

Title: "Burial Grounds"

A Conversation with Lauren O'Brien and Derrick L. Head.

In This Episode:

We talk to Lauren O'Brien, a Lead Project Scholar at the Tenement Museum, about a new tour, coming to the Museum, that will help us reconstruct the forgotten histories of Black migrants in Lower Manhattan. We begin our story in a Black-owned Tavern in the notorious Five Points neighborhood. What does this hot-spot tell us about Black culture and placemaking before the infamous Draft Riots of 1863? And what happened to the 10,300 Black residents who all but vanished from the Five Points after the riots? Lauren O'Brien helps us uncover a Pre-Harlem World that's been buried for more than 156 years, and we'll turn to Derrick L. Head, National Park Service Ranger and Historian, at the African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan for a deeper look at New York City's Black History.

We talked to:

Lauren O'Brien is a public historian interested in the relationship between Black memory, geographies of displacement, and historical trauma. In cultivating her historical practice she strives to seek out opportunities that encourage the interrogation of historical silences and create public platforms that highlight, document, and share the rich and diverse history of African Americans. Utilizing her historical practice as a vehicle to facilitate critical dialogues on race, social equity, and peace building, Lauren has worked with several museums and cultural institutions including the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. She currently is a PhD Candidate in American Studies at Rutgers University-Newark.

Derrick L. Head is a National Park Service Ranger at the African Burial Ground National Monument and the General Grant National Monument. Head focuses on historical research of national monuments in New York City. He gives tours of historic sites and lectures on events that delve into the history of NPS historic sites in the city and acts as an ambassador to foreign visitors and dignitaries.

The Tenement Museum inspiration:

The content we drew from is a part of the Museum's forthcoming tour on Black Migration within the Lower East Side. The tour will focus on the experiences of Black residents overshadowed in the neighborhood's collective memory.

Where we got our information:

- The research for this episode came from comprehensive primary and secondary research--conducted over the course of a full year--by lead project scholar Lauren O'Brien and museum staff. Research to be published Spring 2021.
- You can learn more about Black migration and gotham from an [article](#) published by Carla Peterson.
- [Read](#) Charles Dickens' full review of Pete William's tavern and the Five Points neighborhood in *American Notes for General Circulation*.
- For more on the Museum's forthcoming tour, watch [Black Placemaking: Reinterpreting Lower East Side History](#).