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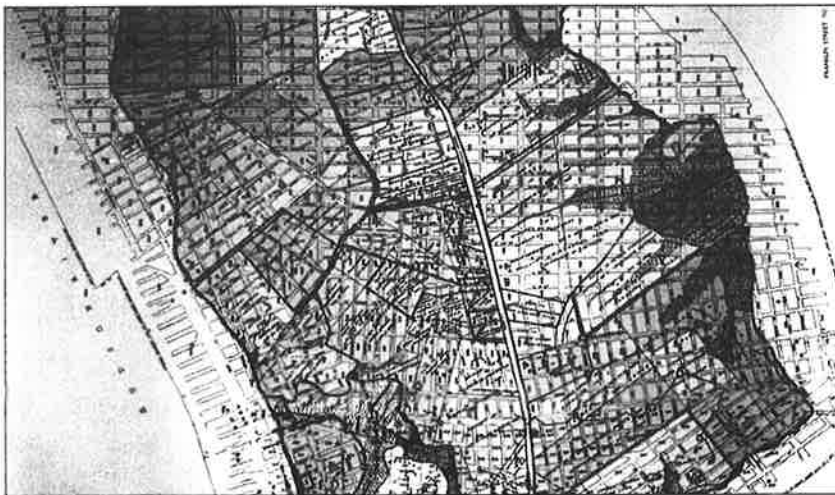
Black Farms to “Little Africa” *The Village Before Bohemia*

Almost every discussion of the history of Greenwich Village begins with the information that it was a farmland “in the beginning” and the “beginning” is generally taken to be after the Revolutionary War. In actuality, the story of Greenwich Village is even more interesting than most people know: the earliest farms belonged to freed African slaves who acquired the land here, along with their freedom, in 1644 from the Dutch West India Company. These freed men held, farmed, and sold land in what is now Greenwich Village until 1712, when their titles were rescinded by the British, who had come to power in 1664. For uncovering this story and researching it, we have Christopher Moore to thank. Mr. Moore is a journalist and historian, a former news editor for National Black Network News, and a member of the National Advisory Board on the African Burial Ground.

The discovery of the African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan has opened an area of New York City history for which it has always been assumed there is little primary research material available. Moore is one of a handful of scholars who have long searched for the true beginnings of the

story of the Africans of Manhattan, and found it. Early Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam granted partial freedom, and gave farmlands, to 11 African slaves whom they had brought with them into the colony in 1623. A 1644 ruling freed these 11 men to farm the swampy, hilly region located one mile north of New Amsterdam, extending into Manhattan’s rugged central wilderness. Thus began the earliest history of black land ownership in North America, as well as the first non-native inhabitation of the area we now refer to as Greenwich Village. When the British overcame the Dutch in 1664, there were approximately 700 African slaves in the colony. More than 20 farms owned by free blacks spanned Manhattan’s south central hills from Chinatown, Little Italy, and SoHo, to Greenwich Village.

There can be no denying that Moore’s excellent study of these period of African-American history is both enlightening and unexpected. Few 20th century New Yorkers associate their city’s early history with slavery, and only a handful of Villagers are aware that this neighborhood was once inhabited by the farms of freed 17th century slaves. We must (*continued on page 3*)



Farms owned by free blacks, including Simon Congo and Paulo D’ Angola, inhabited what is Greenwich Village (map overlay from I. N. Phelps Stokes’ *Iconography of Manhattan Island 1498-1909*).

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Like most non-profit organizations, the GVSHP could not operate without the energy, generosity, and emotional support of its Board of Trustees. We are particularly blessed with a strong and caring Board, and my thanks go out to all of our Trustees for making my first few months as Executive Director a pleasure. Each year, in accordance with its by-laws, the Society nominates new or renewed Trustees to three-year terms. At the Annual Meeting, nominations are voted on and confirmed by the general membership. I am pleased to announce the following new and renewed Trusteeships:

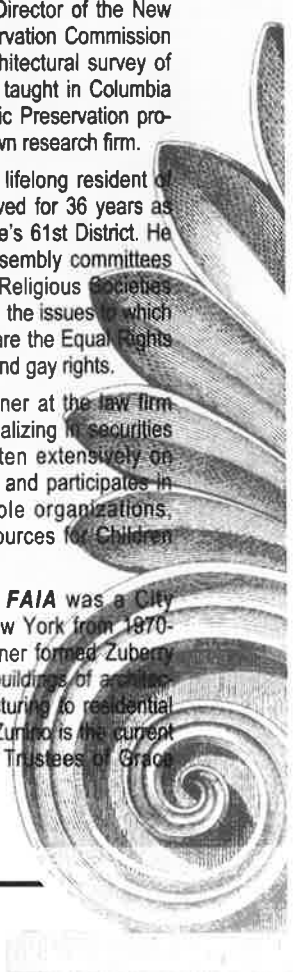
Tiziana Hardy owns and administers a firm that rehabilitates historic buildings, most recently concentrating on buildings in Harlem. She serves as a Trustee on various boards including the Edith Wharton Restoration at The Mount, in Lenox, Massachusetts. She is married to the architect, Hugh Hardy.

Dr. Regina M. Kellerman is an architectural historian, founding advisor of the GVSHP, and its Executive Director from 1981-1989. In the 1960s she was Research Director of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and supervised its first architectural survey of the five boroughs. She has taught in Columbia University’s graduate Historic Preservation program, and now heads her own research firm.

William Passannante is a lifelong resident of Greenwich Village who served for 36 years as Assemblyman for the Village’s 61st District. He has chaired such State Assembly committees as Claims, Charities, and Religious Societies and Social Services. Among the issues to which he has devoted his career are the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion law, and gay rights.

Arbie Thalacker is a partner at the law firm Shearman & Sterling specializing in securities transactions. He has written extensively on international securities law and participates in many social and charitable organizations, including the Benefit Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

F. Anthony Zunino III, FAIA was a City Planner for the City of New York from 1970-1974, when he and a partner formed Zuberry Associates to convert loft buildings of architectural interest from manufacturing to residential and commercial uses. Mr. Zunino is the current chairman of the Board of Trustees of Grace Church School.



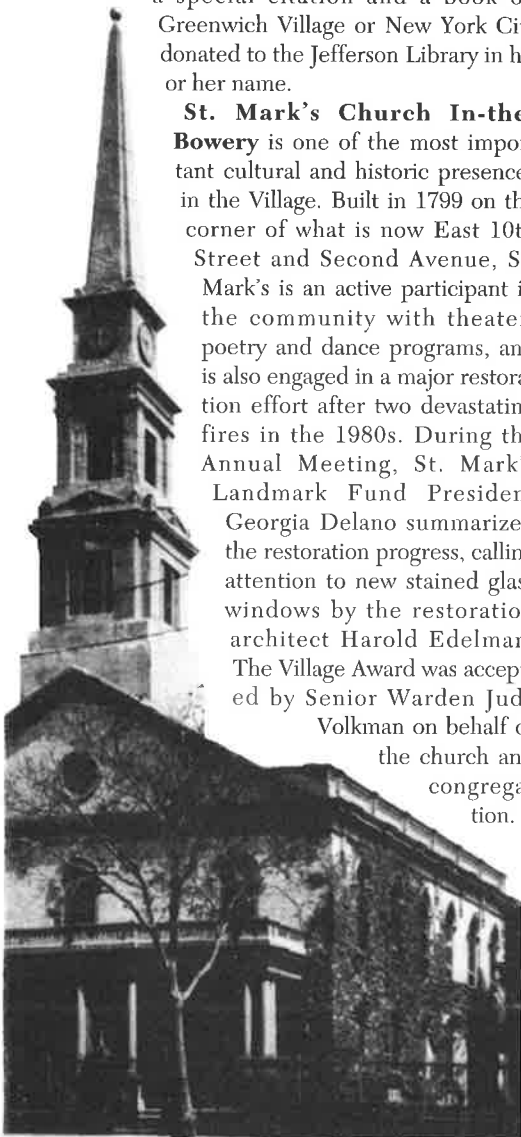
3rd Annual Village Awards

At its Annual Meeting at St. Mark's Church in June, the Society was pleased to present its Third Annual Village Awards honoring significant contributions to life in Greenwich Village. Nominations for awards are solicited each year from our general membership and are then considered by an awards committee, which makes the final decisions. This year more than 30 nominations were reviewed by a committee of GVSHP Trustees plus three friends and neighbors of the Society: Kent Barwick, president of the Municipal Art Society; Ray Sokolov, architectural critic; and writer Calvin Trillin.

James Stewart Polshek, Society Vice-President and Awards Committee Chair, presented the awards in his usual spirited style. The committee included Trustees Penelope Bateau, Richard B. Barnett, Regina M. Kellerman, Mr. Polshek, Julie Rinaldini, Judith Stonehill, as well as GVSHP Executive Director Vicki Weiner.

Each Award recipient was honored by a special citation and a book on Greenwich Village or New York City donated to the Jefferson Library in his or her name.

St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery is one of the most important cultural and historic presences in the Village. Built in 1799 on the corner of what is now East 10th Street and Second Avenue, St. Mark's is an active participant in the community with theater, poetry and dance programs, and is also engaged in a major restoration effort after two devastating fires in the 1980s. During the Annual Meeting, St. Mark's Landmark Fund President Georgia Delano summarized the restoration progress, calling attention to new stained glass windows by the restoration architect Harold Edelman. The Village Award was accepted by Senior Warden Judy Volkman on behalf of the church and congregation.



The Bagel Restaurant was established in 1957 at 170 West 4th Street, and is still there with its eight original counter stools and ten table seats. For the last 23 years Filomena Vitrano, a native Villager, has owned the restaurant. She was a waitress under the original management and today is assisted by her grandson, John. Her staff includes people who have been at The Bagel since the late 1960s. These days, when restaurants seem to come and go with the phases of the moon, that sort of longevity deserves an award. Ms. Vitrano was on hand to receive it.



Broadway Windows is an art gallery existing solely and entirely in three large showcase windows on the corner of 10th Street and Broadway. The brainchild of NYU president emeritus



John Brademus, the gallery has exhibited the work of more than 70 artists, both well-established and lesser-known, who create pieces specifically for the windows. Intriguing, amusing, satiric and stunning, their work has captivated passersby for almost ten years. The gallery's curators/directors are Marilyn Karp and Ruth Newman, who accepted the Award.

Jackson Square Park was a tangle of weeds and debris in 1980. The city-owned property was such an eyesore that a group of Villagers formed The Friends of Jackson Square Park to put it to rights. They lobbied for repairs and arranged to take responsibility for the park's maintenance, whereupon the Parks Dept. provided funding for a thorough restoration. Joe Flahaven, the current president of the park's Friends, accepted the Award.



Grace Opportunity Project is a non-sectarian education outreach program of Grace Church and Grace Church School. Founded in 1968, its mission is to offer remedial education and enrichment programs to underachieving but capable young children in the city's



public schools. During a summer session and a winter tutorial program, Grace Opportunity Project brings as many as 125 under-achievers up to grade level in basic skills. The program aims to nurture joy in learning, instill self-confidence and offer family help and education. Accepting the award was the current administrator, Kate Heichler.

Greenwich Village Little League and Soccer Club now claims more than 700



children as participants and 65 Village businesses as sponsors. It was founded ten years ago by artist John Bennett, who felt city kids should have the same healthy fun as those in the suburbs. Now every spring, teams of baseball and soccer players, as handsomely outfitted as any in Westchester, gather to slug it out at James J. Walker Field, on Hudson Street. Mr. Bennett was on hand to accept the Award.

Dr. Joyce Wallace is a medical hero. An internist at St. Vincent's Hospital, she specializes in the treatment and prevention of HIV and AIDS and recently founded the



Foundation for Research on Sexually Transmitted Diseases, whose mission is to provide HIV testing, condoms and medical support to street-walking prostitutes. The Foundation operates out of a van, traveling around the city to offer care. A *New Yorker* magazine article and television interview have made Dr. Wallace a national figure, but we think of her as one of our own because she has lived in the Village for years. Dr. Wallace accepted her award in person.

The 1993 Front Stoop Award for improvement of a Village streetscape went to **Goodfella's Pizza**, at the southwest corner of 7th Avenue and 14th Street. Tony Kokakis bought the



former Papaya Place last year, and rejected a designer's suggestion of aluminum siding for the facade. He used rose and green polished granite and his own design instead. The change has vastly improved this busy street corner, and to prove that this is indeed a charmed alteration, Goodfella's Pizza was completely untouched by a fire that raged next door in August.

Congratulations to all!

Book Note

Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture

A collection of 22 essays by various scholars, this book's genesis was the 1990-91 Museum of the City of New York exhibition "Within Bohemia's Borders: Greenwich Village 1830-1930." Co-sponsored by NYU's Humanities Council, the exhibition and the public lectures which accompanied it form the nucleus of this collection. They were augmented by articles from *Around the Square, 1830-1890: Essays on Life, Letters, and Architecture in Greenwich Village*, edited by Mindy Cantor in 1982.

Covering the period from the early 17th century to the present, the anthology is divided into five sections: landscape, people, politics, culture, and commerce. They contain essays as diverse as a history of Christopher Street seen as a microcosm of the Village; a report on the archaeology of Greenwich Mews; a history of the Village's black community in 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries; and a representation of life on Washington Square. With its primarily social and cultural focus the collection allows us to get to know some of the people who helped make the village famous—all of them are well worth knowing and some of them have been so overlooked and under-credited that to learn about them is a sort of revelation.

The book contains some thought provoking facts and observations about the Village: 1) Newgate Prison, opened in 1797 at Christopher Street and the Hudson River, started a building boom, beginning with the Greenwich Hotel right across the

street. Prisons don't seem to have that effect anymore. 2) The Triangle Shirtwaist fire of 1911 came just two years after an attempt to unionize the shop was quashed. What if the attempt had succeeded? 3) The 1834 Stonecutter Riot was staged by masons to protest the use of Sing Sing inmates as stonecutters for NYU's new building on Washington Square. Today, prison labor is still controversial.

As a body of work about the Village, *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture* may be unrivaled for breadth and depth of coverage. It is packed with more information than one can possibly retain, but it is written with grace and clarity and presented with enough overlap that a sense of the evolving place emerges. As a reference work, it may well take its place with the classics. As a book to dip into and read for pleasure, it has every bit as much to recommend it.

We will be co-hosting a panel discussion featuring the authors of this important book. See our calendar, page 4, for details.

Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture, edited by Rick Beard & Leslie Berlowitz, published by Rutgers University Press/Museum of the City of New York.

Black Farms...

(continued from page 1) remember that slavery was practiced in New York City until the early 19th century. The abolition movement begun by Quakers in 1767 did not culminate in complete freedom for the 16,000 black people living in Manhattan and Brooklyn until 1827.

Moore is making every effort to bring this important information to the public's attention. A writer-consultant to NYC's Landmarks Preservation Commission, and co-author of NYC Public Schools' newest curriculum guide, "African-American Heritage: A Resource Guide for Teachers, Grades 5-8," Moore is also writer and associate producer of a television documentary

currently in production about the recently unearthed African Burial Ground.

In October, we will have the honor of presenting Christopher Moore to our membership. His special slide presentation and lecture, "New Amsterdam 1643-1644: Frontier, Farms, and Freedom" will be followed by a walking tour of Greenwich Village highlighting African-American history from the 17th century to the present. To lead the walking tour, we are pleased to have preservation architect and architectural historian Alan G. Neumann, who gives walking tours in New York for the Municipal Art Society. See our calendar on page 4 for dates and details.

BULLETIN BOARD

News bits, hot tips and other items of interest...

FILM *The Age of Innocence*, the new film version of Edith Wharton's celebrated novel, is one of the most eagerly awaited films of the Fall. The Columbia Pictures release is directed by Martin Scorsese and stars Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder. Edith Wharton became the first woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for this story of the New York of her youth.

EXHIBIT *Reflections, A Legacy Unearthed: Discovery of the Duane Street Burial Site* opens Thursday October 14 and continues through November 6 at the TriBeCa 148 Gallery at 148b Duane Street. This exhibition uses art and technology to express the fascination and complex feelings inspired by the recent discovery of the African Burial Site. Curated by Charles Mingus III and Leslie Hoffman. Call 226-9002 for details.

MUSEUM The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, located at 97 Orchard Street, offers a diverse selection of public programs including lectures, video presentations, and walking tours. Founded in 1988, it seeks to promote historical perspective through the presentation of immigrant experiences on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Call (212) 431-0233 to receive a brochure and calendar.

BUS TOUR *Lost New York: A Close-Up Look at New York's Invisible Past*. October 16, 1-5:30 p.m. Visit two of New York's most prominent ghosts, Ebbets Field and Pennsylvania Station. With the aid of maps and photographs, learn if it is possible to restore cultural memory after history has been removed. Along the way we'll search for other ghosts, including the original Madison Square Garden and the Tenth Street Studio Building. Leader: Vicki Weiner, Executive Director, GVSHP. The fee is \$30; \$25 for MAS members and GVSHP members. For information and reservations call the Municipal Art Society, 397-3809.

LECTURE *Henry James' and Edith Wharton's Washington Square* Scott Marshall, former Executive Director of GVSHP, will give a slide presentation on Wharton and James at Book Friends Café, 16 West 18th Street, on Monday October 18 at 7 p.m. Marshall is now Deputy Director of Edith Wharton Restoration, Inc. at The Mount. For reservations call Book Friends Café, 255-7404. Admission is \$5.

LECTURE *Building By The Book: Pattern Book Architecture in New Jersey* Robert Guter and Janet Foster will discuss the influence of

continued on page 4

Fall Calendar of Events

Bulletin Board (continued)

pattern-book design in New Jersey's residential architecture, and illustrate how architectural ideas from books and popular periodicals shaped the state's landscape from the Colonial Era to the advent of WW II. Sponsored by Columbia University Preservation Alumni. For info call Mary Jablonski (516) 939-0110. Free.

BOOK *Old Greenwich Village: An Architectural Portrait* by Steve Gross and Susan Daley has stunning full-color photographs of the Village's architectural features which take the reader on a nostalgic trip through one of the great intellectual and artistic centers of American culture. 128 pages, 80 color photographs, The Preservation Press, \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

BOOK *George & Edward Blum: Texture and Design in New York Apartment House*



Architecture by Andrew S. Dolkart and Susan Tunick reveals the singular contribution that the firm of George & Edward Blum made to the design of the New York apartment building. Active from approximately 1910 to 1930, these two brothers

were among the most talented of New York architects to explore 20th century urban housing. The book analyzes the Blums' varied designs and use of fired-clay building materials. Published by The Friends of Terra Cotta Press, 77pp., 6 color and 68 B/W photographs, paperback only, \$15. Call 932-1750 for purchasing information.

Design and Layout: Paul Baumgarten

Writing and Editing: Vicki Weiner and Penelope Barea

Photography: Martin Weiner



OCTOBER: The Lower East Side Tenement Museum presents *Women of Valor* walking tour. Visit the site of sweatshops, union halls and settlement houses, and learn about Emma Goldman, Lillian Wald & Eleanor Roosevelt. Call 431-0233 for information, reservations and fees.



OCTOBER: The Municipal Art Society presents *Lost New York* bus tour given by GVSHP Executive Director Vicki Weiner. Call MAS at 397-3809 for information and reservations. \$30 non-members, \$25 MAS and GVSHP members.



OCTOBER: Book Friends Café presents *Henry James' and Edith Wharton's Washington Square*, a lecture by Scott Marshall, Deputy Director of Edith Wharton Restoration. For information call Book Friends Café, 255-7404. \$5.



OCTOBER: GVSHP presents *Greenwich Village Before Bohemia: Black Farms to "Little Africa"* lecture by Christopher Moore & walking tour by Alan Neumann. 1 p.m., St. Joseph's Church, 371 Sixth Ave.; tour to follow at 3:00 p.m. Call 924-3895 for information and reservations. \$12 members \$15 non-members.



OCTOBER: Preservation Alumni presents *Building By The Book: Pattern-Book Architecture in New Jersey*, a lecture and slide presentation by Robert Guter and Janet Foster. Call Mary Jablonski, (516) 939-0110 for information. FREE.



NOVEMBER: GVSHP presents *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture* panel discussion with the authors, in cooperation with NYU's Humanities Council & The Museum of the City of New York. 7 p.m. in NYU's Great Hall. Call GVSHP at 924-3895 for info & reservations. FREE.

Watch your mailbox for details about our annual GVSHP holiday party in December!



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