

Learning Places Fall 2016

# Library / Archive REPORT

## Brooklyn Public Library Visit

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### INTRODUCTION

The Central Library of the Brooklyn Public Library is located on Flatbush Avenue and Plaza St E. The Library is very close to Prospect Park and is surrounded by many train routes. There is the Botanic Garden Station, which is train 2, 3, 4, 5, and S trains. Then there's the Eastern Parkway Brooklyn Museum, also 2 and 3 train. And the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station which has the B and Q trains. I took the 3 train to the Library and got off the wrong exit so I walked in the side of Prospect Park. When reaching the library I noticed the statue in top of the arch in the middle of the Plaza. It all seemed very welcoming and the plaza open to the public in front of the library also made it feel very open and attracted people to come.

We came to the library because we can use some of the material archived here to develop our research topic and also help us gather some information. The visit will inform us on the material archived in the library and will also inform us, how to rent out or obtain copies of the materials.

## SITE OBSERVATIONS

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

This is the second time I visited the Brooklyn Library and it gives a sense of calmness. With large windows and the amount of sunlight entering it allows you to have an imagination to transport yourself to the old times.

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

This is a library that collects anything that is related to Brooklyn. They collect Brooklyn Maps and Atlases, Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper clippings, and 20,000 digitized historic photos. There is also record of city telephone directories.

Who might use this collection and for what purpose?

The collection is mainly used by researchers, for example, Joseph Alexiou and researching Gowanus. This collection can also help anyone who wants to know about their ancestors or background. Or anyone interested in the history of Brooklyn.

Are there any special rules for using or accessing material?

The materials in this library are sometimes limited edition or the only copies there is. So, we are asked to be very careful with the materials. We can check out books but we must request them. The material is very accessible at the library and online. Some of the images are online making it easier to obtain a copy. In order to access the original photographs and collection you have to make an appointment.

## SOURCE ANALYSIS

**CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #1: Eco- Gowanus: Urban Remediation by Design (Plunz, 2007)**

1933 - 2007	waterfront	high viaduct
<p><b>1933</b> – IND 9th street subway station opens, with completion of the viaduct crossing the Canal</p> <p><b>1941</b> – Robert Moses completes the Gowanus Parkway, which was built on top of the support pillars of the former 3rd Avenue Elevated that ran through the Gowanus and Sunset Park areas</p> <p><b>1942</b> – A new Hamilton Avenue Drawbridge is opened to traffic, directly connecting the northern part of the Gowanus Parkway to the Red Hook area of Brooklyn and further north to the Buttermilk Channel</p>	<p><b>1948</b> – Eighty percent of Brooklyn's coal and oil comes through the Canal</p> <p><b>1955</b> – U. S. Army Corps of Engineers stops the regular dredging of the Gowanus Canal</p> <p><b>1961</b> – The flushing tunnel is not maintained and the pump fails. As a result the Canal becomes stagnant, bulkheads deteriorate and pollution becomes increasingly worse</p> <p><b>1964</b> – The Gowanus Expressway opens (Interstate 278), consolidating Moses's earlier Parkway project and crossing the Canal along the Hamilton Avenue</p>	<p><b>c.1970's</b> – New York enters its post-industrial phase with over 50% of the property in Gowanus unused and derelict</p> <p><b>1976</b> – A fire at the Patchogue Oil Terminal causes 900,000 gallons of oil to be dumped into the Canal. It takes the Coast Guard a week to clean up the massive spill</p> <p><b>1977</b> – A Federal environmental study is released detailing the pollution levels and its effects on the Canal</p> <p><b>1978</b> – For the first time, New York City was fined for polluting the Gowanus Canal by the Federal Govern-</p>

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

This source is a timeline, that depicts the events that were recorded throughout history that helped contaminate the canal. The purpose is to inform the people how the contamination happened.

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

I am assuming that the person that created this timeline were the authors. They probably also did some research to build the timeline. This timeline was created to inform people who may be doing research about the canal in the future.

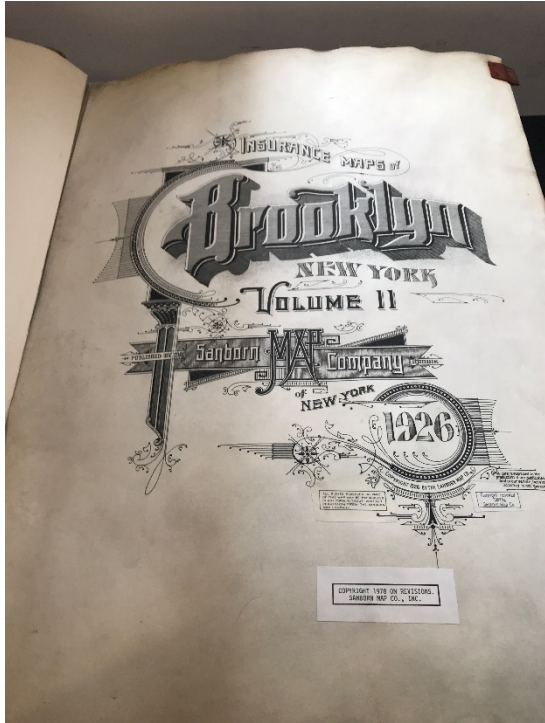
3. What does this source tell us about the place we are studying? What themes or subtopics does it relate to?

The source explains how the flushing tunnel fails because the pump fails, which increases the pollution. Then, how the New York enters the post- industrial phase and only 50% of the canal was used. There was also a fire at an oil terminal that caused 900,000 gallons of oil to be dumped into the canal. Therefore, the theme is the Canal Contamination and the subtopics can be the causes that helped contaminate the canal.

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

This information might be integrated into the project to help introduce the topic. It will help breakdown the process of how the contamination of the canal occurred and how did the contamination get so bad. It can answer, "how did the canal get contaminated" but most likely there are going to be more questions asked. Like "why did the government take so long to do something about it?" or "why weren't there any laws to help avoid the contamination?"

**CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #2: Company, S.M. (1926). Insurance Map. In *Insurance Maps of Brooklyn New York*. (p.04). New York**



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

This source is a map that was used for insurance purposes. The map shows pink for brick, yellow for wood, and blue for concrete. Depending on the material the building was made of, the insurance would charge different rates.
2. Who created it and who was it created for?

The maps were created by the Sanborn Map Company. They were created for insurance companies. They would be used to charge different rates.
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 about the varied materials buildings were built with back in 1926. It also tells us about the different types of businesses there were. Most of the buildings served as warehouses or factories.
4. How might it be integrated into a research project? What question could it be used to help

answer?

This can be integrated in the research project because it can prove that Gowanus was very known for its industry. It can also be used to compare the industries back then and the ones we have today.

## GENERAL NOTES:

- Gowanus had a lot more businesses than expected back in the day.
- There was a fire that contaminated the canal with thousands of gallons of oil.
- The pump fails since 1961 but everybody ignores it.

## QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Why did it take the city too long to take action on the pumps failures?
2. How long did it take for the maps to be made?
3. What has happened to the industries that were there before? Were they kicked out ?