

The Tottenville Historical Society presents...

**229 MAIN STREET
POP UP SPACE
A VIRTUAL TOUR**

Tottenville, Staten Island, NY

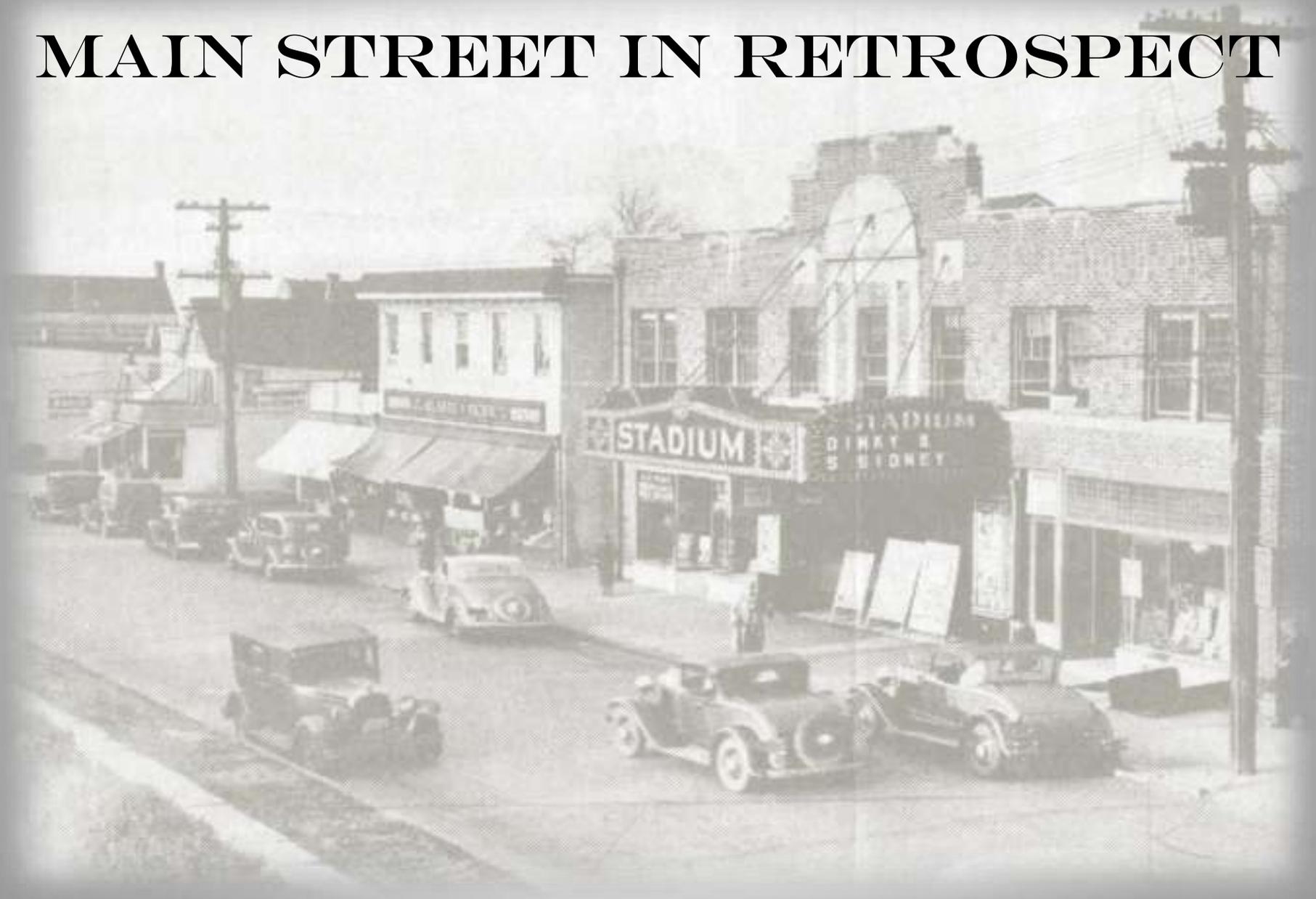
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On August 3, 2013, the **Tottenville Historical Society** celebrated its *Grand Opening* at 229 Main Street, Tottenville after extensive rehabilitation of the storefront where for the next eight months we presented exhibits, programs and workshops.

This virtual tour will provide a glimpse of our first exhibit titled,
“Main Street in Retrospect.”



MAIN STREET IN RETROSPECT



Main Street, Tottenville, circa 1935

In the 1830s and 1840s the area that would become Tottenville was almost entirely woodland. In 1834 and 1836 John Totten Jr. purchased two parcels of land on the westerly side of Main Street and built a dock and general store on the waterfront. The road that led to this dock came to be called Totten Street and later Main Street. By 1850 more than a dozen houses were built along this busy roadway. These earliest residents included oystermen, boatmen and sea captains. From 1840 to 1900 everything in Tottenville centered around the oyster. Lower Main Street (north of Arthur Kill Road to the water) became a bustling hub on the southern end of Staten Island.

In the early 20th century a period of rapid growth began in Tottenville sparked by commercial expansion. New buildings were constructed along upper Main Street, some replacing earlier residential structures, and many homes were renovated with storefront additions including 161, 169 and 225 Main Street.

Most residents believe a combination of factors, including the relocation of the A&P in the 1960s, contributed to the decline of Main Street as a vibrant commercial district. Almost every American family owned at least one car, and the large modern shopping centers offered a variety of goods and services, as well as bargains; this had a great impact on small local businesses. Complaints about run-down storefronts and lack of parking added to Main Street's woes. Despite several attempts during the past fifty years by merchants, organizations and local residents, Main Street continues to struggle.

The *Main Street* exhibit offers some insight as to how well Main Street has served this community for the past 150 years, providing a wide array of goods and services from shoe repair to confection.

But what about the future? For the past 25 years, over 1,600 communities across America have taken the initiative to look again at their Main Streets, the heart of their community. Their goal: to save and adapt their historic buildings for reuse, to revive their commercial core, to control community-eroding sprawl, and to maintain a sense of place and community.

Is now the time for Tottenville to join this national Main Street movement and plan for the future?

"For the longest time, we all waited for a white knight to ride into town and fix the problems. But the..only way to get it done right was to do it ourselves." Mayor of Americus, Georgia

MAIN STREET, CIRCA 1910

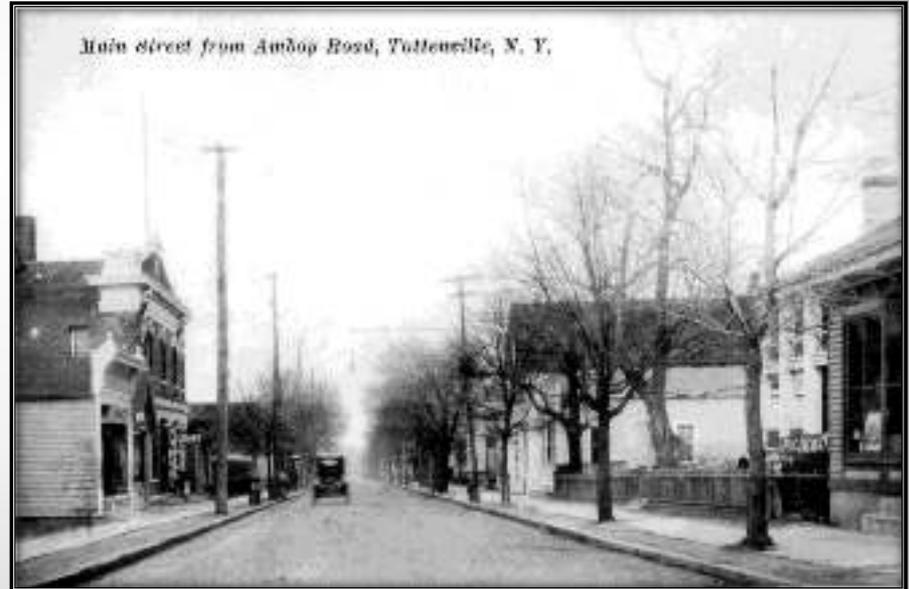
Lower Main Street at Arthur Kill Rd.

(Lehman's Pharmacy, far right)



Upper Main Street from Amboy Rd.

(Masonic Temple, left)



BUSINESSES OF THE PAST

Main Street was the heart of the community and the businesses there provided essential goods and services for decades.

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77 MAIN STREET
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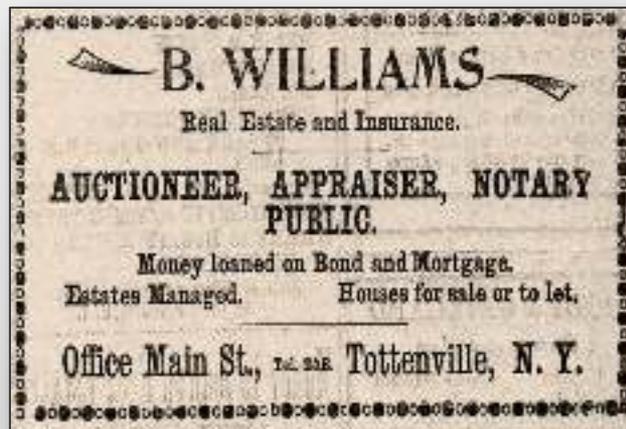
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173 MAIN STREET



1940



2005

This circa 1892 Queen Anne style commercial building was built for George C. Cunningham, butcher, and later occupied by Benjamin Williams, “Real Estate and Insurance” from 1913 through 1957. In 2005 the shop was awarded NYC landmark status.



In 1907 J.B. Runyon, J.C. Seguine and H.G. Stiles purchased the “Totten Dock” property at the foot of Main Street where they operated a lumber and building materials business for decades.

180 MAIN STREET



1940

Built in 1870 as a dry goods and grocery store for David J. Pepper and Seth Joline. Early on, the second story was used as a community center and was known as *Pepper's Hall*. The Tottenville Cornet Band, a community band, met here for decades.

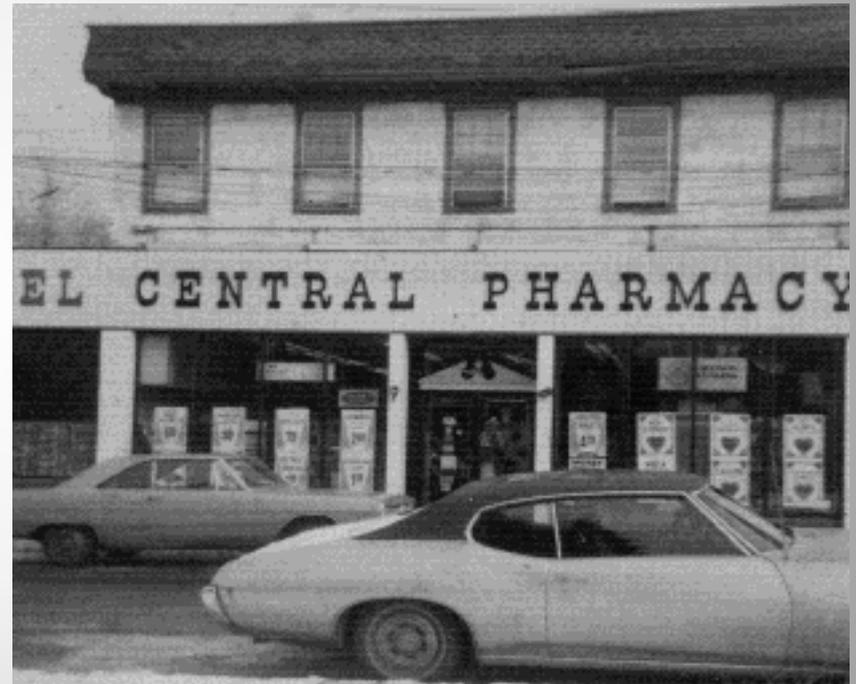
Other former business names include **Roulston**, **Red Front Grocery** and **Berkower's Market**. Still selling grocery and deli items today, 180 Main Street has been known as ***The Cracker Barrel*** since the 1960s.

211 MAIN STREET

(Kerrie's Laundry Land today)



circa 1962



circa 1970

"Remember this place well, groceries on one side and butcher on the other."

NEW DEVELOPMENT ON MAIN STREET HAS BROUGHT NEW CHALLENGES. IS THIS THE FUTURE FOR MAIN STREET?

Bentley Lane properties from Main Street, built 1996



Eden Court, built 1997



140 Main Street strip mall, built 1990



MAIN STREET: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



THE TIME IS NOW TO START PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF MAIN STREET

**THE TOTTENVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS
AND VOLUNTEERS
WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MAKE 229 MAIN STREET A SUCCESS:**

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(list to be updated)

We also wish to thank all the donors of artifacts and information to the collections of the Tottenville Historical Society that were used in this exhibit.