



LIBRARY NOTES

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2000

A CELEBRATION OF NEW YORK WRITING Diaries, Memoirs, and Poetry With Phillip Lopate

Tuesdays: January 25, February 29, and March 28
6:30 P.M. Members' Room

Life in New York City has inspired a rich and varied literature, the cream of which has been collected in *Writing New York*, the Library of America's 1100-page anthology edited by **Phillip Lopate**. The book was the winner, last year, of the Library's New York City Book Award for a work of fiction. *The Wall Street Journal* said it "captures the city in all its romantic charm and biting loneliness," while *New York Newsday* called it "a 108-course banquet." Mr. Lopate, himself a prominent author of several essay collections and editor of *Art of the Personal Essay*, will introduce "A Celebration of New York Writing" in three genres: the diary, the memoir, and the poem.

The first evening, devoted to the city's diarists, will feature three readers who are themselves authors and contributors to *Writing New York*: **George Plimpton**, **Angeline Goreau**, and **Susan Cheever**. Mr. Plimpton will represent businessman-mayor Philip Hone and lawyer George Templeton Strong, who together left an unequalled portrait in diary form of nineteenth-century New York City.

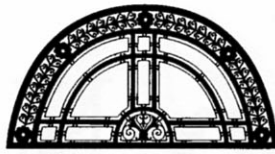
The second evening will be given over to the memoir—a more considered, shaped form than the diary. **Louis Begley** will make a selection from among New York male memoirists of different eras, such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Lincoln Steffens, Malcolm Cowley, Alfred Kazin, and Lewis Mumford. **Patricia Bosworth** will choose from among the city's women writers of autobiographical reflection, such as Joan Didion, Kate Simon, Anzia Yezierska, and Elizabeth Hardwick.

The third evening, three New York poets, **Harvey Shapiro**, **Marie Ponsot**, and **Alfred Corn**, will read from their own selection of New York poets, likely to include Walt Whitman, Hart Crane, Sara Teasdale, Elizabeth Bishop, Langston Hughes, James Merrill, Frank O'Hara, James Schuyler—and themselves. Together, the three evenings should provide a lively, thought-provoking mirror of the metropolis.

Enrollment for the series is limited. To register, please send your check for \$60 to The New York Society Library and send it to the attention of Programs.



C A L E N D R	Writing About New York Tuesdays January 25 February 29 March 28 Phillip Lopate 6:30 P.M. Members' Room	Storytelling Saturdays 10:30 A.M. January 29 February 5, 12, and 19 Eleni Constantelos Children's Room	Fiction Reading Group Tuesdays February 8 March 7 April 4 Ellen Feldman 11:00 A.M. Whitridge Room	Author Series Tuesday February 15 Shirley Hazzard "Greene of Capri" 6:30 P.M. Temple Israel 112 East 75th Street	Biography Reading Group Wednesdays March 8 April 5 May 3 Stacy Schiff 1:30 P.M. Whitridge Room	Lord Byron: The Poet as Autobiographer Monday March 6 Benita Eisler 6:00 P.M. Members' Room
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**THE 1999-2000 AUTHOR SERIES
GREENE ON CAPRI**

Shirley Hazzard

Tuesday, February 15 at 6:30 P.M., Temple Israel, 112 East 75th Street



For thousands of years the cliffs of Capri have sheltered pleasure seekers and refugees alike, among them Augustus, Tiberius, Henry James, Rilke, and Lenin. Here, in the 1960s, Graham Greene became friends with Shirley Hazzard and her husband, Francis Steegmuller. Ms. Hazzard's latest work uses their ever-volatile intimacy as a prism through which to illuminate Greene's character and work as well as the extraordinary literary culture that long thrived on this enchanted isle.

Shirley Hazzard, a trustee of The New York Society Library for twenty-five years, is the author of *The Evening of the Holiday*, *The Bay of Noon*, *The Transit of Venus*, and *The Countenance of Truth*. She lives in New York City and on Capri.

*The Author Series, held annually since 1994, is sponsored in 1999/2000 by Thirteen/WNET and The New York Society Library. The programs are held at Temple Israel, 112 East 75th Street, at 6:30 P.M. and are free for members and guests of the Library and Thirteen/WNET Patrons and Associates. For the general public, there is a \$10 admission charge at the door. The last talk will be in April by **Caroline Alexander** on **The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition**.*

**THE MAGIC OF THE SPOKEN WORD
LORD BYRON: THE POET AS AUTOBIOGRAPHER**

Benita Eisler

Monday, March 6 at 6:00 P.M., Members' Room

Alone among his fellow Romantics, Byron saw his poetry as an autobiographical project. From his earliest schoolboy verses, he self-consciously mined his life and times, including portraits of lovers, friends, and enemies, along with his adventures, revolutionary and sexual, for the raw material of his poems. On March 9, biographer Benita Eisler will be joined by an actor/reader to evoke, in what Ms. Eisler calls a form of "duet," Byron's turbulent life through his works, among them selections from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and his masterpiece, *Don Juan*.

Ms. Eisler, a trustee of The New York Society Library, has served as art editor for the Public Education Association, taught literature at Princeton University, and written several works including *O'Keefe and Stieglitz: The American Romance*, along with articles for *The New Yorker* and *The Nation*. Her biography of Lord Byron uses newly available family archives to reveal a man, poet, and celebrity who is an astonishingly contemporary figure in many ways.

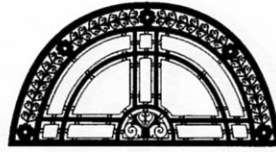
To register send a check for \$10. attention: Programs. Limited registration.



FOR CHILDREN—Old and New Tales—Saturdays at 10:30 A.M. at the Library

Escape from the wind and cold and enjoy stories warm and bright. Eleni Constantelos returns to the Library with old and new tales from around the world. Join us as we journey from "Once upon a time" to "Happily ever after." The four-week series begins on Saturday, January 29, and continues through February 19. The programs are at 10:30 A.M. in the Children's Room of the Library. Ages four and older are welcome.





NEW YORK CITY BOOK AWARDS, 1999

The Library's Book Award was established in 1994 to honor current authors who capture the essence of the city. The Award Committee consists of the following Library members: Barbara Cohen, former proprietor of the New York Bound Bookshop; 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.

1999 BOOK OF THE YEAR

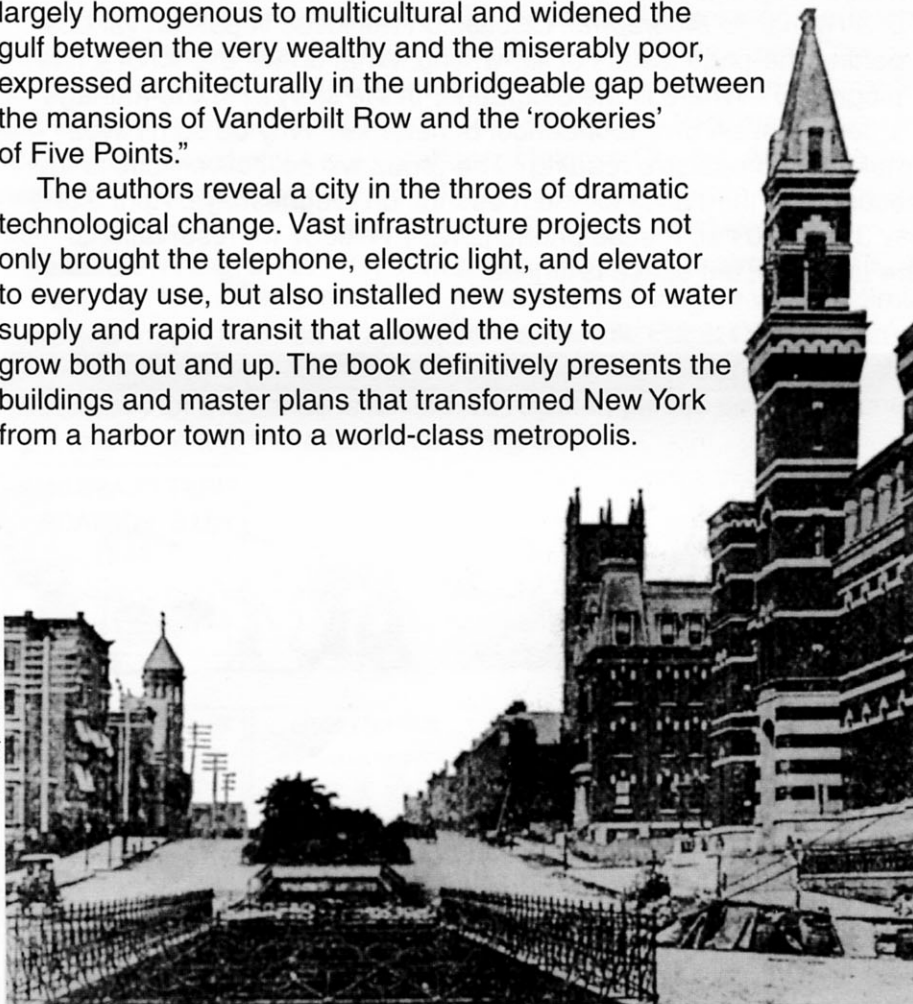
NEW YORK 1880: ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN THE GILDED AGE

Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman (The Monacelli Press)

New York 1880, the fourth volume in a series of documentary studies of architecture and urbanism in the city, covers the post-Civil War era when the city outstripped Boston and Philadelphia to become the great commercial center of the United States. As one reviewer noted, "It began to pile office floor upon office floor to create the splintered skyline that heralded the profiles of the 20th-century American city; and a mounting inflow of peoples, the newly rich from inland and the 'huddled masses' from without, transformed the city's population from largely homogenous to multicultural and widened the gulf between the very wealthy and the miserably poor, expressed architecturally in the unbridgeable gap between the mansions of Vanderbilt Row and the 'rookeries' of Five Points."

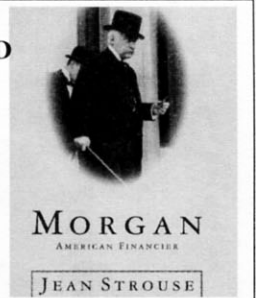
The authors reveal a city in the throes of dramatic technological change. Vast infrastructure projects not only brought the telephone, electric light, and elevator to everyday use, but also installed new systems of water supply and rapid transit that allowed the city to grow both out and up. The book definitively presents the buildings and master plans that transformed New York from a harbor town into a world-class metropolis.

NYTMS: photo David Ortiz

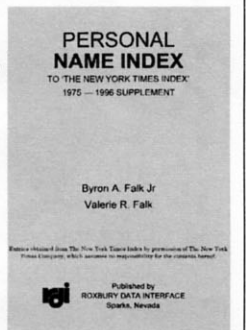


View north along Park Avenue from East 65th Street, 1888.

**SPECIAL AWARD
BIOGRAPHY**
***J. P. MORGAN:
AMERICAN
FINANCIER***
Jean Strouse
(Random House)



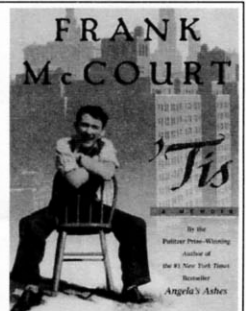
**SPECIAL AWARD
REFERENCE**
***PERSONAL NAME
INDEX TO
THE NEW YORK
TIMES, 1851-1975,
1975-1996***
**Byron Falk, Jr.
Valerie Falk**
(Roxbury Data Interface)

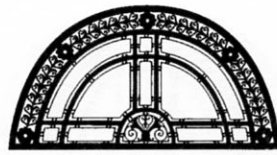


**SPECIAL AWARD
CHILDREN'S
BOOK**
SECTOR 7
David Wiesner
(Houghton Mifflin)



**SPECIAL AWARD
MEMOIR**
'TIS
Frank McCourt
(Simon & Schuster)




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CURRENT FICTION with Ellen Feldman

The Library's reading group in contemporary fiction, led by novelist, reviewer, and Library member Ellen Feldman, whose most recent book is *God Bless the Child*, will focus on a different novel each month. The first will be by Jane Gardam—either *Crusoe's Daughter* or *The Queen of the Tambourine*. The former traces the emotional breakdown and eventual restoration of an imaginative woman in her prosperous home in present-day South London. The latter was a winner of the Whitbread Novel Award and follows the life of a Northern New Englander. Participants will meet at 11:00 A.M. in the Whitridge Room, Tuesdays, February 8, March 7, and April 4. Please phone (212) 717-0357 for reservations. There is no fee, but space is limited.


CURRENT BIOGRAPHY with Stacy Schiff

Stacy Schiff, author of *Saint-Exupéry: A Biography* and *Vera (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov): Portrait of a Marriage*, will lead the reading group in current biography. The book scheduled for the first meeting on Wednesday, March 8, is Richard Holmes's *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer*. Discussion will focus in part on various behind-the-page issues of life-writing. What do we expect of a fine biography? Where is the biographer in the story? How to manage a dearth—or an overabundance—of material? Why do some lives make for compulsive reading? The group will collectively choose the second and third titles for the meetings on Wednesdays, April 5 and May 3, at 1:30 P.M. Please phone (212) 717-0357 for reservations. There is no fee, but space is limited.



Please write the Library (or at: webmaster@nysoclib.org), with any comments or suggestions.

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