



Municipal Library Notes - February 23, 2024

Spotlight on: Keep Well Leaflets

By Christine Bruzese, Director, Municipal Library

From 1915 to 1922, the Bureau of Public Health Education at the NYC Department of Health published a series of Keep Well Leaflets. These leaflets offered practical advice from medical and educational professionals on various health topics and provided some self-care tips. Take a look and see what might still hold true today.

Here is an excerpt from "Talks with Mothers" written by Dr. S. Josephine Baker in 1919.

WHAT NOT TO FEED THE BABY

I have already told you in some of my other talks what you should feed the baby. At the same time you learn some of the things you should not feed it. I have already told you not to feed the baby strong, sweet or fat from your own breast if it is possible for you to feed him that way. I told you too how to look out for bad milk when you had to feed your baby from a bottle.

There are a great many rules for feeding babies, particularly for the mother who has to feed her baby from a bottle. Remember first of all what I told you about not asking your neighbor's advice. Always go to a doctor or nurse; find out just what you should feed your baby.

Don't forget how to get good clean milk and how to take care of it so it will stay so. Keep the bottles and nipples and everything that baby's milk touches perfectly clean by frequent boiling and leaving them standing in salt water or clean water when not in use as I explained in one of my other talks.

If you must use a bottle for your baby, don't give him plain cow's milk. Cow's milk is much stronger than mother's milk, and so too strong for a tender baby's stomach. Cow's milk must always be modified or mixed with water and other things that the doctor will tell you about. Don't try to modify the milk yourself until a doctor or nurse has shown you how. You might do it wrong and do your baby a great deal of harm.

If baby leaves a little milk in the bottle when he gets through feeding, never save it for the next time. Never feed baby old milk or milk that has stood after part of it has been used. It is very likely to make him sick, because the tiny bacteria I have told you about have had a chance to grow in it. It is better to waste a little than to run the risk of wasting your baby.

Don't feed the baby cold milk; remember the milk that nature

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meant baby to take is as warm as your own. Mood. If his little stomach has to warm the milk up for itself it is pretty sure to be harmed by it.

But never stick your finger in baby's milk to see if it is warm enough. Your finger may look perfectly clean, but remember these little bacteria, too small to see without a magnifying glass. There may be thousands of them on a finger that looks perfectly clean. If you put them in baby's milk they will grow there very quickly and turn it to poison.

And worst of all, don't put the nipple of the bottle into your own mouth to see how warm the milk is. You can't tell what bacteria may be living in your mouth. You are grown up and strong and well. There may not be enough of them to do you any harm. Yet there may be enough of them to kill your baby, especially when they have a chance to grow in his milk. Besides, you may be coming down with some disease that hasn't shown itself to you yet. Many a little one has taken consumption or diphtheria or some other deadly disease from a careless mother or nurse who has insisted on putting the nipple of baby's bottle into her own mouth.

The best way to tell if the milk is warm enough is to dip up a little with a clean spoon that has just been in boiling water and hasn't had your fingers on its bowl since, then taste of the milk from the spoon and don't put the spoon back in the milk.

It is best always to taste a baby's milk before feeding it not only to find out if it is the right heat, but to make sure that it is not sour. Never give your baby sour milk. It is very likely to make him seriously sick.

Never feed a baby condensed milk or patent foods unless a doctor orders you to. Here is another place where your neighbor's advice is dangerous. Remember no two babies are alike. One child may do well on what kills another.

Then, too, many of these foods lack the animal matter that gives baby strength. Your baby may grow fat on them for a time but does not grow as strong as he should. He is very likely

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Guidance from "Care of the Hair" written by Dr. S. Dana Hubbard in 1922.

RULES FOR CARE OF THE HAIR

1. Promote circulation of the blood, so as to keep the scalp in a healthy condition. Massage the scalp daily with a stiff brush, vigorously, but not violently.
2. Avoid pressure and constriction by tight headbands. Give the hair air and sunlight. But do not unnecessarily expose to the direct rays of the sun, as such prolonged exposure will cause the hair to fade and become straggled.
3. Avoid chilling the head by cold douches. Do not wet the hair every time you wash it.
4. Use a soft brush in arranging the hair. Shampoo at regular, proper intervals. Always rub the natural oil, removed by the shampoo, with some substance such as sweet almond oil or yellow vasoline.
5. Avoid cutting the hair too close to the scalp. Women should not have their hair cut too frequently. Discontinue shampooing by fire.
6. Don't fuss with your scalp unnecessarily. Rough usage and too frequent washing predispose to dandruff.
7. Wash the scalp to determine whether it is too dry or too oily. Either condition means that you must take measures to make the oil glands function properly.
8. Itching is a sign of trouble. Even though the itching is slight, the danger may be great. If the shampoo, as directed, fails to stop the itching, seek competent medical advice.
9. Avoid alkaline substances on a dry scalp, and avoid the use of washes containing resorcin or oily bases.
10. Look after your general health. Eat properly; aid digestion by active exercise and the right amount of sleep.

Every hair on your head is like a plant, growing on the scalp as in a garden. The blood is the stream that nourishes this garden, and anything that interferes with the normal feeding of the hair by the blood stream may cause some one of a great variety of diseases, resulting in early thinning of the hair and perhaps in baldness.

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The degeneration of the hair may come from causes within—that is, it may be due to disease of the blood or of the nervous system. Also, like other "plants" the hair is liable to be attacked from without by various bad habits of living, improper diet, want of exercise, excessive worry, certain styles of wearing the hair—all these things affect the nutrition of the scalp through the blood and the nervous system.

I know a man who is bald because, for years, he indulged too frequently in Welsh rabbit. This food kept his digestion continually disturbed. He suffered many bad troubles, and among them the loss of hair. When he was finally impressed with the cost to him of this indulgence, he gave up the Welsh rabbit; but it was too late to save his hair.

Another man I know has long been a sufferer from indigestion because of excessive smoking. He is not much over thirty, but his hair is already thin, and he will soon be bald, largely because of this habit of excessive smoking.

One of our famous milliners is bald as a result of prolonged nervous strain. He has a single hair on his head. Not even an eyebrow. Care and worry affected his digestion, circulation, and nervous system; causing poisons to accumulate in the blood. This starved the hair and it fell early—never to return. It is only when a person's constitution has been very thoroughly sapped that the skin is thus affected. In this man's case, the skin was so great that he has not a single hair for an inch on his own.

Many cases of baldness are accelerated—and some are directly caused—by night-dring hair. The tight bandages constrict the blood vessels leading to the top and front of the scalp, and thus diminish the supply of blood to the hair. The flesh at the sides and front of the skull is very thin, so that the arteries are close to the bone. Consequently, a very slight pressure is sufficient to compress them.

Probably you have noticed the red band of congestion on the forehead when a tight-fitting hat is removed. It is particularly noticeable after you have been exercising, and the blood has been circulating freely. If your work requires you to be constantly out of doors or exposed to drafts, so that a head covering must be worn, the top or hat should be well ventilated, so as not to cause sweating or overheating of the scalp.

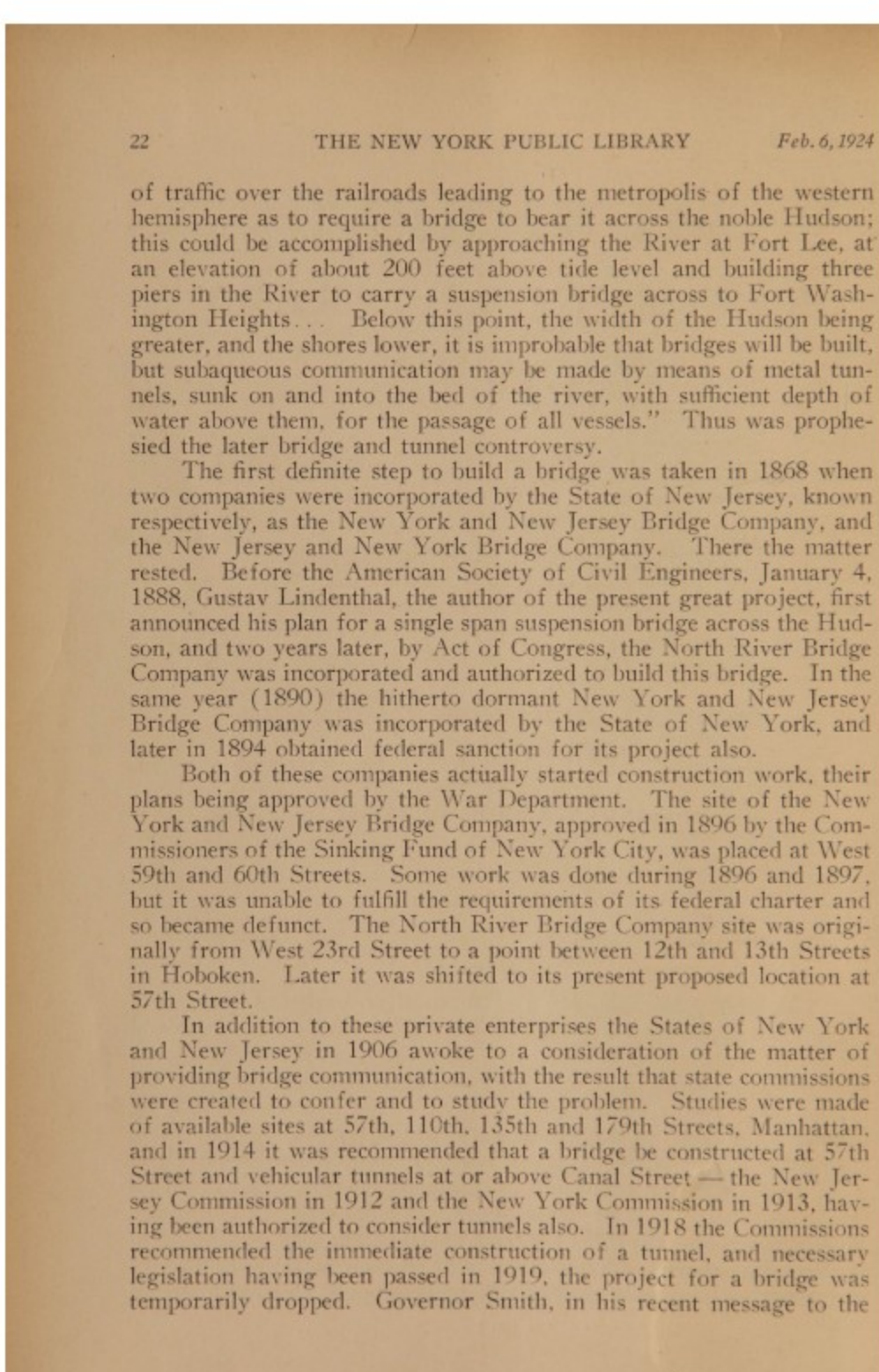
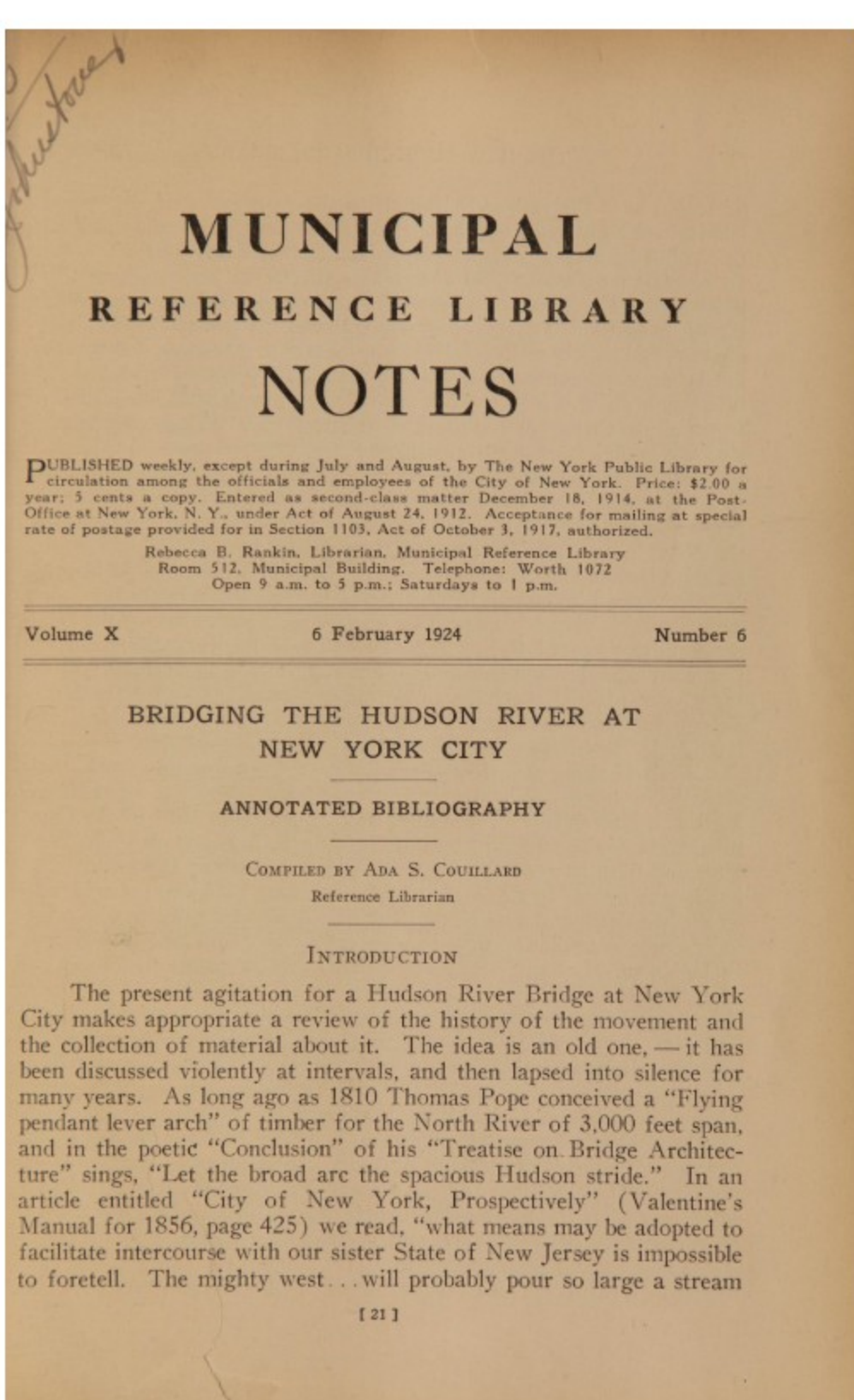
Farmers and others who wear soft hats seem to be less troubled with baldness than those who live in the city, where stiff hats are in vogue. The worst of all styles of hat are, of course, the high hat and the stiff derby.

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Municipal Reference Library Notes Bridging the Hudson River at New York City

By Christine Bruzese, Director, Municipal Library

The February 6, 1924, issue of Municipal Reference Library Notes features the first in a series of articles on bibliographic sources about a proposed Hudson River Bridge. It is noted in the article that the idea of a bridge across the Hudson River was discussed as early as 1810. Many plans were considered by the states of New York and New Jersey. By 1924, the idea was up for discussion again with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey established in 1923 actively involved. Articles for each Notes issue in February provided detailed bibliographies from 1811 to 1924. Eventually, the George Washington Bridge was constructed across the Hudson River and opened in 1931. Here are two images from the first article in the series.



A Woman of Firsts: Constance Baker Motley

By Pauline Toole, Commissioner, Department of Records and Information Services

New York City can count many groundbreaking women among its residents and leaders. Few, though, have been as inspiring as Constance Baker Motley who should be celebrated more widely.

The Vertical Files in the Municipal Library contain a folder of news clips, mostly from long-shuttered newspapers, documenting her impact in a career that broke ground in the law, politics and civil rights.

Born in New Haven to immigrant parents from Newis, Baker Motley aspired to attend college but lacked resources. While working as a housecleaner she volunteered in organizations advocating for civil rights. In a fluke, a wealthy white contractor was in the audience when she was making a speech. He offered to fund her college education. And she was off!

Initially attending Fisk University, she transferred to New York University to complete her undergraduate degree and then Columbia University's Law School. While a student, she volunteered with the emerging Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—the NAACP LDF, and was among the organization's first employees. Working alongside Thurgood Marshall throughout the South, Baker Motley achieved major civil rights victories over a two-decade career. She was the first Black woman to appear before the United States Supreme Court where she argued ten cases. One notable example is successfully representing James Meredith in the fight to desegregate the University of Mississippi.

In 1963 she became the first Black woman elected to the New York State Senate and in 1965 she became the first woman Borough President in New York City. In that position, she focused on community needs and took city agencies to task for being unresponsive. In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated her for a federal judgeship on the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, on the recommendation of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Upon confirmation, over the objections of Southern senators, she became the nation's first Black woman federal judge. Constance Baker Motley became the chief judge of the District Court in 1982 and continued to serve as a judge until her death in 2005.

In January 2024, the United States Postal Service honored her with a Black Heritage Stamp.

If these highlights pique your curiosity, check out the biography Civil Rights Queen: Constance Baker Motley and the Struggle for Equality by Tomiko Brown Nagin.

Progress in NYC's Electronic Records Management

By Rose Yndigoyen, Director, Municipal Records Management Division

The DORIS Records Management division continues its diligent work to actively and efficiently manage New York City's records in all formats. This update showcases the strides we've taken in the fiscal year 2024 to enhance citywide involvement in contemporary aspects of electronic records management. One of our major accomplishments in recent months has been the continued successful implementation of the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS). This transformative project is on track to bring over 20 million city records under management by the end of January 2024. Another project we are proud to highlight is a joint effort with the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) to manage de-activated Outlook mailboxes in accordance with retention schedules. By doing so, we are working to ensure the proper archiving and retention of city records.

The DORIS Records Management division is committed to expanding citywide compliance with electronic records management practices. The successful implementation of ERMS and the collaboration with OTI showcases our dedication to ensuring active and appropriate management is applied to all NYC records in all formats.

