A NEIGHBORHOOD’S HISTORY
SEEN THROUGH A FAMILY’S STORY

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documentation and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx and its people from its earliest historical references in the 17th century to the present.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 New York Community Trust.

A large portion of the extensive archive at The Bronx County Historical Society consists of items donated from private collections of Bronx families. These collections have been compiled by generations of Bronxites who have lived in a certain area of The Bronx for many years. Interestingly, a thorough study of these donated collections quickly reveals a historic tale of a neighborhood or place. Whether it be a series of photographs, letters, books, clothing, household items, or other objects, one’s family collection can offer a plethora of historical facts about a neighborhood that may not be available anywhere else. With every large family collection accessioned into the collections of The Society, an extensive narrative about an important area can emerge. Such was the story of the Ferris Family collection donated to The Society many years ago.

The Ferris Family of Westchester Town dates back to the 17th century, when the area was still hotly disputed by the Dutch and English. As the town became the county seat for Westchester County, the Ferris name has graced the town’s ancient records for hundreds of years. As a classic example of how valuable family heirloom collections are for historical research, the Ferris Family Collection spans so far back that they help document almost 300 years of Bronx history. Today, the Ferris Family name still holds prominence in Westchester Square, with one local street bearing the name while a small Ferris Family burial ground sits nearby on Commerce Avenue. A quick walk through some of the area’s church graveyards will reveal more Ferris family members, including Ms. May Doherty, one of the last Ferrises in the area who donated the collection on what The Society’s upcoming exhibition is based. See page 3 for the exhibition opening for “Westchester Town – Bronx Beginnings” at The Museum of Bronx History.
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):

Peter & Laurel Beechey: Freedomland USA informational brochure, 1960.

Dan Boujoulian: Poster showing actor Vincent Price posing in 1977 at the grave of Edgar Allan Poe in Westminster Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland.

Sheila Brummel: P.S. 168 eighth grade class photograph (1930), 15 Bronx school report cards (1934-1941), 3 P.S. 70 commendation cards (1935) and 3 Hebrew school/ Mount Eden Center report cards (c. 1930s).

Harriette M. Connors-DeLuca: Pen and ink sketch copy print of the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, done in the early 20th century by donor’s grandmother, Harriet Claire Reynolds.

Karen Mercurio: Framed photographic portrait showing the graduating class of June 1919 from P.S. 6, West Farms.

Ken Shavell: 134 buttons for Bronx and New York City-wide political campaigns (c. 1950s-1980s).

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):

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Historic House Trust of NYC
Krasdale Foods
Malkin Fund
Pizzagalli Foundation
Preservation League of NYS

$5,000 - and over
Lloyd Ultan

BCHS received a Technical Assistance Grant from the Preservation League of New York State to complete an Accessibility Study for the Valentine-Varian House. The Technical Assistance Grant Program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.
BRONX HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIANS AWARDS PROGRAM
Sunday, June 5, 2016

Join us this year in honoring The Bronx’s High School Valedictorians. The program begins at 1:00 PM with entertainment, refreshments, food, and tours of the Museum of Bronx History. At 2:00 PM, the awards ceremony will commence with gifts to the students and special awards to honor an educator of the year, a business person of the year and individuals who have supported the arts and humanities. The Museum of Bronx History is located at 3266 Bainbridge Avenue and East 208th Street. The program ends at 3:00 PM.

To make a donation to this wonderful event, contact The Society (718) 881-8900 or donate online at http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org/valedictorian

EXHIBITION 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)

WESTCHESTER TOWN
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BRONX BEGINNINGS

April 14 – October 9, 2016
Opening Reception: April 14, 2016  4:30 PM – 7:00 PM

For further information, and to RSVP, please contact The Society
(718) 881-8900
administration@bronxhistoricalsociety.org

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 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.

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
Taking A Walk Through History BRONX WALKING TOURS
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 Hunt Family in The Bronx
Saturday, March 26, 2016 at 11:00 AM
The Hunt Family gave its name to a southern peninsula located in the town of West Farms back in the 1670s. Although Hunts Point has since become a center for commercial enterprise and urban culture, the Hunt Family legacy still lives on in some of the neighborhood’s historic sites. Come learn more about the Hunt Family during a historic walking tour of Hunts Point, led by BCHS Educator Angel Hernandez. Tour will meet at the Hunts Point #6 train station on Southern Boulevard. Take Bronx buses #4, #5, #6, and #19.

The Bronx during the Ice Age
Saturday, April 23, 2016 at 11:00 AM
BCHS guest tour guide and member Mike Kaplan will lead a 4.5-mile hike through Pelham Bay Park and Orchard Beach to discuss The Bronx during the Ice Age and how geologists look for such evidence. Also, for good measure, you’ll learn about some human history of the park during the tour. This tour will start at the Pelham Bay #6 train station near the bottom of the stairs at Bruckner Boulevard. Take the #6 train to the last stop in The Bronx or take Bronx buses #5, #12, #23, or #24, BxM #7 or #8, or Q50. Please wear comfortable walking shoes.

Marble Hill – Whose is it Anyway?
Saturday, May 7, 2016 at 10:30 AM
Once the northernmost tip of Manhattan Island, the Marble Hill neighborhood is today claimed (in different ways) by both Manhattan and The Bronx. BCHS tour guide Nestor Danyluk will highlight sites of old toll bridges, riverbeds, and train tracks, learn about a once-famous bicycle racing track, and a never-completed ballpark which might have hosted a World Series if it had been finished, and stroll down quiet, tree-lined streets with private homes and slate sidewalks. This tour will start on the southeast corner of Broadway and West 225th Street, outside Chase Bank. Take the #1 train to West 225th Street or take Bronx bus #9 or Manhattan bus #7.

The Grand Concourse Historic District – Art Deco Delights
Saturday, May 7, 2016 at 2:00 PM
Join Bronx Borough Historian Lloyd Ultan on a stroll through one of The Bronx’s noted designated historic districts – the Grand Concourse. This tour will start on the southwest corner of the Grand Concourse and East 167th Street and will terminate at East 149th Street. Take the D train to East 167th and the Grand Concourse, or take the #4 to East 167th Street and walk two blocks east to the Grand Concourse. Bronx buses #1, #2, and #35 stop at the meeting location.

FREE PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES
The Bronx African American Experience
Thursday, February 18, 2016 at 2:00 PM
African Americans have contributed greatly to the borough’s structural, cultural and political history, and played a major role in its revitalization. BCHS Educator Angel Hernandez will highlight the African American experience in The Bronx since colonial times with an illustrated presentation. This lecture will be held at Hostos Community College, located at 500 Grand Concourse, at E.149th Street. For directions, call (718) 518-4444.

* The following two lectures will be held at the Museum of Bronx History at * the Valentine-Varian House located at 3266 Bainbridge Avenue

Central Park: Where Are the Women?
Saturday, March 5, 2016 at 1:00 PM
Central Park has 22 statues honoring men and none honoring real women. Join Coline Jenkins, legislator, author, television producer, and great, great granddaughter of notable suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as she discusses her involvement in placing a statue of two women’s rights pioneers in New York City’s Central Park. This lecture is part of the Women’s History Month celebration.

The Legacy of Westchester Square
Saturday, April 16, 2016 at 1:00PM
The area we now know as Westchester Square goes back in Bronx history more than 350 years. It was once the county seat for Westchester until an 18th century fire drove the capital to White Plains. Lloyd Ultan, official Bronx Borough Historian, will provide a talk on the history of Westchester Square, its prominent families, and long-lasting legacy in New York history.

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

www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org
The Bronx, New York 10467
Phone: (718) 881-8900
Fax: (718) 881-4827

FACILITIES:
Research Library
By Appointment
The Bronx County Archives
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.

Ultan, official Bronx Borough Historian, will provide a talk on the history of Westchester Square, its
prominent families, and long-lasting legacy in New York history.

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