

26th Annual PANYC Public Program
April 23, 2006
In Association with the
Museum of the City of New York

Public Improvement Projects:
Does Archaeology Delay Progress?
The Real Story

1:00 – 1:20

Opening Remarks and Welcome
Diane Dallal, AKRF, Inc.

1:20 – 1:40

Linda Stone, Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.
The Subway and the “Wall” in Battery Park

The recent discovery of a colonial era battery wall buried in Battery Park in lower Manhattan is one of the most exciting archaeological finds in New York City. The identification of the park’s namesake during construction of a new subway has generated much positive publicity and public interest. Ms. Stone will discuss the MTA South Ferry Terminal Project archaeology and the battery wall.

1:40 – 2:00

Cece Saunders, Historical Perspectives, Inc.
The Willis Avenue Bridge, Planning for Replacement

NYCDOT will replace the Willis Avenue Bridge connecting First Avenue at 125th Street in Manhattan with Willis Avenue at 134th St. in the Bronx. The bridge is a significant historic structure and efforts are underway to preserve the swing and through truss bridge center spans by adaptive reuse. A Topic Intensive Archaeological Evaluation was conducted at sensitive locations in the new bridge/ramp alignment. The Manhattan section of the project site is sensitive for a 17th century cemetery first used in 1667 as the official burying ground for the First Reformed Low Dutch church of New Harlem. As early as 1771, the cemetery’s eastern portion was known as the “Negro burying ground.” The Bronx section of the project site is sensitive for a c.1873 railroad roundhouse foundation.

2:00 – 2:20

Joan H. Geismar, Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D., LLC
Washington Square Park Restoration Project: A Win-Win Situation

Since public projects are often conducted on a grand scale or in particularly interesting locations, they have the potential to foster the archaeological process. In the case of the Washington Square Park Restoration Project, the project will go forward with its possible

archaeological resources identified and a plan in place to address them. Because environmental requirements were honored, and because archaeological issues will be considered prior to construction, the project has the potential to be one where everyone wins.

2:20 – 2:30

Break

2:30 – 2:50

Lynn Rakos, Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Navigating Archaeology on a Large-Scale Navigation Project

The US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, was authorized by Congress to deepen navigation channels in the New York/New Jersey Harbor to 50 feet. As a Federal agency the Corps had to take into consideration cultural resources which included the potential for shipwrecks along channel edges where the deepening project would entail cutting wider channels. A remote sensing survey was undertaken along 170 line-miles of channel edge followed by diving on 43 targets to determine their significance. Recording of certain vessels was conducted and selected vessel elements were salvaged for conservation and display.

2:50-3:10

Justin DiVirgillio, Hartgen & Associates
Beyond the North Gate: The Rum Distillery on the Outskirts of colonial Albany, New York

In the then-remote frontier community of mid-18th century Albany, three residents established a rum distillery. Initially encouraged by the prospect of supplying provisions during the escalating conflict of the French and Indian Wars, the distillery structure, with its 18 large wooden vats linked by an extensive wooden plumbing system and two stills, operated until the early 1800s. In the winter of 2000-2001, archaeologists uncovered the distillery’s remarkably well-preserved, undisturbed remains. This presentation explores how rum was produced and the social and political context in which the distillery operated.

As always, we extend our thanks to the Museum of the City of New York and its staff, especially Robert Blanchard and Tanya Pranmongkit, for co-sponsoring this year’s public program. Our special thanks to Diane Dallal, Shelly Spritzer, Joan Geismar and Celia Bergoffen for their assistance with the program. Thank you also to the PANYC speakers. We look forward to seeing you all again next year, and please consider membership in the museum.