

Back to E. 29th Street

Where Fact and Fiction

Revisit Kips Bay, N. Y.



Imre Sutton

Americo Publications

About the Author

Imre Sutton (b. 1928), a native New Yorker, attended grade schools (P. S. 116, 96, & 40) and Seward Park High School (10th grade) on the East Side. He has lived in Chicago, San Francisco as well as Los Angeles, graduating from Hollywood High School. He worked for the U. S. Forest Service in Southern California, fighting forest fires, and later served as a seasonal naturalist with the National Park Service at Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NV/AZ). He served in various capacities with the law libraries of the Bar Association of the City of New York and Los Angeles County. He served in the Air Force at Brooks AFB, San Antonio, TX. He earned a Ph. D. in geography at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is professor emeritus from California State University, Fullerton, where he taught cultural geography, conservation, law and environment, and water resource planning from 1964 to 1995. He has been a member of several editorial boards of journals and is currently an editor and consultant. While not being an urban specialist, he did study urban geography and urban planning and for a time worked for the Los Angeles County Planning District.

Sutton has authored and edited books dealing with American Indian land, territoriality and political geography – Indian Land Tenure (1975); American Indian Territoriality, a research guide, <http://thorpe.ou.edu/treatises.html>; 2005; Indian Affairs & Geographers, 2004; as editor, Irredeemable America: The Indians' Estate and Land Claims (1985); as coeditor (with Richmond Clow), Trusteeship in Change: Toward Tribal Autonomy in Resource Management (2001). He is currently coediting with Dan Cole (Smithsonian Institution) Cartography in Indian Affairs. Sutton is also a lifetime amateur composer/pianist, having written some 100 piano pieces.

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Photo on Book Cover

E. 29th Street is in the upper center. 1st Avenue is on the right (east); 2nd Avenue is to the left (west). 315 was located on the north side of the street four doors in from 2nd Avenue. It was torn down in the 1960s, replaced by the Henry Phipps Plaza North, a 21 story apartment complex. On the southside of the street from the corner of 29th Street south to 28th Street, along 2nd Avenue, is the Henry Phipps Plaza West. At the corner of 29th and 2nd Avenue is the former Churchill School, which earlier was the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club. This complex was completed in 1940. An even earlier Boys Club building was on 30th Street back-to-back with my apartment building. Farther down 29th Street is the Renwick Towers, which replaced older tenements as well as the Carmelite Parochial School, and toward the corner of 1st Avenue, the Church of Our Lady of Scapular was also replaced. Average height of buildings in the mid-1930s was 5 or 6 stories; today, it is closer to 21 stories. Also, there were almost no trees on these blocks; today the green landscape and the removal of the 2nd Avenue El create a very different urban environment. Photo downloaded from Google. Note: the green arrow is slightly west of 315 which is the address utilized to obtain this image.

Comment on the Photos

Many of the older photos, especially those that have been digitized, do not reproduce and print very well – some are unclear, out of focus, or otherwise just poor copy. Yet they help tell a story. So forgive my wanting to include them.

(For photo and map credits, see p.172)

Dedication

My family has been much involved in the ideas and the development of this book.

Logically and affectionately, this book belongs to my grandson, Aaron, who was 8 when I began to develop its content. He has been the inspiration to complete this project.

My daughter, Heidi, a high school history teacher, has encouraged me, as has my wife, Doris, a former social studies/ geography and home economics teacher.

I also want to remember my older brother Jaffery (1926-69), who shared so many of these experiences while we lived on the East Side.

Finally, I must acknowledge those youth I had known and those I didn't, for if any of them are still among us and thus in their seventies or older, they might choose to revisit with me the old neighborhood for better or worse. Irving Harris, historian of the Madison Square Boys (and Girls) Club, and actor Ben Gazzara, are two 'old-timers' who knew the neighborhood in the 1930s. I didn't know either of them and only know Irving by phone chats and correspondence. He has shared his working history of the club.

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F. 1 CONTEMPORARY KIPS BAY & EAST SIDE



A wider view of Kips Bay focusing on E. 29th Street (near the center of the photo). The high-rise apartment complexes include the Henry Phipps Plazas West, North and East, as well as the Kips Bay Plaza which is bound by 30th and 33rd streets and 1st and 2nd avenues. The East River lies at the right; adjacent is the Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) Parkway. Sequentially to the west are 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Lexington avenues. On the north is 35th Street, and on the south, 24th Street. Near the top of the photo just east of 3rd Avenue and on 33rd Street is P. S. 116. As I view this latest urbanscape, it is dominated by apartments and medical row along 1st Avenue. What stands out as a 'landmark' was the Madison Square Boys (and Girls) Club – now entirely gone from the neighborhood. Photo by Google, as downloaded, Fall 2006.

Foreword and Acknowledgments

Early on, I had in mind a geography of the past of Kips Bay, a neighborhood in Midtown on the East Side of Manhattan. Professionally, that would constitute an historical geography. To be sure, one can hardly write about the geographic past of a place without dealing with its history. In its own rights, Kips Bay is historically more significant for its association with the Revolutionary War. Its contemporary eminence, if that is the right word, focuses on its prime location near uptown but also within a medical district. Reasonably, I questioned myself as to how viable this neighborhood was in my youth to want to reconstruct the mid-1930s. I only lived there as a grade school youth, and I never thought of having resided in a prominent section of the city. The more I pondered the idea of a professional study, the less I was enamored with the venture. Not that I was not up to the research task, potential field work, and contacts with many persons. Nor was my memory of that neighborhood completely void after nearly seventy years. The issue, as I saw it then and still do, is that I cannot connect with individuals I had known then. I left too young, not to return, certainly before lasting friendships would be made.

Consequently, I came to believe that a more successful book would be a semi- autobiographical account of my youth on the East Side. I would draw more upon memory of place than on persons simply because I moved away at age 10. I would seek facts but probably slip into some fictional narrative only because I presume some truth in my recollections. Of course, I also feared an academic product would fall way short

of the professional, and thus fail to serve the double objective of revisiting the old neighborhood as well as stimulating an interest in geography of the man-made environment.

As ideas emerged, a more hybrid yet personalized approach took hold. I might explore, so I thought, Kips Bay as a case study or exercise that incorporated solid geographic analysis with personal observations. I would turn to maps, photos, websites, correspondence, and other sources, and tell readers how I discovered and utilized the source materials. (See *Notes*) Real persons today will make important inputs to this account; hopefully, even a few individuals who hark back to the same years I am writing about will enhance the historic and geographic past. As a professor of geography, retired for more than a decade, I could readily achieve much of the reconstruction, but surely I will leave gaps, blank spaces as it were, and thus I can not claim this book is a professional job. I have intentionally minimized methods and jargon in telling the story. Yet I could not avoid some academic approaches in my search for facts or evaluation of my findings.

Of all the places I have lived, 29th Street is chosen because I resided there and on the East Side the longest in my childhood – three years, and four other years elsewhere in Manhattan. Earlier, I lived farther downtown on Madison Avenue, then later on 2nd Avenue, then uptown, then a return to the area, and ultimately to Greenwich Village on the west side. My family, no thanks to a restless, journalist father, moved about a great deal, way too much as I recall, back and forth both from and within New Jersey, and in many locations in Manhattan, much later in Chicago and then on the West Coast. However, I was born in New York, despite spending my first year and a half in Newark and nearby, and I feel a certain affinity for the East Side despite the great gap in time. Well, I

surely still talk like a New Yorker (for now and then, among other words or phrases, I still say ‘becuz’ and ‘ascared’, combining afraid and scared.)

I have specific objectives, the primary one being to reconstruct that neighborhood even if incompletely, and in the process seek to characterize the area especially because of the dynamic environmental changes that came about after the Second War and throughout the 1960s. As such I want to share my views of the new urban scene and thus provide some insights into how we observe and comprehend environmental change.

I intend that this book would have a mixed audience perhaps as young as junior high teens, but I am unsure how old, because the orientation is on the *youthful* past, not the much *older* contemporary. Assuredly, many New Yorkers, past and present, might find the account more provocative, but I do not rule out an interest by persons living elsewhere. As such, I hope my account will invite interest in geography and history, perhaps urban planning, architecture, music (my amateur field) or, in sum, the past, present and future of the man-made environment. (Interest in the computer is self-evident for many potential readers.)

East 29th Street is but one street in Kips Bay. Figure In.2 will show you that the general neighborhood lies within a few blocks of the East River from, say, Fourth (Park) Ave and from 34th Street south to 23rd Street. In Manhattan, approximately 20-22 streets make a mile, so the north/south area of Kips Bay is about ½ mi plus and the width averages somewhat more. Not that it may mean too much to you, but that accounts for about 240 acres; most farms and even some parks are much larger. Of course, the ‘bounds’ of Kips Bay depend upon who is describing the district. Interestingly

enough, the name Kips Bay does not ring a bell for me; I was 6–10 when I lived in that neighborhood or nearby. I grew up talking about the East Side without any clarity. I certainly didn't distinguish differences for the neighboring districts such as Gramercy Park or Murray Hill. I was then, and now even more, aware that 29th Street seemed a boundary of the older tenement area of poor housing and other less interesting commercial and industrial ventures. It is not a neighborhood known for important landmarks.

As I note later, I didn't even know the name of my grade school! Only a number -- P. S. 116. [The name is Mary Lindley Murray, the name is also that of the adjacent neighborhood to the immediate north – Murray Hill.] A close friend from Brooklyn similarly contends that he only knew his grade school by number. These 'revelations' should suggest to the reader that some of my facts and their interpretations must be questioned up to a point. Fortunately, several readers serving as referees have discovered mistakes and omissions, and have advised me en route to completion of this volume.

On Being a Geographer

My frequent wanderings in Manhattan as a kid in a way prepared me as a geographer, although I had no idea that such a profession even existed, much less one I would choose for a life work. Certainly, such was not on my mind at ages 6, 7, 8 or 9. I read on occasion *National Geographic*, but I really enjoyed pouring over maps of every kind. If my memory doesn't fail me here, I recall at least one or more early geographies, especially one of New York City. Perhaps I saw it at school or at one of the libraries a few blocks from our apartment. I'm told that the city schools did not utilize texts that were modified for New York schools. Thus such a

geography was probably a library book. One by a Straubemuller (1924) may well have ended up in my hands. I had some encouragement to learn more of the East Side and beyond. My older brother was a bonehead when it came to knowing where he was. He relied upon me when we went on our urban excursions. But such side trips up and down the island, or across town, didn't mean we learned a lot about other neighborhoods or would remember specific buildings and other local features. For example, I was never good at recalling statues in parks. Dvorak is very special, as you will see, because I was a student of music. I also knew where Carnegie Hall was located. Anyway, so much for trying to reconstruct what made me a geographer.

Organization of book and writing strategy

One of my college professors (*see* Spencer & Thomas 1969) once talked about "Familiar Ground" and "Far Country." He and a colleague later wrote about how we early on identify with home and neighborhood and then begin to perceive a bit more and then lots more of the environment in which we live and move about. Our earliest observations begin in the home and perhaps in our garden, out front at the sidewalk and street and with our neighbors on either side of us, and perhaps across the street. I grew up in apartments on the east side of Manhattan, so I knew my building and immediate neighbors on my floor and perhaps some of the kids elsewhere in the apartment building or on the block. I did get involved with a few kids in the nearby apartments. Even though we moved around a lot, I tried to get to know where the stores were. In those days, even as a very young kid in the 1930s, I was sent to the corner 'cigar' store to get cigarettes for my folks (of course, that is not allowed these days).

As time went on, the boundaries of familiar ground expanded as I walked to grade school which was five short blocks. When we moved way uptown on the East Side, I came to inhabit some of the far country, changing schools and local stores, meeting different kids. But it soon became another familiar ground. My professor's far country would take you beyond your county and even across state lines. This happened when I was ten and we moved to Chicago; we went by train overnight (the New York Central via a part of Canada). With each major move -- later to San Francisco by car, then to Los Angeles by bus -- I entered new far country and became immersed in yet another familiar ground.

I have essentially followed this model of familiar ground and far country in the organization of this book -- beginning on the block and its immediate surroundings, local stores, the school, churches, then farther away in any direction and eventually to the Queensboro Bridge or the Jersey Palisades.

Acknowledgments

This is not a book that could be compiled and written without a great amount of help – given so graciously, willingly, cooperatively – what can I say? Once I got on the Internet I made numerous discoveries and ‘met’ countless people who offered me help in so many ways. Where do I start? Whom do I slight by not starting with him or her? So bear with me as I recite them to you but not necessarily in any special order. Local persons were quickly identified. I was amazed. Eleonora DiBernardo of the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club told me she grew up on 29th, apparently across the street from me, but she was probably a toddler in my last year there. Her mother was the superintendent of three buildings on that side of the street. Patricia Pardo, Branch Manager of the Kips Bay

Public Library on 3rd Ave between 31st and 32nd streets , walked the neighborhood and sent me elegant photos, some of which I have included. She wrote thoughtful captions; her photos brought to life what aerial photos can only rarely tell you! (That library branch came into existence in the 1970s; in my time we walked many blocks north or south to a public library.) She has continued to offer assistance in various ways.

I discovered that the Chapel of the Incarnation on 31st near 2nd Ave became independent, changing its name to Church of the Good Shepherd. Reverend David Carlson told me that the church still sponsors kids at Incarnation Camp at Ivoryton, CT. I was there 3 summers! But a member of that church – Marie Furray -- sent me a visiting sermon by Reverend Nicolas Feringa, former pastor of that church, whom I remember, and he spoke of facts, some of which I never knew, that nearly brought me to tears. Another contributor is William Mulligan, who lived near the area as a youth, moved away, but continued to visit grandparents nearby and worked in the neighborhood with the New York Police Department. He is currently a security manager with the Henry Phipps Plaza West on 2nd Ave. between 28th and 29th Streets. Several persons graciously shared information or photos, such as did Frank Pfuhler (*see* Electricrailroaders.org) and Lawrence Stelter (*see* his book *By the El.*) I do want to include Norman Ross, a New York publisher in his own rights, who published my first book (about Indian land); he has been a good counsel from the beginning. And his then part-time assistant, Larissa Archer, who served for a time as my research aide in the map, photo and microfilm collections of the New York Public Library. Also, I want to acknowledge the special assistance of Matthew Walusko, a computer graphic designer, who made many photos more readable and executed other chores. I

include here Simon Wright, a graduate student in geography at California State University, Long Beach, who computer-prepared Figure 1.22a/b.

After nearly two years working at the task of putting this book together, I ‘encountered’ Irving Harris, who as a long-standing member of the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, and who grew up on E. 27th Street, is completing the writing of a history of the club. His reminiscences give me confidence in my own recollections. His working title is: *Welcome to the Club: A Photographic History & Memoir of a Place Once Called the Madison Square Boys’ Club.*

Stephen L. Meyers, author of *Manhattan’s Lost Streetcars*, sent me photographic data of the 28th/29th Streets Crosstown Railway, which vanished before my time, as well as photos of historic streetcars. But, in reality, he became a voluntary editor, who caught many typographical errors as well as those of fact, especially in the chapters focusing on transportation. Much thanks, Stephen.

Briefer mention of others is in order: Professor Andrew Dolkart, Columbia University, Architectural History - -he is an authority on firehouses. Father Alfred Isacson of the Carmelite Order, Millertown, NY, for a photo of the Carmelite Parochial School. Father Sean Harlow, pastor of the St. Stephens Catholic Church for confirmation on photos. Hilary Ballon, architectural historian, Columbia University, who also shared older photos. Finally, other acknowledgments must appear more as credits in the *Notes to Online References* or in photo captions.

I had hoped to touch base with the actor Ben Gazzara who lived on my block. He is two years younger than I, and because I had left so early on it is doubtful I knew him as a youth. Indeed, he and his family moved into the neighborhood

around the same time as we did, in 1934. I did make contact with one of his friends, but unfortunately Gazzara has not been well –thus no response to my inquiry. But with reference to E. 29th Street, Gazzara, in a documentary film, spoke of how he got out of a “neighborhood of tenements” on the block between 1st and 2nd avenues. As a youth, he had made every effort to get up to Broadway to see stage plays and films, even playing hooky from school. Earlier he performed in the many plays staged by the Madison Square Boys Club, which was on our block after my time. In his interview, he commented: “I said this is the way off the corner...I think I found it...” He had lived at 318, attended the Carmelite Parochial School next door, and later, attended Stuyvesant High on 15th Street. Had I continued living there, I suspect that I would have also gone to Stuyvesant. When I came back to New York in the fall of 1942, I enrolled at Seward Park High farther down on the Lower East Side. Perhaps I will yet hear from Mr. Gazzara.

Imre Sutton

Fullerton, California

January 2008

[I owe a debt to the utility of the Internet. In a way this book demonstrates the vitality of the Internet for gathering information and data, including maps and photos that I have downloaded. Thus, the Notes section makes available most of the urls utilized for this study. The websites were last visited in the Spring, 2007.]

On Revisiting E. 29th Street

...After only a few steps, I saw that there was no street life—a few pedestrians, that was all. The street seemed deserted and sad.

I looked to my left and there was the Boys Club where I had learned to hope. They were tearing it down. But for me it would always remain whole.* It seemed that everything had been demolished and replaced by cement blocks, cloned by committee, there was no warmth, no feeling. These new dwellings certainly could not have been built with people in mind. The stoops, where neighbors could stand or sit, talk, laugh, and gossip were no more. And so it was with the grocery store, the butcher shop, the produce markets...

Ben Gazzara

In the Moment: My Life as an Actor, 2004 (pp.290-91)

* Irving Harris, historian of the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, informed me (July 2007) that Mr. Gazzara was mistaken. The club was then renovating the building (circa early 1990s). In 1999 the Churchill School took possession of the building.

Introduction

Real & Virtual New York

Aaron and I Pour Over Some Maps

My grandson Aaron has a wild curiosity and, as most kids do, asks many questions. He usually asks about space – the planets, stars – and, because he hangs around me a lot, the environment, especially natural hazards. Ask him anything about volcanoes and the like. But he also has asked me:

“Papa, what was it like when you were a kid, like my age?”

Well, that would have made me 8, going on 9. What was it like? I would need to begin with: Where was I living? Of course, on the East Side of Manhattan, on 29th Street, off 2nd Avenue. So I would respond:

“Let me tell you about New York, at least those parts I knew as a kid your age.”

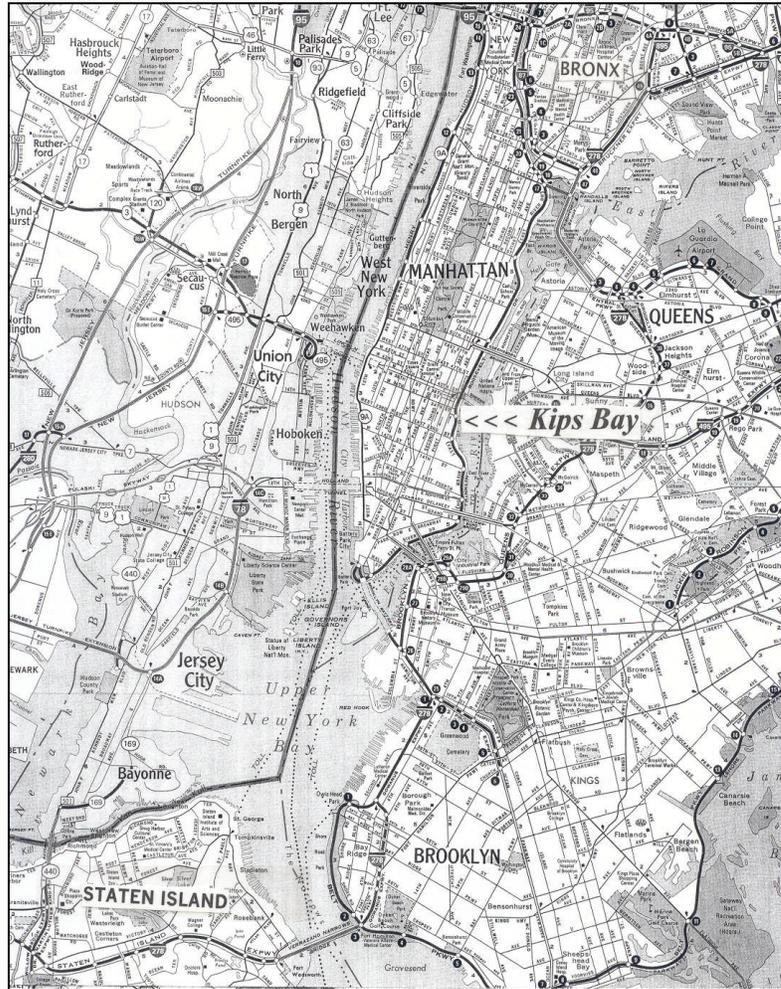
Now, Aaron knew New York was on the east coast of North America and that it is a very big city on the Atlantic. I got out a folded map of New York and environs. For me, it was a logical way to start. He was already drawing his own maps, knew the states, in fact, the continents, oceans and even more. We opened the map of “New York City and Vicinity”(AAA, 2005/06) The big map consists of northern New Jersey and all of New York City. I pointed to Manhattan and made my usual remark about my birth:

“You know, I was born on an island!”

Since Aaron and his folks had been to Hawaii several summers, he looked at me, a bit puzzled.

“You mean Hawaii? Maybe Maui” [That’s his favorite]

In.1 METROPOLITAN NEW YORK CITY



New York comprises five boroughs – Manhattan, Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island (Richmond). All but the Bronx are island locations. Manhattan is bound by the East River (actually a strait) and the Hudson River -- the immediate boundary with New Jersey. Kips Bay is on the East Side in Midtown. Map from “New York City and Vicinity,” AAA 2005/2006.

//

“No, no; Manhattan Island. You see, most of New York City is made up of islands. A good Jeopardy [the TV quiz show] question might be: “Which is the only part of New York City that is on the mainland of North America?”

Aaron was baffled; shrugged his shoulders. So I answered:

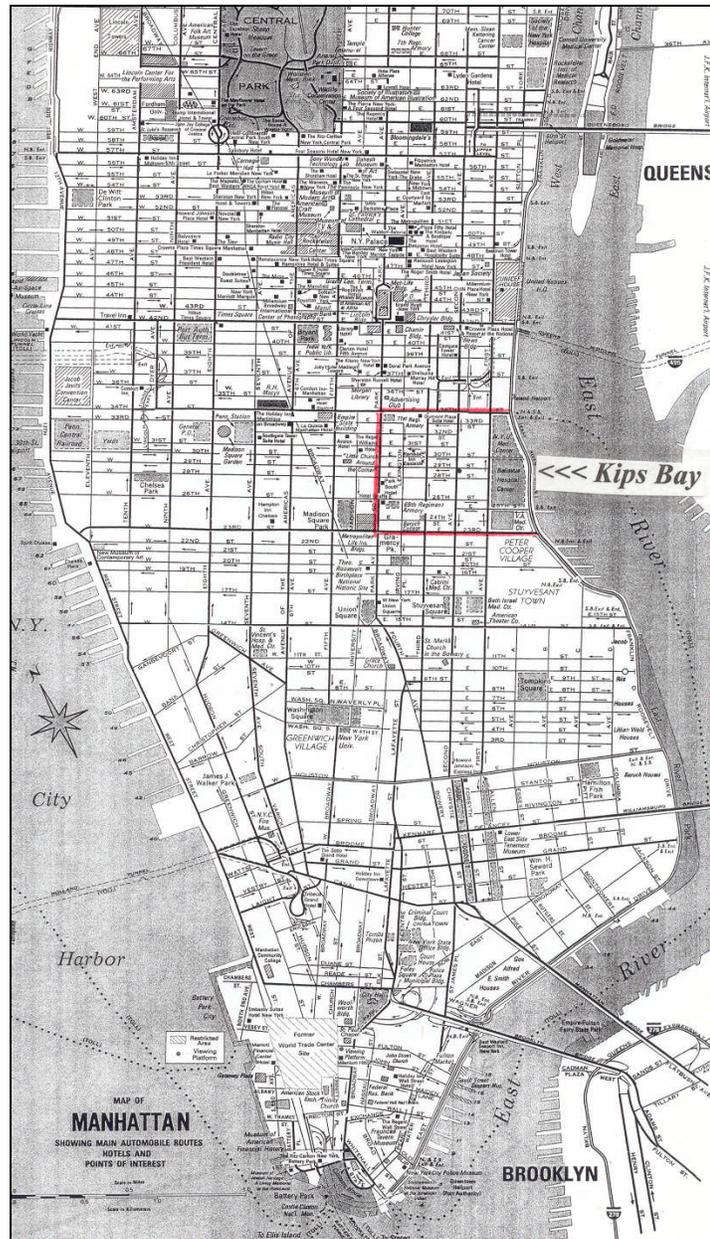
“The Bronx!” Everything else is islands – Manhattan, Long Island, which includes Brooklyn and Queens, and Staten Island. So, you see, New York is a city of bridges – lots of them. Anyway, let’s talk about the East Side.”

I turned the map over to a detailed street map just of Manhattan. Unfortunately, Aaron’s home does not reside in an older neighborhood although the town itself is still being overtaken by houses and streets that are displacing orchards and farms, a situation that engulfed New York more than a century ago. (Let me tell you that I read in *Time* magazine that the last farm in Manhattan went out of existence in 1930. I would have thought much earlier in time.) By comparison, Aaron’s town started up in the late 1900s. New York has been around since the 1700s. And, as I told him, my old neighborhood is even more than a century old. It was probably in some ways at least a half-century old when I lived there in the mid-1930s.

So he asked: “Do you remember anything of your home? What was it like?”

“My home was an apartment building—some city dwellers refer to apartments as their house – indeed, it was a tenement, very old, now torn down, had five stories and a front stairway of perhaps 10 stairs. It also had a full basement to store coal for the winter, a garbage area with a dumb waiter,

In.2 LOWER MANHATTAN & KIPS BAY



Kips Bay is one of many neighborhoods making up New York City. Located in Midtown on the East Side, it extends essentially from 4th Avenue to the East River and from just south of 34th St. to the lower 20's. Murray Hill lies on the north; Chelsea and Gramercy Park are west and south, and the Lower East Side may be said to begin at 23rd St. Many maps and their descriptions do not account for Kips Bay at all. Map from "New York City and Vicinity," AAA, 2005/2006.

storage bins for trunks and the like, as well as an apartment for the ‘super’.” I was sure he was going to ask about all of that, but he didn’t. We moved on...

“What was your street like? Did you know a lot of kids? Did you drive to school every day?” Good questions, all. So I began:

“We were five or six in all, living in my building or those next door and across the street or elsewhere in the neighborhood around 29th St. and 2nd Ave. on the East Side. The El trains rolled by in great numbers every few minutes and all night! Our grade school -- P. S. 116 --was a few of blocks away...”

“Papa, didn’t your school have a name? [His is called Ben Franklin].

“It did or does, it is Mary Lindley Murray Elementary School. I am told that some school names were only added after World War II.”

“You ask about friends, well, I think we spent a little more than three years together at school, but maybe one of the boys moved away sooner. I did for a short time, then moved back, said I had moved to California [which I did two years later]. But I went to a different school [P. S. 40]. I saw two or three of the old group, then after leaving New York, I lost touch with all of them.

“What did you and your buddies do, like after school or on the weekend?”

“We had good times, swam in the dirty East River, were yelled at to get out, picked up by the police boat, because when the tide went out, we couldn’t reach the lower rungs on the wharf ladders. We spent some afternoon time at a newsstand on 3rd Avenue. We helped shelve magazines and got to read the

comics. In those years, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia read the comics on radio on Sunday mornings. But my father brought home two papers every morning, so we had plenty of opportunities to read the comics. But magazine comics were another matter. Some of us played in the streets. There were few cars – maybe just a police car [I remember the two-seater Fords], a delivery van, milk truck, also the ice truck. Oh, yes, even wagons pulled by horses.”

To this comment, Aaron eyes lit up. “Horses! Wow!”

“Anyway, the street was open, so we could play ball. We liked a bat game where you roll the ball on the ground to hit the bat, and if you do, it jumps up and you try to catch it. And if you do, you get the score and then it’s your turn! Simple game, lots of fun. That’s the way I remember living on the East Side.”

Aaron thought about what I was telling him and then asked:

“Let’s look at the map some more. Can you show me where 29th Street is?”

“Look here, see the East River – later I’ll tell you why it isn’t a river – and the area that is beige or sort of brown, that is Bellevue Hospital. I lived around the corner from it!” I pointed to 29th St. “That’s part of the East Side.”

Right now, Aaron was asking mostly about why the East River is not a river. So I better tell him and all the readers.

Well, Aaron, the East River is mostly salty, like the ocean; it really has no true source of water from the land, like the Hudson does. The Hudson rises way in the north of New York State. But the East River is part of Long Island Sound, which is an extension of the Atlantic Ocean – all salty water, into which rivers flow. But the East River looks like a river

because it is narrow. Even the Harlem River, which separates Manhattan from the Bronx, is a strait, not a true river, but it does get some fresh water from the Hudson, so perhaps it is like a branch of the Hudson. In fact, since the Harlem gets some water from the Hudson, so does the East River. ”

I got to thinking that this discussion is beyond him, so I didn't try to explain distributaries of a river at a delta.

Aaron's eyes focused not on the hospital, nor on the street, but on the arrows alongside the streets and avenues, and then he pointed to them.

“What are the arrows?”

“Well, in New York and in many other cities, traffic can only go one way. Downtown Los Angeles has several one-way streets. More efficient that way. See, 29th Street goes west, somehow I'm remembering that we went east on the street when I was a kid. I'd need an older map to prove that. I offered too much information, when I told him that most avenues and larger crosstown streets – such as 34th or 42nd – had normal two-way traffic. (From newspaper stories with photos, I see that even 2nd and 3rd avenues are one-way.) Most avenues I knew were two-way in the 1930s.

He had already moved on to other questions. He asked about the World Trade Center, so I showed him on the map that it was especially marked ‘Former World Trade Center Site.’ I told him that I was rarely that far down the island. I did get to visit my grandfather just off Wall St. once.

Aaron got further interested in the map, noticing Broadway going diagonally down the island. I told him that it tracks an old Indian trail. He traced with his fingers the various bridges. He remembered driving on the Vincent Thomas Bridge over the Los Angeles River and having driven

In.3 THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE & THE EAST RIVER



*Typical view of a tugboat pulling a barge on the East River past the Queensboro Bridge (essentially 59th Street on the Manhattan side). While these boats and others plied the river day and night, in the warmer weather many of us kids ended up swimming off 30th Street or nearby. We had no idea that the river is, in reality, a strait, an arm of Long Island Sound, which is an extension of the Atlantic. Photo from: *The East River, Images of America* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishers, 2005), p. 83. Photo, circa 1950.*

across the Golden Gate Bridge to go the Muir Woods, north of San Francisco..

“Do you remember when you visited Pittsburgh, there were many bridges where the three rivers come together. New York is a city of bridges. Let’s turn over the map. Look at all of the red lines and strips crossing the blue areas over the rivers. More of them cross over the East River, only one connecting New York City with New Jersey – the George Washington.” I told him that some other time I would explain why there are so few bridges over the Hudson River.

Then he asked: “What are those dots?”

Aaron was tracing the dots over the water.

“They are the routes of the ferries.”

“Papa, when did you visit New York, your neighborhood. I know you went back east by car years ago. Mom told me that all of you took a trip during the Bicentennial and you went to New York, visited Grandma Jini.”

“Yes, and that is the last time I was in the city. Just about 30 years ago. So much must have changed. Maybe even before 1976. Are you curious?”

“Sure. How can we find out?”

I got to thinking about it. With what I know about geography and history, about maps and aerial photos, and how to use the Internet, I posed an idea to him.

“Why not make it a project. Like a school assignment.”
He took to the idea. “Can I help?”

“You bet. You can be in it. I’ll write you into the account. Maybe it should be fiction. What do you think? We could make it a story that young people, like you, could read and also learn something about getting information and other materials for a project.”

“That’s a great idea.”

“I just thought also that it could be written for kids from your age to maybe 12 to 14, mostly middle school or a bit younger. Does that make sense? “Should I try to include old buddies who lived on the block with me?”

“Great idea. Do you still know any of them?”

Before I could move on, Aaron asked about the dashed lines crossing the rivers.

“Those are showing the auto and subway tunnels under the rivers. See the Holland Tunnel, the oldest, connects New Jersey with lower Manhattan. That is the one of the ways my grandfather used every day going to and from work. Of course, on occasion, he did take the ferry across from Weehawken to 40th Street in mid-Manhattan and then take a subway

[probably the 7th Avenue] south to Wall Street. He worked as an engineer for an insurance company just off Wall Street. Farther upriver is the Lincoln Tunnel, which was being built when I was your age, connects New York with Weehawken, NJ, where my grandparents lived.”

“You were asking about my old buddies, and I have to tell you that I could start with something about them years ago—not very much -- and then try to find them now, and make up the story about what happened to them. They could then help put together the old neighborhood as we all remember it.”

As it happened, Aaron liked the idea but I did not ultimately find it would fly too well. So I abandoned it in favor of a semi-autobiographical account. I must admit that my first quest is to put on paper something of my childhood and my old neighborhood for my grandson, who is about the age I was when I lived on 29th St. In a way, of course, I do want to show younger readers – who probably can show me even more, faster and better – how to get a lot of facts from texts, maps, photos, Internet, contacts, and all other means. I am a teacher at heart.

A Geographer’s View of Urban Change

As a geographer, I suppose it is my duty, so to speak, to interpret the urban landscape of New York in a way that would contrast with a description made by a resident, visitor, or perhaps even a municipal official. There are so many ways to talk about New York. I will do so on the broader scale for some reasons but then focus in on Manhattan, since in my youth I did not live in any other borough and perhaps, like so many New Yorkers, I traveled the subways and knew little about what was above me. To me, Manhattan was – perhaps

still is – the East Side, lower Manhattan, the East River and the bridges. I had been uptown to the museums and Central Park, and downtown, in part, because I attended Seward Park High School in my 10th grade. I also know Greenwich Village. But I am not a good student of Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens – been to all three boroughs perhaps only once or twice. And I never visited Staten Island, until as an adult, we crossed from New Jersey and continued to where we crossed the Verrazano Bridge to Brooklyn.

As a youth, the East Side was everything. I had no notions about a ‘lower’ or ‘upper,’ or even a Kips Bay. In later years, whenever I told others about where I lived , I spoke of the East Side as being everything. However, since I had lived on 22nd around the corner from Gramercy Park, I knew such a neighborhood by name. I walked considerable distances, took the El or subway, but did not have a firm grasp of the city’s diverse geography. I didn’t know the East River was a strait, an arm of the ocean, yet I swam in that river. In a way, I knew the palisade towns of New Jersey – Weehawken especially – better than I knew other boroughs of New York. So much for a youthful geographic education.

If you look at a map of the city and region, you’ll see that most of New York is made up of islands. It is correct for me to say that I was born on an island, but I suppose one hardly realizes that Manhattan is an island despite the Hudson River on the west and the East River on the east. Years ago there was a TV show called “Candid Camera,” and the staff would encounter people on the street and ask them questions. Like, where is west or east in Manhattan. But I don’t remember if they asked anyone about the place they lived in, such as an island. But because there are so many islands, there are so many bridges and tunnels. When I was a kid, we already

had many bridges over the East River and only one connecting Manhattan to New Jersey – the George Washington Bridge uptown. The Hudson is a very deep river, carved by glaciers many thousand years ago, perhaps too deep in places to support a bridge. But a long time ago, engineers managed to construct the Holland Tunnel that connects the Battery to New Jersey, and later, the Lincoln Tunnel in two stages, in the late 1930s when traffic went both ways through it. Much later, second and third tubes were constructed.

Long before bridges and tunnels, we already had ferries and they still operate in certain areas of New York. We traveled to Weehawken, across from 40th Street or thereabouts, by ferry; later, we went by bus that took the tunnel and then wound its way up the palisades on the Jersey side. I don't want to overlook the fact that New Yorkers always wanted a bridge to Staten Island, but for years, I suspect, engineers were unsure of the construction across The Narrows from Brooklyn. Of course, financing precluded construction during the 1930s. Eventually, they did construct the Verrazano Bridge (he was an important early explorer, as was Hudson). There are other bridges from the Bronx to Long Island, such as the Triborough. Today, of course, the metropolitan area is girded by major highways – interstates, parkways and the like. And there are many tunnels for cars and for trains under the rivers. I suppose when I moved to San Francisco at age 11, I felt at home: there again are many bridges and ferries and much later the Bart system that includes a pneumatic tube under the bay.

You learn in school something about your city. I'm sure they elaborate much more today but we learned that New York is made up of five boroughs, each with a president and local government. Each borough is also all or part of a county.

Complicated? Yes, in a way: most cities lie within one county. Some states do not allow cities to cross county lines and certainly not state lines. There are many joint cities such as Minneapolis/St Paul separated mostly by the upper Mississippi River. On the other hand, El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, are separated by the Rio Grande and the international boundary. The point is that New Yorkers probably mostly ignore the borough system and just go from here to there by subway, bus, train not much thinking about local government: it is all part of New York. But also, as with my experience, I never really got to know much about the other boroughs. I really knew more about the Jersey facing the Hudson River and the view back to the skyline of Manhattan. In that sense, for me New York was one borough and as a young boy Kips Bay on the East Side was my neighborhood. I have New York friends who only really know one borough. A friend who was from Brooklyn responded to my query that he knew little of Manhattan. It is also true that if you commute and otherwise travel via subway, you may never know what is above you except at each end of your trip. The El made it possible to know more of your city as did (and do) trolleys and buses.

Soundmarks and Landmarks

We all know something about landmarks, whether of natural origin or man-made – e. g., Niagara Falls or the Empire State Bldg. On the other hand, soundmarks, while not a new experience, are yet not common vocabulary. There is such a thing as a *soundscape*. Each environment may be said to include given natural or man-made sounds that distinguish the place, perhaps identify its uniqueness much in the way landmarks do. A professor of music and composer at the

University of Toronto in Canada – R. Murray Schaefer-- not only wrote about soundscapes, but went out with his students to record natural and man-made sounds in various cities, towns and rural areas. He started with his home town, Vancouver, the largest city and a port in British Columbia, in western Canada -- a city with lumbering on the north, cathedral chimes, fog horns, the O Canada Horn, and other sounds in the urban complex, many just completely lost in the cacophony (harsh clashing sounds). But there, the lumber mill sounds, including the work calls in the morning, noon, and end of work day were recorded as soundmarks. (By the way, we could also talk about the smellscape, but that is another story.) Let me apply all of this to the East Side. A most obvious soundmark came from the Els. They sounded in such frequency that you mostly forget they are there. Another soundmark, heard less often, are sounds of ships moving up and down the East River. Other sounds are not soundmarks such as police and fire vehicles. We were just enough blocks east of the Lexington subway that its sounds were muted or not heard at all. When I later lived in Greenwich Village, the subway ran under our building and we heard it and sometimes felt it was shaking the building a bit. But what I remember of the 2nd Avenue El was the screeching sound made by the wheels as a train moved along a slightly curved track, probably very close to 29th Street.

Most places in the world have at least one landmark that identifies the geography of that place. It may just be a hill where everything else is pretty flat. Landmarks, of course, can

In.4 EMPIRE STATE BUILDING: A LANDMARK



Completed by 1931, the Empire State Bldg continues to represent a landmark. When the apartments in Kips Bay averaged 5 or 6 stories in height, the Empire could be easily seen from the neighborhood. Today many apartment complexes reach 21 stories, obscuring a better view of the Empire except perhaps from some higher floors. View is Looking west to New Jersey. Sorry, photo credit is lost.

and are man-made, not just natural features. In a place like New York City, the river is a landmark of sorts, but there are countless landmarks that are the product of man. Skyscrapers meet the definition well, but too many of them reduce their importance. Yet the Empire State Bldg, completed in 1931, certainly qualifies. The World Trade Center did eclipse the Empire in many ways. As it happens, one could see the Empire from our neighborhood. Not just from any location – buildings did get in the way and if you are too close to the El's, they blocked your view. But from 1st Avenue and looking up from 33rd Street, you could easily see the building. Another vantage point was the roof of the tenements and office buildings. We had a good view because no other building was higher on our west and north. But keep in mind that to locals a landmark quickly loses its importance. You see it every day and get used to it being there, almost not seeing it at all. Others say the same thing about landmarks.

I can't help but want to add a fact that I learned only recently while assisting my grandson with his 5th grade project on New York State. We were discussing another New York landmark – the Statue of Liberty. I learned that despite the fact Liberty Island (Statue of Liberty National Monument) lies within New Jersey's borders, it is considered by joint state agreement going back to the 1830s to be in New York State. Why would I or anyone else really need to know this? There are so many interesting facts and I am only dealing with a small part of the city. Of course, it is not another landmark lost in the urban shuffle, but it is only visible at or near the south coast of Manhattan Island or perhaps farther inland from a high-rise structure. I have no experience in the second regard.

It is no monumental discovery that, during the seventy years since I lived on the East Side, that area and many other parts of New York City have undergone enormous environmental changes. Now and then I will try to present some examples of the dynamics of such change. For example, perhaps to nearby residents and others, the traffic along the FDR (Franklyn Roosevelt) Drive supplanted earlier soundmarks. Today I live just east a block or two of a major freeway and the sounds of traffic are now no longer soundmarks because they occur every moment or so. It would have been a good learning experience to interview people who lived adjacent to the Els and ask about their reactions subsequent to demolition. For a time, no doubt, there would have been a strange 'silence', but perhaps a welcomed one! Old and new standing side by side; the height of newer buildings; the presence of a greener landscape; the absence of the Els, which opened up avenues to daylight and diminished certain noises and lights. And so on. Urban renewal is an important geographic fact – often called gentrification, a general term for tearing down and building anew. (On this subject, see Max Pace in the bibliography.) To be sure, these physical changes to the urban environment hopefully improved the lot of thousands of people. Better housing; a refrigerator for an icebox; trees, grass and gardens; better services and the like.

I have included a current photo of traffic congestion on a New York avenue. We in Southern California experience gridlock daily at almost any hour, especially on our freeways. So I think nothing or very little about such traffic. In New York and several other large metropolitan areas, walking traffic can be congested, people bumping into each other. Even

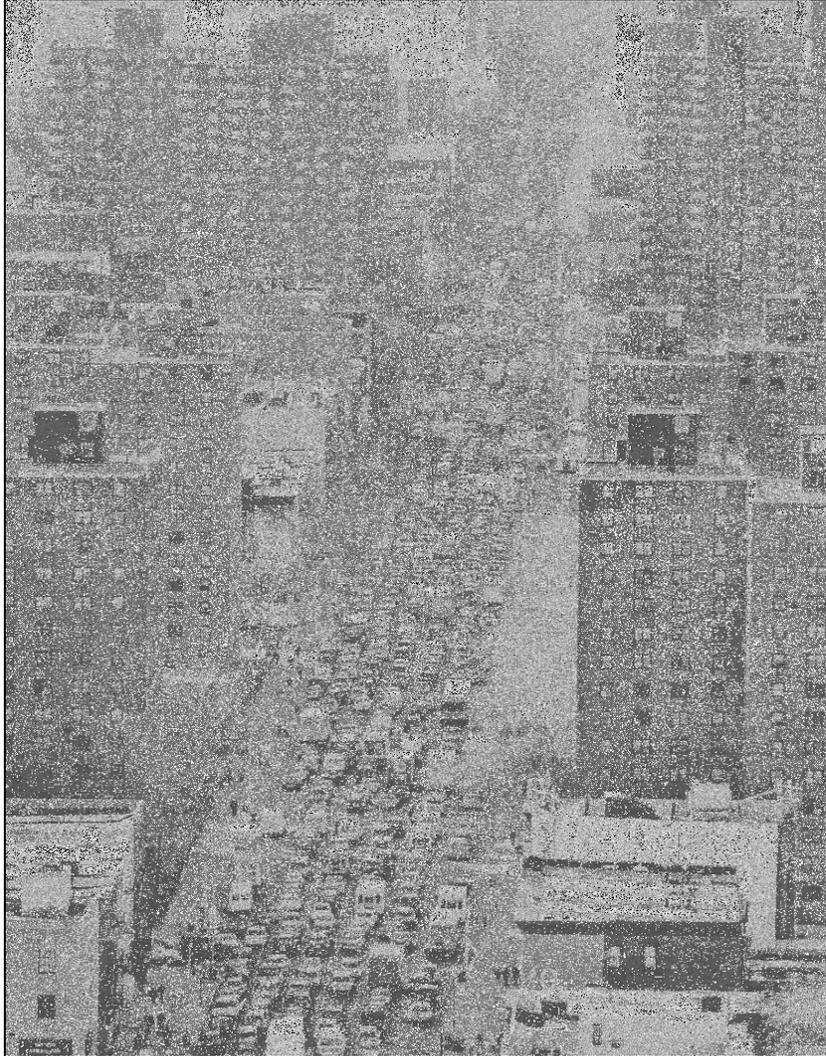
In.5 DEMOLITION FOR STUYVESANT TOWN



*The land clearing to make way for Stuyesant Town, 1943. This extensive urban renewal occupies eighteen blocks bounded by 14th and 20th streets, 1st and C avenues. This was essentially the beginning of the demolition of the old tenements on the East Side, and preceded the South Bellevue Urban Renewal developments of the 1960s, which remade Kips Bay. Photo source is the New York Historical Society; copied from Fig. 3.12 in Max Pace, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).*

as a kid, I can recall such congestion, so much so that I all too often moved quickly to the curb and cut around people by walking in the street. I wasn't alone, but it was a thing young people, especially boys, tended to do. Downtown Los Angeles does experience some hours of the day with moderate congestion, but not so much to remind me of New York.

In.6 LOWER 2nd AVENUE IN GRIDLOCK



To my knowledge as a youth, nothing like this congestion would have occurred on the East Side in the 1930s. This backup of traffic on lower 2nd Avenue resulted when the city imposed a checkpoint to prevent cars with fewer than four passengers from continuing into Manhattan. The incident occurred during a transit strike. Perhaps this traffic flowed from the Queens Midtown Tunnel, which discharges vehicles to 2nd Avenue for downtown destinations. The mid-picture where the high-rise exist on both sides of the avenue, may be 17 Street. Photo by ary Altaffer, Associated Press, printed in the Los Angeles Times, 12/21/05.

Familiar Ground

My apartment building and street, the corner stores, the parochial school across the street, the Chapel of the Incarnation on 31st Street and my school on 33rd lie within familiar ground. How many times I had walked on those streets and the connecting avenues. I knew all of these urban features by view, physical contact, and by sound. Surely the 2nd Avenue El belongs to this memory of place, but perhaps less so the 3rd Avenue El and the Fourth Ave/Lexington Ave. subway. If you leave the area and come back, you feel comfortable; it is your territory, a place you identify with, even if you want to get away from the neighborhood. I recall my street and the buildings, including their roofs where we often played. Yet some features I have forgotten. Despite playing in the street and, in summer, enjoying the opened hydrant so we could get real wet on a very hot day, I do not recall where that hydrant was located. And I indeed forget if there was at least one tree on the block.

29th Street, Kips Bay and the Neighborhood

Tenements and Apartments

Where we live – home, apartment, hut, tent, encampment – such represents familiar or home ground even at very early age. We learn of our surroundings as good local geographers. We may know our whereabouts but not think much about the character of the place, at least not as a small child. But at some point, your keener awareness grows from a broadening familiarity with neighborhood: comparison enters your limited reality. Apartments seemingly all looked alike to me, but just on the next blocks differences were notable.-- more trees, more variable height of buildings, many other factors.

What are the real differences? Apartments differ in so many ways; and they surely differ from tenements. Consider the quality of the structure; tenements commonly had coldwater units, making them somewhat cheaper. Rooms may have been smaller. Perhaps fewer appointments in terms of hall lights, carpeted floors, and the like. (There is an Internet site that discusses tenements. *see* p. 154) I would be inclined to say that 315 was a less than adequate apartment building but what did a kid know? The apartment was heated by radiators; in winter, we would drape a garment over them to get them warmed up. My mother would make bread and set the mixed flour in a pan on the radiator so the bread would rise before baking. My grandmother had done the same thing when my mother was a kid. But we did have hot water. I recall something else that we take for granted today. There were very few wall plugs; many of those buildings were less than

1.0 315 E. 29th STREET



315 E. 29th Street, where I lived the better part of three years. The New York City Building Department photographed every structure in the city between 1939 and 1941. The attached adjacent apartment was 317. This photo was shot in January 1940. I purchased it from the city. Note the brownstone stairs. At the time the Madison Square Boys Club (the Boys and Girls Club by the 1950s) was relocating from 30th to 29th Street, constructing their own building near the corner of 2nd Ave. We lived on the 2nd or 3rd floor in a 'walk-up' apartment on the left and shared the fire escape, where we often slept on a hot muggy summer night.

adequate from the point of view of fire safety. But we would run wires under carpets so we could have lamps. The overhead lights were not shaded lamps and thus glared at us. My mother was an artist and very inventive.

When my brother and I asked to have separate rooms, of course, we only had two bedrooms in the apartment. But strangely enough there was a large walk-in closet or storage room without a window. So I chose it for a time, in the colder weather, and my mother painted a window with curtains and painted flower pots on the window sill. Too bad we never photographed it; for I would have included the picture here. I never asked why we had such a large closet unless it was intended to be another room. I must mention in passing, since it involved some of the produce stores – we used to get lugs or orange crates (ones divided into two parts) and make them into furniture. My mother would make curtains for them and place them at our bedside. In those days, the heart of the Depression, everything could be adapted as needed.

The apartments had a dumb waiter in the corner of the kitchen. That was how you sent your garbage down to the basement at certain hours, usually around supper time. You would just open the door, put the pail on the shelf, and pull on the cord. The “Super” -- superintendent or building manager - - would do the rest and send the pail back empty. On occasion, at midday Saturday we used to crawl through to the neighbors by prearrangement. They had two kids. We could bring the dumb waiter up by pulling the cord ourselves. A little mischief I guess. Even more was tying our sheets to the leg of the bed and then climbing out the window down the air shaft to the basement. Much harder getting back up, especially with your mother screaming at us! She went for the Super, who opened the window down below. There was no door. We also played on

the roof and I am trying to recall if it was possible to cross over to the next building; 317 was 'attached'. We were sort of one building in two parts, but I really do not recall this fact as I look at this historic photo.

Most of the apartments on the block were much alike. Either four or five units on each floor. As the photo reveals, there were five floors. Perhaps 5 floors *times* 5 units each or 25 units with at least 3 persons in each apartment. There were lots of children in my building. This suggests at least 75 persons in the building., but I suspect there were more residents. I had no idea then how many people came and went each day, but we were a crowd heading for school or coming home. I knew four or five kids, my elderly neighbors, and a young family with a baby in a carriage. Some weekdays I got home quick because I would sit with the baby out front when the mother went to work and until the dad arrived home. It was like twenty minutes or so.

Turn the corner onto 30th Street or walk up to 31st and beyond and apartments were brighter, more trees on the block. The Phipps apartment exemplifies the difference one or two blocks would make. The first Phipps Houses were on E. 31st, three six-story tenements, located between 1st and 2nd avenues. They were completed in 1906 around the same time my apartment was built. As far as I can recall, I never visited an apartment in those buildings.

Historic Neighborhood

Having not lived on the block and in the neighborhood into my teens and later, I can only intellectually share the remarks Ben Gazzara made in the documentary film "Broadway...." As a pre-teen, I can not reflect on likes and dislikes. I was aware of my neighborhood and other parts of

1.1 HENRY PHIPPS APARTMENTS ON E. 31ST STREET



In the same time period of the mid-1930s, this apartment, the first constructed by Henry Phipps, stood just two blocks north on 31st Street between 1st and 2nd avenues. Note the quality of the building, the clean sidewalk and the row of trees. If my memory is correct, 29th Street seems to have been the last street north of older tenements and a less desirable streetscape. But remember that I was only 7, 8, and 9 at the time. In the late 1960s into the 1970s Henry Phipps constructed newer high rise apartments on several blocks including 28th and 29th streets. As part of the Kips Bay Plaza project, this Phipps structure was torn down in the late 1950s. See Ballon & Jackson, 2006. Photo courtesy of the Henry Phipps Development Corporation.

1.2 BROWNSTONES & OTHER APARTMENTS

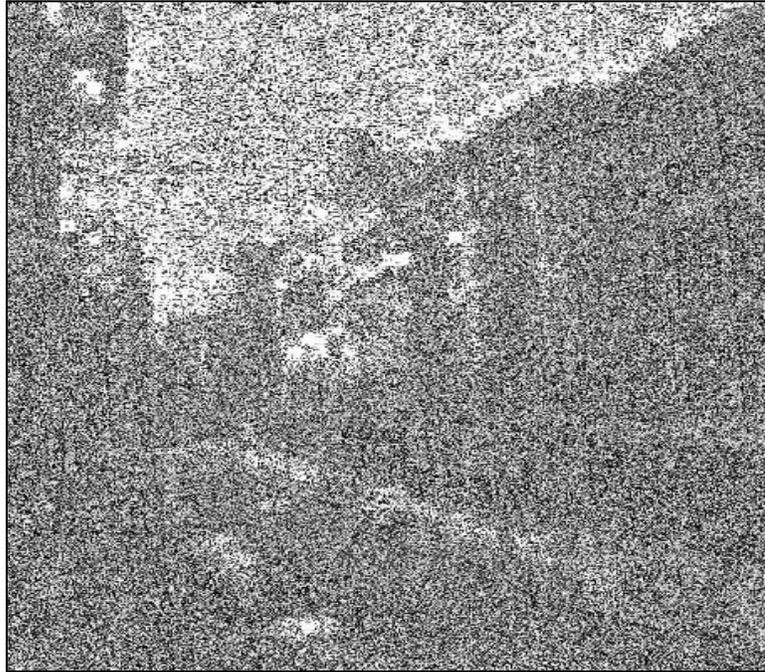


A view looking west on E. 33rd St from 2nd Avenue. Dimly visible is the Empire State Bldg; then the Norman Thomas High School. Many older apartments and homes were already standing in the mid-1930s. Some include professional space, such as for a veterinarian and the NY University Medical Center's labs and others. P. S. 116 is on the very far left, just east of the high-rise apartment at the corner of 3rd Avenue. Photo & some description by Patricia Pardo, branch manager, Kips Bay Public Library, 2005.

Manhattan, but I did not come to feel, say, trapped, and wanting to escape to a better place. But in the brief period we had moved farther uptown and then downtown to 22nd Street, around the corner from Gramercy Park. Whenever I came back to the old neighborhood, I told buddies we had moved to California. This was not prophetic, but probably reflected my avid following of cowboy films, and my dad did tell us that they were filmed in Southern California.

I have already pointed out that the anchors to the historic neighborhood, standing testimony to the sustainability

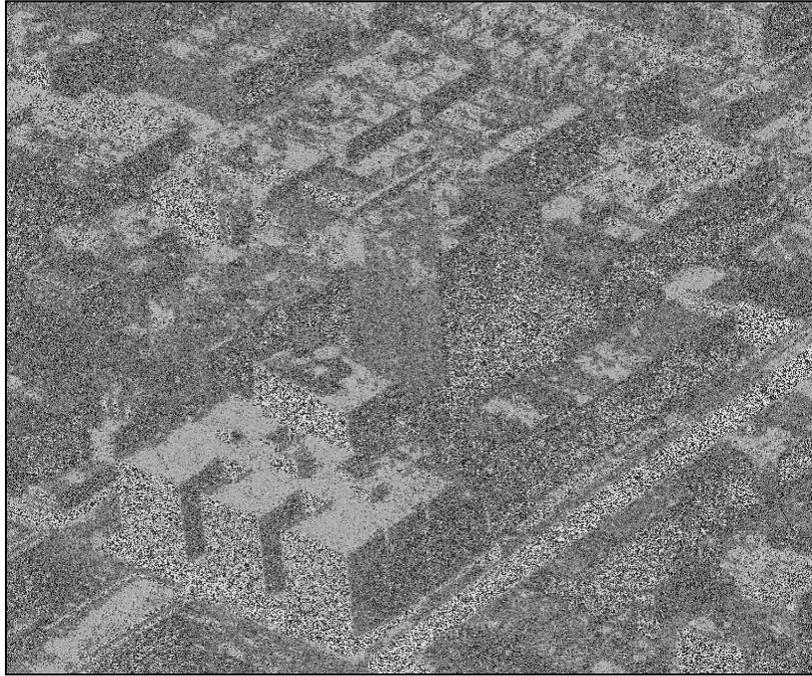
1. 3. 29th STREET IN LATER 1940S



29th Street, view to the west from 1st Ave. The Madison Square Boys Club is the second building from the corner of 2nd Ave 315 is two more buildings east. On the right. Photo is much later in time (circa late 1940s). Photo: from Joe Gormley's father, from third floor where He lived at the time. I did not know the Gormleys. Photo: via Irving Harris.

of the past, are the religious centers. To be sure, other buildings of the past persist in the urban landscape, but the several churches and the synagogue within walking distance link me to the past tense. Since the Els are gone, that memory, for what it is worth, is gone, and with it the many cobblestone streets, the period phone booths, the corner cigar store, and other urban features. Let the photographs escort you back in time. One photo in particular is absent from this photo essay: It is that of the Coca Cola Bottling Plant that we frequented and even got to visit as a class! But in this section and later,

1.4 KIPS BAY OVERLOOKING 29th STREET



A part of Kips Bay, circa mid-1950s. E. 29th Street lies to the left of the taller building. The street is bound by 1st Avenue in the lower left and 2nd Avenue near the upper right. Visible near the lower left is Our Lady of the Scapular; unfortunately the Carmelite parochial school is blocked from view. The post 1940 Madison Square Boys & Girls Club is located on the north side of 29th Street. Next door on its left is 315. Planning of the Kips Bay Plaza just to the north of my old street is shown by the white band which frames 30th to 33rd streets and 1st and 2nd avenues. In this view there are only a few 'newer' buildings such as the block of structures between 29th and 30th streets facing 1st Avenue that are part of New York University's Medical Centers. Photo from MTA Bridges and Tunnels Special Archives, via Hilary Ballon, Columbia University.

note as above the drab streets, the small, often called mom-and-pop stores, the lack of trees: such was the environment in which kids grew up – some continue to in other parts of New York – and adults live and work, or then, hunted for work.

Actor Ben Gazzara, in his autobiography, made these observations about growing up on the block:

Living on Twenty-ninth Street in the 1930s was a lot like living in a little village. On that one block alone there was a brewery that made good beer, a factory that baked delicious doughnuts, a butcher, two grocery stores, a candy store, an ice cellar, a funeral parlor, and a Boys Club....Between Second and Third Avenues were the outdoor produce markets. I used to enjoy walking the length of that block because the aroma of fresh fruits and vegetables and spices made me feel as though I were in the country somewhere, far away from the New York City asphalt. (19)

Gazzara noted that the candy store was in his building, no doubt on the first floor. I only vaguely recall that fact and also that there was a pay phone in the store. I do recall at least the odors from the brewery but am unsure if I am recalling the doughnut factory. Perhaps it came to the block after my time. Grocers and butchers were near the avenues. Keep in mind he lived on the block for more than a dozen years, so his memory is so much better. To be sure, I do recall the produce markets along 29th between 2nd and 3rd avenues and a butcher about midway on the block. However, the produce markets never made me feel I was in the country. How different individuals would reflect on their past experiences. But I note on various pages of his memoir that he named stores – the Italian ones. I have no names to accompany the stores I can identify. Perhaps I do remember a Cushman bakery on 2nd or 3rd avenue.

1.5 29th STREET & FIRST AVENUE



View from 1st Avenue looking west on 29th Street. There are various stores at or near the corner. Other corner did house the Fidelio Brewery which was still there throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. Midway up the block was a doughnut factory, which I only vaguely recall. Photo: N. Y. Public Library - Digital Gallery, #40. P. L. Sperr, Photographer. 1930, 711912F.

Unfortunately, the *Land Book of the Borough of Manhattan* doesn't well reproduce, but it tells a story of sorts. It recorded lots and blocks with measurements, some with labels such as PS 14, the Telephone Co., and the like. It certainly identifies the medical facilities already well established by 1930. The plate I partially reproduce here also identifies a lumber yard, a brewery, several garages, and I must admit that I no doubt walked by these places more than once, but have forgotten of their existence. Too bad the city mapmakers didn't include specific information about a greater number of properties. Religious centers do show up well.

On the next plate to the west (which I have not reproduced here) is the location of the White Wood House, located on 29th Street almost to the corner of 3rd Ave. I wish I could remember having stopped and looked at it at least once. Originally constructed in the 1840s, apparently it contains three stories, with a masonry walled ground floor and three upper floors covered with clapboard. It has had a number of different tenants over the years since the mid-19th century. Still not fully designated a landmark, it does represent the only potential landmark structure within Kips Bay.

1.6 31st STREET & the 3rd AVE EL



*A mid-1950s view of the intersection of 3rd Avenue and 31st Street. I recall the corner stores, the few trees on the block. I often walked this way from school because the newsstand was a block north of here. The published caption indicates that to the right of the photographer stood a parking lot that later became the site of the Kips Bay Branch Library. Branch Manager Patricia Pardo (letter 1/08) notes that the street vendors still use the same umbrellas. She points out that at the distance today is the Kips Bay Plaza and behind it the NYU Hospital bldg. She also notes that the street has many trees. I would need a contemporary photo to do justice to her update of the corner and the street. Photo is from Stelter, *By the El*, 2007, p. 53 and is used with his permission.*

1.7 LAND BOOK OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN



Plate 57 of the Land Book of the Borough of Manhattan, 1930. Map offers considerable detail including sites of the parochial school, church, boys club, and Bellevue Hospital and adjacent medical centers. I added the later, but now obsolete, site of the boys club. Map copied from the New York Public Library, courtesy of the Map Division.

According to author Christopher Gray: The building's distinctive look drew the attention of the late Alan Burnham, who was the executive director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the 1960s and '70s. Some of his notes in commission files, apparently dating from the 1960's, convey the sense of elation a historian feels when an exciting discovery presents itself.

Observing the complex pitch of the roof, he wrote that "this particular type of high-shouldered gambrel may be quite early" and that he could see the heavy timber construction typical of early buildings. "I suspect we have something here of considerable antiquity even though so far uptown," he wrote.

But by 1972 elation gave way to deflation. In a letter to an inquirer, Mr. Burnham wrote: "I don't wonder that you are intrigued by it. I was too when I first saw it — hoped it might even be Dutch."

By then Mr. Burnham had come to the conclusion that the house was of "no particular antiquity" and dated from around 1845, although he said the commission still found it "very interesting." It has never been designated a landmark.

The NY Landmarks Preservation Commission has decided to formally review the house, and perhaps by further research the Commission will be able to resolve some of the mysteries of this house.

Transition to the Present

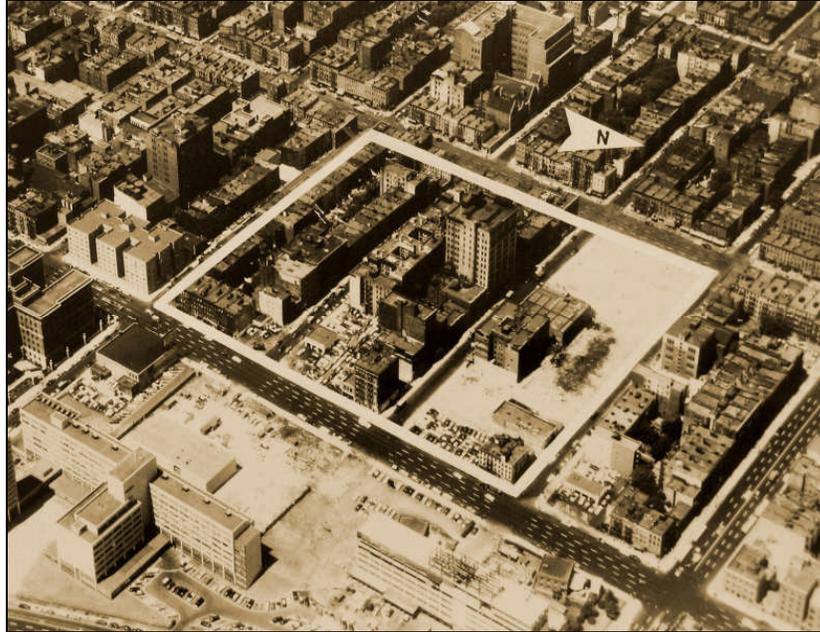
The beginning of major urban change in Kips Bay and nearby, formulated in the 1930s, perhaps even earlier, went into effect in stages in the 1950s and for the next two decades. South of Kips Bay, of course, Stuyvesant Town was a reality by the early postwar years. Then, owing to the import of Robert

1.8 “HOUSE AT 203 E. 29th STREET”



This historic structure is also known as The White Wood House, which is the smaller, arched roof building, Located just east of the corner of 3rd Avenue, on 29th Street. It likely dates from 1840 although there is some controversy over the age of the building, and thus the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has not to date landmarked it. It is on the National Register of Historical Places (NRHP), and it is being reviewed by the LPC. Photo: P. L. Sperr, New York Public Library Digital Gallery, probably mid-1930s, 711918F.

1.9 THE KIPS BAY SUPERBLOCK – MID-1950S



The site of the Kips Bay Plaza project, circa mid-1950s. On the south is 30th Street and at the north, 33rd Street. 1st Avenue is closest; then 2nd Avenue. The project was completed in the mid-1960s. Kips Bay Plaza was begun and completed several years before the Henry Phipps Plazas were in development just to the south, embracing 29th to 26th Streets between the same avenues. Photo: a larger aerial photo by the MTA Bridges and Tunnels Special Archives, via Hilary Ballon, Columbia University.

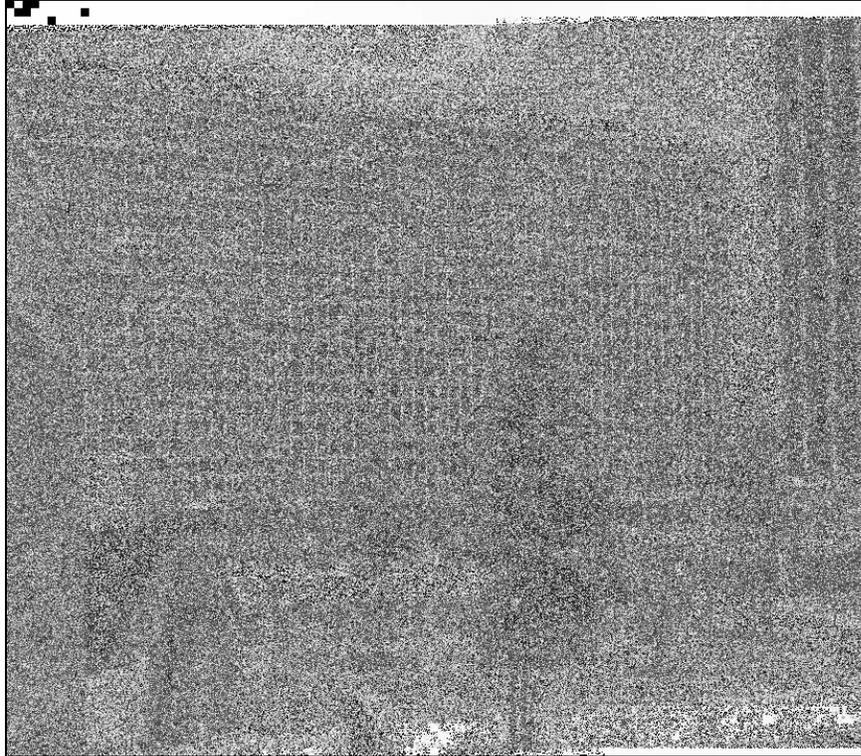
Moses and New York City, Kips Bay Plaza led to the total demolition of a superblock. Completed in the later 1950s, it preceded the Henry Phipps plazas to the south by a decade or so.

1.10 KIPS BAY PLAZA & NYU MEDICAL CENTER



The Kips Bay Plaza as planned to the west of the medical complex that was part of the total NYU-Bellevue Project. The housing project commenced development from as early as 1946. The Plaza complex today occupies the block from 30th to 33rd between 1st and 2nd avenues. Photo copied from Ballon and Jackson, 2007, p.270.

1.11 KIPS BAY PLAZA STILL IN DEVELOPMENT



The Kips Bay Plaza as of 1962. Note that the trees are still quite young. View is looking south. Photo reproduced from Ballon and Jackson, 2007.

Contemporary Kips Bay

However bounded, Kips Bay does focus today on the newer high-rise complexes that came into existence in the 1960s and '70s. Prior to that time, nothing especially distinguished the neighborhood except its midtown location, which has apparently become of increasing significance as a residential location, one of walking distance to offices in the medical complexes along 1st Avenue.

Aside from Bellevue Hospital and associated institutions of medicine and the few references to places occupied at one

time or another by politicians, writers and other well-known individuals, Kips Bay's real prominence is the fact that it lies in midtown, within, for example, a handful of blocks of the Empire State Building and the businesses of 34th Street. Today it takes on greater significance because its apartment developments such as the Henry Phipps Plazas and Kip Bay Plaza have remade the neighborhood into a semi-high-rise community that is characterized as being occupied by doctors, nurses, technicians and others in the medical profession. This oversimplifies, of course, the characterization of the neighborhood. To be sure, much of the former residents moved on owing to relocation, essentially not to return to the old, now new and somewhat alien, neighborhood. For one thing, the much higher cost of rentals precluded many from returning.

An online realty service emphasizes Kips Bay's midtown adjacency. As they note, "Somewhat understated until recently, this neighborhood east of Third Avenue between 27th and 34th Streets, is becoming more and more popular with trendy young professionals." The neighborhood is the center of medicine in Manhattan – home to New York University's School of Medicine and Dentistry, Bellevue Hospital, and the Chief Examiner's Office. Many doctors and hospital personnel live in Kips Bay; this has led to an influx of higher real estate.

It is also interesting that the religious centers speak in similar or other terms about the character of Kips Bay. For example, the Congregation Adereth El on 29th near Lexington Avenue speaks of Jewish students and faculty of the same New York University medical center as well as some hospital patients' visitors as guests. And they refer to the proximity of Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women (Lexington Ave).

1.12 MASTER PLAN FOR HENRY PHIPPS PLAZAS



The plan for the Henry Phipps Plaza West. Note also the other buildings – Renwick Towers, named for the famous architect; Berkley Park; next door to the Churchill School is the Phipps Plaza North, the adjacent portion occupying the site of 315. The 1st Avenue corner contains Phipps Plaza East and adjacent is a church. Plaza West extends southward along 2nd Avenue to 26th Street. Maps and other materials courtesy of William Mulligan, Security Manager, Henry Phipps Plaza West. and 35th

In the 1930s, I suspect that Kips Bay was a relatively unknown corner of lower Manhattan, yet still benefiting in some ways from its proximity to uptown. Perhaps in some ways this was truer then than now because there were two Els -- 2nd and 3rd avenues -- in operation along with the still existing Lexington Avenue subway. But the physical changes in the urban landscape have given newer perspective about the neighborhood even to people such as myself. As a kid, I recall a drab locale, lower income families, ethnically much mixed community, anchored by numerous religious centers, which still thrive. Apartments -- many better described as tenements -- were five or six stories in height, much contrasting with the present scene of modern apartments rising to 20 or more stories.

I recall only a few streets with rows of trees, none for sure on my block. Today, as aerial photos well reveal, green is a prominent color in the urban landscape. Perhaps not quite correctly interpreted, but my recollection is that 29th Street was almost a 'boundary' delimiting the upper end of the Lower East Side, for just beyond buildings seemed in better condition, some much newer, more streets had trees, and the like. For example, the Henry Phipps apartments on 31st.

One wonders, because of the impact of the Depression years, just how many buildings, apartments and offices alike, were in receivership and their owners bankrupt and, as a result, management was considerably curtailed and maintenance negligent.

1.13 HENRY PHIPPS PLAZA WEST



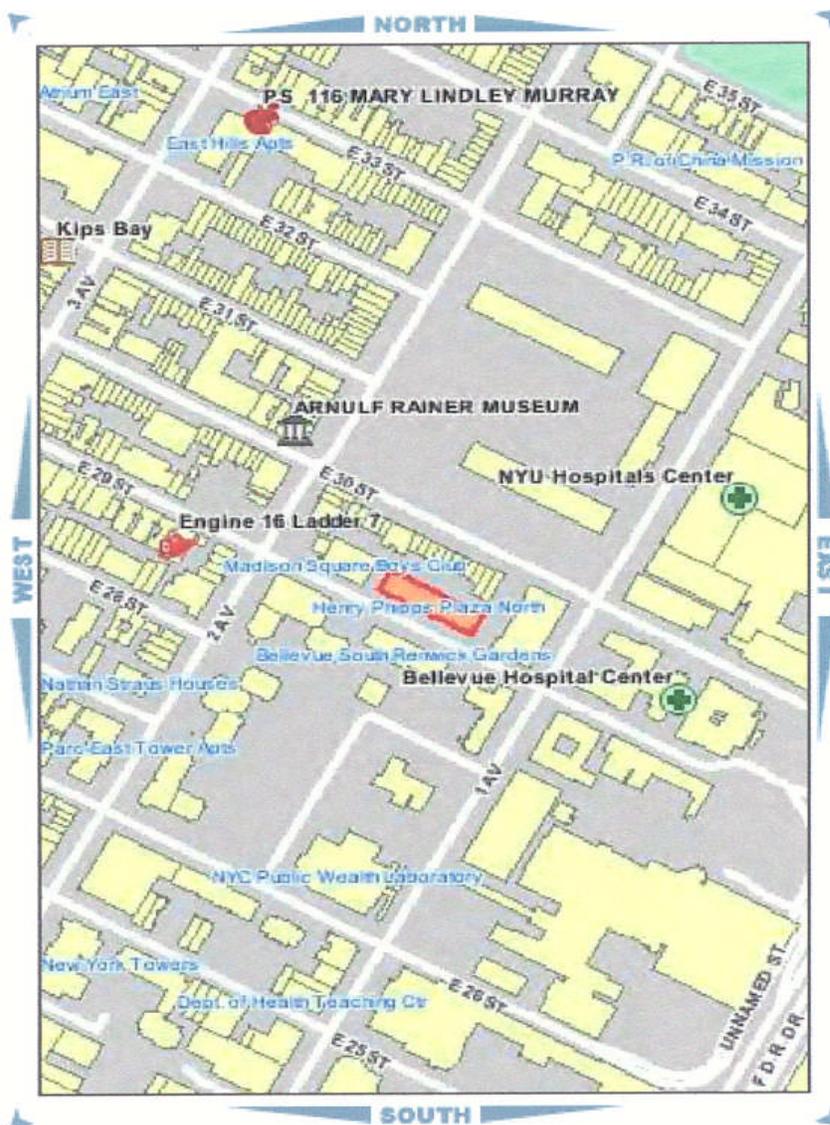
The Henry Phipps Plaza West, during its latter construction period in the early 1970s. View is northwest toward the Empire State Building (in distant view). 29th Street is at the right; 28th Street at the left lower corner. Open area became interior gardens and walk area. Photo from Phipps Houses, pamphlet 1976, courtesy of William M. Mulligan, Security Manager, at Plaza West, 2006..

1.14 THE EAST SIDE & KIPS BAY



*Much but not all of Kips Bay in 1974 and since. Bellevue Hospital on First Avenue is the very white building in the foreground. The twin apartment buildings just north and west of the hospital are the Kips Bay Plaza; East/west is diagonal from right to left. 29th Street is nearly central in the lower portion of the photo and its higher rise apartments are the Henry Phipps Plaza. This high-rise character of Kips Bay began in the 1960s; average building height in the mid-1930s would have 5 or 6 stories. The Empire State Bldg is just out of the picture on the upper left. Photo is plate 26 in W. Fried and E. B. Watson, *New York in Aerial Views* (NY: Dover Publs. 1980).*

1.15 29th STREET & KIPS BAY



The Map Portal of New York City's Planning Department provides a road grid with streets and avenues, but also a map will show (in blue) the names of various buildings. On the map portal page at the right, you will find a legend of generic sites each of which can be transferred to the map. Note in black, Bellevue, Kips Bay (library), PS 116 (my grade school), etc. The 'Henry Phipps Plaza North', shown in red, in part occupies old 315 E. 29th St. Compare aerial photo (1.14) that shows the larger hospital complex. Source: NYC Map Portal.

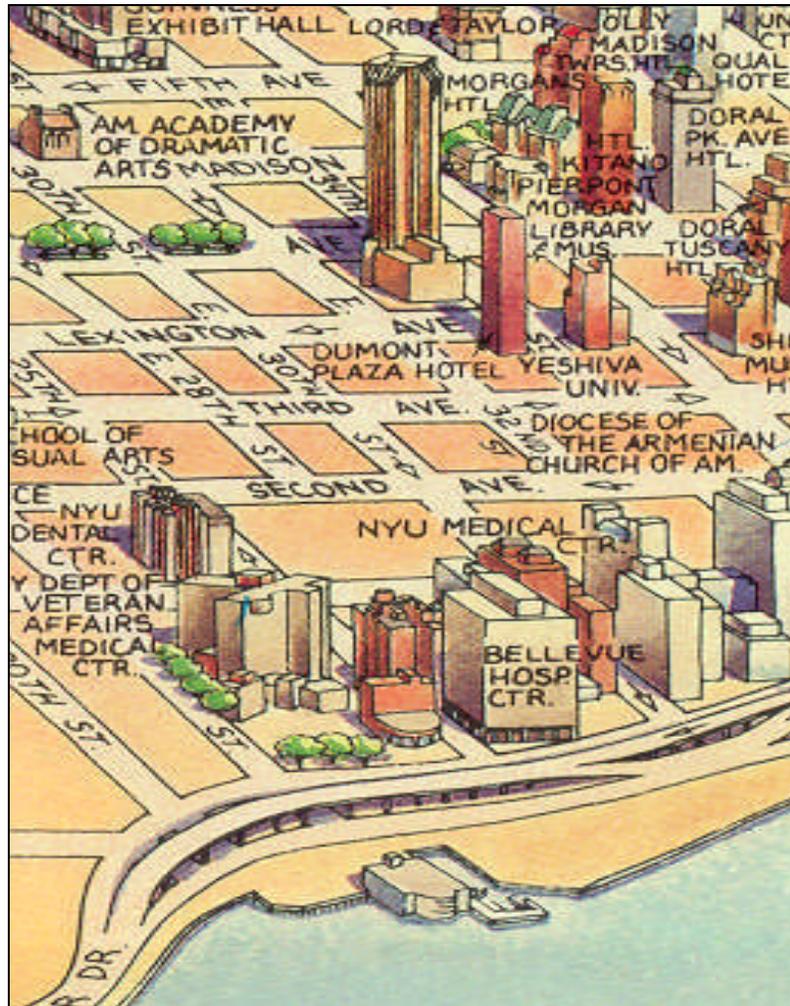
The first Phipps Houses were on E. 31st, three six-story tenements, located between 1st and 2nd avenues. Completed in 1906. Apparently in the 1950s, according to Gray (2003), Phipps Houses allowed the 31st Street complex to be condemned, making way for the Kips Bay Plaza project between 30th and 33th streets and 1st and 2nd avenues. Occupying some 10 acres, the plaza consists of twin towers, each 21 stories, each with 560 apartments. The site includes 3 acres of landscaped plaza, plus retail, and of course a garage for 300 cars below ground. The project was completed in 1963, several years ahead of the Phipps plazas.

Midtown East Side, a larger geographic area than just Kips Bay, which at times is hardly identified as a district or neighborhood, includes a number of significant sites, although they do not represent landmarks as such. For examples: the 28th and 33rd street subway stations under Park Ave; Church of the Transfiguration and Rectory at 1 E. 29th Street; the White Wood House at 203 E. 29th Street; the Old Grolier Club at 29 E. 32nd Street; Sniffen Court Historic District at E. 36th Street; Seville Hotel at 22 E. 29th Street; and Prince George Hotel at 10-20 E. 28th/17-19 E. 27th Streets.

One author (Heffernan, 2005) describes the Kips Bay high-rise apartments and condominium complexes:

The Kips Bay towers, designed by I. M. Pei in 1961, are the most famous and desirable example of the era's version of the American dream....while Kips Bay lacks a major cultural attraction – or even a public park – it is only a short subway or cab ride from many of New York's most famous destinations...For such an unheralded neighborhood, a surprising number of residents say location was the motivating factor in their decision to move in.

1.16 A TOURISTIC VIEW OF KIPS BAY



The smaller of two cartographic renderings of Manhattan that includes Kips Bay and the East Side. The medical center is easily identified; all other major features are peripheral: the Diocese of the Armenian Church (St. Vartan), Yeshiva University, American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and the School of Visual Arts. Kips Bay is otherwise a residential neighborhood of older apartments, a few hotels, and several high-rise modern apartments, but also includes a number of office buildings.. Map copied from "Manhattan" by Unique Media Maps (Don Mills, Ontario, Can), 2001/02 edition.

Heffernan reports that the nearest train (subway) stops are at 28th and 33rd on Park Ave (the so-called Lexington line). He notes that 3rd Avenue is lined with bars at its northern end and restaurants at the southern.

E. 29th Street

Despite my age at the time, I reflect back on 29th Street as a drab, uninteresting street possessing few, if any, trees. In the middle of the block across from me was the Carmelite Parochial School and down the block the Church of Our Lady of the Scapular. The Boys Club came to my street several years after I moved away. During my years, we entered a facility on 30th Street back-to-back with my apartment. The Fidelio Brewery was located at the corner of 1st Avenue on my side of the street. Old maps dating to 1930 show it. I had thought there was a bakery and a shoemaker across the street from me but I can not confirm it. Gazzara mentions a candystore in his building. There was a bakery on 2nd Ave between 29th and 28th streets. And, as the photo shows, some smaller stores on or off the corner at 1st Ave. Otherwise, that block, like so many others, had nothing outstanding about it.

Just consider 315 in which I lived most of 3 years. I suspect that by 1939 and certainly during and following the 2nd War, if one could afford to relocate, then I suspect that person or family did. Many young men who served in the military may not have returned to the old neighborhood. Unfortunately, some residents I knew were probably still there when the building was torn down in the late 1960s.

1.17 29th STREET & HENRY PHIPPS PLAZAS



In the middle of the photo, obscured by high-rise buildings, is E. 29th Street. 2nd Avenue is at the extreme left. The apartments are the Henry Phipps Plazas. My old apartment was located on the north side of 29th a few buildings east of the corner. Note that the towers reach to 21 stories. Until torn down in the 1960s, apartments and tenements stood only five or six stories. The high rise complex beyond occupies 30th-33rd streets between 1st and 2nd avenues and comprises the Kips Bay Plaza complex which includes apartments, stores, and theaters. Photo from <http://live.local.com>. (Windows).

1.18 29th STREET LOOKING EAST



Looking east from 2nd Avenue, down 29th Street. The Churchill School is on the left (bldg was Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, constructed in 1940). One of many Henry Phipps Plaza complexes. As a youth, I would say that never did I feel as if I lived in a canyon. Photo by Patricia Pardo. 2006.

My recollections suggest that farther west as well as north the man-made environment improved. Other streets exhibited more urbane quality. I contend that 29th, east of Lexington Avenue seemed to be the last street – a boundary, so to speak – of the lower income, tenement neighborhoods. One could enjoy the better environment of 30th, surely of 31st, and farther up the avenues.

(After two years at work on this book, I discovered that the actor Ben Gazzara had lived directly across the street from me at 318. He apparently attended the Carmelite Parochial

School and later on went to Stuyvesant High School on 15th Street. I did not know him; he was two years younger. But apparently we both participated in the Boys Club and, who knows, we may have encountered as kids.)

1.19 KIPS BAY PLAZA AT 1st AVENUE & 30th STREET

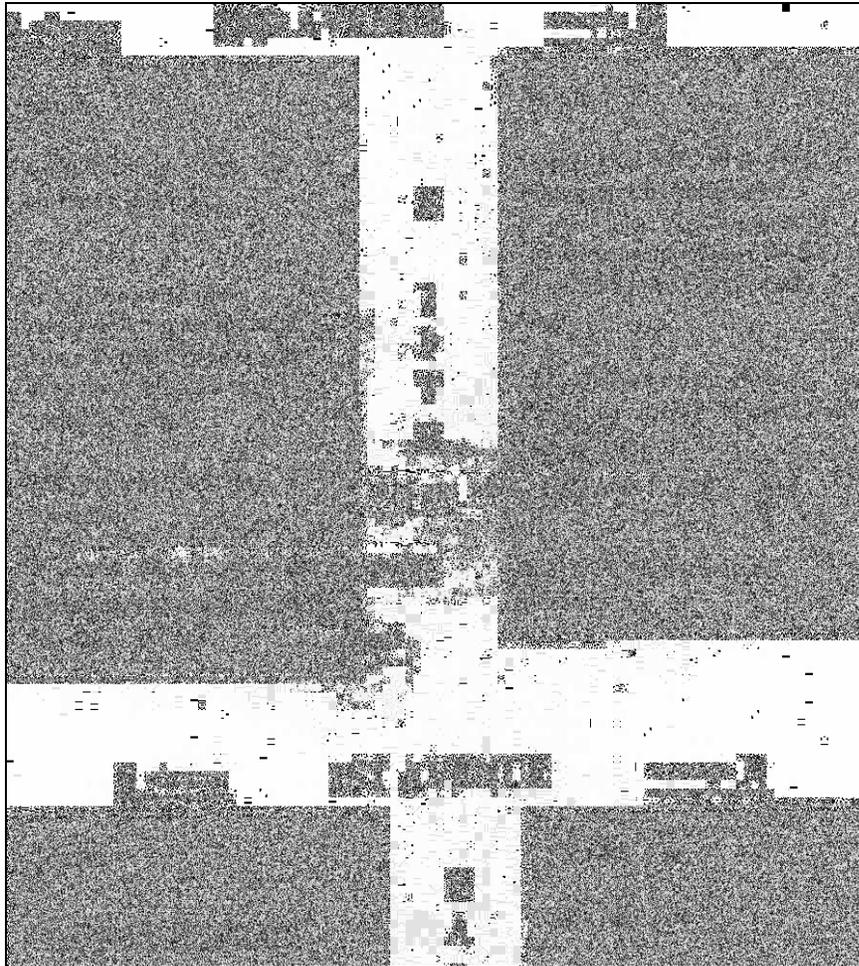


Part of the Kips Bay Plaza complex which extends from E. 30th to 33rd streets between 1st and 2nd avenues. Empire State Bldg in far background; then an apartment complex and the Norman Thomas High School (red/black bldg). Note the ample landscaping, which has also changed the character of the neighborhood. Photo by Patricia Pardo. 2006

Soundmarks and Landmarks

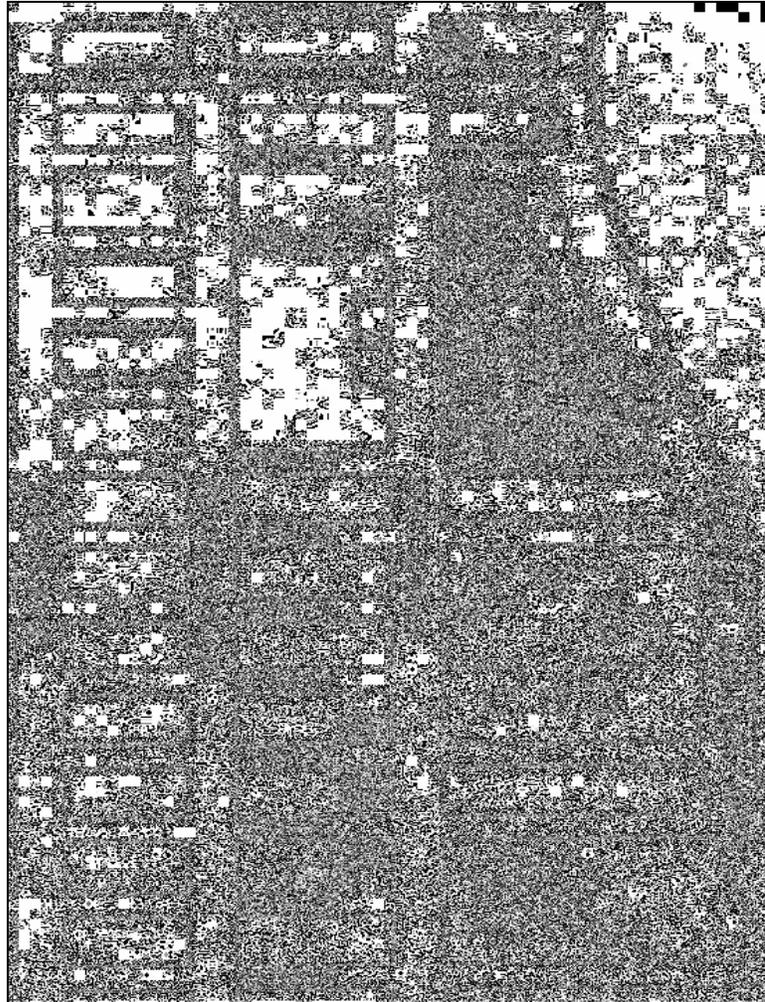
To some extent, even churches and other religious structures represent landmarks and, of course, their chimes and bells would be examples of soundmarks. I recall the churches, cathedrals and synagogue within Kips Bay but not their sounds. But then again I would not have paid much attention since I am not a religious person and only frequented one church (The Chapel of the Incarnation, now the Good Shepherd) located on 31st Street just west of 2nd Avenue.

1.20 29th STREET & NEW YORK SONGLINES



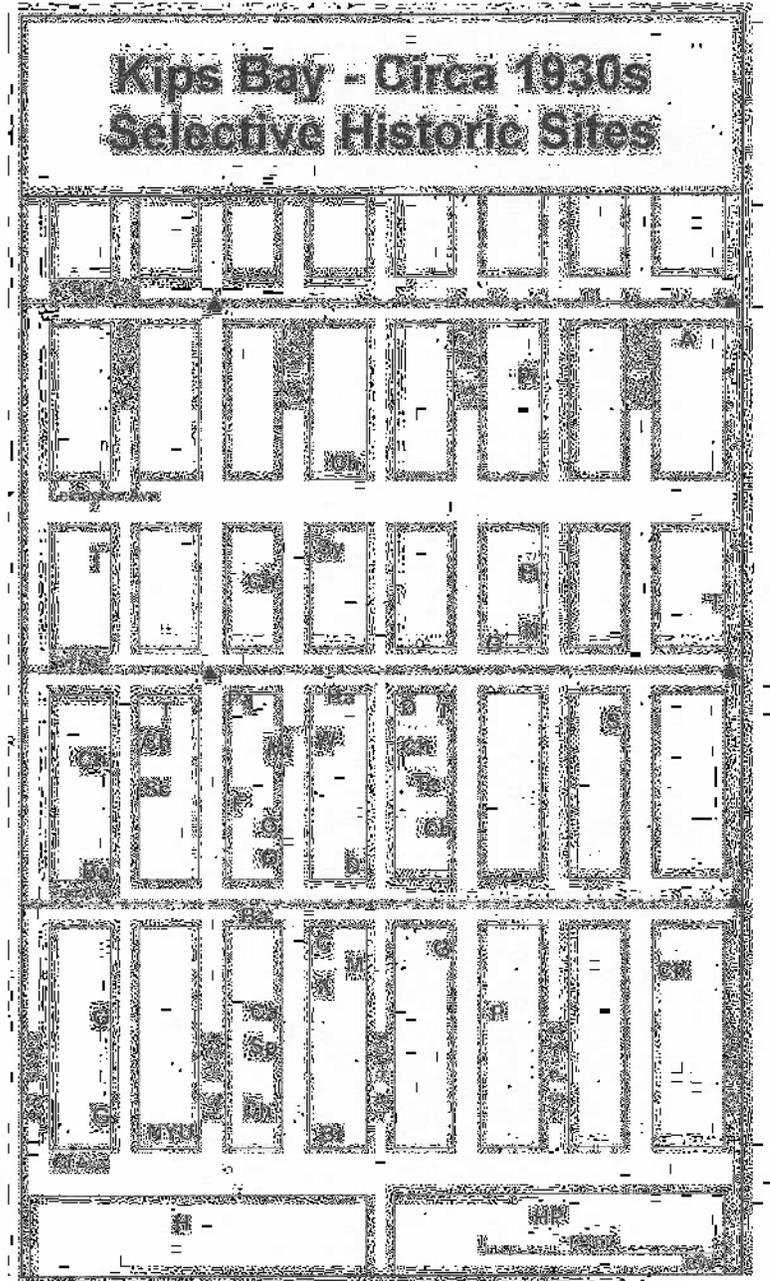
E. 29th Street east of 2nd Avenue, from www.nysonglines.com. Basic text probably edited in early 1990s. Note: Phipps Plaza at 2nd Ave = West; 315 = old site of apartments replaced by Phipps North; East = other Phipps Plaza. CPS = former site of Carmelite Parochial School; Our Lady = old site of church.

1.21 NEW YORK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER



New York University's Medical Centers stretch from 17th to 34th streets along 1st Avenue.. Bellevue Hospital and other medical institutions also occupy sites along this avenue. Map downloaded from the NYU Medical Centers site. Visit the site for a listing of the buildings.

1.22b SELECTIVE HISTORIC SITES



A preteenager's view of familiar ground does not include many places, businesses, etc. (See legend on next page) Because of scale and reduced image, only a small number of sites could be identified.. Map reconstruction based on the Yellow Pages,

1936/37 and the Land Map of the Borough of Manhattan, 1930, plus data from photos of the NY Public Library Digital Photo Collection. Map prepared by Simon Wright, Cal. State Univ., Long Beach, Geography Dept., 2007.

Other sounds were just those daily activities including those of cars and trucks, the fire engine, and, of course, of people, including children going to and from school or playing in the street, on the sidewalks and on the front stairs. Other memorable sounds were those of street barkers such as the rag man, who usually came around by wagon and horse, yelling “I cash clothes,” a phrase I do not recall but Stephen Meyers does..

Kips Bay is not known for significant landmarks. True, a few writers and other celebrities and politicians lived for a time within the neighborhood. Adjacent, however, to the neighborhood are a few noteworthy sites -- e.g., Sniffen Court., which is located on E. 36th Street between 3rd and Lexington avenues. It was constructed between 1850 and 1860 and consists of ten brick carriage houses protected behind a locked iron gate. John Sniffen was the architect; the structures were formerly utilized for stables, then converted in the 1920s as homes..

‘Nysonglines’ is a good online source for information about the past and present occupancy of various buildings, including Sniffen Court. Also nearby on E. 30th Street is the Henry George School of Social Science.

Historic Map

The map of ‘Selective Historic Sites’ (Fig. 1.22a/b), based mostly on entries in the 1936/37 *Yellow Pages*, provides some image of another era. The western orientation is deliberate because almost all stores, churches, schools were

west of me, except for Bellevue Hospital. The daily world of a preteen, of course, would be limited: my day included (S) the school, (Ch) the church for lunch and after school, (G) any of the groceries. Now and then a quick stop at (N) the newsstand, or a visit to the club (M). Saturday would include the (T) theater. On a rare occasion, I was allowed to play the piano (Pi). Of course, the day started and ended at 315 (X) although I may have gone over to a buddy's apartment.

As I look over the map, I realize that I have few memories west of Lexington Ave. other than walking to the El station on either 28th or 33rd. My friends lived mostly from 1st Ave. to Lexington and from 28th to 33rd. There were countless stories along the avenues and on several streets within a block or so my place. I concur with Ben Gazzara about the nature of the open-air produce stands along 29th between 2nd and 3rd avenues. They, in a way, 'enriched' the neighborhood by color and smell, but I never felt I was in the country.

The map excludes streetcar routes, much data west of Lexington Avenue, and some other omissions. One interesting missing item is the *loft* – while the district had a very limited number of them, they were representative of the larger loft movement after World War I. By 1930 they were dominant along 4th/Park Ave between 27th and 31st Streets and scattered elsewhere as on 32nd east of 2nd Ave. Pace notes (32) that “[L]ofts dominated the development of manufacturing space in Lower Manhattan ... A post-World War I boom generated fifty to sixty million square feet in industrial loft space in the 1920s...” Perhaps lofts were only marginally developed in my district, and, of course, as a kid I would not have known anything about these structures or neighborhood factories in general. Today, of course, as modified for apartments, lofts are *not* low-cost equivalents of tenements or apartments.

To Sum Up

Besides the obvious dynamic changes that appear in the Kips Bay Plaza and the Henry Phipps Plazas, as well as the expansion of ‘medical row’ along 1st Avenue, demolition and replacement by newer high-rise structures occur on many streets and avenues. For example, on 3rd Ave around the corner from P. S. 116; the Nathan Straus Houses as a replacement for P. S. 14 on 27th Street between 2nd and 3rd avenues. In fact, there are many newer high rises on 3rd Avenue and selectively on the other avenues and streets to the west. The point being that older buildings have been replaced in so many cases by newer, taller buildings, mostly apartments but some office structures. To be sure, the cost of ground space and the value of location necessitate building higher and higher. I am not acquainted with any specific method for measuring average height of a neighborhood, but let’s guess that it has gone, selectively, from 5 or 6 stories to 20, but not everywhere. Perhaps then the neighborhood has been moving toward an average closer to 8- 10 stories? Perhaps that is too much.

Readers might want to visit <http://maps.google.com/maps>, where they can explore the skyline of Kips Bay by typing in a street address. Try my old one: 315 E. 29th Street and choose ‘satellite’. Once there, you can click on the left mouse and move the aerial photo around.

Let me also note that along with the small Pinkerton Environmental Center, initially a community garden/nature center established by the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club, at the northeast corner of 2nd Avenue and 29th Street, there is,

on the northwest corner, the Vincent F. Albano Jr. Playground. Smaller green areas that enhance the neighborhood.

1.23a/b SNIFFEN COURT HISTORIC LANDMARK



Two photos of Sniffen Court, a Historic District in adjacent Murray Hill. This Landmark was designated in 1966. See Diamonstein, in bibliography, p. 382.

Nearby and Familiar

Going to school, church, some specialty stores – such expands the familiar world of young persons. I used to visit one of the piano stores beyond Park Ave. One meets other youth at school or in the neighborhood, perhaps those living on different blocks, and this adds to your geographic experience. We visited a nearby synagogue and spent time at an Episcopal church. Visiting the nearest two libraries, both within reasonable walking distance, also extended one’s range, as did visiting the nearest newsstand. In all, we ventured out from our home and soon were exploring even farther west, north or south. Thus familiar ground takes on new dimensions.

**2.1 28th STREET: THE 3rd AVE EL STATION, P. S. 14
& STREETBALL**



Looking west from 2nd Ave., the 28th Street 3rd Ave El Station, circa 1937. On the lower left, with the iron grill fences, is Public School 14, which was closed in 1959 following the collapse of its roof.. The boys in the street are playing some form of streetball, common in those days, and still being played today. On the right by the truck is the old fire house, which today serves as a church for the "Self Realization fellowship." Photo: NYC Municipal Archives, via Irving Harris.

II

**The Street as Playground;
Madison Square Boys Club**

About Streets

You may have noticed that the numbering of buildings on streets and avenues is often divided somewhere in the middle of town. That is how we often get *North* and *South* Jones Avenue and *East* and *West* 10th Street. In New York, some boroughs have lots of names for streets, avenues, boulevards, and the like. In Manhattan, the longer roads are mainly numbered avenues that run north/south the length of the island, such as 8th Avenue, but we also have Lexington and Park avenues and, of course, Broadway. And uniquely, but not in my time, 6th Avenue is today known as Avenue of the Americas. Numbered streets run across the narrower part of the island and at 5th Avenue we change from east to west or vice-versa. There are notable districts or neighborhoods with street names as where I attended 10th grade: Delancy, Essex, Grand, in the Lower East Side.

Generally, the avenues and certain cross-town streets such as 23rd, 34th or 42nd, which were all two-way traffic, were too busy that youth didn't play in them. But other streets, more residential, had far less traffic, especially relative to now. My street, E. 29th, was just one example of a less frequented street by vehicles. My apartment building, numbered 315, was just a couple of doors in from 2nd Avenue, which was a very active road with the El and street traffic. By the way, no streets

or avenues are numbered exactly the same. For example, if we start at 5th Avenue, going east, we usually can begin with the 100s, which usually run across two avenues, then the 200s and 300s; 400s would be east of 1st Avenue. To get acquainted with the numbering system, one can visit www.nysonglines.com. Avenues can be more irregularly numbered. In Kips Bay, streets and avenues align rectangularly, unlike, for example, farther south in part of the Lower East Side or in Greenwich Village on the West Side.

Let me note that the layout of Manhattan, going back to city plans of the early 19th Century, focused on a grid, one based on the surveyor's use of the chain (Gunter's chain of 66 feet). The chain as a land measure owed its origin to England, although it was modified on this side of the Atlantic. Streets were to be 1 ½ chains or 198 feet, and if consistently laid out, would result in some 26 blocks equaling a mile, which is a bit of an exaggeration for the north/south dimension of Manhattan. However, as historian Linklater (2002) reports, the constraint of 198 feet to a block necessitated building vertically early on and encouraged much land speculation. It led, he contends, to smaller, taller buildings, with crowded apartments and thus to the rise of the tenement. I would contend that 29th Street and much of the neighborhood, reflected this grid's impact.

My Block

Like so many residential streets, 29th had its share of youth, and the street was a place to hang out, to play. A few cars now and then did not upset any street behavior. I don't think we knew anyone who had a car and, if he or she did, they may have parked it on the street or in a nearby garage. There were probably already restrictions on day to day parking.

While we had the street, we were lucky to have the Boys Club around the corner. I mentioned before that there were lots of kids in my building and in the others. Most my age either went either to P. S. 116 or P. S. 14, or parochial schools across the street and on nearby streets, or to some other private and religious schools. They could take the El or walk a dozen or more blocks to the high school, the nearest being Stuyvesant on 15th Street. Actor Ben Gazzara writes that he walked those blocks. P. S. 116 was (and still is!) 4 blocks north and one block west, just around the corner off 3rd Avenue. Of course, as kids, we didn't refer to east or west, and perhaps few of us really thought about direction even though the East River was just a few blocks from us!

I don't recall any trees on my block, but different tenants did have some potted plants on window sills and even on fire escapes. There were a few interior courtyards as at the school and farther down at the church. At the corner of 2nd Avenue on my side of the street was a cigar store, a place that sold cigarettes and other things. When we were kids, you could buy cigarettes for your folks. My brother and I tried a cigarette now and then and both of us did become smokers as young adults. (I quit at 32, sore throats all the time!).

We played mostly on 29th, but there were times when we went down a block or two and played. I do not recall playing on the streets farther north or even west of us. I knew kids on 28th Street. I should mention that we enjoyed playing with baseball cards. One kid would flip a card to the ground; the other would follow suit. If the second card matched the face or the back of the first card, the second player got it; otherwise, he lost his card. And it was common to play for what seemed

2.2 STOOPBALL: MOST POPULAR SIDEWALK GAME



A contemporary shot of boys playing stoopball. Notice that the ball, perhaps a tennis ball, is fairly small, making it more difficult to hit the edge of the stair. It was common for one youth to be standing in the street, which was really quite safe. There were few vehicles on residential streets in the mid-1930s. Photo downloaded from www.streetplay.com.

like hours. I had a huge bundle of cards which I carried from New York to Chicago to San Francisco and even Hollywood. There, at 13, I gave them up and moved on to a stamp collection. That's also the age when I began composing for the piano and orchestra. Geography then was the New York streets, the East River, and scenes in cowboy films! I think

many of us kids were in the street much of the time. One reason: few cars or trucks drove on our street. Who could afford to own a car? Besides, New York had excellent public transportation -- once in a while a delivery truck, the police, a fire truck, but some wagons. So we could quite safely run back and forth to visit buddies. We did regularly see the trucks that sold produce off the back end where they had a scale. And less often, we would see and hear the rag man who came by with a wagon drawn by a horse. Another truck that came by regularly was the ice truck. He would call loudly and we'd open our window and yell back. In those days we still had iceboxes (I still say icebox although we later had a refrigerator and we called it a fridge!). The iceman would climb the stairs holding a block of ice with his serrated shovel. I think ice was real cheap and we had to buy it twice a week. The iceman would set a block on the landing and cut a slice. In winter, the ice lasted longer and we also had a cooler attached outside the one window in the kitchen.

In warmer weather, we played in the street nearly every day. When the fire department opened the hydrants, the street was usually blocked off with wooden barriers at each end. (I'm noticing in a photo shared by Irving Harris that there was a hydrant on my side of the street farther toward 1st Avenue.) Many kids would run in and out of the splashing water, often the younger boys only wore their underwear. I hardly remember a kid in a regular bathing suit. Probably the girls but only the older boys. We regularly played all sorts of street games and some on the sidewalk. I showed my grandson a game many of us enjoyed playing, known to city kids as 'stoop'ball, where you try to hit the edge of the stair so the ball would bounce back as a fly and, if you caught it, it was your point and turn. It was a foul or loss of a point if the ball hit the

instep or elsewhere and if you caught it anyway. The idea was to succeed up the stairs and then down again, or so I recall. Some brownstones had up to 10 or 11 steps and the higher you went, the more difficult it was to hit the edge of the step just right. I read online that stoop ball continues to be a very popular game in New York.

We also played games in the street. One by laying a bat or stick down in front or at a distance between you and your opponent; one of you would hit the ball low to the ground and, if it hit the bat or stick, it would fly up and you had to catch it; if you didn't, your opponent got the score. You could also throw the ball at the bat or stick with the same potential effect. It was usually called 'Hit the Stick' but perhaps had other names. Some of the older kids also played some form of baseball, bat ball or stickball, but I don't recall joining in. But I did go to some empty lots where we played baseball. I could run but not hit too well. Gazzara recalls that there were games with other neighborhood kids. I recall such games on our block, but perhaps they were more frequent in the years after I moved away. I left the block when I was 9 and he was only 7; he lived in the neighborhood at least through high school.

We also played marbles along the gutter and some of the older boys played mumbling peg with a knife in some empty lot and there were plenty of them around. Girls played hopscotch and us boys loved to rub out the chalk marks. Yet years later I watched some girls playing hopscotch and later composed a piece of music to the rhythm of their jumping back and forth. Playing in the street was normal for us. Of course, we did go and play on other streets. I had friends on 28th Street and we did walk the distance to the nearest parks – up at 35th-36th or down at 17th. There was no local park. Oh, yes, mustn't forget: we played on the roof and in some cases, one

could go from roof to roof quite easily although when our mothers knew of it, they would scream at us!

2.3a/b GOUDEY GUM CARDS OF THE EARLY 1930S



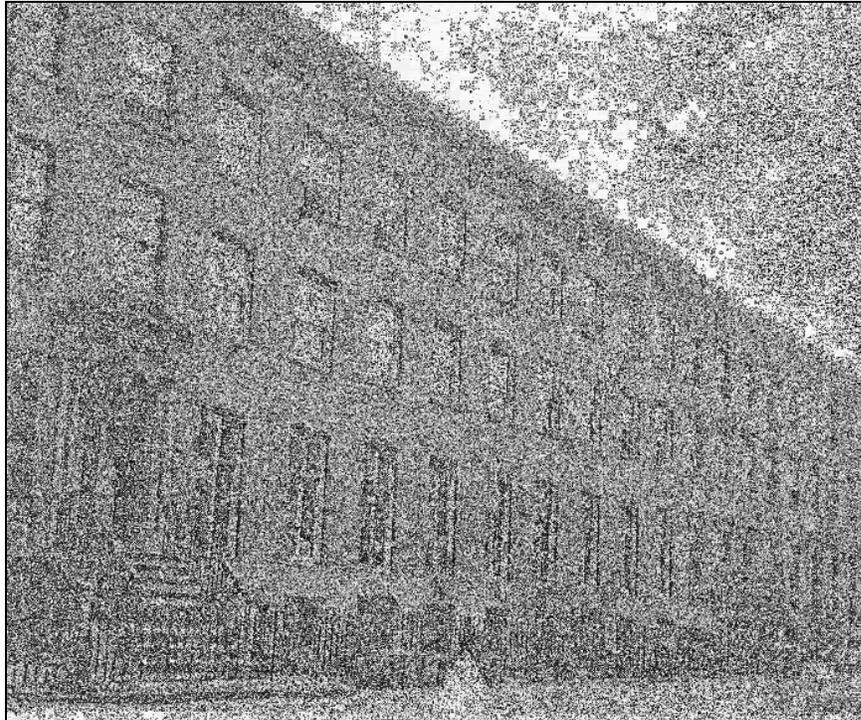
The two teams I knew and saw play at least once as a kid, but I can't say that I recall these players. Walter Brown was with the Yankees and Jack Quinn with the Dodgers. These Goudey Gum cards were dated 1933, so perhaps neither player was active in 1936-38, but I suspect I did have these cards in my collection of 6 or 7 dozen. I recall that the gum and card cost only a penny. At times, we daily played these and other cards on the sidewalk, street, school courtyard, etc. I don't remember if we not allowed to bring the cards to school. These images were downloaded from Kit Young Old Vintage Baseball Cards.

Madison Square Boys (& Girls) Club.

The club, in my time, was on E. 30th, essentially back-to-back with our apartment building. It consisted of three attached buildings. A new building was constructed on 29th Street. On a given Saturday, the whole neighborhood of kids and others from elsewhere flocked to the club and climbed up into the bleachers and we got to watch – a first time for me at least – a Popeye talking cartoon. Why I don't recall the other

pictures I'll never know, but obviously Popeye made a hit. An older member of the club, Irving Harris, told me that he saw "Phantom of the Opera", the 1925 silent film with Lon Chaney, at the club. I probably saw this film but I really remember the

2.4 MADISON SQUARE BOYS CLUB – 1930S



The Madison Square Boys Club on E. 30th Street, circa late 1930s/ Early 1940s. The brownstone on the left survives today. But the three adjacent club buildings were torn down much later. The facility contained a gymnasium. Photo courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives via Irving Harris.

talkies version that came out in 1943, with Claude Rains, Nelson Eddy and Susanna Foster. (I liked the singing!)

I have most recently been in touch with Irving Harris, who is five years my senior and then lived on E. 27th Street. I didn't know him but perhaps did encounter him at the club. He has been very active with the boys club and is currently researching and writing a history of the Madison Square Boys

and Girls Club. He recalls the bleachers, films and other activities at the clubhouse when the entrance was on 30th Street. Being older, his recollections will prove invaluable. Elsewhere I report his observations, which coincide with mine, about the Superior Theater over on 3rd Avenue. I must also note that the street as a ‘village’ or community, as expressed by Ben Gazzara, eludes me. No one of my mixed ethnicity lived in the apartments or attended my school. So I didn’t identify with the so-called community, and since I did not fully get involved with the club, I was less attached to the neighborhood. I should point out that, as best I recall, Italians were probably the most prominent ethnicity, but there were several Armenian families, as well as Jewish, Greek, one or two Hungarian, and, of course, Irish. I do not recall any Hispanic residents. (See Homberger 1994, 2005).

2.5 CHURCHILL SCHOOL



The Churchill School, on the east side of 2nd Avenue, extends around the corner on 29th Street, and was constructed next door to 315. It was formerly the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, which was constructed by 1940 (and so appears in part in the photo of 315). Looking south at the corner of 29th Street and

the Henry Phipps Plaza West. This view would not be possible if the 2nd Avenue El were still standing. The trees at the corner are part of the Pinkerton Environmental Park originally constructed for the use of club members. Photo by Patricia Pardo. 2006.

3.1 TYPICAL MARKETS ON 29th STREET



Markets on E. 29th Street between 2nd and 3rd avenues. Note the produce truck. Many of them – some driven by horses – would go up and down residential streets. Trolleys operated on 28th and 29th streets prior to 1919, and the earlier alignment of the crosstown streetcar line are visible in this photo but did not exist by the mid-1930s. Photo from NY Public Library Digital Gallery, #41. Percy L. Sperr, photographer, 1930, 711913F.

III

Stores, Services, Theaters & Medical Centers

First, Second and Third avenues as well as 29th Street west of my block had many stores; in fact, many of them were ‘mom-and-pop’ stores where the owners/managers often lived above. I understand such stores continue to exist in New York and elsewhere. There were open-air stands—produce markets -- in front of many stores, and they often narrowed the sidewalk. I mention this because when there were numerous customers mulling around, I tended to walk at the curb, even in the street. The stands displayed fruits and vegetables, but other commodities as well. Since I did some of the shopping, after school mostly, I can recall the butcher on 29th and on the avenues, both delicatessens and bakeries, especially Cushman’s on 3rd near 27th Street. I recall that bakery because I loved cheese cake. On the other hand, I recall the butcher because he tried very hard to outwit me. To prevent him from selling me cheaper meat, when I would ask for ground round, I insisted very loudly that he grind it in front of me. Otherwise, he would go in back and bring out a cheaper grade of ground round. He also had to be watched because he tended to put his fingers on the scale. In retrospect, I must say in his defense that times were hard and pennies counted. But what held for him, also applied to me and my family. And I wasn’t ten years old yet! Those childhood experiences have served me most of my life. Regrettably, I can not identify specific stores by name and, in reality, I had no favorites unless it be the newsstand on

3rd avenue. (At 14, when I was in the 10th grade and lived in Greenwich Village, I worked for a mom-and-pop market on Greenwich Ave.)

Nearby on 28th Street was the nearest firehouse, which in the 1960s was replaced by a newer one almost back-to-back on 29th Street. I want to say that I remember the firemen had a Dalmatian, but that may well have been somewhere else. In fact, possibly in Jersey City, where my grandfather was a volunteer fireman. But I do recall the engines, the sirens, and running after them and watching fireman at work. There was also a firehouse on E. 27th St, today serving as a home to a religious fellowship. The nearest police precinct was farther downtown or quite far uptown. Only infrequently do I recall seeing the police in our neighborhood. Locally, of course, is Bellevue and other medical facilities which fortunately were, and continue to be, located close at hand, on 1st Avenue. I walked there every few months for a checkup since I was a diphtheria carrier and I spent some time there with chickenpox and other childhood ailments.

I have no recollection of a nearby bookstore, perhaps there was one west of us on Madison or 5th Avenue. My brother and I had more interest in used books – mostly novels as by Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, even the Norwegian Knut Hamsun, and others. New books cost a good deal more than we had, even if we saved our allowance for several weeks. And, being kids, we also enjoyed the comics and spent time reading them over on 3rd avenue at the newsstand.

I recall especially the local theaters. While there were several along 3rd Avenue between 27th and 34st streets, the Superior on the corner of 31st Street was our favorite. The Regent, farther down the avenue, was also attended but less

frequently. I do not recall attending a third theater, which Irving Harris speaks of. Nonetheless, the Superior showed westerns and other pictures, a cartoon, and a “chapter” or serial, usually 15 or so minutes with each episode ending with a cliff-hanging event that was, of course, safely resolved in the next episode.

I’m pleased to note that Irving Harris and actor Ben Gazzara both confirm my memory of the showings at this theater. Gazzara specifically refers to the Hopalong Cassidy series, which did come somewhat later; I saw them in San Francisco. Early on, many pictures were silent and they introduced all of us kids to Buck Jones, Tom Mix, Johnny Mack Brown, Tex Ritter (fortunately being a silent film we didn’t hear him sing until somewhat later) and others of that cowboy genre. I recall Jones best because he could jump on a horse from the hind end. After a few action scenes, the text would appear on screen (good thing we had already learned to read!), but the text never covered all of the dialogue you figured went on when you observed the actors’ lips moving. Never saw a guy kiss a girl in any of those shows, only his horse, usually near the end of the film. We also got to see a cartoon – you know Felix the Cat, a Disney Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse, or some other, but only one at each show. Am I recalling correctly that the cartoons were all talkies?

Some of us had cap guns or pea-shooters, and, although we were supposed to leave them home or ‘hang them up’ at the theater, we too often hid them and then fired them at the bad guys. Too often, of course, that was ‘fatal’ for us – a heavy-set matron, usually in white uniform, would come and grab you and drag you to the exit. But it was fairly easy to sneak back in at the side of the theater. I recall one or another theater, as on 14th Street, but I do not recall what pictures we saw. On

one special occasion our mother took us uptown to the Radio City Music Hall to see “Snow White” and that probably was the most expensive show I saw while I still lived on the East Side. That was in mid-winter 1938. I had already moved down to E. 22nd Street and was attending P. S. 40.

On occasion, we did walk up to the 34th Street Theater, which stood adjacent to the 3rd Ave El Station (which is shown in Stelter, 2007, p. 56, for the early 1950s). I have no recollection of which films we saw there.

(One further comment: When I eventually ended up in Southern California, from summer of 1941, whenever we went out for a drive, I would question our surroundings, noting, as we say today, déjà vu, because of the hillsides, chaparral, quantum of oak trees, the general dryness. Of course, some of the pictures had been filmed in these parts. For example, in Temescal Valley, south of Corona, or out north among the Vasquez Rocks, and at the Santa Susana Pass (today, the gateway to the city of Simi Valley, north of Los Angeles). I even recall the first time we drove on the wide streets in Burbank—there I recall from earliest pictures, Laurel and Hardy, the Keystone Kops, and others. References back to childhood are many and, at times, random.)

Only some local stores impressed us as kids. Groceries, of course, were nearly daily events, especially in the summer months because we couldn't keep too much in our icebox and milk normally had to be consumed within two days. I do recall that the butcher shop (meat market) had sawdust on the floor and that the grocer utilized a large poll with a special apparatus to pull down such items as breakfast cereal and toilet tissue. We used to do that for ourselves. Some of the stores sold pickles and other items from open barrels, and

3.2 29th STREET NEWER FIREHOUSE



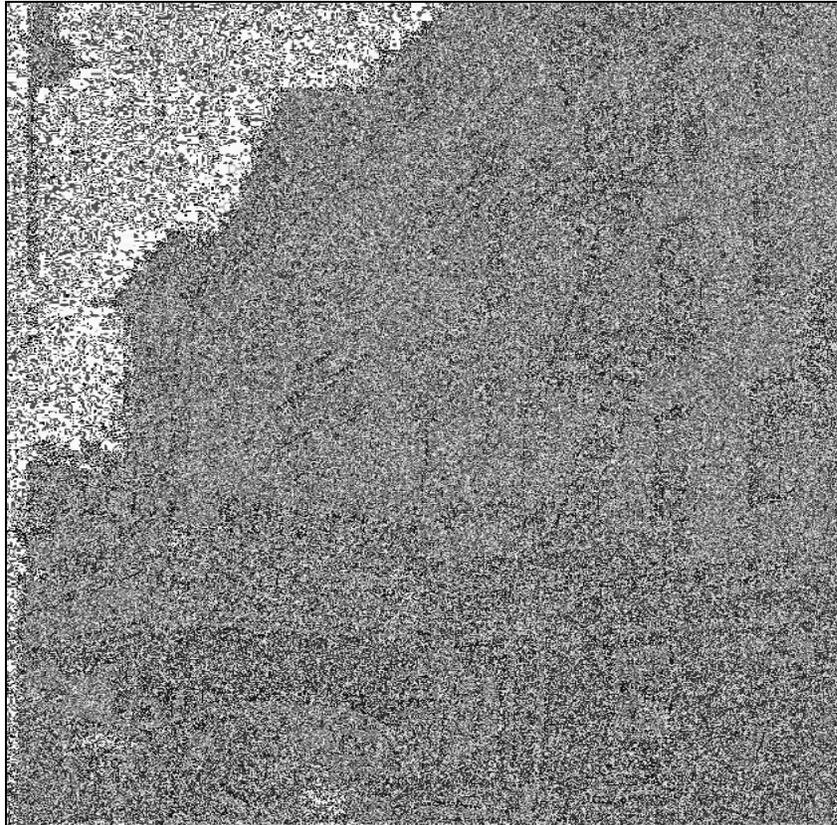
A view of the current firehouse, Engine 16, Ladder 7, on 29th Street between 2nd and 3rd avenues. In the 1930s, there was a firehouse on E. 28th, essentially back-to-back with this site, as best I remember. This facility was constructed in 1967, during the same decade when old tenements were being torn down and new high-rise apartments were going up. Notice the survival of older structures on either side of the firehouse. Photo by Patricia Pardo, branch manager, Kips Bay Public Library, 2005.

3.3 3rd AVENUE GROCERY STORES



Various stores, including groceries, along 3rd Avenue up from 30th Street. Note the El and the station from 33rd Street north.. Photo by P. L. Sperr, New York Public Library Digital Gallery, circa 1930, 70803F..

3.4 LOCAL MOTION PICTURE THEATER



The Superior Theater on 3rd Avenue at 31st Street, where a bunch of us would see western films, cartoons, and a serial, most of which were also cowboy shows. Sometimes, a parent would come to collect a child and would give the person in the enclosed booth, who sold the tickets, the name, and the projectionist would put it up on the screen. You know, “Johnny Smith, go home,” or something like that. There was also the Regent Theater at 28th Street on 3rd Ave., but I have little recollection of it. Photo is courtesy of Irving Harris. It dates from the mid-1930s. See also figure 7.4b (the Regent Theater).

cheese was usually sliced at the counter. Not the most sanitary arrangement. The grocer would write down the prices on the side of the large brown bag and then add them up. I was instructed by my folks to double check the bottom line. I usually put the change in the bag. It was usual for me to carry two bags home. My brother managed to get out of shopping because he would not be responsible to watch for the correct change. Now and then today, in local markets, I tell the young cashiers and box boys that two bags of groceries now, easily costing \$20.00, cost less than \$1.00 when I was a kid. No one really believes me. Try the comparison but with rents. Our rent was \$25, then \$30 a month. As I write (June 2007), you can't fill a car tank with gas for that amount! and apartment rents run well over a thousand a month.

Big events, so far as shopping goes, took us out of the neighborhood. We especially enjoyed Macy's – we loved to ride the escalators. And we did frequent the Automats, those restaurants with prepackaged sandwiches and other foods housed in glass cased boxes opened by coins. But with so little money, local shopping dominated our lives. Now and then my mother would buy fruit and vegetables from a truck or horse-driven wagon parked on our street. Itinerant merchants came and went on a regular basis. Having left the neighborhood and New York except for one other year – 1942-43—when I lived in Greenwich Village, I cannot say what became of these individuals, but they disappeared from the scene even earlier, I suspect, than much of the neighborhood itself.

As kids, many of us frequented Bellevue Hospital or a smaller clinic nearby on 1st Avenue. But everyone, not just New Yorkers, knows the name Bellevue, probably because it is often referred to in crime series on TV. I often like to think

that we moved to 29th Street because in that period I was a carrier of diphtheria and periodically had to be checked out at the hospital. Eventually, after five years, I was given a good bill of health! Among soundmarks, of course, were the sounds of ambulances in the immediate neighborhood. I might mention that for some medical needs we went to Rockefeller Center – to go to the dentist, but also to get my tonsils removed. The center was a socialized service, and, of course, so was medical treatment at Bellevue. As a kid, of course, how would I have predicted that 1st Avenue would become medical row.

3.5 MEDICAL ROW: 1st AVENUE



The eastside of 1st Avenue. Looking uptown from 30th Street: farthest is an apartment building, Then the first white high-rise is the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitative Medicine, then the New York University Medical Center, the shorter white building is the NYC Coroner's office. The older, brownish building is part of the Bellevue Hospital complex, which at the time of the photo was being utilized as a homeless shelter. Photo and description provided by Patricia Pardo, branch manager, Kips Bay Public Library, 2005.

3.6 BELLEVUE HOSPITAL & EXPANSION



Part of the Bellevue Hospital complex on 1st Ave, 28th and 29th streets, circa 1930. Today hospitals and other medical facilities including university medical schools line 1st Ave from 24th to 34th streets. Photo by P. L. Sperr, New York Public Library Digital Gallery, 707557F.

Did I mention that I was sent up to the corner of 2nd Avenue to buy cigarettes for my dad? I recall that two packs of Luckies went for a quarter. In those days no one seemed to object to kids buying cigarettes for adults. At that store and elsewhere, we would buy – for a penny! – a flat square of gum that came with a baseball card. Wow, had I kept the many dozen cards, I would likely be very rich today. (We moved to Chicago in 1938, took the cards and comics, but when we drove west to San Francisco, we left behind a bundle of comics, including the first editions of *Superman* and *Detective Comics*. They would have paid my way through college!)

IV

P. S. 116 and Other Schools

On any school day, a bunch of us would convene at the 2nd Avenue corner and walk together. At times, one or more of the boys would run ahead and, as expected, someone would be running late and run to catch up. I was as guilty as the others. In snowy weather, especially when it was more water than snow, we loved to walk in it and, of course, got our socks wet. So, once at school, we had to shed the boots or galoshes and get dried off. This was (perhaps still is) a boy thing! Of course, we also threw 'snowballs' – but of course, they were wet and fell apart quickly -- at each other as we walked, ran, jumped our way to school. We went north on 2nd Ave on one side of the street and usually ran across the middle of the street under the El. I remember that we came in the back way off 32nd Street.

I am recalling that we entered the gym and put our coats, gloves, galoshes, whatever, against the wall. There were hooks. Then we got in line at a designated spot and awaited our teacher, who escorted us to the classroom. Did I also comment that we wore the equivalent of uniforms: black corduroy pants (usually Knickers), a short corduroy squared off tie, and dark shoes. Girls wore pinafores, if I recall correctly. We were easily spotted by the truant officer! Such garb could be purchased in countless stores at low cost, so it was no hardship – we had to have clothes, so some of them were school designated.

4.1 MARY LINDLEY MURRAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



P. S. 116 (Mary Lindley Murray Elementary School), E. 33rd St. between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. The original building and two annexes. Most of the block contains brownstone apartments as in the past. Aside from the annexes, the major change is the daily existence of cars, almost unknown when I attended in the three-year period, 1934-37. I confirmed my recollection that we entered the school from 32nd St, entering the gym. I hardly recall the front entrance! I understand that school names may be a product of post-Second War. Photo by Patricia Pardo, Manager, Kips Bay Branch Library.

Frankly, I only remember one teacher and the principal by name – a Mrs. Daly, perhaps 3rd grade, and Ms Foley, respectively. I spent my share of time in her office or sitting on a bench in the hall. I even recall having my hands slapped with a ruler, which I once grabbed and broke. That led to a note going home via my brother, and – yes – I got the belt that night!

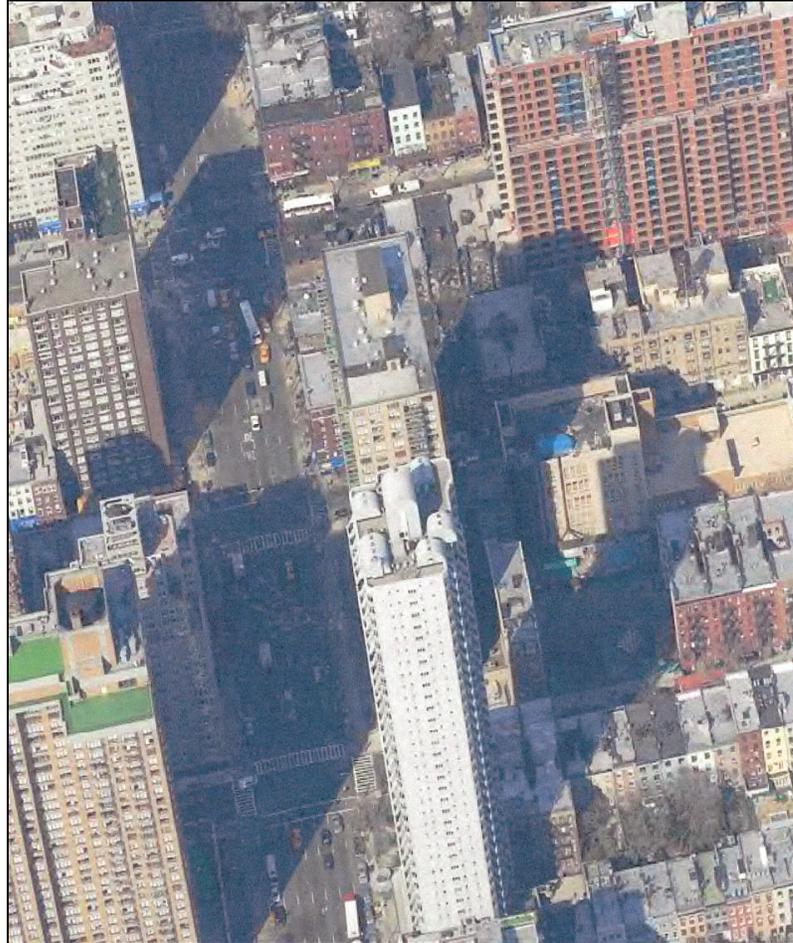
After school, when I was younger, my brother and I headed to the Chapel of the Incarnation on 31st near 2nd Ave., where we stayed a couple of hours at after-school care in the

basement. At some point, my brother dropped me off and he then went somewhere if not directly home. Eventually, I didn't have to stay there anymore, and both of us would go home, help get dinner ready and start our homework. I was usually entrusted with grocery shopping en route home.

In late afternoon we got to listen to a couple of 15 radio shows – e. g., “Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy,” “Little Orphan Annie, ‘(with her decoder ring that left an indelible green ring on your finger!). On a number of days, we often detoured west on 33rd and turned the corner south and hung out at the newsstand, looking at comics. We used to help unpack bundles of magazines and newspapers whenever we stopped there. We rarely hung around school in the afternoon, but once in a while we went to someone else's apartment for an hour or so. I know we must have told our mother, but it made little difference because she got home way after 6 p.m. and my father would be away at the newspaper until 3 a. m. or later.

There isn't a lot to say about school. I attended 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. I mentioned Mrs. Daly; perhaps that is because she was nice and I liked her. My brother also attended P. S. 116, went with his own buddies and, of course, was two years ahead of me. We didn't like it when, because one of us got into trouble, a note was sent home with the other. (Years later, in San Francisco when I was in 7th and he was in 9th, we agreed to go to differences schools thereafter.) Everything I currently read about P. S. 116 indicates it is one of the best elementary schools in the city. Perhaps it was already in my time. I'd like to think so.

4.2 PS 116 & ADJACENT HIGH-RISE APARTMENTS



The dynamics of construction change is well revealed in this view of modern apartment structures adjacent to P. S 116. The high-rises face 3rd Avenue on the left; the school and its playground sit in the shadows on the right. Such construction changes also appear just uptown one or two blocks, and also elsewhere within Kips Bay. Photo from <http://local.live.com> (Windows. Live Local, circa 2006).

I am not really surprised to discover that my school lies behind – indeed in the shadow of – high-rise buildings. Seasonally, then, I suspect the school grounds would be less desirable for outdoor play. But so many older brownstones have survived gentrification. But just how many more pre-teens have moved into the neighborhood and now attend the school, I don't know, because I have no idea how large the enrollment was in my time. Also, it is a K-5 today, but probably included the 8th grade in my time.

P. S. 116 was constructed with hardwood floors. The fact that I remember – and somewhat shamefully – is because I and other boys liked to dip our quill pens in blue ink and then drop them into the floor. Bluish stains were quite common. Oh, yes, we also enjoyed dipping girls' braids, although we ended up sitting in the back corner or being sent to the principal. (Did I tell you that she was a Ms. Foley, and that years later when I entered Hollywood High School at the 11th grade level, I met my new principal, a Mr. Foley, who, when asked, said she was his aunt. A credible answer. But I have wondered if he humored me. Perhaps Foleys are dedicated to becoming principals. His son became the principal at Hollywood some years later. And right or wrong I want to say that the principal at P. S. 40, which I attended at 5th grade was also a Ms Foley.)

Across from my apartment was the Carmelite Parochial School. Many of its Catholic students lived on our block or nearby. For example, there were many Italians in our neighborhood. I frequented the grounds probably to play ball.

There were – still are – several Catholic schools in Kips Bay. As for other public schools, the 1930 map (Fig. 1) records the past existence of a P. S. 14, located between 27th and 28th streets

4.3 PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ON 29th STREET



Middle of picture is the Carmelite Parochial School on E. 29st Street across from my apartment building. The photo suggests the amount of traffic during the week, contrary to my memory. The 28th/29th Street Crosstown streetcar which came up my block, was gone before 1920 Note the absence of track alignment. Photo by P. L. Sperr New York Public Library Digital Gallery, 1930. .

4.4 THE CARMELITE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ON 29th ST.



Across the street from my apartment there stood the Carmelite parochial school; the church was farther down toward 1st Ave. I visited the school on more than one occasion with Catholic buddies. When the school and the church were demolished, the staff relocated to St. Stephens on 28th Street. Photo courtesy of Father Alfred Isacson, Millerton, N. Y.

and 2nd and 3rd avenues. It is a mystery to me now— unless my memory has just failed to recall—but I have no recollection of its existence, and since it was located closer to my apartment, I should have attended that school. Perhaps it was overcrowded at the time. Irving Harris tells me that he attended that school and it was operative into the 1950s. For the older secular students, it is logical that they attended Stuyvesant High down on 15th Street. Perhaps some kids even walked, as Ben

Gazzara recalls he did, but one could get the 3rd Ave El local at 28th Street and then exit at 14th.

4.5 P. S. 14: OLD GRADE SCHOOL ON 27th STREET



According to the Land Map of the Borough of Manhattan, dated 1930, there was a grade school, PS 14, between 27th and 28th streets and between 2nd and 3rd avenues. I do not recall such a school. It is the building farthest down the street. The smaller building to its right is St. Illuminator Armenian Church, which is still there. The school site

and to the corner of 2nd Ave. is today occupied by the Nathan Straus Houses apartments and Community Center. Photo: from the NY Public Library Digital Gallery, Percy L. Sperr, photographer, 1930, 711852F.

V

Religious Centers

Religious centers abound in Kips Bay. This fact eluded me as a youth but doesn't surprise me as a researcher. Like some other neighborhoods in New York City, Kips Bay continues to present a very mixed ethnicity, which, in turn, is reflected in its religious institutions. For examples, Catholic, Episcopal, Armenian, Jewish, Presbyterian, Moravian, and other religious centers. On 29th Street near 1st Avenue was the R. C. Church of Our Lady of Scapular and in the middle of the block, their Carmelite parochial school. Two blocks west there is still the Congregation Adereth El synagogue. There are other Catholic churches on 28th Street and on 34th Street, and at least two Protestant churches in the neighborhood.

The Chapel of the Incarnation, located on 31st Street near 2nd Avenue, continues today as the Church of the Good Shepherd, having become independent sometime in the 1960s. Many youth, even if not members of the church, had lunch there daily at very low cost (I am remembering 5 cents?) and then, after school, we stayed in the basement under supervision (a Mrs. Meggs?) until a parent or sibling picked us up. My brother was liberated from childcare long before I was, he being two years older. Neither program continues today as the

current reverend told me. (See my later discussion of summer camp in Connecticut.) We weren't a church-going family. But the Chapel of the Incarnation sort of adopted my brother and me. Father Nicolas M. Feringa did try to get us to become regular members, but it didn't happen. We knew a Lucille Manning who was a social worker somehow connected with the church. But most important, three summers in a row we got to

5.1 CHAPEL OF THE INCARNATION



The Chapel of the Incarnation, circa mid-1950s, located on 31st Street between 2nd and 3rd avenues. The New York Telephone Company Bldg towers to the west. This photo emphasizes how frequently one encounters strong contrasts in the height of buildings in New York and many other cities. At the right margin is part of an arrow that identifies the north direction, and the white band at the lower left is part of the bounding of the Kips Bay Plaza project which was then just underway. Compare photo

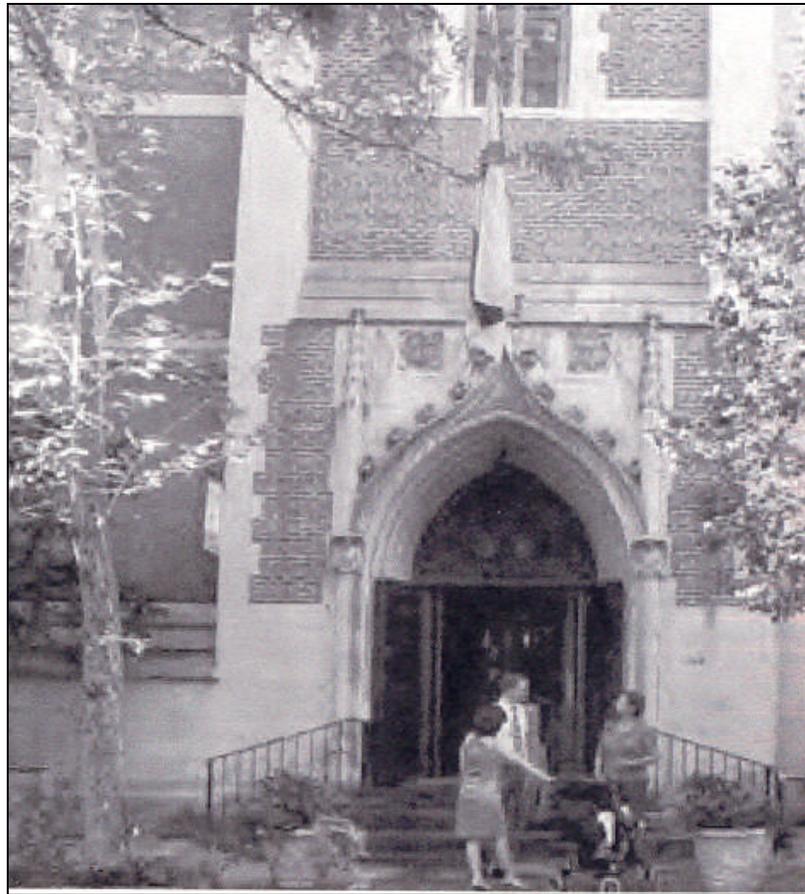
*1.9. Photo by MTA Bridges and Tunnels Special Archive,
via Hilary Ballon, Columbia University.*

Camp Ivoryton (Incarnation) in eastern Connecticut. It was a two-week outing if you were lucky enough not to get sick. I got whooping cough and my dad borrowed a car to come and get me. Another summer I got the mumps. My brother seemed to have survived summer illnesses. We enjoyed swimming, hiking, playing games including volley ball. I know that we had to be careful in the water. Usually an older boy or an adult stayed on a floating platform at the edge of the swimming area and watched for water moccasins. They were hard to spot in the water. In the three summers I was there, I think one kid got struck. I knew some of the other kids from my neighborhood but the summer group involved some kids who didn't go to P. S. 116. (As an aside, I was recently told that the Boys Club also had a summer camp. We never knew of it or it was cheaper to go to the church camp.)

During the school year, we spent a good deal of time at the church despite not choosing to become members, and today I do have good memories of the staff and their kindnesses not just to me or my brother but to all the children there. Along with Father Feringa, I recall a Father MacDuff. A church member who was also active with the summer camp sent me a copy of a sermon, when, in June 1974, Father Feringa revisited his former parish and spoke of the "nutritional lunch ...served to 200 school children, whether they were members...or not." He spoke also of the acquisition of the

property on which sits Incarnation Camp and how fortunate that they got their buildings (the lodge is one) constructed before the crash in 1929. The reverend mentioned that various groups spent a month at the camp and that boys were there in August. I am only recalling a two-week stay and have no idea

5.2 CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD



The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, known as the Chapel of the Incarnation in the 1930s. Located on 31st Street between 1st and 2nd avenues. The street is mostly residential with surviving brownstones, trees, etc. Photo downloaded from <http://goodshepherdnyc.diocesenyc.org/about.html>.

which month that was. I would suspect that my parents paid the \$10 for each of us, although I would note that rent for our two-bedroom apartment was around \$30 a month, so that spending \$10 for each of us for two weeks at camp may have been a hardship in the mid-1930s. I find my attachment to the church after so many years a curious commentary on my life as a non-church goer. It was then a home away from home probably for many youth such as myself.

I remember the bus trip along the coast of Long Island Sound. It was an important excursion and experience for me. My only other 'out-of-town' experiences came about when we went to Jersey to visit our grandparents in Hoboken and later in Weehawken. Once in a while my uncle Paul and his girl friend (later my aunt) would come by in his convertible and take us for a drive on Long Island. The trip to camp, and the camp experience, perhaps served as catalysts toward my becoming a geographer. The events did take me beyond familiar ground well into far country by the time I was seven.

The Church of the Good Shepherd, which I knew as the Chapel of the Incarnation, speaks of "representatives of various cultures and backgrounds as parishioners are blessed with a vital and diverse parish family." Since I and my family were never formal members, I can only make reference to the benefits of being a regular guest at lunch, or of staying after school, but I do recall how the reverends sought to encourage my brother and me to join. Curiously, while I was born at the Lutheran Hospital on the upper west side and my maternal grandfather was originally Catholic, I have not belonged to any church in my lifetime.

We had Jewish friends and my brother knew the daughter (Helen) of Rabbi Gusick at the Congregation Adereth El synagogue on 29th near Lexington. We used to get to visit

there now and then. The first time, I remember getting lightly swatted on the head for not wearing a hat; so they gave me something to wear. I think my experiences with other cultures in the neighborhood encouraged my later interest in anthropology, my second field.

Let me tell you a multiethnic story, or sort of. At sundown on Fridays, a gentile ('shabbat goy') youth would be called to come upstairs and turn off gas stoves, some lights,

5.3 ADERETH EL TALMUD SYNAGOGUE



Congregation Adereth El Talmud Torah on E. 29th Street between Lexington and 3rd avenues. Although I visited here many times, I have to admit that I do not well recall the building. Photo by George Chinn, New York Public Library Digital Gallery, no date, but probably mid-1930s, 711919F.

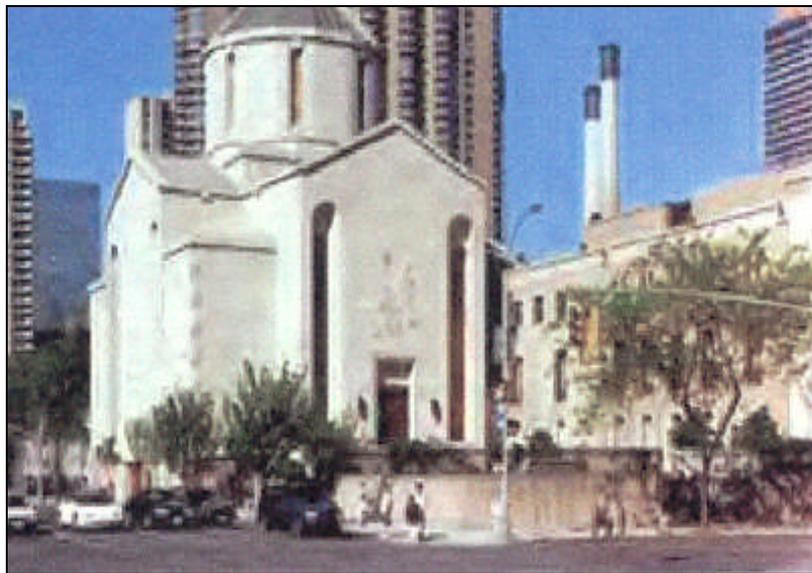
etc., as Jewish people got ready for the Sabbath. I would hear them call out, “Sonny, come upstairs.” It is a common practice probably among the older generation. Then on Sunday, they would call us again and we would get a dish of blintzes - delicious and, of course, fattening, the last thing I needed at age 7 or 8. I think that many of the local Jewish residents attended the Congregation Adereth El Talmud.

It interests me that actor Ben Gazzara who lived on the block more than a dozen years, wrote that “Antisemitism was alive and well on Twenty-ninth Street.” He said that he knew the only Jewish boy in the neighborhood. It is possible that other Jewish folk, many of whom my family and I knew, had moved on. But during my early years I was too naïve to be aware of the prejudices. We knew kids of many ethnicities, including Jewish kids in my building as well as in the other tenements.

I knew two Armenian kids in the neighborhood and was aware that there was a community of Armenians nearby. In fact, many of the families had originally grouped around E. 20th St between Lexington and 3rd avenues; many later moved a little more uptown. I have no idea how many Armenian families were nearby. Two Armenian churches were already flourishing in or adjacent to the neighborhood – the Armenian Evangelical Church on 34th between Lexington and 3rd and St Gregory the Illuminator on 27th between 2nd and 3rd. I have no

idea whether those families I knew attended either church. The latter only became an Armenian church in 1935, the structure having been built for a Protestant group in 1923. The former was built in the mid-19th century. On the other hand, the St. Vartan Cathedral, perceived as early as the 1940s, wasn't designed until the 1950s and consecrated until 1968.

5.4 ST. VARTAN'S CATHEDRAL



The Armenian St. Vartan Cathedral located on 2nd Avenue between E. 34th and 35th streets. I mostly identify that locale with the St. Gabriel Park public library. Photo from the St. Vartan website, 2007.

There were of course several Roman Catholic churches -- The Church of Our Lady of Scapular and St. Stephens were the closest. I had friends who attended these churches and their parochial schools. I had no knowledge of the others. I understand that when the Carmelite school and Church of Our Lady of Scapular were demolished to make way for the new high-rise apartment complexes, the staff moved to Saint Stephen's on 28th between Lexington and 3rd Avenue.

To be sure, numerous religious centers have long been established in Kips Bay and nearby, and they help to identify the multiethnic nature of the East Side.

5.5 ST. STEPHEN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH



St. Stephen's Church is located on E. 28th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Its architecture as well as the paintings by Constantine Brumidi have encouraged preservationists to seek to have the church designated a landmark, which has yet to occur after more than forty years of effort. The building to its right appears to be a newer structure since my time. The presence of more cars today has also necessitated the installation of parking meters, none of which existed in the neighborhood in the 1930s. Photo downloaded from the

Gotham Gazette, N. Y., 2005.

5.6 ST. STEPHENS 29th STREET ENTRANCE



The St. Stephens Church and school located between E. 28^t and 29th streets and between 3rd and Lexington avenues. Compare photo 5.5: obviously the corner building was replaced. Photo: NY Public Library Digital Gallery, #43, P. Sperr, photographer, 1930, 711917F.

5.7 CAMP IVORYTON LODGE IN CONNECTICUT



The Lodge in 1928 at Ivoryton, CT, where my brother and I spent two weeks each of three summers, 1935-36-37. I am assuming this building was standing and utilized in my day. Photo: from the Incarnation Center Annual Report, 2005-2006.

(Note: ‘religious centers’ seems a more appropriate term than ‘church’, since the latter is not utilized for a synagogue, temple or mosque.)

6.1 FOURTH AVENUE – BOOK ROW



Book Row, on lower Fourth Avenue, mid-1930s. Many of us kids frequented these bookstores with their low-priced used and new books. It was walking distance from 29th Street. Photo: from

Marvin Mondlin and Roy Meador, Book Row: An Anecdotal and Pictorial History of the Antiquarian Book Trade (N.Y.: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003).

VI

Reading:

Libraries, Bookstores and Newsstands

My brother Jaffery and I grew up in a bibliophile household. Our father was a journalist, editor and author, and our mother was an artist, pianist and former arts-and-crafts school teacher (in New Jersey). However drab our apartments may have been, we always had plenty of books, even if we didn't have enough book cases. Indeed, my mother also covered the walls with paintings, including her own. We had our own collection of fiction and were introduced to the novels of Hemingway, Anderson, Twain, Lewis, Steinbeck, and many others. The others included the Norwegian Knut Hamsun! We read avidly. Bookstores, of course, were the preferred venue for reading. It was common then, as it still is, for readers to sit and read, perhaps not buy at all. We saved some of our fifteen cents allowance each week to buy books regularly. We especially liked 'Everyman's Library,' with its soft covers. Most of our purchases were of used copies. (Of course, we also bought our share of comics but more so after

we moved to Chicago and then San Francisco.) I do not recall a bookstore right in our neighborhood. Perhaps one could buy some new books in a drugstore. If there was a used bookstore farther west toward or beyond Madison Ave., I have no recollection.

Speaking of comics, we used to drop by the nearest newsstand – it was on 3rd Avenue, around the corner from our school, where we would sit and read comics, but also help

6.2 3rd AVENUE & 32ND STREET NEWSTAND



*Newsstand on the southwest corner of 32nd Street and Third Avenue. It was a popular hangout. The owner also sold sodas, fruit, candy cigarettes, etc. Photographed in 1935; downloaded from the New York Public Library photo collection, MFZ (Abbott) 96-4294. Photo may also be seen in Berenice Abbott, *New York in the Thirties* (formerly *Changing New York*) (NY: Dover, 1939, 1967, 1973).*

unwrap and shelve magazines and newspapers. We didn't buy a newspaper at the stand because my dad brought home the morning edition from work – he was a reporter for the *New*

York Daily News as well as the *Journal-American*. And from time to time, he still free-lanced with the *Newark Star-Eagle*, where he had been working full-time when I was born in 1928.

Nor was there a public library within immediate walking distance. Alone or with a buddy or another family member, we did occasionally walk several blocks north to St. Gabriel's Park branch library. The library stood adjacent to a parochial school and across the street from St. Gabriel's Park.

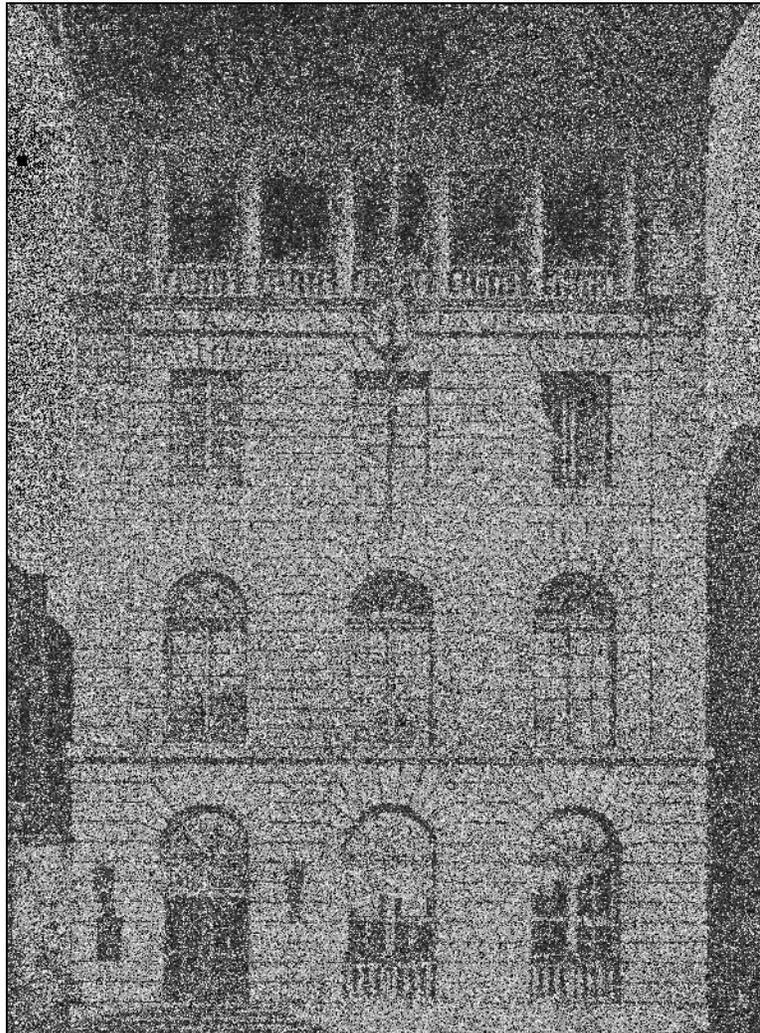
Today, a swath of road – access to the Queens Midtown Tunnel – cuts through the park. Unfortunately, I have limited recollection of the library. I was asked by the librarians at Kips Bay if I could describe the interior at St. Gabriel's, but I could not. I have better recollections of the Epiphany Library on 23rd Street because we moved to 22nd when I was 9, and being older I frequented that library more often. It is still there.

I mentioned the library – the St. Gabriel's Park, which is near the current St. Vartan's Park and the Armenian cathedral. My mother and I went there on occasion, but my brother and I much preferred to frequent the old bookstores on 4th Avenue and just about anywhere. Such bookstores were surrogate libraries because no one annoyed you if you sat on the floor and read from one or more books. If we had ten or twenty cents, we could bring home a couple of books. As an aside, it was a common occurrence when entering any one of the used bookstores to be handed a slip of paper with some titles on it. You were asked to keep an eye out for a title. I had this experience in New York, New Jersey and farther west even into my senior years!

Here is a sad story reported to me by librarians at Kips Bay, a library that didn't exist in my time. But the account has

to do with the demolition of the St. Gabriel library in 1939-40 to make way for the ingress to and egress from the Queens Midtown Tunnel (which connects Manhattan with Queens). It seems that several of the men who had years earlier helped construct the library, now were tearing it down. And many were in tears according to the newspaper report. The statement continues: "...A tablet on the façade of the building...was taken down carefully by moist-eyed employees,

6.3 ST. GABRIEL'S PARK BRANCH LIBRARY



The St. Gabriel's Park Branch Library was located on

E. 36th Street next to the corner of 2nd Avenue. The building was opened in 1908, and was torn down in the 1950s to provide an approach to the Midtown Tunnel that connects Manhattan to Queens by motor vehicle. Photo: courtesy of Patricia Pardo, Kips Bay Public Library.

some of whom have served with the branch library during the entire thirty-two year s of its existence.”

Still on the subject of libraries, I do not recall if P. S. 116 had a library. Now and then my brother and I did make the excursion uptown to the New York Public Library on 42nd Street and 5th Avenue. This main library has been the source of many photos and map data for this little volume. I thank the librarians there for all their help. (By the way, as adults for a time my brother was on staff in the reference section of the NY main library, and I worked for the law library at the Association of the Bar up on 43rd Street. And my grandmother, Helena de Guzman, was the first librarian of Weekhawken (NJ).

When I learned that Kips Bay finally got its own library (circa 1972), I was of course delighted. To be sure, were it in existence in my time, I would have hung out there. Interestingly enough, this branch is only a block from the former site of our favorite newsstand, the nearest thing to a library! From time to time I have been contributing some books to this branch.

6.4 KIPS BAY BRANCH LIBRARY



Constructed in the early 1970s, the Kips Bay Branch Library is located on 3rd Avenue at the southwest corner of 31st Street. Photo downloaded from the library's website.

Far and Farther Country

My notion holds that a few short blocks, as to school or the grocery, do not send you beyond familiar ground. But the distance to parks, a library, and beyond to Uptown or even to 23rd Street – we now enter far country. We generally walked to the nearest two parks and libraries, even to a theater on 34th Street. I recall walking over to 5th Avenue but it was a distance into less familiar surroundings. And such places were not frequented that regularly, surely not like attending school or going to the Chapel of the Incarnation on 31st Street. And once we took the El or the subway, we would go into farther country, such as Brooklyn or New Jersey. And certainly just the trip itself to summer camp in Connecticut opened your vision and imagination to a far country that continues to stand in such sharp contrast to Manhattan Island. Such far-country jaunts encouraged me to compare the urban and rural world, and perhaps reminded me of the story of the town and country mouse of children's literature. But the trip to New Jersey spoke of another world – small town vs. big city. Later in life, even though I studied urban geography and worked in urban planning for a time, I became a conservationist who specialized in wild and rural environments, and instead of working with urban ethnicity out of which I came, I chose to specialize in the territoriality of Native Americans.

These comments do not comprehend the vast arena that distinguishes familiar grounds from far country, but suggests how one might interpret their surroundings from an early age. I enjoyed wandering about alone or with my brother or a friend. The contrasts and the changes triggered my interest, but also told me that even in far country, much the same may well exist. I make this point about Walker Evan's photo essay of E. 61st Street; it has much in common with E. 29th Street and nearby. But certainly Times Square and Coney Island were – and still are – different worlds from the neighborhood in which one resides. Changes in the man-made environment of Kips Bay since my youth reveal how man can bring the world of one place into another and change it for good. I appreciate the dynamics of urban gentrification, but I also do not really recognize my old haunt. But I am also glad that we moved away when we did.

7.1 HERALD SQUARE: 34th ST., BROADWAY, & 6th AVE.



Herald Square-- where 5th Ave and Broadway cross at 34th Street. This is the home of Macy's department store. For me, this was Far Country. The image is of 1936. The 6th Ave. El is at the right, long since torn down. When I was 8, we went to Macy's many, many times even without any money to spend. Its toy department was upstairs and we enjoyed the escalator ride and explored the new toys and games. I recall walking the distance to this square. Photo from: Levere, 2005, in bibliography.

VII

Els, Subways and Streetcars

As a youth, walking several blocks still kept me in the neighborhood, but I soon walked beyond and entered Far Country. I know that 34th and 23rd streets offered a different world with its taller buildings and businesses. Fifth Avenue had the same effect. Even going to the river was within walking distance. So I probably would not define those locations as truly far country. But once I boarded an El or the subway, the distance was far greater and the locations became increasingly different from my own neighborhood. But first let's talk about the Els and subways themselves before we travel on them.

It is after midnight and I awake but not because of the general city noises and lights. We briefly lived on 2nd Avenue and all day and night the El trains went by – ‘locals’ in both directions and expresses also. At times, two trains passed each other. I think there was a slight curve in the track and one could hear the sheer shriek of train wheels at any hour. Of course, the light was perpetual – for a short period we had rented an apartment on 2nd Avenue, around the corner from 29th Street. We were on the second floor facing the El and as the train went by it would be light and dark in rapid succession for probably a few seconds. Yet I can still see it happening so many years later and long after the El was torn down in 1942.

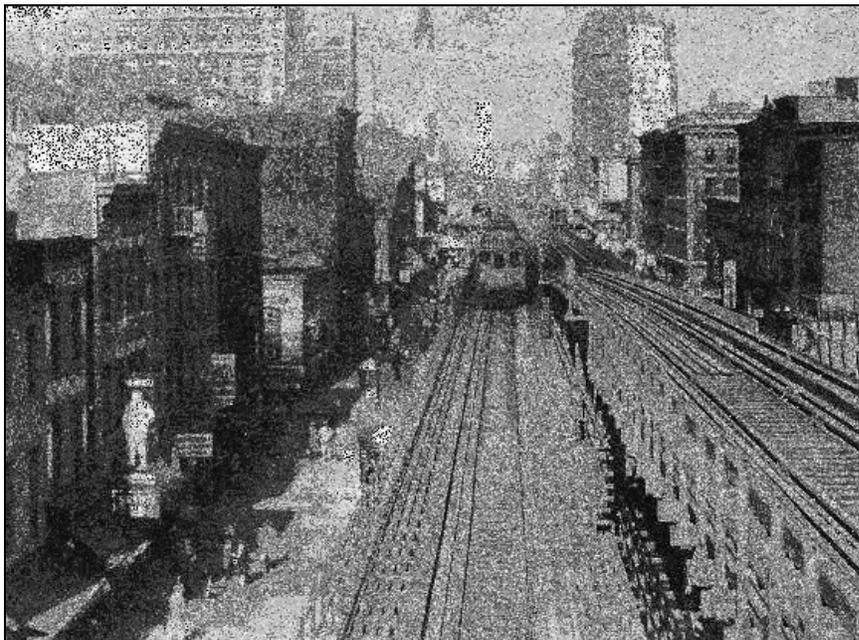
We used to walk over to 28th to get the 3rd Avenue El; it was the nearest station. For various reasons the 2nd Avenue El did not have a local stop between 23rd and 34th. Perhaps it was redundant; these two Els were owned and operated by competitive companies. The 3rd Avenue station sat like a house atop the El and we climbed a steep set of stairs, as I remember.

You could see up and down the avenue except for the tracks. But still you would see stores below. The station could be crowded; on cold days, many people hung out inside, otherwise they were on the platforms. As I recall, 28th was not an express stop – the nearest ones were at 34th and 23rd. So if you wanted to catch the express, you took the local from 28th and got off at the express stop in either direction. At crowded hours, I remember getting on near the front or back end and moving quickly to the opposite side. I would stand by the door because if I were going to 42nd St., the station was on the same side. The same was (and probably is still) true of the subways. Years later when I lived in Greenwich Village I would take the 7th Ave subway and experience the same situation.

Someone asked me about the Els and subways. You know, the rolling stock was the same whether running underground or above ground. They were of course parts of different systems. Uptown, for example, the subway comes out of the tunnel and becomes an elevated structure. Els still survive in parts of the Bronx and in Brooklyn. For the latter, the El was shown in episodes on the TV series “Dr. Becker,” although the storyline was in the Bronx. One could see El stations on that show and also on several others, including “The Bill Cosby” where he was a doctor living in Brooklyn. By the way, according to Stelter (2007, p. 9) the prevailing price of five cents sustained from 1886 to 1948.

Els are mostly gone. Their survival in boroughs other than Manhattan suggests their continuing utility and the fact that no current urban gentrification would see to their

7.2 2 3rd AVENUE EL: VIEW FROM 14th STREET (?)



The 3rd Ave El, looking uptown probably from either the 9th or 14th street station, circa 1933. Business signs are out of focus so it is somewhat difficult to trace them in the Yellow Pages. However, on the right there is a loan sign and on the left a figure of a man at a Siegmund Klein Gymnasium. Midway in the photo is possibly the 18th St. station. My interpretation is based, in part, on the distance to the Chrysler Bldg near the horizon – easily more than a mile distant. Photo, courtesy of Frank Pfuhler and the Electricrailroaders.org. .

demolition. The demise of the Els, according to Stelter (2007, p. 9) had to do with “[T]he drop in ridership due to the 1930s economic depression and concomitant political changes spelled the doom of the Manhattan Elevated system.” He points out that successively subways were completed and opened:

In December 1938, the 6th Avenue line closed and was completely demolished by April 1939. The replacement subway opened in December 1940. After protracted negotiations, the City obtained the IRTCo. in June 1940 and closed the 9th Avenue line south of

155th Street and the 2nd Avenue line north of 59th Street. Both lines were demolished in 1941. [The City-operated 8th Avenue subway had opened in 1952.] The remainder of the 2nd Avenue line was scrapped in 1942. By the end of World War II, only the 3rd Avenue line survived in Manhattan. (Stelter, 2007, p. 9)

Meantime, they are still debating the need for a subway where they tore down the Els on the East Side. Second Avenue is the prime route and now I read that they may yet start construction but farther uptown in the 60s. In fact, I understand that a few segments have been constructed. But a full-service subway under 2nd Avenue is literally decades away. So residents of my old neighborhood still must walk to Fourth (Park Avenue) to catch the Lexington subway. Not much fun in the bitter cold when the East River wind blows at your back and snow is falling. Worse when returning home and the wind is in your face!

During those early years when I attended grade school, my mother drew pen and ink posters advertising 'Louie Linn's' restaurant over on E. 14th Street. The posters were designed and cut to curve and fit secure into the advertising frames on the subways. My brother and I would post the signs on different subways and that is one way I got to know all the routes. At least one evening a week, we got a free dinner at Louie's. By the way, the restaurant was on the first floor of an old brownstone apartment. There were tables in the living room, dining room, in the hall and just off the kitchen. I probably counted the tables and the chairs and at one time could tell you how many people could be seated at one time. My mother told us that Louie and his partners had been waiters in some restaurant uptown. They became co-owners and several of them lived upstairs. Of course, when my mother drew a new batch of posters, we would go out and post them

and find that many of the older ones had been covered over with someone else's ad or else they were torn down. Such is business, I guess.

Let me tell you a sad story that I mostly know from riding the subways as a kid. A number of men, probably in their 40's or older, traveled through the cars riding a flat wheeled vehicle that they pushed with their hands. These men had lost part or both of their legs; they had served in Europe in World War I. They carried cans or small boxes to collect coins. I used to give them a nickel or even a few pennies. But I suppose by day's end, they had a dollar or two. After a while, they were a curiosity, but nonetheless I have never forgotten their presence on the subways.

At seven or eight then, it was quite safe for a kid to roam about alone in the day time and to ride the subway or El. Times have changed. I traveled the subway up and down Manhattan – not so much to the other boroughs – mainly on Saturdays. Gone most of the day with an apple, a candy bar, a nickel perhaps, and a jacket when necessary. Sometimes my brother and I went together, but more often I had a buddy who liked to roam around the city. We would go as far north into the Bronx to the Triborough Bridge, but mainly we would get to 59th St and then walk on the Queensboro Bridge, about which I will say more a little later.

7.3 INTERIOR WAITING AREA: EL STATION



*While this is a shot of an El station on Columbus Ave and 72nd Street, it might just as well be the 28th Street station of the 3rd Ave El. The date is February 1936 and passengers are taking advantage of the potbelly heater. The photo's caption notes that the turnstile was a recent innovation in 1923. I went under those turnstiles many a time. Photo is plate 76 from *New York in the Thirties: as photographed by Berenice Abbott* (NY: Dover, 1939; 1967). The original prints belong to the Museum of the City of New York.*

7.4 THE 28th STREET STATION OF THE 3rd AVE EL

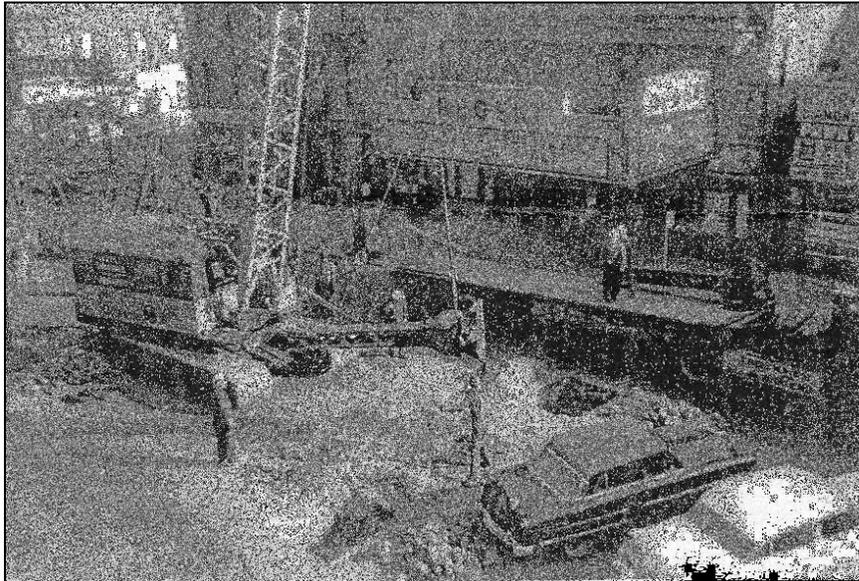


*The view is looking east, circa early 1950s. Note the 1951 Ford and 1940 DeSoto taxi. According to the original caption, Bellevue Hospital is in the distance. This was the most frequently utilized station by my family and others. Note school sign; PS14 was still operating at this time. Photo is from Stelter, *By the El*, 2007, p. 52, and used with his permission.*

7.5a/b DEMOLITION OF THE 2nd & 3rd AVENUE ELS



Tearing down the 2nd Avenue EL, between 32nd and 34th Streets, during 1942. One can experience the immediate difference between the darkness from overhead and the openness of the avenue. Trolleys were also removed. Photo by Percy Loomis Sperr, ID485727, New York City Public Library digital photo gallery..



The 3rd Ave EL was dismantled in 1955. Scene is at 28th Street and the historic Regents Theater. Photo by Mary Georgiade, courtesy of Irving Harris. .

In those years, if you could go under the turnstile, you didn't have to pay. I don't recall when the policy changed. Perhaps only kids could go under? But I do remember people ducking under the turnstile or jumping over it, to go free even though the cashier sat in a small booth close by. Once in a while a cop would be standing around, but I never saw anyone arrested for getting a free ride. I think the subway was only 5, at most 10, cents, and if you knew how to do it, you could connect from one line to another and keep on going without any extra charge. A colleague reminded me that New Yorkers gain some geographic insight into the layout of the city by utilizing subway maps. They may quickly know how the boroughs are laid out and which trains get them here and there. Yet they probably know very little of the surface areas in between. On the way to Coney Island, for example, I couldn't tell you much about Brooklyn. As an adult I learned more when I traveled to Kennedy Airport by bus from the East Side terminal then on 38th St or thereabouts.

I'm remembering that under the Els were trolley lines. We used to jump on the back end and ride them a distance, until the conductor would yell at us, and we would jump off and run as fast as we could. We did as much some years later on Market Street in San Francisco where regular trolleys run. Not so easy to jump on the back end of a cable car!

Last but not least, I should recall the streetcars that operated in the neighborhood. Only 3rd Avenue had a trolley in my time. I have a vivid memory of jumping on the back end as other kids (mostly boys) did until the conductor (if the car had two staff members on it) yelled at us. Sometimes people

7.6 TYPICAL VIEW UNDER AN EL



Photographed in summer, 1938, this view typifies city streets overcast by the EL. This is the 2nd Avenue EL. Note the many small stores. Both 2nd and 3rd Avenues in Kips Bay was very similar in the 1930s. Photo is from "A New York City Block," a photo essay of E. 61st Street in August 1938 by Walker Evans, a noted photographer then with the FSA (Farm Security Administration).

along the street would yell at you, but as a rule many of us went the few blocks we wanted to. Besides the 3rd Ave., there had been a 2nd Avenue line, but it was gone before my time, as was the 28th & 29th Crosstown Railway. Note in photos in chapter 3 the evidence of former tracks. As streets were repaved, those ruts disappeared. This streetcar line, which began in the 1890s and terminated in 1919, started at the 34th Street ferry, wound its way to 1st Ave., and then headed west along 29th Street, presumably in front of my building, which existed as early as 1906. The return trip, as the map shows, was along 28th Street. According to Meyers (2005), the expansion of Elms and subways precluded the financial success of the streetcar routes. By the mid-1950s, none existed in Manhattan.

Meyers also informed me that...prior to the opening of the East River Railroad tunnels to Penn Station, East 34th Street was a major transport terminal with the 34th Street elevated spur and many street car lines terminating there... Many East River ferry lines landed there.

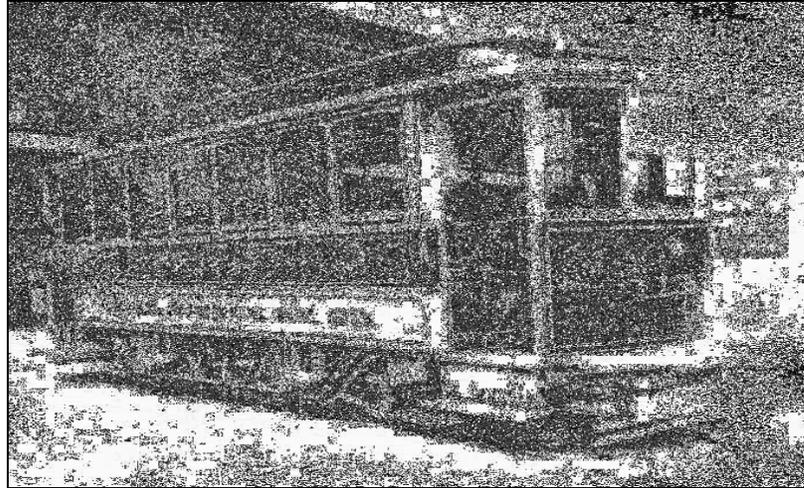
I am not particularly recalling ground or elevated facilities terminating at the ferry. Generally, we all hung around the lower 30s. But I vaguely recall a seaplane port somewhere in that locale. By the way, I never experienced ferrying over to Long Island.

7.7 NYC SUBWAY AND EL LINES

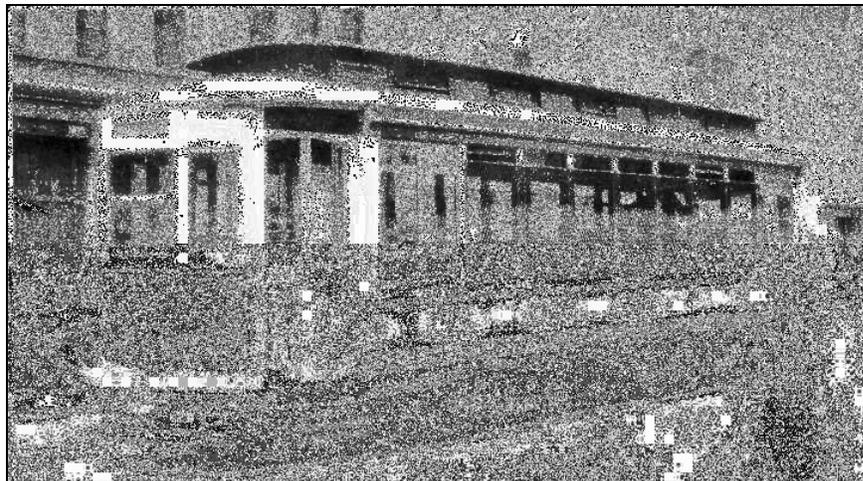


This is a the lower Manhattan portion of a 1930 map showing subways and Els. It bears the title “Rapid Transit Map of Greater New York.” Note in blue/green two lines running north/south on the East Side; they represent the 2nd and 3rd avenue Els. Both Els were torn down. To the west of them, note in blue the Lexington Ave. subway, which still functions as the only subway on the East Side of Manhattan. Trolley routes are not represented on this map. Source: The New York Times imagepages, 9/3/03.

7.9a/b HISTORIC STREETCARS



The Third Avenue Railway also operated the 28th & 29th Streets Railway, which ran from the last decade of the 19th Century to 1919. From its eastern terminus at the E. 34th Street ferry, streetcars wound their way via 1st Ave. to commence a westward route along 29th Street. The return was via 28th Street. Photo from the Stephen L. Meyers Collection. (See also his book, 2005, p.26).



A Second Avenue Streetcar. The line had run from Lower Manhattan to the north end of 2nd Avenue. It operated until 1933. Thus it was not operative in the middle 1930s when I lived on 29th Street. Photo from the Stephen L. Meyers Collection.

VIII

Dvorak House, Stuyvesant Park and Other Parks

Aside from Central Park, which we visited only occasionally, three smaller parks reside in my memory bank— St. Gabriel's, Stuyvesant, Gramercy and Abdington. Since most blocks are relatively short in Manhattan, several of us boys used to walk up to the mid-30s to the park at St. Vartan's (St. Gabriel's Park). The library was nearby. And we used to walk downtown on 2nd Ave to Stuyvesant Park at 17th Street. Gramercy became a sometime hangout in my last elementary school year in New York, when I lived on E. 22nd, and Abdington, located on Greenwich Ave and 8th Ave, is located in Greenwich Village, where I lived two different years in the 1940s. I have no good memory of having visited other neighborhood parks, but probably did once or twice.

What impressed us at Stuyvesant was the Dvorak House on the north side of 17th. Antonin Dvorak, a Czech (Bohemia in his time) composer was invited to this country in the mid-1890s to direct the American Conservatory of Music located farther west on the block. He stayed most of three years and traveled about the country. While here, he composed the 'New World Symphony' based, in part, on melodies and songs of the South, particularly music of Black America at the time. He also encouraged American composers to turn to our ethnic music to develop a particularly American idiom in music. We can hear some of that in the music of Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Charles Ives. He also wrote one

of the most famous cello concertos while here – in B minor, a favorite of most virtuosos including Yo-Yo Ma, who has performed it in concert, on records and CDs, as well as on TV. Anyway, Dvorak on the East Side was exciting for me since I aspired to become a composer and pianist. Dvorak got lonely for his homeland and returned after three years. I don't recalling actually entering the house although, I suspect, there were open hours to tour the facility.

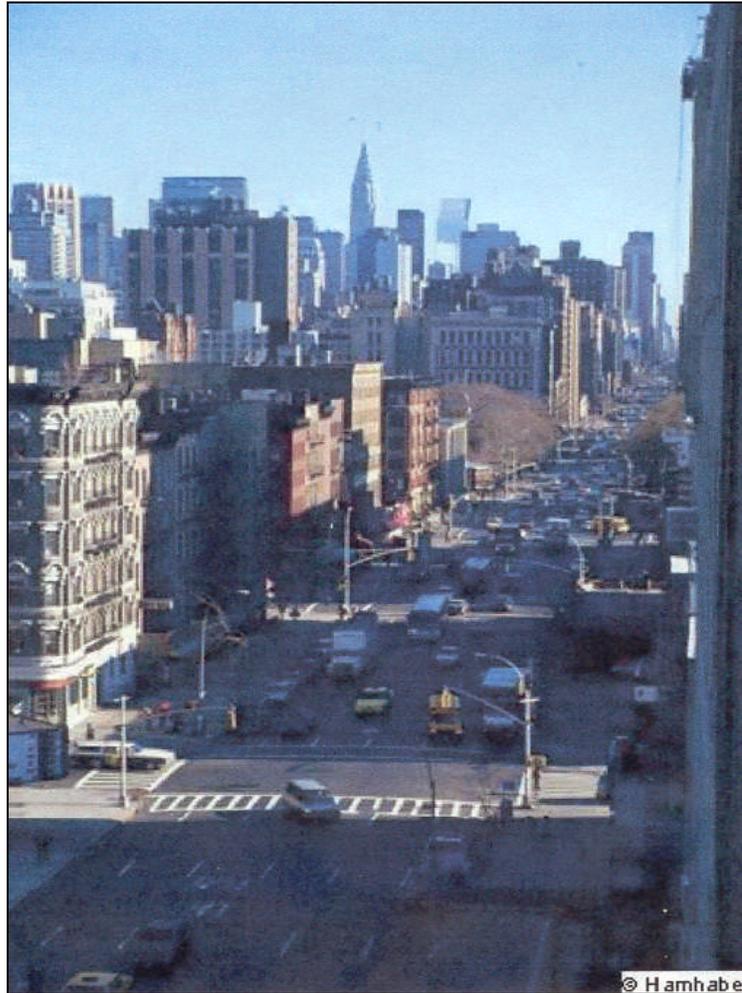
Unfortunately, the Dvorak house did not survive efforts to preserve it as a historic landmark, although the city did so dedicate it. It was torn down by a medical group that had acquired much of the block; they established a center for AIDs, certainly a worthwhile purpose. A statue of Dvorak does stand across the street in Stuyvesant Park.

I didn't intend overlooking frequent visits uptown to Central Park, but that is way outside my neighborhood and doesn't enter into local activities and events. Yet one could easily take the Els or the Lexington subway to 59th and walk the few blocks over.

Today, there is a small parklike area at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 29th Street. This is the Pinkerton Environmental Center, a community nature center established in 1979 for the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club located next door. It is somewhat ironic, if not merely coincidental, that I went on to become an environmentalist, teaching conservation and related resource studies having worked in the National Forests. On the west side of 2nd Avenue there is another small park, the Vincent F. Albano, Jr. Playground and the Mary Collins Playscape, which honors a community activist. Neither of these parks existed in my time and are surely welcomed open-air features in the neighborhood.

8.1 2nd AVENUE

LOOKING NORTH FROM 14th ST.



View of 2nd Ave from 14th St., looking north. Midway trees on both sides of the avenue are part of Stuyvesant Park at 17th Street. Way up the avenue would be my old neighborhood. The Chrysler Bldg is visible at the far distance. Photo is fairly contemporary, absent the EL and since the avenue was designated a one-way southbound thoroughfare.

8.2 STATUE OF ANTONIN DVORAK:

STUYVESANT PARK



The statue of Antonin Dvorak, the Czech (Bohemian) composer who lived in New York for three years in the 1890s, while he was director of the American Conservatory of Music. Dvorak House, which stood in the background across the street from Stuyvesant Park, on 17th Street, was replaced by a HIV clinic. Photo was downloaded from Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Assn, Inc., New York.

Gramercy Park

I was aware of Gramercy Park long before I ended up living on E. 22nd Street, virtually around the corner from the park. It wasn't generally open to neighborhood kids, but on occasion, the gate was open and we weren't driven off. I have no bad recollections. It is a small park, then entirely fenced in, and surrounded by more upper middle class apartments and homes. Once we moved to 22nd Street, after I turned 9, we frequented the park as often as we could get away with it. I especially want to recount an experience I had in connection with coming to the park on a Saturday.

8.3. GRAMERCY PARK



A select park, normally not open to neighborhood kids. Nonetheless many of us visited the park, and I did more often when we moved to E. 22nd Street. Photo downloaded from [newyorkbirds.free/fr/manhattan/gramercy](http://newyorkbirds.free.fr/manhattan/gramercy). (Spelling is theirs).

In my usual disheveled garb, I was approached by an elderly woman, perhaps well into her fifties. She turned out to be an artist; by name, Van Dyke. I do not recall her first name. She was a portrait artist. She asked me if I would pose for her so she could create a portrait of me. I would earn ten cents an hour. Since I had much experience posing for my mother, also an artist, I expressed much enthusiasm. I was to report back the following Saturday at one of the apartments or flats on the park. My mother, of course, got me ready, cleaned me up, dressed me better. We both went. Mrs. Van Dyke was disappointed and sent me home. She asked me to come back the following week looking the way she found me in the park – disheveled, a typical kid of the street. So I did. I do not know how many sessions I sat, but eventually the portrait was done. We all liked it. She took it the Grand Central Gallery, and years later I learned that my grandfather had tried to buy the painting but the artist wanted \$1000.00 for it. To this day, I have no idea where the portrait ended up. And I know almost nothing about the artist.

Nonetheless I have fond memories of the park and my last year as a grade school student in New York. I attended P. S. 40 over on E. 19th Street, and I insist that the principal there was also a Ms Foley. In early summer, 1938, we moved to Chicago. When I returned to New York, during the Second War, we lived in Greenwich Village and I went crosstown to Seward Park High School for my tenth grade.

By the way, most of that year on 22nd Street I spent more free time up on 29th Street, where I still had friends. But my brother and I did tell them that we had been to California. What cowboy pictures will do for you!

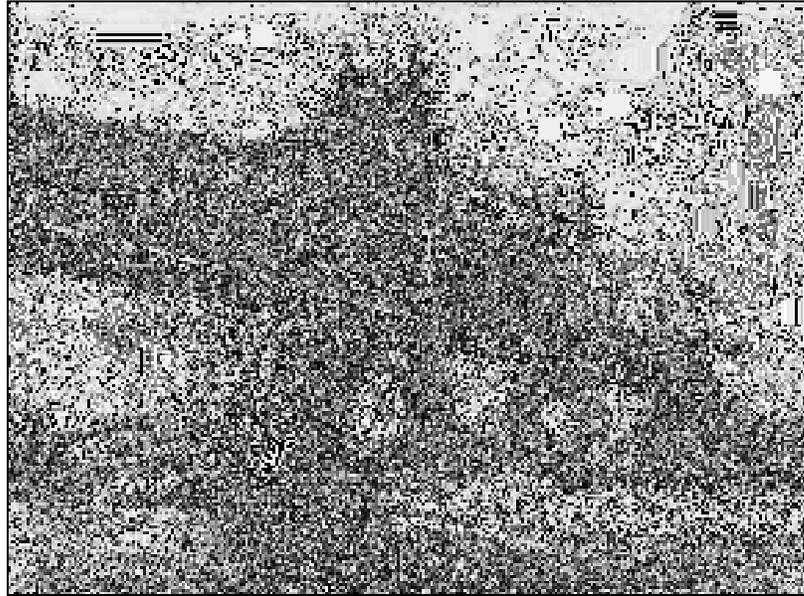
IX

Queensboro Bridge, Other Bridges and the East River

A favorite activity on a Saturday during the school year and any day during summer vacation or holidays, I and either my brother or a friend would take the El uptown and end up walking the Queensboro Bridge, but only halfway out to Welfare Island (today, Roosevelt Island). In the 1930s, the city penitentiary (jail) was located on the island. There were stairs down that we would take, even if we were limited where we might walk on the island. The first time, I was somewhat “ascared,” (a slang combination of afraid and scared, and I don’t know if the word was used a great deal but I remember it, almost fondly). Anyway, it was a steep drop to the island, although secure. We were never approached by the police on this bridge, but, on one occasion, I was escorted off the Triborough Bridge and put on the El and sent home. I never went back. We all also enjoyed walking on the Brooklyn Bridge.

When I started to hunt for a suitable photo of the Queensboro, I discovered that the online sites only showed the current bridge, lacking the stairs. And, I encountered only individuals who are much, much younger than I, who, of course, do not know in fact that there was a staircase. Even the NYC Building Department came up blank! Then I wrote the NYC Corrections Department and got a reply from their historian/archivist, who sent along the text and a photo with the stairs! My memory hadn’t failed me after all. Of course,

9.1 QUEENSBORO BRIDGE WITH STAIRS



Queensboro Bridge linking Manhattan (around 59th St.) with Queens. Midway is Welfare (now Roosevelt) Island. Note the stairs on the southside; they no longer exist, having been torn down in the mid-1950s. Today there is a separate bridge from Manhattan just to the island which comprises apartments and condos and stores. New York City's penitentiary was torn down in the 1950s. Trolleys stopped on the bridge to let people out at the stairs and the elevator. Metropolitan hospital was also established on the island. There were also huge elevators for ambulances, paddy wagons, etc. Visit <http://www.correctionhistory.org/html/chronicl/nycdoc/html/qnsboro2.html>.

something else did occur. In 1955, I am told, the city tore down the old penitentiary when they built the newer jail on Riker's Island, which has gained some infamy on various TV shows such as "Law and Order." Years later, new developments occurred, including the construction of apartments and stores, and a short bridge directly to the island, with a tram overhead, one that shows up occasionally on TV.

Of course, while I had the occasion more than once to walk the Brooklyn Bridge all the way to Brooklyn, alas I must admit to not having walked the Williamsburg or Manhattan over the East River or the George Washington across the Hudson. By the way, the Verrazano Bridge at The Narrows (between the upper and lower New York Bays), once considered a site for which construction couldn't happen, was built long after I was no longer a very good New Yorker. I drove over it with my family in the 1960s for the first time. You know, as with Hudson, Verrazano was also an explorer. By the way, I am a bridge walker by nature, I guess; I have walked across the Golden Gate more than once.

To eastsiders, the East River became a mecca during good weather. In the summer, many of us headed for the river and jumped off one or another wharf somewhere between 31st and 27th streets. I discovered an ad for the musical "Dead End," but did not capture a copy to present here. But it showed kids jumping off a pier with a tenement standing behind them. Even though the original story was set in the upper 50s on the East Side and filmed in a studio in California, the picture in the ad could well have been of the upper 20s. The river as a site for film studios is an event of modern times, as reported in chapter 8 of the *East River*. (See E. Baard et al in the bibliography.) Then, the river was simply dirty; today, it is said to be in worse shape owing to industrial pollution.

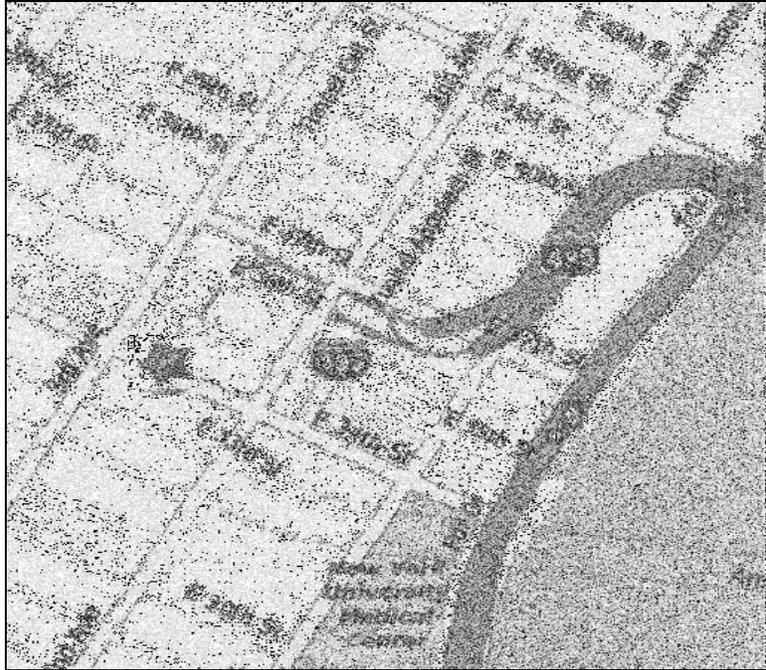
The Queens Midtown Tunnel access was cut through the upper east 30s, leading to the demolition of St. Gabriel's Park branch library and taking a swath out of the park on the southside, which today is called St. Vartan's.

9.2 EAST RIVER & SEAPLANE PORT



View from 31st Street at the East River, looking north along the shoreline and toward the Chrysler Bldg. Many of us would walk over to this site, although we would be encouraged to stay away. About a block or so south we swam off one of the wharves. Photo: New York Public Library Digital Photo Gallery, Percy Sperr, photographer, 1939, 733869F.

9.3 APPROACH TO QUEENS MIDTOWN TUNNEL



Queens Midtown Tunnel. The access necessitated taking part of the acreage of the St. Gabriel's Park and branch library, located at E. 36th Street between 1st and 2nd avenues. Location is just a few blocks north of Kips Bay. Map downloaded from MapQuest.

9.4 BROOKLYN BRIDGE & VIEW OF LONG ISLAND CITY



The Brooklyn Bridge spanning the East River; Brooklyn in the distance. A walking bridge, as was the Queensboro farther uptown. Source: e.architect.co.uk. no date.

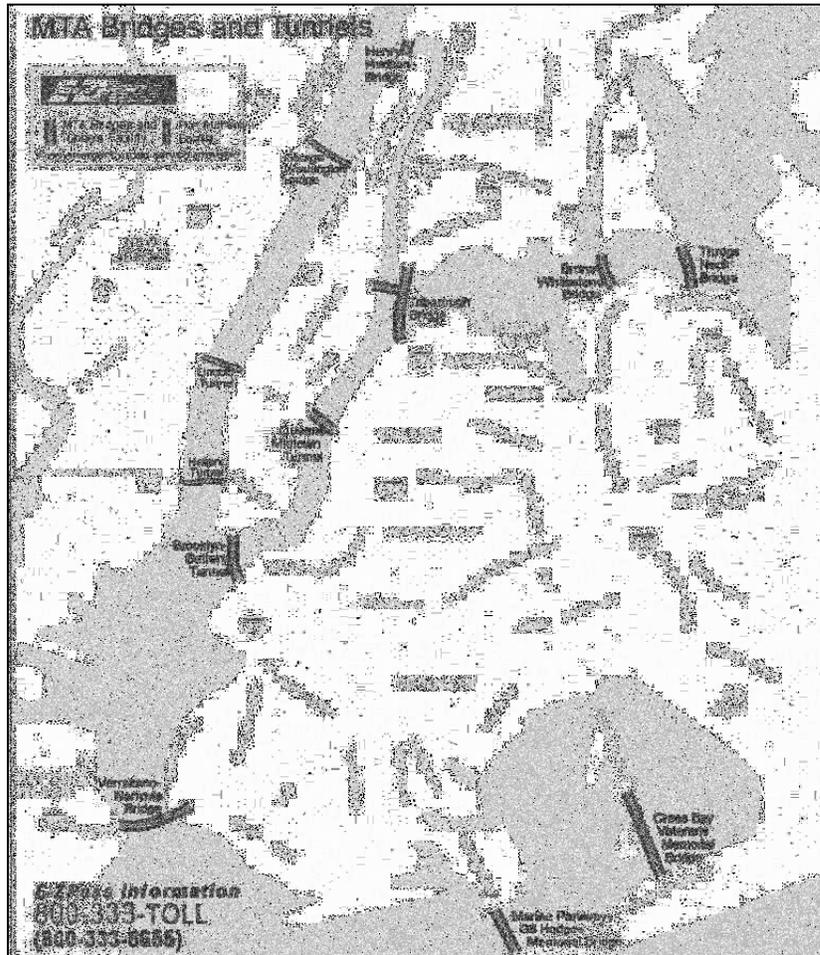
Alas, I must admit that despite enjoying the walk on many a bridge, the many times I walked either the Queensboro or the Brooklyn, I never ventured into the neighboring boroughs and today I can not say much about them. But, while a bit embarrassed, I am yet amused, for my Brooklyn friend admits to knowing little about Manhattan. I suspect that one grows up in a part of the city – any city – and may or may not come to know other parts in adulthood. My excuse is that I moved west. I do have a competence in knowing the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Trip to Jersey: *Ferries and Tunnels*

Even visitors to New York will tell you that it is quite easy to get around in the city. Of course, today many tourists are advised against taking subways, so they hail a cab, some of which won't take you just everywhere. But New York has all kinds of transport – subways, Els (as in the Bronx), buses, streetcars, cabs, and for some, your own car if you can afford parking, much less find a parking spot. Some years ago my uncle, who ran an advertising business in Manhattan, bought a five-story 'one-room' wide building (I visited him there) on east 35th near Lexington Ave. He wanted the parking at the back along with a place in town (they regularly lived on Long Island). He ran his advertising business at that address.

Anyway, a trip to Jersey from the East Side was quite simple. We could take the 2nd or 3rd Avenue El to 42nd St and transfer to a crosstown shuttle. But we preferred walking to 28th and Park (4th) and taking that subway up to 42nd and then shuttling west to the ferry. Several years later, when living in Greenwich Village, we took the 7th Ave subway to catch a bus at 40th Street. Crossing the Hudson River by ferry was always exciting; we went up front as far as allowed. In most but not all cases, there were cars parked at the prow. Mid-river was the state boundary; who knows exactly where but I presume there were buoys telling you. I don't recall watching for them. To me, at 7 or 8, a ferry ride was like going to an amusement park. But my grandfather thought otherwise after years commuting that way from Jersey to lower Manhattan.

10.1 GREATER NEW YORK: *BRIDGES & TUNNELS*



Not all bridges or tunnels appear on this map, only those under the management of the MTA. Engineers and planners, even with great construction difficulties, obviously have overcome the obstacles of the site of deep water, islands, and limited space. Map downloaded from the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 2007.

10.2 VERRAZANO BRIDGE & THE NARROWS



Verrazano Bridge at the Narrows of the Upper and Lower New York bays. Brooklyn in the lower right; Staten Island in the distance. The bridge not only serves to connect the two boroughs but it links the greater highway connections of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. Photo downloaded from NY MTA Transportation Authority.

Once on the Jersey side, around a half hour later, we took a bus up the winding palisades to Weehawken. (Earlier on, I have only a faint recollection of how we got to Hoboken, but I suspect we went via the Holland Tunnel or a ferry farther down the island.) When we crossed via the Lincoln Tunnel in the early 1940s, we stayed on the bus all the way to their street. Did I tell you the view from the palisades is tremendous: you see the main part of Manhattan with all its high rise buildings, the Empire, the Chrysler, and other facilities. It always seems farther, but according to maps, the distance across the river to

mid-Manhattan averages some 8000 ft or approximately 1.5 miles. From our apartment it was a bit more than six miles to my grandparents' flat!

Those Jersey towns were small, uncrowded as I recall, and so different in such a short distance from crowded, noisy, often dirty streets in New York. Recently, I did read that New Yorkers have discovered these small towns, and new apartment complexes and shopping centers keep springing up, forever changing the bucolic nature of the palisade communities. Weehawken was more than a commute: it was a small journey, a welcomed event (partly, because I would get to play my aunt's piano or work in Grandpa's garden section).

Since we had no relatives on Long Island until many years after we moved away, we just didn't make that trip – perhaps once or twice I recall going to Coney Island and once I did get to see a baseball game at Ebbets Field – my recollection is that I attended a World Series game between the Yankees and the Dodgers and, as my grandson asked me just recently because he gave an oral report on baseball at school, I probably did see Lou Gehrig in action!.

A more exciting trip was to Long Island with our uncle in his convertible. And the bus trip along the Connecticut coast to and from Ivoryton, where the Chapel of Incarnation (The Good Shepherd) had then, and still has, a summer camp. They were 'Far Country' for they got us out of the city, especially during the hottest, sultry days of the summer. Such did make you realize, even for a brief time, that there was a world beyond the concrete and high-rises of New York City.

A battleship sticks in my mind because as a grade school class (classes?), we took a launch from the Battery out to Sandy Hook, climbed perhaps two dozen or more stairs up the

side of the ship and met the captain. We got to tour the vessel, and we ate a sack lunch up on deck. I suspect this event

10.3 TYPICAL FERRY: *DOCKING AT STATEN ISLAND*



The Dongan Hills ferry, New York City, circa 1945, prepares to dock. Specific port not known. Many ferries carried vehicles but this one seems to be only for passengers. We traveled on both kinds but most often there were vehicles up front and the area fenced off. Photo from Wikipedia, free encyclopedia.

occurred in 1936 or 1937, and unfortunately I do not know the name of the ship.

A note on the Holland Tunnel, which was begun in 1920 and opened in November 1927. The historical account indicates that officials and designers first had in mind the construction of a bridge. However, some 200 feet of clearance for ships was essential and that could not have been achieved because of the need for a longer approach from Manhattan, and land area was deficient.. The tunnel idea took hold in 1913 and Clifford Holland came on the scene in 1919. As a kid, I always thought the tunnel had been there since the early part of the century. My grandfather went by ferry from Hoboken to Wall Street and later from Weehawken to Liberty St, a short walk to work as an engineer in the insurance business. At some point in time, he also took advantage of a streetcar on the Jersey side and then by subway or bus via the tunnel. I must have asked him.

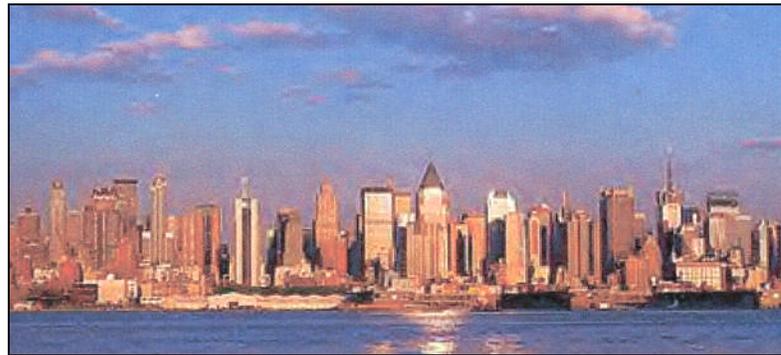
It was always my notion that glaciation had carved a very deep river and made bridge construction difficult. I am unsure if there is any scientific evidence to support this view either in connection with the construction of bridges or tunnels. But the same question might have been raised with respect to The Narrows and the ultimate construction of the Verrazano Bridge, which opened in 1964. Costs represented a very important decision-breaker. But glaciation apparently did not preclude the creation of the bridge.

10.4 LINCOLN TUNNEL: MANHATTAN TO WEEHAWKEN



The Lincoln Tunnel in 1937, soon after it opened. In later years – 1945 and 1957 – two other tubes were constructed and opened. The concept for this tunnel was to link up with a Queens Midtown Tunnel connecting Manhattan with Long Island City, all part of what became US 495, initially aligning 38th Street across Manhattan Island. Photo downloaded from <http://www.nycroads.com/crossing/Lincoln/>.

10.5 MANHATTAN SEEN FROM WEEHAWKEN, NJ



View of Manhattan from the palisades of New Jersey at Weehawken. Looking over to about 40th Street. Photo from the online collection of Andrew Prokos.

In looking back, I have fond memories of bridges, Els, subways, perhaps even streetcars, but not the tunnels. I carried the love of bridges to San Francisco and even to a minor extent to the couple of bridges at the Los Angeles-Long Beach harbors. We do not have Els but have been developing a system of subways in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area. I do miss the old Red Cars, the streetcars of my youth in Southern California.

XI

In Lieu of an Epilogue

No doubt, I have repeated myself numerous times. But I come away from this experience in revisiting Kips Bay after more than seventy years with a certain amount of awe and amazement. Man's capacity to change the face of the earth continues to be very dynamic, creative, and at times destructive. The East Side at midtown has selectively undergone urban gentrification that makes the newer man-made environment a different world from what I recall as a kid. For those who have lived within this changing environment, the dynamics of change moved more slowly, yet have had monumental impact on their lives. I am reminded how too often the displaced from urban renewal rarely get to come back to 'enjoy' (?) the remarkable changes. They reestablish elsewhere and, in many cases, they can not afford the newer costs of housing and other services. After a while, of course, the newness does wear off, and life moves on. I've seen that in parts of Southern California – from the rising height of downtown Los Angeles, to the massive and complex freeway systems. Where I live, we have seen more than forty years of the displacement of farmland, an experience my generation would no longer know for most of New York City, except perhaps for the far distant margins of Long Island or Staten Island. Manhattan's last farm, according to *Time* some years ago, ended its run in 1930. Ours will occur after my time.

This has been a personal narrative embellished with anecdotes but also enabled by some professional calling. As a

geographer, I have tried to draw attention to the realities of environmental change. And I have wanted to encourage anyone reading this personalized memoir of my youth in Kips Bay to gain and to increase their geographic bearings whether they live in a large metropolitan area, a small town, or in greater rural America. I have lived at all of these levels as well as worked in a national forest and in the desert.

I share Max Pace's terminology for what has been happening to New York: *Creative Destruction*. There is gain, there is also loss. Efforts to preserve historically significant structures and limited open space as parks or preserves continue to contend with the dire needs of daily existence calling for more housing, better schools, medical facilities, and the like. I find it interesting, and note this from the work of Arthur Dolkart, that even public service facilities can be more than functional – firehouses can be creative experiences. So can entire neighborhoods.

To me, Kips Bay has improved at an incalculable magnitude since my youth. It bears the present problems of noise and congestion, but it has elevated its residents from the drab, less than healthy environment of tenements, noisy Els and the like. As such, it is a trade off as the urban world moves forward in time and space. On the other hand, to the older generations, such sweeping changes in the urban profile of a neighborhood can be devastating. But a whole new generation only knows the current man-made environment. I am no philosopher in this dialogue.

o0o

Notes: *Online & Other Sources*

Introduction to the Notes

This section runs parallel to the chapter sequence of the book so that readers can follow along and choose to visit any of URLs where I gathered information. Also, from time to time, I discuss how I gathered that information. Some textual references (book, articles, other) also appear in brief form here, but they are fully cited in the Selective Bibliography. Note that some URLs will only open with a portion of the address; when this occurs, you must be inventive and find appropriate entries to click on within the site. All of the URLs were accessed in Spring, 2007, so that subsequently some may have become ephemeral – i. e., ‘here today, gone tomorrow’.

Most of my readers have considerable skills in searching for facts, places, and resources on the Internet. So I won’t belittle your ability to think up ways to find information. However, I do suggest that, in my experience, you have to be diligent and try again and again to locate what you need to know. For example, historical sources whether on the web or in libraries and other places, abound. Later I give you some examples of how to hunt just to find a single answer to a question: “Was I right in recalling stairs down from the the Queensboro Bridge to Welfare (Roosevelt) Island?” Yes, but only after much searching and sending emails to all sorts of online persons. Persons much under sixty in age, have no memory of a staircase and doubted my insistence that stairs did exist. Also, I have discovered that you need to make a record of the search entries themselves because some of the websites do not readily open and you might have to go back to the original link online, one that was found by entering a subject on the navigation line. Keep in mind, too, that you can search, as I did, on AOL, Yahoo, Msn.com, Questia, scholar.google.com, and countless other general sources. Try comparative research: different sources often produce a number of different entries only found on one site!

URLs include both those specifically related to the exhibits in the book and to others that expand the discussion or offer alternative information. Some times, I simply get preoccupied with a subject and explore a number of websites – e. g., with reference to photographic coverage of older New York. So bear with me. New York is a fruitful arena to explore and since I enjoyed the task, I want to share my enthusiasm for hunting down information and exhibits. Since maps and photographs are the two major exhibit entries, let me turn to them separately. And thirdly, I need to say

something about institutions, especially the New York Public Library. I keep that library on my bookmark for instant connection.

On Maps

Let me list just briefly some major websites for things geographic: www.google.com. @– two links: maps, earth. Maps is accessible even if you still dial up as I do, earth requires broadband or equivalent. These are excellent sources for maps and aerial photos. For New York, also try New York City Map Portal. In either instance, you need a street and, more helpful, would be an address, because streets, boulevards and avenues can be quite long and you want to focus your research.

In later discussions, I will introduce countless websites of much utility. You will be overwhelmed by the number of online photo ‘galleries’, that is, where you will encounter photos of buildings, streets, special places, etc., as I did for New York. At times, it will be hard, even impossible, to find exactly what you need, and I suffered that fate.

More specialized are the Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases. For New York City, visit the N. Y. Public Library, online catalog -- *ZE-14 (also *ZE-40) 1884-1952. These maps report detailed property information, but unfortunately, no maps covered Kips Bay or for the time period of interest.

<http://dlib.nyu.edu/nyhs/maps/index.html> @

<http://www.anhd.org/resources/Maps/Manhattan/Manhattan%20Sec%208%20Addresses.doc> @

(Visit: www.nysonglines.com @ This site opens up a series of walking tour maps; on them you can find so many New York sites of interest. I suspect that Jim Naureckas, the author of songlines, prepared copy at least a decade ago and may or may not have updated certain locations. There are also blank spots. Nonetheless, I found data for my street and nearby, and it has proved useful.

<http://nypl.org/research/chss/map/mp.html>. @ This website opens to the Map Division of New York Public Library. My researcher in New York discovered a most useful 1930 edition of real estate information, lot by lot, block by block, with some locations identified as theaters, markets, schools, etc.

Here is a good source for map outlines of districts of N. Y: <http://www.citidex.com/map>. @ I have utilized “Medical City” and “Kips Bay.” The outlines include names of streets and avenues. There are also maps of parks, subways, airports, stadia, guides to building numbering, police precincts, Manhattan neighborhoods, and other geographic features.

About Photography

Visit: <http://www.globexplorer.com/> @ Very useful. But you have to pay to acquire a photo either by downloading or via post. One can view a location by zooming in or out as desired, move in any direction, focus onto a street or a house, but the words 'global explorer' will run diagonally many times over the image. Thus they protect themselves from free downloading. But for research you can focus in closely. Most photos I explored are for 2004, some in early 2005. I ordered one. It appears on the book cover.

Broad entries on the navigation line such as "Historic Photos of New York Streets" yielded several thousand entries; focus in on "Historic Photos of Kips Bay, New York."

At the following site is a notice of a conference on the work of Robert Moses and urban renewal in New York City and its source includes photos of the 1960s: www.columbia.edu/cu/wallach/pdf/moses.pdf. @ See K. T. Jackson in the bibliography:

The NYC Department of Records, Municipal Archives, was able to provide me with an excellent photo of 315 E. 29th St., where I lived more than 3 years. The photo was taken in 1940, three years after I had moved away. Apparently, the Madison Square Boys Club was constructing a new building just west of the apartment. I do not recall seeing it the one time I visited the old neighborhood in the early 1940s. But I recognize my building, its front steps, the metal fence, fireescapes, e tc.

Until I find a pair of pictures of my immediate neighborhood, readers will find similar comparisons of past and present by perusing Holland, *The Way It Was*. The book includes comparative photos of old tenements and new housing complexes, as occurring in Chelsea – a nearby neighborhood on the west-, but similar changes have occurred in Kips Bay.

www.photosofoldamerica.com/index.cfm @ This is another useful source, with street scenes, and a photographic portrait, photos by Peter Bennett. None very applicable to my needs. Visit <http://ambientimages.com> @ Under such headings, far too many links but few are good for historic sources except well-known places and buildings.

Site for street scenes, NYC photo gallery, some of 1936-37, but not in Kips Bay.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/gallery/html/photos.html?cat=street&img=6> @

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org> @ opens to NY PublicLibrary photo collection; arrow down to 'cities and buildings,' scroll down to two entries on Manhattan – one includes Percy Loomis Sperr's 1930-42 photos of Manhattan; the other , Berenice

Abbott's photos. Visit the New York Public Library website for photos by Berenice Abbott:

<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/photo/abbottex/abott.html> @ Also find Abbott in the bibliography.

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/> . @ Gramercy Pk photos; midtown, Sniffen Court, etc. well known bldgs.

More photos at the site of the Museum of New York: http://www.mcny.org/nyc_images/ @ -- neighborhoods and buildings: photos of bldgs and street scenes. None of the 29th St photos –some 121 – were useful; all for earlier period to about 1910. For period 1934-42, little of use.

(<http://www.megacities.uni-koeln.de/documentation/> @ (Click on New York, then on pictures. Long group by number; at bottom is description. #28 looks up 2nd Ave from 14th Street. Notice increasingly high rise buildings. Not so many in my time.)

“HistoricPhotos of NY Neighborhoods” see N. Y. Times, 17 pp of photos.

Photosofoldamerica.com/index.cfm/New_York_Street_Scenes/234.htm. @ bridges, parks, street scenes, etc.

When you visit the New York Public Library Digital Gallery, with its thousands of photos of historic New York City [<http://www.nypl.org/digital/index.htm>] @ look especially for the photography of Percy Lummis Sperr. He photographed buildings and other facilities in N. Y. C. until his death in 1964.

Follow these steps:

- 1) Click on NY Digital Gallery
- 2) Upper left, click arrow to Cities & Bldgs
- 3) Scroll down to “Photo view of NYC 1870-1970”
- 4) Then click on ‘contents’
- 5) Click on another “Photo view...”
- 6) Then click on “Manhattan”
- 7) In search box: type in street or avenue (but not two at a time); click GO.

Visit these other sites for more on Sperr:

http://www.iphotocentral.com/search/result_list.php/256/Percy+Loomis+Sperr @ takes you to a listing of his photographic work; art photos of ships, etc.

http://www.vintageworks.net/search/photographer_list.php @ this URL will also open to Sperr's other photography

http://www.mariner.org/exhibitions/highlights/photog_sperr.php @ at this site, see:

Percy Loomis Sperr was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1889 and gravitated to New York City after college sometime in 1924. An author by choice, he began to illustrate his literary ambitions with photographs and then discovered his photographs were in greater demand than his writing. Sperr sold enough photographs to maintain a livelihood but eventually opened and managed a second hand bookstore until his death in 1964. Sperr became known as the “official photographer of New York City,” photographing community activities and events. His photographer’s business card read “A growing collection of over 30,000 views of: New York Harbor; ships; old and modern, Sky-lines, dock scenes, skyscrapers, Old Houses, Foreign Quarters, Pushcarts, Farms, Old New York Scenes.” His chief interest became the waterfront and his photographs often show ship’s mast and harbor scenes juxtaposed in the background seen against the towering city skyline.

At step (3) for the NYPL Digital Galley, you could choose to scroll down to “Changing New York (Berenice Abbott)...” Then click on ‘contents.’ A smaller collection but very useful. See bibliography for book reference.

Look in bibliography for entries to Walker Evans, another photographer, one who created an essay of photographs of E. 61st Street in 1938. There are many similarities with E. 29th Street as well as other streets:

[Memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap04.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap04.html). @
[As with some other URLs, you will need to type on or highlight and move this one to the navigation line.]

About Institutions & Organizations

If you type in “New York Historical Society,” (170 Central Park West, NY 10024), you will find an entry to Exhibits and Collections. And you can also click on: <http://www.bobcat.nyu.edu/isit>. @ for access to a number of online catalogs, including that of the NY Historical Society.

<http://ask.nypl.org> @ Ask a librarian a question at N. Y. Public Library.

<http://www.mcny.org/collections/67.html>. @ Museum of the City of New York. Photo collections; checked the Bryon Co, but overwhelmingly earlier in time and a bit west as 29th at Broadway, for ex., <http://dlib.nyu.edu/affiliates/NYHS/findingaids/proomlinks.html> @

<http://www.nyhistory.org> @

Archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records. @ Guide to WPA and other federal records.

Verso Page of Book

<http://maps.google.com/maps> @

Foreword to Book pages xiii-xxi

The reference to Ben Gazzara is to the documentary film, “Broadway: The Golden Age – by the Legends Who Were There,” a film by Rick McKay (DADA Films, etc.), broadcast on KCET, Ch. 28 (PBS in Los Angeles), Dec. 16, 2006. It is also on DVD. Readers will find considerable online information about Ben Gazzara. One of the most thorough:

http://www.hollywood.com/celebrity/Ben_Gazzara/197849.@

Introduction to the Book: 1-19

The Real & Virtual New York

For general resources, visit some of the following:

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/> @

click to ‘Cities and Buildings’; scroll down to ‘Photographic Views of New York City – 1870s-1970s’; then ‘Contents’. This collection includes many photos that reproduce poorly for various reasons, including the image size and quality of copy.

With reference to maps and aerial photos, a good way to get started is by going on Yahoo.com. , click on “Maps”, then provide an address, and click again. Up comes a map that places a star at the site (relative to the scale of the map). It now gives you a better idea of the surroundings. In my case, I wrote in 315 E. 29th St., N. Y. 10016 and found my old neighborhood, which I of course already knew much about. This way, I could choose to block in certain streets: from 34th St. to 27th St., 3rd Ave. to the East River. This is the essential area of Kips Bay. You can also shift over to ‘Satellite’, which will open an aerial photo and you can zoom in or out. Now and then I have found that the star or arrow indicator is not exactly on the correct building, but it is very close.

One can also visit the New York City Planning Department, “Map Portal” and that will give you a map of neighborhoods – closest is #6. Map Portal will locate maps by close up. I asked for 315 E. 29th St. and the map revealed an area from 33rd St. south to 26th St., and from 2nd Ave to 1st Ave, with some adjacent data less complete.

Visit : <http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/mp/Portal.do> @

www.mapquest.com/maps/ @

<http://maps.yahoo.com>. @

You can get close to the East Side via any of these three and perhaps others.

Figures In.1 and In.2 are derived from the Automobile Club of America map series; they are not online sources.

Of course, photographs may be discovered in the literature. For example, there is a fine article by a young colleague on Loisaida (placename is Puerto Rican rendition of Lower East Side), which includes useful photos of the empty lots on the Lower East Side that are utilized as small gardens. Karen Schmeltzkopf, "Urban Community Gardens as Contested Space," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (July, 1995): 364-381.

When I returned to New York in 1942, my brother and I visited the old neighborhood. It still existed but just south we discovered Stuyvesant Town, which occupies much of the area bounded by 20th St., 1st Ave., 14th St. and the East River. A collection of 15 story apartment structures with landscaped open spaces. According to the website, planned housing projects from the end of World War II (1945) and the mid-1950s, providing apartments for low-and middle-income residents of NYC.

You can type in 'Stuyvesant Town' and find countless entries. The photo I chose to download is from a book by Max Pace, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999). And you can type in 'South Bellevue Urban Renewal' and find various citations.

For various citations to landmarks, and for entries to the Preservation Commission, visit:

<http://www.answers.com/topic/new-york-city-landmarks-> @ and then click on 'landmarks of NYC'. For various resources on the history of NY, visit <http://gothamcenter.org> @ ; http://newyorkcitywalk.com/html/interactive_19th.html. @ The example is of 19th St, with older buildings, and trees! Typical of some nicer, but older streets.

<http://www.forgotten-ny.com/> @ Site contains many photos of abandoned, demolished, etc. Structures, and other data; also subways, etc. pictures of 2nd Ave El and Queensboro spur, 1942.

<http://www.palter.org/~subway/73-05-01/index.html> @ Site offers many photos mostly uptown of subway and El, end of service in Bronx in 1973.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/gallery/html/photos.html?cat=aerial&img=8> @ Excellent collection of older photos (N. Y. Dept of Records). One can locate by tax block, lot and address a particular photo. The city photographed every building between 1939 and 1941. 315 was at tax block 935, lot 13., and I ordered photo via smail. Via Boys Club, I contacted E. DiBernardo who lived on 29th 19th--1963 across the street. She attended the Carmelite Parochial School, no longer on 28th and 1st. Her mother was the super across the street.

<http://www.nysonglines.com> @ These walking maps are of tours crosstown, up/downtown, governing mostly streets and avenues in lower Manhattan, circa early 1990s (?). Much useful historic, architectural, and other information. Some data need updating as I have done for E. 29th Street.

www.policeny.com @ This is the NY Police Dept site, where you can find precinct names and locations. Visit www.google.com @—click on maps --- for maps, air photos, and overlap (hybrid) of streets, etc. If you have broadband, also click on earth. I discovered that while I couldn't print an enlarged image of a google aerial photo, it would still print only the 8 1/2 X 11 size. When I was able to save the aerial photo as a bitmap, I could house it in My Pictures (which includes Insert). Then I could select it and keep expanding it, taking care to keep the east/west and north/south proportions to scale. I filled the page, and in fact I went back to scanning a print copy and masking it down to close in on my neighborhood. It made a better image that would enlarge even more! Now I am not using broadband or other newer tools, just basic computer technology.

A note on historic districts and neighborhoods. Although I have no memory of knowing that I lived within a district called Kips Bay, its bounds do embrace my old neighborhood. I have tried to find online sources but have not had a lot of good luck. Once in a while the area is included in an adjacent district such as Gramercy Park, Murray Hill or Stuyvesant Town. As I researched for the area, I encountered photos, maps, tours, etc. with reference to more significant historic districts. I have written, for ex., the Historic District Council -- <http://www.hdc.org> @ -- to ask for advice on finding other outlets. Perhaps they will tell me why Kips Bay is not reported. Or I can guess! A number of sites rely upon publications such as the Encyclopedia of New York City (Kenneth Jackson, Yale 1995), thus their data may not be anything additional. I had hoped to find a society or group equivalent, for ex., to the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. I found interesting sets of older maps of NY, etc., at U. S. Historic Archive, but not of 1930s East Side. With reference to land use, there are too many sites, but I tried most; for ex: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/> @ The site lists categories of land use with links to text; funded by Citizens Union Foundation. But I did not find anything useful for Kips Bay. Here is another website: <http://www.nyhistory.org/education/linksbib.html> @ Some tours can be helpful. Tried many; found, for ex., Lower East Side at <http://gonyc.about.com/od/toursbr>. . @/ Did include links to Greenmarket which is all over NYC. A map provided info and found one at 2nd Ave and 33rd.

With reference to community gardens: Karen Schmelzkopf, "Urban Community Gardens as Contested Space," *Geographical Review*, 85:3 (July 1995): 364-81. Area of Loisaida: Ave A to Ave D, 14th Street to Houston. NYC. can be obtained online through various university or other educational and library institutions; available in full from JSTOR.

By the way, countless public libraries also subscribe to services that permit patrons to access full articles from journals online.

About others buildings, also visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/reference/code_internet.shtml @ This site opens to buildings; then click on ‘applications and permits’ and then enter an address in NYC. It will provide you with historic and present data about structures on given lots. This site will get you to historic photos and to the NYC Map Portal. 315, even if not a valid address, will produce data by selecting ‘Manhattan’, then click on go. By this means, you can find the tract and lot numbers essential to ordering a photo of a particular building.

A good airview of the East Side appears in William Fried, *New York in Aerial Views* (NY: Dover, 1980), pl. 26, which identifies the Kips Bay Plaza on E. 30th St, and clearly shows for 1974 the changing 29th St.

Thanks to the Branch Manager (Librarian) of Kips Bay P. L. on 3rd Ave at 31rd St, I have received a dozen photos that she took in the neighborhood. Most reveal new high-rise buildings, landscaped with trees, etc. 20- stories or more; standing next to some older structures of 5 or 6 stories as on 1st Ave. near Bellevue Hospital., Firehouse on 29th is newer (1967), next door to two or more older apartments. Lots of small stores on ground floor of high-rise apartments. Reports at least one apt blg with grocery complex in basement. Some older structures renovated and updated. More colorful streets, lots more cars running and parked, apartments with balconies; still some blocks, as on 33rd where school is, older buildings, including school but with newer annex for sports, etc., with newer high rise apts next door, down the street.

To gain a comparison, one needs also to visit <http://lostnewyorkcity.com>. @ -- scroll down to ‘demolished buildings, over 100 photos’ of historic structures. A great many examples are of tenements of an earlier period. Also visit The Tenement Museum and read “The Tenement as History and Housing,” by Ruth Limmer and Andrew S. Dolkart. Note a demonstration structure with 20 3-room units, 4 per floor, hence 5 story. 4 - 6 stories quite common for older bldgs. <http://www.tenement.org> @

Although not a landmark, the Henry George School of Social Science, located on E. 30th between Park (4th) and Lexington, is a famous institution based on the philosophy and economics of property espoused by George in the late 19th century. Visit: www.henrygeorgeschool.org. @

There are several nearby landmarks – e. g., the Church of the Transfiguration, on E. 29th St. between Madison and 5th avenues; and Estonian House on 34th St. between 2nd and 3rd avenues. See Diamonstein, 2005, pp. 147, 325.

For comments on St. Stephens Church and paintings, 28th St and efforts to landmark the site, visit: <http://gothamgazette.com/article/feature-commentary/20050822/202/1514>. @ If site is gone, see *Gotham Gazette*, 8/22/2005 or contact Gary Papush, then chair, Parks and Landmarks Committee of Community Board 6, Manhattan's East Side. Papush writes that the "Romanesque brownstone church ... was designed and built from 1850 to 1854 by noted architect James Renwick..." He goes on to say: "...it is the interior ...that is truly remarkable. Light pours through 100 stained glass windows..." Speaking of the paintings: "these include murals – such as a large crucifixion scene over the altar –and paintings depicting a variety of religious themes." According to Father Sean Harlow, pastor of St. Stephens (5/23/07), the landmark status has been tabled.

Time reported (9/15/30 and in a special in the 1970s) that

In Manhattan, Mrs. Joe Benedetto was not sorry to learn that the city block at 213th St. and Broadway which she leases and runs as a truck farm with her husband and nine children will be sold, thereby putting an end to the last farm on the island. Said she: "Things have not been very good for the farmer this year."

Visit

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,788465,00.html> @

On Filming in New York

For Mayor's office of film, theater and broadcasting, visit: <http://nyc.gov/html/film/html/index/index.shtml>. @ Negative response; established in 1966, no data before then. See also "Shooting in NYC", a link.

For the 1930s, I thought perhaps the film "Dead End" had been filmed on location on the East Side. So I contacted this individual at: sargebri@earthlink.net. – His responded that the film "Dead End" was actually filmed on a soundstage.

A number of books serve as texts and almanacs listing sites for thousands of films; e.g., see in the bibliography, Chuck Katz, *Manhattan on Film*, 2 vols. (NY: Limelight Editions, 1999; '2002) and Tony Reeves, *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations* (Chicago: A Cappella Books, 2001). Tried several entries on the computer, e. g., 'Gangster movies filmed on the streets of New York' no useful results. Tried 'New York Streets as Film Locations' found reference to 'Dead End, 1937, with Bogart, McCrea, etc. but no reference to a specific street or location in NY. Fictional setting, I understand, was in the upper 50s on the East Side. But could easily have depicted the lower 30s, etc. Both volumes contain a wealth of data about places and film locations in New York. One or two come close to the area of this book, but none is located within it. My recollection of witnessing the filming of a picture in the 1930s is off by some years; I am probably

recalling something later, but perhaps related to some commercial advertising filming. I was not living in NY once TV was prominent. In Katz's second volume, the nearest site is Park Ave South at 28th St subway entrance (p. 162) for the film Taking of Pelham One, Two, Three (1974). The realism of set design probably lets one believe you are really there, as in street scenes in Dead End (1937), replicating E. 56th St or nearby. In sum, I did not turn up any relevant examples of films or one or more film scenes that utilized Kips Bay.

This situation is seemingly true also of photographic work of individual photographers. Walker Evans, who was working for the Farm Security Administration, was sent to New York to develop an urban photo essay and chose E. 61st Street. See a further discussion with text and urls in section 9 below.

The facts about the Liberty Island (and Ellis Island) come to me from the Park Ranger at Statue of Liberty National Monument:

A pact in 1834 between both the Governor of NY and Governor of New Jersey agreed upon this. It was ratified by the U.S.Congress. It stated (paraphrase) in part that every island above the water's edge in NY Harbor would be considered to be in NY. Therefore Ellis and Liberty Islands, as they were then, are considered to be in NY.

V. DiPietro

Supervisory U.S. Park Ranger
Statue of Liberty National Monument & Ellis Island
Division of Interpretation & Visitor Services
3/27/07

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/stli/prod02.htm>. @ There are many websites for the National Monument.

Familiar Ground

I

29th Street, Kips Bay and the Neighborhood 21-59

Tenements/Apartment

A good airview of the East Side appears in William Fried, New York in Aerial Views NY: Dover, 1980), pl. 26, which labels the Kips Bay Plaza on E. 30th St, and for 1974 clearly shows the changing 29th St.

A good site for photos of buildings no longer standing in NY, see: <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/GON/GON.htm> @ Kips Bay is not specifically singled out, but overlapping districts are identified. And for buildings still standing:

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID.htm>.@

Various on Henry Phipps developments, see <http://www.phippsny.org/pdf/Annual%20Report%20.pdf> @ This annual report refers to programs by Phipps Community Development Corporation for children and seniors, incl. activities at Plaza West. Also visit: http://www.phippsny.org/wn_nyarticle.html @ , which is an article about Phipps Houses, including the one on E. 31st Street, by Christopher Gray, author of the 'Streetscapes' column (2003) from the NYTimes. See also bibliography. Here are some details from Gray's article: "Working with Elgin R. L. Gould, an advocate for model tenements, (Henry) Phipps established a \$1 million fund for building the model tenements that would be called Phipps Houses. He said he wanted a 4 percent annual return on his investment because he wanted to demonstrate to builders of conventional tenements that money could be made producing housing with reasonable standards of ventilation and comfort. At the time there were 80,000 tenements in New York City. The first Phipps Houses were at 321-337 East 31st Street, three six-story tenements between Third and Second Avenues (this was corrected in the next week's column to "between First and Second Avenues"), completed in 1906 and designed by Grosvenor Atterbury, who had also designed Phipps's original 87th Street house (now the Liederkrantz Club). At a typical rent of \$1.25 a room per week, or \$14 a month for a three-room apartment, they were more expensive than the usual \$10 a month other tenement tenants were paying. Atterbury's 31st Street complex had 142 apartments of from two to five rooms, each with its own bathroom, and a finished courtyard to improve ventilation and avoid the typical dank back-alley look of such housing. Earlier model tenements had been spare in exterior expression, but Atterbury, with the goal of better ventilation of the interior court, gave his a heroic four-story-high archway. His building prototype, with its varied brickwork and window patterns, overhanging tile roof and elaborate central roof pergola, was entirely new for New York. The ground-floor entrance courts were designed to serve as social centers, to keep the residents away from the corrupting influence of the street. But Phipps Houses made every attempt to avoid the aura of high-mindedness. An early brochure said: "This enterprise is not a charity. Tenants are not asked to accept anything free. All that they pay for in their rent they will receive."

When I contacted the Phipps organization, I received this reply:

... We do not have any historic photos of the Kips Bay neighborhood. We have one image of our building on East 31st Street, which I will attach.

Susan Angermeier, Director of Development
Phipps Community Development Corporation
902 Broadway, New York, NY 10010

<http://www.phippshouses.org>. @ The apartment complex was constructed in 1906, between 1st and 2nd Avenues: 321-337 East

31st Street. It was torn down as part of the Kips Bay Plaza project in the 1960s.

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID009.htm>. @ includes four photos of Sniffen Court. This landmark, designated in 1966, is a historic district. See p. 382 in Barbaralee Diamonstein, in bibliography. Sniffen Court is just north of Kips Bay, really in Murray Hill; overlapping 'boundary' depending on who is talking..

About the Kips Bay Plaza, visit <http://www.pcfandp.com/a/p/5705/s.html> @ -- which is a website for Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, architects who designed the complex. More on the neighborhood, visit http://www.villagevoice.com/generic/show_print.php?id=63134&page=heffernan&issue @ This is an article by T. Heffernan, see bibliography. See also "Kips Bay Plaza 1962," from Ballon and Jackson, Robert Moses, 2007, in bibliography.

To locate an historic photo of an older building, including one that has been demolished, see: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/taxphotos/home.shtml> @ At this site, I located block # (935) and lot # (13), and then ordered a photo of my old apartment building.

Historic Neighborhood

Another description of Kips Bay (source is lost):

On the East Side of Manhattan there is a well hidden area known as Kips Bay. It is located in the 30's It is marked by some of the most expensive real estate in Manhattan, and the most dynamic cosmopolitan concentration of restaurants, shops, entertainment, living and culture.

One-way streets. I am probably wrong about the direction of traffic on 29th, except that one reference suggested that the policy was abandoned on the East Side for a time in the past, perhaps much before I lived in the neighborhood. Older photos (circa 1930) clearly show the street and other odd numbered ones as westbound and even numbered streets as eastbound. Avenues still went both ways probably until after the Second War and then only selectively became one way. Anyway, here are sources to some answers: New York Times via ProQuest. "One-Way Rule Aids in Clearing Traffic," 2/1/1916, p. 9, says policy began in 1915 with 19 streets and in 1916 8 more were added. In "'Super -Streets' in New City Traffic Plan...," 12/21/24, p. 1, it was proposed to abandon policy between 59th and 23rd streets west of 9th Ave and east of 3rd Ave. No indication policy change occurred. In "One-Way Streets for All Manhattan," 2/25/27, p. 1. indicated policy already covering south of 59th, unclear if policy change existed or not. Then repeat policy that even-numbered streets would flow east, odd ones west, hence 29th a west flowing street as of today. Proposal for one-way avenues

probably raised in the 1930s and established by the mid-1950s. “New Code Planned for City Drivers,” 11/1/1936, p. 47. When I went on ProQuest, used single entry: ‘One-way streets in Manhattan.’

<http://www.mcny.org/collections/abbott/a015.htm>. @

I tried “old photographs of NYC streets”; a number of good sites for online photos, this one opens to a copy of Abbott’s photos (see name in bibliography), including the newsstand on 3rd and 32nd. This copy includes text. A good collection of photos of the 1930s but none of E. 29th St, etc.

To locate an historic photo of an older building, including one that has been demolished, see:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/taxphotos/home.shtml> @ At this site, I located block # (935) and lot # (13), and then ordered a photo of my old apartment building.

Two useful urls for locating historic places on the national registry:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Registered_Historic_Places_in_New_York_County,_New_York @ The second site lists

Registered Places in New York County, from Wikipedia:

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/NY/New+York/stat.html>. @

If you visit: www.nysonglines.com. @ read up one street and down another and the avenues in the same way. I noted that, for ex., for what it is worth, that Chester Arthur, when he became president in 1881 was sworn in in a building on Lexington Ave between 28th and 29th Streets. That for one year Dashiell Hammett, who wrote detective stories, lived on 30th St between 3rd and Lexington. I think Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, when first married, lived on the edge of Kips Bay. We have a couple of buildings designed by well known architects such as Stanford White and James Renwick. There was an older Little Galleries of Photo Secession at 30th and Madison and 5th avenues where art work by Picasso, Cezanne and others were introduced. We also have the White Wood House, built in 1870, at 29th between 2nd and 3rd avenues. It is on the National Register. The older Madison Square Gardens was located at Park South between 26th and 27th. It had a statue on the roof by Saint Gaudens –the name for P. S. 40 over on 19th Street. And so it goes. What should we expect of a neighborhood?

The historic map was constructed from data provided by the 1936 Yellow Pages, a microfilm copy purchased from the New York Public Library. It is an incomplete map for several reasons: first of all, many businesses could not afford a telephone nor pay fees for inclusion in the Yellow Pages. Stores within walking distance, neighborhood in nature, probably did not seek customers from a greater area, hence, did not need a phone. Considering the volume of potential businesses, I soon stopped identifying every grocery and other markets. long ago, I forgot all of the stores we frequented. I

was looking for facilities I remember and those others located within close proximity to my apartment. I have included schools, religious centers, bakeries, groceries, theaters. I have also positioned the view of many of the other photos in this volume. The main reference is: Manhattan Classified Telephone Directory, Fall/Winter 1936 (corrected to July 22, 1936). The New York Public Library apparently filmed its own microfilm collection.

Readers will find Homberger's *Historical Atlas of New York City* (1994/2005) of much interest. It includes (pp. 136-37), in a discussion of the ethnic city, a 1920 map that shows that 29th Street might well have been the upper limit of Italians on the East Side and that Irish were resident in much of the area of Kips Bay that borders Murray Hill on the north. But my own recollection is that the neighborhood was very much ethnically mixed in the mid-1930s. I do not recall either Puerto Ricans nor Blacks, but perhaps a couple of "old Spanish" families. My grandfather -- a de Guzman from Peru -- belonged to that ethnic group in his time.

Transition to the Present

Discussion of the Bellevue South Urban Renewal project: New York Times, July 14, 1968, R1. Slum clearance had been earlier announced in 1959. Phipps was among early planners, and local support came from the PTA of PS 116 and the Talmud Torah, among others. Priority for some projects was for displaced tenants.

The mid-1930s map of Kips Bay developed mainly from the use of a 1930 City cadastral map and the Yellow Pages: <http://www.yellowbook.com/ContactUs/> @ In the Yellow Pages I researched by subjects my old neighborhood in Kips Bay for mid-1930s. Both the cadastral map plates and the Yellow Pages came to me via the New York Public Library. However, let me note that I never received any response from the Yellow Pages via that website. [http://catnyp.nypl.org/search/dNew+York+\(NY\)+Telephone+directories+-+Yellow](http://catnyp.nypl.org/search/dNew+York+(NY)+Telephone+directories+-+Yellow). @ New York City Telephone Directories, Manhattan, 1928/29-1976. *R-*ZAN-13682I. Several steps are necessary to reach the catalog copy; readers will need to explore this site.

Map and Key

Map reconstruction of the neighborhood based on Yellow Pages, 1936-37 as photographed by the New York Public Library; my copy is a 2006 reprint. I have selectively searched for various businesses and public service facilities in my old neighborhood. I recalled, of course, that there were a couple of theaters, a newsstand,

many stores such as grocers, open-air produce markets, meat markets (separate at that time), hardware, shoes, bars and grills (sometimes listed as taverns), drugstores. I even found two piano stores several blocks away. I was especially hoping to find bakeries, fire-and-ten-cent stores (such as Woolworths), laundries, banks, barber, bookstore, cigar stores, and others. Such a map can not really be complete because, during the Economic Depression of the 1930s, many businesses could not afford telephone service. Also, not all stores needed to be in touch with 'walking' customers from within a few blocks. As a way to get phone service, a store (I recall a dry cleaners or laundry, and apparently the candy store across the street) contracted to have a pay phone that they could list for their business in the Yellow Pages. Because of the age of the microfilm and the difficulty reading very small print, a number of businesses were no doubt missed or overlooked. I didn't find the shoe repair I thought was on my block, but I did discover the Imperial bar (listed as a tavern) around the corner on 2nd Avenue. I know that alone or with my mother or brother, we walked several blocks in any direction as on 1st Avenue down to 25th or 26th and similarly on 2nd and 3rd avenues. There were various stores on the avenues and other streets. I have no recollection of visiting the piano stores. We didn't get a piano until we moved to Chicago in 1938. Theaters I recall were located on 3rd Avenue between 30th and 32nd streets. But I cannot see theater marquis in my mind. The Superior I do recall and others confirm events there. When we add information from city maps, various photos and other sources, the neighborhood begins to fill in. Churches and schools today are part of the past. The fire house moved from 28th to 29th as best I can tell. There was no police precinct station nearby. My map was also enabled by the use of a 1930 edition of a real estate map, which was reproduced from a collection at the New York Public Library. It is a cadastral map of multiple plates, showing only some properties such as schools, churches, a few stores, hospitals, etc. However so many potential commercial or public facilities are not identified. But by correlating the map with the Yellow Pages made it possible to fill in some blank spaces. Considering the volume of potential businesses, I soon stopped identifying every grocery, clothing store, gas station, etc. I was looking for facilities I remember and those others located within close proximity to my apartment. I have also located the sites of the other photos in this volume. The main reference is: Manhattan Classified Telephone Directory, Fall/Winter 1936 (corrected to July 22, 1936). The New York Public Library apparently filmed its own microfilm collection.

Land Book of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, 1930. Humanities Maps: Map Div. ++ (New York City) (Bromley, G. W. & Company, 1930). [First published in 1916 under title Atlas of the Borough of Manhattan]

Contemporary Kips Bay

Because I had questioned the greenery in the expanded neighborhood, I wrote to the NYC Parks Department, which, from what I discovered online, is responsible for street trees. My query asked about ways to determine the presence of trees in the 1930s and more information about planting since that time. All of us know that urban renewal led to much tree planting and such shows up on photos and aerial photos. I got the following email (9/26/05) which offers some helpful advice:

Unfortunately, the first street tree survey conducted in New York was in 1995. We are in the process of counting again (and into a modern database system). The only way I can think of to accomplish what you're asking would be to look at historic photos and see if there are trees planted. Of course you could see if there are any 67 year-old trees on the census [the writer projected from my chosen date of 1938], but that does not account for a 30 year old tree planted in 1908, that would have been mature in 1938 and could have died in 1958. Good luck with your search and thank you for writing the Parks Library.

John Mattera,
Parks Librarian

In light of the above discussion, *Time* (7/2/07, pp. 69-70) ran the following article, Dan Cray, "Uprooted. Trees Have Always Struggled to Survive in Cities, and Now They're Losing the Fight. That's Bad for Them –and for Us." The article emphasizes the climatic factors of trees; i. e., reduction of 'heat islands', helping to cool down the concreted environments. Also, the role of canopies on capturing particulates and carbon dioxide. Trees also can reduce flooding. They note that most cities fall short of the need. The notion that eastern cities should aspire to 40% coverage whereas New York is measured at 20.9%. Of course, as a conservationist, I support the environmental goals but I also appreciate the aesthetic values, which are conservational in a different way. A comparison of old photos and current ones, including aerial photos, can tell us a great deal about tree-planting efforts in New York and elsewhere.

For other graphic renderings in map form, visit:
<http://www.wall-maps.com/UniqueMedia.htm>. @

Soundmarks and Landmarks

Besides the Sniffen Court, which is just beyond the traditional bounds of Kips Bay, there are several historic places. "The House at 203 E. 29th Street," otherwise the White Wood House is on the National Register of Historical Places, but is not listed as a landmark site by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. The city does seem to be doing some further evaluation of the building. I found a photo in the Percy L. Sperr collection of the New

York Public Library and this article: "A House That's Shy about Revealing Its Age," by Christopher Gray, 4/2/2006. Visit: <http://travel.nytimes.com/2006/04/02/realestate/02scap.html>. @

"House at 203 East 29 Street" (added 1982 – Building 82003377).

<http://nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/ny/new+york/state.html>. @

But visit for other locations:

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID009.htm> @

Map is Plate 57 (modified from): "The Land book of the borough of Manhattan, City of New York" (NY: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1930). It is housed in the New York Public Library.

mapref@nypl.org. Oct. 27, 2006. The gap between the date of this map and the Yellow Page data of 1936-37 made it difficult to decide if certain commercial or public activities in the neighborhood persisted into the middle 1930s. One example suggests the problem of correlating data: the NY school system never replied to my query about P. S. 14 located between 2nd and 3rd avenues and 27th and 28th streets. It appears on the 1930 edition but I have no recollection of a school at that site; if it had existed, how is it I attended PS 116 many more blocks distant from my street? However, in May 2006 Irving Harris, historian for the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club and former resident as a youth on E. 27th, told me he attended P. S. 14 and that it existed into the 1950s.

Two street scenes come via the New York Public Library Digital Gallery.

With reference to the quality of buildings, their maintenance and the like, I'm reminded of a colleague thirty or so years ago discussing the bankruptcy and public administration of 'abandoned' apartments. His reference was to Chicago, but it could easily apply to New York and elsewhere. See his doctoral study, Austin Sullivan, 1973, in bibliography.

A comment about Stuyvesant High School. Its history can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuyvestant_High_School. @ The school was located on E. 15th and was reestablished on the west side with a view of the Hudson and the upper harbor in 1992 (Chambers St.). The older facility became the High School for Health Professions and Human Services. Of course, I spent one year at Seward Park High School, farther downtown at Grand (within view of the Williamsburg Bridge). In 2006 it closed as a separate high school and its facility is now occupied by five or more smaller specialized high schools.

The Norman Thomas High School on E. 33rd at Park Ave South didn't exist in the area in the 1930s. One may learn more about this school, named for the socialist leader who ran for president some four times; visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/OurSchools/Region9/M620/AboutUs/Overview/Our+Mission.htm> @

II

The Street as Playground; Madison Sq. Boys Club 61-70

There are several useful websites for street games: http://www.streetplay.com/cgi/sp_bigpic.pl?url=/photos/images/stoop2.jpg @ It may not be possible to open this site beyond com – if so, scroll down listings for stoopball. Also, see other street games. Also visit: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoopball> @

As for baseball cards, there are numerous website listings; e. g <http://www.kityoung.com/newinventoriespecials.php> @ -- an excellent website with literally thousands of entries – photos, players' names, team names, dates. Photos can be enlarged. For anyone interested in reading the history of baseball card collecting, visit: <http://www.oldbaseball.com/refs/Collecting33-41.html> @ .

Madison Square Boys Club

One could contact the executive director of the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club at: jpatuleia@madisonsquare.org We chatted on the phone and I learned a good deal about the history of the club and the fact that currently Irving Harris is writing a club history and would be interested in exchanging information and thoughts. You never know who is going to become a useful contact. He and I are now in a dialogue.

III

Stores, Services, and Theaters & Medical Centers 71-80

If you were looking for firehouses, and there was one on my block or the next, then you might begin by searching for NYCFire Department – lots of entries online! I chose several, but had best luck with one that specifically brought me to the current firehouse in the 200 block of E. 29th St. But I wrote to Engine 16 for more advice because I discovered that ladder 7, which consolidated with it in 1967, when the building was constructed, had been on E. 28th St. Meantime, I did ask the NYC Fire Museum for advice and they told me of a book: Brian R. McCaffery, FHNy Firehouses in New York (which was advertised on the Fire Department website in the past): <http://www.fdnny.org>. @ Also try: <http://www.forgotten-ny.com>.

You can visit firehouses but not likely be able to directly open this site: <http://www.forgotten-ny.com>

[/STREET%20SCENES/Firehouses/firehouses.html](#). @ Enter only the short part of the URL – through ‘com’ --Then try the following: on home page, scroll down to ‘search’; type in ‘firehouses’; click on ‘street scenes home page’; scroll down under ‘Manhattan’ to ‘The Fire, That Time’. Curiously, the site views a firehouse on W. 29th St, a block west of 5th Avenue.

There was no police precinct in the neighborhood. I have no reason to recall the location of precincts but discovered that one was located on E. 22nd and another at E. 35th Street, both close enough I suppose. Also: [Http://nycarchitecture.columbia.edu](http://nycarchitecture.columbia.edu). @ Click on ‘public realm’ In lower right; then at left, ‘expansion of public realm’; then on ‘neighborhood buildings’; then on any or all sites: ‘schools’, ‘firehouses’, ‘police’, and ‘libraries.’ One authority is Prof. Andrew S. Dolkart at Columbia University; look in bibliography. For a different view, visit:

http://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/f_a/e16_6.shtml.@ This is a direct view of the firehouse on 29th Street, west of 2nd Avenue.

There was a Coca Cola plant at 1st Ave and 35th/34th streets, but when I wrote the company, they pointed out that most bottling plants contract and if they have gone out of business, no way to locate any historic photos.

I draw attention to the alignment of trolley tracks on E. 29th St. near 2nd Ave. There is an excellent trolley website: <http://www.forgotten-ny.com/TROLLEYS/Trolley%20homepage/trolley2.html> @

A response to my inquiry (7/5/07) at that website suggested there was likely a trolley in 1930 on 2nd Ave. It wasn’t there or on 29th St. by 1935 or later, as I recall.

IV

PS 116 and Other Schools

81-88

In looking for schools, I visited www.nycenet.edu @ and other sites to learn that there are several P. S. 116s (other numbers are duplicated as well), but only one in Manhattan. I found the name and address but no email. As for other schools, I did have some buddies who attended

The Carmelite Parochial School across the street from my apartment building. It was operated by Our Lady of the Scapular farther down the block. The staff, I understand from Father Alfred Isacson [isacso@yahoo.com. @] at Middletown, NY, relocated to St. Stephens, around 1991. Had I stayed in the neighborhood, I would likely have attended Stuyvesant High down on 15th St. To utilize the URL, click on ‘Our Schools’; then at left find ‘region 9’ which includes Kips Bay. You can look up a school if you have its name or number.

Let's turn to churches and synagogues. I entered 'synagogue' in my initial search, and read down on several pages and found two on the East Side: <http://www.aderethel.org>. @ . Congregation Adereth El Talmud Torah, located near Lexington on E. 29th St. I wrote them. Sidney Kleiman, rabbi ; see also Carole Sharon, at Sharon@eastendtemple.org the other synagogue on E. Side.

Gazzara's comments on Jews in the neighborhood appear on p. 143 of In the Moment.

Then I searched for Episcopal churches and encountered The Church of the Good Shepherd, which identified itself as formerly the Chapel of the Incarnation, the church I knew, and I got this email addresses –

<http://goodshepherdnyc.dioceseny.org/about.html>. @

I wrote them and got a nice response for the Reverend David Carlson, who told me that my memory was at fault because there was no school across the street, which made me rethink where my grade school was. I also was sent a copy of a sermon by Rev. Nicolas M. Feringa, who was in charge during my years in association with the church. He revisited his old parish on June 9, 1974. The copy was made available to me by Ms. Marie Furray, who has worked with the Incarnation Camp at Ivoryton, CT.

Churches stand out as sustainable man-made works in the neighborhood, which is generally true most places. The St. Stephen's Church, designed by architect James Renwick, Jr. in 1854, was attended by several families from my block. They had their own school on 28th Street. I knew several Armenian kids and presumed they attended St. Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic Church on 27th between 2nd and 3rd avenues. Papush, 2005, discusses St. Stephen, efforts to gain landmark status, See <http://gothamgazette.com/article/feature-commentary/20050822/202/1514>. @

Note that Murray Hill doesn't really embrace Kips Bay but referred to St. Stephen's which lies outside MH. I do not find a Kips Bay website of similar construction. Would be most useful.

For other photos of Kips Bay, St. Vartan Cathedral, Kips Bay Plaza, Our Lady of the Scapular, Estonian House, Little Church Around the Corner, and Sniffen Court , visit: <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID009.htm> @

Additional information about the Armenian churches: St Vartan:

<http://www.armenianchurch.net/diocese/cathedral/index.html> @

also:

<http://www.armenianendowment.org/dioscese/cathedral/building.html> St. Gregory:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/medny/oster/index.html> @

When I wrote to the Carmelite Church in Millertown, N. Y., Reverend Alfred Isacson responded by acknowledging that I was correct in identifying the parochial school on 29th and the Church of Our Lady of the Scapular on 28th and 1st Avenue, which extended to 29th. He told me that the staff had relocated to St. Stephens. I might point out that most of the changes on those few blocks between 27th and 33rd occurred in the 1960s.

VI

Libraries, Bookstores, and Newsstands 101-108

Photo of the newsstand also appears at <http://www.mcnyc.org/collections/abbott/a015.htm>. @ This source indicates that today an apartment rises where the stand stood.

Since I identified the Newark Star-Eagle, let me mention that my father's friend and coreporter, later an editor, was Morton Sontheimer, whom I fondly regard as my other godfather. He was the one who drove my mother to Manhattan the night before I was born. Sonny moved to San Francisco, where we ultimately followed him in 1939. Some readers might find his book of much interest: *Newspaperman: A Book about the Business* (N. Y.: Whittlesey House, 1941).

For libraries, I have cited the email for Kips Bay. The other nearby library is Epiphany on 23rd St., which I frequented when I was 9. <http://www.nypl.org/branch/local/man/kp.cfm>. @

I have no email addresses for contemporary bookstores, but, for example, there is a Borders on 2nd Ave near 32nd Street; another bookstore in the complex as part of Kips Bay Plaza. I have no memory of any used bookstore within short walking distance.

Far & Farther Country

The photo of Herald Square and Macy's in 1936 is from Levere (2005):129. See bibliography. It is paired from another view taken in 2002.

VII

Els, Subways and Streetcars

109-122

As for the El's, I first found maps. <http://mta.info>. @ . Click on maps in the menu; then, on 'New York City transit'; then on 'subway'. This one showed me that the only East Side subway is the Lexington (Fourth Ave. South), which existed in my time. I discovered in reading John A. Kouwenhoven's *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York, 1953*, see bibliography -- that the four Els in Manhattan are all gone; that the 2nd Ave. El was demolished in 1942 and the 3rd Ave one in 1955. <http://www.nycsubway.org/maps/route/> @ provides a detailed, easy to read map of subways for Greater NYC. As for a discussion of the efforts to construct a 2nd Ave subway, visit:

Even before I had the idea to write about the East Side, this article appeared, John J. Goldman, "Phantom Subway May Finally Run," *L. A. Times*, 7, 29, 2004: A25. It claims the first link, if constructed, would be way uptown between 63rd and 96th streets and linked to the existing Lexington line.

On subways and Els, Maps do show abandoned 3rd Ave. El (1955 ed.) One can see the remaining uptown El on 3rd Ave, on 1964 system map – it continues from 149th St. In fact, it looks as if one could transfer from the Lexington subway at 149th St to the 3rd Ave El. (by the way, the existing 3rd El is probably what is shown in the TV series, "Dr. Becker.") To date, no 2nd Ave subway has been constructed. A good website for maps: <http://www.nycsubway.org/maps/historical.html> @ Many maps require pdf opening. But the collection goes back to the earliest years and the text reports when Els and subways have been demolished, etc. Maps show the 3rd Ave El still partially operative southward to City Hall, as in 1951, and by 1959, showing the El still operative from 149th north in the Bronx. Older maps show the two El lines – 2nd and 3rd Avenues – which merged way uptown at the edge of the Bronx.

<http://electricrailroaders.org/> @ Generally useful site about railroads, including NYC. I contacted Frank Pfuhrer -- pfuhrer@msn.com. @ He replied with reference to the 3rd Avenue El: "I am not sure that this is 23rd St. If you do use the photo, pls credit Electric Railroader's Association - Sprague Library Collection." " <http://erausa.org/sprague/> @

The association maintains an extensive collection of electric railway literature of a research nature at its Frank Julian Sprague Memorial Library. Mr. Sprague, ERA member No. 1, engineered and operated the first practical electric street car line and later invented practical multiple-unit control. The first books and papers in the library were donated to the ERA by Harriet (Mrs. Frank)

Sprague and consisted of elements of Mr. Sprague's personal collection. It is fitting that this vast and growing collection of historical, technical and economic data on electric railways is named in his honor.

<http://transit.nerail.org> @ (photo archive).

I've confirmed that the business on the left is Siegmund Klein, and I presume it was a gymnasium because he is listed in the 1936 Yellow Pages as operating an "internationally famous gymnasium." However, it was located at 48th Street. Thus I cannot confirm that the photographer was standing in the 14th Street El station. There is a 2nd Avenue subway project in the planning, but it has been proposed, designed, etc., for a couple of decades or longer. Its construction would apparently begin farther uptown in the 60s. But visit this site for discussion:

http://newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/news/features/n_10109/index.html @ An excellent article on 2nd Avenue subway project by Greg Sargent, April 5, 2004 in *NY Magazine*. Try <http://mta.info>. @ for general information.

Because I included a photo by Walker Evans and comments on his photo essay of E. 61st. let me cite some references to his work as listed in the bibliography. Also visit the essay: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fachap04.html>. @

In Fleischhauser and Brannon (1988) there is another copy of the "New York City Block" by Walker Evans which offers images of E. 61st Street in the 1930s, including the El at 61st and 2nd, street scenes, smaller stores, pushcart, etc. Useful for comparison. *Also see* Trachtenberg, 1989.

http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2006/09/03/nyregion/thecity/03maps_CA3.ready.html .@ The Rapid Transit map of subways was downloaded from a NY Times source.

As for police cars, there are photos for that era: www.policeny.com @ (click on 'site map'; then, scroll down to 'RMPs --the Radio Motor Car Patrol'. This site opens to countless pictures of various police cars of the 1930s.

The photo of Herald Square and Macy's in 1936 is from Levere (2005):129. See bibliography. It is paired from another view taken in 2002.

Historian Stephen Meyers tells me (Oct. 2007) :

"During WW II, the Kaiser Shipyards at Richmond, CA had many workers and little transportation. The U S Maritime Commission asked the KEY SYSTEM (the East Bay transit operator) to cobble together a commuter rail line to service shipyards--on a cost-plus basis... Anyhow, the people at Key were very adroit and

discovered the rails, ties and overhead of the recently abandoned Southern Pacific commuter rail system, found transformers and miscellaneous electrical generating and transmission equipment from the Los Angeles area and built an electric railway from Emeryville (at the east end of the Bay Bridge) right to the door of the shipyard complex. The only thing missing was rolling stock. They hit their bonanza in olde New York where the Interborough Rapid Transit Division of the NY City transit System was sitting knee deep in elevated cars due to the recently discontinued 2nd Ave line. So a deal was struck and the IRT sold them 80 motorized ANCIENT elevated cars (the fleet was built between 1881 and 1891 !!). most of which were quickly rebuilt from third rail power to overhead power and put into service as the U S Maritime Commission's Richmond Shipyard Railway. It was the Toonerville Trolley of World War II. Altho it was a high capacity operation, the workers avoided it in droves and, for most of its career (it terminated weeks after the war ended), it ran at under 20 % of capacity and ended up as a pan-war boondoggle; an imaginative effort that just didn't work. Oddly enough, a San Francisco area railroad museum obtained two of those cars and still runs one on a daily basis. It has to be the oldest operating transit vehicle in the United States! A number of years ago I had the pleasure of riding it and it certainly brought back some fond memories."

With reference to tearing down the Els (Figures 7.4a/b), Irving Harris reports that a Mary Georgiade who lived on 3rd Avenue across from the Regent Theater (at 28th Street) photographed the demolition of the 3rd Avenue El. from her second floor window.

VIII

Dvorak House; Stuyvesant Park 123-128

On Antonin Dvorak in America, see Horowitz, 2005, pp. 223-231. See also: <http://www.preserve.org/stuyvesant/about.html> @-- 5 pages but different photo of statute. Another website, discussing the home, its demolition and motives for the newer building, a medical facility. <http://www.american-music.org/publications/bullarchive/richm231.htm> @ This site discusses reasons for demolition, efforts to preserve, etc. <http://www.preserve.org/dvorak.htm> @ Also discusses the event of bringing the Dvorak statute to park site and the history of the loss of landmark status for the home.

There are a number of historic structures in Kips Bay, such as Sniffen Court; visit: <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID009.htm>@. However, the landmark structure,. White Wood House may be listed on the national registry and on nysonglines, it is still not on a website with text and photo. The photo utilized here was found almost accidentally on the NY Public Library Digital Gallery.

IX

Queensboro Bridge; Other Bridges, & the East River 129-134

From nychs@nyc.rr.com , I received text and photo showing the elevator and stairs from the Queensboro Bridge to Welfare Island. It served various people, but including visitors to the old penitentiary that was much later demolished after NY had established a new facility at Riker's Island upriver. I don't know in what year the stairs were removed, perhaps as early as 1955 or as late as 1970.

http://correctionhistory.org/rooseveltisland/html/rooseveltislandtour_tram.html. @ This site includes the bridge with the stairs. At times, you may have to copy to the navigation line and otherwise only type 'http.....org/' The additional url opens to more history of the bridge and island in first half of 20th century. <http://www.correctionhistory.org/html/chronicl/nycdoc/html/qnsboro2.html>. @

Thomas C. McCarthy of the NYC Historical Society wrote me that in the '_tram.html' the dash can get lost when underscoring is involved. Thus, I suggest, that one type in the address on the navigation line.

When you go online and search by person, place, subject, whatever, keep in mind the need to link on many entries, including up to four or five pages under a given entry. I went searching for information about film locations on the East Side for pictures made prior to 1940. Many pages, many entries, followed up on some books, kept at it! Same for determining that I was right in remembering stairs from the Queensboro Bridge to Welfare (Roosevelt) Island. In that case, even the first article about its opening did not reveal the fact [see: "Queensboro Bridge Opens to Traffic," NYTimes, Mar. 31, 1909, p. 2. Note, try to get access to ProQuest in order to utilize the NYTimes online.] I searched under Queensboro Bridge, Roosevelt Bridge, East River, Bridges and East River, etc. Contacted individuals at various websites, and whomever they suggested. Finally, it was the NYC Corrections Dept, which operated an old penitentiary on Welfare Island, and in 1955 Rikers' newer penitentiary opened. They provided text and photo. You won't always have such good luck in each instance. Visit:

[Correctionhistory.org/html/chronicl/nycdoc/html/qnsboro2.html](http://correctionhistory.org/html/chronicl/nycdoc/html/qnsboro2.html). @

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roosevelt_Island @

This url opens a discussion of the history of the island, its penitentiary, which was closed down in 1935 after the Riker Island facility was constructed. It also discusses efforts to establish a Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial.

For an interesting photo/text essay about Roosevelt Island, including some of its past, see <http://www.forgotten-ny.com>. @ You

need to find ‘Street Scenes’ and then ‘Roosevelt Island.’ (For more advice about this site, see Section 5, above.) Reference to the Queens Midtown Tunnel. Visit <http://www.nycroads.com>. @ Site includes text as well as new and older photos. A map of the access to the tunnel from the Manhattan side can be found at: <http://search.cityguide.aol.com/newyork/entertainment/queens-midtown-tunnel/v-52153/> @ This yields a Mapquest map of the East Side of Manhattan in the upper 30s/lower40s, showing the access to and from the tunnel.

X

Trip to Jersey; Ferries & Tunnels 135-142

For the Dongan Hills Ferry, 1945, type on the navigation line: ‘photos of the dongan hills ferry, 1945’ @. Various thumbnail photos will appear; click on any of them. (Note: I didn’t pick this ferry because of the disaster that struck it in 1960. Just a good example of a ferry.) For skyline of New York from Weehawken, visit:

<http://andrewprokos.com/photos/cityscapes-skylines/> @.

On tunnels, visit:

<http://www.nycroads.com/crossings/lincoln/> @ Site include text as well as new and older photos. For the map of bridges and tunnels: <http://www.mta.info/bandt/html/btmap.htm> @ ; which should open directly to the map; otherwise, click on ‘maps’; then ‘bridges and tunnels.’ Verrazano Bridge photo from Ballon and Jackson, 2007, p. 238.

XI

In Lieu of an Epilogue 143-144

With reference to Jane Jacobs, there are countless online links. This one is especially useful; it contains discussions of her ideas and works and includes a lengthy bibliography of her books and articles:

<http://www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/placemakers/jjacobs.> @

Online Bibliographic Data

Many book citations came from Scholar.google.com. Believe it or not, I found a few citations at Amazon.com and even purchased a couple of books that way. In either instance, if you know an author or a title, you can type in that name. You can also type in subjects. But for books, you should go to www.google.com and then click on ‘more’, then on ‘books.’

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Berenice Abbott, *photographer (ph)*; Mary Altaffer (*ph*); Arcadia Publishers; George Chinn (*ph*); Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd; *Correctionhistory.org*; B. Diemonstein (*author, Landmarks of New York*); *e.architect.co.uk*; Walker Evans (*ph*); Fried and Watson (*authors, NY in Aerial Views*); *Gothic Gazette*; *Google.com*; Hamhaber (?); Incarnation Center (Ivoryton, CT); Irving Harris (*historian, Madison Square Boys & Girls Club*); Father Alfred Isacson; Kit Young Old Vintage Baseball Cards; D. Levere (*author, New York Changing*); *Live.local.com*; Stephen L. Meyers Collection; M. Mondlin and R. Meader (*authors, Book Row*); MTA Bridges and Tunnels, Special Archives; New York City Building Department; New York Historical Society; NYC Municipal Archives; *NYRoads.com/crossing*; Patricia Pardo (Branch Manager, Kips Bay Public Library); Henry Phipps Development Corporation; Frank Pfuhler and *Electricrailroaders.com*; Andrew Prokos, (*ph*); Percy L. Sperr (*ph*); St. Vartan website; *Streetplay.com*; Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Assn; Wikipedia. Lawrence Stelter (*author*).

Automobile Club of America; Ballou and Jackson (*authors, Robert Moses*); Land Map of Borough of Manhattan, via the New York Public Library but copied from a purchased print; Bernard Linder (*author, "28th & 29th Street Crosstown Line"*); MapQuest; William Mulligan (Henry Phipps Plaza West); NY Map Portal; NY MTA Transportation Authority; NY Public Library; *NY Songlines.com*; NY Times imagepages; NYU Medical Center; Unique Media Maps; *Yellow Pages*.

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**3. *Back to E. 29th Street: Where Fact and
Fiction Revisit Kips Bay, N. Y.***

Imre Sutton (2008)

*Back to E. 29th Street:
Where Fact & Fiction Revisit
Kips Bay, N. Y.*

Manhattan's East Side has undergone nearly continuous urban change over the past sixty years. Kips Bay, a very small district or neighborhood in New York's midtown, went from older tenements and lofts to a higher-rise complex of apartments and, along 1st Avenue, to Medical Row dominated by New York University and Bellevue Hospital. Virtually standing unchanged, except right on 29th Street, are the neighborhood religious centers and the author's grade school – P. S. 116.

The author lived in the 300 block on E. 29th from 1934 to 1937, revisiting the neighborhood now and then. He later moved west. When he returned to the city for a year, he attended Seward Park High School in lower Manhattan. Having left Kips Bay so young – age 9 –, he did not retain any friends. As a retired professor of geography his neighborhood reconstruction and personal memoir have relied on new encounters, the Internet, and, at times, sheer luck. Of the several dozen photos, nearly half were downloaded from the New York City Public Library Digital Photo Gallery.