

Learning Places Fall 2016

# Library / Archive REPORT

## New York Public Library Map Room

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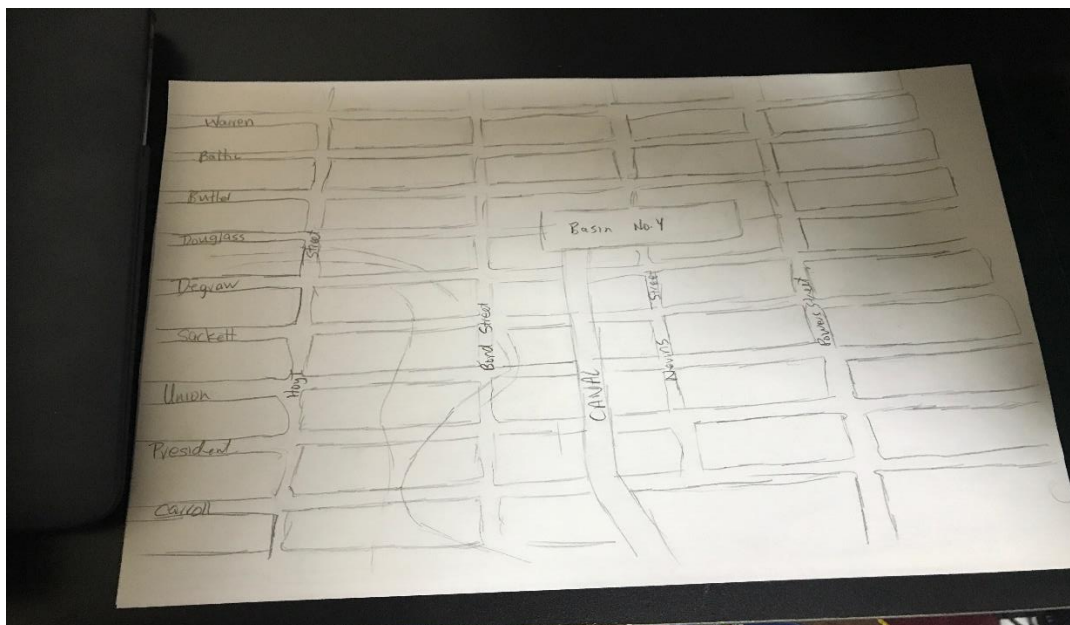
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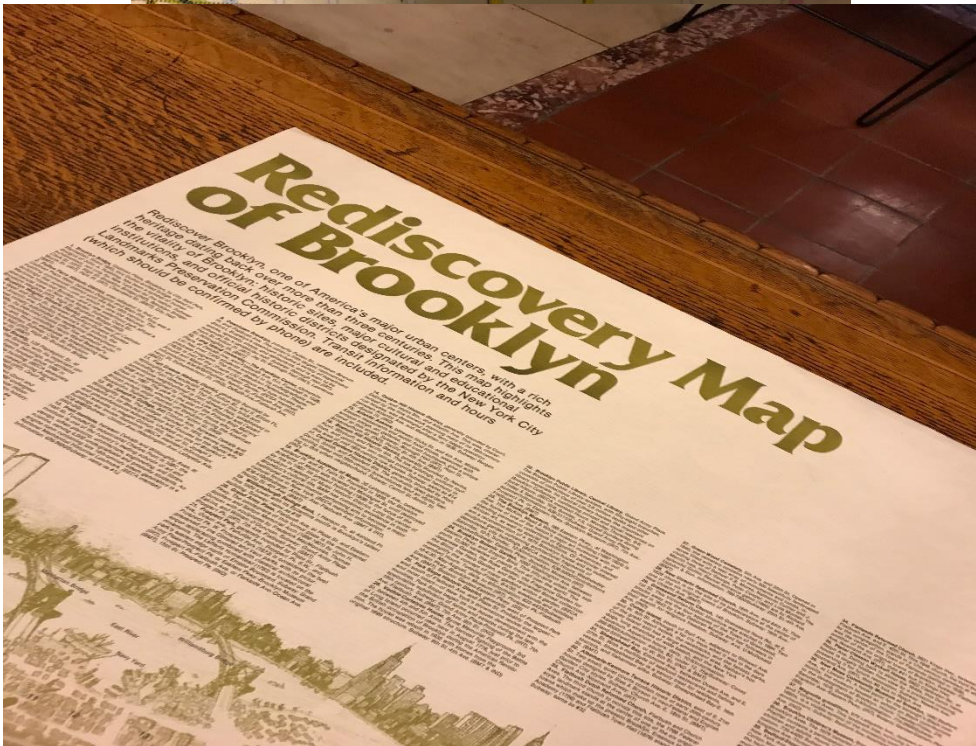
### INTRODUCTION

As a class, we visited the New York Public Library Map Room. We had the opportunity to view several maps and atlases from years as early as 1830's. The fire insurance maps targeted my attention. The map room has multiple fire insurance maps. Also shows are refined maps of the Gowanus Canal from 1855. I learned that the insurance companies go to every building in the city to see what objects are made of wood and brick to inspect, map and code every area of the city in order to determine what insurance rates would be charged per properties. Many industries were built around the canal. I find it very different that the maps were constantly updated from 1903 and 1907. Parts of the map have been glued. The blue map has lines to depict how far the corners can be. In 1916, that was when the first zoning regulation took place. This place is very useful for me and I never visited a map room before. For our project, we are focusing on Gowanus. The map room lies many atlases and books to further help us in our searches pin pointing certain dates and times which are crucial when composing research.

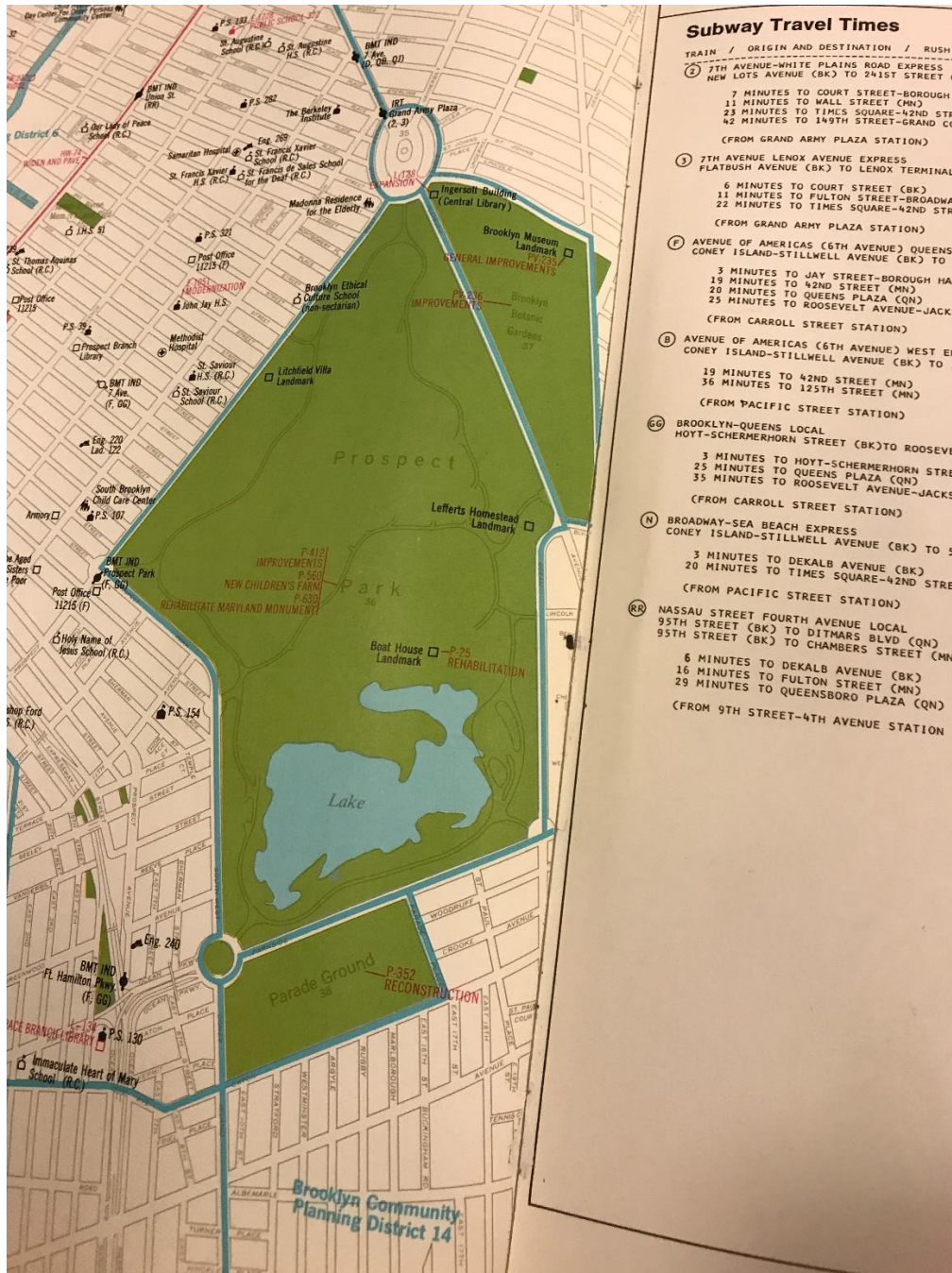
### SITE OBSERVATIONS

Below is a sketch of the plan of the drainage for the Gowanus Creek & Bay









Prospect Park 1903





What is the Genius Loci, or spirit, of this place?

The NYPL Map Room was established in 1898. Within the map room has over 433,000 sheet maps and 20,000 books and atlases that range from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many research opportunities are available to the public. There are class tours, online research, in person research and even organizational lectures.

What kind of archive or library is this? What kinds of materials / sources does this place collect?

This library has over 29,000 linear feet of manuscripts and archives. There are several divisions in the library in which it carries its own specialty. The arts and artifacts division has traditional masks, statuary, instruments, objects and weaponry from the core of the African art holdings. The Berg Collection has a comprehensive collection of first and rare editions of nearly all the canonical 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century authors from earlier centuries. The Billy Rose division focuses mainly on theatrical arts. The Dorot Jewish division is known for administering, developing and promoting one of the world's great collections of Hebraica and Judaica. The photographs and print division holds both documentary and fine art photographs which document the lifestyle and culture from people of African descent from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. These are not all of the divisions the library has to offer. However, these divisions will be useful for me in the future since there is a huge trace of historic valid information. There is also a digital collection which is very useful for those who need citation and serves as a quick reference for digital media through the New York Public Library Website.

Who might use this collection and for what purpose?

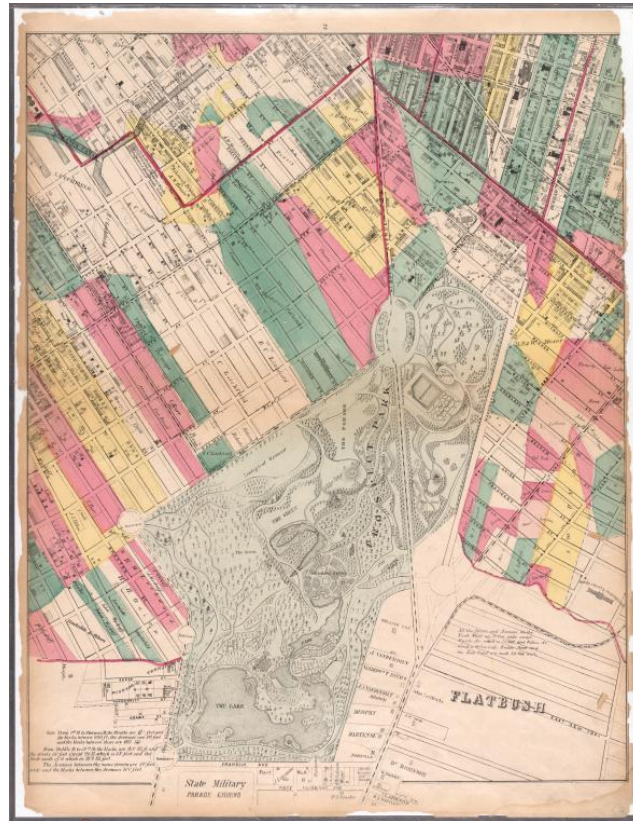
People who are composing research of places from the earlier time will find this library useful. My class and I are doing a project on Gowanus and this has been the most useful site visit in my opinion. The resources are citable and are physically present from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In my opinion, it's always good to have a physical copy or reference of information when doing research. This library has so many different editions and maps, atlases and information in which anyone can easily find and include into their researches.

Are there any special rules for using or accessing material?

Due to the age of the physical print, pages must be turned by library personnel to avoid damage. Resources may also have to be reserved in order to save you time when arriving to the library. Because there are so many resources, this gives the librarian a chance to pull prints from different shelves to suit your criteria.



## SOURCE ANALYSIS



Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. (1869). *Sheet 2: Map encompassing Prospect Park, Windsor Terrace, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus Canal, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Prospect Heights* Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-49e3-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

### CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #1 (consult this [website](#) for help with citations)

1. What is this source and what is its purpose?

This is a map from 1969 which shows some of the parts of Gowanus or nearby Gowanus that we are able to compose our research about. It's easier to read and is color coded so that places and landmarks can be easily identified.

2. Who created it and who was it created for?

It was created by MIT press and crated for New York City as a plan or proposal in 1969.

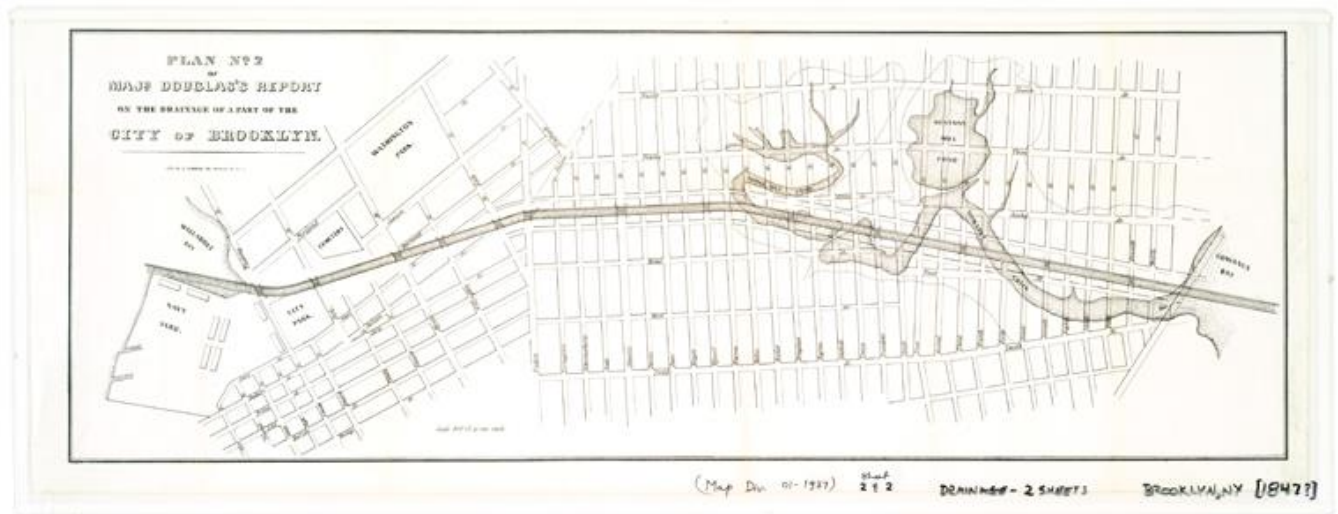
3. What does this source tell us about the place we are studying? What themes or subtopics does it relate to?

The main division on the map is the Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division. It was also used for city planning and social conditions of NYS.

4. How might it be integrated into a research project? What question could it be used to help answer?

This can be integrated into a research projects because this is a section of Brooklyn that the class is studying. This map is a still image which has all the information needed to be able to include in a project. Its useful separation of colors makes the tasks easier and the topic on a whole easier to explain because the map is a clear image with description.

**CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #2 (consult this [website](#) for help with citations)**



Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. (1847). *Plan[s] of Majr. Douglas's report on the drainage of a part of the city of Brooklyn*. Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-ee2c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

1. What is this source and what is its purpose?

This source is the plans of the report of the drainage in the city of Brooklyn. I took a similar image of a source like this in the Map Room. Differently, it was a map of the Plan of Drainage of that part of the City of Brooklyn which empties the water into Gowanus Creek & Bay which is also explained in the sketch above.

2. Who created it and who was it created for?

This map was created by Daniel Richards in 1847. It was created for the surveyors to survey the area and determine future costs builds and upgrades.

3. What does this source tell us about the place we are studying? What themes or subtopics does it relate to?

This source tells us that there is a big drainage issue in the city of Brooklyn which overflows into the Gowanus area and continues to pollute into the Canal of Gowanus. Research has been shown that the Superfund cleanup will start and the pollution and the repair of the canal will begin. Delaying the cleanup is the budget of the cities as well as the industries around it.

4. How might it be integrated into a research project? What question could it be used to help answer?

This was actually integrated to my groups research project. We are basically using maps to compare properties that were or were not in the area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century versus the several properties or for better word, public spaces that are present today.

## GENERAL NOTES:

- Maps were used by cab drivers before GPS- regular navigation map street map of Brooklyn. Displays bridge between the 70s and the modern era.
- Tri-boro bridge authority- the purpose of pamphlet was the Gowanus improvement project. The improvement talked about was highway building and Glorifying the elevated highway showing construction defense industries in 1941.
- The map is updated and glued into changed parts between 1903 and 1907. The blue map has lines to depict how far the corners can be. 1916- first zoning regulation - associated with working on the districts to separate residential versus industrial.
- 1972- the atlas came form 1920. Gluing and modifying naps documenting changes in the city quite different agenda for insurance purposes



## QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Does the map room have a specific section of criteria in which was defined for green infrastructure since that seems to be a bigger section in Gowanus?
2. In what year approximately was there an unpolluted canal before it became contaminated and polluted?