

125th Street Chronology

- 16th Century Native Americans inhabit summer village at what is now East 125th Street and the Harlem River.
- 1609 Henry Hudson trades with Native Americans off the Manhattanville shoreline.
- 1658 Pieter Stuyvesant founds the village of Nieuw Haarlem, part of which occupies the land at what would later become East 125th Street between First and Second avenues.
- 1776 George Washington defeats the British in the Battle of Harlem Heights, driving the enemy south across what was then called the Hollow Way, later known officially as West 125th Street.
- 1806 Village of Manhattanville founded at an inlet along the Hudson River at what will soon become West 125th Street.
- 1811 The Randel Plan proposes a grid of streets blanketing Manhattan, including an East-West thoroughfare along a geological fault line thereafter known as 125th Street.
- 1813 125th Street opens as one of Manhattan's 15 major cross-town streets
- 1814 Regular ferry service begins along the Harlem River from East 125th Street to downtown.
- 1850s The public school at East 125th Street and Second Avenue admits its first African-American student.
- 1863-1872 Artist Thomas Nast plots the downfall of the Tweed Ring from his backyard studio at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street.
- 1869 A group of German Jews relocates from the Lower East Side to East 125th Street and Third Avenue, establishing the core of uptown's Jewish community.
- 1889 Oscar Hammerstein opens the Harlem Opera House at 211 West 125th Street, paving the way for 125th Street's development as an entertainment district.
- 1904 The Interborough Rapid Transit's Broadway line opens in Upper Manhattan, spanning West 125th Street with a viaduct featuring a 168.5-foot parabolic arch.
- 1913 Hurtig and Seamon's, a racially segregated vaudeville house opens at 253 West 125th Street.
- 1920 Manhattan Street renamed 125th Street
- 1925 Marcus Garvey, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, arrested on charges of fraud in connection with his Black Star shipping line at the East 125th Street train station at Park Avenue and remanded to jail in Atlanta, Georgia.
- 1934 Hurtig and Seamon's re-opens as the unsegregated Apollo Theatre, soon to become famous for its Wednesday Amateur Night..
- 1934 Adam Clayton Powell Jr.'s "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" demonstrations against Blumstein's Department Store, on 230 West 125th Street, inaugurate the modern Civil Rights era.
- 1935 The arrest of a 16-year-old Puerto Rican boy for allegedly shoplifting at Kress's Department Store, at 256 West 125th Street, sets off a massive riot that results in the death of three Harlemites and more than 200 injured (including eight police officers).

- 1943 After a scuffle between a policeman and a serviceman at the Braddock Hotel, at 125th Street and Eighth Avenue, thousands of Harlemites take to the streets in a night of unrest that causes six deaths and 700 injuries (including 45 policemen), in addition to the looting of more than 1,500 stores.
- 1946 Bobby Robinson takes over a 125th Street hat store and opens Bobby's Record Shop, the first black-owned business on West 125th Street.
- 1958 Martin Luther King, Jr. stabbed while signing copies of his book at Blumstein's.
- 1960 Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, visiting New York City to address the United Nations, visits Harlem, meeting with Malcolm X and Langston Hughes and staying at the Theresa Hotel, at Seventh Avenue and West 125th Street.
- 1968 The Studio Museum in Harlem opens in a rented loft at 125th Street and Fifth Avenue.
- 1974 The Harlem State Office Building opens at West 125th Street and Seventh Avenue, at 19 stories the tallest building uptown.
- 1979 The Apollo Theatre closes for what will be two years before being taken over and opened by Percy Sutton.
- 1984 West 125th Street renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (Way?)
- 1987 Harlem Children's Zone Project founded.
- 1991 Discovery of Harlem African Burial Ground during excavations for a new MTA bus Depot along the Harlem River just north of 125th Street along First Avenue.
- 1993 Creation of the 125th Street Business Development District.
- 1994 Police evict dozens of unlicensed African merchants along West 125th Street, inspiring a demonstration that brings Harlem's African community to broader city-wide awareness for the first time and results in the construction of the Harlem African Market on West 116th Street.
- 1995 An arsonist kills himself and seven others as a protest against the eviction of a vendor from the former Blumstein's building
- 2001 Bill Clinton moves into offices at 55 West 125th Street
- 2007 The New York City Department of City Planning initiates a controversial project to re-zone 125th Street, eventually transforming it a densely developed boulevard lined with high-rise office and residential towers

- a compilation from Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History from Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove Press, 2011)