



Brooklyn Public Library and Brooklyn Historical Society Announce Plans to Combine, Expanding Resources, Reach, and Impact of Each and Creating the Premiere Collection of the History of Brooklyn

Brooklyn, NY (February 27, 2020) – Brooklyn Public Library’s (BPL) President and CEO, Linda E. Johnson, and Brooklyn Historical Society’s (BHS) President Deborah Schwartz, announced today a plan to combine the institutions, with BHS becoming part of BPL, fostering an institutional expansion for both by unifying resources, expertise and skillsets and broadening reach and impact in Brooklyn and beyond. Brooklyn Public Library will serve as the parent institution, taking on responsibility for stewarding the Historical Society’s landmark home, holdings, and programming, providing access and awareness to a broad public through its 59 library branches in every neighborhood in the borough, 650,000 cardholders, and nearly 8 million annual visitors.

BPL’s significant Brooklyn Collection will be combined with the archives of the Brooklyn Historical Society in its Pierrepont Street building, creating the premiere collection of the history of Brooklyn. The Historical Society will provide to the Library conservation and preservation expertise; state-of-the-art, environmentally controlled exhibition presentation and storage facilities; and award-winning programming. The relocation of BPL’s historical collections frees up space for public programming at Central Library as BPL continues its most ambitious capital program in a century. As with all of BPL’s resources and programs, access to BHS and the new combined research collection will be available for scholars, researchers, students, and the public free of charge. BPL and BHS are currently in discussions with the City of New York regarding funding necessary for combining the institutions.

“Brooklyn Historical Society and Brooklyn Public Library are both education institutions dedicated to helping individuals build a sense of self, a sense of place, and a sense of community. Together our institutions hold important collections of material, manuscripts, and artifacts, vital to our shared history that we are committed to making accessible to everyone,” said **Brooklyn Public Library President and CEO Linda E. Johnson**. “I’m thrilled this partnership will provide a new level of care and interpretation of our own collections, and that we will greatly expand access to this combined archive through our far reaching networks and library branches.”

“By combining with Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Historical Society immediately extends our reach to every neighborhood in the borough, creating myriad opportunities to educate people of all ages about Brooklyn’s important history and its relevance to each of them,” said **Brooklyn Historical Society President Deborah Schwartz**. “This partnership also provides BHS with financial stability, professional resources, and through our combined programming, an enhancement and expansion of everything we do. This includes the ongoing building of our collections in ways that foster inclusion and reflect the diversity of the borough.”

Both institutions are dedicated to providing welcoming spaces where all can engage in learning and

explore individual and shared experiences that strengthen the fabric of community and promote civic engagement. Brooklyn Historical Society, with its unprecedented holdings, has been a cultural hub for dialogue and community outreach since 1863 and a leader in expanding the narrative of Brooklyn's history for scholars, students, and the public. BPL, one of the largest library systems in the country and a leader in redefining the role of libraries in the 21st century through groundbreaking work to address the needs and issues that are vital to the communities it serves, will provide its own unique programming expertise and community service resources to BHS, as well as efficiencies through economy of scale and marketing expertise. Making the combined collection available online through digitization is an ongoing priority for the combined BPL and BHS in an effort to expand its reach even further.

The unified collections will be housed at Brooklyn Historical Society's Pierrepont Street home. BPL's [Brooklyn Collection](#) and other archival materials in BPL's Central Branch have supported scholarly, student, and public research in the borough since 1896.

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About Brooklyn Public Library

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is an independent library system for the 2.7 million residents of Brooklyn. It is the sixth largest library system in the United States with 59 neighborhood libraries located throughout the borough. BPL offers free programs and services for all ages and stages of life, including a large selection of books in more than 30 languages, author talks, literacy programs, and public computers. BPL's eResources, such as eBooks and eVideos, catalog information, and free homework help, are available to customers of all ages 24 hours a day at our [website](#).

About Brooklyn Historical Society

Founded in 1863, Brooklyn Historical Society is a nationally recognized urban history center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's extraordinary 400-year history. Located in Brooklyn Heights and housed in a magnificent landmark building designed by George Post and opened in 1881, today's BHS is a cultural hub for civic dialogue, thoughtful engagement and community outreach. In May 2017 BHS opened a second site in DUMBO's Brooklyn Bridge Park. All of BHS's resources and programs are accessible on our [website](#).

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