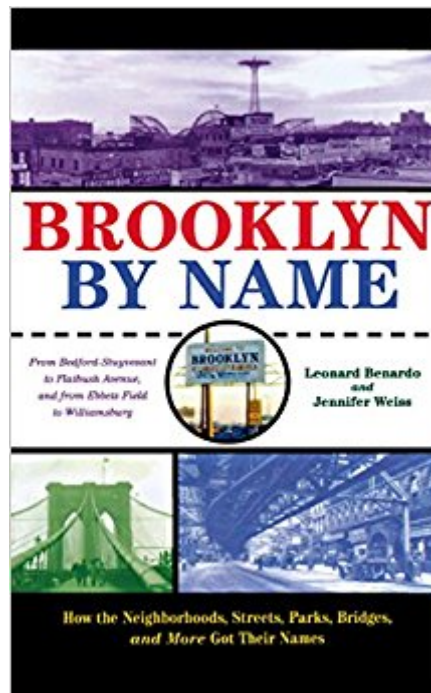




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# Brooklyn By Name: How The Neighborhoods, Streets, Parks, Bridges And More Got Their Names



## Synopsis

Visit the blog for the book at [www.brooklynbyname.com](http://www.brooklynbyname.com) From Bedford-Stuyvesant to Williamsburg, Brooklyn's historic names are emblems of American culture and history. Uncovering the remarkable stories behind the landmarks, Brooklyn By Name takes readers on a stroll through the streets and places of this thriving metropolis to reveal the borough's textured past. Listing more than 500 of Brooklyn's most prominent place names, organized alphabetically by region, and richly illustrated with photographs and current maps the book captures the diverse threads of American history. We learn about the Canarsie Indians, the region's first settlers, whose language survives in daily traffic reports about the Gowanus Expressway. The arrival of the Dutch West India Company in 1620 brought the first wave of European names, from Boswijck ("town in the woods," later Bushwick) to Bedford-Stuyvesant, after the controversial administrator of the Dutch colony, to numerous places named after prominent Dutch families like the Bergens. The English takeover of the area in 1664 led to the Anglicization of Dutch names, (vlakkebos, meaning "wooded plain," became Flatbush) and the introduction of distinctively English names (Kensington, Brighton Beach). A century later the American Revolution swept away most Tory monikers, replacing them with signers of the Declaration of Independence and international figures who supported the revolution such as Lafayette (France), De Kalb (Germany), and Kosciuszko (Poland). We learn too of the dark corners of Brooklyn's past, encountering over 70 streets named for prominent slaveholders like Lefferts and Lott but none for its most famous abolitionist, Walt Whitman. From the earliest settlements to recent commemorations such as Malcolm X Boulevard, Brooklyn By Name tells the tales of the poets, philosophers, baseball heroes, diplomats, warriors, and saints who have left their imprint on this polyethnic borough that was once almost disastrously renamed "New York East." Ideal for all Brooklynites, newcomers, and visitors, this book includes:

- \*Over 500 entries explaining the colorful history of Brooklyn's most prominent place names
- \*Over 100 vivid photographs of Brooklyn past and present
- \*9 easy to follow and up-to-date maps of the neighborhoods
- \*Informative sidebars covering topics like Ebbets Field, Lindsay Triangle, and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge
- \*Covers all neighborhoods, easily find the street you're on

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Fascinating morsels of Brooklyn history. . . . An entertaining, breezy compilation for the NYU Press, perfect for reading down at Coney, up on tar beach, or out on your shady front stoop this summer. . . . So if you wanna know how Dead Horse Bay, Sheepshead Bay, Floyd Bennett Field, Smith St. Carroll Gardens, Junior’s Restaurant, Green-Wood Cemetery, Gilmore Court or the Riegelmann Boardwalk got their names, grab a copy of Brooklyn by Name.”—New York Daily News

“Witty, occasionally irreverent and always engaging, Brooklyn by Name takes readers from the six independent towns that once comprised Breuckelen to the modern metropolis. Weiss and Benardo have uncovered surprising data and have woven a compulsively readable narrative. Pick it up, rifle through, and find out about—or be reminded of—the underpinnings of our borough’s heritage.”—The Brooklyn Rail

“This book is an essential companion for anyone teaching about Brooklyn, for anyone writing about the borough, and for tour guide people. Benardo and Weiss have to be pleased with their product, and clearly should be congratulated.”—Brooklyn Daily Eagle

“Brooklyn streets, parks and sites are dripping with history, and husband-and-wife team Leonard Benardo and Jennifer Weiss have hung them all out to dry in their dictionary of street smarts, Brooklyn By Name.”—Brooklyn Papers

“Information is well presented and well illustrated—both factors making this guide easy on the eye. Hardly a location is left unexplored in this fascinating, indispensable guide to a borough undeservedly in Manhattan’s shadow.”—Booklist

Leonard Benardo is a former weekly columnist for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Jennifer Weiss has written for New York Newsday and The Washington Post and is co-editor of *Eldercare in New York: A Consumer’s Guide to Long-Term Health Care*. The authors live together in Brooklyn.

Overall, BROOKLYN BY NAME is a fascinating concordance, providing capsule descriptions and interesting factoids about hundreds of streets and sites in my home town. Having been six separate cities, then one unified city, and then a borough of New York City, Brooklyn has a rich and varied history. Its numerous neighborhoods each have their own distinct personalities as befits an amalgam of small clustered villages, which, much like London, is what they were and still are, and BROOKLYN BY NAME confirms this. On the down side, the book simply does not have enough photographs. Nor does it do a particularly good job of discussing the histories of the six original cities of Kings County, why they amalgamated, and why they amalgamated the way they amalgamated. The authors admit that the book is not exhaustive, and there are some odd deficiencies; an entire section of Canarsie is missing, both from the maps and the listings. The often-odd names of the islands in Jamaica Bay (technically in Queens) are not mentioned, Canarsie Pol among them. It really is a case of the forest for the trees. Although our Brooklyn walking tour-in-print divides the borough into workable sections and lists street after street, personage after personage, and building after building, "Brooklyn" the fourth largest city in America almost but not quite gets lost among all the details. Although this is a reference guide, not a social history, a little on the unique Brooklyn sense of self (nobody's ever proud of being from Staten Island, but Brooklyn is a different story), would have made a nice finishing touch to the book. Somewhat expanded entries (they should have been further expanded) on such topics as the Brooklyn Bridge and the Dodgers do give us some sense of a unifying thread. No true Brooklynite calls himself a "New Yorker," and Walter O'Malley is STILL hated fifty years later for taking our beloved Bums to Lost Angeles; the Borough of Churches (how many?) has never been the same. Still, history unfolds as you walk your Brooklyn roads with this little book in hand. Welcome home. **THREE-AND-A-HALF STARS**

Brooklynites, did you know Empire Boulevard was originally Malbone Street, but was renamed after a devastating 1918 Brighton Beach Line train accident there that killed more than 90 people? Did you know that parts of DeGraw St. in Park Slope were renamed Lincoln Place in 1873 because a famous murder there had caused the street name to be tainted by association? This book is full of amazing name origins like these. It opened my eyes to the tumultuous history of my city and the remnants that are everywhere, once you know where to look. Get this book and impress your smartalecky Brooklyn friends with your obscure wisdom!

I found it very interesting, barely over 200 pages it is packed with information. Anyone who walks the streets of Brooklyn will see them in a whole new light.

A well-designed, carefully researched, and long overdue introduction to the history of Brooklyn through its place names. Both residents and visitors intrigued by the County of Kings and its colorful past will want to take this companion on their roamings across the borough. Some of the entries are overly pedantic. For instance: "Like neighboring Neptune Avenue, Mermaid Avenue suggests the fantastical, otherworldly seaside excitement of Coney Island." Duh! At least the authors assume we can figure out "Surf Avenue" on our own. At the same time, some figures, like Lady Deborah Moody, who founded Gravesend as a utopian community, get short shrift. Given its range and accuracy, however, I'd call it an indispensable guide.

Perfect read for anyone having grown up in Brooklyn. Already gave it as a birthday gift and have it on my list of gifts for Christmas.

useful history for those that love Brooklyn

Great coffee table book. Excellent gift for anyone who has moved to NY.

I grew up in Brooklyn and fully enjoyed the history lesson.

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