

Learning Places Fall 2016

Library / Archive REPORT

New York Public Library Map Room

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INTRODUCTION

Today, we met at the NYPL's old Baltic and Slavic Reading Room to look at maps, related to Brooklyn and the Gowanus, dating from 1766 to 2009 with our guide Carmen Nigro. The NYPL is located on, Fifth Ave between Fortieth Street and Forty-second Street, one of Manhattan's busiest locale filled with tourists and native New Yorkers who work in that district. Thus far in my lifetime, I believe I've only visited the library maybe once as a child on a school field trip so my memory of the library besides being the Genius Loci of Fifth Avenue was very vague. Once entering inside the NYPL I was able to appreciate Beaux-Arts style Architecture and understand the library's importance to New York.

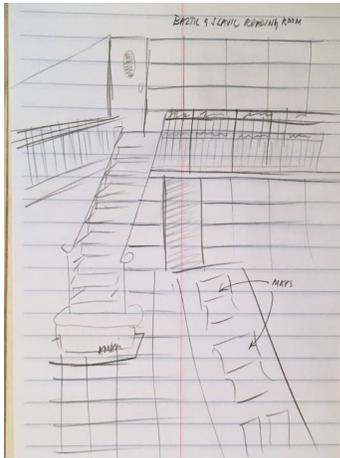
SITE OBSERVATIONS



The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division



1767 Ratzer Map of Gowanus in its earliest state



Sketch of Baltic and Slavic Reading Room by Lisa White

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

The Genius Loci of the NYPL is the NYPL, the library was built to reflect the greatness of New York. The building spans two blocks and is on one of New York's prominent streets Fifth Ave and the location for the library is one of New York's rare sites that has a street vista like the Opera found in France.

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

The New York Public Library is one of New York's greatest civic centers that is publicly owned and opened to the public. The NYPL currently exceeds fifty million items, in combination with lending collections of books, CDs and DVDs. The collection is organized into over 100 major topics, ranging from Accents and Dialects to Women Studies, Baseball, Computer Science, Gay and Lesbian Studies, Immigration, Judaica, Theatre and U.S. History. The Stephen A. Schwarzman Building located at the NYPL has the following:

- **General Research Division**

This Division serves as the gateway to the Library's world-class research collections of more than 43 million items. Located in the Rose Main Reading Room and Bill Blass Public Catalog Room, these two rooms serve as the central humanities and social sciences research hub.

- **Dorot Jewish Division**

This Division is responsible for administering, developing and promoting one of the world's great collections of Hebraica and Judaica.

- **Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature**

The Berg Collection contains approximately 35,000 printed volumes, pamphlets, and broadsides, and 2,000 linear feet of literary archives and manuscripts, representing the work of more than 400 authors.

- **Manuscripts and Archives Division**-The Division holds over 29,000 linear feet of manuscripts and archives in over 5,500 collections. The greatest strengths of this Division are the papers of individuals, families, and organizations, primarily from the New York region dating from the 18th through the 20th centuries.

- **Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division**

Established in 1898, this world's premier map collection holds more than 433,000 sheet maps and 20,000 books and atlases published between the 16th and 21st centuries.

- **Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy**

Collects publications documenting American history on the national, state, and local levels, including an extensive holding on New York City history. The Division has a well known collection of family histories and other genealogical collections.

- **Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle**

Offers a wide range of collateral materials supporting study of the period, including biographies, criticism, political and scientific treatises, grammars, dictionaries, almanacs, and business directories. It also has a collection of topical pamphlets, broadsides and other ephemera related to issues of the day such as the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 and the 1820 adultery trial of Queen Caroline

- **Rare Book Division**

The Rare Book Division is rich in Americana (books printed before 1801), holding of European Americana from early period to 1600, collection of broadsides, American newspapers printed before 1865, printed collections, with nearly 800 pieces of incunabula ranging from the 1460 Catholicon to Schedel's Liber Chronicarum, block books, indulgences, and several examples of Asian printing (that predates the incunabular period). One of the most important collecting areas of this division are voyages and travels.

- **The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division**

Works of art, reference materials on paintings, sculptures, drawings, printmaking, photography and the history of architecture from prehistoric times to the present

Who might use this collection and for what purpose?

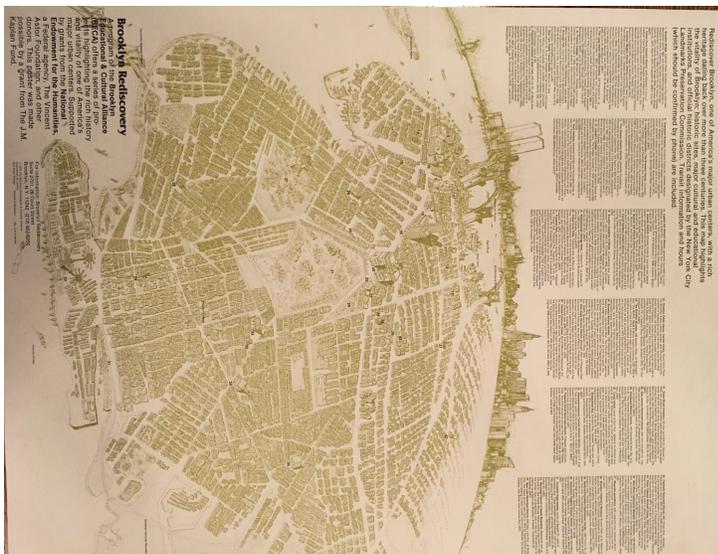
Anyone interested in World Studies, Zoning Laws, Urban Development, Historians, to students at NYCCT in an elective class: Learning Places, Understanding the City would find this room very resourceful.

Are there any special rules for using or accessing material?

To make the most out of your visit to The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division it is best to contact NYPL in advance. Some material due to its age and rarity cannot be handled by the public and will require an associate of the library to assist in turning pages. Photos are allowed without the flash, as the light from the flash ruins the maps.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #1



1979 Rediscovery Map of Brooklyn; Illustrated by Al Lorenz

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

This is the 1979 Rediscovery Map of Brooklyn. It was the beginning of the Gentrification Era for Brooklyn.

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

It was created by The Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance; Illustrated by Al Lorenz

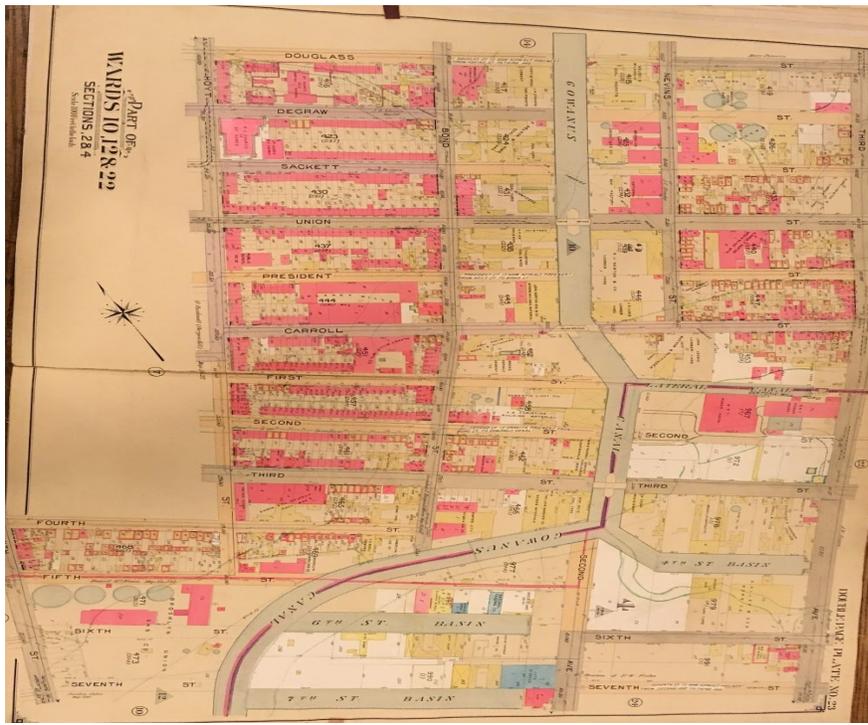
3. What does this source tell us about the place we are studying? What themes or subtopics does it relate to?

This source helps to understand the initial propaganda used to artfully introduce gentrification which relates to my group's topic of Gentrification and Community.

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

The 1979 Rediscovery Map of Brooklyn can integrate into a research project by giving a visual and informative depiction of the beginning of gentrification and help to answer or at least introduce a timeline.

CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #2



Sam Borne Maps 1920-1972

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

This is a Sam Borne Map giving a pictorial image of all the homes and businesses within the Gowanus Canal that was built from either brick, wood, or metal.

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

This map was created by the famous publisher Sam Borne for the use of insurance companies. Insurance companies would know how to insure a property based on the material it was built with.

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

This map help us to know that along the Gowanus Canal there were mostly industrial businesses and they were made out of wood; surrounding areas were predominantly residential and their homes were built with brick.

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

This map could help understand zoning of the Gowanus during the time period of 1920-1972.

GENERAL NOTES:

- Zoning and the Gowanus
- Artists and their effect on the The Gowanus
- Community involvement to navigate change in the Gowanus
- Gentrification
- Importance of local businesses and community

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. How does the loss of local businesses change the fabric of community in the Gowanus?
2. How can old communities and new communities coexist?
3. How can Gowanus unite to be one community for Artist, native and new Gowanus residents?

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