

A Lot of Debris in Harlem Becomes a Plot of Flowers and Greenery in Three Hours



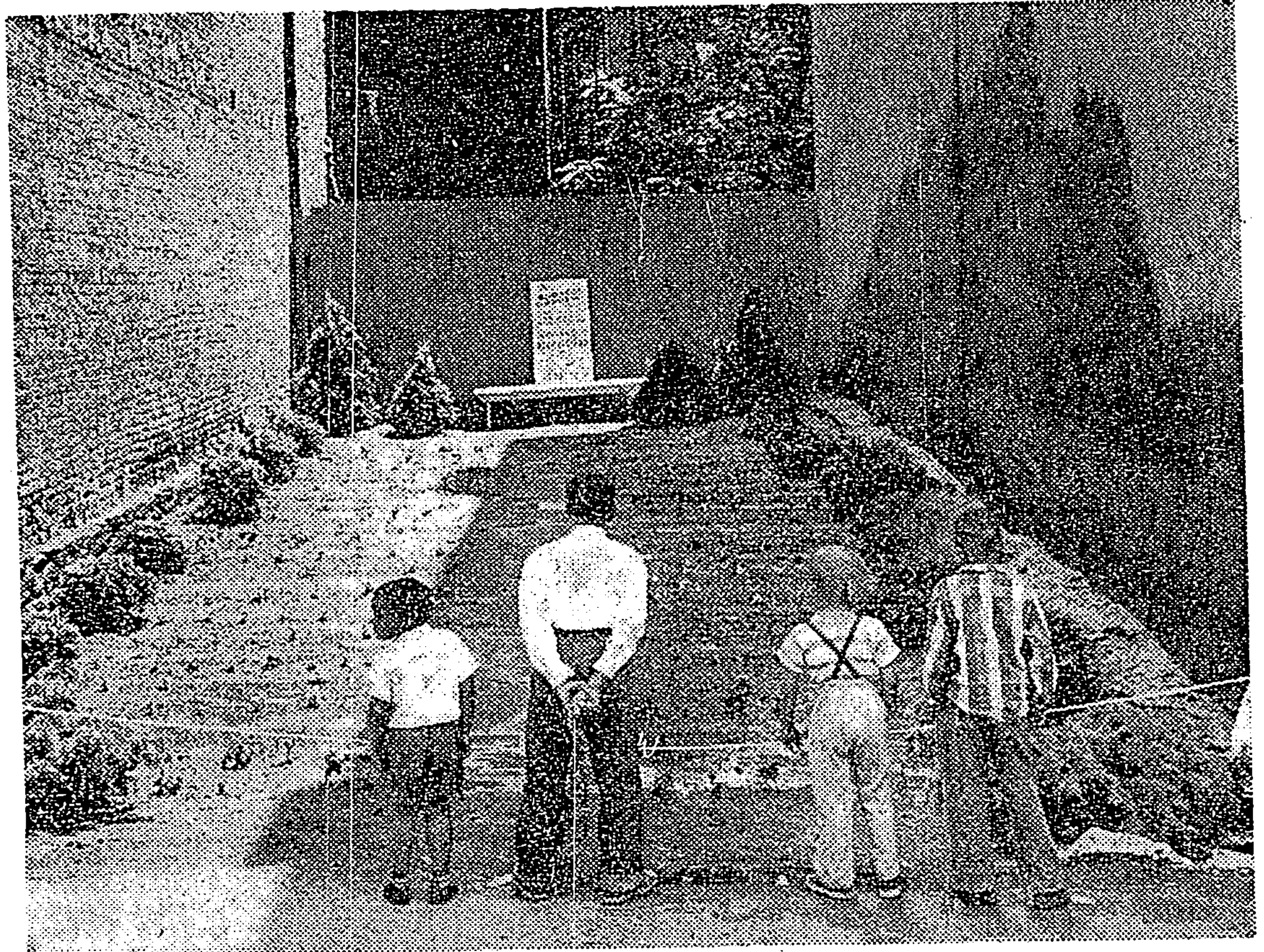
Welder cuts part of fence on St. Nicholas Avenue to permit a Department of Sanitation cleaning force to pick up the trash and move in topsoil.



Then about twenty-five children from Public School 157, which is just across the street, took over. Here some of them spread the topsoil.



Norman White, 6, digs hole as Cynthia Chestnut, also 6, waits to plant flowers bought with pupils' contributions.



The completed project, first "miracle garden" in Manhattan. It was sponsored by Board of Education, Sanitation Department and Citizens Committee to Keep N. Y. City Clean.

DUMP IN HARLEM BECOMES GARDEN

Trash-Filled Lot Is Cleared and Planted in Flowers by City and Pupils

A trash-littered vacant lot in Harlem was transformed into a field of flowers in three hours yesterday by school children and the Department of Sanitation.

The project was the first "miracle garden" in Manhattan. It was sponsored by the Board of Education, the Sanitation Department and the Citizens Committee to Keep New York City Clean. Brooklyn has seven such projects and the Bronx two.

At 8 A. M. the 25-by-75-foot city-owned lot on St. Nicholas Avenue between 126th and 127th Streets was a repository for empty beer cans, broken bottles, discarded furniture and rubble. A lot-cleaning force from the Sanitation Department moved in, cleaned up and spread topsoil.

About twenty-five boys and girls from Public School 157 then took up rakes, shovels and hoes. Under the eye of Romaine F. Button, supervisor of school gardens for the Board of Education, they planted shrubs, petunias, marigolds, zinnias and salvia.

The school is just across the street from the lot. Many of its 1,700 children had donated nickels and dimes to help pay for the plants, and at least one youngster felt he owned a proper share. He told another, "Don't mess up my garden, I paid a nickel for it."

Sanitation Commissioner Paul R. Screvane and hundreds of children from the school were on hand to see the planting. The garden will be tended by members of the committee and by the children.

"We're always glad to pitch in when we get this kind of community spirit," Mr. Screvane said.

He said there were about 40,000 vacant lots in the city, ranging from small parcels to several acres. About 6,000 of these need periodic cleaning up. Since last October, Mr. Screvane said, the Sanitation Department has policed more than 2,000 lots.