



**THE ROBERT DAVID LION GARDINER FOUNDATION AWARDS
\$50,000 GRANT TO MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
TO DIGITIZE RARE MANUSCRIPTS**
**Nearly 1,000 Never-Before-Seen Documents Chronicling Histories of Notable
New York Families Now Free and Accessible Online to Public**

NEW YORK, NY (February 11, 2019) – Today, the Museum of the City of New York announced that, thanks to a \$50,000 award from The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, it has completed the digitization of nearly 1,000 manuscript items from notable New York families of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Originally assembled by Edward F. De Lancey, the collection chronicles the histories, lives, and impact of several of NYC’s founding clans including the De Lanceys, Floyds and Joneses. These important documents are now online and available to the public via the Museum’s Collection Portal (<http://collections.mcny.org>) as well as described online in archival finding aids (<https://mcnycatablog.org>).

The original body of material was estimated to hold approximately 780 items, but over the course of processing it — thanks to the shepherding of MCNY Project Assistant Archivist, Mary Silverstein— an additional accession related to the project was identified, numbering an additional 167 items.

One particular highlight includes a formal deed from 1687 that conveys a parcel of land on the South Shore 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.

Another group of documents reveals the difficult and dramatic choices the Jones family was required to make during and after the Revolutionary War. Correspondence details 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.

“At the time these papers were 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. We are so pleased that the Foundation’s generosity has allowed us to provide free digital access to these significant materials for scholars, students, and the greater public, anywhere and anytime.” says Whitney W. Donhauser, *Ronay Menschel President & Director*, Museum of the City of New York.

The grant has already enabled the De Lancey collection to be catalogued and shared online—with an accompanying 2,457 images—through the Museum’s Collections Portal. 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 incorporated into 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 include 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 De Lancey Collection

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 by the Museum in 1942, Jerome Irving Smith—then the Museum's 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, but also in the lives of several outstanding Americans of the past” (*New York Times*, September 20, 1942).

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, New York. 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 of the City of New York fosters understanding of the distinctive nature of urban life in the world's most influential metropolis. It engages visitors by celebrating, documenting, and interpreting the city's past, present, and future. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY. For more information please visit www.mcny.org.

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