

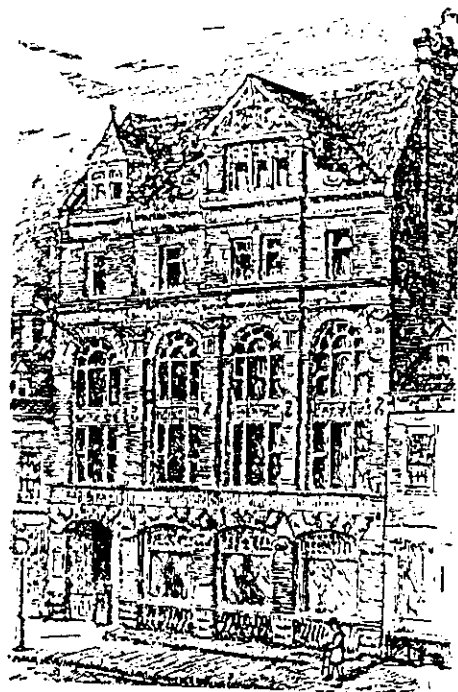
**(FORMER) YOUNG MEN'S INSTITUTE BUILDING OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (YMCA), 222 Bowery, aka 222-224 Bowery, Manhattan.**  
Built 1884-1885; architect Bradford L. Gilbert.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 492, Lot 23.

On October 13, 1998, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the (former) Young Men's Institute Building of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Two witnesses, representing Giorno Poetry Systems, a tenant-shareholder of the building, and the Historic Districts Council, respectively, testified in favor of the designation. No one spoke in opposition to the designation.

#### Summary

This 1884-1885 building, the first branch erected by the New York City YMCA Board of Directors, is the sole survivor of New York's nineteenth-century YMCA branches and the major surviving New York City work of architect Bradford L. Gilbert. This building originally housed the Young Men's Institute, a membership organization intended to promote the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of young working men in the densely crowded Bowery. The five-story Queen Anne style building has a largely intact facade, which is asymmetrically organized with a recessed entry at the south bay; a rusticated sandstone base with segmental arches; a mid-section featuring giant pilasters framing a double-story arcade with recessed metal-enframed windows; and a top section crowned by a slate-covered mansard roof pierced by two dormers. The larger dormer has a pediment with terra-cotta decoration surrounding the commencement date, 1884. In 1915 the firm of Parish & Schroeder renovated the three lower stories at the rear for an enlarged gymnasium, new shower and locker room, and a swimming pool. The YMCA left the building in 1932, and it has since become studio/residential space for artists, many of whom are world renowned, and it houses a teaching and meditation center for a community of Tibetan Buddhists.



Drawing by Bradford L. Gilbert c1885

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### The Young Men's Institute Branch of the YMCA, 1884-1932<sup>1</sup>

The wide avenue called the Bowery (Dutch for farm), an entry road into downtown New York, was lined with inns, taverns and shops along its route from Cooper Square to Chatham Square near City Hall. It was called "thieves' highway" by Jacob Riis, the nineteenth-century photographer/ journalist, who described "swarms" of young men "fresh from good homes," with hopes, but not much money, who gravitated to the Bowery with its twenty-five-cent lodging houses. Riis estimated that more than nine thousand homeless young men lodged nightly on or near the Bowery. YMCA records stated that to reach young men who "were not yet hardened," the organization established a Bowery Branch; the upper four floors of 243 Bowery (still standing) were leased in 1882, and this space provided reading and meeting rooms and lodging accommodations for sixty.<sup>2</sup>

William E. Dodge, a director of the YMCA, had helped finance the Bowery Branch, and his son Cleveland, two years out of college, became its chairman in 1881, serving until 1884, when he became the first Chairman of the Young Men's Institute.<sup>3</sup> In 1885 Cleveland H. Dodge described the establishment of the Young Men's Institute.

The Bowery Branch has long done a noble work, in reaching and helping fallen and destitute men. Being distinctly a relief work, from the very nature of the case, it has not been able to reach the larger class of hard-working independent young men. There has therefore, long been a need in that part of the city for an attractive building, in which to help this latter class to a full and wholesome development. The Association bought the two lots, 222 and 224 Bowery, in June, 1882. Money was raised for a building in the winter of 1884, and on the 1st of July ground was broken. In about a year the building was ready for occupancy. The name Young Men's Institute was chosen to distinguish it effectively from the Bowery Branch ... On the 15th of October the building was opened.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of a building where inner-city men could fraternally enjoy athletic, social and

intellectual rapport was innovative, and the Institute Branch, the first branch building erected by the Board of Directors, is the first manifestation in New York of what would be the modern YMCA.<sup>5</sup>

Architect Bradford L. Gilbert had been introduced to the Committee of Management of the Bowery Branch in February 1883, by Chairman Cleveland Dodge. Gilbert presented his design for the proposed new Bowery building to the YMCA Board of Directors meeting on April 21, 1884, on the recommendation of Vice-President Cornelius Vanderbilt II.<sup>6</sup> Vanderbilt was an enthusiastic member of the Directors' committee that named the new building, and at their meeting on January 19, 1885, "after a lengthened consultation, on motion of Mr. Vanderbilt, the new Building was named The Young Men's Institute."<sup>7</sup>

In his first annual report to the YMCA Directors, Cleveland H. Dodge described the aim of the Institute -- to provide for the physical, intellectual and spiritual health of its members. He reported that the gymnasium and its calisthenic classes were fully functioning; that the Institute held such weekly cultural events as lectures, concerts, and debates, as well as "entertainments" accompanied by the Institute's own orchestra and glee club. The circulating library had a thousand volumes, and six educational classes had been initiated -- free-hand, mechanical and architectural drawing, bookkeeping, pensmanship and arithmetic. Dodge reported that many members were mechanics and that the Institute intended to try to attract more of that profession by providing practical industrial classes in the future. Spiritual fellowship was provided through Sunday activities including a Bible talk and a reading club in the afternoon, and a Gospel meeting and a prayer meeting in the evening.<sup>8</sup>

Any man between 17 and 35 years of age by agreeing to be governed by the rules of the Institute and by paying his dues could become a member. In 1886, lecturers included the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, and the Honorable Theodore Roosevelt gave two talks on hunting and ranching in the far West. In the fall of 1886, an Institute trade class for carriage builders was opened under the auspices of the National Carriage Builders Association, which paid the teachers. This class was a carriage design and drafting course, and the Annual Report for 1889 states that "the class in carriage drafting ... still

holds its position as the one class on this subject in the country, maintaining its work in the [Institute] building and through correspondence." <sup>9</sup> In 1887 an English grammar class was begun, primarily for immigrants. From 1903, this course was specifically called "English for Italians." Also in 1903 classes were initiated to prepare young men for examinations in Federal and Municipal Civil Service, the latter for fire and police positions in particular.

In 1885 the bowling alleys and the baths were open; and for gymnastic exercising, the gym had "horses"; bell, parallel, and horizontal bars; rings; and Indian clubs. By 1897, other equipment included climbing bars and ropes, ladders, striking bag, chest machines, and bicycle-trainers. There was room enough for running high jump. <sup>10</sup>

In 1895, the membership was 663, but in 1915 it had fallen to 441. To attract more men, funds for improvements were raised from members and from the Committee of Management, including Percy R. Pyne, Moses Taylor Pyne and Cleveland Dodge. Alterations were then made according to plans drawn by architects [Wainwright] Parish & [J. Langdon] Schroeder. A rear three-story addition included a large gymnasium with basketball and handball courts, a second-floor locker room with showers, and a first floor swimming pool of glazed brick and white tile. <sup>11</sup>

#### The Architect <sup>12</sup>

Bradford Lee Gilbert (1853-1911), the architect of the Young Men's Institute Building, was born in Watertown, New York, the son of a civil engineer. He attended Yale College, and by 1872 he was serving an apprenticeship with architect, Josiah Cleveland Cady (1837-1919). In 1876 Gilbert was appointed official architect to the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad, and became a consulting architect to eighteen railroads. He had established his own practice in New York in 1882. Before the Institute Building, he planned and designed the General Railroad Office Building, Northern Pacific Railroad Company, St. Paul, Minnesota (1881-82, demolished); Union Station, Saginaw, Michigan (1883-84); and Berkeley Arms Hotel, Berkeley, New Jersey (1883). It was undoubtedly through railroad contacts that Gilbert became known to the Vanderbilt, Dodge, and Pyne families. <sup>13</sup>

After the Institute building, Gilbert again contracted with the YMCA to design the first Harlem Branch building (demolished), constructed

in 1887-89. Gilbert designed his most famous building in 1888-89, an innovative, eleven-story, narrow skyscraper called the Tower Building, on the east side of Broadway near Bowling Green (demolished). <sup>14</sup> Projects during the last two decades of his life include his design for the Illinois Central Railroad Station, Chicago, built 1892-93 (demolished in 1969), and his renovations of New York's first Grand Central Station (where Cornelius Vanderbilt II had his office) built 1898-99 (demolished in 1903). He died September 1, 1911, in Accord, Ulster County, New York.

#### The Institute Building and the Queen Anne Style <sup>15</sup>

The "Queen Anne" style, although popular for domestic architecture in 1884, was less frequently used for the design of such institutional buildings as the Young Men's Institute. This style, originating in England in the 1860s and popularized by architects such as Richard Norman Shaw, became known and adapted in the United States by the late 1870s, when in England a few new school buildings were being designed in the style. It was heralded a "progressive" architecture which was moving away from the "massiveness" of the "Gothic" style, making use of forms and sensibilities of late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century English architecture (when Anne was Queen). In 1892 Moses King called the Institute an "English Renaissance" building. <sup>16</sup>

The basic character of a Queen Anne-style facade is planar but pierced by recesses and windows, asymmetrically organized, and crowned by strong picturesque roof silhouettes. Gilbert's romantic 1885 drawing of the Institute reveals that he conceived the arcades, side entry and multipaned windows as large dark openings in an ornamented plane topped by a roof whose steep pitch is broken by a shaped dormer and a gable with aedicular brackets and is terminated with a sculpted chimney. Buildings designed in this style are brick, usually combined with other materials to add color and texture, such as, in the case of the Institute, a sandstone base; metal window enframements, spandrel panels, tie rods, entry gates and roof trim; slate roof-covering; and terra-cotta capitals, dormer gable and roof finials. A signature part of the style's identity are floral decorative motifs, which can be found at the Institute's garlanded window-panels, at the capitals of the pilasters, and within the pediment of the larger dormer.

### Later History: 222 Bowery, "The Bunker"<sup>17</sup>

The Board of Directors closed the Young Men's Institute in December 1932. During 1940 and 1941 the famous Surrealist French painter, Fernand Leger (1881-1955), having fled to New York after Nazi troops occupied his farm in Normandy, was allowed to live and work at the unoccupied Institute building. In 1942 the YMCA sold 222 Bowery to the X-Ray Manufacturing Corporation of America, for offices and a factory for dental equipment.<sup>18</sup> In 1958 the X-Ray Corporation sold the building to a private realty corporation, which in that year leased studio/residential space to both Mark Rothko (1903-1970) and James Brooks (1906-1992), major exponents of the New York school of abstract painting.

In 1962 another painter of that school, Michael Goldberg, moved into the "gymnasium loft" (and still resides there), and painter-poet Elwyn (Wyn) Chamberlain also became a tenant. Poet John Giorno became a resident of 222 Bowery in 1966, and the following year he founded the "Dial-a-Poem" project.<sup>19</sup> Among the poets who recorded for this telephone service was writer William Seward Burroughs, who moved into the "locker room" loft at 222 Bowery in 1974 and retained ownership of that space until his death in 1997. Burroughs dubbed the former Institute's locker room the "Bunker," and the entire building is still affectionately called by that name.<sup>20</sup>

While in India in 1971, John Giorno became a Buddhist and "took refuge" with the Tibetan lama, Dudjom Rinpoche, head of the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism called *Nygmapa* ("Ancient ones"). Giorno in 1976 convinced Dudjom to come to America with his *khempas* (monks) and family in order to establish a New York center. From the early 1980s Burroughs spent most of his time at his home in Lawrence, Kansas, so his space was made available to the Nygmapa community for teaching and meditation.<sup>21</sup>

### Description<sup>22</sup>

This five-story-and-basement, four-bay, brick and sandstone building, located on the west side of the Bowery, south of Prince Street, is 50 feet wide and 88.8 feet deep. Its Queen Anne-style asymmetrically-composed facade features three sections -- the ground level, a middle section consisting of the second, third and fourth floors, and the fifth story with mansard. Vertically, the three

northern bays are symmetrically organized, with the entrance bay subtly set to one side.

At the ground story, five brick piers with rusticated sandstone impost blocks form four segmental-arch openings above a rusticated sandstone base (recently painted), topped by a molded stone watertable. The rusticated stone voussoirs of the arches are presently concealed behind a horizontal commercial sign. The entrance consists of ornamental iron gates and a shallow vestibule, at the rear of which is a non-historic molded-wood entry with a glazed transom above non-historic glass-paneled triple doors. The three replacement show windows are rectangular and recessed behind the segmental arches, with horizontal metal housing for roll-down gates filling the space between the windows and the arches. The basement window openings beneath the show windows have been in-filled with concrete; metal cellar doors open at the sidewalk. The sandstone base of one of the piers, next to the iron siamese outlet, has been cut for the installation of a drinking fountain (removed).

At the middle, and most striking, section of the building the brick piers of the first story continue vertically to create a double-story, round-arched arcade, whose imposts and archivolts are articulated by terra-cotta string courses, and a cornice above the third story is defined by decorative brickwork and a stone coping. At the four northern piers, four giant brick pilasters with stylized terra-cotta capitals and metal S-shaped tie rods enframe the three northern arches. Each of the recessed, metal-enframed, multilight window units consist of a lower (second story) tripartite sash with transom and an upper (third story) round-headed sash, with the two levels separated by a metal-relief, garlanded, spandrel panel. In both the upper and lower groups, the glass is set in deep molded metal enframements; the central wood sashes are one-over-one, flanked by small wood sashes with fixed panes.

At the fourth story a single, wood, one-over-one rectangular window is situated vertically over the axis of the bay below, excepting at the second bay from the north where a paired set of these windows emphasizes the central axis of the arcade below. Decorative, stepped brickwork defines a cornice with a terra-cotta finial at either end.

The mansard is slate-covered with metal flashing, and coped walls terminate either end. Piercing this roof are a hipped dormer with a wood one-over-one window located over the entry bay,

and a larger, gabled dormer with three one-over-one wood windows over the second bay from the north. The pediment of the larger dormer is enriched with terra-cotta relief floral decoration surrounding the building's commencement date, 1884. (The gable was originally flanked by aedicular brackets, removed by c1915.) Also at the mansard are seen a metal ventilator, a small skylight, and metal-pipe scaffolding behind the crest flashing. A chimney

can be seen behind the mansard at each end of the building, and the roof, continuing to the rear at the third story, is flat. Two one-over-one windows have been cut into the north wall at the fifth story.

Report Prepared by  
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#### NOTES

1. This section is based on the following sources: Anon., with sketches by C.A. Keetles, "Helping The Poor," *Harper's Weekly*, Feb. 8, 1879, 104, 110.  
*Annual Report of The Young Men's Christian Association of The City of New York* [hereafter *YMCA Annual Report*] (New York: The Association), *14th Annual Report, Jan. 1867*, 110; and the *32nd Annual Report* through the *37th Annual Report*, for 1884 through 1889, *passim*, in particular, *32nd Annual Report, Jan, 1885*, 41, 7; *33rd Annual Report, Jan. 1886*, 3, 19, 41, 43, 108-109; *34th, Jan. 1887*, 99-100; *37th, Jan. 1890*, 105, 107.  
Wm. Thompson Bonner, *New York The World's Metropolis 1623-1923* (New York: R.L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1924), 871; Robert M. Coates, "The Street That Died Young," *New York Times Magazine*, Sep. 14, 1924, 8; *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. Dumas Malone (New York: Chas. Scribner Sons, 1959-61): vol. III, 352-353, William B. Shaw, "William Earl Dodge, 1805-1883;" vol. X, 173-174, Alvin F. Harlow, "Cornelius Vanderbilt II 1843-1899."  
Journal of the Young Men's Institute of the YMCA, called variously, *Institute Doings*, *The Institute*, *The Young Men's Institute Notes*, and *Institute Notes* (New York: The Young Men's Institute, Dec. 1885-Dec. 28, 1932, *passim*), in particular, Dec. 1885, 1, 4; March 1886, 2, 3; Feb. and March 1892, w/o pagination; Sep. 26, 1903, 1. Sep. 8, 1908, 3; Sep. 12, 1908, 1, 4; March 20, 1909, 1; Jan 22, 1916, 3; Dec 28, 1932, 1-2.  
Erica Judge, Vincent Seyfried, Andrew Sparberg, "Elevated Railways," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 369-370; Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York City*, (Boston, Mass.: Pub. by Moses King, 1892), 376-380, 662-663; Henry Wysham Lanier, *A Century of Banking in New York 1822-1922* (New York: The Gilliss Press, 1922), 315, 316;  
LPC Research Files, in Architects' Files for Bradford L Gilbert, correspondence 3/18/1993, from Daniel Coe, Saginaw Depot Preservation Group, Saginaw, Michigan, to Marjorie Pearson, LPC Director of Research.  
*New York Times Obituaries*: Cleveland Hoadley Dodge (1860-1926), 6/25/1926, 1:2; Percy Rivington Pyne (1857-1929), 8/23/1929, 21:1; Moses Taylor Pyne (1855-1921), 4/23/1921, 11:5.  
Rev. J. F. Richmond, *New York and Its Institutions* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1871), 508-510; Jacob A. Riis, *How The Other Half Lives* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971; orig. pub. Chas. Scribner & Sons, New York, 1890), 69, 70, 75; George Stewart, "McBurney, Robert Ross (1837-1898)," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Chas. Scribner & Sons, 1961), ed. Dumas Malone, 556-557.  
YMCA of NYC Archives (unpublished ms.): Anon., "Historical Highlights of The Bowery Y.M.C.A.," without pagination; Anon., "The Bowery Branch of The Y.M.C.A. of New York City, A Short History" [hereafter "Short History"], compiled Apr. 15, 1927, 1-5; William J. Jones, "Relief Services of the New York City Men's Association 1852-1872," Bowery Branch YMCA, May 1932, 1-5.  
YMCA of Greater New York, Archives (unpublished ms.): YMCA Board of Directors, *Meeting* [hereafter *Directors Meeting*] (1/21/1884 - 1/21/1886, 521-627, *passim*), in particular, 1/21/1884, 521; 2/18/1884, 528; "Special Meeting," 3/10/1884, 530; 4/21/1884, 531; "Special Meeting," 7/01/1884, 538-539;

1/19/1885, 555; 2/16/1885, 563; 5/18/1885, 585-588.

Bowery Branch, YMCA of NYC, Committee of Management, *Minutes*, 2/20/1883, 10/17/1883, 4/15/1884, 5/20/1884, 12/16/1884, w/o pagination.

Young Men's Institute offprints, without pagination: *It's Summer, 1897; A Clean Resort for Men on The Bowery (1905)*.

*N.B.* The Third Avenue Elevated RR was built up the Bowery in 1876; it was electrified in 1902-03 and was dismantled in 1955.

2. Riis, 69, 70. "Short History," w/o pagination.

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was established in New York City in 1852. At first providing temporary reading and meeting rooms, the Association aimed to help the large numbers of young men "in destitute circumstances," who came to New York from rural America and stricken areas of Europe. In 1862, a young, enthusiastic Irish immigrant, Robert Ross McBurney (1837-1898), became the only paid officer of the Association, and successfully raised funds for relief money and for a central YMCA building. On April 3, 1866, the YMCA received an Act of Incorporation from the State which allowed for the holding of non-profit real estate, and in 1869 a five-story building (demolished) was completed at East 23rd Street and Fourth Avenue. The Association subsequently introduced branch organizations to provide limited services in the poorer areas of the city.

The Bowery Branch building opened in an existing building on June 4, 1872, at 134 Bowery. It had lodging quarters, reading rooms, an employment bureau, and a restaurant in the basement. After the Panic of 1873, this branch tried an "experiment in feeding" and provided "a place where men could be lodged for a limited time." Social activities were provided, although the main goal was to change behavior through evangelical Bible meetings and sermons. By 1882, the facilities were inadequate, and the upper four floors of 243 Bowery (still standing) were leased.

The 1872 establishment of the Bowery Branch was an idea of the YMCA Board of Directors' General Secretary Robert McBurney, who remained on the Bowery Branch's Committee of Management for the remainder of his life. A major financier of the alterations at 134 Bowery, the "Crystal" saloon, was William Earl Dodge, a director of the YMCA, and president of the Evangelical Alliance and the National Temperance Society.

3. Each YMCA Branch had a Committee of Management, whose chairman reported to the YMCA Board of Directors, whose president ultimately reported to the YMCA Board of Trustees. Cleveland H. Dodge was Chairman of the Bowery Branch Committee of Management, 1881-84, and Chairman of the Institute's Committee of Management, 1885-1887.
4. *33rd Annual Report, Jan. 1886*, 108-109. Before it was complete, on February 14, 1885, Cleveland Dodge held a meeting to discuss plans for the new building at his home, 2 East 29th Street; McBurney was there. The finished building had panelled first-floor reception rooms and a large fireplace, second-floor library and reading room, and class rooms on the upper floors, with a gymnasium in the rear and showers, lockers and bowling alley below the gym. It was ready "to provide for the physical, intellectual and spiritual welfare of the young men living in the vicinity." Moses King, 378.

The first Committee of Management of the Institute included Cleveland H. Dodge (1860-1926), Chairman; Percy R. Pyne, Jr. (1857-1929), Director of Finance; and Moses Taylor Pyne (1855-1921), Director of the Library and Reading Room. Cleveland H. Dodge and the Pyne brothers, had graduated from Princeton in 1879, 1878, and 1877 respectively. Their fathers were successful financiers in banking, trust and railroads, and were active in philanthropic works including the YMCA. The fathers, both of whom were listed in the 1866 YMCA Act of Incorporation, William Earl Dodge and Percy R. Pyne, had vast holdings in the Farmer's Loan and Trust Co. and in City National Bank, of which Mr. Pyne was president (1882-1891). The Pyne Brothers and Cleveland Dodge, sooner or later, became directors and officers in both those concerns. William Earl Dodge was the head of Phelps, Dodge and Company, the foremost dealer in copper and other metals, and his son became Chairman of the Board. At Princeton the three met fellow student Woodrow Wilson, who remained a lifelong friend of Cleveland Dodge. The Pynes and Dodge

pursued lifelong philanthropic work, often together. In 1925 Cleveland Dodge and Percy Pyne were on a Young Men's Institute Honor Roll as having been long-term members, and in 1923 Dodge was 1st Vice President and Percy Pyne, Secretary, of the Museum of Natural History.

5. The YMCA had had its headquarters constructed in 1869, but all the branches until the Institute were in existing renovated buildings. In 1884 the three major YMCA branches, the Bowery, the Harlem, and the German (2nd Avenue) branches, were all requesting new quarters, and in April 21, 1884, the Board was giving power to the Finance Committee to purchase property for new buildings for all three. Of the branches listed by Moses King in 1892, those with buildings constructed by the YMCA are in chronological order: The Institute (fin. 1885); the Railroad Branch (built by Cornelius Vanderbilt II in 1887); and the Harlem Branch (fin. 1889). The other fourteen branches were in pre-existing buildings and mostly were relief and lodging facilities. Of the constructed buildings, only the first, the Institute, is extant. A Young Women's Christian Association Building, 7 E. 15th St, built 1885-87 to designs by Robert Henderson Robertson, is extant, but is younger than the Institute. (It is within the LPC designated Ladies Mile Historic District.) The concept of charging fees and having classes, social gatherings, and athletic activities among the members -- and no lodging or dining facilities -- is today the main drawing power of the YMCA.
6. *Directors Meeting*, Apr. 21, 1884, 533.
7. *Directors Meeting*, Jan. 19, 1885, 555. This Committee that the President had appointed to name the new building consisted of Percy Pyne, Sr., as Chairman, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, Wm E. Dodge Jr, Cleveland H Dodge, the Senior General Secretary and Secretary Robert McBurney. Vanderbilt was interested in this building, and the YMCA *32nd Annual Report, Jan. 1885*, 41, shows that the families Dodge, Payne and Vanderbilt contributed 42 percent of the money needed to erect it. Earlier than this, at a special Directors meeting on March 10, 1884, Vice-President Vanderbilt, in the presence of General Secretary McBurney, William Earl Dodge and his son, Cleveland H. Dodge, "(m)oved that the preparation of plan (sic) for the Bowery Branch Building to be submitted to the Board, be referred to the Finance Committee and that Messrs. C.H. Dodge and P.R. Pyne be requested to confer with the Committee. Carried." (YMCA *Directors Meeting*, 3/10/1884, 530.)
8. YMCA *33rd Annual report, Jan 1886*, 108-109. The *By-Laws, Young Men's Institute* were approved at the YMCA *Directors Meeting*, May 18, 1885. The devotional meetings were not ritual services. The Act of Corporation demanded a non-sectarian attitude, and at least four different Protestant denominations had to be on the Board of Directors (Dodge was Presbyterian, the Pynes were Episcopal). Devotions was intended to encourage and maintain abstinence from alcohol and drugs. In the YMCA *34th Annual Report, Jan. 1887*, 100, Dodge quotes one young man as saying "(t)he prayer meetings have been a special help to me to... give up some of those bad habits which tended to pull me down and ruin me." These habits included drugs, as a lecture on "Stimulants and Narcotics" given in 1886 indicates. By the end of the century many members were Roman Catholic. In 1909 an article in a New York Italian journal, *Bollettino Della Sera*, described the Institute as having many Catholic Italians, members.
9. *37th Annual Report, Jan. 1890*, 105. A class in steam engineering was begun in 1889.
10. Later class/ lecture/ athletic elaborations reflected the vicissitudes of the turn of the century. The year 1889 saw the formation of a Savings Fund System, the first classes in First Aid, and the lectures that year on photography and electricity led to an 1892 camera club, with its own darkroom, and by 1897 to a class in Practical Electricity. In 1908 "up-to-date" moving pictures were shown at the Members Monthly Meeting. In 1905 classes in boxing and wrestling were initiated; the gym uniform was a required black shirt, long gray pants and shoes without heels or nails. Summer programs were available at Peekskill and Lake George, New York; yachting outings were available; and a baseball team had been formed. In 1908 J.A. Billing an Olympic winner in standing, high and broad jump gave an exhibition; and a "harriers" or long distance running club was begun.

11. The new 1915 pool was 21'X 39' from 3 1/2 to 7 1/2' in depth, and its accompanying shower room had 12 showers. The new basement had mechanical equipment, laundry, more showers, and a billiard and pool room. In 1918 a program was begun for boys under 17.
12. This section is based on the following sources: Daniel Coe, correspondence March 18, 1993, *op. cit.*; Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper 1865-1913* (New York: Yale Univ., 1996), 161, 163, 166; Carroll L.V. Meeks, *The Railroad Station, An Architectural History* (Secaucus, N.J.: Castle Books, 1978), 107-108, 129; NYC, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets, File: Block 492, Lot 23, 222-224 Bowery, correspondence from Bradford L. Gilbert to W.P. Easterbrook, Oct. 4 [?], 1884; Marjorie Pearson, "Gilbert, Bradford L.," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek (New York: The Free Press/ Macmillan Pub. Co., Inc., 1982), vol. 2, 201; Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessy and Ingalls, 1970), 233, 454.
13. In 1883, Gilbert first appears in the records of the YMCA. He had an office at 257 Broadway, and besides the New York, Lake Erie & Western R.R. Co., he worked for Flint & Pere Marquette, Michigan, R.R. Co. He had a branch office in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1883 Cornelius Vanderbilt II had become chairman of the Board of Directors of the New York Central and Michigan Central. From 1880 Moses Taylor Pyne had been general solicitor for the Western Railroad, of which his brother, Percy R. Pyne Jr. was a director. Cleveland Dodge's father was one of the largest shareholders in the Erie Railroad, and Cleveland's office was at 176 Broadway.
14. The Tower Building is now recognized as "the first complete skeletal structure built without masonry adjuncts. It was very likely the first building with a complete system of wind bracing, and it was certainly the first for which a drawing of the bracing survives." Landau, 166.
15. This section is based on the following sources: Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light. The 'Queen Anne' Movement 1860-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 14, 15, 18, 20, 25, 68, 208-210; LPC, *The Century Building* (LP-1539), prepared by Gale Harris (New York: City of New York, 1986), 7-8; LPC, *The New York House and School of Industry* (LP-1632), prepared by James T. Dillon (New York: City of New York, 1990), 3-5; YMCA *33rd Annual Report, Jan 1886*, frontispiece.
16. King, 378.
17. This section is based on the following sources: M. Brown, S. Hunter, J. Jacobus, N. Rosenblum, D. Sobol, *American Art* (New York: Abrams, 1979), 490, 493; Robert Coe, "Becoming Buddha, the Life and Times of Poet John Giorno," *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, Fall 1994, 75-83; Fernand Leger obituary, *New York Times*, (Aug. 18, 1955) 23:1; New York County, Office of the Register, Deeds Liber 4177, Page 439 (Nov. 2, 1942), Liber 5035, Page 568 (Apr. 18, 1958); 222 Bowery Co-op private files, *Leases*; Robert W. Snyder, "Rothko, Mark (1903-1970)," *The Encyclopedia of New York*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1024; *Who's Who* (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1980-81), "Benglis, Lynda," 231, "Brooks, James," 1278; *Who's Who In The East*, "Walton, William" (Chicago: Who's Who, Inc., 1966-67), 2227-2228.
18. Until 1942 the factory building of the X-Ray Manufacturing Corp. was at the northeast corner of Bowery and Stanton St., diagonally across from the Institute.
19. In its six-month life, this service, a two-and-a-half-minute recorded poem, different each day, inspired by the weather bureau's phone service, received 1,112,337 calls. In 1970 Vice President Spiro Agnew personally denounced John Giorno for anti-War activity.
20. This is verbal history related to the LPC staff by Mr. Giorno on Oct. 7, 1998.
21. The Nygma is one of the four traditions within Tibetan Buddhism. Each has a head *lama* (teacher), and, for example, the Dalai Lama is the head of the Gelugpa, all of whose *lamas* are monks. Dudjom was married and had children. There are Nygma monks (*khempos*), and two of these, recognized scholars, Palden Sherab

and Tsewang Dongyal, followed Dudjom to New York, and since his death have strengthened the New York congregation (*sangha*), and they and others currently hold teachings and meditation sessions at the Bunker. John Giorno has founded a society to fight AIDS and to encourage the arts; the not-for-profit society, *Giorno Poetry Systems* is also located at the Bunker. Giorno and three other artists, including the well-known sculptor, Lynda Benglis, own their lofts and reside there full time. Other people who have lived here include William Walton, who won a bronze star for his Time-Life reporting during World War II, and was the coordinator for the Kennedy-Johnson 1960 presidential campaign. The ground story, once the Institute's reception room, is leased to commercial enterprise, currently a retail furniture shop.

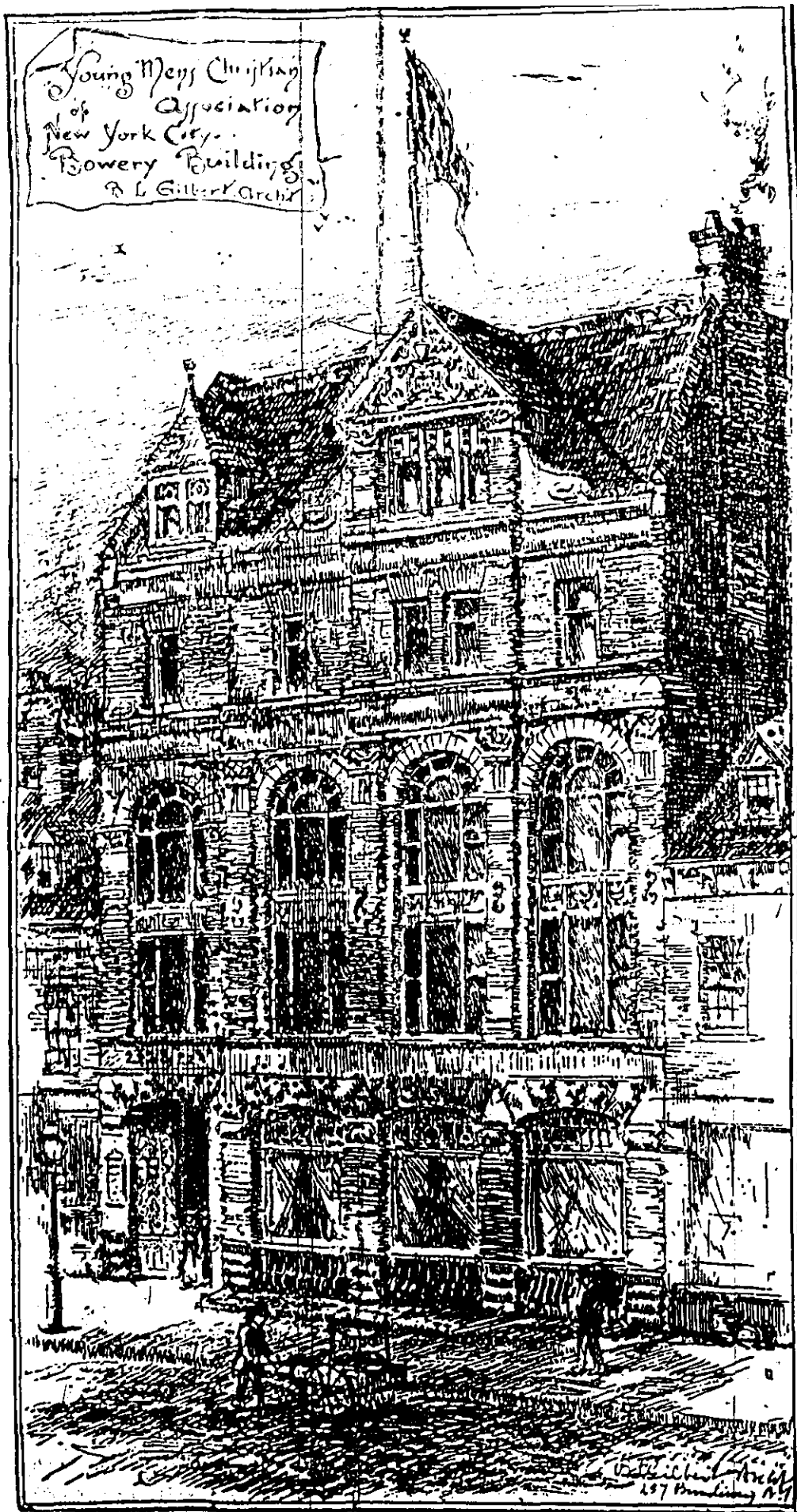
22. This section is based on the following sources: New York City Dept. of Buildings, Plans, Permits and Dockets: NB 1012-1884; Alt 1553-1915; in File: Block 492, Lot 23, 222-4 Bowery, *Letter* (Dec. 6, 1884), from F.A. Winslow, Hecla Iron Works, Poulson and Eger, contractors for iron girders. According to N.B. 1012, filed June 30, 1884, the new YMCA building architect was Bradford L. Gilbert, the builder, Patrick Walsh, and the 50' by 88', 5-story building was begun July 27, 1884, and completed September 29, 1885, at an estimated cost of \$48,000. The stone and metal drinking fountain was donated by Abner W. Colgate in 1889, removed in the early 1900s, restored to that location at the end of the 1980s, and stolen c1990.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

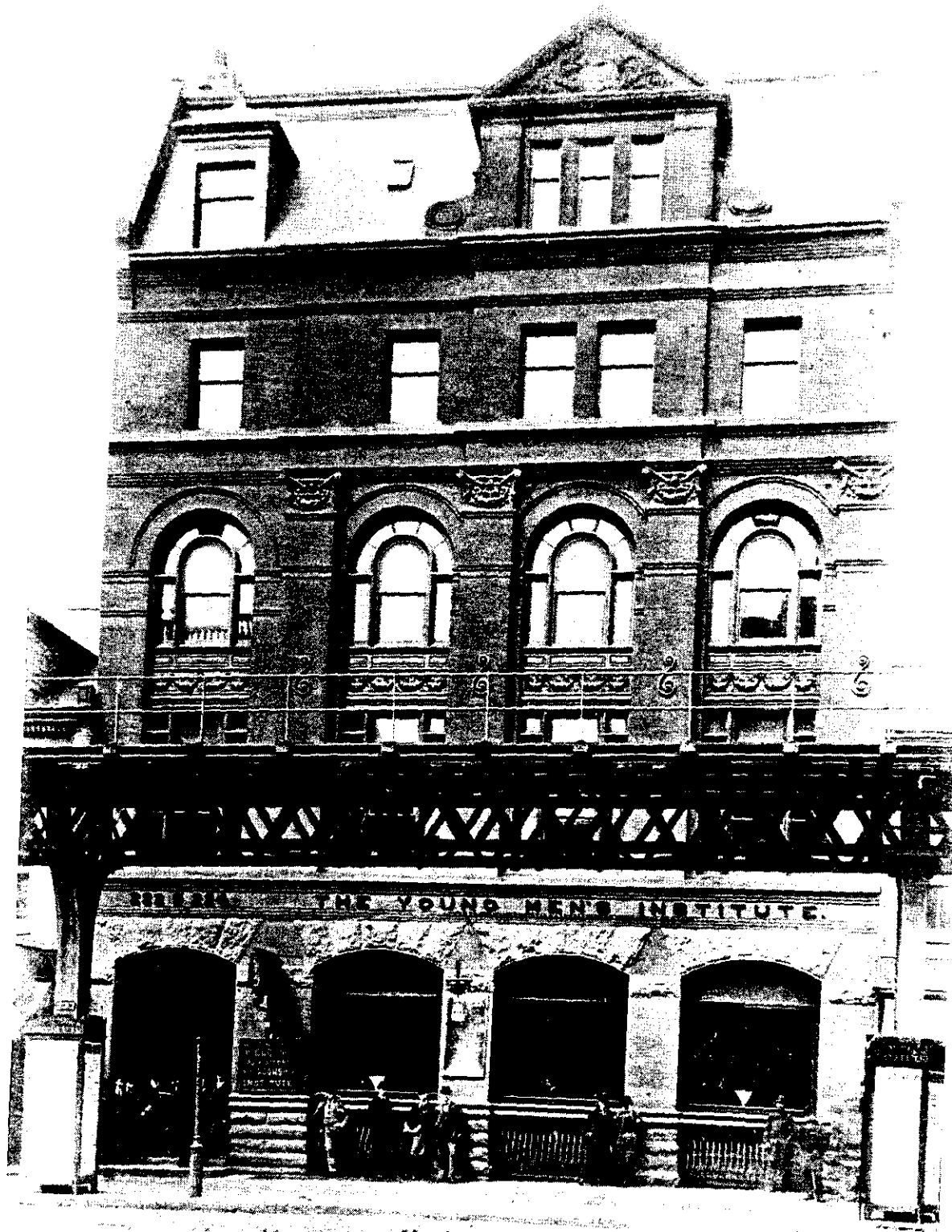
On the basis of careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Young Men's Institute Building has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Young Men's Institute Building of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was constructed in 1884-1885 as the first and sole surviving nineteenth-century New York City YMCA branch building; that it was designed by architect Bradford L. Gilbert and is his major surviving work in New York City; that it originally housed the Young Men's Institute, which was a membership organization intended to promote the physical, intellectual and spiritual health of young working men in the vicinity of the Bowery; that the facade of this five-story Queen Anne style brick and sandstone building is largely intact; that the facade features a recessed entry at the south bay, a rusticated sandstone base with segmental arches, a mid-section with giant pilasters framing a double-story arcade with recessed metal-enframed windows, and a top-section crowned by a slate-covered mansard pierced by two dormers; that the larger dormer has a pediment with terracotta decoration surrounding the commencement date, 1884; and that since the YMCA left the building in 1932, that the building has been converted to residential/ studio space for world-renowned artists and a meditation and teaching center for Tibetan Buddhists.

Accordingly, pursuant to provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the (former) Young Men's Institute Building of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), 222 Bowery, aka 222-224 Bowery, Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 492, Lot 23, as its Landmark Site.



Young Men's Institute of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), 222 Bowery  
Drawing by Bradford L. Gilbert c1885 Source: YMCA 33rd Annual Report, Jan 1886



*W. A. H. H. H.*

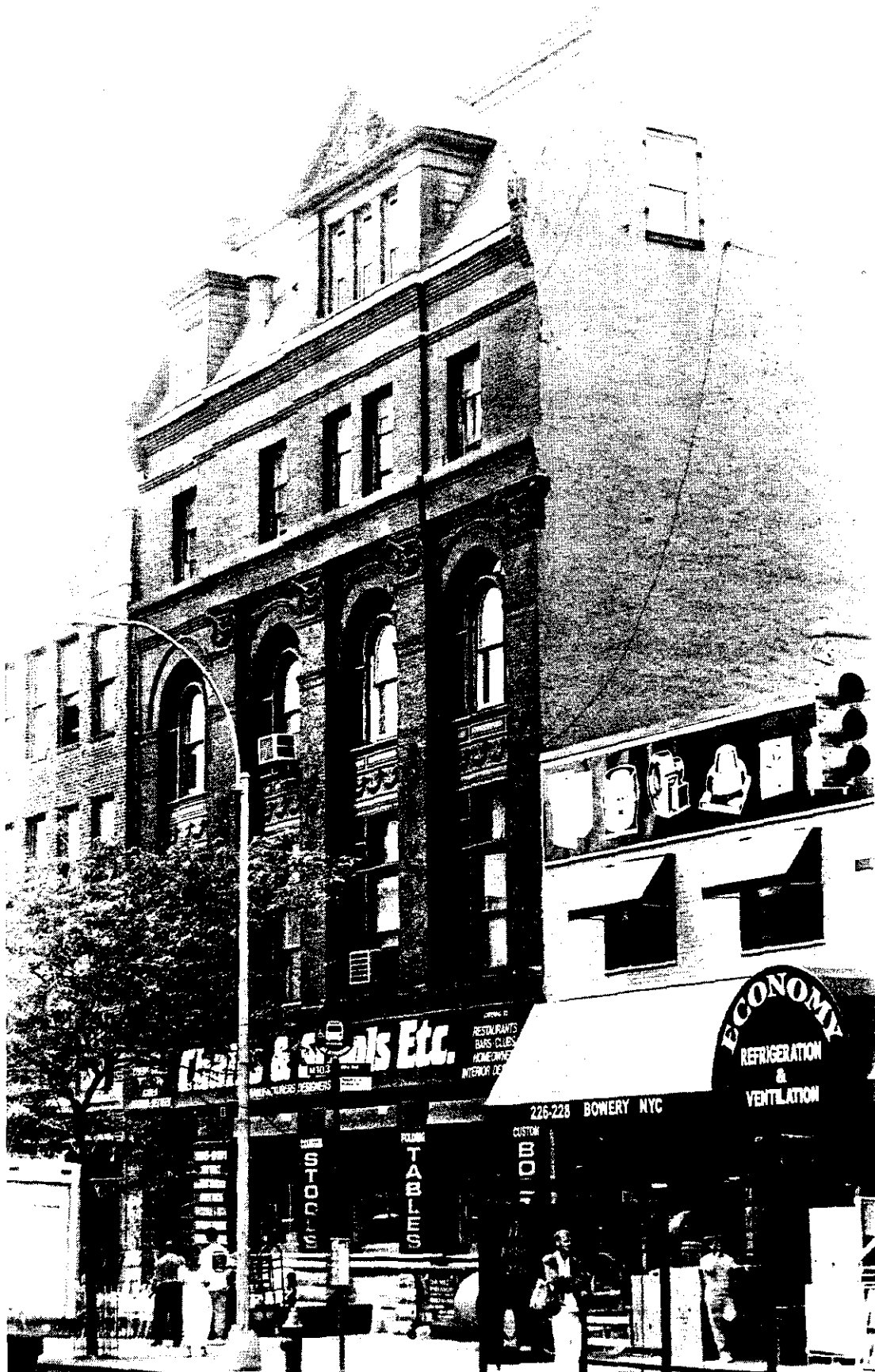
Young Men's Institute of the YMCA (c1886), 222 Bowery  
Source: YMCA of Greater New York Archives



Young Men's Institute of the YMCA (c1915), 222 Bowery  
Source: YMCA of Greater New York Archives



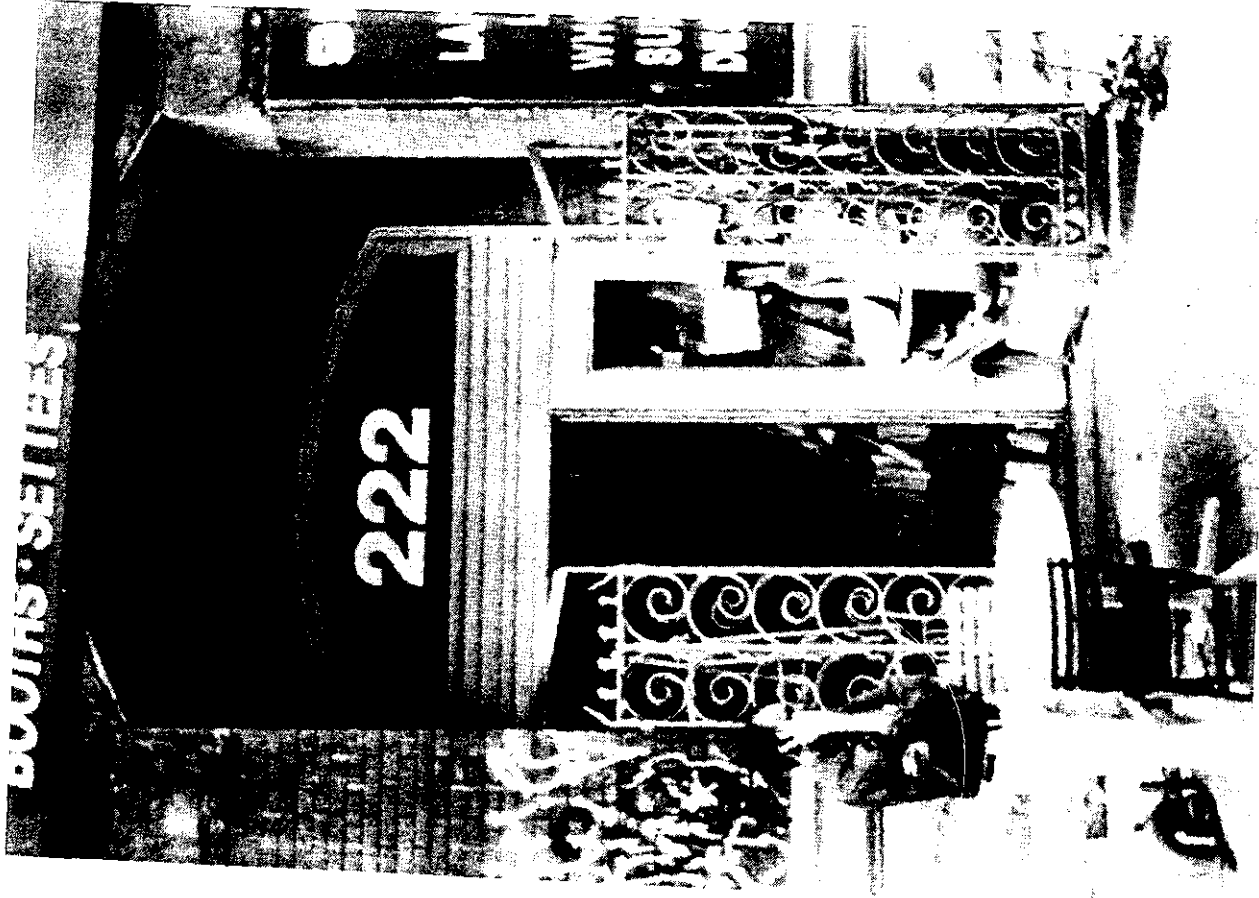
(Former) Young Men's Institute of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA),  
222 Bowery, Borough of Manhattan  
Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



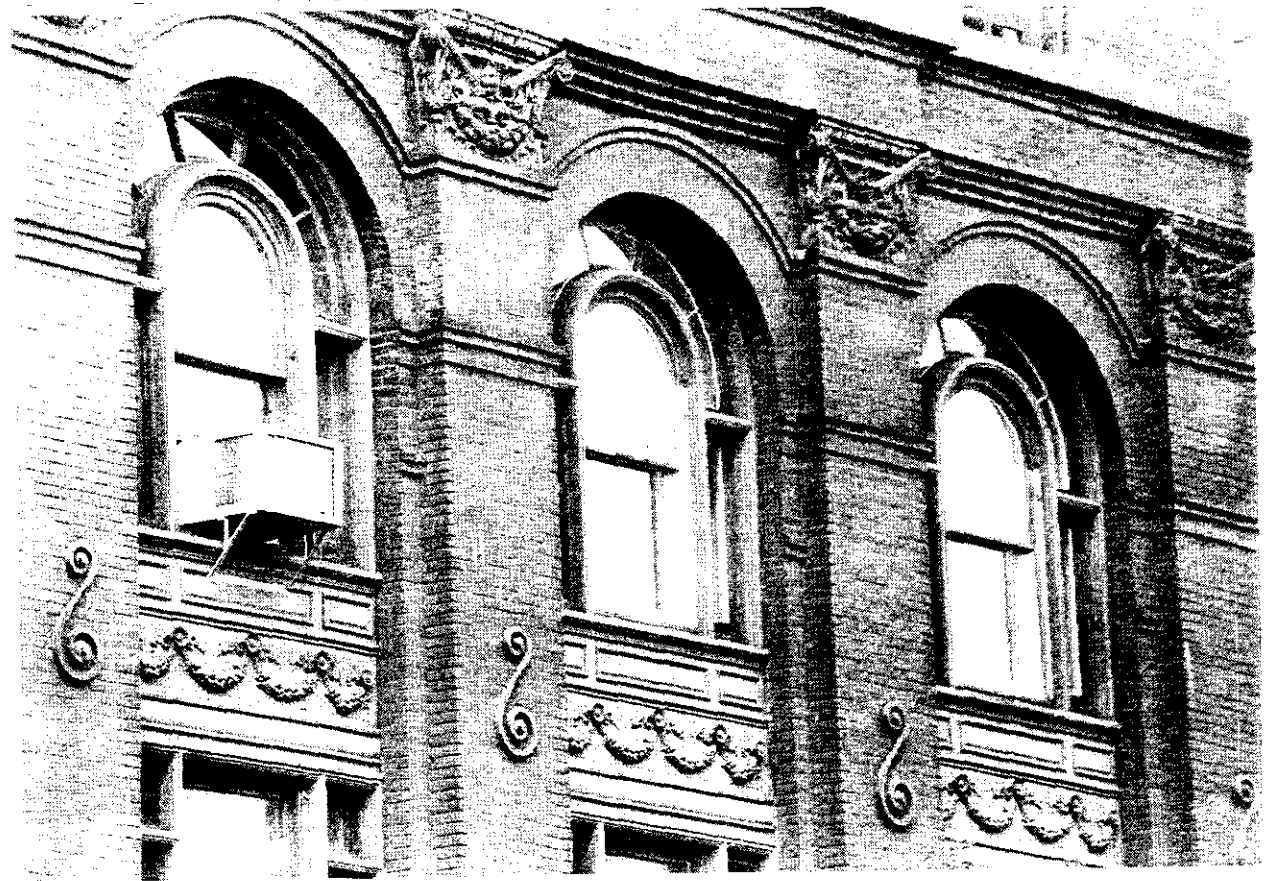
(Former) Young Men's Institute of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA),  
222 Bowery, Borough of Manhattan Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



Detail of floors one through four  
 Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



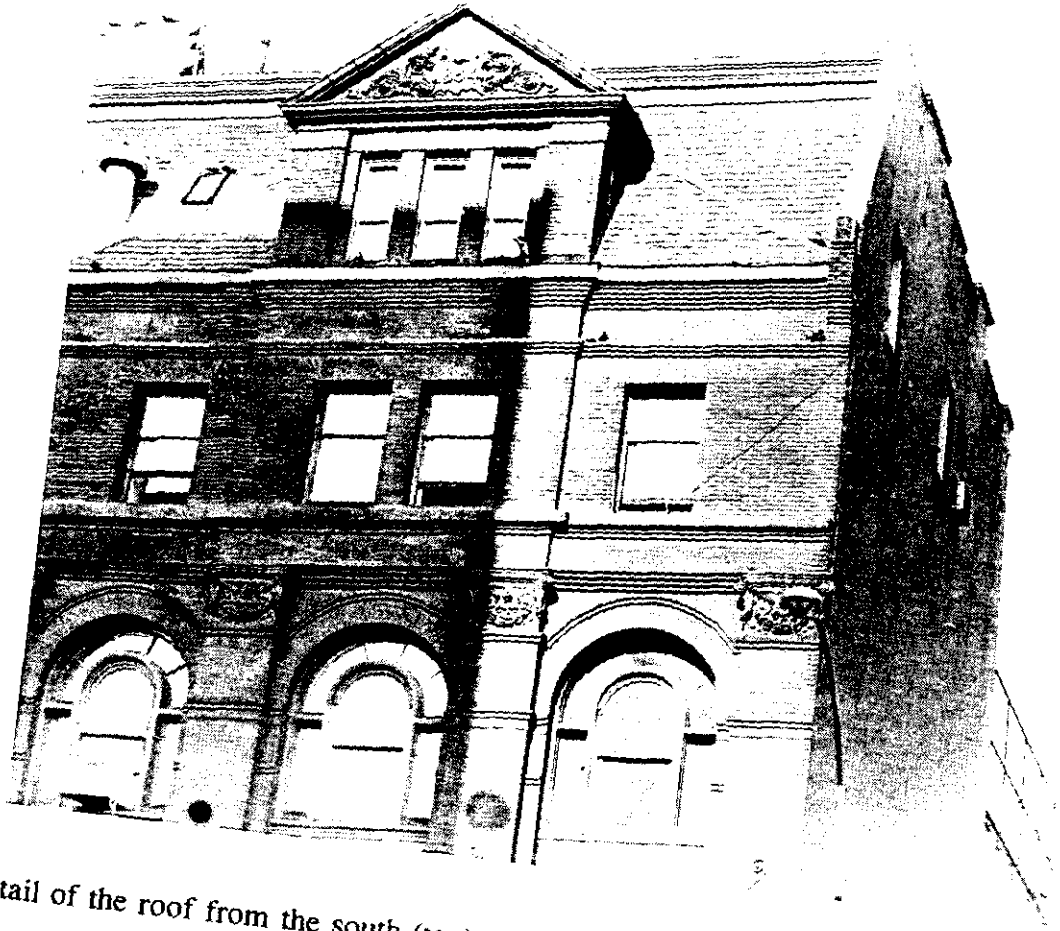
Detail of recessed entry vestibule  
 Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



Detail of third-story windows  
Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



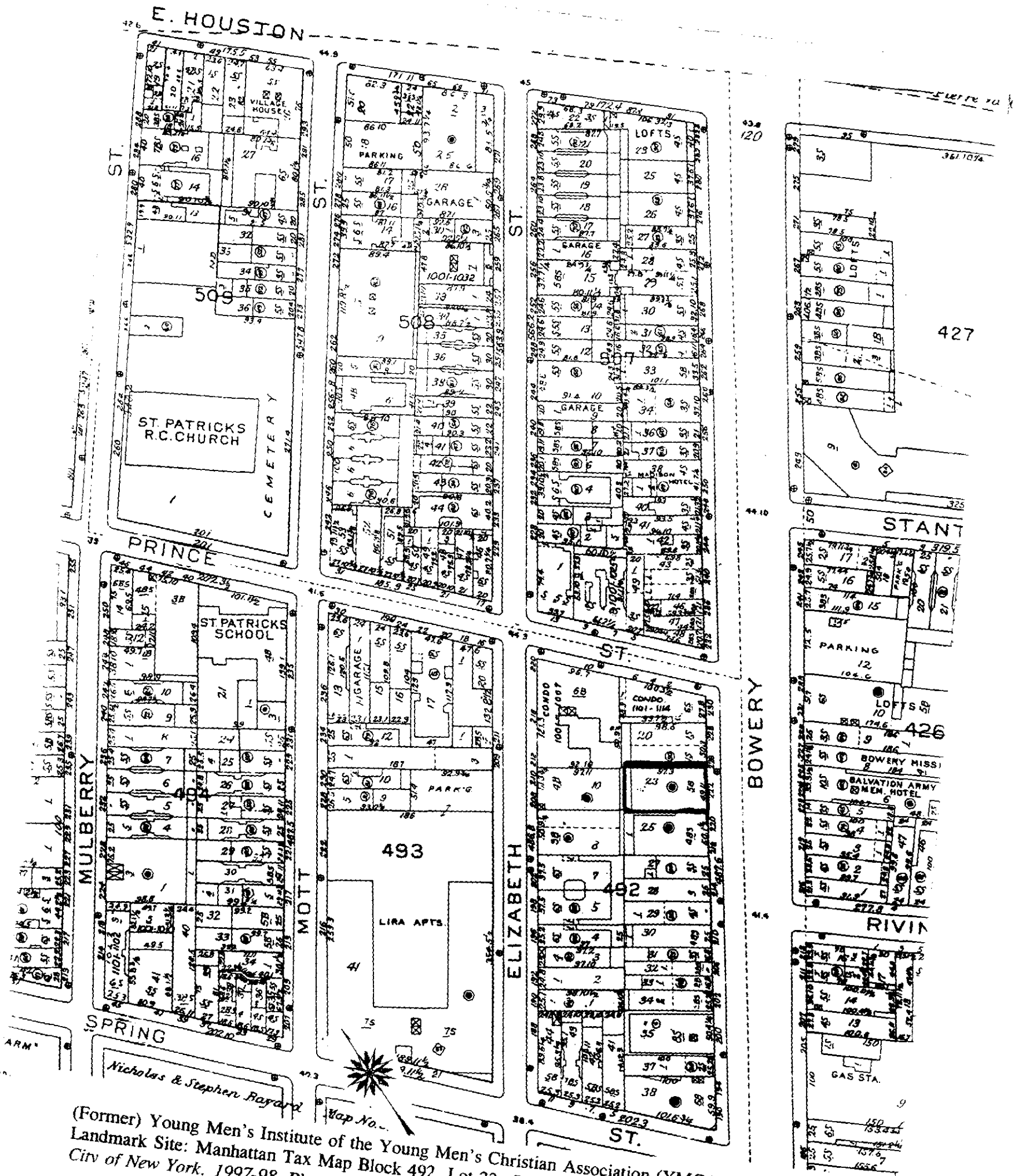
Detail of the first and second stories at the two southern bays  
Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



Detail of the roof from the south (top) and from the north. Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



Detail of the larger dormer and gable pediment  
Photo: Joseph Brooks, 1998



(Former) Young Men's Institute of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), 222 Bowery  
 Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 492, Lot 23. Graphic Source: Manhattan Landbook of the  
 City of New York, 1997-98, Plate 19.



