

New York,



New York

BY THOMAS W. SANTOS

In the span of just a few centuries, what is now New York City went from a verdant wilderness on the edge of the known world to a sprawling megalopolis that commands international attention. Still, with all its size and frenetic energy, New Yorkers remain stubbornly sentimental about the city they call home. Painters, writers, and filmmakers have tried to capture its essence and appeal. But nothing compares to actually being there, walking the streets, and soaking in the unique, syncopated rhythm of the city.

Unlike cities such as Rome or Beijing, New York cannot look back on millennia of development and history. Even so, unprecedented growth and prosperity over a relatively short time has raised New York to the level of the greatest cities of civilization. Concentrated into a relatively small space, “The City,” as people call it, is a world of commerce, imagination, diversity, and productivity. The city actually consists of five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. Yet, when people speak of New York City, they generally are talking about the island of Manhattan. This is where it started. This is where the vitality of the city is most evident. This is where the buildings scrape the sky.

The History

There are many reasons why New York became the leading city that it is. The most compelling reason is its large, deep natural harbor. In the 1500s, European explorers marveled at the potential this protected body of water had as a seaport and trading center.

Before the Europeans arrived, the area around what is now lower New York State, New Jersey, and Delaware was inhabited by the Lenape, an Algonquin-speaking nation of hunter-gatherers. According to the history books, the first European to set eyes on New York harbor was Giovanni da Verrazano, an Italian explorer scouting the Atlantic coast of America in 1594 for the French crown. He apparently did not stay long, but the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge that connects Brooklyn to Staten Island is named for him.

The first European to map this region in earnest was the English explorer Henry Hudson. He was working for the Dutch East India Company, which had contracted him to find a trading passage to Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic. In 1609, during his exploration of the Atlantic

coast, he sailed into New York Harbor and up what is now the Hudson River. He never found the passage, but the Dutch laid claim to the land he had explored. In 1613, they established a fur trading post on the extreme southern end of Manhattan island and later called it New Amsterdam, also dubbing the surrounding area New Netherlands.

In 1626, Peter Minuit, the director general of the Dutch trading venture, “purchased” the whole of Manhattan from the Lenape, giving them tools, blankets, and other goods in trade. It is doubtful that the Lenape saw this trade as a true purchase in the European sense, and later this clash of cultures would bring the Native Americans and the European settlers into conflict.

New Amsterdam, clinging to the southern tip of Manhattan, was not a success at first. It attracted all sorts of rough and unseemly settlers who made the little colony a fairly lawless place. In 1647, the Dutch East India Company sent a hard, humorless man named Peter Stuyvesant to clean it up. He did just that, disciplining the population and encouraging further settlement. New Amsterdam



The Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States, towers over Liberty Island in New York Harbor. Visitors travel to and from the island by ferryboat.

was starting to attract all sorts of people, making it a distinctly diverse place. In 1664, the British, who had formed colonies all around New Netherlands, forced the Dutch to hand over the colony. The British immediately renamed it New York. From the beginning, New York was the leading economic and cultural center of North America.

During the American Revolutionary war, the city was targeted by the British, who sent a massive war fleet into New York harbor in June-July of 1776. In late August, the British soundly defeated the revolutionary army in the Battle of Long Island. The British maintained control of New York Harbor until the end of the war.

After the United States won independence, New York was briefly the new U.S. capital, and the first president, George Washington, was inaugurated there in 1789. But the capital was transferred to Philadelphia the following year and eventually to Washington, D.C.

In 1825, with the opening of the Erie Canal, which connected the Hudson River to the Great Lakes and opened shipping to the Midwest, New York became the premier American port on the Atlantic coast. Within 15 years, the city's population more than doubled. Over the next century, the city continued to grow, easily becoming the largest city in the New World.

In 1898, New York expanded beyond Manhattan island when what became known as "Consolidation" was instituted. In one moment, New York City more than doubled its size and population by incorporating the boroughs of the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Before this historic transition, Brooklyn itself was already one of the largest cities in the country. This binding together of millions of New Yorkers was further strengthened six years later in 1904 with the opening of the New York City Subway, which made it possible to traverse the city with relative ease.

Throughout the twentieth century, New York City maintained its claim as the largest and most dynamic city in the world. As the now familiar skyline rose, American business and entertainment found in New York a fertile ground for growth. Trade and commerce, art and music, literature and journalism all thrived in this dynamic environment. And now in the twenty-first century, even as other cities in the world have become large, exciting metropolises, New York still holds a place in the world's imagination as a city where dreams can be realized, where anything is possible.

Immigration

Immigration has had a profound impact on the texture of American culture. And New York City served as the



Ellis Island in New York Harbor was a processing center for immigrants from 1892 to 1954. Today the renovated facility functions as a museum and research center.

primary entry point on the Atlantic coast for immigrants to the United States. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, millions of people emigrated from Europe to the United States to escape economic, political, and social hardship.

In 1892, the U.S. government opened an immigration facility on Ellis Island, in New York Harbor, that processed more than 12 million people over a period of 62 years. Even though two-thirds of the immigrants only passed through New York on their way to other parts of the United States, others poured into New York City, most notably the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Because they shared a common language and culture, immigrants from the same country tended to settle close together, creating unique neighborhoods that survive to this day.

In the late nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants started to move into Lower Manhattan. Throughout the twentieth century, Chinatown continued to expand, maintaining its distinct Chinese character as New York City grew up around it. Today, a walk through Chinatown is like a trip to the other side of the world with Chinese spoken everywhere and signs in Chinese characters. The restaurants serve unique foods, and the shops sell items from Shanghai and Beijing.

The first three decades of the twentieth century brought massive waves of Italians to the United States. A large percentage of these immigrants settled in the five boroughs of New York City. As the years went on, Italian neighborhoods started to disappear but one remained strong—Little Italy. Just north of Chinatown and centered on Mulberry Street, Little Italy is a neighborhood of restaurants, shops, and businesses owned by descendants of Italian immigrants. The neighborhood is much smaller now than it used to be, but you can still walk down Mulberry Street and have a dish of flavorful pasta or a frothy cup of cappuccino.

In 1954, the immigration facility on Ellis Island closed. But the main building was later renovated and is now open as a museum and research center exploring the



The Brooklyn Bridge spans the East River between the boroughs of Brooklyn and Manhattan. When it opened in 1883, this bridge was considered one of the engineering marvels of its time.

American immigrant experience. Americans can research records and ship manifests to learn when their ancestors arrived in the United States. Ellis Island is a short ferry ride from Battery Park in Manhattan and is a popular destination for both tourists and schoolchildren.

The ferry to Ellis Island also takes visitors to nearby Liberty Island to see a famous symbol of America, the Statue of Liberty. This statue, designed by sculptor Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, was a gift from France to the United States to acknowledge the friendship established between the two countries during the American Revolution. Dedicated in 1886, the Statue of Liberty towered over New York Harbor and was one of the first sights seen by immigrants when their ships sailed into the harbor.

Geography and Architecture

New York can sometimes feel like a chaotic place. There are so many people—more than eight million—so much traffic, so much energy. Yet one thing remains constant, and that is “the Grid.” From the beginning of its history, New York has had a plan. The founders of the city looked northward across Manhattan and envisioned an orderly layout of streets and avenues. The Grid, laid out in 1811, planned for streets to run east to west and avenues to run south to north. Each street and avenue has a number, with letters used in a neighborhood on the Lower East Side nicknamed Alphabet City. The East Side is separated from the West Side by Fifth Avenue.

The boroughs are laid out in roughly the same way, but because they developed as separate cities, more of their streets have names, and the streets don't all fit the

Grid because some of them curve to follow the natural aspects of the land.

On New York's systematic and symmetrical layout, there are beautiful buildings, famous bridges, and neighborhoods where history was made.

The Boroughs

The Bronx is the northernmost borough of New York City. The name comes from one of the first settlers, Jonas Bronck, a Swedish sea captain who had a large farm here in 1641. In the late twentieth century, the Bronx became one of the poorest and most crime-ridden places in America. In recent years, the Bronx has started to make a comeback. The crime rate is down, and New Yorkers are starting to be attracted to the Bronx by what it has to offer—the famous Bronx Zoo, the Bronx Museum of Art, Fordham University, and, of course, Yankee Stadium home of the New York Yankees baseball team.

Queens, the borough that covers the greatest area, was named for Queen Catherine, wife of Charles II of England. Although Queens is largely residential, both major New York airports, John F. Kennedy International and LaGuardia Airport, are situated in Queens. In 1965, the New York World's Fair was held in the Flushing Meadows area of Queens, bringing the quiet borough to worldwide attention. Today that attention is focused on the annual U.S. Open tennis tournament in Flushing Meadows. Queens is also home to a baseball team, the New York Mets. Over 45 percent of the residents of Queens were born overseas, making Queens one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the United States.

Brooklyn, named for the city of Breukelen in the Netherlands, is one of the most vibrant communities in America. If it were a city separate from New York, it would be one of the largest in the country. Brooklyn is a borough of green parks and streets lined with characteristic “brownstone” homes (built of reddish brown sandstone). The renowned Brooklyn Museum has one of the finest art collections in the world. The Brooklyn Academy of Music has gained recognition and acclaim hosting productions of all the performing arts—classical music, opera, theatre, and dance. The Park Slope section of Brooklyn has become a unique enclave of contemporary American writers.

On the west side of New York harbor is Staten Island, connected to Brooklyn by the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and to Manhattan by the Staten Island Ferry. Sometimes called the “forgotten borough,” Staten Island has the smallest population of all the boroughs and has a quiet suburban feel. Many people who work in New York choose to live on Staten Island for the peaceful neighborhoods far from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Rivers and Bridges

The boroughs of New York are separated by the Hudson and East Rivers and New York Harbor itself. In the old days, New Yorkers used ferries to cross from Manhattan to Queens, or from Staten Island to Brook-

lyn. That changed in 1883 with the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge. Considered one of the engineering marvels of its time, the Brooklyn Bridge joined Manhattan to Brooklyn in one span. Many other bridges have been built to unite the city, but none has the iconic power of the Brooklyn Bridge. In the center of the bridge is a raised walkway for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Brooklyn Bridge crosses the East River. But, the East River is not really a river. It is a “tidal strait” that separates Brooklyn and Queens on Long Island from Manhattan and the Bronx on the mainland.

The other impressive bridge in New York is the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge that spans the opening of New York harbor. It is the longest suspension bridge in the United States and is the starting point of the yearly New York Marathon.

Parks

When the grid plan for Manhattan was designed in 1811, it did not include any parks. Several decades later, as the city was rapidly growing, city leaders decided to revise the plan to include an enormous park in the center of the island. Central Park, the first landscaped public park in the United States, was designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. It opened in 1873. The park stretches all the way from 59th Street in the south to 110th Street in the north. Fifth Avenue runs along the eastern edge.



Ice skaters in Central Park take a break from the city that surrounds them. An immense public park occupying six percent of the island of Manhattan, Central Park provides year-round recreation for New Yorkers.



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The Empire State Building, the tallest building in New York City, is a popular destination for tourists. Since it opened in 1931, more than 110 million people have visited this famous building.

Millions of people each year enjoy the lakes, meadows, and trees of Central Park. People roller-skate along the lanes, play sports on its fields, and visit the Central Park Zoo. In winter there are ice skating rinks, and in summer there are free performances of Shakespeare plays in the outdoor theatre. Central Park is known by many for the horse-drawn carriages that can be hired for a leisurely ride around the park.

Another large park designed by Olmsted is Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Like Central Park, it is used by the citizens of Brooklyn as a meeting place and for recreation. The park has a band-stand for concerts, a zoo, and baseball fields. It's even possible to go horseback riding in the park, right in the middle of Brooklyn. Also in the park is the Audubon Center, where city children can learn about nature and environmental preservation.

Famous Buildings

The Empire State Building is one of the symbols of New York. The name comes from the nickname of the State of New York. Until 1954, the Empire State Building was the tallest building in the world, and it is currently the tallest in New York City. Strangely, it was built

during the Great Depression when such a large project should have been unthinkable. After it opened in 1931, it sat mostly empty for years; some people jokingly called it the “Empty State Building.” Now it houses numerous offices, shops, and restaurants and is one of the most visited sites in the city because of the stunning views from the observation deck on the 102nd floor.

There is an interesting story in the race for the tallest building in the world. At the time the Empire State Building was being built, the Chrysler Building was under construction ten blocks away. An Art Deco masterpiece, the Chrysler Building was being touted at that time as the *second* tallest building in the world, following the Bank of Manhattan Building being constructed downtown. The architects of the Chrysler Building had a secret, though. Hidden from view inside the building, they were constructing a spire to top the building. At the end of construction, the 125-foot spire was raised into place taking the title of tallest building in the world from the Bank of Manhattan Building by just 60 feet. The honor wouldn't last, though. The Empire State Building would open less than a year later, and it exceeded the Chrysler Building in height by more than 200 feet.

Another building important to New Yorkers is Grand Central Terminal. It is one of the two main train terminals in the city. More than 125,000 commuters pass through Grand Central Terminal each day. More than twice that number come to shop in its stores and eat in its restaurants, and perhaps to admire the building's beautiful architecture.



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Grand Central Terminal, a busy commuter hub, connects train, subway, and pedestrian traffic. More than 125,000 commuters pass through the terminal each day.



This colorful building is in SoHo, a neighborhood known for its art and artists and for the distinctive cast iron embellishment of its original buildings.

Famous Neighborhoods

Harlem

Situated on the northern end of Manhattan is a neighborhood rich in history and culture—Harlem. Named after the city of Haarlem in the Netherlands, it has been a center of African American identity for well over a century. It is also the home of modern American music; the rhythms of jazz and the blues were nurtured here. Harlem showcased such great musicians as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Cab Calloway at the famous Cotton Club and singers Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, and Aretha Franklin at the Apollo Theater.

The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and '30s saw the rise of black writers, artists, and musicians that would have a profound and lasting effect on American culture. Great American writers such as Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes emerged from this era.

In the years that followed, Harlem declined and decayed. By the 1960s, Harlem had become a dangerous neighborhood plagued with crime and drugs. This trend was reversed in the late 1990s with an infusion of public funds and neighborhood pride. Harlem is now develop-

ing into an attractive area of streets lined with historic homes and thriving businesses. One of its notable residents is Bill Clinton, who, after his presidency, established his office on the newly revitalized 125th Street in the center of Harlem.

SoHo

The SoHo district of New York is known for its art and artists. SoHo is an abbreviation meaning “South of Houston Street.” For much of the mid twentieth century, SoHo was known as the “Cast Iron District” because of the ornate cast iron architecture of its buildings, SoHo was a neighborhood of factories and warehouses mostly for the garment industry. In the 1960s, artists moved into the abandoned warehouses of SoHo because the large well-lit spaces were perfect for artist studios. Artists were also attracted by the cheap rents. (Some were “squatters,” moving into abandoned buildings and living there for free.) After the district was designated a preservation area in 1973, SoHo suddenly became popular. Through the 1960s and 1970s, more and more people moved in, and real estate prices skyrocketed. Now SoHo is one of the most fashionable and “arty” parts of New York, filled with studios, art galleries, cafes, shops, and restaurants.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of several museums along New York's "Museum Mile," has a collection of more than two million pieces that includes art of every time period and style.

Greenwich Village

Greenwich Village is a "Downtown" neighborhood with a reputation for alternative lifestyles. In the 1600s, Greenwich Village actually was a village situated north of the original settlement of New York. As the city grew up around it, Greenwich Village was absorbed into the greater metropolis but retained its name and unique character. Today New York University sits in the center of Greenwich Village, and its academic atmosphere lends a youthful, unconventional feel to this part of town.

"The Village," as most people call it, has always been a place of avant-garde art and progressive politics. Through the years, it has been the home of many famous American writers and artists, including Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Jackson Pollock, Jack Kerouac, and Bob Dylan. Greenwich Village is known for its bookstores, art galleries, funky shops, small experimental theatres, and intellectual culture.

Wall Street

In 1699, the British tore down the wall that protected the old Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam from the outside world. A street was laid out in the space that was left, appropriately named Wall Street. One hundred years later, a group of speculators would gather regularly under a buttonwood tree at the lower end of the street by the East River. There they would trade. In 1792, twenty-four of these brokers drew up an agreement called the Buttonwood Agreement to establish what would eventually become the

New York Stock Exchange. Ever since then Wall Street has been associated with high finance and trade.

Over the years, Wall Street has had its characters and villains. J. P. (John Pierpont) Morgan is probably its most famous. Morgan, a financier and industrialist in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, grew rich on investments and corporate mergers that made him the wealthiest man in America. Because of his wealth and business dealings, he was a controversial figure. Some people saw him as a ruthless, greedy man. Others saw him as a benefactor of the arts and sciences. When he died, he left his sizeable art collection to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

After years of economic optimism and speculation, the New York Stock Exchange and the other exchanges along Wall Street crashed on October 29, 1929. The depression that followed was global in scope, and it took years for the stock market to recover.

Today "Wall Street" includes not just the street itself but also the surrounding neighborhood, which is bustling with bankers, investors, and stock brokers who inhabit the world of high finance.

Arts and Entertainment

Art Museums

The "Museum Mile," a stretch of Fifth Avenue that runs along Central Park on New York's Upper East Side, is the location of some world-class museums. The

most famous of these is the Metropolitan Museum of Art, commonly known as “The Met.” It is an enormous museum, the largest in the United States. The Met’s holdings cover all periods and styles of art, and its permanent collection contains more than two million pieces. A few of the highlights of the collection include the hall of Egyptian artifacts, the display of armor, and the exhibition of clothing and fashion design throughout history. There are, of course, many famous paintings, sculptures, and photographs to view as well. In addition to its main collection, the Met puts on many special exhibitions each year, inviting visitors to come back again and again.

The Met’s medieval collection is housed in a special building at the northern tip of Manhattan. This building is called “The Cloisters” because the architectural design is a replica of an ancient monastery. The Cloisters is a beautiful and peaceful place to view the medieval art.

Not far from the Met is the Guggenheim Museum, known for its unique architecture. Designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the building is a spiral, wider at the top than the bottom. The Guggenheim collection holds some of the greatest works of modernist art from the beginning of the twentieth century. Many consider the Guggenheim a required stop on any visit to New York.

There are many other great art museums in New York, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Frick Collection. New York has always been the center of the American art world, and the richness of the city’s museum collections reflect that.

Broadway

Broadway is exactly what its name describes—a wide avenue. It stretches northward from Battery Park in Lower Manhattan up the length of the island, through the Bronx, and finally into Westchester County outside the city limits. Broadway is the oldest and longest thoroughfare in the city. But Broadway is more than just a street; it is the main artery of the American theatre. People come from all over to experience the best theatre the country has to offer.

The term “Broadway” refers to the 32 large theatres scattered around Times Square in midtown Manhattan, what is called the Theatre District. Plays and musicals that are produced in a Broadway theatre are considered the pinnacle of the art in America, although the productions tend to aim at mainstream audiences. The productions will run for as long as audiences buy tickets; a show will close when ticket sales no longer support it. This means that a Broadway show could run for only a

week or for many years, depending on its popularity. The longest running show is “The Phantom of the Opera,” which opened in January 1988.

Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway refer to New York theatre productions that are produced in smaller venues scattered around the city. Off-Broadway shows are more experimental than the entertainment-focused productions of Broadway. Still, productions are in established theatres with large, loyal audiences. Off-Off-Broadway refers to plays and musicals that are alternative in form and content. The spaces in which they play are usually small theatres, or sometimes not even theatres at all. Avant-garde or outlandish productions that would never appear in Broadway or Off-Broadway theatres can find a home in Off-Off-Broadway.

Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall

Lincoln Center is the premier venue for the performing arts in New York. It is the home of the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Juilliard School for the performing arts. Around the grand plaza are gathered an opera house, a theatre, and a concert hall. The complex also includes studios and rehearsal halls where artists develop their crafts and schools for young actors, dancers, and musicians. Lincoln Center is an exciting place to see a play, ballet, or opera, or to hear some beautiful music.

Carnegie Hall is another famous concert hall in New York. It is named for philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who financed its construction. Since its opening in 1891, Carnegie Hall has hosted world-renown musicians, conductors, and orchestras. It is said that if you “play Carnegie Hall,” you have reached the top of your musical career.





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Times Square in the heart of New York's Theatre District is teeming with traffic and bright electric billboards.

The City of New York has had dozens and dozens of songs written about it. Many books singing its praises and reviling its excesses have been published over the years. Plays have been produced, paintings painted, films filmed, and photographs taken. All this has been done to capture what makes New York, New York so captivating. Still, nothing can compare to walking the streets, riding the subway, eating in the restaurants, and meeting the people. The energy of “The Big Apple” is infectious; it grabs hold of you and won't let go. No wonder people keep coming back to the city time after time. There is always something new to see, something exciting to do.

Websites of Interest

Ellis Island

<http://www.nps.gov/elis/>

The National Park Service operates both the park and the official website of Ellis Island. Visitors to the website can find information about the Statue of Liberty (located on nearby Liberty Island) and the American Family Immigration History Center.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

The website of “the Met” presents information about the museum's permanent collections and temporary exhibits. It also includes a “MuseumKids” sections for younger visitors.

New York City Government

<http://www.nyc.gov/>

This website provides visitors with information about the various offices and people that make up New York City's government. It also has information about events sponsored by the city.

Transportation in New York City

<http://www.mta.info/>

This is the official website of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, which operates the bus and subway systems in New York City. Website visitors can find maps, schedules, and a “trip planner” to help them plan travel in the city.

United Nations Cyberschoolbus

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/>

Part of a teaching and learning project supported by the United Nations, this website features lesson plans for teachers and online activities for students, as well as links to other United Nations websites.

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Graceful fountains adorn the exterior of the Metropolitan Opera House, one part of the famous Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

United Nations Headquarters

EVERY YEAR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of visitors to New York City go to see the United Nations Headquarters in midtown Manhattan. The 18-acre site includes four buildings—the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Conference building, and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The United Nations (UN) currently has 192 members, and the flags of those nations line the plaza in front of the General Assembly Hall and Secretariat. The row of flags, displayed in English alphabetical order, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, stretches from 48th Street to 42nd Street.

The decision to locate United Nations Headquarters in the United States was made in 1946 by the UN General Assembly, then meeting in London. Several U.S. locations were considered, but a donation of 8.5 million dollars from philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. secured the purchase of land at the present site. And the City of New York provided a gift of additional land. The UN complex was designed by an international team of prominent architects. American Wallace K. Harrison was named chief architect, and ten other countries each nominated an architect to the Board of Design Consultants. The 11 architects began the project in early 1947. The U.S. government provided an interest-free loan to the United Nations for the cost of construction, which began in 1949.

The Secretariat Building, which houses the UN administrative offices, was completed in 1950, and United Nations Headquarters officially opened in 1951. The Library was dedicated in 1961. Over the years, changes have been made inside the buildings to accommodate the expanded membership of the United Nations. Today the General Assembly Hall, the largest conference room, seats more than 1,800 people.

The UN Headquarters site is international territory owned by the member nations. It has its own security force, fire department, and postal service. (The postal service issues stamps that can only be mailed from the Headquarters; tourists often mail postcards bearing these stamps.)

Taking a guided tour is the only way for visitors to see the inside of UN Headquarters. Tours are led by professional guides representing all the member nations and are conducted in many different languages. Visitors taking a tour see exhibits, various council chambers, and the General Assembly Hall. If their timing is good, they might even see a council meeting in session.

The United Nations Headquarters displays many beautiful and meaningful works of art created specially for its halls and chambers. Sculptures and statues donated by member nations adorn the grounds of the complex. One sculpture, the Japanese Peace Bell, was made from the metal of coins collected from 60 different countries. Japan presented the bell to the United Nations in 1954, and it is rung every year on September 21, the International Day of Peace.

The Peace Bell and other sculptures, as well as paintings and murals inside the buildings, create an impression of grandeur and dignity, reflecting the importance of the work being done at the United Nations.

Flags of member nations line the plaza leading up to the international headquarters of the United Nations in midtown Manhattan.

