

LOCAL NEWS

Historic sail boat returns to Tottenville

The *Carib II* is the last-known surviving ship built by the now-defunct A.C. Brown & Sons Shipyard

By JODI LEE REIFER
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

She endured a World War II stint on anti-submarine patrol; the punishing heat and humidity of the Virgin Islands for many years, and an unknown number of violent storms.

All of that, and she's still nautical eye candy.

Now, after 83 years away, the *Carib II*, a 52-foot, double-masted wooden sail boat has returned to the town where she was built: Tottenville.

The last-known surviving ship built by the neighborhood's now-defunct A.C. Brown & Sons Shipyard (1873-1929), the boat sailed here on its way to Maine for structural reinforcement. The Tottenville Historical Society is playing host to *Carib II* and her owner, David Soule.

The ship docked at Great Kills Yacht Club before moving on to Port Atlantic Marina and Bentley Yacht Club, where she's moored until tomorrow.

"When you can see something then you can understand and appreciate its his-

tory a lot better," said Linda Hauck, director of the historical society.

By 1880, Staten Island had 17 shipyards, scattered throughout the North Shore, Stapleton and Tottenville. The borough's southernmost town was home to eight shipyards, she said.

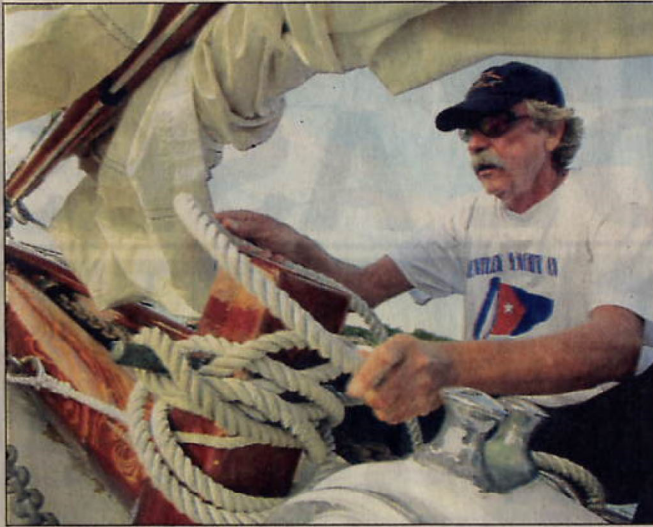
Soule, a maritime history buff, reached out to the historical society last winter after he bought the boat in October. A big fan of its designer, the renowned Commodore Ralph M. Munroe, Soule discovered Munroe was a longtime friend of A.C. "Uncle Chris" Brown.

Munroe grew up in the borough, but even after he moved to Coconut Grove, Fla., he still sent clients here to have their ships built.

"It tells me his boats were the best," said Soule. "The people of Staten Island have a lot to be proud of, more especially Tottenville."

The *Carib II*, a gaff-rigged centerboard ketch, was constructed in 1924 of white oak framing and yellow pine planking with a mahogany interior and can sail in water as shallow as four-feet deep.

She and her twin sister ship, the *Alice*, were commissioned by Max Mauran of Rhode Island and Henry Howard of Massachusetts. Howard had been searching for a designer to build his "dream ship," a vessel that could stay off shore in any



David Soule secures a buoy line to his sail boat *Carib II* at the Bentley Yacht Club in Tottenville.

weather and seaworthy through shallow Caribbean waters.

Soule, 53, a tall man with warm, crystal blue eyes, said his mission is to reconnect communities with their history. "This magnetizes them," said the sailor, who has two houses in Arizona, where he works as a metal fabricator/welder two weeks out of every two months.

Sitting on the couch in the *Carib II*'s hull, Renie Wuethrich, 86, a resident of Tottenville since 1948, inspected Soule's vast collection of history, fiction and gourmet cook books.

"We're moving in," she

joked. "The woodwork is so beautiful. And the roominess! I've learned a lot. They've brought us back to the original Tottenville."

— Call Hauck at 646-291-7005 for ship information.

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For a gallery of *Carib II* photos, visit silive.com/photos



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/CHAD RACHMAN

Soule looks back at his sail boat *Carib II* as he motors his dinghy toward the Bentley Yacht Club in Tottenville. The last-known surviving ship built by Tottenville's now-defunct A.C. Brown & Sons Shipyard, the *Carib II* sailed here on its way to Maine for structural reinforcement.