Welcome

The Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL) Consortial Survey Initiative is a 30-month project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to assess backlogged archival collections at 22 Philadelphia area libraries, archives, and museums.

This site will be updated regularly to keep participants and others informed on the project's progress.

Information about the December 4-5 conference celebrating the conclusion of the Consortial Survey Initiative.

Something New for Something Old.

Innovative Approaches to
Managing Archives and Special Collections

News for January and February 2009

- Conference audio and presentations posted.
- Wrapping up the survey, starting up the CLIR-funded followup.
Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)

Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) was officially approved by the Society of American Archivists as an SAA standard in March 2004, following review by its Standards Committee, its Technical Subcommittee for Descriptive Standards, and by the general archival community.

DACS is an output-neutral set of rules for describing archives, personal papers, and manuscript collections, and can be applied to all material types. It is the U.S. implementation of international standards (i.e., ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF)) for the description of archival materials and their creators.

As a replacement for Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts (APPAM), DACS guides archivists and catalogers in creating robust descriptive systems and descriptive records. DACS extends the skeletal rules for archival materials that comprise chapter 4 of AACR2. It provides both specific rules for describing archives and illustrates how these rules might be implemented in MARC and EAD format. It includes crosswalks to these and other standards.

Archivists and catalogers can use DACS to describe archival materials at any level of specificity, from the collection to the item level. DACS includes an overview of archival description (including the requirements for effective multilevel description), outlines the elements that must be included at different levels of description, and describes how those elements should be implemented.

In addition, DACS provides specific guidance in describing creators of archival material, constructing archival authority records, and recording forms of names. DACS may also be used in conjunction with other standards to treat aspects of description unique to specific media types.

DACS is available from the Society of American Archivists. To purchase, click here.
Encoded Archival Description
Version 2002 Official Site

**general information**

- About EAD
- Background on EAD development
- Design principles for enhancement of the EAD
- Technical Subcommittee on EAD
- Other Sites related to EAD

**version 2002 - current**

- EAD 2002 Schema
- EAD DTD, version 2002
- EAD Tag Library (with examples and crosswalks), version 2002
- EAD 2002 Tag Library Translations

**version 1.0 (1998) - superseded documentation**

- EAD Tag Library, version 1.0 (1998)
- EAD Application Guidelines, version 1.0 (1998)

**Encoded Archival Context**

- Encoded Archival Context - Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families

**tools and helper files**

A variety of tools and helper files for a number of different XML authoring and editing applications is available at the SAA Standards Portal EAD Web site. These tools will be kept up to date with the current versions of the software with which they are intended to be used:

http://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-subcommittee-on-encoded-archival-description-ead/encoded-archival-description-ead

**SAA EAD Roundtable**

The EAD Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists is intended to promote the implementation and use of encoding standards for dissemination of archival information:

http://www2.archivists.org/groups/encoded-archival-description-ead-roundtable

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The EAD Document Type Definition (DTD) is a standard for encoding archival finding aids using Extensible Markup Language (XML). The standard is maintained in the Network Development and MARC Standards Office of the Library of Congress (LC) in partnership with the Society of American Archivists.
Search Finding Aids

Use the search box to search finding aids for any or all of these collections:

- The Fales Library & Special Collections
- The Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives
- New York University Archives
- New-York Historical Society
- Brooklyn Historical Society

Search for

Submit Search Query

Tips for Searching

By default, the search engine will return items with ALL of your search terms. If you would like to see finding aids with either of two or more search terms, use the OR operator.

Example: Spanish OR Portugese

If you would like to search for an exact phrase, place the phrase in quotes.

Example: "Give me Liberty"
Welcome to Emma!

Emma is the Catablog of Archives, Manuscripts and Special Collections at the Brooklyn Historical Society. It contains brief overviews and links to fuller information about our archival collections. Using Emma you can:

:: **Search** our collections by keyword in using the search box to your right

:: **Browse** the collections by subject category using the drop-down menu to your right

:: **Browse** the collections alphabetically by the name of their creator using the alphabet list to your right

:: **View full finding aids** for many collections using the links at the end of each collection description

:: **Find out** information about our hours, appointments, and other frequently asked questions using the menu bars on your left
Brooklyn Historical Society > BobCat > BHS Resources

BHS Resources  All Libraries

Find books, periodicals, maps, manuscripts & more.

Limit to:  All items ▼
          that contain my query words ▼
          Anywhere in the record ▼

Advanced Search

Search  New Search

Other BHS Catalogs

Finding Aid Portal
Emma
Image Catalog
Help
Reference Question?
Visit the Library
Family Research
House Research
Rights & Reproductions

Visiting the Othmer Library

Hours: Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 1:00-5:00 PM

Location & Directions:
128 Pierrepont Street, 2nd floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Directions, admission rates, and general museum information are available here.

Appointments:
You do not need an appointment to use books, periodicals, newspapers, maps and atlases, and the searchable database of our digitized images and oral histories during open hours.
You do need an appointment to use the Archive & Manuscript Collections. Please request appointment at least one week in advance by filling out our online form. Appointments are available only during open library hours. If you need to do extensive research in the collections, you may request an appointment outside of these hours; these requests will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis.

About the Othmer Library
Founded in 1863 as the Long Island Historical Society, the Brooklyn Historical Society's (BHS) mission was to discover, procure, and preserve whatever may relate to general history, especially the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of the United States, the State of New York, and more particularly of the counties, towns,
and villages of Long Island.

Through time the institution narrowed the focus of the scope of the collections and began to seek out materials specifically relating to Brooklyn and Long Island. Today, the Othmer Library is a nationally recognized research library comprised of special collections, archives and manuscripts, image and oral history collections. The library possesses a remarkable and unique collection of Brooklyn and Long Island materials that provides important insights into our nation's history and heritage.

The Othmer Library serves the mission of the Brooklyn Historical Society by supporting research into the history of Brooklyn and Long Island and by collecting, preserving, and promoting access to our library and archival materials. The Library's collections foster and enrich BHS' exhibits, education activities, and programming.

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About SAFA

Engaging First-Year College Students in Primary Source Research

The Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) is proud to announce Students and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA), a three-year, US Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant that will create a replicable pedagogical model for collaboration between archives and institutions of higher learning.

Over five semesters, BHS will work with eighteen partner faculty from three neighboring schools: Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus; New York City College of Technology; and St. Francis College. Participating faculty are affiliated from many different departments, including English, History, Religious Studies, Architectural Technology, Fine and Graphic Arts, and American Studies. With SAFA staff, they will integrate BHS’s rich archival collections into their first-year undergraduate courses.

During the first academic year (2011-2012), the SAFA project will bring over 800 college students into BHS’s beautiful Othmer Library, designated a New York City interior landmark. Students and faculty will utilize archival material in assignments, projects, and class visits, and produce a class website chronicling their learning experiences. Students selected for SAFA’s summer internships will also have the opportunity to curate a physical exhibit featuring materials from BHS’s remarkable collection.

By introducing students to archival research, SAFA aims to develop students’ research and critical thinking skills, leading them to greater academic and professional success. The project will track and evaluate the impact of SAFA participation on key inquiry and archival literacy skills, student engagement, and retention.

By 2013, the final year of the grant, partner colleges and cultural repositories from other states will model similar collaborations on the Brooklyn cohort. In this way, SAFA will introduce a nationwide group of students to archival research and exhibition development.
Hidden Collections

...now browsing by category

Map of the Month – December 2012

Written by Carolyn on December 8th, 2012

This month's featured map is a reproduction of Hooker's Map of the Village of Brooklyn in the Year 1827. The reproduction was made in 1861 for Brooklyn reporter Henry McCloskey's Manual of the Corporation. Hooker's map is one of the earliest detailed maps of Brooklyn, showing wards, churches, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the marshlands of Gowanus, and even Archer Parmentier's Garden, one of Brooklyn's earliest botanical gardens.

Hooker's map of the village of Brooklyn in the year 1827. William Hooker. 1861. Brooklyn
Cunning, Care and Sheer Luck Save Rare Map

It was rolled up among other yellowed maps and prints that came off a delivery truck at the Brooklyn Historical Society’s stately office near the East River. Carolyn Hansen, the society’s map cataloguer, began to gently unfurl the canvas.

“You could hear it rip,” said Ms. Hansen, 29, still cringing at the memory. She stopped pulling. But enough of the map, browned with age and dry and crisp as a stale chip, was open to reveal a name: Ratzer.

“We have a Ratzer map,” said James Rossman, chairman of the society, who happened to be in the building that Monday last May. That statement, despite the reverence in its delivery, meant little to the others in the room, but it would soon reverberate in cartography circles and among map scholars.

The name Ratzer is invoked as something of a Da Vinci of New York cartography, and the map was an early edition of his best-known work: a Bernard Ratzer “Plan of the City of New York” in its 1770 state.

There were widely believed to be only three copies of this exact map in existence. One of them belonged to King George III and remains in the British Library in London, where it is displayed occasionally. The other two — one legible, the other tanned and dark with shellac — are at the New-York Historical Society on the Upper West Side and remain in storage but for two or three times a year, when they are pulled out for students.
Restoring this surprise fourth map, aged beyond its 240 years by its destructive shellac coating, became an immediate priority in Brooklyn. Its transformation from literally untouchable to clearly legible and mounted behind glass, to be unveiled at a private party at the society on Wednesday night, involved science, patience and more than a little bit of kitchen-sink cunning, calling to service, at one delicate point, boiling pots of old books used to distill the color of aged paper.

Not that anyone at the Brooklyn Historical Society knew what it had. The map had been delivered from the society’s warehouse in Connecticut. The society said it had no catalog listing the map or when it had been acquired. It had been shellacked and mounted on linen, with a wooden pole attached at the bottom, presumably to bestow a more artistic air. It had probably hung on a wall somewhere for who knows how long, but in May it was in disastrous shape.

The map had been cut in long strips to allow it to be rolled up for storage. The strips were so brittle they broke when touched. It took a lot of squinting and bending, breath held in, to discover that it was a Ratzer 1770 — its name perhaps an error, as it was most likely completed in 1769.

A British Army officer in America, Lieutenant Ratzer was a surveyor and draftsman, and his map was immediately praised as a step forward from those of his predecessors. For his trouble, his name was misspelled on initial versions of his maps, called the “Ratzen plan.”

The map included a detailed rendering of the island’s slips and shores and streets in Lower Manhattan, the familiar mixing with the long gone. Pearl, Broad, Grand and Prince lay beside Fair and Crown and the “Fresh Water” pond.

“Manhattan, at least the part shown here, was mapped as precisely as any spot on the Earth at the time,” said Robert T. Augustyn, co-author of ”Manhattan in Maps: 1527-1995” (Rizzoli International Publications, 1997). “There was no more beautiful or revealing a map of New York City ever done.”

There are notable buildings: “The Powder House,” “The City Hall,” “The Prison,” “The Theatre.” Mr. Ratzer included detailed topography, with hills and woodlands near Kips Bay and Turtle Bay that have disappeared.

“It’s one of the ways we know about how this place looked before the grid really took hold,” said Matthew A. Knutzen, geospatial librarian in the New York Public Library’s map division.

The bottom of the map contains a striking illustration of the view of Manhattan as seen from Governors Island, with ships, soldiers, waves and smoke. Brooklyn, or “Brookland,” is a patchwork of farms of different shades, bisected by Flatbush Road.

A later version known as the second state, published in 1776 and nearly identical to the first except for a tiny line of text from the publisher, is more common. England’s 1770 state was presented to George III and remained in his expansive collection. “Publishers gave him one as soon as it came off the press,” said Peter Michael Barber, head of the cartographic and topographic materials department at the British Library.
The two 1770 maps at the New-York Historical Society were gifts of its founder, John Pintard, on Jan. 4, 1810, according to its catalog. That would make, barring the existence of other copies unknown to map archivists, this fourth map in Brooklyn the first one discovered in 200 years.

“It’s incredibly significant,” Mr. Knutzen said. “It’s a needle in a haystack.”

The provenance of the Brooklyn map is a little murky. On the back of the linen that Ms. Hansen began unrolling last May, the name Pierrepoint was clearly legible, from the prominent Brooklyn family. But there was no indication how or when it came to land in the Connecticut warehouse, the society said.

Fearful of causing more damage, the society called Jonathan P. Derow, a paper conservationist in Park Slope, who came right over. “It was in terrible condition,” Mr. Derow, 44, said. “I suggested it not be rerolled. Every time it was handled, more pieces were broken apart, and the damage was increased.”

It was too brittle to move to his office, so he made a makeshift plastic tent in the society’s office and inserted a humidifier. The hard paper softened, and Mr. Derow, a conservationist since 1991, carried it away in a mode unthinkable at the time of the map’s creation: a Zipcar.

He washed the map for four days in an alkaline bath that removed acid and grime, and he cut away the linen backing. He aligned the pieces, using a strong magnifying glass and tweezers, and let the map dry, only to see tiny gaps appear between strips, the result of the paper’s shrinking. He rewet it and started over, but let the pieces overlap slightly. That worked: the map shrank perfectly in place.

White lines were visible where the map had ripped, the brighter inner fabrics of the paper standing out from the stained surface. Mr. Derow visited Argosy Book Store on the Upper East Side and bought a handful of obscure old books — among them, for example, “The Select Dialogues of Lucian, to Which Is Added, a New Literal Translation in Latin, With Notes in English,” from 1804 — that were printed on cloth paper, like the map, and not wood pulp.

He performed on them a technique that should chill the blood of any author, wondering where his books will be in 200 years: he baked them in his kitchen stove and boiled them in water. He painted the resulting brackish stew onto the white lines, matching them to the rest of the map.

Did he ever, perhaps in a rush, consult the map for a meeting in an unfamiliar part of town? “There’s barely anything about Brooklyn on there,” he said.

He framed the finished product behind plexiglass. The society, which paid a reduced rate of $5,000 for the restoration, plans a public viewing in the future.

There is no hurry. “It will last for hundreds and hundreds of years,” Mr. Derow said.

A version of this article appeared in print on January 17, 2011, on page A1 of the New York edition.
Borough President Marty Markowitz views the historic and recently restored 1770 Ratzer map of New York City at the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) along with Deborah Schwartz, BHS president and CEO, on Tuesday. Due to popular demand, the opportunity to see the rare map by the general public has been extended through May 1. Markowitz was on hand for the first of the 2011 quarterly luncheons of the Brooklyn Real Estate Roundtable, the proceeds from which go to the BHS. Luncheon attendees were also invited to view the map.
Map factor! Historical Society saves a rarest look at early New York

BY MEREDITH DELISO
The Brooklyn Paper

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Big map on campus: Brooklyn Historical Society President Deborah Schwartz (right) and Chela Scott Weber, the Society’s director of Library and Archives, show off a very rare restored 18th-century city map.

Image courtesy Brooklyn Historical Society

The Ratzer map was badly discolored and in pieces (above) when the Brooklyn Historical Society began repairing it. Now, it looks great (below).

Image courtesy Brooklyn Historical Society

The 18th century Ratzer map is in near-mint condition, now that conservator Jon Derow’s worked his magic on it.

Talk about buried treasure!

For years, the Brooklyn Historical Society had no idea that it was sitting on an incredibly rare map of New York City dating back to the mid-1700s, until workers literally unraveled it.
Much of the society’s collection has been in storage since the renovation of the Brooklyn Heights building ended in 2003. But when the Society’s map expert was cataloguing items last May, she came across an especially decrepit one, discolored to a nice burnt orange and brittle to the touch.

Once unraveled, it was revealed to be a map of New York City dating to around 1770, one of only four in existence made by cartographer Bernard Ratzer. Thanks to an inscription on the back, the society surmised that it was a gift from the once-prominent Pierrepont family.

It is not uncommon for a historical society, especially one that’s close to 150 years old, to misplace items sometimes, said Society President Deborah Schwartz.

“We have very sophisticated cataloguing procedures at this point in time, but they didn’t exist previously,” said Schwartz.

In fact, people who study this kind of thing didn’t even know that there was a fourth Ratzer map. Other editions are currently housed at the New-York Historical Society, which has two, and the British Library in London.

The map in question shows parts of Lower Manhattan, Governors Island, New Jersey, and northern Brooklyn, or “Brookland,” which was mostly patches of farmland at the time. Thanks to the very extensive survey of the land at that time, the map provides a level of detail not often found on maps from this period, said Carolyn Hansen, the Society’s map cataloguer.

“To my knowledge, it is the most complete cartographic portrait of New York City from the 18th century,” she said. “After researching the map, I felt both excited and concerned. One the one hand, it is a tremendous joy to find such a rare piece. On the other hand, the map was in terrible condition and would need extensive conservation in order to be saved.”

So, they called in an expert: Jon Derow. The Park Slope-based conservator deals in all matters of aged paper, and had worked with the society previously restoring another prized possession of the society — a diary of Dutch settler Jasper Danckaerts from 1679.

Derow also was a bit daunted by the challenge posed by the nearly 250-year-old map.

“It was somewhat shocking, the condition it was in,” said Derow. “It was severely deteriorated, and extremely brittle. I was concerned that any handling at all would just fracture it into many pieces, and I wouldn’t be able to reassemble it into anything resembling a map.”

Despite the initial concerns, with a little patience and a steady hand, Derow was able to work his magic. After several weeks of treatment, which included washing the map to deacidify it and restore the color, as well as disguise damage due to cracks, he was able to repair the map to its original condition. Well, almost.

“It’s not in as good condition as when it was first made, but it will last hundreds of years,” said Derow.

For now, the map is available at the Brooklyn Historical Society for research purposes, but it will be put on permanent display in about a year once work on its gallery is completed. Then, history buffs can admire this long-lost piece of history.

“It’s breathtaking, it’s a beautiful map,” said Schwartz. “And now, it’s in unbelievably fantastic condition.”

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The 250-Year-Old Ratzer Map on Video

by Heather Quinlan on January 27, 2011 9:27 am in History, Video

The Brooklyn Historical Society’s recent unveiling of a 250-year-old map of New York City has garnered much hoopla over the last couple weeks. And with good reason—the map was restored from a crumbly, neglected state into a historic work of art. The map will be on display until Friday, after which it will be exhibited at a later date. If you can’t make it to the BHS because of the weather, catch the video after the jump. You’ll see that the mapmaker and surveyor, Bernard Ratzer, combined attention to detail with a love of craftsmanship. Video after the jump.

The NY Times has an interactive feature showing before and after photos of the map.

Be Sociable, Share!
The Brooklyn Historical Society Blog

Map of the Month

...now browsing by tag


Map of the Month – December 2012

Written by Carolyn on December 8th, 2012

This month's featured map is a reproduction of Hooker's Map of the Village of Brooklyn in the Year 1827. The reproduction was made in 1861 for Brooklyn reporter Henry McCloskey's Manual of the Corporation. Hooker's map is one of the earliest detailed maps of Brooklyn, showing wards, churches, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the marshlands of Gowanus, and even André Parmentier's Garden, one of Brooklyn's earliest botanical gardens.
Hooker's map of the village of Brooklyn in the year 1827. William Hooker. 1861. Brooklyn
Historical Society Map Collection.

1827, the year that the Hooker Map was originally published, was an auspicious year for Broolynites. On July 4th of that year, New York
State abolished slavery. Over the next decades, Kings County, an agricultural region once reliant on slave labor, would become the home
of a thriving and diverse abolitionist movement. Along with Weeksville Heritage Center and Irondale Ensemble Project, BHS is chronicling
the history of Brooklyn's abolitionist movement through the In Pursuit of Freedom Project.

Click here to view detail from the map.

Interested in seeing more maps? You can view the BHS map collection anytime during the library's open hours, Wed.-Fri., from 1-5 p.m.
No appointment is necessary to view most maps. Our cataloged maps can be searched through BobCat and our map inventories through
Emma.

Map of the Month is part of a project to catalog our map holdings, funded through the Council on Library and Information
Resources Hidden Collections program. If you would like to help us do more of this kind of work with our exciting map holdings,
donate here.

Posted in Brooklyn Past & Present, Hidden Collections, Library & Archives | 1 Response »
Tags: Map of the Month, maps

Map of the Month – October 2012

Written by Carolyn on October 3rd, 2012

This month's featured map shows the Gravesend and Coney Island areas in 1787. Hand-copied by Tennis G. Bergen in 1861 "from an old
map" that was "probably used in a suit ... in relation to fishing rights," the map features property, names of landowners, and landscape
features. A prolific map maker and surveyor, Tennis G. Bergen made hundreds of maps during his lifetime, many of which can be viewed in
the BHS Map Collection and the Tennis G. Bergen and Bergen Family Collection. Bergen was also an active historian and genealogist, and
served as a U.S. Representative in Congress during the 1860s.
Un-hiding maps @brooklynhistory: Strategies for outreach in times of austerity
Carolyn Hansen

Abstract
This article describes map outreach initiatives at the Brooklyn Historical Society(BHS), a non-profit museum, library and archives, and education center located in Brooklyn, New York. In particular, it explores how BHS staff prioritized outreach under budget constraints, created successful workflows, and employed tools to help patrons discover the map collection.

Keywords
maps, outreach, workflows, social media, WordPress

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Saving the Ratzé Map: Lessons Learned in the Conservation, Restoration, Management, and Publicity of Cartographic Resources

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