

# Lithuanian Alliance Building



## DESIGNATION REPORT

# Lithuanian Alliance Building

## LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan  
307 West 30th Street

## LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Lithuanian Alliance building is an 1876-1877 neo-Grec-style building that has served since 1910 as the headquarters of the Lithuanian Alliance of America, the nation's oldest continually operating Lithuanian organization.



### **Lithuanian Alliance Building Entrance**

Sarah Eccles, March 2026

### **LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Lisa Kersavage, Executive Director  
Mark Silberman, General Counsel  
Timothy Frye, Director of Special Projects and  
Strategic Planning  
Margaret Herman, Director of Research  
Cory Herrala, Director of Preservation

### **REPORT BY**

Jessica Fletcher, Research Department

### **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH**

Michael Caratzas, Research Department

### **EDITED BY**

LPC Staff

### **PHOTOGRAPHS BY**

Sarah Eccles

### **COMMISSIONERS**

Angie Master, Vice Chair  
Wellington Chen  
Stephen Chu  
Mark Ginsberg  
Michael Goldblum  
Erasmus Ikpemgbe  
Everardo Jefferson  
Frank Mahan  
Stephen Wilder

# Lithuanian Alliance Building

307 West 30th Street, Manhattan

## Designation List 548

LP-2695

**Built:** 1876-1877

**Builder:** James C. Springstead

**Landmark Site:** Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map  
Block 754, Lot 34

**Building Identification Number (BIN):** 1013530

**Calendared:** December 2, 2025

**Public Hearing:** March 10, 2026

On March 10, 2026, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Lithuanian Alliance Building as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.3). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Five people spoke in support of designation. Speakers included a representative of the Lithuanian Alliance, the Consul General of Lithuania in New York, representatives of the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Historic Districts Council, and one individual. Additionally, the Commission received one written submission in support of the proposed designation.

## Summary

### Lithuanian Alliance Building

The Lithuanian Alliance Building is a neo-Grec-style building dating to 1876-1877. Located in the northernmost limits of Chelsea, the building is an example of the neighborhood's 19th-century residential fabric, and has important cultural significance as the longtime headquarters of the Lithuanian Alliance of America, which purchased the property in 1910 and has supported Lithuanian immigration and the Lithuanian American community in numerous ways ranging from providing insurance policies to keeping the Lithuanian-language press alive. It is the oldest continuously operating Lithuanian organization in the United States.

The developer brothers Samuel J. and Edward E. Ashley bought the lot on West 30th Street in 1867 and in 1876 filed plans for a four-family dwelling with James C. Springstead as their builder. The four-story-plus-basement dwelling held one apartment on each floor and was referred to as a French flat in documentation recording its construction, suggesting that it was intended for middle-class residents, as this typology offered more spacious accommodation than tenements. Early tenants included a dealer in fancy papers, a bookseller, and a saloon keeper.

The Lithuanian Alliance was established in 1886 and bought the building in 1910. The organization chose the site for its relative proximity to Ellis Island after considering sites in Brooklyn and as far afield as Boston. Lithuanians have a long history in the United States. A famine in 1867-8 brought an early wave of Lithuanian immigrants to the United States, most of whom were poor agricultural workers. Though many arrived in New York, and some settled on farms

around the city, they often did not stay, often finding jobs in railroad construction and coal mining in Pennsylvania. Lithuanians continued to immigrate throughout the 19th century, and by the early 20th century there was a substantial Lithuanian community in New York. In 1904 there were roughly 15,000 Lithuanians in New York and New Jersey, with many settling in Brooklyn and Long Island City.

Fraternal alliances such as the Lithuanian Alliance were set up to help fellow immigrants weather the difficulties of life in the United States. The Alliance offered material aid in the form of insurance policies, health benefits, and loans, while also seeking to preserve and propagate Lithuanian cultural heritage. *Tevyne (Fatherland)*, a weekly newspaper published by the Alliance starting in 1896, covered Lithuanian news for immigrants, and it was printed at 307 West 30th Street starting around 1910. *Tevyne* currently appears as a digital newsletter on the Alliance's website.

Although alterations to the building's facade were made in the 1970s, the Lithuanian Alliance restored the historic features of the building in 2018, preserving its appearance as it was first constructed in the 19th century. The Lithuanian Alliance is culturally significant as an intact neo-Grec-style building that has served as the headquarters of the Lithuanian Alliance and as the hub of Lithuanian culture in the United States since 1910.

# Building Description

Lithuanian Alliance Building

## Description

The Lithuanian Alliance Building is a four-story neo-Grec-style brick building above a brownstone basement. The building terminates in a pressed metal cornice at the fourth story. It was constructed as a flats building in 1876--77 before being purchased by the Lithuanian Alliance of America in 1910. The main-entrance surround and first-story sills and lintels were removed in 1976 when this story was faced with metal paneling, but that paneling was removed, and these features restored to their original appearance, in 2018.

## Primary (South, West 30th Street Facade)

The building is three bays wide and faced with red brick laid in stretcher bond, with brownstone lintels and sills. The basement level is faced in brownstone with a large opening crowned by a cast-iron lintel with rosettes; this lintel and expanded opening were likely added by the Lithuanian Alliance shortly after purchasing the building. A short brownstone stoop leads to the main entrance which is surrounded by a brownstone door surround. Within the surround enframing are incised rosettes and a floral motif in a curved panel above the doorway. Window openings on each floor have brownstone sills and lintels, with incised motifs on the lintels. There are two small plaques between the first-story windows. Crowning the fourth story is a bracketed pressed metal cornice with paneled frieze and incised decoration.

## Alterations

Basement resurfaced; historic double-leaf paneled wood-and-glass main-entrance door with transom

replaced; historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows replaced; brickwork patched above some lintels; light fixtures and intercom at main entrance.

## Secondary (East Facade)

The partially visible east facade is of brick, with two chimneys. The roofline is coped with clay tile.

## Alterations

Facade parged.

## Secondary (West Facade)

This brick facade is partially visible.

## Alterations

Facade parged and painted.

## Secondary (North Facade)

The partially visible north facade has square-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels.

## Alterations

Facade parged; windows replaced.

## Site

A non-historic iron railing surrounds the areaway, and a non-historic stoop gate has been added. The historic areaway and stoop railings featured curving wrought-iron elements and stone posts with incised ornament and pyramidal neo-Grec-style finials.

# History and Significance

## Lithuanian Alliance Building

### The Historical Development of Chelsea<sup>1</sup>

The Lithuanian Alliance Building is located on West 30th Street, in the northernmost section of the neighborhood of Chelsea. It exemplifies the 19th-century residential development of the area.

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the land that became Chelsea was part of a broader area that spanned the lower Hudson to upper Delaware River valleys. This region was inhabited by Indigenous People known as the Munsee. Following the nominal “sale” of Manhattan to the Dutch in 1626, European colonists drove the Munsee from Manhattan by the end of the 18th century.<sup>2</sup> In the late 18th century, as the city of New York began to grow northward along the east side of Manhattan, the section that would become Chelsea remained rural, with small farms and large estates providing the only suggestion of future settlement.

In 1750 Thomas Clarke, a retired army captain, bought a large parcel of land in today’s Chelsea. His holdings roughly stretched between Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River between West 20th and 28th Streets.<sup>3</sup> He built a large house near what became Ninth Avenue and 23rd Street, naming his estate Chelsea, which was an old soldiers’ retreat in England. After his death, his wife, Mary, and then their daughter, Charity, and son-in-law, Benjamin Moore, inherited the property. As was typical of large estate owners of the time, the Clarkes and Moores were enslavers. Ultimately two grandsons, Clement Clarke Moore and Thomas B. Clarke, inherited different sections of the land.<sup>4</sup>

Clement Clarke Moore lived the life of a

landed gentleman, enjoying his extensive property, and dabbling in politics through the writing of several political pamphlets. He also penned the poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” as well as the first American-produced lexicon of the Hebrew language. In 1819 he donated the land bounded by Eighth and Ninth Avenues, and 20th and 21st Streets, for the construction of a campus for the General Theological Seminary.<sup>5</sup>

When Clement Clarke Moore realized that development was rapidly approaching his extensive lands, he decided to try to control it. In 1822 he teamed with James N. Wells, whom he had met when the latter was a young carpenter in the neighborhood. Wells helped Clarke Moore develop Chelsea, devising property restrictions for Clarke Moore’s projects that required tree planting and prohibited both stables and rear buildings. A subsequent newspaper article observed that “The arrangements made by the original proprietors of the land in that quarter are such that no building can be erected for any purpose which will make the neighborhood disagreeable, and it is becoming a favorite place of residence.”<sup>6</sup>

During the boom years of the early 1830s, development moved northward in Manhattan at an unprecedented pace. It was temporarily stopped by the Panic of 1837 but resumed by the early 1840s. The population exploded, due in large part to extensive immigration from Europe. As numerous Irish immigrants moved into the Five Points district in Lower Manhattan, that neighborhood’s Black residents were forced northward. A small African American community was established west of Sixth Avenue, between 26th and 30th Streets.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the city, speculators began building long rows of townhouses for well-to-do businessmen. The first such development in Chelsea, begun in 1845, was London Terrace (demolished), constructed on the north side of West 23rd Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues. This large-scale,

continuous row followed precedents that already existed on the Lower East Side and in Greenwich Village, as developers attempted to emulate the elegant and uniform rows or terraces constructed in London's fashionable neighborhoods since the 18th century, and to display New Yorkers' growing wealth and good taste.<sup>8</sup>

During this time, the character of the developing Chelsea neighborhood varied from block to block. As London Terrace was taking form as a wealthy enclave, the Hudson River Railroad laid tracks along Tenth and Eleventh Avenues (in 1847), bringing industry to the area. Factories were locating west of Tenth Avenue, and those who worked in them settled in tenements nearby. Gradually more of the marshy land west of Tenth Avenue was filled in, creating inexpensive land that became home to many of the city's recent immigrants.

As commercial development subsequently pushed northward into the neighborhood, wealthy and middle-class families who originally settled in Chelsea increasingly left the neighborhood and were replaced by working-class immigrant families, many of them Irish-Catholic. One local newspaper stated in 1855 that "Recent neighborhood changes had not helped make Chelsea the court end of town. Tongues very different from English were heard on its streets."<sup>9</sup>

By the late 19th century, the neighborhood was a working-class area with a mixture of native-born and immigrant residents. In 1869 the Ninth Avenue El extended from lower Manhattan to 30th Street, greatly improving transit connections and enabling Chelsea's residents to move around the city more efficiently.<sup>10</sup> The settlement house Hudson Guild, dedicated to aiding low-income families in the neighborhood, was established in 1895 in quarters on West 25th Street. Hudson Guild first offered a local boys' club and then expanded its services to girls and adults, providing amenities like a kindergarten and

library, eventually moving into new premises on West 27th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues.<sup>11</sup> In the early 1900s, when the Lithuanian Alliance was looking to buy property in the area, the streets surrounding 307 West 30th Street were dotted with breweries and factories, as well as small neighborhood churches. Purpose-built tenements abutted rowhouses that had been turned into multi-family dwellings and lodging houses to meet the housing needs of working-class New Yorkers.<sup>12</sup> Residents of the area held working-class jobs, ranging from railroad laborers and factory workers to domestic servants and department store salespeople. Many were native-born, but there was a sizeable first- and second-generation Irish population, as well as Italians and Germans.<sup>13</sup>

By 1939, *The WPA Guide to New York City* described Chelsea as "one of New York's worst slum areas." In addition to the older populations of Irish and Italian New Yorkers, newer arrivals of Spanish, Puerto Rican, Greek, and Balkan descent were also living in the district by that time.<sup>14</sup>

### **Edward E. and Samuel J. Ashley**

The real estate developers Edward E. and Samuel J. Ashley primarily constructed residences in the city from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries.<sup>15</sup> The brothers were born in New York.<sup>16</sup> Their father, James M. Ashley, died at a young age and the brothers grew up in their maternal grandparents' household.<sup>17</sup> Their grandfather, Samuel Queripel, was a coal merchant.

The Ashleys' first entry into the real estate business is unclear but perhaps came with the acquisition of 307 West 30th Street. On March 1, 1867 their grandmother, Mary Queripel, bought the lot at 307 West 30th Street from George Hartman and that same year the Ashleys acquired the property from Queripel.<sup>18</sup> They subsequently developed the lot, in 1876-1877, into the French flats building that would

later become the Lithuanian Alliance Building. French flats were developed for the middle class, and the term was intended to separate them from the perceived stigma of tenements at a time when many viewed apartment living as suspect.<sup>19</sup> However, it seems that these real estate dealings did not become a fully-fledged business for them at this time. Despite their lack of a sustained profession, both employed servants, suggesting that they had independent sources of wealth, perhaps stemming from their grandfather's coal dealing, as well as their ownership of 307 West 30th Street.<sup>20</sup>

Beginning in 1895, Edward E. Ashley began to be consistently listed as working in real estate in city directories.<sup>21</sup> By the 1910 census Edward was listed as an architect and builder, while Samuel was noted as a dealer in real estate. Edward, whose architectural training has not been documented, regularly acted as both the owner and architect of the buildings he developed. Notably in the designated Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District he designed and developed two apartment buildings and four row houses (three of these row houses were developed in tandem with his brother) between 1890 and 1906.<sup>22</sup> The Ashley brothers lived in two of these row houses on St. Nicholas Avenue.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Neo-Grec Style and the Design of the Lithuanian Alliance Building<sup>24</sup>**

The neo-Grec style was popularized in the years after the Civil War as the Italianate style that had dominated row house design from the 1840s through the 1860s began to fall out of favor.<sup>25</sup> Developments in the mechanization of stone cutting and tooling, paired with increasing labor costs after the Civil War, saw the broad adoption of mechanical planers and routers to more economically create decorative details. While a financial consideration, the incised designs of the emerging neo-Grec style reacted to the seemingly fussy hand-carved details of

the Italianate. By the 1870s the neo-Grec had become the style of choice for the row houses of New York City, offering delicate, decorative, and “modern” design with the speed and low cost that could be achieved through the use of relatively unskilled labor.<sup>26</sup> There are a number of features commonly associated with the style, including most notably both neo-Grec fluting and incised detailing. Additionally, the use of angular, geometric (generally triangular) brackets as volutes under door hoods, to support window enframements, and as modillions and end blocks in cornices were common design elements of the neo-Grec style. Neo-Grec cornices are also recognizable for their geometric designs and simplified patterns. Many of the Lithuanian Alliance Building's features are characteristic of the style, including the incised detailing found on the lintels above the windows and door surround and pressed metal cornice with angular panels and incised decoration. It is also similar in width and facade organization to a typical neo-Grec rowhouse, but as a flats building it has shorter entrance stoop than rowhouse entrances.

### **Early History of the Building**

The developer brothers Samuel J. and Edward E. Ashley acquired the lot on West 30th Street in 1867.<sup>27</sup> In 1876 they filed plans for a four-family dwelling with James C. Springstead as their builder.<sup>28</sup> Springstead was a native New Yorker.<sup>29</sup> The four-story-plus-basement dwelling held one apartment on each floor and was referred to as a French flat in documentation recording its construction.<sup>30</sup> Documentation by the City's Tenement House Department in 1902 shows that each apartment included a kitchen, dining room, parlor, three bedrooms and a toilet, offering far more spacious amenities than a tenement equivalent.<sup>31</sup>

The Ashley brothers rented out the property after developing it, and tenants of the apartments in

1880 were in relatively affluent occupations, such as a dealer in fancy papers and a book seller.<sup>32</sup> Most were native-born with parents who were also born in the United States, although there was one Prussian head of household and a few second-generation Irish tenants. This was typical of the area in this period. The 1880 census shows middle- and working-class families, both native-born and immigrant, living in the surrounding streets, to the north of the fashionable heart of Chelsea. By 1900 first-generation Irish New Yorkers, as well as native-born, populated 307 West 30th Street, with tenants in jobs ranging from saloon keeper to druggist.<sup>33</sup>

### **Lithuanian Immigration**

Located between Latvia and Poland and bordering the Baltic Sea, Lithuania has a turbulent political history that fueled migration to the United States in the 19th century. Annexed by the Russian Empire in the late 18th century after much political unrest, Lithuania long struggled for statehood.<sup>34</sup> The ruling Russian tsarist government implemented policies designed to Russify Lithuania, such as the 1864 law that made it illegal to publish Lithuanian literature in the Latin alphabet.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, the Lithuanian language was banned in schools and government offices.<sup>36</sup>

Lithuanians have a long history in the United States. The first known Lithuanian in America was Alexander Curcius, a professor, recorded in New Amsterdam in 1659.<sup>37</sup> However large-scale immigration did not occur until the 19th century. A famine in 1867-8 and insurrections against Russian rule in 1863, 1867, and 1868 brought an early wave of Lithuanian immigrants to the United States; most were poor agricultural workers or “socialists and other revolutionaries fleeing a failed uprising against Russian domination in Lithuania and Poland.”<sup>38</sup> Most immigrants came from three provinces in western Lithuania: Kaunas (Kovno), Suvalkija (Suwałki), and Vilnius (Vilna).<sup>39</sup>

A surplus of agricultural workers in Lithuania brought many to America throughout the 19th century, with immigration spiking between 1889 and 1891 during a huge crop failure.<sup>40</sup> Beyond this, the abolition of serfdom, political instability, and an oppressive tsarist regime that introduced compulsory military service in 1874 prompted many to move in the late 19th century.<sup>41</sup> Of these immigrants, a substantial proportion were illiterate, with rates as high as 65 percent in the incoming groups of the 1880s.<sup>42</sup>

In the 1860s Lithuanians tended to congregate with Polish immigrants and did not set up their own organizations.<sup>43</sup> As the scholar Mary E. Kelly puts it, “frequently, immigrants from the first wave had no particularly strong attachment to Lithuania because they saw themselves more as part of a village or family than as citizens of a nation-state.”<sup>44</sup> It took the emerging independence movement of the late 19th century to foment a widespread sense of national identity.<sup>45</sup> By the 1880s immigrants established specifically Lithuanian associations.<sup>46</sup>

During this period there was a pattern of migration whereby more established immigrants would help friends and relatives come to the United States by sending money and offering accommodations once they arrived. The immigrants were mainly bachelors or married men who moved without their families.<sup>47</sup> Though many arrived in New York, and some settled on farms around the city, they often did not stay here, with a substantial number leaving the city for railroad construction and coal mining jobs in Pennsylvania.<sup>48</sup>

It is difficult to accurately judge the number of Lithuanians in the United States in the 19th century because Lithuanians were typically classified as Polish, Russian, or German in immigration statistics until 1899—and sometimes afterward.<sup>49</sup> Lithuania did not declare independence until 1918, making the question of nationality a vexed one well into the 20th

century.

In the first decades of the 20th century, large numbers of Lithuanian immigrants arrived in the United States, as economic and political instability continued in Lithuania, along with forced conscription.<sup>50</sup> Between 1899 and 1914, roughly one-third of immigrants were women, often making the journey because their husbands had sent for them after establishing themselves in America.<sup>51</sup> Before and during World War I, Lithuanian Americans were a significant force in agitating for an independent Lithuanian nation. They sent money to nationalist leaders in Lithuania who advocated for the country's independence and supported the nationalist press and various underground societies. Finally in 1918 Lithuania declared independence and in 1922—after lobbying from immigrant groups, including prominently the Lithuanian Alliance—the United States recognized the nation.<sup>52</sup>

By 1904, there were roughly 15,000 Lithuanians in New York and New Jersey, with many settling in Brooklyn and Long Island City,<sup>53</sup> and by 1920 there were 135,000 foreign-born Lithuanians in the United States, 25 percent of whom were naturalized.<sup>54</sup> A 1925 newspaper article detailed New York City's Lithuanian community.<sup>55</sup> Most lived in Williamsburg and Greenpoint, Brooklyn, as well as in Maspeth, Queens. They worked in sugar and oil refineries, soap and match factories, and foundries, and additionally as tailors and longshoremen. About 85 percent were laborers and 15 percent were professionals. Women made up part of the labor force, with immigrants working in the garment trade and as domestic workers and waitresses, while second-generation women tended to be bookkeepers and stenographers, indicating the class mobility achieved by Lithuanian immigrants.<sup>56</sup>

After the 1924 Immigration Act, which drastically reduced legal immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe as well as the Baltic states,

Lithuanian immigration was practically prohibited until the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, which allowed approximately 36,000 Lithuanians to immigrate.<sup>57</sup> These immigrants differed in socioeconomic background from the first wave of immigrants as they were largely professionals fleeing the Soviet regime.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, increasingly assimilated second- and third-generation Lithuanian Americans from the first wave were less inclined to form ethnic associations and such organizations dwindled in the post-war period.<sup>59</sup>

### **Early Years of the Lithuanian Alliance**

The Lithuanian Alliance was established in 1886. It emerged out of a growing practice among immigrants of establishing fraternal benefit societies. Immigrants founded these societies to communally address problems that they faced in the United States, banding together to provide sickness and disability insurance for members, as well as support for funeral costs. There were numerous Lithuanian societies scattered across the United States in the late 19th century, and these societies formed an important part of the nascent nationalist movement for Lithuanian independence.<sup>60</sup> Within the Lithuanian community, individuals began suggesting that a national society that joined together these different groups could be beneficial.

At an 1886 meeting of the Lovers of Lithuania Society—an organization founded by nationalist leader Jonas Šliūpas—members considered founding a nationwide alliance that would join together these different local societies. In the same year, the Lithuanian Alliance was established and then incorporated in 1889 for “the purpose of cultivating the spirit of fraternity and practicing the principles of benevolence and charity for the accumulating of funds for sick and disabled members and for the widows and orphans of deceased members.”<sup>61</sup> At this point the Alliance comprised roughly 400 members.<sup>62</sup>

The Alliance began publishing books in the

early 1890s that aimed to both educate members about the United States and foster their connection to Lithuania. As part of this effort, they published Lithuanian authors whose works were proscribed in Lithuania under the Russian government. Alongside these cultural activities, the Alliance also helped new immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, aiding them in navigating their new country.<sup>63</sup>

Although an alliance in name, the Lithuanian Alliance was divided by tensions in its early years, initially between nationalists, who wanted to fight for Lithuanian independence, and Polonists, who were in favor of continuing to have joint Polish-Lithuanian organizations and who did not prioritize the establishment of separate Lithuanian alliances. The nationalists prevailed, with nationalist advocate Father Alexander Burba becoming president in 1889.<sup>64</sup> Jonas Šliūpas' anti-clericalism led to his expulsion from the Alliance and created disagreements between Catholic members who wanted the Alliance to primarily be a religious organization, and nationalists who wanted it to focus on the cause of Lithuanian independence.<sup>65</sup> At a 1901 convention an explosive split occurred between the two groups and in 1906, Catholic members incorporated as a separate society, leaving the nationalists to lead the Alliance.<sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile the Russian Revolution of 1905 intensified the efforts of Lithuanian Americans in agitating for an independent Lithuanian nation.<sup>67</sup> In 1905 a Grand Congress consisting of more than 2,000 delegates met in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, and issued demands to the Russian Tsarist government for “political autonomy for Lithuania, the establishment of Lithuanian language schools and local government.”<sup>68</sup>

Jonas Šliūpas and Father Jonas Žilinskas (president of the Alliance from 1894 to 1898) organized a conference in Philadelphia in 1906 and Šliūpas spoke. The attendees supported the Grand Congress' demands for Lithuanian autonomy and

began to fundraise for the nationalist efforts.<sup>69</sup>

In this period the Lithuanian Alliance was growing and began looking for a building to house its headquarters.<sup>70</sup> After considering sites in Brooklyn and as far afield as Boston, they purchased the building on West 30th Street from the Ashleys in 1910, for its relative proximity to Ellis Island. No. 307 West 30th Street also became an extremely convenient site due to its accessibility to Pennsylvania Station, which was located a block away and opened shortly after the Alliance purchased the building.<sup>71</sup> The Alliance then set up the printing press in the basement, used the first floor as a reception area, the second floor as offices, and the third and fourth floors were retained as apartments. Notably, the 1920 census shows that Lithuanian newspaper staff lived in one of the apartments in the building, likely employees of the Alliance's newspaper, *Tevyne (Fatherland)*.<sup>72</sup>

## **The Lithuanian Alliance from World War I to World War II**

The Lithuanian Alliance continued to advocate for Lithuanian independence during the 1910s, led by Pranas Živatkauskas and then S. Gegužis. Jonas Šliūpas remained active in Lithuanian American circles and wrote in 1916, “From a political viewpoint, the SLA [Lithuanian Alliance] performs excellent work, unifying all elements and ideologies. Here one finds the nationalist, socialist, clerical, and liberal coming together... Here the ideals of Lithuanianism are developed.”<sup>73</sup> The organization played an important role in cultivating the Lithuanian American connection to Lithuania.

The Alliance took on a prominent role in advocating for statehood for Lithuania in this period of global unrest. During the course of World War I, Lithuania's political status changed, and by 1916 Germany occupied the territory. At this time famine and disease were rife. Lithuanian leaders went to the German occupiers with proposals for a free Lithuania,

but made scant progress. Lithuanian Americans also organized funds to support Lithuanians and the nationalist cause throughout the war.<sup>74</sup>

In 1918 Lithuania finally declared independence. The Alliance raised funds to support the new nation.<sup>75</sup> These funds were particularly important in post-war reconstruction.<sup>76</sup> By the late 1920s and into the 1930s, tensions emerged again between the various factions in the Alliance, and the Alliance faced financial difficulties as well as a drop in membership during the Depression. Most notably the Communist wing, which was dissatisfied with the direction of the organization, tried to disrupt the operations of the Alliance.<sup>77</sup> During the Depression and onset of World War II the Alliance remained dedicated to disseminating news and literature to the Lithuanian American community and to agitating for Lithuanian independence. In 1939, part of Lithuania was occupied by Germany, and then in 1940 Soviet forces occupied the nation. At their annual convention the Alliance condemned the Soviets and called for Lithuanian Americans to fight for Lithuanian independence.<sup>78</sup>

The Alliance continued to lease the apartments above the offices. The 1930 census shows an Italian midwife rented out rooms in her apartment to waiters and a cook, while the other apartment was occupied by an American salesman and his family. By 1940 only one family was recorded as living at 307 West 30th Street, with members working as a superintendent and a bookkeeper.<sup>79</sup>

## The Lithuanian Alliance After World War II

During the post-World War II period the Alliance campaigned for the restoration of independence for Lithuania, which was then under Soviet occupation. It also supported newly arrived immigrants leaving the Soviet state.<sup>80</sup>

With the decline in Lithuanian immigration and the increasing assimilation of Lithuanian

Americans, membership decreased from 14,855 in 1944 to 8,663 in 1969.<sup>81</sup> As Medicare and health insurers increasingly provided health insurance to Lithuanian Alliance members, the Alliance shifted its focus from providing health benefits toward philanthropy and culture. In 1976, the organization undertook interior renovations of 307 West 30th Street to permit larger gatherings at its headquarters.<sup>82</sup>

Lithuanian independence from the Soviet Union was achieved in the early 1990s and the Alliance supported the new republic in various ways, including by sending much-needed medical supplies. A convention was held in 2012 that established new by-laws, transferred the remaining insurance policies, and amended the Charter, changing the organization's operations and diminishing administrative costs. In the following years, 307 West 30th Street was used for cultural events of various types, which remains its primary function.<sup>83</sup>

## *Tevyne (Fatherland)*

The Lithuanian Alliance's newspaper started in Plymouth, Pennsylvania in January 1896 as a 32-page monthly magazine circulated to members for free.<sup>84</sup> It was first edited by Father Jonas Žilinskas who wrote that, "Our pages will be full of ardent love for our unfortunate fatherland Lithuania... We will be Americans because we eat bread here, and Lithuanians because we come from over there. We'll strive to build up a Lithuania in America so it will help build up our true and only fatherland on the shores of the Nemunas."<sup>85</sup> It became a key outlet for the Lithuanian diaspora and a way to connect Lithuanian Americans to Lithuania. *Tevyne* published well-known figures, such as the nationalist leader Jonas Basanavičius and the poet Adam Mickevičius.

In 1900 the newspaper was published on a weekly basis and stopped publishing between 1902 and 1908 before being revived in Boston.<sup>86</sup> Around the time that the Alliance purchased the building in

New York City in 1910 the paper moved its printing press into the basement and operated from there. *Tevyne* covered news about the lodges and member activities, as well as news about Lithuania. Between 1917 and 1919 there was a short-lived supplement focused on topics thought to be of interest to women and children.<sup>87</sup>

The newspaper continued publication throughout World War II and through the post-war period until the 1970s. In 1971 the Alliance headquarters was burgled and important machines related to *Tevyne*'s printing operations were taken. This caused the printing to move from Midtown to Brooklyn.<sup>88</sup> It temporarily ceased publication in 1972. *Tevyne* was subsequently revived and is now an online newsletter available on the Alliance's website.<sup>89</sup>

### **Later History of the Building**

The Lithuanian Alliance altered 307 West 30th Street in 1976 as part of a "modernization" plan that involved the facade being painted white and the addition of metal panels at the ground story, which entailed removing the lintels above the windows and the door surround. Under the guidance of preservation architect Dean Koga, the Lithuanian Alliance removed these panels in 2018 and restored the historical features, restoring the appearance of the building as it was first constructed. The National Register recognized the historical importance of 307 West 30th Street and listed the building in 2022.

### **Conclusion**

The Lithuanian Alliance building exemplifies the significant history of Lithuanian activity in New York City. The Lithuanian Alliance played an essential role in aiding immigrants, ranging from those recently arrived at Ellis Island to those with a longer tenure in the country. Using its basement printing press the organization spread news and information nationally,

fostering shared cultural identity among the diasporic Lithuanian community in the United States. Located in a neo-Grec building that evokes the time of its construction in the late 19th century, the Lithuanian Alliance has owned 307 West 30th Street for over a century, using it as their headquarters and creating an important hub for Lithuanian culture that continues to operate today.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Excepting the final two paragraphs, this section is drawn from Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Lamartine Place Historic District Designation Report (LP-2324)*, prepared by Virginia Kurshan and Theresa Noonan (New York: City of New York, 2009), 3-6.

<sup>2</sup> This language is drawn from LPC, *Barbey Building Designation Report (LP-2687)*, prepared by Marianne Hurley (New York: City of New York, 2025), 8.

<sup>3</sup> LPC, *West Chelsea Historic District Designation Report (LP-2302)*, prepared by Christopher D. Brazee and Jennifer L. Most (New York: City of New York, 2009), 6.

<sup>4</sup> For a description of Thomas B. Clarke's selling and development of his land, with a focus on the westernmost area between 10th and 12th Avenues, see LPC, *West Chelsea Historic District Designation Report*, 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel White Patterson, *The Poet of Christmas Eve, The Life of Clement Clarke Moore* (New York: Morehouse-Gorham, Co., 1956), 44-77.

<sup>6</sup> *Evening Post*, April 2, 1846, reported in I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909* (New York: Robert Dodd, 1928) v. 5, 1797.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham, A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 854.

<sup>8</sup> The first such group in New York was on Bleecker Street, one block south of fashionable Bond Street, between Mercer and Greene Streets. Builder Isaac G. Pearson constructed two rows of fine houses on both sides of the street in 1826 and named them for Jacob LeRoy. Built in a simple Federal style with showy granite fronts, these houses were set back a uniform distance from the street and provided with small front yards, making the street feel wider and giving it a sense of grandeur. This development was followed by Depau Row, built in 1829-30 by merchant Francis Depau, and the Greek Revival style Colonnade Row built in 1832-3 and attributed to Seth Greer.

<sup>9</sup> Patterson, *The Poet of Christmas Eve*, 155.

<sup>10</sup> Clifton Hood, *722 Miles: The Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York* (Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins University Press, 2004), 49.

<sup>11</sup> "Hudson Guild Records, 1896-1900s Finding Aid," Findingaids.Library.Columbia.edu, accessed 02/10/2026, <https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/archives/cul-6930622>.

<sup>12</sup> *Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Manhattan* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1911), plate 18.

<sup>13</sup> United States Census Records, 1910.

<sup>14</sup> "Middle West Side," *The WPA Guide to New York City* (1939; Random House: New York, 1982), 145.

<sup>15</sup> In addition to his residential work Edward E. Ashley developed one loft building in the Tribeca West Historic District, see LPC, *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report (LP-1713)*, prepared by Betsy Bradley, Virginia Kurshan, David Breiner, Kevin McHugh, and Margaret M. M. Pickart (New York: City of New York, 1991), 82-83 and 347.

<sup>16</sup> United States Census Records, 1910

<sup>17</sup> United States Census Records, 1855, and "Mary Josephine Queripel Ashley Howell," Findagrave.com, accessed 2/12/2026, [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154914246/mary\\_josephine-ashley\\_howell](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154914246/mary_josephine-ashley_howell).

<sup>18</sup> From Samuel J. Ashley, Irene V. Ashley, Edward E. Ashley, and Martha I. Ashley to Lithuanian Alliance of America. Office of the Register, New York County, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 156, p. 267 (May 3, 1910) and "Latest Dealings in Realty Field." *New York Times*, April 17, 1910, D6. In 1872 Queripel also owned 304 West Thirtieth Street. "Alterations in Buildings," *New York Times*, March 29, 1872, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 62. Note that although the term tenement legally meant any multi-family dwelling that housed three or more families living separately who each had cooking facilities, which technically encompassed most apartment houses, the term took on associations with the working class. In the social imaginary, a tenement called to mind housing, often substandard, for the poor. Plunz, *A History of Housing*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> United States Census Records, 1880.

<sup>21</sup> LPC, *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report*, 347.

<sup>22</sup> LPC, *Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District*

*Designation Report (LP-2064)*, prepared by Matthew A. Postal and Donald G. Presa (New York: City of New York, 2000), 93, 95-96, 105-106, and 107-108.

<sup>23</sup> United States Census Records, 1910

<sup>24</sup> This section is drawn from LPC, *Central Harlem – West 130th-132nd Streets Historic District Designation Report*, prepared by Theresa Noonan and Barrett Reiter (New York: City of New York, 2018), 9-11.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstone* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 125, 225.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> From Samuel J. Ashley, Irene V. Ashley, Edward E. Ashley, and Martha I. Ashley to Lithuanian Alliance of America. Office of the Register, New York County, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 156, p. 267 (May 3, 1910) and “Latest Dealings in Realty Field.” *New York Times*, April 17, 1910, D6.

<sup>28</sup> “Latest Dealings in Realty Field.” *New York Times*, April 17, 1910, D6, and Detailed Statement of Specifications for New Buildings, September 16, 1876, Block 754 and Lot 34 Folder, Municipal Archives.

<sup>29</sup> United States Census Records, 1870.

<sup>30</sup> Detailed Statement of Specifications for the Erection of Buildings, 1876, Block 754 and Lot 34 Folder, Municipal Archives; Report of Inspector, March 1, 1877, Block 754 and Lot 34 Folder, Municipal Archives; and 1876-600, N.Y.C. Department of Buildings, New Building Applications, Manhattan, 1874-1880, 157.

<sup>31</sup> I-Card, 307 West 30th Street, 1902, Department of Buildings.

<sup>32</sup> United States Census Records, 1880. Note that of the seven families recorded as living at this address it is likely that three lived in the wood frame building found in the rear yard. The census doesn’t differentiate between the front and rear buildings. Cross-referencing the census with the city’s directories shows that families with breadwinners in lower-paid jobs, such as the porter, Thomas Blake, lived in the rear building while those in the higher paid jobs, such as dealer in fancy papers, Andrew Blum, lived in the main building. See *Trow’s New York City Directory, 1881*. 129, 135, 129.

<sup>33</sup> United States Census Records, 1900

<sup>34</sup> Lithuania had close ties to Poland for centuries, establishing the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569 which was then absorbed by the Russian Empire in 1795. Arunas Ališauskas, “Lithuanians,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, edited by Stephan Thernstrom

(Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1980), 665.

<sup>35</sup> This law was in place until 1904.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph S. Roucek, *American Lithuanians* (New York: Lithuanian Alliance of America, 1940), 9.

<sup>37</sup> Alfonsas Eidintas, *Lithuanian Emigration to the United States, 1868-1950* (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2005), 19.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 10; Joseph Slabey Roucek, “Lithuanian Immigrants in America,” *American Journal of Sociology* 41, No. 4 (January 1936), 447; and Vladimir Werstman, “Lithuanians,” *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, edited by Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 757.

<sup>39</sup> Ališauskas, “Lithuanians,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 665.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>41</sup> Roucek, *American Lithuanians*, 6 and Kelly, “Lithuanian Americans,” 854.

<sup>42</sup> Alfred Erich Senn and Alfonsas Eidintas. “Lithuanian Immigrants in America and the Lithuanian National Movement before 1914,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 6 (2) 1987, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Eidintas, *Lithuanian Emigration to the United States, 1868-1950*, 92.

<sup>44</sup> Mary E. Kelly, “Lithuanian Americans,” *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*, edited by Richard T. Schaefer (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2008), 855.

<sup>45</sup> The scholar Arunas Ališauskas notes that there was an incipient cultural nationalism within Lithuania earlier in the 19th century, because of Russian attempts to convert Lithuanian Catholics to Russian Orthodoxy and suppress the language. But the growing nationalist movement developed in the 1880s and the modern concept of nationalism became widespread by the 1900s. See, Ališauskas, “Lithuanians,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 666-8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 668.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 667.

<sup>48</sup> Eidintas, *Lithuanian Emigration to the United States, 1868-1950*, 75.

<sup>49</sup> Kelly, “Lithuanian Americans,” 855.

<sup>50</sup> Eidintas, *Lithuanian Emigration to the United States, 1868-1950*, 57.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>52</sup> Ališauskas, “Lithuanians,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 673.

<sup>53</sup> Roucek, *American Lithuanians*, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Eidintas, *Lithuanian Emigration to the United States, 1868-1950*, 101.

<sup>55</sup> Jean Piper, “30,000 Boro Lithuanians Toy with Their Beads and Long for Trees of Homeland,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 22, 1925, 9.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Kelly, “Lithuanian Americans,” 856.

<sup>58</sup> Ališauskas, “Lithuanians,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 665.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 675.

<sup>60</sup> Vytautas Širvydas, Antanas Diržys, and Algirdas M. Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English [1886-1976]*, (New York: Lithuanian Alliance of America, 1976), 471.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 478.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.

<sup>63</sup> Lithuanian Alliance, “SLA Social History for New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation” (unpublished text), 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> Širvydas, Diržys, and Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English*, 479-480.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 483-85 and 491-2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 496-500.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 502.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 503.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 503.

<sup>70</sup> “30th Street,” *Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, April 23, 1910, 881.

<sup>71</sup> Širvydas, Diržys, and Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English*, 507.

<sup>72</sup> United States Census Records, 1920. Note that five families are recorded as living at 307 West 30th Street, although the rear building isn’t noted, it’s likely that two families lived in the main building and three in the rear.

<sup>73</sup> Širvydas, Diržys, and Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English*, 519.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 520-521.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 530-531.

<sup>76</sup> Ališauskas, “Lithuanians,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 673.

<sup>77</sup> Širvydas, Diržys, and Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English*, 533-535. Eventually the political moderates prevailed, and Communist members established their own organization, the Association of Lithuanian Workers. *Lithuanian Alliance of America*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2022, 13.

<sup>78</sup> Širvydas, Diržys, and Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English*, 548.

<sup>79</sup> United States Census Records, 1930 and 1940.

<sup>80</sup> Širvydas, Diržys, and Budreckis, *History of the Lithuanian Alliance and its Condensation in English*, 556.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 556 and 559.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 487.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 487-8.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 488.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 551.

<sup>88</sup> Lithuanian Alliance, “SLA Social History for New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation,” 7.

<sup>89</sup> *Lithuanian Alliance of America*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2022, 19.

# Findings and Designation

## Lithuanian Alliance Building

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Lithuanian Alliance Building has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City, state, and the nation.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Lithuanian Alliance Building and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 754, Lot 34 as its Landmark Site, as shown in the attached map.



**Lithuanian Alliance Building, 307 West 30th Street**

Sarah Eccles, March 2026



**Lithuanian Alliance Building**  
Sarah Eccles, March 2026



**Lithuanian Alliance Building**  
Sarah Eccles, March 2026



**Lithuanian Alliance Building**  
Sarah Eccles, March 2026



**Lithuanian Alliance Building**  
Sarah Eccles, March 2026

