



LIBRARY NOTES

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY NEWSLETTER
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The New York Society Library's NEW YORK CITY BOOK AWARD, 1997

New York City has been the inspiration of many books. The Library's Book Award was established in 1994 to honor current authors who capture the essence of the city. The 1995 recipient was The Encyclopedia of New York City, edited by Kenneth T. Jackson (Yale University Press and The New-York Historical Society). The 1996 recipient was Brooklyn! An Illustrated History, by Ellen M. Snyder-Grenier (Temple University Press). This year's award was divided between Manhattan in Maps and Terra-Cotta Skyline, featured below.

The Award Committee consists of the following Library members: Barbara Cohen, proprietor of the New York Bound bookshop; Hope Cooke, author of Seeing New York and Time Change; Joan K. Davidson, civic leader and former commissioner of New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation; Christopher Gray, architectural historian and author of the "Streetscapes" column for The New York Times; Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, executive director of Cityscape Institute; and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Wendy Wasserstein.

MANHATTAN IN MAPS, 1557-1995 Paul E. Cohen and Robert T. Augustyn (Rizzoli International Publications)



The Carwitham Plan, 1730

"The illustrations of the maps (many never published before) are lapidary, the weight and touch of the volume's pages a voluptuous pleasure. It is the text, however, brilliantly describing the mind set of the different era's map-makers which makes this book extraordinarily valuable."

(The Award Committee)

This lavishly illustrated volume explores New York's urban and social history through rare and beautiful

maps of the city produced during the past four hundred years and collected from archives and libraries throughout the world. From a crude woodblock engraving depicting Giovanni da Verrazano's first glimpse of New York Harbor in the sixteenth century to the latest satellite photograph of Manhattan, these important documents offer an unprecedented "avenue to New York's past."

Paul E. Cohen has been a dealer in antique maps and rare books with the New York firm of Richard B. Arkway, Inc. for the past ten years. He has served as director of the New-York Historical Society's library and worked at Columbia University Libraries. Robert T. Augustyn is one of the owners of the antique map and rare book firm of Martayan in New York and has worked in the field for twenty years.

TERRA-COTTA SKYLINE: NEW YORK'S ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENT

Susan Tunick and Peter Mauss (Princeton Architectural Press)



International Trading Company facade; 111 Fourth Avenue, New York

"Through her patient documentation over fifteen years, with the help of Peter Mauss's astutely positioned camera lens and consummate photographic artistry, Susan Tunick has made a ubiquitous but often unnoticed element of the New York City streets dramatically and enticingly visible to the average New Yorker."

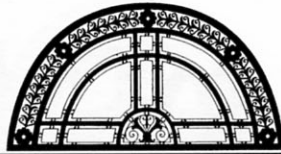
(The Award Committee)

Architectural terra cotta became an integral part of the buildings in New York City well over one hundred years ago. During much of the last century, however, this exceptional material has received little attention from most city dwellers. Terra cotta had its modern roots in the nineteenth century industrial era, grew in popularity in Stanford White's Gilded Age, and achieved its fullest realization in the geometry of the Art Deco period. Today, terra cotta is enjoying a quiet renaissance in restoration projects as well as new construction.

Susan Tunick is a national spokesperson for the preservation of architectural terra cotta and an established artist working in ceramic mosaic. Peter Mauss photographs architecture, interiors, and landscapes for the design profession.



The French Building mural; 551 Fifth Avenue, New York



GOING TO BERLIN? From a Visitor's Report by Linda B. Fritzinger



Berlin has a very special aura. On my first visit, I was convinced that it had a special smell as well. My Berlin friends told me that it was the blooming lindens, those same trees that once lined (and do again, just recently) its most famous street. On subsequent visits I have noticed the smell of the lindens less, the pungent atmosphere of the city itself more. Visually Berlin is idiosyncratic. Not lovely and seductive like Paris, grandly ancient like Rome, or proud in the monumental way of London, Berlin sits stolidly (but not quietly) on the great northern European plain that stretches from the Ural Mountains to the Netherlands. Flat, quite green, laced with rivers and canals, and dotted with lakes around its edges, it is not "pretty." Even before it was so badly bombed it was not that. Stylish and sharp-edged, like Mack's knife, its impact is intensely subjective. Berlin is above all alive--and kicking--and always has been, as if in spite of itself and those who have tried to destroy it.

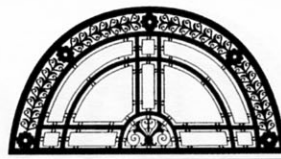
I have chosen the following books for the traveller to Berlin because I feel that by reading some of them, some of part of them, even a little of any of them, one comes away with a sense of the history and the spirit of Berlin and also, occasionally, of the territory called Brandenburg which encloses it. The land, or state, of Brandenburg is not one of the largest in Germany but, as the heartland of the former Kingdom of Prussia, it has a long and complex history. Berlin, nearly dead center in Brandenburg, is a land unto itself in both senses of the word, a state and a state of mind. Its history, if measured by when it first became the capital of a united Germany in 1871, has been short but incredibly dramatic. It has been led by posturing emperors and gesticulating demagogues, filled with millions of marching men, home to revolutionaries and visionaries, a city of the avant-garde and of bourgeois rectitude, bombed to bits and saved by airplanes a few years later, and finally, divided and reunited with maximum theatricality.



Memoirs and Journals

(For books on the subject of Berlin's politics, history, biography, novels, plays, art, architecture, music, travel, and description, check Dr. Fritzinger's report in the Visitors' Reports Notebook at the Main Desk.)

- Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground: Berlin Diaries, 1945-1948* (92 A5573A)
- Vicki Baum, *It Was All Quite Different: The Memoirs of Vicki Baum* (828B) Born in Vienna, Baum was a musician, an editor, and a very popular author, best known for *Grand Hotel*. Her account of her life in Berlin from just before World War I until the 1930s begins on p. 213.
- Christabel Bielenberg, *Ride Out the Dark* (940.548B) English, a niece of the British press czar, Lord Northcliffe, and married to an aristocratic German, she spent the war years in Berlin where she and her husband enjoyed the close attentions of the Gestapo because of their intimate connections with the would-be killers of Hitler.
- Bertold Brecht, *Journals, 1934-1955* (92 B8292B) The portion on Berlin covers the dates from 22 October 1948-18 July 1955. What Brecht says about Berlin, among other things, is that it is "an etching by Churchill after an idea by Hitler."
- Elias Canetti, *The Torch in My Ear* (92 C2217C) Look at Part Four: "The Throng of Names." It is about Berlin in 1928.
- George Clare, *Berlin Days, 1946-48* (943.1C) Clare served as an intelligence officer with the American army. Shortly after the war he returned to Berlin, this time as a journalist intent on witnessing the "after shock" of Nazi defeat in the capital.
- Robert Darnton, *Berlin Journal: 1989-1990* (943.1D) An account of recent memorable events in Berlin by an historian who has written more often of France.
- Countess Marion Donhoff, *Before the Storm: Memories of My Youth in Old Prussia* (92 D 682D) A memoir by the formidable publisher of *Die Zeit*, mainly about life in East Prussia (the area is now Poland), but from the point of view of a family intimately connected with Berlin's highest social and governmental circles in the early years of this century.
- George Grosz, *An Autobiography* (92G88G) Pre and Post World War I in Pomerania and Saxony (Dresden) as well as Berlin.
- Edith Keen, *Seven Years at the Prussian Court* (92 K2654K) The memoirs of an Englishwoman who from 1907 to 1914 served as companion to the daughter of Prince Frederick Leopold of Prussia, a cousin of the Kaiser. A look at the Hohenzollern Court from behind the scenes, below the stairs, and an English perspective on the years leading up to World War I.
- Harry Kessler, *In the Twenties: The Diaries of...* (92 K4268K) Kessler knew everybody ca. 1918-1937, and while this is not entirely about life in Berlin, he is interesting wherever he is.
- Hildegard Knef, *The Gift Horse* (92 N3835N) Chapters 1-12 cover the actress's childhood in Berlin during Hitler's rise to power.
- Susan Neiman, *Slow Fire: Jewish Notes from Berlin* (943.1N) An American graduate student living in Berlin and getting to know Berliners a generation after World War II.
- Mary Annette Beauchamp Russell, *Elizabeth and her German Garden* (FR) A charming account of aristocratic life in Berlin and Prussia before World War I as seen through the eyes of a young English wife to Graf Henning von Arnim-Schlagenthin. If you are charmed by "Elizabeth," there is in the Library an interesting account of her life by Leslie DeCharms, called *Elizabeth of the German Garden* (92 R9655D).
- William Russell, *Berlin Embassy* (940.5343R) This is about Berlin at war--but before the U.S. entered. Needless to say, people are trying desperately to get out.
- William Shirer, *Berlin Diary: Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1931-1941* (940.5343S); *End of a Berlin Diary* (940.5343S)
- Marie Vassiltchikov, *Berlin Diaries, 1940-1945* (92 V339V) A White Russian emigre who lived in Berlin through most of World War II and was close to many of the primary plotters against Hitler. Times are terrible, she is charming, and her account is fascinating.



Trustee Christopher Gray and his daughter, Olivia; Annual Meeting

GOING ON-LINE

From Mark Piel's Report at the Annual Meeting, April 22

A steady stream of members and visitors used the Library this year. Memberships topped 3000, with the main categories being household and students or teachers, schools, profit and non-profit organizations. Apart from these recognized divisions, there are countless others one can think of, but they all share one characteristic: they are readers. This is what Virginia Woolf writes about this select group in "How Should One Read a Book," from *The Second Common Reader*:

I have sometimes dreamt that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards--their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble--the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, "Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading."

The Library's most significant watershed has been the installation of the computer system. Nineteen-ninety seven saw the final preparations for our computerized services and on-line catalog terminals. Apprehension about this is unfounded. You probably read the recent *New York Times* article about toddlers and computers. They can hardly speak, they are still in diapers, but they are learning to push computer buttons. Recently, a member brought us a donation of Peter Drucker's two most recent books, saying "You're not up to date, you don't have these books." It turned out we did have the books. Although there was no information in the catalog cards (as they had not yet been filed), the computer indicated the call numbers.

The terminals are now installed in Stack 1, the Reference Room, the Children's Room, and the Microfilm Room on the fifth floor. While the system does not yet reflect the circulation status of a book, readers can use the catalog to carry out subject, author, title, or series searches--or all four simultaneously. Soon we will be able to tell you not only if a book is here but if the Library already has it on order. You may find out precisely what books you have out, something we couldn't tell you before.

We are looking for volunteers to help the computer-timid learn how to use these catalogs. They are not difficult to manage; if you can teach someone how to use an ATM, you can teach someone to use the on-line catalog. The difference is that the catalog is far more interesting. We will set up a schedule to suit yours, and of course train you. Anyone who would like to volunteer should call Nancy McCartney at (212) 717-0357. To paraphrase Cole Porter:

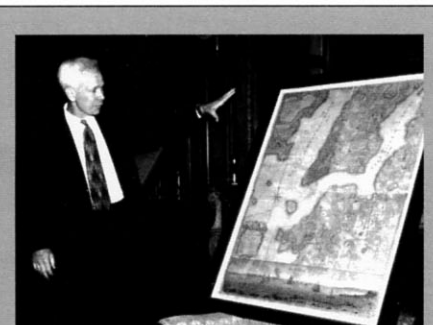


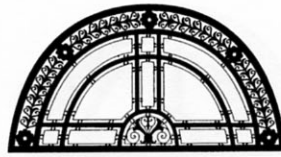
Teenagers do it.
 Toddlers do it.
 They even say in Boston that the Athenaeum does it.
 Let's do it.
 Let's use the terminals.



Trustees Connie Roosevelt and Ralph Brown, Annual Meeting

Robert Augustyn, co-author of *Manhattan in Maps*, talked about the Library's Ratzen Plan at this year's Book Award presentation on June 9. The map depicts the city in the years 1766 and 1767. It is 48" x 35" and printed from three copper plates. Mr. Augustyn called it "perhaps the finest map of an American city and its environs produced in the 18th century." The view is from Governor's Island and includes a detailed rendering of the agrarian landscape of Brooklyn and Queens. The map extends to today's 50th Street. The city at the time had a population of about 25,000. All major roads north of the city are shown and named for the first time. Bernard Ratzer was a skilled military engineer sent to America during the French and Indian War.





Thirsty?

The Library has acquired a water cooler. It is in the cloakroom directly to the right of the information desk on the main floor.

New Head of the Visitors' Committee

Dr. Margaret Mather Byard, a trustee, is stepping down as first Chair of the Visitors' Committee. She writes, "The Committee has given me a lively education, a great deal of pleasure and has been a rich reward for effort and energy expended." The Visitors' Committee comprises members who explore various aspects of the Library's holdings and report on what they find of interest for fellow readers. Twenty-nine such written essays have been completed. The new Chair is Mrs. Lucienne Bloch, a bibliophile and author of *Finders Keepers* and other works.

Historians Wanted

The Book Committee is in the process of reviewing the Library's entire history collection. If you have special knowledge of any section of this field and would like to help assess the Library's holdings, please call Nancy McCartney at (212) 717-0357.

The Library Reading Group in Current Fiction

This fall, the Library will sponsor a reading group in contemporary fiction. Led by novelist, reviewer, and devoted Library member Ellen Feldman, whose most recent book is *God Bless the Child*, the discussion will focus on a different novel each month. The book scheduled to be discussed at the first meeting is *Freedomland*, by Richard Price. Novels for subsequent gatherings will be chosen by the group, which will be limited to twenty members.

Participants will meet at 11:00 A.M. on the first Tuesday of each month, beginning October 6, and continuing through December 15, 1998. We look forward to a season of lively, informed, and impassioned discussion of some of the best of contemporary American and British fiction.

Please call Nancy McCartney at (212) 717-0357 for reservations. Space is limited.



Ellen Feldman

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Ms. Lawrence,

It is indeed fitting that Mark Piel was honored for his 20-year service at the Library. I was teaching at Finch College when Mark Piel came, as a very young man, to be our librarian in 1962. Our president, in choosing him, assumed he would meet the challenge of upgrading the Finch College Library. And he did.

I remember how I appreciated Mark's handing me advertising brochures with lists of books from companies dealing in out-of-print books, urging me to mark the ones I considered important for the Finch Library to own. I studied those brochures as eagerly as mystery book fans read whodunits. This opportunity to work with a librarian who encouraged book selection and library building--as opposed to just adding books--was exciting. The result was that Mark transformed the Finch Library from an inadequate collection of books into a very fine college library. Of the many tragic sides to the closing of Finch College in 1975, none was more regretted than the dispersal of its excellent library that Mark had been instrumental in building.

As a long-time member of The New York Society Library, nothing about this superb institution has pleased me more than seeing Mark as its librarian, in his quiet but effective way, both maintain its traditions and inconspicuously introduce important innovations. I congratulate Mark and the Library for their choices and activities.

Sincerely,
Margaret Maxwell

Please write to Jenny Lawrence, editor of *Library Notes*, care of the Library, with any comments and suggestions.

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