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 new york
 preservation
 archive
 project

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NEWSLETTER

FALL 2016

Welcome to the 25th 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.



From left to right: Denise Brown-Puryear, Yvonne Taylor, and Mandingo Tshaka, interviewees in the first phase of *Saving Preservation Stories*. Courtesy of Liz Strong and Leyla Vural

Diversity Project Expanding!

Oral History Project Focused on Diverse Preservation Stories Receives Additional Funding

The New York Preservation Archive Project is pleased to announce the expansion of the oral history project *Saving Preservation Stories: Diversity & the Outer Boroughs*. Made possible through a grant from the LuEsther T. Mertz Fund of the New York Community Trust, this expansion will allow the Archive Project to record additional oral histories that capture key memories of preservation campaigns significant to minority communities as well as those in the boroughs outside of Manhattan.

Archive Project's oral history collection so that it reflects a more complete and diverse narrative of preservation in New York City. Over the past year interviewers visited every borough in the City to interview community members who have worked tirelessly to preserve the history and architecture of sites and neighborhoods important to them and their communities. These interviews, recorded in high-quality audio and video and transcribed, are now available to the public on our website (www.nypap.org).

The first phase of *Saving Preservation Stories* was launched in 2015 as an effort to strengthen the comprehensiveness of the

By expanding *Saving Preservation Stories* the Archive Project will continue to create a more inclusive public record of the

2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit

Honoring Robert A.M. Stern with our Preservation Award and featuring a Conversation on Preservation with Robert A.M. Stern & Anne H. Van Ingen

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

Yale Club
 50 Vanderbilt Avenue

Tickets range from \$75-\$500

See pages 6-7 for more details.

NYPAP in the Classroom

Last spring, Anthony C. Wood, founder and chair of the Archive Project, Matthew Coody, the organization's executive director, and Oral History Coordinator Liz Strong visited Brooklyn College to deliver a lecture as part of a public history course entitled "The Public Past." Over the semester, students are taught about oral history, historic house museums, community history, and via the Archive Project's presentation, about the intersection of all those subjects through the lens of historic preservation. Students learned about the significant work the Archive Project does in protecting valuable primary source documents and collecting oral histories and also enjoyed excerpts of our recent oral history interviews. The class became engaged with the material by mapping and discussing historically valuable places in their own neighborhoods.

After the lecture, one student commented that "The places we grew up with are being erased, and I think the presentation made it clear why that feels so terrible. It's our personal history being erased...others will hopefully use the stories [the Archive Project is collecting] as blueprints and as inspiration."

This year the Archive Project has also given presentations at the Briarcliff Manor-Scarborough Historical Society and Stuyvesant High School, and will lecture at the Fashion Institute of Technology in October. Additionally, the Archive Project team has been invited to make a presentation at two conferences this fall: the National Trust for Historic Preservation's conference taking place in Houston, TX, and "Preservation in the US: 50 Years On," the Noreen Stonor Drexel Cultural and Historic Preservation Conference presented by Salve Regina University and the Newport Restoration Foundation. We look forward to these opportunities to inspire the current and next generation of preservationists!

preservation movement, one that deepens public appreciation and understanding of minority involvement in preservation. The Archive Project is also working to plan a series of programs within these underrepresented communities to raise awareness of the availability of the records created through this project, highlight the project's success, celebrate in these diverse communities the power and importance of their own history, and inspire a drive to document that history. The planning process for these programs is sponsored by a Vision Grant from the New York Council for the Humanities.

Six interviewees were recorded during the first phase of *Saving Preservation Stories*. **Mandingo Tshaka** is a longtime community activist in Queens who advocated for the archaeological survey and proper recognition of the Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground. The burial ground dates back to the 1840s and the majority of the nearly 1,000 people interred there are of African-American and Native-American descent.

Yvonne Taylor is a founding member of the Sandy Ground Historical Society in Staten Island, which was formed in the 1970s to promote the history of the Sandy Ground community and work for the preservation of its structures, some of which are New York City landmarks. Sandy Ground was built by free blacks in the decades before the Civil War, and some believe it to be the oldest continuously-held settlement established by free blacks in North America. Yvonne Taylor's house is the oldest remaining building in Sandy Ground, constructed some time before 1859 and designated a New York City landmark in 2011.

Ronald Melichar is the current president of the Hamilton Heights-West Harlem Community Preservation Organization, which, among other quality of life issues, deals with the preservation of West Harlem's architecture and its historical and cultural significance spanning from the Revolutionary War to the Harlem Renaissance. In 2008, Melichar was active in securing a new location for Hamilton Grange, Alexander Hamilton's former

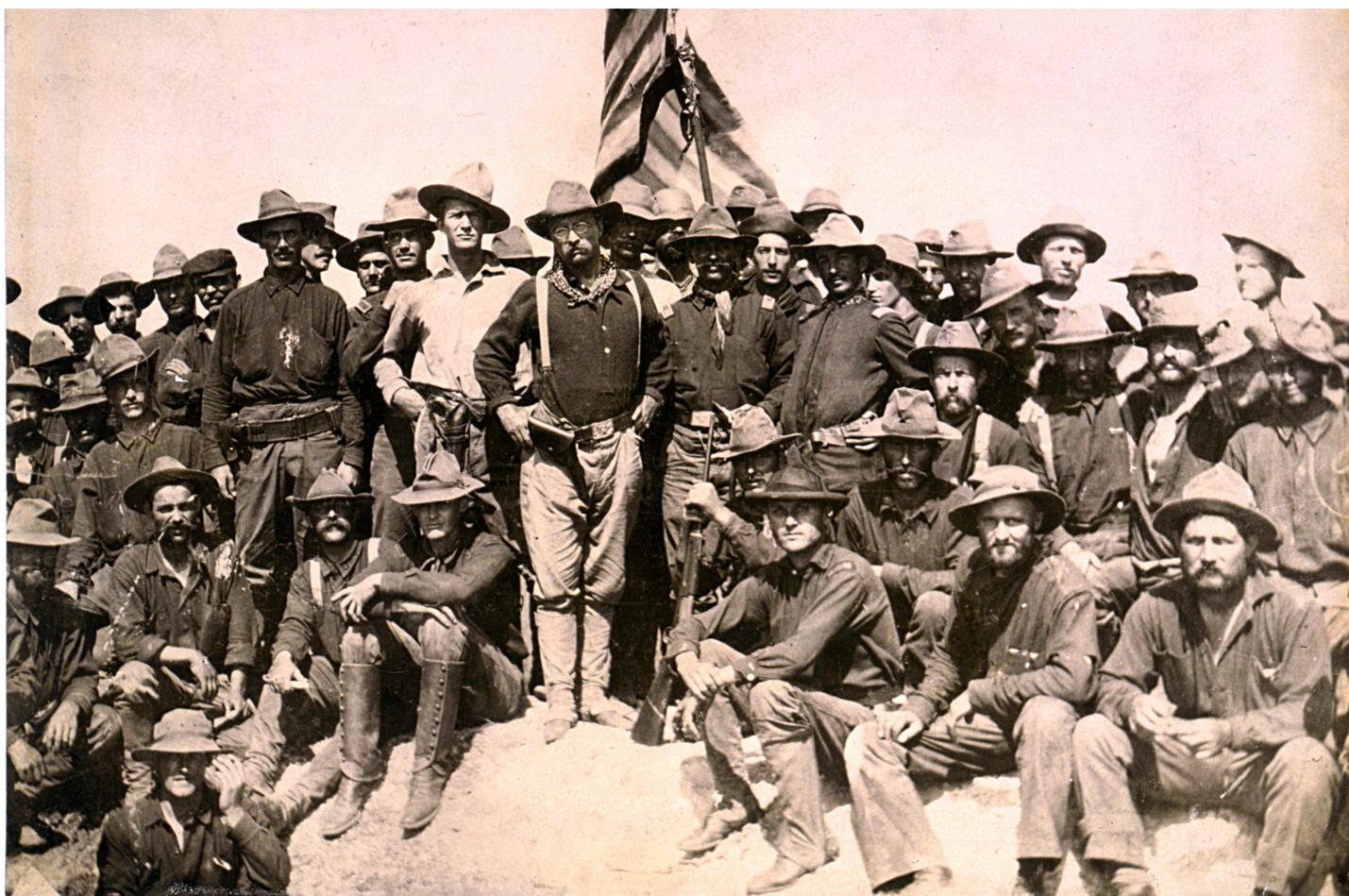
home, in St. Nicholas Park, and expanding the Hamilton Heights Historic District to include Sugar Hill in the early 2000s.

Denise Brown-Puryear and **Deborah Young** co-founded the Crown Heights North Association in 2001 to advocate for the preservation of the historic buildings of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, as well as revitalization, housing stabilization, and the economic and cultural enhancement of its residents. Since that time they have led successful campaigns to create three designated historic districts in the area that include many homes built as early as the 1870s.

Sam Goodman is an urban planner for the Bronx Borough President's Office and a native of the Grand Concourse, a major thoroughfare in the Bronx flanked by many of the finest examples of Art Deco and Art Moderne architecture in the United States. Initially the area was populated predominately by middle-class Jewish and Italian immigrants, but later, with suburban flight, slum clearance, and other urban policies, the area became largely African American and Puerto Rican American. In the 1960s and '70s most buildings along the Grand Concourse were damaged by arson, vandalism, and a lack of maintenance. Through the efforts of Goodman, among others, the Grand Concourse was designated a New York City historic district in 2011.

While the New York Preservation Archive Project has begun to achieve significant advances in capturing this relatively undocumented piece of preservation history in New York City, we are eager to continue collecting these inspiring stories. Like all of the oral histories the organization captures, the materials created through the project, such as final transcripts and audio recordings, will be made public through the website.

If you have any suggestions for potential interviewees for this expansion of *Saving Preservation Stories* or other resources that can help make this oral history project an even greater success, please contact Matthew Coody at mcoody@nypap.org or 212-988-8379. ■



Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders on top of San Juan Hill, July 1898, Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

The Surprises & Rewards of Archival Research

By *Elizabeth Rohn Jeffe, Vice-Chair*

For years, in a variety of ways, I have used the **Chairman's Column** to promote the idea that advancing the mission of the New York Preservation Archive Project—i.e., to document, preserve, and celebrate the history of preservation—is essential to the ongoing health and success of the preservation movement. In order to amplify that message and underscore the importance of preserving archives, particularly those archives that are preservation-related, from time to time I will be inviting others who share these beliefs to be guest writers for my column. I am delighted that in this, the first of these features, **Elizabeth Rohn Jeffe**, one of the Archive Project's Vice-Chairs and the editor of our newsletter, shares her personal passion for archives. Read on and enjoy!

- Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair

When our chair, Anthony C. Wood, asked me to be a guest contributor to his column, he suggested that I draw on my background as a historian, writer, and preservationist to discuss the role that archives play in my life. That is an easy topic to address—I can say without hesitation that archives are essential

to my work and a source of great personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Because they are goldmines of primary materials, archives go far beyond what is available in secondary sources, making it possible to illuminate more history more

fully, in part precisely because the contents of archives are by no means limited to the papers and objects of famous people. In fact, just the opposite is often true. Perusing materials in a local historical society might lead a researcher to a farmer's diary, or a bill of sale for a household item, or a collection

of letters written by ordinary people but rich in details about daily life that are sorely absent from history books. Indeed, archives weave the threads that sew together the past, present, and future, giving us fascinating insights into what has gone before, a better sense of how the present came to be, and a clearer vision of what the future might hold.*

As numerous articles in past issues of the Archive Project newsletter have shown, archives come in many types and sizes. Owners occasionally house them privately, but generally museums, libraries, educational institutions, organizations, and historical societies hold them. Increasingly, many archival records, including visual images, are now available digitally. Archives are valuable to a variety of researchers, from historians and preservationists, to urban planners and genealogists. And the use of archives is not the province of the few; members of the general public who simply want to learn more about a topic can spend many a pleasurable hour hunting down whatever interests them in a particular collection. Just the act of handling an artifact such as an old letter or photograph can be very exciting!

Because they are predominantly primary sources, archives unveil valuable information that is often previously unknown to the public, enriching our understanding of a topic or person. Perhaps most crucially, a visit to an archival collection often opens new doors of exploration by creating hitherto unknown links between people, places, and events. In fact, I have at times found archival research so addictive that I have spent days and even weeks “lost” in a collection, compelled to move from one hitherto unknown fascinating connection to another. There’s always the promise of that “next thing” waiting to be discovered.

In recent years, while serving as the editor of the Museum of the City of New York’s research journal, *City Courier*, I consistently

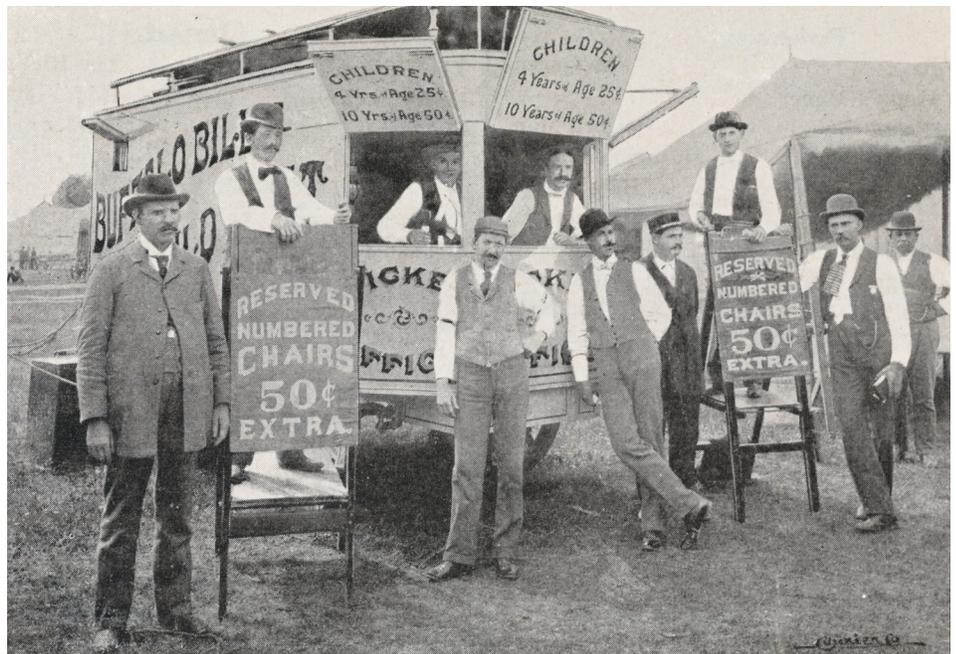
**Although the term “archives” usually refers to paper items such as diaries, ledgers, and letters, legal documents and the like, and “collections” refers to a broader range of artifacts such as objects, for the purposes of this article, I will use “archives” in a comprehensive sense, just as the Archive Project and many institutions do.*

spent time in the Museum’s archives doing research for articles for the publication. My purpose was twofold: to share with our readers some of the interesting information, items, and visual resources that are housed in the collections, much of which would be otherwise unknown to the general public, and to uncover new historical information. In two cases, what I found in the archives was so unexpected that I changed the focus of my articles as a result.

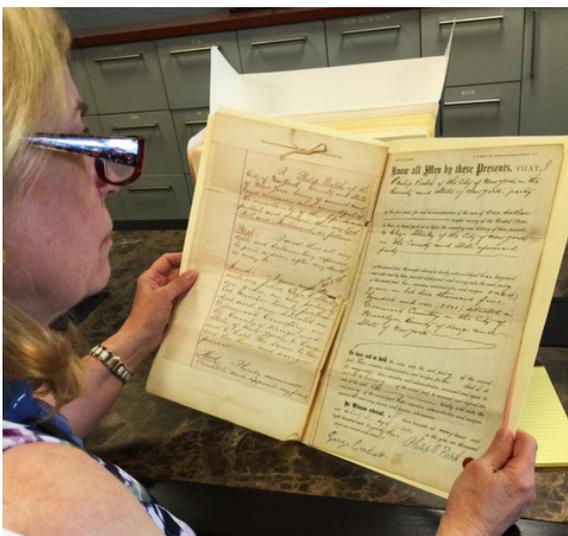
For one issue of the *Courant*, I was thinking of writing about Theodore Roosevelt, a New York City native who was at various times a candidate for mayor, a state legislator, and governor before ascending to the presidency. When I asked an archivist at the Museum about what the collections held on “TR,” she suggested that I study a scrapbook called the “Theodore Roosevelt Scrapbook.” After poring over its pages with postings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, I realized that my story would be about the man who kept the scrapbook, Charles E. Knoblauch. Knoblauch, a New Yorker and stockbroker, fought with Roosevelt as a Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War and remained in touch with him until Roosevelt’s death in 1919. The fragile memory book required careful handling, but it thrilled me to know that I was holding an album of memories collected a century ago by its owner. Filled with old newspaper clippings,

actual correspondence from Roosevelt, a regimental song, and other memorabilia such as an invitation to Roosevelt’s funeral service and a luncheon menu from a Rough Riders’ reunion at the Harvard Club, the scrapbook transported me in time and enhanced my understanding of this era in United States history. When an archival treasure like this unique scrapbook is written about, readers can view history through a personal lens. Hence, my exploration in the archives became a catalyst to a new and more significant historical narrative than the one I had originally planned.

A similar experience occurred when I was considering writing about the Ethel Merman collection of scrapbooks donated by that famed singer to the Museum. A biography of Merman had been released fairly recently that was based heavily on the legendary performer’s scrapbooks, so I was concerned about the originality of my article. But my problem was solved quickly after spending time studying the portion of Merman’s scrapbooks covering her role as Annie Oakley in the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*. Because of the story’s link with *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* show, a subject I had written about while in graduate school, I thought it would be helpful to see what the Museum possessed on the real Buffalo Bill (William F. Cody). It turned out that there were boxes of wonderful resources on



Page from the Official Souvenir Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World, 1896. Museum of the City of New York. F2014.45.1



Elizabeth Rohn Jeffe at Green-Wood Cemetery, studying a 19th-century document, Courtesy of the Archive Project

Buffalo Bill, including a marvelous souvenir book that showed how Buffalo Bill's success depended on the latest technology and urban developments in order to be successful in bringing a show about the "Old West" to mass audiences. I shifted my story line, relying heavily on the data in the souvenir book. The article was a joy to write, and Ethel Merman's role as Annie Oakley became, literally, a sidebar.

In another archives-related endeavor, as a board member of The Green-Wood Cemetery, I am incredibly excited about this cultural institution's major initiative to create a new Visitors Center and an adjoining archives facility. Blessed with a plethora of archival materials, Green-Wood is now assessing new and better ways to organize, house, and preserve its holdings. Since I also serve as a member of the group supported by The National Endowment for the Humanities for the cemetery's project, *Gone But Not Forgotten: Digitizing the 177-Year-Old Legacy of New York City's Green-Wood Cemetery*, I have been spending time in the Green-Wood archives, as have the other team members, each of whom brings a unique set of skills and insights to the endeavor. I have enjoyed looking at various records associated with cemetery business going back to its founding in 1838, studying interment records, reading accounts from old books and newspapers clippings, learning about the many famous "permanent residents" of the cemetery, and gaining an appreciation for Green-Wood's art collection which comprises two categories of works: those created by

renowned artists buried there as well as depictions of the cemetery itself. Every visit to immerse myself in Green-Wood's archives enriches my understanding of the cemetery's complex story and helps me to find ways to envision its future.

So, you might ask, what does all this have to do with preservation? The answer is, a great deal! Preservationists, contrary to the portrait sometimes painted of us, are hardly quirky folk who blindly admire the past and remain stuck there. We are a vibrant lot, with an eye to safeguarding the future. This is why saving the story of

preservation through archive creation and maintenance is part of the Archive Project's mission. We encourage all preservation groups and activists in New York City (and beyond) to do so, and with good reason. Preservationists can use materials in archives to celebrate the past; we can also use them to recognize losses and learn from those experiences. Preservation archives educate us, inspire us, and are essential to the sharing process so necessary to make preservation in New York a vital experience and a team effort. By preserving everything from correspondence and protest signs to video footage and ephemera, we can create roadmaps of previous preservation campaigns and pick out what strategies, contacts, and people emerged as critical in a battle—and why.

The Archive Project is itself an archival source through its website, offering oral histories, a preservation history database, and a resource library. The Archive Project has also worked to assist organizations to better organize and protect their archives through grants from the Archival Assistance Fund. Our mantra has been, and will continue to be, save, save, save your preservation story for posterity! No battle is too small! Let's do all we can to make sure that our vital preservation story is saved—and used—as it should be! ■

Please note that the Museum of the City of New York's collections are accessible by appointment only. Please contact research@mcity.org for more information.



Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe, Courtesy of the Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation

Announcing the Jeffe Fellowship

Due to special grant funding from the Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation, the New York Preservation Archive Project has created a new year-long fellowship position that will focus on implementing standards of organization and accessibility for the Archive Project's archival and oral history collections.

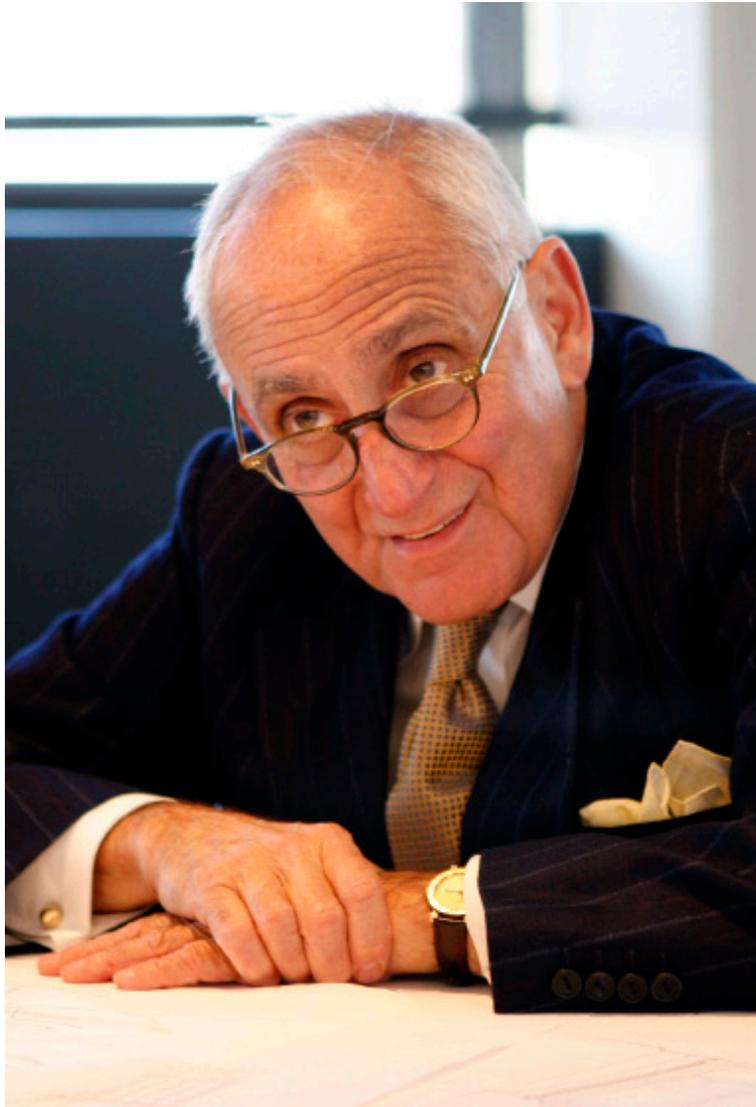
Among other important work, the Jeffe Fellow will deal primarily with a backlog in the processing of oral history records, which necessitates tasks ranging from securing missing release forms to audit-editing interview transcripts for accuracy and consistency. The ultimate goal will be to complete the final steps in preparing up to 30 oral histories for publication on the organization's website (www.nypap.org), where they will join the larger collection that currently resides there.

We are immensely grateful for the support of the Jeffes and all that they do to make the Archive Project's important work possible.

2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit

Preservation Award to be Bestowed upon Robert A.M. Stern at this Year's Benefit

Few New Yorkers have contributed more to the cause of preserving preservation's own history than architect and author Robert A.M. Stern. His monumental five-volume *New York* book series captures and meticulously documents the architecture, development, and urbanism of New York City from just after the Civil War to the millennium, including decades of preservation efforts. Whether it is preservationists' battle with city planner Robert Moses over Castle Clinton or the campaign to save Two Columbus Circle, thanks to Stern's efforts New Yorkers can read about some of the most significant moments in local preservation history. The *New York* series has helped to fill a gap in the narrative of our City's history and has become an invaluable resource for those seeking to understand preservation in New York City before and after the passage of the Landmarks Law. Above all, *New York* has given preservationists the empowering gift of their own story.



Robert A.M. Stern, Courtesy of Robert A.M. Stern Architects

Therefore, the New York Preservation Archive Project can imagine no better recipient for its Preservation Award—created to honor outstanding contributions to the documentation, preservation, and celebration of the history of preservation in New York City—than Mr. Stern. This will be the second such award, the first awarded in 2015 to Barbaralee Diamonstein-

Spielvogel for her long career promoting preservation, including spearheading the 50th anniversary celebration of New York City's Landmarks Law. Stern's award will be presented at the Thirteenth Annual Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit, to be held at the Yale Club (50 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York City) on the morning of December 14th.

The breakfast will also feature Mr. Stern in conversation with Anne H. Van Ingen, a fellow preservation advocate. The Archive Project hopes that you will join us for this special event.

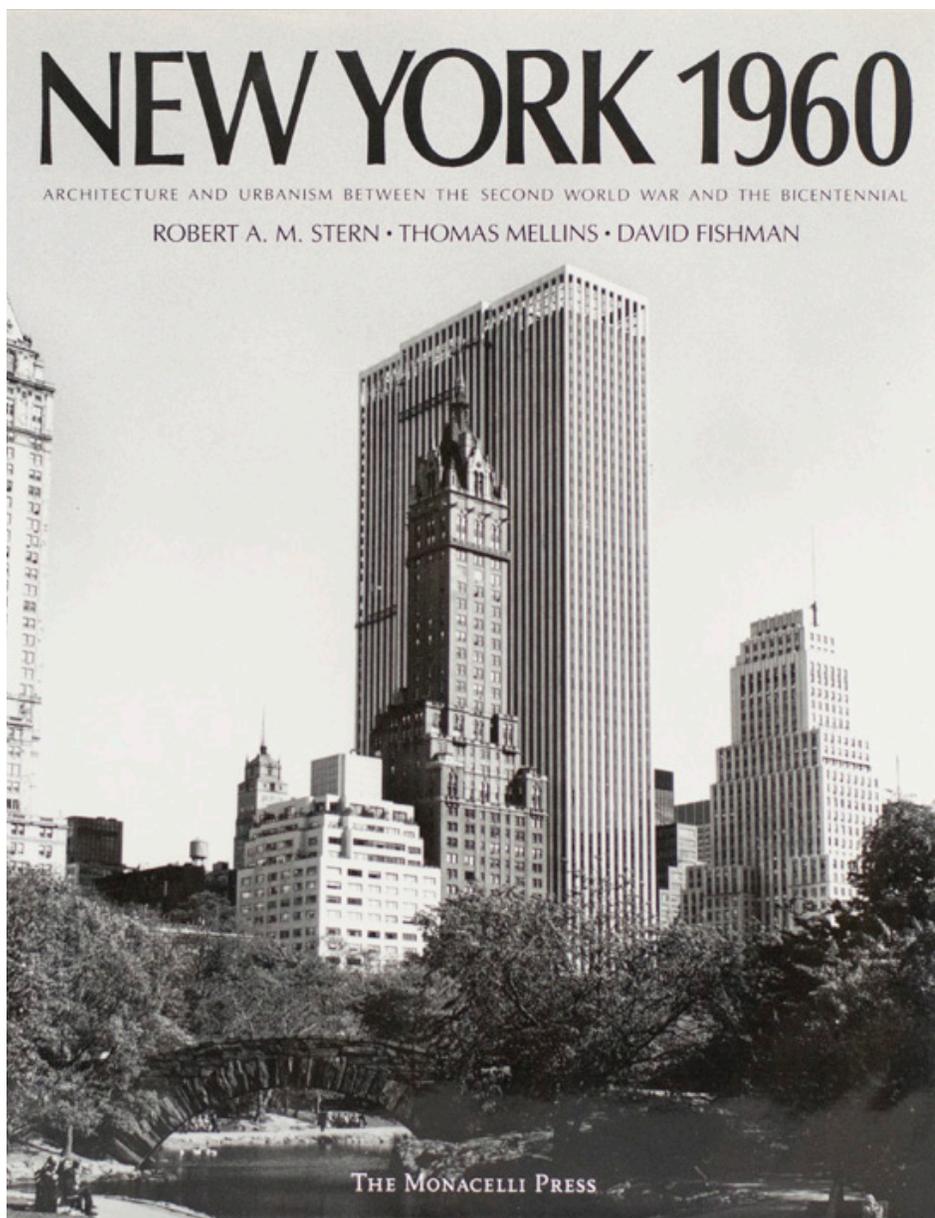
The Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit, the Archive Project's signature fundraising event, is held each year to memorialize civic figure Albert S. Bard (1866-1963) on what would have been his birthday. This year, in fact, would have been his 150th birthday and we have special plans for this event to commemorate his sesquicentennial! Bard was a leader in working to protect the aesthetic values of special places, drafting the New York State legislation which authorized New York City's Landmarks Law and advocating for City Beautiful concerns ranging from billboard control to zoning.

Also a man of many hats, Robert A.M. Stern is a practicing architect, teacher, writer, committed preservationist, one of the foremost historians of New York City's architecture and urbanism, and an early and ardent advocate for the preservation of 20th-century buildings: his "35 Modern Landmarks-in-Waiting" was published in *The New York Times* in November 1996. Founder and Senior Partner of the 300-person New York-based Robert A.M. Stern Architects, Stern served as Dean of the Yale School

of Architecture from 1998 to 2016. Before returning to Yale, where he earned his Master of Architecture degree in 1965, he was Director of the Historic Preservation Program at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University. Stern continues to be an influential proponent of the importance of preservation's past, and the Archive Project is thrilled to present him with its Preservation Award.

After the award ceremony, Mr. Stern will be joined in conversation with Anne H. Van Ingen. Ms. Van Ingen is the Chairman of the Board of the Preservation League of

New York State. She also sits on the boards of Pratt Institute, the Adirondack Museum, and the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation, and is the President of the St. Regis Foundation, a land trust in the Adirondacks. In addition, she is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Columbia University. From 1983 until 2010 she was the Director of the Architecture, Planning & Design Program and Capital Projects at the New York State Council on the Arts. Prior to that she ran a preservation consulting business and worked for several not-for-profits and public agencies. She also served as an Advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation from 1999 to 2008. ■



Cover of *New York 1960* featuring the under-construction G.M. Building, which replaced McKim, Mead & White's Savoy-Plaza Hotel in the 1960s despite much outcry by preservationists, Courtesy of The Monacelli Press



2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit

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Preservation Award and featuring a
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December 14, 2016

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Yale Club

50 Vanderbilt Avenue

Tickets:

Sesquicentennial Co-Chair: \$500

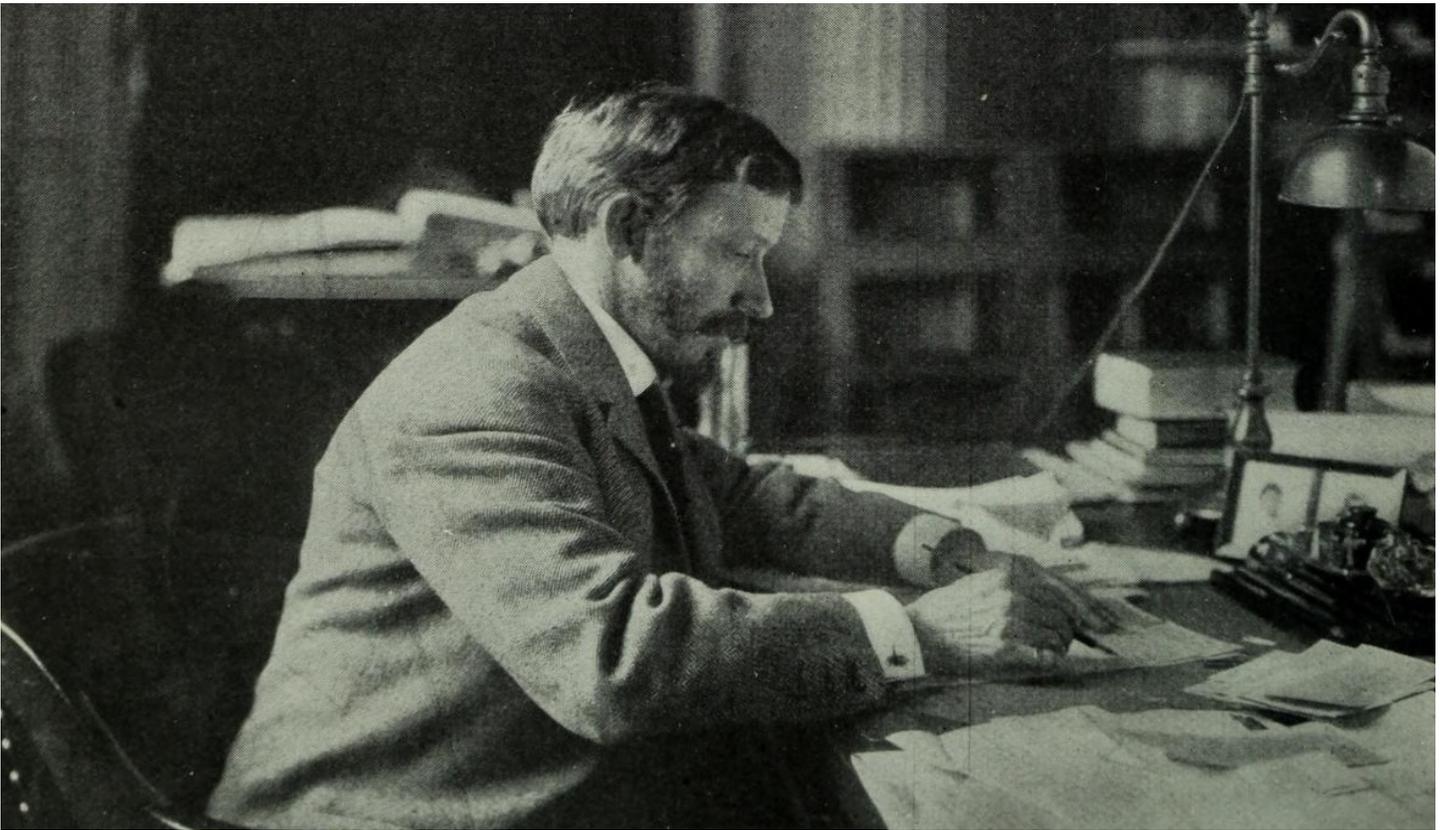
Benefit Committee: \$300

Benefit Tickets: \$150

Student Tickets: \$75

To purchase tickets, or if you have any questions about the event, please visit our website (www.nypap.org) or contact Archive Project Executive Director Matthew Coody at mcoody@nypap.org or 212-988-8379.

Your support of the 2016 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit will enable the New York Preservation Archive Project to continue its efforts to record and document the history of the historic preservation movement in New York City. We are very excited about this upcoming event and sincerely hope you will join us on December 14th!



Portrait of George McAneny, c. 1913, Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

NYPAP Events

Our Public Programs Continue to Celebrate, Educate, & Inspire

Mark your calendars for **New York's Forgotten Master Planner: Rediscovering the Legacy of George McAneny** on October 20th at 6:30 p.m. at Federal Hall (26 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005). Co-sponsored by the Municipal Art Society, the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy, the Manhattan Borough Historian's Office, the Historic Districts Council, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this lecture 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 New York Preservation 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. Afterward Starks will be joined by Manhattan Borough Historian Michael Miscione and Anthony C. Wood, founder and chair of the Archive Project, in a discussion on the lessons that McAneny's work holds 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. McAneny negotiated

the plan that eventually built 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. This lecture is the culmination of Starks's research on McAneny, which was funded by the Archive Project. Starks drew on material from archives around the region to unravel the complex legacy of the man whose heavy-handed tactics ripped through the City's ethnic neighborhoods in the 1910s but 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 Starks on McAneny will soon be available in the "Resources" section of Archive Project's website.

Lastly, the Archive Project feels it is fitting to be hosting the lecture at Federal Hall, an 1830s neoclassical building that stands on the site where George Washington was inaugurated as president. McAneny helped to designate Federal Hall as a national historic shrine in 1939 (the first historic building in a major city to be so designated under the 1935 Historic Sites Act), and then became chairman of the Federal Hall Memorial Associates, a group that operated a historical museum in the building.

The next installment in the “Unsung Heroes” lecture series will focus on planner and architect Robert C. Weinberg (1901-1974). **Pioneer of Planning: Robert C. Weinberg’s Unabashed Urbanism** will delve into Weinberg’s life-long devotion to improving New York City and his influence on the development of historic preservation. Considered a pioneer of city planning, a fledgling profession in the 1930s, Weinberg fostered a decades-long devotion to design, architecture, and preservation. His keen intellect and razor-sharp personality were often at odds with his planning contemporaries, including the politically powerful Robert Moses (Moses even ousted Weinberg from the City’s Department of Parks because Weinberg remained steadfast in principles of design that ran counter to Moses’s).

Fascinated by aesthetic regulation and the role government could play in advancing the beauty of a community, Weinberg was part of numerous preservation campaigns throughout his lifetime, advocating for the protection of areas such as Greenwich Village, Riverdale, Inwood Hill Park, and the Bronx’s Spuyten Duyvil, and such sites as Grand Central Terminal, Pennsylvania Station, Washington Square, and Jefferson Market Courthouse. Countless letters, editorials, and other writings attest to his zeal for improving and preserving the City. In 1956, while a member of The Municipal Art Society, he engaged in an effort to “consider ways and means of having the Bard Act implemented with respect to New York City,” which is now considered one of the first steps towards the Landmarks Law. In 1968 Weinberg became the critic-at-large of architecture and planning for WNYC, New York’s municipal radio station, regularly giving two talks a week that offered

incisive scrutiny to issues including landmark designation, zoning, new construction, and the creation of parkways.

Join us for an exploration of this influential New Yorker, a man considered a preservationist but who had a complex relationship with the movement. Janet Marks, who manages the Weinberg archive at Long Island University, and Andy Lanset, Director of Archives at the New York Public Radio, where Weinberg’s radio recordings are held, will join Archive Project founder and chair Anthony C. Wood for an evening that will rescue Weinberg’s life and work from obscurity. Stay tuned for more details!

The Archive Project is teaming up with the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) to offer a **Preserving Your Personal Papers Workshop** on Thursday, December 1st at 6:30 p.m. BHS Archivist John Zarillo will guide attendees through the tools needed

to properly store, handle, and preserve collections of papers, photographs, memorabilia, and ephemera for future generations. Whether your collection is personal, related to a specific preservation campaign, or part of a larger organizational collection, this workshop will offer productive and hands-on insight into taking the first steps towards stabilizing and protecting it.

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. Assisting in properly archiving the papers and documents of preservationists and organizations is paramount in this mission so we are thrilled to be partnering with BHS to present this educational program. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased through the BHS’s website (www.brooklynhistory.org). ■



Robert C. Weinberg, Courtesy of Long Island University Brooklyn Campus Library Archives



The Columns Club at 101 Spring Street,
Courtesy of the Archive Project

Join the Columns Club!

Have you joined the Columns Club on one of their absorbing behind-the-scenes tours yet? The latest outing was at famed minimalist artist Donald Judd's spectacular former home and studio at 101 Spring Street. Judd purchased the five-story cast-iron building in 1968, renovated it, and installed museum-quality artworks, furniture, and decorative objects that strike a balance between a great respect for the historic fabric of this landmark and Judd's innovative approaches to interior design. Today 101 Spring Street has been preserved as Judd left it upon his death in 1994.

This guided visit to 101 Spring Street offered the Columns Club a direct engagement with Donald Judd's art and vision. Afterward the group retired for a cocktail across the street at Fanelli Cafe, considered New York City's second-oldest food-and-drink establishment in the same locale, having operated under various owners since 1847.

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.

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.

Stewardship Society

Last spring the Stewardship Society went on a rare tour of the Public Design Commission Archive and the agency's newly renovated offices atop City Hall. The archive 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.

Now Stewards are in for another enlightening experience. On November 10th they will walk in the footsteps of the world's greatest leaders during a private tour of the United Nations Headquarters (UN). Perched along the East River, the remarkable modernist buildings of the UN house the intergovernmental organization with the substantial mission of promoting international cooperation. Designed in the 1940s by the most renowned international architects of the day, including Wallace K. Harrison, Le Corbusier, and Oscar Niemeyer, the UN is both an architectural and cultural landmark.

The complex recently underwent a meticulous \$1 billion interior and exterior renovation, the first since opening in 1952, to help restore the buildings' original appearances, increase security, and improve energy efficiency (along with removing asbestos and decades of cigarette smoke coating the walls). Because of the institution's vast archives, original colors and materials could be reinstalled and many of the fixtures and furnishings have been returned to the look they had when the building first opened. Werner Schmidt, from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management of the United Nations Headquarters, will lead attendees through the complex, explaining the history and architecture in the context of this renovation, completed last year.

The 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 undertaken 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



HABS photograph of United Nations Secretariat Building,
Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

City. Since its launch, the 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.

Preservation History in Quotes

"We have won an important legislative battle but it is not the end of the Landmark's war by any means. Vigilance is the price of preservation."

- Edward Finch, Counsel, The Municipal Art Society, June 1965

It might seem prescient that Edward Finch's admonition, "Vigilance is the price of preservation," was delivered on the heels of what is arguably the greatest victory in the history of preservation in New York City: the signing of the Landmarks Law by Mayor Robert Wagner on April 19, 1965. Given preservation's ongoing struggles, Finch was very much on point. Finch, counsel for The Municipal Art Society (MAS) at the time, wanted to make sure that members of MAS did not regard the passage of the law and the

creation of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission as the completion of their preservation agenda. Noting that MAS might choose to "rest on its oars" he wisely counseled that instead, it should be encouraged "to greater efforts." He knew that in a very real sense the law codified the importance and need for citizen advocacy in the landmark process. Finch's words are as relevant today as when he wrote them 50 years ago. Without constant vigilance the Landmarks Law itself could be lost, and

without vigilance, the law's ability to actually preserve New York City's landmarks cannot be assured. The law is only as good as citizens demand it to be. Preservation requires vigilance. Is that too high a price to pay for safeguarding our architectural, historical, and cultural treasures? Fortunately, for half a century, preservationists have taken action to say "no." ■

*Contributed by Anthony C. Wood,
Founder & Chair*



Personifying Finch's call to vigilance, Margot Gayle is pictured here campaigning to save the Jefferson Market Courthouse in 1961, Courtesy of H.J. Fields/The New York Public Library

NYPAP News

The Archive Project has nearly completed *Through the Legal Lens: Interviews with Lawyers Who Shaped NYC's Landmarks Law*. This oral history project, funded in part through a grant from the **Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation**, documents the experiences of individuals who have been pivotal actors in the changing landscape of New York City's Landmarks Law. The oral histories we have collected, as well as a how-to manual on oral history projects that was created in conjunction with this initiative and a video highlighting the project, are now available via our website (www.nypap.org). The Archive Project plans to capture one more interview in the series this fall.

Rave reviews have been flooding in for our **newly redesigned website**, which was launched this spring with a more user-friendly interface and more appealing visuals. There has been a marked increase in inquiries about the resources, archival assistance, and internships we provide.

NYPAP board members Elizabeth Rohn Jeffe and Richard J. Moylan were recently appointed to a panel at The Green-Wood Cemetery in a project funded by The National Endowment of the Humanities. (Jeffe is a board member of Green-Wood, and Moylan is its president.)

Entitled *Gone But Not Forgotten: Digitizing the 177-Year-Old Legacy of New York City's Green-Wood Cemetery*, this effort enables project members to review the Cemetery's massive institutional archive and consider the potential research opportunities that its documents offer, ranging from public health studies and demographic research to genealogical and historical investigation. After studying the collection from multi-disciplinary perspectives, members of the team will make recommendations for a plan for the archives' digitization.



Video still of Gabriel Taussig in the *Through the Legal Lens* video, Courtesy of the Archive Project

New Videos Online

The New York Preservation Archive Project is excited to announce the creation of new “teaser” videos made from the footage recorded as part of *Saving Preservation Stories: Diversity & the Outer Boroughs* and *Through the Legal Lens: Interviews with Lawyers Who Shaped NYC's Landmarks Law*. These oral history initiatives are capturing key memories of preservation campaigns significant to minority communities as well as those of influential legal figures in the evolution of New York City's Landmarks Law. The videos are available on YouTube and due to the recent redesign of the Archive Project's website, can now be featured prominently in the Oral History Collection section of the organization's website (www.nypap.org).

The Archive Project hopes that these engaging videos will tempt both serious researchers and more casual browsers to delve into these collections of newly captured stories. The videos will also be incorporated into future public programs and conference sessions to deepen the public's appreciation and understanding of preservation in New York City and inspire similar efforts in advancing our field. This May, the Archive Project used the *Saving Preservation Stories* video to illustrate a session on how to plan, fund, capture, and share oral history narratives at the 2016 Statewide Preservation Conference in Albany, NY. The Archive Project will use the videos in

presentations at additional conferences this fall, including that of the National Trust for Historic Preservation this November in Houston, TX, and also plans to undertake a series of local public programs over the next year to highlight these oral history initiatives. This series will feature a selection of interviewees in a moderated panel discussion to speak on their efforts and the benefits of undertaking oral histories to document their stories. The goal of this series is to highlight the success of these projects and inspire local communities and individuals to begin documenting their own history. Make sure to visit our website (www.nypap.org) or YouTube page to view the videos!

Last fall the Preservation League of New York State presented its most prestigious award, the Pillar of New York, to the former chairs of New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission for their contributions as stewards of the City's extraordinary Landmarks Law. The honorees were Kent Barwick, Laurie Beckelman, Gene A. Norman, Sherida Paulsen, Jennifer Raab, Beverly Moss Spatt, and Robert Tierney. In conjunction with this award ceremony the Preservation League created a video documenting the legacies of each of these chairs and a brief history of the work of the Commission over the last 50 years. View this inspiring video on the Preservation League's YouTube page. ■

Book Review

Miracle on Fourth Street: Saving an Old Merchant's House

by *Lisa Ackerman, Secretary, New York Preservation Archive Project*

Miracle on Fourth Street: Saving an Old Merchant's House by Mary L. Knapp is an inspiring look at the way in which history is championed for the benefit of us all. For those who doubt the importance of saving historic places, the book may seem an unnecessary contribution to a reading list. Those people would be mistaken. Knapp has chronicled a fascinating tale of the randomness of what gets saved and how it is a true miracle that a house lived in by one family across two generations is now a thriving house museum in New York City. Indeed, the author notes that the Tredwell family might be surprised that their lack of interest in renovating and modernizing the house, coupled with their penchant to save everything, is now delighting curators, conservators, and visitors.

The Merchant's House Museum is a portal to the life of the Tredwell family, as well as a barometer through which we can judge the evolving nature of the East Village. As Knapp notes, the family's patriarch Seabury Tredwell lived from 1780 to 1865 and occupied the house on Fourth Street with his family from 1835 into the early decades of the 20th century. After the death of Seabury Tredwell's youngest daughter, Gertrude, George Chapman, a great-nephew, prevented the house from being sold and undertook an initial restoration. The house opened to the public as a museum in 1936 and has been in continuous operation since then.

Miracle on Fourth Street chronicles the league of champions from Chapman, who is portrayed as the enthusiastic savior of the house, to an array of notable New York City architects, conservators, decorators, and philanthropists who took on the heavy tasks

George Chapman and architect Joseph Roberto, who completed a restoration in the 1970s. Together, these archives—made up of ephemera, architectural drawings, photographs, slides, newspaper clippings, phone logs, guest registers, member rolls, and

correspondence—contain more than 50 years of history during the building's restoration and second life as a historic house museum. This history includes the struggle to survive during the difficult times of the mid-20th-century in the East Village and the house's 1960s designation as a New York City landmark. Through this grant-funded project, the Museum was able to guarantee the long-term preservation of this material while also making it more accessible for researchers (including Mary L. Knapp). These materials can now also be safely displayed and used in exhibitions and educational programming.

Today the house welcomes visitors and has been recognized over the years for its inventive programs, but the book makes clear that the path from 1936 to 2016 was not an easy one. And yet, the extensive archival research evident in the book shows

that those striving to preserve the house over the decades have given us a legacy that is much more than the physical structure of the house. It is a compelling narrative of the Tredwells and those champions who would not be stopped in their quest to help us remember why places matter. ■

MIRACLE ON FOURTH STREET *Saving an Old Merchant's House*



Mary L. Knapp

Cover of *Miracle on Fourth Street: Saving an Old Merchant's House*, Courtesy of Girandole Books

of preserving the house and presenting it to the public. The Archive Project is intimately familiar with some of these figures because the Merchant's House Museum has been the recipient of two of our Archival Assistance Fund grants that helped the Museum process and re-house the institutional archives of

In Memoriam



R. Michael Brown; Courtesy of *The New York Times*

"The story of our lives is written in interiors...how we lived, how we worked, how we played, how we worshipped. Interiors are much more fragile than exteriors. Just look around and see how many we've lost to Sheetrock modernization and demolition."

- R. Michael Brown

R. Michael Brown, the only interior designer ever appointed to serve on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (1978-82), was a passionate advocate for expanding protection of significant interiors. In 1978, he helped spark public outrage against the proposed demolition of Radio City Music Hall by organizing an exhibition of stunning photographs called "Radio City: Keep It Kicking." (It may well have been Brown's idea for the Rockettes to form a kickline on the steps of City Hall, in front of reporters' clicking cameras, before an important public hearing on Radio City's fate.) That same year, he launched a citywide survey, funded by the American Society of Interior Designers, of over 700 significant New York City interiors in all five boroughs.

And yet, by 2013, when the New York School of Interior Design (NYSID) was invited to participate in planning for the 50th anniversary of New York's Landmarks Law, Brown's contributions had been all but

forgotten. As NYSID began to contemplate a show and publication on New York City's interior landmarks (the designation of which was authorized through vital 1973 amendments to the law), the planning process led to Michael Brown (thank you, Kent Barwick!). Brown had retired to a farmhouse in Dutchess County, NY. Fortunately, he had kept boxes of archival material related to his survey work. These records and numerous fascinating conversations with Brown informed and inspired NYSID's exhibition (available to view at landmarkinteriors.nysid.net), which opened with his poignant quote included here.

The topic of interior landmarks resonated with preservationists, interior designers, and the public (the show, which lasted only six weeks from March to April 2015, became NYSID's most visited exhibition ever). People used the website and good old pencil and paper to nominate their favorite interiors for landmark consideration, ensuring that Brown's volunteer survey, begun in the '70s, continues today. The show prompted discussion and questions such as, what is the future of interior landmarks? One thing is certain: without Michael Brown, for many of these landmarks, there simply would be no future.

*Above contributed by Kate Wood,
President of Landmark West!*

Frederic Stuart Papert, co-founder of storied advertising agency Papert Koenig Lois and prominent preservationist, passed away on May 20, 2016, at the age of 89. Papert was born in Manhattan in 1926 and attended P.S. 6 on the Upper East Side, enrolling in high school in Miami following his family's move to Florida. Papert studied journalism at the University of Missouri while also working as a salesman at the Kansas City-based Woolf Brothers department store.

In 1960, the 34-year-old Papert started his own advertising agency with Julian Koenig and George Lois.

Papert Koenig Lois worked with a broad range of clients, from Xerox to Robert F. Kennedy's 1964 Senate Campaign. The successful agency grew to 200-employees and is often cited as an inspiration for Don Draper's firm on *Mad Men*. Having achieved a lasting reputation, Papert Koenig Lois was ultimately disbanded in 1969.

As Fred Papert's career in advertising came to a close, he began utilizing his strengths in public outreach and behind-the-scenes decision-making to great effect in New York City's preservation movement. One of Papert's earliest efforts in the field was the founding and management of Carnegie Hill Neighbors, an organization that was instrumental in rezoning much of the Upper East Side neighborhood to a maximum height of 18 stories. The organization continues to preserve, protect, and improve the neighborhood today.

Beyond Papert's home base of Carnegie Hill, he also took a leading civic role across New York City. Working with Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Kent Barwick, Papert helped lead the effort to preserve Grand Central Terminal from then-owner Penn Central Company's plans to redevelop the landmark. Ultimately, in proving that Penn Central lacked the economic necessity



Fred Papert, left, with Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Philip Johnson in front of Grand Central Terminal in 1977. Courtesy of Dave Pickoff/Associated Press

required to alter Grand Central Terminal's original design, Papert helped to insure that the Beaux-Arts masterpiece would not meet a similar lamentable fate as the demolished Pennsylvania Station.

Through his involvement with the Municipal Art Society, where he served as president from 1975 to 1976, Papert was also a key proponent for the conversion of the Farley Post Office into Moynihan Station, as well as halting the proposed construction atop St. Bartholomew's community house. Papert also served as a board member for the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Henry Street Settlement.

Founded by Papert in 1976, the 42nd Street Development Corporation is perhaps one of his greatest accomplishments. According to Papert, the company was formed "to rescue West 42nd Street from four decades of misuse and neglect," with the ultimate goal of recreating "a river-to-river grand boulevard that would have a major impact on the economy of New York City and the tri-state region." This redevelopment was to be based on the restoration of dilapidated theaters across Times Square and the construction of mixed-use developments. As noted by Papert during the "Sages and Stages" speaker series that the New York Preservation Archive Project hosted in 2004, the feasibility of 42nd Street's revitalization benefited from the clever use of zoning which allowed mid-block theaters to transfer their air rights. This led to theatrical groups such as the Shubert Organization, which owned several theaters, to gain as much as \$50-60 million, portions of which they could reinvest in their theaters and the surrounding area. The transcript of this forum, which is included in the Archive Project's online Oral History Collection at www.nypap.org, also includes Papert's perspective on the politics of preservation, analyzes various preservation-related publicity campaigns and court battles, and addresses more recent debates over new construction in Carnegie Hill and the redevelopment of the far West Side.

One of New York City's behind-the-scenes preservation warriors in the 1970s through the beginning of the 21st century, **Donald Oresman** began his journey in this field as a trusted young colleague of Whitney North



U.S. Custom House at Bowling Green from *King's Views of New York* c. 1903, Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

Seymour, Sr., another early champion of the City's preservation movement. Both were attorneys at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett in the 1970s, then located at One Battery Park Plaza, overlooking the newly vacant U.S. Custom House at Bowling Green. Seymour, a founding member of the New York Landmarks Conservancy (NYLC), asked Oresman to join him on the board of the fledgling organization, recently created under the auspices of the Municipal Art Society. NYLC was to serve a role for landmark structures akin to that of the Nature Conservancy in acquiring, leasing, and selling property—doing anything legal to ensure these structures' preservation.

Playing this all important role, Oresman mobilized many attorneys at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett to further the Conservancy's projects, including the leasing of the U.S. Custom House to advertise its vacancy; the purchase and long-term leasing of the Fraunces Tavern block through a gift from the Vincent Astor Foundation; the preservation and reuse of the Federal Archive Building in Greenwich Village to create the New York City Historic Properties Fund, a multi-million dollar revolving fund that still functions today; and the preservation and reuse of the Villard Houses. Oresman remained on the NYLC's board for 25 years, including a term as its chairman.

Prickly and ornery yet very loyal, Oresman was above all an activist who enjoyed

solving concrete problems. Although he said he much preferred books to buildings, he was a preservationist in all regards. After leaving Simpson Thacher & Bartlett he became part of a three man trio who ran Gulf + Western, which later became Paramount Communications. Ensclosed in an office at the top of the corporate skyscraper headquarters on Columbus Circle, he provided a berth for Brendan Gill, another preservation giant, and his assistant Susan for many years, although this cadre of preservation advocates was later ousted from their perch because of a pernicious rodent problem caused by the droppings of the many caged birds in their office. To me, Oresman was a beloved curmudgeon and a true preservation activist. We should applaud his many preservation victories in the final quarter of the 20th century.

Above contributed by Susan Henshaw Jones, Former Ronay Menschel Director of the Museum of the City of New York and Former President of the New York Landmarks Conservancy

At the time of this issue's printing we learned of the passing of architect and preservationist **John Belle**. The Archive Project is fortunate to have completed an oral history with Belle and his colleague John Beyer in 2014. An "In Memoriam" piece covering Belle's significant preservation-related work will be featured in our spring 2017 newsletter. ■



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YOUR FALL 2016 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!

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

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