

Lenore Bell
Creative Writing

My first novel, *Translatie*, was about a plane crash which occurred in a Dutch ghetto in 1992. My main characters were sex workers living in the area. While internet-based research was somewhat useful, it became clear as the story went on that I would need primary sources. I was fortunate enough to receive a travel grant for a research trip to Amsterdam. During my stay, I visited the affected neighborhood, the Bijlmermeer, the Amsterdam City Library and the Prostitution Information Centre. This trip was the most valuable part of my process.

Since completing the novel, I've been eager to work on a new project. Over the summer I began to research a new story, which I want to set in a rapidly gentrifying block of brownstones in modern-day Brooklyn. The residents discover that a series of gruesome murders took place in their homes back the 1910s (much like the crimes of H.H. Holmes in Chicago). I want a complex conflict to ensue between the residents who are eager to capitalize on the gory history and those who do not want to re-associate the neighborhood with any legacy of violent crime.

Travelling to Brooklyn to research various archives would be ideal. While there are many well-known books about "New York City" i.e. Manhattan, there is scant information about Brooklyn, which has a very different history than Manhattan. Since I specifically want to research Edwardian Brooklyn, access to primary resources would be invaluable.

There are many beneficial archives in Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Historical Society has collections of vital documents including maps, housing records and even sermons. The New York Transit Museum, also located in Brooklyn, would be another important place. My story takes place at the opening the first New York City Subway lines. I want to do similar research at the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public Library, and the Museum of the City of New York. This research would help me learn about who lived in the area when it was developed. I want to get a sense of their voices, their way of living, and the politics of their day.

I have recently been accepted for a one-week residency at Hospitalfield Arts in Arbroath to begin work on this novel. During my time at Hospitalfield, I'll work on the modern-day voices in the story and roughly map out the narrative structure. But the central Edwardian narrative will only truly get off the ground if I am able to visit the Brooklyn archives. The University of St. Andrews' winter break begins on December 20th and ends on January 21st, which would be an ideal, if chilly, time for me to research. I have connections in New York, so accommodation would not be an issue. I would put the bursary towards the price of a round-trip ticket from Edinburgh to New York. Three to four weeks would give me ample time to research the archives.