

BROOKLYN NAVY | YARD

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives Guide to the BNYDC Photographs collection 1846 – 2009 SC/9

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives
Building 77, 141 Flushing Avenue, Suite 801, Brooklyn, NY 11205

Finding aid produced on: March 6, 2026
Description is in English.

Title

BNYDC Photographs collection

Creator

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation

1846 – 2009

Quantity

5 boxes, 1 oversized folder

Language Of Materials

English.

Call Number

SC/9

Administrative/Biographical History

The Brooklyn Navy Yard, previously known as the New York Navy Yard and later the New York Naval Shipyard, has its origins in the federal government's purchase of the land adjacent to Wallabout Bay for \$40,000 in 1801. Over the course of its history, more than 230 naval warships and auxiliary vessels were built at the Yard. Additionally, during World War II alone, more than 5,000 ships were repaired, overhauled, or converted. The first ship built was the USS Ohio, launched in 1817, while the last Navy ship launched was the USS Duluth (LPD-6) in 1965. Other historic vessels constructed at the Yard include USS Brooklyn, the USS Arizona, and the USS Missouri, the latter two of which bookended World War II.

In 1824, the Navy purchased an additional 25 acres near the Yard, on which it established the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. The main hospital building was completed in 1838. By 1850, the hospital annex was a walled-in, self-contained parcel of land with a gatehouse, a laboratory, and a cemetery. In 1864, a surgeon's residence was built. When the shipyard expanded during World War II, it took over the land of the former Wallabout Market, located between the Yard and the annex, and the physical separation between the Yard and the Hospital was eliminated.

During the Civil War, the Yard employed about 6,000 people, and by 1938 it provided jobs for over 10,000. At the height of World War II, nearly 70,000 people were employed at the Yard, and it had grown to encompass 291 acres with 270 major buildings, 24 miles of railroad tracks, 23,278 linear feet of crane tracks, 18 miles of paved roads, 16,495 feet of berthing space, 9 piers, 6 dry docks, and 22 shops housing 98 different trades.

In 1966, the Navy decommissioned the Yard, and a year later most of the property was sold to the City of New York. While the Yard lost its naval shipbuilding presence, it retained residual administrative support functions as part of Naval Station New York, which occupied the former hospital annex and some adjacent buildings until it too was closed in 1989. The City eventually acquired the former naval station annex and the row of admiral's quarters at the south western tip of the site, taking full control over the 300-acre property by 2012.

The City delegated the Yard for private commercial use. It was first administered by the Commerce Labor and Industry Corporation of Kings (CLICK), then by the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC), a private, non-profit development corporation that manages and develops the Yard on behalf of the City with the aim of growing and maintaining an industrial manufacturing base in

Brooklyn.

From 1969 to 1979, Seatrain Shipbuilding was the main tenant under CLICK. During its operation, the company produced four Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), eight barges, one icebreaker barge, and two roll-on/roll-off ferries. Another important early tenant was Coastal Dry Dock & Repair Corporation, which leased space in the Yard between 1971 and 1987.

In the 1980s, BNYDC began a long-term effort to diversify the tenant base at the Yard, and by 2001 nearly 275 companies employing over 6,000 people were in residence. BNYDC undertook sustainability initiatives to support a rapidly growing cluster of green manufacturers, and large spaces were updated to accommodate small industrial enterprises that reflected the diversity, energy, and creativity of the community. BNYDC's Employment Center expanded, a Summer Youth Program was established, and a shuttle service to the subway is launched to provide better access and encourage the use of mass transit. The City took note of BNYDC's success and funded major upgrades to the Yard's basic infrastructure, some of which dated to the Civil War era. The Yard's largest expansion since WWII was underway.

The Yard is now home to over 400 businesses employing more than 7,000 people and generating over \$2 billion per year in economic impact for the City. With the openings of Building 77 and Dock 72, redevelopment of Admirals Row, expansion of Steiner Studios, and other projects, employment at the Yard will more than double in the next few years, jumping from 7,000 to 17,000+ by 2020. Building on the Yard's history as the economic heart of Brooklyn, the 300-acre waterfront asset offers a critical pathway to the middle class for many New Yorkers.

Scope And Content

This collection contains historic and contemporary photographs – in various formats and sizes -- of both the Brooklyn Navy Yard site and BNYDC corporate activities. Buildings and facilities are well represented in the collection, while there is more a modest amount of content relating to BNYDC staff and events.

Historic photographs are duplicative of photographs taken by the US Navy for either publicity or construction progress purposes. The complete collection of originals are under the custodianship of the National Archives and Records Administration. The photographs in this collection range from vessels built at the Yard to components of the Dry Docks constructed in the 1940s.

Contemporary interior and exterior photographs of buildings and structures were taken by BNYDC project managers during construction projects and are in poor condition. Most of the staff and event photographs are from the Mark Rosenbaum administration in the early 2000s.

This collection at present is a potpourri of photographs that made their way to the Archives over time. In the future, more material will be added to this collection to give a more robust representation of the site and its current activities.

Related Materials

Existence and Location of Originals: Physical originals of Series 1 are located at NARA-NYC.

Existence and Location of Copies: Digital surrogates of Series 1 may be found in NARA's online catalog.

System Of Arrangement

This collection contains 4 series: New York Naval Shipyard; Buildings and Structures; BNYDC Staff; BNYDC Events. Each series is arranged chronologically.

Access Points

Ships and Vessels , Buildings

Access And Use

Conditions Governing Access This collection is open for research.

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Related Collections

Records of Naval Districts and Shore Establishments

Records of the Bureau of Ships

Collection Contents

Collection: BNYDC Photographs collection, SC/9

Series: Buildings and Structures, SC/9_2

SC/9_2, Inclusive date(s): 1988 – 2005