

the New York Preservation Archive Project

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

Welcome to the 32nd 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.

Preservation, Pestilence, and Uncertain Times

By Anthony C. Wood, Archive Project Founder & Chair

In times of great upheaval, solace can come from those things and places that provide stability and continuity. Our landmarks and historic districts offer both in spades. In the current ongoing health crisis, our scenic landmarks have been particularly appreciated, offering their natural beauty and refuge as they did after 9/11. The power of place and the importance of community are being underscored as we live through these uncertain times. As efforts and attention are appropriately focused on the health emergency and its economic aftermath, it is important that preservationists articulate the important role preservation plays in our society and make sure the values of preservation are not forgotten in the difficult days and months ahead.

Preservation's history has some lessons to offer us about times like these. Economic bad times and calamities have in some cases had a silver lining for preservation. When homeowners lacked the funds to upgrade their old homes, thus missing out on the asbestos and aluminum siding fads, their buildings survived the modernization that marred so many historic structures. However, although the adage that poverty is a friend of preservation has some truth to it, when carried to its extreme, economic distress can result in the loss of historic structures to abandonment and demolition. We have all seen the results of that.

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With Brush and Pen Building a Case for Preservation Through Art

By Pamela Wong

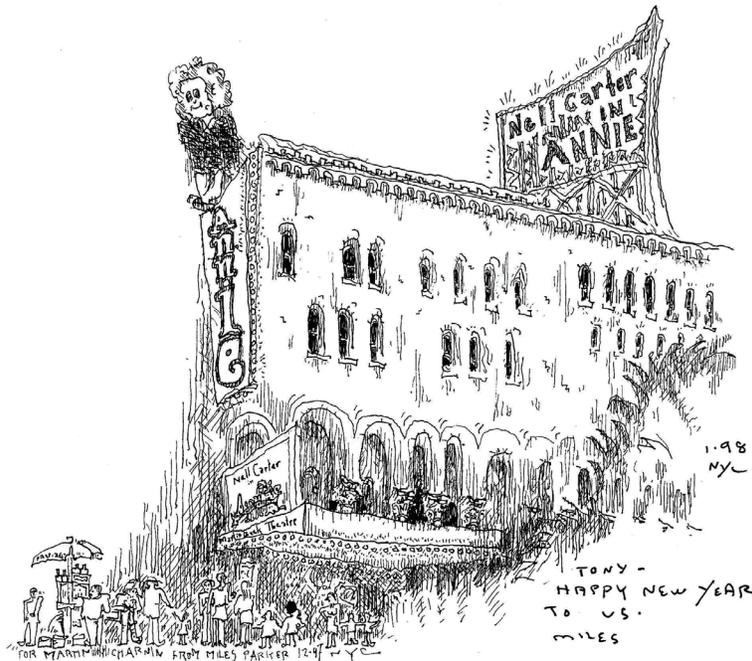
Diane Hu, "Park Slope, 9th Street." Watercolor on paper. Rendering of the 1856-57 William B. Cronyn House at 271 9th Street in Park Slope, Brooklyn, designated an individual city landmark in 1978 | Courtesy of @dianeposephinehu

Cont. from page 1

Unintentionally, tragedy and bad times have helped stop ill-considered projects. Rebecca Shanor in her wonderful book, *The City that Never Was*, tells how the results of the failed 1910 assassination attempt on Mayor Gaynor diminished his abilities and likely contributed to the death of his plan to alleviate congestion by carving a new thoroughfare from Eighth street to Fifty-ninth street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenue. That scheme would have demolished hundreds of buildings including such treasures as the New York Yacht Club. For the record, his proposal was not the motivation behind the assassination attempt.

It was World War II that saved the remains of Castle Clinton from final destruction by Robert Moses. Because of the war effort, he could not get the heavy equipment needed to destroy the structure's historic thick walls thus giving its defenders the time they needed to turn the tide and ultimately save the Castle. Another example comes from decades later. Architectural historian extraordinaire Andrew Dolkart reminds us that it was New York City's 1975 fiscal crisis that cancelled the Beame administration's plans to demolish the Tweed Courthouse.

Times of reduced economic activity can also create opportunities to advance progressive land-use reforms because there are fewer active or proposed projects that would immediately be impacted by such changes. Is now the time to float the notion of New York City instituting a demolition tax? What a win for the environment that would be, as well as being an added encouragement to preserve instead of destroy. In moments when the traditional opponents of pro-preservation policies remain distracted by concerns more central to their real estate interests, a pro-preservation agenda might actually have a chance of success.



Robert Miles Parker's drawing, "Helen Hayes Theatre" 1997, ink on paper. The marquee, depicting Annie, reminds us that when COVID-19 recedes "the sun will come out tomorrow," but what it shines on will depend on preservationists remaining vigilant in the months ahead. | Courtesy of Anthony C. Wood

On the flip side of that coin, difficult economic times will likely create pressure for other types of policy changes. Welcomed efforts to reboot economies from collapse have had mixed results for preservation. After 9/11, preservationists thought that the immediate need would be to address historic resources that were damaged due to the collapses and aftermath. They quickly realized that those damages were more limited than imagined and their energies needed to focus on the threat to historic streets and buildings posed by public and private rebuilding efforts.

As the current economic crisis continues to unfold, there will be appropriate efforts to jump-start the economy with the infusion of funds for a variety of projects. Let's hope some will be preservation projects. However, in that desire to spur growth the existing drumbeat for reducing regulation may lead to efforts to undercut processes and procedures essential for preservation. Yes, reducing bureaucratic delay is desirable, but it should not be used to legitimize undercutting well-established and time-

tested policies securing preservation as the civic good it has proven to be. It will be up to the preservation community to defend and articulate the value of preservation policies in the face of those who have long characterized them as getting in the way of economic growth. History has shown us that preservation does not need to be sacrificed for economic revival; it is an effective tool to achieve it.

Those of us who have lived through economic downturns know that there are difficult times ahead for preservation. Our work will be more important than ever, yet resources will be tighter than ever. To the best of our abilities we must continue to support our preservation organizations as they confront the economic fallout. We will be called upon to exhibit nimbleness and creativity, to do more with less, to cooperate and partner as never before. This will require an even greater combined effort than the impressive coming together of preservation organizations that mobilized to confront the aftermath of 9/11.

The preservation community is no stranger to successfully overcoming adversity. All we need do is look to Albert Bard's decades of efforts to lay the groundwork for our landmarks law or to those historic "David v. Goliath" victories over Robert Moses or, in more recent times, to the successful legal efforts defending the City and Suburban Homes complex. Preservation's history time and again proves that preservationists are as resilient and as sound as the landmarks they seek to protect. Now is not the time to forget that history. Let it inspire us all to add new chapters to it.

Nor is this the time to discount preservation values because they may hinder a passion of the moment. Gregory Gilmartin recounts in *Shaping the City: New York and the Municipal Art Society* (a must read for

anyone interested in preservation history) the ill-conceived idea floated during World War I of having schoolchildren dig trenches in Central Park as part of the Liberty Loans Campaign. The Municipal Art Society strenuously opposed it as did Albert Bard who commented: “Why not advertise the war by smashing the windows in the City Hall?” When bad ideas advanced by good

well-meaning people threaten preservation, they must be appropriately challenged.

As a historically undercapitalized movement that knows how to punch well above its weight, preservation has a history of success, often against the odds. At times like these that history can be a source of information, instruction and inspiration. It is to benefit

both the good times and challenging times—like those we will be facing—that the New York Preservation Archive Project is dedicated to its work of documenting preserving and celebrating the history of preservation. Thanks for helping us do just that. ■

New NYPAP Database Entry on Brooklyn’s “Tree Lady” Unveiled

Peter Sohmer, Reisinger Scholar

On February 26th, the Archive Project unveiled a new Preservation History Database entry on Hattie Carthan at an event honoring her legacy. Held at The Brooklyn Collection at the main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, the talk was one of the final events held in the space prior to the merger of the Brooklyn Public Library with the Brooklyn Historical Society.

Known as the Tree Lady of Brooklyn, Carthan became involved in preservation efforts only in the last two decades of her life. But those years were marked by a flurry of community engagement.

Carthan, who died in 1984, was instrumental in leading a campaign in the 1970s to designate a magnificent *magnolia grandiflora*—whose branches rise above brownstones on Lafayette Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant—as a City landmark. The tree, which is now the City’s only living designated individual landmark, is just one facet of Carthan’s legacy. Carthan also founded numerous environmental and community organizations in central Brooklyn, including the Magnolia Tree Earth Center, fighting to beautify neighborhoods and empower communities.

At the library event, Marlon Rice, former director of the Magnolia Tree Earth Center, presented “The Legacy of Hattie Carthan,” part of The Brooklyn Collection’s programming for the exhibition *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn: An Exploration of Our Plant Life and Green Spaces*. Rice discussed Carthan’s life, the historical context of 1960s and 1970s Brooklyn, and connected her mission to continuing work in central Brooklyn today to preserve and reinvigorate green space for community benefit. At the end of the talk, Executive Director Brad



Left to right: NYPAP Reisinger Scholar Peter Sohmer, Michelle Montalbano of The Brooklyn Collection, speaker Marlon Rice, and NYPAP Executive Director Brad Vogel | Courtesy of the Archive Project



Hattie Carthan attends a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Magnolia Tree Earth Center in 1979 in Bedford-Stuyvesant. | Courtesy of The Brooklyn Collection, donation of Bernice Green

Vogel spoke about the Archive Project’s work and handed out copies of the freshly published entry on Carthan. Unveiling the entry in person allowed The Archive Project to share its mission with a new audience, and to get its resources (literally) in the hands of people interested in the enduring legacy of preservation across the city. The Archive Project continues to grow its Preservation History Database with new entries. ■

With Brush and Pen

Building a Case for Preservation Through Art

By Pamela Wong

While smartphones make it easy for anyone to photograph remarkable scenes in New York City, many artists—past and present—have picked up a pen or brush instead to document the city’s sites and landmarks. Profiled here are five New Yorkers whose perspectives on historic preservation through art demonstrate how this form of documentation is actually part of the broader preservation movement. Artistic representations of the historic built environment can convey in a unique way why a structure or streetscape is worthy of preservation efforts, thereby helping to build constituencies engaged in preservation advocacy.

Finding Real Value in the Village

Artist Kazuya Morimoto has painted lushly-hued watercolors of Greenwich Village for 13 years, meticulously portraying the area’s architecture, streets, and denizens. He has been “archiving old shop fronts and capturing the moments of local scenes before they change and lose their current quality” as he puts it. Some popular neighborhood haunts he has immortalized include Café Cluny, Cherry Lane Theater, Cornelia Street Café, Jefferson Market Library, and Village Cigars.

Originally from Japan, Morimoto lived in the Upper West Side and Williamsburg before settling in the Village three years ago. He has painted scenes of the Lower East Side and Soho along with his own picturesque Village neighborhood. “It’s a beautiful part of the city,” he said, pointing out the “old architecture,” “tree-lined streets” and sense of community created by the “very friendly” locals and their dogs. Morimoto also references Greenwich Village’s creative



Kazuya Morimoto, “West Village,” Watercolor on paper. | Courtesy of @kazuyamorimoto

past, observing that “It’s an important part of the history of New York City. Many artists used to live [here] and created art, music, and literature. [It was the] original bohemian neighborhood. Unfortunately, not much art is going on in this area since its gentrification. The artists were pushed away but it’s still a nice neighborhood.”

Morimoto stresses the importance of historic preservation and insists, “If they start building glass buildings in Greenwich Village and the West Village, [there will be] no reason for me to stay and paint this neighborhood. It’s important to pass the legacy of history to the next generation.” The artist travels to Europe each summer to paint old cities and villages. “People in Europe know it’s important to preserve historical monuments and environment,” he said.

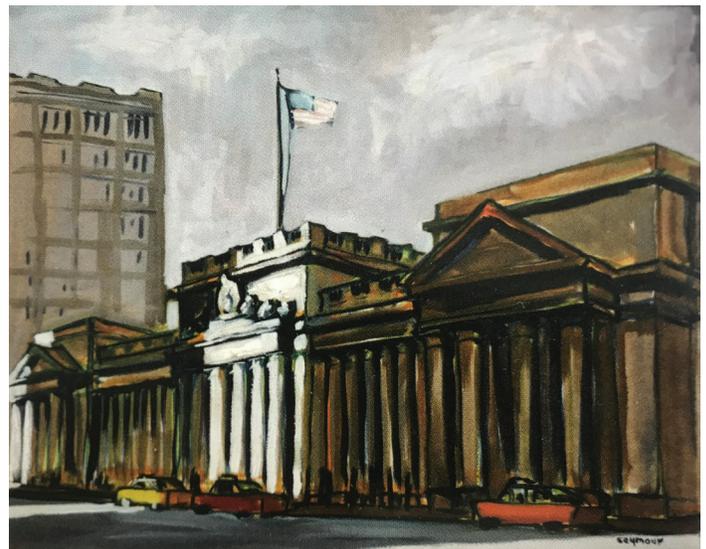
“Humanity has arrived today through various experiences. Many towns and villages disappeared due to wars or natural disasters.... It is impermissible for our generation to end what our ancestors have protected and nurtured.”

A Painter and Preservationist

Morimoto is not alone in his desire to save the character of Greenwich Village. The late Whitney North Seymour, Jr. (1923-2019) also championed the neighborhood in the middle

of the last century as a leader in the historic preservation movement. A member of the Greenwich Village Association, a New York State Senator, and a United States Attorney, Seymour was also an avid painter.

After being appointed Chairman of the Committee of Preservation of Historic Courthouses in 1957, Seymour spent that summer traveling across New York State to paint pre-1900 courthouses, bringing



Whitney North Seymour, Jr., “Pennsylvania Station,” Oil on canvas. | Courtesy Gabriel North Seymour and Tryntje Van Ness Seymour

awareness to the landmark structures and saving them from demolition. In 1956 he painted *Pennsylvania Station, New York*—the railway station built in 1910. He documented the beauty of the Beaux-Arts McKim, Meade, & White masterpiece before it was demolished in the 1960s to make way for today's Madison Square Garden. Seymour also aided the Municipal Art Society's efforts to support the establishment of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1964 and played an important role in the getting the Landmarks Law passed the following year.

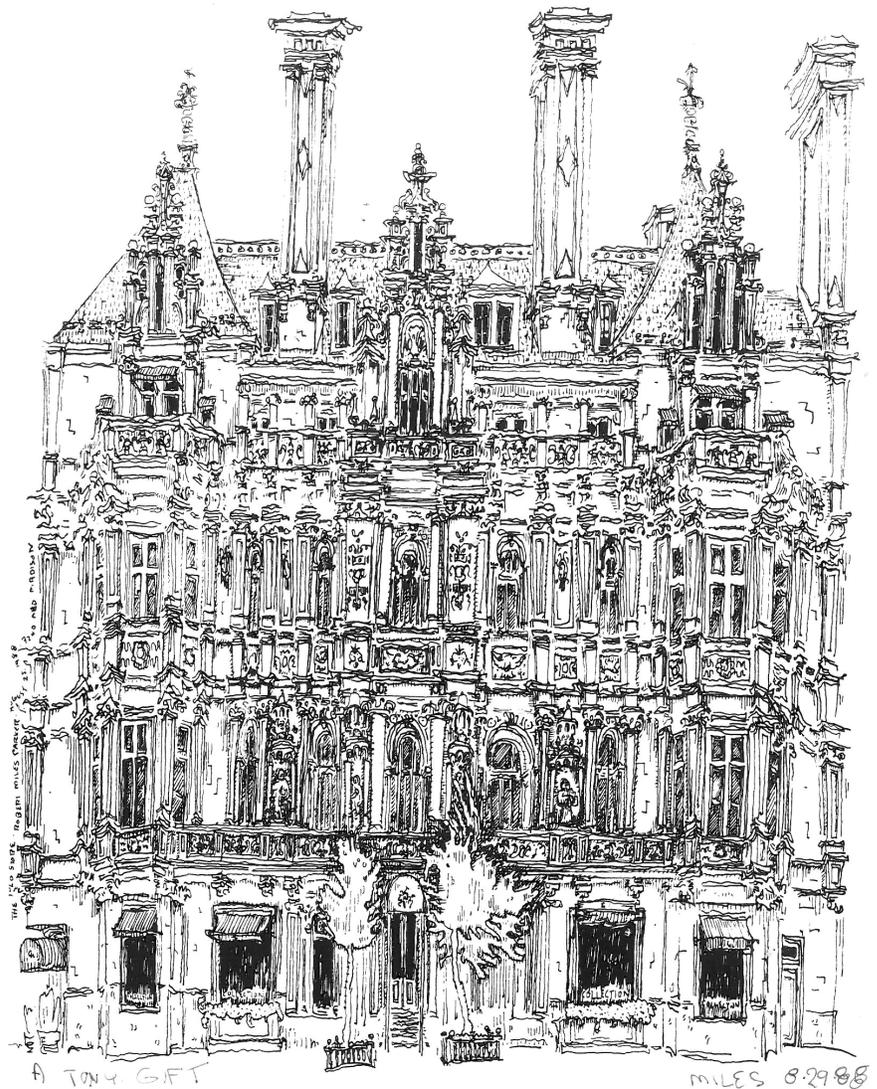
Bringing Brownstones to Life in Brooklyn

"The historic architecture is what makes New York, *New York*," insists Brooklyn-based artist Diane Josephine Hu (@dianejosephinehu). "It's what can turn even a short walk to the bodega into an inspiring revelation."

When Hu relocated to NYC from Washington state eight years ago, she was instantly awed by the architecture so unlike the "sprawling, cookie-cutter suburban housing developments" she grew up with. "I was immediately struck by the beautiful rows of brownstones sitting behind tree-



Diane Hu, "Windsor Terrace, Prospect Park," Watercolor on paper. | Courtesy of Diane Hu



Robert Miles Parker, "The Polo Store," 1988, Ink on paper. This image captures the Gertrude Rhinelander Waldo House at 72nd Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan. | Courtesy of Anthony C. Wood

lined streets," Hu said of the structures she had previously seen only in movies: "They were even more charming in real-life and I quickly became enamored with all of the different architectural styles and details." She finds it inspiring that artisans had once "cared enough about their art to create something unique and beautiful for ordinary day-to-day living."

During her first years in New York, Hu photographed the buildings and homes that fascinated her. "I especially loved my first Brooklyn brownstone in Carroll Gardens and spent a lot of time capturing the neighboring streets, especially in the historic district throughout the changing seasons," she recalled. "A couple of years later, I picked up watercolor painting, and

found myself really enjoying the process of drawing and painting these brownstones and historic buildings as well. It really makes you notice small details that you would have otherwise missed."

Hu can be found across Brooklyn sketching and painting *en plein air* or in coffee shops. "Everything about these old buildings inspires me," she says. "They are not only visually magnificent and interesting, but also carry so much of New York City's history."

The Incomparable Miles Parker

Another artist passionate about preservation, the late Robert Miles Parker (1939-2012),

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was revered for his lively images of street scenes and buildings across the country. Born in Norfolk, Virginia, Parker grew up in San Diego. In 1969, after discovering that the 1887 Sherman-Gilbert House in his San Diego neighborhood was slated to be razed, Parker founded the Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO). The group saved the Victorian house and several others from the wrecking ball, restoring and relocating them to the specially created Heritage Park in the city's Old Town section.

Parker moved to New York City in the mid-1980s where he lived until his death in 2012. He was often spotted drawing outdoors around his Upper West Side neighborhood, accompanied by his Norfolk terrier. Published in 1988, *Upper West Side: New York*, features 200 of Parker's illustrations accompanied by his commentary. Parker also drew Broadway theaters, both inside and out, illustrating the evolution of their designs throughout the years, creating hundreds of pen-and-ink drawings of the majestic venues. Each drawing gave life and meaning to the structure in his gaze, heightening its value.

Preservation on a Personal Level

Parker often ran into fellow artist Jill Gill at various preservationist events. "Miles, as he was called, with his thatch of white hair and gaunt face, was really a character," Gill fondly recalls. "He lived and breathed buildings."

Born and raised in Manhattan, Gill began documenting the city's architecture after graduating from the University of Connecticut. "I came home from college in 1954 and lived in my parents' place on Second Avenue and 22nd Street," she said. "When I saw the Third Avenue El coming down, I would go out with my Brownie camera and take many, many photographs from various vantage points," she said. Gill

shot the blocks along Second and Third Avenues "that were being destroyed," documenting her "crumbling world."

She soon began painting the scenes captured in her pictures. Later, in the 1960s, along with taking photos of sites about to be demolished, she started rescuing architectural relics such as angels, gargoyles, and stained-glass windows. "I didn't even know about

City's old cinemas and theaters "like the wonderful terra cotta-tiled Helen Hayes which used to be on 46th Street." She recently completed a painting featuring a vacant, "yellowish-brick, twin-peaked, gabled building" on Broadway between 60th and 61st Streets. "It's one of my favorite quirky buildings and I wanted to preserve that," she explains. "It's standing there empty, awaiting demolition."



Jill Gill, "UWS #5," 2017, Watercolor on paper. Image depicts Broadway at 81st Street | Courtesy of Jill Gill

architecture at that point," she said. "I was fascinated with all the fancy cornices on the Third Avenue tenements and the names on the top of them like 'Caroline' or 'Elite.'" This fascination led her to attend lectures by architectural historian Barry Lewis, inspiring her decades-long pursuit of documenting New York's disappearing structures.

Though she has painted iconic sites such as the Old Merchant's House, the no-longer-extant Bonwit Teller, and the Russian Tea Room "before it got glitzed up," Gill notes that her work focuses not on landmarked structures but records and celebrates "ordinary, vernacular city blocks." Rich in detail and whimsy, Gill's watercolor and ink paintings preserve "the buildings that are unremarkable and un-landmarkable that really form the fabric of neighborhoods."

A series by Gill pays homage to New York

In an unpublished book, *Townhouse Proud*, Gill preserves 100 Manhattan townhouses—some safe in historic districts, others unprotected—in paintings commissioned by their owners accompanied by anecdotes about the homes and their histories. Gill is currently busy completing *Building Memories: Lost New York 1954-2019*. Scheduled to be released in 2021, the book compiles 100 of her paintings and commentary on lost blocks across seven Manhattan neighborhoods. "It's totally personal," Gill says of her work to preserve New York City's historic architecture. "It became a passion. My people-oriented city is being torn down around me."

Through the artistic talents and insights of each of the five artists mentioned here, the transmission of history in art serves a double preservation purpose. First, it captures the history the building itself embodies, amplifying the value of the building's continued existence to the city. Second, it helps to immortalize or at least heighten the importance of an edifice, increasing the likelihood that someone will care enough about it to ensure that it will persist further into the future, whether landmarked or not. ■

For more:
www.kazuyamorimoto.com/about
www.nypap.org/oral-history/whitney-north-seymour-jr/
www.jillgill.net

Notes from the Board

Michael Ryan



Michael Ryan | Courtesy of Michael Ryan

Although I began my professional life fresh with a Ph.D. in Early Modern European History (1500-1800), I somehow wound up managing rare book and manuscript libraries in universities for the next 40 some years. I had no aspirations to work in a library, other than to read books. It would not have occurred to me to become a librarian. But it was a fortunate transition, since it rescued me from life as a solitary drudge laboring mightily to produce an ounce of genuine scholarship. And it opened so many doors for me, doors to the broader world of universities, higher education, book collecting, philanthropy, and, book and paper conservation, among others. I have bounced around the country, from New York to Chicago to Palo Alto to Philadelphia and now back to New York. It has been, in the words of the late Gardner Botsford, a *New Yorker* contributor from an earlier time and master of the *mot juste*, a life of privilege, mostly.

Having been born and raised in Los Angeles, I was unfamiliar with architectural conservation. LA was then (and I guess still is) all about building – building on anything that had room to accommodate a structure. Penn Station fell during my junior year in high school. I knew nothing about it, and if I had, I probably would not have cared. Teenage males have other preoccupations.

Conservation, however, did mean (and still does) something important to me: the conservation of nature. The relentless destruction of the natural beauty of Southern California was a wrenching experience to watch. The proliferation of drab, cheap sub-divisions across the alluvial basin that is LA County remains heartbreaking in memory, whence sprang a lifelong distrust of developers. New York had Penn Station; LA had almost 5,000 sq. miles to despoil. The developers did their work well, leaving few stones unturned.

My introduction to historic preservation came at Columbia where I was asked to run the Avery Architectural Library pending the appointment of a permanent director. At Avery, I had the good fortune of meeting Andrew Dolkart who was the faculty face of preservation and neighborhood integrity at Columbia. Through Andrew I learned to appreciate the manifold pleasures of vernacular architecture around the boroughs. Who knew! Thank you, Andrew.

My next awakening came over lunch with someone I had never met but was encouraged to engage with, Tony Wood. At the New-York Historical Society, I realized that we had a key role to play in acquiring and preserving the documentary legacies of

the preservation community. It would be part of our contribution to documenting the built environment of New York. Since we already had a rich corpus of Gilded Age architectural firms whose works were now “objects of interest” (by the good guys and the bad guys), it made sense for us to be more aggressive in acquiring the papers and records of people and organizations which had planted their flags.

It is a privilege and honor for me to work with colleagues at The New York Preservation Archive Project to further the goals and mission of the organization in preserving the work of those who have labored most to secure the future of New York’s buildings and neighborhoods. As a librarian, I will do what I can to ensure that the legacies of individuals and organizations committed to saving our built environment from mindless despoilation are preserved and made accessible for use. ■

Michael Ryan is the Vice President and Sue Ann Weinberg Director of the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library at the New-York Historical Society. He joined the Archive Project board this year.

2019 Bard Breakfast Honors Otis Pratt Pearsall

Speaker Priscilla Hancock Cooper Highlights Preservation of Civil Rights Sites

A record crowd gathered in December of 2019 at the Yale Club for the 17th Annual Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit. Legendary Brooklyn Heights preservationist Otis Pratt Pearsall, accompanied by his wife Nancy Pearsall, was honored with the Archive Project's Preservation Award. Importantly, Pearsall, who was introduced by Richard Moylan of Green-Wood Cemetery, was

honored for his tireless efforts to create, maintain, and use meticulous archives of his preservation activities. Attendees were also moved by the words of speaker Priscilla Hancock Cooper of the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium. Brent Leggs of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund

introduced Cooper, and she highlighted efforts to preserve sites associated with the U.S. civil rights movement. Lead sponsors for the event included The J.M. Kaplan Fund and Green-Wood Cemetery. ■

Video of the full Bard Breakfast is available online at the Archive Project's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfPmTNO2iQk



Professor Andrew Dolkart (foreground) and a host of preservationists rise to honor Otis Pratt Pearsall for his long service as a steward of the records that constitute preservation history. | Courtesy of John Keon



Otis Pratt Pearsall receives the Archive Project's 2019 Preservation Award at the Bard Breakfast, with NYPAP Chair Anthony C. Wood (middle) and Board Member Richard Moylan of Green-Wood Cemetery (right)



Priscilla Hancock Cooper addresses two hundred guests at the Yale Club during the 2019 Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit as Brent Leggs looks on. | Courtesy of John Keon

NYPAP Events

Programs, Tours, and Conferences

Columns Club Tour

In February, the Archive Project's Columns Club toured the Grand Masonic Lodge in Chelsea courtesy of member **Alex Vastola** who serves as librarian of the Lodge's



Alex Vastola, left, head of the Grand Masonic Lodge's Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library, provides Columns Club members with context for artifacts from the Library's collection. Vastola previously served as a researcher for the Archive Project. | Courtesy the Archive Project

Livingston Masonic Library. In addition to experiencing the ostentatious ornamentation in various lodge rooms, members had an opportunity to view rare objects from the Library's collection, including an ornate trowel used at the 1880s dedication of Cleopatra's Needle in Central Park.

Chairman's Circle

The Archive Project's Chairman's Circle gathered at the Columbus Citizens Foundation in February for dinner and a program headed by Archive Project board members **Lisa Ackerman** and **Michele Bogart**. International heritage preservation issues and public art controversies dominated the evening's conversations.

NYC Landmarks 55 Alliance

Along with the **Historic House Trust**, the Archive Project hosted the **NYC Landmarks 55 Alliance** in February in the lead-up to the 55th anniversary of the signing of New York City's Landmarks Law (April 2020). **Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel** led those gathered at The Abyssinian Baptist

Church in Harlem in a program with a focus on celebrating Black History Month. Special thanks to Archive Project board member **John Reddick** for facilitating the event.



Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, center, at February's Alliance meeting at Abyssinian Baptist Church, has led the charge to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the NYC Landmarks Law in 2020. | Courtesy the Archive Project

HDC Conference

In early March, the Archive Project participated in the Preservation Conference sponsored by **Historic Districts Council** at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Preservationists and historians from around the City gathered for a day of discussing relevant topics.

Our 2020 Jeffe Fellow

Ireland Native and City Island Resident Sarah Eccles



Sarah Eccles, 2020 Jeffe Fellow, at her home in City Island | Courtesy Sarah Eccles

I graduated from Fordham University in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in history. During my time at Fordham, my interest in preservation grew along with my devotion to history, and as a result I decided to pursue graduate studies in historic preservation. I am at present pursuing a master's degree in historic preservation at Pratt Institute.

History, especially American history, has always been a passion of mine. In my spare time, I love to read novels based on American history. Right now, I am immersed in Russell Shorto's new book, *Revolution Song: A Story*

of American Freedom, which tells the story of the conflict through the documented lives of six people involved in the Revolutionary War.

My perspective on American history is enhanced by the fact that I grew up in the northwest of Ireland, where remnants of Irish history survive through its built fabric. As you walk in the countryside, viewing the stone walls separating the fields and the thatched roof cottages, you can feel the lives of the people who have gone before.

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Archive Project Gets “Zooming” During Pandemic

Multiple Virtual Offerings Launched, Hundreds Participate

“Let me unmute you.” This strange phrase, once reserved for obscure settings, has catapulted to mainstream prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic as masses of people continue to take to Zoom for virtual programming. Amidst the fluid situation with millions of people subject to lockdown in New York City, the Archive Project launched multiple ways to interact remotely. As this newsletter goes to press, fans and supporters of the Archive Project can join a weekly Coffee Break Chat at 3:45 pm on Wednesday or a NYPAPy Hour each Friday at 5:45 pm. The programs feature Archive Project board members, authors, architectural historians, and preservationists in conversation about everything from the legacy of preservationist Margot Gayle to the history of Brooklyn architect Montrose Morris. Additional educational offerings, sponsored by the A. Ottavino Corp.,

on conducting oral histories and saving papers have also been well-attended.

“It’s a bit of a sudden Wild West to figure out—and we’re certainly working things out as we go,” Executive Director Brad Vogel said with a laugh. “But it’s been exhilarating to create a new and somewhat casual sense of community online, especially during these trying times when people are craving connection. Plus, we have a chance to lift up our extensive body of preservation history and bring in some remarkable voices to bring it to life.”

To ensure that you are staying abreast of the Archive Project’s Zoom offerings, be sure to sign up for e-updates at www.nypap.org. You are invited to join the hundreds of people who have enjoyed the programming to date. ■

Visit our online library and YouTube channel for recordings of our inaugural Zoom programming:

Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm) - Zachary Violette and Brad Vogel on the book *The Decorated Tenement: How Immigrant Builders and Architects Transformed the Slum* **April 22**

Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm) - Francis Morrone with Brad Vogel on Henry Hope Reed **April 29**

Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm) - Patrick Ciccone with Brad Vogel on the book *Bricks & Brownstone* **May 6**

NYPAPy Hour (5:45 pm) - Suzanne Spellen & Susan De Vries on Brooklyn Architect Montrose Morris. **May 8**

Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm): Anthony W. Robins on Margot Gayle and Cast-Iron with special guest Yuki Ohta **May 13**

NYPAPy Hour (5:45 pm): Paul Lozito and Chuck Hovanic on Clay Avenue in the Bronx **May 15**

Oral History Training (6 pm): Oral Historian Sarah Dziedzic **May 18**

Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm): Otis and Nancy Pearsall with Anthony C. Wood on preservationist Clay Lancaster **May 20**

NYPAPy Hour (5:45 pm): Re-envisioning Morris-Jumel Mansion with Matthew Coody & Shiloh Holley *Welcome Columns Club & Young Georgians! **May 22**

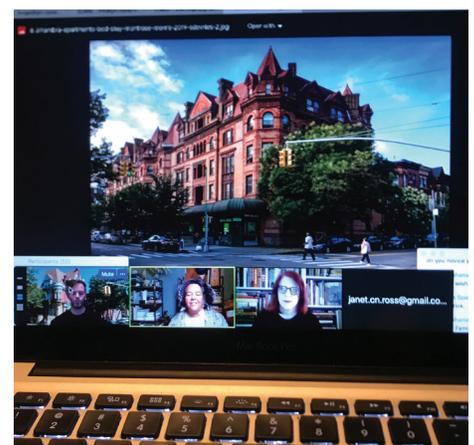
Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm): John Freeman Gill in conversation with Gina Pollara on his book *The Gargoyle Hunters* **May 27**

NYPAPy Hour (5:45 pm): Mary Habstritt, Nathan Kensinger, & Tom Rinaldi on Waterfront Industrial Preservation in NYC (or the lack thereof) **May 29**

Coffee Break Chat (3:45 pm): Hailing Halina Rosenthal with Anthony C. Wood & Friends **June 3**



Led from a laptop perched on a chair in an apartment kitchen, the Archive Project’s first Coffee Break Chat featured author Zachary Violette. CTA Architects sponsored the Coffee Break Chats. | Courtesy the Archive Project



One of the Archive Project’s virtual Zoom programs underway in April 2020 amidst the pandemic. Executive Director Brad Vogel, architectural historian Suzanne Spellen, and Archive Project board member Susan De Vries discuss the work of Brooklyn architect Montrose Morris in the first NYPAPy Hour, sponsored by JHP Associates. | Photo: Brad Vogel

NYPAP News

Archive Project Founder Honored.

The Archive Project's founder and chair, **Anthony C. Wood**, has been selected to receive the **Preservation Leadership Award** as part of The New York Landmarks Conservancy's Lucy G. Moses Preservation Awards. The Preservation Leadership Award is bestowed upon an outstanding individual in the field of historic preservation. "Tony Wood has been a driving force for preservation for more than 40 years," said **Peg Breen**, President

of the Conservancy. "He literally wrote the book on the creation of the City's landmarks law. And he is ensuring that preservation movement records, and the efforts of key individuals, will be remembered." Mr. Wood was slated to receive the award on April 23, 2020, but the ceremony has been postponed to September 23, 2020.

Preservation Photos Shown at Gracie Mansion.

The Archive Project worked with the **Gracie Mansion Conservancy**, **The Brooklyn Collection**, **Weeksville Heritage Center**, and photographer **Steven Tucker** to ensure that several images from the preservation movement were included in a February art exhibition at Gracie Mansion entitled **CATALYST: Art and Social Justice** (including photos of **Dr. Joan Maynard**, **Hattie Carthan**, **Kent Barwick**, and **Action Group for Better Architecture in New York** marching at Penn Station). The exhibit was featured in *The New York Times*.



Responding to the call of a Brooklyn food pantry, the Archive Project donated 100 of its Preservation Film Festival totes in early May after the festival was cancelled. The totes will be used to bag meals distributed to those in need. |
Courtesy Brad Vogel

Project donated 100 of its Preservation Film Festival totes to CHiPS soup kitchen in Gowanus after the festival was cancelled due to the pandemic. The totes will be used to bag meals that are prepared from donated food and distributed daily to long lines of individuals in need. A special thanks to those who had stepped up to sponsor what would have been the fourth annual film festival: **Jan Hird Pokorny Associates**, **A. Ottavino Corp.**, **Francoise Bollack Architects**, **Pratt Institute Historic Preservation Program**, and **CTA Architects P. C.**

Archive Project Donates to COVID-19 Relief.

Responding to a call by a Brooklyn pop-up food pantry, the Archive



One of four images of historic preservationists in action on display in the CATALYST exhibition at Gracie Mansion (Kent Barwick leading a rally, original image by Steven Tucker). |
Courtesy of the Archive Project

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Now, I live on City Island in the Bronx, where a similar tale of history can be told through local buildings and landmarks.

At Pratt we focus on value-based preservation, where we do not just look solely at historic buildings but also the communities and people within them, as does the Archive Project. We strive to take a closer look at the people behind the preservation movement—those who fought to save the City's heritage. One example that I think of is someone who is not always given her due, one of the many female driving forces behind the movement to save Greenwich Village: Verna Small.

The Archive Project has given me the opportunity to learn so much about preservation history. But my fellowship has consisted of more than research. Writing posts for our social media pages based on research findings has been a major component of my work. I have been assisting with the NYPAP newsletter and with our website. The combination of tasks has been very helpful in learning to balance the love of research with core administrative work.

New York City is quite different to the northwest of Ireland, but both regions have many devoted preservationists who, in their respective ways, fight to preserve the history of those who came before them. This city

has certainly increased my appreciation for preservation and history, something that has been greatly enhanced through my Pratt experience and through working at the Archive Project. I have just completed my first year in Pratt, but as I look forward to graduation I also look forward to the changing dynamic of the preservation world. It's increasingly one where people and communities are as important as buildings. Working at the Archive Project, with its mission to preserve the history of preservation and those who furthered the cause, has prepared me for this new realm. I am grateful to Elizabeth and Robert Jeffe for their generosity in making this experience possible for me. ■



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YOUR SPRING/SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!

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Our work could not be accomplished without their—and your—contributions.

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

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