



BROOKLYN'S HISTORIC
ATLANTIC AVENUE
 WALKING GUIDE

THE ATLANTIC AVENUE
 BETTERMENT ASSOCIATION
 321 ATLANTIC AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11201



MAP

USING THIS GUIDE | This tour looks at Atlantic Avenue in its stages of growth, as well as the diverse cultures and personalities that make this 11-block strip so unique today. Take time out to explore some of the exciting shops and delicious restaurants en route.

The numbering of Atlantic Avenue buildings was largely established by 1889. Of course, whenever a cluster of buildings was demolished and replaced by one or two larger ones, a localized stretch of numbers changed. The last major renumbering seems to have taken place around the 1880s. As far as we can determine, the numbers listed in this guide for past establishments match current numbers — when they still exist — on the Avenue.

Reference notes in the text are keyed to the listing of References on page 23.

GUIDE KEY

The text that refers to historical businesses once found here, where buildings **still exist**, is introduced with this symbol

Buildings **no longer** in existence are marked with this symbol



This box provides a brief summary of each block

Street number

101

MODERN BUSINESS NAME

HISTORIC BUSINESS NAME

HISTORIC BUSINESS NAME

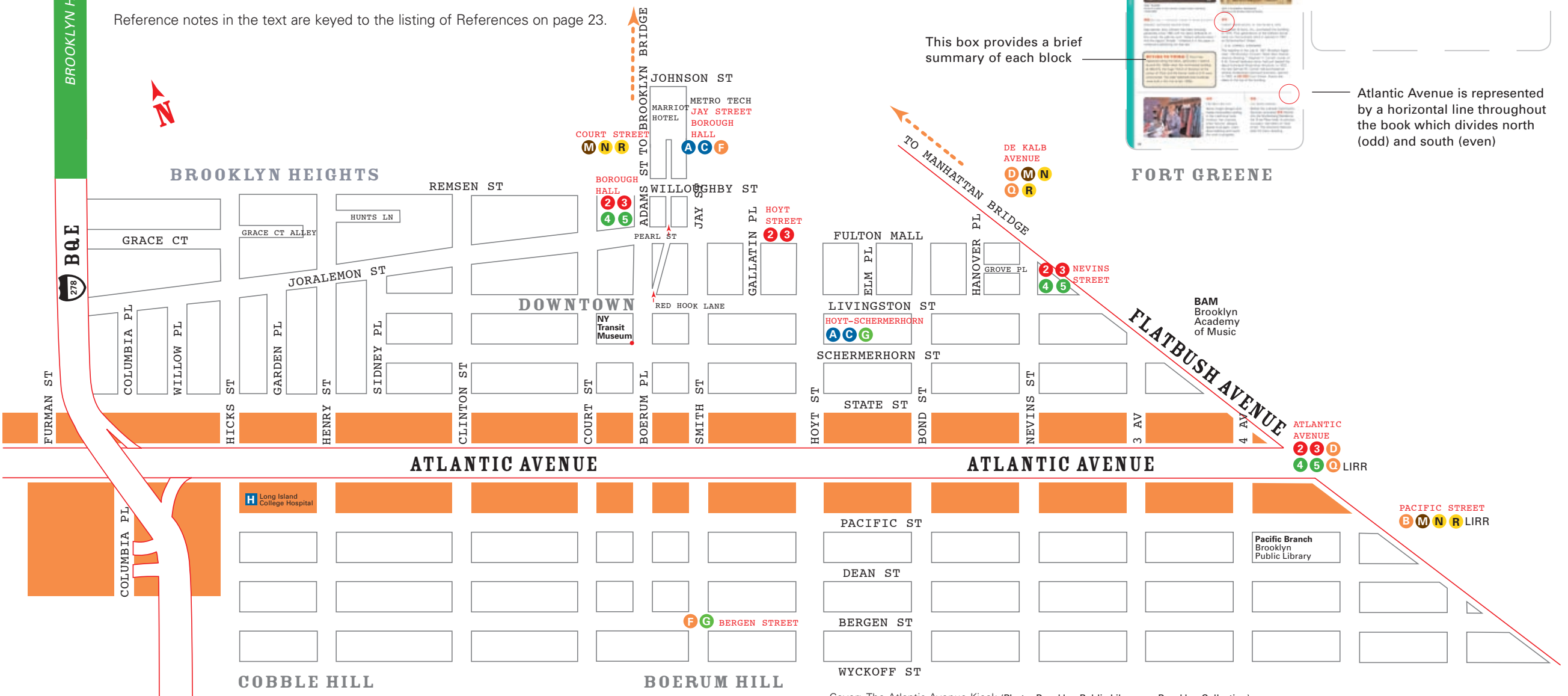
Additional information, both historic and modern.

Atlantic Avenue is represented by a horizontal line throughout the book which divides north (odd) and south (even)

EAST RIVER

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS PROMENADE

BQE



Cover: The Atlantic Avenue Kiosk (Photo: Brooklyn Public Library — Brooklyn Collection).
 Photo Details: (from left to right): Storefronts (Photo: Betsy Kissam); Mosaic (Photo: Sandy Balboza); A & P Shoppers (Photo: Brooklyn Public Library—Brooklyn Collection); Robert Diamond (Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.); Mural (Postcard: Courtesy Orange Outdoor Advertising); Bottle (Photo: Courtesy of Anheuser-Busch Archives); Gross Studio (Print: Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society); Mural (Postcard: Courtesy Orange Outdoor Advertising).



CA. 1920.
Traffic jam at the northeast corner of Atlantic and Fourth Avenues.
(Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

THE ATLANTIC AVENUE BETTERMENT ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS “BROOKLYN’S HISTORIC ATLANTIC AVENUE: WALKING GUIDE”

This self-guided walking tour, featuring 11 blocks from the East River to Fourth Avenue, will introduce you to the rich history and unique shopping adventure that makes Atlantic Avenue the perfect place to spend a day!

View the nineteenth century architecture and original Victorian storefronts, and discover the beginnings of the Avenue’s international waterfront commerce and manufacturing. As you walk along, compare the photographs and prints made when the Avenue was young with what you see today. Many of these images from the 1800s and early 1900s are reproduced here through courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society.

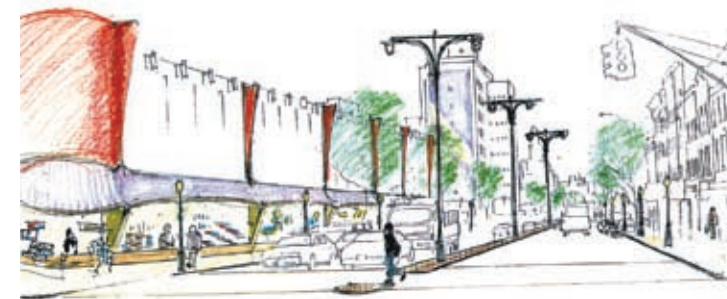
In the 1960s, the City Landmarks Preservation Commission helped to protect the architectural legacy of Atlantic Avenue from Henry to Court Streets with its historic designation. The blocks from Court Street to Flatbush Avenue were made a Special Zoning District in 1972, ensuring compatible renovation of facades and storefronts.

Today Atlantic Avenue is renowned for its popular “Antiques Row,” Middle Eastern specialty food shops, fine restaurants with international cuisine, pubs, and cafés, as well as a host of boutiques, modern home furnishings, and gift shops. Once a year around late September the Atlantic Antic, one of the largest street fairs in New York City, is held here.

AN AVENUE DESIGNED FOR WALKING

The Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association (AABA) is working to improve the ambiance of our Avenue. We have commissioned the Project for Public Spaces — an urban design group — to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment running from Court to Smith Streets. Right now, most of the buildings on these blocks are so unappealing that they create a gap between the two communities of downtown — the Brooklyn Heights/Cobble Hill neighborhoods and Boerum Hill.

Our plan will make crossings safer for pedestrians, add trees and more period lights, and initiate public art projects and outdoor markets. We are also promoting construction of a more accessible entrance to the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel of the Brooklyn Historical Railway.



A DESIGN FOR ATLANTIC AVENUE AT COURT STREET
Drawing: Project for Public Spaces

A BRIEF HISTORY

The history of Atlantic Avenue as we know it today began in the 1700s. First it was a private road terminating at Ralph Patchen’s farm on the East River. This country lane was swallowed up by District Street, which became the southernmost boundary of The Village of Brooklyn, incorporated in 1816. In 1855, District was renamed Atlantic Street, and by the 1870s designated an Avenue.

In the late 1800s, fashionable shopping along with waterfront commerce and manufacturing firms defined the Avenue. Along the blocks closest to Fourth Avenue, a mini-revitalization around the 1920s spurred construction of the YWCA of Brooklyn, the Times Plaza Post Office, and the Times Plaza Hotel. On blocks nearer the waterfront Middle Eastern immigrants began opening restaurants and food shops in the 1930s. Many of these businesses are still run by descendants of the original merchants.

EAST RIVER

**1883. BROOKLYN EAGLE POSTCARD.**

Brooklyn Ferry House at the foot of Atlantic Street.
(Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society.)

THE FRUIT CLEANING CO.,
BY ORDERS AND CLEARANCES OF
CURRANTS AND RAISINS,
Office and Works,
14 ATLANTIC AVE., BROOKLYN.
Packers of the Celebrated Telekatharos Brand.
Long Island Telephone, Bridge 1111. A. NICHOLS, Prop.

14

† THE FRUIT CLEANING COMPANY

In 1892, importing was a profitable waterfront business. For nearly a century, vessels of every description moored daily, loading and unloading wares from all over the world, at the wharves here.



CA. 1940

Photo: Edna Huntington. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

26-46

† COLUMBIA PLACE

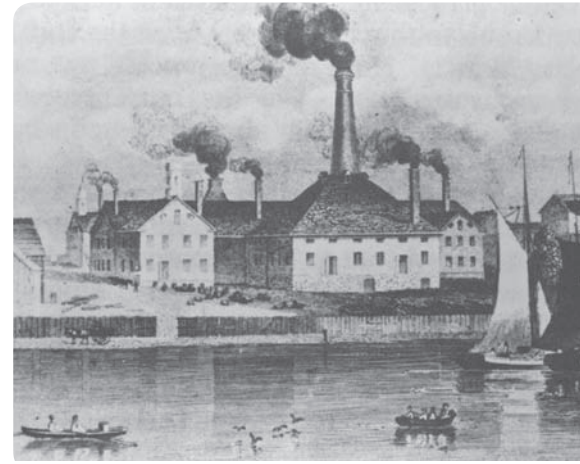
Before Robert Moses and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway steam-rollered much of Brooklyn's shoreline, a community thrived. Columbia Place still met Atlantic in the early 1940s.

† FERRY HOUSE

Taking advantage in 1836 of a new ferry service to Whitehall Street in Manhattan from "South Ferry," as the foot of Atlantic Avenue was then called, an influx of middle class citizens raced to Brooklyn overrunning farmlands and constructing mansions and rowhouses. Suburbia was born!

In the late 1800s, ferries ran every 10 minutes in the daytime; evenings and nights, the schedule was only slightly less ambitious. In 1868, 40,000,000 passengers passed through this depot.⁴

By 1933, bridges and tunnels so reduced revenues that service was terminated.



CA 1830. THE BROOKLYN FLINT GLASS WORKS

from a business card. (Courtesy of the Corning Incorporated Department of Archives and Records Management, Corning, NY)

† FLINT GLASS WORKS

On May 1, 1823 the Brooklyn artillery saluted and the community turned out for the laying of the cornerstone for a new factory. John L. Gilliland & Co. manufactured glass on water's edge real estate (today bordered by Atlantic, State, Hicks, and the East River). The land cost \$7,000.

For 30 years Mr. Gilliland supplied New York City with gaslight globes. In 1851, he won a medal for flint glass at London's Crystal Palace; at that time the company was called the Brooklyn Flint Glass Works. By 1855 Gilliland had gone bankrupt, and in 1868 the new, reorganized company moved to Corning, NY. Boats carried the factory's machinery and molds up the Hudson River and over four canals; 100 employees resettled upstate with the new Corning Flint Glass Works — today known as Corning Inc.



55

† BENJAMIN MOORE PAINT FACTORY

Benjamin Moore, recently arrived from Ireland, set up a paint factory in 55 Atlantic Avenue with his brother William in 1883. A year later the building burned. According to company history, Benjamin Moore was the last person to exit the conflagration. No wonder Moore paints don't run!

1883 BENJAMIN MOORE PAINT FACTORY
(Courtesy of Benjamin Moore Paints Archives)

EAST RIVER TO BQE

Once the waterfront supported a thriving commercial port with regular ferry service to Manhattan. Vessels from all over the world docked here, releasing their international cargoes and crews. Businesses flourished and declined until the 1940s and 1950s when New York City began construction for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Then any institution, falling in the pathway of the new Expressway, received its death knell. Only historical illustrations remain as witness to this part of the old Avenue, which ran to the East River.

BQE TO HICKS TO HENRY



Photo: Betsy Kissam

THE PLAQUE in the newly renovated Palmetto Playground identifies Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia and Commissioner Robert Moses.

PALMETTO PARK

This park was updated in 1999 with colorful modern play apparatus and ball-playing courts, as well as space for a community garden. It was designed in 1937 by Park Commissioner Robert Moses.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

73

MONTERO BAR & GRILL

For more than half a century, Pilar Montero and her late husband Joe ran this bar. Established in 1940 at **56** Atlantic until Robert Moses's Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) condemned that part of the Avenue, Montero's still reflects the once-thriving seaport thronged with sailors on shore leave and longshoremen. Much of the Avenue's history still lives inside these walls.



THE CRONIN BROTHERS in front of their first parlor at 103 Atlantic Avenue. (Courtesy of Raymond Perillo, Jere J. Cronin Inc.)

115

JERE J. CRONIN FUNERAL HOME

In 1896, Irish immigrants Jere J. Cronin and his brother founded this funeral parlor, one of few businesses remaining from the 1800s. Mr. Cronin opened in number **103** and then moved to **115**; notice the "C" on the elaborate parapet at the top of this building.



Photo: Betsy Kissam

75

HEIGHTS DELI-GROCERY

ATLANTIC STREET

Look up at the corner of the building at number **75** — it identifies the thoroughfare when it was called Atlantic Street.

BQE TO HICKS TO HENRY

These two blocks mark the beginning of today's shopping blocks along Atlantic Avenue. Brooklyn's early development began closest to the River and spread up the Avenue — spurred by the Brooklyn-Manhattan ferry, which commenced service in 1836. Many of the buildings on these blocks date from the 1850s.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

110

LONG ISLAND BAR & RESTAURANT

SCRANTON & COMPANY

Before 1900, Scranton & Co. sold "groceries, wines, liquors etc." at **110**; in 1884 annual sales were recorded at \$150,000.¹⁸ Scranton & Co. is noteworthy as the donor of a house and lot on Atlantic between Third and Fourth Avenues (SEE PAGE 20, **520** ATLANTIC) for auction at the Sanitary Fair for Brooklyn and Long Island.

CHOP HOUSES

Saturday evenings, men from Brooklyn Heights "would repair for dinner to one of the numerous chop houses [on Atlantic Avenue], and there indulge in the real old English fare which was then prevalent." — James M. Callender, 1927⁷ Today the Avenue is still a popular "watering hole," but the "fare" is greatly diversified — now featuring cuisine from all over the world.

LONG ISLAND BAR & RESTAURANT

Emma Sullivan brings a soda to one of her diners in her family-run restaurant, which has been located at 110 since 1951.

HENRY TO CLINTON



CA. 1894. ATLANTIC STREET. MERCANTILE ILLUSTRATING CO. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

ATLANTIC STREET

Compare this image with the odd-numbered side of the street today. It appears to match — except number **141** has only three stories now.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

147

AKIO'S HATHOUSE

Akio Chou designs and makes all the hats he sells here — from distinctive street wear to theatrical creations for Lincoln Center.

124-128 TODAY NUMBERED 124-134

LONG ISLAND COLLEGE HOSPITAL AUXILIARY OFFICES
JOURNEY & BURNHAM'S

Looking for a corset? A cloak? A shawl, embroidery, lace, satin — perhaps a parasol? In the late 1800s, Journey & Burnham's could help you. This four-story dry-goods shop, on this site since 1851, was celebrated as "headquarters in Brooklyn for bargains and low prices."¹² H.P. Journey lived above his famous establishment at **126** Atlantic. Journey & Burnham's moved to Flatbush Avenue in the 1890s.

124-128

ATLANTIC-PACIFIC CHANDLERY MANUFACTURING CO.

By 1922, the Atlantic-Pacific Chandlery Manufacturing Co. was supplying provisions for ships docked at the busy waterfront. Look for the ghosting of the company name — still visible on the building.



1922. 124-128 ATLANTIC AVENUE. Photo: Eugene Armbruster. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)



CA. 1922. FOUGERA APARTMENT. Photo: Eugene Armbruster. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

200 CLINTON AT NORTHWEST CORNER OF ATLANTIC AVENUE

The Art Deco-style apartment house here today was built in 1926.

FOUGERA APARTMENT

Before today's structure, "Fougera flats" was a similarly shaped building, reflecting the Victorian era. Built around 1882, "The Fougera" bore the name of its developer — Edmond Fougera. His father and namesake — one of the largest importers of foreign medicinal preparations in the city — introduced "gelatine capsules now so generally used, in all forms and of all sizes, for the administration of bitter or nauseous medicines."¹⁸

155

PETER'S WATERFRONT ALE HOUSE

CONGREGATION BAITH ISRAEL ANSHEI EMES

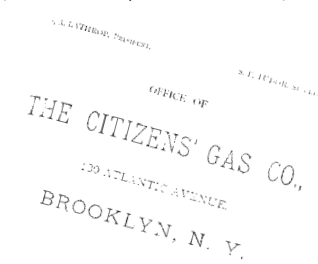
This congregation once worshiped at **155**. On August 31, 1862, accompanied by a marching band, members carried their Scrolls of the Law from here to their just-built synagogue at Boerum Pl. and State St.¹

Today, the congregation worships at 236 Kane St. in Cobble Hill.

130

CITIZENS' GAS COMPANY

In 1895, after years of price wars, unethical competition, and violence, Citizens' Gas Co. consolidated with Metropolitan Gas, located at **563** Atlantic Ave., and four other illuminating companies to form Brooklyn Union Gas, today renamed KeySpan. (SEE PAGE 21, **563** ATLANTIC)



HENRY TO CLINTON | Today this block is known as "Restaurant Row." Over the past few decades, a diverse collection of fine dining experiences has developed. These establishments now attract local and citywide diners to sample a smorgasbord of international cuisine.

Many of the buildings here date back to the 1850s when Journey & Burnham's dry-goods store (at 124-128) offered the height of fashion for Brooklyn shoppers.

CLINTON TO COURT



169

KEY FOOD

⌄ THE ATHENEUM

Could the Atheneum Concert Hall — built in 1853 on this site — have been Brooklyn’s first indoor mall with a theater? *“The first floor is arranged for mercantile purposes. On the second floor is a large, well-lighted and commodious reading-room, an excellent library-room, and a number of private rooms. The third floor is a lecture-room or concert-hall, which is capable of seating about 2,000 people.”*¹⁹ The hall was demolished. in 1922.

⌄ A&P

Lines of shoppers in search of scarce commodities after World War II snaked for blocks waiting to shop in the A&P. In 1975, fire devastated the A&P. Today Key Food is in business here.

OCTOBER 22, 1946, BROOKLYN EAGLE
Photo: Brooklyn Public Library—Brooklyn Collection



GROSS STUDIO CA. 1863 Print: Gross & Becher.
(Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

176

YEMEN CAFÉ ATLANTIC BARBERSHOP

⌄ GROSS STUDIO

Soon after photography was invented, Gross Studio operated out of this Greek Revival building, numbered **184** in 1863. By the mid 1870s, the Avenue had been renumbered and Brooklyn directories now listed Gross Brothers at **176** — including Julius A., photographer; Frederick, artist; and Richard, artist.² Numbers **170** to **178** were all built in 1846 with just three stories and are today stripped of their elaborate window lintels. The facade of **176** has been the most dramatically altered.⁸



Photo: Betsy Kissam

168

CLINTON HOUSE FURNITURE

Sometimes things aren’t what they seem. *“Number **166-168** was erected in 1856-60, while **164** was not built until 1864”*⁸ — neither in 1859.

185

PETER’S ICE CREAM PARLOR & COFFEE HOUSE

The colorful tile floor is typical of those found in 1920s and 30s ice cream parlors.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

187-189

SAHADI IMPORTING CO.

Charlie Sahadi’s father opened this ethnic food store in 1948 specializing in Middle Eastern fare; today the greatly expanded shop features specialty foods from all over the world. PHOTO ABOVE



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

195

DAMASCUS BREAD AND PASTRY SHOP

Dennis Halaby’s grandfather opened this shop in 1930 and automated pita bread-making in the 1960s. Today everything but the pita (baked nearby on Gold Street) is still made on site.

178

FANFARE SCHNALL & SCHNALL, ARCHITECTS

⌄ BROOKLYN HOMEOPATHIC DISPENSARY

The Brooklyn Homeopathic Medical Society of the County of Kings set up its headquarters in **178**. The building was *“thoroughly and admirably fitted up for the purpose of a dispensary [open daily from 1 to 4 pm] with pharmacy, consultation and operating rooms, a valuable collection of surgical instruments, library, etc., making it one of the most completely equipped institutions of the kind in the city.”*¹⁹

If you didn’t like the services here, you could pop over to Long Island College Hospital, founded in 1857 at Henry and Pacific Streets. A cupper and a leecher held places on staff then.

180

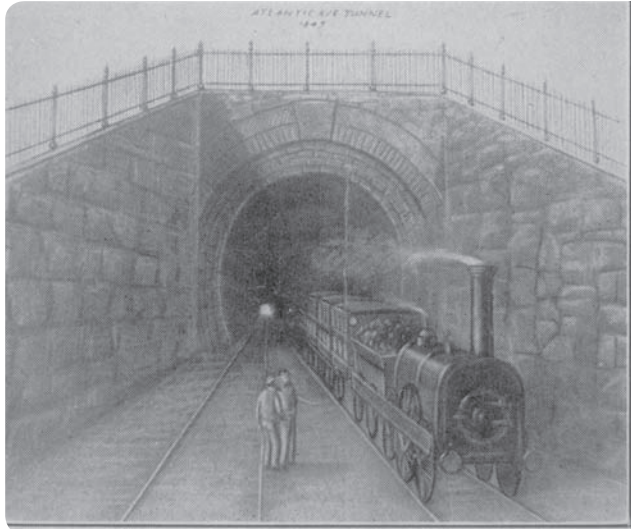
MAKE A FRAME

This four-story commercial building, dating from 1873, still has its original Greek revival cast-iron facade and roof cornice.⁸

CLINTON TO COURT | Around the 1930s, an influx of Middle Eastern immigrants settled and established businesses here. Their restaurants and shops offer specialty foods from the Middle East as well as Mid-Eastern music, books, clothing, and other assorted items. Today, the fame of this block extends well beyond the five boroughs.

In the late 1800s, the anchor of this block was the South Brooklyn Savings Institution at 160. Today the Independence Community Bank at the corner of Court commands our attention. (See page 22, Bank.)

COURT TO BOERUM TO SMITH



1845, ATLANTIC AVENUE TUNNEL, from Hazelton's History of Brooklyn. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

ATLANTIC AVENUE TUNNEL ENTRANCE

Robert Diamond stands by the manhole in the middle of the intersection of Court and Atlantic — the only entrance today to the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel.

TUNNEL

Once soot-spewing locomotives steamed up and down the Avenue. In 1844, the Atlantic Tunnel — a half mile of underground tracks from Boerum Place to “South Ferry” — was constructed. Sealed by 1861, the tunnel quickly slipped from memory into folklore. Rumors of spies, prohibition liquor-making, and mushroom farming can still be heard from area residents, who insist that sub-basements offered egress to the tunnel. In the 1980s, engineer Robert Diamond rediscovered the “lost” tunnel. Today you can visit it and see its elaborate barrel arch brickwork. To find out about tours, contact Diamond at 718-941-3160.

214

ARTHUR J. HEANEY,
LICENSED PAWNBROKER

The three balls of Arthur Heaney’s pawnbroker business are still visible here. The firm, established in 1893, survives today as Modell’s at 150 Atlantic Avenue.



Photo: Betsy Kissam

RED HOOK LANE

Stand across the street or duck into the gas station next to 234 Atlantic, and look up at the slanted side wall of 228-230. Red Hook Lane, which once zigzagged across the present grid of streets all the way to Red Hook “was laid out, according to record, on the 6th of June, 1760 ... and although mostly swallowed up by the growth of the city a remnant still survives, between Fulton avenue and Livingston street, and is particularly noticeable as containing the modest retreat of the Board of Education.”¹⁹

You can still visit that last block of Red Hook Lane!

COURT TO BOERUM TO SMITH

The next two blocks have largely lost their historical character. Of significance is the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), a trace of Red Hook Lane, and the original Victorian storefront façade on 278. The Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association is working to make these two blocks more pedestrian friendly. (See page 1 for details.)



CA. 1940, THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF BOERUM PLACE AND ATLANTIC AVENUE. Photo: Edna Huntington. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

253-259

NORTHEAST CORNER OF BOERUM & ATLANTIC

MILLER’S FURNITURE STORE

At Miller’s Furniture Store, it was business as usual before 1957 when the Brooklyn House of Detention for Men came to dominate this block.

278

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS BIKE SHOPPE

IMPORTED AND DOMESTIC DELICACIES,
AND FANCY GROCERIES

On this same site before 1900, William Meyer was a prosperous fancy grocer. “Mr. Meyer offers special inducements to buyers in first-class teas from China and Japan, coffees from South America, Mocha, and Java, spices, sugars, canned goods of every description, and all kinds of fancy and staple groceries. He also keeps on hand at all times the finest imported and domestic sauerkraut, pickled beans, and Dill pickles, and all kinds of imported Stohlwerk’s cocoa and chocolate, Knorr’s prepared soups, French and Italian macaroni, and all kinds of nuts and fruits.”¹²



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS BIKE SHOPPE

Manager Tony Scarselli never spins his wheels. He’s too busy selling bicycles and bikes accessories and servicing bikes in this 20-year establishment.

SMITH TO HOYT



CA. 1940. SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SMITH STREET. Photo: Edna Huntington (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

93 SMITH STREET SOUTHEAST CORNER OF ATLANTIC

ST. CLAIR RESTAURANT

Still family run, St. Clair Restaurant opened in the corner building sometime in the 1930s. The present owner's father bought it in 1967.

PHOTO ABOVE

308

GEORGE P. TREISS JEWELRY

It's fair to assume that George P. Treiss, a jeweler at this address, was a proud man — successful enough to construct this Italianate-style building that today records his name and the date at the top.



Photo: Betsy Kissam

312

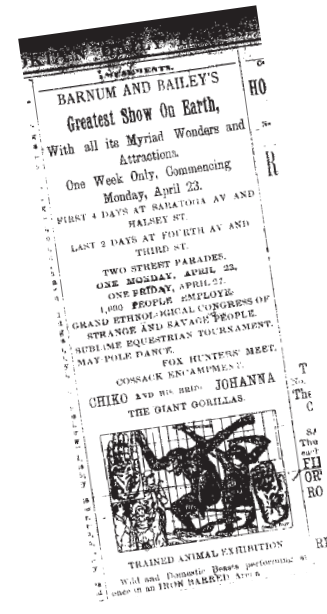
NATIONAL CASH REGISTER

From 1930 to 1947, a National Cash Register branch operated out of this Art Deco-style building with its stylized details. The office showroom handled sales and service for downtown Brooklyn.

SMITH TO HOYT

If the weather is warm, take a break and enjoy the scents and colors of the Hoyt Street Community Garden.

The Italianate-style buildings on this block were built in the mid to late 1800s, probably around the 1860s and 70s. The Art Deco-style structure at 312 was erected later around 1920.



1904. STREETS OF INDIA, LUNA PARK, CONEY ISLAND from "Views of Coney Island," vol. 2, a scrapbook collected by Eugene Armbruster. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

BARNUM AND BAILEY'S STREET PARADE

In 1894, you could stand right here and see the "Greatest Show on Earth." Barnum and Bailey's street parade marched down Atlantic Avenue from Fourth Avenue to Clinton Street. The parade featured "the sovereigns of the world,"³ like those shown in this illustration.

315

LUCRETIA MOTT DISPENSARY

In 1886, the Lucretia Mott Dispensary opened its doors here. Women physicians treated women and children.⁴



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

320

BROOKLYN GRILL

Owner Peter Correa and chef James Henderson serve contemporary American cuisine, including asparagus salad and pork chops with garlic clams. Try the backyard in warm weather.

HOYT STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF ATLANTIC

If you find the gate open, wander in. You're invited. Since 1975, this corner lot has been lovingly tended by members of the Hoyt Street Block Association. The tree of life mural was designed by Margaret Cusack, one of the garden's founders.

HOYT TO BOND



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

369

BREUKELLEN

John Erik Snyder sells contemporary design housewares and furnishings. He showcases the work of local artists.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

377

CIRCA

Since 1974, Rachel Leibowicz has been collecting and selling nineteenth-century furniture and accessories. Her storefront still maintains its original nineteenth-century details.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

391

CENTER FOR THANATOLOGY

Roberta Halporn established this center "to help change people's attitudes about death." She has a 2,000-book library and a computerized list of national helping organizations. She sells books and gravestone rubbing supplies. Call to visit: 718-858-3026.



Photo: Sandy Balboza

368

TIME TRADER ANTIQUES

TALMUD TORAH BETH JACOB JOSEPH

The name of this former school survives, in Hebrew, over the front door: Talmud Torah Beth Jacob Joseph. "The school took care of the children in the neighborhood of Atlantic Avenue and Bond Street. In 1936, since there are few Jews in that section, instruction is given by the sexton to those children who venture into the building or whose parents are insistent upon the children's getting some Hebrew training. Religious services are held in the Talmud Torah every day."¹¹

A DETAIL IN THE MOSAIC FLOOR AT 368.

VICTORIANA

Look for the mementoes of the Avenue's Victorian heyday. Rope moldings, shields, flowers and shells still frame some store windows and are tucked in doorways and on



Photo: Betsy Kissam



Photo: Betsy Kissam



Photo: Betsy Kissam

354

ANTIQUE TREASURE

D.FREY, TAYLOR

A popular tailor Daniel Frey set up shop here in 1883. "Mr. Frey is recognized as one of the most expert cutters in the city, and is making suits at prices and styles that cannot be excelled in the city, and those dealing with him may confidently depend upon the best of good, perfect fit, and superior workmanship at the very lowest prices."¹²

360A

PRESTIGE UPHOLSTERY

CHARLES SCHAFER GROCERIES

Planning a party? In the 1870s Charles Schafer was your man. In addition to his passion for music, he sold groceries out of his shop here and lived upstairs.

SCHAFER CHAS. Brass and Quadrille Band, 360 1/2 ATLANTIC AV. Military and Civic Parades, Balls, Excursions, Picnics, Serenades, Parties, etc., furnished with music. Schafer Charles, groceries, h 360 1/2 Atlantic av

HOYT TO BOND | The density of antique dealers on this block is exceptionally high — thus it is known as "Antiques Row." In the 1960s and 70s, antiques shops began to cluster here, as well as on adjoining blocks, spurring an economic revitalization. Today the antiques shops have been joined by other intriguing furnishing stores, many of which sell contemporary designs by Brooklyn-based artisans. Some of the Italianate-style buildings on this block feature original Victoriana details; you can see decorations on 375, 377 and 377A and across the street on the façades of 362 to 364A, 394 and 396.

BOND TO NEVINS

401 AT NORTHEAST CORNER OF BOND & ATLANTIC

ST. CYRIL'S OF TURAU CATHEDRAL

The congregation of St. Cyril's of Turau Parish of the Belarusian Autocephalic Orthodox Church worships here. This congregation was established in 1950 by refugees from Belarus in the former USSR.

⌘ Before this church with its modified gothic-style windows was built, another structure was erected in 1850 by St. Peter's Episcopal Church.¹⁸ In 1857, Reformed Presbyterians bought and, in turn, resold it to the Second United Presbyterian Church in 1863.

In 1902, the Second United Presbyterian Church laid the cornerstone for the present building.



CA. 1910. BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE POST CARD. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

405

BEDOUIN TENT

Walid Demis serves Middle Eastern "slow food" in his cozy restaurant and outdoors in the garden. His favorites: green pizza, lambajin, chicken ouzi, and falafel.

Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.



413-415

HOUSE OF THE LORD PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Today the House of the Lord Pentecostal Church occupies this century-old Romanesque-style building. Activist minister Reverend Herbert Daughtry has been preaching and reaching out to assist the community since the 1950s. The Reverend Jesse Jackson, Stokely Carmichael, and Winnie Mandela are among the notables who have spoken here.

⌘ A congregation of Congregationalists — the Swedish Pilgrim's Evangelical Church — worshiped here first in 1893.

404

ATLANTIC HARDWARE

⌘ APOTHECARY

In 1886 Herman Ihlo, with "a large German and general family trade," purchased an established apothecary in this corner Italianate-style building. "He occupies a very neat, commodious store [with just about everything] comprehended in drugs, medicines, and chemicals, acids, extracts, essences, herbs, barks, roots, and botanic medicines, all the standard proprietary remedies, pharmaceutical preparations, sanitary specialties, and druggists'

Photo: Betsy Kissam



VICTORIAN STOREFRONTS

A construction boom, fueled by the Civil War, dovetailed with new technology for making plate glass. Thus was born a shopping avenue with large windows that allowed customers to eyeball merchandise (for the first time!) without setting foot inside a store. Numbers **404** to **416** along with **420** offer a dramatic stretch of historically accurate Victorian storefronts.

435-443

† BUSCH BOTTLING COMPANY

From 1893 to 1903, the August Busch Bottling Company pasteurized and bottled beer on the site where the Ex-Lax Co-ops are today. August was the son of Adolphus Busch who introduced Budweiser. Before the Interstate Commerce Commission regulated railroad tariffs, beer was shipped in barrels to reduce freight charges. Once the railroad monopoly was broken, beer was transported already bottled, making this operation superfluous. If you talk to enough locals, you might get one to recall passed-down memories of prancing Clydesdales pulling wagonloads of clattering beer bottles.

423-443

EX-LAX

Today this factory has been converted into 57 co-op lofts. The architecture is reminiscent of works by Henry Hobson Richardson with alternating arched and straight window lintels. The factory lobby is still largely intact; peak through the glass at **423**.

⌘ In 1908 Israel Matz, a Lithuanian philanthropist, founded Ex-Lax — "the chocolate laxative." In 1975, the company moved its operation to Puerto Rico. According to local lore, new laxatives were once tested on



CA. 1910. CORNER OF ATLANTIC AND NEVINS (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)



BOTTLE— (Courtesy of Anheuser-Busch Archives)

447-451

† STROBER BROTHERS, INC.

Still located in Brooklyn, today at Pier 3, Strober Brothers first opened a sheet metal working business at **447-451**. The Brooklyn Directory for 1933 lists Michael Strober as president and Sam as secretary-treasurer.

BOND TO NEVINS

The odd-numbered side of this block features two historic churches and a former factory, converted in 1975 into luxury co-op apartments.

Don't miss the exceptional stretch of historically accurate Victorian storefronts on the even-numbered side of Atlantic, and the three remaining façades on the Italianate-style structures across the street at 405, 407 and 409.

NEVINS TO THIRD



1985. "PLATES"
(Postcard courtesy of Jerry Johnson, Orange Outdoor Advertising, 718-941-0203)

455 SIDE WALL AT NORTHEAST CORNER OF NEVINS & ATLANTIC ORANGE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

Sign painter Jerry Johnson has been amusing passersby since 1982 with his satiric billboards on this corner. He calls his work *"blatant self-promotion."* And the topics? Simple: *"whatever's in the paper or whatever's bothering me that day."*

NEVINS TO THIRD | Much has happened along this block, particularly it seems, around the 1920s when the commercial building at 469-475, the huge YWCA of Brooklyn at the corner of Third, and the former hotel at 510 were constructed. The older Italianate-style buildings were built in the mid to late 1800s.



1927 S.W. CORNELL HARDWARE
(Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

475 CARPET WAREHOUSE, D. KALFAIAN & SON

D. Kalfaian & Son, Inc., purchased this building in 1975. Four generations of the Kalfaian family have run the business since it opened in 1907 on Schermerhorn Street.

S.W. CORNELL HARDWARE

The headline in the July 4, 1927 *Brooklyn Eagle* read *"Old Brooklyn Concern Takes New Atlantic Avenue Building."*³ Stephen H. Cornell, owner of S.W. Cornell hardware store, had just leased the about-to-be-built three-story structure. In 1872 the late Samuel W. Cornell had purchased an already established hardware business, opened in 1853, at 121-125 Court Street. Notice the dates at the top of the building.



CA. 1940S
During the war years, this "Y" remained open 24 hours each day providing classes, recreation, and social activities. (Photo courtesy of the YWCA of Brooklyn)



CA. 1920S
Job training for women was a particular focus for the "Y." (Photo courtesy of the YWCA of Brooklyn)

30 THIRD AVENUE NORTHWEST CORNER OF ATLANTIC

YWCA OF BROOKLYN

The YWCA of Brooklyn, opened in 1892, moved in 1927 from its original home at 376 Schermerhorn St. to Atlantic Avenue — *"an eleven-story building erected at a cost of \$1,788,238. Its facilities include two gymnasiums, a swimming pool, class and club rooms, an audience hall, a domestic science department and laboratories. On the four upper floors is Post Hall, a residence accommodating 235 young women."*⁵ Activities were segregated until 1943, when the branch became one of the nation's first YWCAs to integrate. Today the "Y" is an active neighborhood institution, offering daycare, after-school and sports activities for children as well as classes and recreational facilities for adults.

503 ROYAL GROCERY

Built around the turn of the last century, this Beaux-Arts style building was designed for commercial use.



510-512

† Several small buildings once lined the cobblestoned street; today only the building at the extreme left, **514** Atlantic, still exists.

1922
Photo: Eugene Armbruster.
(Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

492 THE MELTING POT

Nancy Cogen designs and makes hand-crafted clothing in the traditional batik method. Her inspired, often fanciful, designs appeal to all ages. Learn about batik and watch the work in progress.

510 THE MUHLENBERG

Before the Lutheran Community Services renovated **510** Atlantic into the Muhlenberg Residence, the Times Plaza Hotel, its previous occupant, had fallen on hard times. The structure features bold Art Deco detailing.

THIRD TO FOURTH

THIRD TO FOURTH | This block is an eclectic mix of architecture. The older Italianate-style buildings date from the late nineteenth century; the Post Office at 542 was built in the early 20th century, as was the distinctive Beaux-Arts-style structure at 554.



Photo: Chester Higgins Jr.

519

ZAWADI GIFT SHOP

Lora Brown presents the works of local artists in her unique gift shop. Take a look at her collection of ethnic handcrafted dolls.

543

AHLUL BAYT ISLAMIC LIBRARY

Don't be fooled by the modern stucco facade on this brick building.

ATLANTIC STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

A congregation of Baptists built **543** and dedicated the Atlantic Street Baptist Church on May 1, 1855. *"The edifice was of brick, thirty-four feet front by sixty-four feet deep, and thirty feet high; having, on its upper floor, an audience room capable of seating three hundred persons, and its basement floor accommodates Sabbath school, infant class and pastor's study, the whole cost (inclusive of the price of the lot) being \$6,000."*¹⁸

After the Baptists moved to Hanson Place, St. Matthew's English Lutheran Church took ownership in October, 1860.

Almost exactly 19 years later, the Metropolitan Mission (Independent African Methodist Episcopal Church) began to worship here. The congregation of 60 members paid \$8000 for the church; in 1884, their membership rose to 300.¹⁸

By 1900, the Swedish Baptist Church had moved in and in 1929 the Salvation Army. In the 1970s, the Brooklyn Tabernacle, now on Flatbush Avenue, worshiped here.

Today, this sacred site is home to the Ahlul Bayt Islamic Library.

520

WALGRENS PHARMACY

† During the Civil War, enormous loss of life prompted the formation of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, a forerunner of the Red Cross. Colossal sums of money were needed to change the national approach to disease-prevention. In 1864, residents of Brooklyn raised \$400,000 at a Sanitary Fair, including an auction. This house and lot, donated by Scranton & Co. (SEE PAGE 4, **110** ATLANTIC), was sold to W. R. Tice of Fulton Street for \$3,850.²⁰

Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of Prospect Park, was the Sanitary Commission's first general secretary. He was charged with overseeing the gathering of facts, dissemination of information, and construction of sanitary hospitals.

LATE 19TH CENTURY. HOUSE AND LOT AT 520 ATLANTIC AVENUE, a few doors east of Powers St. (now called Third Ave.). Photo: C.H. Williamson. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society.)



563

METROPOLITAN GAS-LIGHT CO.

A fierce contender in the "turf wars" that marked the beginning of gas service in Brooklyn, Metropolitan Gas-Light once operated here. In 1895 it was one of six "illuminating" companies consolidated to create Brooklyn Union Gas, today renamed KeySpan. (SEE PAGE 7, **130** ATLANTIC)

THE ATLANTIC AVENUE KIOSK

Built in 1908 as the Times Plaza Control House, this structure — situated on the island formed by Atlantic, Fourth and Flatbush Avenues — is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It served as an entrance to the subway beneath. Heins & LaFarge, renowned as architects for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, designed the kiosk. *PHOTO RIGHT*



ATLANTIC AVENUE KIOSK July 16, 1937. Brooklyn Eagle. Photo: Brooklyn Public Library — Brooklyn Collection

THE

532

MACK BROTHERS SHOP

Big Macks were born here... and not the kind you eat. In 1900, Mack Brothers wagon builders moved into a large brick stable and foundry — previously used by the Atlantic Avenue horse car lines. Here, the Mack Brothers manufactured the first of generations of motorized vehicles — a bus used for touring Prospect Park!



568

MADINA

LONG ISLAND FREE LIBRARY

At the turn of the last century, the Long Island Free Library opened on this site — daily from 8 in the morning to 9 at night, except Sundays and holidays. In 1893, its free reading room held 7,500 volumes.⁴

552-554

MASJID AL-FAROOQ

The congregation of the Masjid Al-Farooq worships in this Beaux-Arts style building. If the time is right, you will hear the loud-speaker call to prayers.

1905

Mack Brothers Shop on Atlantic Avenue. John Mack is center, in the derby hat. (Photo courtesy of Mack Trucks, Inc.)

BANK



Photo: Betsy Kissam



CA 1920. These frame buildings, acquired by South Brooklyn Savings Institution, were torn down to make way for the new bank building. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society.)

BUILDING DETAIL

Detail from the railing in front of 130 Court Street.

130 COURT AT SOUTHWEST CORNER OF ATLANTIC AVENUE

INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY BANK

This Italian Renaissance-style building, built in 1923 by the South Brooklyn Savings Institution, has its entrance on Court St. This impressive structure was designed by McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin. A continuous row of carved stone eagles supports the roof cornice of this solid, distinctive building. Today the bank still carries on here but it is called the Independence Community Bank.

A plaque to the right of the bank's entrance identifies George Washington surveying the troops on August 27, 1776. Observing the battle of Long Island from atop a conical-shaped hill that arose in the midst of rows of corn, the General "...was heard to exclaim, 'Good God, what brave fellows I must lose this day.'"



EARLY 20TH CENTURY. The South Brooklyn Savings Institution building is still new. Note the power lines above and the trolley tracks in the cobblestone avenue. Although there was never one Atlantic Avenue trolley, the Crosstown, Fifth Avenue and Erie Basin lines traveled a few blocks along the Avenue. The last trolley disappeared from here in 1951. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society.)



1922 The year before the South Brooklyn Savings Institution moved to the other end of the block. Photo: Eugene Armbruster. (Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society)

160 CLINTON HILL CLEANERS EVON PHARMACY SOUTH BROOKLYN SAVINGS INSTITUTION

This once-grand Greek revival bank was built in 1871. It was the original home of the South Brooklyn Savings Institution which moved to the imposing building at the other end of the block at 130 Court St. "Its interiors were reputedly finished with rare marbles and handsome black walnut woodwork. The vault was constructed of granite blocks mortised out to receive cannon balls between each pair so that the stones could not be forced out of alignment without demolishing the entire wall."³

CLINTON TO COURT | No shopping center is complete without a bank. In 1871, the South Brooklyn Savings Institution opened at 160 Atlantic. Some 50 years later, the bank (today renamed Independence Community Bank) moved to the southwest corner of Court Street. See pages 8 and 9 for more about this block of Atlantic from Clinton to Court.

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AABA was formed in 1993 to address the concerns of the hundreds of people who live and work here. AABA members are dedicated to preserving the historic character of the Avenue, as well as improving our quality of life and work, on issues such as safety, traffic calming, zoning issues, sanitation, and Avenue beautification. To find out more about our organization, write to us at 321 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

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