

became the Stuyvesant Theater and Phoenix Theater, before turning to a cinema in 1992. Now the Village East Cinema, the theater was built in a Moorish Revival style that incorporates Moorish, Islamic and Alhambraic motifs and Judaic references. The architect was theater architect, Harrison G. Wiseman. **IL**

4. Walk to 4th Avenue, once affectionately known as Book Row, between Astor Place and Union Square where an endless stretch of book stores once stood. The Strand (now on Broadway) originally opened at 81 4th Avenue in 1927 on Book Row. It, along with Alabaster Bookshop at 122 4th Avenue and St. Mark's Bookshop at 31 3rd Avenue, continue the Book Row tradition today.

5. Webster Hall (125 East 11th Street) is around the corner from 4th Avenue on 11th street. From 1910 to the 1920s, this Queen Anne building was nicknamed the "Devil's Playhouse" for its masquerade balls, but was also a popular space for union meetings, like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. **IL**

6. Back along 4th Avenue heading south, is the Foundation Building at Cooper Union (Cooper Square between Astor Place and East 7th Street), which housed one of the first reading rooms free to the public. This Anglo-Italianate building, completed in 1859, was also one of the first in New York City to use wrought-iron beams. The Foundation Building and Cooper Square quickly became a popular place for rallies, meetings, protests, and other reform movements of the Bohemian Age. **IL**

7. Heading east to 2nd Avenue, the Loew's Commodore Theater was once located at 105 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Built in 1926 as a vaudeville theater, it soon became a cinema. It was used as a theater, a music hall named Fillmore East, and a dance club until 1997 when the theater was converted to its present use as a bank and apartments.

8. Next door is the Saul Birns Building (107-113 Second Avenue) adorned with the name of the developer, which was built in 1928. Birns advocated for the restoration of Lower Second Avenue to its stately residential affluence of the 1830s & 40s by developing several buildings in the area. In use today as a Met Food market, it first housed the Woolworth Store, then, around 1918, Ratner's

Jewish Dairy Restaurant. (The owners were a different branch of the family that owned the Ratner's on Delancey Street.) Ratner's 2nd Avenue was a fixture in the neighborhood staying open 24 hours a day until its closing in 1974. An "R" for Ratner's remains in the floor tile of Met Food.

9. Around the corner at 31 East 7th Street is the Hebrew Actor's Building, which housed the first theater union in the country.

10. At 135 2nd Avenue is a terracotta townhouse today housing the Ottendorfer branch of the New York Public Library, which opened in 1884 as the city's first free public library. The townhouse was donated by Anna Ottendorfer, along with a collection of more than 8,000 books. At this time the neighborhood was known as Kleindeutschland, or "Little Germany." The Ottendorfer Library was known to host small art shows, music lectures and programs, and also regularly held Saturday Opera broadcasts. **IL**

11. One block north, along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue just below the corner of East 10<sup>th</sup> Street is the "Walkway of Yiddish Actors" – an homage to the Jewish Rialto. It was installed in 1984 in front of the 2nd Avenue Deli, by Abe Lebewohl owner of the deli, which occupied the corner from 1954 to 2006.

12. Continuing one block north at 170 & 162 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are two apartment buildings developed by Saul Birns. The "Peter Stuyvesant" tower, named for the famous Dutchman, was built in 1928 and was soon followed by "Warren Hall" next door, replacing the site of a Baptist Tabernacle.

13. Across 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery. From 1911-1937, Rev. Guthrie welcomed congregants from diverse places, cultures, and classes. He believed in artistic form as religious expression and was responsible for bringing many artists to St. Mark's. Among the reminders of Guthrie at St. Mark's, three statues by Solon Borglum, brother of the sculptor of Mt. Rushmore: 'Little Lady of the Dew,' 'Aspiration,' and 'Inspiration.' The latter two depict Native American men: the stone sculptures were unveiled at a celebration of Peter Stuyvesant's birthday in October 1922. **IL**

*\*The spelling transition from the Dutch "Bouwerie" to modern "Bowery" in the street name, neighborhood, and church was not uniform. The two different spellings used in this tour were based on the usage in our sources.*

# PEG-LEG PETE'S



## BOUWERIE TOUR: JAZZ AGE EDITION

ST. MARK'S  
HISTORIC  
LANDMARK  
FUND

*St. Mark's Historic Landmark Fund is committed to the preservation of the landmark St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery site and sponsorship of the Neighborhood Preservation Center.*

The cultural heritage of the neighborhoods that have evolved on the land that Peter (Petrus) Stuyvesant (c. 1612-1672) purchased for his *bouwerie*, or farm, in 1651 is some of the most layered in New York City.

An anchor of the area's rich heritage, St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery, built on the site of Stuyvesant's farm chapel, has been a continuing influence on the community since its consecration in 1799. Take a step back to the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, when St. Mark's was at the heart of a bustling neighborhood lined with theaters, meeting houses, and dance clubs. This is the second edition of the St. Mark's Historic Landmark Fund's Bouwerie\* Tour. The series identifies sites on the footprint of Stuyvesant's original farm during different historical eras and explores how they influence the vibrancy of today's neighborhoods.

1. Beginning at 232 East 11th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, the Historic Ernest Flagg Rectory, completed in 1901 by architect Ernest Flagg, was home to The Rev. William Norman Guthrie and his family during his rectorship at St. Mark's from 1911-1937. Guthrie's time at the church was an especially poignant time of neighborhood shift reflective in his interest in theater, poetry, dance, art, architecture, and social progress. The historic rectory is currently home to the St. Mark's Historic Landmark Fund and it's Neighborhood Preservation Center project. **HD**

2. Across 11th Street is the Third Street Music School Settlement (235 East 11th Street), the first music school settlement in the country, offering music lessons to the immigrant community of the Lower East Side. Begun in 1894 by Emilie Wagner with 10 students in the basement of the Mariners' Temple at Chatham Square, the classes grew and were taught at the settlement buildings on Rivington Street until 1903 when the school moved into 53-55 East 3rd Street, two townhouses that still stand today. That year the school was officially named The Society of the Music School Settlement and then The Society of the Third Street Music School Settlement. Third Street moved into its current location in 1974. This new social movement was a driving influence for music schools and continues to be successful today.

3. Around the corner, 2nd Avenue was once lined with theaters, known from the 1920s to the 1940s as the Yiddish or Jewish Rialto. The Jaffe Art Theater on the corner of 2nd Avenue and East 12th was built in 1926 as the Yiddish Art Theater. In the 1950s it

## BOUWERIE TOUR: JAZZ AGE EDITION



### TOUR KEY

The shaded area indicates the footprint of Peter Stuyvesant's original bouwerie.

**HD:** within an NYC historic district

**IL:** designated NYC individual landmark

Designation reports for NYC landmarks may be found at: [neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation\\_reports/](http://neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation_reports/)

### FUN FACTS

- Peg-Leg Pete's decorative coat on the front cover is inspired by pediment design of St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery during The Rev. William Norman Guthrie's time. It was a scene of flowers, birds, and fish in blue and gold. Guthrie also stuccoed the exterior of the church pink, which was reversed by the next Rector.
- Lower Second Avenue was known as "lover's lane" for its 30-foot-wide sidewalks and stately residences one avenue over from the 3rd Avenue elevated railway.
- The site of the Jaffe Art Theater was given to Stuyvesant Rutherford by Peter Stuyvesant, on the condition he legally rearrange his name to Rutherford Stuyvesant.
- The "Stuyvesant" building developed by Rutherford Stuyvesant, at 130 East 18th street was considered one of the first apartment buildings in the United States, but was demolished in 1958.



The St. Mark's Historic Landmark Fund gratefully acknowledges and thanks Hannah Gall, Abigail Fischer and Kate Tuohy for their work on this project and Deacon Worrell for his illustration of Peg-Leg Pete. This guide uses sources from Third Street Music School Settlement, The New York Times, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, and the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.