

Tours and Tales of New York

An email newsletter of Take a Walk New York

December 2016

*It's December, and thoughts turn to giving and sharing something special with friends and family. For an avid walker or history buff who loves New York, we will be happy to create a custom tour. Purchase it now to enjoy later. For the armchair enthusiast, check out the brief book *My New York Stories*, where the tale below first appeared. See the last page of this newsletter or our website (www.takeawalknewyork.com) for more about these gift suggestions.*

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and hope to take a walk with you this month or in the coming year.

Laurie Lewis, Alan Cohen, and Deborah Harley

A Sculptor's Unexpected Christmas Gift

By Laurie Lewis

In all kinds of weather, crowds gather at the foot of Manhattan around a giant bronze beast. Many people call it simply the Bull or the Bull of Wall Street; its official name is *Charging Bull*. Its admirers pose for photos and rub its shiny testicles for good luck.

The bull is such a fixture that it seems to have been here forever. But it actually came fairly recently, arriving in the Financial District at the end of 1989. How it came to stand just outside the northern gate of Bowling Green is an amusing tale.



Happy
Holidays

On October 19, 1987, the New York Stock Exchange lost more than 20% of its value in a single day, which became known as Black Monday. The city reeled temporarily, but it bounced back in an upward-trending bull market. To celebrate the resiliency of the stock market and the forge-ahead spirit of New York, sculptor Arturo Di Modica created a 3½-ton, 18-foot long statue, *Charging Bull*.

On the evening of December 15, 1989, Di Modica anonymously delivered the statue as a gift to the city. A Christmas tree had gone up in front of the New York Stock Exchange that day, and the sculptor deposited his giant present under the tree—then took off as fast as he could in a truck big enough to haul the bull.

The next day, Wall Street workers gasped in wonder when they saw the great bronze beast for the first time. Word quickly spread, and the streets filled with gawkers and admirers. The media went wild.

Christmas at Macy's

Long before *Miracle on 34th Street* created an indelible association between Macy's and Christmas, the store was celebrating the holiday like nobody else. Soon after opening in 1858 at its original location, on Sixth Avenue near 14th Street, Macy's became one of the first retailers in the country to feature an in-store Santa. In 1874 Macy's began to thrill December shoppers with elaborately decorated windows. One window displayed porcelain dolls from around the world, and another window featured scenes from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, complete with movable parts. In 1883 reindeer pulled Santa on a mechanical sleigh that traveled across all the store's front windows.

It seems that the window displays become more elaborate each year, not just at Macy's but at other retailers, like Lord & Taylor. Visiting the windows is a must on the end-of-year to-do list for many New Yorkers and visitors.

Everyone seemed to love the bull, except for higher-ups at the New York Stock Exchange. By the end of the day, they made sure that the bull was hauled away.

How quickly the sculpture had won the hearts of New Yorkers! The public and press screamed for the return of the bull. As quickly as it had appeared and then disappeared, it came back again, this time to the bit of city land where it now attracts throngs of tourists and city folk.

That spot is an ironically fitting home for *Charging Bull*. In Dutch Colonial times, the cattle market was located there.

December Tours

Most Take a Walk New York tours cover 1 to 2 miles, last 2 to 2½ hours, and cost \$15 per person. Advance registration is required. To register and to learn the meeting place, send an email to lewislaurie2nyc@gmail.com. Please arrive a little before the start time. Tours are cancelled if nobody has registered or if the weather is extreme; if in doubt, call or text Laurie at 917-306-2868.

Hidden Treasures of the Financial District

Walking through the canyons of Wall Street, you can easily miss gems hidden in plain sight, including relics of colonial times and park-like oases. Discover these secrets, and you'll see why the Financial District has a lot more going for it than stock trades and megadeals. One of the last stops on this tour is *Charging Bull*; now that you know its back-story, you'll really love it!

This tour takes place on **Saturday, December 3, at 1 PM**. To reserve a place on the tour and to learn the meeting location, email Laurie at lewislaurie2nyc@gmail.com.

Parks of the East 90s

Enjoy outdoor holiday decorations in two adjacent neighborhoods of the Upper East Side, Yorkville and Carnegie Hill. Visiting several parks and green-spaces adorned for the holidays, you'll gain insight into how different types of parks serve the unique needs of their communities.

Take a walk through parks of the East 90s on **Sunday, December 18, at 1 PM**. Email the guide (lewislaurie2nyc@gmail.com) to reserve a spot and to learn the meeting location.

Central Park: Highlights of the Southern Half

In the popular southern half of Central Park, you'll recognize some of the most filmed and photographed sights in New York, including Strawberry Fields, the Sheep Meadow, and Bethesda Terrace. The Park beckons in all kinds of weather. In winter, you clearly see some design elements that are hard to detect in other seasons through the foliage and visiting throngs.

Take a walk through the southern half of Central Park on **Tuesday, December 27, at 1 PM**. We'll cover as much ground as weather permits. Please email the guide (lewislaurie2nyc@gmail.com) to register and to learn the meeting location.

Looking for a special gift for someone who loves New York?



Give a Custom Tour from Take a Walk New York

We can create a tour that meets your gift recipient's special needs and interests. Whether that means exploring a particular neighborhood, delving into the city's history, or following an ethnic trail, we will put together an unforgettable walking tour. We'll make it the length you want and include rest stops and indoor highlights if desired. See our website www.takeawalknewyork.com for ideas, and let us know your interests by emailing takeawalknewyork@gmail.com.

Share Great Little Stories About a Great Big City

If you've enjoyed reading the stories in this newsletter, share them with a friend. Many stories from past issues and some that may be published in the future appear in Laurie Lewis's Kindle book, *My New York Stories*. Each story is followed by the author's personal reflections. At just 99 cents, the book makes a perfect "stocking stuffer." You can gift an ebook by clicking the Give as a Gift button on the Amazon page, https://www.amazon.com/New-York-Stories-Laurie-Lewis-ebook/dp/B01EI8UDII/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1479245706&sr=8-1&keywords=my+new+york+stories.

Invite Someone to Take a Walk New York This Month

D E C E M B E R						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						3 Financial District 1 PM
18 E 90s Parks 1 PM						
		27 Southern Central Park 1 PM				

Please contact the tour guide at lewislaurie2nyc@gmail.com to reserve a space and to learn the starting location.