

51 Villard Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson
New York 10706
July 27, 2010

Ms. Amanda Burden
City Planning Commission
20 Reade Street
New York, N.Y. 10007

Dear Ms. Burden,


I'm a native of the Bronx, a fourth-generation New Yorker whose paternal great-grandparents landed on South Street, in 1847, in the wake of the Irish famine. From then until 1913, when they decamped for the Bronx, my family lived in and around the Bowery and worshipped in nearby churches (Old St. Patrick's on Mulberry, St. Mary's on Grand, St. Brigid's on Tompkins Square). My grandmother, Margaret Manning, a seamstress, met my grandfather, Patrick Quinn, a laborer in the East River shipyards, at a dance sponsored by Big Tim Sullivan's political club.

My father, Peter Quinn--born in 1904, on East 7th Street and Avenue B, a few blocks from the Bowery--was elected from the Bronx to the N.Y. State assembly and the U.S. Congress. He was a judge for 25 years, serving as a Magistrate's Court judge, Chief Justice of the City Court, and a justice of the State Supreme Court.

Like many New Yorkers, the history of the Bowery is intertwined with family history. In fact, the Bowery provides the background for my first book, *Banished Children of Eve: A Novel of Civil War New York*. As I researched that book, I came to realize that no area of this city--indeed, of this country--is more directly and intimately connected to the saga of immigration, the development of popular culture and the rise of urban politics than the Bowery.

Being raised in New York, I'm well acquainted with the inevitability of change and, often enough, the need for redevelopment. But when done intelligently, redevelopment isn't the same as a willful amnesia that requires the wanton and wholesale obliteration of the past. (And God knows, New York has seen far too much of that!) Instead, it builds on what came before, using the past to the advantage of the future, valuing diversity over bland uniformity, and preserving a sense of place that enriches and enhances the experience of generations to come.

For all these reasons, I wholeheartedly support the East Bowery Preservation Plan. What's at stake here isn't merely the fate of a single neighborhood but our collective capacity to shape the city's future. Please act now.



Peter Quinn

www.newyorkpaddy.com