

Where Harlem Rests
at The Woodlawn Cemetery

A project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund

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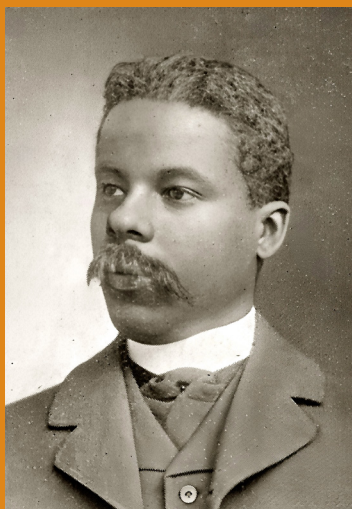


Florence Mills

Duke Ellington

Canada Lee

Nina Mae McKinney

For more than a century, The Woodlawn Cemetery, opened in 1863, has been the final resting place of many figures of the Harlem Renaissance. This storied era, spanning the 1920s through the mid-1930s, produced a vibrant cultural movement of African American artistic, musical, and literary expression, whose influence spread globally.

Visitors may easily recognize such iconic names from this period as Duke Ellington, W.C. Handy, Florence Mills, Bert Williams, Bricktop, Countee

Cullen, Nina Mae McKinney, Canada Lee, Coleman Hawkins, Hall Johnson, and Cootie Williams. Yet beyond its constellation of performing artists and writers, Woodlawn is also the proud steward of a host of other influential but lesser known individuals. These were the many Black business leaders, doctors, lawyers, clergy, journalists, civic organizers, social workers and others—often referred to as "race" men and women—whose professional vocations underscored the social justice ideals of the Harlem Renaissance long after the era's heyday.

But why Woodlawn? What drew Black Manhattanites across the Harlem River to bury their loved ones in the Bronx?

While there's no single explanation, the likeliest reasons point to transportation convenience, neighborhood proximity, and cultural cohesion—factors that began taking shape decades before the Harlem Renaissance. In 1878, the renowned abolitionist and minister, Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, presided over the funeral of Adelaide Butler, a matron of the Colored Orphan Asylum that was destroyed by white mobs during the infamous New York City Draft Riots of 1863. Butler's and other asylum interments at Woodlawn—which did not racially segregate—were harbingers of later patronage from the city's various Black communities.

Railroads further strengthened Woodlawn's appeal to the city's Black population. The New York Central's railroad system ran along the cemetery's eastern edge as it traversed the Bronx northward from Manhattan's Grand Central Station. Regular passage through the area in the 1890s induced Pullman porter Jacob Cantey to promote Black homeownership in nearby Williamsbridge. Similarly, Rev. E. G. Clifton founded a Black Episcopal church for the many families of railroad porters, and later station Red Caps, who settled along the Harlem Line.

In 1918, yet another rail line extended to Woodlawn's western boundary—the IRT subway—and signaled a changing demographic at the dawn of the Harlem Renaissance. By the 1920s, word of mouth in Harlem made Woodlawn a preferred burial place, as did the guidance of prominent Black funeral directors such as H. Adolph Howell, the Duncan Brothers, Henry A. Toppin, and others who are also buried here.

Approximately 320,000 people are interred at The Woodlawn Cemetery. Although African Americans form a substantial part of that population, their number is uncertain since the statistics do not record burials by race. The following list of 25 names, by no means comprehensive, is only meant to be representative. Hopefully, their lives will shed light on a larger story of creativity, leadership, and community resistance that will inspire further curiosity and research. Through the stories of both this diverse and fascinating group—combined with those of our more easily recognizable figures—Woodlawn honors a rich, complex and enduring African American legacy where Harlem, quite literally, rests.

—**Eric K. Washington**, *Project Historian*

Notable Harlem Residents

Section 1. Laurel Avenue Walk (page 6)

1. **H. Adolph Howell** *Undertaker, fraternal leader*
October 29, 1870–April 2, 1927) Acacia Plot

2. **Rev. Edward G. Clifton** *Pioneering Episcopal priest*
(February 4, 1863–March 26, 1930) Arbutus Plot

3. **Dr. Louis T. Wright** *Pioneering surgeon and civil rights leader*
(July 23, 1891–October 8, 1952) Arbutus Plot

4. **Birdye H. Haynes** *Pioneering social worker*
(November 21, 1886–June 30, 1922) Primrose Plot

5. **Herbert D. Cummings** *Floral decorator*
(February 8, 1878–April 12, 1952) Primrose Plot

Section 2. Canna Avenue Stroll (page 12)

6. **John W. Connor** *Restaurateur, baseball owner, cultural tastemaker*
(December 26, 1875–July 9, 1926) Canna Plot

7. **Thelma Berlack Boozer** *Journalist*
(September 26, 1906–March 6, 2001) Cosmos Plot

8. **Caspar Holstein** *Racketeer, philanthropist, gambling ace*
(December 6, 1877–April 5, 1944) Cosmos Plot

9. **Bessye J. Bearden** *Journalist, club woman, civic leader*
(contested: October 9, 1888 or 1893–September 16, 1943) Cosmos Plot

10. **James H. "Chief" Williams** *Railroad labor leader*
(August 4, 1878–May 4, 1948) Cosmos Plot

11. **Hon. J. Frank Wheaton** *Lawyer, orator, civic leader*
(May 8, 1866–January 15, 1922) Syringa Plot

12. **Edward H. Wilson** *Businessman, hotel proprietor*
(February 17, 1877–August 15, 1944) Salvia Plot

13. **Troy H. Hinton** *Fraternal leader, deacon, Grolier Club steward*
(1859–January 7, 1930) Salvia Plot

14 **Hubert H. Harrison** *Writer, orator, social critic*
(April 27, 1883–December 17, 1927) Salvia Plot

15 **Jacob Charles "Doc" Cantey** *Pullman porter, real estate owner*
(ca. 1855–September 29, 1932) Syringa Plot

16 **Wilhelmina F. Adams** *Civic leader, entrepreneur, politician*
(January 31, 1901–May 19, 1987) Heliotrope Plot

17 **Charles W. Anderson** *Political orator and organizer*
(April 28, 1866–January 28, 1938) Summit Plot

18 **Edward E. "Chief" Lee** *Civil servant, political power broker*
(ca. 1849/50–March 9, 1929) Salvia Plot

SECTION 3. YEW PLOT (PAGE 26)

19 **Rudolph Fisher** *Physician, radiologist, writer*
(May 9, 1897–December 26, 1934) Heliotrope Plot

20 **Felix Weir** *Violin virtuoso, educator*
(October 8, 1884–May 9, 1978) Yew Plot

SECTION 4. THE FILBERT AVENUE WALK (PAGE 29)

21 **Mme. C.J. Walker** *Entrepreneur, philanthropist, social activist*
(December 23, 1867–May 25, 1919) Butternut Plot

22 **A'Lelia Walker** *Socialite, cultural doyenne*
(June 6, 1885–August 17, 1931) Butternut Plot

23 **Dr. Charles H. Roberts** *Dental surgeon, city alderman*
(August 12, 1872–January 1, 1967) Aster Plot

SECTION 5. WEBSTER AVENUE ENTRANCE (PAGE 33)

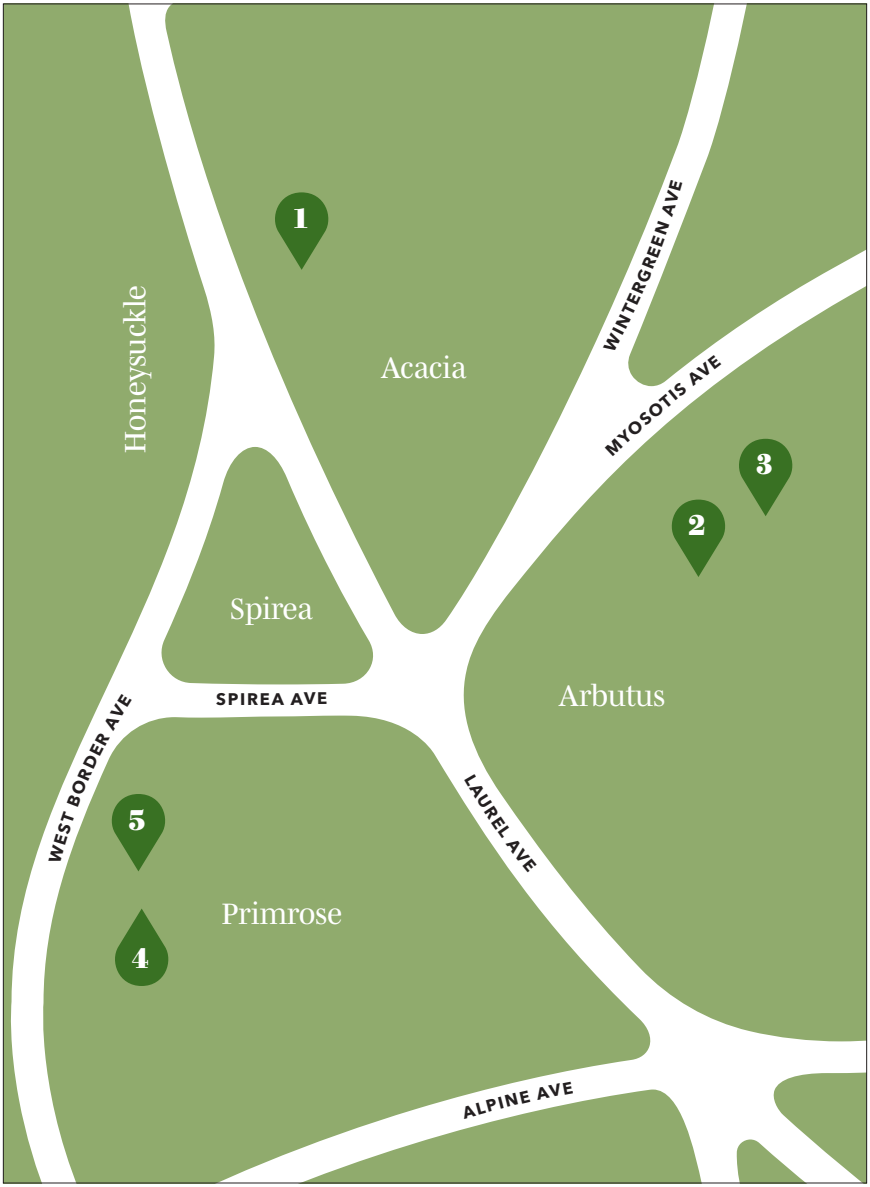
24 **David K. McDonogh** *Surgeon, ophthalmologist, otolaryngologist*
(contested: August 10, 1821 or 1825–January 15, 1893) Myrtle Plot

25 **Adelaide Butler** *Matron and heroine, Colored Orphan Asylum*
(ca. 1823–June 4, 1878) White Oak Plot

NOTE: Throughout this text, names appearing in boldface are individuals interred at Woodlawn.

SECTION 1. LAUREL AVENUE WALK

From the Jerome Ave Entrance make a right onto West Border Ave. Continue straight to the Acacia Plot. Once you reach Acacia, look for the Muller Monument on the right-hand side of the road. From the Muller monument, count back four headstones and you will find the grave of H. Adolph Howell. Note that the monument says "Parras/Howell."



H. Adolph Howell

Undertaker, fraternal leader

(October 29, 1870–April 2, 1927)
Acacia Plot

1

In early April 1927, thousands crowding a Harlem funeral home were not there to mourn one of its clients, but rather its owner H. Adolph Howell, the distinguished undertaker whose own passing drew the kind of public tribute usually reserved for luminaries.

Born in Barbados, Howell emigrated in the 1890s to New York City, where he married his Bermuda-born wife Martha in 1896. After completing embalming school in the early 1900s, he managed a struggling mortuary business in Harlem for many years. But his warm personality cultivated a loyal following of clients from across the myriad fraternal organizations in which he was deeply involved.

By 1919, Howell's reputation secured him the funeral of legendary hair-care magnate **Madam C. J. Walker**, whose service—drawing some 1,000 mourners to her Villa Lewaro—was then said to be one of the largest for a Harlem figure. Likewise, in 1922, the sensational murder trial and execution of Luther Boddy reportedly drew 20,000 onlookers to Howell's parlors. Whether beloved or notorious, Harlem's highest-profile figures increasingly entrusted their bereavements to Howell's expert care, effectively laying the groundwork to his most ambitious enterprise.

Museum of the City of New York

H. Adolph Howell Funeral Church

Chicago Defender, September 1, 1923

Howell

On November 30, 1925, nine Christian denominations, alongside Harlem's business and civic leaders, gathered to dedicate the palatial H. Adolph Howell Funeral Church. The former Y.W.C.A. building at Seventh Avenue (now Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard) and 137th Street had undergone a $60,000 transformation—more than $1 million today—into an English Gothic–style funeral home adorned with handcrafted details. One out-of-town newspaper hailed it as "one of the most beautiful and elaborate establishments of its kind in the country owned by race men," affirming Howell's stature as one of Harlem's premier undertakers.

Rev. Edward G. Clifton

2

Pioneering Episcopal priest

(February 4, 1863–March 26, 1930)
Arbutus Plot

Sometime while laboring as a railroad dining-car waiter in the 1880s, Edward G. Clifton was honing his truer calling to the ministry—one that ultimately led him to found the only Episcopal church in the Bronx established by a Black priest.

After emigrating from St. Kitts in 1881, Clifton settled first in Brooklyn, later serving as an African Methodist Episcopal preacher in the Bronx. His circuit carried him through Mott Haven, Melrose, Tremont, Morrisania, Fordham, and Williamsbridge, before he joined the Episcopal Diocese and was ordained by Bishop Henry Codman Potter. By 1895, he knew well the Bronx's striving Black railroad families along the New York Central's Harlem Line—porters and waiters who staffed the luxurious Pullman palace cars. For them he established St. David's Protestant Episcopal Mission Chapel for Colored People in a modest storefront on East 158th Street, where congregants worshiped for eight years.

New York Public Library

Rev. Edward G. Clifton

On March 1, 1903, the congregation entered its new church building at East 160th Street and Melrose Avenue, funded by the Trinity Corporation and a philanthropic gift from clergyman Charles Comfort Tiffany. Its most poignant contribution came from Jamaica-born railroad porter George Thomas Allen, who lived above the original chapel; before his fatal accident in a railroad yard, he devoted his entire savings—about $5,000—to help build the new church.

Clifton's ministry forcefully confronted the racial injustices of his era. He denounced lynching, convict leasing, and the nation's moral failures that continued to impact the Black congregation, largely composed of itinerant railroad workers as well as his fellow Caribbean immigrants for decades. Around 1922, Vertner W. Tandy, the state's first licensed Black architect, neared the completion of rebuilding St. David's church edifice with a new one.

In 2024, the three Bronx ministries of St. David's, St. Edmund's, and St. Simeon's were legally unified as All Saints' Episcopal Church. Nevertheless, its congregation still cherishes its trifecta of legacy as the borough's first African American Episcopal church, the pioneering Black priest who founded it, and the esteemed Black architect who built it.

Dr. Louis T. Wright

3

Pioneering surgeon and civil rights leader

(July 23, 1891–October 8, 1952)
Arbutus Plot

Dr. Louis T. Wright was a trailblazing brain surgeon, bone fracture specialist, cancer researcher, and civil rights activist. Born in Georgia, he graduated from Clark University in 1911, Harvard Medical School in 1915, and completed postgraduate studies at Freedmen's Hospital (Howard University).

During World War I, Dr. Wright served in France with the 367th Infantry "Buffaloes," a segregated Black regiment awarded the Croix de Guerre. As a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, he led a field hospital, introduced an intradermal smallpox vaccination technique, and survived a poison gas attack, earning the Purple Heart.

Library of Congress

Dr. Louis T. Wright

Wright's service abroad perhaps steeled him for lifelong battles at home—a vigilant NAACP board member, he fought doggedly for racial equity in public healthcare. In 1920, he became Harlem Hospital's first Black intern. His many "firsts" included Police Surgeon for Harlem's 32nd Precinct, admission to the American College of Surgeons, and appointment as Surgical Director of Harlem Hospital—the first African American to lead a New York City hospital. In 1945, he conducted the first human administration of the antibiotic Aureomycin.

Even Dr. Wright's activism approached surgical precision. In 1936, when a Harlem Hospital superintendent tried to bar proposed, and now famous, WPA murals for depicting too much Black life, Wright won out by launching a publicity campaign that galvanized community support for the artists.

In 1952, Eleanor Roosevelt helped inaugurate Harlem Hospital's Louis T. Wright Library. Months later, Wright died, remembered as "a stormy petrel in the medical world and in civil rights."

Birdye H. Haynes

Pioneering social worker

(November 21, 1886–June 30, 1922)
Primrose Plot (Unmarked Grave)

4

For a brief but impactful period, Birdye H. Haynes was the head resident of Lincoln House, a branch of the Henry Street Settlement, located at 202 West 63rd Street on Manhattan's west side. From 1915 to 1922, she led this vital social welfare center in San Juan Hill, a historic African American neighborhood. Under her leadership, Lincoln House addressed pressing issues of poverty, joblessness, poor health, racism, and the first world war while advancing its mission of promoting "a better understanding between the races."

Crisis, September 1922

Birdye H. Haynes

Cultivating community partners, Lincoln House also headquartered a branch of the Urban League, the national organization co-founded by Haynes's older brother, sociologist **George E. Haynes**. One periodical credited the center's success "entirely to the personality of a young colored woman"—that woman was Birdye Henrietta Haynes.

Born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Haynes graduated from Fisk University in 1909. While teaching high school in Corsicana, Texas, she received a Julius Rosenwald fellowship to study at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. Her subsequent leadership of the Wendell Phillips Settlement, a Black-run institution affiliated with Hull House, brought her to the attention of social reformer Lillian D. Wald, who recruited her to New York's troubled San Juan Hill. Indeed, she arrived just as the community's name was so maligned that locals were campaigning to rename it "Columbus Hill."

In 1922, Haynes died following surgery, a tragically ironic loss—for having relocated to Harlem, she was preparing for a new leadership role at the 137th Street YWCA.

New York Public Library

Lincoln House, 202 West 63rd Street

Harper's Weekly

Cummings decorated a Met Opera House gala

Herbert D. Cummings

5

Floral decorator

(February 8, 1878–April 12, 1952)
Primrose Plot

In 1902, the old cliché, "Once upon a time," seemed to apply to a young African American floral decorator named Herbert Dey Cummings when a nod from European royalty turned him into a star. It happened during Prince Henry of Prussia's famous goodwill tour of several American cities, for which New York staged an extravagant welcome: a grand gala on February 25 at the Metropolitan Opera House.

For this occasion, famous Gilded Age florist **Charles F. Thorley** was commissioned to create a floral spectacle, which he in turn entrusted his young assistant, Herbert Cummings, to execute. Cummings, one of many African American clerks who staffed Thorley's shops, pulled off a spellbinding installation: cascading from the theater balconies were tendrils of smilax vines accented with blooms of azaleas, marguerites, and glimmering little white lights. The Prince, enchanted, halted before exiting the opera house and asked to meet the person responsible. When Cummings stepped forward, the Prince invited him to serve as his personal florist on his return sail to Germany.

Aboard the *S.S. Deutschland*, Cummings daily recreated the opulent floral décor of the Prince's stateroom and table arrangements. Thorley had outfitted him with 15,000 flowers and $700 (nearly $27,000 today) for personal expenses. Weeks later, Cummings returned to Thorley's Fifth Avenue shop with a glowing letter of recommendation and a diamond-studded gold watch—royal tokens of esteem that added luster to his career and to the growing prestige of Harlem's Black professional class.

SECTION 2. CANNA AVENUE STROLL

From the Jerome Ave Entrance make a right onto West Border Ave. Stay to your left as you continue on West Border Ave which turns into Canna Ave when you reach the Canna Plot. On the right side of the road, you will see John W. Connor's monument with a cross and an angel.

John W. Connor

Restaurateur, baseball owner, tastemaker

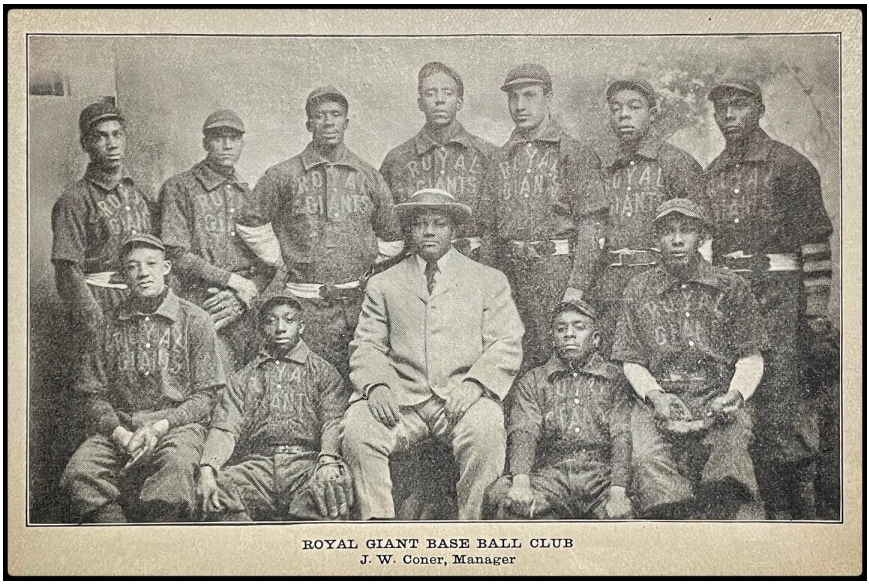
6

(December 26, 1875–July 9, 1926)
Canna Plot

Brooklyn businessman and sportsman John W. Connor was a principal founder of organized "colored" baseball in New York. Around 1905, he founded the Brooklyn Royal Giants—one of New York's earliest and most celebrated independent Negro League baseball teams—which he later sold to white club owner Nathaniel "Nat" Strong.

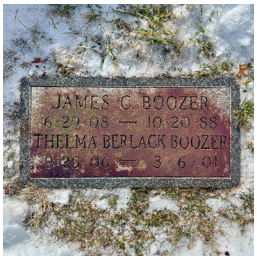
Off the field, Connor was a leader in Black hospitality. His Royal Café was widely regarded as Brooklyn's finest Black-owned restaurant, a business he later recreated in Harlem. Connor also presided over the Colored Liquor Dealers Association, advocating for the dignity and respect of Black-owned saloons amid frequent police harassment. In 1914, he hosted Harlem's first Tango Tea Party, launching a daytime social tradition with music by the famed Clef Club Orchestra—featuring a young Dooley Wilson, later famous as "Sam" in the 1942 movie *Casablanca*.

By 1918, several star players of Connor's former Brooklyn Royal Giants team defected from Nat Strong. Opting to cross the East River to Manhattan, they joined the Grand Central Terminal Red Caps Base Ball Club led by **James H. "Chief" Williams**, who offered them something no white manager could match—steady off-season employment.



Eric K. Washington Collection

Connor with his Negro League baseball team ca. 1905



Thelma Berlack Boozer

Journalist

7

(September 26, 1906–March 6, 2001)
Cosmos Plot

A trailblazing journalist, Florida-born Thelma Berlack graduated with honors from Theodore Roosevelt High School in the Bronx in 1924. Among her many accolades were the Alfred C. Bossom school citizenship medal, and generous cash awards from the *New York World*—for an article on the proposed Child Labor Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—and the NAACP-Madam Walker scholarship fund. A precocious teenager, she was already working as a staff writer for the Harlem bureau of the *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper while studying journalism at New York University.

New York University

Thelma Berlack Boozer

By June 28, 1930, when she married James C. Boozer, her childhood sweetheart from Ocala, Florida, Thelma Berlack had risen to assistant managing editor of the *New York Amsterdam News*. Two years later, she founded the Harlem Newspaper Club, an early forum for Black journalists.

"Journalism is difficult, especially for a colored girl," Berlack once admitted about her career, "but I have never urged anyone to stay out of the field."

In 1942, Lincoln University in Missouri appointed her chair of its newly established school of journalism, marking a rare institutional leadership role for a Black woman in American media education.

Caspar Holstein

Racketeer, philanthropist, gambling ace

(December 6, 1877–April 5, 1944)
Cosmos Plot

8

Born on the Caribbean island of St. Croix, Caspar Holstein personified the unlikely fusion of vice and virtue that animated the mystique of the Harlem Renaissance.

During the 1920s, Holstein lorded over one of Harlem's most prosperous enterprises within the era's underground Prohibition economy: organized gambling. From his Turf Club at 111 West 136th Street, he ran the illegal lottery known as policy playing, or the "numbers" game, in which his bettors wagered on three-digit figures drawn from stock market reports. With odds running 600 to 1, the operation generated enormous profits, allowing Holstein to amass substantial real estate holdings.

Unlike menacing contemporaries such as gangsters Lucky Luciano, Dutch Schultz, or Legs Diamond, Holstein's nonviolent reputation was more evocative of Robin Hood. He poured his wealth into a remarkable range of philanthropic causes. He famously underwrote *Opportunity* magazine's annual literary prizes for Black authors, inducing writer **Hubert Harrison** to cite Holstein as "the only Negro patron of art and letters in New York." He also financed outings for Harlem children, supported a training school in Liberia, and helped establish model dairy farms in St. Croix to supply milk to infants. As head of the Virgin Islands Congressional Council, Holstein published widely on political conditions in his native homeland, advocating for improved governance and economic development.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library

Caspar Holstein

In 1928, Holstein was kidnapped by rival gangsters and released three days later without ransom, a turning point that foreshadowed his decline. By the early 1930s, Dutch Schultz seized control of his Harlem numbers empire. Though Holstein continued his civic commitments and Elks lodge activities, a 1936 gambling conviction led to a three-year imprisonment. Toward the end, his Harlem and Caribbean communities rallied to honor their former benefactor, bankrupt and ill, ensuring he would not be buried in obscurity.

Bessye J. Bearden

Journalist, club woman, civic leader

9

(contested: October 9, 1888 or 1893–September 16, 1943)
Cosmos Plot

Bessye J. Bearden was an eminent journalist, civic leader, and socialite of the Harlem Renaissance. Her regular columns captured the spirit and sophistication of the Harlem smart set that energized the 1920s and '30s.

Born in North Carolina, she attended public schools before studying at Virginia Historically Black Colleges: Hartshorn Memorial in Richmond and the Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg. She later studied journalism in New York at Columbia University. As Harlem correspondent for the *Chicago Defender*, Bearden became a trusted chronicler of the neighborhood's dynamic political and cultural life.

Civic life punctuated her journalism. In 1924, she became the first Black member, and secretary, of Manhattan's 15th School District board. When the board was renamed District No. 12 she was elected chair—making her a rare Black woman in the nation whose signature appeared on public school diplomas. In 1927, Harlem's newly formed Theta chapter of Phi Delta Kappa—a national sorority of Black women educators—granted Bearden honorary membership in recognition of her standing as a Board of Education official.

New York Public Library

Bessye J. Bearden

Bearden's wide-ranging social and political affiliations ranged from the Women's Auxiliary to The Frogs, a theatrical fellowship, to her presidency of the Colored Women's Democratic League of the United Colored Democracy, an organization that anticipated the eventual shift of African American political allegiance away from the Republican Party.

In 1935, Bearden left journalism to become a New York State deputy collector of internal revenue. Her death in 1943 perhaps produced her boldest legacy: her son, Romare Bearden, one of twentieth-century America's most renowned artists.

James H. "Chief" Williams

Railroad labor leader

(August 4, 1878–May 4, 1948)
Cosmos Plot

10

In the early twentieth century, James Henry Williams transformed a low-ranking service job at Grand Central Terminal into a platform of advancement for a generation of Harlem's aspiring Black professionals.

When the New York Central Railroad began building its new terminal in 1903, it also broke precedent by integrating its all-white station attendant crew—known as Red Caps—with Williams, an African American. Within a year, the staff became almost entirely Black, paralleling the Pullman porters who worked aboard trains. This workforce, color-coded by uniform and race, soon became the national model, and Williams, promoted to Chief Attendant in 1909, its most prominent leader.

Eric K. Washington Collection

James H. "Chief" Williams

Red Caps, while vital to America's railway system, were trapped in tip-based positions and barred from advancement. Chief Williams countered this by establishing the Red Caps Beneficial Association to provide mutual aid. He also established a premiere orchestra, quartet, and competitive sports teams from their ranks to sustain morale. For three decades he was the namesake of the American Tennis Association's coveted Williams Cup prize.

Williams hired hundreds of African American college students from across the East Coast, with few employment options en route to becoming doctors, lawyers, linguists, architects and journalists. Distinguished Red Cap alumni included New York's first Black police officer Samuel "Jesse" Battle; Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr.; singer Paul Robeson; architect John L. Wilson; mortician Samuel R. Delany Sr.; and Urban League leader Lester Granger. Williams's own son, Wesley Williams, became the city's first Black fire officer. "Only because the Chief…was proud of his race were hundreds of young colored men able to go through college," recalled Harlem politician Earl Brown, one of countless men at Grand Central Terminal who transformed humble service roles into singular pathways toward education, economic stability, and middle-class mobility.

Hon. J. Frank Wheaton

Lawyer, orator, civic leader

(May 8, 1866–January 15, 1922)
Syringa Plot (Unmarked Grave)

11

Born in Hagerstown, Maryland, J. Frank Wheaton was a pioneering civil rights lawyer, politician, and civic leader whose five-decade career spanned Maryland, Minnesota, and New York. He graduated high school at Storer College in 1882, an enrollee during Frederick Douglass's historic 1881 address there on abolitionist John Brown. He entered politics early, stumping for Benjamin Harrison in 1888 and serving as an elected delegate to the Republican National Convention.

Wheaton worked as a House clerk in the Capital in Washington, D.C. to support his studies at Howard University, where he earned his law degree in 1893. Although soon admitted to the Maryland bar the same year, he chose to relocate to Minnesota. In 1894 he became the first Black graduate at Minnesota State University, bearing its honor of class orator. He was elected to the Minnesota Legislature in 1898—its only Black representative at the time.

New York Public Library

Hon. J. Frank Wheaton ca. 1898

In the early 1900s, Wheaton settled in Harlem where he co-founded the Equity Congress, a civic league that fought for Black representation in government, employment, and public service. Under his leadership, the group helped establish the famed all-Black 15th Regiment, later known as the 369th Infantry "Harlem Hellfighters." Wheaton's legal clients included heavyweight champion Jack Johnson and the Colored Elks, where he served as Grand Exalted Ruler.

Edward H. Wilson

Businessman, hotel proprietor

(February 17, 1877–August 15, 1944)
Salvia Plot

12

When businessman Edward H. Wilson opened the Hotel Olga in December 1920, it seemed almost an answer to prayer. At a time when Harlem's now-iconic Hotel Theresa still barred Black guests, New York was said to be "the only large city without a Race hotel." To fill that void, Wilson established a three-story, seventy-five-room hotel at 695 Lenox Avenue, on the intersection's southwest corner with 145th Street, which quickly drew both travelers and long-term residents.

Wilson arrived from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, well connected to Harlem's elite. His brother, **Dr. Wiley Wilson**, was married to heiress **Lelia Walker**, daughter of the late millionaire hair-culturist **Madam C. J. Walker**—ties that positioned him to become a central figure in Harlem's emerging landscape of Black hostelries. Over the next two decades, the Olga hosted such notables as "Dean of the Harlem Renaissance" Alain Locke, "Empress of the Blues" Bessie Smith, pioneering aviators J. Herman Banning and Thomas C. Allen, baseball legend Satchel Paige, and immortal jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong, who lived there for several years in the 1930s.

In 1928, Wilson expanded his venture a block away with the elegant Witoka Club reception hall. He often donated this space to civil rights groups like the NAACP for lecture "smokers" featuring Clarence Darrow and Heywood Broun, and fundraisers for the Scottsboro Boys. Its social events drew stars such as Billie Holiday and Dexter Gordon. Then a decade later, on a corner across from the Olga, Wilson opened the Hotel Currie.

A'Lelia Bundles Family Archive

Edward H. Wilson

For a quarter century, Wilson's trifecta of enterprises spanned the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression, and World War II. Attesting to Harlem's robust northward expansion, they represented pride of place to both Black travelers and residents in America's most celebrated Black community.

Troy H. Hinton

13

Fraternal leader, deacon, Grolier Club steward

(1859–January 7, 1930)
Salvia Plot

On the Sunday afternoon of March 9, 1924, as 3,500 Black Elks paraded up Seventh Avenue and down Lenox, Troy H. Hinton could rightly bask in the deafening cheers that were pouring from Harlem's crowds. A building superintendent by day, Hinton was now presiding over the dedication of the newly built clubhouse for Imperial Lodge No. 127, of which he was a founder and past Exalted Ruler.

Hinton's lodge was part of the I.B.P.O.E. of W. (Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World), a vast fraternal order of mutual aid and self-empowerment that had flourished in Black communities nationwide for decades. That summer, the Elks' national conclave in Pittsburgh greeted him as an eminent delegate.

Harlem's prestigious Imperial Lodge No. 127 building at 160 West 129th Street, which cost $150,000 (about $3 million today), was designed by pioneering Black architect Vertner Tandy. Hinton soon witnessed it become a cultural landmark: In 1925, A. Philip Randolph organized some 500 "Pullman" railroad workers there into the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters, the nation's first chartered Black labor union.

Hinton's day job carried its own resonance: he was the resident caretaker of Manhattan's exclusive Grolier Club. He took notice of the evening doorman, a studious young poet, whom he steered toward the club's top brass. Indeed, **Countee Cullen** later recalled crafting many of his verses there that would fill his 1925 debut collection, *Color*, a celebrated poetry volume of the Harlem Renaissance.

Sir Knight Hinton, as masonic brothers styled him, died in 1930. Although he was a deacon at the Walker Memorial Church, his overflowing fraternal ties necessitated services to be held instead at his wife's church, Salem M.E. Church, pastored by **Rev. Frederick A. Cullen** (Countee Cullen's father). Hinton's pallbearers were, like himself, all past Exalted Rulers of his Imperial Lodge No. 127.

Eric K. Washington Collection

Former Imperial Lodge No. 127

Hubert H. Harrison

14

Writer, orator, social critic

(April 27, 1883–December 17, 1927)
Salvia Plot

The early decades of the 20th century saw Hubert H. Harrison emerge as Harlem's first great soapbox orator, a speaker so commanding he was said to have turned Seventh Avenue into "the People's University." His brilliance as a lecturer, writer, and educator led civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph to call him "the father of Harlem radicalism."

New York Public Library

Hubert H. Harrison

Born in 1883 on the Danish Caribbean island of St. Croix, Harrison emigrated to New York City at seventeen, orphaned and seeking opportunity near an older sister. While supporting himself as an elevator operator, postal clerk, and in other modest jobs, he completed DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx and plunged into radical politics. By 1911 he had become a prominent Socialist Party theorist and an outspoken supporter of the Industrial Workers of the World.

A notorious anti-Black massacre in East St. Louis, Illinois, in 1917 pushed Harrison's activism into national view. In Harlem, he founded the Liberty League of Negro-Americans and its newspaper, *The Voice*, and published his first book, *The Negro and the Nation*. Together, these works became foundational to the emerging New Negro Movement, the intellectual current that helped ignite the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s. In 1918, amid the First World War, Harrison joined journalist William Monroe Trotter and others to bring African American demands for federal enforcement of constitutional rights and anti-lynching legislation before Congress.

Beginning in 1920, Harrison served as principal editor of the *Negro World*, the newspaper of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). He transformed the paper into a leading political and literary forum before eventually breaking with Garvey over strategy and leadership.

Jacob Charles "Doc" Cantey

Pullman porter, real estate owner

(ca. 1855–September 29, 1932)
Syringa Plot (Unmarked Grave)

15

In 1886, Jacob Charles Cantey put his medical studies on hold to work for the Wagner Palace Car railroad company. In the decades after the Civil War, industrialist George Pullman recruited legions of Black men who were newly freed from slavery to staff his opulent sleeping-car trains as waiters and porters. Relegated to these low-level service positions, Cantey and many others parlayed the steady work into the realization of broader middle-class professions.

Cantey was reportedly one of the first Pullman porters assigned to the New York Central's new Empire State Express, the "fastest in the world," which ran between Grand Central Station and Buffalo. Introduced in 1891, the plush four-car train—steam-heated, gaslit, and linked by vestibules—included a combined buffet, smoking and library car, a Wagner palace drawing room car, and two standard coaches.

University of Minnesota YMCA Archives

Williamsbridge Colored Men's Association, 1910

On June 30, 1897, just past Poughkeepsie, an incident aboard the train thrust Cantey to the center of sensational railroad news. In abject distress, a veiled young woman traveling alone could not stir any other woman passenger to assist her. Cantey managed to guide her to the adjoining car's vacant stateroom. There, helpless to avoid indiscretion, he summoned his brief medical training and delivered her healthy baby girl before relatives met the train at Utica.

Though widely called "Doc," Cantey remained a Pullman porter well into the twentieth century—and became a major community builder. Long before Black families migrated up from Manhattan's Tenderloin to Harlem, he was among the most notable Black property owners in the Bronx's Williamsbridge section. He encouraged fellow Pullman and Red Cap porters to buy homes there, often with support from the New York Central's Railroad Co-operative Building and Loan Association. By 1910, the popularly called "Bridge" neighborhood thrived like a suburban extension of Harlem, with its own Black churches, clubs, and institutions such as the Williamsbridge Colored Men's Association, where Cantey served as an officer.

Jacob Cantey never got his medical career back on track, but his life, from railroad service to quiet community leadership, was decidedly influential. He helped define a path to a once vibrant, middle-class Bronx enclave for generations of African American families.

Wilhelmina F. Adams

Civic leader, entrepreneur, politician

16

(January 31, 1901–May 19, 1987)
Heliotrope Plot (Name Not on Headstone)

Wilhelmina "Willy" Adams was a civic leader, entrepreneur, and skilled Harlem political leader. Although crowned Queen of the Hotel Tattler's Ball in 1924, her renowned beauty belied a formidable political mind that earned her reputation as "Harlem's First Lady in the drive for progress."

As a Harlem teenager during the first World War, Adams helped raise $1.6 million in Liberty Bonds. Her civic zeal saw her both modeling for the Utopia Neighborhood Club's annual fundraisers to establish a child welfare and recreation center, and serving as one of its directors.

In the early 1930s, Adams's persuasive personality ignored the Great Depression. She secured an unprecedented privilege to run a ticket booth in Grand Central Terminal for a celebrity costume ball supporting Harlem's unemployment relief effort. She also brokered the first Harlem appearance of bandleader Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians at the Savoy Ballroom.

Emory University

Wilhelmina F. Adams

New York Public Library

Adams featured on a local ad ca. 1950

In politics, she managed the 1930 campaigns of Justices **James S. Watson** and Charles B. Toney, who became the first two Black elected judges in New York State. A decade later, Adams became Manhattan's first Black woman Assembly District co-leader, and the first to serve on Tammany Hall's law committee. She supported Adam Clayton Powell Jr.'s 1944 congressional win and was the first Black woman delegate to that year's Democratic National Convention.

A successful florist, Adams was identified with the National Association of Business and Professional Women, and numerous other civic, church and political organizations throughout her lifetime.

Charles W. Anderson

17

Political orator and organizer

(April 28, 1866–January 28, 1938)
Summit Plot (Unmarked Grave)

Known as the "Colored Demosthenes" for his commanding oratory, Charles William Anderson was a pioneering Republican organizer among Black voters, holding influential posts in both New York State and the federal government.

Born in Oxford, Ohio, Anderson attended public schools and commercial college before moving to New York City in 1886. The charismatic 20-year-old soon entered politics as a "ward healer," organizing African American voters into clubs for the Republican Party that most then loyally supported. By 1890 he was president of the city's Young Men's Colored Republican Club, which ushered in his government career three years later as State Treasurer Addison B. Colvin's private secretary, and in 1898 as Governor Frank S. Black's appointed supervisor of state racing accounts.

In the 1890s, Anderson's eloquence and organizing skill had earned him a place in Booker T. Washington's inner circle, and the honor of delivering the Tuskegee Institute's 1897 commencement address. That same year he evoked the valorous "colored troops" before a grand banquet of Union Army Civil War veterans that included Republican President William McKinley. His career peaked in 1905 when President Theodore Roosevelt, defying racist opposition, appointed him Internal Revenue Collector for New York's Wall Street district—an unprecedented federal post for an African American from a Northern state.

Anderson was ousted in 1915 when Democratic president Woodrow Wilson purged African Americans from federal jobs. Governor Charles Seymour Whitman duly named him chief inspector for the state agricultural department, and in 1923 President Warren G. Harding appointed him revenue collector for a new New York district. Though less prestigious than his earlier federal role, it prompted a blizzard of congratulatory telegrams attesting to Anderson's enduring stature as one of Harlem's most influential political figures until his 1934 retirement.

New York Public Library

Charles W. Anderson

Edward E. "Chief" Lee

Civil servant, political power broker

(ca. 1849/50–March 9, 1929)
Salvia Plot (Unmarked Grave)

18

Edward E. Lee was head bellman at two downtown hotels. To the unacquainted, the big, lumbering figure with a cane might have seemed unremarkable. But to those who knew him, he was "one of the landmarks of Harlem"—a formidable political power broker.

In the late 1890s, Lee founded the United Colored Democracy (UCD), a political movement of Black voters that anticipated the major break from traditional Republican allegiance a generation later. Like most Black voters, Virginia-born Lee was a Republican in 1896, backing presidential candidate William McKinley. But McKinley repeatedly reneged on patronage promises to Black New Yorkers. When some constituents threatened to bolt, state GOP congressman Lemuel E. Quigg reportedly scoffed that Black voters "could not be drove out of the Republican party with a trip hammer," a condescension that spurred Lee to break ranks.

New York Public Library

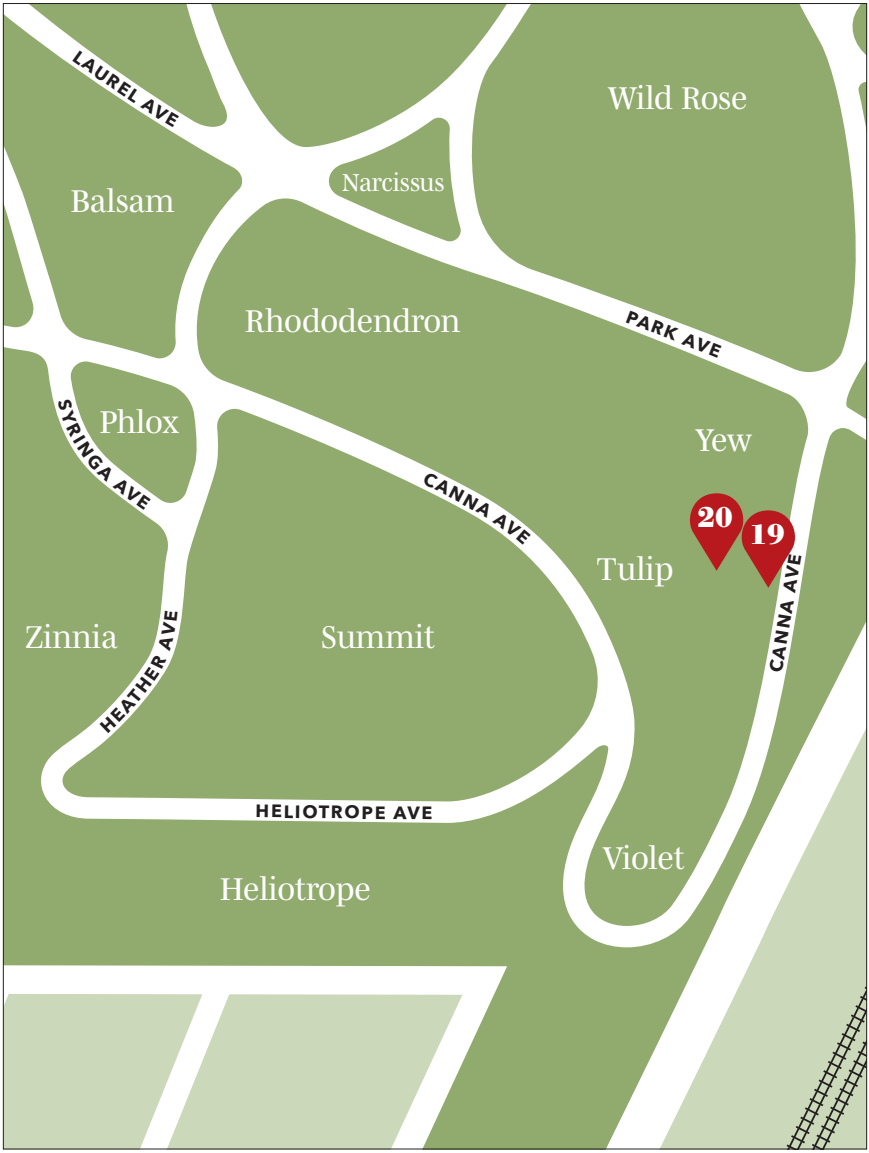
Edward E. "Chief" Lee

During the heated 1897 mayoral race, as New York prepared to consolidate into five boroughs, Lee led a committee offering Tammany Hall boss Richard Croker their votes in exchange for appointments. In 1898, under Mayor Robert A. Van Wyck, Croker pledged "at least one colored man in every department of the city government," and Lee was elected "Chief" of the UCD.

The UCD quickly secured posts for African Americans in the health department, district attorney's office, tax department, dock service, and more. Though many Black Republicans branded them traitors, even pelting them at rallies, the UCD served a vital role—teaching Black voters "the rudiments of patronage and practical politics," and fostering a bipartisan outlook that challenged blind loyalty to the GOP.

SECTION 3. YEW PLOT

From Jerome Ave Entrance make a right onto West Border Ave. Stay to your right continuing on West Border Ave as it turns into Canna Ave. Stay to your right and continue onto Syringa Ave. Stay to the right and continue onto Heather Ave. Turn left as Heather Ave turns into Heliotrope Ave. When you reach the end of Heliotrope Ave make a right onto Canna Ave and go down the hill. On your left hand side in the Yew plot, you will see the grave of Rudolph Fisher.



Rudolph Fisher

Physician, radiologist, writer

(May 9, 1897–December 26, 1934)
Heliotrope Plot

19

Looking beyond his X-ray training, Rudolph Fisher probed the human condition in a way that blazed a defining literary trail of the Harlem Renaissance.

New York Public Library

Rudolph Fisher

Born in Washington, D.C., Fisher grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, where his father served as a pastor. After studying at Brown University, he pursued medicine at Howard University. While in Washington, D.C. he met and married Jane Ryder, a school teacher, before graduating with honors in 1924 and beginning an internship at Freedmen's Hospital.

In 1926, Fisher and his wife moved to New York City. Specializing in radiology and publishing in medical periodicals such as *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, he later joined Harlem's International Hospital as a physician and researcher. Medicine, however, was only one dimension of his achievement.

While still at Freedmen's Hospital, Fisher's short story "The City of Refuge" appeared in *The Atlantic* in 1925. Additional stories followed in *American Mercury*, *Survey Graphic*, and *Opportunity*. Set largely in Harlem, his fiction examined lynching, interracial relationships, color prejudice, and tensions between Black migrants from the American South and the Caribbean. That same year, the *Crisis* awarded him the $100 Amy Spingarn Prize for his story "High Yaller," amplifying his national attention.

Fisher's reputation expanded with his 1928 novel, *The Walls of Jericho*, a sharp social satire of class and color divisions within Black Harlem. His 1932 novel, *The Conjure-Man Dies*, became a landmark as the first detective novel with a Black detective and an entirely Black cast of characters.

Fisher died in 1934 at thirty-seven, but his fusion of medical insight and literary innovation secured his lasting influence in American letters.

Felix Weir

20

Violin virtuoso, educator

(October 8, 1884–May 9, 1978)
Yew Plot

Encouraged by family, Felix Fowler Weir first drew attention in 1895 as an eleven-year-old classical violin prodigy in Chicago. When in 1903 he became the first African American to win the Chicago Musical College's coveted diamond medal, a patron—likely his uncle David Weir, a prosperous caterer—offered to fund his advanced study in Europe. The following year, he entered the Royal Conservatory of Music in Leipzig, Germany, and excelled under Hans Becker. But his first year ended with his benefactor's death, forcing his return to the United States.

Weir settled in Washington, D.C., teaching music while touring widely. His notable New York appearances included a 1905 Madison Square Garden recital promoted by vaudevillians **Bert Williams** and George Walker, and a 1906 Mendelssohn Hall concert with Afro-English composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Perhaps most pivotal was a 1914 "Concert of Negro Music" at Carnegie Hall benefiting the Music School Settlement for Colored People under J. Rosamond Johnson—a school founded by the renowned **David Mannes**, in tribute to his boyhood violin tutelage by a Black instructor. The Carnegie Hall event anticipated Weir's move to Harlem, where he organized the Music School Settlement String Quartet with Joseph Lymas, second violin; Leonard Jeter, cello; **Hall Johnson**, viola (also a famous choral arranger).

National Museum of African American History and Culture

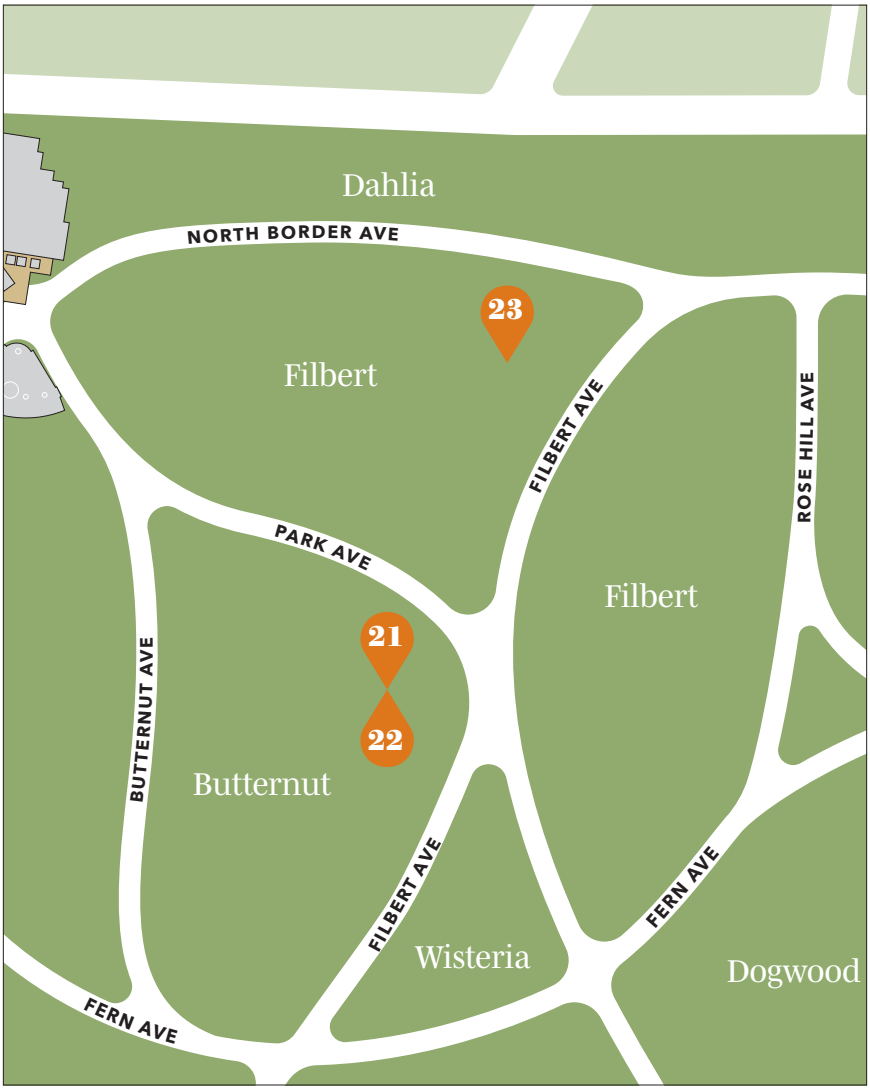
Weir (left) with the Negro String Quartet ca. 1923

The Settlement school's closure in 1919 recast the ensemble as the celebrated Negro String Quartet, active until about 1937 with varying personnel, who provided a singular instance of chamber music by Black players. Their acclaimed artistry—which was featured at a 1925 Carnegie Hall recital of tenor Roland Hayes—expanded opportunities for Black classical musicians and carried Weir's prodigious promise into legacy.

Weir was also the father of physician **Reginald S. Weir**, who broke racial barriers in 1948 when the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association admitted him to the National Indoor Championship. He became the first Black player to win a national tennis title.

SECTION 4. FILBERT AVENUE WALK

From the Jerome Ave Entrance make a left onto West Border Ave. You will pass the Woolworth Chapel. Stay to the left and continue on West Border Ave until you reach the Community Mausoleums. You will pass the Van Cortlandt and Garden Conservatory Mausoleums on your left. On your right you will see the Lotus Community Mausoleums. Pass the Lotus Mausoleum and turn right onto Park Ave. At the fork in the road stay to the left and continue on Park Ave. Look for the Weser Mausoleum on your left. The Walker Monument is under a tree 75 feet behind the Weser Mausoleum.



Mme. C.J. Walker

Entrepreneur, philanthropist, social activist

(December 23, 1867–May 25, 1919)
Butternut Plot

21

In the classic American rags-to-riches story, Madam C.J. Walker stands as one of its most iconic figures. Born Sarah Breedlove in 1867 on a post–Civil War plantation near Delta, Louisiana, she was the first freeborn child of her formerly enslaved parents' six children. Orphaned by age seven, Breedlove moved at ten to live with her married sister in Vicksburg, Mississippi. At fourteen, seeking escape from her brother-in-law's abuse, she married Moses McWilliams. Their daughter, Lelia, was born in 1885, but McWilliams died two years later.

A'Lelia Bundles Family Archive

Mme. C.J. Walker

Mother and child soon relocated to St. Louis, where Breedlove supported them as a washerwoman. In 1894 she married John Davis, a union that ended in 1903. During these years, however, her determination transformed her from laborer to entrepreneur. In 1906, after marrying newspaper man Charles Joseph Walker, she began marketing herself as Madam C.J. Walker, beauty culturist.

By 1910, she had opened the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company's factory and beauty school in Indianapolis. But at her daughter's urging, she opened a Harlem office and salon in 1913, positioning herself at the center of New York's rapidly expanding Black community. Walker salons soon spread nationwide, training thousands of Black women as beauty culturists and sales agents.

Walker was equally committed to philanthropy and activism, supporting the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC), the NAACP's anti-lynching fund, and countless charitable causes. By 1918, she was considered America's first self-made millionaire businesswoman—at least its most famous one—when she commissioned Vertner Tandy, New York State's first licensed architect, to build her mansion in Irvington, New York. The great Italian tenor Enrico Caruso named the house Villa Lewaro; it stands to this day. The following year she died, leaving behind a legacy of enterprise, empowerment, and enduring influence.

A'Lelia Walker

Socialite, cultural doyenne

(June 6, 1885–August 17, 1931)
Butternut Plot

22

Though often only remembered as the daughter of millionaire businesswoman Madam C. J. Walker, A'Lelia Walker—born Lelia McWilliams—fashioned her own legacy as a singular cultural doyenne of the Harlem Renaissance.

Arguably America's first Black celebrity heiress, Walker lived in a public glare that reflected both wealth and spectacle. In 1923, she purportedly invited 9,000 guests to a lavish "million-dollar wedding" for her daughter Mae. Certainly thousands of onlookers lined Harlem's streets in the rain that day to witness the splendid cortege that embodied a rare example of Black generational wealth. Yet Walker's deeper significance lay in her rare gift for convening people across social boundaries. Well-traveled and cosmopolitan, she compelled disparate figures—Black and white, American and international, gay and straight—to share spaces that broke with convention.

Her circles included Harlem writers **Countee Cullen**, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman and Bruce Nugent; performers Alberta Hunter and Jimmie Daniels; journalists **Bessye Bearden** and Gerri Major; and downtown figures such as Carl Van Vechten and English playwright Noël Coward. Her gatherings unfolded at multiple settings—her mother's Westchester estate, Villa Lewaro; her Harlem apartment; and most famously, the townhouse above the Walker Beauty Salon.

A'Lelia Bundles Family Archive

A'Lelia Walker

On October 15, 1927, Walker formally opened that townhouse salon at 108 West 136th Street as the "Dark Tower," conceived as a showcase for Harlem's Black literati. Its centerpiece was a dramatic skyscraper-like bookcase designed by Viennese modernist Paul T. Frankl. Flanking it, each of the opposite walls was stenciled with a poem: Cullen's "From the Dark Tower," which inspired the salon's name, and Hughes's "The Weary Blues," respectively.

Remembering her years later, Hughes crowned A'Lelia Walker "the Joy Goddess of Harlem's 1920s," a fitting tribute to both her exuberance and her lasting cultural impact.

Dr. Charles H. Roberts

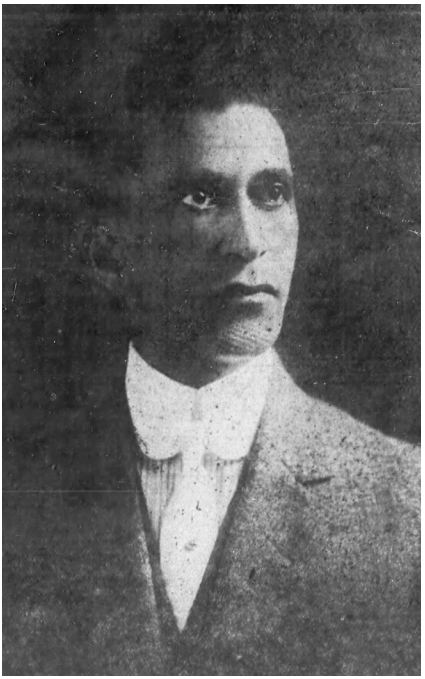
23

Dental surgeon, city alderman

(August 12, 1872–January 1, 1967)
Aster Plot

On July 28, 1919, New York's white and Black Republicans set a remarkable precedent by unanimously nominating Dr. Charles H. Roberts for alderman of the 27th district, which encompassed Harlem. Roberts, a respected dental surgeon, thus became the city's first African American candidate for the Board of Aldermen, precursor to today's City Council.

In 1914, Roberts traveled with his family to London to address the VI International Dental Congress, but the outbreak of war disrupted their extended European trip. Determined to serve, he returned alone the following year to volunteer with the French army's medical division. Back home, he provided free dental care to U.S. servicemen, presided over the Manhattan Medical Dental and Pharmaceutical Association, and organized a Children's Dental Clinic through the Children's Aid Society.



New York Age

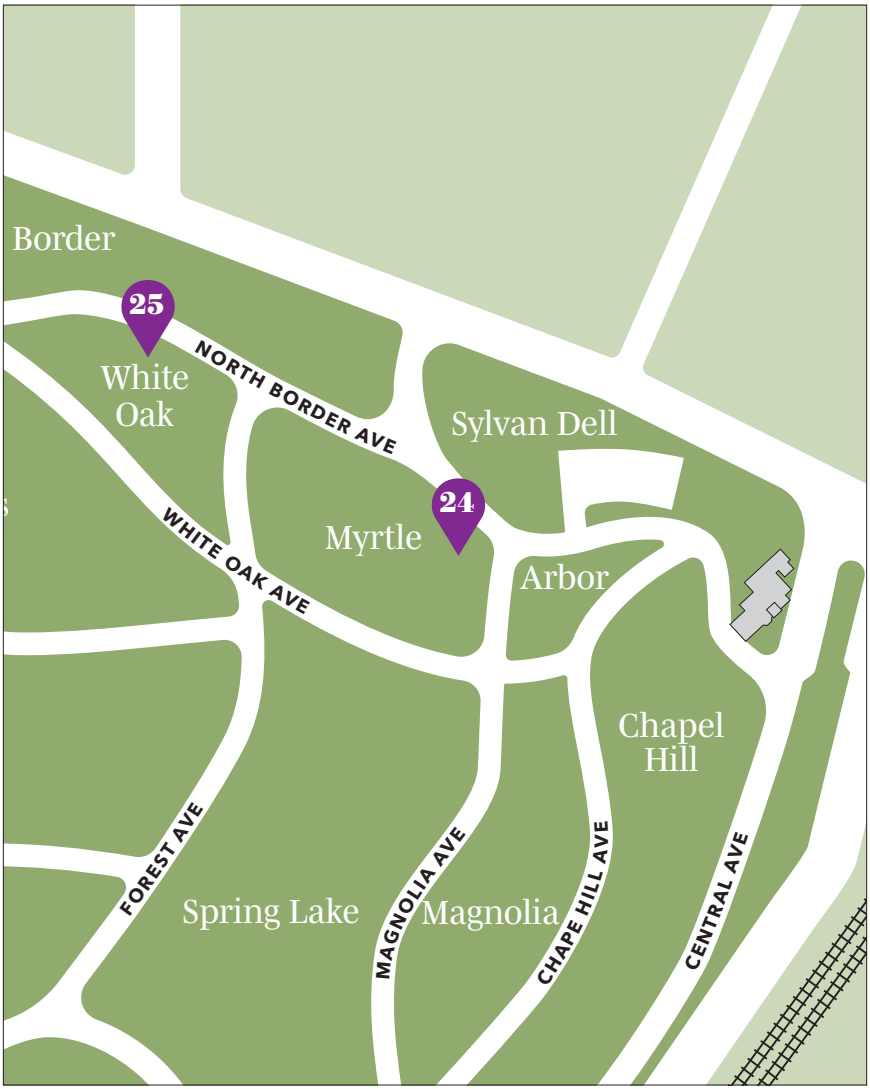
Dr. Charles H. Roberts

For the aldermanic race, Roberts campaigned on a wide range of neighborhood concerns: building public baths, an armory for the 15th Regiment "Harlem Hellfighters," prosecuting food profiteers, opposing public transit fare hikes, and creating a local public market. His political platform drew a remarkable coalition of endorsements, including Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt (eldest son of the late president), NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson, and Rev. Adam Clayton Powell of Abyssinian Baptist Church.

He won the election, and Harlem marked the alderman-elect's victory in grand style. Charles W. Anderson—the famed "Colored Demosthenes" and former federal appointee of President Theodore Roosevelt—presided as toastmaster at Harlem's exclusive Libya resort, adorned by the renowned society florist **Charles F. Thorley**. Roberts's triumph ushered him toward prominence as a civic leader, and signaled Harlem's centrality as a Black political stronghold.

Section 5. Webster Avenue Entrance

From the Jerome Ave Entrance Continue straight onto Central Ave following the dotted line in the road. Stay on Central Ave for approximately ¾ mile. You will see a tree sculpture of an owl on your left. When you see this sculpture, make a left off of Central Ave onto Forest Ave. Continue on Forest Ave until you reach North Border Ave. If you make a right and continue to the next corner of the myrtle plot you will find the grave of David K McDonogh. If you make a left off of Forest, you will find the Butler monument on North Border Ave in the White Oak plot.



David K. McDonogh

Surgeon, ophthalmologist, otolaryngologist

24

(contested: August 10, 1821 or 1825–January 15, 1893)
Myrtle Plot

Born in chattel slavery in New Orleans, Louisiana, David Kearny McDonogh rose to prominence in New York City as America's first Black ophthalmologist and otolaryngologist.

In 1838, his enslaver John McDonogh, a Louisiana planter and promoter of the American Colonization Society (ACS), sought to advance its mission of relocating free and formerly enslaved Blacks to Africa. Convinced two of his enslaved men—David, and another named Washington—could serve as missionaries in Liberia, he enrolled them at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. But many Blacks decried McDonogh—who admitted he would never "give freedom to a single individual…to remain on the same soil with the white man"—for masking self-interest as philanthropy. In 1842, he boasted that an enslaved family of eighty, promised manumission, had labored so diligently for fifteen years that he recouped their full value in wages and even bought their replacements. That same year, Washington quit Lafayette early for missionary work.

New York Public Library

New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

But David K. McDonogh, captivated by medicine, stayed. In 1844, he became the first enslaved college graduate in the United States. Although his 1847 diploma from the New York's College of Physicians and Surgeons was awarded posthumously, he received his medical degree from the Eclectic Medical College in 1875. He practiced in the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary for eleven years.

Two years after McDonogh's death in 1893, Black physicians and educators organized the short-lived interracial McDonough Memorial Hospital (with a "u" added to his surname), which operated at 439 West 41st Street from 1898 until 1904; in 1918, groundbreaking took place at 20 West 133rd Street in Harlem for a new facility that was never built.

Adelaide Butler
Matron and heroine, Colored Orphan Asylum

25

(ca. 1823–June 4, 1878)
Colored Orphan Asylum—White Oak Plot

Virginia-born widow Adelaide Butler was a matron and heroine of New York's Colored Orphan Asylum, the venerable nineteenth-century institution whose destruction by a racist mob left an indelible scar on the nation's conscience.

In the summer of 1863, as the Civil War split the nation, white New Yorkers could pay $300 (about $7,300 today) to avoid the draft—a provision that infuriated poorer working men. On July 13, violent white mobs unleashed days of terror and anti-Black attacks. That afternoon, they stormed the Colored Orphan Asylum at Fifth Avenue and 43rd Street. Despite the children inside, they torched and plundered the building. Fortunately, Butler, assisted by police **Captain Jebediah W. Hartt**, smuggled the children out of a back door to safety.

Butler counts among numerous burials of the venerable Colored Orphan Asylum

Fifteen years later, Butler died at age 55, concluding a 25-year tenure. The legendary Rev. Henry Highland Garnet presided at her funeral, citing "her presence of mind and decisive courage that prevented a panic, saved the orphans under her charge, and averted a series of cowardly murders." He recalled her singing softly on her deathbed:

> *"That gate ajar stands free for all*
> *Who seek through it salvation;*
> *The rich and poor, the great and small*
> *Of every tribe and nation."*

After the riots, the Asylum relocated to upper Manhattan and buried its dead in nearby Trinity Church Cemetery until 1871, then subsequently secured a plot in the Bronx's Woodlawn Cemetery. Butler's 1878 funeral, alongside the Asylum's stature and Garnet's prominence, likely elevated Woodlawn's profile among Black New Yorkers.

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