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RLIN NYKI-590-040-0119
A0130 – 6/4/C

Records of the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad Company
1875-1897

Brooklyn Historical Society
Othmer Library
128 Pierrepont Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel. 718.222.4111 FAX 718.222.3794

library@brooklynhistory.org
www.brooklynhistory.org

Marilyn H. Pettit
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Introduction

This collection contains documents of the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad Company, 1875-1897, acquired by purchase by the Long Island Historical Society (re-named Brooklyn Historical Society in 1986) from James B. Stewart, Books and Prints, August 28, 1940. Accession number was assigned during the Brooklyn Rediscovery project of the 1970's and inventoried by (Mitziko) Mitzi Sawada, who numbered 195 items in a portion of a single manuscript box. The New York State HDI/RLIN project surveyed the collections in the mid-1980's. Sawada's finding aid was not migrated into successive electronic access formats in ensuing years; was keyboarded, edited, and emended in June, 2006 by Dr. Pettit.

Biographical Note

Henry W. Putnam of Bennington, Vermont and New York City was president of the company from approximately 1883 to 1892 and the records are chiefly from that period. The Brooklyn Elevated Railroad Company was incorporated in 1874 and became an extensive elevated railroad that in New York City (following consolidation in 1898). The first rail was laid in 1883 and the railroad opened to the public in May, 1885. W. Fontaine Bruff was president of the company until c.1883 when Henry W. Putnam became president. Putnam was succeeded by Adolf Ladenburg in 1892.

The railroad operated via a number of divisions or subsidiaries, including the following:

1. Railroad Construction Company, incorporated June, 1883 in New Jersey with offices in Jersey City, Patterson, Brooklyn, New York, London, and Edinburgh;
2. Union Elevated Railroad Company, chartered in 1886, leased its road to the Brooklyn "El" as soon as the rail line was completed, and the two firms consolidated in 1890;
3. the Syndicate.

The original elevated line ran from Washington and York streets (old downtown Brooklyn, now part of DUMBO) along Flushing Avenue (adjacent to the Navy Yard) to Grand Avenue and then Myrtle. It was taken out of service in 1889 and replaced by 1890 with four main lines:

1. the Broadway (Broadway Ferry in Williamsburg to Van Sicklen Avenue in East New York)
2. the Lexington (Brooklyn Bridge to Van Sicklen Avenue in East New York)
3. Myrtle Avenue (Fulton Ferry to Wyckoff Avenue in Ridgewood)
4. Fifth Avenue Line (Brooklyn Bridge to Fifth Avenue and 36th Street in today's Sunset Park).

A fifth line was the Fulton Street line, owned by the Kings County Elevated Railroad Company.

Scope and Content

Bulk dates: 1883-1890. Includes correspondence, financial documents, incorporation documents, and operations reports. About one-third consists of letters to Mr. Putnam and about one-third from Frederick Uhlmann, a New York City hops merchant who was Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Documents indicate the financial arrangements and operations of a growing transportation system in the 1880's, including plans for property use, employment and labor needs, pay rates, construction expenses.

Records are arranged by department, then chronological within each folder. Most items are hand-written and in good condition.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
A0130	1	Agreements – 12 items Braff stock, cash subscribers, security holders	1882-1886
	2	Correspondence – 73 items securities, creditors and debt, operations, Bruff stock, iron works, compensation for property (condemnation maps)	1882-1897
	3	Trustees materials, including lists of trustees	1875-1891
	4	Financial statements -39 items	1885-1892
	5	Financing – 40 items	1881-1894
	6	Litigation – 2 items Farmers Loan & Trust Co	1881
	7	Operations – 13 items	1880-1890
	8	Incorporation – 10 items incorporation, consolidation of all elevated lines	1882-1891

References

Cunningham, Joseph and Leonard DeHart, *A History of the New York City Subway System: Rapid Transit in Brooklyn*, 1977.

Fischler, Stan, *Uptown, Downtown*, 1976.

Howard, Henry W. B., ed., *The Eagle and Brooklyn*, 1893

Syrett, Harold C., *The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898*, Columbia University Studies in the Social Sciences, no. 512, New York, 1944, reprinted 1968.