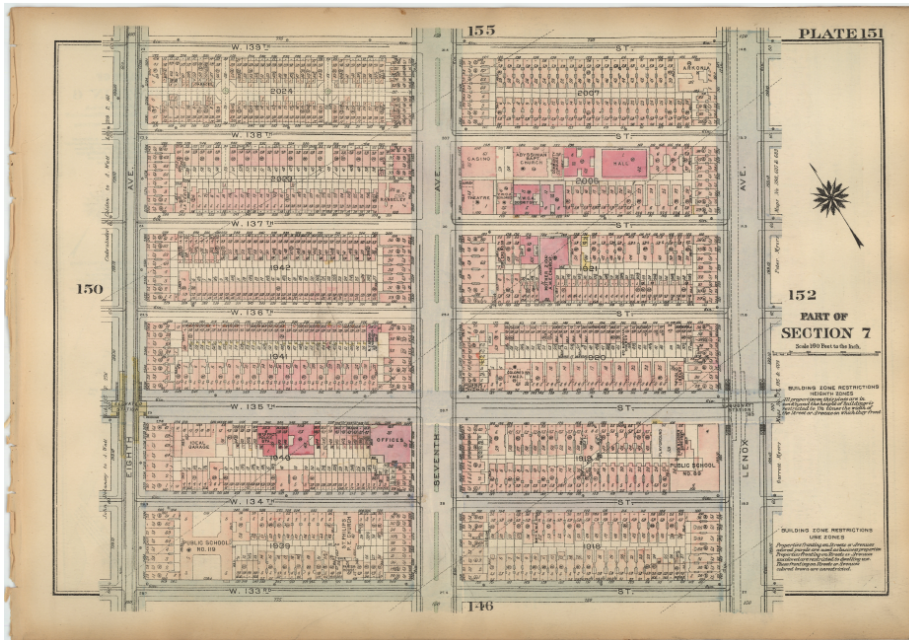


## FRAMING DOCUMENT

Source: *Land Book of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York: Vol. 1* (New York: G. W. Bromley, 1925), Plate 151 (8<sup>th</sup> Ave – Lenox Ave; 133<sup>rd</sup> Street – 139<sup>th</sup> Street)

Commented [1]: Include an image of the source



This map shows the buildings on several blocks of central Harlem in 1925. It shows the location of businesses and thus the setting for Chinese businesses and a basis for understating the significance of specific locations. The buildings marked with an "S" contain shops on their lower levels; they line the avenues running north-south, and 135th Street. There are few larger buildings - an office building, and a theater and casino [dance hall], and a garage. The largest structures belong to Harlem's churches, the YMCA and YWCA, and a hall. Two schools and a police station are also shown.

Commented [2]: I begin by describing what information is in the source

This area was the center of black Harlem. Black settlement of the neighborhood began in this area, and by 1930 had spread to the Harlem River, 155<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Park West and begun to spill over 125<sup>th</sup> Street toward Central Park. A black population of over 200,000 lived in this area, the second largest black neighborhood in the US behind Chicago's South Side (thanks to significant black communities in Brooklyn, New

Commented [3]: Next I answer local context questions about the area the map shows: part of Harlem, a black neighborhood in NYC. I then refer to secondary sources for information to answer the local context question "Who lived in Harlem? Who patronized Harlem's businesses?" and the regional context question "How did Harlem compare to other black neighborhoods in the United States?"

York City as a whole was the largest black city). Like other northern cities, the growth of Harlem's black population was fueled by the Great Migration from the South, especially Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Harlem also had an additional distinctive element to its population, West Indian immigrants, who made up one-fifth of the black residents.

While Harlem was a racially segregated community, with very few non-white residents. However, unlike black neighborhoods in other American cities, there were few black businesses and more limited black property ownership. Established white businesses remained even as white residents and the churches and other institutions associated with them departed, and Harlem lacked black banks and other sources of capital to support extensive business activity by blacks. Consequently, the businesses that lined Harlem's avenues were overwhelming not owned or staffed by the neighborhood's black residents (Robertson (2013)).

The churches on the map played an extensive role in residents' lives, as venues not just for Sunday services, but for clubs and meetings throughout the week. Churches, and the YMCA, as well as dance halls, also served as venues for basketball, which grew in popularity in this period. Social clubs and fraternal orders met in Harlem's homes, and held events in the churches and dance halls, and paraded on the wide avenues (Robertson (2017)).

Alongside those black spaces, most institutions in Harlem remained under white control. The vast majority of the police officers at the precinct on the map, on 135<sup>th</sup> Street, were white, as were all of the firefighters at the station on 137<sup>th</sup> Street. The two public schools on the map, like those elsewhere in Harlem employed mostly white teachers; likewise, the hospital just off the map on Lenox Avenue had few black nurses and no black doctors before 1925 (Robertson 2013).

How does this source help answer the question: "What businesses did Chinese immigrants establish in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s, and why?" The map is evidence of the character of Harlem at this time, and what place existed for Chinese immigrants. The limited business opportunities for blacks allowed more of a role for Chinese immigrants, as did the black residents patronage of non-black businesses. The evidence of institutions and organizations in the map also suggests the limited opportunities for contact between black residents and Chinese immigrants outside of commerce, while also highlighting that Chinese immigrants were not represented in Harlem's white institutions.

**Commented [4]:** Next I focus on the information in the source most relevant to my question, the businesses that the map shows. I look to secondary sources for information on the local context questions -- who owned and worked in Harlem businesses - and the regional context question --- how that business situation compared to other black neighborhoods.

**Commented [5]:** Next I focus on information in the source about the local context question "What institutions and organizations existed in Harlem?" and to secondary sources for information about those places and the role they played in the neighborhood

**Commented [6]:** To finish, I summarize how the source helps answer my research question

## **Bibliography**

Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

Stephen Robertson, Shane White, and Stephen Garton, "Harlem in Black and White: Mapping Race and Place in the 1920s," *Journal of Urban History* 39, 5 (September 2013): 864-880

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