



# *A tale of Two Bridges*

Effects on the cityscape, transport, and residents of NYC

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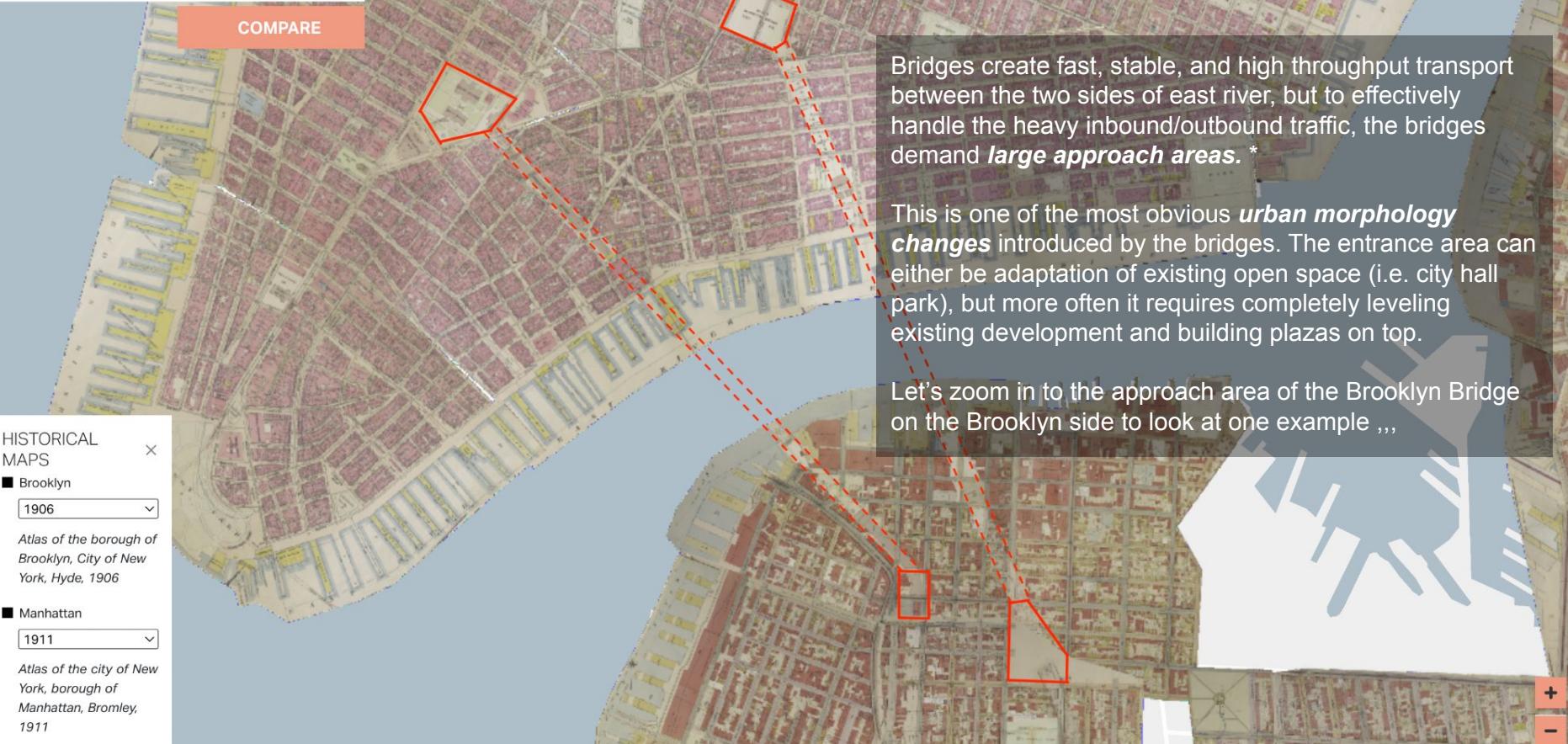
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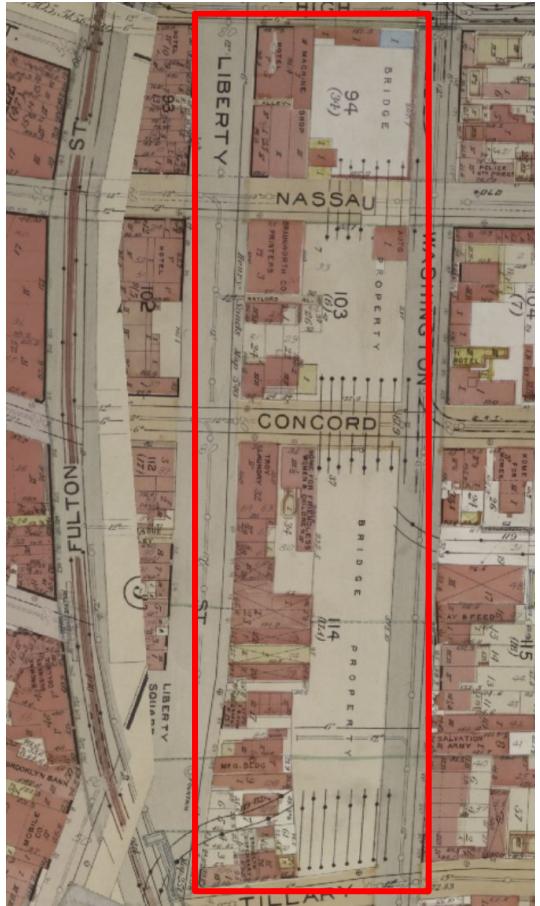
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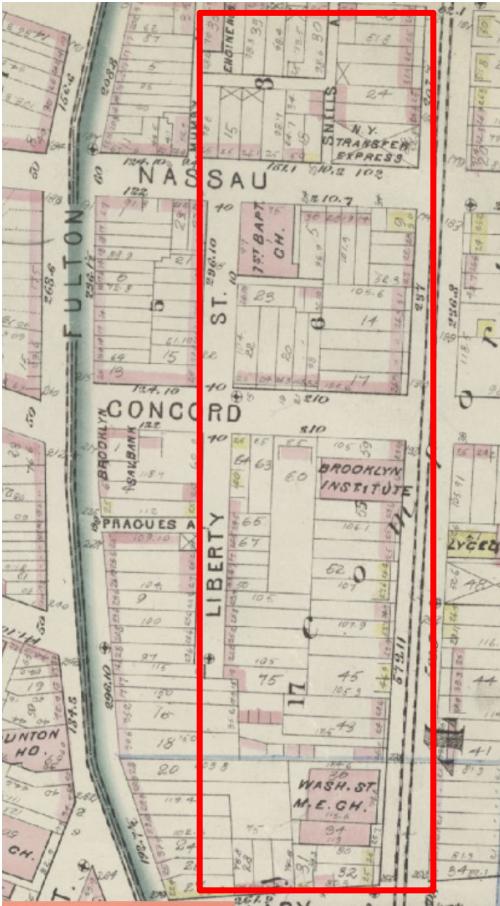
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**1906**

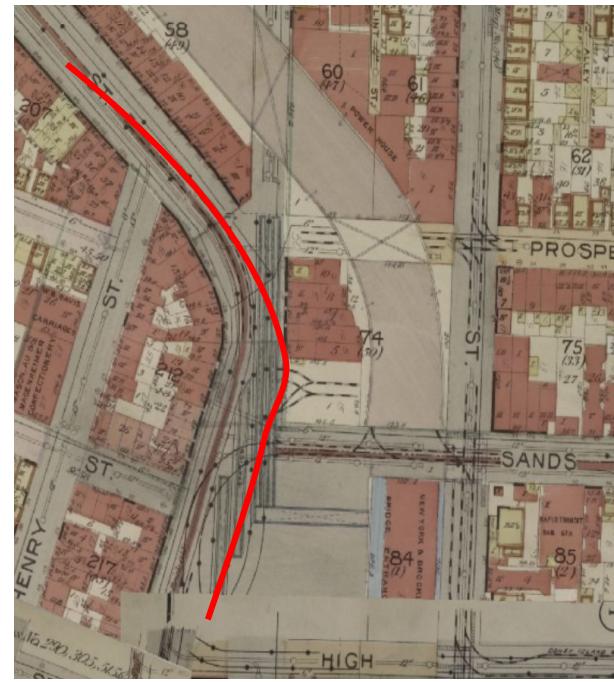
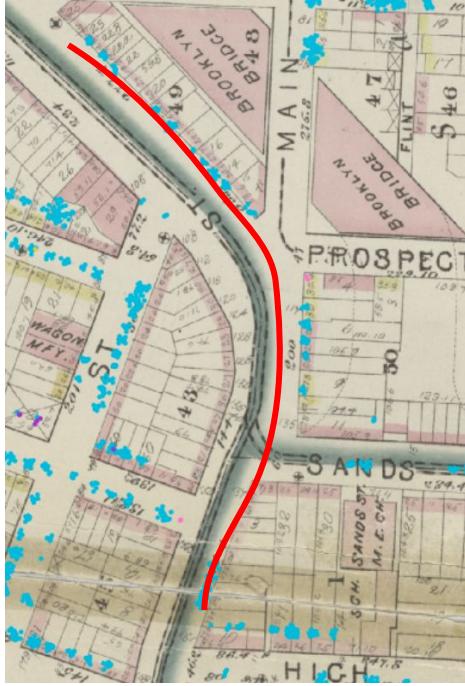


**1880**



## **Bridge Entrance Construction 1880 vs. 1906**

Clearly demonstrated in the contrasting buildings layouts of 1880 and 1907, the Brooklyn Bridge was built directly onto more than seven blocks of residential property along Fulton Street. Two churches and a building called Brooklyn Institute (possibly associated with the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences) were demolished on the right side of the blocks shown, while on the left side, residential apartments were replaced with industries such as Troy Laundry, Braunworth Printers, and a Machine Shop.



## Railroad Advancements: 1850, 1880, 1906

The Fulton Street Elevated Railway, constructed between 1885 and 1915, was built alongside the Brooklyn Bridge. Running from Fulton Ferry to Downtown Brooklyn, it extended across Brooklyn. Its trajectory along Fulton St. is now marked by the J line. The railroad increased transfer of goods and efficiency of travel similarly to the bridge itself, although the two were not directly connected. With the combined construction of the railroad and the Bridge, traffic flow likely caused significant variability in residential life- this is evident in the 1906 image, which shows that residential buildings and communal areas such as the Sands St. Church were replaced by the New York Brooklyn Bridge entrance and rail accommodations.

## Fulton Street Railroad



While the construction of a new bridge may have encouraged the railroad development around the entrances of the bridge, the influence may be reciprocal.

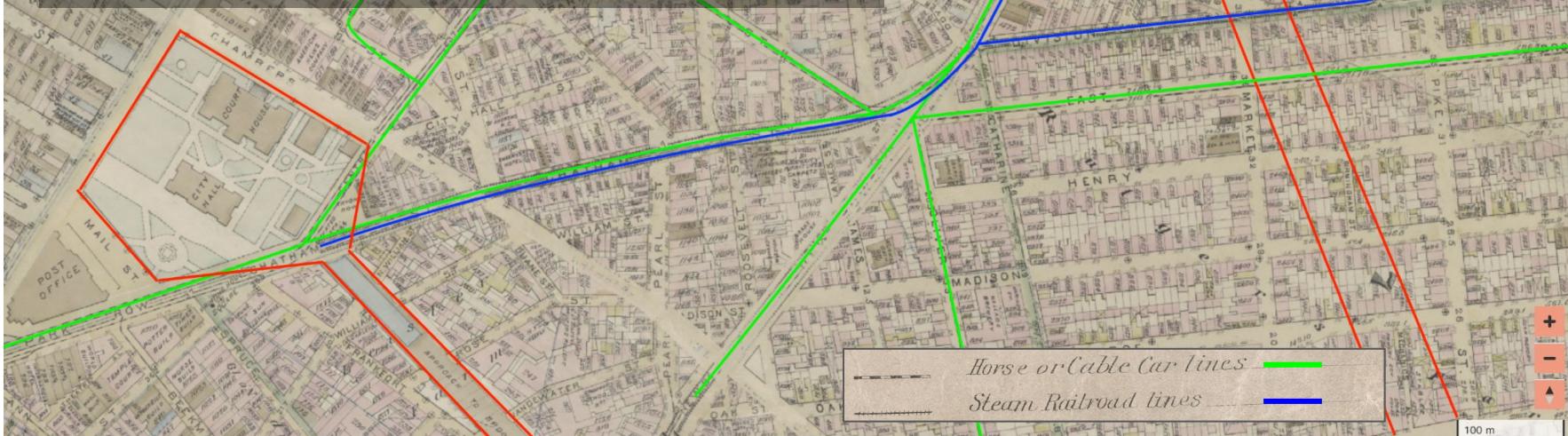
The approach area to the Manhattan Bridge on the manhattan side is the “Arch and Colonnade”. Unlike the city hall plaza with the Brooklyn Bridge, this plaza levels 2 existing blocks and the bridge’s support columns cut across 5 more blocks. With high cost of reconstruction, this site must have been chosen for a reason.

One hypothesis is that the **nearby railroad and trolley lines** make this approach area an ideal nexus that tie together different transports.

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## Displacement caused by Brooklyn Bridge 1857 vs. 1885

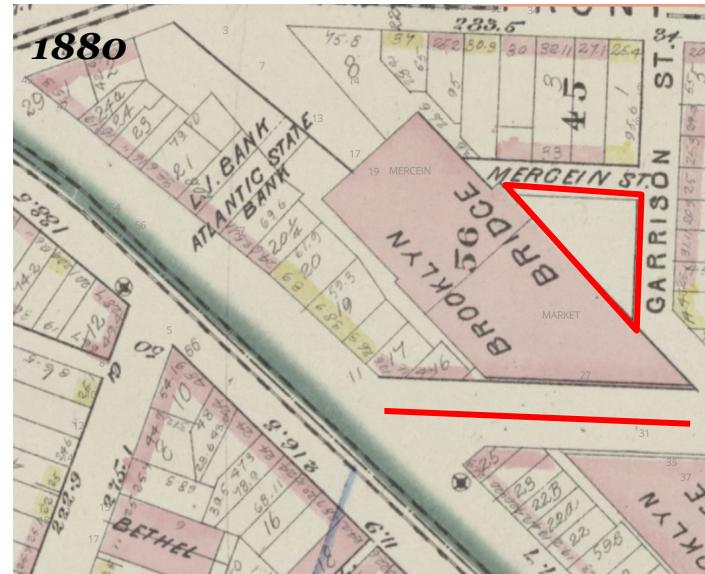
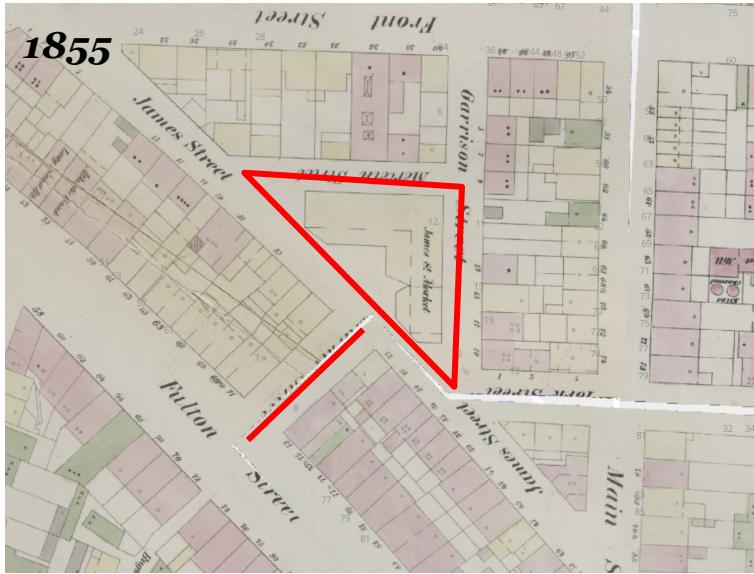
The bridge took space from roads and buildings. Interestingly, its construction also “smoothed” the urban fabric by bending the Frankfort Street and Dover Street to align better.

The bridge displaced existing residential and commercial developments on multiple blocks. The room below the bridge leading up the anchorage were turned into chambers and rented to liquor vendors as wine cellars, to cover part of the bridge construction costs.

## Chambers below the Bridges - Now and Then



Image source: Top-left, The Library of Congress; Top-right, Untapped NY, Bottom-left, Museum of the City of New York; Bottom-right, NPR.



## James Street Market and Street Layout, 1855 vs. 1880

The erasure of James Street Market, a trading hub built in 1826 for the sale of moats, fish and vegetables, is one example of a drastic shift in community life brought about by the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge. At its height, the market employed 27 butchers, 2 fishermen and 10 hucksters. Although the market itself was demolished between 1855 and 1880, the half block on which it resided remained, indicating that although the market was not spatially displaced by the bridge it was still heavily impacted by its construction. A more direct spatial change is indicated in the angle of what is now Market Street: likely in order to create a functioning underpass, it was necessary to level the street grid to cut the brooklyn bridge at a 45 degree angle.

## James Street Market



*Old James Street Market, Brooklyn.*

**1855****1906****1880**

Images of the Brooklyn coastline of 1850 (before the construction of the bridge), 1880 (during construction) and 1906 (post construction) indicate a shift away from ferry use in favor of the railroad and bridge. The 1850 map features a spacious Coal Yard and Wood Yard, as well as a robust ferry harbor which was under consistent use for the transfer of goods across the river. After the opening of the bridge in 1883, ferry workers reported a sharp decrease in riders, while toll workers on the bridge reported more than 100 travelers per minute. By 1906, the coal and wood yards had long been replaced by the New York Dock Company and the famous Brooklyn Bridge Tower.

# References

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