

Jacob Day Residence



Jacob Day Residence

LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan
50 West 13th Street

LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

SIGNIFICANCE

A circa-1845 Greek Revival row house significant for its nearly 40-year association with the notable Black entrepreneur and abolitionist Jacob Day and his family from 1857 to 1896.



1940 Tax Photo
Municipal Archives

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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Jacob Day Residence

50 West 13th Street, Manhattan

Designation List 543

LP-2658

Built: c. 1845

Architect: Unknown

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map
Block 576, Lot 15

Calendared: June 18, 2024

Public Hearing: September 10, 2024

On September 10, 2024, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Jacob Day Residence as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Eleven people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives from the New York City Landmarks Conservancy, the Historic Districts Council, the Victorian Society of New York, Village Preservation, and Save Harlem Now!, and four individuals. No one spoke in opposition of designation. The commission received written testimony in favor of designation from Council Member Carlina Rivera, and from a petition containing 105 campaign letters.

Summary

Jacob Day Residence

The former Jacob Day Residence is a three-story Greek Revival Style brick row house located in Greenwich Village, built c. 1845. From 1857 to 1884, the building was owned and used as a residence and place of business by Jacob Day (1817-1884), a prominent African American businessman and property owner. Day was an advocate for the abolition of slavery and later for voting rights and economic opportunities for African Americans in the second half of the 19th century.

Before the Civil War, abolitionism was a dangerous activity for Black individuals, and could result in loss of business, loss of family, and even loss of life. Despite the risks, Jacob Day was a member of the National Anti-Slavery Society and a contemporary of other distinguished abolitionists, including Reverend Henry Highland Garnet and Professor Charles L. Reason, principal of the 42nd Street Colored School. Day was a prominent member of Abyssinian Baptist Church, which throughout its history supported abolition and African American civil rights. Day was also a member of the Freedman's Bank, founded after the Civil War to help improve the economic prospects of African Americans.

The building at 50 West 13th Street was Jacob Day's residence and housed his catering business on the ground floor and basement level, with rented apartments and rooms on the upper floors. Tenants included prominent educator, abolitionist, and later suffragist, Sarah J. Tompkins Garnet, who resided here from the 1860s to 1874. After Day's death in 1884, his sons Charles Day and Jacob Day, Jr. continued to own the property and carried on the catering business at this address until

1896.

Day owned a successful catering company at a time when catering was one of the few business opportunities Black men could pursue, and Day was a member of the Caterers' Club, along with other renowned African American caterers in New York City. At the time of his death in 1884, Day was worth an estimated \$200,000 (approximately \$6 million in 2024), and he owned property in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Long Island.

In 1959, 50 West 13th Street was renovated to house a theater at the basement level, a school on the first story, and residences on the remaining upper two stories. Among other tenants, the groundbreaking four-member Afro-American Folklore Troupe had a residency at the theater in 1968, performing poetry, folklore and works by well-known Black writers James Weldon Johnson, Gwendolyn Brooks, Leroi Jones and Langston Hughes. From 1972 to 2020, the building was the home of the 13th Street Repertory Company, one of New York's longest-operating "Off-Off-Broadway" theaters, founded by Edith O'Hara.

The row house at 50 West 13th Street is a characteristic example of 19th-century Greek Revival style architecture and is significant for its nearly 40-year association with prominent African American entrepreneur and abolitionist Jacob Day.

Building Description

Jacob Day Residence

Description

The Greek Revival-style Jacob Day Residence was built c. 1845 as a freestanding, three-and-one half story brick-clad row house located on West 13th Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan. The basement, accessed through the under-stoop entrance, features a large central window, a configuration that may date to the period of Jacob Day's catering business in the 1870s.¹ Additionally, a raised stoop entrance provides access to the residential portion of the building. An entrance at the northwest corner of the basement, still visible at the time of the 1940s tax photograph, may have served as an access point to the rear of the lot and to a three-story rear outbuilding shown on historic maps but not currently visible from the street. A 1959 renovation connected the rear building to the main house and provided space for a theater. A metal fire escape (now removed) was added sometime between the 1940s and 1980s.

Primary Facade (North)

The three-bay-wide brick facade features a stone stoop with iron railings that leads to the main entrance with simple stone lintel; square-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels (decorated at the second and third stories with incised ogee arches); some historic wood six-over-six and six-over-nine double-hung sashes; and a denticulated wood cornice with scrolled brackets.

Alterations

Facade painted; stoop resurfaced, and railings

replaced; door and surround replaced; historic metal portico removed; non-historic metal cover over basement window; lights with conduits; fire alarm; Siamese hydrant; metal canopy frame; metal flagpole; entrance at northwest corner infilled, areaway in front of it brought to grade; through-wall air conditioner; windows altered, one replaced at third story.

In 2008, extensive development rights from 50 West 13th Street were transferred to the neighboring property at 52-54 West 13th Street in connection with construction of a new hotel on that site. On November 22, 2022, a Department of Buildings permit (M0074884-1-GC) was issued for construction of a three-story vertical addition at 50 West 13th Street. An audit was undertaken of that permit due to questions over whether sufficient development rights remained for construction of the addition. In response to the audit, the approved plan was modified and on April 12, 2024, a revised, smaller version of the previously approved addition was approved by the DOB.

Secondary facade (West) (partially visible)

Unarticulated brick facade, parged.

History and Significance

Jacob Day Residence

Slavery and Emancipation in New York²

Black people have been present in New York City for close to 400 years. Slavery was present in what is now New York City from its earliest European settlement with the first enslaved people brought to New Amsterdam in 1625 by Dutch settlers.³ After the British gained control, the practice of slavery became even more entrenched in colonial life, and new cruel laws were written affecting both the enslaved and the small number of free Blacks.⁴

The formation of the United States involved negotiation and compromise with the slave-holding states. After the creation of the United States, some enslaved individuals were able to work independently or negotiate their freedom from slaveholders; however, legal justification for slavery remained firmly in place. At the turn of the 19th century, a movement formed to end the international slave trade and to abolish slavery through the legislative process.

According to historians, “New York had the largest Black population in the antebellum North,” with more than 40,000 Black residents, including more than 15,000 enslaved people at the end of the 18th century.⁵ Both free and enslaved Black people worked in every capacity in the city and in the rural areas of New York, on the waterfront, on farms, in construction, within households, men as transports and valets, and women as domestic help and nursemaids. Although in other northern states, strides in the emancipation of enslaved individuals were made, with Pennsylvania and Massachusetts passing emancipation laws in 1780 and 1783, for example, slavery remained central to the New York State

economy, and New York would not take its first concrete steps toward abolition until 1799. In 1799, New York’s law stated that all children born after July 4th of that year would be free when male children turned 28 and female children 25; those already enslaved would remain so.⁶ In 1817, New York passed a second law declaring all enslaved people held in bondage by state residents, including those not covered by the previous act, would be free on July 4, 1827.⁷

Even when freed from enslavement, Black people were still subject to discrimination, political marginalization, and various forms of forced labor imposed by local authorities.⁸ The argument connecting antislavery ideals and racial equality was not well received in New York or anywhere else in the North. Political discourse of the first half of the 19th century was constructed on the basis of a bigoted appeal to white working men. The foundations of this appeal were racial superiority, male egalitarianism, and colonialism;⁹ white male workers were all too willing to believe that their status depended on keeping Blacks, Indigenous People, and women in their place, at the bottom of the status hierarchy.¹⁰ Legislation that abolished slavery in New York State was finally passed in 1827.

While these laws would incrementally dismantle slavery in New York State, the legal fight to abolish slavery was complicated by the city’s deep economic ties to the slave-owning Southern states. For example, the New York State constitution allowed slaveholders from the South to bring enslaved persons into New York for up to nine months without freeing them. In general, New York City leaned more toward condoning slavery, and many did not support emancipation.¹¹ Despite emancipation as of 1827, free Blacks faced rampant discrimination in employment, education, criminal justice, transportation, and property ownership.

Obstacles also remained for the full political participation of Black men. From 1821 until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, New York legally required that in order to vote, Black men had to own property valued at \$250 dollars.¹²

The 19th Century Black Community in New York City¹³

During the Colonial period communities of free Africans settled in the area of Manhattan just north of today's City Hall. Under Dutch rule, enslaved Africans who had obtained free or half-free status were able to receive grants of land in the area from the Collect Pond north to what is now 34th Street.¹⁴ One of these areas to the north was near today's Minetta Place in the South Village, where free Africans farmed small patches of land.¹⁵

By 1830, New York City had the North's largest free African American population.¹⁶ Many worked and lived in free Black communities, building churches and schools, printing newspapers, and establishing fraternal organizations and societies. New York City's first significant community of free African American property owners was Seneca Village, located within what is now the western boundary of Central Park, a New York City Scenic Landmark. Founded by free African Americans in 1825, Seneca Village was a thriving middle-class and multi-ethnic settlement with schools, churches and several hundred residents by 1855.¹⁷ Two other free Black communities existed in two other boroughs in New York City; The Houses on Hunterfly Road, (Weeksville) in Brooklyn and Oysterman's homes on Bloomingdale Road in Sandy Ground on Staten Island, both designated New York City Landmarks.¹⁸

During the mid to late 1800s, Jacob Day lived on West 13th Street in Greenwich Village, at the time one of the city's largest African American neighborhoods.¹⁹ Several blocks nearby, around Minetta Lane and Minetta and Bleecker streets south

of Washington Square, became known as Little Africa. Despite significant discrimination, poverty, and harsh living conditions in Greenwich Village, the community became home to many Black businesses, churches, schools, and benevolent organizations.²⁰ African Americans of all walks of life lived and worked together within Greenwich Village. Physicians, undertakers, hairdressers, and whitewashers all lived in the confines of the Village. The first Black Baptist church in the city was Abyssinian Baptist Church, founded in 1808. It was located two blocks west of Washington Square at 166 Waverly Place. Churches were the only large institutions inside Greenwich Village that African Americans could call their own.²¹ The relatively low value of Greenwich Village's older housing stock translated into greater affordability for the city's poor and working-class citizens of all races; after the Civil War, however, rising land values forced poor Blacks in particular to migrate northward. The Black community in Greenwich Village slowly decreased from 1880 onwards, although a small but significant African American presence persisted on Minetta Street and Minetta Lane as late as the 1910s. Other areas of the city began accommodating Black families, providing a chance to live in newer, more spacious apartments.²²

Black Abolitionism In New York City²³

Organized abolitionist movements began to appear in the 18th century as Atlantic slavery expanded. As the struggle intensified, abolitionism depended on a broad range of participants and activities. One author defines an abolitionist as "...any person, group, or political party for which slavery's destruction became the central aim."²⁴

The movement to abolish slavery was the first civil rights movement in the United States, and Black men and women across the country were active participants in the abolition movement

throughout its history. They expressed their anger towards enslavement through rebellions, insurrections, refusing to work, and by making efforts to escape. Historian Dan O. Chukwu notes that although African Americans also “petitioned for redress of grievances, revocation of exclusionary laws and removal of discrimination of all types,” their efforts have been too often deemphasized in the scholarship on abolitionism in favor of white people’s contribution to the movement.²⁵ Recent literature has placed more emphasis on the abolitionist movement’s dependence on African Americans, both enslaved and free, in partnership with whites who supported immediate total emancipation.

Beginning in the 1820s, free African Americans and freedom seekers made increasingly aggressive demands for equal citizenship and “...became the driving force behind the transformation of American abolitionism.”²⁶ Many Black abolitionists were working-class men and women who worked closely with the few, staunch advocates that gained notoriety, such as Frederick Douglass, who escaped enslavement to become an eloquent orator, journalist and the face of the anti-slavery movement; Sojourner Truth, who in 1826 was the first Black woman to sue her former enslaver for the freedom of her son;²⁷ Harriet Tubman, who risked her life and freedom, on numerous return trips to southern states, to help several hundred people to freedom;²⁸ David Ruggles, who in 1835 founded the New York Committee of Vigilance;²⁹ and Henry Highland Garnet, whose 1843 speech “Address to the Slaves,” was a call to resistance made at the National Convention of Colored Men in Buffalo, New York, and brought him to the vanguard of abolitionist movements across the country.³⁰ Elizabeth Gloucester, a wealthy Black businesswoman and a contemporary of James McCune Smith and John Brown, was instrumental in

the cause of ending slavery, giving both her time and money towards abolition.³¹

Black abolitionists from New York City were also important participants in several national and state civil rights conventions, including the Conventions of Colored Citizens.³² Held from the 1830s to the 1890s, these “Colored Conventions” were national- and state-level meetings that provided an opportunity for Black political organizing. The delegates who attended these conventions consisted of both free and formerly enslaved African Americans from all walks of life, religious leaders, businessmen, teachers, writers, publishers and editors of Black newspapers and working-class people, all of whom were abolitionists. The conventions provided “an organizational structure through which Black men and women could maintain a distinct Black leadership and pursue Black abolitionist goals.”³³ “Colored Conventions” occurred in thirty-one states across the United States and in Canada.

For Black abolitionists, and especially free Blacks, “the abolition of slavery was not only a strategic problem, but it was also a matter of self-definition of citizenship and equal protection.”³⁴ The meaning of liberty was directly linked to an expanding notion of what it meant as a Black person, to be a citizen in the United States. The free Black citizens of any city, who fought against slavery, assisted people in the Underground Railroad, or supported the movement in countless ways, lived in fear of being discovered, sued, losing business or employment, arrested, being assaulted, and losing their lives.

To express their outrage on the topic of slavery and promote abolition, northern Black people developed institutions like Black newspapers and civil rights advocacy organizations to formalize their public protest at a time when few outlets for Black public expression were available.³⁵ These newspapers and advocacy organizations laid the

groundwork for the progress during the early part of reconstruction after the Civil War.³⁶

Underground Railroad

According to historians, the term “Underground Railroad”³⁷ developed in the early 1840s to describe the organized networks that had existed for decades to assist enslaved people escaping from the South.³⁸ Despite New York’s reputation in the early 19th century as a conservative mid-Atlantic community with close economic ties to the South, New York City became an important abolitionist center and crucial way station along Underground Railroad routes to Upstate New York, New England, and Canada. Many of the most famous abolitionists who had escaped slavery, such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Henry “Box” Brown, and Harriet Tubman, passed through New York City or Brooklyn on their way farther north.³⁹

Housing escaped enslaved persons was a secretive and dangerous activity. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, requiring all escaped slaves be returned to those who had enslaved them and authorizing fines and imprisonment on those who were involved. Many free northern Black people, for fear of being kidnapped into slavery escaped to Canada after the passage of this law. Nonetheless, historians have established that housing fugitives was not uncommon. Historian Eric Foner has written that “Nearly every prominent white abolitionist, as well as antislavery politicians...at one time or another assisted fugitive slaves; many sheltered them in their homes. So did just about every Black abolitionist.”⁴⁰ There are two extant sites in Manhattan associated with the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad that are designated New York City landmarks, the 2 White Street House (the Rev. Theodore S. Wright Residence) and the Gibbons family residence at 339 West 29th Street in the Lamartine Place Historic

District.⁴¹

Jacob Day

Jacob Day (1817-1884) was a prominent Black businessman and contributor to New York City’s African American civil rights movement in the 19th century. He fought for the abolition of slavery in the antebellum period, promoted Black political and economic participation after the Civil War, and became a successful businessman and property owner. Born free in 1817 in New York City, Day came from humble beginnings and was listed as a waiter in the 1840 and 1850 census.⁴² Jacob and his wife Catherine had four children; two sons Jacob Jr., and Charles, and two daughters Catherine and Caroline.⁴³

Jacob Day’s first venture into real estate investment came through an initiative by Gerrit Smith,⁴⁴ a white man and staunch abolitionist who was a member of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1846, Smith deeded 3,000 acres of land in the “Adirondack region of Upstate New York, to Black and poor white people”⁴⁵ in the sum of 40 to 60 acres each. In a letter dated August 1st, 1846, Smith requested that his friends, three Black abolitionists Theodore S. Wright, James McCune Smith, and Reverend Charles Ray help in the distribution of property deeds, with no compensation to them.⁴⁶ Also, certain stipulations were to be met by individuals to receive deeds of said properties. The recipients had to be Black men who did not already own property; they had to be of a certain age, (not under 18 years old, nor, older than 60 years old); they did not drink alcohol; and they had to reside within eleven counties in New York State.⁴⁷ Smith also stipulated that no more than 1,948 people could receive property and that he would be responsible for paying the property taxes.⁴⁸ Jacob Day met all criteria and received 50 acres in Franklin County.⁴⁹

Day purchased 50 West 13th Street in

approximately 1857,⁵⁰ where he would eventually start one of the most successful Black-owned catering businesses in New York City. Jacob Day was a successful entrepreneur in the catering business at a time when this was one of the few avenues for business ownership open to Black people.⁵¹

Day was a member of the Caterer's Club along with several other contemporaries that made a name for themselves during the era, such as Joseph Ten Eyck and John Van Dyke, who also lived in Greenwich Village.⁵² Day first appears in the New York City Directories as a "private caterer" and advertised his business in a variety of publications in New York City to garner a wide range of clientele, including *The Jewish Messenger* in the 1870s, and *the Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and *The University Quarterly* in the 1880s.⁵³ After Day's death, his sons continued to list the business as "Jacob Day's Sons" in the City Directory until 1905.⁵⁴

Jacob Day was an advocate for the abolition of slavery in a variety of ways. He was a prominent member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, (a New York City Landmark),⁵⁵ which throughout its history supported abolition and African American civil rights, and he was a documented member of the National Anti-Slavery Society and a delegate to Colored Conventions, in 1840 and 1843.⁵⁶ Day was a delegate from New York City to the "National Reform Convention of the Colored Inhabitants of the United States of America" in New Haven, Connecticut, to address "the hallowed cause of Freedom." Other delegates from New York included David Ruggles, Charles L. Reason, and George Campbell.⁵⁷

Day registered to serve in the Union Army in 1863, however, he was not called into service.⁵⁸ After the Civil War, Day continued to be a staunch advocate for civil rights. An 1866 post-Civil War article in the *Anti-Slavery Standard* mentions Jacob

Day as a representative of the convention committee for a mass meeting in New York City.⁵⁹ Day was also a member of the Freedman's Bank, founded after the Civil War as a means of improving the economic prospects of Black Americans.⁶⁰

At the time of his death in 1884 Day had amassed a small fortune of \$200,000, equivalent to around \$6 million by today's standard. In addition to his house at 50 West 13th Street, Day also owned property on Prospect Place in Brooklyn, in Jamaica, Long Island, and in Fishkill, New York.⁶¹

50 West 13th Street

50 West 13th Street was built, as a freestanding row house, between 1845 and 1846, for William B. Fash, with the house and lot having an assessed value of \$2,500.⁶² It was designed in the Greek Revival style, which was popular in America from the 1830s to the 1850s and was influenced by classical Greek design. The popularity of the style in residential architecture was also greatly supported by the use of early carpenter's guides and later architectural pattern books, "manuals" that gave architects examples of finished urban row houses and guidance on how to implement those design styles.⁶³ The Greek Revival style row house is typically three stories in height plus a basement and a three-bay-wide facade featuring a stone stoop with under-stoop entrance, and a denticulated cornice of wood or metal. The main entrance surrounds characteristically featured columns or rectangular pilasters supporting a full entablature typically recessed with sidelight and transom. The stoop was adorned with ornamental iron railings. Multi-light double-hung wood framed windows, and simple molded stone lintels and sills had a minimum of ornament and were usually flush with the facade.

Jacob Day purchased the house from Fash in August of 1857.⁶⁴ At the time of the purchase, the lot was next to an open coal yard, so both the house and

its rear extension and a free-standing back building would have been visible to the street at that time.⁶⁵

During Day's ownership of the property, he lived in the building with his family until his death in 1884, ran his successful catering business from this address at the basement level, and rented apartments and rooms on the upper floors. One of the residents of the building during Day's ownership was prominent educator, abolitionist and later suffragist, Sarah J. Smith Tompkins Garnet, who resided here from 1860s to 1874.⁶⁶ Tompkins Garnet began her teaching career in Williamsburg, Brooklyn in 1854.⁶⁷ Although census records from 1870 place her in Brooklyn in the household of her father at that time (listed as Sarah J. Smith),⁶⁸ Board of Education records show her residing at 50 West 13th Street for several years in the 1860s through the early 1870s, a period in which she was a teacher and appointed in 1863 as one of the first Black female principal within the New York City Public School system, at Colored School No. 4, (a designated New York City Landmark).⁶⁹ Educators Sarah Douglas and Emma Smith also resided here in the 1860s and 1870s.⁷⁰

In the late 1880s, after Day's death, his sons leased one of the upper floors of 50 West 13th Street to James Mason and his wife, prominent members of the Black community in Greenwich Village. Mason was a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church, and a member of fraternal organizations including the Covenant Masonic Lodge, and the Railroad Porters' Protective Union.⁷¹

Jacob Day's sons, Jacob Day, Jr. and Charles Day, continued the catering business as "Jacob Day's Sons" at 50 West 13th Street after their father's death in 1884. The family-owned the property until 1896 and expanded the business to a second location down the street at 38 West 13th Street in 1888, using this location until at least 1905, and had a third location in Brooklyn at 451 Halsey Street.⁷²

Jacob Day's heirs sold the property at 50

West 13th Street to Mary Lawson on March 30, 1896, for \$16,000.⁷³

Later History of 50 West 13th Street

After passing out of Day family ownership, 50 West 13th Street had a variety of incarnations. From 1900 to about 1940 it was used largely as a residence.

According to census records, as of 1900 there were two Black families living at 50 West 13th Street.⁷⁴ During the 1940s, the basement and first-story were reconfigured to house a metal design school.⁷⁵ In 1959, the rear building and the basement were redesigned to accommodate a theater, and the first floor was used as a theater school.⁷⁶

From 1960 to 1970, the building housed an Off-Off Broadway theater called the 13th Street Theatre, started by Bro Herrod.⁷⁷ Several productions, including "The Drunkard," featured Barry Manilow as musical director.⁷⁸ During this era, in 1968 the Afro-American Folklore Troupe had a temporary engagement at 50 West 13th Street. The troupe held regular weekly shows at the building that included poetry, prose, and folklore performances.⁷⁹ Founded by artists Marc Primus, Norman Jacobs, Charles C. Thomas, and Stella Beck, the Afro-American Folklore Troupe performed from 1963 to the mid-1970s.⁸⁰ This groundbreaking theatrical group toured the country and garnered a reputation for performing the works of notable African American poets and folklorists, including works by James Weldon Johnson, Leroi Jones, Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes among others. The troupe also performed blues, spirituals, work songs, and gospel songs. In an interview with the magazine *Black Dialogue*, they stated that "The Afro-American Troupe is concerned with what Black People have been, what they think they have been, who they think they are, who they actually are, and what they may become."⁸¹

From 1972 to 2020, 50 West 13th Street

housed the 13th Street Repertory Company, one of New York's oldest "Off-Off Broadway" theaters, founded by Edith O'Hara, a veteran theater-owner, producer, manager, and artistic director.⁸² O'Hara ran the 13th Street Repertory Theatre and lived in the upper portion of the house until her death in 2020 at the age of 103.⁸³ The theater's stage saw the work of prominent actors, directors, playwrights over the decades, including Bette Midler, Barry Manilow, Chazz Palminteri, Amy Stiller, Richard Dreyfuss, and others. An Israel Horovitz play, "*Line*," which opened at the theater in 1976,⁸⁴ was performed for close to 45 years, laying claim to the longest run of an Off-Off Broadway play in New York City theater history.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The Jacob Day Residence at 50 West 13th Street is architecturally and culturally significant to the history of New York City. The row house is a characteristic example of a 19th century Greek Revival style building and is important for its nearly 40-year (1857-1896), association with prominent African American entrepreneur, abolitionist and civil rights activist Jacob Day and his family in the 19th century. 50 West 13th Street's significance to the Greenwich Village community continued into the 20th and 21st centuries in its role as an Off-Off-Broadway theater, and it remains an important reminder of the layered history of Manhattan south of Union Square.

Endnotes

¹ Day's catering business dates to 1871 or earlier: Jacob Day Advertisement, *The New York Tribune*, November 29, 1871, 5; "Our Colored Friends," *The New York Times*, March 13, 1871, 10; *Jewish Messenger* 1873, Advertisement for Jacob Day.

² This section draws on the following sources: Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), Harriet and Thomas Truesdell House Designation Report, (LP-2645) (New York: City of New York, February 2, 2021), prepared by Marianne Hurley; Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York, W. W. Norton Co., 2015).

³ Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Encyclopedia of the City of New York*, "Blacks: From the Colonial Period to 1900," (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press), 2010.

⁴ By 1740, 20% of New York's residents were enslaved, and 2 of every 5 households relied on slave labor.

⁵ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁶ Several New England states approved direct emancipation: Vermont's 1777 constitution banned slavery and in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, a succession of legal explanations during the 1780s "declared the institution of slavery in violation of the bills of rights contained in their new state constitutions." See Richard Johnson, "First Emancipation," <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/first-emancipation/>, (July 2007), and Berlin., Berlin.

⁷ Information in this section is from the following sources: LPC, Drake Park and Enslaved People's Burial Ground, (LP-2674), (New York: City of New York, December 12, 2023), prepared by Michael D. Caratzas; "The Long Death of Slavery," in Berlin and Harris, Eds., 133.

⁸ Ibid, Berlin.

⁹ Saxton, Alexander (1998) "*Blackface Minstrelsy, Vernacular Comics, and the Politics of Slavery in the North*," in David Roediger and Martin H. Blatt (eds.) *The Meaning of Slavery in the North*. New York: Garland: 157-75; Shiffrin, Steven H. (1971) "*The Rhetoric of Black Violence in the Antebellum Period*," Henry Highland Garnet. *Journal of Black Studies* 2 (1): 45-56.

¹⁰ Ibid. Garland

¹¹ Information in this section from the following sources: LPC, Harriett and Thomas Truesdell House, (LP-2645), (New York City of New York, February 2, 20210; Ira Berlin and Leslie Harris, ed., *Slavery in New York*

(New York: New York Historical Society, 2005), 125-133.

¹² Liebman, Bennett, "The Quest for Black Voting Rights in New York State," (August 28, 2018), Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3240214> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3240214>, accessed from the internet 04/10/2024.

¹³ Information in this section from the following source: LPC, South Village Historic District Designation Report, (LP- 2546), (New York: City of New York, December 17, 2013) Social and Cultural History of the South Village, section prepared by Theresa C. Noonan; Timothy Shortell, "The Rhetoric of Black Abolitionism An Exploratory Analysis of Antislavery Newspapers," *New York State, Social Science History*, Spring, 2004, V. 28, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), 75-109 (Mass: Cambridge University Press).

¹⁴ LPC, African Burial Ground and The Commons Historic District Designation Report (LP-1901) (New York: City of New York, February 25, 1993), prepared by Gale Harris, Jean Howson, and Betsy Bradley. Collect Pond was located at today's Mott and Grand streets.

¹⁵ LPC, South Village Historic District Designation Report (LP-2546) (New York: City of New York, December 17, 2013), 6.

¹⁶ Foner, 46; LPC, South Village Historic District Designation Report (LP-2546) (New York: City of New York, December 17, 2013), 23-27.

¹⁷ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/lpc/about/pr2019/lpreleases-story-map-highlighting-50-years-of-designationsassociated-with-nycs-abolitionist-history.page>

¹⁸ Information in this section from the following sources: LPC, Houses on Hunterfly Road, (LP-0769, LP-0729, LP-0730, LP-0731, LP-0732, LP-0733), (New York: City of New York, August 18, 1970); (LPC), Rossville A.M.E. Zion Church, (LP-2416), (New York: City of New York, February 1, 2011); (LPC), 565 and 569 Bloomingdale

Road Cottages, (LP-2415), (New York: City of New York, February 1, 2011).

¹⁹ Information in this section from the following source: LPC, South Village Historic District Designation Report, (LP- 2546), (New York: City of New York, December 17, 2013) Social and Cultural History of the South Village, section prepared by Theresa C. Noonan.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Information in this section from the following source: LPC, South Village Historic District Designation Report, (LP- 2546), (New York: City of New York, December 17, 2013) Social and Cultural History of the South Village, section prepared by Theresa C. Noonan

²³ Ibid, Timothy Shortell, 75-109.

²⁴ Richard S. Newman, *Abolitionism, A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 5.

²⁵ Dan O. Chukwu, "Background to The Era of New Abolitionism," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2007/2008, Vol. 17 (2007/2008),

1-15.; Okon E. Uya, *African Diaspora and the Black Experience in New World Slavery*. (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1987) p. 149

²⁶ Timothy Patrick McCarthy, 'To Plead Our Own Cause: Black Print Culture and the Origins of American Abolitionism,' in Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, ed., *Prophets of Protest* (New York: The New Press, 2006), 115.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Clinton, Catherine. *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, (New York: Time Warner Book Company), 2004; Debra Michals, PhD., Harriet Tubman, National Women's History Museum, <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/harriet-tubman>.

²⁹ Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *David Ruggles A Radical Black Abolitionist, and the Underground Railroad in New York City*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), 2012; David Ruggles Center for History & Education, <https://davidrugglescenter.org/david-ruggles/>.

³⁰ Martin B. Pasternak, *Rise Now and Fly to Arms: The Life of Henry Highland Garnet* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995) p. 113; David Swill, *Black Prophets of Justice: Activist Clergy Before the Civil War*, (Baton

Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/black-abolitionists/#Henry_Highland_Garnet, accessed from the internet 09/05/2024.

³¹ Brent Staples, "The Lost Story of New York's Most Powerful Black Woman," *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/16/opinion/elizabeth-gloucester-black-history.html>; Steve Bell, "Overlooked No More: Elizabeth A. Gloucester, 'Richest' Black Woman and Ally of John Brown," *The New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/18/obituaries/elizabeth-gloucester-overlooked.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pg_type=Article, accessed from the internet 02/16/2024.

³² Information in this section from the following sources: Colored Conventions, https://idoc.pub/documents/the-colored-conventions-movement-black-organizing-in-the-nineteenth-century-d477ded07m42#google_vignette.

³³ P. Gabrielle Foreman, Jim Casey, Sarah Lynn Patterson, *The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

³⁴ Ibid, Timothy Shortell, 75-109.

³⁵ To express their outrage on the topic of slavery and promote abolition, northern Black people began to use the printed word as a means of political protest, when few other outlets for Black public expression were available. There were 11 Black newspapers in New York City that span the abolitionist period, beginning in the late 1820s and continuing until the Civil War. These newspapers gave a voice to the concerns of the Black community and kept the people informed on political, educational, and economic strides within the Black community across the country. The earliest newspaper was the Freedom Journal, published in 1827-1829. Their motto was "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long others have spoken for us." After the 1830s, in the United States there were about 24 Black newspapers created Timothy Shortell, 5-109. These are the black newspapers that all started in New York City: Freedom Journal (1827-1829), Rights of All (1829), Weekly Advocate (1837), Colored American (1837-1841), Mirror of Liberty (1838-1840) Northern Star and Freeman's Advocate (1842), Ram's Horn (1846-1848), North Star (1847-1851), Frederick Douglas Paper (1851-1859), Douglas Monthly (1859-1860), Weekly Anglo-African Magazine (1859-1861); Kelly Fazilleau, *The Role of the Black Press in America*, <http://journals.openedition.org/mimmoc>.

³⁶ Reconstruction, United States History,

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Reconstruction-United-States-history>. One example of an advocacy organization is The New York Political Improvement Association, founded in 1840 by Professor Charles L. Reason, advocated for the right of fugitive slaves to a jury trial in the state Reason played a prominent role in the Negro Convention Movement in New York. Reason was the first Black college professor in the United States, teaching at the predominantly white New York Central College, he also was leading the fight in 1873 to end racial segregation in the city's public schools. Working For Higher Education: Advancing Black Women's Rights in the 1850S, Charles Lewis Reason <https://coloredconventions.org/women-higher-education/biographies/charles-lewis-reason/>. The NERL founding members included Henry Highland Garnet, Fredrick Douglass, and John Mercer Langston. The all-Black member organization originated in New York but quickly expanded at the end of the Civil War to many other cities. Christi M. Smith, *National Equal Rights League (1864–1921)*, |The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed" www.blackpast.org retrieved from the internet 05/17/2022.

³⁷ This section draws on the following sources: LPC, Harriet and Thomas Truesdell House Designation Report, (LP-2645) (New York: City of New York, February 2, 2021), prepared by Marianne Hurley; Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York, W. W. Norton Co., 2015)

³⁸ Information in this section from the following sources: LPC, Harriet and Thomas Truesdell House Designation Report, (LP-2645) (New York: City of New York, February 2, 2021), prepared by Marianne Hurley; Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*, (New York, W. W. Norton Co., 2015).

³⁹ Ibid Foner.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ This section draws on the following sources: LPC, 2 White Street House Designation Report, (LP-0086), (New York: City of New York, July 19, 1966; Lamartine Place, (LP-2324), (New York: City of New York, October 13, 2009), prepared by Theresa C. Noonan and Virginia Kurshan.

⁴² Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 Records.

⁴³ Tenth Census of the United States, 1880 Records.

⁴⁴ Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University Libraires Special Collections Research Center, https://library.syracuse.edu/digital/guides/s/smith_g.htm;

Gerrit Smith, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/gerrit-smith.htm>; Gerrit Smith, New York History Net, <http://www.nyhistory.com/gerrit-smith-smith.htm>, accessed from the internet 03/08/2024; Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Garrett Smith: A Biography*, (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons Publishing, 1878), 342-352.

⁴⁵ New York State Archives. New York (State). Comptroller's Office. Land Tax Bureau, Receipt book of land grants from Gerrit Smith to "Colored and poor white slaves from the South." A1352-77, Volume 1, <https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/collections/4450>, accessed from the internet 03/05/2024.

⁴⁶ Theodore S. Wright, James McCune Smith, and Charles Bennett Ray, contemporaries of Jacob Day, were members of the Anti-Slavery Society, and were instrumental in the abolitionist movement. Theodore S. Wright was a minister and head of a Presbyterian church in New York City, who lived at 2 White Street in Tribeca (a New York City Landmark). See Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), 2 White Street House, (LP-0086), (New York: City of New York, July 19, 1966), and Theodore Wright House, Mapping African American Places (MAAP), Columbia University, <https://maap.columbia.edu/place/>, accessed October 30, 2023. James McCune Smith was the first Black physician in the United States and was the physician for the Colored Orphan Asylum for close to 20 years. See John Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith: Black Intellectual and Abolitionist*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Bryan Greene, "America's First Black Physician Sought to Heal a Nation's Persistent Illness," *Smithsonian Magazine*, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/james-mccune-smith-america-first-black-physician-180977110/>, accessed from the internet 02/16/2024. Reverend Charles Bennett Ray, a methodist minister, was a member of the New York Vigilance Committee, a newspaper owner and editor (*The Colored American*), and member of the Liberty Party. Carter Godwin Woodson, Rayford Whittingham Logan, "The Life of Charles B. Ray," *The Journal of Negro History. Association for the Study of Negro Life and History*, Inc. v. IV, October 1919, 361-371

⁴⁷ Ibid, Frothingham, 104. The 11 counties where individuals had to reside to receive property deed from Smith were: Suffolk, Queens, Kings, New York, Richmond, Rockland, Westchester, Dutchess, Sullivan, Ulster, Orange, and Putnam counties.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Frothingham, 102-105.

⁴⁹ Jacob Day met all the stipulated criteria, he lived in New York County, did not own any property at that time, and he was 29 years old when he received the property deed from Smith. New York State Archives. New York (State). Comptroller's Office. Land Tax Bureau. Receipt book of land grants from Gerrit Smith to "Colored and poor white slaves from the South." A1352-77, Volume 1, 65, <https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/collections/4450>, accessed from the internet 03/05/2024.

⁵⁰ New York City Deeds and Conveyances, 1857, Block: 576 Lot: 15, Liber No. 742, Page 83; Assessed Valuation of Real Estate, Ward 15, West 13th Street, 1859. NYC Municipal Archives

⁵¹ Juliet E. K. Walker, "Racism, Slavery, and Free Enterprise: Black Entrepreneurship in the United States Before the Civil War." *The Business History Review*, Autumn, 1986, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Autumn, 1986), 343-382. According to census records collected by Christopher Moore, related professions open to Black men during the era included public cook, public waiter and owner of oyster restaurants and saloons. Contemporaries of Jacob Day included Thomas Downing, who owned an oyster house opened in 1825 at 5 Broad Street, and his son, George T. Downing, who owned an oyster house on State Street. See: Thomas Downing - NYC Oyster King & Abolitionist <https://www.fishersislandoysters.com/blog/2021/2/22/thomas-downing>, accessed from the internet, 03/15/2022. Day's business was hired by many notable people of the era, the Vanderbilts, The Harpers, and two New York City mayors, William Frederick Havemeyer and George Opdyke. See "Our Colored Friends," *The New York Times*, March 13, 1871, 10; "Thrifty Colored People," *World*, November 29, 1885.

⁵² "The Caterer's Club," *The New York Age*, February 22, 1890. Joseph Ten Eyck lived at 109 MacDougal Street (located within the South Village Historic District) and John Van Dyke at 6 West 13th Street (no longer extant) in Greenwich Village.

⁵³ "Jacob Day Sons," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 22, 1908, 22.

⁵⁴ Trow's New York City Directory v.107 1894, p. 1572, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015050646465&view=1up&seq=1572>; Trow's 1905 New York City Directory, v.118 p. 825.

⁵⁵ LPC, Abyssinian Baptist Church, (LP-1851), (New York: City of New York, July 13, 1993), prepared by

Christopher Moore and Andrew S. Dolkart.

⁵⁶ Martin B. Pasternak, *Rise Now and Fly to Arms: The Life of Henry Highland Garnet* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995) p. 113; David Swill, *Black Prophets of Justice: Activist Clergy Before the Civil War*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/black-abolitionists/#Henry_Highland_Garnet, accessed from the internet 09/05/2024.

⁵⁷ "National Reform Convention of the Colored Inhabitants of the United States of America," *The Anti-Slavery Standard* June 16, 1840.

⁵⁸ New York State Civil War registration records, May and June 1863, p.39.

⁵⁹ "Call for A State Convention," *Anti-Slavery Standard*, 1866.

⁶⁰ Jacob Day's 1872 record with the Freedman's Bank, Ancestry.com

⁶¹ "Doings of the Race," *The Cleveland Gazette*, 1885; "Jacob Day Obituary," *The New York Globe*, April 19, 1884; New York, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999, Vol 0331-0332, 1884-1885, 208-213.

⁶² Assessed Valuation of Real Estate, Ward 15, West 13th Street, 1847. NYC Municipal Archives.

⁶³ Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860," *Winterthur Portfolio*, v. 19, No. 2/3 (Summer - Autumn, 1984), pp. 107-150.

⁶⁴ New York City Deeds and Conveyances, 1857, Block: 576 Lot: 15, Liber No. 742, Page 83; New York City Tax Assessment Records

⁶⁵ Perris 1854 map of the City of New York, 15th ward, Plate 66, The New York Public Library. "Map bounded by West 14th Street, East 14th Street, University Place, East 9th Street, West 9th Street, Sixth Avenue" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1854. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e4-56af-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

⁶⁶ This section draws on the following sources: Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York, Board of Education, 1866, 319; Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York, Board of Education, 1870, 262; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870; Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York, Board of Education, 1874, 731; Trow's Directory, 1866-67, 1032; City of New York Directory 1874, 731; Ellen Carol DuBois, *Suffrage*:

Women's Long Battle for the Vote, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2020; Sarah J. Garnet, *National Park Service*, <https://www.nps.gov/people/sarah-j-garnet.htm>, accessed 04/20/2024; In 1875, Sarah J. Thompkins Smith, (this is how her name is listed on marriage certificate), marriage to Reverend Henry Garnet lists her living in Brooklyn. The New York City Municipal Archives, M-K-1875-0002589, <https://a860-historicalvitalrecords.nyc.gov/view/7604569>, accessed from the internet 01/25/2024.

⁶⁷ Susan Goodier, Biographical Database of Black Woman Suffragists, "Biographical Sketch of Sarah Jane Smith Thompson Garnet," https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3911200?account_id=12163&usage_group_id=101714 accessed from the internet 05/05/2021; Ibid; LPC, (Former) Colored School No. 4 (LP-2659), (New York: City of New York, May 23, 2023), prepared by Marianne Hurley.

⁶⁸ Ninth Census of the United States, Brooklyn, Kings County. 1870, 120.

⁶⁹ Ibid, LPC, (Former) Colored School No. 4 (LP-2659), (New York: City of New York, May 23, 2023), prepared by Marianne Hurley.

⁷⁰ Eighth and Ninth Census of the United States 1860 and 1870.

⁷¹ "Honored After Death," *New York Times*, December 18, 1890, 8, Mason was a member of the Philomathean Odd Fellows Lodge No. 346, the Sons, and Daughters of Moses.

⁷² Trow's 1894 New York City Directory, v.7, p. 1719; Trow's 1905 New York City Directory, v.118 p. 825.

⁷³ New York City Deeds and Conveyances, March 30, 1896, Manhattan Block 576, Lot 15. Department of Finance Property Card. NYC Municipal Archives.

⁷⁴ Twelfth Census of the United States 1900 Records.

⁷⁵ New York City Department of Buildings 1941 Alteration No. 586-41, C of O No. 27923, July 22, 1941.

⁷⁶ New York City Department of Buildings 1959 Alteration No. 1745-58, C of O No. 50094, January 16, 1959.

⁷⁷ "The Underpants," *The Village Voice* advertisement, August 15, 1963; Leo Seligsohn, Dastardly Fate: Drunkard reels," *Newsday Nassau Edition*, May 27, 1970, 104.

⁷⁸ "The Drunkard," *The Village Voice*, "Off-Off Broadway," December 11, 1969, May 21, 1970; "Charlotte Peters to Star in gala 1870s melodrama," *Cape Girdeau Missouri*, 1976, 14.

⁷⁹ "Folklore Troupe," *The Villager*, January 18, 1968, 7.

⁸⁰ Ibid, *The Villager*.

⁸¹ Arthur A. Sheridan, "To Make a Poet Black and Bid Him Sing," *Black Dialogue*, v. 1, 1965, 1-2; "Negro Folklore Troupe Visits Tonight," *Elmira Star Gazette*, August 3, 1965.

⁸² John Freeman Gill, *Streetscapes*, "Rescuing an Off-Off Broadway Theater with a Storied Past," *The New York Times*, March 12, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/12/realestate/streetscapes-greenwich-village.html>.

⁸³ Neil Genzlinger, "Edith O'Hara, a Fixture of Off-Off Broadway, Dies at 103," *New York Times*, October 24, 2020.

⁸⁴ "Play by Horovitz Opens at 13th Street Theater," *The New York Times*, March 22, 1976.

⁸⁵ Robert Viagas, "Off-Off-Broadway's Little-Known Longest-Running Show Reopens Tonight," <https://playbill.com/article/off-off-broadways-little-known-longest-running-show-reopens-tonight-com-365455>.

Findings and Designation

Jacob Day Residence

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Jacob Day Residence has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City, state, and the nation.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Jacob Day Residence and designates 50 West 13th Street Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 576, Lot 15 as its Landmark Site, as shown in the attached map.



Jacob Day Residence, 50 West 13th Street
Sarah Eccles, October 2024



Cornice Detail
Sarah Eccles, October 2024



Main Entrance and Stoop
Sarah Eccles, October 2024



Areaway
Sarah Eccles, October 2024



Under Stoop Entrance
Sarah Eccles, October 2024



West Facade
Sarah Eccles, October 2024

