

Short Document Analysis Essay

by Geoff Zylstra



Part of an in-archives exercise at <http://www.teacharchives.org/exercises/scaffolded-research>

Select one of the historical documents that you examined at the archives.
Write a 2 - 3 page essay that discusses the historical relevance of this document.

Think about what you can prove historically with your document and discuss that in your paper. You will be using your document to make a historical argument. The document will be the evidence you use to make your argument. You should consider how the details of your document relate to both Brooklyn and larger national history. Use your annotated bibliography to help make the broader connections.

Ask yourself some of the following questions to stimulate ideas that you could write about. These are for brainstorming:

What basic factual information did the document provide to you?

Do these facts show anything about social power, for example class, race, or gender?

Does the document show any thing about living in Brooklyn at a certain time?
This could be architecture, sewers and sanitation, social relationships, cultural events, government operations and control, religion, economics, etc.

Was there anything that the document did not mention that seems important in terms of the people's lives at that time?

Consider the larger events that occurred at the time of your document (you may need to use your text book or other books). Is Brooklyn similar or different than other places in North America?