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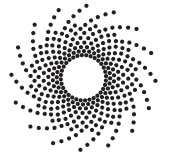
YOUNG SCHOLARS
PS 307

EMPIRE STORES

YESTERDAY, TODAY
& TOMORROW



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YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

By the 2018 Young Scholars of PS 307

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Cover photo **Empire Stores.**

[Warehouse at Water Street and Dock Street, Brooklyn, New York], 1936, Berenice Abbot, V1976.2.286; Edward B. Watson photographs and prints collection, ARC. 213; Brooklyn Historical Society.

Pages 2 & 31 **The City of Brooklyn.**

Currier & Ives. The City of Brooklyn., 1879. [New York: Currier & Ives] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	8
Chapter 1 The First People of the Waterfront	10
Chapter 2 An Area of Commerce & Trade	12
Chapter 3 A Community of Working People	16
Chapter 4 Brooklyn Makes, the World Takes	18
Chapter 5 Dangerous Work	20
Chapter 6 Coffee Wars	22
Chapter 7 A Changing Landscape	24
Glossary of Terms	26
Bibliography	27
About the Authours	28
Credits	30

FOREWORD

A.J. Liebling recognized that New York Harbor is, and was always, a seaport. Arthur Miller's play A View from the Bridge and Budd Schulberg's screenplay for the film On the Waterfront highlight the importance of New York's coastline as an epicenter of trade, power, and opportunity. New York's harbor is—and always has been—a seaport. The waterfront is a place where trade, commerce, opportunity, and power have interacted throughout history.

For nearly ten thousand years before European arrival in the seventeenth century, Brooklyn's waterfront was home to the Lenni Lenape, an indigenous people whose seasonal camps stretched along the mid-Atlantic coast from Long Island to Delaware. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Dutch, and later English, merchants and farmers traded with the Lenape for furs, fish, and agricultural goods. By the late 1600s, most of the Lenni Lenape were no longer living in the area, pushed out by European encroachment.

The East River provided transportation, allowing Brooklyn's waterfront to become a key player in the distribution of national and global goods. The continuous arrival of ships necessitated a steady supply of skilled and unskilled labor. While the foremen often discriminated in the hiring hall and gave preferential treatment and easier work assignments to their own kind, crews of strong men loaded and unloaded ships. This back-breaking work itself did not discriminate. Dangerous work was a social equalizer for African Americans and Irish and German immigrants, who often shared the most dangerous tasks, such as hoisting heavy goods in and out of warehouses without the use of safety devices.

The post-Civil War era ushered in the development of the second industrial revolution. Brooklyn's waterfront exploded with the construction of multistory brick warehouses. Business owners amassed great wealth through monopolies on staple goods, including Havemeyer Sugar and Arbuckle Coffee. Wage-earning workers, who toiled in factories for little pay, bolstered the riches earned by these business tycoons, while also fostering broader community groups and structures in neighborhoods adjacent to the waterfront factories.

In "Empire Stores: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," the Young Scholars of PS 307 focused on the following topics:

- *What makes a community?*
- *How has their community changed over time?*
- *What was it like to live and work along Brooklyn's industrial waterfront in the past?*
- *How do the waterfront neighborhoods' changing demographics impact their community today? How will these changes affect their future?*

Over the course of the 2018 spring semester, the Young Scholars of PS 307 discovered more about the industrial and manufacturing history of their neighborhood. These young students valued their roles as historians, writers, and researchers. They read and analyzed primary and secondary sources, including fire insurance maps, paintings, and newspaper articles from The Brooklyn Daily Eagle. They traced the development of the waterfront area and the surrounding neighborhoods of Vinegar Hill and DUMBO, and they investigated Empire Stores, a warehouse that once stored unroasted coffee beans for the Arbuckle Coffee Company. The students' trip to Brooklyn Historical Society DUMBO's new exhibition, Waterfront, provided deeper insights into the borough's rich history around Brooklyn's waterfront. Andrew Gustafson of Turnstile Tours led the students on a walking tour of the area and gave students a new perspective on the buildings and cobblestone streets that they passed by each day. Their sense of accomplishment was evident when some of the students exclaimed, "I am going to give a neighborhood tour to my friends and family!"

As their teacher, it has been my pleasure to take this journey with these engaging Young Scholars. This book reflects their hard work, dedication, and commitment.

Janise Mitchell

*PS 307 Young Scholars Program Educator, 2018
Brooklyn Historical Society*

THE FIRST PEOPLE OF THE WATERFRONT



Manatvs gelegen op de Noot [sic] Riuer.

Vinckeboons, Joan, and Library Of Congress. *Manatvs gelegen op de Noot sic Riuer*. 1670. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.

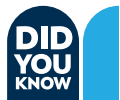
HAVE YOU EVER WALKED ALONG STREETS IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF DUMBO and Vinegar Hill and noticed cobblestone paths? Have you ever walked along Brooklyn's waterfront and wondered what's inside the enormous brick building called Empire Stores? Brooklyn's waterfront has a long history.

Empire Stores is located in the neighborhood of DUMBO and close to the neighborhood called Vinegar Hill. These neighborhoods are located in the northern part of Brooklyn. The first people who lived

in the area were the Lenni Lenape. The Lenni Lenape belonged to a federation of thirteen Long Island Native American nations that lived near the water. The thirteen nations were the Corchaug, Lenni Lenape, Manhasset, Massapequa, Matinecock, Merrick, Montauk, Nissequoge, Patchoag, Rockaway, Seatauket, Secatoag, and Shinnecock. The Lenni Lenape people of Wallabout Bay were called the “Rennegackonck” after their village. The area of Rennegackonck was excellent for fishing and oyster harvesting.

The Rennegackonck people lived in longhouses and planted crops such as corn, squash, and beans. They sometimes grew tobacco. They wore and exchanged wampum beads made from seashells during special ceremonies.

- ***DUMBO is short for Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass.***
- ***Vinegar Hill is named for the Battle of Vinegar Hill during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 in Ireland. Many Irish immigrants lived in the area in the 1800s.***
- ***The Lenni Lenape nations took their village names as their tribal affiliation. They were seasonal peoples, who moved from place to place, and they took the name of the village they lived in for the length of their stay. For example, the Lenni Lenape people living in Carnarsee would refer to themselves as Canarsees for as long as they lived there.***



CHAPTER 2

AN AREA OF COMMERCE & TRADE



James Ryder Van Brunt, Gowanus Bay, Brooklyn with a View of New York.

James Ryder Van Brunt, Gowanus Bay, Brooklyn with a View of New York, 1863, watercolor on paper; M1995.23.1; Brooklyn Historical Society.

THE AREA NEAR BROOKLYN'S WATERFRONT ALSO ATTRACTED EUROPEAN settlers from Manahatta, the Lenni Lenape's name for what we call Manhattan today. The Dutch were the first Europeans to settle here on the island. Dutch settlers built their farms close to Lenni Lenape communities. Wampum beads that had been used for ceremonies became currency used for trade with the Europeans.

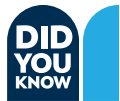
The Lenni Lenape, however, were weakened from diseases such as smallpox and measles that were brought by these European settlers

to the newly discovered lands. These new European diseases led to the death of many Lenni Lenape. As more Dutch settlers moved into the area, creating large farms and plantations, many of the Lenni Lenape were forced from their land. Some of the Rennegackonck land was sold to Joris Jansen Rapelje, a Dutch settler. By the late 1600s, most of the Rennegackonck Indians were no longer living in the areas along the waterfront. The area the Lenni Lenape called "Rennegackonck" became known as "Wallabout."

In early America, the Dutch built homes, flour mills, meat markets, and breweries (a place where beer is made). Dutch farmers traveled by ferry boats across the East River taking foods grown on their farms to people living in Manhattan. Dutch farms produced important crops like corn and wheat. In 1664 Great Britain took over the area, renaming it New York.

By the 1770s, during the American Revolutionary War, many Dutch people who lived in New York sided with the British. When the war was over and America gained its independence from Great Britain, Dutch farmers like Joris Rapalje, who had sided with Great Britain, were forced to give up their land and farms. In 1784 two brothers, Joshua and Comfort Sands, purchased the Rapelje family's land and created a community called "Olympia." They developed the area near the waterfront and changed it from farms to a small village of homes, shops, stores, and inns.

→ ***Joris Jansen Rapelje [Rapelye] was a Dutch settler from the Netherlands. He immigrated to New Netherlands (an area of New York State) in 1624 and eventually settled in New Amsterdam. He and his family moved across the East River to Wallabout Bay in 1637 after "purchasing" 335 acres of land there from the Lenni Lenape. This is where the Brooklyn Navy Yard is today. He became one of the wealthiest people in the village of Breukelen (Brooklyn).***



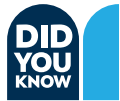


Map of New York City and its environs.

*Plan of the City of New York in North America, Bernard Ratzer, 1770;
nyc-1770.fl.f.ra; Brooklyn Historical Society.*

In early America, the Dutch built homes, flour mills, meat markets, and breweries (a place where beer is made). Dutch farmers traveled by ferry boats across the East River taking foods grown on their farms to people living in Manhattan. Dutch farms produced important crops like corn and wheat. In 1664 Great Britain took over the area, renaming it New York.

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Wallabout improvement.

Wallabout Market, circa 1885, Eugene L. Armbruster, V1974.022.7.111; Eugene L. Armbruster photographs and scrapbooks; Brooklyn Historical Society.

- ➔ ***Olympia was expected to become a summer resort town for wealthy New Yorkers because of its high hills, fresh water, and cooling summer air. Today the neighborhood of Vinegar Hill includes some of Olympia's early city streets. Sands Street in downtown Brooklyn is named after Joshua and Comfort Sands.***
- ➔ ***During the Revolutionary War, over 11,000 Americans died on British prison ships docked in Wallabout Bay.***

A COMMUNITY OF WORKING PEOPLE



View of four workmen, possibly stevedores, three of whom are loading or unloading a large barrel from freighter at Brooklyn waterfront. The exact location is unknown.
Dock workers, DUMBO, Brooklyn, 1924, V1973.5.917; Brooklyn photograph and illustration collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.

IN THE EARLY 1800S, MOST BLACK PEOPLE LIVING IN BROOKLYN WERE ENSLAVED. When New York State abolished slavery in 1827, black workers continued to contribute to the economic development of Brooklyn by working in jobs in homes, factories, businesses, and along the waterfront as dock laborers. Many black people lived in the waterfront neighborhoods of DUMBO and Vinegar Hill. It was a diverse neighborhood that also included Irish, Dutch, and English families. By the late 1880s, Italian, Germans, and Eastern European Jews had also moved into the area, making it a very diverse place.

The people of DUMBO and Vinegar Hill worked as laborers in warehouses along the waterfront. There were rope makers, blacksmiths, glassblowers, tool sharpeners, steam-fitters, and stonecutters.

round. At this time there were high hills in the neighborhood of the Navy Yard. One of them was known as "Vinegar Hill," so named by Mr. Jackson to attract purchasers to his lots. A great number of Irishmen had come over after the failure of the Irish rebellion of 1798 and 1803, with some means to purchase homes, and Jackson christened a portion of his high ground as "Vinegar Hill," commemorative of the stubborn struggle for independence which the Irish patriots made at this famed battle in Wexford. These hills were covered with people

*Brooklyn Daily Eagle article June 11, 1886 "Vinegar Hill."
Courtesy of the Brooklyn Public Library.*

→ **Enslaved people did a majority of Brooklyn's agricultural and industrial work from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Enslaved people also worked as skilled laborers in jobs such as blacksmiths, bricklayers and carpenters.**



CHAPTER 4

BROOKLYN MAKES THE WORLD TAKES



John Jay Pierrepont Dock, Brooklyn Heights, circa 1890.

Pierrepont Bartow, View of New York from Fulton Ferry slip, Brooklyn, 1872, oil on canvas; M1974.74.1; Brooklyn Historical Society.

BY THE BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR IN 1861, BROOKLYN WAS THE THIRD-largest city in the United States. Goods and products from all over the world came across the Atlantic and up the East River. You might see large ships going to California or even China, India, or Australia. On the dock and piers it was very noisy. Hundreds of boats filled the harbor every day and night. Men were yelling, screaming, and even singing songs. It was dangerous work on the docks for little money.

Businessmen built enormous warehouses to store goods and cargo that were arriving daily. One of the biggest warehouses along the waterfront was Empire Stores. It was five stories high, built of brick, and had walls two feet thick. Empire Stores stored bales of leather from the pampas of Argentina. Inside Empire Stores, you could find bales of wool, cotton, and jute from Calcutta, India.¹ The docks were covered with long rows of barrels of sugar. You might smell chocolate from ships arriving from Africa. You might notice beautiful wild horses from South America.²

There were oranges from Italy, native hemp, and hundreds of hogsheds of tobacco from Kentucky and Virginia. You would see ships carrying coffee beans from South America and sugar from Cuba. Dockworkers worked day and night moving, storing, and keeping track of freight arriving from all over the world. From Africa, came wood, rubber, ginger and ivory.³



Empire Stores.

[Empire Stores.], circa 1880, Joseph Hall, V1991.90.9.1; George J. Bischof papers and photographs; Brooklyn Historical Society.

¹ *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 6, 1875, 3.

² *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 17, 1887, 2.

³ *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 19, 1891, 6.

- **Before steam-powered pulleys, horses were used to load and unload cargo.**
- **When the Brooklyn Bridge was built in 1883, it was the longest suspension bridge in the world.**



DANGEROUS WORK



Unloading Sugar at Arbuckles Bros.

More Coffee Drinking When National Prohibition Comes, circa 1920, Underwood & Underwood, V1973.5.914; Brooklyn photograph and illustration collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.

YOU HAD TO BE BRAVE AND STRONG TO WORK ALONG THE WATERFRONT. Working at Empire Stores, and other Brooklyn warehouses, could be dangerous. Dock workers, or longshoremen, could be killed or injured. For example, workers could be struck with a grain sling and get knocked down a hatchway to the floors below. Men worked long hours in all types of weather.

Burglaries were another problem. Burglars would enter the stores and steal merchandise. These burglars were given the nickname “sugar

thieves" because sugar was one of the most popular items to steal. Coffee, molasses, tobacco, rubber, iron, and rope were also popular items stolen from the many warehouses along the waterfront.

When there was a fire, many nearby buildings also caught on fire because everything was so dense near the water. If a worker was smoking and wasn't paying attention, he could accidentally spark a fire.

A LONGSHOREMAN INSTANTLY KILLED.

While at work unloading grain on a steamer lying at the Empire Stores this morning Edward Lynch, a longshoreman of Congress and Columbia streets, was struck with a grain sling, knocked down a hatchway and instantly killed. The Coroner was notified and will make an investigation.

A Longshoreman Instantly Killed.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle. April 26, 1889. Courtesy of Brooklyn Public Library.

https://www.newspapers.com/clip/18175729/the_brooklyn_daily_eagle/

Courtesy of the Brooklyn Public Library.

- ➔ **One of the biggest dangers in the workplace was fire. There were many fires along the waterfront. The warehouses were close together. The first Empire Stores warehouse was made out of wood. The warehouses were always filled with materials that could catch fire easily, such as tobacco, cotton, coffee, sugar, wool, grain, and dried animal hides.**



COFFEE WARS

“ARIOSA” COFFEE.



839,972 POUNDS ROASTED DAILY.

THE ENORMOUS CONSUMPTION OF THIS POPULAR BRAND GIVES PROOF THAT FOR STRENGTH, PURITY AND DELICIOUSNESS IT HAS NO EQUAL.

Ariosa Coffee, 1880s.

Ariosa Coffee, 1880; Brooklyn Ephemera Collection, ARC.272; Brooklyn Historical Society.

IN 1881, A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN NAMED JOHN ARBUCKLE MOVED TO Brooklyn from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Brooklyn was booming, and Arbuckle wanted to be where the action was. Americans called Arbuckle the “King of Coffee” because years before, when he was in Pittsburgh, Mr. Arbuckle patented a way to keep coffee beans fresh. Most coffee beans were stored in barrels, where they spoiled easily, but John’s coffee was made differently. John had a special method of keeping coffee beans fresh. He used an egg and sugar glaze to keep them fresh.

John Arbuckle also made it easier for people to store coffee by roasting and grinding the beans right in one warehouse. Arbuckle coffee was sold in one-pound bags with fancy labels. Soon millions of people were drinking Arbuckle's coffee from Brooklyn. His coffee, Ariosa Coffee, was so successful that he became a millionaire and bought a mansion in the neighborhood of Clinton Hill. He had a monopoly on coffee.

John Arbuckle was buying sugar from another famous businessman named Henry Havemeyer. Henry Havemeyer was called the "King of Sugar" because he controlled most of the sugar refineries in the United States. Henry Havemeyer refused to lower prices for one of his biggest customers, John Arbuckle. So in 1887, Arbuckle opened a sugar refinery at 10 Jay Street to make it easier to glaze and process his coffee beans. When John Arbuckle opened his sugar refinery, Henry Havemeyer decided to go into the coffee business! Both men used advertisements to promote their brands of coffee and sugar. Their business fight over coffee and sugar lasted for several years. In the end, Havemeyer gave up the coffee business, and Arbuckle was still the "King of Coffee."



Empire Stores.

[Warehouse at Water Street and Dock Street, Brooklyn, New York], 1936, Berenice Abbot, V1976.2.286; Edward B. Watson photographs and prints collection, ARC. 213; Brooklyn Historical Society.



A CHANGING LANDSCAPE



ON JANUARY 16, 2018, THE YOUNG SCHOLARS TOOK A TRIP TO BROOKLYN Historical Society's new satellite location inside Empire Stores. They visited the exhibition titled *Waterfront*, which explores the past, present, and future of Brooklyn's waterfront. The biggest question the class had was about what happened to Empire Stores and why it isn't a warehouse anymore. They found out that by the mid-1900s, large ships were too big to travel up the East River and under the Brooklyn Bridge. Many of the buildings were sold but were no longer used as warehouses. Once inside, the Young Scholars learned more about the stories and lives of the people who helped shaped the development of the waterfront. They reflected on how the waterfront has changed over time:



SYLVAMIE *As soon as I walked into Empire Stores, I could smell coffee and chocolate. In the lobby, everyone was drinking coffee. The building looked old, but it was updated to make it new.*

When I was outside I could see ferries and boats going up and down the East River.

ASHANTI *It was very noisy. There were a lot of people walking around taking pictures. I saw how the Brooklyn Bridge was built. Before the bridge, people had to travel by ferries.*

JAYDEN *The waterfront has changed over time, but some things are still the same; people in Brooklyn still like to drink coffee. When you walk through the neighborhood, you see a lot of coffee shops.*



OLIVIA *One thing I liked about Empire Stores is the smell. It smells so good. The building looks like a castle. We walked along the pier and could see the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges. I learned that today, oysters in the East River are not eaten but are used to help clean and filter water.*

JACOB *I learned the differences between warehouses and factories. Warehouses are for storage, factories are for turning items into useful things. The bags of coffee beans stored in the warehouse weighed more than me!*

ASHANTI *It's strange to think that two hundred years ago, Brooklyn was mostly farmland. Farmers in Brooklyn used ferries to carry their food to people in Manhattan. We still grow food in Brooklyn. There is a small community garden next to my school.*

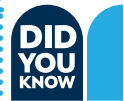
JACK *The movie was great! We saw how the waterfront would have looked like hundreds of years ago. We also found out that the water is rising, and Empire Stores will be underwater one day.*

MAKAYLA *During World War II, many women worked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard repairing ships. I tried on the uniform that women wore at work. It was heavy and hot.*

A WALKING TOUR OF VINEGAR HILL AND DUMBO

On February 6, 2018, the Young Scholars of PS 307 went on a walking tour led by historian and professional tour guide Andrew Gustafson of Turnstile Tours. The group was able to take a closer look at buildings and sites in the neighborhood of Vinegar Hill and DUMBO, all of which perform different purposes for society today. Historic photographs gave the Young Scholars a sense of how the area changed over time.

- ***Robert Gair was an immigrant from Scotland who invented the cardboard box in Brooklyn. Companies put their names on boxes so they could advertise their products.***
- ***Eskimo Pies were manufactured in the neighborhood of Vinegar Hill.***
- ***Irish immigrants moved to Brooklyn and into these neighborhoods because of the potato famine [in Ireland]. A lot of the buildings where families used to live were torn down to build the Brooklyn Queens Expressway.***
- ***A lot of the old factories in DUMBO are now fancy apartment buildings.***



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BREWERIES places where beer is made commercially

COBBLESTONE a small, round stone formerly used to cover road surfaces

COMMERCE the act of buying goods and services on a large scale

CURRENCY a system of money

DENSE crowded

FACTORIES a building or group of buildings where goods are manufactured or assembled, by machine

GRAIN SLING equipment used to hoist dry materials, such as grain

HOGSHEAD a large, round, wooden container that holds up to 1,500 pounds of cargo

LENNI LENAPE a group of North American Indian peoples who had occupied the mid-Atlantic region, including the Delaware and Hudson River valleys, for approximately 10,000 years prior to European arrival

LONGSHOREMEN people who worked on the docks to load and unload cargo between ships and warehouses

JUTE a natural fiber used to make clothing, carpets, sacks, rope, and twine

MANAHATTA the Lenni Lenape name for Manhattan, possibly meaning "land of many hills"

MOLASSES thick, dark brown syrup obtained from raw sugar during the refining process

MONOPOLY the exclusive possession or control of the supply or trade in a commodity or service

OYSTERS bivalve mollusks with rough irregular shells, eaten as a delicacy or farmed for pearls

PATENT an official government document that grants a person or company the exclusive right to manufacture, use, or sell an invention for a set timeframe

STEAMFITTER a mechanic who installs and repairs the boilers and pipes in steam-pressure systems

SUSPENSION BRIDGE a bridge in which the roadway's weight is supported by cables that run between towers and are anchored at each end

TRADE the activity or process of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services

WAREHOUSE a large building where raw materials or manufactured goods are stored before export or sale

WATERFRONT a stretch of coastline, riverfront, or shoreline that sits adjacent to a city or town

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



2018 YOUNG SCHOLARS OF PS 307

1 JACOB DANIELS

My name is Jacob and I really like basketball. My favorite teams are the Celtics and Warriors. I love that I can run fast, jump high, and can play basketball.

2 ASHANTI HERNANDEZ

My name is Ashanti but you can call me Ashie. I am kind and nice. I have friends who depend on me. My favorite things to do are drawing, eating, sleeping, and watching television. I felt special being in this program. I got to meet an author and get my picture taken by a professional photographer.

3 J'HANNA HUGGINS

My name is J'hanna. I like myself because I am very unique. I don't care what other people say about me. I always stick up for myself. I'm a very good friend to people. I want to serve on student government, be a historian, and a doctor.

4 SYLVAMIE LACROIX

My name is Sylvamie. I am smart, pretty, confident, and a bibliophile. I love to draw and roller skate. I have lots of siblings. I like this Brooklyn Historical Society because I get to meet authors, make friends, and learn how to become a historian and author.

5 JACK PENG

Hi, my name is Jack. There is something special about me. I was born on a special holiday: July 4th, or Independence Day. I love Egyptian things like mummies and figurines. It was awesome that we got to meet the author Nina Crews!

6 JAYDEN PEREZ

My name is Jayden Perez. I like basketball and playing video games. My favorite teams are the Golden State Warriors, Celtics, and Lakers. If I could live anywhere in the world, it would be Florida. It's hot and I get to see my cousins. What I like best about my community are the festivals in the summer.

7 MAKAYLA SANCHEZ

My name is Makayla. I love to style my hair in different ways. I play the violin. It's so peaceful and fun when I play. I love playing with my sisters. I also am a historian. I love my community because I have many friends.

8 OLIVIA WILLIAMS

Hi, my name is Olivia. I was born on New Year's Eve. I have three pets. I am good with technology, sports, video games, and music. I like my community because we have a lot of nice people living there.



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Empire Stores: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

is the result of a six-month “Young Scholars” partnership between Brooklyn Historical Society and PS 307. The Young Scholars program is designed to introduce a core group of students to the dynamic process of historical research about their neighborhood, and to share these students’ interpretive work beyond the walls of their classroom. Young Scholars programs truly express Brooklyn Historical Society’s mission to connect the past and present and make the vibrant history of Brooklyn tangible, relevant, and meaningful for today’s diverse communities and for generations to come and are a hallmark of its Education Department.

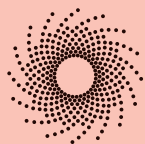
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