Greetings!

Welcome to the autumn edition of *Bloomingdale Bulletin*, with news of programs, projects and a view into the history of the Upper West Side between 96th and 110th streets, from Central Park to the Hudson River. The *Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group* (BNHG) welcomes your feedback, comments and ideas [here](#).

Upcoming Programs

**Names of New York**

Joshua Jelly-Shapiro

**Monday, October 18, 6:30 pm**

How did our favorite places get their names? Geographer and author Joshua Jelly-Shapiro will focus on the Upper West Side as he tells the stories behind the names of our streets, neighborhoods, parks, playgrounds, and more – tracing back to native Lenape, Dutch and British settlers, and waves of immigrants over the centuries. His book is [Names of New York: Discovering the City's Past, Present and Future Through Its Place-Names](#).

This is a free zoom presentation. You’ll find the link at [www.upperwestsidehistory.org](http://www.upperwestsidehistory.org).
General Grant and His Tomb
Louis L. Picone
Wednesday, December 1, 6:30 pm

Presidential historian Louis L. Picone presents highlights about the famous final resting place of the Civil War general and 18th president of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant. He'll give us a view of Grant, his final years, and his legacy—and tell the fascinating story of the creation of Grant’s Tomb right in our neighborhood, in the context of New York City at the time. His book is Grant’s Tomb: The Epic Death of Ulysses S. Grant and the Making of an American Pantheon.

This is a free zoom presentation. You’ll find the link at www.upperwestsidehistory.org.

Recent Programs

97th Street Farmers Market
Margaret Hoffman

At the height of the early fall harvest, Margaret Hoffman, Greenmarket regional coordinator, presented an anecdote-filled history of how the Farmers Market came to Bloomingdale. Regional farmers gave insight into how the Greenmarket movement has promoted local agriculture and helped save small family farms, while providing healthful produce and delighting neighborhood palates. You can see a recording of the program here.
Free Neighborhood Walking Tours

The popular walking tours of historic Bloomingdale, led by renowned local historian Jim Mackin, are treasured by neighborhood locals and visitors alike. Join one to hear about highlights of the neighborhood and an endless store of fascinating tidbits about historic residents from all walks of life. Find out tour dates and meeting locations here, or get information about Jim’s other Weekday Walks outings here.

Our Quarterly Selection from Notable New Yorkers of Manhattan's Upper West Side

by Jim Mackin
Fordham University Press

Jacob “Little Augie” Orgen, Gangster: 211 West 106th Street, near Amsterdam Avenue

His gravestone indicates “Little Augie – Age 26 yrs”, but his actual age was 33. Supposedly, his father made the statement that his son died at 26 when he couldn't be convinced to leave the rackets. Born in Russia as Jacob Orgenstein, he grew up on the Lower East Side where he became a “labor slugger,” i.e. a professional thug, for the mobster Benjamin “Dopey” Fein. Then Orgen formed his own gang “The Little Augies” that specialized in garment center labor racketts. Some of his more illustrious gang members were Louis “Lepke” Buchalter and Jack “Legs” Diamond. After Orgen spent time in prison, he and “Legs” Diamond tried bootlegging liquor during Prohibition but were advised to stick with labor racketts. “Little Augie” was gunned down and killed in a subsequent mob war. His bodyguard “Legs” was also shot but survived.

You can find out about other notables here.
BNHG Documentary: And...Action!

Production of our video on the history of Bloomingdale continues, to the delight of passersby and our very own acting crew. It features cameos by our BNHG members, many in historical costume, set at the homes of some of our most notable Bloomingdale residents spanning three centuries. You will meet us, and our shared history, all set to music. We expect to present the video on our website in the fall.

Left to Right: Jim Mackin as Humphrey Bogart and conjuring the 1920s; Gil Tauber as a 17th-century Dutch settler in Bloemendaal

Blog: Bloomingdale After the Revolution

Pam Tice, BNHG historian and Planning Committee member, has continued her brilliant series of articles about Bloomingdale during colonial times and in the decades following the Revolutionary War. The first four parts vividly convey events before, during, and just after the Revolution and treat the elusive history of slavery in Bloomingdale. Now she has added three more articles, completing the series (for now at least):

Part 5: Bloomingdale Grows and Prospers 1790-1820
Part 6: Along the Bloomingdale Road After the Revolution: Taverns and Tavernkeepers
Part 7: Bloomingdale Goes to School 1890s and Early 1800s
100 Years Ago in Bloomingdale

In 1921 when Pomander Walk was built on land between Broadway and West End Avenue between 94th and 95th Streets it was supposed to be temporary. The owner, Thomas Healy, a 15-year-old immigrant when he came to New York in 1885, had made a name for himself as a nightclub owner. But Prohibition had changed his focus and he was turning to real estate development. The irregularly-shaped property had once housed Vincent Astor’s 1915 fresh food market. Healy acquired the property and built a sunken restaurant and a skating rink that later became the Symphony Theater, now our beloved-Symphony Space. While he worked on financing for a planned 16-story hotel, Healy decided to build a temporary structure to create some income.

Pomander Walk was an immensely popular play that had come to New York from London in 1910, a romantic comedy set in a small street in London. That stage set gave Healy his idea to replicate it as a little village on his property, twenty two-story houses facing each other across a walkway. He hired the architectural firm of King & Campbell to design the Tudor-style residences with varying facades of brick, stucco and mock half-timbering. Soon the temporary structure became a popular place to live, attracting theater people.

Thomas Healy died in 1927 and never had the chance to demolish his temporary street and build his big hotel. Pomander Walk lived on, becoming somewhat shabby, and then gaining landmark status in the 1980s when it also became converted to co-op status. The houses are now single-family spaces. In 2019 a unit sold for more than $2 million.

That Fateful Morning: 9/11 in the First Person

A contemporaneous account of 9/11 is the latest addition to the BNHG Digital Collection.

A Tintype of CFD’s Interrupted Primary Day 2001: Where Members Were That Fateful Morning, is vividly written by author and Bloomingdale resident, Joan Paylo, a Democratic District Leader and then-president of the Upper West Side Community Free Democrats political club. It gives first-person narratives of her own experiences and those of club members and some political candidates on that day, which was also Primary Day in NYC. The original item is in the BNHG Library Collection at the Bloomingdale Branch of the New York Public Library.
Neighborhood History Archives

Our public archives of neighborhood history are back at the Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library, on West 100th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues. The files are next to the circulation desk. Whether you are researching a specific topic or just browsing you're sure to find something interesting, and you may copy pages or take an entire folder to an armchair or table to read it in comfort. On top of the filing cabinets you’ll find a small assortment of books about NYC history donated by Peter Salwen (author of Upper West Side Story) which are also for reference in the library. The Bloomingdale Library's own webpage is here, and some highlights of our collection are posted digitally here.

The History of Your Building

How to Research the History of Buildings in Manhattan Is the new handsome and very informative guide to help residents who would like to know how to find out more about their buildings and neighborhoods. Its creation grew out of the three-year project to develop the BNHG Building Database that documents all of the 1,056 buildings in the Bloomingdale neighborhood blocks from 96th to 110th Streets between Central Park and Riverside Drive. The guide describes sources and methods that can be used by individuals, block associations, business improvement districts, schools, churches, and other organizations. The project to develop both the database and the guide were led by BNHG member Gilbert Tauber. Check the BNHG website for the Bloomingdale Building Database and the accompanying guide.