

A PROGRAM CONCEIVED BY PROJECT NIA

# THE YOUTH PUBLIC HISTORY INSTITUTE



## SHRINKING THE GAP BETWEEN VALUES AND ACTIONS

The Youth Public History Institute, conceived by Project NIA, brings young people together from all over New York City in hopes of sharing valuable information and experiences. We will learn about conducting research through archival materials and public libraries, storytelling, surveillance, and history. In doing so, we are deepening our "appre-

ciation of, and commitment to, history and social justice" all while building "kinship and solidarity" (Zahra). We will seek out erased histories, learn from abolitionists and revolutionaries who came before us, and visualize the future ahead of us.

## THE START

We began at City College, entering a classroom filled with strangers. And yet, they felt familiar. We came together from all parts of New York City, from Queens, to Brooklyn, to the northern-most point of Manhattan, to learn from and work with each other, to participate in a program with people who are also interested in abolitionist thinking and activism.

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**1637**  
Pequot tribe was declared extinct as part of the outcome of the Pequot war. All surviving members were made to live under colonial authority and could not live on their previous land or be recognized under their tribal name.

**1641**  
Massachusetts became the first

**1635**  
A group of Dutch settlers wrote to English colonists, asking them to let them stay in Massachusetts, arguing that they were already there and could not be considered strangers and come into their country, as they should rather conform to the customs of our country, then impose yours on us.

**1636**  
The first American slave codes, largely written by Massachusetts, marking the start of colonial America's slave trade.

**1715**  
The first American slave codes, largely written by Massachusetts, marking the start of colonial America's slave trade.

**17**  
The C and D British war.

**17**  
English import of two robotic slaves, bunnies.

**1756**  
Lynette Chapman, a woman from the colony of Massachusetts, became the first woman known to be cast into the sea.

**1633**

**You are here as strangers**

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# BEGINNING

"The first words spoken in room 2M11A were, "I like your sticker." Gold was commenting on a sticker on Eve's water bottle, which has stickers collected from their experiences in organizing and advocacy. Soon enough, we were already feeling quite comfortable with one another. Mariame, Zahra, and Kei talked about YPHI's core values, led Resistance Bingo, and conversations on the prison industrial complex. In one activity with Kei and Zahra, we each took six post-it notes, writing down moments in history that shaped us, and personal events in our lives that are significant to us, noting important places and moments in our or their family's life. We shared some of our notes with the person sitting next to us, and then placed our notes on the timeline dating from the 1600s to the present. By sharing stories from our lives, we began building our relationship with one another.

"SCIENTISTS SAY WE ARE MADE OF ATOMS, BUT A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME WE ARE ALSO MADE OF STORIES." – EDUARDO GALEANO

## RADICAL BLACK WOMEN OF HARLEM WALKING TOUR

How do we remember? We learn, collaborate, and discover. We can enter the same spaces that previous abolitionists once lived in, if we are able to, we can acknowledge the places that no longer exist but continue to teach us in their absence. The Radical Black Women of Harlem tour highlights the "history and the extraordinary contributions of Black radical women who built community, fought for freedom, and imagined others futures" and "offers an important contribution to the effort to uplift Black women's intellectual, social and political work" (Barnard Center for Research on Women).





# WEEK I

Our first field day was focused on learning about radical Black women who shaped our city, our communities, and history in Harlem.

Throughout the Radical Black Women of Harlem Tour, we were reminded of how abolitionist thinking and practices now are not new. Abolitionists had already supported each other through mutual aid, building communities, and allowing *their* histories to guide them. We were also reminded that history lives among us in the built environment, as we walked along the same streets where women such as Claudia Jones, Lorraine Hansberry, and Zora Neale Hurston lived, worked, and collaborated. From the second day of the program, we were already learning about how stories are erased, how community organizing leads to change, and how our city's rich history is right where we stand.



## WHY WERE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING YPHI?

*"I have been really wanting to find spaces that are not connected to an academic institution or a university where we're coming together to study and be in abolitionist praxis with each other. [...] I'm really interested in thinking about how we are when we're together, and what we learn about each other and ourselves in the process of making something together" - Daria*

*"I came into this program wanting to learn how to harness history towards social movements and specifically prison and PIC abolition. I chose to apply to this program because I'm thinking about becoming an archivist, and [YPHI] came as the perfect convergence of my interest in history and liberation movements. I hope to learn about alternative ways to learn about history and how we can use embodied methods of learning to further social movements." - Gold*





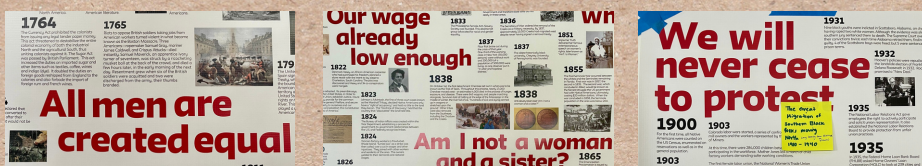
**WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE LESSONS FROM WEEK ONE?**

*"Thinking about my experience as a YPHI fellow last week, I have to say that it's been a very insightful and eye-opening experience for me - especially seeing people of color not being monoliths in history and not being the side characters in their own histories. More-so what I'm starting to realize and find empowerment in is these really radical activists who shaped the dynamics of what it means to be someone who's from a marginalized background in the 1800s. One of my most fascinating connections that I learned about was the connection between colonialism and the slavery abolition movement. It was very interesting to see, from the perspective of someone who's from a very colonized country, how the colonial ideology at one point was considered a solution against abolition. What I'm most grateful for is that the first week has really helped me learn that there's so much about our world, especially about our history, that I still have yet to learn."* - Mahir

**PEOPLE. SPACE. TIME.**

Following the Radical Black Women of Harlem Tour, we began thinking about our history. One of the reasons why the program consists of taking part in walking tours and then creating our own is because it enables us to understand history in a more comprehensive way. Before we can teach others about history on walking tours, we must understand it ourselves.

The next step was to consider the question: How do we begin creating a walking tour? We begin by considering the people, the spaces they occupy, and time.





# SLAVERY & RESISTANCE TOUR

Slavery was abolished in the US in 1865 under the 13th Amendment (except as punishment for a crime). But New York City was deeply entrenched in slavery, despite what we are often taught to believe. Just two streets away from the now New York Stock Exchange, the slave trade was an essential component to New York City's economy and construction of our most famous streets, like Wall Street. A large sum of the city's wealth originated from cotton in the south, creating economic reasons to maintain slavery in New York's ports.

On our Slavery and Resistance Walking Tour, we learned about places like Fraunces Tavern, a prominent site during the Revolutionary War, as a "reminder of the multiple ways Black people were involved in, and affected by, that conflict" (Kaba).



New York City's wealthiest were, not surprisingly, also heavily involved in preserving slavery. In 1702, Black people were no longer allowed to "[trade] without their slaver's consent" and in 1712, "free Black people were barred from owning property" (Kaba). And in 1730, a law prevented "two enslaved people from meeting together without supervision" (Kaba). New York was actually one of the last northern states to outlaw slavery in 1827, but continued to take part in the cotton trade (which was still gathered by slaves in the south). One third of Wall Street's founders were slave owners, and Federal Hall (26 Wall Street) was a jail.





**WHY WERE YOU INTERESTED IN YPHI, AND HOW DO YOU HOPE TO USE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED IN YOUR LIFE?**

*"YPHI seemed like an amazing opportunity to learn from [Mariame] directly and build on my own abolition philosophy. I wanted to better ground myself in the history of this city and understand how systemic oppressions have shaped the communities I hope to keep serving here. I've learned more than I can even capture... Perhaps the most eye-opening takeaway was the absolute erasure of the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village from the public eye. As I've been researching for our walking tour, it has been humbling to excavate this lost history and frame the House of D as a formative space for leftist organizing in the twentieth century. I hope to implement a walking tour project for my students this year. YPHI has showed me how effective walking tours are for teaching history. They're engaging and immersive in a way that textbooks and lectures are not. I hope my students develop a genuine interest in history as a result of this potential walking tour project." - Claire*

**THE HISTORY OF SLAVERY IS STILL PRESENT IN NEW YORK CITY**

New York is filled with history that most people are likely unaware of. This tour provided a new lens to view New York, and taught us to investigate the ongoing relationship between the past and the present.

**NEW YORK'S MUNICIPAL SLAVE MARKET**

On Wall Street, between Pearl and Water Streets, a market that auctioned enslaved people of African ancestry was established by a Common Council law on November 30, 1711. This slave market was in use until 1762. Slave owners wanting to hire out their enslaved workers, which included people of Native American ancestry, as day laborers also had to do so at that location. In 1726 the structure was renamed the Meal Market because corn, grain and meal — crucial ingredients to the Colonial diet — were also exclusively traded there.

Slavery was introduced to Manhattan in 1626. By the mid-18th century approximately one in five people living in New York City was enslaved and almost half of Manhattan households included at least one slave. Although New York State abolished slavery in 1827, complete abolition came only in 1841 when the State of New York abolished the right of non-residents to have slaves in the state for up to nine months. However, the use of slave labor elsewhere for the production of raw materials such as sugar and cotton was essential to the economy of New York both before and after the Civil War. Slaves also cleared forest land for the construction of Broadway and were among the workers that built the wall that Wall Street is named for and helped build the first Trinity Church. Within months of the market's construction, New York's first slave uprising occurred a few blocks away on Maiden Lane, led by enslaved people from the Coromantee and Pawpaw peoples of Ghana.

Artist's Rendering, modified from The Burgin Book, c.1718. © New York Public Library

When reflecting on the tour, one participant had explained how history is always being rewritten and, as a group, we reflected on how history tends to be written by the victors. Even in a diverse and seemingly progressive city, we have a deep history in slavery and racist practices. Despite our involvement, most New Yorkers, even those who grew up in NYC public schools, had no idea that we continued to rely on slave labor post its abolition.

In our first week we uncovered hidden histories in New York City and considered different ways in which we think about learning and sharing history in ethical ways. We also thought about how previous abolitionists dating from the 1800s, to 1900s, to now offer ways to organize and advocate through community support and organizing. With these ideas in mind, we moved to Week 2, considering research practices, archives, resources, and mapping.





# WEEK 2

What is research?

What are primary sources?

What are the archives/archival materials?

This week we began thinking and talking about how we research through finding aids, archives, libguides, and other resources. Sarah provided a finding aid in preparation for our trip to the Municipal Archives and the New York Public Library. Because archives can come in many forms (photographs, articles, diaries, tapes, and many more), we discussed how archives unlock doors from the past. In doing so, we learned how archivists categorize new material, considering whether it has historical or financial value, for example. And while there are still so many gaps in our history, archives provide a way to think about the past, the present, and the future.



## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH YHPI?

*A key takeaway that I've gotten so far from this program is the extent of Black survival and resistance. I think that slavery was not only a very nefarious evil thing, but it was everywhere. The fact that New York City was a slave state was unsurprising to me because I never bought the whole North means solace for Black people and that the south was the only place that relied on the forced enslaved labor of displaced Africans. The fact that New York City was so resistant to the end of slavery and thrived on the domestic enslaved labor of Black peoples was something I was unaware of. I realized that this was a very dangerous and uncertain time. Black peoples had no bodily autonomy and could be stolen away if any white person decided that they were theirs. It's given me a lot to think about."*

- Mariah





**WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN IN RESEARCHING SO FAR?**

*"The process of researching was interesting because very little of it involved digging through different websites and Google searches as has become normal in a digital age—the type of work we were doing both required and benefitted from research in person. Either at an archive or visiting the area on a tour, because all this history exists essentially in our backyards. I learned a lot both specifically about the House of D for my project, but also about public history research in general, since it wasn't something I had ever done before. I'm hoping to take away a continued interest in abolition, research, organizing and activism, and apply the things I learned at YPHI in my similar future projects." - Noel*

Following our discussion with Sarah, Kei talked about their Fighting Dark and Black Gotham Experience walking tour, created with Kamau Ware and Hopi Noel Morton. The tour focuses on Manhattan and Brooklyn's 19th-century racial history and "speaks to a dark side of American history as well as the dark-skinned people who have been impacted by it, especially the Black New Yorkers who fled in the dark of night during the 1863 riots" (Fighting Dark).

Through these discussions, we learned how walking tours are created, the steps to create a tour, and the struggles behind *resistance* to the tours. Some spaces are not supportive of tours that shed light onto our history for different reasons, as Kei touched on when discussing their tour in Ithaca, NY.

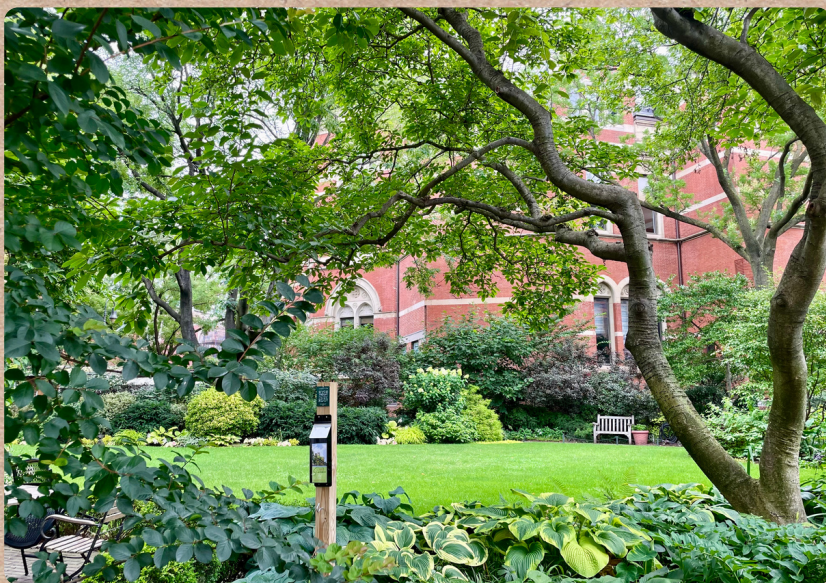






## WEEK 3: STORYTELLING

Our final week began with meeting Hugh Ryan. He discussed his journey in writing his book “The Women’s House of Detention: A Queer History of a Forgotten Prison” and the erased history of the House of D. As we’ve learned throughout the program, many major moments in history have been erased, the House of D being one of them. As the title of Ryan’s book may suggest, many of the women incarcerated in the House of D were queer, or simply did not conform to societal expectations of how women should behave, and were incarcerated for their “otherness.” Today, the land where the House of D used to be looks nothing like a prison. Now visitors will pass by a garden, gated off from the public, on the property of the Jefferson Market Courthouse.



### WHAT HAS YOUR PROCESS RESEARCHING BEEN, AND WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING SO FAR?

*"My group and I are working on a walking tour of the Women's House of Detention. I've been learning about so much of the interconnection between radical grassroots movements such as the Black Panthers, Young Lords, Queer and Trans liberation, and abolitionists, all working toward intergenerational liberatory struggles and forming solidarity. It's been mind-blowing to hear the words of incarcerated grassroots organizers talking about solidarity against the carceral system and its oppressors, and their organizing strategies to dismantle it that are still being applied to the present day. It has been difficult to access certain information, specifically rallies/protests from radical movements, since certain entities like the NYPD can access it due to their surveillance of said groups and individuals. Plus, reminding myself to take a mental break when reading the state-sanctioned violence towards Black, Brown, Queer, and Trans folx, since it's a lot to process and an unfortunate reality that is still ongoing within and outside the carceral walls. Overall, reading the information and centering these narratives has made me further think of what it means to tell the history of liberation and my evolving commitment to the abolitionist movement on an intergenerational level." - Bri*



Even in the official plaque for the Jefferson Market Garden, there is only a brief mention of the House of D. Some participants noted the way in which family members, friends, and partners of those incarcerated were described as “linger[ing],” “yell[ing],” and a nuisance to the people living nearby, instead of acknowledging the brutal conditions and treatment of the women inside. Once again, the history of those considered discardable by those in power is erased.



## JEFFERSON MARKET GARDEN

361 ACRE

Where some went to market, and some went to jail, today's Greenwich Villagers tend the Jefferson Market Garden in the shade of the landmark Jefferson Market Courthouse.

Named for Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, the Jefferson Market opened on this site in 1833, alongside a police court, a volunteer firehouse, and a jail. The market grew rapidly to include fishmongers, poultry vendors, and hucksters. It was razed in 1873 to make way for a new civic complex and courthouse.

The Jefferson Market Courthouse, with its fire-watch bell tower, and lighted clock dial, was designed by Frederick Clarke Withers and Calvert Vaux, and built in 1877. The ornate courthouse struck the *New York Times* as inappropriate for such a shoddy neighborhood—“a jewel in a pig's snout.” Nonetheless, architects polled in 1895 deemed the building to be the fifth most beautiful in the United States. While Vaux believed that the cells should be “strong, secure, and entirely unattractive,” he created a six-tiered structure that allowed some light to penetrate and air to circulate. At the turn of the century, the triangular parcel between Sixth Avenue, Greenwich Avenue, and 10th Street was thus entirely occupied, and connected to the rest of the city by the Gilbert Elevated Railway's Sixth Avenue line, inaugurated in 1878.

In 1927 the jail, the market, and the firehouse were demolished and replaced by the City's only House of Detention for Women, an 11-story building designed in the French Art Deco style by Benjamin W. Levitan. By the time the Women's House of Detention opened in 1931, the adjacent courthouse heard only cases with female defendants. Corrections Commissioner Richard Patterson introduced the facility as “undoubtedly the best institution of its kind in the United States if not indeed in the entire world.” Contemporaries noted the facility's modern equipment, one of its most striking features being a turntable altar in the chapel, with sections fitted respectively for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services.

Use of public transportation declined during the Depression, and the clattering elevated

railways were criticized for lowering property values. The 6th Avenue line was demolished in 1935. Amendments to the district court system in 1945 led to the abandonment of the courthouse, which was to be sold by auction in 1959. The Greenwich Village Association (GVA), led by Margot Gayle and Verna Small, campaigned forcefully to preserve the building, and won their first victory in 1961 by saving the four-sided clock in the tower. A year later Mayor Wagner agreed to establish a Village branch of the New York Public Library in the Jefferson Market Courthouse.

The Board of Estimate transferred the site to Parks in 1974, and the Jefferson Market Garden Committee, Inc., composed of Village neighborhood associations and homeowners, was entrusted with its care. Landscape architect Pamela Berdan originally designed the garden in the spirit of Frederick Law Olmsted, who co-designed Central and Prospect Parks with Calvert Vaux. The garden was planted with 10 Star and Saucer Magnolia trees, 7 Yoshino Cherry trees, 2 American Yellowwoods, 7 Thornless Honeylocusts, 10 Crabapple trees, 70 fairy hedge roses around the lawn, 60 pycnantha, and 58 holly bushes in clusters. Volunteers have since planted tulips, daffodils, and crocuses in the garden.

In the late 1960s, GVA and Community Board 2 held town meetings to discuss the removal of the Women's House of Detention and the creation of a “passive recreation area” on the site. At the time, friends and families of inmates lingered outside the House at all hours of the day or night, yelling their news and greetings. Nearby residents were disturbed by the noise. Gawkers came to watch the scene. The facility was overcrowded and had become obsolete. The Women's House of Detention was demolished in 1973, after 42 years of use.

A generous grant, one of the last made by the Vincent Astor Foundation, funded the new decorative steel fence, which recalls the design of the courthouse fence and unifies the site. On October 13, 1998 Mrs. Brooke Astor dedicated the fence at a ceremony attended by members of the Greenwich Village community.



## WHAT DREW YOU TO YPHI?

*"I was interested in the program because I had never had a formal opportunity to get out there and learn about prison and the justice system in my own city. Everything I had known prior to this had been obtained through either social media or in brief mentions from different organizers. I wanted to have the opportunity to educate myself on topics I felt weren't being discussed in my educational environments and I wanted to meet people who are also passionate about the things that I am. Being around people who are interested in the same things that I am helps me learn and want to learn in order to get something from the conversations we are having with each other. During my time in the program I feel like I've learned that, although organizing is hard and not commonly financially rewarding, it's important work and that you are not alone in this. There are people who actively want to create and see change, not only for themselves but for the people who are directly impacted by the negative systems that are present today."* - Xela



"EVERYTHING WORTHWHILE IS  
DONE WITH OTHER PEOPLE"  
-  
MARIAME KABA



**WHY WERE YOU INTERESTED IN YPHI?**

*I loved learning in college! But a lot of my assignments felt disconnected from the world outside my classrooms, or even just my professor. Professors emphasized rigor in writing and researching, but few assigned us projects in mediums other than long-form essays. Even fewer taught us skills to share what we learned with a broader audience. I was lucky to take a Transnational Feminism class, where a close friend and I got to create a zine about the history of prisons and resistance in Iran, grounding it in our experience of our own community's amnesia about this history and thinking of that community as our audience, rather than only our professor. But once I graduated, I felt lost as to how to continue and apply the skills I learned to life after college. Even though I work in a public institution that teaches NYC history and continue to do abolitionist organizing I started in college, it was really hard to know where to learn and how to teach things I felt were incredibly important. When I saw this program, I was so excited to learn how to use public archives and databases, learn about radical history in the place I lived in for 5 years and grew up around, and meet other young people interested in and committed to PIC abolition. But what I didn't expect to learn- and am the most grateful for- is the wisdom around acceptance and kindness to oneself and others in this work. Mariame emphasized that it's not about the final product, but the journey and skills we learned along the way. At times, I was honestly very anxious about what we could come up with in such a short time and at times felt flashbacks to the stress of college, but I kept coming back to her words. It was okay if the goal, in this moment, was to connect with my groupmates and learn. But then! I think by splitting up into small collectives and then linking up our work in the larger collective, we were able to come up with something both broad and deep, that tells an accurate and expansive story of prisons and policing in New York. I'm really proud of what we came up with. YPHI was slow, hopeful, kind, trusting, and iterative and collaborative pedagogy. It was grounded in abolition, deep commitment on the part of our facilitators (THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH), and months of preparation was life-changing. I'm so grateful and excited to see the ripple effects this has. My love of learning has deepened and grown, far beyond what I learned in college. Thank you Project NIA!" - Mahan*

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YPHI?**

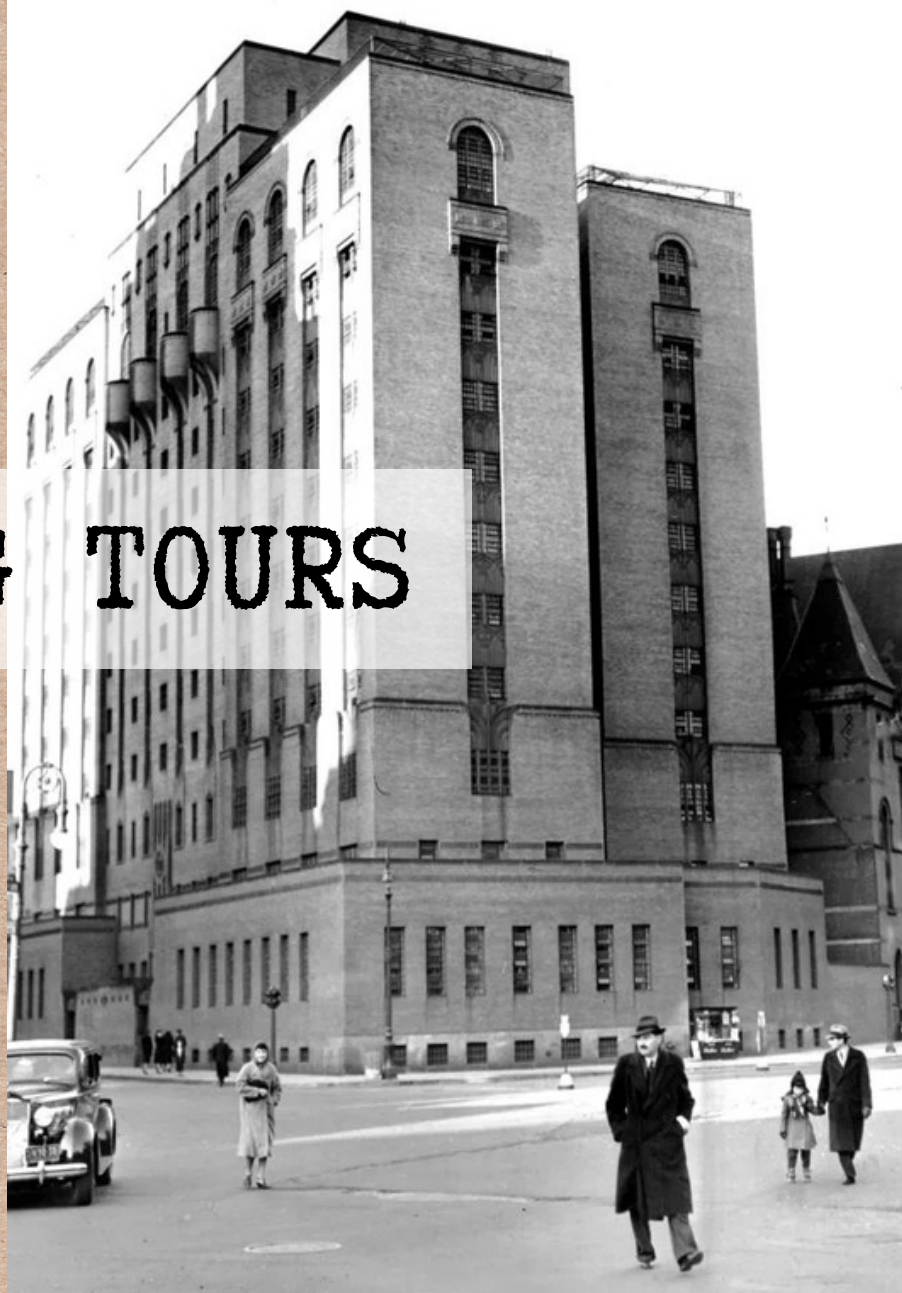
*"Participating in the YPHI has totally re-invigorated my excitement for history! Working in groups to create our walking tours has helped me to understand the power of thinking about history in a collective space. Coming from a more traditional academic setting which generally frames research as an individual endeavor, I hope to bring the ethos of collaboration and collectivity that I developed through YPHI into all of my future projects. I'm also really grateful to the YPHI for expanding my conception of what it means to be a historian. I used to think that being a historian only meant being an academic with a PhD, but I was so inspired by all of the different ways that folks we met throughout the program engage with history and research. I'm glad that I'm now able to envision different ways of practicing my commitment to history and incorporating it into my political organizing work. As a potential future archivist, it was invigorating to get to meet with archivists and researchers committed to using archives to advance abolitionist, social justice struggles, and in general, I'm so grateful for the new group of comrades and friends I made in the program. I am excited to see all of the organizing and research projects that are going to come from the relationships we built during these three weeks." - Eve*





# — PRESENTING OUR WALKING TOURS

## Police Riots of 1857 & the Women's House of Detention



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In our final week, each group presented their very own walking tours. Everyone was excited to share what they had learned and discovered while researching their site and the city's history. Three groups presented their own walking tours on the Women's House of Detention, now 10 Greenwich Avenue. One group presented on the 1857 Police Riot, which took place outside of City Hall.

**“Eyes on You’ Chronicling the Development of Police and Surveillance Culture”** with Eve, Mahir, Mariah, and Margaret

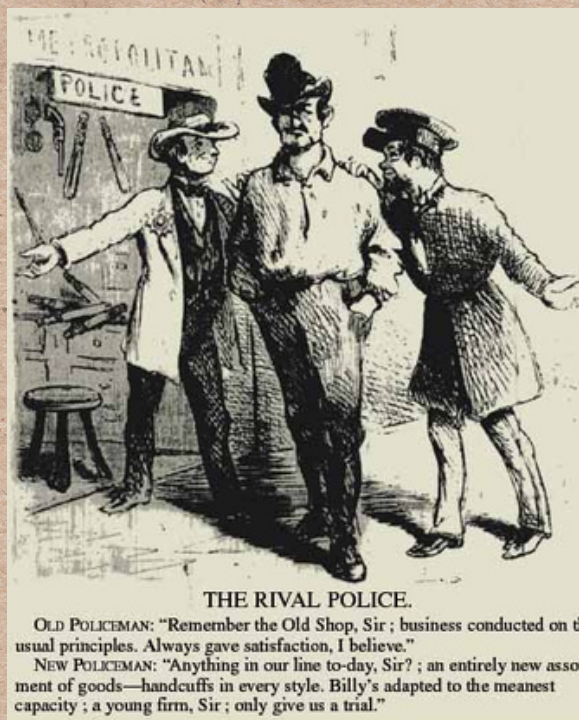
The first group presented a history on surveillance, dating from the mid 1600s with “night watch” groups to present-day investments in NYPD drones. From the mid 1600s to the 1700s, night watchers, consisting of civilians, would “prevent disorder.” The groups consisted of white men who aligned heavily with mainstream structures of power.



And later, in 1741, constables served as witnesses, providing evidence against those who they arrested. Policing and surveillance increasingly became a component in everyday life, so much so that the night watchers went from three members to 36 in a short time. Likewise, politicians in power maintained their power through controlling incoming immigrants. William M Tweed preserved his position by offering housing and jobs to immigrants in return for their votes.

The Municipal Police Act of 1844 took the next step in determining who should be arrested, targeting “suspicious” people. These people included “idlers, tiplers, gamblers and other disorderly suspicious persons.” Of course, these guidelines are all subjective. Now anyone who was perceived out of place could be targeted by police. The 1857 Police Riots were a result of corruption within the government. Essentially, the New York Municipal Police and the newly-formed Metropolitan Police were fighting for power hoping to control all five boroughs. Another police riot occurred in 1992, led by Rudy Giuliani, while mayor David Dinkins was in office. The police rioted on Brooklyn Bridge, barricading the bridge in response to Dinkins’ proposal to create a civilian agency to investigate police misconduct. The police used derogatory terms towards Dinkins, the first Black mayor of New York City. Only two police officers were suspended, and no other officers were punished.

The group’s presentation brought us to modern day, where we still decide who is seen as “suspicious” and therefore undeserving of being treated as a human (terms like “alien” and “illegal” to describe immigrants to push them to the outside). Night watchers are now comprised of thousands of police in New York City, plus drones, cameras, AI, and general policing in dozens of institutions.







**“Junkies, Prostitutes, and Other Political Prisoners”** with Daria, Chase, River, and Gold

As discussed in Group 1’s presentation, people in power in 1844 could determine and arrest anyone who seemed "suspicious" based simply upon personal beliefs and biases. The same was true in the 1900s.

The Women's House of Detention was designed in 1931, and opened in 1932. Group 2 focused on the incarceration of women who did not conform to what the "proper feminine subject" should be. Women who were queer, for example, were a "threat to ever being a normal, healthy, happy, productive member of society," as Hugh Ryan stated. Nonconforming women had to be contained, the group explained. Their poverty and queerness were criminalized, and they became targets of the system that incarcerated them in the House of D.

Likewise, Cafe Society, one of the first integrated clubs in New York City, was heavily policed. The song "Strange Fruits," by Billie Holiday, protested the lynching of Black Americans, and the FBI would come to her shows to surveil the scene because they were engaging in "anti-American activities." Eventually a new cabaret system was implemented to stop performers from coming (1931-1967). In the 1940s and 50s, the NYPD began heavily criminalizing drug usage, leading to increased violence on Black communities. The group noted that these "criminal" activities were subjective.

Despite the ongoing policing of people who did not conform to the norms and expectations of the time, people rebelled. The Haven Riots were initiated when police attempted to raid the LGBTQ+ alcohol-free after-hours bar. The people within the bar resisted. Black Panthers,



the Gay Liberation Front, and others had been organizing for years. It is noted that the Haven Riots occurred right after the Panther 21 trial too. Solidarity helped spark and encourage resistance towards the carceral state. During the Stonewall Inn Riots, women in the House of D. also participated in supporting the riot.

Though they were living in a completely different world, the women in the House of D. chanted "Gay power!"

Towards the end of their presentation, the group noted that, "the harms of the system are not meant to be realized." But we also ended with optimism and hope in seeing the solidarity of different groups coming together to fight for better treatment of each other.

**"Building Out the History of Greenwich Village and the House of D" with Noel, J, Bri, and Nic**

The group began with the question: What stories are we missing? This question has been one that we'd considered heavily throughout the program. Whose stories are erased? How do we preserve history? And how can we share history?

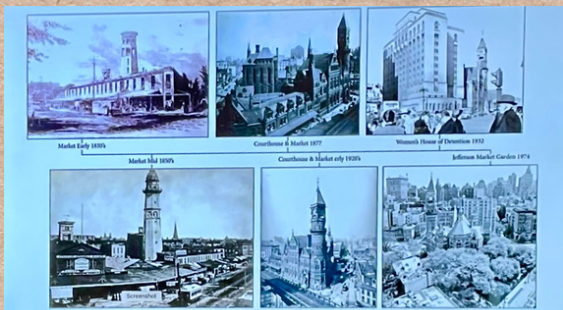
They began with the history of Manhattan, dating back to the forceful removal of the Lenape people. When prisons were first established, they were often placed in Greenwich Village because it was extremely rural. Eventually prisons used aesthetics to gain support, as they were potential money-making



institutions. Towers were almost always an architectural component in these prisons - ones to surveil and dominate.

The prisons from the 1800s are certainly recognizable in today's physical architecture and representation of power. As stated in their presentation, "sites of violence continue to exist" and are "a model of how to create [harmful] spaces." Our physical environment holds remnants of our past. Washington Square Park is also a site where military members were trained. People were also publicly executed on the site, but there is also no information about that on the modern-day landmark.

In revisiting history, they pointed out how, once again, the victors were able to push these histories under the rug but through research and collaboration, they were able to tell the stories of survivors, rebels, and heroes.







**"The Women's House of Detention: A Short Story of Solidarity" with Xela, Mahan, Onye, and Claire**

The final group detailed the solidarity of different organizers who came together to advocate for change. Discussing the work of Afeni Shakur, Joan Bird, and Angela Davis, the group highlighted the strength in building community and unity together, rather than apart. The Women's Bail Fund, organized by Shakur, Bird, and Davis, helped provide free bail assistance in hopes of creating a fairer system. They also touched on the Stonewall Riots and the support provided by the women who were in the House

of D. Touching on the issues women faced and combatted together, they pointed out that, in 1969, "women were paying ten times what men paid in bail."

Lorraine Hansberry called on other Black women to protest against racism and imperialism, among other injustices. She focused on the intersections of gender and sexuality, and how these issues were not limited to one experience. She also protested the execution and court case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a Jewish communist couple who were accused of sending information to the USSR.

At the end of their presentation, Mahan stated, "the cycle of incarceration has not only continued, but massively expanded. Meanwhile, public services are being cut across [New York] city."

Despite the expansion of prisons and defunding of services, the women in their presentation provide us with examples of solidarity and community-building.

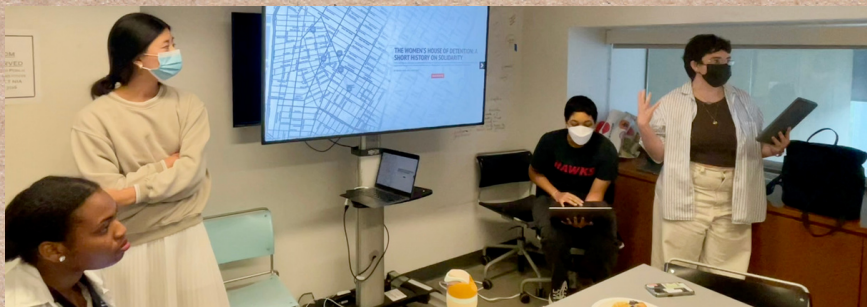


“***Abolition is about presence, not absence. It's about building life-affirming institutions.***”

**-Ruth Wilson Gilmore.**



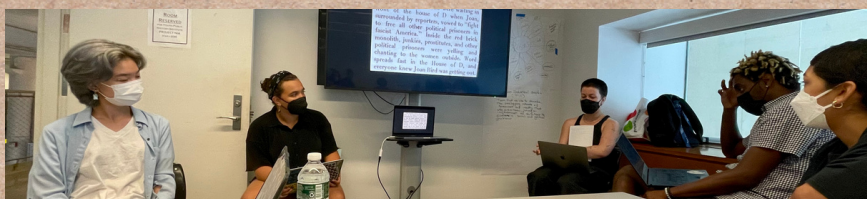
# PRESENTING!



Onye, Claire, Xela, and Mahan presenting



Bri, J, Nic, and Noel presenting



Mariah, Margaret, Mahir, and Eve presenting



River, Gold, Daria, and Chase presenting



J brought in their own resources and generously shared with us



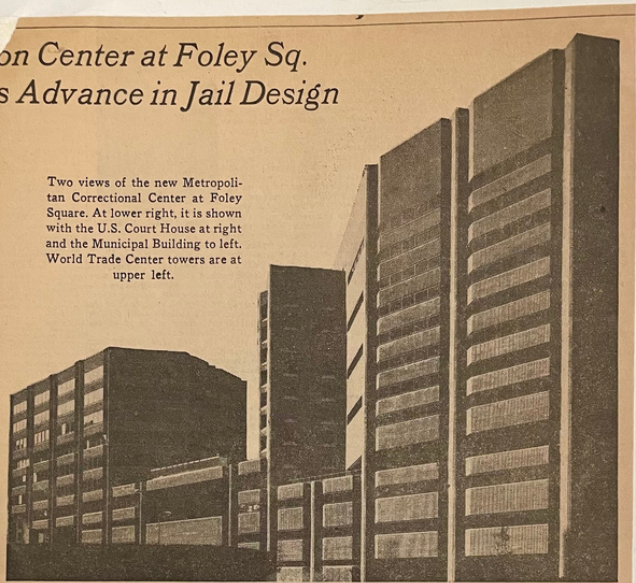
Preparing for presentations!



The New York Public Library graciously shared their archives covering the histories of prisons and rebellions in New York City.

on Center at Foley Sq.  
s Advance in Jail Design

Two views of the new Metropolitan Correctional Center at Foley Square. At lower right, it is shown with the U.S. Court House at right and the Municipal Building to left. World Trade Center towers are at upper left.



comfortable — there is excellent wood furniture (built by inmates of the Federal prison system) that resembles the simple wood furniture popularized by such places as the Workbench years ago. Unbreakable glass covers the windows, and the over-all sense is as much that of a new college dormitory room as that of a prison cell.

The clusters of rooms will each be administered as separate units, and each contains eating areas and rooms for counseling and education. A more complete recreation area is on the roof of the building — with the best view of the Municipal Building tower from anywhere in town.

The building will house 450 inmates, both male and female, most of whom will be awaiting trial, not serving extended sentences. The relaxed, dorm-like ambience — there are even Earnes chairs in the lounge areas — is merely skin-deep; underneath, the new prison is as secure as they come. But the security system is largely electronic, with doors, elevators and alarms controlled by a central building computer, thus freeing the architects from the need to provide the traditional physical symbols of incarceration — bars, iron gates and so forth.

Office Space Inadequate

The prison will begin functioning early next month; the United States Attorney's section of the structure has been in operation since early this year, and the attorneys, it appears, have not fared as well as the prisoners will. If the Correc-

Continued on Page 49, Column 3



G. New York City - Prisons

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED AND BEEN SURPRISED BY THROUGHOUT YPHI?

"The institute gave me a more nuanced perspective on the history of a place I've been living in my whole life. With all the walking tours we went on, it was seemingly impossible to escape the colonialism and systems of oppression embedded into the very land we were walking on. I was surprised by how little recognition there was in the physical spaces the history we were learning about took place in, and how I had never even heard about many of the people and events that were so impactful to the making of the city we know today. Then, it was less surprising to realize that that lack of awareness and widespread knowledge of these important figures and events were all intentional because they were suppressed by the same institutions that benefitted from their erasure. Of course the Women's House of D is only memorialized in a measly verbose plaque most people will not stop to read: because its destruction—both the physical structure and its erasure from public memory—serves to maintain a polished image of Greenwich Village that contributes to the popularity of the Jefferson Market Garden today. And so many others." - River

"The program gave us all the materials and tools we needed to successfully conduct our walking tours. And not only that, but I'm really proud of all the work the groups did. I also appreciated the trips we took the the Municipal Archives and the New York Public Library. I really liked those trips too because they helped a lot with our walking tours. I was shocked by how deeply entrenched New York City was in slavery. When we are having conversations with other people and thinking about solutions, this history is crucial in making practical solutions in the long run." - Onye

New York City appears to be a progressive city, but our history is filled with preserving slavery and the construction and usage of hostile prisons and policing.





# THANK YOU!

This newsletter documents the Youth Public History Institute, the people, conversations, and the community we built during the three weeks of the Youth Public History Institute program. I hope this newsletter serves as an archive and a memory of uncovering erased history and a way to envision our future together. I've learned so much from all of you - it's been an honor to be a part of the program and share this space with everyone.

Thank you all!

Warmly,  
Tia Poquette (she/her/hers)  
YPHI Documenter



# YPHI 2023



Thank you to Sarah, Kei, Zahra and Mariame for making this program possible and inviting us to learn from and collaborate with you!