

# CAST-IRON RELICS FROM 1848 STOLEN

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There are millions of stories in the Naked City. Today there are four fewer.

Housebreakers have made off with what was left of the stored remains of the four floors of the landmark Bogardus Building, which was torn down in 1971.

The theft, discovered yesterday, of the 1½ tons of cast-iron facade panels was not a landmark crime. Thieves stole parts of the remains three years ago.

Landmarks Preservation Commission chairman Beverly Moss was detected yesterday as she reported the latest theft.

"It was the forerunner of the skyscraper," she said of the building. "This was the transition. It's a missing link now."

## A FIRST

When it was constructed in 1848, the Bogardus became a cornerstone in the history of architectural and technical development that led to the modern skyscraper.

It was the first building in the city constructed with a complete cast-iron

front. Built at 258 Washington St., in Lower Manhattan, the structure was dismantled—rather than demolished—in 1971, to make way for the Independence Plaza housing project.

Three years ago this month, three men drove up to the Washington St. site in a truck at midday and removed about four tons of the building's facade from the fenced-in area where it was stored.

Two men later pleaded guilty to that theft. They had sold the iron to a Bronx junkyard where it was cut into smaller pieces.

## UNDER LOCK & KEY

After that incident the remaining 59 pieces of the structure were moved to an empty building at 503 W. 52d St. and kept under lock and key.

Parts of the facade had been slated for use by the South Street Seaport Museum. Landmarks Commission and museum staff went to examine the pieces yesterday. Some second-story men had been there before them.

Police were checking scrap metal shops around town today in the hope that the facade hasn't already been melted down. But the search is a long-shot since the theft may have occurred weeks or even months ago.