

Learning Places Fall 2016

LIBRARY - ARCHIVE REPORT

New York Historical Society



Amalia Beckett

November 30, 2016

INTRODUCTION

The New York Historical Society brings history to life through engaging exhibitions and collections. It's located at the corner of 77th Street and Central Park West in Manhattan. This building was founded in 1804. The purpose of this building was to hold a collection of historical artifacts, works of American art, and other materials documenting the history of the United States and New York. My class and I took a trip here and were lucky to view their archive area. We viewed maps, books and pictures of the past to collect information for this archive report. In this report I will focus on the New Amsterdam Theatre.

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM • LIBRARY

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

Before coming to the New York Historical Society, I thought I was going to do a lot of walking around and just viewing pictures on a wall just like any other typical museum. I was never attracted to the Historical Society and never even considered going until I actually went with the class. I left with a lot of information. If you enjoy an educational experience you will certainly enjoy this museum. The staff we encountered were friendly and extremely helpful. Below is a picture of the library that we were in.



This is the library where we found all images of the maps and pictures.

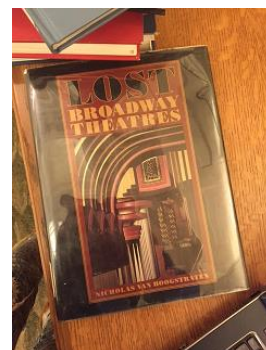
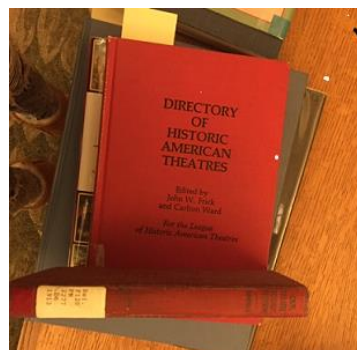
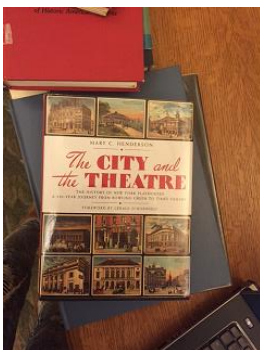
This picture was found

https://www.google.com/search?q=new+york+historical+society+library&biw=1440&bih=757&site=webhp&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjM4d7PndTQAhXD7CYKHSTXD7EQ_AUIB#imgrc=oKQYbkDMnzdmmMM%3A

SOURCES found

Below are some books that I found quite useful towards my archive report. These books contained a lot of information about the New Amsterdam Theatre. These books were found in the NY Historical Society Library.

1. *The City and the Theatre* written by Mary C. Henderson
2. *Directory of Historic American Theatres* written by John W. Frick and Carlton Ward
3. *Lost Broadway Theatres* written by Nicholas Van Hoogstraten

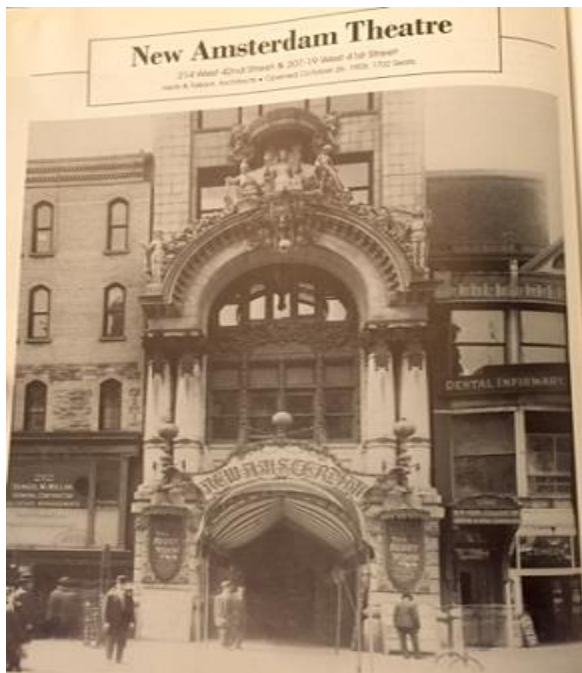


DOCUMENTATION of *The New Amsterdam Theatre*

Map of the New Amsterdam Theatre.



This was one of the maps that was found in the Archive area of the New York Historical Society. The New Amsterdam Theatre is located at 214 West 42nd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues in the Theater District of Manhattan, New York City. It was built in 1902–1903 and was designed by the architecture firm of Henry Hertz and Hugh Tallant. It was built for theatre and entertainment purposes.

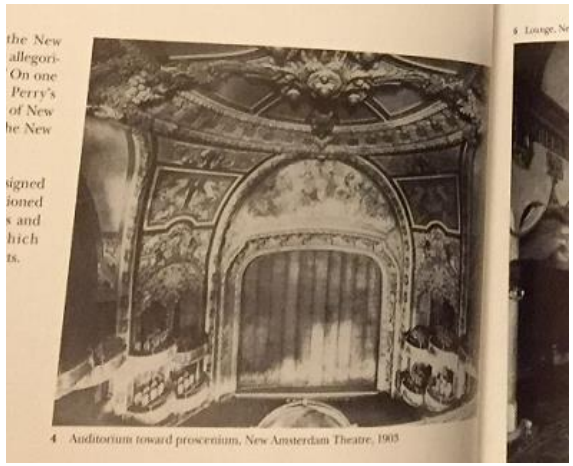
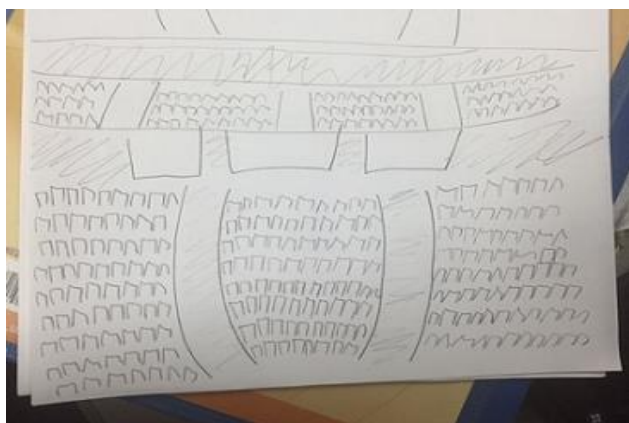
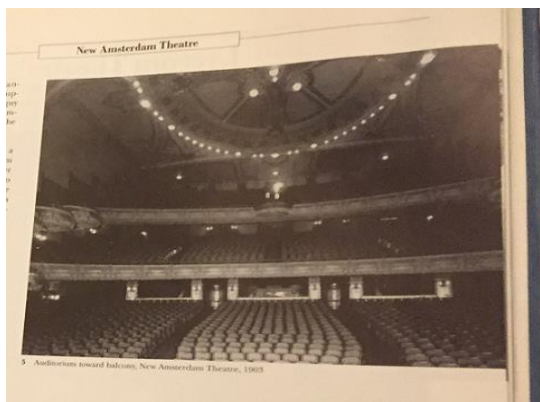
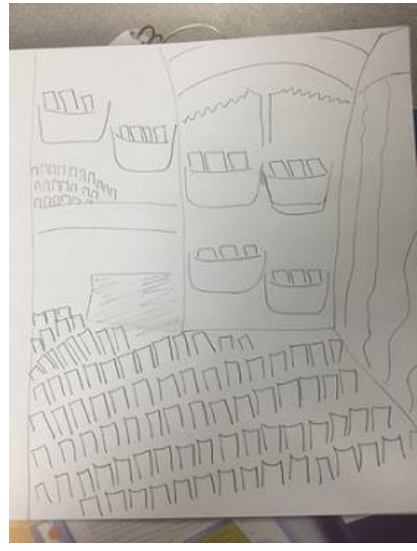


According to the book *Lost Broadway Theatres* written by Nicholas Van Hoogstraten “When it first opened in 1903, The New Amsterdam was Broadway's biggest theatre. At the time of construction, it was the largest theatre in New York with a seating capacity of 1,702. Along with the Lyceum Theatre, also built in 1903, it is the oldest surviving Broadway venue. It enjoyed great success in the early part of the decade, but didn't do well during the Great Depression. In 1936 the New Amsterdam closed. It reopened on a limited basis in 1937 but soon was converted to a movie theatre. This theatre went through a lot of stress do to the economy not fully recovering until the 1990s, when Disney Theatrical Productions signed a lease. It

has since housed many of the company's biggest Broadway hits, including *The Lion King*, *Mary Poppins*, and its current resident musical, *Aladdin*.”

The Fascade of The New Amsterdam Theatre above (1903). This picture was found in the book *Lost Broadway Theatres*.

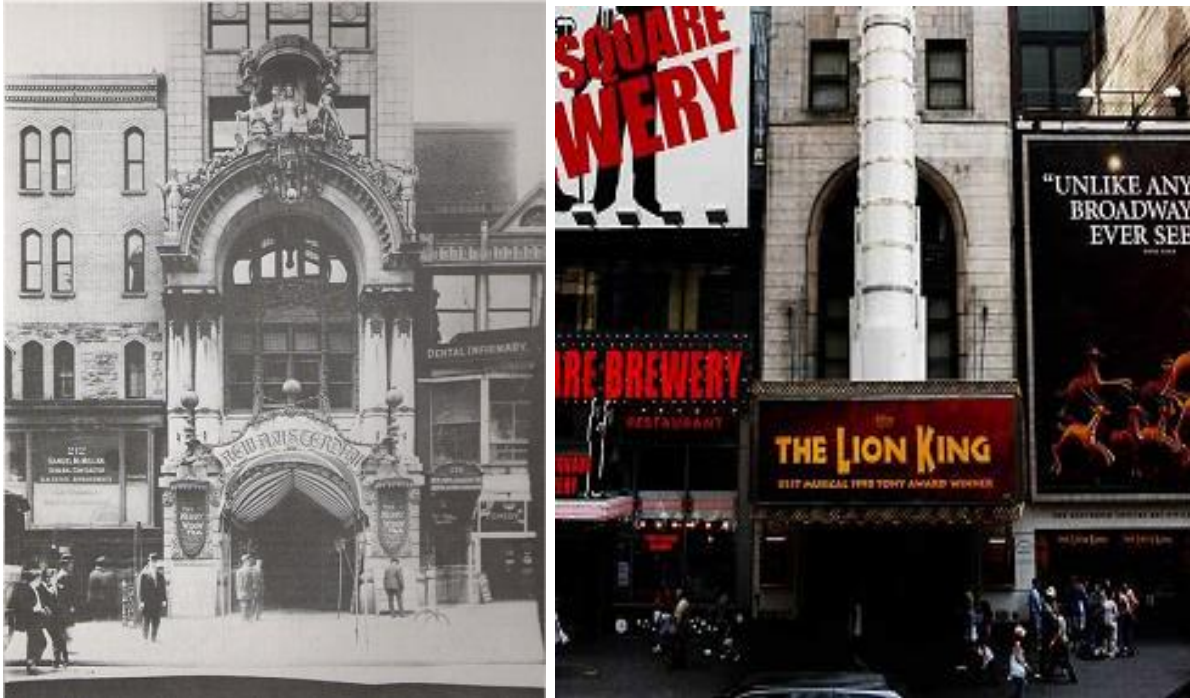
The New Amsterdam Theatre. This is how it first looked when it first opened up. These images were found in the book *Directory of Historic American Theatres* written by John W. Frick and Carlton Ward. This book was found in the New York Historical Society's Library.



Restoration

Before (1903)

After (2006)



How things have changed!

https://www.google.com/search?q=new+york+historical+society+library&biw=1440&bih=757&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjM4d7PndTQAhXD7CYKHSTXD7EQ_AUIBigB#tbn=isch&q=new+amsterdam+theatre+1903&imgrc=WDqfwleguWdpM%3A

The following information was retrieved from :

<http://nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID113.htm>

The New Amsterdam was officially reopened on April 2, 1997. In November 1997, after the premiere of the film Hercules and a limited engagement of a concert version of King David, Disney's stage version of The Lion King opened. On June 4, 2006, The Lion King closed in The New Amsterdam Theatre, moving two blocks uptown to the Minskoff Theatre on June 13, 2006. Mary Poppins began previews at the New Amsterdam Theatre on October 16, 2006 and opened on November 16, 2006.

DISCOVERIES

1. Neighborhood History
 - a. Times Square
 - b. 214 West 42nd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenue
2. Key Events / Historical Dates
 - a. 1903 New Amsterdam Opened
 - b. 1936 New Amsterdam Closed due to Great Depression
 - c. 1997 Officially reopened (Disney)
3. Key Players
 - a. Henry Hertz
 - b. Hugh Tallant
4. Relationship Key Players
 - a. The New Amsterdam Theatre was designed by an architecture firm owned by these two
5. Public Perception of Key Events
 - a. Entertainment and Theatre in the early 1900's
 - b. Family and Entertainment in the late 1900's
6. Important Changes to Neighborhood
 - a. The class of the people started to change. The theatre used to be composed of a lot of men.
 - b. Later when the New Amsterdam officially opened in 1997 it targeted families and children. This helped to increase the business.
7. Other Observations
 - a. I noticed they haven't really touched the front of the building. I like that they have preserved most of it.
 - b. The New Amsterdam Theatre has a lot of history. I didn't know it was right next to McDonald's. I go there all the time and had no idea this was the theatre I was talking about this whole time.
 - c. This theatre should do very well in the years to come. It's extremely heavy with tourists and locals.

TOPICS & KEYWORDS

Fascade: the face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space

QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Land Ownership	According to newamsterdamtheatre.com “The New Amsterdam was built in 1903 by the partnership of impresarios A.L. Erlanger and Marcus Klaw and designed in the Art Nouveau style by architects Herts and Tallant”
Number of Blocks	It is on one block
# of Buildings on a Typical Block	1 Building on a Typical block
Materials	Stone and Brick
# of Stories of Buildings	10 stories
Residential Bldgs	No residential Building
Empty Lots	No residential Building
Commercial Uses	Theatre
Industrial Uses	Theatre
Other Data	According the New Amsterdam’s Website, “The style of the building is Beaux-Arts and Art Nouveau”
Other Data	Built in 1903 - Current

QUESTIONS to Research Further

QUESTIONS:

1. What play is showing at the New Amsterdam Theatre today?
2. When did that show open up?
3. What is the capacity?
4. How much is a ticket?

RESEARCH METHOD/ ADDITIONAL SOURCES NEEDED TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

Answers

1. Aladdin
2. Mar 20, 2014
3. 1,702
4. \$130 Minimum on Broadway.com

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

In conclusion, The New York Historical Society allowed me to get further information for this Archive report. I enjoy all the information about this theatre. I will never walk past this theatre the same way ever again!