

MANY CITY STREETS ARE LITTLE KNOWN

Real Estate Transfers Often
Reveal Existence of Strange
Thoroughfares.

CROOKED OLD BROADWAY

Shows What Bloomingdale Road
Once Looked Like—Memo-
ries of Sylvan Place.

Transfers of city property occasionally reveal the names of well-nigh forgotten or little known thoroughfares, the prompt location of which would be a hard puzzle to almost any one outside of the real estate business. Manhattan Island has many small streets whose existence is undreamed of except by the limited number of persons doing business or residing in their neighborhood. How many persons, for instance, could tell offhand where Sylvan Place is? Perhaps Old Broadway may be more familiar, but there would be a great scurrying to the foot of the class if the question were asked to locate Fort Charles Place. Yet within the last few days transfers of property have been recorded in all of these thoroughfares on Manhattan Island.

There are really two Sylvan Places, although the one which figures among the transfers is more correctly known as Sylvan Terrace. It was recorded, however, as Sylvan Place, and is the narrow street connecting Jumel Place with St. Nicholas Avenue between 160th and 162d Streets. On the east of Jumel Terrace is the Roger Morris Park, with the historic house once occupied by Washington and where Aaron Burr lived for some time after his marriage with Mme. Jumel, who owned a magnificent estate of many acres there. Sylvan Place or Terrace is lined on both sides with several small houses, the one transferred on the south side being on a plot only 34.6 feet in depth.

The better-known Sylvan Place is in the East Harlem section bisecting the block bounded by Lexington and Third Avenues, 120th and 121st Streets, the street running north and south. The Harlem Court House occupies half a block front on the easterly side. This small thoroughfare, only one block in length, is the only visible survivor in Manhattan of the old Eastern Post Road which at that point made a junction with the Kingsbridge Post Road which came in from the southeast. At 120th Street and Sylvan Place, near the junction of the two post roads the ancient Harlem Road or Church Lane began, running northeast and the meeting of these three prominent thoroughfares gave the name of the Five Corners to the neighborhood more than a century ago. For many years the old Harlem Reformed Dutch Church faced on Sylvan Place and in 1807 a market was established there. Up to a few years ago, two or three aged plane trees stood as a mute witness of the early stage coach days when the Eastern Post Road was the main route out of the city to Boston. With the exception of Sylvan Place practically nothing remained to recall the more primitive times when Harlem was really a village.

Old Broadway, in the far western Harlem section, is the only reminder of the ancient Bloomingdale Road. With its almost semi-circular contour from Manhattan Street north to 133d Street where it ends 122 feet east of Broadway. Old Broadway is a faithful reminder in its width and characteristics of upper Bloomingdale Road conditions years ago. It starts on the north side of Manhattan Street just east of the subway station a little above 127th Street and the diagonal shape of many neighboring plots, especially in the block between 130th and 131st Streets, east of Old Broadway, show the original form of the residential site before the rectangular system of roads was adopted, Manhattan and Lawrence Streets being the only exceptions besides Old Broadway.

Fort Charles Place is of a much later vintage, being a semi-circular thoroughfare in the Marble Hill area at the northerly end of the island and being virtually the continuation of Van Corlear Place at its junction with Jacobus Place and ending in Marble Hill Avenue.