

THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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documentation and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx and its people from its earliest historical references in the 17th century to the present.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

FEBRUARY 2019 – MAY 2019

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 2

The Birth of the Film Industry

Hollywood wasn't the only Tinseltown in the country. In fact, the birth of the film industry started right in our own backyard. Thomas Edison had Edison Studios in West Orange, New Jersey in the 1890s and in New York City as early as 1901. When Edison realized the need for expansion, he moved production in 1908 to a warehouse in The Bronx, at the corner of Decatur Avenue and Oliver Place.

Edison Studios was one of the finest of the era and in 1910 produced the first film adaptation of *Frankenstein* in the Bronx studio. It took four days to film and was released three months later. The film was thought to be lost shortly after its release, however one surviving print was discovered in the 1970s in a farmhouse in Wisconsin. Sadly, the first building was destroyed by fire in March 1914.



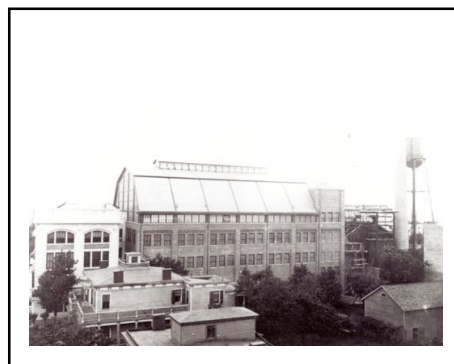
Edison Studios in The Bronx, 1909.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.



On the set of *Frankenstein*, 1910.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.



Biograph Studios in West Farms, 1913.

The Bronx County Historical Society Collections.

The Biograph Company opened their Bronx state-of-the-art studios at 807 East 175th Street in 1915. Stars such as Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks Sr. were no strangers to The Bronx as they appeared in films produced at this location. Biograph was bought out and renamed Gold Medal Studios in 1956 and became the largest feature film studio outside of Hollywood. This lasted until the late-1960s. Feature films such as *Midnight* (1934), *Woman in the Dark* (1934), *The Notorious Elinor Lee* (1940), and the early 1960s NBC television series *Car '54, Where Are You?* were all filmed at Biograph. Unfortunately the old four-story Biograph Studio building burned to the ground in a three-alarm fire on July 8, 1980.

Today, The Bronx movie production business is experiencing a renaissance. In 2017, Silvercup Studios opened their \$40

million facility in Port Morris. They are currently the largest film and television production studio in New York City with another location in Long Island City, Queens. York Studios is currently building a 350,000 square foot production facility in Soundview with a 2019 anticipated completion date.

The Bronx County Historical Society's Spring exhibition, *BXFlicks: The Bronx Goes to the Movies*, will not only explore these production studios, but famous Bronx film locations and the picture houses that showcased them. This exhibition will run at The Museum of Bronx History from April 11 to October 6, 2019.

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

Ambassador Fuel & Oil Burner
 Corp
 1049 Washington Ave.
 Est. 1935

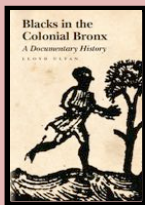
PASCAP Co., Inc
 4250 Boston Road
 Est. 1929

Hilltop Auto Salvage
 4157 Boston Road
 Est. 1968

WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS

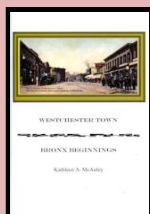
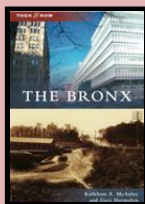
Yuderky Reynoso
 Kendall Lewis
 Vanessa Chavez
 Edward Frisch
 Peter A. Bunten
 Mercy College Library
 Christopher Baker
 Lawrence Porco
 Noreen Hernandez
 Eileen Fox
 Murray Herman
 Matthew Gaynord
 Juan Cruz
 Diana Cartaya
 Margot Finkel
 Angela Ruiz

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):

Dennis Brett – Creston JHS booklet (1950); cap decorated with various badges, buttons and mementoes (1940s-early 1950s).

John Lodge: Researched genealogy – *The Lodge Family* by Joseph Lodge.

Donald March: Various political, Bronx school and City of New York identification, achievement and campaign pins and buttons (1932-1973); sample presidential election ballots for Bronx districts (1968-1984), 2 books, North Side Savings Bank customer bank.

Betsy Dehls Price: Title abstract relating to a premises on Bainbridge Avenue, once part of the Walter Briggs Farm (1917).

Robert Levine – Elder Avenue building certificate of occupancy and blueprint (1931); PS 77 graduation program (1947); James Monroe High School literary journals (1948, 1949) and graduation program (1950).

Stephen Scarangella – DVD footage of the City Ice House, c. 1990, located at Grant Avenue and East 161st Street.

Larry Schliessman: Jessup & Thompson store ledger from West Farms (1868).

Jane R. Snyder: Two PS 36, Castle Hill Avenue school pins (early 1930s), World War II Coast Guard (SPARS) honorable discharge lapel pin.

Brian Stoothoff: Freedomland USA parking ticket stub (1960-1964).

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

Ray Beckerman
 Michael Bykofsky
 Edward McLoughlin
 Rosemarie DiCristo
 Joanne Mastropolo
 Marie M. King
 Kathy McArdle
 Wallis Doerge
 Russell F. Ryer
 Marie Savard
 Julio E. Rivera
 Harry A. Parsons
 Sara Bong
 Lilly Pappas
 Joan Pendergast

\$10 - \$99 (continued)

Mary Stoll
 Bruce J. Raynor
\$100 - \$999
 John F. Calvelli
 Russell Vollmer
 Ed Purce & Tami Luhby
 Roger Wines
 Edward Harris
 Robert M. Fox
 Tina R. Wolf
 Nicolas DiBrino
 Laws Construction Corp.
 Gaines, Novick, Poncini, Cossu &
 Venditti LLP

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Original Energy
 Malkin Fund
 Langsam Property Services
 Manhattan Parking Group
 Historic House Trust of NYC
 Hub International

\$5,000 and Up

Lysbeth Mate
 Fidelity Title Insurance Co.
 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. 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."

**SPRING EXHIBITION AT
THE MUSEUM OF BRONX HISTORY**
Opening Reception – April 11, 2019 4:30PM – 7:00PM

**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)**

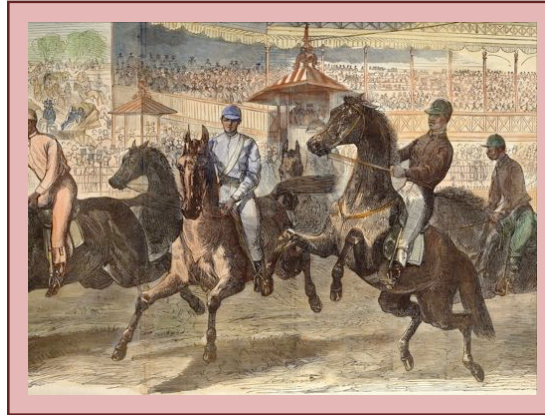


**Edgar Allan Poe
Cottage**
*Poe Park
Grand Concourse &
East Kingsbridge
Road*

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.



BXFlicks
The Bronx Goes to the Movies
April 11 – October 6



Celebrating Black History Month
February 1st – February 28th

Come visit the Museum of Bronx History to see “The Bronx African American Experience,” The Bronx County Historical Society’s exhibition documenting the history and heritage of Bronx African Americans.

The show runs through February 28th at The Museum of Bronx History.

1868 *Harper's Weekly* print, "Opening Race at the Jerome Park, Fordham, New York - The Start."
The Bronx County Historical Society Collections



*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.

A Salute to Bronx History
at Zero Otto Nove

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 6:00PM – 9:00PM

Join us for a special evening of cocktails and dinner at Arthur Avenue’s Zero Otto Nove to raise money for The Bronx County Historical Society! The Bronx’s own Chef Roberto, head chef at Zero Otto Nove, will be hosting the event.

Your tax-deductible \$250 contribution will benefit The Bronx County Historical Society’s rich collection as well as the historic preservation, documentation, and interpretation of The Bronx for future generations.

Zero Otto Nove is located at 2357 Arthur Avenue, Bronx, New York 10458.

To purchase tickets, contact Teresa Brown at tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org, or mail a check to The Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467.

**The 2019 Bronx High School
Valedictorian Awards Ceremony**
Sunday, June 9, 2019 2:30PM – 5:30PM

Join us in honoring the future leaders of The Bronx. The Society’s 64th anniversary program honors the valedictorians of high schools throughout The Bronx.

To honor The Bronx’s best and brightest students, we will once again be hosting the ceremony at Schiff Family Great Hall at The Bronx Zoo. The Bronx Zoo, known as The Wildlife Conservation Society, is one of the finest zoological institutions in the world.

The program begins at 2:30pm with entertainment and refreshments. The award ceremony will commence at 3:00pm.

To inquire about sponsorship opportunities or to make a donation, contact Ms. Ann Ryan at 718-881-8900 ext. 101 or via email at annryan@bronxhistoricalsociety.org.



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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
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

“Devotedly I love her” Edgar Allan Poe Candlelight Tours

Saturday, February 9, 2019, \$20 per person

Join us for this special tour of the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage and learn about Poe’s most fervent love, his wife Virginia. Visitors will receive a candlelight tour by costumed interpreters who will read letters and poems written by Poe.

Tours are timed every 45 minutes. Please arrive 10 minutes before your tour begins.

5:00-5:45pm

6:00-6:45pm

7:00-7:45pm

The tour will take place at the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, Poe Park, 2640 Grand Concourse. Space is limited, so please call 718-881-8900 or visit www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org for tickets!

Friday Night At the Movies!

***A Bronx Tale* (1993)**

Friday March 1, 2019 - 7:00PM

Suggested donation: \$5

Join us at The Bronx County Archives, 3313 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY for a showing of ***A Bronx Tale***.

“As he grows into a teenager on the streets of The Bronx in the socially turbulent 1960s, Calogero (Lillo Brancato) gets taken under the wing of the neighborhood mobster Sonny (Chazz Palminteri). Sonny initiates the boy into the ways of gangland life, in direct conflict with his straight-arrow bus driver father (Robert De Niro). But when Calogero falls for his African-American classmate, Jane (Taral Hicks), the repercussions threaten the entire neighborhood.” This film is rated R and is intended for mature audiences only.

Take A Walk Through History

BRONX WALKING TOUR

Tours cost \$10 for BCHS members, \$20 for non-members. Call

(718) 881-8900 to reserve your spot.

The Village of Morrisania: The First Planned Community

Saturday, April 6, 2019 - 11:00AM

In 1848, the Village of Morrisania became the first planned community in what is now The Bronx. Although it was founded as a “dry” community by native-born temperance advocates, German-American settlers soon developed a thriving beer culture there. On this walk, we will learn about Morrisania’s citizens and see some of the original buildings of the village, many over 150 years old. Join Dr. Marian Swerdlow on this rarely examined tour of Morrisania. This tour will meet at the northwest corner of East 163rd Street and Third Avenue. Take Bronx buses #13, #15, #21 or #6 to 163rd Street and Third Avenue.

Victorian Cemetery Customs and Picnic

The Woodlawn Cemetery

Sunday, May 19, 2019

1:00PM - 4:00PM

Come to The Woodlawn Cemetery for a delightful afternoon of promenading and picnicking with Victorians! Learn about cemetery customs and traditions of the 19th century, where relaxing and dining at these peaceful locations were not uncommon sights. The picnic will take place in front of the Belmont Mausoleum near the Jerome Avenue entrance of The Woodlawn Cemetery.

This event is free.

Trolley Tour Series

The Bronx County Historical Society and The Woodlawn Conservancy are pleased to continue their partnership by offering three Spring 2019 Trolley Tours. Tours run from 12PM - 5PM and the start/finish location is the Jerome Avenue entrance of The Woodlawn Cemetery. Tours are rain or shine and ticket sales are final, so no refunds will be given. Also, lunch is not included in the sales price. There are only 30 seats on the trolley, therefore tickets must be purchased in advance.

For more information, please call The Woodlawn Conservancy at 718-920-1469.

The Bronx’s Silver Screen Trolley Tour

Join The Bronx County Historical Society on The Woodlawn Conservancy Trolley on this special trolley tour highlighting the sites and sounds of the film industry in The Bronx. We will visit the famous film locations that made the borough famous along with the movie studios that help create these films and the picture houses that debuted them. There will be a one-hour lunch break in Little Italy (Arthur Avenue).

Saturday, March 30, 2019

The Beautiful Bronx Trolley Tour

The Bronx is blessed with some of the most beautiful natural sights to enjoy in its abundant parkland and in its outstanding architecture and noted public sculptures. The tour will concentrate on several examples of beauty produced by both nature and the man, such as Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx Park, Crotona Park, Claremont Park, the Grand Concourse and its Art Deco architecture.

There will be a one-hour lunch break in Little Italy (Arthur Avenue).

Saturday, May 11, 2019

Bronx Breweries Legacy Trolley Tour

Continuing the exploration of the beer brewing industry in The Bronx, this tour will take participants on The Woodlawn Conservancy Trolley to the borough’s newest breweries and beer halls. The Bronx County Historical Society will lead the tour. There will be a one-hour lunch break in Little Italy (Arthur Avenue).

Saturday, May 18, 2019