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# Lincoln Center

— The Neighbourhood  
Before & After —

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# Before Lincoln Center

# Introduction

Lincoln Square is a residential area in Upper Manhattan that changed over time through architecture and morals. It features the illustrious Lincoln Center, the mecca of theatre, dance and musicals across the world. It is one of the major visual representation of the change within Lincoln Square formerly known as San Juan Hill. Midway during this semester we got an opportunity to research more Lincoln Square or Times Square, and we discussed as a team and agreed that Lincoln Center would be our focus of study. Thereby, we will explore San Juan Hill in the 19th century to present to show how the area changed. To do this we will use historical events, maps, special events of interest, demographics, statistics, archival material, library material, and web sources to convey our ideas and findings on our topic.

Which is, **“What was the Lincoln Center neighbourhood like before and after Lincoln Center was constructed?”**

# 19TH CENTURY

Spanish-American War in 1898.

Theodore Roosevelt won that battle, and that's how the area got its name.

The area was known to be the largest African-American community before Harlem.

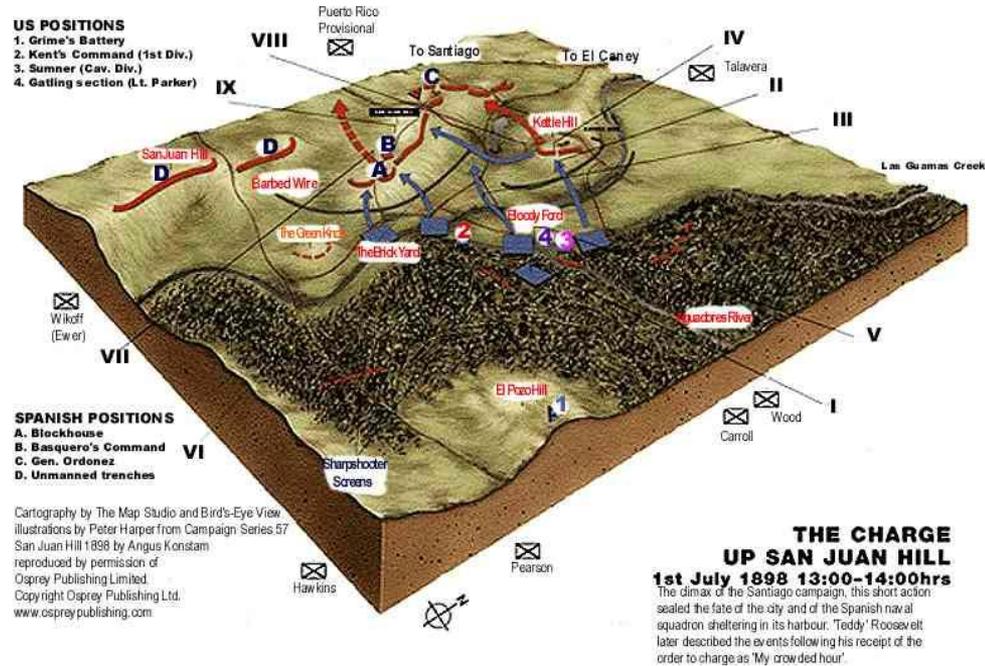


Image of Spanish-American War at San Juan Hill in 1898.

Source: Osprey Publishing.

# 19TH CENTURY

The homes were mostly made from **brick** and **wood**.

However the **culture** was rich with a vibrant jazz atmosphere.



Image of Tenement Buildings. Source: Ephemeral New York.

# 20TH CENTURY

The New York City Housing Authority was created in 1934 to “**provide decent and affordable housing** in a safe and secure living environment for low- and moderate-income residents throughout the five boroughs”

Surprisingly, they worked closely with Robert Moses to designate San Jaun Hill as the **worst** New York City **slum** in 1940.

However, World War II delayed his plans between 1939 to 1945 due to lack of money.



Images showing the connection between NYCHA and Robert Moses.

Source: NYC Public Housing 1934-Present, page 9.

# 20TH CENTURY

Robert Moses was a New York City **Urban Planner** who created the **Urban Renewal Program**.

He used this program to completely **demolish** the **San Juan Hill neighbourhood**.



Robert Moses and his Battery Bridge Proposal.

Source: Wikipedia

# 20TH CENTURY

Around the 1950's most African Americans migrated to Harlem opening up area to Puerto-Ricans.

Then in **1955** the area was **designated for Urban Renewal** thanks to the join operation between **Robert Moses** and the **New York City Housing Authority**.



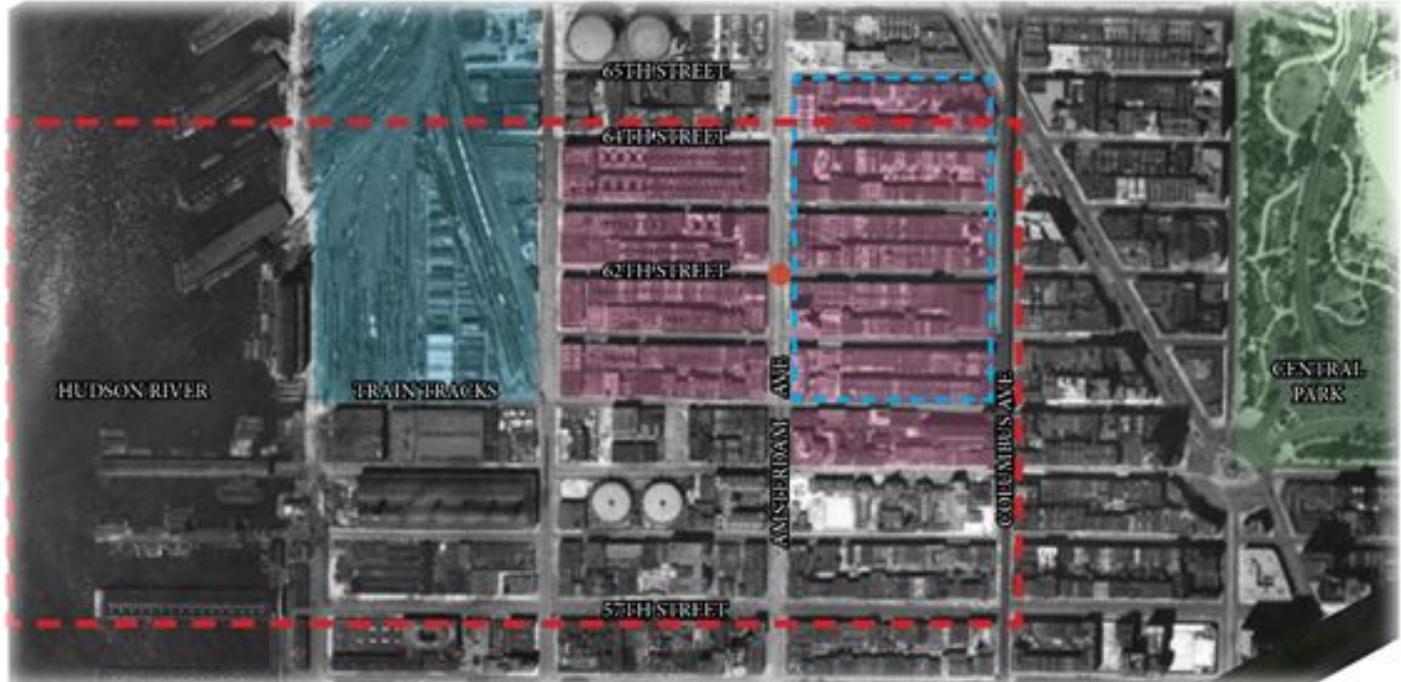
Robert Moses and his Battery Bridge Proposal.

Source: Wikipedia

# 1924 MAP

San Juan Hill neighbourhood spans between 57th to 64th Street and Amsterdam Ave to the Hudson River.

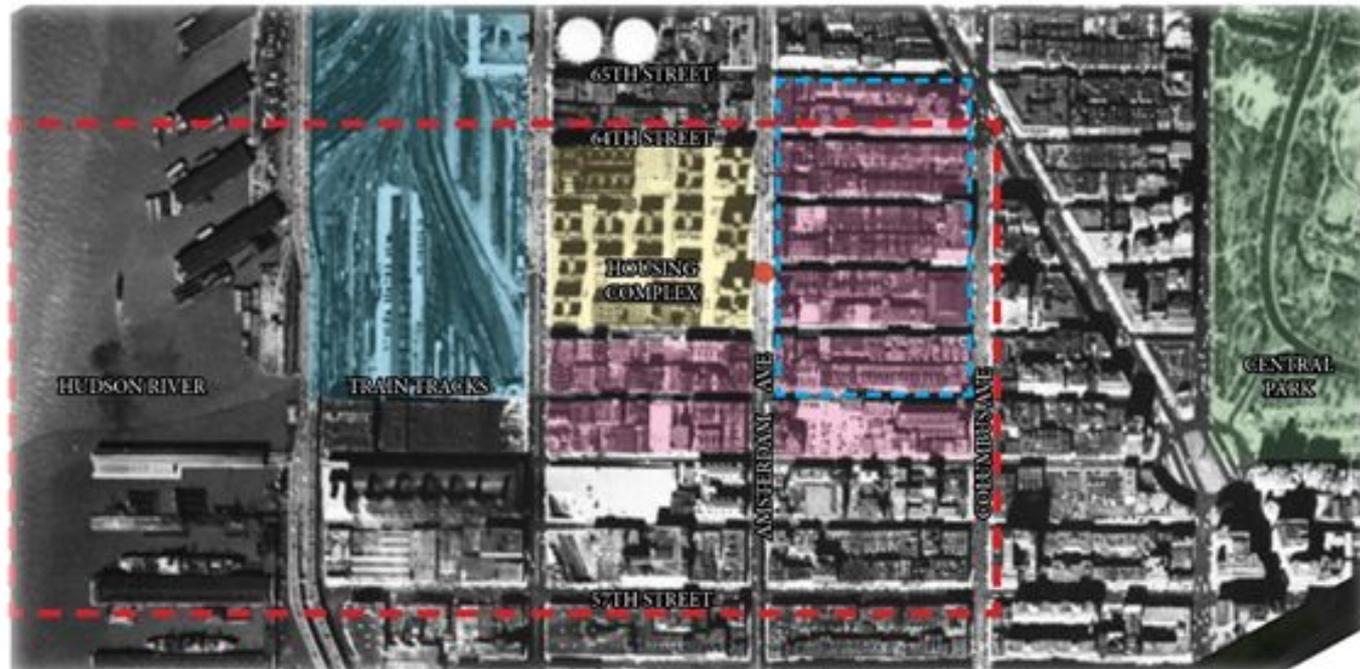
Amsterdam Ave and 62nd Street was the center of San Juan Hill.



Map of Lincoln Center by NYC CityMap DoITT GIS in 1924 and edited by Stedroy Brand

# 1951 MAP

Three of the residential lots was converted into a housing complex to help with the slum situation at the time.



Map of Lincoln Center by NYCityMap DoITT GIS in 1951 and edited by Stedroy Brand

# 2012 MAP

Three more city blocks were demolished to make way for Lincoln Center.

Two more city block were demolished to provide space for the Fordham University Law School expansion.



Map of Lincoln Center by NYCityMap DoITT GIS in 2012 and edited by Stedroy Brand

# The Neighborhood

- Mixed-income black population and Hispanic communities
- It was hard hit by the Depression and the post-war decline
- Middle and working-class families moved to other areas, and left a lot of single-family rowhouses
- Speculative landlords divided them into smaller apartments and rooming houses
- These housing were rented to poorer white immigrants
- About 53% of the families earned less than the city median income of \$3,526 a year



# Housing Condition

- A majority of the residential structures were “Old Law Tenements” built before 1901
- Most of them were apartments converted to rooming houses.
- A survey indicated 98% of the buildings were “either badly rundown, deteriorated or deteriorating, and most of them required major repairs”.
- Only 4 of the 482 residential buildings were “standard” and worth being invested in bringing them up to code.
- A “barren urban waste” where “tenements stand, blowsy and run-down, in silent shoulder-to-shoulder misery, full of filth and vermin”
- “Overcongestion, disease delinquency, crime, and other attendant ills of a cramped and scrambled population”



Lincoln Square, 1957

# After Lincoln Center

# Renewal

Lincoln Square replacing the West Side Story

“West Side Story tells the tale of Tony and Maria, the two star-crossed lovers who try to escape the world in which the warring factions have trapped them. But their love story is also the story of urban renewal (Zipp 248).”

The image and the quote are taken from the book, *Manhattan Projects*. The image already had its own image caption and credit.



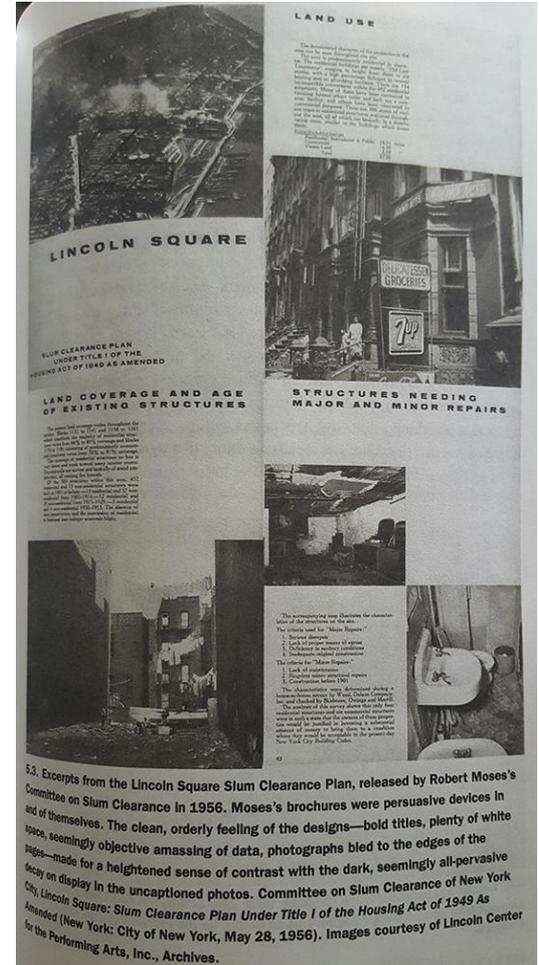
4.1. “Explosion on the West Side,” *Life*, October 20, 1961. This promotional image—staged for the camera to advertise the upcoming film version of *West Side Story*—reveals the mingling of hope and violence at the heart of urban renewal’s intervention in the cityscape. Gjon Mili/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

# Redevelopment

Lincoln Square is known as a slum.

Slum clearance in 1956

The image is taken from the book, *Manhattan Projects*. The image already had its own image caption and credit.



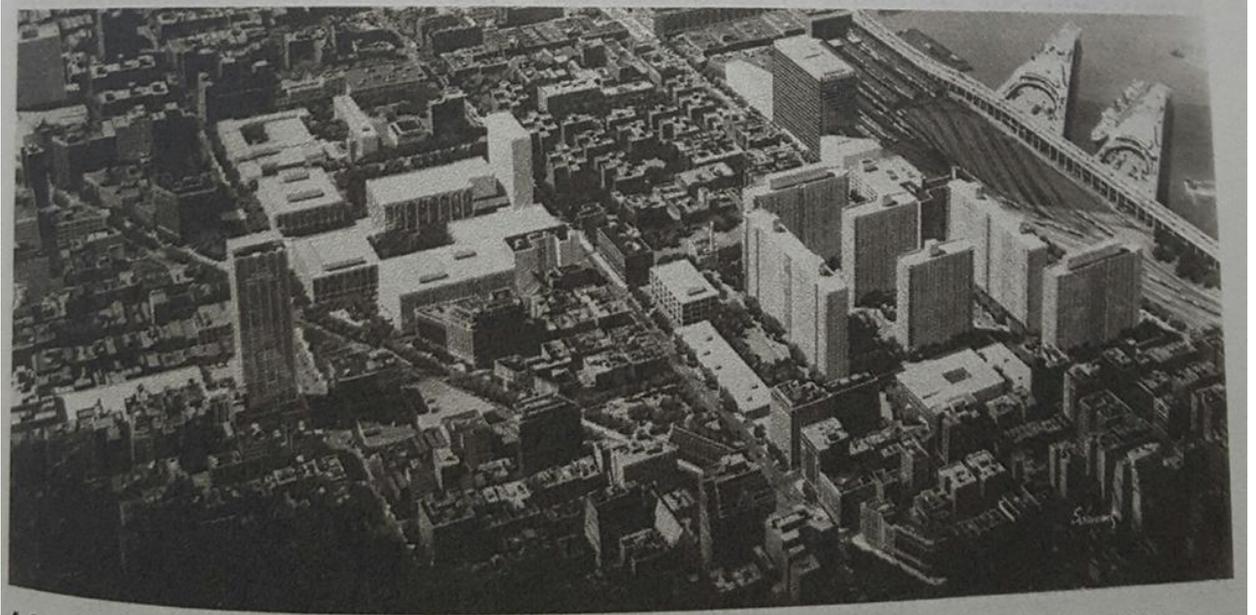
5.3. Excerpts from the Lincoln Square Slum Clearance Plan, released by Robert Moses's Committee on Slum Clearance in 1956. Moses's brochures were persuasive devices in and of themselves. The clean, orderly feeling of the designs—bold titles, plenty of white space, seemingly objective amassing of data, photographs bled to the edges of the pages—made for a heightened sense of contrast with the dark, seemingly all-pervasive decay on display in the uncaptioned photos. Committee on Slum Clearance of New York City, *Lincoln Square: Slum Clearance Plan Under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 as Amended* (New York: City of New York, May 28, 1956). Images courtesy of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., Archives.



# Rebuild

Figure 4.3 - Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Plan looking across Broadway from the northeast.

The image is taken from the book, Manhattan Projects. The image already had its own image caption and credit.



**4.3. A rendering of the proposed Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Plan looking across Broadway from the northeast, as envisioned by the developers of the Lincoln Towers housing development, Webb and Knapp. Lincoln Towers is to the right in this depiction, with Lincoln Center and Fordham in the center left. New York World-Telegram Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.**

# Rebuild

Figure 4.4 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower of Lincoln Center is saying that the purpose of redevelopment is purpose, utility, and taste of Lincoln Center.

Lincoln Square is disrupted; it needs to rebuild in order to have a better future for Americans.

In 1969, the overall renewal cost for Lincoln Square is under \$185 million.

The image is taken from the book, Manhattan Projects. The image already had its own image caption and credit.



# Construction and Design

Figure 4.5 - In 1959, Different architects design different building, so it can have a different modern feelings and perspective.

Architects: Left to Right

Edward J. Matthews, Philip Johnson (Dance Theater), stage designer Jo Mieziner, Rockefeller, Wallace K. Harrison (standing at center) (Opera-house), Eero Saarinen, Gordon Bunshaft (ES and GB for Repertory Theater and the Library Building), Max Abramovitz (Philharmonic Hall), and Pietro Belluschi (Juilliard).

The image is taken from the book, Manhattan Projects.  
The image already had its own image caption and credit.



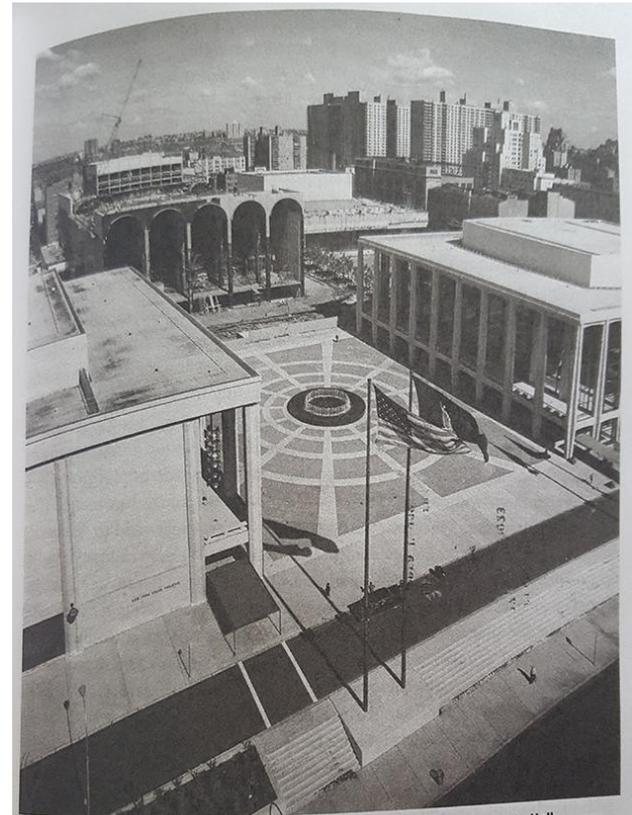
4.5. In late 1959, photographer Arnold Newman posed John D. Rockefeller III with some of Lincoln Center's architects and designers in an oversized mock-up of their vision for the complex that had been erected in the basement of Rockefeller Center. Left to right: Edward J. Matthews, Philip Johnson, stage designer Jo Mieziner, Rockefeller, Wallace K. Harrison (standing at center), Eero Saarinen, Gordon Bunshaft, Max Abramovitz, and Pietro Belluschi. Arnold Newman Collection/Getty Images.

# Construction and Design

Figure 4.6 - Lincoln Center in the mid-1960s

Some is complete and some is still under construction.

The image is taken from the book, Manhattan Projects. The image already had its own image caption and credit.



4.6. Lincoln Center in the mid-1960s, with Max Abramovitz's Philharmonic Hall (right), Philip Johnson's New York State Theater (left), and the central plaza complete. Wallace Harrison's Metropolitan Opera House is under construction at top left, Gordon Bunshaft and Eero Saarinen's repertory theater and library building is under way just to the right of the opera house, and Pietro Belluschi's building for the Juilliard School of Music has not yet gone up. Lincoln Towers hovers in the background. Photograph by Bob Serating. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

# Resident Displacement

Around 800 families, include 55 percent of them are black, Puerto Rican, or otherwise non-white, are displace.

Estimated rate of displacement from an average of about 23, 500 to 50, 000 a year.

Some has moved to potential redevelopment clearance, some has moved to neighborhoods that are not slum; some were forced back into other slum; some escaped; and some disappeared.

## Income Issue

62.6%

53%

Robert Moses mentions that 62.6 percent of the families earned less than \$4000 a year, and 53 percent earned less than \$3,526 a year.

24 percent or 1,250 families were minorities.

18 percent of them were Puerto Rican, 4 percent black, and 2 percent listed as "others."

Robert Moses concluded that 6,018 families have to relocated.

# Income 'Solution'

5383.49%

Taken from Point2Home.com, the average household income has increased to \$193,348.

- Lincoln Center has exponentially increased the earnings of all of its inhabitants who are now predominantly Caucasian.

# Happy Holidays



Thank You For Listening!