

Learning Places Spring 2016

LIBRARY / ARCHIVE REPORT



Brooklyn Historical Society

Gerard Jitechian

04.20.2016

INTRODUCTION

For this site visit, we went to the archives at the Brooklyn Historical Society, located at 128 Pierrepont St, Brooklyn, NY 11201. In particular we visited the Othmer Library, located on the second floor. This ornate room, lined with shelves of records, houses a large portion of Brooklyn's history.



The above panorama is of the Othmer Library.

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

I was expecting to see maps from several decades into the past. My goal initially was to inspect the tangible records pulled by the archivist. However, I had a contingency to search the digitized records as well. I was looking for photographs of the historical districts of Vinegar Hill.

SOURCES

1. Huntington, E. (1945). V1974.16.755 [Photograph]. Edna Huntington Papers and Photographs, Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn.
2. Huntington, E. (1945). V1974.16.756 [Photograph]. Edna Huntington Papers and Photographs, Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn.
3. Huntington, E. (1945). V1974.16.747 [Photograph]. Edna Huntington Papers and Photographs, Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn.

DOCUMENTATION

1)



This is a photo, facing west on Front St. St. Ann's church, which is no longer standing, can be seen in this photograph. It was taken in 1945 by Edna Huntington, a former BHS librarian.



Here is photograph, from a similar perspective, from 2013. Provided by google maps. Other than the destruction of the church, the building along Front St. in this section remain similar to their 1945 condition.

2)



This image is also of Front St, facing east this time. Again, since this image was taken in 1945, before the church's destruction in 1992, the church is still erect.



This image from 2013 shows a similar vantage point. Structures apart from the church remain unchanged, however the sidewalk and street seem to have been redone in the interim time.

3)



From the Edna Huntington collection, this photo shows a view down Hudson Ave, facing north, in 1945. The ConEd facility can be seen, however it different, with many more smoke stacks, with the exception of the large smoke stack seen in the following photo.



The front faces of the buildings on the right have been redone, however their underlying structures seem to be unchanged.

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

1. Who was Edna Huntington. Why was she taking photos of the area circa 1945?
 - a. Go back to BHS, look for metadata about the collection

- b. Look for archival biographical information about her.
2. Why did the ConEd facility destroy some smokestacks, and build the mega stack?
 - a. Look for information about the ConEd facility.

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

After visiting the archive, I was intrigued by the elegance and antique appearance of the Othmer Library. The computerized searches I conducted on the archive's database were extremely helpful, but a little complicated due to the rudimentary searching search GUI. I did confirm however, that some portions protected by the Landmarks Preservation act in Vinegar Hill were in fact preserving the past appearances of the structures.