Guide to Brooklyn Atlas Collection, 1855-1969

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Various
Title: Brooklyn Atlas Collection
Date Span: 1855-2005
Abstract: This collection consists of eleven series:
1. Maps of the City of Brooklyn, 1855
2. Maps of Prospect Park Extension, 1866-1868
3. Atlases of Long Island, 1873
4. Farm Line Map of the City of Brooklyn, 1874
5. Atlas of Brooklyn Townships, 1877
6. Atlas of Brooklyn, 1880
7. Hopkins’ Atlas of the City of Brooklyn, 1880
8. Robinson’s Atlases of Brooklyn, 1886
9. Hyde’s Atlases of Brooklyn, 1904-1929
The atlases provide specific information about the features of Brooklyn’s physical layout, including streets, buildings, parks, water and transportation systems.

Quantity: 52 atlases
Location: Central Library, Brooklyn Collection, Reserve Room
Repository: Brooklyn Public Library – Brooklyn Collection
Call Number: BC 0239

Scope and Content Note

The Brooklyn Atlas collection provides a wealth of information about Brooklyn geography and city planning from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. In addition to topographical information about elevation, water depth and natural features, atlases provide details on property owners, building construction
and usage, street construction, modes of transportation, and water maintenance. Our earliest atlases show farm lines and the names of land owners. With the expansion of the urban landscape, we see more concentrated areas and the development of new symbols and identification tools. Construction details like street width, water pipe size, lot size, and fire hydrant location are often labeled. Advances in transportation can be traced with the eventual addition of symbols for paved and unpaved streets, rail roads, trolleys, elevated railways and subways.

Most atlases identify buildings based on the type of material they were made out of: brick, stone, frame or a combination of materials. In some cases, the number of stories, the presence of a first floor store front, a basement, skylight and other details are also included. Greenhouses, stables, and saloons and hotels with bars may receive their own symbol. Businesses, factories, churches, synagogues, schools, police and fire departments and other municipal buildings were often specifically identified and labeled.

When using historic maps, it is important to recognize that the boundaries of Brooklyn changed over time. Your neighborhood may or may not be included in a map of Brooklyn. What is considered the borough of Brooklyn today was commonly referred to as Kings County for much of the 19th century. The original City of Brooklyn spread along the waterfront from Red Hook to the Navy Yard and inland as far as Prospect Park. At one time, Williamsburg was its own city, and areas along the southern and eastern most parts of our borough were absorbed by the towns of Gravesend, New Utrecht, Flatbush, Flatlands, and New Lots.

As a result of their size and age, our atlases range from good to fragile condition. We have been able to encase some atlases in Mylar to protect them from further deterioration. Our collection also includes three sets of desk atlases, which are more portable and easier to handle.

The following summaries describe each of the 10 series of atlases in our collection, which have been broken down by publisher. Please note that the date range is not continuous.

This list may be updated as atlases are acquired by the Brooklyn Collection.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Atlases are available in Central Library’s Brooklyn Collection. Atlases are only available during the Collection’s operating hours and, due to their fragile nature, some may only be viewable in our Reserve Room.

Use Restrictions

While many items in the Brooklyn Collection are unrestricted, we do not own reproduction rights to all materials. Be aware of the several kinds of rights that might apply: copyright, licensing and trademarks. The borrower assumes all responsibility for copyright questions.

Access Points

Subject Topics:
Brooklyn (N.Y.) – Maps
Street Addresses – New York (State) – New York – Maps
**Arrangement**

**Series 1: Maps of the City of Brooklyn**

Publisher: William Perris  
Title: *Maps of the City of Brooklyn*, 2 volumes  
Date Span: 1855  
Abstract: Atlas of the City of Brooklyn in two volumes. Building labels broken down by material type and purpose of building: dwellings, stores and dwellings with first floor stores. Stores and businesses are further identified by classes ranked for “specially hazardous” in case of fire. List of class breakdowns show breadth of Brooklyn industry: bakers, boat builders, varnish manufacturers, bleaching works, paper mills, rope walks, instrument makers, and more. An excellent resource for the study of Brooklyn waterfront industry.  
Condition: Fragile

**Series 2: Maps of Prospect Park Extension**

Publisher: Unknown  
Titles:  
*Prospect Park Extension (B)*, 1866  
*Further Prospect Park Extension (C)*, 1868  
Date Span: 1866-1868  
Abstract: The accompanying map to the commissioners’ report on the development of Prospect Park. Identifies land that is to be included in the extension of Prospect Park, including streets and buildings that were eventually demolished during the expansion.

**Series 3: Atlas of Long Island**

Publisher: Beers, Comstock and Cline  
Title: *Atlas of Long Island, New York* (2 copies)  
Date Span: 1873  
Abstract: Atlas of Long Island in one volume. Includes individual maps for several towns on Long Island, which includes Brooklyn and Queens. Additional entries cover census statistics of the United States, maps of the City and State of New York and Long Island and lists of post offices, railroad stations and distances. The only atlas to include advertisements for Brooklyn and New York City businesses. Individual maps identify land owners, lot numbers, railroad tracks, and labels for some buildings.

**Series 4: Farm Line Atlas**

Publisher: J.B. Beers and Co.  
Title: *Farm Line Maps of the City of Brooklyn*  
Date Span: 1874
Abstract: Atlas of the City of Brooklyn in one volume. Identifies farm lines with names of property owners and the current street grid. Rail roads, old roads, closed streets and ward lines also labeled. Compiled and drawn by Henry Fulton, C.E.

Series 5: Dripps’ Atlas of the Townships
Publisher: Mathew Dripps
Title: Atlas of the Townships of New Utrecht, Gravesend, Flatbush, Flatlands and New Lots, Kings County, New York
Date Span: 1877
Abstract: Atlas of the areas in Kings County that were not in the City of Brooklyn in one volume. Identifies railroads, streets, bulkheads, basins, piers, street dimensions, landowner names and tracts of land.
Location: Central Library, Brooklyn Collection, Reserve Room

Series 6: Atlas of Brooklyn
Publisher: Not Available (Missing Title Page)
Title: Atlas of Brooklyn, New York
Date Span: 1880
Abstract: Atlas of the City of Brooklyn in one volume. Identifies building materials, fire hydrants, steam railroads, street railways, old farm lines, water courses, block dimensions and street widths.

Series 7: Hopkins’ Atlas of Brooklyn
Publisher: G.M. Hopkins, C.E.
Title: Atlas of the City of Brooklyn Complete in Six Volumes
Date Span: 1880
Abstract: Atlas of the City of Brooklyn in six volumes. Identifies building materials, old farm lines and water courses, water pipes and sewers, fire hydrants, block distances and elevation.

Series 8: Robinson’s Atlases of Brooklyn
Publisher: E. Robinson
Titles: Robinson’s Atlas of the City of Brooklyn, New York, 1886
Certified Copies of Important Maps of Wards 8, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25, 1889
Robinson’s Atlas of Kings County, 1890 (2 copies)
Date Span: 1886-1890
Abstract: When combined, Robinson’s atlases cover the entire borough of Brooklyn in two volumes. Identifies building materials, paved and unpaved streets, water pipes and sizes, unused lots, rail roads, horse carriage lines and fire hydrants.
Series 9: Hyde’s Atlases of Brooklyn

Publisher: E. Belcher Hyde
Titles: 
- *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn Complete in Four Volumes*, 1904-1905, 4 volumes
- *Hyde’s Miniature Atlas of Brooklyn*, 1912, 2 volumes
- *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York*, 1916-1920, 3 volumes
- *Desk Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York*, 1920-1922, 4 volumes
- *Desk Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York*, 1929, 4 volumes

Date Span: 1904-1929
Abstract: The atlases published by the E. Belcher Hyde Company are similar in scope and content, with slight variations on what information is provided. Provide details on building material, street material, water mains and sewers, transportation systems, elevation, old farm lines, and property owners. The larger atlases supply slightly more detail than the desk atlases, and later atlases reflect new updates in transportation and the addition of elevators in buildings. Later atlases also identify saloons and hotels with liquor licenses.

Series 10: Plan for New York City

Publisher: New York City Planning Commission
Title: *Plan for New York City: A Proposal*, Volume 3 (of 6)
Date Span: 1969
Abstract: The third in a six volume report on the City of New York. Includes maps, demographics and written evaluations of the socio-economic conditions and a summary of the entire borough, as well as each district. Summaries cover topics such as history, transportation, education, industry and ethnicity. Each section includes relevant maps on topics such as population and income, ethnic makeup, transportation and commerce.

Series 11: Insurance Maps of Brooklyn

Publisher: Sanborn Map Company
Title: *Insurance Maps of Brooklyn*
Date Span: 1926, 2005
Abstract: In 21 volumes, the Sanborn Maps cover the entirety of Brooklyn on a block-by-block level, providing information on material structure of buildings, water mains and sewers, property lines, streets and general property information. Only volume 6 is included in the 1926 edition, covering parts of Park Slope, Prospect Heights and Sunset Park. The rest of the collection includes 21 volumes originally published in 1930, but regularly amended up to 2005.