

Graffiti and vandalism plagued the United States Pavilion from the '64 fair after the park's opening. It was never utilized or maintained and was demolished in 1976.

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous
palaces,
the solemn temples, the great globe itself;
yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve
and like this insubstantial pageant faded,
leave not a wrack behind."

—*The Tempest*, William Shakespeare

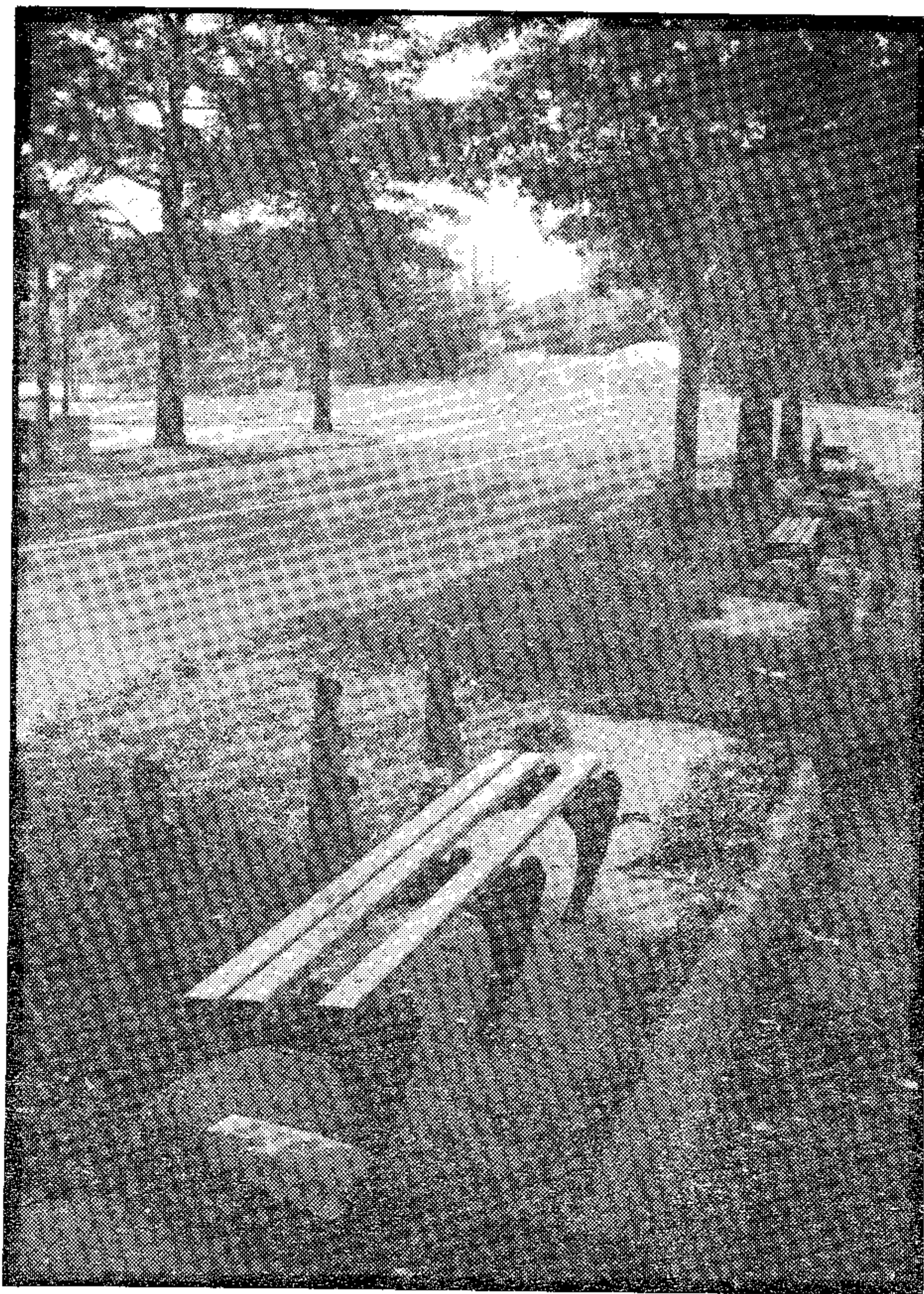
Section 2.3

From the Grass Roots - A New Fair

When Flushing Meadow-Corona Park was opened to the public in 1967, it was a splendid addition to the city's public park system. At 1,258 acres, it is the largest land-area park in the entire city. On a given weekend during the summer, upwards of 100,000 people use the park to play soccer, softball, rugby, bocci, golf and tennis; to picnic, stroll, swim, ice-skate, roller-skate, for kite-flying, row-boating, bike riding and resting.

However, by 1970 problems began to appear at the park—problems that reflected the general woes afflicting the city as a whole. A "Manhattan-oriented bureaucracy" seemed to ignore the concerns of the residents of the four out-lying boroughs. Snow went unshoveled in Queens; garbage went uncollected in Brooklyn, transit was abysmal on Staten Island and a whole community in the South Bronx was allowed to die. At the same time it appeared to many of the citizens of these neighborhoods that Manhattan was a thriving, glittering wonderland receiving the best in city services.

While many of these perceptions were exaggerated, the reality of deteriorating city services became a very real and painful fact of everyday life to the proud people who make up this great city. Parks suffered along with other city services, and so Flushing Meadows was no exception. Grand structures, costing millions of dollars during the 1964-65 fair were left abandoned to decay and fell prey to the elements and vandals. The United States Pavilion, built as a monument to "The Great Society" had become a graffiti-ridden symbol of a national decay. The once proud structure eventually burned and was demolished.

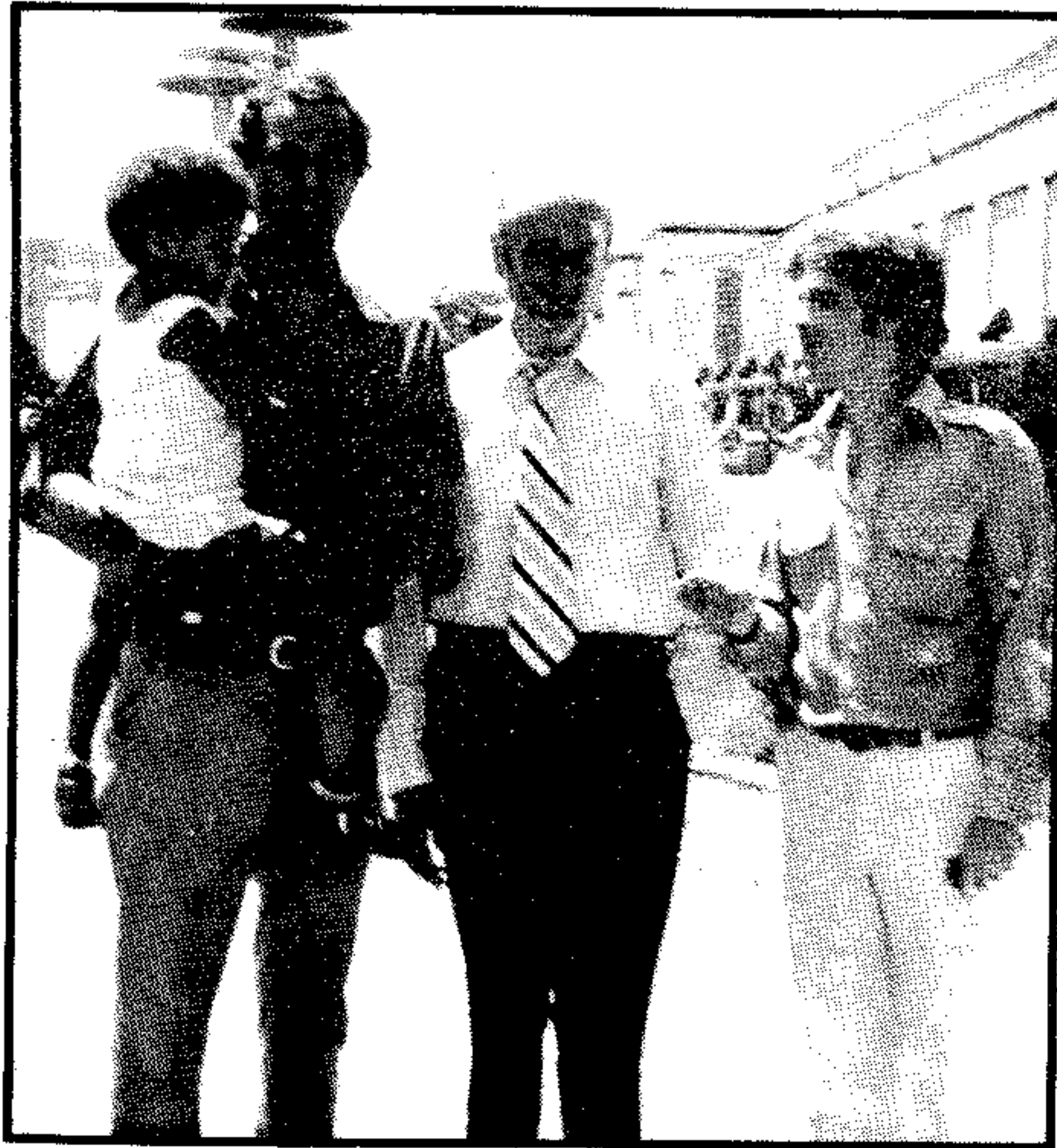


Broken benches in Flushing Meadow Park, 1980.

Broken benches, inoperable water fountains, lights and restrooms became commonplace, as these conditions were becoming in parks throughout the city. Proposals were advanced by the city to inflict schemes upon this park that would never be considered for Central Park in Manhattan, such as a proposal to construct a giant luxury housing and commercial complex over the beautiful Willow Lake wildlife sanctuary that had developed over the years in the south end of the park.

Seeing these type of things happening in the neighborhoods all over the city, local citizens began to demand a voice in the operation of their communities. Community Planning Boards began to grow from mere advisory groups with little power to actual decision-making councils with clout. Volunteer civic leaders made their wishes known to City Hall and government grew more responsive to the neighborhoods. A civic group was formed to act as a watchdog for Flushing Meadows in 1970 and through the cooperation of the local community planning boards that surround the park, and the involvement of the Queens Borough President, many of the negative developments in the park and elsewhere were halted.

Magnificent accomplishments grew out of this citizen-involvement. In 1972, the vacant north half of the old New York City Building from the 1939 Fair was opened as the Queens Museum. (The county of Queens, with a population of two million people had never had its own museum or cultural facility.) The museum, along with a repertory theatre in the old New York State Pavilion made marvelous use of the leftover Fair structures and brought a new cultural life to the borough that had been demeaned for years as "the bedroom of New York" or "Archie Bunker country."

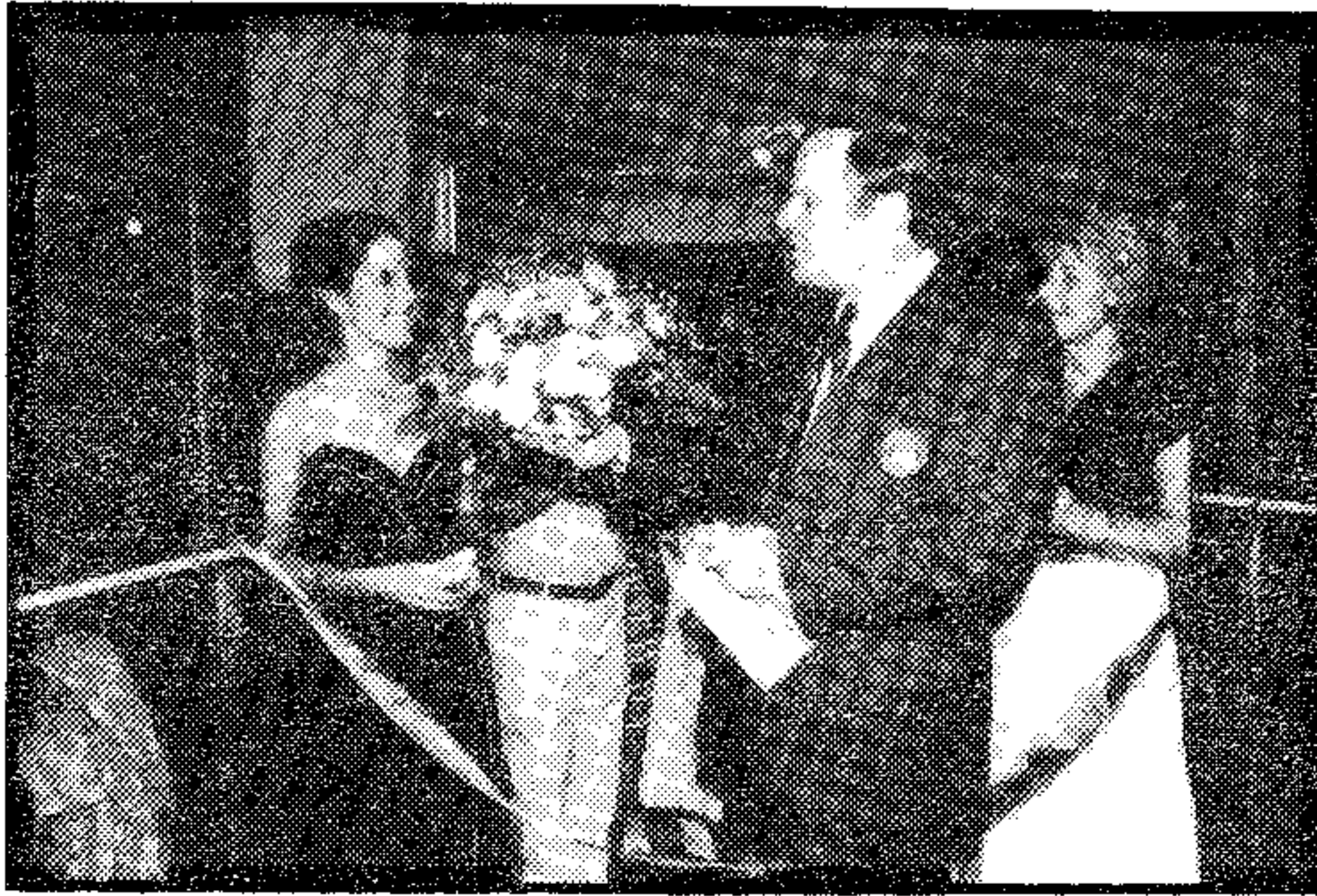


David Oats, president of the Flushing Meadow-Corona Park Association, a local civic action group in a tour of the park with Mayor Edward Koch (center) and Park Commissioner Gordon Davis (holding daughter, left). At right is the N.Y. City Building, in background, the N.Y. State pavilion tower from the 1964 Fair.

But just as these inroads in participatory municipal government were beginning, the fiscal crisis of the '70's hit, forcing massive cutbacks in even the most essential city services, such as police, fire, sanitation, municipal hospitals, and others. "U. S. to N. Y. - Drop Dead" cried the headlines, but the Federal government eventually saw that the plight of its urban centers, particularly the cities of the Northeast and Midwest was a national concern and priority. New York responded by shaping up and putting its financial house in order. After the euphoria of the city's 1976 Bicentennial celebration, the city began the long uphill road to fiscal health.

Mayor Edward Koch talked of "a renaissance for New York," a twelve year rebuilding of the magnificent city. In this context, in 1979, David Oats, a Queens newspaper editor and president of the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park Association, and Peter Byrne, a Flushing resident and businessman, wrote to Mayor Koch suggesting that a World's Fair ten years from then might be the best way for the city to proclaim that 'renaissance.'

In talks with local civic leaders it was felt that a third World's Fair might be the only way that the necessary improvements could be made to finalize the dream of a great recreation cultural complex at Flushing Meadows in the very geographic and population center of the city. The Parks Department had become responsive to the community's desires, however the shortage of city funds prevented major repairs and improvements from taking place. A World's Fair, it was said, might be the answer with an infusion of basically private funding complete the 40 year dream.



Queens Borough President Donald Manes cuts ribbon opening new galleries at the Queens Museum in the N.Y. City Building as museum director Janet Schneider (left) looks on (June 1980).

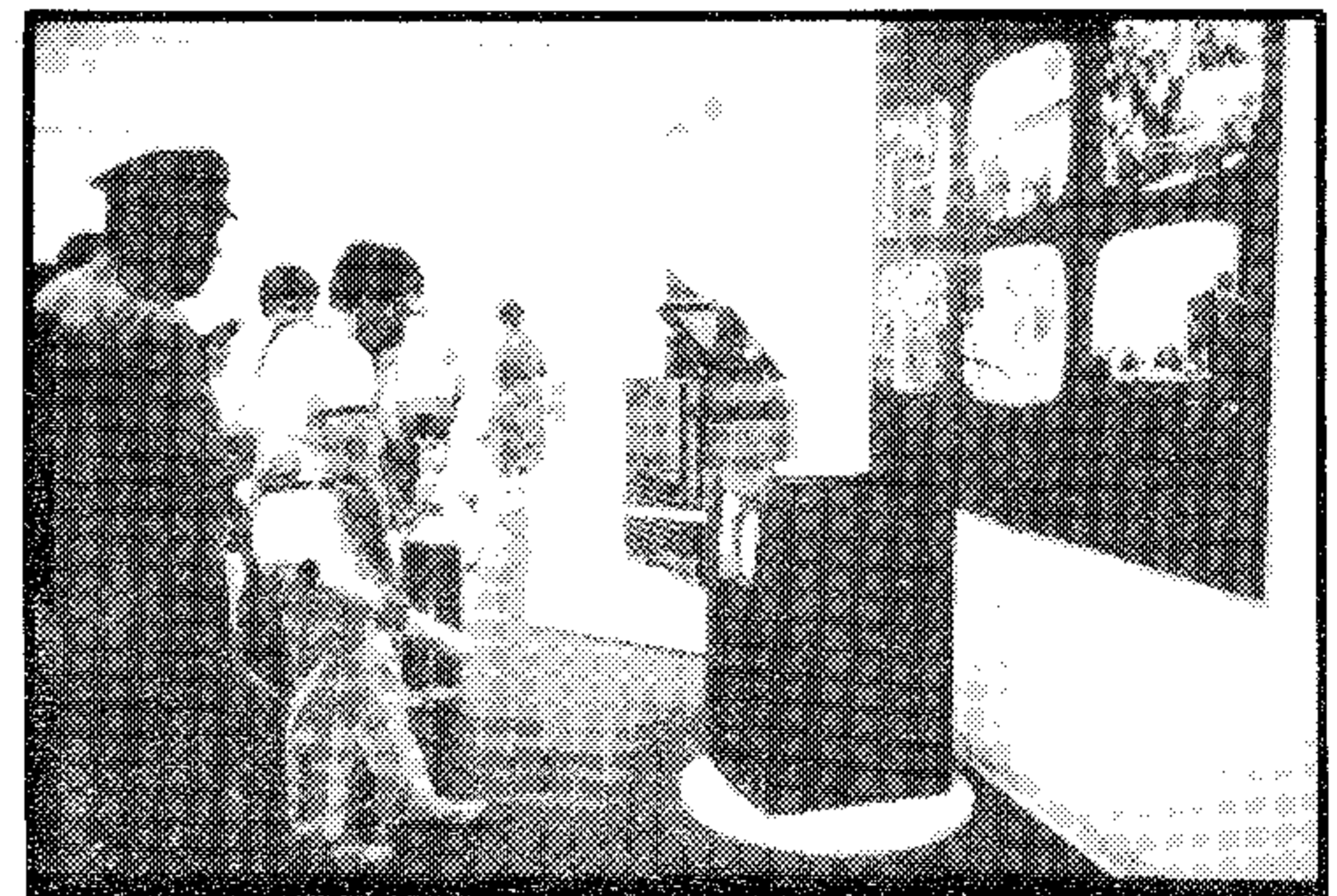


Museum Tour guides show Franklin D. Roosevelt's model of the Trylon and Perisphere during the successful 'Dawn of a New Day' retrospective on the 1939 Fair which was held at the Queens Museum in 1980.

It was June of 1980, however, when the Queens Museum opened its newly expanded galleries with a major exhibition on the 1939 World's Fair, when the talk of a possible future fair grew from idle conversation to enthusiastic action. The museum's retrospective, called "Dawn of a New Day," was a 40th anniversary look back at the phenomenal impact the '39 Fair had on the city, its times and the world. The exhibition was widely praised and an almost universal reaction was registered during its display "Let's Do It Again!"

The older people who had visited that fair were again captivated by the memory of a very special event in their lives. Young people who had not experienced the fair first hand, reacted with equal enthusiasm to the magic that the photos, films, models and memorabilia evoked from that great exposition. These citizens, young and old asked if such an event could once again lift us out of the malaise and despair that afflicts much of society today.

David Oats met with Mayor Koch in his City Hall office in June of 1980 to present the Mayor with the announcement of a Citizens Committee formulated to explore the possibility of an International Exposition for New York. After an expression of the mayor's interest in the idea, the project began.



Queens Museum visitors look on at models of the first TV sets shown at the 1939 World's Fair during the 'Dawn of a New Day' exhibit.

The New York Daily News ran a full page article and editorial about the proposal for a 1989 Fair and asked readers to send in their views and suggestions about the idea. The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of letters, once again from young and old alike, expressed an optimism about the proposal; "it's just what we need," was a common sentiment expressed by the letters. Many of these writers sent novel and interesting suggestions as to what the fair could offer and what it could be all about.

A group of prominent leaders of the local business community came forward and expressed an interest in the fair's potential as a tremendous economic boost for the city. Under the leadership of Joseph French, Economic Development Coordinator for N. Y. Telephone, a meeting was called at Phone Company headquarters where executives of Citibank, Chase Manhattan Bank, Con Edison, Brooklyn Union Gas Company, the Borough President's office, Queens County Business Alliance, the Queens Chamber of Commerce and other major banks and businesses gathered to discuss the proposal. All agreed that the city should not to lose the opportunity to hold an international exposition and that a feasibility study should be undertaken. The Committee for the New York World's Fair 1989 was formed and at the urging of the leaders of the committee and the city's economic development agencies, a preliminary feasibility study was started by the firm of Touche Ross & Co., one of the world's leading public accounting and consulting firms.

Touche Ross had prepared studies for the World's Fairs in Montreal and Seattle, as well as various theme parks and major projects such as the Meadowlands complex for the New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority. The firm had also performed many significant engagements for the City of New York including assisting the City in the reorganization of its financial

policies and systems to restore financial order.

The preliminary study took an extensive overview of the records of previous World's Fairs, from Chicago in 1933 to the plans for the Knoxville fair this year. Voluminous data on finances, attendance, expenses, planning, etc. on seven major fairs was supplied by Peter M. Warner, a noted fair historian and the president of the World's Fair Collectors Society. Touche Ross supplied the Fair Committee with two of its most experienced partners in major project development on a probono basis, to review this material and report back to the committee as to the viability of continuing the process.

The firm came back to the committee with the finding that "our preliminary research suggests that New York City could benefit substantially from a 1989 World's Fair." Through their research, Touche Ross outlined the full scope of the planning process required for an event of this magnitude. A timetable of deadlines and procedures was proposed and preliminary suggestions as to the financial structure of the fair were put forward. (See Appendix)

As a result of the positive report from Touche Ross, the Committee was legally formed as a Not-for-Profit Corporation, under the laws of the State of New York. At a ceremony in the Queens Borough Hall Conference Room, the New York World's Fair 1989 Corporation was incorporated with five initial directors; David Oats, Joseph French, (who had become Senior Vice President of New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Alfred Simon, president of Orth-o-Vision, (a local-based Communications Company), Daniel Koren, executive assistant to the Queens Borough President and Julian Wager, president of the Queens County Business Alliance. Thirteen civic and business leaders became the initial incorporators and the organization was approved by the Secretary of State and the Attorney General of the State of New York.



Some of the organizers of the New York World's Fair 1989 Corporation sign the official papers of incorporation in the Borough President's Conference Room at Queens Borough Hall, 1980. (Standing) Nicholas Garaufis, Julian Wager, Henry Auffarth, Joseph French, (vice president of the New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry and vice-president of the Fair Corporation) Dennis Donnelly and Al Simon. (Seated) Daniel Koren and David Oats (Fair President).

On April 3, 1981, Supreme Court Justices Joseph Kunzeman and Robert T. Groh, in a joint ceremony at Supreme Court in Jamaica, Queens, officially signed the Corporation into existence, giving the notion of the fair, a tangible, legal form.

Queens Borough President Donald Manes took lead by endorsing the concept, and in letters to the entire Queens Congressional delegation asked their support and advice. Representatives Geraldine Ferraro, Benjamin Rosenthal, Mario Biaggi, Joseph Addabbo, John LeBoutillier and James Scheuer all replied that they endorsed the idea enthusiastically. U. S. Senators Alphonse D'Amato and Daniel Patrick Moynihan also indicated their interest and New York State Lieutenant Governor Mario Cuomo endorsed the idea. Numerous magazines, newspapers, & TV and radio programs carried stories about the project.

Armed with grass roots interest and the support from elected officials, civic leaders, local agencies with a wide range of interests, and with an organization well rooted in the New York business community, the Fair Corporation decided to actively pursue the concept.

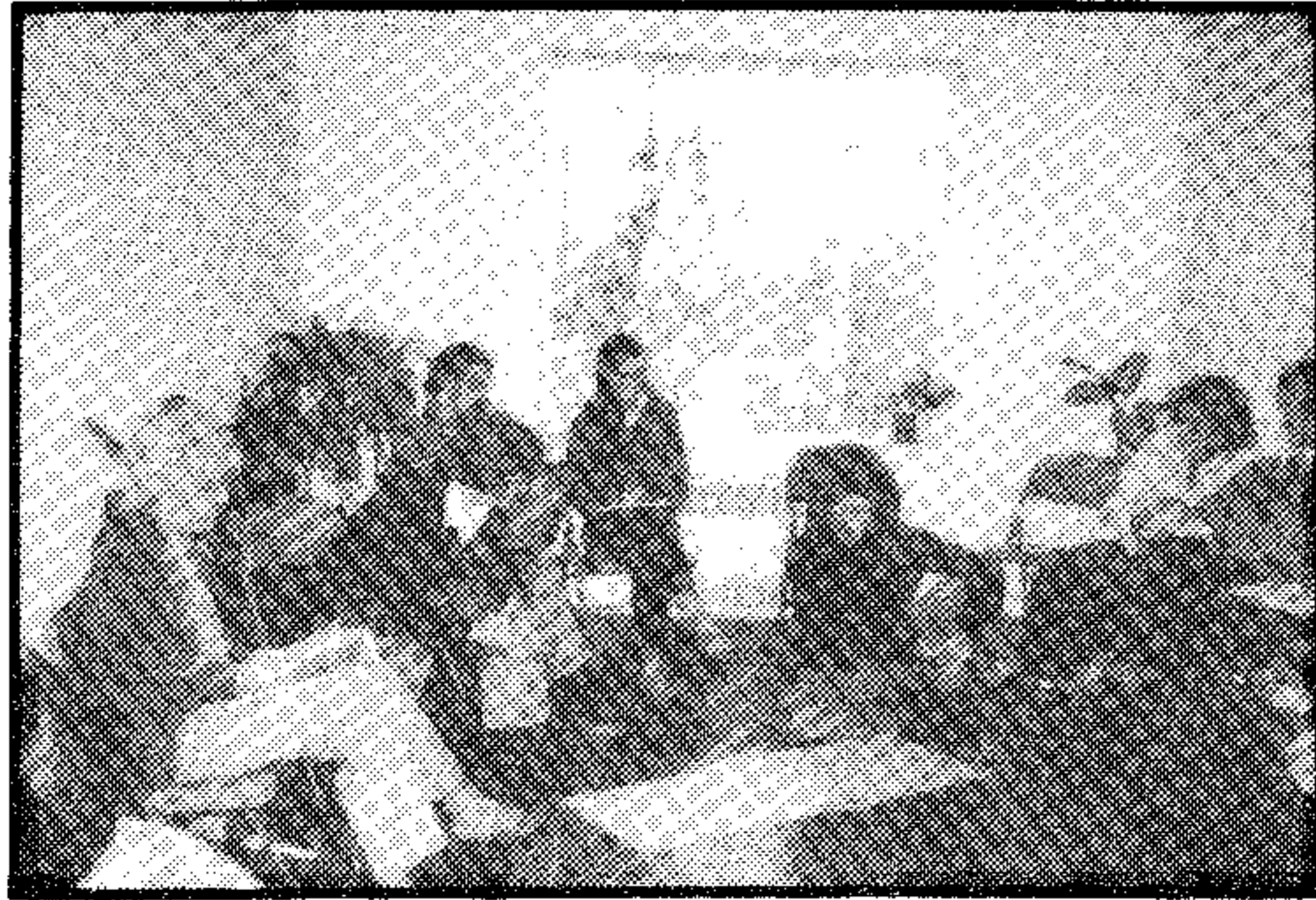
The next stage of development would be to prepare an extensive report with the purpose of securing recognition from the Federal Government necessary to secure Registration by the Bureau of International Expositions. Among the Exhibits necessary for the Application to the Federal Government are the following:

- 1) Purpose, Historical-Geographical Context
- 2) Theme, B. I. E. Category and Preliminary Architectural Concepts
- 3) Documentation of Financial and other support
- 4) Organization Chart with Officers' Biographical Data
- 5) Parameters of Planned Visitors Services
- 6) Right to Site- Evidence
- 7) Construction Wage Rates
- 8) Labor Stability Data, Preferably No Strike Assurances
- 9) Detailed Economic Feasibility Study
- 10) Implementation Schedule and Management Approaches to Assuring Its Achievement

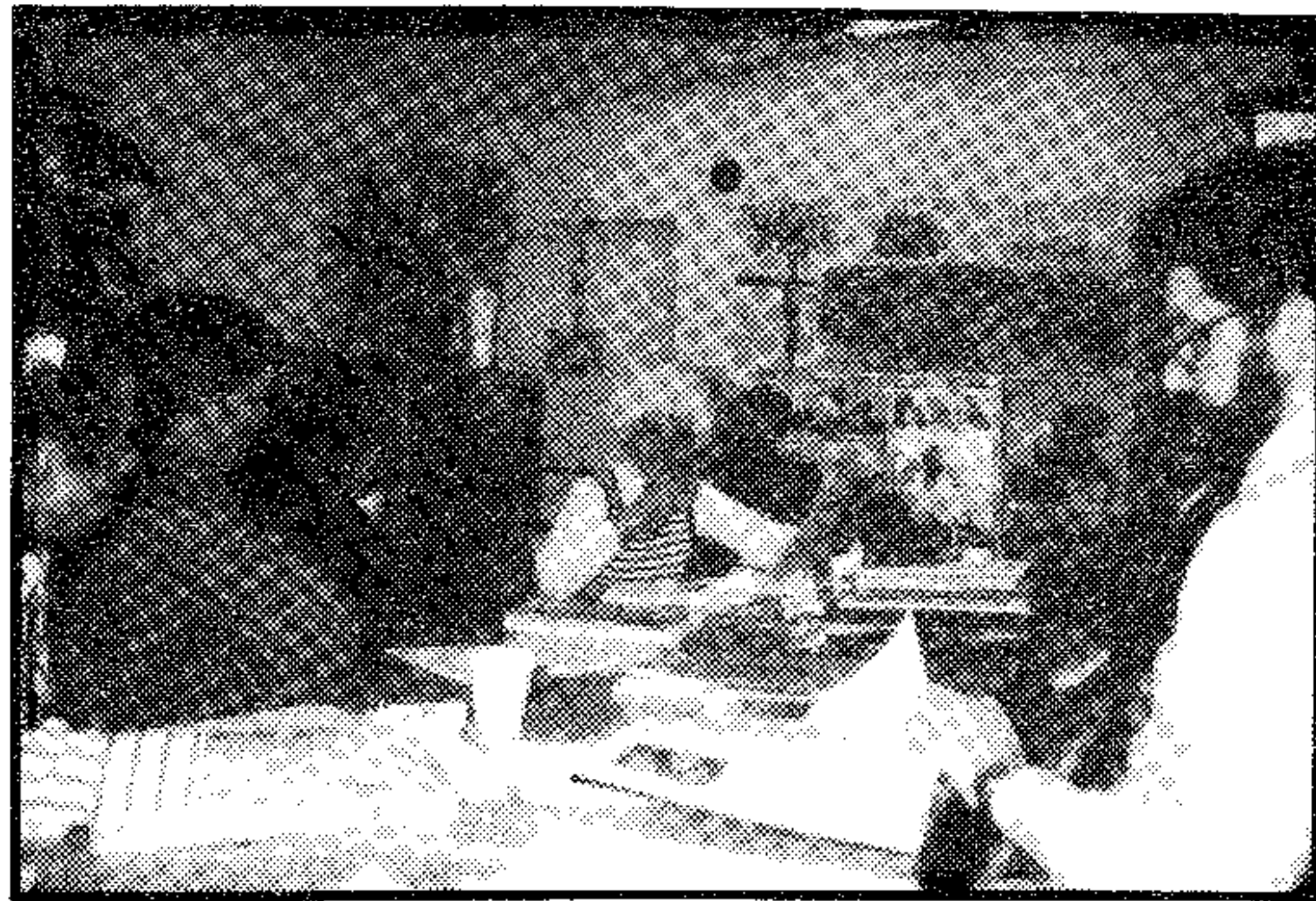


In ceremonies at Queens Supreme Court, Justices Joseph Kunzeman and Robert T. Groh signed the New York World's Fair 1989 Corporation into existence.

- 11) Promotional Plans
- 12) Benefits Expected, including Residual Site Use
- 13) Environmental Impact Statement
- 14) Proposed Rules of Operation and Facsimile Participation Contract
- 15) Agreement to Accept Appointed Commissioner General



For six months a Theme Committee of the Fair met to discuss the scope of the project and proposed ideas for the Fair's theme. (Below) a Theme Committee meeting at the Queens Botanical Gardens, December 1981.



The advice of Touche Ross was that the Corporation must first develop its Historical Purpose and Theme, along with the proposed B. I. E. category. They emphasized that this could be the most critical aspect of the early stages of the concept, as well as for the ultimate success of the exposition. Lack of a solid Thematic development at the 1964-65 World's Fair can be directly linked to many of the problems encountered at the fair. Conversely, it was the careful theme development of the 1939 Fair's planners that resulted in a first class exposition of memorable design.

A Theme Committee was organized by the Corporation under the leadership of A. Rand Peabody, a Queens clergyman with extensive experience in seminar and group consultation planning. This committee was comprised of a group of 20 persons from a variety of different professions and interests from the community and the Greater Metropolitan region.

Their task was to set the groundwork for the Fair's overall theme and possible scope. The Theme Committee immediately set about to renew the goal established by the 1939 Fair planners back in 1936; "to create a World's Fair on New Lines or none at all." This report is the result of this process. The next stage will be to complete the final feasibility study in order to apply for Federal recognition. It is a complex process requiring the detailed financial data necessary to insure the fair's fiscal health and the completion of the 15 exhibits required for final approval.

The first important stage has been completed. For the first time in history, a World's Fair has been born, not from the governmental or financial elite or the power brokers of the day, but has rather grown spontaneously from the grass roots—from local civic, cultural and business leaders sensitive to the local concerns of their city. Visionary, dedicated people who believe that the following proposal just might be a key to the renewal of New York.