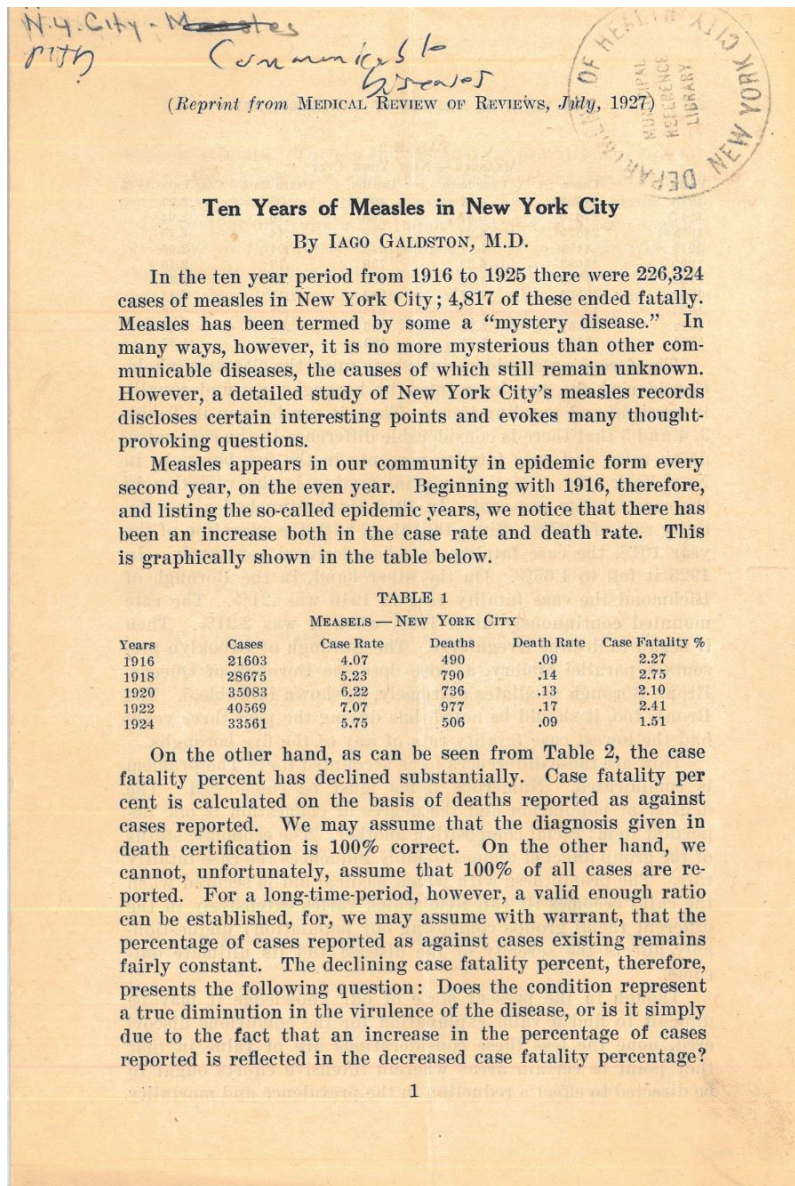




Municipal Library Notes April 18, 2025

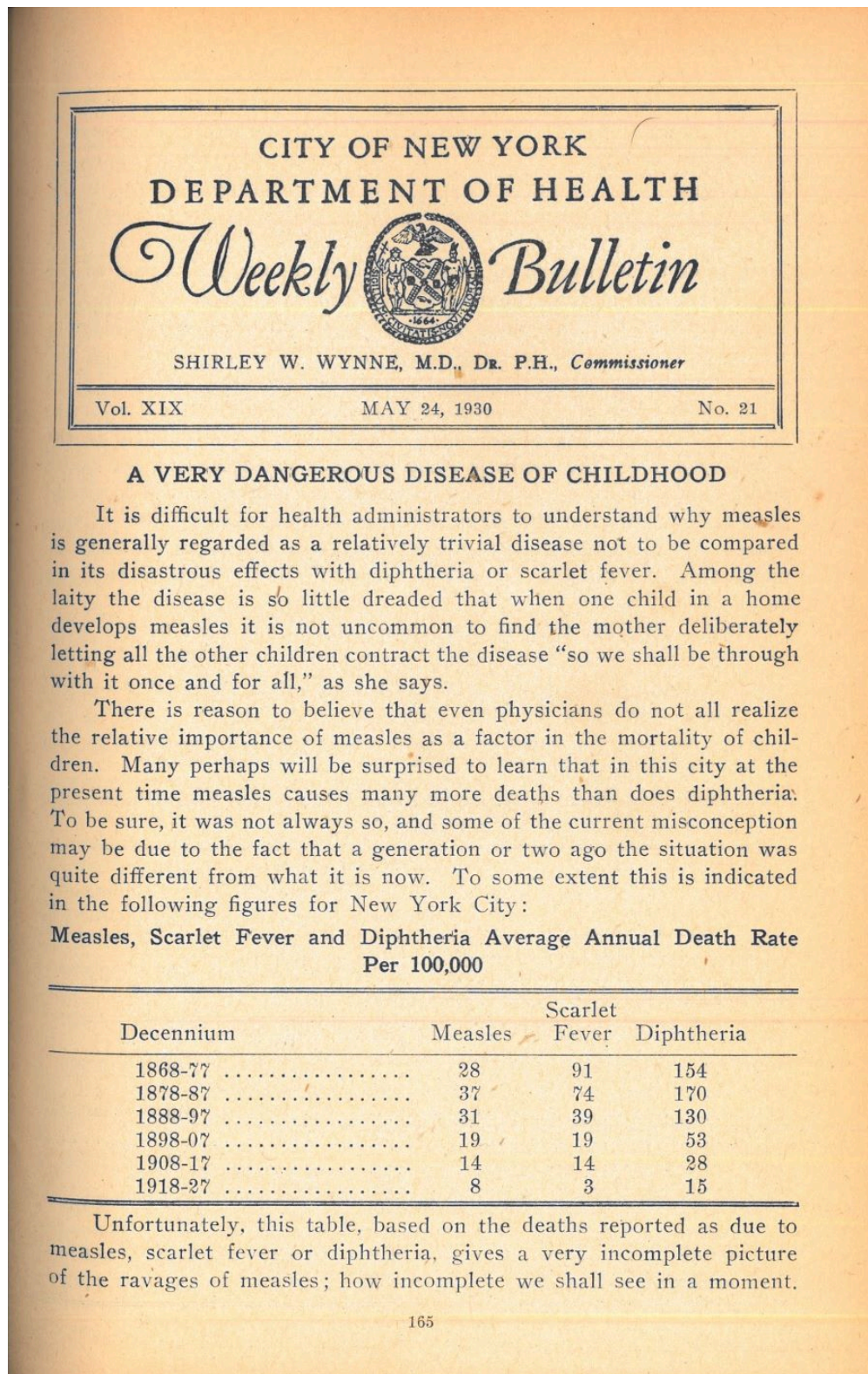
A Very Dangerous Disease of Childhood: Measles in NYC in the 20th Century

According to a 1927 report on *Ten Years of Measles in New York City*, “from 1916 to 1925 there were 226,324 cases of measles in New York City; some 4,817 of these ended fatally.” Decades before the development of a vaccine, the report decried the “absence of any adequate technique for establishing artificial immunity” and “little promise of success in any mass effort to prevent the disease,” which it described as “the most highly contagious of all communicable diseases,” with 90% of the deaths occurring in children under the age of five.



"Ten Years of Measles in New York City." Reprint from *Medical Review of Reviews*, July 1927.

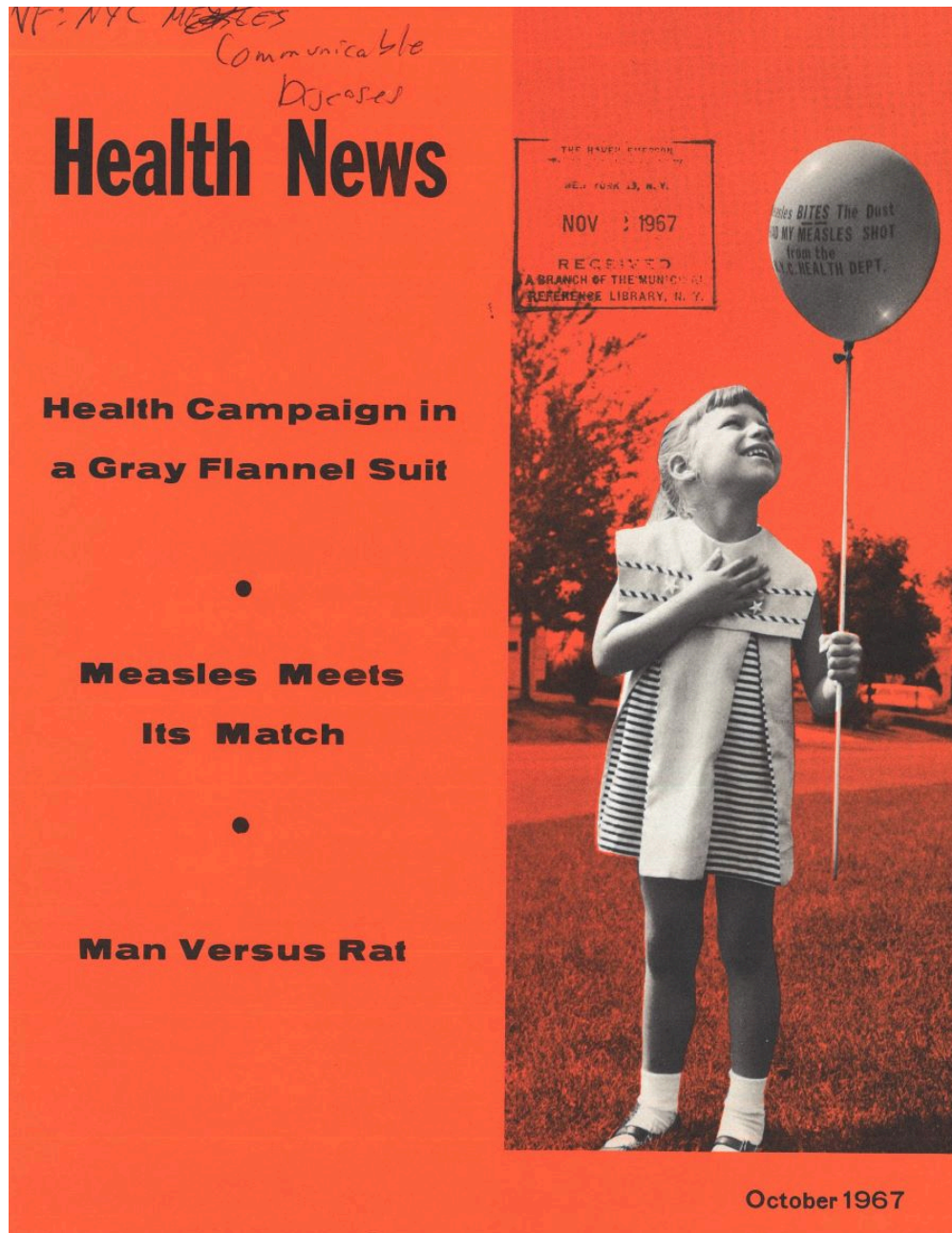
A New York City Health Department Weekly Bulletin from 1930, with the headline "A Very Dangerous Disease of Childhood," warned the public about the severity of the condition, stating: "It is difficult for health administrators to understand why measles is generally regarded as a trivial disease not to be compared in its disastrous effects with diphtheria or scarlet fever." The bulletin recalculated prior measles fatalities, which were believed to have been undercounted as a result of attribution to pneumonia rather than to the underlying measles infection that caused it.



City of New York Department of Health, Weekly Bulletin, Vol. XIX, No. 21, May 24, 1930.

Just a few years after the development of the measles vaccine in 1963, the October 1967 issue of *Health News* from the New York State Health Department featured an article with the triumphant title, "Measles Meets Its Match," which described the "effective vaccine and vigorous information-education campaign"

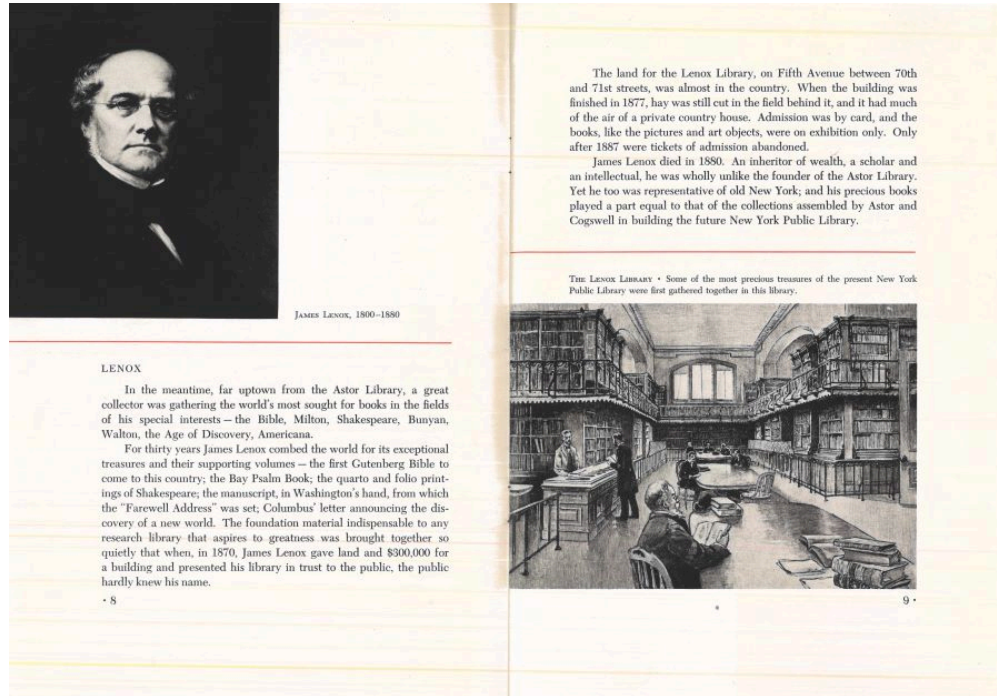
that had led to a 92% decrease in statewide cases since the previous year. The article discussed the vast public health campaign that led to this success, involving “250,000 pamphlets, posters, and fact sheets” along with radio and television ads and educational exhibits at fairs and school events, all promoting the “free distribution of more than a half-million doses of measles vaccines.” The United States declared measles eliminated in 2000.



New York State Department of Health, *Health News*, October 1967.

Frick Collection Reopening

Designed by the firm of Carrère and Hastings and completed in 1914 at a cost of over \$5 million (nearly \$160 million today), Henry Clay Frick's Beaux-Arts mansion is located on 70th Street at Fifth Avenue. This was the former site of the 1870 Lenox Library designed by Richard Morris Hunt (see below), which was demolished by Frick after the Lenox joined with the Astor and Tilden Libraries in 1911 to form the New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. After a renovation by architect John Russell Pope, Frick's former home opened in 1935 as a museum for his collection of 14th- to 19th-century European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts.



After One Hundred Years: An Account of the Partnership which has Built and Sustained the New York Public Library, 1848-1948. New York: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 1948.

The Frick Collection was designated a [New York City Landmark](#) in 1973 and a National Historic Landmark in 2008. According to the New York City designation, "this great mansion presents a striking picture of imposing grandeur and architectural distinction on Fifth Avenue." It is "one of the finest examples of French Louis XVI architecture in New York City" and "houses one of the finest art collections and art reference libraries in the world." The building is visible below in a 1961 photo from the Mayor Robert F. Wagner records at the Municipal Archives.



Ironically, while the Frick was being designated a New York City landmark in 1973, the Landmarks Commission was in a battle with the museum to save the mansion of George D. Widener, a 1909 Louis XV–style residence located next-door at 5 East 70th Street, which the museum had purchased and planned to tear down to build a new wing. After the demolition was ultimately approved, the museum came under fire once again for scrapping their plans for the new wing and installing a garden in its place. The original 2014 plan for the current renovation prompted protest from preservationists who objected to the removal of that now-beloved garden, and the designs were later revised to retain it.

Closed since 2020, the Frick Collection has just reopened after a \$220 million renovation with a new underground auditorium, an education center, and for the first time, access to the second-floor bedrooms, now functioning as galleries.

Celebrate National Poetry Month!

April is National Poetry Month, and April 19 marks the 60th anniversary of New York City's Landmarks Law, which was signed into law by Mayor Robert Wagner in 1965. The following poem is found in an unusual 1965 book of verse by Arthur Cort Holden held by the Municipal Library, entitled [*Sonnets for My City: An Essay on the Kinship of Art & Finance as Factors in the Development of the*](#)

City and the Moulding of Man's Environment. In this collection of 200 sonnets, the author, an architect and city planner, seeks “to show that Finance, which seems so unyielding, is susceptible and pliable in the hands of Art.”

LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Here round the church, low brownstone homes are set;
One speculator senses chance for gain;
High rise apartments, a mortgage from the Met;
All protests from the neighbors seem in vain.

This tree lined square's low buildings make its charm,
Desired frontage, taxed because it's rare;
Great city's need for income works the harm,
So business judgment builds tiered boxes there.

Must beauty and rare landmarks yield their place?
And economic forces uncontrolled
Destroy fine records of past living's grace?
Has good taste vanished with the men of old?

Bard framed a sanction, written into law
To make taste vocal; that's what law is for.



April is Records Management Month!

The New York City Charter gives the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) the duty to “establish standards for the proper records management in any agency or government instrumentality funded in whole or in part from local tax levy monies.” Further, it establishes the municipal records management division and defines its function, which includes recommending improvements in records management practices.

This month, the Records Management Division at DORIS has been sharing tips online on how to improve control over records and scheduling “clean-up” sessions at the agency. Last week, the Division hosted records managers from throughout City government for an information sharing get-together.

DORIS has initiated a project to manage City government’s born-digital records, which have accumulated over many years. City government is storing more than 13 petabytes of digital records. That is 13 quadrillion bytes! One equivalent would be 20 million five-drawer filing cabinets.

By implementing an Electronic Records Management System (ERMS), each participating City agency and office can reduce the quantity of digital records being stored. The ERMS being deployed is a Software as a Solution (SAAS) that was chosen in collaboration with the City’s technology agency after consultation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Many of the born-digital records are eligible for disposal because they have exceeded the amount of time they are supposed to be kept. Disposing of these outdated records is not easy because each record type must be identified and listed on a disposal application that is reviewed by the Law Department and DORIS. Important electronic records that should be transferred to the Municipal Archives are sitting on servers without inventories.

The ERMS project provides a software solution to identify and manage the born-digital records so they are kept safely for the correct amount of time. Beginning in 2022 with a five-agency pilot program, DORIS tested the tool and began a phased implementation. As of April 9, 2025, 30 agencies are using the ERMS solution to manage their records inventories, with 139 million records in the system and additional records under management daily.



Lunch & Learn: Brooklynites

Join the [NYC Department of Records and Information Services \(DORIS\)](#) virtually via Zoom from 1-2 PM on Tuesday, May 13th for our next Lunch and Learn, **Brooklynites**.

Before it was a borough, Brooklyn was our nation's third-largest city. Its free Black community attracted people from all walks of life who sought to establish a town rooted in a radical, anti-slavery ideology. On May 13th, Prithi Kanakamedala will discuss her first full-length book, [Brooklynites: The Remarkable Story of the Free Black Communities that Shaped a Borough](#), which recounts the lives of these remarkable New Yorkers and considers their lasting impact on New York City's most populous borough and our city today.

When: Tuesday, May 13th @ 1 PM EST

Location: Online (via Zoom)

[RSVP for "Brooklynites" Here](#)

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