

BROOKLYN NAVY | YARD

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives Guide to the BNYDC Archives' Reference collection 1840 – 2008 SC/5

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

Finding aid produced on: March 7, 2026
Description is in English.

Title

BNYDC Archives' Reference collection

Date

1840

Description

The BNYDC Archives' Reference collection contains a selection of materials relating to the history of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The collection covers the history from the opening of the Yard up until present day. The items came to the Brooklyn Navy Yard in a variety of ways over the course of many years, so there is no provenance of donation information available. The collection consists of a variety of items that tell the history of the Yard, including magazines, newspapers, books, vertical files, publications, ephemera, and more. Some of the items tell the history of specific events at the Yard, such as ship launchings, a change in command, or an open house. Other items tell the story of daily life at the yard, such as the first aid pamphlet, closure actions briefing books, and safety publications.

1840 – 2008

Quantity

6 boxes

Language Of Materials

English.

Call Number

SC/5

Administrative/Biographical History

The Brooklyn Navy Yard, officially known as 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, and the subsequent conversion of the land into an active U.S. Navy shipyard five years later in 1806. 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 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The first ship built was the USS Ohio, launched in 1820, while the last ship launched was the USS Duluth (LPD-6) in 1965. Other historic vessels constructed or launched at the Navy Yard include Robert Fulton's steam frigate, the Fulton, the USS Arizona, the USS Missouri, and the USS Antietam.

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, and functioned until it was eventually closed in 1948. By 1850, the Hospital Annex was a self-contained parcel of land, walled-in, with a gatehouse, a laboratory, and a cemetery. In 1864, the Surgeon's Residence was constructed. When the shipyard expanded during World War II, it took over the land of the former Wallabout Market and the physical separation between the Yard and the Hospital was eliminated.

During the Civil War, the Navy Yard employed about 6,000 people and by 1938 it provided jobs for over 10,000 people. During World War II nearly 70,000 people were employed at the Yard. By the end of the war, 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 closed its active shipbuilding presence in Brooklyn but 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. In 1967, the City of New York acquired the Brooklyn Navy Yard for private commercial use, and eventually also acquired the former Naval Station Annex in 1993.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard industrial park was first managed by the Commerce Labor and Industry Corporation of Kings (CLICK), and later, in 1982, by the current Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC). A private, non-profit local development corporation, BNYDC operates the Yard on behalf of the City with the aim of maintaining an industrial manufacturing base in Brooklyn. Seatrain Shipbuilding was the main tenant under CLICK and was in operation at the Brooklyn Navy Yard from 1969 to 1979. During its operation the company produced four Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), eight barges, one icebreaker barge and two roll-on/roll-off ferries (Ro-Ros). Another important, early tenant was Coastal Dry Dock & Repair Corporation which leased space at the Yard between 1971 and 1987 and continued to service Navy ships as a private contractor. Starting in the 1980s, BNYDC began a long-term effort to diversify the tenant base at the Yard. By 2001, under BNYDC, the tenant base had expanded to 275 companies that employed over 6,000 people.

Scope And Content

The BNYDC Archives' Reference collection contains a selection of materials relating to the history of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The collection covers the history from the opening of the Yard up until present day. The items came to the Brooklyn Navy Yard in a variety of ways over the course of many years, so there is no provenance of donation information available. The collection consists of a variety of items that tell the history of the Yard, including magazines, newspapers, books, vertical files, publications, ephemera, and more. Some of the items tell the history of specific events at the Yard, such as ship launchings, a change in command, or an open house. Other items tell the story of daily life at the yard, such as the first aid pamphlet, closure actions briefing books, and safety publications.

System Of Arrangement

This collection contains 6 series: Publications; Newspapers; Ephemera; Clippings; Vertical Files; and Books.

Access And Use

Conditions Governing Access This collection is open for research.

Technical Access Only the digital surrogates of some items are present. This is indicated in the collection guide's container list - there is no folder or object number listed.

Conditions Governing Reproduction Material in this collection is made available for use in research, teaching, and private study, pursuant to U.S. Copyright law. The use must assume full responsibility for any use of the material, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced material. Please see the BNYDC Archives' Policy on Access and Use for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish. Any material used for academic research or otherwise should be credited using the citation below.

Preferred Citation Published citations should take the following form: Identification of item, date (if known), BNYDC Archives' Reference collection; SC/5; Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives, Brooklyn, NY.

Collection Contents

Collection: BNYDC Archives' Reference collection, SC/5