



IN MEDIAS RES
NEW YORK CITY
before the cell phone

STAN SHERER

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For my family

A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction. It means something only in conjunction with the buildings and other uses that border it, or border other sidewalks very near it. The same might be said of streets, in the sense that they serve other purposes besides carrying wheeled traffic in their middles. Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.

Jane Jacobs

The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Introduction

I DEVELOPED my first roll of film and made tiny contact prints in the bathroom of our apartment in the Bronx when I was eight years old. The magic of this process enthralled me then, and has stayed with me throughout my life.

Twelve years later, I saw the exhibition *The Concerned Photographer* at the Riverside Museum in New York. The photographs by Werner Bischof, Robert Capa, Leonard Freed, André Kertész, David Seymour, and Dan Weiner made such a deep impression on me that my photography was defined then and there; as was my camera—a Leica M3 with Plus-X and Tri-X films. I was majoring in sociology at the City College of New York and minoring in photography. Inspired by the work of Margaret Mead, I dreamt of traveling the world documenting how people lived and the details of everyday life.

In the years that followed, I walked the streets with my camera at every opportunity, drawn to faces that spoke to me—happily, silently, eloquently, sadly. I returned to the same neighborhoods repeatedly: Hell’s Kitchen (bordered by 34th Street to the south, 59th Street to the north), lower Manhattan (the Bowery, Little Italy, Chinatown, Lower East Side, Fulton Fish Market), and Central Park. I did not take notes; I did not realize, then, that fifty years later I would want to know where I had taken these pictures.

Now many of these street scenes have vanished. I have identified as many of the locations as possible from architectural details, old phone books, Google Maps, and memories of family and friends.

Revisiting the streets of New York through these photographs is to step into the past, and into my own past. Aside from the contact prints I made as a child, these darkroom prints record the first years of what would become my career. The process of digitizing these images and fitting them into a geographical puzzle has brought me closer to them again, and reacquainted me with the young man I was then.

I wonder how I would photograph these same people today, should I encounter them again.

Stan Sherer, 2019

Unless otherwise specified, all photographs were taken in Manhattan.



West 43rd Street, near the Port Authority Bus Terminal, 1967





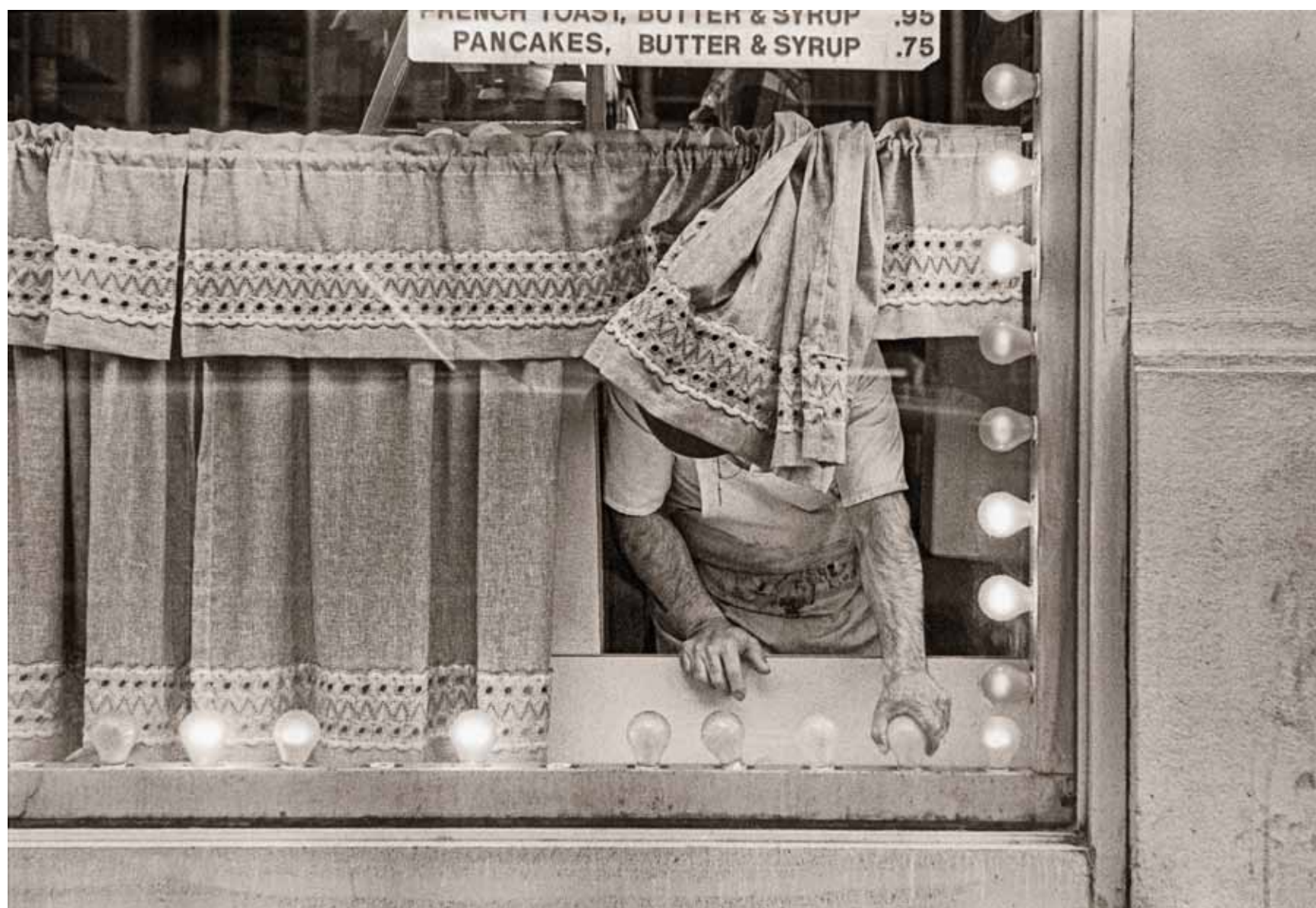




Near 32nd Street & Broadway, 1966





















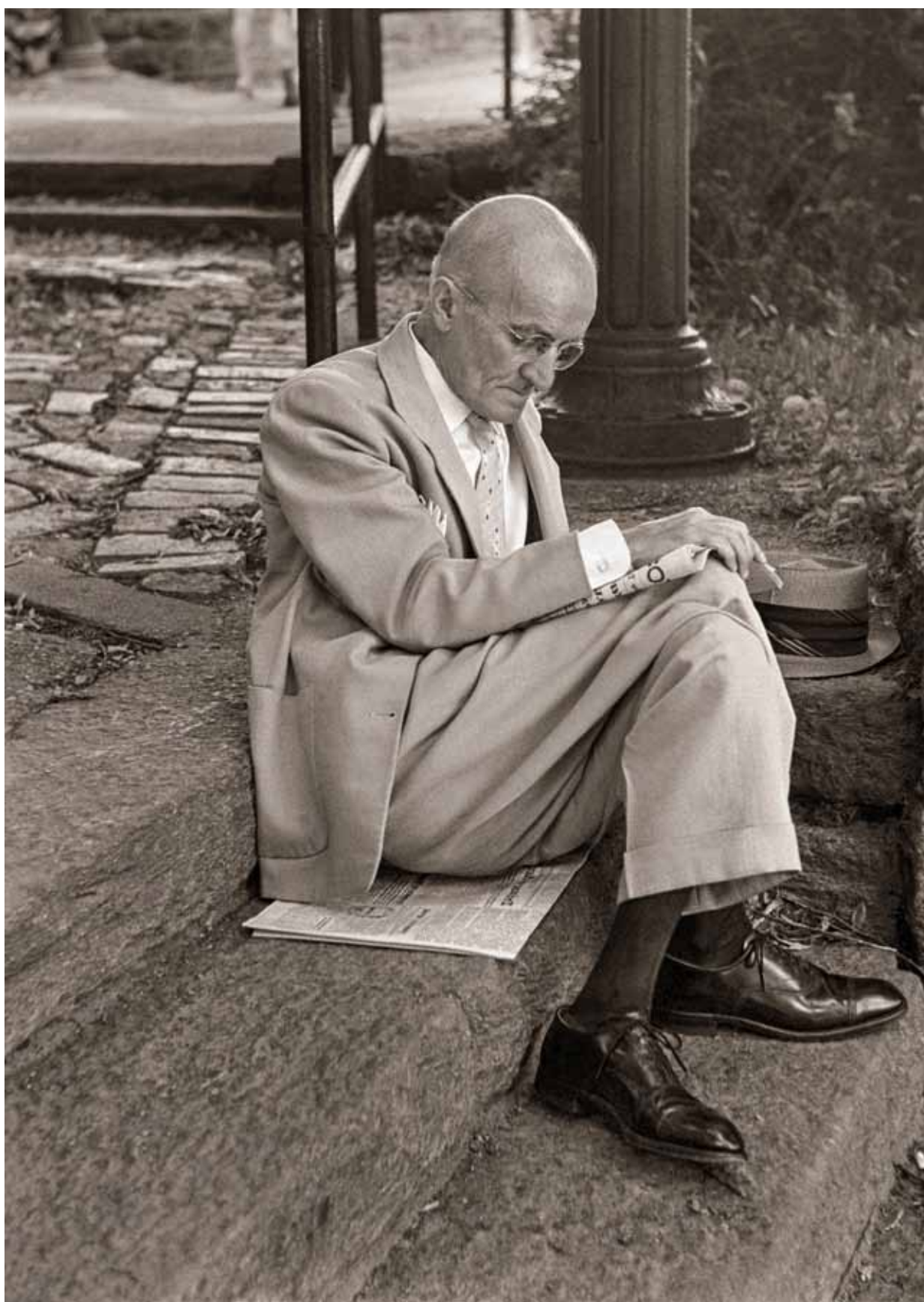








































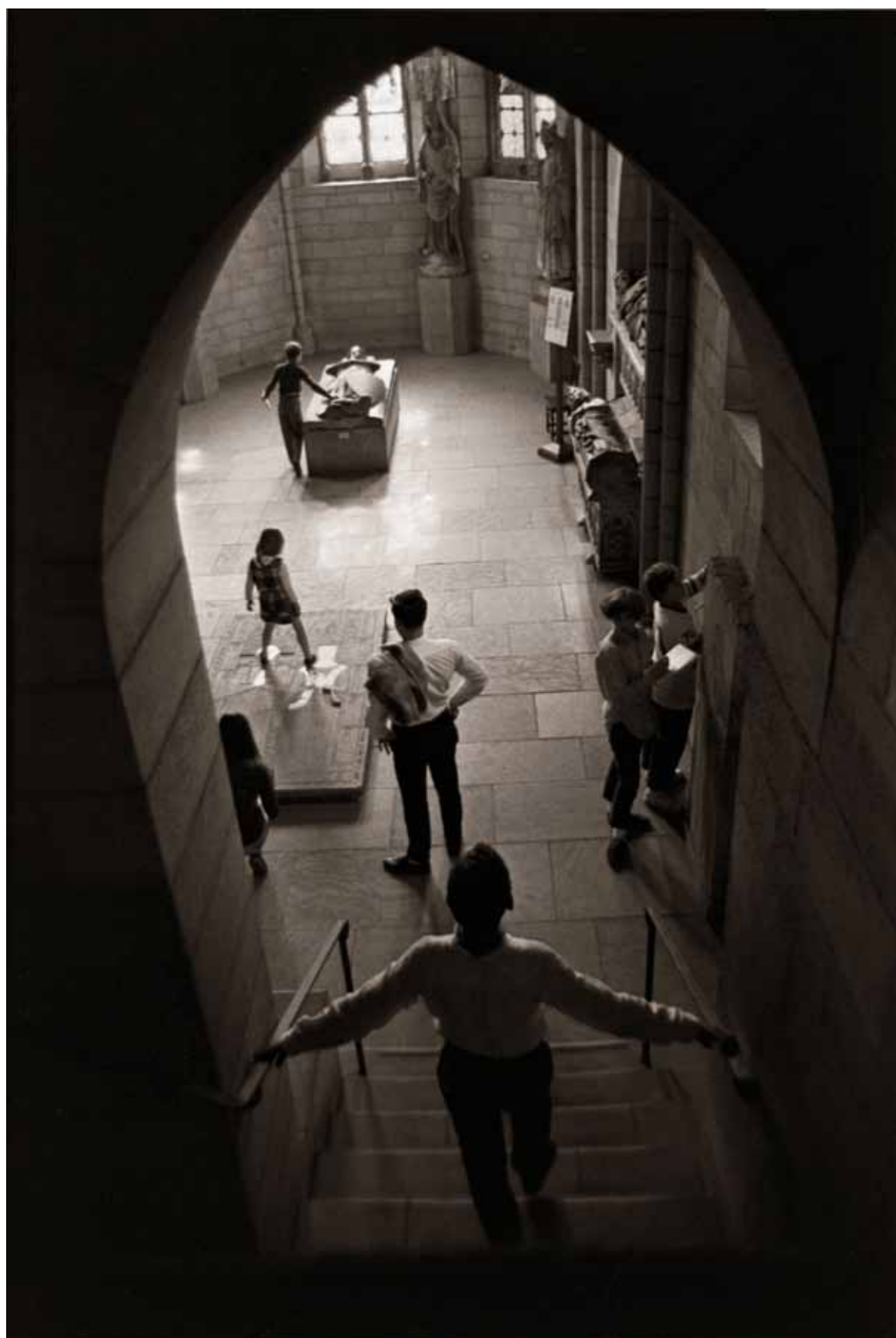
















































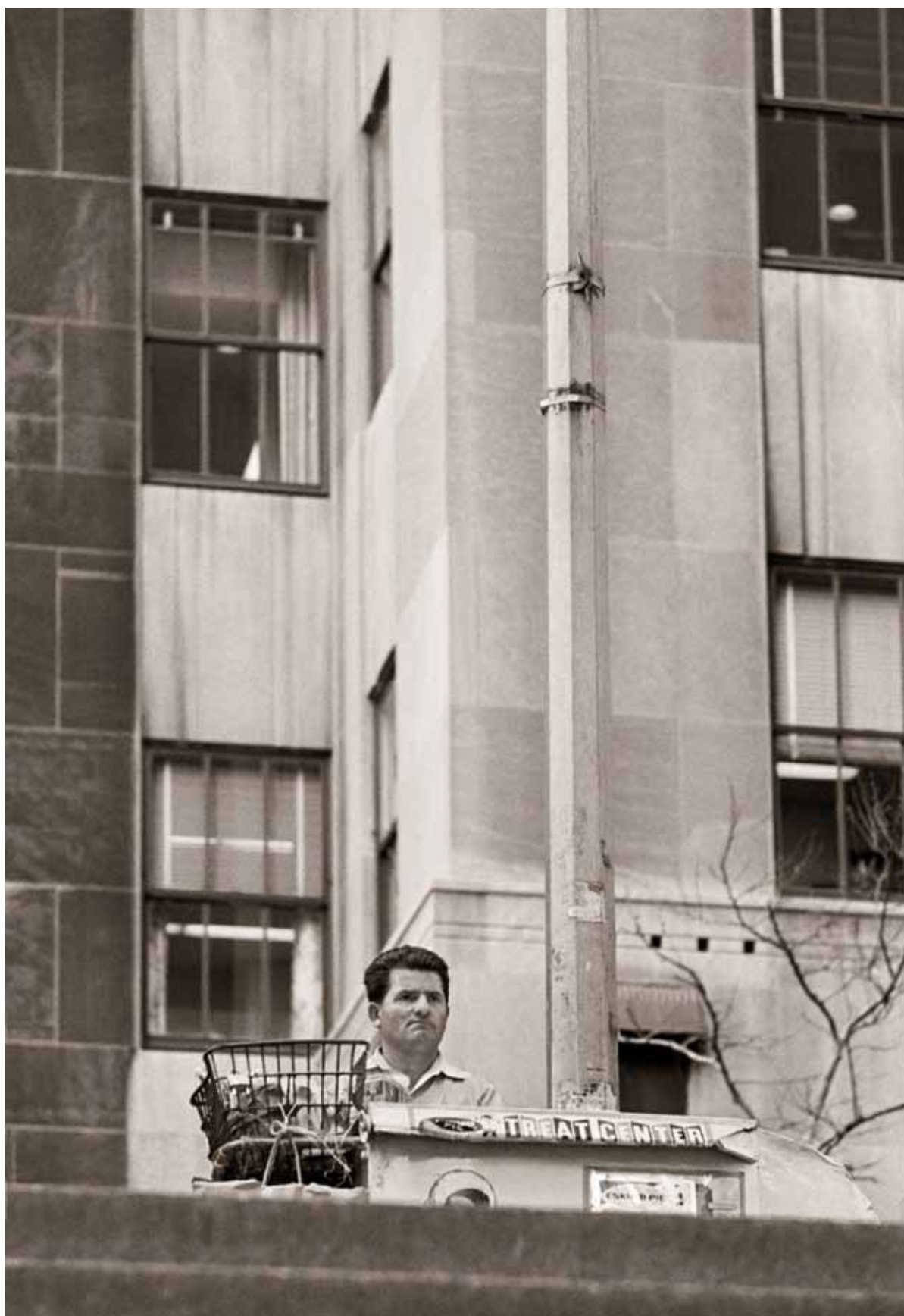






















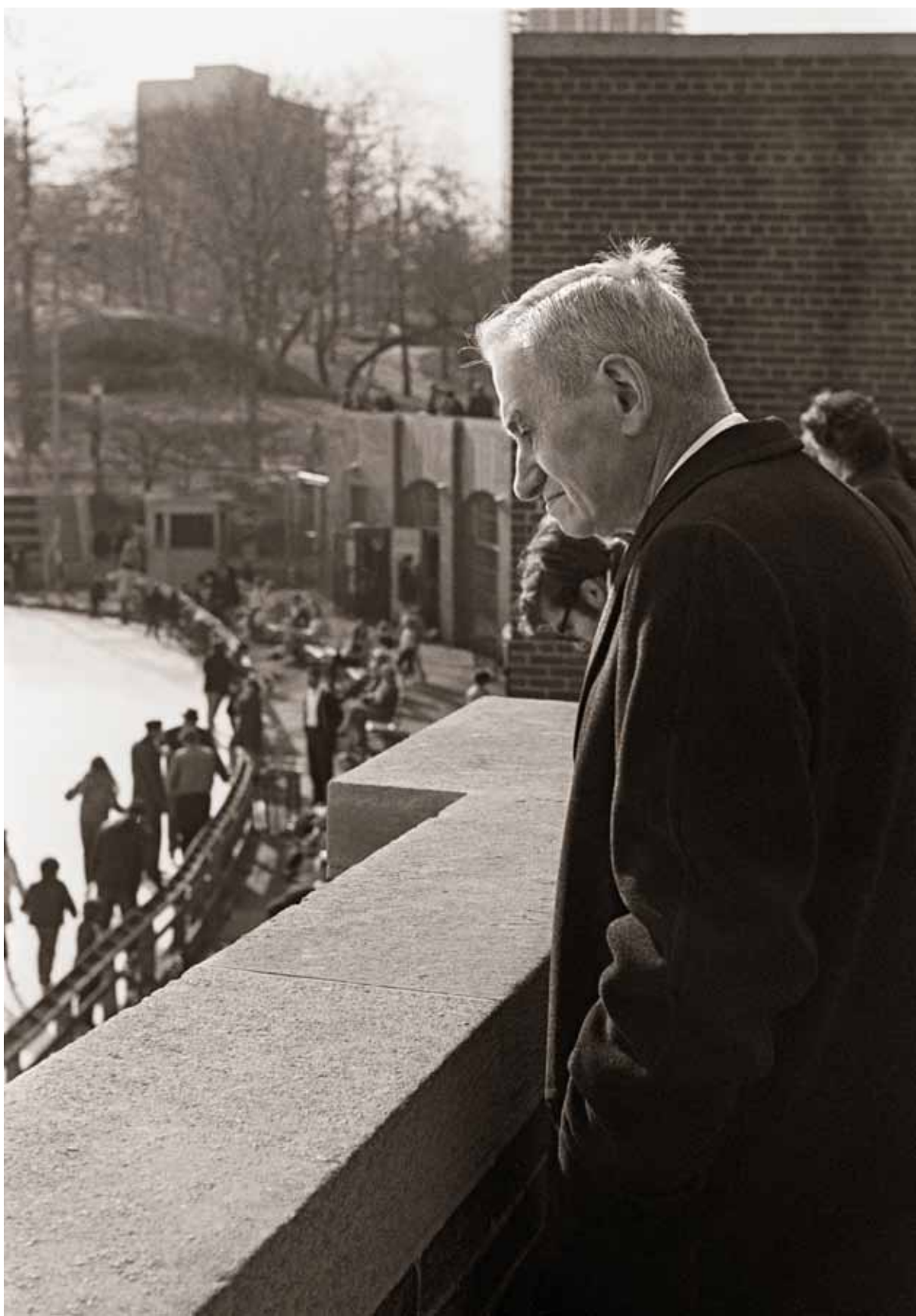






Benta's Funeral Home, 624 St. Nicholas Avenue, 1967





Wollman Skating Rink, Central Park, 1967













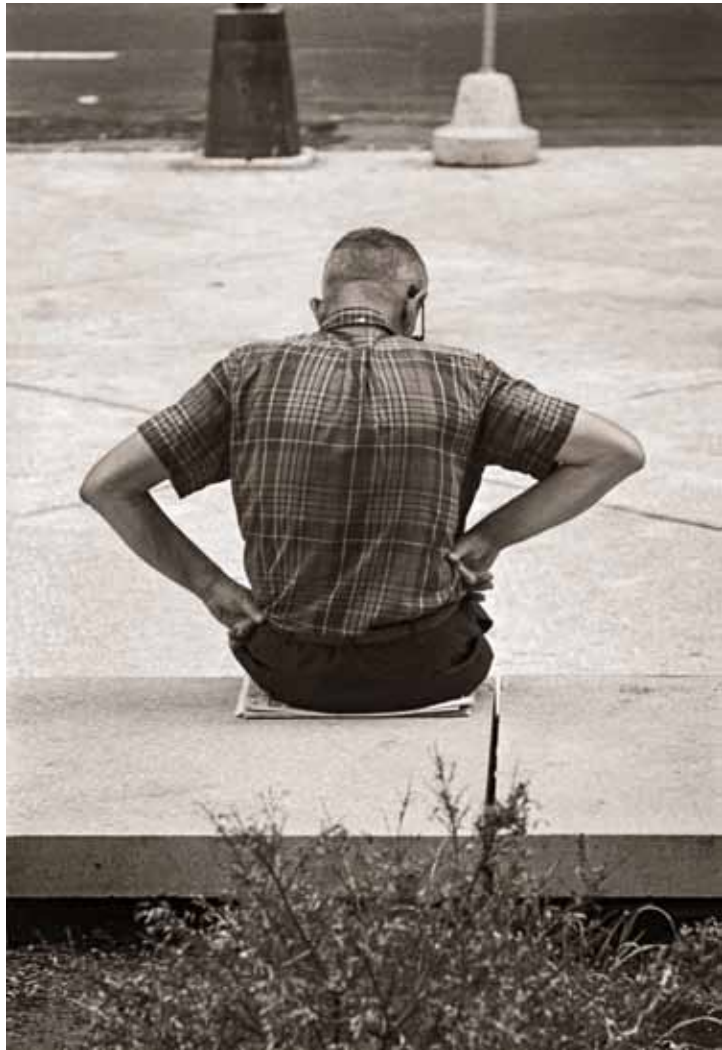












Midtown, 1967

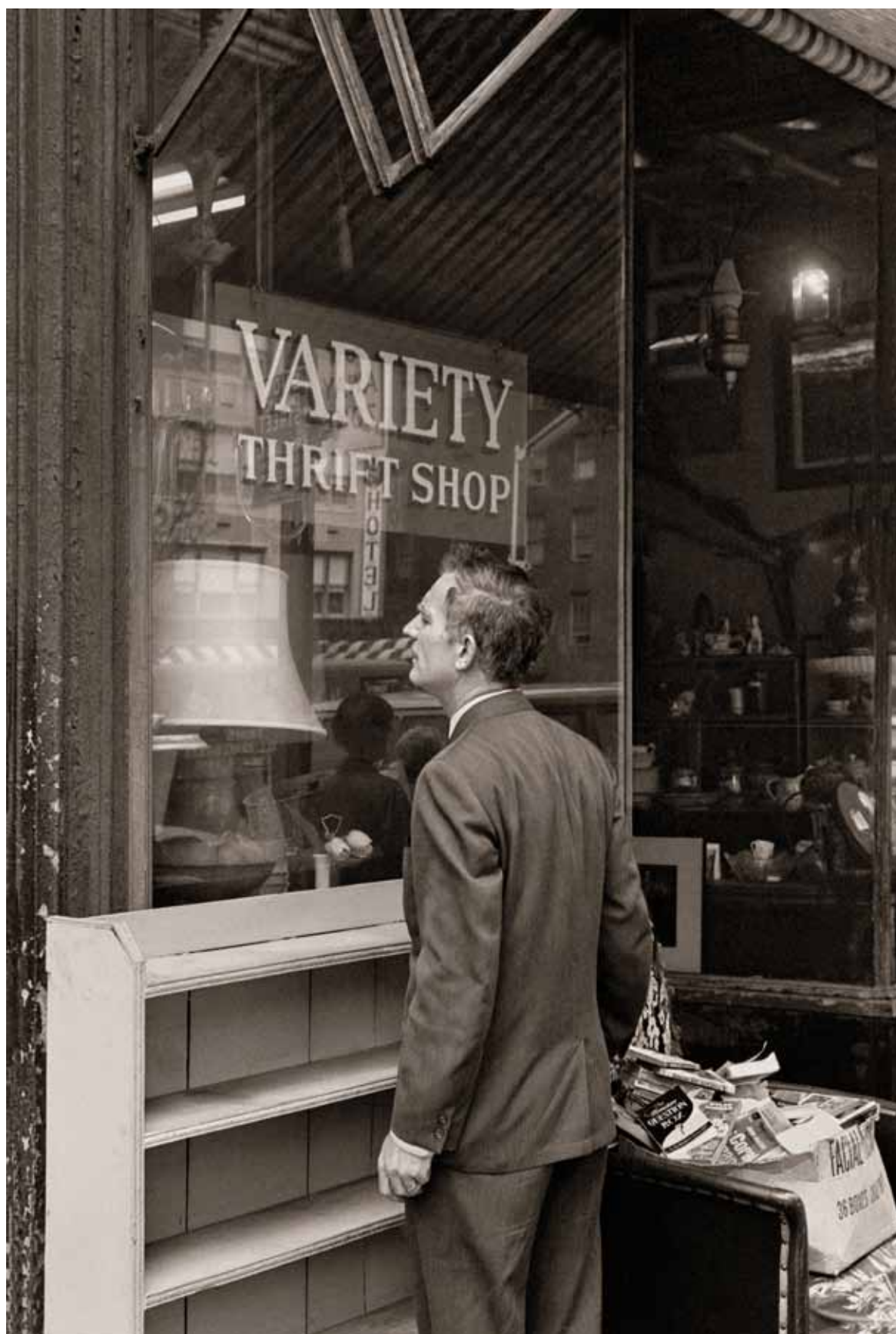


Central Park, 1967





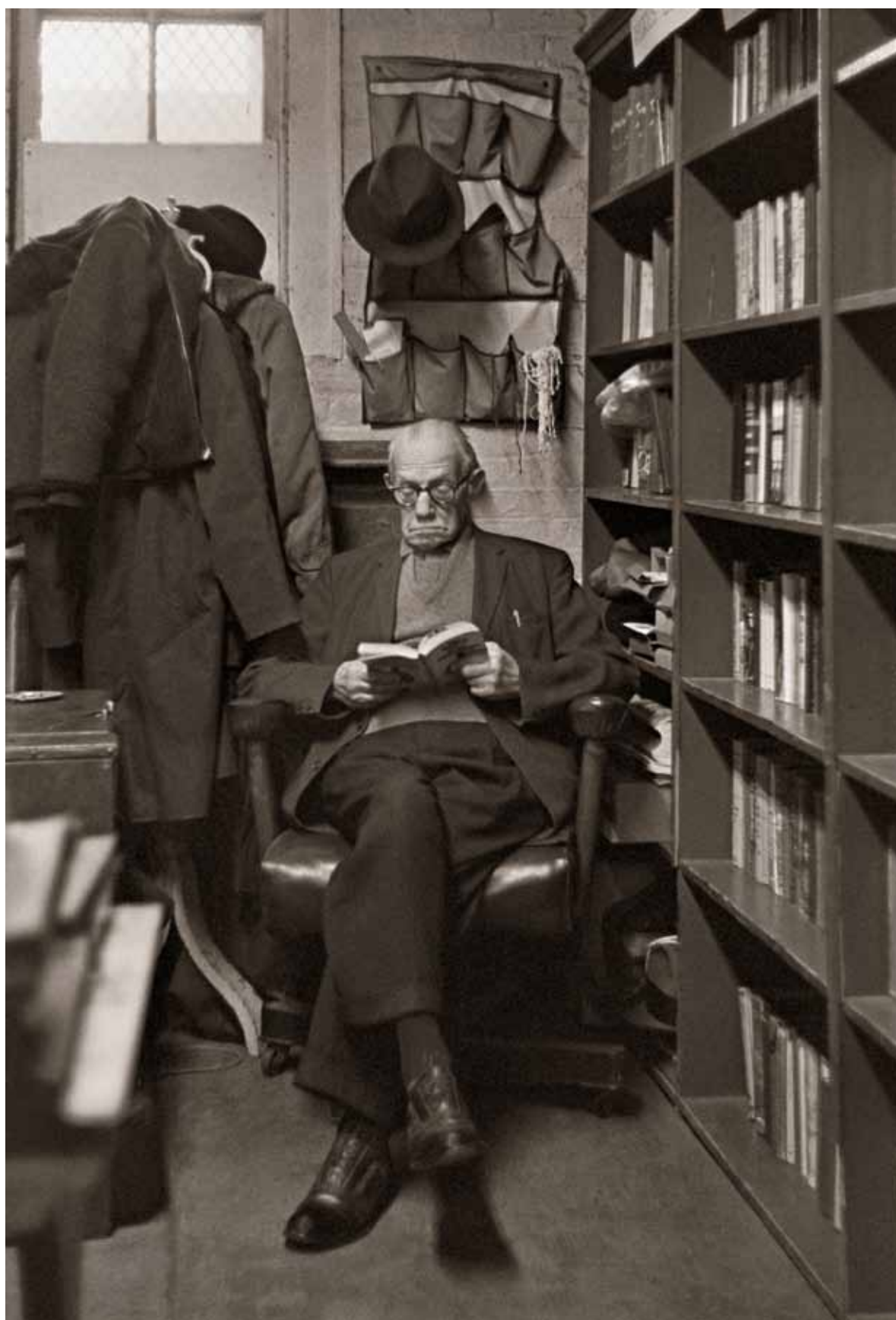








Children from P.S. 35, East 163rd Street, the Bronx, 1968

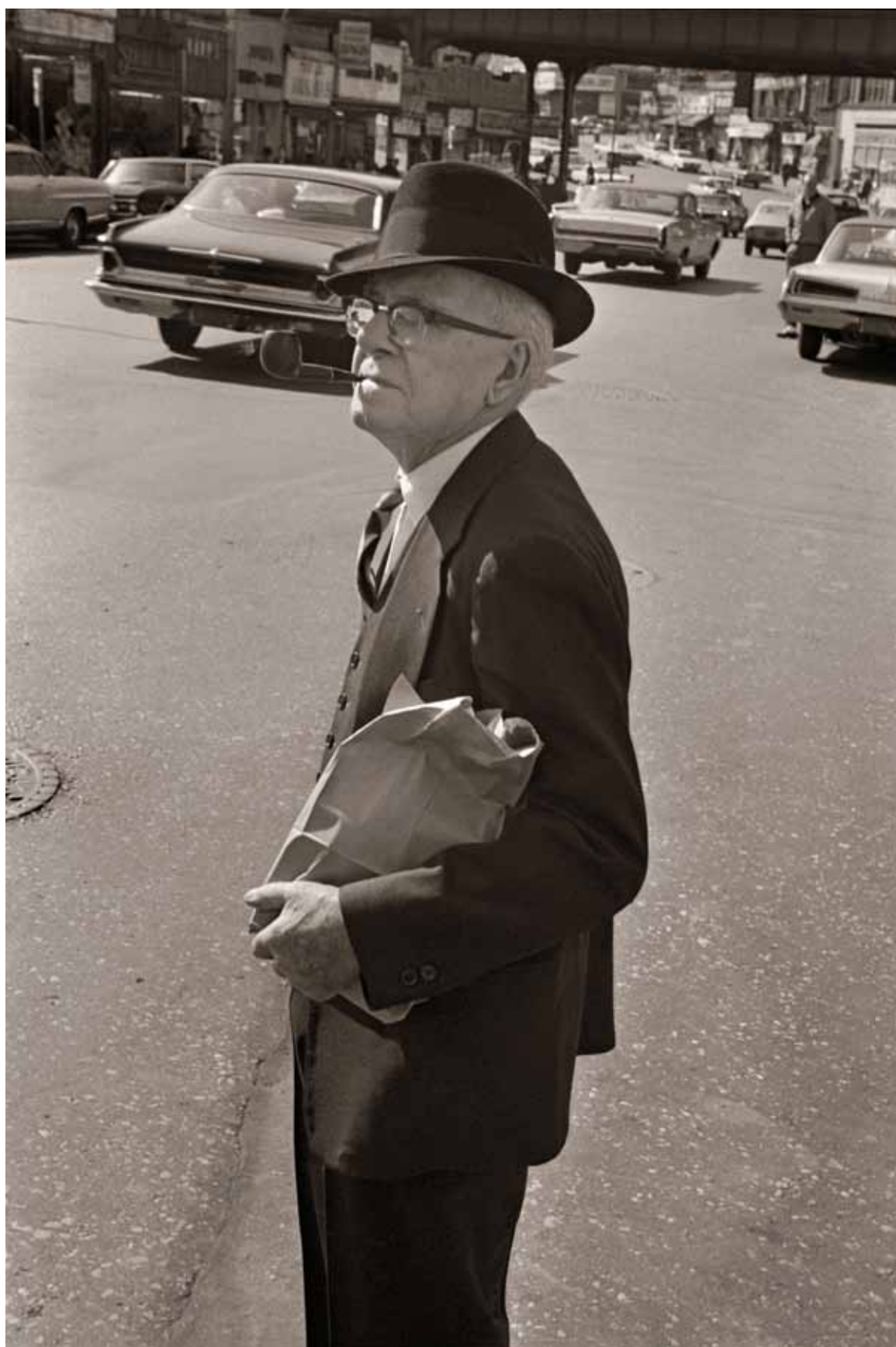












Burnside Avenue, near Jerome Avenue, the Bronx, 1969





James Farley Post Office, 8th Avenue, 1967























