

**THE BRONX COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
HEADQUARTERS
3309 BAINBRIDGE AVENUE
THE BRONX, NEW YORK 10467
PHONE: (718) 881- 8900
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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documentation and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx and its people from its earliest historical references in the 17th century to the present.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, the Susan Tane Foundation, the New York Public Library, and The Bronx Chamber of Commerce.

THE BRONX HISTORIAN

Newsletter of The Bronx County Historical Society

JUNE 2015 – SEPTEMBER 2015

VOLUME 38 NUMBER 3

Port Morris and Randall's Island

Port Morris in The Bronx and Randall's Island in Manhattan each occupy a land mass larger than what they did originally. In the 20th century, Randall's Island was joined with its smaller southern neighbor, Ward's Island, by the filling in of the narrow waterway that separated them. Port Morris was originally an island as well, known in the colonial period as Stony Island. It became part of the mainland by having the narrow waterway separating them filled in the mid-19th century.



Considered to be the last aristocrat of what we now call The Bronx, Morris' selling of his family's estate, Morrisania, helped usher in the age of industrialization and urbanization in the borough.

Image courtesy of The Walters Art Museum of Baltimore, MD.

Through the centuries, both islands were part of the rural landscape near them. Randall's Island was a farm taking its name from whoever owned it at the time. Stony Island was sometimes used to graze sheep, but Gouverneur Morris, a nationally known statesman who owned it at the beginning of the 19th century, liked to relax there by casting his fishing rod into the East River. It was his son, Gouverneur Morris II (pictured above) who realized that gaining wealth in the 19th century no longer came from owning land but by encouraging industry.



A 1778 view of Hell's Gate from Harlem shows what are now Randall's and Ward's islands. Morrisania and today's Port Morris are seen on the left.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

He filled in the waterway to attach the island to the mainland, built a railroad line to it, touted it as a deep water port, renamed it Port Morris and encouraged industrial firms to establish factories there. Scattered among the factories, a number of dwellings arose.

Randall's Island, on the other hand, was acquired by New York City and became the anchor of the Triborough Bridge (now known as the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge) in the 1930s. Robert Moses developed it into a major park and recreation facility with the walkway of the bridge providing pedestrian access to it from The Bronx. Now a pedestrian bridge connecting Willow Avenue in Port Morris to the northeast corner of Randall's Island will provide a more direct access to this major park for mainland residents.



For many years, Port Morris has been an industrialized community in the South Bronx. This 1907 photograph shows a trolley traveling to the heart of the district via East 138th Street.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

PURE GOLD

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

John J. Fox & Sons
Funeral Home
203 East 201st Street
Est. 1897

L & L Home
Appliance Service
2951 Middletown Road
Est. 1955

Rainbow Florist
2134 Westchester Avenue
Est. 1950

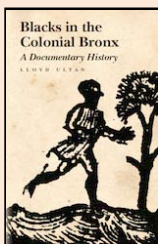
Tri-Boro
Insulating & Roofing
2532 Boston Road
Est. 1938

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Evelyn Begley
Eric Bell
Frank da Cruz
Scott Dietsch
Joel Grassi
Hudith Herbert
Fahimul Islam
Adam Kanciper
Annellen Madigan
Edward Murphy
Deborah Robinson
Cheryl Steinberg

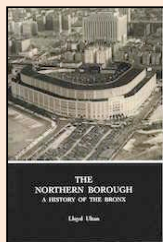
SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS:

Autographed copy, add \$10



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

The Bronx: Then & Now
\$21.99



The Northern Borough: A History of The Bronx
\$28.00

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):

Aileen Ronner Brasko – Collection of family letters written in German; journal of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church; 3 photographs (20th century).

Daniel Wolfe – Book, *Seabury Place: A Bronx Memoir*, by Daniel Wolfe.

Dengler Family – 2 copies of The Catholic News Directory of The Bronx (1974, 1981).

Gail Fenty – Book, *McNamara's Old Bronx*, by John McNamara.

Helen Dunlap – Land map of The Bronx (1912).

Lilly Pappas – 4 Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority tokens and 1 NYC Transit Authority subway token (1990s); G.O. button, Herman Ridder JHS 98 (1945-1948).

Lloyd Ultan – 1 wine glass and 1 beer glass imprinted: "Cardinal Spellman High School Senior Prom, June 3, 1998.

Robert McLaughlin – Book, *Freedomland, 1960-1964*, by Robert McLaughlin.

Stephen Eisenstein – 2 class photographs, Jordan L. Mott JHS 22 (1955, 1960).

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

Amy Dreher
Archie Arpiarian
Dara Caponigro
Donald J. Petersen
John Sauter

\$100 - \$999 (continued)

Joseph Rachlin
Krasdale Foods, Inc.
Lottie Esteban
Mary Elizabeth Wendt
Michael Dwyer

\$1,000 - \$4,999 (continued)

Langsam Property Services
Fordham Associates
Robert Esnard
CPJ Quality Foods

\$5,000 - and over

<u>\$100 - \$999</u>	<u>\$1,000 - \$4,999</u>	Historic House Trust of New York City
Herbert H. Lehman College	New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission	Lloyd Ultan
Hutch Metro Center	Genesis Realty	Pizzagalli Foundation
James Clayton	James G. Houlihan Family Second, LP	Antonio and Rita Pomerleau Foundation
John P. Dillon		

SIXTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

In 1955, eight people met at the dental office of Bronx Borough Historian Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff to begin The Bronx County Historical Society. Today, sixty years later, The Society maintains two landmark historic houses, a major research library, The Bronx County Archives, a large education program of lectures, tours and school visits, an extensive publications program and three Internet websites. The Society is now the most active local historical society in New York State. To celebrate this wonderful anniversary, The Society will soon announce new memberships terms.

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, written with clarity and scholarly substance, 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 or illustrations at 300dpi as email attachments to administration@bronxhistoricalsociety.org. Make sure you include your contact information.

RAYMOND F. CRAPO IN MEMORIAM

Raymond F. Crapo, who was President of The Bronx County Historical Society during one of The Society's greatest periods of growth (1976 to 1986), passed away on April 5, 2015. He was a life-long Bronx resident who became a junior high school teacher and principal. Later, he served as Educator and Training coordinator for the New York State Court Administration.

The Society will miss Raymond for his leadership, his foresight, his drive and his will to make The Bronx County Historical Society a center of excellence.

15th Annual Golf Outing

To Support The Bronx County Historical Society

Split Rock Golf Course / Pelham Bay Park
Tuesday, September 29, 2015

Co-chairs: Mark Engel & Greg Gonzalez

10:00 AM Registration & Breakfast

11:00 AM Shotgun Start

4:00 PM Cocktail Reception & Awards Dinner

\$1,400 Per foursome including Golf & Dinner

\$375 Per Player includes Golf & Dinner

\$175 Dinner Only

For golf sponsorship opportunities, please contact Tournament Coordinator, Teresa Brown at tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org. To take an ad out in the Golf Journal, please contact Catherine Pellicano at cpellicano@bronxhistoricalsociety.org.



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.



EXHIBITIONS AT THE MUSEUM OF BRONX HISTORY

3266 BAINBRIDGE AVENUE
& EAST 208TH STREET, THE BRONX, NEW YORK 10467
(718) 881 - 8900

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

THE HIGH BRIDGE NEWS A TEEN THURSDAYS PROJECT

APRIL 8 – OCTOBER 4

THIS EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS THE WORK STUDENTS
HAVE DONE THROUGHOUT A PROGRAM TITLED TEEN
THURSDAYS, ALONG WITH THEIR NEWSPAPER
PUBLICATION, *THE HIGH BRIDGE NEWS*.



HIGH BRIDGE

NEW YORK CITY'S OLDEST BRIDGE &
NEWEST GREENWAY
THROUGH OCTOBER 4, 2015

1865 - 2015

The Civil War Comes Home



April 8 – October 4, 2015

2015 marks the 150th anniversary of the end of the
American Civil War (1861-1865) as well as the
assassination of President Abraham Lincoln – one of the
last victims of the conflict. The Bronx contributed a
number of infantry and cavalry units to the war effort
under the New York State volunteer system. Learn about
these men and the families and communities
they left behind.



Museum of Bronx
History/Valentine-
Varian House
3266 Bainbridge
Avenue
& East 208th 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.

BE A PART OF BRONX HISTORY

Buy a Poe Paver to Support the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage!
To learn more about it, please call (718) 881-8900 or visit
<http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org/poecottagepaver>



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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 208th Street
Museum hours:
Saturdays 10AM-4PM and
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 and
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
Treasurer (718) 881-8900

The Bronx County Historical Proudly Presents Tour D'Bronx

Each tour costs \$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.

The following walking tours will be led by noted BCHS tour guide Nestor Danyluk.

Riverdale Park

Sunday, June 7, 2015 at 10:00 AM

Take a historic stroll in one of the most exclusive neighborhoods in New York City. The tour will include marvelous views of the Hudson River, famous tales of the neighborhood's great estates, and much more. The tour will meet at the Henry Hudson Monument inside Henry Hudson Park near Kappock & Independence avenues. Take the #1 train to West 231st Street then transfer to the #10 bus.

Westchester Square

Sunday, July 5, 2015 at 10:00 AM

Visit one of the oldest "villages" of The Bronx. The area we know as Westchester Square was not only a vibrant town center, but an important village in the history of both Bronx and Westchester counties. Join the BCHS as we stroll past historic churches, cemeteries and libraries in this unique neighborhood of The Bronx. Tour starts in front of McDonald's on Williamsbridge Road. Take #6 train to Westchester Square or Bronx buses #4, #8, #21, #24, 40, and #42.

Co-op City

Saturday, August 8, 2015 at 10:00 AM

From the ruins of the Freedomland Amusement Park rose the nation's largest cooperative housing development. Yet in spite of its massive scale, there are some surprising secret places in this part of The Bronx. Come explore Co-op City and surrounding neighborhoods. Tour meets at the Barnes & Noble at Bay Plaza. Take Bronx buses #12, #25, #28, #29, and #38.

Pugsley Creek/Clason Point

Sunday, September 27, 2015 at 10:00 AM

Historically known as Cornell's Neck, this tour will explore a southeastern Bronx community that has a local history dating back to Native Americans and their encounters with our borough's earliest European settlers. The tour will include history on ancient estates, amusement parks, views of the Long Island Sound, and the beautiful Pugsley Creek Park. This tour will meet at the end of Castle Hill Avenue. Take the #6 train to Castle Hill Avenue and transfer to the #22 bus to Castle Hill and Norton avenues.

AUTHORS LECTURE SERIES

The following free lectures will be held at the Museum of Bronx History, located at 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx, New York 10467. Authors will have extra copies of their books for purchase and signing. For directions, please call (718) 881- 8900

THE BLOCK

Saturday, June 27, 2015 - 1:00 PM

Take a walk down memory lane with Mr. Phil Coltoff as he talks about his new book, *The Block*, which covers his early years growing up in the Crotona Park section of the South Bronx.

BRONX RIVER HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

Saturday, July 18, 2015 - 1:00 PM

Mr. Stephen DeVillo, longtime BCHS member, has been doing research on the Bronx River for many years. Join him as he shares that research from his new book titled *Bronx River History and Folklore*.

THE BRONX: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO NEW YORK CITY'S BEAUTIFUL BOROUGH

Saturday, August 15, 2015 - 1:00PM

Join the official Bronx borough historian Lloyd Ultan and Dr. Shelley Olson on a fact-filled discussion about their latest publication *The Bronx: The Ultimate Guide to New York's City's Beautiful Borough*.