

Learning Places Spring 2016

# LIBRARY / ARCHIVE REPORT #1

## Brooklyn Public Library



Carlos Merced

02.29.2015

### INTRODUCTION

The Brooklyn Public Library has thousands of public programs, extensive book collections, and digitized newspaper articles. They have an online database to look up articles for research material. We will visit the Brooklyn Collection to Research downtown Brooklyn area. We will have access to archival material such as maps and historic Brooklyn photographs. My goal is to find two Sources in a time frame of interest, which will be between 1770's and 1820's.

### PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

Upon visiting the Brooklyn Public Library I expect to learn what other source material they have to offer. I realize that not all information is up to date on the website because of funding issues, so i

think there will be material only accessible through a site visit. I am interested on how easy or difficult it is to access and sort through the online database.

## SOURCES found

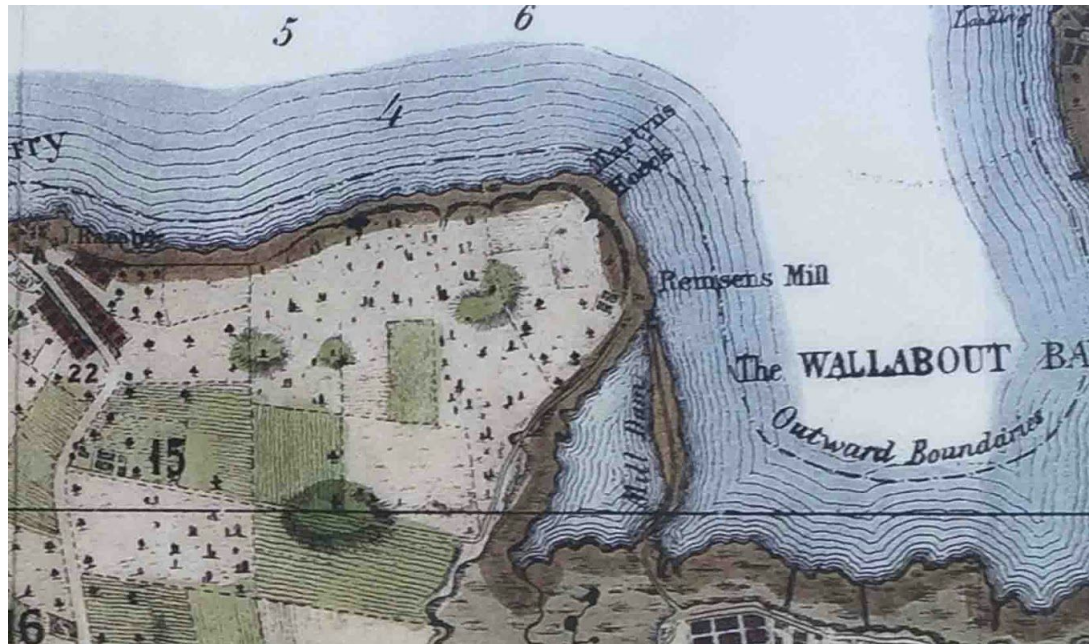
1. Henry Fulton, Farm Line Map of the City of Brooklyn, Published by J.B. Beers & co, One , 1874
2. Drawn by B. Ratzer, Plan of the Town of Brooklyn, Royal American Regiment, 1766 and 1767

## DOCUMENTATION of site & resources (maps/archival documents/photos)

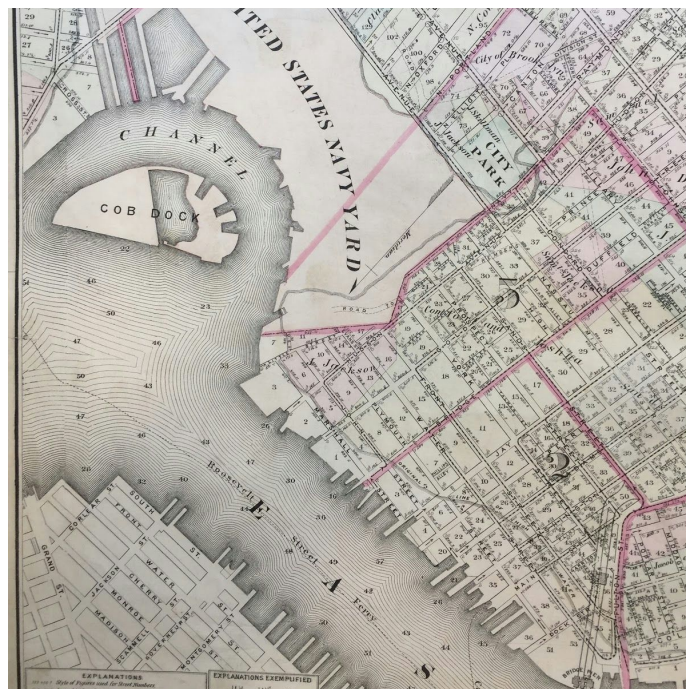


The Plan of the Town of Brooklyn in 1766 is a hand drawn map with details on main building structures and crop divisions. We can see a distinction between farmland and forests. Brookland Ferry was one of the main points of travel between Brooklyn and manhattan. The artist of the map included indications of land elevations throughout Brooklyn, along with rivers and streams. At this point of time Brooklyn is known as a Town and we can see more development next to the waterfront. There are lines indicating water depth in the East River along with numbers, for sailors. Some plots of land have nothing on them possibly for future building development. This map was made for the British army by Bernard Ratzer, a British engineer and surveyor.





Here we see a zoomed in version of the Vinegar hill and future Brooklyn Navy yard area. There is a large amount of marsh land that is near the coast and we see Remsens Mill, owned by Abraham Remsen. The Outward Boundaries were mapped for future development. We can see sectioned lots with nothing on them, indicated future blocks and street development.



In this 1874 map by Henry Fulton, you can see the original waterfront line. The outward boundary line is now filled in and occupied by The united states navy. The Bay is now converted to a channel and a new piece of land was added called the Cob Dock. There are street names, block numbers, and old farm line sections. There is a significant extension to the waterfront line in the Navy Yard and along the East River. The river is much more detailed with more docks and water depth information.



Magnifying the 1874 farm line map we can see the old farm lines affected the street development. The main streets like Sands and Bridge street border the old farm line divisions. What is really helpful is that the map indicated the previous land owners of this area of brooklyn. Comfort and Joshua Sands are written across multiple land plots. Sands street still holds the name today as the people who owned the land back then. In about 100 years the population has exploded and trolley routes displayed.

## DISCOVERIES

1. Neighborhood History
  - a. Much of the Brooklyn coast is man made and planned as far back as 1766.
  - b. Some of the early roads and farm land plots affected street development in the future.
2. Key Events / Historical Dates
  - a. 1766 - British occupied lands Pre-revolution
  - b. 1776 - The Battle of Brooklyn

- c. 1874 - Fairies and trolleys for public transportation
- 3. Key Players
  - a. Royal American Regiment
  - b. Commercial and military center of Britain's colonial empire
  - c. Dutch Merchants
- 4. Relationship Key Players
  - a. British Military
  - b. Dutch Towns
  - c. Dutch Large influence on street names and spelling
- 5. Public Perception of Key Events
  - a. High taxes on merchants from british
  - b. Depression from debt
- 6. Important Changes to Neighborhood
  - a. Land fill in the waterfront of Brooklyn
  - b. Conversion of farmland to blocks
  - c. Public transportation

## TOPICS & KEYWORDS

Pre revolution, Comfort Sands, Joshua Sands, Rensselaers, Henry Fulton, B. Ratzer, Royal American Regiment

## QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Land Ownership	Comfort Sands and Joshua Sands
Number of Blocks	In 1766 mostly farm land plots and main roads
# of Buildings on a Typical Block	1766: Small groups of settlements, no real blocks developed only outlines. 1874: 4-6 building on a block

Materials	1766: Wood framed homes
# of Stories of Buildings	Three story Buildings
Residential Bldgs	The Duffield House 1828, Old Brick House owned by Isaac Nichols
Empty Lots	1766: many empty space near waterfront for future development.
Commercial Uses	Brookland Ferry
Industrial Uses	Remsens Mill, Livingston's Distillery, Remsens
Church	The Old Church from 1766 map

## QUESTIONS to Research Further

### QUESTIONS:

1. Was this the first major map of brooklyn? What was the main purpose of the map in 1766?
2. Why did the navy choose Wallabout Bay?
3. What were the merchants trading in 1770's and how did it change by 1870s?

### RESEARCH METHOD/ ADDITIONAL SOURCES NEEDED TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
  - a. [http://brooklynhistory.org/docs/Ratzer\\_map.pdf](http://brooklynhistory.org/docs/Ratzer_map.pdf)
  - b. New York Public Library Digital collections
  - c. Newspaper about the maps discovery
2. Question 2
  - a. Library of Congress Geography and Maps
  - b. 1810 map from the New York State Archives
  - c. A Birthplace of Ships, Transformed, New York Times
3. Question 3

- a. American History Told by Contemporaries: Building of the republic, 1689-1783
- b. Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York
- c. Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Banking Department of the State

## SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

In my trip to the Brooklyn Public Library provided me with a more detailed look of Brooklyn between two very different time periods. I was able to compare map information from 1766 and 1874 and see the explosion of development between these two map drawings. I was looking for a map in the 1770's, but the 1766 map was better because it was earlier than expected. It had much more details than I was expecting. The 1874 map was later than what I wanted, but it was helpful in that it provided old farm lines and coastline details, which I was able to compare to the 1766 map. Many symbols and numberings were made for the East River merchants and sailors, which means trading and commerce had a large influence on the development of Brooklyn.