

Greenwich Village Tour

Introduction

Hi, this is Catherine with Free Tours by Foot, here to guide you around Greenwich Village. Our tour begins at Waverly Place in Sixth Avenue. The closest subways are the A, C, E, B, D, F, and M trains to West Fourth Street or the number one train to Christopher Street. Before we continue on, just a bit of background information on this area. Greenwich Village is a neighborhood that does not conform to Manhattan's grid pattern. This is because it was actually established as a completely separate area in the 18th century. The village of Greenwich was settled by those seeking a country atmosphere and what they felt was cleaner, healthier air than New York City.

New York City at the time was ravaged by cholera and yellow fever epidemics. When the grid of Manhattan was laid out in 1811, the already established village of Greenwich was allowed to keep their original streetscape. Today, the narrow, oddly-angled streets are one of the things people love most about the area. Through the years, the neighborhood's relative isolation ended up turning it into a haven for artists and those with radical social ideas, and the village became known as the Bohemian Center of New York. Playwrights, novelists, artists, musicians, dancers, and more flocked to the area.

You will see some historic music and theater venues on our tour today, and see spots where political dissenters gathered. Even though rising housing costs drove many of these artists out of the neighborhood, the Bohemian roots of Greenwich Village are still visible for those who know where to look. Let's get started. Walk north up Sixth Avenue until you come to the building with the clock tower. Then stop and press play.

Jefferson Market Library

This beautiful building stands near the site of the Jefferson Market, a series of merchant sheds established in 1832 and named for President Thomas Jefferson. It was later decided that the market stalls would be demolished to make way for a new courthouse, the building that you're now looking at.

The Commission for the design of the courthouse went to the firm of Vaux and Withers. Calvert Vaux, famed architect of Central Park, was busy at the time with the designs of the American Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, so his partner, Frederick Clarke Withers, designed this building.

It is done in the high Victorian Gothic style and very closely resembles much of Vaux's work from the same period. The courthouse was finished in 1877 and in 1885, it was voted the fifth most beautiful building in the country.

This building was used for the Third Judicial District, one of the busiest in the city, particularly because it included the lively Tenderloin District, near Madison Square. There

was such a heavy caseload that the first-night court sessions in the country were held here. One of the biggest cases to come through the door was the arraignment of Henry K. Thaw for murdering famous architect Stanford White. The trial of Thaw was called, "The trial of the century".

The building was used as a courthouse until 1945 and was at one point in danger of demolition. A group of preservationists, including poet E. E. Cummings, fought to have the building converted into a library. After approximately \$1.4 million in restoration, it opened as a library in 1967, one of the first adaptive reuse projects in the United States.

Peek into the beautiful garden outside. Sex And The City fans will recognize it as the spot where Steve and Miranda get married in Season 6.

Now you're going to turn left to walk west down Christopher Street. The first block on your left you will pass is Gay Street. Many people assume that this tiny curved street is named as a nod to the area's history as an LGBTQ neighborhood.

It is actually likely named for an early resident of the area. The street was originally a stable alley. It was widened to become a full street in 1833 so, as a result, the houses on the west side of the street are federalist style, built between 1826 and 1833. The homes on the east side were built between 1844 and 1860.

Keep walking and you will see a triangular building off to your left, at the intersection with Waverly Place. Stop and press play.

The Northern Dispensary

Directions: From the corner of Christopher Street and Gay Street, keep walking and you will see a triangular building off to your left, at the intersection with Waverly Place.

In 1791, the City of New York established a dispensary in lower Manhattan near City Hall. It was a place where the poor could seek medical treatment. As the city's population grew, the single infirmary wasn't enough and the citizens of the city pushed for a new dispensary to the north.

In 1827, a triangular piece of land was granted to build one. In granting the land, the city's requirement was that this new building was only to be used to treat people who were too poor to afford medical care.

The building that you are now looking at is the Northern Dispensary. John Tucker and Henry Baird completed the building in 1831. The marble plaque over the door reads "Northern Dispensary, Instituted 1827, Built 1831, Heal the Sick".

In its first year, the Northern Dispensary treated 3,296 people. In 1837, one of the people treated was Edgar Allan Poe, then in his 20s.

The structure was originally two stories. The third was added in 1855 to accommodate the ever-growing number of patients. The busiest year was 1886. Nearly 14,000 people were treated. Numbers declined in the 20th Century. By World War Two, half of the treatments were dental and by the 1960s it was solely a dental clinic.

Problems arose in the 1980s as Greenwich Village was strongly affected by the AIDS epidemic. The dispensary would not provide dental treatment to anybody with AIDS. The New York City Human Rights Commission sued the dispensary. Rather than complying and treating those with AIDS, the northern dispensary was fined thousands of dollars and shut down in 1989.

The Catholic Archdiocese bought the building hoping to open a shelter for those with AIDS, but the plan received push back from the neighborhood and the plan was never executed.

After sitting empty for 10 years, William Gottlieb bought the building, but he passed away soon after.

The building is still unoccupied. The deed restrictions set into place in the 1820s still stand and the building is technically still limited to being used for medical treatment for the poor. The future of the building remains unclear today.

Now continue down Christopher Street until you come to the Stonewall Inn on your right then press play.

The Stonewall Inn

Directions: From the Northern Dispensary, continue down Christopher Street until you come to the Stonewall Inn on your right then press play.

Hess Triangle

Directions: This is a memorial of a protest against eminent domain. This is the smallest piece property in NYC.

The triangle that you're looking at represents the smallest piece of property in New York. In an effort to widen city streets and put in subway lines in 1910, the city of New York condemned and demolished almost 300 buildings. One of the buildings in the way of the new plans was a five-story apartment building called The Voorhis, owned by David Hess. He resisted the claims of eminent domain, but his building was ultimately demolished.

All that remained of his property holdings by 1914 was this triangle you are looking at. The city asked that he legally donate it for part of the city sidewalk, but he refused to be pushed any further.

In 1922, he covered his property with a tile mosaic reading, "Property of the Hess estate, which has never been donated for public purposes."

Village Cigars, the shop the triangle sits in front of, purchased it in 1938 for \$1000. That would be nearly 17,000 dollars today.

Now, walk one block south to take a right onto Grove Street, when you get Marie's Crisis Cafe, stop and press play.

Marie's Crisis Café

Directions: From the Hess Triangle, walk one block south to take a right onto Grove Street, when you get Marie's Crisis Cafe, stop and press play.

Today, this is a well-loved piano bar, known for being a hangout for Broadway stars.

The name Marie's Crisis goes back to the unique history of the spot. This was once the site of a small wooden house where revolutionary war patriot, Thomas Paine, died in 1809. Paine was known for being the author of the pamphlet, *Common Sense*, a publication that was credited with creating support for American succession from Great Britain. Paine also authored a less known pamphlet called *The American Crisis*. This urged patriot soldiers to re-enlist as their terms of service ended.

The cafe that later stood on the spot of Paine's house was named for its owner, singer Marie DuMont.

The name caused confusion early on because Marie was also the name of a popular Greenwich Village Cafe owner named Romanie Marie, known for creating Bohemian Hotspots. Today at Marie's Crisis, this is a popular spot for locals and visitors alike. Stop in for a drink and don't be afraid to sing.

Continue down that side of Grove Street, when you get to Grove and Bedford Street, look across and press play.

Friends Apartment Building

Directions: From Marie's Crisis Cafe, continue west down that side of Grove Street. When you get to the intersection of Grove and Bedford Streets, look across the street and press play.

The TV show *Friends* was arguably one of the most popular sitcoms of all time. One of the iconic shots for viewers became the exterior of the apartment building inhabited by Monica, Rachel, Joey, and Chandler. This is one of the only things that was actually filmed in New York. While the gang is supposed to live in Greenwich Village, the show was actually filmed in California.

Fans of the show will notice some issues with this building though. The friends frequently gather out on the balcony and there are none here.

There's been speculation since the show aired as to how Monica could afford her spacious, beautiful apartment. Rents in this area consort over \$3,000 a month for a studio. In the world of the show, it is explained that the apartment is rent-controlled and is actually Monica's grandmother's. In New York, apartments older than 1947 with six or more units are rent-controlled. The landlords can only increase the rent as much as the city tells them. Increases are based on the length of the lease.

Skeptics still say that Monica couldn't have the apartment for \$300 a month as the show claims, but as of 2012, a 1,200-square foot apartment on Commerce Street was being inhabited by an 80-year-old man for \$332 a month. Whatever the rent, this building has been drawing *Friends* fans for years. Even though there isn't really a Central Perk on the ground floor, check out the restaurant that is there, The Little Owl.

The house that you're in front of on the corner opposite the *Friends* building is one of a very few wooden houses in New York City. This house was built in 1822, but it was originally only two stories. The third floor and the decorative cornice was added in 1870.

The house's original owner was a sash maker named William Hyde. You can check out his handiwork in the home's double hung windows.

Now, cross over Grove Street and go a few doors down to the right. You will come to a wrought iron gate with the words private court on it.

Grove Court

Directions: Now, cross over Grove Street and go a few doors over down to the right. You will come to a wrought iron gate with the words Private Court on it.

Peak through the gate to see this serene row of townhouses. These were built in the 1850s by a local businessman named Samuel Cocks. He owned a grocery store right at the corner of Grove and Bedford and figured that the residents of his newly built houses would be sure to patronize his store.

The houses were small by the standards of the time. Each is a little less than 1,000 square feet. That's about half the size of the average townhouse at that point in the 19th century.

Today, this is a highly coveted private block. When these were built, however, it was not considered upscale or even respectable. The houses were small and they didn't have front stoops. Also, while the privacy of the block is valued in today's fast-paced New York, in the 1850s, people considered street-facing real estate to be more desirable. These were back houses designed for poor families.

The nickname for Grove Court was Mixed Ale Alley, which alluded to the fact that the residents couldn't afford a real pint of ale and they were forced to drink a mix of the dregs from the bottom of the barkeeper's barrels. Another nickname for the block was pig alley. Tough to believe looking at it today. Only residents have access and Grove Court, today, is one of New York's many hidden gems.

Now, turn around and go back to the corner of Bedford, take a right. When you get to number 86 Bedford Street, stop and press play.

Chumley's

Directions: Now, turn around and go back to the corner of Grove Street and Bedford Street and take a right turn. When you get to #86 Bedford Street, stop and press play.

If you look at 86 Bedford Street, it looks nondescript, not really worth a second glance. That's a good thing because this is the home of Chumley's, originally opened as a popular speakeasy.

In 1922, socialist activist Leland Stanford Chumley converted a blacksmith shop into a Prohibition-era speakeasy. Though Prohibition is long since over, the building still retains features from that time.

There has never been any kind of sign over the entrance at 86 Bedford Street. The entrance on Barrow Street is also unmarked and it's in a courtyard. Inside, there were trapdoors and secret staircases.

Chumley's is also credited with creating the popular restaurant industry term 86, meaning the restaurant is out of something. There are two versions of how this came about.

One is that if guests got too rowdy, they would be taken out of the Bedford Street entrance at number 86. The other is that if the police were coming to raid the place, they would call ahead to tip off the bartender and say to 86 the customers, meaning send them out the 86 Bedford Street door because they were going around to the Barrow Street entrance.

Chumley's became a hotspot for literary figures. Theodore Dreiser, E. E. Cummings, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and John Steinbeck were regulars here. Chumley's posted dust jackets of books that had been worked on in the bar up on the walls.

In 2007, the chimney in the dining room collapsed and Chumley's had to be shut down. After a nearly 10-year absence, Chumley's reopened. There is a new owner, but many of the original features such as the iconic book covers remain.

Now, continue down Bedford Street. When you get to Commerce Street, turn to the right and press play.

Operation Midnight Climax

Directions: Now, continue down Bedford Street. When you get to Commerce Street, turn to the right and press play.

81 Bedford Street doesn't really stand out, but in the 1950s this was the site of CIA drug experiments. In 1953 an apartment in this building was leased in the name of Morgan Hall. In reality, it was being used by a man named George Hunter White and he was testing LSD in hopes of finding a truth serum. This was called Operation Midnight Climax.

The apartment was fitted with two main way mirrors and surveillance equipment. White would lure people into the apartment and give them LSD, sometimes without their knowledge and then record their behavior.

In 1955 White and his experiments were moved to San Francisco where they continued luring unsuspecting people into LSD tests until the program was shut down in 1965 as being unethical.

The Cherry Lane Theatre

Directions: Now, turn around and go back to the corner of Bedford, take a right. When you get to number 86 Bedford Street, stop and press play.

If you look to the right down Commerce Street, you'll see the Cherry Lane Theatre. This theatre sits on the side of a silo that was built for the Gomez Farm in 1817. The present building was constructed as a brewery in 1836, and over the years, it was used as a tobacco warehouse and a box factory, but in 1924, a group of Edna St. Vincent Millay colleagues hired a scenic designer to convert the box factory into a theatre.

The Cherry Lane Theatre is the oldest of Broadway House that exists in New York City today, and it has cultivated some of the American theatres' greatest talents. Works by playwrights such as Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, Edward Albee, Eugene Ionesco, Sam Shepard, and David Mamet have premiered at the small tucked-away theatre.

Acting alumni of the Cherry Lane Theatre include Barbra Streisand, Cicely Tyson, Tony Curtis, Frank Langella, Tyne Daly, Lee Stasberg, Geraldine Page, and James Earl Jones.

Now, continue down Bedford's Street until you come to number 75 1/2 then stop and press play.

77 and 75.5 Bedford Street

Directions: Now continue south on Bedford Street until you come to number 75 + 1/2.

You are now looking at the narrowest house in New York City. Even though this house is a mere 9 feet or 2.75 meters wide, it is packed a lot of history in since it was built in the mid 19th century. This house has been home to Cary Grant, John Barrymore, and it is where Edna St. Vincent Millay penned her Pulitzer Prize-winning poem, *The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver*. Even though the houses small, these days it commands a price tag of about \$4 million.

Right next door to number 75 and a half is the oldest existing house in Greenwich Village. It occupies the corner lot at number 77 Bedford. The house was built in 1799, the only 18th-century house still in the neighborhood. It was originally entirely done and wood, the brick front was added in 1836. Now, step back and try to picture this house standing all alone. That's how it would have looked when it was built, a house on undeveloped land.

A year after the house was built, it was purchased by Harmon Hendricks. Hendricks and his brother in law, Simon Isaacs, were in business together. They were New York agents for Paul Revere, who started the copper rolling industry in the United States. The New York duo eventually opened their own copper rolling factory in New Jersey and supplied copper boilers for ships. An important business for a busy seaport, with a big shipbuilding industry like New York was at the time.

Today, the house at 77 Bedford, stands as a reminder of a different era in the neighborhood.

Now continue down Bedford until you get to Morton Street, take a left on Morton, you will cross over 7th Avenue. When you get to Bleecker Street, take a right and then press play.

Bleecker Street (Walk and Listen)

Directions: From the Hendricks House, continue south down Bedford Street until you get to Morton Street. Take a left turn on Morton Street and cross over 7th Avenue. When you get to Bleeker Street, take a right turn and then press play.

Begin walking down Bleecker Street as you listen to this next section. This is one of the best-known thoroughfares in the Village.

It is named for Anthony Bleecker, a banker and merchant. This road ran right through his family farm. He owned about 160 acres in this area and in 1808 he deeded the land for the road to the city. Over the years, the street became one of the most popular in the neighborhood. It has been immortalized in films, TV shows, songs, and novels. Simon and Garfunkel included a track called Bleecker Street on their debut album.

This street is home to some wonderful shops, such as Phi-egos and Rocco's pastries. This area also has a number of excellent pizzerias, including the famous Johns. Johns only sells whole pies though. If you're looking for just a quick slice, check out Bleecker Street pizza at the corner of Seventh Avenue. The house specialty is the Nonna Maria pizza and it's one of the best in the city.

Keep walking east down Bleecker until you get to the church at the corner of Carmine Street.

Our Lady of Pompeii

Directions: Keep walking east down Bleeker until you get to the Church as the corner of Carmine Street.

The congregation of Our Lady of Pompeii was founded in the neighborhood in 1898. The area had become an enclave for Italian immigrants and a church that offered services in their native language was needed. Just a couple of years later, in 1900, the charismatic 30-year-old Antonio Demo took control of the parish. He became a well-known figure to Italians all over New York City.

In 1923, an expansion of Sixth Avenue was planned and the church was squarely in the path of it. Father Demo was told his church had to be demolished. He began efforts to purchase a new part of land out of the way of Sixth Avenue. The building you see today was consecrated in 1926.

The expansion of Sixth Avenue created an empty triangle of land diagonal from the church, and in 1941 it was named for Father Demo who had passed away in 1935.

Today, the church still houses an active Catholic congregation, but while the members would've been almost exclusively Italian in the time of Father Demo, today, they offer masses in English, Italian, Tagalog, and Portuguese.

From here, continue down Bleecker Street to cross over Sixth Avenue. Once you cross, listen to the next section about the Minetta Brook as you walk down Minetta Street. When you reach the corner of Minetta Lane, turn right and walk until you come to Cafe Wah?.

Minetta Brook (Walk and Listen)

Directions: Once you cross over 6th Avenue on Bleeker Street, you will need to make a left turn onto Minetta Street. Once you are on Minetta Street, press play and continue to walk.

This street is named for the water that once flowed through here called the Minetta Brook. Though not be called this Minette, meaning Devil's water. The brook splits off, and also runs beneath Minetta Street. The curve of that street follows the path of the water. Though it is difficult to imagine today, the natural geography of Manhattan included rolling hills, and many creeks and streams.

The Minetta Brook was approximately a mile and a half long, and it ran above ground through Greenwich Village. This Brook, like many others in Manhattan, was eventually completely covered so that the city could be built up over it. There is abundant evidence that the water still runs below the city. Many people with homes along the path of the creek regularly have flooding in their basements.

Cafe Wha?

Directions: Once you are on Minetta Street, keep walking until you reach Minetta Lane. Make a right turn and Cafe Wha? will be on your left.

This unassuming venue is a legend in the music world. It was originally opened as a coffeehouse by Mannie Roth, uncle of Van Halen frontman, David Lee Roth. Roth had heard about a garage formerly a horse stable that was available even though the basement was dark and it had a trough running through it, Roth saw it as a perfect spot for a coffee house. He bought \$100 of broken marble that he laid to create a floor, spray painted the walls and found secondhand tables and chairs.

Mr. Roth would hold what he called "Hootenanny Nights" where anybody could get up and play a couple of songs. On one of these nights January 24th, 1961, a 19-year old told Mr. Roth that he had hitchhiked from Minnesota and wanted to see if he could play a few songs. After he played some Woody Guthrie songs, he told Roth that he didn't have a place to sleep. Mannie Roth asked the crowd if anybody had a couch the kid could crash on.

Fortunately, someone did and that night was Bob Dylan's first performance in New York City. Cafe Wha? was a place for new talents to hone their skills. Jimi Hendrix, Bruce Springsteen, Lenny Bruce, and Richard Pryor performed here early in their careers. A basket was passed around and many of these now legendary performers received no more than tips. Mary Travers of Peter Paul and Mary started here as a waitress.

Today at Cafe Wha?, the main act is the Cafe Wha? House Band. They play a wide range of styles from RNB to classic rock. They can be seen here every Wednesday through Sunday.

Other great spots to check out for live entertainment are the Blue Note for jazz, Groove for funk, soul and RNB and the Comedy Cellar for some of the best stand up in the city. Performing especially music existed in all corners of the village just across the street at 116 MacDougal Street was the site of the Gaslight Cafe. It opened in 1958.

It saw Beat poets like Ginsburg in its early days and later it became a folk music cafe. Gaslight was at basement level and the air shafts led up to the apartments above. To avoid noise complaints, patrons had to snap their fingers in appreciation rather than applauding. Bob Dylan played here regularly when he first arrived in New York. Check out our self guided Bob Dylan tour for more spots that he frequented.

[Bob Dylan Greenwich Village Tour](#)

Minetta Tavern

Directions: On the corner opposite Cafe Wha? is the Minetta Tavern.

This was originally opened in 1937 and was named for the Minetta Brook. The tavern was a popular hangout for literary types. Over the years, it was frequented by Eugene O'Neill, Dylan Thomas, Ernest Hemingway, Ezra Pound, and E.E. Cummings. Today, the Minetta Tavern is a Michelin-starred restaurant.

Now turn left to walk up Macdougall Street. You will pass Caffè Reggìo on your left. Caffè Reggìo was opened in 1927 by Domenico Parisi, the man who introduced cappuccino to New York City. His espresso machine was made in 1902 and is still on display inside.

When you get to 3rd Street, turn right and continue walking. When you get to Sullivan Street, turn right again and walk down the east side of Sullivan Street until you reach number 225.

The Odd Father

Directions: When you get to 3rd Street, turn right and continue walking. When you get to Sullivan Street, turn right again and walk down the east side of Sullivan Street until you reach number 225.

This building was the home of Vincent the Chin Gigante, the head of the Genovese crime family. Born to a poor family, Vincent left school to become a boxer, and then began moonlighting as an enforcer for the mafia. Over the years, he rose through the ranks until he ultimately became the head of the family. He was considered the extreme counterpoint to the more famous John Gotti, head of the Gambino crime family. While Gotti was always immaculate and favored \$1,000 suits and limousines, Gigante was often seen in ill-fitting clothes and preferred to conduct business on long nighttime strolls around the city.

His outward appearance ultimately helped him. As investigators began closing in on organized crime in the city, Gigante presented himself as senile. Aside from checking into a mental health facility in Westchester, he almost never left the city. The apartment on Sullivan Street really belonged to his mother, which gave way to family member testimony that he was mentally unfit to care for himself and therefore, mentally unfit to stand trial. Once, federal agents entered the apartment here on Sullivan Street to find him standing underneath the shower head, holding an umbrella and wearing a bathrobe.

He can often be seen wandering the street, mumbling to himself. The press dubbed him, the odd-father and the enigma in a bathrobe. He began feigning insanity in 1969, and it was

pretty successful until the 1990s. He was ultimately convicted of racketeering in 1997 and continued to run the family from behind bars. When faced with new charges in 2003, he finally admitted that he had been feigning mental incapacity for three decades. He died in prison two years later.

Just down the block, at 208 Sullivan is the site of the former Triangle Social Club, which was home base for his mafia operations.

From here, walk North on Sullivan Street until you reach Washington Square Park.

NYU (Walk-and-Listen)

Directions: From the Odd Father, walk north on Sullivan Street until you reach Washington Square Park.

Now you're going to turn to the right to walk along the south end of Washington Square Park. On your way, you're going to pass several NYU buildings.

New York University was founded in 1831. Today, it is one of the largest private, nonprofit educational institutions in the United States. When the university was founded, it was meant to be a place of learning for all men, regardless of social standing or wealth. It was also significant that it was not affiliated with any particular religious denomination, an unusual thing for a private university at that time.

The original name was the University of the City of New York. It became popularly known as New York University early on, and the name was officially changed in 1896.

Today, NYU is comprised of more than 20 individual schools and it has campuses and academic centers all across the globe. There are close to 60,000 people in the student body. NYU can boast 36 Nobel Prize winners and over 30 winners of both the Pulitzer Prize and Academy Awards.

NYU sports teams are called The Violets, as a nod to their trademark school color called NYU Violet. The school motto is "To persevere and to excel".

When you get to Washington Square East, turn left, then turn right at Washington place. When you get to the intersection with Greene Street, stop and press play.

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

Directions: When you get to Washington Square East, turn left, then turn right at Washington place. When you get to the intersection with Greene Street, stop and press play.

The 10 story building on the corner was called the Asch building, and it was the sight of the deadliest industrial disaster in the history of New York City.

The 8th, 9th and 10th floors of this building were home to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. A business that made a popular style of women's blouse. The factory was largely staffed by

Jewish and Italian immigrants, mostly young women. There were about 500 employees total and most worked for over 50 hours a week.

Saturdays were shorter days at the factory clocking in at seven hours. On Saturday, March 25th, 1911 a fire broke out at 4:40 PM just before workers were supposed to leave. It's thought that the fire began with a smoldering cigarette burnt in the bin of scrap fabric. The fire spread quickly and many of the workers were unable to escape.

This was largely due to several doors to the stairwell and exits being locked. This was common practice at the time. It was used to prevent workers from stealing material or taking unauthorized breaks. Some of the trapped workers jumped from the windows to their deaths rather than burning inside the building.

The exact death toll is a matter of some debate, but most historians do agree that 146 people were killed in the Triangle Fire. This tragedy led to new safety standards for workplaces, and also the rise of the International Lady's Garment Workers union.

The American Society of Safety Engineers was founded shortly after the fire in October of 1911.

Now, turn around to walk back down Washington Place and then right into Washington Square Park. When you get to the area between the Arch and the fountain, stop and press play.

Washington Square Park

Directions: From the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, turn around to walk back down Washington Place and then right into Washington Square Park. When you get to the area between the Arch and the fountain, stop and press play.

The park you are now standing in was originally established as farmland in the 1600s. During the Dutch colonial era, settlers would give plots to their slaves upon granting them their freedom. This sounds like a nice thing, but these farms were well to the north of the existing city of New Amsterdam. It was thought that in the event of a Native American attack, they would strike these farms first and serve as a buffer zone or an early warning for the rest of the colony.

The area continued as farmland until 1797 when the city purchased this plot for use as a potter's field or free public burial ground. Most people who used this potter's field simply couldn't afford a burial plot. For hygienic reasons, this was also used to bury people who had died of infectious diseases like yellow fever. The area's use as a cemetery was discontinued in 1825.

Today, there are approximately 20,000 people that are still buried beneath Washington Square Park. The arch that you see was designed by Stanford White and it was modeled after the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. It replaced a different arch made out of wood and plaster which had been a temporary decoration for the centennial anniversary of George Washington's inauguration right here in New York City.

The Marble Arch was dedicated in 1895. Washington Square Park has long been considered a Center for Neighborhood activity. The first demonstration of the telegraph by Samuel Morse

happened right here. In 1834, a protest was held in the park. People were protesting NYU's use of cheap prison labor for construction rather than hiring New York stonemasons. That protest led to the first labor march in New York City.

Throughout the years, this place has been a gathering spot for all kinds of students and musicians and activists. In 1888, Robert Louis Stevenson sat on a bench right here in Washington Square Park and chatted with Mark Twain. Today in the park, you can join a chess game at the southwest corner, enjoy street performers or just relax by the fountain, which was moved here from 59th Street and 5th Avenue in the 1870s.

The park has had many renovations in recent years, so take some time to stroll around and enjoy both the old and the new features of the park.

When you're ready to go, exit the park right underneath the Washington Arch to walk up 5th Avenue. You will want to walk on the east side of the street, the sidewalk ahead to your right. In just a half a block, you will see the Washington Mews on your right.

Washington Mews

Directions: From Washington Square Park, walk past the Washington Arch and continue up 5th Avenue along the right side (east) of the avenue for 1/2 a block. The mews will be on your right.

This private street was once part of a Lenape trail that connected the Hudson and East Rivers. Later, it was part of a private farm owned by Captain Robert Richard Randall. Upon his death, he left this land to an organization trying to create a home for aging seamen. Randall's heirs contested the will for many years, and by the time the matter was settled, this area was no longer as rural as it had once been. The organization later known as Sailors' Snug Harbor decided to move their retired seamen's home to Staten Island, and instead use rents collected from this land to help finance it.

The land contained several homes and included two-story stables built along this street named the Washington Mews. In 1881, the city ordered gates built at each end of the mews to distinguish it from the public streets. In 1916, Sailors Snug Harbor renovated several of the stables into art studios, which were used by people such as Paul Manship and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. In 1950, New York University leased most of the property and have since converted it to offices and faculty housing.

Continue up (north) along 5th Avenue until you reach West 10th Street. Make a left turn onto West 10th Street and walk along the south side of the street until you reach #14 West 10th Street.

Mark Twain House

Directions: From the Washington Mews, continue up (north) along 5th Avenue until you reach West 10th Street. Make a left turn onto West 10th Street and walk along the south side of the street until you reach #14 West 10th Street.

By looking at it, you'd never imagine that this pictureless house could be nicknamed the House of Death. This brownstone, originally built in the 1850s is said to be home to 22 spirits, most famously, Mark Twain. Who resided here for one year beginning in 1900. People say they have encountered Twain's ghost, wearing his signature white suit. Other spirits are said to include a lady in white, a child, and a gray cat.

This was also the site of a murder in 1987 when former criminal defense attorney Joel Steinberg beat his six-year-old adopted daughter, Lisa, to death. This cemented the reputation of the House of Death. To find out more about this house and other grizzly neighborhood histories, check out our Greenwich Village ghost tour. From here, continue down 10th Street until you reach Sixth Avenue. Turn left to walk down Sixth Avenue until you reach Eighth Street. Cross to get to the south side of Eighth Street and then turn left. Stop when you reach Electric Lady Studios at 52 West Eighth Street.

This house is a stop on our [Greenwich Village Ghost Tour](#).

Now, continue west along West 10th Street until you reach 6th Ave. Make a left turn on 6th Ave. Walk south for 2 blocks and make a left turn onto West 8th Street.

Electric Lady Studios

Directions: Now, continue west along West 10th Street until you reach 6th Ave. Make a left turn on 6th Ave. Walk south for 2 blocks and make a left turn onto West 8th Street.

This building used to house a nightclub called The Generation. In 1968, Jimi Hendrix and his manager purchased it and decided to convert it to a professional recording studio. Jimi Hendrix was constantly on the hunt for the perfect recording environment, and thus, Electric Lady Studios was born. An opening party was held on August 26th, 1970, and Jimi Hendrix created his last ever studio recording there entitled *Slow Blues*. He died less than three weeks later. Though Jimi Hendrix only recorded there briefly, many other artists have used Electric Lady Studios including Stevie Wonder, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, David Bowie, Led Zeppelin, and The Rolling Stones.

The End

That's the end of our tour. Thank you for joining me. We are right back by where we started our tour. The closest subways are the A, C, E, B, D, F and M trains at the Westford Street Station. Make sure you check out our other audio tours, such as the Highline, which is right nearby, Brooklyn Bridge and Lower Manhattan. Or consider joining one of our 'pay-what-you-wish' walking tours. Visit www.freetoursbyfoot.com for more information. See you next time.