

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2025

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Douglas held at the office of D. D. McKeon Esq - Present - Tuesday Evening May 14, 1867 - D. D. McKeon, Charles G. Armstrong, C. S. Brand and W. S. Tyler - Resolved unanimously that Ch. G. Barnes be the Clerk of the Board for the ensuing year. On motion it was then ordered that an election by ballot be had for President. D. D. McKeon having received a majority of the vote cast, was declared to be duly elected President of said board -

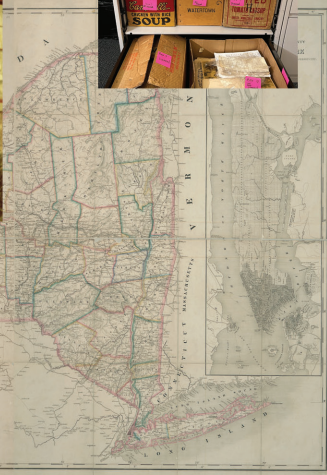
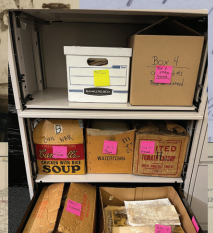
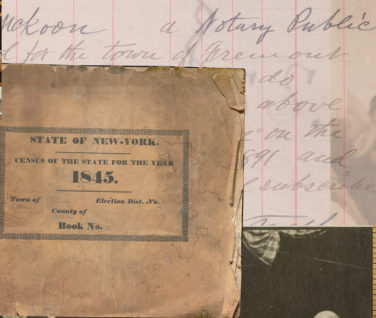
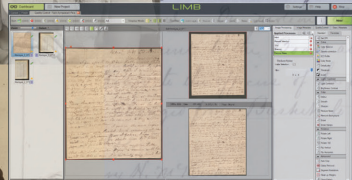
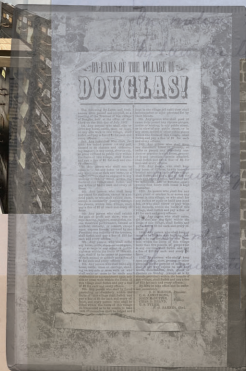
It was unanimously resolved that the whole amount of \$500. - within said year be levied as a tax and collected from the taxable property within said Village to Saturday Evening May 26.

Ch. G. Barnes - Clerk

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VALUATION PERSONAL  
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J. D. Legg  
Assessor  
Writing a Paper



Anna Jaylord died Dec. 18, 1834 A&E 24 y & 5 m.

Coriah Phelps died Dec. 24, 1841

Charlotte wife of John Thompson Born Oct. 17, 1788 Died June 7, 1843

Mrs. Eunice wife

Sandwich, Mass, Nov. 17, 1782 Died Mar. 24, 1824

Abigail his wife Born Sandwich, Mass, Feb. 28, 1789 Died May 13, 1860

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## Letter from the President & CEO

In 2025, the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society (NYG&B) made decisive strides forward. This was a year not simply of activity—but of advancement. Plans matured into programs, ideas evolved into infrastructure, and long-standing ambitions moved from aspiration to actualization.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community, we celebrated a record-breaking fundraising year, with gifts totaling \$1.044 million. Anchored by a major gift from the Peck Stacpoole Foundation and strengthened by support from individual donors, organizations, public and private grants, members of our Board of Trustees, and planned giving, this achievement reflects confidence in the NYG&B's vision, momentum, and direction. It also demonstrates the depth of commitment among those who believe in preserving and expanding access to New York's family history.

Our anchor initiatives energized our constituents and demonstrated tangible progress. Digitize New York expanded its footprint—engaging new partners and volunteers and delivering thousands of new online records for researchers. The first 50 peer-reviewed New Netherland Settlers sketches were published to widespread enthusiasm. Our Scholar in Residence program deepened its examination of family history

resources in our collections. Across each initiative, we saw forward motion—clear evidence that the work is taking root and flourishing.

At the same time, the NYG&B strengthened its role as a statewide and national leader. We successfully led advocacy efforts to prevent further restrictions on access to New York State vital records. We launched our first subway advertising campaign, held an inaugural summit for society leaders, produced two dynamic videos promoting Digitize New York, and received national recognition for our publications and scholarship.

In 2025, we were not simply busy—we were building. We strengthened systems, broadened partnerships, expanded access, and advocated for our community. Together, we are preserving New York's past—and building the future of family history.

*With gratitude,*



**D. Joshua Taylor, President & CEO**

# 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Hundreds of thousands of historical records digitally preserved and made accessible to researchers anywhere. Groundbreaking scholarship that is redefining New York research. An expansion of educational programs, statewide partnerships, and advocacy efforts that protect and promote family history for everyone. In 2025, the NYG&B accomplished all this and more with support from our family history community.

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## Making Strides in Major Initiatives

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We accelerated growth among our milestone preservation and access projects that are both helping our community on their current family history journey and leaving a lasting impact on future research.

### *Digitize New York: Scaling a Movement*

Digitize New York entered 2025 with momentum and continued to grow and expand its impact throughout the year.

Launched as a statewide initiative in 2023, Digitize New York seeks to empower and educate communities across New York State in the preservation of at-risk historical records.

In June, we opened the Western New York Digitization Center (our third center to date) in partnership with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and with generous support from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, extending this initiative into Western New York and signaling that this work is truly statewide. That same month, we launched an upgraded digitization kit program, beginning with the Albany Diocesan Cemeteries, allowing preservation efforts to happen on-site at partner locations and reaching collections that cannot travel to our physical digitization centers.



*The new Western New York Digitization Center with team members from partner Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.*



*A digitization kit deployed at the Wyckoff House Museum in Brooklyn, NY.*



*NYG&B volunteer Lynne Hayden-Findlay working on a Digitize New York project with partner The Church of the Transfiguration.*

With three centers operating full time—in New York City, Central New York, and Western New York—and kits in the field, the initiative digitized 597,000 images in 2025 alone. Volunteers corrected or enhanced more than 173,000 images, and more than 1,600 hours of volunteer service were logged across New York State. Fifty-two in-person volunteers contributed their time and expertise, empowering community members to preserve their own local history.

**“In 2025, Digitize New York tripled its county representation, growing from 7 counties in 2024 to 30 counties in 2025.”**

Behind the scenes, we strengthened the initiative’s infrastructure. The addition of a dedicated Coordinator role significantly increased and streamlined Digitize New York’s capacity to steward relationships and cultivate new projects. In 2025, Digitize New York tripled its county representation, growing from 7 counties in 2024 to 30 counties in 2025 through active partnerships and online collection releases. Looking ahead, we will conduct targeted outreach to partners in the New York counties not yet represented—continuing our commitment to serve as a truly statewide research resource.

We also invested in visibility and storytelling through two new Digitize New York videos. One explores the initiative’s origins and impact, featuring our partner The Church of the Transfiguration and project volunteers. The other spotlights the Central New York Digitization Center and the generous support of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation as a replicable model for local preservation. The Central

New York video also highlights NYG&B member and volunteer Ruth Huggler and her collaboration with us to digitally preserve records from the Sullivan County Historical Society, Basket Historical Society, and the Town of Fremont.

Digitize New York is no longer an emerging initiative. It is a scalable, replicable preservation movement—and in 2025, it accelerated.

## ***New Netherland Settlers: Emerging Scholarship***

This groundbreaking, multiyear project to develop detailed, peer-reviewed sketches of all the people residing in New Netherland prior to 1664 hit an exciting milestone: in July 2025, we published the first 50 peer-reviewed sketches online.

Each sketch provides detailed information about origin, migration, settlement, and biographical context. The response from scholars and family history researchers alike was enthusiastic, affirming the importance and scholarly rigor of this work.

In November, we also released the project’s Known Residents Index on the NYG&B website, which provides indexed results for a database of more than 4,000 known and possible New Netherland residents and will be used in the development of future sketches. This list will be continuously curated and added to, working with an objective of inclusion and the broadest definition of New Netherland as possible. We continue to encourage people to contact us if there is a New Netherland ancestor that should be included or other information to contribute to the initiative.

The project’s momentum led us to grow our research team, with a contracted research assistant to help with record lookups and the drafting of sketches for Flatbush settlers.

The initiative was also highlighted at our 2025 New York State Family History Conference, “Echoes of New York,” as part of a keynote address by Yvette Hoitink—one of New Netherland Settlers’ leading scholars.

Our 2025 Fall Luncheon further supported this



*Author Russell Shorto discusses his new book at the NYG&B’s 2025 Annual Fall Luncheon.*

First Name	Patronymic	Last Name	Origins	Arrival (est.)	Settlement
Aeltien	Alders	—	Dutch	1659	New Amsterdam
Aeltje	—	Braconie	Dutch	1628–29	Gowanus
Andries	Jochems	—	Dutch	1650	New Amsterdam
Anna	—	van Angola	African	before 1642	Manhattan
Annetje	Pieters	Pra	Dutch	1659	Brooklyn; Flatbush; Gowanus
Annitge	Pieters	—	Dutch	1655	New Amsterdam
Anthonij	—	—	Unknown	—	Long Island?
Auke	Wiggerts	—	Dutch	1628	—

The first 50 online sketches of the New Netherland Settlers initiative was released in July 2025.

work: our featured speaker was author and scholar Russell Shorto, who explored his latest book, *Taking Manhattan: The Extraordinary Events That Created New York and Shaped America* and signed copies for attendees. Proceeds from the event support the continued advancement of New Netherland Settlers.

Through these efforts, we are building a framework for thoughtful scholarship made public, accessible, and enduring for current and future researchers.

### Scholar in Residence: Deepening the Record

In January 2025 Karen Kowallis was appointed as the NYG&B’s scholar in residence to focus on NYG&B resources for tracing immigrants. Under this project, Ms. Kowallis surveyed and identified specific groups covered within the NYG&B’s collections relating to immigrants to New York between 1840 and 1924. Ms. Kowallis examined NYG&B manuscript and print collections housed at the New York Public Library; all published issues of the *NYG&B Record*; the NYG&B’s online collections and articles; and other relevant items in the NYG&B’s internal archives. Ms. Kowallis’ report was published on the NYG&B’s website and includes a bibliography of NYG&B resources for different immigrant ethnicities and at the New York City, county, and State levels.

Michael Waas, our first scholar in residence in 2023, was reappointed in late November 2025 to be our next scholar in residence in 2026. Michael is resuming his work on surveying Jewish families within the NYG&B

**“In 2025, the NYG&B held 110 programs serving more than 8,300 registrants—a nearly 22% increase over the previous year.”**



Karen Kowallis, NYG&B Scholar in Residence.



Michael Waas, NYG&B Scholar in Residence.

collections, this time with a focus on examining the NYG&B’s manuscripts and other loose materials for relevance to Jewish genealogy and research. He will complete his work in 2026.

We are grateful to NYG&B Chair Adrienne P. Auerbach, who generously supported our Scholar in Residence projects in 2025.

## Elevating Programs, Expanding Community

In 2025, the NYG&B held 110 programs serving more than 8,300 registrants—a nearly 22% increase over the previous year. These programs ranged from paid educational offerings and research tours to free preservation workshops and volunteer orientations.

Our New York City Department of Cultural Affairs–funded “Preserving Your New York Story” series continued to thrive, drawing first-time attendees and expanding our reach. This free series offers programs featuring a guest speaker to share resources and tips for researching a specific cultural/ethnic background as well as opportunities for anyone to digitally preserve their own family history records for free through one of our Preservation Days. We are delighted that funding for this series from the New York City Department



Participants of the Research in Albany Spring Tour gather for research at the New York State Archives.



Participants of the Research in Washington D.C., Tour in July listen to a talk at the Daughters of the American Revolution Library.



Participants of the Heritage Tour trip to the Republic of Ireland visit the Knowth Passage Tomb at Brú na Bóinne in County Meath.

of Cultural Affairs was secured again in 2025 and will continue through 2027. As a way to further engage with the NYG&B, all attendees of this series are offered a complimentary three-month membership.

We also launched a conference scholarship program for people who would otherwise be unable to participate in some of the NYG&B's conferences and seminars because of financial circumstances. Through this scholarship program, the NYG&B is removing barriers that keep people from pursuing their family history by waiving the registration fee for accepted applicants. In July we made our first scholarship award for someone to virtually attend the 2025 New York State Family History Conference.

Two additional New York Family History School online courses debuted in 2025: "New York Land Records: An Introduction" and the free course "Tracing Your New York Ancestors with the NYG&B," which focuses on our resources and the many ways the NYG&B can help people trace their ancestors. The free course was met with great enthusiasm by existing constituents and first-time registrants alike.

Our online interactive Empire State Exploration programs throughout the year also helped

participants trace their ancestors in the Hudson Valley and Western New York regions and on Long Island as well as break through research brick walls.

Other well-attended online seminars included "Researching Eastern European Families," "Researching New Netherland Ancestors," and "Family History's New Tools and Approaches"—all led by experts within those topics and giving registrants a chance to ask their questions in real time and interact with one another.

We held five Research Tours over the course of 2025: two spring tours (New York City and Albany) and three fall tours (New York City, Albany, and Washington, D.C.). Over the course of these in-person tours, participants visited the top research repositories in these cities and received personal help from on-site genealogy consultants.

In August, we held our first Heritage Tour trip to the Republic of Ireland, based in Dublin. Attendees had the opportunity to explore Dublin and surrounding counties, with behind-the-scenes tours of the National Archives, the National Library, Trinity College, neolithic tombs in County Meath, rural history museums

## 2025 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

We are grateful to our programming partners:

**AARP New York**

**Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Jean Sampson Scott Greater New York Chapter**

**New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**



The Old Dutch Church, Kingston, New York.

in the Irish countryside, and more. They also received expert guidance on Irish genealogy, history, and heritage from a local Dublin-based tour guide.



*The Harlem Genealogy Fair, hosted by NYG&B partner Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Jean Sampson Scott Greater New York Chapter.*

Approximately 250 enthusiastic attendees joined us for our 2025

New York State Family History Conference “Echoes of New York,” which featured livestreamed sessions from the Old Dutch Church in Kingston, NY, over two days in September as well as access to on-demand sessions for more than two months. We also held special in-person activities for registrants attending in Kingston with the Ulster County Genealogical Society.

In October 2025 we held our inaugural New York Genealogical and Historical Society Summit for society leaders, volunteers, and members to explore key issues affecting local organizations today. More than 100 people from more than 45 genealogical and historical societies from across New York State and beyond joined remotely for this free online event. NYG&B staff and others led a range of sessions, including growing membership, increasing engagement, preserving records, leveraging publications, and amplifying communications.

We also held two successful NYG&B Weeks (February and November) that featured a variety of events and digitization opportunities throughout each week, both in person and online, to help and inspire people on their genealogical and family history journey. All programming is free and open to anyone who wants to participate.

## Growing Our Record Resources

Across our three Digitization Centers—New York City, Central New York, and Western New York—2025 was a year of sustained productivity and informative new releases.

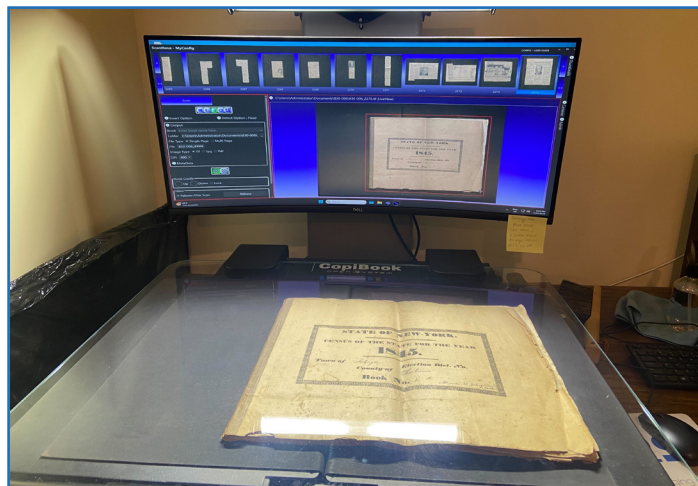


*Historical documents to be scanned at the Central New York Digitization Center.*

**“When the only known surviving copy [of the 1845 State Census] resurfaced for sale on eBay in 2025, we acted swiftly to acquire and digitize this at-risk document.”**

In total, we published 29 online collections, comprising thousands of digitized records that document the lives of New Yorkers across centuries and regions. These releases reflect not only the scale of our scanning efforts but also our commitment to making high-value materials searchable and accessible to researchers everywhere.

One especially notable achievement was the release of the online collection “1845 State Census, Town of Schuyler, Herkimer County.” The original census was lost in the 1911 Capitol fire. When the only known surviving copy resurfaced for sale on eBay in



*The 1845 Schuyler census being scanned at the New York City Digitization Center.*

2025, we acted swiftly to acquire and digitize this at-risk document. Its preservation and subsequent online publication for anyone to search exemplify our mission in action: protecting fragile history and making it publicly accessible.

We also launched a comprehensive search index for Kinship Books—the largest publisher of transcribed New York records, with more than 400 titles in continuous operation since 1965. The new index identifies individuals named across Kinship publications, along with corresponding titles and page numbers, and conveniently links users to each title’s listing page. This tool substantially enhances people’s ability to find relevant family history resources within this significant body of published New York genealogical material.

Another major addition was the New York Land Records Index, a free-to-use, enhanced index to FamilySearch’s digital collection “New York, Land Records, 1630–1975.” Our searchable index consists of 63.5 million records for more than 32 million transactions, including deeds, mortgages, patents, and land grants. Spearheaded by the NYG&B and FamilySearch, the collection represents the largest volunteer-led indexing project of New York records to date.

Collectively, these digitization efforts reflect more than increased output. They represent a deepening of our commitment to preservation, accessibility, and stewardship—ensuring that the records of New York’s past are made available and ready for discovery by current and future generations of researchers.



*Michele McEvoy, Director, Communications, participating in Family History Hill Day in Washington, D.C., organized by the Records Preservation and Access Coalition.*



*NYG&B President D. Joshua Taylor testifying at the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing in Albany, NY.*

## Advocating for Our Community

In 2025, the NYG&B led a highly visible advocacy campaign concerning access to New York State vital records. In January a proposed bill that would have had a negative effect on New York State vital records access was included in the New York State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025-26 Executive Budget Proposal.

As soon as the NYG&B learned about this, we sprang into action. This included creating and widely sharing an informational resource page that provided tangible next steps for New Yorkers and the wider family history community to make their voices heard on this issue.

NYG&B President D. Joshua Taylor provided in-person testimony before the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing, complementing written testimony opposing proposed restrictions. We coordinated with other organizations and leaders in the genealogy and family history field on advocacy strategies for addressing this issue. NYG&B staff also continued to engage with legislators and policymakers on educational efforts, including supporting legislation that would require the New York State Department of Health to enter into a contract for the digitization and indexing of vital records—although the legislation was ultimately vetoed by Governor Hochul.

However, the proposed bill in the 2025-26 State budget was ultimately removed. Furthermore, in her 2026 State of the State policy handbook released in January 2026, Governor Hochul included an item to make overdue technological improvements to

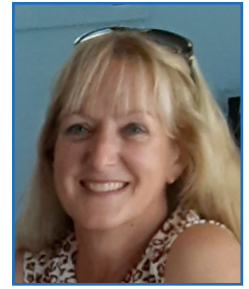


Directress General Suzanne Roff, Society of Daughters of Holland Dames, and NYG&B President D. Joshua Taylor.



Preserving Your New York Story guest speaker Elizabeth Murray Vargas and one of the NYG&B's MTA advertising posters.

**“The successful opening ceremony for our Western New York Digitization Center, held in partnership with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, garnered significant media attention.”**



2025 Preservation in Action honoree Michelle Henry.



2025 Preservation in Action honoree William P. Tatum III.

New York’s vital records system, launching an effort to digitize archival records for genealogical requests and converting historical birth, death, and marriage certificates into electronic, searchable formats.

In other advocacy efforts, in April Michele McEvoy, NYG&B Director, Communications, participated in Family History Hill Day in Washington, D.C., which was organized by the Records Preservation and Access Coalition. She met with congressional staff members on the need for safeguarding and preserving the records of the federal government and ensuring continued access to these documents.

## Raising Our Visibility

NYG&B President and CEO D. Joshua Taylor received the Stuyvesant Pear Award, presented by Directress General Suzanne Roff, Society of Daughters of Holland Dames, at the Society’s Annual Meeting in April. This honor is awarded in recognition of extraordinary efforts on the part of someone who is not a Holland Dame in fostering a greater understanding of the contributions that the Dutch made in establishing



The opening of the Western New York Digitization Center at the B&ECPL, with support from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation.

the founding principles of the United States. Mr. Taylor then shared an update on the NYG&B’s New Netherland Settlers initiative, of which the Society of Daughters of Holland Dames is a foundational sponsor.

In May, we launched our first MTA New York City Transit advertising campaign promoting our Preserving Your New York Story series, using grant funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs to have 100 posters placed in subway platforms in key stations throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. We also had a PSA digital ad run in New York City nonprofit spaces through a grant we received from F.Y. Eye.

In July, the successful opening ceremony for our Western New York Digitization Center, held in partnership with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, garnered significant media attention, with press coverage in print, radio, and TV stories by *WGRZ*, *The Buffalo News*, and *Buffalo Toronto Public Media*. In honor of the new center, the City of Buffalo and Erie County both issued proclamations declaring Digitize New York Day in Western New York.

Our 2025 Preservation in Action theme “The Power of One” celebrated those who have conducted impactful archival work in New York State—in some instances with very limited help or support. Our honorees were William P. Tatum III, Dutchess County Historian, and Michelle Henry, a trustee of the Chautauqua County Historical Society and the former Chautauqua County Historian. William and Michelle spoke about their experiences and contributions to the preservation field during an online discussion with

NYG&B President D. Joshua Taylor during our NYG&B Week in November 2025.

Nationally, we had a strong presence in the family history field in 2025, with staff representing the NYG&B at industry-related events throughout the year, including the RootsTech Conference, National Genealogical Society Conference, New England Regional Genealogical Consortium Conference, Association of Professional Historians of New York State Conference, and Communications Network Conference.

NYG&B publications also created buzz in 2025. *New York State Archives Guide: For Family Historians, Biographers, and Historical Researchers*, authored by Jane E. Wilcox, FGBS, won the National Genealogical Society's 2025 Award of Excellence: Methods and Sources. We also released the anticipated *New York City Municipal Archives Guide (Enhanced Edition)* by Aaron Goodwin, with updated access information, including the extensive digitization efforts of the Municipal Archives. And the *New York Researcher* launched a successful redesign, emphasizing a fresh, cleaner look and layout; more imagery and illustrations; better streamlined content; and new, engaging columns. The 156th volume of the *NYG&B Record* was also released in four numbers.

Throughout the year, we grew our digital and social media presence and engaged with a wide audience, including relaunching our Instagram page. Over the course of 2025, we gained more than 1,200 new Facebook followers and nearly 100 new Instagram followers.

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## Organizational Strength: Building for the Future

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We continued to invest in and expand our staffing to strengthen our organizational goals and further our mission. New team members in 2025 included Matthew Bruinooge, Director, Digital Services; Anna Gardner, Coordinator, Digitize New York; Karen Ferguson, Grants Contractor; Shane Minster, Digitization Operator; and Penelope Thomas, Coordinator, "Preserving Your New York Story" series.

In March, the NYG&B Board of Trustees unanimously elected Adrienne P. Auerbach to succeed William C. Hallett as Chair, who will continue as a Board member. The new Chair, Adrienne P. Auerbach, has been a Trustee since 2019, previously serving as Vice Chair



Adrienne P. Auerbach, Chair, NYG&B Board of Trustees.



NYG&B interns on a field trip to Ellis Island.

from March 2024 to March 2025. Ms. Auerbach has also chaired the NYG&B's Development Committee from 2018 to present. The following Officers were also unanimously elected by the Board of Trustees: Anne Sibert Buiter (elected as Vice Chair), Sharon W. Vaino (re-elected as Secretary), and Lorraine D. Bell (re-elected as Treasurer). The Board of Trustees also welcomed two new members: David W. Dangremond and Laura Dean Ramsay.

With new opportunities and streamlined systems, we expanded our volunteer network across the State and maintained a core group of dedicated volunteers. We worked with 52 in-person Digitize New York volunteers, who logged more than 1,600 hours across our three Digitization Centers and assisted with the scanning and processing of materials from across the State. Remote volunteers also had opportunities to support our digitization efforts, including indexing, transcription review, and project assessment.

Over the course of 2025, we also hosted seven interns from New York, Utah, and the United Kingdom, who assisted NYG&B staff across departments, including with digital, administrative, research, executive, and social media projects.

**"We worked with 52 in-person Digitize New York volunteers, who logged more than 1,600 hours across our three Digitization Centers and assisted with the scanning and processing of materials from across the State."**

# THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our supporters in 2025. The list below includes donors who supported all programs of the NYG&B and were instrumental in advancing our mission to preserve, document, and share family history and stories from across New York State.

With gratitude,

— *Joshua and the NYG&B Team*

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## Founders (\$20,000 and more)

Reed D. and Adrienne P. Auerbach  
Laur Kongkasem Charitable Foundation  
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

Estate of Donald J. Marshall  
Peck Stacpoole Foundation  
Steven T. Watson

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## Scholar (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

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**Caption for page 2 photo:** *Preserving Your New York Story panel discussion. From l. to r.: Lara Diamond, Reem Awad-Rashmawi, D. Joshua Taylor, LaBrenda Garrett-Nelson, and Elizabeth Murray Vargas.*