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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

Welcome to the 22nd 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.



Shelved record boxes at the Depósito del Archivo de la Fundación Sierra-Pamblley, Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Funding Secured for More Grants!

Thanks to a donation from the Windie Knowe Fund of the New York Community Trust, another round of grants from the New York Preservation Archive Project's Archival Assistance Fund will be offered in 2015! The Archival Assistance Fund was established to help identify and maintain archival resources and organizational documents related to the historic preservation movement. With this Fund specifically targeted to the preservation community, the Archive Project hopes to provide practical assistance and instill a lasting archival mindset in the New York City preservation civic sector.

In 2013 the Archive Project awarded grants from the Fund to worthy archival projects at preservation-related not-for-profits and house museums across New York City. Projects included digitally-regulated cooling,

heating, and humidity equipment for the collections at the Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum, archival processing and rehousing at the Merchant's House Museum, archival reorganization and management at FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, a collection survey and the drafting of finding aids at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, and the creation of an online platform to share the historic photograph collection of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. 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 preservation efforts.

The great success of this inaugural round of grants demonstrated that there is a

genuine need for this type of funding. Reports flooded back describing increased accessibility, usability, and protection of these significant collections. The Archive Project is pleased to be able to offer a second round of grants and hopes these projects will serve as inspiration to potential grantees.

To learn more about past grantees and to access the 2015 application form, please visit www.nypap.org. As in the first round of grants, this year's applicants must demonstrate their collection's significance to the history of historic preservation in New York City. Additionally, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the passage of the City's Landmarks Law in 2015, preference will be given to those projects that have a strong connection to the past 50 years of preservation in New York City. ■



Biltmore Hotel c. 1913,
Courtesy of the Byron Company



Palm Court at the Biltmore Hotel c. 1960,
Courtesy of William Bird

How Soon We Forget

By Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair

I confess. The rumor is true. I was thrown out of the Biltmore Hotel in August of 1981. I was not shown the door for the type of misbehavior that usually gets one booted from such a grand venue. In fact I was in particularly good company when I was ejected. Gabe Pressman—long a staple presence in New York broadcast news—and I were unsuccessfully trying to get a glimpse of the in-progress demolition of the Biltmore Hotel’s famed Palm Court. That did not sit well with those swinging the sledgehammers, so out Gabe and I went! In a place of honor in my office today is my souvenir of that episode: a nine-inch strip of decorative plaster molding from the Biltmore.

The demolition of the Biltmore’s historic interiors on Friday, August 14, 1981, surprised New Yorkers, preservationists, and the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (which at the time was considering several of the hotel’s impressive spaces for possible designation as interior

landmarks). Last minute legal action was indeed too last minute. When the sorry story came to its ultimate conclusion, the Palm Court and a number of other significant interiors were destroyed. The Biltmore’s exterior would eventually be re-clad and become unrecognizable inside and out. The main villains in this saga were the Bank of America and Biltmore owners Seymour and Paul Milstein. After the building was refaced, architectural critic Paul Goldberger would describe it as “a bloated, heavy form of glass and polished granite, unrelieved by any of the gracious ornament that made the old Biltmore so beloved a presence.”

Having been involved in the failed efforts to prevent the destruction of the Biltmore on that Friday and over that August weekend, I vowed never to go into the building again. Fast forward to September 30, 2014. I am headed to a board meeting of the New York Preservation Archive Project. A board member generously volunteered a conference room at his new law firm. The

address: 335 Madison Avenue. We are promised glorious views over Grand Central Terminal. When entering the information in my calendar, I did not give it a second thought. Later I realized I should have been tipped off by the comment about the views.

The day of the meeting, I exit Grand Central Terminal and walk across Vanderbilt Avenue towards Madison Avenue. I think to myself, “Where exactly is 335?” It then struck me that 335 Madison Avenue had to be the site of the old Biltmore Hotel. Because the Biltmore was such a New York icon, no one ever used its street address. You would just tell a cabbie, “Take me to the Biltmore.” If you were meeting someone there, it would just be, “Meet me under the clock,” in reference to the well-known gilded timepiece in the lobby. So, in fact, I had not forgotten the address of the Biltmore; I simply never knew it. Nor had I forgotten my vow to never enter the building again.

Pausing a moment to consider whether it was an option to boycott the board meeting of my own organization (a meeting I was also chairing), I sucked it up and after 33 years entered the Biltmore and the new space that had replaced the Palm Court.

Well, I certainly had not missed anything over those three decades. For this the Biltmore interiors had been sacrificed? As a bone tossed to preservationists (well, actually only a fragment of a bone), the famed Biltmore Clock had been reinstalled in the building’s modern lobby. It is so dwarfed and looks so ridiculously out of place that when I saw it I could not believe this was the gesture to preservation that I had read about years ago. In light of this, I had to start the board meeting with the subject of the Biltmore and my broken vow. Some longtime New York board members had vague recollections of the battle over the Biltmore. Younger board members had not forgotten the battle—they had never heard of it. And how would they? That, of course, is my point.

Unless such chapters in preservation history are captured and brought to the fore, how are new generations of preservationists to know their preservation history? We must be thankful that at least the high points (or should I say low points?) of the Biltmore story are captured for the record within Stern, Fishman, and Tilove's 1,520 page *New York 2000: Architecture and Urbanism between the Bicentennial and the Millennium*. However, the Biltmore preservation story, like so many others, deserves fuller attention and certainly broader recognition.

Why is it important to remember the battle over the Biltmore? First, it gives one a sense of what preservation in New York City was like in the early 1980s, just years after the milestone Penn Central decision that upheld the Landmarks Law. It is yet another cautionary tale—a reminder of the need for preservationists to get ahead of the wave, instead of having it crash over their heads—in this case, the need to landmark a structure before it is too late. It is a reminder of the often plodding nature of the official landmark process. It explains why August in New York is still greeted with dread by some preservationists, who see it as a time for hyper-vigilance, not relaxation. It demonstrates the necessity of going to court to obtain restraining orders and the need to have the pertinent legal skill set finely honed.

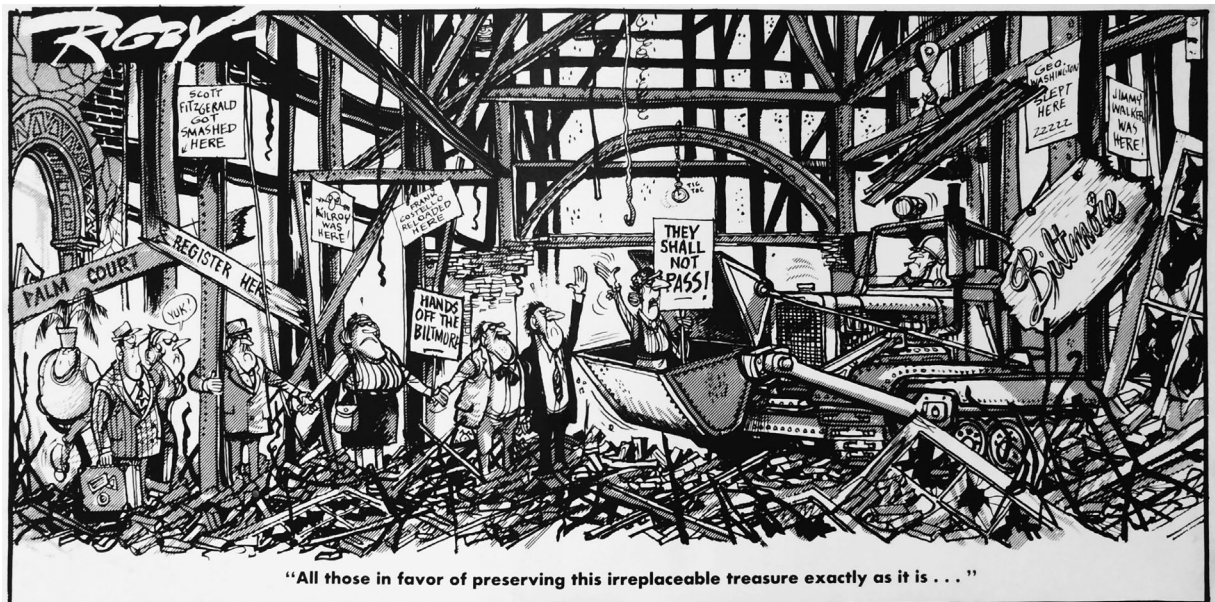
Perhaps most importantly, the loss of the Biltmore is instructive in the dangerous game of making private preservation deals with developers. After demolition was well underway, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, supported by the Municipal Art Society, struck a deal with the Milsteins to “restore” the Palm Court, but only if the Landmarks Preservation Commission did not move to designate the building’s

exterior, ballroom, or lobby, all then under consideration. No designations took place, yet of course today there is no Palm Court. Ultimately, with a \$500,000 contribution to the Conservancy, the developers got out of their agreement. Robert A.M. Stern et al. in *New York 2000* describe this payment as “an unsettling offer that amounted to little more than blood money.”

Yes, episodes in preservation history such as the loss of the Biltmore—largely forgotten today—have their instructive value. One may disagree on exactly what these lessons are, but they are there. The knowledge of such preservation stories provides insight into the past, helps explain present attitudes among at least one generation of preservationists, and by example, suggests what not to do and

avoiding 335 Madison Avenue for 33 years I had missed nothing. That too is useful knowledge as I contemplate a future likely to include an ever-expanding list of buildings I will need to boycott. That list could be a lot shorter if preservationists remember their past and put it to good use.

The memory of the loss of Pennsylvania Station still helps fuel the preservation movement—in New York City and around the world. It continues to inform, instruct, and inspire today’s preservation movement. So too could the stories of the battle for the Biltmore, or, for that matter, the battle for the Dvořák House and Lüchow’s in the East Village, or the Purchase Building underneath the Brooklyn Bridge, or Dorothy Day’s Bungalow in Spanish Camp on Staten



Cartoon by Paul Rigby referencing the preservation battle for the Biltmore Hotel, August 19, 1981, Courtesy of *The New York Post*

what can be done better as we move towards the future. Indeed, the current, appropriately intense focus on the 50th anniversary of the Landmarks Law—the first 50 years of its implementation, and the last century of preservation in New York—is not underway to pat ourselves on the back or kick ourselves in the backside, but rather to document, preserve, and celebrate our history. This history is the key repository of some of our most valuable intellectual capital, and we need it to “up our game” as we enter the next half-century of preservation.

One upside of breaking my vow never to enter that building was the realization that in

Island, or Billy Rose’s Aquacade on the 1939 World’s Fair Grounds in Queens, or the Coogan Building in Chelsea, or the Goelet Garage on the Upper West Side, or 2 Columbus Circle, and the list of losses goes on. However we do so, these stories must be documented and preserved.

On this golden jubilee of the Landmarks Law, ask yourself: “Have I done my part to preserve the history of preservation that I helped make—both triumphs and tragedies?” If your answer is “no,” now is the perfect time to start.

Long live the lessons of the Biltmore! ■



Preservationist Joan Maynard with students in front of the Hunterfly Road Houses, a site that may have untold preservation stories, Courtesy of Weeksville Heritage Center

New Oral History Project Launched!

Initiative Aims to Capture Missing Stories Related to Minority Sites and Places Outside Manhattan

The Archive Project is thrilled to announce the launch of a new oral history initiative entitled *Saving Preservation Stories: Diversity & the Four Boroughs*. While the Archive Project has made great strides in documenting the preservation stories of neighborhoods and sites in Manhattan, this project was begun to capture important, untold narratives, focusing on diversity and the four “other” boroughs in order to create a more complete

story of preservation in New York City over the last century.

After a recent assessment, the Archive Project’s current oral history collection was found to lack stories associated with the preservation of sites and neighborhoods significant to minority communities. While some of these stories have been told individually in various forms, no initiative has yet set out to tell a comprehensive story about minority involvement in New York City preservation. With generational shifts and a changing urban fabric bringing rapid transformation to many areas, the stories of these communities are in danger of being lost forever if they are not collected soon. The same could be said for another area in which the Archive Project’s collection is lacking: sites and neighborhoods located outside of Manhattan, especially Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has made a concerted effort in recent years to designate more historic districts and individual landmarks in these underrepresented boroughs, in an effort to address the higher proportion of landmarks located in Manhattan. Although some of

these sites may have only recently been designated, their preservation campaigns often go back decades. And there are also many stories from unsuccessful preservation campaigns—buildings and neighborhoods that have been lost or compromised before they had a chance to be protected.

Through a grant from the New York Community Trust, the Archive Project can now begin capturing these overlooked stories and work towards creating a broader record of the history of preservation. Like all of the oral histories the organization captures, the final transcripts will be made available to the public online at www.nypap.org. The Archive Project also plans to form exciting new partnerships to highlight this project, inspire similar efforts, and impart our mission to a new population.

Through the help of a special ad hoc advisory committee, the Archive Project is currently working to identify sites, significant figures, and other resources that will help make this oral history project a success. If you have ideas for potential interviewees or any other suggestions, please contact Matthew Coody at mcoody@nypap.org or 212-988-8379. ■



Casa Amadeo, the oldest, continuously-occupied Latin music store in the Bronx, Courtesy of Jim Henderson

NYPAP Events

Our Public Programs Continue to Celebrate, Educate, & Inspire

Thanks to an incredible outpouring of interest in the speaker at last December's **Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit**, it became the Archive Project's most successful fundraiser to date! This event marked what would have been the 148th birthday of Albert S. Bard, a civic figure dedicated to protecting the aesthetic values of special places. Bard drafted the New York State legislation (known as the Bard Act) that authorized the Landmarks Law. He was also an advocate for City Beautiful concerns ranging from billboard control to zoning. To celebrate Bard's birthday, Nathan Silver, author of the iconic *Lost New York*, made a rare trip from London to speak on this book and the evolution of his theories on preservation since its publication.

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, was later published as the book for which he received a Certificate of Merit from the Municipal Art Society and a nomination for the 1967 National Book Award. After moving to Great Britain, Silver taught architectural design at Cambridge University and became architecture critic for the *New Statesman*. In addition to his work as a practicing architect, he served as 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 *Advocism: The Case for Improvisation* with Charles Jencks.

Lost New York defined an era of new philosophy concerning the demolition of historic architecture. Silver rejected the notion that the destruction of treasured urban property was the inevitable price of progress, making his case by using

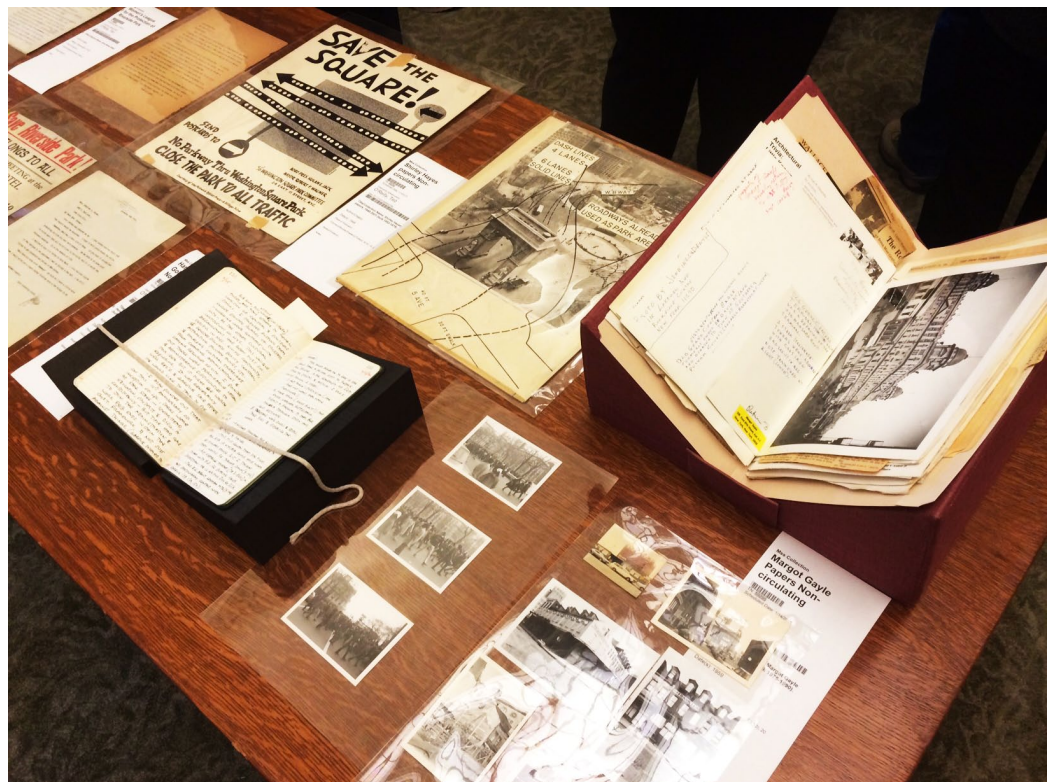
potent historic photographs to illustrate the astonishing riches that were quickly vanishing from the streetscape. At the Bard Breakfast, Silver reflected on this quintessential work while also encouraging forms of innovative preservation that can transform threatened buildings and urban places today. *Lost New York* has recently gone 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."

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this event such a success. Funds raised at the Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit support the Archive Project's general operations.

In January the Archive Project hosted a remarkable **Tour of the New-York Historical Society's Patricia D.**

Klingenstein Library. One of the oldest and most distinguished libraries in the United States, the Library's collection contains more than 350,000 books, three million manuscripts, and distinctive collections of maps, architectural drawings, photographs, prints, and ephemera documenting the history of the United States from the perspective of New York City. In addition, the Library holds materials related to the City's nationally-significant historic preservation movement, including collections related to Harmon Goldstone, Margot Gayle, and Shirley Hayes. Preservationists might also know the Library as the home of the records of some major architectural firms, including McKim, Mead & White.

With commentary by Michael Ryan, Vice President and Director of the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library, Nina Nazionale, Director of Library Operations, Edward O'Reilly, Head of the Manuscript Department, and various other curators, attendees were guided through an in-depth exploration of the venerable Library's diverse collection. From brochures for the World Trade Center and breathtaking renderings done by McKim, Mead & White while designing the Morgan Library, to advocacy



Preservation-related materials from the collection of the New-York Historical Society, Courtesy of the Archive Project

flyers for preservation efforts in Greenwich Village and 19th-century street scene photographs, this proved to be an unparalleled opportunity to view what lies within the stacks of one of the greatest keepers of New York City history. Due to the incredible response to this tour, the Archive Project hopes to offer another in the future. If you missed this one, please stay tuned!

What was the first interior landmark in New York City? What preservationist is best known for crying out, “Someone has stolen one of my buildings!”? What notable building currently sits on the site of the original Waldorf Astoria? Competition was fierce at **Preservation Trivia Night** as attendees worked

in teams to answer these questions and more, battling it out for bragging rights (and a bar tab at the historic Paris Café). Because the event was co-sponsored with the Historic Districts Council, FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, Preservation Alumni, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, and Pratt Historic Preservation Alumni, a diverse crowd came out to test their knowledge of New York City preservation history. Trivia rounds included “Know Your Landmarks,” which focused on the history of landmark designation, “Rest in Pieces: Landmarks That Have Died and Gone to Heaven,” and “New York City in 1965,” a special round devoted to the year the Landmarks Law was passed. It was a fun and fitting kickoff to the year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Landmarks Law in 2015!

This past February, the Archive Project contributed original content to **The Brokaw Mansion: Catalyst for the Landmarks Law**, a special program co-sponsored with FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts and the Ukrainian Institute of America as part of the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Landmarks Law. In 1965, despite the best efforts of preservationists, the lavish



Rally at the Brokaw Mansion, Courtesy of the Anthony C. Wood Archive

Brokaw Mansion met the wrecking ball. Though a major loss to the architectural fabric of New York City, many believe that the general outcry and scathing press coverage surrounding the fall of this residence were key factors that led Mayor Robert F. Wagner to sign landmarks legislation into law later that year.

To honor this momentous occasion in preservation history, the Archive Project pieced together rare video footage from the archives, pairing it with an examination of the Brokaw Mansion’s importance, presented by founder and chair Anthony C. Wood. Additionally, guest speakers who were closely associated with the building were on hand to share their experiences, including Peter Samton, New York City architect and one of the original founders of the Action Group for Better Architecture in New York (AGBANY). Samton and AGBANY became involved with key preservation battles in the 1960s, including the failed attempts to save Pennsylvania Station and the Brokaw Mansion. Also present to give a first-hand account of the storied residence was Joseph M. Cahalan, Ph.D., who grew up in the Brokaw Mansion. Cahalan’s father was the live-in caretaker and superintendent for the building from roughly 1940 until

its demolition in 1965. Council Member Benjamin Kallos was also in attendance, kicking off the night with an impassioned pro-preservation appeal.

Due to the generosity of the Ukrainian Institute of America, the program and reception took place at its headquarters in the spectacular Fletcher-Sinclair Mansion, located directly across the street from where the Brokaw Mansion once stood. Designed by C. P. H. Gilbert and completed in 1898, this French Gothic-style former private residence is one of the last remaining structures of its type on Fifth Avenue. Fortunately, the building is protected as part of the Metropolitan Museum Historic District, designated in 1977, and its continued existence explicitly displays the power of the Landmarks Law.

The Archive Project was honored to pay proper respect to the Brokaw Mansion’s catalyzing place in preservation history through this program. A video recording of the entire program can be viewed on the Archive Project’s YouTube page, which can be accessed via www.nypap.org.

In a special April Fools’ Day installation of our screening series, the Archive Project



Illustration by David Edward Byrd of Angela Lansbury in her role as Jessica Fletcher in *Murder, She Wrote*, 1987, Courtesy of TV Guide

hosted a viewing of *For Whom the Ball Tolls*, from the television series *Murder, She Wrote*. In this episode, which dates from 1993, the indomitable Jessica Fletcher takes on a quintessential (and campy) New York City murder mystery involving the preservation world when she is asked to help save three historically-significant brownstones that are scheduled to be razed for a high-rise condo. Scheming real estate developers, alternate side parking, landmark committees, and rent-controlled apartments all play a role in the mystery's eventual solution.

Following the **Preservation She Wrote** screening, guest critics discussed the changing public image of preservation, and how the portrayal of the field in the early 1990s compares to today's perception and reality. Convened by Anthony C. Wood, founder and chair of the Archive Project (and *Murder, She Wrote* aficionado), critique and commentary was given by Susan De Vries, Archive Project board member and preservation consultant, and Cristiana Peña, social media strategist and preservation advocate, currently involved with Unite to Save the Frick.

De Vries also gave an entertaining impromptu breakdown of the episode's plot points when audio



Guest speakers Cristiana Peña and Susan De Vries display a copy of *Murder, She Wrote* autographed by Angela Lansbury, Courtesy of the Archive Project

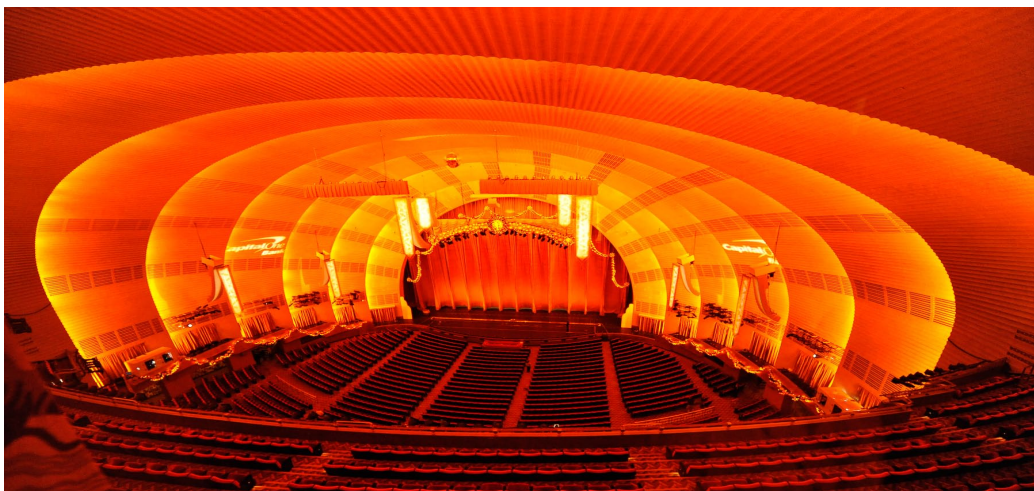
unexpectedly went out for several minutes. For her efforts she was awarded the evening's raffle prize: a DVD set of *Murder, She Wrote*, Season 10 (which includes the preservation-themed *For Whom the Ball Tolls* episode), signed by Dame Angela Lansbury herself!

The Archive Project joined forces with the New York School of Interior Design to present **Public Lives: Preserving New York's Landmark Interiors**, part of the institution's programming for their exhibition, "Rescued, Restored, Reimagined: New York's Landmark Interiors." This panel discussion examined the past, present, and future of the interior preservation movement, focusing on those advocates who challenged the destructive forces that

threatened such iconic interiors as Grand Central Terminal and Radio City Music Hall. Through their work, these figures secured a future for an extraordinary interior design legacy that enriches the lives of everyone who experiences New York City. Panelists included Kent Barwick, civic leader and former New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair; Roberta Brandes Gratz, journalist and urban critic; and Francis Morrone, architectural historian. The panel was moderated by preservation historian Anthony C. Wood and Kate Wood, co-curator of the New York School of Interior Design's exhibition, provided an introductory overview that helped set the stage. Although the exhibition is now closed, its content is available on landmarkinteriors.nysid.edu.

The Archive Project hosted a special **Toast to 50 Years of the Landmarks Law** on April 19th, exactly 50 years from the day the legislation was signed by Mayor Robert F. Wagner in 1965. Since its groundbreaking passage, the law has successfully provided legal protection for the City's treasured buildings and neighborhoods; today over 33,000 special places throughout the City are protected as individual landmarks, interior landmarks, scenic landmarks, or as part of 114 historic districts.

As part of the festivities, there was cake, champagne, and a screening of WNET's *Treasures of New York: The Landmarks Preservation Movement*, which documents the tireless work of preservationists before and after the passage of the Landmarks Law. Simeon Bankoff, executive director of the



Auditorium of Radio City Music Hall, a landmark interior that was once threatened, Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Stewardship Society

After last fall's dazzling tour of the Art Deco skyscraper One Wall Street, the Archive Project's annual series of special events for our Stewardship Society continues! In April the Society visited the Shubert Archive, held within the Lyceum Theatre. Built in 1903, the Lyceum is one of the oldest surviving Broadway theaters and the first to be granted landmark status.

Members of the Stewardship Society gained unparalleled access to this collection, which contains nearly six million items related to the theatrical activities of the Shubert family, who are generally considered responsible for establishing the Broadway theater district. Archivists guided the group through more than a century's worth of costume designs, sheet music, photographs, ephemera, and architectural plans. After the tour, the group retired to another Broadway establishment, the Café Un Deux Trois, for a lively reception.

The Stewardship Society consists of our most devoted benefactors 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 private viewings of archival treasures at such places as Carnegie Hall, the Explorers Club, and the Park Avenue Armory.

We hope that you will consider becoming a Steward of the New York Preservation Archive Project and thus a steward of the history of New York City's preservation movement. To join the Society, please contact Matthew Coody at mcoody@nypap.org or 212-988-8379, or just note "Stewardship Society" on your donation check or online contribution.



Cake at the toast to 50 years of the Landmarks Law,
Courtesy of the Archive Project



Film still of Anthony C. Wood and Karen Loew
from the video recording of *100 Years of Preservation:
A Conversation with Anthony C. Wood*, Courtesy of the
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

Historic Districts Council, and Brooklyn Heights preservationist Otis Pratt Pearsall, both featured in the documentary, discussed the portrayal of the field in the program, and gave their thoughts on how preservation might evolve over the next 50 years.

Although the preservation field is currently focused on the past 50 years of the Landmarks Law, preservation has a much longer history in New York City. The Archive Project and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation investigated this history in **100 Years of Preservation: A Conversation with Anthony C. Wood**. Wood, founder and chair of the Archive Project and author of *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks*, joined in a discussion with Karen Loew, Director of East Village and Special Projects at the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, to investigate what led to the passage of New

York City's 1965 Landmarks Law and its effect on the urban environment. Their conversation illuminated the long struggle that preceded the law and the forces that shaped it, while also examining the architectural losses along the way and the preservation of so many remarkable buildings since. The panel concluded by evaluating the current political landscape and how preservation may change in the 21st century.

Join us in **Celebrating 50 Years of Preservation Public Service** on Saturday, July 18, 2015 from 4:00-7:00

p.m. at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY). This special gathering will honor past and present commissioners, chairs, executive directors, and staff of New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission. Co-hosted and conceived with MCNY as part of their current exhibition "Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks," this "reunion" will include sweets, champagne, a group photo, and an oral history booth to record attendees' contributions to preservation history. Tours of the exhibition, which is open until September 13, 2015, will also be offered. RSVP at programs@mcny.org.

The Archive Project and MCNY are currently attempting to create a master list of names and contact information for all former staff members of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. This document will ensure all former staff can join this celebration, but will also help to create an important historical record. If you are a former staff member or commissioner and can provide contact information for past colleagues, please contact info@nypap.org.

The New York Preservation Archive Project is planning additional programming through the summer and fall, including a special lecture on a preservation battle in New Orleans with surprising connections to New York City and a multi-event celebration of the 50th anniversary of the designation of Brooklyn Heights, New York City's first historic district.

If you wish to stay updated on our various events and programs, make sure you are on our list by emailing info@nypap.org. ■

Preserving Preservation

A New Initiative at the New-York Historical Society

Founded in 1804 and now one of the nation's pre-eminent cultural institutions, the New-York Historical Society (N-YHS) is dedicated to fostering research and presenting exhibitions and public programs that explore the rich history of New York and the nation as a whole. From its beginnings to the present day, the institution has actively acquired significant materials related to the history of the region. In the words of one speaker at a N-YHS meeting soon after its establishment: "...without the aid of historic records and authentic documents, history would be nothing more than a well-combined series of ingenious conjectures and amusing fables."

The N-YHS is currently seeking to partner with individuals, groups, and organizations to collect, preserve, and make accessible the documentary legacy of the preservation movement in New York City and the surrounding area. The goal of this new initiative is to create an ongoing program that provides a secure, professionally curated and managed home for archival materials in all formats. This resource will provide researchers, scholars, students, and others with the primary material critical to the history of the preservation movement in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The N-YHS is interested in a broad spectrum of material, from ephemera, scrapbooks, photographs, and audio/video recordings to correspondence, diaries and journals, formal organizational records, case studies, and campaign files. In short, the institution is interested in the wide variety of materials generated by individuals, groups, and organizations in the course of their work on behalf of historic preservation.

Although this initiative is new, it builds on foundations that have been in place at the N-YHS. Among other items, the N-YHS holds the diaries of Harmon Goldstone's years at New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission (1968-1974); the papers of Margot Gayle, best known

'60s; the Woman's League for the Protection of Riverside Park; the Friends of City Hall Park; and small collections relating to Andrew Haswell Green, the Chapel Farm in Riverdale, and the involvement of the N-YHS and the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society in the movement to

preserve Castle Clinton. The N-YHS's architectural collections also hold primary documentation on many of the City's most important buildings. These materials have served preservationists well over the years. Within this large archive are the records of McKim, Mead & White, Cass Gilbert, and George B. Post. There is also a significant collection of brochures on 20th-century apartment buildings and hotels.

The Archive Project is thrilled that this prominent institution is addressing the urgent need to collect materials related to the nationally significant historic preservation movement in New York City. By partnering with the N-YHS on this initiative, the Archive Project looks forward to working together to help create an established repository devoted to this piece of New York City history. The Archive Project has already been involved with placing some of Margot Gayle's papers at the N-YHS, as well

as the transfer of the Ladies' Mile collections of Jack Taylor and Margaret Moore last year.

For further information on this initiative, or for questions related to the current collection of preservation materials at the N-YHS, please contact Michael Ryan, Vice President and Director of the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library, at michael.ryan@nyhistory.org. ■



The Patricia D. Klingenstein Library, Courtesy of the Archive Project

for her work on behalf of the Jefferson Market Courthouse, the Victorian Society in America, and the Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture; and the papers of Shirley Hayes, active in Greenwich Village and a vigorous opponent of Robert Moses. In addition, the N-YHS hold the records of groups active around the redevelopment of Washington Square Park in the 1950s and

NYC Landmarks50 Alliance

The 50th Anniversary of the Landmarks Law is Upon Us!

The big anniversary year has arrived! To commemorate and celebrate 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 over 170 members of the Alliance, ranging from the Brooklyn Historical Society to the Judd Foundation, has created a special project or event for the anniversary, and their work is highlighting the amazing assortment of cultural institutions and organizations that are deeply passionate about historic architecture and its important contribution to New York City. Included on these two pages are photographs from some of the many programs, exhibitions, and projects. There will continue to be numerous ways to celebrate this milestone anniversary throughout 2015. We hope to see you at the next event! ■

Clockwise from top: Alliance founder Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel (center), flanked by George Calderaro and Tara Kelly at the ringing of the NASDAQ closing bell, Courtesy of Tara Kelly; Kate Wood, Hugh Hardy, Kitty Hawks, Judith Gura, and David Sprouls at the opening of the exhibition they created at the New York School of Interior Design, "Rescued, Restored, Reimagined: New York's Landmark Interiors," Courtesy of Matthew Carasella; "Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks" exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, Courtesy of Filip Wolak



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Rendering of celebratory tulip plantings on Park Avenue, Courtesy of the Fund for Park Avenue; Billboard tribute created by artist Peter Tunney, Courtesy of the Alliance; Historic District Council's "Landmarks @ 50" Conference, Courtesy of HDC; Empire State Building lit in honor of the anniversary, Courtesy of the Alliance; Wallace Roney performing at the celebrity-studded anniversary reception at the Four Seasons, Courtesy of the Alliance; New York Transit Museum's "New York's Transportation Landmarks" exhibition, Courtesy of Patrick Cashin/Metropolitan Transportation Authority



In Memoriam



Teri Slater, Courtesy of the Historic Districts Council

Teri Slater, preservationist and co-founder of the Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side, died January 13, 2015 at the age of 70. Born and raised on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, Slater was deeply passionate about preserving the character of her neighborhood and New York City as a whole. She was both an officer and a director of the Historic Districts Council, the citywide advocate for historic neighborhoods, and served alongside many community preservation groups in various efforts to protect the historic architecture of the Upper East Side. Slater was also a member of Community Board 8, sitting on its Landmarks Committee and co-chairing its Zoning and Development Committee.

Slater co-founded the Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side in 2003 with Elizabeth Ashby, another neighborhood preservationist whom Slater met in the early 1980s. This advocacy group is dedicated to protecting and preserving the historic character of the Upper East Side, which includes several historic districts and numerous individual landmarks. An ardent guardian of this neighborhood, Slater stated: "We love it the way it is, and we will fight to protect it." Since its founding, the Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side has been involved with the creation of the Park Avenue Historic District, blocking the construction of inappropriately-scaled towers in the neighborhood, and preventing the creation of a 3,000-seat performance space on Park Avenue.

One of Slater's well-known preservation battles was her opposition to the 2007 redevelopment plans for 980 Madison Avenue (located between East 76th and 77th Streets, within the Upper East Side Historic District), which included a 30-story tower designed by prominent architect Norman Foster. The Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side opposed this idea and urged the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to reject the plan, citing that the new tower would obstruct views throughout the Upper East Side and reduce visibility of the iconic Carlyle Hotel. Due in part to her efforts, the LPC deemed this redevelopment plan inappropriate in January 2008, prompting a revised plan. The site has yet to be redeveloped.

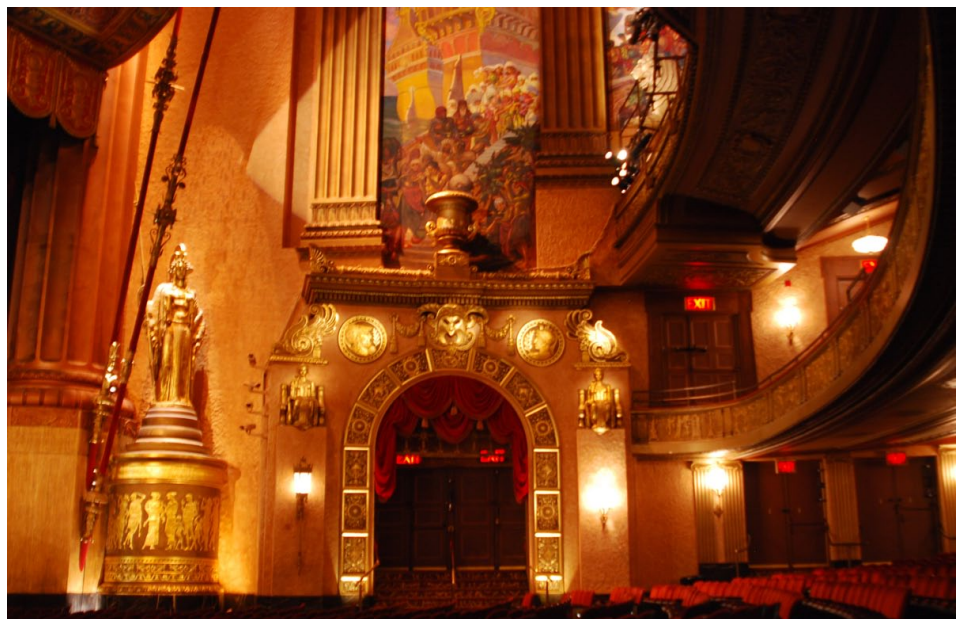
In one of their most involved preservation initiatives, the Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side joined forces with Carnegie Hill Neighbors, Historic Park Avenue, and FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts to advocate for the designation of a large portion of Park Avenue, from East 62nd to 96th Streets, as an historic district. Although some of the avenue was protected within the Upper East Side and Carnegie Hill Historic Districts, at the time large swathes remained unprotected. The push for an historic district was in response to several architectural losses in these undesignated sections, and was intended, in part, to combat numerous development plans that

could have caused further destruction to the area's historic fabric. After a long battle, the Park Avenue Historic District was finally designated in 2014.

Slater also spearheaded less expansive campaigns. In 2012, she began protesting oversized and excessive signage for commercial properties, especially along East 86th Street. Slater called for a replacement of the "gaudy" signs and storefronts with more modest designs, and encouraged enforcement of the installation of signs that comply with size regulations. Indeed, even until her death, Teri Slater was fighting on numerous fronts to maintain the sense of place of the Upper East Side. Community Board 8 Chair Jim Clynes called Slater an unparalleled resource in the community. "Teri's knowledge of zoning and historic preservation was encyclopedic and her institutional knowledge of the city, the Upper East Side, and the community board was historic," said Clynes. "She will be sorely missed. She was indeed the ultimate defender of the historic Upper East Side."

Daniel B. Meltzer, playwright, short story author, and preservationist best known for his effort to save the interior of the Upper West Side's Beacon Theatre, died November 6, 2014. He was 74 years old.

Meltzer was born and raised in Brooklyn, but by 1968 he was a resident of the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Meltzer's father



Interior of the Beacon Theatre, Courtesy of Andrew Kaplan/Landmark West!

once owned and operated a movie theater, so it is not surprising that his son eventually spearheaded the preservation of the historic Beacon Theatre. The Beacon opened in 1929 as a moving picture and vaudeville “palace” and continued to show films until the early 1970s, when live performances began. The theater’s lobbies, stairways, and auditorium were designated a New York City Interior Landmark in 1979. But by the early 1980s, the Beacon Theatre had become run-down, and Olivier Coquelin, a prominent developer of discotheques, announced his plan to gut portions of the building and turn it into a dance club. In response, Meltzer helped form the group Save the Beacon Theatre in 1985. As chairman, Meltzer led hundreds of volunteers in the fight against the proposed plan. They enlisted a wide range of celebrity supporters, such as Brooke Astor, Marvin Hamlisch, Yoko Ono, Harry Belafonte, and Judy Collins, while at the same time recruiting over 20,000 people to sign a petition and leading demonstrations to advocate for the theater’s preservation.

Although the dance club plan was unexpectedly approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Meltzer and his group eventually had the Commission’s decision overturned in 1987, with the court ruling that the renovation planned by Coquelin would violate the space’s interior landmark status. This decision effectively saved the theater’s significant interior features. Subsequently the Beacon underwent a revival in its concert hall business and the Madison Square Garden Company eventually purchased the theater in 2006. By 2008, the architecture firm of Beyer Blinder Belle was hired to begin a restoration which lasted over seven months, restoring the interior to its original splendor. Since its restoration the theater has continued as a popular venue for a wide variety of events, including live music concerts by the likes of Bob Dylan, the Beach Boys, and the Allman Brothers, as well as the location for the Tony Awards and appearances by notable figures such as the Dalai Lama.

Judith Edelman, a “firebrand” in the architecture field, best known in preservation circles for her firm’s work to restore St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery, died on

October 4, 2014, at the age of 91. At the time of her death, she was still active at Edelman, Sultan, Knox & Wood / Architects.

Edelman (née Hochberg) was born in Brooklyn to immigrant parents from Eastern Europe. She experienced an early childhood fascination with architecture and decided to pursue the field after visiting an architecture firm when she was a junior in high school. Her interest in becoming an architect was further solidified when an injury prevented her from pursuing her first passion, dancing.

Edelman attended Connecticut College and

historic preservation work, including the restoration of the renowned La MaMa Theater on the Lower East Side. But Judith Edelman’s most significant preservation triumph took place when she, along with her husband Harold as lead architect, dedicated over three decades to the preservation of St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery. The effort began in 1967 with the reclamation of the church’s historic graveyards. Then, in 1978, following a fire in the church, the firm took on the renovation of the structure, which dates from 1799, and after a later fire in 1988, the adjacent 1901 Ernest Flagg Rectory (now home to the Neighborhood



Judith and Harold Edelman discuss a drawing in their office on Washington Street, Courtesy of Robert Ipcar

then New York University before receiving her degree in architecture from Columbia University. Soon after marrying Harold Edelman in 1947, she and her husband founded the architecture firm that is today called Edelman, Sultan, Knox & Wood / Architects. During the 1970s, she became a leader in the movement to include more women in the architecture profession. She was the first woman to be elected to the executive committee of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1971 and helped found the Alliance of Women in Architecture in 1972.

The Edelmanns’ architecture firm did much

Preservation Center). The project was finally finished in 1999.

In this effort to restore St. Mark’s, Judith Edelman and her husband embraced a pioneering urban preservation approach in which young people from the surrounding area, under the Edelmanns’ oversight and the supervision of master artisans, performed all the day-to-day restoration tasks, a work and training initiative called the Preservation Youth Project. Harold Edelman, who served on the Board of the St. Mark’s Historic Landmark Fund, died in 1999. Judith Edelman remained a devoted friend of St. Mark’s until her death last year. ■

Join the Columns Club!

Last fall the Archive Project added a new level to the Stewardship Society, the organization's major donor group.

The Columns Club—consisting of young preservation enthusiasts ages 21-40 who donate \$75 or more annually—is an exciting way to engage a new generation of New Yorkers in the Archive Project's important mission.

Members of the Columns Club, informally known as "Columnists," are invited to special tours of historic places and archives throughout New York City, including some of the extraordinary tours given for Stewardship Society members. Spearheaded by Archive Project board member Bradley J. Vogel, unique experiences have been created to appeal to the wide-ranging tastes of this multifaceted group.

The inaugural event was an after-hours flashlight tour of the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum, a Dutch Colonial-style structure that is the last remaining farmhouse on the island of Manhattan. Susan De Vries, former director of the museum, led the group through fascinating (and spooky!) nooks and crannies not typically shown to the public. The growing troupe of Columnists has also taken a private tour of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine with former Executive Vice President Stephen Facey, exploring the many secrets hidden within the walls of that glorious edifice. And thanks to the generosity of Archive Project board member Richard J. Moylan, the Columns Club recently embarked upon a twilight visit to Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery, complete with wine, cheese, and a look through the archives!

If you are interesting in joining this hearty crew of urban explorers, please contact Brad Vogel at brad.vogel@gmail.com or Matthew Coody at mcoody@nypap.org.

Notes from the Board: Bradley J. Vogel

The following is an installment in a series highlighting the interests of members of our Board of Directors

I cut my teeth in preservation in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. Granted, a keen interest in history emerged earlier in my life, as I served actively on the board of my hometown historical society in Kiel, Wisconsin, while in high school. But it was not until the tail end of law school at Tulane in New Orleans that I threw myself fully into the preservation fray. A massive state and federal construction project targeted 70 acres of a National Register historic district in the middle of the city for demolition, and I began heavily documenting the area via a blog ("Inside the Footprint") after visiting the "blighted" site to see for myself. Documentation of architectural history turned into outright activism as I learned more about what would be lost. Ultimately, I served as an historic preservation fellow with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and my advocacy efforts led to the moving and saving of a number of historic structures from the project footprint. I also worked to influence blight policy in the city at a time when mass demolition was rampant. Ultimately, the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation honored me as co-recipient of its Preservationist of the Year award in 2011.

The author and journalist Roberta Brandes Gratz, whom I had met in New Orleans preservation circles, proved to be a key bridge to New York, introducing me to Tony Wood shortly upon

my arrival in the metropolis to work as a transactional attorney. Within a year, I had joined the board of the Archive Project. I have enjoyed many aspects of Archive Project membership, but chief among them has been the chance to launch the organization's new group for the younger set, the Columns Club (for more on the Columns Club, see sidebar on this page). Our nascent membership, a subset of the Stewardship Society, enjoys behind-the-scenes and after-hours access to historic buildings or sites, so if you are able to provide us with an "in" please let the Archive Project know. And if you are under the age of 40 and would like to join the Columns Club, feel free to contact me at brad.vogel@gmail.com.

Beyond the realm of preservation, I enjoy spending time with my boyfriend, Suresh, and I am an active member of the Circumnavigators Club, the iMentor program, and a rather lively book club. Traveling, drawing, hiking, and roof gardening keep me busy throughout the year, and I am currently editing a book from the 1880s for republication and pushing a poetry book toward publication. But on any given Sunday, there is a good chance you might find me wandering somewhere in New York City, musing about an interesting Venetian Gothic or Art Deco detail floating far above the sidewalks. ■



Above: Bradley J. Vogel, Courtesy of Thompson Hine; Below: Members of the Columns Club at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; Courtesy of the Archive Project



Haughwout Building in the 1980s, Courtesy of The SoHo Memory Project

SoHo Native Raises Funds to Preserve Her Neighborhood's Rich History

Following up on the success of her blog, The SoHo Memory Project (www.sohomemory.com), Yukie Ohta, archivist, writer, and SoHo native, is setting out to raise funds to create a mobile historical society in partnership with The Uni Project, a nonprofit dedicated to creating pop-up learning experiences across New York City. The SoHo Memory Project is a blog and archive preserving and sharing the history of SoHo as a New York City neighborhood. A significant portion of the archive consists of material related to the preservation of the neighborhood from the 1960s onward, including the successful battle against Robert Moses's Lower Manhattan Expressway.

Ohta is fundraising to design and create this "portable historical society that can navigate the bustling urban environment of today's SoHo, showing a glimpse of its past," she explains. "Knowing the story of our neighborhood and its significance in the larger history of New York City will enrich the experiences of SoHo residents and visitors alike and will influence how they interact with the people, streets, and ideas of SoHo."

The exhibition will chronicle the evolution of the area, focusing on the decades between

1960 and 1980, when SoHo evolved from a manufacturing and warehousing district to an artists' community. The displays will include objects, ephemera, artwork, photographs, sound, and video, as well as unconventional media such as 3D-printed miniatures, comic books, and an olfactory station.

At the forefront of a new wave in exhibition design, according to Ohta, "The immediacy... will allow for a visceral experience that will ideally linger with viewers as they go on with their excursions through SoHo and inform the way they interact with the neighborhood." Uni Project Executive Director Leslie Davol says, "We hope this will provide a model for telling the stories of other neighborhoods."

Although there are archives that collect the personal papers of significant artists and individuals who were SoHo pioneers, SoHo itself has no historical society dedicated to preserving its history as a neighborhood, nor is there any library or museum that tells its story. Ohta hopes that this exhibition is just the first step in finding a permanent home for The SoHo Memory Project.

For further information please contact Yukie Ohta at 917-608-7460 or yukie.ohata@gmail.com. ■

NYPAP News

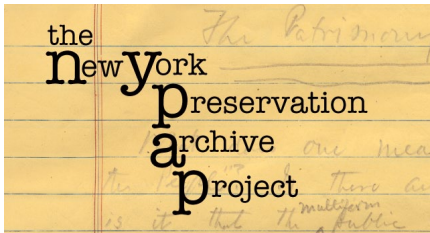


Subway riders may have seen a recent Seamless ad reading "Calling for takeout. Demolishing the old Penn Station. Seemed like good ideas at the time." Clearly the myth of Penn Station has reached beyond the field into the City's collective consciousness!

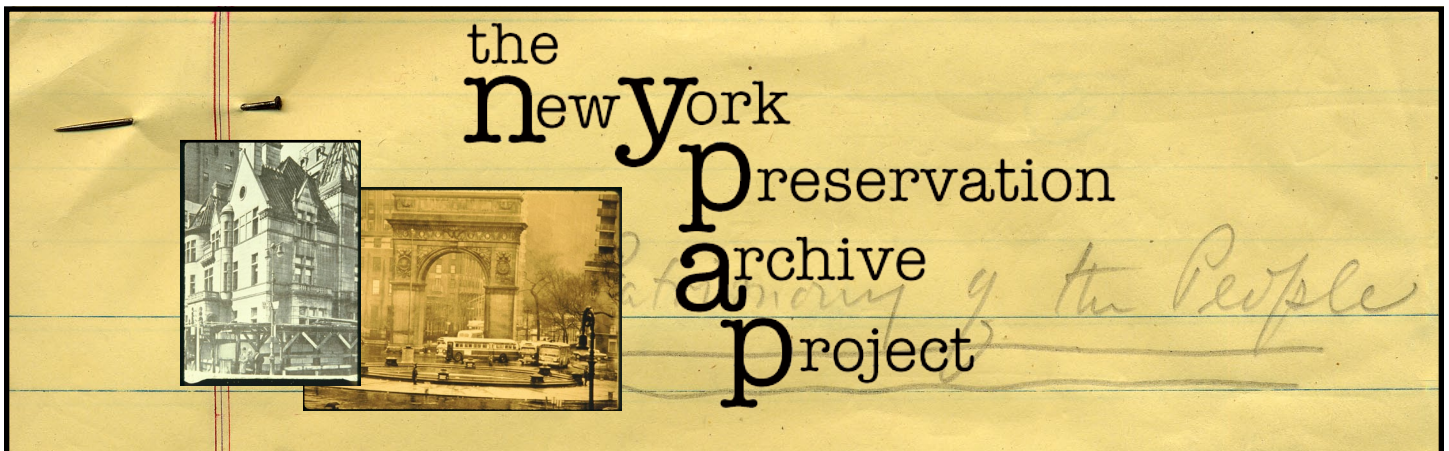
Archive Project board member Anthony W. Robins was closely involved with the planning and execution of the Transit Museum's new exhibition "New York's Transportation Landmarks." Hosted as part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of New York's Landmarks Law, this exhibition features some of the City's most famous and least known historic transportation structures, including train terminals, subways, airports, ferry and pier buildings, bridges, and landscaped parkways. Robins proposed the exhibition to the Museum and researched and wrote the accompanying text. Installed in the gallery annex in Grand Central Terminal, the exhibition will be open through October 31, 2015.

Several new entries have recently been published in our online "Preservation Database," including posts on the Biltmore Hotel, Brooke Astor, and Radio City Music Hall. Visit www.nypap.org to check them out!

CORRECTION: In the fall 2014 issue of the Archive Project newsletter, Michael Miscione was incorrectly referred to as Manhattan Borough President. Miscione is in fact Manhattan Borough Historian.



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YOUR SPRING 2015 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!

The Archive Project would like to thank the New York Community Trust, the Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, the Windie Knowe Fund, the Achelis Foundation, the Gerry Charitable Trust, the Elizabeth R. & Robert A. Jeffe Preservation Fund for New York City of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Kress Foundation, and the Irene Ritter Foundation for their generous support. Our work could not be accomplished without their—and your—contributions.

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), or by credit card over the phone at 212-988-8379.

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