Very Cool! New York Public Library Releases 180,000 Historical Images into the Public Domain

NPR reports that the New York Public Library has released 180,000 public domain items as high resolution downloads available for free.

This means that the public now has unprecedented access to historical images in high quality:

> *"The documents include literary manuscripts, Farm Security Administration photographs, sheet music, papers from Founding Fathers, WPA-era art by African-American artists, the 16th-century Handscrolls of the Tales of Genji, illuminated manuscripts from the Medieval Ages and the Renaissance, maps and atlases, and stereoscopic views, the library says."*

[*Letter of George Washington to James Madison, March 2, 1788*]

The library is encouraging all people to use these items freely and with originality:

> *"These changes are intended to facilitate sharing, research and reuse by scholars, artists, educators, technologists, publishers, and Internet users of all kinds,' the library says in a statement… In addition to making public-domain files available for free, the library is actively encouraging people to come up with creative uses for the items. A 'remix residency' will offer funding, work space and promotion to people with novel ideas for reusing the library's public domain materials."*

The library even offers some suggestions on creative uses of these images such as, "a game based on public-domain mansion floor plans, a comparison of 1911 street photos with 2015 Google Street View images and a trip planner based on a guide to where black visitors would be welcomed in the 1930s-1960s."

You can begin scrolling through the images here.

Can opportunities like this for easy access to quality historical documents help renew people's interest in history?