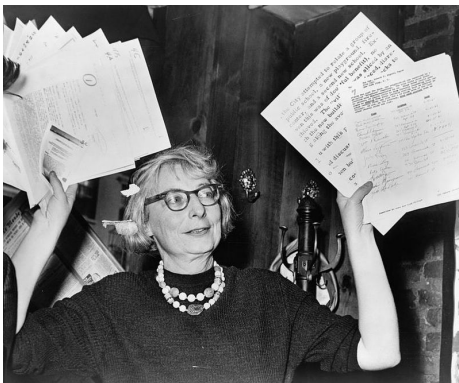




June 2017 Her Story ENewsletter New Yorkers

The recent release of the documentary "Citizen Jane" profiling the influence that journalist and activist Jane Jacobs had on the development of New York City leads her to be profiled in this month's ENewsletter. Another woman who loved New York City and documented its evolution in photographs, Berenice Abbott, joins Jane Jacobs.

A journalist and activist, Jane Jacobs began writing on urban planning and urban blight after she joined the staff of the Architectural Forum in the early 1950s. Her philosophy of the vitality of neighborhoods ran counter to much of the popular thinking of the time and eventually led her into direct conflict with Robert Moses, the powerful planner for New York City who wanted to crisscross New York City with major highways. In 1958, she expressed many of her views in a piece for Fortune magazine titled "Downtown is for People." Although labeled crazy and called even less flattering names, Jacobs was successful in obtaining a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation through which she would examine city planning and urban life in the U.S.



Jane Jacobs

The outgrowth of this grant effort was her famous 1961 book "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" that advanced the provocative theme that cities were about people, not buildings and cars. Dismissed as a housewife with a blunt bob haircut and oversize glasses, she took on Robert Moses to save her house (and garden) and her neighborhood in Greenwich Village, New York City. Amazingly, she won - and her ideas about how cities should be developed continue to receive much attention. As she wrote in her book, "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."



Berenice Abbott

Another woman with ties to Greenwich Village is photographer Berenice Abbott. Born in Ohio, she came to New York City and the Village in 1918. She discovered her love of photography in 1923 while she was in Paris, France, and returned to the U.S. and New York City in 1929. Impressed by the many changes that had occurred during her absence, she began to record the City visually. Her work is displayed at the Smithsonian Institution which describes her New York City photography thusly:

Its sweeping technological innovations, its bridges, its canyonlike streets overtowered by skyscrapers (many of the most famous under construction at that time), its nineteenth-century brownstones and even earlier vestiges of colonial architecture, its littered streets, its hum and vitality, its sparkling transformation at night into a fairyland of light and glitter.

The New Deal's Federal Arts Project agreed in 1935 to sponsor her documentation of New York. The result of her efforts, her 1939 book "Changing New York" is now regarded as a milestone in photography history.

Jane Jacobs and Berenice Abbott are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us. We are pleased to tell women's stories.

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