

History

Seneca Village was a community mainly of free Black property owners. This was uncommon at the time due to the racial discrimination during that time period. Seneca village was a thriving community from the 1920s into the 1950s, but it became forcefully displaced for the city's decision to create Central Park. The land was stripped and completely torn down to make the park we know today. The residents were compensated in exchange for vacating their homes. Seneca Village's history emphasizes the significance of the racial and economic issues of the 19th century and how that impacted marginalized communities in New York City.

CENTRAL PARK

What I had thought was an all-natural park is actually completely manmade! Before it became Central Park it was known as Seneca Village. A community of predominantly African Americans who actually owned property. This was very interesting to me since it was a time where black property owners weren't known or at least to my knowledge they couldn't own land. The land that this used to be is completely unrecognizable. Seneca was stripped and bare to build from the ground up and built by Central Park. It truly is its own work of art. The residents previous to the park's building were compensated for their property and had to be gone by a certain time. Although by doing this it took the homes of so many away it balanced by making this park accessible for all. This whole part contrasts the entire of New York City. Beyond the park is our classic grid. Central Park looks nothing like the city and has absolute greenery in its path, which forces anyone in there to go through an abundance of scenery before they get to their desired destination.

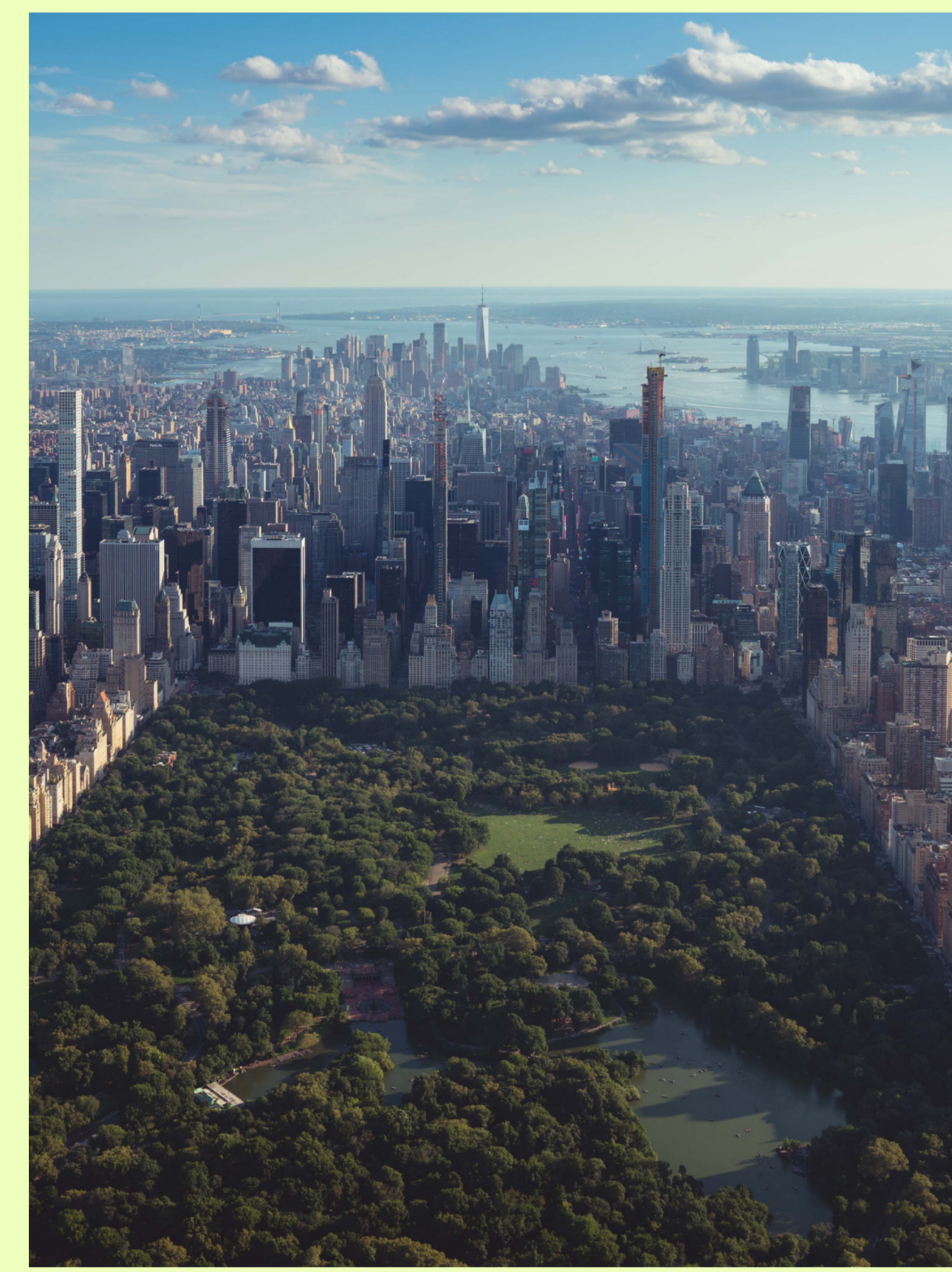
HAPPINESS

Live in the moment

The Park and the People

Discover the untold story of Seneca Village, a thriving 19th-century African American community that was demolished to make way for Central Park. Discover stories of perseverance, community, and the fight against injustice.

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Central Park, nestled in the heart of New York City, transcends its role as a scenic escape by championing accessibility. With wheelchair-friendly paths, tactile paving, and thoughtfully placed benches, the park becomes an inclusive haven for diverse residents. Families with strollers, seniors, and individuals with disabilities navigate seamlessly, enjoying recreational pursuits and cultural events. This commitment to accessibility is not just about convenience; it's a catalyst for community cohesion. Central Park and any other open-access space become a melting pot where residents, regardless of physical abilities or economic status, engage in a shared urban experience. As a symbol of a broader societal shift, Central Park sets the standard for equitable urban landscapes, enhancing the quality of life for all residents and promoting a harmonious cityscape where everyone can participate.

Design + Accessibility

CENTRAL PARK

On this trip to Central Park I learned so much about what went into the design, through process and more when it came to accessibility and the things, contrasts between it and the rest of the city.

Although we are going to different directions there's not one single answer, different levels of them, and even if it takes the whole city what makes this park so special. It could also be great all around. It's the great amount of the city and Central Park built from the ground up and made available to everyone. It's just people used to be long the way that Manhattan. It's sort of yay and yay which is why they emphasized what we see here.

CENTRAL PARK

I learned that Central Park and all of its geographical features were manmade. It was fascinating to learn that the park was designed to give the visitor a unique experience every time they visited. I've never once questioned whether Central Park was preserved or man made, and class outside taught me something new about the city I've lived in my whole life.

Seneca Villiage + The Met

Before Yesterday We Could Fly is a MET period room with its roots in Seneca Villiage. However, it is does not just show one historical period. Instead, the room functions as a representation of the African diasporic belief that the past, present, and future are interconnected. So, the period room contains art and objects that are historical, modern and futuristic.

The creation of Central Park has allowed millions of people to escape from the business of the city into a natural built environment. However this environment was built over the lives of African American's who lived in Seneca Village.

I had heard about Seneca village in the past, but I was never taught the extent to which Central Park uprooted the lives of so many, in order to root trees and create nature from the ground up. When I visited Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afro Futurist Period Room I was struck by how much the construction of Central Park removed a sort of promise that the MET exhibit represented.

I was also reminded of the Kimberly Drew reading, when she talks about how many African American's don't go to museums or have limited access to them. As I stood reading and watching this exhibit at the MET, people would come in every few minutes, all of them white, glance around, perhaps read a few of the plaques for a moment before leaving to another part of the museum, perhaps this room was only their short cut to get to the Greek and Roman section of the museum.

However, near the end of my visit to the room when a Black couple entered the room I remember being struck by the woman's immediate exclamation to her boyfriend about the hot comb. In the midst of so much information and art in the room, this comb was what prompted her reaction. Something so real about it, the fact it actually came from Seneca Village and it's ability to connect with this stranger, struck a chord within me. It's something I've never used or needed to be familiar with, but this woman was, and her experience of this exhibit was most likely much different than mine.

This is why access is so important. While I benefited and appreciated this exhibit, shouldn't everyone be able to come and visit art and connect with it in their own way?

That's how access should begin. While a space can be designed fully accessible to groups of people, for example a building could be completely wheelchair accessible, ramps by all the doors, elevators to every floor, enough space to turn around, but if no one knows about these features, the space isn't truly accessible.

Of course, the first step is thinking of others, having a diverse group of people in the room when designing or talking about public spaces, making sure that everyone feels welcome, regardless of race, socioeconomic background, or physical ability. But the next step is making sure all of those people are reached, and it might take different strategies in order to reach them. Sure some people might check on a park website, but what about advertising public spaces in the same way private spaces are advertised. Creating a sense of belonging when people show up to a public because they know they are wanted.

Before Yesterday We Could Fly - An Afrofuturist Period Room



Central Park is a true gem in the heart of New York! It's a huge green oasis with beautiful scenery, trees and winding paths. There are so many things to do there, such as picnicking, jogging or just enjoying a leisurely walk. You'll also find iconic landmarks like the Bethesda Terrace and Fountain, the Central Park Zoo, and the famous Bow Bridge. It truly is a haven of peace in the middle of a bustling cityscape. Central Park is like a huge playground for adults, but with trees and grass instead of monkey bars. You can unleash your inner Tarzan and swing on tree branches, or channel your inner squirrel and harvest acorns. And if you're feeling adventurous, you can even challenge the pigeons to a game of tag.

Chlorp derp Fast

Yeah, this part of the park is actually made up of a bunch of foreign trees from Chlorp derp.

Accessibility in Central Park

When Olmsted was designing Central Park, he thought it was important to have different experience every time you visit Central Park. These are all pictures in my camera roll from visiting Central Park only a matter of times in the last few years. Each picture tells a distinct story and is a different background. There are many different examples of accessibility but in these pictures, for example, there are benches throughout the park for people who want to sit, another is a person using the nature around them for another reason. Additionally, there are hills, an approach to stairs, for access for people with disabilities. Another thing I thought was interesting was the walking paths that are formed from the grass just from overuse. Even though our walking is restricted by the concrete paths throughout the park, it isn't limited to that. The last point I wanted to touch upon is the different scenery you get in different parts of the park. There are some places where you can see the city skyline, something you can't see other places in the city, places you can see different types of trees, and even places you can see a waterfall!

Planning the Park

There are several factors that go into designing a public space or park as Central Park. All should work towards a goal of making the space as accessible as possible for the entire population. This is made possible by making sure that some of the historical over have too steep of a gradient and have been removed or flattened. This is made possible by having the double benefit of making several distinct parts of Central Park as the artificial hills make several different scenes as you have one area entirely and go to another. It's also important that the curved pathways that were placed in the park have many places where pedestrians can sit, rest, and relax so that foot traffic is never too overwhelming and that there can be many ways within the park where there might be a break from the normal run-beside someone on a path.