

**THE BRONX COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**3309 BAINBRIDGE AVENUE  
THE BRONX, NEW YORK 10467  
PHONE: (718) 881- 8900  
FAX: (718) 881- 4827**

**[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documentation and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx and its people from its earliest historical references in the 17th century to the present.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, the Susan Tane Foundation, the New York Public Library, and the New York Community Trust.

# THE BRONX HISTORIAN

*Newsletter of The Bronx County Historical Society*

FEBRUARY 2016 – MAY 2016

VOLUME 39 NUMBER 2

## A NEIGHBORHOOD'S HISTORY SEEN THROUGH A FAMILY'S STORY



An image of May Alice Ferris in 1884. Her daughter, May Doherty, donated the Ferris Family Collection to The Society.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

The Ferris Family of Westchester Town dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> 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



A gentleman studies an artifact from the Ferris Family Collection at the Museum of Bronx History.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

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.



Westchester Square in the southeast Bronx still held remnants of its rural past in 1910. The Ferris Family legacy dates back in this area to colonial times.

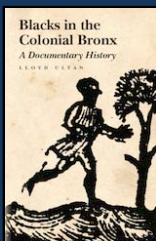
The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

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.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**  
(PARTIAL LIST)

Terence Kearns  
Richard Lefkowitz  
Chang Liu  
Charmaine Lloyd  
Kathy Lubner  
Teresa Luckert  
Susan Lynch  
Thomas R. Maeglin  
Caroline Maloney  
Matthew Mariano  
Stephen Marmon  
James & Lisa McDonnell  
Esther Medrano  
Rafael Moure  
Schur Management Co.  
Barbara McNenney  
Joan O'Kray  
David & Anne Payne  
Syeven Payne  
Kate Pedatella  
Patricia Perlo  
Mary Quinones  
Edward Reilly  
Robert Rooney  
Danile Rose  
Barabar Rose  
Robert Rowe  
Keith Rubenstein  
Sally Ann Schneider  
Thomas Schneider  
Jack Valverde  
Julieta Velazquez  
Nina Wohl  
Beatrice Walsh  
Pat Ward  
Vivian Warren  
Sue Novick Wasko  
Kevin Watson  
Matthew Westall  
Carole Wiseman  
Jian hong Xu  
Shan chen Xia

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



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



*The Bronx: Then & Now*  
\$21.99

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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):

<u>\$10 - \$99</u>	<u>\$10 - \$99 (continued)</u>	<u>\$100 - \$999 (continued)</u>
Sig Balka	Edward McLoughlin	Lisbeth Mate
Joseph Barone	John McManus	C.J. Mattison
David Begley	Bernadette Meyer	Frances Pandolfi
Sara S. Berlan	Lilly Pappas	Ed Perlmutter
Robert Burke	Donald J. Petersen	G. Prlain
Dara Caponigro	Annette Sambolin	Henry G. Stroobants
William Casari	Robert Stonehill	Robert Sander
Anna Marie Castagnetta	L. Suarez	Vinton Thompson
Michael Collins	Maria Swerdlow	Roger A. Wines
John J. Doddy	Jerrold Wolfset	Wood Heights Democratic Club
Regan Dowdall		Ira Zuckerman
Robert Fass	<u>\$100 - \$999</u>	
Joan A. Finger	Galgano & Associates	<u>\$1,000 - \$4,999</u>
Joseph L. Frango	Marie Bingham	Susan Tane
Joseph J. Gannon	Children's Corner Learning Center	Bronx Lebanon Hospital
EarthShare NYC Gives	Clean Jean Dry Cleaners	Fordham University
Mark Glander	Michael Antolino Construction	Historic House Trust of NYC
Sanford Glatzer	John B. Dillon	Krasdale Foods
Judith Herbert	Robert Fox	Malkin Fund
Marie King	Frank J. Franz	Pizzagalli Foundation
Miriam Korman	Sidney Horenstein	Preservation League of NYS
Walter Lewis	Susan Lally	
Anthony Loscalzo	Wolinetz Management	<u>\$5,000 - and over</u>
Tami Luhby	Brian McCarthy	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>



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.



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.

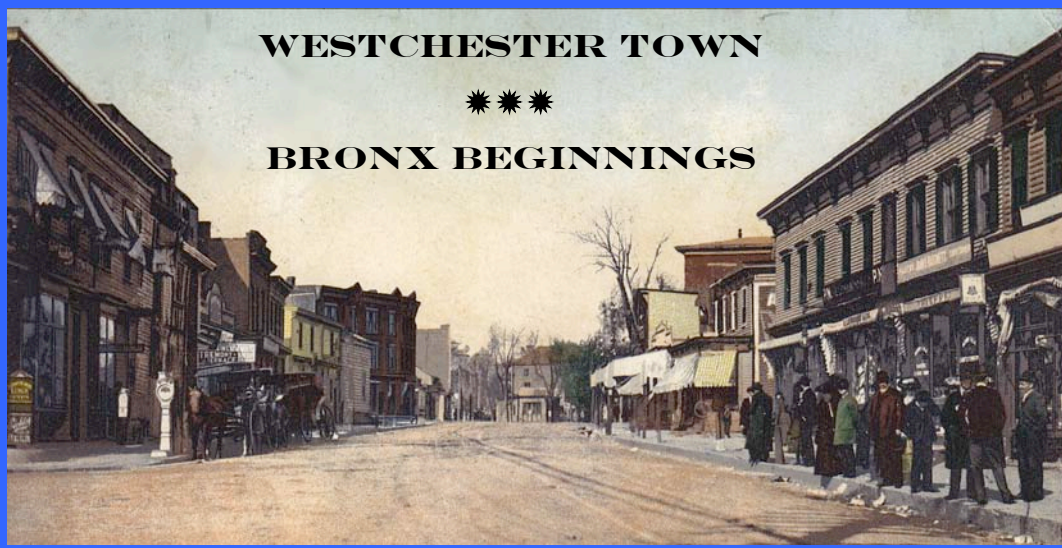
## EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM OF BRONX HISTORY

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



### 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 in your article in Microsoft Word format along with 2-4 images or illustrations at 300dpi as email attachments to [administration@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto: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>



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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 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

## ***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 225<sup>th</sup> Street, outside Chase Bank. Take the #1 train to West 225<sup>th</sup> 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 167<sup>th</sup> Street and will terminate at East 149<sup>th</sup> Street. Take the D train to East 167<sup>th</sup> and the Grand Concourse, or take the #4 to East 167<sup>th</sup> 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.149<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.