



To pursue, preserve and promote the history of correctional services in the city and state of New York.

Correction * Probation * Juvenile Justice * Youth Services * Parole Incarceration Alternatives * Post Release Support

President
Michael P. Jacobson

Vice President
Gerard O'Gara

General Secretary*
Thomas McCarthy

Treasurer
Leasa McLeish

Curator
Deborah J. Kurtz

Counsel
Joseph Guarino

Executive Committee Members At Large
Brian Fischer
Brant Kehn

Board Chairperson
Bernard B. Kerik

Board of Trustees
Thomas Antenen
Lewis Cash
Alan J. Croce
William J. Fraser
Glenn S. Goord
Tino Hernandez
Gary Lanigan
Katherine N. Lapp
Barbara Margolis
Peter Meringolo
Fredrick Patrick
Raul Russi
David A. Schulte
Norman Seabrook
Alan Vengersky
Thomas Ward

On the Inside:
'Cage' frees NYCHS to seek more items to archive: Page 2
NYCHS played role in History Channel documentary: Page 3
NYCHS officer now warden at Sing Sing: Page 4



New York Correction History Society
newsletter Summer 2000 Vol.1 No. 3

(212) 266-1016

(212) 266-1579

Fax

*Room 608,
60 Hudson St.,
N.Y., N.Y. 10013

macjudge@aol.com
www.correctionhistory.org



Photo used by Katharine Bement Davis in her suffragist campaign as the first woman to run for statewide office on a major party ticket. It was 1914.

Exhibit salutes NY Correction's top suffragist

NY Correction's own suffragist leader, Katharine Bement Davis, is among more than three dozen Women of Distinction being honored by a NY Senate historical exhibit traveling the state. NYCHS arranged for its debut in NYC the week of March 27-April 1 at the Correction Department Acad-



Her monogram on stationery in retirement.

(Continued on Page 2)

Tours cap NYCHS' first year of activity

Tours conducted at historic Hart Island and Harlem Courthouse jail and a tour being planned for Rikers Island take center spotlight as the New York Correction History Society nears completion of its first year of activities. All tours conducted by the State Regents-chartered nonprofit historical society are provided without charge.

July 13, 2000 marks the first anniversary of the official founding of NYCHS at a formal organizational meeting held in the visit house of the Manhattan Detention Complex, better known as the Tombs.



DOC Capt. Eugene Ruppert tells tour group about Hart Island's long and varied history.

Narrated visits to Hart Island took place:

June 15, in coordination with the June 15-17 Conference on NY State History at Fordham University, and

April 27, a tour that included a visit to the century-old former 5th District jail in East Harlem.

Later this summer a tour to various Rikers jails will be conducted to view paintings on walls and on canvas by inmates, the WPA and Salvadore Dali.

The June 15th Hart visit, that drew more than 50 participants, was arranged to conclude during the noon hour so state history conferees among those on the tour could attend the conference's registration and first session starting later that afternoon at Fordham's nearby Bronx Rose Hill campus.

The first stop set for the tour bus returning to NYC DOC's headquarters in Manhattan's Tribeca section af-

(Continued on Page 3)



DOC Bureau Chief Sheila Vaughan discusses Davis display with Senator Maltese and his wife, Constance.

Salute Correction suffragist

(Continued from Page 1)

emy in Middle Village. Miss Davis, who served as the first superintendent of Bedford Hills reformatory from 1900 before being named the first woman to head any major NYC agency, Correction, in 1914, was added March 14th to the State Senate Women of Distinction list, bringing the number to 39.

The Senate display write-up on Commissioner Davis was based on her biography by NY Correction History Society general secretary Thomas McCarthy. NYCHS also provided photos for the Davis display board. The full biography, *New York City's Suffragist Commissioner: Correction's Katharine Bement Davis*, is on NYCHS' web site (www.correctionhistory.org) in the *Chronicles* section. Pages on the exhibition can be found in the *About Us* section..

State Senator Serphin R. Maltese, in whose Queens district the Academy is situated, assisted the NY Correction History Society's initiative to have the exhibit shown there the last week of Women's History Month. State Senator Frank Padavan, also from Queens, sponsored KBD's inclusion on the list. Miss Davis lived in Jackson Heights, Queens, during the 1920s while heading the Rockefeller-funded Social Hygiene Bureau.

The Senate announcement concerning Miss Davis read, in part: "Katherine Bement Davis (1860-1935) was born in Buffalo, and spent much of her early life as an active suffragist, but it was her appointment in 1914 as NYC Correction Commissioner -- the first woman ever named to run a major municipal agency -- that first brought her international attention. . . She later became the first woman to run for statewide office as a then-major party (Progressive) candidate." She couldn't vote but she could run and did: for Constitutional Convention delegate-at-large.

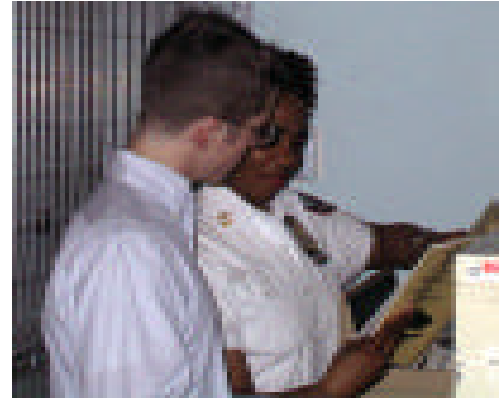
'Cage' frees NYCHS to seek items to archive

At the request of the NY Correction History Society, the NYC Correction Dept. this spring installed floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall metal grill partitions sectioning off an area of its Academy's large storage room for use as a secure archives. On the other side of the grill partitions -- unofficially called the Cage -- are storage cabinets containing drawers filled with old annual reports, newsletters, ledgers, news clippings, magazine articles, hundreds of photos and other memorabilia.

Most material relates to NYC DOC, but other agencies with some items in the collection include the city's Board of Correction, Dept. of Juvenile Justice, and Probation Dept., and the state's Dept. of Correctional Services.



Capt. Beverly Pinckney shows Columbia grad student/researcher Trenton Daniel the secure archival enclosure used by NYCHS.



COBA officials display archival materials given to NYCHS.

The "Cage" enables NYCHS, in seeking more archival materials from these and other NY correctional agencies, organizations and individuals, to offer the assurance that all items placed with it will be stored securely under lock and key. NYCHS rules regulating researchers' use and access to the materials had already stressed security and preservation.

Shortly after the Cage's installation, NYCHS asked for and received from the Correction Officers Benevolent Association back-issues of its publication.



COBA first vp Israel Rexach, shown right in photo, made the presentation to NYCHS board member CO Louis Cash. COBA Retiree Consultant Vincent Coppola donated a folder filled with old DOC newsletters and news clippings. COBA president Norman Seabrook is a NYCHS trustee and charter member.



Harlem jail, Hart & Rikers tours cap NYCHS 1st year

(Continued from Page 1)



Society played role in Prisons documentary

NYCHS provided significant assistance to the producers of The History Channel's *Modern Marvels: Prison*, that premiered March 6th, is available as a video tape, and is re-broadcast from time to time.

Among NYCHSers appearing as commentators are board chairman Bernard B. Kerik, NYC DOC commissioner; executive committee member at-large Brant Kehn, NYS DOCS Fulton CF superintendent; charter member Roger Panetta, Marymount College history professor; member Clyton Eastmond, a Rikers Island jail warden, and



Thomas McCarthy, NYCHS general secretary.

Both Superintendent Kehn and Dr. Panetta have written and researched Sing Sing history. McCarthy is NYC DOC director of historical services. Sing Sing, Auburn and Attica prisons as well as Rikers Island jails receive attention in the documentary.

More documentary details appear on the NYCHS web site at www.correctionhistory.org

ter leaving the City Island/Hart Island ferry dock was Fordham's McGinley Center where the state history conference registration was scheduled to take place from 12 to 1:30 p.m. The first session, an organizational meeting entitled "Looking to the Future," was to begin at 1:30 p.m.

Some tour participants drove their own vehicles to the City Island ferry slip on Fordham St. By special arrangement with NYCHS, the City Island Nautical Museum on Fordham St. was opened at 9:15 a.m. for tour participants who had driven to the ferry dock area in their own cars. Curator Virginia Gallagher gave an informal walk-through introduction to the museum for those awaiting



What the tour group in the front page photo was looking at: A Dept. of Public Charity and Correction building erected in late 1800s, one of the dozens of abandoned structures on Hart Island.



April 27 tour participants view some of the 40 cells in the multi-tiered 1892 Harlem Court jail.

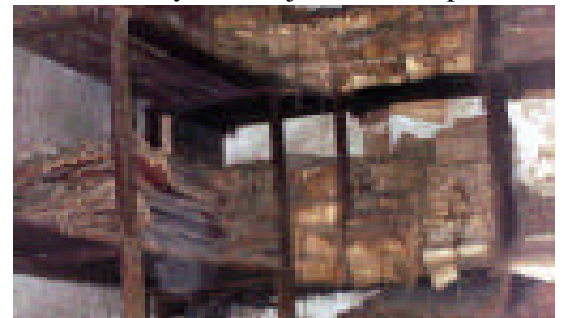
years service and are still on the job.

Both Hart tour groups visited the Civil War Union soldiers and sailors' burial site and its 1877 monument as well as the site of the Army Nike Ajax missiles poised at the ready on the island during part of the Cold War. The visitors saw dozens of abandoned structures from the 19th century and later eras when the island housed various classifications of inmates and patients. The group viewed Potter's Field and the massive 30-foot high Peace monument build in 1948 by inmates for the unclaimed and unbefriended dead buried on the island. The April 27 tour takers also visted

(Continued on Page 4)

arrival of the DOC bus with the other Hart tour participants. As she did with the April 27 tour, she joined the visiting group on Hart and talked about the intertwined histories of the "sister islands."

As on the April 27 tour, the June 15 visitors also heard Hart tales from Capt. Eugene Ruppert, head of the island's operations that include Potter's Field burials by inmates from Rikers Island, and Correction Officer Samuel Perry, one of only two officers still with DOC who served on Hart when it housed inmates. Also escorting the April 27 tour was the other Hart veteran officer, Thomas O'Connor. Each has 41



Old records recently found in a long-forgotten attic storage area of the 1892 courthouse jail.

Hart, Rikers tours cap first year

(Continued from Page 3)
the Harlem jail where they were greeted and escorted by David Bedrin, the Harlem Community Justice Center's fiscal administrator.

He led them on a tour of the 1892 courthouse's restored courtrooms (featuring partially restored WPA murals) and the unrestored 40-cell multi-tiered jail. One highlight of the visit was a peek at the recently discovered near-century old court and jail records bundled, shelved but damaged by dampness and pigeons in a long-forgotten attic storage area accessible only by ladder.

The June 15 tour featured Donald E. Bender,



Even as the June 15th Hart tour took place, NYCHS went forward with arrangements to rescue the vandalized 1890 and 1931 cornerstones of the island's chapel.



Each numbered stone marks the location of a Potter's Field burial plot of 150 coffins.

leading authority on the history of the Nike missile defense system, in which the Ajax base on Hart Island played its part.

Arrangements for the Rikers art tour later this summer are being worked out by NYCHS' DOC activities coordinator, Sandra Lewis Smith, who is DOC's director of special events, and by NYCHS charter member Professor. Lee Bernstein of San Jose State University's American Studies and Humanities program.

Viewed will be painted by inmates through the

Irons in the fire

Other NYCHS projects in the works include:

- A joint NYC DOC, DJJ and Board of Education display at the Academy telling the history of city youth incarceration.

- A plaque placement at the Mid-Hudson Psychiatric Center in Orange County to honor NYS and NYC staffers at the reformatory and training school formerly on the site.

decades, by Depression the inmates, a work whose WPA artists, and by monetary value is estimated Salvadore Dali as a gift to in six figures.

NYCHS officer now heads Sing Sing State Prison

Department of Correctional Services quarter-century-plus veteran Brian Fischer, elected NY Correction History Society executive board member at-large Feb. 16, was appointed in May by NYS DOCS Commissioner Glenn S. Goord as superintendent of New York's best known prison that is also one of its most historic: Sing Sing. At the time of his election to the NYCHS executive committee, he was superintendent of Queensboro Correctional Facility in Long Island City. He remains supervising superintendent for all DOCS facilities in the NYC area.



Brandt Kehn, superintendent of DOCS' Fulton CF, the Bronx, also was elected member at-large at the same meeting. It was held in the then newly-opened NY Police Museum. NYS Commissioner Goord also is a member of the NYCHS board of trustees.

Superintendent Brian Fischer speaks at the NYCHS meeting in the then-new New York Police Museum.

