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Photographs of City of Ithaca from 1950s-1960s recently digitized and made publicly available on Tompkins HistoryForge & New York Heritage Digital Collections

Embark on a journey through time one click at a time! Historic Ithaca and The History Center join forces to bring you a digital archive of 1950s-1960s tax photograph index cards – a visual feast for history lovers! New resources are available free online for individuals or groups interested in the City of Ithaca's built environment. Historic Ithaca (HI), a non-profit preservation organization, and The History Center in Tompkins County (THC), an education and research center preserving the history of Tompkins County, NY, collaborated and received a grant from the South Central Regional Library Council (SCRLC) to digitize HI's collection of 5790 images of Ithaca tax photograph index cards from the 1950s-1960s and connect them to corresponding building records on the Tompkins HistoryForge platform (tompkins.historyforge.net). The images depict all taxable buildings in the City of Ithaca at that time including residences, businesses, and industries.

These taxable building index cards offer a unique view of the built environment of a small Upstate New York city in the mid-20th century. They are valuable research tools for historians, genealogists, teachers, City of Ithaca employees, architects, city planners, builders, homeowners, and community members, serving as a publicly available tool that can trace the history of a building, streetscape, or neighborhood, and the changes to Ithaca's built environment. These images will be useful for local history projects and projects related to housing trends and neighborhood evolution.

The complete image collection is now available online through Historic Ithaca's collection on New York Heritage Digital Collections website

(<https://nyheritage.org/organizations/historic-ithaca>) and on The History Center's innovative open-source digital history platform *HistoryForge* (www.tompkins.historyforge.net). HistoryForge provides historical context for the photographs. Each image is attached to a georeferenced record of that building on HistoryForge which can be viewed on current (Google) or over a dozen historical map layers on The Forge (our map page). Along with additional information about the buildings themselves, residential buildings also contain links to the members of each household who lived in them from historical censuses (1880-1950). A short video offering tips on how to use it can be found here: [HistoryForge How-to: Local History using History Forge's maps, photos, and census records.](#)

Having these visual records of the past available online allows these items to be readily available to a wide audience and easily accessed by anyone with a computer, tablet, or smartphone. The photographs offer unique snapshots of Ithaca's built environment in the mid-20th century. Some of the buildings on the tax photograph cards have been demolished and some of the buildings have been greatly altered. For many of the buildings, these images are the only surviving record of their appearance. The images are in copyright with non-commercial use permitted, so they can be used for educational and personal use.

About Tompkins HistoryForge: Tompkins HistoryForge is the model site of the HistoryForge platform: historyforge.net. HistoryForge is an innovative open-source digital history platform developed by The History Center in Tompkins County which combines historic census records, maps, and other local history resources to tell the story of Tompkins County. HistoryForge relies on local history enthusiasts to help expand the resources available on our platform. Learn more at tompkins.historyforge.net and [#ExploreHistoryForge](#).

About Historic Ithaca: Established in 1966 as a community response to threats

to downtown Ithaca landmarks, Historic Ithaca is the non-profit voice for preservation in Tompkins County and the Finger Lakes Region.

Our headquarters are located at 210 and 212 Center Street in Ithaca's historic Southside neighborhood. Significant Elements and Work Preserve are housed in a 130-year old manufacturing building at 212, and our offices and library are next door at 210 inside a former neighborhood grocery. The Plain Street Mural completed in 2011 depicts the fascinating history of this rare surviving example of a timber-frame industrial building. You can follow along @historicithaca and @significantelementssalvage on Instagram and Facebook.

About The History Center: The History Center in Tompkins County is a generation-to generation education and research center focused on engaging the public with the history of Tompkins County (located in the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Gayogóhó:nq' Nation) and the Finger Lakes region. The History Center helps people use the tools of history to understand the past, gain perspective on the present, and play an informed role in shaping the future. The History Center is located within the Tompkins Center for History & Culture. Learn more at thehistorycenter.net and follow @TompkinsHistory on any platform.

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