Our recent Zoom presentation on Bloomingdale in cinema offered a fascinating look on our neighborhood's rich movie legacy. Click on the image to watch.

Hello, Fellow Bloomingdalers!

Here is the inaugural issue of *Bloomingdale Bulletin*, the newsletter of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group (BNHG). While we've been working to preserve and celebrate the unique history of our neighborhood for over two decades, this is our first foray into newsletter publication. We hope you enjoy our ongoing offerings and invite you to learn more about our organization and share your ideas with us.

More than ever, it's important to remember and reinforce our bonds as a community. Through this newsletter and our enhanced programming in 2021, we aim to promote a better understanding of our shared past and how it shapes our neighborhood today.

Please join us, as we share compelling stories about the Manhattan blocks between 96th and 110th Streets, from the Park to the River. This is a three-century-old saga and we're sure you'll be surprised and delighted by what we uncover together.
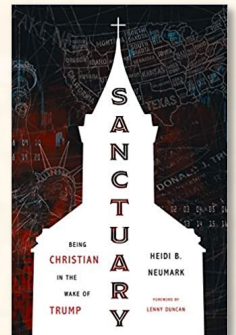
Prologue

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group celebrated twenty years in 2020. We started in Park West Village and soon grew to encompass the entire neighborhood, drawing diverse experts and neighbors with an avid interest in understanding the complex history of the area.

Perhaps you've taken one of our walking tours or attended a program. Despite the pandemic, we remain active, offering our programs virtually, and sharing information on our website: *www.upperwestsidehistory.org*. A new neighborhood buildings database can be found there, along with blog posts, book reviews, and other projects. Please feel free to reach out to us via email: bloomingdalehistory@yahoo.com. Watch this space in 2021!

Programs

BNHG's first program in 2021 will be held on January 21 at 5:30 pm. Pastor Heidi Neumark of Trinity Lutheran Church on West 100th Street, will speak on her experience in our neighborhood and the many changes she and her congregation have both witnessed and coped with in recent decades. Pastor Neumark is the author of a recent book *Sanctuary: Being Christian in the Wake of Trump* which details her work in Bloomingdale as a counter-point to the recent years of harshness and hatred. You will receive a notice about this program soon. A good way to spend an evening the day after Inauguration Day?

BNHG Planning Group Members Vita Wallace and John Gorham have worked on documenting the Bloomingdale neighborhood experience during last year's challenges. Vita writes:

Neighbors are warmly invited to contribute photos and/or paragraphs about the remarkable experiences of Fall, 2020, in the neighborhood, to our growing local history project documenting the year. Unusual study arrangements? Sidewalk cafes? There are gaps in our collection, particularly the stories of people who have either become ill or died this year, from COVID or other causes. Healthcare workers and delivery workers are not represented. Non-English-speakers are not represented. Where do you see something missing? Let's try to fill some of these gaps! Send suggestions, as well as your own photos and writings. To see the collection so far, and add to it, go to: https://www.upperwestsidehistory.org/2020-project.html. You may also use the email address bloomingdalehistory@yahoo.com.

Curious about your building? BNHG Planning Group Member Gil Tauber has created a database of Bloomingdale buildings that may help you find lots of key information. You can access it at: https://www.upperwestsidehistory.org/building-database.html. Gil has detailed a full explanation of what you'll find here, and why there may be gaps.

Historical Sketches

BNHG Planning Group Member Jim Mackin has researched hundreds of our neighbors in Bloomingdale. Many are listed in his new book *Notable New Yorkers of Manhattan's Upper West Side: Bloomingdale — Morningside Heights.* You can catch up with Jim's presentation to the BNHG audience here: https://www.upperwestsidehistory.org/past-events.html. Even more vignettes not in Jim's book can be found here. Jim shared this one with us:

Name: Milton "Milt" Gabler

Profession: Record Producer

Birth — Death: 1911 — 2001

Bio: At Decca Records, Gabler produced the 1955 hit record "Rock Around the Clock" performed by Bill Haley and the Comets. It was recorded in the Pythian Temple on West 70th Street. Gabler also produced Billie Holiday singing "Strange Fruit" on his Commodore label after Columbia Records chose not to record it. Gabler may also claim "Flying Home" in 1942 with the Lionel Hampton orchestra. Co-written by Hampton with Benny Goodman it has been argued as the first rock 'n roll record. Born in Harlem, Gabler began in the record business by working at his uncle's record shop, Commodore Music Shop, which specialized in jazz on West 42nd Street. In 1937, he set up a new record store on 52nd Street, known as "Swing Street", and soon established Commodore Records where he re-issued select jazz recordings and emphasized the names of the individual musicians. His nephew is the comedian Billy Crystal.

Address : 120 West 106th Street, Jewish Home and Hospital

Bookshelf

Are there books on your wish list? You may find something on the BNHG website bookshelf: upperwestsidehistory.org/bookshelf.html.

If you want to explore New York books even further, the New York Public Library has compiled a list of 125 New York City books, celebrating the Library's 125th anniversary. Check it out here: https://www.nypl.org/books-more/recommendations/nyc/adults