

## Historical Identity Vignettes

### Historical Identity Vignette 1

**Identity Vignette 1 Name:** Charles V.

**Age:** 45

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** Physician on the Henry Street Settlement's Medical Advisory Committee

**Religion:** Lutheran

**Nationality:** German American

**Language:** English

**Education:** Completed medical school

**Additional details:** Dr. Charles V. was born in Germany, but immigrated to the United States as a baby. He grew up in a New York City tenement. Dr. V. became involved with the Henry Street Settlement because he is concerned about health conditions in the city's tenements. He sometimes provides consultation to the Henry Street nurses on cases. He is a strong supporter of any efforts to improve housing (e.g., waste removal, plumbing installation, pest control, etc.), but is uncomfortable with Henry Street nurses distributing money to their clients.

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### Relevant primary sources in *Outside / Inside* exhibition

- [Visiting Nurse Service: Administered by the Henry Street Settlement, Bulletin of Instruction, revised edition, 1933](#)
- ["Push carts on Bleeker Street, Miss Stafford makes a purchase"](#)
- ["Backyard toilet—Chelsea."](#)

### Questions to consider

1. How do you think Dr. V. views the Henry Street nurses? As equals, employees, or in some other way?
2. Why might Dr. V. oppose the distribution of money, but not milk, food, or supplies?
3. What might Dr. V. find most frustrating about his role with the Henry Street Settlement? Most rewarding?
4. How do you think Dr. V. explains his work with the Nursing Service to his friends, family, or potential donors?

## Historical Identity Vignettes

### Historical Identity Vignette 2

Identity Vignette 2 Name: Esther R.

Age: 20

Occupation: Henry Street Settlement Visiting Nurse (in training)

Religion: Jewish

Ethnicity or Nationality: Second-generation Russian

Language: English, Yiddish, and some Russian

Education: Completed high school

**Additional details:** Inspired by Lillian Wald, Esther R. joined the Henry Street Settlement Visiting Nurse Service. Esther grew up in an upper-middle class family in New York City. In high school, she excelled in math and science, and she feels confident as a nurse. Last year, she learned how to drive and hopes to get to drive one of the Settlement House's cars to serve some of the most remote parts of the city. Esther also understands how the city's government functions and often refers her clients to various agencies for assistance.

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### Relevant primary sources in *Outside / Inside* exhibition

- ["Student nurses assist in pre-activities, teaching mothers to make paper bags, cut patterns, and make swabs."](#)
- ["A Gun Hill car in the district, Miss Kramer, driver"](#)
- [Visiting Nurse Service: Administered by the Henry Street Settlement, Bulletin of Instruction, revised edition, 1933](#)

### Questions to consider

1. How do you think nurse Esther views the Henry Street Medical Advisory Committee? As equals, as her bosses, as a resource she can draw on when needed, or in some other way?
2. How might Esther relate to her clients?
3. To what extent do you think Esther's family supports her work with the Henry Street Settlement Visiting Nurse Service? Why?
4. What might make it easier for Esther to navigate New York City's administrative offices than her clients? How might this shape their relationships?

## Historical Identity Vignettes

### Historical Identity Vignette 3

**Name:** Mrs. Joseph B.

**Age:** 53

**Occupation:** Society woman, serves on the Board of Directors of the Henry Street Settlement

**Children:** 4 (3 grown children, 1 who died as an infant)

**Religion:** Methodist

**Ethnicity or Nationality:** Anglo-American

**Language:** English

**Education:** Completed high school

**Additional details:** Mrs. Joseph B. is a wealthy member of New York City's upper-class society. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of the Henry Street Settlement, she financially supports several other reform and social service groups. She was 40-years-old when women got the vote (Nineteenth Amendment, 8/18/1920), and has taken advantage of that right ever since. Mrs. Joseph does not provide direct services to New York's City's residents, but is a strong advocate for the nursing service. She is particularly concerned about the health of babies and children living in the city's "squalid" tenements being raised by "ignorant" parents. For the past few years, she has lead the Henry Street Settlement's fundraising efforts.

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#### Relevant primary sources in *Outside / Inside* exhibition

- [Quarterly of the Henry Street Visiting Nurse Service, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1930](#)

#### Questions to consider

1. What do you think motivates Mrs. B. to work with the Henry Street Settlement?
2. What do you think Mrs. B. enjoys the most about her role at the Settlement?
3. What do you think that Mrs. B. enjoys the least about her role at the Settlement?
4. How do you think Mrs. B. promotes the Visiting Nurses Service in fundraising appeals?

## Historical Identity Vignettes

### Historical Identity Vignette 4

**Name:** Paulina L.

**Age:** 34

**Occupation:** Homemaker

**Children:** 3 children

**Religion:** Jewish

**Language:** Polish, Yiddish, and some English

**Ethnicity or Nationality:** Polish, immigrated to New York City about ten years ago

**Education:** Left school after the 4th grade

**Additional details:** Paulina's husband lost his job in May of 1930, and is now receiving work relief. Although she is primarily a homemaker, Paulina takes on odd jobs as she is able. Her oldest child has left school to work. When Paulina was pregnant with her youngest child, she attended a "Mother's Club" sponsored by the Henry Street Settlement Visiting Nurse Service. Later, when her children had pneumonia, the Henry Street nurses were essential to their recovery. She is concerned about the air quality in her neighborhood and the lack of ventilation in many tenements. This summer, her middle child will attend summer camp sponsored by the Henry Street Settlement.

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### Relevant primary sources in *Outside / Inside* exhibition

- ["Backyard toilet—Chelsea."](#)
- ["Mothers' Club"](#)
- ["Miss Kramer takes care of a very sick baby who has pneumonia. The M.L.I. furnished a night nurse and the baby recovered. Father is on work relief."](#)
- ["A group of girls starting for Camp Fire Day Camp. Money from a special Henry Street fund payed for much needed recreation for these girls and others during the summer months."](#)

### Questions to consider

1. Other than medical care and instruction, what might Paulina have received at the "Mother's Club?"
2. To what extent do you think Paulina feels welcomed by the Henry Street Settlement? Why?
3. What do you think Paulina and her family need the most right now? What do they need the least?
4. How do you think Paulina views the Henry Street Visiting Nurses? Given her social and economic conditions, how does she feel attending the meeting?