

Founded 1968

Thirty-fourth Year of Publication Spring 2001

# THE BROWNSTONER

A PUBLICATION OF THE BROWNSTONE REVIVAL COALITION

(212) 675-0560

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

## REAL-ESTATE EXPERTS REPORT ON TODAY'S BROWNSTONE MARKET: SUPPLY LOW, PRICES HIGH

**A**t the annual Brownstone Market Report sponsored by the Brownstone Revival Coalition on April 10, four real-estate experts, representing different New York brownstone areas, summarized their experience in selling and renting houses and apartments. There is no question, they said; the market is still hot. Here are their reports:

*Chris Thomas, Vice President and Sales Director of the William B. May offices in Park Slope and Brooklyn Heights.*

Many of his customers are Manhattan residents moving to Brooklyn, preferably in the old landmark communities with low-density housing. Prices and bidding are up, due to Brooklyn's short supply, with occasional bidding wars. While brownstone conversions to co-ops in the 1980's increased dramatically, new housing is hard to come by, particularly, of course, in the landmark communities and the areas that surround those historic centers.

Brooklyn Heights brownstones are going for prices that most closely resemble Manhattan prices: currently running between \$1.8 million to just under \$3 million at the top of the market. But in Brooklyn Heights you get a mansion for your \$3 million. Prices in other landmark communities bear varying relationships to prices in Brooklyn Heights: Cobble Hill and Park Slope go for about 15 percent less, with Carroll Gardens going for 5-10 percent below that level

Prices in Windsor Terrace, Prospect Heights, Boerum Hill, Fort Greene, and Clinton Hill--all 19th-century communities--have been driven up by buyers venturing beyond the traditional landmark areas. Chris Thomas calls this a 'slingshot' effect, as buyers in these outskirt areas find that they can buy fine brownstones with an easy commute to lower Manhattan for, perhaps, \$800,000 instead of the \$1,800,000 necessary in Brooklyn Heights.

*Jed H. Garfield, Managing Partner of Leslie J. Garfield & Co., represented Manhattan's Upper East Side.*

The impact of the (CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Townhouses in Poland?  
Townhouses in France?  
In England?  
In Ancient Rome?

Yes--they have been and still are all over!  
And now you can learn about them in...

## TOWNHOUSES AROUND THE WORLD

Slide Lecture by  
Everett H. Ortner, Chairman,  
Brownstone Revival Coalition  
at 6:00 pm  
Tuesday, May 29  
at the  
Donnell Library Center  
20 West 53rd Street  
The Public Is Invited  
- Admission Free -

## CIVILITY IN NEW YORK

**L**ast year, when I gave the 'State of the City' speech, I talked about civility being at the core of what a city is all about. Like everything I do, it was subject to a great deal of ridicule. The reason for that ridicule was that I wanted New York City people to be polite. Now, I'm not that unrealistic, and I'm not always that polite myself. What I meant by civility was the Greek concept, *de civitas*, of the obligation that we have to each other: to not destroy each other's property, to respect each other, to understand that freedom is a very delicate combination of liberty and obligation.

"Freedom is not just being able to do anything you want to do anytime you want to do it--that is a perversion of legal rights and civil rights. It means for every right, there is something that you have to give up, there is something that you have to concede, something that you have to do in order to preserve that right."

--Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, April, 1999, Speech at the Livable Cities Conference, Washington, D.C.

# THE BROWNSTONER

Newsletter of the  
Brownstone Revival Coalition  
Thirty-fourth Year of Publication

## OFFICERS

Everett H. Ortner, Chairman  
Dexter Guerrieri, President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2001

Robert Arthur King

2002

Myrna E. DeJesus  
Josephine Jones  
John Muir  
Everett H. Ortner  
D. Kenneth Patton

2003

Ruby Ford  
Ruth Goldstein  
Dexter Guerrieri  
Frances O'Shea

Marvin Rock, Executive Director

## ADVISORY BOARD

James Greene, Clem Labine, Donald E. Moore,  
Richard Rosan, Deirdre Stanforth,  
H. Dickson McKenna, Claire Walter

Contributions to the  
Brownstone Revival Coalition  
are tax-deductible

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 G3, using QuarkXPress 3.31 and Adobe Photoshop 5.0.2. Copyright 2001.

## THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART BOWS TO THE 21ST CENTURY WITH A GLASS APPENDAGE

In recent months, while a lot of us (including this writer) weren't looking, the New York Landmarks Commission kissed off a new design for the entrance to the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

As you may recall, the City Fathers of two-thirds of a century ago approved the amputation of the great flight of steps that offered an imposing entrance to the museum. But that was then and this is now. We don't do that sort of thing any more. We are now in an age of restoration--and money--and we are in a position to consider the possibility of restoring those steps. Or even, forgetting precise restoration, to modify for today's sensibilities the century-old McKim, Mead & White design. Unfortunately, some may say, the museum and the Landmarks Commission have decided in favor of "improvement" rather than design modification or restoration. It is, sadly, a decision that has largely gone unchallenged.

The New York (read "Manhattan") preservation heavyweights, weary perhaps of battling for even tiny objectives (witness the Dvorak house), heaved a sigh of relief that the proposed design has drawn little controversy, and after fussing with this and that, gave in. The New York Landmarks Conservancy, normally on the side of the preservation angels, commented: "In our view, their [the museum's] architects have sent a wakeup call that is both appropriate and invigorating.... They have proposed an addition that completes the front of the complex in a thoroughly contemporary idiom...."

With little opposition from Brooklynites, the McKim, Mead & White classic design will soon be seen and visited through a glass porch.

There were particular sighs of relief when a staunch Brooklynite like Otis Pearsoll didn't contest the design. Mr. Pearsoll, an early champion of the 1965 landmarks law, might have made his judgment based on the rendering that the museum and the architect, James Stewart Polshek, have widely distributed. Look at it and you see, beyond the glass entrance structure, the columns and upper stonework of the original museum. But the perspective is a cheat. To see the museum as the rendering shows it, you would have to be on a cherry picker forty feet in the air. Take another look at the picture and visualize what you would see if you were entering from street level, with the glass structure directly in front of you, largely blocking your view of the upper elements of the original classic structure. Now the old facade is diminished, and has perhaps even vanished from view.

The non-architect might think that it would have been comparatively simple to restore the original McKim, Mead & White design---in modified form, to meet the comfort and ease that we are used to today. Think of restoring the original flight of steps-but hollowed beneath to form a kind of porte cochere: solid from the front, but permitting cars to drive through and pedestrians to enter from street level. Think of escalators on the far sides of the steps for those of us who would rather ride than walk. Think even of entering at the original piano nobile, the great hall, as museum-goers did before the steps were removed.

-Everett H. Ortner

---

---

### New York

Purple-robed and pauper-clad,  
Raving, rotting, money-mad;  
A squirming herd in Mammon's mesh,  
A wilderness of human flesh;  
Crazed with avarice, lust and rum,  
New York, thy name's Delirium.

- "Owed to New York,"  
Byron Rufus Newton, 1906

### WHEN MAYOR LINDSAY COULDN'T COME TO BRC'S 1970 ANNUAL MEETING

The City of New York  
Office of the Mayor  
New York, N.Y. 10007

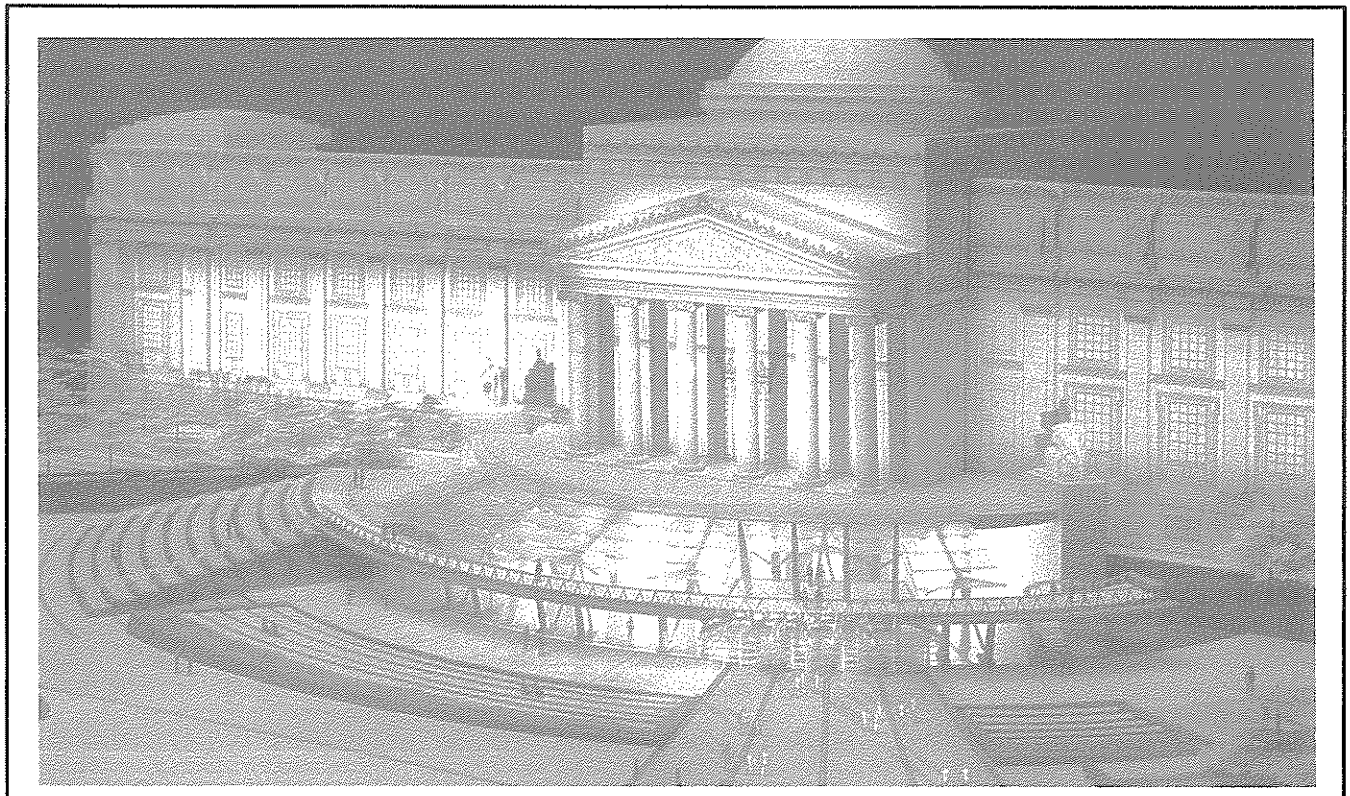
Dear Brownstoners:

I sincerely regret that my schedule precludes my joining you at your Annual Meeting on October 7.

The Brownstoners who make up your group have each and every one, individually and collectively, contributed an essential element to the vitality of New York City. The faith that is shown by each renovation is a source of pride to all New Yorkers, and reaffirms my belief that our City is not only a great place to visit but is, indeed, an even greater place to live. The prospects for New York are brightened by the knowledge that so many people are dedicated to improving our City, making it livable and viable, while at the same time preserving elements of the City which it would, indeed, be tragic to lose.

My support and best wishes go to the Brownstone Revival Committee and all your fine members. I hope that I may be able to join you on another occasion.

Sincerely yours,  
John V. Lindsay  
Mayor



## A PLATFORM FOR PRESERVATIONISTS

The Brownstone Revival Coalition along with many other preservation organizations has announced its support of a "Preservation Platform" for the 2001 elections. Among the organizations are The Municipal Art Society, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, Landmarks West!, and the Historic Districts Council. The platform and a list of organizations supporting it will be distributed to candidates, demonstrating the strength and unity of the preservation community. The platform covers four major areas:

1. *Commitment to tax incentives to building owners for restoration work on historic properties.*

New York City's elected officials should support the state bill, "Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credits," and the federal "Historic Homeownership Assistance" act.

2. *Preservation of public buildings, especially historic school buildings.*

New York City must learn that it is commonly more economical to upgrade and rehabilitate historic school structures than to construct new facilities.

3. *A well-funded and independent Landmarks Preservation Commission.*

Increased funding and staffing will enable the com-

mission to speed up its actions and give more attention to enforcement of the Landmarks Law. The current budget for the Commission is a miserly \$3 million.

4. *Commitment to zoning reform that reinforces and complements historic neighborhoods.*

Zoning reform should begin with the protection of the urban fabric in livable neighborhoods throughout the city. Contextual zoning is particularly important around designated brownstone neighborhoods where there are many blocks of outstanding low-scale historic buildings outside of the historic districts' boundaries. It would prevent as-of-right blockbusters from destroying the contextual integrity of these landmark-protected neighborhoods.

### BITTER THOUGHTS DEPARTMENT

Does it make any preservation sense to permit the sale and transfer of so-called air rights of a landmark structure in a landmark district to a structure that now, "as of right," will seriously affect the quality of that district? And are those "air rights," a concept invented by some perverted legal genius, not a fiction? The landmark structure, not being able, by law, to change its appearance, should really have nothing to sell. If the air rights are real, the landmark structure should be able to extend itself upward without hindrance. If it can't, what is it selling?



Only one name  
Brownstone Insurance  
stands for...

- *Experience* • *Service*
- *Innovation* • *Lower Cost*

**BROWNSTONE  
AGENCY INC.**

ONE SEAPORT PLAZA NEW YORK NY 10038 (212) 962-5620

## A CREDO FOR BROWNSTONERS

### Why Brownstones Are So Great

("Brownstone" is the New York term for any 19th century or early 20th century stone rowhouse)

1. Nineteenth century brownstone townhouses are among the finest residential structures ever built--anywhere--for the middle class, in terms of space, architectural and structural quality, and interior grace notes: fine woodwork, floors, fireplaces, elegant room scale.

2. Victorian tastes are now appreciated in a way they were not as recently as a half-century ago. Many brownstones still have, even after the destruction wrought by ignorant owners, colorful stained glass, fine entryway floor tiles, fireplaces, sliding doors, fine plasterwork, and those wonderful high-high ceilings.

3. Brownstone neighborhoods are human scale. You are not overwhelmed by building size when you walk down a brownstone street.

4. The scale of the houses and of the neighborhoods make for lower population density, and thus for a feeling in the big city, where people tend to know each other.

5. Brownstones are good for the city. The history and architectural quality of these old houses attract many people of education and taste, and thus tend to keep such people in the city and attract others like them to the city.

6. No structure is better insulated than a brownstone--what better insulation can there be than houses on both sides sharing your wall? Brownstones stay cool in summer, warm in winter.

7. Brownstones are durable. When you consider that they are all more than a century you must marvel at their state of preservation.

8. Brownstones can be turned into any number of living arrangements: an apartment on each floor, an owner's duplex plus apartments, etc., etc., supplying rental income that often buys the house for its owner.

9. And--a thought for the 21st century--they are now worth real money!

# Carbonell

*interior & exterior painting  
plastering & paint stripping*

**Frank Carbonell (212) 410-9153**

# Carbonell

**Restoration ■ Stonework  
Waterproofing ■ Masonry**

**Frank Carbonell (212) 410-9153**

**Apple  
Architectural  
Windows**

Manhattan's Source for Marvin Windows and Doors

Marvin Wood Window Specialists  
Manhattan Showroom  
Factory Trained  
Supplied and Installed  
Brownstones and  
Historic Districts

231 West 29th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10001  
Tel: (212) 643-0080  
Fax: (212) 643-1024  
www.applewindows.com

**F** **R**  
**i** **e**  
**n** **s**  
**t** **t**  
**W** **R**  
**o** **e**  
**o** **s**  
**d** **t**  
**e** **i**  
**s** **t**  
**t** **i**  
**o** **n**

**FURNITURE QUALITY FINISHING**  
Residential & Commercial  
Stripping, Staining & Maintenance  
"Brownstone Specialists"

Phone/Fax (845) 638-4006 Vincent Battiloro  
Free Estimates Ono Kristoffer Court  
Insured New City, New York 10956

## MARCUS ROOFING

**DEPENDABLE CRAFTSMANSHIP  
SINCE 1905**

379 Prospect Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York  
(718) 768-5499

**WE DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME**

## the corcoran group

As a fellow Brownstone owner and BRC member,  
I can help you with all of your real estate needs

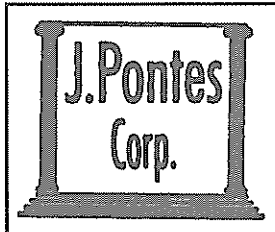
**John A. Schwartz**  
Associate Broker

Office: 212.360.1664 Home: 212.650.1817  
Available 7 Days A Week

**IRIS KAPLOW  
LANDSCAPES**

GARDENS  
TERRACES

DESIGN/ INSTALLATION  
MAINTENANCE  
**212.496.8464**



Jack Pontes  
President

Brownstone & Limestone  
Restorations and Preservation  
Waterproofing, etc.

42 North Moore Street  
New York, NY 10013

Tel: (212) 226-0339  
Fax: (212) 431-1753

**LANDMARK SPECIALIST**

**Millwork Specialities**

189 Prospect Avenue  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215  
718-768-7112-7113-8308

- DOUBLE HUNGS • CASEMENTS •
- BENT WINDOWS • CUSTOM DOORS
- ARCHITECTURAL MILLWORK •
- Fax your inquiries 965-3974 •

**BUILDING PROBLEMS?**

**CONSULT AN ARCHITECT**

BROWNSTONE INSPECTIONS  
BUILDING DESIGN  
SPACE PLANNING & INTERIOR DESIGN  
CLEAR BUILDING VIOLATIONS  
OBTAIN CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

**HARRIS ARCHITECTURE, PC**  
ARTHUR S. HARRIS, ARCHITECT  
305 Seventh Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> floor, NY, NY 10001  
**(212) 352-1214**

[REAL ESTATE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE]

2001 first-quarter financial market has had an impact on brownstone sales in the East 60's through the 90's, with "a fair amount of available and expensive properties out there not moving. There are 26 properties priced in excess of \$10 million." In fact, says Garfield, "I don't think there are 26 buyers out there. Part of what is affecting sales is the difference between seller expectations and what buyers are willing to pay."

Garfield cites the case of a 16' by 60' four-story penthouse that was bought in 1998 for \$2.2 million and has come up for sale. Garfield suggests listing it at \$5.2 million, but it is actually listed at \$5.9. Then follows: bid, \$4.8...counter, \$5.6...re-counter, \$5.4...again, \$5.2...deal, \$4.8.

Last year, prices for brownstones in the East 60's and 70's rose about 20 percent, on top of 20 percent the year before, and 25 percent the year before that. The 80's have been flat, and the 90's are starting to show a decline, especially in Carnegie Hill. The average price Garfield sees is \$3.6 million for an Upper East Side town house that needs gut renovation. "It's not that the market has disappeared," he says. "I think that we're returning to realistic market values," from a previous high of \$1,250 to \$1,300 per square foot to about \$1,000.

*Carole Griffin, President of The Griffin Group and Managing Partner, Harlem Homes Realty.*

Harlem is enjoying a favorable media position, says Ms. Griffin, and the fact that former President Clinton has chosen to have his office on 125th Street is already having a rippling effect. "Commercial space has shot up to \$89 per square foot, and there are our 19th-century brownstones."

It helps that the City of New York--the largest property owner in Harlem--has begun to market all of its housing stock aggressively. Town houses were the first to start moving five years ago, giving Harlem a shot in the arm. City programs have helped to renovate the houses before they were sold--to owners who agreed to live there and not resell them--at affordable prices of \$300-500,000. The result is a rash of new construction on almost every block. Renovation, says Griffin, has brought about 50 to 100 percent increases in price in the last five years, and there is still a shortage of affordable housing.

Harlem's brownstones come in three types: renovated and existing, SRO's, and shells.

\*Renovated and existing single- and two-family homes are selling for between \$600,000 and

\$825,000. Some brownstones currently list for \$1,000,000, but Harlem hasn't reached that high yet. Three- and four-family buildings cost less: \$400,000 to \$500,000.

\*SRO prices vary greatly, depending on whether they sell with certificates of non-harassment in effect, with tenants, or delivered vacant.

\*Shells represent a large portion of existing housing stock, and are available in substantial numbers. Their prices have jumped 200 percent in the past five years, going from \$65,000 to \$250-400,000. Add to that, Ms. Griffin says, \$75,000 per floor for a "decent" renovation.

There has been, however, Griffin says, a recent "leveling off" of prices. Buyers are beginning to negotiate, something unheard of six months ago. But, she predicts, "Brownstones will remain strong, especially in Harlem's three landlocked districts." The next surge in Harlem, she says, will be in condos and co-ops--spurred by the city's enfranchising, followed by one-to-four-family new construction and, finally, loft buildings.

*Dexter Guerrieri, President of Vandenberg Real Estate, specializes in town houses on Manhattan's West Side. He is also President of the Brownstone Revival Coalition.*

Last year there were 69 sales over \$500,000 on the Upper West Side, with an average price of \$2.2 million; 35 percent of the sales were between \$1 and \$2 million, and 35 percent were between \$2 and \$3 million. The record sale: \$7.7 million for a mansion on Riverside Drive.

There's not much available, Guerrieri, says, at moderate prices. He noted a new trend in listings, with a three-month plan instead of the usual five to six months because sellers don't want to wait out a changing market.

"For an average upper-income family earning, say, \$250,000 a year, with 2.5 kids going to private school, there is no \$2 million house available on the Upper West Side. Finished houses verge on \$2.5 million. If that family wants a \$2 million house, they have three options:

\*Get a vacant house needing gut renovation.

\*Buy a partially occupied building with rent-stabilized tenants (and still needing renovation).

\*Find a peripheral location off the beaten path in a less primary location--neighborhoods such as Manhattan Valley.

With the stock market in flux, real-estate

investors have also raised the stakes on what was more commonly owner-driven bidding. Guerrieri cited several cases in which investors outbid owner users for partially vacant buildings.

---

#### LAST OF 4-VOLUME SERIES: "BIRTH OF BRONX" - 1609-1900

Completing a 20-year project, The Bronx County Historical Society has just published "The Birth of the Bronx: 1609-1900." The first volume of the series-- "The Beautiful Bronx: 1920-1950"--was published in 1979. It was followed by "The Bronx in the Innocent Years: 1890-1925." This in turn, in 1995, was followed by "The Bronx It Was Only Yesterday: 1935-1965."

The four-volume set can be purchased from The Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Ave., The Bronx, NY 10467 for \$90 plus 8 1/4% sales tax and \$10 for shipping and handling.

---

#### THE GREAT SUBWAY EXPANSION OF 1913: TUNNELING TO THE BRONX

In 1910, with New York City bursting at the seams as more and more people crowded into a limited supply of housing in the tenements of Manhattan and the older areas of Brooklyn, the city faced a crisis. Traffic could scarcely move on the narrow streets, and passengers were jammed into the trolleys and subway cars like sardines. The population density on Manhattan's Lower East Side was the highest in the world. What to do?

In March, 1913 public officials and officers of the two existing rapid-transit networks, the IRT and BRT (later BMT), shook hands to seal a deal for an enormous expansion of the subway system, more than doubling the size of the existing transit networks. In the Bronx, the plan included the Jerome Avenue, Pelham and White Plains Road lines. And it served as a catalyst for the development of large areas of The Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn, transforming the city's composition.

The full story is told in "Tunneling to the Future: The Story of the Great Subway Expansion That Saved New York" by Dr. Peter Derrick, archivist of The Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx, NY 10467.

Are you a member of the Brownstone Revival Coalition? If not, please join!

## THINGS TO DO AND PLACES TO GO FOR NEW YORK BUFFS

JOYCE GOLD HISTORIC TOURS, 141 West 17th St., NYC 10011 212/242-5762 Most tours: 2 hours, \$12

- Sunday, June 3: "The New Meat Market--Butchers, Bakers, & Art Scene." Meet 1:00 pm at park, 13th St. & 8th Ave.
- Sunday, June 10: "Genius & Elegance of Gramercy Park." Meet 1:00 pm at Gramercy Park Hotel, Lexington Ave & 21st St.
- Sunday, June 17: "The Old Jewish Lower East Side." Meet 1:00 pm at Straus Sq., Essex (Ave. A) and Canal St.
- Thursday, June 21: "Harlem--Hub of African America." Meet 11:00 am at City College, 138th St. & Amsterdam Ave.
- Sunday, June 24: "Here's Hell's Kitchen." Meet 1:00 pm at NW corner, 10th Ave. & 42nd St.
- Saturday, July 21: "Tribeca--Creative Explosion." Meet 1:00 pm at park, Duane & Hudson Sts.
- Sunday, Aug. 5: "Essential Greenwich Village." Meet 1:00 pm at Arch, 5th Ave. south of 8th St.
- Saturday, Aug. 18: "Wall Street." Meet 1:00 pm at Trinity Church, Broadway & Wall St.

MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY, 457 Madison Ave., NYC 10022 212/935-3960 Tours \$12

- Sunday, May 27: "The Men Who Made Central Park-- a Springtime Stroll." Meet 1:00 pm at Gen. Sherman monument, 5th Ave. & 59th St.
- Monday, May 28: "Rockefeller Center." Meet 11:30 am at Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave.
- Saturday, June 2: "Hamilton Heights." Meet 2:00 pm at St. Luke's Church, NE corner, Convent Ave. & W. 141st St.
- Monday, June 11: "Art Deco Midtown." Meet 11:30 am at Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave.
- Friday, June 22: "Times Square." Meet 11:00 am at NW corner 47th St. & 6th Ave.

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11238 718/230-2780 Tours \$12

- Saturday, June 2: "Revisiting Brooklyn's Great Theaters." Meet 1:00 pm at Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lafayette Ave. near Flatbush.
- Sunday, June 10: "From Cobble Hill to Boerum Hill." Meet 11:00 am at Atlantic Ave. & Court St.

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, 1220 Fifth Ave., NYC 10029 212/534-1672

- Saturdays, June 2, July 7, July 28, Aug. 4: "Multi-Ethnic East Harlem." Meet 1:00 pm at Museum.

BIG ONION WALKING TOURS, 476 13th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215 212/439-1090 Tours \$12

- Friday, June 1: "SoHo & NoLiTa." Meet 1:00 pm at SE corner, Spring & Lafayette Sts.
- Saturday, June 2: "Park Slope--Brooklyn's Gold Coast." Meet 1:00 pm at subway entrance, SW corner, Flatbush Ave. & Plaza St. W.
- Thursday, June 7: "Greenwich Village at Twilight." Meet 6:30 pm at Arch, 5th Ave. south of 8th St.
- Friday, June 8: "Immigrant New York." Meet 1:00 pm at City Hall Park, SE corner Chambers St. & Broadway.

**"PLACES THAT MATTER":  
SIX DISCUSSIONS SPONSORED BY THE  
MUNICIPAL ARTS SOCIETY**

**W**ith the first of six "discussions" scheduled to start on June 12, the Municipal Art Society (MAS) is sponsoring a series of discussions on "Public Policy, and New York's Places of History, Story, and Tradition." They will be presented by Place Matters, a project of City Lore and MAS.

**JUNE 12. Determining Significance--What Makes a Landmark?** 6:00 pm. At the Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Public discussion of the meanings and values we associate with places--traditional and symbolic, from history and memory. Discussion will be led by Randall Mason, University of Maryland preservationist. Plus case study of the Bowery Mission.

**AUGUST ??? Field trip** to a site to be selected.

**SEPTEMBER 12. Regulating History--How Architecture Tells a Building's Story.** 6:00 pm. Led by Ned Kaufman. Location to be announced.

**OCTOBER 3. Protecting Places of Traditional Activity.** Many of the city's community and folklore traditions are place-based--i.e. fishing in Sheepshead Bay, gospel singing in African-American communities, Chinese New Year in Chinatown, etc. Location to be announced.

**NOVEMBER 14. Protecting Community Character--Zoning, Environmental Planning, & Other Tools.** Location to be announced.

**NOVEMBER 28. Establishing an Interpretive Framework--What's New York's Story?** Location to be announced.

All programs are free and open to the public. To R.S.V.P., call 212/935-3960.

**BROOKLYN BROWNSTONES  
GET HEADLINES IN LONDON**

**A**splendid article occupying almost two pages in the January 7 issue of London's "Financial Times" extolled the quality and desirability of Brooklyn brownstones beneath the headline "Buyers Flock back to the Beauty of Brownstones."

A subhead told the story: "House-hunters fleeing Manhattan's high prices have rediscovered the imposing chocolate-colored townhouses of Brooklyn, writes Victoria Burnett." Pictures of Brooklyn brownstones accompany the article. Ms. Burnett, a "Financial Times" correspondent, lives in the Fort Greene neighborhood.

**HISTORIC SITE OF PRISON-SHIP MARTYRS,  
FORT GREENE PARK IS TO BE RESTORED**

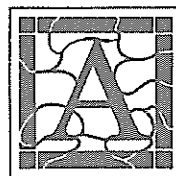
**T**he Committee for the Restoration of Fort Greene Park calls the park the "jewel in the crown of a revitalized downtown Brooklyn." The date set for completion, 2008, marks the bicentennial of the first martyrs' vault by the Navy Yard.

The park is named for a patriot who fought in the Battle of Brooklyn in 1776, General Nathaniel Greene. The British beat the Americans badly in that battle, taking many prisoners, who were deposited in old warships anchored in Wallabout Bay. The number of prisoners eventually grew into many thousands. Of these, cruelly mistreated, eventually some 11,500 men, women, and children died in the rotting prison hulks, victims of disease and starvation. Their bodies were buried in shallow graves along the Brooklyn shore where the Navy Yard is today.

In the early 19th century, citizens gathered up those remains and placed them in a crypt built for the purpose near the Navy Yard. In the 1840's, as a result of a campaign by Walt Whitman, then editor of the "Brooklyn Eagle," Fort Greene was designated a park, and some years later, in 1873, the martyrs' remains were moved to a crypt in the hillside of the park. Calvert Vaux and his partner, Frederick Law Olmsted, were the designers of the park. The monument they designed was not built.

The current monument, designed by McKim, Mead & White, was dedicated by President-elect William Howard Taft in 1908. The design includes a 100-foot-wide granite staircase leading up the hill to a 220-by-220-foot plaza. The plaza surrounds a 140-foot Doric column topped by an eight-ton bronze urn 20 feet tall. The design suggests a classical lighthouse lit by an eternal flame. Included is a comfort station modeled after a classical temple.

Ruth Goldstein, chairman of the Restoration Committee, is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Brownstone Revival Coalition.



**Albert  
Stained Glass  
Studio**

235 St. Marks Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
(718) 783-8800  
FAX (718) 783-6114

Landmark Specialist

[www.albertstainedglass.com](http://www.albertstainedglass.com)  
email: [brooklynglass@aol.com](mailto:brooklynglass@aol.com)

Drop in to visit ~ Call us for references ~ See our listing in  
The NY Landmarks Conservancy Restoration Directory

## 200 YEARS AGO IN NEW YORK CITY

"We note with a degree of pleasure the beautiful appearance which the Bow [shop] windows give to the streets, designed by their situation for trade, and we hope the Corporation will not prevent the erecting of them, provided they do not project out more than 12 inches from the walls of the House. It will make the street of business appear very handsome, and preclude the necessity of exposing goods for sale over the walks."

—*Commercial Advertiser*, May 28, 1801

"Capt. Richard Randall, by his will, gives the principal part of his real and personal estate at the Sand Hill, near the junction of Broadway and the Bowery, to trustees for the purpose of establishing and supporting an asylum or marine hospital, to be called the 'Sailors' Snug Harbour.'

—June 1, 1801

"For the 4th of July this year, Delacroix has erected a grand Amphitheatre at his Vauxhall Garden on the Bayard property, from which the whole exhibition may be seen. No gentleman will be admitted without accompanied by a lady. Applications for seats are to be made at his store, 122 Broadway."

*Daily Advertiser*, July 4, 1801

"A Panther from the Wilderness of Niagara will be baited with eight Dogs on Thursday, the 8th of July, on Bunker's Hill....The Panther may be seen until the time of Baiting at the Circus Greenwich-street.."

*Commercial Advertiser*, July 18, 1801

"The Summer Amusement at Mount Vernon Garden commenced on Tuesday evening... The Comedy of the Child of Nature was represented....We are sorry that Mr. Delacroix manifested a resentment certainly unbecoming; and his Horn Blower certainly stopt many of us, even in the very avenue to Mount Vernon. Mr. D. should recollect that a large body of performers cannot be maintained by one or two nights acting in a week, and that their postponement in consequence of bad weather from one night to the following, is not an additional monopoly, but a continuation of the usual number, necessary for their support. Mr. D. should also recollect, that in this country we have no monopolies--if he should please to give fireworks every evening, he has an unquestionable right, and so have the performers to act at Mount Vernon. The public in America are not to be told, on Monday night you must go here and on Tuesday you shall go there; they must be the judge of when they chuse to receive their amusements and where they chuse to visit it."

*Spectator*, August 15, 1801

{Concerning the matter of Mr. Delacroix's behavior--blowing a horn at a presentation at the Mount Vernon Garden--it appears that Joseph Delacroix claimed to be "the first to establish a Vauxhall in this city in Broadway." Further, that he had always held to an agreement with the Mount Vernon Garden's owner, Joseph Corre, to give their entertainments on alternate nights.) "It is now six years since the Tuesday's, Thursday's, and Saturday's were the days mentioned for the amusement of the public in his [Delacroix's] Garden, which days he has always kept, and never intruded upon any other.... At all times, the New-York Theatre days were fixed, and never when the weather proved bad was it given the next night, but always the second day after."

*Ibid.*, August 15, 1801

## 150 YEARS AGO IN NEW YORK

Philip Hone, former mayor of New York City, was probably its most distinguished citizen in the first half of the 19th century. He knew every prominent American of the time. His diary, kept scrupulously from 1828 to his death on May 5, 1851, is an extraordinary record of the life and events of his time. He made the last entry on April 30, 1851, five days before his death:

"*Wednesday, April 30.*--This volume of my journal, which has only four vacant leaves to be completed, has been suspended during nearly the whole month by continued unmitigated illness and incapacity to perform any act of mental or physical ability. Feeble beyond description, utterly destitute of appetite, with no strength in my limbs, and no flesh upon my bones, shall this journal be resumed? During this illness I have gone occasionally to my office for a short time, and performed a little *pro forma* business; but it could have been performed by deputy. Tomorrow will be the first of May. Volume 29 lies ready on my desk. Shall it go on?

*Epitaph.* A few years ago, during a visit I made with my dear wife to the Greenwood Cemetery I was so struck with the beauty and simplicity of the inscription on one of the monuments,-- "There is rest in Heaven,"---that I was induced on my return home to extend the idea, in order, perhaps, that it might be appropriated to my own use. It was copied in the journal at that time.

Has the time come?

'The weary traveler on earth's dull road,  
'The pilgrim fainting under life's load,  
'The stout heart struggling 'gainst the adverse wave,  
'And sinking, with no mortal arm to save,  
'Finds hope and consolation in the blest decree  
'Pronounced by angels' lips--there's rest in heaven  
for thee.'

*The Diary of Philip Hone*

1851:

## A PARK FOR BOTH POOR AND AFFLUENT

"It seems obvious to me that the entire tongue of land south of the [City Hall] Park is destined to be devoted entirely and solely, to commercial purposes; and the Park and Battery, which were formerly favorite places of resort for pleasure and for recreation for citizens who were below that line [City Hall Park], are now deserted. The tide of population is rapidly flowing to the northern section of the island, and it is here that provision should be made for the thousands whose dwellings will, ere long, fill up the vacant streets and avenues north of Union Park...

"There are thousands who pass the day of rest among the idle and dissolute, in porter-houses, or in places more objectionable, who would rejoice in being enabled to breathe the pure air in such a place, while the ride and drive through its avenues, free from the noise, dust and confusion inseparable from all thoroughfares, would hold out strong inducements for the affluent to make it a place of resort.

"There is no park on the island deserving the name, and while I cannot believe that any one can be found to advance an objection against the expedience of having such a one in our midst, I

## Tips on Getting Plastered

**M**ost brownstoners have at one time or another attempted to do their own patch plastering. Here are some helpful hints and suggestions to make the job easier.

The tools you need are 1) a rectangular plaster trowel with its corners filed slightly round to avoid lines in the finish work; 2) a small pointing trowel for corners and hard-to-reach areas; 3) a cheap whitewash brush; and 4) a plaster pail.

Although professionals use a mixture of presoaked finish lime and gauging plaster, I recommend for the homeowner a mixture of plaster of paris and dry spackling compound. The spackling compound significantly retards the drying time of plaster.

Begin with clean cold water in the bottom of the pail. Slowly add five parts of plaster of paris and one part spackling compound. Let the water absorb the dry materials and do as little stirring as possible; the more air in the mix, the faster it will harden (which you don't want). For

Save the Day!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

At Brooklyn's Beautiful Baptist Temple  
All-Day Brownstone Seminar

"Brownstone History,  
How-To, and Hooray for Us  
Brownstoners"

Sponsored by:

Brownstone Revival Coalition  
Boerum Hill Association  
*Traditional Building* magazine

Want to join us? Register on  
[evoandev@aol](mailto:evoandev@aol)

think that the expenditure of a sum necessary to procure and lay out a park of sufficient magnitude to answer the purposes above noted would be well and wisely appropriated and would be returned to us fourfold, in the health, happiness and comfort of those whose interests are specially intrusted to our keeping--the poorer classes."

deep patches a two-coat operation is necessary. First apply a "rough" coat, keeping the level approximately 1/4 inch from the surface. With your second mix, apply the finish coat carefully, leveling to the surface with the edge (not the entire flat area) of your trowel.

*The next step is critical:* For a smooth finish, just as the finish coat is hardening, wet it down with water, using your whitewash brush. Go over it again with the edge of your trowel--this will smooth out imperfections in your work and will feather it into the existing surface. Be sure your mixing pail is cleaned thoroughly between mixes--allow any excess to harden and then squeeze the pail.

For larger patches, here's a further hint: You can save time by first nailing up pieces of sheetrock (plaster board) as a filler. Be sure that the gray side faces out, as plaster doesn't stick to the white side. Always use blued annular-thread plasterboard nails for a better hold.

--Leonard Shiller

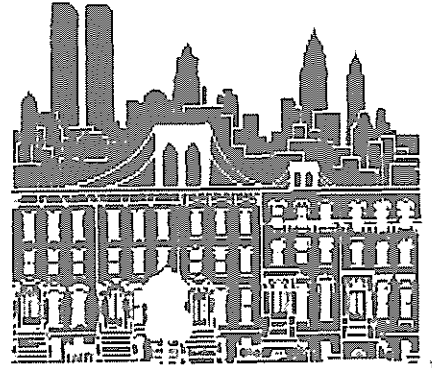
# INSURANCE 1-800-626-0007

## N.Y. & N.J. HISTORIC PROPERTIES Policy

for BROWNSTONE, BRICK, LIMESTONE Row Houses

Built in 1800's - early 1900's

- BROKERS WELCOME
- 3 Year Policy
- L O W Fixed Cost
- Easy Payment Plans
- Better Coverage
- Options Available
- Owner Occupied
- NON Owner Occupied
- Residential & Commercial



Licensed: NY CT NJ FL PA

FULL SERVICE INSURANCE AGENCY / All Coverages Including AUTO & BUSINESS

**HIGH RIDGE Agency ■ 1-800-626-0007 ■ 40+ YEARS EXPERIENCE**

P.O. 577  
New York, New York 10113

### Are You a Member of the Brownstone Revival Coalition?

For only \$35.00 your membership includes

- One year's subscription to *The Brownstoner*, plus annual calendar
- Names of craftspeople recommended by our members.
- Workshops & lectures on brownstoning.
- Free advertising space in *The Brownstoner* for personal ads only (not commercial).
- Advice, information and referrals.

Join today for the best deal in town!

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city / state / zip \_\_\_\_\_

where did you hear about BRC? \_\_\_\_\_

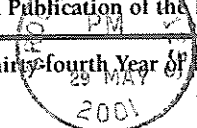
■ BRC is a non-profit organization. Your contributions are both needed AND tax deductible.

© 2001, Brownstone Revival Coalition,

## THE BROWNSTONER

A Publication of the Brownstone Revival Coalition

Third-fourth Year of Publication: Spring 2001



Mr. Dexter Guerrieri  
R. P. Estato