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NEWSLETTER

FALL 2014

*Welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the newsletter of the New York Preservation Archive Project. The mission of the New York Preservation Archive Project is to protect and raise awareness of the narratives of historic preservation in New York. Through public programs, outreach, celebration, and the creation of public access to information, the Archive Project hopes to bring these stories to light.*



René Lalique windows on the third floor of the Coty Building, c. 1984; Courtesy of the Anthony C. Wood Archives

# If You Live Long Enough...

*By Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair*

At long last, it finally happened. After years of waiting, the call I had long hoped for finally came. No, it was not the one about winning the lottery. For decades I have been guided by the firm conviction that at some point in the future, the materials I have accumulated from my past preservation activities would be of interest to posterity. At times, as I have shuttled the growing stacks of Bankers boxes containing my preservation files from one makeshift home to another, I have had my moments of doubt. However as a preservation history packrat (turned unofficial archivist in an attempt to justify my behavior) I remained resolute in

my belief that these materials would be of value, and frankly I just could not face the thought of tossing these files out.

That phone call validated my preservation-boarding behavior. The subject of the caller's inquiry was the 1984 effort to save the Rizzoli and Coty buildings on Fifth Avenue between 55<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> streets. Preservationists successfully campaigned for landmark designation of these two early-20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings, one of which housed the Rizzoli Bookstore, when a developer sought to demolish them to make way for an office tower. Many of you may remember one of

the key discoveries that helped tip the scales in preservationists' favor: famed glassmaker René Lalique had designed the cast glass windows spanning the third through fifth floors of the Coty Building. The caller's interest in this historic event had been triggered by the more recent, failed effort to designate the building on 57<sup>th</sup> Street that the Rizzoli Bookstore relocated to in 1985. In the aftermath of that unsuccessful attempt, the caller—one of the activists involved in this recent campaign—contacted me looking for information on that first battle of Rizzoli; he had learned of my involvement in that earlier struggle and wondered if I had any

materials on it. His goal was to examine both Rizzoli battles to draw conclusions, make observations, and take stock of preservation then and now.

Some day you or your preservation organization will receive a similar version of that phone call. And when that call comes, will you have what that researcher needs? Time passes quickly. Chances are that inquiry will come before you even have a sense that your current preservation work has become historic.

Just this August, I opened *The New York Times* to read a review of an exhibition at the Skyscraper Museum entitled *Times Square, 1984: The Postmodern Moment*. The exhibition focused on the Times Tower Site Competition, a design contest organized by the Municipal Art Society in 1984. Could that really have been 30 years ago? Can that event already have become historic and worthy of attention? Yes and yes! For that competition over 550 architects and designers submitted proposals on 30"x40" poster boards, about 20 of which the Skyscraper Museum had located. Three decades ago who could have imagined that this event and the material

related to it would be of such interest? That's just the point—one never knows! Everything cannot be saved (imagine storing 550 poster boards for 30 years hoping someday someone would do a retrospective). But we can document preservation's past—luckily it is much easier to do so today—and we can be conscious about what we save and what we throw away.

The multi-year gala celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of New York City's Landmarks Law currently unfolding (driven by the member organizations of the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance) is a further reminder that preserving and documenting your preservation efforts is a valuable activity. The curators of *Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City's Landmarks Law*—an exhibition scheduled to open at the Museum of the City of New York on April 20, 2015 as part of this celebration—recently went exploring in my stacks of Bankers boxes. Who knew those old flyers from various 1980s preservation advocacy campaigns would be of interest? Authors writing articles about the past 50 years of the Landmarks Law have also come forward showing interest in documents that I literally salvaged from trash bins decades ago.

These recent experiences have caused me to reflect on my years as an unofficial recorder and hoarder of material documenting various episodes in preservation's history. Looking back with the gift of hindsight, I suggest five behaviors (some admittedly a bit unorthodox) that could serve you well if you have the slightest inclination to play a similar role.

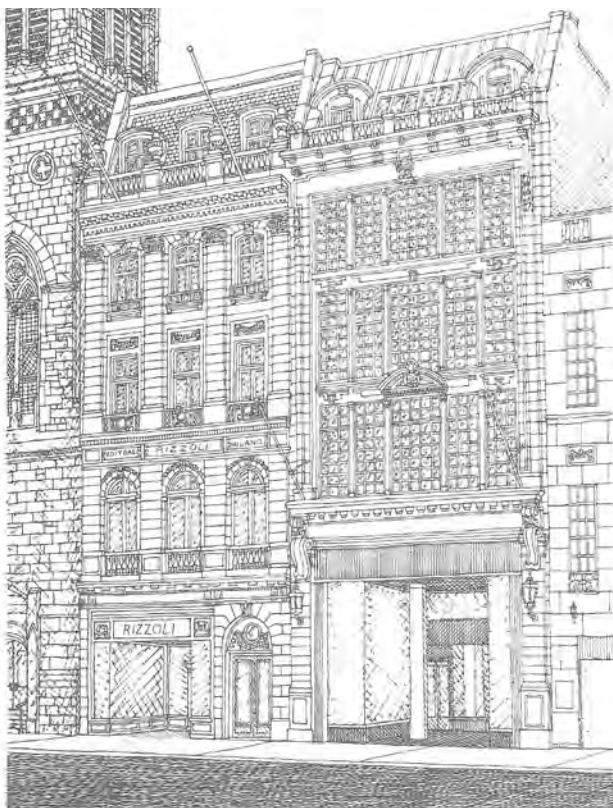
**1. Save documents without knowing why.** I distinctly remember, decades ago, fishing out of the trash bin at the J. M. Kaplan Fund an old file containing early grants from the Fund to the Municipal Art Society (MAS). Though at the time I had no idea why it might be of future value, I knew in a general sense that MAS had

a long involvement in preservation, so I rescued the file from the dustbins of history. Over a decade later, while researching some aspect of that organization's role in preservation history, I stumbled on the old file in my archives. In it I discovered essential information that was available nowhere else. That information not only helped inform my book *Preserving New York*, but only months ago, an author at work on an essay about the last 50 years of preservation in New York City sought out this same material, having traced it to me through the footnotes in the book.

**2. Keep personal copies of select materials and basic documents from both your paid and volunteer preservation efforts.** Sadly I didn't do enough of this, but what I did copy has proven invaluable. The odds are that the originals I left behind with former preservation employers, or organizations for which I volunteered, no longer exist or are irretrievable. **Do not trust the organizations you are involved with to treat the work files you leave behind in an archival fashion.** If you have even the slightest inkling that something might be of future value, copy it and take it with you. That also goes for those items that are so abundant that you could never imagine they will one day be in short supply (e.g. advocacy brochures, newsletters, postcards, flyers from campaigns, etc.).

Even basic institutional documents can be difficult to track down decades later. While exploring the files of civic activist Albert Bard I found copies of meeting minutes that the organization in question no longer had in its possession. Redundancy can be a good thing. One caveat on adopting this behavior: if you happen to work for a government agency or a large institution with regulations that might constrain your opportunity to put this behavior into practice, learn what you are allowed to do. So far there is no preservation archive whistle-blower defense fund!

**3. Keep good working notes of events while they unfold.** Trying to reconstruct events decades after they take place is virtually impossible. In 1984, when I was working at MAS, I remember resenting having to prepare a board-briefing memo that summarized our campaign leading to the landmark designation of the Rizzoli and



Drawing of the Rizzoli and Coty buildings by John Suchy used on postcards to advocate for their preservation, 1985; Courtesy of the Anthony C. Wood Archives



Coty buildings on Fifth Avenue because it seemed a redundant task at the time. Fast forward to the present and one can imagine how different my attitude was towards that report when I rediscovered it and had at my fingertips a chronology of events that would have been extremely difficult to recreate today.

**4. Record what appear to be mundane events and capture incidental reflections offered along the way.** Trust me, in future years you will appreciate having readily available such basic facts as when meetings occurred, who attended them, who was put in charge of what tasks, etc. Also, take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to ask questions of those involved in past preservation events. Jot down that old preservation war story you may have heard last night at a cocktail party. These narratives can be very important because, despite the best of intentions, formal interviews sometimes fail to occur, and the insights gained in spur-of-the-moment conversation and captured in your notes can provide useful knowledge.

**5. Take more pictures.** The list of happenings (events, meetings, rallies, hearings, etc.) for which I now wish I had photographs is a long and painful one. When I do happen to rediscover a photograph or two buried in old files it is like finding a nugget of gold!

A final bonus admonition: **Put complete dates on everything.** When I go through my old papers I realize how few of the advocacy brochures and flyers that we created actually have dates on them. At the time everyone knew the year a meeting or hearing was taking place, so why print it on the material? Now, decades later, when trying to date such items, I come up with a decidedly different answer to that question!

As we progress further and further into the digital era, some of these suggestions will become easier to follow and others not as much. The most important thing to keep in mind is that today's breaking news is tomorrow's history. The better documentarians we are today, the greater the chance that preservation's story will be properly told when the next big anniversary rolls around. And it will. ■

# Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit

*Author of Lost New York Returns from London!*

Purchase tickets now for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit on December 10<sup>th</sup>! Joining us this year to celebrate what would have been Albert S. Bard's 148<sup>th</sup> birthday is featured speaker Nathan Silver, author of *Lost New York*. This book, first published in 1967 and updated in 2000, defined an era of fresh thinking about the wrecking ball. Silver rejected the spurious notion that the demolition of treasured urban property was the inescapable, unopposable price of progress.



Cover of the 1967 edition of *Lost New York*;  
Courtesy of Nathan Silver

To make his case, he used potent historic photographs that were indisputable evidence of the astonishing riches we had carelessly foregone. And in seeming to look back, his book in fact looked forward—challenging us to create a New York City worth saving, with better principles to sustain it. In his benefit lecture, Silver will enjoin us to consider the next step: applying innovative ideas for conservation that transform threatened buildings and urban places, regaining an enduring vitality for them. Silver promises to

show some examples to admire and others that will start arguments, all creating valuable lessons. Introducing him will be Adele Chatfield-Taylor, former president and CEO of the American Academy in Rome.

Nathan Silver is an architect, writer, and educator who trained at Cooper Union and Columbia University. *Lost New York*, originally an exhibition he curated while teaching at Columbia, afterwards became a book, for which he received a certificate of merit from the Municipal Art Society and a nomination for the 1967 National Book Award. He has also been awarded a fellowship by the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. After moving to Britain, Silver taught architectural design at Cambridge University and became architecture critic for *The New Statesman*. As a practitioner he has been a partner in a national UK firm as well as the leader in his own practice. He was a visiting professor at the University of California San Diego and head of the department of architecture at the University of East London. His other books include *The Making of Beaubourg: A Building Biography of the Centre Pompidou, Paris* and *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*, written with Charles Jencks.

After 46 years *Lost New York* is now out of print, but a newly revised and updated edition is being planned. In the author's words, "That's so the book can continue to astonish some, sustain memory for others, and remind everyone that concern for the future of the past is an ongoing matter, and a noble job for us all." ■

*To purchase tickets, please visit [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org) or contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379.*

# NYPAP Events

*Our Public Programs Continue to Celebrate, Educate, & Inspire*

This past August the Archive Project was proud to help promote *Skyline: A Mid-Century Musical*, a production centered around the grassroots struggle to save Pennsylvania Station from demolition in the early 1960s. Featured as part of the 2014 New York International Fringe Festival—the largest multi-arts festival in North America, with more than 200 different productions throughout New York City—*Skyline* exposed the power and significance of preservation in a fresh and effective way. With a brisk, jazzy score, *Skyline* tells the

Produced by Maureen FitzGerald, Taylor Williams, and the Present Company, and directed by Jason Blitman, this wonderful production is both a heartfelt love letter to New York City and a cautionary tale for any city and any age in which one kind of envisioned future threatens to sever a lifeline to the past. After one of the closing performances, the Archive Project joined fellow preservationists in raising a toast to the production team at cocktail lounge Madam Geneva, wishing them the best as they pursue support for future performances, and congratulating them on adding an inspiring new chapter to the Pennsylvania Station saga.

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On October 21<sup>st</sup> the New York Preservation Archive Project teamed up with the Historic Districts Council, the Neighborhood Preservation Center, Preservation Alumni, Pratt Historic Preservation Alumni, and the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance to present *Our Vanishing Legacy: A Screening*, a special viewing of the first prime-time broadcast advocating preservation efforts in New York City. Created and written by award-winning producer Gordon Hyatt, the film has rarely been screened since it originally aired on WCBS-TV on September 21, 1961. Made prior to the passage of the New York City Landmarks Law in 1965, *Our Vanishing Legacy* looks at threats to the City's



Actor Joseph Spieldenner plays Paul Silver, one of the key preservation advocates in *Skyline*, © 2014 Dixie Sheridan

story of the ordinary New Yorkers who banded together to try to save the grand Beaux-Arts edifice. Each advocate has his or her own motivation for memorializing the now-iconic building, that together form an honest and sometimes heartbreaking narrative of personal histories and their connection to the built environment. The show brilliantly captures the highs and lows of advocacy battles—the near victories, the in-house squabbles, the compromises—and ultimately the importance of standing up individually and as a group for preservation.

architectural heritage and argues for the need to enact a law to protect significant buildings. Narrated by veteran CBS correspondent Ned Calmer, one of noted broadcast journalist Edward Murrow's original team of studio reporters, the documentary film explores what were then "unofficial" landmarks, and issues related to each.

These include Carnegie Hall (which had been recently saved from demolition), a vandalized Old Merchant's House, the prospects for the adaptive reuse of the Jefferson Market Courthouse, and commercial threats to the architectural integrity of Grand Central Terminal. Along with rare footage of several other buildings, the film includes shots of Pennsylvania Station, which was slated for demolition at the time.

Following the screening, the documentary's producer Gordon Hyatt was on hand to share his experience making the film and his thoughts on the preservation movement in New York City then and since. Hyatt has a long history of involvement in preservation; along with producing several documentaries on the subject, he served as secretary of the Municipal Art Society from 1973-1982 and traveled on the "Landmarks Express" train to Washington, DC in 1978 with Brendan Gill, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and over 200 protestors to support the Landmarks Law, which was being challenged at the Supreme Court. Hyatt later served on the Art Commission of the City of New York, where he initiated the restoration of the Governor's Room in City Hall.

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Save the date for a special program devoted to the Brokaw Mansion on February 18, 2015. As members of the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance—the consortium of organizations and individuals committed to commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of New York City's Landmarks Law—the Archive Project is teaming up with FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts to present **The Brokaw Mansion: Catalyst for the Landmarks**



The Brokaw Mansion c. 1910-15; Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [LC-DIG-ggbain-15066]

**Law.** Located at 1 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, the lavish Brokaw Mansion sat on “Millionaire’s Row,” the 50-block stretch of Fifth Avenue facing Central Park on the Upper East Side. Prominent families constructed fabulous residences along this avenue in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But within a generation most of the mansions were demolished to make way for high-rise apartment buildings. Like so many other Fifth Avenue palaces, the Brokaw Mansion met the wrecking ball, but none had as significant a role in the advancement of landmarks legislation in New York City. Although many people believe it was the fall of Pennsylvania Station that played the most crucial role, the public outcry and scathing press coverage relating to the Brokaw Mansion’s demolition in the mid-1960s were some of the key factors that led Mayor Robert F. Wagner to sign landmarks legislation into law.

This jointly-sponsored program will bring together first-hand accounts of the advocacy battle and rare vintage video clips to explore and celebrate this catalyzing moment in the history of the Landmarks Law. And due to the generosity of the Ukrainian Institute of America—a fellow NYC Landmarks50 Alliance member—the program will take place at their headquarters in the former Fletcher-Sinclair Mansion at 2 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, located directly across the street from where the Brokaw Mansion once stood.

Were you involved in the fight to save the Brokaw Mansion? Do you have original ephemera, photos, or archival materials that are related to this key moment in preservation history? We want to know! Contact FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts at [info@friends-ues.org](mailto:info@friends-ues.org) or the Archive Project at [info@nypap.org](mailto:info@nypap.org) to help us memorialize this important piece of preservation history. ■

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*The Archive Project enjoys hosting exciting collaborations that celebrate the history of preservation and record the stories of those involved in the field. If you know of a preservation story that should be captured, please consider contacting us to cosponsor an event such as those described here that will educate other preservationists and inspire similar projects.*

# NYC Landmarks50 Alliance

## *The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Landmarks Law Continues*

The anniversary year is almost upon us! To commemorate 50 years since the passage of New York City’s Landmarks Law, the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance has been working to broaden the appreciation of New York City’s landmarks through a series of programs held throughout the five boroughs. Each of the nearly 140 members of the Alliance, ranging from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Merchant’s House Museum, is planning a special project for the upcoming anniversary. Please add these dates to your calendar—we hope to see you there!

In honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Landmarks Law, the **American-Scottish Foundation** is planning a lecture series that will culminate in a spring 2015 exhibition on the contributions of Scottish architects and philanthropists to the building of New York City. The lecture series commenced on October 15<sup>th</sup> at the University Club where Manhattan Borough Historian Michael Miscione and John Kinnear, architect, historian, and president of American Friends of the Georgian Group, spoke on Charles Follen McKim, William Rutherford Mead, and Stanford White, of the legendary architectural firm McKim, Mead & White. Please visit [www.americanscottishfoundation.com](http://www.americanscottishfoundation.com) for details on future lectures in the series.

The **Pratt Institute Historic Preservation Program** will also be sponsoring a speaker series to celebrate the anniversary, beginning this fall and running through spring 2015. The series will include cosponsored events hosted in the School of Architecture on Pratt’s Brooklyn Campus. Each lecture will highlight New York City landmarks from a different perspective and feature topics ranging from sustainability, resiliency, and community to zoning, development, and sense of place. Visit Pratt’s website at [www.pratt.edu](http://www.pratt.edu) for more information.

Another exciting NYC Landmarks50 Alliance project is being planned by **chashama**, an organization that partners with real estate professionals to repurpose vacant, unused properties into subsidized studios, galleries, event and performance venues. By making use of real estate-in-transition, chashama brings culture, new audiences, and economic activity to surrounding areas and increased foot traffic to local businesses. For the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, chashama is developing a public service announcement and marquee campaign that will run in Times

Square from April 1-30, 2015. The arts organization is also proposing to activate its gallery spaces for the anniversary, and to have chashama studio artists create commemorative works to celebrate this milestone.

The **Bowery Alliance of Neighbors** has planned the Bowery Signage Project, in which approximately 25 visually-striking posters will be strategically placed in windows along the Bowery for the duration of one year, ending in December 2015. Historic images and text will highlight

remarkable people, events, buildings, and achievements associated with particular addresses along the famed thoroughfare. Barcodes on posters will link smart phone users to an enhanced website for additional history, images, video and audio, as well as information about the efforts of community activists to preserve the neighborhood. By creating eye-catching posters celebrating the Bowery’s unique historical and cultural significance, the Bowery Signage Project will raise consciousness about the street’s importance and broaden support for the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors’ six-year effort to preserve, rezone, and protect the unique working class history and diverse community that the Bowery represents.

City University of New York (CUNY) is the largest urban university system in the country,







Gould Memorial Library, c. 1904; Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [LC-DIG-det-4a11791]

with 24 campuses and a rich collection of important, architecturally-distinctive landmark buildings. These structures reflect and symbolize New York City's magnificent architectural, educational, political, and social history, and were designed by some of our nation's greatest architects. To honor the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance anniversary celebration, **CUNY TV**—the university's state-of-the-art television station—will produce a documentary featuring five of these evocative landmarks: Stanford White's famous colonnaded Hall of Fame and late masterpiece Gould Memorial Library, on what had once been the northern campus of NYU, now part of the Bronx Community College (the first community college campus to be designated a National Historic Landmark); George B. Post's iconic North Campus of City College; Charles A. Platt's Roosevelt House; Trowbridge & Livingston's CUNY Graduate Center, originally the B. Altman & Co. Department Store; and the jazz genius Louis Armstrong's Queens home, also a National Historic Landmark. Prominent New Yorkers, architects, and historians will offer insight and commentary throughout the documentary. It will be televised beginning Sunday, April 19, 2015, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of New York City's historic Landmarks Law by Mayor Robert F. Wagner. It will then be repeated five times that week, and will be available at [www.cuny.tv](http://www.cuny.tv). CUNY TV is seen in the tri-state area on broadcast Channel 25.3, and on cable in the five boroughs of New York City on Channel 75 (Time Warner and Optimum Brooklyn), Channel 77 (RCN), and Channel 30 (Verizon FiOS).

Although Mother Nature will decide the date, in spring 2015 the Park Avenue Malls will bloom with special seasonal plantings

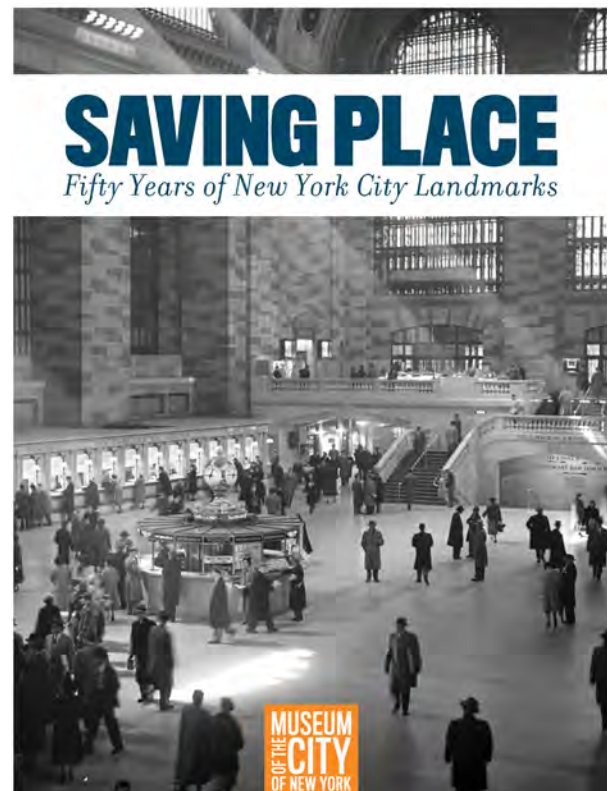
to celebrate both the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Landmarks Law and the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **The Fund for Park Avenue**. Through its two privately-supported beautification programs—the Park Avenue Malls Planting Project and the Park Avenue Tree Lighting—The Fund for Park Avenue plants, lights, and maintains the trees and flowers on the Park Avenue Malls. The Fund is currently designing plantings that will symbolize both of these important anniversaries.

The **Museum of the City of New York's** major exhibition *Saving Place: Fifty Years of New York City Landmarks* is set to open on April 20, 2015. Curators Donald Albrecht, Andrew Dolkart, and Seri Worden have canvassed New York City archives, libraries, and architects' offices (including the Archive Project's collections!) to select compelling material that traces the story of the Landmarks Law and its impact on the City. The exhibition will be designed by the award-winning architectural firm Cooper Joseph Studio, and will feature many never-before-exhibited historic documents, drawings, and architectural models. Internationally-acclaimed photographer Iwan Baan was also commissioned to create images of historic landmarks and districts, illustrating the dynamic synthesis of old and new that characterizes New York City 50 years after the passage of the law. In addition to being prominently displayed in the exhibition, Baan's photographs will be presented as a special portfolio in a companion book to be copublished by the City Museum and the Monacelli Press. The book will be ready for distribution in April 2015 and it will include essays by architects Robert A. M. Stern and Françoise Bollack, and noted preservationists such as Claudette Brady, Adele Chatfield-Taylor, and Archive Project founder and chair Anthony C. Wood.

Lastly, please mark your calendars for the **New York School of Interior Design's** exhibition on New York City's designated landmark interiors, which will run from March 6 to

April 24, 2015. An opening reception will be held on March 5<sup>th</sup>, and additional public programming is in the works. With leading American architect Hugh Hardy as its guest curator, the show will feature the City's 114 landmark interiors to trigger discussion about what and where these often unknown spaces are, how they are preserved and adapted for continued use, and which as-yet-unprotected interiors should be prioritized for future designation. In association with this exhibition, a book on New York's interior landmarks is to be published by Monacelli Press, co-authored by Judith Gura, author, professor, and director of the design history program at NYSID, and Kate Wood, adjunct assistant professor at Columbia University.

With such a wide array of projects being planned, there will be countless ways to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Landmarks Law over the next year! The NYC Landmarks50 Alliance continues to welcome innovative ideas from individuals and organizations throughout the five boroughs of New York City to help make this milestone event even more extraordinary. To get involved, share ideas, plan a project, and volunteer your time, please email [info@nyclandmarks50.org](mailto:info@nyclandmarks50.org). ■



Promotional image for *Saving Place*; Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

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# Book Review

## *Greenwich Village Stories: A Collection of Memories*

by Kira Blayne Manso Brown

“Walking through the Village is to brush against immortality,” editor Judith Stonehill writes in the forward to *Greenwich Village Stories: A Collection of Memories*, published in March of this year. A compendium of remembrances about the Village, this book offers contributions from Wynton Marsalis, Graydon Carter, Donna Karan, Ed Koch, Calvin Trillin, and other illustrious individuals. Along with poetry and prose, *Greenwich Village Stories* includes photographs and other illustrations that nicely capture the distinctive architecture of the Village and brings it into the narrative as a secondary character. *Greenwich Village Stories* is an enjoyable compilation for anyone who has felt a connection to the Village through the diversity of experience the neighborhood accepts and nurtures.

Long thought of as a bohemian gathering place, the Village has been home to, and inspiration for, numerous intellectuals, writers, artists, musicians, and chefs, and *Greenwich Village Stories* draws on the memories of contemporary luminaries to shed light on this multi-layered heritage. Copublished by Universe and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, the book succeeds in reminding readers of not just the unique legacy of bricks and mortar in this area, with its many historic structures, but also, in the words of contributor Jonathan Adler, of the “magical fairy dust of the Village.” The reminiscences reveal how the physical reality of the neighborhood intertwines with the cultural fantasy of “The Village”; not surprisingly, these remembrances

filter through many perspectives: from windows, stoops, sidewalks, and storefronts. Hence, the Village’s built environment both mirrors and fosters the intimacy of the lives presented. Brownstones and street corners bear witness to neighborhood happenings, and this particular sedimentation of cultural

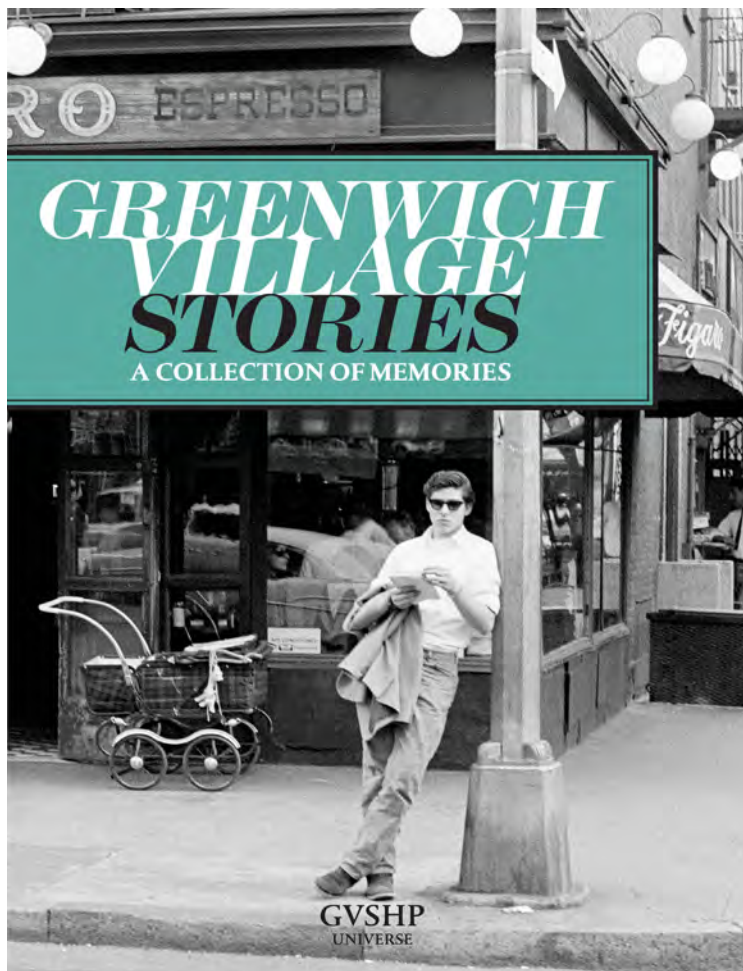
to harness remembrances into a formation that gives a collective shape to a place historically and contemporarily. At a time when neighborhoods are threatened by development and other disruptions that threaten scale and character, the content of *Greenwich Village Stories* reminds us of

the energy that comes from sharing the past. Hence, a sense of dynamic vitality comes with recalling the intimacy of Wynton Marsalis’ subterranean nightclubs, on one hand, and the neighborly interactions in Mario Batali’s favorite shops on a Sunday on the other.

For those of us who are dedicated to recounting the story of preservation, *Greenwich Village Stories* helps us remember and revisit, with fresh eyes, the genuine goal of historic preservation: keeping a special neighborhood special in its own way. Ultimately, *Greenwich Village Stories* makes us want to answer the call to arms posed by contributor Karen Finley in her poem, “For Historic Preservation,” where she asks the question, “What would Jackie do?”—a reference to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis’s efforts on behalf of preservation in New York. This book demonstrates the importance of maintaining historic character and human scale in a neighborhood. As *Vanity Fair* editor Graydon Carter so precisely tells us, we should “keep it that way.” ■

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*Kira Blayne Manso Brown is currently a graduate student at Columbia University and worked this year as an intern for the Archive Project. She is proud to have lived in Greenwich Village, where she has created her own Village stories.*



Cover of *Greenwich Village Stories*; Courtesy of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and Universe

legacy is preserved in the connection Village residents have to their surroundings as well as to each other.

While the book’s various segments are strong enough to stand alone, together they create a powerful reminder of the importance of collecting narratives so as



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# New to Archives

## *Fund for Architecture and the Environment; Alan Burnham; Henry Hope Reed*

The Archive Project was recently called upon to help find a permanent archival home for a carton of documents from the Fund for Architecture and the Environment (FAE). Included within were materials such as incorporation papers, minutes, dissolution papers, and other organizational documents. FAE was established in 1984 when Suzanne Davis, executive director of the J. M. Kaplan Fund at the time, became aware of situations in which preservation-related organizations needed to obtain funds quickly but did not have 501(c)(3) status, which would allow donors to receive deductions for federal income tax purposes. In response to this problem the FAE was organized under the auspices of the Cultural Council Foundation, which had a 501(c)(3) designation and could also provide smaller groups with administrative support. From the outset, however, the FAE faced a number of challenges. Many of the projects it supported were small in scale but labor intensive, such as applications for landmark designation. Also, some donors wished to give stock, which raised tax and bookkeeping issues. Other tax questions were raised by projects that could be deemed ineligible for tax exemption. These and other issues saddled FAE with a heavy administrative burden.

What ultimately proved fatal for FAE was a policy dispute. Prominent among FAE's clients were private, non-charitable membership organizations. One of these, the Knickerbocker Club, received Landmarks Preservation Commission approval for an exterior renovation. Members of the Club wanted to support the renovation project through tax-deductible donations to FAE, but FAE's legal counsel advised that the IRS had issued a "private ruling" in a similar instance involving a fraternity, holding that donations by members to private, members-only institutions could not be deductible. FAE decided not to accept such projects in the future. In May 1992 the FAE board stated, "enough other vehicles are available to serve our present and potential clients, and...we want to wind down our activities." The board eventually dissolved in 1993.

Although the FAE existed for less than eleven years, it was involved in many significant matters concerning the preservation of historic structures, monuments, and landscapes, as well as raising awareness of preservation issues and architectural heritage. Among these were opposing the sale of St. Bartholomew's Church Parish House and its replacement with a high-rise office tower; a study of the East River waterfront; preservation of the Ladies' Mile district; and the establishment of a Beaux Arts society.

A detailed history of FAE was laid out within these documents; to have lost them would have been equivalent to losing a substantial record of this significant preservation organization. Luckily the current staff of the J. M. Kaplan Fund stepped in to provide a repository for the carton of materials. The thoughtful process undertaken by these staff members and several former board members of FAE was integral in securing a home for the important papers of this short-lived organization. Others involved in similar organizations, volunteer groups, or grassroots projects that have ceased to exist should recognize the potential importance of such records to the history of preservation and consider their eventual placement. If you have any questions about the process involved with securing a permanent repository for your records, please contact the Archive Project at [info@nypap.org](mailto:info@nypap.org).

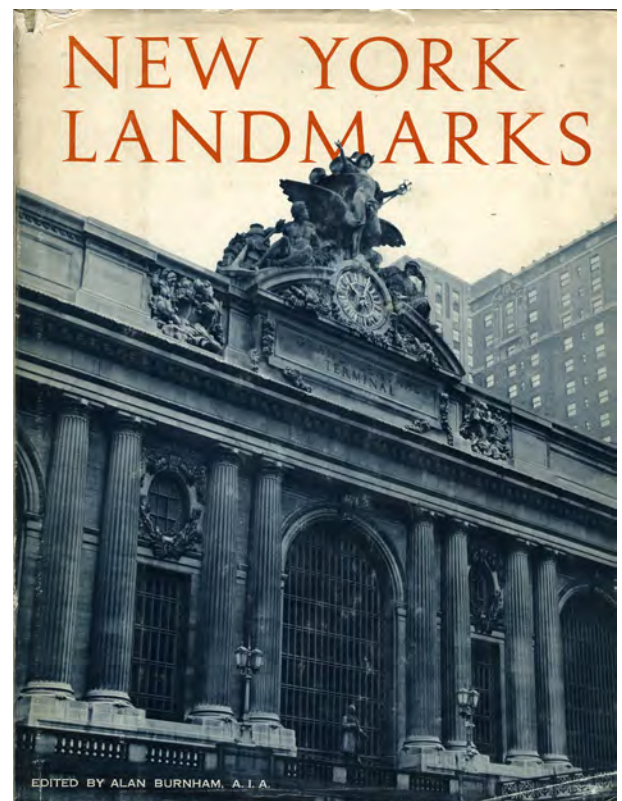
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The papers of two prominent individuals in the history of preservation in New York City—architect and former executive director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission Alan Burnham (1913-1984) and architecture critic and advocate Henry Hope Reed (1915-2013)—have recently been made available

to researchers by Columbia University's Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library. Though they had very different public roles and personas, both Burnham and Reed were careful architectural historians whose research and advocacy were significant in building the case for preservation.

Alan Burnham served as the executive director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) from 1966 to 1973, after which he became its director of research. Prior to joining the LPC, Burnham worked as an architect at a firm specializing in churches, where he was responsible for the restoration of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary near Battery Park (known for its shrine to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton). He also served on the Municipal Art Society's Committee on Historic Architecture, eventually becoming its chair.

Although he worked as an architect and an administrator, Burnham was an architectural historian at heart. The Alan Burnham Papers



Cover of the 1963 edition of *New York Landmarks*;  
Courtesy of the American Architectural Archive



at Avery Library contain a lifetime of notes, clippings, manuscripts, and other materials that Burnham collected and organized on the architectural history of New York City and beyond. Burnham's personal collection, known as the American Architectural Archive, supported a number of research projects, notably his *New York Landmarks: A Study & Index of Architecturally Notable Structures in Greater New York*, published in 1963. In later years his archive became a resource of some renown and was consulted by other scholars. Burnham's papers also contain material from his activities at the LPC and the Municipal Art Society and the research he conducted for architectural and preservation groups such as the American Institute of Architects and the Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture. Additionally, the Richard Morris Hunt Family Papers, a part of the Burnham papers, contain numerous notes and research materials Burnham collected on the famed architect, including an unpublished biography and a family scrapbook prepared by Hunt's wife, Catherine Howland Hunt. At the time of his death, Burnham was planning to use these materials to write his own biography of Hunt.

The Burnham papers and the American Architectural Archive were preserved after Burnham's death by Gordon McCollum, a real estate executive with an encyclopedic knowledge of New York City history and architecture. McCollum died in 2000, and the papers were donated to Avery in McCollum's honor by Andrea Anson and Jeffrey N. Lew. [For the story of how Lew saved these papers, please see the Archive Project's fall 2011 newsletter, page 6]

Another remarkable New Yorker, Henry Hope Reed, was an iconoclastic author and architecture critic who pioneered the architectural walking tour in the 1950s and was a dogged champion of the City's distinctive heritage of great buildings and parks. Reed railed against modernism and argued for a return to classical principles of architectural design and decoration. He published incisive studies of historic architecture and rallied public opinion to his side with numerous books, articles, and



Reed leading a walking tour of Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza; Courtesy of the Estate of Henry Hope Reed, Jr.

walking tours celebrating historic buildings and landscapes.

In 1955, Reed began to organize exhibitions on historic architecture, and a year later he began leading the Municipal Art Society's first architectural walking tours. At the time, Reed was also working with preservationists in Brooklyn Heights to promote legal protections for historic buildings. In the 1960s, Reed's research and advocacy helped lay the groundwork for the restoration of Central Park; he was named the park's official curator in 1966.

The Henry Hope Reed Papers, contributed to Avery by Reed and his family members, contain extensive research materials that Reed accumulated when writing his books and articles and crafting his walking tours, including guide notes on sites and neighborhoods. The papers also contain notes, drafts, and other materials that Reed collected for his writings, lectures, exhibitions, and presentations, and files relating to his Central Park curatorship. Also included are Reed's research files on classical architecture and his files relating to Classical America, the organization he cofounded that later became the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. ■

## Notes from the Board: Shirley Ferguson Jenks

*The following is the first in a newsletter series highlighting the interests and contributions of members of our Board of Directors.*

My interest in preservation predates my graduate schooling at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London where I earned an M.A. in art history, specializing in medieval architecture. When I returned to New York to live and work, it seemed only natural to combine an interest in historic architecture with a love of numbers to become the first director of development at the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Over time, I also worked in leadership fundraising roles at other organizations, including the American Craft Museum and the American Academy in Rome.

More than 20 years ago, I evolved my development expertise into a consulting practice and established my own firm, Jenks Group, LLC ([www.jenksgroup.com](http://www.jenksgroup.com)). Today the Jenks Group operates in New England, New York, and Bermuda, managing capital campaigns and other fundraising programs as well as strategic planning and executive searches for development positions. Clients include schools, museums, social services, and environmental and health organizations. And there is almost always an historic house or preservation project in the mix.

My initial experience of the Archive Project, like many of us, was the result of attending a Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit. It was through these wonderful annual events that I was recruited to the Board of Directors in 2008 to help long-time colleagues Anthony C. Wood and Lisa Ackerman grow the organization. One of my key board member initiatives has been the founding and development of the Stewardship Society, a group for higher-level contributors that are treated to special archival tours throughout the City (read more about the Society on page 10). For me, the Stewardship Society is an easy "ask" for contributions. The Archive Project is such a worthy cause, the people involved are truly wonderful, and the Stewardship Society events are terrifically interesting insiders' views. You'll find us quite a welcoming group—so please do join our growing ranks!

# Stewardship Society

After this spring's unforgettable tour of the collection of curiosities at The Explorers Club, the Archive Project's annual series of special events for our Stewardship Society continues this fall. The Society's latest visit: the extraordinary Art Deco skyscraper One Wall Street, designed with theatrical flair by architect Ralph Walker in 1929. With a viewing of the building's glittering floor-to-ceiling mosaics by Hildreth Meière, a visit to the observation decks and triple-height reception room at the tower's pinnacle, and a look at special items pulled from the collection with Bank of New York Mellon archivist Christine McKay, this is yet another wonderful example of the perks of membership in the Stewardship Society.

The New York Preservation Archive Project is pleased to offer such inimitable experiences to our Stewardship Society, which consists of our most devoted benefactors, or "Stewards," who annually contribute \$500 or more in general support. Because our work could not be done without our generous donors, the Society was created to celebrate these supporters with a series of unique tours at institutional archives and private collections throughout New York City. Since its launch in 2011, the Society has held viewings of archival treasures at such locations as Carnegie Hall, the Century Association, the Seventh Regiment Armory, and the Museum of the City of New York.

And just this fall the Archive Project has added a new level to the Stewardship Society. The Columns Club—consisting of young professionals ages 21-40 who donate \$75 or more annually—are now welcome to join these remarkable Stewardship Society tours!

*To join the Stewardship Society, please contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nyypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nyypap.org) or 212-988-8379.*

## Archival Assistance Fund

*Successful Archival Projects Lead to a New Round of Grants!*

It has been a year since the New York Preservation Archive Project awarded grants from its Archival Assistance Fund to worthy archival projects at preservation-related not-for-profits and house museums across New York City. The Archival Assistance Fund, established to help identify and maintain archival resources related to the historic preservation movement, is another example of outreach initiatives on the part of the Archive Project to provide practical assistance to the preservation community. The grantees have made considerable progress over the past year.

The Fund's grant to the **Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum** allowed for the installation of digitally-regulated cooling, heating, and humidity equipment in the space where the Museum's collection is stored, which has now been stabilized for the first time in its 100-year history. This equipment has also helped increase productivity by creating a temperature-regulated space for archivists, and has allowed the archives to become a more integral resource within the Museum. The Museum continues to develop the archives and library as a research center both for internal personnel and outside scholars.

The **Merchant's House Museum** has been able to make great strides in the processing and re-housing of the institutional archives of Museum founder George Chapman (1935-1958), the Decorators Club (1958-1968), and restoration architect Joseph Roberto (1968-1989). Together, these archives contain more than 50 years of history, telling the story of the building's transition from home to museum. Through this project, the Museum has been able to guarantee the long-term preservation of this material while also making it more accessible for research and facilitating its use in exhibitions and educational programming.

**FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts** has sorted through dozens of file boxes from the organization's early years and has created a fully-searchable database of the collection's contents using

Archivists' Toolkit, an open-source archival data management program. This database will become an important resource for preserving the history of FRIENDS and making it more accessible to the public. The majority of the material processed relates to the work of FRIENDS from the 1980s to the early 1990s, focusing especially on the creation and expansion of historic districts, rezoning campaigns, and general preservation issues on the Upper East Side.

The **Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum** was awarded a grant to perform a survey and inventory of the International Garden Club Archives, rehouse the materials in archival boxes and folders, and create finding aids. Through a wide-ranging collection of materials, this archive documents how a group of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century preservationists successfully restored this significant house and gardens.

The **Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation** used its grant from the Archival Assistance Fund to embark upon a project that will eventually provide online access to its archival image collection through the open-source web-publishing platform Omeka. This fall, the organization will identify a project manager to ensure that this online catalogue maintains a look that is consistent with their current website design.

The great success of this inaugural round of Archival Assistance Fund grants by the New York Preservation Archive Project demonstrates that there is a genuine need for this kind of funding. Despite their unique missions and the diversity of their archival holdings, each grant recipient boasts a record of activism in preservation and a demonstrated commitment to safeguarding the story of those efforts. The Archive Project hopes these projects will serve as inspiration to other organizations with archival projects still in need of addressing. To that effect, **we are excited to announce that funding has been secured for another round of grants in 2015!** Please stay tuned for details on these grants in the coming months. ■





Flyer from Save the Village; Courtesy of Betsy Humes

## In Memoriam

**Carey Vennema**, an attorney and activist who worked to protect the historic character of Greenwich Village and pioneered the use of zoning as a preservation tool, died July 24, 2014 at the age of 93. Known for riding around the Village with legal briefs strapped to the child seat of his bicycle, Vennema embodied the eccentric, intellectual flair of preservation activists in the 1960s.

Vennema was one of several attorneys who developed legal strategies for Save the Village, a group formed in 1959 by sculptor Arnold H. Bergier to pressure city government to use zoning and the powers of the Bard Act (the precursor to New York City's Landmarks Law) to preserve the historic character of Greenwich Village. At that time the "blighted" neighborhood was vulnerable to large-scale apartment house development and other forms of urban renewal that often required mass evictions and the demolition of significant architectural fabric. Vennema and Save the Village used field surveys and demographic research to refute claims of blight. His innovative use of tax records in this grassroots effort was later recognized by activist Jane Jacobs as a key strategy in defeating a plan by Robert Moses to raze wide swaths of the neighborhood. And in March 1960, after a major offensive by Save the Village, the City adopted an emergency zoning amendment

championed by the group which spared the Village from much inappropriate development until the neighborhood gained legal protection as an historic district nine years later. The Greenwich Village Historic District, the largest of its kind in the United States at the time, became the prototype for other such districts in New York City and across the country.

In the early 1960s, Vennema also lent his expertise to the Committee for Artist Housing, formed by a group of neighborhood activists who sought to legalize artist residences in industrial lofts. He served as treasurer on the committee, which also included such noted figures as Carol Greitzer, Robert Jacobs, and Ruth Wittenberg. The committee helped convince City Council to change the zoning to allow artist residences in manufacturing districts, and it established a pilot project at 799 Greenwich Street,

which set a pattern for artist residences at Westbeth and later in SoHo and Tribeca. The adaptive reuse of these buildings helped revitalize and preserve historic neighborhoods that were threatened by development proposals and neglect.

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Next time you find yourself in Riverside Park, take a moment to visit the memorial bench for artist and preservationist **Robert Miles Parker** and his partner David Van Leer. Parker's death was reported in our fall 2012 newsletter; Van Leer passed away shortly after in 2013. The bench—located at the West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance to the park, on the south side—was one of Parker's favorite places to sit and sketch the whimsical pen-and-ink drawings of buildings, urban life, and streetscapes for which he became so well known. The bench is a fitting memorial to Parker, who delighted in the historic architecture of the City. ■



Parker's memorial bench; Courtesy of NYPAP

## NYPAP News



The Kress Foundation, which generously donates work space to the Archive Project, recently moved our organization into a newly-renovated office at their Upper East Side headquarters. Our address will remain the same, but our style quotient has improved considerably! The Archive Project is deeply indebted to the Kress Foundation for providing us with such a beautiful space in which to carry out our mission.

The recent office move triggered a timely reassessment of our own collection of institutional documents and assorted materials related to the history of the historic preservation movement. With special funding from the Winston Foundation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Elizabeth R. and Robert A. Jeffe Fund for the Preservation of New York City, the Archive Project was able to hire archivists Martha Foley and William Dean to help create and implement a blueprint for a well-organized archival program. This has efficiently reorganized and rehoused portions of the collection while judiciously discarding material deemed unnecessary.

Several new entries have recently been published in our online "Preservation Database," including posts on the Savoy-Plaza Hotel, the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District, and Tony Schwartz, noted media consultant who produced radio ads in support of preservation in New York City. Visit [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org) to check them out!



174 East 80<sup>th</sup> Street | New York, NY 10075



**YOUR FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!**

The Archive Project would like to thank the New York Community Trust's Windie Knowe Fund, the Achelis Foundation, the Gerry Charitable Trust, the Elizabeth R. and Robert A. Jeffe Preservation Fund for New York City of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Kress Foundation, the Winston Foundation, the Irene Ritter Foundation, and the J. M. Kaplan Fund for their generous support. Our work could not be accomplished without their—and your—financial support.

We hope you will consider making a donation to support the documentation and celebration of the history of preservation in New York City. Donations can be made in the form of checks mailed to our office via the enclosed remittance envelope, securely online via PayPal on our website ([www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org)), or by credit card over the phone at 212-988-8379.

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