

Hometown History Project - Manhattan

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Part 1 – Community History

Brief Introduction

I was born and raised in Manhattan, one of the most famous and most populous boroughs of New York City. More specifically, I was born and raised in a historically immigrant, middle-class neighborhood known as Yorkville, which is a part of the bigger and more well-known Upper East Side.

Manhattan, along with the rest of New York City, is considered a world-class city, and arguably the financial capital of the modern world. It has similar levels of prominence as other major world cities, such as London and Tokyo to name a couple of examples.

Manhattan alone has about 1.5 million people. Even though Manhattan only has a little less than one fifth of New York City's population, Manhattan itself is the size of some of America's biggest cities, such as Philadelphia, which also has around 1.5 million people.

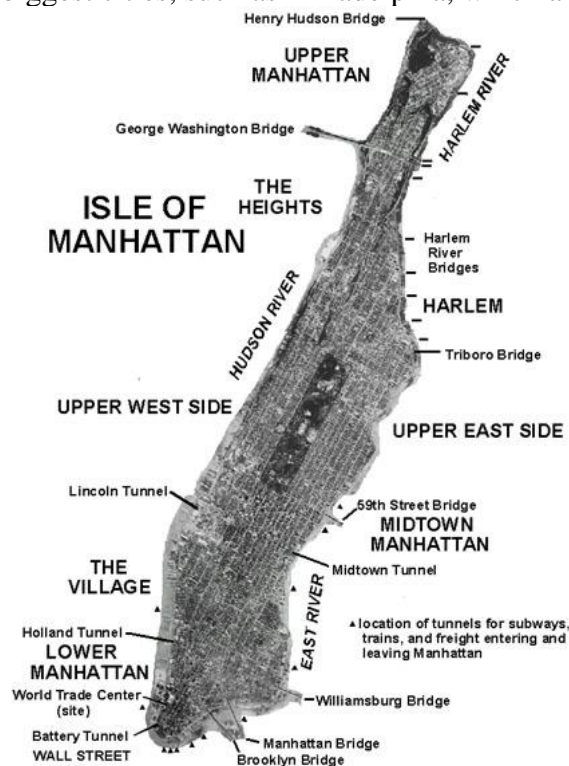


Fig. 1. General map of Manhattan (retrieved from: <http://3dparks.wr.usgs.gov/nyc/humanimpact/humanimpacts.htm>)



Fig. 2. Map showing the 5 boroughs of New York City and Manhattan's location among the other boroughs (retrieved from: <http://www.johnbetts-fineminerals.com/jhbnyc/articles/nycminerals1.jpg>)

Natural Geographic Factors that Led to the Settlement of Manhattan

One of the biggest reasons why Manhattan was settled where it was, is because of Manhattan's important location on major waterways. Modern-day Manhattan and the Hudson River were initially partially explored by the explorer Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524 ("Henry"). However, starting on September 3, 1609, Henry Hudson, under command of the Dutch East India Company, further explored the area by sailing up the Hudson River, from present-day Manhattan up to present-day Albany, NY, under command of the Dutch to help found what would later become New Netherland, a Dutch territory along the Hudson River consisting of various forts and towns ("Dutch"). New Amsterdam was located on the southern end of New Netherland, right at the southern end of Hudson River where the river lets out into Upper New York Bay, which then leads to the Atlantic Ocean.

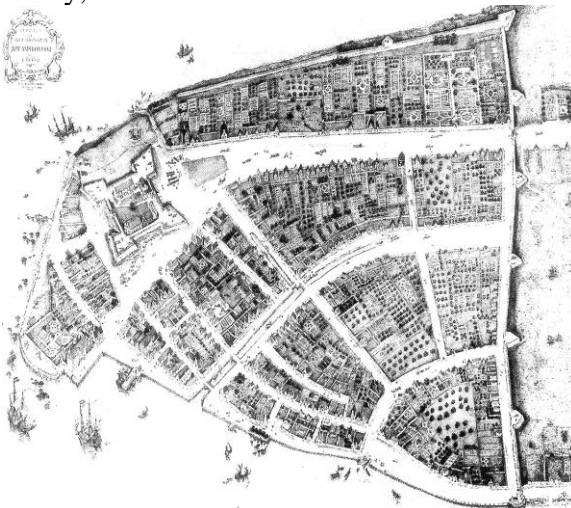


Fig. 3. Map of the settlement of New Amsterdam (retrieved from: <http://www.stoutenburgh.com/family-history/descendants-of-pieter-stoutenburgh-generation-3-by-isaac-pietersz-stoutenburgh/>).

Because New Amsterdam was located at the southern end of the Hudson River, it served as a gateway into the rest of New Netherland, and a sort of bridge between New Netherland at the Atlantic Ocean. Any boat coming in or out of the Dutch territory would have to pass by New Amsterdam one way or another.

Major Center of Employment

Today, Manhattan is considered the major employment center of New York City by far. The 2 major areas of Manhattan in which major companies have their offices and headquarters is in are Lower Manhattan (specifically the financial district), and Midtown.



Fig. 4. Skyline of Midtown Manhattan, with famous buildings like the UN and Empire State Building (retrieved from: <http://www.newsday.com/opinion/columnists/joseph-dolman/nyc-is-ready-for-another-growth-spurt-joseph-dolman-1.4098679>)

People from all over New York City and its surrounding suburbs commute into Manhattan to work. They commute into Manhattan mostly by 3 regional rail systems known as the Metro North, New Jersey Transit (NJT) and the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). Some people drive into Manhattan as well, but this is often discouraged as the volume of traffic in Manhattan is typically extreme on weekdays.

The biggest reason why so many banks and associated companies have their offices and headquarters located in Lower Manhattan is because that is where the New York Stock Exchange is located. Offices of major world banks and associated companies have offices in the Financial District which surrounds the New York Stock Exchange, on streets in the neighborhood such as Wall Street. In general, various office buildings housing the office of various major companies are clustered around the tip of Lower Manhattan.

Predominant Nationalities of Original Settlers

The Dutch were the first to settle Manhattan. Thirty Dutch families were the first people to settle Manhattan, who made a settlement at the very southern tip of Manhattan in 1624. The settlement at the southern tip of Manhattan was named New Amsterdam in 1625. This shows how the majority of early settlers in Manhattan were of the Dutch nationality.

However, there were other nationalities that settled in New Amsterdam in small numbers. People from countries such as Belgium, Portugal, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, England, Ireland, and Scotland (“Brief”).

African slaves came to New Amsterdam as well, starting with a shipment of 11 African slaves by the Dutch West India Company in 1626. The slaves mainly were house servants, but they also did things such as clear forests, pave roads, grow food for the colony and construct buildings (“Slavery”).

The Settlers’ Occupations, and How Occupational Categories Changed Over Time

In New Amsterdam, there were people who worked as soldiers who guarded the settlement walls from attackers, such as Native Americans. Many early settlers had public service jobs, who worked directly for the Dutch West India Company (“A Brief”).

But, the vast majority of people were fur and fish merchants. These merchants traded locally, and in exchange for their right to do business in New Amsterdam, they had to pay the Dutch West India Company a fee (“A Brief”).

There have always been many merchants in Manhattan. In the 19th century, with the construction of the Erie Canal, many piers were constructed along Manhattan’s shores (“New”), making Manhattan a huge shipping hub and base for merchants of all trades. These piers were used well into the mid-20th Century, when interstate trucking gradually made these shipping piers obsolete. Many piers were later demolished and turned into a popular park, known as the Hudson River Park.



Fig. 5. Shipping piers on the Hudson River in Manhattan, taken in the 1960’s (retrieved from: <http://northriversailny.wordpress.com/2011/02/12/new-york-waterway-1/>)

Today, as mentioned before, Manhattan is still a merchant’s hub. This is shown by the presence of such areas in Manhattan as the Financial District and Midtown, where merchants in companies with offices in these areas do intra-national and international trade with other companies. This all has led to accumulation of vast amounts of wealth in Manhattan over time, making it and the rest of New York City arguably the financial capital of today’s world.

Oldest Building in Manhattan

The oldest building in Manhattan that still stands today is the St. Paul’s Chapel, located in Lower Manhattan, and a little bit south of City Hall. The chapel was built in 1764 and opened for services in 1766. It was designed by an architect named Thomas McBean. McBean said that he was inspired by structures such as the Chroagic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, as well as the Church of St. Martin in the Fields in London (“St.”).



Fig. 6. Undated photo of St. Paul's Chapel, with octagonal tower (retrieved from: <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/LM/LM065.htm>)

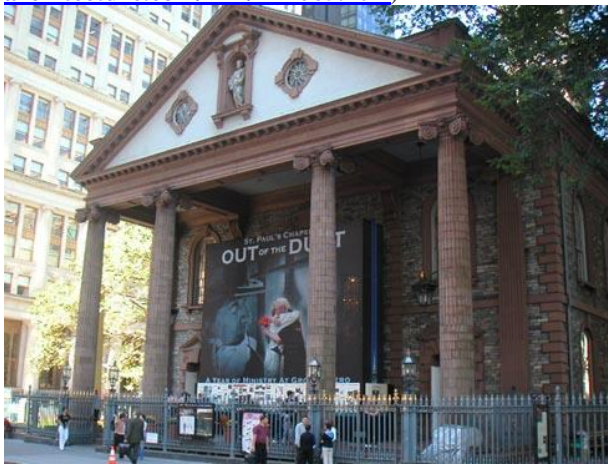


Fig. 7. Front of the Chapel, with the Georgian Columns present (retrieved from: <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/LM/LM065.htm>)

The chapel is also famous for being where George Washington prayed on his inauguration day (“St.”) when he got inaugurated as the first President of the United States in Federal Hall in 1789, also located in Lower Manhattan. It is also well known for not being even slightly damaged during the 9/11 attacks, despite having been located practically adjacent to the World Trade Center.

The chapel is built in what is known as the Georgian architectural style, the same architectural style as the Church of St. Martin in the Fields. The octagonal tower on top of the chapel is the part that is a replica of the Chroagic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, Greece (“St.”)

Most Significant Public Space in Manhattan: Times Square

There are many big, well-known and crowded public spaces throughout Manhattan. The most significant public space in Manhattan would be Times Square. Times Square is one of the most

famous and crowded squares in the world. Times Square is typically filled with visitors from all over the world as a result.

Times Square is traditionally defined at the intersection of the major thoroughfares Broadway and Seventh Avenue, from 43rd to 47th streets. Also, the moniker “Times Square” does not only apply to the square itself, but it also applies to the neighborhood surrounding the square.

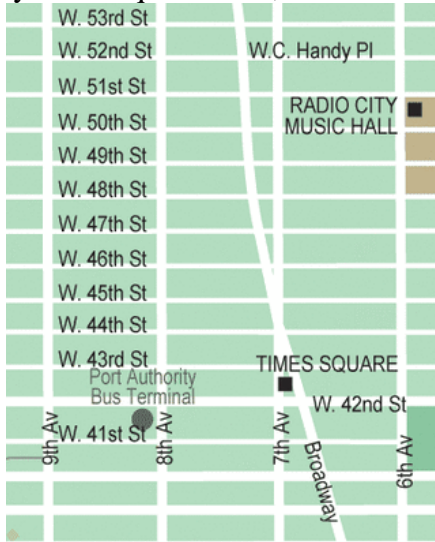


Fig. 8. The neighborhood surrounding Times Square, known as the Time Square neighborhood (retrieved from: <http://gonvc.about.com/od/manhattan/ss/Times-Square-Neighborhood-Map.htm>).

There is a major presence of theaters in the area around Times Square. Since World War I, there has been a famous Theater District located in the neighborhood surrounding Times Square, which have been also known as “the Broadway theaters” or simply “Broadway”.

The square was originally named Longacre Square. But in 1904, the New York Times built its headquarters in the office building known as the Times Tower, with the address of 1 Times Square. This contributed to the square being renamed “Times Square” (“Times”).

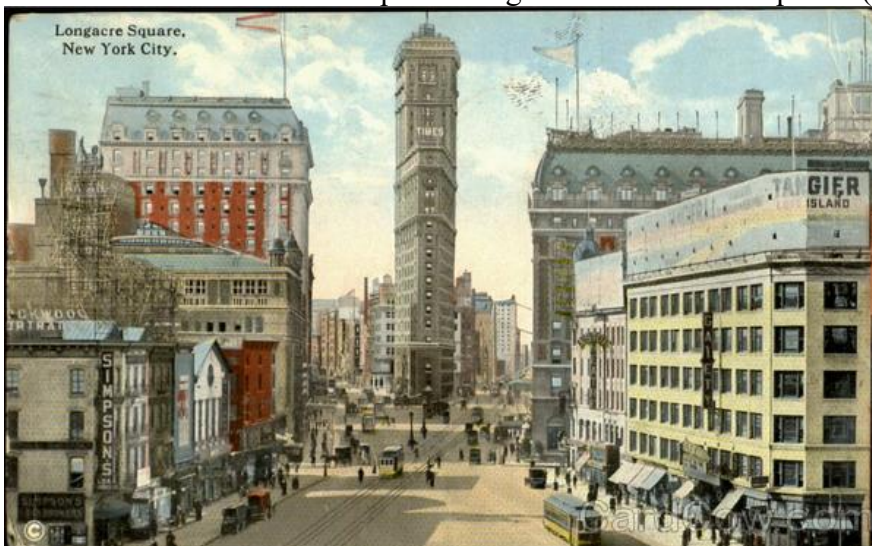


Fig. 9. Old postcard photo of Times Square when it was called Longacre Square, from 1913 (retrieved from: <http://www.cardcow.com/78345/longacre-square-new-york-city/>).

There are many famous major billboards in Times Square. These billboards and moving signs are the most famous and visible characteristic of Times Square today. When visitors walk

through Times Square, they will immediately know they are there when they see the massive electronic billboards all around them.



Fig. 10. The electronic display billboards in Times Square today (retrieved from: <http://www.aviewoncities.com/nyc/timesquare.htm>).

Times Square and the neighborhood surrounding it experienced major declines during the Great Depression, as well as from the 1970's to the 1980's. Many seedier establishments popped up in the neighborhood, such as strip clubs, pornographic theaters, brothels and drug dens, making tourists avoid the square. ("Times").

Then, starting in the 1980's and 1990's, urban planners and city officials started to carry out plans to redevelop the square and the surrounding neighborhood, beginning with the opening of major chain stores ("Times"), such as an M&M's store, a Disney store, a Toys 'R Us, a Hard Rock Café, and other associated businesses.

Just recently, urban planners decided to pedestrianize parts of Times Square, due to the huge number of tourists who visit the square. There are major events held in Times Square, such as the New Year's Eve Ball Drop at 1 Times Square, where people from all around the world converge on Times Square to watch the ball drop and celebrate as the New Year starts.



Fig. 12. The pedestrianized part of Times Square (retrieved from: <http://www.aviewoncities.com/nyc/timesquare.htm>).

Times Square today is filled with major chain stores catering mostly but not completely to tourists. Tourists are the ones who mainly visit Times Square. This is in contrast to most New Yorkers, who only pass through the square most of the time. Times Square is always crowded, at all times of the day, which leads people who visit the square to believe that New York City really is the “city that never sleeps”.

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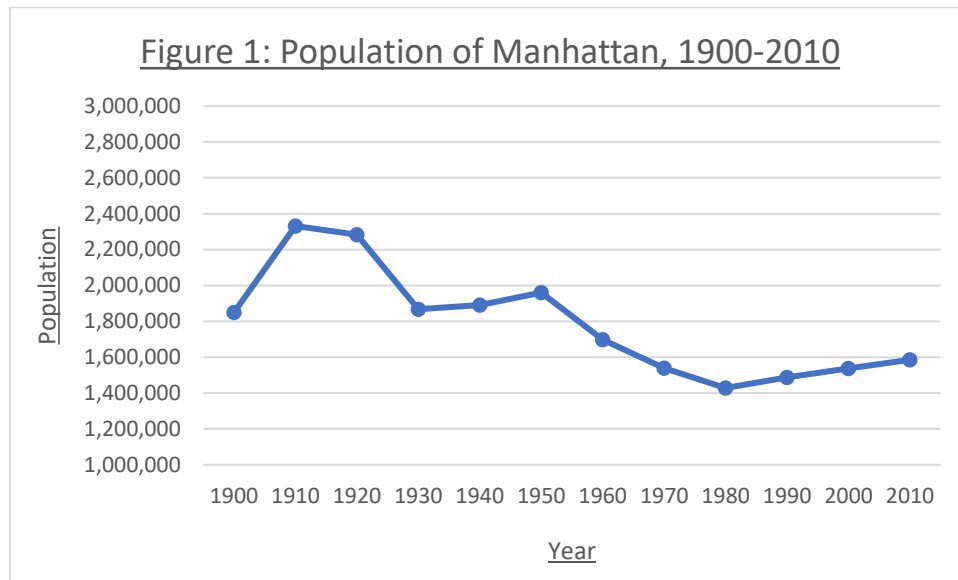
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Part 3: Mini-Demographic Analysis

Manhattan is known as New York County, the smallest county in the US in terms of acres, though despite this, it is one of the most populous counties in the United States (“NYC”).

Even though it is so small in terms of acreage, it is extremely populous. As of 2010, the population of Manhattan is 1,585,873 people, slightly larger than the size of Philadelphia, one of the US’s biggest cities (“NYC”).

Population Growth and Decline in the 20th Century



Values from Figure 1

Year	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	1,850,093	2,331,542	2,284,103	1,867,312	1,889,924	1,960,101	1,698,281	1,539,233	1,428,285	1,487,536	1,537,195	1,585,873
Source	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(Gibson)	(“NYC”)	(“NYC”)

From 1910-1920, Manhattan’s population was above 2 million. In 1910, Manhattan had around 2.33 million people, its peak for the 20th Century. It makes sense that Manhattan had a high population in the first 2 decades of the 20th Century, because at that time, many immigrants were settling in Manhattan. Even before the start of the 20th century, Manhattan’s population was already climbing thanks to new immigrants. For example, in 1889 alone, 349,233 immigrants were processed in Castle Garden, a then-immigrant processing facility in the very southern tip of Manhattan (Riis 233). Also, in 1890, 80% of Manhattan residents were foreign-born (Handlin 21). The immigrants that came to Manhattan at the time mainly came from all around the world in the first half of the 20th Century, such as from China, Greece, France, Lithuania, Poland, Italy, and Germany just to name some examples (Handlin 34). This is what clearly caused the rise in Manhattan’s population in the first half of the 20th Century.

After 1920, Manhattan’s population dropped below 2 million, never to go above 2 million again. Major American and worldwide political and economic events that happened around then, such as the Depression and the onset of World War II, all hurt immigration into

Manhattan, as well as the rest of New York City and the US as a whole. Other events that slowed down the number of immigrants coming to Manhattan and America as a whole was the nativism-caused Immigration Act of 1924, which impeded the number of immigrants coming into the US as a whole.

Another reason for Manhattan's decline somewhat minor decline in population after 1920 was that as immigrants who initially settled in Manhattan gradually accumulated more wealth and assimilated into American society, they moved to other boroughs such as the Bronx and Brooklyn to name two examples, where the population was less dense and where the houses were nicer, newer and bigger than in the often cramped, poverty-filled neighborhoods in Manhattan (Handlin 35).

The population of Manhattan declined especially from 1950 to 1980, where it lost around half a million people. Manhattan was not alone in this trend, as the population of New York City as a whole declined during this time, as many people moved to the suburbs of New York City, in nearby places such as New Jersey, Westchester County, southwestern Connecticut and Long Island (Handlin 48). New York City wasn't alone in this trend either, as inner city decline as a result of white flight and suburban sprawl was happening in many cities across the United States during this time.

How Occupational Categories Changed Over Time

In the early part of the 20th century, Manhattan was a bustling port, mostly on its shore along the Hudson River, where there were many shipping piers built to handle the large amount of ships. Since the Erie Canal connects to the Hudson River, Manhattan was perfectly positioned where the Hudson meets the Atlantic, where ships would always have to pass by to disembark and unload goods. This guaranteed Manhattan's role and position as a very busy port (Buttenwieser 27).

As a result of the commerce coming from the ships, warehouses, railroad lines such as the High Line, and other associated industrial buildings in neighborhoods like the Meatpacking District and in Chelsea were all built near the docks. This attracted many people to work in and near Manhattan's many shipping piers (Buttenwieser 27).

All of this commerce led to the establishment of many businesses by merchants and entrepreneurs. Many immigrants that came to Manhattan in the first half of the 20th century founded their own private businesses in neighborhoods like the Lower East Side selling many items such as food, clothing, and other necessities.

For example, in 1940, out of a total of 783,564 employed Manhattan residents, most Manhattan residents worked in these fields: 266,567 people worked in "business and personal services excluding domestic services", 171,098 people worked in "wholesale and retail trade", 147,063 residents of New York County worked in manufacturing, and 116,163 people worked in jobs in the "other and not reported" category (U.S. Census Bureau 33). This shows how many residents of Manhattan were engaged in private business in the first half of the 20th century, but other sectors of the economy employed many residents of Manhattan too, such as industry and manufacturing.

In the second half of the 20th century, the shipping and railroad industry declined, as other modes of transportation such as trucking came to dominate the transportation of goods as modern interstate highways were built in New York City and throughout the country as a whole. However, New York City always remained a center of finance, as Wall Street and the surrounding neighborhood known as the Financial District provided many finance sector jobs.

As a result, many people in Manhattan gradually moved towards taking jobs in other sectors of the economy, such as with major corporations such as international banks. This led to a decline in the number of people working in small businesses declined. That is shown by how New York City as a whole had much fewer smaller businesses in the 1990s compared to in 1969 (Keating 30). Some people also took jobs such as working for the United Nations in the second half of the 20th century, after the UN's headquarters were built in the eastern part of Midtown Manhattan in the late 1940s.

The construction of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan in the early 1970s shows how big corporations and firms were making their offices in Lower Manhattan, as well as in office buildings in Midtown Manhattan. Many Midtown Manhattan office buildings were constructed in the second half of the 20th century as well (Keating 30).

All of this shows how Manhattan's main sectors of employment shifted from manufacturing, small businesses and industry in the first half of the 20th century, to sectors such as the finance sector in the second half of the 20th century, and into the first decade of the 21st century. People in Manhattan gradually changed jobs because the economy of America as a whole changed around the middle of the 20th century, as America's manufacturing and industrial sector declined.

Household Incomes

Table 1: Median Household Incomes for Manhattan Residents from 1990-2012 (expressed in 2012 dollars):

Year	1990	2000	2012
Median Household Income	\$57,682	\$64,808	\$68,370
Source	(<i>Census</i>)	(<i>Census</i>)	(<i>Census</i>)

In general, people and families in Manhattan have historically made more money on average than people in the rest of the United States. Also, Manhattan has historically also had a very high cost of living, higher than other parts of New York City, due to various factors, such as its high population for example. This has made employers in the borough pay their employees higher salaries, so they can afford Manhattan's high cost of living.

Also, household income in Manhattan has always greatly varied from neighborhood to neighborhood, and still does today, as economic inequality in Manhattan continues to grow. As of 2012, some census tracts in Manhattan have median household incomes as high as \$243,622, in neighborhoods such as Carnegie Hill, while some census tracts in Manhattan have median household incomes as low as \$14,645 (*Census*), in neighborhoods such as the Lower East Side, where many poor people reside in public housing.

Since 1990, the median household income in Manhattan has gradually increased. A big factor that has caused the rise in median household income since 1990 in the borough has been the fact that the borough's population has increased in Manhattan since then, as recent immigrants and Americans from around the country have moved to Manhattan in recent times. New residents causes an increase in the city's tax base for example. When the amount of a city's residents increase, the more money those residents collectively earn increases as a result. This leads to that city's government making more money, since they have more residents to tax.

Household Size

Before the 20th Century even started, the 1880 census said that there was an average household size of 16.37 people in Manhattan. This was much higher than other American cities of the time, such as Philadelphia, which had 5.79 people per house for example (Riis 232). Up until World War I, these numbers in Manhattan remained fairly consistent, as immigrants poured into New York City's low-income, majority-immigrant neighborhoods.

Table 2: Average Household Sizes in Manhattan in: 1880, 1970, 1980, 2000, 2012

Year	1880	1970	1980	2000	2012
Average Household Size	16.37 people	2.17 people	1.96 people	2.00 people	2.08 people
Source	(Riis 232)	(U.S. Census Bureau 203)	(U.S. Census Bureau 203)	("Average")	("New")

Average household size in Manhattan has always been relatively high compared to the rest of the country. Since Manhattan is the smallest county in terms of acreage in the US but one of the biggest in population, as mentioned before, this will naturally create high population density. This was especially the case in the first half of the 20th Century, when Manhattan was swamped with new immigrants living in very tight quarters.

As the 20th Century progressed, the average household size in Manhattan gradually declined, as immigrants assimilated and moved out of Manhattan, to boroughs and suburbs with more space, such as Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, Staten Island, New Jersey, Westchester County and Long Island. This created more room for the people who stayed in Manhattan, decreasing the population density and average household size as a result.

One reason for this decline in average household size from 1970-1980 was that after 1950, Manhattan's population declined even faster, as the previously mentioned processes of suburbanization accelerated.

Another factor that contributed to this was that many people who were working in Manhattan's finance and banking sector at that time were young and single. This lack of families would decrease the average household size to 1-2 people as a result.

However, starting around 1990, many people started moving into Manhattan again, and Manhattan's population increased in general. This led to an increase in Manhattan's population density and average household size. In 2000, Manhattan's average household size was 2.00 people ("Average"), and it further increased to 2.08 people in 2012 ("New").

All of this shows how changes in Manhattan's average household size coincided with population increases and decreases in the borough. The factors that caused Manhattan's population increased and decreased are also pretty much the same factors that caused Manhattan's average household size to increase and decrease.

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