



138th Street and 3rd Avenue 1902  
Bronx Historical Society Collections



Charlie Ahearn The Fantastic 5 MC's the Grand  
Concourse & the Cross Bronx Expressway, 1981



Morris Avenue and 149th Street 1890s  
Bronx Historical Society Collections



Edgar Allen Poe Cottage  
The Bronx Historical Society Collections

## .bronx timeline.

1609: Henry Hudson sails up the Hudson River, exploring the Dutch East India Company. He becomes the first European to see what is now called the Bronx.

1639: Swedish sea captain Jonas Bronck settles in the “South Bronx.” He builds a farmstead at what becomes 132nd Street and Lincoln Ave. Dutch, German, and Danish servants settle with him.

1654: 15 men settle at the head of navigation of Westchester Creek (now the Bronx River) and found the first village in the area, called Westchester (located at what is now West farms in the south Bronx). This is the first permanent settlement in the Bronx.

1748: The Van Cortlandt House is built by Frederick van Cortlandt. This is currently the oldest house in the Bronx.

1790: Lewis Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and owner of the Morrisania manor, proposes his property as the site of the future capital of the United States, located on the southwest corner of the Bronx, this entire avenue was called Morrisania.

1850's: The Bronx develops as a suburb for people working in the city.

1850: Samuel Denman purchases 120 acres of South Melrose from Gerard and Henry Morris. Together, Elton and Denman market their holdings with those of William H. Morris, the owner of Melrose, platting right-angle streets and dividing the three tracts into more than 1,000, 50 x 100-foot lots.

1887: The Third Avenue El (Elevated Train) is extended to the south Bronx.

1898: The city of Greater New York is created as a federation of five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. Louis F. Haffen is elected the first Borough President of the Bronx.

1900s: Along with the growing industrialization, the South Bronx population increases.

1904: Expansion of the Bronx begins with the first subway connecting the Bronx and Downtown New York.

1910—1920: South Bronx residents are living in exceptionally good circumstances.

1911: “The Hub” becomes “the great business center of the north borough” and “the most prominent shopping district in the Bronx.”

1912: The Bronx flag is designed. It consists of orange, white and blue horizontal stripes to represent the Netherlands, upon which is superimposed the Bronck family coat-of-arms enclosed in a laurel wreath.

1914: The Bronx becomes a separate, and the last, county of the state of New York.

1920s: Italian, Russian and Jewish populations in the Bronx grow. Urbanization continues. Most tenements of the South Bronx are built.

1929: The Great Depression hits. Rapid growth dies, but the Bronx is still relatively well-off.

1934: 49% of the population in the Bronx is Jewish. At this time, the Bronx has more amenities than any other borough (95% with central heating, 97% with hot water, 99% with private bathrooms).

1938: Alexander’s Department Store opens on Fordham. It soon makes more sales than any other department store in the US.

1930s—1950s: Most established European immigrants leave the South Bronx due to better living opportunities upstate and on the periphery of the Bronx.

1963: Robert Moses leads and finalizes the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway. Though an engineering marvel in its time, many blame the expressway for worsening the decay that was beginning to take place in the South Bronx.

1964: The South Bronx becomes one of the first areas proposed for anti-poverty funding.

1970s: Gangs targeted at the youth of the Bronx grow in popularity. Arson, crime, and devastation nearly ruin the South Bronx.

# .timeline continued.

1977: President Jimmy Carter makes a visit to the South Bronx which is later televised and broadcast on the radio.

1977: World Series, held at Yankee's Stadium, America receives it's 1st look at the devastation and corruption of the South Bronx.

1970—1980: Population drops from 21,000 to 3,000.

1980s: The reversal towards cleaning up the South Bronx begins. During the late 1980s, initial plans for a middle-income, home-ownership-based community in the South Bronx are developed by the Departments of City Planning and Housing Preservation and Development.

1984: 55% of families are below the poverty level, 39% of which are receiving welfare.

1985: As part of a \$5 billion funding for New York City, Mayor Koch initiates a program that would spend \$1.5 billion on affordable housing for the Bronx over the next decade.

1991: The Bronx Center Project, a collaborative, community-based plan to revitalize a deteriorated 300 block section of the South Bronx begins.

1993: Upon great disapproval of the residents, Yolanda Garcia founds Nos Quedamos/We Stay in order to resist large scale urban renewal plans that would displace thousands of residents of the Melrose section of the Bronx.

1994: After two years of collaborative work between Nos Quedamos, their consultants and the City, the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan is approved and signed into law by the City Council.

1994: DreamYard Project is established. Offices are in East Harlem.

2004: DreamYard decides to work solely with Bronx youth and moves its offices to Gerard Street in the Bronx. Out of Schools programs begin.

2005: DreamYard Preparatory High School opens.

2009: DreamYard Arts Center opens on Washington Avenue providing Bronx youth and families quality arts education and community events.

## Did You Know?

- The Bronx Zoo first opened in 1899, consists of 265 acres, has 5000 animals and 700 species
- Colin Powell was raised in the South Bronx and attended Morris High School, a former public school in the Bronx, in 1954.
- The Bronx has a greater percentage of green space than any other urban area in the country: 24% of its 42 square miles is parkland.

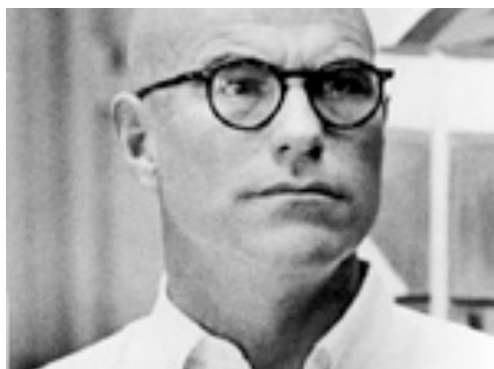
# .bronx artists.

## Joe Conzo, photographer



Born in the South Bronx in 1963, Joe Conzo is one of the premiere early hip-hop photographers. In high school, Conzo became his class. In addition to documenting the activities of his years at South Bronx High School, Conzo took many photographs of the destruction of the South Bronx, which was going through a period of rapid decline. He also photographed many protests organized by his mother, including a march against the 1981 film *Fort Apache, The Bronx*. According to his mother, the film portrayed African Americans and Latinos from The Bronx as being drug dealers. It was also this time period young African Americans and Latinos from The Bronx began to turn or scratch records at community parties held in housing projects. Eventually, lyrics were written to this music, which would be known as MCing or rapping. This and other elements such as graffiti and breakdancing led to the cultural movement of Hip Hop. In 1978, while attending South Bronx High School, Conzo became friends with the Cold Crush Brothers, an early Hip Hop group. Eventually, Conzo became the group's professional photographer and documented their jam sessions. After graduating high school, Conzo attended the School of Visual Arts and interned for an art photographer. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was renewed interest in his photography. His photographs have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Vibe*, *The Source*, *Hip-Hop Connection*, *Urban Hitz*, *Esquire*, and *Wax Poetics*. His work has also been featured in several books and exhibited at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and several art galleries in Europe.

## Emilio Sanchez, painter



Emilio Sanchez was born in Camagüey, Cuba in 1921. He began his artistic training at the Art Students League in 1944 when he moved to New York City where he lived until he died in 1999. However, it was in Cuba that he became fascinated with the play of light and shadow on colored forms that became a dominant characteristic of his works. His early works of the 1950s are stylized and figurative depicting themes such as portraits of friends and models, views of New York and tropical landscapes.

In the 1960s his works became significantly more abstract, though always maintaining a strong sense of naturalism. It is during this decade that his work matured into an individual vision and when he began to develop his well-known paintings of houses and architectural themes. These architectural works stand out for their simplified forms where all superfluous details are

## Ralph Fasanella, painter



Ralph Fasanella was born in the South Bronx. He was a self-taught painter whose large, detailed works depicted urban working life and critiqued post-World War II America. In the mid-1940s, Fasanella began to suffer from intense finger pain caused by arthritis. A union co-worker suggested that he take up painting as a way to exercise his fingers and ease the pain.

In 1945, Fasanella persuaded the UE to organize painting classes for its members at a local college. He was one of the first members to sign up for classes. Fasanella became consumed by art, and left labor union organizing to paint full-time. To pay the bills, he bought a service station and worked there. Fasanella's painting focused on city life, men and women at work, union meetings, strikes, sit-ins and baseball games. He quickly developed a style

which spoke to workers and the poor through the use of familiar details. Fasanella improvised a quasi-surrealist style, depicting interiors and exteriors or past and future simultaneously. He painted canvases as big as 10 feet across because he envisioned his paintings hanging in large union meeting halls. [ending]



## Oscar Bermeo, poet

Born in Ecuador and raised in the Bronx, Oscar Bermeo is the author of the poetry chapbooks *Anywhere Avenue*, *Palimpsest*, *Heaven Below* and *To the Break of Dawn*. He has facilitated poetry workshops at Rikers Island Penitentiary and in schools throughout New York City and Oakland. Oscar has been a featured writer at a variety of venues and institutions including the Nuyorican Poets Café and the Bowery Poetry Club. Oscar was the founding curator and host of the Acentos Bronx Poetry Showcase, a twice monthly showcase of emerging and nationally recognized Latina/o poets, in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. He was also a founder, curator and host of

synonymUS, a multidisciplinary poetry series at the Nuyorican Poets Café. He is a He is a BRIO (Bronx Recognizes Its Own) writing fellow.





## **Rich Villar & Acentos Bronx Poetry**

*Acentos* Bronx Poetry Showcase is committed to maintaining a safe open space for the expression and enjoyment of poetry, no matter what the language, without translation or apology. Each reading is a celebration of our work as colleagues, friends, and family.

Proudly based in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, New York, at the Bruckner Bar and Grill (Corner of Third Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard), *Acentos* showcases nationally recognized Latino and Latina poets alongside emerging voices every second and fourth Tuesday of the month in a setting designed to foster an increased sense of community.



## **Pregones Theater**

Pregones Theater is a Bronx-based ensemble whose mission is (1) to create and perform original musical theater and plays rooted in Puerto Rican/Latino cultures, and (2) to present other performing artists who share our twin commitment to the arts and civic enrichment. The company is proud owner of a professional performing arts facility on Walton Avenue, south of Yankee Stadium, in the heart of the burgeoning South Bronx Cultural Corridor.



## **BAAD! The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance**

The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance is a 70 seat performance and workshop space dedicated to presenting challenging works of established and emerging choreographers, dancers, playwrights, musicians, visual artists, poets, writers and directors. BAAD! is located in the legendary American Banknote Building. Built in 1911, the warehouse originally manufactured currency for foreign countries. It was sold in the 1970's to Walter Kahn Associates, which converted the building into an apparel center. The space occupied by BAAD! was a sewing shop but had been abandoned and neglected for about ten years before Aviles had the dream in 1998 to have a concert in the space. With help from The Point, members of his company, local residents and friends, cleaned the space for a weekend performance. The effort and energy from that performance inspired Aviles to work with the landlords to create a permanent space for dance and performance in the building.

# .field trip ideas.

## THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Booking a Reservation

- All reservations must be booked at least two weeks in advance
- Please select the primary date you would like to schedule and two extra days in case we cannot accommodate your first choice and email that information to: [Education@Bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Education@Bronxhistoricalsociety.org)
- To complete your reservation, you must submit a \$25 deposit either by check or pay pal at <http://shop.bronxhistoricalsociety.org>
- Your reservation is complete once you receive a confirmation email from us.

### **Valentine-Varian House/Museum of Bronx History**, Cost: \$5 adult, \$3 student

#### Elementary

- A guided tour around the Museum
- A gallery discussion about The Bronx during the American Revolution
- An interactive period where students can engage with replica colonial items
- A self-guided tour through our rotating galleries

#### Intermediate/High School

- A guided tour through the Museum
- A gallery discussion about The Bronx's role during the American Revolution
- A discussion about the issues surrounding the Revolution
- A interactive, literacy-based activity through the revolving gallery space

### **The Edgar Allan Poe Cottage Museum**, \$5 per adult, \$3 per student

- A docent led tour of the Cottage
- A gallery talk about Poe's life and times at Fordham
- A video about Poe's life

\*During our programs we are happy to work with teachers to highlight specific components of Poe's work and life. Please contact us in advance if you have special requests.

### **Classroom Workshops, \$150**

Our space can accommodate up to 25 students and 5 adults at a time. These visits last 1 to 1.5 hours and are based around relevant historical themes. Here is a list of sample topics we can provide:

The Bronx and the American Revolution, The Bronx and the Civil War, Immigration and The Bronx, Bronx Architecture, Transportation and People, Slavery and The Bronx, Industrialization's Impact

### **School Outreach, \$200**

We are ready, willing, and able to come visit your classroom. We can present all of the programs listed above in the comfort of your home classroom.