

Thirtieth Year of Publication

Summer 1998

THE BROWNSTONER

A Publication of the Brownstone Revival Coalition

(212) 675-0560

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

222 Years Later, Brooklyn Group Remembers the Battle of Brooklyn

Never call it "The Battle of Long Island" in the Old Stone House at J.J. Byrne Park in Brooklyn. That was the name by which the famous Revolutionary War battle was known when Brooklyn was the premier city on Long Island. Today's historians call it the Battle of Brooklyn; that was where, by today's geography, the bloody battle took place. It was the first battle of the war after the Declaration of Independence and the first under the command of George Washington.

To commemorate the happenings of 1776, a Brooklyn organization, the First Battle of the Revolution Alliance (FBRA) is sponsoring several events that history buffs and such patriots of 1998 who are ready to spring to arms should be aware of:

August 22: A re-enactment of the British invasion of Brooklyn. Time: 9:30-10:30 am. Place: Tories and others will assemble on the Brooklyn shore near the original Denys Ferry Landing. For precise meeting place, call voicemail (212) 726-8062.

August 22: The Society of Old Brooklynites (SOB's) plus representatives of several veterans' organizations will meet at 11:00 am to pay tribute to the American prisoners who died in the British prison hulks in Wallabout Bay. Place: Prison Ships Martyrs Monument, Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn.

August 23: Battle of Brooklyn walking tour. With historian John Gallagher visit the sites where many of the bloody events of August, 1776 took place. \$8. Time: 1:00 pm. Call (718) 499-3750 for information and to register.

August 29: Re-enactment of Washington's retreat. Brooklyn dignitaries and American militia will assemble, with music and appropriate fanfare, on the East River pier at the foot of Brooklyn's Fulton Street for a brief ceremony and "sendoff" of General Washington's defeated army. [Con't. on pg. 11]

Web-Site Addresses for Brownstoners

Do you know of some web sites that Brownstoners would find of particular interest or value? Let us know about them. E-Mail us at EvOandEvO@aol.com.

An Invitation to Join the Board of the Brownstone Revival Coalition

Thirty years ago the newly formed Brownstone Revival Committee of New York City was surely among the most important catalysts of the brownstone frenzy that seized so many New Yorkers at that time. By the thousand, buyers-- mostly young -- stormed out of their shoebox apartments to acquire the king-size brownstone rowhouses that both urban-renewal and fashion experts of the time had consigned to the wrecker's crowbar.

The BRC helped peel the scales from the eyes of a new generation of New Yorkers, helped them to appreciate not only the period charm of those Victorian houses but also the shrewdness of their design (which goes back to ancient Rome) that has made for good living here for more than a century and a half. They were and are quality housing, the best housing ever built in New York for the middle class. It is a good bet that it is the best large-scale housing that ever will be built in New York. And possibly anywhere.

The Board of Directors of the Brownstone Revival Coalition (our new name) has aged, along with our organization. Two of us were on the original 1968 Board. Most of us have been on the Board for more than 10 years. We have decided that we need new Board members to steer the BRC into the future. In our current program, we offer several lectures each spring and, usually, a workshop (or two or three) in the fall. We have also run many all-day seminar/ workshops and walking tours. We maintain for our members a list of recommended craftsmen -- very handy when they need a trustworthy painter or carpenter or such. And of course we publish this newsletter, *The Brownstoner*, and our annual Olde New York calendar.

We're looking for new Board members who (a) love New York's older communities, particularly those that are blessed with brownstones, and want to preserve them, (b) and will work with us in creating programs that save the best parts of New York for generations to come. Links with other preservation organizations or community associations would be particularly valuable to us. And -- hey! -- what's a Board today without an Internet-savvy member?

Interested in joining our Board? Call our President, Dexter Guerrieri, at (212) 769-2912 or our Chairman, Everett Ortner, at (718) 638-3128. Or write to us at P.O. Box 577, New York, NY 10113.

Or even E-Mail us at EvOandEvO@aol.com.

THE BROWNSTONER

Newsletter of the
Brownstone Revival Coalition

Thirtieth Year of Publication

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Published by The Brownstone Revival Coalition, Inc., P.O. Box 577, New York, N.Y. 10113. Telephone (212) 675-0560. Opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect Brownstone Revival Coalition policy. Design, typography and production by Burnley Duke Dame/Design & Photography, 521 Tenth Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215. Telephone (718) 965-0869. This newsletter is produced on a Macintosh Centris 650, using QuarkXPress 3.31. Copyright 1998.

THE PASSING OF BRENDAN GILL

We have not hitherto noted the death of Brendan Gill, *New Yorker* staff writer for 60 years, man-about-town, and ardent preservationist.

Brendan was one of the earliest members of the Brownstone Revival Committee's Board of Directors (1969), and in recent years has been a member of our Advisory Board. It is with great regret that we have removed his name from that list.

Two examples, among many, of his generosity come to mind: In 1974 when the BRC sponsored its first Back to the City Conference, Brendan helped us to launch not only the conference, but the organization that grew out of it -- Back to the City, Inc. -- in great style with a hugely successful cocktail party at the famous Century Association Club on 43rd Street. Two hundred and fifty persons who attended our conference--most of them out-of-towners--had an unforgettable New York experience that evening.

About ten years or so ago, I enlisted Brendan in joining me to answer a call for help from an organization devoted to restoring an 1834 church in Nantucket. Brendan was there to appeal sternly (and humorously) to the residents of Nantucket to do their duty. I was there, too, as a representative of Back to the City, Inc. and also of the Brownstone Revival Committee, showing my slides. We spent a memorable few days together.

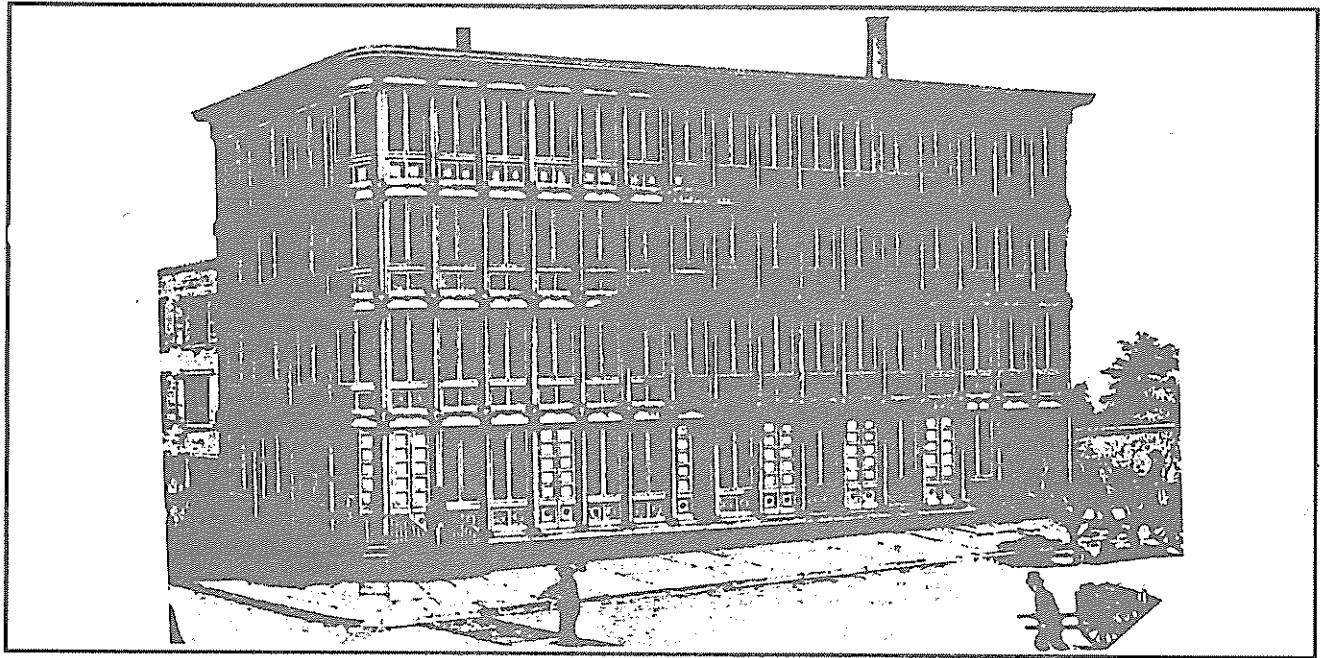
Here at the *Brownstoner*, as at *The New Yorker*, we shall miss Brendan Gill.

--Everett H. Ortner

Add a Name to the BRC List Of Recommended Craftspersons

For and by its members, the Brownstone Revival Coalition maintains a list of recommended craftspersons. Have you had a particularly happy experience with, say, a plumber who came when you needed him, did his job expertly, and charged a reasonable price? A contractor who did what he had contracted to do -- on time? An architect who understood exactly what you wanted? Send his/her name to us -- Brownstone Revival Coalition, P.O. Box 577, New York, NY 10113 -- with a brief comment.

Things to Do and Places to Go
For New York Buffs
PAGES TEN AND ELEVEN



The first iron building: Bogardus's factory.

CAST-IRON ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA -- THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JAMES BOGARDUS

By Margot Gayle and Carol Gayle
W.W. Norton & Company \$39.50

"It was whilst in Italy, contemplating there the rich architectural designs of antiquity, that Mr. Bogardus first conceived the idea of emulating them in modern times, by the aid of cast iron. This was in the year 1840, and, during his subsequent travels in Europe, he held it constantly in view; and cherished it the more carefully, as he became convinced, by inquiry and personal observation, not only that the idea was original with himself, but that he might thereby become the means of greatly adding to our national wealth..."


Sixteen years later, in a pamphlet written with the help of his assistant, John Thomson, James Bogardus could well look back in wonder at how successfully he had turned a vision into reality and at the architectural revolution he had begun: the creation of a building system that used iron as its

central material and the factory fabrication, in cast iron, of duplicate, self-supporting facade elements, in almost any design style -- the forerunner of the curtain-wall International style.

"As an influence on my own design work Bogardus looms larger, let us say, even than Louis Sullivan," the architect Philip Johnson writes in an introduction to a fine new book, *Cast-Iron Architecture in America -- the Significance of James Bogardus*, by Margot Gayle and Carol Gayle.

"Even Richardson, a greater architect, was not such an ancestor of mine as James Bogardus," Johnson continues. "It is, fortunately, easy to say why. With his cast-iron facades, he acquainted Americans with modular rhythm, which is the basis of modern design. Imagine Mies without a module. Imagine Le Corbusier without the basic freedom of evenly spaced windows."

Bogardus, born in 1800 in the agricultural town of Catskill, New York, was far removed, other than having watched Robert Fulton's steam-powered *Clermont* pass on the Hudson River, from the new technologies of the



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day. As was the custom, young James left school at the age of 14 to become an apprentice. "Having shown great taste for mechanics," he was placed by his father with a local watchmaker, where, according to an article in the *Catskill Daily Mail*, "by close application he soon became skilled in watch work and working in gold and silver, and also made himself acquainted with Dye sinking, engraving in wood, steel, and other metals."

By the age of 23, Bogardus was a fully fledged professional, having worked in both Savannah, Georgia as a journeyman watchmaker and back in Catskill in his own business. At 28 he was at an inventors' fair run by the American Institute of New York City, exhibiting a "three-wheeled chronometer clock" that worked on an unusual principle. The clock won first prize and launched Bogardus on what was to be his lifetime profession: inventing.

While supporting himself as a watchmaker in New York City, Bogardus maintained a flow of inventions: an Eccentric Universal Mill "admirably adapted for every species of grinding" that was to provide an income throughout his life, an "ever-pointed" mechanical pencil, two gas-metering devices that came into general use, and an engraving machine of such fidelity that

the painter Rembrandt Peale considered that it "might be applied advantageously to the purposes of the Mint." The Mint was indeed interested in Bogardus's engraving machine, but at the time Bogardus was too involved in manufacturing his gas meters.

In the decades from 1830 to 1850 he received 13 U.S. patents and one British patent for clocks, spinning machinery, devices for pressing glass, for cutting or working with rubber, and for separating gold from silver.

In 1836, Bogardus journeyed to Great Britain, where his gas meter had aroused interest, in an attempt to get a British patent. He had little luck with that, but his superb engraving machine, capable of producing up to 150 lines to the inch, and at a speed of 30 lines a minute, was another matter. The British Museum had been looking for a way to publish a medallic history -- pictures of historic medals -- and that and other publishing projects, in addition to selling and making duplicates of his engraving machine, kept him in England for four years. During that period, his wife, Margaret, a skilled painter of miniature portraits, joined him.

In 1840, before returning to the United



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States, the Bogarduses visited Italy, and it was as a result of that experience that the two seminal influences on Bogardus came together: classical architecture and the widespread use of iron in Britain in the construction of bridges, aqueducts, railway facilities, even the huge St. Katherine Dock on the Thames. The Industrial Revolution, largely based on British advances in iron technology, had made immense advances there.

Iron as a building material was not unknown in America, particularly in the form of columns for framing mills and factories or for shop-front display windows. As early as 1819, in *The Builders Assistant*, John Haviland wrote, "The improvement and general introduction of cast iron bids fair to create a totally new school of architecture. It has already been employed in bridges, pillars, roofs, floors, chimneys, doors, and windows, and the facility with which it is molded into different shapes will continue to extend its application."

But it was its use in fireproof construction that aroused most interest -- especially in New York City, which had suffered a number of major conflagrations, particularly in 1835 and 1845. To that protective quality Bogardus added his enthusiasm for the use of iron in modular construction. In an article published in 1849 he wrote:

"These [iron] buildings will sustain a greater weight, and are put up with less inconvenience than brick buildings, being cast and fit so that each piece may be put up as fast as it is brought on the ground. They may be taken down, removed and put up again in a short time, like any other casting....They admit more light, for the iron columns will sustain the weight that would require a wide brick wall in ordinary buildings...."

In 1848, having secured financing, Bogardus began to build his own cast-iron factory, but stopped work to erect a cast-iron facade on a narrow five-story building on lower Broadway. This was the Millau Pharmacy building. It offered an extraordinary display of ornamentation: attached fluted Tuscan columns topped by Medusa heads, recessed panels beneath the windows with starburst designs, etc. But it also offered across its 20-foot width four huge windows, almost from floor to ceiling, made possible by the strength of its slender supporting cast-iron columns.

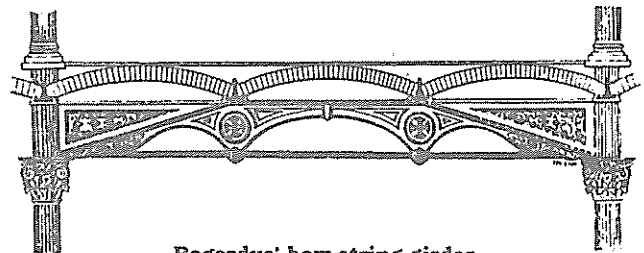
In 1849 Bogardus completed his factory, which he called "the first complete cast-iron edifice ever erected in America, or the world." It consisted of four stories, each lighted by 20 windows, and a basement. It was made entirely of iron: walls, floors, interior columns, even the roof. And of course it was heavily ornamented with classical

motifs.

In 1850, Bogardus applied for a patent on what he claimed as his invention of a "building system." Basically, this consisted of beams cast with flanges, plus columns, pilasters or posts, also cast with flanges, all provided with bolt holes through which the parts could be combined. "In this way," said Bogardus, "one story may be erected on another, and, when thus put together, each side of the house or structure constitutes a frame, and when the four sides are united all these frames brace each other, and make a strong and light structure."

Floor beams were cast level on top, with the underside arched -- the so-called bow-string girders. Flooring members had tongues and grooves made by riveting strips of metal to the plates. Roof plates overlapped to keep out water. Bolted-on ornamental details, also of cast iron, not only added esthetic interest but covered connections where iron beams met, keeping out rain-water.

But, as co-authors Gayle and Gayle point out, the patent inadequately represented what Bogardus had achieved. "He had brought together a variety of methods, none in itself unique, into a whole that was new. He created self-supporting facades that simulated the carved stone of classical architectural forms, with their repeating designs -- all in cast iron." He had created a truly modular system. In the course of this, also, he



Bogardus' bow-string girder

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had introduced to the United States the light but strong open beam -- the now universal I-beam.

And he created an industry. Although Bogardus offered the use of his patent for only \$200, few took advantage of the offer. Cast-iron facades became popular and began to appear throughout lower Manhattan. Building owners could have the class of classical forms without the expense of stone carvers. There was the further assurance of fire-safety.

Other cities followed. In 1850 the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company in Philadelphia decided upon cast iron for its new headquarters building, as did the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In San Francisco, Boston, Portland, Oregon, and elsewhere, iron foundries that had formerly made stoves, fences, gas pipes, and such began to produce architectural castings.

Bogardus's first large building was for the *Baltimore Sun*. At that time, 1849, he had erected only two cast-iron facades and his own small iron-framed factory. The *Sun* building was, by comparison, a monster: five stories and 70 feet high, and occupying 74 feet by 56 feet on a corner lot.

It was a challenge. The building was framed entirely in iron, consisting of numerous columns on each floor supporting cast-iron beams. There were 105 windows. Pedestals at the second level were ornamented with cast-iron medallions with portraits of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. At the top, or fifth, floor, a row of 23 four-foot-tall standing figures, all in classical garb, depicted Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. The building was painted a metallic bronze.

By 1851, Bogardus had 70 men working in his cast-iron factory, finishing and preparing parts for shipping. In Washington, D.C. that year he completed an iron front for the Adams Express Company, another for a commercial building known as Iron Hall, and a third for a warehouse. Perhaps while he was still at work on the warehouse, on Christmas Eve, 1851, fire struck a room in the Capitol that housed the Library of Congress and did great damage. In rebuilding the section, it was

decided to fireproof it, and Bogardus got the job: three tiers of iron galleries, bookshelves, and floors.

Bogardus's methods and of course cast iron were also widely used for fire watch towers, the lofty structures -- sometimes as tall as a hundred feet -- that New York and other cities erected, as perches for watchmen, to look for fires and signal when they appeared.

As his fame spread, Bogardus was called on in a number of other cities. He erected four buildings in Chicago, one in Albany, a warehouse in Havana, Cuba, the Iron Clad Building (still standing) in Cooperstown, New York, and perhaps more.

A small scattering of Bogardus buildings remain standing in New York City: the Bruce Building at 254 Canal Street, and others, nameless, at 75 Murray Street, 85 Leonard Street, and 63 Nassau Street.

But more important than the structures that he was personally involved in was the vision that was his: of cast iron, capable of assuming virtually any form, of being assembled and disassembled with ease, fireproof, structurally of enormous strength, almost indestructible.

In that sense, all of the hundreds of cast-iron buildings remaining from that age, now almost a century and a half past, are Bogardus buildings. Long may they stand!

The co-authors of this work, Margot Gayle and her daughter Carol, have done a superb job in piecing together what is known of the life and works of James Bogardus. Margot, patron saint of cast-iron preservation, is the founder and president of the Friends of Cast Iron, author of many articles and books on the subject, a great and distinguished woman. In her spare time, some 30 years ago, she also founded the Victorian Society in America. Among her many preservation credits are the Sun clock on New York's Chambers Street and the Jefferson Market Court House, now a public library. Carol Gayle, the junior member of the team, is a professional historian.

-- Everett H. Ortner

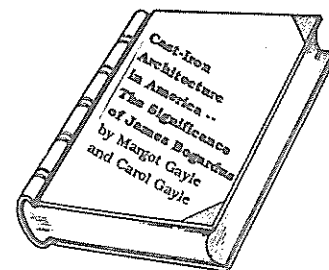
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200 Years Ago in New York City

"Many of the private houses in New York are very good, particularly those in Broadway. Of the public buildings there are none which are very striking. The churches and houses for public worship amount to no less than twenty-four; four of them for Presbyterians, three for Episcopalians of the Church of England, three for Dutch Reformists, two for German Lutherans and Calvinists, two for Quakers, Two for Baptists, two for Methodists, one for French Protestants, one for Moravians, one for Roman Catholics, and one for Jews."

-Isaac Weld, Jr., *Travels Through the States of North Am., and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797.*

With war between the United States and France threatening, U.S. Senator North writes to New York Governor John Jay: "The spirit of the people of New York seems to be exerting itself for the safety of the City. I have sent to Col. Hamilton Baron Steuben's ideas on the subject and also have given them to Mr. McHenry, who is to go to New York next week, and fortunately is in possession of certain plans and maps... intended to point out the proper place, and the best method for fortifying the harbor of New York."

-Letter to John Jay, June 6, 1798

The New York Grenadiers, a state military unit, advertises for recruits. Citizens of reputable character, 5 ft. 9 in. to 6 ft. 4 in. in height are wanted. "At a crisis like the present, when the political horizon of our country is dark and gloomy, and war seems inevitable, it becomes the duty of every member of society, who professes to have the welfare of his country at heart, and is able to bear arms, to step forward with alacrity, and learn to use them for their country's good."

-N.Y. Gazette & General Advertiser, June 12, 1798

"Great preparation for War."

-Journal of Hugh Gainé, June 26, 1798

"On reading a Petition of a number of Inhabitants in the Bowery Lane complaining of the Dangerous Practice of running or racing Horses in the public Road or Highway," the Common Council passes an ordinance against this practice "in any public Street or Road within this City."

-Minutes of the Common Council, June 30, 1798

Jos. Delacroix advertises that on the Fourth of July there will be "Grand Fireworks in the evening, accompanied by Several Transparent Paintings executed by Mr. Snyder at his Vauxhall Gardens," and there would be "two

neat carriages which will ply between his house, No. 112 Broadway, and his Garden, at one shilling each person."

-N.Y. Gazette & General Advertiser, June 29, 1798

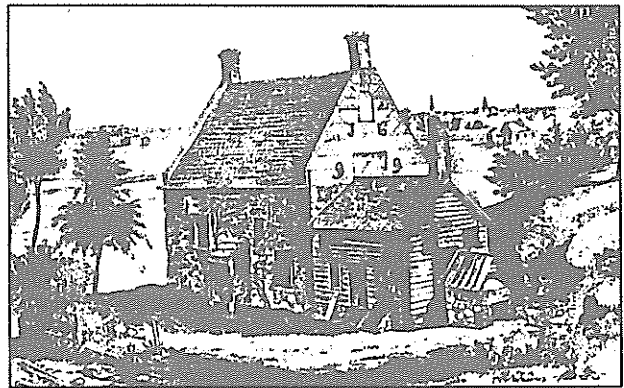
President Adams comes to New York from Philadelphia on his way to Braintree, Mass., his home. "After landing, the President was joined by a large number of civil and military officers. Several military corps...moved from Courtlandt street down Broadway, when federal salutes were fired from the Battery and Governor's island. The President and officers followed in the rear of the troops, and were greeted by incessant acclamations of joy from the sidewalks, windows, and even house tops. He walked uncovered, and bowed politely to the numerous spectators...the simplicity of his dress and equipage is no inconsiderable evidence of those 'stern republican virtues' for which he has always been so deservedly celebrated. The President retired to his son's house in Beaver street, where all the troops passed in review before him, and thence passed up Broadway to Trinity Church, and were there dismissed. The bells of Trinity were rung for a considerable time."

-N.Y. Gazette & Advertiser, July 28, 1798

(CON'T. ON PG. 8)

"Battle" (CON'T. FROM PG. 1)

August 30: Commemorative ceremonies at Battle Hill, Green-Wood Cemetery. Time: 2:00 pm. If you have never been to the famous cemetery, this is a rare opportunity. Entrance is at Fifth Avenue and 25th Street, Brooklyn.



THE OLD STONE HOUSE

Also worth visiting is the Old Stone House at Fifth Avenue and 5th Street, Brooklyn. It is a restoration of the Seventeenth Century Vechte-Cortelyou farmhouse, which figured actively in the American retreat during the Battle of Brooklyn. Here the brave Maryland regiment made its stand, and here hundreds of Marylanders died. The house is now the headquarters and historic interpretive center of the First Battle of the Revolution Alliance. For information, call (718) 726-8062.

"200 Years" (CON'T FROM PG. 7)

A city physician complains to Mayor Varick of the vendors of fruits and vegetables who "Make a Costom, when the Butchers is Gon, to Move in the Markett with their Coffee & Frute, and by that Means Collect Numbers of Idol, Drunken, and Durty Men Seting and Lying on the Stalls, So that the Butchers with Difficulty can scarecely make the Stalls Even Look Deasant, as the Huxters...Stays until 9 or 10 O'clock at night, and their Frute draws Large Gangs of unruly Boys, Disturbing the Peasable Inhabitants."

-Minutes of the Common Council, August 15, 1798


150 Years Ago in New York City

"Whereas, The Neighborhood of St. John's Park is in the night time infested with base and unprincipled persons, who take advantage of the darkness with which it is shrouded, in consequence of the dense foliage of trees, and the dimness of the ordinary oil lamps, to perpetrate acts of violence upon...unprotected persons, who have occasion to pass through Beach, Varick, and Laight streets. Therefore, be it

"Resolved, That the Superintendent of Lamps and Gas be, and is hereby directed to have Beach, Varick, and Laight streets, where they front on St. John's Park, lighted with gas."

-Proceedings, Approved by Mayor, July 28, 1848

In a description of "the picturesque beauty of the suburbs of New York," the prophecy is made that "not many years will pass before Harlem, Yorkville, and New York will be one city."

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-New York Commercial Advertiser, June 6, 1848

"The treaty of peace with Mexico is proclaimed by President Polk.... It stipulated the evacuation of Mexico by U.S. troops within three months; the payment of \$3,000,000 in hand and \$12,000,000 in four annual installments by the U.S. to Mexico, for New Mexico and California, which had become territory of the U.S. by conquest, and, in addition, the assumption of debts, due certain citizens of the U.S. from Mexico, to the amount of \$3,500,000."

-Diary, Philip Hone, July 4, 1848

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to pay a bounty not exceeding 50 cents "for each dog found running loose or at large in the City, below Forty-second street, without being properly muzzled, and which may be killed or destroyed," is approved by Mayor Havemeyer.

-Proceedings, Approved by Mayor, July 12, 1848

100 Years Ago in New York

The American National Red Cross Society is organized, at the Manhattan Hotel.

-N.Y. Times, May 11, 1898

Puccini's "La Boheme" is produced for the first time in New York, at Wallack's Theatre, by a company of Italian singers.

Krehbiel, Chapters of Opera, May 16, 1898

Puccini's "Manon Lescaut" is sung for the first time in New York, at Wallack's Theatre.

-NYPL Bulletin, May 27, 1898

San Juan Hill and El Caney (Cuba) are captured by the American Rough Riders, and the 71st Regiment of New York distinguish themselves in the assault.

-N.Y. Times, July 1, 1898

Horse cars cease running on Sixth and Eighth Aves. below 59th St., and the work of constructing the electric lines is begun.

-Ibid., July 18, 1898

Automobiles "have almost ceased to be regarded as curiosities, and the embarrassment of the passengers caused by many staring eyes, is gradually wearing off."

-Ibid., Oct. 2, 1898

**Check-Up Time
for the Heating System**

When was your chimney last cleaned out? When you have your heating system checked this out summer, make sure that the chimney is also inspected.

Need a chimney cleaner? Ask BRC if we have one on our list of recommended craftsmen.

Back in the Old Backyard:

Reminders of the Past

Brownstone backyard archeologists--the people who dig up backyards in search of clay pipes and old beer bottles and such -- know all this, but most of today's brownstoners know little of New York's history and how it affects our houses. Here's a brief primer on backyards, old and new:

One central factor, the existence of a municipal water system, defined the nature and use of the New York City brownstone backyard. Before water started flowing through city mains into our houses, here are some of the things people didn't have:

*Flush toilets. Instead, most people used a backyard privy -- typically, a shed with a wooden "one-holer" -- over a cesspool built of dry-laid stone topped by brick. On a cold winter night residents might avoid a freezing outdoor trip by keeping a chamber pot, colloquially known as a thunder mug, under the bed, and emptying the contents the next day.

*Running water. In the earliest New York days, houses had wells. But as farms and farm houses were replaced, more and more, by row houses, one on top of the other, the backyard well became impractical -- too close for health to the privy of the house next door. Water could be obtained and carried home in buckets from the few city wells, worked by crank-operated pumps that were scattered around lower Manhattan in the first half of the last century. But that was a nuisance. The more affluent homeowners built a cistern in their backyard. This was a large, underground cylindrical brick structure, lined with mortar, sometimes with a capacity of thousands of gallons, that stored rainwater captured by roof gutters and suitable for laundry and other household uses. (Later, when hard, mineral-laden municipal water became available, many homeowners retained their cistern for its soft water; ladies, particularly, preferred to wash their hair in it.) To prevent overflow, a pipe ran from the cistern to the cesspool. For drinking water, those who could afford it bought "tea water," conveyed in large horse-drawn tanks from springs in Harlem, for a penny a gallon.

*A garden. The backyard was strictly, and unpleasantly, utilitarian. Its covering was sand and gravel. In the days before routine garbage collection, refuse was disposed of there and unquestionably supported colonies of rats. (Bones dug up in old backyards usually bear signs of having been chewed by rats.) It proba-

bly smelled to high heaven. It would have been draped with clotheslines for the family laundry.

Those old backyards are the kitchen middens that archeologists love. Like the kitchen middens of ancient Troy or Babylon, they provide a picture of a bygone age. The smells are gone, of course. Offensive organic matter has long since gone back to nature. Now when today's archeologists dig in the area of the old cesspools or probe the old cisterns, often filled with trash when they were no longer needed for water, there emerges a picture of life a century and a half ago, as seen through its artifacts: Dishes, bowls, jugs, dolls' heads, clay pipes, buttons, pins, lamps, pots, marbles, toys, wine and beer bottles -- these are the household possessions that an artist might use to portray the everyday life of a middle-class family in pre-Civil War New York.

Municipal water transformed the brown-stone backyard. With plumbing, the outdoor privy disappeared, replaced by the modern indoor bathroom with flush toilet. Running water appeared in the kitchen. The backyard, increasingly, became a garden with flowers and brick paths and bluestone slabs for the barbecue.

In Manhattan, Croton water started to flow from the giant reservoir at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue in 1842, but, with the time it took to lay pipes for a city, would not have been generally available available for probably a decade or so after that date. In Brooklyn, starting in 1859 in Brooklyn Heights, a new supply system brought water from springs out on Long Island to a reservoir located on Prospect Hill, exactly where the main library now stands. Most of Brooklyn outside of the Heights was rural, and individual wells served most of the residents' needs.

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Things to Do and Places to Go For New York Buffs

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, 1220 Fifth Ave., Manhattan. (212) 534-1672

"Broadway: the Great White Way in 1898"-- Exhibition to Jan. 31, 1999

"New York Horizontal--Circuit Views of New York" by William Hassler-- Exhibition, Nov. 14-May 2, 1999

"New York Vertical--Photos" by Horst Hamann--Exhibition, Nov. 21-Apr. 11, 1999

"Souvenir Buildings from Architects' Collections"--Exhibition, Nov. 14-Mar. 28, 1999

"Architectural Drawings by Hughson Hawley"--Exhibition, Nov 29-Apr. 4, 1999

FRAUNCES TAVERN MUSEUM, 54 Pearl St., Manhattan. (212) 425-1778

"When New York Was British"--Exhibition through Aug. 31

BIG ONION WALKING TOURS. P.O. Box 20561, Cherokee Station, NYC 10021. (212) 439-1090

Walking Tours: \$10. Call for Meeting Place

"Brooklyn Bridge & Brooklyn Heights at Twilight." Thursday, Aug. 27, 1:00 pm

"Greenwich Village at Twilight," Thursday, Aug. 20, 6:30 pm

"Chinatown," Sunday, Aug. 23, 1:00 pm

"The East Village," Sunday, Aug. 23 1:00 pm

"Gramercy Park & Union Square," Saturday, Aug. 29, 1:00 pm

"Greenwich Village," Saturday, Sept. 5, 1:00 pm; also, Sunday, Sept. 20

"Historic Harlem," Sunday, Sept. 19, 1:00 pm

"Pre-Yom Kippur Jewish Ellis Island," Sunday, Sept. 27, 12 noon (\$16)

THE OLD STONE HOUSE, Fifth Ave. & Third St., Brooklyn. Call (212) 726-8062

"The British Invasion of Brooklyn"--Reenactment--Saturday, Aug. 22, 9:30- 10:30 am.
Place to be announced

"Prison-Ships Martyrs Memorial Ceremonies":

*At Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn, Saturday, Aug. 22, 11:00 am

*At Battle Hill, Green-Wood Cemetary, Brooklyn, Saturday, Aug. 30, 2:00 pm

"Battle of Brooklyn Walking Tour," Sunday, Aug. 23, 1:00 pm. \$8. Call (718) 499- 3750 to register

"Washington's Retreat"--Reenactment--Saturday, Aug. 29, 9:30-11:00 am at Fulton St. & East River, Brooklyn

JOYCE GOLD HISTORY TOURS, 141 West 17th St., Manhattan. (212) 242-5762

"Greenwich Village--Nautical Tour," Saturday, Aug. 22, 1:00 pm. Meet at West & Christopher Sts. \$12.

"SoHo's Changing Scene," Sunday, Aug. 30, 1:00 pm. Meet at Houston & Lafayette Sts. \$12.

BROOKLYN BOROUGH HALL, 209 Joralemon St., Brooklyn. (718) 875-4047

"Tuesday Lunch-Hour Tours of Historic Borough Hall," every Tuesday at 1:00 pm. Free

MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY, 457 Madison Ave., Manhattan. (212) 935-3960

"Chelsea," Saturday, Aug. 22, 11:00 am. Meet at Chelsea Hotel, 222 West 23d St. \$12

"Brooklyn Heights," Friday, Aug. 28, 12:30 pm. Meet at Clark & Henry Sts., Brooklyn, \$12

"East Village," Saturday, Aug. 29, 11:00 am. Meet at Astor Place, 8th St. & Fourth Ave. \$12.

FRIENDS OF THE PARKS. Call (212) 625-8733.

"From Art to Square," Saturday, Aug. 29, 7:00 pm. From Maine Monument, Columbus Circle, to Times Square

"Dome, Bank & Bridge," Sunday, Sept. 20, 2:00 pm. Meet at Marcy Ave., Brooklyn (J, M, or Z train), walk to Manhattan on Williamsburg Bridge

"Green-Wood Cemetery," Sunday, Oct. 11, 1:30 pm. Meet at Fifth Ave. & 25th St., Brooklyn

"Rus in Urbe" -- Central Park, that is. Sunday, Nov. 1, 2:00 pm. Meet at Children's Gate, east 64th St.

PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE. Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY 11215. (718) 965-8951

Lecture Series, Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at 50 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn. \$2

"Designing Men" -- Central & Prospect Park photos by Sara Cedar-Miller, Sept. 24

"Meadows & Buffer Zones" Oct. 15

"Birding in Prospect Park" Nov. 12

A Book for Restorationists

A new and expanded edition of "Historic Building Facades: the Manual for Maintenance and Rehabilitation" is now available. The 200-page manual examines the restoration of historic facades of virtually every period and style, with chapters about each of the major building materials. The book, edited by architect William G. Foulkes, has a foreword by architectural historian James Marston Fitch -- sufficient testament, to those who know Fitch, to the importance of the work. The manual is available from the New York Landmarks Conservancy, 141 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010. It's \$29.95 plus tax and shipping

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