

Learning Places Fall 2016

# Library / Archive REPORT

## New York Public Library Map Room

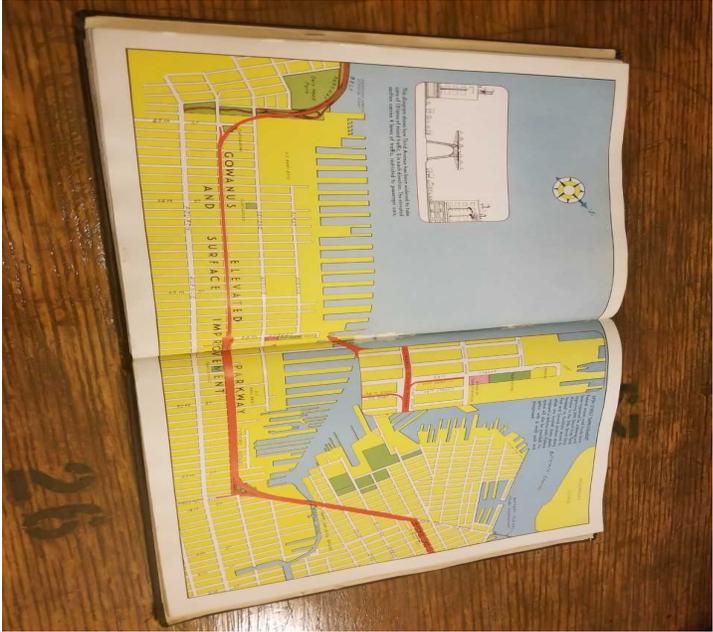
Jarnelle Foucault

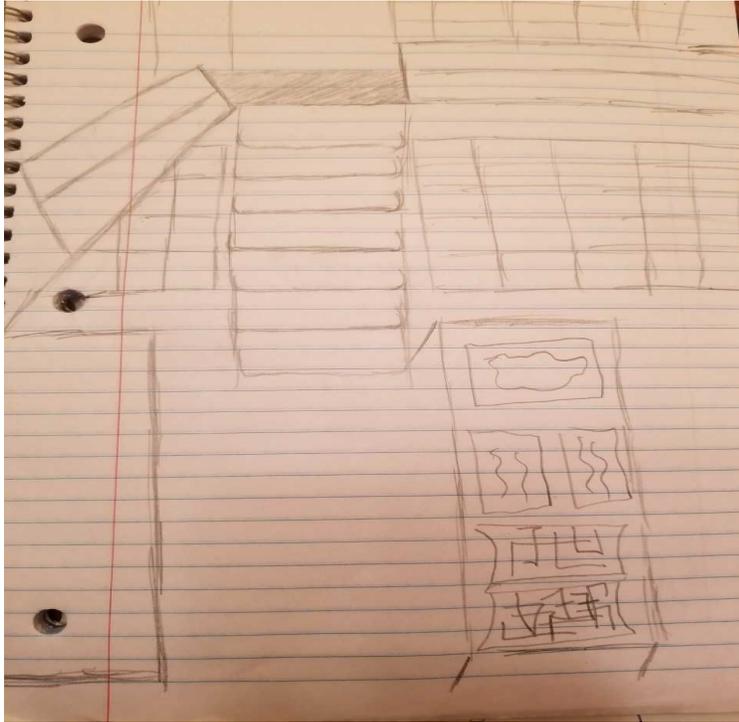
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### INTRODUCTION

For our second library visit we went to the New York City Public Library located inside Bryant Park between 5th and 6th. The New York Public Library and Bryant park are both tourist attractions so you can say the area is very congested, especially being between Times Square and Grand Central with multiple name brand stores in between. Outside and inside the library has a lot activity majority of them tourist, but there are quiet areas where you would see the locals and college students looking for a place to concentrate. This wasn't my first visit to the library because I once had to do a project on the NYPL, basically talking about the history and what activity it offers. My expectations were to learn how to the materials the NYPL had to offer because being such a big space it can be intimidating to look through. Yet, I would have to saw after the visit really help take away that intimidation fact and help me feel more comfortable to come for future visit.

# SITE OBSERVATIONS





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

I feel the Genius Loci of the New York Public Library are barn-face owls. And not just one but multiple owls flying over the lobby and hallways observing the human activity. But, inside the rooms designed for studying there is only one owl perched in the corner as some type of guardian for peace and knowledge.

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

The New York Public Library is a public center, and one of the largest public library in the country. Being a public center center means it's open to anyone and everyone where they can have access to information. The sources the NYPL contain range from books, maps, manuscripts, audio books, movies, music, art, magazines, photographs, public records, etc.

There are also different divisions that contain different for example, The General Research Division has over 43 millions items such as world history, literature, religion,

philosophy, and politics—from authoritative scholarly books to unique pamphlets to popular magazines and fiction—in over 430 languages. Or The Music Division is one of the world's preeminent music collections documenting the art of music in all its diversity classical and opera as well as the whole spectrum of popular music including spirituals, ragtime, jazz, musical theater, film, rock and world music. The Berg Collection contains some 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. The Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division collects, preserves, and makes available for research purposes rare, unique, and primary materials that document the history and culture of people of African descent throughout the world, with a concentration on the Americas and the Caribbean.

- Who might use this collection and for what purpose?

People who might look into these collections are anyone interested in these subjects, people doing research, or people looking for more information about their culture/history.

- Are there any special rules for using or accessing material?

A common rule for most of these divisions is that you should call ahead for certain items and you need to show ID.

## SOURCE ANALYSIS



Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. (1916). *City of New York. Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Use District Map*. Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e4-7675-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

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

This was an atlas made in 1916 and the purpose of this source is to show the usage of the streets in 1916 before zoning laws were in place.

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

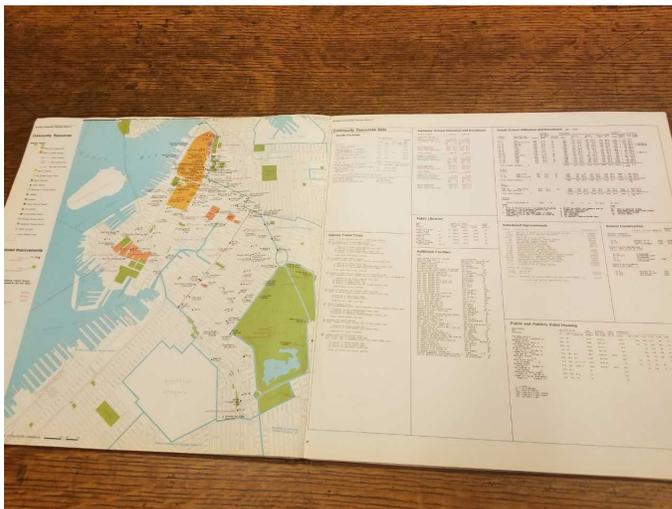
Made by the city engineer department and was created for developers looking to build in the Gowanus area at the time.

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

This source gives us an idea of what could be built and where, especially at the with the weak zoning laws that were in place at that time. The themes this atlas relate to is zoning laws, gentrification, and public spaces.

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

How this source can be integrated with my research project on public spaces is that current developments being built along the Gowanus canal must include 40 feet of public space. So we can look at this atlas and see how these businesses were coexist with the original state of Gowanus or also known as public space, which can give us an idea of how we can coexist today. A question we can ask is that can Gowanus ever be brought to it's original state?



Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. (1969). *Plan for New York City. 1969. A proposal. 3 Brooklyn. New York City planning commission*. Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c42cb93f-8db0-ca65-e040-e00a18064e5c>

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

This is a proposal map called “Plan for New York City”, the purpose of the map was to give an idea of urban renewal to bring communities together. In the key it list different community resources in the Gowanus area.

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

It was created by the New York City Planning Commissions, created for the public and give a new look at neighborhoods.

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

The source tells us that the city noticed there was a result of urban decline, which we see with the history of Gowanus. The themes this map relates to is community resources, green infrastructure, and public spaces.

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

How this source can be integrated with my research on public spaces is that just how we are trying to understand how to improve Gowanus with public spaces, this map also wants to improve the shape of neighborhoods with resources such as libraries, health services, and school and housing improvements. A question we can ask is that has any of these improvements been implemented?

## GENERAL NOTES:

- Sand Burn Map
- Fire Insurance
- Key: Pink is brick houses, Yellow is wood house
- Glue over new developments on insurance maps
- Natural Boundaries

- **QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH**

1. How is looking at the Gowanus in the past help build Gowanus future?
2. Can knowing the history of old developments help with constructing public spaces?
3. How can we get city planner and developers to seek old maps as references in rebuilding Gowanus?