



PANORAMA

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THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

VSNY INITIATES LANDMARK EVALUATION

A request for evaluation filed on behalf of the Victorian Society New York by board member Alta Indelman asked the Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider designating the school at 131 Sixth Avenue in Manhattan as an individual landmark.

Now home to Chelsea Career and Technical Education High School and the New York City iSchool, the building was completed in 1905 to the design of C.B.J. Snyder, the legendary superintendent of buildings for the Board of Education from 1891-1922. The Beaux Arts style structure has a "J" shaped plan rather than the "H" form Snyder used for numerous schools. Its façade has a limestone base and bands of light-colored brick accented with terra cotta detailing. A copper-clad cornice and faux mansard parapet crown the structure. The building, wrote Ms. Indelman, "stands as a graceful coda to the streetscape vista from the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District and the Sullivan-Thompson Historic District."

Hilda Regier

After this article went to press, the Landmarks Preservation Commission denied the request. Options to pursue designation will be explored.

Drumming Up Support For Tin Pan Alley Designation

On the snippet of West 28th Street that links Broadway and 6th Avenue in Manhattan, the storefronts overflow with wigs, beaded slippers, paper lanterns, phone cases and knit ponchos. What you will not find in its windows anymore, and what you would have been offered at every turn circa 1900, is brand-new sheet music.

From the 1890s to the 1910s, composers, performers and music publishers and impresarios rented offices on the block in four- and five-story structures built as early as the 1830s. Hits like "Give My Regards to Broadway" and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" were first played on the tenants' pianos, with cardboard muffling the soundboard strings (to keep competitors from hearing the melodies in progress). The pervasive tinny sound inspired the block's nickname, Tin Pan Alley.

The buildings where the immortal music was dreamed up are substantially intact. The street is full of facades with faceted bay windows, detailed moldings, leafy brackets and column capitals made of stone, terra cotta and pressed metal. Given the block's combination of significant past inhabitants and



Buildings from the glory days of Tin Pan Alley remain on West 28th Street in Manhattan. Photo courtesy of Historic Districts Council

historic fabric, it obviously should be a historic district. But Tin Pan Alley has not yet come under New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission protection, despite years of public demand for the street to at least appear on the commission's calendar. In an effort to crank up the push for designation, George Calderaro, co-chair of the Victorian Society New York's Preservation Committee, is spearheading a renewed Save Tin Pan Alley landmark initiative, an advocacy campaign to safeguard what he calls a "precious cultural legacy" that is "acknowledged globally."

Calderaro's team, which includes the 29th Street Neighborhood Association, Historic Districts Council and Victorian Society New York, is raising public awareness by networking with politicians, journalists, musicians and scholars and hosting events including guided tours led by historians David Freeland and Miriam Berman. Lesley Doyel has developed a Tin Pan Alley curriculum that she introduced to P.S. 11 students as part of her education initiative for the VSNY; she is



Snyder school on Sixth Avenue is focus of a request to be evaluated as a possible landmark. Photo by Alta Indelman Architect

Architecture And Technology: How Buildings Grew Tall

With rare exceptions, church steeples were the tallest structures on the horizon in New York City until the mid-1860s, with most buildings topping out at six stories—around 60 or 70 feet—or lower in height. In the early years of the Victorian era, floors and roofs were typically framed with wood beams supported by hand-laid masonry bearing walls, with building heights subject to the limitations of those materials and construction methods.

Now, fast-forward to 1899 when the newly completed Park Row Building, designed by R.H. Robertson at 15 Park Row in lower Manhattan, extended 386 feet into the sky. It was, for several years, the tallest building in the world. How did this happen? As construction technologies evolved and were able to sustain taller structures and the functions within these structures, the push to make buildings higher picked up momentum. By the late 1880s, the die was cast for New York, along with Chicago, to be a city of skyscrapers.

While buildings increased in height significantly during the latter third of the 19th century and skyscrapers popped up in New York City at a galloping pace by the 1910s, the systems necessary for the development of high-rise buildings were in the works decades earlier. For a building to grow tall, power-operated equipment was needed to do the actual construction work and there had to be a convenient way to travel up and down in the building. The structure had to be flexible enough to be braced for wind loads, able to be easily fireproofed, and slender enough to not eat up valuable floor area. A brick bearing wall in a 20-story building would need to be four feet thick at the first floor! Clearly, metal framing to replace bulky masonry was key. Plumbing had to reach the top floors, active ventilation was needed for a healthy environment and artificial lighting was required for the interior spaces.

William Otis, an American inventor, patented the steam shovel in 1839, ringing in the era of powered construction equipment. His cousin, Elisha Otis, designed the first commercial passenger elevator; it was installed in the Haughwout Building in 1857—the beginning of vertical transportation as we know it today.

Cast iron, used for load bearing, facade framing and decorative elements, hit its stride by the late 1850s. The Haughwout Building



LEFT TO RIGHT: The Park Row Building was the tallest building in the world from 1899 to 1908. The Everett Building at 200 Park Avenue South exemplifies the new American architecture of the early 20th century. Photos by Alta Indelman Architect.

(488 Broadway, designed by architect John P. Gaynor) illustrates how slender metal columns, in place of masonry bearing walls, enable spacious interior layouts and generous fenestration. Further refinement in metal frame construction was made possible by the advent of the I-beam. Trenton Ironworks, founded by Peter Cooper, rolled the first wrought iron I-beam, the precursor of modern steel framing, in 1855.

Fans for ventilating tall buildings were being developed by 1860, and plumbing systems were able to achieve enough pressure to serve a tall building by 1858. Lighting remained the last problem to be solved for the design of high rise buildings. Gas was not an optimal source at that scale and, although central electric power became available in New York City in 1882, many new large buildings continued to rely on private generators until World War I.

The Everett Building, 200 Park Avenue South at East 17th Street, is a solid case study in early skyscraper design and exemplifies the development of rapidly built, fireproof commercial buildings with simple, gridded facades and open plan interiors. Sixteen stories (230 feet) high and sheathed in white terra cotta with green and orange ornamentation, the building is a true expression of

the new American architecture of the 20th century, reflective of both New York and Chicago styles.

Designed by Goldwin Starrett & Van Vleck and built in 1908 for the Everett Investing Company, the building was lauded in the trade journals of the day for being both functional and architecturally pleasing. 200 Park Avenue South showcases the features of tall building design that made these structures work so well for growing businesses. Square, clear floor area, important for supervising large numbers of employees, was made possible by the regularity and compact footprint of a steel frame. Terra cotta facade cladding was designed to custom fit the shape of the steel, fireproofing and weatherproofing it, as well as contributing elegant architectural detail to the facade's strict grid. The snug fit of the terra cotta to the steel allowed for large window openings at the exterior walls and maximum daylight in the work spaces.

The Everett Building, and other new loft and office buildings of its type built during the last years of the Victorian era, stretched the scale of New York's commercial streetscapes, laying the groundwork for the very tall skyline to come.

Alta Indelman

Victorian Era Foods Pique Interest

Scholars are revealing how Victorian chefs concocted and marketed meals, just in time for the Victorian Society New York's February 24 three-course brunch at the new antiques-packed Oscar Wilde Bar in Manhattan.

David S. Shields, a professor at the University of South Carolina, has profiled 175 influential chefs and restaurateurs in a new book, *The Culinarists: Lives and Careers from the First Age of American Fine Dining* (University of Chicago Press). The chronological study begins and ends with Frenchmen famed for soups: from 18th-century Boston's Jean Baptiste Gilbert Payplat, who claimed that his turtle potages had "efficacy in purifying the blood," to Louis Diat, who popularized vichyssoise at New York's Ritz-Carlton in the 1910s. The biographies are particularly revealing about culinary feats by African-American restaurateurs, who served elite white customers right after the Civil War. The freed slave John Dabney piled shaved ice and fresh flowers onto

mint juleps at West Virginia spa towns, and the freed slave Emeline Jones spooned a puree of chicken, anchovies and truffles onto lettuce leaves at New York's Carlton Club. Dr. Shields has peppered the text with recipes and tips for cooking and serving.



The picture shows a version of snow pudding made with a recipe used by my grandmother, mother and siblings. It differs from "Aunt Mary's" version slightly: the chilled gelatin/egg white/sugar pudding is cut into squares and rolled in Graham Cracker crumbs. Photo by John Graham

Related exhibitions have gone on view at the Museum of Food and Drink (mofad.org) in Brooklyn. Its current show (through February 16) covers the history of Chinese restaurants in America, with menus dating back to the 1910s. In the former Lee's Art Shop flagship at 218 West 57th Street in Manhattan, an exhibition (through early spring 2018) explores the PBS series *Downton Abbey's* sets, costumes, plotlines, characters and social history context (downtonexhibition.com). The three-story show contains roomfuls of rarefied cooking and dining equipment. Kitchen shelves are stocked with Virol, a bone marrow emulsion advertised as a strengthener for "children & invalids." A formal table is glitteringly set with everything an aristocrat required around 1910, including pudding forks. A vintage cookbook is displayed open to an appetizing page that depicts fanchonettes (jam-slathered tarts) and molds for making timbales (pastry shells).

Eve Kahn

SNOW PUDDING WITH LEMON CUSTARD SAUCE

The following recipe is re-printed from *Aunt Mary's New England Cook Book: A Collection of Useful and Economical Cooking Receipts*, published in 1881. While the procedures Aunt Mary lists often seem anachronistic—she includes instructions for plucking hens, the preparation of potted pigeons and recipes calling for "a lump of butter the size of an egg"—it seems Aunt Mary was an up-to-date Victorian, perfectly ready to accept 19th-century innovations into her kitchen. Unflavored dried gelatin, the basis for this dessert, was first marketed to housewives in 1845, and the rotary egg beater was patented in the United States in 1859.

SNOW PUDDING

INGREDIENTS—One half box of gelatin; the juice of one lemon; one pint boiling water; two cups sugar; the whites of two eggs.


Soak the gelatin in cold water to cover for ten minutes until softened. Add the lemon juice. Pour the boiling water over the gelatin and stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Add the sugar and let the mixture cool. While the gelatin mixture cools, beat the two egg whites until they are stiff with an egg beater. Fold the egg whites into the cool gelatin mixture and beat for five minutes. Pour the mixture into a dish, rinsed with cold water, smooth the top, and chill until firm. Serve with Lemon Custard Sauce.

LEMON CUSTARD SAUCE

INGREDIENTS—One whole egg; the yolks of two additional eggs; a pint of milk; a tablespoon of sugar; a few drops of essence of lemon.

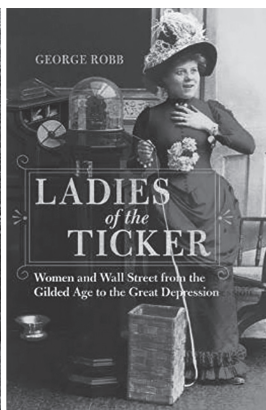
Heat the milk to just below boiling; lightly beat the egg and the yolks; remove the milk from the heat and pour it slowly over the eggs, stirring constantly; stir in the sugar and the lemon essence; chill before serving with the Snow Pudding.

John Graham

			
Cherry Stone clams 30	Little Neck clams 30	Saucon de Lyon 40	Anchovies 50
Sardines 40	Celery 50	Beluga caviar (portion) 1.25	
SOUPS			
Cream of peas, St. Germain 35	Sorrel with Vermicelli 30	Clear green turtle 60	Cold in cup 30
Tomato broth in jelly 30	Hot	Poached, Benedict 60 40	Hot
Halibut, Anchovy sauce 60	Soft shell crabs, Tartar sauce 65	Sea bass, Meuniere 60	Stuffed crab (1) 60
READY			
Sweetbread, New pens à la Française 80	Minced lamb, Ortolan 75	French chicken 75	Chicken croquette, Asparagus tips 65
Roast Lamb 75	To Order: Squab 1.00	Garniture of: Potato, any style 15	One vegetable 20
COLD SPECIAL			
Fricandeau of veal, Macdoine salad 70	Assorted meats 90	Boned capon 75	Stewed chicken 75
French string beans 50	New asparagus 60	New peas 60	New Lima beans 60
Potatoes: Bermuda 25	Fried 30	Seybel 30	Sweet potato 30
Lyonnaise 30	Beef 60	Water cress 50	Crab cakes 60
Celery 50	Potato 40	Macedoine 50	Lettuce 50
Tomato 50	Romaine 50	Chicken 75	Cucumber 50
DESSERT			
Banana fritter glacé, Rum 30	Strawberry short cake 50	Plum rice pudding 30	Strawberry, Bar-le-Duc 40
Apple sauce 15	Rum cake 15	Vanilla, coffee or chocolate eclairs 15	Cup custard, vanilla or chocolate 25
Crème renversée 30	Stewed rhubarb 30	Charlotte Russe 30	Bar-le-Duc jelly 40
Fruits: Grape fruit, half 35	Watermelon 35	Pineapple 20	Orange 20
Berries or peaches with cream 50	Cantaloup (half) 35	Apple 20	Bananas 15
French Ice Creams: Madison 45	Vanilla 35	Chocolate 35	Cheese: Gruyère 25
Port-du-Salut 30	Roquefort 30	Gervais 25	American 20
Special Stilton 40	Gorgonzola 30	Pont l'Évêque 30	Camembert 30

Beaver & South William Streets.

Thursday, July 9th 1914



LECTURES

The Victorian Society New York sponsors a series of lectures at The Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St., between Second and First Avenues in Manhattan. No reservations are required for the free lectures that begin at 6:45 p.m. A reception beginning at 6 p.m. precedes the lectures.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8 LADIES OF THE TICKER: WOMEN OF WALL STREET

Long overlooked in histories of finance, women played an essential role in areas such as banking and the stock market during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Yet their presence sparked ongoing controversy. A pioneering study by George Robb, professor of history at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ, sheds light on the financial methods, accomplishments and careers of three generations of women during this pivotal era.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8 HIDDEN HISTORY OF LGBT VICTORIAN NEW YORK

The NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, founded in 2015, is the first cultural heritage initiative to document historic LGBT spaces in the city's five boroughs. Panelists Andrew Dolkart,

Ken Lustbader, Jay Shockley and Amanda Davis will focus on sites from the 1840s to the 1920s. Special attention will be given to the project's work in amending the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Alice Austen House. Other sites include Walt Whitman's Brooklyn residence and the Henry Street Settlement, co-founded by progressive reformer Lillian Wald, as well as early bar and social spaces in downtown Manhattan.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12 WEALTH AND CELEBRITY IN THE GILDED AGE: LARZ AND ISABEL ANDERSON

Stephen T. Moskey, author of a new dual biography of a married couple, will offer a fresh look into America's Gilded Age. His research has focused on the lives of the Andersons within the intersection of wealth, celebrity, politics, gender and race as one century ended and another began. Moskey will describe Larz's professional achievements as well as Isabel's emergence as an American woman of the early modern era whose words and deeds anticipated women's roles in culture and society today.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Alice Austen's home on Staten Island, photo by Floto + Warner. *Ladies of the Ticker* book cover, published by University of Illinois Press, 2017. Oscar Wilde Bar in Manhattan, photo courtesy of Oscar Wilde Bar. Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay, photo courtesy of Friends of Sagamore Hill. Larz and Isabel Anderson: *Wealth and Celebrity in the Gilded Age* book cover, published by iUniverse, 2016. Tombstones in the Wyckoff-Snedicker Cemetery in Woodhaven, Queens, photo courtesy of the Woodhaven Cultural & Historical Society.

THURSDAY, MAY 10
MARK TWAIN AND CHARLES DARWIN:
THE EVOLUTION OF LITERATURE
Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Charles Darwin (1809-1882) met only once, but Darwin influenced Twain's work and view on society, while Twain was one of Darwin's favorite novelists. James Joseph Golden, director of education at the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, CT, has explored the unexpected connections between two Victorian intellectual titans, examining the full range of Twain's oeuvre, including fiction, travelogues, philosophical works, social commentary and personal correspondence. It shows the enduring relevance of Darwin's thought and the surprising depth of what, on the surface, seems like simple humor.

MARGOT GAYLE FUND EVENT

Susan Tunick, president of Friends of Terra Cotta, will speak at an April 19 event to benefit the Margot Gayle Fund for the Preservation of Victorian Heritage. The terra cotta expert's topic will be "Don't Take It for Granite." She is the co-author of *Terra Cotta Skyline: New York's Architectural Ornament* and a ceramist whose works may be seen in New York City schools and subways.

The event venue has not yet been determined.

The Margot Gayle Fund provides monetary grants for preservation or conservation of Victorian era material culture. Each year 5% of the fund's principal is available for grants. With continuing low bank rates, the need to replenish the fund has become an annual problem.

MARGOT GAYLE FUND DEADLINE



Margot Gayle Fund grant applications are due on Valentine's Day, Wednesday, February 14, 2018. A grant application form can be found on The Victorian Society New York website (vicsocny.org).





TOURS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 12 NOON

BRUNCH AT THE OSCAR WILDE BAR

Enjoy a drink and three courses in a private room in the ornately decorated Oscar Wilde Bar that celebrates the legendary English author and wit. During our meal, Russell Needham will enlighten us on how the space came to be filled with an unusual collection of antiques. The bar is near Tin Pan Alley, and George Calderaro will describe the initiative to save this historic streetscape.

FEES: \$65 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY

NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$75 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2 PM

A WALK IN WOODHAVEN

The serenity of a spring afternoon in a park-like setting may belie a troubled past. Neglected for nearly a century, the Wyckoff-Snedicker Family Cemetery was rescued and restored through the efforts of the Woodhaven Cultural & Historical Society. The grounds were cleared of fallen trees, weeds and garbage. The Victorian Society New York made a small grant from its Margot Gayle Fund for garbage bags to help in the cleanup. The cemetery was created in the 1700s when two neighboring farmers donated the land. Burials continued there for more than a century. Our guided walk will unveil elements of the history of Woodhaven through biographies of the dead researched by students involved in the project. Proceeds from the tour will benefit the Margot Gayle Fund for Preservation of Victorian Heritage.

FEES: \$20 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY

NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$30 FOR NONMEMBERS

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 8:30 AM-4:45 PM

AN OYSTER BAY DAY

On Long Island's North Shore we will visit Sagamore Hill, the mansion Theodore Roosevelt built in 1884-85 and used during the summers of his presidency, 1901-08. Family furnishings remain in the house. Time permitting, a drive through part of what was Louis Comfort Tiffany's estate will afford glimpses of remaining elements. After lunch we go to Raynham Hall. The oldest part of this house, built in 1738, has ties to Revolutionary War spies. A Victorian wing was added in 1852. Our last stop will be at Coe Hall and Planting Fields Arboretum. The 65-room Tudor Revival style mansion was built in the early 20th century for William R. Coe, an insurance executive, and his wife, Mai, heiress of a Standard Oil fortune. Hundreds of acres of gardens surround the mansion.

FEES: \$140 FOR VICTORIAN SOCIETY

NEW YORK MEMBERS, \$165 FOR NONMEMBERS



Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our nation's 19th-century heritage as well as that of the early 20th century (1837-1917). The Victorian Society New York (VSNY), the oldest of numerous chapters now flourishing throughout the USA, is an independent nonprofit organization affiliated with the national Society.

Membership contributions at any level help to provide the foundation for all that we do—from our lecture series, walking tours and excursions, to our grant and awards programs honoring worthy preservation projects in New York. Members also help provide scholarships to the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools for advanced study. Donations to the Margot Gayle Fund make possible monetary grants for preservation and conservation of Victorian material culture in our region.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF TOUR PARTICIPATION

Meeting places will be provided in the confirmation of registration. Participants in our tours must be in excellent health. They must be able to participate safely in all activities and keep pace with the groups. Sites we visit may have challenging stairs or steep or rocky hills. If you have any doubt about your ability to participate fully because of health conditions or disabilities, please contact info@vicsocny.org or call (212) 886-3742. The Victorian Society New York reserves the right to decline to accept or to refuse to retain any person as a participant in its tours at any time.



A Look Back at a VSNY Honoree

Since 1925, writers who've wanted to have an impact upon Gotham, the United States and the English-speaking world have set their eyes on the urbane pages of *The New Yorker*. For 92 years, the magazine has published the best. And for over 60 of those years, its pages were the professional home of the recipient of the Victorian Society New York (VSNY) 1998 Lifetime Achievement Award, presented posthumously to Brendan Gill.

Mr. Gill was raised among the insurance aristocracy of Hartford, Ct. After receiving his diploma from a local prep school, he followed the approved path for men of his class and enrolled at Yale. But during his time as an undergraduate, he realized he wanted more than life among the actuarial tables and country clubs of central Connecticut. He wanted to write. He wanted New York. And he had the ability to achieve both aims. Within a year of graduating with Yale's class of '36, he was hired as a staff member at *The New Yorker*. It's the sort of life-changing transition most aspiring authors can only dream about.

Brendan Gill proceeded to produce hundreds of polished articles on books, films, theater and architecture. He wrote anonymous pieces for the magazine's famous "Talk of the Town" feature; he became its film critic in 1960, and from 1987 to 1996 he was the successor to Lewis Mumford as the author of the influential "Skyline" column. The latter post provided him with excellent opportunities to celebrate the city's architectural heritage and to mourn the loss of important buildings. But Mr. Gill didn't limit his writing to articles that would fit between the covers of a weekly. He also wrote 15 books. They include biographies of Charles Lindbergh, Cole Porter and Frank Lloyd Wright; *Late Bloomers*, a collection of essays on people whose creativity refused to recognize their biological clocks, and his 1975 best seller, *Here At The New Yorker*.

His life outside literature was just as busy. He was a trustee of the New York Society Library from 1973 to 1993. He was chairman of the board of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts from 1992 until 1997. He was

chairman emeritus of the Preservation League of New York State at the time of his death. He served as a trustee of the Whitney Museum of American Art for 15 years. And, perhaps most importantly in terms of preservation, Mr. Gill was the chairman of the Municipal Art Society. In 1988, MAS established the Brendan Gill Prize, awarded to a person whose work in the fine arts celebrates city life.

In 1978 Brendan Gill and MAS took on a major role in the famous battle to save Grand Central Station. Penn Central, which owned the station, was determined to challenge the constitutionality of the New York City Landmark Preservation Law. The company was eager to maximize income with alterations that would have destroyed the architectural integrity of the building. Lower courts had supported the company, but in 1978 the city decided to take the case all the way to the Supreme Court. Mr. Gill was able to persuade Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis to lend her support to the city's case. On April 17, 1978, they boarded the "Landmarks Express," to Washington, D. C. to bring public attention to this threat to our architectural heritage. And on June 26, 1978, the Court decided 6-3 in favor of New York City's Landmark Law.

Brendan Gill was also an early member of the Victorian Society in America, the national organization of which VSNY is a chapter. In 1958, a few years before the organization's founding, following the prompting of Margot Gayle, he'd written a *New Yorker* essay on the Jefferson Market Courthouse, calling it an "invincibly romantic confection."

Brendan Gill died on December 27, 1997. When the Board of VSNY learned of his death, members were shocked to realize that the organization had never officially recognized his work in preservation. In the spring of 1998, the Board approved the Awards Committee proposal to present the first posthumous lifetime achievement award in honor of Mr. Gill. His widow, Anne Gill, attended the Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony at the Judson Memorial Church that June.

John Graham



Brendan Gill

Acknowledgments

The Victorian Society New York gratefully acknowledges the generous support of members, individuals, firms and sponsors who help to further the Chapter's mission to preserve, protect and promote our Victorian heritage.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

making it available for other educators to use. It can be downloaded from www.vicsocny.org/preservation/HandsOnHistory/TeachingTinPanAlleyTeacher'sManual.

During a recent stroll down Tin Pan Alley, Freeland and Berman pointed out where particular refrains first reached the public's ears and which buildings housed the teams that published the likes of the original "Wizard of Oz" musical and "Daisy Bell (Bicycle Built for Two)." The music publishers kept brazen pianists called pluggers on salary. (Their ranks at one point included a teenager named Irving Berlin.) When a fresh song was ready for sheet music and the footlights, pluggers were dispatched to perform it loudly at theaters, cafes and saloons. Celebrity crooners would be accosted as they dined out or headed backstage, and the pluggers' pitch went something like this: if you'll sing our irresistibly catchy tune in public, we'll all get rich.

Every genre of popular music was available on Tin Pan Alley: marches, blues, ragtime, sentimental and comic ballads. The block was also thronged with people patronizing or gawking at dancehalls, brothels and gambling dens. Filmmakers made the occasional silent movie on the rooftops. *The New York Clipper*, an entertainment and sports weekly newspaper (later folded into *Variety*), set up offices there, near the headquarters of the then-new William Morris Agency that promoted vaudeville talent. "It was a world within a world," Freeland says.

Various ethnicities found a way to thrive on Tin Pan Alley, despite facing prejudice elsewhere. The prolific African-American composer Richard Cecil McPherson, who used the pseudonym Cecil Mack, co-founded a music



45 W. 28th St. was the headquarters of music publisher, Jerome K. Remick. Photo courtesy of Historic Districts Council

publishing company. William Morris, a German Jewish immigrant, had changed his name from Zelman Moses. Women managed to have some agency on Tin Pan Alley, too; the singer and composer Nora Bayes (née Goldberg) co-wrote the hit "Shine On, Harvest Moon" with lyricist Jack Norworth, one of her five husbands.

No one cared much whether the music makers actually knew anything about the topics that inspired their lyrics. "They wrote their lives as they wrote their songs. Authenticity didn't even enter into their conception," Freeland says. Albert Von Tilzer, the composer of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" (lyricist Norworth) did not see a real baseball

game until two decades after the tune made him famous. His brother Harry published another hit, "My Old New Hampshire Home," without having traveled to the Granite State.

By the early 1900s, however, the street had developed an unsavory reputation. Police squads cracked down on gambling and other vices. The pluggers were considered insufferable nuisances and a "din-making drove," the *Evening World* reported in 1905. By the 1920s, the music industry had headed northwest, closer to Times Square's lavish new cinemas and theaters. Decades of ensuing neglect helped preserve the West 28th Street block. It even evaded urban renewalists in the 1960s. In the 1970s, a sidewalk plaque commemorating Tin Pan Alley was installed at the southeast corner of Broadway and 28th Street (just east of the subway entrance).

The landmarking initiative has garnered support from Manhattan Community Board 5 and all the local elected officials, Calderaro reports, and 40,000 people have signed petitions to protect the area. In October 2017, Calderaro's team organized "Save Tin Pan Alley Day," an afternoon of activism that was headquartered at mid-block Pergola restaurant. It included five tours and seven performances, made possible by a tuned piano from Steinway & Sons and professional audio equipment from Samson Technologies. The 19th-century facades, and the storefronts full of wigs and knit ponchos, echoed with odes to Broadway, ball games and harvest moons. Summing up the importance of the designation of the block, Berman said, "It's too wonderful to lose."

To learn more about the street—and ways to get involved—see savinatinpanalley.org. Eve Kahn