

# the new york preservation archive project

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## NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017

*Welcome to the 26<sup>th</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.*



The Morosco Theater marquee sign is salvaged from the demolition site, March 22, 1982. Interviewee Virginia Waters was involved in the legal fight to protect New York City's Theater District; Courtesy of Yvonne Hemsey/Getty Images

# Through a Legal Lens

*Reflections on Oral Histories of Figures Who Shaped NYC's Landmarks Law*

*By Will Cook, Associate General Counsel at the National Trust for Historic Preservation*

It's not often that preservation lawyers have an opportunity to see the forest for the trees. Daily demolition threats, requests for emergency help, and arbitrary legal decisions usually cloud the bigger picture. This past year, however, the New York Preservation Archive Project gave me the opportunity to step away from my regular work and examine, through a legal lens, three attorneys who have helped develop the rule of

preservation law not only in New York City but across the nation.

Because of their quiet modesty, one would never suspect how important Virginia Waters, Leonard Koerner, and Gabriel Taussig are to the field of preservation law. But in New York City—a place they have dedicated their professional lives to protecting—they are true “lions” of the bar.

Even though these individuals never sought the spotlight, the cases in which they were involved not only made the news but helped create some of the country's most influential legal precedents.

My first interview took place with Virginia Waters. Prepared with detailed notes about her recollections, Virginia was an interviewer's dream. Her love of theater and





Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (center) on board the Landmark Express, a special train chartered by the Committee to Save Grand Central Terminal, April 16, 1978. The train arrived in Washington, D.C. the day before oral arguments in *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City* at the Supreme Court; Courtesy of AMTRAK News

cultural heritage fueled her legal work, giving her the most personal connection to historic preservation of the three interviewees. When asked what preservation meant to her, Virginia responded: “For me, it is very important because...when I go to the theater, I sit in the theater and I say, ‘This theater is here because of me’...when I drive around buildings in the city...I feel like I’ve had an active role in saving the architectural fabric of the city for generations. It’s a good feeling.” We also had the chance to explore Virginia’s important work in securing protection for the iconic interior of the Four Seasons Restaurant, a groundbreaking landmark decision. The restaurant, which closed in 2016, is undergoing a controversial redesign and will reopen this spring.

My next interview, with Leonard Koerner, was different. Unlike Virginia Waters, Leonard did not have a professed personal connection to preservation or a wide array of preservation cases to explore. Although Leonard would never admit it, his legal briefs and oral argument in *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City* convinced the Supreme Court of the United States in 1978 to uphold New York City’s Landmarks Law and declare historic preservation to be an important public purpose. But until Leonard’s interview, I had never considered the myriad details that contributed to his win or how Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis helped convince City officials at a crucial political moment not to abandon the case. In this

way, Leonard’s interview gave important texture to one of the most widely reported preservation cases in the nation. Leonard also confirmed—with a slight smile—the famous anecdote about appearing in the Supreme Court without any notes and shocking his boss who wanted to review them. Leonard replied: “And I wrote on a pad, ‘Mr. Chief Justice and members of the court,’ [the standard opening address at the Supreme Court] and he turned colors...I’ve

thought afterwards that I should have told [him that I planned to memorize my argument] in advance.”

Gabriel, or “Gabe,” Taussig was my final interview. Gabe is another unsung preservation legal hero. His career spanned the terms of five mayors, providing a unique perspective on how New York City’s changing leadership has affected preservation. Having grown up in Queens, Gabe also shared his early recollections of Manhattan’s skyline and the “Tom Sawyer-ish” qualities of exploring places like the 1939 World’s Fair site, as well as memories of his childhood neighborhood’s history of inclusion and diversity. When I asked Gabe what he considered to be his proudest professional moment, he paused, then responded thoughtfully: “Making sure that there is a fair process in place...Overall integrity...can only be maintained if there is a general understanding and agreement that everybody has been given a fair shake. Procedural issues are important and...it’s important to the continued viability of the Commission that people appreciate that.” ■

*Will Cook is an associate general counsel at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He also teaches preservation law at Columbia University. Access the full interviews at [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org).*



New York World’s Fair on July 7, 1939. Interviewee Gabe Taussig referenced the World’s Fair site as influential to his future work with preservation law; Courtesy of AP Photo

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# Revealing Look at McAneny

*New Manuscript on Civic Leader & Preservationist Sheds Light on His Work*

*By Charles Starks, Archive Project Research Fellow*

In today's New York City, every development battle seems to pit hardheaded advocates of Robert Moses-style mega-building against local activists who invoke Jane Jacobs's ideals about neighborhood life. The Moses-vs.-Jacobs frame offers a compelling story: the powerful, unaccountable "master builder" of 20<sup>th</sup>-century New York, who by force of will and personality yanked the City into the modern age, is cut down by a Greenwich Village writer whose unique ideas about the value of old buildings and lively urbanity inspired activists around the world. Simplistic as it is, this narrative has so dominated public discourse that it has blotted out the visions advanced by New York's other past city builders and preservationists. One once-towering figure whose name has generally slipped from public consciousness is that of George McAneny (1869-1953), a public official and civic leader who shepherded New York City's first zoning law into being, brought much of the subway system into existence, preserved downtown landmarks from City Hall to the Battery, and became a national preservation pioneer.

In fact, McAneny was Robert Moses's most dogged antagonist well before Jacobs rose to prominence. McAneny led the fight to prevent Moses from marring Battery Park with a giant bridge, convinced the federal government to preserve Federal Hall as a national historic site, and spent many of his last years trying to save the historic Castle Clinton from Moses, who had determined to destroy the monument. In *New York's Pioneer of Planning and Preservation: How George McAneny Reshaped Manhattan and Inspired a Movement*,

made possible by a research grant from the Archive Project and published last fall on the organization's website ([www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org)), I take a close look at these and other battles and place them in the context of McAneny's lengthy career. I was able to draw upon

propelled him to the front rank of American preservationists and positioned New York City at the vanguard of the preservation movement well before the Penn Station fight and the creation of the Landmarks Law.



George McAneny, 1914; Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photograph Division

archival materials recently processed by the National Park Service that reveal how activists led by McAneny worked during World War II to prepare the ground for a robust preservation campaign after the war's end. These materials also help demonstrate that McAneny's tireless work on behalf of Manhattan's national monuments

Drawing on these and other archival sources, as well as work by prior researchers, the manuscript is the first examination since McAneny's death of the scope of his planning and preservation career. It shows that as he advanced solutions to a complex array of public needs, McAneny made decisions that preservationists today would not always agree with. During his term as Manhattan Borough President (1910-13), he forced through a widening of 21 miles of Manhattan streets, lopping architectural details off numerous buildings and sacrificing broad sidewalks to widen streets for automobiles. But a few years later he spearheaded a unique public-private partnership in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to save the elegant, 1803 St. John's Chapel, and his commitment to preservation strengthened in subsequent decades even as he headed the growth-oriented Regional Plan Association. By tracing the arc of McAneny's career, we can see how one of New York's most influential city-shapers safeguarded a place for preservation amid the growth of the metropolis. ■

*Charles Starks teaches urban studies at Hunter College. He has spoken on McAneny to the Society of Architectural Historians, the Urban History Association, and at a NYPAP-sponsored program at the Federal Hall National Memorial. Read his full manuscript on McAneny at [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org).*





Albert S. Bard in his office at 25 Broad Street, 1961; Courtesy of Robert Walker/*The New York Times*

# The Year of the Bard!

*By Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair*

Do not let the absence of a Hallmark greeting card in your mailbox or the failure of the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp in any way dampen your joyous celebration of this special anniversary year. Of course, dear readers, I am referring to the sesquicentennial of the birth of Albert Sprague Bard (December 19, 1866-March 25, 1963), the “grandfather” of New York City’s Landmarks Law. Though Bard’s importance has yet to penetrate the larger national consciousness, his civic achievements are being appreciated by more and more New Yorkers. In fact, with so many other important historic New York

City civic figures remaining unappreciated, why do we continue to make such a fuss over Albert Bard?

In a sense, Bard has become the poster child for the ongoing work of the New York Preservation Archive Project. He is the archetype of the virtually forgotten yet hugely important preservationists whose stories the Archive Project seeks to rediscover and share. Bard’s story would not be known if his papers had not been saved. Their loving preservation by the wife of the man Bard regarded as his adopted son, who for months after Bard’s death regularly

traveled to New York City from upstate to go through his papers, continues to be a source of inspiration. This example helps to motivate us in our work of raising the awareness of the preservation community of the importance of stewarding the personal papers, organizational documents, and ephemera that can tell the story of preservation in New York City.

Bard and his story make the case for why the Archive Project does what it does. His life and work inform, inspire, and instruct today’s preservationists and those preservationists who follow us. The Archive



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Project documents, preserves, and celebrates preservation's history because whether it is the story of Albert Bard, Margot Gayle, Brendan Gill, Joan Maynard, or Dorothy Miner, it is a part of the intellectual capital of the preservation movement. Much can be learned from those who have come before us. Their lives offer us context, continuity, and courage.

Since it is the Year of the Bard, it is fitting to call out some of the lessons to be learned from his life and work. Jim Collins, the business consulting guru, and his co-author, Jerry Porras, coined the term BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) in their book, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. Bard's BHAG was his belief that government had the right to regulate private property on aesthetic grounds. When Bard proposed this idea in 1913 it was truly visionary and as history would show, it was years ahead of established thinking. Bard, like a dog with a bone, would not let go of his idea and over the decades would seek every opportunity to advance it. With time, the unconventional can become the conventional. Game changing ideas take years to come to fruition. The willingness to think big and not be limited by conventional wisdom is one of many lessons to be learned from Bard. **Like Bard, preservationists need vision.**

Having a big idea is not enough if you do not have the staying power to see it through to reality. Bard's picture should appear in the dictionary under the definition of perseverance. Bard first floated his BHAG in 1913. When he proposed this idea at the 1915 New York State Constitutional Convention it sank like a lead balloon. He tried again in 1938. In the 1940s and into the 1950s he continued to seek a legal basis for regulating private property on aesthetic grounds. In 1954, in response to a threat to Grand Central Terminal, he tried once again, drafting a piece of legislation that when ultimately passed in 1956 would become known as the Bard Act. It gave New York City the authority Bard had been seeking for over 40 years: the power to regulate on aesthetic grounds. But having authority to do something and actually using that authority are two different things. Bard continued to advocate for New York City to use that authority until he died in 1963.

If he had held on a little longer, he would have witnessed that authority become a living thing in 1965 with the passage of New York City's Landmarks Law. **Like Bard, preservationists must have perseverance.**

Having a vision and relentlessly pursuing it would come to naught if one were just a lone voice in the wilderness. Part of Bard's success was the result of his decades-long involvement in a cluster of civic organizations. When Bard became part of an organization, it was for the long haul, and he played the long game. Because Bard was simultaneously involved with the Municipal Art Society, the Citizen's Union, the City Club, and the Fine Arts Federation, and was a close colleague of such civic mavens as George McAneny, C.C. Burlingham, and Robert Weinberg (to name just a few), he could leverage their combined clout to advance his agenda. Bard was an expert at collaboration and coalition building. **Like Bard, preservationists must be consummate networkers.**

Bard believed some things were so important one had to fight for them even if the odds were stacked against you. Bard was a key figure in the successful battle against Robert Moses to defeat the Brooklyn-Battery Bridge. In a letter about the struggle to his friend Felix Frankfurter, a then-recently appointed Supreme Court Justice, Bard wrote: "The whole thing is being railroaded through in an outrageous manner. Information is withheld and inquiries are obstructed. Even hearings have not been fairly conducted...Can feeble little folk like me save the city from a serious blunder? I don't know. It is certainly uphill work." Up against as powerful a foe as Robert Moses, and engaged in a battle where facts, figures, and logic were disregarded, Bard fought on. He and his colleagues were willing to endure the cruel barbs of Robert Moses. **Like Bard, preservationists must have courage.**

Indeed, it took guts for Bard to battle the likes of Robert Moses and to take on other such powerful foes as the national billboard industry. Bard had the intestinal fortitude and the natural instincts to do battle. At one point he wrote to his much more polite colleague in the war against the billboard industry, Elizabeth (Mrs. Walter) Lawton: "I know that I am inclined to

shout where you whisper. Thank you for shushing me from time to time. But I also know that a lot of people are deaf, and that the gladiators did not go to afternoon teas in the coliseum." Not only did Bard have the right personality to engage in battle, he also had incredible strategic instincts. In the ultimately successful decades-long struggle to save Castle Clinton from Moses, Bard and his colleagues perfected preservation strategies still used today: challenge a project at every step of the process, enlist the press, use visualization tools to demonstrate potential impacts, build broad coalitions, employ law suits to buy the time and space needed to triumph, and never give up as long as the landmark is still standing. **Like Bard, preservationists must be sophisticated and strategic fighters.**

Bard is just one source of inspiration. Whether one looks to such early civic leaders and preservationists as Andrew Haswell Green and George McAneny, or leaps decades forward to the likes of Shirley Hayes, Ray Rubinow, Henry Hope Reed, and Ruth Wittenberg, or looks to more recent preservationists such as the Ortner's, Georgia Delano, Teri Slater, and Fred Papert, there is much to be learned from all their stories. **Preservationists today should feel a powerful sense of pride in being part of such a long, empowering, and honorable civic tradition.**

Celebrating Bard is in essence a reminder to study, salute, and celebrate all our preservation forebearers. Today, more than ever, preservation needs visionary leaders with the perseverance, networking abilities, courage, and fighting spirit to take on the challenges facing New York City. Learning from the past can only increase preservation's chances of success in the future.

Isn't it time you made your plans to celebrate the Year of the Bard? What better way to do so than by capturing the story of your favorite preservationist through an oral history interview, putting in place plans to safeguard your own archives, making sure your favorite preservation organization is stewarding their records, and heading off to the next preservation rally? Another modest suggestion: make another (or your first) donation to the New York Preservation Archive Project. Happy Year of the Bard! ■

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# Archival Assistance Fund

## *Grantees Accomplish Impressive Archival Feats Over the Past Year*

Over the past year substantial progress has been made on the worthy projects that were awarded funding in the last round of grants from the New York Preservation Archive Project's Archival Assistance Fund. The Fund was established in 2013 to help identify and maintain archival resources and organizational documents significant to the history of the preservation movement. And in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of New York City's Landmarks Law in 2015, preference for this most recent grant cycle was given to applicants who proved how their collections were distinctly tied to the last 50 years of historic preservation in New York City. With this criterion in mind the Archive Project funded six groups.

With the support of its Archival Assistance Fund grant, the **Bowne House Historical Society** wrote and adopted an archival policy dictating collection priorities and procedures tied to the Bowne House's educational and preservation mission as a historic house museum and providing guidance for its records-management program in the future. Although the archives are historically rich, ranging from Colonial-era documents to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century records of the Bowne House Historical Society's own preservation efforts, the collection had never undergone formal archival processing. Guided by this new policy, an archival consultant has arranged and described over 60 cubic feet of the Society's organizational records, illuminating the mission of the museum over the course of six decades. Going forward, the Society aims to make a finding aid available to the public on its website and commence processing and conservation work on the Bowne Family Papers and other significant historical collections in its custody.

The **Evergreens Cemetery Preservation Foundation** described, arranged, and preserved the archives of the Sailors' Cemetery Association, which for approximately 150 years administered burials for indigent sailors in its plot at the cemetery. The plot is known for its monumental pillar dedicated to sailors from around the world whose final resting places are located nearby.

of the maritime history of the port of New York City and will assist with the restoration of the Seaman's Monument itself, famous for welcoming ships to the New York harbor from the heights of Evergreens Cemetery's Beacon Hill.

The **Merchant's House Museum** used funding to continue its important work of processing and rehousing the archives of Museum founder George Chapman and restoration architect Joseph Roberto that together cover the years between 1935-1989. During the grant period, the Museum created a finding aid and framework for searches in PastPerfect, a software application for collections archiving that allows for the database storage of artifacts, documents, photographs, and books, for all Chapman and Roberto materials. The Museum also reboxed and cataloged its original analog collection of cassettes, tapes, and reels featuring lectures and meetings held at the museum, digitized the collection of photographic slides, and reboxed, reorganized, and described the original slides. The Museum continues to rehouse the photographs and catalogue its oversized materials and is moving forward with processing the Gardiner Archive, which documents the museum's history from 1989 to the present. Together, these archives provide a valuable resource on the



Entrance steps to the Merchant's House Museum, 1936; Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

Most of these seamen died in port and had no relatives to claim their remains or assist with burial arrangements in their home countries. The collection comprises legal documents, correspondence, newspaper clippings, burial permit ledgers, surveyor's maps, contractor bids for repairs to the monument, deeds of property, and board meeting minutes. Work with these archives has revealed a fascinating 150-year survey

development of the historic house museum in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the preservation of this New York City and National Historic Landmark.

The **Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden** hired an archivist to work with the curator on a collections management policy for items relating to the building's extensive history of uses, as well as the preservation



### Tom Bernardin


A native of Lawrence, Massachusetts, Bernardin moved to New York City as a young man and enjoyed the freedom and community for gay men that he found in the Village. Preservation pioneer Margot Gayle inspired him to become involved in preservation, which Bernardin has especially pursued via a passion for clocks and lampposts, founding [clocks.org](http://clocks.org).

Listen to a short audio clip:



[Read the short audio clip transcript](#)

Listen to the full interview here:

 [GVSHIP - Bernardin Tom Oral History](#)

 [SOUNDCLOUD](#)

[Read the full interview transcript](#)

Screenshot from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's website, which now features short audio clips of oral histories with significant figures from the preservation movement; Courtesy of GVSHIP

and interpretation of the building and garden in the late-19<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. With policies in place for using the archives, the Museum began to enter collection items into their PastPerfect database to ensure a complete catalogue record of all the items in their collection, which includes photographs, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, architectural drawings, as well as accessioned items such as paintings, furniture, ceramics, and other decorative arts and material culture objects. Next, the Museum plans to rehouse collection items that are not yet catalogued, including those dealing with the preservation of the site's garden and main building.

In 2015 and 2016, the **Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation** (GVSHIP) produced and released 19 new oral histories focusing on Manhattan's East Village and South Village. These interviews capture the vibrant history of these neighborhoods, documenting immigrant perspectives (Ukrainian, Lithuanian, German, Puerto Rican, Italian, and Irish, to name a few), the area's musical, culinary, and theatrical heritage, the intrepid gay rights movement, and fights for equitable housing. These interviews also focus on the personal stories of preservation figures such as Marilyn Appleberg, founder and president of the 10<sup>th</sup> and Stuyvesant Streets

audio clips for all 19 full-length oral history recordings. The clips, posted alongside a photo of the interview subject, the full-session audio recording, full-session transcript, and clip transcript, are used to highlight important segments of the interviews for educational purposes and as a tool to showcase the larger project. These clips also enhance the user experience of the archive and will allow greater utilization by a larger and more diverse audience.

The **NYC Landmarks50+ Alliance**, under the leadership of Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, received a grant to support the preservation of documents, videos, audio recordings, and other records of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the New York City Landmarks Law. These materials include documents and photographs related to the membership of the Alliance (over 190 organizations and individuals), the programs and events planned by these members since 2013, and documents related to the planning and organization of two celebratory galas at the former Four Seasons Restaurant in the Seagram Building. Video recordings of these two milestone events and other programs such as a 2015 panel discussion on the New York City Landmarks Law at the Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse, organized and introduced by Dr. Diamonstein-Spielvogel, are also part of the collection. (Video

Block Association and a leader in the fight for the preservation of the St. Mark's Historic District; Frances Goldin, founder of the Metropolitan Council on Housing and the Cooper Square Committee, and a leader in the successful effort to stop Robert Moses's plan to bulldoze a large swath of the East Village; and Tom Bernardin, who was inspired by Margot Gayle to become involved in preservation, which he pursued via his passion for historic clocks and lampposts. GVSHIP's grant from the Archival Assistance Fund allowed the organization to hire professional sound engineers to create short

recordings are available as part of the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Video Archive at Duke University's Rubinstein Library. Written materials, filed and organized into broad categories, are housed as part of the Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel Archive, also at the Rubinstein Library.)

The Archive Project's Archival Assistance Fund is an important example of outreach initiatives to provide practical assistance to the New York City preservation community while also instilling a lasting archival mindset. 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 for future activists, researchers, and scholars. The Archive Project hopes these projects will serve as inspiration to other organizations with archival projects still in need of addressing. ■

## Third Round of Grants in 2017!

The New York Preservation Archive Project is thrilled to announce that funding has been secured for another round of Archival Assistance Fund grants in 2017! The great success of our second round of grants, as detailed [here](#), demonstrates that there is a genuine need for this kind of funding and a desire to improve the condition and organization of archival collections at preservation-related organizations, historic house museums, and more. Please stay tuned for more details in the coming months.

The Archive Project thanks the Windie Knowe Fund for its support, without which grants from the Archival Assistance Fund would not be possible.



Robert A.M. Stern and Anne H. Van Ingen at the 2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit; Courtesy of the Archive Project

# NYPAP Events

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

Last December the Archive Project teamed up with the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) to offer a **Preserving Your Personal Papers Workshop**. BHS Archivist John Zarrillo guided attendees through the tools needed to properly store, handle, and preserve collections of papers, photographs, memorabilia, and ephemera for future generations. The collections represented by those in attendance—ranging from personal family archives and papers related to specific preservation campaigns to documents chronicling larger organizational histories—benefited from insights and hands-on experience to take the first steps towards stabilization and preservation. Part of the Archive Project's mission is to document and protect the history of the preservation movement in order to ensure that an accurate account of the movement is made available for posterity, and assisting in properly archiving the papers and documents of preservationists and organizations is

paramount in this mission. Partnerships such as this educational workshop with the BHS are important methods of delivering this information to the public. Therefore, the Archive Project hopes to offer this workshop on an annual basis. Stay tuned for future installments.

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In December the Archive Project also honored architect and author Robert A.M. Stern with the organization's Preservation Award at the Thirteenth Annual **Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit**. The Preservation Award was created to honor outstanding contributions to the documentation, preservation, and celebration of the history of preservation in New York City. The inaugural Preservation Award was given in 2015 to Dr. Barbaraalee Diamonstein-Spielvogel for her long career promoting and celebrating preservation.

Few New Yorkers have contributed more to

the cause of safeguarding preservation's own history than Mr. Stern. His monumental five-volume *New York* book series meticulously documents the architecture, development, and urbanism of New York City from just after the Civil War to the millennium, capturing decades of preservation efforts. Thanks to Stern's efforts New Yorkers can more clearly understand some of the most significant moments in local preservation history, from the battle with city planner Robert Moses over Castle Clinton to the campaign to save Two Columbus Circle.

Last year's benefit also marked a very special milestone, what would have been the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Albert S. Bard, the "grandfather" of New York City's Landmarks Law. Bard was dedicated to protecting the aesthetic values of special places, drafting the New York State legislation authorizing the Landmarks Law (known as the Bard Act), and advocating for City Beautiful concerns ranging from billboard control to zoning. The benefit program had a special commemoration of Bard's sesquicentennial by Archive Project Founder and Chair Anthony C. Wood. After the award presentation Mr. Stern joined Anne H. Van Ingen, a fellow preservation



advocate, in conversation. Among other topics, their discussion focused on what inspired the *New York* book series and how the project evolved, as well as what Mr. Stern sees as current challenges to preservation and the present state of the archival collections of architectural firms. Readers can watch a video of the entire program on the Archive Project's website or YouTube page.

The Archive Project thanks everyone who helped to make this event such a success, especially our Sesquicentennial Co-Chairs, Benefit Committee members, and other sponsors. The generous support of the annual Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit enables the Archive Project to continue its mission of documenting and celebrating the rich history of the preservation movement in New York City.

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The Archive Project is **Celebrating Preservation in Crown Heights North** at the Brooklyn Children's Museum on April 19<sup>th</sup>! The history of Crown Heights North, Brooklyn, endures through the memories of its residents and the architectural character of the streetscape. In celebration of ongoing preservation campaigns and oral history projects to preserve this neighborhood and the stories of those who fight to save it, the Archive Project has teamed up with the Crown Heights North Association to bring together an evening of speakers who have contributed to that lasting legacy. This event will showcase the Archive Project's recent oral history with the co-founders of the Crown Heights North Association, current work to preserve the Crow Hill neighborhood, as well as the exemplary efforts by the Weeksville Heritage Center to preserve the Hunterfly Road Houses, establish an African-American history museum at the site, and document essential stories of communities in the area. Speakers will include Tia Powell Harris, President and Executive Director of the Weeksville Heritage Center; Suzanne Spellman, board member of the Crown Heights North Association, writer, architectural historian, and contributor to *Brownstoner*; Gabriel Solis, a Brooklyn College student who is conducting oral histories in Crow Hill as well as photo surveys to assist the landmark preservation campaign; and Deborah Young, co-founder of the Crown Heights North Association.

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Please stay tuned for details on **Sandy Ground Stories: An Oral History Workshop**. Staten Island's Sandy Ground was built by free blacks in the decades before the Civil War, and some believe it to be the oldest continuously-occupied settlement established by free blacks in North America. The program, hosted in partnership with the Sandy Ground Historical Society and the New York Public Library (NYPL), will provide oral history instruction by Liz Strong, the Archive Project's oral history consultant, alongside Alexandra Kelly, Manager of Outreach Services and Adult Programming at the NYPL. Featured will be sample interview questions, audio and video clips, and relevant oral history examples, such as the Archive Project's recent interview focusing on the area. After the training session, volunteers can check out an "oral history kit," which includes recording equipment, to document the stories of significant community members. This project will be a part of the NYPL's Community Oral History Project, an initiative taking place throughout the library system that aims to document, celebrate, and make accessible the rich history of the city's unique neighborhoods. The final products from these interviews, including video and audio recordings, will be featured on the NYPL's website (as well as that of the Archive Project) and made available to the public at the Sandy Ground Historical Society.

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Join us throughout the month of April for **People Preserving Place: A Film Festival** presented by the New York Preservation Project in celebration of the NYC Landmarks50+ Alliance's Preservation Month. Bringing together documentaries,

pop culture films, and iconic television shows that chronicle New York City under the common theme of preservation, these screenings explore how the movement has been characterized and celebrated on screen. The screenings will be hosted across the City during the course of the month. Visit the Archive Project website to view more details, including the lineup of guest speakers, and to RSVP. Following are descriptions of each film event.

#### **Preservation She Wrote**

April 5, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

B Bar & Grill

40 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street

New York, NY 10003

Embezzled pensions! Murder by crossbow! Legacy businesses! Jessica Fletcher takes on a New York City-based murder mystery involving preservation in an episode of the television series, *Murder, She Wrote*. The closing of the family-owned Larkin's Department Store leads Ms. Fletcher to attempt to broker a deal that will sell the historic building to the Museum of Contemporary Culture. However the deal falls apart when someone is found dead on the premises and soon Jessica finds herself trying to solve a double murder with no shortage of suspects, all while attempting to preserve the business for its cultural value and save the careers of long-time employees.

#### **Citizen Jane: Battle for the City**

April 15, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.

Museum of the Moving Image

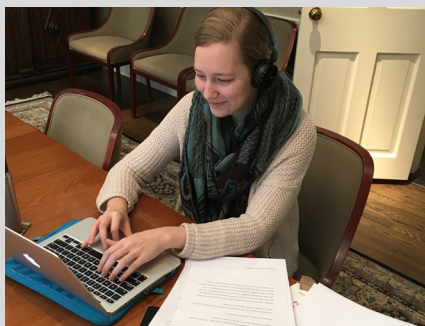
36-01 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Queens, NY 11106

Jane Jacobs, author of the highly influential *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,



Promotional image for the People Preserving Place Film Festival, Courtesy of the Archive Project



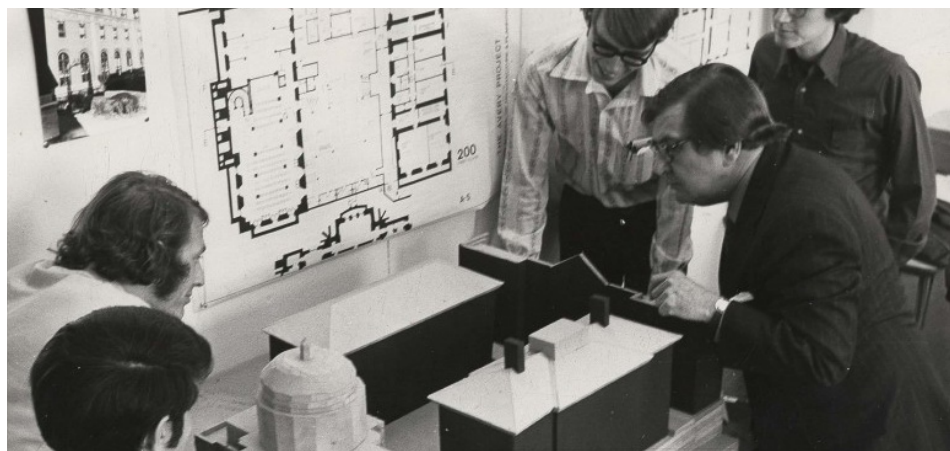
Jeffe Fellow Anne Dearth working on oral history recordings, Courtesy of the Archive Project

## Meet our Jeffe Fellow!

The Archive Project is pleased to announce Anne Dearth as the 2016-2017 Jeffe Fellow. Anne comes to the Archive Project from the world of classical music, performing as a flutist in concerts around New York City and often sharing the history of her pieces while doing so. She attended the University of Michigan, where she majored in flute performance, before moving to New York City to continue her graduate studies at New York University, again in music performance. Anne has a passion for history, a keen mind for archives, training in oral history best practices, and is very excited to be working with an organization dedicated to telling the stories behind the preservation of the city she calls home.

During her fellowship, Anne is working primarily with the oral history archive preparing both new and old interviews for online publication. This involves editing interview transcripts for accuracy and consistency, writing abstracts, securing missing release forms, and editing audio or video before uploading these resources to the organization's website. The ultimate goal is to complete the final steps in preparing up to 30 oral histories for publication online, where they will join the larger collection that currently resides there.

*We are grateful for the support of the Robert A. and Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation for funding this fellowship.*



Professor James Marston Fitch (right) and instructor Theo Prudon (left) examining a thesis project by students in Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program, 1974; Courtesy of the Graham Foundation

helped change the way we look at urban living with her grassroots vision of city planning that was diametrically opposed to that of New York City's power broker Robert Moses. *Citizen Jane*, a riveting new documentary directed by Matt Tyrnauer (*Valentino: The Last Emperor*) and co-produced by High Line co-founder Robert Hammond, focuses on Jacobs's thrilling struggles with Moses in the 1960s, where at stake was whether the city's historic neighborhoods would stay intact or be split apart by expressways and urban-renewal housing projects. *Citizen Jane* offers a playbook, courtesy of Jane Jacobs, for organizing communities and speaking the truth to entrenched and seemingly insurmountable powers. Selected by *Vogue* as one of spring's "most exciting movies."

This is a special screening before the film's theatrical release! The film will be followed by a discussion with Matt Tyrnauer, director of *Citizen Jane*.

### I Remember Harlem

April 23, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.  
Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10029

Although arguably no other New York City neighborhood has generated as many conflicting representations as Harlem, one singular documentary stands out: *I Remember Harlem*, directed and produced by legendary filmmaker William Miles. This epic film lovingly renders the diverse, 350-year history of Harlem as both a living, breathing neighborhood and as the cultural hub of African-American life in New York City.

### James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education

April 26, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.  
Higgins Hall Auditorium at Pratt Institute  
61 St. James Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11238

This portrait of James Marston Fitch examines the inspirational work of the founder of Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program, the first in the nation, and looks at several New York City buildings and districts that demonstrate Fitch's enduring ideals. Created in 1996 by Christine Ferinde and Jon Calame, two graduates of Columbia's program, this film affectionately portrays a pioneer in the movement to preserve America's architectural heritage.

Following the film will be a discussion on the evolution and future of preservation education featuring leading experts in the field.

### \*batteries not included

April 29, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.  
Museum of the Moving Image  
36-01 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Queens, NY 11106

For preservationists of all ages, this 1987 sci-fi comedy from executive producer Steven Spielberg celebrates how preservation has made its way into mainstream public consciousness. The film follows the owners and inhabitants of an apartment building and café in the then-run-down East Village. The building comes under threat by a nearby development and is saved only with the mysterious help of small living space ships. ■



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# Notes from the Board

## John T. Reddick

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



John T. Reddick, Courtesy of John T. Reddick

that the community and times were devoid of racial issues and awareness, but to reflect on the rich opportunities the period and community offered my parents, and through them, me.

As a war veteran my father was entitled to the government's G.I. Bill which offered all servicemen support toward home ownership and a continued education. This gave my parents and their peers a shot at better work and housing opportunities. Oddly for the time, and despite the fact that my mother and her family had lived for generations in a suburban area outside of Philadelphia, my parents chose to live "in the city" in Mount Airy. As the civil rights period advanced opportunities in the city for African Americans, my mother's civic efforts would result in an offer to work at a local bank. My father would move on to a position in the

I was fortunate to grow up in the 1950s and '60s in what still remains one of America's unique and truly integrated communities, an area of Philadelphia known as Mount Airy. The neighborhood supports a rich and varied housing stock, from modest row houses to spacious mansions, which were affordable to people with a broad range of incomes. The area hosts an equally significant number of historic properties that date to the 1700s, among them the Morris, Cliveden, and Upsala Mansions, along with churches, cemeteries, and schools of the era that dot the community's main thoroughfare. My early public schooling in this richly historic area reflected not only that economic range, but a racial mix as well. I went on to attend one of the city's vocational high schools

before going on to Ohio State University and Yale University to study architecture.

Neither one of my parents had attended college, but my father's income was enough for my mother to be "just" a housewife, which made her unique among other families of our income level. Both of them were active in the community. My father was a local Republican Committeeman and my mother was very engaged in the area's block and neighborhood civic associations. In fact, they were both registered as Republicans. They were advised by other young African-American couples moving into the area that this was a way of disguising from city government the evolving African-American presence in the area. I say all this, not to say

city's court system, two opportunities that provided resources to support sending my sisters and me to college.

Another factor that guided my interest in history, architecture, and urbanism throughout this period were family trips to New York City. We participated in neighborhood-organized theater trips, as well as visits to family friends who lived in Harlem. There's a famous Langston Hughes quote, "I was in love with Harlem even before I got there," to which I would have to also include Manhattan as a whole. For me it was Harlem's place within that cosmopolitan island that contributed to its luster. Fortunately, I got to New York pretty early. In fact, one of my first spatial memories was

## NYPAP News

The Archive Project is thrilled to announce that its newly-redesigned website has been honored with the 2017 Technology Award from FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts! The award was presented in March at the organization's 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony at The Cosmopolitan Club, a fitting setting for the Archive Project's fellow recipients, all of whom completed exemplary preservation work over the past year.

The new website, launched a year ago, continues to garner glowing reviews and there has been a marked increase in inquiries and research requests from sources ranging from Harvard University to documentary film studios. The Archive Project continues to expand our online resources, with new entries posted in the Preservation History Database (one of the most recent is an entry on the Warburg Mansion) and new scholarly works and historic documents uploaded to the Resource Library. Make some time to explore!

Interest in our work is expanding. Last year the Archive Project made presentations on current projects at conferences, high schools, and universities in New York City and across the nation. Our outreach will continue in 2017. We were recently accepted to host an oral history workshop at the 2017 Statewide Preservation Conference in Rochester, NY, and plan to submit proposals to make presentations at several other conferences throughout the year including that of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Chicago, IL.

of the interior of Radio City Music Hall. When, years later, I related the memory of that combined sensation of space and performance to my mother she said, "I can't believe you remember that. You were about four years old!" I can also recall coming to New York for the World's Fair in 1964 and passing through the colonnade of the former Pennsylvania Station, then covered in scaffolding and in the midst of demolition. Those memories and their significance were a great reservoir of reference when I later sat in on Vincent Scully's architectural history lectures at Yale, and they helped to define how my feelings for those particular structures were relevant to how all citizens share place-related memories and histories over generations.

Of course, I would eventually move to New York City, working for Robert Venturi's office, the Prospect Park Alliance, and later with Betsy Barlow Rogers and the Central Park Conservancy, where I focused on park and streetscape restoration and enhancement. Beyond those experiences I also chose to engage in work with Harlem institutions such as the Abyssinian Development Corporation, the Apollo Theater, and the Studio Museum. I volunteered and benefited from participating in New York City's cultural and political life, serving on my community board and panels for Arts in Transit, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Percent for Art Program of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. From these I acquired a variety of knowledge and skills that would serve me well.

In my first neighborhood-based civic project I volunteered and chaired the effort to fund and build a memorial to Ralph Ellison in Riverside Park near where he lived on Riverside Drive. Later I worked with Betsy Barlow Rogers to advance the federal application for the enhancement of Frederick Douglass Circle and the Harlem Gateway along 110<sup>th</sup> Street north of Central Park. That was followed by working with then-Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields to implement the construction of a monument honoring abolitionist Harriet Tubman. In all of these efforts I drew from historic documents and narratives to enliven written proposals, inspire artists and their work, and glean specific quotes that would

eventually be engraved on these memorials and monuments.

My past has informed my present. This lifetime of living around historic structures and working within the realms of architecture and memory has led me to the work of the New York Preservation Archive Project, where I have served on the Board of Directors for the past year. The Archive Project shares my belief that the preservation of history serves as a guide for contemporary life, for it serves as a point of reference of both our great achievements and flaws, always serving as a guidepost to help light and inspire our way. ■

## CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

Last fall the Archive Project launched its Chairman's Circle, a new major donor level for those benefactors who contribute \$1,000 or more annually. Held at the J.M. Kaplan Fund offices overlooking the Ladies' Mile Historic District, the evening included a lively dinner and salon-style conversation between Archive Project Founder and Chair **Anthony C. Wood** and J.M. Kaplan Fund Executive Director **Amy Freitag** on the current state of preservation in New York City and how we can guide it to a more successful future.

Join us for our second installment in this special series for the Chairman's Circle in September. The evening will feature Archive Project Vice Chair **Bradley J. Vogel** in conversation with award-winning journalist, urban critic, lecturer and author **Roberta Brandes Gratz** on preservation in New York and New Orleans. Please contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379 for more details on how to join the Chairman's Circle.



# Stewardship Society

Last fall the Stewardship Society left New York City for international soil during a private tour of the **United Nations Headquarters and Archives**. After viewing historically significant items in the intergovernmental organization's archival collection, the group toured the complex's modernist buildings, designed in the 1940s by such renowned architects as Oscar Niemeyer, Le Corbusier, and Wallace K. Harrison. On display were the fruits of a meticulous \$1-billion interior and exterior renovation, which used the institution's archives to replicate original mid-century colors, materials, fixtures, and furnishings. The group also enjoyed studying sculptures, paintings, and tapestries by global artists, a model of Sputnik that was donated by the Soviet Union, and other items significant to the history of the institution.



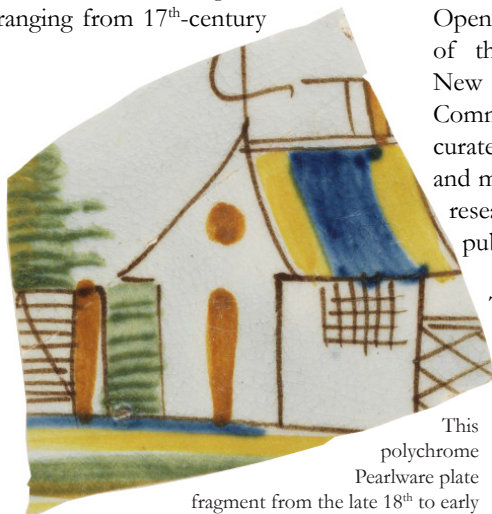
Werner Schmidt from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management of the United Nations Headquarters leads members of the Stewardship Society through the General Assembly; Courtesy of the Archive Project

On May 18<sup>th</sup> Stewards are invited to explore the unearthed past of New York City with a visit to the **NYC Archaeological Repository at the Nan A. Rothschild Research Center**. This repository currently houses hundreds of thousands of artifacts from over 31 sites throughout New York City, ranging from 17<sup>th</sup>-century

New Amsterdam wine bottles to 19<sup>th</sup>-century passenger pigeon bones. Archaeological items from sites such as Manhattan's Stone Street and Seneca Village, Snug Harbor on Staten Island, and Van Cortlandt Mansion in the Bronx will be on view.

Opened in 2014, the repository is a project of the Archaeology Department of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Its purpose is to preserve and curate the City's archeological collections and make them accessible to archaeologists, researchers, teachers, students, and the public.

The Archive Project is pleased to offer such unique experiences to our Stewardship Society, which consists of benefactors who annually contribute \$500 or more in general support. To join please contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379, or just note it on your donation check. ■



This polychrome Pearlware plate fragment from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries found in City Hall Park may have depicted a structure in the area; Courtesy of the NYC Archaeological Repository



The Columns Club at the Apollo Theater; Courtesy of the Archive Project

## Join the Columns Club!

This year the Columns Club has already had two extraordinary outings, with more adventures to come! Through his engaging storytelling, Billy Mitchell, AKA "Mr. Apollo," shared the context, history, and some juicy backstories of the **Apollo Theater**, one of the world's most famous entertainment venues through which countless icons have passed. Attendees had a once-in-a-lifetime chance to perform onstage and go backstage to see celebrity graffiti and performer dressing rooms.

The Columns Club tour of **City Hall**, considered one of the finest architectural achievements of its period, was led by Mary Beth Betts, former Director of Research for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The group admired the soaring rotunda with its cantilevered marble staircase, the City Council Chamber, and the Governor's Room, which features historic furnishings such as a desk used by George Washington. These rooms have hosted many eminent personages, including Presidents Monroe, Lincoln, and Jackson, Albert Einstein, and Martin Luther King Jr.

The Columns Club consists of supporters ages 21 to 40 who donate \$75 or more annually and are invited to special tours around New York City.

*Join this hearty crew of urban explorers by contacting Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) with credit card info, or contribute online via PayPal on our website.*



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# In Memoriam



Christopher Gray; Courtesy of Mike Appleton/*The New York Times*

**Christopher Gray**, an architectural historian and journalist whose “Streetscapes” column in *The New York Times* exposed a broad readership to the richness of New York City’s urban fabric, passed away in March 2017 at the age of 66. “Streetscapes,” which ran from 1987 to 2014 in *The New York Times*’s Sunday Real Estate section, focused on the architecture, social history, and preservation policies of New York City and displayed Mr. Gray’s wide breadth of knowledge on these topics. Over 1,450 installments of this column were published during the course of 27 years, becoming a widely popular piece that combined educational lessons with the wry asides of a seasoned guide. Mr. Gray’s features often inspired readers to take the time to appreciate New York City’s architecture and to explore their own archival research on buildings of personal interest.

In addition to his columns and books, Mr. Gray contributed to the overall scholarship of New York City architecture through his Office for Metropolitan History, which he founded in 1975 to offer his research skills in determining a building’s history by referencing archival resources. His role was also acknowledged in many important books about New York City buildings, including the

*ALA Guide to New York City* and Robert A.M. Stern’s *New York* book series. Gray received awards for his research and writing from the American Institute of Architects, Classical America, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the New York Society Library, and the Preservation League of New York State.

Mr. Gray did not consider himself a preservationist, but his writing extolled the virtues of eccentric historic buildings and often overtly focused on preservation history; for example his 2014 column “Belles of the Wrecking Ball” documented some of New York City’s greatest architectural losses. His witty writings fostered an appreciation of New York City’s architectural essence and these columns survive as his legacy to lovers of the built environment.

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**John Belle**, a founding partner of Beyer Blinder Belle, an architecture and planning firm that specializes

in preservation, restoration, and contextual design, passed away in September 2016 at the age of 84. Mr. Belle worked on restoring such iconic New York City structures as Grand Central Terminal, the Main Building on Ellis Island, and the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at the New York Botanical Garden. Furthermore, Mr. Belle was known for his interest in the sensitive intersection of urban planning and preservation, reflecting the ideology of the 1960s when activists demanded urban solutions that incorporated older buildings and neighborhoods. “Preservation is one of the highest forms of good citizenship,” Mr. Belle said on his firm’s website. “As a witness to the aftermath of the urban renewal movement in New York, I was determined to find a different way.”

Born in Wales, Mr. Belle received diplomas in architecture in the United Kingdom before moving to the United States in 1959. In America he worked for Josep Lluís Sert and Victor Gruen before starting his own firm in 1968 with Richard L. Blinder and John H. Beyer. Mr. Belle’s early work included community planning projects in Manhattan. With the addition of architect and preservationist James Marston Fitch to the practice in 1979, Beyer Blinder Belle began moving to the forefront of preservation-oriented architecture. The firm attracted much attention in the 1990s with its



John Belle; Courtesy of Beyer Blinder Belle



historically sensitive renovations of Grand Central Terminal and the Main Building on Ellis Island.

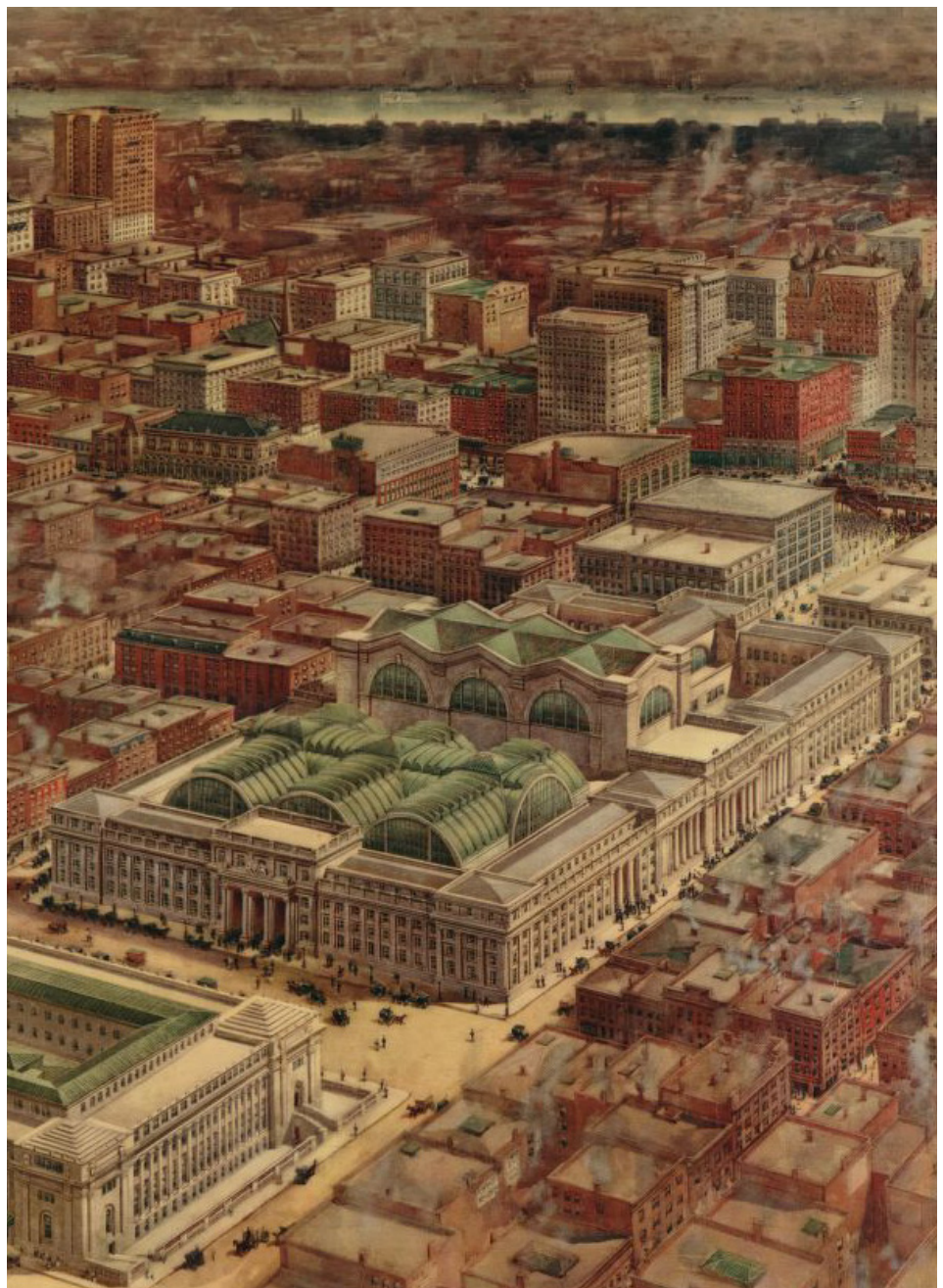
The restoration of Grand Central—especially the nine-month-long cleaning of the concourse ceiling, which revealed the striking blue ceiling with gold leaf stars, constellations, and zodiac signs—was particularly applauded, coming relatively soon after the 1978 United States Supreme Court decision that upheld the terminal's status as a landmark. "It was as if life were being breathed back into the building," Mr. Belle and Maxinne R. Leighton wrote in their book *Grand Central: Gateway to a Million Lives*. "Many commuters stopped in their tracks, speechless and amazed at the change that had so instantly brought back the majesty of the space."

An oral history with John Belle and his colleague John Beyer was completed by the Archive Project in 2014. In this interview they discuss their work with historic structures, including interactions with the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, how standards at that agency have changed over the years, and public perception of renewal architecture. Access the full transcript at [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org).

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At the time of this newsletter going to print the Archive Project was saddened to learn of the passing of architect **Hugh Hardy**. Mr. Hardy reshaped America's cultural landscape through design during his 50-year career and his work has been recognized for an enlightened spirit and a sensitive response to context. He was involved with projects for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the restoration of Radio City Music Hall and the Rainbow Room, and the revitalization of Bryant Park. His restorations of the New Victory and New Amsterdam theaters, among other projects along 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, were pivotal in the revitalization of New York City's Theater Row. Mr. Hardy's awards include the President's Medal from the Architectural League of New York, the AIA New York Chapter's President's Award, and the Historic Districts Council's Landmarks Lion award.

A more in-depth piece covering Mr. Hardy's significant preservation-related work will be featured in our fall 2017 newsletter. ■

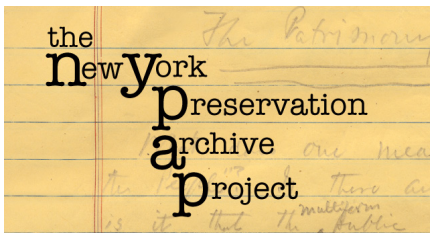


*Pennsylvania Railroad Station, New York City: Seventh Avenue and Thirty-Second Street, looking towards Long Island, Created by Hughson Hawley and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1910; Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division*

## Preservation History in Quotes: Advocating for the Wrong Side of History

In a letter to Mayor Robert F. Wagner dated October 11, 1962, Edmund E. Thomas, President of the Real Estate Board of New York, wrote: "The Real Estate Board of New York, Inc., wishes to place itself on record as enthusiastically supporting the recently announced plans for the redevelopment of the Pennsylvania Station

and the construction of a new Madison Square Garden sports and office building complex...this project with its design by one of the nation's leading architectural firms should prove to be a monument for the city, clearly outweighing the possible architectural loss from the demolition of the existing Pennsylvania Station."■



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## **YOUR SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!**

The Archive Project would like to thank the American Society for Legal History, the Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, Humanities New York, the Irene Ritter Foundation, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, the Kress Foundation, the New York Community Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation, and the Windie Knowe Fund 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](http://www.nypap.org)), or by credit card over the phone at 212-988-8379.

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