

MANHATTAN SITES
NORTHEAST REGION
FY 2000 ANNUAL REPORT

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Castle Clinton

Significant progress has been made in FY 2000 toward implementation of elements of the park's General Management Plan, which received final approval in 1997. The proposed relocation of Hamilton Grange National Memorial and its eventual restoration are in the final stages of New York City's Uniform Land Use Review Process. Approval is expected shortly. A feasibility study has been done which specifies methods of moving the historic structure with minimal impact upon both its stability and the surrounding environment.

The Conservancy for Historic Battery Park has now secured \$10 million in federal and private funding for the restoration of Battery Park, including Castle Clinton National Monument, and its development as a transportation hub. The architectural firm of Beyer Blinder Belle has begun preliminary planning for a redesign of Castle Clinton.

As has been noted previously, the site improvements proposed in the park's General Management Plan are ambitious. They include construction of a new visitor center outside the present site of General Grant National Memorial on what is presently New York City park land, as well as the relocation and restoration of Hamilton Grange and the conversion of the present open-roofed structure at Castle Clinton into a closed all-weather multiple-use facility. In addition to the millions of construction dollars entailed by each of these proposed projects, the cost of expanded operations and the additional staff they will require lie far beyond present or anticipated funding levels for Manhattan Sites.

Several key staff positions, which had been vacant, were filled this year. These include the Deputy Superintendent, Administrative Officer, and Curator. These individuals have already had a positive impact upon Manhattan Sites operations, and they are expected to contribute at even higher levels in the future.

STEWARDSHIP

Replacement of the wood shingle roof at **Castle Clinton National Monument** was completed. The Circle Line sales office was rehabilitated, including installation of a large air-conditioning unit and improved signage. The Conservancy for Historic Battery Park completed reconstruction of the lower promenade along the Battery, and began reconstruction of the upper promenade, which adjoins Castle Clinton. Detailed planning with Denver Service Center for rehabilitation of public restrooms in Castle Clinton was completed. Construction will begin in early FY 2001.

The flagstone sidewalk on the west side of the plaza at **General Grant National Memorial** was replaced. The grand staircase leading to the entrance was caulked and repointed. Restoration work needed in the Flag Rooms at Grant's Tomb has been

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identified. These include replacement of the failed handrails, peeling ceiling paint, and repair of damage to the murals. A preliminary schedule for the work to proceed has been established. The contract for conservation of the General Grant Funerary Book has been finalized and work is in progress.

The roof at **Hamilton Grange National Memorial** was caulked in an attempt to prevent further damage to the interior from water leaks. This problem does not yet seem to be corrected, despite repeated efforts to do so.

The sculpture of George Washington on the steps of **Federal Hall National Memorial** has been cleaned and restored by the Collection Conservation Branch team from the Northeast Cultural Resources Center. A contract for the removal of oil stains of the pedestal and adjacent bronze plaque has also been negotiated with the Collection Conservation Branch.

Two new temporary exhibits have been installed at Federal Hall. One, in the third floor hallway, displays part of the Messmore Kendall collection of George Washington memorabilia. The other, a photographic exhibit near the public restrooms on the basement level, provides an overview of all six Manhattan Sites.

The complete refurbishment of the period rooms at **Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site** was completed. All five period rooms had ceilings repainted and furniture, carpets, woodwork and wallpaper cleaned. In addition the ceilings of both exhibit galleries and the library were painted and historic light fixtures restored. The Wiles portrait of Theodore Roosevelt was conserved. A loan of Theodore Roosevelt's eyeglass case was arranged for the Presidents exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History.

Following failure of part of the iron fire escape at the rear of the building, a complete step by step, bolt by bolt, inspection and repair was completed. The central vacuum system was evaluated, switches replaced, and is mechanically operational, pending location of appropriate collection attachments.

The sanctuary and exterior windows of **Saint Paul's Church** were painted for the first time since the National Park Service assumed responsibility in 1980. The color of the sanctuary walls was returned to the original white. Approximately thirty gravestones which had fallen were reset. Four critically weak trees which threatened to damage or displace gravestones, were removed. A row of evergreen bushes was planted at the rear of the property to begin to develop a natural screen between this historic site and the adjoining industrial property. The 1833 Henry Erben organ in the church – one of the oldest functioning organs in America – was restored and several concerts presented. The Drake window, a magnificent example of stained glass art, was restored, cleaned, and

returned to its original location in the Church nearly sixty years after it had been removed as part of the colonial revival restoration.

The Curatorial Division installed approximately 555 old catalogue records and 37 accession records on the database. A written Access to Collections Policy was prepared to assist researchers who wish to use Manhattan Sites collections. All of the Required Fire Safety Actions for Museum Collections were completed in compliance with the Director's memorandum of July 27, 2000. These included the identification and labeling of hazardous materials in the collections and the training of all Manhattan Sites staff in the use of various types of fire extinguishers. Estimates were obtained for the installation of visible light-reducing shades for exhibition areas on the second floor of Federal Hall.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Site tours were conducted at all six Manhattan Sites by park staff and volunteers. Costumed interpretive programs were presented also presented at all sites. Over 8,250 interpretive programs were presented to 36,000 visitors. Forty-eight special events attracted 15,500 visitors. 13,000 students attended education programs. 79,000 visitors enjoyed performances. In addition, there were over 3 million visitor contacts involving information and informal interpretation.

Over the July 4th weekend (July 1 – 5, 2000) **Castle Clinton National Monument** was visited by over 75,000 persons attracted by the OPSAIL 2000 event. Extended hours of operation and heavy visitor use had an impact on the site's operations, including \$2,382 in staff overtime and \$1,360 in rental of portable sanitary units. Thousands in Battery Park enjoyed the Tall Ships and July 4th fireworks. No visitor complaints were received.

Over 7500 listeners attended the five weekly concerts presented in Castle Clinton by the Conservancy for Historic Battery Park and the Downtown Alliance. The Conservancy hosted a banquet at the Castle honoring retiring Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Several temporary exhibits were presented at **Federal Hall National Memorial** which were developed by park staff and others. Subjects of exhibits included The 200th Anniversary of the Death of George Washington and the Underground Railroad. An exhibit of art prepared by Japanese students was shown on the second floor. Candidates Sen. John McCain and Ralph Nader spoke from the steps of Federal Hall. A Public Broadcasting documentary on the architecture of Federal Hall was filmed. The American Legion held a commemoration on George Washington's birthday. St. John's Masonic Lodge presented their annual reenactment of Washington's inauguration, followed by a costumed interpretive program on the causes of the American Revolution by park staff and volunteers. Two new public programs about the soldiers and weapons of the American Revolution were created and regularly presented by Federal Hall staff.

General Grant National Memorial hosted eight Jazzmobile concerts attended by 16,000 fans, Gospel Sunday, part of Harlem Week, was enjoyed by 1500 persons, and Family Day had an attendance of 800. Special events at this site included the annual commemoration of Grant's birthday, which had an audience of over 1300 students and teachers, as well as members of the public, the African American soldier in the Civil War, which was part of Black History month, and Memorial Day and Veteran's Day commemorative programs. In addition, there were six new "Living History Sunday" events which interpreted events in Ulysses S. Grant's life, and fifty-three demonstrations of loading and firing a Civil War era musket.

Alexander Hamilton's birthday was commemorated at **Hamilton Grange National Memorial** in a program enjoyed by 250 visitors. The National Park Service Manhattan Sites was invited by two Harlem community groups to present a costumed program to commemorate the Battle of Harlem Heights on the 224th anniversary of that Revolutionary War event. A "Revolutionary War" encampment was set up on part of the historic battlefield which now lies in St. Nicholas Park near Hamilton Grange. Several members of the Brigade of the American Revolution and other costumed interpreters joined us. Everyone felt that the event was successful in bringing this local historical event to the Harlem community. It is anticipated that this will become an annual commemoration.

Filming was done at **Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace** for two television documentaries: Theodore Roosevelt: New York City Police Commissioner, 1895-1897 and Ric Burns' History of the City of New York, which appeared on the "American Experience" series.

A conference titled "Conservation/Preservation for the Millenium" was convened by Theodore Roosevelt IV at the site. Attending were the directors of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U. S. Forest Service, Sierra Club, World Wildlife Fund, and many others. The Smithsonian Institution held a press conference here announcing a new major exhibition on the Presidency.

The site supervisor served on New York Governor Pataki's "Centennial Commission of Theodore Roosevelt's Governorship, 1899-1900." An important publication of this commission is a CD-ROM containing the Theodore Roosevelt Encyclopedia, his New York State Governor's Papers, and Edison recordings of Theodore Roosevelt speaking. Eastern National is developing two publications assisted by site staff: The Quotable TR: A Collection of Quotes of Theodore Roosevelt from Speeches, Letters and Writings (reprint of an earlier publication), and The Women's Roosevelt Memorial Association Rebuild Roosevelt House (in preparation).

The annual Revolutionary War Encampment at **Saint Paul's Church** commemorating the Battle of Pell's Point attracted 1500 students and other visitors to the site. An evening lantern tour of the cemetery proved to be a popular addition to the program.

More than 50 lecture, demonstrations, walking tours, and performances were presented which enriched the interpretation of the broad range of historical topics related to this site. A mid-day summer series was initiated which proved to be a popular lunchtime event for workers nearby.

A self-guided walking tour brochure was developed relating the site's Civil War history, as well as ten historic site bulletins on other specific topics. Research, planning, writing and design were undertaken in preparation of a new exhibition about St. Paul's Church, Westchester County, and the American Revolution in anticipation of the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution in the New York area in 2001.

More than 150 articles and listings related to programs and events at this site appeared in newspapers in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Outreach programs were presented by park staff at senior citizens centers, libraries, recreational centers and schools. Regular mailings kept the public informed about programs at the site.

PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT

The Constitution Works educational program offered in-depth role-play experiences in American History and Government to 7,100 students from 79 schools in the New York City area. Additionally, 242 teachers attended 21 workshops on presenting these programs to their students.

The Conservancy for Historic Battery Park has raised \$10 million for the preservation and rehabilitation of Battery Park, including Castle Clinton.

Thirty-nine volunteers contributed 2,166 hours to interpretation, maintenance, curatorial, and administrative programs.

BUDGET

Manhattan Sites needs to be made whole. That is, adequate funding and FTE need to be provided in order to allow this park to respond to the demands of cultural resource protection and preservation, public service, and organizational effectiveness for these six sites, as well as to provide a resource for other New York Harbor National Parks. Specific needs include the addition of a personnel specialist, and education specialist, a computer support person, increased curatorial staff, and an administrative assistant. Funding and FTE are needed for seven-day a week operation and 24-hour security at all sites. There is a great need for additional staff to perform routine maintenance, as well as for space for storage of collections and equipment.

In short, Manhattan Sites continues to suffer from inadequate funding and FTE needed to reach its full potential as an educational and cultural resource, a community resource, and a trustee of some of our nation's most important historic resources.

CONCERNS

Reference has already been made to the unfunded consequences of implementation of the park's general management plan. In addition, several important funding requests related to resource preservation and protection have not been approved. Examples include:

Replacement of antiquated elevator, removal of obsolete utilities, and rehabilitation of 26 air handlers at Federal Hall.

Repair of masonry at Castle Clinton.

Restoration of historic keyboard instrument at Hamilton Grange.

Conservation of hundreds of artifacts.

Conservation of numerous historic vaults, markers, and monuments in St. Paul's Church cemetery.

Rehabilitation of landscape at St. Paul's Church, along with provision of lighting, fence, and security system for this property.

Replacement of museum exhibits at Federal Hall, and rehabilitation of exhibits at Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace.

Each of these proposed projects relates directly to accomplishing the mission of the National Park Service at Manhattan Sites, as it contributes to "the protection, restoration, and maintenance in good condition of natural and cultural resources."

Joseph T. Avery
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Manhattan Sites