



# NEW YORK

*Year by Year*

A  
CHRONOLOGY  
OF THE  
GREAT  
METROPOLIS



JEFFREY A. KROESSLER



New York

Year by Year

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New York and London

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*To my father, who always asked, "How's the book,"  
and to the memory of my mother, who would have been so proud.*



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# A Note on Illustrations

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The primary source of images was the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL) in Jamaica, one of the finest and most accessible collections in the city. For this reason, there is a preponderance of images from Queens and Brooklyn. Many came from the morgue of the *Herald-Tribune* (HT/QBPL) now in the Long Island Division. Images credited to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA), the United Nations, and the U.S. Army were also found in the Long Island Division. Images also came from Archives and Special Collections, College of Staten Island; the Greater Astoria Historical Society (GAHS); the Roosevelt Island Historical Society (RIHS); and The Bronx County Historical Society. Several photographs and postcards are in the author's collection or were taken by him (JAK). Illustrations for the earlier periods were reproduced from late 19th- and early 20th-century histories: Richard M. Bayles, *History of Richmond County (Staten Island), New York, from Its Discovery to the Present Time* (1887); Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of the Bronx* (1912); Mrs. Martha Lamb and Mrs. Burton Harrison, *History of the City of New York: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress* (1877/1896); Ira K. Morris, *Morris's Memorial History of Staten Island, New York* (1898); Henry R. Stiles, *History of the City of Brooklyn* (1867); and Daniel Van Pelt, *Leslie's History of the Greater New York* (1898). Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders of images used herein. If there are any omissions, we apologize and will make appropriate acknowledgments in any future editions.



# Introduction

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Life is just one damn thing after another.

—Elbert Hubbard, *A Thousand and One Epigrams*

What Elbert Hubbard said about life surely applies to history. History, our interpretation of the past, is necessarily replete with names, places, and dates—especially dates. So relentless is the march of events that the historical record finally blurs into “one damn thing after another.” Perhaps Hubbard (who detested the city) pondered his epigram as he sailed from New York on May 1, 1915, aboard the *Lusitania*.

Events by themselves signify little. It is for us to imbue them with meaning. The Greek historian Herodotus understood that. He wrote his history of the Persian Wars

in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done, and of preventing the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the Barbarians from losing their due meed of glory.

In this chronology of New York City, I have attempted to follow Herodotus and preserve from decay the people, places, and events that comprise the city’s glorious story. It is incomplete, of course.

A chronology is only the sequence of events, “one damn thing after another,” and we must not confuse chronology with causation. Doing so, we fall into a fallacy of logic: *post hoc ergo propter hoc*—after this, therefore because of this. That one event follows another does not establish a causal link. In 1847, the Chinese junk *Keying* sailed into New York harbor. The next year, the first baseball game was played by a New York club in Hoboken, and the year after that, John Jacob Astor died. Can any rational soul believe causality is at play?

Still, at its core, history remains the record of human affairs, and to understand this dimension of the human experience, we begin by comprehending past events in chronological order. Otherwise we will be like the Japanese high school student who, when asked by a National Public Radio reporter whether he thought it was right for Japan to have bombed Pearl Harbor, replied, “Yes. We had to retaliate for the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” In Einstein’s universe space is curved, but time?

Still, if history were merely chronology, it would scarcely exert such powerful claims on the present. Nor would we find the past an endless source of fascination. In *Debates with Historians* (1955), Pieter Geyl wrote, “History is an

argument without end.” The argument is rarely about what happened, or when it happened—such facts are generally agreed upon. Mr. Heaney, my eighth-grade social studies teacher, taught that the truly important questions begin with how or why. And in answering the hows and whys, the arguments begin.

Knowing what happened is never enough. We need to distinguish the significant from the ephemeral, the celebrity of the moment from the individual who makes a lasting contribution. That is the task of the historian. But history is also a compelling narrative. As Henry Steele Commager warned, “If history forgets or neglects to tell a story, it will inevitably forfeit much of its appeal and much of its authority as well.” What makes this book of value, I hope, is that the reader sees a complex story behind each fact, a human drama replete with heroes and villains, acts of courage and creativity, personalities braced by principle and riddled with contradictions.

One fact: in 1987, Governor Mario Cuomo ordered the final closing of the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island. But behind that single act lie decades of suffering and activism; it is ultimately the story of a sea change in the way our society treats the mentally retarded and disabled. Such a story deserves a dissertation, not a line in a chronology. In the same way we might consider the demolition of Pennsylvania Station in 1963, the dedication of the Prison Ship Martyrs’ Monument in 1908, or Mark Twain’s first public appearance at Cooper Union in 1867. Each event suggests a rich narrative. It is for the historian in each of us to make sense of these events, giving each its “due meed of glory” or damnation.

This book began as only a research tool. To unravel the convoluted history of the Long Island Railroad, I put together a chronology; it clarified matters somewhat but did not answer the big questions. I did the same for the Queensboro Bridge, the Croton water system, and the Queens Borough Public Library. This revealed some intriguing connections. Charles Dickens, I learned, visited the city in 1842, the same year water began flowing from the Croton Reservoir. Once I put the separate chronologies together, the project took on an independent life, and dominated mine.

I must have been mad to begin. A chronology of New York City can never really be finished. There is always another event, another building, bridge, or statue dedication. Another play opens; another television show goes on the air; another venerable institution shuts its doors; another person destined for fame is born; another revered New Yorker dies. Where does one make an end?

A better question: why begin? First, if any city deserves a full chronology, it is New York. This city has contributed more to American culture than any other. Who doesn’t understand the meaning of Coney Island, Fifth Avenue, Harlem, or Wall Street? Who wouldn’t instantly recognize the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, the Unisphere, or the Brooklyn Bridge? Some-

times an event is important because it happened in New York; that is almost certainly the case with Bobby Thompson's dramatic home run in 1951. But other scenes could only have happened here. Where else would Carl Denham have brought Kong, the Eighth Wonder of the World, if not to Broadway?

Another reason to produce a chronology of the city is because it is fun. New York is a city with a personality, and New Yorkers have an attitude that sets the city apart from other American places. As Lauren Bacall put it in a 1996 interview in the *New York Times*, "I spent my childhood in New York, riding the subways and buses. And you know what you learn if you're a New Yorker? The world doesn't owe you a damn thing."

New Yorkers have created a perfect city, even as we make over our city anew every generation. Taken together, the names and events contribute to a marvelous, often surprising story. George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, George Burns, Ethel Merman, Tony Bennett, Edith Wharton, and William Bonney (better known as Billy the Kid) were born here. Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr died here, as did Tom Paine. Scott Joplin, Béla Bartók, Sergei Rachmaninov, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, and John Lennon lived and died in New York. Herman Melville was born in Manhattan and died in Manhattan. Presidents James Monroe, Ulysses S. Grant, and Bill Clinton retired here; and Mark Twain spent more time in New York than on the Mississippi. The *America*, the yacht that gave its name to the America's Cup, was built here, as were the *Monitor*, the *Maine*, the *Arizona*, and the *Missouri*. Oreos, vichyssoise, the hot dog, Thomas's English Muffins, and Haagen Dazs ice cream were created here.

At the same time, it is impossible to understand American history without considering the city's role. From the inauguration of George Washington in 1789 to the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, from the Draft Riots of 1863 to the Stock Market Crash in 1929, events in New York resonated across the country. Think colonial and most people would identify Boston, Philadelphia, or those artificial re-creations Colonial Williamsburg and Old Sturbridge Village. New York is older than any of them. Consider the American Revolution and Boston, Philadelphia, even Trenton spring to mind. But the events leading up to Lexington and Concord have parallels in New York, including the Boston Massacre (see January 1770) and the Boston Tea Party (see April 1774). Bunker Hill and Yorktown are central to our national narrative, but too few know anything about the Battle of Long Island, fought in August 1776. Fewer still know the story of the infamous prison ships where 11,500 patriots perished in rotting hulks anchored in Wallabout Bay between 1776 and 1783.

Fundamental American rights and great legal principles were established here. The Flushing Remonstrance (1657) was the first expression of religious tolerance in the colonies. John Peter Zenger (1735) established the principle of freedom of the press, a right reaffirmed 236 years later when the *New York*



*Times* published the Pentagon Papers (1971). *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), affirming the primacy of the federal government in interstate commerce, originated in a dispute over ferry franchises on the Hudson River. And on two occasions the United States Supreme Court affirmed the legitimacy of historic preservation laws: the Penn Central case (1978) established preservation as an appropriate use of regulatory powers, and the St. Bartholomew's case (1990) reiterated the application of those laws to religious properties.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, New York was once again thrust into the heart of the American drama, as terrorists flew hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center. Dominating the skyline of lower Manhattan, the Twin Towers were potent symbols of American economic and cultural might, and their destruction reverberated around the world. Over 2,800 men and women died, far more than fell on the Normandy beaches on D-Day, but the dead were not soldiers; they were just New Yorkers—bond traders and lawyers and waiters and window washers. These New Yorkers were from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas; they were Christians, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and atheists. Across the country, Americans long accustomed to viewing the city as an exception, a place and a state of mind distant from the “heartland,” embraced New York like an estranged sibling.

When I began this chronology, I was confident that the one certainty historians possess is that we can know when something happened. Foolishly, I believed this project would require a mechanic's skill: find the date, enter the date, move on to the next date. Early on this proved illusory. I found conflicting dates for even relatively recent, easily verifiable events. To further complicate matters, during the colonial era there are two dates for everything because the calendar itself changed. Until 1752, the English adhered to old-style dating, while the Dutch had embraced the new style. For example, Peter Stuyvesant surrendered to the English on August 29 (Old Style) or September 8 (New Style). I've tried to be consistent by accepting the date used at the time, but it remains confusing.

The book is divided into sections covering half-century spans. Obviously, they vary greatly in length. The 20th century takes up the bulk of the volume, while the 18th century, at least until the American Revolution, is rather thin. Truth be told, not much happened in the first half of the 1700s. I did not endeavor to create a definitive chronology for the colonial decades. Why not? Because it has already been done. Readers craving a more detailed account of those years should consult the six-volume *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, by Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes (1915), and the three-volume *History of Brooklyn*, by Henry Stiles (1867). Certainly, I could have appropriated details from those venerable gentlemen (more than I have, I mean); but to what purpose? Generally, the *Iconography of Manhattan Island* is a magnificent source, but even Stokes can be frustrating. When did Governor Andros abolish Indian

slavery? Was it on December 5, 1679, or was it on April 20, 1680? The reliable Stokes offers both dates. Which should we accept? Does it matter?

Newspapers are full of facts, but one cannot always assume they are accurate. Not infrequently a writer will check the newspaper index to find a specific date and cite the date the newspaper story appeared, which, of course, is the day after the event. Still, how can a *Times* article about the Brooklyn Dodgers have the wrong date for their one and only world championship? And how can one source claim the final score in the last game at Ebbets Field was 2–0, while another makes it 3–0? I also found contradictory dates for the first game played there. In that case, the confusion can be traced to the exhibition played between the Yankees and Dodgers on April 5, four days before the Dodgers hosted the Phillies in the first official game (the Dodgers lost, 1–0).

Perhaps these are insignificant quibbles, but still I marvel at the frequency with which errors are introduced into the historical record, errors that are magnified with each citation. Once the mistake is in print, it is difficult to set it right. Even the massive, authoritative *Encyclopedia of New York City* has mistakes. Which sources can a historian trust?

Consider one final example of the historian's quandary. The "City" section of the *Times* on December 24, 2000, noted:

Anne Hutchinson fled Massachusetts with six of her children and a small band of followers and settled in the marshes near what is today the Boston Road Bridge in 1643. The Siwanoy, enraged by years of violence, abuse and pilferage at the hands of the Dutch West India Company, attacked the encampment, murdering Hutchinson, her servants, and all but one of her children. Susannah Hutchinson, 8, escaped, but was captured by the Siwanoy and held for six years before she was released.

Now consider the version in *History of the City of New York: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress*, by Mrs. Martha Lamb and Mrs. Burton Harrison (1877):

The Weekquaesgeeks stole upon the estate of Annie Hutchinson at Annie's Neck, and murdered her with all her family and people save a sweet little granddaughter of eight years, whom they carried into captivity.

*The Story of the Bronx*, by Stephen Jenkins (1912), states that

the savages made a descent upon her farm and wiped it out of existence, at the same time killing her and all her family and servants except a granddaughter, who was carried into captivity, but was afterwards restored; her two years captivity among the savages had converted her into one.

Another source, *A Sweet and Alien Land*, by Henri van der Zee and Barbara van der Zee, states that Susanna was Hutchinson's eight-year-old daughter and was held for two years. A Web site for the genealogy of the Hutchinson family claims Susanna was christened in 1633, which would have made her ten at the time of the massacre. In *Gotham* (1999), Mike Wallace and Edward Burrows do not mention the child at all, and Stokes, on whom I depended to provide a definitive answer, omits the story of Anne Hutchinson entirely as far as I can tell. Again, whom should we trust?

*New York, Year by Year* is only as accurate as the sources I used. Though I tried to apply my best historian's judgment to sort out contradictions, my goal of sterling accuracy is undoubtedly already tarnished. I, too, am surely guilty of repeating inaccurate details and introducing fresh inaccuracies through carelessness or ignorance. But I hope readers will forgive the occasional misstatements and find value in my effort.

Finally, a personal note: I have been fascinated with New York for as long as I can remember. Though raised on Long Island, I was born in Brooklyn, and my parents always made me feel that, as Bobby Short sings, "New York is my personal property." But I also developed an early connection to the city's history. Perhaps it was *New York, Past and Present*, the schoolbook a careless child left in the Barricini candy store in Flatbush, where my mother's mother worked; I looked at every page of that book over and over and over again, marveling that places around me had an exciting past. But it might be something else again. I am only here because the girl who grew up to be my father's mother was sick and missed the church picnic on June 15, 1904.

# 1524-1649

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## 1524

Giovanni da Verrazano, a Tuscan sailing for France, anchored in the Narrows on April 17. In his journal he wrote: “We found a pleasant place below steep little hills. And from among those hills a mighty deep-mouthed river ran into the sea. . . . We rode at anchor in a spot well-guarded from the wind, and we passed into the river with the *Dauphin’s* one small boat.”



Henry Hudson’s ship *Half Moon*.

He mentioned natives “clad in feathers of fowls of divers hues.”

## 1525

Esteban Gomez, a black Portuguese captain, sailed up what he named Deer River, taking 57 Indians as slaves.

## 1609

Sailing for the Dutch East India Company, Henry Hudson anchored the *Half Moon* in the harbor on September 2. On September 6, five men exploring the Narrows were attacked by Indians in canoes. Two sailors were wounded, and one, John Coleman, was killed, an arrow lodged in his throat. The crew buried him the next day at Sandy

Hook. On the 12th, Hudson sailed up the river that now bears his name. In his journal he recorded: “It is as pleasant a land as one can tread upon.” On his return trip, the *Half Moon* engaged in a three-day running fight with the Indians.

## 1610

The *Half Moon*, sailing under a different captain and accompanied by another vessel, visited Manhattan. They were greeted by Indians who recognized crew members from Hudson’s voyage.

## 1611

Captain Hendrick Christiaensen made two voyages to Manhattan, the second with Adriaen Block. He returned to the Netherlands with two young Indians, sons of a local sachem, whom the Dutch called Valentine and Orson. In 1616, Orson murdered Christiaensen near Albany.

## 1613

Adriaen Block sailed into the harbor, up the East River through the swirling passage he named Hell Gate and into Long Island Sound. After his ship burned, his crew, assisted by Indians, constructed another seaworthy vessel, the *Onrust* (Restless). He and Hendrick Christiaensen, captain of the *Fortuyn*, produced the first map showing Manhattan and Long Island as separate. In June, Captain Thijs Volchertz Mossel arrived on the *Jonge Tobias* and left behind a black sailor, Jan Rodrigues, with hatchets

and knives for trade. Rodrigues joined Christiaensen as an interpreter but remained behind among the Rockaway Indians.

## 1614

Dutch merchants formed the United New Netherland Company on October 11, with exclusive trading rights with “the newly discovered lands lying in America between New France and Virginia . . . for four voyages, within the period of three years.” The company made no effort to plant colonies.

## 1621

The States General of Holland, the governing body of the United Seven Provinces, granted the Dutch West India Company a monopoly in the Western Hemisphere and in Africa from the Tropic of Cancer to the Cape of Good Hope. The company was “to advance the peopling of those fruitful and unsettled parts, and do all that the service of those countries and the profit and increase of trade shall require.”

## 1622

Concerned about English designs on their territory, the Dutch West India Company established Fort Orange (Albany) and Fort Nassau (Gloucester, New Jersey).

## 1624

The Dutch West India Company sent their first colonists to New Netherland. Led by Captain Cornelis Jacobsen May, the first director, thirty families, most of them French-speaking Walloons, arrived in early May aboard the *Nieu Nederlandt*, settling at Fort Orange, Fort Nassau, and Governor’s Island.

## 1625

Willem Verhulst replaced Cornelis May as the colony’s director; in July, he selected a site for Fort Amsterdam (approximately Pearl, Beaver, Whitehall, and Broad Streets). Kryn Frederycks laid out Broadway, Park Row, Fourth Avenue, and the Bowery, and construction began on stone houses to replace the makeshift huts. The colony numbered about a hundred souls.

## 1626

Peter Minuit, the first governor of New Netherland, arrived aboard the *Zeemeeuw* (Sea-Mew) on May 4. He purchased Manhattan island from local Indians for 60 guilders worth of goods (\$24 in 1869 dollars). Minuit consolidated the settlements and abandoned Fort Nassau.

The first African slaves came into New Netherland, captured off Spanish ships. Slavery was not practiced in Holland.

The *Arms of Amsterdam* sailed from Manhattan on September 23 with a cargo

of 7,246 beaver pelts and the pelts of 675 otters, 48 mink, 36 wildcats, and various others.

## 1627

New Amsterdam (as the settlement around Fort Amsterdam became known) established relations with the Puritans of New England, receiving English goods in trade for “wampum,” or “seawan,” which the English used in commerce with the Indians. Wampum was made from the periwinkle clam. Long Island was a prime source of wampum, giving the Dutch an ample supply.

New Amsterdam sent the pelts of 7,520 beavers and 370 otters, worth 56,420 guilders, back to Holland, importing goods worth 56,170 guilders.

## 1628

Johannes Michaelius, the colony’s first dominie, or pastor, arrived with his wife and three children on April 7. He led the first service that day. His wife died seven weeks later. In his first report home he wrote: “Our coming here was agreeable to all, and I hope, by the grace of the Lord, that my service will not be unfruitful. The people, for the most part, are rather rough and unrestrained, but I find in almost all of them both love and respect towards me. . . . At the first administration of the Lord’s Supper which was observed, not without great joy and comfort to many, we had fully fifty communicants—Walloons and Dutch; of whom, a portion made their first confes-

sion of faith before us, and others exhibited their church certificates. Others had forgotten to bring their certificates with them, not thinking that a church would be found and established here . . . but they were admitted upon the satisfactory testimony of others to whom they were known, and also upon their daily good deportment, since one cannot observe strictly all the usual formalities in making a beginning under such circumstances.”

Four ships laden with furs and two with cargoes of timber sailed to Holland.

New Amsterdam had 270 inhabitants.

## 1629

On June 7, the Dutch West India Company offered a “Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions” to anyone bringing groups of fifty to settle along a navigable river. By 1630, five such patroonships were ventured along the Connecticut, Delaware, and Hudson Rivers; only Van Rensselaer’s settlement near Albany succeeded.

## 1630

Johannes de Laet published a map on which the names Manhattan (Manhattes), New Amsterdam, and the North (Noordt) River first appeared.

On August 10, the Dutch West India Company gave Michael Pauw a patroonship encompassing Staten Island (the first use of the name) and Pavonia (the Hudson shore of New Jersey).

New Amsterdam imported goods worth about 113,000 guilders, while exporting goods worth 130,000 guilders during this year.

## 1632

In late winter, Bastiaen Jansz Krol succeeded Peter Minuit as director general.

## 1633

The Dutch established Fort Good Hope, a trading outpost on the Connecticut River (Hartford).

Wouter Van Twiller, a former clerk in an Amsterdam warehouse, related by marriage to Van Rensselaer, became the colony’s new director general. He arrived with 104 soldiers in March and ordered construction of a fort.

The Reverend Everardus Bogardus became pastor of the Reformed Church. The congregation erected the first house of worship, as well as a home and barn for the minister. Previously, services had been held above a horse mill.

Pearl Street (named for the shells used for the roadbed) was laid out along the East River waterfront.

## 1635

Fort Amsterdam was completed. In 1643, a Jesuit passing through described the four bastions mounted with artillery as “but



The church and governor's house inside Fort Amsterdam.

ramparts of earth, most of which had crumbled away so that the fort could be entered on all sides. There were no ditches. There were sixty soldiers . . . beginning to face the gates and bastions with stone.”

## 1636

Jacob van Corlear, Andries Hudde, and Wolfert Gerritsen, officials in Van Twiller's administration, purchased land from the Indians and received the first grants to settle western Long Island. Amersfoort (Flatlands) grew near their 15,000-acre holdings. William Adriaense Bennet and Jacques Bentyn purchased land from the Indians near Gowanus (the Indian name for the place).

## 1637

On June 17, Joris Jansen de Rapalje, one of the original Walloons who arrived in 1624, purchased land at Wallabout Bay (from *Waal-Bogt*, or “bay of foreigners”).

Van Twiller purchased Nooten, or Nutten, Island, known since as Governors Island. He also acquired the 120-acre, 1.75-mile-long island in the East River where the Dutch herded pigs; hence its name, Hog Island (now Roosevelt Island).

Patroon Michael Pauw sold his rights to Pavonia and Staten Island to the Dutch West India Company.



## 1638

Willem Kieft arrived in New Amsterdam on March 28, replacing Van Twiller as director general. The first schoolmaster, Adam Roelantsen, also arrived.

In May, Gerrit Jansen, a soldier, was stabbed during a brawl outside the fort; it was the colony's first recorded murder.

On August 1, Kieft purchased what became the town of Bushwick from the chiefs of the Keskaechquerem for cloth, wampum, iron kettles, axes, and knives.

## 1639

In January, Governor Kieft purchased lands from the Rockaways east to Fire Island and north to Cow Bay (Huntington), encompassing what became Queens County.

Captain David Pietersz de Vries established a plantation on Staten Island on January 5 but abandoned the effort a year later, "as no people had been sent me from Holland, as was promised me in the contract." In 1640, De Vries leased his rights to Thomas Smythe.

Previously restricted to the West India Company, the lucrative fur trade was opened to all in order to encourage new settlers; the company also offered 200 acres to each arriving head of household.

On August 3, the West India Company purchased the Keskwesheck tract north of Manhattan between the Hudson and

Harlem Rivers from three sachems: Tequeemet, Rechgawac, and Pachimiens.

## 1640

Massachusetts men led by Captain Daniel Howe attempted to settle Cow Neck (Manhasset). Dutch soldiers arrested them on May 13. In September, they founded Southampton, which came under the jurisdiction of Connecticut.

On May 10, the Canarsee chief Penhawitz sold lands around Jamaica Bay to the Dutch West India Company.

With a grant to settle Staten Island, Cornelius Melyn arrived with 41 others.

The Dutch West India Company again pledged to ship "as many blacks as possible" to the colony, the success of which created a labor shortage.

## 1641

A new governing body, the Council of Twelve, was selected by the male heads of households to advise the director general.

In September, Raritan Indians attacked Dutch settlements along the Hackensack River and on Staten Island; the Dutch then abandoned Staten Island.

Jonas Bronck, a Dane who arrived in July 1639, purchased 500 acres between the Harlem River and the Aquahung River, soon known as Bronck's River; hence the borough's name.

In September, annual livestock fairs were scheduled for Manhattan.

Director General Kieft issued an ordinance criticizing the depreciation of wampum: “A great deal of bad seawant [wampum]—nasty, rough things imported from other places—is in circulation, while the good, splendid seawant is out of sight or exported, which must cause the ruin of the country.”

## 1642

On March 28, the Reverend Francis Doughty received a charter to settle the head of Newtown Creek; he named the place Maspeth.

The Dutch Reformed congregation erected a stone church in the fort.

Cornelius Dircksen began the earliest ferry between Manhattan and Long Island (Fulton Street to Peck Slip). The next year he sold his rights and property to Willem Thomasen.

Religious dissenters Lady Deborah Moody and her son Sir Henry Moody arrived from Massachusetts with their followers. They settled Gravenzande (Gravesend), named after a town in Holland.

In October, Englishman John Throgmorton settled 35 households where the East River meets Long Island Sound; the place was called Throg’s Neck.

In Jonas Bronck’s home, the Dutch and Indians signed a treaty to end the war; the

truce did not hold and fighting continued for two years.

## 1643

In February, Indians from the lower Hudson valley, fleeing the Mohawks, camped at Pavonia and Corlear’s Hook. Dutch soldiers attacked on the night of February 25, killing 80 in Pavonia and 40 on Manhattan. It was a cowardly and barbaric assault.

Settlers from Maspeth stole two wagons of corn from the Marechkawiecks, killing three. In response to Kieft’s offer of a truce, the Indians replied, “Are ye our friends? Ye are merely corn thieves.” Eleven tribes on Long Island and the Hudson valley allied against the Dutch, who sent a remonstrance to the West India Company in October: “We poor inhabitants of New Netherland were here in the spring pursued by these wild Heathen and barbarous Savages with fire and sword. Daily in our houses and fields have they cruelly murdered men and women, and with hatchets and tomahawks struck little children dead in their parents’ arms, or before their doors, or carried them away into bondage. The houses and grain barracks are burnt with the produce; cattle of all description are slain and destroyed, and such as remain must perish this approaching winter for the want of fodder. Almost every place is abandoned. We, wretched people, must skulk with wives and little ones that still survive in poverty together in and around the fort . . . where we are not safe even for an hour; whilst the Indians daily threaten to overwhelm us

with it. Very little can be planted this autumn and much less in the spring; so that it will come to pass that all of us who will yet save our lives must of necessity perish of hunger and sorrow with our wives and children unless our God have pity on us. . . . These heathens are strong in might. They have formed an alliance with seven other nations, are well provided with guns, powder and lead, which they purchased for beaver from the private traders who have had for a long time free range here; the rest they take from our fellow-countrymen, whom they murder. In fine, we experience the greatest misery, which must astonish a Christian heart to see or hear.”

In October, Indians attacked the home of religious dissenter Anne Hutchinson near Pelham Bay, killing the entire household except her daughter, who was carried off. Hutchinson had arrived from Rhode Island the previous year. (The Hutchinson River is named for her.) The Indians then destroyed Throgmorton’s settlement. Another band attacked Moody’s settlement, which stoutly resisted. “Kieft’s War,” as the conflict came to be called, lasted almost two years and destroyed most outlying villages and farms.

Father Isaac Jogues, a French Jesuit rescued from cruel captivity among the Mohawks, arrived. Three years later he wrote: “On the island of Manhate, and in its environs, there may well be four or five hundred men of different sects and nations; the Director General told me that there were men of eighteen different languages. . . . No religion is publicly exercised but the Calvinist, and orders are to admit none but

Calvinists, but this is not observed; for besides the Calvinists there are in the colony Catholics, English, Puritans, Lutherans, Anabaptists. . . . When anyone comes to settle in the country, they lend him horses, cows, etc.; they give him provisions, all of which he returns as soon as he is at ease; and as to the land, after ten years he pays to the West India Company the tenth of the produce which he reaps.”

## 1644

On February 25, the West India Company granted freedom to the first eleven slaves who arrived in 1626, conditioned on enslavement of their children. Among the emancipated was Manuel Gerrit, who three years earlier had been convicted of murdering another slave and sentenced to hang; because he was a big man the rope broke, and the crowd shouted for mercy.

## 1645

The Indian war ended in the early spring. The Indians ratified a peace treaty on August 30, agreeing to return Anne Hutchinson’s daughter; about 1,600 Indians perished during the war.

Maspeth was reestablished and renamed Middleburgh (Newtown). Vlissingen (Flushing) received a charter from Governor Kieft on October 10. On December 19, Gravesend received its patent as a reward for resisting Indian attacks. The 16-acre square had ten lots facing the common (still part of Brooklyn’s street plan, at McDonald Avenue and Gravesend

Neck Road). The charters granted “free liberty of conscience according to the custom and manner of Holland, without molestation or disturbance from any magistrate . . . or ecclesiastical minister that may pretend jurisdiction over them [and] to erect a body politic and civil combination amongst themselves as free men . . . and to make such civil ordinances as the major part of the inhabitants . . . shall think fitting for their quiet and peaceable subsisting.”

## 1646

In May, the first cargo of slaves arrived from Brazil for sale.

On June 12, Breuckelen was founded (near today’s Fulton, Hoyt, and Smith Streets), named after a village in Holland about 18 miles from Amsterdam.

On June 25, Jan Creoli was convicted of sodomy for the second time and was sentenced to be hanged, his body to be burned. The 10-year-old boy caught with him, Manuel Congo, was flogged.

The entire waterfront from Newtown Creek to the Gowanus was under cultivation.

## 1647

Peter Stuyvesant arrived to replace Willem Kieft on May 11. Addressing the citizens, he said: “I shall govern you as a father his children, for the advantage of the chartered West India Company, and these



Peter Stuyvesant.

burghers and this land.” On September 27, Kieft left New Amsterdam aboard the *Princess*, with a fortune estimated at about 400,000 guilders. (During his tenure the Dutch West India Company lost half a million guilders.) The ship sank in Bristol Channel, and Kieft, the Reverend Bogardus, and most others perished.

Responding to pressure for popular representation, Stuyvesant permitted the first election in New Amsterdam. Eighteen of the “most notable, reasonable, honest, and respectable” men were chosen; the director selected nine as an advisory council.

Governor Stuyvesant ordered the prosecution of Cornelius Melyn and Jochem Pietersen Kuyter for criticizing official actions. They were fined and banished.

His conviction overturned, Melyn returned two years later under a safe-conduct letter with a writ ordering Stuyvesant to appear at the Hague, which Stuyvesant ignored.

The Reverend Johannes Megapolensis arrived as pastor of the Reformed Church, serving until his death in 1669.

The widow of Lord Stirling, granted all of Long Island by the Plymouth Colony in 1640, sent Andrew Forrester to assert her

title. Forrester visited the English settlements at Vlissingen and Heemstede, but when he arrived in Manhattan, Stuyvesant had him arrested and deported to Holland for trial. He escaped, however, when the ship put into an English port.

## 1649

New Amsterdam's first wharf was constructed at Dock Street, between Whitehall Street and Coenties Slip.

# 1650–1699

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## 1650

On September 29, Peter Stuyvesant and the New England colonies signed the Treaty of Hartford, setting the boundary between the English and Dutch on Long Island at the western edge of Oyster Bay; in Connecticut the line ran north from Greenwich Bay.

## 1652

Cornelius van Werckhoven acquired what is now Bensonhurst from the Indians for six shirts, two pairs of shoes, six pairs of socks, six hatchets, six knives, two scissors, and six combs.

The First Presbyterian Church of Newtown was established.

Midwout (Flatbush) was founded.

Jan de la Montagne established the first Latin school; it lasted two years.

## 1653

On February 2, New Amsterdam received a city charter separating it from the province of New Netherland and ending direct control by the West India Company. Stuyvesant led a parade down Broadway, followed a chapel service.

The first prison and poorhouse were erected.

New Amsterdam established a night watch on March 13, and Stuyvesant requested the burgomasters and *schepens* take responsibility for fencing the fort: “We see with great grief the damages done to the walls

of the fort by hogs, especially now again in spring, when the grass comes out.”

Stuyvesant ordered palisades and bastions constructed on the city’s northern limit: “Taking into consideration that the Fort of New Amsterdam could not contain all the inhabitants, and to protect the houses and habitations of this city, it is deemed essentially necessary to enclose the greater part of the city with upright palisades and a small breastwork, so that, in case of necessity all the inhabitants may retire therein and, as far as practicable, defend themselves and their property against attack.” A tax on property owners funded construction, which was completed by May. This is the wall that gave Wall Street its name.

Adriaen vander Donck was the first permitted to practice law in the colony.

Stuyvesant denied the petition of the small Lutheran community to call a pastor to serve them.

The English towns on Long Island objected to Stuyvesant’s policy of taxation on the grounds that they were subject to but not represented in the government of New Netherland. On December 10, delegates from Breuckelen, Midwout, Amersfoort, Gravesend, Vlissingen, Middleburgh, and Heemstede issued a remonstrance stating their rights and demanding laws “resembling as near as possible those of the Netherlands,” claiming the director could not afford them protection from Indians and that they would look to their own defense.

## 1654

In July, Governor Stuyvesant and the council enacted an ordinance to correct the “daily confusion occurring among ferry men on Manhattan Island, so that the inhabitants are waiting whole days before they can obtain passage, and then not without danger, and at an exorbitant price.” The act set rates and mandated service from 5 A.M. to 8 P.M. in summer and 7 A.M. to 5 P.M. in winter, except “when the windmill hath lowered its sail in consequence of storm, or otherwise.”

On July 18, a proclamation affixed to the wall of the Stadt-Huys announced a pact of “Peace, Union, and Confederation” had been concluded between the English and the Dutch, heading off war with New England. Stuyvesant proclaimed August 12 a day of thanksgiving.

To stabilize the shoreline, the city ordered the ditch at Broad Street planked up to contain the tide. The planking extended up the shore to Wall Street by 1656; in 1672, the city ordered the planks replaced with stone.

Guttaquoh put his mark on a deed conveying his claim to “Conyne Island,” which he called “Narrioch,” to forty Dutch patentees.

The first Jewish colonist, Jacob Barsimson, arrived in August. Others arrived from Brazil in September; the 23 Sephardic Jews formed Congregation Shearith Israel, known as the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.

In December, the first Dutch church on Long Island was completed at Midwout, a cooperative effort by Breukelen, Amersfoort, and Midwout. The Reverend Polhemus held services every Sabbath in the church and alternated weekly visits to Breuckelen and Amersfoort for afternoon services. In February 1655, Midwout petitioned Governor Stuyvesant to order Breukelen and Amersfoort to assist “in cutting and hauling wood” to heat the church.

## 1655

On February 15, the West India Company granted permission for Jews to live and trade in New Amsterdam. Still, Stuyvesant refused to permit them to own property or to trade freely. On June 14, 1656, the directors again ordered Stuyvesant not to hinder them.

Egbert Van Borsum obtained a three-year lease to operate a ferry across the East River and built a tavern on the Long Island side. He held the ferriage rights at least until June 1663.

The first cargo of 300 slaves imported from Africa arrived on September 15; three slave ships arrived the next year. Many of the Africans were sold to the English in the Chesapeake.

In September, Governor Stuyvesant led soldiers from New Amsterdam against the Swedes along the Delaware River. The Dutch captured Fort Casimir and Fort Christina without firing a shot, ending the

brief history of New Sweden. While Stuyvesant was away, the “Peach War” began: Hendrick Van Dyck shot and killed an Indian woman for stealing peaches, inciting more than 1,500 Indians to attack on September 15. The Dutch drove them back to their canoes, but the Indians then attacked Staten Island, Hoboken, and Pavonia. The fighting ceased after three days, leaving 100 Dutch dead, 150 captured and held for ransom, and 28 farms destroyed. Seventy captives were soon released; others were held almost two years.

## 1656

In January, the Dutch Reformed ministers Johannes Megapolensis and Samuel Drisius complained to Stuyvesant that unqualified persons—meaning, Independents in Middleburgh—were actively preaching, “from which nothing could be expected but discord, confusion, and disorder in Church and State.” Stuyvesant then prohibited preachers “not having been called thereto by ecclesiastical authority” and banned “Conventicles and meetings, whether public or private.” He arrested several Lutherans for worshipping in their homes. On June 14, the directors of the Dutch West India Company admonished Stuyvesant: “We should have gladly seen that your Honor had not posted up the transmitted edict against the Lutherans, and had not punished them by imprisonment . . . inasmuch as it has always been our intention to treat them with all peaceableness and quietness. Wherefore, your Honor shall not cause any



more such or similar Edicts to be published without our previous knowledge, but suffer the matter to pass in silence, and permit them their free Worship in their houses.”

Governor Stuyvesant and Takapausha, the chief selected by sachems of the Massapege, Maskahuong, Secataug, Meracock, Rockaway, and Canarsee, signed a treaty on March 12.

Governor Stuyvesant permitted a group of Englishmen to settle Rustdorp (Jamaica) on March 21.

The first public marketplace was established for Saturdays near Whitehall and Pearl Streets on September 12.

Captain Frederick de Konigh finished the first complete survey of the city, enumerating 120 houses and 1,000 residents.

## 1657

On New Year’s Day, citizens of Breukelen objected to a levy of 300 guilders to support Reverend Polhemus, the Dutch Reformed minister, because they were unhappy with his work: “Every fortnight, on Sundays, he comes here only in the afternoon for a quarter of an hour, when he only gives us a prayer in lieu of a sermon, by which we can receive very little instruction; quite often, while one supposes the prayer or sermon (whichever name might be preferred for it) is beginning, then it is actually at an end, by which he contributes very little to the edification of his congregation.”

New Utrecht received its charter; the land was divided into twenty-one 50-acre plots, with two reserved for the poor.

Thursdays were declared market day in Breuckelen on April 11.

On July 6, Johannes Earnestus Gutwasser, the first Lutheran minister, arrived aboard the *Goude Meulen*.

Quakers arrived in New Amsterdam on August 6, causing an immediate commotion with their wild preaching in the street. A Dutch minister described the scene: “A ship came from the sea to this place, having no flag flying from the topmast, nor from any other part of the ship. . . . They fired no salute before the fort. When the master of the ship came on shore and appeared before the Director-General, he rendered him no respect, but stood with his hat firm on his head as if a goat. . . . At last information was gained that it was a ship with Quakers on board. . . . We suppose they went to Rhode Island for that is the receptacle of all sorts of riff-raff people and is nothing else than the sewer of New England. They left behind two strong young women. As soon as the ship had departed, they began to quake and go into a frenzy, and cry out loudly in the middle of the street that men should repent, for the day of judgment was at hand. Our people not knowing what was the matter ran to and fro while one cried ‘fire’ and another something else. The Fiscal seized them both by the head and led them to prison.” On August 9, Robert Hodgson arrived at Heemstede, where he was detained in a magistrate’s house. He spoke to a small crowd gathered outside

his window, which might be called the first Quaker meeting in the province. Hodgson was brought back to New Amsterdam and sentenced to a fine of 600 guilders or two years chained to a wheelbarrow working alongside African slaves. Denied food, he was hung by his hands with weights on his feet and severely beaten. Only the intervention of Stuyvesant's sister ended Hodgson's five-week ordeal; he was deported to Rhode Island.

Red Hook (named for the soil color) became part of Breuckelen.

At a town meeting in the home of Michael Milner on December 27, the citizens of Flushing signed a remonstrance protesting Governor Stuyvesant's policy of intolerance toward the Quakers: "For our part we cannot condemn them in this case, neither can we stretch out our hands against them, to punish, banish or persecute them, for out of Christ God is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We desire therefore in this case not to judge least we be judged, neither to condemn least we be condemned, but rather let every man stand and fall to his own Master. . . . Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us, we cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egress and regress unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences. And in this we are true subjects both of Church and State, for we are bounde by the law of God and man to doe good unto all men and evil to noe man. And this is according to the patent and charter of our Towne,

given unto us in the name of the States General, which we are not willing to infringe." Two days later Stuyvesant arrested Tobias Feake when he delivered the document. Edward Hart, the man who wrote it, was imprisoned for three weeks. He claimed that the sentiments in the Flushing Remonstrance were not his alone but arose "from the general votes of the inhabitants." In petitioning Stuyvesant for release, he asked "for your mercy, not your judgment."

## 1658

The village of Harlem received its charter on March 4; Hendrick de Forest first settled there in 1637.

In October, the city replaced the citizen watch with the "rattle watch," a paid police force that patrolled the streets between 9 P.M. and 6 A.M. The four men earned 24 stivers a night.

In a clean house kept by an able matron, Dr. Varravanger established the first hospital for those without families to care for them.

Manhattan gained its first thoroughfare paved with cobblestones, appropriately called Stone Street.

On November 28, the city set an annual livestock fair for lean cattle in May and for fat cattle in late October. Cattle would be ferried across the river for 25 stivers a head, rather than the usual 20 stivers; unsold animals were ferried back free.

## 1659

In June, Alexander Carolus Curtius opened his Latin school, but he was dismissed after two years for accepting beaver pelts from his pupils and failing to keep classroom discipline.

Raritan Indians killed a Dutch family at Maspeth Kill in August; by September, the First Esopus War engulfed the entire Hudson Valley.

## 1660

In February, French settlers founded Boswyck (Bushwick) “between Mespath Kil and Norman’s Kil.” Within a year it numbered 23 families.

On March 6, the Dutch concluded a treaty with tribes on Long Island, Staten Island, and across the Hudson to stop the war. The Esopus and Raritan, however, did not sign until July 15. The Esopus attacked again in 1663.

On June 2, the first post office opened.

Amersfoort received permission on August 12 to erect a church.

In October, Jacques Cortelyou completed a plan of the city, the model for the Castello Plan, the earliest existing map. (It is preserved in the Villa Castello near Florence.)

Dominie Henricus Selvyns became the first pastor at Breuckelen, serving 31 families. Until a church was built, the 134 souls wor-

shipped in a barn. The next year the West India Company gave them a church bell, which “might also be used, in times of danger, to call the country people thereabouts together.”

## 1661

In February, Henry Townsend held Quaker meetings in his home in Rustdorp (Jamaica). Stuyvesant sent soldiers to watch the residents, quartering them in the homes of Quaker sympathizers.

On July 4, citizens of Breuckelen petitioned Stuyvesant to subsidize the salary of the schoolmaster, Carel de Beauvois, a Huguenot. The provincial council agreed to pay 50 guilders in wampum per annum. In addition to classroom duties, he served as bell ringer, grave digger, reader, chorister, and town clerk.

Dutch and Huguenots founded the first permanent settlement on Staten Island (near South Beach). Once every two months, the Reverend Samuel Drisius sailed from New Amsterdam to conduct a religious service.

The oldest house on Staten Island, the Billou-Stillwell-Perine House, was built (1476 Richmond Road); behind the house stands a black locust tree with a 54-inch girth that dates from the same period—the oldest living thing on the island.

An English visitor remarked: “The town is seated . . . commodiously for trades, and that is their chief employment for they plant and sow little.”



The Bowne House, ca. 1900. (QBPL)

## 1662

The First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica was organized.

On September 21, Governor Peter Stuyvesant banned the public exercise of any but “the [Dutch] Reformed worship and service.”

John and Hannah Bowne invited Quakers to use their home for worship. Bowne was arrested and fined, “with the express warning to abstain himself in future from all such conventicles and meetings.” On December 14, the council decreed, “for the welfare of the community, and to crush as far as possible that abominable sect who treat with contempt both the political magistrates and the ministers of God’s holy word, and endeavor to undermine

the police and religion . . . to transport from this province the aforesaid John Bowne, if he continues obstinate and per-  
vicacious, in the first ship ready to sail, for an example to others.” On January 9, 1663, Bowne was deported aboard the *Gilded Fox*. Bowne finally returned, having obtained the right of religious freedom from the directors of the Dutch West India Company in Amsterdam. On April 16, 1663, they wrote to Stuyvesant: “We heartily desire that these and other sec-  
taries had remained away, . . . yet we doubt very much whether we can proceed against them vigorously, without dimin-  
ishing the population and stopping emi-  
gration. In the youth of your existence you ought rather encourage than check the population. . . . The consciences of men ought to be free and unshackled so long as they continue moderate, peaceable,

inoffensive, and not hostile to the government. . . . You may therefore shut your eyes, at least not force people's consciences, but allow every one to have his own belief, so long as he behaves quietly. . . . Such have been the maxims of prudence and toleration, by which the magistrates of this city have been governed; and the consequences have been that the oppressed and persecuted from every country have found among us an asylum from distress. Follow in the same steps, and you will be blessed." The 1661 Bowne House became "a national shrine to religious freedom."

## 1663

New Amsterdam suffered its first earthquake on February 5. Also in this year, the place endured a spring flood, a smallpox epidemic, and a renewal of warfare with the Indians. On June 7, Indians attacked Esopus, a settlement on the Hudson, killing 21 and carrying off 45 others. The Indians had not forgotten that three years earlier Stuyvesant had enslaved members of the tribe and shipped them to the Caribbean.

On November 1, the provincial assembly (*Landtag*) petitioned Stuyvesant and the West India Company for free trade between English and Dutch colonies.

## 1664

Under authority of the Duke of York, Captain John Scott visited the English towns on Long Island in January. He marched on the Dutch towns with 150 men but was not

well received in Breuckelen. On January 14, Stuyvesant sent a commission to Jamaica to resolve this situation. Scott informed the Dutch that Charles II had given New Netherland to his brother. In February, Stuyvesant relinquished the English towns on Long Island, in Westchester, and in the Connecticut valley.

In February, Stuyvesant forbid the people of Breukelen to harvest their crops until their tithes were collected, with a fine of 100 guilders to those who disobeyed. The lands had been granted with a ten-year tax exemption, but after that the grantees were obliged to pay 10 percent of their produce.

On April 10, the provincial assembly met in City Hall. Representatives from New Amsterdam, Rensselaerwyck, Fort Orange, Breukelen, Midwout, Amersfoort, New Utrecht, Boswyck, New Haarlem, Wiltwyck, Bergen, and Staten Island heard Stuyvesant's appeal for supplies to check the English threat, but they refused to act.

At Fort Amsterdam on May 16, Indians from the Hudson Valley, Long Island, Staten Island, and New Jersey signed another peace treaty.

The *Gideon* arrived with a cargo of 153 male and 137 female slaves from Guinea; 40 were destined for Peter Stuyvesant's farm.

The Reverend Selyns of Breukelen returned to Holland aboard the *Beaver*, the same ship on which he had arrived four years earlier. Carel de Beauvois assumed Selyns's pastoral duties until a permanent replacement arrived.

In August, four British warships—the *Guinea*, the *Elias*, the *Martin*, and the *William and Nicholas*—carrying 500 soldiers anchored in the Narrows. Colonel Richard Nicolls quickly captured Staten Island. On August 30, Nicolls demanded Stuyvesant surrender the province. After the fleet anchored directly opposite the fort and landed troops near Breukelen, prominent citizens urged Stuyvesant to surrender peaceably. On September 6 (August 27, Old Style), Stuyvesant yielded. Two days later he signed the articles of capitulation and the English landed. The articles declared: “The Dutch here shall enjoy the liberty of their Consciences in Divine Worship and Church discipline.” Nicolls renamed the city New York.

On September 15, Rev. Samuel Drisius wrote to the Classis in Amsterdam: “We have been brought under the government of the King of England. On the 26 of August [New Style] there arrived . . . near Staten Island four great men-of-war . . . well manned with sailors and soldiers . . . to . . . take possession of the province, in the name of His Majesty. If this could not be done in an amicable way, they were to attack the place, and everything was to be thrown open for the English soldiers to plunder. We were not a little troubled by the arrival of the frigates. Our Honorable rulers of the Company and the municipal authorities of the city were inclined to defend the place, but found that it was impossible, for the city was not in a defensible condition. . . . Therefore upon the earnest request of our citizens . . . our authorities found themselves compelled to come to terms, for the sake of avoiding bloodshed and pillage.”

Governor Nicolls granted freedom of worship to Lutherans on December 6.

## 1665

From February 28 to March 1, 34 delegates from Long Island and Westchester met at Hempstead and adopted the Duke’s laws, modeled after New England law but without demands for religious conformity.

On May 1, Governor Nicolls established a racecourse on the Hempstead Plains that he called Newmarket, after an English course. He hoped to improve horse breeding in the province.

On June 12, a new charter made the city congruent with Manhattan Island and imposed the English system of mayor, aldermen, and sheriff, replacing the Dutch *schout*, burgomasters, and *schepens*. Thomas Willett became the first mayor; the new officials began work on June 15.

On October 2 began the witchcraft trial of Ralph and Mary Hall, accused of causing the death of a man and an infant by “detestable and wicked arts.” The court found “there are some suspicions by the Evidence of what the woman is charged with, but nothing considerable of value to take away her life. But in reference to the man we find nothing considerable to Charge him with.”

## 1666

The first church in Brooklyn was erected (Fulton and Lawrence Streets).

In April, Governor Nicolls tried to impose new taxes on the Long Island towns, but they resisted, even assaulting his agents. Nicolls compromised, permitting the towns to pay their own bills directly instead of going through his administration, thereby preserving their tradition of self-imposed taxation.

## 1667

In July, the Treaty of Breda confirmed English control over New Netherland.

Governor Richard Nicolls granted a patent to Flatlands on October 4. Brooklyn received a patent on October 18, Flatbush and Bushwick on the 25th.

## 1668

Colonel Francis Lovelace became governor on August 28.

## 1669

On May 3, Governor Lovelace granted John Archer permission “to settle sixteen families upon the Maine neare the wading place” (this was the first settlement at Fordham).

Representatives from Hempstead, Jamaica, Flushing, Newtown, Gravesend, Eastchester, and Westchester issued a remonstrance to Governor Lovelace, demanding the right to elect their own legislators. Lovelace replied that he had no authority to change the form of government.

## 1670

On April 13, the Lenape Indians signed a treaty yielding Staten Island to the English for 50 knives, 30 axes, 30 hoes, 30 kettles, 30 boots, 30 shirts, eight coats, a keg of powder, 60 barrels of shot, and 400 fathoms of wampum. To symbolize the surrender of their rights, the Lenape handed the English a clump of dirt and a twig from every kind of tree that grew on Staten Island except ash and hickory, as they retained the right to make baskets from those.

In England, Daniel Denton, one of Jamaica’s earliest settlers, published his description of the province of New York.

Claiming their rights as Englishmen had been violated, the Long Island towns rejected Governor Lovelace’s order to contribute toward the repair of Fort James. When war between England and the Dutch broke out two years later, Lovelace asked each town to contribute toward maintenance of the fort; he squandered the funds in other pursuits.

## 1672

On June 7, George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, preached before several hundred beneath two oaks across the road from the Bowne House. The Fox Oaks survived into the mid–19th century, when they measured almost 13 feet in circumference at a point 6 feet above the ground. The Flushing Historical Society erected a stone marker on the site in 1907.



Quaker George Fox preaching under the oaks in Flushing. (QBPL)

Peter Stuyvesant died in February and was buried in a vault in a chapel on his estate (now part of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery). A bust of Stuyvesant stands in the graveyard.

## 1673

The first rider set out on the new Boston Post Road on January 1.

On July 30, five Dutch warships under Captains Bencke and Evertsen attacked Fort James and recaptured the city. Captain John Manning, the deputy governor, surrendered. (When the English recaptured the city, his sword was broken in a ceremony at City Hall for the disgrace.) The new Dutch governor, Anthony Colve, arrived on September 17, and Governor

Lovelace departed. The city was renamed New Orange.

## 1674

The Treaty of Westminster, signed on February 9, ended the Anglo-Dutch War. The Dutch surrendered New Netherland to the English for the last time in exchange for the Caribbean islands of Curaçao and Demerara, which the English captured during the war. Major Edmund Andros arrived in New York on October 31, and Anthony Colve, the last Dutch governor, yielded the province. King James instructed Andros: "You shall permit all persons of what Religion soever, quietly to inhabit within the precincts of your jurisdiction, without giving them any disturbance or disquiet whatever for, or by any reason of, their



differing opinions in matters of Religion: Provided they give no disturbance to ye publique peace, nor do molest or disquiet others in the free exercise of their religion.”

## 1675

An annual fair for grain, produce, and cattle was established near the Brooklyn Ferry.

The boundary between Flushing and Hempstead was set at Little Neck on November 23.

## 1676

Captain Christopher Billopp received a patent to settle the southern tip of Staten Island.

Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter walked the entire circumference of Staten Island from October 11 to 13.

The Heere Graft (a canal) was filled in and paved over; it became Broad Street.

## 1677

Mayor Stephen Van Cortlandt ordered the digging of the first six public wells. (Previously, the only source was a pump near the fort.) Ten wells were dug by 1700.

City fathers ordered construction of the first insane asylum on November 20.

## 1679

The council, on December 8, prohibited enslavement of Indians: “that all Indians here have always been and are, free, and not slaves, except such as have been formerly brought from the bay or other foreign parts. But if any shall be brought hereafter into the government, within the space of six months, they are to be disposed of, as soon as may be, out of the government. But after the expiration of the said six months, all that shall be brought here from those parts and landed, to be as free as other Indians.”

## 1680

Coopers formed an association to raise the price of their wares, the barrels so crucial to the city’s commerce (that’s why barrels are part of the city’s official seal). On January 8, the council fined each cooper £2.10 and discharged those in public employ.

## 1681

When recalled to England, Major Edmund Andros neglected to renew import duties imposed in 1677. Merchants took advantage of this lapse and refused to pay, and the council refused to order them to do so. An official trying to collect funds due was arrested.

In England, the Reverend James Wolley published *A Two Years Journal of New York*.

## 1682

In the summer, the Reverend Selyns returned to the Dutch Reformed congregation in New York, serving until his death at age 65 in July 1701.

## 1683

William Penn visited his friend John Bowne in Flushing.

In August, Thomas Dongan arrived as governor with orders from King James II: “You shall let them know that for the future it is my resolution that the said General Assembly shall have free liberty to consult and debate among themselves all matters as shall be apprehended proper to be established for laws for the good government of said colony of New York and its dependencies, and that if such laws be propounded as shall appear to me to be for the manifest good of the country in general, and not prejudicial to me, I will assent unto and confirm them.” The first provincial assembly met on October 17; on the 30th they approved the “Charter of Libertyes and Privileges Granted by His Royal Highnesse to the Inhabitants of New Yorke, and its Dependencies,” granting freedom of conscience to all Christians and affirming that only the legislature could impose taxes and duties.

On November 1, Governor Dongan organized the province into ten counties: New York, Kings, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, Westchester, Dutchess, Orange, Ulster, and

Albany (Dukes and Cornwall were dropped). He granted a new charter on December 6.

The Reverend Petrus Tesschenmacker, the first Dutch Reformed minister ordained in New York, moved to Staten Island; he left within two years for the northern frontier.

The cemetery of Congregation Shearith Israel (St. James Place off Chatham Square) recorded its first known burial; the name on the headstone is Joseph Benjamin Bueno de Mesquita, one of the Sephardic Jews who arrived from Brazil in 1654. As more Sephardim arrived from the West Indies, Suriname, and Europe, the provincial assembly decreed that only Christians could become citizens. This was generally disregarded.

## 1684

The Court of General Sessions of the Peace for the City and County of New York met for the first time on February 5; the Common Council—six aldermen and six assistant aldermen—met on February 14; the city’s freemen participated in the first election of aldermen, councilmen, assessors, and constables on October 13.

Indians signed over lands in Whitestone and Flushing.

## 1685

Takapausha and Paman, the sagamore of Rockaway, sold the Rockaway Neck to

New York merchant Captain John Palmer for £30. The Indians claimed that this land had not been included in the sale of 1643. Although his claim was disputed, Palmer sold it to Richard Cornell on August 23, 1687, and Cornell soon established a settlement.

Coclestown was founded on Staten Island; it was renamed Richmondtown in 1730.

## 1686

King James II signed the Dongan Charter in April, confirming New York's rights to the harbor. The boundary between Manhattan and Brooklyn was set at the low-water mark on the Brooklyn side of the East River.

## 1688

Major Edmund Andros, appointed by James II to govern New England, New York, and New Jersey, arrived on August 11.

## 1689

After news arrived of the overthrow of King James II in the Glorious Revolution, Jacob Leisler led a rebellion against Governor Andros. On August 16, a committee of safety appointed Leisler commander in chief of the province; on October 14, Pieter De La Noy became the first mayor elected by popular vote.

## 1691

After surrendering the fort to the new governor, Henry Sloughter, Jacob Leisler and his son-in-law, Jacob Milborne, were arrested. Convicted of treason, they were hanged, then drawn and quartered on May 17 and buried without ceremony at the foot of the gallows.

On April 24, the Common Council banned the sale of liquor to slaves without the consent of their masters; slaves were also barred from taverns on Sundays.

## 1692

Governor Benjamin Fletcher arrived on August 30.

## 1693

The colonial legislature renamed Long Island "Nassau" in honor of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange and King of England.

Kings Bridge, the first span across the Harlem River, was built at Spuyten Duyvil (today's Kingsbridge Avenue).

## 1694

The first meeting was held in Flushing's Quaker Meeting House on November 24, a year after John Bowne and John Rodman purchased the three-acre plot. The building is still home of a Quaker meeting.

## 1695

The city employed a scavenger to remove garbage from the streets and directed residents to sweep in front of their homes, resulting in an uncommonly clean city until the mid-1700s.

The Voorlezer's House was built in Richmondtown for Hendrich Cruser, lay reader and schoolmaster. The oldest school building in the nation, it is part of Historic Richmond Town.

In London, John Miller published *A Description of the Province and City of New-York*.

## 1696

On May 11, the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in New York obtained a royal charter confirming its rights and privileges.

Captain William Kidd sailed from New York on the *Adventure*, with a commission from the British East India Company to fight pirates. When he arrived in the Indian Ocean, he turned pirate himself. Kidd came to New York in 1691 and married a wealthy widow; they lived in her well-appointed home on Wall Street. He was hanged in London in 1701.

## 1698

A year after citizens submitted a petition to Governor Fletcher for permission to



The Quaker Meeting House, Flushing, ca. 1890 (QBPL)

erect an Anglican church, King William III granted the charter, together with a large tract of land in Manhattan, for an annual rent of “one peppercorne.” The first service in Trinity Church was on March 13.

Richard Coote, the earl of Bellomont, was appointed governor on April 13.

At midnight on a stormy October night, the bodies of Jacob Leisler and Jacob Milborne were disinterred for a proper funeral. Their remains lay in state in the Stadt Huys for two days. Governor Coote permitted the service out of compassion for the families after Parliament issued posthumous pardons.

The Wall, or the last pieces thereof, was torn down.



Trinity Church.

According to the first census, 4,937 people lived on Manhattan, 2,017 in Kings, 3,565 in Queens (including Nassau), 727 in Richmond, and 1,063 in Westchester; blacks—free and slave—comprised 14 percent of the population.

## 1699

The foundation for a new City Hall on Wall Street was laid on August 9, using stones from the old bastions. It had rooms upstairs for the court and the Common Council; a room on the street held fire-fighting equipment. There was also a dungeon, with the cage, pillory, stocks, and whipping post nearby.

# 1700–1749

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## 1700

Because masters could not prevent their slaves from gathering “on the holy Sabbath in time of Divine Service to the great scandal of the Christian Profession and Religion,” on April 9 the Common Council prohibited groupings of more than three slaves on Sundays.

On August 9, the provincial assembly passed “An Act against Jesuits and popish priests,” ordering all “ordained by any Authority, power or Jurisdiction derived or pretended from the Pope or See of Rome” to depart before November 1 or face imprisonment or death.

On November 2, the assembly passed “An Act for Incouraging the brewing of Beer and making of Malt within this province,” imposing duties on imported brew to encourage local production.

## 1702

Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, arrived on May 3 as governor. His predecessor, the earl of Bellomont, died in 1701. Cornbury supposedly appeared in public in women’s clothing; a portrait hanging in the New-York Historical Society shows him in a splendid blue gown.

St. George’s Parish was founded in Flushing by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Yellow fever hit the city for the first time; it arrived annually into the next century.

Samuel Clowes, the first lawyer in Queens, arrived in Jamaica as county and court clerk.

Encouraged by Lord Cornbury, who wanted to make the Church of England

the established church, Anglicans occupied the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica for their services; the Presbyterians forcibly evicted them. A court finally affirmed the rights of the Presbyterians to their church in 1731.

During the year, 165 slaves were imported from Africa.

## 1703

Elias Neau opened the first Anglican school for blacks. In 1712, Governor Hunter ordered that “all slaves should be sent to Neau’s school” for religious instruction.

The first sewer, an open trench, was dug on Broad Street; it was later bricked over.

## 1704

Lord Cornbury appointed a commission to lay out Kings Highway from the river to Flatbush; another road branched off to Jamaica.

Visiting the city on December 7, Sarah Knight wrote: “The Cittie of New York is a pleasant well compacted place, situated on a commodius River wch is a fine harbour for shipping. The Building Brick Generaly very stately and high. . . . The Bricks in some of the Houses are of divers Coullers and laid in Checkers, being glazed, look very agreeable. . . . They are Generaly of the Church of England. . . . There are also a Dutch and Divers Conventicles, as they call them, viz. Baptist, Quakers, &c. They

are not strict in keeping the Sabbath as in Boston. . . . They are sociable to one another and Curteos and Civill to strangers. . . . They have Vendues very frequently and make their earnings very well by them, for they treat with good Liquor Liberally, and the customers Drink as Liberally, and Generally pay for’t as well. . . . Their Diversions in the Winter is Riding Sleys about three or four Miles out of Town, where they have Houses of entertainment at a place called the Bowery, and some go to friends’ Houses, who handsomely treat them.”

## 1705

Reverend Aeneas Mackenzie founded St. Andrew’s, the first Anglican congregation on Staten Island. Their church in Richmondtown was built in 1712.

Queen Anne granted Trinity Church the 215-acre “Church Farm,” extending from Fulton to Christopher Streets and from Broadway to the Hudson.

## 1708

In February, two slaves, an Indian man and a negro woman, axed to death William Hallet, his wife, and their five children at their home near Hell Gate. The two slaves were executed in Jamaica.

The Governor’s House was built on Governors Island. Lord Cornbury apparently used taxes collected for harbor fortifications to pay for it.



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Staten Island.

Lord John Lovelace became as governor on December 18.

## 1709

Lieutenant Governor Ingoldsby became governor on May 6 after the death of Lord Lovelace.

Trinity Church established a charity school for poor children, with William Huddleston as headmaster. (Trinity School is now on West 91st Street.)

## 1710

Colonel Robert Hunter arrived on June 14 as governor, accompanied by approxi-

mately 2,500 German Palatines fleeing religious persecution. Most went up the Hudson; a few hundred remained in the city.

## 1711

The Meal Market, for the sale or hire of slaves, was established at the foot of Wall Street.

## 1712

Recently arrived African slaves began a revolt shortly after midnight on April 7, setting fires and killing whites who rushed to extinguish the blaze. Six slaves were killed during the revolt; 19 others were captured and executed.



On December 12, new slave laws were enacted, limiting their access to liquor and permitting masters to punish them; worse, “no Negro, Indian, or Mallatto, that hereafter be made free, shall enjoy, hold or possess any Houses, Pands, Tenements, or Hereditaments in this colony.”

## 1713

The first ferry sailed between Manhattan and Staten Island on April 2.

## 1714

On August 1, Governor Hunter’s play *Androborus* was printed, the first dramatic work to be published in the English colonies.

## 1717

Robert Blackwell married the stepdaughter of Captain John Manning, acquiring the island known thereafter as Blackwell’s Island (now Roosevelt Island).

William Burgis published a detailed view of the city, “A South Prospect of ye Flourishing City of New York.”

## 1718

During the year, 517 slaves were imported. The slave population was also growing through natural increase.

## 1720

The new governor, William Burnet, arrived on September 17; Governor Hunter had sailed for England on July 13, 1719. One of Burnet’s first acts was to ban trade between Albany and Montreal, redirecting trade to New York and strengthening ties with the Iroquois.

Johannes Lott built his home in what later became the Marine Park section of Brooklyn. His grandson Hendrick Lott expanded the house in 1800. The 18-room clapboard farmhouse remained in the family until 1989, when Ella Suydam died. It became a landmark that year but was abandoned. The city bought it from the family in 1998.

## 1722

The city’s first Presbyterian church was completed on the north side of Wall Street.

## 1725

On November 8, William Bradford published the city’s first newspaper, the *New-York Gazette*.

## 1728

John Montgomerie became governor on April 15.

The Jamaica Fair opened for the sale of merchandise and fine horses on May 6.

The city’s first Baptist church was built.

The Schermerhorns began running ships between New York and Charleston, South Carolina, bringing back rice and indigo.

Banned from the heart of town, tanners relocated near the Collect (from the Dutch *kolch*, a small body of water). The pond (today's Foley Square) became thoroughly polluted.

## 1729

The first Richmond County courthouse (Richmond and Arthur Kill Roads) was built.

## 1730

Congregation Shearith Israel erected the first synagogue on Mill Street, just below Wall Street.

Anthony Rutgers petitioned to drain the western outlet of the Collect, a 75-acre swamp extending from Duane to Spring Streets, on the condition that the land be given to him: "The said swamp is constantly filled with standing water, for which there is no natural vent . . . is by the stagnation and rottenness of it become exceedingly dangerous and of fatal consequence to all the inhabitants of the north part of the city, they being subject to very many diseases and distempers which by all physicians and by long experience are imputed to the unwholesome vapours arising thereby." The city gave Rutgers a year to complete the task. Leonard Lispenard, who leased the adjacent portion of the Church Farm, married Rutgers's daughter and ac-

quired the site, known henceforward as Lispenard Meadows.

Nicholas Bayard built the first sugar refinery on the north side of Wall Street, near City Hall.

## 1731

On February 11, Governor Montgomerie presented a new city charter extending jurisdiction up to King's Bridge. Montgomerie died on July 1, and authority passed to Rip Van Dam, president of the Common Council. The charter created a night watch, with a constable and eight citizens, but citizens were reluctant to serve. A paid force was formed in 1734, replaced by another citizen's watch a year later.

In late summer, smallpox killed hundreds.

A municipal ordinance, passed on November 18, ordered: "All Negro, Mulatto and Indian slaves that are let out to hire within this city to take up their standing, in order to be hired, at the Market House at the Wall Street Slip, until such time as they are hired, whereby all Persons may know where to hire slaves as their occasion shall require and all Masters discover where their slaves are so hired."

The first two fire engines arrived from England on November 27.

## 1732

Colonel William Cosby arrived on August 1 as governor.



Slave market at the foot of Wall Street.

The first theater opened “in the Buildings of the Honorable Rip Van Dam” on December 6.

## 1733

On March 12, the Common Council authorized “enclosure of Bowling Green for the ornament of the said street as well as for the Recreation and Delight of the Inhabitants of the City.” Annual rent for this first public park was one peppercorn.

## 1734

St. James Episcopal Church was built in Newtown (Broadway and 51st Avenue); the congregation built a new house of worship nearby in 1849.

## 1735

The first almshouse opened.

The libel trial of printer John Peter Zenger began on August 4. He first published the *New-York Weekly Journal* on November 15, 1733. He later wrote: “As there was but one Printer in the Province of New-York that printed a public News Paper, I was in Hopes, if I undertook to publish another, I might make it worth my while, and I soon found that my Hopes were not groundless.” On November 17, 1734, he was arrested for libeling Governor Cosby. Andrew Hamilton of Philadelphia and John Chambers of New York successfully defended him. Hamilton received the freedom of the city in the form of a five-and-a-half-ounce gold box “for the remarkable service done to this city and colony, by his defense of the rights of mankind and the liberty of the press.”

## 1736

The first municipal hospital was founded to care for lunatics and paupers (this is the ancestor of Bellevue).

Governor Cosby died on March 10; the president of the Common Council, George Clarke, held office until 1743.

## 1738

On June 28, the Common Council established a quarantine station at Bedloes Island, named for the first owner, Isaac Bedloe.

The first volunteer fire company, 30 strong and sober men, was organized on September 28.

## 1740

Thomas Stillwell began a ferry between Bay Ridge and Staten Island.

## 1741

After a rash of unexplained fires (probably caused by defective chimneys), rumors of another slave revolt swept the city. Authorities learned of the “Negro Plot” on June 11 and reacted swiftly and unmercifully, arresting 26 whites and 160 slaves, most on rumor or false accusations. Led by illegally enslaved Spanish Catholics, the plot was hatched in taverns frequented by slaves on Sundays. By October 22, 1742, 14

blacks had been burned at the stake, 18 hanged, and 71 transported; three whites were executed. A fifth of the city’s 10,000 inhabitants were slaves, but the black population decreased over the next 15 years.

## 1743

Governor George Clinton arrived on September 22.

## 1744

To protect public health, on May 3 the city banned certain activities from neighborhoods below the Collect. They prohibited skimmers, leather dressers, and carriers from using their noxious vats; prohibited hatters and starch makers from pouring their waste into the streets; and enacted regulations for garbage disposal.

## 1746

Smallpox forced the provincial assembly to move to Greenwich, then to Westchester.

## 1747

When workmen from outside the city accepted lower wage scales, a hundred mechanics protested to Governor Clinton on April 2.

A ferry was started from Manhattan to the north shore of Staten Island.



# 1750–1799

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## 1752

The first Moravian church was dedicated.

The Merchant's Exchange was built at the foot of Broad Street.

The Beekman Street home of St. George's Chapel, founded in 1749 as the first chapel of Trinity Church, was dedicated on July 1. In 1811 it became independent; a fire in 1814 consumed the original chapel. The congregation later moved to Stuyvesant Square.

## 1753

Trinity Church was damaged by fire. All records of marriages, baptisms, and burials were lost.

On October 12, five days after becoming governor, Sir Danvers Osborn committed suicide; Lieutenant Governor De Lancy succeeded him.

Pennsylvania merchant Robert Murray built a farmhouse near what is now Park Avenue and 37th Street. The neighborhood became known as Murray Hill.

## 1754

The New York Society Library, the city's oldest, was founded on April 8 in City Hall; it received a charter from George III in 1772. The collection began in 1729 when the Reverend John Millington of Newington, England, bequeathed 1,622 volumes to the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign

Parts, which presented the books to the city. With additional books from the Reverend John Sharp, the collection opened to the public.

On October 31, King’s College—now Columbia University—received a charter to “enlarge the Mind, improve the Understanding, polish the whole Man, and qualify them to support the brightest Characters in all the elevated stations in life.” The first president, Samuel Johnson, D.D., was an Anglican, as stipulated in the charter. The college obtained a site from Trinity Church across from the Common (City Hall Park) and erected its own building in 1760. Many founders of the Republic attended Kings College, including John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Robert R. Livingston, and Gouverneur Morris.

## 1755

Sir Charles Hardy arrived on September 2 as governor.

## 1756

Regularly scheduled stagecoach service began between New York and Philadelphia, a three-day journey. Within a year, a round trip took only five days, with two nights and a full day in Philadelphia.

## 1757

The first running of the New York Purse was held in Jamaica.

In London, William Smith published the first history of New York.

Governor Hardy sailed for England, leaving the province again in the hands of Lieutenant Governor De Lancy.

## 1758

Farmer and blacksmith Isaac Valentine built a fieldstone house on the Boston Post Road. Owned by the Varian family from 1791 to 1905, the Valentine-Varian House is now home of the Museum of Bronx History.

## 1760

Following Lieutenant Governor De Lancy’s death on July 30, Cadwallader Colden became the head of the government. The new governor, General Robert Monckton, arrived on October 19, 1761.

## 1762

The first whale-oil lamps were installed at public expense to illuminate the streets.

On January 15, Oliver de Lancy, Beverly Robinson, and James Parker sold the 1719 townhouse at Broad and Pearl Streets to Samuel Fraunces, who opened the Queen’s Head Tavern in the spring. This building burned in 1900.

## 1763

Governor Monckton left for England on June 25; Lieutenant Governor Colden again assumed the office.

The Moravian church in New Dorp was consecrated.

## 1764

The boundary dispute between Newtown and Bushwick was settled at Arbitration Rock on January 10. In 2000, the boulder was unearthed beneath Flushing Avenue near the Onderdonk House in Ridgewood.

A ferry began sailing between Paulus Hook (Jersey City) and Manhattan.

Mail service between New York and Philadelphia increased from once a fortnight to twice weekly.

On July 11, the first lighthouse on Sandy Hook went into operation.

The Bar of New York City limited admission to men who had attended two years of college, served five years as a clerk, and paid a fee of £200 to the attorney under whom the clerkship was served.

## 1765

With delegates from nine colonies, the Stamp Act Congress assembled in City Hall from October 7–25. They adopted a declaration of “the rights and grievances

of the colonists of America” and dispatched petitions to King George III, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords. The stamps arrived aboard the *Edward* on October 23. The next day, placards appeared: PRO PATRIA. The first man that either distributes or makes use of stamp paper, let him take care of his house, person, and effects. VOX POPULI WE DARE. On October 31, the day before the law took effect, merchants met at Burns’s City Arms Tavern on Broadway and adopted a nonimportation agreement. The next day, the Sons of Liberty gathered on the Common and marched to Bowling Green, where they burned Lieutenant Governor Colden in effigy, then broke into his home and dragged his carriage, sleigh, and other possessions into a bonfire.

The new governor, Sir Henry Moore, arrived on November 13 amid the Stamp Act crisis.

## 1766

The first St. Patrick’s Day parade was staged.

News arrived on May 20 that Parliament had repealed the Stamp Act in March. In celebration, the Sons of Liberty erected the first liberty pole on the Common, which they dedicated: “To His most Gracious Majesty, George the Third, Mr. Pitt, and Liberty.” On August 10, British soldiers cut it down; when the Sons of Liberty attempted to erect another the next day, the soldiers attacked with bayonets. On



August 12, the Sons of Liberty successfully raised their liberty pole.

St. Paul's Chapel on Broadway, the oldest church in Manhattan, was consecrated on October 30.

The first Methodist services were held in Philip Embury's home on Barrack Street (Park Place). The congregation rented space on William Street in 1767; on October 30, 1768, the John Street United Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated at 44 John Street.

## 1767

Kings College established the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the second American institution to grant an M.D.

A new law required all roofs to be covered with tile or slate.

The Ratzen Plan, a detailed map showing Manhattan below 50th Street and parts of Kings and Queens, was published.

## 1768

Brick Church, the Presbyterians' home at Nassau and Beekman Streets, was dedicated.

Twenty merchants founded the New York Chamber of Commerce on April 5 in Fraunces Tavern.

## 1769

Governor Moore died on September 11; the reins of government again went to Lieutenant Governor Colden.

## 1770

In mid-January, long-simmering antagonism between the Sons of Liberty and British soldiers erupted when the soldiers cut down the liberty pole (on their third try). On January 19, the Sons of Liberty fought British troops with clubs and cutlasses in the Battle of Golden Hill (William and John Streets). One American was killed and several wounded. Clashes continued the next day. Another liberty pole was erected on private land across from the Common on February 6, inscribed "Liberty and Property." The British cut it down after they occupied the city in 1776. Today, a replica of the pole stands west of City Hall.

A gilded equestrian statue of King George III was erected in Bowling Green on August 16, four years after it had been publicly commissioned to celebrate repeal of the Stamp Act. On September 7, a white marble statue of William Pitt in Roman garb was erected near Wall and William Streets, at public expense, in gratitude for repealing the Stamp Act.

Merchant and privateer Thomas Randall and others founded the Marine Society for "the improvement of maritime knowledge and the relief of indigent and distressed members, who are or have been masters of

vessels, or their widows and orphans.” This is the origin of Sailors Snug Harbor.

John Murray, earl of Dunmore, arrived on October 18 as governor.

## 1771

New York Hospital, founded to care for lunatics and those afflicted by smallpox or syphilis, received a royal charter on June 13. Their building was not completed until 1791.

Sir William Tryon arrived on July 8 as governor.

## 1772

Governor Tryon compelled the provincial assembly to provide his salary out of general revenues, rather than from an allocation by the assembly. This assault on popular government elicited little protest.

David Hunt began to manufacture hand-pumped fire-fighting apparatuses.

## 1773

British soldiers were housed on Bedloes Island in the harbor.

## 1774

A paid constabulary of about 20 night watchmen was established.

The Sons of Liberty staged a Tea Party on April 22. Dressed like Indians, they boarded the merchant ship *London* and dumped the tea into the harbor.

Stopping en route to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, John Adams wrote in his diary: “With all the Opulence of Splendor of this City, there is very little good Breeding to be found. We have been treated with an assiduous Respect. But I have not seen one real Gentleman, one well-bred Man, since I came to Town. At their Entertainments there is no Conversation that is agreeable; there is no Modesty—No attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and altogether. If they ask you a Question, before you can utter 3 words of your Answer, they will break out upon you, again—and talk away.”

Printer John Holt replaced the King’s Arms at the head of his weekly *New York Journal* with the logo “Unite or Die” and a dismembered snake, soon replaced by a coiled snake.

Bowne & Company was established at 39 Queen Street. Their notice in the *New-York Mercury* offered for sale “Writing Paper, English and American; Account Books; Quills and Pens; Binding and Printing materials; Bolting Cloths; Powder, Furs, Nails, Glass and Dry Goods; Pitch Pine Boards; and a few casks of low-priced Cutlery.” The company is still in business.



Pulling down the statue of George III in Bowling Green.

## 1775

New York ranked behind Philadelphia, Boston, and Charleston in volume of shipping, largely because of the poor condition of the wharves, which were too small, too few, and badly maintained.

Several slaves in Jamaica were jailed on suspicion of a conspiracy against whites.

In April, the Sons of Liberty hanged in effigy printer James Rivington, publisher of the *New-York Gazetteer*. Rivington published a drawing of the scene in his paper and called his enemies “the very Dregs of the City,” claiming they opposed him “merely for acting consistent with his

profession as a printer.” In November, Isaac Sears led the Sons of Liberty into Rivington’s shop and smashed his printing press. He acquired another from England and after the British occupation published the *Royal Gazette*. Rivington remained in the city after the Revolution and died in 1802.

The First New York Provincial Congress assembled in the city on May 22; the Second Provincial Congress assembled on December 6.

George Washington, recently appointed commander of the American army besieging the British in Boston, stopped in the city on June 25, the same day Governor Tryon returned from England.

On August 23, patriots began to remove the 21 cannon from the Battery. Captain Vanderbilt of the man-of-war *Asia* fired on the Americans, who returned fire. There were casualties on both sides; the *Asia* then fired a broadside on the city, damaging several houses.

As patriot agitation intensified, Governor Tryon fled to the sloop-of-war *Halifax* on October 19, taking with him the city’s records, which were not returned until 1781.

## 1776

On June 29, a fleet under Sir William Howe arrived off Sandy Hook and began landing troops on Staten Island. One American soldier thought “all London was afloat.” On July 12, General Howe’s brother,

Admiral Richard Howe, arrived with reinforcements from England.

On July 9, General Washington assembled his troops for a reading of the Declaration of Independence. After another public reading on July 16, patriots pulled down the statue of George III in Bowling Green. It was melted down for musket balls. The head was set on a pole at the Blue Bell Tavern (Broadway and 181st Street). Loyalists later sent it to England.

In the Battle of Long Island on August 27, 25,000 British regulars defeated Washington's outnumbered volunteers in a day of fierce fighting. The battered Americans escaped to Manhattan during the night on August 29.

Printer John Holt published the last edition of his weekly *New York Journal* on

August 29. He evacuated the city but published elsewhere until 1783, when he returned.

On the night of September 6, a one-man submarine built by David and Ezra Bushnell attempted to sink the 64-gun British flagship *Eagle*, anchored off Bedloes Island, by boring holes through its hull. Called the *Turtle*, the craft proved unmanageable and could not pierce the iron on the ship's hull.

On September 11, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge met with Lord Howe at the Billopp House in Tottenville to discuss ending the revolution. The British offered "clemency and full pardon to all repentant rebels," but the Americans declined. Built around 1680 by Captain Christopher Billopp, the Conference House is now a museum.



The Conference House, ca. 1890.

The British landed at Kips Bay on September 15. Legend has it that Mary Murray invited General Howe and his staff into her home for tea, delaying them long enough for Washington's army to reach Upper Manhattan. (The Daughters of the Revolution installed a plaque at 130 East 37th Street, honoring her patriotic hospitality.) The next day the Americans fought gallantly in the Battle of Harlem Heights.

General Nathaniel Woodhull died in a British prison on September 20. He had been captured in Jamaica while trying to drive the army's cattle east, out of the reach of the British after the Battle of Long Island. According to legend, a British officer ordered him to say, "God save the king." Woodhull replied, "God save us all," and the officer slashed with his sword, gravely wounding him.

A fire on the night of September 21 destroyed a third of the city, including Trinity Church and 500 other structures; it burned until the middle of the next day.

On September 22, a day after his capture, 21-year old Captain Nathan Hale was hanged as a spy by the British at 11 A.M., probably at the five-mile marker on the Boston Post Road, across from a tavern known as the Dove (66th Street and Third Avenue). According to the journal of British officer Frederick Mackenzie, Hale said, "It is the duty of every good officer to obey any orders given him by his commander in chief." An article in the *Boston Chronicle* in 1782 reported Hale's final words as "I am so satisfied with the cause in which I have engaged, that my only regret is that I have not more lives

than one to offer in its service." Fifty years after the event, Hale's friend William Hull set the words in their familiar form: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

American soldiers attacked the British near St. Andrew's Church in Richmondtown on October 15.

On November 16, the British captured Fort Washington in northern Manhattan, the last American stronghold on the island.

War, fire, and the British occupation forced Christopher Colles to abandon construction of the waterworks begun in 1774.

## 1777

On March 16, British soldiers attacked 100 Americans near King's Bridge, killing 40 and capturing the others; the British lost six, including their captain.

On September 25, Captain Pennington of the Guards killed Captain Tolmash of the man-of-war *Zebra* in a duel in an upstairs room of Hull's Tavern, also known as the City Tavern (115 Broadway). Wounded several times, Pennington finally pierced Tolmash through the heart.

Most of Lord Howe's army left Staten Island on July 23. General John Sullivan raided the island with 1,500 soldiers on August 22. In November, Americans landed at Bloomingdale and burned the home of Loyalist General Oliver De Lancy.



Ruins of Trinity Church.

## 1778

After attending a party on Staten Island on June 5, Loyalist Colonel Christopher Billopp was captured by Captain Fitz Randolph, the brother of the woman hosting the ball; Billopp was exchanged after two months. In February 1779, friends of Billopp captured Captain Randolph, who remained a prisoner for 15 months. On the night of July 23, 1779, the Americans again took Billopp prisoner, rousting him from bed. After the war, Billopp abandoned Staten Island for Canada.

Cruger's Wharf burned on August 3, destroying 60 buildings along the East River.

## 1779

In January, ships arrived from Ireland and Halifax, Nova Scotia, bringing much-needed supplies to the city. The scarcity of flour caused prices to rise precipitously.

British troops evacuated from Rhode Island arrived in the city, and with the evacuation of the fort at Stony Point on the Hudson, the city became even more crowded.

A lighted walk was created through the ruins of Trinity Churchyard for British officers and their ladies. A small orchestra serenaded them. A sentry at the gate kept out ordinary citizens. According to Loyalist minister Ewald Gustav Schankirk, the scenes “give great offense and uneasiness



Hell Gate, 1775. HMS *Hussar* went down here in 1780. (QBPL)

to all serious and still more to all godly men, and caused many reflections not only on the irreligious turn of the Commandant, but also on the Rector. . . . Profaneness and wickedness prevaieth—Lord have mercy!”

## 1780

In February, the upper bay was frozen solid. British soldiers dragged cannon five miles across the harbor from the Battery to Staten Island. The “hard winter” of 1779–80 was possibly the coldest in the city’s history.

On March 5, Americans confined on the prison ship *Good Hope* in Wallabout Bay

“wilfully, maliciously and wickedly burnt the best prison ship in the world.”

The last English governor, Major General James Robertson, arrived on March 21.

Former slaves from Virginia camped near Broadway and Barclay Street, claiming the freedom the British had promised. Many died of smallpox and were buried in the nearby African Burial Ground.

In September, after the capture of Major John André revealed his treason, General Benedict Arnold fled to the city aboard the British warship *Vulture*. He was appointed brigadier and given command of a British regiment.

HMS *Hussar* went down in Hell Gate after hitting Pot Rock. The ship supposedly carried a cargo of gold, none of which was ever recovered.

## 1781

On May 28, the British commandant, Brigadier-General Samuel Birch, issued regulations for city markets, as “divers persons influenced by a desire of inordinate gain, have been guilty of engrossing and forstalling all kinds of victuals and provisions in this town, whereby the prices thereof are excessively enhanced.”

On August 30, a bull-baiting took place at Thomas McMullan’s tavern. McMullan claimed, “the Bull is active and vicious,” and hoped “the spectators will have satisfactory diversion.”

Prince William Henry, third son of George III and the future King William IV, arrived in New York on September 26.

In September, the provincial records removed in November 1775 were returned to the city.

## 1782

On May 13, Sir Henry Clinton and Hessian general Wilhelm von Knyphausen departed for England. English and Hessian troops lined the streets to their ship.

On October 6, the first convoy of Loyalists sailed for Nova Scotia.

## 1783

In January, captured American soldiers and sailors were finally liberated from the prison ships moored in Wallabout Bay. More than 11,500 patriots perished between 1776 and 1783; their bones are interred in a crypt in Fort Greene Park.



The prison ship *Jersey*.



Washington Irving was born in Manhattan on April 3.

On April 8, the royal proclamation formally ending hostilities was read at City Hall; Governor Robertson sailed for home within a fortnight.

Traveling with Governor George Clinton through lower Westchester (the Bronx) en route to Manhattan in November, George Washington reportedly exclaimed, “Surely this is the seat of empire!” Thus originated the state’s nickname, “The Empire State” (first appearing on license plates in 1951).

The Lefferts Homestead was rebuilt near Flatbush Avenue; the original burned during the Battle of Long Island.

The last British troops sailed from New York on November 25, having nailed the Union Jack to a greased flagpole. The insult was quickly rectified. For years thereafter, Evacuation Day was one of the city’s most important holidays, marked by parades and patriotic dinners. On December 2, a fireworks display celebrated the peace treaty. George Washington bid farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern on December 4. Raising his wine glass, he said, “With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you; I most devoutly wish, that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been gracious and honorable.”

Earthquakes rocked the city at 8 P.M. and 11 P.M. on November 29. One diary recorded they “shook the city in a surprising manner. We felt it in bed—enough to arouse us from our first sleep.”

On November 30, the Black Brigade, a regiment formed with escaped slaves and free blacks, left Staten Island for Nova Scotia aboard HMS *L’Abondance*. About 4,000 blacks sailed for Canada. On December 4, the last British troops departed Staten Island, where, after seven years of occupation, many homes and churches lay in ruins; most of the forests had been chopped down; and scarcely any livestock remained. On December 8, the last troops marched out of Jamaica, ending their seven-year occupation of Long Island. One shopkeeper remembered, “One day the British patrolled the streets, next day the American soldiers.” That night, residents placed 13 candles in their windows to celebrate independence. Washington wrote to Lafayette that the harbor was “finally cleared of the British flag.”

## 1784

Governor George Clinton appointed James Duane mayor on February 5.

On February 22, the *Empress of China* sailed for Canton, initiating the China trade.

In February, Alexander Hamilton and others organized the Bank of New York; it opened on June 9 with \$500,000 in capital. The bank built its headquarters at 48 Wall Street in 1797 and is still at that address.

Closed during the British occupation, King’s College reopened as Columbia College.

## 1785

Congress met in City Hall on January 11 for the first time.

On February 23, the *New York Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* appeared, the city's first daily newspaper.

On March 31, the state legislature selected a site at the geographical center of Queens for a new county courthouse (east of Nassau Boulevard on Jericho Turnpike). It was dedicated in 1789.

Quakers and Anglicans founded the New York Manumission Society. Early on, the society attempted to block the sale of slaves and to stop kidnappers.

Regular stage service commenced to Albany.

The First Presbyterian Church on Wall Street was restored as a religious sanctuary. The British had used it as a military hospital during the Revolution.

## 1786

The first city directory was published on February 14.

On February 15, the Common Council solicited bids for a waterworks: "Whereas the Corporation of the city have long had it in contemplation to supply the inhabitants with water. . . . And whereas proposals have been lately offered for carrying on the said design by private companies and the funds of the corpora-

tion not enabling them to erect the necessary works on a public account . . . notice is hereby given that the privilege of supplying the city will be granted to such person or companies as will engage in the undertaking on the most reasonable terms." Only three bids were received, and action was deferred due to questions about entrusting a private corporation with the public water supply.

Dr. Samuel Provoost, rector of Trinity Church, was nominated as the first Episcopal bishop of the diocese of New York, established the previous year. The Reverend Provoost was formally installed in a ceremony at Lambeth Palace Chapel in London in 1787.

The Columbian Order of Tammany Society was founded.

Thomas Pool brought what was probably the first circus to New York, featuring "feats of horsemanship" and a clown between acts.

St. Peter's, Manhattan's first Catholic church, was consecrated on November 4 at Barclay and Church Streets, two years after the repeal of the anti-papist law. The present sanctuary was dedicated in 1838.

## 1787

In May, the first Methodist Society on Staten Island was organized.

The first fire insurance company, the Mutual Assurance Company, was founded on June 15.



The parade supporting New York's ratification of the Constitution.

Erasmus Hall Academy was founded in Flatbush by the Reverend John H. Livingston.

Pierre Toussaint, a Haitian-born slave, arrived in the city with his master; he became the proprietor of a successful hair salon and purchased the freedom of members of his family, though he remained loyal to his mistress until her death.

On October 27, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison began publishing the *Federalist Papers* in the newspapers.

## 1788

On April 13, after rumors spread that the medical students were stealing cadavers

from cemeteries for dissection, a mob marched on New York Hospital. The doctors would have been murdered had they not been whisked away to jail for their own safety. The jail was defended by prominent citizens who fired on the rioters after John Jay and Baron von Steuben were hit by rocks. Five were killed in the “Doctors Riot.”

On July 23, 5,000 marchers, many of them members of trade guilds, participated in the federal procession, a mile-and-a-half-long parade supporting New York's ratification of the Constitution. A 27-foot model frigate named *Alexander Hamilton* featured a banner proclaiming, “This federal ship will our commerce revive / And Merchants and shipwrights and joiners shall thrive.” New York

ratified the Constitution a few days later.

On September 17, the Common Council permitted the federal government to use City Hall. The building was enlarged and remodeled under Major Pierre L'Enfant, who provided his services without a fee.

## 1789

President-elect Washington arrived at the Battery on April 23. He was inaugurated at Federal Hall on April 30; President Washington and his cabinet then walked to St. Paul's Chapel for a worship service.

Describing the inauguration, Mrs. Josiah Quincy wrote: "Washington's appearance was most solemn and dignified.

Advancing to the front of the balcony, he laid his hand upon his heart, bowed several times, and then retired to an arm-chair near the table. The populace seemed to understand that the scene had overcome him and were at once hushed in profound silence. After a few moments Washington arose and came forward.

Chancellor Livingston read the oath of office according to the form prescribed by the Constitution, and Washington repeated it, resting his hand upon the Bible. Mr. Otis, Secretary of the Senate, then took the Bible to raise it to the lips of Washington, who stooped and kissed the book. At this moment a signal was given, by raising a flag upon the cupola of the Hall, for a general discharge of the artillery at the Battery. All the bells of the city rang out a peal of joy, and the assembled multitude sent forth a universal shout." Another eyewitness recalled: "Such

thundering peals went up from the crowds as seemed to shake the foundations of the city, and long and loud were they repeated as if their echoes were never to cease."

Martha Washington arrived from Mount Vernon on May 27, to a 13-cannon salute at the Battery.

On October 10, President Washington, Vice President John Adams, Governor George Clinton, and others sailed up the East River to Flushing. In his diary Washington wrote: "I sett off from New York, about nine o'clock, in my barge to visit Mr. Prince's fruit gardens and shrubberies. . . . These gardens, except in the number of young trees, did not answer my expectations. The shrubs were trifling and the flowers not numerous. The inhabitants of the place showed us what respect they could, by making the best use of one cannon to salute."

On October 12, Richard Varick succeeded James Duane as mayor; he held office until 1801. Varick Street runs through his property.

On October 22, two black slaves, Sarah and Nelly, burned the home of Jeremiah Vanderbilt, the Flushing town clerk, destroying the town records. They were convicted in a trial prosecuted by Attorney General Aaron Burr at the Queens County courthouse in September 1790; young Sarah was reprieved, but Nelly was hanged on October 14, 1790.

The District Court (later the Southern District Court) met for the first time in the Exchange Building on November 3, the



The Walter Franklin House, where President Washington lived.

first federal court to meet. The Supreme Court convened there in February 1790.

## 1790

On New Year's Day, President and Mrs. Washington received visitors in their home on Cherry Street, the house of merchant Walter Franklin. The vice president, the governor, senators, congressmen, diplomats, and the city's finest gentlemen and ladies came to call. In the evening they served tea, coffee, and cakes. Washington commented: "The highly favored situation of New York will, in the process of years,

attract numerous emigrants, who will gradually change its ancient customs and manners; but whatever changes take place, never forget the cordial and cheerful observance of New Year's Day." In 1899 the Mary Washington Colonial Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution installed a brass plaque on the Manhattan anchorage of the Brooklyn Bridge to commemorate the first presidential mansion. Washington later moved into the McComb Mansion on Broadway, below Trinity Church.

On the morning of January 8, President Washington addressed both houses on the

occasion of the opening of Congress at Federal Hall on Wall Street.

Second Trinity Church was consecrated on March 25. (The first was destroyed in the fire of 1776.) On March 8, church fathers, including John Jay, James Duane, and Robert Livingston, provided a pew for the president.

President Washington began a tour of Long Island on April 20. As recounted in his journal: “About 8 o’clock (having previously sent over my Servants, Horses, and Carriage), I crossed to Brooklyn and proceeded to Flat Bush—thence to Utrich—thence to Jamaica where we lodged at a Tavern kept by one Warne—a pretty good and decent house.” He rode east to Patchogue, visiting Setauket, Huntington, Oyster Bay, Roslyn, Flushing, and Newtown. On the trip from Flushing to Brooklyn he noted: “The Road is very fine, and the country in a higher state of cultivation & vegetation of Grass & grain forwarded than any place also, I had seen, occasioned in a great degree by the Manure drawn from the city of New York.”

At a private dinner in his Manhattan home in July, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton agreed that Jefferson would support the Assumption Bill (federal payment of state debts incurred during the Revolution), while Hamilton and Robert Morris would secure northern support for a national capital along the Potomac.

A grand banquet on August 2 honored Creek sachems who were in the city to

settle territorial disputes with the new government. The treaty between the Creeks and the United States was signed at Federal Hall on August 13.

Congress adjourned in New York for the last time on August 12, to reconvene in December in Philadelphia, ending the city’s tenure as the national capital.

President and Mrs. Washington left New York for the last time on August 30. A large crowd, including Governor George Clinton, Lieutenant Governor Pierre Van Cortlandt, Mayor Varick, and the order of the Cincinnati, gathered at the president’s residence to bid him farewell. He departed from the Battery to a 13-cannon salute.

General Horatio Gates, hero of Saratoga in 1777, moved to New York from Virginia after freeing his slaves. Horatio Street is named for him.

The old fort at the Battery was demolished.

## 1791

Aaron Burr took his seat as senator from New York on October 24.

Another yellow fever epidemic lasted from August to October; many fled northward to Greenwich Village.

The new home of the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown was dedicated on December 21; the British had demolished the original during their occupation.

## 1792

The Common (City Hall Park) was enclosed.

Union Hall Academy in Jamaica was dedicated on May 1, a year after local citizens raised £800 to establish the school.

On May 17, 24 merchants and auctioneers met under a buttonwood tree (68 Wall Street) and founded the New York Stock Exchange. The Buttonwood Agreement stated: “We the Subscribers, Brokers for the purchase and Sale of Public Stock, do hereby solemnly promise and pledge ourselves to each other, that we will not buy or sell from this day for any person whatsoever any kind of Public Stock, at a less rate than one quarter per cent Commission on the specie value, and that we will give preference to each other in our negotiations.”

The second courthouse in Richmondtown opened on Fresh Kills Road; the first was destroyed during the Revolution.

## 1793

John Bill Rickets and his troupe performed at Broome Street and Broadway, the first troupe billed as a circus and the first with a woman performer.

The Tontine Association, founded by such prominent merchants as John Broome, John Watts, Gulian Verplanck, John Delafield, and William Laight, completed a \$43,000 building at Wall and Water Streets. The name honored the Neapolitan “Tonti,”

a loan advanced by a number of associated capitalists for life annuities.

## 1794

Cornelius Vanderbilt was born on Staten Island on May 27. Known as “Commodore” because he began his career as a ferryman and built a fleet of steamships, he created the New York Central Railroad. At his death in 1877, he was worth more than \$100 million.

The public hospital moved to Bellevue, the Murray estate along the East River.

Yellow fever again arrived, killing hundreds.

## 1795

The New York Society Library moved into a new building at Nassau and Cedar Streets.

A British frigate brought yellow fever into the city; 732 died.

## 1796

Black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church formed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the first black congregation.

In July, John Fitch sailed an experimental 18-foot steamboat with a screw propeller on the Collect, circling the pond several



John Fitch's steamboat on the Collect.

times. Nothing came of it, and the craft was abandoned on the shore.

The Blackwell farmhouse was built on Blackwell's Island.

In November, Albany replaced New York as the state capital.

## 1797

Aaron Burr rented the estate known as Richmond Hill from Trinity Church. The stately home was built in 1767 by Major Abraham Mortier, a British official, and was once occupied by Vice President John Adams. It was demolished in 1899.

Newgate Prison opened along the Hudson between what is now Perry, Christopher, and Washington Streets.

A second almshouse opened.

After their son drowned, the parents erected a memorial inscribed: "Erected to the Memory of an Amiable Child St. Claire Pollock, Died 15 July 1797 in the Fifth Year of his age." The current monument in Riverside Park above Grant's Tomb dates from 1967.

## 1798

The Park Theater opened on Park Row on January 29.





Manhattan Water Company's reservoir on Chambers Street, 1825.

The city's only good water came from the tea water pump (Park Row and Pearl Street), probably from the same source which fed the Collect. Water carts filled their barrels for sale to the public.

According to a contemporary source: "The average quantity drawn daily from this remarkable well, about 20 feet deep and 4 feet in diameter, is 110 hogsheads of 130 gallons each. In hot summer days, 216 hogsheads have been drawn from it, and, what is very singular, there are never more or less than 3 feet of water in the well." On July 2, Dr. Joseph Browne presented to the Common Council his "*Memoir of the Utility and Means of Furnishing the City with Water from the River Bronx.*" The Council later approved the plan and ordered surveys of the proposed system.

Yellow fever arrived in August. The epidemic killed 2,000; of 522 deaths in

October, 431 were attributed to yellow fever.

## 1799

St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, built on the site of a chapel on Peter Stuyvesant's farm, was consecrated.

On April 7, Governor John Jay signed legislation creating the Manhattan Company. Aaron Burr, Dr. Joseph Browne (Burr's brother-in-law), John B. Church and others incorporated the enterprise to provide the city "with pure and wholesome water" and, not incidentally, establish a bank. On May 1, the *New York Gazette & General Advertiser* indignantly complained that Burr, "Our Machiavel," had manipulated the legislature to favor his company instead of empowering the

City to tap the Bronx River. “That a supply of good water is essential to the welfare of this City cannot be denied—but it was not necessary that a company should be incorporated for this purpose—the Corporation of the City, men whom we all know who possess the public confidence, stood ready to carry into effect so desirable an object—they only asked to be employed to do it. . . . Do the men who were concerned in such selfish, such corrupt practices, deserve your confidence? Will you by electing such men give a premium to villainy?” With \$2 million in capital, the Manhattan Company opened a bank on

September 1; this is the origin of the Chase Manhattan Bank.

New York State established a quarantine station on Staten Island to confine those arriving in the harbor with yellow fever or other infectious diseases.

On September 21, the Bank of New York opened a branch in Greenwich Village, giving Bank Street its name.

There was a memorial service on December 31 for George Washington, who died at Mount Vernon on December 14.



# 1800–1849

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## 1800

On February 15, the state ceded Governors Island to the federal government for a military base and harbor fortifications.

Alexander Hamilton purchased thirty acres uptown (143rd Street and Convent Avenue) for the estate he called The Grange. Designed by John McComb Jr. (architect of City Hall), it was completed in 1802. Hamilton transplanted 13 gum-tree saplings from Mount Vernon in Washington's memory.

The city's population was 60,515, including 3,333 free blacks and 2,534 slaves.

The body of Juliana Elmore Sands was found in a Spring Street well on New Year's Eve. Levi Weeks, her fiancé, was charged with her murder.

## 1801

The United States Navy established the Brooklyn Navy Yard at Wallabout Bay.

On June 1, Captain Robert Richard Randall bequeathed his 20-acre estate near Washington Square for Sailors' Snug Harbor, a home for "aged, decrepit, and worn-out sailors." He stipulated that produce be grown on the estate for residents.



The Grange, home of Alexander Hamilton.

On August 10, Haitians fought to prevent a white Haitian refugee from selling her slaves.

Edward Livingston became mayor on August 24.

John Hays was appointed high constable, a post he held for the next half century.

The first edition of the *New York Evening Post* appeared on November 16. Founded by Alexander Hamilton, it remains the city's oldest newspaper.

## 1802

The American Academy of Fine Arts was founded, with Chancellor Robert R. Livingston the first president.

Dr. David Hosack established the Elgin Botanic Garden (now the site of Rockefeller Center).

## 1803

Mayor Livingston laid the cornerstone for City Hall on May 26.

Yellow fever claimed 6,000 lives from July to November.

DeWitt Clinton became mayor on October 29.

## 1804

Vice President Aaron Burr shot Alexander Hamilton in a duel in Weehawken, New Jersey, on July 11. Hamilton died the next day in the Bayard family home at 81 Jane Street; he was buried in Trinity Churchyard.

David Hosack and John Pintard founded the New-York Historical Society on November 20.

## 1805

The Havemeyers built their sugar refinery on Vandam Street in January; by 1860, the operation had moved to Williamsburg. (It still produces Domino sugar.)

On February 19, Thomas Eddy, a Quaker, established the Free School Society to inculcate “habits of cleanliness, subordination, and order” among lower-class children. Their Chatham Street building opened in 1809. The society ran all public schools until 1853.

Congregation Shearith Israel established a new cemetery on West 11th Street. Only a small triangular plot remains of the original graveyard, which vanished in 1830 when the street was cut through.

As the polluted Collect was “dangerous to the public health,” the city ordered it drained.

Rufus King, the first senator from New York and former ambassador to Great Britain, purchased a 1750s farmhouse on

Jamaica Avenue known since as King Manor. King died in 1827; in 1898, the King family deeded it to the city for a museum.

## 1806

Blockading the harbor during the Napoleonic Wars, the British warship *Leander* attacked the sloop *Richard* off Sandy Hook on April 24.

The Medical Society of Richmond County was organized.

## 1807

On March 16, Marinus Willett became mayor.

On April 3, the Common Council appointed Gouverneur Morris, Simeon DeWitt, and John Rutherford to lay out “the leading streets and great avenues, of a width not less than 60 feet, and in general to lay out said streets, roads and public squares of such ample width as they may deem sufficient to ensure a free and abundant circulation of air among said streets and public squares when the same shall be built upon.”

On May 2, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill published *The Picture of New-York: or The Traveller’s Guide, through The Commercial Metropolis of the United States*.

Robert Fulton’s *North River Steamboat*, better known as the *Clermont* (for the country seat of Robert Livingston, Fulton’s financial backer), had its maiden voyage



Rufus King. (QBPL)

up the Hudson on August 17, reaching Albany in 34 hours. Commercial service began September 4. The *Clermont* was retired in 1814.

Former members of the Gold Street First Baptist Church founded the Abyssinian Baptist Church; the Reverend Thomas Paul was the first minister.

St. John’s Chapel was dedicated on Varick Street; St. John’s Park (originally Hudson Square) became the city’s finest residential neighborhood. Construction of Cornelius Vanderbilt’s railroad terminal in 1869 eliminated the square; Trinity Church demolished the chapel in 1918.



The *Clermont*.

## 1808

With President Jefferson's Embargo Act curtailing trade with Europe, unemployed seamen petitioned Mayor Willett on January 9 "to provide some means of our subsistence during the winter." In response, the Common Council opened a "Soup House" and funded public works projects for unemployed cartmen.

Writing in his journal *Salmagundi*, Washington Irving first referred to New York as "Gotham."

DeWitt Clinton became mayor for the second time on February 22.

The city's first Hook and Ladder Company was established on May 8.

On May 26, the bones of the Prison-Ship Martyrs were placed in a tomb against the wall of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Members of the Society of Tammany led a solemn procession from Manhattan for the dedication. During the British occupation of New York, the bodies of American prisoners were buried at Wallabout Bay. According to Walt Whitman: "They were dumped in loose loads every morning in pits, and the sand shoveled over them. The writer of these lines has been told by old citizens that nothing was more common in their early days than to see thereabout plenty of skulls and other bones of these dead—and that thoughtless boys would kick them about in play. Many of the martyrs were so insecurely buried that the sand, being blown off by the wind, exposed their bleached skeletons in great numbers." The bones were collected during construction

of the navy yard. Over the years, the tomb fell into a decrepit state.

On October 24, the Bleecker family donated part of their estate to the city for a new thoroughfare, Bleecker Street.

## 1809

William Elliot published *The Observer*, the first Sunday newspaper, on February 17; it lasted six months.

Tom Paine died on the morning of June 8 at 59 Grove Street.

Washington Irving published *A History of New York* by Diedrich Knickerbocker, a parody of Dr. Mitchill's 1807 book.

Joseph B. Pirsson opened a circulating library on Main Street in Brooklyn.

Black members left Trinity Church over the issues of abolition and discrimination and formed St. Philip's Episcopal Church. (St. Philip preached among the Africans.)

The *Long Island Star* began publishing in Brooklyn; Alden Spooner purchased it two years later.

## 1810

Jacob Radcliffe became mayor on March 5.

The steamboat *Raritan* began regularly scheduled trips from Manhattan to Amboy.

## 1811

DeWitt Clinton became mayor a third time on February 6.

The Commissioners Plan, the street grid imposed over Manhattan between Greenwich Village and 145th Street, was approved on April 1.

In May, a fire at Chatham and Duane Streets destroyed a hundred buildings.

Castle Clinton at the Battery and Castle Williams on Governors Island were completed, both designed by Colonel Jonathan Williams, superintendent of West Point and the army's chief engineer. Neither fort fired a salvo in anger. During the Civil War, Castle Williams was a stockade. Castle Clinton became Castle Garden in 1824.

John Stevens began running the world's first steam ferry, the *Juliana*, between Manhattan and Hoboken.

## 1812

City Hall was completed after nine years. It was faced with Massachusetts marble on the front and sides and brownstone in the back.

War with Great Britain disrupted the city's commerce, as British warships blockaded the harbor and Long Island Sound until 1815.

The first Tammany Hall was erected at Nassau and Frankfort Streets; the Society





Canal Street, 1820s.

of Tammany moved to a new building at Union Square in 1868.

## 1813

The commission appointed in 1812 to consider plans to drain the Collect and Lispenard's Meadows concluded "that Canal Street may be so constructed as to afford ample means of conveying off all the waters which . . . may collect from said district." They proposed a brick tunnel running from the Hudson River to Broadway. They stated: "Viewing New York as preeminently designed by nature to be the point where the streams of Commerce meet, and from whence they again diverge in foreign enterprise, and believing it destined to become the great emporium of North America, we cannot but regard whatever may contribute to the Salability, convenience or

embellishment of the City as of incalculable importance, both to its present and future Citizens, and to the inhabitants of this and neighboring States. If that portion of the City . . . is suffered to be built up in an irregular, huddled, promiscuous and confused manner, it will entail a curse upon the City and posterity."

After a solemn procession through the streets, a funeral service was held in Trinity Church for Captain James Lawrence and Lieutenant Augustus C. Ludlow of the USS *Chesapeake*, killed when their frigate was captured by HMS *Shannon*. They were buried in the churchyard on September 16.

Robert Macomb built a bridge and dam across the Harlem River at 155th Street.

## 1814

In the home of Elizabeth W. Lawrence, on February 7, 18 women in Quaker dress founded the Flushing Female Association to improve “the situation of the poor children of Flushing in their neighborhood, who from the incapacity of their parents to give them education, are growing up in danger of being led into vice and immorality.” Their school opened on April 1 with 19 pupils. After a public school opened in 1848, the village paid the association \$75 per pupil to educate “colored” children.

The Village of Jamaica was incorporated on April 15.

Robert Fulton’s steam ferry *Nassau* made its first trip between Brooklyn and Manhattan on May 8.

On July 15, Fort Stevens was completed in Astoria at Hell Gate.

## 1815

John Ferguson became mayor on March 6; Jacob Radcliffe succeeded him on July 10.

St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Prince Street, between Mott and Mulberry, was dedicated on May 4; Joseph F. Mangin was the architect. Irish immigrants founded the parish in 1809. After the dedication of St. Patrick’s on Fifth Avenue in 1879, the original was downgraded to a parish church.

Governor Daniel Tompkins purchased a tract on Staten Island for Tompkinsville.

The streets are named after his children—Arietta, Minthorne, and Hannah.

The Society for promoting the Manumission of Slaves opened the New York African Free School. In Bloomingdale, St. James Parish of Trinity Church began a Sunday School for black children “who would otherwise be but profane violators of the sanctity of God’s Holy Day.”

In December the Board of Health recommended that residents be protected against smallpox; in January the Common Council allocated \$1,000 for free vaccinations.

## 1816

The survey for Manhattan’s street grid was completed up to 145th Street.

The Village of Brooklyn was incorporated on April 12.

The *Chancellor Livingston*, an elegant, 135-berth steamer, began overnight service to New England.

The Richmond Turnpike Company was incorporated on March 31 to construct a road from Tompkinsville to Travis, shortening travel to Philadelphia.

A new penitentiary opened near Bellevue Hospital, replacing Newgate Prison in Greenwich Village.

## 1817

On June 11, President James Monroe visited the city, receiving visitors in the Picture Room at City Hall.

Bloodgood Haviland Cutter, the “Long Island Farmer Poet,” was born on August 5 in Little Neck.

The Brooklyn Public School opened, with 190 whites and 45 blacks in segregated classrooms.

The Old Ferry Road in Brooklyn was renamed Fulton Street.

The steamboat *Nautilus* began running from Whitehall Street to Tompkinsville.

## 1818

Five Quakers—Jeremiah and Francis Thompson, Isaac and William Wright, and Benjamin Marshall—founded the Black Ball Line, the first regularly scheduled packet service across the Atlantic. The *James Monroe* sailed in a snowstorm at 10 A.M. on January 8 with only 8 passengers aboard, though it had room for 20 more. Previously, ships had remained in the harbor until the hold and staterooms were full. By 1821, Black Ball ships were sailing on the 1st and 16th of every month. The line folded in 1878.

Cadwaller D. Colden became mayor on February 18.

The African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church was organized on High Street in

Brooklyn; they split off from a white congregation over issues of slavery and racial equality. The oldest black congregation in Brooklyn, they have been at 277 Stuyvesant Avenue since 1938.

The Reverend Peter I. Van Pelt of the Reformed Dutch Church at Port Richmond published a *Brief History of the Settlement of Staten Island*, the first history of the place.

David Dunham, the “Father of Williamsburgh,” began a steam ferry to Manhattan.

Henry Sands Brooks established a men’s clothing store in Manhattan. His five sons—Henry, Daniel, John, Elisha, and Edward—later changed the name to Brooks Brothers.

## 1819

John Pintard incorporated the first savings bank, the Bank for Savings of the City of New-York, on March 26. Between July and December, depositors opened 1,527 accounts totaling of \$153,378.

Walt Whitman was born in Huntington on May 31.

Yellow fever arrived in late summer and persisted into autumn.

The village of Brooklyn adopted an official street map.

Herman Melville was born on August 1 at 6 Pearl Street.

An advertisement offering “a few hours of healthful pleasure” appeared on August 11 for a trip the following Sunday. With Cornelius Vanderbilt at the helm, the paddle wheeler *Bellona* sailed from the Whitehall dock for a daylong fishing expedition. It was the first party boat.

About 40 persons attempted to prevent John Hall, a slave catcher, from taking Thomas Harlett, a fugitive slave. The sheriff jailed Harlett until he could be returned to his master.

A city ordinance passed on November 1 prohibited use “of any private drain or Sewer leading into any of the public Common Sewers . . . for the purpose of carrying off the contents of privies or water closets.”

Barrett & Tileston’s New-York Dyeing and Printing company was established on the north shore of Staten Island (originally Factoryville, now West New Brighton).

Manhattan merchant Wyant Van Zandt acquired the Van Wyck Estate on Little Neck Bay. (The Van Wycks built there in 1735.) He sold the property to George Douglas in 1835; in 1921, his mansion became the Douglaston Club.

## 1820

The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen founded the Apprentices’ Library for young workmen; privileges were extended to working women in 1862.

The Park Theater (Park Row and Ann Street) burned on May 25. A new theater opened the next year, funded by John Jacob Astor and John K. Beekman.

The first Unitarian church was dedicated on Chambers Street, near Church Street.

## 1821

The *Long Island Farmer* was first published in Jamaica on January 4.

Stephen Allen became mayor on March 5.

The first issue of the *Whitestone Herald* appeared on May 24.

Established to rival the Black Ball Line, the Red Star Line sailed for England on the 24th of every month.

The steamboat *Franklin* advertised excursions to fishing grounds twice a week for \$1.50, including dinner.

The Brooklyn Circulating Library was founded with about 800 volumes; an annual subscription was \$4, or \$2.50 for six months.

## 1822

The city’s first life insurance company, the Mechanics’ Life Insurance and Coal Company, was incorporated on February 28 “to make insurance upon lives, to grant annuities, and to open, find out, discover, and work coal beds within this state.”

In 1821 the legislature had authorized “trials of speed” in Queens each May and October for the next 10 years. Union Course, an enclosed mile-long oval track, soon opened in Woodhaven (79th to 84th Street, between Atlantic and Jamaica Avenues). On May 27 there, northern champion Eclipse bested Sir Henry, the southern champion, in a match race.

The cornerstone for St. James Cathedral, the oldest Catholic church in Brooklyn, was laid on July 25.

Alden Spooner published the first *Brooklyn Directory* at the offices of the *Star*.

St. Luke’s Chapel of Trinity Parish on Hudson Street was dedicated. The architect was James N. Wells.

On December 5, the Presbyterian church in Jamaica opened a Sabbath school for “colored children” who, they felt, would otherwise grow up ignorant of the Bible; it soon attracted 50 pupils.

## 1823

The New-York Gas-Light Company was incorporated on March 26 to illuminate Broadway from the Battery to Canal Street (replacing whale-oil lamps). Within a year the company installed gaslight in a house at 286 Water Street.

William Marcy Tweed was born April 13 in a house on Cherry Street.

The Sandy Hook Lightship was anchored in position in May; discontinued in 1829

and reestablished in 1838, it became the Ambrose Lightship in 1908.

An outbreak of yellow fever began in Brooklyn on August 22 in a house on Furman Street. Of 19 reported cases, 10 were fatal.

The brothers of Samuel F. B. Morse began publishing their Presbyterian newspaper, the *New York Observer*; it folded in 1912.

On December 25, Hezekiah B. Pierrepont advertised lots in Brooklyn Heights: “Situ- ated directly opposite . . . the city, and being the nearest country retreat, and easi- est of access from the centre of business that now remains unoccupied . . . views of water and landscape both extensive and beautiful; as a place of residence all the ad- vantages of the country with most of the conveniences of the city. . . . Gentlemen whose business or profession require their daily attendance in the city, cannot better, or with less expense, secure the health and comfort of their families.”

## 1824

General William Paulding became mayor on January 19.

In *Gibbons v. Ogden*, one of Chief Justice John Marshall’s most important decisions, the United States Supreme Court ruled unanimously that only the federal govern- ment could regulate interstate commerce, voiding the monopoly New York State granted Robert Livingston to run ferries to New Jersey (rights subsequently acquired by Aaron Ogden). Thomas Gibbons hired



The arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette at the Battery, 1824.

Cornelius Vanderbilt as captain of the *Beltona* to challenge Ogden and had Daniel Webster plead the case before the Supreme Court.

Castle Clinton became Castle Garden, a 6,000-seat theater for concerts, celebrations, and scientific demonstrations.

On August 16, the Marquis de Lafayette arrived in New York for his triumphant return to the United States, landing at the Battery amid great crowds. He had spent the previous day at the Staten Island home of Daniel Tompkins, former New York governor and vice president.

On November 20, the Brooklyn Apprentices Library Association was incorporated

to establish a library and “for collecting and forming a repository of books, maps, drawings, apparatus, models of machinery, tools and implements generally for enlarging the knowledge and thereby improving the condition of mechanics, manufacturers, artisans and others.” The Marquis de Lafayette laid the cornerstone for the building on July 4, 1825.

## 1825

Thomas Cole arrived in New York from his native England and exhibited three landscapes, attracting the attention of John Trumbell, president of the American Academy of Fine Arts.



Fort Hamilton. (QBPL)

The municipal hospital at First Avenue and 26th Street was renamed Bellevue. Founded in 1736 as a six-bed infirmary near the Common, it moved uptown in 1794; an almshouse opened there in 1816.

A new law banned liquor sales in the Queens County courthouse. The sheriff, who had held the license, then erected a shed against the front of the building and took orders through an open window.

The Harlem Library was founded as a private circulating library. In 1897, all Harlem residents gained free borrowing privileges.

The cornerstone of Fort Hamilton, built to guard the Narrows, was laid on June 11 (completed 1831). Robert E. Lee was post engineer from 1841 to 1846.

The 363-mile Erie Canal was completed. The *Seneca Chief* entered the lock at Buf-

falo on October 26 and reached New York on November 4. Governor Clinton emptied two casks from Lake Erie into the bay in a ceremonial wedding of the waters.

Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* was staged at the Park Theater on November 29, the first operatic performance in the nation.

## 1826

Philip Hone became mayor on January 3. At his urging, the Common Council eliminated the parade ground located above 23rd Street and designated the old potter's field as the Washington Military Parade Ground, soon renamed Washington Square. Not part of the 1811 street plan, it grew to 13.5 acres by 1828. A wealthy auctioneer, Hone is best known for his oft-quoted diary.

The National Academy of Design was founded on January 19; Samuel F. B. Morse was the first president, and Thomas Cole was among the founders.

Seeking to prevent slave catchers from taking fugitive slaves, a crowd surrounded City Hall and attacked the police with stones and sticks.

## 1827

Arthur Tappan founded the *Journal of Commerce*. David Hale and Gerard Hallock purchased it a year later and began running “news schooners” to intercept arriving vessels for the latest news, in order to beat other papers.

*Freedom’s Journal*, a black-owned and managed newspaper, appeared on March 16. It folded in 1829, despairing in a final editorial: “We consider it mere waste of words to talk of ever enjoying citizenship in this country.”

The New York Merchants Exchange, headquarters of the Board of the New York Stock Exchange, opened on Wall Street between William and Hanover Streets, supplanting the 1792 Tontine Coffee House as the commercial center.

Slavery ended in New York on July 4. Reverend William Hamilton of the African Zion Church (Leonard and Church Streets) declared from his pulpit: “This day has the State of New York regenerated itself. This day She has been cleansed of a most foul, poisonous and damnable stain.” The next day, several thousand blacks

marched from St. John’s Park to Reverend Hamilton’s church.

Swiss-born brothers John and Peter Delmonico opened their restaurant on William Street. After the 1835 fire, they rebuilt at Beaver and William Streets. The existing eight-story, cast-iron-and-steel-frame building dates from 1891.

The Village of Williamsburgh was incorporated.

After threatening to sell its library, the New-York Historical Society received \$8,000 from the state legislature.

The first edition of the *Richmond Republican* appeared on October 17. (It was actually printed in Manhattan.)

The General Theological Seminary occupied its new building on 20th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues.

The Throgs Neck Lighthouse, located where the East River becomes the Long Island Sound, went into operation; it was decommissioned in 1934.

## 1828

The Delaware and Hudson Canal was completed, opening the Pennsylvania coalfields to the New York market.

James Kent founded the New York Law Institute.

On July 14, the city paid the Blackwell family \$32,500 for their 147-acre island in the



East River, intending to use the site for prisons, asylums, workhouses, and hospitals. The penitentiary opened the next year, with 500 cells for men and 256 for women; prisoners labored in the island's quarries.

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse was lit on Staten Island; it was extinguished on August 31, 1922. Lighthouses at Fort Tompkins and the Navesink Highlands were also lit.

The New Utrecht Dutch Reformed Church was built (18th Avenue and 83rd Street). A replica of the liberty pole raised during the Revolution stands on the front lawn.

## 1829

The Seamen's Bank for Savings was incorporated on January 31.

The Coney Island Hotel opened, the first such establishment there.

The Brooklyn Sunday School Union, founded in 1816, staged a Protestant Sunday School parade, initiating what became Anniversary Day. At the time of the consolidation of Greater New York in 1898, the legislature declared the second Thursday in June a public school holiday in Brooklyn, to honor that city's former independence; in 1959, "Brooklyn Day" was inexplicably extended to public schools in Queens.

Robert Alexander Young published his "Ethiopian Manifesto," a visionary tract attacking slavery and proclaiming the coming of a black messiah.

Walter Bowne became mayor on December 29.

## 1830

The Manhattan Gas-Light Company was incorporated, with capital of \$500,000, to illuminate streets and homes.

Only 31 shares changed hands on the stock exchange on March 16, the all-time low.

Zion Episcopal Church in Little Neck was dedicated on June 17.

The cornerstone of the Northern Dispensary, a medical clinic at the triangle between Waverly Place and Christopher and Grove Streets, was laid on October 18.

## 1831

Irish immigrant Thomas Emmet incorporated the New York & Harlem Railroad, the city's first, on April 25 and began running horsecars between Prince and 14th Streets on November 14, 1832; by 1833, horsecars ran from City Hall to Murray Hill.

The University of the City of New York (New York University) was incorporated as a secular institution on April 18.

Twenty-five-year-old Alexis de Tocqueville arrived in New York to study American prisons. News of his arrival was printed in the *Mercantile Advertiser* the next morning and reprinted in the *New York Evening*



Sunday school parade in Brooklyn, ca. 1895.

*Post.* Tocqueville published his impressions in *Democracy in America*.

Developer Samuel Ruggles created Gramercy Park on December 17.

## 1832

On April 24, the Erie Railroad was chartered “to lay a single, double, or triple track from the City of New York to Lake Erie, to transport property or persons by the power of steam, or of animals, or by any other power.” Capitalized at \$10 million, it ultimately cost \$23.5 million.

Returning to New York after many years abroad, Washington Irving was honored at a public dinner on May 30.

Union Square, one of the few open spaces in the street grid, was formally named on

July 6. The Common Council had approved the acquisition of land for the park in April 1831.

Over 4,000 died of cholera between July and October, most in Irish neighborhoods.

Construction began on Colonnade Row, stylish homes below Astor Place.

Clinton Avenue, named for DeWitt Clinton, was laid out in Brooklyn (now the spine of the Clinton Hill Historic District).

## 1833

Gideon Lee became mayor on January 2.

Johann Stephen Raffener, a wealthy Austrian priest, leased a church on Second Street in the 13th Ward for St. Nicholas Kirche, the first German parish.



The music hall at Sailors' Snug Harbor.

On June 1, the cornerstone of the Marine Pavilion in Far Rockaway was laid. The 160-room hotel cost \$43,000; in May 1836, Charles Davis and Stephen Whitney purchased it for \$30,000.

On July 1, Aaron Burr married Eliza Bowen Jumel at her Upper Manhattan home (now the Morris-Jumel Mansion) and assumed control over her financial affairs. She filed for divorce a year later.

Twenty-seven ancient mariners moved into Sailors' Snug Harbor on Staten Island on August 1. The Marine Society had purchased the 130-acre site in 1831, and the cornerstone had been laid in October that year. The brick and marble Greek Revival houses on Washington Square North known as "The Row" were completed on lots leased from Sailors' Snug Harbor.

On September 3, Benjamin Day's *New York Sun* appeared, the city's first "penny paper." It folded on January 4, 1950.

The Fulton Fish Market opened.

William Lloyd Garrison founded the Anti-Slavery Society of New York at the Chatham Street Chapel. The threat of mob violence forced abolitionists to cancel their first public meeting planned for October 2.

The General Trades Union of New York was organized.

Minthorne Tompkins and William J. Staples purchased property from the Vanderbilts for a new suburb on Staten Island; it was officially named Stapleton on July 19, 1836.

Alexander Hamilton's widow, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, sold The Grange, the family's 1802 home. The property was subdivided in 1879.

## 1834

On April 8, Brooklyn received its city charter. In December 1833, New York had formally opposed Brooklyn's application to become a city, favoring a municipal union under Manhattan's lead. General Jeremiah Johnson gave Brooklyn's answer in the *Star* on February 13: "The inhabitants of Brooklyn know and feel the value and importance of the rights of freemen, and are accustomed to exercise them. . . . They could not be induced, by any consideration that could be offered, to a voluntary surrender of them. . . . They would consider an association with New-York, under a common government, as virtually implying such surrender. Between New-York and Brooklyn, there is nothing in common, either in object, interest, or feeling—nothing that even apparently tends to their connection,

unless it be the waters that flow between them. And even those waters, instead of, in fact, uniting them, form a barrier between them which, however frequently passed, still form and must forever continue to form an insurmountable obstacle to their union.”

During three days of voting beginning April 8, Democrats and Whigs fought in the streets, violently contesting the first direct election for mayor. (The legislature had amended the city charter in 1833.) Democrat Cornelius Lawrence narrowly won, but the Whigs took the Common Council.

The Brooklyn & Jamaica Company (founded April 25, 1832) began building its railroad from Jamaica to the foot of Atlantic Avenue. The Long Island Railroad was incorporated on April 24, capitalized at \$1.5 million; Cornelius Vanderbilt was a stockholder.

Anti-abolitionist riots raged July 7–11. The rioters destroyed St. Philip’s African Episcopal Church on Centre Street.

New York University graduated its first class on July 17. In August, stonecutters rioted against the use of convict labor at Sing Sing to cut marble for the NYU building on Washington square. The 27th New York Regiment camped on the square for four days to stifle protest.

Cholera arrived again.

Writing in the *New York Observer*, Samuel F. B. Morse advanced nativist and anti-Catholic views and warned against a papal “conquest” of the American Republic.

Tompkins Square Park opened.

St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church at Sixth Avenue and Washington Place was consecrated.

Thomas E. Davis developed New Brighton on Staten Island.

The first issue of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* appeared; Gustave Adolph Nau- mann was the editor. Circulation reached 2,000 the first year; 14,000 in 1854; and 55,000 by 1872. Eduard Schaffer published the city’s first German-language paper, *Der Deutsche Freund*, in 1819, but it quickly failed.

The New York & Harlem Railroad extended its streetcar line from Madison Square to 86th Street along Fourth (Park) Avenue and reached Harlem by 1837.

New York and New Jersey settled their boundary dispute over the Hudson River and the harbor, setting the line at the river’s midpoint but granting New York possession of all the islands.

## 1835

In the spring, voters authorized the city to build the Croton Aqueduct.

The first edition of James Gordon Bennett’s *New York Herald* appeared on May 6. His statement of purpose proclaimed: “Our only guide shall be good, sound, practical common sense, applicable to the business and bosoms of men engaged in every day life. We shall support no party—



The fire of 1835 consuming Coenties Slip.

be the organ of no faction or coterie, and care nothing for any election or candidate from president on down to constable. We shall endeavor to record facts, on every public and proper subject, stripped of verbiage and colorizing, with comments when suitable, just, independent, fearless, and good tempered.”

On June 21, nativists and Irish fought in the Sixth Ward in the Five Points Riot.

David Ruggles, William Johnson, George Barker, Robert Brown, and J. W. Higgins founded the Committee of Vigilance to aid runaway slaves and resist slave catchers. They assisted Frederick Douglass when he arrived in the city.

The South Ferry began running from the foot of Atlantic Avenue to Whitehall Street.

The *Long Island Democrat* was founded in Queens.

Beginning on August 21, the *Sun* began a series describing life on the moon as seen through a telescope in South Africa. The stories were false, but circulation rose.

Washington Irving and other Knickerbockers, all descendants of old New York families, formed the St. Nicholas Society to offset the prestigious New England Society.

On the evening of October 29, William Leggett, publisher of the *New York Evening Post*, and other Democrats tried to wrest

control of Tammany Hall. When loyal Tammany men extinguished the lights, the insurgents lit matches, or “locofocos.” The Locofocos, as they became known, opposed paper money issued by banks and advocated the end of imprisonment for debt.

Public executions were banned in the city.

On the night of December 16, a fire destroyed 17 blocks around Hanover Square. The night was so cold that water froze inside the fire hoses. Over 700 buildings, including the Merchants Exchange on Wall Street and most survivors from the Dutch era, were destroyed. Ultimately, 23 of the city’s 26 insurance companies declared bankruptcy after the conflagration.

## 1836

Frozen solid since early February, the Hudson and East Rivers finally broke to permit river traffic on March 2.

The cornerstone for Brooklyn City Hall was laid on April 28, but the financial panic of the next year stopped work until 1846.

Presbyterians founded the New York Theological Seminary (now Union Theological Seminary) in Lenox Hill. It moved to Morningside Heights in 1910.

John McDowall organized the Magdalene Society to aid prostitutes.

Philip Hone sold his home near City Hall: “Almost everybody downtown is in the

same predicament for all the dwelling houses are to be converted into stores. We are tempted with prices so exorbitantly high that none can resist. I have sold my house, it is true, for a large sum; but where to go I know not.” He rented a house at Broadway and Washington Place.

On April 18, the Brooklyn & Jamaica Company ran its first train from the foot of Atlantic Avenue to Jamaica. The railroad suffered its first accident on May 3, when a train carrying spectators to Union Course hit a cow and the following train could not stop. On December 1, the Long Island Railroad leased the line for 44½ years, intending to continue to Greenport for a connection to steamboats to Boston.

On May 31, the 600-room Astor House opened on Broadway between Vesey and Barclay Streets, on the site of John Jacob Astor’s home. Philip Hone wrote: “The establishment will be a great public advantage, and the edifice an ornament to the city, and for centuries to come will serve, as it was probably intended, as a monument of its wealthy proprietor.” It was demolished in 1913.

Aaron Burr died on September 14 at Daniel Winant’s Inn in Port Richmond, the same day his divorce from Eliza Bowen Jumel became final.

In October, Thomas Cole exhibited “The Course of Empire” at the National Academy of Design in Clinton Hall. Merchant Luman Reed had commissioned the five paintings in 1833 but died a few months before Cole finished. (“Course of Empire” is now in the New-York Historical

Society.) In this year also, Cole married and moved to the Hudson River town of Catskill. Cole died there on February 11, 1848.

## 1837

The Panic of 1837 began in January, as a result of President Andrew Jackson's bank war. Hundreds of businesses went bankrupt and millions of dollars were lost. A run on the banks caused all but three New York banks to suspend specie payments on May 10.

On February 13, the Flour Riot started when a hungry crowd, facing a severe winter and high prices, broke into the Eli Hart & Co. warehouses on Washington Street (between Dey and Cortlandt) and stole barrels of flour and sacks of grain. The mayor and constables tried to intervene but were pelted with stones and ice.



The inn at Port Richmond where Aaron Burr died.

Whig Aaron Clark was elected mayor on April 11.

The Village of Flushing was incorporated on April 15. According to the *Gazetteer of the State of New York*, published the year before, the village had about 140 dwellings, "some of which are neat and several magnificent."

The New York & Harlem Railroad opened a depot at Madison Avenue and 26th Street. (It later became the first Madison Square Garden.) The company built the Fourth Avenue Tunnel between 34th and 42nd Streets (now used by automobiles), with streetcars running every 15 minutes; the fare was 25¢.

George Pope Morris, founder of the *Mirror*, penned "Woodman, Spare That Tree," based on an incident when he paid a man \$10 not to cut down an ancient elm at Striker's Tavern at the foot of West 97th Street.

The original Gothic Revival building of New York University was dedicated at Washington Square; NYU's Main Building now occupies the site. One lone finial remains, set on a pedestal adjacent to Bobst Library. Faculty member Samuel F. B. Morse demonstrated the electric telegraph in the building later in the year.

The *Richmond County Mirror* appeared, the first newspaper printed on Staten Island.

St. James Roman Catholic Church at 32 James Street was completed. The church



New York & Harlem Railroad depot, Madison Avenue and 26th Street.

was the parish of future governor Al Smith, who grew up around the corner.

Charles Lewis Tiffany established his firm on Broadway.

The third county courthouse opened in Richmondtown (now part of Historic Richmond Town).

Daniel Webster addressed 5,000 Whigs at Niblo's Saloon.

## 1838

Steamship service between New York and Europe began; the *Sirius* arrived from Cork on April 22, and the *Great Western* arrived from Bristol the next day.

Workers constructing the Croton Aqueduct struck for higher wages in April and again in July.

Brooklynites commissioned Major David Bates Douglass to design Green-Wood Cemetery. He completed his work in 1839. In 1844 the body of former governor DeWitt Clinton was moved there from Albany. Those buried in Green-Wood include Leonard Bernstein, Samuel F. B. Morse, Boss Tweed, Seth Low, Horace Greeley, and Margaret Sanger.

Lorenzo da Ponte, a poor grocer, died in New York. The first professor of Italian at Columbia College, he also wrote librettos for several Mozart operas, including *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutti*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*.



# 1839

The Brooklyn City Library was incorporated; 57 gentlemen took out the first subscriptions on February 2.

Democrat Isaac L. Varian was elected mayor on April 9.

The Village of Astoria was incorporated on April 12.

John Quincy Adams delivered the oration at a dinner for the sesquicentennial of George Washington's inauguration. Philip Hone described it as an "assemblage of first-rate men." The first toast was "George Washington: his example was perfect."

The legislature allocated \$4,000 to build a poorhouse on Staten Island. This became the Farm Colony.

The city acquired the site for Mount Morris Park (renamed Marcus Garvey Park in 1973).

An ordinance dated May 9 mandated: "All ashes or cinders shall be kept, for the purpose of delivering the same to the ash-carts, in vessels of tin, iron, or other metal under the penalty of One Dollar for each offense."

The Cunard Line relocated its American headquarters from Boston to New York.

The Robbins Reef Light off Bayonne went into operation; it was rebuilt in 1883.



The abandoned Octagon on Roosevelt Island, 1977. (Mort Pavane/RIHS)

Heavily damaged in a snowstorm, Trinity Church had to be demolished.

St. Peter's, the first Catholic parish on Staten Island, was founded.

A legislative commission prepared Brooklyn's official street map, extending the grid beyond the old village.

The Octagon Tower on Blackwell's Island was completed as the administration building for the Lunatic Asylum. Though landmarked, it remained a ruin for years.

In December, John Draper, a professor at New York University, produced the first known portrait photograph, a daguerreotype of his sister.

## 1840

Bishop John Hughes requested funds from the Common Council for Catholic schools on September 21. The council rejected his appeal, 15–1.

The first indoor bowling alley opened in Manhattan.

The Halls of Justice, the Tombs, was completed between Centre, Elm, Franklin, and Leonard Streets. The Egyptian-inspired prison was replaced in 1902; that building was, in turn, replaced in the 1970s. The name endures.

Black sailors founded the Colored Seamen's Home.

In November, Thomas Cole exhibited "The Voyage of Life" at the National Academy of Design, in the fifth floor of the Atheneum Building, Broadway and Leonard Street. Banker Samuel Ward commissioned the series. (Ward was the father of Julia Ward Howe, who penned "The Battle Hymn of the Republic.")

## 1841

P. T. Barnum opened his museum on Broadway, displaying a contortionist, a demonstration of laughing gas, and a painting of Reims Cathedral.

Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* appeared on April 10.

Democrat Robert H. Morris was elected mayor on April 13, defeating Samuel F. B.

Morse, who ran on a nativist, anti-immigrant platform.

Jesuits established St. John's College, now Fordham University, at Rose Hill.

The first issue of the *Brooklyn Eagle* appeared on October 26. It folded in 1955.

The New York & Harlem Railroad bridged the Harlem River, extending service into Westchester.

After an especially heavy rainstorm, the first dam across the Croton River for the city's reservoir collapsed. It was redesigned and rebuilt within a year.

## 1842

At the Park Theater on February 14, 2,500 attended the "Boz Ball" honoring Charles Dickens. Dickens recorded his caustic impressions of the city in *American Notes*.

The United States Custom House was completed in May on the site of Federal Hall, where George Washington was inaugurated. Today the Greek Revival structure is a museum called Federal Hall. One piece of the 18th-century original remains: a balcony railing preserved in the Museum of the City of New York.

The *Flushing Journal* began publication.

Woodrow United Methodist Church on Staten Island was erected.

After seven years and \$12,500,000, the Croton Aqueduct was completed. Water



Celebration for the opening of the Croton Water System.

flowed into the Murray Hill Reservoir (site of the New York Public Library) on July 4. On October 14, a celebration at City Hall Park marked the achievement.

Frederick and Maximilian Schaefer established the first brewery in America to produce lager beer, on Broadway between 18th and 19th Streets. In 1849 they relocated to Park Avenue and 51st Street.

Thomas Eddy and John Griscom founded the New York House of Refuge, the first juvenile reformatory.

Samuel F. B. Morse supervised the laying of a telegraph cable connecting Manhattan and Governors Island. On October 18, during the annual fair of the American Institute (founded 1828) at Castle Garden,

Morse and Samuel Colt demonstrated a new harbor defense system. They blew up a 260-ton brig using electric current to detonate a mine. The military was unimpressed.

The New York Philharmonic (originally the Philharmonic Society) held its first concert on December 7 under Ureli Corelli Hill, performing Beethoven's Symphony no. 5 (its first public performance in America); Hummel's Quintette in D Minor; arias and duets from Weber's *Oberon*, Rossini's *Armida*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and Mozart's *Belmont and Castantia*; and an overture by Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda.

# 1843

The First Ward school opened, the first without the Protestant Bible in the curriculum. Secularizing public education was a victory for the Catholic minority.

Prominent bankers and merchants founded the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (incorporated 1848).

Henry David Thoreau spent the summer on Staten Island as a tutor in the home of Judge William Emerson (Ralph Waldo Emerson's brother). He wrote: "From the hill directly behind the house I can see New York, Brooklyn, Long Island, the Narrows, through which vessels bound to and from all parts of the world chiefly pass—Sandy Hook and the Highlands of Neversink—and, by going still farther up the hill, the Kill van Kull, and Newark Bay. From the pinnacle of one Madame Grimes' house, the other night at sunset, I could see almost round the island. Far in the horizon there was a fleet of sloops bound up the Hudson, which seemed to be going over the edge of the earth; and in view of these trading ships, commerce seems quite imposing. But it is rather derogatory that your dwelling-place should be only a neighborhood to a great city—to live on an inclined plane. I do not like their cities and forts, with their morning and evening guns, and sails flapping in one's eye. I want a whole continent to breathe in, and a good deal of solitude and silence, such as all Wall Street cannot buy—nor Broadway with its wooden pavement. I must live along the beach, on the southern shore, which looks directly out to

sea, and see what that great parade of water means, that dashes and roars, and has not yet wet me, as long as I have lived."

Meeting in Sinsheimer's Cafe at 60 Essex Street on October 13, 12 young Germans founded the fraternal order of B'nai B'rith to assist new immigrants.

The *Rainbow*, one of the first clipper ships, was built in the East River shipyard of Smith & Dimon for merchant William H. Aspinwall.

On Christmas night, Emeline Houseman, the young wife of a schooner captain out at sea, and their 20-month-old daughter were bludgeoned to death in their Richmond Avenue home, which was set ablaze. Suspicion fell on Polly Bodine, Emeline's sister-in-law and a woman of questionable morals. The first trial, in Richmond Court House, ended in a hung jury; a second, in Manhattan, saw the guilty verdict overturned; Bodine was acquitted in a third trial in Newburgh. Polly Bodine returned to Staten Island and lived to be 82.

# 1844

James Harper was elected mayor on April 9.

On July 27, the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) was completed to Greenport, connecting with Cornelius Vanderbilt's steamer *New Haven*. The combination cut travel time to Boston in half. When sparks from the engines set fires along the right of way in Suffolk, farmers and woodsmen retaliated with acts of sabotage until the company paid damages. Service was



Lithograph by Nathaniel Currier of the match race between Peytona and Fashion, 1845. (QBPL)

suspended in 1847 after Vanderbilt pulled out of the arrangement.

The New York & Harlem Railroad reached White Plains.

President John Tyler married Julia Gardiner (of the Gardiner's Island Gardiners) at the Church of the Ascension, Fifth Avenue and 10th Street. The church was dedicated in 1841; Richard Upjohn was the architect.

The "Millerites," a religious cult, set October 28 for the end of the world; believers bought "ascension robes" and closed their shops in anticipation of the end. One shoemaker began to give away all his stock until the arrival of his son, who had the man committed to an asylum "until the excitement of his mind abated."

The 122-year-old Quaker Meeting House in Maspeth burned on December 21.

## 1845

The *New York Evening Mirror* published "The Raven," by Edgar Allan Poe, on January 29.

Democrat William F. Havemeyer was elected mayor on April 8. He reorganized the 800-man police force and tried to clean up the streets by enacting a sanitation law providing for garbage collection and health inspectors.

On May 13, the most famous match race of the antebellum era took place at Union Course in Woodhaven. Southern champion Peytona bested Fashion, the New

York horse, for a \$20,000 purse before 70,000 spectators.

First Presbyterian, Manhattan's oldest Presbyterian congregation (established in January 1718), consecrated its new home at Fifth Avenue and 12th Street. The wrought-iron fence along Fifth Avenue came from the original site at Wall and Nassau Streets.

Thirty-three German Jews established Temple Emanu-El, the first Reform congregation.

On July 19, a fire broke out near Whitehall and Broad Streets. Fueled by a saltpeter explosion, the blaze destroyed 345 structures, worth \$10 million.

The Moravian church at New Dorp was consecrated.

On December 10, Mrs. Ann Alsop sold her farm near Newtown Creek to the Roman Catholic Church for Calvary Cemetery, stipulating that the Alsop family plot always be maintained.

## 1846

The first telegraph between New York and Philadelphia began operating on January 26; the line to Washington was finished in June. Samuel F. B. Morse and his partners incorporated the Magnetic Telegraph Company in 1844.

Andrew F. Mickle was elected mayor on April 14.

The New York & Hudson Railroad received its state charter in May.

A. T. Stewart opened his dry goods palace at Broadway and Chambers Street.

William Cullen Bryant and others founded the Century Association to promote literature and the arts. Originally limited to 100 members, the association first met on January 13, 1847, in the rotunda of the New-York Gallery of Fine Arts in City Hall Park.

At Elysian Fields in Hoboken, on June 19, the New York Knickerbockers, the first baseball club, played a cricket team in the first recorded baseball game; the Knickerbockers lost, 23–1. Founded on September 3, 1845, the Knickerbocker Club had established the rules of the game and the dimensions of the field, setting the bases at 90 feet apart and the number of players and innings at nine.

Grace Church, designed by James Renwick Jr., was dedicated at Broadway and 10th Street on March 7. The congregation was formed in 1808.

Third Trinity, a Gothic Revival structure designed by Richard Upjohn, was consecrated on Ascension Day, May 21.

Anti-slavery activist Louis Napoleon secured the release of George Kirk, a runaway slave who arrived as a stowaway aboard a ship from Georgia. Granting Napoleon's petition, the judge ruled that Georgia's laws were not applicable and the captain had no right to detain Kirk.

William A. Muhlenburg founded St. Luke's Hospital.

December 8 saw the clipper *Sea Witch*, with its radical hull design, launched at the Smith and Dimon shipyard on the East River. Built for Howland and Aspinwall for the China trade, the ship sailed from Canton to Sandy Hook in a record 74 days, 14 hours. The *Sea Witch* ran aground off Cuba in 1856, carrying 500 Chinese laborers.

The Second Congregational Church in Brooklyn was dedicated. In 1854, the African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church had acquired the Greek Revival building, and it became a stop on the Underground Railroad. (It is now Polytechnic University's student center.)

## 1847

On May 7, the Free Academy received its charter as a college for graduates of common schools. Townsend Harris, president of the Board of Education, stated: "Open the doors to all—let the children of the rich and poor take seats together and know no distinction save that of industry, good conduct, and intellect." It became City College in 1866.

Madison Square Park opened to the public on May 10.

Samuel Bowne Parsons brought a shoot from a weeping beech tree from Europe and planted it in his Flushing nursery. The tree died in 1998.



Henry Ward Beecher.

The Deutscher Liederkranz was founded. The most prestigious German singing society, it later counted as members William Steinway and Oswald Ottendorfer.

The *Keying*, a Chinese junk, visited New York harbor.

Reservoir Square, behind the Croton reservoir on 42nd Street, was enclosed as a park. (It had been a potter's field since 1823.)

Henry Ward Beecher became minister of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn Heights.

The New York Academy of Medicine was founded.

# 1848

John Jacob Astor died on March 29. He had come to New York from Germany in 1783, at the age of 20. Late in life he stated: “Could I begin life again, knowing what I now know, and had money to invest, I would buy every foot of land on the island of Manhattan.” He bequeathed funds to establish a library: “Desiring to render a public benefit to the city of New-York, and to contribute to the advancement of useful knowledge and the general good of society, I do . . . appropriate \$400,000 out of my residue estate, to the establishment of a public library” to be furnished “upon the most ample scale and liberal character . . .

accessible, at all reasonable hours and times, for general use, free of expense to persons resorting thereto.” With Washington Irving among the original trustees, the library at Astor Place was incorporated on January 13, 1849.

On April 11, William F. Havemeyer was again elected mayor.

High Bridge, carrying the Croton Aqueduct over the Harlem River, was completed.

Grove Court was built; it was accessible only through a gate between 10 and 12 Grove Street.



High Bridge.



Walt Whitman's weekly newspaper, the *Brooklyn Freeman*, first appeared on September 9. It became the *Brooklyn Daily Freeman* on March 12, 1849.

The old Park Theater burned.

James Bogardus produced his first cast-iron building facade for John Milhau's pharmacy at 183 Broadway, in Lower Manhattan.

Frederick Law Olmsted purchased a farm on Staten Island, where he produced nursery stock; it remained his home until 1854.

On October 5, Frederick Hecker, hero of a failed revolution in Germany, arrived to a tumultuous welcome.

The Society for the Relief of Worthy Aged Colored Persons opened the Colored Home on First Avenue and 64th Street. The institution moved to the Bronx in 1898 and became the Lincoln Hospital and Home.

Cypress Hills cemetery in Queens opened on November 21.

A fire in Brooklyn consumed more than eight blocks, over 200 buildings.

Founded as the first chapel of Trinity Church in 1749, St. George's Episcopal Church was consecrated on November 19 at Stuyvesant Square (originally part of Peter Stuyvesant's farm). Rebuilt after an 1865 fire, the Romanesque Revival sanctuary was renovated in 1947 and again in 1964.

St. Joseph's, the oldest Catholic church on Staten Island, was built on Poplar Avenue in Rossville.

On December 28, the New York and New Haven completed a railroad through Connecticut, the first overland line from Manhattan to Boston.

## 1849

On January 27, the Free Academy opened at 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue, in a building designed by James Renwick Jr.

The new city charter stipulated that the mayor and aldermen were to serve for two years instead of one. On April 10, Caleb S. Woodhull was the first mayor elected for a two-year term.

On May 2, the following ordinance went into effect: "No person shall throw, cast, or lay any ashes, offal, vegetables, garbage, dross, cinders, shells, straw, shavings, dirt, filth or rubbish of any kind whatever, in any street, lane, alley or public place." Punishment for violations included a fine of up to \$10 or five days in jail.

At Astor Place, Irish workers and nativists disrupted a performance of *Macbeth* starring English actor William C. Macready on May 7—the same night that American Edwin Forrest was performing the role in another theater. According to the *Daily Tribune*, Macready "was received with cheers, waving of handkerchiefs, groans, and hisses. . . . Rotten eggs, potatoes, and pennies were thrown on the stage." Before Macready's next performance, handbills



The Astor Place Riot, May 10, 1849.

appeared declaring: “Workingmen! Shall Americans or Englishmen rule in this country?” On May 10, Macready’s performance was again disrupted as a crowd of 10,000 gathered outside. Called to restore order, the militia opened fire, leaving 22 dead and 150 injured.

An outbreak of cholera began on May 14 in Five Points. More than 1,000 died in temporary hospitals; many more died in their homes.

The Brooklyn Gas Light Company began providing coal gas for streetlights. The city installed the lamps and hired lamplighters.

Father Theobald Matthew arrived from Ireland and soon enrolled 150,000 in his Temperance Society.

Brooklyn’s first baseball club, the Atlantics, was organized.

Isidor Busch published the first Jewish newspaper, the weekly *Israels Herold*; it failed after three months.

St. Vincent’s, the city’s first Catholic hospital, opened at Seventh Avenue and 11th Street.

Brooklyn City Hall was completed. Gamaliel King was the architect.

The Hudson River Railroad began service to Riverdale.



# 1850–1899

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## 1850

Bishop John Joseph Hughes purchased land at Fifth Avenue and 50th Street for St. Patrick's Cathedral. Hughes was elevated to archbishop, making New York an archdiocese.

*Harper's New Monthly Magazine* began as a general-interest magazine, promoting books published by Harper's.

The Long Island Railroad went into receivership on March 4.

The Brooklyn and Jamaica Plank Road Company was formed on May 21.

On June 9, Henry Steinway, his wife, and their five sons arrived from Germany aboard the *Helene Sloman*. Their son Charles had earlier emigrated after the failed German revolution of 1848.

Giuseppe Garibaldi arrived on August 2. He spent the winter on Staten Island with Antonio Meucci. Garibaldi left on April 28, 1851, for Central America but stopped briefly in New York in 1853 on his return to Italy.

On Staten Island, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded in Bogardus Corners (later Sandy Ground, now Rossville).

P. T. Barnum sponsored the American tour of Jenny Lind, "The Swedish Nightingale." Her concert at Castle Garden on September 11 had a top price of \$225. Unhappy with Barnum, Lind later broke her contract and toured under a new manager, taking in \$176,000.

Congregation Anshe Chesed dedicated their synagogue on Norfolk Street; designed by Alexander Saeltzer, it is the oldest synagogue in the city and the first Reform temple.

Plymouth Church was dedicated in Brooklyn Heights. (The original had burned in 1849.)

On November 5, Ambrose C. Kingsland was elected mayor.

The Reverend Lewis M. Pease of the New York Ladies Home Missionary Society opened the Five Points Mission. It began with a Sunday school and soon added a day school and an employment bureau.

The New York Industrial Congress was organized.

Nicholas Pike, director of the Brooklyn Institute, imported eight pairs of English, or house, sparrows. He released them the next spring, but they apparently did not thrive. He released more in Green-Wood Cemetery in 1853.

## 1851

On May 5, Mayor Kingsland proposed a public park “on a scale which will be worthy of the city. The public places of New York are not in keeping with the character of our city. . . . The establishment of such a park would prove a lasting monument to the wisdom, sagacity and forethought of its founders.” On June 21, State Senator James Beekman introduced legislation authorizing the city to acquire Jones Wood

(150 acres along the East River, from 66th to 75th Street, where Beekman owned property) through eminent domain. In January 1852, the Special Commission on Parks recommended a central park, roughly coinciding with the present boundaries.

Philip Hone died on May 5 at his home at Broadway and Great Jones Street.

On May 15, a parade along Broadway and the Bowery celebrated completion of the Erie Railroad from Piermont on the Hudson River to Dunkirk on Lake Erie; construction of the railroad had taken 17 years. The next day, the steamer *Erie* carried Senator Daniel Webster and other guests to Piermont for the inaugural run.

On June 3, the Knickerbockers became the first baseball club to wear uniforms, sporting white shirts, blue pants, and straw hats.

The New York Central & Hudson Railroad was completed along the Hudson into Westchester.

Henry J. Raymond’s *New York Daily Times* appeared on September 18; it cost a penny.

The New York Juvenile Asylum was established.

The schooner *America*, designed and built by James R. and George Steers for John C. Stevens, founder of the New York Yacht Club in 1844, won the Royal Yacht Squadron’s regatta around the Isle of Wight. Thus originated the America’s Cup,



Lutheran Cemetery, Middle Village (QBPL)

successfully defended by the New York Yacht Club until an Australian triumph in 1983.

Most Holy Redeemer, a stone church on Third Street between Avenues A and B, was completed and became the center of the growing German Catholic community.

On December 6, Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth landed at Castle Clinton for his triumphant American tour.

## 1852

Williamsburgh, formerly part of rural Bushwick, received a city charter; on April

16, the state legislature chartered the Williamsburgh Water Company (renamed the Brooklyn Water Company in 1855).

January 31 marked the founding of the Brooklyn Atheneum and Reading Room. Its building at Clinton Street and Atlantic Avenue was completed on April 19, 1853; the \$49,728 cost was raised by subscription.

Frederick William Geissenhainer established Lutheran Cemetery on 225 acres in Middle Village.

New York hosted the third annual German *Sangerfest*, attracting singing societies from across the country.

The Flushing Railroad received its charter on March 3 and began construction in April, before they had an East River terminal. In September, the directors selected Hunters Point for the terminal after Williamsburgh rejected one in Greenpoint.

Shakespearean actor Edwin Forrest completed Font Hill, a mansion with six octagonal towers overlooking the Hudson. It is now the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

The new workhouse on Blackwell's Island was completed, replacing the older facility at Bellevue; 221 cells were set in tiers along three-story granite walls.

On June 30, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) opened a reading room modeled after the successful London institution.

Landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, 37, died in a steamboat accident off Riverdale on July 28.

The People's Washing and Bathing Establishment opened on Mott Street.

Louis Napoleon secured freedom for eight slaves brought into the city when their master, Jonathan Lemmon, stopped en route to Texas. Judge Elijah Paine ruled the slaves were free as soon as they arrived in New York. Pro-slavery merchants compensated Lemmon for his lost property.

St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church was organized in Rosebank on Staten Island; the sanctuary was completed in 1858.

August Schmidt's Constanz Brewery (later Monroe Eckstein's Brewery) opened on Staten Island at Four Corners.

Jacob A. Westervelt was elected mayor on November 2.

The New York Custom House accounted for approximately 80 percent of the federal government's revenue.

## 1853

The cornerstone of the Five Points Mission was laid on January 27, on the site of the notorious Old Brewery, demolished in December 1852. The five-story brick structure, housing schoolrooms, a chapel, and model apartments, was dedicated on June 18.

Steinway & Sons was established on Varick Street on March 5. They began with 10 workers and sold their first piano in September.

A 17-year-old Samuel Clemens took a job in the composing room of the John A. Grey and Greene printing company. Later in life, Clemens (Mark Twain) remarked: "Make your mark in New York and you're a made man."

July 4 saw the opening of America's first world's fair, the Crystal Palace Exposition, in Reservoir Square at 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue.

Frank Queen founded the *New York Clipper*, a weekly that popularized baseball, boxing, and other sports.



The Crystal Palace.

Charles Loring Brace founded the Children's Aid Society to help homeless children. The next year he opened the first home for orphaned newsboys at Fulton and Nassau Streets, providing a bed and breakfast for 6¢ a night.

Bechtel's Brewery was founded on Staten Island.

The Board of Education took over the nine colored schools from the Society for Education among Colored Children, which had opened them a few years earlier.

Stanford White was born on November 9 at his parents' East 10th Street home.

Myrtle Avenue, a plank road from Brooklyn to Jamaica, opened December 12.

## 1854

The Astor Library on Lafayette Place opened on January 9, boasting 80,000 volumes. The *Morning Courier* reported: "We understand from the Superintendent that nothing could be more satisfactory than the department, both of readers and visitors, during the first week's experiment in the use of the Library; it was unexceptionable in every respect, and affords an unequivocal proof that its advantages are understood and valued. It would be unjust to these gentlemen to suppose that any other influence was necessary to produce this result than their own sense of propriety."

McSorley's Ale House claims to have opened at 15 East Seventh Street in 1854, which, if true, would make it the oldest bar in continuous operation in the city. It is not true, however.





Advertisement for the India Hard Rubber Comb Company, 1877. (QBPL)

On July 3, the Brooklyn City Railroad Company began running Brooklyn's first horsecar line, from Fulton Ferry to Marcy Street along Myrtle Avenue; the fare was 4¢.

The Academy of Music opened on 14th Street. (Con Edison now occupies the site.) The social elite controlled this opera house with such exclusivity that "new money" built the Metropolitan Opera House in 1883.

On May 4, the National Racing Federation purchased land in Corona from a Quaker, intending a Fashion Race Course. Hearing that, the seller unsuccessfully tried to buy it back. The Flushing Railroad, running along Newton Creek to Hunters Point, was

completed in time for the first races on June 26.

The Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute (now Polytechnic University) was founded on Livingston Street; it was the nation's second technical college. (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy was first.) Polytechnic Preparatory, or Poly Prep, was also founded.

On September 2, Conrad Poppenhusen's India Hard Rubber Comb Company opened in College Point. Poppenhusen had arrived from Germany in 1843, representing H. C. Meyer's whalebone company; he managed Meyer's Williamsburgh factory, producing corset stays and combs. In 1852, Charles Goodyear licensed Pop-

penhusen to manufacture hard rubber goods.

India House, 1 Hanover Square, was completed.

St. George's Episcopal Church was dedicated in Flushing.

Democrat Fernando Wood was elected mayor on November 7.

The Common Council banned steam locomotives below 42nd Street; the ban led to the construction of Grand Central Terminal.

## 1855

Brooklyn annexed Williamsburgh and Bushwick on January 1.

On March 23, Mayor Fernando Wood vetoed a measure shifting Central Park's boundary from 59th to 72nd Street and cutting 400 feet from each side; he thereby saved the park.

On April 10, the Long Island Railroad, the Brooklyn & Jamaica Company, and the City of Brooklyn reached an agreement to reset the Atlantic Avenue tracks, which impeded wagons and endangered pedestrians.

The Union Course Tavern (87–48 78th Street) in Woodhaven opened; originally the Blue Pump Room, it became the Nier Hotel in 1891. It is the oldest bar in Queens.

Blacks replaced white longshoremen who were striking for higher wages, thereby setting off brawls on the docks. The strike was settled, and the whites regained their jobs.

A year after arriving, Samuel Liebmann and his sons opened their brewery on Forrest Street in Brooklyn, producing 5,000 barrels their first year. S. Liebmann's Sons began producing Rheingold around 1885; the company closed in 1976.

On April 12, the state legislature authorized Brooklyn to purchase stock in the Nassau Water Company (which acquired the Brooklyn Water Company), giving the city control over its water supply.

On May 17, the Jews' Hospital (incorporated in 1852) was dedicated on West 28th Street. Renamed Mount Sinai Hospital in 1866, it moved to Lexington Avenue and 66th Street in 1872, and to Fifth Avenue and 100th Street in 1904.

Balthazar Kreischer opened the New-York Fire-Brick Manufactory along the Arthur Kill in Staten Island. Kreischer had arrived from Germany in 1835 and established his business in Manhattan in 1845; he was one of the first to manufacture firebrick in the country. The place became known as Kreischerville. (Previously it had been Androvetteville.) During the anti-German hysteria of World War I, it became Charleston.

On July 16, Elizabeth Jennings, a black woman, was forced off a Third Avenue Railroad Company horsecar when she refused to leave voluntarily. She sued the

company for \$225 in damages and brought an end to segregated public transportation in the city. Her attorney was Chester A. Arthur. Jennings had founded the Colored Ladies Literary Society in 1834.

Castle Clinton became the city's first immigrant depot; it had been Castle Garden, a theatrical venue.

Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and father of the Beaux-Arts in America, opened his architecture practice.

## 1856

The Staten Island Historical Society met for the first time on January 21.

On June 1, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher held a “slave auction” at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn Heights to dramatize the abominable commerce. Calling the unfortunate woman to the front, he said: “This is a marketable commodity. Such as she are put into one balance and silver into the other. . . . What will you do now? May she read her liberty in your eyes? Will you stretch forth your hands?” His congregation immediately donated \$783 in cash and jewelry. According to the *New York Times*, “The most stoical and the most refined shed tears like rain. Men wept, who had not wept for years.”

Julius Kroehl built the cast-iron fire watch tower in Mount Morris Park. The installation of fire-alarm boxes in the 1870s rendered it obsolete, but it still stands, the last of its kind.

July 4 saw the dedication of the equestrian statue of George Washington, by Henry K. Brown and John Quincy Adams Ward, in Union Square Park.

The ferry road was renamed Flatbush Avenue.

The Richmond County Gas Company was founded.

The New York Sunday School Union visited the homes of the poor and founded mission schools in impoverished neighborhoods. Each member church took responsibility for part of the city. In the spring of 1858, about 2,000 devout visitors knocked on doors.

Baseball was referred to as our “national pastime” for the first time in print in the *New York Mercury* on Sunday, December 5. The city had 50 baseball clubs by 1858.

The Blackwell's Island smallpox hospital opened in December; the building was designed by James Renwick Jr., the architect of St. Patrick's Cathedral. The Gothic structure was abandoned in the 1960s; though designated a landmark in 1975, it was demolished.

## 1857

Nathaniel Currier and James M. Ives entered into partnership on Nassau Street.

On February 17, Peter Cooper founded the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

Twelve “distinguished members of the profession” met on February 23 to consider forming “a Society of Architects”; they later invited 11 others to join them. Thus began the American Institute of Architects. The New York chapter was organized in 1867, with Richard Morris Hunt as president.

On March 9, the first legislative commission to investigate housing for the poor issued its report.

The German Dispensary, a clinic providing medical care to immigrants, opened on the Lower East Side.

In April, Elisha Graves Otis installed the first elevator with automatic safety devices in E. V. Haughwout’s new cast-iron store at the northeast corner of Broadway and Broome Street. The builder was Walter Langdon, the architect John P. Gaynor. In 1965 the building was designated a city landmark, over the objections of Robert Moses, who wanted to push through the Lower Manhattan Expressway.

In May, Columbia College moved from its original location near City Hall to 49th Street and Madison Avenue, its home for the next 40 years.

The Brooklyn Mercantile Library Association was founded; it merged with the Brooklyn Public Library in July 1903.

The legislature, dominated by upstaters, created the Metropolitan Police District to replace the locally controlled Municipal Police Force. The rival forces clashed on June 16 as the Metropolitan attempted to



Peter Cooper and William Cullen Bryant at Bryant’s Roslyn home, 1875. (QBPL)

arrest Mayor Fernando Wood in City Hall. The courts supported the legislature and ordered the Municipals disbanded.

On July 4 and 5, the Dead Rabbits and the Bowery Boys, rival street gangs, brawled on the Bowery.

The Panic of 1857 began in August; banks suspended specie payments until December. Thousands of unemployed laborers gathered in Tompkins Square Park for “hunger meetings.”

On November 19, a fire raced along Jamaica Avenue, burning the Greek Revival First Reformed Church and surrounding blocks.

On November 25, General William J. Worth, hero of the Mexican War, was buried with full honors beneath a granite monument at Fifth Avenue and 24th Street.

Daniel F. Tiemann was elected mayor on December 1.

# 1858

On March 15, the police department founded its Marine Division (later the Harbor Patrol), 12 five-man rowboats to fight thugs preying on docks and ships.

The first exhibit was held at the 10th Street Studio Building (51 West 10th Street) on March 22. Designed by Richard Morris Hunt, the building opened in 1857. Artists later exhibiting there included Frederic Church (*Heart of the Andes*), Winslow Homer (*Snap the Whip*), and Albert Bierstadt (*The Domes of Yosemite*). Later, Kahlil Gibran lived there. The Studio Building was demolished in 1956.

Twelve men gathered at the home of Augustus B. Sage for the first meeting of the American Numismatic Society on April 6. In 1907 the society moved to Audubon Terrace, 155th Street and Broadway.

On April 28, the commissioners of Central Park adopted the Greensward plan submitted by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.

St. Luke's Hospital opened at Fifth Avenue and 54th Street on May 11.

Baseball clubs in Brooklyn challenged teams from New York and Hoboken to a championship series. In the first game, on July 20, 1,500 spectators paid 50 cents admission to see New York defeat Brooklyn, 22–18, at the Fashion Race Course in Corona. (It was the first time fans paid to attend a baseball game.) Brooklyn won the second game on August 17, 29–8, but lost the third, 29–18, on September 10—the

first time the *Times* featured a baseball game on page one.

On May 1, Abraham Hewitt and Peter Cooper acquired the Flushing Railroad. The company had defaulted on its bonds in September 1856 and went into receivership in April 1857.

Columbia College established its law school.

On the night of September 1, Staten Islanders burned the Quarantine Station to prevent the landing of ship passengers carrying infectious diseases. Though quickly rebuilt, the station was relocated to Hoffman and Swinbourne Islands. No one was ever prosecuted.

The Crystal Palace burned on October 5.

Rowland Hussey Macy, born into a Quaker family on Nantucket, opened his dry goods store at 204–206 Sixth Avenue, near 14th Street, on October 27. He took in \$11.06 his first day; after 13 months, sales totaled \$90,000. The symbol for his enterprise was a red star, the tattoo he had acquired on a whaling ship years before.

Theodore Roosevelt was born on October 27 at 28 East 20th Street. The brownstone called the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace is a 1923 re-creation of the 1848 original.

On December 4, water began flowing from the Ridgewood Reservoir into Brooklyn's water mains. Now in Highland Park, the reservoir began receiving water from the ponds and streams of Long Island on July 31, 1856.

The country's first skating rink opened at the pond created at the southeast corner of Central Park. In 1859 the rink was segregated by sex, and remained so until 1870.

## 1859

In April, A. W. Winans began running ferries between Hunters Point and 34th Street.

The Dime Savings Bank of Brooklyn was incorporated on April 12. On June 1, it opened on the ground floor of the Montague Street Post Office, with 90 accounts totaling \$1,892.

The Brothers of the Order of St. Francis opened St. Francis Academy; this became St. Francis College.

On April 28, 300,000 celebrated completion of Brooklyn's new water system.

John Jacob Astor III and his brother William Backhouse Astor erected twin mansions on Fifth Avenue between 33rd and 34th Streets.

A razorback whale was found beached near Willets Point in Flushing Bay on August 10.

The Great Hall at Cooper Union opened on November 4.

William Bonney, the infamous "Billy the Kid," was born at 70 Allen Street on November 23; at 16, he killed a man in a street brawl and headed west.



Laying a water main from the Ridgewood Reservoir.

Fernando Wood was elected mayor again on December 6.

## 1860

Abraham Lincoln spoke at Cooper Union's Great Hall on February 27. Earlier that day he posed for a photograph in Matthew Brady's Broadway studio.

Henry Ward Beecher held another slave auction at Plymouth Church, raising \$1,007 in cash and jewelry to purchase freedom for Pinky, a nine-year-old girl.

In April, after years of controversy, the LIRR agreed not to use steam engines between East New York and the ferry; Brooklyn paid the railroad \$129,801.80 in compensation.

On April 23, Staten Island's first railroad began running from Eltingville to Vanderbilt's Landing; service reached Tottenville on June 1.

The first issue of the *New York World* appeared on June 14.

On July 13, Jackson Avenue (Northern Boulevard) opened from the Hunters Point ferry to Flushing.

Banzer's Cypress Hills Park, with a five-acre lake, a dance hall, bowling alleys, and shooting galleries, opened opposite the reservoir at Rocky Hill Road and Cypress Avenue in East New York.

August 30 was the grand opening of Steinway's \$150,000 factory on Park Avenue, between 52nd and 53rd Streets.

Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, visited the city. A grand ball in his honor was held at the Academy of Music on October 12.

In *The Conduct of Life*, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of New York: "Have you seen a few lawyers, merchants, and brokers—two or three scholars, two or three capitalists, two or three editors of newspapers? New York is a sucked orange. All conversation is at an end when we have discharged ourselves of a dozen or so personalities, domestic or imported, which make up our American existence."

About 62 percent of the nation's commerce passed through the port of New York; in 1800 the figure had been 9 percent.

## 1861

The Seventh Regiment left for Washington, D.C., on April 19, only six days after the fall of Fort Sumter. The next day, 100,000 gathered in Union Square to support the Union. Patriotic rallies were held in Jamaica on April 20 and Newtown on April 25.

The Dispensary, soon renamed the S. R. Smith Infirmary, opened at Bay and Union Streets in Stapleton; it became Staten Island Hospital.

Forced out of Brooklyn, the LIRR opened a terminal in Hunters Point on May 9.

Richard Upjohn's Gothic gatehouse at Green-Wood Cemetery was completed.

The Academy of Music opened on Montague Street in Brooklyn; the auditorium held 2,250.

On May 16, the 14th Regiment left from Washington Park (Fort Greene Park). Walt Whitman described the event in "The Centenarian's Story."

The City Hospital, designed by Renwick & Auchmuty, opened on Blackwell's Island. Convicts quarried and cut stone for the Second Empire structure. The city closed the hospital in 1957, leaving it to the ravages of time and vandals; it was demolished in 1994.

Eberhard Faber opened his pencil factory near the East River in Manhattan. After it burned in 1872, he relocated to Greenpoint. In 1893, Faber produced the famous Mongol pencil, with its distinctive yellow



The City Hospital on Blackwell's Island. (QBPL)

shaft. The company abandoned Brooklyn in 1956.

Amid a rainstorm on December 2, the Flushing Battery departed for the Civil War.

George Opdyke was elected mayor on December 3.

The Patriot Orphans' Home was founded in Manhattan; in April 1864, the orphanage relocated to Flushing.

## 1862

Edith Newbold Jones (Edith Wharton) was born on January 24 at 14 West 23rd Street.

The *Monitor*, the first ironclad warship, was launched from the Novelty Iron Works

in Brooklyn on January 30. The keel had been laid on October 25, 1861.

On February 21, Nathaniel Gordon, captain of the slave ship *Erie*, was hanged, the only man in America executed as a slaver. He had been convicted in federal court the previous November of attempting to smuggle 900 slaves from the Congo. The next day an editorial in the *Times* declared: "And thus the majesty of the law has been vindicated, and the stamp of the gallows has been set upon the crime of slave-trading in so forcible a way that it will not soon be forgotten. And it was time."

Approximately 12,000 troops were quartered from East New York to the Hempstead Plains, many at the Union Course and Centerville Course race tracks.





The Tyler Mansion, West New Brighton.

Julia Gardiner Tyler, widow of former president John Tyler, left Sherwood Forest, her husband's plantation on the James River in Virginia, to live with her mother in West New Brighton on Staten Island. William Evarts purchased the Staten Island home in 1874. The 1835 Julia Gardiner Tyler House is now a landmark.

June 7 marked the laying of Flushing Town Hall's cornerstone; it contained a Bible; a Thanksgiving sermon; the bylaws of the Odd Fellows; silver coins minted in 1861; catalogs and cards from local merchants; and lists of town officials, the Hamilton Rifles, volunteer fire companies, Flushing men in the Union army, and the prizewinners of the recent county fair.

A. T. Stewart built his new department store at Broadway and 10th Street; called the "iron palace" to distinguish it from his "marble palace" near City Hall, it became Wanamaker's in 1896 and was demolished in 1950 to make way for an apartment building.

On August 20, blacks in Newtown held a mass meeting to oppose President Lincoln's suggestion that blacks be colonized to Central America or Africa.

## 1863

The police department's Marine Division launched its first steamer, the *Seneca*, on February 1; by 1901, all rowboats were replaced by steamers.

On February 6, the Union League Club was founded to support the Union.

On February 10, General Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren Bumpus, midgets in P. T. Barnum's company, were married in Grace Church. The minister remarked, "Little people have as much right as anybody to get married in a big church."

The Long Island Historical Society was established in Brooklyn on April 6; in 1985 it became the Brooklyn Historical Society.

The first horsecar line opened on Staten Island, running along Jersey Street from Tompkinsville to Port Richmond (later to Howland Hook); another ran along Bay Street to Fort Wadsworth.

For three days in April, Irish longshoremen fought to drive black longshoremen from the docks, believing the black workers would drive down wages.

The Third Avenue & Boston Road Company began running the first horsecars into the Bronx from 129th Street and Third Avenue.

At the Great Hall of Cooper Union, State Senator Edward Lawrence of Queens presided at a Democratic Party rally to oppose the Lincoln's conduct of the war and to call for negotiations with the Confederacy.

On July 11, the first names in the military draft were drawn without incident. Trouble began on July 13, when 25,000 marched to the draft office at Third Avenue and 47th Street. The mob burned the Colored Orphans Asylum and two police precincts. After five days regiments rushed from Gettysburg suppressed the uprising, which left many dozens dead, including soldiers, police officers, blacks, and Irish.

On Staten Island, violence against the draft erupted on the night of July 14 and continued for days. The rioters attacked the homes and businesses of blacks, many of whom fled to New Jersey.

On November 4, Civil War veteran Alfred Wood of the Union Party became mayor of Brooklyn, defeating Democrat Benjamin Prince and incumbent Martin Kalbfleisch, who was running as an independent.

Central Park's northern boundary was extended from 106th to 110th Street.

On December 1, C. Godfrey Gunther was elected mayor.

A post office opened in Kreischerville on Staten Island.

## 1864

On January 8, Flushing Town Hall opened with a dance hosted by the Empire Hose, a volunteer fire company.

The 20th New York Colored Troops was organized on February 9, on Rikers Island; in March, 100,000 witnessed the presentation of their colors by the Union League. The 31st Regiment of the United States Colored Troops was organized in April on Hart's Island, under Colonel Henry C. Ward.

The Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair ran from February 22 to March 5 in the Academy of Music, raising \$400,000 for medical supplies for the army. The Metropolitan Fair opened on April 4 in the



Burning the Second Avenue Armory during the Draft Riot.



Parkway leading from Prospect Park. (QBPL)

22nd Regiment Armory on 14th Street, raising \$1 million for the Sanitary Commission.

After working as the American agent for his father's London-based firm, 27-year-old J. Pierpont Morgan joined Dabney, Morgan and Company.

The 1833 Marine Pavilion, the first hotel in the Rockaways, burned on June 25.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Hunters Point was founded on August 26.

John McCloskey became archbishop on May 6; he was elevated to cardinal on March 15, 1875.

On the night of November 25, Confederate agents tried to burn the city, setting fires in hotels and at Barnum's Museum. The blazes were quickly contained but caused

damage estimated at \$400,000. One rebel agent, Robert Kennedy, was captured trying to reenter the country from Canada; he was hanged at Fort Lafayette in March 1865.

## 1865

High Bridge Park opened.

The Metropolitan Fire District was established on March 30, with paid firefighters replacing volunteer departments in New York and Brooklyn.

On April 24, the train carrying the body of Abraham Lincoln passed through New York en route from Washington, D.C., to Springfield, Illinois. The Seventh Regiment, the first New Yorkers to march off to war, escorted the president's body to City Hall, where 120,000 mourners paid their respects.

The University Club was founded at 9 Brevort Place on April 28.

The ancient buttonwood tree on Wall Street, where brokers had founded the Stock Exchange in 1792, fell in a storm on June 14.

On August 28, two LIRR trains collided head-on near Jamaica, killing 11 and injuring dozens.

John T. Hoffman was elected mayor on December 5.

## 1866

On January 24, Olmsted and Vaux submitted their plan for Prospect Park, with landscaped parkways to the ocean and Long Island. (They introduced the term *parkway*.) Work began July 1; the original design was completed in 1874.

Dr. Stephen Smith and other physicians at Bellevue, alarmed by the number of typhus cases, began inspecting tenements. As a result, the Metropolitan Health Law was enacted in 1866, the first sanitary code in any American city.

The Ladies Employment Society of Flushing was established “to furnish sewing to the needy women of Flushing to the amount of seventy-five cents weekly.” They disbanded January 12, 1923.

Leonard Jerome and the American Jockey Club opened the Jerome Park Racetrack on September 25; it closed in 1889.

The Free Academy at Lexington Avenue and 23rd Street was renamed City College.

The *Long Island City Star* began publishing in April; it folded in 1968 as the *Long Island Star Journal*.

The villages of Edgewater, Port Richmond, and New Brighton were incorporated on Staten Island.

Steinway Hall opened on 14th Street. It closed in 1890.

Charles W. Walter and August Baumgarten founded the Laurel Hill Chemical Works along Newtown Creek; it soon became the nation’s largest producer of sulfuric acid. Renamed the G. H. Nichols Company, it was smelting and refining copper by the 1880s.

George Ehret, a 31-year-old German immigrant, opened his Hell Gate Brewery in Yorkville between Second and Third Avenues and between 92nd to 93rd Streets; he shipped his first barrels of beer in March 1867. The brewery eventually stretched from 91st to 94th Streets.

The Broadway Railroad Company opened a horsecar line from the Williamsburg Ferry to East New York; also, a horsecar began on Jamaica Avenue, the first street railway in Queens.

## 1867

In April, Candy Cummings of the Brooklyn Excelsiors threw the curve ball in a game for the first time. Of his baffling



The employees of George Ehret's Hell Gate Brewery, 1894.

pitch he said confidently, "The secret is mine."

On May 6, at the Great Hall of Cooper Union, Mark Twain delivered a "Serio-Humorous Lecture concerning Kanakadom or Sandwich Islands"—his first public appearance in New York. Tickets were 50¢ each.

On May 14, the city's first tenement house law was enacted, setting requirements for light, air, fire ladders, and sanitation.

Brooklyn staged its first Memorial Day parade.

The *Quaker City* sailed for the Holy Land on June 8, with Mark Twain and Blood-

good Haviland Cutter, the Long Island Farmer Poet, aboard. Twain chronicled the voyage in *Innocents Abroad* and dubbed Cutter the "Poet Lariat."

The dowager queen of the Sandwich Islands visited August 8–13.

Charles Pratt founded the Astral Oil Works in Greenpoint for refining kerosene (a Brooklyn-born word).

The first hospital in the Bronx, Saint Barnabas Hospital for Chronic Diseases, opened in West Farms; it moved to Third Avenue and 181st Street in 1872.

The first New York performance of Charles Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* was staged at

the Academy of Music on November 15, seven months after its Paris premiere.

The ancient pear tree at Third Avenue and 13th Street, planted by Peter Stuyvesant in 1644, was cut down, a victim of old age.

On December 27, at the St. Nicholas Hotel (Broadway between Broome and Prince Streets), Mark Twain was introduced to Olivia Langdon, his future wife.

## 1868

The East New York Savings Bank was founded.



Peter Stuyvesant's pear tree.

Delmonico's Restaurant was the site of a farewell banquet for Charles Dickens on April 18.

The Protective Order of Elks was founded; it grew out of a group who met above a saloon on Delancy Street to drink on Sundays (when saloons were supposedly closed).

Henry Kirke Brown's statue of Abraham Lincoln in Union Square was dedicated.

Charles T. Harvey's West Side & Yonkers Railway, Manhattan's first elevated line, opened on July 3; it ran half a mile along Greenwich Street between Dey and Cortlandt. Construction on the cable-powered line had begun the previous summer. On November 15, 1870, it became the New York Elevated Rail Road Company.

The Washington Heights Library was founded. Originally only for paying members, it opened to all in 1883.

The 40-acre Parade Ground near Prospect Park was created for use by Civil War veterans. It was later used for athletic contests, especially baseball.

The South Side Railroad was completed from Bushwick to Patchogue. Also, the Flushing and North Side Railroad Company began service between Flushing and Hunters Point, starting a fare war with the LIRR.

Outraged by Jay Gould's manipulation of Erie Railroad stock, on November 30 the New York Stock Exchange and the Open Board issued new regulations banning the

sale of fraudulent securities. The two exchanges merged the next year.

Thomas Coman, president of the Board of Aldermen, became mayor after John Hoffman resigned.

## 1869

On January 25, merchant seamen went on strike, demanding higher rates and an advance on their wages before each voyage. Sailors earned about \$15 a month and sought \$40. The strike collapsed but gave birth to the New York Seamen's Association, which endeavoured to improve their lot ashore.

Criticizing legislation sponsored by Boss Tweed and Parks Commissioner Peter Barr Sweeny to widen Broadway to 59th Street, on May 25 the *New York Herald* stated authoritatively: "There is a point beyond which Broadway can never become a very great thoroughfare, and that point is Thirty-Fourth Street."

Alexander Turney Stewart bought over 8,000 acres of the Hempstead Plains for \$55 an acre in July, and in December he announced plans for a railroad through his tract. The first houses were erected in Garden City the next year. Also, his \$3 million Fifth Avenue home designed by John Kellum, architect of many Garden City Company buildings, was completed.

A horsecar line began between the 34th Street ferry in Hunters Point and the 92nd Street ferry in Astoria.

James Gordon Bennett Jr., publisher of the *Herald*, dispatched reporter Henry Morton Stanley to find Dr. David Livingstone in Africa.

On Black Friday, September 24, Jay Gould and Jim Fisk tried to corner the gold market.

Potter's Field opened on Hart Island.

The McBurney YMCA opened on Fourth Avenue; it moved to 23rd Street in 1904, providing inexpensive lodging. The McBurney evicted its last residents in 1999.

On December 1, A. Oakey Hall, a member of the Tweed Ring, was elected mayor.

*Harper's Weekly* published Thomas Nast's first cartoon against the Tweed Ring. (The paper had first published Nast's work the year before.) Tweed once complained, "I don't care a straw for your newspaper articles, my constituents don't know how to read, but they can't help seeing them damned pictures."

## 1870

The Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art convened on January 27 and elected John Taylor Johnston president. The museum was incorporated on April 13 to encourage "the study of the fine arts, and the application of the arts to the manufacture, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and to that end, of furnishing popular instruction and recreation."

Under Thomas Hunter, the Female Normal and High School held its first classes on February 14, in quarters above a carriage shop at 691 Broadway. In May the city provided a site at Park Avenue and 68th Street. This became Hunter College in 1914.

In December 1869, reacting against judicial corruption, lawyers began to organize “to sustain the profession in its proper position in the community, and thereby enable it . . . to promote the interests of the public.” At the first meeting of the Association of the Bar of New York, on February 1, they selected as president William M. Evarts, an early member of the Republican Party and President Andrew Johnson’s counsel during the impeachment trial.

On February 12, Dorman B. Eaton, a founder of the bar association, was beaten almost to death on his doorstep. Counsel for the Board of Health and the Board of Excise, Eaton vigorously prosecuted corrupt officials and disreputable landlords. The bar offered a \$5,000 reward, but the crime was never solved, though suspicion fell on financier Jim Fisk.

Tiffany & Company opened on Union Square near Ladies Mile, the fashionable shopping district.

Joseph Rubsam and August Horrmann founded the Atlantic Brewing Company in Stapleton; by 1880 there were eight breweries on Staten Island. Also, German immigrant Gustav A. Mayer moved his confectionery establishment from Manhattan to Stapleton. His creations were served in the finest restaurants, including Del-

monico’s and Sherry’s. Mayer introduced the sugar wafer, later popularized by Nabisco.

Alfred Ely Beach, editor of *Scientific American* and publisher of the *Sun*, opened his pneumatic subway under Broadway on February 28. Holding a permit for a pneumatic mail tube, he built it large enough for passengers. Boss Tweed quickly ordered it shut, but not before 400,000 persons each paid 25¢ for the 312-foot-long ride. A fountain and a grand piano graced the station.

On April 5, state senator William Marcy Tweed pushed a new city charter through the legislature, giving the mayor and City council little power but granting almost unlimited powers to appointed commissioners. Mayor Hall named Tweed commissioner of public works. Tweed claimed the charter cost \$600,000; six Republicans each cost \$40,000.

Governor Hoffman signed Long Island City’s charter on May 4. Abraham D. Ditmars was elected the first mayor on July 5.

On May 9, the United Cabinet Workers began selling property in Astoria to its members, stimulating an influx of Germans.

Backed by Commodore Vanderbilt, Victoria Woodhull and her sister Tennessee Claflin opened the first woman-owned brokerage house on Wall Street.

The Metropolitan Police District, established by the legislature in 1857 to replace the Democrat-controlled Municipal Police



Force, was abolished, restoring local control.

On July 1, the Poppenhusen Institute, in College Point (14th Road and 114th Street), opened with meeting rooms, a school, a library, an auditorium, a bank, and the first free kindergarten.

William Steinway purchased the 35-acre Luyster farm in Astoria for his piano works on July 8. Three days later he purchased the 80-acre parcel around the Pike Mansion for his summer home. Steinway wrote: “We sought a place outside the city . . . to escape the machinations of the anarchists and socialists . . . who were continually breeding among our workmen, and inciting them to strike.”

On July 12, five were killed at the first Orange Parade (marking the victory of Protestant William of Orange over Catholic James II at the Battle of the Boyne, 1690).

At Brooklyn’s Capitoline Grounds, the Atlantics met the Cincinnati Redstockings before 20,000 spectators on June 14. With the score tied at 5–5 after 9 innings, they agreed to play “extra innings” for the first time; the Atlantics won 8–7 in the 11th, ending Cincinnati’s two-year undefeated streak. Baseball pioneer Harry Wright called it “the finest game ever played.”

The Tweed ring abolished the Board of Commissioners that had overseen the construction and management of Central Park and created a Tammany-controlled Department of Public Parks.

The city began installing fire-alarm boxes to replace manned watch towers.

Frederick August Otto Schwarz opened his Toy Bazaar at 765 Broadway.

The Vincentian Fathers founded St. John’s College; it became a university in 1906.

The funeral of George Holland was held on December 22 at the Church of the Transfiguration, 29th Street near Madison Avenue. Holland’s friend Joseph Jefferson initially approached Rev. William T. Sabine of the Church of the Atonement, but Sabine refused to bury an actor, suggesting that “there is a little church around the corner where they do such things.” “If that be so,” Jefferson replied, “then God bless the little church around the corner.” The Church of the Transfiguration became known as the actors’ church.

## 1871

At considerable public expense, the Tammany Society hosted the Fenian Exiles on February 9.

On April 6, the Council for Political Reform held a mass meeting at Cooper Union to protest new taxes proposed by Boss Tweed. William Evarts complained that the cost of city government had risen from \$36 million to \$136 million in only two years, even as Tweed had moved from Henry Street to a mansion at 511 Fifth Avenue. On May 31 Tweed’s daughter, Mary Amelia Tweed, married Arthur Ambrose Maginnis of New Orleans in Trinity Chapel; the wedding was followed by a re-



Thomas Nast's political cartoon depicting Boss Tweed's fall, 1871.

ception in Tweed's home, catered by Delmonico's, and the whole affair cost \$700,000. On July 8 a front-page article in the *Times* attacked Tweed with the headline "The Secret Accounts: Proofs of Undoubted Frauds Brought to Light." The paper had been printing stories about the ring almost daily for a year. Responding to Tweed's boast "Well, what are you going to do about it?" the Committee of Seventy held a public meeting at Cooper Union on

September 4, announcing, "This is what we are going to do about it!" They declared: "We are determined to ascertain the full extent of the truth, and to fix the full measure of the responsibility . . . and now formally arraign you, WILLIAM M. TWEED, RICHARD B. CONNOLLY, and A. OAKEY HALL, as having dishonored public offices and abused public trusts." Tweed was arrested on October 26 and indicted in December.



Bow Bridge in Central Park, designed by Calvert Vaux.

On April 20, the New York Elevated Rail Road Company began running a steam locomotive, pulling three passenger cars, on the Ninth Avenue elevated.

St. James Methodist Episcopal Church (founded in 1830 as the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Harlem), a Norman Gothic church designed by Rembrandt Lockwood, at 126th Street and Madison Avenue, was dedicated on May 13. In July 1942 the New York Conference of the Methodist Church discontinued “its existence as a church for the white race” and transferred the building to Reverend Robert Lawrence’s black congregation; it became the Metropolitan Community Church.

Charles Feltman opened a small stand on the Coney Island beach. He is credited with inventing the hot dog—not at Coney Island but at his stand at East New York and Howard Avenues in Brooklyn.

To curtail unruly riders and to stop runaway carriages in Central Park, the police department established the Mounted District (later the Mounted Unit) on July 10.

Despite heavy police presence, violence erupted at the Orange Parade on July 12. A shot was fired from the crowd, and the soldiers opened fire. Two militiamen were killed and 24 wounded; 31 rioters and bystanders died, 67 were wounded.

On July 30, the ferry *Westfield* exploded in Whitehall slip, killing dozens.

In a series of races in the harbor, *Columbia* and *Sappho* bested British challenger *Livonia* to retain the America’s Cup.

On October 9, Vanderbilt’s \$6.5 million Grand Central Depot, a massive iron and glass train shed 90 feet high, opened on 42nd Street. John B. Snook was the architect.

Acting on his own initiative, William T. Blodgett, vice president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's board of trustees, spent \$116,180.27 in Europe to purchase the first works for the collection.

The Ringling Brothers Circus performed in Brooklyn, its first appearance in the area.

St. John's Episcopal Church in Rosebank on Staten Island was dedicated; it is a replica of a church in Stratford-upon-Avon. The congregation was established in 1843.

The Salmagundi Club was founded at 87 Fifth Avenue, a home built for Irad Hawley, president of the Pennsylvania Coal Company. Stanford White, Louis Comfort Tiffany, and John LaFarge were members.

After ten years, and millions of dollars lost through corruption, the infamous Tweed Courthouse (New York County Courthouse) on Chambers Street was completed.

Drexel, Morgan and Company, a partnership of J. P. Morgan and Anthony J. Drexel of Philadelphia, opened at 23 Wall Street.

Ten million visited Central Park in 1871, about 30,000 a day. In 1870, Frederick Law Olmsted observed: "No one who has closely observed the conduct of the people who visit the Park can doubt that it exercises a distinctly harmonizing and refining influence upon the most unfortunate and lawless classes of the city,—an influence favorable to courtesy, self-control, and temperance."

## 1872

On January 6, Jim Fisk—financier, swindler, and notorious manipulator of Erie stock—was shot and killed by Ned Stokes on a staircase in the Broadway Central Hotel. Stokes loved Fisk's mistress, Josie Mansfield.

In April the New York Seamen's Association opened the Seamen's Exchange Building at 187–189 Cherry Street, with a clothing store, bowling lanes, a reading room, a bank, and a hiring hall.

The Sohmer Piano Company was founded on April 1.

On May 28, all piano workers except those at Steinway & Sons joined a general strike for an eight-hour day.

The Moorish-style Central Synagogue, designed by Henry Fernbach, was dedicated at 55th Street and Lexington Avenue. After a fire in 1998, the congregation restored and modernized the place of worship.

A year-round lifesaving station was established at Arverne in the Rockaways. The men rowed through the surf whenever there was a shipwreck to rescue passengers and crew.

Anton Rubinstein made his New York debut with violinist Henri Wieniawski at Steinway Hall on September 23. Steinway & Sons sponsored Rubinstein's American tour.



The light at the northern tip of Blackwell's Island. (RIHS)

On October 10, Presbyterian Hospital (founded in 1868) opened on 70th Street between Madison and Park Avenues.

Hunters Point became the county seat of Queens.

On December 5, William Havemeyer was elected mayor, regaining the office he had held in the 1840s.

The lighthouse at the northern tip of Blackwell's Island was completed. Designed by James Renwick Jr., architect of St. Patrick's Cathedral, it was built by an inmate at the lunatic asylum. The concrete was inscribed: THIS IS THE WORK / WAS DONE BY / JOHN MCCARTHY / WHO BUILT THE LIGHT / HOUSE FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE / TOP ALLYE WHO DO PASS BY MAY / PRAY FOR HIS SOUL WHEN HE DIES. The marker vanished

when Lighthouse Park was created in the 1970s.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art opened at 681 Fifth Avenue. The next year it moved into the Douglas Mansion on 14th Street.

P. T. Barnum's circus, menagerie, and museum, based for the winter in the Hippodrome on 14th Street, burned on Christmas Eve; only two elephants and a camel survived.

## 1873

The Central Railroad began running from Flushing to Floral Park on January 1. A. T. Stewart built the line to serve his new suburb, Garden City, then leased the line to Conrad Poppenhusen.

The *New York Daily Graphic* published the first news photograph.

On June 17, the bones of the prison-ship martyrs, heroes of the American Revolution, were moved to a crypt in Fort Greene Park, the site of Fort Putnam during the Battle of Long Island.

The inaugural match at the National Rifle Association's Creedmore Rifle Range was on June 21; the range closed in 1907.

The failure of Jay Cooke & Co. on September 18 set off a financial panic. On Saturday, September 20, the stock exchange suspended trading for the first time; it reopened on September 30. Seats on the exchange fell from \$7,700 to \$4,250, and 287 brokerage houses failed.

The *Newtown Register* was founded; it continues as the *Queens Ledger*.

New York University played its first intercollegiate football game. NYU dropped football after 79 seasons, with a record of 199–226–31.

The new Collegiate Gothic home of the Normal College at Park Avenue and 68th Street opened on October 29; it burned in 1936.

## 1874

New York annexed the Westchester towns of Morrisania, West Farms, and Kingsbridge.



Shooting at Creedmore. (QBPL)

On a freezing January 13, 7,000 unemployed men, women, and children gathered in Tompkins Square to demand “work relief.” The police waded in with clubs flying, injuring dozens.

A horsecar line began running from the Hunters Point ferry to Calvary Cemetery on March 1.

The American Linoleum Manufacturing Company opened on Staten Island at Long Neck, soon known as Linoleumville (now Travis). Joseph Wild & Company formed the enterprise in 1873 with Englishman Frederick Walton, the inventor of linoleum.

In April, P. T. Barnum opened the Great Roman Hippodrome in the old New York, New Haven & Harlem Railroad depot at Madison Avenue and 26th Street, enclosing a quarter-mile oval where he actually staged chariot races. Barnum sold the Hippodrome to Patrick Gilmore, “bandmaster of the Union Army”; Gilmore’s Concert Garden later became Madison Square Garden.

The Town Survey Commission, established by the state legislature in 1869, extended Brooklyn’s street grid across the rural towns.

Work began on a railroad tunnel under the Hudson River between Hoboken and Greenwich Village. One tube was 40 percent complete when financial woes forced construction to cease in 1882. The Hudson & Manhattan Railroad Company finished the tunnels. This is now part of the PATH

system (Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation).

The New York Central completed the stone viaduct along Park Avenue between 98th and 111th Streets.

Theodore Tilton accused the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher of committing adultery with his wife, Elizabeth—“criminal conversation” and “alienation of affections” in the language of the day. The Tiltons were members of Beecher’s congregation. The sensational trial ended in a hung jury.

At Coney Island, Charles Feltman’s Ocean Pavilion opened with a capacity of 20,000; the ballroom could accommodate 3,000 couples.

During the summer, children under five accounted for over 60 percent of all reported deaths.

Theater people founded the Lamb’s Club for dinner and informal entertainments.

Charles Pratt built his mansion at 232 Clinton Avenue (now home of the bishop of Brooklyn) and five homes for his sons (three of which still stand). Pratt’s secret merger with Rockefeller’s Standard Oil that year was not made public until 1882.

William H. Wickham was elected mayor on November 3; Mayor Havemeyer died suddenly on November 30, and Samuel B. H. Vance, president of the Board of Aldermen, filled out the last weeks of Havemeyer’s term.

On December 3, the Holly Water Works opened in Flushing with a parade, fireworks, a dinner, and a ceremony at Flushing Town Hall. Tests at several points proved the pressure could shoot a stream a hundred feet in the air.

## 1875

The Prospect Park & Coney Island Railway opened.

The smallpox hospital on Blackwell's Island was converted to a nursing school residence.

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank, a golden-domed cathedral of finance designed by George B. Post, opened at Broadway and Driggs Street.

Eliza Greator published her sketches in *Old New York from the Battery to Bloomingdale*.

## 1876

Meeting at the Grand Central Hotel on February 2, owners of professional baseball clubs founded the National League. William Hulbert was named president.

The first edition of the *Long Island City Star* rolled off the presses on March 27.

Conrad Poppenhusen and associates acquired a majority of LIRR stock, having earlier acquired the South Side Railroad and the Flushing, North Side & Central Railroad, uniting all lines on Long Island

for the first time. In 1877, a victim of the national economic crisis, Poppenhusen went bankrupt, his railroads in receivership under Thomas R. Sharp.

Austin Corbin incorporated the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway, opening his fashionable Manhattan Beach Hotel a year later.

At Coney Island, German immigrant Charles I. D. Loeff operated a carousel featuring his hand-carved animals. In 1880 he opened a carousel factory in Brooklyn.

Trains began running over the Sixth Avenue elevated.

The Queens County Bar Association was founded at the Garden City Hotel on July 19, with John J. Armstrong chosen its president. General Joseph Hooker, a guest at the hotel, was invited “to honor the company with his presence at the dinner.”

Randolph Rodgers's statue of William Seward—secretary of state, governor of New York, and United States senator—by was dedicated in Madison Square. Rodgers grafted Seward's head onto a recycled casting of his 1871 Lincoln statue.

After the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia closed, the Department of Parks paid \$1,500 for a small wooden cottage, built as a typical one-room Swedish schoolhouse, that had been on display there. The cottage was placed in Central Park on a site selected by Olmsted. The Swedish Cottage became home to the Marionette Theater.





The demolition tunnels under the Hell Gate.  
(GAHS)

Irish American Richard Kyle Fox became editor of the *National Police Gazette*, turning it into a popular and profitable weekly.

On September 24, explosives set in a network of tunnels under the East River blew up the dangerous reefs at Hell Gate.

The *Yudishe Gazeten*, the first Yiddish-language newspaper, appeared; it folded in 1927.

Smith Ely was elected mayor on November 7.

On December 5 a fire at the Brooklyn Theater, 313 Washington Street, claimed 295 lives.

## 1877

Visiting Dr. and Mrs. William May and their charming daughter Caroline on New Year's Day, an inebriated James Gordon Bennett Jr., publisher of the *Herald*, announced there was not a bathroom within half a block and urinated into the drawing-room fireplace. He was promptly thrown out. On January 7 he fought a duel over the incident with Caroline's brother, Frederick, on the border between Maryland and Delaware; both men intentionally missed. Bennett was forever disgraced.

Cornelius Vanderbilt died on January 4. Born in 1794 on Staten Island, the Commodore was worth \$100 million.



Cornelius Vanderbilt.

LIRR trains ran into the new Flatbush Avenue terminal, 17 years after Brooklyn banned steam railroads within its limits.

The Queens County Courthouse in Long Island City was dedicated on April 4.

On May 11, Alexander Graham Bell successfully demonstrated his telephone at the St. Denis Hotel (Broadway and 11th Street), speaking to his assistant in Brooklyn.

The Lenox Library (incorporated 1870), designed by Richard Morris Hunt, was built at Fifth Avenue and 70th Street. It was demolished in 1912, a year after the public library on 42nd Street opened; Henry Clay Frick's mansion rose on the site.

The Tower and Home Buildings, Alfred Tredway White's model tenements for the worthy poor, were completed at Baltic and Hicks Streets in Brooklyn.

The Jefferson Market Courthouse, Sixth and Greenwich Avenues, was completed; Calvert Vaux and Frederick Clarke Withers were its architects. It closed in 1945 and remained empty until the 1960s, when Greenwich Village activists led by Margot Gayle pushed the city to make it a library.

A decade after his death, the statue of Fitz-Greene Halleck was dedicated on the Mall in Central Park. He is the least known and least poetic figure on Literary Walk (and the only American).

On December 22, President Rutherford B. Hayes dedicated the American Museum of Natural History. Calvert Vaux and Jacob

Wrey Mould had designed the Victorian Gothic building.

## 1878

The Bell Telephone Company published the first phone book, with 252 listings.

Stern's (founded in 1867) opened on 23rd Street; until 1910 it was the city's largest department store. Federated Department Stores acquired the chain in 1988 and converted the stores to Macy's in 2001.

The post office at the lower end of City Hall Park was completed.

Editor Adolph Douai founded the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, organ of the Socialist Labor Party.

William Marcy Tweed died in the Ludlow Street Jail on April 12. According to his lawyer, his last words were "I hope Tilden and Fairchild are satisfied now."

Nighttime service on the Manhattan elevateds began April 15. The Third Avenue elevated began running from South Ferry to 42nd Street on August 26.

Charles Feltman built a 1,000-foot Iron Pier at Coney Island, with dance halls, concessions, and 1,200 lockers. Also opening this year was the Sea Beach Palace, an establishment that served 15,000 in the dining room. On summer Sundays, 50,000 visitors visited Coney Island, many riding the new steam-powered Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island Railroad (ancestor of



Feltman's Pavilion at Coney Island. (QBPL)

the Brighton Line, the D train), others arriving by boat from Manhattan.

On September 7, after a 13-month European tour, Stanford White joined the firm of Charles Follen McKim and William Rutherford Mead at 57 Broadway. McKim said of White, "He can draw like a house-a-fire!" The firm's architects and draftsmen included John Carrère and Thomas Hastings (New York Public Library), Cass Gilbert (Custom House, Woolworth Building), Henry Bacon (the Lincoln Memorial), and Edward York and Philip Sawyer (Bowery Savings Bank).

On October 8, grave robbers stole the body of A. T. Stewart from St. Marks Church in-the-Bowery and demanded \$250,000 for the remains. Two years later they accepted \$20,000, and the remains (which may or may not have been Stewart's) were returned and reinterred in a crypt in the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City, built by his widow, Cornelia (dedicated June 2, 1885).

Edward Cooper was elected mayor on November 5.

## 1879

John Cardinal McCloskey dedicated St. Patrick's Cathedral on May 25. Designed by James Renwick Jr., it was the 11th largest church in the world and the city's largest. At the inaugural mass, Cardinal McCloskey declared, "Fearless and alone, it stands above all churches here, as the faith which inspired its erection is superior to all creeds."

On June 9, the New York Elevated Railroad made its first run up Ninth Avenue (Columbus) from 53rd Street, at the end of the Sixth Avenue line, to 145th Street. The line featured the nerve-wracking S-curve at 110th Street.

The 1867 tenement house law was amended to provide more light and air, limiting new tenements to 65 percent of

a lot. These are the “Old Law” tenements.

The Steinway Avenue streetcar line began running to Hunters Point on August 1.

On November 17, President Rutherford B. Hayes opened a fair to raise funds for the new Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue and 66th Street. After the regiment decided to relocate from Tompkins Square, the city donated the uptown site; the \$600,000 cost was raised by private subscription. William B. Astor and William K. Vanderbilt each contributed \$140,000. Louis Comfort Tiffany and Associates designed the Veterans’ Room. The armory opened in 1880.

The Vanderbilts began building mansions on the west side of Fifth Avenue between

52nd and 57th Streets. Today they are all gone.

The Staten Island Water Supply Company was incorporated; in 1883 the Crystal Water Works was incorporated.

*Sanitary Engineer* sponsored a competition for an improved tenement. James E. Ware won with his infamous “dumbbell” design, so called because of the air shaft between the buildings. The air shafts were convenient for dumping garbage and acted as a flue in case of fire.

## 1880

The Metropolitan Museum of Art opened in Central Park, designed by Calvert Vaux and Jacob Wrey Mould.



The S-curve of the elevated at 110th Street.

Parts of the original are visible within the present museum.

On February 13, varnishers at Steinway & Sons in Astoria led a strike for restoration of wages lowered during the depression of the 1870s. William Steinway convinced the Pianoforte Manufacturers to enforce a lockout. By March 25, employers backed down; even Steinway offered a 10 percent raise.

Englishman Samuel Bath Thomas opened his bakery at 163 Ninth Avenue, producing Thomas's English Muffins. In 1922 the company opened a large bakery in Long Island City; it closed in 1965.

Calling libraries “the most progressive means toward the moral and intellectual elevation of the masses,” the New York Free Circulating Library was incorporated on May 16 “to furnish free reading to the people of the city of New York, by the establishment . . . of a Library or Libraries, with or without Reading-Rooms, which . . . shall be open without payment to the public.” Andrew Carnegie became a trustee in 1893. The Free Circulating Library merged with the New York Public Library in 1901, becoming the nucleus of the branch system.

The White Horse Tavern opened at Hudson and 11th Streets.

On August 26, the first trains rolled over the new trestle across Jamaica Bay to the Rockaways; 65,000 passengers rode that first week.

The Rockaway Beach Hotel opened between Beach 110th and Beach 116th Streets.

*Il Progresso Italo-Americano* was founded; the paper folded in 1988.

The city opened an 80-bed hospital for contagious diseases on North Brother Island.

Austin Corbin bought a controlling interest in the LIRR and, on December 30, appointed himself receiver. On October 15, 1881, he appointed himself president.

William R. Grace was elected mayor on November 2.

Charles Brush's electric arc lights illuminated Broadway between 14th and 26th Streets—Ladies Mile—on December 19; the next year, Brush installed lights in Union Square and Madison Square.

## 1881

The New York City and Northern Railroad (later the New York Central's Putnam Division) began running along the Saw Mill River from Brewster to the Ninth Avenue elevated at 155th Street in the Bronx; a terminal opened at Sedgwick Avenue in 1918.

Cleopatra's Needle, a gift from Egypt to the United States, was set on a pedestal behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art on January 22. A newspaper reported that it was rotated into place “as easily and delicately as if it were the minute-hand of a lady's watch. . . . Two hundred and nineteen and a quarter tons of stone, distributed in a

length of sixty-nine feet two inches, are not turned in mid-air every day.” The formal presentation was held on February 22.

Boston champion John L. Sullivan attended a “testimonial benefit” at Harry Hill’s dance hall and sporting establishment on Houston Street near Mulberry. (Hill opened his establishment in October 1880.) Sullivan offered \$50 to any man who could stand four three-minute rounds with him. Wearing padded gloves, he forced John Taylor to yield after only two rounds. On May 16, he defeated John Flood of Five Points in an eight-round bare-knuckle fight on a barge anchored in the Hudson River off Yonkers. Spectators paid \$10 apiece to see the illegal bout.

Meeting in a Manhattan hotel on May 21, representatives of 34 tennis clubs formed the United States Lawn Tennis Association, setting official dimensions of the court and adopting an official ball. (They dropped “Lawn” in 1975.)

On May 25, the Farragut Memorial in Madison Square Park was unveiled before 10,000 people. Augustus Saint-Gaudens designed the statue, showing the admiral steaming into Mobile Bay; Stanford White designed the bluestone exedra. Farragut died on August 14, 1870, and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Ulysses S. Grant and his wife moved to the city and took a house at 3 East 66th Street. Grant entered into partnership with Ferdinand Ward, who ruined the firm—and Grant. William K. Vanderbilt gave Grant a personal loan of \$150,000; Ward cashed the check and disappeared.

The S. S. White Dental Manufacturing Company opened at Prince’s Bay on Staten Island.

Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture was established.

Offended by a book by minister Emory J. Haynes, Charles Pratt and other congregants left the Washington Avenue Baptist Church and founded the Emmanuel Baptist Church. Their French Gothic church at 279 Lafayette Avenue in Clinton Hill, designed by Francis H. Kimball, was dedicated on April 17, 1887.

After the death of President James A. Garfield, Vice President Chester A. Arthur was sworn in as president at 123 Lexington Avenue, at 2:15 A.M. on September 20. A 17-foot bronze statue of Arthur stands in Madison Square Park.

The city established the Department of Street Cleaning but left the removal of the garbage to private firms.

The new home of the Long Island Historical Society, designed by George B. Post, was dedicated. Sculptor Olin Levi Warner created busts of Columbus, Franklin, Shakespeare, Gutenberg, Beethoven, and Michelangelo for the facade.

Naturalist William T. Davis and others founded the Natural Science Association of Staten Island, which became the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.



The Elephant Hotel at Coney Island. (QBPL)

## 1882

Freight handlers seeking a raise from 17¢ to 20¢ an hour began a three-week strike, virtually shutting down commerce. Railroads broke the strike by hiring immigrants at Castle Clinton.

The Elephant Hotel opened at Coney Island, with rooms and shops in the body and an observation platform on its back.

In a steady rain on July 4, John L. Sullivan battered Jim Elliot senseless in three rounds at Brooklyn's Washington Park. Sullivan offered Elliot \$500 if he could last four rounds. On July 17, 5,000 spectators paid up to \$5 apiece to see Sullivan fight Englishman Tug Wilson at Madison

Square Garden. Wilson survived four rounds by skipping away and intentionally falling to the floor. Many from the city's upper crust joined the sporting crowd.

On September 4, the Edison Illuminating Company, backed by J. P. Morgan, opened the first underground electric system in the nation, providing power for the stock exchange, the House of Morgan, the offices of the *Times* and *Herald*, and surrounding blocks. Located at Pearl and Fulton Streets, the system gave rise to the "Pearl Street trot"; the discharge of electricity onto the streets caused horses pulling streetcars to hop. It operated until 1917.

The nation's first Labor Day parade was on September 5.

Oscar Wilde appeared at Chickering Hall, near Union Square.

August Luchow opened his German restaurant on 14th Street.

On November 7, Franklin Edison was elected mayor.

Fiorello H. La Guardia was born on December 11 at 117 Sullivan Street, an Italian neighborhood in Manhattan.

The first Yiddish theatrical production opened at Turn Hall on East Fourth Street. Some German Jews attempted to disrupt the performance by banging drums outside because the “vulgar” language reflected badly on Jews.

The oyster harvest in Jamaica Bay totaled 100,000 bushels.

## 1883

Emma Lazarus published her sonnet “The New Colossus.”

The New York Giants were founded.

Wechsler & Abraham moved their department store (founded in 1865) to Fulton Street. In 1893, Abraham Abraham joined with Isidor and Nathan Straus, who bought Macy’s in 1888, to buy out Wechsler; the store became Abraham & Straus.

At Madison Square Garden on May 14, John L. Sullivan battered Englishman Charlie Mitchell. Police captain Alexander “Clubber” Williams stopped the fight in

the third round, though Mitchell seemed willing to continue. (It was Williams who dubbed the vice district the Tenderloin.)

On May 24, President Arthur opened the Brooklyn Bridge, the world’s largest suspension span. John Roebling had designed it; after his death, his son Washington carried the work forward until he was weakened by the bends. Washington Roebling’s wife, Emily, then became his eyes and ears, supervising construction.

The Metropolitan Opera House was dedicated on October 22. J. C. Cady designed the Romanesque Revival structure at Broadway and 39th Street.

Gottfried, Michael, and Wilhelm Piel founded their brewery on Liberty Avenue in East New York. Piel’s shut down in September 1973.



Stereoscopes showing the Brooklyn Bridge under construction.



The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association was founded to serve the community and combat prejudice; they shipped bodies to China for burial and mediated the Tong Wars.

On November 26, marking the centennial of Evacuation Day, the statue of George Washington by John Quincy Adams Ward was dedicated at the Sub-Treasury (now Federal Hall) on Wall Street.

John D. Rockefeller relocated the headquarters of the Standard Oil Trust from Cleveland to 26 Broadway.

Conrad Poppenhusen, industrialist and benefactor of College Point, died on December 12 at age 65.

## 1884

LaMarcus Thompson's Switchback Railroad, Coney Island's first roller coaster, opened.

Charles Byrne, Joseph Doyle, and Ferdinand Abell formed the Brooklyn Grays (ancestors of the Dodgers) as a team in the American Association. The Grays played at Washington Park on Fourth Avenue; their headquarters was the Old Stone House, the scene of heroic fighting during the Battle of Long Island.

The Board of Trustees of the St. Francis Monastery received a charter on May 8 "to establish a literary college in the City of Brooklyn under the title of St. Francis College."

An earthquake centered in the harbor, estimated at 5.5 on the Richter scale, hit on August 10. Hundreds of chimneys collapsed. Seismologists expect a quake of that magnitude to hit every century or so; two faults run through Manhattan, one at 125th Street, the other along Dykeman Street.

The Dakota (so named because it was so far uptown that it might as well have been in Dakota Territory) opened on October 27. Attorney Edward Clark purchased the two-acre site from August Belmont in 1877 for \$200,000; Henry Hardenbergh was the architect. Clark made his fortune handling Isaac Singer's patent troubles in return for 50 percent of I. M. Singer & Co. in 1851.

Calvert Vaux completed the renovation of Samuel Tilden's home at 15 Gramercy Park. The facade incorporated busts of Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Milton, and Benjamin Franklin. Tilden purchased the house in 1863 and expanded next door to accommodate his library.

The state legislature authorized three large parks in the Bronx (Van Cortlandt, Bronx, and Pelham Bay) as well as three smaller parks (Crotona, St. Mary's, and Claremont) and three parkways (Mosholu, Pelham, and Crotona).

Founded by Jewish businessmen, the Montefiore Home for Chronic Invalids opened in a rented house at Avenue A and 84th Street. The institution moved to Amsterdam Avenue at 138th Street in 1889.

Reservoir Square, the park at Sixth Avenue and 42nd Street, was renamed for poet William Cullen Bryant.

Harvard graduate Samuel A. Brearley Jr. founded the Brearley School for girls.

A new building housing both the German Dispensary and a branch of the New York Free Circulating Library was dedicated in December on Second Avenue near St. Marks Place, funded by Oswald and Anna Ottendorfer, publishers of the *Staats-Zeitung*. (Anna died in May.) William Schickel was the architect.

The Madison Avenue Bridge over the Harlem River opened. It was replaced in 1910.

The Wallabout Market in Brooklyn was created for Long Island farmers.

The Chelsea Hotel, 222 West 23rd Street, designed by Hubert & Pirsson, was completed. Originally cooperative apartments, it became a hotel in 1905.

The nation's first bacteriology laboratory was established at Bellevue Hospital.

## 1885

Jerome Kern was born in Manhattan on January 27.

The second Tenement House Commission, founded in 1884 after dramatic articles in the *Tribune* by Jacob Riis, issued its findings on February 15.

On April 29, Edith Newbold Jones married Teddy Wharton in a small ceremony at Trinity Chapel at 15 West 25th Street; a wedding breakfast followed at her mother's home at 28 West 25th Street.

The Villard Houses on Madison Avenue at 51st Street were completed. Built for financier Henry Villard, the six brownstone mansions resembled a Renaissance palazzo. Joseph Wells designed the facade; McKim, Mead & White designed the interiors.

Pier A, headquarters of the fire department's Marine Division, was completed at the foot of West Street near Battery Park.

Michael A. Corrigan succeeded John Cardinal McCloskey as archbishop.

William Dean Howells moved to New York from Boston.

The DeVinne Press Building on Lafayette Street was completed, a Romanesque gem designed by Babb, Cook & Willard.

Goldman, Sachs & Company was founded. Marcus Goldman, a German immigrant, opened an office at 30 Pine Street to trade in promissory notes. His son-in-law Samuel Sachs joined the firm in 1882 and his son Henry Goldman joined in 1885. The Goldman branch withdrew from the company over whether to purchase government bonds during World War I. (Henry Goldman sympathized with Germany.)



The Sohmer Piano Company along the East River in Astoria.

The Hotel St. George opened in Brooklyn Heights; over the years it expanded into the city's largest.

Waiters at a Long Island hotel formed the Cuban Giants, the first black professional baseball team.

## 1886

Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* had its American premiere at the Metropolitan Opera on January 4.

The ferry between St. George and Whitehall Street began on February 23. Also, the Staten Island Rapid Transit Railroad Company began service between St. George and South Beach. St. George was named for George Law, the owner of waterfront prop-

erty. Businessman Erastus Wiman had offered to "canonize" Law if he relinquished his rights to the ferry landing; hence St. George.

On March 12, Sohmer & Sons purchased land along the East River in Astoria for a piano factory, which still stands.

Illustrator Charles Gibson sold his first drawing to the original *Life* magazine for \$4. Born in Massachusetts in 1867, Gibson moved to Flushing in 1882. By the 1890s his "Gibson Girls" made him so successful that he commissioned Stanford White to design a townhouse at 127 East 73rd Street.

The *Richmond County Advance* began as a weekly newspaper; it was renamed the *Staten Island Advance* in 1918.

On May 5, the New York Stock Exchange opened its first million-share day.

Dr. Stanton Coit of the Ethical Culture Society founded University Settlement, the first settlement house in America. Originally the Neighborhood Guild, it had the support of Seth Low and Andrew Carnegie; Eleanor Roosevelt volunteered there.

Yeshivat Etz Chaim (Tree of Life) was founded at 44 East Broadway; it became Yeshiva University. Etz Chaim merged with the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in 1915.

The Manhattan Chess Club (founded in 1877) hosted the first official world chess championship; club member Wilhelm Steinitz defeated Johannes Zukertort.

The Bowery Bay Beach amusement park opened on June 19. William Steinway and brewer George Ehret were the major investors. Renamed North Beach in 1890, it closed in the 1920s; La Guardia Airport is there today.

On August 4, Brooklyn annexed the town of New Lots (population 25,000).

In September, 778 buildings were under construction on the Upper West Side between 59th and 110th Streets.

Charles Pratt built the Astral Apartments in Greenpoint for his workers. Lamb & Rich were the architects of the model tenements; they later designed Pratt Institute. On March 4, 1890, a branch of the Pratt Institute Library opened in the Astral.



North Beach, originally known as Bowery Bay Beach, ca. 1895. (QBPL)

A gift from the people of France to the United States, the Statue of Liberty—officially *Liberty Enlightening the World*—was dedicated on October 28. This was also the occasion for the first ticker-tape parade, as office workers spontaneously tossed streams of paper from windows.

Governor Samuel J. Tilden, foe of the Tweed Ring and Democratic candidate for president in 1876, died on August 4. The bulk of his \$5 million estate was intended for “the Tilden Trust, with capacity to establish and maintain a free library and reading room in the city of New York, and to promote such scientific and educational objects as my said Executors and Trustees may more particularly designate.” Tilden’s relatives contested the will, and only a portion went to his trust, which merged with the Astor and Lenox Foundations as the New York Public Library in 1895.

The eclectic brick and terra-cotta Potter Building on Park Row rose on the site of the *World* building, which had burned. Architect N. G. Starkweather used fireproof materials throughout.

Abram S. Hewitt was elected mayor on November 2.

Good Shepherd Chapel on Blackwell’s Island was consecrated.

The Suburban Rapid Transit Company bridged the Harlem River, bringing the Second and Third Avenue elevateds into the Bronx; service reached Tremont Avenue in 1891 and the Botanical Garden in 1902.

The Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* on December 1.

Wealthy Jews founded the Aguilar Free Library “to meet a great need in the lower districts of the city . . . where the influence of wholesome literature is a most important factor in uplifting the mental and moral tone of a class that woefully lacks refining influences.” The four branches and traveling library consolidated with the New York Public Library in 1903.

The Flushing Village Association was founded on December 20 to promote “the most healthy, accessible, and beautiful suburb of New York.”

## 1887

A mile-square section of the town of New Utrecht was named Bensonhurst; the Benson family owned four farms there.

Catholic philanthropists founded the Cathedral Library. It opened to non-Catholics in 1893.

The Hebrew Actors Union, the nation’s first, was formed.

Peter Luger’s Steak House opened in Williamsburg.

Henry Ward Beecher, the dynamic, controversial minister of Plymouth Church, died on March 8.

Olmsted and Vaux’s plan for Morningside Park was approved, a year after the death

of Jacob Mould, who began designing the park in 1883. Olmsted considered the site “difficult, unsafe, and in parts, unpractical to travel over.”

Charles Pratt founded the Pratt Institute near his Clinton Hill home, beginning with 12 students in a drawing class.

Joseph Pulitzer’s *World* printed “Behind Asylum Bars,” a two-part expose of conditions in the Blackwell’s Island Asylum by Nellie Bly. Two months later her articles became a book, *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. She wrote: “What, excepting torture, would produce insanity quicker than this treatment? Here is a class of women sent to be cured. I would like the expert physicians who are condemning me for my action, which has proven their ability to take a perfectly sane and healthy woman, shut her up and make her sit from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on straight-back benches, do not allow her to talk or move during those hours, give her no reading and let her know nothing of the world or its doings, give her bad food and harsh treatment, and see how long it will take to make her insane. Two months would make her a mental and physical wreck.”

Sister Mary Irene of the Sisters of Charity opened Seton Hospital in Spuyten Duyvil.

On December 7, the Jamaica & Brooklyn, the first electric streetcar line in the metropolitan area, began along Jamaica Avenue.

The Eldridge Street Synagogue was consecrated. A century later, the congregation was so reduced that it was difficult to raise

a minyan. In 1986, Roberta Gratz founded the Eldridge Street Project to save and restore the synagogue.

## 1888

On March 12 and 13, the Blizzard of ’88 dumped more than two feet of snow on the city.

The Kings County Elevated Railroad began running from Fulton Ferry to East New York.

A real estate development on Staten Island called Prohibition Park (now Westerleigh) opened on July 4.

On November 6, Hugh J. Grant was elected mayor.

Violinist Fitz Kreisler made his American debut at Steinway Hall on November 10.

Daniel Lyons, a convicted murderer, was hanged in the New York County Jail, better known as the Tombs, just before a law banning executions went into effect. His was the city’s last execution.

## 1889

The Players, founded by Edwin Booth, was dedicated on New Year’s Day at 16 Gramercy Park, a rowhouse he had purchased the year before. The building features an entrance and loggia designed by Stanford White. John Singer Sargent’s full-size portrait of Booth hangs inside.



Madison Square Garden.

Washington Bridge opened over the Harlem River at 181st Street.

For the centennial of Washington's inauguration, the city commissioned Stanford White to design a temporary arch for Washington Square.

The nation's first golf course, founded in November 1888, opened near Yonkers on March 30. John T. Reid converted a cow pasture into a six-hole course that he named the St. Andrews Golf Club, after the famed course in Scotland.

On July 8, Charles H. Dow and Edward D. Jones published the first edition of the

*Wall Street Journal* at 15 Wall Street; the paper sold for 2¢ a copy.

Amos Cotting, the developer who purchased The Grange, Alexander Hamilton's country estate, gave the building to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, which moved it from 143rd Street to 287 Convent Avenue, near 141st Street.

Barnard College opened at 343 Madison Avenue on October 7; it became affiliated with Columbia College in January 1900.

Ernest Flagg built his summer estate in Dongan Hills on Staten Island, using stone from his own quarry. After Flagg's death in 1947, the estate became St. Charles Seminary.

The Giants won the National League pennant and the Brooklyn Bridegrooms (so called because several players got married) won the American Association crown. In their unofficial world championship series, Brooklyn took the first three games, the Giants the final six.

Nellie Bly, reporter for the *World*, departed from Jersey City on November 14 to challenge the record of Phineas Fogg, Jules Verne's fictional hero in *Around the World in 80 Days*. She completed the journey in 72 days, 6 hours, 11 minutes, and 14 seconds, visiting Verne in Paris along the way. She returned to Jersey City on January 25, 1890.

# 1890

Francis G. Lloyd of Brooks Brothers introduced the first English-style silk tie to America, but reversing the diagonal.

The first electric trolley in Brooklyn ran from Prospect Park to Coney Island along Coney Island Avenue; the fare was a nickel.

Jacob Riis published *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York*, with his photographs reproduced as line drawings; the 1901 edition included the photographs. As a result of his description of Mulberry Bend, the block was demolished and a public park created.

The second Madison Square Garden, designed by McKim, Mead & White, opened at Madison Avenue and 26th Street on June 16; Stanford White's 320-foot tower, topped with the controversial nude statue

of Diana by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, opened November 2, 1891; the Roof Garden (where White was murdered in 1906) opened on May 30, 1892. The complex was demolished in 1925.

The Morris Park Racecourse for thoroughbred racing (and later, automobile races) opened after the Jerome Park racetrack was demolished for the reservoir. Morris Park burned in 1910.

In their first year in the league, the Brooklyn Bridegrooms won the National League pennant. The championship series against the Louisville Cyclones ended on October 28 at three games apiece; it was too late in the season to continue.

The Huntington Free Library opened at Westchester Square in the Bronx.

The new Croton Aqueduct opened, with three times the capacity of the original.



Mulberry Bend Park (now Columbus Park).



Desiring to see in America every bird mentioned by Shakespeare, Eugene Schieffelin released 60 starlings in Central Park. The first nests were found under the eaves of the Museum of Natural History. The birds were generally unappreciated until it became clear that they feasted on the larvae of Japanese beetles, a pest that arrived in the roots of imported irises in 1912.

John A. Koski and other Finns formed Tyoanyhdistys Imatra (Worker's Society Imatra—*Imatra* being Finland's legendary waterfall) on December 14. Their building on 40th Street in Sunset Park was dedicated on November 1, 1908. Finntown once extended from 40th to 45th Street and from Fifth to Ninth Avenue.

The 349-foot World (Pulitzer) Building, the world's tallest, was completed in December; George B. Post was the architect. It was demolished in 1955 for an approach to the Brooklyn Bridge. Befitting the capital of the American Century, New York boasted the world's tallest building until 1974.

## 1891

The Century Association's home at 7 West 43rd Street, designed by Stanford White, was dedicated on January 10. For thirty years the club was on East 15th Street.

The Judson Memorial Baptist Church on Washington Square held its first services on February 6. McKim, Mead & White's Romanesque Revival sanctuary, with stained-glass windows by John LaFarge, was completed in 1892.

The Brooklyn Bridegrooms, or Trolley Dodgers as they were increasingly known, moved to Eastern Park in Brownsville, their home for seven seasons.

The New York Botanical Garden was established on April 28. Nathaniel Britton became the first director in 1896.

Carnegie Hall opened on May 5. Walter Damrosch led the New York Philharmonic Society in Beethoven's *Leonora* Overture no. 3. Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky then conducted his own *Coronation March*, and Damrosch followed with Berlioz's *Te Deum*. Tchaikovsky conducted performances of his own works the next two nights.

The Montauk Club, founded by Brooklyn businessmen in 1889, was dedicated on May 23. Francis H. Kimball designed the Venetian Gothic clubhouse in Park Slope; the terra-cotta frieze depicts Montauk Indians.

Yielding to the Women's Temperance Union, the police department hired its first female officers to serve as prison matrons.

The Brooklyn Police Department hired its first black patrolman, Wiley G. Overton. Never accepted by his fellow officers, Overton resigned the next year.

Herman Melville died on September 28 at 104 East 26th Street, where he had lived in obscurity for 28 years.

Ignaz Paderewski made his New York debut, sponsored by Steinway & Sons.



Ellis Island, ca. 1901.

Critic Henry Finck wrote in the *Evening Post*: “There are many persons who shun piano recitals as intolerable bores, but who never miss a Paderewski concert because when he plays, Bach and Beethoven are no longer riddles to them but sources of pleasure.”

James Stillman became president of National City Bank, the city’s 12th largest commercial bank. When he retired in 1909, the bank was the nation’s largest, with assets of \$334 million—a tenfold increase since 1890.

Charles B. Snyder became the Board of Education’s architect, his post for 31 years. He designed stately Collegiate Gothic school buildings, a measure of the city’s commitment to public education at a time of great population growth.

The Old Town Restaurant opened at 45 East 18th Street.

## 1892

The Ellis Island immigrant station opened on New Year’s Day; 15-year-old Annie Moore from County Cork was first down the gangplank. Damaged by fire, it was replaced by the present complex in 1900.

The first trolleys on Staten Island began from Port Richmond to Meier’s Corners.

On August 27 a fire damaged the Metropolitan Opera House, canceling the season. Carrère & Hastings redesigned the interior.

Backed by the Vanderbilts, Clara Spence founded the Spence School.



The Columbus Monument.

The city's last cholera outbreak claimed 100 lives.

Antonín Dvořák and his family arrived in New York on September 27. Mrs. Jeannette Thurber founded the National Conservatory of Music in America at Irving Place and 17th Street in 1885 and convinced Dvořák to become director at a \$15,000-per-year salary. In mid-October the family moved to 327 East 17th Street, where Dvořák composed the *New World* Symphony and his Cello Concerto. Critic Henry Krehbiel wrote that Dvořák's presence heralded "the rise of a school of American composers." At a concert in Dvořák's honor at Carnegie Hall on October 21, Anton Seidl conducted the Metropolitan Orchestra and a 100-voice chorus in the world premiere of the composer's *Te Deum*, written for the occasion.

The Columbus Monument at Columbus Circle was dedicated on Columbus Day.

Pete's Tavern (originally Healy's) opened at Irving Place and East 19th Street. O. Henry was a regular and set his story "The Lost Blend" there. During Prohibition the saloon became a flower shop, but patrons in the know entered the bar through the walk-in refrigerator holding the blooms.

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch, designed by John H. Duncan, with a quadriga by Frederick MacMonnies, was dedicated on October 21 in Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza.

The Fordham Branch of Bellevue Hospital opened; renamed Fordham Hospital, it moved to 190th Street and Aqueduct Avenue in 1899.

Thomas F. Gilroy was elected mayor on November 8.

Hermann M. Biggs became head of the Board of Health's Department of Pathology, Bacteriology, and Disinfection. He immediately initiated a campaign against tuberculosis. Also, the Strecker Laboratory for medical and bacteriological research was completed on Blackwell's Island.

Financier Jay Gould, 56, died of tuberculosis on December 2.

Developer Dean Alvord purchased 40 acres from the Flatbush Reformed Church for Prospect Park South, his "*Rus in Urbe*."

On December 27, St. John's Day, the cornerstone was laid for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine at 110th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. In 1887, Bishop Henry

Codman Porter had announced that he would build an Episcopalian edifice to rival St. Patrick's. Heins & La Farge were the cathedral's architects. The building remains unfinished.

On December 28, five died in a dynamite explosion on the Queens side of the Steinway Tunnel. Resulting lawsuits ruined the New York & Long Island Railroad, later acquired by August Belmont.

The *Tribune* identified 4,047 American millionaires; 27 percent of them lived in New York, 4 percent in Brooklyn.

## 1893

The Hotel Waldorf, Fifth Avenue and 33rd Street, opened on March 14; the Astoria Hotel opened later. By 1897 the two had become the single Waldorf-Astoria; it was



The Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch in Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn. (QBPL)



A milk station on the East Side.

demolished in 1929 to make way for the Empire State Building.

Architect Richard Morris Hunt and others founded the Municipal Art Society on May 22: “To make us love our city, we must make our city lovely.”

On June 1, philanthropist Nathan Straus, owner of Macy’s and Abraham & Straus, established a milk station on a pier at the foot of East Third Street where poor families could buy milk. Fresh milk cost a penny a glass, or 4 cents a quart; pasteurized milk cost six cents a quart. Eventually Straus supported six year-round stations and ten more open in the summer, contributing to a lower infant mortality rate. In 1914, New York required all milk to be pasteurized.

Edwin Booth’s funeral was on June 9 in the Church of the Transfiguration (the actors’ church, the “Little Church Around the Corner”).

A hurricane hit on August 23, flooding Lower Manhattan and uprooting trees in Central Park. The storm surge washed away Hog Island off Rockaway, taking pavilions and bath houses with it.

In September, Edward F. Albee and Benjamin Franklin Keith opened the Union Square House for vaudeville.

Lebanon Hospital, founded by Jewish philanthropists in 1890, opened with a kosher kitchen in a former convent at Westchester and Cauldwell Avenues in the Bronx.

Frank Sprague installed the first electric elevator in the Postal Telegraph Building.

Lillian Wald, a middle-class German-Jewish nurse, founded the Nurse's Settlement, which later became Henry Street Settlement.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Building at One Madison Avenue, designed by Napoleon Le Brun & Sons, was completed; the 700-foot tower (modeled after the campanile of San Marco in Venice), added in 1909, made it the world's tallest building at the time.

Trolleys began running along Northern Boulevard from Hunters Point to Woodside.

Archbishop Molloy High School for boys opened in Queens.

On September 4, Moses Baline and family arrived at Ellis Island aboard the *Rhynland*; his 5-year-old son, Israel, became Irving Berlin.

The Old Stone House was demolished to make way for Third Street in Park Slope. In 1935 the Parks Department unearthed the stones and reconstructed the house.

Frederick MacMonnies's statue of Nathan Hale was dedicated in City Hall Park on November 25, Evacuation Day; Stanford White designed the base.

Under Anton Seidl, the New York Philharmonic gave the world premiere of Antonín Dvořák's *New World* Symphony on December 16. Seidl directed the Philharmonic from 1891 to 1898.

## 1894

Brooklyn annexed New Utrecht, Gravesend, and Flatbush.

The New York Philharmonic gave the world premiere of Victor Herbert's Cello Concerto on March 9, with Herbert as soloist. In the audience was Antonín Dvořák, who was inspired to compose his own concerto.

On March 27, 300 women at the Astoria Silk Works went on strike over working hours; their work day began at 8:30 A.M. and stopped at 10:30 P.M.

The Metropolitan Traction Company's eight-story Cable Building, designed by McKim, Mead & White, was completed at Broadway and Houston Street. Powered by machinery in the basement, the cable cars ran from Bowling Green to 36th Street. Electric trolleys doomed the system, which stopped on May 25, 1901.



The Old Stone House, scene of heroic fighting during the Battle of Long Island.

On September 27, the Queens County Jockey Club opened Aqueduct Racetrack (named for the conduit carrying water from Long Island to Brooklyn).

The Municipal Art Society commissioned Edward Emerson Simmons to create murals for the Criminal Courthouse on Centre Street, depicting *Justice*, *The Fates*, and *The Rights of Man*.

Senator Clarence Lexow's legislative committee began investigating police corruption; Republican boss Thomas Platt hoped it would damage Tammany. The star witness was Captain Max Schmittberger, who said that initial appointment to the police force cost \$300; promotion to sergeant cost \$1,600; and the going rate for captain was based on the value of the command, reaching \$15,000. Another witness was Captain Alexander "Clubber" Williams. In 1876, after his transfer to the nightlife district above 14th Street, Williams remarked, "All my life I've had nothing but chuck steak. Now I'm going to get me some tenderloin," thereby giving the district its nickname, "the Tenderloin." After the committee's investigation, Tammany boss Charles Croker took an extended trip to Europe; on November 6, Republican reform candidate William L. Strong was elected mayor. Strong appointed Theodore Roosevelt his police commissioner.

In a nonbinding referendum, voters narrowly approved the consolidation of Richmond, Kings, lower Westchester, and western Queens into Greater New York, 176,170 to 131,706; in Kings County the results were 64,744 in favor, 64,467 opposed. The Commission of Municipal Consolidation ex-

plained the significance: "Your vote is only a simple expression of opinion. Actual consolidation does not come until the Legislature acts. Electors will please observe that this vote amounts to nothing more than a simple expression of opinion on the general subject of consolidation. It is merely the gathering of sentiment of the electors of each municipality advisory as to the future proceedings. If every ballot in a city or town were cast in favor of consolidation there would be no finality about it; no consolidation would result until further action by the Legislature."

The Patrolmen's Benevolent Association was founded to assist families of officers who had died during an influenza outbreak.

The new state constitution granted the city greater home rule, stating the legislature could "act in relation to the property, affairs, or government of any city only by general laws which shall in terms and in effect apply to all cities."

John Y. McKane, political boss of Coney Island, or "Sodom by the Sea," was convicted of election fraud and sent to Sing Sing.

The Normal College Alumnae Settlement House, now Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, was founded in Yorkville.

## 1895

Under chairman Richard Watson Gilder, the third tenement house commission issued its report on January 17.



The *Maine*, 1895.

On February 4, the Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Verdi's *Falstaff*.

The battleship *Maine* was launched at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

On April 16, after two years as director of the National Conservatory of Music, Antonín Dvořák sailed for Europe aboard the SS *Saale* (the same ship he arrived on). He never returned.

William Randolph Hearst purchased the *Journal*.

Under architect John Carrère, the Fine Arts Federation of New York was founded on April 18 “to establish an alliance to ensure united action by the art societies of New York in all matters affecting their common interests, and to foster and protect the artistic interests of the commu-

nity.” Architect Russell Sturgis was the first president.

The New York Public Library was founded on May 23, consolidating the Astor Foundation, the Lenox Foundation, and the Tilden Trust, with 360,000 volumes and \$3.5 million in real estate holdings. Dr. John S. Billings became the first director.

Coney Island's first amusement park, Captain Paul Boyton's Sea Lion Park, opened; it featured a water slide and chutes. Also, for the first time visitors to Coney could travel the entire way by trolley for a nickel; the fare on steamboats was 50¢.

The New York Zoological Society was chartered on April 26. (It was renamed the Wildlife Conservation Society in 1993.)

The first public golf course in the country opened in Van Cortlandt Park. It expanded to eighteen holes in 1899.





First Presbyterian Church of Newtown on Queens Boulevard, July 14, 1930. (QBPL)

Trumpets blared from above for the dedication of the Washington Memorial Arch on May 4. (It was to have been dedicated April 30, the anniversary of Washington's inauguration and exactly five years since the groundbreaking, but the ceremony was rained out.) The monument had garnered donations totaling \$178,000, including \$4,000 raised at a benefit concert by pianist Ignaz Paderewski at the Metropolitan Opera House on March 27, 1892. Stanford White was the architect; Frederick MacMonnies created the bas-reliefs. Hermon A. MacNeil's statue *Washington in War* was completed in 1916, A. Sterling Calder's *Washington in Peace* in 1918.

The new home of the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown (founded in 1652) was dedicated on May 5. In 1924 it was moved 125 feet for the widening of Queens Boule-

vard and construction of the Independent subway. The steeple was removed then.

On May 7, Mayor William Strong presided over a hearing at City Hall to consider splitting the Department of Public Charities and Correction. Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell testified: "Unfortunate men, women and children who, through accident or disease, are thrown upon city charity, should be relieved from the stigma and contamination of association with criminals." Carl Schurz added: "It's a sign of barbarism when jails and almshouses are thrown together under one management; the effort to separate them is a sign of civilization." On June 5, Governor Levi P. Morton signed legislation separating the departments. The Public Charities Department was charged with "all hospitals, asylums, almshouses and other institutions belonging to the city or county of New York which are devoted to the care of the insane, the feeble-minded, the sick, the infirm, and the destitute." The Correction Department had "all the authority concerning the care, custody and disposition of all criminals and misdemeanants in the city and county." Robert Jefferson Wright became the first commissioner of correction on December 21.

On June 6, the state legislature permitted the city to annex the villages of Wakefield, Eastchester, and Williamsbridge; the town of Westchester; and parts of Pelham.

Colonel George E. Waring, the "Apostle of Cleanliness," took over the Street Cleaning Department. During his two-year tenure, he put his workers in distinctive white uniforms and pith helmets, ended ocean

dumping, and began recycling. Also, the city opened a dump at Rikers Island. When the dump closed in the 1930s, the island had grown from 80 to 400 acres, with four cranes, 15 miles of track, 12 engines, and 30 flat cars to move the garbage from the scows.

The police department began bicycle patrols.

The great trolley strike shut down streetcars in Brooklyn. The state militia arrived to protect company property and scab drivers and soon broke the strike.

On October 7, the town sheriff raided the annual fair of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Newtown for staging horse races.

NYU's uptown campus in the Bronx was dedicated on October 19.

The body of architect Calvert Vaux was found in Gravesend Bay on November 21.

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce was founded.

Oscar Hammerstein's *Olympia*, the first theater in Long Acre Square (Times Square), opened on November 25. It attracted 10,000 that night, far more than the 6,000-seat capacity, and ticket holders who could not get in smashed the doors. The *Olympia* never made money, and Hammerstein lost it in 1898; it was demolished in 1935.

The straightening of the Harlem River was accomplished (the War Department had

begun dredging in 1888), but it cut off the community of Marble Hill from the island of Manhattan; later, Spuyten Duyvil Creek was filled in, fusing the neighborhood to the Bronx.

Dr. Theresa Cimino created Manhattan Special coffee soda (named for Manhattan Avenue in Greenpoint).

The third Macombs Dam Bridge was completed, a 415-foot swing bridge designed by engineer Alfred P. Boller.

Theodore Dreiser paid 25¢ a night at the Mills Hotel on Bleecker Street. He also lived at the Salmagundi Club (14 West 12th Street), 165 West 10th Street, where he wrote *The Genius*, and 12 St. Luke's Place. In September 1923 he moved to 118 West 11th Street, where he wrote *An American Tragedy*.

## 1896

Brooklyn annexed Flatlands, making the city coterminous with Kings County.

Nathan Birnbaum, better known as George Burns, was born on the Lower East Side on January 20.

On March 8, Ballington and Maud Booth founded the Volunteers of America.

The Rosenwach family started making rooftop water tanks.

During March, 30.5 inches of snow fell, the most recorded for any month.

The Long Island City Public Library received its charter on March 19. This became the Queens Borough Public Library.

After lobbying by real estate developer Cord Meyer, who wanted to disassociate the community from malodorous Newtown Creek, the Post Office changed Newtown to Elmhurst on April 1; the LIRR re-named its station the next year.

On April 23, motion pictures using Thomas Edison's vitascope were shown publicly for the first time at Koster & Bial's Music Hall.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average began on May 26, closing at 40.94. Of the original 12 companies, General Electric is the only one still included.

The first recorded automobile accident occurred on May 30 on Riverside Drive. During a horseless carriage race, a driver lost control and ran into a woman on a bicycle. She was hospitalized with a broken leg; the driver was arrested.

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on Hillside Avenue in Jamaica was dedicated on May 30.

The Cosmopolitan Race, the second automobile race in America, was staged along a 30-mile, route from Kingsbridge to Irvington-on-Hudson and back.

On June 4, LIRR president Austin Corbin died in a carriage accident. At the time of his death he was advancing a plan to open a deep-water port for transatlantic liners at Montauk Point.

Mrs. Robert Abbe founded the City History Club. Within a year the organization offered 40 classes for hundreds of students and issued its first publication.

The Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company (BRT) was formed as a securities holding company, uniting the surface, elevated, and streetcar lines in Brooklyn.

The Midland Beach resort on Staten Island, built by a subsidiary of the streetcar company, opened on August 29.

George Waring staged a Street Cleaning Parade, with 23 marching bands and all 2,000 members of his department dressed in new white uniforms (giving the workers their nickname—"White Wings").

Henry Siegel and Frank Cooper opened their massive Siegel-Cooper Department Store at Sixth Avenue and 18th Street.

On November 30, the Brooklyn Common Council established the Brooklyn Public Library, stipulating that the reading room should be "forever free for the use of the inhabitants of Brooklyn." The Board of Directors, appointed by Brooklyn's last mayor, Frederic Wurster, met February 1, 1897, with David A. Brody as president. According to an early mission statement: "To supply good reading to old and young—not to the intelligent only but to the idle, the ignorant and the vicious—is an important factor in helping to improve the quality of the minds of the people; especially is it of value in training the minds and elevating the taste of the young whose habits are still in the formative period." The first branch opened a year later in P.S. 3.

The nation's first public aquarium opened on December 10 in Castle Clinton. It closed in 1941 when Robert Moses tried to build a Brooklyn-Battery Bridge, and reopened in Coney Island in 1957.

Philadelphia department-store magnate John Wanamaker purchased A. T. Stewart's on Broadway, between 9th and 10th Streets. He built a new store on 9th Street, now Wanamaker Place, in 1903.

*The Wave* began publication in the Far Rockaway.

Bohemian National Hall at 321 East 71st Street was completed. Years before, Antonín Dvořák had performed in a benefit concert to raise money for its construction.

The 21-story, 312-foot American Surety Building, at the corner of Broadway and Pine Street, was completed. The company had paid \$1.5 million for the site two years before. John Jacob Astor IV complained that the new building's cornice extended three feet over his lot and, when rebuffed, announced plans for a 21-story building that would not only destroy the cornice but block the views from windows on that side. The company then agreed to pay Astor \$75,000 a year (about \$900 per office) for the infringement on his property.

St. Luke's Hospital opened on Morningside Drive at 114th Street. Designed by Ernest Flagg, the Baroque-inspired edifice was demolished in the 1960s for an uninspired replacement.

## 1897

"All the News That's Fit to Print" appeared on the front page of the *Times* for the first time on February 10.

The Citizens' Union was founded on February 22.

Founded by socialists, the *Jewish Daily Forward* began publication; Abraham Cahan, a Russian refugee, was editor. Circulation peaked at 275,000 in the 1920s.

Governor Frank S. Black signed Greater New York's charter on May 2.

The Richmond County Country Club, founded in 1888, moved onto an estate in Dongan Hills and built a new golf course; the present course dates from 1910.

The New York and Staten Island Electric Company was incorporated.

John F. Trommer opened a brewery and beer garden on Evergreen Avenue in Bushwick.

On June 2, the Brooklyn Museum, originally the Institute of Arts and Science, opened. Only a quarter of McKim, Mead & White's plan for the building was completed.

George Tilyou opened his 15-acre Steeplechase Park in Coney Island, confidently stating: "We Americans want to be thrilled or amused, and we are ready to pay well for either sensation."

President William McKinley dedicated Grant's Tomb on April 27. Located near Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, the mausoleum was designed by John H. Duncan; 90,000 Americans made donations. Ulysses S. Grant died on July 23, 1885.

The new home of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul, 315 West 22nd Street, was completed. The congregation had been established in 1841 at 15th Street and Sixth Avenue.

On September 13, the first public high schools in New York City opened: DeWitt Clinton, Morris, and Wadleigh. (Brooklyn had already opened Girls High, Boys High, and Erasmus Hall Academy.) Of the 524 students originally enrolled in Morris High School in the Bronx, 326 left during the year; only 72 ever graduated.

Arctic explorer Robert E. Peary arrived aboard the *Hope* with six Eskimos from Greenland, including a seven-year-old boy named Minik. About 20,000 people paid 25¢ each to view the exotic visitors on the ship. The Eskimos were then displayed at the Museum of Natural History; they lived in the basement. Minik's father and three others soon died of tuberculosis, and the fifth returned to Greenland, leaving Minik alone. The museum kept the father's bones for years, despite Minik's pleas.

Responding to an eight-year-old's letter on September 21, Francis Pharcellus Church of the *Sun* wrote one of the most famous editorials of all time. A lifelong New Yorker, Virginia O'Hanlon died in 1971.

Dear Editor:

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun* it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

*Virginia O'Hanlon, 115 West 95th Street*

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished. . . . No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

On October 4, Columbia University and Barnard College moved from Madison Avenue and 49th Street to Morningside Heights (Broadway and 116th Street). Charles Follen McKim modeled the new campus after the Athenian agora.

Jamaica Avenue Turnpike, the last private road in Queens, stopped collecting tolls on October 6.

Tammany candidate Robert A. Van Wyck was elected the first mayor of Greater New York on November 2.

## 1898

On January 1, Greater New York came into being, encompassing the five boroughs.

German immigrant William Entenmann opened his bakery on Rogers Avenue in Flatbush. By 1905 the business had moved to Bay Shore on Long Island.

Charlie Ebbets became president of the Dodgers and moved the team from Eastern Park in East New York to 10,000-seat Washington Park, which he built between Third and Fourth Avenues and First and Third Streets. The team won the opening game before 14,000 fans on April 30, beating the Philadelphia Phillies 6–4.

The \$5 million Harlem Speedway, the 2.3-mile roadway from 155th Street to Dykeman Street, opened on July 2. It was designed for carriages so that the elite could show off their prized horses. Lawson N. Fuller was the first to race through. The Speedway opened to automobiles in 1919.

In the Bronx, the year saw the opening of Lincoln Hospital and Home, an old-age home and nursing school exclusively for blacks, though medical treatment was available to all. The nursing school closed in the 1970s.



The Harlem Speedway, with High Bridge (1848) and Washington Bridge (1889).

A new Third Avenue Bridge over the Harlem River opened, the third on the site since 1795.

Charles De Kay founded the National Arts Club, having previously founded the Authors' Club in 1881 and the New York Fencers' Club in 1883.

On September 13, the Board of Aldermen banned the sale of tobacco products to children under 18.

George (Jacob) Gershwin was born on September 26 at 242 Snediker Avenue in Brooklyn.

The Atlantic Terra Cotta Works opened in Tottenville; they later produced ornamentation for the Flatiron Building, the Plaza Hotel, and the IRT subway.

Emil Paur became music director of the New York Philharmonic.



Teeing off at Far Rockaway, 1903. (QBPL)

Louis Sullivan's only building in New York, the Condict Building, was completed on Bleecker Street between Broadway and Lafayette Place.

The Municipal Art Society erected a monument at Fifth Avenue and 70th Street to architect Richard Morris Hunt, who died in 1895.

Life expectancy in the city was less than 50 years.

## 1899

On January 1, a year after the creation of Greater New York split Queens County,

Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay formed Nassau County.

The Tottenville Free Library was organized on February 6.

Demolition of the reservoir at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street began for the new library. Eugene Lentilhon received a \$378,692.39 contract to remove the debris.

Comptroller Bird S. Color established a system to pay voluntary hospitals to care for indigent patients.

On May 10, the historic Liberty Pole was reset on the lawn of the New Utrecht Reformed Church. The first pole had been

erected in 1783 after the British evacuation; President Washington rode past it during his 1790 tour of Long Island. The pole was replaced in 1834 and again in 1867.

The nine-hole Far Rockaway Country Club was founded; it disbanded in 1923.

According to the *Times* on June 29, automobiles were banned from Central Park “because they might frighten horses and otherwise be a disfigurement or annoyance.”

Newsboys went on strike on July 20. In less than two weeks, the “newsies” forced Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst to abandon their attempt to raise the wholesale price of their papers.

On September 9, Henry H. Bliss became the first automobile fatality. He was struck by a car after stepping off a streetcar at 74th Street and Central Park West.

Brooklyn won the National League pennant under manager Ned Hanlon. Sports-writers called the team the “Superbas,” after Hanlon’s Superbas, a popular vaudeville act.

Admiral George Dewey, hero of the Spanish-American War, arrived in the city on September 29; there was a parade in his honor the next day. Charles Lamb and other sculptors created a temporary plaster-and-lath triumphal arch at Fifth Avenue and 24th Street.

The 33-story, 391-foot Park Row Building eclipsed the 349-foot World (Pulitzer) Building as the world’s tallest; R. H. Robertson was the architect.

The Bronx Zoo opened on November 8; William T. Hornaday was the first director.

Trolleys began running on Broadway on November 17.

On December 2, trolleys began running between Jamaica and Flushing.

The Brooklyn Children’s Museum opened on December 16.

On NYU’s uptown campus, Gould Memorial Library was dedicated; the building was designed by Stanford White. It was named for Helen Miller Gould, daughter of robber baron Jay Gould, graduate of a special women’s class at NYU Law School, and the principal donor.





# 1900–1949

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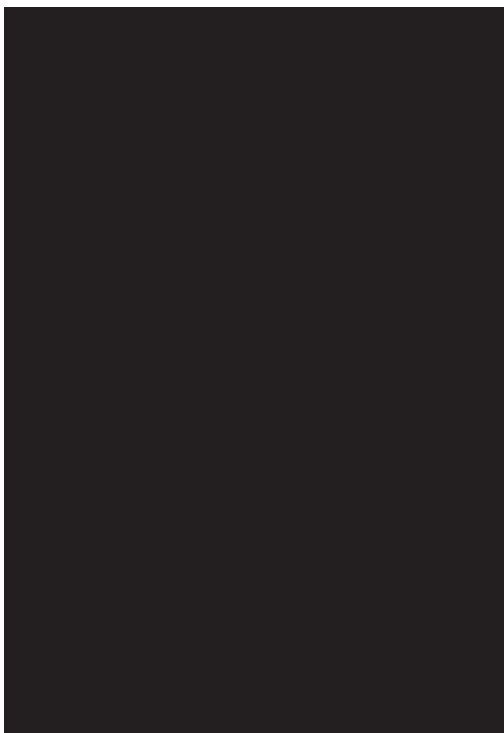
## 1900

On January 2, the First Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court moved into a \$650,000 courthouse at Madison Avenue and 25th Street. A third of the cost went for decorative work and sculpture by Daniel Chester French, Karl Bitter, and Frederick Ruckstul.

Groundbreaking for the Interborough Rapid Transit Company subway (IRT) took place at City Hall on March 24. Construction began two days later under Chief Engineer William Barclay Parsons. Excavation debris was dumped on Governors Island, doubling its size.

Newtown High School, designed by Charles B. J. Snyder, opened on May 4.

In Hell's Kitchen on August 12, Arthur Harris, a black man, stabbed undercover



Newtown High School, 1927. (QBPL)

officer Robert J. Thorpe, who was trying to arrest Harris's wife for soliciting. The Hell's Kitchen Riot began on August 15, the night before Thorpe's funeral. Neighborhood men, mostly Irish, attacked blacks, dragging them from streetcars and invading their homes. The police stood by; no rioter was charged, though several blacks were convicted on trumped-up charges. On September 12, 3,500 citizens filled Carnegie Hall to protest police brutality and the failure to protect blacks.

For a second year the Brooklyn Superbas won the National League pennant, taking a best-of-five series from the second-place Pittsburgh Pirates.

Benjamin Perine died on October 3 on Staten Island, where he was born a slave on December 2, 1796.

Madison Square Garden held the nation's first automobile show on November 3.

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn on November 14.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) was founded.

Rudolph Guggenheimer, president of the Board of Alderman, unveiled the Heine Memorial at 161st Street and Mott Avenue, near the Grand Concourse. The Fine Arts Federation and the National Sculpture Society had objected to placing the monument, funded by the German-American Arion Society, at Fifth Avenue and 59th Street. The city offered the Bronx location after William Steinway and

George Ehret announced they would erect it at their North Beach amusement park.

A fire destroyed several blocks in Lower Manhattan, including historic Fraunces Tavern.

## 1901

On February 4 the Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Puccini's *Tosca*.

The private New York Free Circulating Library, with 11 branches and a traveling library, merged with the New York Public Library. Also, the Bay Ridge, Flatbush, Fort Hamilton, and Tompkins Park libraries merged with the Brooklyn Public Library, as did the Free Library of the Union of Christian Work.

On April 14 the Long Island Automobile Club staged their first race, from Merrick Road in Springfield to Babylon and back.

The city charter was amended on April 22 (effective January 1, 1902), creating the Board of Estimate (the mayor, president of the Board of Aldermen, comptroller, and the five borough presidents).

On May 11, the sale of Carnegie Steel to J. P. Morgan and Associates for \$500 million was announced. The next day, Andrew Carnegie donated \$5.2 million to the city for public libraries, the New York Public Library receiving the lion's share; Brooklyn received \$1.6 million and Queens \$240,000. Sixty-seven library branches were built. Also, Carnegie built his



The start of the Long Island Automobile Club race in Springfield. (QBPL)

mansion on Fifth Avenue and 91st Street (now the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum).

On May 25, the last cable car ran from Houston Street to Bowling Green. The cars were replaced by trolleys.

The Hall of Fame for Great Americans, Stanford White's Beaux-Arts colonnade at NYU's University Heights campus, was dedicated on May 30, funded by Helen Gould. Every five years a committee voted on new members. (Nominees had to be dead at least 25 years.) All 102 niches were eventually occupied.

L. A. Thompson opened an amusement park in the Rockaways.

Following the death of his first grandchild from scarlet fever, John D. Rockefeller founded the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Founders Hall opened on Avenue A and 65th Street in 1906. It became Rockefeller University in 1965.

Frank W. Woolworth's mansion was completed at Fifth Avenue and 80th Street. Designed by Charles Pierrepont H. Gilbert, it was demolished in 1926 for an apartment house (990 Fifth). In the 1910s, Gilbert designed town houses for Woolworth's daughters at 2, 4, and 6 East 80th Street.

The city required car owners to place initials on their automobiles, the first step toward license plates.

The Chamber of Commerce Building at 65 Liberty Street was completed.

The Willis Avenue Bridge over the Harlem River opened.

Mary Harriman, daughter of railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman, founded the New York Junior League to involve young women from prominent families in charitable projects.

Construction of the Manhattan Bridge began on October 1.

Seth Low, the anti-Tammany candidate, was elected mayor on November 5.

Dr. John Girdner published *Newyorkitis*, describing the symptoms as “haste, rudeness, restlessness, arrogance, contemptuousness, excitability, anxiety, pursuit of novelty and of grandeur, pretensions of omniscience, and therefore prescience, which of course undermines any pleasure taken in novelty.”

Northern Boulevard trolleys ran from Hunters Point to Flushing on December 2.

## 1902

On January 8, two trains collided beneath 55th Street near Grand Central Terminal. Fifteen passengers were crushed, burned, or scalded to death. After this tragedy, the state legislature forced the railroad to switch from steam to electric power.

On January 9, the first electric train ran over the Second Avenue elevated.

Daniel Burnham’s Flatiron Building was completed.

Walter Damrosch began a two-year tenure as the music director of the New York Philharmonic.

The Long Island Automobile Club staged their first 100-mile endurance test on April 26, starting and finishing in Jamaica.

The Studebaker Brothers Company built a 10-story factory and headquarters at Broadway and 48th Street. Thus began



The Flatiron Building.

Automobile Row, running up Broadway from the 40s to the 60s, home to General Motors, REO, Cadillac, Packard, Ford, Peerless, Fisk, and the Goodrich and U.S. Tire companies.

Archbishop Corrigan died on May 2; his successor was John Farley.

The Algonquin Hotel on West 44th Street opened. During the 1920s, the Oak Room hosted the fabled Roundtable, a literary lunch with Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Haywood Broun, Alexander Woollcott, George S. Kaufman, and others.

Zella de Milau turned Henry Street between State and Joralemon in Brooklyn Heights into the “block beau-

tiful,” with street trees, window boxes, and rear-yard plantings. The Municipal Art Society’s Committee on Flowers, Vines and Area Plantings, under architect Katherine C. Budd, initiated the experiment. There were fewer than 4,000 street trees in the city at the time; a Parks Department census in 1996 counted over 498,000.

Mary Kingsbury Simkhovich founded Greenwich House. She headed the settlement house until 1946.

Macy’s moved from 14th Street and Sixth Avenue to Herald Square.

The 96-foot-high Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument (modeled after the Lysicrates Monument in Athens) was dedicated on Memorial Day at Riverside Drive; it was originally intended for Fifth Avenue and 59th Street.

The New York Central’s Twentieth Century Limited was inaugurated between Grand Central and Chicago on June 15; the last run was in 1967. The Pennsylvania Railroad inaugurated the Pennsylvania Special, running from New York through Philadelphia to Chicago in 20 hours. In 1912 it was renamed the Broadway Limited (after the Pennsylvania’s six-track right of way, not the Great White Way). The 20-wheel, 240-ton, 4,620-horsepower locomotive with gold trim reached 100 miles per hour. Amtrak discontinued it on September 9, 1995.

On June 17, Ira A. Shaler, the “voodoo contractor,” was gravely injured when a half-ton boulder crushed him in a subway tunnel during an inspection tour. He died 11 days later. There had been two earlier accidents on his projects: a powerhouse holding 200 pounds of dynamite had exploded on January 28, killing 5 and



Macy’s in Herald Square.

injuring 100, and a tunnel had collapsed near 37th Street on March 21, delaying construction for weeks and damaging homes in Murray Hill.

Charles Francis Murphy succeeded Richard Croker as Tammany leader.

William Sydney Porter, better known as O. Henry, arrived in the city. From 1903 to 1907 he lived at 55 Irving Place, where he wrote 100 short stories.

The Fifth Avenue facade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art was finished, designed by Richard Morris Hunt and his son, Richard Howland Hunt. The wings by McKim, Mead & White were added in 1906.

The city's first free municipal bathhouse opened at 326 Rivington Street; it was later renamed the Dr. Simon Baruch Public Bath for the father of America's public bath movement (and father of financier Bernard Baruch).

The New York Zoological Society took over the aquarium in Castle Clinton.

## 1903

On January 9, Frank Farrell and Bill Devery purchased the Baltimore Orioles for \$18,000, relocated to New York, and renamed the team the Highlanders; these were the forerunners of the Yankees. On April 22 the Highlanders lost their first game, falling to the Senators 3–1 in Washington, D.C. In their first home game at Hilltop Park (built in six weeks on

Broadway between 165th and 168th Streets), they beat the Senators 6–2 before 16,243 spectators. In the first game between Boston and New York on May 7, the Pilgrims (forerunners of the Red Sox) topped the Highlanders 6–2.

*In Dahomey* opened in February; it was the first musical written by black artists and starring a black cast to be booked into a Broadway house. The show closed after 53 performances. Paul Laurence Dunbar and James Weldon Johnson penned the lyrics, and Will Marion Cook (one of Dvořák's students) wrote the music. The show starred the popular vaudevillians Bert Williams and George Walker.

The last steam train ran over the Sixth Avenue elevated on April 3. The trains were replaced by cleaner, faster, quieter electric cars.

Jamaica Race Track opened on April 27; it closed in 1959, replaced by the Rochdale Houses.

St. Vincent's Hospital opened on Staten Island.

The New York Stock Exchange moved to 8 Broad Street on April 22; the architect was George B. Post, and the sculpture in the pediment is by John Quincy Adams Ward and Paul Bartlett.

Frederick Thompson and Elmer "Skip" Dundy bought Sea Lion Park in Coney Island and transformed it into Luna Park. The grand opening was on the evening of May 16. Luna's most unusual attraction featured Dr. Martin Arthur Couney's

Premature Baby Incubators, a fixture for 40 years.

The first permanent municipal playground in the country opened in Manhattan's Seward Park.

The General Sherman statue at Fifth Avenue and 59th Street was dedicated on Memorial Day. Augustus Saint-Gaudens was the sculptor; Charles McKim designed the base.

C. B. J. Snyder's new building for Erasmus Hall High School opened. (The private academy had become public in 1896.)

On October 8 and 9, 11.17 inches of rain fell, the most for any 24-hour period in the city.

In the last America's Cup defense held in the harbor, the New York Yacht Club's *Reliance* bested Sir Thomas Lipton's *Shamrock III* in three straight. On Memorial Day 1959, *Shamrock III*'s mast was installed in front of the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza.

On October 24, 10 died in the IRT's worst construction disaster when the roof of the Fort George Tunnel collapsed. In all, 54 workers died building the IRT.

George B. McClellan was elected mayor on November 2.

On November 23, Enrico Caruso made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in *Rigoletto*.

The police department named Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino to head the new Italian Squad (predecessor of the bomb squad) to investigate bombings and extortion linked to the Black Hand, a Sicilian gang.

The police began fingerprinting all persons arrested for felonies.

To celebrate the completion of his lodge at 190th Street and Fort Washington Avenue, Cornelius Kingsley Garrison Billings, a 42-year-old "capitalist at large," hosted a dinner on horseback in the ballroom of Sherry's Restaurant, Fifth Avenue and 44th Street. In 1916, Billings sold his 25-acre estate to John D. Rockefeller, who gave it to the city for Fort Tryon Park in 1930. The mansion burned in 1926.

The municipal tuberculosis hospital opened on Blackwell's Island.

Construction began to deck over the railroad tracks running northward along Park Avenue from Grand Central Terminal. The project was completed in 1913.

On December 19, the Williamsburg Bridge opened; construction had begun in 1891.

Flushing High School won the Public School Athletic League's (PSAL's) first boys' basketball championship tournament on December 26; the one-day, multi-sport event at Madison Square Garden attracted 9,000 spectators. The PSAL had been formed earlier in the year.

The Coney Island Polar Bears Club was founded.





The Williamsburg Bridge.

## 1904

Long Island City High School opened on April 4. In the Bronx, Morris High School (named for Gouverneur Morris) opened in June. George William Curtis High School opened on Staten Island, the borough's first, named for the local writer who once exclaimed, "God may have made a prettier spot than Staten Island, but He never did."

On June 15, the *General Slocum* caught fire in the East River; 1,021 passengers perished, most of them women and children attending the annual Sunday school picnic of St. Mark's German Lutheran Church (6th Street east of Second Avenue). The cork life jackets broke apart, and the crew could not lower the lifeboats because the pulleys were rusted through. Captain William Van

Schaick finally beached the vessel on North Brother Island. Van Schaick was sentenced to 10 years in Sing Sing; President William Howard Taft pardoned the captain after he had served three and a half years. The Knickerbocker Steamship Company escaped punishment. On the first anniversary of the tragedy, 10,000 witnessed the dedication of a monument for the 61 unidentified victims buried in Lutheran Cemetery. In September 1906 a monument was dedicated in Tompkins Square Park, inscribed: "They were the earth's purest children, young and fair."

William H. Reynolds opened Dreamland across from Luna Park on Surf Avenue. The most lavish of Coney's amusement parks, it cost \$3.5 million and featured a million lights; 100,000 bulbs illuminated a 375-foot tower.

Three Carnegie libraries opened in Queens: Far Rockaway (it burned in 1962); Poppenhusen in College Point; and Astoria. The first of Brooklyn's 22 Carnegies, the Pacific branch, opened; Staten Island's first Carnegie opened in Tottenville.

The Highlanders met the Boston Pilgrims on the last day of the season for the American League championship. The Pilgrims won when the Highlanders' Jack Chesbro, winner of 41 games, threw a wild pitch. The National League champion New York Giants refused to play the Pilgrims for "the championship of the world."

On October 16 the *World* reported that moral crusader Anthony Comstock was advocating censorship at the Brooklyn Public Library: "Brooklynites . . . are finding it difficult to get, from the shelves, certain classics which are not calculated to improve the morals of the community. . . . The list of proscribed books has been steadily growing and requests for them are carefully scrutinized."

The IRT opened on October 27. Mayor McClellan took the controls for the inaugural run, racing from City Hall to Harlem in 15 minutes. That evening the system opened to the public; 150,000 rode the first day. Heins & La Farge designed the stations, with elegant tilework, terra-cotta ornament, and oak and brass ticket booths. The first section in the Bronx opened to 180th Street, over the old Third Avenue elevated, on November 26.

The Hotel Astor opened in Times Square, with rooms at \$2.50 to \$10 a night.

Mt. Sinai Hospital moved to Fifth Avenue and 100th Street.

In October, William K. Vanderbilt and the Long Island Automobile Club initiated the Vanderbilt Cup Race in Nassau County. The race was discontinued after four spectators were killed in 1910.

Fire virtually destroyed the Queens County Court House on November 26.

George M. Cohan's *Little Johnny Jones* opened at the Liberty Theater, introducing "Give My Regards to Broadway."

The Strand, a new 3,000-seat movie theater, opened at Broadway and 47th Street, marking the emergence of Times Square (as Longacre Square was renamed



The City Hall station of the IRT. (GAHS)



The Times Tower under construction.

in April) as the new entertainment hub. The New York Times Tower opened with a fireworks display at midnight on December 31, the first New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square. In 1907 the illuminated ball was dropped for the first time.

## 1905

The first Carnegie Library in the Bronx, the Mott Haven branch, opened at 140th Street and Alexander Avenue. The architects, Babb, Cook & Willard, modeled it after Carnegie's Fifth Avenue home, which they also designed. The Tremont and

Kingsbridge branches also opened. In Queens another Carnegie, the Richmond Hill branch, opened, and the Port Richmond branch opened on Staten Island.

On April 12 the Hippodrome, the city's largest arena, opened on Sixth Avenue between 43rd and 44th Streets. It closed on August 16, 1939.

The city took over the Staten Island ferries.

Belmont Park Race Track opened on May 4.

The Giants won the National League pennant for a second year. In the World Series, they bested the Philadelphia Athletics in five games; Christy Mathewson won three games.

In Manhattan, Gennaro Lombardi opened Lombardi's, the first pizzeria. Anthony "Totunno" Pero, who opened Totunno's in Coney Island (1924), and John Sasso, who opened John's Pizzeria on Bleecker Street (1929), trained under Lombardi. In 1994, Lombardi's grandson, also Gennaro, opened a new Lombardi's on Prince Street in Manhattan.

The Prospect Park boathouse was completed. Neglected for years and threatened with demolition, it was landmarked in 1968 thanks to poet Marianne Moore.

St. John's College became Fordham University and opened medical and law schools. The medical school closed in 1921.

At the urging of a young librarian, the Brooklyn Public Library placed *The*

*Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on the “restricted list”—“not to be given out to children under the age of discretion [15].” Informed by a sympathetic librarian, the author replied:

I am greatly troubled by what you say. I wrote “Tom Sawyer” and “Huckleberry Finn” for adults exclusively, and it always distresses me when I find that boys and girls have been allowed access to them. The mind that becomes soiled in youth can never again be washed clean; I know this by my own experience, and to this day I cherish an unappeasable bitterness against the unfaithful guardians of my young life, who not only permitted but compelled me to read an unexpurgated Bible through before I was 15 years old. None can do that and ever draw a clean, sweet breath again this side of the grave. Ask that young lady—she will tell you so.

Most honestly do I wish I could say a softening word or two in defense of Huck’s character, since you wish it, but really in my opinion it is no better than those of Solomon, David, Satan and the rest of the sacred brotherhood.

If there is an unexpurgated Bible in the children’s department, won’t you please help that young woman remove Huck and Tom from that questionable companionship?

Sincerely yours,  
S. L. Clemens

The Lamb’s Club moved to 130 West 44th Street, designed by club member Stanford White. Members included Mark Twain, George M. Cohan, and Edwin Booth. The clubhouse was sold to the Church of the Nazarene in 1974.

Amid blatant fraud, Democrat George McClellan was elected mayor on November 7, with 228,397 votes; independent candidate William Randolph Hearst received 224,929 votes and Republican William Ivins 137,193.

The National Arts Club purchased Samuel Tilden’s home at 15 Gramercy Park. They removed the stoop, added a top-floor studio, and built a 13-story residence for members.

The Auburndale Improvement Association, the oldest civic association in Queens, was established.

August Belmont purchased the unfinished Steinway Tunnel (completed 1907) for \$80,000. On December 22, Belmont acquired the Metropolitan Street Railway Company, eliminating another rival to his Interborough Rapid Transit Company. The *Tribune*’s headline cried: “Belmont Is Traction King; Belmont Now in Position to Sandbag City.”

The first issue of *Variety* appeared on December 16.

“Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May?” lyrics by future mayor Jimmy Walker, was one of the year’s hit songs.

## 1906

Two more Carnegie libraries opened in Queens: the Elmhurst and Flushing branches.



The log cabin where Abe Lincoln was born being moved from College Point to Kentucky, 1906. (QBPL)

J. Pierpont Morgan built his library adjacent to his mansion at 29 East 36th Street; McKim, Mead & White were the architects.

After being displayed at the Buffalo Exposition, Abraham Lincoln's log cabin was stored in College Point before being shipped to the Lincoln Farm in Kentucky.

Staten Island Borough Hall in St. George was dedicated on May 2.

Joseph W. Stern published the first song by Irving Berlin (born Israel Baline), "Sunny Marie from Sunny Italy." Berlin received 37¢ for the song. At the time he was a singing waiter at Mike Salter's Pelham Cafe ("Nigger Mike's") on Pell Street.

On June 25, a jealous Harry K. Thaw shot and killed Stanford White in the rooftop garden of Madison Square Garden. In 1901, White had been involved with Thaw's wife, Evelyn Nesbitt, when she was a 16-year-old showgirl, years before she married Thaw.

On June 30, the Happyland amusement park opened at South Beach on Staten Island.

For a few weeks in September, Ota Benga, a 23-year-old Pygmy from the Belgian Congo, was displayed in a cage at the Bronx Zoo. (Benga had been enslaved by villagers in the Congo; they sold him to a man who brought him to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair for an anthropological exhibit.) Outraged black clergy compelled William Hornaday, director of the zoo, to permit Benga to wander the grounds, though he continued to sleep in the primate house. Mercilessly harassed by the public, Benga was sent to an orphan asylum in Brooklyn and then to a seminary in Virginia, where he committed suicide in 1916.

Bloodgood Haviland Cutter, the Long Island Farmer Poet, died on September 26 at his Little Neck home.

Wassily Safonoff became music director of the New York Philharmonic; he held the post until 1909.

The 69th Regiment Armory at 68 Lexington Avenue opened on October 13.

The 556-room Knickerbocker Hotel at Broadway and 42nd Street opened in October. John Jacob Astor IV acquired the partially complete hotel in May 1905. Tenor Enrico Caruso lived there for many years. The hotel became an office building in the 1920s (another victim of Prohibition), and Maxfield Parrish's *Old King Cole* mural in the bar was removed; it now graces the St. Regis Hotel.

The Rickert-Finlay Realty Company acquired the former Douglas Estate on Little Neck Bay and began subdividing it.

The *Rockaway Journal* began publishing.

## 1907

On January 22, the Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Richard Strauss's *Salome*, a performance so scandalous that it was not repeated until 1934.

The Brighton Beach Bath and Racquet Club opened; it closed in 1997.

After joining the Teamsters, workers of the Manhattan Street Cleaning Department went on strike on June 25, demanding a 48-hour week and 25¢ an hour for overtime. Violence ensued when the city hired strikebreakers.

The United States Custom House, designed by Cass Gilbert, was dedicated at Bowling Green. Daniel Chester French and Karl Bitter were the sculptors.



The United States Custom House.



Bison from the Bronx Zoo heading west. (Courtesy of The Bronx County Historical Society)

Florenz Ziegfeld staged his first musical revue in the roof garden of the New York Theater. This evolved into the Ziegfeld Follies (actually the brainchild of Ziegfeld's companion Anna Held).

On July 30, the horse-drawn omnibus made its final run along Fifth Avenue. The horse-drawn vehicles were completely replaced by gasoline-powered buses.

In October, Proctor & Gamble opened a 77-acre complex called Port Ivory (for their soap) along Kill van Kull on Staten Island; it closed in 1991.

The new Fordham Hospital opened, with 150 beds and a nursing school.

The *Bronx Home News* began publication.

The first metered taxicab hit the streets on October 1.

The Knickerbocker Trust Company, the city's third largest bank, failed on October 22. The federal government turned to J. P. Morgan to stem the panic, which he did with John D. Rockefeller and other major bankers.

The New York Zoological Society sent 15 bison to Oklahoma to reestablish the species in the west, the institution's first conservation project.

Fiorello La Guardia began working as an interpreter at the Ellis Island immigration station on November 12.

The Paris jeweler Cartier opened at 712 Fifth Avenue, the first commercial building on the avenue. In 1917, Cartier moved into the 52nd Street mansion built in 1905 for Morton Plant, who reportedly sold the building to Cartier in exchange for a two-strand pearl necklace for his wife.

Carnegie libraries opened in Stapleton and St. George on Staten Island.

Scott Joplin moved to Manhattan, where he published more than 20 works, including his opera *Treemonisha*. He died on April 1, 1917, and is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery in Astoria.

The Sons of the American Revolution reopened Fraunces Tavern on December 4, seven years after a fire destroyed the original.

On December 9, following an investigation by Commissioner of Accounts John Purroy Mitchel, Governor Hughes removed Manhattan Borough President John Ahern. Ahern had held elected office since 1882 (when Mitchel was 3!). Hughes stated: "It is not shown and it is not claimed that he has converted public money or property to his own use or has personally profited in an unlawful manner by his official conduct. Justice to Mr. Ahern requires that this should be stated emphatically and clearly understood. A Borough President is removable upon charges and without attempting to state comprehensively what conduct bearing upon char-

acter or fitness must be regarded as a proper subject for charges it is clear that a charge will lie for breach of duty."

## 1908

The 47-story, 612-foot Singer Building at Broadway and Liberty Street was completed. Designed by Ernest Flagg, it was the world's tallest for a year. Torn down in 1967, it was the tallest building ever demolished.

The subway tunnel between Brooklyn Borough Hall and Bowling Green opened on January 9. On August 1, the Van Cort-



The Singer Building.





Preparing the Long Island Motor Parkway, 1908. (QBPL)

landt Park extension opened, completing the original IRT system in the Bronx.

On January 10, three firemen perished in a blaze that destroyed the Parker Building. John Purroy Mitchel's investigation revealed the fire hoses were substandard and the fire department's telegraph system inadequate. Furthermore, the department's own headquarters was not fireproof. The fire commissioner resigned.

An exhibition by "The Eight"—Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan—opened at the Macbeth Galleries on February 3. They were soon dubbed the Ashcan School because they painted supposedly unworthy subjects and rejected academic style.

Residents incorporated the Malba Association on February 18 to enforce restrictions in their new community near Whitestone.

Chief Joel Skidmore, the last Canarsie Indian, died at 97 at his East 92nd Street home in February. He was an officer in Kings County Supreme Court from 1872 to 1907.

President Theodore Roosevelt pressed a button at the White House to start the first electric-powered train of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad Company (now PATH). Governors Charles Evans Hughes of New York and John Franklin Fort of New Jersey shook hands under the river at a spot illuminated by red, white, and blue lights.

On March 9 the Congestion Exhibit, sponsored by Benjamin Marsh's Committee on the Congestion of Population in New York,

opened in the Museum of Natural History. The exhibit documented the unhealthy overcrowding in tenements.

After another investigation by John Purroy Mitchel, Queens Borough President Joseph Bermel resigned on April 29. Lawrence Gresser succeeded him.

The Ambrose Lightship was anchored in the harbor. It was decommissioned on August 23, 1967, and is now part of the South Street Seaport Museum.

City College moved to 145th Street and Convent Avenue; the original 23rd Street building later became Baruch College.

After the Vanderbilt Cup Race in October, the Long Island Motor Parkway, the nation's first limited-access roadway,

opened; construction had started in June. By 1911, this private toll road extended from Lake Ronkonkoma to Creedmore. It was abandoned when Grand Central Parkway opened.

Tammany politician “Fishhooks” McCarthy’s Brooklyn Ash Removal Company acquired Flushing Meadows for a dump. “Mount Corona,” with rats “so big you could put saddles on them,” closed in 1934.

The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument in Fort Greene Park was dedicated on November 14. President-elect William Howard Taft gave the oration. Stanford White designed the monument, a 148-foot Doric column rising above the crypt. The bronze brazier meant to hold an eternal flame was never lit.



The Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument.



The Queensboro Bridge under construction, 1908. (QBPL)

The New-York Historical Society moved to Central Park West and 77th Street.

The topographical bureau completed the official street map of Queens.

The Belnord, at the time the world's largest apartment building, was completed between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue and between 86th and 87th Streets. Designed by H. Hobart Weekes, it contained 175 flats of 7 to 14 rooms; rents started at \$175 a month.

The Lincoln Settlement opened in Fort Greene, to serve the local black community.

On December 21, the Dime Savings Bank of Brooklyn moved into its marble home at Fulton and DeKalb.

## 1909

Outraged that women were subjected to “insults and indignities which they have been powerless to avoid,” Julia D. Longfellow, leader of the Women’s Municipal League, proposed in February that the last car of every subway be set aside for women. The IRT rejected her suggestion, but on April 1 the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad reserved the last car of their trains for women during rush hours. The experiment ended July 1, as few women took advantage of the privilege.

On assignment in Palermo, Sicily, to investigate the Black Hand, Police Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino of the Italian Squad was shot and killed on March 13. Petrosino is the only member of the New York Police Department (NYPD) killed on foreign soil.

A park is named for him at Lafayette and Kenmare Streets in Manhattan.

After eight years of construction, the Queensboro Bridge, designed by Gustav Lindenthal and Henry Hornbostel, opened on March 30. The official celebration ran June 12–19, when 19-year-old Elizabeth Augenti of Long Island City was voted “Queen of the Queensboro Bridge.” Trolleys began running over the span September 19.

The Richmond County Bar Association was founded in May.

The *Amsterdam News* was founded.

Gustav Mahler began a two-year tenure as the New York Philharmonic’s conductor.

The Battery Marine Building was completed. It later served the Governors Island ferry.

The 700-foot Metropolitan Life Tower opened at Madison Square, supplanting the Singer Building as the world’s tallest.

Police Headquarters at 240 Centre Street was completed. Abandoned in 1973 after the NYPD moved into One Police Plaza, it was converted to residences in 1988.

In August, Governor Hughes removed Bronx Borough President Louis Haffen after John Purroy Mitchel released a 300-page report on his activities. According to Mitchel, “It is not enough for a public official to keep outside the criminal law in performing his duties. He is under obligation to keep his work and subordinates up



The Hudson-Fulton Celebration, 1909.

to a certain standard of efficiency. If he fails in that, he is accountable to the head of the government.”

The week-long Hudson-Fulton Celebration began on September 25. On the 29th, Wilbur Wright took off from Governors Island for the first flight over water and buzzed the Statue of Liberty. On October 4 he flew above the American fleet anchored in the Hudson.

In articles about the songwriting game, Monroe Rosenfeld first referred to 28th Street between Fifth Avenue and Broadway as Tin Pan Alley for its concentration of composers, lyricists, arrangers, and publicists.

Democrat William J. Gaynor was elected mayor on November 3, defeating Fusion candidate Otto Bannard and independent candidate William Randolph Hearst; Fusion, however, swept the Board of Estimate. John Purroy Mitchel was elected president of the Board of Aldermen; William A. Prendergast became comptroller; and Fusion candidates became borough presidents of Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island.

The Grand Concourse opened on November 24; the 4.5-mile boulevard runs from 138th Street to Mosholu Parkway.

On November 24, Local 25 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), led by Clara Lemlich, organized a strike by young, female shirtwaist workers. “The Uprising of the 20,000” lasted until February; over 700 were arrested. At 2:30 A.M. on December 14,

Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont provided bail for four strikers, using her mansion at 477 Madison Avenue as collateral. When the judge asked if it was sufficient, she replied, “I think it is. It is valued at \$400,000. There is a mortgage of \$100,000 on it which I raised to help the cause of the shirtwaist makers and the women's suffrage movement.” Carola Woerishoffer also purchased houses and used them as collateral to bail out strikers. One judge lectured the strikers: “You are on strike against God”—to which George Bernard Shaw remarked, “Delightful. Medieval America always in the intimate personal confidence of the almighty.”

Mayor McClellan drove across the Manhattan Bridge on December 31. It was not really finished, but he wanted to declare it open before he left office at midnight.

During the year, about 16,000 infants died before their first birthday; in 1981, only 1,678 infants died.

## 1910

The Parks Department established the Bureau of Recreation, which stationed 30 playground leaders across the city.

Bohemian Hall opened in Astoria. It is the city's last beer garden.

The Ladies Christian Union opened Katharine House on 13th Street, a residence for “young ladies who are supporting themselves by their own exertions.”



Bohemian Hall in Astoria.

On July 17 a fatal accident marred the inaugural trip of *The Flying Lady*, a mono-rail running from Pelham Parkway to City Island. It was replaced by a battery-powered streetcar in 1914 and ceased in 1919.

A strike by 60,000 garment workers began July 7; on September 2, manufacturers and the ILGWU accepted a “Protocol of Peace” covering wages and working conditions.

On August 9 a dismissed public employee shot Mayor Gaynor as he boarded an ocean liner bound for Europe. Gaynor never fully recovered and he died on October 12, 1913.

The Penn Tunnels opened on September 8, bringing the newly electrified LIRR into Pennsylvania Station at 34th Street and Seventh Avenue. Designed by McKim, Mead, & White after the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, it was demolished in 1963.

Belmont Park hosted an international aviation meet October 22–30.

The Metropolitan Opera staged the world premiere of Puccini’s *La Fanciulla del West* on December 10. Also, radio pioneer Lee DeForest successfully aired part of *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, the first live opera broadcast.



Interior of Penn Station.



The New York Public Library.

## 1911

The New York Urban League was founded on 136th Street in Harlem to assist southern blacks moving to the city.

Josef Stransky became music director of the New York Philharmonic; he held the post until 1923.

A fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company (Washington Place and Greene Street) on March 25 killed 146 workers, most of them young Jewish and Italian women. Many jumped from the 10th-floor windows rather than remain in the burning building. The owners, who had locked the exits, escaped prosecution. On June 30, the state legislature formed the Factory Investigating Commission under Robert F. Wagner and Al Smith, resulting in 36 new regulations within four years.

After the Polo Grounds burned in April, the Highlanders agreed to share Hilltop Park with the Giants. The Giants won the pennant but lost the World Series to the Philadelphia Athletics in six games.

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine was consecrated on April 19. The interior dome used the tiles of Rafael Guastavino, a Spanish immigrant whose distinctive work is found in the Oyster Bar at Grand Central, in Central Park, under the Queensboro Bridge, and in the Municipal Building.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden, founded in July 1910 by the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (the Brooklyn Museum), opened on May 11.

Colonial Park opened in Harlem. It was renamed for Jackie Robinson in 1978.

At Tompkins Square Park, about 10,000 witnessed the finals of the first interpark athletic contests.

On May 23, President Taft dedicated the New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. Carrère & Hastings designed the \$9 million Beaux-Arts structure. John Carrère had died in a traffic accident on March 1; the public first entered the building to view his body in Astor Hall on March 3.

The Board of Aldermen abolished tolls on the Queensboro Bridge on July 18.

A fire began in a ride called “Hell Gate,” and Dreamland quickly burned to the ground. It was never rebuilt.

On November 15, after 2,500 workers in the Department of Street Cleaning went on strike, Commissioner William H. Edwards hired 4,000 strikebreakers.

The Century Chapel at St. George’s Episcopal Church was dedicated. J. P. Morgan, Seth Low, and Edward H. Harriman were members of the congregation.

English writer Hildegard Hawthorne described the crush on the IRT: “A sight not to be matched elsewhere—happily! As each train pulls up and the doors are slid back, a frantic rush is made by the waiting crowds. ‘Let them off!’ yells the guard; ‘Keep back!’ roar the police; and those who must get out push and struggle against the advance throng of those who want to get in. The policemen pull and shove; the gongs sound incessantly; and as the last passenger squeezes off, a restless mass of

humanity is wedged into each car; the doors are slid shut again, at the imminent risk of crushing someone; the policemen haul back those who have not managed to board the train, and off she whirls, to be followed the next moment by another, where the same scene is repeated.”

Anarchist Piet Vlag founded *The Masses* at 91 Greenwich Avenue. Editor Max Eastman intended to print “what is too naked or true for a money-making press.”

The Queens Chamber of Commerce was incorporated; it began publishing its magazine *Queensborough* in 1913.

## 1912

Bound for New York, the *Titanic* hit an iceberg and sank on April 14. Among those lost were Isidor and Ida Straus. According to Mrs. Paul Schabert, “Mrs. Straus declared she would not leave her husband. They were standing arm in arm as the last boat left. As she refused, she clung to him, and they went down arm in arm with the boat.” Colonel John Jacob Astor also perished; his 20-year-old son, Vincent, inherited the \$87 million estate.

The Curran Commission’s investigation of police corruption revealed widespread payoffs involving saloons, gamblers, and prostitutes. Police lieutenant Charles Becker and four accomplices were convicted of murdering gambler Herman Rosenthal and sentenced to death.

The *Leader Observer* began publishing in Woodhaven.





Forest Hills Gardens, ca. 1925. (QBPL)

The Russell Sage Foundation built the first homes in Forest Hills Gardens. Grosvenor Atterbury was the architect, the Olmsted Brothers the landscape architects. The Forest Hills Inn opened on May 1.

On May 2, James Reese Europe's 100-piece Clef Club Orchestra performed at Carnegie Hall before an integrated audience, the first performance by black musicians there. During World War I, Europe served with the Harlem Hellfighters as a machine gunner.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) led a strike by 18,000 hotel workers on May 7; most hotels blacklisted the leaders and hired strikebreakers.

The Board of Estimate approved the dual subway system on May 24; only John Purroy Mitchel dissented. The contracts were signed on March 19, 1913.

The Eltinge Theater, named for popular female impersonator Julian Eltinge, opened on 42nd Street. Empty for years, it reopened as a multiplex cinema in 2000, with the restored mural of Eltinge in drag.

On June 5, Brooklyn Borough President Alfred E. Steers took the controls of a steamshovel to break ground for the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza. A Brooklyn alderman had earlier complained, "The Central Library is certainly an extravagant proposition and although it may be of use to a hundred or so bookworms, it would never be a paying proposition for the taxpayers at large." Construction ceased after a few years.

The Jewish Daily Forward Building opened at 175 East Broadway. Designed by George Boehm, it features reliefs of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The paper moved to 49 East 33rd Street in 1974, and

the Forward Building became upscale condominiums.

Amos Cotting chopped down the 13 gum trees Alexander Hamilton had brought from Mount Vernon in 1802 for The Grange. Cotting had purchased the estate in 1879.

The New York Connecting Railroad, a venture of the Pennsylvania and New York Central, began building the Hell Gate Bridge in July. When joined above the East River on October 1, 1915, the arms were only  $\frac{5}{16}$  inch apart.

The Maine Memorial was dedicated at the entrance to Central Park at Columbus

Circle. The sculptor was Attilio Piccirilli, the architect H. Van Buren Magonigle.

On October 5 the Dodgers lost to the Giants 1–0 in their last game in Washington Park, their home field since 1898. The same day the Highlanders played their last game at Hilltop Park; Columbia Presbyterian Hospital rose on the site.

In the eighth game of the World Series (one ended in a tie) on October 16, the Boston Red Sox beat the Giants when centerfielder Fred Snodgrass dropped a fly ball in the 10th inning.

The East River Homes, model tenements overlooking the East River at 77th Street,



The Hell Gate Bridge under construction, 1916. (QBPL)



Craftsmen preparing the status of Mercury for Grand Central Terminal. (QBPL)

were built by Anna Harriman Vanderbilt. Henry Atterbury Smith's design, with open stairwells and oversized windows, was intended to combat tuberculosis.

D. W. Griffith's Biograph Studio opened at 175th Street in the Tremont section of the Bronx. The Edison Studio opened earlier on Oliver Place in Bedford Park.

The New York, Westchester & Boston Railway inaugurated an electric commuter line from the Harlem River at 132nd Street to White Plains and Portchester. The company went bankrupt in 1937; in 1941 the line became the IRT's Dyre Avenue extension.

The National Biscuit Company made the first Oreo at their Manhattan bakery (15th to 16th Street, 9th to 10th Avenue). Nabisco moved out in 1958; the site became Chelsea Market in 1997.

## 1913

On January 29, trolleys began running over the Queensboro Bridge from Second Avenue to Woodside. Service reached Jamaica on January 23, 1914.

Grand Central Terminal, designed by Warren & Wetmore, opened at midnight on February 2. The concourse ceiling shows the constellations, but reversed. Professor Harold Jacoby of Columbia

provided the sketch but claimed the artist had put the design on the floor instead of holding it above his head. Charles Gulbrandsen, who worked on the original and was hired to repaint it in 1944, remarked, “The ceiling is decoration, not a map. The constellations are north. They should be south. So what?”

The Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov* on March 19.

The new headquarters of J. P. Morgan and Company opened at 23 Wall Street. J. P. Morgan died on March 31.

Montefiore Hospital for Chronic Diseases opened on Gun Hill Road; with 650 beds, it was the largest Jewish hospital in the world. Montefiore was founded in Manhattan in 1884.

On April 9, 10,000 fans saw the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Dodgers 1–0 in the first game at Ebbets Field. The Yankees, formerly the Highlanders, played the first of 10 seasons in the Polo Grounds, paying the Giants an annual rent of \$55,000.

The Motion Picture Projectionists Union, Local 306 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, was founded. By the 1940s the union had 2,450 members, but by the 1980s automation eliminated the craft and virtually eliminated the union.

Cass Gilbert’s 792-foot Woolworth Building, the world’s tallest, was dedicated on April 24. President Woodrow Wilson threw a switch in the White House to illu-

minate the \$13.5 million “Cathedral of Commerce.” The 58th-floor observation deck took in \$200,000 a year.

Labor activist Mother Jones appeared at Carnegie Hall on May 27; tickets cost 10¢, 25¢, and 50¢.

The pageant of the striking silk workers at Paterson, New Jersey, was staged at Madison Square Garden on June 7. Mabel Dodge, who hosted a bohemian literary salon in her home at 23 Fifth Avenue, bankrolled the production.

The Queens Chamber of Commerce adopted the borough’s official flag: a tulip for the Dutch and red and white roses for the English, encircled by wampum for the Indians, on a blue and white background. Unveiled on June 7 at the ceremony marking the start of construction of the dual subway system, the flag was first raised at Borough Hall on October 14, 1929.

Edward F. Albee opened the 1,700-seat Palace Theater at Broadway and 47th Street.

The Actors Equity Association was founded.

The Hotel Theresa opened at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue; it did not desegregate until 1940. The building was converted to offices in 1970.

The Main Post Office was dedicated at 34th Street and Eighth Avenue. William Mitchell Kendall of McKim, Mead & White designed the classical structure to

complement Penn Station. He used a passage from Herodotus for the frieze: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds” (referring to horsemen serving Xerxes at the Battle of Salamis).

The Firemen’s Memorial at 100th Street and Riverside Drive was dedicated on September 5. Episcopal Bishop Henry Codman Potter formed a committee with Andrew Carnegie and Isidor Straus in 1908 and raised the \$50,000. The memorial is inscribed SOLDIERS IN A WAR THAT NEVER ENDS.

*La Prensa* began publication; it became a daily in 1917.

The Bronx’s second public high school, Evander Childs, opened; it was named for a dedicated principal who died at his desk.

The Giants won their third straight National League pennant but lost the World Series to the Philadelphia Athletics in five games.

Fusion candidate John Purroy Mitchel was elected mayor on November 4, with 355,888 votes, defeating Tammany’s Edward E. McCall and Socialist Charles Edward Russell. At 34, Mitchel was the youngest man to win the office; he declared, “I have but one ambition, that is, to make New York the best-governed municipality in America.” Fusion swept the Board of Estimate except for the position of Queens borough president, won by Democrat Maurice E. Connelly.

Sea View Hospital on Staten Island opened on November 12.

Horse-drawn vehicles comprised a quarter of the traffic over the Queensboro Bridge.

King’s Bridge, the 200-year-old span over Spuyten Duyvil Creek, was demolished.

The state legislature passed the Home Rule Act, granting every city “power to regulate and control its property and local affairs and . . . all the rights, privileges and jurisdiction necessary for carrying such power into execution.”

The Armory Show, the first exhibition of modern art, opened at the 69th Regiment Armory, introducing works of the Ashcan School and contemporary artists in Paris.

The first crossword puzzle appeared in the *New York World* Sunday magazine on December 21.

Once the city’s most elegant, the 1830s Astor House Hotel (built on the site of John Jacob Astor’s house) was demolished for the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company’s (BRT) Broadway Line.

## 1914

On New Year’s Day, the Bronx became the state’s 62nd and last county. (Until then it had been part of Westchester.) Alderman Arthur H. Murphy became the first Democratic Party county leader, operating out of his saloon near Borough Hall until his death in 1922.



Jackson Heights. (QBPL)

As the IRT expanded south along Seventh Avenue, the city mapped Seventh Avenue South from West 11th Street to Varick Street, cutting through the middle of blocks and sometimes slicing corners off buildings (as at 61 Grove Street).

On May 2, Ellen Eddy Shaw, a young schoolteacher, established the Children's Garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden; 150 children tended small plots. It was later renamed Miss Shaw's Children's Garden.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt delivered a patriotic oration at the Forest Hills railroad station on the Fourth of July.

Edward Archibald MacDougall's Queensboro Corporation constructed the first garden apartments in Jackson Heights.

On August 13, the first Davis Cup tournament was held at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills Gardens.

Construction of Queens Boulevard began, joining Thomson Avenue in Long Island City and Hoffman Boulevard in Elmhurst.

Charles E. Merrill and Edmund Lynch founded Merrill Lynch and Company. (The comma was inadvertently omitted from the incorporation papers.) They sold the firm in 1929, just before the crash.

The Municipal Building was completed. Designed by McKim, Mead & White, it cost about the same as the 1870 New York County Courthouse—the infamous Tweed courthouse—across the street.

Jacob Riis, author of *How the Other Half Lives*, died on May 26.

In a townhouse adjacent to her MacDougal Alley home, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney opened the Whitney Studio. In 1918 the studio moved to a rowhouse at 147 West Fourth Street; this is the origin of the Whitney Museum of Art.

The NYPD appointed the first black officer, Samuel Jesse Battle.

Edgar Allan Poe's cottage on Kingsbridge Road in the Bronx was moved across the street, saving it from demolition.

Retailer J. C. Penney relocated its corporate headquarters from Wyoming, where it was founded, to New York; they moved to Dallas in 1988.

Sculptor and collector George Grey Barnard opened the Barnard Cloisters, a museum of medieval art, at Fort Washington Avenue and 190th Street. John D. Rockefeller Jr. purchased the collection in 1916 and donated it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

B. Altman's opened at Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. Founded in April 1865 at 39 Third Avenue by Benjamin Altman, the department store closed in 1989.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union was founded; Sidney Hillman was the first president.

*Watch Your Step*, Irving Berlin's first Broadway show, opened on December 8.

## 1915

On January 11, Colonel Jacob Ruppert and Colonel Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston purchased the Yankees for \$460,000. The team wore their legendary pinstripes for the first time on April 22.

On February 12 the publisher of the *Richmond County Advance*, William C. Wilcox, sent reporter John Drebing west in a covered wagon to publicize the virtues of Staten Island. The 30-week journey to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco was suspended in Denver.

The G. X. Mathews Company exhibited their "model flats" at the San Francisco exposition. The family began building their distinctive yellow-and-orange brick apartments in Ridgewood in 1904 and expanded to Astoria, Woodside, and Elmhurst. The brick came from the Kreischer brickworks on Staten Island.

The elevated line to Metropolitan Avenue in Ridgewood opened on February 22.

On March 18, the day after an unfavorable review of a new farce, *Taking Chances*, the Schuberts banned *Times* reporters from their theaters. The ban was lifted by court order.



Mathews model flats. (GAHS)

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Japanese Garden opened, designed by Takeo Shiota.

A park was dedicated at Broadway and 106th Street for Isidor and Ida Straus, who went down on the *Titanic*; it features a statue titled *Memory*, inscribed with a verse from 2 Samuel: "Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives and in their death they were not divided." Evarts Tracy was the architect, Augustus Lukeman the sculptor.

The German embassy published a notice in newspapers on May 1, the day the *Lusitania* sailed from Pier 54: "Travellers intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war

includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government vessels flying the flag of Great Britain or any of her allies are liable for destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk." On May 7 a German U-boat sank the *Lusitania* off Ireland; 1,198 perished, including 128 Americans—Alfred Gwynn Vanderbilt, Broadway producer Charles Frohman, and writer Elbert Hubbard among them.

On June 22 the first subway ran through the Queensboro Tunnel (originally the Steinway, then the Belmont Tunnel) between Grand Central and Queens. Service reached Queensboro Plaza on November 5, 1916.





Members of the United States Life Saving Service in the Rockaways reading books provided by the Queens Borough Public Library. (QBPL)

The city's official flag and seal, designed by Paul Manship, were unveiled before Mayor Mitchel and Governor Whitman on June 24.

Hotel des Artistes opened at 1 West 67th Street.

The Coast Guard took over the Arverne Lifesaving Station in the Rockaways (established in the 1840s). The station closed in 1929; a firehouse rose on the site.

The Marshall Chess Club was founded, named for Frank J. Marshall, the American champion from 1909 to 1936. The club bought a town house at 23 West 10th Street.

Port Newark's new cargo facility opened on October 15; a new deep-water channel was dredged out of shallow wetlands.

## 1916

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church on Fifth Avenue and 53rd Street was consecrated on April 26. Bertram G. Goodhue was the architect.

The Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Manufacturers' Protective Association began a lockout on April 29, idling 60,000 garment workers until August.

Marcel Duchamp, John Sloan, and friends climbed the Washington Square Arch for a picnic and declared Greenwich Village “a free republic, independent of uptown.”

The Liberty Avenue elevated line to Lefferts Avenue in Richmond Hill opened.

The Pulitzer Fountain in Grand Army Plaza, designed by Carrère & Hastings, with Karl Bitter’s sculpture of Pamona, was dedicated.

The city opened a garbage dump on Lake’s Island in Fresh Kills; bowing to local protests, the Board of Health closed it in 1918.

Jamaica Bay was closed to oystering by court order.

In the summer, infantile paralysis killed 2,362.

The destructive Japanese beetle first appeared in the metropolitan area.

St. Joseph’s College was founded as a liberal arts college for women in Brooklyn.

The Zoning Resolution, the first in the country to regulate the size and use of buildings, went into effect on July 25, protecting neighborhoods from industrial and commercial intrusions.



The Liberty Avenue elevated line under construction, 1915. (QBPL)



Lumber camp in Forest Park removing blighted chestnut trees. (QBPL)

The F.&M. Schaefer Brewing Company relocated from Park Avenue and 51st Street, their home since 1849, to Kent Avenue and South Ninth Street in Williamsburg. It closed in 1976.

In the lobby of Washington Irving High School on Irving Place, Barry Faulkner painted murals depicting scenes from Irving's *History of New York*.

The chestnut blight hit Forest Park; a logging operation removed diseased trees.

The Dodgers (or Robins, for manager Wilbert Robinson) won the National League pennant and appeared in the World Series for the first time. They fell to the Red Sox in five games.

On January 17, Rodman Wanamaker hosted a luncheon at the Taplow Club that led to the formation of the Professional Golfers Association (PGA); it was incorporated on April 10 with 82 members. In the first PGA championship, on October 14, Englishman Jim Barnes defeated Jock Hutchinson on the 36th hole at the Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville.

On October 16, Margaret Sanger opened her first birth control clinic at 46 Amboy Street in Brownsville, distributing “safe, harmless information” about contraception for 10¢; she was arrested and her clinic shuttered.

The battleship *Arizona* was commissioned at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on October 17.

On November 3, with the 28-year-old playwright in the cast, the Provincetown Players presented Eugene O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff* in a rowhouse at 139 Macdougall Street. Two years later the company opened the Provincetown Playhouse in a converted stable at 133 Macdougall Street, where they produced O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* and *The Emperor Jones*.

With war raging in Europe, the Federal Reserve Bank at Liberty and Nassau Streets accepted the gold of foreign nations for safekeeping and soon held the largest gold reserve in the world.

The nation's first animal hospital opened at the Bronx Zoo.

The Rockefellers donated property in Fort George for High Bridge Park.

## 1917

In January, Leon Trotsky, his wife, and their two sons arrived in the city and rented an apartment in the Bronx (\$18 a month), but Trotsky returned to Russia in March.

Rapid transit began February 1 from Queensboro Plaza to Ditmars Boulevard, and on April 21 to 103rd Street in Corona; on July 23, the Second Avenue elevated was extended over the Queensboro Bridge, making Queensboro Plaza the most complex transit station anywhere.

Eddie Cantor joined the Ziegfeld Follies at \$400 a week.

The Hell Gate Bridge was dedicated on March 10; trains began rolling on April 3. Gustav Lindenthal designed the arched span.

The 27th Division of the National Guard marched in review along Fifth Avenue, the first New York regiment to head off to the world war.

Poly Prep moved from downtown Brooklyn to a 25-acre campus in Dyker Heights.

The United States completed Fort Tilden (named for Governor Samuel J. Tilden) at the western tip of the Rockaway Peninsula.

The final run of the city's last horsecar line was July 26, from Broadway and Bleecker Street to Ninth Avenue and 14th Street.

The 93-mile Catskill Aqueduct opened on October 12; construction had begun in 1905 and cost \$277 million. Staten Island was connected to the system on October 25.

The Kingsbridge Armory, with its 100-foot vaulted ceiling, was completed.



The last horsecar in Manhattan, at 207 Varick Street, 1917. (QBPL)



Seventh Avenue and 31st Street, ca. 1940. Penn Station is on the left, the Hotel Pennsylvania on the right. (Weber Collection, QBPL)

The Chicago White Sox beat the Giants in the World Series, taking the sixth game on October 15.

The State Conservation Commission closed the Arthur Kill oyster beds.

The Ford Building opened along Automobile Row, at Broadway and 54th Street. The ILGWU occupied it during World War II; labor leader David Dubinsky gleefully used Edsel Ford's desk.

*The Masses*, which published John Reed's accounts from the Western Front, folded after staff members were charged with sedition; all were acquitted.

Democrat John Hylan was elected mayor on November 6, defeating incumbent John Purroy Mitchel, Socialist Morris Hillquit, and Republican William Bennett (who beat Mitchel in a Republican primary marred by fraud). In the general election,

Mitchel received less than half his total from 1913.

Chef Louis Diat created vichyssoise at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Madison Avenue and 46th Street.

## 1918

Mayor Hylan disbanded the Confidential Squad, which investigated police corruption. The new police commissioner, Richard Enright, banished Lewis Valentine, a dedicated member of the squad, to a distant post.

The Bronx International Exposition of Science, Arts, and Industries opened on May 30.

The St. Albans Golf Club opened. During World War II it became a Naval Hospital.

The Jamaica Avenue elevated opened to 168th Street on July 3. On July 17 the tunnel under the Harlem River for the Lexington Avenue line was completed; the sections were assembled on land, floated into place, and sunk into a trench on the river bottom. Also, the Ninth Avenue elevated was extended to Jerome Avenue.

Irving Berlin's *Yip! Yip! Yaphank!* opened on August 9, featuring "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning."

Former mayor John Purroy Mitchel received a commission in the Army Air Corps. On July 6, during a training flight at Gerstner Field in Lake Charles, Louisiana, he fell out of an open cockpit plane. His funeral mass was held at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The military airfield in Garden City was renamed in his honor. In 1928 his memorial was dedicated in Central Park at Fifth Avenue and 90th Street; a flagpole in front of the 42nd Street library is also dedicated to his memory.

Wagner College relocated from Rochester to Staten Island.

The Hotel Pennsylvania, designed by McKim, Mead & White, opened on Seventh Avenue across from Penn Station.

On November 1, a BRT train derailed at Malbone Street; 102 died in the nation's worst mass-transit accident. To erase the memory, Malbone was renamed Empire Boulevard, and in 1925 the BRT became the BMT—the Brooklyn–Manhattan Transit Corporation.

The city published *The Official Directory of the City of New York*, listing all agencies and public officials, complete with home addresses and salaries. The 112-page paperback cost 15¢, the hardcover 30¢. In 1984 it was renamed *The Green Book*.

The Edwin Booth statue, sculpted by Edmond T. Quinn, was unveiled on November 13 in Gramercy Park opposite The Players, the club Booth founded in 1888.

The Metropolitan Opera staged the world premiere of Puccini's *Il Trittico* on December 14.

A temporary triumphal arch was erected on Fifth Avenue at 24th Street to welcome returning troops.

## 1919

The St. Thomas Choir School opened, the only church-affiliated boarding school for choirboys.

On February 19 the 369th Regiment, the Harlem Hellfighters, marched up Fifth Avenue to Harlem; James Reese Europe's regimental band broke into the ragtime tune "Here Comes My Daddy Now."

The federal government purchased the Vanderbilt estate in New Dorp for a military airfield, named for Captain James E. Miller, the first American aviator killed in action. The Vanderbilt mansion was demolished in 1936.



Laborers emptying a garbage barge into the ocean.

On May 4, the Giants beat the Phillies 4–1 at the Polo Grounds in the first legal professional baseball game played on a Sunday.

On May 8, the navy’s NC-4 flying boat took off from the Naval Air Station in Rockaway for the first transatlantic crossing. Stopping in Canada and the Azores, it arrived in Plymouth, England, on May 31.

Trinity Church no longer required parishioners to rent their pews.

Patrick Hayes succeeded John Cardinal Farley as archbishop of New York. Hayes became a cardinal on March 24, 1924.

The city resumed ocean dumping.

The Harlem Speedway opened to automobiles.

The New School for Social Research was founded.

The *Daily News*, the city’s first tabloid, hit newsstands on June 26. Within four years circulation topped 750,000, highest in the nation.

The 29-room Soldiers’ Sailors’ Marines’ and Airmen’s Club opened at Lexington Avenue and 37th Street.

The *Sun* moved into A. T. Stewart’s 1846 marble palace at Broadway and Chambers Street. In 1930 the paper installed the distinctive four-sided bronze clock emblazoned with the motto “The Sun Shines for All.”

Actors Equity went on strike on August 7; they secured an eight-performance week and a closed shop on September 6.

The new headquarters of the Standard Oil Company, designed by Thomas Hastings, opened at 26 Broadway. John D. Rockefeller had relocated the company to the city from Cleveland in 1883.

On December 21, Russian-born Emma Goldman and 248 others were deported aboard the *Buford*, the “Soviet Ark.” She was convicted of sedition and stripped of her citizenship for opposing American participation in the war.

Edward Hopper mounted his first exhibition at the Whitney Studio Club.

## 1920

The Yankees acquired Babe Ruth from the Boston Red Sox on January 5 for \$125,000 and a \$350,000 loan. Ruth hit 54 home runs, drove in 137 runs, and hit .376 for his new club. Playing at the Polo Grounds, the Yankees became the first team in baseball history to draw over a million fans in a season. Boston has since endured “the curse of the Bambino.”

In February, the Bronx branch of Hunter College was founded; it became Lehman College in 1968.

The state legislature authorized the city to exempt new housing from local property taxes for 12 years, stimulating new



Flying boats at the Naval Air Station in the Rockaways, May 7, 1919. (QBPL)



construction; home owners faced new tax bills in the middle of the Great Depression, however.

The Wonder Wheel opened at Coney Island on May 30. Herman J. Garms commissioned the 150-foot high marvel, which has 16 sliding cars and 8 fixed cars, from the Eccentric Ferris Wheel Amusement Company; Charles Herman was the designer. Also, Nathan Handwerker opened Nathan's Famous that summer, selling hot dogs, beer, malts, and hamburgers for a nickel apiece.

On May 31, Hero Park in Tompkinsville was dedicated, honoring the 144 Staten Islanders killed in World War I.

Yankee pitcher Carl May beamed Cleveland shortstop Ray Chapman with a fastball on August 16; Chapman died the next day, the only fatality in the history of major-league baseball.

The monument at Battle Hill in Greenwood Cemetery (the highest point in Brooklyn) was dedicated on August 27, the anniversary of the Battle of Long Island. The Altar of Liberty, designed by Frederick W. Ruckstull, features a statue of Minerva, her left arm saluting the Statue of Liberty. The monument was financed by Charles M. Higgins, inventor of India ink.

The police department hired its first black policewoman, Lawon R. Bruce.

The massive Silvercup Bakery opened near the Queensboro Bridge.

At 12:01 P.M. on September 16, a bomb packed with pieces of metal, left in a horse-drawn wagon, exploded outside the headquarters of the J. P. Morgan Company at 23 Wall Street, killing 30. The crime remained unsolved.

The \$2.5 million Famous Players-Lasky Studio opened in Astoria (35th Avenue and 35th Street) on September 20.

The first traffic light was installed at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue.

On October 12 the Cleveland Indians beat the Dodgers 3–0 to take the World Series five games to two.

When manufacturers tried to restore the open shop, Sidney Hillman led a strike by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in December; the strike ended in June.

The first subway to Coney Island opened. In the Bronx, the Third Avenue elevated was extended along Webster Avenue to Gun Hill Road in October, and later to 241st Street. The dual system in the Bronx was completed on December 20 with the extension of the Pelham Bay Line to Pelham Bay Park. New York's 201.8-mile system was the world's largest, surpassing London's 156.6 miles.

## 1921

In February, the Yankees purchased 11.6 acres at 161st Street and River Avenue in the Bronx, across the Harlem River from the Polo Grounds. Construction of the \$2.5 million stadium began May 6, 1922.

“As a reflection of the general nature of its use,” Blackwell’s Island was officially renamed Welfare Island on April 12.

*Shuffle Along*, by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, opened on Broadway; it was the first Broadway revue with an all-black cast.

Town Hall opened on West 43rd Street.

Elisabeth Irwin founded the Little Red Schoolhouse on East 16th Street; it moved to 196 Bleecker Street in 1932.

Inspired by the 1911 play *Pomander Walk*, set near London, restaurateur Thomas Healy built Pomander Walk, a private mews running between 94th and 95th Streets near Broadway.

Congress authorized New York and New Jersey to establish the Port of New York Authority; the compact was signed April 30. In 1972 it was renamed the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Jose Raul Capablanca of the Manhattan Chess Club defeated Emanuel Lasker for the world title. Capablanca joined the club in 1905 at age 18.

Langston Hughes arrived in Harlem from Cleveland. The 24-year-old poet published his first volume, *The Weary Blues*, in 1926.

The Yankees won their first American League title. In the World Series, the Giants beat the Yankees five games to three, taking the deciding game 1–0 on October 13. In the fourth game Babe Ruth became the first Yankee to homer in the

World Series. All games were played at the Polo Grounds.

Newspaperman William Barclay “Bat” Masterson—gunslinger, gambler, lawman—died at his typewriter on October 25. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Mayor Hylan was reelected on November 8.

## 1922

Willem Mengelberg became music director of the New York Philharmonic.

The Great Arverne Fire consumed blocks of summer homes around Beach 59th Street and Larkin Avenue on June 15; over 400 buildings burned.

At the July groundbreaking for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company’s model tenements in Sunnyside, seven-year-old Alberta Glenn, daughter of the construction foreman, stepped from a flag-draped steamshovel and, presenting a ceremonial shovel to Met Life president Haley Fiske, said: “We the children of New York want to thank you ever so much for these beautiful homes. Now we needn’t be shut up in the dark old tenements where we haven’t any place to play; but we will come here to live in sunshine and see the wonderful garden and flowers all day. We hope that every child in New York may have homes as fine as these.” Met Life built identical blocks in Astoria and Woodside; architect Andrew Thomas also designed Jackson Heights.



Bird's-eye view of Arverne before the fire. (QBPL)

On August 28, at 5 P.M., radio station WEAf (Wind, Earth, Air, Fire) broadcast the first commercial. “Mr. Blackwell” spoke for Jackson Heights: “It is 58 years since Nathaniel Hawthorne, the greatest of American fictionists, passed away. To honor his memory the Queensboro Corporation has named its latest group of high-grade dwellings ‘Hawthorne Court.’ I wish to thank those within the sound of my voice for the broadcasting opportunity afforded me to urge this vast radio audience to seek recreation and the daily comfort of the home removed from the congested part of the city, right at the boundaries of God’s great outdoors, and within a few miles by subway from the business section of Manhattan. . . . Let me enjoin upon you as you value your health and your hopes and your home happiness,

get away from the solid masses of brick, where the meager opening admitting a slant of sunlight is mockingly called a light shaft, and where children grow up starved for a run over a patch of grass and the sight of a tree. Apartments in congested parts of the city have proved failures. . . . Let me close by urging that you hurry to the apartment home near the green fields and the neighborly atmosphere right on the subway without the expense and trouble of a commuter, where health and community happiness beckon—the community life and the friendly environment that Hawthorne advocated.”

Edward J. Flynn became county leader of the Democratic Party in the Bronx. He was later national chairman and one of FDR’s political advisers.

For a second year the Giants and Yankees met at the Polo Grounds in the World Series. The Giants swept in five games (one ended in a tie).

F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, moved to 6 Gateway Drive in Great Neck, paying \$300 a month rent. (They were married in St. Patrick's Cathedral on April 3, 1920.) The “nifty little Babbitt house,” as Zelda called it, is where he wrote *The Great Gatsby*. They learned of Great Neck from Ring Lardner.

## 1923

Vasily Kandinsky's paintings were displayed at the Societe Anonyme from March 23 to May 5.

Yankee Stadium, “The House That Ruth Built,” opened on April 18 before 74,217 fans (capacity was 60,000). Governor Al Smith threw out the first ball at the nation's largest ballpark. The Yankees beat the Red Sox, 4–1; Babe Ruth hit the first home run. The stadium featured a short porch in right field, a 43-inch-high fence 290 feet from home, for his benefit.

The Washington Irving Branch, the last of Brooklyn's 22 Carnegies, and the Fordham Branch, the Bronx's last Carnegie, opened.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers opened the Amalgamated Bank of New York, an independent labor bank.

Elkan Naumburg donated a limestone bandshell on Bethesda Mall in Central Park. Over the years Irving Berlin, Duke

Ellington, John Philip Sousa, and the Grateful Dead performed there. The Central Park Conservancy tried to remove the bandshell, but in 1993 the Court of Appeals ruled the city had no right to demolish a gift.

Gene Sarazen defeated Walter Hagen in the PGA tournament at Pelham Golf Club on the 38th hole.

The Christian Brothers opened the Riverdale campus of Manhattan College.

At the Polo Grounds on September 14, heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey knocked out Luis Firpo in the second round. Firpo knocked Dempsey down twice in the first round; in the second, Dempsey floored Firpo 10 times.



Manager Miller Huggins and owner Jacob Ruppert at the opening of Yankee Stadium. (Courtesy of the Bronx County Historical Society)



New homes in Rego Park. (QBPL)

Marjorie Seligman opened the Drama Book Shop.

The Museum of the City of New York was founded in Gracie Mansion.

The Bowery Savings Bank at 110 East 42nd Street was completed, designed by York & Sawyer; an 18-story tower was added in 1933.

For a third year the Yankees and Giants met in the World Series, the first played in Yankee Stadium. The Yanks took the sixth game October 15 for their first world championship. Babe Ruth hit three home runs.

At the Colonial Theater on October 30, *Runnin' Wild*, by James P. Johnson and Cecil Mack, introduced the Charleston.

One reviewer said it “excels in eccentric dancing—some of the most exciting steps of the season (though steps is not always the right word, for knees are used more often than ankles).” One of the performers was Vivian Harris, later the Voice of the Apollo.

Black businessman Bob Douglas organized the Harlem Renaissance Big Five, a professional basketball team. They played in the Renaissance Casino ballroom.

Henry Schloh purchased land south of Queens Boulevard and began building “real good” homes. Originally Real Good Park, residents shortened the name to Rego Park, which became official when the post office there opened in 1946.

On December 1, the city took over the Williamsburg Bridge trolley. With a fare of three rides for a nickel, the trolley went from a \$60,000 annual profit to a loss of \$40,000 within a year. The shuttle returned to the BMT in December 1929.

The National Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Letters moved to Audubon Terrace. (They merged in 1976.) Designed by McKim, Mead & White (all three were members), the Beaux-Arts building was funded by Archer Milton Huntington.

Barney Pressman opened his men's store at Seventh Avenue and 17th Street. Barney's grew from a discount store to an upscale emporium. In 1996, Barney's opened a glitzy store at Madison and 60th and closed the original.

## 1924

The last Carnegie Library in Queens, the Woodhaven branch, opened on January 5.

On January 14, the Westchester County Parks Commission approved the Saw Mill River Parkway. The first section opened December 16, 1926, and the section above Yonkers on September 7, 1929.

George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" premiered at Aeolian Concert Hall on 42nd Street on February 12.

In February, the City Housing Corporation purchased a site for Sunnyside Gardens; within four years they built 563

homes and apartments. The architects were Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Frederick Ackerman. Lewis Mumford participated in the planning and was an early resident.

On April 9, the legislature established the Long Island State Parks Commission. On April 18, Governor Al Smith appointed Robert Moses chairman and Townsend Scudder and Clifford Jackson commissioners. With a \$225,000 budget, Moses began building his parks and parkways.

The Elks Lodge on Queens Boulevard in Elmhurst opened. (The chapter was founded in 1903.) It was sold to a church in 2001.

Antonio Zito moved the family bakery from Sullivan Street to 259 Bleecker Street. This was the bakery photographed by Berenice Abbott in 1937. In 1986, *Times* critic Craig Claiborne wrote: "At its best, the crust of Zito's tapered loaf is crisp and crunchy, and the inner crumb is of good color, well flavored and properly 'marbled' with characteristic flecks of ground wheat."

International House, located at 500 Riverside Drive at 123rd Street, opened to foreign and American students. John D. Rockefeller Jr. funded construction.

Emily Post, author of *Etiquette—The Blue Book of Social Usage*, commissioned architect Kenneth Murchison to design a 14-story co-op apartment building at 39 East 79th Street. As she intended, all residents were in the Social Register.

The first issue of the *Herald Tribune* appeared on June 6, combining the two venerable papers. The newspaper went under on April 24, 1966, as the bastard *World Journal Tribune*—a merger of the *Journal-American*, the *World Telegram and Sun*, and the *Herald Tribune*.

In June, William Randolph Hearst published the *Daily Mirror*: “90 per cent entertainment, 10 per cent information.”

The Eternal Light Memorial, designed by Thomas Hastings and Paul Bartlett, was dedicated on June 7 in Madison Square Park. The 120-foot flagpole, topped with a glowing star, honors Americans who fell in World War I.

During the 1924–25 season, Paul Robeson played the lead in *The Emperor Jones* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*; the latter sparked controversy for depicting an interracial couple.

Municipal radio station WNYC-AM went on the air on July 8.

Louis Armstrong left a successful gig in Chicago with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and came to New York to join the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. He returned to Chicago after 14 months, but in his brief time in the city he was a sideman on over 50 jazz and blues records. Also, Count Basie had his first gig in Harlem, appearing with Katie Krippen and her Kitties.

In July the Democrats held their convention at Madison Square Garden, an

exhausting contest between Governor Al Smith and former treasury secretary William McAdoo of Tennessee. After 103 sweltering ballots, they compromised on New York lawyer John W. Davis.

Walter Winchell's column “Your Broadway and Mine” appeared in the *Graphic* on September 20.

The Giants won the National League pennant for the fourth straight year but lost the World Series to the Washington Senators, dropping the seventh game in 12 innings, 4–3, on October 10.

The first election eve rally was held at the Lucky Corner, East 116th Street and Lexington Avenue, for Fiorello La Guardia. Vito Marcantonio continued the tradition.

The massive Federal Reserve Bank at 33 Liberty Street opened, designed by Philip Sawyer like a Florentine palazzo. Eighty feet below Nassau Street are vaults containing the gold reserves, an area half the size of a football field.

Macy's held its first Thanksgiving Day parade. The balloons made their first appearance in 1926. The parade was only canceled during World War II.

On December 9, the Board of Estimate approved the plan for the city-owned Independent Subway (IND).

After a typhoid outbreak, the Health Commissioner closed all shellfish beds in the harbor in December.

# 1925

The first issue of the *New Yorker* appeared in February; it cost 15¢.

The LIRR's ferry between 34th Street and Hunters Point ceased on March 3. Completion of Pennsylvania Station and subway lines made the ferry redundant.

Scribner's published F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* on April 10. Also this year, Dorothy Parker published her first volume of poetry, *Enough Rope*, and John Dos Passos published *Manhattan Transfer*.

Charles Ebbets died on April 18; in his honor, the Dodgers refused to cancel their game. As manager Wilbert Robinson put it, "Charlie wouldn't want anyone to miss a Dodger-Giant series just because he died."

The steam railroad on Staten Island switched to electric power.

Harlem millionaire Solomon Riley (he made his fortune buying properties in his white wife's name and renting the apartments to blacks) attempted to open a "Negro Coney Island" on Hart Island. After constructing a boardwalk, dance hall, bathing pavilion, and boarding houses, his dream ended when the city condemned the property.

In Harlem, A. Philip Randolph founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Zora Neale Hurston, daughter of a Florida tenant farmer, arrived with "\$1.50, no job, no friends, and a lot of hope." After one of

her stories won a prize, she gained a scholarship to Barnard.

Lou Gehrig began his streak of 2,130 consecutive games on June 1 as a pinch hitter; he took over first base from Wally Pip the next day. On July 23, Gehrig hit the first of his record 23 grand slams, as the Yanks beat the Senators 11–7.

The Bronx River Parkway was completed on August 14.

Bookmaker Tim Mara bought a franchise in the new National Football League for \$500. The Giants football team lost their first three games, falling to the Frankford Yellow Jackets, 14–0, before a sparse crowd at the Polo Grounds in their first home game. On December 6, 70,000 saw Red Grange and the Chicago Bears beat the Giants, 19–7. Thirty-seven-year-old Jim Thorpe played briefly for the Giants that season.

St. John's University Law School was founded.

The Flushing line reached 111th Street on October 23.

Army beat Notre Dame, 27–0, at Yankee Stadium, ending the 16-game winning streak of Knute Rockne's Fighting Irish. The teams clashed at the stadium annually until 1946.

John B. Gambling began "Rambling with Gambling" over WOR. His son, John A. Gambling, took over the program in 1959 and in 1985 was joined by *his* son, John R. Gambling, who became the host in 1990.



The final broadcast of this amiable morning show was on September 11, 2000, after 23,316 programs. (WOR thought Gambling's audience was too old.)

Ernest Flagg built a model bungalow at 1929 Richmond Road and placed a sign announcing: "This house cost less than the ordinary frame house of equal size." The design had been published in *McCall's*, which invited eight prominent architects to present plans for simple homes.

Beekman Terrace (455 East 51st Street) was completed, the first luxury apartment house along the East River. Joseph B. Thomas had purchased the site the year before. His wife, Clara Fargo Thomas, an accomplished muralist, noted that New Yorkers were "only just beginning to realize what our waterfronts might mean to us," as they offered "an opportunity for the wealth of our present merchant and banker princes to beautify their city."

Steinway & Sons moved into Steinway Hall, a showroom at 111 West 57th Street. The facade included reliefs of Brahms, Liszt, Chopin, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Grieg, and Bach.

James J. Walker was elected mayor on November 3.

Ed Smalls opened Smalls's Paradise, "Harlem's House of Mirth and Music." Known for a stylish integrated audience, the club closed in the 1940s.

On November 28, Tex Rickard opened the second Madison Square Garden at Eighth Avenue and 49th Street with a six-day

bicycle race. The original building was demolished. For the new arena, William B. "Big Bill" Dwyer purchased the Hamilton Tigers and renamed them the New York Americans, the city's first professional hockey team. They took the ice against Montreal before 17,000 spectators on December 15.

On December 3, Walter Damrosch conducted the premiere of George Gershwin's Concerto in F, with the composer at the piano.

On December 8, the four Marx Brothers opened at the Lyric Theatre in *The Cocoanuts* (book by George S. Kaufman, music and lyrics by Irving Berlin).

## 1926

Mayor Jimmy Walker appointed George McLaughlin to clean up the police department. McLaughlin brought back Lewis Valentine to head the Confidential Squad, but his vigor caused problems for Walker. Grover Whalen became police commissioner in 1928, demoted Valentine, and disbanded the unit.

The Queensboro Line was extended from Grand Central to Fifth Avenue on March 22, and to Times Square on March 14, 1927.

In Kaufman's drugstore, Lenox Avenue and 115th Street, Congressman Fiorello La Guardia showed his opposition to Prohibition by demonstrating how to make beer.

*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, by Anita Loos, opened on Broadway.

The legislature established the New York City Board of Higher Education, which met on May 26.

Mrs. William B. Astor's mansion at Fifth Avenue and 65th Street, designed by Richard Morris Hunt (1895), was demolished for Temple Emanu-El.

The wake of Yiddish theater star Jacob P. Adler at the Hebrew Actors Union attracted 100,000 mourners.

Schuyler Van Vechten Hoffman and other businessmen founded the Downtown Athletic Club.

Anthony Dominick Benedetto—Tony Bennett—was born in Astoria on August 3.

On August 6, 19-year-old Gertrude Ederle of Manhattan became the first woman to swim the English Channel, cutting two hours off the previous record. She received a ticker-tape parade up Broadway, the Canyon of Heroes, on August 27. The Aquacade built for the 1939 World's Fair was later named in her honor.

Film star Rudolph Valentino died of peritonitis at the Polyclinic Hospital on West 50th Street on August 23. Crowds thronged the streets around Frank Campbell's Funeral Church at Broadway and 66th Street to view the body.

The Yankees lost the seventh game of the World Series to the St. Louis Cardinals on October 10. The game ended with Babe Ruth caught stealing second in the bottom of the ninth.



Gertrude Ederle during her channel swim. (QBPL)

The New York Yankees football team took the field in the new American Football League, with Red Grange at running back. The team and the league folded in 1927, but the Yankees reemerged in the NFL in 1927 and 1928.

Magician Harry Houdini died on Halloween. Born Erich Weiss, he grew up in Harlem; he is buried in Machpelah Cemetery in Ridgewood.

Robert F. Wagner was elected to his first of four terms in the United States Senate on November 2.

The Palm opened as a speakeasy and restaurant at Second Avenue and 45th Street.

The Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Puccini's *Turandot* on November 16.

Chumley's opened as a speakeasy at 86 Bedford Street; there is still no sign marking the entrance.



Police breaking up the KKK march in Jamaica. (QBPL)

The New York Rangers took the ice for the first time on November 16, defeating the Montreal Maroons, 1–0, at Madison Square Garden. Despite an agreement that the Americans would be the only hockey team at the Garden, Tex Rickard purchased an expansion franchise in the National Hockey League for \$50,000 specifically to play there. They were called Tex's Rangers.

Long Island University was founded.

## 1927

Telephone service between New York and London began on January 7.

Russian émigré Alex Gard produced a sketch of bandleader and comic Ted Healy,

the first of more than 1,000 caricatures to grace the walls of Sardi's Restaurant.

In a sensational trial, Ruth Snyder and her lover Henry Judd Gray were convicted of murdering Snyder's husband in her Queens Village home on March 20. They were executed at Sing Sing on January 12, 1928; the *Daily News* headline blared "Dead," with a photograph of Snyder in the electric chair. The reporter smuggled in the camera taped to his leg.

On May 20, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field for the first nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic. He received a joyous ticker-tape parade upon his return on June 11.

On Memorial Day, the Ku Klux Klan placed a wreath at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Jamaica and attempted to parade on Hillside Avenue. The police enthusiastically broke up the march.

The Cyclone opened in Coney Island on June 26. With its 90-foot, 68-degree drop, the 105-second ride is the finest roller coaster in the world.

The Half Moon Hotel opened on the Coney Island Boardwalk at 29th Street, "the only hotel in New York City on the Atlantic." It was demolished in 1995.

In his last victory, Jack Dempsey knocked out Jack Sharkey on July 21 in Yankee Stadium. As Sharkey turned to the referee to complain about a low blow, Dempsey landed a haymaker. Asked about it later, Dempsey answered, "What was I supposed to do, mail him a letter?"

The Yankees led the American League from opening day, winning a record 110 games behind Murderers' Row: Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Tony Lazzeri, and Bob Meusel. Ruth hit his 60th home run of the season off Tom Zachary of the Washington Senators on September 30. (The Yanks won, 4–2.) They swept the Pittsburgh Pirates in the World Series.

The first "talkie," *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson, opened at the Warner Theater, Broadway and 51st Street.

The Oriental Theater at 86th Street and Bay 19th Street in Bensonhurst opened. The 2,700-seat movie palace became a

triplex in the 1970s; it closed in February 1995.

W. E. B. Du Bois organized the third Pan-African Congress in New York City; the first was in Paris in 1919, the second in London and Brussels in 1921.

Georgia O'Keefe painted *Radiator Building* (Raymond Hood's Art Moderne masterpiece facing Bryant Park). The edifice became a luxury hotel in the 1990s.

Radio station WEVD (named for Eugene Victor Debs) went on the air, "the Voice of Labor." The *Jewish Daily Forward* bought the station in 1931 for "the University of the Air." It was sold in 2001 to ESPN.

Five of the original stone arches of the 1848 High Bridge were replaced by a steel arch to improve navigation on the Harlem River.

Cornelius Vanderbilt II's 137-room mansion at Grand Army Plaza was razed for Bergdorf Goodman's.

Residents moved into the Amalgamated Houses (Sedgwick Avenue and Mosholu Parkway), co-ops built by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union for members.

Mae West was jailed on Welfare Island for 10 days for her "obscene" play, *Sex*.

The Holland Tunnel, named for chief engineer Clifford Holland, was dedicated on November 12; the next day, 51,748 vehicles used the tunnel, the first in the world specifically designed for automobiles. The tolls were 50¢ for cars, 25¢ for

motorcycles, and \$1 for trucks and buses. Ole Singstand (later engineer for the Lincoln, Queens-Midtown, and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels) designed the ventilation system.

The Giants won their first NFL title, beating the Bears 13–7 at the Polo Grounds; they scored 213 points and allowed only 20 for an 11–1–1 record that season.

Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II's *Show Boat* opened on December 27, produced by Flo Ziegfeld.

## 1928

On January 21 the Queensboro Line reached Flushing, a milestone celebrated with a parade on Fifth Avenue, featuring floats that depicted the history of transportation on Long Island, and another parade in Flushing. Mayor Jimmy Walker addressed celebrants at the Commodore Hotel but skipped the trip to Queens.

On February 2, the Board of Estimate allocated \$500,000 to make Barren Island in Jamaica Bay the city's first municipal airport; it became Floyd Bennett Field.

On April 7, in the second period of the second game of the Stanley Cup finals against the Montreal Maroons, Ranger goalie Lorne Chabot was hit in the eye by the puck; no other goalie being available, Lester Patrick, the 43-year-old coach, put on the pads and held the Maroons to one goal. The Rangers won 2–1 in overtime.

They took the Stanley Cup three games to two, the first American team to win it.

A. Joseph Geist, a Belle Harbor attorney, purchased Thompson's Park and renamed it Rockaway Playland.

The Gaelic Athletic Association began hosting hurling and Irish football at Gaelic Park, 240th Street and Broadway in the Bronx.

On June 20 the Port Authority dedicated the Outerbridge Crossing (named for the Port Authority's first chairman, Eugenius H. Outerbridge), a cantilever truss span connecting Staten Island and New Jersey, designed by John Alexander Waddell. The Goethals Bridge (for Major General George W. Goethals, builder of the Panama Canal and the Port Authority's consulting engineer) was dedicated the same day. Both opened on June 29.

On July 30, 5,000 paraded in Ridgewood to celebrate the opening of the BMT line.

Silent-screen star Harold Lloyd made *Speedy*, a comic dash through the city featuring Babe Ruth. Also, Buster Keaton made *The Cameraman* in the city.

Inventor and Flushing resident Lewis Latimer died at age 80. Thomas Edison's former assistant, he was the first black executive of the Edison Electric Company and supervised the installation of street-lights in New York and other cities.

Avenue A on the Upper East Side was renamed York Avenue for World War I hero Alvin York.

On October 1, the Dow Jones Industrial Average expanded to embrace 30 major stocks.

Newark Airport opened on October 1; it was soon the nation's busiest.

The Yankees beat the St. Louis Cardinals to sweep the World Series for a second year.

On October 23, *Animal Crackers* opened on Broadway, starring the Marx Brothers and Margaret Dumont; it ran for 191 performances.

*Blackbirds of 1928* opened on Broadway.

The quarantine station at Swinburne Island, off Staten Island, was closed; the Hoffman Island quarantine closed in 1937.

Alexander's department store opened a branch in the Bronx at the Hub (Third Avenue and 149th Street).

The news ribbon around the Times Tower started on election night, announcing Herbert Hoover's victory over Al Smith. The *Times* operated it until 1961.

Walt Disney's *Steamboat Willy*, introducing Mickey Mouse, premiered at the Colony Theater on November 18.

A'Lelia Walker Robinson, daughter of Mme. C. J. Walker, who made millions marketing hair-straightening products, opened her 136th Street mansion, the Dark Tower; Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen attended the opening bash. Her dream of hosting a literary salon for the Harlem Renaissance was never fulfilled.

Yeshiva College moved to Washington Heights.

Notre Dame beat previously undefeated Army, 12–6, at Yankee Stadium. Trailing 6–0 at halftime, Coach Knute Rockne told the Fighting Irish to “win one for the Gipper,” 25-year-old George Gipp, who had died of pneumonia eight years before.

The Brooklyn Paramount at Flatbush and DeKalb opened during Thanksgiving week, showing *Manhattan Cocktail*. Long Island University acquired the 4,124-seat theater and 11-story office building in 1950 and, in 1963, clumsily transformed the Rococo auditorium into a gymnasium; the majestic Wurlitzer organ remains.

The New York Life Building, designed by Cass Gilbert, opened at Madison Avenue and 26th Street (site of the original Madison Square Garden). The distinctive six-story, eight-sided peak was covered in gold-leaf tiles.

Arturo Toscanini became music director of the New York Philharmonic and held the post until 1936. On December 13, the Philharmonic premiered George Gershwin's “An American in Paris.”

## 1929

The Valencia Theater on Jamaica Avenue, designed by John Ebersson, opened on January 12; 17,000 came the first day to see *White Shadow in the South Seas*. In 1977, Loew's donated the movie palace to the Tabernacle of Prayer for all People.

The Boston Bruins beat the Rangers in the Stanley Cup finals.

The Yankees wore numbers on their uniforms for the first time.

The Regional Plan Association issued their first plan on May 27.

The last Orphan Train left for Texas. The Children's Aid Society had begun sending boys and girls to farm families in 1854; over 200,000 abandoned, abused, or orphaned children were sent west for adoption on the Orphan Trains.

The Church of the Heavenly Rest, designed by Hardie Philip, was dedicated at Fifth Avenue and 90th Street. Originally at Fifth Avenue and 45th Street, the congregation acquired the site from Mrs. Andrew Carnegie for \$1 million, with the restriction that until 1975 it only be a Christian church. Carnegie had purchased the corner lot across from his mansion in 1917 for \$1.7 million.

Glenn Curtiss Airport opened at North Beach.

The New York Junior League moved into a neo-Georgian clubhouse, designed by John Russell Pope, at 215 East 71st Street. It had squash courts and a pool and a fifth-floor nursery for infants from troubled families.

Southern State Parkway opened in July.

Governor Franklin Roosevelt opened Jones Beach on August 4. In 1930, the first full season, the park welcomed 1.5 million visitors.

The \$4 million, 4,000-seat Loew's Paradise, designed by John Ebersson in the Italian Baroque style, opened on the Grand Concourse near 188th Street. The 3,692-seat Loew's Kings opened on Flatbush Avenue on September 7; it closed in 1977, and the city took over the property for nonpayment of taxes in 1978. The building remained empty and decaying for the next quarter century.

The 512-foot Williamsburgh Bank building, Brooklyn's tallest, was completed, crowned by the world's largest four-sided clock.

To stop daredevils, on October 24 the police department founded the Air Service Division (later the Aviation Unit) at Glenn Curtiss Airport, with four flying boats, 12 pilots, and 24 mechanics. It was the first such unit in the country.

The Staten Island Stapletons played their first season in the National Football League. The team folded after the 1932 season with a record of 14–22–9.

On October 1, 1928, John D. Rockefeller signed a 99-year lease with Columbia University for 12 acres in midtown for Rockefeller Center; excavation began July 31. Nelson Rockefeller selected the architects.

On October 24, "Black Thursday," stocks tumbled. On the 29th, "Black Tuesday," the market fell 30.57 points (11.73 percent), ushering in the Great Depression. The Dow had peaked at 381.17 on September 3 and did not reach that point again until 1954. On June 8, 1932, the Dow stood at



Transatlantic flyer Clarence Chamberlin christens a Savola-Marchetti biplane, the first airplane of the NYPD's Aviation Unit. Police Commissioner Grover Whalen looks on. (QBPL)

41.82. (On its first day in 1896, it closed at 40.94!) Seats on the exchange fell from \$500,000 to \$70,000.

Mayor Walker presided at the ground-breaking for the Triborough Bridge on October 25; the depression soon stopped all work on it.

The Queens Borough Public Library's new Central Library on Parsons Boulevard in Jamaica was dedicated on November 1. Abandoned for a modern facility on Merrick Boulevard in 1966, the Beaux-Arts structure became the family court.

On November 5, Mayor Walker was reelected.

On November 9, the Museum of Modern Art opened on the 12th floor of the Heckscher Building at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street; 43,000 visited in the first month to view works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and Van Gogh. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller was the museum's treasurer; in 1932, Nelson Rockefeller joined the board.

On November 11, 72,000 vehicles crossed the Queensboro Bridge during a 24-hour period; in 1910, exactly 1,810 vehicles had crossed on the same date.

A boulevard in Queens was named for Horace Harding, who pushed for improved roads. It became the Long Island Expressway.



The Department of Street Cleaning became the Department of Sanitation.

Walter Winchell began writing in the *Daily Mirror*, a Hearst paper.

Morrisania Hospital opened, the first public hospital in the Bronx.

Louis Armstrong appeared with Carroll Dickerson's Orchestra at Connie's Inn on Seventh Avenue in Harlem. He also played in the orchestra for *Connie's Hot Chocolate* on Broadway, featuring songs by Fats Waller. The *Times* critic commented: "One song, a synthetic but entirely pleasant jazz ballad called 'Ain't Misbehavin' stands out, and its rendition between the acts by an unnamed member of the orchestra [Louis Armstrong] was a high light."

Sherman Billingsley opened the Stork Club as a speakeasy at 132 West 58th Street. Walter Winchell called it "New York's New Yorkiest place." Shut down by Prohibition agents in 1931, Billingsley reopened the club on East 51st Street.

On New Year's Eve, "21" reopened at its new home, 21 West 52nd Street. Founded in Greenwich Village in 1922 by Jack Kriendler and Charlie Berns, it was raided only once during Prohibition, in 1930.

Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians played at the Roosevelt Hotel on New Year's Eve, establishing a tradition that continued for the next 33 years. In 1963 they moved to the Waldorf Astoria.

## 1930

Workers began digging the foundation for the Empire State Building on January 22; demolition of the old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on the site had begun on October 1, 1929. (The debris was dumped off Sandy Hook.) On average, 3,000 men worked on the building every day. The framework was completed 25 weeks after the first steel column was riveted into place. Shreve, Lamb & Harmon designed the skyscraper.

The 17th-century Moore Homestead on Broadway in Elmhurst was demolished for the IND. Clement Clark Moore spent his holidays there and allegedly took inspiration from the place for "A Visit from St. Nicholas," the poem published in 1822. (Questions later arose casting doubt on Moore's claim of authorship.)

B. Altman's opened its first suburban branch in White Plains.

Louis Morino opened Sloppy Louie's Restaurant at 92 South Street. Years later he told journalist Joseph Mitchell: "The simple fact my building was an old Schermerhorn building, it may sound foolish, but it pleased me very much. The feeling I had, it connected me with the past. It connected me with Old New York. It connected Sloppy Louie's Restaurant with Old New York. It made the building look much better to me. Instead of just an old run-down building in the fish market, the way it looked to before, it had a history to it, connections going back, and I liked that." Sloppy Louie's closed in 1988.



The 1662 Moore House in Elmhurst, February 16, 1925. (QBPL)

The 1,046-foot Chrysler Building, designed by William Van Alen, was completed. The world's tallest skyscraper, it topped the 927-foot tower at 40 Wall Street, a rival completed the same year. The stylish spire made the difference. The formal opening was on May 28; on July 30, the exclusive Cloud Club for executives opened in the building. (The club closed in 1979 and remained empty for decades.)

The Board of Higher Education created Brooklyn College on April 22, consolidating the Brooklyn branches of Hunter College for women and City College for men.

Thomas A. Armour won the PGA tournament at the Fresh Meadows Country Club.

The Damascus Bakery opened on Atlantic Avenue, the first sign of Brooklyn's Near Eastern community.

On July 5, the first Negro League games were played at Yankee Stadium, a double-header between the New York Lincoln Giants (later the Black Yankees) and the Baltimore Black Sox.

Trolley coaches (rubber-tired buses attached to overhead wires) began running in Brooklyn.

Hart Crane published "The Bridge," an epic poem about the Brooklyn Bridge. He rented rooms at 110 Columbia Heights, the house where the Roebblings had lived while the bridge was under construction. Crane arrived in the city from Ohio when he was 17 and entered the gay subculture. With the city as his muse, Crane published his first



Christening the Queens Library's book bus in City Hall Park. (QBPL)

collection, *White Buildings*, in 1926. Crane developed a serious drinking problem and committed suicide in 1932 by jumping, drunk, from the stern of a liner in the Caribbean. Walker Evans wrote to a friend: "Don't let this upset you. Crane a goner long ago, as you will remember."

The Art Deco apartment building at 55 Central Park West, designed by Schwartz & Gross, was completed. The imaginative brick facade fades from a deep purple at the base to a pale white at the top. Rudy Vallee was an early tenant. The architects also designed 241 and 336 Central Park West.

The Queens Borough Public Library's book bus, the *Pioneer*, began running in

July. On October 11 it visited Governor Franklin Roosevelt in Albany.

After emptying two bank accounts and selling \$16,000 in stock, Judge Joseph Crater, deeply implicated in the Tammany scandals, disappeared on August 6, never to be found.

On August 7, federal agents raided the Hercules Garage on DeKalb Avenue and found a spigot connected to underground pipes from the Excelsior Brewery two blocks away. (How did the criminals dig up the streets without anyone noticing?) Everyone in the brewery was arrested, but the case was dismissed because there was no warrant for the raid. Renamed the King

Brewery, the former Excelsior closed in 1939.

In September the new 38-story Art Deco home of the Downtown Athletic Club was dedicated. It contained a swimming pool, squash and handball courts, a gym, dining facilities, a miniature golf course, and rooms for members. The club has awarded the Heisman Trophy (named for John W. Heisman, the club's athletic director) for the nation's best college football player since 1935.

The Brooklyn Dodgers football team was formed. In 1945 it merged with the Boston Yanks and then folded with a record of 60–100–9.

An overflow crowd attended the first service in Riverside Church on October 5. John D. Rockefeller Jr. funded its construction. Charles Collens and Henry C. Pelton designed the massive French Gothic church, which is crowned by a 22-story tower containing offices and chapels. The church was completed in 1936.

The New School's West 12th Street building opened on November 12; Joseph Urban was the architect.

The population of the Bronx had grown by a million since 1900; 70 percent of borough residents were immigrants or the children of immigrants, and 49 percent were Jewish. Ninety-five percent of the buildings in the borough had central heating, private bathrooms, and hot water. During the same 30 years, Queens grew from 153,000 to 1.1 million.

## 1931

Soprano Lily Pons made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Lucia on January 3.

Nathan Straus, owner of Macy's and Abraham & Straus, died on January 11; his funeral at Temple Emanu-El attracted thousands. After his brother Isidor went down on the *Titanic*, Nathan devoted his life to philanthropy, establishing milk stations at his own expense and supporting lodging houses for the destitute. A 1923 poll selected Straus as the individual who had done the most for the public good during Greater New York's first 25 years. At a testimonial dinner, Straus remarked, "I often think of the old saying, 'The world is my country, to do good is my religion.' This has been an inspiration to me. I might say, 'Humanity is my kin, to save babies is my religion.' It is a religion I hope will have thousands of followers."

Performing at the Cotton Club, Cab Calloway forgot the lyric to "Minnie the Moocher" and scatted, "Hi-de-hi-de-hi-di-ho. Ho-de-ho-de-ho-de-hee." The performance was broadcast over radio.

The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel opened at Park Avenue and 50th Street.

John Perona, an Italian immigrant, opened the speakeasy El Morocco at 154 East 54th Street.

On February 26 the Scripps-Howard company purchased the *World*, merging the newspaper with their own *Telegram*.



Northern Boulevard and Main Street, Flushing, ca. 1910. (QBPL)

On March 19 workmen cut down the last tree on Main Street in Flushing, a giant English elm; also, 135 stately trees lining Northern Boulevard were removed to widen the road.

On April 30, Governor Roosevelt attended the groundbreaking for the Port Authority Building (originally the Commerce Building), between Eighth and Ninth Avenues and 15th and 16th Streets. It served as the Authority's headquarters from 1933 to 1973, when the World Trade Center opened.

The 1,250-foot Empire State Building, completed in one year and 45 days, was dedicated on May 1. It was the world's tallest building until 1973. On September 15 a blimp actually tied up at the mooring mast on top of the building for all of three minutes.

The 50-story Art Deco Irving Trust Company tower at 1 Wall Street was completed, designed by Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker.

The upper roadway of the Queensboro Bridge opened on June 25, eliminating the pedestrian walkway.

Jazz cornetist Bix Beiderbecke died on August 6, at the age of 28, in Sunnyside.

The world's largest flying boat, the German Dornier DO-X, set down in Bowery Bay on August 26 and became a popular attraction at Glenn Curtiss Airfield.

The second water tunnel from the upstate reservoirs was completed.

Grover Cleveland High School opened in Ridgewood.

In October, the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company (founded in 1917) moved into their 35-story blue-green terra-cotta skyscraper on West 42nd Street; the building was designed by Raymond Hood. The company moved to Sixth Avenue in 1972.

The Museum of the City of New York moved to Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street.

After knocking off his rivals Giuseppe Masseria and Salvatore Maranzano, Charles "Lucky" Luciano took over as the boss of all bosses, controlling a five-family syndicate. Vincent and Philip Mangano headed what became known as the Gambino crime family, with Albert Anastasia as underboss.

The Brill Building at 49th Street and Broadway was completed. During the



The Dornier DO-X at Glenn Curtiss Airfield, North Beach. (QBPL)

1950s and 1960s, it was a mecca for songwriters.

President Herbert Hoover presented Dwight James Baum with a gold medal from the American Institute of Architects for the “best small-home design from 1926 to 1930,” a \$10,000 three-bedroom Greek Revival home in Fieldston built for Dr. Francis Collins. Baum designed a third of the 250 homes in Fieldston, the West Side YMCA on 63rd Street, the Campagna Mansion in Riverdale, and World’s Fair pavilions. He died in 1939.

The 4,760-foot, \$59 million George Washington Bridge was dedicated on Saturday, October 24, and opened to traffic at 5 A.M. the next day. By midnight, 55,523 motor vehicles had paid the 50¢ toll, and 33,000 pedestrians had paid 10¢ to walk across the bridge. O. H. Ammann was chief architect and Cass Gilbert consulting architect. Le Corbusier called it “the most beautiful bridge in the world. Made of cables and steel beams, it gleams in the sky like a reversed arch. It is blessed . . . it is painted an aluminum color and, between water

and sky, you see nothing but the bent cord supported by two steel towers. When your car moves up the ramp the two towers rise so high that it brings you happiness; their structure is so pure, so resolute, so regular that here, finally, steel architecture seems to laugh.”

The graceful Bayonne Bridge, 266 feet above Kill van Kull, opened on November 15. Designed by Othmar Ammann and Cass Gilbert, the \$13 million steel-arched span was the world’s longest at the time.

On November 18 the Whitney Museum of Art opened at 8–14 West 8th Street, in rowhouses that Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney had acquired in 1907. She established her museum after the Metropolitan Museum of Art rejected her collection of contemporary American art.



Walkway on the George Washington Bridge, opening day.

In December, workmen excavating Rockefeller Center decorated a Christmas tree, initiating an annual tradition.

Winston Churchill was struck by a car on Fifth Avenue on December 13. (He apparently had looked the wrong way, forgetting that Americans drove on the right side of the road.) He spent a week in Lenox Hill Hospital, then two weeks in his Waldorf-Astoria suite. By late January 1932 he resumed his lecture tour, speaking in Brooklyn about Anglo-American cooperation and the coming conflict between “the English-speaking peoples and Communism.”

On Christmas Day, the Metropolitan Opera’s performance of *Hansel and Gretel* was the first radio broadcast of a complete opera.

## 1932

The Rangers lost the Stanley Cup finals to the Toronto Maple Leafs in three straight games.

The massive Art Moderne Starrett-Lehigh Building was completed. It was built by developer William Starrett above the Lehigh Valley Railroad yards. Lewis Mumford called it “a victory for engineering . . . the contrast between the long, continuous red-brick bands and the green-framed windows, with sapphire reflections or depths, is as sound a use of color as one can see about the city.” The railroad moved out in 1966, and the railyard yielded to trucks.

With the depression worsening, the Board of Estimate allocated \$5 million for immediate relief and \$1 million for veterans on April 29. At least 828,000 persons, a ninth of the population, received public or private charity.

A full-scale replica of Federal Hall was erected in Bryant Park for the bicentennial of George Washington’s birth.

Thousands of spectators lined Fifth Avenue to cheer the Beer Parade, an anti-Prohibition march led by Mayor Walker.

On May 3 the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) moved to a town house at 11 West 53rd Street, across from the Rockefeller homes on 54th Street. At the time, there were thoughts of extending the short midblock Rockefeller Plaza two blocks north, to end at the museum. Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock curated first architectural show at MOMA, featuring Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Raymond Hood, and other International Style architects.

On June 21, at Madison Square Bowl in Long Island City, Jack Sharkey won a split decision over Max Schmeling for the heavyweight crown. When the result was announced, Schmeling’s manager, Joe Jacobs, shouted into the radio microphone, “We wuz robbed!”

Gene Sarazen won the U.S. Open at the Fresh Meadows Country Club.

On July 4, the Sons of Italy clashed with anti-fascists at the Garibaldi Memorial in Rosebank on Staten Island. One man was

fatally shot; he received a hero's funeral in Italy.

Mayor Walker resigned on September 1, before being removed in the wake of Judge Samuel Seabury's investigation of Tammany corruption. Defending himself before Governor Roosevelt, Walker said of Seabury, "This fellow would convict the Twelve Apostles if he could." Joseph V. McKee, president of the Board of Aldermen, assumed the office; in November, John P. O'Brien was elected to finish Walker's term. Walker had received \$246,692 from Paul Block, supposedly from Wall Street investments, though he had never put up any money. After his resignation, he went to Europe with his mistress Betty Compton, and he married the former showgirl after divorcing his wife. Speaking to an interviewer in 1946, Walker remarked, "Only one man is responsible for Jimmy Walker's trouble in and out of office and that man is sitting opposite you."

The Eighth Avenue subway opened on September 10 along Central Park West. Omero C. Catan, "Mr. First," bought the first token.

Ed Sullivan's column ran in the *Daily News*; he also began his radio program. Sullivan started with the *New York Evening Mail* in 1920.

Father Francis Patrick Duffy died on June 26. He had received the Distinguished Service Cross as chaplain of the 69th New York Regiment—the Fighting 69th—during World War I, then had served a Hell's Kitchen parish. In 1937 his statue was



Brooklyn Technical High School under construction, 1931. (QBPL)

dedicated at Times Square, in a triangle renamed Duffy Square.

Tiffany Studios went bankrupt. Founded by Charles Lewis Tiffany in 1837 and expanded by his son, Louis Comfort Tiffany, the firm peaked in the early 1900s with its popular multicolored leaded-glass lamps.

The \$5.5 million Brooklyn Technical High School in Fort Greene, with a capacity of 5,000, opened in the fall; it was the city's costliest school to date.

The first buildings at Rockefeller Center opened: the RKO Building (1270 Sixth Avenue) and Radio City Music Hall (with a three-ton curtain).

The Bronx Bombers swept the Cubs in the World Series, scoring 37 runs and amassing 45 hits. In the third game, Babe Ruth called his shot, pointing to the seats where he would hit a home run. (Frank Crosetti said Ruth was only responding to taunts from





Women tapping a keg of beer in a Queens backyard, March 1930.

the Cub dugout.) Gehrig followed Ruth's blast with his own homer.

Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin founded the *Catholic Worker*, selling copies in Union Square for 1¢. Circulation reached 150,000 by 1936 but dropped to 30,000 during World War II because of their pacifism. They later established the Catholic Worker Farm on Staten Island. Dorothy Day spent her last years in a small cottage overlooking the bay at Spanish Camp, a bungalow colony on Staten Island.

Countee Cullen published his only novel, *One Way to Heaven*, a view of Jazz Age Harlem.

## 1933

On New Year's Day, the YMCA opened a men's residence at 180 West 135th Street in

Harlem, their last such facility. In the 1990s, the organization abandoned a historic commitment to single men in order to focus on families and children.

*King Kong*, starring the Empire State Building, opened in Manhattan on March 2.

Beer began flowing a minute after midnight on April 7, four days after the repeal of Prohibition. At the Paradise Restaurant, Broadway and 48th Street, Jimmy Durante tapped the first keg and presented the first glass to Jack Dempsey. That day Trommer's Brewery delivered 4,000 kegs of beer to bars and restaurants in the city. Ruppert's brewery in Yorkville immediately hired 1,000 men—a miracle during the Great Depression. On Staten Island, only the Rubsam & Horrmann Brewery survived.

On April 13, the Rangers beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 1–0 to take the Stanley Cup in four games.

The Chinese Hand-Laundry Alliance was organized in the Transfiguration Church on Mott Street.

The RCA Building at Rockefeller Center opened on April 30, but Diego Rivera's controversial mural was shrouded. The Rockefellers asked Rivera to remove a portrait of Lenin from the piece but did not object to the image of a Moscow May Day parade. Rivera refused: "Rather than mutilate the conception, I should prefer the physical destruction of the conception in its entirety." Nelson Rockefeller, a Museum of Modern Art trustee, failed to convince MOMA to accept the work. As

Rivera requested, it was destroyed in February 1934. Rivera called it "an act of cultural vandalism." John D. Rockefeller said, "The picture was obscene and, in the judgment of Rockefeller Center, an offense to good taste. It was for this reason primarily that Rockefeller Center decided to destroy it."

With a legal liquor license, Sherman Billingsley reopened the Stork Club at 53½ East 51st Street. (In 1934 it moved to 3 East 53rd Street.) The nightclub closed in 1965.

On July 1 the IND began running to 205th Street in the Bronx. Service to Roosevelt Avenue in Queens began August 19.

Grand Central Parkway opened from Kew Gardens to Nassau County on July 15.



Grand Central Parkway. (QBPL)

The Pennsylvania Railroad's main line was electrified, eliminating Manhattan Transfer in Harrison, New Jersey, where trains switched from steam to electric power for the run into Pennsylvania Station. In 1935, Penn Station in Newark was reconfigured to admit Hudson & Manhattan trains (now PATH), which previously had terminated at Manhattan Transfer.

Monroe College was founded in the Bronx.

Fleeing Hitler's Berlin, George Grosz arrived in New York. For the rest of his life he taught at the Art Students League and produced illustrations for *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, and other publications. He died in 1959 on his first return trip to Berlin.

The New York Central opened the High Line to replace tracks on 11th Avenue—"Death Avenue." The elevated freight line ran from St. John's Park Freight Terminal at Houston Street to 60th Street, connecting warehouses and markets along the Hudson River. Conrail shut it down in 1980.

Douglas Leigh installed his first electric billboard in Times Square, a steaming A&P coffee cup. He added signs for Kool and Camel cigarettes, with the famous steam smoke rings (1941–66); Pepsi-Cola, Super Suds detergent, with 3,000 illuminated bubbles a minute; and Bond clothing store.

The Giants defeated the Washington Senators in five games in the World Series.

The *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* was staged for the first time. Produced by S. L. "Roxy" Rothafel, it featured the Rockettes (each 5'5½" to 5'9" tall) in "The March of the Wooden Soldiers."

The last daughter of Seabury Tredwell died in her East Fourth Street home. Virtually unchanged since it was built in 1832, the rowhouse became the Old Merchant's House Museum.

At Wrigley Field on December 17, the Chicago Bears defeated the New York Giants, 23–21, in the first NFL championship game.

## 1934

Fiorello La Guardia was sworn in as mayor on January 1. He appointed Robert Moses the city's first parks commissioner and brought back Lewis Valentine as chief inspector, with a mandate to clean up the police force. His first day back, Valentine told the commanders, "Be good or be gone. The day of influence is over. There is no room in the department for parasites and drones." He became police commissioner in September. Within four years, he personally fired 221 officers; 70 others committed suicide.

The All City High School Chorus was founded.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) was established on February 6. Langdon Post was the first chairman. By 1941, NYCHA completed seven housing projects.

The thermometer sank to  $-15^{\circ}$  on February 9, the lowest recorded temperature in the city. February 1934 was the coldest month on record, averaging  $19.9^{\circ}$ .

Riebling's Greater New York Park and Casino in Glendale, one of the last picnic parks, was razed on March 8 for the Interborough Parkway.

The "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" boycott began in Harlem, primarily targeting Blumstein's department store on 125th Street.

The United States Supreme Court ordered an end to ocean dumping. The city soon opened 90 dumps and landfills. A dump opened on the Corona Park Golf Course on August 2.

The police department's Aviation Unit moved to Floyd Bennett Field, but two of the four planes were taken out of service in disrepair; federal inspectors shut down the unit in 1938 because the planes were unfit to fly.

America's Little House, an eight-room Georgian cottage built for \$8,000, went up at 39th Street and Park Avenue, commissioned by Better Homes in America. Roger H. Bullard and Clifford C. Windehack's model showed "what the dollar will buy in the construction field" in the depths of the depression. Over 166,000 people paid 10¢ apiece to walk through the house.

Lightning struck Flushing's historic cedar of Lebanon, 32nd Avenue and 148th Street, on September 10. The skeleton was finally removed in 1947 and houses went up,



The Cedar of Lebanon in Flushing. (QBPL)

though neighbors lobbied for a Cedar of Lebanon Park.

On September 15, Mayor La Guardia presided at the reopening of Bryant Park, which featured a sunken lawn and granite balustrade.

Hillside Homes, a 1,416-unit, 114-building complex financed through a low-interest federal loan, was completed along Boston Post Road in Williamsbridge. The architect was Clarence Stein (designer of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn), with landscaping by Marjorie S. Cautley. The once-distinguished complex fell into decay by the 1980s; in the late 1990s it was renovated and renamed Eastchester Heights.

Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* opened at the Alvin Theater on November 21.

The Apollo Theater on 125th Street held its first "colored revue," becoming the entertainment capital of Harlem. The theater

opened in 1914 as Hurtig & Seamon's New Theater, a burlesque house with a "whites only" admission policy.

In Brooklyn Heights, Plymouth Church and the Church of the Pilgrims merged.

The *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* and the *New Yorker Herold Abend Zeitung* merged as the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung und Herold*.

Ten lawyers founded the Women's Bar Association of New York, with Hilda Ginsburg Schwartz the first president; she was later a judge.

Horse-drawn vehicles accounted for less than 1 percent of the traffic over the Queensboro Bridge.

A&S opened in Jamaica, the Brooklyn department store's first branch.

Henry Roth published his first novel, *Call It Sleep*. He had begun his studies at City College 10 years earlier. In his 1995 memoir, *A Diving Rock on the Hudson*, Roth described his experiences: "How beautiful, how glorious, the first hour or two spent in the environs of CCNY was! An academic cornucopia it seemed, so bountiful and promising from the outside." Roth died in 1995.

Dashiell Hammett introduced the stylish detective Nick Charles and his socialite wife, Nora (and their dog, Asta), in *The Thin Man*.

On November 24, Mayor La Guardia flew from Chicago to Newark but forced the

plane to land at Floyd Bennett Field because he claimed his ticket said New York, not New Jersey.

On December 2, the Board of Estimate approved a 2 percent sales tax to support the unemployed.

The Central Park Zoo reopened on December 3, less than a year after Robert Moses became parks commissioner. Aymar Embury II designed the brick and concrete structures.

The Bronx County Building, 161st Street and Grand Concourse, was dedicated.

The Giants scored 27 points in the fourth quarter to defeat the Chicago Bears, 30–13, in the NFL title game at the Polo Grounds on December 9. To cope with the icy field, the Giants borrowed basketball sneakers from Manhattan College.

On December 29, 16,188 fans attended the first college basketball games at Madison Square Garden, organized by sportswriter Ned Irish. In the first game, Westminster College beat St. John's, 37–33; NYU beat Notre Dame 25–18 in the second game.

## 1935

Robert Sherwood's *The Petrified Forest*, starring Humphrey Bogart, Leslie Howard, and Peggy Conklin, opened at the Broadhurst Theater on January 7.

George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* opened at the Alvin Theater. It ran for 124 performances. Gershwin first offered it to

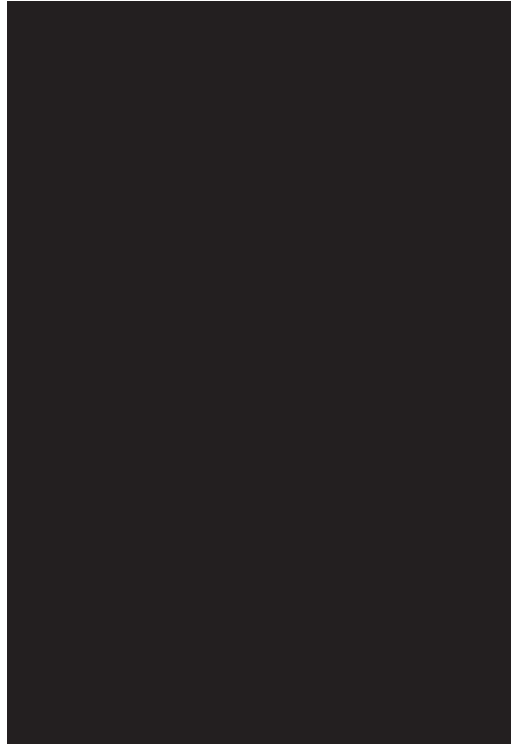
the Metropolitan Opera, but they guaranteed only two performances. In 1934 he wrote: “If I am successful, it will resemble a combination of the drama of *Carmen* and the beauty of *Meistersinger*.”

*Dead End*, by Sidney Kingsley, opened on Broadway, starring Leo Gorcey and Huntz Hall as boys from the tenements. The 1937 film was the first in a series starring the Dead End Kids, including *Crime School*, with Humphrey Bogart (1938); *Angels with Dirty Faces*, with Jimmy Cagney (1938); and *They Made Me a Criminal*, with John Garfield (1939).

On February 9, boys found a 125-pound, eight-foot alligator in a sewer on 123rd Street near the East River. They dragged the creature from the icy water and clubbed it to death with snow shovels.

Max Gordon opened the Village Vanguard at 178 Seventh Avenue South. After his death in 1989, his wife, Lorraine, managed the venue. Sonny Rollins, Bill Evans, John Coltrane, and Dexter Gordon recorded live albums there; Lenny Bruce also performed there.

On the afternoon of March 19, employees at the Kress store in Harlem grabbed 16-year-old Lino Rivera for stealing a penknife. The boy got away in the struggle, but rumors spread that he had been killed. That night, rioters looted stores along 125th Street; 75 were arrested and 57 civilians and seven police officers were injured. La Guardia appointed a commission to investigate, whose members included Countee Cullen, A. Philip Randolph, Franklin Frazier, and Herbert Delany; they



The Bronx County Building. (JAK)

concluded the “outburst was spontaneous and unpremeditated.” Ultimately, “the personality or racial identity of the owners of the stores faded out and the property itself became the object of their fury.”

Otto Bettmann, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, arrived in New York with two trunks containing about 25,000 images, including many negatives. Thus began the Bettmann Archive. When he sold the collection in 1981, it contained 5 million images.

On May 27 the Supreme Court ruled in *United States v. ALA Schechter Poultry Corporation* (kosher butchers at 991 Rockaway Avenue and 257 Brighton Beach Avenue in Brooklyn) that National

Recovery Administration (NRA) regulations did not apply, and furthermore that the NRA was unconstitutional.

On June 9, a sledgehammer-wielding Mayor La Guardia destroyed slot machines confiscated by the police, part of his crack-down on tinhorns and gamblers.

The Prospect Park Zoo opened.

Mrs. August Belmont founded the Metropolitan Opera Guild on July 1.

Fort Tryon Park opened, designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm.

The Will Rogers–Wiley Post Memorial Beacon was installed atop the Manhattan Tower of the George Washington Bridge to guide airplanes. The two men had died when their airplane crashed in Alaska on August 15, 1935.

On October 3 the Hayden Planetarium, a classically inspired Art Deco dome built with federal funds and a \$150,000 donation from banker Charles Hayden, opened at the American Museum of Natural History. The landmark was demolished in 1997 for the Rose Center for Earth and Space.

Bootlegger Dutch Schultz was gunned down in a Newark restaurant on October 24. The Bronx “Beer Baron’s” headquarters had been at 149th Street near Third Avenue.

The Old Stone House, scene of desperate fighting during the Battle of Long Island,

was rebuilt by the Parks Department as a public restroom. (The 1699 house was demolished in 1893 and the stones buried on site.) In the 1990s it became a history museum.

The 122-unit First Houses, the first public housing project, opened December 3, nine months after work began.

The Bronx Terminal Market opened.

Aaron Douglas completed *The Evolution of Negro Dance* in the Harlem YMCA. The previous year he had completed three other Works Progress Administration (WPA) murals (now in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture).

The Interborough Parkway opened; it was renamed for Jackie Robinson in 1997.

Allan Stewart Konigsberg was born in the Bronx; he changed his name to Woody Allen in 1952 to become a comedy writer. He sold his first jokes in 1954.

The Detroit Lions beat the Giants, 26–7, in the NFL championship game in Detroit.

## 1936

The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial at the American Museum of Natural History was dedicated on January 19.

On February 7, the Welfare Island jail closed and the \$12 million Rikers Island facility opened.

The 63-year-old Hunter College building at Park Avenue and 68th Street burned on February 14.

Construction of the Sixth Avenue IND began on March 23.

The Long Island University (LIU) Blackbirds, winners of 43 straight basketball games, boycotted the Olympic trials held at Madison Square Garden to protest American participation in the Berlin games. Remembering their stand 60 years later, Leo Merson, one of three Jews on the team, said, “It was emotional, it was traumatic, it was a lost opportunity, but we thought it had to be done. And I’m not sorry.”

Reginald Marsh finished *George C. Tilyou’s Steeplechase Park*. A frequent visitor to Coney Island, the painter noted in his diary: “On the first trip each summer, I’m nauseated by the smell of stale food, but after that I get so I don’t notice it.”

On May 3, Joe DiMaggio had three hits in his first game as a Yankee as they beat the St. Louis Browns, 14–5. On July 7, he became the first rookie to start in an All-Star Game.

The Staten Island Zoo opened on June 10.

On June 19, German heavyweight boxing champion Max Schmeling defeated Joe Louis in 12 rounds at Yankee Stadium.

The McCarren Park Play Center, with its enormous swimming pool, opened; Aymar Embury II was the architect. One of Brooklyn’s four WPA pools (the others are



The Astoria approach to the Triborough Bridge. (GAHS)

Red Hook, Betsy Head, and Sunset Park), it closed after a fire in 1987.

Central Park’s Great Lawn opened on the site of the old reservoir.

The first issue of the *Bayside Times* appeared on July 2.

On July 9 the thermometer hit 106°, the highest recorded temperature in the city.

The Triborough Bridge, completed with New Deal funding, opened on July 11, as did the Grand Central Parkway to Kew Gardens. Eleven million vehicles rolled across in 1937 (55 million in 1996). Also, the Astoria Pool opened just in time to host the Olympic swimming and diving trials, and Downing Stadium on Randall’s Island was rushed to completion for the track and field trials.



William Van Alen's all-steel House of the Modern Age was installed at 39th Street and Park Avenue on July 23; by noon, 1,500 visitors walked through the house.

John Barbirolli became the music director of the New York Philharmonic; he held the post until 1941.

Cottages on Barren Island were condemned in order to make way for the Marine Parkway Bridge. The city had stopped using the place as a garbage dump in 1918, and in the early 1930s the horse-rendering plant was closed.

Boulevard Gardens was completed in Woodside. The Dick-Meyer Corporation built the apartment complex, one of seven federally funded limited-dividend housing developments in the nation.

At the Berlin Olympics, American officials bumped Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller (the only two Jews on the track team) from the 400-meter relay, replacing them with Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalfe. Glickman, a star athlete at Syracuse, believed Avery Brundage did not want to embarrass Hitler further by having Jews beat his Aryans. Glickman became the consummate New York sports announcer, calling games of the Knicks, Jets, Giants, and local colleges.

Former mayor Jimmy Walker married longtime mistress Betty Compton; they divorced in 1941. It was an open secret that he visited her at 12 Gay Street, not far from the home he shared with his first wife at 6 St. Luke's Place.

The American Labor Party (ALP) was founded. In 1937, five ALP members were on the City Council, and in 1938, La Guardia's protégé Vito Marcantonio was elected to Congress on the ALP line. He was defeated in 1950.

Tottenville and New Dorp High Schools opened on September 14.

At Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Rosebank, Vito J. Russo began a stone grotto in memory of his five-year-old son. Helped by friends and neighbors, he completed it 25 years later.

In the World Series, the Yankees beat the Giants in six games.

On October 2, President Franklin Roosevelt attended the groundbreaking for the Queens Midtown Tunnel, a \$58,365,000 Public Works Authority project. On the 28th he attended the cornerstone ceremony for the gymnasium at Brooklyn College and dedicated Sara Delano Roosevelt Park on the Lower East Side (originally Christie-Forsythe Park, completed in 1934).

Jerome Weidman, born on the Lower East Side in 1913, published his first story in the *New Yorker*. Reviewing a collection of his stories in 1939, Alfred Kazin described them in the *Times* as "a snarling, joyous, rambunctious carload of sound effects in the best Seventh Avenue New Yorkese." Weidman wrote *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* and *Fiorello*. In his memoir he recounted: "Living as part of the sweaty traffic of New York's East River docks in the early part of this century was for me a

time of excitement I did not think about, much less understand. . . . Life for me on East Fourth Street when I was a boy was not unlike what life on the banks of the Mississippi had been for young Sam Clemens of Hannibal, Mo.”

St. John’s University purchased the Hillcrest Golf Club, at Union Turnpike and Utopia Parkway, for their new campus; construction began in 1953.

Set in Haiti with an all-black cast, Orson Welles’s Federal Theater production of *Macbeth* opened at the Lafayette Theater.

On November 3 voters approved a new charter, to take effect in 1938. It abolished the Board of Aldermen and created a new City Council elected by proportional representation; it also established the office of deputy mayor and created a City Planning Commission.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 26, New York University upset powerful Fordham, 7–6, before 50,000 fans at Yankee Stadium. This was the last game of Vincent Lombardi, Fordham ’37, one of the Seven Blocks of Granite.

On December 3, John V. L. Hogan and Elliott M. Sanger formed the Interstate Broadcasting Company and turned Hogan’s experimental W2XR into WQXR, 96.3 FM. Broadcasting from a room above a Long Island City garage, Hogan played his own classical records, but only radios within a mile picked up the signal. Sanger’s wife, Eleanor Naumburg Sanger, became the first program director. In 1944 the *Times* purchased WQXR, which has

the largest audience of any classical station.

Henry Hudson Bridge at Spuyten Duyvil opened on December 12; the toll was a dime. A second deck opened within a year and a half.

The skating rink at Rockefeller Center opened on Christmas Day. Omero C. Catan, “Mr. First,” was the first paying patron, though 12-year-old Elinor Weiler took the ice for an exhibition waltz with an 88-year-old man before the public was admitted.

The Astoria ferry *Rockaway* made the final run between Astoria and 92nd Street on December 28.

## 1937

Ruth McKenney’s first story appeared in the *New Yorker* on January 16. Her stories were the basis for *My Sister Eileen* and *Wonderful Town*.

Borough President James J. Lyons declared the *Amorphophallus titanum* the official flower of the Bronx. Found only in the Sumatran jungle, it reaches 20 feet and produces a single 15-foot flower with a disgusting smell. Lyons made his declaration when one bloomed at the Botanical Garden: “Its tremendous size shall be symbolic of the fastest-growing borough. . . . There may be many other, sweeter-smelling flowers, but not as large and distinctive.” On May 15, 2000, Borough President Fernando Ferrer replaced it with *Hemerocallis the Bronx*, a day lily.



Aerial view of the Corona Dumps, 1936. (QBPL)

By March, the World's Fair site was completely graded. (Work had begun on June 29, 1936.) Thirty-thousand men labored for 190 days to eliminate the mountains of garbage and ashes.

Sara Delano Roosevelt, FDR's mother, visited the Lower East Side park named in her honor; the park employed 26 playground directors and 19 maintenance men.

On April 6 the Board of Higher Education authorized the creation of Queens College at the former Parental School for boys. Under President Paul Klapper, it began with 400 students and a staff of 56.

The Art Deco apartment building at 1150 Grand Concourse was completed, one of many constructed after the IND opened. Designed by Horace Ginsbern, it features mosaics of undersea scenes beside the stainless-steel doors, as well as lobby murals by C. P. Graves and Rene Graves.

The Bronx County Jail, a Public Works Administration (PWA) project, was completed at River Avenue and 150th Street.

It was a great year for jazz: Count Basie and his big band, with vocalist Billie Holiday, played the Apollo for the first

time. Benny Goodman played the Paramount in March. In a “Battle of the Bands” at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, the Chick Webb Orchestra, the Savoy’s house band, topped the Benny Goodman Orchestra; 4,000 jammed inside, 5,000 were turned away. Trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie arrived from Philadelphia, ready to become “a New York musician.” He lived with his brother at 216 West 19th Street, surviving on 25¢ a day.

The Detroit Red Wings defeated the Rangers, 3–0, on April 15 to take the Stanley Cup in five games.

Mark Blitzstein’s anti-capitalist musical *The Cradle Will Rock*, produced by the Federal Theater Project’s Unit 891 (created specifically for Orson Welles), had its legendary single performance on June 16. When the WPA prevented the show from opening because of an alleged union dispute, the actors walked uptown to the Venice Theater on 59th Street and performed from seats in the audience.

Jacob Riis Park opened in the Rockaways.

The first section of the East River Drive, now the FDR Drive, opened; the Henry Hudson Parkway also opened.

Robert Moses shut Public Bath No. 7 in Brooklyn (Fourth Avenue and President Street); it had opened in 1910.

The NYPD introduced two-way radios in patrol cars.

Sports cartoonist Willard Mullin of the *World-Telegram* created a new symbol for

the Dodgers—the Bum. He got the idea when a cabby who picked him up outside Ebbets Field asked, “What’d dem bums do today?”

The Marine Parkway Bridge (now the Gil Hodges Bridge) opened on July 3. The Marine Parkway Authority was another Robert Moses brainchild.

On August 30 the first tenants moved into the 574-unit Harlem River Houses; their furniture was first put in cyanide gas vaults to eliminate vermin. Funded by the Public Works Administration, construction had begun on July 5, 1936. The courtyard features a pair of oversized sculptures by Heinz Warneke. In November, John D. Rockefeller Jr. donated a new playground.

Residents moved into the 1,630-unit Williamsburg Houses on September 29.

For a second year, the Yankees beat the Giants in the World Series.

Another PWA project, the Ward’s Island Water Pollution Control Plant, the city’s



Riis Park, 1946. (QBPL)



N.Y. & Queens Co. Railway Company trolleys burning in Woodside. (QBPL)

first to treat sewage, began operating on October 23.

The National Broadcasting Company established an orchestra under the baton of Arturo Toscanini. The symphony performed in concert halls and on radio and television. It disbanded in 1954.

It was a bad year for trolleys in Queens. The Queens Boulevard line shut down on April 17; the Flushing-Jamaica line was abandoned on August 10; the College Point trolley ended on August 23; and on September 5 the Northern Boulevard line stopped running. As a final indignity, after the last run of the Borden Avenue trolley on October 30, Queens Borough President George U. Harvey and Edward A. Roberts,

president of the streetcar company, set fire to two trolleys in the Northern Boulevard yard.

Mayor La Guardia was reelected; Thomas Dewey became Manhattan district attorney.

The Flushing Centennial Celebration Committee presented “The Pageant of Flushing Town” at the Armory on December 6 and 7. Flushing had received its village charter in 1837.

The 8,216-foot center tube of the Lincoln Tunnel, built at a cost of \$75 million, opened on December 22. Omero C. Catan, “Mr. First,” paid the first toll.

# 1938

On January 16, Benny Goodman and his sextet performed the first jazz program to be held at Carnegie Hall. Count Basie also appeared that night.

Madison Square Garden hosted the first National Invitational Tournament (NIT) for college basketball teams.

On June 15, in the first night game at Ebbets Field, Johnny Vander Meer of the Cincinnati Reds pitched his second consecutive no-hitter, beating the Dodgers, 6–0.

Before a capacity crowd at Yankee Stadium on June 22, heavyweight champion Joe Louis knocked out Max Schmeling in the first round.

The Cloisters opened. John D. Rockefeller Jr. funded the construction and donated his medieval art collection. At the dedication he said: “With the changes that time has brought, the wholesome and profitable use of leisure . . . is one of the great problems of the day. In its solution the cultural and uplifting value of beauty, whether apprehended with eye or ear, is playing an increasingly important part. . . . The Cloisters in their new environment, surrounded by nature at her best, will become another stimulating center for the profitable use of leisure. . . . If what has been created here helps to interpret beauty as one of the great spiritual and inspirational forces of life, having the power to transform drab duty into radiant living; if those who come under the influence of this place go out to face life with new courage and restored faith because of the

peace, the calm, the loveliness they have found here; if the many who thirst for beauty are refreshed and gladdened as they drink deeply from this well of beauty, those who have built here will not have built in vain.”

In July, Parks Commissioner Robert Moses published *The Future of Jamaica Bay*, criticizing Sanitation Department plans to dump garbage there. Moses suggested the bay was better suited for recreation and urged protecting it from development.

After filing a plan for a nonstop flight to Long Beach, California, Douglas Corrigan took off from Floyd Bennett Field at 5:15 A.M. on July 17. He disappeared in a cloud bank and 28 hours, 13 minutes, and 3,150 miles later landed in Dublin. He asked the airport workers, “Just got in from New York. Where am I?” Wrong Way Corrigan became a folk hero, celebrated on August 5 with a ticker-tape parade up Broadway bigger than Lindbergh’s.

The Queens Valley Golf Club near Kew Gardens was sold to developers for \$750,000 on August 15. The club had opened in 1922.

Alexander’s opened a branch on Fordham Road, its second in the Bronx; it soon had more sales per square foot than any department store in the nation.

The 11 murals at Sea View Hospital on Staten Island were completed by the WPA’s Federal Arts Project.

The Merritt Parkway opened in Connecticut.



Uprooted trees in Kew Gardens after the Hurricane of '38. (QBPL)

The Hurricane of '38, the “Long Island Express,” hit on September 20. It cut new channels through the barrier islands on the south shore.

The Yankees swept the Chicago Cubs in the World Series.

On October 22, Chester Carlson produced the first photocopy in his Queens workshop. It read “10-22-38 Astoria.”

On October 30, Orson Welles and his Mercury Theatre of the Air performed *War of the Worlds*. Some listeners believed the Martians had actually landed in New Jersey. Welles also directed the premiere of Aaron Copland’s opera *The Second Hurricane*, featuring Eartha Kitt, at the Neighborhood Playhouse at Henry Street Settlement.

Garment workers produced a Broadway musical, *Pins and Needles*.

In the Cecil Hotel at 118th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue, saxophonist Henry Minton opened Minton’s Playhouse, the jazz club that gave birth to bebop.

A 597-foot radio antenna was installed atop Brooklyn Tech, making it the highest structure in Brooklyn. (The Williamsburgh Savings Bank is 512 feet.)

The Central Nurses Residence opened on Welfare Island, housing 675 nurses working on the island.

Confined to a hospital on North Brother Island for the last 20 years of her life, Mary Mallon, “Typhoid Mary,” died on November 11.

The last train ran over the Sixth Avenue elevated on December 4.

On December 11, before 48,120 fans at the Polo Grounds, the Giants defeated the Green Bay Packers, 23–17, in the NFL title game, on a pass from Ed Danowski to Hank Soar.

## 1939

The General Courthouse in Jamaica was dedicated on March 1. To celebrate, the Queens County Bar Association hosted a reception at the Forest Hills Inn.

Undefeated James Madison High School won the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) basketball championship. The team's five starters and the sixth man all

played in the pros: Stanley Waxman, Larry Baxter, Fuzzy Levane, Freddie Lewis, and the Rader twins, Lennie and Howie.

LIU won the NIT basketball tournament.

In April, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and the Charity Organization Society merged to form the Community Service Society.

The Bronx-Whitestone Bridge opened on April 29, 23 months after groundbreaking. The Clason Point–College Point Ferry shut down the same day; it was the last ferry serving the Bronx and Queens.

The New York World's Fair, "Building the World of Tomorrow," opened on April 30. President Franklin Roosevelt's address was the first presidential speech to be televised,



Aerial view of the Whitestone Bridge, with the World's Fair in the distance. (QBPL)



but only a few technicians saw the broadcast over NBC's experimental station. The fair's symbol, the Trylon and Perisphere, was designed by Wallace Harrison and J. Andre Fouilhoux.

Lou Gehrig played his last game for the New York Yankees on April 30. The 35-year-old first baseman took himself out of the lineup on May 2 "for the good of the team" after 2,130 consecutive games. He suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known since as Lou Gehrig's Disease; he died June 2, 1941. On July 4, 1939, 62,000 fans attended Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day at the stadium. Gehrig said: "Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years, and I have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans. Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day? Sure I'm lucky. Who wouldn't consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert? Also, the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins? Then to have spent the next nine years with that understanding leader, that smart student of psychology, the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy? Sure I'm lucky. When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift—that's something. When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with

trophies—that's something. When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles with her own daughter—that's something. When you have a father and a mother who work all their lives so you can have an education and build your body—it's a blessing. When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed—that's the finest I know. So I close in saying I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for."

The Board of Education moved to 110 Livingston Street, which had been built in 1926 as an Elks Lodge; McKim, Mead & White were the lodge's architects.

The Bowery Bay Treatment Plant went into operation, another New Deal public works project. Designed by Albert Bela Bauer, it features reliefs that depict workers constructing the plant.

The first televised event at Madison Square Garden was part of a six-day bicycle race on May 20.

The National Maritime Union organized the "Tanker Strike." On May 22, strikers disrupted the New York Maritime Day exercises at the Custom House.

The Essex Street Market opened, part of a strategy to remove pushcarts and peddlers from the Lower East Side's congested streets.

The 1878 post office in City Hall Park was demolished.

The police department's Aviation Unit was reactivated, with six pilots and six mechanics. An anonymous donor (Howard Hughes?) gave two new engines, enabling the city to order new planes.

Henry Picard defeated Byron Nelson in a playoff to capture the PGA Championship at the Pomonok Country Club in Queens on July 15.

Goldwater Memorial Hospital on Welfare Island opened for 900 chronic care patients.

Cross Bay Bridge opened, connecting Howard Beach and the Rockaways. By September, 2 million cars used the span.

Built with a \$3 million contribution from John D. Rockefeller, Memorial Hospital at 65th Street and York Avenue opened. The institution had begun at 106th Street and Central Park West.

The new home of the Museum of Modern Art, designed by Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone, opened in May. The Rockefellers donated property at 11 West 53rd Street and John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s town house at 10 West 54th Street.

The first residents moved into the 2,545-unit Red Hook Houses on July 1, eleven months after construction started. The 3,149-unit Queensbridge Houses received residents on October 16; the nation's largest public housing project, it was completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

On July 22, Mayor La Guardia appointed Jane M. Bolin to the New York City Court of Domestic Relations; she was the first black woman in the nation to be appointed a judge.

On August 23, the Kosciusko Bridge opened.

On August 26, NBC-TV broadcast the first major-league baseball game: a double-header between the Dodgers and the Cincinnati Reds at Ebbets Field.

Lost Battalion Hall on Queens Boulevard in Elmhurst was dedicated on October 5. The community center is named for the 550 men of the 77th Division who were surrounded by the Germans in the Argonne in October 1918; only 194 returned. It features a 96-foot by 12-foot WPA mural depicting the Lost Battalion in action.

Lafayette High School in Bensonhurst opened.

The Yankees beat the Cincinnati Reds for their second consecutive sweep of the World Series.

The six-level parking garage at 10 Rockefeller Plaza opened, the first parking garage in any office building in the city.

The Brooklyn Dodgers and Philadelphia Eagles played the first televised professional football game on October 22.

Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman's *The Man Who Came to Dinner* opened.



The opening of North Beach Airport. (PA)

North Beach Airport opened on October 15. It was renamed for Mayor La Guardia in November. At 12:01 A.M. on December 2, a TWA flight from Chicago landed, the first scheduled arrival.

Charlie Parker, 18 years old, worked as a dishwasher at Jimmy's Chicken Shack in Harlem, where he heard jazzman Art Tatum play piano. In January 1942, Parker joined the Jay McShann Orchestra at the Savoy Ballroom. When McShann went on tour, Parker stayed behind, "just digging New York."

Francis Spellman succeeded Patrick Cardinal Hayes as archbishop.

Batman made his debut in *Detective Comics* no. 27. Created by 22-year-old Bob Kane, the Caped Crusader protected Gotham City, which was modeled after New York City.

On December 10 the Giants lost the NFL title game to Green Bay, 27–0, in Milwaukee.

## 1940

On February 9, in a split decision, heavy-weight champion Joe Louis defeated Arturo Goday at Madison Square Garden. On March 29, again at the Garden, Louis knocked out Johnny Paychek in the second round.

Residents moved into Parkchester on February 27. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company began building the complex in 1938; it was completed in 1942. Richmond H. Shreve was presiding architect.

Fordham and Pittsburgh played in the first televised basketball game, broadcast live from Madison Square Garden on February 28.

Pan American Airways initiated clipper service from the Marine Air Terminal to Lisbon on March 31. Previously, the flying boats had been based in Port Washington. The crossing took 26 hours.

Florence Abraham Blum, wife of the president of A&S and member of the ladies auxiliary of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, led a campaign to beautify the borough, convincing Borough President John Cashmore to designate the forsythia Brooklyn's official botanical emblem and to declare an official Forsythia Day each April.

On April 13, the Rangers defeated the Toronto Maple Leafs for the Stanley Cup, taking the sixth game 3–2 in overtime.

Mayor La Guardia and Nathan Strauss of the Federal Housing Authority set the cornerstone for the South Jamaica Houses on April 15; residents arrived on July 2, a year after work had begun. A total of 5,155, with an average annual income of \$975, applied for the 448 apartments. A day nursery served children breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

In Chicago, the Harlem Renaissance won the first world professional basketball tournament, defeating the Oshkosh All-Stars of the National Basketball League.

Thelonious Monk, 23 years old, began a gig with drummer Kenny “Klook” Clarke at Minton’s Playhouse in Harlem, ushering in the bebop era. In the words of Langston Hughes, bebop “let midnight out on bail.”

On Long Island, Alicia Patterson founded *Newsday*; by 1952, circulation reached 167,933.

The 240-unit Vladeck City Houses and the 1,533-unit Vladeck Houses were completed in Manhattan, named for Russian immigrant Baruch Charney Vladeck, a Lower East Side labor leader and housing reformer.

The first air-conditioned taxi, a 1940 Packard, hit the streets.

Motoring through Queens on April 29, Mrs. Sara Delano Roosevelt, the president’s mother, took ill and stopped in a drugstore



The opening of the Marine Air Terminal. (PA)



FDR's mother is in the drugstore on the corner; the World's Fair appears in the background. (HT/QBPL)



Sunday traffic on the Belt Parkway, 1951.  
(HT/QBPL)

at 53rd Street and Corona Avenue. She returned to Queens on May 11 for the World's Fair.

The subways were unified under municipal ownership on June 2. The BMT was valued at \$22 a share, the IRT at \$50 a share; the IND was city owned.

In June, two Army Air Corps bombers collided above 239th Street in Bellerose. One crashed into a house at 86–16 239th Street; the other fell onto the mall between Hillside and 87th Avenues. Eleven memorial trees were planted on the site, one for each airman killed.

The Belt Parkway, officially the Circumferential Parkway, opened on June 29, 18 months after groundbreaking.

On July 4, a bomb exploded at the British Pavilion at the World's Fair, killing two members of the bomb squad.

Hunter College's classroom building on Park Avenue was dedicated on October 8. Built with \$6.5 million from the PWA, it was designed by Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon.

The New York World's Fair closed on October 27. The Tilyou Brothers then purchased the Parachute Jump (sponsored by Lifesavers at the fair) for \$150,000 and moved it to Steeplechase. The ride featured 12 chutes, each 32 feet in diameter. It took 57 seconds to reach the top and less than 15 seconds to drop.

President Roosevelt campaigned across the city on October 28, stopping at the

Queens-Midtown Tunnel, Hunter College, and the Queensbridge Houses and finishing his trip at a rally at Madison Square Garden that evening.

After four years of construction, the Queens-Midtown Tunnel opened on November 15. Harry E. Sochovit of Brooklyn paid the first 25¢ toll; 4,399,000 vehicles drove through the first year.

Archbishop Spellman laid the cornerstone of Cardinal Hayes High School on the Grand Concourse at 153rd Street.

The legendary Cotton Club closed after moving from Lenox Avenue and 142nd Street to Midtown.

The *United Journal*, a Chinese-language daily, was founded.



Opening of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel. (HT/QBPL)

The Ninth Avenue elevated shut down, except for the “Polo Grounds Shuttle,” which ran until 1958.

The American Irish Historical Society (founded in Boston in January 1897) moved to 991 Fifth Avenue.

Texaco sponsored its first live radio broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera on December 7.

On December 26, *My Sister Eileen*, based on Ruth McKenney’s stories, opened at the Biltmore Theater; it was produced by Max Gordon and directed by George S. Kaufman. The play ran for 865 performances. Four days before the opening, Eileen McKenney and her husband, Nathaniel West, died in an automobile accident.

Anthony and Sally Amato founded the Amato Opera Company.

Breweries in Brooklyn produced a record 3.4 million gallons of beer, eclipsing the 1907 record of 2.5 million gallons.

## 1941

On New Year’s Day, Texas A&M beat Fordham in the Cotton Bowl, 13–12.

The 5,000-square-foot mural by Spanish artist Jose Maria Sert, on the lobby ceiling of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, was unveiled in March. Sert earlier had completed the piece that appears over the information desk. Frank Brangwyn did the insipid murals near the elevators.

The Brooklyn Public Library’s new Central Library, named for Borough President Raymond Ingersoll, was dedicated on March 21.

LIU won the NIT at the Garden, defeating Ohio University, 56–42.

The Transport Workers Union, founded in 1933, went on strike March 10–21, idling all buses.

Joe DiMaggio’s 56-game hitting streak began on May 15; it ended in Cleveland on July 17.

Fiorello La Guardia moved into historic Gracie Mansion on May 26; he was the first mayor to live there.

The Bronx Zoo opened the African Plains exhibit, the first to display different species in a naturalistic setting. Also, the New York Aquarium in Castle Clinton closed and the fish were relocated to the Bronx Zoo; Robert Moses intended to demolish the historic fort for his Brooklyn-Battery Bridge.

The Joint Legislative Committee investigating the state’s educational system, the Rapp-Coudert Committee, called faculty and staff of City College to answer questions about communist affiliations. Sixty were dismissed for refusing to testify. The four Foner brothers—Jack, Philip, Moe, and Henry—were blacklisted. In 1981 the Board of Higher Education issued a belated apology for the “egregious violation of academic freedom.”

The first television stations—WCBW, channel 2 (CBS); WNBT, channel 1 (NBC); and W2XWV, channel 4 (DuMont)—went on the air on July 1. WNBT had been broadcasting experimentally since June 1936. The first live commercial was broadcast July 4, with Ray Forrest speaking for Adam Hats. A true television pioneer, Forrest produced and hosted “Children’s Theater” from 1949 to 1960, showing educational films.

Queensbridge Park, another WPA project, opened in July.

The Hutchinson River Parkway (named for Anne Hutchinson) opened.

On September 8, ceremonies at the Dvořák House (327 East 17th Street), marked the centennial of the composer’s birth. Mayor La Guardia dedicated a historical marker; Harry T. Burleigh, Dvořák’s student at the National Conservatory and longtime soloist at St. George’s on Stuyvesant Park, also attended.

At the Polo Grounds on September 29, heavyweight champion Joe Louis knocked out Lou Nova in the sixth round.

The Yankees beat the Dodgers in five games in the World Series.

Paul Robeson and others performed at a rally for Russian War Relief at Madison Square Garden.

The *Long Island City Star-Journal* exposed a house in Ridgewood as a Nazi Bund headquarters.



Opening of the African Plains exhibit at the Bronx Zoo. (Courtesy of the Bronx County Historical Society)

New York University suspended seven students for leading protests against the “gentlemen’s agreement” whereby a visiting school agreed not to field a black athlete if the host school objected. In 1940, NYU kept fullback Leonard Bates out of a game at the University of Missouri.

On November 12, Abe “Kid Twist” Reles fell six floors to his death from a room in the Half Moon Hotel, on the Boardwalk at 29th Street in Coney Island, despite the presence of round-the-clock police stationed outside his door. He was to testify against Louis “Lepke” Buchalter, boss of Murder, Inc. Lucky Luciano claimed the police were paid \$50,000 to push Reles out the window; others speculated that he was trying to escape. Brooklyn soon had a new quip: “The only law Kid Twist could understand was the law of gravity.”





Section of *Flight* in the Marine Air Terminal. (JAK)

The stylish Art Moderne apartment house at 240 Central Park South, designed by Mayer & Whittlesey, was completed.

Four public housing projects opened: the 1,170-unit East River Houses in Manhattan; the 207-unit Wallabout Houses and the 1,166-unit Kingsborough Houses in Brooklyn; and the 400-unit Clason Point Gardens in the Bronx.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the navy closed the Woolworth Building's 58th-floor observation deck because it offered sweeping views of the harbor and the Navy Yard. It never reopened.

On December 21, the Giants lost the NFL title game to the Chicago Bears, 37–9, at Wrigley Field.

## 1942

On New Year's Day, Fordham beat the University of Missouri, 2–0, in the Sugar Bowl.

On January 18, Mayor La Guardia broadcast his first Sunday-afternoon program over WNYC, "Talk to the People."

On February 9, the passenger liner *Normandie* burned in her Hudson River

berth while being refitted as a troop ship. One person died and 128 were injured.

Four German saboteurs landed on Long Island on June 12; they were soon captured.

The last trains ran over the Second Avenue elevated on June 13.

The last ferry between Manhattan and Brooklyn (Bay Ridge to the Battery), ceased on June 30.

For the war effort, the city sold Floyd Bennett Field to the U.S. Navy.

On July 19, Arturo Toscanini led the NBC Symphony in the American premiere of Dmitry Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, a performance broadcast over radio. The score was smuggled out of the Soviet Union on microfilm.

James Brooks's mural *Flight* was completed in the Marine Air Terminal at La Guardia Airport. The largest and last WPA mural in the country, it was painted over in the 1950s for supposedly subversive imagery and style; it was restored in 1980.

From an office at 270 Broadway, Colonel James C. Marshall of the Army Corps of Engineers administered the Manhattan Engineering District. Colonel Leslie Groves later moved the Manhattan Project to Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Austin J. Tobin became executive director of the Port Authority, a post he held until 1972. Under his leadership, the Authority

grew from 300 employees to more than 8,000.

Irving Berlin's revue *This Is the Army* opened at the Broadway Theater on July 4 (the last performance was in Honolulu, October 22, 1945); it raised millions for the Army Relief Emergency Fund, established to aid the wives and parents of servicemen. In May, 310 soldiers gathered at Camp Upton on Long Island for rehearsals; they moved to Manhattan, drilling at 54th Street and Tenth Avenue in the mornings and rehearsing in the afternoons. At Berlin's insistence, the company was integrated—a first. Berlin performed "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning."

Residents moved into the Fort Greene Houses near the Navy Yard on August 19.

The St. Louis Cardinals beat the Yankees in five games, the only time Joe DiMaggio's team lost the World Series.

Aaron Copland's "Rodeo" premiered in a sold-out Metropolitan Opera House on October 16.

Hildegard Swift and Lynn Ward wrote *The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge*.

George M. Cohan died in Manhattan on November 5. For years he had lived in the Hotel Knickerbocker at Seventh Avenue and 42nd Street (as had Enrico Caruso).

The army purchased the old Paramount Studio in Astoria for the Signal Corps Photographic Center, later the Army Pictorial Center. It closed June 30, 1970.



U.S. Army Pictorial Center in the former Paramount Studio in Astoria. (QBPL)

As a patriotic gesture, Rockefeller Center varied tradition and decorated three large Christmas trees, one with red ornaments, another with white, a third with blue.

Three months after leaving the Tommy Dorsey Band, Frank Sinatra made his solo debut at the Paramount Theater on December 30, billed as an “Extra Added Attraction” with the Benny Goodman Orchestra.

## 1943

Sergei Rachmaninov and his wife became American citizens at the Municipal Building on February 1. The composer died on March 28. For 17 years he had lived at 505 West End Avenue.

In February, the Bronx campus of Hunter College was turned over to the navy; 80,000 WAVES trained there.

Paul Robeson played the title role in Shakespeare’s *Othello* at the Alvin Theater; it ran for 296 performances.

Duke Ellington and his orchestra performed “Black, Brown, and Beige” at Carnegie Hall. Not well received, Ellington never performed the piece in its entirety again.

Led by Fuzzy Levane, St. John’s University won the NIT at Madison Square Garden. In a Red Cross charity game between the winners of the NIT and the NCAA, Wyoming beat St. John’s, 52–47.

*Oklahoma*, the first collaboration of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, opened on March 31.

On May 16, Frank Sinatra performed in a patriotic concert in Central Park. Mayor La Guardia led everyone in singing Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.”

The *China Tribune* began publication.

On August 1, a riot erupted in Harlem after a policeman shot a black soldier; six were killed.

After they passed an exacting test on August 30, 20 women became the Port Authority’s first female toll collectors at the George Washington Bridge and the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels.

On September 21, WNYC-FM went on the air.

To address the wartime housing shortage, the Federal Office of Price Administration instituted rent regulations on November 1, pegging rents at March 1, 1943, levels.

In the World Series, the Yankees beat the Cardinals in five games, despite the fact that Joe DiMaggio, Phil Rizzuto, and Red Ruffing were in the military.

A year after marrying, Louis Armstrong and his fourth wife, Lucille, a former Cotton Club dancer, purchased a home at 34–56 107th Street in Corona.

Residents moved into the 360-unit Edwin Markham Houses on Staten Island.

Artur Rodzinski became the New York Philharmonic's music director; he held the post until 1947. On November 14, guest conductor Bruno Walter became ill, and 25-year-old assistant conductor Leonard Bernstein stepped in. The program featured Schumann's *Manfred* Overture, Rozsa's "Theme, Variations and Finale," Strauss's *Don Quixote*, and Wagner's "Prelude to the *Meistersinger*." The nationally broadcast concert made Bernstein a star. Also, Bernstein's symphony *Jeremiah* won the New York Music Critic's Award this year.

On November 22, songwriter Lorenz Hart died in Manhattan, at age 48. With Richard Rodgers he created *Babes in Arms*, *The Boys from Syracuse*, *Pal Joey*, and *On Your Toes*. His songs include "Spring Is Here," "Manhattan," and "The Lady Is a Tramp."

Eleanor Roosevelt dedicated the Sarah Delano Roosevelt Memorial House at 47–49 East 65th Street on November 22. Franklin and Eleanor moved into the town house, designed by Charles A. Platt, in 1908. FDR's mother, Sara Roosevelt, lived at No. 47 until her death in 1941. The presi-

dent then sold the house to Hunter College for use as an interfaith student center.

City Center opened on December 11. Built in 1923 as the Shriners' Mecca Temple, the city acquired the building through tax foreclosure during the Great Depression. Mayor La Guardia rejected plans to make it a parking garage. City Center was home of the New York City Ballet and City Opera.

## 1944

The battleship *Missouri*, last of the Iowa class, was launched at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on New Year's Day. In September 1945, the Japanese signed the articles of surrender on the ship's foredeck, ending World War II.

On January 18, the first jazz concert—and the first integrated performance—was held at the Metropolitan Opera House, a benefit for the war effort; it featured Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, and Benny Goodman.

St. John's University again won the NIT at Madison Square Garden. In a Red Cross charity game between the winners of the NIT and the NCAA, Utah beat St. John's, 42–36.

Concerned about communist influence in the American Labor Party, Alex Rose and others founded the Liberal Party.

*On the Town* opened on September 28 at the Adelphi Theater. Leonard Bernstein composed the music; Betty Comden and

Adolph Green wrote the book and lyrics; and Jerome Robbins was choreographer. The production grew out of Bernstein and Robbins's collaboration on the 1944 ballet *Fancy Free*.

Jacob Lawrence's "Migration Series" was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art from October 10 to November 11.

The Columbus Day Riot ensued when Frank Sinatra appeared at the Paramount Theater, performing between showings of the movie. The line began forming before dawn, and the audience refused to leave after the first show, leaving thousands of frustrated teenage girls outside. Two hundred police officers, 20 patrol cars, and hundreds of reserves restored order.

Terese Hayden published the first edition of the *Player's Guide*, a volume listing the city's actors and actresses; it folded in 1996.

Green Bay beat the Giants, 14–7, in the NFL title game, played at the Polo Grounds before 46,016 spectators.

## 1945

Dan Topping, Del Webb, and Larry MacPhail bought the Yankees for \$2.8 million on January 25.

On January 25, Richard Tucker made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *La Gioconda*.

The 7,482-foot north tube of the Lincoln Tunnel opened on February 1. Construction had begun in 1937 but had stopped in May 1938 after holing through; work had

resumed in June 1941. Michael Katen, "Mr. Second," paid the first 50¢ toll; his brother, Omero Catan, "Mr. First," was in a military hospital in England and asked his brother to stand in.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* opened on April 19 at the Majestic Theatre; it ran for 890 performances.

Hungarian composer Béla Bartók died; for the last year of his life, he lived at 309 West 57th Street.

Using converted World War II troop carriers, Francis J. Barry founded the Circle Line on June 15. "America's Favorite Boat Ride" carries a million tourists a year.

A crowd of 4 million lined the streets for General Dwight Eisenhower's ticker-tape parade on June 20.

On June 30, newspaper deliverymen began a 17-day strike, during which Mayor La Guardia read the Sunday funnies over the radio for the children.

At 9:50 A.M. on Saturday, July 28, a B-25 bomber lost in dense fog crashed into the 79th floor of the Empire State Building, killing 14 and injuring 26. Luckily, it was not a workday.

On August 8, General Motors chairman Alfred P. Sloan announced a \$4 million grant to Charles F. Kettering's new cancer research institute from the Sloan Foundation. Sloan-Kettering was associated with Memorial Hospital (65th Street and York Avenue).

On August 14, hundreds of thousands jammed Times Square to celebrate the war's end. At 7:03 P.M., the news zipper on the Times Tower declared: "Official—Truman announces Japanese surrender."

Sixth Avenue was renamed Avenue of the Americas on October 2. Borough President Edgar Nathan installed the first sign at 50th Street that day, and the Sixth Avenue Association celebrated with a luncheon in the Rainbow Room. Not everyone agreed with the name change, however; at the public hearing, Mrs. Viola Warren called it "an awful mouthful."

Appearing as Tonio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, with the New York City Opera, Todd Duncan became the first black singer to perform in a production with a white cast. Duncan had originated the role of Porgy in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* on Broadway in 1935.

On October 29, while playing on a rock ledge above the west side of the Grand Concourse, nine-year-old Joseph Vitolo Jr. received a vision of the Virgin Mary. She told him she would reappear for 16 nights. On the last night, 25,000 people gathered. Later a grotto was built, originally Our Lady of the Concourse, now Our Lady of the Universe.

William O'Dwyer was elected the 100th mayor on November 6.

Sponsored by Mrs. Steven Clark in memory of the men killed in the war, the Park Avenue Memorial Trees were lit for the first time on December 17. Each year

since, private donations have funded the decorations.

Approximately 20 percent of all revenues collected by the Internal Revenue Service came from New York City.

## 1946

On January 30 the Fresh Meadows Country Club, once host of the PGA and U.S. Open, was sold to developers.

Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer's *St. Louis Woman* opened on Broadway, based on Harlem writer Arna Bontemps's 1931 novel *God Sends Sunday*, which Bontemps and Countee Cullen turned into a play. The show introduced Pearl Bailey and ran for 113 performances.

On February 14, the United Nations selected New York City as its headquarters. The Security Council convened at Hunter College in the Bronx on March 25. On August 15, the UN moved to an interim home in Lake Success while considering sites in Westchester for a permanent site, having rejected Robert Moses's offer of a world capital in Flushing Meadows. President Harry Truman formally opened the first session of the General Assembly on October 23 in the former New York City Building, dating from the World's Fair. On December 14, Secretary General Trygve Lie accepted John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s gift of a 17.5 acres on the East River, calling it the "crossroads of our world . . . the turbulent center of Twentieth Century life." In January 1947, Wallace Harrison was appointed director of planning for the new



Secretary General Trygve Lie addressing the first session of the United Nations in the former New York City Building in Flushing Meadows, October 24, 1946. (United Nations)

headquarters, leading an international team of architects. The final design was based on plans by Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer.

Because of a tugboat strike, Mayor O'Dwyer ordered theaters, schools, stores, and city offices closed, fearing a prolonged strike would cause shortages of coal and heating oil.

Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*, starring Ethel Merman, opened on May 16.

On May 28, Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric, threw out the first ball for the first night game at Yankee Stadium. The Washington Senators defeated the Yanks, 2–1

Ann Petry published *The Street*, describing life in Harlem.

Bronx-born Bess Meyerson became Miss America, the first Jewish contestant so crowned.

On September 27, before 39,827 spectators at Yankee Stadium, middleweight champion Tony Zale knocked out Rocky Graziano in the sixth round. Graziano won a rematch the next year, and Zale took the third bout in Newark on July 16, 1948.

The St. George ferry terminal burned on June 25; three died and 280 were injured in the nine-alarm blaze.

On November 1, the New York Knickerbockers played their first game in the 11-team National Basketball Association, beating the Toronto Huskies, 68–66. The team included Ossie Schectman (LIU), Sonny Hertzberg (City College), Nat Miltzok (Hofstra), Ralph Kaplowitz (NYU), Hank Rosenstein (City College), Dick Murphy (Manhattan), Tommy Byrnes (Seton Hall), Bobby Mullens (Fordham), Bud Palmer (Princeton), Stan Stutz (Rhode Island), and Leo Gottlieb (no college). Ossie Schectman scored the first basket in NBA history. Marty Glickman was the radio announcer.

In their final meeting at Yankee Stadium, before 70,000 fans, undefeated Army and undefeated Notre Dame played to a scoreless tie on November 10. Behind Doc Blanchard and Glenn Davis—Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside, the Touchdown Twins—Army had been national champions in 1944 and 1945. Notre Dame took the title in 1946 after Army struggled to beat Navy.

Mayor O'Dwyer dedicated the first Holocaust Memorial, a plaque installed in Riverside Park near 83rd Street, honoring the Warsaw Uprising of 1943 and victims of the concentration camps.

Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday* opened, with Judy Holliday in the lead. She played to a full house every night for three years; the Catholic press condemned the comedy as a "Marxist farce."

The Board of Higher Education established New York City Technical College on Jay Street in Brooklyn.

Bruno Caravaggi and Gino Robusti opened Quo Vadis on East 63rd Street, between Park and Madison. The epitome of continental style, it attracted Frank

Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Grace Kelly, Truman Capote, and Jacqueline Kennedy. In 1948, *Knife and Fork in New York* described it as "a delightful new restaurant unveiled by a couple of young paragons of politeness whose virtuosity as suggesters, carvers, servers and general pleasers is quite extraordinary." It closed in 1984.

On November 17 buses replaced the 42nd Street trolley. There had been streetcars on 42nd Street since 1884; by the end of the year, all Manhattan trolleys were gone.

The City Hall IRT station closed because it couldn't handle the new, longer cars.

Damon Runyon died on December 10; Eddie Rickenbacker scattered his ashes from a plane above Broadway. Runyon had



Railroad cars filled with coal at the Long Island Railroad car floats in Hunters Point, February 3, 1945. All coal had to be shipped across the harbor from New Jersey on lighters, barges that carried railroad cars. (QBPL)



joined Hearst's *American* as a sportswriter in 1911.

On December 15, before 58,346 fans at the Polo Grounds, the Chicago Bears defeated the Giants in the NFL title game, 24–14, behind Sid Luckman (Erasmus Hall High School class of '35 and Columbia University).

On December 20, Fiorello La Guardia presided over the groundbreaking for the John L. Elliott Houses. Elliott had founded the Hudson Guild.

The new All-America Football Conference (AAFC) fielded the New York Yankees and Brooklyn Dodgers. In the first championship game on December 22, the Browns defeated the Yankees, 14–9, in Cleveland. The NFL and the AAFC merged after the 1949 season, and the Yankees, having absorbed the Dodgers, folded.

Residents moved into Glen Oaks, a 2,864-unit garden apartment complex in eastern Queens, built for veterans by the Gross-Morton company; Benjamin Braunstein was the architect. The Federal Housing Authority had provided loans for construction.

The Society for the Prevention of Disparaging Remarks about Brooklyn documented 3,000 such comments in the media during the year. According to founder Sid Ascher, who had a show on WNEW-AM, "Any comedian could get a laugh just by saying the word Brooklyn." Archer moved to New Jersey in 1950.

December 23 was the biggest single day in the history of the subway system; 8,872,244 passed through the turnstiles. (In 2000, 3.5 million rode the subway daily.)

## 1947

The American Theater Wing established the Tony awards (named for actress Antoinette Perry but spelled with a *y* instead of an *i* to eliminate confusion with Toni home permanents) to honor Broadway performances. The first ceremony was on Easter Sunday, April 6, at the Waldorf-Astoria. There was no award for best musical, despite the opening of Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's *Brigadoon*, Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*, and Yip Harburg and Burton Lane's *Finian's Rainbow*.

On March 21, firemen acting on an anonymous tip forced their way into a decrepit four-story mansion at Fifth Avenue and 128th Street, home of the reclusive Collyer Brothers. They found the body of blind Homer Collyer, but it took a week to locate his brother, Langley. The house was crammed with stuff, including a copy of every edition of every New York newspaper since 1918, saved by Langley for the day Homer could see again. Langley perished in one of his own booby traps, and Homer silently starved.

On April 9, Baseball Commissioner Happy Chandler suspended Dodger manager Leo Durocher for one year, for associating with gamblers and for other acts detrimental to baseball. On April 15, Jackie Robinson made his major-league debut on opening

day at Ebbets Field. About 14,000 blacks attended, but the ballpark was only two-thirds full. Robinson was named Rookie of the Year. (How much easier would his season have been had the feisty Durocher been manager?)

On April 27, Babe Ruth Day, the Sultan of Swat's number, 3, was retired. He told the capacity crowd: "Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. You know how bad my voice sounds. Well, it feels just as bad. You know, this baseball game of ours comes up from the youth. That means the boys. And after you're a boy and grow up to play ball, then you come to the boys you see representing the clubs today in your national pastime. The only real game in the world, I think, is baseball."

The Jewish Museum (founded in 1904) moved into the former Warburg mansion on Fifth Avenue on May 8.

On May 22, Edward Robb Ellis wrote in his diary: "Today I arrived by train in New York City, which I had never seen before, walked through the grandeur of Grand Central Terminal, stepped outside, got my first look at the city and instantly fell in love with it. Silently inside myself, I yelled: *I should have been born here!*" Author of *The Epic of New York*, Ellis was the most prolific American diarist, beginning as a youth in Kewanee, Illinois, and continuing until his death at age 87 on September 7, 1998. His diary reached 22 million words and filled 50 cartons when he deposited it with the New York Public Library in the spring of 1998.

William J. Levitt began building Levittown in Nassau County. By 1951, Levitt & Sons erected over 17,000 homes, many selling for less than \$7,000, with no money down for veterans.

On June 1 the Port Authority took over New York International (still under construction), La Guardia, and Newark Airports.

On July 11, Parks Department workers removed the cast-iron Flushing Fountain from the park at Northern Boulevard and Main Street. The beloved fountain, topped with the figure of Neptune, was destroyed because, they claimed, it would have cost too much to repair.

On September 2, Macy's opened a \$1.25 million branch with rooftop parking at 89th Avenue and 165th Street in Jamaica; 70,000 shoppers came the first day. Robert Moses wrote to Macy's president Jack I. Straus: "Let me congratulate Macy's upon the completion of the first modern store in a congested section of New York City in which parking facilities for patrons are an integral part of the plan. It is an example which must be emulated by other builders if the City hopes to solve its future traffic problems. Roof parking where surface parking is too expensive or otherwise impractical, is an ingenious answer, and one far more practical and economical than indiscriminate building of public parking garages. . . . I am happy to have been of some little assistance in securing the necessary approvals of the governing bodies of the city." The store closed in 1977.



Fresh Meadows. (QBPL)

In the first week of September, residents moved into Fresh Meadows, the 3,000-unit housing complex built by the New York Life Insurance Company. It included two 13-story towers (another was built in 1962), two-story garden apartments, and three-story apartments. In the *New Yorker* in October 1949, Lewis Mumford commented: “Great’ is a word I use sparingly, especially about housing projects. . . . The deeper one penetrates into Fresh Meadows, the more favorable the impression, for the architects present one with a series of urban vistas rare in a modern American community—of short, curving streets, of long, open greens and buildings beyond, of plentiful verdure against a restful background of brick walls, of wide windows and great pools of domestic quiet behind the long, irregular, widely spaced rows of three-story apartment houses and two-story dwellings. . . . Fresh Meadows is perhaps the most positive and exhilarating example of large-scale community planning in this country . . . not just more housing; it is a slice of the City of Tomorrow.”

The Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce was founded.

Maurice King invented Barbicide (literally, “to kill the barber”) in his Brooklyn bathtub. The blue liquid disinfected combs, brushes, and scissors and is common in barbershops across the country. The factory is on 12th Street, east of Second Avenue near the Gowanus Canal.

Fiorello La Guardia died on September 20.

A new city charter eliminated proportional representation and open primaries, ending the influence of the American Labor Party and ushering in one-party rule.

The police department’s Aviation Unit acquired its first helicopters; it was the first department in the nation so equipped.

The cornerstone for the Lillian Wald Houses, a public housing project on the Lower East Side, was laid on October 4.

Tenants moved into Met Life’s Stuyvesant Town, 8,757 apartments in 89 buildings east of First Avenue, from 14th to 20th Street. Construction soon began on Peter Cooper Village, extending from 20th to 23rd Street.

The Yankees and the Dodgers met in the first televised World Series on September 30. The Yankees won the seventh game, 5–2, on October 6.

Bruno Walter became the music director of the New York Philharmonic; he held the post until 1949.

The Little Orchestra Society made its debut at Town Hall on October 20,

performing “Music for Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet,” commissioned from David Diamond.

The New York Junior League sold their East 71st Street clubhouse to Marymount Manhattan College and moved to the former home of Vincent Astor at 130 East 80th Street.

Intended for United Nations employees, Parkway Village, a 110-building garden apartment complex designed by Leonard Schultze & Associates, opened. Betty Friedan and Roy Wilkins once lived there.

On October 5, art dealer Jacqueline Klauer (known professionally as Jacques Marchais) opened the Jacques Marchais Tibetan Museum on Staten Island. The Dalai Lama visited in 1991.

The Bronx Zoo welcomed its 100 millionth visitor.

Broadcasting from Rockefeller Center, *Meet the Press* premiered on NBC-TV on November 6. Begun on radio three years before, it was the brainchild of newsman Lawrence E. Spivak.

*A Streetcar Named Desire*, by Tennessee Williams, opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theater on December 3. Kim Hunter made her Broadway debut as Stella Kowalski and Marlon Brando starred as Stanley Kowalski.

The Cleveland Browns defeated the Yankees, 14–3, for the All American Football Conference championship, held

before a crowd of 61,879 at Yankee Stadium on December 14.

The Blizzard of ’47 dumped 26.4 inches of snow on the city December 26–27, the most snowfall in New York in a 24-hour period.

## 1948

*El Diario* was founded, serving the small but growing Puerto Rican population.

The Fresh Kills landfill opened on April 16.

The Queens Botanical Garden opened on June 5. It grew out of the World’s Fair exhibit “Gardens on Parade.” It moved to its current location in 1963 to make way for the 1964–65 World’s Fair.

Babe Ruth made his last appearance at Yankee Stadium on June 13, for the ballpark’s 25th anniversary. He died on August 16; his body was laid out at the stadium, and thousands of fans paid their last respects. For years, Ruth lived at 110 Riverside Drive.

On Sunday, June 20, Ed Sullivan hosted his first television show on CBS, originally called *Toast of the Town* after his syndicated newspaper column. Guests included Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin, pianist Eugene List, ballerina Kathryn Lee, John Kokoman (a singing fireman), Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, and boxing referee Ruby Goldstein. The program was retitled *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1955; the 23-year run ended on June 6, 1971.



Idlewild Airport, 1951. (PA)

WPIX, Channel 11, went on the air on June 15, broadcasting from the Daily News Building at 42nd Street and Second Avenue. The call letters are newsroom slang for photographs.

The transit fare went from a nickel to a dime on July 1.

President Harry Truman dedicated New York International Airport, commonly called Idlewild, on July 31, calling it the “front door” of the United Nations: “As the Statue of Liberty symbolized freedom to those who came here by sea, the New York International Airport should symbolize America’s devotion to peace, among those

who come by air.” Governor Thomas E. Dewey added, “This airport is not only an invitation to goodwill; it actually is a compulsion upon all of us to see more of the other citizens of the world.” Omero C. Catan, “Mr. First,” and Michael Katen, “Mr. Second,” were the first to land. The City Council wanted to name the airport for General Alexander E. Anderson, a World War II air hero, Forest Hills native, and Queens Democratic leader.

Bandleader Tito Puente and dancer Frederico Calais introduced the cha-cha at the Havana Madrid nightclub on August 2. Calais was really choreographer and dancer Fred Kelly, Gene Kelly’s brother.

On August 12, 52-year-old Russian schoolteacher Oksana S. Kasenkina jumped to freedom from the third floor of the Soviet Consulate at 7 East 61st Street. She would have been put on a plane for the Soviet Union at midnight. Earlier, attorney Peter Hoguet had submitted documents in New York State Supreme Court on her behalf, and Justice Samuel Dickstein ordered the Soviet consul general to appear in court with the woman on August 11. Oksana Kasenkina became an American citizen in 1954; she died in 1960.

The last streetcar in the Bronx stopped running on August 21. Two years earlier, there had been 20 trolleys in the borough. On November 30, the Jamaica Avenue trolley ceased; started in December 1887, it was the nation's second electric streetcar line.

George Balanchine founded the New York City Ballet; Jerome Robbins became associate artistic director in 1949. The first performance, on October 11, featured three Balanchine works: "Concerto Barocco," "Orpheus," and "Symphony in C." The 50th anniversary performance on November 24, 1998, repeated that program.

The state legislature agreed for the first time to fund the city's colleges. They also established the State University of New York.

On September 18 a parade along Queens Boulevard in Kew Gardens celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Greater New York.

The *Texaco Star Theater*, starring Milton Berle, went on the air. "Uncle Miltie" was soon embraced as "Mr. Television."

The kosher Royal Wine company, having survived Nazi occupation, abandoned Communist Czechoslovakia and began production in Williamsburg.

Dwight Eisenhower became president of Columbia University, a position he held until he was elected president of the United States in 1952. Columbia also established its oral history archive.

Abstract expressionist Willem de Kooning held his first one-man show in Greenwich Village.

On December 30, Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* opened at the Century Theater.

CBS television broadcast New Year's Eve live from Times Square for the first time.

## 1949

The Brooklyn Heights Esplanade (the Promenade, as it is generally known) opened in January.

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* opened at the Morosco Theater on February 10. A revival opened 50 years later to the day, with the playwright in attendance.

On April 1, 7,000 workers went on strike against the city's 14 breweries. (Brooklyn had seven.) Workers at the F&M Schaefer Brewing Company, 430 Kent Avenue, sought a raise of \$8.50 to their \$71-a-week wage. The walkout ended on June 20; Brooklyn breweries lost about \$75 million. Within two years, Trommer's (founded in



The Brooklyn Heights Esplanade, January 1949. (HT/QBPL)

1897) and Edelbrew (founded by Otto Huber in 1866) shut down. Trommer's went under because the beer never tasted the same after the yeast culture spoiled during the strike.

*South Pacific*, based on James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*, opened on April 7 at the Majestic Theater. Brooks Atkinson wrote in the *Times*: "No one will be surprised this morning to read that Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein 2nd and Joshua Logan have written a magnificent musical drama." It closed January 16, 1954, after more than 1,900 performances.

On May 19, New York City Heliport No. 1 was dedicated on the East River at Montgomery Street.

In August, local police and members of the American Legion attacked those attending an outdoor performance by Paul Robeson in Peeksville. They claimed Robeson and those attending the concert were communists.

Trailing Boston by one game on October 1, the Yanks took the final two games against the Red Sox at the stadium to capture the pennant. In the World Series, they beat the Dodgers in five games.

The United Nations headquarters was dedicated on October 24. The General Assembly opened in 1952.

The Helfand Commission uncovered corruption and bribery in the NYPD,

involving gamblers. The scandal ultimately brought down Mayor O'Dwyer, his police commissioner, and the chief inspector.

Mayor O'Dwyer established a commission on Puerto Rican Affairs to ease the "integration of U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico into the life of the city" and to adapt social services to the needs of Puerto Ricans; the Welfare Department hired 480 Spanish-speaking caseworkers in 1953.

Dimitri Mitropoulos became music director of the New York Philharmonic; he held the post until 1958.

*The Goldbergs*, the first television show set in the city, premiered; it ran until 1955.

On November 8, Mayor O'Dwyer was reelected; Robert F. Wagner Jr. was elected Manhattan borough president.

The Pomonok Country Club closed on November 19. Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers purchased it for \$1,238,172 and built Electchester, a 2,100-unit apartment complex for union members. Pomonok

Houses, a NYCHA project, went up on another part of the golf course.

On December 15, Birdland, the jazz club named for Charlie Parker, opened at 1678 Broadway near 53rd Street. As heroin addiction made him increasingly erratic, Parker was barred from the club.

E. B. White published *Here Is New York*: "There are roughly three New Yorks. There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born here, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size and its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter—the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is the New York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something. Of these three trembling cities the greatest is the last—the city of final destination, the city that is a goal. It is this third city that accounts for New York's high-strung disposition, its poetical deportment, its dedication to the arts, and its incomparable achievements. Commuters give the city its tidal restlessness; natives give it solidity and continuity; but the settlers give it passion."





# 1950–1999

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## 1950

The *Sun*, founded in 1833, ceased publishing on January 4.

In one of the most controversial trials of the McCarthy era, Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury on January 21.

On February 17, two LIRR trains collided head-on near Rockville Centre, killing 32. On November 22, trains collided near Richmond Hill, killing 78; it was the railroad's worst disaster.

The Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement opened in the community center of the Queensbridge Houses on March 2.

In his last bank job, Willie "The Actor" Sutton and two accomplices robbed the Manufacturer's Trust Company at 47–11 Queens Boulevard, making off with



LIRR wreck in Richmond Hill, November 22, 1950. (HT/QBPL)

\$63,933. Asked by a reporter after his capture, "Why do you rob banks?" he answered, "That's where the money is."

The Department of Sanitation instituted alternate-side-of-the-street parking rules to facilitate street cleaning.



Jane Robinson at the controls of a Brooklyn Bridge trolley on its last day. (HT/QBPL)

The last trolley ran over the Brooklyn Bridge on March 5.

During a severe drought, the city hired meteorologist Wallace E. Howell as a rain-maker for \$100 a day. He seeded clouds in the Catskills in March. In February 1951, with reservoirs 99 percent full, the drought was declared over and the contract terminated. Dr. Howell estimated he had increased rainfall by 14 percent.

Bill Bradley, a member of the chorus, or “gypsy,” in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, presented the Gypsy Robe to a cast member in *Call Me Madam* on opening night. It next went to a gypsy in *Guys and Dolls*, with a rose from Ethel Merman

attached. Thus began the tradition of presenting the robe to the gypsy with the most credits on the opening night of each Broadway musical.

City College basketball team, coached by Nat Holman, defeated heavily favored Bradley in the NIT, 69–61, on March 18, and 10 days later again defeated Bradley in the NCAA tournament, 71–68, both times at Madison Square Garden. Holman had grown up on the Lower East Side and was a pioneer professional basketball player.

On April 23, the Rangers lost the seventh game of the Stanley Cup finals to the Detroit Red Wings 4–3 in double overtime.

The Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel opened on May 25. To make way for the Manhattan entrance, Little Syria was demolished.

Rudolph Bing took control of the Metropolitan Opera in June; he left in April 1972. In his memoir Bing wrote: “You don’t need wit to run an opera house. You need style.”



Coach Nat Holman addressing a rally at City College after CCNY won both the NIT and NCAA basketball tournaments. (HT/QBPL)

Gambling kingpin Harry Gross was arrested on September 15. He admitted making \$1 million a year in payoffs to the police, not to mention \$20,000 donated to William O'Dwyer's mayoral campaigns. He implicated 200 officers; 21 were indicted. There were no convictions because Gross backed away from his allegations on the stand. The scandal convinced Mayor O'Dwyer to become ambassador to Mexico. Vincent R. Impellitteri, president of the City Council, became acting mayor. Denied the Democratic nomination, Impellitteri was elected to a full term in a special election as the nominee of the Experience Party.

*Your Show of Shows*, a 90-minute live comedy program starring Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, went on the air; it ran until 1954. The comedy writers included Neil Simon, Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, Larry Gelban, Woody Allen, and Lucille Kallen.

In the World Series, the Yankees swept the Philadelphia Phillies. Rookie Whitey Ford won the first of his record 10 World Series games.

On November 4, Harry Rosen opened Junior's at Flatbush and DeKalb Avenues. In 1973, *New York Magazine* declared Junior's cheesecake the best in the city. (The recipe is in Molly O'Neill's *New York Cookbook*.)

On November 24, *Guys and Dolls* opened, based on the stories of Damon Runyon, with music by Frank Loesser and book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows.



Sandhogs holing through at the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, September 16, 1948. (HT/QBPL)

The Port Authority Bus Terminal opened in December.

The Wollman Memorial Rink, named for Kansas banker and philanthropist William Wollman, opened in Central Park.

On December 10, the IND was extended from 169th Street to 179th Street in Jamaica.

## 1951

On February 19, members of the City College basketball team were arrested for point shaving. Between 1947 and 1950, 86 games were fixed, involving 32 players



Opening Day at Dexter Park in Woodhaven, between the Bushwick Brooklyns and the Homestead Grays, April 1950. Bushwick's owner Max Rosner is the short man in the center. (QBPL)

from seven schools: CCNY, LIU, NYU, Manhattan, Kentucky, Bradley, and Toledo. The scandal emerged when Junius Kellogg, a Manhattan College sophomore from Portsmouth, Virginia (the school's first black scholarship player), told Coach Kenny Norton that Henry Poppe, Manhattan's former co-captain, had offered him \$1,000. Norton sent Kellogg to the district attorney. Kellogg later played for the Harlem Globetrotters but was crippled in an auto accident in 1954. City College suspended Coach Holman, but he was exonerated. He retired in 1960 with a 421–190 record.

The trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg began on March 8 in U.S. District Court in Foley Square, Judge Irving Kaufman presiding. Convicted of espionage on March 29, the couple were executed in the electric chair at Sing Sing on June 19, 1953.

On April 17, Yankee rookie Mickey Mantle played his first game. That day, Bob Sheppard made his debut as the public address announcer at Yankee Stadium, and he remained the announcer for more than half a century.

On April 19 the Port Authority began helicopter flights to Idlewild from the roof of their headquarters on 16th Street and Eighth Avenue. Heliport No. 1, on Pier 41 on the East River at the foot of Gouverneur Slip, opened on June 27.

On May 28, 19-year-old Giants rookie Willie Mays got his first major-league hit, a home run off left-hander Warren Spann of the Boston Braves. The shot cleared the roof of the Polo Grounds. In the locker room after the game, Spann remarked, "Gentlemen, for the first sixty feet, that was a helluva pitch."

Ethel Merman (born Ethel Zimmerman in Astoria in 1909) won her first and only Tony award for *Call Me Madam*.

The Bushwick Brooklyns played their final season. Owned for many years by Max Rosner, they played at Dexter Park in City Line.

J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* was published in July.

Omero C. Catan, "Mr. First," put the first coin in the new parking meters on September 19.

A \$25 million ferry terminal in St. George opened, five years after the old terminal burned.

Water began flowing from the Rondout Reservoir in the Delaware water system; the last reservoir was connected in 1964.

On September 29, the last steam-powered train ran on the New York Central's Putnam Division, from Brewster to the Bronx.

Ending the season tied, the Dodgers and Giants met in a best-of-three series for the pennant. On October 3, in the bottom of the ninth in the third game, Giants third baseman Bobby Thompson hit a three-run shot off Ralph Branca to win the game 5–4. Radio announcer Russ Hodges shouted into the microphone, "The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!" In the World Series, the Yankees defeated Leo Durocher's club in six games. In his last at bat, Joe DiMaggio hit a double; he retired after the season.

On October 5, the first "Honeymooners" sketch aired on Jackie Gleason's *Cavalcade of Stars* on the Du Mont network. *The Honeymooners* later moved to CBS, which broadcast 39 half-hour episodes in 1955 and 1956. On October 15, *I Love Lucy* went on the air, set in Manhattan but filmed in Hollywood.

On October 15 the Brooklyn Public Library started a "Library on Wheels." The bookmobile held 2,500 volumes and stopped at 12 schools and seven housing projects.

Judith Malina and Julian Beck founded the Living Theatre in a former department store at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street.

On November 5, voters approved a \$500 million bond issue for the Second Avenue subway. All monies were used to modernize stations and equipment, however, not construction.

Schoolchildren participated in a massive air-raid drill on November 28.

Jazz bassist Charles Mingus moved to the city and began performing with Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis. In 1955 he founded the Charles Mingus Jazz Workshop.

Albert Anastasia took over the Gambino crime family after the murder of Philip Mangano and the disappearance of his brother Vincent Mangano.

The Newsdealers Association barred the sale at newsstands of the *Daily Worker*, the Communist Party's newspaper.



The Arverne Houses. (QBPL)

The 418-unit Arverne Houses opened, the first public housing project in the Rockaways.

Robert Sarnoff, son of RCA founder David Sarnoff, commissioned an opera for NBC from Gian Carlo Menotti. Broadcast Christmas Eve, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* was the first program televised in color.

## 1952

On January 14, *The Today Show* was broadcast for the first time from the NBC

studios in Rockefeller Center. Dave Garroway was the host.

Alice Austen, born in 1866, died on Staten Island on June 9. An accomplished photographer, she lived in obscurity until *Life* published her pictures in 1951. Her house is now a museum.

New York Heliport No. 2 opened at Pier A at the Battery on June 11.

On July 24, two and a half years after disbanding his touring big band, Count Basie opened with his new orchestra at Birdland on 52nd Street.

Dr. Bernard F. Riess, a member of the Psychology Department at Hunter College, was dismissed after refusing to answer questions about his politics before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security. In the 1940s he was president of the New York College Teachers Union, which was expelled from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) for alleged communist influence. Nine other CUNY faculty members were dismissed. In 1982 they received restitution from the city for wrongful dismissal.

The Yankees beat the Dodgers in the World Series, taking the seventh game 4–2 on October 7. Dodger first baseman Gil Hodges went hitless; Mickey Mantle collected 10 hits, with two homers.

New York Airways initiated helicopter service between La Guardia, Newark, and Idlewild on October 15.

In the *New York Times Magazine* on November 16, John Clellon Holmes quoted Jack Kerouac as saying, “You know, this is really a *beat* generation,” giving a title to the article and a tag for a generation.

The Lever Building, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, was completed. It was designated a landmark in 1983, thanks to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Philip Johnson, Brendan Gill, and others.

The first 47 members of the Housing Police were sworn in on December 15.

To address police brutality, a Civilian Complaint Review Board was created.

Bird S. Coler Hospital on Welfare Island opened.

## 1953

On February 14, the Metropolitan Opera staged the American premiere of Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*.

David Katz founded the Queens Symphony Orchestra as an amateur ensemble.

Construction began on the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx. Einstein permitted Yeshiva University to use his name only if the school was open to all.

Five young men in Harlem formed the Cadillacs, a popular doo-wop group. They had begun singing on the corner of 118th and Eighth Avenue the year before.

*Wonderful Town*, a musical based on *My Sister Eileen*, opened at the Winter Garden on February 25. The lyrics were by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, book by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, and music by Leonard Bernstein; the director was George Abbott, and Jerome Robbins was the choreographer. It won eight Tony awards.

The Staten Island Little League opened its first season on May 16. They built Hy Turkin Field in 1957.

The subway fare increased from 10¢ to 15¢ on July 25, and the first token was introduced, with the distinctive Y-shaped cutout.



The city endured its longest heat wave: 12 consecutive days above 90°, beginning August 24.

Piel's bought the Rubsam & Horrman Brewery on Staten Island; it closed in 1963.

Victor Borge's *Comedy in Music* opened at the Golden Theater on October 2; his 849 performances set a record for a one-man show.

The Yankees defeated the Dodgers to take the World Series in six games. In game three, pitcher Carl Erskine fanned 14 Yankees.

*Ladies of the Corridor*, by Dorothy Parker and Arnaud d'Usseau, opened at the Longacre Theater on October 21. It was about aged and aging single women living in a residential hotel, which Parker did.

After defeating Mayor Impellitteri in the Democratic primary, Robert Wagner was elected to the first of his three terms on November 3.

On November 9, after another night of drinking at the White Horse Tavern, 39-year-old Welsh poet Dylan Thomas died.

Con Edison's Astoria power plant opened on November 10.

Matthew Guinan led the 8,000 private bus-line drivers of Local 100 of the Transit Workers Union on a 29-day strike, for a contract guaranteeing a five-day, 40-hour work week.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* won the National Book Award.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian House and Exhibition Pavilion was temporarily installed at Fifth Avenue and 89th Street (the future site of the Guggenheim Museum).

## 1954

*On the Waterfront* was released, dramatizing corruption on the Jersey City docks; the film starred Marlon Brando and Rod Steiger, was directed by Elia Kazan, and featured music by Leonard Bernstein. Father John Corridan, the model for Karl Malden's character, died in 1984.

The four-story International Style Manufacturers Trust Company branch at 510 Fifth Avenue opened, designed by Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill.

The *Pajama Game* opened on May 13. Harold Prince's first show, it won the Tony award for best musical, and Bob Fosse won his first Tony for the show's choreography.

On June 22, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway opened between Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue, featuring the triple-deck arrangement of roadways and the Brooklyn Heights Esplanade.

The Whitney Museum moved into a banal new addition at the Museum of Modern Art at 22 West 54th Street; the building was designed by Noel and Miller to conform to Philip Johnson's design for MOMA. The arrangement did not last.

On September 27, *The Tonight Show* premiered on NBC, broadcasting live from Rockefeller Center. NBC had aired *The Steve Allen Show* locally for four years before changing the name and broadcasting coast to coast. Also, the NBC Symphony Orchestra was disbanded. Maestro Arturo Toscanini died in 1957.

In the first game of the World Series at the Polo Grounds on September 29, with the score tied 2–2 in the eighth inning, Willie Mays made “the catch,” running down a 462-foot shot off the bat of Vic Wertz in center field. The Giants swept Cleveland, winners of a record 111 games.

General Foods relocated its corporate headquarters from Midtown to suburban White Plains.

Fire destroyed the LIRR trestle across Jamaica Bay; the city paid \$8.5 million for the right of way and invested \$47 million to rebuild the trestle and construct new stations to extend subway service.

With their hit “Sh-Boom,” the Chords, a Bronx doo-wop group, became the first black group to break the top ten on the pop charts. But the gold record went to the Crewcuts, a white group that covered their hit.

The federal government closed the Ellis Island immigration station, abandoning it to vandals and the elements.

The police department’s Aviation Unit retired its last airplane in favor of helicopters.



The Brooklyn Queens Expressway in Brooklyn Heights. (HT/QBPL)

Sports cartoonist Bill Gallo joined the staff of the *Daily News*.

Despite efforts by preservationists, Mark Twain’s home at Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street was demolished for an apartment building.

In the first week of December, the Dow Jones Industrial Average finally topped the record high set in September 1929: 381.17.

## 1955

In January, Marian Anderson became the first black singer with the Metropolitan Opera. Also in January, Robert McFerrin

became the first black singer to receive a contract from the Met. He appeared as Amonasro in Verdi's *Aida* in his debut.

The last issue of the *Brooklyn Eagle* appeared on January 28 as the American Newspaper Guild went on strike in a wage dispute. The owner announced on March 16 that the *Eagle*, founded in 1841, was folding.

On March 12, Charlie Parker died of cirrhosis of the liver at age 34, in the suite of his patron, Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter, in the Stanhope Hotel.

On April 18, Governor Harriman signed the Limited-Profit Housing Companies Law, also known as the Mitchell-Lama bill, under which the state subsidized over 140,000 medium-income apartments across the city. Co-Op City in the Bronx was the largest.

The 1,392-bed Bronx State Hospital for mental patients opened, the last such institution in the state.

In May, the 65-member Brooklyn Philharmonia (renamed the Brooklyn Philharmonic in 1982), formed by conductor Siegfried Landau, offered a Beethoven festival. Brooklyn philanthropist Adolf Leon provided the initial funding.

At 6:04 P.M. on May 12, the last train on the Third Avenue elevated left Chatham Square for 149th Street in the Bronx. Demolition of the elevated began August 3; the last section was removed at 42nd Street on February 16, 1956. A shuttle ran between 149th Street and Gun Hill Road

until April 28, 1973, when it was replaced by a bus.

Harlem-born photographer Roy DeCarava published his first book, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*. Langston Hughes wrote the text and selected and arranged the images.

At Yankee Stadium on September 21, boxing champion Rocky Marciano defeated Archie Moore.

The Dodgers finally beat the Yankees in the World Series, for Brooklyn's one and only world championship. Pitcher Johnny Podres won the seventh game 2–0 on October 4.

The LIRR's last steam locomotive made its final run from Jamaica to Greenport on October 16.

The \$6.5 million Welfare Island Bridge, a steel-truss vertical-lift span, opened. Ferry service from 78th Street in Manhattan to Welfare Island ceased in 1956.

Paddy Chayefsky's *Marty*, starring Ernest Borgnine as an Italian butcher in the Bronx, won the Oscar for best picture.

*Eloise: A Book for Precocious Grown Ups*, by Kay Thompson, illustrated by Hilary Knight, was published. It sold 150,000 copies in two years. Kay Thompson spontaneously created Eloise when late to a rehearsal for her nightclub act with the Williams Brothers in the early 1950s. She met her illustrator during an engagement at the Plaza's Persian Room.



The Long Island Railroad's last steam train leaving Jamaica for Greenport, 1955. (QBPL)

Members of the Columbia University crew team painted a 60-foot white “C” on a 90-foot rock above the Harlem River. The “C” was repainted Columbia blue in 1986.

A Mercedes Benz showroom designed by Frank Lloyd Wright opened at Park Avenue and 56th Street.

The first section of the Long Island Expressway opened on October 13.

Founded by Norman Mailer, Ed Fancher, and Dan Wolf, the *Village Voice* hit newsstands on October 26; it cost a nickel.

Mayor Wagner created the Commission on Intergroup Relations.

The first “Walk/Don’t Walk” sign was installed. In 2001, new signs were intro-

duced in their place, using a red hand and a white figure.

“Mr. First,” Omero C. Catan, led the way when the Major Deegan Expressway (named for William F. Deegan, veteran of the Army Corps of Engineers and a former Bronx public official) opened on November 5. The Tappen Zee Bridge opened on December 15, and “Mr. First” was there.

Stanley Kubrick produced and directed *Killer’s Kiss*, a grade-B thriller. Unlike most films shot in the city at that time, all pre- and postproduction work was also done in New York.

The 712-unit Hammels Houses in the Rockaways was completed.

Dorothy Day, Ammon Hennacy, and others with the *Catholic Worker* were tried in December for violating the state's Emergency Defense Act by distributing anti-war leaflets in City Hall Park and refusing to go to fallout shelters during a civil defense drill. The judge sentenced Hennacy to a \$25 fine or five days in jail. He refused to pay, explaining, "As a Catholic, I twice refused to take part in air-raid drills in accordance with the practice of Saint Peter, who was arrested twice for speaking on the street, and he and all the Apostles said to the state that they should obey God rather than man." After Hennacy invoked William Lloyd Garrison, "the first American Christian anarchist," the judge suspended the sentences.

## 1956

The soap opera *As the World Turns* was broadcast on April 2 from a studio in Grand Central Terminal. Helen Wagner played Nancy Hughes McClosky for over 40 years.

On April 8, a snowy Sunday afternoon, historian Henry Hope Reed and painter E. Powis Jones led the city's first historical walking tour for the Municipal Art Society.

A Nike guided-missile battery was installed on Hart Island. An editorial in the *Times* proclaimed: "The modern Nike represents a triumph of electronic science, a winged messenger of death to the attacker and a symbol of ultimate victory over aggres-



The newly opened Long Island Expressway, looking west from Greenpoint Avenue, 1955. (HT/QBPL)



Nike-Hercules missile on Governor's Island, 1963. (U.S. Army)

sion.” Twenty-four Nike batteries ringed the city, from Brookville and Long Beach to Fort Tilden to Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

The New York Coliseum, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority's (TBTA's) \$35 million convention center and 26-story office tower, opened in April. Demolition of the 44 buildings on the site, including the Circle and Majestic Theaters and the 23-story Gotham National Bank, had begun in 1953. The facade featured Paul Manship's massive cast-aluminum seals of the United States, New York State, New York City, and the TBTA. At the opening, Frank Lloyd Wright remarked, “It's a great utilitarian achievement, but architecture is something else again.” The Coliseum closed in March 1986 and was demolished in 1999.

The McLean Trucking Company introduced containerization at Port Newark on April 26.

For the first time, the Tony awards were broadcast live on local television; the show went national in 1967.

Jean Shepherd began his 21-year stint as a radio host on WOR-AM 710. His intelligent, insightful, and funny monologues made him legendary throughout the northeast, as the clear channel signal was heard hundreds of miles away.

James Brown won the amateur-night competition at the Apollo.

The *Village Voice* presented the first Obie awards for Off-Broadway theater. Also, Jules Feiffer published his first cartoon in the *Voice*.

With \$50,000 from John D. Rockefeller III, who eventually donated \$10 million, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts was founded. Rockefeller also founded the Asia Society this year. He and his wife donated their Asian art collection to the society in 1973.



Technician at the electron microscope, Sylvania Electric Products, Bayside. (QBPL)

At 8:50 A.M. on July 2, two thorium explosions (the breeder material used in reactors) rocked the Sylvania Electric Products Company plant in Bayside. The Atomic Energy Commission determined there was “no radiation hazard” outside the building, and with “contamination essentially confined” to one section of the metallurgy laboratory, there was “no possibility that anyone could have taken in a measurable amount of thorium unless he was in the room when the blast occurred or entered it a few minutes after.”

On September 9, Elvis Presley sang “Don’t Be Cruel” and “Love Me Tender” on the *Ed Sullivan Show* but was shown only from the waist up. This was not his first televi-

sion appearance; he was previously on *The Tonight Show*.

Surrounded by 11,000 parking spaces, Roosevelt Field, the first shopping mall in Nassau County, opened in September.

On September 17, Staten Island Community College, established in 1955 by the Board of Higher Education, opened in St. George with 114 students and 14 faculty.

The Port Authority’s West 30th Street Heliport, Manhattan’s first commercial heliport, opened on September 26.

At Yankee Stadium on October 8, Don Larson pitched a perfect game to beat the Dodgers 2–0 in the fifth game of the World Series. The Yankees took the seventh game 9–0 and became world champions again.

Brooklyn’s last trolley lines stopped October 31. One ran along McDonald Avenue from Church Street to Avenue Z, the other from 92nd Street to Bush Terminal.

John Marchi was elected to the state senate from Staten Island, and was subsequently reelected into the next millennium, making him the nation’s longest-serving state legislator.

Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide* opened on Broadway.

Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino founded the Joffrey Ballet Company with six dancers. They later established a prestigious school that trained over 800 students.

With the temperature at 10°, the Giants destroyed the Chicago Bears in the NFL title game, 47–7, before a crowd of 56,836 at Yankee Stadium on December 29.

## 1957

George P. Metesky, the “Mad Bomber,” was arrested at his home in Waterbury, Connecticut, in January. Over 16 years he planted 47 pipe bombs that caused many injuries, though no one was killed. He answered an open letter in the *Journal-American* and provided a clue to his identity: he held a grudge against Consolidated Edison, which had dismissed him years before. Metesky was committed to a mental institution until December 1973.

Lerner and Loewe’s *My Fair Lady* won the Tony for best musical.

Billie Holiday performed before a packed house at the Loew’s Sheridan, her first performance in New York in 10 years. She had not appeared in a nightclub since her arrest for heroin possession in 1949.

The Coney Island Aquarium opened.

The Board of Higher Education created Bronx Community College; it opened in 1959.

Fourteen-year-old Bobby Fischer of Brooklyn won the United States Chess Championship at the Manhattan Chess Club, which he had joined two years before.

The last trolley made its final run over the Queensboro Bridge at 12:32 A.M. on April 7, with about 125 passengers and trolley enthusiasts aboard. Afterward the driver said, “Enough is enough.” Two days earlier a *Times* editorial noted the streetcar’s passing: “It is unlikely that the whooshing whine of the bus will ever be memorialized in song as was the clang of the trolley. For the streetcar, with a refreshing breeze blowing through, went back to a day before everybody owned his own automobile, before the elevated and the subway. It represented not only a way to go to work, but also a way to go places and have fun. It was, on its own account, a way of having a good time. . . . We regret the passing of the trolley car, and we have never been convinced that the bus was a fair or completely beneficial exchange.”



The last trolley in Brooklyn entering the car barn at Tenth Avenue and 20th Street, October 31, 1956. (HT/QBPL)





The Billy Graham Crusade at Yankee Stadium. (Courtesy of The Bronx County Historical Society)

On the night of May 16, Yankees Hank Bauer, Billy Martin, Whitey Ford, and Mickey Mantle got involved in a fight at the Copacabana. Martin was soon traded to Kansas City.

The 8,006-foot south tube of the Lincoln Tunnel opened on May 25.

The city closed the 1861 charity hospital on Welfare Island. Abandoned to vandals, James Renwick's Gothic Revival structure was demolished in 1994, with a pledge that the stones would be used in Louis Kahn's FDR Memorial, planned for the island's southern tip. We'll see.

Jack Paar took over as host of *The Tonight Show* on WNBC.

The Reverend Billy Graham brought his Crusade to Yankee Stadium on July 20.

Aviation High School moved to Queens Boulevard in Long Island City. (The site had been a trolley barn.) Founded in 1925 as the Central Building Trades School, it focused on aviation in 1936.

The Long Island Expressway opened to Nassau County on September 24.

On September 24, only 6,702 fans attended the last game at Ebbets Field as the

Dodgers beat the Pirates, 2–0. Who can blame fans for staying away after team owner Walter O'Malley announced he was abandoning Brooklyn for Los Angeles? The Giants played their last game at the Polo Grounds on September 29 before 11,606 faithful, losing to Pittsburgh, 9–1. Team owner Horace Stoneham took his team to San Francisco.

*West Side Story* opened, with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

On October 10, a crowd of 3,000, including Senator Javits and Mayor Wagner, gathered at the Bowne House for the 300th anniversary of the Flushing Remonstrance. A message from President Eisenhower affirmed that the “individual liberties of our people begin with the free

conscience of each citizen.” Governor Harriman drew a parallel between colonial Flushing and the school integration crisis in Little Rock, declaring that “the fight for equality and against discrimination in other forms has not been finally won.” On December 27, the 300th anniversary of the signing of the Remonstrance, the post office issued a 3¢ stamp in Flushing, honoring religious freedom.

On October 10, the Milwaukee Braves beat the Yankees, 5–0, to take the World Series in seven games.

Albert Anastasia was gunned down in the barbershop of the Park Sheraton Hotel on October 25. As a member of Murder, Inc., the organization responsible for 500 murders, he worked under Lucky Luciano



The 1957 Dodgers at Ebbets Field. (QBPL)

and Frank Costello. Carlo Gambino took over.

Mayor Wagner was reelected.

On November 26, the 39-story Tishman Building at 666 Fifth Avenue was dedicated. Designed by Carson & Lundlin, it was the world's largest aluminum-clad skyscraper and featured Isamu Noguchi's 40-foot-long waterfall in the arcade and a ceiling of aluminum waves in the lobby. The stylish storefronts and lobby were altered in 1998; Noguchi's work was preserved, though the context was lost.

A new Catholic diocese was formed in Nassau and Suffolk. Previously, all of Long Island was in the Brooklyn diocese.

Forty members of the police department founded the Hispanic Society.

Thelonious Monk and tenor saxophonist John Coltrane performed at the Five Spot in Cooper Square.

The International Arrivals Building, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, was dedicated at Idlewild Airport on December 5. It was demolished in 1999.

In December, a drunken Jack Kerouac appeared at the Village Vanguard, reading his works to the accompaniment of J. J. Johnson's jazz combo. It was a disaster.

On December 30, Mayor Wagner signed the Sharkey-Brown-Isaacs law, banning racial discrimination in private housing.

## 1958

Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* had its world premiere at the Metropolitan Opera on January 15.

In January, a teacher, a housewife, and a clerk received suspended sentences for "unlawful detention of books" from the Brooklyn Public Library; in October, the Court of Special Session ruled that a teacher had to pay \$500 for keeping more than a hundred volumes from the Brooklyn library.

Critic Leonard Altman and violinist Isaac Stern formed the Citizens Committee to Save Carnegie Hall. A truly ugly tower was proposed.

The Board of Higher Education created Queensborough Community College on 34 acres in Bayside.

On March 31, Mayor Wagner issued Executive Order 49, granting public employees the right to collective bargaining. District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) organized workers in all municipal hospitals. Workers at Montefiore Hospital joined Local 1199.

The Lunt-Fontanne Theater, 205 West 46th Street, opened on May 5, with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne starring in *The Visit*. Designed by Carrère & Hastings, the theater had opened January 10, 1910 as the Globe, complete with a sliding roof.

Van Cliburn, the first American to win Moscow's Tchaikovsky piano competition, received a ticker-tape parade on May 20.

The last passenger train ran along the Putnam Division of the New York Central from the Bronx to Brewster.

The Long Island City public baths closed July 27.

On August 1, 194,418 Jehovah's Witnesses thronged Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds, and nearby sites; by some accounts, it was the largest crowd ever in the stadium.

On August 12, Count Basie and 56 other jazz musicians, including Dizzy Gillespie, Gerry Mulligan, Sonny Rollins, Gene Krupa, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Marian McPartland, Coleman Hawkins, and Willie the Lion Smith, posed in front of a brownstone at 17 East 126th Street for photographer Art Kane of *Esquire*.

On August 27, Herbert Stempel, former champion on the quiz show *Twenty-one*, walked into the office of Manhattan prosecutor Joe Stone and stated the show was rigged. He had been dethroned by Charles Van Doren, a Columbia University literature professor. Thus began the quiz show scandal that rocked television.

Bronx High School of Science moved from East 183rd Street to Bedford Park.

The first Steuben Day Parade marched up Fifth Avenue to Yorkville on September 20.

While signing copies of his book in a Harlem store on September 20, Martin Luther King Jr. was stabbed by a deranged woman.

The first transatlantic commercial jet passenger flight, a BOAC Comet 4, landed at Idlewild on October 4.

The Yankees beat the Milwaukee Braves in the World Series, taking the seventh game 6–2 on October 9.

One person died in a fire at the Museum of Modern Art. The original facade with its curved marquee was destroyed.

Leonard Bernstein became principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic. He also conducted the first Young People's Concert at Carnegie Hall. (He had led 53 such concerts by 1972.)

Washington Square was closed to automobile traffic on October 30. With Manhattan Borough President Hulan Jack and Democratic leader Carmine DeSapio in attendance, Raymond Rubinow, chairman of the Committee to Close Washington Square to Traffic, presided over a ceremonial ribbon tying on November 1.

The Leo Castelli Gallery held the first solo exhibition by Jasper Johns. Born in 1930, Johns moved to New York at the age of 23; he completed *Flag* in 1955. The Museum of Modern Art soon purchased three of his works.

To control flooding and create additional parking, the Port Authority filled in the lagoon at La Guardia Airport.

*The Naked City*, the first television crime drama set in the city, went on the air; it ran until 1963.

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater presented the choreographer's first program at the 92nd Street YMHA.

The Connecticut Turnpike opened.

The Common, a bohemian coffee house, opened at 11–13 Minetta Street. Later renamed the Fat Black Pussycat, it offered poetry readings and folk music. The neighborhood was still mostly Italian.

On December 29, after tying the game with seven seconds left, the Baltimore Colts defeated the Giants in overtime, 23–17, to win the NFL title before 64,185 fans at Yankee Stadium. It was called “the greatest game ever played.”

## 1959

An American Airlines flight crashed into the East River on February 3, killing 66.

During a nasty contractual battle, Rudolf Bing abruptly ended the Metropolitan Opera's relationship with Maria Callas. On February 5, Leonie Rysanek made her debut, stepping into Callas's role in Verdi's *Macbeth*. Rysanek sang 24 roles during her 37-year career.

In April, Fidel Castro visited the United Nations but moved from a Midtown hotel to the Hotel Theresa in Harlem.

Reuben Mattus began selling Haagen Dazs in the Bronx shop where he had been quietly selling his family's homemade ice cream for the previous 30 years.

*Once Upon a Mattress* opened at the Phoenix Theater on May 11. Mary Rodgers, daughter of Richard Rodgers, wrote the music; Carol Burnett stole the show in her Broadway debut.

Groundbreaking for Lincoln Center was on May 14; President Dwight Eisenhower turned the first shovel. Robert Moses had offered the 53-acre slum clearance site to the Metropolitan Opera and the Philharmonic in 1955. To make way for the performing arts center, thousands of families and dozens of businesses were evicted. The United States Supreme Court rejected two appeals of the evictions, permitting the project to move forward.

On June 26, Swedish heavyweight Ingemar Johansson defeated Floyd Patterson in a title bout at Yankee Stadium.

Local 1199 began a six-week strike against voluntary hospitals over grievance procedures. In 1963, Governor Nelson Rockefeller signed legislation granting hospital workers in voluntary hospitals the right to collective bargaining.

Billie Holiday died in Metropolitan Hospital on July 17, a policeman at her bedside because she had heroin in her possession.

On July 27, attorney William Shea announced formation of the Continental League, with franchises in New York,

Houston, Denver, Toronto, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Branch Rickey was the president. This forced baseball owners to grant the city a new National League franchise, two years after the Dodgers and Giants left.

The final day of racing at Jamaica Race Track was August 5. The Rochdale Houses rose on the site.

The George M. Cohan statue was dedicated in Duffy Square on September 11, with Oscar Hammerstein II, George Jessel, and Robert Moses in attendance; the crowd of 45,000 sang “Give My Regards to Broadway.” George Lober was the sculptor.

United Airlines and Eastern Airlines opened new terminals in October at Idlewild.

The Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opened on October 21.

William S. Burroughs, a dominant figure of the Beat Generation, published his second book, *Naked Lunch*. His first work, *Junkie*, appeared in 1953.

The Four Seasons Restaurant opened in Mies van der Rohe’s Seagram Building; Philip Johnson & Associates designed the space. Joseph H. Baum and Jerome Brody had originated the concept, a menu that would change with the seasons. Their company, Restaurant Associates, opened other expensive trend-setting spots: the Newarker at Newark Airport (1953), Forum of the Twelve Caesars in the United States Rubber Building in Rockefeller Center



Jamaica Race Track, May 24, 1945. (QBPL)

(1957), and La Fonda del Sol in the Time Life Building (1961). *Times* critic Craig Claiborne wrote of the Four Seasons: “Both in decor and in menu, it is spectacular, modern and audacious. It is expensive and opulent and it is perhaps the most exciting restaurant to open in New York within the last two decades.” In 1960, Brody remarked, “We are New York guys and we have tried to express in all our restaurants the idea of the elegant, perhaps you might say the shiny side of contemporary New York.”

Frank Lloyd Wright’s two-story Pre-fab 1 (called Crimson Beech for the tree in the yard) was built for William and Catherine Cass on Lighthouse Hill in Staten Island, for \$100,000. Mrs. Cass lived in the house for 40 years and said she would not have changed a thing: “He was darn good. He thought of everything.”



One of the last trolley coaches in Brooklyn, Bergen Street and Flatbush Avenue. (HT/QBPL)

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*, starring Mary Martin, opened at the Lunt-Fontanne Theater. In the *Herald Tribune*, critic Walter Kerr wrote, "Too sweet for words."

The Ornette Coleman Quartet performed at the Five Spot in November. Their music provoked fistfights in the audience but also attracted the likes of Leonard Bernstein.

The 604-unit Redfern Houses in the Rockaways opened.

In Baltimore on December 27, the Colts defeated the Giants for the NFL championship, 31–16.

## 1960

On January 17, 305 diesel buses replaced the 138 trolley coaches serving five routes in Brooklyn.

The American Airlines Terminal opened at Idlewild in February, the first with "jetways" allowing passengers to pass from the building to the plane without stepping onto the field. In May the Pan American terminal opened, featuring the first self-claim baggage area with a moving conveyer belt.

Demolition of Ebbets Field for a housing project began on February 23. The crew painted the wrecking ball white with red stitching.

During a performance of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* on March 4, Leonard Warren died on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera.

With book by Jerome Weidman and score by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick, *Fiorello* won the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics Circle award and shared the Tony with *The Sound of Music*.

*The Fantasticks* opened at the Sullivan Street Playhouse on May 3. It closed in January 2002.

The Council of Churches of the City of New York was founded.

Freedomland, an amusement park near the Hutchinson River Parkway in the Bronx, opened in July. It closed in 1964.

Wearing blue and gold uniforms, the New York Titans of the American Football League (formed on August 14, 1959) took the field on September 11 before 5,727 fans at the Polo Grounds and beat the Buffalo Bills, 27–3; the coach was Sammy Baugh. On October 9, offensive guard Howard Glenn died of a cerebral hemorrhage after a game against the Houston Oilers.

On October 13, in the bottom of the ninth of the seventh game of the World Series, second baseman Bill Mazeroski of the Pittsburgh Pirates homered to beat the Yankees, 10–9.

On October 28, John F. Kennedy rode the ferry to a campaign rally in St. George. He spoke for 30 minutes before a crowd of

15,000, apologizing to “any Republican commuters who have been caught unwittingly in this crowd.” He had a bite at the snack bar before boarding the Brooklyn ferry. JFK also addressed about 200,000 in the garment district at Seventh Avenue and 37th Street. (The presidential campaign of 1996 was the first without a major rally in the city.)

On Sunday, November 6, a bomb exploded under a seat on the A train in the 125th Street station, killing one young woman and injuring 18 other passengers. It was the fifth explosion on municipal property since October 2.

German baritone Hermann Prey made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Wolfram in Wagner's *Tannhauser*.

Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot* opened at the Majestic Theater on December 3.

WABC 770 AM switched to a Top 40 format, with Cousin Bruce Morrow leading the charge; its clear signal could be heard up and down the East Coast.

On December 8, the Port Authority's Downtown Heliport opened at Pier 6 on the East River.

On December 16, a United Airlines DC-8 and a TWA Constellation collided above Staten Island, killing all 129 passengers and crew and several people on the ground. The DC-8 came down at Seventh Avenue and Sterling Place in Park Slope; the Constellation fell to Miller Field in New Dorp.





The Port Authority's Downtown Heliport at Pier 6 on the East River. (PA)

Fifty workmen died when the aircraft carrier *Constellation* burned while under construction at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on December 19.

The Puerto Rican population numbered 612,574, a tenfold increase since 1940.

## 1961

The Throgs Neck Bridge opened on January 11. The Clearview Expressway was built to carry traffic from the bridge to the Belt Parkway, but community opposition blocked the highway at Hillside Avenue; 500 homes were moved or demolished for the road.

Listener-supported radio station WBAI, 99.5 FM, went on the air. One critic called it a “noble experiment doomed to failure.”

Leontyne Price made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Il Trovatore* on January 27.

On February 16, Andre Surmain opened Lutece in a brownstone at 249 East 50th Street; chef Andre Soltner became owner of the stylish French restaurant in 1972.

Eastern Airlines began a shuttle between New York, Washington, and Boston. The fare to Washington was \$14, the fare to Boston \$12. (The train cost \$10.65 to Washington and \$11.58 to Boston.) According to the *Times*, “Eastern’s approach is probably

about as close as any airline has yet come to reducing air transportation to its basic job of moving passengers and goods from point A to point B. How much demand there is for minimum fuss rides at cheaper fares will be tested to a considerable degree.”

On April 9, folksingers scuffled with police attempting to enforce a ban on music in Washington Square.

Judy Garland appeared in concert at Carnegie Hall on April 23.

At President Kennedy’s birthday celebration on May 19 in Madison Square Garden, Marilyn Monroe sang a seductive “Happy Birthday, Mr. President.”

Judge Learned Hand died on August 18 at age 89. He had served on the federal bench in Manhattan since 1909.

The City University of New York was created on September 1, uniting City, Baruch, Queens, Hunter, and Brooklyn Colleges. Also, the Graduate School and University Center was founded. Al Bowker was CUNY’s first chancellor.

With its delightful Mother Goose theme, the Central Park Children’s Zoo opened in September; admission was 10¢. To commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary, former governor Herbert Lehman and his wife, Edith, had donated \$500,000 for the zoo in 1960. Edward C. Embury, son of Aymar Embury, architect of the Central Park Zoo in the 1930s, designed the entrance building. The

Children’s Zoo closed in 1992 after years of neglect and was demolished in 1996, replaced by a more earnest experience.

At Yankee Stadium on October 1, Roger Maris hit his 61st home run on the last day of the season. In the World Series, the Yankees beat the Cincinnati Reds in five games.

Running for a third term, Mayor Robert F. Wagner Jr. broke with Tammany boss Carmine DeSapio and joined reformers Herbert Lehman and Eleanor Roosevelt. DeSapio lost his position as district leader to James Lanigan of the Village Independent Democrats (VID); VID’s Carol Greitzer was elected female district leader.

Representatives from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware formed the Delaware River Basin Commission to regulate the 12,755-square-mile watershed. A 1954 Supreme Court decision entitled the city to draw 800 million gallons a day from reservoirs in the upper basin, half the daily flow.

James Thurber, longtime contributor to the *New Yorker*, died on November 12.

Chase Manhattan Plaza at Nassau and Cedar Streets was completed. Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill designed the 64-story tower, incorporating a sculpture by Jean Dubuffet and a sunken pool by Isamu Noguchi.

The 1,395-unit Edgemere Houses opened, the fourth public housing project in the Rockaways in 10 years.

*The Dick Van Dyke Show* (based on the comedy writers of Sid Caesar's show) went on the air. Produced by Carl Reiner, it ran until 1966. *Car 54, Where Are You?* a comedy about a Bronx precinct, also aired; it ran until 1963.

Dreadfully designed and sited, the Kate Wollman Memorial Rink opened on December 22 in Prospect Park, obliterating a picturesque lakefront (as did the Central Park rink, named for her father, which opened in 1950).

On November 26, Joan Sutherland made her Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

On December 31, the Packers dominated the Giants in the NFL title game, 37–0, in Green Bay.

## 1962

In February, Wall Street lawyers and brothers-in-law J. Daniel Mahoney and Kieran O'Doherty founded the Conservative Party, which fielded its first candidates in November. Their prospectus declared: "The Rockefeller-Javits leadership, confident that conservative New York Republicans are a captive vote, is leading the Party in an unabating march to the left. . . . The Conservative Party's endorsement will become essential to Republican victories in New York statewide elections, just as the Liberal Party's endorsement is considered essential by the Democrats."

On March 1, an American Airlines 707 crashed in Jamaica Bay, killing 95.

The Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority began operating on March 23, taking over the Surface Transportation Company, which consolidated several private bus lines.

The Mets took the field for the first time on April 11 in St. Louis, losing to the Cardinals, 11–4. Their home opener at the Polo Grounds was on Friday the 13th. The Mets set a record for futility, losing 112 games. Manager Casey Stengel once asked, "Can't anybody here play this game?" The Mets broadcasting team of Lindsey Nelson, Ralph Kiner, and Bob Murphy worked together for over a quarter century.

Eero Saarinen's Trans World Airlines terminal opened at Idlewild on May 26. The TWA chairman called it "the spirit of flight, inside and out, and nothing less will do."

In April, Fred Feldman took to the air over WOR 710 as the city's first airborne traffic reporter. Feldman is credited with the phrase "rubbernecking delays" and called the Long Island Expressway "the world's longest parking lot."

The Young Americans for Freedom, founded by William F. Buckley, held a standing-room-only rally at Madison Square Garden in the spring, with Barry Goldwater the featured speaker.

The father-and-son team of Dewey and Jerome Albert, the owners of the Cyclone, opened Astroland at Coney Island. (It's not exactly Dreamland.)

The Prospect Expressway opened.



The TWA terminal at Idlewild. (PA)

City-owned and -operated WNYC-TV, channel 31, went on the air, joining WNYC-FM and AM.

The Delacorte Theater in Central Park opened, home of Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival.

During the summer, Temple University undergraduate Bill Cosby performed stand-up comedy at the Gaslight Cafe in Greenwich Village, to good reviews.

On August 1, Herbert and Sylvia Woods opened Sylvia's soul food restaurant on Lenox Avenue.

The Elizabeth–Port Authority Marine Terminal opened on August 15, the world's first all-container port facility.

The lower level of the George Washington Bridge opened on August 29.

On September 1 the Port Authority took over the bankrupt Hudson & Manhattan Railroad in order to build the World Trade Center on the Church Street site. Construction began in 1965; the last building opened in 1987. The railroad was renamed the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH).

Philharmonic Hall, designed by Max Abramovitz, opened. Intended to replace Carnegie Hall, it suffered from poor acoustics until redesigned by Philip Johnson and acoustician Cyril Harris in 1976; it was renamed for Avery Fisher, who funded the renovation.

Jack Paar hosted his late-night show for the last time on March 29; on October 2, Johnny Carson took over as host of *The Tonight Show*, broadcasting from the NBC studios in Rockefeller Center.

After a one-day strike, the United Federation of Teachers signed its first contract with the city.

*I Can Get It for You Wholesale* opened, a musical by Jerome Weidman and Harold Rome; it was the Broadway debut of Barbra Streisand.

The Yankees beat the San Francisco Giants in the World Series, taking the seventh game 1–0 on October 16.

Irving Berlin's last Broadway show, *Mr. President*, opened on October 20.

The Playboy Club opened at 5 East 59th Street; it closed in 1982. Gloria Steinem once worked there and wrote about the experience in *Show* magazine.

A new express station opened on November 16 along the Lexington Avenue Line at 59th Street, the first connection with the BMT to Queens.

On November 27, the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court ruled unanimously that policewomen could not be barred from taking the departmental examination for sergeant, calling the policy of denying women the opportunity “an archaic approach in the light of modern-day conditions.” Felicia Shpritzer, a 20-year veteran, had brought suit with the support of the New York Civil Liberties Union. There were 278 women on the force at the time. In 1965, Shpritzer and Gertrude Schimmel made sergeant; in 1972, Schimmel became the first woman captain.

President John F. Kennedy attended the groundbreaking for the Federal Building of the World's Fair on December 14. Designed by Charles Luckman Associates, it was to remain after the fair closed, but the city permitted it to decay; it was mercifully demolished in 1977.

A newspaper strike shut down all unionized papers. Local 6 of the International Typographical Union settled after 114 days. The only beneficiary was the nonunion *Village Voice*, which saw circulation rise from 17,000 to 100,000.

At Yankee Stadium on December 30, the Green Bay Packers defeated the Giants for the NFL championship, 16–7.

## 1963

It was a big year for expressways in the Bronx: the controversial Cross-Bronx (under construction since 1955), Bruckner (named for Henry Bruckner, Bronx borough president), and Sheridan (for Arthur V. Sheridan, chief engineer of the Bronx during the La Guardia years) opened.

Brush fires swept through Staten Island on Saturday, April 21, destroying 100 homes, including a dozen in historic Sandy Ground.

Groundbreaking for the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center was on May 9.

The Board of Higher Education established Kingsborough Community College



Secretary General U Thant and President John F. Kennedy at the United Nations, 1963. (United Nations)

on 67 acres in Manhattan Beach and Borough of Manhattan Community College in Tribeca (just called Lower Manhattan then).

New York Typographical Union Local 6 built the Big Six cooperative apartments on Queens Boulevard in Woodside for members.

The State Board of Regents chartered the Mount Sinai Hospital School of Medicine. It became affiliated with City University in 1967.

The AFL Titans became the Jets, with new owners and a new coach, Weeb Ewbank.

After years of protests, buses were finally banned from Washington Square Park on September 2; on May 29, 1964, they were banned from surrounding streets.

President John F. Kennedy addressed the United Nations General Assembly on September 20.

The Yankees again won the pennant, but the Los Angeles Dodgers swept the World Series.

On October 20, Robert Moses dedicated the new administration building of the Queens Botanical Garden, which moved from its original site to make way for the 1964 World's Fair.

Demolition of Pennsylvania Station began on October 28.

The Pan American Airways Building was completed astride Park Avenue.

The Alexander Hamilton Bridge opened.

Ed Koch, a 38-year-old lawyer, defeated former Tammany leader Carmine DeSapio by 41 votes to become district leader. DeSapio challenged the results, and a judge ordered a new election. In June 1964, Koch again won, 5,904 to 5,740, and he won for a third and final time in November 1965.

The Reverend Lynn L. Hageman founded Exodus House in East Harlem, an innovative drug treatment center that rehabilitated heroin addicts through abstinence, group therapy, and spiritual counseling. In 1981, after Reverend Hageman suffered a stroke, his wife transformed Exodus House into an after-school program for children, and in 1991 it became the East Harlem School at Exodus House, a private middle school.

The Giants lost the NFL title game for the third year in a row, falling to the Chicago Bears, 14–10.

The Port Authority's George Washington Bridge Bus Station opened, designed by Italian architect Pier Luigi Nervi with a distinctive concrete "butterfly" roof, a blue-and-white tile interior, and a Venetian terrazzo floor.

On Christmas Eve the Port Authority renamed the New York International

Airport John F. Kennedy International Airport.

## 1964

Rev. Milton Galamison of Brooklyn's Siloam Presbyterian Church led a one-day school boycott on February 3 to demand integration; 464,361 students (44.8 percent) were absent that day, 360,000 above normal. On March 12, 15,000 opponents of integration demonstrated at City Hall to support neighborhood schools; on September 14, they staged their own boycott to protest plans to integrate junior high schools and pair elementary schools from black and white neighborhoods. In that boycott, 275,638 students (27 percent) were absent.

On February 9, 73 million watched the Beatles on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, which also featured impressionist Frank Gorshin, singer Tessie O'Shea, the comedy team of McCall and Brill, a European magician, and a scene from the Broadway show *Oliver*, with future Monkee Davy Jones as Artful Dodger.

At Madison Square Garden on Eighth Avenue and 49th Street, Boys High defeated Benjamin Franklin for the PSAL basketball title. According to referee Tom Michael, "After Boys High won, bottles came down from the old balcony, then the problem spread into the street outside the Garden where the real riot was." The championship game did not return to the Garden until 1989.



The new terminal at La Guardia Airport. (PA)

Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death on a Kew Gardens street on March 13. Neighbors heard her screams, but no one called the police; they “didn’t want to get involved.”

Beginning with 12 pupils, soprano Dorothy Maynor founded the Harlem School of the Arts at St. James Presbyterian Church, where her husband was minister.

Demolition of the Polo Grounds for more public housing commenced on April 10.

The new \$36 million terminal and \$1.6 million control tower at La Guardia Airport opened on April 16; the work had begun in 1958.

On April 17, 50,312 spectators saw the Mets lose to the Pittsburgh Pirates, 4–3, in the first game at Shea Stadium, built in conjunction with the World’s Fair. Mr. Met, the first human mascot for any major-league team, made his on field debut. The All-Star Game was at Shea on July 7, the only time the event was held there; the National League won, 7-4.

The Hotel St. George in Brooklyn Heights, once the city’s largest, went bankrupt.

On April 22, President Lyndon Johnson opened the New York World’s Fair in Flushing Meadows; the theme was “Peace through Understanding.” The Bureau of International Expositions in Paris refused



to sanction the fair, and many nations declined to participate. Landscape architect Gilmore Clarke's layout from the first fair was retained; Clarke also designed the fair's symbol, the stainless-steel Unisphere. Rising 140 feet where the Trylon and Perisphere stood, it represented "Man's Achievements on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe." On opening day, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) attempted to stage a "Stall-in for Freedom," but it fizzled.

On May 4, NBC broadcast the first episode of the soap opera *Another World* from its Manhattan studios. The final episode aired on June 25, 1999.

General Douglas MacArthur died on May 4. He spent his last years in a suite in the Waldorf-Astoria.

A riot began in Harlem after police lieutenant Thomas R. Gilligan shot 15-year-old James Powell when the youth lunged at him with a knife. Five days later there was rioting in Bedford Stuyvesant. One person died during the disturbances, 118 were injured, and 465 were arrested.

Huntington Hartford's controversial Gallery of Modern Art, designed by Edward Durell Stone, opened at 2 Columbus Circle. In 1973 the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Conventions and Visitors Bureau acquired the building. Also, the fountain around the Columbus Monument was installed.

The Board of Higher Education established John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

On September 19 the Homosexual League of New York and the New York City League for Sexual Freedom staged the city's first gay rights demonstration at the Whitehall Street Induction Center, protesting the military's policy of giving homosexuals dishonorable discharges.

After 67 seasons, Steeplechase Park closed on September 20. Fred Trump purchased the 12-acre site for \$2.5 million in 1965 and resold it to the city for \$4 million in 1969. It remained vacant for 36 years.

*Funny Girl* opened, a musical based on the career of Broadway star Fanny Brice, starring Barbra Streisand and directed by Garson Kanin.

Eero Saarinen's CBS Building at 51 West 52nd Street, "Black Rock," was completed.

On September 28, Governor Rockefeller appointed a Special Committee on the LIRR under William J. Ronan. In November 1965 the committee suggested the state purchase the LIRR from the Pennsylvania Railroad and create a Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Authority to "assume other commuter activities throughout the New York State portion of the metropolitan area including arrangements with transportation authorities in neighboring states to help assure regional commuter services." They recommended a \$200 million modernization program for new cars, upgraded stations, and the electrification of lines east of Mineola and Babylon.



The parachute jump and Steeplechase, ca. 1957. (QBPL)

Elisabeth Schwartzkopf debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in *Der Rosenkavalier* on October 13.

On October 15, the Yankees lost the seventh game of the World Series to the St. Louis Cardinals, 7–5. Mickey Mantle ended his World Series career with a record 40 RBIs and 18 home runs; Yogi Berra finished with a record 71 hits; and Whitey Ford set records with 10 wins and 94 strikeouts. For the World Series, the Yankees replaced Mel Allen, “The Voice of

the Yankees” since 1939, with Phil Rizzuto; Allen was fired after the season.

CBS purchased 80 percent of the Yankees for \$11.2 million on November 2, ushering in a decade of decline.

The New York State Theater, home of the New York City Ballet and City Opera, opened. The architects were Philip Johnson and Richard Foster.

Lloyd Sealy became the NYPD’s first black precinct commander.



Macy's on Queens Boulevard in Rego Park, with the holdout on the corner. (QBPL)

Democrat J. Raymond Jones of Harlem became county leader, the first black Democratic county leader in the country.

The Verrazano Narrows Bridge opened on November 21; the lower level opened in 1969. One old Staten Islander complained, "The bridge is a great piece of architecture, but why does it have to be here?" The ferry between 69th Street in Bay Ridge and Staten Island shut down.

After living abroad for almost 20 years, Paul Robeson returned to the city on December 22 and moved to Jumel Terrace. He died on January 23, 1976; his funeral was held at Mother A.M.E. Zion Church in Harlem.

## 1965

Quarterback Joe Namath snubbed the NFL to sign with the New York Jets of the AFL.

His three-year \$427,000 deal included a new Lincoln Continental.

On February 21, Malcolm X was assassinated by Black Muslims at Audubon Ballroom, Broadway and 165th Street. The 1912 building was partially demolished in the 1990s by Columbia University for a bio-research center.

On March 15, Alan N. Stillman opened the original T.G.I.Friday's at First Avenue and 63rd Street, allegedly the first "singles bar."

Macy's opened a branch on Queens Boulevard in Rego Park. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill designed a circular store with a notch around the property of a woman who refused to sell.

At the New York Stock Exchange, an electronic display replaced the historic stock ticker with its stream of ticker tape.

Mayor Wagner signed the Landmarks Preservation Law on April 19. At their first meeting in September, the Landmarks Preservation Commission considered the Metropolitan Opera House, the Astor Library, and the Friends Meeting House in Gramercy Park. The Pieter Claesen Wyckoff House in Brooklyn was designated the first landmark on October 14. Brooklyn Heights became the first historic district on November 23.

Radio station 1010 WINS switched from Top 40 to all news, all the time on April 19. Rock deejay Murray the K had left the station in March.

The New York Philharmonic offered its first series of free concerts in the parks.

Three new Staten Island ferries—the *John F. Kennedy*, the *Gov. Herbert H. Lehman*,

and the *American Legion*—began running. The 294-foot boats carried 3,500 passengers and 45 cars.

The Beatles performed before a capacity crowd at Shea Stadium on August 15, reportedly the first rock concert held in a ballpark. They played a 28-minute set on a stage set up at second base, but few heard a note because of the screaming.

Congress passed the Immigration Reform Act, reopening the Golden Door to a new wave of immigration from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

On October 4, Sherman Billingsley closed the world-famous Stork Club.

Pope Paul VI visited the World's Fair. On October 4, he held a mass in Yankee Stadium, and on October 6, he addressed the United Nations.



Robert Moses greeting Pope Paul VI at the World's Fair. (QBPL)

Renata Scotto made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Cio-Cio-San in *Madame Butterfly* on October 13.

On October 16, the Westinghouse Time Capsule was buried at the World's Fair, next to the capsule buried in 1938. The World's Fair closed at 2 A.M. on October 18; 446,000 came the last day, the largest single-day attendance. Over two seasons 51 million came, but the World's Fair Corporation still lost money.

The New York City Opera presented the world premiere of Jack Beeson's *Lizzie Borden*.

The U.S. State Department refused to allow Bobby Fischer to go to Cuba for the Capablanca Memorial Tournament, so he sat in the Marshall Chess Club on 10th Street, his moves relayed to Havana by Telex; he finished second.

With 972 megawatt turbines, Con Edison's Ravenswood No. 3 power plant (known as Big Allis for the manufacturer, the Allis-Chalmers Corporation) went on line.

Republican congressman John V. Lindsay of the Upper East Side, the "Silk Stocking District," was elected mayor with 45.3 percent of the vote, defeating Democrat Abe Beame and Conservative William F. Buckley. Buckley took the Conservative Party line "because the Republican designation is not, in New York, available nowadays to anyone in the mainstream of Republican opinion." (Asked what he would do if elected, he replied, "Demand a recount.") Mario Procaccino of the Bronx

became comptroller. Herman Badillo became the first Puerto Rican Bronx borough president; in 1970 he became the first Puerto Rican elected to Congress.

In late afternoon on November 9, a 13-hour blackout hit the northeast after an equipment failure in Ontario. There were few reports of looting and most New Yorkers took it in stride, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands were trapped in elevators, subways, and commuter trains during rush hour.

On November 11, Rheingold bought Jacob Ruppert's brewery in Yorkville (originally Ehret's), which produced Knickerbocker Beer, but soon moved production to their Brooklyn plant.

The PATH system introduced a fleet of air-conditioned trains, the first mass-transit system so equipped.

Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* was published.

The first newspaper vending machine was installed on a street corner in the Bronx.

On December 15, St. John's University dismissed 20 faculty members for joining the United Federation of Teachers. In January 1966 the faculty went out on strike and manned the picket lines for over a year. On December 1, 1966, at the urging of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Middle States Association of College and Secondary Schools put St. John's on probation and threatened their accreditation.



A New York Airways helicopter taking off from the Pan Am Building, 1965. (HT/QBPL)

On March 3, the first helicopter took off from the heliport atop the Pan Am Building for a 60-day trial. Regular service began December 21; Cardinal Spellman was the first passenger. The 7-minute flight to Kennedy Airport cost \$7. The unprofitable flights were suspended in 1968.

Precipitation in the city measured a parched 26.09 inches, the driest year on record.

## 1966

Mike Quill led the Transit Workers Union on a 10-day strike on January 1, the day Lindsay was inaugurated. Columnist Jimmy Breslin wrote: “John Lindsay looked at Mike Quill and saw the past.

Mike Quill looked at John Lindsay and saw the Church of England.” At the inaugural ball, Sammy Davis Jr. quipped, “One day on the job and John Lindsay has ended crime in the subways.” During the strike, Lindsay remarked, “I still think it’s a fun city.” Columnist Dick Schaap of the *Herald Tribune* pounced and popularized the ironic appellation “fun city.” After Quill died suddenly, Matthew Guinan took over as union president.

On January 20, the state purchased the LIRR from the bankrupt Pennsylvania Railroad for \$65 million and agreed to pay \$800,000 annually to use Penn Station and the East River tunnels. Governor Rockefeller announced that within two months the LIRR would become “the greatest

commuter railroad in the nation,” a statement he immediately regretted.

The *Herald Tribune* ran a series titled “City in Crisis.” Actually, the paper was in crisis, and it folded before year’s end.

At the last performance at the Metropolitan Opera House, on April 16, conductor Leopold Stokowski addressed the audience: “I beg you to help save this magnificent house.” By a 6–5 vote, the Landmarks Preservation Commission declined to designate, and despite last-minute efforts by Leonard Bernstein, Marian Anderson, and Tony Randall, the building was demolished in January 1967. The Metropolitan Opera supported demolition to eliminate the prospect of a rival company moving in. On September 16, 1966, the new Metropolitan Opera House opened at Lincoln Center with the world premiere of Samuel Barber’s *Antony and Cleopatra*; Wallace K. Harrison was chief architect and Cyril Harris the acoustician.

Mayor Lindsay passed over several higher-ranking officers in the heavily Irish NYPD and promoted Deputy Inspector Sanford Garelick to chief inspector, the highest rank attained by a Jewish officer; on August 26, Lloyd Sealy was promoted to assistant chief inspector, the highest rank attained by a black officer. On May 2, Mayor Lindsay issued an executive order creating a civilian review board to investigate complaints of police brutality, but the Police Benevolent Association put a referendum on the ballot in November. Voters rejected the mayor’s plan by a two-to-one margin.

On June 30, the U.S. Army left Governors Island, its base since the 1790s. Rear Admiral Stephens then accepted the island for the Coast Guard, which remained there for thirty years.

The subway fare rose from 15¢ to 20¢ on July 5.

On July 21, 11-year-old Eric Dean was shot by a sniper in East New York, the scene of increasing racial tension. Mayor Lindsay rushed to the neighborhood to defuse the situation.

The Rikers Island Bridge to Queens was completed. Previously, the only way to reach the prison was by ferry from the Bronx.

With Governor Rockefeller’s approval, plans were prepared for Battery Park City, a mixed-income development for 20 piers along the Hudson. (Ultimately, only market-rate housing was built.) Fill for the 92-acre site came from the excavation for the World Trade Center.

Harold Prince produced and directed *Cabaret*, starring Joel Grey.

The first Puerto Rican Day parade was held.

York College opened in Jamaica in the fall. Also, Staten Island Community College moved to its new Sunnyside Campus.

*That Girl*, starring Marlo Thomas, a comedy about a single woman in the city, went on the air; it lasted five seasons.

The *East Village Other*, an alternative paper, began publication.

Mayor Lindsay halted construction of the Willowbrook and Richmond Parkways, which would have crossed Staten Island's greenbelt.

The Whitney Museum of American Art at Madison Avenue and 75th Street opened on September 28. In 1963, Marcel Breuer, the architect, remarked, "It can't be strong enough in New York to stand on its own feet. . . . Its form and its material should have identity and weight . . . in the midst of the dynamic jungle of our colorful city. It should be an independent and self-relying unit . . . and at the same time . . . transform the vitality of the street into the sincerity and profundity of art."

Richard Dattner's first Adventure Playground opened in Central Park West at 68th Street in the fall; another opened near East 72nd Street in 1970. In the 1990s the Central Park Conservancy tried to destroy Dattner's design in favor of "safer," less-adventurous play spaces.

The Ragamuffin Parade was inaugurated in Bay Ridge, thereafter held annually on either the last Saturday in September or the first Saturday in October. The parade institutionalized the tradition of children begging door to door on Thanksgiving, dressed as ragamuffins.

WOR-FM embraced a free-form rock format, with Scott Muni, Murray the K, and Rosko (William Roscoe Mercer). When it adopted a tighter playlist in October 1967, Rosko announced on the air:

"When are we going to learn that controlling something does not take it out of the minds of people? . . . In no way can I feel that I can continue my radio career by being dishonest with you." WNEW-FM adopted the progressive format and hired Rosko and Scott Muni.

The Yankees fired broadcaster Red Barber because he had the television camera scan thousands of empty seats at Yankee Stadium during a game. Barber had formerly called Brooklyn Dodger games.

Warner LeRoy opened Maxwell's Plum, an opulent singles bar at First Avenue and 64th Street. The place to be seen in the 1970s, it closed in 1988. LeRoy later transformed Tavern on the Green into a tourist mecca.

Twelve firemen perished fighting a blaze at 6 East 23rd Street on October 17.

On November 28, Truman Capote hosted the Black and White Ball at the Plaza Hotel, bringing together celebrities from the literary world, high society, and politics.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard closed; two years later the government sold it to the city. During World War II, 70,000 men and women had worked there in three round-the-clock shifts.

## 1967

Cornell Capa organized the first exhibition of the Fund for Concerned Photography, forerunner of the International Center for



Photography. The exhibition at the Riverside Museum featured work by six photographers, including his brother Robert.

On April 15, 100,000 Vietnam War protesters gathered at the Sheep Meadow and marched to the United Nations behind Martin Luther King Jr., Harry Belafonte, and Benjamin Spock.

Langston Hughes died on May 22. For the last 20 years of his life he lived at 20 East 127th Street in Harlem.

The Oscar Wilde Bookstore, the first dedicated to gay and lesbian literature, opened on Christopher Street.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation was founded.

Flushing Meadows–Corona Park was dedicated on June 3, two years after the World's Fair closed.

On June 7, Dorothy Parker died of a heart attack in her room at the Hotel Volney.

The *World Journal Tribune* dropped Walter Winchell's column, ending his 38-year run in Hearst papers.

On June 24, the Metropolitan Opera initiated "Opera in the Parks" with a performance of *La Boheme* in Central Park.

The Ford Foundation building at 321 East 42nd Street opened.

Paley Park, commissioned by CBS chairman William Paley, opened on East

53rd Street on the site of the Stork Club. Designed by landscape architect Robert L. Zion, this first pocket park features a 40-foot waterfall.

The Electric Circus, a discotheque with psychedelic lights, a tent ceiling, and circus acts, opened at 19–21 St. Marks Place. *Village Voice* columnist Jack Newfield wrote it was where "the New Frontier met the Underground." The club invited people to "play games, dress as they like, dance, sit, think, tune in and turn on."

Sociologist Harry Edwards led a demonstration against the New York Athletic Club (NYAC), accusing them of sponsoring black athletes but denying them membership. The NYAC staged annually the city's most important track meet at Madison Square Garden and sponsored amateur athletes in many Olympic sports.

Muriel Siebert became the first woman to buy a seat on the New York Stock Exchange; hers was the first woman-owned brokerage firm since 1870.

In the Rockaways, Carleton Manor, a 174-unit public housing project, opened. Two middle-income projects, the 1,104-unit Dayton Towers East and the 648-unit Dayton Towers West, were also completed, joining the 342-unit Nordeck Apartments (1960), the 1,140-unit Dayton Beach Park (1964), and the 768-unit Surfside Park (1966).

The Newtown Creek sewage treatment plant went into operation in Greenpoint.



Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, 1967. (QBPL)

Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell lived at 41 West 16th Street, where she wrote “Chelsea Morning.”

On July 23, an off-duty policeman intervened in a street quarrel in Harlem and shot a man who attacked him with a knife. Soon, 1,000 police were on the scene to quell the disturbance; Mayor Lindsay

arrived at 4:30 A.M. the next day to calm the crowds. Thirty-four people were arrested, 36 injured, and 2 killed by police bullets. On Labor Day, a detective jumped from his car in Brownsville to stop a mugging and shot one of the young thugs. Though both cop and criminal were black, rumors that the cop was white set off four nights of violence.



Pennsylvania Station.

Richmond College (established in 1965) held its first classes at 130 Stuyvesant Place in St. George.

Norval White and Elliot Willensky published the *AIA Guide to New York City*, and Nathan Silver published *Lost New York*, a survey of buildings demolished in the recent past.

During “Stop the Draft Week,” on December 5, a demonstration blocked the army induction center at 39 Whitehall Street. Dr. Benjamin Spock and Allen Ginsberg were arrested.

Abbie Hoffman founded the Youth International Party—the Yippies—in his apartment at 30 St. Marks Place on New Year’s Eve.

## 1968

Madison Square Garden and the adjacent office tower were completed above Pennsylvania Station. The architect, Charles Luckman, responded to preservationists decrying the demolition of Penn Station, “Does it make any sense to preserve a building merely as a monument?” to which *Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable replied, “We will probably be judged not by the monuments we build, but by those we have destroyed.” In an earlier *New Yorker* interview, Luckman had remarked, “I am firm in my belief that architecture is a business and not an art.” About the new structure Huxtable said, “We want and deserve tin-can architecture in a tin-can culture.” The first event in the new Garden was a “Salute to the USO” with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby on February 11.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) began on March 1, supplanting the Metropolitan Commuter Transit Authority created in 1965. The last hurdle it faced was a suit by Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority bondholders, represented by Chase Manhattan Bank. A private meeting between Nelson and David Rockefeller resolved the matter; bondholders received an additional 0.25 percent and the MTA got the tolls. The MTA included the LIRR, the Transit Authority, the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority, and the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. In 1982 it absorbed Metro North. Chairman William Ronan once called the MTA “the biggest collection of losers ever collected under one roof.” (Others dubbed it the “Holy Ronan Empire.”) Plans announced at the time included the Second Avenue subway and a rail link to Kennedy Airport. The first express buses began later in the year.

On March 22, Abbie Hoffman brought over 3,000 to a midnight revel in Grand Central Terminal. The police waded into the crowd with clubs flying, sending dozens to the hospital.

Over 400 were arrested in Harlem following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., despite Mayor Lindsay’s attempt to calm the crowds.

On April 23, Mark Rudd led a Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) demonstration against Columbia’s plan to build a gymnasium in Morningside Park; the protesters occupied several buildings, including President Grayson Kirk’s office

in Low Library. On April 30, Kirk called in the police; hundreds were arrested and dozens injured as 1,000 police in riot gear moved in. Kirk retired in August. In October 1969 a commission under Archibald Cox found that the administration “conveyed an attitude of authoritarianism and invited mistrust,” adding that it was guilty of “indifference” toward the Harlem community.

On April 26, 200,000 high school and college students engaged in a strike to protest the Vietnam War.

On May 2, 10,000 sanitation workers began a nine-day strike. Governor Rockefeller authorized a retroactive pay raise, setting an unfortunate precedent for labor negotiations and contributing to the worsening financial situation.

Promoter Bill Graham opened Fillmore East at 105 Second Avenue, an incarnation of the famed rock venue in San Francisco. The theater had started in 1926 as the Loew’s Commodore. It closed in 1971.

The Studio Museum in Harlem was founded.

The New York Central Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad became the Penn Central Corporation; as a condition of the merger, the Interstate Commerce Commission ordered them to absorb the New Haven Railroad, in bankruptcy since 1961. Penn Central paid \$145.6 million for the line.

The Board of Higher Education established Hostos Community College, La Guardia Community College, Lehman

College (previously the Bronx campus of Hunter College), and Baruch College (formerly City College's School of Business and Public Administration). Also, the CUNY Faculty Senate was formed.

The parachute jump at Coney Island closed.

*La Prensa*, founded in 1913, and *El Diario*, founded in 1948, merged.

The first Indian restaurant opened on East Sixth Street between First and Second Avenues. It was really Bangladeshi, as most owners and workers were coming from Sylhet near the Himalayas.

The school decentralization battle in Ocean Hill–Brownsville started on May 9 when Rhody McCoy, head of the local school board, fired 13 teachers and six administrators, most of them Jewish. A bitter strike by the teacher's union in September delayed the start of the school year for 55 days; union president Albert Shanker spent 15 days in jail for continuing the strike. Classes finally began November 19. In 1969 the legislature passed a school decentralization bill protecting teachers' jobs.

Tenor Placido Domingo made his Metropolitan Opera debut on September 28 in Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*. On September 27, 1999, he starred in *Pagliacci* for his 18th opening night, eclipsing Enrico Caruso's record. Tenor Luciano Pavarotti made his Met debut in *La Boheme* on November 23.

Walter Turnbull formed the Boys Choir of Harlem in the basement of Ephesus Seventh-Day Adventist Church. In 1993 the

choir moved into a vacant school building on East 127th Street.

Governor Rockefeller created the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) to build low-income housing across the state, financed by bonds backed by the state's "moral obligation" to pay. Ed Logue was the first president. In 1969 the UDC announced plans for a new mixed-income community on Welfare Island.

Terrance Cooke became archbishop, succeeding Francis Cardinal Spellman.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the South Street Seaport Historic District, which had been threatened with demolition.

The *Long Island Star Journal*, founded in April 1866, folded.

## 1969

After brashly guaranteeing victory, quarterback Joe Namath and the underdog Jets upset the powerhouse Baltimore Colts 16–7 in Super Bowl III on January 12. Later that year, NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle ordered Namath to sell his interest in Bachelors III, an East Side watering hole, because it attracted known gamblers.

On January 16 the city issued municipal bonds worth \$140,380,000 at 5.702 percent, the highest rate since 1932; on the 29th a \$30.01 million housing bond issue was withdrawn. On July 15 a \$146 million bond issue had a rate of 6.156 percent.

On February 9 and 10, 15 inches of snow blanketed the city. While Manhattan was quickly and repeatedly plowed, the streets in Queens remained blocked for days, and residents blamed Lindsay. Ralph Bunche, undersecretary general for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations, wrote to the mayor: “As a snowbound resident of Kew Gardens, Queens, where I have been a homeowner on Grosvenor Road for 17 years, I urgently appeal to you. In all those years, we have never experienced such neglect in snow removal as now. The snowstorm came on Sunday. This message is sent Wednesday morning. In all that period no snowplow has appeared on our street or in our vicinity. There are no buses, no taxis, no mail, newspaper or other deliveries, and there has been no trash or garbage collection since last Friday. The shelves of our neighborhood grocer are empty. As far as getting to the United Nations is concerned, I may as well be in the Alps.”

A year after moving to the Lower East Side to minister to the poor, Father Bruce Ritter founded Covenant House as a refuge for homeless teens. He found his calling when he sheltered six teens during a winter storm; his apartment became a crash pad for runaways. Covenant House grew into a \$90 million organization in 15 cities. Ritter resigned in 1990 amid accusations of sexual improprieties and financial mismanagement.

Leonard Bernstein retired as musical director of the New York Philharmonic. He conducted nearly 1,300 performances between 1943 and 1989. George Szell began a two-year tenure as musical director.

Patrick J. Cunningham became the Democratic Party chairman in the Bronx. He was also state chairman. He was investigated for tax evasion and resigned in 1978.

On April 22, Black and Puerto Rican students padlocked the gate at City College, demanding the student body reflect the racial makeup of the city’s high schools. At the time, admission standards were high, and few applicants from the worst high schools were admitted. In response, the Board of Higher Education announced a policy of open admissions in July, commencing in 1970. Furthermore, all community college graduates would be admitted to the senior colleges, and no one would flunk out until the second year.

The Stonewall Riot began in the early morning hours of June 27, when patrons of the Stonewall, a gay bar in Sheridan Square, resisted arrest during another police raid. The headline of the *Daily News* read “Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad.” This marks the beginning of the gay rights movement.

The 911 system went into operation.

George T. Delacorte donated a \$400,000 fountain, shooting a stream of water 425 feet into the air, at the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. It was turned off in 1986, but it was nice while it lasted.

El Morocco, established as a speakeasy on East 54th Street in 1931, closed.

Meade Esposito became the Democratic leader in Brooklyn. He stepped down in 1983 and was convicted of bribery in 1987.

Westbeth, artists' housing fashioned out of former Bell Labs by architect Richard Meier, was completed.

In June, Puerto Rican college students founded the Young Lords. When they disrupted a Sunday service at the Methodist church at 111th Street and Lexington Avenue to “testify” on the need for a free breakfast program in the neighborhood, parishioners attacked them and called the police. The Young Lords returned the Sunday after Christmas and occupied the church. Within a few months they claimed a thousand members and published a weekly newspaper, *Palante*.

On September 10, the Mets swept a doubleheader from the Montreal Expos at Shea Stadium and moved into first place for the first time. In the World Series they defeated the Baltimore Orioles, taking the fifth game on October 19.

*Sesame Street* went on the air. Jim Henson and Jon Stone, creators of the Muppets, modeled Oscar the Grouch after a magnificently rude waiter at Oscar's Tavern, with a voice inspired by a cabbie.

Puerto Rican activists founded El Museo in an East Harlem public school. In 1977 they moved into the Heckscher Building at Fifth Avenue and 104th Street.

Composer William Schuman, president of Lincoln Center, founded the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center on February 17, bringing together distinguished artists to play in Alice Tully Hall. The ensemble first performed on September 11.

In the Democratic primary, Comptroller Mario Procaccino defeated Robert Wagner, Bronx Borough President Herman Badillo, Congressman James Scheuer, and Norman Mailer (who, with running mate Jimmy Breslin, ran under the slogan “Vote the Rascals In” and called for the city to become the 51st state). In the Republican primary, State Senator John Marchi defeated Mayor Lindsay by 6,000 votes. During the election, the Italian-born Procaccino campaigned against “limousine liberals” and said, “We must stop coddling the criminals and pampering the punks. The do-gooders and bleeding hearts must stop handcuffing the police.” In November, Lindsay was reelected on the Liberal line with 42 percent of the vote; his running mate, Sanford Garelick, became City Council president; and Abe Beame became comptroller.

On November 10, bombs exploded at the RCA Building, the GM Building, and a Chase Manhattan Bank. On December 21, bombs went off at Banco de Credito, Woolworth's, and the Manhattan office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Arson damaged the Gould Memorial Library at NYU's uptown campus (designed by Stanford White), destroying the auditorium and the stained glass in the dome. Marcel Breuer redesigned the space in a starkly modernist style.

On December 13, former Tammany leader Carmine DeSapio was convicted of bribery in federal court and sentenced to prison.



Senator John Marchi campaigning near City Hall before the primary, May 1969. (Archives and Special Collections, College of Staten Island)

## 1970

The subway fare increased from 20¢ to 30¢ on January 4, and a new, larger token was introduced. During this year, subway ridership began a steady decline.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bernstein hosted a cocktail party on January 14 that raised \$10,000 for the Black Panthers' legal defense fund. Tom Wolfe ridiculed the event as "radical chic" in *New York*.

Marilyn Horne made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Norma* on March 3.

On March 6, three members of the Weatherman faction of SDS—Theodore Gold, Diana Oughton, and Terry Robbins—died in an explosion at 18 West 11th Street, the

1840s rowhouse they used as a bomb factory. (It was rebuilt to a design by Hugh Hardy.) They planned to blow up the Columbia University library. Two survived the blast and spent years underground: Cathlyn Wilkerson, whose parents owned the house, and Kathy Boudin, later involved in an armed robbery when a Brinks guard was killed.

On March 11, explosions rocked the corporate headquarters of IBM, Mobil, and GTE. On March 28, an explosion in an East Fifth Street tenement killed I. Brown and maimed G. A. Bernard. The two black radicals had set off a bomb in the Electric Circus on March 22; their fingerprints were found on an unexploded device set outside a Chase Manhattan branch in the Bronx.



The city began digging the third water tunnel, which was necessary in order to inspect and repair the other two.

Penn Central declared bankruptcy. In 1971 the MTA entered into an agreement for the company to continue operating the New Haven line, and the next year it reached a similar arrangement for the Hudson and Harlem lines.

With information from David Durk and Frank Serpico, the *Times* ran a story on April 25 detailing endemic police corruption involving graft, narcotics, and gambling. Mayor Lindsay appointed Wall Street lawyer Whitman Knapp to head a commission to investigate. Durk and Serpico were the star witnesses. Ultimately, no high-ranking officers were indicted, only beat cops.

On May 8, a few days after four students were shot dead at Kent State, hard hats attacked a peaceful anti-war protest in Lower Manhattan, injuring more than 70 protesters and bystanders as the police looked on. Peter Brennan, president of the New York Building Trades Council, was a Nixon supporter and an outspoken hawk on Vietnam.

Led by Willis Reed, the Knicks defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 113–99 for the NBA championship on May 8. The Knicks began the season with a 23–1 record.

On June 9, a bomb exploded in a second-floor men's room in police headquarters on Centre Street, injuring seven.

Beginning in June 1968, Bayside housewife Veronica Lueken had claimed that messages from St. Theresa the Little Flower told her she would behold a vision of the Virgin Mary on June 18, 1970. Lueken and her followers gathered on the grounds of St. Robert Bellarmine, and she claimed the vision indeed appeared and asked to be invoked as “Our Lady of the Roses, Mary Help of Mothers.” The vigils attracted believers by the busload, leading to confrontations with Lueken's neighbors. To debunk Lueken's claims, Monsignor James P. King of the Brooklyn diocese declared, “Such devotions are unauthorized.” In May 1975 the vigil moved to the site of the Vatican Pavilion from the 1964 World's Fair.

A year after Stonewall, 15,000 participated in the first Gay Pride march, ending in a rally in the Sheep Meadow at Central Park.

On August 10, prisoners at the Tombs rioted and took five corrections officers hostage. Mayor Lindsay convinced the inmates to release the guards unharmed. At the time there were 1,992 prisoners in a facility meant for 932. On October 1, inmates at the Long Island City jail rioted and took seven hostages; intended for 196 inmates, the facility held 335 (all but 41 were awaiting trial). Herman Badillo, Shirley Chisholm, and Louis Farrakhan acted as negotiators, but when inmates escalated their demands, officers stormed the jail. On October 2, inmates at the Tombs rioted again, taking 18 hostages, and 900 men at the new Kew Gardens jail rioted; on October 3, the Brooklyn House of Detention on Atlantic Avenue exploded.

On August 11, McSorley's Old Ale House on East Seventh Street admitted women for the first time.

On August 24, Mayor Lindsay signed an executive order banning age and sex discrimination in city employment. On August 26, the Women's Strike for Equality commemorated the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage with a march up Fifth Avenue to Bryant Park, led by Bella Abzug, Kate Millett, and Betty Friedan.

Hostos Community College enrolled its first class of 623 students.

Kings Plaza, the city's first indoor shopping center, opened on Flatbush Avenue on September 11.

On September 13, New York fireman Gary Muhrcke won the first New York City Marathon, completing four 6-mile laps around the main drive in Central Park in 2 hours, 31 minutes, 39 seconds; he received a watch. Of the 127 runners who started, only 55 finished. Nina Kuscsik, the lone woman, dropped out but won in 1972 and 1973.

The *Times* printed its first op-ed page on September 21.

In October, the Young Lords led 10,000 marchers from Spanish Harlem to the United Nations to demand independence for Puerto Rico.

Co-Op City (built on the site of Freedomland) was completed: 15,372 units in 35 apartment towers and 236 two-family houses for 60,000 residents, along with

parking garages, schools, and shopping centers.

On December 3 the New York Public Library at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, traditionally open every day and evening, announced that it would be closed on Sundays and holidays. On December 7 the city cut the library's funding by \$161,500. In 1971, hours were reduced from 78 hours a week to 40.

## 1971

Disgruntled over the lack of a new contract, the police began a wildcat strike on January 15; 85 percent of the officers scheduled for patrol were out for six days.

On February 11, Mayor John Lindsay switched from Republican to Democrat in preparation for a presidential run.

Lukas Foss became conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonia, succeeding Siegfried Landau. He retired in 1988.

Pierre Boulez became the music director of the New York Philharmonic, a post he held until 1977.

Councilman Carter Burden (co-owner of the *Village Voice*) introduced the first gay rights bill in the City Council, but it did not pass.

Governor Rockefeller established the Harlem Urban Development Corporation to generate private and public commercial and residential development. It was eliminated from the state budget in 1995.



Opening Day at the redesigned Yankee Stadium, 1976. (Courtesy of The Bronx County Historical Society)

The city acquired Yankee Stadium and on March 2 announced a \$24 million modernization plan (the same day the Board of Education terminated the contracts of 3,500 teachers for lack of funds). Work began in 1973 and took two years; costs ballooned to \$110 million. For two seasons, the Yankees shared Shea with the Mets.

On March 8, in one of the greatest bouts of the century, Smokin' Joe Frazier defeated Muhammad Ali in a 15-round decision for the heavyweight crown at Madison Square Garden. Famed announcer Don Dunphy called the fight at ringside.

The Cosmos were founded in the North American Soccer League, playing at Downing Stadium on Randall's Island; in 1976 they played at Yankee Stadium, then at Giant Stadium until 1985, when the

league folded. From 1975 to 1977, Brazilian superstar Pele played for them.

The Gay Activist Alliance moved into the Firehouse in May. This remained a center of gay activism until destroyed by arson in October 1974.

On Sunday, June 13, the *Times* began printing the Pentagon Papers, a 1967 Defense Department study of American involvement in Vietnam. The next day the Nixon administration tried to stop publication. Attorney General John Mitchell wrote to Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, saying that "publication of this information is directly prohibited by the provisions of the espionage law, title 18, United States Code Section 793. . . . I respectfully request that you publish no further information of this character and advise me that you have made arrangements for the return of these

documents to the Department of Defense.” The *Times* refused. On July 1, the Supreme Court affirmed the paper’s right to publish by a six-to-three majority.

On June 5, James Levine made his Metropolitan Opera debut, conducting *Tosca*.

On June 28 reputed mafia boss Joseph A. Colombo, head of the Italian-American Civil Rights League, was shot by a lone black gunman, Jerome A. Johnson, before the start of the Italian-American Unity Day rally at Columbus Circle. Johnson was immediately gunned down. Colombo never recovered.

Palisades Amusement Park in Fort Lee closed after being rezoned residential. The site sprouted high-rise apartments.

After Governor Rockefeller urged the legislature to block District Council–37’s new contract, with an especially generous pension plan, municipal workers retaliated by opening all 27 drawbridges, resulting in gridlock, and opening all the sewer lines, fouling the harbor and beaches.

Founded in 1968, La Guardia Community College held its first classes on September 22. Medgar Evers College, founded in 1969, also enrolled its first students.

Greenacre Park at 217 East 51st Street, the second privately endowed pocket park, was dedicated on October 14, a gift of Abby Rockefeller Mauze (the oldest child of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.). Hideo Sasaki was the architect.

Norman Lear’s *All in the Family*, about Archie and Edith Bunker in Queens, began a 12-year run on CBS. The house in the opening credits is at 89–70 Cooper Avenue in Glendale.

## 1972

The subway fare increased from 30¢ to 35¢ on January 5.

Television reporter Geraldo Rivera exposed the deplorable conditions for the retarded in the Willowbrook Developmental Center on Staten Island. A lawsuit by the parents described “monumental filth” and overcrowding. Intended for 4,200, by the 1970s it held 6,000. The state institution was built in 1941 and used by the military during the war; children were admitted in 1947. Willowbrook was finally closed in 1987. The site became the campus of the College of Staten Island.

On April 7, mobster Joey Gallo was gunned down in Umberto’s Clam House in Little Italy, possibly in retaliation for the shooting of Joe Colombo.

On April 14, responding to a false report of an officer in trouble, policemen entered a mosque on Lenox Avenue and 116th Street. Officer Philip Cardillo was shot once in the chest and died.

After a weeklong occupation, Columbia students protesting the Vietnam War were forced out of Hamilton Hall by campus police on May 2. At the same time, black and Hispanic students occupied campus buildings for 17 days, until May 12.

The Newport Jazz Festival moved to New York. Organizers blamed disturbances by “college students” the previous year for the move.

The Dow Jones closed at 1,003.16 on November 14, breaking 1,000 for the first time.

Parts of the Rockaways, Jamaica Bay, Staten Island, and Sandy Hook were designated the Gateway National Recreation Area, one of only two urban National Parks in the country (the other is San Francisco’s Golden Gate).

When a low-income housing project with 24-story towers was proposed for 108th Street in Forest Hills, neighbors approached Mario Cuomo to broker a compromise. On October 26, the Board of Estimate approved three 12-story buildings for 432 families.

On October 27, ground was broken at 102nd Street for the long-promised Second Avenue subway. In July 1974, Governor Wilson and Mayor Beame broke ground at 2nd Street. With no additional funding, construction ceased in September 1975 during the fiscal crisis. Only small sections in Harlem and Lower Manhattan were completed.

After a successful pilot program, the NYPD assigned female officers to patrol for the first time; the terms *patrolman* and *policewoman* were dropped in favor of police officer. The number of women increased after Congress amended the 1964 Civil Rights Act to eliminate height requirements for police officers.

The final section of the Long Island Expressway opened to Riverhead.

Charles Atlas died. Born Angelo Siciliano, the “97-pound weakling” took up bodybuilding after a bully kicked sand in his face at Coney Island. He took his name from a gilded statue in Coney Island’s Atlas Hotel. In 1924 he posed for sculptor Pietro Montana for *Dawn of Glory*, a memorial on Jamaica Avenue dedicated to 144 local boys who fell in World War I. Atlas was also the model for Alexander Calder’s *Washington in Peace* on the Washington Square Arch and Frederick MacMonnies’s *Civic Virtue*, derided by Mayor La Guardia as “Fat Boy.” (It was relocated from City Hall Park to Queens Borough Hall.)

NYU’s Bobst Library (Philip Johnson and Richard Foster, architects) was dedicated.

Following the Knapp Commission’s recommendation, Governor Rockefeller named Maurice Nadjari special prosecutor to investigate police corruption. Over four years Nadjari indicted 11 judges, but charges against 9 were dismissed and the others were acquitted. Governor Carey attempted to fire Nadjari in December 1975 but backed off before a political firestorm. Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz finally removed Nadjari in the summer of 1976.

LIRR trainmen began a seven-week strike on November 30; service resumed on January 22, 1973. They accepted a contract in April.

# 1973

George Steinbrenner and his partners purchased the Yankees from CBS on January 3.

On February 10 a liquid natural gas facility on Staten Island exploded, killing 40.

Welfare Island was renamed for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A memorial designed by Louis Kahn was intended for the southern tip.

Failing to get the controversial South Richmond Development Corporation through the legislature for the second time, Senator John Marchi announced he would not reintroduce the plan, which would have controlled development in the southern part of Staten Island.

On February 28, Mayor Lindsay and Borough President Robert Connor christened the Staten Island Rapid Transit's new three-car train, the line's first new rolling stock in 50 years.

The winter of 1972/73 recorded the least snow ever in the city: 2.8 inches (28.3 inches is average).

Elizabeth A. Christy and the Green Guerrillas obtained a lot at Houston Street and the Bowery for the first community garden, renting it from the city for \$1 a month.

Trainmen on the PATH system began a 63-day strike on April 1; service resumed June 3.

The Board of Directors of the recently incorporated New York Landmarks Conservancy elected Brendan Gill president. The Conservancy was founded by the Municipal Art Society in 1971.

Abbie Hoffman was busted in a cocaine deal. He skipped bail and went underground. Taking the name Barry Freed, he became a grassroots activist in upstate New York to protect the St. Lawrence River.

On June 9, Secretariat, with jockey Ron Turcotte up, shattered the track record by 2.6 seconds to win the Belmont Stakes by 31 lengths and capture the Triple Crown.

After vetoing similar legislation in 1971 and 1972, Governor Rockefeller signed a bill on June 20 prohibiting the MTA from building the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge.

The Theater Development Fund opened TKTS, the discount ticket booth in Times Square, on June 25.

NYU abandoned its uptown campus at 180th Street in the Bronx; the site became Bronx Community College.

Elizabeth Connelly was elected to the New York State Assembly in a special election, the first woman elected on Staten Island; she retired in 2000.

The draconian Rockefeller drug laws went into effect on May 8, mandating imprisonment for even small amounts of illegal drugs and eliminating plea bargains. The prison population swelled.



Strollers on the closed West Side Highway. (JAK)

Citing limited room for expansion and inadequate rail connections, the Schlitz Brewery at 26 George Street in Brooklyn closed in March. They tried to close in December 1971, but a labor arbitrator ordered them to remain in production until the end of the union contract. Opened in 1949, the plant produced a million gallons a year, 6 percent of the company's total. Piel Brothers Brewery (founded in East New York in 1883) at Liberty and Sheffield Avenues shut down on September 20.

The police drama *Kojak*, starring Telly Savalas, went on the air; it ran for five seasons.

On October 21 the Mets lost the seventh game of the World Series to the Oakland A's, 5–2.

The 110-story twin towers of the World Trade Center, designed by Minoru Yamasaki, were completed, eclipsing the Empire State Building as the world's tallest. One World Trade Center was 1,368 feet high; Two was 6 feet shorter. In 1974 the 1,454-foot Sears Tower in Chicago claimed the title, the first time since the 1890s that Manhattan did not boast the world's highest skyscraper. But with a television antenna on Tower One, the World Trade Center regained the crown at 1,730 feet.

The landmarks law was amended to permit the designation of interiors and scenic landmarks.

After defeating Herman Badillo in a runoff for the Democratic mayoral nomination, Abe Beame won the general election with

56 percent of the vote over Republican John Marchi, Liberal Al Blumenthal, and Conservative Mario Biaggi. Harrison Golden was elected comptroller, and Paul O'Dwyer, brother of former mayor William O'Dwyer, became City Council president. O'Dwyer had the official date for the city's founding changed from 1664, when the English took it, to 1625, when the Dutch arrived.

The old Third Avenue elevated in the Bronx shut down.

The College of New Rochelle began offering degree programs for adults in the Bronx, eventually opening satellite campuses in Co-Op City and the South Bronx.

The West Side Highway was closed after a dump truck and a car plunged through the roadway to the street below.

During the eight years of the Lindsay administration, the city's welfare rolls ballooned from about 500,000 to 1.25 million.

## 1974

On February 1, PepsiCo closed the Rheingold Brewery on Forrest Street in Bushwick. In March, Chock Full O' Nuts bought Rheingold for \$1 and reopened the plant.

Soprano Kiri Te Kanawa made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Desdemona in Verdi's *Othello* on February 9.

Duke Ellington died at age 75 on May 24; his funeral was in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. A Washington, D.C., native, he had lived in New York since 1923.

On June 30 the city's short-term debt was \$3.4 billion, having tripled since 1971.

On August 7, Frenchman Philippe Petit walked a tightrope between the twin towers of the World Trade Center. He then became artist-in-residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

The Landmarks Conservancy stopped the demolition of the Fraunces Tavern block; in 1978 it acquired the buildings with a grant from the Astor Foundation.

Frank Sinatra appeared at Madison Square Garden on October 13 in "The Main Event."

The Metropolitan Opera staged the world premiere of Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice* on October 18.

On October 31 the South Street Seaport Museum acquired the *Peking*, a four-masted, steel-hulled barque built in 1911 in Hamburg.

The International Center for Photography opened in November at 1130 Fifth Avenue, the former Willard Straight residence. Cornell Capa founded the museum and served as director for twenty years.

The Ramones performed at CBGB's on the Bowery, launching the punk rock scene.

Boricua College opened, serving Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics. (The college



was accredited in 1980.) The campus is in the former headquarters of the American Geographic Society at Audubon Terrace; satellite campuses later opened in Brooklyn.

The City Planning Commission designated Sunnyside Gardens, Parkchester, Fresh Meadows, and the Harlem River Houses as Special Planned Community Preservation Districts.

Moondog, the blind street musician noted for his homemade Viking garb, abandoned his familiar spot at 54th Street and Sixth Avenue and moved to Germany. Born Louis T. Hardin, he had arrived from Kansas in 1943, establishing himself at the stage door of Carnegie Hall, where he met conductor Artur Rodzinski. In the 1950s he recorded his “Moondog Symphony,” which Alan Freed often played on his radio show. “The Viking of Sixth Avenue” died in 1999.

On November 23, the Port Authority opened a new passenger-ship terminal between 48th and 52nd Streets. Never successful, the facility reverted to the city on January 1, 1997.

The army abandoned Fort Tilden (which supposedly held conventional and nuclear-tipped Nike-Hercules missiles) on the Rockaway Peninsula. It became part of Gateway National Park.

## 1975

FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional), a Puerto Rican terrorist organization, planted a bomb in Fraunces Tavern

on January 24, killing 4 and injuring 53. In 1979, FALN member William Morales was maimed when a device he was assembling in Queens exploded.

The Urban Development Corporation defaulted on \$104.5 million in bond anticipation notes on February 26, setting the stage for the city’s fiscal crisis.

The controversial North Shore Towers opened on the site of the Glen Oaks Golf Club.

On March 25, Gage and Tollner’s on Fulton Street became the first restaurant interior designated a landmark.

On March 31, with the short-term debt at \$6.1 billion (on June 30, 1966, it had been \$466 million) and \$8 billion outstanding in long-term bonds, the city could no longer sell its paper. Governor Hugh Carey advanced \$800 million not due until the next fiscal year so that the city could continue functioning. Carey appointed Simon H. Rifkind, Felix G. Rohatyn, Richard M. Shinn, and Donald B. Smiley to consider the bleak situation; at their recommendation, the state legislature created the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC) on June 10. MAC issued bonds backed by municipal tax revenues. Only \$550 million of the initial \$1 billion offering was subscribed by the public, with underwriters taking the balance. On September 10 the legislature created the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB), which was empowered to extend the wage freeze, approve city contracts, and oversee the budget. The EFCB met the

next day and essentially ran the city for two years.

Beverly Sills made her Metropolitan Opera debut on April 7 in *L'Assedio di Corinto*.

The Borough of Richmond became the Borough of Staten Island on April 8.

On May 5 the Willowbrook Consent Decree was entered, establishing new standards for the treatment of patients at all state institutions. Litigation had been filed in 1972 in response to the shameful conditions at the Staten Island facility.

Fixed commissions among stockbrokers, as prescribed in the 1792 Buttonwood Agreement establishing the Stock Exchange, were eliminated.

Sanitation workers went on strike in July after Mayor Beame's \$12.7 billion austerity budget went into effect, calling for the layoff of 30,000. In August, a wage freeze was implemented.

The subway fare jumped from 35¢ to 50¢ on September 1.

*Welcome Back Kotter* began on ABC, starring Gabriel Kaplan as a former student returning to teach at New Utrecht High School and John Travolta as one of his pupils. Also, *Barney Miller*, a comedy set in a shabby Manhattan precinct, and *The Jeffersons*, a spinoff from *All in the Family* about an upwardly mobile black family, went on the air.

The *Daily News* headline on October 30 announced: "Ford to City: Drop Dead,"

after President Gerald Ford rebuffed the city's appeal for loan guarantees.

Playwrights Horizons (founded in 1971) leased a porno theater on 42nd Street west of Ninth Avenue. Their success attracted other ensembles, revitalizing the area.

The *Woodside Herald* was founded.

E. L. Doctorow published *Ragtime*.

The Museum Cafe opened at 77th Street across from the Museum of Natural History, spurring the resurgence of Columbus Avenue, one of the hottest spots in the city in the 1980s. Trendiness overwhelmed older businesses, however. In 1991, Grossinger's Home Bakery at 76th Street closed, replaced by another Gap (the fourth within 10 blocks). The Museum Cafe closed in 1998.

The Kaufman-Astoria Studios opened on November 10, five years after the Army Pictorial Center closed.

On November 22, Northside residents blocked Engine Company 212 at 136 Wythe Street in Williamsburg to prevent the fire department from closing the station. The residents continued their protest for over a year, until the city relented; they called themselves the People's Fire House.

The first residential buildings were constructed on Roosevelt Island.

Elizabeth Ann Seton became the first American-born saint and the first New Yorker to be canonized by the Roman Catholic church. Mother Seton had



The Roosevelt Island Tram. (Mort Pavane/RIHS)

founded the Sisters of Charity, the first American order. Her shrine is a 1793 town house at 8 State Street.

Pier A at Battery Park was designated a landmark, saving it from demolition.

Illuminated advertisements appeared on the roofs of taxicabs for the first time, the brainchild of adman J. Rembrandt George.

The city had lost 470,000 private-sector jobs since 1970.

## 1976

In January, the Rheingold brewery in Bushwick closed; it had been in Brooklyn since 1855. The Schaefer Brewery (founded in 1842), the city's last, closed on January

31, ending the city's 345-year brewing tradition. In 1960, 10 percent of the nation's beer was brewed in Brooklyn.

The West Shore Expressway opened on Staten Island.

After playing at Shea for two seasons, the Yankees returned to a renovated Yankee Stadium. They beat the Kansas City Royals in five games for the pennant but were swept by the Cincinnati Reds in the World Series.

The top of the Empire State Building was illuminated for the first time, another Douglas Leigh creation.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Corporation's Restoration Plaza opened in a former milk plant at 1360 Fulton Street. Arthur Cotton Moore was the architect.

The new city charter gave Community Planning Boards a role in land-use decisions.

Threatened with extinction by the fiscal crisis, the police department's Mounted Unit solicited public support for funds and horses. They succeeded in sustaining the unit.

The Roosevelt Island Tram started in May, a four-minute ride 250 feet above the East River to Second Avenue.

On June 1, the Board of Higher Education imposed tuition in the City University, ending a tradition going back to the institution's founding.

A parade of tall ships highlighted the bicentennial celebration on July 4.

While visiting the city, Queen Elizabeth received 279 peppercorns as symbolic back rent from Trinity Church, one for each year, as stipulated in its 17th-century charter.

The Transit Museum opened on July 4 in the abandoned Court Street station.

The Democrats held their national convention in Madison Square Garden.

Richmond College and Staten Island Community College combined to become the College of Staten Island.

On September 12, 17,000 attended the opening of Sailors' Snug Harbor. The city acquired the bucolic, rundown site in the early 1970s and made it a cultural center.

At Yankee Stadium on September 28, heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali won a unanimous decision over Ken Norton.

On October 10, the Giants played their first game at Giant Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, having previously played in the Polo Grounds (1925–55), Yankee Stadium (1956–73), Yale Bowl (1973–74), and Shea Stadium (1975).

After cancer claimed crime boss Carlo Gambino on October 15, his first cousin Paul Castellano took over.

The New York City Marathon wound through the five boroughs, from the Verrazano Narrows Bridge to Central Park, for the first time.

Long Island City's Public School 1, built in 1892 but vacant for years, was converted



Crowds on First Avenue watching the marathon. (JAK)

into Project Studios 1, a contemporary art gallery.

Liberal Party leader Alex Rose died on December 28.

## 1977

The Bronx Zoo opened the “Wild Asia” exhibit. This year also saw the Zoological Society begin the Mountain Gorilla Project in Rwanda.

New York Airways resumed helicopter flights from the Pan Am Building on February 1. (Service had been suspended in 1968.) On May 16, an accident sent a 20-foot rotor spinning across the roof, killing four passengers and a pedestrian on the street and critically injuring seven others. The flights never resumed.

The Jamaica-based *Long Island Press*, begun in 1821 as the *Long Island Farmer*, folded March 25.

Harold L. Fisher, an original member of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, became its chairman. During the fiscal crisis he secured two labor contracts without strikes or a fare increase. He was later chairman of the Convention Center Development Corporation, which built the Javits Center. An adviser to mayors and governors, he once said, “I don’t have a great ego, but I’m smart. I know the personalities around town. I don’t lie. I keep my word and I keep my mouth shut.”

Woody Allen’s *Annie Hall* won the Oscar for best picture.

A blackout on July 13 resulted in widespread looting and arson; 4,000 were arrested. Bushwick was particularly devastated.

A string of murders of young couples chilled the city. The killer sent notes signed “Son of Sam” to *Daily News* columnist Jimmy Breslin. David Berkowitz was arrested on August 11. He was convicted of six murders on May 8, 1978.

Rupert Murdoch bought the *Post*, the *Village Voice*, and *New York Magazine*. He transformed the *Post* from the liberal paper it had been under Dorothy Schiff into a conservative tabloid.

In August, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued a report on the fiscal crisis: “The City employed budgetary, accounting and financing practices which it knew distorted its true financial condition.”

Brooklyn’s Polytechnic Preparatory Country Day School, founded in 1854, admitted girls for the first time.

On October 5, President Jimmy Carter visited the South Bronx, highlighting the place as a symbol of urban decay. Between 1970 and 1980 the population fell from 14,000 to 2,100, due to arson and housing abandonment. Residents formed the Banana Kelly community organization to preserve their neighborhood. General Colin Powell grew up on the block.



The South Bronx, 1971. (Courtesy of The Bronx County Historical Society)

The Cooper-Hewitt Museum (later the National Design Museum) opened in the former Carnegie Mansion at Fifth Avenue and 91st Street.

The Yankees beat the Kansas City Royals in five games for the pennant. In the World Series, they defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers in six games, winning the last game 8–4 on October 18. Reggie Jackson hit five homers in the series, the last three on consecutive swings of the bat in the sixth game.

Macy's closed its Jamaica branch on October 31. Opened in 1947, the branch had accounted for \$13 million in annual sales in the late 1950s, but these had declined to \$8 million a year after the Rego Park store opened.

Seven candidates entered the Democratic primary: incumbent Abe Beame, Herman

Badillo, Percy Sutton, Bella Abzug, Mario Cuomo, Ed Koch, and Joel Harnett. In the runoff, Koch defeated Cuomo. With the slogan "After eight years of charisma and four years of the clubhouse, why not competence?" Koch defeated Roy Goodman (Republican), radio personality Barry Farber (Conservative), and Cuomo (Liberal).

Sunnyside Garden, a boxing arena on Queens Boulevard erected in the 1920s, was demolished on December 9.

## 1978

In January, Isaiah Sheffer and Allan Miller produced Wall-to-Wall Bach at Symphony Space, marking its revival as a performance space. They acquired the theater the next year.

Retired firefighter Gary Muhrcke won the first Empire State Building Run-Up on February 15. His sprint up the 1,575 steps to the 86th floor was controversial, however, as he was receiving a  $\frac{3}{4}$  disability pension from the fire department.

Mayor Koch appointed Mary Perot Nicols head of WNYC. She resigned the next year when the mayor ordered the station to broadcast “The John Hour,” naming men arrested for soliciting prostitutes; it was broadcast only once, and Koch pledged not to interfere with programming. Nicols returned from 1983 to 1990 and established the WNYC Foundation. In the 1950s she had fought Robert Moses’s plan to force a roadway through Washington Square.

Frank Macchiarola became schools chancellor. During his tenure the system improved significantly, despite painful budget cuts. He resigned in 1983.

The final appearance of the Rockettes was to have been April 12. Rockefeller Center, Inc. planned to close Radio City Music Hall and erect a new office tower. At the 11th hour, a \$2.2 million state grant saved the music hall and the Rockettes. The interior was later landmarked.

In April, Hall Place, connecting East Sixth and East Seventh streets, was renamed for Ukrainian writer and nationalist Taras Shevchenko.

The United States Supreme Court upheld the Landmarks Preservation Commission against the Penn Central Corporation, which had contested the designation of Grand Central Terminal. The Court’s

decision gave local historic preservation laws constitutional grounding.

The pooper-scooper law went into effect on August 1.

On August 8, sitting at a desk used by George Washington, President Carter signed legislation at City Hall providing for federal guarantees of bonds issued by the city and the Municipal Assistance Corporation.

Unions at the *Times*, *Daily News*, and the *Post* went on strike from August 10 to mid-September.

The U.S. Open moved from the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills to Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. The matches were played in Louis Armstrong Stadium (originally the Singer Bowl, built for the 1964 World’s Fair).

In mid-August the Yankees trailed the Red Sox by 14 games; in a one-game playoff at Fenway on October 2, Bucky Dent hit a three-run homer for a 5–4 victory. The Yanks beat the Kansas City Royals in four games for the pennant and took the World Series from the Los Angeles Dodgers in six games.

To revitalize downtown Brooklyn, Fulton Street was turned into a pedestrian mall; it later reopened for buses.

Following the resignation of Patrick Cunningham, Stanley Friedman became the first Jewish Democratic county leader in the Bronx. Friedman was convicted of bribery in 1986.



Governor Rockefeller and Robert Moses, ca. 1962. (QBPL)

Zubin Mehta became music director of the New York Philharmonic; he held the post until 1991.

The Apollo Theater closed. Former Manhattan borough president Percy Sutton and others reopened it in 1983, but they couldn't make it profitable. In 1992 they turned it over to their not-for-profit foundation.

On December 11, hooded gunmen led by James “Jimmy the Gent” Burke burst into the cargo terminal at JFK and stole \$5.8 million in cash that had just arrived from Germany. The cash was never recovered, but in the following years members of the gang were murdered. Burke escaped prosecution for the heist but was convicted of a college basketball point-shaving scandal and the murder of a

drug dealer who allegedly owed him \$250,000.

The Spalding Sporting Goods Company discontinued the beloved Spaldeen, a pink rubber ball sold in candy stores and essential for stickball, stoopball, and punchball. The Spaldeen was reintroduced in May 1999 as the Spalding Hi-Bounce.

*Taxi* began its six-year run on television.

The telephone company abandoned traditional exchanges—*CHelsea*, *Murray Hill*, *BUtterfield*, *AStoria*—for ordinary numbers, eliminating a little more romance from daily life.

## 1979

Nelson Rockefeller, 70-year-old four-time governor of New York and former vice president, had a heart attack at 10:15 P.M. on January 26 at his West 54th Street town house while working late with his assistant Megan Marshack. He was pronounced dead at the hospital two hours later.

The city was able to sell its notes in the bond market for the first time since the fiscal crisis began in 1975.

Over angry protests, Sydenham Hospital in Harlem was closed.

The Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps Marching Band was founded. Also, the Gay Men's Chorus presented its first concert.

A tugboat strike began on April 1; as sludge and garbage piled up, a health emergency



was declared. The 88-day walkout ended June 28.

On May 25, six-year-old Etan Patz disappeared between his SoHo home and the school bus stop, the first time his mother had let him go to the bus stop by himself. Years later, a convicted pedophile was implicated in the boy's death.

The Rangers beat the Islanders in the semifinals of the Stanley Cup playoffs in six games but lost to Montreal in five games in the finals.

Greta Waitz won the New York Marathon in the world-record time of 2:27:33; Bill Rodgers won the men's race for the fourth consecutive year. For the first time, the marathon was televised.

As crime pervaded the streets and subways, Curtis Sliwa founded the Guardian Angels, young men and women in distinctive red berets on volunteer patrols.

A Board of Trustees replaced the Board of Higher Education as the governing body of the City University; also, the state agreed to fund the senior colleges while the city continued funding the community colleges.

Tim and Nina Zagat distributed a photocopied guide to restaurants, based on opinions compiled from friends. Thus was born the influential *Zagat's*.

LIRR trainmen began a 10-day strike on December 7; President Carter invoked the

Railway Labor Act, ordering them back to work for 60 days.

## 1980

The private, not-for-profit Central Park Conservancy was founded to raise funds for specific restoration projects in the sadly neglected park. In 1998, the Parks Department awarded the Conservancy a contract to manage Central Park.

The Transit Workers Union went on strike at 2:01 A.M. on April 1, as their contract expired. The union accepted a new contract on April 11. Also, LIRR workers staged a 31-hour strike on April 1.

The subway fare jumped from 60¢ to 75¢ on June 28.

The Democratic National Convention was held in Madison Square Garden.

As a result of a class-action lawsuit, the fire department hired 42 women who passed a less strenuous, court-mandated test.

On December 8, John Lennon was murdered outside the Dakota, where he and Yoko Ono had lived since 1975. Lennon had made New York his home in 1971, after the breakup of the Beatles.

E. J. Korvette's closed its last 17 stores, including their flagship in Herald Square, on December 30. Eugene Ferkauf had founded the discount chain in 1948.

## 1981

On January 30, 2 million spectators lined lower Broadway for a ticker-tape parade welcoming home the hostages who had been held in the American embassy in Iran for 444 days.

The Flushing Armory on Northern Boulevard became a shelter for homeless women. It closed in the summer of 1994 but became an emergency men's shelter.

The new 6,000-passenger *Andrew J. Barberi* and the *Samuel I. Newhouse* began running between Manhattan and Staten Island. The bus-inspired design eliminated all the charm of the ferry.

In June, MTA chairman Richard Ravitch secured state funding to renovate and modernize the system. (The average subway car traveled only 7,000 miles between breakdowns; in 1995, the average was 58,000 miles.) The LIRR and the Hudson and Harlem lines also received additional funding. The MTA was authorized to issue \$1.6 billion in bonds, and the sales tax increased by \$.0025 in the region.

Robert Moses died at age 91 on July 29.

The American Chicle Company closed its factory on Thomson Avenue in Long Island City, a few years after they were prosecuted for an industrial accident that killed one worker. The building later became the International Design Center of New York (IDCNY), with a master plan by I. M. Pei. IDCNY failed because Manhattan designers were loath to cross the river.

After a gap of 13 years, the New York Central Labor Council staged a Labor Day parade to support the striking air traffic controllers fired by President Ronald Reagan.

Linebacker Lawrence Taylor, out of the University of North Carolina, played his first game for the Giants. He led the team to two Super Bowls and retired in 1993.

Richard Serra's controversial *Tilted Arc* was installed in the plaza of the Jacob Javits Federal Office Building in Lower Manhattan as part of the Art in Architecture program. A thousand office workers signed a petition requesting the rusting hulk be removed. The General Services Administration held a public hearing in 1985, pitting sensitive artists against the philistines who used the space daily. *Tilted Arc* was removed in 1989, replaced by functional if uninspired landscaping.

Red Hook Marine Terminal was dedicated, the city's only container port. It attracted little business, as most companies used New Jersey or Baltimore.

The Asia Society, Park Avenue and 70th Street, was dedicated; Edward Larrabee Barnes was the architect.

The Yankees won their 33rd pennant but in the World Series lost to the Los Angeles Dodgers in six games.

Endorsed by the Republicans and Democrats, Mayor Koch was reelected with 75 percent of the vote, defeating Frank Barbaro, running on the Liberal line. It

was the smallest Election Day turnout in years.

The *New York Native* appeared. The paper was among the first to write about the “gay plague,” as AIDS was originally called. Circulation peaked at 20,000; it folded in January 1997.

This year, 1,678 infants died before their first birthday, an infant mortality rate of 15.5 per 1,000 live births. (In 1909, when the population was 4 million, 16,000 infants had died.) In Harlem the rate was 21.2 per 1,000. In addition, 79 percent of the births in Harlem were illegitimate, and 69 percent of the mothers were on public assistance.

## 1982

The ILGWU demonstrated in Chinatown against nonunion sweatshops. Former ILGWU president David Dubinsky died on September 17.

The funeral for Thelonious Monk was at St. Peter’s Church (the “Jazz Church”), Lexington Avenue and 54th Street, on February 22. Asked to define jazz in 1964, Monk had answered, “New York, man. You can feel it. It’s around in the air.”

The last freight train ran along the Putnam Division, ending a century of railroading in the Saw Mill River Valley.

Federal judge Thomas Griesa voided the permit issued by the Army Corps of Engineers for Westway, the controversial road-and-landfill project intended to replace the

West Side Highway, because there was no environmental impact statement assessing the impact on striped bass in the Hudson River.

The Intrepid Sea-Air Museum opened at Pier 86 at 46th Street, featuring the aircraft carrier *Intrepid*, veteran of World War II and Korea; the destroyer *Edson*; and the guided-missile submarine *Growler*.

Precipitation totaled 16.85 inches in September, the wettest month on record in the city.

The first residents moved into Battery Park City.

The IBM Building at Madison Avenue and 57th Street opened. Edward Larrabee Barnes was the architect; Robert Zion designed the praiseworthy atrium.

The Loft Law (article 7c of the Multiple Dwelling Law) legalized the studios and dwellings artists had created in manufacturing lofts in SoHo and Tribeca and required landlords to bring the spaces up to code.

Employees represented by District 65 of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the *Village Voice* won a contract guaranteeing benefits to domestic partners, the first such provision in the nation.

Work on the Cathedral of St. John the Divine resumed after a 40-year hiatus. High-wire artist Philippe Petit crossed high above Amsterdam Avenue to set the tower’s first stone. Dean James Parks Morton initiated a stonecutting program



Charlotte Gardens. (JAK)

for neighborhood youth. Construction stopped again 10 years later, after 50 feet had been completed.

## 1983

The MTA created Metro-North on January 1, combining the Hudson, Harlem, and New Haven lines.

The Playground for All Children, designed to accommodate the disabled, opened at Flushing Meadows–Corona Park.

The first model homes were built in the South Bronx; 89 single-family houses were built in Charlotte Gardens by 1986, selling for \$49,500–\$60,000.

The New York Yacht Club lost the America's Cup to the Australians at Newport, Rhode Island.

Silvercup Studios opened in the old Silvercup Bakery in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge.

The Queens County Farm Museum opened in the 1772 Adriance Farmhouse on Little Neck Parkway; the site had been a family farm until 1927.

The first shops in the new Fulton Market opened at the South Street Seaport, two years after the Board of Estimate approved the contract with the Rouse Corporation. (A decade later, Fulton Market was almost vacant.) Pier 17 mall opened in 1985.

The CUNY School of Law at Queens College opened.

In December, Phelps Dodge shut down the century-old copper refinery along Newtown Creek in Maspeth.

Precipitation totaled 80.56 inches, the wettest year on record in the city.

## 1984

The subway fare increased from 75¢ to 90¢ on January 1.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral on March 19, John O'Connor became the eighth archbishop, succeeding Terrance Cardinal Cooke.

Count Basie died on April 26; his funeral was held at Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church.

On May 17, State Senator John Marchi introduced legislation to permit Staten Island to secede from the city.

On September 6, the Jets played their first game at Giant Stadium in the Meadowlands. They previously had played at the Polo Grounds and Shea Stadium.

*The Cosby Show*, a sitcom set in an integrated Brooklyn neighborhood, premiered on NBC; it was taped in the Astoria studios.

Benjamin Ward became the city's first black police commissioner.

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation was established; it took over the island's management in 1986.

The giant illuminated snowflake, another Douglas Leigh creation, was installed at 57th Street and Fifth Avenue. (Leigh died in 1999.)

On December 22, Bernie Goetz shot four black teenagers on the IRT as it pulled into Chambers Street, after one asked, "Mister, can we have five dollars?" Goetz was eventually jailed for 250 days for carrying an unlicensed .38 pistol.

## 1985

Mayor Koch proclaimed "New York, New York" the city's official song; it had been composed by John Kander and Fred Ebb for the 1977 movie of the same name.

On May 7, 10 years after the last troops left Vietnam, veterans received a ticker-tape parade up Broadway.

The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum opened on Vernon Boulevard in Long Island City.

The Historic Districts Council, founded in 1971 as a committee of the Municipal Art Society, was incorporated as an independent preservation organization in August.

Following demolition of the Helen Hayes and Morosco Theaters, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the remaining Broadway theaters.



Graffiti in Astoria, 1985. (JAK)

Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island were shifted from area code 212 to 718.

Mayor Koch was reelected for a third term, with 76 percent of the vote. (Only 38 percent of the registered voters cast ballots.)

*The Golden Land* opened at the Eden Theater, the last Yiddish theater production on Second Avenue.

Mob boss Paul Castellano and underboss Thomas Bilotti were shot to death outside Sparks Steak House on East 46th Street on December 16. John Gotti ordered the hit and took over the Gambino crime family. His underboss was Salvatore “Sammy Bull” Gravano.

## 1986

The subway fare went from 90¢ to \$1 on January 1; a new token with an alloy center replaced the familiar Y-cut design, making it more difficult to identify the token in your pocket.

At 1:50 A.M. on January 10, police stopped a car driving erratically on Grand Central Parkway and found Queens Borough President Donald Manes bleeding from a self-inflicted knife wound. On March 13, three days after his associate Geoffrey Lindenaucr agreed to cooperate with the investigation of the Parking Violations Bureau, Manes committed suicide, plunging a knife into his heart in the kitchen of his Jamaica Estates home. Manes was also

implicated in a bribery scheme involving cable television franchises.

Rockaways Playland was demolished.

The Garden of Eden of John Peter Zenger II (or Adam Purple, for his tie-dye attire; his real name was David Wilkie) was razed for a low-income housing complex. Adam and his companion Eve had cleared rubble from the 15,000-square-foot vacant lot adjacent to 184 Forsythe Street (where they lived as squatters without electricity or running water for 17 years); fertilized it with horse manure from Central Park; and planted shrubs, trees, and flowers in concentric beds circling a yin-yang symbol. In 1998, the city-owned abandoned building was condemned; Adam Purple was finally evicted in 1999.

On March 20 the City Council passed a gay rights bill by a 21–14 vote, banning discrimination in employment and housing on the basis of sexual orientation.

The Jacob Javits Convention Center opened in April.

Gimbel's closed its doors forever, and with it went another New Yorkism: "Does Macy's tell Gimbel's?"

The 207-foot Staten Island ferries *Alice Austin* and *John A. Noble* (capacity 1,280) went into late-night service.

During a sexual encounter in Central Park, 19-year-old Robert Chambers murdered 18-year-old Jennifer Levin. Chambers claimed he unintentionally killed her

during "rough sex." The tabloids called it the "Preppie Murder."

The Transit Authority shut down tracks on the south side of the Manhattan Bridge for repair. Service resumed in 2001, when the north side tracks were closed (scheduled for completion in 2004).

Socrates Sculpture Park opened on an abandoned site adjacent to sculptor Mark di Suvero's studio along the East River in Astoria; it became a city park in 1998.

The Museum of Motion Pictures and Television, later the American Museum of the Moving Image, opened in the Kaufman Astoria Studios.

On October 15, after scoring three runs in the ninth inning to tie, the Mets beat the Houston Astros, 7–6, in 16 innings for their third pennant. They beat the Boston Red Sox in the World Series, taking the seventh game 8–5 on October 27. They were one out from defeat in the sixth game when Mookie Wilson hit a grounder through the legs of Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner, allowing the winning run to score.

*New York Newsday* began publication, challenging the *Post* and the *News*. Citing huge losses, the paper folded in 1995, but the Long Island edition was still available.

A one-way toll was instituted at the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, speeding traffic into Brooklyn while creating ghastly bottlenecks at the Holland Tunnel in Manhattan (with a resulting rise in air pollution) as drivers avoided the Verrazano's double toll.

After their car broke down, three black men were attacked by a group of white youths at a pizza parlor on Cross Bay Boulevard in Howard Beach. Trying to escape, Michael Griffith was killed when he ran onto the Belt Parkway.

The Queens Borough Public Library's circulation of 10,519,034 was the nation's highest, a distinction Queens has held since. By 1996, circulation topped 15 million.

## 1987

The Dow broke 2,000 on January 8; the market peaked at 2,722.42 on August 25. On October 19, the Dow dropped 508 points (22.6 percent), abruptly ending the "go-go '80s."

The Giants defeated the Washington Redskins, 17–0, for the NFC title on January 11. They went on to beat the Denver Broncos 39–20 in the Super Bowl on January 25.

After a routine gall bladder operation at New York Hospital on February 22, 59-year-old Andy Warhol died.

In March, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power—ACT UP—staged their first demonstration; 250 descended on Wall Street to protest the high price of AIDS medication and to demand more research. ACT UP spun off Housing Works, to provide housing for people with AIDS. Larry Kramer was a founder of ACT UP.

The weekly *New York Observer* was founded.

All-sports radio WFAN went on the air on July 1, replacing WHN at 1050 on the AM dial; it moved to 660 on October 7, 1988, replacing WNBC-AM. Ten years later it was the country's highest-grossing station, the radio home of the Mets, Jets, Knicks, and Rangers.

On November 24, Tawana Brawley, a black girl in Westchester, concocted a story about being abducted and assaulted by whites, including police officers. Her advisers C. Vernon Mason, Alton Maddox, and Al Sharpton exploited the situation, polarizing race relations. In September 1988 a grand jury dismissed her accusations. Maddox was later disbarred, but Sharpton ran for Senate against Attorney General Robert Abrams, who investigated the affair. In Poughkeepsie on July 13, 1998, a jury found Brawley's three advisers liable for defamation of Steven A. Pagonis, the former assistant district attorney of Dutchess County, whom they had accused of raping Brawley.

Judge Francis X. Smith, former City Council president, was convicted of bribery involving cable television franchises in Queens.

The Red Hook sewage treatment plant began operating.

On December 12, Wagner College defeated the University of Dayton, 19–3, in the Alonzo Stagg Bowl for the Division III football championship.



On December 23 the City Council banned smoking in public places. A more stringent law took effect April 10, 1995.

## 1988

The Central Park Zoo reopened after a \$35 million, four-year renovation—four times the estimated cost.

Former Bronx Borough President Stanley M. Friedman began a 12-year sentence for bribery involving the Parking Violations Bureau. He was paroled in 1992 after four years. Also, former Bronx congressman Mario Biaggi went to prison for the Wedtech scandal, which involved bribery and influence peddling to obtain military contracts for a Bronx firm.

When police enforced a midnight curfew in Tompkins Square Park on August 6, the crowd resisted; two nights of rioting ensued. Seventeen officers were later charged with brutality.

Russ Smith began the *New York Press* to compete with the *Village Voice*. The five-person staff put out a 24-page paper; 10 years later, “New York’s Free Weekly Newspaper” had a staff of 55 and circulation of 110,000.

To revitalize historic Erie Basin at Red Hook, the city opened the \$25 million Fishport to attract commercial fishing fleets and processors; it quickly failed.

President Ronald Reagan and Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev held a summit on Governors Island.

Bess Meyerson, commissioner of cultural affairs; Carl Capasso, her companion; and Judge Hortense Gabel were acquitted of conspiring to lower Capasso’s alimony payments.

In September, Sloppy Louie’s at 92 South Street closed; it was one of the last links to the old seaport.

Cartoonist Charles Addams died on September 29; his drawings first appeared in the *New Yorker* in 1933.

After setting an NCAA Division I record with 44 consecutive losses, Columbia University finally won a football game, defeating Princeton, 16–13, on October 8.

The Archer Avenue Extension (E, J, and Z trains), 10 years behind schedule and \$365 million over budget, was completed to Jamaica Center on December 11.

## 1989

B. Altman’s, the always-tasteful department store at Fifth Avenue and 34th Street, closed. A decade later, the landmark building housed the Science, Business and Industry Division of the New York Public Library; Oxford University Press; and the CUNY Graduate School.

On March 22 the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Morris v. Board of Estimate* that the city’s government was unconstitutional because it violated “one man, one vote.” The New York Civil Liberties Union had sued in 1982 on behalf of three Brooklynites, arguing that giving equal standing

to each borough violated the equal protection clause, since Brooklyn had 2.2 million residents and Staten Island only 350,000. The Court's decision stimulated Staten Island's drive for secession.

The Citicorp Tower was completed in Hunters Point. As part of the deal, the bank donated part of the ground floor to the Queens Borough Public Library, the first branch in the neighborhood since 1957.

The Staten Island Homeport was dedicated on May 3. The first ships were the Aegis-class guided-missile cruiser *Ticonderoga* and the destroyer *Hayler*. (The port was intended for the *Iowa*, but the battleship was decommissioned.) In 1985, concerned about nuclear weapons, 200,000 New Yorkers had signed petitions to put a referendum on Homeport on the November ballot, but the effort was blocked in court.

Tom Wolfe published *Bonfire of the Vanities*, a novel that captured the spirit of the city in the 1980s.

Only three musicals were nominated for the Tony award: two revues—*Black and Blue* and *Jerome Robbins's Broadway*—and *Starmites*, the worst-ever nominee.

In August, after their real estate taxes increased from \$5.1 million to \$38 million, the Richmond County Country Club, the last private golf club, agreed to sell to the city in exchange for a 99-year lease and \$4 million, with \$1 million going to the Staten Island greenbelt.



The Citicorp Tower looming over the Hunters Point Historic District. (JAK)

In Bensonhurst, 16-year-old Yusef Hawkins of East New York was attacked by white youths and shot dead on the evening of August 23. He had wanted to buy a used car.

On August 30, Leona Helmsley, wife of real estate mogul Harry Helmsley, was convicted of tax evasion and mail fraud. She served 18 months in a federal prison. Harry Helmsley was too ill to stand trial; he died in 1997.

Songwriter Irving Berlin died at age 101 on September 22.

A&S Plaza opened in the old Gimbel's in Herald Square, the Brooklyn department store's first Manhattan branch.

A new \$868 million subway line under the East River opened on October 19. "The train to nowhere" terminated at 21st Street in Long Island City, with a stop at Roosevelt Island.

Mandatory recycling went into effect in Manhattan and gradually included all boroughs.

After defeating incumbent Ed Koch and Richard Ravitch in the Democratic primary, David Dinkins was elected mayor, beating Republican Rudolph Giuliani. Also, voters approved a new city charter eliminating the Board of Estimate and expanding the City Council to 51 members.

Choreographer Alvin Ailey died of AIDS on December 1.

About 4,500 members of ACT UP demonstrated outside St. Patrick's Cathedral in December to protest the anti-gay positions of the Catholic Church; 111 were arrested, including 43 who disrupted Cardinal O'Connor's homily.

## 1990

The subway fare rose from \$1 to \$1.15 on January 1.

On January 1, 567,000 gallons of oil spilled from an Exxon pipeline into the Arthur Kill. Hundreds of thousands of marsh-

grass seedlings were planted along the contaminated shoreline; by 1994, blue crabs, herons, and muskrats had returned.

The Giants beat the San Francisco 49ers for the NFC title, 15–13. In the Super Bowl, they defeated the Buffalo Bills, 20–19.

Lewis Mumford died on January 26.

The *Jewish Daily Forward* published an English edition, in addition to Yiddish.

On March 25, arson consumed the Happy Land Social Club on Southern Boulevard in the Bronx, killing 87, most of the victims Hispanic immigrants. A man started the fire because his former girlfriend worked there.

In May, Vincent Gigante and 14 other organized crime figures were indicted on racketeering charges. In June 1993, Gigante's indictment was amended to include charges that he had ordered six murders and conspired to kill John Gotti. Long suspected of heading the Genovese crime family, Gigante avoided trial by feigning mental illness, wandering his Greenwich Village neighborhood in a bathrobe. On July 25, 1997, he was finally convicted.

Nelson Mandela of South Africa was honored at Yankee Stadium on June 21. He also received a ticker-tape parade up the "Canyon of Heroes."

Two quintessential New York shows went on the air on NBC: *Seinfeld* (produced in Los Angeles) and *Law and Order*.

The Federal Court of Appeals overturned a district court decision affirming the right of the homeless to panhandle on the subways. Judge Francis X. Altimari rebuked the lower court for setting the rights of the beggars above those of other passengers and upheld the state law banning loitering in terminals to beg: “Whether intended as so, or not, begging in the subway often amounts to nothing less than assault, creating in the passengers the apprehension of imminent danger.”

Leonard Bernstein died at age 72 on October 14.

The United States Supreme Court upheld the authority of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate religious properties. St. Bartholomew’s had sued after the commission refused to permit demolition of their community house on Park Avenue for an office tower, a plan proposed in 1981.

Unions at the *Daily News* began a five-month strike on October 25. Circulation dropped when the Tribune Company attempted to publish with scab labor. On March 20, 1991, the company paid English publisher Robert Maxwell \$60 million to take the paper. Seven months later, Maxwell disappeared from his yacht in the Atlantic, his financial affairs in freefall.

A record 2,245 people were murdered during the year, and a record 365 were killed by motor vehicles.

## 1991

Former mayor Robert F. Wagner died on February 12.

Kurt Masur became music director of the New York Philharmonic.

On April 17 the Dow broke 3,000 for the first time.

In August, Beth Israel Medical Center demolished Dvorák House at 327 East 17th Street, where the composer had lived between 1892 and 1895. After the City Council overturned the building’s landmark designation, the *Times* printed an approving editorial, “Dvorák Doesn’t Live Here Anymore.” Brendan Gill wrote a stinging response: “Dvorák doesn’t live here anymore! Mozart doesn’t live in Salzburg anymore: should the house in which he lived be torn down? Should we tear down the Jumel Mansion in Manhattan because Washington doesn’t live in it anymore? You pretend to fear the city will be ‘dotted with shrines because a celebrity passed through.’ Is Dvorák to you merely a celebrity? Is three years passing through?” A Dvorák monument was dedicated in Stuyvesant Square Park on September 13, 1997; Ivan Mestrovic was the sculptor and Jan Hird Pokorny designed the base.

Four nights of violence erupted in Crown Heights after a car in a Hasidic rabbi’s motorcade killed seven-year-old Gavin Cato on August 19; 43 civilians and 152 officers were injured. Yankel Rosenbaum, a Hasidic scholar from Australia, was stabbed to death by Lemrick Nelson, who



The American Merchant Mariners' Memorial, Pier A in the background. (JAK)

was sentenced to 19½ years. On July 9, 1998, Charles Price was sentenced to 21 years for violating Rosenbaum's civil rights; Price had incited the mob by shouting "Kill the Jews" and "An eye for an eye."

Just after midnight on August 28, drunken motorman Robert Ray passed out, and his train crashed into the Union Street Station at about 40 miles per hour; five died. Ray was convicted of manslaughter.

The Museum of Television and Radio opened in a new \$55 million, 17-story building on West 52nd Street; the structure was designed by Philip Johnson.

Dennis Russell Davies became music director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music and principal conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

The American Merchant Mariners' Memorial for World War II "seamen resting in the unmarked ocean depths" was dedicated in the water off Battery Park on October 8.

In September, excavation for a federal building at Broadway and Duane Street revealed hundreds of skeletons; it was the colonial-era African Burial Ground. The skeletons were removed to Howard University for study. The building was redesigned to allow reburial and a memorial.

Subway ridership dipped to 995 million from a peak of 1.3 billion in 1970. By 1996, ridership reached 1.1 billion, largely due to new immigrants living in the outer boroughs.

## 1992

The subway fare increased from \$1.15 to \$1.25 on January 1.

On March 11, Manuel de Dios Unanue, the former editor of *El Diario* investigating Colombian cocaine traffic, was murdered in Meson Asturias restaurant in Elmhurst. The Cali drug cartel ordered the hit.

On April 2, mob boss John Gotti was convicted of the 1985 murder of Paul Castellano and others, based on testimony by his underboss, Salvatore Gravano.

On April 21, a redesigned Bryant Park opened, the first project controlled by private funders, the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation. The city had blamed the park's design for influx of drug dealers in the 1970s.

The controversy over the proposed "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum brought down Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez.

The Democratic National Convention convened at Madison Square Garden in July.

After two years of renovation and ongoing conflicts with the homeless, self-styled anarchists, and squatters, Tompkins Square Park reopened on August 25. Three days later, 75 "activists" defied the midnight curfew; 21 were arrested.

In September, Judge Milton Mollen began investigating allegations of corruption and drug trafficking by police in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Mollen Commission followed the 1949 Helfand Commission and the 1970 Knapp Commission. The report issued on July 7, 1994, described a "willful blindness" at all levels and recommended an independent agency to combat police corruption.

On September 8, New York 1 News began broadcasting, covering the city 24 hours a day.

The TriBeCa Bridge at Chambers and West Streets opened, primarily for Stuyvesant High School students. In 1997 the American Institute of Architects (AIA)

honored Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for "a great piece of design that also ennoble the daily act of going to high school."

Brooklyn's Edward R. Murrow High School won their first national chess championship. They successfully defended the title in 1993 and 1994 and won the state championship seven times between 1989 and 2001.

On December 2, radio station WQEW-AM (formerly WQXR-AM), went on the air playing American popular standards (the format previously at WNEW 1130 AM). It went off the air at midnight on December 27, 1998, after the *Times* sold the station for \$40 million to Disney for a children's station; the WQEW audience was too old for advertisers.

The Bronx was shifted from area code 212 to 718, and 917 was introduced for beepers, faxes, and cellular phones in Manhattan.

The city stopped dumping treated sewage in the ocean.

## 1993

On February 26, a bomb exploded in the parking garage below the World Trade Center, killing 6 and injuring more than 1,000. Muslim terrorists were convicted.

On June 6 the freighter *Golden Venture* went aground off the Rockaways, carrying 286 illegal Chinese immigrants. Some drowned trying to swim to shore. Many were deported; others languished for years in an immigration facility in Pennsylvania.

On October 14, the College of Staten Island's Willowbrook campus was dedicated. The site had been the Willowbrook State School for the developmentally disabled, which closed in 1987.

On November 2, Republican-Liberal Rudolph Giuliani was elected the city's 107th mayor, defeating Mayor Dinkins 51 percent to 49 percent (903,114 to 858,868). Alan Hevesi was elected comptroller, and Mark Green became the first public advocate (replacing City Council president). New Yorkers also endorsed term limits by a 60 percent margin, and Staten Islanders voted to secede by a two-to-one margin.

Apartments renting for \$2,000 or more a month and occupied by tenants earning above \$250,000 were exempted from rent regulations. In 1997 the threshold for "luxury decontrol" was lowered to households earning \$175,000 or more.

On December 7, Colin Ferguson, a deranged Jamaican immigrant living in Flatbush, opened fire with an unlicensed pistol on the 5:33 P.M. LIRR train out of Penn Station as it pulled into the Merrillon Avenue station in Garden City, killing 6 and wounding 19. Carolyn McCarthy, the widow of one of the slain riders and mother of another who was wounded, was elected to Congress the next year as a Democrat, ousting the Republican incumbent who opposed gun control. Ferguson was convicted on February 17, 1995.

On December 13, police raided an apartment at 201 West 57th Street, rented by Frenchman Gilbert Barbe, and seized 424

pounds of pure heroin, worth \$240 million on the street after being diluted into \$10 and \$20 packets. This culminated a two-year narcotics investigation stretching from Hell's Kitchen to Asia.

Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, longtime minister at Marble Collegiate Church and author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*, died at age 95 on December 24.

The Borough of Manhattan Community College Chess Team won the Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament, soundly beating Harvard in the finals. They defended their title the next year, again defeating Harvard.

## 1994

On February 5, the guided-missile cruiser *Normandy* returned to the Homeport after a Mediterranean cruise. The ship sailed from Staten Island for the last time on June 27, and the \$300 million base closed August 31.

After 14 years of repair, all lanes on the Queensboro Bridge were reopened on February 24. On April 5, the inbound outer roadway was closed for long-term reconstruction.

On March 4, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver declared he would not pass the Charter for the City of Staten Island without a home-rule message from the city. On January 18, 1995, State Supreme Court justice Robert C. Williams dismissed a suit against the speaker brought by



Staten Island legislators, effectively killing secession.

On May 19, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis died of cancer in her home at 1040 Fifth Avenue. The Central Park Reservoir was renamed for her.

At Madison Square Garden on June 14, the Rangers defeated the Vancouver Canucks, 3–2, in the seventh game of the National Hockey League finals to capture the Stanley Cup for the first time since 1940.

On July 31, Theater 80 on St. Marks Place ended its life as a film revival house and became an Off-Broadway theater. In the 1970s and 1980s, Manhattan boasted many venues for classic films, including the Bleecker Street, the Metro, the Regency, the Thalia, the New Yorker, the Carnegie Hall Cinema, the Elgin (now the Joyce Theater), Film Forum, and Cinema Village.

After 21,425 programs, the *Joe Franklin Show*, a mix of celebrity interviews and nostalgia, was canceled on August 6.

Broadway composer Jule Styne died on September 20. His first show was *High Button Shoes* (1947), his last *The Red Shoes*, (1993); he also composed *Gypsy*, *Peter Pan*, and *Funny Girl*.

Fred Lebow, longtime president of the New York Road Runners Club, died of brain cancer at age 62 on October 9. Lebow had made the New York City Marathon an international event and originated the Empire State Building Run-Up (1978), the Fifth Avenue Mile (1981), and the Mini-

Marathon for women in Central Park. Accompanied by nine-time winner Greta Waitz, Lebow ran his last marathon in 1992.

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch sect in Brooklyn, died at 92.

Democratic assemblyman Roberto Ramirez became Bronx county leader, the first Puerto Rican in the post. (The borough was 40 percent Hispanic.)

The 25¢ tolls on the Hutchinson River and Saw Mill River Parkways were abolished at midnight on October 31.

Luchow's, the historic German restaurant on 14th Street, burned in a suspicious fire on December 9. It had been vacant since 1982 when the restaurant moved uptown, where it quickly failed.

## 1995

On January 12 the New-York Historical Society auctioned off dozens of paintings at Sotheby's, many of them from the Thomas Jefferson Bryan Collection. Sotheby's had lent the society funds, for which the collection was used as collateral. At a later auction, the society sold Americana and New York items.

Broadway director George Abbott died at the age of 107 on January 31. He had created dozens of shows, including the 1932 hit *Twentieth Century*.

The Dow closed at 4,003 on February 23.





Luchow's.

After placing second for a few years, Fifth Avenue again had the world's highest rents for any retail street. At \$392 per square foot, it topped Tokyo's Ginza by \$7.

The 88-year-old Fulton Fish Market was partially destroyed by a four-alarm fire on March 29, days after a crackdown on organized crime. Fire marshals determined it was arson. Business had dropped from about \$3 billion a year to \$1 billion since the early 1980s. On October 13, six firms controlling the unloading of trucks were evicted for mob ties.

At midnight on April 2, the Transit Police merged into the New York Police Depart-

ment. On May 1, the Housing Police merged into the NYPD.

On April 30, Federated Department Stores dropped the venerable A&S name, turning the stores into Macy's, Stern's, or Bloomingdale's. Federated acquired A&S in 1949, Macy's in December 1994.

On May 4, the *Daily News* moved from its Art Deco skyscraper at East 42nd Street and Second Avenue (Howells and Hood, architects) to rented quarters at 33rd Street and 10th Avenue.

Both musicals that opened on Broadway were nominated for a Tony. *Sunset Boulevard* beat out *Smokey Joe's Cafe*.

On June 5 a J train slammed into the back of an M train on the Williamsburg Bridge, killing the motorman and injuring 50 passengers. Investigators blamed the motorman for running a red signal at high speed but admitted the spacing of the signals and the train's poor brakes were contributing factors.

Shelley Taylor-Smith swam the 28.5 miles around Manhattan in record time: 5 hours, 45 minutes, and 25 seconds. In 1998 she won the race for the fifth time.

In a short-sighted budgetary move on August 3, the Giuliani administration sold WNYC-TV, channel 31, for \$207 million.

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers formed UNITE. Amalgamated earlier had absorbed the Textile Workers Union (1976)

and the United Hatters, Cap and Military Workers' International Union (1983).

The Dean Street station along the Franklin Avenue shuttle, the system's least used (82 tokens a day), was closed; it was the first closing since the Worth Street station in 1962. Trains first ran along the shuttle's 1.7-mile route in 1878.

On October 7, Pope John Paul II held a rain-soaked mass in Central Park for 125,000. The pontiff exclaimed, "This is New York. The great, great New York. This is Central Park. The beautiful surroundings of Central Park invite us to reflect on a more sublime beauty: the beauty of every human being made in the image and likeness of God, and the beauty that is God living in our hearts through the Holy Spirit." The pope also said mass at Giant Stadium and Aqueduct Racetrack.

Radical lawyer William Kunstler died.

The transit fare rose to \$1.50 on November 12, despite a lawsuit by the Urban League and the Straphangers Campaign, claiming it was discriminatory because suburban riders faced a smaller increase and paid a smaller percentage of the cost.

The Dow closed at 5,023 on November 21.

The Brooklyn College Chess Team won the Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament on December 29. Team members, all immigrants, were Gennady Sagalchick from Minsk, Yury Lapshun from Odessa, Alex Kalikshiteyn from Tashkent, Oleg Shalumov from Baku, and Alex Beltre from Santo Domingo.

## 1996

On January 7 and 8 a blizzard dumped 21 inches of snow on the city. The winter of 1995/96 set the record for the most snow: 75.6 inches.

Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko joined the faculty of Queens College.

The Coast Guard abandoned Governors Island, its home for 30 years. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan arranged for the federal government to offer the island for \$1, but squabbling between Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki prevented them from accepting. In 2002, President Bush agreed to transfer the island to the state.

Robert Spano became conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, succeeding Dennis Russell Davies.

At the end of the model year, Chrysler discontinued the *New Yorker*, the longest continuous nameplate in the industry at the time. (Chrysler had dropped the *Fifth Avenue* a few years earlier.) The *New Yorker* had graced the Chrysler line since its introduction for the 1939 World's Fair. Buick's *Park Avenue* survives.

After permitting the Flushing Meadows Aquacade to decay, Parks Commissioner Henry Stern and Queens Borough President Claire Shulman gleefully ordered its demolition. The slab remained an eyesore for years.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage opened at Battery Place.



Demolition of the Aquacade. (JAK)

On May 28 the Brooklyn Brewing Company opened at 79 North 11th Street in Williamsburg, the first commercial brewery in the borough since 1976. (The Park Slope Brew Pub had opened in 1994, but produced beer only for on-site consumption.)

All bridges and tunnels accepted the E-Z Pass.

The Kearny Connection, linking Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line with the old Morris and Essex line, opened on June 10, enabling New Jersey Transit passengers to ride into Penn Station without changing trains.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton dedicated the Eleanor Roosevelt Monument at 72nd Street and Riverside on October 5.

On October 14, the Dow closed at 6,010. The Dow had doubled in only five and a half years.

Joseph Mitchell died. He had arrived from North Carolina at age 21 and wrote for the *World-Telegram*, the *Herald Tribune*, and the *New Yorker*. His pieces are collected in *Up in the Old Hotel* and *My Ears Are Bent*.

After dropping the first two games, the Yankees swept the next four to capture the World Series from the Atlanta Braves. In the third game they trailed 6–0 but prevailed in extra innings. The Yanks won the clincher, 3–2, at the stadium on October 26.

On December 15, St. John's University's men's soccer team won the NCAA Division I championship, defeating Florida International University, 4–1.

There were 984 murders in the city, the first time the number had fallen below 1,000 in over a decade.

## 1997

Broadway composer Burton Lane died on January 5. Born in Manhattan on February 2, 1912, he was working in Tin Pan Alley by the time he was 18. He composed *Finian's Rainbow* (1947) and *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (1970). He also wrote "(I Like New York in June) How about You."

To avoid spending billions on filtration plants, the city announced plans on January 21 to spend \$660 million to safeguard the Catskills watershed from fertilizer and farm waste and sewage from exurban sprawl.

On February 13, the Dow closed at 7,022.44; on July 16, it closed at 8,038.88.

On the afternoon of February 23, Ali Abu Kamal, a 69-year-old Palestinian immigrant, shot seven people, one fatally, on the observation deck of the Empire State Building, and then shot himself; he wanted to kill "Zionists." He had acquired the gun illegally in Florida. The observation deck reopened two days later with airport-style security.

On February 25 the City Council legalized tattoo parlors, which had been outlawed in 1961 after a hepatitis outbreak.

Rap star Biggie Smalls, the Notorious B.I.G. (born Christopher G. Wallace in Brooklyn), was gunned down in a drive-by

shooting in Los Angeles on March 9. On March 19, his funeral procession wound through Fort Greene and Bedford Stuyvesant; fans danced on cars and scuffled with police. Ten were arrested, including a *Times* reporter who objected when officers used pepper spray on her.

On Saturday, March 22, the NYU women's basketball team won the NCAA Division III championship, defeating the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire.

On April 1, Paul R. Verkuil, the Supreme Court–appointed master determining the fate of Ellis Island, ruled that New York owned only the original 3 acres; the remaining 24.5 acres belonged to New Jersey. An 1834 agreement granted New Jersey the lands underwater around the island, which over the years grew by the use of landfill (some from the excavation for the subway). To keep the main building under a single jurisdiction, Verkuil granted New York five acres. The Supreme Court rejected New York's appeal on May 26, 1998.

Poet Allen Ginsberg, a central figure of the Beat Generation, died on April 5 at age 70. He first came to notice with his 1956 poem "Howl!"

The famous news zipper (originally the "motogram") wrapping the Times Tower in Times Square was dismantled on May 5; part went to the Museum of the City of New York. The *Times* operated it from 1928 to 1961; *Life* magazine from 1965 to 1977; *Newsday* from 1986 to 1994; and Dow Jones beginning in 1995. A digital zipper with 235,000 light-emitting diodes replaced

thousands of 30-watt bulbs and went into operation on July 29.

At the Myrtle Avenue station on the BMT, the last of the old token turnstiles was removed on May 13, replaced by new models accepting the Metrocard.

On June 19, *Cats*, the Andrew Lloyd Weber musical based on the poems of T. S. Eliot, had its 6,138th performance, surpassing *A Chorus Line* as the longest-running Broadway musical. *Cats* opened on October 7, 1982, and closed after 7,485 performances on September 10, 2000.

The New York Liberty of the new Women's National Basketball Association took the court for the first time on June 21, beating the Sparks in Los Angeles. They won their home opener at Madison Square Garden against the Phoenix Mercury on June 29. They lost the championship to the Houston Comets on August 30.

The Duke Ellington Memorial was dedicated at the northeast corner of Central Park on July 1. (Frawley Circle was renamed Duke Ellington Circle in 1995.) Cabaret star Bobby Short had begun campaigning for the monument in 1979. According to Short, Ellington "always considered himself a New Yorker. He spoke for New York in a very special way. He became, for many, the symbol of jazz in New York." The monument designed by Robert Graham is unworthy of its subject.

On July 4 double fares were eliminated, with free transfers between buses and subways and free passage on the Staten Island Ferry.

Reverend Floyd Flake's \$23 million Cathedral of the Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church, at 110th Avenue and Merrick Boulevard in Jamaica, was dedicated on July 27. A congressman since 1986. Flake resigned to be a full-time minister.

The Asian long-horned beetle, another destructive alien pest, appeared in the city, probably arriving in a shipment from China. To fight the infestation, the Parks Department chopped down dozens of mature trees.

On August 9, Officer Justin Volpe assaulted Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in a bathroom in the 70th Precinct in Flatbush, shoving a broken broom handle into Louima's rectum. Volpe was convicted in June 1999 and sentenced to 30 years. Other officers who attempted to cover up the crime were also convicted.

Mayor Giuliani was reelected, defeating Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger.

Author and preservationist Brendan Gill died at age 83 on December 27. Associated with the *New Yorker* since 1936 and author of the "Skyline" column since 1987, he was instrumental in saving Grand Central Terminal and the Lever Building.

On December 29, the Borough of Manhattan Community College chess team won the 52nd Pan-American Inter-collegiate Tournament, their third national title.

# 1998

Comedian Henny Youngman died on February 24. He had lunched at the Friar's Club every day and invariably told the maître d', "Get me a table near a waiter."

For the first time since record keeping began in 1869, February ended without any snow. The winter of 1997/98 was the second warmest on record, averaging 39.4°; 1889/90 averaged 40°.

Former congresswoman Bella Abzug, known for her liberalism, feminism, and large hats, died at age 77 on March 31. She was elected to the House from the West Side in 1970 but left in 1976 in a failed bid for the Senate. Mario Cuomo characterized her style as "agree with me or I'll make you deaf."

On April 6, after Citicorp and the Travelers Group merged as Citigroup, the world's largest financial institution, the Dow closed at 9,033.23. The great bull market had begun on April 15, 1982.

The men's tennis team of Kingsborough Community College won the National Junior College Athletic Association championship on May 21, defeating DuPage College of Illinois, the first national sports title for any CUNY school since 1950.

Bowing to Mayor Giuliani's shrill demands, CUNY trustees voted on May 26 to end remediation in the senior colleges. A judge later ruled the action illegal because it violated the open-meetings law. They repassed the rule in January 1999.

On June 6, after four days of deliberation, a jury of seven women and five men sentenced Darrel K. Harris to death for murdering three people while robbing a Brooklyn social club in 1996; it was the first application of the state's restored death penalty. (The last execution was in 1963.)

The Flushing Branch of the Queens Borough Public Library (James Stewart Polshek and Associates, architects) was dedicated on June 20, the fourth library building on the site.

On June 24, the City Council granted benefits to the domestic partners of municipal employees, regardless of marital status or sexual orientation.

Grand Ferry Park opened near the Domino sugar refinery in Williamsburg on July 9. El Puente, a neighborhood youth group, helped create the park.

Choreographer Jerome Robbins, artistic director of the New York City Ballet, died at age 79 on July 29. His credits included *On the Town*, *The King and I*, *Gypsy*, *West Side Story*, *Peter Pan*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

In July, having won all court challenges, the city began shutting down sex shops and strip clubs, defined as a public nuisance in the mayor's quality-of-life crusade.

Water flowed through a 13.5-mile section of the third water tunnel on August 13. Sandhogs had begun digging the multibillion-dollar project in 1970 (the section had actually been completed in 1993); 24 lives

were lost during the project, 1 for each mile and each year of work, including a child who fell into an open shaft. Completion of the entire 14-foot-diameter tunnel was slated for 2020.

The Yankees won a record 112th game on September 25. (The 1927 Yankees won 110 games.) They won their 24th world championship on October 21, beating the San Diego Padres in four straight, the seventh World Series sweep by the Yankees.

Grand Central Terminal was rededicated on October 1 after a 10-year, \$200 million restoration, following a master plan by Beyer-Blinder-Belle.

On November 4 at Cipriani Wall Street, rapper Puffy Combs hosted a 29th birthday party for himself, with Muhammad Ali, Martha Stewart, and Duchess Sarah Ferguson in attendance, as well as 3,000 gate-crashers; it was an excessive mess. A year later, Combs was arrested for gun possession after a shooting in a Manhattan nightclub. He was acquitted.

WNEW-FM fired longtime deejays Scott Muni and Dave Herman on November 13. Muni had joined the station in 1967 as the format changed from Top 40 to progressive rock. Jonathan Schwartz, a disc jockey there from 1967 to 1976, noted: “WNEW-FM was indigenous to life in New York, and reflected the world around it culturally, musically and sexually.” The station “where rock lives” went all talk on September 13, 1999.

After revelations of corruption and election fraud surrounding District

Council 37’s contract ratification vote in 1996, the parent union installed Lee Saunders as trustee. President Stanley Hill stepped aside, taking an “unpaid leave.”

On December 8 a funeral was held for Flushing’s dying Weeping Beech Tree, the first living landmark; it had been planted in 1847 by Samuel Bowne Parsons.

The year ended with only 628 murders, the fewest since 1964.

## 1999

On February 4, four police officers looking for a serial rapist fired 41 shots at Amadou Diallo, an immigrant who lived with other African street peddlers, as he entered the vestibule of his Bronx apartment building. The officers were indicted but, after a change of venue to Albany, acquitted on all counts.

The New York Philharmonic performed its 13,000th concert on February 18, broadcast over WQXR. Kurt Masur conducted Gian Carlo Menotti’s 1952 Violin Concerto and Gustav Mahler’s “Das Lied von der Erde,” highlighting the ensemble’s devotion to American music and its historic link to Mahler.

Recordmart, a famed mecca for Latin music on the mezzanine of the Times Square subway station, was evicted on March 1 after nearly 40 years. Boston Properties, developers of a skyscraper above, refused to accommodate the shop.



The Weeping Beech in Flushing, 1942. (QBPL)

In a 166-page decision on March 6, Administrative Law judge Richard McGill of New Jersey ruled that Hartz Mountain Industries could not build 160-foot towers in Weehawken because they would block the view of the Manhattan skyline from the entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel. “The views in question,” he wrote, “are a world-class amenity that encourages people to live, work and locate businesses in the area. . . . The views in question can fairly be described in terms such as ‘magnificent’ and ‘spectacular.’ Indeed, the view of the New York skyline is nationally and internationally renowned. Petitioner’s proposal does not satisfy the requirement that it

must not block the views in question to the maximum extent practicable.”

On March 30 the Dow closed at 10,006.78. On Tuesday, May 4, 24 trading days later, the Dow closed at 11,014.69.

On April 1, park rangers and police officers used a tranquilizer gun to capture a coyote in Central Park. Coyotes already inhabited Van Cortlandt Park.

On April 8, the Bronx Museum of Art on the Grand Concourse opened its permanent exhibit, featuring works by contemporary African American, Asian American, and Latin American artists.



Lucille Lortel, the Queen of Off-Broadway, died at age 98. Over a 70-year career, she produced plays by Sam Shepard, Langford Wilson, Sean O’Casey, and Terrance McNally. Her production of *The Threepenny Opera* ran from 1954 to 1961 at the Theater De Lys on Christopher Street, renamed in her honor in 1981. She also produced plays at her White Barn Theater in Westport, Connecticut.

*Wall Drawing No. 896, Colors/Curves*, the bold new mural by Sol LeWitt, was unveiled on April 24 at the opening of the new Christie’s headquarters at 20 Rockefeller Plaza; it was the first new mural at Rockefeller Center since 1946. The Landmarks Commission permitted new three-story windows on the facade; according to Christie’s chairman Christopher Burge, “Our landlords were keen that we do something to animate the street.”

In May, a propeller was installed to force fresh water through the tunnel connecting Buttermilk Channel and the notoriously foul Gowanus Canal. By July, jellyfish, blue crabs, and schools of fish were spotted in the once-dead waterway.

After Mayor Giuliani threatened to auction off city-owned lots that had become community gardens, Bette Midler and the Trust for Public Land stepped in and agreed to purchase the gardens on May 12.

The Chinese Scholar’s Garden opened at Sailors’ Snug Harbor.

*Time Sculpture*, a three-sided clock tower designed by Philip Johnson and paid for

by Movado (featuring Movado clocks on each side), was dedicated on May 19 in a park across from Lincoln Center. Councilwoman Ronnie Eldridge called it “just another piece of advertising . . . the creeping privatization of parkland.”

In June, Iman El Hajji Izak-El Mu’eed Pasha, leader of the Shabazz Mosque in Harlem since 1998, was sworn in as the NYPD’s first Muslim chaplain. Of 40,000 officers, 102 identified themselves as Muslim.

The Staten Island Yankees played their first game on June 20 at the College of Staten Island. The City Council allocated funds for a new stadium in St. George.

On June 25, Rochelle T. “Rocky” Jones became the fire department’s first woman captain. She and 41 other women had joined the force after passing a court-ordered physical test that replaced the FDNY’s own harsher test. At the time of her promotion, there were only 35 women among New York’s Bravest.

Fred C. Trump died at age 93 on June 25. He built 27,000 apartments, including Shore Haven in Bensonhurst (1949), Beach Haven in Coney Island (1950), and the 3,800-unit Trump Village in Coney Island (1963). When growing up in Woodhaven, he founded his first construction company, to build garages. His son Donald once remarked that it was fortunate his father limited himself to Brooklyn and Queens: “You know, being the son of somebody, it could have been competition to me. This way, I got Manhattan all to myself.” We are all grateful.

Donald Trump's first two towers on the old Penn Central Railroad Yards, between 59th and 72nd Streets, opened. Jimmy Breslin wrote: "I don't see what right people have to buy the sky. If you did that in a movie I'd tell you to sit down."

Beginning on July 1, new telephone listings in Manhattan were assigned area code 646 instead of 212; on October 1, new listings in the outer boroughs were assigned area code 347.

John F. Kennedy Jr.; his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy; and her sister, Lauren Bessette, perished when their private plane plunged into the waters off Martha's Vineyard on July 16. After graduating from NYU Law School, Kennedy had worked for the Manhattan District Attorney. He lived in Tribeca at 20 North Moore Street.

On July 26, the last Checker Cab was retired by order of the Taxi and Limousine Commission. Earl Johnson bought the cab new in 1978 for \$8,000; it had a million miles on the odometer when retired. The Checkers Motors Company of Kalamazoo produced the legendary vehicle from the 1920s to 1982.

July was the warmest month on record in the city, averaging 81.4°, as well as the driest, with precipitation of just 0.44 inches.

On August 15, 40,000 gathered to hear the Dalai Lama in Central Park.

In September, helicopters and planes sprayed malathion to kill mosquitoes blamed for an outbreak of the West Nile

virus, an Old World disease previously unknown in North America. Seven people died of the disease, and there were 31 confirmed cases. The disease was traced to a shipment of imported birds.

In the fall, lobsters in Long Island Sound died off by the hundreds of thousands. Researchers identified a parasite, the paramoeba, but lobstermen cited pesticide runoff. Until 1999, the Sound yielded 11 million pounds of lobster annually, placing it behind only Maine and Massachusetts.

"Sensation" opened at the Brooklyn Museum on October 2, a controversial exhibit of works by contemporary British artists, including *The Holy Virgin Mary*, by Chris Ofili, who applied elephant dung to the canvas. Calling it "Catholic bashing," Mayor Giuliani cut off public funding and sued to remove the trustees and evict the museum. On November 1, Judge Nina Gershon of the Federal District Court in Brooklyn ruled the city's stated intent "is directly related not just to the content of the exhibit, but to the particular viewpoints expressed. There can be no greater showing of a First Amendment violation. . . . No objective observer could conclude that the museum's showing of the work of an individual artist which is viewed by some as sacrilegious constitutes endorsement of antireligious views by the city or the mayor, or, for that matter, by the museum, any more than that the museum's showing of religiously reverential works constitutes an endorsement of them or religion."

In the National League Championship Series, the Mets fell to Atlanta, losing the

sixth game on a bases-loaded walk in extra innings.

The Yankees beat the Boston Red Sox for the pennant. Yogi Berra told center fielder Bernie Williams, “We’ve been playing these guys for 80 years. They cannot beat us.”

The Yankees went on to sweep the Atlanta Braves, taking the final game on October 27—their 12th straight World Series victory, third title in four years, and 25th world championship.

Motor vehicles killed a record 34 bicyclists.

# 2000-

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## 2000

On March 16, undercover officer Anthony Vasquez shot and killed Haitian immigrant Patrick Dorismond. They scuffled after Dorismond objected to being asked about buying drugs. At his funeral in Flatbush on March 25, thousands of mourners confronted police in riot gear; 27 were arrested, and 23 officers and seven civilians were injured.

On April 27, Mayor Giuliani revealed that he had prostate cancer. On May 3, he admitted that Judith Nathan was his “very good friend.” At a May 10 press conference, he announced his separation from his wife, Donna Hanover (before he told her). All agreed that, given his medical condition, he should not run for Senate against First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Jazz great Tito Puente, the Mambo King, died on May 31. Thousands watched his funeral procession along 110th Street. He was born to Puerto Rican parents in East Harlem in 1923.

John Cardinal O’Connor died on May 3 at age 80. Bishop Edward Michael Egan was installed as his successor on June 18.

Several women were molested in Central Park by an unruly crowd after the Puerto Rican Day parade. Mayor Giuliani then banned alcohol at all street fairs.

On June 30, the last residential hotels for women closed. The Ladies Christian Union had run Katharine House (118 West 13th Street) and Roberts House (151 East 36th Street) for unmarried women between ages 18 and 25. The organization

thought it could better serve the needs of young women with proceeds from the sale of the buildings.

On September 12, all 10 lanes of the Queensboro Bridge were finally open, including a pedestrian and bicycle lane.

A teenager set a fire that destroyed the 19th-century St. Elizabeth Orphanage on the grounds of the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin at Mount Loretto, overlooking Raritan Bay on Staten Island. Once home to 350 girls, the orphanage had been vacant since 1992.

New York again enjoyed a Subway Series. On October 26, the Yankees beat the Mets, 4–2, in the fifth game at Shea for their third straight World Championship.

According to the 2000 census (released March 15, 2001), the population reached an all-time high of 8,008,278. (How many illegal aliens were missed is another matter.)

## 2001

An earthquake measuring 2.5 on the Richter scale shook the city on January 17.

On January 28, the Baltimore Ravens defeated the Giants in Super Bowl XXXV, 34–7.

St. John's University won the NCAA Fencing Championship.

The last garbage barge arrived at the Fresh Kills landfill on March 22. The dump had opened in 1948.

In March, the last coal-burning furnaces in public schools were retired.

Natural gas turbines, installed over community objections by the State Power Authority at six sites across the city, went on line in June.

Mel Brooks's musical *The Producers* won a record 12 Tony awards on June 3.

On June 24, in the first game played at the new \$71 million city-funded minor-league ballpark in St. George, the Staten Island Yankees beat the Hudson Valley Renegades, 3–1. The Brooklyn Cyclones, the Mets affiliate, won their first game in their new Coney Island ballpark (the site of Steeplechase) on June 25, beating the Mahoning Valley Scrappers, 3–2.

The walkway on the Manhattan Bridge reopened on June 25, after being closed for 40 years.

On July 30, Harlem welcomed former president Bill Clinton when he moved into his 125th Street office.

On August 25 the Ronaldo Paulino All-Stars from the South Bronx lost the U.S. final in the Little League World Series. Within days it was revealed that their star pitcher, Dominican-born Danny Almonte, was 14 years old and thus ineligible to play.

On the morning of September 11, Muslim terrorists hijacked two airliners and flew



World Trade Center, September 11, 2001. (Hal Bromm)

them into the World Trade Center. The first plane hit Tower One at 8:45 A.M., the second hit Tower Two at 9:03 A.M. The extreme heat caused the towers to collapse, killing nearly 3,000 people, including 343

firefighters, 23 police officers, 37 Port Authority police officers, and other emergency personnel. The five other buildings in the World Trade Center complex also collapsed.

Trading on Wall Street resumed on September 17. The New York Stock Exchange closed at 8,920, a drop of 684.81 points, or 7.1 percent, the highest one-day drop in history (but not the greatest percentage loss). NASDAQ closed at 1,579, a 115.83 point decline (6.8 percent). It dropped 14 percent within a week.

After defeating the Oakland Athletics and the Seattle Mariners for the American League pennant, the Yankees fell to the Arizona Diamondbacks in the World Series, losing the seventh game 3-2 on November 4 when closer Mariano Rivera gave up two runs in the bottom of the ninth inning. The Series was played in November for the first time after the season was suspended due to the attack on the World Trade Center.

The mayoral primary scheduled for September 11 was held on September 25 (the first time an election had been postponed). Mark Green, Fernando Ferrer, Alan Hevesi, and Peter Vallone vied for the Democratic nomination; Green

defeated Ferrer in a run-off. Businessman Mike Bloomberg defeated Herman Badillo for the Republican nomination. Bloomberg was elected with 51 percent of the vote on November 6, the first time one Republican succeeded another as mayor. He spent \$75.5 million of his own money on his campaign, about \$100 a vote. Green participated in the city's campaign finance program and spent \$16.6 million.

On November 12 an American Airlines jet bound for Santo Domingo crashed soon after take-off in the Rockaways, Queens, killing all 260 passengers and crew, and five people on the ground.

On December 11, the new \$22 million home of the American Museum of Folk Art opened at 45 West 53rd Street. The architects were Tod Williams, Billie Tsien & Associates.

On December 16, for the 231st consecutive year, Handel's *Messiah* was performed at Trinity Church.

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