

Learning Places Fall 2016

Library / Archive REPORT

Brooklyn Public Library

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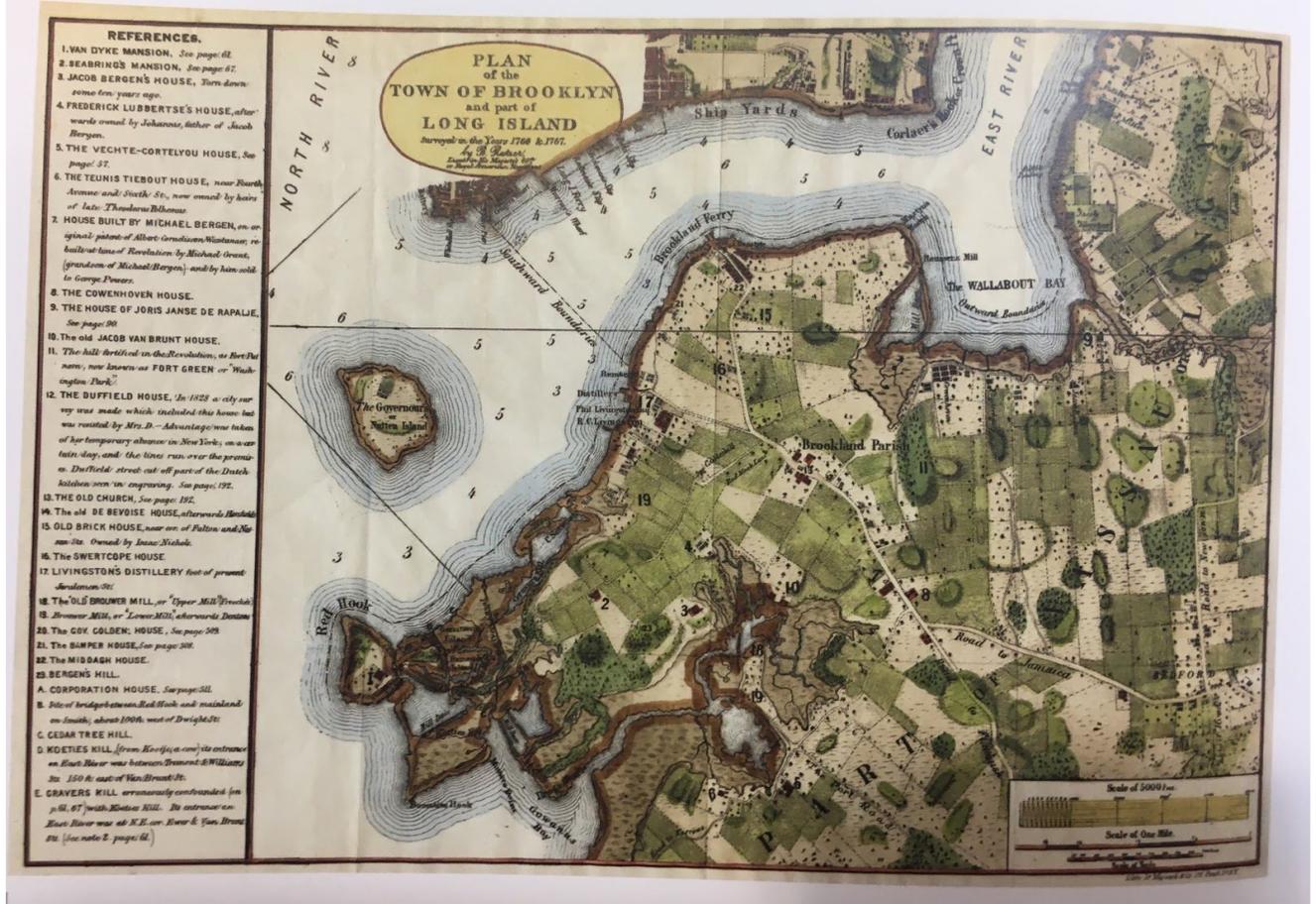




INTRODUCTION

On October 5th the Learning and Understanding Cities class went to the Brooklyn Public Library. This is the first time that I have traveled to that library. I am not familiar with the borough of Brooklyn so it was exciting to travel somewhere new and go to a building I had never been to before. In the library we were joined by the library worker who spoke to us about how the library works. In the room she showed us various maps from different time periods for the borough of Brooklyn. The maps were useful because many depicted Gowanus and its history. There were also books on hand about Gowanus. Arriving to the library I expected to see and learn information about the Gowanus Canal , I can say I left with new information about the canal that I had known before.

SITE OBSERVATIONS



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

The Genius Loci of the Brooklyn Library is that it is a place of greater learning. It is a place of discovery where information can be dug up in the older books or maps available in the library. It is also a place with a dynamic environment , many visitors are welcome to explore its collections.

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

The Brooklyn Public Library has a historical collection where various forms of documents are held. There are both printed and digital materials available. Specifically the library holds documents and materials about the borough of Brooklyn. In its collections are books , legal documents, maps , old and new newspapers clippings and advertisements as well as digitized information. Their vault of information holds many treasures that allows visitors to go back in time and understand the time as those who lived in it.

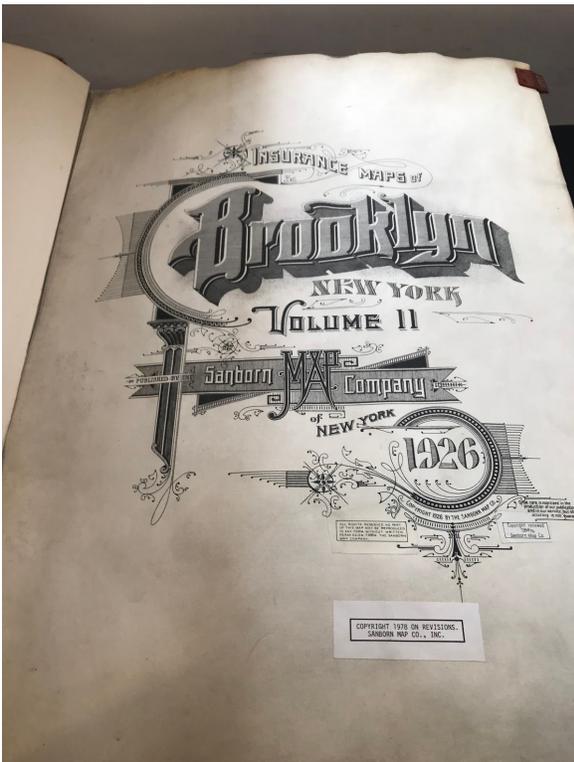
Who might use this collection and for what purpose?

Anybody interested in researching Brooklyn can take advantage of the collection. From students to professors are able to use this resource that is available. Also those who are interested in learning about the history of their current property. They can see what type of building they bought and reside in for insurance purpose. They can also see what kind of businesses took place where they currently live. People researching the Gowanus canal can search for information about the canal because the library has many original maps on the land especially before and after the canal was constructed.

Are there any special rules for using or accessing material?

The documents and sources we were shown during the field trip were only allowed to be seen in that room. Most of the documents had to be found by the librarian before hand and brought out to the class. We were able to take pictures during our visit.

SOURCE ANALYSIS



CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #1

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

Insurance Maps of Brooklyn. Volume 11. New York. Sanborn Map Company. 1926. Copyright 1978 on Revisions. Sanborn Map CO, INC.

The source is a large map that has information specifically about the fire insurance in areas of Brooklyn.

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

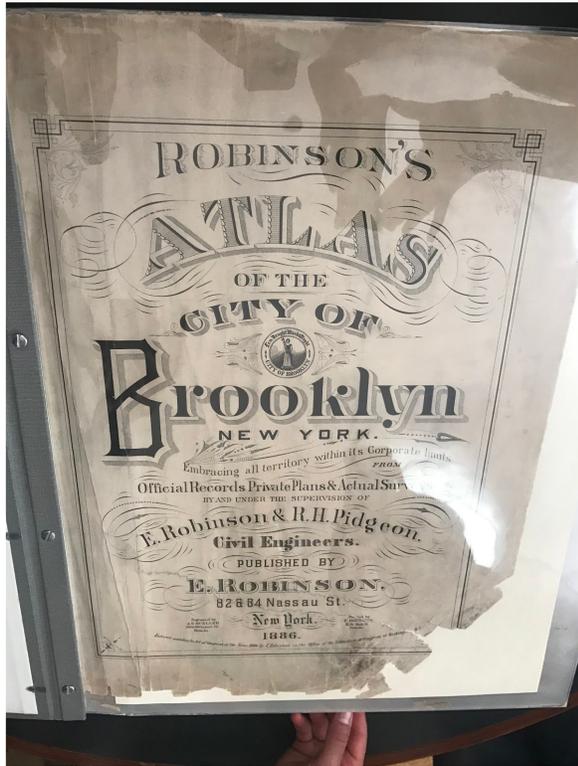
Sanborn Map Company created the map. It was created for insurance companies to gain knowledge of the type of fire policies they could give out based off each building

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

It shows the surrounding buildings along the Gowanus canal. It labels the type of buildings that they were and the materials they had.

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

It could be integrated into a project if someone is researching the types of materials that were used in the Gowanus area in previous times.



CITATION for ARCHIVAL SOURCE #2

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

Robinson's Atlas of the City of Brooklyn, New York. The Official Records, Private Plans and Actual Surveys by under the supervision of E. Robinson and R.H Pidgeon, 828 84 Nassau Street, New York, 1886.

The source is a map which describes in detail the lots in Brooklyn. It separates the lot by number and colors specifying its use. It was a way to record information about property owners and the type of use the lots had.

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

E. Robinson and R.H Pidgeon created it to keep a ledger of what was occurring in Brooklyn with the properties. It was created for themselves the people of Brooklyn and companies who would need that type of information.

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

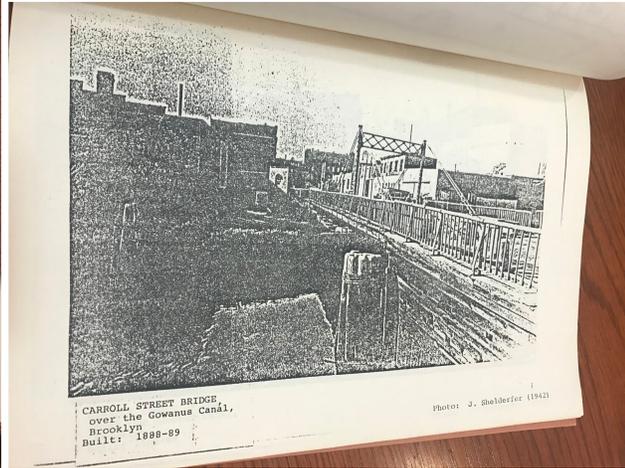
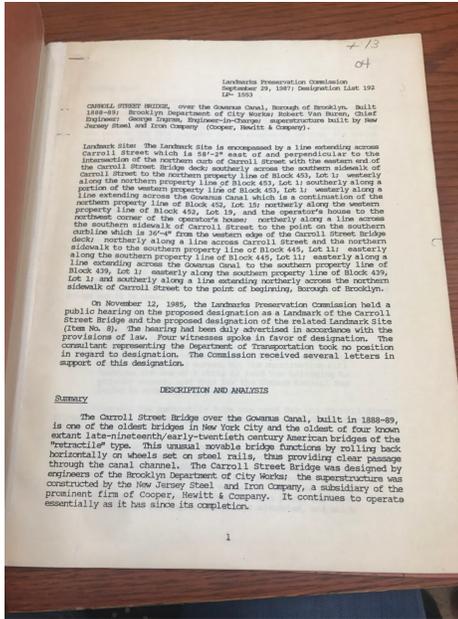
It shows us its neighboring and surrounding history and what the land had been used for. It gives dates and specifies changes that have occurred in the area. It helps those researching the area to understand what has worked best in the neighborhood.

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

It can be integrated because business developers can find information on specifics of the land. It can answer the questions “Who bought this property?” “What was this property used for?”, and “How long was this specific use here for? Whether it be business or residential.

GENERAL NOTES:

- The library is equipped with an endless amount of historical information about Brooklyn.
- The historical maps showing the surrounding neighborhood of the Gowanus Canal depict more industrial use commercials.
- Most of the building materials used in Brooklyn were those who were common in the time of construction.
- The collection that the librarian showed the class varied from books to maps as well as legal documents.
- There was a Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing document available about the Carroll Street Bridge



QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. As community members how can we contribute to spreading historical information?
2. Will developers take into account the past of the Gowanus when they move into the neighborhood?
3. As property owners , can the historical maps show who is accountable for the pollution in the Gowanus Canal?

