



Museum of the City of New York receives \$50,000 grant from The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation to digitize nearly 780 manuscript items from notable New York families of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries

(New York, NY | September 27, 2018) - The Museum of the City of New York is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation to process, arrange, catalog, and digitize a large group of nearly 780 manuscript items assembled by Edward F. De Lancey in the 19th century. Purchased from the Ms. Elon Huntington-Hooker fund in 1942, these manuscripts chronicle the histories of several notable New York families—the De Lancey, Floyd, Jones, Morris, and Jay families—and date from the 17th through the 19th centuries. With this generous support from The Foundation, the Museum will make this important collection freely accessible online to scholars, students, and the public.

The collection was assembled by Edward Floyd De Lancey (1821-1905), who not only served as the President of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, but was also the author of several works on New York history. At the time the collection was accessioned in 1942, Jerome Irving Smith, the Museum's then curator of manuscripts referred to it as "the most amazing single collection" he had ever seen. "When collated and catalogued, it will fill in many important gaps not only in the history of the city and country but also in the lives of several outstanding Americans of the past" (*New York Times*, September 20, 1942). One particular highlight is a formal oversize deed from 1687 that conveys a parcel of land on the south side of Long Island from Native peoples to first-generation immigrant Colonel Richard Floyd. The document is signed by Tobacus the Sachem, elder of the Unkechaug tribe of Long Island, and several other Native men, using signature marks and red wax seals. Jones family materials reveal the difficult and dramatic choices the family was required to make during and after the Revolutionary War. Correspondence describes in detail the attempts family members made to retain and/or reclaim not only their Long Island land and property, which had been seized under the 1779 Act of Attainder, but their very right to reside in America as well.

While archival work continues, the grant has already enabled much of the De Lancey collection to be catalogued and shared online—with an accompanying 2,457 images—through the Museum's Collections Portal at <http://collections.mcny.org>. In its use of the Portal, the Museum seeks to facilitate an open dialogue regarding New York City's past, present, and future. Digitized materials from the collection are often incorporated into the educational programming offered by the Museum's Frederick A.O. Schwarz Education Center, which serves more than 54,000 students, children, and family members from across the city. All educator workshops includes a session linking the lesson's content with relevant objects

available on the Collections Portal, as well as lesson plans for utilizing online content in the classroom. Since its launch in 2010, the Portal has had nearly 1.2 million unique visitors, and over 15.5 million page views.

About the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation

The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, established in 1987, primarily supports the study of New York State history. Robert David Lion Gardiner was, until his death in August 2004, the 16th Lord of the Manor of Gardiner's Island, NY. The Gardiner family and their descendants have owned Gardiner's Island since 1639, obtained as part of a royal grant from King Charles I of England. The Foundation is inspired by Robert David Lion Gardiner's personal passion for New York history. For more information visit:

<https://www.rdlgfoundation.org/>

About the Museum of the City of New York

The Museum celebrates and fosters understanding of the world's most influential metropolis. Through a unique array of content-rich special exhibitions, public and education programs, and publications, the Museum engages visitors by documenting and interpreting the city's past, present, and future. For more information visit: www.mcny.org.

The Museum serves the people of New York and visitors from around the world through exhibitions, school and public programs, publications, and collections spanning fashion, art, music, theater, culture, activism, and history. Three floors of exhibitions and a prodigious collection of 750,000 objects, art, and artifacts chronicle New York City's people, places, and events.

###

Media Contact:

Christian Barclay

cbarclay@mcny.org

(917) 492-3457