

Twenty-Eighth Year of Publication

Spring 1996

THE BROWNSTONER

A Publication of the Brownstone Revival Committee

(212) 675-0560

P.O. Box 577, New York, NY 10113

What's the Owner of a Landmark House to Do When: The House Next Door is Abandoned? And the Landmarks Bureacracy Does Nothing?

Number 306 State Street, between Smith and Hoyt streets, Brooklyn, is one of a group (290-324) known as the State Street Houses. They are outside the Boerum Hill Historic District but individually landmarked. The AIA Guide refers to them as a "group of lovingly restored Renaissance Revival brownstones with most of the original detail." A visitor to State Street some years ago wrote: "Suddenly you find yourself admiring a street with some flourishing trees, decorative planters, stunning interiors, and aloof stray cats. On a Sunday morning...you might well sense that you have stumbled on an oasis of humanity near the fringe of a bueaucratic ghost town."

But all is not well on this handsome street. The problem is Number 306, vacant since the owner was murdered 17 years ago. The letters we print below, from Constance Newsom who lives at 308, to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, tell a heart-breaking story.

July 3, 1995

Ms. Jennifer Raab
Chair
New York City Landmarks Commission
Re: 306 State Street = State Street
Houses

Dear Ms. Raab:

The State Street Houses...in downtown Brooklyn enjoy both City and National landmark status.

306 State Street, which shares a party wall with our house at 308 State Street, has been vacant for 17 years. The owner, Margaret Goding, a resident of Hawaii, inherited both this house and another on nearby Atlantic Avenue from her brother, Max Goding, in 1977. He bought them in the late 1960's.

(Continued on page six)

BRC Annual

Spring Lecture Series

The second and third lectures of the Brownstone Revival Committee's annual spring series are scheduled for Tuesdays, May 7 and June 11, at the Donnell Library auditorium, 12 West 53rd Street. Both will be accompanied by slides. Time: 6:00 pm. (We hope you attended our first lecture on April 9.)

Speakers and subjects are:

* **MAY 7:** Everett Ornter, chairman of BRC, will deliver a totally idiosynceratic talk on "Downtown—Mysteries and Histories of Old New York." You'll love it!

* **JUNE 11:** Mark Weber. "Brownstone Problems: How to Deal with the Unfore-see-able." Pipes that burst, bricks that bulge, brownstone that scales, graffiti—these and other problems will be covered by Mr. Weber, Director of the Technical Services Center of the New York Landmark Conservancy.

Landmarks Commission

Restoration Guide

Available Free to Brownstoners

More than three-quarters of the 21,000 buildings in New York City's 66 designated historic districts are rowhouses—or brownstones, as true lovers of the breed call them. That's 16,000 houses. And now the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission has produced an official guide for these wonderful structures: "Rowhouse Manual."

The 40-page manual sets out what owners of buildings in landmark districts need to know: what kinds of work require permits and how to get and submit the permits. There are drawings and descriptions of different historic styles, and lots of other helpful matters.

For a free copy of the "Rowhouse Manual," write to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, 100 Old Slip, New York, NY 10005, or call Jared Knowles at the Commission: (212) 487-6782.

THE BROWNSTONER

Newsletter of the
Brownstone Revival Committee

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Simple Facts About City-Owned Buildings

A communication to the Times by Dan Margulies, Executive Director of the Community Housing Improvement Program, offers these facts: "The city confirms that the average rent in buildings on which it forecloses for nonpayment of taxes is \$216. The city's operating costs—with no mortgage payments, taxes, water and sewer bills, or insurance—are about \$450 for a typical two-bedroom apartment.

"According to the city's Rent Guidelines Board, private owners citywide operate rent-stabilized apartments for an average of \$382 per month, including all those expenses except debt service."

Free Reverse-Mortgage Booklet For Cash-Seeking Seniors

Reverse mortgages are loans on your house that you never repay as long as you live in your house; when you leave your house (one way or another), the mortgage is paid off (possibly by your heirs) or the house is sold to satisfy the mortgage. Before that time, however, you get to draw on the equity in your house, either through monthly checks as long as you live or through a lump sum up front. It's a fine idea for older people who are house rich but cash poor. For a free 16-page handbook about reverse mortgages, write to Professional Handbook, Transamerica HomeFirst, 505 Sansome St., 11th Floor, San Francisco, Calif. 94111; or fax (415) 983-7905.

Another 19th Century Bed & Breakfast— This One in Landmark Stuyvesant Heights

A recent full-page article in the New York Times, handsomely illustrated, paid tribute to an 1860's Italianate mansion in the landmark district of Stuyvesant Heights, restored and turned into a B & B by Monique Greenwood and Glenn Pogue. It has been named the Akwaaba Mansion. Room charge: \$85-100. Address: 347 MacDonough St, Brooklyn. Phone: (718) 455-5958. (MacDonough Street is named after Thomas MacDonough, naval hero, who defeated the British at the Battle of Plattsburgh.)

See pages ten and eleven for:
"Things to Do and Places to Go
for the New York Bull"

*The Lesson of Hale House:
Even Good People Can Be Insensitive
to Their Neighbors*

Hale House, the Harlem charity that cares for orphaned and abandoned children, is not the best of neighbors. The organization owns two in a row of six 110-year-old brownstones on West 122nd Street. Recently it tore down the stoop of one of the houses.

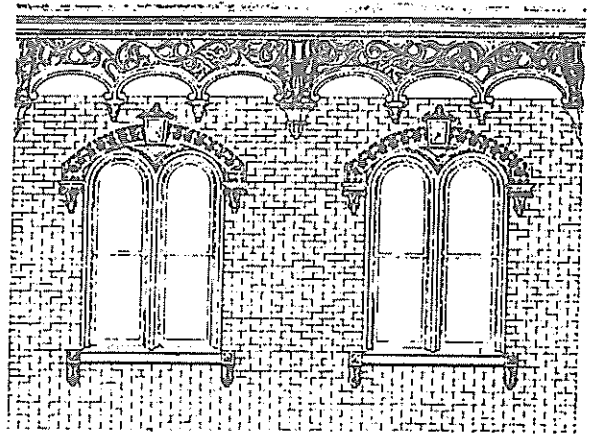
The organization is reported to have the legal right to alter the property. Still, the New York Times reported recently, the Hale House block "sits among some eight blocks recently added to the Mount Morris Park Historic Area, a national designation that places no regulatory burden on property owners."

Michael Henry Adams, president of the Upper Manhattan Society for Progress Through Preservation, commented, "While it's commendable to memorialize Mother Hale, it's unconscionable to deliberately destroy one of these row houses."

Brownstone Artists in our Midst

* Mr. Alan D. Iselin (P.O. Box 524, Rhinebeck, NY 12572; 914-876-3380) has sent some of his handsome renderings of brownstones to "The Brownstoner," in the hope that we would call atten-

tion to his work. We do so now, with a small portion—a cornice and windows—of one pencil drawing; the whole drawing would consume this entire page.



* Mr. David Finlay (18 Hillside Ave., Chatham, NJ 07928; 201-701-0230) restores and fabricates architectural sculpture—either on site or in his shop by making molds and casting reproductions. "My work in the field of exterior restoration is to provide clients with brownstone reproductions of the ornamental elements on their building's facade," says Mr. Finlay. Photographs of his work look very good indeed.



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Notes for Homeowners: When Plaster Fails

There are three major types of plaster failure:

1. Cracks. If a crack appears, and the plaster appears to be firmly attached to its lath, the crack may be the result of a structural problem: foundation settlement, deteriorated basement posts, excessive snow loads, etc.
2. Delamination. This is a failure between plaster layers resulting from excessive moisture, hard knocks, or poor mixture of materials.
3. Key failure. Large bulges with or without accompanying cracks probably indicate key failure--plaster pulling away from lath.

What to do?

"House Notes" from the Landmark Society of Western New York State offers this advice:

After making any needed structural repairs, remove all loose, bulging, or deteriorated material back to a sound surface. In large or deep repairs, make sure the lath is sound, secured tightly, and that nails are not deteriorated. Clean out and undercut cracks: bevel back under the surface to insure a good key for the repair. On large repairs, dampen old lath and plaster to prevent premature drying out of the new patch.

For small repairs such as nail holes and minor blemishes on up to medium-sized repairs, hardware-store products—common drywall mud or spackle—do the job. For larger and deeper holes, try two or three layers of a quick-setting drywall compound like Durabond 90.

Repairs to large expanses of bare lath, especially overhead, should begin with Structo-Lite or Gyso-Lite, available at mason's or builder's supply stores. Large plastering projects? Best left to the professional.

New Journal Features Material About Classical Architecture

"The Classicist," a new annual publication, is the first of its kind in North America in more than 20 years: a journal dedicated to contemporary architectural and artistic classicism. It is published by the Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture, 60 East 42nd St., Suite 2140, New York, NY 10165. The Institute also offers courses, workshops, and lectures on classical subjects. The founder and Director is Donald M. Rattner.

To date, the Institute has published two issues of "The Classicist." These contain essays by experts on classical matters and portfolios on current projects, competitions, student work, etc.

The journals sell for \$19.50 (first issue) and \$21, plus shipping.

More on Lead Paint: Federal Rules For House Sellers and Landlords

New federal regulations published in March require house sellers and landlords to give buyers and renters all information they have about the results of any lead tests made on their property. Landlords and sellers must also provide prospective tenants and buyers with copies of a pamphlet developed by HUD and the Environmental Protection Agency concerning the problems of lead pollution.

The regulations also guarantee buyers a 10-day period to test the house for lead. A technician can make this test with a device called an X-ray fluorescence gun. Or paint chips can be sent to a laboratory for analysis. Depending on the condition of the paint, the remedy can be to remove it, cover it, or leave it.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that some 64 million houses and apartments contain lead-based paint on walls and woodwork. The manufacture of lead-based paint has been banned since 1978.

Ah, taste! (Brownstone Division)

A wealthy Manhattan client of designer Abigail Shachat wanted to get away from it all to a rustic cabin where, presumably, he could relax in country style and dream country dreams. But it's a long ride to the country, and the weekend traffic... horrible! What to do?

The solution turned out to be simple: Ms. Shachat put the structure on top of the client's East 30's town house. The cabin can't be seen from the street, but, for all we know, residents in tall nearby apartment houses might just be able to make out the crescent on the outhouse door.

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Brownstone Prices in Manhattan Going Through the Roof

The average price of a single-family house on Manhattan's Upper East Side rose last year from an astonishing \$1.9 million to an incredible \$3 million, according to statistics gathered by the Halstead Property Company. On the Upper West Side, averages rose from \$900,000 to \$1.1 million. Downtown, with a \$2,975 million sale reported by one realtor, the \$3 million mark was almost reached.

Among individual sales reported, actress Meryl Streep bought a house on West 12th Street in Greenwich Village for "just over" \$2 million, and Jerry Della Femina, the ad man, bought a house on East 62nd Street for about the same amount.

Additional Sources for Loans to Buy Brownstones

Even non-yuppies may now be able to buy brownstones. Through a five-year investment program, the Federal National Mortgage Assn., familiarly known as Fannie Mae, has recently made an additional \$8 billion available for mortgage loans in New York City. Officials cite the need to increase home ownership in New York: Only 29 percent of New York families own their own homes, compared with a national average of 60 percent. The rules for the new plan allow families with incomes up to \$75,570 to qualify for mortgages on coop apartments, with down payments as low as five percent and with no restrictions as to location. In cases of two-family homes, Fannie Mae will not impose income limitations.

A loan program developed by Bankers Trust and Neighborhood Housing Services of New York helps home buyers manage the closing costs. In a case cited, a buyer had enough money for a downpayment on a \$145,000 house, but could not manage the \$12,000 closing costs. Neighborhood Housing Services came to the rescue. (Editor's note: \$12,000 closing costs on a \$145,000 house? The bankers and lawyers strike again!)

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**Abandoned House,
Con't. from page one**

Ms. Goding continued to live in Hawaii, totally ignoring her Brooklyn properties, declining to maintain or sell them. They continue to deteriorate despite sealing by HPD several years ago. The problems of 306 include a leaking roof, a collapsed extension roof, interior incendiary materials and decay, and the serious erosion of exterior detail. Additionally, an extensive exterior wall crack between our two houses is widening.

Should this house be demolished, as HPD advised, it would devastate this block and its homeowners who have restored their houses, returning the row to one of the loveliest in the City. It would also, of course, create a great hardship for our family and the families at 304, who have also undertaken a careful facade restoration.

Our neighbors' past experience with the Landmarks Commission has not been positive. Neither Joan Olshansky nor Dorothy Miner was effective in resolving this issue. They were

mistaken to believe that sealing the building fulfilled their responsibilities both to the property and our neighbors.

Ms. Goding has promised our neighbors, elected officials and the bureaucracy she would take the necessary steps to preserve her building. Her inaction over the years, however, clearly reflects her incompetence. Through a well-educated tongue she has deceived every involved official these many years. They all learn about Ms. Goding's unreliability themselves and then move on, while 306 continues to deteriorate.

Margaret Goding has said it is her great pleasure to confound intelligent people. And to this point she has toyed with us all. But, now may be the time to tackle the problem.

A new Landmarks administration, focused on enforcement, can make the difference. State Street can show that the Landmarks community is committed to preserving buildings not only from quick demolition by the wrecking ball but from the slower, but equally sure, demolition

through neglect.

Sincerely,
Constance Newsom

December 9, 1995

Ms. Jennifer Raab
NYC Landmarks Commission

Dear Ms. Raab:

July 3rd past I wrote you about the alarming condition of 306 State Street, the abandoned house with which mine shares a common wall. With that letter, the latest in a stream of correspondence and calls to Landmarks and elected officials, I enclosed photos and some of that correspondence describing not only the house's progressive deterioration but my frustration, as this house has been vacant 18 years since Max Goding, the then owner and sole resident of 306, was murdered by a nephew October 5, 1977.

I was heartened when Mark Silberman, your Director of Enforcement, and Jennifer Fields came to State Street to see for

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themselves. Their candor and sincerity were refreshing and appreciated.

Since then, another summer slipped into fall, and now winter approaches. The old problems with 306 remain, and new ones have emerged, such as dumping in the areaway, recurring creaking in the common wall and rats.

But, suddenly, I have had a change of heart and mind....I will no longer admit anyone into my house on behalf of 306; I will no longer give interviews, write letters, plead, speak at public forums, cajole or otherwise make a fool of myself; I will not shovel the snow or sweep the sidewalk; I won't fill out any more police reports on break-ins.

BRIEFLY, I WILL NO LONGER BE LANDMARK'S UNPAID CURATOR

306 State Street has been abandoned by its owner, by the City and now by me, with one difference. I care about the building and its significance....

A recent visit from HPD marked the watershed. I interrupted my work to let in another inspector, the latest in a long line, so he could see the back of 306 with its tearoom hanging by a thread. Mumbling that 306 is a landmark he simply shook his head and left....

Commissioner Raab, it appears that the chips will fall where they may. I must say I will not stand still if I feel my family is in danger from the building collapsing or going up in flames. I

will assist rational demolition with the same vigor I pursued preservation. If the house is broken into and left open again I will call HPD and will not lift a finger to stay the course of demolition.

The will of one woman, Margaret Goding, a longtime resident of Hawaii, threatens the unique row of State Street houses. And it does not end there. She owns another historic building in Boerum Hill, 387 Atlantic Avenue, once an outstanding example of Victorian storefronts in New York. Through her dereliction leading to a drug-related fire, New York has been robbed of yet another one of its 19th Century buildings. More, each boarded up building strikes another blow at the tenuous economic development of Atlantic Avenue, Boerum Hill's "Main Street."...

The power to endanger the health and safety of neighbors, to create endless work for them, to demoralize them as curators and to sabotage the preservation of our historic properties is insulting. Official, albeit tacit, support of Ms. Goding has raised government bungling and buck passing to a level exceeded only in the child welfare system.

Unrealistic property taxes undergird Ms. Goding's destructive powers. Annual property taxes on 306 State Street are \$1,021.76, while taxes on my restored house, 308 State Street, are \$2,594.56.

I understand the reason improved properties pay higher taxes. But here the policy is perverse. A property owner's de-

structive behavior should not be rewarded by low taxes....

With this last letter I remove myself from this insanity....

Sincerely,
Constance Newsom

March 20, 1996

Ms. Jennifer Raab
NYC Landmarks Commission

Dear Ms. Raab:

Rats from nests in 306 have invaded both 304 and our house. Only Saturday, our tenant called in hysterics to tell us a rat was running around her garden apartment....

In previous communications I failed somehow to mention that before he was murdered in 1977, Max Goding, the previous owner of 306, had dug a deep trench along our joint foundations to prepare for an illegal backyard extension. News of the collapse of the building on 54th Street this week has had a chilling effect on our family as the situation at our common wall parallels that of the 54th Street building.


Surely, in collaboration with other departments you can bring this seemingly intractable problem to a happy situation.

Sincerely,
Constance Newsom

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200 Years Ago in New York

"Theater. The Public are respectfully informed, that the entertainments for the season will commence on Wednesday, Feb. 10, with the favorite Comedy, of the Provok'd Husband, or, The Journey to London....To which will be added The Spoil'd Child...."

"N.B. The house has been new ornamented and thoroughly aired...."

—American Minerva, Feb. 8, 1796

"Some French Performers, lately arrived in this city, respectfully inform the public, they mean to give Two Performances, the first to take place on Thursday Evening, March 3d. The Entertainments will consist of--One small French Peice, Two Ballet Pantomines, and several Dances...."

—American Minerva, March 2, 1796

"Wm Keteltas, having published in the Argus of Feb. 22 and March 5 articles arraigning the justice and impartiality of the Assembly, claiming that the Representatives of the people had failed to impeach certain State Officials on the clearest evidence of malfeasance in office, refuses to ask the pardon of the House on being arraigned, and is committed to the jail. He has been carried there in a handsome arm chair, borne and supported by eight citizens, as a testimony of their approbation of his spirited conduct, amidst loud acclamations, and repeated cries of 'The Spirit of Seventy-Six,' &c. Addressing the people from

this chair he promises in time to seek the redress promised by the constitution of the state, and is then lodged in the jail."

—New York Journal, March 11, 1796

"The inhabitants of New York are very fond of music, dancing, and plays; an attainment to excellence in the former has been considerably promoted by the frequent musical societies and concerts which are held in the city, many of the inhabitants being very good performers. As to dancing, there are two assembly-rooms in the city, which are pretty well frequented during the winter season; private halls are likewise not uncommon. They have two theatres, one of which is lately erected and is capable of containing a great number of persons; there is an excellent company of comedians who perform here in the winter. But the amusement of which they seem most passionately fond is that of sleighing, which is riding on the snow in what you call a sledge, drawn by two horses...Parties of twenty or thirty will sometimes go out of town in these vehicles towards evening, about six or eight miles, when, having sent for a fiddler, and danced till they are tired, they will return home again by moonlight, or, perhaps more often, by daylight."

—Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 and 1797, by Francis Bally, President of the Royal Astronomical Society of Great Britain.

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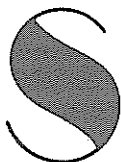
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—Walt Whitman,
"The Brooklyn Eagle," 1861.

150 Years Ago in New York

"Dickens has just published one of his novelettes, a pretty fireside story—a one evening's recreation. He calls it 'The Cricket on the Hearth,' and it chirps most sweetly, certainly. It is a story of domestic happiness, love, and confidence, not in the upper crust of society, nor indeed in the lower, but right in the middle, where all the good things are....I read it last evening in one of Harper's sixpenny pamphlets, and oh my eyes! How severely they suffer this morning from the small print of the book, and the tears which it caused to run down my cheeks!"

—The Diary of Philip Hone, Jan. 28, 1846

"Miss Caroline Chapman made her first appearance in New York on the 5th of June as Harriet Arlington in 'Billy Black' and Catharine in 'A Husband at First Sight.' This young lady displayed a meritorious versatility almost unprecedented, and in many characters of low life in comedy was not only unsurpassed but nearly unrivaled. In comic singing parts as Madame Monette, Suzanne, Lisette Gerstein, Gertrude and Paul the Pet, she was not inferior to Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and in burlesque extravaganza she combined the rare merits of Mrs. Henry Hunt's utter abandon, while in the rendering of mock Italian bravura, she eclipsed all who have ventured to undertake the experiment.... Miss Chapman was slender in person, and her features were plain, but her large mouth was redeemed by the whitest of ivory, and her countenance was radiant with expression from a pair of lustrous dark eyes....She had long played in the Western theatres, and in her father's floating establishments on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and how she became so admirable an *artiste*, and how remained so long hidden from New York, is an unexplained mystery."

—Records of the New York Stage, 1750-1860, by Joseph N. Ireland

100 Years Ago in New York

March 25, 1896. From the trustees of the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations to Mayor Strong: "If the City of New York will furnish a proper site, and provide the means to erect thereon a suitable building for the purposes of the New York Public Library...then the New York Public Library can...obtain such an addition to its funds as will justify it in providing for the circulation of books from its main building. If further funds can be supplied from private benefaction...it is certain that the City of New York can and will have a free Public Library on the broadest and most comprehensive plan."

"Should the suggestions of the Trustees be favorably received, no site within the control of the City could accomplish the ends in view as well as that of the Reservoir upon Fifth Avenue, between Fortieth and Forty-second Streets.

"The site is an ideal one for such a building. It is today the most central and easily accessible spot on the Island and will be rendered even more so by new means of communication. Within a single block are two lines of surface cars and two elevated railroads running north and south....Less than three hundred yards away is the common terminus of the three principal railroads running into the city. And not only does this site command these incomparable advantages at the present time, but it is impossible to foresee a time when it cannot retain a like superiority.

"On this site it will be possible to erect a library building, dignified, ample in size, visible from all sides, with uninterrupted light, free from all danger of fire, in no respect encroaching upon the existing Bryant Park, and which will be an ornament to the City."

.....

"Thomas A. Edison and Albert Bial have perfected arrangements by which Edison's latest invention, the vitascope, will be exhibited for the first time anywhere at Koster & Bial's Music Hall.

"The vitascope projects upon a large area of canvas groups that appear to stand forth from the canvas, and move with great facility and agility, as though activated by separate impulses. In this way the bare canvas before the audience becomes instantly a stage upon which living beings move about.

"Mr. Bial said yesterday: 'I propose to reproduce in this way at Koster & Bial's scenes from various successful plays and operas of the season, and well-known statesmen and celebrities will be represented, as, for instance, making a speech or performing some important act or series of acts with which their names are identified.'"

—New York Times, April 14, 1896

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* Second Wednesday. "Tower Below the Street": Hidden Grand Central. Meet at Grand Central Gift Shop. 1:00 pm. \$9.

* Third Wednesday. "Hyper-Ventilation": Tour of giant underground ventilation plant. Meet at NW corner, 42nd St. and Sixth Ave. 1:00 pm. \$9.

* Fourth Wednesday, "Under construction": Tour subterranean maze at Canal St. Meet at Canal and Broadway, 1:00 pm. \$9.

* Saturday, May 4. "Irish, Jewish, and Chinese Working Women of New York City": Lecture. Museum of the City of New York. 1220 Fifth Avenue. 2:00 pm.

* Sunday, May 5. "Staten Island's St. George/ New Brighton Historic District": Walking Tour. Municipal Art Society. \$25. Call (212) 935-3960 for information and reservation.

* Tuesday, May 7. "Americans at Home During the Federal Period": Lecture by Hugh Crean. Abigail Adams Smith Museum. 421 East 61st St., Manhattan. 6:00 pm. \$5.

Wednesday, May 15. "Lost in New York--What Tenement Dwellers Left Behind": Urban archeology lecture. Lower East Side Tenement Museum. 66 Allen St. 5:30 pm.

* Wednesday, May 15. "The Victorian City": Slide talk. Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave. 6:00 pm. \$10. For information, call (212) 935-3960.

* Wednesday, May 15. "Brooklyn Backyard Archeology." Talk and demonstration by urban archeologist Jeff Kantoff. Bay Ridge Historical Society. 7:45 pm at Shore Hill Community Room, 91st St. between Shore and Colonial Roads, Brooklyn.

* Saturday, May 18. "Al Smith and Belle Horowitz: How the Irish and Jews of New York Helped Invent the New Deal": Lecture. Museum of the City of New York. 1220 Fifth Ave. 2:00 pm.

* Saturday, May 18. "Jamaica, Queens--People, Paces, and Buildings": Walking Tour with historian Barry Lewis. Meet at King Manor Museum, King Park, Jamaica Ave. & 153d St. Queens. Free. Call (718) 206-0545 for reservations.

* Saturday, May 25. "Brooklyn's Community Gardens": Tour by van of outstanding Brooklyn gardens. 8 am-12:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. \$20. Call (718) 622-4433 for information.

* Sunday, May 26. "Plunkitt of Tammany Hall": Lecture, Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. 3:00 pm.

Wednesday, May 29—"The Beaux-Arts City": Slide talk. Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave. \$10. For information, call (212) 935-3960.

* Saturday-Sunday, June 8-9. "Shakespeare Weekend, Tour of Shakespeare Garden." Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., Brooklyn. \$3 admission.

* Sunday, June 9. "Rolling Down Ralph's Route." Bus tour in vintage motor coach along Ralph Kramden's Fifth Avenue. 11:00 am at Metropolitan Museum. Reservation required: (718) 243-8601. \$15.

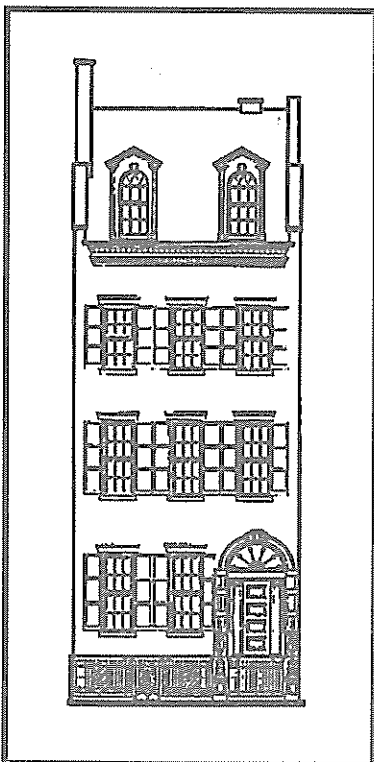
* Wednesday, June 12. "The Skyscraper City": Slide Talk. Municipal Art Society. 457 Madison Ave. \$10. For information, call (212) 935-3960.

* Friday, June 14. "The Irish Experience in America": Slide lecture by historian John Barnes. Montauk Club, 25 Eighth Ave., Brooklyn. 8:30 pm. Admission free.

* Saturday, June 15. "Day One on the IRT" Subway tour of old, hidden, and glorious wonders of the IRT. 10:00 am at NY Transit Museum, 130 Livingston St., Brooklyn. Reservation required: (718) 243-8601. \$15

* Wednesday, June 19. "Exploring the Underwater of New York's Rivers and Bays." Slide talk by diver/archeologist Gene Ritter, who has recovered hundreds of artifacts, dating from the 1700's, from the City's waters. Bay Ridge Historical Society. 7:45 at Shore Hill Community Room, 91st St. between Shore and Colonial Roads, Brooklyn.

Wednesday, June 26. "The Modern City": Slide talk. Municipal Art Society. 457 Madison Ave. \$10. For information, call (212) 935-3960.



The Merchant's House Museum

No Brownstoner should miss a visit to the Merchant's House Museum at 29 East Fourth Street, near the Bowery. One of a row of houses built in 1832, it was the home of a well-to-do merchant, Seabury Tredwell. It is unique in New York City—preserved intact for more than a century and a half. The Greek Revival interior—furniture clothing, memorabilia—is unaltered. The gowns the Tredwell daughters wore at the 1860 ball given for the Prince of Wales are still there. Walk through these doors and you enter the 19th century. The museum is open from 1-4:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday.

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