

0. HISTORICAL FACTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES - Story
Preface

1. BACKGROUND

2. FIVE POINTS

3. LIFE IN FIVE POINTS

4. THE BOWERY

5. THE IRISH ARRIVE

6. GANGS AND TAMMANY HALL

7. DEAD RABBITS vs. THE BOWERY BOYS

8. BILL THE BUTCHER

9. MURDER OF BILL THE BUTCHER

10. MONK EASTMAN AND JOHNNY SIROCCO

11. 1863 DRAFT LAW

12. 1863 DRAFT RIOTS

13. REACTION TO THE RIOTS

14. HISTORICAL FACTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES

Other miscellaneous but important historical facts, highlighted hereafter, will help to put mid-19th century New York in context with the rest of the story.

1863 FASHIONS

- Fall fashions for the wealthy - worn a few months after the draft riots - demonstrated the great divide between rich and poor.
- Wealthy women and their children wore much different "street" clothes than their poorer counterparts.

NEW YORK SCENES IN THE 1860s

- A lone hay wagon made its way through the city at the junction of Canal and Walker (near Centre Street).
- "Paisley Place," on 17th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues.
- Soldiers, fighting in the Civil War as volunteers, returned to the city for a rest.
- Leaders of Tammany Hall congregated at the Democratic Club Cafe.
- "The Tombs" - 19th century New York's Hall of Justice, police courts and infamous, foreboding, "great gloomy pile of prison buildings" located at the edge of Five Points - was once the lovely site of Collect Pond.
- The Court of Special Sessions, in "The Tombs," was a busy place.
- Chamber of New York's Board of Councilmen.

- The *Commodore Barney*, formerly a New York City ferryboat (commissioned in 1861), made her way on the James River in 1863.
- The Fulton Ferry was “built of iron in 1863.”
- Opening night at Brougham’s Theatre.
- Tammany Hotel, headquarters of the Democratic Party.
- Recruiting for the Civil War (as reported in the March 19, 1864 edition of Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated Newspaper*), took place in New York City Hall Park in 1864, the year after the draft riots.

ADDITIONAL GANGS FROM FIVE POINTS

- FORTY THIEVES

It is said that New York City's first gang was formed in the back room of Rosanna Peers' grocery store on Center Street, just south of what was then called Anthony Street. Because Rosanna sold liquor for less money than local saloons, her store became a gathering place for murderers, thieves, thugs and pickpockets (who often fought in their undershirts). Meeting in the store's back room, the Forty Thieves became the city's first organized gang in about 1825. Other gangs (like the Dead Rabbits - which was slang, at the time, for very rowdy and athletic young men) also had their roots in the grocery stores of Five Points.

- THE PLUG UGLIES

To be a member of this Five Points gang - named for plug hats stuffed with rags, leather and wool - one had to be of Irish descent and at least six feet tall. During fights, the men wore their hats over their ears to protect themselves.

- EASTMAN GANG

As the 19th century neared its end, Jewish gangs - like the Eastmans - became dominant in Five Points. Hired as enforcers, these men bullied both labor unions and management during unrest in the early 1900s.

- THE FIVE POINTERS

As more Italian families immigrated to New York City, during the early 1900s, the nature of American gangs changed. Paul Kelly (Paolo Antonio Vacarelli) formed “The Five Pointers,” a mixed-ethnic gang. Some of the most infamous American gangsters eventually came from The Five Pointers (or its affiliates, like the James Street Gang).

- FAMOUS FIVE POINTERS

Some Five Pointers remain part of popular culture. Johnny Torrio, Al Capone and Lucky Luciano (the “organizer” of “organized crime” whose influence, and exploits, caused *TIME* to include him in the magazine's top 100 people of the 20th century) are featured characters in “Boardwalk Empire.” So is Meyer Lansky (Luciano's friend who was born in Russia - as Meyer Suchowljanski - long known as a genius with numbers). Lansky's childhood friend, Bugsy Siegel, is remembered (among other things) for his role in Las Vegas casinos.

Today, a federal courthouse sits atop the old Five Points neighborhood. It is an ironic tribute to this small corner

of the city which birthed so many Gangs of New York.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HISTORICAL-FACTS-PEOPLE-AND-PLACES-Gangs-of-New-York>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HISTORICAL-FACTS-PEOPLE-AND-PLACES-Gangs-of-New-York>

Media Stream



Johnny Torrio, Notorious Five Pointer

Image online, courtesy [Wikimedia Commons](#) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Johnny-Torrio-Notorious-Five-Pointer>



Meyer Lansky, Notorious Five Pointer

Mug shot of Lansky, Public Domain.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Meyer-Lansky-Notorious-Five-Pointer>



Lucky Luciano - Early Life

Clip from "[Lucky Luciano: Chairman of the Mob](#)," a 1987 production from A&E Home Video. Online, courtesy A&E and YouTube. Copyright, A&E, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lucky-Luciano-Early-Life>



Lucky Luciano - Gang Member

Clip from "Lucky Luciano: Chairman of the Mob," a 1987 production from A&E Home Video. Online, courtesy A&E and YouTube. Copyright, A&E, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lucky-Luciano-Gang-Member>

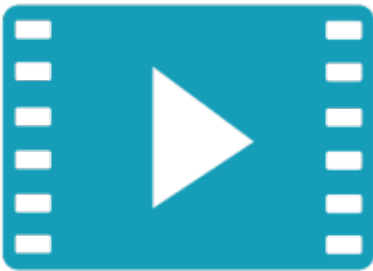


Meyer Lansky - Friend of Lucky Luciano

Clip from [documentary on Meyer Lansky](#), online via Bio.com's channel at YouTube. Copyright, A&E, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Meyer-Lansky-Friend-of-Lucky-Luciano>

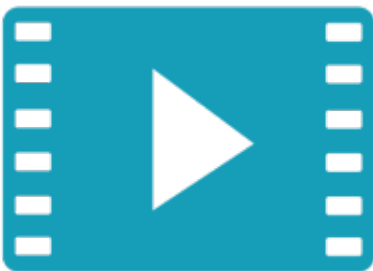


Meyer Lansky - It's Just Business

Clip from [documentary on Meyer Lansky](#), online courtesy Bio.com's channel at YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Meyer-Lansky-It-s-Just-Business>



Meyer Lansky - Chairman of the Board

Clip from [documentary on Meyer Lansky](#), online via Bio.com's channel at YouTube. Copyright, A&E, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Meyer-Lansky-Chairman-of-the-Board>