

# Tottenville Historical Society

Walking Tour map continued →



# Tottenville

STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

## Walking Tour #2

### Amboy Road

The Tottenville Historical Society invites you to slow your pace and take a step back in time as you explore this southernmost village of New York State. Along your journey you will become acquainted with the homes of some of Tottenville's Founding Fathers.

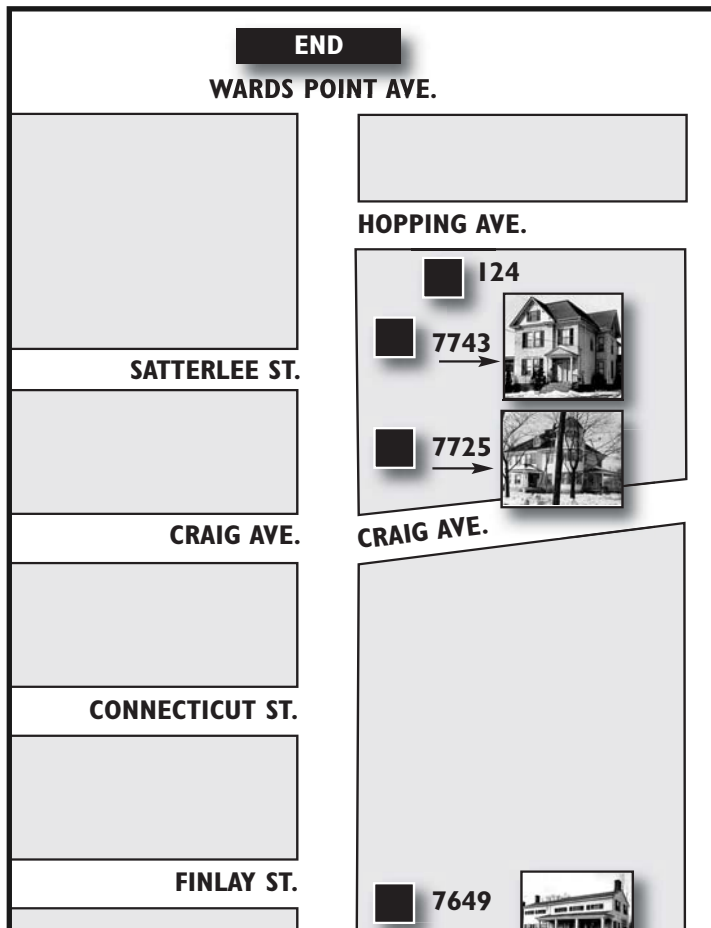
Some buildings have survived the centuries virtually intact while others offer only a hint of their former appearance.

The Tottenville Historical Society hopes this tour will give you a greater appreciation of Tottenville, "a lovely little town on the south shore."

Caution: Private homes, please observe courtesy.

Start Here ..... → **START** ↑

|                                  |  |   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>FINLAY ST.</b>                |  | 7649                                      |
| 7630 Congregation Ahavath Israel |  | 7647                                      |
| <b>ASPINWALL ST.</b>             |  | 7639                                      |
|                                  |  | 7635                                      |
|                                  |  | 7631                                      |
| <b>CARTERET ST.</b>              |  | <b>BENTLEY ST.</b>                        |
|                                  |  | 7595                                      |
| <b>SWINNERTON ST.</b>            |  | 7583                                      |
| 7558 St. Paul's                  |  | <b>BUTLER AVE.</b>                        |
| <b>MAIN STREET</b>               |  | 7563                                      |
| Tuscan Sun Cafe <b>J</b>         |  | 7559                                      |
| 7528                             |  |   |
| 7516 St. Stephen's               |  | <b>JOHNSON AVE.</b>                       |
| <b>CHELSEA ST.</b>               |  | <b>I</b> ← Main St. Deli 249              |
| 7492                             |  | <b>H</b> Villaggio Pizza                  |
| 7484                             |  | 7497                                      |
| 7474                             |  | 7485                                      |
|                                  |  | <b>G</b> ← Atmosphere Essentials 7481     |
| <b>BRIGHTON ST.</b>              |  |   |
| 7448                             |  | <b>F</b> ← Bedell-Pizzo Funeral Home 7447 |
| 7440 Cape House Gallery <b>B</b> |  | <b>E</b> Eggers Ice Cream                 |
| 7430 Library                     |  | <b>D</b> Kiddie Chic                      |
| Sudsy's Bagels <b>A</b>          |  | <b>C</b> Classic Pizza                    |
| <b>YETMAN AVE.</b>               |  |   |
| 7396 OLHC                        |  |   |



**1. 7396 Amboy Road.** Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church. Built in 1990 to replace the fire-damaged original church of 1898.

**2. 7430 Amboy Road.** Tottenville Library. Built in 1904. This was the first library built on Staten Island with money donated by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. The original beamed ceiling is a must-see.

**3. 7440 Amboy Road.** Cape House Gallery. Built in 1935 as both the residence and office of Dr. Herbert Berger, a medical doctor. Currently used as a gift shop and art gallery.

**4. 7448 Amboy Road.** Built in 1903 in the Colonial Revival style, a move away from the overly fancy Victorian style of architecture. The house was built for Charles Thrall, a foreman at the Atlantic Terra Cotta Plant in Tottenville.

**5. 7447 Amboy Road.** Bedell-Pizzo Funeral Home. This is the oldest surviving business in Tottenville, dating back to 1840, when Isaac P. Bedell began work as a carpenter

and coffin maker. The present building recently replaced the original structure which dated back to about 1886.

**6. 7474 Amboy Road.** A grand example of the French Second Empire style of architecture. Built in the 1870's for the Sprague family who lived there for 80 years. Notice the original slate mansard roof line. This house has been modified by having the front porch enclosed and a room built on top of it. The side porch has also been enclosed.

Please take a moment to compare this house to the one to its right # 7484.

**7. 7484 Amboy Road.** The James L. and Lucinda Bedell House, a New York City landmarked building. Built circa 1869-74. James Bedell was part of a prominent family. His eldest brother was the founder of the oldest surviving undertaking business in New York City. (The family business survives just across the street.) James was a carpenter who specialized in making window blinds and sash. He was most likely responsible for the design and building of this house. In the 1890's, James also entered into the funeral business and this house began to be used as a funeral home.

In 1920, the home was acquired by architect Chester Cole who was associated with the prominent firm of Carrere & Hastings. Mr. Cole is well known for his work on the restoration of the Conference House, a National and NYC Landmark English manor house, built circa 1680.

Numbers 7484 and 7474 Amboy are virtually the same house. Both are graced with mansard roofs (for extra living space), bay windows, and dormers, and both were built within a few years of each other.

The Bedell House, at one time a true gem of architecture, awaits restoration to its former glory.

**8. 7481-7485 Amboy Road.** Atmosphere Essentials. These two houses have always been a couple it seems. Built in 1891 as rental properties and owned by Jane Gammon. They are still jointly owned today and house a beauty spa, tea room and office space.

A previous owner added fancy fretwork and color, and they are now prime examples of adaptive reuse of an older building.

**9. 7492 Amboy Road.** Built in 1886 for John and Ella Hopping. He was a postmaster's assistant.

**10. 7497 Amboy Road.** This large home with a nice size yard was built in 1874 for Abraham Latourette whose occupation is listed as oyster planter/dealer. An impressive home made possible by the affluent oyster business that made the town of Tottenville grow.

In 1890, Doctor David Coleman bought the house. He practiced medicine in town for many years, and delivered countless babies. In fact there are more than a

few men whose middle names are Coleman - a nod to the beloved doctor who delivered them.

**11. 7516 Amboy Road.** St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. This modern church was built in 1967 to replace the original 1880's structure which was devastated by fire in 1965.

It is surmised that the name was chosen to honor Stephen Morehouse, the father of a founding member, as well as St. Stephen.

**12. 7528 Amboy Road.** Tuscan Sun Focacceria Cafè. Built circa 1880. Remembered fondly through the 1980's to South Shore residents as Mary's Five-and-Dime. Here you could buy anything from Scout knives to pots and pans.

**13. 249 Main Street.** Corner of Amboy Road, built in 1870 for John W. Russell, a confectioner.

**14. 7558 Amboy Road.** St. Paul's Methodist Church. Built in 1862. This grand brick structure originally boasted a large cupola atop the roof. In October 1918, during the World War, the Gillespie Powder Plant near Morgan, NJ exploded and severely damaged the cupola to the extent that it was deemed unsafe and was removed.

To the left is a newly constructed carillon, a type of electronic bell tower.

**15. 7559 Amboy Road.** Parsonage of St. Paul's Church. Built in 1867. Records show that the house was completed at a cost of \$3,033.

**16. 7563 Amboy Road.** Built circa 1888. Originally a wood frame building now clad with brick. This house was once known as the Wisteria Cottage. The early photo shows the front porch covered with wisteria vines.

**17. 7583 Amboy Road.** Built in 1855 for Daniel Butler, an oysterman. The side street, Butler Avenue, was named for this family.

**18. 7595 Amboy Road.** Bentley Tire and Auto. A former gas station that served the traffic heading for the Perth Amboy Ferry at the foot of Bentley Street. The Cohen family has operated this business continually since 1917 when gas was 8¢ a gallon!

**19. 7631 Amboy Road.** Built circa 1840. This house was moved to this site by Melancthon Rutan, circa 1890. It is unclear where the house was originally sited or why it was moved.

The home's interior woodwork is representative of 1840 or earlier.

**20. 7635 Amboy Road.** Built in 1850 for Lot Rick-

how who is listed as a boatman. The house is notable in that it appears to be two houses, or one house with two different sections. The right side with the two story bay suggests an 1890 date, while the left portion might well be the original 1850 house.

**21. 7630 Amboy Road.** Congregation Ahavath Israel (the Law of Israel.) In the year 1914 the High Holy Days were celebrated for the first time in Tottenville. It was, however, not until 1933 that construction was completed on this building. The cost was listed at \$5,100.

**22. 7639 Amboy Road.** Built in 1850 for Abraham Romaine. His occupation was ship joiner.

This is one of the earliest houses in Tottenville and though simple in construction it boasts fancy Greek pilasters on its corners.

Additions were made to the rear of the property instead of to the sides as was the more usual practice.

**23. 7647 Amboy Road.** Built in 1848 and owned by James Rutan, a shipbuilder. A very early house with the original section on the right. A smaller two bay addition to the left was most likely added soon afterwards.

Note the elaborate Greek Revival doorway, an original feature.

This house is a designated New York City landmark.

**24. 7649 Amboy Road.** Built in 1921 for William H. Brown, a shipbuilder and son of A.C. Brown, founder of Brown's Shipyard in Tottenville.

In 1925 the house was owned by Robert and Alice Macan. He was a draftsman at the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company in Tottenville.

**25. 7725 Amboy Road.** This imposing home with the large rounded corner turret was built in 1897 for Charles M. Winant. Charles's profession is listed as "carpet salesman."

In 1912 he was an officer in the Progressive Political Party.

**26. 7743 Amboy Road.** Built in 1889 for Gilbert S. Barnes who was a bookkeeper and later the first president of the Tottenville National Bank.

\*\*\*Turn right onto Hopping Ave.\*\*\*

**27. 124 Hopping Avenue.** This impressive brick colonial style home was built in 1935 for Harry Lebovitz. His auto dealership was located a short distance away on Main Street, where he sold Chevys and Oldsmobiles. In 1949 the company moved to the corner of New Dorp Lane and Hylan Boulevard and was known as H&L Motors for decades.

\*\*\*End of Tour\*\*\*

## Tottenville Houses of Worship

Since its early settlement days as a Methodist community, Tottenville has become religiously diverse.

1939



**Bethel United Methodist Church**  
7033 Amboy Road

2009



**Tottenville Evangelical Free Church**  
266 Wood Avenue



**Faith Assembly of God**  
263 Lee Avenue



**Our Lady Help of Christians Church**  
7396 Amboy Road



**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
7516 Amboy Road



**Korean United Methodist Church**  
(Formerly American Legion) 291 Main Street



**South Baptist Church**  
197 Main Street



**St. Mary & St. George Coptic Orthodox Church**  
(Formerly Richmond County Federal S&L Association)  
190 Main Street



**St. Paul's United Methodist Church**  
7558 Amboy Road



**Congregation Ahavath Israel**  
7630 Amboy Road

