

The New York City Tenements in the Progressive Era

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the tenement as a building type and a complicated social landscape in the decades before federally supported public housing. It considers the New York City tenements in the Progressive Era context. It unites three important aspects of the tenements: their fire escapes as public features, the tenement as a socially marginalized and disreputable building type, and model tenements as reform attempts. The first chapter will investigate fire escapes as public features of the New York City tenements. Chapter Two will examine how Jacob Riis and the issue of prostitution made the tenement building type a socially marginalized and disreputable space. Chapter Three will examine the history of model tenements. It will also assess the role of model tenements as Progressive reform attempts. The thesis will demonstrate that the Progressive Era was a critical point for the tenements as a building type and a complicated social landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the tenement as a building type and a complicated social landscape in the decades before federally supported public housing. It considers the New York City tenements in the Progressive Era context. It unites three important aspects of the tenements: their fire escapes as public features, the tenement as a socially marginalized and disreputable building type, and model tenements as reform attempts. The thesis relies on newly researched information, but also offers reevaluations of previously discovered material. It will demonstrate that the Progressive Era was a critical point for the tenements as a building type and a complicated social landscape.

Housing, or a house, is supposed to embody ultimate privacy, familiarity, and protection from the world. This is especially the case in the U.S. home, where the idealization of the private single-family home is prevalent.¹ Yet, tenement housing seems to contradict the idea of what an American home should be. It is, among the most obvious, not a single-family dwelling. It contains features such as fire escapes which are extensions of the home but are also public in every sense, both architecturally and in terms of administration. Tenement housing was socially marginalized because of its negative depictions in photojournalism. Its reputation was further besmirched because of the perceived immorality of its dwellers, particularly women. Tenement

¹ This idealization of the single-family home comes from England. John Ruskin, an influential English critic of art and architecture, even said, "There is a sanctity in a good man's house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins..." Ruskin's work was heavily referenced in both the English and American Arts and Crafts Movement. The Movement was the artistic counterpart of the socialist progressivism that was prevalent. In the U.S., Ruskin, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and progressivism were particularly associated with the Progressive Era. Also, Zach Violette talks about this idea in Chapter Five of his dissertation, see Zachary J. Violette, "The Decorated Tenement: Working-Class Housing in Boston and New York, 1860-1910," Ph.D. Diss., Boston University, 2014.

women stepped outside their natural domestic sphere into the public sphere by participating in the workforce. "Public women," or prostitutes, also brought the workforce into the domestic sphere. They were also antithetical to the Victorian ideal woman as a protector of the home who was both morally and physically intact. Reformers sought to reform tenement housing through model tenements. Model tenements were designed to feature amenities commonly found in the middle-class home. However, no matter how much reformers idealized the concept of model tenements, they were nonetheless failed attempts.

What is a tenement?

A tenement is generally defined as "a room or a set of rooms forming a separate resident within a house or block of apartments," according to the Oxford English Dictionary. However, to most people, a tenement building brings to mind multi-level row houses in New York City, particularly in the Lower East Side neighborhood in Manhattan.² The establishment of the Tenement Museum located at 97 Orchard Street helps reinforce this common association.³ In addition to their rather broad and neutral definition, the tenements are often defined by their social stigma of being overcrowded slums, a condition associated with having housed foreign immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Progressive muckraking journalists such as Jacob Riis helped perpetuate this negative image of tenement housing. Riis' famous photography book *How the Other Half Lives*, published in 1890, shaped how the public saw New York City tenements and their dwellers for decades.

² This is particularly true in the American context. There are, of course, tenement houses in other cities such as Dublin, London, and so on.

³ 97 Orchard Street is located in the Lower East Side neighborhood.

Despite its social definition, a tenement had a legal definition under the Tenement House Law of 1867—"any house, building, or portion thereof, which is rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied or is occupied, as the home or residence of more than three families living independently of one another and doing their own cooking upon the premises, or by more than two families upon a floor, so living and cooking and having a common right in the halls, stairways, yards, water-closets, or privies, or some of them."⁴ The specificity with which a tenement was defined reflects one of the very first attempts of the government to classify and regulate what was at the time a relatively new building type. New York City by the mid nineteenth century saw an influx of foreign immigrants, increasing the demand for housing. As a result, the residential landscape of New York City saw an explosion in tenement construction and occupancy in the 1860s. Prior to this time, not many purposely built tenements were present—"tenement housing" existed in the form of existing houses converted into multi-family dwellings without any type of regulatory control in place.

A typical tenement layout consists of three rooms: parlor/living room, kitchen, and bedroom (Figure 1). In their early days, tenements were tight, dark, and poorly ventilated spaces that lacked basic amenities such as running water. With the Tenement House Law of 1867, things began to improve, though not significantly. During the Gilded Age, another Tenement House Law was passed in 1879. One of the major improvements demanded by the 1879 House Law was that all tenements needed to have adequate ventilation. It required that every bedroom had a window. As a result, "old law" tenements, consisting mainly of the "dumbbell" tenement design (Figure 2), began to populate the city's landscape. The dumbbell tenements were very problematic because the middle airshaft opening to which the bedroom windows opened was

⁴ New York State Legislature, *Laws* (1867), ch. 980, sec. 17, p. 2265-2273.

typically narrow, providing insufficient light and air. In addition, the air shaft would often be filled with garbage, producing unbearable odors. In the same year that Jacob Riis published his book, the "new law," or the Tenement House Law of 1901, was passed. In true Progressive Era fashion, the "new law" required more radical changes such as adding courtyards and indoor toilet facilities (Figure 3). In addition, it demanded for the demolition of Five Points and Mulberry Bend neighborhoods, elimination of rear tenements, and addition of playgrounds.⁵

The Progressive Era

The Progressive Era, generally speaking, spanned from the 1890s to the 1920s. As its name suggests, the period is marked by a series of social and political reforms such as labor, immigration, and housing, all of which reacted against increasing industrialization and urbanization. Progressivism in the U.S. can find its origins in English precedents. In England, a similar reaction against industrialization in the form of socialism took place several decades earlier. Progressives in the United States believed that the morals of people were related to their living conditions. In other words, population groups such as foreign immigrants, who were perceived as being more prone to vice, needed to be taken out of their slum conditions in order to improve their morals.⁶

Reform in the U.S. Progressive Era, like England, saw its manifestations artistically and architecturally. In England, the Arts and Crafts Movement was born out of its reformative context. William Morris, the father of the Movement and a socialist himself, gave birth to the artistic manifestation of England's socio-political zeitgeist through his Red House and romantic

⁵ See New York State Legislature, *Laws* (1901), ch. 334, p. 889-923.

⁶ See Chapter One in Roy Lubove, *Progressives and the Slums: Tenement House Reform in New York City, 1890-1917* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), 1-24.

utopia in *News from Nowhere* (1890).⁷ It is perhaps no coincidence that the Arts and Crafts Movement took root in the U.S. simultaneously as the advent of the Progressive Era. Siegfried Bing, renowned art dealer, scholar, and proponent of the French Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau, helped transport the Arts and Crafts to the United States. Like many European Arts and Crafts followers, Bing revealed an interest in the relationship between art, architecture, and reform when he sought to improve living conditions through the decoration of interior spaces.⁸ Yet, in existing scholarship, the U.S. Arts and Crafts movement is represented by Gustav Stickley in New York State, Ralph Adams Cram in Boston, Frank Lloyd Wright in the Midwest, and the Greene brothers in California. Although, some scholars have also acknowledged the connection between progressivism, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and their architectural manifestations in New York City.⁹

Fire Escapes as Public Features of the Tenements

Architecturally, the tenements contained features that were part of the tenement home and yet were "public" because of the way in which they encroached onto public space. In addition, some features of the tenements were also publicly administered. For example, the tenement fire escape, one of the most distinctive features of the tenements, often occupied space that was not part of the private home but the public street. While many residents indeed treated the fire escape as an extension of their living space, the structure was imposed upon tenement

⁷ The Red House is an Arts and Crafts house designed by William Morris and Phillip Webb in 1860. It is located in Bexleyheath, England.

⁸ See Gabriel Weisberg, "Redesigning the Home: Bing's Art Nouveau Workshops," in *The Origins of l'Art Nouveau: The Bing Empire*, ed. by Weisberg, Edwin Becker, and Evelyne Posseme (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 2004), 164-187.

⁹ Scholars that have written about the connection include Richard Guy Wilson, see Richard Guy Wilson, "Gustav Stickley and *The Craftsman*, Social and Political Values," *Arts and Crafts* 6, no. 3 (1993): 27-31.

housing by State law and was meant to do nothing more than serve its intended fire safety function. Today, most people recognize the intimate connection between the fire escape and tenement housing; the fire escape is the only feature of the tenements whose silhouette has been made into a Christmas ornament and sold at the Tenement Museum (Figure 4).¹⁰ Yet, few can articulate exactly why there is a connection, or the significance of that connection.

The tenement fire escape was not a product of the Progressive Era. In fact, the fire escape was required since the inception of the purpose-built tenement in the 1860s. However, during the Progressive Era, fire safety was taken more seriously, and the fire escape became more publicly controlled.

The Tenement as a Socially Marginalized and Disreputable Building Type

As introduced earlier, against the backdrop of U.S. Progressivism, reform journalists such as Jacob Riis began to capture the slum conditions in hopes of mobilizing the middle classes to join their efforts. Riis, who befriended Theodore Roosevelt, targeted the tenements in New York City, particularly in the Lower East and West Sides of Manhattan.¹¹ Although he tried to capture the true conditions of tenements, or at least wanted to present it as such, Riis sensationalized the content of his photographs in order to generate impact. Despite using photography as his primary mode of communication, the photographer never saw himself as an artist. Instead, he aligned himself with political figures and activists, and toured the city to educate the public through

¹⁰ In my own experience from talking to people during the Tenement Museum tours, a lot of people recognized the connection between the fire escape and tenements.

¹¹ Theodore Roosevelt appointed the Tenement House Commission which formed the Tenement House Department in 1901. Also Riis' friend, Robert de Forest was the commissioner of the Tenement House Commission and played part in the Charity Organization Society.

lectures using lantern slides.¹² Despite his seemingly benevolent intentions, the tenements were depicted in a negative light, with their dwellers rendered as helpless, dehumanized objects subjected to the viewer's gaze. Without doubt, Riis' work helped the passing of the House Law of 1901, but is also representative of the willingness of Progressive reformers to convey their message at the expense of their subjects.¹³ Oftentimes, Riis ventured inside of people's homes in the tenements in order to capture the private lives of tenement dwellers; the privacy of tenement dwellers is thus invaded by the public eye (Figure 5). In exposing the private moments of his subjects, Riis depicted the tenements as a building type that was socially marginalized.

The tenement as a socially marginalized building type was accentuated by its disrepute as a space of immorality, especially of female immorality. During the Progressive Era, women became less confined to their roles in the home, breaking away from the Victorian model of the separation of spheres, and of women being bound to their domestic duties as mothers and wives. Among both the middle and lower classes, more and more women began working, stepping into what used to be the male, public sphere. Their presence increased in social activism, which ultimately led to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, granting women's suffrage. Despite the progress women had made, the Progressive Era was not particularly kind to women in the tenements. While many tenement women held jobs in factories, others engaged in the informal economy of prostitution working out of the tenements.

Prostitution, among other social "evils," had always been an issue in the urban environment of New York City, but it was not until the Progressive Era that the issue became pronounced through a series of public condemnations. Reformers vowed to eliminate the

¹² See Maren Stange, "Jacob Riis and Urban Visual Culture: The Lantern Slide Exhibition as Entertainment and Ideology," *Journal of Urban History* 15 (1989): 274-303.

¹³ New York State Legislature, *Laws* (1879), ch. 504, p. 554-556.

problem, and punish those who continued to commit the crime. In 1913, John Rockefeller sponsored a monumental effort and launched a public report on vice in the city in conjunction with the Bureau of Social Hygiene that he helped establish.¹⁴ He targeted the issue of prostitution in particular, and campaigned to efface the social evil from the streets of the city.

Women in the Progressive Era had a heightened public presence for their expansion into the workforce and status in social activism. This public presence was further emphasized by the public nature of prostitution. Sex was, and continues to be today, considered a private affair to most people. Because prostitutes sold sex, thereby making sex a public commodity, they were considered "public women." In the Progressive Era, an attempt to restore women back to their place in the home according to Victorian ideals took place. This was especially the case in the tenements, where prostitution was perceived as being most prevalent, resulting in the criminalization of the tenements.

Model Tenements as Reform Attempts

Legislation such as the various Tenement House Laws helped prevent sub-par tenements with poor conditions from being constructed, and were guidelines for builders to renovate existing tenement buildings. However, laws were difficult to enforce in practice, and many existing tenements remained in bad shape. Law-compliant, higher quality tenements were constructed, but they also caused tenement owners to increase rent, making them inaccessible to the poorer tenement dwellers. As Progressive reformers began to seek other ways to provide a solution to improve the conditions in the tenements, they looked to philanthropy.

¹⁴ See "Rockefeller Report on Commercialized Vice," *Survey* 30 (1913): 257-259.

Corporate philanthropy enabled higher quality tenements to be erected without the need to maximize the investors' return on their money. This way, tenements could be rented out at an affordable rate. Funded by wealthy philanthropists, model tenements were erected. Model tenements featured updated amenities such as light and airy spaces championed by Progressive housing reformers. However, maintaining the model tenements was a strenuous task, the conditions in many quickly deteriorated. Most of the model tenements that were constructed ended up failing, and did not achieve what they had intended.

Historiography

As a topic, the New York City tenements have been very well studied in general. Almost every publication on the history of New York City includes a section on the tenements, most of which consider the relationship between the tenements and immigration history.¹⁵ Others consider the tenements through the lens of urban housing. Originally published in 1990 and recently revised in 2016, *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* by Richard Plunz, Professor of Architecture at Columbia GSAPP, traces the architectural development of tenement housing through legislation and reform.¹⁶

Since the establishment of the Tenement Museum in New York City in 1988, the New York City tenements have been understood on a more micro scale, with scholarship focusing on the monograph of the tenement building at 97 Orchard Street. Publications such as the Museum's

¹⁵ See, for example, Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham: A History of New York City From 1898 to 1919* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁶ Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, Revised Ed (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). Also see Anthony Jackson, *A Place Called Home: A History of Low-Cost Housing in Manhattan* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976).

own *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum* (1999) provides a history of the founding of the museum, while giving a short summary of the history of the tenement at 97 Orchard Street and its social context. In *Biography of a Tenement House in New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street* (2006) by Columbia Professor Andrew Dolkart, the author again focuses on the tenement at 97 Orchard, but devotes much space to situating the building in its broader architectural and socio-political contexts, giving insight into the history of the tenements and their dwellers.¹⁷ Additionally, popular tours of the Museum itself bring to life what goes on inside a tenement.

Zach Violette in his 2014 PhD dissertation examines decorations on tenement facades in both New York City and Boston, using architectural history methods including tools of vernacular architectural analysis. The author, who graduated from Boston University's American and New Studies program, argues that the presence of the agency of tenement dwellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, manifested through ornamental facades, goes against the contemporary discourse on reform which relied on the tenement dwellers' lack of agency.¹⁸ Because Violette's consideration of the New York City tenements includes the Progressive Era, his dissertation has impacted the development of this thesis' direction.

Fire escapes as public features of the New York City tenements are often overlooked by architectural and social historians. Many mention them merely in passing. A few scholars such as Sara Wermiel, Instructor of Preservation Studies Program at Boston University, examine the fire escape under the broader category of the history of all fire escapes, with an emphasis on the fire

¹⁷ See Stuart Miller and Angela Voulangas, *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum* (New York: Lower East Side Tenement Museum, 2008), Andrew Dolkart, *Biography of a Tenement House In New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street* (Santa Fe: The Center for American Places, Distributed by the University of Virginia Press, 2006).

¹⁸ See Violette, "The Decorated Tenement," 2014.

escape's role as a safety feature.¹⁹ The first chapter will investigate fire escapes as public features of the New York City tenements.

In terms of the tenement as a marginalized and disreputable building type, there is robust content around both Jacob Riis and prostitution in the Progressive Era as individual subjects studied by social historians.²⁰ However, how Riis and female immorality surrounding the tenements stigmatized the building type is poorly understood. Chapter Two will examine how Riis and the issue of prostitution made the tenement building type a socially marginalized and disreputable space.

There is little scholarship focusing on the model tenements as a topic. Many scholars such as Plunz acknowledge their presence as part of the overall tenement landscape in New York City, but do not analyze them in detail. Articles have been written focusing on individual cases of model tenements.²¹ Chapter Three will examine the history of model tenements. It will also assess the role of model tenements as Progressive reform attempts.

¹⁹ Sara E. Wermiel, "No Exit: The Rise and Demise of the Outside Fire Escape," *Technology and Culture* 44, no. 2 (2003): 258-266. Also, Elizabeth André, in her University of Vermont thesis from 2006, examines the fire escapes in relation to the New York City tenements, but largely from a formalist approach. She also investigates the topic through the lens of preservation.

²⁰ For Riis, see, for example, Reginald Twigg, "The Performative Dimension of Surveillance: Jacob Riis' How the Other Half Lives," *Text & Performance Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 4 (1992): 305-328. For prostitution, see, for example, Noralee Frankel, Nancy Schrom Dye and Conference on Women in the Progressive Era National Museum of American History, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991).

²¹ For instance, in Jonathan A. Rawson's "Modern Tenement Houses," *Popular Science Monthly*, February (1912): 191-196, the author's discussion focuses specifically on the Open Stair tenement, discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER ONE: FIRE ESCAPES AS PUBLIC FEATURES OF THE TENEMENTS

The aim of this chapter is to engage in a discussion about fire escapes as public features of the New York City tenements. Features that not only existed in the public space, but were also administered by the government. It will demonstrate that although the fire escape had always been part of the tenement home architecturally, its control was in the hand of the state, which became increasingly evident in the Progressive Era.

The Tenement Fire Escape

Janet L. Abu-Lughod, an American sociologist and professor emeritus at the New School for Social Research and of Sociology at Northwestern University, summarizes the importance of fire escapes to the New York City tenement identity in her seminal work *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side*:

The buildings are usually three- to six-story-high walk-ups on narrow lots, and most are adorned by that legally prescribed and distinctive feature of Lower Manhattan architecture - the fire escapes, zig-zagging up the exterior, that have clearly been appended later. While the fire escapes often obscure the remarkably beautiful decorations on the stone facades, they serve to lead the eye up toward the flat rooflines, encrusted with outcroppings of wonderfully ornate cornices sharply delimited from the sky. These are the tenements!²²

The iron fire escape as we know it today emerged with the advent of larger tenant houses, or tenements, in New York City. While the Tenement House Laws changed the way tenements were built and occupied between the 1860s and 1900s, fire escapes were required beginning in

²² From Chapter One of Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 27. In his conclusion, Violette also quotes this line, see Violette, "The Decorated Tenement," 2014.

1862.²³ Fire escapes also predated other essential amenities such as running water in tenements—this speaks to the fact that they were considered to be of utmost importance.

There was little need for the construction of permanent fire escapes prior to the enlargement of tenement buildings; mobile ladder "fire escapes" were perceived as sufficient (Figure 6).²⁴ The birth of the iron fire escape marked the birth of the tenement building type. Fire escapes hallmarked the facades of tenements and symbolized what the tenements signified—immigrant neighborhoods replete with poverty and hardship. While other types of building structures in New York City later adopted the use of the permanent fire escape, none were more emblematic of the fire escape than the tenements.

Fire Escapes Equal Tenements

Socially, the close link between the fire escape and tenements is documented in photojournalism. In Riis' book, *How the Other Half Lives*, dated 1890, the author vividly describes tenement life, of which the fire escape is a noteworthy element:

It is in hot weather, when life indoors is well-nigh unbearable with cooking, sleeping, and working, all crowded into the small rooms together, that the tenement expands, reckless of all restraint...every truck in the street, every crowded fire-escape, becomes a bedroom, infinitely preferable to any the house affords.²⁵

In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, a novel portraying life in New York City by realist novelist William Dean Howells dated 1890, the fire escape is clearly associated with tenement housing and lower socioeconomic status. As part of the Marches' apartment hunt, Howells describes:

²³ See Robert W. De Forest, Lawrence Veiller and New York (State) Tenement House Commission, *The Tenement House Problem: Including the Report of the New York State Tenement House Commission of 1900* (New York: Macmillan, 1903).

²⁴ See Wermiel, "No Exit," 258-266.

²⁵ Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (Williamstown: Corner House, 1890), 173.

Flattering advertisements took them to numbers of huge apartment-houses chiefly distinguishable from tenement-houses by the absence of fire-escapes on their facades, till Mrs. March refused to stop at any door where there were more than six bell-ratchets and speaking tubes on either hand.²⁶

The tenement is again marked by the fire-escape-clad facades, while the definition of decent housing in the city around this time is signified by the absence of fire escapes.

In addition to their association with the urban poor, fire escapes were censured by the general public for their lack of aesthetic appeal. Most considered them eyesores, and tried to keep them off of their buildings.²⁷ In Russell Sturgis' *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building*, part of the charge against fire escapes was:

[T]he general feeling that fire escapes disfigure a building or, at least, lower it in the scale, as suggesting a building for common and humble uses rather elegance, has caused a tendency to resist or evade the law in all practicable ways. The only remedy for this seems to be the adoption of some system of fire escapes which shall be architectural in character, rather decorative than disfiguring to the building, and forming a part of the general design.²⁸

When possible, fire escapes were put in the back of the building in order to be hidden. When rear fire escapes were not possible, ornamentation became a way to mitigate the aesthetic problems fire escapes posed. When housing reformers began to design model tenements in the 1890s, decorative fire escapes began to appear such as ones seen at 224-226 Avenue B, built by Charles I. Weinstein in 1904 with architect Geo. F. Pelham (Figure 7).²⁹ Although decorative fire escapes represented the improved status of model tenements, many were not actually built as the model tenements themselves proved to be failed ventures. Most tenements were, and still are, associated with unsightly fire escapes.

²⁶ William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (New York: Harper, 1911), 71.

²⁷ See Wermiel, "No Exit," 272-273.

²⁸ Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building: Biographical, Historical, and Descriptive* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 28-29.

²⁹ Model tenements were tenements purposely built according to reform ideals, and were championed by Progressive reformers such as Jacob Riis.

Some middle-class apartment buildings used interior fireproof staircases rather than exterior fire escapes for both aesthetic and safety reasons.³⁰ However, because interior fireproof staircases were more expensive and would occupy valuable rental space, tenement owners settled on the use of exterior fire escapes.³¹ Ultimately, there were ways to circumvent the fire escape issue—but only if the building owner chose to do so. Because tenement dwellers did not own the tenements, nor were they financially able to persuade owners to make improvements on their behalf, their fire escapes were usually the cheapest kinds made from stock patterns, devoid of unique design.³² As a result, the unremarkable, street facing exterior fire escape is further linked to the tenements to which poor immigrants were bound.

Private Home vs. Public Space

In addition to being connected to the tenements socially, fire escapes were connected to the tenements architecturally. Architecturally, fire escapes were amongst the few features that were part of the tenements and in the public space at the same time. Physically, fire escapes occupied a position on the outside of the tenement building. The tenement apartment spaces, shared hallways and staircases were all architecturally contained inside the tenement house, not exposed to the outside world. Unlike other public features such as streets and alleys, fire escapes were required for each tenement apartment, making them part of the tenement home.

Fire escapes were architecturally part of the home, and were treated as such. They became additional living or storage space, often cluttered with household items or used to hang laundry. The use of fire escapes as extensions of living space was so prevalent, that it caught the

³⁰ It was believed that exterior fire escapes were not as safe because they were often, for instance, too cluttered to use.

³¹ Wermiel, "No Exit," 279.

³² *Ibid.*, 273.

attention of the Fire Department because the cluttered fire escape prevented egress during emergencies, the feature's sole intended purpose. Despite this potential risk and the repeated warning from fire marshals, tenement dwellers insisted on using the fire escape as an alternative living space. This resistance to keeping fire escapes free of obstructions was evident, as many made complaints to the Tenement House Committee about it. As Ms. Cook complained, "...There is a fire escape that can be seen from the 2nd floor of the rear house 17 Allen St. that is tied up with clothes lines. A light fire would be horribly fatal..." Another suggested, that the Committee "...send an inspector to look over fire escapes of #151 and 153 West 22nd St. Garbage cans uncovered and soiled clothes are constantly left on the fire escapes. For days at apartments on the fourth floor, east, and street sides of the house. The odor, and stench is unbearable..."³³

Oftentimes, tenement dwellers used the fire escape to also escape the poor conditions of the tenements. For example, residents used fire escapes for plants as a solution to the lack of green outdoor space. In the summer months, the fire escape was an especially useful spot for getting cool air. At night, people slept on fire escapes. Tenement dwellers took advantage of fire escapes' physical location on the outside of the tenement building, and through them gained access to public space and air.

Fire Escapes, Publicly Controlled

Fire escapes were also public because they were not controlled and regulated privately. They were features required by the law, and thus were monitored and regulated by the state. Fire danger was a particularly pronounced issue in the tenements. The tenements were such firetraps

³³ THC-Complaints Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

largely due to their dark and confusing layouts and the presence of clutter and flammable materials. Each tenement building typically featured only one staircase, shared by what was often a large number of tenement residents. This prevented residents from exiting the building quickly in the event of a fire. In February 1860, ten women and children were trapped and killed in the upper floors of a tenement building fire because the wheeled ladder was not tall enough to reach them.³⁴ This tragic incident finally prompted the city to implement laws that required tenements to have fire escapes as permanent structures.

This requirement, however, was not strictly enforced. In the special report on fire escapes completed by the New York Tenement House Commission of 1900, they found that at least 15 percent of all tenement buildings still had no fire escapes at all and 23 percent had no fire escapes on the front. Also, the study found that many balcony floors or stairs of the fire escapes were made of wood, rendering them utterly useless in the event of a fire. Furthermore, many of the fire escape balconies were "connected by vertical ladders instead of stairs with a hand-rail."³⁵ These vertical ladders were often difficult for the elderly, women, and children to use.

It was during the Progressive Era that the strict enforcement of tenement fire escapes began to take place. Beginning in the late 1880s, more tenements were built that met fire escape requirements.³⁶ In keeping with other Progressive efforts, reports were also made regarding the questionable conditions around fire safety. For example, in *The Tenement House Problem*:

³⁴ "Burnings—Fire Escapes," *Scientific America*, 18 February (1869): 121. Also referenced in Wermiel, "No Exit."

³⁵ See Lawrence Veiller and Hugh Bonner, *Tenement House Fire Escapes in New York and Brooklyn Prepared for the Tenement House Commission of 1900* (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing House, 1900), 9.

³⁶ Many tenement builders retrofitted their existing buildings in order to meet fire escape requirements, see Violette, "The Decorated Tenement," 2014, 237.

Including the Report of the New York State Tenement House Commission of 1900, edited by Progressive reformer Lawrence Veiller and New York City lawyer and philanthropist Robert W. De Forest, it was estimated that nearly half of all New York City fires occurred in tenement houses, pointing to the urgency of enforcing fire escapes on tenements.³⁷

Progressive Fire Fighting

In 1912, the Bureau of Fire Prevention, a division of the city's Fire Department was created and in charge of overseeing safety regulations. Rather than merely recognizing the inadequacies of existing fire escapes and improving fire safety measures, the Bureau of Fire Prevention decided to encourage fire fighting within the home, through educating tenement dwellers on how to prevent fires in the first place. In a memorandum, the Bureau claimed "most of the fires are caused by carelessness in handling fire and careless housekeeping," placing the blame of fires on the tenement dwellers rather than the poor designs of tenements.³⁸ Together with the Tenement House Committee, the Bureau created a pamphlet titled "Don'ts and Warnings for Fire Prevention" (Figure 8). Amongst the many "Don'ts" in the pamphlet, the top ones featured on the front page state:

- DON'T allow children to play with matches.
- DON'T block the fire escapes. You may need them yourself to-night.
- DON'T leave everything to the landlord; inspect your own house from cellar to garret and locate all exits.
- DON'T throw away lighted matches, cigars, or cigarettes.
- DON'T go into dark closets, bedrooms, or cellars using matches or candles to light your way.
- DON'T use insecticides in the vicinity of open flame lights. Many such compounds contain volatile inflammable oils.³⁹

³⁷ De Forest, Veiller and NY Tenement House Commission, *The Tenement House Problem*, 262.

³⁸ THC-Fire Prevention Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

³⁹ Ibid.

The language of the "DON'Ts" in all caps carries an accusatory tone, inferring that if a fire were to occur it would be the fault of the tenement dweller.

On the pamphlet's back cover, it also warns:

When in a place of public assembly such as a moving picture show, theatre, dance hall, lecture hall, boxing club, etc., LOOK AROUND AND NOTE THE NEAREST EXIT TO YOU. In case of fire or panic WALK, not run, to that exit and do not try to beat your neighbor to the street.⁴⁰

There is no evidence that speaks to the decision behind including fire prevention tips in public places such as theaters in a pamphlet about preventing fire in the tenements. However, by grouping fire safety strategies for both public places and the tenements together in the same pamphlet, it attaches resonances of being a "public" space to the tenements.

Similar educational content aimed at tenement dwellers can be found in a pamphlet called "For You," published by the Tenement House Committee in the 1910s (Figure 9). "For You" was a pamphlet meant to serve as a guide for all newly arrived immigrants who were going to reside in tenement housing. It was more all-encompassing as it included sections such as "Don't Take Chances on Getting Sick," and "Don't Rent Dark Rooms," in addition to sections related to fire safety. The section "Keep your fire-escapes clear" states:

Fire-escapes have been put on your house for you to use in case of fire. Use them for that and for nothing else.

Don't put clothes lines, boxes, kindling wood or anything on your fire-escapes. It is against the law. The policemen will destroy anything they find there and may arrest you.

Don't put boards over the opening of the fire-escape or let the children play on it. It is dangerous. The children may fall through. The fire-escape is the only safe way out when your house gets on fire. If you close the openings you and others may be unable to escape and be burned to death.

Keep cool and don't get excited. Don't jump from the windows. The firemen will rescue you.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *For You*, THC-Publications "For You" Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

The fact the pamphlet devoted a significant amount of space to fire escapes speaks to their importance. No other single factor of fire prevention strategy had a section dedicated to it.

The Fire Escape and Danger

During the Progressive Era, the practice of hosting lodgers in the tenements was becoming increasingly problematic. Tenement owners and dwellers sublet their home spaces to either relatives or strangers in order to earn supplemental income. The term "lodger evil" came into existence to describe the problematic condition.⁴² In the "For You" pamphlet, the "lodger evil" is reflected in section "Don't Keep Lodgers." It urges tenement dwellers that:

If you are keeping lodgers get rid of them as soon as you can. It is better to live in a smaller apartment where the rent is cheaper if you need to, and have just room enough for your family alone. Do You Know That Lodgers often cause trouble in the family and sometimes break up the home? Lodgers have been known to betray little girls—the daughters of the family they live with? Most apartments where lodgers are kept are over-crowded, and over-crowding causes sickness? It is hard to give children good home training if there are lodgers to set them bad examples?⁴³

In addition to the issue of overcrowding, the pamphlet implies that lodgers pose danger to vulnerable women in the tenements and are bad role models for children.⁴⁴

The tenement fire escape provided a way for the danger of lodgers to persist in the tenement home. In reaction to the lodger problem, the city's law enforcement implemented rules that limited the number of occupants per tenement living space. Random night raids were administered in order to enforce these rules. These raids often occurred after midnight, when

⁴² See David T. Beito and Linda Royster Beito, "The 'Lodger Evil' and the Transformation of Progressive Housing Reform, 1890–1930," *The Independent Review* 20, no. 4 (2016): 497-8.

⁴³ *For You*, THC-Publications "For You" Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

⁴⁴ African American women were particularly subject to the dangers of male lodgers. African American women were more vulnerable to the abuse of lodgers because on average, black renters were charged more rent than white renters, and therefore relied more on taking in lodgers to make rent. See Cheryl D. Hicks, *Talk with You Like a Woman: African American Women, Justice, and Reform In New York, 1890-1935*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 43-4.

residents were assumed to be present and in bed. However, savvy lodgers often escaped through fire escapes in order to evade such check-ups and once the police left, lodgers re-entered apartments through fire escapes. Beyond their singular intended safety function, fire escapes allowed the danger of lodgers to persist in the tenements by acting as a means of egress and entry as exemplified by lodger evasion.

At times, fire escapes served to prevent danger, while other tenement fire safety features provided opportunities for danger. In a complaint letter to Lawrence Veiller, a tenement builder Everett Wheeler writes:

Allow me to call your attention to an experience of my sister, Mrs. Cornelius B. Smith, and myself, in connection with three tenement houses which we own in West 19th Street. We built these houses some thirty-five years ago. Mr. Russel Sturgis was our architect and at that time they were inferior to none. Of course the new type of tenement house which has since been developed, is a great improvement; but still they are good houses, have larger rooms than the modern building and are inhabited by decent respectable people.

We find the provision of the Tenement House Law which prohibits the owner from locking the scuttle is very prejudicial to the comfort and peace of the tenants. Gangs of boys and young men enter the houses, go up through the scuttle to the roof and actually went so far last week as to carry on to the roof a lot of joists and plank, which they had probably stolen, and built a house there. When the janitor went up to remove this shack, they attacked him and beat one of his men over the head with a shovel.

We have fire escapes upon these buildings which are amply sufficient in case of fire to enable persons to escape. The opening of the scuttle to escape in that way would be a source of additional danger, for it would make a chimney through which the flames and smoke would pour and which would increase the draft and consequently the spread of the flames. Now that fire escapes are universal it does seem to me that it would be in the public interest if the requirement as to locking the scuttle would be repealed. Please consider this and let me hear from you on the subject.⁴⁵

Section 32 of the Tenement House Law states "No scuttle and no bulkhead door shall at any time be locked with a key," which was what Mr. Wheeler was protesting against.⁴⁶ In this case, the unlocked bulkhead, required by law, was a "source of additional danger" to tenement dwellers

⁴⁵ THC-Complaints Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

⁴⁶ New York State Legislature, *Laws* (1903), p. 405. A bulkhead is "an enclosed structure on the roof of a building that may include mechanical equipment, water tanks and roof access from interior stairwells," according to Glossary of Planning Terms, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/glossary.page>.

because it allowed strangers with unknown intentions from the public to enter the private tenement home. Because "fire escapes are universal," requiring bulkheads be unlocked was no longer necessary. Fire escapes, in this case, were responsible for preventing danger from entering the tenement home.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TENEMENT AS A SOCIALLY MARGINALIZED AND DISREPUTABLE BUILDING TYPE

This chapter will examine how Jacob Riis and the issue of prostitution made the tenement building type a socially marginalized and disreputable space. Through reform-minded photojournalism, Riis' work inserted the tenements into the public imagination and depicted the tenements as socially marginalized spaces. Additionally, tenement prostitution was publicly condemned during the Progressive Era, and its high-profile status made the tenements disreputable. The Progressive Era saw one of the last efforts to restore women back to their place in the home according to Victorian ideals through the public crusade against tenement prostitution. The criminalization of the tenements made the issue of prostitution, or "public women," increasingly public by being presented as a public hazard linked to morality and health.

Riis' Tenements

Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* was without doubt instrumental in shaping the way America saw the tenements. Born on May 3, 1849 in Denmark, Riis immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 21. Like many newly-arrived immigrants, Riis had some personal experience living in tenement housing and endured poverty.⁴⁷ However, most of his accounts of tenement slum conditions came from his time as a police reporter in the Lower East Side neighborhood of New York City. Riis taught himself photography in order to document the conditions of the tenements.

Riis' photographs are often spectacles that were designed to galvanize the audience into joining his reformative cause. Additionally, he employed public lantern slide lectures in order to

⁴⁷ Although, he did not live in tenement housing for very long.

deliver his message most effectively—his performance as a lecturer played a significant role because he was able to control and manipulate the interpretation of the photographs.⁴⁸ Riis' photographs provided insight into tenement life, in part to persuade his audience to invest themselves in the wellbeing of the helpless tenement dwellers; at the same time, they also provided a way for the viewer to exercise voyeurism, thereby invading the privacy of the subjects.⁴⁹ The physical act of photographing itself was also uncomfortable for the tenement dwellers. Riis often frightened his subjects with the use of explosive flash-powder. Some reputedly pushed back against his efforts by attacking him and his team.⁵⁰

Despite resistance, Riis managed to capture images like *Family in Room in Tenement House* (Figure 10), dated c. 1910 and *Five Cents a Spot - Unauthorized Immigration Lodgings in a Bayard Street Tenement New York* (Figure 11), 1889. *Family in Room in Tenement House* portrays a family in what appears to be the kitchen of a tenement unit, though it is quite clear that the kitchen serves multi-purpose as the bedroom and living room also. The photograph is the first interior image of *How the Other Half Lives*, representing the quintessence of what a typical tenement flat looked like according to Riis. The depiction of the room is exactly what you would expect from Riis—deteriorated conditions, particularly evident through the structurally dilapidated crib in the center of the photograph. Additionally, all 7 members of the family are cramped into the small room, which speaks to the idea of the overcrowded tenement.

Five Cents a Spot, on the other hand, exposes the appalling conditions around lodger evil, where lodgers typically paid five cents per night to rent out a sleeping space in a tenement. The

⁴⁸ See Stange, "Jacob Riis and Urban Visual Culture," 291.

⁴⁹ Twigg references the voyeurism in Riis' work in "The Performative Dimension of Surveillance," 305-328.

⁵⁰ Riis and his team were "attacked by some of the women with brickbats" in Hell's Kitchen, see "The Society of Amateur Photographers of New York," *The Photographic Times*, February 3 (1888): 59.

result of the lodger problem is clearly shown in the image. The tenement becomes overcrowded, the space becomes cluttered and dirty. The lodgers themselves are also uncomfortable in such conditions—two of them appear to be sleeping sitting up. The fact that lodgers are all male carries resonances of the dangers that "For You" warns against—"[]odgers have been known to betray little girls—the daughters of the family they live with."⁵¹

In addition to interior shots of the tenements, Riis took many exterior photographs. *Typical Tenement Fire Escape, Serving as an Extension of the "Flat"* (Figure 12), c. 1890, focuses on a tenement fire escape filled with household items—pots, laundry, and clutter. *Yard in Jersey Street Tenement* (Figure 13), c. 1890, depicts the rear yard of a tenement. The sheds in the background are likely outhouses. Prior to indoor bathrooms, a few outhouses were typically located in the tenement backyard and were shared by a disproportionately large amount of tenement dwellers. In *Bandits' Roost, 59 1/2 Mulberry Street* (Figure 14), a well-known photograph dated 1888, Riis portrays the danger of dark and crime-ridden tenement alleys.

Both Riis' interior and exterior photographs of the tenements supported his claim that the tenements and their dwellers needed help, but without eliminating the possibility that they could be helped. Riis never intended to dismiss the tenement dwellers simply as beyond saving; a major part of Riis' rhetoric revolved around the ability for the tenement dwellers to improve, and for the immigrants to assimilate. His analysis of the different immigrant groups in his book was highly racially charged. He ranked them based on their fitness to assimilate into the American society. For example, he thought highly of "order-loving" German immigrants but dismissed Italian immigrants, particularly for that "[u]nlike the German, who begins learning English the day he lands as a matter of duty, or the Polish Jew, who takes it up as soon as he is able as an

⁵¹ *For You*, THC-Publications "For You" Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

investment, the Italian learns slowly, if at all."⁵² To Riis, Italian immigrants' inability to learn the English language was detrimental to their ability to survive in the American society. African American and non-European immigrants such as Chinese immigrants, were equally dismissed as being unfit to thrive in America. While Riis championed social policies that went against the ideology of Social Darwinism, his writing nonetheless exudes Social Darwinist beliefs about racial hierarchy that were prevalent since the Gilded Age.⁵³ Riis as a reformer was not perfect—in the process of carrying out his agenda, he contradicted it by perpetuating ideas about racial hierarchy inherited from earlier decades. In addition to Riis' social criticism, the issue of prostitution played a role in tarnishing the tenements' respectability as a building type.

"Public Women"

"Public woman" comes from the French term "femme publique." It has been used to refer to prostitutes since as far back as year 1367:

Si les femmes publiques, porte ensuite cette ordonnance, se permettent d'habiter des rues ou quartiers autres que ceux ci-dessus désignés, elles seront emprisonnées au Châtelet, puis bannies de Paris. Et les sergents, pour salaire, prendront sur leurs biens huit sous parisis...⁵⁴

Prostitutes were considered "public women" because many solicited business openly in public places such as the streets. In addition, prostitutes sold sex to public consumers even though sex was considered a private matter to most people. Prostitution was prevalent in the U.S. context, especially in urban centers such as New York City. As New York City grew in population and

⁵² Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 43.

⁵³ Social Darwinists, put broadly, believed that social fitness was based on a biological hierarchy. They promoted, for example, certain races were superior than others in order to justify racial discrimination and economic disenfranchisement. Social Darwinist ideas were particularly prevalent in the Gilded Age. During the Progressive Era, reformers pushed back against Social Darwinism by arguing that social issues could be fixed through reform and education.

⁵⁴ Ordained by Hugues Aubriot, the provost of Paris in 1367. See Henri Sauval, *Histoire Et Recherches Des Antiquités De La Ville De Paris*, Republished Ed., V. III (Franbarough: Gregg, 1969), 652.

economy, prostitution also increased. It "became a public activity, conducted in the open and visible to unengaged neighbors and observers."⁵⁵ This was particularly so by the mid-nineteenth century. The term "public woman" with the connotation of prostitution also applies in the U.S. context, though it is more commonly used in the historiography on the subject than by the progressives at the turn of the twentieth century.⁵⁶

During the Progressive Era, prostitution became a target of reformers. An informal economy, prostitution received more attention than ever under the Progressive limelight. It was also in the Progressive Era that prostitution became an official criminal offense.⁵⁷ It was frequently associated with issues of public morality and public health. Prostitutes posed a threat to the domesticity, purity, and thus morality of women, while the spread of venereal disease caused anxiety about the physical health of the public. While there had always been "public women" in New York City throughout the nineteenth century, the issue of "public women" became increasingly public in the Progressive Era through public condemnation and linking the issue to public health and morality.

The issue of prostitution and "public women" was further complicated in the context of the tenements. As the tenements became a focal point for Progressive reform efforts, the issue of prostitution within the tenements became more visible. As the issue gained visibility, the criminalization of the space increased in order to prevent tenement women from falling victim to the informal economy of prostitution.

⁵⁵ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 18.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Mary Murphy, "The Private Lives of Public Women: Prostitution in Butte, Montana, 1878-1917," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 7, no. 3 (1984): 30-35.

⁵⁷ Ann M. Lucas, "Race, Class, Gender, and Deviancy: The Criminalization of Prostitution," *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice* 10, no. 1 (1995): 51.

"Public Women" and the Tenements

Women and the tenements had a special relationship with one another. In the Progressive Era, reformers believed that women should be in charge of managing their tenement home while men were out working.⁵⁸ As a result, many reform efforts targeted the women in the tenements, hoping to exact change through them. For example, in the "For You" pamphlet, discussed in Chapter One, the section "Good Housekeeping" states:

If you keep your rooms tidy, the wall paper clean, the woodwork washed, the windows polished, and the floors scrubbed, your landlord will know you are a good tenant and will be more willing to make repairs for you...Your husband will like to come home to a comfortable place, and the children will be proud of their home. Everyone likes a light, cheerful room. That is why theatres, saloons and stores are brightly lighted...Do not let the children carry in dirt or mark the walls or break plaster, leaving holes for bugs or dirt.⁵⁹

The language of "your husband" clearly highlights the intended audience of the text to be the woman of the tenement household.

The issue of prostitution is also addressed in "For You." In section "Bad Women," it states:

[You can complain] If there are bad women in the house who entertain many men callers in their flat and who make their living in an immoral way. If disorderly men or women use the hallways for immoral purposes.⁶⁰

Like what the pamphlet has done about the lodger evil, it warns tenement women about the social evil of prostitution, or "bad" women. Additionally, it seems to perform the task of educating its audience about morality. The pamphlet implies that prostitution, or "entertaining men callers," makes a woman "immoral" and "bad." In turn, it attempts to educate the reader about who not to be or what not to do—in this case, to not become immoral women by avoiding

⁵⁸ See Chapter Six "Reconstructing the 'Family': Women, Progressive Reform, and the problem of Social Control," in Frankel, et al, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, 73-86.

⁵⁹ *For You*, THC-Publications "For You" Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

engaging in prostitution. In the process of trying to instruct tenement women to look out for prostitutes, the pamphlet also instructed them on how to behave.

The distribution of the "For You" pamphlet also facilitated making the issue of "public women," or prostitutes, more public. While the pamphlet itself was made for the education of tenement dwellers, the distribution of it was a rather high-profile and public venture. It was meant to be distributed at public lectures as well as door to door in tenement neighborhoods. In addition, it was to be distributed in public schools in hopes that the children would be able to translate its text to their parents who may not know English.⁶¹

Monitoring Tenement Prostitution

Lawrence Veiller, a Progressive reformer and secretary of the New York State Tenement House Commission, wrote to his contacts around the city asking them to report activities of prostitution in tenement houses. The letter writes:

We are writing to inquire what the situation is in your neighborhood with regard to the increase of tenement house prostitution...

During the past year the records of the Night Court for Women, in which women arrested for tenement house prostitution are arraigned, show a steady growth in the total number of cases brought before this court...

We know that if there has been any considerable increase in the presence of prostitutes in respectable tenement houses, you and others like you who are in close touch with neighborhood conditions would be the first to know of it.

We shall appreciate it, therefore, if you will advise us what the situation is in your neighborhood so that we may confer with you and others especially interested in this subject to take such steps as may be necessary to overcome any bad tendencies that may exist.⁶²

⁶¹ Press release titled "City Starts New York: Novel Campaign for Instruction of Tenement House Dwellers: Inaugurated by Tenement House Department." Written on press release "To be released Monday June 22, 1914." THC-Publications "For You" Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

⁶² THC-Prostitution Folder, CSS Papers, Box 168.

Veiller recruited his acquaintances around the city in order to monitor prostitution activities, thus making prostitution monitoring and surveillance a public effort.

Monitoring tenement prostitution proved to be rather difficult. Veiller and his team concluded:

70 letters were sent out on June 24th. We have received 31 replies either by letter or in person to date, or about 39%. Practically none of the replied were of the nature that we wanted. The writers, as a rule, either knew nothing whatever of the situation and admitted it, or instead of giving their view of the general tendency of their section, would name three or four specific cases.⁶³

Despite the general lack of helpfulness from Veiller's contacts, many letter writers noted cases of prostitution. On June 25, 1914, Dr. Ira S. Wile responded:

In answer to your letter of the 24th, I may say that in this section of the City, there is an increase in the amount of street soliciting which leads one to the inference that there is some activity in the line of "Flat Prostitution."⁶⁴

Dr. Wile's letter reveals the perceived correlation between "public women's" streetwalking and tenement prostitution. Letters such as Dr. Wile's would have helped Veiller monitor prostitution around the city.

Tenement Prostitution

George J. Kneeland, a vice investigator and former Director of the Chicago Vice Commission, published a vice report in 1913, *Commercialized Prostitution in New York City*, which included an introduction by John D. Rockefeller who supported the project.⁶⁵ According to the report, prostitution was most problematic in the tenements, among other places such as

⁶³ Veiller wrote this to Miss Madge Headley, THC Secretary in a letter on June 25, 1914. THC-Prostitution Folder, CSS Papers, Box 168.

⁶⁴ THC-Prostitution Folder, CSS Papers, Box 168.

⁶⁵ See George J Kneeland and Katharine Bement Davis, *Commercialized Prostitution In New York City* (New York: The Century Co, 1913).

hotels and massage parlors.⁶⁶ As a result, tenement prostitution was subject to particularly intense scrutiny. "In the eyes of the [Tenement House] Commission, this tenement-centered prostitution had to be quashed, regardless of public policy toward prostitution in other districts."⁶⁷ Led by Lawrence Veiller, the Tenement House Committee was convinced that the evil of prostitution had a lot to do with tenement housing. Edward Marshall, the Tenement House Committee secretary, believed that "[t]he tenements always have had, and probably always will have their share of immoral women—of a class peculiar to them and separate from the professional prostitutes driven of late into them, from houses of ill-fame."⁶⁸

The connection between prostitution and the tenements is all too clear in this illustration published in the *Puck* magazine—*The Tenement - a Menace to All* done by Udo Keppler in 1901 (Figure 15). The caption reads, "Not only an evil in itself, but the vice, crime and disease it breeds invade the homes of rich and poor alike." The illustration speaks to the evil of tenement housing as both inadequately designed housing as well as a space filled with vice such as prostitution. Prostitution is represented as a female spirit emanating from the tenement house below in the illustration.

It is hard to disassociate prostitution from the tenements when public solicitation was blatant. "Un-abashedly open prostitution in tenement neighborhoods" was hard to miss.⁶⁹ Prostitutes solicited from streets around the tenements as well as from open doors and windows. For instance, a New Yorker Theo Goetze complained about "[in] broad day light you can see them [prostitutes] at their windows and cling to passers by at night. They are so vulgar in front of

⁶⁶ Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 94.

⁶⁷ Lubove, *Progressives and the Slums*, 138.

⁶⁸ David Huyssen, *Progressive Inequality: Rich and Poor In New York, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 28.

⁶⁹ Lubove, *Progressives and the Slums*, 138.

their houses that any respectable person cannot pass without being insulted by them."⁷⁰ Because prostitutes openly solicited business in and around the tenements, other women living in tenement districts were often mistaken as prostitutes. In order to avoid being mistaken as a prostitute, women needed to avoid lingering on the street and definitely being out after dark.

The stigma of the tenements being sites populated by immoral prostitutes had legal and disciplinary implications. For example, in 1895 the Tenement House Committee recommended that

(20) Prostitution in tenement houses—that a law be passed making the offenses of soliciting and the maintenance of houses of prostitution in tenement houses punishable with greater severity than when they are committed elsewhere.⁷¹

The discrimination against the tenements as a building type and their dwellers is clear. By making prostitution in tenement houses more punishable by law, the recommendation criminalizes the tenements as a space. The criminalization of the tenement space, in turn, renders its dwellers as criminals. An amendment to Section 150 of Tenement House Law reveals the extent to which the criminalization of the tenement space took place—" [v]agrancy...Amended also to include not only apartments but 'any part of a tenement house' to cover halls, cellar, roof, etc."⁷² Vagrancy was used to refer to prostitution at this time, and the extension of the law against vagrancy to include all places within a tenement speaks to the determination of reformers in prosecuting tenement prostitution.

⁷⁰ See Veiller to Mitchel, 18 April 1914, THC-Prostitution Folder, CSS Papers, Box 168. This was also mentioned in Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*. Others have complained about prostitution in tenements, see THC-Complaints Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166.

⁷¹ New York State Legislature, *Report*, BLYU, 78. It states that "the tenement-house committee, on the 16th of Jan., 1895, submitted a report to the New York legislature making the following recommendation..."

⁷² Memorandum regarding bills submitted to amend existing Prostitution Section. First part states "Amended by changing "woman" to "person" so that it is possible to prosecute keepers, cadets, and solicitors, both male and female." THC-Prostitution Folder, CSS Papers, Box 168.

"Public Women" and the Tenement Home

The criminalization of the tenements consequentially criminalized its dwellers. Yet, the aim of criminalizing tenement prostitution was not only to punish its offenders, but to teach women not to be sexual deviants. In addition, it was meant to disrupt the informal economy in which women were working and supporting themselves as independent individuals.⁷³ By preventing women from transgressing both social and sexual norms, women could be restored to their proper place in the private, domestic sphere to be mothers, wives, and protectors of the home. The middle-class ideals about women being moral and pure guided the strong urge to reform tenement prostitution. The criminalization of the tenement space was a way to ensure it.

To ensure the purity of women was also to ensure that they were physically pure, meaning free of disease. "[S]exual disease represented a manifestation of contamination and corruption in society, and as a result was reflected largely as an example of the immorality of prostitution."⁷⁴ Venereal disease was on the rise throughout the Progressive Era, for which there was no yet known treatment. Regulating prostitution, the root of disease spreading, became especially important at this time to keep women both morally and physically intact. "Public women," therefore, were perceived as being antithetical to the morally and physically intact woman, and became the target of the Progressive "crusade" to restore social order and the middle-class ideals of women and the home inherited from the Victorian era.⁷⁵

As Progressives attempted to reform the tenements, they also sought to reform tenement women physically and morally in order to make them fit mothers, wives, and protectors of the

⁷³ This idea is championed by Lucas in "Race, Class, Gender, and Deviancy: The Criminalization of Prostitution," 47-60.

⁷⁴ Beth Bergman, "AIDS, Prostitution, and the Use of Historical Stereotypes to Legislate Sexuality," *The John Marshall Law Review* 211 (1988): 791.

⁷⁵ The idea of "vice crusade" has been raised by many scholars. For example, see *ibid.*, 793.

home. The Progressive Era saw one of the last efforts to restore women back to Victorian ideals before the birth of the "New Woman" in the 1920s.

CHAPTER THREE: MODEL TENEMENTS

The Progressive Era gave birth to model tenements as a culmination and realization of all of its ideals. Model tenements were generally designed by architects and funded by reformers who had very little experience with what it was actually like to live in a tenement. They were also widely unsuccessful. This chapter examines the history of model tenements.

The First Model Tenement

The very first model tenement was constructed in 1854. It was sponsored by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, or AICP, a charitable organization established in 1843 in New York City. The AICP believed that "enlightened capitalism combining philanthropy" was going to be the solution to New York City's tenement housing problem.⁷⁶ They initiated the ideal notion of model tenements. Model tenements were to be built in a higher quality and offer updated amenities, but were voluntarily designed to be low-profiting in order to keep the rental cost down. The main distinction between a model tenement and a typical tenement at the time was profit. Typical tenements, or sometimes called speculative tenements, were built to generate rental income—to make money. They were cheaply constructed in order to maximize investment return. Whereas speculative tenements generated 15 to 20 percent profit on their investment, model tenements typically generated a profit of around 5 percent.⁷⁷

The construction of the AICP model tenement sought to encourage its replication by demonstrating that model tenements would generate rental income and were not just a charity

⁷⁶ Lubove, *Progressives and the Slums*, 8.

⁷⁷ See Jackson, *A Place Called Home*, 121.

project. In 1854, the first model tenement building consisting of 87 units and 2 retail stores was erected on Elizabeth and Mott Streets. It charged tenants \$5.50 to \$8.50 per month per room, which was in fact higher than the average of \$4 per month per room. The pricing intended to give the investors a 6 percent profit return.

However, when the AICP model tenement opened, it was not a success story. Not only was the rental cost still too high, the building's conditions began to deteriorate rather quickly. Maintenance was difficult to keep up. In terms of tenant management, the AICP initially conducted inspections in order to make sure that the tenants lived according to reform standards and did not break any building rules.⁷⁸ However, the inspections were not kept up either and the model tenement quickly became a slum and was eventually deemed to be "unfit for human habitation."⁷⁹ The AICP sold the building in 1867.

Problems with Legislation

While the very first iteration of the model tenement proved to be a failure, Progressive reformers never gave up on their model tenement dream. Some scholars have called the reformers' push for model tenements an "evasion" rather than a solution to the tenement housing problem.⁸⁰ However, there were many reasons why newly constructed model tenements appealed to the reformers over legislation. For instance, the Tenement House Law of 1901 was legislation that prevented older tenement designs from being built, and gave rise to many newly constructed tenements called "new law" tenements. However, "new law" tenements were not accessible to many due to cost. "New law" tenements cost more to build because of improved amenities. As a

⁷⁸ For example, the inspector would make sure that tenants applied good housekeeping practices.

⁷⁹ Lubove, *Progressives and the Slums*, 9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

result, tenement builders increased rent in order to make up for the increased cost of construction. Many tenement dwellers were unable to afford to rent "new law" tenements and settled for cheaper "old law" tenements in the Lower East Side.⁸¹

Model tenements had advantages over for-profit "new law" tenements, and were also more promising than retrofitted "old law" tenements. The Tenement House Law of 1901 called for the renovation of existing tenements. However, by 1900 there were already more than 80,000 tenements in New York City, and to enforce legislation on such a vast amount of buildings was challenging. Whenever renovations were done, standards were hard to guarantee. To housing reformers, building new model tenements, ideally, provided a good way to ensure the quality of construction while keeping the rental cost low.

City and Suburban House Company

Even though the AICP model tenement failed, reformers insisted that corporate philanthropy was the solution to tenement reform.⁸² Lawrence Veiller, in particular, had great faith in model tenements because he saw the success of the City and Suburban House Company. Established in 1896 by reformers such as Jacob Riis, the City and Suburban House Company was founded to showcase to tenement builders that higher quality tenements could still be profitable. City and Suburban was responsible for the construction of many model tenements, including a large project of 13 model tenements on York Avenue. It looked to London philanthropists and their model housing companies as a source of inspiration.⁸³

⁸¹ About one-sixth of the New York City population resided in the Lower East Side of Manhattan by 1900, many of which were unable to relocate to "new law" tenements. The Lower East Side had the most "old law" tenements. "New law" tenements were often constructed outside of the LES neighborhood due to land availability.

⁸² Wallace and Burrows, *Greater Gotham: A History of New York City From 1898 to 1919*, 258-260.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 258.

One of the first projects under City and Suburban was the Clark Estate, designed by Ernest Flagg. Flagg received the chief designer position through winning the housing design competition sponsored by the Improved Housing Council in 1896. The Improved Housing Council was formed especially for dealing with working class housing issues. Together with the Charity Organization Committee, the Improved Housing Council was responsible for the establishment of City and Suburban. The 1896 competition called for housing plans for a 200-by-400-foot lot. Flagg's winning entry was based on the courtyard apartment house type he saw during his time in Paris (Figure 16).⁸⁴ In Flagg's design, the number of rooms on each floor remained the same as the dumbbell tenement design, but the size of the rooms was larger with better ventilation and exposure to light. James E. Ware, who came in second place, also had a minor role in the design of the Clark Estate.

The Clark Estate project consisted of six model tenements at 217-233 West 68th Street and 214-220 West 69th Street. Elizabeth Scriven Clark, wife of Alfred Corning Clark and heir to the Singer Sewing Machine Company fortune, donated both the land and money for the project. Upon completion, in 1898, all 373 units were equipped with indoor toilet, bath tub, and laundry facilities.

The project was open to house lower-income but steadily employed tenants, and it accomplished just that. With the affordable rental rate of 93 cents per room per week, it attracted many working class tenants such as servants, firemen, clerks, cigar makers, and dress makers.⁸⁵ Regular inspections took place in these units for both rent collection and tenant inspection. Inspectors made sure that the tenants remained "desirable" by looking out for "unkempt

⁸⁴ Flagg studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. For more on Flagg and Beaux-Arts, see Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, 41-43.

⁸⁵ Compared to the typical four dollars per room per month, 93 cents would have been very affordable.

apartment or some of other infraction of the rules," and by eliminating "the drunkard, the incorrigible, the criminal, the immoral, the lazy and shiftless" should they come across any.⁸⁶

Following the success of the Clark Estate, City and Suburban built the First Avenue Estate in 1900, located between 64th and 65th Streets. The Avenue A Estate, completed in 1913 on 78th and 79th Streets, was the largest low-income housing project in the world at the time. An article about the project was published in *Good Housekeeping*, a women's magazine founded in 1885. The Avenue A Estate is touted as "surpassing in some respects the most expensive apartments," and that "probably no other house in the world is better equipped."⁸⁷ To live in the Avenue A Estate meant to live in a world of domestic luxury:

Each suite throughout the building has its private entrance hall, toilet, large combination kitchen and dining room, and one or more bedrooms. Apartments with three or four rooms have parlors, while all the suites have private bathrooms. The smallest living room has one hundred and twenty square feet of floor space, the smallest bedroom seventy square feet, most of the rooms being somewhat larger. The ceilings in every case are nine feet from the floor...The plumbing is open and of the most scientific pattern. Each apartment has a refrigerator. The finishing of the rooms is complete even to the permanent moldings for hanging pictures. Gas ranges are used, while hot water and steam heat are furnished free of charge.⁸⁸

The article also recommends that "housekeepers in every class of society" should learn from the arrangements of this model tenement project.⁸⁹ The Avenue A Estate served as "model" housing in its truest sense.

After working for City and Suburban, Flagg was commissioned by banker and millionaire Darius Ogden Mills to build model tenement houses for single men.⁹⁰ In a Mills House, amenities such as a reading room, smoking room, and laundry were provided. A restaurant was located in the basement serving affordable meals. The tenants were also subject to

⁸⁶ Wallace and Burrows, *Greater Gotham: A History of New York City From 1898 to 1919*, 259.

⁸⁷ Hector Rosenfeld, "Model Tenements," *Good Housekeeping* 39, no. 3 (1904): 283.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁹⁰ One was located on Bleecker Street between Sullivan and Thompson, the other was on Rivington and Chrystie. Some model tenements were also designed solely for women.

inspection—"tramps and objectionables were excluded, and the conduct of bachelor tenants was rigidly regulated."⁹¹

In 1905, Henry Phipps built model tenement houses for African Americans, located on 63rd and 64th Streets between Amsterdam and West End. To be sure, the Phipps Houses were not the first philanthropic housing projects for African Americans. The first African American model tenement was built in 1855 called the Workingman's Home. However, the Phipps Houses were more well-known, likely because they were published in *The Craftsman* magazine (Figure 17).⁹² *The Craftsman* was the "official" magazine of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the United States. It was founded by American designer Gustav Stickley in 1901 and published in New York State. The Arts and Crafts Movement, while widely recognized as an artistic movement, was not an artistic style. Rather, it was a collection of individual artists and architects united by an Arts and Crafts spirit, ideology, and philosophy. The magazine embodied the progressive and reform spirit of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Like many ideally planned housing communities that came out of the Arts and Crafts Movement tradition, model tenements failed in practice.

Specialty Tenements: Vanderbilt and Open Stair

Anne Harriman Vanderbilt, wife of wealthy businessman William Kissam Vanderbilt I, heir to the Vanderbilt railroad empire, sponsored a tenement for families with at least one member suffering from tuberculosis.⁹³ Commonly known as the Vanderbilt tenement, the model tenement was constructed on 78th Street and Cherokee Place. Henry Atterbury Smith was the

⁹¹ Wallace and Burrows, *Greater Gotham: A History of New York City From 1898 to 1919*, 259.

⁹² See Wallace and Burrows, *Greater Gotham: A History of New York City From 1898 to 1919*, 259, and Andrew Dolkar's *Biography of a Tenement House In New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street*.

⁹³ Tuberculosis was a major public health issue around this time. The treatment mainly involved getting fresh and clean air.

architect who designed the tenement. In addition to amenities also found in other model tenements, the Vanderbilt tenement focused on maximizing light and air circulation in the units for the wellbeing of the tubercular patients. The Vanderbilt tenement was also equipped with balconies so as to encourage tubercular residents to spend time outdoors. There was also a small hospital and a recreational roof deck in the building. Today, the building operates as a cooperatively owned, or co-op, apartment building.⁹⁴

Smith also designed another specialty tenement—the Open Stair tenement built by the Open Stair Tenement Company. In the Open Stair tenement, stairs were featured on the outside of the building, providing private entrance to individual tenement units (Figure 18). In doing so, the tenement eliminated interior passages and hallways which were dark and dingy. The open stairs were, of course, fire proof—no fire escapes were required in the Open Stair tenement. The stairs also solved the problem of too many residents exiting the building through one staircase in the event of a fire. The railings were made of iron, and seats were provided as resting places throughout the stairway. The seats were protected by overhead hoods, angled in a manner as to keep out rain and snow while still providing ample light. A pergola was featured as well at the top of each stairwell for weather protection. The pergolas were made of an iron frame with glass panels to let in as much light as possible.⁹⁵

A Failed Attempt

Unfortunately, not nearly enough model tenements were built to exact real change to the tenement housing situation. Ultimately, the concept of philanthropic tenement housing, housing

⁹⁴ Andrew Alpern, *Luxury Apartment Houses of Manhattan: An Illustrated History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992), 170.

⁹⁵ See Jonathan A. Rawson, "Modern Tenement Houses," *Popular Science Monthly*, February (1912): 191-6.

for little profit, was attractive to few investors. Of the ones that were built, none were built in neighborhoods where reform housing was most needed, for example, in the Lower East Side. The notion of using model tenements to solve the New York City tenement housing problem proved to be an ideal rather than practical reality.

Architect and housing reformer Henry Atterbury Smith famously declared that the model tenements were failures in a 1912 *New York Times* article "New York's Famous Model Tenements are Failures." The article lists three reasons for model tenements' failure, focusing on unaffordability:

In the first place, they say, the legislation controlling the erection of tenement houses is becoming, in some minor points, too strict. This strictness demands conditions which, in their turn, make necessary more expensive buildings and higher rents.

In the second place, model tenements, being built by private philanthropy, are built of too expensive material, furnished with too many luxuries.

And last, the private individuals and organizations that manage the dwellings have heretofore found necessary for their maintenance the employment of salaried officials and clerks for the observation of the house's management, the gathering of statistics, and the like. The "red tape" of private philanthropy...has helped to hold the rents of model dwellings at a prohibitive figure.⁹⁶

Despite the effort to limit their profit, many model tenements were still not accessible to the city's poorest population, making them no better than reformed speculative tenements. Model tenements were intended to house the very poor, but failed to do so.

Other news articles on the topic were soon published. In an article titled "Is the Model Tenement a Failure?" published in July 1914 in *The Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, the author acknowledges that although beautifully constructed, model tenements such as the Vanderbilt tenement were too costly and "have thus far been merely models."⁹⁷ On the other side of the

⁹⁶ "New York's Famous Model Tenements Are Failures," *New York Times* (1857-1922), Oct 27, 1912, <http://proxy01.its.virginia.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/docview/97328809?accountid=14678> (accessed April 26, 2019).

⁹⁷ "Is the Model Tenement a Failure?" *The Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette* 30, no. 7 (1914): 292.

spectrum, some disagreed with the fact that model tenements were failures. In "Model Tenements Not a Failure, Says Dr. E.R.L. Gould," published in 1913 in the *New York Times*, Dr. E.R.L. Gould, a housing reformer and economist in the Department of Labor, responded to Smith's article by saying that model tenements were successful if properly managed. He said that model tenements were never intended for the city's "very poor"—"the shiftless, the careless, the ne'er do wells," but were for the working, "worthy" poor.⁹⁸

Despite the varying opinions, the model tenement movement was on the decline as the twentieth century unfolded, with many model tenements ending up being sold for profit. Even when the model tenements failed, the idealism towards them persisted. For instance, as the Open Stair tenement was put on the market to be sold, Smith still hoped that it was going to inspire builders to build housing of equal quality but less costly and luxurious.

⁹⁸ E.R.L. Gould, "Model Tenements Not a Failure, Says Dr. E.R.L. Gould," *New York Times* (1857-1922), Jan 19, 1913, <http://proxy01.its.virginia.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/docview/97434567?accountid=14678> (accessed April 27, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The Progressive Era was a critical time period for the New York City tenements. They possessed public features such as fire escapes that not only encroached onto public space but also became more public through Progressive legislation. The tenement was a socially marginalized and disreputable building type through Riis' photojournalism and the public condemnation of prostitution. Progressives sought to use model tenements to reform tenement housing, but ultimately failed.

Nonetheless, the gesture towards building entirely new housing communities for those in need heralded the advent of government funded housing, or public housing, in the 1930s. After the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal created the Public Works Administration, or PWA, with a Housing Division. The PWA Housing Division constructed affordable housing with government funding. The Progressive Era model tenements that were designed for specific social and racial groups have modern public housing resonances. Today, public housing is associated with issues of segregation and the socio-economic disenfranchisement of racial groups. While the official establishment of public housing did not exist until the 1930s, the tenements, particularly the philanthropic model tenements, prefigured that era.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

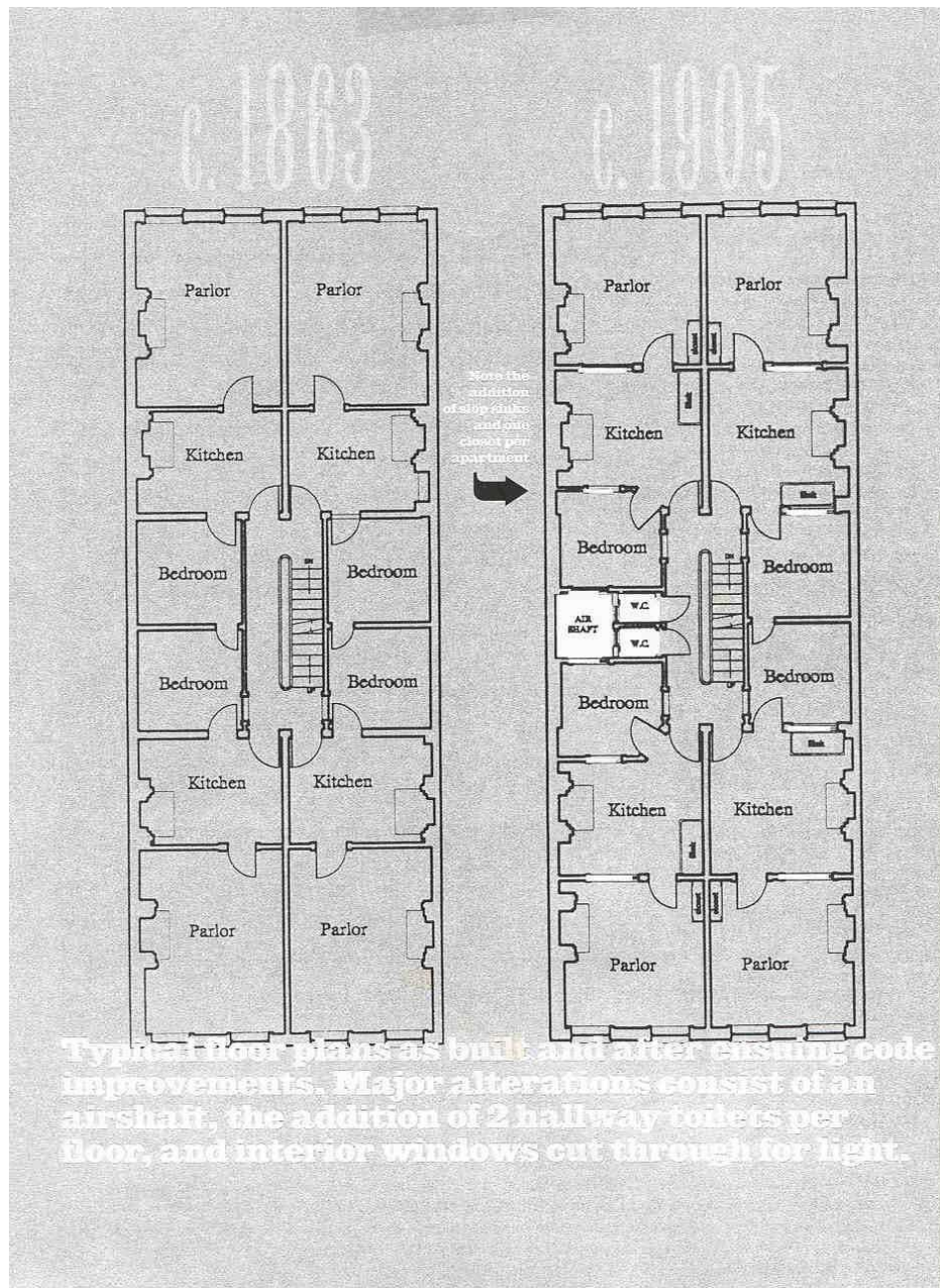


Figure 1: A typical tenement plan in 1863 and 1905. Caption reads, "Typical floor plans as built and after ensuing code improvements. Major alterations consist of an air shaft, the addition of 2 hallway toilets per floor, and interior windows cut through for light."
<http://www.nygeo.org/Tenement.html>.

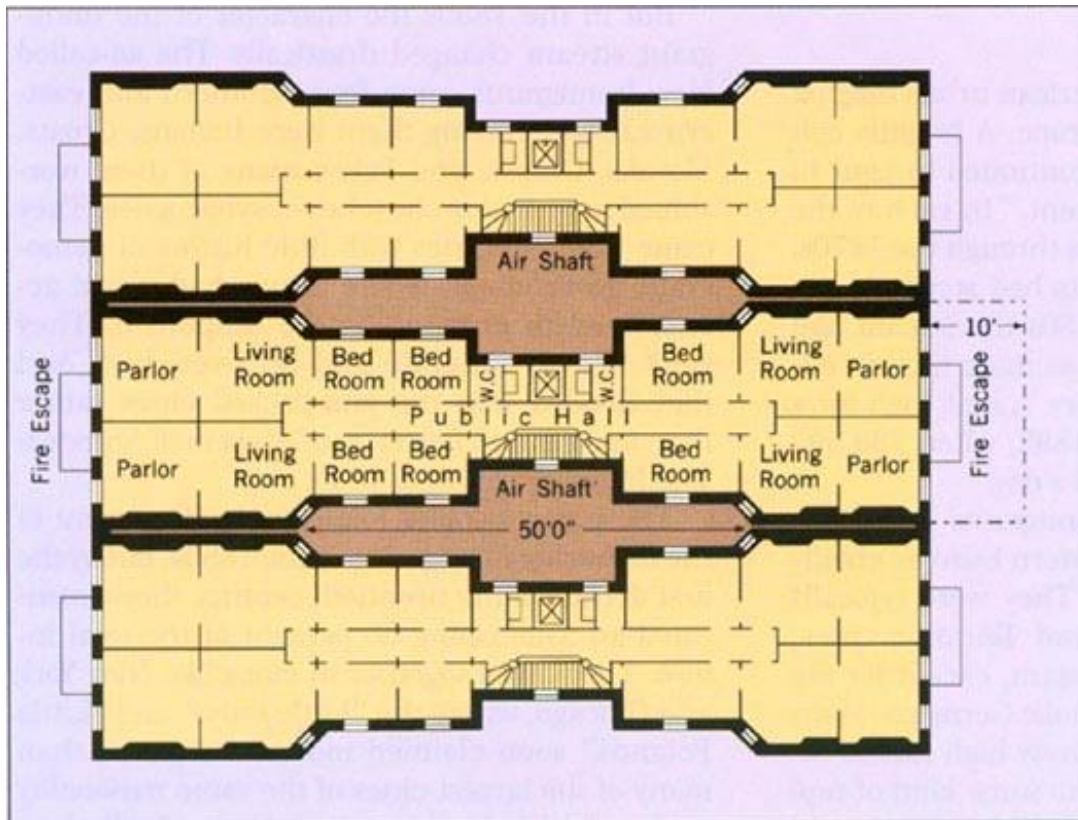


Figure 2: "Dumbbell" tenements.

<http://claver.gprep.org/sjochs/slum%20through%20political%20machine%20review-2014-regular.htm>.

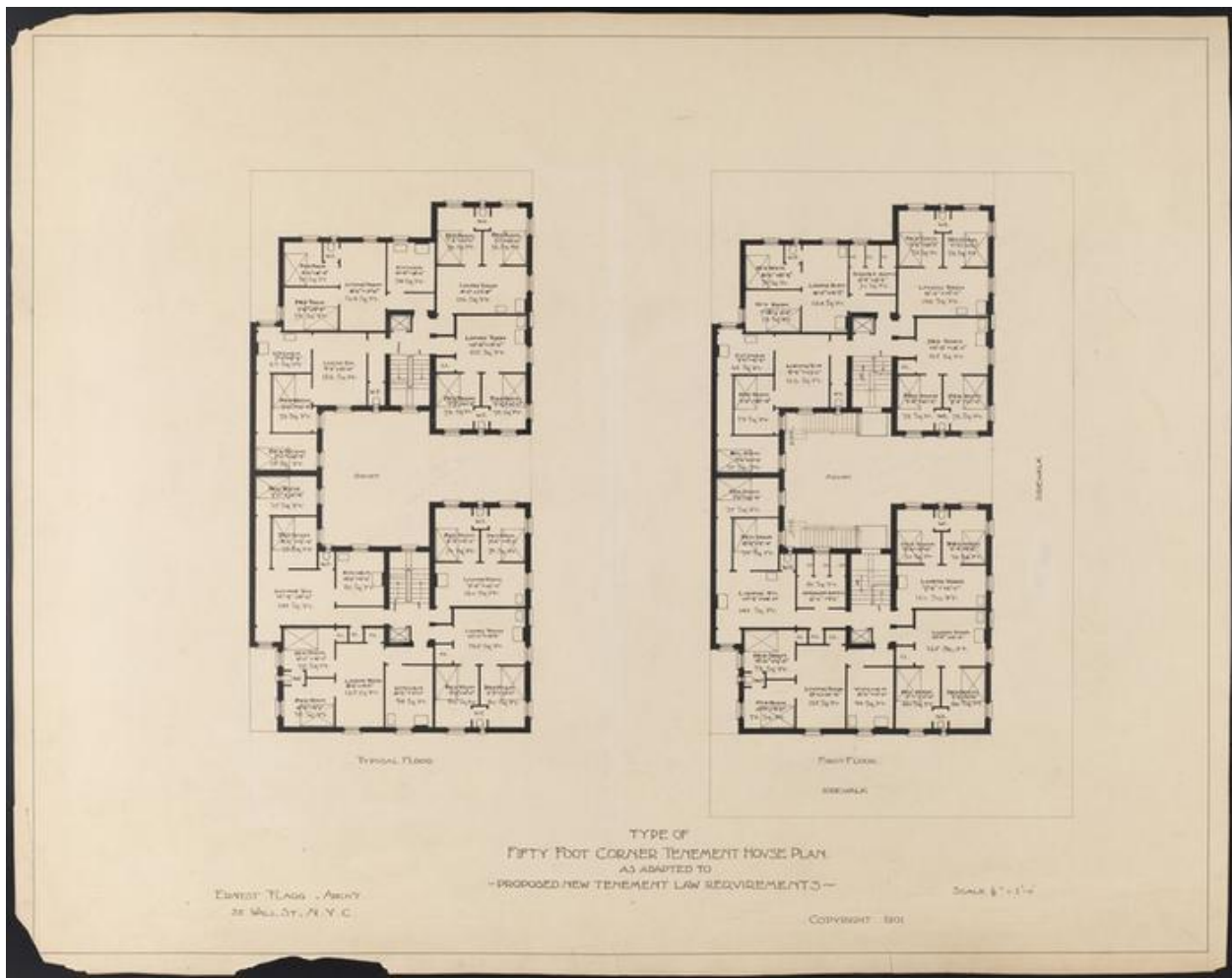


Figure 3: Ernest Flagg, *Type of Fifty Foot Corner Tenement House Plan As Adapted To Proposed New Tenement Law Requirements*, 1901, Museum of the City of New York, New York, NY.



Figure 4: Tenement Fire Escape Ornament, 4" Laser cut metal ornament, \$19.99. Image from shop.tenement.org. The shop listing describes, "As a symbol of tenement life, this fire escape honors the role immigration has played and continues to play in shaping America's evolving national identity."



Figure 5: Jacob Riis, photographer. *Family in Poverty Gap, N.Y.C. Tenement Room*, c. 1889, Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002710281/>.



Figure 6: Fire Apparatus, c. 1865, Type: Hook and ladder truck, hand drawn. Hand drawn hook and ladder truck, has five ladders, 1 long hook (entire length of truck) and 1 shorter hook, rope and rope wheel, painted maroon. Inscription Text: Gleason & Bailey. Dimension Details: L 16ft, W 7ft, H 7ft, Ladder L 20ft 3in. Image from New York City Fire Museum, New York, NY.



Built by
CHARLES I. WEINSTEIN
1904

GEO. F. PELHAM
Architect

**A MODEL
TENEMENT
HOUSE**
224-226 AVENUE B

BUILDING has a frontage of 43 feet 6 inches by 82 feet by 95 feet.

There are five apartments on a floor in suites of four rooms and bath.

For particulars concerning equipment, etc., refer to page 293.

Rents from \$20 to \$25 per month.

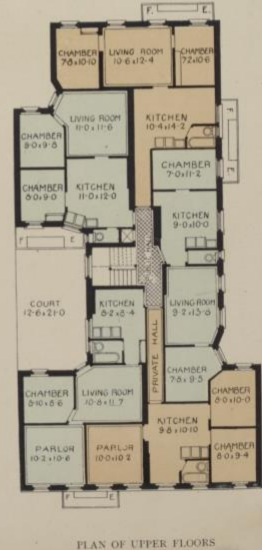
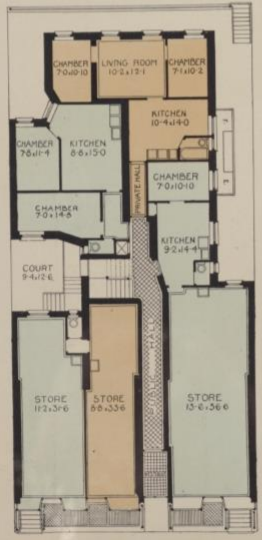


Figure 7: A model tenement house. 224-226 Avenue B; Plan of first floor; Plan of upper floors., 1908, Publisher: G.C. Hesselgren Pub. Co. Built by Charles I. Weinstein, 1904 / Architect - Geo. F. Pelham.



Figure 8: "Don'ts" and Warnings for Fire Prevention, THC-Fire Prevention Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166. Community Service Society Archives. Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Columbia University, New York, NY.

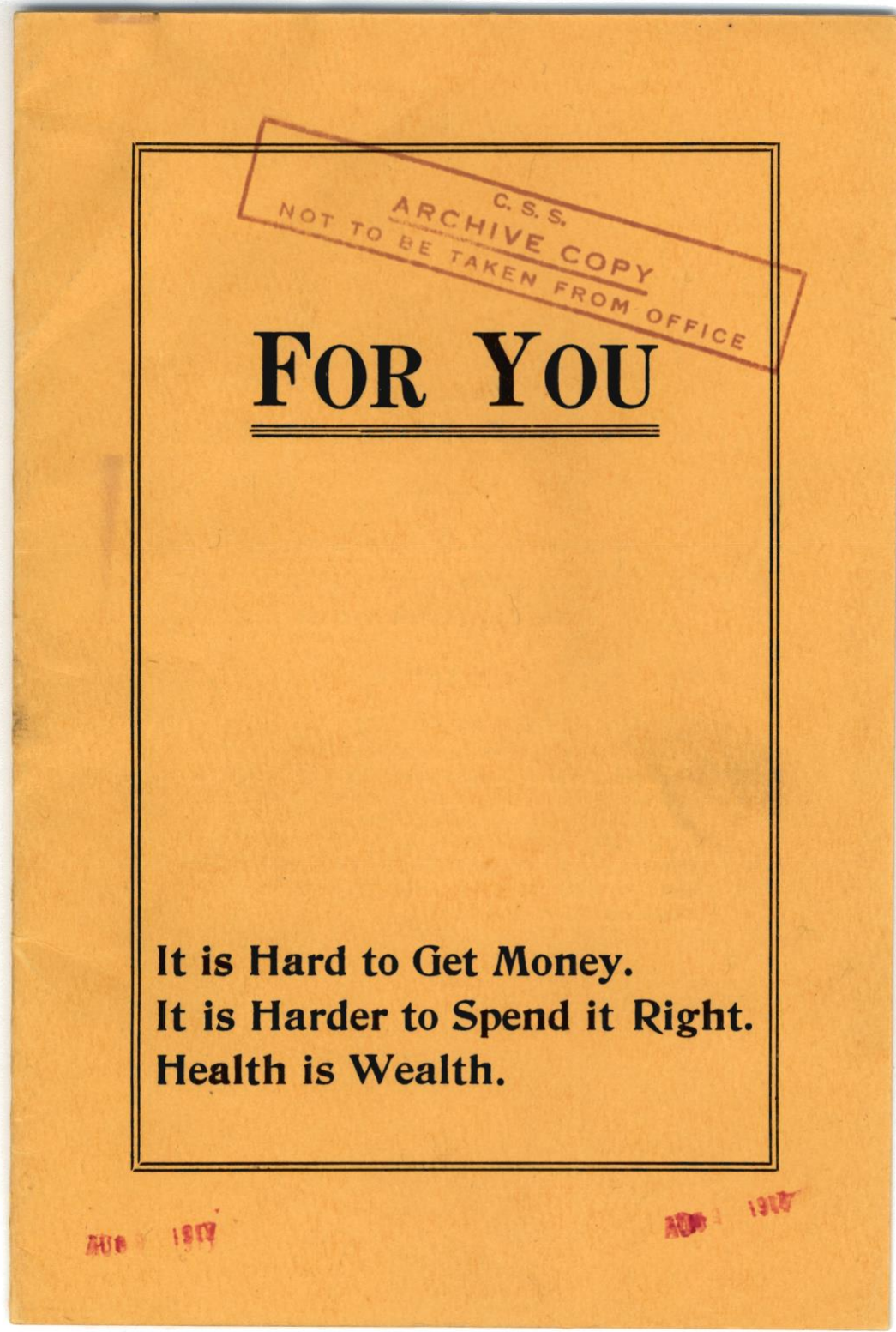


Figure 9: *For You*, THC-Publications "For You" Folder, CSS Papers, Box 166. Community Service Society Archives. Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Columbia University, New York, NY.



Figure 10: Jacob Riis, photographer. *Family in Room in Tenement House*, c. 1910. Photograph. Museum of the City of New York, New York, NY.



Figure 11: Jacob Riis, photographer. *Five Cents a Spot - Unauthorized Immigration Lodgings in a Bayard Street Tenement New York*, c. 1890. Photograph.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002710259/>.



Figure 12: Jacob Riis, photographer. *Typical Tenement Fire Escape Serving as an Extension of the "Flat,"* c. 1890. Photograph. Museum of the City of New York, New York, NY.



Figure 13: Jacob Riis, photographer. *Yard in Jersey Street Tenement*, c. 1897. Photograph. Museum of the City of New York, New York, NY.



Figure 14: Jacob Riis, photographer. *Bandits' Roost, 59 1/2 Mulberry Street, 1888*. Photograph. Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.



Figure 15: Udo J. Keppler, Artist. *The Tenement - a Menace to All*/Keppler. United States, 1901. New York: J. Ottmann Lith. Co., Puck Bldg. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010651390/>.

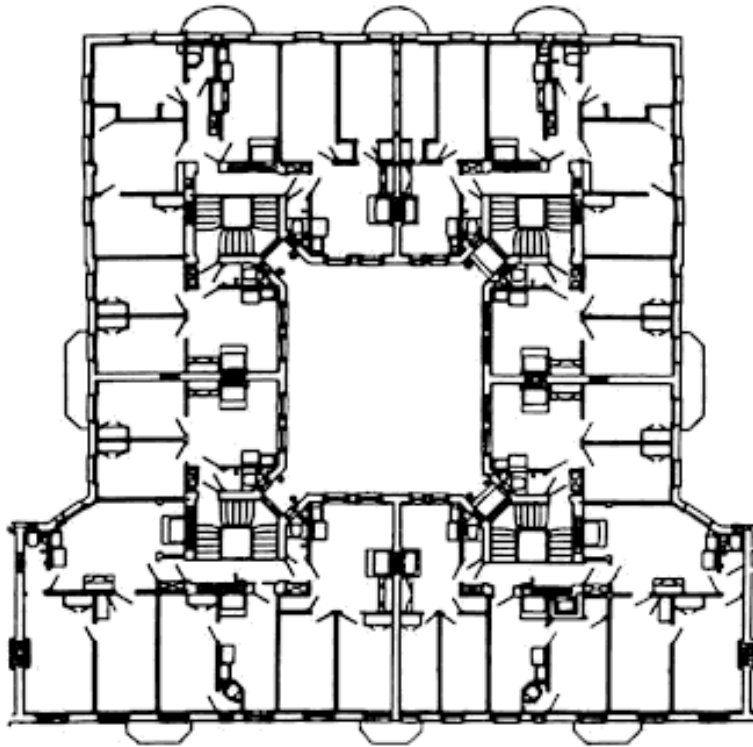


Figure 16: Ernest Flagg's winning entry to the 1896 tenement house competition sponsored by the Improved Housing Council. From: Richard Plunz. *A History of Housing in New York City*, Revised Ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, 42.

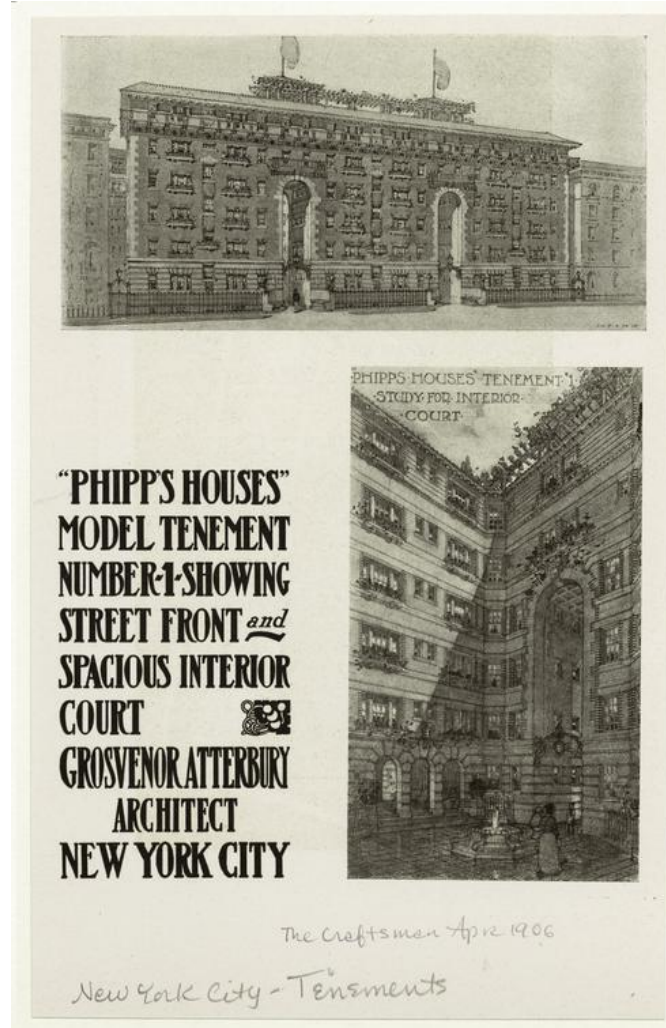


Figure 17: "Phipps Houses" Model Tenement Number-1-Showing Front and Spacious Interior Court. 1906. From *The Craftsman* [an illustrated monthly]. Syracuse: Gustav Stickley, 1903-1908.



Figure 18: Stairs in the Open Stair tenement. From: Jonathan A. Rawson. "Modern Tenement Houses." *Popular Science Monthly*, February (1912): 193.