

Learning Places Fall 2017

SITE REPORT #2

Gowanus Canal and Its Conservancy



Gowanus Canal Conservancy

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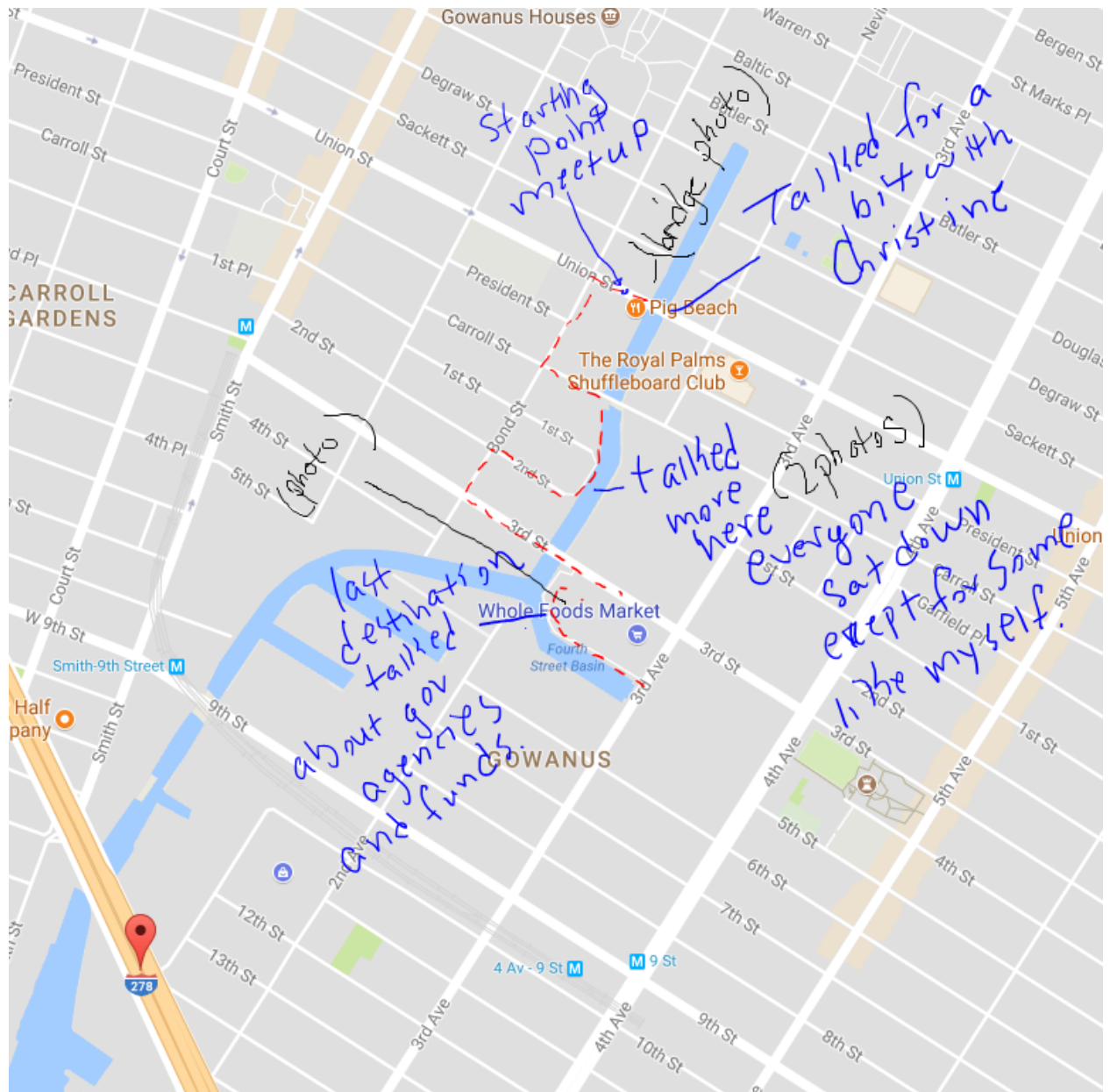
10.3.2017

INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

During the first visit to the Gowanus canal, I was more interested in seeing the condition of the canal and where it was located at. The second visit to the Gowanus canal, I was ready to learn some new facts involving the canal and the government participation in the cleaning of the canal plans.

SITE DOCUMENTATION: Take notes and sketch in your notebook, take many photographs – search for angles and details that really tell a story and use those to report your documentation. Your site documentation will include the following:

- (1) MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION -- on a map like the one below chart the route of the walk and mark the following: (a) significant stops; (b) Locations and directions of your photos and sketches.



- (2) PHOTOS AND SKETCHES: Provide a minimum of 4 photos and 2 sketches of places, elements, processes, people or anything else that you found significant and meaningful during the walk. Focus on scenes that relate to ecology, the environment and public spaces. Feel free to include IN ADDITION other “findings” that you found intriguing. For each photo provide captions and explanations – why is the image shown significant for your exploration.



The significance of this picture can be understood by knowing the importance of its geological location. The bridge in the picture is used by road vehicles while allowing boats to crossover to the other side when needed. The geological location itself is vulnerable to floods.



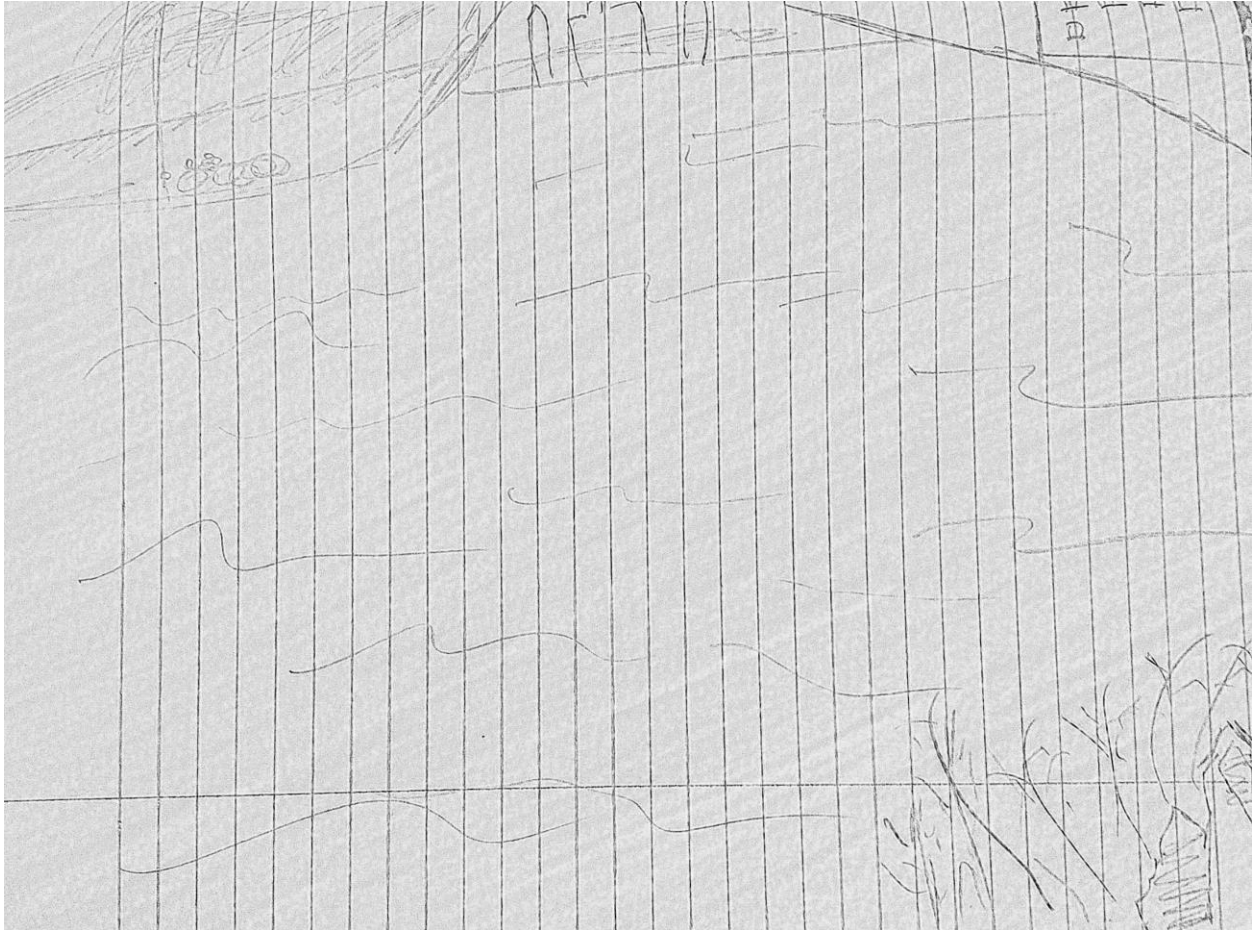
Picture taken when walking around from 1st street to 2nd street on the side of the canal where it is completely revamped into a beautiful relaxing spot for the public. According to GCC(Christine), privately owned spaces must have parts of their territory opened up to the public.



Last location, where we heard the final statements from the conservancy group. This was taken with my back facing the canal and the opposing side is whole foods. The whole foods claim themselves to be “The most greenest supermarket in NYC.” What caught my attention was the cleanliness and the machinery which spun artistically creating renewable energy.



Last but not least, a picture of the canal with my back facing whole foods where all the “greenery” is located. While we arrived at the site, I noticed groups of people sitting down attentively while patiently sketching the same view shown in this picture. Without the infrastructure and pollutants, I can imagine the canal giving off tranquil vibes for those who acknowledges.



I sketched the area where oysters were located and also where a whole bunch of random people were also sketching around me. This sketch was simple yet if seen by eye you can almost feel some

sort of peace coming from the stillness of the water.



A sketch of the whole foods area depicting the infrastructure and the new developments around the Gowanus canal which greatly beautifies the entire location. The place is immaculate with many world changing engineering such as wind powered generators and solar panels.

ANALYSIS: Select one of the topics discussed on the walk and 1-3 most important of your images (from those presented in the documentation section) and develop a 300-500-word discussion of that topic. Be specific and consider multiple points of view of that topic. Consider how it might affect the neighborhood, people, environment, art, development or anything else that you detect as significant either positively or negatively or both. How are your images relevant to the discussion? How will this topic affect the Genius Loci, or spirit, of this place? Does it have any ramifications for the rest of Brooklyn?

The Gowanus canal as we all know that it is completely polluted with all sorts of industrial waste dating back for more than a century of history. The topic which caught my interest was the geological location and its vulnerabilities of being deluged. The flooding part alone is not of concern here, what I'm most concerned about is the massive flow of hazardous waste being released onto the streets and into people's facilities if such event is to take place. The pollutants as mentioned by our guest speaker Joseph

contains infectious microbes such as e. coli, gonorrhea, cholera, and much more. If a flood is to take place, the residents will encounter chemicals and destructive bacterias which can cause many health implications. The canal may contain heavy metals and material wise impurities, the biggest concern here is not knowing which of the pollutants will cause health concerns. Getting rid of the industrial waste is one thing, but, we must seek answers to how the canal is planning to rid of the dangerous microbes. We also discussed about flood prevention and the use of flood banks. The flood banks is a good way of preventing floods but, since there is vegetation growing in these banks, I was wondering what will happen to the plants if coal tar residue is to be filled into the bank with the soil. Another thing which raised a question for me was how effective the capping of the pollutants will be. By capping the waste in the canal, theoretically, the canal should rise in water level which adds extra thoughts to the flooding matter.

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY (these must be words you learned on this walk such as specialized vocabulary, city agencies, names of businesses or significant people – they must be specific to the topic of the walk) *5 keywords required per site visit

1. Gowanus Canal Conservancy
2. Non-Profit
3. Private Funds
4. Coal tar
5. Sewage(poop)

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH: (these should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project; do not include questions you can answer with a quick google search)

1. What will be cleaned out of the canal and what will remain?
2. What are the thoughts of the people that are responsible for paying to have the canal cleaned?
3. Will the polluted water of the Gowanus Canal potentially kill the plants of the flood reservoirs if a floor is to occur?