

Brooklyn Historical Society  
Guide to the Map Classification System

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## **I. Introduction/Purpose of classification system**

The purpose of implementing a new map classification system for BHS is to increase access to map collections, improve efficiency of reference service, improve patrons' browsing experience, and classify new materials. The classification system will group similar materials together by geographic location, date, and collection. Materials related to Brooklyn will be further subdivided by subject after the geographic location. Additionally, materials related to specific war or conflicts will be grouped according to subject as opposed to geographic location.

## II. Classification codes

The following codes will be used to classify maps by geographic area. This list may not contain codes for all of the geographic areas covered by maps in the collection; however, these codes represent the geographic coverage of maps that have been reclassified at this point. As the reclassification and inventory process continues, new codes will need to be created and added to this list. This section also contains the subject classification codes for war/conflict maps.

### A. Geographic classification codes

*Commonly Used:*

Brooklyn	B
Long Island	L.I.
Manhattan	M
Bronx	Br
Queens	Q
Staten Island	S.I.
New York City <sup>1</sup>	NYC
New York State	NYS
New Jersey	N.J.
New England	N.E.
Eastern United States <sup>2</sup>	E-US
United States	US

*Less commonly used:*

West Indies	W. Indies
Panama	Pan.
North America	N. Amer.
South America	S. Amer.
Central America	C. Amer.
Netherlands	Neth.
Texas	TX
Georgia	GA
Nicaragua	Nic.
Atlantic	Atl.
Mid Atlantic	Mid. Atl.

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<sup>1</sup> Use for maps containing two or more boroughs, unless one borough is predominately featured.

<sup>2</sup> Use for maps covering both New England and the Mid Atlantic; use also for maps that display a significant portion of the Eastern Coast.

Germany	Ger.
Europe	Eur.
England	Eng.
Martinique	Mart.
Maryland	MD
Pennsylvania	PA
Rhode Island	RI
Midwest	Midwst.
Illinois	IL
Minnesota	MN
Arctic Circle/Ocean	Arc.
Southeast U.S.	SE
North Carolina	NC
South Carolina	SC
Tennessee	TN
North Pole	NP
Canada	Can.
Mexico	Mex.
Massachusetts	MA
Western Hemisphere	W. Hemis.
Middle East	Mid East
Great Britain	G. Brit.
El Salvador	Salv.
Connecticut	CN

*For war/conflict maps<sup>3</sup>:*

Revolutionary War	Rev. War
Civil War	Civ. War
War of 1812	War of 1812
US-Mexican War	US-Mex. War

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<sup>3</sup> For war/conflict maps that cover Brooklyn, class by war as opposed to geographic coverage. For example, a map of the Battle of Long Island would be classed by: Rev. War-1776.

**B. Subject classification (use only for Brooklyn maps)**

**A—Physical/Political-historical**

Maps representing relief, bathymetry, general city plans, and tourist maps. Also maps showing political divisions, administrative divisions, and historical sites.

**B—Population**

Map representing vital statistics and other activities related to population, census, disease, ethnology, tribes, culture, education, religion, sanitation, anthropology, languages, native American reservations, settlements, and health resorts.

**C—Transportation**

Maps showing roads, airways, railways, and other types of transportation.

**P—Property Maps**

Maps showing property lines, lots, and divisions. Also includes maps showing land sales and auctions.

**PP—Prospect Park Maps**

Maps showing Prospect Park. Includes maps that show only a portion of the park.

### III. Assigning call numbers

#### *For a non-Brooklyn map*<sup>4</sup>

1. Determine the predominant geographic location featured. If more than one geographic location is present, use best judgment to assign classification.
2. Assign a date. If inferred, put the date in brackets. Try to determine a century, if possible (ex. [18-?]). If not possible, use n.d.

Ex. Map of Long Island, published in 1858.  
Classification no.: L.I.—1858

Ex. Map of Queens, date indeterminable.  
Classification no.: Q--n.d.

Ex. Map of Eastern United States, 1870 (date inferred from text)  
Classification no.: E-US--[1870]

#### *For a Brooklyn map*

1. Assign the geographic code for Brooklyn.
2. Assign a subject classification. Use best judgment for maps that feature more than one subject.
3. Assign a date. If inferred, put the date in brackets. If the date is indeterminable, use n.d.

Ex. Physical map of Brooklyn, published in 1852.  
Classification no.: B  
A--1852

Ex. Transportation map of Brooklyn, published in 1833.  
Classification no.: B  
C--1833

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<sup>4</sup> When assigning a call number for a property map, add the property owner after the call number if this can be determined. It won't officially be part of the call number but will be used to help with browsing.

Ex. Auction map of Sarah Lefferts Brooklyn property from 1875.

Official call number: B  
P-1875

Call number on piece: B  
P-1875 (Sarah Lefferts)

### *Collection/Location Codes*

All of BHS's maps belong to sub-collections within the general map collection, which are identified in the call number after the date.

The sub-collections and their collection/location codes are:

Sub-collection	Collection/Location Code
Flat maps (regular sized)	.Fl
Flat maps (folio)	.Fl.F
Folded maps (regular sized)	.Fd
Folded maps (folio)	.Fd.F
Atlases (regular sized)	.A
Atlases (folio)	.A.F

Ex. Physical map of Brooklyn, published in 1852  
Sub-collection: Flat maps (regular sized)

Classification no.: B  
A—1852.Fl

Ex. Transportation map of Brooklyn, published in 1833.  
Sub-collection: Folded maps (folio)

Classification no.: B  
C—1833.Fd.F

Ex. Atlas of New York City, published in 1900  
Sub-collection: Atlases (regular sized)

Classification no.: NYC—1900.A

## **IV. Special Cases**

### *Reproductions*

1. Assign a geographic code.

2. Assign an original (content) date and publication date.
3. Assign a sub-collection code

Ex. An administrative map depicting New York City as it was in 1789. The map was published in 1995.  
Sub-collection: Flat maps folio

Classification no.: NYC-1789 [1995].Fl.F<sup>5</sup>

#### *Duplicate classification numbers*

1. If a map is assigned a classification number/date that has already been assigned, add a lower-case letter after the date to distinguish

Ex. The flat map (regular sized) collection has three different maps of New York State from 1843.  
For the first map: NYS-1843.Fl  
For the second map: NYS-1843a.Fl  
For the third map: NYS-1843b .Fl

#### *Multiple copies*

1. Assign a geographic code.
2. Assign a date. Following the date, put the copy no.

Ex. Map of Bronx, published in 1900, copy 3.  
Sub-collection: Folded maps (regular sized)

Classification no.: Br-1900.Fd c. 3<sup>6</sup>

#### *Maps on more than one sheet<sup>7</sup>*

1. Assign a geographical code.
2. Assign a date. Following the date, put on the sheet no.

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<sup>5</sup> File reproductions by the original (content) date as opposed to the publication date. Also, for original maps (not reproductions) that represent historical content, include the historical date and the publication date.

For example, a map originally published in 1944 showing New England in 1870  
Classification no.: N.E.—1870 (1944)

<sup>6</sup> In ALEPH, we cannot add copy numbers to the call number; we have to instead create new holdings records for each copy. So, in Bobcat, multiple copies of the same map will have the same call number. However, on the physical maps, we can and should indicate copy number even though it will not be included in the official call number.

<sup>7</sup> This includes single sheets that have split from age. Write the call number on all sheets.

- Ex. Map of New York City published in 1855, on three sheets  
For the first sheet: NYC-1855 (sheet 1 of 3)  
For the second sheet: NYC-1855 (sheet 2 of 3)  
For the third sheet: NYC-1855 (sheet 3 of 3)

### *U.S. Coast Survey Maps*

These are serial maps and will be filed separately by number.<sup>8</sup>

1. Assign code for U.S. Coast Survey: U.S.C.S.<sup>9</sup>
2. Assign the map number. This is usually located in one of the corners of the map.

- Ex. U.S. Coast Survey map of Long Island from 1890, map no. 455  
Sub-collection: Flat maps (folio)

Classification no.: U.S.C.S.—455.FI.F

### *Maps that cover more than one geographic or subject classification*

Use cataloger's judgment to determine. Keep in mind that the classification should reflect the *predominant* geographic or subject characteristic of the map.

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<sup>8</sup> There are several other map series in BHS's collection. Assign codes based on the map producer (ex. Department of Transportation (DOT)).

<sup>9</sup> The title of the Coast Survey varies over time. Use U.S.C.S. for all coast survey maps before 1973, regardless of name on map (ex. Coast and Geodetic Survey should be abbreviated USCS).

## **V. Writing the call number/Filing the map**

Write the call number in the lower-left hand corner of the map. If the map is oversize, orient the map with the title facing the right and write the call number in the lower left-hand corner.

Maps are filed from latest to earliest date. For example, a folder of NYC 19<sup>th</sup> century maps will have the maps from 1899 at the top and the maps from 1800 at the bottom. Maps with uncertain dates (18--?) (185-?) will be filed as though they were the earliest possible date. So, (18--?) would be filed as though it were 1800 and (185-?) would be filed as if it were 1850.

Maps with multiple copies are filed from highest copy number to lowest copy number, ending with the original. Maps on multiple sheets are filed from last sheet number to first sheet number.