SELF-GUIDED TOUR

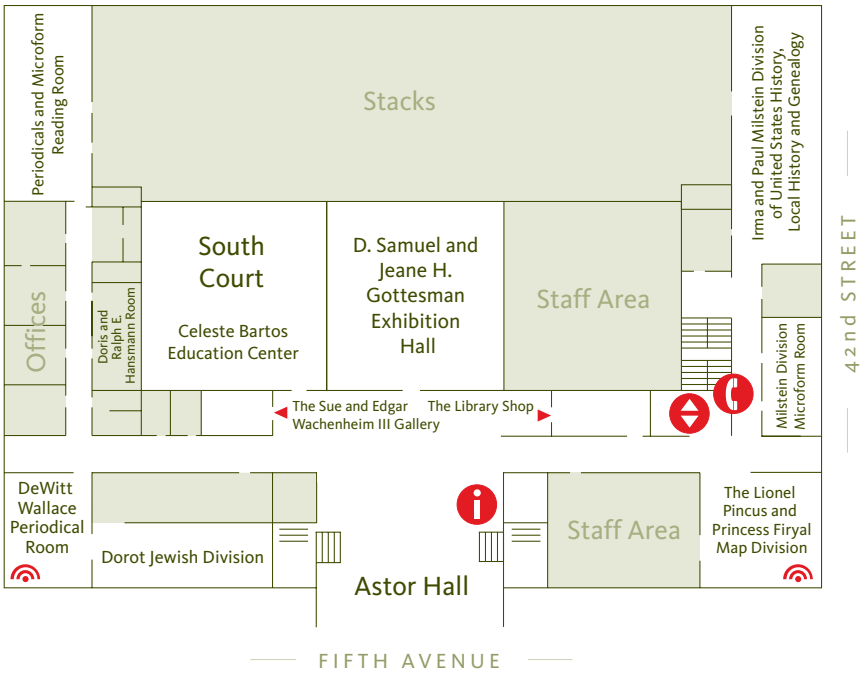
DISCOVER THE STEPHEN A. SCHWARZMAN BUILDING

Welcome to The New York Public Library's **Stephen A. Schwarzman Building** at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.

The building you are standing in opened its doors to the public on May 23, 1911. It took 16 years to design and complete and was the largest marble building ever built in the United States when it opened.

FIRST-FLOOR HIGHLIGHTS

Let's start our tour in Astor Hall.
As you take this self-guided tour, consider how the Library works to fulfill its mission: to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities.



Astor Hall is also known as Benefactors Hall

- *Why do you think it was given this title?*
- *What other names can you find in this hall?*
- *Would you donate $400,000? What about $2 million?*
- *Where would you donate your money?*

Look Around You:

Look at the style of architecture. *What do you notice?*

This room has many elements of symmetry, nature, and symbolism. What are some examples of these elements you can find in this room?

Did You Know?

The Library is designed in the **Beaux-Arts** (pronounced *BOZE-ar*) architectural style. **Beaux-Arts** combines Classical structures with Renaissance art and style. What other buildings remind you of the Library's architecture?

Meet the Architects

After a competition with 80 national and international firms, the architects John Merven Carrère and Thomas Hastings won the commission to build the Library. Both architects were trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris–the most important school for architects at that time!

- *Look at the picture. Do you recognize the building model in the background?*
- *What would your workshop look like?*
- *Imagine your dream library. What architectural designs would you include?*

A Building Inside a Building

Walk across Astor Hall, away from the main entrance and toward the **South Court.** With your back to the main entrance, you will see a walkway that leads to a modern-looking area of the Library slightly toward your left. As you cross this walkway, stop for a moment and look down.

- *Can you see the foundation stones?*
- *How are these stones different from the surrounding marble?*

Where you are standing is the first above-ground structure to be added to the building since 1911. It was added in 2002.

The Library was built on the site of the old Croton Reservoir. Some stones from the foundation of the reservoir were used to construct the Library.

Meet the Founders

James Lenox (1800–1880)
inherited a family-owned business (you may have also heard about him from Lenox Hill Hospital). He built his own library on Fifth Avenue in the East 70s, now home to the Frick Art Reference Library.

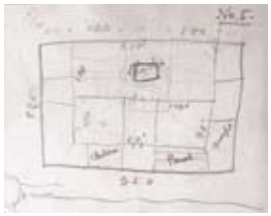
John Jacob Astor (1763–1848)
was once considered the wealthiest man in America. In his will, he pledged $400,000 to establish the first private free library housed downtown on Lafayette Street (near Astor Place), now the home of the Joseph Papp Public Theater.

Samuel Jones Tilden (1814–1866)
was a railroad attorney and served as governor of New York from 1875 to 1877. In 1870, he ran for President and lost to Rutherford B. Hayes. He won the popular vote but lost the electoral vote. He donated $2 million to the Library (a large sum at the time).

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

The Library's floor plan was sketched on a postcard in 1897 by John Shaw Billings, The New York Public Library's first Director. As the postcard shows, both the northern and southern courtyards were in place from the start.

- *What would you sketch on the back of a postcard?*



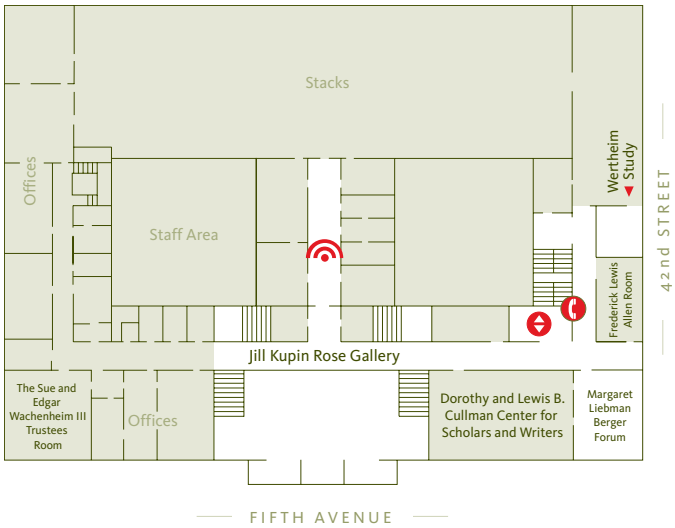
Where Are the Books?

Great question! Go to the back wall of the South Court–down the narrow hallway, past the theater. At the end of the hall, you'll see a glass wall through which you can glimpse the book-storage area known as the "stacks."

There are seven floors of stacks under the Library. There are even books under Bryant Park! Altogether, there are 88 miles of shelf space in the building, including 40 miles under Bryant Park. The Library was declared a National Historic Landmark and so cannot alter its basic structure. Therefore, it must add space by digging down or sideways or by moving its collections to off-site storage locations. The stacks also provide structural support for the building.

SECOND-FLOOR HIGHLIGHTS

Let's explore the Jill Kupin Rose Gallery on the second floor. Exit the South Court area and walk back to Astor Hall. Walk up either the left- or right-hand set of stairs near the main entrance. After one flight of stairs, you will see a gallery that looks like the image to the right.



While on the second floor, face the main entrance. The display nearest the left staircase, on the wall overlooking Astor Hall, has some interesting information. Search for these images:

Find this picture in the case. What does it show? When was it published?

Have you ever used a card catalog? What would you use to find a book today?

Did You Know?

Horses were frequent visitors to the Library's open-air southern courtyard, because that is where deliveries were made. Books requested by the public and materials needed for the daily running of the library were delivered here as well. Beneath a covered driveway on 40th Street, people could tie up their horses and let them drink at a water trough.

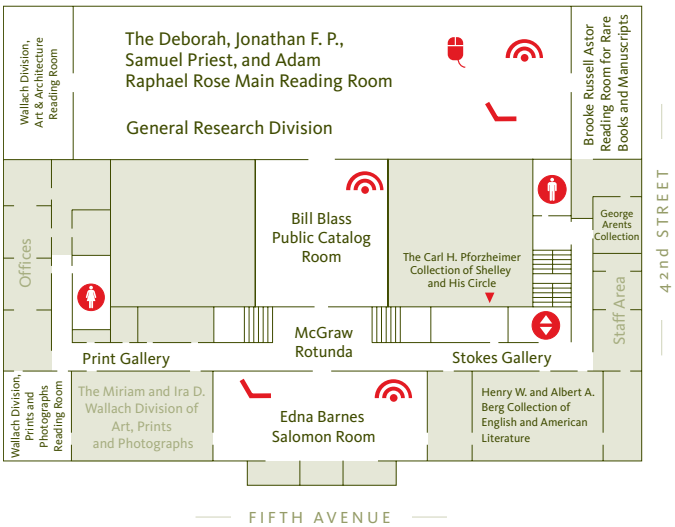
From the second floor, face the main entrance. The display nearest the left staircase, on the wall overlooking Astor Hall, has some interesting information. Search for these objects:

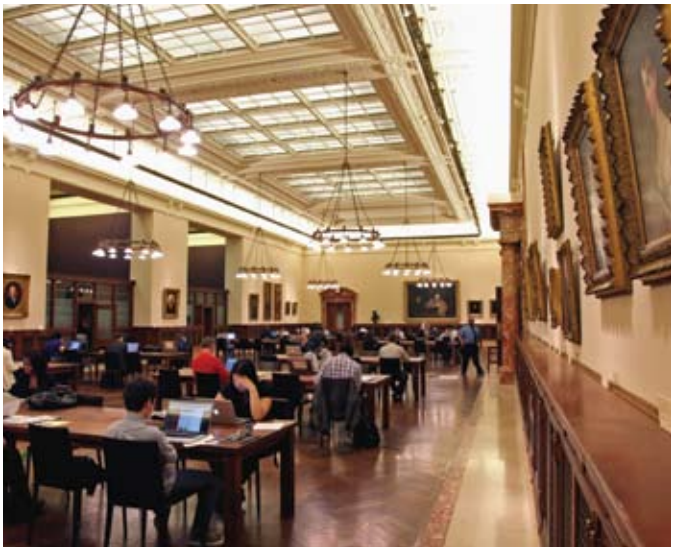
Can you find something with George Washington's signature? Can you find a copy of *Sponsor* magazine?

Can you find a book of poems by Phillis Wheatley? Can you find sheet music?

THIRD-FLOOR HIGHLIGHTS

Once you are done exploring the second floor, continue up the stairs on either the left or right side of the hall. You should now be in the McGraw Rotunda. Pause for a moment and look at the artwork on the walls, ceiling, and above the doorways.





McGraw Rotunda

Take a look at the paintings on the walls and ceiling. Edward Lanning painted these murals and lunettes (pronounced *loo-NET*) between 1938 and 1942. The lunettes are painted in the arches above the doorways.

- *What do you notice about these paintings?*
- *Look at the painting with the boy and then look at the man. What similarities do you see?*
- *If you could paint a third picture what would it be?*

Look Up:

- *What Greek myths do you know?*
- *What is the man holding in his hand?*
- *This painting is the story of Prometheus. He disobeyed Zeus and gave fire to humans. For this, he was severely punished.*
- *Why might the artist have chosen to paint Prometheus here in the Library?*

Look Around:

- *Each of the murals shows a story in the history of writing.*
- *Why do you think the artist chose to paint these four murals?*
- *What would you choose to paint?*

Edna Barnes Salomon Room

This is a Wi-Fi reading room. Laptops are provided free of charge to Library patrons for 45-minute sessions. Remember to be quiet if you go inside; people are working. The room was originally designed as a picture gallery. On the walls of this room you will find paintings of famous people, including George Washington!

Print Gallery and Stokes Gallery

If you are facing the Edna Barnes Salomon Room, you may notice artwork, prints, or photographs in the hallways to your left and right. Take a moment to explore the current exhibition.

Bill Blass Public Catalog Room

Across the hall from the Wi-Fi reading room is the Bill Blass Public Catalog Room. You can use a computer to look things up. If you find something you want to see, you can fill out a request form (known as a "call slip") and take it to the desk in the next room. Sorry, you cannot check out books from this part of the Library; you must do your research here. This way, the special books, manuscripts, art, music, and all the other collections can receive the special care they need and remain available for everyone at all times.

Pneumatic Tubes

Do you remember the pneumatic-tube system you learned about on the second floor? Walk toward the entrance of the Main Reading Room. Look at the section of the main desk nearest the Main Reading Room entrance. Can you match the picture? Pneumatic-tube systems were once used by post offices to transport telegraphs over short distances and in banks to transport money to nearby tellers.

Main Reading Room. Lantern slide, ca. 1911–20. New York Public Library Archives.

Deborah, Jonathan F. P., Samuel Priest, and Adam Raphael Rose Main Reading Room

At the entrance to this room, you can usually find one of the most famous and valuable books in the world, the **Gutenberg Bible.** This is because it was the first book printed with moveable type. Before this, books were written out by hand, which took a very long time. **The Gutenberg Bible is currently on display in Gottesman Exhibition Hall on the first floor.** Stop by the exhibition and see if you can find it.

The reading room is a quiet zone–please respect the people hard at work on their research and take a look around quietly!

The Rose Main Reading Room, which was completely renovated and restored thanks to the generosity of the Rose family, reopened in November 1998. It is one of the largest rooms in the country without a dome, interior columns, or steel-reinforced walls to support the ceiling. The room's dimensions are almost the size of an entire football field! The ceiling is 51 feet high.

- ***Look Up:*** *Why do you suppose the architects designed such a high ceiling? What does it symbolize?*
- ***Imagine:*** *What did the architects have in mind when they designed the Library? Why do you think they placed the reading rooms on the third floor?*
- ***Think About It:*** *What noises can you hear at street level? What noises do you hear on the third floor?*
- ***Look Down:*** *How old do you think the floor tiles are?* (Hint: They are the same age as the Lbrary.)

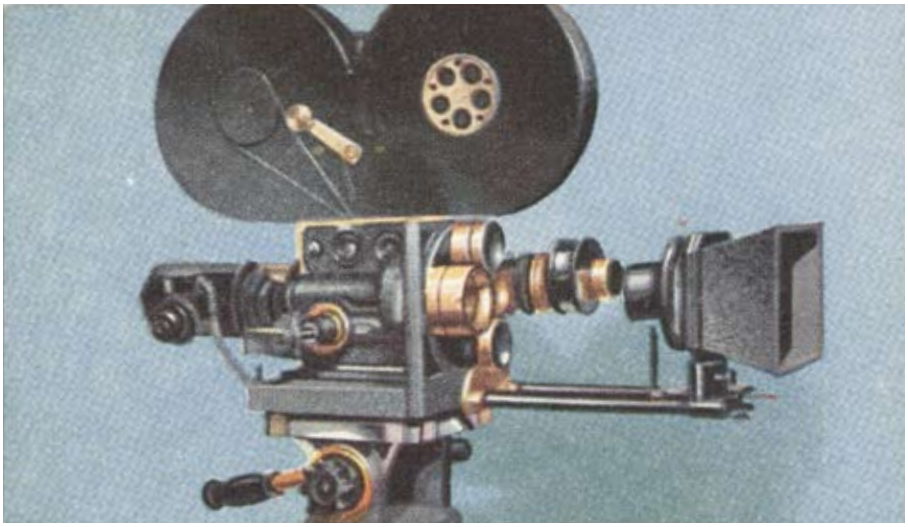
Fun Facts

- The marble floors of the Library were deemed so hard that in 1911 all employees were supplied with rubber-soled shoes, a fact which the manufacturer quickly used in its advertising.
- The building was originally heated by coal, needing more than 20 tons a day; the resultant coal ash had to be carted away daily.
- Maps reveal that the site where the Library now stands was also the location of a battle that George Washington and his troops fought against the British during the Revolutionary War.
- During World War II, Allied military intelligence used the Map Division to research and prepare battle plans.

Lights! Camera! Action!

If the Main Reading Room looks familiar to you, it could be because you've seen it in a movie. This room was used in a scene in *Ghostbusters* (1984)!

Many films have been shot in the Library, including *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011), *Sex and the City: The Movie* (2008), *Spider-Man 3* (2007), *13 Going on 30* (2004), *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), *Spider-Man* (2002), *Quiz Show* (1994), and many more!



Who Lived in the Hundred Acre Wood?

If you have time, stop into the Children's Center at 42nd Street on the north side of the ground floor of the building to see the much-loved stuffed animals that inspired A. A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh stories.

Top Cats

If you go down the Fifth Avenue steps, say hello to the lions! Their original nicknames were "Leo Astor" and "Leo Lenox," in honor of the Library's founders. In the 1930s, they were nicknamed "Patience" and "Fortitude" by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia. They are still the names we use today.

Research at the Library

The Library is a treasure trove of resources. Go online and visit **www.nypl.org.** Read about the marvelous collections and discover the answers to the following questions:

- *Where can you go to research family history?*
- *Where can you find newspapers and magazines in the Library?*
- *Where can you find a map of New York City that is more than 100 years old?*
- *Where can you find manuscripts by authors such as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain?*
- *Where can you find information about the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and his circle of friends? (Bonus: Who is the author of* Frankenstein? *How is this person connected to Shelley?)*

All this and much more can be found at The New York Public Library! For information about educational programming at NYPL, please visit **www.Teachandlearn.nypl.org.**

FIND THE FUTURE

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY 100 YEARS

Key to Maps

- nonpublic area
- elevator
- telephone
- women's restroom
- men's restroom
- information
- wireless internet
- public internet
- laptop

The New York Public Library's Centennial Festival is made possible through an endowment established by family and friends of the late Richard B. Salomon, and by Bank of America, The Skeel Fund, MetLife Foundation, The Blackstone Charitable Foundation, Asprey, Wells Fargo, Celeste Bartos, *The Wall Street Journal*, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Titan, WABC-TV/Channel 7, Penguin Classics, Engine Yard, and *Gotham Magazine*.

The Library's Teaching & Learning program is made possible by a generous grant from The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation