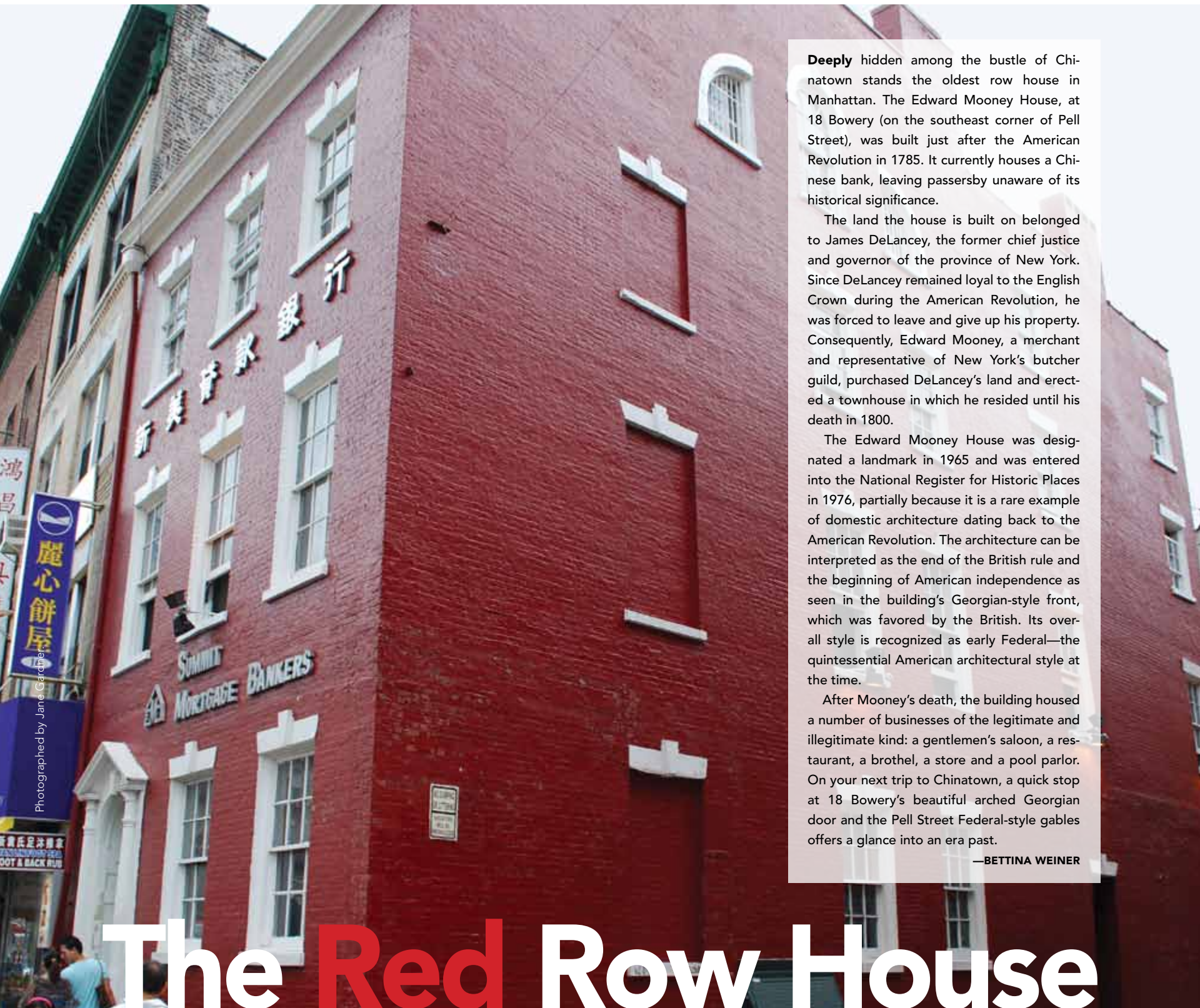


DOWNTOWN ON

Chinatown

In Sight / Short Story / Fast Facts



Deeply hidden among the bustle of Chinatown stands the oldest row house in Manhattan. The Edward Mooney House, at 18 Bowery (on the southeast corner of Pell Street), was built just after the American Revolution in 1785. It currently houses a Chinese bank, leaving passersby unaware of its historical significance.

The land the house is built on belonged to James DeLancey, the former chief justice and governor of the province of New York. Since DeLancey remained loyal to the English Crown during the American Revolution, he was forced to leave and give up his property. Consequently, Edward Mooney, a merchant and representative of New York's butcher guild, purchased DeLancey's land and erected a townhouse in which he resided until his death in 1800.

The Edward Mooney House was designated a landmark in 1965 and was entered into the National Register for Historic Places in 1976, partially because it is a rare example of domestic architecture dating back to the American Revolution. The architecture can be interpreted as the end of the British rule and the beginning of American independence as seen in the building's Georgian-style front, which was favored by the British. Its overall style is recognized as early Federal—the quintessential American architectural style at the time.

After Mooney's death, the building housed a number of businesses of the legitimate and illegitimate kind: a gentlemen's saloon, a restaurant, a brothel, a store and a pool parlor. On your next trip to Chinatown, a quick stop at 18 Bowery's beautiful arched Georgian door and the Pell Street Federal-style gables offers a glance into an era past.

—BETTINA WEINER

The Red Row House OF REVOLUTIONARY TIMES