

PREFACE

This Indenture made the twenty ninth Day of November in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and two Between Samuel Stilwell of the City of New York, in the State of New York Gentleman and Elizabeth his wife of the first part and Gulian Ludlow of the said City Merchant of the second part Witnesseth that the said Samuel Stilwell and Elizabeth his Wife for and in consideration of the sum of Three hundred and nine Dollars and six Cents current Money of the United States, to them in hand paid by the said Gulian Ludlow at or before the sealing and Delivery of these presents the receipt whereof the said Samuel Stilwell and Elizabeth his Wife do hereby acknowledge HAVE granted, bargained, sold, aliened, released, conveyed, and confirmed and by their presents DO grant bargain, sell alien release, convey, and confirm unto the said Gulian Ludlow and to his Heirs and Assigns for ever All that certain Lot of Ground situate lying and being at Bloomingdale in the seventh ward of the City of New York being part of the farm of the said Samuel Stilwell and shown in a Map or Plan thereof by number three, Bounded Northeastly by a Road known by the name of Stilwell's Road, Southeastly by a street or Lane forty feet wide lately laid out called Spring Street, Southwestly by Lot Number Four and Northwestly by Number two, containing in front on Stilwell's Road Four hundred and fifty feet, and on Spring Street three hundred and twenty feet, on the Southwestly side Four hundred and thirty five feet and on the Northwestly side two hundred and thirty six feet, Together with all and singular the Hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever to the said hereby granted Lot of Ground and premises belonging, or in any wise appurtenant. And the Reversion and Reversions, Remainder and Remainders, Rents Issues and Profits thereof, and all the Estate, Right, Title, Interest, Power, Property, Possession, Claim and Demand whatsoever both in Law and Equity of them and each of them the said Samuel Stilwell and Elizabeth his Wife of in and to the said hereby granted Lot of Ground and premises above mentioned, and every part thereof with the Appurtenances, To Have and to hold unto the said Gulian Ludlow and his Heirs and Assigns to the only proper use, benefit and behoof of him the said Gulian Ludlow his Heirs and Assigns forever. And the said Samuel Stilwell for himself his Heirs Executors and Administrators doth Covenant and grant to and with the said Gulian Ludlow his Heirs and Assigns by their presents that the Lot of Ground and premises above mentioned are free and clear from all former grants, Mortgages, Claims and Incumbrances whatsoever. And also that the said Gulian Ludlow his Heirs and Assigns shall and may at all times forever hereafter peaceably have, hold and enjoy all and singular the said hereby granted Lot of Ground and premises above mentioned with the Appurtenances without any manner of Let, Suit, Trouble, Hindrance, Melitiation, Eviction or Denial of or from the said Samuel Stilwell his Heirs or Assigns or any other person or persons whomsoever. And Lastly that the said Samuel Stilwell and his Heirs, all and singular the said hereby granted Lot of Ground and premises above mentioned with the Appurtenances unto the said Gulian Ludlow his Heirs and Assigns against him the said Samuel Stilwell and his Heirs and against all and every other person and persons whomsoever shall and will Warrant and for ever Defend by their presents. In Witness whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and Seals the Day and year first above written.

Samuel Stilwell

Eliza Stilwell

P.1 The land conveyed in 1802 from Samuel Stilwell to Gulian Ludlow would become in 1825 a part of Seneca Village, the former Black community on the west side of Central Park.

86th



59th STREET

110th STREET



86th

Map of Central Park in 2021, with the landscapes and structures referenced in the book labeled.

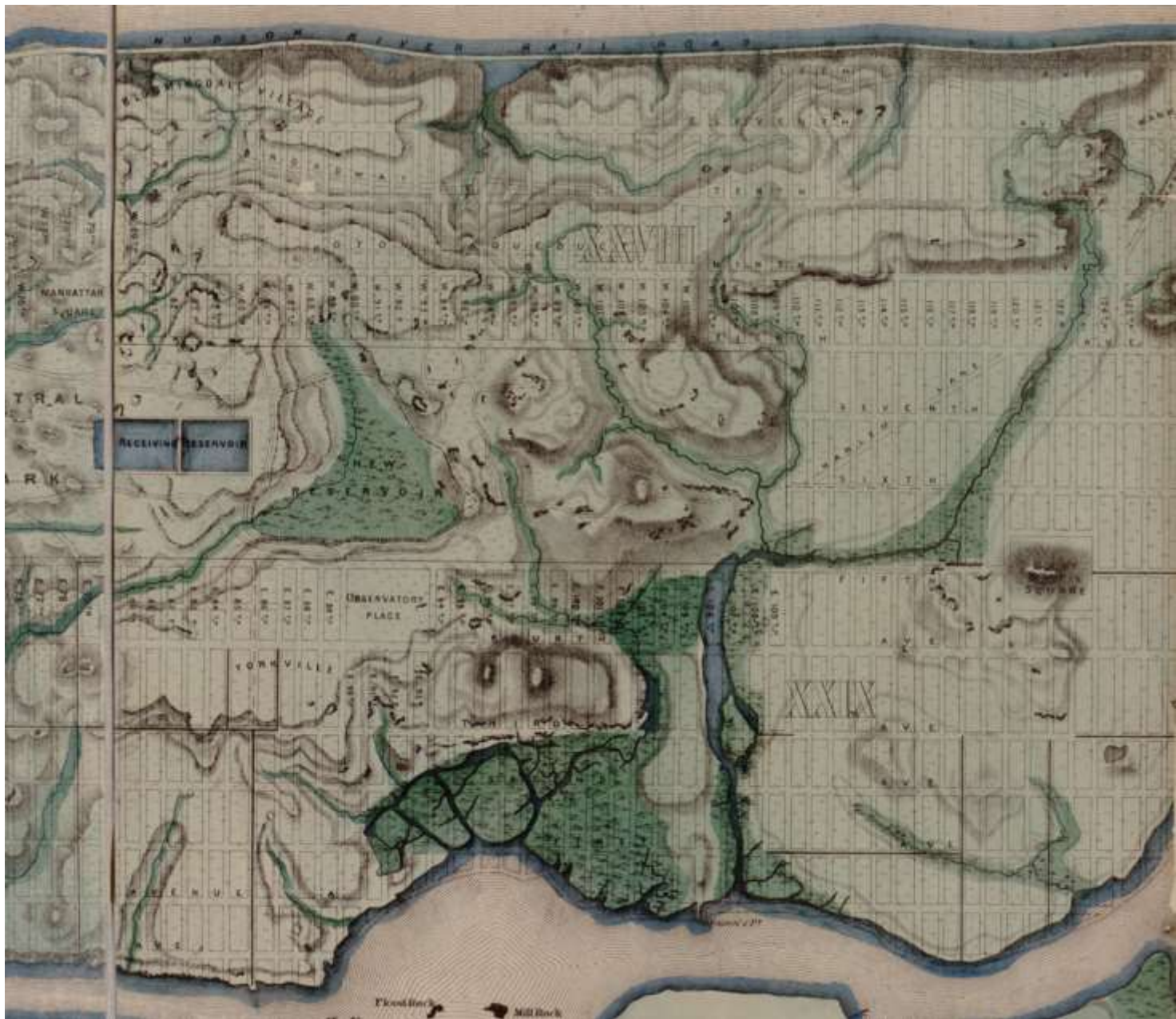
I.1

PART 1: TOPOGRAPHY



I.1 Dutch artist Jan van Goyen painted *View of Haarlem and the Haarlemmermeer* in 1646. It depicts a flat and watery terrain, features similar to those that attracted the first prepark family to settle in the similar Harlem landscape.

I.2



I.2 Egbert Viele's 1865 *Topographical Map of the City of New York* depicts Manhattan's original watercourses. This detail from Seventy-Seventh Street north to 124th Street and from the Hudson River to the East River depicts the vertical Harlem Creek at 108th Street as it entered the marshland that is today the Harlem Meer.

1.3



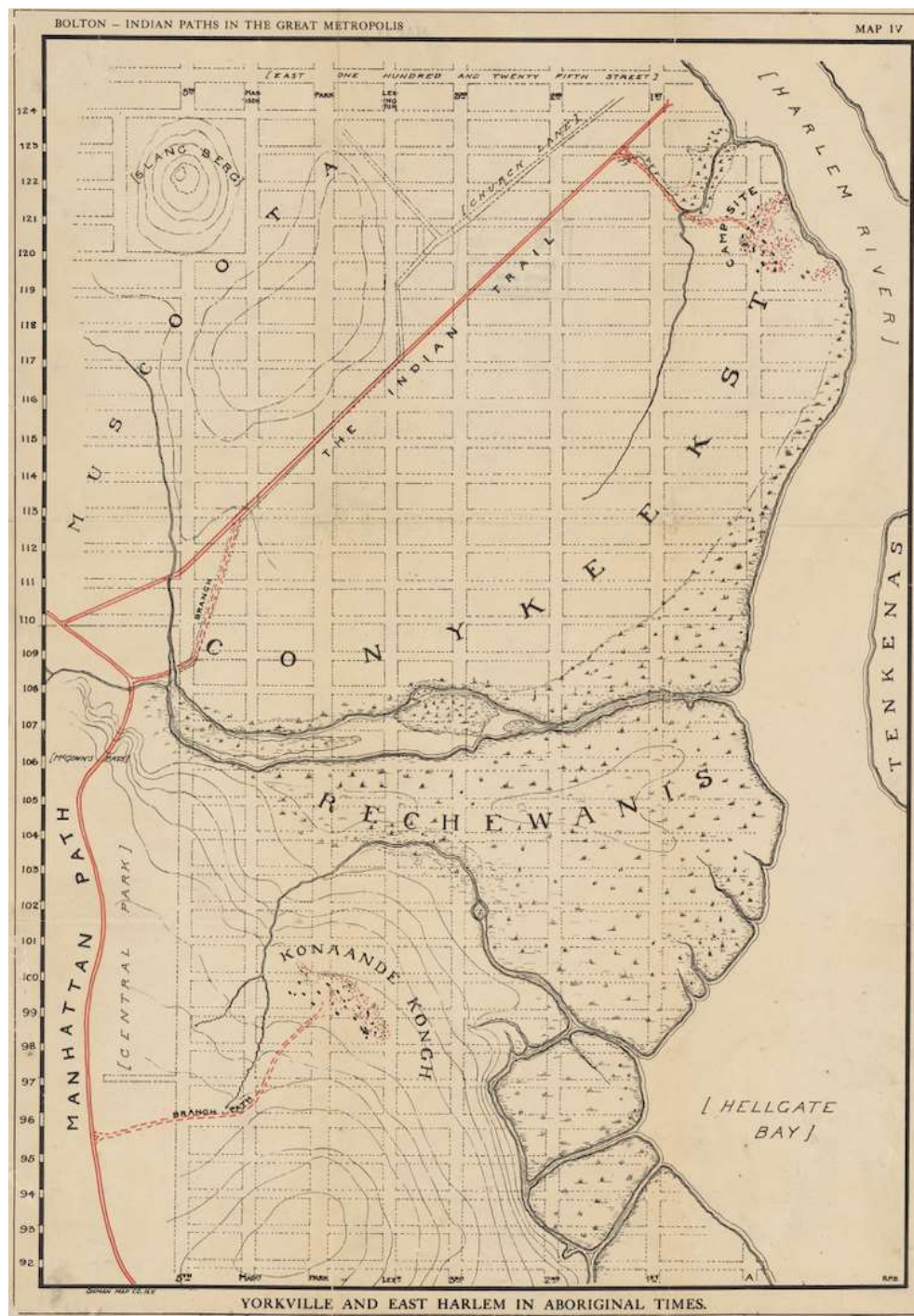
1.3 Since the creation of the park in the nineteenth century, the Loch that meanders through the steep woodland Ravine has mainly been composed of city drinking water that comes from pipes hidden in the landscape and is merged with the freshwater “run” or stream, the natural water body that entered the prepark at Eighth Avenue and 100th Street and flowed northeast into the marshlands that became today’s Harlem Meer.

I.4



I.4 Some of the most significant rock configurations within the prepark were the lofty cliffs that ran along the southern edge of the Muscoota flats. From these bluffs, one could have seen both rivers and the surrounding countryside, providing warning of encroaching enemies. Today those outcrops still loom over the Harlem Meer and meander across Central Park close to its northern terminus.

I.5



I.5 The map by New York archeologist Reginald Pelham Bolton, "Yorkville and East Harlem in Aboriginal Times," shows the path of the two Native trails that intersected within the prepark. Bolton also placed Konaande Kongh, a Native settlement near the heights of Park or Lexington Avenues at about Ninety-Ninth Street. Rechewanis and Conykeekst are today's East Harlem, and Muscoota is today's central Harlem and the Harlem Meer landscape.

1.1

CHAPTER 1



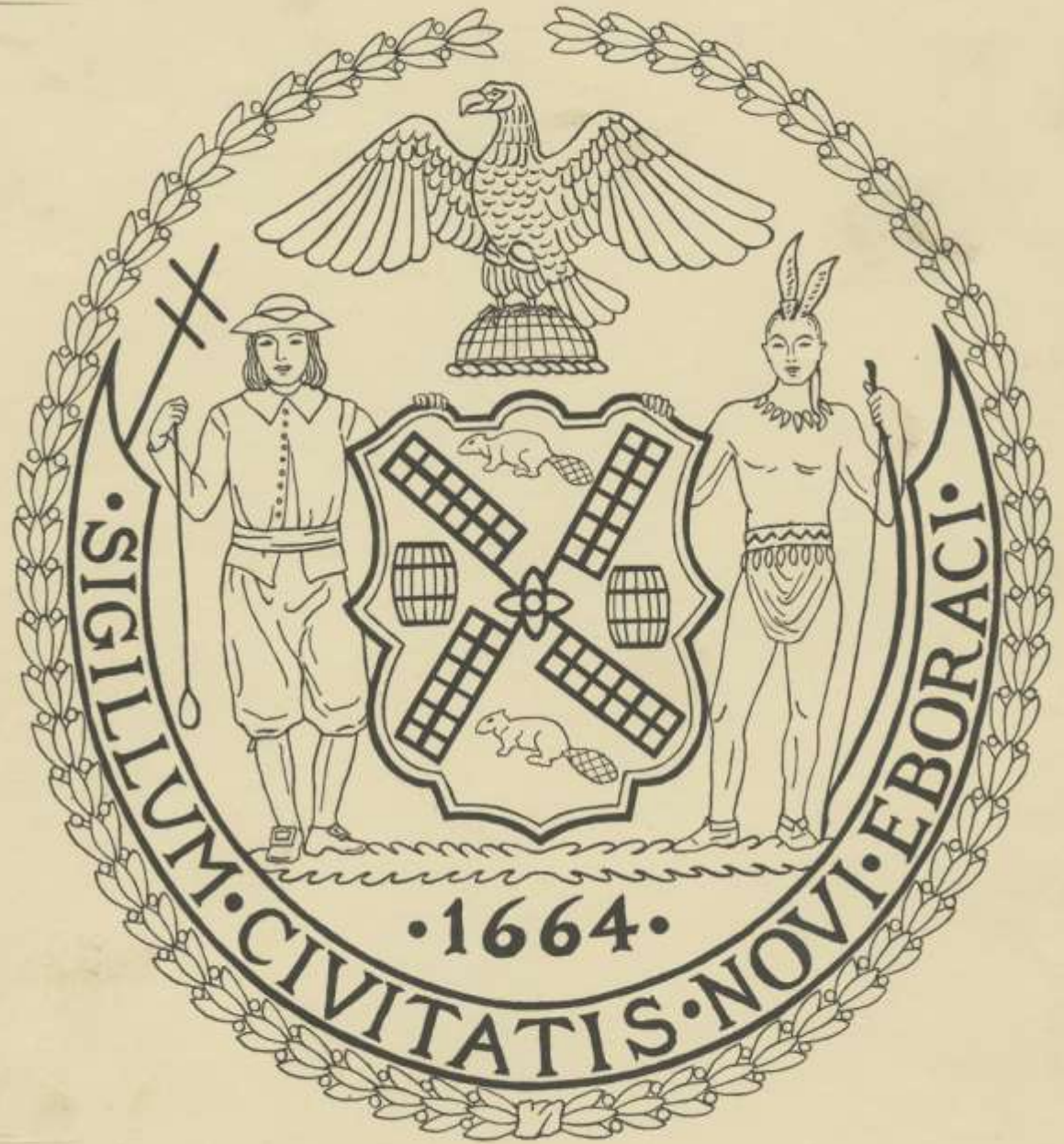
1.1 The Harlem Meer area at the northeast corner of Central Park was the site of the first settlement in the prepark. The entrance drive and its adjacent triangular lawn at the top left were possibly the site of the 1637 homestead of the de Forest-Montagne family. Half a century later, it was the site of the prepark's first tavern, the Half-Way House.

1.2

1.2 Beavers were prodigious in the New World. When the French discovered them in Canada and began to export them to Europe, the Dutch were inspired to establish their own trading outpost in New Amsterdam. The beavers are, depicted in a detail of *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America*, ca. 1711.



1.3



1.3 Beavers and barrels of milled flour (depicted between blades of the windmill) were the two most valuable exports to Europe from New Netherland and New York. They have appeared on the official seal of the City of New York since 1686. This version, designed by artist Paul Manship, was created in 1915.

1.4



1.4 The illustration “Nieu Amsterdam, al. New Yorck,” by Carel Allard in 1700, depicts the beaver trade between Europeans and the local indigenous hunters. A seated hunter clutches a beaver in one hand while offering another to the standing European woman, shown holding a basket of fruit and tending a goat. The contrast between hunting and the symbols of domestication were intended to indicate European culture was superior to that of the Native peoples.

1.5

1.5 A detail of the 1639 “Manatus” map is the first map that indicates the plantations and bouweries of the Dutch settlers. The de Forest-Montagne homestead and their two-hundred-acre tobacco farm lay between the two forks of the Y-shaped creek on land known to the Lenape as Muscoota. The hills that begin at Morningside Park and form the spine of Harlem are depicted in the distance.



1.6

1.6 Len Tantillo, a historian and contemporary painter of New Amsterdam architecture and scenes, has envisioned the de Forest-Montagne homestead and surrounding farm on the edge of the Muscoota flats.



1.7



1.7 Dutch West India Company Director Wilhelm (or Willem) Kieft was the most despised man in New Amsterdam history for his genocidal war on the local indigenous tribes.

1.8



1.8 Inspired by a likeness done during Peter Stuyvesant's lifetime, artist John Trumbull captured the formidable autocrat in his 1808 portrait.

2.1

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Evidence of the original Kingsbridge Road was unearthed during routine park operations at McGowan's Pass. The smaller stones are embedded in the roadbed and the larger ones are the base of a barrier gate fortification from the War of 1812.



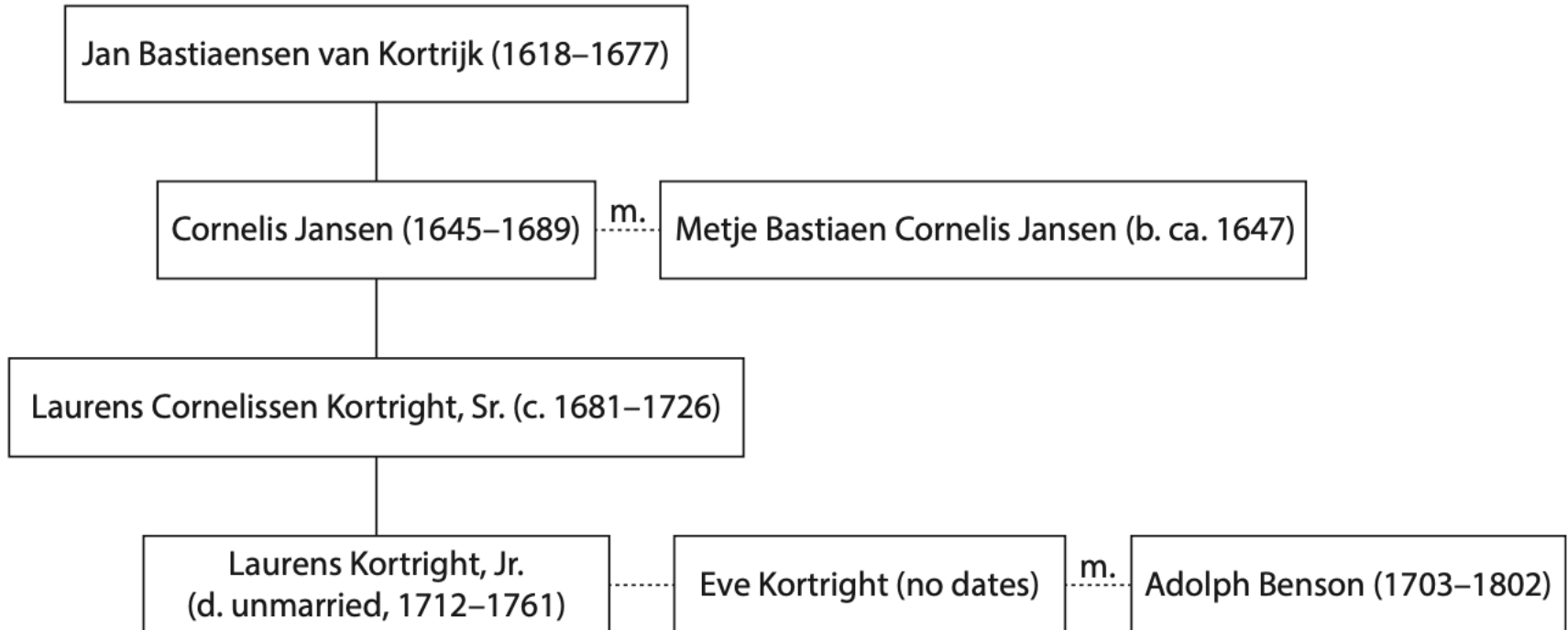
2.2



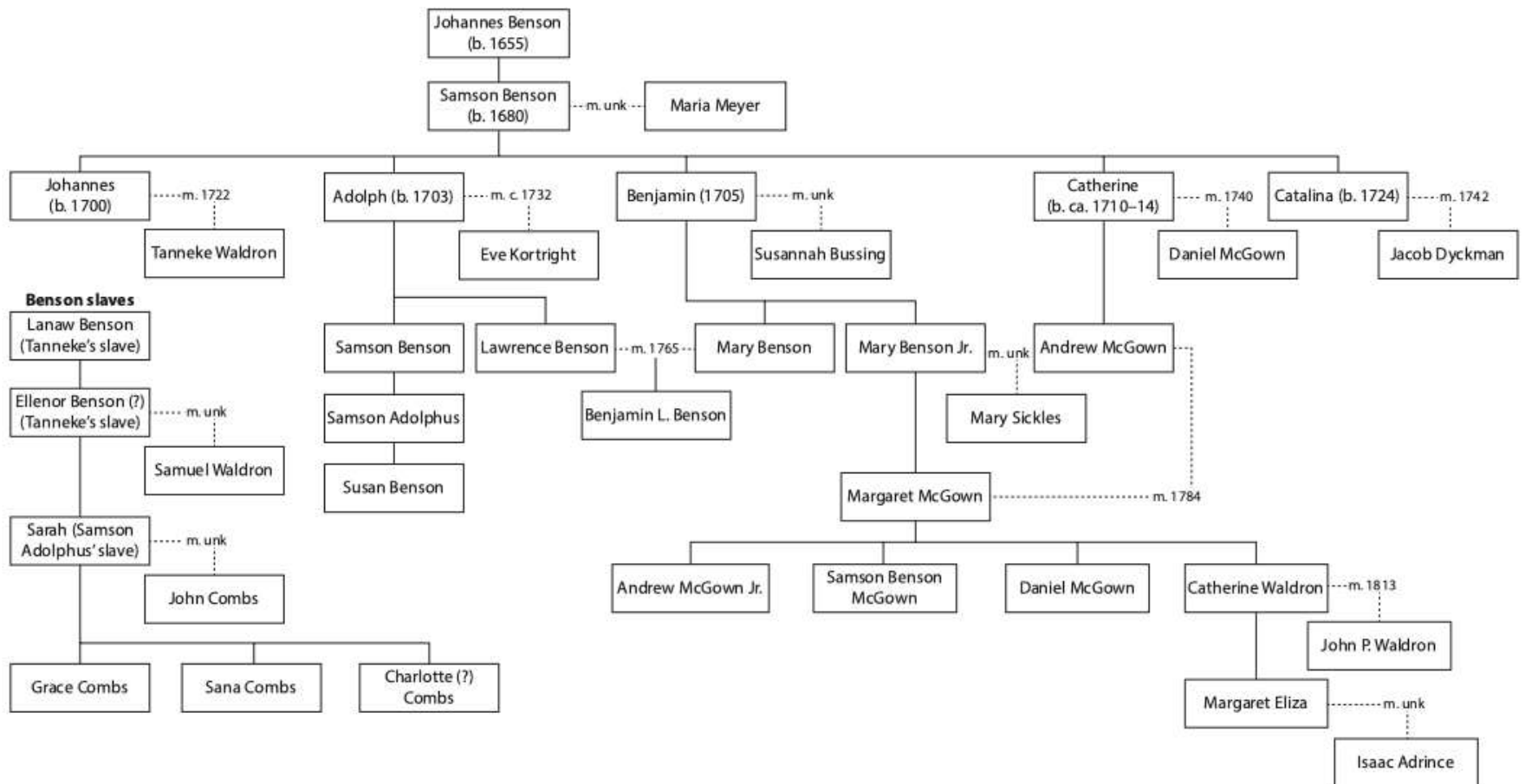
2.2 McGowan's Pass—the narrow opening for the Kingsbridge Road situated in a wall of rock outcrops that cross the park at 107th Street—is one of the most historically important spots on Manhattan Island.

2.3

Kortright family tree



2.4 Benson Family Tree



2.5



2.5 Today's composting operation in Central Park along the East Drive at 105th Street is part of the nine-acre site that originally included Jacob Dyckman's Black Horse Tavern. It was bought by his brother-in-law Daniel McGowan in 1756 and remained in the McGowan family until it was sold in 1846.

2.6



2.6 An 1814 detail of the McGowans' home is shown with its enlarged two wings, added in 1790, most likely to accommodate the growing family of Andrew and Margaret McGowan.

2.7



2.7 Mary Sickles's marriage to Samson Benson Jr., intertwined two prosperous Harlem landowning families. Mary is the mother of Margaret Benson McGowan (2.8).

2.8



2.8 John Megarey's humble 1837 portrait of Margaret McGowan belies her status as one of the largest and wealthiest landowners in Harlem.

2.9

2.9 James H. Wright's portrait of Andrew McGowan Jr., ca. 1840–1845, son of Andrew and Margaret, depicts a well-to-do gentleman whose silver-tipped walking stick may be a symbol of his wealth and elite status or the hint of a disability.



CHAPTER 3

I Andrew McGowan of Harlem in the County of New
York Gentleman Do Certify that a certain female Child
named Eliza was born on the fourteenth day of April last past
of my Negro Woman Slave Jane
New York Dec 8. 1810

Andrew McGowan

3.1 The birth certificate of Eliza, born April 14, 1810, the daughter of Jane, the enslaved servant of Andrew McGowan.

3.2



3.2 The perimeter of Central Park between 109th and 110th Street and Duke Ellington Circle was once the property of the formerly enslaved Lanaw Benson.

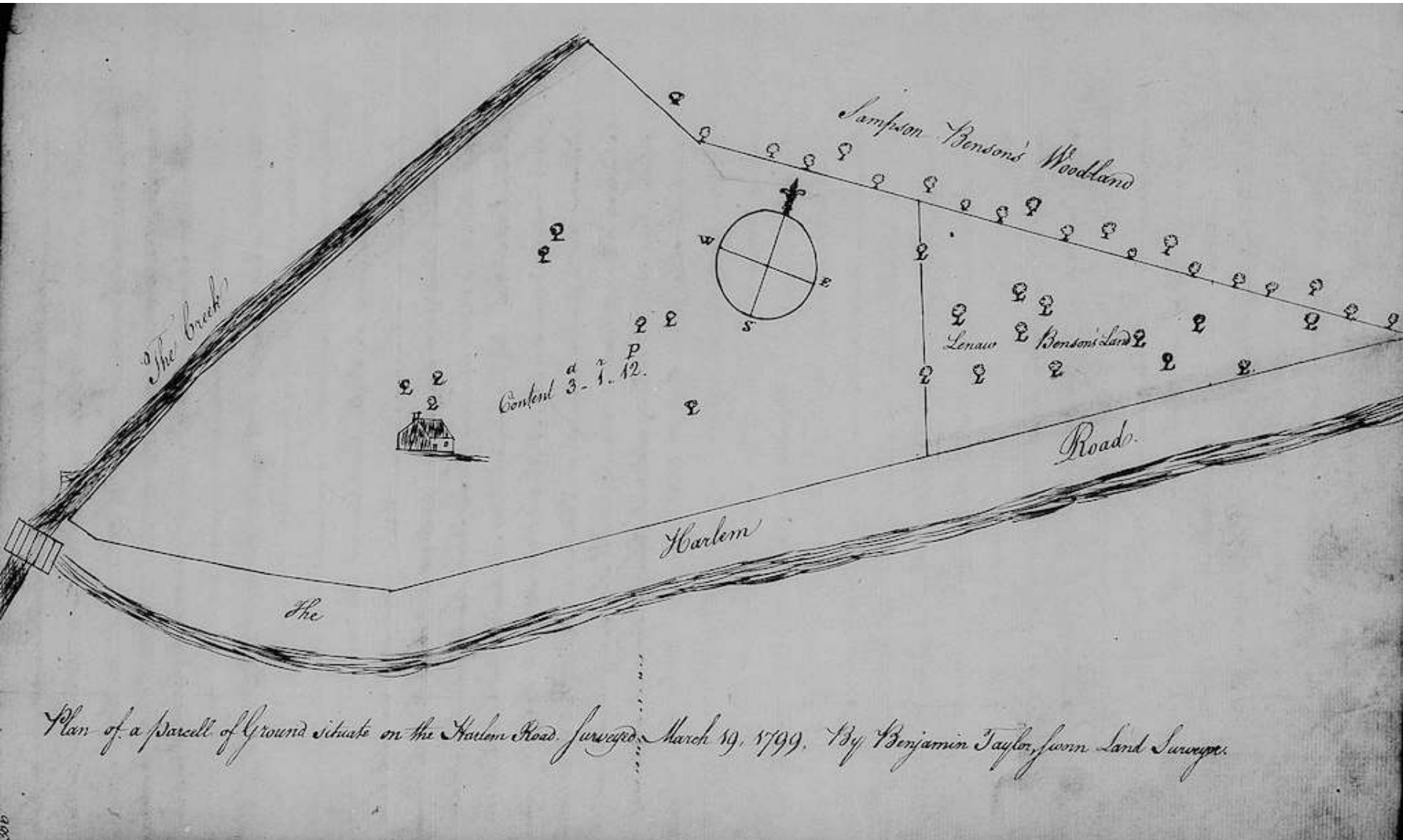
3.3

3.3 Duke Ellington Circle was once the property of Lanaw Benson, the formerly enslaved by the Benson and Waldron families.



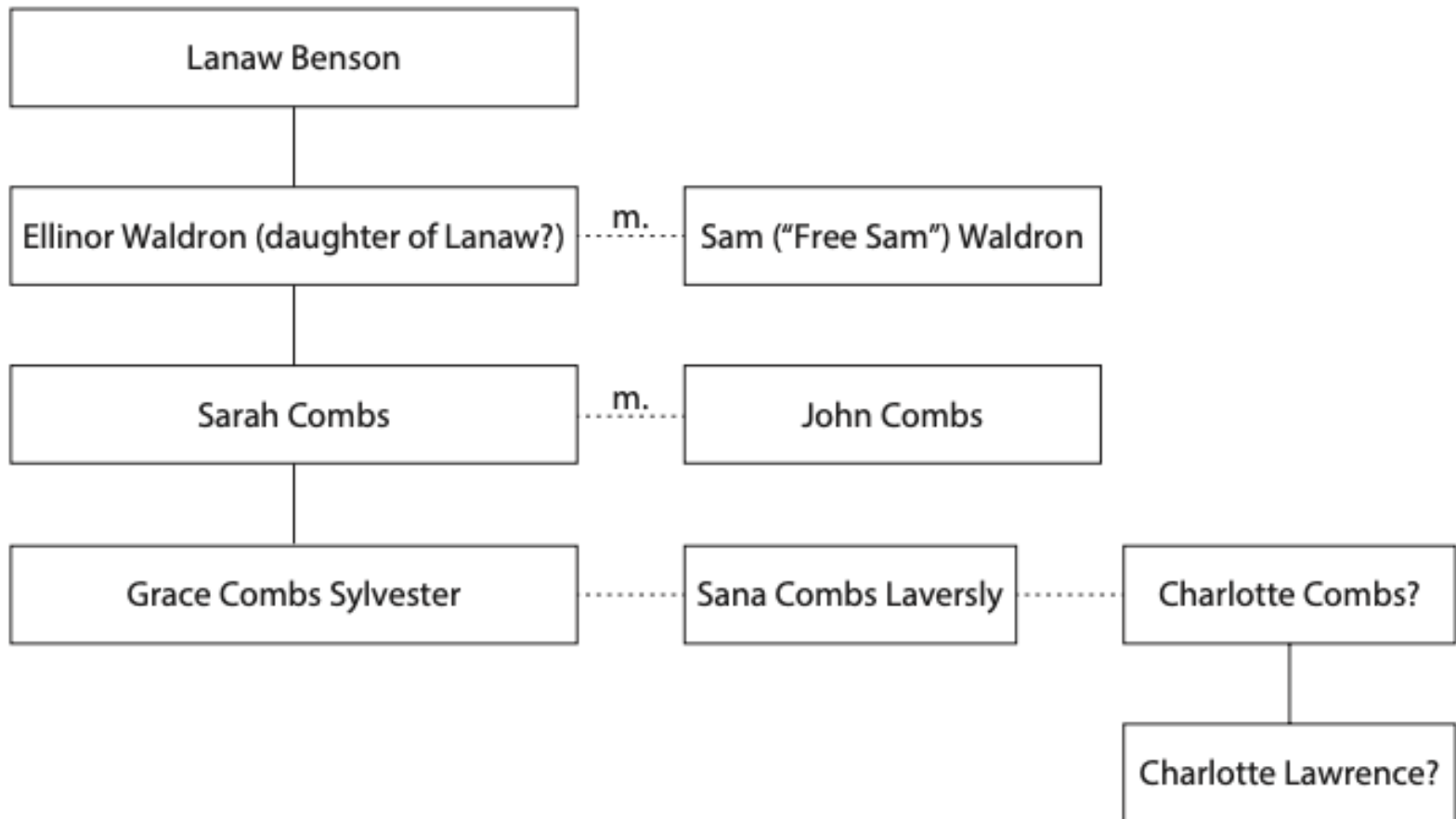
3.4

3.4 This diagram appears in the deed from formerly enslaved Lanaw Benson to grocer John Rankin in 1799. The transfer of property financed her manumission. She cleverly divided the property into two sections. The larger one, which included a part of the future Central Park, was sold to Rankin. She retained the smaller triangular tract for herself and moved the house depicted in the deed to her wooded property.



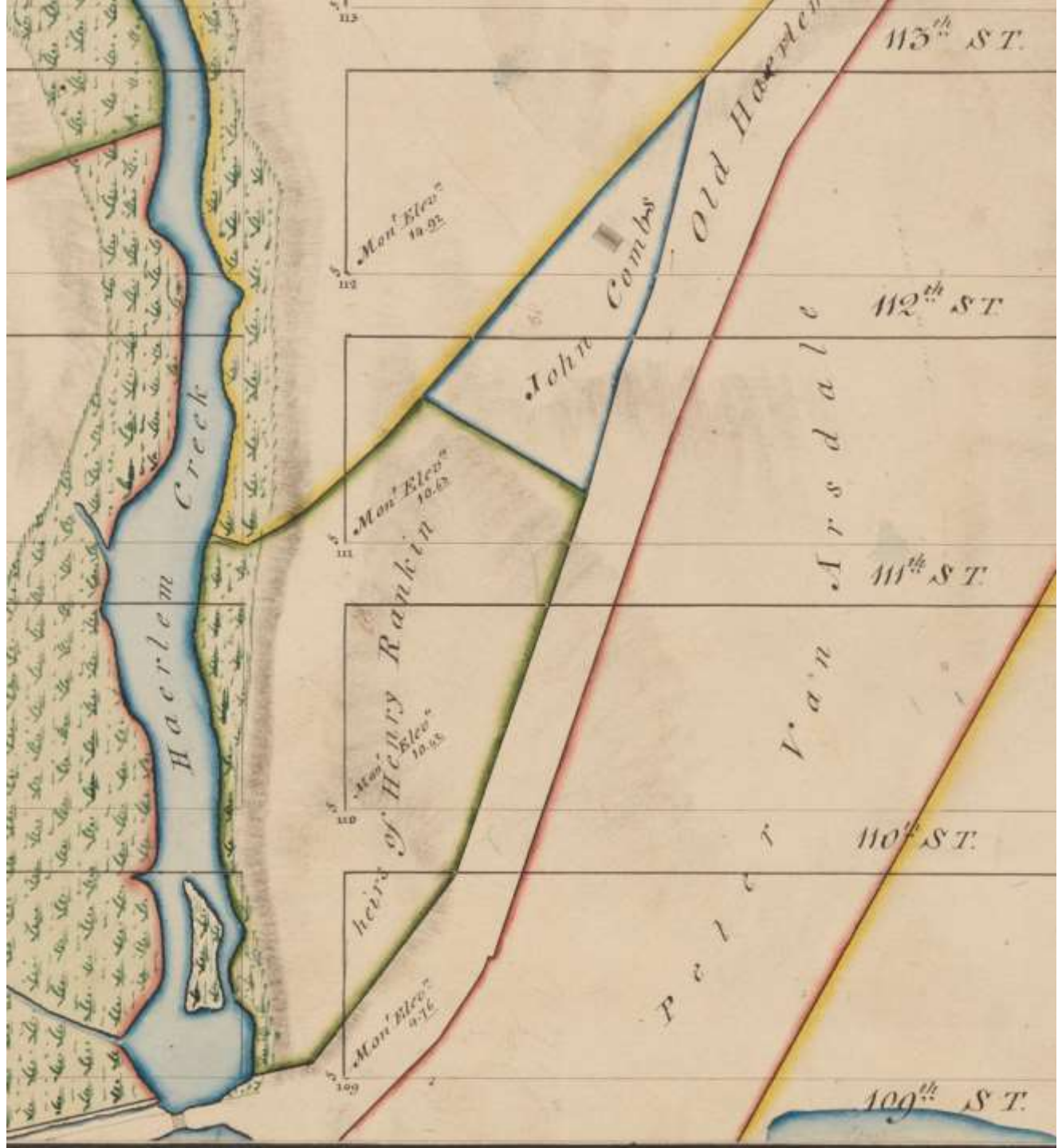
3.5

Lanaw Benson family tree



3.6

3.6 Lanaw Benson's former property that lay on the eastern edge of the future Central Park was depicted in a map by surveyor John Randel ca. 1820. At the time, her former triangular three quarters of an acre tract belonged to John Combs, the husband of Sarah Combs, Lanaw's purported granddaughter, who became the owner only after the death of her enslaver, Sampson Adolphus Benson in 1825.



4.1

CHAPTER 4



4.1 Charles Willson Peale painted his portrait of General Washington after the Battle of Trenton in 1780, four years after he and his generals decided to evacuate New York City during the council of war meeting held at McGowan's tavern.

4.2



4.2 Major General Alexander McDougall despised his superior officer General William Heath (4.3) for his pomposity and his unwillingness to support the evacuation of New York during the September 12 council of war meeting.

4.3



4.3 Major General William Heath was McDougall's superior officer while they were both stationed at West Point in 1782. Heath issued a court-martial to McDougall charging him revealing confidential military secrets during the council of war at McGowan's tavern.

4.4

4.4 British artist Archibald Robertson sketched the only known image of the upper park and environs during the Revolutionary War. In a detail of his “View of Morisinia, Haarlem, Montessor’s & Buchannan’s Island, with part of the sound, taken from our lines near McGowan’s House. 10 Octr. 1777”, the artist shows a view near today’s Great Hill that reveals the presence of British fortifications on the high points of the prepark that overlooked the flat Harlem Plains. The two structures on the left were advanced posts, situated on the north side of today’s Harlem Meer. We can also see a small plank bridge crossing the swamp and the walled promontories on what were repurposed as Nutter’s Battery, center, and Fort Clinton, right, in the War of 1812.



4.5

4.5 Based on archeological findings by his contemporaries Reginald Pelham Bolton and William Calver, artist John Ward Dunsmore created the 1915 painting of the British Winter Cantonment on Inwood Hill in upper Manhattan, a similar encampment to the one that would have been on the Great Hill, where relics from the war were discovered during construction of the park.





4.6 Nineteenth-century visitors to the Ravine in the park used a communal ladle to refresh themselves with a draught of fresh water from the spring or “run” known to the Dutch as a fonteyn, an old Dutch word meaning “spring” or “brook.” These local waters would have sustained the Hessian and British soldiers during their seven-year encampment in the area.

4.7



4.7 The unveiling of the cannons on Fort Clinton by Andrew McGowan's great grandchildren Miss Dorothy Joyce McGowan and Master Henry Daily McGowan in 1906.

4.8

4.8 The cannon and the smaller carronade from the 1780 sinking of the British ship *HMS Hussar* were recovered in 1856 from Hellgate in the Harlem River and donated anonymously to Central Park in 1865. The two guns are a reminder of the seven-year occupation of British troops in the upper park during the Revolutionary War.





5.1 Valentine Nutter's property, wrested from the heirs of Lawrence Kortright in the 1790s, encompassed today's Harlem Meer and much of the North Woods seen in the distance.

5.2

5.2 Judgement Day for Tories, ca. 1770s, depicted a Tory hoisted up on a liberty pole just before his tarring and feathering by a group of angry rebels. After the war, returning loyalists like Valentine Nutter could fear the same punishment unless they pledged an oath of allegiance to the new U.S. government.



5.3



5.3 The seating area overlooking the Harlem Meer, named Nutter's Battery in the War of 1812, was also a fortification during the British occupation. It stood on the site of the property that the Nutters acquired after the Revolution.



6.1 This aerial rendering of the northern end of the land that became Central Park depicts the 1814 fortifications on Harlem Heights: clockwise, Fort Fish, Nutter's Battery, the barrier gate at McGowan's Pass that intersects with the Kingsbridge Road, Fort Clinton and the ramparts abutting the Harlem Creek. The map also depicts the road that connects the woodlands and the Blockhouse through the estate and orchard of Dr. Samuel Borrowe, now the Great Hill. The watercolor is also the clearest visual description of the relationship of prepark landmarks: the northern edge of the Harlem Creek and adjacent marshland, now the Harlem Meer; the meandering rivulet through the woodlands, now the Loch and the Ravine; the edge of the cultivated Muscoota/Harlem Plains, now Harlem above 110th Street; the Kortright/Nutter land, now the Harlem Meer landscape; and the Benson-McGowan house and orchard, east of the Kingsbridge Road, now the Park's composting operation, and Lanaw Benson's original triangular land and house.

6.2



6.2 In 2012, a fallen tree from Hurricane Sandy exposed the foundation of the Gatehouse and its attached ramparts in McGowan's Pass.

6.3



6.3 The two earthen mounds that run down the eastern slope of Fort Clinton to the shore of the Harlem Meer are the remains of the eroded ramparts constructed in 1814.



6.4 Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburn is shown on the far left instructing the British troops to torch the brick building in the foreground, having already burned the Capitol, seen in flames in the background on August 24, 1814. The painting by Allyn Cox is on the walls of the House Wing in the Capitol.

6.5



6.5 The ramparts or earthen walls connecting the Gatehouse at McGowan's Pass to Fort Clinton (right) were constructed in one day by a group of militiamen with assistance from young volunteers, most of them butcher's apprentices.

6.6



6.6 In his *View of Fort Fish at McGowan's Pass looking at Harlem (and Nutter's Battery)*, John J. Holland depicted aspects of camp life. The militiamen at Fort Fish are seen as social, relaxed, bored and, in one instance—the soldier near the head of the cannon—taking a nap. Only the two soldiers at the left seem to be engaged in their patrol duties. Nutter's Battery is to the left and Fort Clinton to the right.

6.7



6.7 Blockhouse No. 1 in Central Park is the remaining fortification from the War of 1812. The uneven and random placement of the lower course of stonework indicates the urgency with which it was constructed.



6.8 In the 1850s, the Hazard Powder Company used the Blockhouse to protect the gunpowder that was stored inside, much of it to blast the rock outcrops during the early years of the park's construction.

6.9

6.9 The Arsenal in Central Park was built in 1847 on land that was bought by New York State in 1808 for the storage of gunpowder. The site was chosen for its remote location.



II.1

PART II: REAL ESTATE



II.1 The land that became Central Park was on the edge of three Manhattan districts: Bloomingdale, Harlem, and Yorkville.

CHAPTER 7



7.1 Every spring, Shakespeare Garden in Central Park features a range of colorful tulips that memorializes Bloemendaal, a tulip-growing region in Holland for which the neighborhood of Bloomingdale, which included the site of the park's garden, was named.

7.2



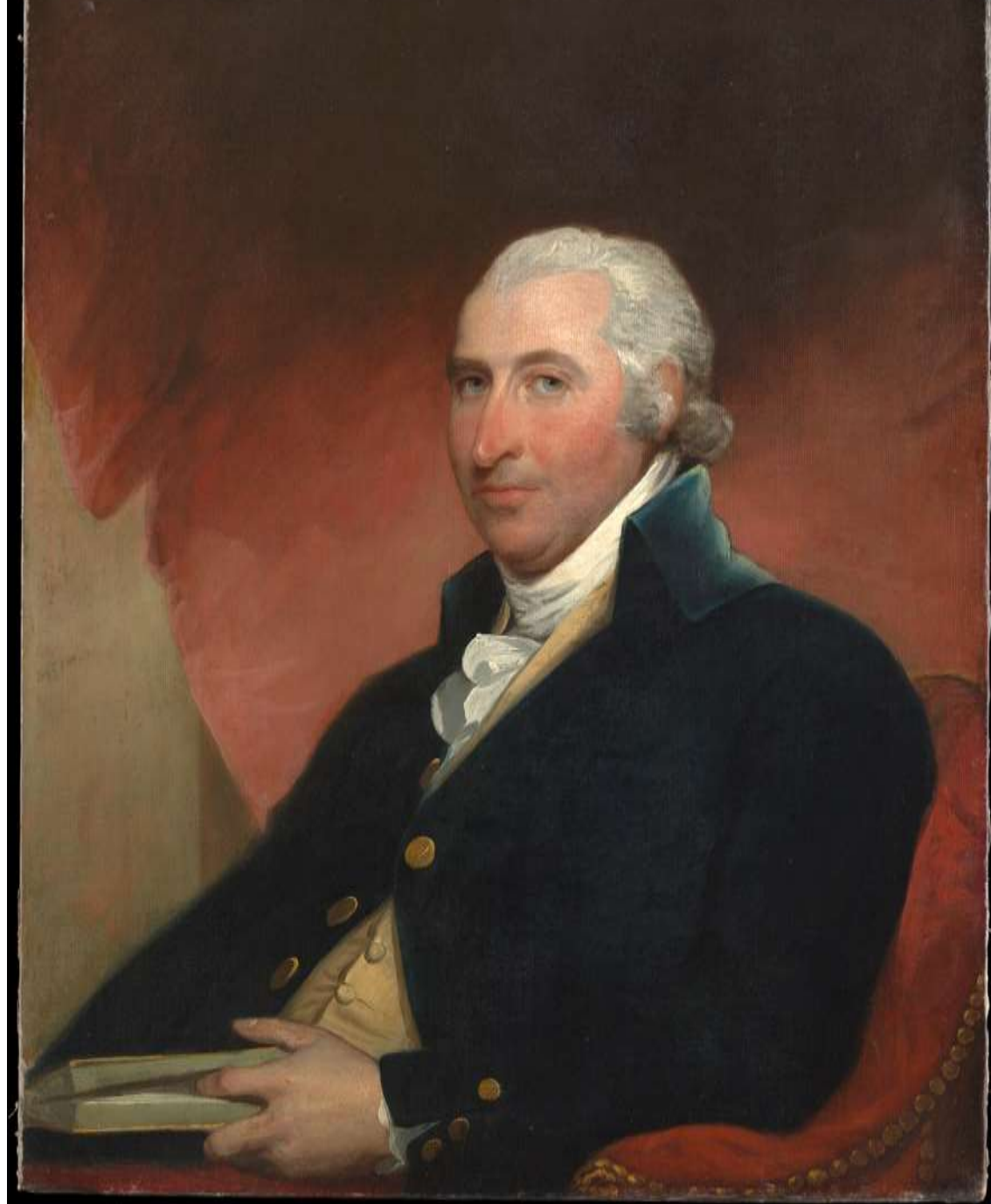
7.2 North Meadow, the largest meadow in Central Park, was once a part of the seventeenth-century farmland of Theunis Idens that reached west to the Hudson River.

7.3



7.3 The Aphthorp mansion, built in 1764 by wealthy slaver and British loyalist Charles Ward Aphthorp, stood on the heights of today's Columbus Avenue and Ninety-First Street. He owned over 300 acres of West Side property, including park land from Seventy-Seventh to Ninety-Seventh Street and the site of the landmark building on Broadway and Seventy-Ninth Street that bears his name.

7.4



7.4 Gilbert Stuart painted this portrait of John Shaw, a staunch loyalist and a rather disagreeable man who was the estranged husband of Grizzel Apthorp.

7.5

7.5 Grizzel Apthorp was the only member of her family to live in the prepark. Her estate on a promontory overlooking her family's mansion on today's Columbus Avenue between Ninetieth and Ninety-First Streets was on the site of today's Safari Playground and its surrounding landscape.



7.6

7.6 In 1880, the memorial to founding father Alexander Hamilton was unveiled in Central Park by his son and biographer John Church Hamilton, who was married to Maria Vanden Heuvel, the granddaughter of Charles Ward Apthorp and an heir to his Central Park property.





8.1 The 1857 *View from Summit Rock* in Central Park shows the popularity of homes along the shoreline of the Hudson River from the West 70s to the West 90s in Bloomingdale.

8.2



8.2 Iron bolts, such as this one in an undisclosed location in Central Park, were placed by surveyor John Randel to demarcate the intersection of every street and avenue. If the corner was on rock, Randel placed a small one-inch bolt. If the intersection was on soil, he placed a three-foot-high marble monument inscribed with the street and the avenue. An original one can be seen in the Luce Center at the New-York Historical Society.

8.3



8.3 The West Meadow was once the property that Samuel Stilwell sold to Robert L. Bowne, a member of the celebrated Quaker family who lost his west side property due to foreclosure.

8.4



8.4 The Demilt family that owned Summit Rock and environs were celebrated watchmakers and advertised their business on the watch paper that would be inserted into every timepiece.

8.5



8.5 Artist Ralph Earl was allowed to paint several portraits like this one of Major James Fairlie during the year he spent in debtor's prison, 1786–1787.

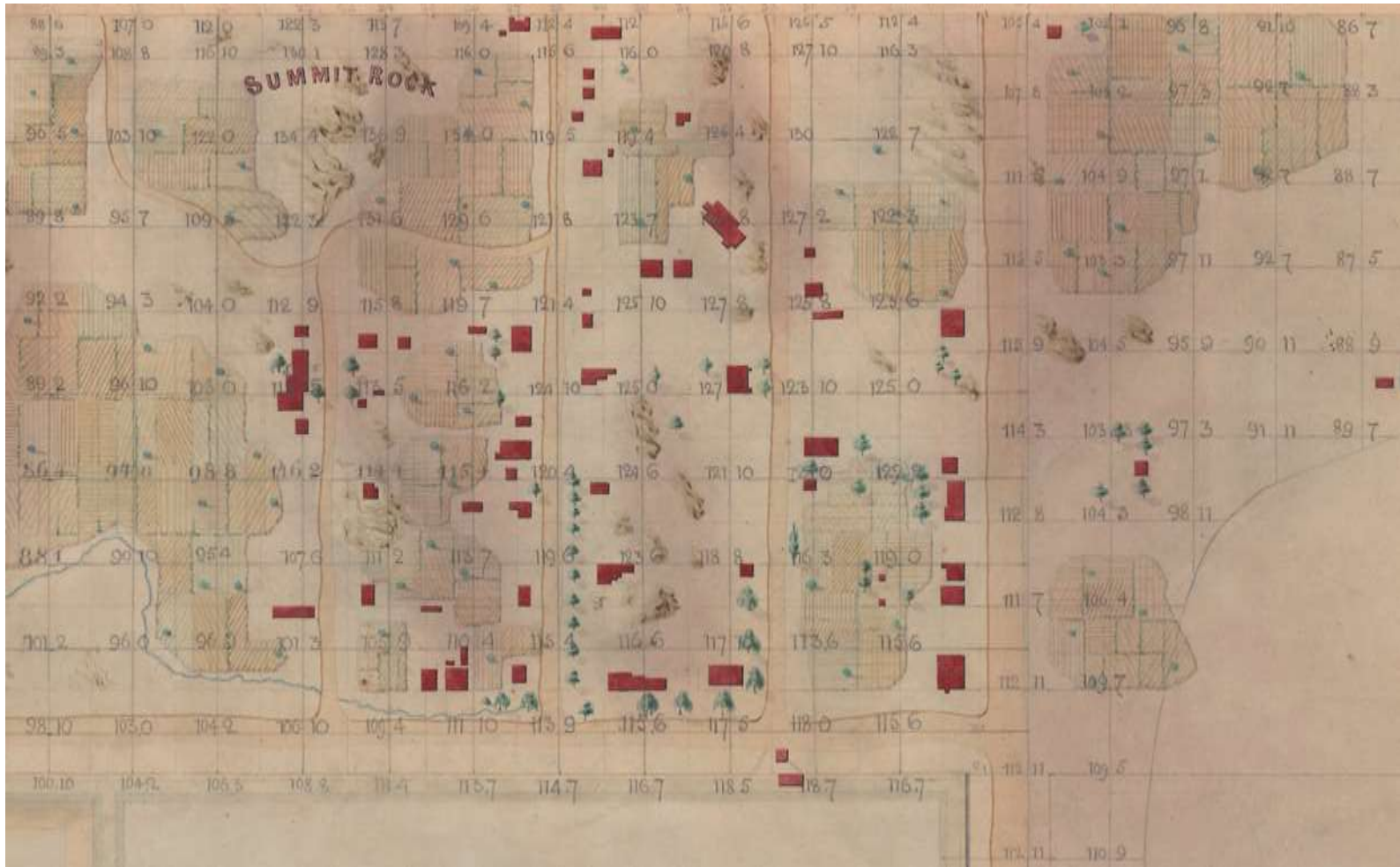
8.6



8.6 *Moving Day (In Little Old New York)*, (detail), depicts May 1, the most lucrative day for New York City cartmen like John Whitehead. That day, every renter in New York moved from one home to another. The cartman in this 1825 painting wears the uniform of a white smock and top hat.

9.1

CHAPTER 9



9.1 Seneca Village within Central Park, Seventh to Eighth Avenue, Eighty-Third Street to Eighty-Ninth Street, is detailed in Egbert Viele's *Map of Lands Included in The Central Park From A Topographical Survey*. Viele, a West Point-trained engineer, indicated over fifty houses and outbuildings, three churches, a school, rock outcrops, garden beds, and trees as they existed in 1855. The following year the landowners and a few renters received financial compensation. Many of the resident landowners left at that time, but those who remained or moved into the vacant homes became lessees of the city. In 1857, they were evicted to begin construction of Central Park.

9.2



9.2 Both of William Pease's two houses were built atop flat elevated outcrops, the only documented placement in the entire village.

9.3

9.3 In her 1920s memoir, Maritcha Lyons, great granddaughter of Seneca Village landowners Elizabeth and Joseph Marshall, looked back on the prosperity that her Black middle-class family and their contemporaries enjoyed by investing in real estate in mid-century New York.

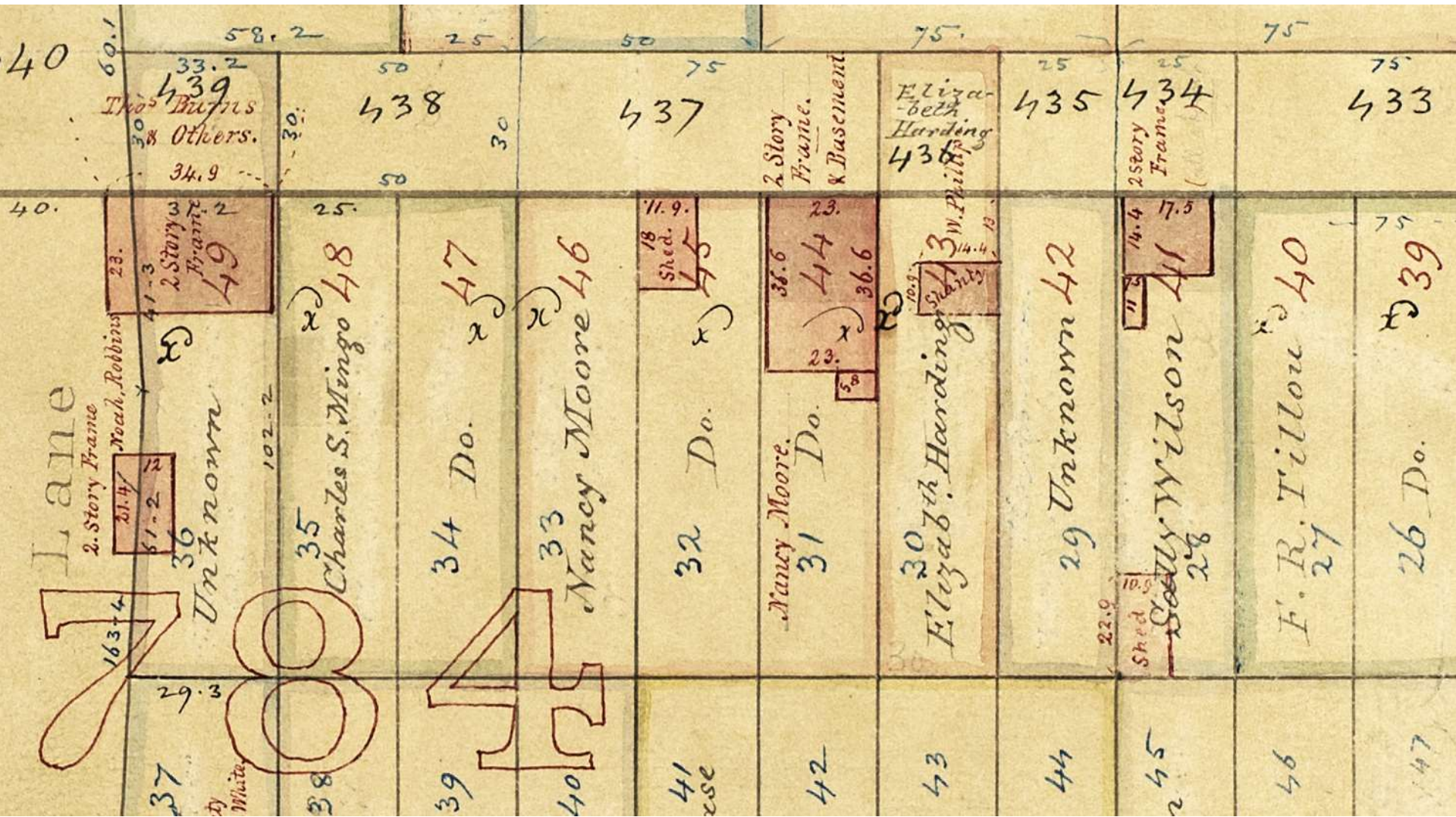




9.4 Fire was the greatest threat to both rich and poor New Yorkers, most of whom lived in wooden buildings. The Great Fire of December 1835 swept through downtown, destroying neighborhoods and displacing many. Seneca Village may have welcomed several new residents after the fire.

25	16	Robt Gibbons ¹²¹	153	Robert Gibbons ¹⁴⁹
	17	Do. 122	152	Do. 148
	18	Henry Gassin ¹²³	151	Peter Lynch ¹⁴⁷
	19	Do. 124	150	Do. 146
	20	Simon Green ¹²⁵	149	Simon Green ¹⁴⁵
	21	John ¹²⁶	148	44
	22	M. ¹²⁷	147	43
	23	African Church ¹²⁸	146	African Church ¹⁴²
	24	Do. 129	145	Do. 141
	25	Do. 130	144	Do. 140

9.5 Lot 19 shows a gray square, the former home of the Landin family that may have been destroyed by fire or some other natural disaster. The house on Lot 21 may also have burned.



9.6 Houses along the south side of Eighty-Fifth Street depict a red footprint layered above a smaller, equal or greater gray footprint that most likely indicates a change in the size and/or shape of the home, possibly the result of a fire that we know happened to the home of Sally Wilson.

9.7



9.7 Ira Aldridge was the most famous Black actor of the nineteenth century, here portrayed as Shakespeare's Othello. His father, Daniel Aldridge, owned land in Seneca Village.

9.8

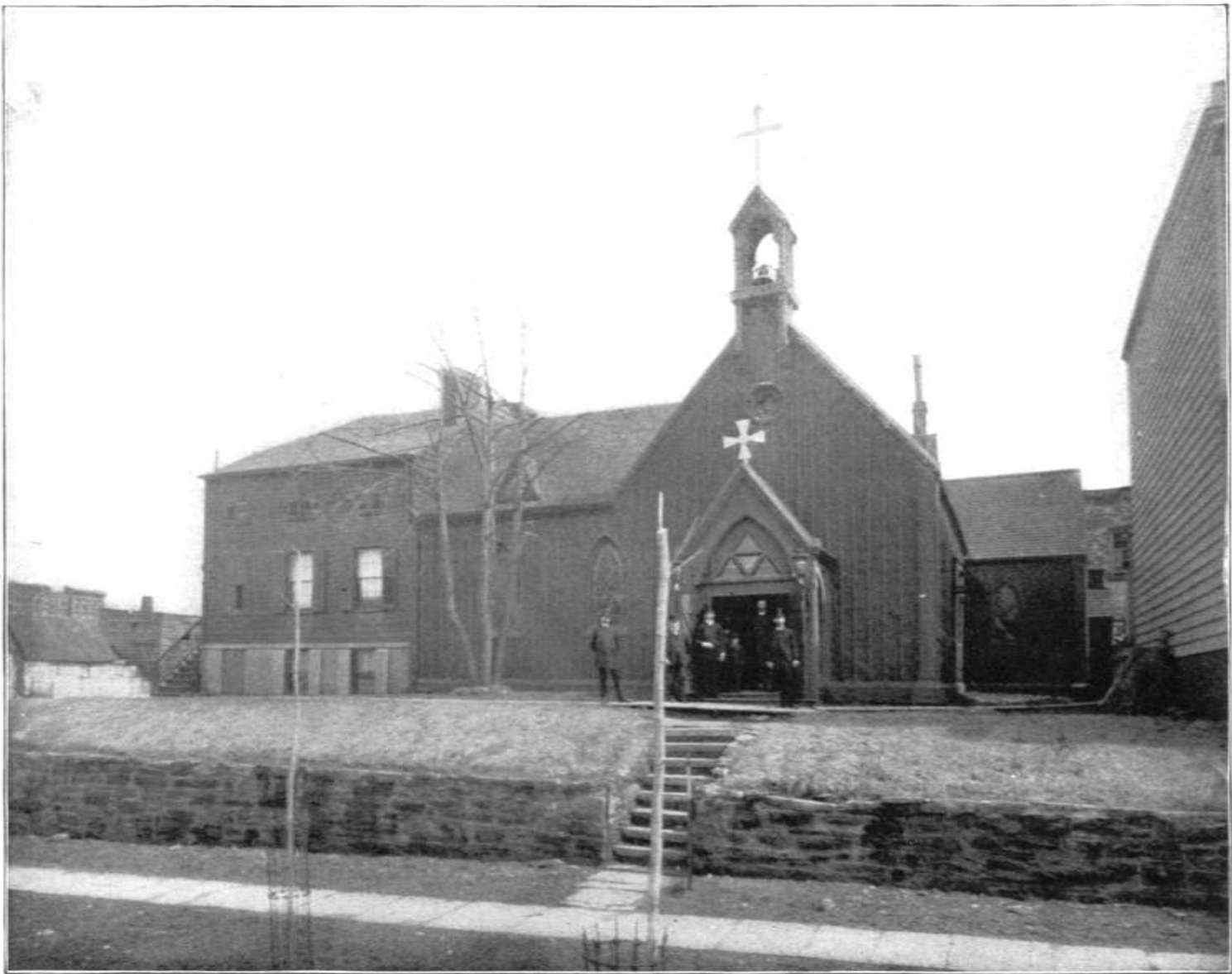


9.8 A.M.E. Zion Reverend Leven Smith and his family were forced to leave their home in Seneca Village due his unpaid mortgage commitments owed to his lender, Reverend William M. Stilwell.

9.9



9.9 African Union, the first of the three churches to be erected in Seneca Village, and the attached school stood on the hill now the area surrounding the green horse chestnut tree in the center of the photograph.



ALL ANGELS' CHURCH AND RECTORY, 1887.

9.10 All Angels' Church was moved from Seneca Village to West Eighty-First Street and Eleventh Avenue (now West End Avenue) when the church was purchased by the congregation. The bell was used by the park staff until the church requested its return.

10.1

CHAPTER 10



10.1 The famous civil rights leader Frederick Douglass was an acquaintance of many Seneca Village landowners. His statue by Gabriel Koren stands on Frederick Douglass Circle at the northwest corner of Central Park.

10.2

10.2 James Hewlett cofounded the African Grove Theater and acted alongside the young Ira Aldridge. Hewlett was the brother of Elizabeth Hewlett Marshall, though the siblings do not seem to have been close.



10.3



10.3 Albro and Mary Joseph Lyons were Seneca Village landowners and political activists for Black civil rights.

10.4



10.4 Dr. James McCune Smith—the first professionally trained Black physician in America and civil rights activist—was a friend and a colleague to several Seneca Village landowners.

DR. JAMES MCCUNE SMITH,
First regularly-educated Colored Physician in the United
States. (See page 325.)

10.5

10.5 While living in Providence, Rhode Island, Albro and Mary Lyons sought admission to the best school for their daughters, Maritcha (left) and Pauline (right), but their rejection forced them to attend the “caste” school. Nonetheless, Maritcha persevered and had a successful career as a public school educator and administrator in the New York City school system.

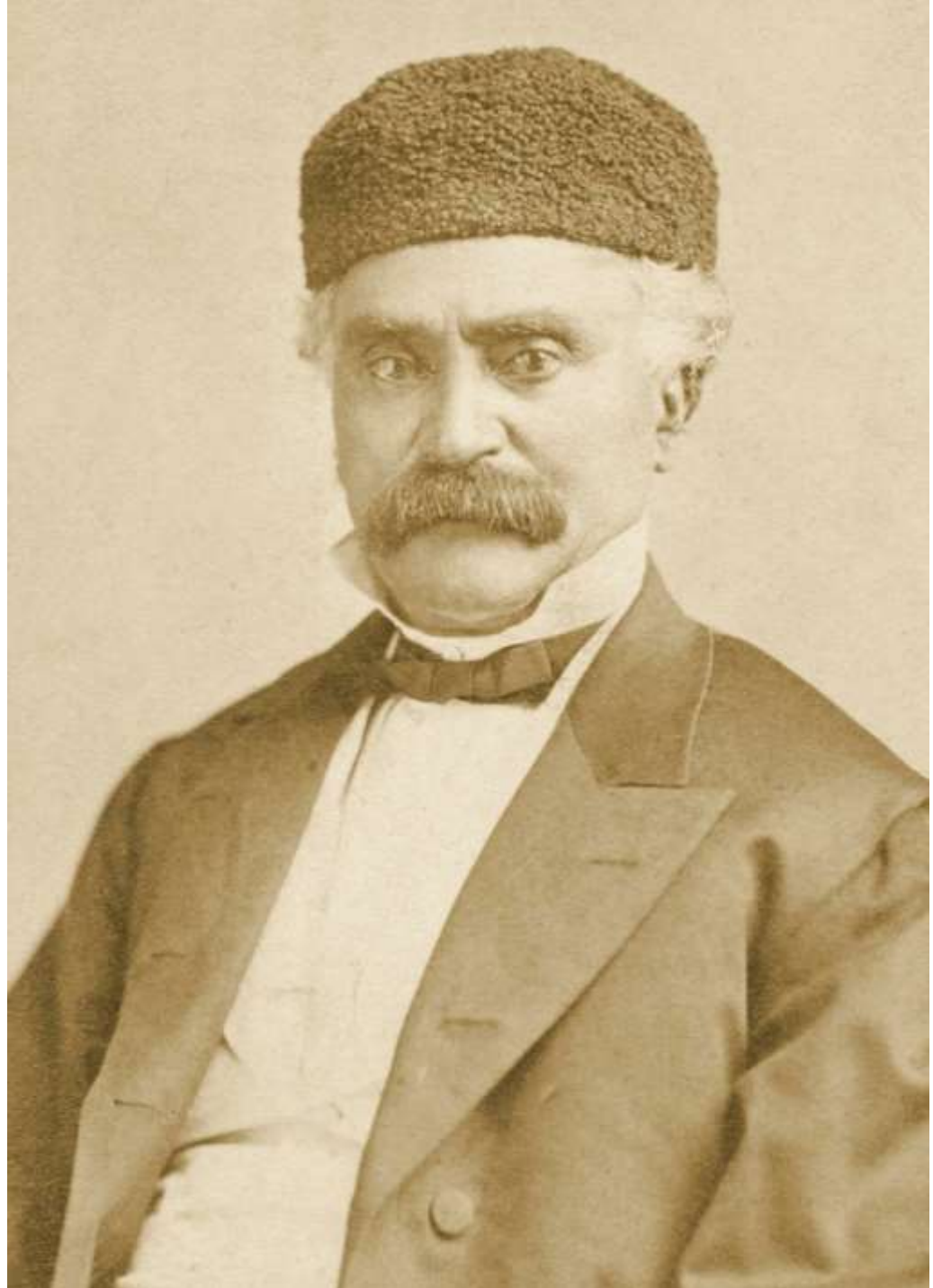


10.6



10.6 The Lyons family's home was nearly destroyed during the New York City draft riots that took place over five days in July 1863 in protest to the conscription for the Union Army during the Civil War, during which eleven Black men were lynched.

10.7



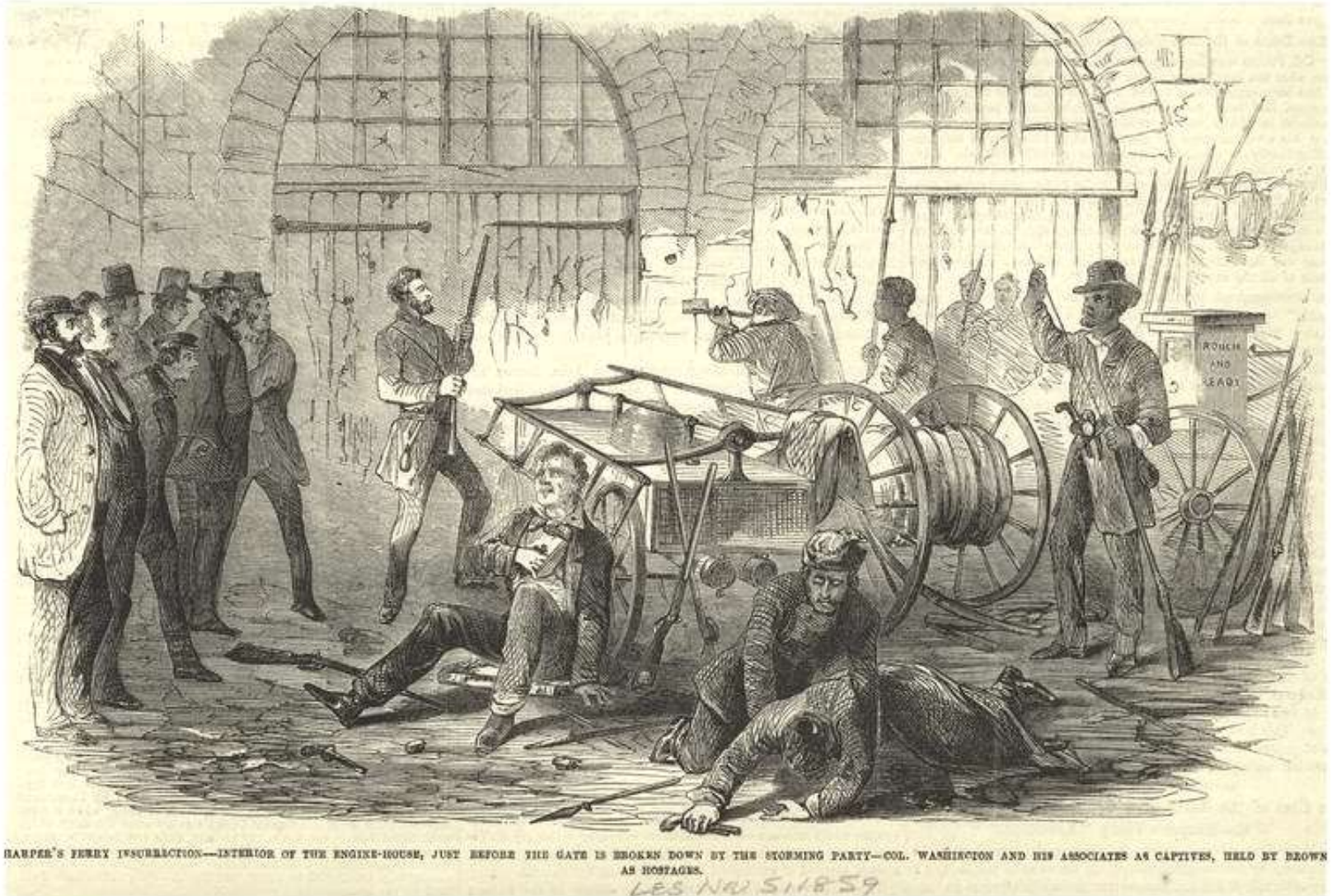
10.7 Peter Guignon, a classmate and brother-in-law of Albro Lyons, suffered many hardships in his life but was an avid civil rights activist and businessman.

10.8



10.8 The beautiful kwanzan cherry allée on the west side of the Reservoir marks the site of Elizabeth Gloucester's first Seneca Village lot. It would be the first of a lifetime of real estate investments that made her one of the wealthiest Black women in America.

10.9



10.9 In 1859, just before leaving New York to lead an insurrection at the federal armory at Harper's Ferry in Virginia, abolitionist John Brown (center) was the guest of Seneca Village landowner Elizabeth Gloucester and her husband, Reverend James Gloucester. Elizabeth Gloucester aided Brown's rebellion by sending him \$25 via Frederick Douglass.

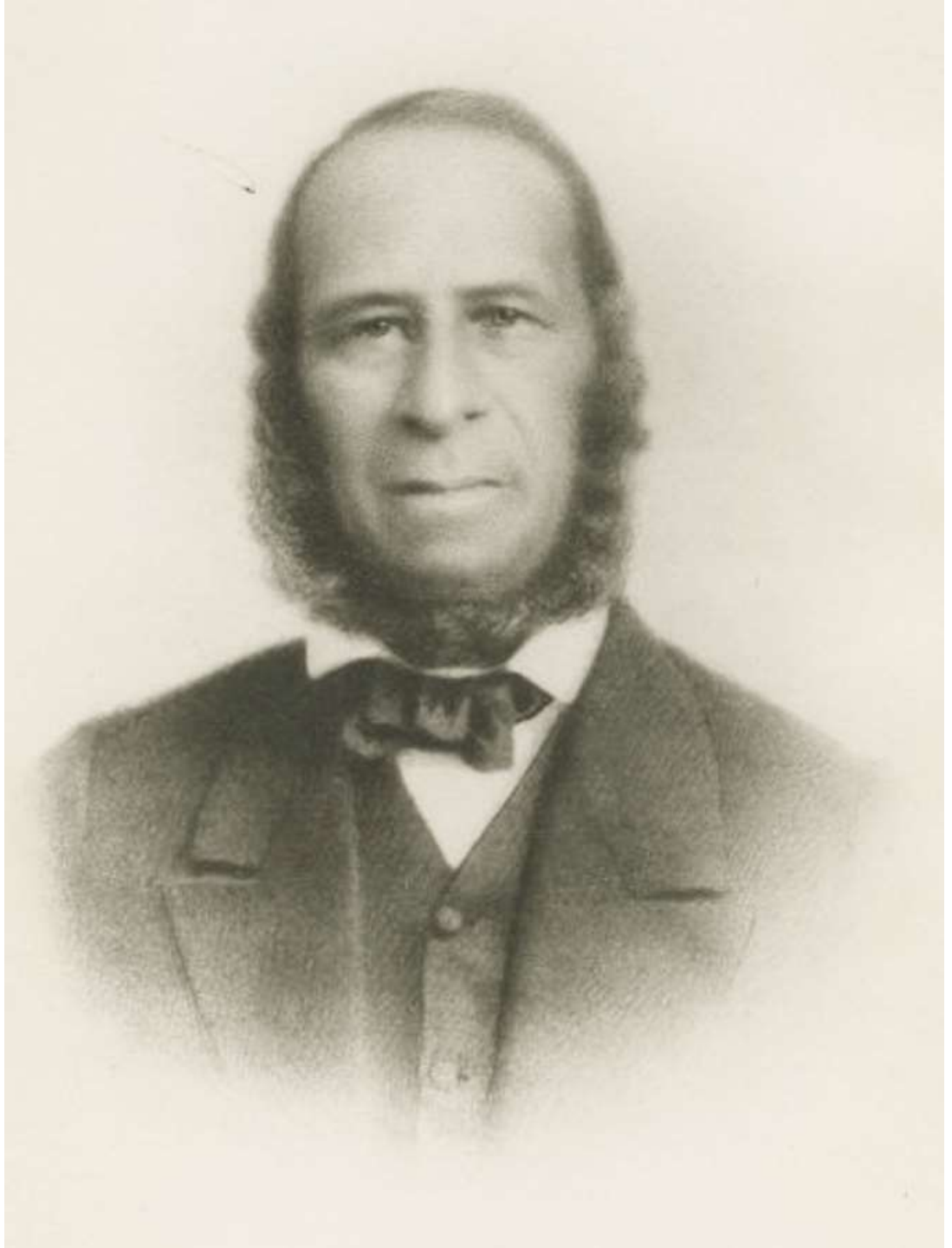
10.10

10.10 Reverend Theodore S. Wright was an ardent abolitionist. He purchased land in Seneca Village shortly before he died. As an active conductor on the Underground Railroad at his home, today's 2 White Street in Tribeca, perhaps he was considering his prepark property for a similar purpose.

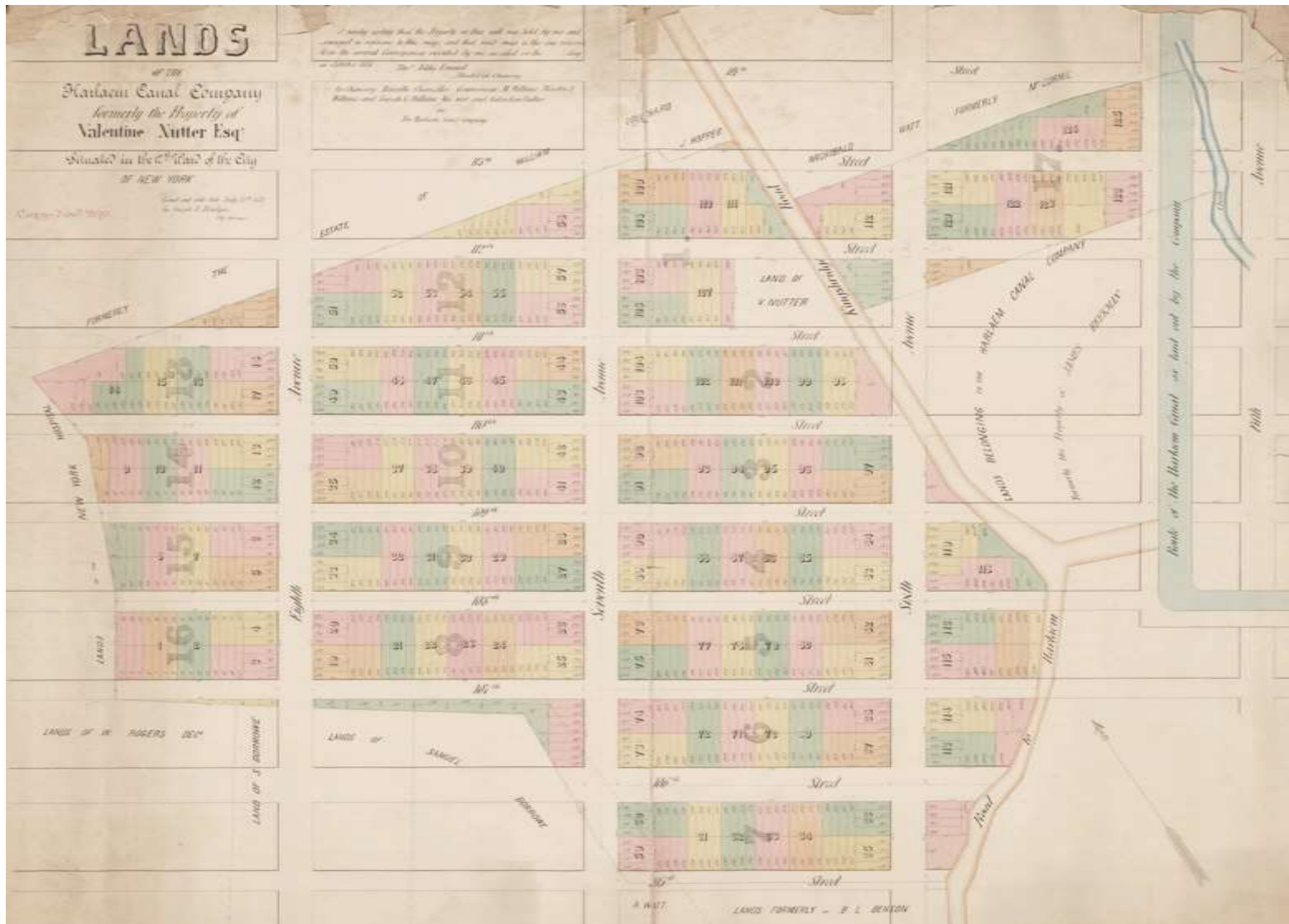


10.11

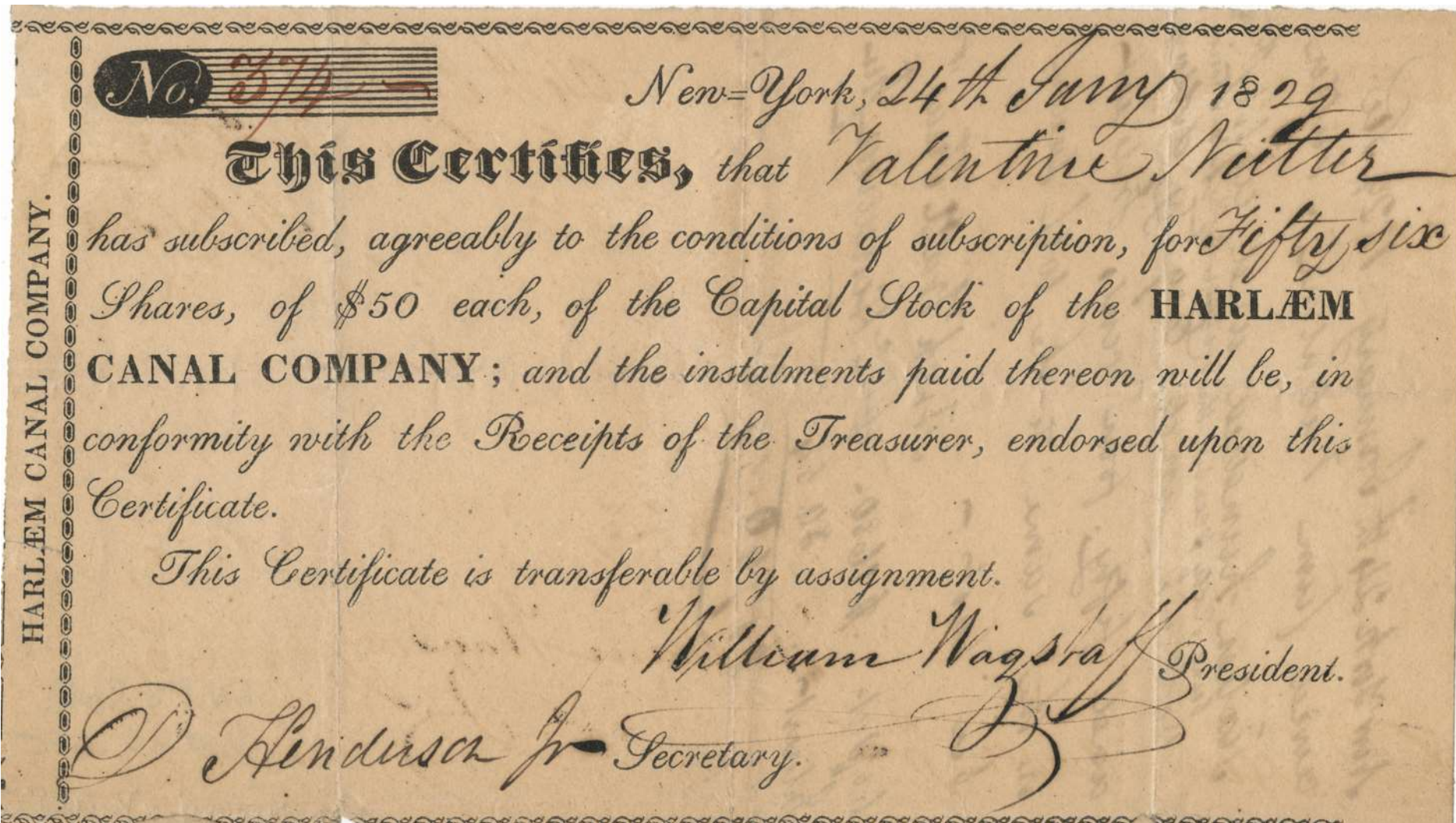
10.11 In 1850, abolitionist Reverend Charles B. Ray bought two lots in what is now Strawberry Fields. That same year, he also began to pay taxes on a lot in Seneca Village owned by Elizabeth Gloucester. Given his active participation in the Underground Railroad and Gloucester's similar sentiments, it is likely that those lots might have become a stop on the railroad.



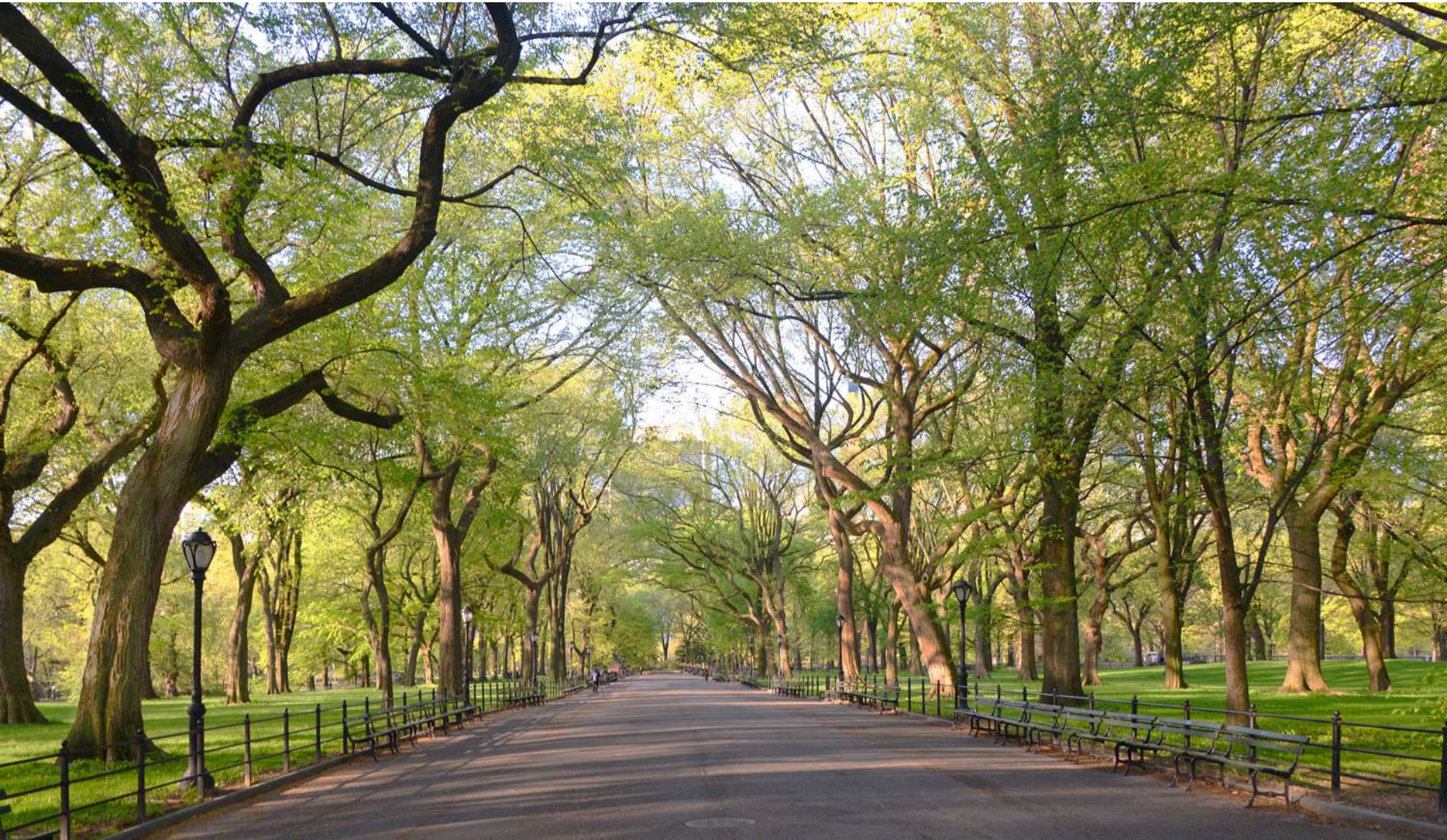
CHAPTER 11



11.1 When Valentine Nutter sold his property to the Harlaem Canal Company, they divided it into nearly 1,200 saleable lots that were repurchased by the family at auction when the canal company failed in 1831. Note the adjacent canal at the top right of the map. It would have flowed through the northeast corner of today's Central Park.



11.2 In 1828, Valentine Nutter sold most of his Harlem property to the Haerlem Canal Company and also invested in it, buying fifty-six shares of stock. When the company failed to meet its financial commitments, Nutter and his family sued and regained title to the property, then sold off some of it to speculator Archibald Watt.

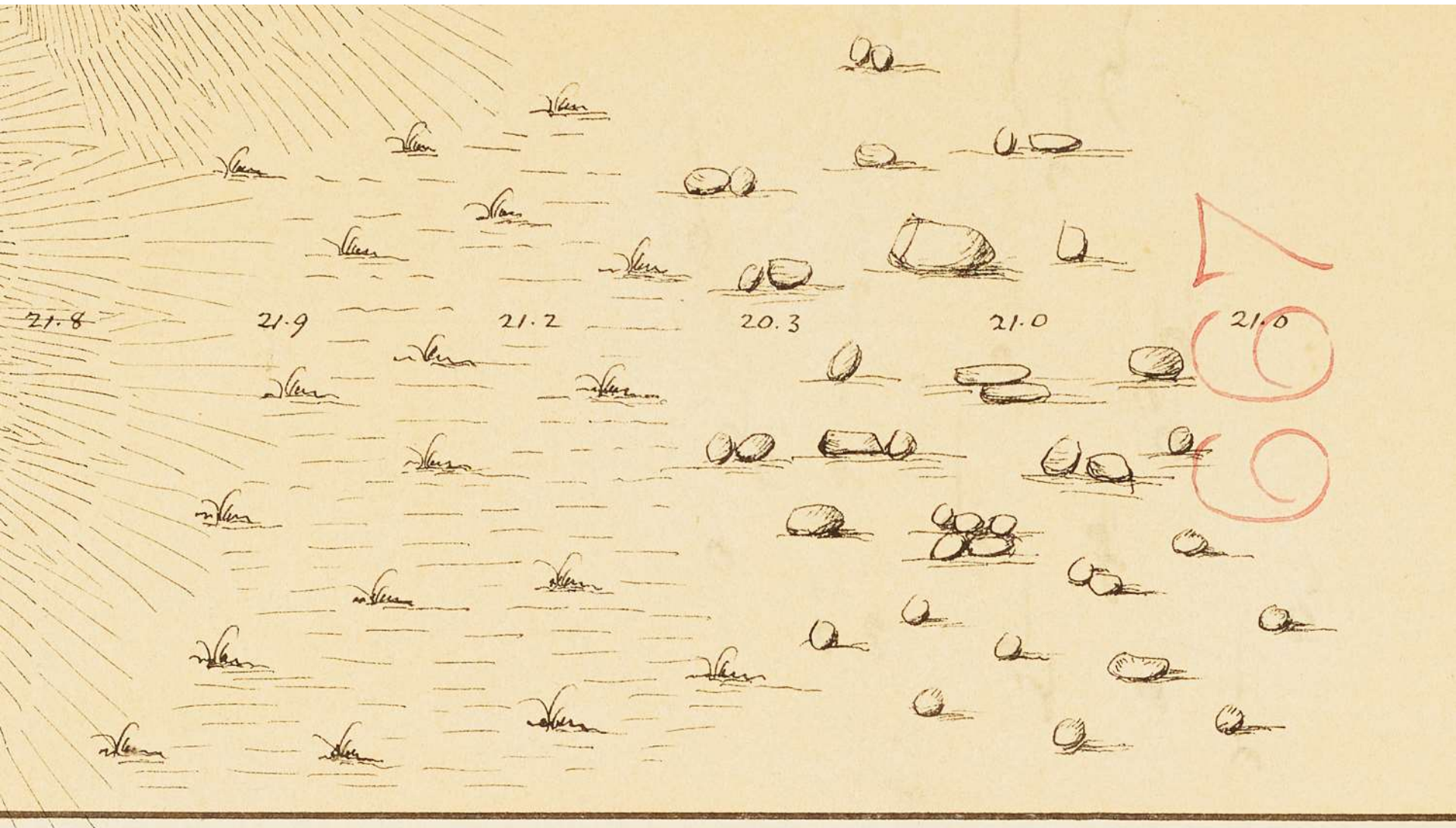


12.1 The magnificent elms that line the Mall are Central Park's most significant horticultural feature. These centenary trees were planted in 1922, when the roots of the 1859 plantings had become constricted by the layers of clay and hardpan that lay beneath the Park.



12.2 When global warming began to melt the Laurentide ice sheet over twenty thousand years ago, it dropped countless boulders on Manhattan—from small stones to others weighing hundreds of tons—that had been dragged by the ice from terrain as distant as the New Jersey Palisades. This photograph taken in 1862 shows the prepark landscape along Fifth Avenue strewn with tens of thousands of these stones, which were used by the park designers for substructure or as design elements.

12.3



12.3 In his topographic survey, surveyor and draughtsman Roswell Graves captured groupings of the erratics throughout the landscape, these in the area just off Bethesda Terrace in the Lake.

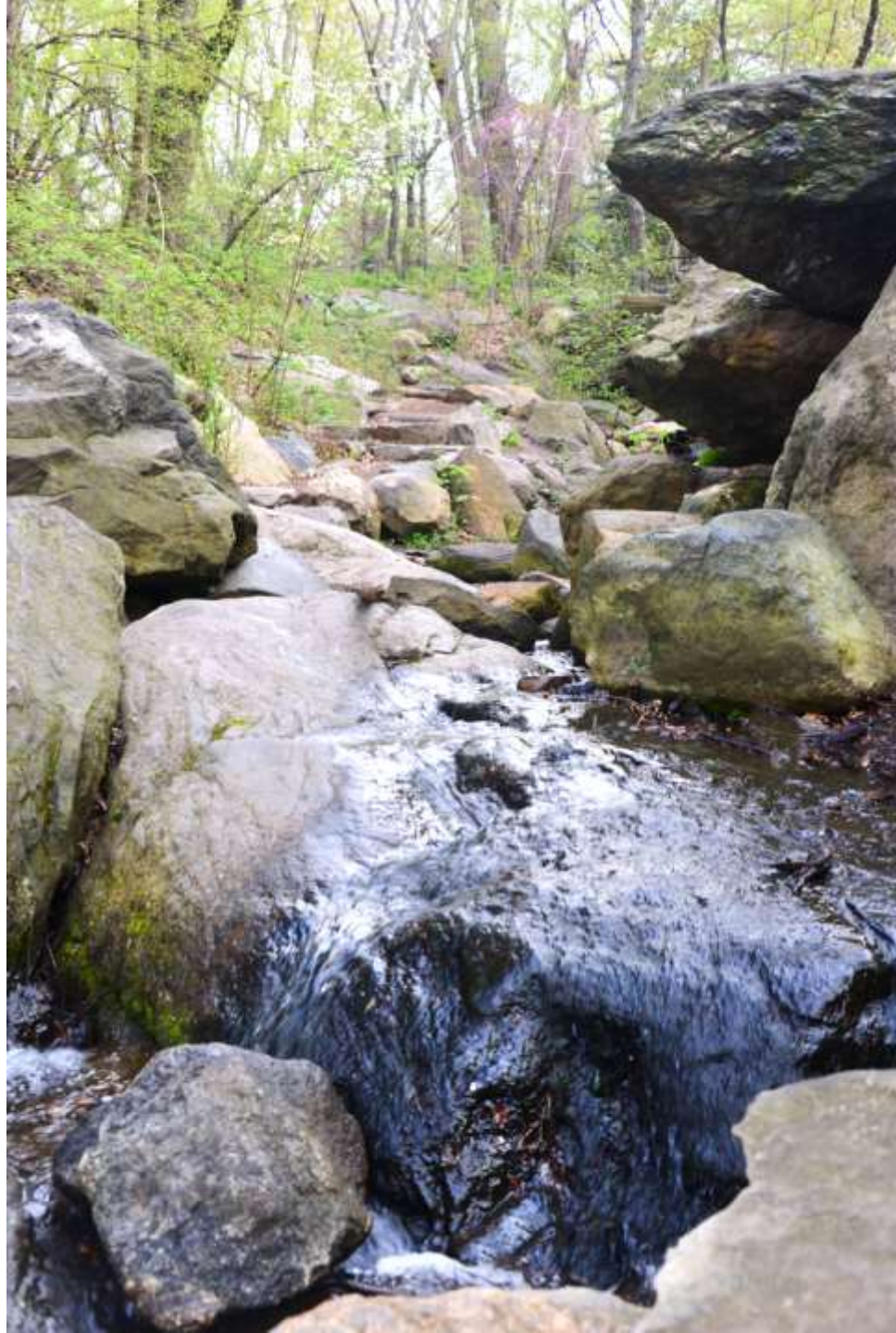
12.4

12.4 The southeast corner of the Sheep Meadow features a line of erratics that had been dumped by the glacier in an adjacent area. The designers used them throughout the park to shore up slopes and here kept the largest one as an eye-catching sculpture.



12.5

12.5 Designers Olmsted and Vaux brilliantly used a group of erratics that were strewn across the bottom of the future Lake to line a steep slope in the Ramble, to prevent erosion and resemble a mountain rockslide.



12.7



12.7 Quicksand, an unstable soil of clay, sand, or silt particles suspended in standing water, was discovered during the construction of Inscope Arch at the Pond.

12.8



12.8 The prepark was covered with unhealthy, stagnant bodies of water—this image most likely the future Lake—that gathered because the thick layer of hardpan prevented proper drainage.

12.9



12.9 James Amory was the largest purchaser of common lands lots that his family and his descendants lived on, worked on and cultivated. Several of the park's most beloved landmarks, referred to as "the heart of the park," were on Amory's property: The Mall, Bethesda Terrace, Rumsey Playfield and surrounding landscapes, the Dene, and portions of the East Green, Sheep Meadow and the former Center Drive.

12.10



12.10 James and John Amory were celebrated whip makers for elite sportsmen. Their most famous client, George Washington, had the Amorys fashion a riding crop for him that is signed "Amory and Johnson" with the initials "GW" on the tip.

12.11



12.11 Cedar Hill was the property of grocer David Wagstaff, who lived in what is now the Seventy-Ninth Street Transverse Road and had a farm that specialized in asparagus.

12.12



12.12 The common lands between Eighty-Sixth and Eighty-Eighth Street, Fifth Avenue into the Reservoir, an area that includes Rhododendron Mile, was the property of Benjamin Romaine, a colorful and corrupt character, whose grandson Robert J. Dillon was instrumental in the legalization of Central Park.

CHAPTER 13

13.1 Before John Snow discovered in 1854 that cholera was caused by contaminated drinking water, health officials believed people could avoid the disease by avoiding drafts of air, raw vegetables, and unripe fruit. The disease caused a pandemic in the 1830s and 1840s.

NOTICE.

PREVENTIVES OF

CHOLERA!

Published by order of the Sanatory Committee, under the sanction of the Medical Council.

BE TEMPERATE IN EATING & DRINKING!

Avoid Raw Vegetables and Unripe Fruit!

Abstain from **COLD WATER**, when heated, and above all from *Ardent Spirits*, and if habit have rendered them indispensable, take much less than usual.

SLEEP & CLOTHE WARM

 DO NOT SLEEP OR SIT IN A DRAUGHT OF AIR 

Avoid getting Wet!

Attend immediately to all disorders of the Bowels.

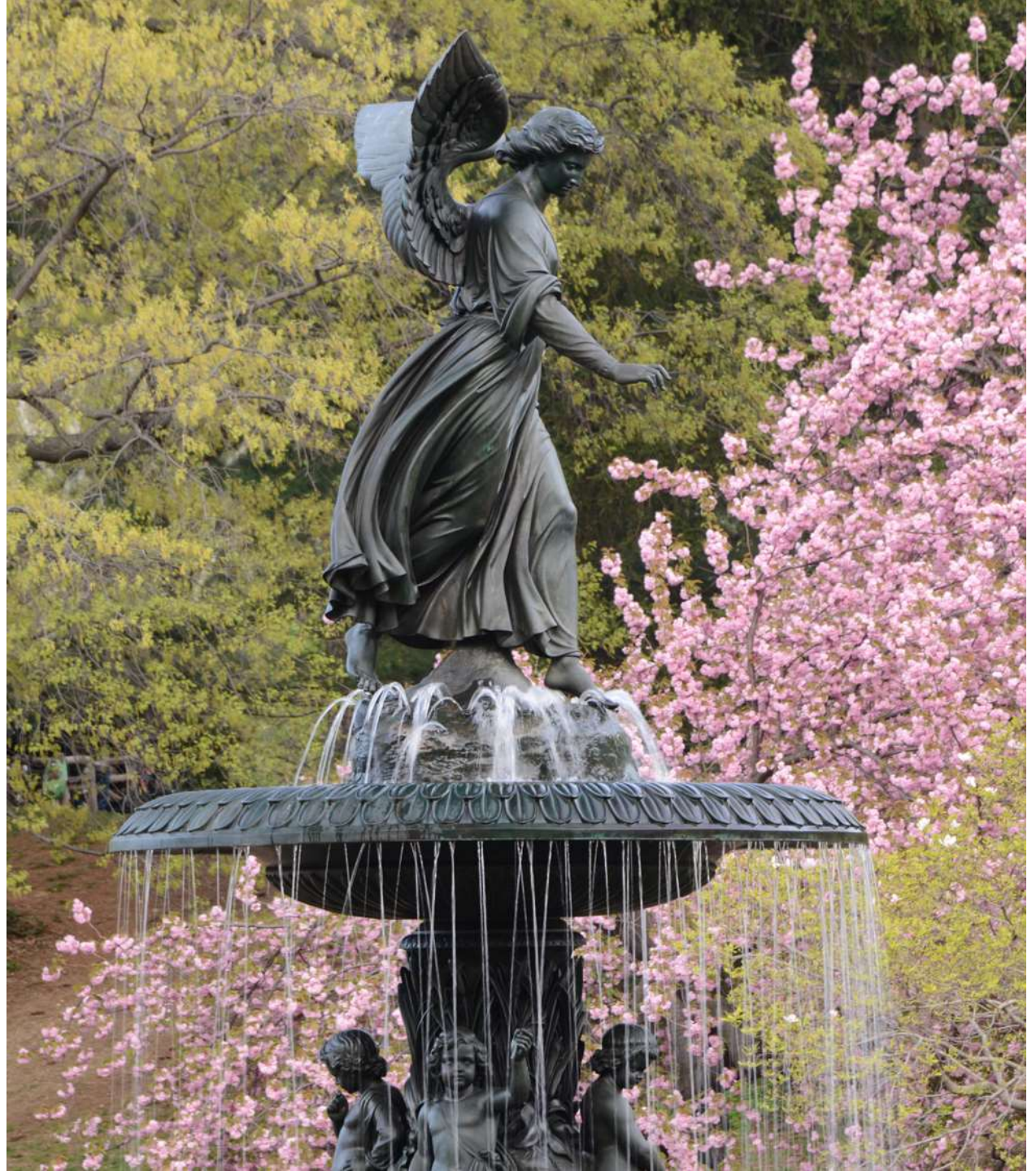
TAKE NO MEDICINE WITHOUT ADVICE.

Medicine and Medical Advice can be had by the poor, at all hours of the day and night, by applying at the Station House in each Ward.

CALEB S. WOODHULL, Mayor.
JAMES KELLY, Chairman of Sanatory Committee.

13.2

13.2 Emma Stebbins's Bethesda Fountain was inspired by the biblical reference to an angel who blessed the pools of Bethesda in Jerusalem, which bestowed them with healing properties. The artist's brother died as the result of cholera, which influenced her to create a fountain dedicated to the healing properties of New York's Croton water.



13.3



13.3 After over a century of concern about the city's poor water, New York finally celebrated the completion of the Croton Aqueduct in 1842. The Egyptian-style distributing reservoir was constructed in an out-of-town location, Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street, the site of today's New York Public Library.

13.4



13.4 Until 1931, the Great Lawn in Central Park was the site of a receiving reservoir, a holding tank for the Croton water. The original site, known as York Hill, caused the water to flow by the force of gravity to the distributing reservoir on Murray Hill.

13.5



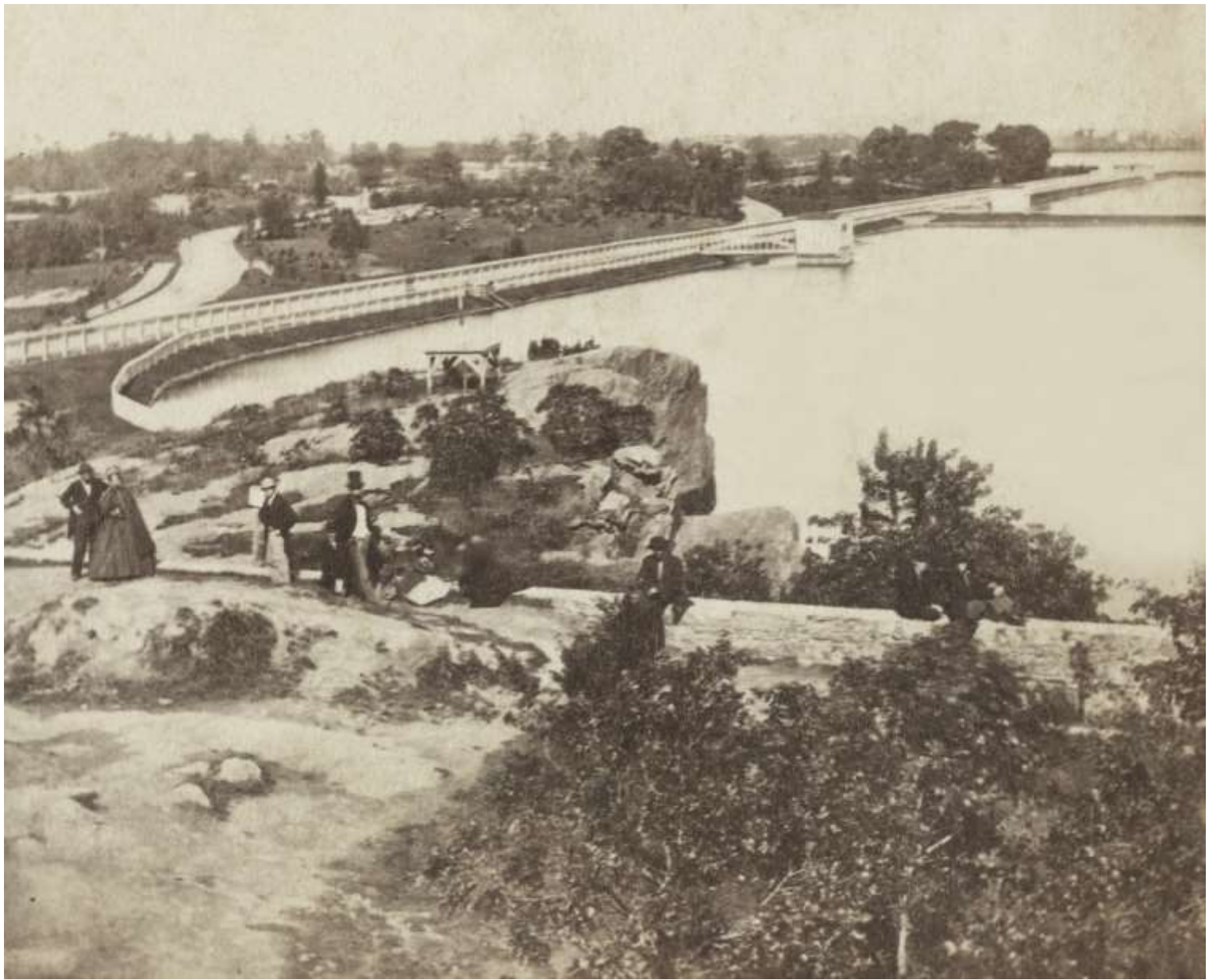
13.5 The Croton Aqueduct Board decided not to blast the huge rock outcrop, later called Vista Rock, at the southwest corner of the receiving reservoir, in order to save \$75,000. Today it serves as a commanding perch for the Belvedere, an Italian word for structures that have a “beautiful view.”

13.6



13.6 Evidence of the Croton Water system can still be found in Central Park. This manhole cover was on the path of the former Seneca Village site, the settlement adjacent to the receiving reservoir. It was recently removed but a similar one can still be found on the path.

13.7



13.7 A view of the receiving reservoir from the tower overlooking Vista Rock, ca. 1865. Due to the city's growing population and the overuse of the Croton water, the system proved to be inadequate only eight years after construction was completed. Another reservoir was needed.



14.1 The inhospitable low-lying swampland that became the lower park was once the site of Irish and German piggeries and shanties.

14.2



14.2 This 1857 photograph shows a frame house, outhouse, kitchen garden, and surrounding orchard that was a typical home of many immigrants. This structure was located in what is today the west side of the Lake.

14.3



14.3 The grounds of the former religious community of Mount St. Vincent became Central Park's first formal garden.

14.4



14.4 The elaborate interior of the Mount Saint Vincent chapel became Manhattan's first uptown art gallery and museum until it burned down in 1881.

14.5



14.5 By the 1850s, the East Meadow, once the property of the Benson family, had become a community of about fifty German immigrants who resided on and farmed the land until it was taken for Central Park.

14.6

14.6 German immigrant, music professor, and composer Jupiter Zeus K.M. Hesser owned and leased farmland that he called "Jupiterville," located on today's East Meadow and North Meadow.



14.7.



14.7 In an 1859 lithograph of the Dene and Mall landscapes under construction, artist George Heyward depicted the furnace chimney from the bone-boiling factory, on the site of the Tavern on the Green Restaurant (14.8), formerly the Sheepfold, built in 1870.

14.8



14.8 Tavern on the Green Restaurant, formerly the site of the bone-boiling works.



14.9 The Conservatory Garden lawn was the site of the burial ground for 156 members of Congregation Shaaray Tefila.

III.2



III.2 This illustration from an 1857 issue of Harper's Weekly, "Broadway, opposite the St. Nicholas, at Four of the Afternoon," depicts the daily ritual of the fashionable promenade while attempting to ignore what were called "the dangerous classes." For some members of the genteel classes, the creation of a policed public park would provide a safe environment that the public streets could not.

15.1

CHAPTER 15

15.1 The painting *Kindred Spirits* by artist Thomas Cole shows him conversing in forested Catskill mountains with fellow Romantic, the poet William Cullen Bryant, who first proposed a large public park for New York that would evoke the woodlands in Cole's painting.

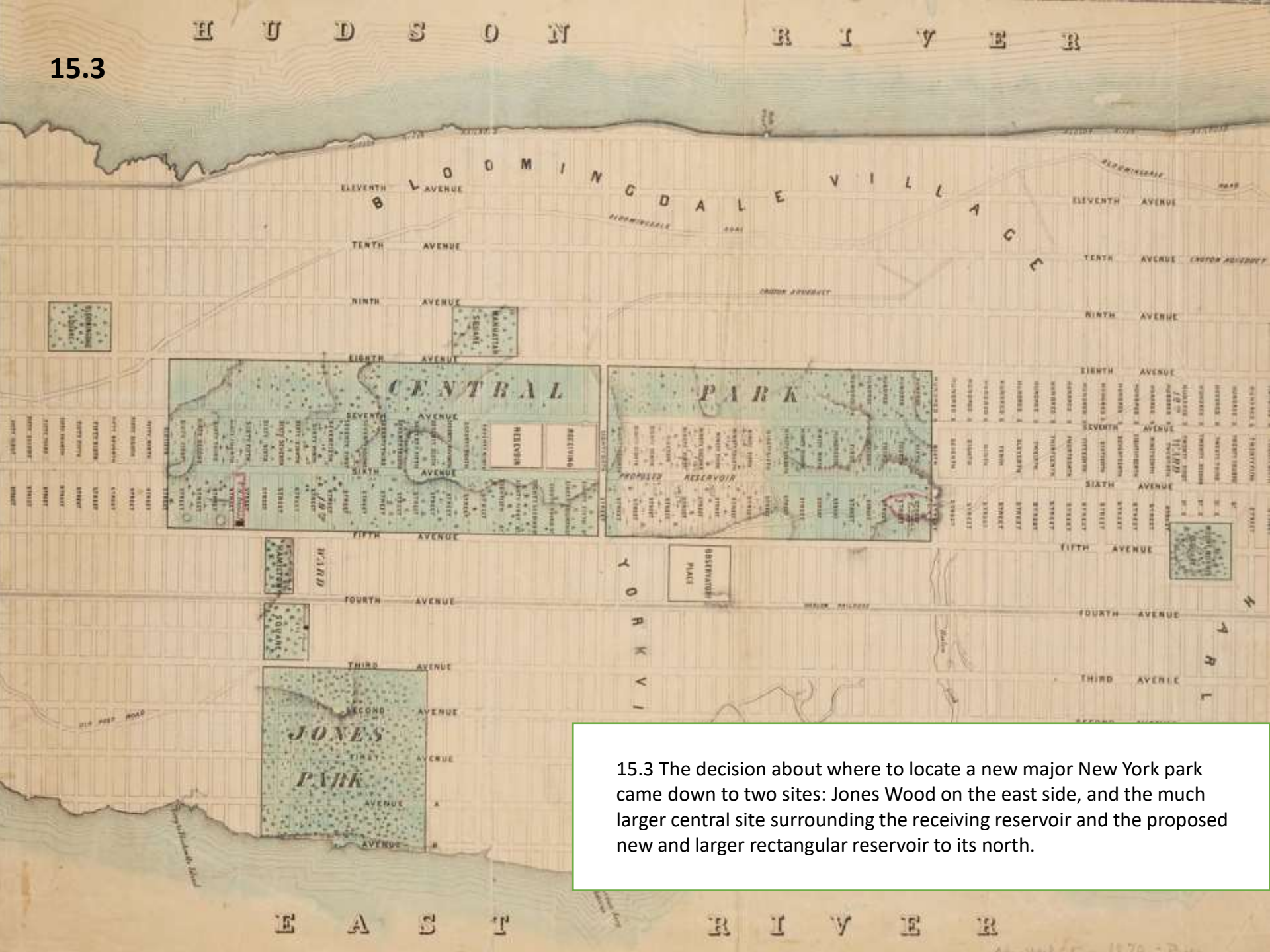


15.2

15.2 Inspired by the parks he saw in Europe, wealthy shipping magnate Robert Minturn, urged on by wife Anna Mary Wendell, became an important force behind the idea for a park in New York. His business partner, Moses Grinnell, became one of the Central Park commissioners.



15.3



15.3 The decision about where to locate a new major New York park came down to two sites: Jones Wood on the east side, and the much larger central site surrounding the receiving reservoir and the proposed new and larger rectangular reservoir to its north.

15.4

15.4 The site of the former Amory homestead, today a memorial grove dedicated to heroes of World War I, was some of the most expensive lots sold in the prepark. Due to an error in their father's will, the Amory heirs were forced to auction off their property in 1851.



15.5



15.5 The Ramble meadow that features the magnificent tupelo tree was the former property of John Patrick and his widow, Mary Ann Reckless, the victim of an ill-intentioned speculation scheme in 1852.

15.6

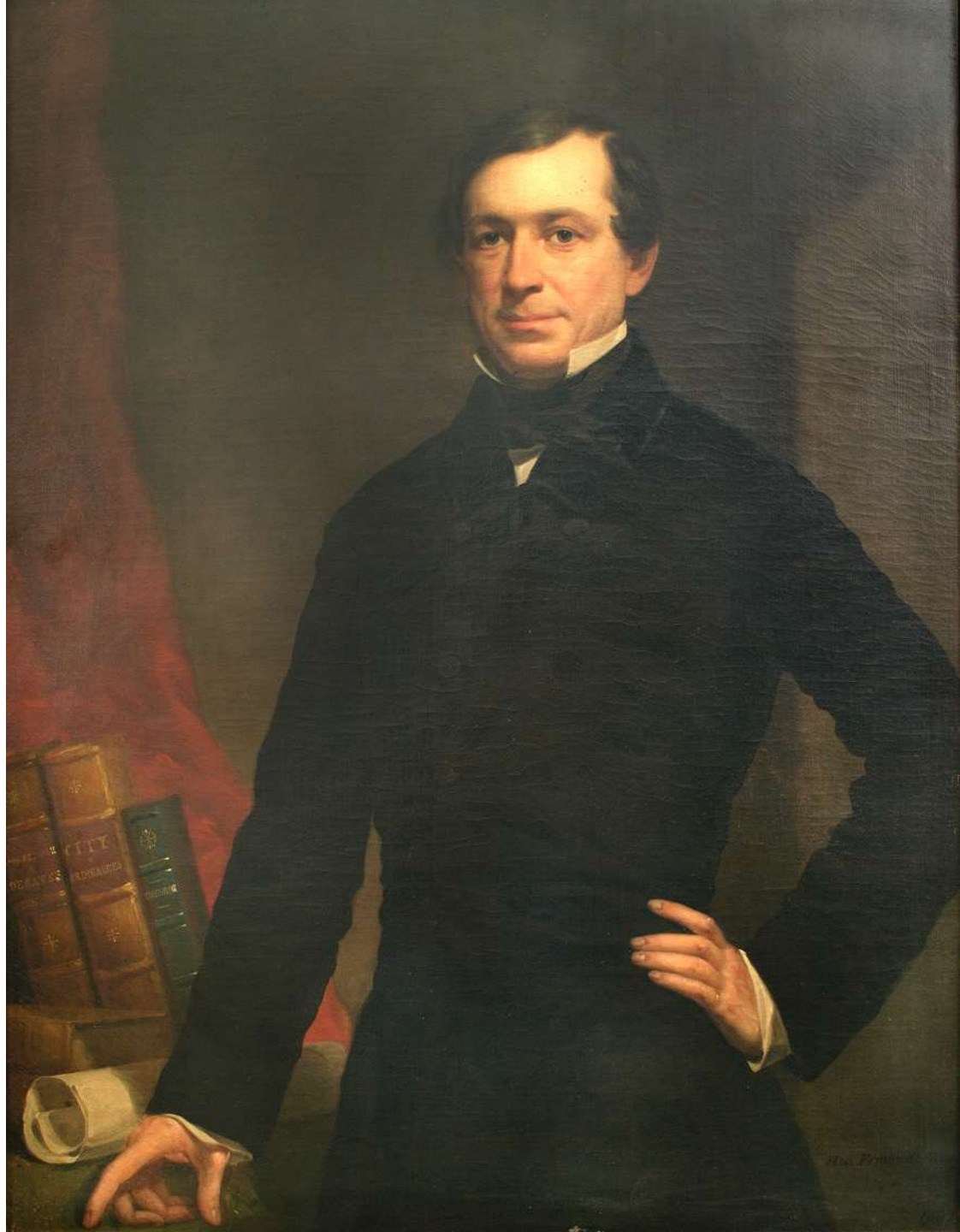
15.6 The Pinetum in Central Park was the former the Seneca Village property of Epiphany Davis, a trustee of the A.M.E. Zion Church. The lots were sold by his heirs in a swindle that was perpetrated upon many unsuspecting landowners.

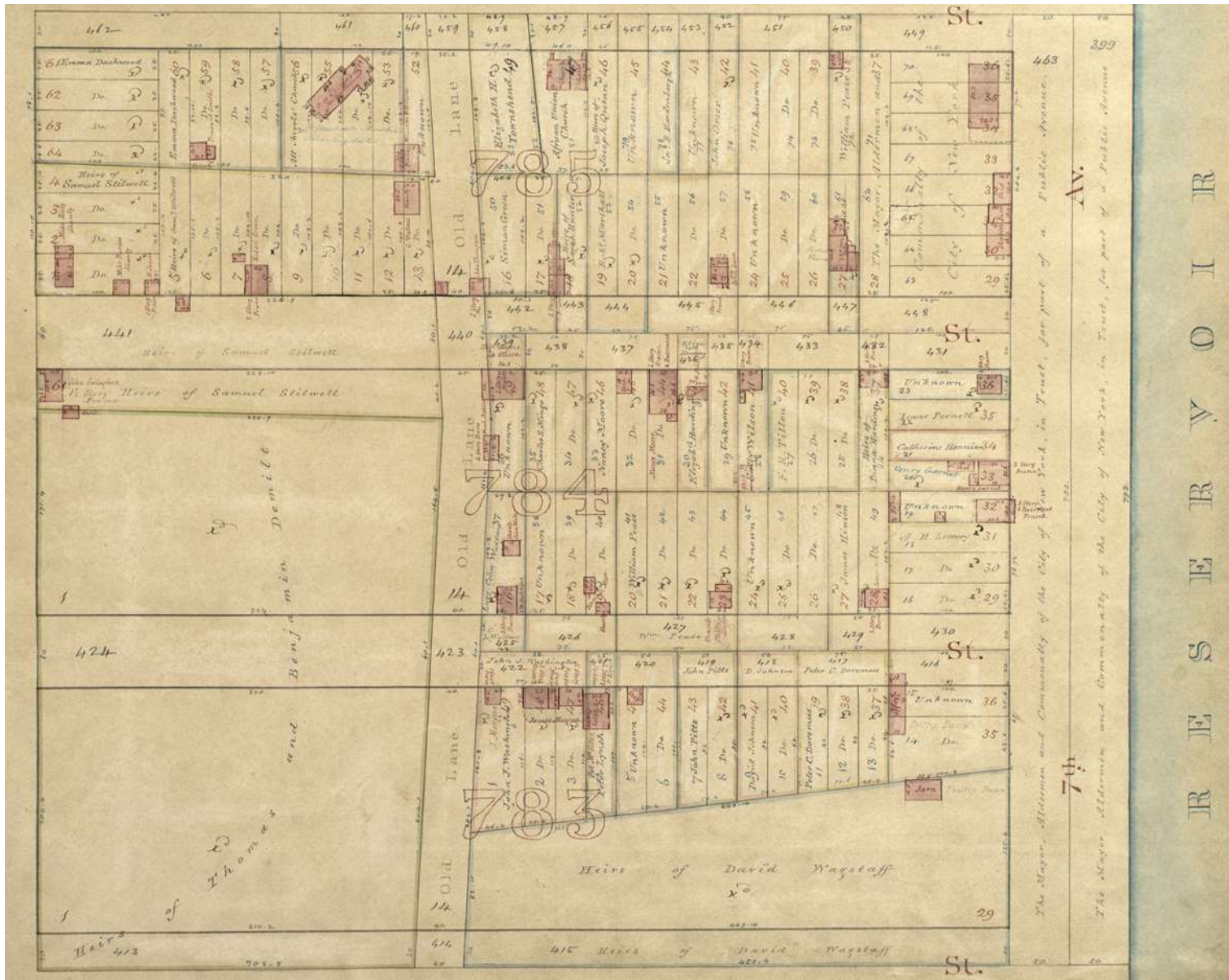


16.1

CHAPTER 16

16.1 Although Fernando Wood was arguably the most corrupt mayor in New York City's history, his one redeeming act was to veto a reduction of Central Park that would have had the park start at Seventy-Second Street rather than Fifty-Ninth Street and have lopped off four hundred feet on either side, at Fifth Avenue and Eighth Avenue. This portrait by Charles Loring Elliott was painted in 1857, when he was both the mayor and the park commissioner.





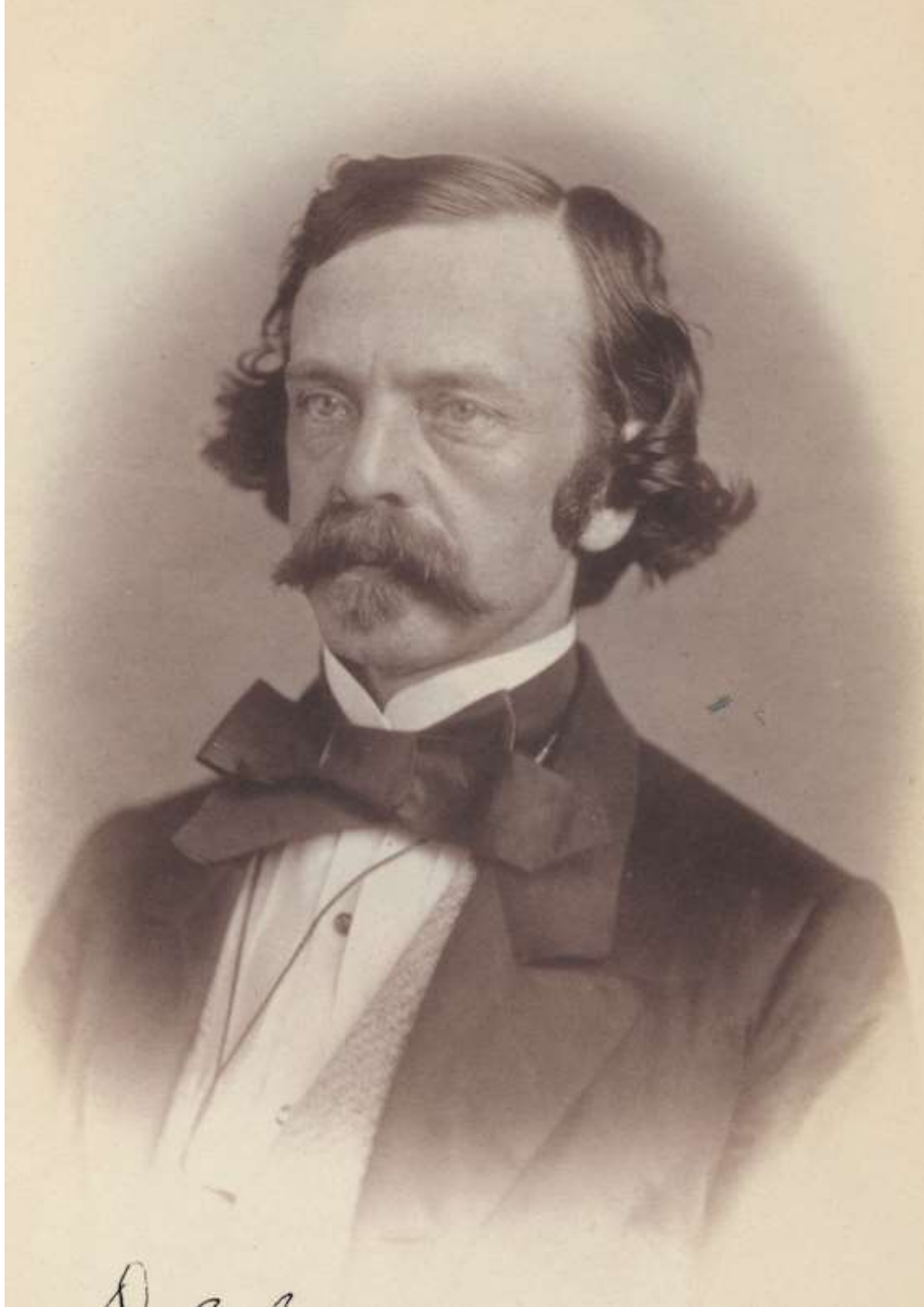
16.3 This condemnation map for three blocks in Seneca Village is one in a volume of forty bound maps, most of which include the names of the landowners or residents and the placement and size of their structures. In that time, ownership and rentals were constantly changing, but the maps offer some of the most authoritative visual documentation of the prepark populations.

16.4



16.4 Surveyors Roswell Graves and Francis Nicholson combined the topographic features and structures for their 1855 prepark maps, here three blocks of Seneca Village, the prepark's most densely populated area.

16.5



16.5 State senator Daniel E. Sickles, later a U.S. Congressman, helped to legalize Central Park through many devious political maneuvers.

16.6

16.6 New York State Supreme Court Judge Ira Harris moved to the city temporarily to officiate over the legalization of Central Park. He conducted the hearing of the protests of the petitioners who, for the most part, wanted a higher award for their properties. Harris would later become a U.S. senator, having made important political connections during the monthlong hearing.



TABLE 1: 79-106 STREETS

TABLE 1G1 Central Park Lot Values

Streets	8th Ave - 7th Ave			7th Ave - 6th Ave			6th Ave - 5th Ave		
	Avenue Lots	Mid-block Lots	Avenue Lots	Avenue Lots	Mid-block Lots	Avenue Lots	Avenue Lots	Mid-block Lots	Avenue Lots
107th St-106th St		1373		1353	1361	1353			
104th St-105th St	1303	1320	1310	1325	1377	1436			
103rd St-104th St				1475	1513	1471			
102nd St-103rd St		1370			1304				
101st St-102nd St		1460			No Data				
100th St-101st St	1375	1361			1374				
99th St-100th St		1405		1470	1369	1445			
98th St-99th St		1407	1690	1303	1340	No Data			
97th St-98th St	No Data	1335	No Data	1565	1385	No Data			
96th St-97th St				1605	1495	No Data			
95th St-96th St		No Data			<i>1377/1495</i>				
94th St-95th St	<i>1375</i>								
93rd St-94th St	<i>1474</i>				1860/1375				
92nd St-93rd St		1320		145/1377/4		1429			No Data
91st St-92nd St					1390				
90th St-91st St				1580	<i>1385</i>				
89th St-90th St	No Data				No Data				
88th St-89th St		1420							
87th St-88th St		<i>1475</i>							
86th St-87th St		<i>1375</i>			No Data				
85th St-86th St		1745 on 86 St. 1530 on 85 St.	11312						
84th St-85th St	1669	1507							
83rd St-84th St		1830	1704						
82nd St-83rd St									
81st St-82nd St									
80th St-81st St		No Data							
79th St-80th St									

TABLE 1 Each block was laid out by the city in three zones: lots facing the eastern avenue, midblock lots, and lots facing the western avenue. Each zone is assigned a mean value per lot. The amounts in bold are for entire blocks purchased from a single owner. The blank cells represent awards for avenue lots and mid-block lots combined, the respective value of which it is impossible to determine. Location appears to be the most important consideration in determining awards. Lots farther south and lots fronting an avenue or along Eighty-Sixth were worth more. Avenue lots between Fifth and Sixth Avenue were slightly longer, contributing to their value.

TABLE 1 59-79th STREETS

78th St-79th St							1347	1571	
77th St-78th St			11,160	1447	1980			1796	
76th St-77th St				1525				No Data	
75th St-76th St		No Data		1565			11,090	1617	11,911
74th St-75th St		No Data		1773/1473/11,058					
73rd St-74th St	1909	1766	No Data				1066	1619	
72nd St-73rd St	11,164	1607	1579	1579	1496	1139		11,351	No Data
71st St-72nd St	11,147	1726	1801	1716	1681	11,158			
70th St-71st St	11,104	1699	1047	11,010	1794	11,303	11,161	1761	11,605
69th St-70th St	11,076	1709	1545	1734	1589	11,101	11,990	1761	11,607
68th St-69th St	11,156		1535	1773	1585	11,105	11,110	1761	11,660
67th St-68th St	11,197	1691	11,206	1799	1614	11,219	11,165	1716	11,796
66th St-67th St	11,176	1665	11,110	1821	1485		11,176	1716	11,735
65th St-66th St		1700		1331	1499	11,110	11,100	1605	11,815
64th St-65th St		1048		11,053	1661				State of New York
63rd St-64th St		1011							State of New York
62nd St-63rd St	11,103	1337	11,215	11,119	1718	11,118	11,171		11,048
61st St-62nd St		1011	11,213	11,212	1739	11,104		1706	
60th St-61st St		11,113			1959		11,077	1821	11,317
59th St-60th St		1343	11,185	11,160	1900			11,011	

TABLE 1 Each block was laid out by the city in three zones: lots facing the eastern avenue, midblock lots, and lots facing the western avenue. Each zone is assigned a mean value per lot. The amounts in bold are for entire blocks purchased from a single owner. The blank cells represent awards for avenue lots and mid-block lots combined, the respective value of which it is impossible to determine. Location appears to be the most important consideration in determining awards. Lots farther south and lots fronting an avenue or along Eighty-Sixth were worth more. Avenue lots between Fifth and Sixth Avenue were slightly longer, contributing to their value.

16.7

Know all Men by these Presents, WHEREAS:

in and by the Report of the Commissioners of Estimate and Apportionment, duly confirmed by the Supreme Court on the fifth day of February, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, in a certain proceeding, entitled - "In the matter of the Opening and laying out a Public Place, between 57th and 100th Streets and the Fifth and Eighth Avenues, in the City of New-York," an award for taking certain lands, to wit:

DESCRIPTION.	WARD No.		CEREMONIAL NUMBER.
	Block.	Lot.	
House Lot	786	37	

was made to Elizabeth McCollin in the sum of Fifteen Hundred and fifty

Dollars,

as by reference to said Report and the Maps of said Commissioners, on file in the office of the Clerk of the city and county of New-York, will more fully appear.

Now Therefore, know ye, That I, Elizabeth McCollin the person named in and entitled to the said award, do hereby acknowledge to have received from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Community of the city of New-York, the aforesaid sum of Fifteen Hundred and fifty

Dollars,

in full payment and satisfaction of said award: And, in consideration thereof, I do hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, grant and release unto the said the Mayor, Aldermen and Community aforesaid, the said lots and parcels of land and all my right, title, and interest therein.

In Witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this Tenth day of June, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six.

Signed and delivered in the presence of

Myman, Notary

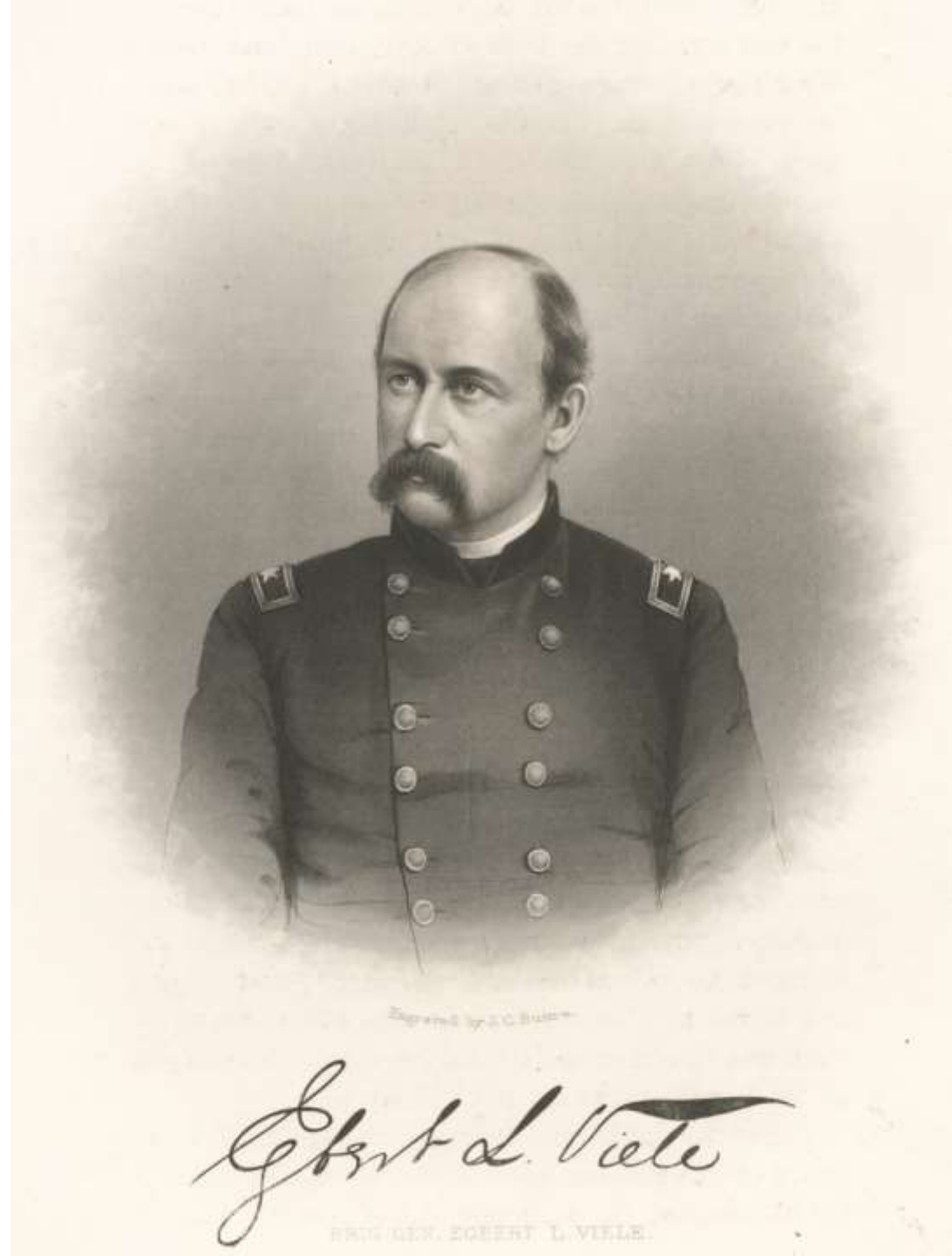
Elizabeth McCollin



16.7 The release from Elizabeth McCollin to the city of New York for her \$1,550 award for her Central Park house and lot along Eighty-Sixth Street.

CHAPTER 17

17.1 Egbert Viele's *Map of Lands Included in The Central Park from a Topographical Survey* was initially an independent project. It depicts the prepark as it was in June 1855, showing homes, outbuildings, plantations, garden beds, rock outcrops, elevations, swamps, watercourses, roads, and paths.

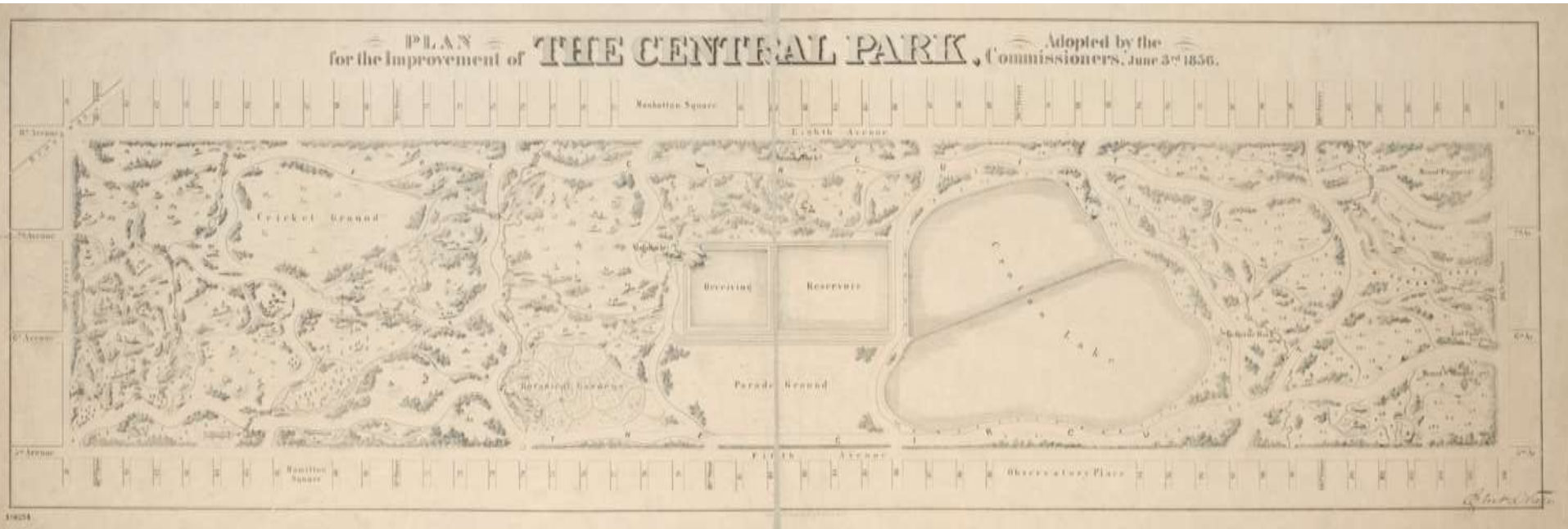


17.2



17.2 Lieutenant Egbert Viele, promoted to brigadier general during the Civil War, was the first designer of Central Park and made two significant contributions: the transverse roads and the shape of the new Reservoir.

17.3



17.3 Egbert Viele's *Plan for the improvement of the Central Park* accepted the limitations of the existing topography as his guide and emphasized outward views from high points in the landscape. His design, like other entries to the design competition, relegated the park to a series of small spaces and little variety due, in part, to the requisite transverse roads on grade with parkland. Viele considered the Circuit Drive the most important feature of his plan, with all other features radiating from it.

17.4



View from Mount Prospect [Central Park] looking East

Drawn from Nature by Aug. Hebelein.

17.4 Viele's plan for "Mount Prospect," later renamed the Great Hill, emphasized views of landscapes and waterways beyond the future park rather than delineating any scenes he would have envisioned within it.

17.5

17.5 The North Gatehouse Construction Looking East captures a ceremonial moment and offers a view of the workmen, the officials, and the equipment used to build this massive public works engineering project.



17.6

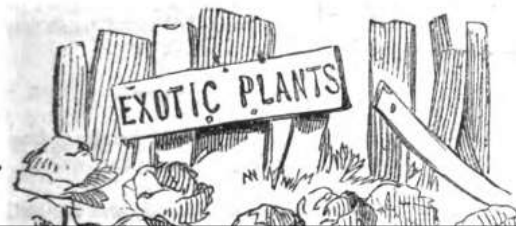
17.6 Egbert Viele converted the Reservoir from the original plan for a rectangle to this more pleasing naturalistic shape. His design also saved \$200,000 that would have been required for rock blasting had the city decided to retain the original idea of a rectangular basin.



CHAPTER 18

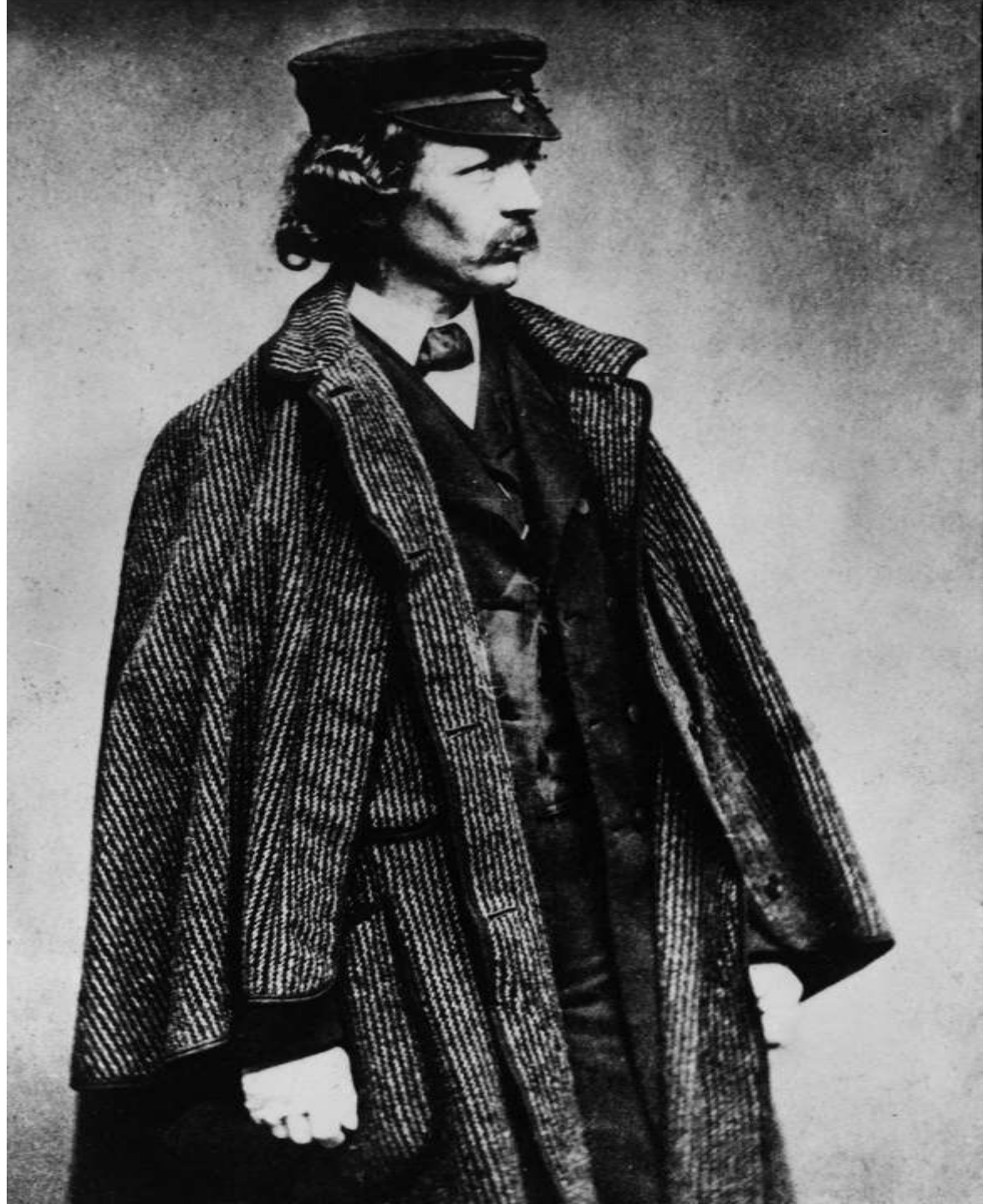
YANKEE NOTIONS.

Photographs of some of the Beauties and Adornments, Natural and Artificial, of the great CENTRAL PARK as it is.



18.1 The cartoon “Beauties and Adornments, Natural and Artificial, of the great CENTRALPARK as it is,” published in the 1858 satiric magazine *Yankee Notions*, was a response to the public’s impatience for the large and beautiful park they had been promised by the city. The artist lampooned the shanties and their poor Irish inhabitants.

18.2



18.2 This photograph of architect-in-chief Frederick Law Olmsted was most likely taken in 1860, after his six-week trip to Europe. He had gone there to recuperate from the mental and physical pressures of his work on the park, though soon after his return a serious carriage accident fractured his upper left leg and left him lame.

18.3

18.3 The photograph was most likely taken in the winter of 1857 when Olmsted, Viele, and Waring were creating drainage ditches that would become the future Lake. The view is to the northeast and shows the future Lake and Ramble hillside on to the distant receiving reservoir and tower that is today's Belvedere.



18.4

18.4 Codesigner Calvert Vaux was connected to two commissioners, and he convinced the board to hold a design competition. Once that was approved, Vaux invited Olmsted, who was at the time the superintendent of the park workforce, to join him in the competition. Though Olmsted turned him down at first, the two would go on to create the winning design.



18.5

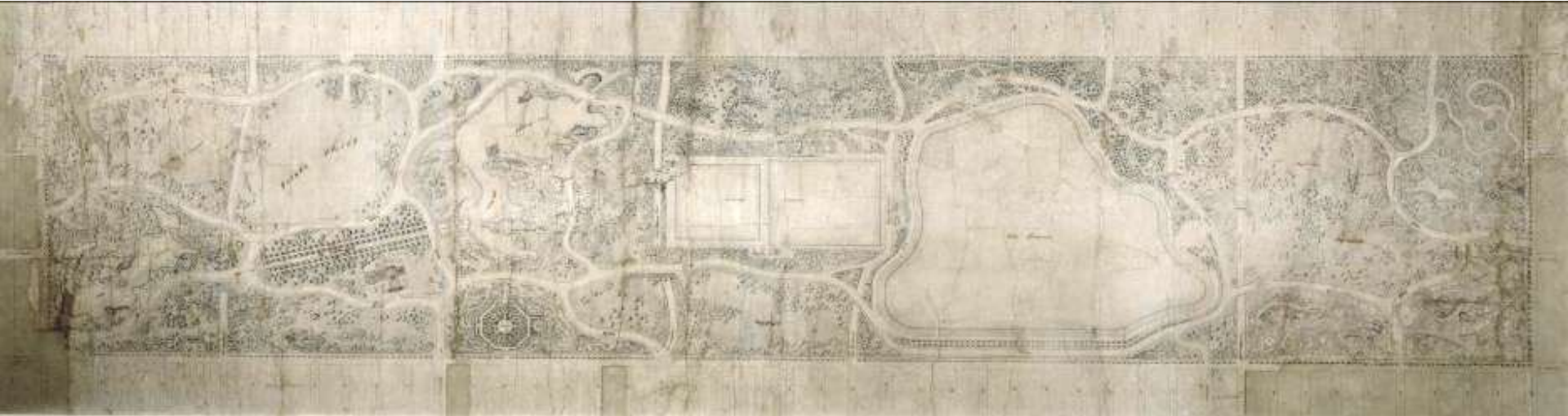
18.5 Mary Perkins Olmsted, the widow of Frederick Law Olmsted's brother John, married her brother-in-law in a civil ceremony that took place on June 13, 1859, in the park's last remaining house on the Great Hill.





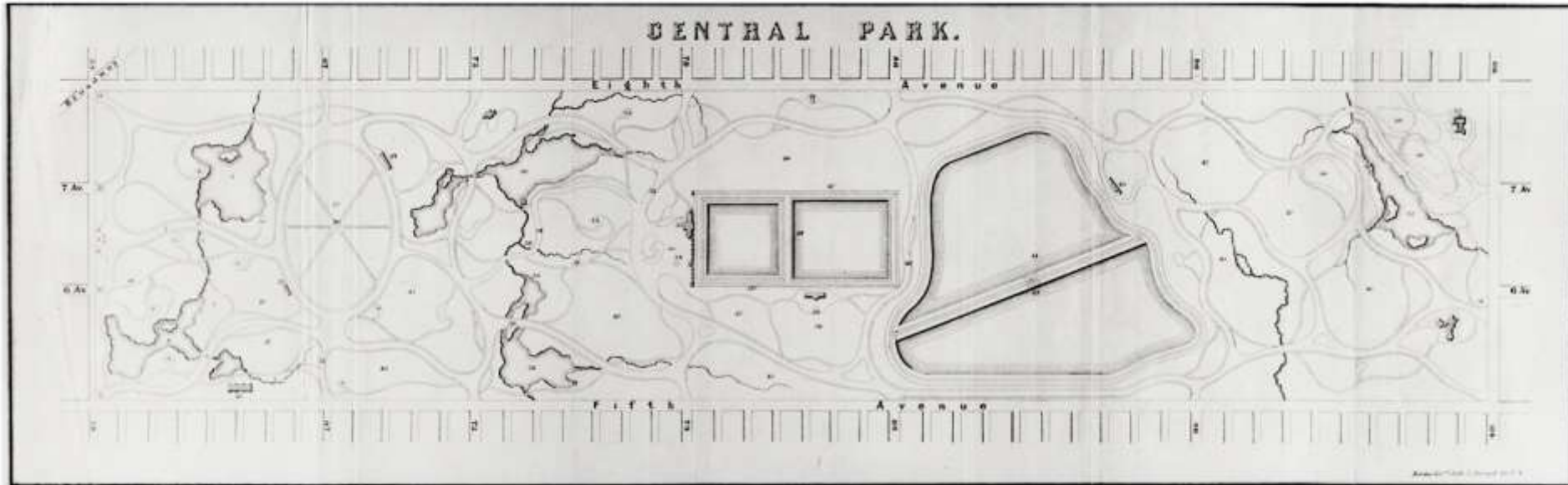
18.6 The most prominent structure in the Old Cadet's Cemetery in West Point is a thirty-three-foot-high pyramid that is the tomb of General Viele and his second wife, Juliette Dana. The tomb and a drawing of a pyramid, submitted anonymously to the design competition soon after the commissioners rejected Viele's plan, may be more than a coincidence.

18.7



18.7 Samuel Gustin's plan for Central Park influenced the commissioners to adopt many of Gustin's features.

18.8



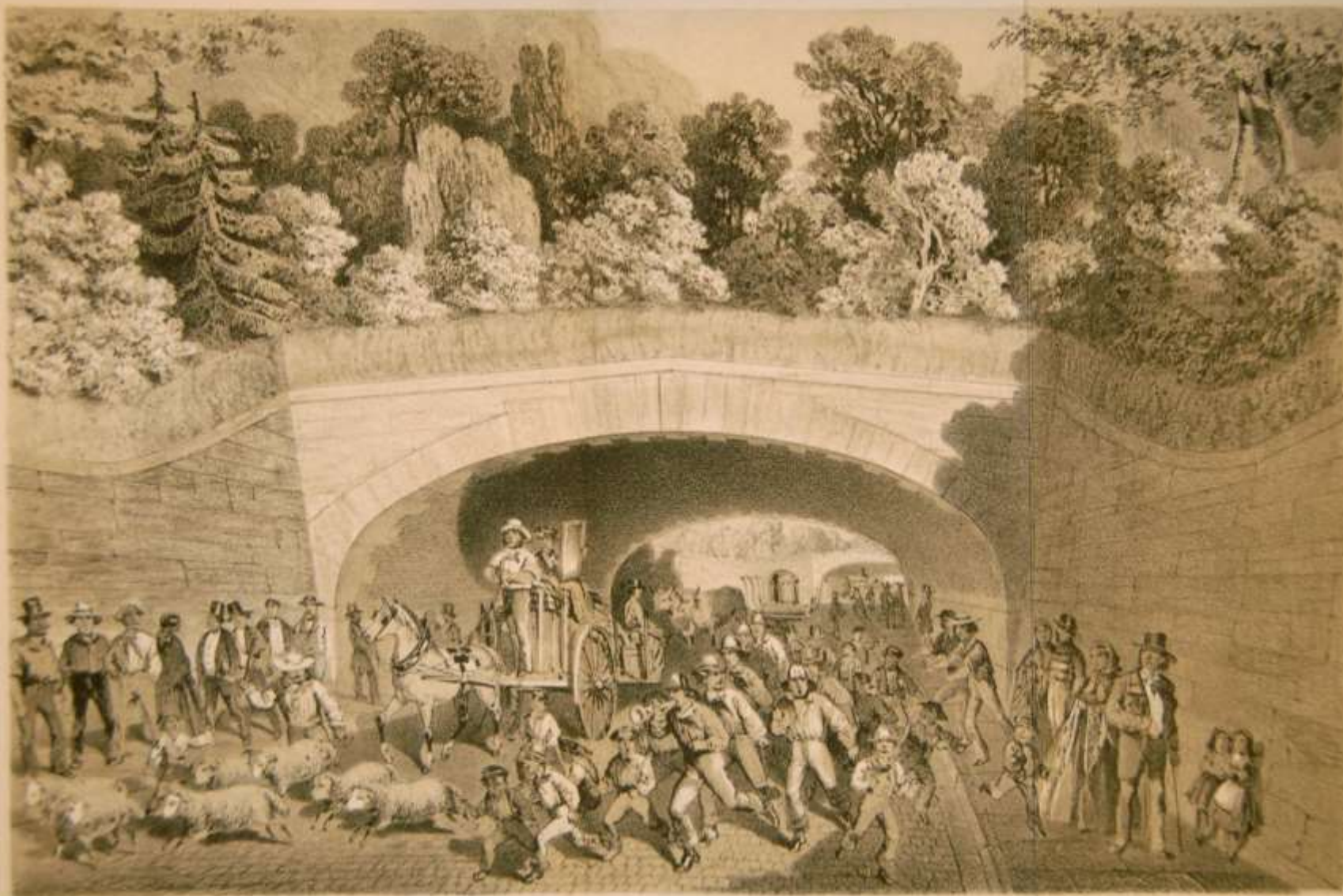
18.8 Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted's "Greensward" was the winning entry in the 1858 design competition. Until the last four blocks were added in 1863, Central Park ended at 106th Street, and the receiving reservoir became the Great Lawn in the 1930s. Other than those major changes, Central Park retains the designers' plan for the most part.

18.9



18.9 When forced to add a bridle path to the park, Calvert Vaux added the ornamental bridges as well. His elegant Bridge No. 28 anticipates the art nouveau style of the 1890s by nearly half a century.

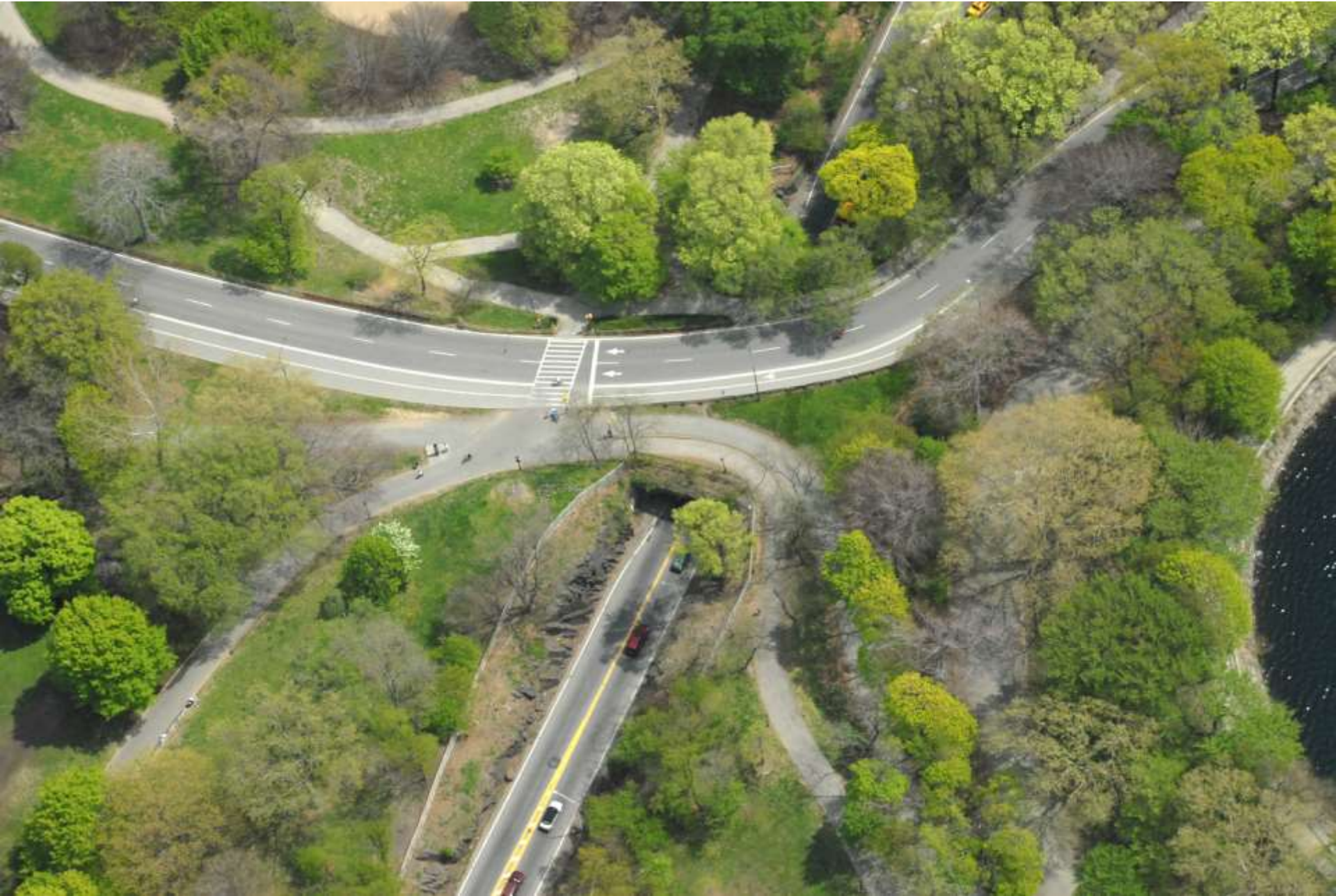
18.10



18.10 The sunken transverse roads that led city traffic—here a fire truck and a herd of sheep—under the park were the brilliant innovation of Olmsted and Vaux's Greensward plan.

18.11

18.11 The transverse roads that led city traffic under the park—here, the Ninety-Sixth Street Transverse Road—were the brilliant innovation of Olmsted and Vaux's Greensward plan. They became the model for the under- and overpasses of our modern highway system.



18.12



18.12 The most famous bridge in Central Park is Bow Bridge, designed as a compromise to replace a proposed suspension bridge. The span bisected the Lake and went against Olmsted and Vaux's design preference for unobstructed and limitless views.

18.13



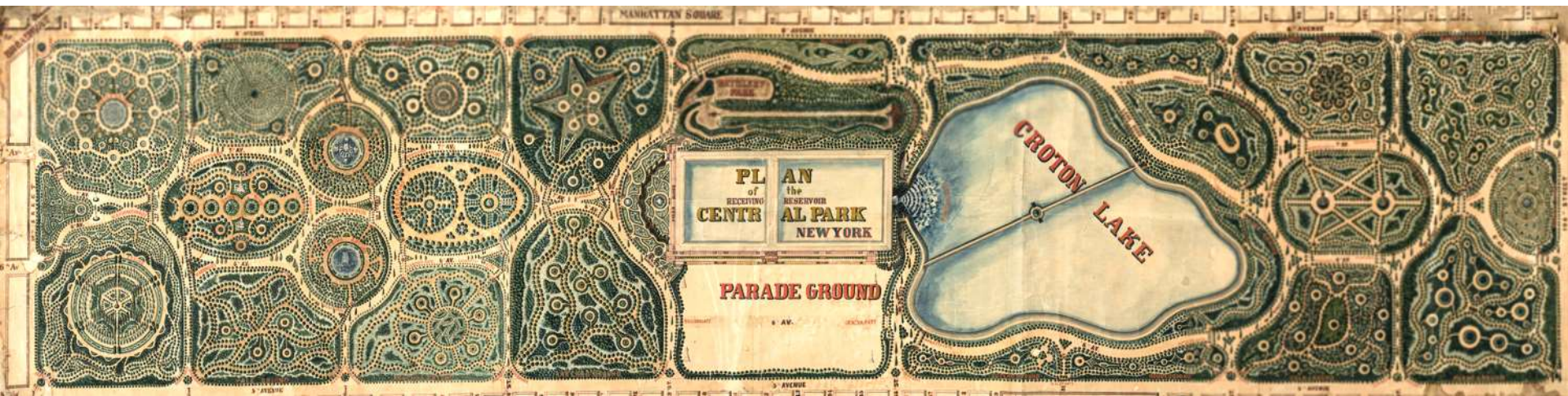
18.13 The Pool, one of the most intimate and charming landscapes in the park, was influenced by Samuel Gustin's entry to the competition.

18.14

18.14 Conservatory Water, better known to park visitors as the Sailboat Pond or Model Boat Pond, was inspired by Samuel Gustin's plan for a water body on that site. The boats may have been inspired by the model yachts in Paris's Jardin du Luxembourg.

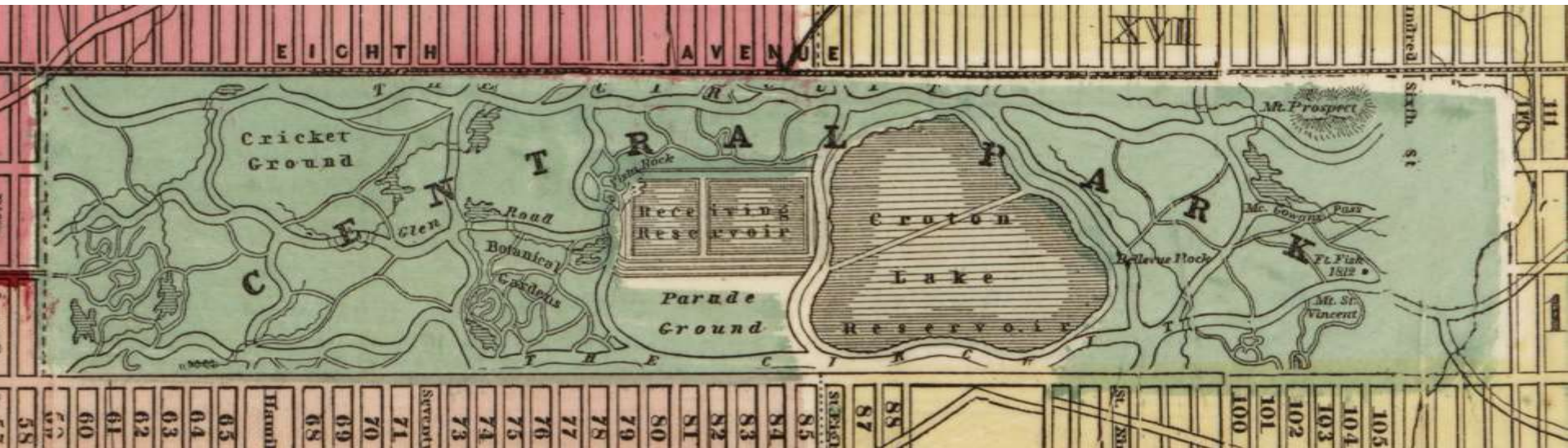


18.15



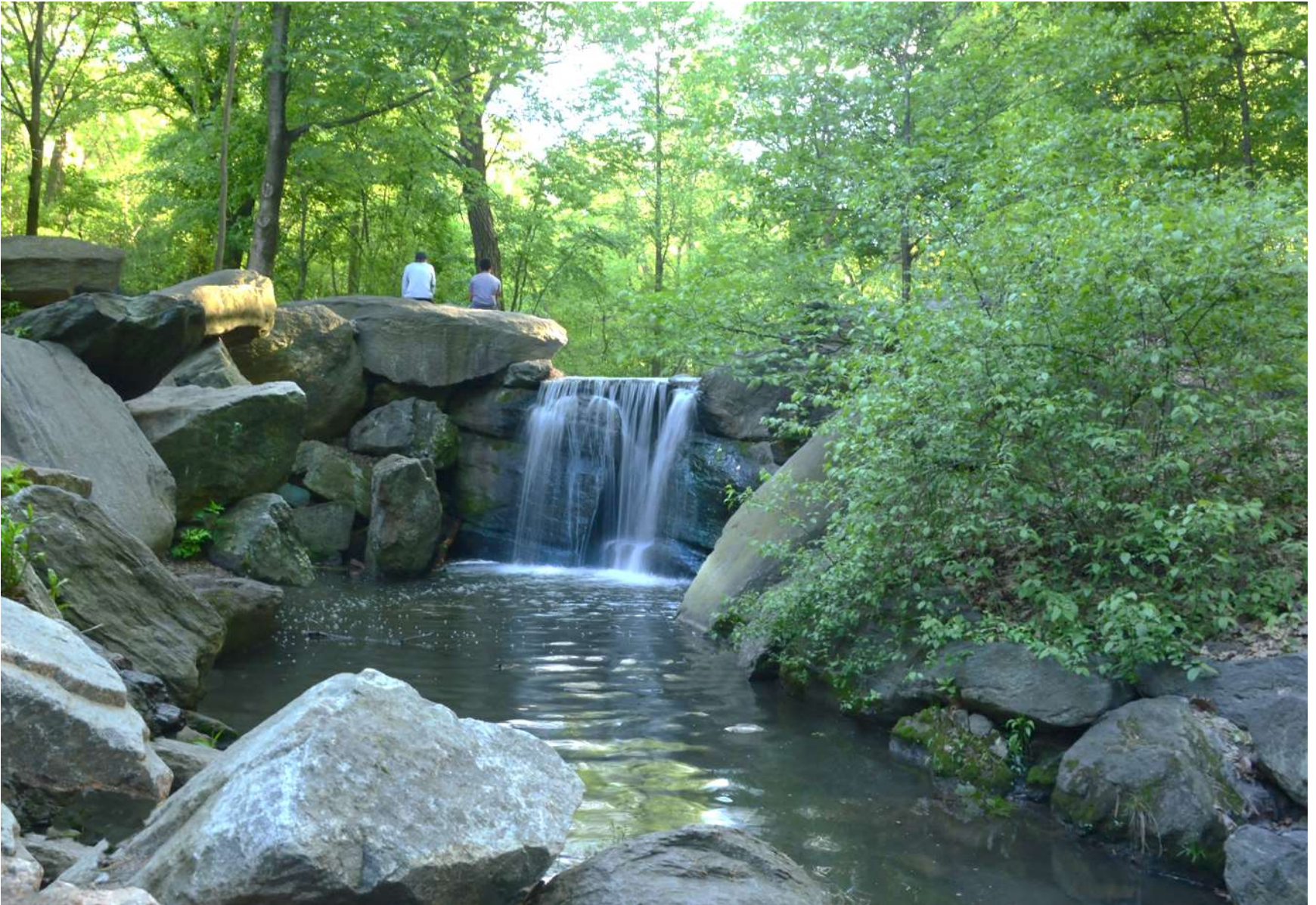
18.15 John J. Rink's entry to the design competition had no reference to the park's challenging topography but instead celebrated America's military past. Rink did, however, submit two plans. The other, perhaps a more naturalistic design, has been lost to history.

CHAPTER 19



19.1 The extension of the park to 110th Street was envisioned as early as this 1857 map, two years before the commissioners petitioned the state legislature for the land. The map's creator used Viele's map and left a blank for the last four blocks.

19.2



19.2 When the commissioners rejected the extension from 106th Street to 110th Street in 1860 due to the cost, it might have prevented such features as the cascade at Huddleston Arch in the Ravine from being created.

19.3



19.3 The last four blocks of Central Park, such as the lots in the North Woods pictured here, were subject to a frenzy of real estate speculation and skyrocketing prices. By 1863, when the land was officially taken for the park, the land was valued at nearly \$19,000 per acre—more than double the \$7,800 price per acre for the lower park in 1856.

EPILOGUE



E.1 Central Park

A.1

AFTERWORD



A.1 Bethesda Fountain before restoration, 1980 (formerly the Amory farm).

A.2



A.2 Bethesda Fountain and Terrace today.

A.3



A.3 Cedar Hill, 1980 (formerly the Wagstaff farm).

A.4



A.4 Cedar Hill today.

A.5



A.5 Harlem Meer, 1980 (formerly a part of the Kingsbridge Road and the farms of the Montagne, Benson, Kortright, Nutter, and Watt/Pinkney families).

A.6



A.6 Harlem Meer and the Charles A. Dana Discovery Center today.