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### Columbia and Harlem: The Beginning

In the year of 1897, Columbia University moved from their 49<sup>th</sup> street campus to their permanent home of Morningside Heights 116<sup>th</sup> street. This was done with the presumption that the neighboring Harlem community would develop into the affluent residential area that it was on track to become. This, however would not be the case. Within a few years of the university's move uptown, Harlem evolved from its suburban beginnings to become the Mecca for Colored People of the world. The research I present in this paper tracks Harlem's development into this diverse neighborhood and the early relationship that emerges between the Harlem community and the Columbia community. These groups were very much new to the area and their coinciding arrivals presents the question of what these early interactions looked like and how it ended up influencing the almost negative relationship Columbia has with its neighboring communities.

### **Harlem pre-1900**

Harlem, in the years leading up to 1900, was coming together in a way that nobody could have expected the events that occurred at the turn of the century. Before the Harlem Renaissance, before the large Negro migration, before the real estate bust, there existed a Harlem that was

considered the Manhattan's first real suburb, an area destined to be the home for the upper middle to upper class community (Osofsky 71). It was generally taken for granted that this desirable neighborhood would exist forever and continue the upward trend that it had been on for the last 50 years. A "residential heaven" of Manhattan Harlem was attracting dozens of elite New Yorkers to come and set up shop for them and their families. At its "peak," white Harlem had such a highly disproportionate number of native America and immigrants from Great Britain that very few neighborhoods in Manhattan could possibly match it (Osofsky 79) It was a rapidly developing neighborhood with residential units increasing exponentially year by year; there was an area of Harlem known as Striver's Row that was actually by the world-famous architect Stanford White, also known for constructing the Flatiron Building (Osofsky 79). Given this fact, it was obvious that Harlem was perceived by all to be an affluent neighborhood that would remain that way well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

What most people don't realize, even the denizens of Harlem during this period, was that there was a Negro presence in Harlem well before they came to dominate the neighborhood. Reports point to the existence of slaves residing in Harlem even in the 1700's, meaning they were a part of this community before it developed into a desirable suburb (Osofsky 83). They did not suddenly appear in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; there mass migration into Harlem was part of an existing trend of moving northward that had in place prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Harlem was transforming into a wealthy area for white citizens, the population of Negroes also grew in the area because of the need for labor these residences required. Gradually it was adding more and more Black laborers that were looking for jobs and finding them in the form of civil servants working for these wealthy white homeowners (Osofsky 83-84). By the turn of the twentieth of century, a significant Negro population was living in Harlem. While smaller than the San Juan

Hill and Tenderloin Districts, there were whole blocks dedicated to just colored residents, so much so that a Columbia student, in 1898, commented that “they are found clear across the city from river to river” (Osofsky 84). The large move of African Americans that was about to ensue the next few years, thus, was already developing before the breakdown of real estate in Harlem and much more logical than some people have perceived.

### **Tenderloin Riot**

The turn of the century was a harsh period for the Black New Yorker to say the least as it was characterized by a violent conflict that took place around Midtown Manhattan, an area that was then known as the Tenderloin District. At this point in time, the Tenderloin District was one of the largest neighborhoods in the city that housed a large population of African Americans; while this area never reached the same population density as Harlem, it contained various sections (a block or two in length) with a large concentration of Negroes (Osofsky 12). Pre-1900, this Black enclave was rapidly growing as immigration to New York City exponentially increased and this expansion quickly came into conflict with the white population that bordered these districts. New trainlines were offering opportunities for white residents to pick up and move away from these areas, which allowed even more Negro immigrants to settle down with the Tenderloin District (Osofsky 13).

Part of the reason for this outflux of white residents was the notorious reputation the Tenderloin District was creating for itself during this time, as Black residents were viewed with contempt and seen as immoral and dishonest (Osofsky 25). The image of a deplorable Tenderloin District was heightened by the fact that this neighborhood was home to New York City’s red-light district and acted as the home for the city’s underworld, as well as for crooked

cops and corrupt government officials (Osofsky 14). Despite its tarnished reputation, the Tenderloin served as business and social hub for the prominent colored men of New York, who would spend large sums of money in the area, thus creating a Black Bohemia within the city of New York (Johnson 73). This Bohemia consisted of various clubs and theatres that allowed for artistic pursuits to be undertaken by individuals of the growing Black population, and it is here we see the beginning of a mass Negro artistic movement that would come to characterize Harlem during the 1920's (Johnson 82). While some did break into the upper echelons of society, most of this population were employed as menial laborers or servants in the few locations that accepted colored workers (Osofsky 16).

The year 1900 marked a period of intensified racial alienation that took place within New York City, as well as the North-Eastern region of the United States. Prior to the large migration into the city, most white Northerners had no issue or even reason to care about the lives of the Negroes as they constituted a small part of their population; with the population increase, this lack of awareness soon became impossible to keep up and the white residents took reprehensible actions in turn (Osofsky 41). Many churches soon began to close their doors to colored churchgoers and many businesses refused service to the colored customers that had grown accustomed to the tolerance in the city (Osofsky 42). In the face of such oppression and subsequent unemployment, the Black residents of New York began to band together to fight these new regulations and protest the injustice plaguing their growing community (Osofsky 42). Such factors created a very tense environment around New York that would lead to violent clashes within the working-class districts New York; the other large Black district of New York was labeled "San Juan Hill" due to these recurring interracial conflicts that were plaguing the district (Osofsky 46).

The Tenderloin District served as the first major battleground for a race riot since the 1863 Draft Riots of New York City. It was August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1900 when a black man by the name Arthur Harris was out and about the streets of the Tenderloin and visiting his local saloon (Osofsky 47). His wife would come down to fetch him later that night and as she waited on the corner of 43<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> avenue while Harris was buying cigars, a white policeman in plain clothes approached her and attempted to arrest her for what he believed to be “soliciting” (Johnson 126). Harris returned to witness his wife being assaulted by another man, which drove him to retaliate against the officer, who never revealed his status, and eventually stab him with a pocket knife when the officer began to beat Harris with a club (Johnson 127). Harris would go on to flee the scene only to be apprehended within the next few days at his mother’s home in Washington D.C. In the meantime, the death of the officer known as Robert Thorpe sparked outrage amongst the white residents of New York and soon rumors of violence began to circulate across the city. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, a fight broke out between two men, one black and one white, which rapidly escalated into a full-blown riot as the black man was attacked by a mob of white people (Osofsky 48). Within a few hours, “a mob of several thousand raged up and down Eight Avenue and through the side streets from Twenty-Seventh to Forty-second. Negroes were seized wherever they were found, and brutally beaten” (Johnson 127). The police present chose to not intervene in the violence taking place and in fact “beat many Negroes as cruelly as did the mob” (Johnson 127). The violence only lasted a few hours but left the entire neighborhood on edge and filled the local courts to capacity with Negro citizens (Osofsky 49).

In the investigation that followed the riot, many excuses and delays were presented by the presiding municipality and police authorities, and it ended up being more of a sham than anything else (Johnson 130). This took place despite the many witnesses that came forward and

the resounding demands of the Citizens Protective League to prosecute the police officers involved in the riot (Johnson 129-130). The fallout of the Tenderloin Riot revealed some startling truths while also forcing the Black residents of New York into action. In the days that followed, the Negro residents of the Tenderloin began to arm themselves, with 145 revolvers being sold in one day (Osofsky 49). Violence would continue for months as small interracial fights between individuals became a norm in this area. The bleak results of the investigation coupled with the misdirected response by the white population upon hearing of this riot revealed “a growing lack of concern of white New Yorkers for the increasingly serious impediments of Negro equality” (Osofsky 46). At the same time, this tragic event acted as a stimulus for the black residents to coalesce and take the necessary steps towards making New York City the leading center for equal rights (Johnson 130). The Tenderloin Riot, more than anything, exposed the fact that these small black neighborhoods were very much not welcome by the greater population of New York and were very much subject to forces outside of their control. It showed that Midtown Manhattan was not the area they were destined to reside in, and the riot just provided another impetus to continue moving northward to find a home. With the construction of Penn Station, this district was soon wiped out and the Black population was displaced once again.

### **Real Estate Bust**

A significant factor behind Harlem’s transformation from an affluent White neighborhood to the Mecca of the New Negro was the real estate break down that took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With this shining image in mind and the urban developments that were taking place in Harlem, such as the construction of new subway routes running through the

neighborhood, a massive wave of speculation consumed prospective land buyers hoping to make a profit of this increasingly valuable land (Osofsky 87). This speculation only further inflated prices in the area which quickly surpassed their actual real estate value; subsequently, the years 1904-1905 marked the crash of this housing market as people realized that too many houses were constructed at the same time, which led to vacancies across the neighborhood (Osofsky 92). Because of this housing bust, the landlords and corporations were forced to open their properties up to colored tenants in order to avoid financial destruction, as it had become a norm across the city for colored residents to pay above average rent (Osofsky 92). This was only possible because of the large Negro immigrant population that was searching for an area to settle down in; the Tenderloin District and others like it had been demolished in the name of progress and displaced many colored New Yorkers.

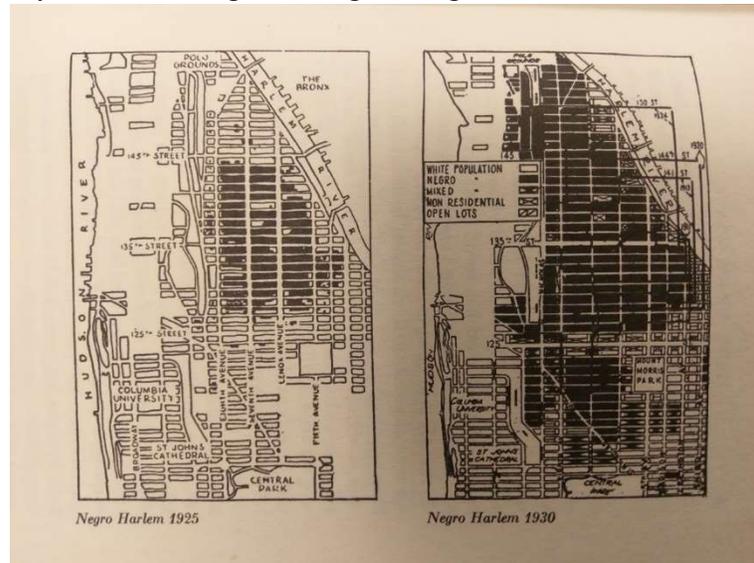
To open these Harlem residences to colored tenants in the wake of such events meant inviting a largely disenfranchised Negro population to come in and truly settle down for the first time in a neighborhood that would become their own within a few decades. For the first time in the city's history, Negro tenants were offered decent accommodations, originally meant for white tenants, and these people flocked to Harlem in greater number than the available housing. Two thirds of all housing available was sold between 1907 and 1914, all at significant losses, and some relatively wealth Negroes were able to actually purchase some of these properties (Osofsky 109). The population pouring into Harlem were being drawn not just from the migrants coming into New York City for the first time, but also from the older Negro sections of Manhattan; women of the Tenderloin District (before it was destroyed) hoped to get married and find a nice home in Harlem (Osofsky 109). Many of the early residents of Harlem were well off colored individuals who had enough wealth to pay the exorbitant rent that was being demanded of them.

The existing white population did try to stop this wave of new neighbors but it was impossible for the white property owners to band together and organize successful restrictive movements without putting themselves at risk for financial losses. The real estate bust opened the door for massive immigration into Harlem, and the neighborhood was completely transformed within a few years.

## **Migration**

By the 1920's Harlem had been transformed into a "Negro Mecca" and, unlike other Black neighborhoods across the United States, it was not a slum but rather "a section of new-law apartment houses and handsome dwellings, with streets as well paved, as well lighted, and as well kept as in any other part of the city" (Johnson 146). The white residents that had once presided over their Harlem quickly disappeared as they saw the incoming Negro tenants as an invasion of their social and economic rights, and even the sudden appearance of one colored family on their block acted as enough of a reason to take flight (Johnson 150). While the Negro press initially protested the immigration into Harlem by the non-Native New Yorkers, it quickly came to depend on their support and they began to openly advocate for more settlement (Osofsky 128). The numbers speak for themselves: between the years 1910-1930, the Negro population of New York City increased from 91,709 to 327,706, with the majority of these new residents residing within Harlem (Osofsky 128). This mass influx of people meant Harlem was also forced to expand its boundaries as it pushed up past 150<sup>th</sup> St and down to the edges of Central Park, as well as pushing as west as the boundaries of Morningside Park, as can be seen in Figure 1. This image presents a detailed visualization of what the exponential immigration into Harlem looked like and how it was beginning to push past its traditional boundaries that had previously been set

for it. It depicts a clearer image of how Harlem was transformed into the Mecca of Colored People, but it also shows how its sphere of influence was beginning to approach the one set up by Columbia University in its Morningside Heights neighborhood.



*Figure 1*

## Harlem Renaissance

The massive migration into Harlem fundamentally transformed this neighborhood from the suburban white area it was projected to become into a densely populated center of colored residents, one that dwarfed any other colored neighborhood in the United States at the time. This evolution, however, was a twofold event. While the Harlem Renaissance swept through the neighborhood and the artistic movement fascinated the world, Harlem itself was beginning to fall into disrepair, and this condition would soon bring the neighborhood into conflict with the University.

The 1920's were period of an epic uplifting within the Negro community, as many famous writers and artists were gaining international platforms from which they could share their craft. The emergence of such individuals was swift yet nonetheless significant in bringing Harlem onto the international stage. This revolution came at a time in American history when intellectuals were challenging traditional notions of life and a cultural rebellion was in place against the effects of industrialization (Osofsky 180). It was at this junction that these people discovered the prominent Black artists, writers, and musicians that came to define the 20's. Famous black intellectuals, such as Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and Claude McKay, were lured by the diversity of Harlem and conducted great work within this neighborhood (Osofsky 181). The Schomburg Center on 135<sup>th</sup> St served as meeting place for these Renaissance men, where they could gather and listen to lectures by W.E.B. DuBois or even the great Columbia professor Franz Boas. This sudden recognition of expression was observed by many to a step towards the acceptance of African Americans within American society and that the act of creating was strong enough to dismantle the inherent racism that plagued the country (Osofsky 182). For the first time, White America, as well as the rest of the world, could see a Black identity that consisted of cultural innovations that rivaled those of any great intellectual.

Because of such a renaissance, the world took a keen interest in Harlem, so much so that it became a hot tourist destination during the 20's. Harlem at this point became a "national symbol – a symbol of the 'New Negro'; a symbol of the Jazz Age" (Osofsky 184). It was frequented by White patrons looking to immerse themselves in the nightlife Harlem provided. They would fill cabarets and night clubs, and some of these institutions went so far as to only cater to white customers, despite their location within Harlem (Osofsky 185). Such a

discriminatory institution included the Cotton Club on 125<sup>th</sup> St, a mere 10 blocks away from Columbia. Upon opening, this specific club was frequented by many students and acted as a site for fundraising and student events. Books about life in Harlem were consumed by the masses, with some going on to sell over 100,000 copies within few weeks of being published (Osofsky 185). This image of Harlem would last up until the beginning of the Great Depression, which would ultimately halt the acceptance of the “New Negro” as the artistic movement abruptly stalled and the centers the promoted went out of business (Osofsky 186). In its wake, “a new image of Harlem emerged – a Harlem already known to stolid census-takers, city health officials, and social workers” (Osofsky 187).

### **A Failing Neighborhood**

While Harlem became widely popular for housing some of the most prominent figures of the 1920's and was a cultural hub rivaled by few, the neighborhood itself was beginning to unravel during this decade. The high cost of living that initially made Harlem a well to do area during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century skyrocketed during this decade, and was the driving factor behind the degradation of Harlem. Coupled with the fact that colored tenants already paid above average rent and the lower salaries of these resident, this higher cost of living forced many into living situations that were obscenely overcrowded and eventually unhygienic (Osofsky 136). The modern housing that was once a factor driving migration into Harlem was soon starting to cause problems of its own: they were built with a different type of person in mind. The brownstone and houses built were made for affluent people with larger families, which in turn put the small family units at a disadvantage because they were looking for smaller apartments (Osofsky 138). Most of the Harlemites consisted of these family units, so they consequently were

forced to move into housing with one or two other families and these residences were rarely subdivided properly by the landlord. These cramped situations were bringing in much more money than ever before to the landowners which halted any improvements that they could have possibly made, including general upkeep of the property (Osofsky 140).

Such conditions led to Harlem becoming a hot bed for disease and vermin, as rats would come to plague many of the congested, unkept residences. Researchers at the time discovered that the Harlem mortality rate was 42 percent higher than that of the rest of the city, infant mortality was twice as high, and death at childbirth being twice as high (Osofsky 141). These same statistics were similar to the ones found for various other diseases, including tuberculosis, heart disease, and still births. The overcrowded environment of the neighborhood was a contributing factor behind Harlem becoming the most disease-ridden area in New York City. In addition to the health epidemic that was rocking Harlem, the neighborhood was also a center for vice in the city as it became the center of prostitution and gambling and exhibited high levels of crime (Osofsky 147). Like the Tenderloin, these characteristics of the neighborhood would only go on to present a negative portrayal of Harlem once the shining façade of the Harlem Renaissance had passed. The deteriorating conditions of Harlem were only exasperated once the Great Depression hit New York, as the already poor community soon faced even greater unemployment and subsequently worse living conditions. It is at this point where we find Columbia University starting to become entangled with the affairs of Harlem. Harkening back to Figure 1, we see that that the boundaries of Harlem had begun to approach the Morningside bubble faster than anyone could have ever predicted, and the problems that the community faced would not remain unnoticed by the University officials. The University would have to take

action in the face of the turmoil that was engulfing Harlem and the potential threat it presented to their campus.

### **Samuel Hadas**

March 12, 1922. Three men enter a pharmacy at the corner of 120<sup>th</sup> and Broadway located underneath Whittier Hall, Teacher's College. Rushing in, they draw their revolvers in an attempt to rob the pharmacy; within moments a shot is heard and the three men sprint out and escape into a night. The end result: a failed robbery and the murder of a 29-year-old Columbia dental student by the name of Samuel Hadas ("Columbia Boy Slain Fighting Store Bandits." 1922). This event marks a point in history where New York was dealing with a massive crime wave and the effects were reverberating through the Columbia University community. The Hadas murder was a culmination of rising crime in the area after the La Salle police station was shut down, and it marks a turning point in Columbia's history where the university starts making proactive decisions to protect their campus and the surrounding neighborhood. The following recount will detail this months leading up to the crime, as well as the subsequent fall out.

Prior to this dilemma was the appointment of Richard E Enright as Police Commissioner of New York City in 1918. Within that year, President Murray Butler of Columbia University started a correspondence with the new commissioner thanking him for his departments involvement in the funeral of Mayor Mitchel, and this back forth would go on for a few years after this (Butler 1918). The police commissioner would invite President Butler to many of the large-scale events hosted by the New York City Police department, including the Police Lieutenants Banquet honoring the death of Teddy Roosevelt who previously served as police commissioner of New York (Enright 1919). Sometime Butler would accept the invitation, and

other time he would offer his utmost gratitude for being invited but sincere apologies for not being able to attend. These early letters indicate that their relationship was incredibly cordial and built on a certain degree of respect each had for on another. Such a dynamic continues up until the 1921, and there is a sudden drop off in contact in the years following. A major part of this break in correspondence could have to do with the events that occurred in the early months of 1922.

In January of 1922, Commissioner Enright abolished the La Salle Police Station on 135<sup>th</sup> without any warning, sparking massive protests from the merchants and the university (Harlem Demands Old Police Station 1922). Within days, a resolution is presented and passed at a Harlem Board of Commerce meeting stating that it was imperative that the police station be reinstated immediately. The main concern was complete lack of police activity in the area as the nearest stations were located on 100<sup>th</sup> St and 152<sup>nd</sup> St, and the area covered by the precinct included “Columbia University, the College of the City of New York, St Luke’s and Knickerbocker hospital, [and] the Fort Lee Ferry” (Harlem Demands Old Police Station 1922). Part of the reason that there was a large-scale push back against the removal of this police station was the fact that the Police Commissioner has tried shutting down another police precinct before in another area of the city, but ultimately kept it open when the local citizens circulated a wide spread petition and protested heavily (Harlem Demands Police Station). The merchants affected by the La Salle Police Station closure feared that robberies and theft would increase in the area with the lack of a police station.

Ultimately, their fears were validated by the rise in crime that ensued in the coming months. In three months, nine hold ups and robberies occurred in the area surrounding 120<sup>th</sup> St

and Amsterdam, which can all be connected to the abolishment of the La Salle Police Station as police activity had dramatically decreased in the area (Columbia Boy Slain Fighting Store Bandits 1922). Some apparently were robbed multiple times to the point where they track of the hold ups and moved to protect themselves using independent security firms. During these months leading up to the murder, it was learned that President Butler had submitted 200 petitions protesting Commissioner Enright's decision, stating that he was fearful for the lives of the thousands of men and women studying at Columbia (Columbia Boy Slain Fighting Store Bandits 1922).

The murder of Samuel Hadas ended up being the tipping point of this entire situation, as the merchants and the university quickly moved to take action and put further pressure on the Police Commissioner to reinstate the police station. It caused the merchants to begin to informally organize against the rise in crime and develop way to protect themselves and the Harlem Board of Commerce made additional requests to meet with the Police Commissioner to resolve the issues that were plaguing their community (Columbia Boy Slain Fighting Store Bandits). Within a few days, their requests were granted as the Police Commissioner decided to attend a Harlem Board of Commerce meeting to discuss these issues, a meeting that was also attended by a Mr. Henry Lee Norris, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at Columbia and a close confidant of President Butler who would carry out many tasks for him over the years. The result was the Police Commissioner offering a convincing argument for the reason behind the closure of the police station and pledging an increase in the amount of police in the area to mitigate the issue of rising crime (La Salle St. Station Protest Withdraws 1922). After this meeting the protest dies down and the murder is largely forgotten by the community, as the Columbia Spectator does not even mention the incident that took place at Teachers College. This

whole situation is a crystallized moment in time where we see Columbia and its president take direct action against the crime that was rising in their general area and openly support an increase in policing to protect their campus.

All of this takes place despite that violence by police against African Americans in Harlem was a rampant problem, so much so that the Commissioner Enright also sets up meetings to discuss issues with Harlem leader's mere months after he promised more boots on the ground (Garner 1922). One of example of this problem was the deadly beating of Herbert Dent by four NYPD officers on 135<sup>th</sup> St on June 27, 1922. While being detained at a police station, Herbert Dent was involved in an altercation that ended in him being brutally beaten by police offers to the point where he was killed in the process; according to neighbors of the station this behavior is not uncommon as they are routinely subject to the sounds of inmates receiving abhorrent treatment at the hands of the police officers (Additional Developments in the Matter of Police Brutality Indicate Need of Change 1922). When the family of Herbert Dent was finally given access to his body, they took to two independent physicians who detailed the various wounds found on him and noted that his vital organs had been removed by the police surgeon and were actually replaced (Additional Developments in the Matter of Police Brutality Indicate Need of Change 1922). This is just one of many instances of police brutality plaguing Harlem, an issue that was not unheard of, which makes the decision by Columbia to support higher rates of policing in the area even more controversial.

**John J Coss Letter**



First, what is important to note is the significance this man holds within the ranks of the university. According to the Columbia College website, John J Coss was integral to the establishment of the Core Curriculum and was the first director of the Contemporary Civilization Class, as well as establishing and directing the annual summer sessions held by Columbia College (John J Coss). The correspondence he had with President Butler over the years had mainly to do with matters regarding the Summer sessions, so this sudden foray into local demographics was very much out of the blue from Coss. The two documents attached to this letter included a map (figure 2) similar to that of Figure 1 that detailed the growing Negro population of Harlem over a span of a few years. As we saw before, this map also displays the ever-expanding neighborhood and focuses on its newfound proximity to Columbia, the issue that Coss is presenting to President Butler. The third document from professor McGoldrick provides detailed numbers of the actual colored residents of these districts in Harlem, and projections of how far the expansion could potentially reach, explaining how bordering areas of Harlem were at risk of probable absorption.

This one-way correspondence (Butler's response was not found) is indicative of a much a larger situation at hand. It is evidence of high ranking university officials taking it upon themselves to petition the president of the university to take action against a potential threat that came in the form of a growing Negro population. Coss's main point is that Columbia should use its resources to purchase the property surrounding the campus, as to create some sort of buffer zone that could be controlled and stop the expansion of Harlem from reaching Columbia. The documents he presents all work to strengthen his case and within a few years, President Butler would present a 50-million-dollar expansion plan that would drastically alter the layout of the Morningside Heights Campus (Butler Lists Proposals In Vast Expansion Plan). Whether this

came through in part by the urging of John J Coss is unconfirmed but it is likely that these similar lines of thought would have been discussed by multiple university officials during the construction of such a plan.

### **Growing Crime Wave**

The 1920's were also a period on instability for New York City as whole, as a sweeping crime wave was consuming the city and beginning to affect the Columbia community. As we saw with the Samuel Hadas case, crime was starting to raise concerns among university officials who began to act in the name of protecting the students. While investigating the Columbia Spectator archives, I came across various articles during this decade detailing incidents that were attributed to this crime wave. One such case involves a fake repairman that was let into a frat house and unsuccessfully attempted to steal their funds (Treasurer Foils Robber Posing as Telephone Man). Another case involves a student reporter tracking thefts and holdups occurring to the local business's in the area, as well as petty theft of items such as overcoats and hats taking place on campus (Reporter Discovers Campus Crime Wave; Hats, Coats and Money Disappear). These reports come in various forms, such as mysterious bullet puncturing the doors of Avery Library or the students performing musical shows about the crime wave that was consuming their city. At one point, the NYPD commissioner Richard Enright comes onto campus to give a speech in Havemeyer Hall sponsored by the Democratic Club of Columbia. In his speech, Enright tries to both provide an explanation for the inability of his police force to properly deal with crime in the city while also claiming that crime rates were indeed falling and that the media was sensationalizing this particular issue (Scores Criticism Of New York Police).

Taking these reports into account with the growing crime problem of Harlem, it becomes clearer why an antagonistic relationship between these two communities could emerge. Columbia was being directly affected by the crime wave of the city, so any further approach by Harlemites could be taken more as a threat considering the growing problems of the neighborhoods. Columbia was clearly dealing with problems of its own at the time, so they would indeed be forced to take action if it meant keeping larger issues at bay

### **1935 Race Riot**

In March of 1935, a boy was arrested for stealing a pen knife from a store in Harlem, an arrest that was witnessed by a nearby crowd of Harlemites. Given Harlem's negative relationship with officers of the law, the store owner and police officer agree to release the boy and allow him to slip out the back. This created confusion among the crowd who believed the boy was killed because they did not witness him leave the store; within hours, thousands of Harlemites were out on the streets protesting police brutality that was a consistent trend during the 1920's and 30's in Harlem. When a police force was sent to maintain order, violence broke out among the protesters. The end result: 3 dead, 100 injured, 125 arrested, and 2 million dollars in property damage (Britannica). This event is the definitive end of the Harlem Renaissance and is a culmination of the all injustices occurring in Harlem at the time. In the university's eyes, this presents another example (albeit extremely unfair) of the dangerous situation that was presented with the university's proximity to Harlem. It also showcases two very different attitudes present amongst the Columbia community. On the one hand, we have a student providing an eye witness account of the police brutality fueling the riot and providing a different point of view on why this took place (3000 Negroes in Race Riot). He tries to reason that the riot was justified and

provoked by the unjust actions of the white police officers. On the other hand, we have a student who happened enjoy the mayhem that came with the riot and showcases a general indifference to the issues plaguing the Harlem community, claiming it was wild night more than anything else (Frosh Walks Through Harlem During Riots, Returns With Battered Shoulder From Attack). Such attitudes present a microcosm of how the university was dealing with Harlem. While they would host talks, and provide discussions on the immorality of racism, they would also create plans to prevent Harlem from encroaching on the University's sphere of influence. President Butler himself was witnessed going to churches and supporting the causes of the Harlemites, all while being advised to buy the neighboring properties to keep them out.

## **Conclusion**

Columbia never expected to be in the situation it was by the 1930's. When they arrived in Morningside Heights, they did so with the belief that the area around them would flourish and provide pure environment where its students could thrive. No one anticipated what Harlem become, no one foresaw all its success and its eventual downfall. This rocky relationship between the two communities would continue for years to come as we see today Columbia is still being accused of buying up properties to keep certain individuals out. With the construction of the Manhattanville Campus comes the inevitable side effects of gentrification and pricing out of people that could traditionally afford the low rent prices of the area. Despite the 120 years that have passed since Columbia first arrived uptown, it does not really seem that much has changed in the relationships it has with its neighbors.

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