

Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt's New York City

The Upper West Side was Hannah Arendt's home from 1941 to 1975.

This neighborhood on a hill, home to fellow artists, writers, and friends, became a haven from her endless speaking and teaching schedule, which took her around the world.

She wrote here, entertained here, taught here, rested here, and it was here where she found the four walls necessary for solitude, friendship, and thinking.

This map traces how Hannah Arendt made a home in America, discovering where she used to live and how she got her start as a writer.

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Hannah Arendt Papers



Guided Audio Tour (Sites 1-6) through Gesso App, please visit:
<https://gesso.fm/collections/hannah-arendts-new-york>



For more information on "Thinking is dangerous," a program on Hannah Arendt, please visit:
www.goethe.de/usa/thinkingisdangerous

Partner



A memorial service was held for Hannah Arendt in the Riverside Memorial Chapel on Amsterdam Avenue and 76th Street in New York on 8 December 1975. Three hundred mourners gathered to remember Hannah Arendt. The night before the service, her friends debated whether or not the Jewish prayers should be said. The conclusion was a compromise: Arendt's niece read a psalm in Hebrew and Daniel Klenbort, Chanan's Klenbort's son, read it in English.



13

Riverside Memorial Chapel

Literature by and about Hannah Arendt is available in our library at the Goethe Institut.



14

Goethe Institut

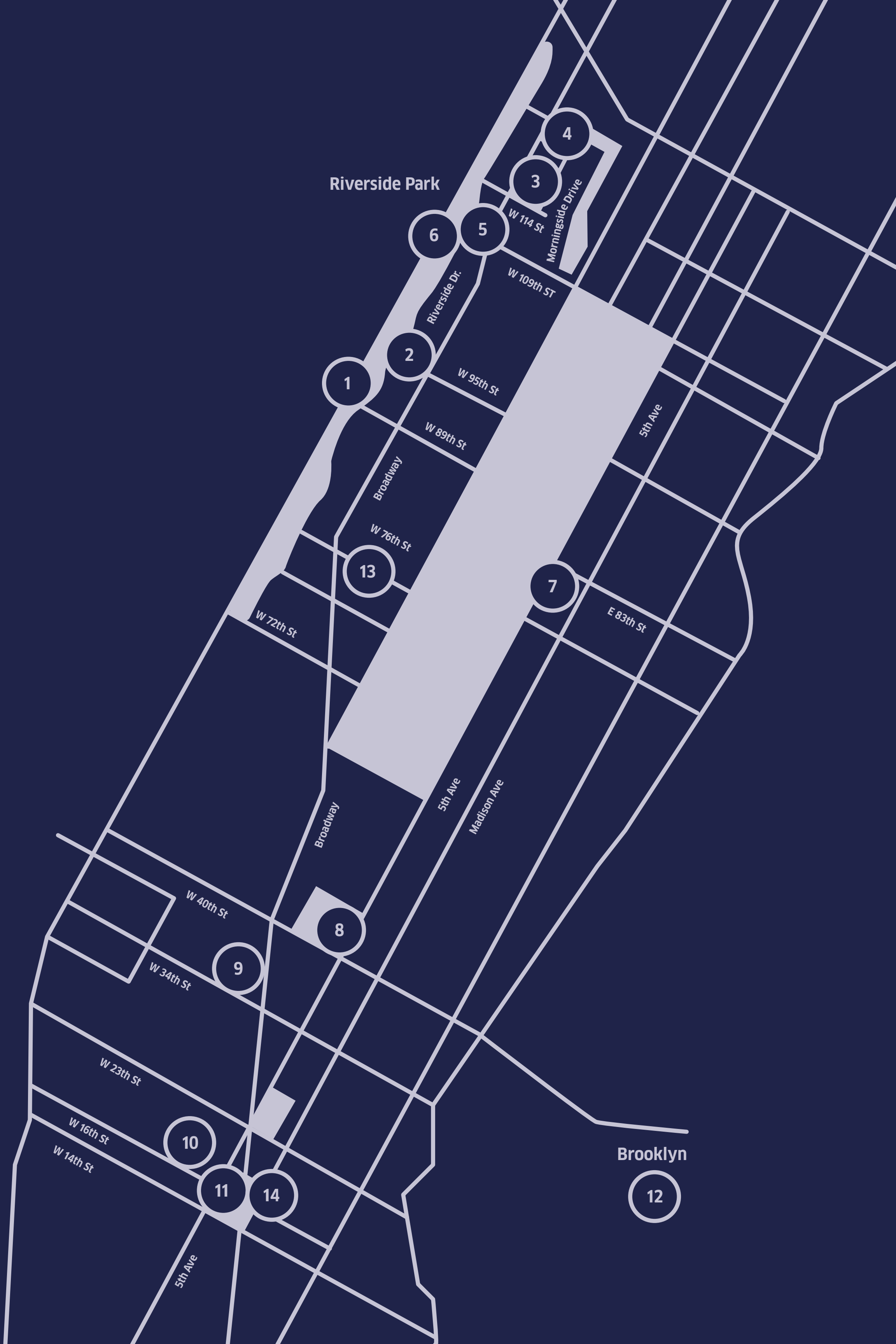
Sites

Audio Tour (with Gesso App)

- 1 Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument
- 2 First Apartment
- 3 Butler Library
- 4 Second Apartment
- 5 Third Apartment
- 6 Riverside Park

Extended Tour

- 7 Former Goethe House
- 8 New York Public Library
- 9 Hotel Diplomat
- 10 Leo Baeck Institute
- 11 New School for Social Research
- 12 Brooklyn College
- 13 Riverside Memorial Chapel
- 14 Goethe Institut



Thinking is dangerous

Monuments were of a particular interest to Hannah Arendt, especially after the war. Living nearby, she walked past the Soldier's and Sailors' Monument on a regular basis. In her book *The Human Condition*, she wrote in 1958: "Monuments tell us a story. They record the actions of men in this realm of human affairs which all too often proves itself to be fragile. Monuments remain though and give us something durable, they become part of our story." This temple-like monument completed in 1902 commemorates Union Army soldiers who served in the Civil War.



W 89th St

1

Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument

In January 1968, Hannah Arendt delivered a talk on Walter Benjamin at the Goethe House in New York. When Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin parted ways in Marseille in the summer of 1940, shortly before his tragic death, he entrusted a suitcase of his last writings to Arendt. She felt a responsibility to have them translated, published, and made available to an English-speaking audience. In her talk she discussed Benjamin's fate, the little hunchback that had tormented him his entire life, and the legacy of his work after death.

After hosting the Goethe House for many decades, the building is now run by 1014, a not-for-profit organization that strives for just and equitable societies through trans-Atlantic dialogue and collaboration. The Goethe-Institut New York is now located at 30 Irving Place near Union Square.



1014
Fifth Ave

Extended Tour

7

Former Goethe House

The morning after Hannah Arendt and her husband, Heinrich Blücher, arrived at Ellis Island on the SS Guinee, she sent a telegram to her first husband, Günther Anders, letting him know that they had survived: "May 23, 1941. 11:20am: We're saved. We are here and living at 317 West 95th Street."

With a \$70 monthly stipend from the Zionist Organization of America, Arendt and Blücher rented two semi-furnished rooms in this tenement building, one for them, and one for Arendt's mother, Martha Cohn, who arrived a couple of months later on the SS Mouzinho.



317 W
95th St

2

First Apartment

In November of 1934, a year after Arendt was forced to flee Nazi Germany, forfeiting her promising academic career, she applied for help from the Academic Assistance Council. Her application materials survived the war and are held at the New York Public Library archive in New York City, in addition to her correspondence with W.H. Auden, Alfred Kazin, the original manuscripts for *Eichmann in Jerusalem* among the New Yorker collections, and Arendt's final manuscript, also published in the New Yorker, *The Life of the Mind*, edited by Mary McCarthy and Jerome Kohn.



476 5th Ave
Bryant Park

Extended Tour

8

New York Public Library

Arendt spent her first summer in the United States living with a family outside of Boston, Massachusetts as a housekeeper, in order to learn English. When she returned to New York City in the late summer of 1941, she went to visit the Jewish historian Salo Baron at Columbia University. During their first meeting they discussed the Dreyfus Affair, and with Baron's help, Arendt published her first essay in English: "From the Dreyfus Affair to France Today."

The article also became the subject matter of Arendt's course on Modern European History at Brooklyn College in the summer of 1942. Baron hired Arendt as the Research Director and later Executive Director of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, which he oversaw.

In numerous trips to Germany after the war, Arendt was able to recover some 1,500,000 books of Hebraica and Judaica, countless ritual and artistic objects, and more than 1,000 scrolls of law. Over the years Arendt would often visit Columbia for lunch, dining in the faculty lounge, attending conferences, symposia and teaching as a visiting professor.



535 W
114th St

3

Butler Library

Columbia
University

When Hannah Arendt published *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* in 1963, Irving Howe and Lionel Abel summoned a meeting of New York's literary society. The forum was hosted by *Dissent Magazine* in the dodgy Hotel Diplomat in Downtown Manhattan and, in the words of the poet Robert Lowell, "The meeting was like a trial, the stoning of an outcast member of the family."

It was nothing short of a war room. Hundreds of people crowded into a hall as the historian Raul Hilberg, Zionist author Marie Syrkin and Harvard professor Daniel Bell approached the podium to prosecute Arendt in absentia. Arendt was invited to attend, but she was away teaching in Chicago. Each time her name was mentioned, it "was greeted with derisive clapping" and "savage sighs of amazement." The site of the Diplomat Hotel is now a Bank of America tower, with service entrances at 106 and 110 W 43rd Street.



108 W
34th St

Extended Tour

9

Hotel Diplomat

The Trial of
Hannah Arendt

In the summer of 1949, Arendt and Blücher had saved enough money to rent their first apartment at 130 Morningside Drive. Since their time together in Paris, they had been forced to move from hotel room to hotel room – and it had taken them eight years in the United States to afford an apartment of their own.

The tiny set of rooms that Arendt decorated saw some of the most illustrious minds of the 20th century: Hermann Broch, Paul Tillich, Salo and Jeanette Baron, Helen and Kurt Wolff, Hans Morgenthau, Alfred Kazin, Mary McCarthy, Lotte Kohler, Elizabeth Hardwick, Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, Glenn Gray, Dwight Macdonald, W.H. Auden, and Lionel and Diana Trilling.



130
Morningside
Drive

4

Second Apartment

The Leo Baeck Institute was founded in 1955 by Jewish emigre intellectuals to preserve the vibrant cultural heritage of German-speaking Jewish culture that was nearly destroyed in the Holocaust. The Institute was named for Rabbi Leo Baeck, the last leader of Germany's Jewish community under the Nazi regime, and Hannah Arendt was a member of the Institute's New York advisory board. The LBI also published one of her major works, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of A Jewess*, in 1957. Today the LBI is a research library and archive focused on the history of German-speaking Jewish people. In the LBI Archive's Hannah Arendt Collection, you will find a transcript of a radio lecture on "Natur und Geschichte," and the notes for the Rahel Varnhagen manuscript. The archives also contain a file of furious responses from the Jewish world to her reporting on the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem for the *New Yorker* in 1961. The LBI Library holds the German-Jewish refugee newspaper, *Aufbau* (1934–2004), which published Arendt's writings on antisemitism, Jewish refugees, and Zionism in the 1940s.

During Arendt's lifetime, the LBI occupied a townhouse at 129 East 73rd Street. In 2000 the LBI became a founding partner in the Center for Jewish History and moved its collections and administrative offices to this building.



15 W
16th St

Extended Tour

10

Leo Baeck Institute

Constructed from 1922 to 1924 by Simon Schwartz and Arthur Gross, the apartment building sits on a hill overlooking the Hudson River and Riverside Park. The 16-story pre-war design included a number of Classic Six apartments with high ceilings, as well as roof deck with views of the river and the George Washington Bridge. With its large rooms, and grand windows, apartment 12A at 370 Riverside Drive in New York reminds its visitors of those prewar buildings in Berlin.

From Arendt's desk, one could look over Riverside Park and the Hudson River to the edge of New Jersey. "In the living room, where Arendt received visitors with her characteristic combination of archness and wit, womanly guile and cultivated erudition, stood a high-backed sofa covered in green vinyl," (Los Angeles Review of Books). Across from the sofa was an assortment of armchairs, and in front of it, a coffee table. The dining room, whose main table was covered in books, papers, and journals, served primarily as a library.



370
Riverside
Drive

5

Third Apartment

Arendt's longest teaching position came towards the end of her life, when she became a University Professor at the New School for Social Research. A news bulletin dated June 1, 1967 announced Arendt's professorship for the coming fall term, where she was slated to teach two seminars: "Political Experiences of the 20th Century" and "Plato's Theaetetus." This was Arendt's first official position at the New School, but she had been an active member in the community dating back to 1952.



6 E
16th St

Extended Tour

11

New School for Social Research

Hannah Arendt's
last teaching position

Hannah Arendt didn't like to interrupt her work day. She wasn't one much for exercise. She smoked constantly and liked to switch from coffee to cocktails at five o'clock. But from time to time she would come to Riverside Park to sit and watch people, taking in a bit of fresh air. In 1943, shortly after she arrived, she wrote a poem one afternoon about Riverside Park. It is a beautiful meditation on daily life, and how we are always rushing from one thing to the next.

[Park on the Hudson \(excerpt\)](#)
Fishers fish quietly on rivers
In the whole world.
Drivers drive blindly on paths
All around the world.
Children run, mothers call,
Golden is the world.
A loving pair passes by,
Sometimes through the world.



W 108 St
Riverside
Drive

6

Riverside Park

Hannah Arendt received her first teaching position in the United States during the summer of 1942 in the Graduate Division of Brooklyn College, lecturing on Modern European History. Her first lecture was on the Dreyfus Affair. Over the course of her career, she would teach at Princeton, Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia, Northwestern, Wesleyan, and Yale, among others.



2900
Bedford Ave

Extended Tour

12

Brooklyn College

Hannah Arendt's
first teaching position