TENEMENT IMUSEUMI

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Lower East Side Tenement Museum Begins Construction of "Shop Life"

New Exhibit Will Explore History of Merchants at 97 Orchard Street

February 8, 2012, New York, NY — On February 13, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum will begin construction of "Shop Life", an exhibition exploring the diverse businesses housed in the Museum's historic tenement at 97 Orchard Street

during the 19th and 20th centuries. "Shop Life" will be the Museum's first new exhibit at 97 Orchard Street since 2008. The

exhibit will be under construction for approximately six months, with a public opening planned for the fall of 2012.

Located on the building's street level, "Shop Life" will tell the stories of the many immigrant entrepreneurs who earned

their livelihoods through small businesses at 97 Orchard. The exhibit will span more than 100 years and will feature a re-

created 19th century German beer saloon, as well as a partially restored commercial space featuring a re-created sales

counter with interactive audio and video clips exploring historic businesses, including Israel Lustgarten's 1890s kosher

butcher store, Max Marcus' 1930s auction house and Sidney Meda's 1970s undergarment store. The tour concludes with

video clips of contemporary Lower East Side shopkeepers.

"Shop Life" will invite visitors to explore the individual stories of these shopkeepers as well as the larger history of the

Lower East Side, from the neighborhood's early days as Kleindeutschland (or "Little Germany") through the late 20th

century. The exhibit will discuss the evolving role of these businesses as community gathering spaces where immigrants

forged new American identities and made significant contributions to local and national economies.

The exhibit will extend the Museum's historical timeline, which currently ends with the eviction of residential tenants from

97 Orchard Street in 1935. Through the stories of the commercial tenants who remained in the building after that date,

"Shop Life" will explore the extraordinary cultural changes which took place during and after World War II. "Shop Life"

will also represent a significant milestone as the Museum's first wheelchair-accessible exhibit at 97 Orchard Street, and its

first exhibit offering interactive technologies to enhance the visitor experience.

About the Lower East Side Tenement Museum

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, founded in 1988, is located in a landmarked tenement building at 97 Orchard Street. Anchored in a neighborhood that has long been home to thousands of poor and working class people, the Tenement Museum is dedicated to using the history of its site as a tool for addressing issues that are still pressing today, including immigration. In 2008 the Museum was honored with the Preserve America Presidential Award and the National

Medal for Museum Service.

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