



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 President of the Borough of The Bronx, 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

OCT. 2022–JAN. 2023

VOL. 46 No. 1

## SOCIETY UPDATES

✎ The Society warmly welcomes our new research librarian, Pastor Crespo, Jr., who started in July 2022. He can be reached at [pcrespo@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:pcrespo@bronxhistoricalsociety.org).

✎ The annual Bronx County Historical Society Day of Golf and Charitable Giving, held on September 13, 2022 at Pelham Bay/Split Rock Golf Course was a great success. The Society thanks Teresa Brown, our CAO and tournament coordinator, the committee members, and sponsors who made the event possible.

✎ The Society is working on a new website, which can be reached at the same address: [www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org).

✎ Update your contact information by writing to Roger McCormack, director of education, at [education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org).

✎ We are continuing to record oral histories for our various oral history projects. If you or people you know want to find out more, get in touch with us.

## THE ALLERTON COOPS

\*\*\*The article below is excerpted from The Society's recently published *Annotated Primary Source Documents*, vol. II, by Roger McCormack.

The United Workers Cooperative Colony (called “the Coops” or the “Allerton Coops” by residents), located at 2700 Bronx Park East, was a radical experiment in cooperative housing in the 1920s. Large numbers of Jews, fleeing oppression in the Russian Empire, began settling in the Lower East Side in the late nineteenth century. Some had already been involved in revolutionary politics in their homelands. Crowded living conditions, high rent, and economic exploitation in their new home attracted more to various alternatives to capitalism.

The United Workers Cooperative Association was one among many of these alternatives developed by working-class Jews, most of whom were laborers in the needle trades, one of the largest industries in New York City at the time. The Association focused much of its early cooperative efforts on Harlem. Its largest and most ambitious project, however, was in the northern Bronx, where it bought land on Bronx Park East in 1926 in order to build a large complex of cooperative housing.

The Coops sold financial stakes in the cooperative to “tenant investors” at the rate of about half a year’s salary for working-class people at the time. As shareholders, residents had a say in the operation of the cooperative. The Coops were a nonprofit cooperative, meaning apartments could not be sold by individuals. Departing tenants received their initial investment back, with interest, and the board

# Thanks!

## to our donors

Lisa Benton-Fergus  
Sandra Berube  
Bronx Care Health System  
Chatam Management  
April Fowler  
Lewis Goldstein  
Historic House Trust of NYC  
Houlihan Parnes Realty  
Langsam Property Services  
Manhattan Parking Group  
Madison Abstract  
Saudah Muhammad  
New Yankee Stadium Community  
Benefits Fund  
Orange Bank & Trust Company  
David Rabinowitz  
Sandra Erickson Real Estate  
Slattery Energy Consulting Group  
Stagg Group  
Townhouse Management

\* This is a partial list.

## New Members

Frank Albano  
Jerold Berksin  
Sandra Berube  
Joshua Casper  
Saudah Muhammad  
Malcolm Sheldrick

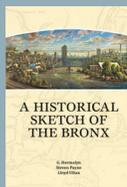
\* This is a partial list.

## Publications

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



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



## THE ALLERTON COOPS, CONT.



Artistic rendering of the Allerton Coops, c. 1926. From the At Home in Utopia Collection at The Bronx County Archives.

of directors, elected by the tenants, decided which new applicants got the vacant apartments.

In the 1940s, the board implemented an occupancy policy that gave priority to Black applicants. A small number of Black tenants were already present as early as 1935, but thanks to this policy, the Coops became one of the first significantly interracial housing complexes in New York City, long before the end of Jim Crow in the South and de facto segregation in the North.

As the rendering from 1926 above illustrates, beauty was a chief concern of the shareholders of the Coops, many of whom had lived in the squalid tenements of the Lower East Side. Apartments were designed with high ceilings, healthy ventilation, and windows oriented so that direct sunlight would fall into at least one room. Further, spaces in the complex were designated for a library, daycare, Yiddish-language schools, youth club rooms, a cooperative restaurant, and a lecture hall.

Ravaged financially during the Great Depression, the Coops began to recover slightly during World War II and was offered new mortgage terms by the bank in 1943 that included rent increases. The Coops was deemed a financial liability by banks and insurance companies at the time for a variety of reasons, including its small but significant number of Black residents. Tenants voted against accepting the new mortgage, the bank refused to negotiate different terms, and the Coops became privately-owned apartment buildings.

Nevertheless, the legacy of housing cooperatives remains alive and well in The Bronx, with historic examples like the Amalgamated Housing Co-operative, built shortly after the Coops and remaining a cooperative to this day, and Co-Op City, the largest cooperative housing development in the world, built starting in the late 1960s and located along the Hutchinson River in the northeast Bronx.

## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Starting with the next issue of our newsletter (Feb.-May 2023), members will receive only the electronic version of our newsletter by default. Individuals who wish to continue receiving the physical version as well as the electronic can opt in by contacting Roger McCormack, Director of Education, at 718-881-8900 x107 or [education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org).

## 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 Dr. Steven Payne, Director, at [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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AIA/BCHS Walking Tour

**Saturday, October 22nd, 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm**  
**100 West Mosholu Parkway South**

Join The Society and the Bronx chapter of the American Institute of Architects for a walking tour of the northwest Bronx. The tour begins at Dewitt Clinton High School and concludes at Tracey Towers. Tour stops include Lehman College, Bronx High School of Science, Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, Fordham Road, and the Grand Concourse. The tour focuses on architectural history, infrastructure development, and urban planning. Cost is \$20 for members and \$30 for nonmembers.

### OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK

**October 22–23, 2022, 1:00–5:00pm**

#### Virtual and In-Person Tours

**Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, 2640 Grand Concourse**  
**Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Avenue**

Join The Society for Open House New York, a weekend-long celebration of New York City's cultural institutions. We will offer in-person and virtual tours of both of our national landmark historic houses in The Bronx. Registration information will be made available at <https://ohny.org> starting October 6, 2022.

### BOOK TALK ON FREEDOMLAND: CO-OP CITY & THE STORY OF NEW YORK

**Monday, November 7, 2022, 7:00pm Eastern**

#### Virtual Event

Join The Society for a virtual book talk by Dr. Annemarie Sammartino, Professor of History at Oberlin College, on her recently published *Freedomland: Co-op City and the Story of New York* (2022). A panel discussion featuring current and former Co-op City residents will follow. To register for the event, contact Dr. Steven Payne, Director, at [spayne@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:spayne@bronxhistoricalsociety.org).



## EDGAR ALLAN POE COTTAGE AT POE PARK

*Grand Concourse & E. Kingsbridge Rd.*

Owned by the New York City Department of Parks, Poe Cottage is operated by The Society. The national landmark house is a member of the Historic House Trust. Its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.



## 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.



## 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  
Group and individual tours by appointment:

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

#### 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.

**EDGAR ALLAN POE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**  
Thursday, January 19th, 2023, 9:00 am-5:00 pm  
Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, 2640 Grand Concourse

Join The Bronx County Historical Society for a day-long celebration of one of the masters of American literature, Edgar Allan Poe, on his birthday in his last permanent home, the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage. Events include guided tours of the Cottage, readings of Poe's poetry, and poetry readings by local poets. Contact [education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org) for more information.

## BCHS 2023 CALENDAR AVAILABLE



\$12.00

Be sure to get a copy of the 2023 edition of *Remembering The Bronx*, the annual historical calendar produced by The Bronx County Historical Society. Fill each month of the new year with stunning and rare images of The Bronx. Available for purchase in person or at our online store at [www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org).

## COLLECTION DONATIONS

The Society's Museum Collection, Research Library Collections, and The Bronx County Archives 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:

Jesús Lebrón and Brendan Fay (June 2022): 2.45 linear ft. of archival material related to Jesús Lebrón's activism around marriage equality, comprising the Jesús Lebrón papers in The Bronx County Archives.

Susan Gatlin-Maroney (July 2022): 10 documents from the organization White Lightning, added to the Gil Fagiani papers in The Bronx County Archives.

Will Doolittle (July 2022): 1 book of Bronx property records from the first half of the twentieth century.

Esperanza Martell (July 2022): 2.5 linear ft. of recorded sound on cassette tape and 0.5 linear ft. of newspapers and documents, included in the Esperanza Martell papers in The Bronx County Archives.

Gerald Stalter (August 2022): 8 personal letters from Fred Safarowic to his parents in The Bronx about his college experience, c. 1947-1948.

Theresa Land-Latta (August 2022): 2.5 linear ft. of documents, photographs, textiles, and objects related to the history of the Bronx Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., comprising an archival collection in The Bronx County Archives.