

A sign project mapping memories of community life

A project of



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Your Guide to the Lower East Side presents the experiences of past and present Lower East Siders on twenty-eight signs at six separate sidewalk locations. With photographs and text in five languages, these "place markers" weave personal stories and cherished memories directly into the landscape, often right where the stories took place.

This public history project celebrates people, places, and community life on the Lower East Side. The signs reveal the rich and diverse layers of human experience that make the neighborhood so distinctive. They transform the participants' stories of struggle and achievement into a legacy for all who pass by.

The catalog showcases all of the signs and keys their locations to the map on the following page.

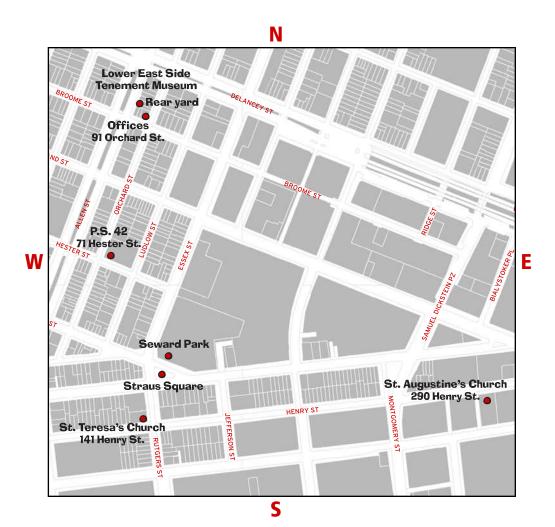
The signs are a project of Place Matters, an initiative of City Lore and the Municipal Art Society to promote and protect places that connect us to the past, sustain community and cultural traditions, and maintain the distinctive character of neighborhoods throughout the city. Place Matters believes that this kind of "place marking" draws attention to our surroundings, and encourages people to recognize, protect, and care for the places that matter to them. We welcome inquiries about how to do similar projects in other places. Go to our website at www.placematters.net to learn more about places on the Lower East Side and all around the city.

Many thanks to the individuals and organizations who shared their stories and photographs, and to the E.H.A. Foundation, the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts for funding *Your Guide to the Lower East Side*.

We also thank our other Place Matters funders, including the Altman Foundation, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York Community Trust, the New York Council for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Scherman Foundation.

Chris Neville & Marci Reaven, project directors of *Your Guide to the Lower East Side,* Place Matters, September 2007

THE SIGNS: LOCATIONS



THE SIGNS: SITES & STORIES

Lower East Side Tenement Museum
Office windows, 91 Orchard St., corner of Broome

- 1-2 Rev. Bayer Lee on laundry work (Chinese & English)
- 3 Afiya D. Dawson & Frank Dawson on The Lower East Siders drum corps
- 4 Victor Papa on Father Gigante of St. James Church
- 5-6 Hyman Genee on Kehila Kedosha Janina (Greek & English)
- 7-8 Lillian M. Rivera on garment work (Spanish & English)
- 9 Bea Salwen on Salwen's Umbrellas

Rear yard, 96 Allen St., between Delancey & Broome

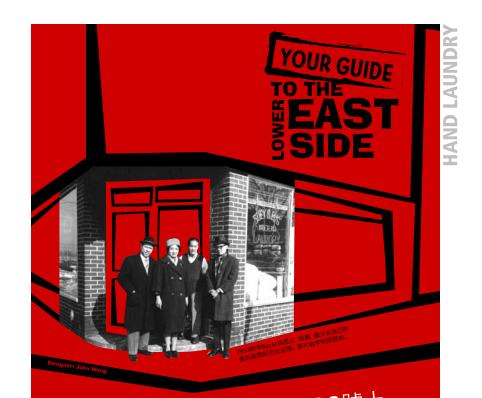
- 10 Joan H. Geismar on archaeology
- P.S. 42 71 Hester St., corner of Orchard
 - 11 Lillian M. Rivera on discrimination
 - 12 Rosa Casiello O'Day on discrimination
 - 13 Rosa Casiello O'Day & May Wong Lee on the school community
 - 14 Aaron Eng-Achson on teaching about the past
- St. Teresa's Church 141 Henry St., corner of Rutgers
 - 15 Father Donald Baker on the church roof collapse
 - 16 Carol Cain on the church rededication
 - 17 Father John B. Chiang on Father Flynn
 - 18 Sister Diane Olmstead on the multilingual congregation

Seward Park • Canal St., corner of Essex

- 19 Mayor Seth Low on the park's opening, 1903
- 20 NYC Department of Parks on the "Mothers' Corner," 1904
- 21 NYC Department of Parks on the "School Farm," 1929
- St. Augustine's Church 290 Henry St., near Montgomery
 - 22 The Rev. Dr. Errol Harvey, Rector, on the Slave Galleries

Straus Square • Rutgers St., between Canal & East Broadway

- 23 Restaurant managers on the former Garden Cafeteria, now Wing Shoon Seafood Restaurant
- 24 Wanda Evans on Betances Health Center
- 25 Fern Schwartz on the Educational Alliance
- 26 Girls at play on Rutgers St., 1950s
- 27 Louis Katz on *The Forverts/Forward* newspaper
- 28 Rebecca Lepkoff on Loew's Canal Street Theater



三零年代時堂先生在柯察街86號上 家手洗衣店。

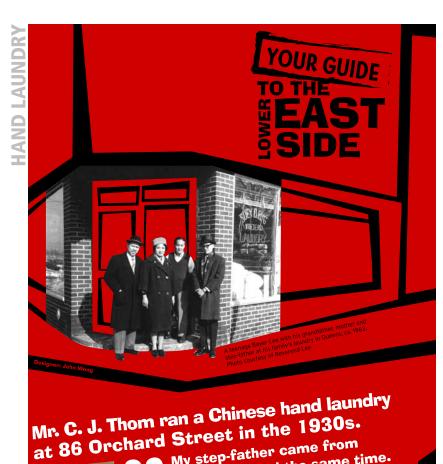


我父親也是那時從台山來。 他跟同一家族的人一起住在 包里街40號,也一起在鄰區的洗衣 店工作。六零年代我在他的洗衣店 打工, 他說他以前白天在燙衣板上 燙衣服, 晚上在燙衣板下睡覺。餐 你總是走著別人的腳步。

誰會走上你的?



Location: Lower East Side Tenement Museum office, window mount



Museum office, window mount

-ocation: Lower East Side Tenement

My step-father came from My step-rather came time.

Taishan around the same time. He lived at 40 Bowery with many other men from his kin network and worked in hand laundries uptown. When I worked in his laundry during my teens in the 1960s, he told me that he used to press shirts on top of the ironing table by day and sleep underneath the same table by night. Restaurant jobs take fathers away

from home but laundries keep them close. - Rev. Bayer Lee Pastor to Chinatown churches

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?





I was an altar boy when Father Louis R. Gigante arrived at St James Church as a newly

St. James Church, 32 James St.

ordained priest. Traditionally, St. James had identified itself as Irish, and 'Father G' was our first Italian-American priest. This was during the early 1960s when

some of the Irish and Italians were apt to say, 'Who are these newcomers, these intruders, these Puerto Ricans?'

It was hard for Father G to transcend the tension, but he bridged the gap and St. James became a fully integrated parish. In fact, Father G inaugurated the first 'Spanish mass.' He didn't as much

negotiate peace as demand it. He had the moral clout. - Victor Papa, President/Director **Two Bridges Neighborhood Council**

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?



Do you know our drum corps marched here?

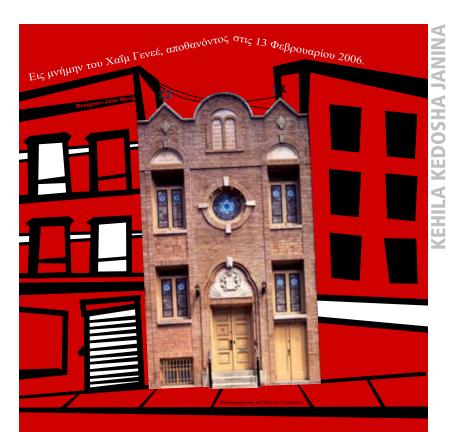
We were the Lower East Siders, from the Vladeck projects, 99% of us Black and Puerto Rican. We were fantastic, criss-crossing the field, arms and legs coming up to just the right height. We competed all over the tri-state area, but we had no money. So our mothers made our uniforms, and we traveled in cars rather than rent buses. How we could fit in a car! Five on the back seat, four on the floor, and four on the knees of the five in the back seat. Even now my kids say, 'Don't let mommy go

to a parade. They know I'll take off and follow the band. - Afiya Diane Dawson

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?

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Location: Lower East Side Tenement Museum office, window mount



Οι γονείς μου και άλλοι Γιαννιώτες από την Κάτω Ανατολική Πλευρά της πόλης της Νέας Υόρκης ίδρυσαν την συναγωγή μας, Κεχίλα Κεντόσα



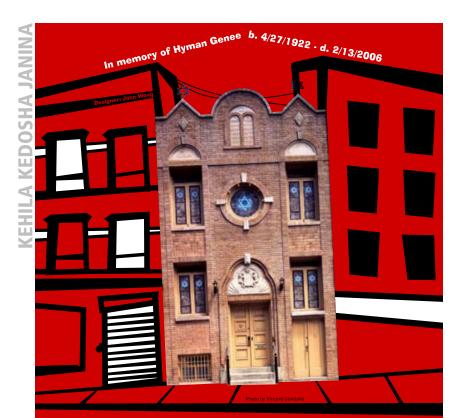
Ιωάννινα, το 1927. Καταγόμαστε από τα Ιωάννινα της Ελλάδος. Ποιος θα μπορούσε να φανταστεί ότι θα ήμασταν οι μόνοι Εβραίοι Ελληνικής καταγωγής που θα ιδρύαμε μια συναγωγή στην Αμερική, ή ότι σήμερα, η δική μας συναγωγή θά ήταν η τελευταία που ακόμα χρησιμοποιεί τη Ρωμανιώτικη Εβραϊκή παράδοση. Δεν θα

ξεχάσω ποτέ εκείνη την ημέρα που εκλέχθηκα πρόεδρος της συναγωγής., 'Διαλέγουμε εσένα', έλεγαν. Από τότε, έχω περάσει πολλά καλά χρόνια εδώ. -Χαΐμ Γενεέ, Κεχίλα Κεντόσα Ιωάννινα Συναγωγή & Μουσείο, Οδός Μπρούμ 280.

Βαδίζετε πάντοτε στα χνάρια κάποιου. Ποιος θα βαδίσει στα δικά σας χνάρια;



-ocation: Lower East Side Tenement Museum office, window mount



My parents and other 'Yaniotes' from the Lower East Side opened our synagogue Kehila Kedosha Janina in 1927.



-ocation: Lower East Side Tenement Museum office, window mount

We're from Janina (Ioannina) Greece. Who could have imagined that we would be the only Greek hometown to establish a synagogue in this country, or that, today, ours would be the last in the Western Hemisphere to practice the Romaniote Jewish tradition. I'll never forget the day I became president of the congregation.

I've spent many a good year here since. -Hy Genee, 2005 Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue & Museum 280 Broome St., www.kkjsm.org You're always walking in somebody's footsteps.



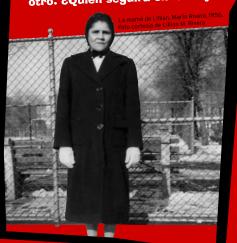


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Mi mamá trabajó duro para criarnos a los cinco—factorías de ropa durante el día, lavar la ropa de otros por la noche, en nuestra bañera. Ella misma hacía su propio almidón con yuca. También trabajábamos por pieza. Después que salíamos de la escuela, mi hermano Tony llevaba a casa unos triangulitos de tela para hacer yarmulkes. Mami cosía diez docenas por noche en su máquina. Nosotros nos sentábamos con ella; poníamos en hilera los trocitos de tela que iba a coser y cortábamos los hilos sueltos cuando terminaba. Todo ese tiempo conversábamos y escuchábamos novelas en español por radio. -Lillian M. Rivera Uno siempre sigue en los pasos de otro. ¿Quién seguirá en los tuyos?

YOUR GUIDE

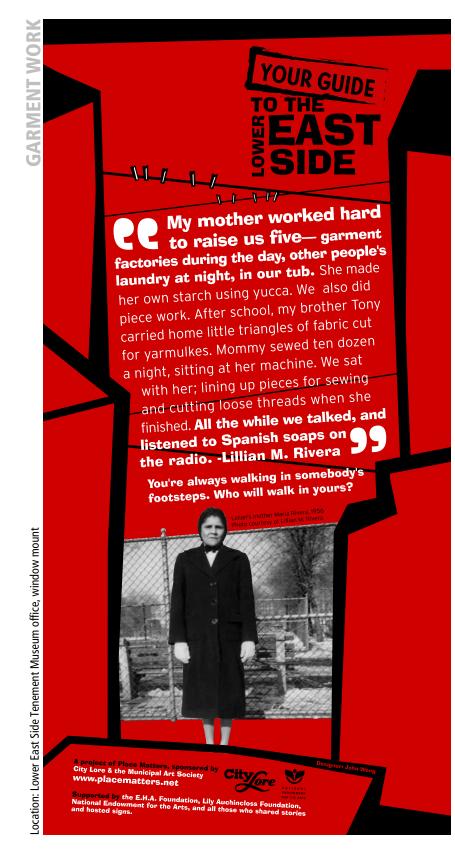


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upported by the E.H.A. Foundation, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, attonal Endowment for the Arts, and all those who shared stories at hosted signs.

ocation: Lower East Side Tenement Museum office, window mount

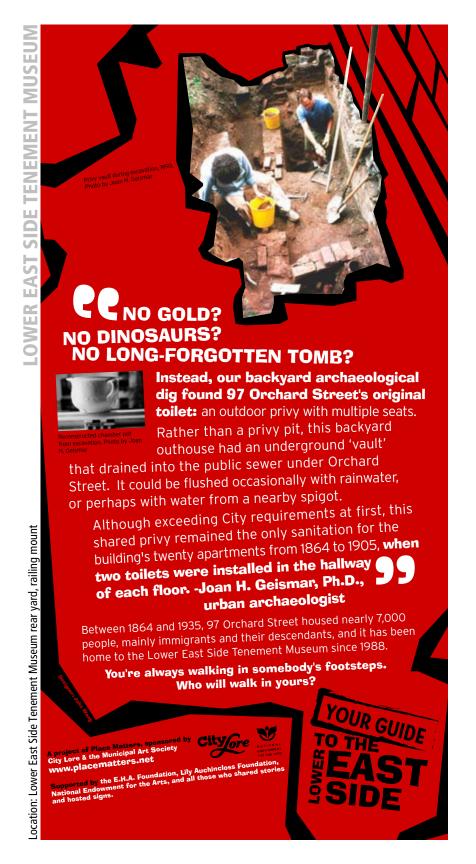




-Mrs. Bea Salwen, March 29, 2006, interviewed by Mr. Eng-Achson's class "2-311" from PS 42 You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours? A project of Place Matters, sponsored by City Lore & the Municipal Art Society

ocation: Lower East Side Tenement Museum office, window mount

to PS 42, just like you, and all his life he worked in the store. We sold umbrellas and parasols of all shapes and sizes. On a good day, we could sell a hundred dozen. My husband used to play his violin for all the children who came to the shop. I'm glad you came to visit today." As the children filed out, she called, "Remember to study!



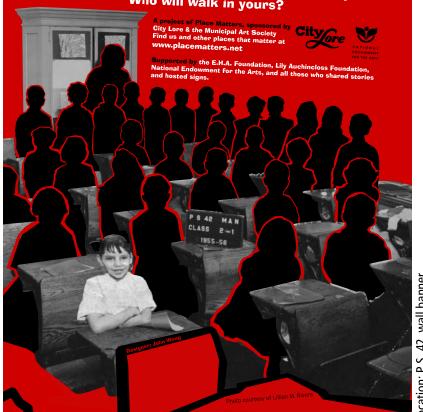
Leaving a Place called Home

I said, 'My name is Lillian Milagros Rivera and I was born under the Puerto Rican flag.' My teacher said, 'No, your name is Lillian Rivera and you're an American.' This went back and forth a couple of days until I said, 'My mother says you're crazy and I was born under the

Puerto Rican flag and my name is Lillian Milagros Rivera and not to listen to you.' So she put me in the corner with a dunce cap and every time she pointed at me the kids yelled hee haw, hee haw.

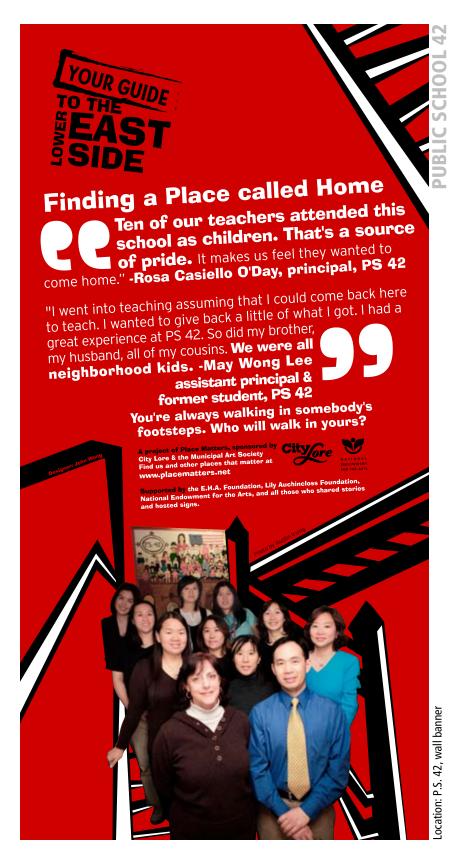
-Lillian Milagros Rivera, student in the 1950s, PS 42

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?

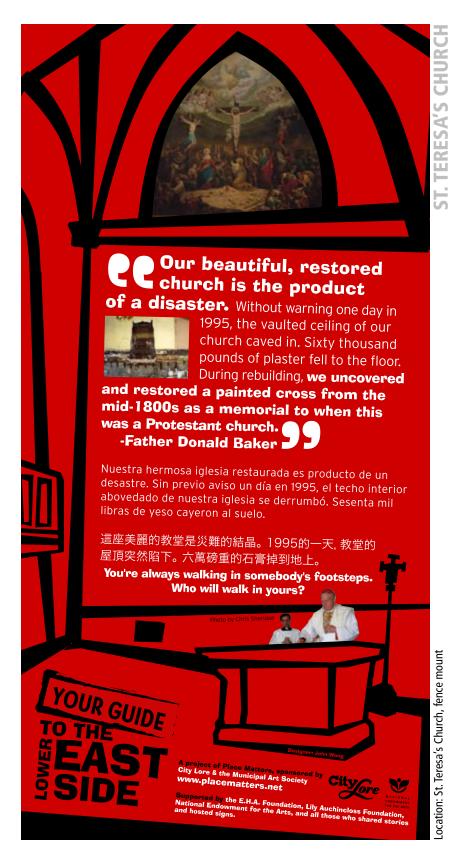


Location: P.S. 42, wall banne

4 SCHO(**Leaving a Place Called Home** When I was a child in the late 1950s, it was almost considered un-American to speak another language. My parents spoke Italian. When my mother struggled to communicate, my teacher had no patience. 'You're in America,' she said, 'Speak English.' I've come across that attitude my whole life, even as recently as the past 10 years. Here, at PS 42, we value our families' languages and cultures.
-Rosa Casiello O'Day, principal, PS 42 You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours? A project of Place Matters, sponsored by Younger 42, wall banner Older ocation: P.S.

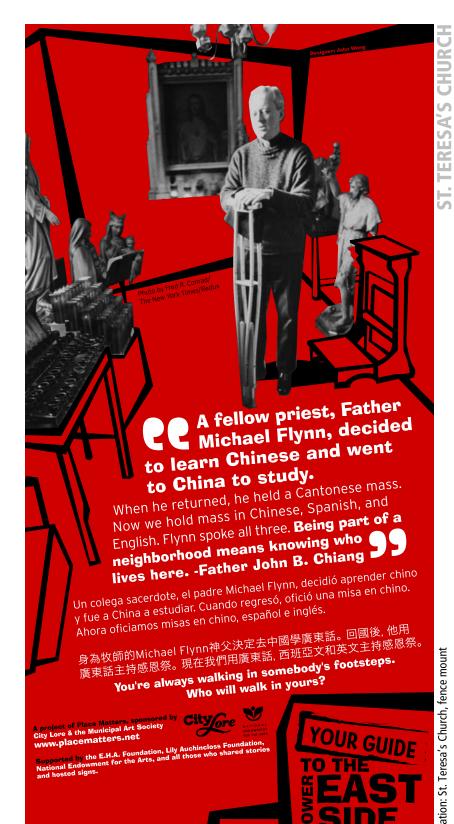






When Cardinal 🕻 🗲 Egan came to dedicate our restored church in 2002, you couldn't fit another soul **inside.** He consecrated the altar with oils and sealed a relic of a saint inside. He blessed the church and everything in it. It was something you see once in a lifetime. -Carol Cain Cuando el cardenal Egan vino a dedicar nuestra renovada iglesia en 2002, no cabía adentro un alma más. Fue algo que sólo se ve una vez en la vida. 2002年, Egan樞機為裝修好的教堂做紀念時, 裡面擠得很滿。 這是件一身難忘的事。 Teresa's Church, fence mount You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours? A project of Place Matters, sponsored by City Lore & the Municipal Art Society

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CHURCH TERESA'S The people from our three language groups seldom get to celebrate together, so we throw two big parties a year. People make Chinese and Spanish foods. We have cakes, a flea market, music, and dancing. At a party in 2004, Father Baker took this picture of us. -Sister Diane Olmstead Los grupos de los tres idiomas distintos raramente se juntan para celebrar, así que por eso hacemos dos fiestas bien grandes al año. En una fiesta en 2004, el padre Baker nos tomó esta foto. 這三群說不同語言的人很少聚在一起所已我們每年舉辦兩次聚會。 2004年, Baker神父照了這張相片。 You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours? Church, ocation: St. Teresa's A project of Place Matters, sponsored by City Lore & the Municipal Art Society

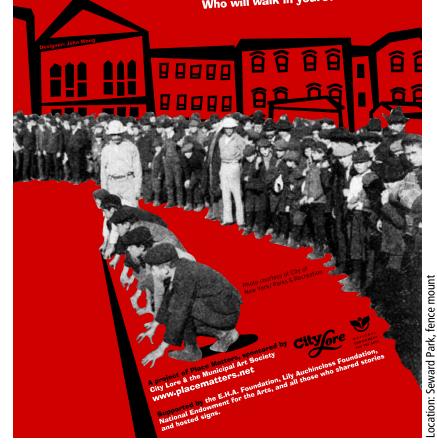
Pe It gives me great pleasure to formally open this park.

It indicates that the city has come to realize that it must provide for its children, that they have a right to play as well as to work. -Mayor Seth Low, 1903

Es para mí un gran placer inaugurar este parque formalmente. Los niños tienen tanto el derecho a jugar como a trabajar.

開放公園是我的榮幸。這代表我們城市能體會到小孩子們需要玩耍空間的重要。

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps.
Who will walk in yours?



19 20



On a wide porch overlooking the Park, a number of comfortable wide-armed rocking chairs have been set about for the exclusive use of women accompanied by small children. Of course, the chairs in this Mothers' Corner are entirely free, as are all facilities at the disposal of the department. -1904 Annual Report, Department of Parks

En un amplio portal con vista al parque, se han colocado numerosas mecedoras con brazos para el uso exclusivo de señoras acompañadas por niños pequeños.

公園前面的走廊上放了幾張寬大的扶椅,特別是為帶著小孩的婦女們用的。婦女用的椅子和其它的設備都是這單位免費提供的。

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps.
Who will walk in yours?



-ocation: Seward Park, fence mount

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imported by the E.H.A. Foundation, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, and hosted signs.



ALL THE GARDEN WORK IS DONE ENTIRELY BY THE CHILDREN,

including preparation of the soil, spading, raking, planting, cultivating, and harvesting. The season is divided into two sessions: first planting in May, harvesting in July, and second planting before August 1st, harvesting on October

15th. The rules of the garden are **Honesty,** Truthfulness, Justice and Courtesy.

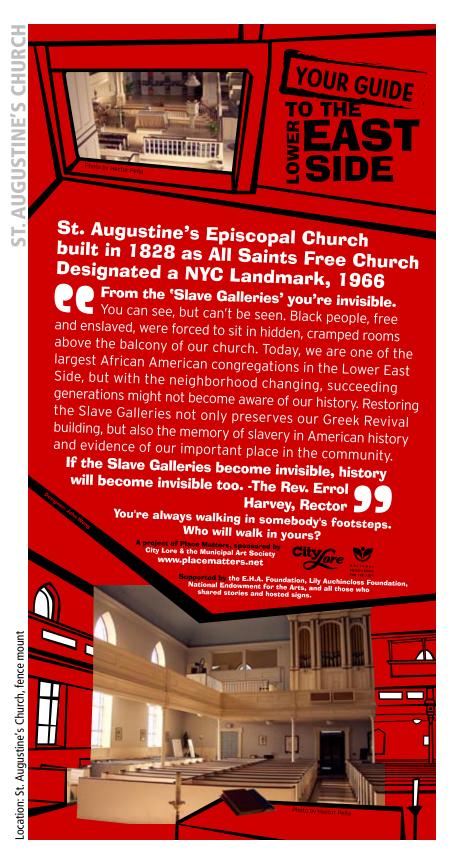
-1929 Report of Seward Park School Farm, Department of Parks

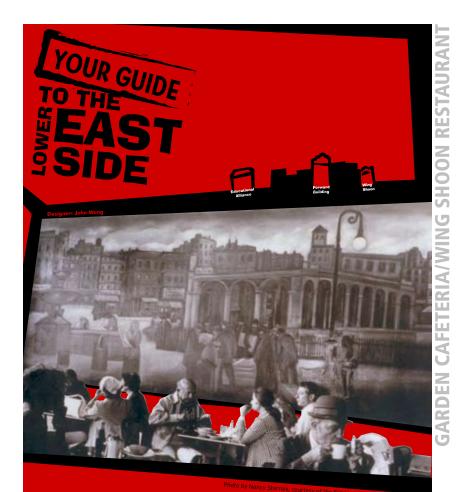
TODO EL TRABAJO DE HORTICULTURA LO HACEN POR COMPLETO LOS NIÑOS, inclusive preparan el suelo, revuelven la tierra, rastrillan, siembran, cultivan y cosechan. Las reglas del huerto son honradez, veracidad, justicia y cortesía.

庭園裡所有的工作都是小朋友做的,包括理土,挖土,種植, 培養與收割。庭園的規則要求誠實,正當,正義與禮貌。

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?







The former Garden Cafeteria, now Wing Shoon Seafood Restaurant, 165 East Broadway

The writers from The Forward, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and the guys from the Workmen's Circle all came in. The old Jewish people who lived in the area for years-they'd come,

have a cup of coffee, sit, and talk. Around 11 o'clock the lunch hour would start and we'd need the tables but they wouldn't get up. I would literally push them out, but as soon as lunch was over, they

were back. **99 -Bert Feinberg, manager of the Garden for 25 years** Garden for 25 years

Wing Shoon means everything comes easily. We came to America hoping to do well and prosper. We've been here over 20 years and our customers are loyal. See those men there? All taxi drivers. They used to come in with their babies. Now those babies are grown. -Manager, Wing Shoon

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?

A project of Place Matters, sponsored by City Lore & the Municipal Art



ocation: Straus Square, free-standing mount



from a van. People on the Lower East Side desperately needed health services that were close by and affordable. First we treated VD, then added services as we grew. There were three of us to start. Now there are 110. Many people work their whole lives and never get to see that they made

a difference. It's been my pleasure to help people get what is rightfully theirs.

-Wanda Evans **Executive Director Betances Health Center** 280 Henry St. www.betances.org

You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours?







FOUNTAIN SERVICE **Pe One potato,** two potato, three potato, four. Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more. Square, free-standing mount corner of Essex & Canal St., 1950's You're always walking in somebody's footsteps. Who will walk in yours? d by the E.H.A. Foundation, Lily A

ion: Straus Sqaure, tree-s



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CREDITS

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(www.placematters.net)

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Project co-sponsors: Lower East Side Tenement Museum and Lower East Side

Preservation Coalition

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Sign Fabrication Info

The signs are designed to be low-cost, and easy to fabricate and install.

Printing: Digital ink-jet prints, using exterior-grade inks on vinyl.

Signs: Graphics mounted on custom-fabricated metal box supports, 36" x 18". Supports fabricated from welded metal frames of 1" square tubing, clad in bent sheet metal, with a factory-applied gloss coating. Protective layer of clear vinyl applied for locations prone to vandalism. Signs hung in windows with thin wire, or mounted on iron fences and railings using screw-on brackets. Free-standing signs supported by bolted-on painted metal legs, set in concrete-filled post holes.

Banners: Graphics printed on heavy vinyl sheets, 72" x 36", hemmed at top and bottom for insertion of lightweight metal battens (to avoid wrinkling) and steel mounting cables.

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