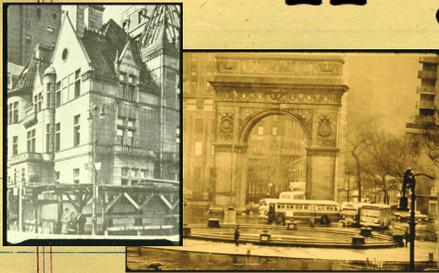


the new york preservation archive project

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

Welcome to the 24th 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.



Gloria Swanson stands among the rubble of the Roxy Theater in 1960 (one of the photographs featured on the new website), Courtesy of *Life* magazine

New Website Launches!

Redesigned Website Offers Updated Resources, Intuitive Interface & Engaging Visuals

It has been a whirlwind beginning to 2016 as the New York Preservation Archive Project designs a new and improved website!

In an effort to make our website more intuitive, user friendly, and visually engaging, the Archive Project has recently completed a complete overhaul. Funded in part by the Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation and the Windie Knowe Fund, the new website features all of the extraordinary resources previously offered, augmented by a

cleaner interface that highlights high-quality photographs, journalistic pieces, information on topics in preservation history and public programming, and the final products from oral history projects. Furthermore, the new design makes it easier and more enjoyable for both researchers and the casual browser to access all of this information.

The Archive Project has secured as a designer the talented firm of Kiss Me I'm Polish, which maintains an award-winning portfolio

of projects for clients in the arts, culture, education, and the media, including the J. M. Kaplan Fund, the Museum of Modern Art, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Geographic Society, Hayden Planetarium, and The Cooper Union.

The Archive Project is thrilled to launch our new website and hopes that through these recent improvements our resources will be used and enjoyed by an even wider audience. Visit www.nypap.org to begin exploring! ■



A Wood family photo discovered while cleaning out the attic, Courtesy of Anthony C. Wood

Confronting the Accidental Archive: Musings from a Family Attic

By Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair

Besides frequently being labeled dysfunctional, what do not-for-profits and families have in common? Both create, and at times are confronted by, accidental archives. Whether it is a preservation not-for-profit needing to free up the space occupied by that unaddressed pile of boxes in an office corner, or a family selling the house where the attic, closets, and garage have become de facto repositories for generations of unsorted papers, both share the behavior that produces these accidental archives and the reluctance to deal with them.

When I was recently confronted with 50 boxes of multi-generational Wood family papers stored in a family home in Vermont,

the similarities between what I was facing and what preservation organizations often confront became painfully clear. I offer my musings on those parallels to further encourage preservation organizations to create intentional, not accidental, archives—and when confronted with accidental archives, to appreciate the desirability and do-ability of treating them with the care they deserve.

How did I end up facing a mountain of unsorted family papers and ephemera? For generations, when anyone in my family passed away, the contents of drawers, desks, and piles were indiscriminately boxed up. Everything was saved, from old dry cleaning

receipts, unpublished scholarly manuscripts, store-bought Christmas cards, and lovingly hand-drawn notes, to generations of college notebooks in multiple languages and countless letters to and from known and unknown people. At best the boxes were labeled with a person's name or the location whence the contents came. This random assortment of materials is the archival equivalent of the archeological site excavated by a bulldozer: Coca-Cola bottles next to Viking swords adjacent to broken china. In the 1960s these boxes were shipped from Connecticut to an attic in Illinois where they sat unopened for decades. In 2004, augmented by boxes contributed by subsequent generations, they were shipped

back east to Vermont.

Not-for-profits often find themselves only slightly better off. When a staff member leaves, files are boxed up and stored in a closet or sent to an off-site storage unit. With any luck someone may have properly labeled the box and made a list of its contents. The same is often true when a file cabinet gets too full. Whether it's copies of old newsletters, correspondence on old preservation issues, or ancient membership records, everything is saved. Do this for a few years and voilà, you have an accidental archive.

The moral of this story is not to throw everything out! Instead, the message is that a little bit of advance planning establishing what should be saved and how to save it can make a world of difference. Large, well-established organizations often have policies to address these issues; this is not often the case with the small, scrappy preservation not-for-profit. As the digital increasingly replaces the physical, the problem of endless boxes will decrease but the question "What should be saved?" will remain. Your organization will continue to generate materials in many forms, worthy and unworthy of saving. Investing the time now to determine how to select items that should be saved and how to organize them, will pay big dividends.

So what to do when faced with that accidental archive? Many well-meaning people will tell you to throw it all away. Don't listen to them. Think back to all those family stories to which you never paid enough attention or those questions you never got around to asking your parents and grandparents. Many lost answers can be retrieved from your accidental archive. When my niece asked what ship my father sailed on in World War II, his discharge papers, unearthed from one of those 50 boxes, provided the answer. When National Trust Historic Site Drayton Hall asked what my late brother's (pictured above) motivation was for becoming a preservation craftsman, his decades-old application letter to a National Trust for Historic Preservation program, found in another box, provided that information.

What might your organization lose if you indiscriminately discard your accidental archive? Like death and taxes, preservation issues always seem to be with us. Old files on issues can provide useful ammunition for the next battle. Wasn't there a previous tower proposed for that landmark site? Didn't we nominate that building for designation years ago? Because you don't know what is in your accidental archive you won't know what you might be throwing out. When that big



Anthony C. Wood (at left) playing cowboy with his brother Stephen in 1957, Courtesy of Anthony C. Wood

anniversary rolls around and you want to showcase your own history, it will be hard to do so if it has been tossed out.

I opened every box in my family accidental archive and I'm glad I did. It was truly daunting but also filled with moments of delight. One such instance was when odd pieces of family furniture and even stranger objets d'art were being loaded in the van to go to the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company's prop shop in Vermont. I was opening yet another box of random family papers, and inside was a Weston playbill from 1946 listing my mother as a member of the season's cast. What a sense of satisfaction to know that 70 years after she appeared at the Weston Playhouse, her furniture might be making its debut on the same stage!

There was also joy in sending three boxes of my grandparent's papers to an archive collecting material on Cherry Lawn, the

private school in Connecticut with which they had been associated for decades, and the happiness in sending a Swedish cousin a box filled with old photos of unidentified Swedes and numerous letters in Swedish, some dating back to the 1880s. Even if when translated those letters read, "Why haven't you written?" or "The weather is bad," they provide a tangible link to a shared family past and are of value to someone.

What moments of satisfaction will you find in your pile of preservation boxes? Pictures of that rally to save a cherished landmark? Copies of your first newsletter? Think of the items that amplified and animated the recent exhibition *Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks* at the Museum of the City of New York. What a loss if the materials featured had ended up in the landfill. Of course everything is not worth saving (I've taken many loads to the mixed-paper recycling dumpster) but as with my family archives, if you don't open all of those boxes, you won't know what you have and to whom it might be of interest.

Daunting though it may seem, embrace the worthy challenge of properly treating your accidental preservation archive. You need not face this alone. The Archive Project can give you general advice and direct you to more specialized resources. If desired, we can help you find a professional archivist. Periodically we have been able to offer not-for-profits modest technical assistance grants through our Archival Assistance Fund. We have also been able to dispatch interns to make a preliminary assessment of materials. Additionally, if you are looking for a long-term home for your papers, we can assist you in finding one.

Your organization's history is worth it. Make the future easier by putting procedures in place to ensure that your successors inherit a planned archive. If you are confronting an accidental archive, take the trouble to treat it with respect. And know the Archive Project is here to help! When faced with an accidental archive remember: "It's your memory. It's our history. It's worth saving." ■

Municipal Art Society Enhances Its Collections

Organization Centralizes and Organizes Significant Archives

by Elizabeth Robn Jeffe, Vice-Chair

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS), founded in 1893, has often been at the forefront of the movement to safeguard and promote the City's historical and architectural legacy. Given MAS's importance in civic affairs, it is not surprising that the organization possesses a wealth of archival materials that chronicle the long and rich story of MAS's role in a plethora of preservation, architectural, and aesthetic initiatives in New York. Over the past 17 months, MAS has centralized and professionally organized its archival collections—a major undertaking that will be a boon to researchers.

In August 1980, following three years of planning and restoration, MAS opened The Urban Center in the landmarked Villard Houses at 455 Madison Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets. MAS shared The Urban Center with other civic organizations such as the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Architectural League of New York, and the Parks Council. Over the next 30 years at this location, MAS presented exhibitions, panel discussions, lectures, and ran both a bookstore, appropriately named Urban Center Books, and The Information Exchange (TIE), a reference clearinghouse for architecture, preservation, community-based planning, and the built environment. Among the lasting legacies of TIE is an invaluable clipping and subject file collection now in the MAS Archives. At this time, MAS kept some of its older records offsite in a storage facility on East 110th Street but

retained most of its collection at its offices. However, when MAS moved from the Villard



Senior Consulting Archivist Sam Markham at the MAS Archives, Courtesy of MAS

Houses in 2010 to a smaller space in the old Steinway Hall building on West 57th Street, it became apparent that the Society needed considerably more offsite space to house its archival materials in their entirety. (MAS has since moved again and now occupies offices in the Look Building on Madison Avenue at 51st Street.)

With funding received from the Leon Levy Foundation in 2014, MAS rented a larger storage unit at the 110th Street facility and approached The Winthrop Group to

assist with planning for and executing the assessment, organization, and cataloging of MAS's archival records. Sam Markham, a senior consulting archivist at Winthrop—who formerly helped establish the Associated Press Corporate Archives—came on board in November 2014 along with processing archivist Cassandra Brewer to help MAS with this major project. In conjunction with full-time processing archivist Diane Dias De Fazio, who succeeded Brewer, Markham continues to be responsible for the MAS Archives while working with other Winthrop clients as well. He describes himself as “an archivist, not a preservationist,” and says that his time spent with the MAS collections has been a fascinating education in the Society's evolution. “It was a new subject for me. I found myself asking, who are the players, and what are the pieces?” Having been able to examine the complete collection, Markham notes that “records help you observe how an organization changes in some ways and remains the same in others.” Indeed, the Archives attests to the transformation of MAS from a group with a “City Beautiful” focus to one concerned with all aspects of the City's physical environment, from the preservation of its historical past to urban design and community-based planning.

Markham's initial charge was to conduct an appraisal of the 650 boxes of materials in order to devise an overarching record group structure to organize the collections and create a processing plan for both the

Save Grand Central! Free Concert
Thursday, April 21st, 12noon
Rain or shine

COME SEE! HEAR!
A host of Grand Central lovers.

Mayor Abraham D. Beame
 Jacqueline Onassis

Steve Allen
 Betty Comden and Adolph Green
 Alistair Cooke
 Tammy Grimes
 Margaret Hamilton
 Loita Inglesias
 Lynn Keitlogg
 Jerry Orbach
 Don Scardino
 Bobby Short
 Henny Youngman

and other stars of stage, screen and television
with Randy Jones Quintet.

Help keep Grand Central a landmark
Contact the Municipal Art Society, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, N.Y.C. 586-4761

Flyer from the "Save Grand Central" campaign,
 Courtesy of the MAS Archives

physical arrangement of materials and the preparation of access tools for researchers. In just under a year and a half, the Winthrop archivists have organized and rehoused materials in acid-free folders and created finding aids that provide information about the location, content, and significance of various collections. This spring, these finding aids for processed collections will be available online for researchers, first at ArchiveGrid.com and at a later date on the MAS website. Although it is hoped that portions of the collection will be digitized in the future, more funding will be required for this additional step.

The MAS Archives contains materials dating from the organization's early days in the 1890s up until the present. Organized into 20 major record groups, the collection comprises an impressive variety of internal documents such as board and committee minutes and annual reports, MAS publications and newsletters, preservation and planning project records, public programs, exhibition and events materials, MAS testimony at public hearings, artifacts, photographs and slides, AV materials in a variety of formats (U-matic tapes, VHS, 16mm, etc.), and a significant collection of news clippings and

subject files. The large number of photographs, slides, and printed materials connected to the "Save Grand Central" campaign, a major subject in the holdings, reflects the fact that MAS may be best known nationally as a driving force behind the successful legal challenge to save Grand Central Terminal. Penn Central wanted Marcel Breuer to build an office tower on top of Grand Central, and the ensuing court battles raged for years, with numerous decisions leading up to that of the Supreme Court in 1978 in favor of preserving the terminal. It was a cause in which MAS member Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who generally chose to guard her privacy, became publicly involved.

For those steeped in the history of preservation and architecture in New York, an especially important and rare resource in the MAS Archives is its Survey of Historic Buildings and Structures (1954-1957), a series of one-page forms on which MAS members systematically documented the architectural history and importance of over 200 buildings and structures that were considered landmark worthy. The result of this three-year effort was the publication of *New York Landmarks: Index of Architecturally Historic Structures in New York City* in 1957. Alan Burnham and other MAS members expanded and reissued this index in three subsequent editions culminating in 1963 with the publication of Burnham's famous *New York Landmarks: A Study and Index of Architecturally Notable Structures in Greater New York*, published by Wesleyan University Press under the auspices of the Municipal Art Society. Architectural historian Agnes Gilchrist was critical to the success of the Survey and was also an early proponent of MAS walking tours in the City begun in 1956. The MAS Archives contains scripts for the tour guides, related correspondence, and photographs of some of these early outings.

Other fascinating holdings abound in the MAS Archives, including 23 episodes of

Save the Date!

2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit

December 14, 2016
 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Yale Club
 50 Vanderbilt Avenue

Mark your calendars for the 2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit, at which the New York Preservation Archive Project will present its Preservation Award to **Robert A. M. Stern**. In 2015 the Archive Project inaugurated our Preservation Award, bestowed upon a person whose work exemplifies the documentation, preservation, and celebration of the history of preservation in New York City. The recipient is presented with a bronze medal designed in the Beaux-Arts tradition. The first honoree was Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, the driving force behind the 50th anniversary celebration of New York City's Landmarks Law.

This year we celebrate Robert A. M. Stern's important contributions to the cause of documenting preservation's history. Stern's monumental *New York* book series records and studies the evolution of New York City architecture and urbanism from 1880 to the present day. These five volumes offer an invaluable resource to those seeking to understand preservation in New York City before and after the passage of the Landmarks Law, capturing and meticulously recording decades of preservation efforts in our City. From the battle with Robert Moses over Castle Clinton to the campaign to save Two Columbus Circle, Stern has documented these stories so that readers can learn about the constant struggle in New York City to balance development with the need to preserve historic fabric. His books have helped fill a gap in the narrative of our City's history; they have given preservationists the empowering gift of their own story.



Items from the collection related to Brooklyn Union Gas Company's "Cinderella" campaign created in the 1960s, Courtesy of the MAS Archives

the MAS radio show "The Livable City," broadcast on WNYC between 1972 and 1979. The program dealt with such topics as "The Effect of the 2nd Avenue Subway on Street Life" (1973); "Rescuing 42nd Street" (1976); and "The Future of South Street" (1979). In handling this portion of the Archives, Markham reached out to WNYC Archivist Andy Lanset to create digital transfers of the reel-to-reel tapes for the MAS Archives. Other recordings that have been digitized include the 1971 MAS Annual Meeting at which Ada Louise Huxtable and then-U.S. Representative Ed Koch discussed "The State of the City" and a 1976 Lee Graham interview on WNYC with MAS Director Margot Wellington.

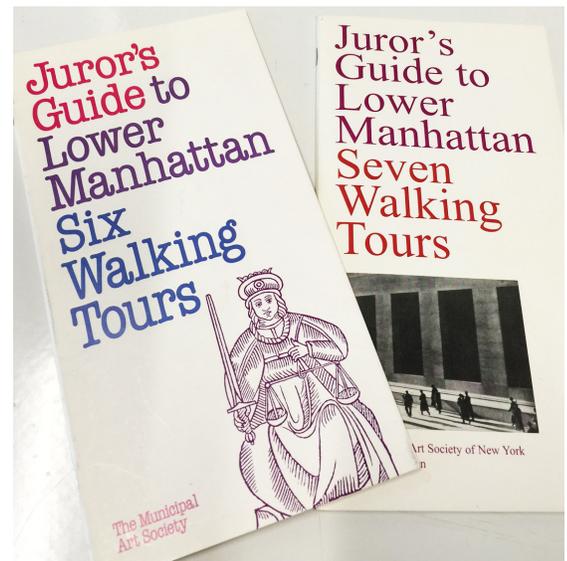
For those interested in how businesses and individuals can become partners in neighborhood preservation and revitalization, one particularly interesting group of items from the subject files of The Information Exchange relates to the Brooklyn Union Gas Company's "Cinderella" campaign created in the 1960s to address the abandonment of homes and commercial buildings in deteriorating neighborhoods. As homeowners fled areas

such as Park Slope, the Brooklyn Union Gas Company was watching its customer base flee as well, so the utility decided to fight for its own business survival by working for neighborhood rejuvenation. The company purchased an abandoned brownstone at 211 Berkeley Place in Park Slope for just \$15,000 and completely renovated the house while respecting its Victorian details. Brooklyn Union created two apartments in the brownstone and used the building to demonstrate all the latest in gas-fueled appliances, heating, air conditioning, and even fireplaces. For years, the gas company worked together with the Park Slope Betterment Committee to transform the neighborhood, which over time became a model of revitalization and preservation.

The Archives also has numerous records reflecting MAS activities in more recent years including two collections of community outreach after the September 11th attacks: the "Imagine New York" project and the "Tribute in Light." The "Imagine New York" initiative engaged

people in over 200 workshops throughout the tri-state area to discuss their visions for rebuilding New York in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. The "Tribute in Light" collection contains extensive documentation relating to the creation of the twin beams rising upwards at the site of the two towers of the World Trade Center as an act of remembrance and inspiration. Sponsored by MAS from 2002 until 2012, this program has since been presented annually by the 9/11 Memorial Museum.

For preservationists and researchers in New York City history, the organization and centralization of the MAS Archives is a very welcome development. Anthony C. Wood, founder and chair of the New York Preservation Archive Project, worked at MAS from 1981 to 1986. He is delighted that this important collection will be more accessible to scholars and preservationists, remarking that "it is wonderful to see such an outstanding archive organized so professionally—it's a night-and-day difference from what it was years ago when I was going through random boxes for research for my book, *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks*." Wood can still recall the difficulties of poring through unsorted boxes and piles of materials—and worrying about the ultimate fate of the important collections of MAS. Now, those materials so important to New York City architectural and preservation history will be protected and available for study by generations to come. ■



Two issues of "Juror's Guide to Lower Manhattan" walking tour brochures, Courtesy of the MAS Archives

Capturing Legal Stories

Oral History Project Focusing on Lawyers Who Shaped the Landmarks Law Nears Completion

Last fall the New York Preservation Archive Project launched *Through the Legal Lens: Interviews with Lawyers Who Shaped NYC's Landmarks Law*, a new oral history project funded in part through a grant from the Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation. *Through the Legal Lens* documents the experiences of individuals who have been pivotal actors in the changing landscape of New York City's Landmarks Law. In 1965, the New York City Landmarks Law was enacted to protect historic sites and neighborhoods from decisions that would destroy or fundamentally alter their character. Fifty years later, numerous challenges to landmark legislation have been overcome and the law has been augmented thanks, in part, to the work of the individuals interviewed in this project. As lawyers, they have defended the administration of the law, argued decisive preservation-related court cases, and worked to secure the legal power that protects the City's architecture.

In December 2015 the Archive Project conducted the initiative's first oral history interview with **Virginia Waters**. In her position as Assistant Corporation Counsel, Waters handled many landmark cases over the past 25 years but she is perhaps best known for her work on the Manee-Seguine Homestead demolition-by-neglect case and the City and Suburban First Avenue Estate hardship case. In subsequent months the Archive Project interviewed **Gabriel Taussig** and **Leonard Koerner**. Taussig is an attorney who worked in the Law Department of New York City for nearly four decades, including 20 years as Division Chief for the Administrative Law Division, which handles many legal matters related to preservation. Some of the more notable cases in which he has been involved include the rezoning of South Street Seaport to preserve its historic character, the St. Bartholomew's Church case challenging the designation of religious

landmarks, developers' attempts to strip detail from landmark buildings, and the 2011 lawsuit over alterations to the Manufacturers Trust Company building. Koerner was the Appeals Division Chief for many years and continues to work at the New York City Law Department. He was involved with *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City* (1978), which ruled that the City had the constitutional authority to regulate landmarks even when it meant that an owner was prevented from developing its property as allowed by zoning, thereby suffering

history project. Strong is an experienced oral historian with an M.A. in Oral History from Columbia University. Additionally, the Archive Project was thrilled to secure William Cook as the interviewer for this project. Cook is Associate General Counsel at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. His primary area of responsibility includes litigation advocacy on behalf of the National Trust in courts across the United States. He lectures regularly to national audiences on issues related to property, land use, and historic preservation law, and teaches a related course at Columbia University.



New York State Supreme Court Building in New York City, Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

a financial loss to create a public benefit. This coming summer, we are also slated to interview **Jeffrey Friedlander**. Friedlander has been with the New York City Law Department for 45 years and is currently the First Assistant Corporation Counsel. Among other issues, he was involved with the passage of the 1973 amendments to New York City's Landmarks Law, which established interior landmarks and scenic landmarks, and otherwise transformed the workings of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The Archive Project's oral history coordinator, Liz Strong, is at the head of this new initiative. Strong first joined us in 2015 to spearhead the *Saving Preservation Stories: Diversity & the Outer Boroughs* oral

Collecting the oral histories of these important legal figures will assist today's preservationists in envisioning the future of the field. To further support that mission, the Archive Project has also taken its first steps in drafting a written manual that will act as a practical guide to undertaking collaborative oral history projects. This manual will introduce the value of conducting oral history projects, provide key tools to getting started, and give examples and advice from the Archive

Project's experience in undertaking large-scale initiatives. The goal of this manual is to inspire new initiatives across the nation that will document the stories of important preservationists. Throughout 2016 and 2017 the Archive Project will promote this model at national conferences and forums, as well as digitally online. The progress made and insights gained by the Archive Project over the past decades collecting oral histories will become a lasting resource for other preservation organizations and for future oral history projects.

These oral histories and the educational manual will soon be available via our website at www.nypap.org. Please feel free to contact the Archive Project with any insights or questions about these interviews. ■



Joel L. Fleishman, Darren Walker, Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, and Anthony C. Wood at the 2015 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit, Courtesy of John Keon Photo

NYPAP Events

Our Public Programs Continue to Celebrate, Educate & Inspire

The winning combination of an inspirational honoree and thought-provoking speakers made last December's **Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit** the New York Preservation Archive Project's most successful fundraiser to date! The event is held each December to honor Albert S. Bard, who would have turned 149 on December 19th. 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.

To celebrate this significant figure, the Archive Project was thrilled to present its inaugural Preservation Award—created to honor outstanding contributions to the documentation, preservation, and celebration of the history of preservation in New York City—to Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel. She is a most deserving recipient due to her singular and decisive role in

helping preservationists remember and honor their own history over the past 50 years. The Archive Project was similarly pleased to host an insightful conversation between Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, and architecture critic Paul Goldberger. Their dialogue ran the gamut of topics from the current shortage of inspired design in New York City to the preservation work of the Ford Foundation.

The Archive Project thanks everyone who helped to make this event such a success. 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 the City.

Last November the Archive Project joined the Brooklyn Historical Society and the Brooklyn Heights Association for **Cocktails and Conversation: An Evening to Honor NYC's First Historic District**. This program celebrated the 50th anniversary

of the designation of Brooklyn Heights as New York City's first historic district with celebratory cocktails in the elegant Othmer Library and a spirited program featuring architectural historian Francis Morrone and Anthony C. Wood, founder and chair of the Archive Project. Introducing the speakers was Meenakshi Srinivasan, chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Morrone and Wood explored the diverse architecture and fascinating preservation history of Brooklyn Heights, which continues to be an ideal example of successful citizen-driven activism and a model for the future of preservation action in New York City.

Designated on November 23, 1965, the Brooklyn Heights Historic District was New York City's first historic district, and as such was an important step in widening the scope of the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission. This pioneering move was prompted by a powerful local constituency advocating for the protection of their neighborhood in the face of major public projects that were insensitive to the area's significant historic fabric. These activists included organizations such as the Brooklyn Heights Association and the nascent Community Conservation and Improvement

Council, as well as countless individuals living in the neighborhood. Today the Brooklyn Heights Historic District remains largely intact and is an excellent example of how a community staved off major development pressures and preserved its neighborhood.

The event also celebrated the re-publication of Clay Lancaster's book *Old Brooklyn Heights: New York's First Suburb*. In the late 1950s Lancaster was enlisted by neighborhood preservation leaders to document the history and architecture of Brooklyn Heights. His research eventually led to walking tours, press coverage, and educational training for the public and for policy makers regarding the importance of the neighborhood. In December 1961, Lancaster's findings were published in *Old Brooklyn Heights*, which made a substantial case for the architectural authenticity and richness of the neighborhood. As Brooklyn Heights preservationists had intended, *Old Brooklyn Heights* proved especially instrumental in guiding the Landmarks Preservation Commission in its designation of the area as a historic district. The Brooklyn Historical Society and the Brooklyn Heights Association, with the support of long-time Brooklyn Heights residents and neighborhood activists Otis and Nancy Pearsall, reissued Dover's 1979 edition of *Old Brooklyn Heights*, which includes Clay Lancaster's forward, "How Brooklyn Heights Came To Be New York City's First Historic District." The book is available for purchase exclusively through the Brooklyn Historical Society and the Brooklyn Heights Association.

Insensitive development projects! State historical associations! Skeletons! Murder! Jessica Fletcher takes on a mystery involving preservation when an old skeleton with a skull wound is found in Cabot Cove's bird sanctuary, bringing to a halt redevelopment plans. Furious investors, court-ordered injunctions, environmentalists, false identities, the FBI? Things got interesting in the second installation of the Archive Project's **Preservation She Wrote** screening series, a viewing of "Joshua Peabody Died Here...Possibly," from the television series *Murder, She Wrote*. Following the screening, special guest critics were on hand to discuss the changing public image of preservation and how the portrayal of the field in the

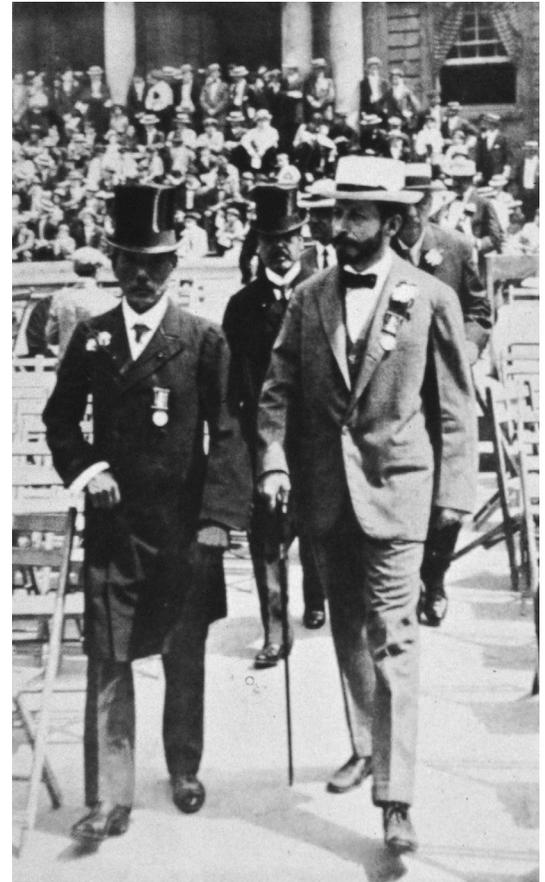
mid-1980s compares to today's perception and reality. Convened by Susan De Vries, Archive Project board member (and *Murder, She Wrote* aficionado), critique and commentary were featured from Adrian Untermyer, deputy director of the Historic Districts Council. The evening ended with a round of trivia questions based on the episode, with the winner taking home a DVD set of *Murder, She Wrote: Season Two*, which features the compelling episode.

Join the Archive Project and the American Planning Association for a special lecture entitled **New York's Forgotten Master Planner: Rediscovering the Legacy of George McAneny**. This is the first in our "Unsung Heroes" lecture series focusing on the lasting, though perhaps forgotten, legacies of significant figures in New York City's preservation history. Since the publication of Robert Caro's *The Power Broker* over 40 years ago, public discussion of the shaping of New York has been dominated by the impact of that book's subject, Robert Moses. But during much of Moses's lifetime the City's most celebrated planner was a man who is little remembered today: George McAneny (1869-1953). In this lecture, Charles Starks, research fellow at the Archive Project and teacher of urban studies at Hunter College, will explore McAneny's distinct legacy, illuminating past and present conflicts over planning and preservation and considering the lessons that McAneny's work may hold for the City's changing built environment today.

McAneny had an extraordinarily diverse and consequential career as a public official and advocate. He was elected Manhattan Borough President and President of the Board of Aldermen, and led, at various times, the City Club, the Municipal Art Society, the Regional Plan Association, and the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, among other groups. He was responsible for the construction of half of New York City's subways, sponsored early urban renewal efforts, helped preserve landmarks such as City Hall and Castle Clinton, and conceived many of the instruments of planning and historic preservation that the City, region,

and nation still rely on.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the City's first zoning resolution—an early fruit of McAneny's long campaign to plan and regulate development—so it is a fitting time to reconsider his significance as a planner, preservationist, and New Yorker. Funded by the Archive Project, Stark's research on McAneny has drawn on material from archives around the region to unravel the complex legacy of the man whose heavy-handed tactics ripped through the City's



George McAneny with Japanese lawyer and civil servant Dr. J. Soyeda at New York City Hall on July 4, 1913, Courtesy of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society

ethnic neighborhoods in the 1910s, but who was lauded as a hero a generation later for saving the Battery and helping found the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A complete monograph by Stark on McAneny will soon be available in the "Resources" section of Archive Project's website.

Please stay tuned for further details on this lecture and for more information on future installments in the Archive Project's "Unsung Heroes" lecture series. ■

Stewardship Society



Curator Kerri Culhane stops at the Poy Gum Lee-designed Kimlau Memorial Arch during a tour of Chinatown, Courtesy of the Archive Project

Join the Columns Club!

Last year was an exciting inaugural one for the Columns Club, a way to engage a new generation of New Yorkers in the Archive Project's important mission. The Columns Club consists of supporters ages 21 to 40 who donate \$75 or more annually and are invited to special tours of historic places, archives, and exhibitions throughout New York City—unique experiences that have been created to appeal to the wide-ranging tastes of this multifaceted group. Past tours include the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Green-Wood Cemetery, and Grand Central Terminal.

More recently the group visited the Brooklyn Historical Society's collection, which includes materials dating to before the Revolutionary War, and were treated to a curator-led tour of the Poy Gum Lee exhibition at the Museum of Chinese in America, followed by a walk around Chinatown (shown in photo above) and dim sum!

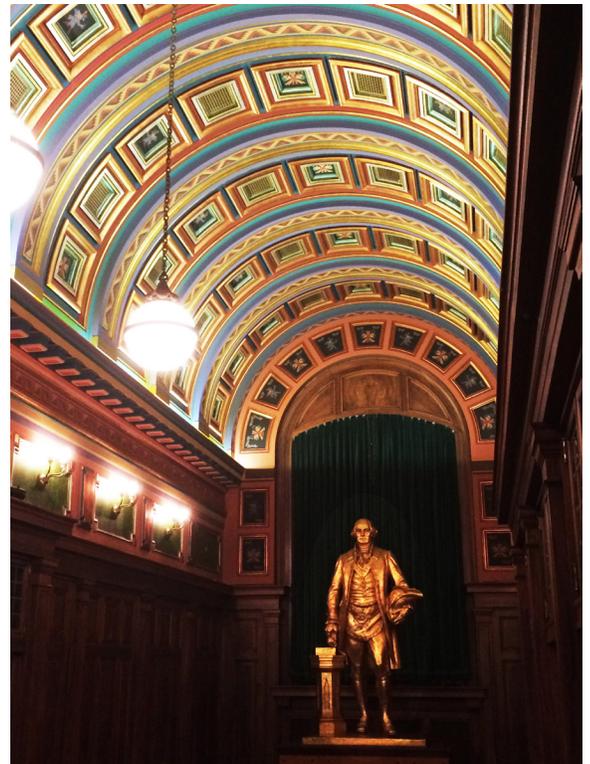
If you are interested in joining this hearty crew of urban explorers, please contact Brad Vogel at brad.vogel@gmail.com or Matthew Coody at mcoody@nypap.org.

The past two behind-the-scenes tours hosted for the Archive Project's Stewardship Society have been very special opportunities to experience facets of New York City not typically accessible. Last December Stewards were allowed inside the hidden jewel box that is the Grand Masonic Lodge of New York. Led by Trustee Paul Reitz, the tour explored the rich symbols and history of this mysterious fraternal order, as well as the Lodge's lavish interiors that range in revival styles from Egyptian to Jacobean.

The group was also guided through the Lodge's archival collections and the Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library with Curator Catherine M. Walter. The library is one of the world's foremost repositories of Masonic books, with volumes detailing such topics as Masonic symbolism and occultism and a collection that includes ritual artifacts, jewelry, artwork, and ephemera.

This spring Stewards toured the Public Design Commission Archive and City Hall. Led by Keri Butler, Deputy Director of the Commission, our tour began at the Archive, which contains drawings, photographs, and architectural plans from over 7,000 works of art and architecture proposed for City-owned property over the past 114 years. On view were beautifully-rendered elevations of a bathhouse in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, architectural fragments from the restorations of public buildings; quirky street signs graphically representing sign language; original photographs from the landmark-documenting Frank Cousins collection, and approved designs for public memorials. Stewards were then led through City Hall, with a focus on the Grosvenor Atterbury-designed offices of the Commission, which contain a wonderful collection of antiques, portraits, and decorative objects from the 18th to 20th centuries.

The New York Preservation Archive Project is pleased to offer such inimitable experiences to our Stewardship Society, which 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



A statue of George Washington presides over a reading room in the Grand Masonic Lodge, Courtesy of the Archive Project

Society has held private viewings of archival treasures at such locations 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.



Richard J. Koke, curator of the New-York Historical Society from 1947-83, explores the partially-demolished Castle Clinton c. 1948, Courtesy of the National Park Service

Preservation History in Quotes

"A people indifferent to the landmarks and monuments of its past will not long retain its capacity to achieve an honored future." - Justice Samuel Null, December 13, 1948

This powerful language comes from a New York State Supreme Court decision in a case brought by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society to stop the demolition of Castle Clinton in Manhattan's Battery Park. The decision was later reversed on the grounds that an insufficient amount of the site remained to meet the definition of a "monument" or "work of art" as outlined in the City Charter regarding the powers of the New York City Art Commission, but it played an important role in the decade-long struggle to save the structure. At the

time of the reversal of the decision, C. C. Burlingham, a defender of Castle Clinton and a great civic leader, commented that the reversal had not "ended the life of the fort" for it had "as many lives as a cat." History has proven him correct. Despite many incarnations—including as a military headquarters, a theater, a beer garden, an immigration station, and an aquarium—and a fierce battle that involved leading local figures such as George McAneny, Albert S. Bard, Stanley Isaacs, and Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt fighting to stop

Robert Moses's demolition plans, Castle Clinton survives today as a reminder of nearly 200 years of New York City history.

To read more about the legal suit and the battle to save Castle Clinton, turn to Charles B. Hosmer, Jr.'s *Preservation Comes of Age, Volume Two: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, Robert Caro's *The Power Broker*, Anthony C. Wood's *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks*, or view our Preservation Database entry at www.nypap.org. ■

GVSHP Collections Expanded, Improved & Available Online

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP)—founded in 1980 to preserve the architectural heritage and cultural history of Greenwich Village, the East Village, NoHo, and beyond—provides a variety of resources to the public that reflect the role of the Village as an icon in the local and national preservation movements. Two significant resources are their collection of oral histories with preservationists, community leaders, and other significant Villagers, and their archive of historic images that document both continuity and change in these areas. Due in part to grants from the New York Preservation Archive Project's Archival Assistance Fund, GVSHP has recently made a great leap forward in expanding and improving their oral history collection and has also made their historic image archive available online for the first time, with a mapping tool to maximize the collection's utilization.

GVSHP began collecting oral histories in the mid-1990s to help preserve memories of the preservation movement in Greenwich Village. There are currently four collections, entitled "East Village," "Preservation Pioneers," "South Village," and "Westbeth." The earliest collection is "Preservation Pioneers," undertaken to document the stories of those who led the nascent preservation movement in Greenwich Village, including such figures as Jane Jacobs and Margot Gayle. The Westbeth oral history project, launched in 2007, documents how Westbeth—a not-for-profit housing and commercial complex dedicated to providing affordable living and working space for artists and arts organizations—was conceived and implemented. The complex, located on the block bounded by West, Bethune, Washington, and Bank Streets in the West Village, was converted from the Bell Laboratories Buildings in 1968-1970

by architect Richard Meier. It is among the first examples of adaptive reuse of industrial buildings for artistic and residential use in the United States. The GVSHP oral history project was undertaken as part of a larger initiative to place Westbeth on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and includes such figures as Meier and Merce Cunningham, the noted choreographer and dancer who had his studio and offices at Westbeth for over 40 years. In 2011, after a



Mark Twain House drawing room in January 1954 (Twain's home from 1904-08 was at Fifth Avenue and East Ninth Street. Its demolition in April 1954, despite protests, helped spark the modern preservation movement in New York City), Courtesy of GVSHP

lengthy process, Westbeth was designated a landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

GVSHP's oral history collection was recently

expanded by 20 interviews, mainly focusing on the East Village and South Village. Among others, this most recent series of oral histories captured the preservation stories of Frances Goldin, a leader in the successful effort to stop Robert Moses's plan to bulldoze a large swath of the East Village, and Marilyn Appleberg, who spearheaded the fight to create the St. Mark's Historic District. The various other interviewees in this latest round tell incredible stories about these neighborhoods' artistic, literary, musical, culinary, cultural, and ethnic histories and experiences.

GVSHP was awarded a grant in 2015 from the Archive Project's Archival Assistance Fund to hire professional sound engineers to create short audio clips from these 20 new oral history recordings. These clips have been used to highlight important segments of the interviews for educational purposes and as a tool to showcase the project. They also enhance the user experience of the archive, and will allow greater utilization by a larger and more diverse audience. In addition to these sound clips, the full transcripts, abstracts, and other supplementary materials for every interview in GVSHP's oral history collection can be accessed at www.gvshp.org/oralhistory.

With a 2013 Archival Assistance Fund grant from the Archive Project, GVSHP was also able to digitize its archive of over 300 historic images—including photographs, prints, slides, negatives, drawings, etchings, and paintings—and make them publically accessible online. Many images in this collection chronicle the preservation struggles of the Village and document such significant historic sites as Washington Square and LaGrange Terrace. All images have been placed on an easy-to-use map that is searchable by geographic area of interest. View the image archive at www.archive.gvshp.org.

The Archive Project applauds GVSHP for its dedication to expanding and improving its oral history and image collections, both of which are critical to the history of the preservation community. ■

Preservation Bookshelf

The preservation “bookshelf” has recently been expanded by a few new (or reissued) volumes! Here are some that the Archive Project recommends.

While it is now commonly accepted that the preservation movement in New York City evolved from more than one single demolition, the mystique of Penn Station as the impetus for New York City’s Landmarks Law lives on. The latest in the string of works immortalizing the iconic train station is *Penn Station, New York*, a book of photographs by Louis Stettner. One of the last living members of the avant-garde New York School of photography, which challenged many of the long-accepted fundamentals of the art form, Stettner’s Penn Station series

of the late 1950s represents some of his most significant work. These photographs are gathered together for the first time in this book, creating an intimate portrait of the building and a study of the people who travelled through it.

As reported in *The New York Times*, it was New York City’s dynamism that led Stettner to practice his photography in Penn Station; amid the City’s hustle, Stettner found the train station a place where he could catch his breath. “Penn Station was a pause,” he

said, “where people could get in touch with themselves, and a way that I could get in touch with them.” Stettner, who now lives in Paris, told the *Times* that he is saddened that such a dignified public space was demolished, especially since its replacement is so off-putting. “The whole thing is continually anxiety-ridden,” he said of traveling through today’s Penn Station. He likened the original 1910 structure by McKim, Mead & White to “living in an art museum; it gave grace and charm to an ordinary function of going from A to B.” Stettner says today that in 1958 the thought of losing Penn Station seemed unimaginable. “What attracted me most was that this was a place that gave dignity to people. A place where you felt you were living in a better world. It was

marble and iron and very graceful, a place with high ceilings that enforced the dignity of the human race—a place where you felt more worthy than on the street. You felt good there.” Although Stettner and the publications to which he originally submitted this series of photographs deemed them as un-newsworthy and “just people in Penn Station,” with time, distance, and the loss of the inspiring structure, their significance has been recognized, and the series is now considered a major work of art.

While some landmarked New York City interiors are widely celebrated, others are virtually unknown. *Interior Landmarks: Treasures of New York* by Judith Gura and Kate Wood sets out to change that situation. The first publication to present the landmarked interiors of New York City in intricate detail, and published in conjunction with the New York School of Interior Design’s 2015 exhibition *Rescued, Restored, Reimagined: New York’s Landmarks Interiors*, the book is a visual celebration of the spaces that capture the rich and varied heritage of New York City.

Since a 1973 amendment to the New York City Landmarks Law first allowed the designation of interiors, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has designated 117 interior landmarks throughout all five boroughs, preserving for future generations spaces that represent New York City’s cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. *Interior Landmarks: Treasures of New York* tells the vibrant stories of these spaces. They range from the soaring 1812 rotunda at City Hall to the modernist 1967 atrium of the Ford Foundation, New York City’s youngest designated interior, hailed by Ada Louise Huxtable as “one of the most romantic environments ever devised by corporate man.”

In addition to including details on these interiors’ original materials, styles, and exceptional design features, the book also



Penn Station, 1957 (the first photograph taken in the series, this image of a young girl playing in circles of sunlight on the waiting room floor inspired Stettner to return to Penn Station in 1958, just five years before its demolition),

Photo © Louis Stettner, 2015

Notes from the Board

Susan De Vries

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



Interior of the Four Seasons Restaurant, designated a New York City Landmark in 1989 © Larry Lederman, Courtesy of The Monacelli Press

focuses on the challenges to preserving them; although some interiors were unanimously accepted as worthy of landmark status, many designations were hotly contested in legal battles. The book also features the incredible restorations and adaptive reuses some of these interiors have undergone, and the preservationists, philanthropists, politicians, and designers who made these possible. Thoroughly researched and beautifully illustrated, *Interior Landmarks: Treasures of New York* is an important addition to any preservationist's collection.

As reported on page nine of this newsletter, the Brooklyn Historical Society and the Brooklyn Heights Association recently reissued Dover's 1979 edition of Clay Lancaster's *Old Brooklyn Heights: New York's First Suburb* in honor of the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. The book, a comprehensive, illustrated, street-by-street guide to the historic houses, churches, and public buildings of the neighborhood, was instrumental in the efforts to designate the area as a historic district. It is available for purchase exclusively through the Brooklyn Historical Society and the Brooklyn Heights Association. ■

To be honest, I wasn't planning on ending up in New York City after college. But after a summer attending the Preservation Institute: Nantucket program, where I received an intensive overview of historic preservation practice and policy, I started looking at master's programs in historic preservation. Although ending up in New York at Columbia University was not what I originally intended, I now can't imagine my career any differently.

My introduction to New York would not have been the same if I hadn't been fortunate enough to receive an internship at the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) in the 1990s. There I received my early lessons on the history of the preservation movement in New York and the

importance of building documentation as well as an introduction to key figures in the early years of preservation. Greenwich Village was a hotbed of preservation activity and I was fortunate that during my time at GVSHP many of those prominent in the movement were still active and interested in sharing their stories. Doris Diether, Margot Gayle, Shirley Hayes, and Verna Small—all were women who did so much to ensure that the character and built environment of the Village survived. It was not only their memories of preservation losses and victories but also their work documenting New York City that engaged my imagination. Their collections of images and clippings conveyed so much about what the City was like when the preservation movement gained traction in the 1950s and '60s. I was already a lover of archives and libraries, but these personal collections showed how many neighborhood stories could be lost if these precious materials disappeared. I have so many fond memories of visiting Villagers in amazing tucked away spaces and hearing their stories of what New York meant to them—stories always tied to particular buildings and spaces.

I also had the pleasure of helping to gather

and tend to the slides (yes, slides) during the early "dog and pony" lectures on the history of preservation given by Anthony C. Wood and Vicki Weiner. I remember digging for images of pigs at protests, sorting through file drawers of amazing materials at the Jefferson Market Library, taping up slides, and changing slide projector bulbs. Participating in these early lectures gave me a valuable understanding of the context of preservation in New York. This experience helped launch me into my current work as a preservation consultant and informed my 10 years as director of the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum.

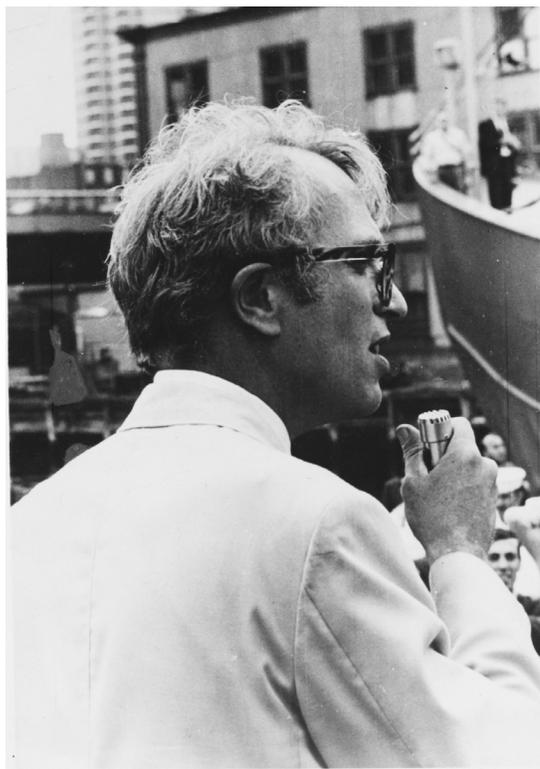
In 2008, I joined the New York Preservation Archive Project's board and have enjoyed working with board members who come to preservation from diverse backgrounds but share a passion for preserving stories. I have particularly loved being part of the Archival Assistance Fund Grant Committee. Over the course of two grant cycles, funding from the program has given crucial support to



Susan De Vries, Courtesy of Susan De Vries

small organizations attempting to deal with their collections. I find this to be a wonderful way to circle back to my early introduction to preservation in New York when I saw first-hand collections that were integral to understanding the history of the movement. Now in my role as an Archive Project board member, I am, in a small way, able to assist with the preservation of these collections. ■

In Memoriam



Peter Stanford, Courtesy of R. Koteff and the U.S. Navy

Peter Stanford, instrumental in preserving the South Street Seaport, passed away in March at the age of 89. In 1966, soon after the enactment of the New York City Landmarks Law, Stanford and his wife, Norma, founded Friends of South Street to advocate for the preservation of this area, significant for its 19th-century mercantile history and for containing some of the oldest remaining buildings in Manhattan.

A year later the Stanfords quit their jobs to focus on these efforts and their plan to create the South Street Seaport Museum. “We saw the barren, windswept plazas that were being built downtown, and we knew we were racing the bulldozer,” Stanford told *The New York Times* in 1998. Ada Louise Huxtable, the *Times*’s architecture critic at the time, endorsed the Stanfords’ campaign as “the first really promising preservation venture that the city has undertaken,” and New York State Senator Whitney North Seymour, Jr. sponsored legislation for the creation of the museum. But according to James M. Lindgren, author of *Preserving South Street Seaport: The Dream and Reality of a New*

York Urban Renewal District (reviewed in the Archive Project’s spring 2014 newsletter), although Huxtable may have brought additional attention to the campaign and Seymour authored the legislation, “Peter Stanford made the Seaport Museum happen.”

In order to create the Museum’s unusual, community-based vision of a “museum without walls,” the Stanfords set out to preserve the early 19th-century buildings of Schermerhorn Row and other waterfront blocks, and acquired a variety of ships to be used as “exhibits” for the museum. Due in part to their advocacy efforts, the area was eventually designated a historic district by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1977. Despite successes, the history of the rebirth of the South Street Seaport has been tenuous, ebbing and flowing with real estate market booms and collapses, controversial

developments, and often conflicting efforts by preservationists, developers, bankers, politicians, and museum administrators. The museum has particularly struggled to recover after the September 11th attacks, the recession, and Hurricane Sandy. However, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation recently announced a \$4.8 million grant to repair storm damage to the museum and this month the institution opened its first new exhibition since 2012, entitled “Traces and Tides of the Seaport” by artist Filipe Cortez.

“The Seaport Museum exists today because of the Stanfords’ vision in the 1960s, a time in which development pressures nearly destroyed this New York treasure,” Jonathan Boulware, the museum’s current executive director, told *The New York Times*. We also have the Stanfords to thank for undertaking the complex struggle to save many of the historic structures that today constitute the South Street Seaport, and expending the energy to retain a tangible connection to New York City’s maritime past for future generations. ■

NYPAP News

This spring the **Bowne House Historical Society** (BHHS) honored **Anthony C. Wood**, founder and chair of the New York Preservation Archive Project, with their Historic Preservation Award, bestowed at a lovely cocktail reception at New York City’s Union Club. The evening celebrated the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Bowne House, located in Flushing, Queens, and one of New York City’s first landmarks. Wood received this award for his career of over 30 years benefiting historic preservation, including his work preserving, documenting, and celebrating the history of the historic preservation movement. He is the author of *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City’s Landmarks* and has lectured extensively on the topic. Most recently Wood has spoken at the Briarcliff Manor-Scarborough Historical Society, Stuyvesant High School, and Brooklyn College. The Archive Project join BHHS in praising our chair for his significant contributions to preservation and saving its narrative.

Congratulations to Archive Project board member and Green-Wood Cemetery president, **Richard J. Moylan**, who received the Place Keeper Award from the Foundation for Landscape Studies in honor of more than 40 years of work securing Green-Wood as one of the City’s most prominent cultural destinations. It was Moylan’s vision to open the cemetery for tours, exhibitions, lectures, concerts, and other events that draw on the cemetery’s great significance and natural beauty. Also under his tenure, the Green-Wood Historic Fund was created to maintain the cemetery’s monuments and buildings.



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YOUR SPRING 2016 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 Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation, 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.

174 East 80th Street | New York, NY 10075 | tel 212-988-8379 | fax 212-537-5571 | www.nypap.org