

3309 Bainbridge Avenue  
The Bronx, NY 10467  
718-881-8900

The Bronx County Historical Society, founded in 1955, is a private, non-profit educational and cultural institution chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. The Society is dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx.

The Society disseminates information by utilizing its collections in exhibitions, historical research, publications and documentaries, educational and cultural programming, the operation of our Research Library, The Bronx County Archives, and two national landmark historic house museums: the c. 1812 Edgar Allan Poe Cottage and the c. 1758 fieldstone farmhouse Valentine-Varian House, home of the Museum of Bronx History.

The Bronx County Historical Society is partially supported through funds and services provided by the NYC Departments of Cultural Affairs and Parks and Recreation, the Historic House Trust of New York City, The Bronx City Council Delegation, the Office of The Bronx Borough President, The Bronx Delegations of the NYS Assembly and the NYS Senate, the H.W. Wilson Foundation, the Astor Fund, The New York Times Foundation, the New York State Library, Susan Tane, the New York Community Trust, the New Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund, and the New York Public Library.

# THE BRONX HISTORIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## 50 YEARS OF HIP HOP IN THE BRONX

When Cindy Campbell asked her brother Clive, better known as DJ Kool Herc, to throw her a back-to-school party on August 11, 1973 in the Recreation Room of 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, neither could have known that this event would be an early catalyst for the global arts and music movement we now know as hip hop. This Kool Herc party, like countless other block and recreation center parties in The Bronx at the time, provided teenagers and young adults a safe place to hang out and get down to good music and dancing. The major difference with Herc's early parties was that they were a notch above many others at the time, with a louder sound system, more hot records carefully curated for percussive breaks, and a group of regular dancers hand-selected by Herc to keep the groove going strong. The musical genres featured at these parties were enjoyed by many Bronxites at the time: soul, funk, salsa, R&B, and rock. Popular dances included uproking, the Latin Hustle, and others in vogue in The Bronx of the early 1970s.

Similar parties were happening around the same time in fits and spurts around the borough, especially in the Bronxdale Houses under the creative guidance of Disco King Mario (1956–1994). These Bronx parties began to take off in a way nobody could have predicted. As Herc and other DJs began to fine-tune their craft and add more elements to the mix—talking to the crowd to pump them up ("MCing"), various turntable techniques, increasingly bold dance moves—the parties had to move to larger venues like parks, public school auditoriums, and other community centers. Within a few years, these highly creative, multi-sensory parties had mushroomed around the borough, with a new generation of DJs like Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grand Wizzard Theodore.

Various Bronx DJs claim responsibility for the original coining of the term

*Continued on inside left.*



*Save the Date*  
The Bronx County Historical Society  
**22nd Annual Golf Tournament**  
Wednesday, September 20, 2023

**HONOREE**  
**JOSEPH R. MAWAD**  
Tekniverse  
Business Technology Solutions

**TOURNAMENT CO-CHAIRS:**  
**MARK ENGEL & GREG GONZALEZ**  
**PELHAM SPLIT ROCK GOLF COURSE**  
870 SHORE ROAD • THE BRONX, NY 10464

For more information on early registration or sponsorship opportunities, please contact our Tournament Coordinator, Teresa Brown at 718-881-8900, ext. 103 or [tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org)

# Thanks!

## to our donors

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Eta Omega Omega Chapter
- Carleton Energy Consulting
- Coder & Company, CPA
- Genesis Realty
- Horing Welikson Rosen & Digrugilliers, PC
- Langsam Property Services
- Lehman College
- Manhattan Parking Group
- Milbrook Properties
- Schur Management
- Sierra Consulting Group
- Skyline Properties
- Slattery Energy Consulting Group
- Dr. Rodrick Wallace

\* This is a partial list.

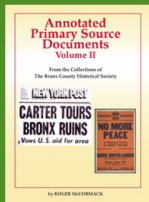
## New Members

- Roger Bernstein
- Michael Caratzas
- Francis Dacruz Jr.
- Raquel Friedman
- Alexandra Harbet
- David Herszenon
- Joseph Morales
- Catherine Trott
- Beth Venn

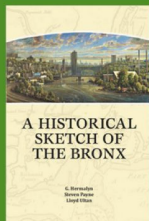
\* This is a partial list.

## Publications

**Annotated Primary Source Documents, Vol. II**  
\$22.00



**A Historical Sketch of The Bronx**  
\$15.00



Stickers from Bronx pioneering graffiti artists RIFF 170 and NAK 143, 2023, courtesy of the artists. The Bronx Aerosol Arts Documentary Project, The Bronx County Archives at The Bronx County Historical Society Research Library.

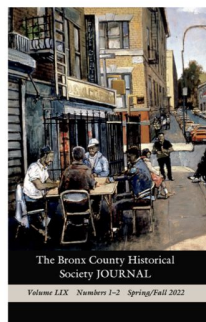
"hip hop" in the late 1970s—Lovebug Starski, Cowboy, and DJ Hollywood—but only gradually did the term become widespread, after The Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" came out in 1979 and when Afrika Bambaataa started using "hip hop" to describe the cultural movement in the early 1980s.

Bambaataa also devised the classical "four elements" scheme of hip hop: DJing, MCing, break dancing, and graffiti, the first two of which are what people today think of as "rap." In 1973, however, the majority of these hip hop elements were still gradually coming into being—aside, that is, from graffiti, then known simply as "writing." By 1973–1974, writers had moved from doing simple tags on walls, vans, and buses to creating increasingly elaborate pieces—short for "masterpieces"—on the outside of subway trains. As with all things hip hop, the locus of this major development in graffiti technique was The Bronx, home to many of the earliest masters of style.

Although each of the elements of hip hop has now become a global commodity, little credit has been given to the mass of Bronx teenagers of the 1970s who gave hip hop its original style and ethos. That is fortunately changing, thanks in part to the Bronx Aerosol Arts Documentary Project and other initiatives we are rolling out at The Bronx County Historical Society.

We invite everyone to celebrate this work and these histories with us in June (see Upcoming Events).

## SUBMISSIONS TO OUR JOURNAL



Since 1964, *The Bronx County Historical Society Journal* has been one of the premier historical journals in the tri-state region. The *Journal's* articles are of interest to all who enjoy scholarly studies and personal accounts of individuals, events, cultures, struggles, and triumphs in The Bronx. Submit article manuscripts in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx) along with 2 images at 300dpi, if relevant, as email attachments to [spayne@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:spayne@bronxhistoricalsociety.org). The manuscript should be in 12-pt. Times New Roman font

and double-spaced. Be sure to include your full name, contact information, and short biography in the body of your email. Publication of submissions is not guaranteed.

# ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

As a final notice, members will receive only the electronic version of the next issue of our newsletter (Oct. 2023-Jan. 2024) by default. Members who wish to continue receiving the physical version as well as the electronic must opt in by contacting Teresa Brown, Chief Administrative Officer, at [tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org) or 718-881-8900 x103.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**BRONX AEROSOL ARTS AND STREET JAM**  
**Saturday, June 17, 2023, 11:00am-6:00pm**  
**Museum of Bronx History**  
**3266 Bainbridge Avenue**

Marking the 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop, The Bronx County Historical Society will host a Bronx Aerosol Arts and Street Jam on the grounds and inside of the Museum of Bronx History on Saturday, June 17, 11:00am-6:00pm. The event will include an oral history viewing party, highlighting stories of Bronx pioneer graffiti artists, an exhibit of Bronx high school students' art on canvases, catering from Johnson's BBQ, and music from DJ Tall Guy. This event is made possible through the financial support of New York City Council Member Eric Dinowitz and the Council's Cultural Immigrant Initiative and Art a Catalyst for Change: Anti-Gun Violence Initiative.

**POETRY SLAM ON POE'S PORCH**  
**Saturday, June 24, 2023, 1:00-6:00pm**  
**Poe Cottage**  
**2640 Grand Concourse**

Join The Bronx County Historical Society on Saturday, June 24, 1:00-6:00pm, for a Poetry Slam on Poe's Porch at the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage. This Spring, the Historical Society is hosting free poetry seminars at Poe Cottage, and this culminating event will feature poems and other creative works produced by students and instructors in these seminars. There will also be light refreshments as well as a Poe-inspired performance by a Bronx opera singer and classical guitarist. This event is made possible through the financial support of New York City Council Member Oswald Feliz and the Council's Cultural Immigrant Initiative.

**AIA Walking Tour of Grand Concourse**  
**Saturday, July 22, 2023, 10:00am**  
**Meet at Cardinal Hayes High School**  
**650 Grand Concourse**

Join The Bronx County Historical Society and the American Institute of Architects for a walking tour of the architectural history of the Grand Concourse, from Cardinal Hayes High School to E. 174th Street. For more information or to register in advance, contact Roger McCormack, Director of Education, at 718-881-8900 x107 or [education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org). Cost is \$20 for members of AIA or BCHS; and \$30 for non-members.



### EDGAR ALLAN POE COTTAGE AT POE PARK

*Grand Concourse & E. Kingsbridge Rd.*  
Owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, Poe Cottage is operated by The Society. The national landmark house is a member of the Historic House Trust. Public support provided through the New York City Departments of Cultural Affairs and Parks and Recreation.



### MUSEUM OF BRONX HISTORY

*3266 Bainbridge Ave. & E. 208th St.*  
Owned by The Bronx County Historical Society, the Museum of Bronx History at the national landmark Valentine-Varian House is a member of the Historic House Trust. Public support provided through the New York City Departments of Cultural Affairs and Parks and Recreation.



## BEQUESTS

You can support The Society's work by means of a bequest. The following paragraph is suggested for your convenience, for insertion in your will: "I give and devise and bequeath to The Bronx County Historical Society, located at 3309 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx, New York 10467, incorporated with the New York State Board of Regents, [insert the amount of money or describe the personal property or real estate] to be used for the general purposes of The Society."

### THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### FACILITIES:

#### Research Library & The Bronx County Archives

3309 Bainbridge Avenue  
The Bronx, NY 10467  
By Appointment:  
M-F: 9AM-5PM

[librarian@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:librarian@bronxhistoricalsociety.org)

#### Museum of Bronx History at the Valentine-Varian House

3266 Bainbridge Avenue  
The Bronx, NY 10467  
S: 10AM-4PM  
Su: 1-5PM

#### Edgar Allan Poe Cottage

2640 Grand Concourse  
The Bronx, NY 10458

Group and individual tours by appointment:

[education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org)

#### FOLLOW US ON:



## UPCOMING EVENTS, CONT.

### EXHIBIT OPENING: THE ALLERTON COOPS, IN LIVING COLOR

Saturday, August 12, 2023, 2-6pm

Open through March 3, 2024

Museum of Bronx History

3266 Bainbridge Avenue

Starting in August, the Museum of Bronx History is hosting a new exhibit on recovered histories of Black and mixed-race residents of the Allerton Coops in the middle of the twentieth century. This storied housing complex, located along Bronx Park East, was home to Black and mixed-race visual artists, activists, cartoonists, actors, authors, and professionals—who lived alongside the complex's better documented trailblazers of Yiddish life and culture. Join us for the exhibit opening this August 12, the birthday of international human rights activist and resident of the Coops Dr. Angie Dickerson.

### VIRGINIA POE DEATH EXHIBIT

August 15, 2023–January 2024

Edgar Allan Poe Cottage

2640 Grand Concourse

The Virginia Poe Death exhibit, on loan from the Poe Museum in Baltimore, will open on August 15, Virginia's birthday, and will be on display at Poe Cottage on select Saturdays through January 2024. The panels explore the morbid story of Virginia's death in Fordham and her afterlives. Contact Roger McCormack, Director of Education, at [education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org) or 718-881-8900 x107 to learn more about the upcoming exhibit and visiting hours.

## COLLECTION DONATIONS

The Society's various collections provide invaluable insight into the history of The Bronx. Below is a partial list of those who have recently made donations of material and thus helped preserve our borough's history:

Rosemarie Farenga (February 2023): photograph collection from her uncle, Gilbert P. Carvajal, of 34 photographs, 8 newspaper clippings, 3 documents, and 2 patches documenting his life in the Bronx, comprising the Carvajal Family photograph collection in The Bronx County Archives.

Amy Starecheski (February 2023): 22,999MB of data from 10 oral history interviews and 1.6MB of digital administrative project files comprising the Mott Haven Oral History Project collection in The Bronx County Archives.

Ronnie Andrada (March 2023): Historic American Engineering Record documentation for Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge, ten photographs, and electronic files comprising 17.9MB of data.

STAFF 161 (May 2023): donation of two 18"x24" print reproductions of paintings by Bronx graffiti pioneer STAFF 161.