

HINTS ON RESEARCHING NEW YORK CITY BUILDINGS

Updated for Spring 2006 Andrew S. Dolkart

Below are suggestions for undertaking research on New York buildings and neighborhoods. These sources range from original records to important secondary sources. Depending upon the topic you are researching, you will not necessarily need to use each of these sources. Keep in mind this is not an exhaustive list of possible research sources, but merely a guide to major repositories and major books and magazines. Before you start a research project, think about your objectives: what it is that you need to find out and then think about where you need to go to get the information. Do not run blindly to each and every possible source of information - targeting your research efforts will make for more effective research. Also, the staff at most of the repositories will be a lot more helpful if you know what it is you are looking for.

Remember to bring picture ID with you, especially when going to the city agencies (i.e. Department of Building, Municipal Archives, Municipal Reference Library, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, etc.)

Maps and Atlases.

The Land Book is a basic source for buildings, especially if you are going to undertake further research for which you need to know the block and lot number of a building or group of buildings. The block and lot is the number under which most official records are filed. The land book also gives dimensions of lot, number of stories, present owner, and much more information.

Old atlases, published by Perris, Bromley, Robinson, Beers, Sanborn, and others, are invaluable for tracing information on neighborhood development and on the history of a particular site. These atlases were published every few years and show what was standing at a particular time, materials used in construction, where old farm lines were, names of buildings, etc. Be sure to refer to the key in the front of each volume; this will aid in understanding what all of the map symbols and colors mean. It is often a good idea to record the key information either in note form or photographically as it is easy to forget what all those odd symbols and colors mean.

Atlases for various years are available at Avery. Ask a reference librarian for a chronological listing of all atlases in the Avery collection. Some volumes are on the double folio shelves, others are in the rare book room. In addition, a run of Sanborn atlases is on microfilm (unfortunately you cannot read the colors on these). Many Sanborn atlases are online through the Library of Congress web site; these are also not in color and manipulating the map plates is difficult. Other collections are to be found at the New York Public Library (Map Division on the first floor) and the New-York Historical Society. The Brooklyn Historical Society has the most extensive collection of Brooklyn atlases. Another useful source for maps is <http://www.davidrumsey.com/index.html>

Important Note: You must check if the atlas was updated at some point after its initial publication (this is noted on a sticker that is usually placed on one of the first pages). If an 1895 atlas was updated through 1916, what you are looking at is a 1916 map not an 1895 map.

New York City Department of Buildings (DOB)--Manhattan Office. 280 Broadway between Reade and Chambers Streets. Records are on Third Floor. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 – 4:30
www.nyc.gov/html/dob/home.html

DOB is located in the former A. T. Stewart Store (one of the most important commercial buildings in America). The records here are valuable and will be the start of many research projects. To use these records you need the block and lot numbers (see above) and address of the properties in which you have an interest. DOB has kept records since April 1866.

All block and lot information is now on microfiche and the holdings for each lot, in the best of all possible worlds, will contain an NB form (new building form), as well as alteration (Alt.) forms. The NB will provide you with valuable information including the architect, developer, beginning date of construction, materials and other pertinent building information. The Alt. forms, filed subsequent to the building's completion, provide information that will allow you to trace the changes to your building. There may also be forms for plumbing, elevators, electric lights and signs, etc. Many of these may not be of interest, but others may be extremely important. Think about what you want to learn and then target your research.

The first thing that you need to do in order to see records at the Department of Buildings is to look up your building on the department's Building Information System (BIS). This is an index to all of the actions and permits.

-Go to <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/bis/bis.shtml>

-Click on Building Information System

-Click on A -- Building Information Search.

-Under Search of Property just fill in borough, then address, and click Go. (Make sure that when it asks for street name you include Street, Avenue, Parkway, etc.)

-The page that comes will not have the information that you are looking for.

-Go to the bottom where it says Select From List. If this box does not appear it means that there are no actions on file (they have probably been lost)

-Select either NB-New Building (NB) or Alt-Alteration, depending on what you are looking for.

-This should give you a list with the NB or Alt number(s). The NB will be coded and will be something like NB 15-88* (this is the fifteenth new building application for 1888; the asterisk means the date is pre-1900). Alt actions are arranged in a similar manner: Alt 123-32 is the 123rd alteration in 1932.-Print this out.

You can now take this number to the Buildings Department window, or you can use it to locate information in the *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* (at Avery; see below) or the Docket Books (see Municipal Archives) or the web site for the Office for Metropolitan History.

At the Department of Buildings, after you have printed out both the first page that includes the address and block and lot number and the action list, fill out a standard request form (available in a box at window 15). Submit this at window 15 with a valid ID (they prefer a driver's license). You will get a ticket and then you will have to wait until your number is called. Try to have all of the printed pages before you go to the Buildings Department since the computers are inadequate and the place can be chaotic.

If you want to see all of the actions in the history of a building -- that is new buildings, alterations, etc. will need to email or fax in a request form (or drop it off in person) three business days in advance. The fax is (212) 566-5601 (Manhattan only) and you may want to call and confirm receipt before heading off, the telephone number is 212-566-0272. You can also hand deliver your request to 280 Broadway, 3rd floor. The material will be held for you for two days. You can pick up the entire file of microfiche for the lot at the window on the third floor. You must look at the entire file the day you pick it up -- they will not be held over for you. The file will include every action and may take a while to sort through but should provide you with valuable information. You are limited to ordering five block and lot files per day.

Each borough has a Department of Buildings. Brooklyn: Brooklyn Municipal Building is on Court and Joralemon streets -- 8th floor. Bronx: East Tremont Avenue and Arthur Avenue. Queens: Queens Boulevard; Staten Island: Borough Hall. Each of these offices keeps different hours and has different rules; it is difficult to get any information from the Bronx and Brooklyn offices.

Office for Metropolitan History

A wonderful new research tool has recently been made available, courtesy of Christopher Gray and his Office for Metropolitan History (Gray is an architectural historian and author of the "Streetscapes" column published in the Real Estate section of the Sunday *New York Times*). He has created a digitized index to all of the new building permits in Manhattan for the years 1900-1986 that is searchable by address, architect, building type, and other fields. It can be accessed at www.metrohistory.com/searchfront.htm

Municipal Archives. Surrogate's Court/Hall of Records, 31 Chambers Street. Note the spectacular Beaux-Arts lobby (also great court rooms on 5th floor; spaces here often used in movies). Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:00-4:30 and Friday 9:00-1:00, (212-788-8580).

www.nyc.gov/html/records/home.html

The director of the Municipal Archives is Leonora A. Gidlund

Docket Books

One of the most valuable resources here are the microfilms of the docket books which are kept in a microfilm cabinet on the north wall of the inner research room in the Archives. New building docket books and alteration docket books were kept by the city and list every new building permit and alteration permit in number order. If you have the NB or Alt number you can look up the number in the docket books and get much of the pertinent information on construction (architect, date, owner, size, materials, etc.) without going to the Department of Buildings (see also *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, below). The new building and alteration dockets also have indexes (through second decade of 20th century), so if you do not have the NB or Alt number you can check the indexes -- alphabetical by the first letter of a street, but not alphabetized within each letter. Often if BIS does not have an NB or Alt recorded, you can find it in these indexes. It helps, when using these indexes to have some idea of when the building was erected so that you do not have to look through too many volumes.

Building Department Records

Also available at the Archives are the original Building Department forms for buildings on blocks 1 through 968, the southern part of Manhattan up to 39th Street. If you wish to see one or more files you must call before you plan to go to the Archives so that the material you want can be brought to the room. Block and lot folders are brought up from storage once a week. You must place your request (you need to provide the block and lot numbers) by Wednesday and the folders will be available late Friday morning. You can place your request over the telephone.

Tax Records

Tax records are useful for dating buildings that predate the Building Department. To use the tax records you will need to find the ward number (a ward was a political subdivision, akin to today's community boards). There is a ward map at the desk and there is also a ward map in the *Encyclopedia of New York* (see below). Note: ward numbers changed occasionally, especially as large wards were split -- note the date of changes on the ward map. The tax records are on microfilm (in cases on the east wall near the window). Tax records for all boroughs are available here, but some will need to be ordered because they are stored off site. Beginning in the 1890s, tax records were arranged by block and lot. Prior to that, however, they are arranged by street, within each ward. Within the streets, they were arranged by ward lot number. You can find the ward number by going to a tax reel from the 1890s, during the period of transition, when both block and lot and ward numbers are often given. However, if this is not available, it helps to have as much information about your property to assist in finding the correct tax entry. Go to conveyance records (see real property records below) first so that you have some idea of who owned your lot and when it changed hands.

Land Books

There are several land books here which will help with block and lots. These are located on the shelves in the southeast corner of the main room. They cover Manhattan and the Bronx (before it became a separate borough). The Archives also have city directories (see below) on microfilm.

Tax Photographs

In c. 1939, New York City photographed every building in the city - this is an invaluable record. To find a building's photo, you will need the block and lot number. A black index book on the table near the center of the room will include reference numbers to the microfilm (the book contains numbers only for Manhattan; the index information for other boroughs is on microfilm). With the reference number (it will look something like "D-1365"), go to the microfilm drawer on the north wall of the main room and search for the roll. The section of the film containing your index number will include numerous tax photos all individually identified by block and lot. Prints can be ordered by filling out a Tax Photo Order Form. Note that these were utilitarian images and not art photos so the quality varies – also some of the negatives deteriorated prior to their rediscovery and preservation. The quality of printed images is generally poor. You can, if you desire, order an image for \$30.00.

Manhattan Borough President's Photograph Collection

In addition to the tax photos, another invaluable record is the MBP photo collection. Of far lesser coverage and far greater quality, the MBP photos cover a period from the 1920s through 1940s. A card catalogue on the east wall of the main room is indexed alphabetically and numerically by street name and street number. A brief description of the image is included on each card along with a number. With the number, you can pull the corresponding microfilm from the drawers across the room on the west wall behind the help desk. Like the tax photos, these too can be ordered by filling out an order form.

The Archives has a copy machine that is self service. Copies are 25 cents each and payment is on the honor system. You can also print from the microfilm machines (25 cents for text copies and 50 cents for tax photos). Please be sure to pay for all copies at the desk before you leave.

****Please remember that the Archives has a very small staff. Try to keep your requests limited. Do not expect to have someone do your research for you.*

There is no photography permitted in the Archives.

City Hall Library (formerly Municipal Reference Library). Surrogate's Court/Hall of Records--1st floor. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00-4:00

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/about/chlibrary.shtml>

This library is located at the rear of the 1st floor of the Surrogate's Court, on direct axis with the building's entrance. The collection here is quite mixed, but this is a convenient place in which to do research when downtown. The library has the most complete collection of annual reports of various city agencies, going back to the 19th century. These reports are often very valuable sources for information on civic projects. They also have clipping (vertical) files and an extensive collection of historic books about New York. The library also has a complete collection of NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission designation reports.

Real Property Records. 66 John Street, 13th floor. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00-4:00.

Kept in this department are records of building ownership and deed conveyances. The conveyance records are a very valuable source for tracing ownership of a property and for establishing who lived in a house. You need the block and lot number to use these records (the Manhattan office has block and lot maps hanging from racks). The oldest property record books are in the back on the right. These list all real estate transactions from the 17th century through about 1898 with grantor (seller) and grantee (buyer). Look for the lot columns, to show which transactions deal with your lot(s). These books also have a very useful brief history of each block (look for it at the beginning of the entry for that block). The smaller, horizontal-format, gray books (to the left) have transactions from 1900-c.1960. These are listed by block and lot, with separate pages for each lot. Records dating back to about 1970 are on line.

The property records are helpful if your building predates the buildings department. For rowhouses, the year in which your building's lot number appears by itself, for the first time, often indicates that this is a new building that a developer has erected and then sold to a single homeowner. You would, of course, have to check this, in tax records, or elsewhere, but it is a useful guide. If you have a residential building, you can take the owners name found here and compare with City Directories to see if the person lived at this address -- this also helps to pinpoint date of construction. The records may also give you names of industrial or commercial owners.

Property records for other boroughs are kept in their Municipal Buildings, but are arranged in a similar manner (note, early records for Brooklyn have no lot notations, making them difficult to follow).

Census Records

The census records are an excellent way to put residential buildings into some sort of social context. These records will tell you who lived in a building on the day that the census enumerator visited (including the head of household, dependents, servants, boarders, etc.). Census listings for different years asked for different bits of information; you can often find out sex, race, national origin, age, occupation, etc. of residents. The U.S. Census is taken every ten years, but they are closed to public scrutiny for about 72 years. Thus, the census records are now available through 1930 (unfortunately the entire 1890 census for New York City was lost in a fire). The more basic data you have, the easier it is to find what you want in the census. From 1880 on, you should have the address of the property. Prior to 1880 you must have a name since the census records do not give address. For the various census before 1880 there are indices by name. For later years you can use a bizarre system called "Soundex" which will help you locate a name if you do not have an address.

Federal census records are available on **AncestryPlus** from **Ancestry.com**, a subscription site available from computers on campus (you cannot access it from home); it is also available at all branches of the New York Public Library. This database includes digital images to all federal census records as well as name indexes for most. Ancestry.com is only useful if you are looking for a name; it is not indexed by address. If you are researching an address, you still need to start with the microfilm copies. An additional problem with this database is that it is reading handwriting. The quality of the handwriting of the census enumerators varied. Thus, many names are read incorrectly. If you do not find the name that you are looking for by clicking exact spelling then try Soundex spelling which may pick up a misreading of the handwriting (I found my paternal grandfather this way).

If you only have an address you will need to check the actual census enumerations on microfilm. Using these records can be a bit confusing and generally takes several steps (to add to the complication, the records of each census are arranged a bit differently). The best place to use the census is the **New York Public Library**. Microfilms are in Room 119. For instructions go to the Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy Room in Room 121 and ask a librarian for assistance (they are usually very helpful). The Federal Census is also available at the **National Archives, New York City Office** at 201 Varick Street (212-337-1300); enter on Houston Street (second entrance). The staff and volunteers here are very helpful, but they do not have the New York State census here (see below). The hours for the National Archives are Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and first and third Saturday of each month 8:00-4:30; Tuesday and Thursday 8:00-8:00. Internet: www.archives.gov/ NYC location: www.archives.gov/facilities/ny/new_york_city.html

New York State Census. New York State undertook its own census in 1905, 1915, and 1925 (all available) for New York County; i.e. Manhattan, (the Bronx was part of New York County in 1905) and in other years for other counties. The entire state was done in 1925. In order find the listing that you want you need to know the AD (assembly district) and the ED (enumeration district) for an address. Fortunately there is a street index on microfilm at the public library and now available at <http://stevemorse.org/index.html>, a very useful service for genealogical research. The actual state census records are not on line, and can be read at the New York Public Library.

There is also a **New York City Police Census** taken in 1890 (this is available only at the Municipal Archives), but this just lists names, offering considerably less information than other census listings.

Avery Library and Other Columbia Libraries

Do not underestimate the resources at Avery. This is one of the world's great architecture libraries. In addition to books, maps, catalogues etc., don't forget to check for magazine articles on your building, architect, block, or neighborhood. Many (but unfortunately not all) of the older magazines are indexed as part of what is known as the "Avery Index." The Index is on line. You can also use the Avery Index Book Catalogue. Avery also has the book catalogue for the Burnham Library in Chicago which indexed several additional magazines.

You will also want to use other Columbia libraries. Census abstracts are at **Lehman Library** (School of International Affairs), information about specific businesses and industries is at the **Business School Library** (Uris), etc. **Butler Library** has Columbia's general collections, including history books, books about New York, and general periodicals. Many popular periodicals, including *Harper's*, *Century*, *Munsey's*, etc. include articles about architecture and about cities. Some of these are on line (Columbia subscribes to HarpWeek which reproduced all issues of *Harper's Weekly*; other nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century journals can be found on the Making of America web site); others are indexed in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature now on line and also available in bound volumes in the Butler Reference room. Note that CLEO only gives the call number of microfilm editions of most of these periodicals. Columbia has paper copies, but to get the call number you need to look in the old Serials Card Catalogue (the call numbers are mostly 051 and then alphabetical by the name of the periodical -- some like Harper's are on folio shelves). Butler also has various biographical dictionaries such as *Dictionary of American Biography* (also available in hard copy at Avery. It is also online – but easier to use in hard copy).

New York Public Library. Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, 11:00-7:30; Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 10:00-6:00; Sunday 1:00-6:00 (212- 930-0830).
Internet: www.nypl.org

The libraries catalogue (CATNYP) is on-line either at the NYPL site or through Columbia.

The New York Public Library and the New-York Historical Society (see below) are the two great resources for New York City. Each has a library with a great deal of valuable information on many aspects of the city. The main catalogue and reading rooms of the library are located on the third floor (CarrPre & Hastings's original spaces have been spectacularly restored by Davis Brody Bond). There are also specialized collections that you may want to use:

United States History, Local History and Genealogy Division. Room 121 (Tuesday-Wednesday 11:00-7:30, Thursday-Saturday 10:00-6:00). The extensive collection of books on New York City is housed in here. Although more and more of the older collections have been placed on line, you should also check the book catalogue in this division. The Public Library also has a photo collection, most of which has been placed on microfiche. It is arranged by street and you can look at the fiche in Room 121 or in room 119 (Avery also has a copy of this microfiche collection). The collection will soon be available in digitalized form. If you want to order a copy of a photo they will pull the original for your perusal. There is also another collection, called the Acker Collection, which is on microfiche. There is a card index by address at the reference desk (ask). All genealogical resources (census, city directories, etc.) are on microfilm in Room 119.

Art and Architecture Division Room 313 (Tuesday-Wednesday 11:00-7:30, Thursday-Friday 10:00-6:00, Saturday 1:00-6:00). Extensive collection of books on art and to a somewhat lesser extent on architecture. This division also has clippings files on specific artists and architects (now on microfiche) that can provide unusual material.

Map Division Room 117 (Hours: Tuesday 1:00-7:30, Wednesday-Saturday 1:00-6:00) See discussion of maps and atlases above. The division's home has just been beautifully restored.

Digital Library The NYPL has undertaken a project to put tens of thousands of images on line. This includes the library's street views of New York photo collection. In addition, there is another small, but quirky photo collection, post card views of Staten Island, and several rare titles with images and plans of early 20th-century apartment buildings. The library's entire picture collection is also on line. This is a collection of clippings and other graphic illustrations arranged by subject; it does not include photographs.

Research Branches of the New York Public Library

As the library's collections have expanded, certain divisions have moved into separate buildings.

Science and Business Library. 188 Madison Avenue between 34th and 35th streets. (Tuesday-Thursday 10:00-8:00; Friday and Saturday 10:00-6:00). If you are researching a topic related to business or science you may wish to visit this new, high-technology library in the old B. Altman Department Store designed by Trowbridge & Livingston early in the 20th century. The conversion was designed by Gwathmey/Siegal. This library also has material about real estate and development, patent records, and microfilm of the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, an important business newspaper.

Performing Arts Library. Lincoln Center, located between the Metropolitan Opera House and the Vivian Beaumont Theater (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 12:00-6:00; Thursday, 12:00-8:00). If you are researching a topic related to theater, music, or dance, you may wish to visit this library, an elegant design by Gordon Bunshaft, recently renovated by James Stewart Polshek Architects.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Lenox Avenue (Malcolm X Boulevard) and 135th Street (Tuesday and Wednesday, 12:00-8:00; Thursday-Friday 12:00-6:00, Saturday 10:00-6:00). Special collections, including photographs and manuscripts, always close at 5:00 and are closed on Tuesday. This is the major resource for research in topics related to African-American history.

New-York Historical Society. Central Park West and West 76th Street. Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10:00-5:00 (212-873-3400). www.nyhistory.org

The libraries catalogue is available on line at the New-York Historical Society site or through Columbia (go to the catalogue of New York University's Bobst Library (Bob Cat) and then click on New-York Historical Society).

The Historical Society has an extraordinary library of materials relating to New York City and it is a relaxing place to work. You do not need an appointment to use the library and it is free. The only downside to research work here is that photocopying is limited. The library contains bound copies of NYC Directories covering much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and this is one of the easier places to do directory research. The Society also has collections of architectural drawings and a large collection of photographs (an appointment is necessary to use these collections). The society has an extensive collection of maps and atlases.

Museum of the City of New York. Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street. Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:00-5:00 (212-534-1672). www.mcny.org

The main resource here is the superb photo collection. The problem is its general inaccessibility. You must make an appointment to use this collection and since they do not have facilities for large numbers of researchers, you may have to wait some time to get in. Note that they charge an outrageous \$25.00 for research appointments (students can often get a reduction).

New York Transit Museum Archive. 130 Livingston Street, Room C42, Brooklyn. Monday – Friday, 9:00-5:00 (718-694-1068).

The Transit Archive has an extensive photo collection documenting the construction of and alterations to the city's numerous subway lines. The early routes constructed during the first quarter of the twentieth century are more fully represented and include street-level photographs before construction and street-level and below-ground construction-period photos. These images are of very high quality and contain incredible details of the buildings adjacent to the routes including storefront infill and other architectural details. Additional information in the archive include photographs of trolley cars and buses and historical transit maps.

It is necessary to call and make an appointment in advance and there is currently only one staff archivist – so patience is required. Research appointments are usually scheduled two weeks in advance.

Library of Congress www.loc.gov

Excellent source for images – photographs, maps, etc. Click on American Memory.

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. The Arsenal, 830 Fifth Avenue at 64th Street. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00-5:00. Parks Library, Room 240 (212-360-8240); Olmsted Center, Flushing (718-760-6798). www.nycparks.completeinet.net/index.php
Historical Signs: www.nycparks.completeinet.net/sub_your_park/historical_signs.html

NYC Parks maintains a diverse collection of primary and secondary source materials relating to the history of the city's numerous parks. The majority of the collection is held in the Parks Library at the Arsenal. Additional resources, including map data, are located at the Olmsted Center in Flushing, Queens. The Municipal Archives (see above) also maintains resources relating to the development and design of the city's parks, particularly the Robert Moses era, and should be consulted too. The Parks Department recently completed a Historical Sign project providing historical information on the more than 1,700 parks in the city. The text of these signs is online and may be a good starting point for your research. Once you have targeted your research, you can contact the Parks Historian or the Parks Library about source materials and setting up a research appointment.

Keep in mind that these are working city offices dedicated to maintaining the city's parks. They are equipped to handle research requests but not large groups.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. 1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North. Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00-5:00 (212-669-7700). www.nyc.gov and then click on departments to find Landmarks.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has written a designation report on every individual landmark and historic district. Some of the earlier reports are not very substantive, but the reports prepared since the mid 1970s are very valuable sources of information. These reports deal with individual buildings, architects, neighborhoods, building types, etc. It is also possible to arrange to pick up a report at the Commission's offices. Call and ask for the research department. There is a fee for some reports.

Although designation reports are available at LPC, it is far easier to access these reports at Avery or the Municipal Reference Library.

Recent designation reports (since about 2001) are on line. Go to the Commission's web site and click on publications.

If you want basic, up-to-date information on a landmark building designated before 2003 check *Guide to New York City Landmarks* written by Andrew S. Dolkart and Matthew A. Postal and published by the Commission (2004).

Real Estate Record and Builders Guide

This is a magazine that began publication on a weekly basis in the late 1860s. There are many original volumes on the shelf at Avery and the entire run is on microfilm. Each week there was a listing of proposed buildings in Manhattan (including the Bronx between 1874 and c. 1913) and Brooklyn. The Manhattan/Bronx new building listings (and Brooklyn in the 1880s) are indexed. This is a good way to find architect, owner, date, etc. without using the records at the buildings department or archives. With a BIS number, you can look up an action in these listings since the *Real Estate Record* is arranged by NB and Alt number. There are also articles on buildings and neighborhood development, but these are not indexed. There is an index to the illustrations (often a good way to find an article on a particular building or neighborhood)--it is on the Avery reference shelves.

Stokes Iconography of Manhattan Island. On Avery Reference Shelves.

I. N. Phelps Stokes, a wealthy collector and architect (designed St. Paul's Chapel here at Columbia) compiled this enormous (and extraordinary) six volume history of New York. It has a detailed early history of the city and hundreds of early views of New York. It is extensively indexed and is an invaluable source for the study of the city's early history, development, and architecture.

City Directories.

City directories were published every year from the 18th century until well into the 20th century. There are separate volumes for New York City (Manhattan and later the Bronx) and for Brooklyn and scattered volumes for the towns and villages of Queens and Staten Island. They list residents, their address, occupation, and place of work. They are invaluable for identifying who lived in a residential building and for getting some idea of the type of person who lived in a particular area. There are reverse directories, which list people by address, for various years of the 19th century. Also useful are business directories, telephone directories, reverse telephone directories (by address), and the Social Register. Some of the directories are on microfiche at Butler and all are on microfilm at the New York Public Library and at the Municipal Archives. The only place that you can actually use hard copies of the New York City directories is at the New-York Historical Society (they are on a shelf on the left side of the library). There are business directories at the Business School Library. A few directories are available on Ancestry.com

Diaries.

There are two 19th-century diaries that are filled with information about New York. They are the diaries of Philip Hone and George Templeton Strong. Editions of these dairies are indexed.

Architects in Practice in New York City

Two volumes that list every architect active in New York City and when they worked and where their offices were located. 1840-1900 by Dennis Steadman Francis; 1900-1940 by James Ward. These are useful for checking spelling when you are having trouble reading the handwriting from the New Building forms or docket books.

New York Times and Other Newspapers

The *New York Times* is a good source for information on development. The *Times* has extensively covered architecture and development since the 19th century, especially in its Sunday real estate section. The *Times* is indexed and the index is available at Butler Library, at the New York Public Library, at the Municipal Reference Library, and elsewhere. The entire run of the *Times* is on-line and available through Columbia's libraries: go to Data Bases A to Z and then to **ProQuest Historical Newspapers**. ProQuest is a fantastic site, but it is not infallible. I have found, for example, that obituaries do not always appear; so, if you are looking for the obituary of someone who you think should appear in the *Times*, check the obituary index or the names index, both in the reference room at Butler Library.

The **Brooklyn Daily Eagle**, the major newspaper for Brooklyn, which also included news of other parts of New York City, is on line for the period 1841-1902. The *Eagle* can be accessed at www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle.

There were other important New York City newspapers, but with the exception of the *New York Tribune* in the 1890s and early 20th century, these are not indexed (the *Tribune* index, in book form, is in the Butler reference room). The microfilm room at Butler Library has the *Times*, *Tribune*, *Herald*, *Sun*, *Evening Post*, and *World*. All of these, and other papers, are also on microfilm at the New York Public Library. If you know that something happened on a particular date, you might wish to check these other newspapers. The New-York Historical Society has compiled a chronological card file of local newspapers in their extensive collection; they also have a hand-written book index to the *Evening Post* and a card-file index to the *Sun*.

The Encyclopedia of New York City

Edited by Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale, 1995). At 1350 pages, a gold mine of information on New York City. Entries across the entire spectrum of New York history, design, and culture. A great resource, always worth checking.

New York 1880, 1900, 1930, 1960

This collection of books, written by Robert A.M. Stern and others, is a very good source for historical information on the development of the city and includes valuable entries on many specific buildings and complexes. In addition to the text and images, the endnotes are very informative and can help you in your research pursuits.