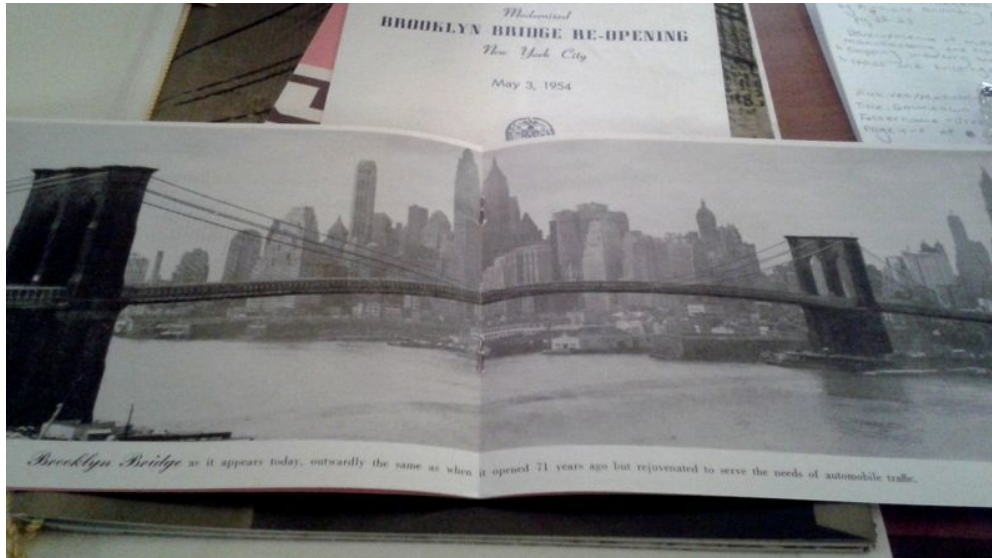


Learning Places Spring 2016

LIBRARY / ARCHIVE REPORT

The Brooklyn Historical Society



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INTRODUCTION

Before visiting the Brooklyn Historical Society, the class was required to utilize the website in order to search through the collections. The goal was to find sources that seemed relevant to our research. For the information to be pulled for us during our visit, the archivists had to be emailed in advance. When we visited the Brooklyn Historical Society, the archivists had pulled all the requested materials and provided the class with online databases as well.

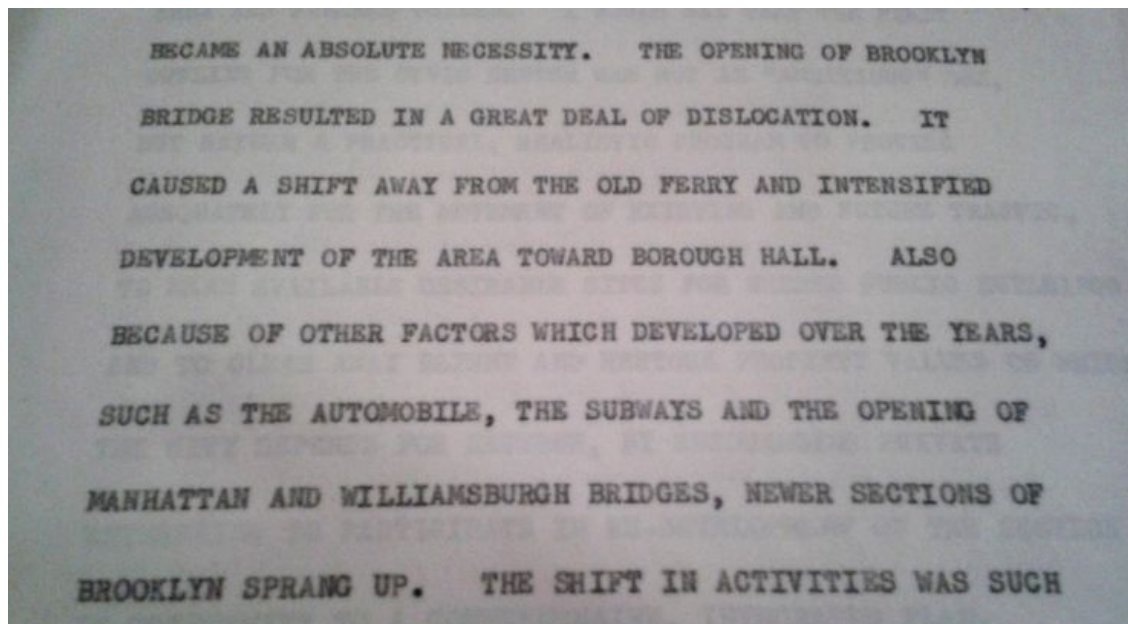
PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

I think that this trip to the Brooklyn Historical Society will be especially important. Before visiting the Brooklyn Historical Society, I have learned how to request sources from the organization's collections. This is a tool that may be useful for future research. I look forward to seeing what other sources and research tools the Brooklyn Historical Society provides in addition to our requested sources.

SOURCES found

1. Downtown Brooklyn Development: Box 2, "Brochure of Brooklyn Civic Center", *The Brooklyn Historical Society*, Page 4, January 25, 1955.
2. Downtown Brooklyn Development: Box 1, "Brooklyn Bridge Plaza Plans and Photographs", *The Brooklyn Historical Society*, 1935.
3. "The Remarkable Roeblings", *The Brooklyn Historical Society*.

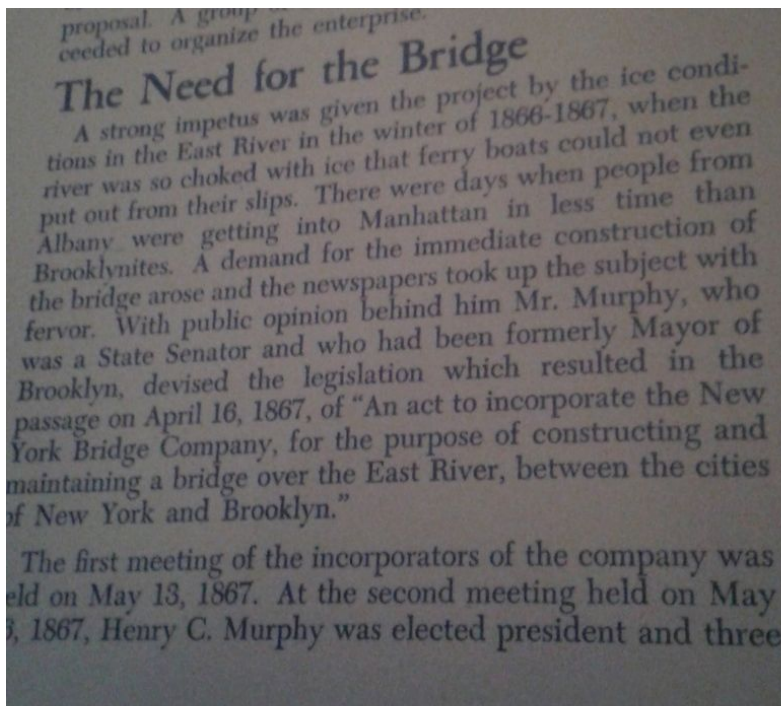
DOCUMENTATION of site & resources (maps/archival documents/photos)



The above photograph is an excerpt of a conversation between a moderator and John Cashmore about the Brooklyn Bridge. The topic of conversation was the Brooklyn Civic Center. Here the discussion focuses on the initial effects of the Brooklyn Bridge opening. What I found to be particularly interesting is the mentioning of the ferry industry. Before the bridge was created, ferries were used to bring people to and from Brooklyn and Manhattan. It would be interesting to know how exactly the Brooklyn Bridge affected the ferry industry and why these changes took place. From observing maps from past site visits, I have noticed that the ferry stations are not on the more recent maps. In addition to ferry transportation, transportation via automobile and subway is mentioned. When the bridge was created in the 19th century, most people were not driving. It leads me to wonder if the bridge was originally designed to accommodate cars and subways or was the focus more on pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles.

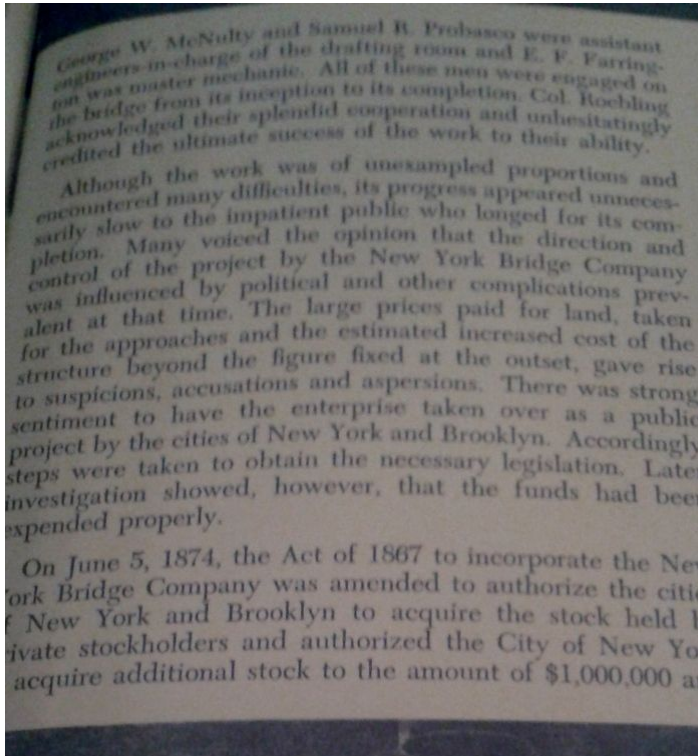


The above image is a photograph of a plan for the Brooklyn Bridge Plaza. The photograph is significant for my research because in order to understand the intended impact of the Brooklyn Bridge, it is critical to see where the bridge is supposed to end. Here the Brooklyn Bridge Approach is meant to connect with Fulton Street, which at the time was the largest, busiest street in Downtown Brooklyn. The bridge's planners clearly wanted the Brooklyn Bridge to get the most use as possible, which is why it would be closest to the most used street.

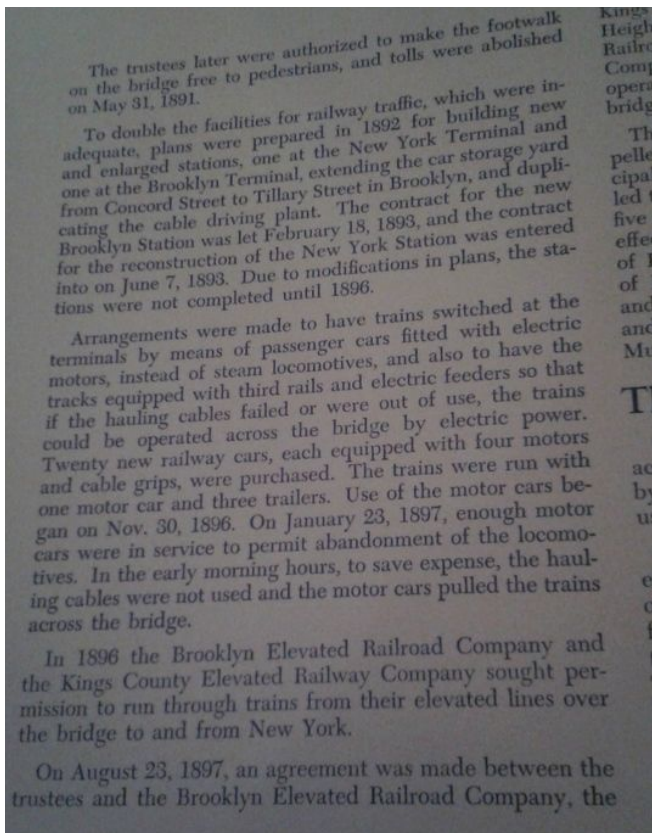


This brief excerpt discusses the need for a continual connection between Manhattan and Brooklyn. The ferries were not dependable during certain weather. If it was too cold or there was a storm, the ferries were unable to take passengers across the East River. This caused people a disconnect from the two cities. The people of Brooklyn especially felt isolated and secluded. The Brooklyn Bridge became the solution to the problem. It would provide the inhabitants of Brooklyn and New York with a permanent connection. People would be able to cross it at will. The bridge proved to be

especially important for the development of Brooklyn.



This is the first time during my research that I have come across documentation of public opinion on the Brooklyn Bridge. This excerpt shows that there was suspicion of corruption and political influence. I did not know that the Brooklyn Bridge construction was significantly delayed due to complications. From previously reading about the unreliability of ferries faced in certain weather, it is understandable that the public would be impatient. In addition, I find it especially interesting that the Brooklyn Bridge construction was not a public project. One would think that the construction of a bridge would be overseen, controlled, and funded by the city government.



One interesting point from this excerpt is the mention of tolls. At one point pedestrians were required to pay a fee in order to use the bridge. The article does not say why the pedestrians were tolled, but it could be because the cost of the Brooklyn Bridge was greater than was expected. The toll may have been put in place to make up for the expenditure.

The use of the bridge continues to increase. When the bridge first opened, pedestrians, horse drawn carts, vehicles, and trains with one- and two-cars were permitted to cross the bridge. Years after the bridge's completion the demand for trains crossing to and from Manhattan and Brooklyn was more prevalent. The need for trains with larger cars illustrated both the advancements in transportation

technology and the population growth.

DISCOVERIES

1. Neighborhood History

- a. Before the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, the only means of connection the people of Vinegar Hill and Downtown Brooklyn had with the City of New York was through ferries. Up until 1898, Brooklyn was a separate city from the City of New York. There was a large disconnect between the two cities. This separation played a large part in enabling Vinegar Hill to become the commercial and industrial hub it was for 19th century Brooklyn.
- b. Following the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, the people of Brooklyn and the City of New York began crossing from one side to the other. During the first few years of the Bridge's opening, the pedestrians were required to pay a toll. Eventually the toll for pedestrians was removed. In addition to the Brooklyn Bridge affecting the population growth of Vinegar Hill and surrounding areas of Brooklyn, the surrounding ferries in Brooklyn and Manhattan were adversely affected. The Old Ferry of Brooklyn soon after closed down. Presumably the end of the industry was a result of people's desire to use the Brooklyn Bridge over the ferries.

2. Key Events / Historical Dates

- a. The completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883.
- a. Brooklyn became a part of New York City in 1898.
- a. The completion of the Manhattan Bridge in 1912.

3. Key Players

- a. Henry C. Murphy: Mayor of Brooklyn from 1843-1845. Murphy was involved in the effort to plan and construct the Brooklyn Bridge. He served as the president for the Brooklyn Bridge Company and was later elected as president of the New York Bridge Company Board of Trustees.
- b. John A. Roebling: A civil engineer who designed and built multiple suspension bridges including the Brooklyn Bridge. He died due to an injury he sustained while working on the Brooklyn Bridge and did not live to see it completed.
- c. Washington Augustus Roebling: He was the son of John A. Roebling. Like his father, he also was a civil engineer who worked on the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

4. Relationship Key Players

- a. Upon being elected as the president of the New York Bridge Company, Henry C. Murphy created three committees. One of the committees he created was the Committee of Plans and Surveys. This committee appoint John A. Roebling to be the

chief engineer for the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

- b. John A. Roebling and Washington A. Roebling worked together on planning and building bridges before they began working on the Brooklyn Bridge. During the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, Washington A. Roebling acted as his father's chief assistant. When John A. Roebling died, Washington A. Roebling took over as chief engineer.

5. Public Perception of Key Events

- a. Prior to the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, research indicates that the ferries were unable to transport passengers during certain weather conditions and at particular hours during the day. The lack of connection between the two cities must have been a struggle for the inhabitants of Brooklyn. Due to the successful and busy nature of the City of New York, the public viewed a permanent connection to be vital to the development and vitality of Brooklyn.
- b. The planning and building of the Brooklyn Bridge took a longer amount of time than the overseeing committees and engineers had anticipated. The public grew impatient and suspicious of the delays. The frustrated public claimed that the lack of progress could be accredited to political influences and corruption.
- c. The completion of the Brooklyn Bridge connected the city of Brooklyn and the City of New York in such a vital way. The two cities became symbiotic. The inhabitants of both cities crossed the bridge in large numbers on a daily basis. The industries employed and were used by the people of both cities. Ultimately this connection could be considered a factor in the unity of Brooklyn and the City of New York.

6. Important Changes to Neighborhood

- a. The construction of the Brooklyn Bridge was one of the most significant changes for the inhabitants and industries of Brooklyn. It helped unify the city of Brooklyn and the City of New York; there was an influx of population in Vinegar Hill; and the bridge seemingly led to the demise of the ferry industry.
- b. Newer means of transportation continued to develop and become more popular in Brooklyn. More people began to use automobiles and the subways. In the 20th century the Manhattan Bridge was constructed. Population began to shift and reached its peak in the late 19th century and then continued to steadily dwindle. Newer neighborhoods were created and the boundaries of older neighborhoods changed and often shrunk.

7. Other Observations

- a. Throughout my research, I noticed that the ferry in Downtown Brooklyn was referred to as the Fulton [Street] Ferry, the Brooklyn Ferry, and the Old Ferry.
- b. When the Brooklyn Bridge was constructed, the most common type of transportation

was horse-drawn vehicles. The original design of the Brooklyn Bridge was designed to accommodate horse-drawn vehicles as well as pedestrians, cable cars, and trolleys.

TOPICS & KEYWORDS

John Cashmore, Old Ferry, Fulton Street Ferry, Brooklyn Ferry, Brooklyn Bridge Plaza, Brooklyn Civic Center, Fulton Street, suspension bridge, cable-stay bridge, Robert Moses, John A. Roebling, Washington Augustus Roebling, Committee on Plans and Surveys, New York Bridge Company, Committee on By-Laws, Brooklyn Bridge Company Board of Trustees, Commissioner of Bridges, Brooklyn Elevated Railroad Company.

QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Land Ownership	City of New York.
# of Boroughs	Two: Manhattan and Brooklyn.
# Years to Complete	Brooklyn Bridge: 1870-1883 -- 13 years. Manhattan Bridge: 1901-1912 -- 11 years.
Materials	Brooklyn Bridge: Steel cables and stone towers. Manhattan Bridge: steel.
Height of Bridges	Brooklyn Bridge: 276 feet and 6 inches above mean high water.
Bridge Span	Brooklyn Bridge: 1,595 feet and 6 inches.
Bridge Design	Brooklyn Bridge: Suspension and Cable-stay hybrid bridge.
Cost of Bridge	Brooklyn Bridge: \$15,211,952.92.
Toll for Passage over Brooklyn Bridge (1884)	Foot Passengers: 1 Cent; Railroad fare: 5 Cents; One horse or horse and man: 3 Cents; One horse and

	vehicle: 5 Cents; Two horses and vehicle: 10 Cents; Additional horses, each: 3 Cents; Neat cattle, each: 2 Cents.
Ferry Company	Old Ferry/Fulton Street Ferry/Brooklyn Ferry

QUESTIONS to Research Further

QUESTIONS:

1. Did the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge ultimately lead to the end of the ferry industry?
2. How did the engineers and planners for the Brooklyn Bridge plan the layout for the various means of transportation?
3. How did the Brooklyn Bridge change in order to accommodate the transportation changes that occurred in the years following its completion?

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

1. Question 1
 - a. Observe maps of Downtown Brooklyn following the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge to determine when the ferry ports are no longer documented on the maps.
 - b. Conduct research in archives for files and records kept the by the ferry industries such as the Fulton Street Ferry.
 - c. Research whether the ferry company mentioned above is the same as the Roosevelt Street Ferry, a ferry company I came across in previous research, and whether it was also affected by the Brooklyn Bridge.
2. Question 2
 - a. Utilize the Municipal Archives for its information on the Brooklyn Bridge.
 - b. Research online further about the Roeblings and their engineering plans for the Brooklyn Bridge.
 - c. Look for documents and plans regarding the reconstructed version of the Brooklyn Bridge from the 20th century and observe the changes from the original transportation setup.
3. Question 3
 - a. Compare the original plans and documents for the Brooklyn Bridge with the plans for the adapted version of the bridge.
 - b. Determine whether certain types of transportation were replaced for automobiles and the trains or whether more lanes were created.

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

A lot of the information that I found at the Brooklyn Historical Society was from the 20th century. This data was gathered from a later time than most of the past sources I have found. The sources' hindsight perspectives provided me with information explaining the general public's perception of the events that I would have difficulties acquiring if the source had been from the same era as the event. Much of the information gathered during this trip was about the Brooklyn Bridge. While I did read through some documents addressing the Manhattan Bridge, I did not find them particularly useful to my research. This has been a pattern for me during most of my library and archival visits. Because of my difficulty finding the adequate information on the Manhattan Bridge and the time constraints, I will probably continue my research focusing solely on the Brooklyn Bridge.