

Cover Sheet: What I Changed

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

Learning Places Fall 2016

Library / Archive REPORT

New York Public Library Map Room

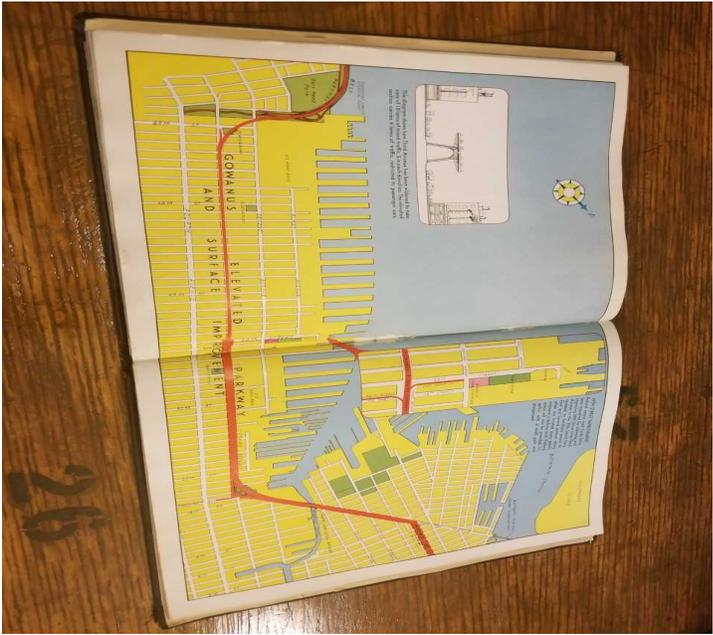
Jarnelle Foucault

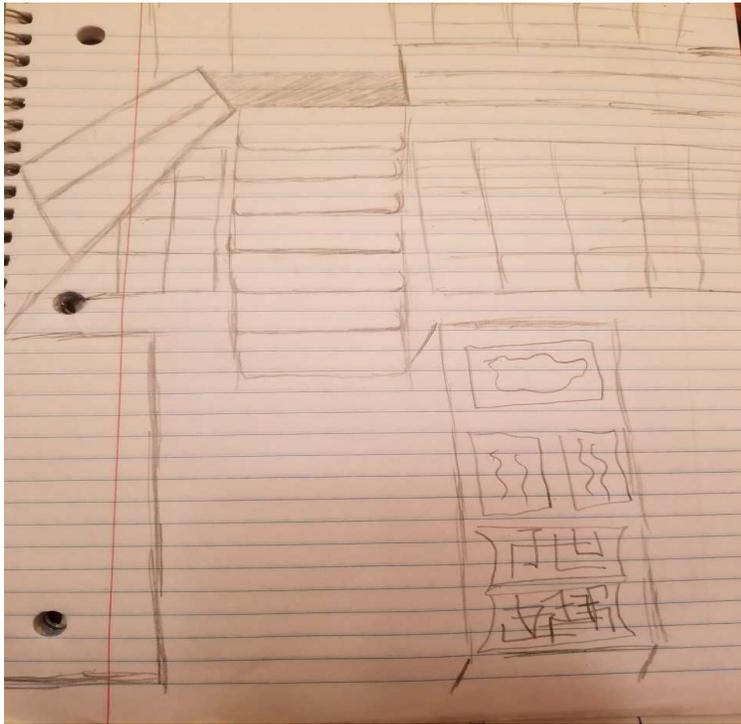
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INTRODUCTION

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 is an 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 has a plethora of resources such as books, newspapers, music, photographs, etc. The archive we visited I would say it's a historical archive because these maps tell the history of this once salt marsh that now is becoming a prime real estate area. Also when looking at at these atlas and maps, they gives us an idea of how life was back then, based on what was built.

- 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.

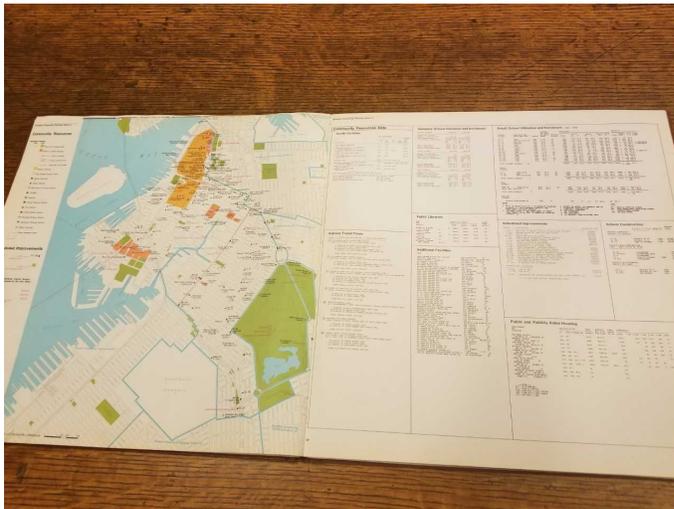
3. What does this source tell us about the place we are studying? What themes or subtopics does it

relate to?

This source gives us an idea of what could be built and where, especially at the time with the weak zoning laws that were in place. The themes this atlas relate to are 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 coexisted 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 its 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 lists 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 Commission, 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:

- Sanborn Map similar to fire insurance map. The Sanborn Map for Gowanus show building being removed for the Gowanus highway.
- Fire Insurance- Insurances would expect buildings to see what materials were used to know how much to charge. A bigger problem in Gowanus than being insured for fires is being insured for floods. Which is why we see some public spaces in private developments have sponge parks to absorb water during floods.
- Key: Pink is brick houses, Yellow is wood house, this key was used to label the material of builds on maps/atlas. This key reminds me of zoning laws and how currently zoning laws are changing to accommodate developers.
- Glue over new developments on insurance maps were common because new buildings kept being built so instead of prints new maps, glue was a cheap and quicker alternative,
- Natural Boundaries were shown in older maps, which shows how in the beginning people followed the natural shape of Gowanus when constructing. This relates to my project of

public spaces because developers may want to look at maps with natural boundaries when thinking about building a public space that blends with the environment.

- **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?