

# THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3309 BAINBRIDGE AVENUE  
THE BRONX, NEW YORK 10467  
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[www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org)

Visit us on Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter.

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, documentation and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx and its people from its earliest historical references in the 17th century to the present. The Society disseminates information by utilizing its collections in exhibitions, historical research, production of publications and documentaries, educational and cultural programming, the operation of our research library, The Bronx County Archives and two historic landmark house museums - the c.1812 Edgar Allan Poe Cottage and the c.1758 fieldstone farmhouse Valentine -Varian House/Museum of Bronx History.

This newsletter is published three times a year as a service to members and friends.

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 Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, The New York Times Foundation, the Verizon Foundation, the New York State Library, the New Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund, Susan Tane, and the New York Public Library.

# THE BRONX HISTORIAN

Newsletter of The Bronx County Historical Society

OCTOBER 2017 – JANUARY 2018

VOLUME 41 NUMBER 1

## CEMETERIES OF THE BRONX

Cemeteries are always interesting to traverse. Despite the morbidity of such a location, cemeteries serve as final resting places of loved ones and notable figures who are sometimes memorialized in very artistic ways. While some grave markers serve as just mere reminders of who is buried at that location, others offer a historic account of a time long ago.

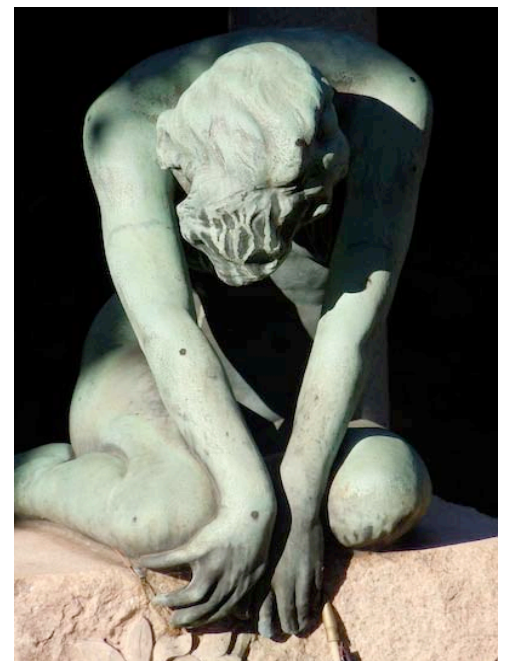
In The Bronx, there are cemeteries today dating back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some are located on land once owned by families whose names grace two of the city's largest parks, Van Cortlandt and Pelham (Pells) while others are still attached to our borough's oldest landmarks, such as St. Peter's Episcopal Church at Westchester Square. Here, you will find graves of our borough's early inhabitants, with names etched on them that define our streets today. A walk over to the old West Farms Soldiers Cemetery will show you headstones of soldiers who fought in our nation's first four wars, while Drake Park in Hunts Point teaches you about African slavery and its roots in early landownership at that location during earlier times.

Many private and public Bronx cemeteries of yesteryear have been relocated due to Bronx urbanization and the scarcity of land. Large numbers of the buried were reinterred in some of the city's finest cemeteries. Woodlawn Cemetery, with its sprawling hills and manicured landscape dotted with the finest headstones and mausoleums in the country, continues to be in operation. Learn more about historic Bronx cemeteries and classical styles of headstones and other memorials at the exhibition *What Lies Beneath: Cemeteries of The Bronx*. Learn more on page 3.



Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of Joseph Rodman Drake Cemetery, today Drake Park in Hunts Point. The park is also known as the Slave Burial Grounds in remembrance of our borough's early Africans.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.



The sculptural grave monument for Vernon Castle Blyth at Woodlawn Cemetery.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

**PURE GOLD**  
**Schools, businesses,**  
**institutions, and**  
**associations in**  
**The Bronx are noted.**

AZBY Brokerage Inc.  
 1751 Crosby Avenue  
*Est. 1987*

L & L Home  
 Appliance Service  
 2951 Middletown Road  
*Est. 1954*

Williams Funeral Home  
 5628 Broadway  
*Est. 1957*

**WELCOME**  
**NEW MEMBERS**

Andrea Andros

Matthew P. Fitzgerald

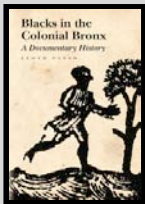
Emilia DiCarlo

Jane Moss

John Phillips

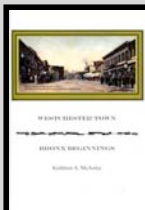
William Veronda

**SOCIETY**  
**PUBLICATIONS:**  
 Autographed copy, add \$10



*Blacks in the  
 Colonial Bronx:  
 A Documentary  
 History*  
**\$18.00**

*The Bronx:  
 Then & Now*  
**\$21.99**



*Westchester  
 Town: Bronx  
 Beginnings*  
**\$ 12.00**

**COLLECTIONS DONATIONS**

The Society's research library, object, and archival collections are a great resource.

We thank those who recently made the following donations (partial list):

Larry Barazzotto – 1880 Schuylerville map, 2 books: *Westchester County During the American Revolution*, by Otto Hufeland and *A Short History of New York State*, by Ellis, Frost, Syrett and Carman.

Danbury Museum & Historical Society Authority: Photographs and ephemeral materials relating to the McEvoy Family, burial expenses and St. Raymond's Cemetery in The Bronx (1903-1940).

Melanie Edwards – 2 booklets: *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, by James Weldon Johnson and *Gather Out of Star-Dust, The Harlem Renaissance & The Beinecke Library*.

Michael W. Frank – Book: *New York Mayors*, by Ralph J. Caliendo.

William & Marian Hyman: Photographs, programs and newsletters (1931-1982) that had belonged to Evelyn Koenig from various Bronx elementary, junior and senior high schools.

Barbara Maher: BX 16 Bronx bus transfer, 1957.

R. Keith Michel, Webb Institute donated in the name of John McGrath: Books: *William H. Webb, Shipbuilder, 1989; A Centennial History of Webb Institute of Naval Architecture, 1994 and Webb Institute: 125 Years of Excellence, 2014.*

Monadnock Construction, via Historical Perspectives: Headstones from features and burials at the Hedger-Edwards and Dutch Reformed Church of West Farms cemeteries (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries).

George Ultan: Bird's eye view designs and blueprint (copies) of The Bronx International Exposition (1916-1918); bird's eye view photograph showing Mt. Eden Parkway tulip beds in 1937.

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS**

Cash donations help The Society fund programming, publications, equipment purchases, and build endowments. To double your donation, check with your employer for any available matching gift programs. We are grateful for the following contributions (partial list):

**\$10 - \$99**

Joseph A. Barone  
 Denis J. Boyle  
 Nestor & Sheila Danyluk

Susan T. Ginsberg  
 "In memory of Cheryl Polydor"

Boyd Hancock  
 Neil Harrow  
 Marie M. King  
 Vivian J. Mall

Edward McLoughlin  
 Stephen D. Miele  
 Howard A. Nenner  
 Joan Pendergast  
 Donald J. Petersen  
 Russell F. Ryer

**\$10 - \$99 (continued)**

Roy Silverfarb  
 Karl Stricker

**\$100 - \$999**

Kavulich & Associates  
 Tompkins Mahopac Bank  
 Manhattan College  
 Rosemarie DiCristo  
 Fernando Ferrer

Gary Makufka  
 "In memory of Abe and  
 Anna Makufka"

Lysbeth Mate  
 Anthony Mormile  
 Belmont Preparatory High School  
 Ira Zuckerman

**\$1,000 - \$4,999**

Hutchinson Metro Center  
 IDK Cooling Corp.  
 Original Energy  
 Cedric Fergus  
 Genesis Realty Group  
 Steven Heining  
 Webster Lock & Hardware  
 Chatam Management  
 Fordham University

**\$5,000 and Up**

Bronx Lebanon Hospital  
 Lloyd Ultan

**SUBMISSIONS FOR THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL JOURNAL**

Since 1964, the BCHS *Journal* has been one of the premier history journals in the tri-state region. The *Journal's* articles are of interest to all who enjoy accounts of people, business events, mercantile gain, defending the nation's interest, or the love of The Bronx. As an ongoing tradition for Bronxites to share their personal experiences, The Society is accepting articles for its *Journal*. Do you have a Bronx story to share? Kindly send in your article in Microsoft Word format along with 2-4 images at 300dpi as email attachments to [administration@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:administration@bronxhistoricalsociety.org). Make sure you include your contact information and a short bio.

**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."

## FALL EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM OF BRONX HISTORY

3266 BAINBRIDGE AVENUE & EAST 208<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
THE BRONX, NEW YORK 10467  
(718) 881 – 8900

MUSEUM HOURS: SAT. 10AM - 4PM / SUN. 1PM - 5PM  
(GROUP TOURS MON.-FRI. BY APPOINTMENT)

October 12, 2017 – April 8, 2018

### What Lies Beneath Cemeteries of The Bronx

Opening Reception  
October 12, 2017  
4:30 PM – 7:00 PM



Come join us for drinks, snacks and lively conversation on the evening of October 12<sup>th</sup> at The Society's Museum of Bronx History for the opening reception of The Bronx County Historical Society's Fall exhibition.

Explore the "sleeping places" of those who have come before us. Some burial grounds are long since vanished; others survive into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Learn what burial secrets your neighborhood may hold. Learn too about burial practices and mourning rituals of Victorians, graveside symbolism and the famous who still dwell among us.



Edgar Allan Poe  
Cottage  
Poe Park  
Grand Concourse &  
East Kingsbridge  
Road

Owned by the New York  
City Department of Parks,  
it is operated by The  
Bronx County Historical  
Society. The house is a  
member of the Historic  
House Trust.

**NYC** Cultural  
Affairs



## JUNIOR BRONX HISTORIANS SUMMER ACADEMY 2017

From July 31 to August 4, 2017, eleven middle school students joined The Bronx County Historical Society for their first annual Junior Bronx Historians Summer Academy. The weeklong camp explored The Bronx during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, visiting sites like Van Cortlandt House Museum and the High Bridge. They learned about why Gun Hill Road was called the Gun Hill and analyzed how Edgar Allan Poe's life at Fordham prompted him to write "The Bells" and "The Cask of Amontillado." Using period maps and their feet, these students traveled the historic highways and byways of The Bronx earning them the title Junior Bronx Historians.



Museum of Bronx  
History/Valentine  
-Varian House  
3266 Bainbridge  
Avenue  
& East 208<sup>th</sup> Street

Owned by The Bronx  
County Historical Society,  
the 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.

Please be on the look out for the fundraiser event "A Toast to Bronx History" benefitting The Bronx County Historical Society, on Thursday, November 2, 2017, from 5:30PM to 7:30PM. Hosted by Arthur Avenue Caterers, this exciting event will be held at the historic Arthur Avenue market. Please call (718) 881-8900 for more information.



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### FACILITIES:

#### Research Library

3309 Bainbridge Avenue  
By Appointment

#### The Bronx County Archives

3313 Bainbridge Avenue  
By Appointment

#### Museum of Bronx History/ Valentine-Varian House

3266 Bainbridge Avenue  
and East 208<sup>th</sup> Street

Museum hours:

Saturdays 10AM-4PM  
Sundays 1PM-5PM

#### Edgar Allan Poe Cottage

Poe Park

2640 Grand Concourse and  
East Kingsbridge Road

Museum hours:

Thursdays and Fridays  
10AM-3PM  
Saturdays 10AM-4PM  
Sundays 1PM-5PM

Call The Society to arrange  
group tours during the week.

### ENDOWED FUNDS

The Bronx County Historical Society encourages the establishment of named endowment funds. Funds may be created to support many Society programs, or may be established for restricted use. The funds appear permanently on the financial records of The Society in recognition of their ongoing support of its work.

For further details, contact:  
Mr. Joel Podgor, CPA  
(718) 881-8900

### Take A Walk Through History BRONX WALKING TOURS

Tours cost \$10 for BCHS members, \$20 for non-members. Contact The Society at (718) 881-8900 to reserve your spot. The tours generally run about 2 hours.

### Naval Training at Pelham Bay Park

Saturday, October 28, 2017 - 11:00 AM

As an extension of the lecture on Pelham Bay Park during World War I given in August 2017, this walking tour explores the environs of the World War I Naval Training Station, now on present-day Rodman's Neck. Since visiting the original site is prohibited to the public, Educator Vivian Davis will guide visitors around the southern end of the park, describing how it looked one hundred years ago. This walking tour is part of *The Bronx during World War I Centennial* series. The tour will meet at the Pelham Bay Park station, the last stop of the 6 train. Take the #6 train to Pelham Bay Park or take Bronx buses #5, #23, #24 or BxM7 or BxM8 from Manhattan.



## FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

### The Bronx Beer Barons

Friday, November 17, 2017 - 7:00 PM

Join BCHS Program Director Angel Hernandez in a historic discussion of the rich beer brewing legacy of The Bronx. Dating back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, German breweries dotted the South Bronx landscape for many years. Although Prohibition halted this operation in the 1920s, beer brewing has again become one of our borough's staples, with the opening of three breweries within the last five years. This free lecture will be held at the Bronx Beer Hall, 2344 Arthur Avenue.

For more information, please call (347) 396-0555.

### Happy Birthday Poe!

Saturday, January 20, 2018 - 2:00 PM

Dr. Gary Hermalyn, CEO of The Bronx County Historical Society, will celebrate Edgar Allan Poe's Birthday with an illustrated presentation about his famous work experience living in The Bronx.

This free lecture will be given at the Poe Park Visitors Center, 2640 Grand Concourse.

For more information, please call (718) 365-5516.

## SPECIAL LECTURE AND WORKSHOP

### EARLY AMERICAN GRAVESTONES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2017 - 1:00 PM

The Society is pleased to offer a lecture and workshop at The Bronx County Archives on the study of early American gravestones and their significance to both the history of early America and the study of sculpture symbolism. This is in conjunction with The Society's Fall Exhibition *What Lies Beneath: Cemeteries of The Bronx*. Participants will receive an understanding of early American gravestones and explore their own creativity in our immersive workshop.

Led by BCHS Educator Vivian Davis, topics will include the beginnings of gravestone art in European America. Popular examples include Cotton Mather and the Mather family of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We will also discuss why motifs and epitaphs changed over the course of 200 years. Early American gravestone conservation and gravestone databases will also be discussed.

For the workshop portion, participants will break off into pairs and study photos of headstones from different colonies, noting changes, if any, from place to place. Participants will then have the chance to create their own gravestone art and epitaph. Materials for the workshop will be provided.

The Bronx County Archives is located at 3313 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx, New York. For directions, call (718) 881-8900. The fee for this 90-minute workshop is \$25 per person. The Archives is wheelchair accessible.