THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE BRONX, NEW YORK 10467
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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documentation and interpretation of the history and heritage of The Bronx and its people from its earliest historical references in the 17th century to the present.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 2020 – MAY 2020  VOLUME 43  NUMBER 2

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE BRONX...

The Bronx is named in memory of the area’s first European settler, The Swede, Jonas Bronck. The earliest settlement in The Bronx took place along the Harlem River in 1639, in what is now Mott Haven. The Bronx originally was part of Westchester County. In 1841, the New York and Harlem Railroad began regular commuter service between The Bronx and Manhattan, and by 1895 the area had become part of New York City. At the turn of the century, the quiet suburban streets and farms of The Bronx began to yield to rapidly expanding factories and urban neighborhoods. In 1914, the borough’s main thoroughfare, the Grand Concourse, was completed; it had been inspired by Paris’ great boulevard, the Champs Elysees. By the 1920s the Fordham Road-Grand Concourse intersection was a great commercial nexus and a center of tree-lined avenues, with luxurious homes and apartment buildings designed in the latest Art Deco and modernist styles.

The last decade of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century were the formative years, too, for many great landmarks which continue to draw hundreds of thousands of visitors to The Bronx every year. The Bronx Zoo, one of the largest zoos in the world; the beautiful park-like New York Botanical Garden; the Hall of Fame for Great Americans at Bronx Community College (the former campus of New York University), of course, Yankee Stadium and Edgar Allan Poe’s Cottage are just a few of the borough’s many outstanding attractions.

All of these sites are featured as part of The Society’s tours of The Bronx.

The Bronx is a microcosm of the story of America. The only one of New York City's five boroughs that is actually part of the mainland, The Bronx is home to some 1.3 million people with a rich diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Since colonial days, The Bronx has stood at the crossroads of American history.

The Bronx County Historical Society was founded in 1955 to preserve the heritage of this thriving community. The Society administers the colonial era Valentine-Varian House, which serves as the Museum of Bronx History; The Bronx County Archives; an extensive Research Library; and Poe Cottage, the final home of America’s great 19th century poet and author, Edgar Allan Poe. Both the Valentine-Varian House and Edgar Allan Poe Cottage are on the National Register of Historic Places. The Society was also the sponsor of a new High School in the South Bronx.

The Society is dedicated to preserving Bronx history. It also offers a variety of programs for tourists, business persons, students, or researchers interested in learning more about contemporary life in The Bronx.
### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Betty Perlish  
Thomas Dunn  
Joanne Cassidy  
Lenore Schultz  
James J. Kelly  
Janet Norquist-Gonzalez  
Carol B. Weber  
Mark Nunally  
Sandra Nunally  
Kathy McAuley  
Douglas Knepper

Hostos Community College  
Sheila Kay  
Bronx Community College  
Janet Harley  
Kathleen McHugh  
Allen County Public Library  
Carl Anderson

We are soliciting suggestions for our PURE GOLD category.

**PURE GOLD** schools, businesses, institutions, and associations have existed and thrived in The Bronx for fifty or more years. Have a suggestion? Email us at: education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org

### SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS:

**Autographed copy of first two publications listed, add $10**

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<th>Yankee Stadium</th>
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<td>History in Asphalt</td>
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#### DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTIONS

The Society's research library, object, and archival collections are a great resource. We thank those who recently made the following donations (partial list):


David Elpern: Bronx street map (1980).

Thomas X. Casey: 142 slides of early Bronx scenes from the John McNamara collection and 76 slides of the Third Avenue Trolley lectures from the Ron Schleissman collection.


Navy Lakehurst Historical Society: 17 postcards depicting the U.S. Naval Training School (WAVES), located at the present-day campus of Lehman College, c. 1944.

### 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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<th>$10 - $99</th>
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<td>Rabine &amp; Nickelsberg</td>
<td>Meszaros Engineering</td>
<td>Lysbeth Mate</td>
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<td>Clifton, Budd, DeMaria, LLP</td>
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<td>Joanne Mastropolo</td>
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<td>Susannah M. Erler</td>
<td>Alvaro Montenegro</td>
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<td>Mary Luersen</td>
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<td>Brennan Ortiz</td>
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<td>Lilly Pappas</td>
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### 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. 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 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.”
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. 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
Mott Haven, The Bronx
A Historic District Turns Fifty

Through May, 2020
Museum of Bronx History/Valentine Varian House
@ 3266 Bainbridge Avenue & East 208th Street
(718) 881-8900
Museum hours: Saturdays 10AM - 4PM & Sundays 1PM - 5PM

A Salute to Bronx History Fundraiser
March 3, 2020
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Join us for a special evening of cocktails and dining at Arthur Avenue’s Zero Otto Nove restaurant to raise money for The 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, NY 10458.
To purchase tickets, contact Kelly Jutsum at kjutsum@bronxhistoricalsociety.org, or mail a check to The Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467.
Walking Tours
Tours cost $10 for BCHS members, $20 for non-members.
Call (718) 881-8900 to reserve your spot.

Arthur Avenue Walking Tour
May 2, 2020 – 10AM
Three major institutions in our country, (Fordham University, The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), The Wildlife Conservation Society (The Bronx Zoo), and a vital community known as “Belmont” are located in the northeast sector of The Bronx. During the latter part of the 19th century, a large Italian immigration settled in the Belmont area. Many of these immigrants who came mostly from southern Italy had experience in the construction industry and they provided the manual labor upon which the three institutions were built. At the height of the Italian population in the 1960s, there were an estimated 45,000 Italian-Americans that claimed Belmont as their home. On our walking tour of Belmont, we will discuss cultural and political effects on this vibrant and now diversified community and how the Italian influence has maintained a strong presence over the past century. We will begin the tour at the corner of 187th St., and Hughes Ave.

161st Street Walking Tour
Saturday, May 9, 2020 – 10AM - Noon
This tour is co-led by The BCHS & the Bronx Chapter of The American Institute of Architects; prices are: $20/BCHS & AIA members, $30/non-members. The Civic Center of The Bronx centering on the intersection of the Grand Concourse and East 161st Street has a rare collection of buildings that reflect the cutting edge of architectural styles in their era. These styles range from 1930s Art Deco, to 1960s Brutalism and beyond. They can be discovered in the area’s monumental public edifices and its elegant upscale apartment houses. Also in the neighborhood are examples of changing taste in landscape architecture and adaptive reuse of older spaces.

Directions: By subway: Number 4 or letter D to 161st Street
By bus: BX1, BX1 LTD, or BX2 to Grand Concourse and East 161st Street
By car: I 87 (Major Deegan Expressway) South to East 161st Street, Macombs Dam Bridge Exit. Turn left, turn right at 161st Street ramp, head straight ahead bearing right to just past Sheridan Avenue and turn right at the Concourse Village shopping mall and its parking garage.

What used to be there? Walking Tour
Saturday, May 30, 2020 – 10AM
This new tour led by BCHS Educator, Justin Mashia, takes you around The Hub to show you what old structures and businesses once stood. You’ll see the Bronx's first skyscraper, where the Third Avenue El ran, where movie theaters, department stores and a cemetery used to be. You’ve never been on a tour quite like this. The tour will meet outside of the 149th Street/3rd Avenue, 2 and 5 train station on the Roberto Clemente Plaza side.

Follow our facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/bronxhistory1639/
Instagram: @Bronxhistorian
Twitter: @Bronxhistory
Website: http://bronxhistoricalsociety.org
Keep up to date as more public programs will be implemented as we head into SPRING!