Happy Spring, Bloomingdalers! Here is the second issue of Bloomingdale Bulletin with notices of upcoming programs, reporting on our projects, and new stories from the Manhattan blocks 96th to 110th streets, from Park to River. Please do share your comments and ideas with us, through our website contact page.

Upcoming Programs

**Upper West Side en clave: Bailando en Bloomingdale**

Thursday, April 15, 6:30pm

The story of the major role that our neighborhood played in the world of popular Latin dance music will come to life in this presentation by Angel Roman and Felix Cortes. They'll tell you about some of the giants in the field over the past decades, all who had connections to Bloomingdale—Mario Bauza (Machito Orchestra), Arsenio Rodriguez, Ismael Rivera, and Angel Viloria. You'll hear about dance clubs, jamming spots, and home dance parties in an evening that will combine talk and music and, if the spirit moves you, a little dancing in your own living room. You'll find the link at www.upperwestsidehistory.org.

**Posh Portals: Elegant Entrances and Ingratiating Ingresses to Apartments for the Affluent in New York City**

Date to be determined

Architectural historian and author Andrew Alpern will present a richly illustrated program, based on his new book and designed especially for the BNHG, featuring some of the most elegant and luxurious apartment houses on the Upper West Side. You’ll find the link at www.upperwestsidehistory.org.
Past Program

Bloomingdale in 1940

What a difference 80 years make! The March 23 BNHG virtual tour of the Bloomingdale neighborhood showed us how what was then became what is now, using an online map (click on the photo at left). This great resource was created by web developer Julian Boilen, who joined Gil Tauber and Jim Mackin as “tour guides.” You can see a recording of the program here.

Notable from Jim Mackin’s
Notable New Yorkers of Manhattan’s Upper West Side
Fordham University Press

Hiram Abrams, Hollywood Mogul (1878-1926)
611 West 110th Street (near Broadway)

Abrams was the head of United Artists, which he and his partner Budd Schulberg formed in 1919. Their motion picture company came about by convincing Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D. W. Griffith to part from the studios that employed them. Abrams had previously been one of the founders and president of Paramount Pictures, but was fired by Adolph Zukor after he and others, including Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle, were caught in an extortion scheme that cost Paramount $100,000. Born in Maine, Abrams was a merchant, theater manager, and motion picture executive. He died at a young age and his funeral service at West End Funeral Chapel on Amsterdam Avenue at 91st Street was officiated by Rabbi Stephen Wise.

BNHG on the Gotham Center’s new site

The Gotham Center, working with Manhattan Borough Historian Rob Snyder and The COVID-NYC Documentary Project, created a clearinghouse for the many efforts to record the history of New York City’s experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now a Directory of projects at the Gotham Center's website, at the City University of New York's Graduate School. The Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group's Project 2020 is included and you can find it here.
Another Bloomingdale

Pastor Heidi Neumark of Trinity Lutheran Church on West 100th Street told one stunner of a story in her recent BNHG presentation, based on her book Sanctuary. It seems that some 30 years ago, a Columbia University student, Jon Dunleavy, volunteered at Trinity’s community Thanksgiving dinner to prepare and serve meals. He continued to do so every year and his extended family did also, bringing turkeys and setting up early each Thanksgiving morning. With the 2020 pandemic defeating any plans for the usual sit-down meal at the church, Jon offered to prepare 300 meals that could be distributed in front of the church. Sadly, a few days before Thanksgiving, he died of a massive heart attack. To honor his legacy, his family marshalled not 300 but 1200 meals in the school where his wife, Janet, teaches and their town’s fire department delivered the meals to Trinity Lutheran on Thanksgiving morning. What town was that? It turns out that the Dunleavy family resides in Bloomingdale, New Jersey, where Jon Dunleavy was their mayor.

Dining Out in Bloomingdale

Back in 2017, our blog post on neighborhood restaurant history mentioned Chateau Stanley on West 97th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam. A recently found 1929 newspaper article tells a story of Hal Hixon, the owner, who was sued by a Sonia Tomara, a dancer, for the $150 she spent on a new suit for him, purchased when he was down and out. He had never paid her back. She won her case in court. That same restaurant operating under the name Peter’s Italian Table D’Hote was featured in our blog post on Prohibition on Bloomingdale when a raid uncovered nefarious business there. You can find both blog posts on our website.
100 Years Ago ... Madame Curie visits Bloomingdale

Madame Curie made her first trip to the United States in 1921 to promote a fundraising effort. The two-time Nobel prizewinner had never patented the process for refining radium and now other scientists and the U.S. Government were doing so, and selling it for $100,000 a gram. Curie could no longer afford the element she had discovered. Her visit was to promote a fund created to raise money for her in the U.S. Madame Curie had no direct role in using radium to treat cancer. The Memorial Hospital on Central Park West at 106th Street (now Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center) was doing cutting-edge work in radiation; the hospital had four grams of radium, the largest amount of the precious element anywhere in the world.

On May 29, 1921, after a luncheon at Mrs. Andrew Carnegie’s mansion, Madame Curie and her entourage came to Bloomingdale to the hospital and was shown the equipment and procedures used at the hospital to use the “emanations” from the radium to treat patients.

Later, Madame Curie would visit Vassar and Smith Colleges, attend a ceremony at the White House, and receive honors from many universities over the course of her six-week tour. During her visit, her image as a scientist was continually softened with remarks about her work as a devoted wife and mother, in an era when women scientists were barely accepted. The fundraising was successful, and Madame Curie returned to her laboratory in Paris to continue he work until her death in 1934, brought on by the continuing exposure to radiation. Today, her papers are still kept in lead-lined boxes.