of the property located directly south of the site was sold to Courtlandt Palmer. Following these sales, the cemetery's last recorded interment occurred in 1856, and by 1857 this property was no longer recognized as a burial ground by the City of New York.

Appearance of the Property Following Abandonment (ca. 1856 to Present)

In 1870, the Ingraham family, whose mansion was on the western portion of Block 1803 (Figure 7, Inset 2) was the property owner of the former Burial Ground, and the 1870 Perris map shows their property covering the western two-thirds of the block. There are no structures or other forms of development near the cemetery on the 1870 Perris Map and it is the first map to show Block 1803 entirely consisting of land with no marshy areas or open water.

By the early 1870s, the church had also sold its cemetery for people of European descent, "God's Acre." Many descendants of those buried in "God's Acre" were contacted so that their ancestors' remains could be exhumed for re-interment in other cemeteries. In contrast, there is no evidence to suggest that similar

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arrangements were made for those of African descent interred in the Harlem African Burial Ground (Saunders and Schneiderman-Fox 2011:15).

By 1885, urbanization and the rectilinear street grid characterized Harlem and historic maps indicate that this parcel remained undeveloped until 1879, when the block was converted to a privately owned and operated amusement park and casino (Figure 8). Sulzer's Harlem River Park and Casino, owned by the prominent German-American Sulzer family, was one of New York City's most popular beer gardens. A one-story structure housing a carousel famous for its finely sculpted animals and bright colors was situated in the location of the Burial Ground and a possible race track overlapped the Burial Ground's northern end (Figure 9). Groups of all sorts rented the casino for private parties. All these recreational activities took place on top of the now forgotten Burial Ground.

With the onset of World War I and the likelihood of Prohibition, the Sulzer family sold the amusement park and casino 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 (Figure 10).

In 1918, multimillionaire and newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst bought the building, added another floor and converted it to a movie studio, Cosmopolitan Productions (Figure 10). Interior spaces were redesigned as movie sets and more than forty major films, many featuring Hearst's mistress, actress Marion Davies, were made here. The work and daily lives of the 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 many times desecrated "Negro burying ground." The Hearst movie studio was torn down in 1941 and the Third Avenue Railway Company built a trolley barn to house its trolley cars/buses.

In 1947 the Second Avenue Bus Garage was constructed on the entire block. 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 (Figure 11). After acknowledging the existence of the colonial Harlem African Burial Ground beneath the facility and reassessing the New York City Transit Authority's transportation infrastructure needs, the bus depot was vacated in 2015. Operations formerly conducted in the depot were moved offsite.

The setting and appearance of the Harlem African Burial Ground beginning in the mid-nineteenth century changed dramatically from an open field set in a rural village landscape to a developed lot in an urbanized landscape. The landscape changes that characterized the Burial Ground mirror those that took place across Harlem.

Present Setting/Archaeological Record

In 2015 a Phase IB archaeological fieldwork study was undertaken by AKRF as part of the proposed redevelopment of this parcel by the New York City Economic Development Corporation. The following description of the archaeological testing and results is summarized from the *Phase IB Archaeological Investigation Report for the 126th Street Bus Depot (2016)*, prepared by A. Michael Pappalardo and Elizabeth Meade.

The fieldwork performed by AKRF included the excavation of four backhoe trenches through the concrete foundation floor of the Bus Depot. Two backhoe trenches were excavated within the boundaries of the former Burial Ground (Trenches 1 & 4); one trench (Trench 2) was excavated partially within the boundaries of the former Burial Ground and partially within what was originally the Harlem River; and one trench (Trench 3) was excavated in the western portion of the Bus Depot outside the cemetery boundaries (Figures 12, 13 & 14). Following the removal of the concrete and upper disturbed and fill soils (Photos 3 & 4), the underlying soils were carefully examined for the presence of grave shafts and historic features, such as wells and privies,

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through the hand excavation of shovel tests and test units. All soils of archaeological interest were sifted through ¼ inch mesh screen and recovered artifacts were collected and analyzed by the AKRF archaeological team.

The archaeological testing revealed the presence of an original ground surface (Trench 1) within the cemetery limits that may contain intact burials and a one-foot thick layer of loose, disarticulated human bone in Trench 2 in redeposited soils. The discovery of human skeletal remains east of the eastern boundary of the Burial Ground in a location that was part of the Harlem River until mid-nineteenth century suggests that soils from the bluff or ridge area of the Burial Ground were redeposited in the low lying, marshy areas along the river's edge.

It is likely that additional disarticulated human remains are located to the north, west and east since additional human remains were visible in the western wall of Trench 2 and the redeposited soil layer continues to the north and east of Trench 2. The full areal extent of the layer of disarticulated human remains is unknown since archaeological testing has been limited. No human remains were recovered from the southern third of the trench and it appears unlikely that additional remains are present to the south. This conclusion is supported by the absence of human remains in Trench 1, which was located 10 feet south of Trench 2.

According to the AKRF Phase IB Report (2016:39), "The fill layer containing human skeletal remains (Level 9) is about 1 foot thick, slopes downward (deeper) to the north, and was encountered at a depth of between 4 and 6 feet below the upper surface of the Depot's foundation slab, below several other fill layers" (Figure 15). In total, over 100 individual human bone or bone fragments were collected including a cranium. The most common skeletal elements were long bones (the bones of the arm and leg, excluding the feet and hands) followed by skull fragments and teeth. Other types of bone, such as those of the feet, hands, ribs and spine, were found in much smaller numbers, likely due to their small, fragile nature.

Dr. Vincent Stefan, the consulting forensic anthropologist, indicated that "the cranium is possibly from an adult female of African ancestry." An independent study by a forensic anthropologist from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner came to the same conclusion. Gender was identified for several other bones: three additional bones were identified as having come from a female, two from a male, and one was identified as "likely male." According to Dr. Stefan, given the size and morphology of the skeletal remains recovered, at least one male and one female are represented. A single observation of trauma or disease was noted by Dr. Stefan and includes a right tibia shaft with "slight medial bowing" and "regions of sclerotic/woven bone on the medial surface." No artifacts were recovered that could definitively be associated with the Burial Ground, such as iron coffin nails, metal handles or decorative cover plates.

Research conducted by the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force and associated scholars have revealed the names of some of the individuals buried at the Harlem African American Burial Ground (Figure 16). These names were obtained from sources, such as; sacramental notes composed by the clergy, church financial ledgers, census data, city directories and local histories and serve as a reminder that the skeletal remains identified in the archaeological record are not static objects but are the remains of people who lived, loved, raised families and experienced struggles just like we do today. Below is the story of one such family revealed through the archival research of the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force.

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. Henry was baptized as an adult when he was ill on the same day that the couple's new baby Richard, also ill, was baptized. Both Henry and baby Richard 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. (Obtained from <http://www.habgtaskforce.org/home>)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Archaeology: Historic – Non-Aboriginal

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1667 to 1856

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

N/A

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance was drawn to encompass the dates of the first and last known burials.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Although the nominated property is a cemetery, it is being nominated for its potential to provide information about the lives and deaths of enslaved and free African Americans from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Harlem African Burial Ground, located in Upper Manhattan along the Harlem River adjacent to Harlem River Drive, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D, Research Potential, for its ability to inform our understanding of the lives and deaths of free and enslaved Africans through a study of their human remains. Beginning in the mid-1660s and continuing until the last known interment in 1856, this segregated Burial Ground was the first and only African cemetery in Harlem and the only known cemetery of its kind in Upper Manhattan. While affiliated with the First Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem (now the Elmendorf Reformed Church), this approximately 0.42-acre cemetery was also utilized by the surrounding community for the burial of people of African descent. The individuals interred here built and maintained the new colony's infrastructure and were instrumental in shaping the character and history of New York City and the New World.

This forgotten and neglected cemetery represents a rare, tangible link to the earliest days of the Dutch village of Nieuw Haarlem (Village of Harlem) and an opportunity to remember and learn about the overlooked lives and contributions of the enslaved and free Africans of New York City. The human remains from this cemetery can help answer research questions related to nutrition, disease, physical stress, injury and the daily activities of this population. The Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force believes that through this nomination and other commemorations, 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.

Criterion D: Site Integrity and Research Questions

As described above, the block containing the Burial Ground has had many uses including: a burial ground; a pasture; an amusement park; a movie studio; and, lastly, a city bus depot. Despite its varied uses, the archaeological evidence, summarized above, indicates that intact burials may be present within the limits of the Burial Ground, given the existence of original ground surfaces identified in Trench 2, and that a layer of disarticulated human remains associated with the cemetery is present.

While it is not possible to associate specific names with specific skeletal remains recovered from the Harlem African Burial Ground, personal stories of the people interred there can be constructed from a study of their skeletal remains and an understanding of the social and cultural contexts in which they lived. Nutrition, disease, physical stress, injury and daily activities often leave traces on human bone and teeth and the human remains associated with the Harlem African Burial Ground have the potential to answer research questions related to mortality rates, health, nutrition, cause of death, physical quality of life and the geographic origins of this population. A comparative study of the Harlem African Burial Ground skeletal collection with the skeletal collections from the New York African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan, the Schuyler Flatts Slave Burial Ground in Albany and the Newburgh Colored Burial Ground, in the City of Newburgh have the potential to provide new insights into how the lives of African and African American populations living in rural Harlem compared with those of similar populations in urban lower Manhattan, rural Albany, and the City of Newburgh. Given the

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limited historical and archaeological information related to free and enslaved peoples of the Village of Harlem, the human remains recovered from this burial ground have the potential to inform our understanding of the lives and deaths of African Americans residing in Harlem from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

People of African Descent and the Village of Harlem (ca. 1637-1856)

To fully appreciate the founding of the Harlem African Burial Ground, the origins of the Dutch Village of New Harlem itself must be discussed. The first attempts to settle Harlem in ca. 1637 were difficult due to the lack of manpower, poor health conditions, political conflicts and altercations with Native Americans. In 1658 the fifty-acre village of New Harlem was officially laid out by an order of the Council of New Netherland and the Director-General, Governor Stuyvesant (Rubinson 1989:10). This settlement was considered an important buffer between New Amsterdam and the Native Americans of the region who were often hostile due to the poor treatment and the land grabbing of European colonists. Governor Stuyvesant guaranteed safety, a court, and a minister for the new settlement to entice and encourage colonists to settle in the area. The new settlement in upper Manhattan was called New Harlem, "Nieuw Haarlem."

Land in some sections of New Harlem was rugged and rocky, while other sections were gently undulating meadowland. When early settlers found, rich soils covered with timber they quickly recognized the potential of the land (Romer and Hartman 1981:5). Shortly thereafter, the community began to grow crops such as tobacco, wheat, rye, barley, oats, beans, peas, flax and hops for brewing beer. In addition, cattle were raised and salt was harvested from the marsh lands next to the East River.

The first documented slaves in New Harlem were purchased by the earliest settlers to work on their expansive farms. Property owners Tourneur, Verveelen, De Meyer, and others headed south from their village to Fort Amsterdam at the southern tip of Manhattan in 1664 to purchase slaves that had just arrived from Curacao (Saunders and Schneiderman-Fox 2011:12). They were reportedly the first slaves owned in New Harlem (Riker 1904: 234). There were likely freed African Americans living in the area as well. Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Amsterdam and New York indicate that as early as 1657, African American marriages were being performed by the church and between 1661 and 1664, twenty-six black couples, who were all free but one, were married by the Dutch Reformed Church. However, since no separate records were kept by individual Dutch Reformed Churches within Manhattan prior to 1806, it is not possible to tell in which church a marriage was performed (New York Genealogical & Biographical Society 1987).

By 1661, Harlem included among its citizens: merchants; a bricklayer; a carpenter; a butcher; a cooper; a shoemaker; a brewer; a mason; and a soap maker, in addition to farmers and soldiers. The number of people of African descent is not known since they were not counted in the 1661 census. According to Gill, "Under the rule of the West India Company, slaves of African descent and white indentured servants were considered a single social class, subject to

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the same restrictions with regard to personal freedom and property ownership” (2011:39). Both slaves and white indentured servants could come and go freely and many bought their own freedom. By 1660 there were thirty black property owners in the region.

The Dutch West Indian Company used its African labor force to construct a nine-mile road connecting New Amsterdam to New Harlem by widening a Native American footpath. This was eventually named the Old Harlem Road and it terminated at the Harlem River near 125th Street. In addition to building roads, other work performed by slaves included clearing land, splitting logs, milling lumber, building wharves, roads and fortifications, constructing farms and helping other residents manage their businesses and households. Skilled in crafts, music and dance Africans also provided entertainment for taverns and private parties. In 1660, Stuyvesant requested of Vice Director Beck in Curacao that “clever and strong” blacks be sent to work at the fort and to aid the Dutch in the war against the Indians (Moore 2005:51).

While struggling with the difficulties of slavery and racism, enslaved and free people of African descent created a vibrant Afro-Dutch culture and were often bilingual or trilingual, speaking African dialects, English and Dutch. People of African descent contributed significantly to the establishment of New Harlem and were a central part of New Netherland’s labor force.

Even before the founding of New Harlem’s first church, provisions for religious worship were enacted as found in the writings of Isaac De Raisers, who came to New Amsterdam in 1626. An ordinance passed by the director general of the new colony, indicated that whenever 25 families moved into a new village they were to receive, among other things, “the services of a pious and good minister, towards whose maintenance the Director General of the Council would pay a half, and the local parishioners pay the other half of his salary.”²

New Harlem’s first church was the Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem (RLDCH), organized in 1660, with Michiel Zyperus serving as the first minister. In 1665-1666, the congregation built its first house of worship, which also served as the community’s meetinghouse on the village square. During its early years (1660-1776) the church maintained its Dutch roots and all services were conducted in that language. As the only church sanctioned by the Dutch West India Company in New Netherland, Dutch Reformed churches served people of many ethnic and religious backgrounds. Ministers and congregations of all Calvinist backgrounds (English, Scottish, French, and German) were welcomed by the Dutch Reformed clergy, as they were by the authorities of New Netherland. Toleration for all religions came with the English takeover of New Netherland in 1664. Under the Articles of Surrender, the Dutch retained the right to continue the public practice of their religion.”³

In addition to erecting church buildings, the RLDCH also established burial grounds. Their earliest cemetery was near First Avenue and East 126th Street and was established in 1667 north of the first RLDCH. It was originally the official burying ground for the first European settlers of New Harlem and their families (Pierce 1903:39), but a small portion of its northern end became known as the “Negro burying ground”, the focus of this nomination.

² Isaac De Raisers as quoted in “Elmendorf Reformed Church: A Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration,” May 15, 1988, p. 13.

³ Peter Eisenstadt, Editor in Chief, and Laura-Eve Moss, Managing Editor, *The Encyclopedia of New York*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005: 1290. Entry on the Dutch Reformed Church by Firth Haring Fabend.

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In 1664 Manhattan Island fell under the control of the English. The English governor, Richard Nicholls, reaffirmed New Harlem as an independent village, and the British permitted the community to retain the name of New Harlem, despite the Dutch reference (Rober and Hartman 1981:256). However, this autonomous existence did not last long. In 1665 Governor Nicholls declared that the City of New York should comprise the entire island of Manhattan, including New Harlem. An influx of immigrants, including Danes, Swedes, Hollanders, French Huguenots, and Germans, established farms on New Harlem's rich soils.

Unlike New York City, Harlem remained a quiet backwater under British rule where the Dutch language and Dutch cultural ways still dominated. Roads in uptown Manhattan were improved through slave labor beginning in 1669 and the last Indians were driven out of the northernmost part of Manhattan by ca. 1685. Dense forests, however, were still prevalent and throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries escaped slaves found refuge in the wilds of Harlem.

According to Gill, "Harlem's blacks lived in their own homes and continued to work with relative freedom from the discrimination and violence encountered in the southern colonies and which was becoming more commonplace downtown under British rule" (2011:140). The differences between the Dutch and British slave systems, detailed below, are excerpted from Howson and Harris, et al. (1992:16).

Many privileges and rights accorded to enslaved and free Africans under the Dutch were rescinded within forty years of the switch to British rule. Historian Edgar McManus draws a basic contrast between the policies of the Dutch in the seventeenth century and the British in the early years of the New York colony:

From the start of the English occupation the creation of a commercially profitable slave system became a joint project of both government and private interests. Unlike the Dutch West Indies Company, which used slavery to implement the colonial policy, the [British] Royal African Company used the colony to implement slavery.

New York's African slaves became subject to a highly restrictive legal system, one which was put in place to secure England's valuable colonial possessions in the Western Hemisphere and which resulted in severe physical and social coercion. In the meantime, along with the established and growing population of Free Africans, enslaved Africans seized all available social and economic opportunities to build a distinct community.

Harlem remained a quiet farming community in the early eighteenth century, and in 1737, there were 211 whites living in Harlem and 64 blacks (Lepore 2005:70). As of 1749 there were only 131 houses in uptown Manhattan and village streets remained improperly surveyed and laid out. However, by the mid-eighteenth century wealthy New Yorkers began to build country estates in Harlem to escape the filth, crime and disease of New York City. Most wealthy families, even those with abolitionist leanings, owned slaves who, for the most part, worked as domestics.

During the Revolutionary War, Harlem became an armed American camp, and in 1776 the British burned down the Village of Harlem and destroyed the second church, near what is today East 125th Street and Second Avenue. "By 1779 an eyewitness found Harlem totally unoccupied, abandoned by the Americans and destroyed by the British" (Gill 2011:65). In the

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1790s, Harlem continued to be a sleepy backwater with only two churches and a single school that served fewer than one hundred families.

By the early nineteenth century, New Harlem's population had grown. By this time, a city plan had been devised to provide for the systematic laying out of streets and avenues throughout Manhattan. The resultant Commissioner's Plan of 1811 imposed a street grid system over the city, disregarding natural topographic features which may have impeded road construction. Street regulations called for extensive grading and filling, removing massive rocks and boulders, and tearing down existing structures located in the path of proposed roadways. However, it was not until decades later that the proposed plan came to fruition (Commissioners of New York State, 1811).

The 1837 construction of the New York and Harlem Railroad, the country's first horse-drawn railway, from the southern tip of Manhattan forged the way for New Harlem to change, transforming it from a charming rural enclave to a "suburb" of the growing city. Many German and Irish laborers helped build the railroad, and many settled in East Harlem. Because of the development and overcrowding in lower Manhattan, the need arose for low-cost housing as workers ventured to find accommodations distant from industrial neighborhoods. The railroad enabled large numbers of people to escape crowded neighborhoods and move north to less populated areas. As a result, Harlem's population grew and the area became more urban, as farms and large country estates were subdivided and developed.

During this period, Harlem's local African American community expanded. Most blacks lived in shacks and shanties scattered amongst the Irish. There were often tensions between the working-class Irish and black New Yorkers fueled by competition for jobs and housing. There was, however, a community of black farmers living near what is now East 130th Street and Park Avenue in the 1830s, and in the 1850s Harlem included a school devoted to black children.

During the 1860s, dredging for the Harlem River Canal generated tons of fill materials when much of the river bottom was removed to create a deep channel for easier shipping (Murphy 1860). Along with improvements in water transport, the nineteenth century also marked the introduction of the elevated trains up Second and Third Avenues in the 1870s. Maps of Harlem in the early nineteenth century show a mix of residential, agricultural, and industrial properties, while by the late nineteenth century, properties in Harlem are identified as residential, commercial, and unimproved with little agriculture land. (NYCLPC Neighborhood Maps 1983: 1815-1829, 1855-1879).

The Harlem African Burial Ground experienced the same developmental history as the rest of Harlem. During the seventeenth, eighteenth and into the mid-nineteenth century, the Burial Ground was part of a rural landscape dominated by farms, large rural estates and the small quite village of Harlem. During its approximately 200 years of use, the cemetery was the final resting place of both free and enslaved Africans. However, like the rest of Harlem, the Burial Ground was forever transformed by rapid urbanization in the mid-nineteenth century and ceased to function as a cemetery by 1857.

While some Africans bought their freedom, ran away or were manumitted by their owners, others were set free through emancipation legislation. Of all the northern states, New York State, in 1827, had the highest number of slaves (319,000) and the highest proportion of slaves

Harlem African Burial Ground
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of the entire population (over 6 percent) (Rael 2005:114). Unfortunately for those in bondage, emancipation in New York State occurred gradually over a half century. It was a slow, incremental process that began in 1777, when abolition measures were first proposed by New York lawmakers, and ended in 1827, when the state passed its last major piece of antislavery legislation. At the time of the 1840 census, no slaves are listed in New York City, and in 1841 the state finally revoked the right of travelers to reside in New York for up to nine months with their slaves. Finally, after fifty years of debate and legislation, over two hundred years of slavery in New York had ended.

Harlem African Burial Ground
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Schneiderman-Fox, Faline (author), and Betsy Kearns and Cece Saunders (principal investigators). *Stage 1A Archaeological Assessment, Willis Avenue Bridge Reconstruction, Bronx County and New York County, New York*. PIN X757.00.121. Prepared for New York City Department of Transportation and AKRF, Inc. Westport, CT: Historical Perspectives, March 27, 2001.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.24 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	590182	4717441	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

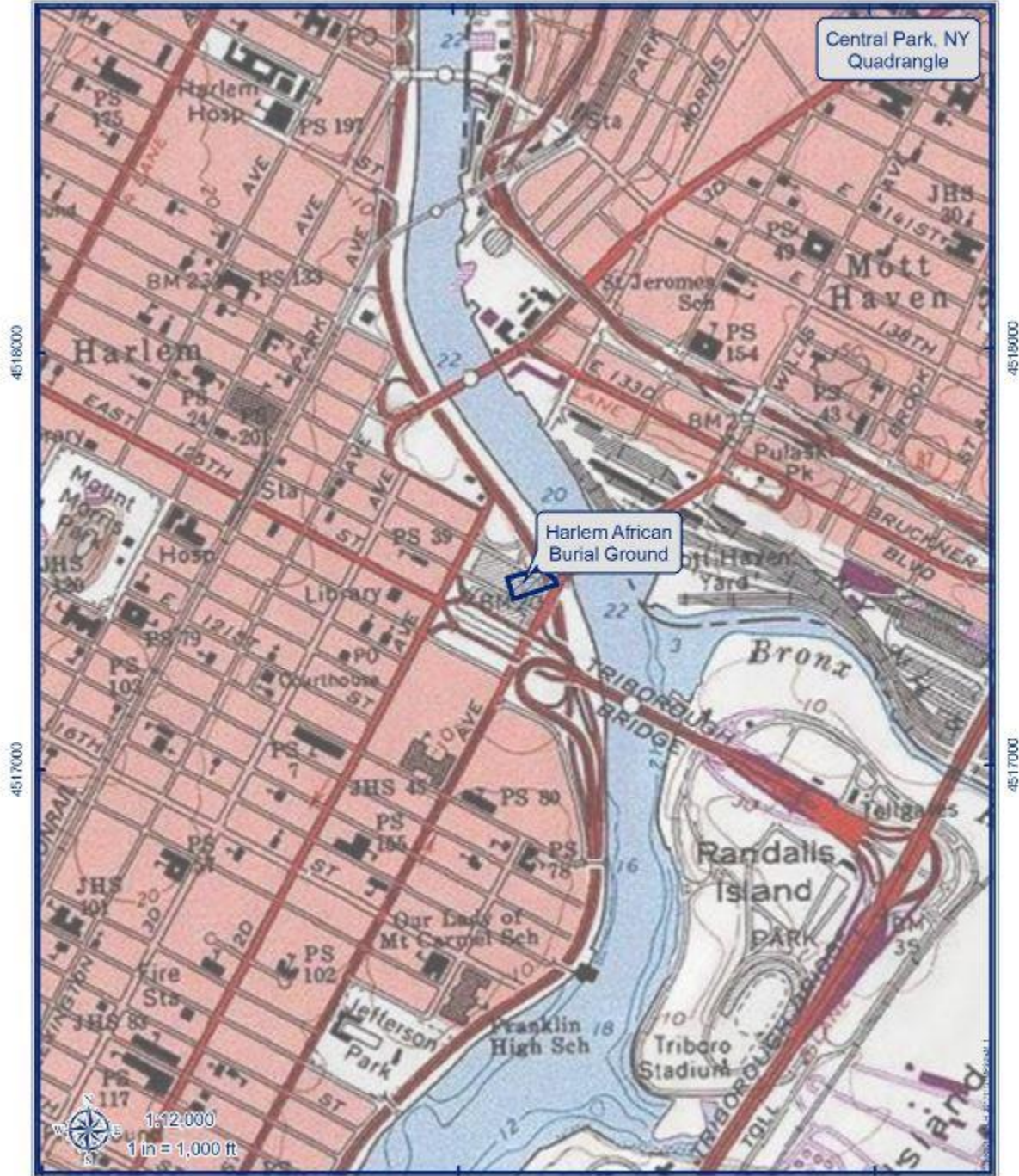
The nomination boundary has been drawn to encompass the full extent of the Burial Ground limits as they appear on the *Atlas of the Entire City of New York* (Bromley 1879) plus a 200-foot area along the eastern boundary of the cemetery. The 200-foot area encompasses the limits of the secondary deposit of human remains as currently understood from the archaeological record. The nomination boundary is 1.24 acres.

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Name of Property

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Harlem African Burial Ground
New York, New York Co., NY

2460 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10035



589000 590000 591000
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 330 660 1,320 Feet

Burial Ground

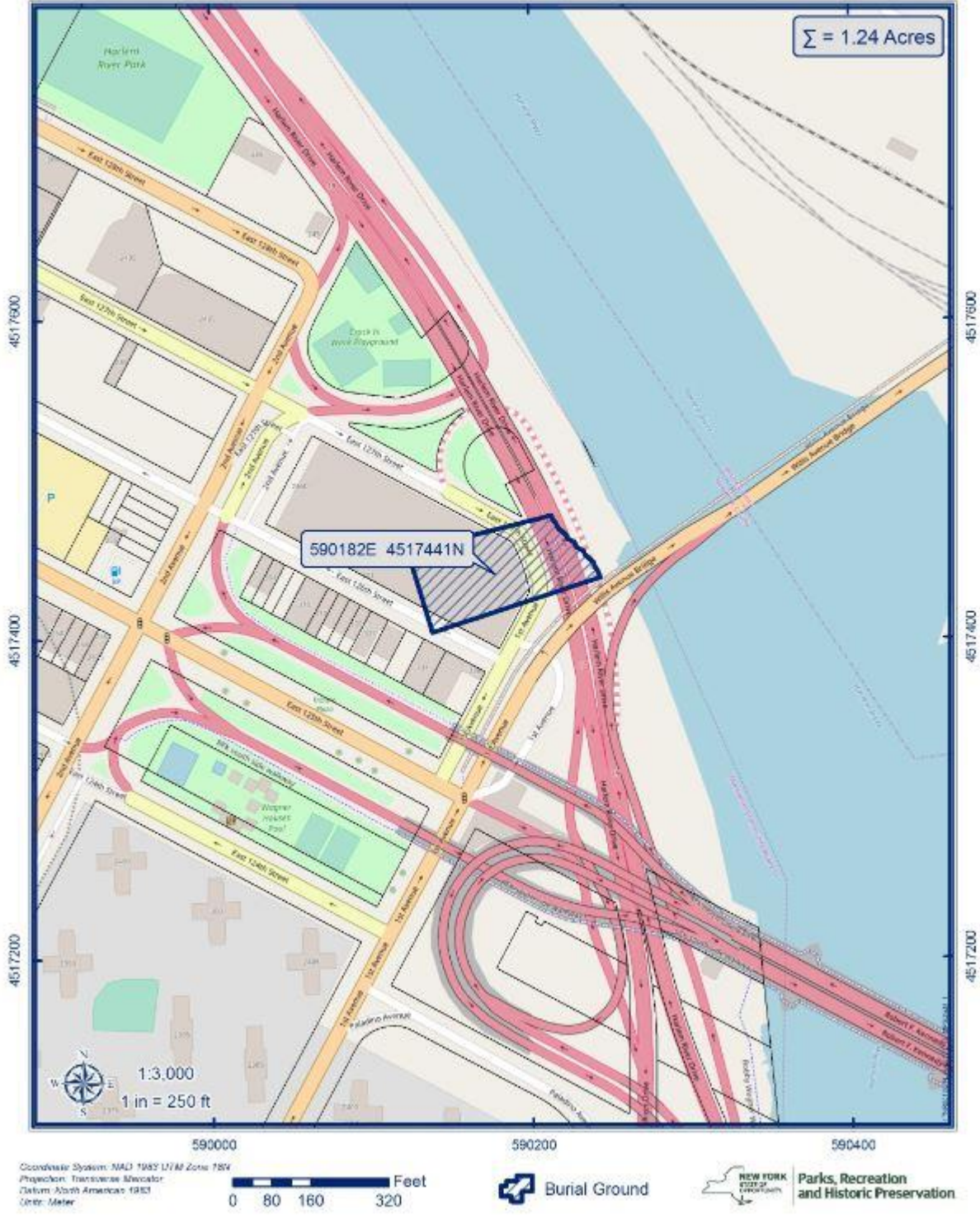
NEW YORK STATE OF CONSERVATION Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Harlem African Burial Ground
Name of Property

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County and State

Harlem African Burial Ground
New York, New York Co., NY

2460 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10035



Harlem African Burial Ground
Name of Property

New York, New York
County and State

Harlem African Burial Ground
New York, New York Co., NY

2460 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10035



Harlem African Burial Ground
Name of Property

New York, New York
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Herter/SHPO Archaeologist in Consultation with Sharon Wilkins, Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force Member

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date August 2017

street & number Peebles Island Resource Center, PO Box 189 telephone 518-268-2179

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

e-mail nancy.herter@parks.ny.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Harlem African Burial Ground
City or Vicinity: Manhattan
County: New York
State: New York
Photographer: AKRF, Inc.
Date Photographed: August 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 4. NY_New York Co_Harlem African Burial Ground_001
Facing west along southern face of bus depot. Trench 4 was excavated along sidewalk in the leftmost bay.
- 2 of 4. NY_New York Co_Harlem African Burial Ground_002
Facing north towards conference room in the western portion of the Depot. Trench 3 was excavated in the foreground.
- 3 of 4. NY_New York Co_Harlem African Burial Ground_003

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Looking north at Trench 1 after concrete removal and before excavation.

4 of 4. NY_New York Co_Harlem African Burial Ground_004.

Facing south from bus wash area towards Trench 2 after concrete removal and before excavation.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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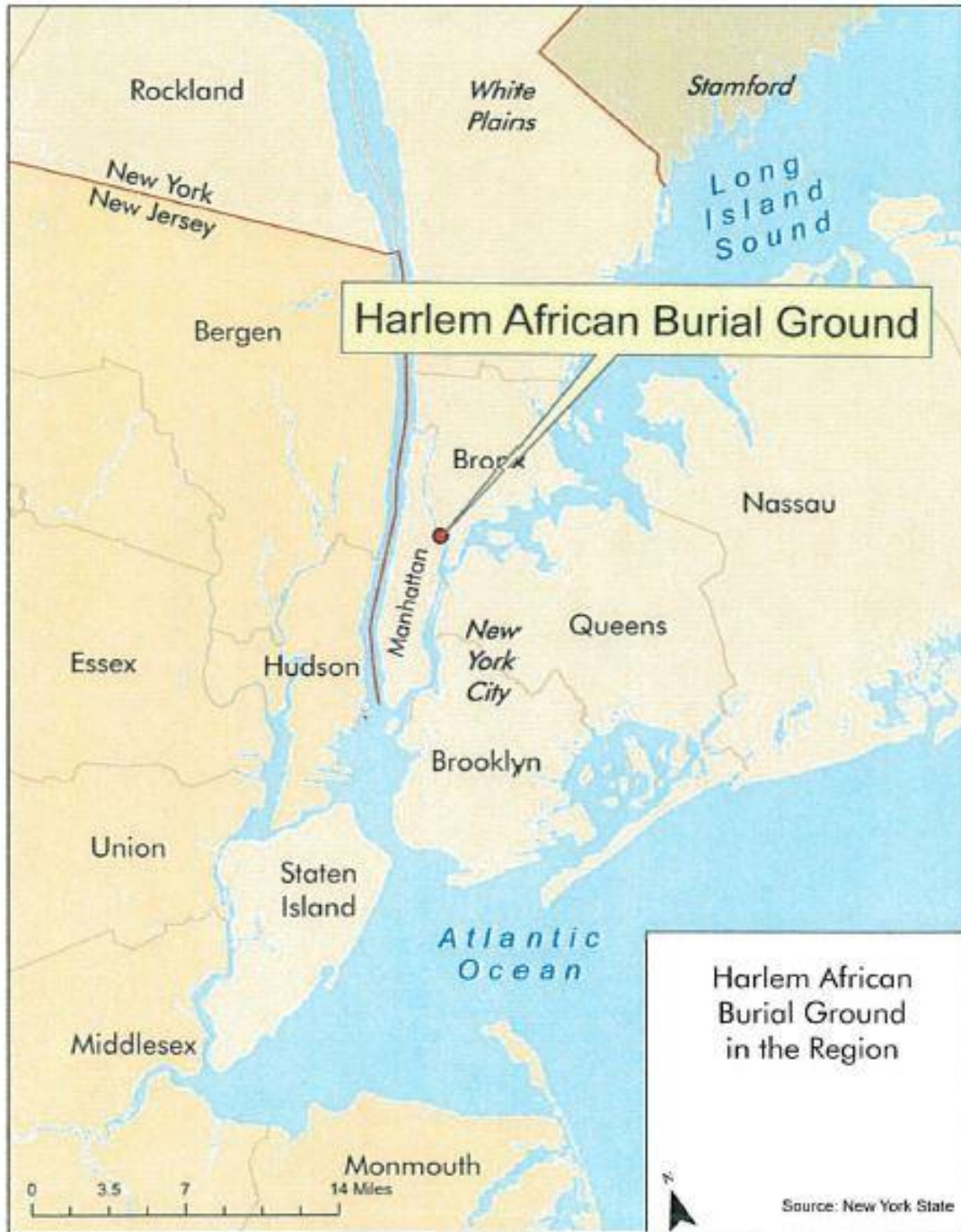


Figure 1. Harlem African Burial Ground in the NY City Metropolitan Region.

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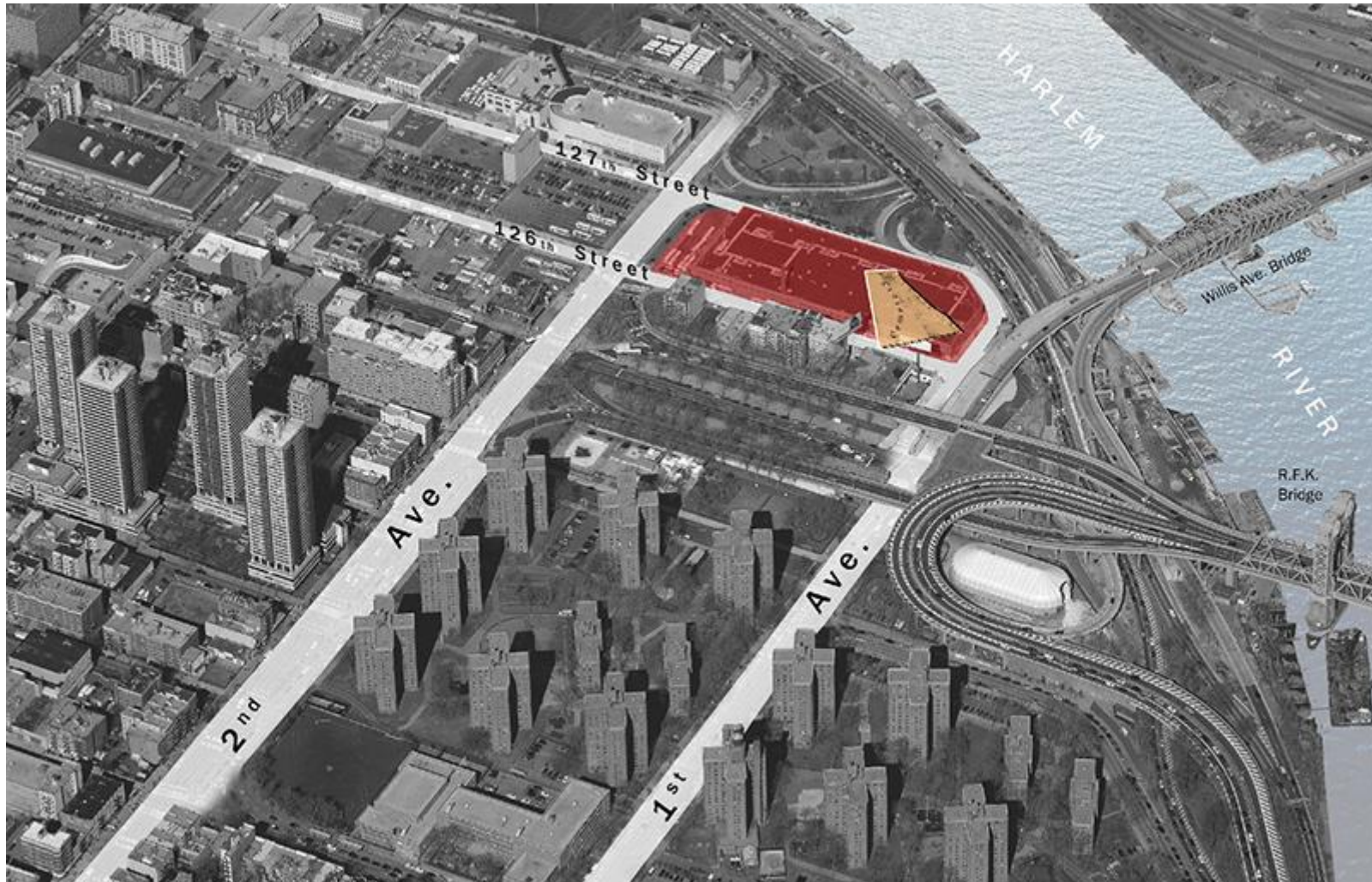


Figure 2. Aerial View of the 126th Street Bus Depot (highlighted in red) and the historic boundaries of the Harlem African Burial Ground (highlighted in orange). Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.habgtaskforce.org.

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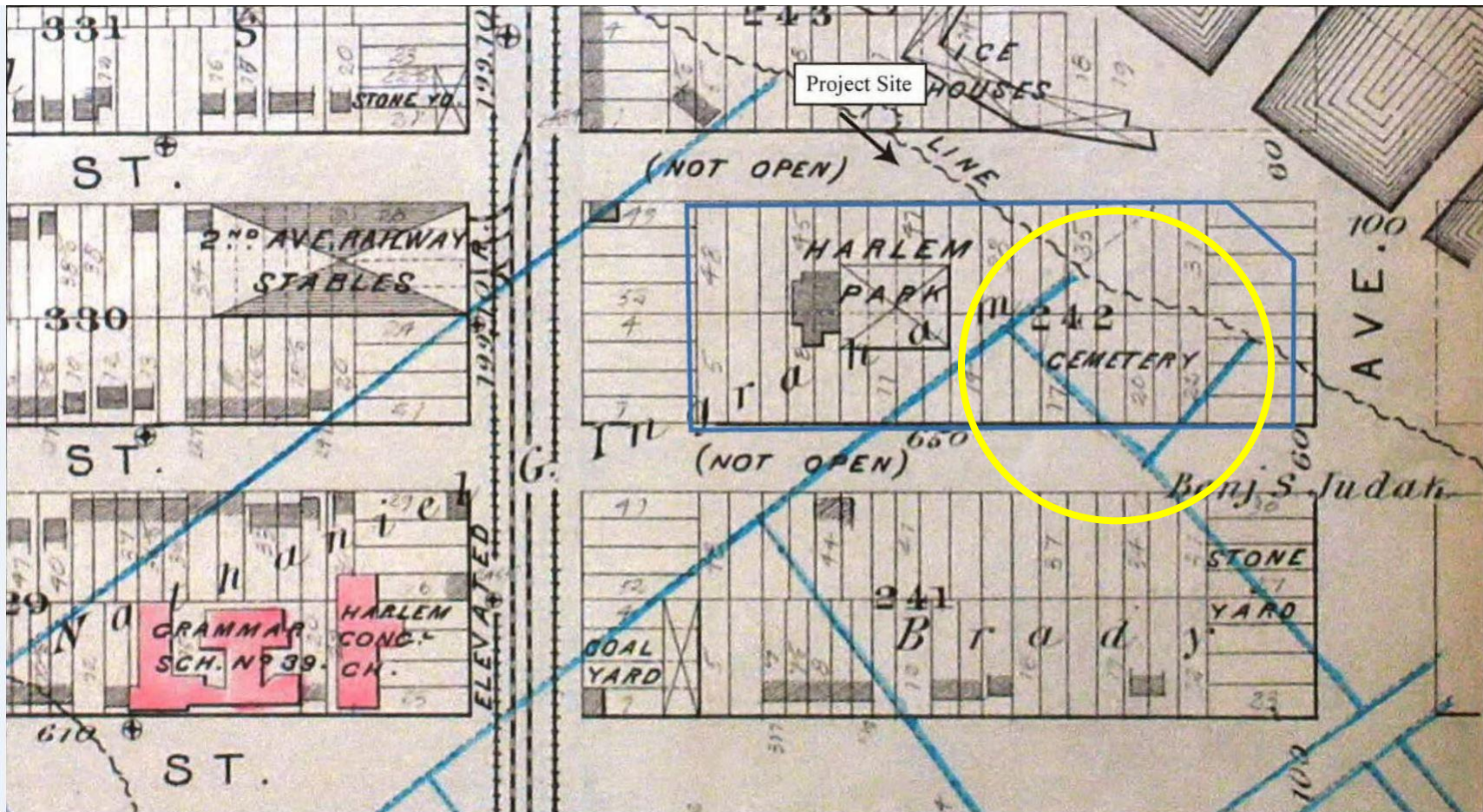


Figure 3. Harlem African Burial Ground (yellow circle) Atlas of the Entire City of New York (Bromley 1879).

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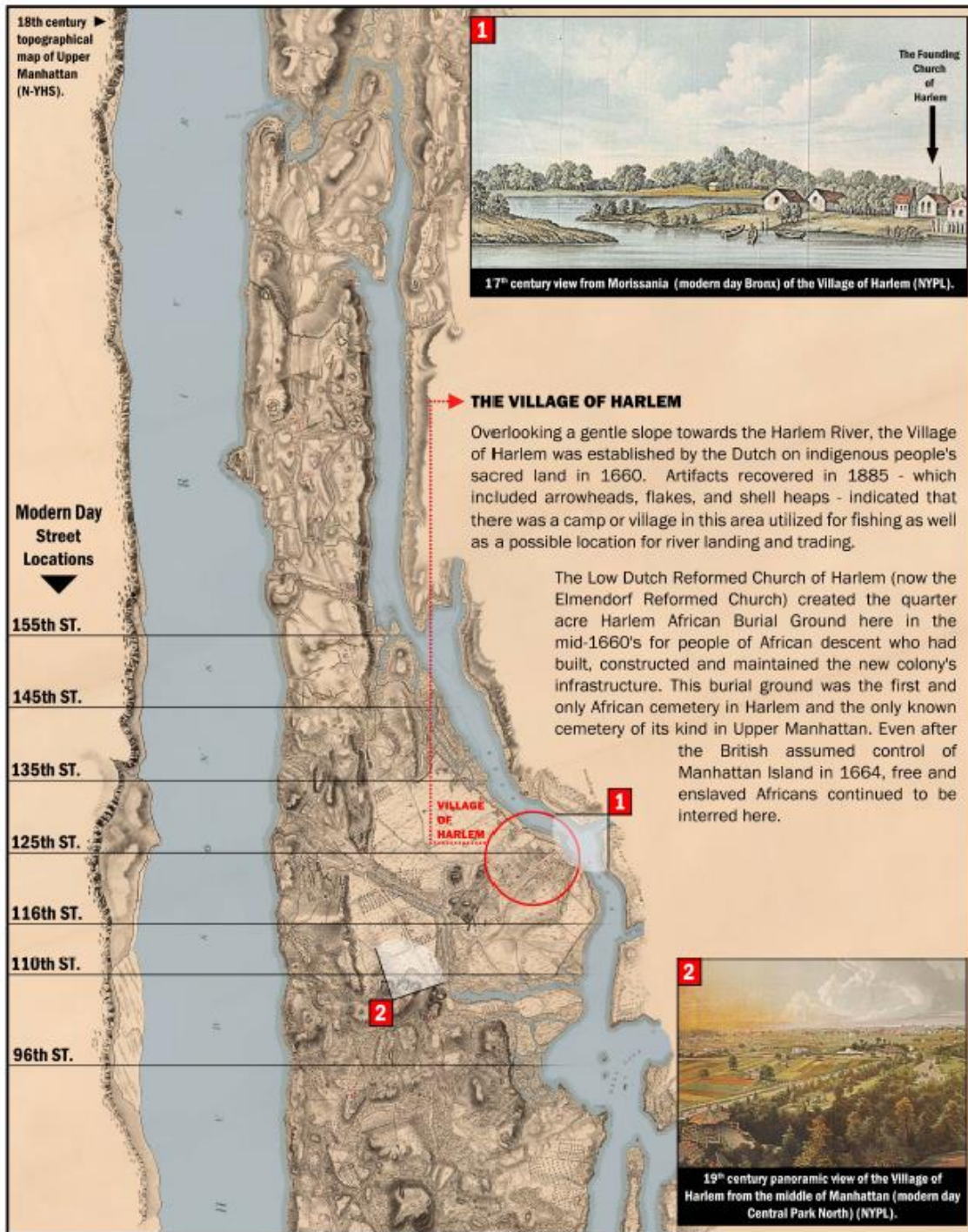


Figure 4. Eighteenth Century Topographical Map of Upper Manhattan with the area of the Harlem African Burial Ground (red circle). Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.habtaskforce.org.

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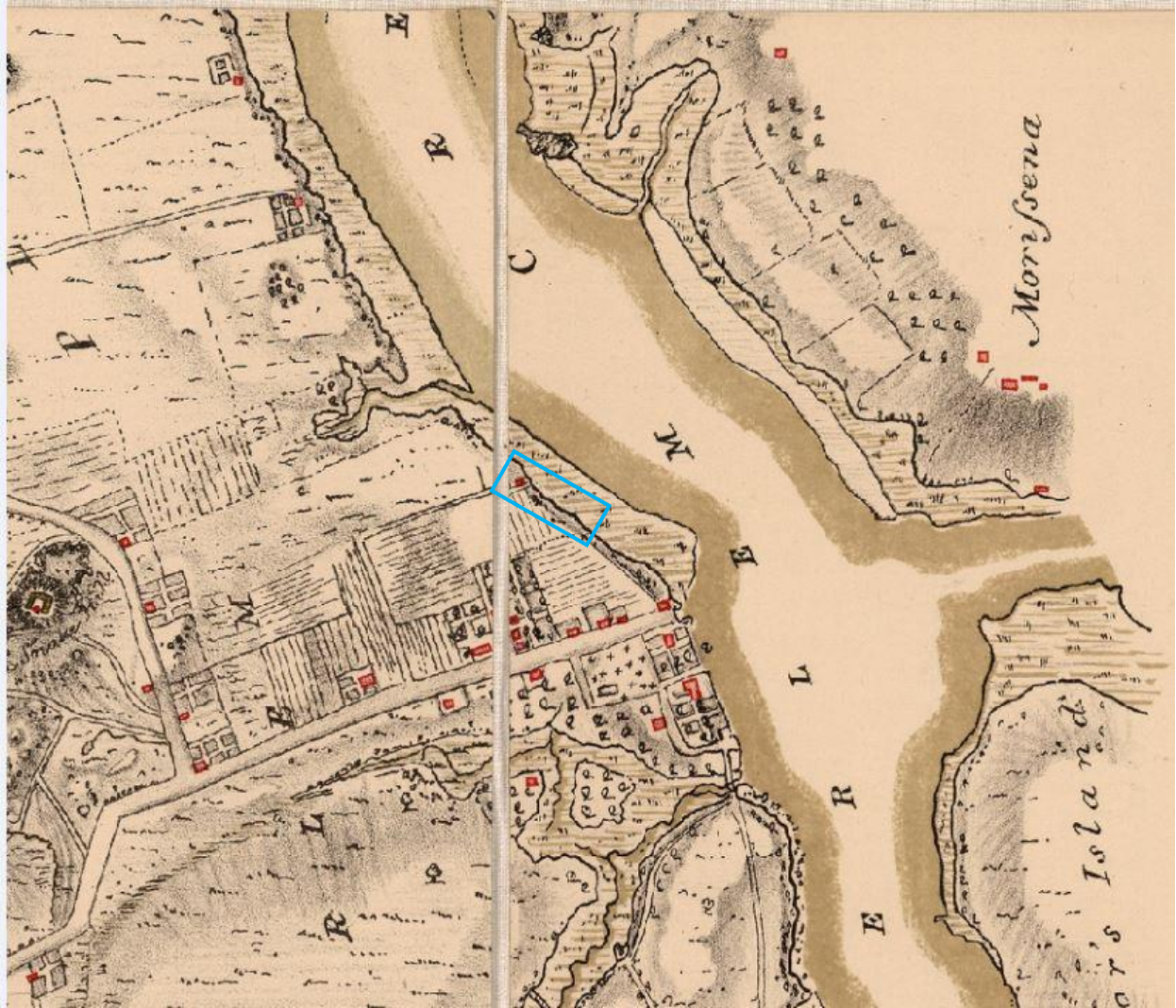


Figure 5. Area of the Harlem African Burial Ground (blue rectangle) on *The British Headquarters Map* (1782).

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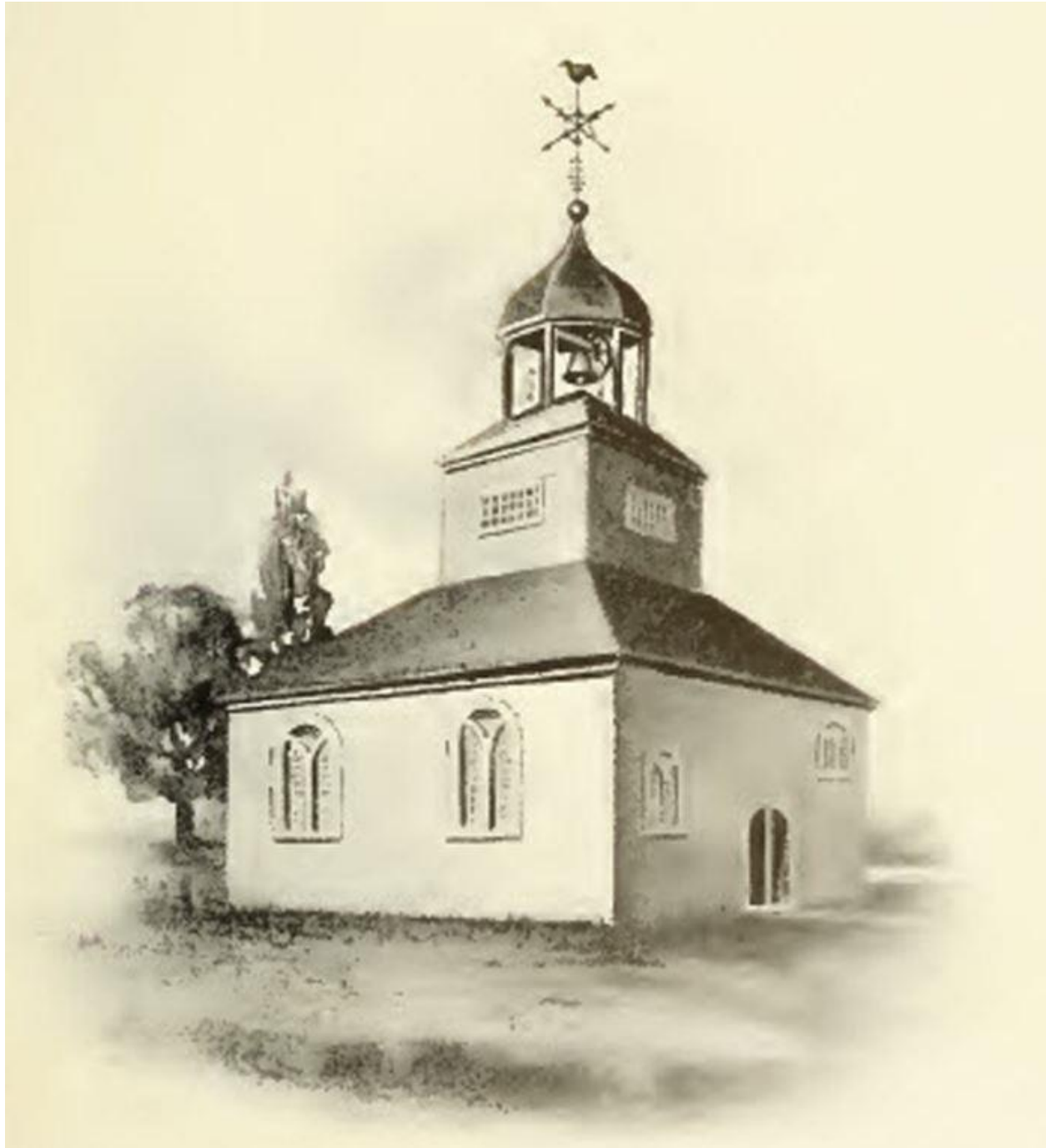
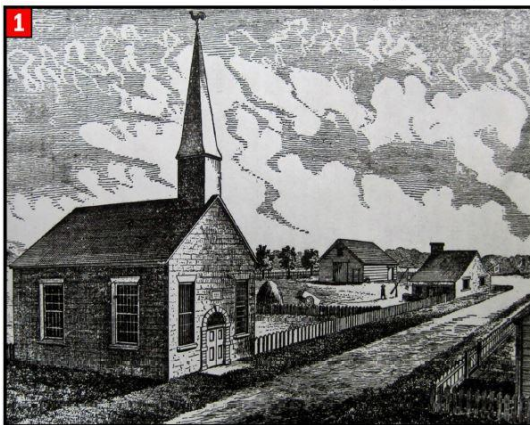
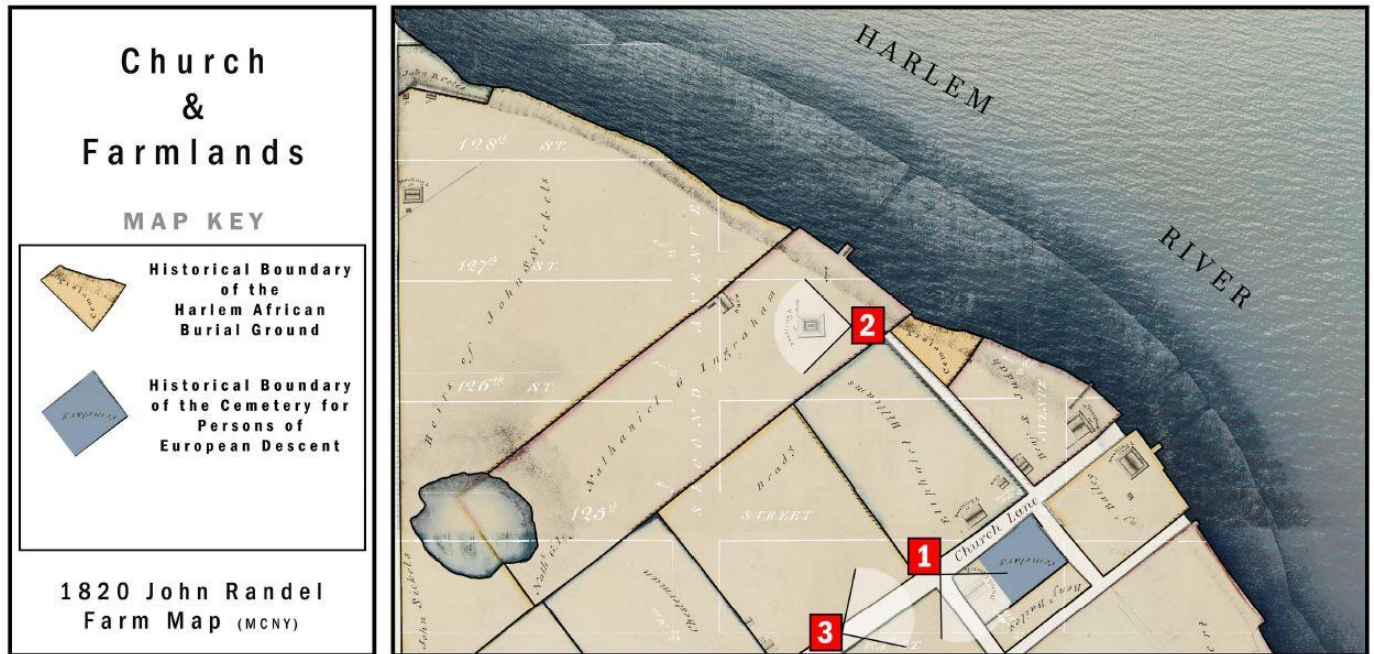


Figure 6. 1686 Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem. (Source New York City Library).

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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).

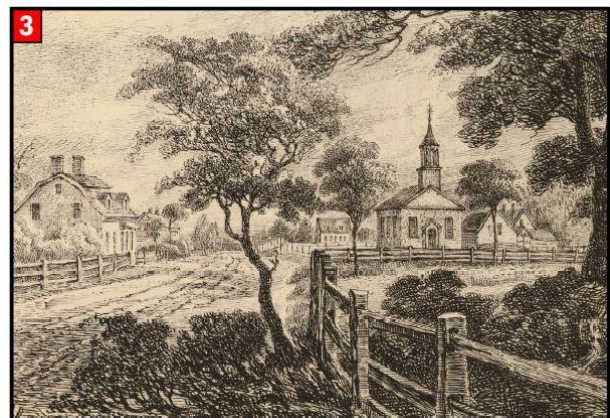


Figure 7. Harlem Early 1800s to Mid-1800s. Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.habgtaskforce.org.

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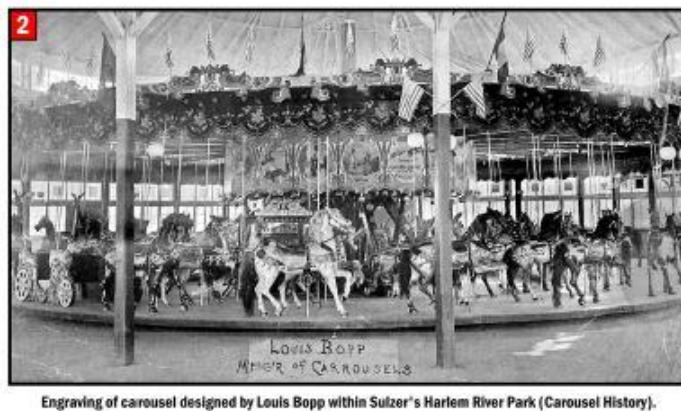


Figure 8. Sulzer's Harlem River Park 1885 to 1917. Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.habgtaskforce.org.

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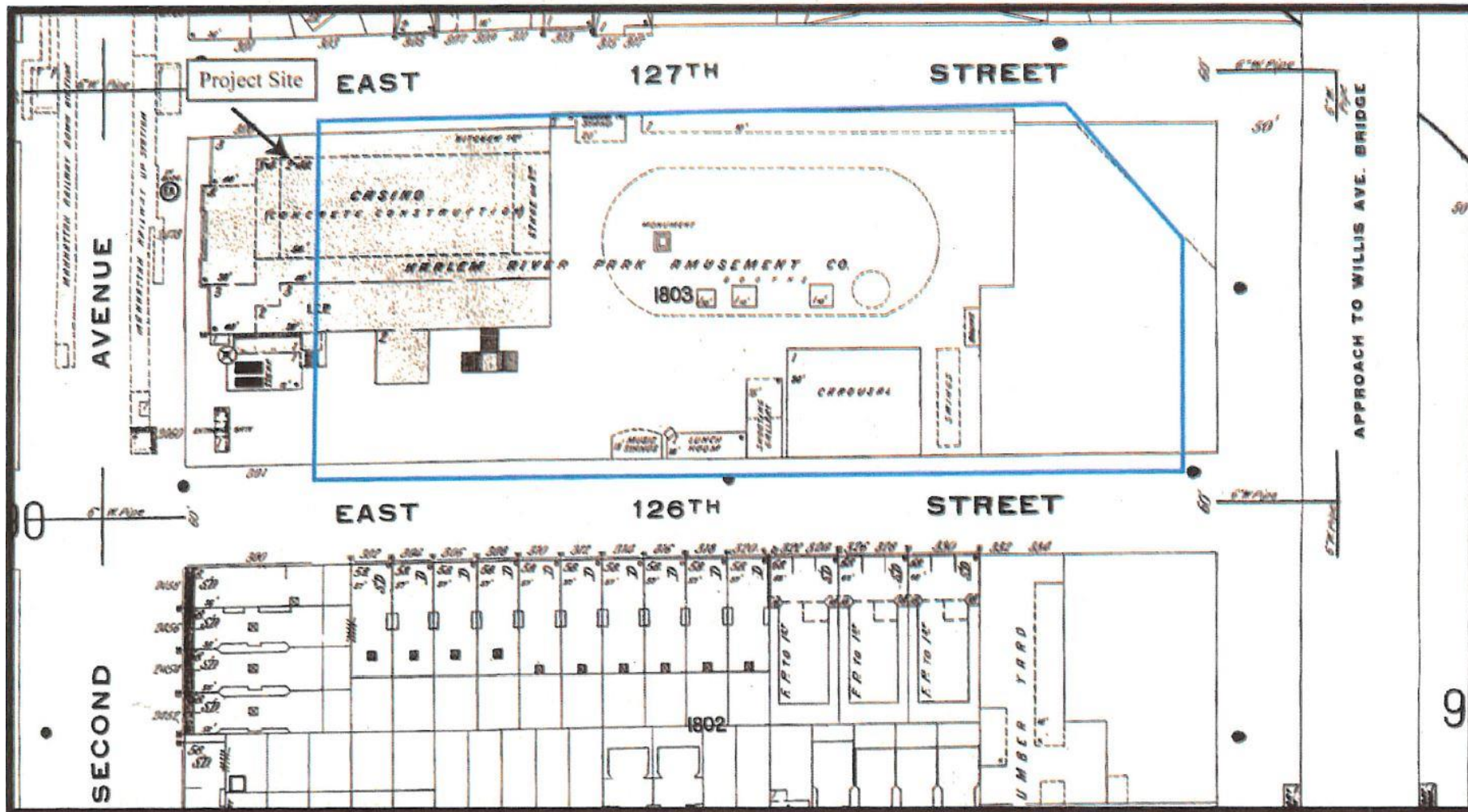


Figure 9. Location (blue rectangle) of the 126th Street Bus Depot on the 1911 Sanborn Insurance Map of the City of New York. Source: 2011 Phase IA Archaeological Assessment Replacement of 126th Street Bus Depot (Saunders & Schneiderman-Fox).

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

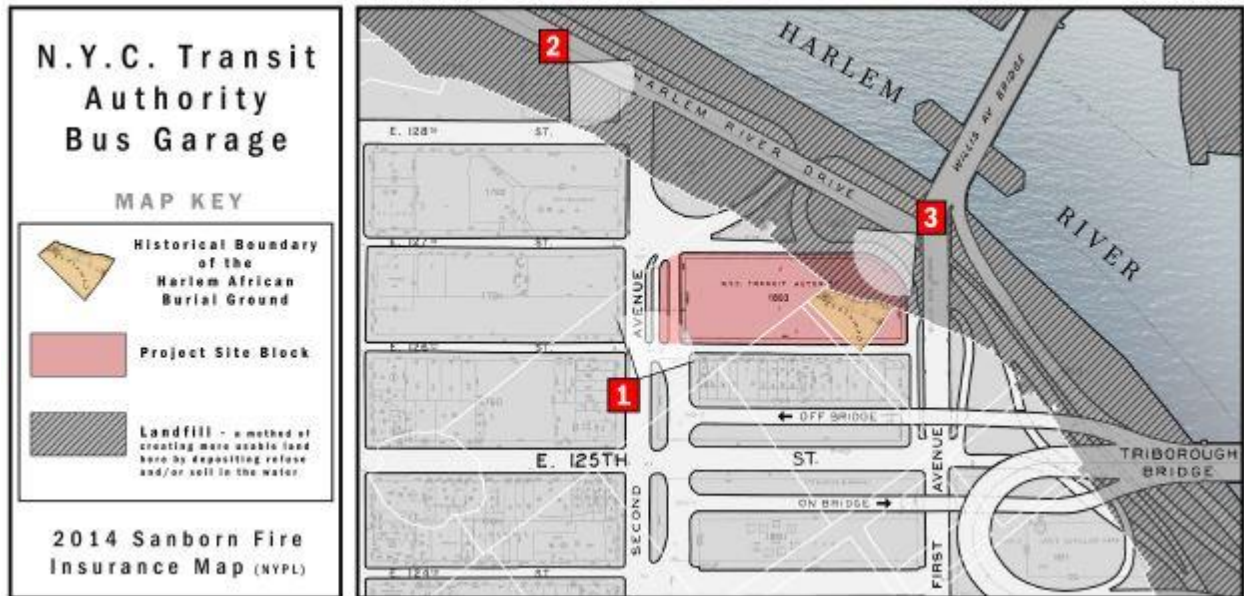
These soldiers, ultimately known in the United States as the Harlem Hellfighters and in France as the Black Rattlers or Men of Bronze, fought valiantly against the Germans in World War I and were among the most decorated of all American units, receiving numerous medals for valor and heroism. c. 1918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



Figure 10. Army Barracks & Movie Studio 1917 to 1924. Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.habgtaskforce.org.

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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).

Figure 11. 126th Street Bus Depot 1940's to Present. Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.habgtaskforce.org.

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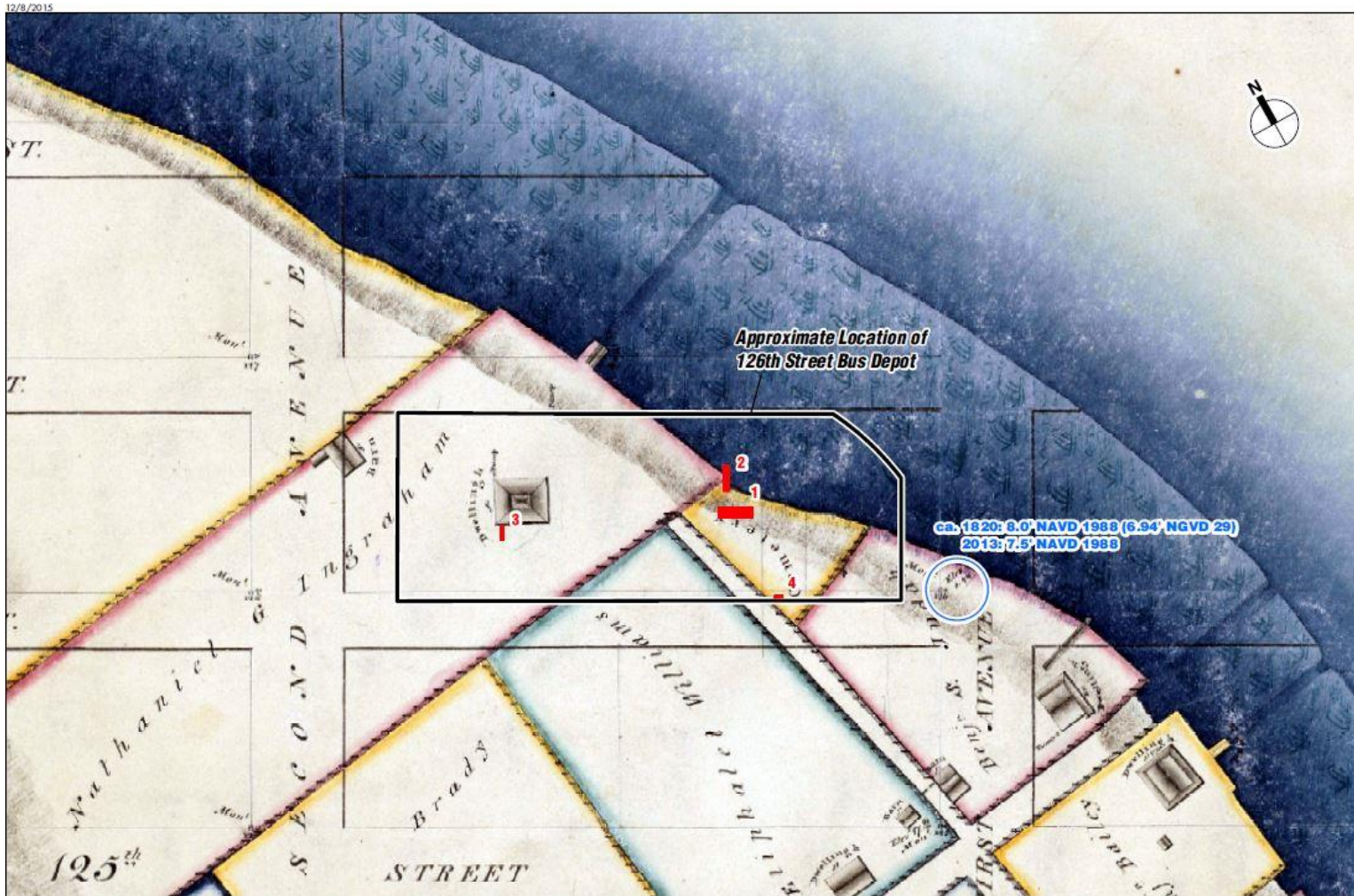


Figure 12. Phase IB Archaeological Investigation Trench Locations (red) on the ca. 1820 Randel's Farm Map. Note the Ingraham Dwelling near Trench 3. Source: 2016 Phase IB Archaeological Investigation 126th Street Bus Depot (Pappalardo and Meade).

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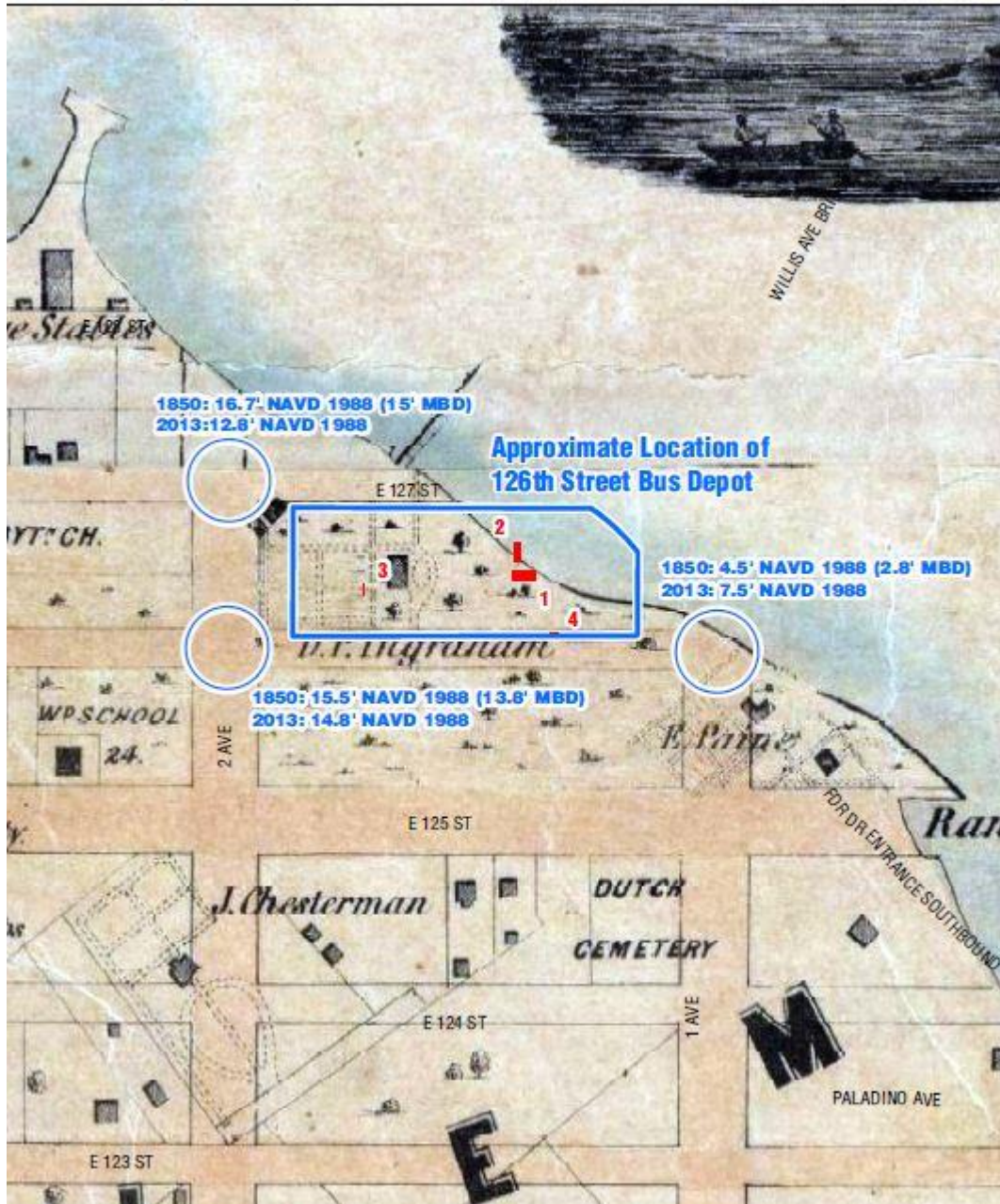


Figure 13. Phase IB Archaeological Investigation Trench Locations (red) on the ca. 1851 Dripps Map. Note the Dutch Cemetery known as “God’s Acre”. Source: 2016 *Phase IB Archaeological Investigation 126th Street Bus Depot* (Pappalardo & Meade).

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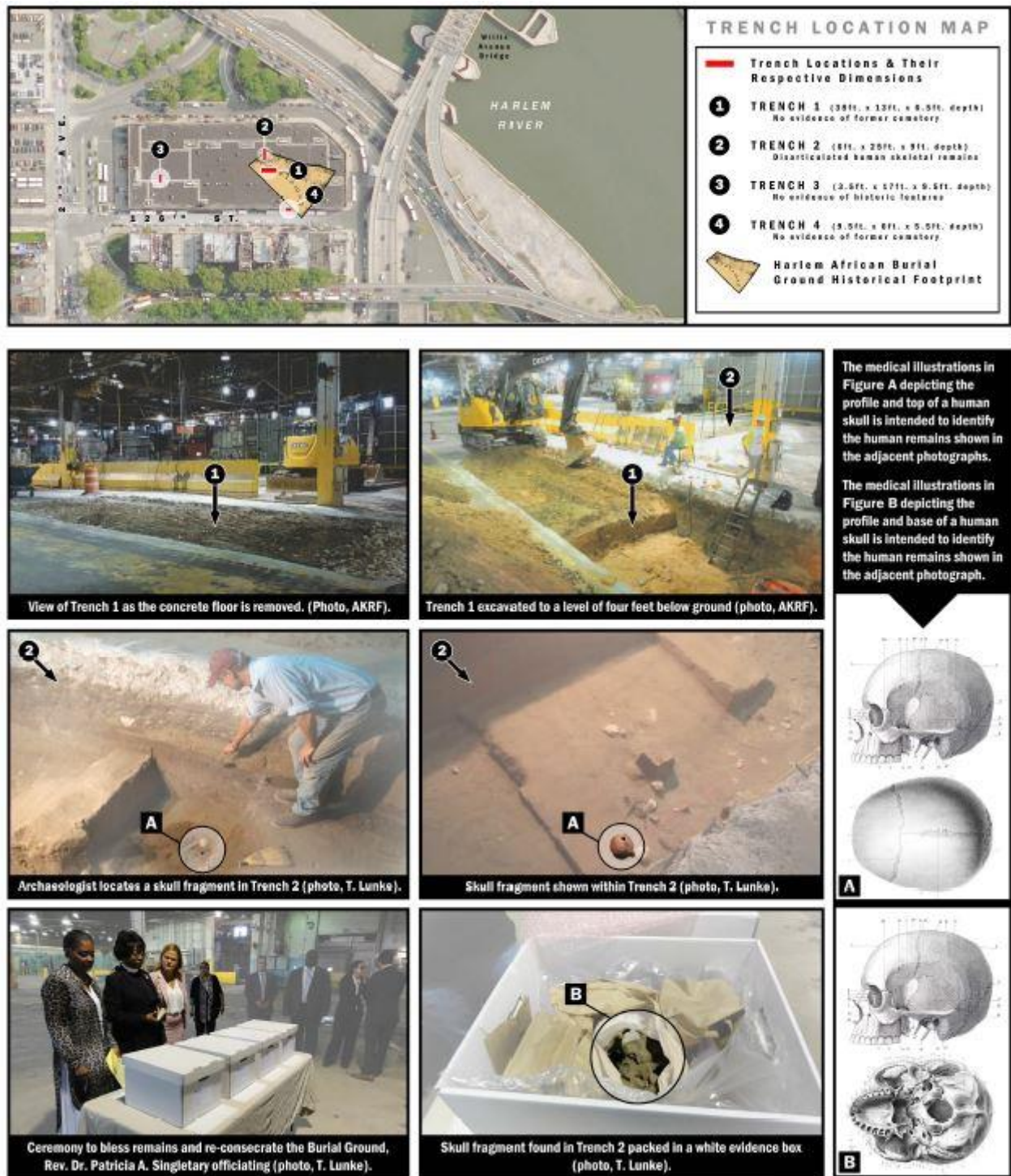


Figure 14. Archaeological Excavations at the Harlem African Burial Ground. Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.hsbgtaskforce.org.

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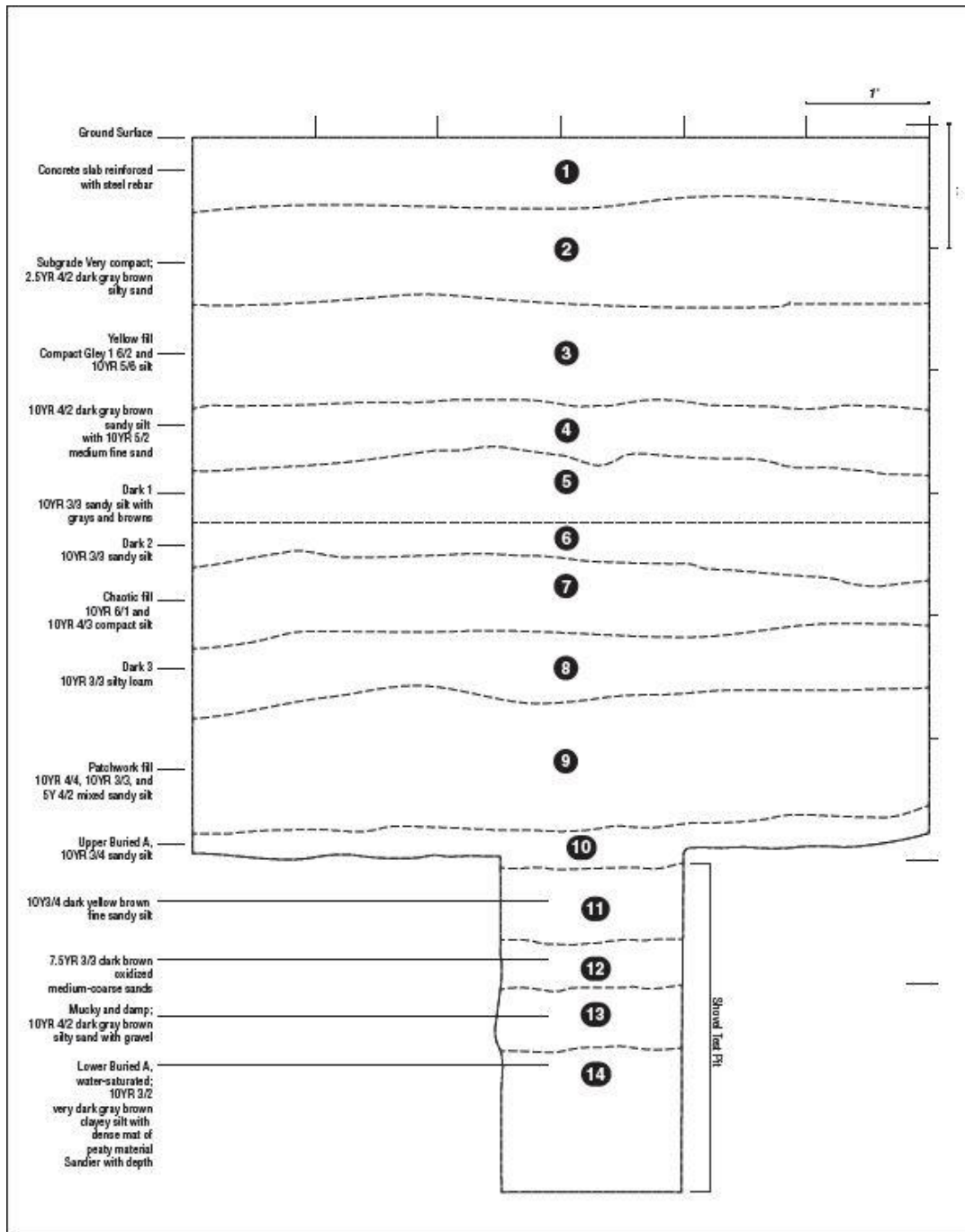


Figure 15. North Wall Profile Drawing, Trench 2. Human Remains were identified in Stratum 9. Source: 2016 *Phase IB Archaeological Investigation 126th Street Bus Depot* (Pappalardo & Meade).

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Figure 16. Names of Some of the Individuals Interred in the Harlem African Burial Ground.
Source: Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force/Anthony Carrion www.hsbgtaskforce.org.





GEN. SUPT.
DEPOT
OPERATIONS

B





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/14/2017 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 1/29/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 1/29/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Julie Ernstein  Discipline Archeologist

Telephone (202)354-2217 Date 1/29/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

NYC
Landmarks Preservation
Commission



Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

August 22, 2017

Sarah Carroll
Executive Director
SCarroll@lpc.nyc.gov

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

Mr. Michael F. Lynch, P.E., AIA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Director, Division for Historic Preservation
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: Harlem African Burial Ground, Manhattan

Dear Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Lynch:

I am writing on behalf of Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Harlem African Burial Ground in Upper Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Archaeology Amanda Sutphin has reviewed the materials you submitted and has determined that the Harlem African Burial Ground appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore based on this review, the Commission supports the nomination of the Harlem African Burial Ground. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sarah Carroll

cc: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

DEC 14 2017

1 December 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following two nominations, both on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Harlem African Burial Ground, Manhattan, New York County
G.W. Todd-Wilmot Castle Company Building, Rochester, Monroe County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office