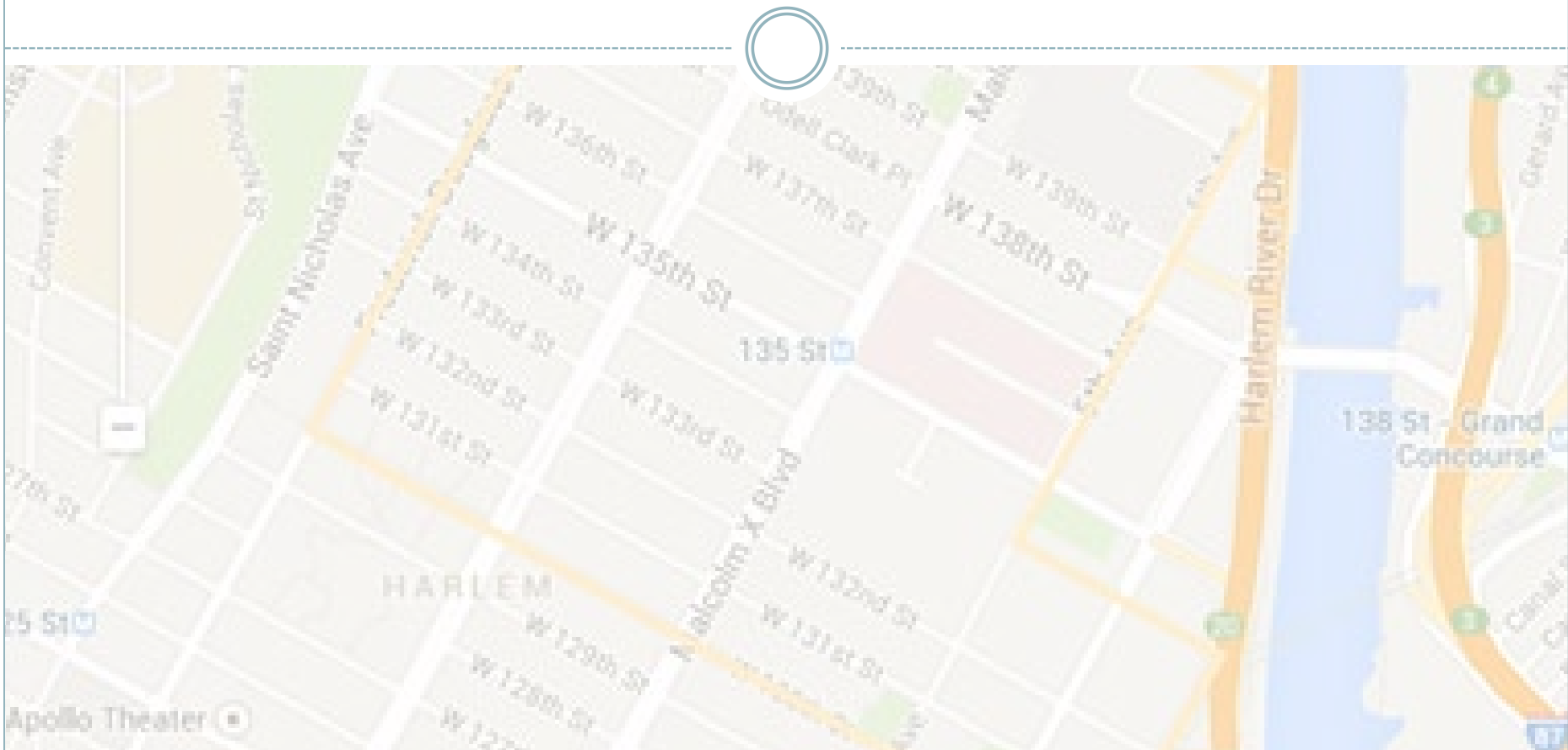


# Digital Harlem

## Everyday Life 1915 - 1930



# What's ahead...



- Quick introduction to *Digital Harlem*
- Criteria for reviewing Digital History projects
- Discussion of how Digital Harlem meets (or doesn't meet) criteria
- Grande Finale

# Why *Digital Harlem*?



- It is a well-known, award-winning project
- Subject matter is 'typical' Digital History
- It is 5 years old
- Personal interest

# Quick introduction



- University of Sydney (Dept of History & Arts eResearch) 2007
- **“a new perspective on what it was like to live in Harlem”**
- Legal reports, newspapers, real estate atlases

# <http://digitalharlem.org/>

Fully searchable database

Add 'layers' to searches

GIS visual

The screenshot displays the Digital Harlem website interface. At the top, it states "Currently presenting 1025 people, 1771 events, 2042 addresses and 4050 documentary sources related to Harlem, 1915-1930". The main heading is "Digital Harlem Everyday Life 1915-1930". Below this are navigation tabs: HOME2, ABOUT, THE MAP, SOURCES, HOW TO..., and FEATURED. The interface is divided into three main sections: a search form on the left, a central map, and a sidebar on the right. The search form includes fields for "Type of Event", "Keyword(s)", "From Date" and "To Date", "Charge / Conviction", "Birthplace of Participant(s)", "Occupation of Participant(s)", "Race", "Gender", "Surname of Participant(s)", "Street / Intersection Name", "Location Type", and a "Submit" button. The central map shows a street grid of Harlem with orange lines indicating the "Borders of black settlement in 1920, 1925, 1930". The sidebar on the right has a "MAPS LAYERS LEGEND" section with a "Layers" dropdown menu. Below this are four thumbnail images representing different search results: "January 1925", "Numbers-Arrests", "Fuller Long", and "Churches". At the bottom of the page, it says "2007-2010 University of Sydney. Site by Damian Evans (ACL) in T1000 (Tom Murtagh & Ian Johnson). XHTML & CSS Database access here. Admin log in/out here."

Digital Harlem: Everyday Life 1915 - 1930

# Criteria for Review



- 1. Realisation of the project's objectives**
- 2. Evidence of the project's impact on target communities**
- 3. Contribution to the discipline of Digital Humanities**
- 4. Measures to ensure longer-term sustainability**

# Criteria for Review



5. Collaboration or connections with related research projects
6. Evidence of peer-review or peer evaluation
7. Availability of technical documentation
8. Is it 'good history'?

# Realisation of the project's objectives



- Primary aim was to “**...focus on the lives of ordinary people...**”
- Succeeded in mapping to a scale that offered a new perspective
- Ephemeral sources
- Criminal records tells much more than the story of crime



# Evidence of impact on target communities



- Target community not defined
- Robertson hinted at lack of interest
- Little evidence of attempts to engage with local community
- Considerable interest in the scholarly community

# Contribution to the discipline of DH



- Award winning; beacon or flagship project for the discipline
- Innovative use of new and emerging technologies
- Obtained considerable funding
- The historian in the public sphere

# Measures to ensure long-term sustainability



- **Links to University of Sydney**
- **Little technical documentation about data curation**
- **5 years on; the look and feel is dated**
- **Partner blog**

# http://digitalharlem.org/

Sits mid-  
screen

Home Center Map

Currently presenting 1025 people, 1774 events, 2042 addresses and 4020 documentary sources related to Harlem, 1915-1930

## Digital Harlem

Everyday Life 1915-1930

HOME2 ABOUT THE MAP SOURCES HOW TO... FEATURED

EVENTS PEOPLE PLACES

Borders of black settlement in 1920 1925 1930

Type of Event  
Select ...

Keyword(s)

From Date... To Date...

Charge / Conviction  
Select ...

Birthplace of Participant(s)  
Select ...

Occupation of Participant(s)  
Select ...

Race Gender  
Select ... Select ...

Surname of Participant(s)

Street / Intersection Name  
Select ...

Location Type  
Select ...

Submit

MAPS LAYERS LEGEND

January 1925

Numbers Arrests

Fuller Long

Churches

2007-2010 University of Sydney. Site by Damian Evans (ACL) in T1000 (Tom Murtagh & Ian Johnson). XHTML & CSS Database access here. Admin log in/out here.

Not very  
intuitive

Digital Harlem: Everyday Life 1915 - 1930

# Collaboration with related research projects



- Little evidence of inter-institutional collaboration on this project
- Post-launch interaction with scholarly community
- Stand-alone project, lacks contextualisation
- Would benefit from increased collaboration

# Evidence of peer review or peer evaluation



- Peer-review is an essential building block of academic research
- Evaluation is necessary
- The format of the peer-review is irrelevant, the process is important
- Evidence of an extensive peer-review process in *Digital Harlem*

# Availability of documentation



- Fundamental for Digital History projects
- Decisions relating to the treatment of sources, the development of tools, the adoption of standards, the methodology, the availability of data etc.
- An essential appendix that is missing in *Digital Harlem*

# Is it ‘Good History’?



- “...the same criteria used in humanities scholarship all along” Flanders, 2009
- Must continue to place original and intellectual **historical questions** at the centre
- Take care not to impose present-day perspectives on our interpretations or understandings of the past





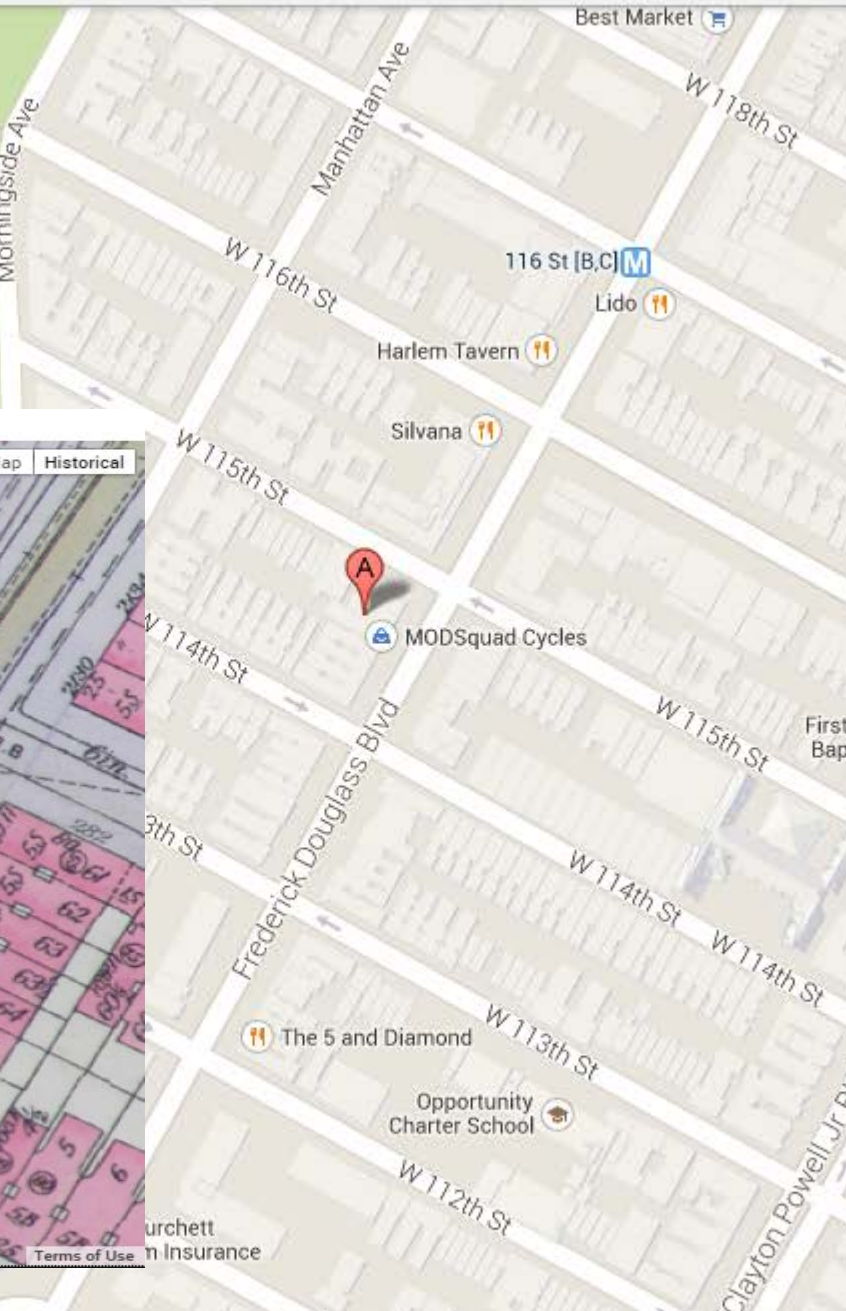
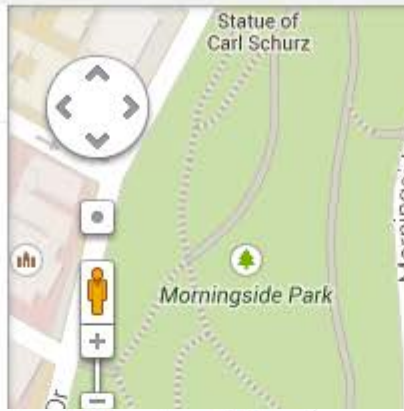
Get directions

My places

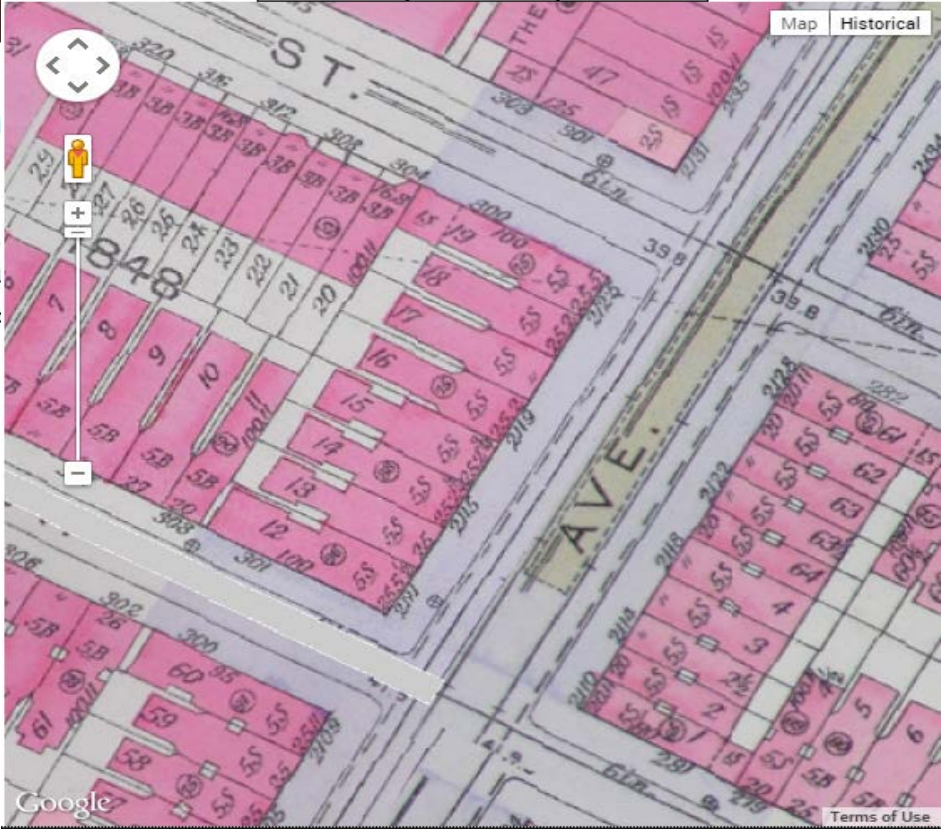


### 2121 Frederick Douglass Blvd

New York, NY 10026



Borders of black settlement in 1920 1925 1930



Directions Search near

Maps

Google Maps - ©2014 Google

# The Grand Finale



- Meets most of the criteria outlined for this review
- Main exceptions are: evidence of collaboration, availability of technical documentation, contextualisation

# References

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# Questions?



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