



April 7, 2020

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Further information regarding historic significance of buildings within proposed historic district south of Union Square along Fifth Avenue, Nos. 49 through 59 (east side) and 60 through 80 (west side)**

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**232 EAST 11TH STREET**

**NEW YORK NY 10003**

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Dear Chair Carroll,

I write to share with you further information we have uncovered regarding the significance of several buildings in [our proposed historic district south of Union Square](#) along the Fifth Avenue corridor. As you know from [prior information](#) we have submitted to the Commission, this area holds a remarkable place in the history of New York and the nation in relation to progressive and transformative social and political movements, the publishing industry, the arts, and commerce. These buildings add to that extraordinary record, and further testify to the extraordinary significance of this area. Just within this two block stretch, one finds the buildings which housed the headquarters of organizations which became the American Civil Liberties Union and Students for A Democratic Society (SDS); those which were founded or led by historically significant figures such as Upton Sinclair, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., Crystal Eastman, Andrew Carnegie and Norman Thomas; and those which led the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti and were the first to call attention to the Armenian genocide. You'll also find the buildings which housed the headquarters of the country's largest publishing house; the studio of the woman called "the Picasso of dance;" the first art movie house in America; the residences of such prominent political figures as Alfred E. Smith and Robert B. Roosevelt; and a recording studio where racial integration in recorded music began and the careers of artists including Billie Holiday and Benny Goodman were launched.

These buildings, in descending address order, are:

**80 Fifth Avenue:** This elaborately-detailed Renaissance Revival style office building was designed in 1908 by Buchman and Fox. Its striking architecture alone at this prominent

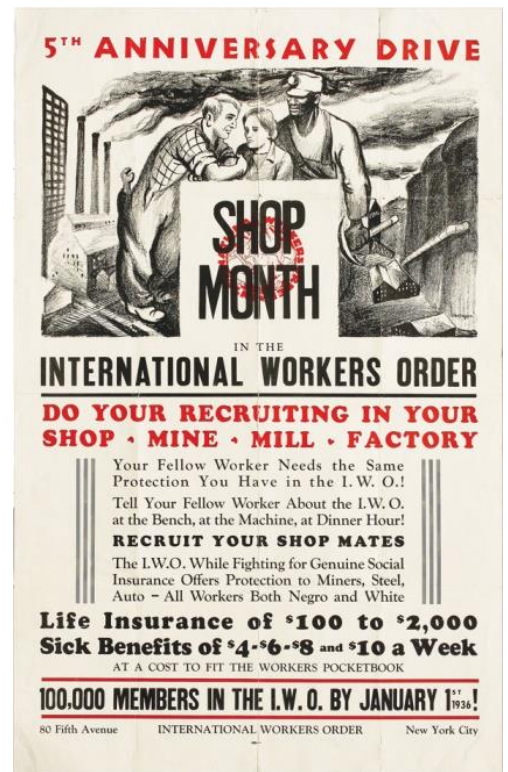


*80 Fifth Avenue, undated, Wurts Bros, MCNY.*

intersection makes it worthy of consideration for landmark/historic district designation. As per [prior submissions to the LPC](#), this building also holds extraordinary significance for serving as the headquarters of the National Gay Task Force (now the National LGBTQ Task Force), the first national LGBTQ rights organization in the country, for the first 13 years of its existence. During this time the group accomplished extraordinary successes in combatting homophobia and dismantling discrimination against LGBTQ people, while laying the groundwork for battles which continue today. However, that is only one aspect of this building's historic significance.

Also located at 80 Fifth Avenue was **the International Workers Order (IWO)**, and its largest division, the Jewish People's Fraternal Order. The IWO was an insurance, mutual benefit and fraternal organization founded in 1930 and disbanded in 1954 as the result of legal action undertaken by the state of New York, claiming that the organization was too closely linked to the Communist Party. At its height after World War II, the IWO had almost 200,000 members. It provided low-cost health and life insurance and medical and dental clinics; supported foreign-language newspapers, cultural and educational activities; and operated a summer camp and cemeteries for its members.

The IWO originated within **the Workmen's Circle (WC)**, but split off from its parent organization in the 1920s to pursue a more left-wing agenda from the Democratic Socialist WC. From the beginning, the organization was probed for its links to the Communist Party, and was the frequent target of **House Un-American Activities (HUAC)** investigations before its demise.



(l. to r.) 72, 74, 78, and 80 Fifth Avenue, ca. 1940 (l.) and today.

**78 Fifth Avenue:** This ten-story loft building was constructed in 1896 by architect Albert Wagner, designer of the nearby landmarked Puck Building. Wagner received this commission from fellow German

immigrants **Joseph and Lyman Bloomingdale, the founders of Bloomingdale's Department Store**, for which this building served as the corporate offices. One of Bloomingdale's great innovations was the introduction in 1898 (while headquartered at this building) of "inclined elevators" into their store -- what we would now call escalators -- which became a standard feature of department stores. The building was also home in its early years to **The University House publishers**, which focused on educational publications and the works of literary greats such as Balzac. The terra cotta modified Corinthian capitals on the façade of the building captured the attention of *The Brickbuilder* magazine in 1897, a periodical dedicated to

"the advancement of architecture in the materials of clay," which [featured them in its January issue](#).

**74 Fifth Avenue/1 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street:** This L-shaped 12-story loft building designed in 1910 by the firm of Maynicke & Frank for developer Henry Corn displays secessionist style motifs on its Fifth Avenue and 13<sup>th</sup> Street facades. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the building housed **Adelphi Hall**, a noted venue for film showings, lectures, and other gatherings related to left-wing causes. It receives multiple mentions in FBI files on figures including **Paul Robeson**, and in **House Un-American Activities (HUAC)** documents from the era for investigations of allegedly pro-Communist, pro-Soviet, and pro-Cuban events and activities there.



TERRA-COTTA CAP, OFFICE BUILDING, 78 FIFTH AVENUE,  
NEW YORK CITY.  
Albert Wagner, Architect.  
Made by White Brick and Terra-Cotta Company.



**72 Fifth Avenue:** See extensive documentation already submitted to the Commission regarding this building's extraordinary history and architecture [here](#).

**70 Fifth Avenue:** This striking 12-story Beaux Arts-style office building was constructed in 1912 by architect Charles Alonzo Rich for the **noted publisher and philanthropist George A. Plimpton**. Other than minor ground floor alterations, the building is almost entirely intact to its original century-old design. Upon that basis alone, it is arguably worthy of inclusion in a historic district or landmark designation.

In [prior submissions to the LPC](#) we have documented the extraordinary significance of this building as the home of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, the NAACP; the oldest black-oriented magazine in the world, *The Crisis* magazine; and W.E.B. DuBois' DuBois and Dill Publishing, which produced *The Brownies' Book*, the first magazine geared towards African-American children. However, over its one hundred eight years of existence, this building was the site of a staggering array of political organizing and social activism, frequently intertwined with the world of publishing, as was common in the area.



According to Gloria Garrett Samson in her book [The American Fund for Public Service:](#)

[Charles Garland and Radical Philanthropy, 1922-1941](#), in addition to the Fund (also known as the Garland Fund) being located there, 70 Fifth Avenue was "a haven for radicals and liberals." Organizations headquartered here included **the American Union Against Militarism**; the **National Civil Liberties Bureau** (which became the **American Civil Liberties Union**); the **Citizen's National Committee for Sacco-Vanzetti**; the **American Federation of Teachers**; the **American Friends of Spanish Democracy**; the **Press Writers Union**; and the **League for the Abolition of Capital Punishment**.

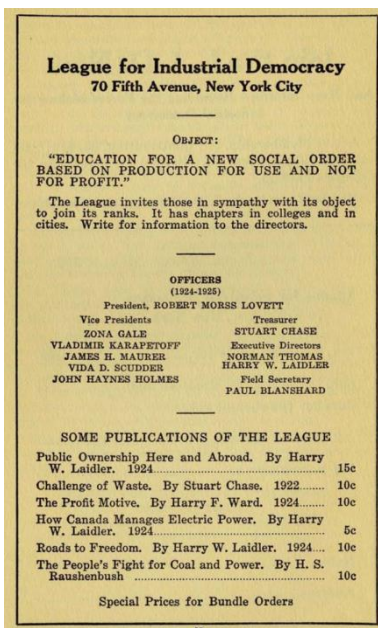
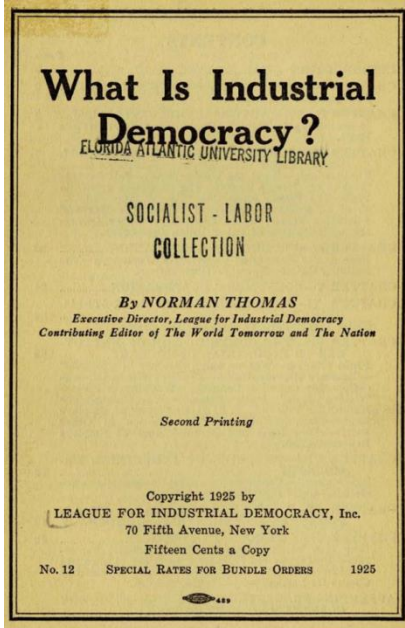
While at 70 Fifth Avenue, the **American Fund for Public Service** was headed by **Roger Baldwin**. Baldwin was a co-founder and the director of the **ACLU** for its first thirty years of existence. Baldwin directed the **ACLU's** litigation in the landmark **Scopes Monkey Trial**, the **Sacco and Vanzetti Case**, and the challenge to the ban on **James Joyce's Ulysses**.



Also headquartered here was the **League for Industrial Democracy**, founded by **Upton Sinclair**, **Clarence Darrow**, and **Jack London**, among others, and led by **Norman Thomas**. The League published *The Socialist Review* from this address. In 1960 the League's youth branch became **Students for A Democratic Society, or SDS**, the New Left organization

which so dramatically impacted political and social discourse in the United States in the 1960s.

70 Fifth Avenue was also home to the headquarters of many notable peace organizations. The **Woman's Peace Party's** New York Office, headed by **Crystal Eastman**, was located here. The **Woman's Peace Party** had its roots in the August 1914 **Woman's Peace Parade** which followed the beginning of World War I and which was intended to call attention to the horrors of the European conflagration. Following the parade, the **Woman's Peace Party of New York** was established in November



of 1914. This was followed by a January 1915 convention of feminists and peace activists from across the country held in Washington D.C., which resulted in the formation of the **Woman's Peace Party** by **Jane Addams**, **Carrie Chapman Catt**, and **Fanny Garrison Villard** (the daughter of **Henry Lloyd Garrison**), of which the **Woman's Peace Party of New York** became a regional chapter. The WPP published its periodical *Four Lights* from its 70 Fifth Avenue offices. The WPP eventually became the American chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which has chapters in 37 countries, and is the oldest women's peace organization in the United States. The WPP is considered one of the first manifestations of the modern peace movement in America, which employed direct action tactics towards its mission, whereas prior peace organizations typically limited themselves to more genteel behind-the-scenes lobbying and attempts to influence public opinion in print and oratory.



*The Women's Peace Parade, Fifth Avenue, August, 1914.*

# Four Lights

"Then he showed four lights when he wished them to set full sail and follow in his wake."

From "First Voyage 'Round the World by Magellan."



FEB. 24, 1917

AN ADVENTURE IN INTERNATIONALISM

ISSUE III.

The idealist said in his heart: "The God of Force is dead, or dying." He has been proven the fool that the man of affairs and the militarist always said he was. But the fools of this world—generally after they are gone—have a way of moving men which the wise and practical believers in force have not. . . . The battle between the God of Love and the God of Force endures forever. Fools of the former camp, drowned out and beaten to their knees, in due time will get up again and plant their poor little flag a little farther on. "All men shall be brothers," said the German fool Schiller: so shall the fools say again when the time comes; and again, and again, after every beating!

First Thoughts on the War, JOHN GALSWORTHY.

## VOTES FOR WOMEN

The voice of the plebiscite upon conscription in Australia resulting in its defeat is attributed to the votes of women. Those who favor conscription agree with the Premier that democracy fails when great national issues are at stake; but those who believe the people who bear the consequences and whose lives are sacrificed by war are the best judges as to whether they desire war and are willing to sacrifice everything for the purposes for which war is waged, believe that, in the long run, democracy will win both in peace and war.

The refusal to fight is by no means a sign of a weak or decaying patriotism. On the contrary, it may be and generally is, an evidence of intelligent human desire to adjust differences by reason rather than by rage, and as diplomacy and concession must always play a large part in adjusting terms of peace after the war is ended and the power to fight longer is exhausted, wisdom says it is better to make the concessions and discuss the differences sanely before rather than after the war.

My opinion is that when the war is proposed and a mother is called upon to cast a vote which decides the fate of her own child, she will, before casting it, inquire carefully whether the difference cannot be better adjusted by peaceful rather than by warlike methods. The votes of women will tend toward a higher patriotism which considers not one's country first, but justice first, and before the right of any nation, the right of humanity.

ANNA HOWARD SHAW.

## LET'S BE HONEST!

"If we must fight Mexico [or Germany], let us pray as we bare the sword."—Religious Periodical.

Let's be honest, anyway.  
If we march away to war.  
Down the column's glint and sway  
We know what we're going for.  
Cut the preaching, church and civil,  
And the praying and the drivel;  
Sing "My country, right or wrong!"  
That's the only soldier song.

Blessings now are foolery;  
Only beef and bullets count.  
Who can run a killing bee  
By the Sermon on the Mount?  
Underneath the war flag's rustle  
You we trust, O steel and muscle!  
In this game of heathen Rome  
Leave our cumbrous God at home.

Could a theologic quirk  
Make us better shots, or worse?  
Let us do our soldier work  
With a candid soldier curse.  
Lock your Jesus in the chapel;  
Leave us free to gouge and grapple  
In the grand beast game we play!  
Let's be honest, anyway.

BADGER CLARK.

015  
The Woman's Peace Party  
of New York City  
70 Fifth Avenue

First Annual Report

February 19th, 1915  
to February 11th, 1916



*Crystal Eastman*

Another noted peace organization located at 70 Fifth Avenue in its early days was the **Church Peace Union** founded by **Andrew Carnegie** in 1914 and endowed with \$2,000,000 from the Carnegie Foundation. Today it is known as the **Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs**.

70 Fifth Avenue was also a haven for agencies dedicated to providing relief to those suffering from the catastrophes of worldwide wars and natural disasters. This included **the Relief Fund for the Women and Children of Serbia** during World War I and **the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief** or **the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief** (later **Near East Relief** and now **the Near East Foundation**, the oldest nonsectarian international development organization in the U.S. and only the second humanitarian organization chartered by Congress). The latter was founded in New York in September 1915 in order to initiate relief measures and organize support in response to the unfolding Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. The group's establishment was initiated **by Henry Morgenthau Sr.**, the American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1913 and 1916. Peter Balakian, in his book *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and the American Response*, wrote:

*Ambassador Morgenthau went beyond the duty of his job as he became the crucial nexus between the killing fields and the American relief community and the press back home. A man of high moral conscience, Ambassador Morgenthau was most likely the first high-ranking diplomat to confront boldly the leaders of the Ottoman government about its treatment of the Armenians.*

That all America may see and know and understand

The frank story of Aurora Mardiganian who survived while four millions perished in

# RAVISHED ARMENIA

DIRECTED BY OSCAR APPEL  
PRODUCED BY WINN SELIG FROM THE SCENARIO BY NORA WALN

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF

W.F. Brando

## GIVE OR WE PERISH

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR RELIEF IN THE NEAR EAST  
ARMENIA - GREECE - SYRIA - PERSIA  
CAMPAIGN for \$30,000,000

Robinson

## LEFT BEHIND IN SERBIA

Send Money for the Women and Children to the SERBIAN RELIEF  
70 Fifth Avenue New York

## LEST THEY PERISH

CAMPAIGN for \$30,000,000

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR RELIEF IN THE NEAR EAST  
ARMENIA - GREECE - SYRIA - PERSIA  
ONE RAYBURN AVE., NEW YORK CLEVELAND H. DODGE, TREASURER





THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE  
 FOR ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF

ANNOUNCES

**"RAVISHED ARMENIA"**  
 THE STORY OF AURORA MARDIGIAN

The Christian Girl Who Survived the Great Massacres  
 will be presented by the Committee in connection with  
 its national appeal for funds with which to rescue and  
 save the lives of the Armenian Refugees who now are  
 crying for bread, medicine and help, from the wastes of  
 the deserts in Asia Minor. It will be shown simultane-  
 ously in many cities.

It is the verdict of many noted experts in the pro-  
 duction of the most spectacular and absorbing motion  
 pictures that

**"RAVISHED ARMENIA"**  
 THE STORY OF THE GIRL WHO SURVIVED

is the greatest motion picture achievement in theme,  
 human interest, seriousness of purpose and thrilling de-  
 velopment of dramatic conception ever attempted.

Those who are privileged to see it will also help

**SAVE A LIFE**

## MILLION ARMENIANS KILLED OR IN EXILE

American Committee on Relief  
Says Victims of Turks Are  
Steadily Increasing.

### POLICY OF EXTERMINATION

More Atrocities Detailed in Support  
of Charge That Turkey Is  
Acting Deliberately.

In a statement issued yesterday from the offices of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief at 10 Fifth Avenue further atrocities committed by Turks upon Armenian Christians were detailed and additional evidence was given to support Lord Bryce's assertion that the massacres are the result of a deliberate plan of the Turkish Government to "get rid of the Armenian question," as Abdul Hamid once said, by getting "rid of the Armenians."

Professor Samuel T. Dutton, Secretary of the committee, said:  
"According to all of the best evidence which the American committee has received, it is probably well within the truth to say that of the 2,000,000 Armenians in Turkey a year ago, at least 1,000,000 have been killed or forced into Islam, or compelled to flee the country, or have died upon the way to exile, or are now upon the road to the deserts of Northern Arabia, or are already there. The number of victims is constantly increasing. Surely there can be no greater need of immediate help, even in these troublous times, than the desperate need of the Armenian refugees. The American committee has already done much in collecting and sending funds, as has also the English committee, but there is still the direst need of generous con-

According to [Morgenthau's grandson](#), Henry Morgenthau III, his grandfather:

*... strenuously reported his concerns [about the fate of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire] back to the State Department in Washington, where he was met not so much with opposition as with a numbing lack of interest... To get Morgenthau off his back, Secretary [of State] Robert Lansing encouraged him to seek aid from private sources. He did. The result was the establishment of the Armenian Atrocities Committee, later redesignated as the Armenian Syrian Relief Committee and finally the great Near East Relief Organization chartered by Congress in 1919, which raised millions of dollars to the battle cry "remember the starving Armenians."*

In its' early years, 70 Fifth Avenue was also the home of the **National Board of Review of Motion pictures**, founded in 1909 to fight government intervention in the film industry and known today simply as the National Board of Review. In its 111-year existence, the Board played a profound role in shaping the motion picture industry in America, single-handedly deciding what content would or would not appear in film by either granting or denying their stamp of approval for movies: "passed by the National Board of Review." In explaining the role and work of the organization in 1926, its Executive Secretary Wilton A. Barrett [wrote](#):

*The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, is a trained, volunteer, disinterested citizen organization, composed of upwards of three hundred people reviewing films in New York City before they are released for general exhibition to the public, with associate, advisory members and affiliate citizen groups in many localities across the country. The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive method of selecting the better pictures, publishing classified*

*lists of, and information about them, and building up audiences and support for them through the work of community groups, in order that the producers may be encouraged to make the finest pictures and exhibitors to show them, and the people in general helped to a response to the best that the screen has to offer. This places the emphasis on making the public conscious of its taste in, and giving it a voice in the selection of its entertainment.*



# NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 2

February, 1940



The Joad family's truck, in "The Grapes of Wrath" (see page 16)

Published monthly except July, August and September  
by the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

20 cents a copy

\$2.00 a year

# NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XIV, No. 3

March, 1939



At the moment of the first attack on the stagecoach (see "Stagecoach" page 20)

Published monthly except July, August and September  
by the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

20 cents a copy

\$2.00 a year

# NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XI, No. 7

Sept.-Oct., 1936



Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer as "Romeo and Juliet" (see page 6)

Published monthly, except July and August, by the  
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

20 cents a copy

\$2.00 a year

# NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. III, No. 10

October, 1928

(Combining "Exceptional Photoplays," "Film Progress" and "Monthly Photoplay Guide")



Luther Facing his Interrogators (See page 4)

Published monthly by the  
NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

Established by The People's Institute in 1909

70 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

20 cents a copy

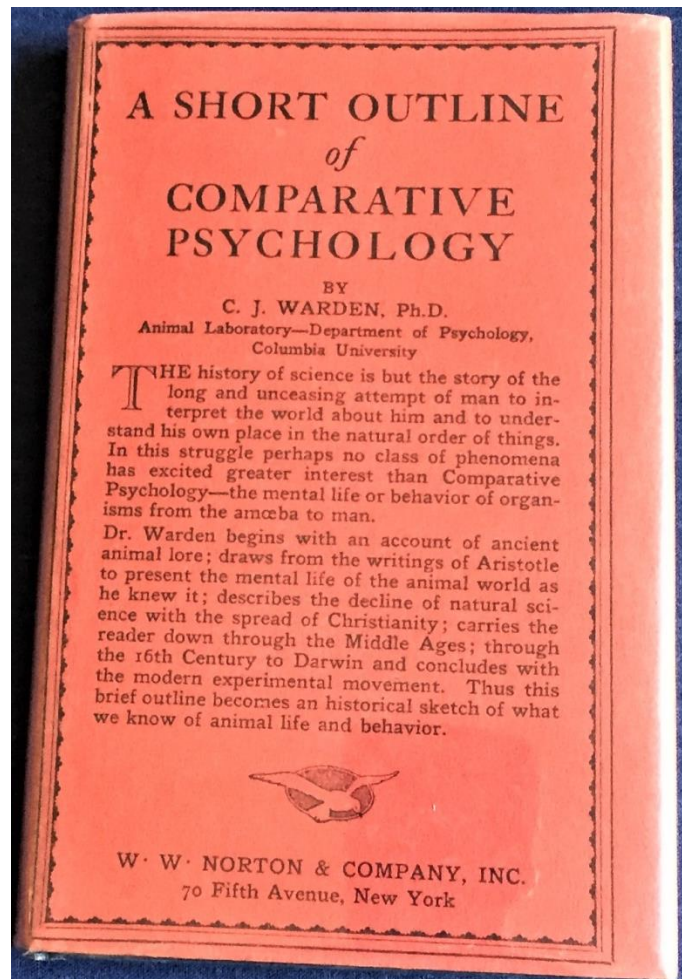
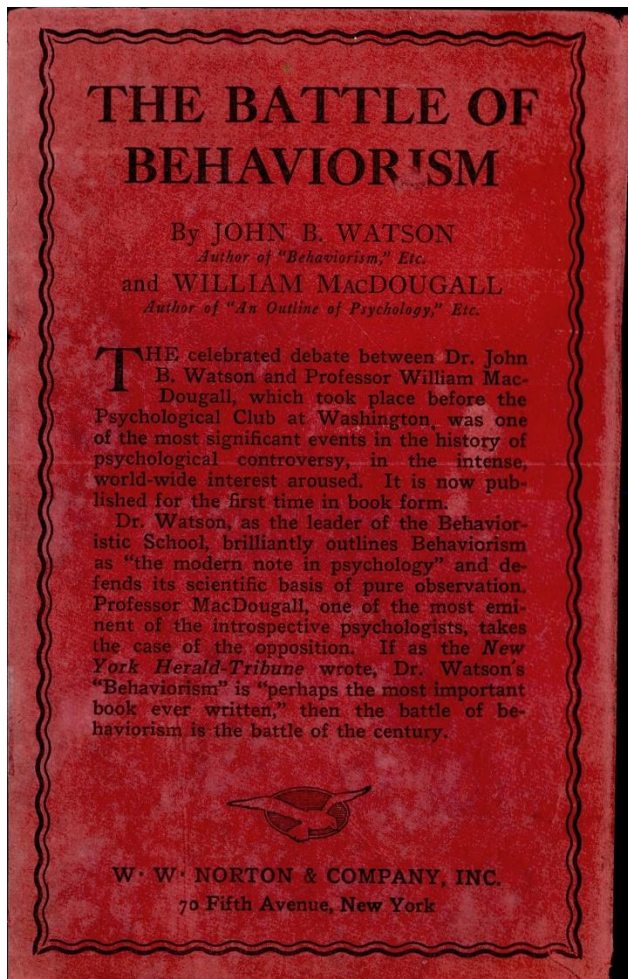
\$2.00 a year

According to [the New York Public Library](#), which maintains the Board's records from 1907 to 1971:

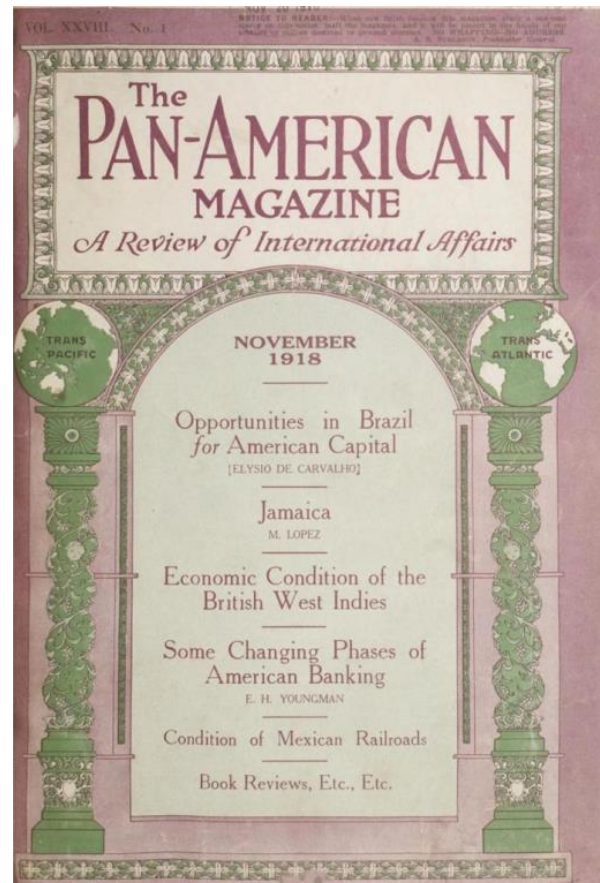
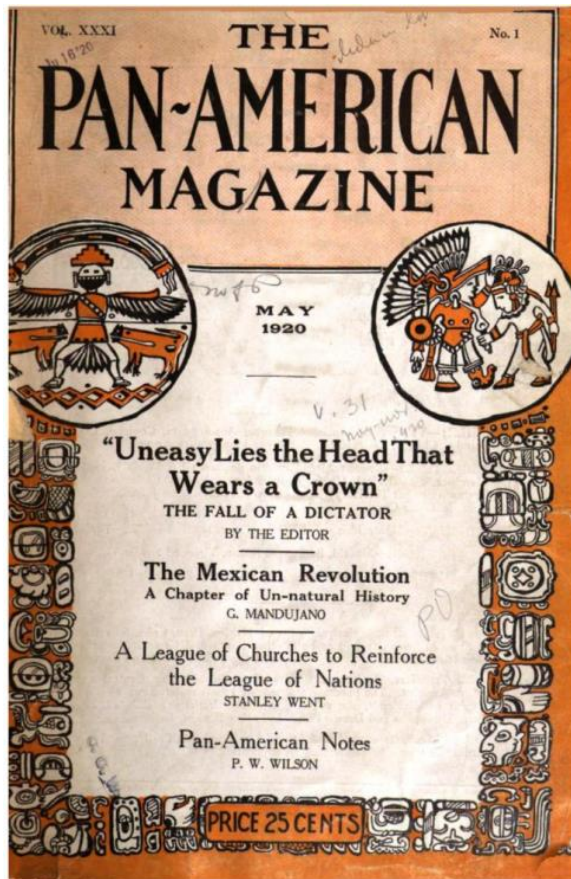
*The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures (U.S.) was created in 1909 as the New York Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures. The New York Board became the National Board of Censorship when it took the place the local boards in various cities. In 1916 the name was changed to the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures (NBRMP) signifying a fundamental change of policy: the Board would no longer dictate standards of morality in motion pictures. Its primary responsibility became the education of the viewing public; it published reviews and recommended movies which were considered by the reviewers to have achieved distinction. Publications of the Board included the National Board of Review Magazine which was superseded in 1950 by Films in Review.*

**The National Board of Review** was located at 70 Fifth Avenue from the 1910s until [at least 1949](#) – a critical time in the development of the motion pictures industry and in the shaping of its content and regulation by the Board.

Like many of the buildings in this area, 70 Fifth Avenue also housed a wide array of prominent publishers, including **W.W. Norton, Hawthorn Books, E.R. Herrick & Co., Prentice-Hall Publishers, Ginn & Co.,** and **Allyn & Bacon**, among others.



No. 70 Fifth Avenue was also the home in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of *The Pan-American Magazine*, which began as a private enterprise by William W. Rasor, a U.S. citizen living in Mexico City. With support from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and eventually under the aegis of the Geographic and Historical Society of the Americas, it was published in multiple languages and circulated throughout the hemisphere, offering readers a wide array of information on commerce, culture, and current affairs in the Western Hemisphere.



**68 Fifth Avenue:** Our research indicates that this 5-story building was constructed in 1838-40 as a 4-story house with a raised basement. While the stoop has been removed and the original ground floor and raised basement altered in later years for commercial use, the upper floors of the building retain much of their original detail, including the cornice and lintels over the windows, though the facade has been covered in what appears to be stucco.

The structure dates to the earliest days of lower Fifth Avenue's development. Directly across from what was **James Lenox's mansion**, the building's location and its grand proportions (now seemingly modest compared to the later and substantially larger buildings around it) indicate it was likely built for a New Yorker of considerable wealth. According to our research, the structure was built by **John H. Cornell** (records show a John H. Cornell at this time who was a high-ranking officer at the **Mechanic's Banking Association on Wall**



68 Fifth Avenue (l. to r.) sometime in the 1920s or 30s, ca. 1940, and present.

Street), but before it was completed was sold to **N.H. Wolfe**, indicating he was the probably first owner of the house. This appears to likely be the same N.H Wolfe who was the owner and namesake of the oldest flour and grain company in New York, **N.H. Wolfe & Company**. So prominent was Wolfe's firm that its failure in 1857 was largely responsible for precipitating **the Panic of 1857**, one of the first multi-national global financial crises.

Photographic evidence indicates the structure remained in the form of a grand home, at least on the exterior, [into the 1930s](#). By 1940 it had been altered, and housed **The Music Box Canteen**, a celebrated World War II entertainment venue for GIs [described at the time as](#) "one of the most famous metropolitan service centers, and... 'a home away from home' to thousands of servicemen." The Canteen was known not just to American GIs but was popular among allied military men from across the world. The caption for an April 1943 photo of servicemen singing boisterously around a piano at The Music Box Canteen [described the scene thus](#):

*'Music hath no boundaries' is an adage that still holds good at the Music Box Canteen, on New York's Fifth Avenue, where long, lanky Australian RAAF aces, grinning American tars, and rosy-cheeked French sailors of the Tricolour's ships, the Richelieu and Le Terrible, all make merry around a Piano, singing "Le Marseillaise." It's coffee the boys are drinking out of paper cups, not champagne.'*

In 1943 the Chinese-American modernist artist **Yun Gee** [staged an exhibition](#) to raise funds for the Music Box Canteen. The Canteen's administrator was [Minna Regina Falk](#), who would later become the first female historian to become a full professor at **NYU** in 1963. Later the space would become home to **The Gondolier Restaurant**, which [billed itself as](#) "the only authentic Italian Supper Club in New York City."



(Below) The Music Box Canteen, April 7, 1943. Original photo caption: "The famous "Coffee Bar" at The Music Box Canteen , on New York's Fifth Avenue, has an international flavor – Australian R.A.A.F. aces, American Tars, and Rosy cheeked French sailors from the Richelieu and 'Le Terrible.' The Tricolour gobs couldn't get over the fact that coffee and milk in paper cups were served exclusively over the bar."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

014604

(Below) The Music Box Canteen, April 7, 1943. Original photo caption: "'Music hath no boundaries' is an adage that still holds good at the Music Box Canteen, on New York's Fifth Avenue, where long, lanky Australian RAAF aces, grinning American tars, and rosy-cheeked French sailors of the Tricolour's ships, the Richelieu and Le Terrible, all make merry around a Piano, singing "Le Marseillaise." It's coffee the boys are drinking out of paper cups, not champagne."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

014606





64-66 Fifth Avenue (l.) ca. 1922 and today.

**64-66 Fifth Avenue:** This 8-story commercial loft building was built in stages – first in 1892 by architect R.H. Robertson, with additions in 1907 and 1915.

The building was constructed for **Macmillan Co. Publishers** to serve as their headquarters. Founded in 1843 in Scotland by Daniel and Alexander Macmillan, Macmillan made a name for itself publishing great writers like **W.B. Yeats, John Maynard Keynes, Lewis Carroll, and Margaret Mitchell.**

Macmillan opened an office in the United States in 1869, and sold the American company in 1890s, resulting in the construction of their Fifth Avenue headquarters. They remained here until they built their new headquarters next door at 60 Fifth Avenue in 1924.

[Arguably the first art movie house in America](#), the **Fifth Avenue Playhouse** opened at 66 Fifth Avenue on December 16, 1925 showing *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. In 1935 the [Jewish Telegraph Agency reported](#) that the “little playhouse brings to New York movies of interest to lovers of France and to those familiar with the French language...Beginning Friday night, the Fifth Avenue Playhouse is showing “Criez-le sur les Toits,” or “Shout It from the



October 31, 1927. Brooklyn Daily Eagle.





Martha Graham

House Tops,” featuring two of France’s well known stars, Simone Heliard and Saint-Granier.”

The theater was renamed the **Fifth Avenue Cinema** in 1954 when it was operated by Ragoff & Becker. A New York premiere art house for many decades, it was where **Satyajit Ray’s** “Pather Panchali!” was introduced to New York and **Pasolini’s** “Accattone” had its first commercial run. It closed its doors in 1973 after the building was acquired by The New School.

Called “the Picasso of dance” and “a prime revolutionary in the arts of this century and the American dancer and choreographer whose name became synonymous with modern dance” by the New York Times, the great American modern dance innovator **Martha Graham** had her first dance studio at 66 Fifth Avenue beginning in the 1930s, remaining here through the at least [the 1950s](#). Starting off as an all-female dance company, it was while located here that Graham first integrated men into her work and school.

**60-62 Fifth Avenue:** This eight-story building was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2006 based upon its significance to the history of commerce and its architecture. [According to the listing](#), the former **Macmillan Publishing Company Headquarters** was built between 1923 and 1924 to be the new headquarters of the American branch of the prominent British publishing house. Macmillan grew from a small London bookstore founded in 1843 into one of England’s most important publishers. Its American branch, founded in 1869, eventually became the largest publisher in the United States. The American company hired the firm of **Carrere & Hastings; Shreve Lamb & Blake** to design their new headquarters building. **Carrere & Hastings** were nationally known for such major New York monuments as **the New York Public Library** at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, while **Shreve Lamb & Harmon** would design **the Empire State**



60 Fifth Avenue (l.) ca.1926 and 2015.

**Building.** 60 Fifth Avenue combined streamlined Beaux-Arts detailing with steel-cage construction to help the commercial building fit into the residential precincts of lower Fifth Avenue, winning it an award from the Fifth Avenue Association.

**Macmillan** was one of the first foreign publishers to locate a branch in the United States, reflecting the growing importance of the American market. During its time at 60 Fifth Avenue, **Macmillan** grew to become the largest publisher in the United States. While the Depression years were challenging for Macmillan, they nevertheless prospered, in no small part due to the success of their American operation, headquartered here, and their publication during this time of **Margaret Mitchell's** wildly popular *Gone With The Wind* in 1936.

**Macmillan** remained there until 1962 when the building was sold to **Forbes Inc.** **Malcolm Forbes** not only purchased the building but the adjacent townhouse at 11 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, which unlike 60 Fifth Avenue is located within the Greenwich Village Historic District. **Forbes** lived in 11 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street while owning and working out of 60 Fifth Avenue. 11 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street had been owned by the family of **British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan.** **Forbes** renovated 60 Fifth Avenue to include the **Forbes Galleries** in the ground floor, housing his unrivalled collection of Faberge eggs, toy soldiers, and the earliest homemade monopoly board.



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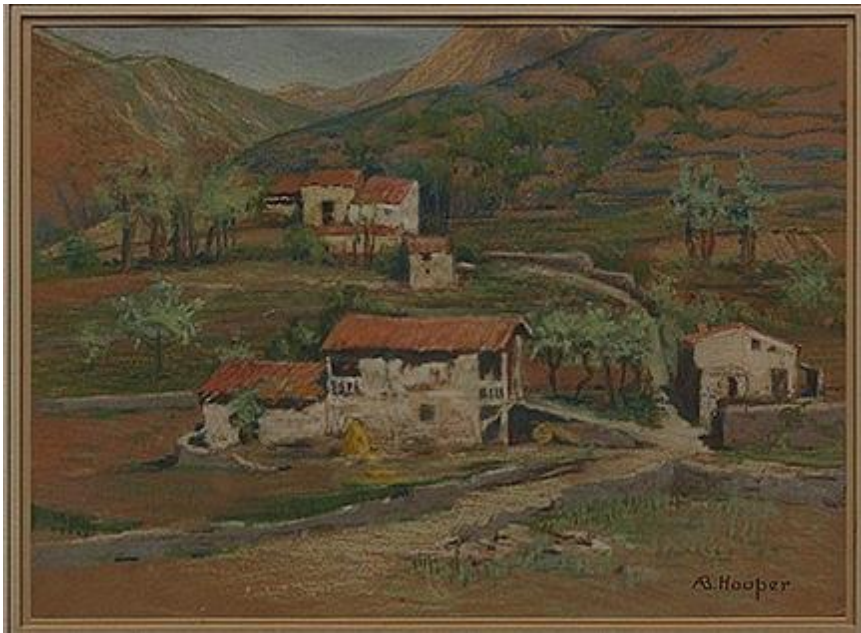
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**FINE UNITED STATES CENTS,**  
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Sale by Auction without Reserve,  
**AT THE KENNEDY AUCTION ROOMS, 59 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK,**  
Friday, April 5, 1895,  
AT 2 O'CLOCK, P. M.  
DANIEL R. KENNEDY, Auctioneer.

(l. to r.) 59 Fifth Avenue and advertisements for Queen & Co. Optical and Scientific Instrument Works and Kennedy Auction Rooms, occupants of the building.

**59 Fifth Avenue:** As per [prior submissions to the LPC](#), this structure was built around 1852 by **James Lenox**, the noted philanthropist and bibliophile whose mansion was located directly south of this building and neighboring 57 Fifth Avenue, and which housed his collection of books which eventually became the **Lenox Library**, one of the original entities



Annie Blakeslee Hooper (1861-1945),  
"Old French Village, Casteil Pyramids - Oriental"

which merged to form **the New York Public Library**. Unlike 57 Fifth Avenue, which was given a new façade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, 59 Fifth Avenue retains much of its original mid-19<sup>th</sup> century detail on its façade, which dates to the earliest phase of development of lower Fifth Avenue as the most exclusive address in New York.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, 59 Fifth Avenue was given over to

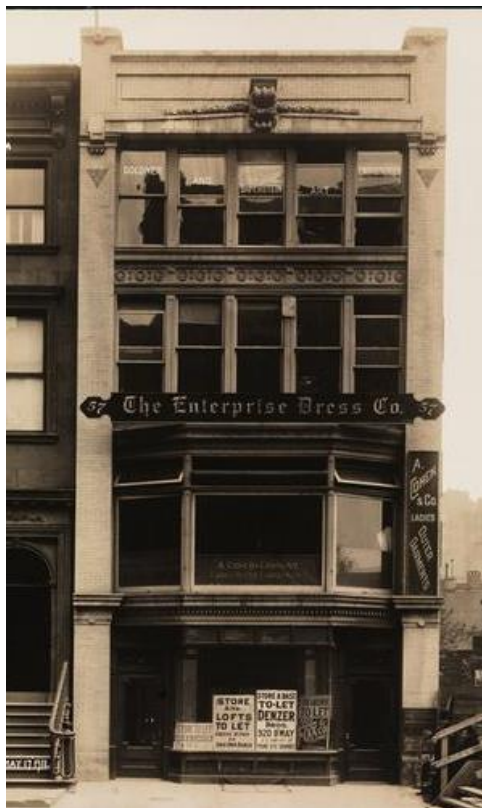
commercial uses. The occupancy of the building perfectly reflects the mixture of commercial, artistic, and literary endeavors which characterized this area south of Union Square. Publisher **O.T Louis Company** was located here, along with bookseller **William Beverley Harison**. By 1900 **Queen & Co. Optical and Scientific Equipment Works** was located here, followed by auctioneer **Daniel R. Kennedy**. Around that time the artists and illustrators **Annie Blakeslee Hooper** and **Will Philip Hooper** had their studios here.

**57 Fifth Avenue:** As per [prior submissions to the LPC](#), this structure was built around 1852 by **James Lenox**, the noted philanthropist and bibliophile whose mansion was located directly south of this building and which housed his collection of books that eventually became **the Lenox Library**. 57 Fifth Avenue is [listed](#) as the address for James Lenox's sister **Henrietta Lenox**. When he died in 1880, **James Lenox** left much of his considerable estate to his sister Henrietta, to whom he was very close and who, like him, never married. After her brother's death, Henrietta became a major benefactor to the **Lenox Library**, which would become one of the three founding entities of **the New York Public Library**, [donating](#) twenty-two valuable adjoining building lots and \$100,000 for the purchase of books.

Multiple sources also list **Robert B. Roosevelt** (1829-1906) as a resident of 57 Fifth Avenue in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Roosevelt was the brother of **Theodore Roosevelt Sr.**, uncle of **President Teddy Roosevelt**, and great uncle of **Eleanor Roosevelt**. An early and influential conservationist, he is credited with imbuing in his nephew Teddy his dedication to the conservation cause. A Democrat, he nevertheless was a fiercely loyal Unionist during the Civil War, co-founding and helping to lead **the Loyal National League**, which was established to support



57 Fifth Avenue



70 Fifth Avenue, 1911. Wurts Bros., MCNY.

the war effort and the maintenance of the Union, and particularly to channel support for Northern and Border State Democrats to the Union (the League was located at 813 Broadway, an extant building also within the proposed historic district). After the Civil War, Roosevelt was elected to Congress and eventually appointed Ambassador to the Netherlands (the Roosevelts were of Dutch lineage). Unlike many New York Democrats at the time, he was a staunch opponent of the corrupt **Tammany Hall** machine, and successfully worked towards its demise. Roosevelt was a trustee representing New York City in the building of the **Brooklyn Bridge**, and was instrumental in the establishment of **paid Fire and Health Departments** in New York City. He founded and led for twenty years the **New York State Fishery Commission**, an early conservation group, and introduced the bill in Congress which established the **United States Fish Commission**. Shortly after its incorporation in 1884 he also became President of the **New York Association for the Protection of Game**, whose

establishment in 1844 has been [described as](#) “the first active steps looking towards game protection in the United States.” Roosevelt was also a noted author and close to writer **Oscar Wilde**, who visited Roosevelt’s family when he came to the United States. Roosevelt is also credited with being the first to write down and publish the *Br’er Rabbit* stories, in **Harper’s Magazine**, which had been passed down orally by African slaves based upon traditional African folklore. The stories were then later popularized by **Joel Chandler Harris** and **Walt Disney**.

What had been a single family house appears to have been altered sometime in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for commercial purposes, and given the Secessionist style façade it maintains, in altered form, today. During this later incarnation the building served as the home of the groundbreaking *Pearson’s Magazine* and bookstore. Pearson’s began as a progressive British magazine in 1896 with a socialist bent and focus on literature, publishing works by **Upton Sinclair**, **George Bernard Shaw**, and **H.G. Wells**, among others. However, the American version, founded in 1899, began to diverge in its content and focus more on American writers and issues, especially under the editorship of **Frank Harris** in the 1910s and 20s, when it was located here.

**Harris** (1855-1931), an Irish immigrant who became a naturalized U.S. citizen during his editorship of *Pearson’s Magazine*, was a noted author, journalist,



Robert B. Roosevelt.



editor, publisher, and provocateur. His autobiographical *My Life and Loves* was banned in the United States and Britain for 40 years due to its sexual content. Harris ran away from home to the United States at the age of 13 in 1869, supporting

himself as a bootblack and eventually as a construction worker on the Brooklyn Bridge. Though committed to left-wing politics pushing the envelope, Harris managed to avoid the fate of many of his peers during World War I, with only one issue of *Pearson's* banned from the mails by the Postmaster General and the magazine kept in publication throughout the war. He wrote two books about **Shakespeare** and biographies of his friends **George Bernard Shaw** and **Oscar Wilde** (Harris' close friendship with Wilde is portrayed in **Moises Kaufman's *Gross Indecencies: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*** as well as several other literary portrayals of Wilde's life).



The former James Lenox's Mansion, 53-55 Fifth Avenue, with 57 Fifth Avenue visible at far left, ca. 1911, just prior to demolition. Wurts. Bros, MCNY.

**55 Fifth Avenue:** This impressive 18-story neo-Renaissance style office building was constructed in 1912 and designed by Maynicke & Franke. Maynicke was, according to the New York Times, “a pioneer in the building of modern loft buildings,” and the architect of other landmarked buildings including the **Germania Bank Building** at 190 Bowery, the **International Toy Center** at 200 Fifth Avenue, and the **Sohmer Piano Building** at 170 Fifth Avenue. Today the building is almost entirely intact on its exterior to its original form save for some very minor ground floor alterations.

While largely housing offices throughout its over one hundred year history, 55 Fifth Avenue bears great significance in the history of American music. Beginning in 1926 the **Columbia Phonograph** recording studios were located here, and some time not long after the **Okeh Phonograph** recording studios were located here, both remaining until mid-1934. Some of the most significant recordings of 20<sup>th</sup> century American music were made in these studios.



**The Columbia Phonograph Company** was founded in 1887. Now known as **Columbia Records**, it is the oldest surviving brand name in the recorded sound business, and only the second major company to produce records. **Okeh Records** was founded in 1916 by **Otto K.E. Heinemann**. **Okeh** eventually merged with **Columbia**, but initially established a strong reputation for producing “race records,” i.e. recordings by and for African Americans, including some of the early greats of jazz and blues, such as **Louis Armstrong**.



The renowned record-producer, civil rights activist, and **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame**-inductee **John Hammond** made his very first recordings here. Hammond would go on to play a significant role in launching the careers of **Bob Dylan**, **Bruce Springsteen**, **Harry James**, **Count Basie**, **Big Joe Turner**, **Pete Seeger**, **Babatunde Olatunji**, **Aretha Franklin**, **Leonard Cohen**, and **Stevie Ray Vaughan**, as well as in reviving the music of delta blues artist **Robert Johnson**.

*Billie Holiday recording*

John Hammond (r.)

At 55 Fifth Avenue, **Hammond** accomplished several historic firsts. His first recordings there were with jazz pianist **Garland Wilson**, and big band and swing pianist, arranger and composer **Fletcher “Smack” Henderson**. **Henderson** is considered along with



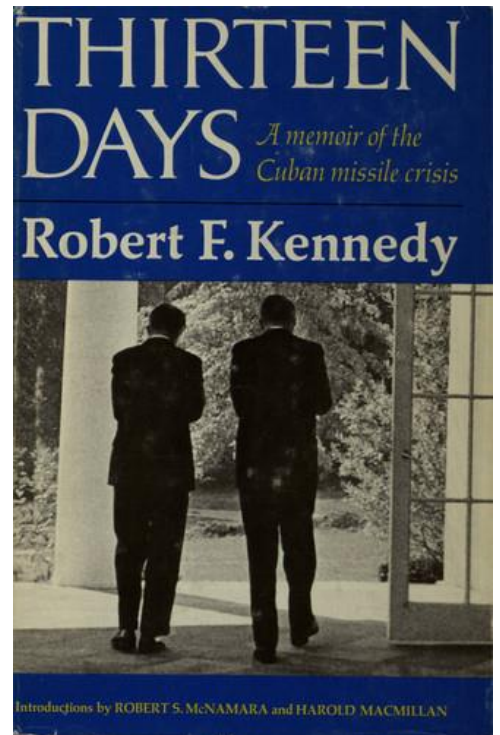
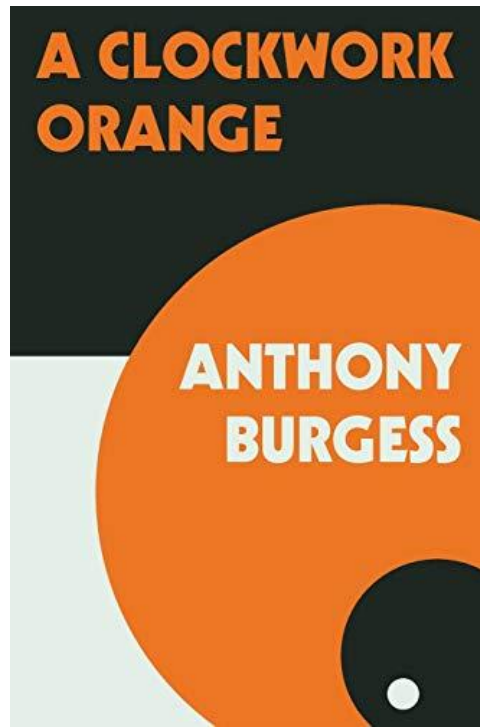
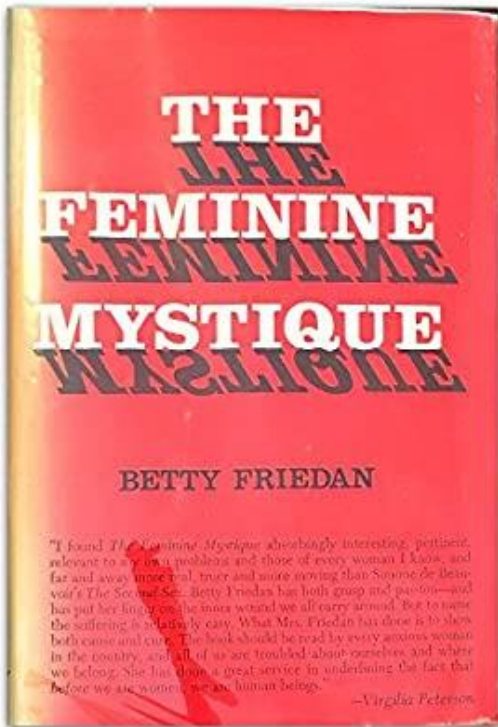
**Duke Ellington** one of the most influential arrangers and bandleaders in jazz history, and one of the progenitors of what would come to be called ‘swing.’ **Henderson** recorded his “New King Porter Stomp” here.

**Hammond** also discovered **Billie Holiday** singing at a Harlem speakeasy, and brought her down to the Columbia studios to *cut her very first records here in 1933*. **Hammond** had established a close relationship with a young **Benny Goodman**, who recorded his first top ten hits, including “Ain’t Cha Glad?,” with **Hammond** at 55 Fifth Avenue in 1934.



While **Goodman** is often credited with integrating American music by working with African American musicians and vocalists, **Goodman** himself would credit **Hammond**, who made it his personal mission to advance the integration of the music industry. **Hammond** suggested and indeed pushed Goodman to record music with African American musicians, and arranged those first integrated recording sessions. After initial resistance from **Goodman**, **Hammond** got him, **Holiday**, and the great African American swing pianist **Teddy Wilson** to record together here in what was *the very first integrated musical recording session* (while black and white musicians might at times play together at clubs, recording together was a taboo which Hammond was the first to shatter).

At 55 Fifth Avenue **Hammond** also recorded with legendary jazz saxophonist **Benny Carter**, Blues singer **Bessie Smith**, and jazz vocalist **Ethel Waters**.



55 Fifth Avenue has also been home to an array of prominent publishers over the years, like many of the buildings in the proposed historic district. Among the more notable is **W.W. Norton & Company**, the oldest and largest employee-owned publishing house, and publishers of *The Feminine Mystique*, by **Betty Friedan**; *A Clockwork Orange*, by **Anthony Burgess**; *Thirteen Days*, **Robert F. Kennedy's** firsthand account of the **Cuban Missile Crisis**; *Present at the Creation*, by **Dean Acheson**; and *The 9/11 Commission Report*, among other works.

It should be noted that 55 Fifth Avenue was built upon the site of **James Lenox's mansion**, which is credited with turning Fifth Avenue into the premiere residential address in New York. **Lenox's mansion** also eventually came to house his extraordinary library, the **Lenox Library**, which became one of the foundations of the **New York Public Library**. After **Lenox's** death, the mansion became the first home of the **Institute of Musical Art**, now the **Juilliard School**. Of the **Juilliard School**, **Frank Rich** said "born when a young country was first discovering that it might have a serious appetite for the arts, Juilliard grew up with both the country and its burgeoning cultural capital of New York to become an internationally recognized synonym for the pinnacle of artistic achievement."

**49-51 Fifth Avenue** As documented in [prior](#)



49-51 Fifth Avenue





*Alfred E. Smith (center) at the opening of the Empire State Building.*

[submissions to the LPC](#), this 16-story Colonial Revival apartment house was constructed in 1929 and designed by renowned theater architect **Thomas Lamb**. Upon opening one of the building's first residents was **Alfred E. Smith**, who had just lost the 1928 Presidential campaign to **Herbert Hoover**. Smith nevertheless holds his place in history as the first Catholic major party candidate for President of the United States. While living here Smith was the President of Empire State, Inc., the firm which built **the Empire State Building** in just 13 months, with construction commencing on St. Patrick's Day 1930 and reaching completion on May 1, 1931. The building remained the tallest in the world from 1931 until 1973, or forty-two years – the longest any building has held that title during the skyscraper era.

More recently, the landscape **artist Jane Freilicher** was a resident of the building. Initially an abstract expressionist and later a representational painter, she painted scenes of New York City from her view from her apartment in this building.

Freilicher was one of the few prominent female painters in the 'New York School' of abstract expressionist who dominated not only the New York art scene but the global art world in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the activity of the New York School of both painters and writers took place within blocks of here and within the proposed historic district, and many of its members, like Freilicher, lived within its confines. As per this and other submission to the Commission, this included Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kilne,



*Jane Freilicher, Untitled  
(Cityscape Looking West), 1970.*

Frank O'Hara, Larry Rivers, Hans Hoffman (under whom Freilicher studied) and Jules Olitski, among many others, with prominent gathering places including the nearby Cedar Tavern, the Albert Hotel, the East 10<sup>th</sup> Street Galleries, and the Reuben Gallery, among many others.

Her unique "urban pastoral" painting style would often featured still lifes or household objects in front of the panoramic views of lower Manhattan she could observe from her apartment at 49-51 Fifth Avenue. She continued to paint from this location until her death in 2014.

As is the case throughout this proposed historic district south of Union Square, within these two short blocks can be found an extraordinary record of our city's and our country's history. However, that history is quickly being erased due to a lack of landmark protections for this area and a steady current of demolitions and unsympathetic alterations of historic buildings. I again strongly urge you to act quickly to recognize and protect this area's special history and architecture and the unique resource it provides to our city.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

cc: Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer  
City Council Speaker Corey Johnson  
City Councilmember Carlina Rivera  
State Senator Brad Hoylman  
Assemblymember Deborah Glick  
Community Board 2, Manhattan  
Historic Districts Council

NY Landmarks Conservancy  
Municipal Art Society  
Victorian Society in America, NY Chapter