



NEIGHBORHOOD  
HISTORY GROUP

# BLOOMINGDALE BULLETIN

Discovering, preserving, and sharing our history

**Issue No. 22**

**Spring 2026**

## ***Happy Spring!***

The Spring season should be especially delightful this year after such a challenging winter. As usual, we have many opportunities for you to learn more about our neighborhood. In April and June, join our colleagues at the Columbus-Amsterdam BID for two events they've planned for us. Share your feedback, comments, and ideas [here](#). We hope you enjoy it all and will choose to support us with a [donation](#).

## ***Upcoming Programs***

### **Neighborhood Walking Tours**

*Jim Mackin*

**Wednesday, April 22**

**Wednesday, May 13**

**Wednesday, June 10**

Free. No reservations needed.

Meet at the south end of Straus Park, Broadway and 106<sup>th</sup> Street, at 6:00 pm.



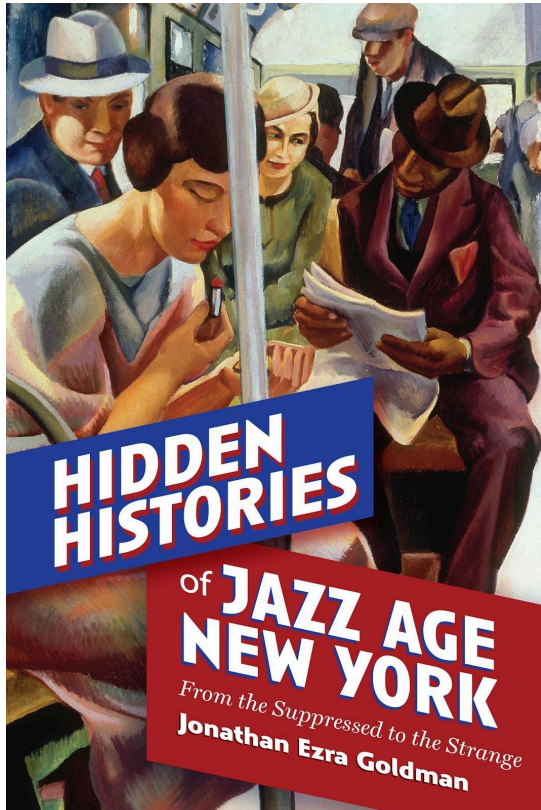
Jim Mackin

Springtime is walk time and the perfect time to join the popular neighborhood tour with Jim Mackin, NYC historian and author of the popular book, [Notable New Yorkers of Manhattan's Upper West Side](#). You'll see the places and hear stories about the people who make the history of Bloomingdale so rich. Tours vary monthly and last between one and two hours.

## Hidden Histories of Jazz Age New York

Jonathan Goldman

Tuesday, June 23, 6:30 pm



Based on his new book, Jonathan Goldman offers a sweeping, vivid, and deeply human portrait of New York City in the 1920s—far beyond the classic images of flappers, speakeasies, and Wall Street excess. Drawing from a vast array of overlooked archives and personal accounts, he illuminates the everyday lives and struggles of New Yorkers whose stories rarely make it into mainstream histories.

With a special focus on Bloomingdale, the talk will traverse entertainment, politics, art, technology, labor, crime, and daily rituals to reveal a city negotiating explosive growth, cultural brilliance, and profound inequality.

From the Harlem Renaissance and Prohibition to immigration reform and the rise of mass media, he interlaces major

historical forces with intimate, surprising vignettes: an all-female police platoon, a Black amusement park closed before opening day, an Arabic literary salon, Puerto Rican socialist cigar workers, Lesbian cafés, toxic dumps, overcrowded jails, and Ku Klux Klan recruitment sites in the outer boroughs.

Goldman also offers fresh perspectives on prominent figures—Marcus Garvey, Dorothy Parker, Babe Ruth—placing them within the tumultuous, exhilarating, and often unjust realities of the Jazz Age.

This will be a free Zoom presentation. Check Upcoming Events on our [website](#) for the link.

# Past Programs

## Spatializing History: An Interactive Map of the Bloomingdale Building Database

Abigail Jack

January 29, 2026

The [Bloomingdale Building Database](#) was released in 2022, the product of more than three years of research and field work by BNHG members. The database was originally designed mainly to answer two questions BNHG is often asked: “How old is my building?” and “Who designed it?”

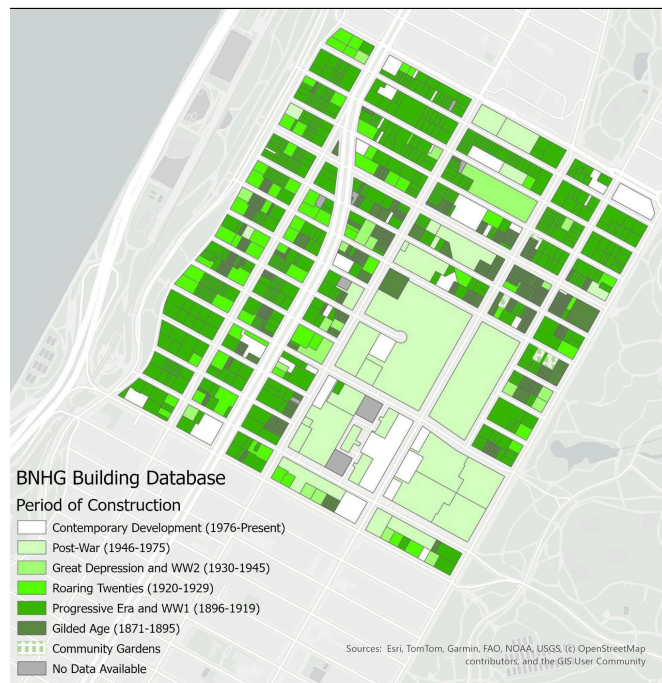
Now, the database has been enhanced and is represented visually in an interactive map, making the answers easier to find and a lot more fun. Check the BNHG [website](#) to try it out.

The map includes all of the approximately 1,056 buildings in every block and lot from the north side of West 96th Street to the south side of West 110th Street between Central Park West and Riverside Drive.

You can click on the map and instantly view information about the building in that location, including the street address, the architect, the number of floors and, if it's a residential building, the number of apartments, and more. The new enhancements also let you see what notable people lived there along with links to other resources.

Abigail Jack created the interactive map and added enhancements to the database. She is a recent graduate of Barnard College and a member of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group.

You can see a video of the program [here](#).



## **An Angel in Bloomingdale: A Look into the Life of the Artist Angelo Romano**

*Angel Roman, Michael Gonzalez, Peter Arndtsen*

February 26, 2026

Angelo Romano was a beloved neighborhood artist whose creative spirit left an enduring mark on Bloomingdale. Spanish born, he left Madrid to travel to Argentina and Brazil as a merchant marine before finding his artistic home in New York. Many of his works were inspired by his travels and by those he held close to his heart.



Angelo Romano

In his later years, he made his way to Bloomingdale where he became known for his paintings of angels. These were inspired by everyday New Yorkers and children whose stories he captured through his work with schools and local organizations.



This program celebrated his life and work, and included a series of video interviews with those who knew him best as friends, collaborators, and community members, who all reflected on the many lives he touched and the lasting resonance of his art.

You can see a video of the program on our [website](#).

## **Secrets of the Schinasi: The Mystery Mansion of Riverside Drive**

*Stephanie Azzarone*

Thursday, March 26, 6:30 pm

In 1909, a bright white villa appeared on the northeast corner of Riverside Drive and 107<sup>th</sup> Street. For much of the following century, it was surrounded by scaffolding and was a mystery to all who passed by.

Today, the Schinasi Mansion is the jewel in the neighborhood's crown. It is not only the sole freestanding, privately-owned villa on all of the Drive, but is also a designated New York City Landmark, one of the few Bloomingdale landmarks that is residential.



Schinasi Residence, Riverside Drive at 107<sup>th</sup> Street

The presentation reveals the true history of the mansion -- who has lived there and the various ways it has been used over time -- while also exploring the architectural elements that make the building itself so special.

Stephanie Azzarone is a member of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group Planning Committee and the author of [\*Heaven on the Hudson: Mansions, Monuments and Marvels of Riverside Park\*](#). Her newest book, [\*Fabulous Fountains of New York\*](#), shares the delights of waterworks in the Bloomingdale neighborhood and throughout the city. A former journalist, Stephanie currently leads walking tours based on her books.

You can see a video of the program on our [website](#).

## ***The Bloomingdale History Collection is Ready to Grow***

Do you have some old photographs, papers, books or other materials related to the Bloomingdale neighborhood? We invite you to [contact us](#) about adding them to the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group Library Collection.

This is a wealth of materials collected by BNHG since 2003 and is a rich resource for anyone interested in researching or browsing the history of the people, organizations, businesses, and institutions that have made the Bloomingdale neighborhood so unique.

The Collection is housed in a file cabinet at the Bloomingdale Branch of the New York Public Library, near the first-floor circulation desk. The materials are catalogued by theme and subject, which you can see [here](#).

### **Highlights of the Archive Collection**

Here are just a few highlights of the Collection.

- The Old Community  
A vibrant community of African-Americans on West 98th and 99th Streets between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue from the early 1930s until the mid-1950s, was dislocated when the urban renewal project commissioned by Robert Moses cleared the 20 acres of land on which Park West Village subsequently was built.

- **Manhattantown Demolition**  
The 1950s slum clearance urban renewal project, which became Park West Village in the 1960s, was marked by multiple redesigns, financial irresponsibility, and the beginnings of questioning about Robert Moses' approach to city development.
- **The Home for Respectable Aged Indigent Females**  
Founded as a charity in 1814, this was a residence for impoverished older women, many of them widows of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. It is now a landmarked building that became New York's first official youth hostel.
- **Landmarking Reports**  
These spiral-bound reports detail all the buildings in landmarked historic districts in our area. They were donated by the Neighborhood Preservation Center.
- **The Salwen collection**  
Peter Salwen donated a collection of periodicals, many of which include his own entertaining articles about Upper West Side history, as well as smaller items.

### **Books about the neighborhood**

BNHG maintains a collection of books about the area, located on dedicated shelves on the first floor of the library. This collection began with books donated to BNHG by well-known New York City historian Peter Salwen for reference use in the library. It has been supplemented with books from various sources over the years -- and there's room for more.

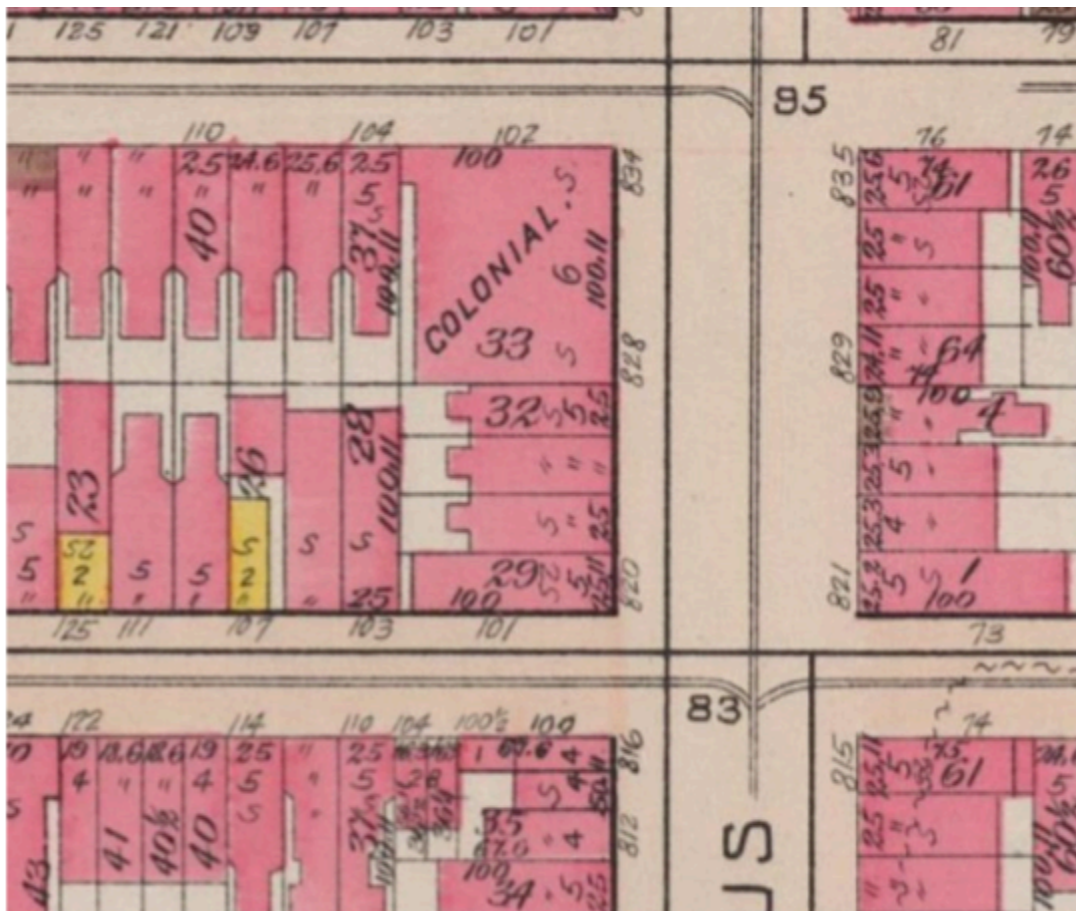
### **Digital Collections**

Select items from the BNHG Library Collection have been digitized and are available [here](#).

## **Colonial Hall, Columbus Avenue at West 101<sup>st</sup> Street**

By Pam Tice

In 1895, a new building appeared in our Bloomingdale neighborhood at Columbus Avenue and West 101<sup>st</sup> Street. Built “on top of a large warehouse,” constructed of brick and six stories tall, it was named Colonial Hall. The *New York Tribune* commented that the new structure was “in a neighborhood populated with a class of people who are able to pay for theatrical amusement.”



Bromley Atlas 1911, New York Public Library

Colonial Hall served as a meeting place for many groups, including district Republicans, the Bloomingdale Republican Club, the Civil War veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic's local Farragut Post, and Friends of Cuba. A

bicycle academy opened there, a popular feature of the bicycle craze that enveloped the city in the mid-1890s, providing a place to learn to ride.

My sources for these stories about Colonial Hall are New York City newspapers, which are available to researchers via various platforms. The stories I found reveal the social concerns of the time or offer an amusing account of how events unfolded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They add to our understanding of the social life of the growing Bloomingdale neighborhood.

The first story occurred early in Colonial Hall's history. In June 1895, Benjamin Steinrich applied for a permit for a "concert license." The license was described as a roof garden license, a popular summer venue in the years before air conditioning. Local property owners, led by Dr. Shaw, the minister at the West End Presbyterian Church, rose up in opposition.

In those days, people marched right down to the mayor's office, where a hearing on the application took place. Mayor William Lafayette Strong hosted the West Side opposition group, "crowded around the Mayor's desk." Mayor Strong was a Republican, elected on a fusion ticket with Democrats opposed to Tammany Hall.

As reported in the *New York Times*, the group stated, "They propose a bicycle school on the first floor, where respectable young girls will be drawn in, and before they are aware of the fact, they will be drinking with men in the roof garden."

The mayor did not approve the application, and the group left, satisfied that they had won their case. A few days later, the West Side Excise Tax Reform Association sent a jelly cake to the mayor to serve with his afternoon tea.

Colonial Hall was in the news again in October 1895 when the new owners, including Thomas P. Sinnott, applied for a saloon at the building. They were turned down.

In January 1896, *The World* reported that Mr. Sinnott, now helped by the Republican leader of the West Side, Abraham Gruber, applied once again for what was described as a roof garden. He presented a petition signed by local property owners who supported him. But one of the signators challenged the petition, saying that his agent had signed for him without his authority, and that "servant girls" had signed for other owners.

Mr. Sinnott won his case, with the mayor granting him a limited license for the summer, from July 8<sup>th</sup> to October 8<sup>th</sup>, for “orchestral instrumental music rendered exclusively by males, from 8 pm to 11 pm only, and a license to sell wines or beers in the auditorium during the performance.”

No performances by males or females in theatrical costumes would be permitted, nor would any mixing with the audience. Those who opposed the license were outraged, but unable to do much beyond writing lengthy letters to the newspapers. Dr. Shaw sent his letter expressing his outrage to more than one paper, where it was printed in full.

Early in 1897, Sinnott applied again for a permanent license. The mayor expressed his dissatisfaction with the way his earlier decision had been characterized by the opposition, but did not indicate that he opposed it. Mr. Gruber appeared to have convinced him not to oppose it.

The *New York Herald* reported that the opposition declared that the roof garden had attracted “an undesirable class of young men and women, some of whom belonged in the Tenderloin.” Mayor Strong made a weak statement that there was “an atmosphere of immorality in all concert halls.” This reporting did not continue; it appears that Mr. Sinnott obtained his license.

In 1900, the *New York Herald* reported that Colonial Hall had two basketball teams, the Colonials, and that the teams sought to schedule games with other local teams. The building hosted Professor Lester’s classes in “dance and deportment.” It was the home of Thumann’s Bowling Alley, which housed the bowling leagues of the Archdiocese of New York.

The next story about Colonial Hall took place in November of 1901. A theatrical agent, Mr. Steele, handed out hundreds of red cards in the neighborhood, announcing that there would be a presentation of a Punch and Judy show. The admission for children was seven cents and a potato, which would be donated to a local children’s home. Adults accompanying a child would be charged ten cents. The meeting space held 400, but 1,200 children showed up, along with a few adults, according to the report in the *New York Times*.

The show was poor, and the children rioted, throwing potatoes, breaking windows, and swinging from the chandeliers until they broke. The police arrived and arrested Mr. Steele for giving a performance without a license, then lined up the children, marched them down the stairs, and out of the building.

Colonial Hall continued, with reports now limited to announcements of local meetings. The *New York Age*, New York's important black newspaper, reported in 1908 that the West Side's Property Owners Improvement Association sought a way to keep more Black people from moving into the neighborhood, citing the "Negro stronghold on West 99<sup>th</sup> Street."

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group highlighted this community, now known as "The Old Community," in a 2024 presentation available [here](#).

My last story about Colonial Hall occurred in May of 1914. A fire erupted on the fourth floor, where "miles of film" were stored by the Universal Film Company. The building was described as "loft space largely occupied by moving picture companies," according to the *New York Tribune*. The building's second floor was occupied by the Ramo Film Company and the Commercial Film Company. The fire attracted a large crowd, as the chemicals in the burning film ignited many explosions.

At the time of the fire, the fifth and sixth floors were occupied by the Helfand Abek Underwear Company. There were stores on the ground floor: an A&P, a Woolworth's, and a shoe store. The shoe store suffered water damage, but the other businesses were not reported as harmed.



1940 Tax Photo from the NYC Municipal Archives

Little was reported on Colonial Hall after this date. The Real Estate Owners Protective Association continued to meet there on the first Monday of each month. The machinists' union attempted to hold a meeting there in 1918, but the police advised the owner not to allow it, as they expected the meeting to become disorderly amid labor unrest during World War I.

I had hoped to find a photo of Colonial Hall in its early days, but did not. My colleague in the BNHG, Rob Garber, an expert on neighborhood buildings, examined the 1940 collection of New York City "tax photographs" and concluded that the photo of the building at the S/W corner of West 101 and Columbus is indeed Colonial Hall, still standing. He also

found a listing in the 1940 phone directory of a shoe store still operating on the ground floor.

Colonial Hall survived into the mid-1950s, when it was demolished to make way for the construction of the Frederick Douglass Houses, which now stand there

## Notable New Yorkers of Manhattan's Upper West Side

By Jim Mackin

Author of [Notable New Yorkers of Manhattan's Upper West Side](#)

### George S. Kaufman (1889 - 1961)

Playwright, humorist, journalist, director, and producer  
241 West 101st Street



George S.  
Kaufman

Kaufman won two Pulitzer Prizes and one Tony Award. He shared his first Pulitzer with Morrie Ryskind and Ira Gershwin in 1932 for the musical *Of Thee I Sing*. In 1937, he shared his second one with Moss Hart for the play *You Can't Take It with You*. His Tony was earned in 1951 for directing Bloomingdale resident Frank Loesser's musical *Guys and Dolls*.

Born in Pittsburgh, Kaufman proffered humorous writings to another Bloomingdale notable, Franklin P. Adams, which led to Kaufman's newspaper work. He was a drama reporter at the *New York Tribune* alongside another Bloomingdale denizen, Heywood Broun. Then, from 1917 to 1930, he was the drama editor at the *New York Times*. Adams, Broun, and Kaufman were core members of the famous Round Table at the Algonquin Hotel.

After Kaufman's first forgettable stage work in 1918, he wrote or directed something on Broadway every year from 1921 to 1958. Some of his work, such as *The Cocoanuts* and *Animal Crackers*, was for the Marx Brothers.

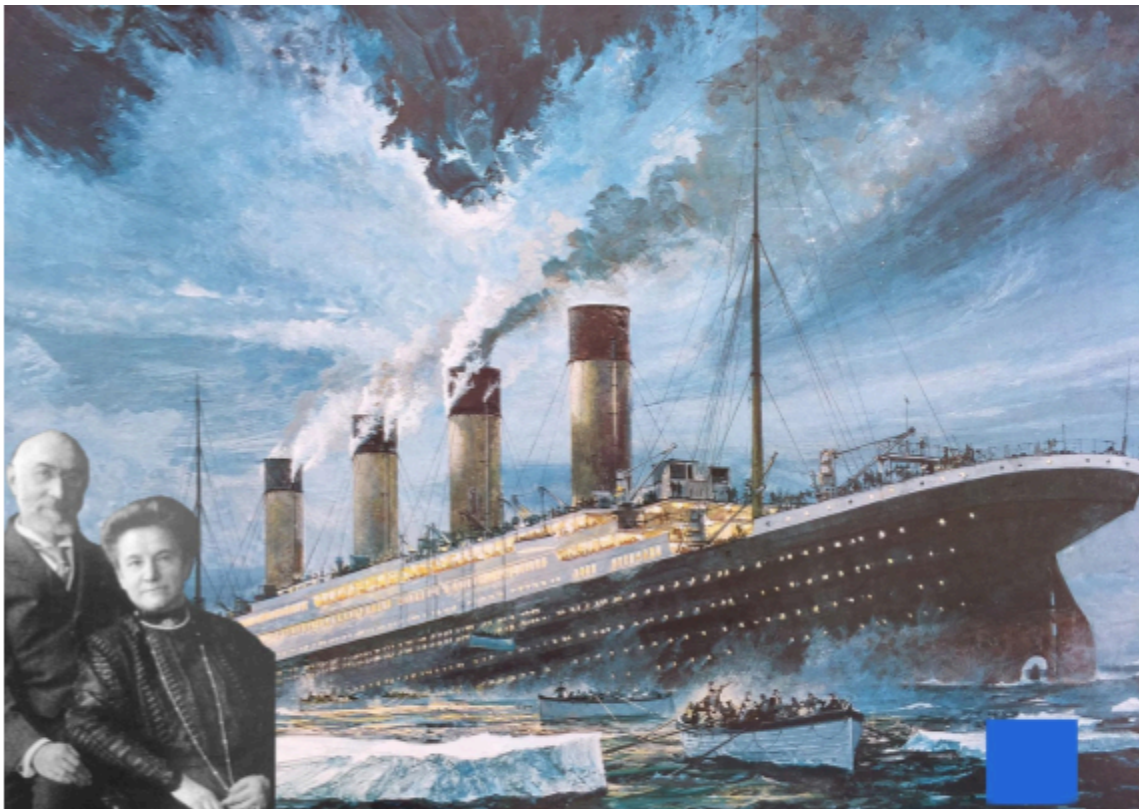
## ***Events in the Neighborhood***

### **Straus Park Spring Opening**

**Saturday, April 11, 2026, 12:00-4:00 pm**

West 106<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway

You know spring has arrived when the [Friends of Straus Park](#) host their opening celebration. This will be their commemoration of the 114<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. It includes a remembrance of Isador and Ida Straus, the members of the Straus family who perished when the ship sank on April 15, 1912, on its maiden voyage.



Isador and Ida Straus and the *Titanic*

A live presentation and display of items from the Straus historical archives will take place starting at 1:00. There will also be announcements of the park's spring and summer activities, including their 2026 concert series.

## **The Longest Table**

**June 14, 2026, 5:00-7:00 pm**

West 103<sup>rd</sup> Street between Broadway and West End Avenue

*Sponsored by the West 102-103rd Streets Block Association with the Columbus Amsterdam BID, Park to Park 103, HI NYC, Bloomingdale Restaurants, WSFSSH, and the Mt Sinai Halfway House*



A portion of The Longest Table 2025

On June 14, The Longest Table will reappear in Bloomingdale. This is a free community event where neighbors gather to share a meal and conversation. Tables and chairs are lined up along a car-free block of 103<sup>rd</sup> Street between Broadway and West End Avenue. People bring potluck dishes and settle into a picnic-like meal together. It was introduced in Bloomingdale last June and was a big hit. Find more information including FAQs [here](#).

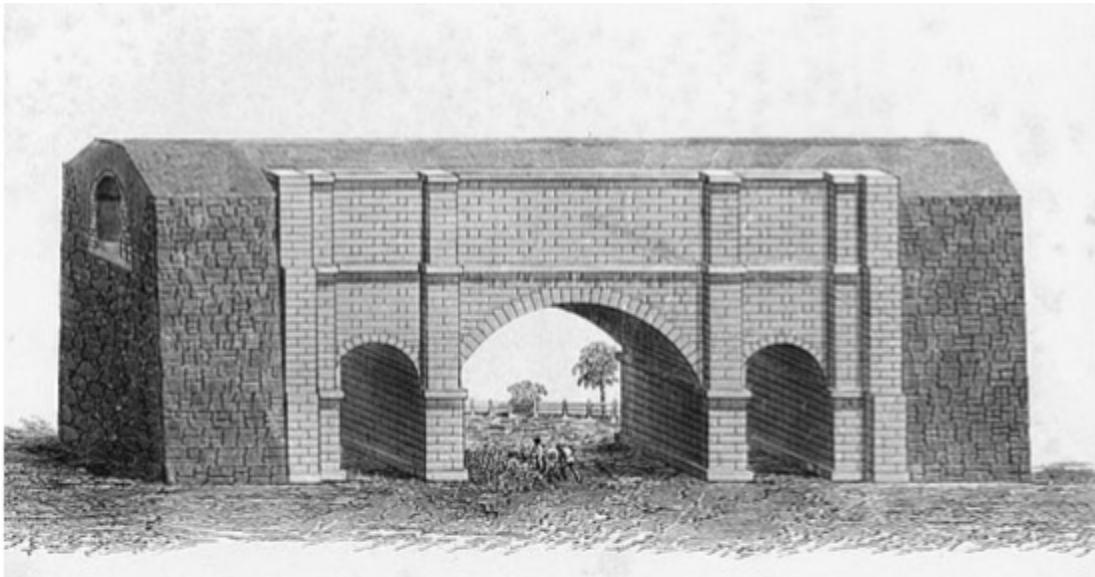
## ***Our Bloomingdale Wall***

*By Pam Tice*

We once had a wall running through our Bloomingdale neighborhood. When the Croton Aqueduct was built in the early 1840s, a portion of it had to be carried over the valley between West 102nd and West 95<sup>th</sup> Streets. The wall was named the Clendening Bridge after the large estate owner, John Clendening, as covered in [this post on the BNHG website](#).

The Croton Aqueduct ran through our neighborhood about 100 feet west of Columbus Avenue. The gatehouses at 113<sup>th</sup>, 119<sup>th</sup>, and 135<sup>th</sup> streets on Amsterdam are still standing. The Aqueduct was an above-ground horseshoe-shaped brick tunnel 8.5 feet high by 7.5 feet wide. It angled over from Amsterdam to Columbus at about 104/105 Streets, and then proceeded south in a straight line. On one of Jim Mackin's neighborhood walking tours, I remember seeing one of the angled buildings on West 105<sup>th</sup> Street, built before the Aqueduct was taken down in the 1870s.

The entire 41-mile Croton Aqueduct project was divided into 97 segments to distribute the building work among the various contractors. The Clendening Bridge was segment 94.



The Bloomingdale Wall drawn by Tower

A young engineer, Fayette B. Tower, worked on the Aqueduct project. Later, he would publish a book with numerous drawings, including this one of the

Clendening Bridge. In his book, he describes the 50-foot bridge structure built through the Valley for 1,900 feet. It was supported by a foundation wall of dry stonework, with three openings allowing crossovers, each with an arch of 20 feet for the carriageway and another 10 feet on each side for the sidewalks. The openings were at 98<sup>th</sup>, 99<sup>th</sup>, and 100<sup>th</sup> Streets. There were supposed to be crossovers at 96<sup>th</sup>, 97<sup>th</sup>, and 101<sup>st</sup> Streets, but to save money, they were not built. The Water Commissioners said at the time that it would be one or two centuries before the West Side would be opened for development.

The 1839 contract for the Clendening Bridge work was awarded to a contractor Bishop & Campbell. In April 1840, the *Commercial Advertiser* reported on a strike that started in Westchester County and soon spread to the “Vale of Clendening,” shutting down the work on the Aqueduct. The strikers, “men from the Emerald Isle,” were reportedly under the delusion that the “hard money system” did not apply to them. The contractors had been compelled to reduce their wages from the current 25 cents per day.



1867 MAP of the Aqueduct angled over at 104/105 streets

The newspaper mocked the Mayor, who finally sent some police officers to the site, but there was no demonstration underway. They found a couple of the leaders and arrested them. That seemed to end the situation, and the workers returned.

The Clendening Bridge ended at West 95<sup>th</sup> Street. The aqueduct continued in a straight line down to West 85<sup>th</sup> Street, where it took another angled turn across to the receiving reservoir in what would become Central Park.

## ***A Neighborhood Poem***

April is National Poetry Month. Here's a poem about Riverside Park by American poet Sara Teasdale, published in her 1915 collection *Rivers to the Sea*. Teasdale won the first Columbia Poetry Prize in 1918, a prize later renamed the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. The rail that is "low in the happy place" refers to the railroad tracks in Riverside Park, long before they were covered over.

### **Summer Night, Riverside**

In the wild soft summer darkness  
How many and many a night we two together  
Sat in the park and watched the Hudson  
Wearing her lights like golden spangles  
Glinting on black satin.  
The rail along the curving pathway  
Was low in a happy place to let us cross,  
And down the hill a tree that dripped with bloom  
Sheltered us,  
While your kisses and the flowers,  
Falling, falling,  
Tangled in my hair....

The frail white stars moved slowly over the sky.

And now, far off  
In the fragrant darkness  
The tree is tremulous again with bloom  
For June comes back.

To-night what girl  
Dreamily before her mirror shakes from her hair  
This year's blossoms, clinging to its coils?

*This poem is in the public domain.*

## ***Three Local Parks in our Website Archive***

Here we revisit some past programs drawn from our website archive, visiting three parks -- Riverside Park, Central Park, and Straus Park -- in celebration of spring.



Cherry Trees: Riverside Park Conservancy

### [More Than Cherries: The Flowering Trees of Riverside Park](#)

With Margaret Bracken, Landscape Architect for Riverside Park  
Scroll to the April 2022 Zoom presentation.

### [Before Central Park](#)

With Sara Cedar Miller  
May 2024 [video](#) recording

### [The Strauses in Bloomingdale: The Family, the House, and the Neighborhood](#)

With Joan Adler and Rob Garber  
October 2024 [video](#) recording

## ***Donate***

You can support local history when you support the work of The Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group. BNHG presents many free programs throughout the year, in person and on Zoom. We maintain a collection of materials at the Bloomingdale Public Library. Our website offers numerous blog posts, an interactive building database, and many other resources. Donations to our work can be made through a GoFundMe site managed by the Columbus Amsterdam Business Improvement District, making your gift fully tax-deductible. Visit our website [Donation Page](#) to learn more. Thank you!

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The Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group promotes research and education about the history of the Bloomingdale neighborhood, and we are available as a resource. We share our findings through free public programs, walking tours, workshops, publications, a blog, [our website](#), and a Neighborhood History Collection of materials housed at the Bloomingdale Branch of the New York Public Library, 150 West 100th Street.