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**CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS EXPANDS ONLINE GALLERY:
PHOTOS INCLUDE POLICE DEPARTMENT “ALIEN SQUAD” SHOTS**

The New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) announced the addition of 30,000 photographs to its on-line gallery. The new additions consist of pictures drawn from the Municipal Archives' vast holdings and include 187 historical pictures from the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) “Alien Squad.”

Some of the more unusual images from this series depict political groups monitored, ranging from Communist Party rallies in Madison Square Garden to the summer retreat in Yaphank, Long Island run by the German American Bund. These are among more than 2,000 photographs from the NYPD departmental files and Emergency Services Unit (ESU), dating from 1928 to 1941.

The ESU photographs document mayhem including street car accidents, early airplane crashes, explosions and the proverbial cat stuck in a tree. The City even sent photographers to Lakehurst, New Jersey, to photograph the remains of the airship Hindenburg after its dramatic crash in 1937.

The addition of the 30,000 new photos brings the total number of images in the online gallery to more than 900,000 and comprises the largest collection of New York City historical images in the world.

These never-before-seen pictures are drawn from the Municipal Archives' vast holdings of vintage large-format film and glass-plate negatives, color transparencies, century-old lantern slides, 35mm Kodachromes, and prints. Originally produced by city agency staff photographers on routine assignments, these pictures evoke a time and place that now exists only in memory and these wonderful images.

Mid-twentieth century NYC is particularly well-chronicled—construction of the United Nations, the 1960 United Airlines plane crash in Park Slope, the ticker-tape parade for John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline during the 1960 presidential campaign, and color photographs of beautiful ocean liners docked along the West Side piers—are just some of the images of that era now available for the first time.

And it is not just the big moments in City history that the photographers caught in their lenses. They also documented quiet, every-day scenes that inform and delight the viewer:

- young students in a late-19th century classroom,
- a family on the porch of their condemned house,
- waves crashing onto the boardwalk in Rockaway Beach,
- dirt roads in then-new housing developments in Queens,
- a grounded tugboat renamed “The Black Pirate” by adventure-minded children,
- ice-skaters on Kissena Lake, and
- the demolition of the 2nd Avenue El train.

The appeal of many of these pictures is often ancillary to the original subject of the picture—the cars and storefronts near a construction site; the children in a crowd of on-lookers at the scene of an accident or police investigation; the clothing on spectators watching men pave a street; the movie magazines hanging in a newstand—all now provide a fascinating glimpse into the past.

The pictures also demonstrate the skill and talents of many of these “municipal” staff photographers. In particular, Eugene de Salignac, the sole photographer for the Department of Bridges, Plant & Structures, from 1906 to 1934, is perhaps the most notable example. He produced over 20,000 glass-plate negatives during his decades-long career. With his eye for framing a photograph, he managed to transform even the most mundane photo assignment into a work of art, and many of his images are comparable to renowned photographers such as Berenice Abbott, August Sander, and Eugene Atget.

De Salignac’s documentation of the construction of the great East River bridges (Manhattan, Williamsburg and the Queensboro), as well as McKim, Mead & White’s magnificent Municipal Building, along with dozens of other infrastructure projects all around the five boroughs, is astounding in both comprehensiveness and quality. These negatives have now been digitized in their entirety and over 16,000 images have been added online.

The large-format cameras employed by De Salignac and other photographers were particularly well-suited to document the physical city. Panoramic views taken during construction of the East River Drive, West Side “Express” highway, Riverside Drive and viaduct, are abundant and detailed. In addition a 1951 aerial photographic survey of the entire City has been added to the maps collection, along with over 1800 survey drawings of the New York City waterfront.

The addition of these 30,000 images still just scratches the surface of the Municipal Archives’ vast holdings, and plans are in the works to digitize more of these resources.

The Department of Records invites visitors to explore the gallery www.nyc.gov/nycma. Reproductions of photographs are available for purchase.