

Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

**PANYC**

## NEWSLETTER

No. 139

May 2009

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Next Meeting:	
TBD	

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PANYC GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2009, 6:30 P.M.

Neighborhood Preservation Center (NPC)

232 E.11th Street

*Notice of upcoming meeting, March 11, 2009, 6:30 pm  
Neighborhood Preservation Center, 232 E. 11th Street, NYC*

**Present:** Stone, Geismar, Pickman, Rothschild, Spritzer, Cantwell, and Wall

**Secretary's report:** Two corrections to the minutes of General Membership meeting. In #4, the word Aids should be Aides. In #5, it's Therese Braddick not Terese. It was voted to accept the minutes

**Treasurer's report:** We have 46 members (1 complementary), and 3 subscribers (1 complementary). We have \$3622.12 in the bank

**President's report:**

- a) Stone received letter from Therese Braddick saying that archaeological RFP's will be tailored for specific projects in future. Geismar said she received two RFPs' for which this was not the case. Geismar will send Stone information to use in preparing a letter to Braddick pointing this out.
- b) Re: Brooklyn Navy Yard, the MAS and others have proposed alternatives to save Admirals' Row Houses, but the National Guard Bureau has not altered plans that we know of. PANYC has not yet been contacted for additional meetings, although this is expected.
- c) Re: Riverside Houses Garages, Amanda Sutphin says that the permit from the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) will stipulate the archaeological process. Geismar has submitted a report calling for testing.
- d) No donation to 2 charities in honor of Dorothy Miner has yet been made. Stone needed a statement about her, just received something from Rothschild and Wall. The donations will be sent in short order.
- e) Stone, Pickman and others went to a film about the Collect Pond and found it to be misleading. The film also used material from the JMA/Joe Schuldenrein's report (diagram and artifact photos) without attribution.
- f) A group of PANYC members went to Flour Mill Site in Brooklyn. A later open-house was conducted and reports from that are in the January Newsletter.
- g) Many PANYC members went to meeting called by Hana Koriech, a volunteer at LPC, to brainstorm about enhanced communication among NYC archaeologists through a web site. Koriech has since drafted a web site. Stone will distribute the URL to members and LPC requests members send Hana comments on the site.

**Committee reports** (only those making a report are mentioned)

Elections: Stone, Geismar, and Jessica MacLean will be the Nominations Committee.

Government affairs:

Issues related to CA Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to do away with environmental review procedures for any projects that will be funded by the stimulus package from the federal government were discussed. Stone will be sending the membership further details.

Met chapter, NYSAA: The first meeting drew >20 people. Meta Janowitz presented a talk on Dutch artifacts in NYC and the Northeast. Another event is set for Feb 1<sup>st</sup> at AMNH, and another with Allan Gilbert in which he will be presenting new information about the origin of the turtle petroglyph in the Bronx. The Met Chapter is thinking of a quarterly newsletter.

Municipal Arts Society: Geismar reported that there is a new president. There is also a new Fellow who guides the Preservation meetings, but she is not clear whether the new person will be interested in archaeology.

Newsletter: Chris Ricciardi sent out 51 copies and 4 hard copies of this issue. It was decided the minutes should state the membership is very appreciative of his hard work.

NYAC: Stone reported Geismar and Louise Basa will co-lead writing the section of NYAC's urban standards related to documentary research.

Outreach: Spritzer will contact Freeman and find out if there need to be letters written to those whose dues haven't been paid for multiple years.

Public program: Geismar reported it will be held on April 19<sup>th</sup> from 1-3 pm at the Museum of the City of NY (MCNY). The title will be "Archaeology in Greenwich Village: Indians, Backyards and Burials" and will feature Anne-Marie Cantwell, Diana Wall, Nancy Brighton, Joan Geismar, and Doug Moody. The program will be dedicated to Dorothy Miner. It was suggested that it should be publicized to the Greenwich Village Historical Society and the preservation community. Geismar reported MCNY is planning an exhibit on New Amsterdam and they asked Geismar if PANYC would be interested in participating. Wall is already on the MCNY committee. Geismar will get more information on what MCNY is asking of PANYC.

Repository: There is now a possibility of two repositories, one in Fort Totten (NYC Parks and Sutphin have been working on, and the other, reported by Geismar, might be in connection with the Brooklyn Historical Society which has a small building). Geismar was in contact with Deborah Schwartz (contact

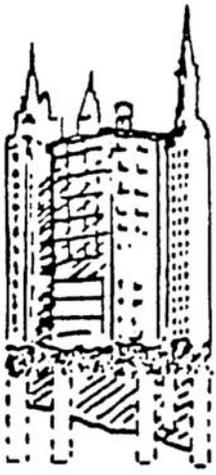
established through the NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs). There was discussion of whether there was a problem supporting two such institutions, whether each would have a focus on specific collections (e.g., recovered from Parks properties or from sites in Brooklyn). It was agreed that since neither may come to pass, we should at this point support both.

Web site: Pickman reported that there are many web-hosting sites and that since we do not require much band width, we could find one that would cost about \$5/month. Apparently Chris Ricciardi has the original disk.

**Old business:** Stone will write Governor Paterson (and remind him of his PANYC award) and encourage his support of archaeology. We will use Arana Hankin as a contact.

General meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Nan Rothschild.



**Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.**

May 18, 2009

**PANYC**

Franklin D. Vagnone  
Executive Director  
Historic House Trust of New York City  
The Arsenal  
830 Fifth Avenue - Room 203  
New York, NY 10065

Dear Mr. Vagnone:

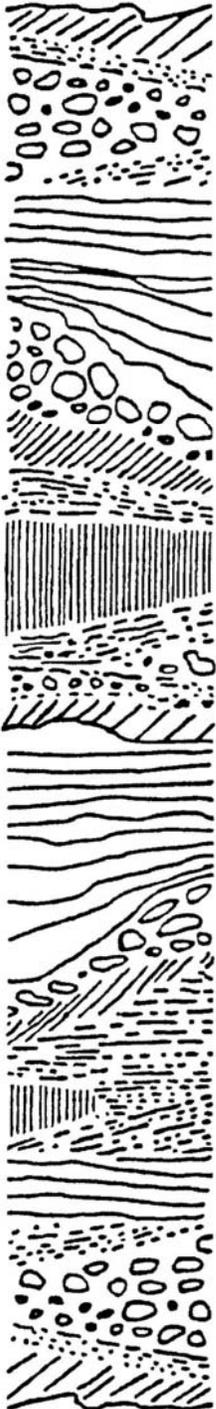
I am writing on behalf of Professional Archaeologist of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) to introduce our organization to you and, if your schedule allows, to suggest a meeting with selected PANYC members to become acquainted. Needless to say, we are delighted to learn that you are not only an architectural designer, environmental sculptor, and preservationist, but also an archaeologist.

We have in the past met with the executive director of the Historic House Trust and would like to do so again to discuss how we might offer our collective expertise to you in your new position, one that can directly affect, and be affected by, archaeology. Please do let me know if we might arrange a meeting. In the meantime, we extend our congratulations to you.

Sincerely,

Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D.,  
PANYC President

40 East 83 Street  
New York, NY 10028  
212 734-6512  
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Meredith Linn

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Arnold Pickman

Lynn Rakos

Nan Rothschild

Diana Wall

Past President:

Linda Stone

## **TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL PANYC SYMPOSIUM**

Presented by the Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) and the Museum of the City of New York in Honor of the Late Dorothy M. Miner, Former Counsel to the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission and Friend of Archaeology

### ***GREENWICH VILLAGE: INDIANS, BACKYARDS, AND BURIAL GROUNDS***

**1:00**

#### ***Welcome***

**Joan H. Geismar, Program Chair**

**1:15**

#### ***Greenwich Village as Indian Country***

**Anne-Marie Cantwell, Rutgers University**

When, 400 years ago, Henry Hudson sailed up the river that now bears his name, he passed by the western reaches of today's Greenwich Village. Known then as Sapokanikan, it had been Indian country for 13,000 years. In 1982, archaeologists excavated the Sheridan Square site hoping to find traces of 17th century Native life but instead found not only how Indian Country had been transformed but also how the idea of the land itself had been rethought.

**1:35**

#### ***Village Backyards: Excavating New York's First Suburb***

**Diana DiZ. Wall, CUNY**

In the early 19th century, the Village became one of the city's first suburbs after its farms were subdivided into urban-sized lots and developed with single-family homes for the city's middle-class and rich. Excavations in the backyards behind some of these houses have revealed many details of middle-class domestic life. This talk provides an overview of some of these backyard projects.

**1:55**

#### ***Before It Was Washington Square Park...***

**Joan H. Geismar, Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D., LLC**

Washington Square Park includes the western part of a late-18th to early-19th-century Potter's Field that, in its entirety, was said to include 20,000 interments. After almost a quarter century of active use, the former burial ground was transformed, first into a parade ground, and then a public park. Recent archaeological testing related to new construction raised, and answered, several questions--foremost among them, did any burials remain?



**2:15 – 2:25**

#### ***Break***

Please be seated promptly

**2:25**

#### ***Lost Amongst the Rubble: The Spring Street Church Site***

**Douglas Mooney, URS Corp.**

Subterranean burial vaults discovered during recent archaeological investigations on the former Spring Street Presbyterian Church property contained over 150 burials. Analysis of forty-five intact burials from these brick and stone vaults offered new information about the structure and internal organization of such vaults and the preservation of human remains in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**2:45**

#### ***Coffin Plates from the Spring Street Church Site: Stories from the Rubble***

**Rebecca White, URS Corp**

Coffin plates were among the funerary artifacts recovered from the Spring Street Presbyterian Church vaults. A coating of dirt, corrosion, and insect casings made most of them indecipherable. However intensive cleaning eventually revealed the elegantly engraved names, ages, and dates of death, for some of the people interred in the vaults. Research using church documents, census records and newspapers revealed some of their personal stories.

**3:05**

#### ***Dialogue***

**Anne-Marie Cantwell, Diana DiZ. Wall, Joan H. Geismar, Douglas Mooney, Rebecca White**

The opportunity to ask questions and discuss New York City archaeology with the program's speakers.

## **PANYC PUBLIC PROGRAM**

**April 19, 2009**

### Opening Remarks

Good afternoon. I'm Joan Geismar, chair of this year's PANYC Public Program. I'm delighted to welcome you to our 29th annual presentation, all but one held at the Museum of the City of New York, to whom we are very grateful.

This year's program focuses on Greenwich Village—well, mostly on Greenwich Village since two of our talks concern a TriBeCa site just next door.

Greenwich Village, arguably the city's first suburb, is a part of the city where its past can still be explored through archaeology. When the Greenwich Village Historic District was designated in 1969, it was the city's largest such district and it remains one of the largest today. It seemed fitting to us that this year's program not only highlight the Village, but also honor one of New York City's preservation greats, the late Dorothy Marie Miner.

Dorothy Miner, counsel to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission for 17 years, who passed away last October, helped define the meaning of preservation in our city and in our nation. She was a staunch advocate and fierce defender of preservation and a friend of archaeology. With her guidance, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission took on the role of protector of archaeology when the city's environmental quality review act—known as CEQR with a “C” to differentiate it from the state's comparable law that fittingly is SEQR with an “S”—was adopted in 1978. With the enactment of CEQR, archaeology became an issue in the city's development, and, with Kent Barwick its Chair, Lenore Norman its Executive Director, Edwin Freidman its Director of Planning and Field Services, and Dorothy Miner its counsel, the Landmarks Preservation Commission became its champion.

In 1980, what could be called the Golden Age of New York City archaeology began. With the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Dorothy to uphold the law, and with the city undergoing a building boom, archaeological investigation flourished. And, not coincidentally, 1980 was also

the year that Professional Archaeologists of New York City, that is, PANYC, was founded.

For the last number of years, Dorothy taught at Columbia University where she trained others to interpret and uphold the laws of preservation. And she continued to be a vital force in NYC preservation. She served on both the Law and Planning Committees at the Municipal Arts Society and shared her expertise where ever and when ever it was needed. Dorothy's knowledge and her passion will be sorely missed. And that is why this year's PANYC public program is in her honor.

So, today we're here to celebrate the New York City archaeology Dorothy helped foster. More specifically, we're here to celebrate the archaeology of Greenwich Village. We hope you will enjoy what we have to tell you. And I encourage you to listen really carefully—even to take notes if necessary—so you can enter into a dialogue with the speakers as a program finale.

Unfortunately, one of our scheduled speakers, Nancy Brighton, who was planning to take us into a Greenwich Village privy—a virtual tour to be sure – unexpectedly has not yet returned from Afghanistan where her job with the Army Corps of Engineers has taken her for the last few months. So Nancy's talk will be something to look forward to at yet another PANYC Public Program.

Now, without further ado, let's look at Greenwich Village in an archaeological perspective. That is, it's Indians, Backyards, and Burial Grounds.



PANYC President Joan Geismar and Past-Presidents Linda Stone (photographer) and Lynn Rakos on the steps of City Hall attending a rally to support preservation and funding for the Landmarks Preservation Commission (May 6, 2009).

# The Brooklyn Paper, March 16, 2009

## Tenants hope this plan is in ruins

By Ben Muessig  
The Brooklyn Paper

Opponents of a controversial plan to build a garage in the courtyard of an historic Brooklyn Heights apartment complex are hoping that a blast from the past will put the brakes on the project.

Residents of the 119-year-old Riverside Apartments have long fought against the developer's plans to build a garage topped with a garden behind their landmarked Joralemon Street building, and they say that old New York heirlooms and relics buried beneath the courtyard could be their last chance to halt the construction of the 90-car garage.

We are hoping and praying that they find something that will stop it," said William Ringler, chair of the Riverside Tenant's Association, which previously opposed an above-ground incarnation of the garage that the city buried last spring.

A March 13 excavation didn't uncover anything earth-shattering — or even identifiable, experts said.

"Our maps revealed that there might be kilns from an 18th-century distillery, but what we found is a footing — but it's nothing that would historically knock your socks off," said project archeologist Joan Geismar.

Mike Berfield, a representative for the landlord, Joel Weiner, told The Brooklyn Paper that the discovery of the brick foundation would not preempt excavation for the garage behind the 157-unit complex built by famed philanthropist Alfred T. White.

"Nothing has been found so far that is historically significant," he said.

It is exceedingly rare for archeological findings to stand in the way of development projects, as they did when excavators uncovered an African burial ground on the site of a planned office building in Lower Manhattan in 1991.

The conflict over the garage stems from the 1990s, when a judge froze rents for some Riverside tenants after a previous building owner paved over much of the building's once landscaped courtyard.

By building a garden atop the parking garage — which the builders claim is widely needed in Brooklyn Heights — the landlord might be able to abolish the discounted rents.

But some tenants say that the garage would just add pollution and noise to the neighborhood.



The Brooklyn Paper / Ben Muessig

Some residents hope that the construction of a parking garage at the Riverside Apartments in Brooklyn Heights will reveal archeological relics and halt the project. Workers did discover a foundation of a prior structure, but the project's archeologist said the relic was not significant.

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<b>EVENTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST</b>					
<b>Compiled for May, 2009</b>					
<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contacts</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Exhibit: "Lenape: The First Staten Islanders" -- Fascinating artifacts, on loan from the Staten Island Museum, explore the day-to-day existence of the Lenape people through the archaeological evidence they left behind.		May 4 – June 30	St. George Library Center, 5 Central Ave., Staten Island	718-442-8560	free
Exhibit: "Mapping of New York's Shoreline, 1609-2009" -- This exhibit celebrates the Dutch accomplishments in the New York City region, especially along the waterways forming its urban watershed, from the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound to the North (or Hudson) River and the South (or Delaware) River. Inspired by The New York Public Library's collection of Dutch, English, and early American mapping of the Atlantic Coastal regions, this exhibition exemplifies the best early and growing knowledge of the unknown shores along our neighboring rivers, bays, sounds, and harbors.		Sept. 25, 2009 – June 26, 2010	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, New York Public Library, 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave. at 42 <sup>nd</sup> St.		free
Exhibit: "Landmarks of New York" -- An exhibition of 83 photographs documenting some of the most significant buildings and public parks in New York City.		April 30 – July 12, 2009	New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77 <sup>th</sup> St.		Members: free, Adults: \$10, Seniors and Educators: \$7, Students: \$6
Exhibit: "Living and Learning: Chinese Immigration, Restriction & Community in Brooklyn, 1850 to Present" -- Brooklyn and the History of Chinese Immigration		May 8 – August 30, 2009	Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St.		Members: free, Adults: \$6, Seniors and Students \$4
Exhibit: "Out of the Box: Anthropology Collections Unpacked" -- The Museum Anthropology program invites you to an opening reception to celebrate the 2009 exhibition. Anthropology graduate students studying the history, politics and practices of exhibiting cultures.	Exhibition, 3:30-5:30pm, Reception, 4:30-6pm	Opening Night Reception: May 12, 2009, Exhibition through June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Exhibition: Low Library, Rotunda, Columbia University, Reception: 465 Schermerhorn Ext.		free

MEMBERSHIP/NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION:

If you are interested in joining PANYC or if you would like to subscribe to the PANYC Newsletter, please complete the form below and return it to:

Jessica Striebel MacLean  
160 Bainbridge Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11233

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