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Waterfront

Waterfront, an exhibition hosted by the Brooklyn Historical Society brings Brooklyn's Coastline to life. The exhibit explores the past, present and future development of the area through the eyes of workers, artist, industries, families and neighborhoods. The exhibit also showcases the coastlines global significance. Addressing pressing topics like rising sea level and gentrification.

The name of the exhibit is where its located. You enter 55 Water St through Brooklyn's waterfront, to the right you'll see the museum. The exhibit is fairly dark but well lit. I walked up to the Museum Representative, she welcomed me and I started walking around. To the right of the exhibit is a small space looking like a hallway. It features blue collar workers such as factory employees and train mechanics. You have a chance to hear their stories with their own words. Stories like, a factory worker looking out the window to see a Streetcar pass by.

Next to it, in the other room is a short movie playing. The movie features the development of the waterfront. Starting off millions of years ago when the ice melted and quickly moving to the swamp in 1600. The people who lived there were mostly Native Americans, living in small villages and tribes. By the 1700s you have small towns and boats transitioning to ships and warehouses by the 1800s. in 1810, the population of Brooklyn was 4,402. The tallest buildings were about six stories and there were houses mixed in, mainly for industrial use. By the 1850s the population grew close to 100,000; and in 1860, it multiplied 1.5 times. The 1860s had a fully developed waterfront. The houses were gone to be replaced by buildings and what once was small docks scattered around the coastline is now a lively shipping area exchanging goods. The video also mentions the "Great Bridge." Showing us how they connected the cables before building the road. The 1880s featured women working in various factory jobs, showing women play a huge role in shaping the coastline. Finally, the video glosses over the 1900s and moves to present day. Showing slides of 'then' and 'now' pictures.

Throughout the exhibit there's more areas where you can experience the life of a women factory worker or see the types of shells that washed up to the shore. There's an exhibit that you can put yourself in by taking a picture and then placing it into the slides. You can also listen to the commuters on the Ferry and Train. One woman spoke about how much she loved taking the Ferry while another man voiced his displeasure.

On the back wall, on the other side of the movie area was a map of Brooklyn around the 1850s. Its a bird's eye view of the borough. You can see the Brooklyn Bridge and the street next to it which is now knows as Cadman Plaza West. The map features boats of all lengths moving through the east river and under the bridge. It gave a great image of what Brooklyn was like at that time. I spent a lot of time looking at the map and my phones map. The main difference is how much bigger the East River was. You can clearly see we have more coastline now than before.

I took some time to look at the other information and listened in our climate change solutions. For the most part our plan is to keep pushing LEED compliant buildings and reduce pollution. While implementing more solar and wind farms. Those plans are slowly moving into place and won't be in full effect until the next 10 years. Adopting as early as possible is the best way to reduce sea level rise.

finally, I did a quick look around, scanning other areas I might be interested in and finally left. This exhibit gave me a greater understanding of Brooklyn, it allowed me to appreciate the areas I walk through every day.