



## THE **SANDBOX** BLOG

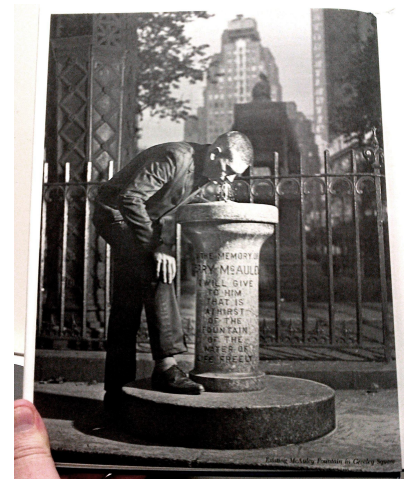
### Historic Drinking Fountain Revival in NYC?

Yesterday found me doing some old fashion sleuth work, pounding the streets of Gotham for another lost, buried or forgotten *historic drinking fountain*. Little did I know that this would land me at a community lunch table at the New York City Rescue Mission with Joe Little, Director of Community Relations. After a plate of Zagat-worthy chicken Florentine from their Lafayette Street soup kitchen (who said there's no such thing as a free lunch!) then checking out their multi-story building expansion project to add 150 new beds for the homeless, We began leafing through archives for old black and white photographic evidence.

This story goes back to 1872 when New York City Rescue Mission was founded by Jerry McAuley, a former Sing Sing inmate transformed into a man with a mission to serve the poor and homeless in New York City. (In our city of constant change it's amazing to find an organization staying 'on-mission' after more than 100 years - and as relevant as ever for growing numbers on the wrong side of our relentless growth-oriented economy. See recent NYC [homeless report](#))

Back to our detective work: Pilot Projects had received a hot tip by a local Google staffer (being the magnet we are for NYC drinking-fountain-lore): Apparently a granite drinking fountain had been erected, roughly turn of the century, in Jerry McAuley's honor in the heart of Manhattan. After finding an old 1950's photo of the fountain claiming to be located at 34th Street and Broadway we headed up to [Greeley Square](#) to see what remained.

We emerged from the Q train at the southern base of the triangular "square." A first pass up and down the main path and McAuley was not to be found. A standard metal NYC drinking fountain on the west side suggested we were too late. But just before giving up hope something caught our eye. Tucked in a corner on the east side was an inconspicuous granite column, basin filled with snow melt serving as a bath for a contented looking pigeon. While the fountain appears to have been relocated from it's original position and is not connected to any water source, its inscription is still clearly visible though now sadly ironic): TO THE MEMORY OF JERRY MCAULEY / I WILL GIVE TO HIM THAT IS ATHIRST OF THE FOUNTAIN OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY - 1913. One hundred years ago exactly. The next question is... how do we get the water flowing freely again. And that's the kind of question Pilot Projects was made for - so stay tuned!



1950's photo of fountain in original Greeley Sq location



A happy pigeon "drinks freely"...





McAuley Fountain as of February 2013 - 100 years after installation

Throughout New York City are numerous historic and monumental drinking fountains celebrating the gift of water in public space. Many of these fountains are non functional or in disrepair. Pilot Projects envisions a restoration and **celebration** of these drinking fountains to showcase NYC's amazing drinking water along with civic sustainability and resilience.



...then reads the sign and reconsiders



NYC Rescue Mission's Joe Little - cold and thirsty



# Historic & Sculptural Drinking Fountains of New York

150 Years of Renowned Water, Beauty and Sustainable Thirst Quenching



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