

# The Archaeology of Home: An Epic Set on a Thousand Square Feet of the Lower East Side

Katharine Greider

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When Katharine Greider was told to leave her house or risk it falling down on top of her and her family, it spurred an investigation that began with contractors' diagnoses and lawsuits, then veered into archaeology and urban history, before settling into the saltwater grasses of the marsh that fatefully once sat beneath the site of Number 239 East 7th Street.

During the journey, Greider examines how people balance the need for permanence with the urge to migrate, and how the home is the resting place for ancestral ghosts. The land on which Number 239 was built has a history as long as America's own. It provisioned the earliest European settlers who needed fodder for their cattle; it became a spoil of war handed from the king's servant to the revolutionary victor; it was at the heart of nineteenth-century Kleinedeutschland and of the revolutionary Jewish Lower East Side. America's immigrant waves have all passed through 7th Street. In one small house is written the history of a young country and the much longer story of humankind and the places they came to call home.



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