

31st ANNUAL PANYC Public Program

**Presented by the Professional
Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC)
and the Museum of the City of New York**

The History and Archaeology of the Commons: New York City's City Hall Park

1:00 Welcome

Lynn Rakos, Program Chair

1:10 What Lies Beneath: Archaeological Sensitivity Mapping of City Hall Park

Ian Burrow, RPA, Vice President, Hunter
Research, Inc.

In 1990 and 1994, the New York Department of General Services commissioned archaeological sensitivity studies in the City Hall Park/Commons area. The 1990 project was specifically focused on the immediate surroundings of the Tweed (New York County) Courthouse, while the 1994 study was for the whole of the African Burial Ground and the Commons Historic District, a New York City Landmark designated in February 1993. These documents, intended primarily as planning tools for the Landmarks Preservation Commission, contain a wealth of information useful for historical and archaeological research in this part of Manhattan. This presentation will provide an overview of these documents and some of the insights they have generated on the development of this historic triangle.

1:30 City Hall: "The Vile Invention of a New York Bricklayer & a Santo Domingo Frenchman" Gerard Koepfel, Associate Editor, *The Encyclopedia of New York City*

In 1802, Aaron Burr promised Philadelphia's Benjamin Latrobe that he would win the design competition for New York's new City Hall. When he lost, Latrobe bitterly denounced the winners, "bricklayer" John McComb, Jr. and French exile Joseph Francois Mangin, and their "vile invention." In fact, McComb and

Mangin were each accomplished architects and their design, largely by Mangin, was superior to Latrobe's. But City Hall was their only collaboration and it was brief. McComb alone was chosen to oversee construction and Mangin's career never recovered. Decades later, a McComb descendant erased Mangin's name from the original drawings, a conspiracy that fooled the *New York Times* and others. Not until 2003 was Mangin officially recognized as the principal designer of New York's iconic City Hall.

1:50

PANYC Awards

Anne-Marie Cantwell, Awards Chair

Special PANYC Award for Outstanding Contributions Made by a Non-Archaeologist to New York City Archaeology

Rockmore Contracting Corporation

2:10 The Archaeology of City Hall Park

Alyssa Loorya, Chrysalis Archaeology

City Hall Park has been the subject of numerous archaeological investigations since the 1980s. However, it was during the two most recent undertakings, in 1998 to 1999 and again from 2010 to present, that a wealth of information regarding the area's history came to light. This includes aspects of institutional life, manufacturing, military history, civic history and landscape transformations. This talk presents some of this newly recovered information.

2:30 Celebrations and Feasts, Parades and Demonstrations: Artifacts of Public Ceremonies

Meta F. Janowitz, Senior
Material Specialist, URS Corporation

The late 18th and early 19th centuries were a time of frequent public feasts and ceremonies, often involving the Commons in one way or another. The recent excavations at City Hall, as well as older excavations, have uncovered artifacts associated with such activities, which created or reinforced social identities and community cohesion.

2:50 Wrap-up