

Oral History Interview Guide **Amsterdam Houses Residents**

I. Biographical Information

- Please tell me your name, date of birth, and birthplace
- If you were born outside of New York City, when and why did you move to New York?
- Please describe first impressions of New York City?
- What was your father's name (first and last name), and his date of birth, and birthplace?
- What was your mother's name (first and last name – maiden name) and her date of birth, and birthplace
- Where did your parents work? What were their occupations?
- Where were you raised?
- Who lived in your home – Siblings? Extended family?
- Were you raised in a particular religious, political, cultural environment?
- Where did you go to school?
- What were your parents' expectations of you?
- What were your own expectations and plans for the future?
- What was your occupation and workplace?
- Did you marry and have children? Please describe your family?

II. Living in the Amsterdam Houses

- When did you move to the Amsterdam Houses?
- Why did you move to the Amsterdam Houses?
- Where did you live before?
- Who moved with you?
- Was it difficult to get an apartment in the Amsterdam Houses?
- How long did you live/have you lived in the Amsterdam Houses?
- Did other members of your extended family move into the Amsterdam Houses? Who?
- What was the Amsterdam Houses like when you first moved in? What were your first impressions? What was your apartment like? What did the grounds look like?
- Tell us what you remember about the maintenance of the buildings and grounds?
- Who were your neighbors? Where did they come from? (Where they immigrants? Migrants from other regions in the United States or other areas

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in New York City?) What were their religious backgrounds? Did you have similar or different political outlooks?

- What was life like for your husband/wife at the Amsterdam Houses?
- What was life like for your children at the Amsterdam Houses?
- Where did they go to school?
- Where did they play?
- Were there social activities organized by the Amsterdam Houses? Were there common spaces (indoors and/or outdoors) used for social gatherings? Did neighbors gather during times of city or national crisis (for example, the assassination of President Kennedy, the 1968 NYC school strike, the 1977 power blackout)?
- Were you involved in community affairs at the Amsterdam Houses? Were you part of tenant organizations?
- What concerns did tenants have? Were tenants involved in decision-making?
- Did you have encounters with the Amsterdam Houses management? Who were they?
- Were you visited by social workers from the New York City Housing Authority? If so, what were those visits like? What did they ask you? What did they look at? How often were you visited?
- What was the outsider impression of the Amsterdam Houses?
- How did the Houses change over time? Can you describe physical changes?
- How did residents change?
- Do you, and/or members of your family still live in the Amsterdam Houses?
- If someone wanted to tour the Amsterdam Houses, what would you show them and why?
- Would you support a Landmark designation for the Amsterdam Houses?