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[www.learn.columbia.edu/panyc](http://www.learn.columbia.edu/panyc)

# PANYC – Professional Archaeologists of New York City

Minutes - General Membership Meeting: May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002.

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## NOTICE OF UPCOMING MEETING: *September 18th, 2002*

Room 710, Hunter College North

The intersection of East 68<sup>th</sup> and Lexington, Manhattan. Turn right out of elevator, go through doors, turn left and go to end of hall, the room is on the right

Executive Board: 6:00 P.M.

General Membership: 6:30 P.M.

### \*\*\*\* SPEAKER \*\*\*\*

Dr. Richard Gould of Brown University will speak about the forensic archaeology work conducted as part of the WTC recovery effort (see abstract below)

\*\*\*\*\*

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED!!!!** – if you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact Lynn Rakos at (212) 264-0229.

President Lynn Rakos called the General Meeting to order at 6:45 P.M.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Minutes accepted with the following corrections: Cantwell was in attendance at the Executive Board meeting. Pickman is not serving his second term, he was elected to a two-year term as Treasurer. The balance of the account indicated in the minutes was the wrong amount. Under **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**, the last sentence should have read "comments were sent to the Sutphin and Bankoff". Also to change: Nan Rothschild was not elected but is a member of the Executive Board *ex officio*.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The treasurer's report was presented by Pickman. There is a balance of \$2114.35 in the PANYC treasury.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** President Rakos sent a letter to Mayor Bloomberg concerning NYC's acquisition of Governor's Island and expressing PANYC's concern that archaeological resource be addressed in project planning. She also noted that an archaeological sensitivity study existed for the island. A letter was sent to Sherida Paulsen, Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission (Landmarks), in support of Landmark's restructuring which recognized archaeology as a distinct discipline. The letter also encouraged Landmarks to include archaeological resources in future landmark designations. Rakos is preparing a letter to Bloomberg about his decision to relocate the Board of Education to the Tweed Courthouse instead of allowing the Museum of the City of New York to move there. Although this is not an archeological issue it was decided by the membership that a letter was appropriate due to PANYC's long-term relationship with MCNY.

Rakos and Chris Ricciardi met with Amanda Sutphin and Arthur Bankoff of Landmarks on April 16 for an introductory meeting. Changes in the Landmarks hierarchical structure were discussed. Landmarks guidelines are final and available on the Landmarks website. Discussed was the possibility of our organizations working together to formulate a strategic plan for archaeology of NYC. Other avenues for cooperation were also discussed. Tabled until the September meeting was the possibility of forming a Landmarks Committee that would explore areas that PANYC could work together with Landmarks.



Nancy Danzig of the Federal Transit Administration asked Rakos to provide a list of PANYC members in response to PANYC's request to be an interested party on the Second Avenue Subway Project. A letter and membership application will be sent to her. Rakos also suggested that the FTA be invited to speak about the project at the November meeting.

The African Burial Ground was brought up for discussion after Rakos indicated that a reporter from Archaeology Magazine had contacted her about PANYC's position on Landmark's burial policy. It was suggested that PANYC write a letter of inquiry to the GSA about the status of the ABG report. It was also decided that should a Landmarks Committee be formed in September, one of their tasks would be to review Landmarks' burial policy and develop an opinion that PANYC could adopt and use should any other inquiries be received.

Meetings for the next year were tentatively set with the following dates: November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2003, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003, and May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003. President Rakos was going to try to get meetings held at the Graduate Center in midtown.

**ACTION:** Nothing to report.

**AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND:** Nothing to report.

**AWARDS:** Cantwell stated that Jessica Davis from Barnard College won this year's award.

**CITY HALL PARK:** Nothing to report.

**ELECTION:** Nothing to report.

**EVENTS:** Kelly Britt will be taking over as Events Chair. Linda Stone was thanked for her dedication and service to PANYC.

**MEMBERSHIP:** One application was requested and sent.

**MET. CHAPTER NYSAA:** Nothing to report.

**MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY:** Nothing to report.

**NEWSLETTER:** September's newsletter will be Christopher Matthews last so we are once again on the lookout for another editor. Chris was thanked for his dedication and service to PANYC.

**NYAC:** NYAC formally adopted the monitoring guidelines.

**PARKS DEPARTMENT:** A question came up as to who is responsible for consideration of archaeological resources in New York City Parks. Geismar will contact Adrian Benepe to find out who at the Parks Department is responsible for archaeological concerns.

**PUBLIC PROGRAM:** The public program was held on Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup> 2002. Despite heavy rain over 100 people attended including many first time attendees who added their names to our mailing list. The book signing for Unearthing Gotham was a sell out. Rakos, public program chair, thanked Pickman, Stone, Freeman and Britt for their help during the event.

**REPOSITORY:** Nothing to report.

**RESEARCH AND PLANNING:** Chris Matthews and Susan Dublin will attend an ethics conference at University of Pennsylvania. The committee has proposed a PANYC sponsored symposium on ethics in archaeology.

**URBAN STANDARDS:** It was noted that NYAC's adoption of the monitoring guideline is a step towards developing urban standards.

**WEB SITE:** Chris Ricciardi created a link from the PANYC website to his own website on which he has a PANYC page that can be quickly updated.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Second Avenue Subway (see President's Report).

**NEW BUSINESS:** Rakos received an e-mail concerning the possible disturbance by a private developer of a reported Alanson Skinner site in the Bronx. Discussed was PANYC's role in such instances since PANYC has no regulatory authority. It was suggested that PANYC create a letter that can be sent to developers making them aware of the significance of archaeological resources on their development site. This generic letter could then be modified as appropriate.

Rakos was informed that Dr. Richard Gould of Brown University and Dr. Sophia Perdikaris, of Brooklyn College, had conducted some type of forensic archeological investigations in connection with the World Trade Center recovery effort. Rakos spoke with Gould who informed her that they had undertaken a trial excavation under the invitation of the NYC Medical Examiners Office. He is mailing her articles and other information about the work. It was suggested by the membership that he, and/or Perdikaris, be invited to speak at the September meeting.

A New York Times article from April 23<sup>rd</sup> regarding Arthur Bankoff's proposed work in Prospect Park with the non-profit organization, Brooklyn Heritage, Inc. was discussed. The group has conducted a remote sensing survey in the park in an effort to locate Revolutionary War burials. While a further remote sensing survey is proposed, there was some concern expressed by the membership with the ultimate goal of the project that, according to the article, is to excavate in the area. It was noted in the piece that they do not intend to disturb the burials.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory D. Lattanzi  
PANYC Secretary

**SPEAKER AT SEPTEMBER 18<sup>th</sup> MEETING: Dr. Richard Gould, Brown University**  
**"WTC ARCHAEOLOGY: WHAT WE SAW, WHAT WE LEARNED, AND WHAT WE DID ABOUT IT"**

Forensic archaeology has already proven its value in studies of crime and accident scenes, battlefields, and mass-graves. But the WTC experience compels us to consider a new and expanded role for the use of scientifically-controlled methods to recover human remains and other evidence from mass-casualty sites and to explore humane ways to use the findings of these recovery efforts. This talk chronicles events leading to a trial excavation under the invitation of the NYC Medical Examiner's Office on March 2, 2002, and the results of those excavations. Especially, we shall examine the lessons learned from these experiences and what they can tell us about future volunteer efforts by archaeologists to perform this kind of work if similar events should occur.

# Correspondence



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

REGION II  
Connecticut,  
New Jersey,  
New York,  
Virgin Islands

One Bowling Green  
Room 429  
New York, NY 10004-1415  
212-668-2170  
212-668-2136 (fax)

May 21, 2002

Ms. Lynn Rakos  
PAYNC President  
ACOE  
26 Federal Plaza  
CENAN-PL-EA  
New York, NY 10278

Dear Ms. Rakos:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) received the letter dated March 29, 2002, requesting that Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) be granted the status of a Consulting Party for the Second Avenue Subway project, pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's (ACHP) Section 106 regulation.

Prior to making it's decision, the FTA would like to receive a response to the following: Please explain PAYNC's interest in the project. For example, what is the group's legal or economic relation to the project or affected properties, or the group's concern with the project's effects on historic resources. Secondly, please explain why the group believes its participation would be valuable to successful resolution. Lastly, please tell us about the composition of PANYC's membership. A copy of this information should also be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 212-668-2180. Our office would be glad to meet in person to discuss these issues with you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Danzig, AICP  
Community Planner

Cc: Dr. Robert Kuhn, SHPO  
Nan Rothshild, PANYC  
Peter Cafiero, NYCT

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

May 22, 2002

Ms. Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Apt 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Mayor Michael Bloomberg  
City Hall  
51-52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC), to express our delight that the City of New York will soon own Governors Island, New York's newest piece of old real estate. As a city, we are presented with the unprecedented opportunity to examine a significant piece of our history through any work subsurface that is proposed on the Island. PANYC respectfully asks that you consider the archaeology of Governors Island as an important element in project planning.

Research was recently undertaken by the federal government to assess the archaeological sensitivity of Governors Island. The study determined that there are areas likely to yield significant historical information. Not only is there a chance for encountering cultural remains relating to the Dutch occupation period and for gaining insight into the later military history but also for discovering information on more than a millennium of Native American use of the island's rich resources.

PANYC sincerely hopes that all plans on the island take into consideration the archaeological component of this historic location.

Sincerely,

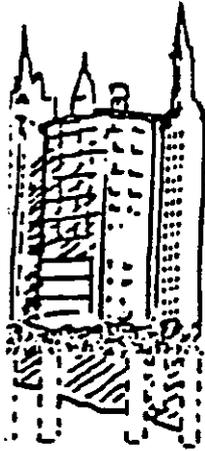
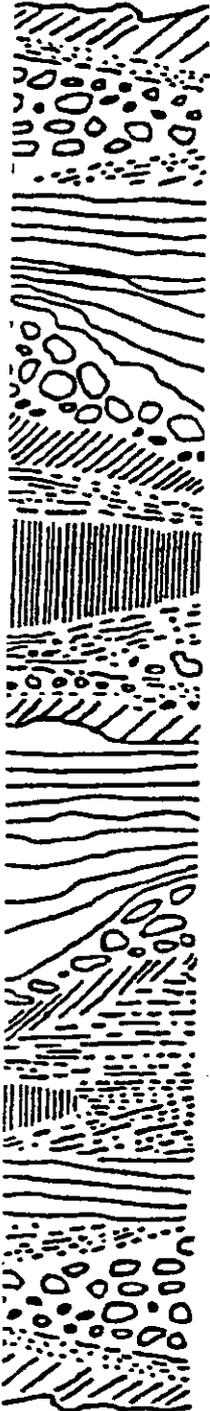


Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President

CC: Deputy Mayor Patricia Harris  
Sherida Paulsen, Chair, NYCLPC



**PANYC**



Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

May 22, 2002

Ms. Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Apt 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Ms. Sherida E. Paulsen, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
One Center Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10007

Dear Ms. Paulsen:

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) to express our delight in the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's (LPC) decision to recognize archaeology as a distinct discipline during the restructuring of your organization. I would also like to express our strong support for the inclusion of archaeology as a component of all future Landmark designations. This would truly be a step forward in the protection of important historic resources within our city.

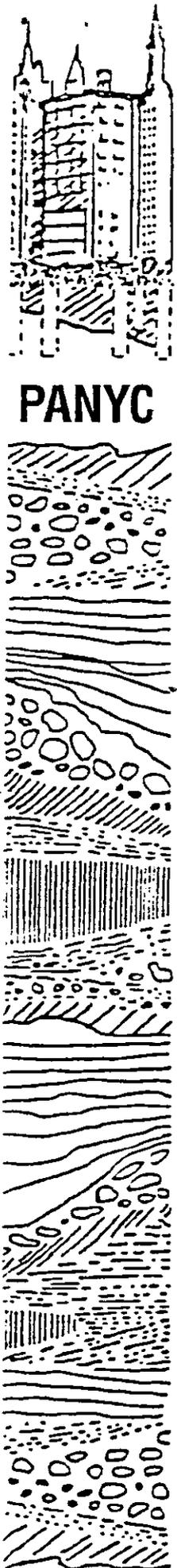
Last month, Christopher Ricciardi, PANYC Vice President, and I met with Dr. Arthur Bankoff and Amanda Sutphin at your offices to discuss the implications of the restructuring of the LPC on the archaeology of New York City. We also discussed ways in which both organizations could work together to ensure that archaeology is properly addressed in project planning and how that information could be disseminated to the public and professional communities.

As the newly-elected president of PANYC, I am eager to develop a relationship of good will between the two organizations and look forward to meeting with you in person to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

  
Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President

CC:  
Michael Bloomberg, Mayor  
Bankoff, LPC  
Sutphin, LPC





## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Municipal Building, 1 Centre St, 9<sup>th</sup> Fl. New York, NY 10007  
(212) 669-7823; FAX (212) 669-7818; asutphin@lpc.nyc.gov



Amanda Sutphin  
Director of Archaeology

June 12, 2002

Ms. Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Apt 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Dear Ms. Rakos:

Chair Paulsen asked me to respond to your letter of May 22. We deeply appreciate your kind words and support. As you know, we too hope that our organizations may be able to work together to better protect New York City's past.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

  
Amanda Sutphin

cc: Chair Sherida Paulsen, LPC  
H. Arthur Bankoff, LPC

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

August 14, 2002

Ms. Nancy Danzig, AICP  
Community Planner  
US Dept. of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration  
One Bowling Green  
Room 429  
New York, NY 10004-1415

**PANYC**

Dear Ms. Danzig:

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) in response to your letter dated 21 May requesting information about our organization. I hope the following data will encourage you to grant our organization the status of a Consulting Party for the Second Avenue Subway project.

As per our by-laws, the mission of PANYC is to protect and preserve the archeological and historic resources of New York City. Our other objectives are to educate and advise agencies and the general public on matters relating to the archaeology of New York City and to promote cooperation and communication among the city's professional archaeologists.

PANYC presently has 55 members, and of those, almost half work in academia (including graduate students) or government. Slightly less than half of our members are engaged in consulting, primarily as contract archaeologists. Approximately 12% of our membership pursues other lines of work, i.e. museum curators, conservators and educators, but are active in the archaeological community of New York City. As you can see from the attached membership application form, education and experience in archaeological method and theory are pre-requisites for membership.

We feel strongly that the Federal Transit Administration will benefit greatly from PANYC's collective knowledge and expertise in dealing with the city's archaeological and historic resources. As a group, we can certainly make an important contribution to a successful Section 106 coordination.

Please consider including PANYC as a Consulting Party for the Second Avenue Subway. If you require further information or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (212) 264-0229.

Sincerely,



Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Apt. 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

CC: Dr. Robert Kuhn, SHPO

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

August 16, 2002

Ms. Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Apt 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

**PANYC**

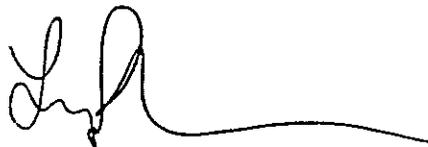
Mayor Michael Bloomberg  
City Hall  
51-52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) to express our support for the reuse of the Tweed Court House as the new home of the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY). PANYC has had a long-standing relationship with MCNY. For 22 years they have generously hosted our annual public program on the archaeology of New York City. The Tweed Court House is a magnificent building and would provide a grand venue for exhibitions on our great city.

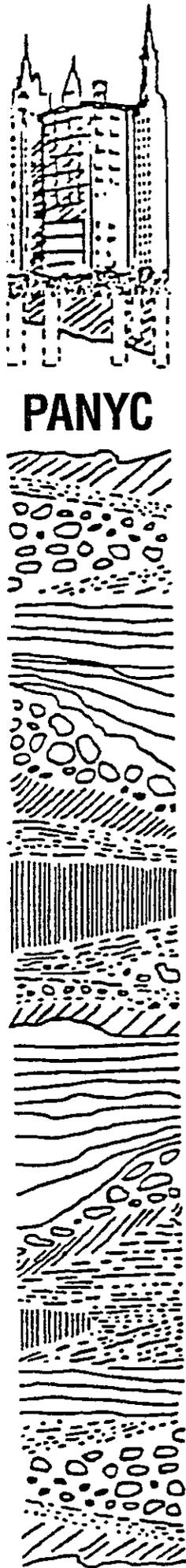
Please reconsider your proposed use of the Tweed Court House as a home for the Board of Education and allow MCNY to move in.

Sincerely,



Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President

CC:  
Deputy Mayor, Patricia Harris  
Robert R. MacDonald, Director, MCNY



# Looking To Solve A Mystery With \$44,000

By ANDY NEWMAN

H. Arthur Bankoff thinks he knows where the bodies are buried.

Dr. Bankoff, the chairman of Brooklyn College's anthropology and archaeology department, says that using electrical probes, he has detected formations beneath Prospect Park that may be burial trenches for American Revolutionary soldiers killed in the Battle of Brooklyn.

If he is right, the burial ground will be a major historical site. But to find out for sure will take money, and yesterday Dr. Bankoff was searching for it in a place where even an archaeologist would have a hard time digging it up: the ever-shrinking city budget.

Dr. Bankoff, representing a non-profit group called Brooklyn Heritage Inc., was one of 17 parties to testify yesterday at a hearing on the budget held by Brooklyn's City Council delegation.

The delegation will pick the most worthy projects and recommend them to their Council colleagues, who will present a wish list to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg that has about as much chance of surviving the budget ax as the Colonial soldiers did the British bayonets.

Brooklyn Heritage is asking for \$44,000 for the next fiscal year to do some more noninvasive probing at the site, which is somewhere in the park's Long Meadow (Dr. Bankoff would not divulge the exact location for fear of tipping off grave robbers).

The group's president, Robert Furman, told the Council that an investment in developing Brooklyn's revolutionary heritage would quickly pay for itself via tourists' tax dollars.

But the head of the delegation, Councilman Lewis A. Fidler, said that the project was a long shot to win financing, albeit an appealing one.

"I'd hope we'd be able to do it," he said. "But it's going to be very hard at a time when the Brooklyn Museum is losing \$2 million that the prior Council had pledged, and that's for an ongoing renovation of the front of the museum. Brooklyn College needs \$1.1 million to finish an Inter-

# Tapping a bare budget for help in unearthing history.

net case that we started with them. How do you evaluate that next to new money, even for something as attractive as this? You can't leave things half finished."

The ground disturbances that may be burial trenches are just north of what was once Porte Road, an east-west route that ran through hilly, mostly unfarmed land. On Aug. 27, 1776, British and Hessian soldiers who had outflanked the outnumbered Americans attacked them from behind in what is now Prospect Park.

Many Americans were killed as they fled west along Porte Road, and most of the rest died in the siege of the Old Stone House west of the park.

Human remains and musket balls were unearthed when the park's East Drive was being built in 1866. The park's commissioners had reported that "the workmen regularly turn up balls and bones in the course of their excavations, where once the tide of battle surged."

Suspicious that there was a military burial ground in the park grew in 2000, when an expedition led by Dr. Bankoff, equipped with instruments that use electric current to sense differences in soil density, turned up what he called several "long, kind of ovoid, rectangular shapes about 10 feet down."

Dr. Bankoff and Brooklyn Heritage are looking for money to use more sensitive probes to do another search. If it turns up trenches, they will try to get permission from the city's Parks Department to dig.

Dr. Bankoff hastened to add that he did not intend to exhumate bodies.

"Maybe if we could find a couple of artifacts, we could tell who they might have been, were they British or American," he said. "There's good arguments against disturbing the graves themselves. They're there; this is where they were buried — it's a cemetery."

Soldiers were often buried in mass graves during the war, he said. "Individual burials were beyond them at that time."

The historians said that if the city did not come through with the money, it was highly unlikely that they would find another source.

"We applied for a federal grant, but we don't think we'll get it," Mr. Furman said.

Mr. Fidler said he wished he could help. "In flusher times," he said, "this is something we'd really love to support."

B4

Post-it* Fax Note	7671	Date	4/23/02	# of pages	1
To	Bob FURMAN	From	K.M.H.+T		
Co./Dept.		Co.			
Phone #		Phone #			
Fax #	(212) 932-2574	Fax #			

## No Rest for African Burial Ground

Delays and Discord Trouble Howard's Preservation Project

By Marcia Slacum Greene  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Tuesday, August 27, 2002; Page A01

Inside a Howard University research laboratory, a deep blue steel cabinet holds a white tray cradling a newborn's skeletal remains -- partial right leg, left arm, tiny ear -- arranged on black velvet like precious gems. Time erased the name, and history is silent on another mystery: whether the child was born slave or free.

The others are nearby, down the corridor of Frederick Douglass Hall. Behind a locked door with an activated security alarm, the skeletal remains of nearly 400 men, women and children rest in rows of cabinets stacked nearly ceiling high. The dead wait in this climate-controlled room for the living to resolve one of the most contentious disputes in the study of African American history.

What began a decade ago as an ambitious archaeological project to study the remains -- discovered when a federal construction crew stumbled across New York City's hidden African Burial Ground -- has turned into a chaotic ordeal, fraught with delays, funding problems and accusations of racism.

Today, the fate of the project hangs on fragile agreements between researchers and the federal government, with much at stake: millions of dollars in public funds, Howard University's reputation and promising research on the early impact of slavery in America.

All agree that the African Burial Ground, the largest and oldest known Colonial-era cemetery used by enslaved and free blacks, could provide groundbreaking insights. That goal, however, remains distant.

The research is one phase of a preservation plan, for which the federal budget has grown from about \$2.2 million to \$24.3 million. But no key phase is complete. Howard's unfinished reports, still in the draft stages, have delayed other phases of the project, and Howard officials have worried that the university's reputation as a top research institution could suffer.

Construction of a memorial at the New York site has not begun, and twice the government had to cancel plans to reinter the remains, despite having paid \$100,000 for mahogany crypts and coffins hand-carved in Ghana.

The project was even affected by terrorism. When the World Trade Center towers collapsed Sept. 11, some artifacts that were being analyzed in a New York laboratory were buried in the rubble.

Before that, the project's many delays had angered a group of black New Yorkers who consider the cemetery the sacred resting place of their African ancestors and a national symbol for black Americans whose ancestral roots were obliterated during slavery. Every stage has provoked an emotional struggle for control. And the disputes have been titanic.

"We are very upset," said Ollie McClean, leader of an advocacy group known as Descendants of the African Burial Ground. "This government brought my people here in bondage and worked them to death, then dug them up, and to this day, we are fighting to get the bones back so we can rebury them."

## Surprise Discovery

Two centuries ago, mapmakers noted a Negro burial ground in lower Manhattan, near the site of today's City Hall. Yet federal officials were surprised in 1991 when, at that precise spot, construction workers excavating for a proposed federal building began unearthing intact burials -- skeletal remains, grave goods and remnants of coffins. The site was part of a five-acre 18th-century cemetery that historians believe held the remains of as many as 20,000 people.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, an independent federal agency, immediately advised the General Services Administration to develop a plan to preserve the site's historic value. But GSA officials, worried about costly delays, initially declined to modify the construction schedule. Instead, the GSA accelerated the excavation and in a year's time had unearthed more than 400 skeletal remains.

In the meantime, New York's black community accused the government of desecrating sacred ground and mishandling the remains,

some of which were wrapped in newspaper. A scientist gingerly handling one burial would later discover that the words "New York Post" had transferred onto a skull.

The proper preservation approach, some argued, would be to scrap plans for the office building. Advocates held vigils, protests and news conferences. Former New York mayor David N. Dinkins asked Congress to intervene.

In 1992, then-Rep. Gus Savage (D-Ill.), chairman of a subcommittee on public buildings and grounds, called for construction to cease until the GSA mitigated damage to the site. In response, the agency halted construction and agreed to a multi-phase plan that would fund research, develop a memorial and interpretive center at the site and reinter the remains.

Advocates saw parallels between their demands and the long, ongoing struggle of Native Americans. Their campaign against the desecration of Native American burial grounds led to the passage of a 1990 federal law that gives them control of grave sites on federal land and requires the return of cultural items and human remains.

In New York, activists insisted that black experts were needed to place the burial ground in the proper historical and cultural context. As a result, Howard received a contract to oversee the research project.

About that time, it became apparent to federal officials that the new demands of advocates would push up expenses. The initial federal proposal of \$2.3 million would not begin to cover the expanding project.

In 1993, the burial ground was declared a National Historic Landmark, and Howard's project created such a stir among archaeologists and researchers that it was featured in documentaries and books.

## The Equivalent of 'Roots'

To the scientists at Howard, the cemetery and the secrets it held were the anthropological equivalent of Alex Haley's "Roots," the hugely popular book and television series that traced Haley's ancestry back to slavery.

Relying on an ambitious research design, the Howard scientists set out to uncover enough evidence to reconstruct the burial ground population's entire existence, from countries of origin to causes of death.

Michael L. Blakey, the Howard anthropologist who assembled and guided a team of mostly black scientists from nine universities, also saw an opportunity to tackle America's race problem.

"We seek to reverse the false histories that deny the African material contributions to the building of the Western world," Blakey wrote in a report to a United Nations human rights conference in Switzerland.

The scientists' early findings fueled expectations, providing a person-by-person picture of black life in America 200 years ago.

Mark E. Mack, an interim curator at Howard's Cobb Laboratory, described how a man labeled "burial 101" exemplified the project's promise: He stood nearly six feet tall and had been physically active as a teenager, judging from early injuries to his shoulders. He had suffered from yaws, a chronic infectious disease common in the tropics. He died between age 30 and 35, and mourners embellished his wood coffin with brass tacks arranged in a heart shape, believed to be a West African symbol called Sankofa. DNA tests linked the man to a maternal ancestor in West Africa.

In burial after burial, the researchers analyzed skeletons, linen shroud pins and coffin fragments to draw conclusions about social conditions and the harshness of slavery.

They found that children under 12, who made up 40 percent of the individual burials, experienced a high mortality rate and developmental delays caused by malnutrition and disease. Pre-revolutionary New York, which had more enslaved Africans than any Colonial settlement except Charleston, S.C., preferred child slaves because they were inexpensive and unlikely to rebel, the Howard historians noted.

The majority of the men and women exhibited signs of muscle tears and spine fractures commonly associated with excessive strain and heavy loads; the scientists said that in some instances they appeared simply to have been worked to death.

In a sample study, scientists used DNA to trace the ancestry of 32 of those buried to specific cultures in Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Benin. They lobbied for funds to expand the DNA research and planned to create a genetic data bank, which eventually could help living black Americans trace their African ancestry.

But as the scientific work progressed, Howard's relationship with the GSA deteriorated. By the fall of 1998, the GSA had rejected the scientists' request to conduct DNA studies on 300 skeletons, labeling the work experimental.

Meanwhile, the archaeologists Howard hired to examine hundreds of artifacts in New York argued that the GSA had never provided adequate funding for their work.

"It has been an uphill battle with very little support," said Warren Perry, the project's associate director for archaeology. "This project has been a battle for every penny."

Blakey said GSA officials sabotaged the team's efforts by failing to fund the entire approved research design, which he estimated would have cost \$10 million. Howard's \$5.4 million federal contract, he said, was not adequate for work on one of the world's most significant scientific sites.

"We did not need what is often called in black college circles 'a colored grant,' " Blakey said. "We needed real funding and under sufficient control to allow those of us with the expertise to carry out our plan. What we got was half of what we would need to carry out the project and constant second-guessing, naysaying and interference by the same Euro-American bureaucrats who had bungled the site from the beginning."

## Managerial Quagmire

For officials at the GSA, the project had become a nagging series of delays, high costs and conflicts with African American advocates. The agency understood the demands of constructing massive buildings, but unearthing centuries-old bones was proving to be a managerial quagmire.

Former GSA chief of staff Brian A. Jackson said Howard had underestimated the work and time the project would require. He noted that even though the basic research was unfinished, Howard continued to seek additional funding for more sophisticated studies.

By 2001, the GSA had paid Howard \$4.6 million and was reviewing invoices for an additional \$700,000. Howard had submitted drafts of two reports. The archaeologists not only lacked a report, but their New York lab had been buried by the terrorist attack, though officials later concluded that critical material had not been irrevocably damaged.

Although the federal office building was completed in 1994, every phase of the preservation work, which the community had meticulously reviewed and approved, was still unfinished.

At times, the GSA was caught in the middle of conflicting demands from community groups. Citing community pressure, the agency scheduled a reinterment ceremony in August 2001 and shifted onto a fast-track schedule.

The GSA spent \$56,700 for 420 coffins, manufactured and hand-carved in Ghana by 100 carvers working daily to finish in five weeks. The agency also paid \$64,960 for seven mahogany burial crypts manufactured by a New York firm. But the ceremony never took place.

New York advocates complained of being excluded from the planning. The historic preservation council also objected, questioning why the government would bury artifacts and remains before the scientific reports were complete.

At the end of 2001, with Howard arguing that it needed more funds, the GSA negotiated a new agreement requiring Howard to complete the scientific research by December this year at no additional cost to the government.

Howard agreed. The GSA thought it had finally crafted the perfect solution. But the conflict was not over.

In May this year, the burial ground researchers retreated to Virginia's historic Moton Conference Center on the banks of the York River to assess the damage to their mission and to salvage what they could. As some civil rights movement strategists had done decades earlier, they used the tranquil spot to confront what they believed had been the fundamental issue: race.

For years, GSA officials had been unable to quell accusations that their positions during disagreements were rooted in a racist contempt for the advocates and the project. The scientists' accusations were no longer subtle.

Seated in large white wooden rockers on the center's porch, Blakey and archaeologists Perry and Jean Howson argued that the government's dogged insistence on a December deadline for the research left them without adequate time and money to complete

critical analysis. Research gaps in the final reports, the scientists feared, would make the team appear incompetent.

"There is a gun to our heads," said Blakey, who is still the scientific director but is now a professor at the College of William and Mary. "What GSA is insisting on is for us to fail. . . . I think racism plays a special part, as well as arrogance. GSA has demonstrated from the beginning a pattern of disrespect and disregard for the expertise of black people."

"I absolutely agree," Perry said. "These are our ancestors, our people. . . ." He stopped speaking, and tears filled his eyes.

"They just interacted with us as though we are idiots and don't know what we are doing," said Howson, who is white. Then she, too, began to wipe away tears.

"We are all PhDs with years and decades of experience in this work, and their way of dealing with us on a day-to-day basis is that we're uppity and we're in their way and we're making their life miserable," she said.

Jackson, who is black, called the racial accusations "hogwash." The former GSA chief of staff stressed that the agency has committed to spend \$22.3 million for the project. An additional \$2 million is being negotiated. In addition to excavation and research costs, the government funds a public education office at the New York site and spent \$500,000 on artwork dedicated to the site and located in the lobby of the federal office building.

"This project is of tremendous scientific, historic, cultural and community significance," Jackson said. "To try to pretend that it is not or to try to not address it would be crazy."

Last month, on the advice of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers archaeologist, the GSA extended the deadline for Howard's final archaeological report to July 2003. In addition, the agency is negotiating a contract modification that would give the scientists additional money to complete their work.

Karl H. Reichelt, the new GSA administrator for the New York area, said the burial ground is now the most important project in his region and will become a "true gem."

"What GSA is doing now will definitely bring this project to a successful conclusion regardless of what occurred in the prior decade," Reichelt said.

Blakey said he was encouraged but still disappointed that the lack of funding for the DNA and chemical tests means the researchers will be unable to determine the origins of the majority of the burial ground population.

## Destination Not Reached

The lobby of the federal building at 290 Broadway today is filled with tributes to the African Burial Ground. Visitors circle a massive sculpture called "Africa Rising" and look at artwork with haunting images of blood-red slave ships and brown and tan faces floating above a bed of white skulls.

Howard Dodson, director of New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, said that by now, the site should be well on its way to becoming "a kind of home-going destination for people of African descent around the world."

But in the far corner of the federal building's lobby, one of the miniature coffins made in Ghana to satisfy government specifications -- deep enough for a skull, long enough for a leg bone -- waited for its assigned cargo. Federal officials now say the reinterment will take place next year, 12 years after the first excavations.

Nearby, a massive window framed the exposed section of the burial ground, a fenced grassy lot. At a far corner, a patch of outdoor carpet cloaked the earth that waits for the mahogany crypts stacked out of sight in a locked storage room.

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### V2s Over Brussels

About the article on Peenemünde ("Letter from Germany," May/June), Von Braun's autobiography should have been *I Aim at the Stars—But Sometimes I Hit London...and Parts of Belgium*. I can still hear the V1s and V2s coming over Brussels, then suddenly the motor stops, silence for a few seconds, then the big explosion on impact! And von Braun was not at the Nuremberg Trials; I guess he was a good Nazi?!

LOUIS BERTRAND  
Valencia, CA

### Tweed Courthouse Rebuttal

We are writing in response to the article, "The House that Tweed Built" (July/August). The author, Colleen Popson, states that the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) excluded the public from the decision making process about archaeology for the Tweed Courthouse and City Hall Park reconstructions. To the contrary, the LPC developed a city policy for the treatment of human remains in conjunction with community representatives long before any work was planned; the history and sensitivity of the area is, and was, well known. Thus, our protocols are a deliberate and thoughtful approach which emphasizes project redesign so that burials may remain where they were interred hundreds of years ago. The protocols for these projects were discussed at the LPC's June 2, 1998, public hearing and its February 23, 1999, public meeting.

Popson also states that the fact that burials were found during the projects was hidden from the public, though the *New York Times*, among others, reported the discoveries. But more egregious is her statement that the policy is not respectful to the deceased and the implication that it does not represent the interests of New Yorkers. In fact, the protocol protects burials where they were originally interred and insures that projects are modified as needed. Moreover, we note that modifying projects to avoid archaeological resources is the preferred alternative nationwide for projects subject to environmental review. While physical anthropologists might favor exhumation so they may study the burials, respect for the deceased and the wishes of the community must be, and were, paramount. The City of New York

is committed to the highest standards of urban archaeology. To that end, extensive archaeology was undertaken at taxpayer expense in connection with the City Hall Park and Tweed Courthouse reconstruction projects. This work includes the analysis of close to half a million artifacts that should reveal a great deal about the city's enthralling past.

H. ARTHUR BANKOFF  
Registered Professional Archaeologist

AMANDA SUTPHIN  
Director of Archaeology  
The New York City Landmarks  
Preservation Commission  
New York, NY

*Colleen Popson responds: The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has taken great strides to preserve historical and archaeological sites in the city—not an easy task—and I applaud it for its commitment. As for the LPC's burial policy, those in the commission can argue that modifying projects and leaving burials under sidewalks is the most respectful treatment,*

*but they must also know that if those remains had belonged to Africans, the policy would have been contested, probably in a heated political battle. That battle was avoided because 1) without removal, the remains could not be proved to be African, and 2) there are no cohesive descendant communities to make claims on the treatment of remains. Furthermore, policies followed in the rest of the country are not always applicable in the urban environment of New York City. Modifying a project in upstate New York might mean shifting the plan of a road 100 feet to avoid a cemetery; at Tweed Courthouse, it involved moving a curb six inches south to avoid an individual's skull, which still sits less than a foot below pavement. The issue is complicated and will surely be raised again. Thanks to efforts like those of Arthur Bankoff and Brooklyn College to involve the public in the study of City Hall Park artifacts, New Yorkers will become more aware of the city's archaeology and the complexity surrounding the treatment of human remains in an urban environment.*

## TIME OUT

by Bill Tidy



"He was a great curator. We buried most of the team with him."

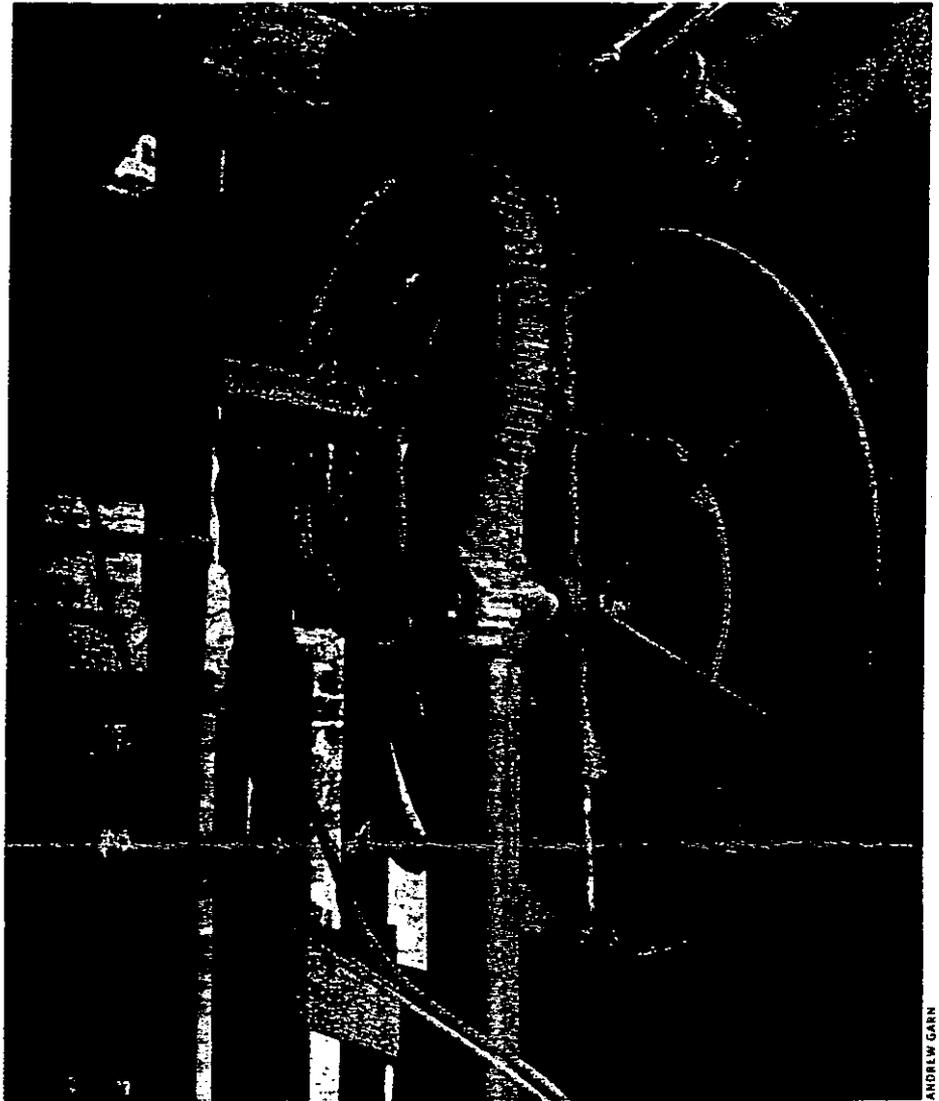
# Schermerhorn Row's Backyard

BY DIANE DALLAE

What lies beneath the vacant lot behind Schermerhorn Row at the corner of John and South Streets? At the request of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the South Street Seaport Museum was able to undertake its own archaeological excavation of this site.

Research indicated that a dock known as the Bowne/Byvanck Pier was constructed at this location prior to 1767. The pier was extended southward between 1776 and 1782 before the landfilling of the block, which began about 1807. In 1810 George Codwise, Jr., constructed a number of "counting houses" on the landfilled property, similar to those still extant on present-day Schermerhorn Row. In addition to old building foundations, wharves and landfill structures, research also suggested that several privies associated with those buildings might also be present.

Along with archaeological consultant Arnold Pickman and intern Kelly Britt, I partially excavated the corner lot. Urban archaeologists are often presented with unique problems, and the corner of John and South Streets was no exception. When the Codwise structures were demolished in 1956, a gasoline station was built on the site. The station closed in the 1970s, but because the records had been lost it could not be determined if the station's subterranean gas tanks had been removed. Because the tanks would have interfered with any new construction, as well as the archaeological excavations, the Museum used ground-penetrating radar in an attempt to determine the presence



ANDREW GARN

The gears of an old elevator will be preserved in a Schermerhorn Row attic.

or absence of the gasoline tanks. The readings, however, were inconclusive.

During the excavations, the archaeolo-

gists uncovered buried building foundations, wooden cribbing associated with pier or landfill structures and many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artifacts. They also found eight gasoline tanks, completely encased in concrete! These tanks were removed along with any contaminated soil, and environmental agencies pronounced the site safe. The archaeologists plan to continue their search for the old pier and privies in the near future. The recovered artifacts, which have been cleaned and conserved, will be included in the Museum's World Port New York exhibit. ☺

*Diane Dallae is the Archaeological Director of the South Street Seaport Museum.*

## MUSEUM RECEIVES MELLON GRANT

In January 2002 the South Street Seaport Museum received a \$500,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to use over the next five years to help preserve the historic block located as a result of the events of September 11, 2001. The grant will be used to assist the Museum in its plans to dig up the site and to restore the area to its original state. The grant will also be used to strengthen educational and cultural programs for the community in the surrounding neighborhood.

The Foundation's President and CEO, Peter Dinklage, said, "The Mellon Foundation is pleased to support the South Street Seaport Museum's efforts to preserve and restore the historic block. The grant will be used to assist the Museum in its plans to dig up the site and to restore the area to its original state. The grant will also be used to strengthen educational and cultural programs for the community in the surrounding neighborhood. We will be pleased to continue to work with the South Street Seaport Museum in its efforts to preserve and restore the historic block. The grant will be used to assist the Museum in its plans to dig up the site and to restore the area to its original state. The grant will also be used to strengthen educational and cultural programs for the community in the surrounding neighborhood." *Continued*

# The Five Points Collection: An Obituary

by Diane Dallal

*On September 11, 2001, the Five Points Collection stored at the World Trade Center was destroyed.*

*Only 18 artifacts on loan to the South Street Seaport Museum survive.*

**T**he only remaining artifacts from the Five Points Site, one of the most significant archaeological sites ever excavated in New York City, sit on a shelf at New York Unearthed, the South Street Seaport Museum's urban archaeology center. Wrapped in acid-free tissue and stored in a single archival box, they are all that survive of a trove of 850,000 artifacts recovered from the site of the new federal courthouse that occupies a block that was once part of Five Points.

Under the auspices of the General Services Administration (GSA), archaeologists from Historic Conservation and Interpretation, Inc. excavated the site in 1991. John Milner Associates assumed responsibility for the artifact analysis in the summer of 1992 under the direction of Dr. Rebecca Yamin. Years passed while the archaeologists washed, labeled, conserved, photographed, catalogued and analyzed the artifacts and wrote interpretive reports. The collection, stored in 1,200 boxes in a sub-basement room at 6 World Trade Center, was destroyed in the collapse of the north tower.

Five Points, New York's notorious nineteenth-century slum, has traditionally been depicted as a center of filth, vice and depravity. But the artifacts uncovered supplied intimate details about the slum's inhabitants and their valiant struggle to rise above the overcrowded, unsanitary conditions to attain respectability. These marvelous materials ranged from the



Perhaps the most significant artifact in the Five Points collection is this commemorative Staffordshire teacup showing the Irish priest Father Mathew administering the temperance oath to his parishioners. A leader of the "Total Abstinence Movement," Father Mathew had a great deal of influence on the poor in the United States and Ireland. The interior of the cup is decorated with a beehive and the phrase "Temperance and Industry/Industry Pays Debts," a rallying cry of nineteenth-century reformers.

"ordinary"—bits of broken crockery, tobacco pipes and liquor bottles—to the extraordinary: a brass thimble engraved, "Forget Me Not;" bird feeders; textile fragments representing a wide range of mid-nineteenth century woolens; exquisite tea sets, perhaps from a brothel on Baxter Street; glass urinals used by bedridden women with syphilis; even the remains of an organ-grinder's monkey!

**W**hile the South Street Seaport Museum negotiated with the GSA to become the official repository of the Five Points artifacts, the Archdiocese of the City of New York borrowed 18 items that were representative of the vigorous Irish community living at Five Points for an exhibit called "The

World of John Hughes: New York's First Archbishop." When the exhibit was over in March 2001, the artifacts were returned to their future home at New York Unearthed, instead of to 6 World Trade Center.

In May 2001, Rebecca Yamin suggested that the Museum keep the artifacts. "They're safer there," she said. As a result, the hand-painted marbles, tiny toy teacup, transfer-printed child's mug and vegetable dish, the cologne, ink and soda water bottles, the clay pipes, cup and saucer in the fashionable Gothic pattern, and the commemorative Father Mathew cup survive. The Museum plans to exhibit the artifacts in the near future. ↴

*Diane Dallal is Archaeological Director of the South Street Seaport Museum.*

PANYC EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT - September -November, 2002

EVENT	SPEAKER	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT	FEE
Ancient Mexican Art from the Collection of the National Museum of the American Indian	Exhibit	7/21/02-3/15/03		National Museum of the American Indian, George Gustav Heye Center	212.514.3700-general	Free
Arms and Armor: Notable Acquisitions 1991-2002	Exhibit	9/4/03-6/29/03		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212.535.7710-general	Admission
People of Five Points-Dan Rice: The most Famous Man You Never Heard Of	David Carylon	9/19/02	6:30-8:30 p.m.	South Street Seaport Museum, Museum Gallery, 213 Water Street	212.748.8600	Admission
Native New Yorkers: The Legacy of the Algonquin People of New York	Evan Pritchard	9/26/02	6:30-8:30 p.m.	South Street Seaport Museum, Museum Gallery, 213 Water Street	212.748.8600	Admission
Costume Collection: an Inside Peek (reception follows)	Marci Morimoto	9/27/02 and 10/25/02	6:30 p.m.	Merchant House Museum	212.777.1089	\$15 non-members. \$10-members
Nomadic Art of Eastern Eurasian Steppes: The Eugene V. Thaw and Other New York Collections	Exhibit	10/1/02-1/5/03		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212.535.7710-general	Admission
Antiquity: Stonehenge, Great Pyramids, Palace of Minos on Crete, Parthenon in Athens and Pantheon in Rome	Janetta Rebold Benton	Starts 10/9/02-part of lecture series "Masterpieces of Western Arch."	11:00 am	Grace Rainey Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum of Art	212.570.3949 for tickets	8-Weds= \$130 Single tkts= \$20
T.B.A.	T.J. Ferguson	Wed. 10/9	T.B.A.	Columbia University, exact location T.B.A.	Lucas Rubin/ Kelly Britt	Free
Arts of the Spanish Americas, 1550-1850: Works from the Museum's Collection	Exhibit	10/11/02-4/6/03		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212.535.7710-general	Admission
Digging for the 1835 Fire	Diane Dalla	Wed. 10/16/02	2:00 p.m.	Merchant House Museum	212.777.1089	\$39-includes a 3-course lunch

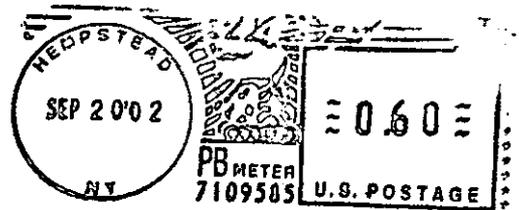
PANYC EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT - September -November, 2002

EVENT	SPEAKER	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT	FEE
The Furniture Collection: The Connoisseur's Look (Reception follows)	Emily Eerdmans	Wed. 10/16/02	6:30 p.m.	Merchant House Museum	212.777.1089	\$15 non-members \$10-mem
T.B.A.	John Stubbs of World Monument Fund	Tues. 11/5/02	T.B.A.	Columbia University, exact location T.B.A.	Lucas Rubin/ Kelly Britt	Free
The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353	Exhibit	11/19/02-4/13/03		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212.535.7710-general	Admission
Chinese Export Porcelain at the Metropolitan Museum of Art	Exhibit	1/14-7/13/03		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212.535.7710-general	Admission
The Wallpaper Excavation	Virtual Exhibition	ongoing		Lower East Side Tenement Museum	www.tenement.org	Free

If any members have events that they would like listed, please contact Kelly Britt at 212.663.4165 or email at kb239@columbia.edu  
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