

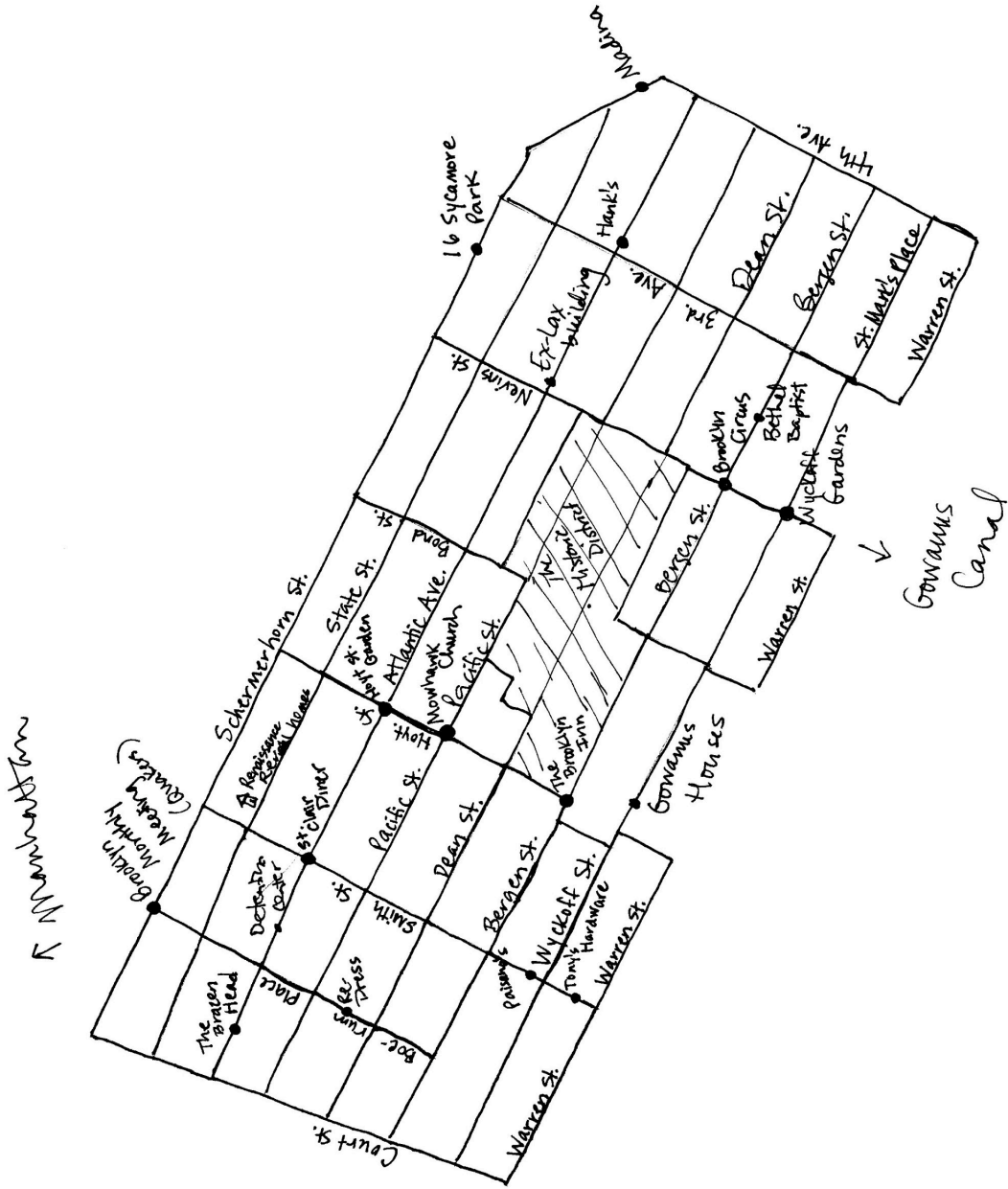
# **The Traveler's Guide to Boerum Hill**

**Brooklyn, New York**

**By Jennifer Senator**

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## NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Thank you for reading my guidebook. You will notice it doesn't follow the same formula as many guidebooks, and because of this I feel I should explain:

I moved to Boerum Hill on November 15, 2008. Today, it is July 16, 2009. So, it is eight months and one day later, and while I know a lot about my neighborhood— information gathered on walks with my dogs, during chats with neighbors, and from time spent at the local bars— I don't know it all just yet. Which is why, for example, there is no "Museums" section. I just haven't spent a lot of time checking out the museums in my neighborhood, and I know there is at least one. Instead, I have done my best to present all of the places I like best in Boerum Hill, and also give context and information about what a traveler would likely happen upon during a stroll through one of the main streets.

A few technical notes: In most cases, addresses are given rather than phone numbers or websites because this guide is best enjoyed while exploring Boerum Hill on foot. It is my hope that you find one of the parks mentioned here, sit down on a bench, and plan a route.

I hope you enjoy my neighborhood.

Jennifer Senator  
for The Work Office (TWO)  
published July 16, 2009



**Part I. General Information  
about Boerum Hill**



*Bergen Street*

## **HISTORY**

This small neighborhood in northwest Brooklyn, New York, just a ten-minute commute from Manhattan, was once a Native American maize field. In the 1600s, corn, squash, and beans were planted where tony red brick row houses stand today.

Most of these homes were built between 1840 and 1870, on land owned by Dutch farmer Simon Boerum, as well as Charles Hoyt, Russell Nevins, and the Gerritsen and Martenese families— many names still spotted around the neighborhood. Boerum Hill thrived as a tightly knit, immigrant-packed community into the 1900s.

In the 1920s, as many middle-class families began moving to wealthier areas of Manhattan, Boerum Hill became a working class neighborhood. When Mohawk ironworkers moved south from Canada and upstate New York in the 1930s and 40s to work on Manhattan's skyscrapers, many of them ended up in Boerum Hill because of the area's cheaper rents and convenience to the city. But after a lull in construction— an effect of the entire city being in economic decline— the Mohawks moved on. In the late 1940s, the New York Public Housing Authority built two large housing developments in the neighborhood: The Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens. Gradually, the name "Boerum Hill" disappeared, and the neighborhood was known as "South Brooklyn" or "North Gowanus."

In the 1960s, as the economy worsened, racial tension and crime increased. Since many residents had moved away, most of the row houses were vacant, dilapidated, and covered in graffiti. As longtime Boerum Hill resident L.J. Davis wrote in a 1969 article for *New York* magazine:

"The pavements were sprinkled with sparkling carpets of pulverized glass. It was the kind of place you drove through quickly, past block upon block of people standing around, sitting on stoops, hanging out of windows with faded pillows, with nothing to do and no special place to go, as though waiting for some grim parade to pass."

Just as many of the row houses were about to be demolished, the residents who remained came together and fought to establish a historic district in the neighborhood. In

1973, they did, and they soon also restored the neighborhood's original name— back to Boerum Hill. By the late 1970s, young singles and a few families began to move into the area, buying the historic row houses for around \$20,000. In 2009, the median home price is \$925,000.

The area's crime and racial tensions have vastly declined through the years and today, the neighborhood is a tightly knit, historically preserved area with an increasing number of young families. Block parties are held in the summer. There is a neighborhood Yahoo! group. Bergen, Dean, and Pacific Streets are among the most beautiful in Brooklyn. And, when visiting, if you happen to get the name of the neighborhood wrong— as many do— and call it "Cobble Hill," "Carroll Gardens," "Brooklyn Heights," or "Gowanus," you can expect to be scorned.

### **INHABITANTS PAST & PRESENT**

At various points in history, Boerum Hill has been home to Swedes, Mohawk Indians, Arabs, Germans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans, as well as the French, Dutch, and Irish.

### **BOUNDARIES**

The Boerum Hill Association defines the neighborhood as bounded by Schermerhorn Street to the north, 4th Avenue to the east, Court Street to the west, and Warren Street to the south.

### **HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Roughly bounded by Pacific, Wyckoff, Bergen, Nevins, Bond, and Hoyt streets.

### **ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS**

Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Gowanus

### **POPULATION**

According to *The New York Times*, the population of Boerum Hill (ZIP codes 11217 and 11201) is 91,611.

In **11217**, the median household income is \$52,256. Seventy percent of residents are single, and eighty percent have no children. 51.2 percent of residents are female. 50.7 percent of residents are white; 29.9 percent are black; 23.6 percent are Hispanic; six percent are Asian; 13 percent are other. The median age is 35.

In **11201**, the median household income is \$56,620. 68.8 percent of residents are single, and 82.8 percent have no children. 50.9 percent of residents are male. Sixty percent of residents white; 22.6 percent are black; 15 percent are Hispanic; 8.2 percent are Asian; 8.9 percent are listed as other. The median age is 36.



*North Pacific Playground*

## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

The Boerum Hill Association is a volunteer organization of residents in Boerum Hill. Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month (September–June) at 7 p.m. in the Mugavero Center, at the corner of Hoyt and Dean streets. There are eighteen board members. In July 2009, the president of the board is Howard Kolins. Association membership is open to any Boerum Hill resident for a minimum of \$25 annually (\$15 for seniors, students, and low-income persons).

## **ARCHITECTURE**

Most of Boerum Hill's residences are three-story row houses built between 1840 and 1870. Many of the homes are in the Greek and Italianate styles. On State Street, between Smith and Hoyt streets, there are twenty-three Renaissance Revival brownstones, built in the early 1840s.

## **HOUSING**

**Sales:** According to Trulia, the median sales price in Boerum Hill from April 2009 until June 2009 was \$925,000, based on six sales. Compared to the same period in 2008, the median sales price increased by 22 percent, and the number of sales decreased by half.

**Rentals:** In 2003, studios and one-bedroom apartments ranged from \$1,200-\$1,800; two-bedroom apartments ranged from \$1,600-\$2,500, and larger, family-style apartments ranged from \$2,400-\$3,500. In 2009, at least one one-bedroom in Boerum Hill is \$2,150.



## RENOVATIONS

As of July 15, 2009, the following addresses displayed evidence of exterior renovation (and perhaps interior as well): 120 Bergen Street, 162 Bergen Street, 227 Bergen Street, 243 Dean Street, 95–97 Wyckoff Street



## FLORA AND FAUNA

In our experience, it seems peonies, tulips, dogwood trees, hyacinths, cherry trees, forget-me-nots, and lilacs do very well in Boerum Hill. But that's just a few of the many plants and flowers that thrive in this region. According to findings by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 170 woody plants are found in Kings County.

They are: *Acer negundo*, *Acer palmatum*, *Acer platanoides*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Acer rubrum*, *Acer saccharinum*, *Acer saccharum*, *Aesculus hippocastanum*, *Ailanthus altissima*, *Albizia julibrissin*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Alnus incana*, *Amorpha fruticosa*, *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, *Aronia arbutifolia*, *Aronia melanocarpa*, *Berberis thunbergii*, *Berberis vulgaris*, *Betula lenta*, *Betula populifolia*, *Broussonetia papyrifera*, *Campsis radicans*, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Carya cordiformis*, *Carya ovata*, *Carya tomentosa*, *Castanea dentata*, *Castanea sativa*, *Catalpa bignonioides*, *Ceanothus americanus*, *Celastrus orbiculata*, *Celtis occidentalis*, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, *Chamaecyparis thyoides*, *Chimaphila maculata*, *Clematis virginiana*, *Clethra alnifolia*, *Cornus amomum*, *Cornus canadensis*, *Cornus florida*, *Cornus foemina*, *Cornus sericea*, *Diospyros virginiana*, *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, *Elaeagnus umbellata*, *Fagus grandifolia*, *Fraxinus Americana*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, *Gaultheria procumbens*, *Gaylussacia frondosa*, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, *Gymnocladus dioica*, *Hamamelis virginiana*, *Hibiscus syriacus*, *Hudsonia tomentosa*, *Ilex glabra*, *Ilex laevigata*, *Ilex opaca*, *Ilex verticillata*, *Iva frutescens*, *Juglans nigra*, *Juniperus virginiana*, *Kalmia angustifolia*, *Kalmia latifolia*, *Larix laricina*, *Leucothoe racemosa*, *Ligustrum obtusifolium*, *Ligustrum vulgare*, *Lindera benzoin*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Lonicera japonica*, *Lonicera sempervirens*, *Lycium barbarum*, *Lyonia ligustrina*, *Lyonia mariana*, *Magnolia acuminata*, *Magnolia tripetala*, *Magnolia virginiana*, *Malus pumila*, *Malus sieboldii*,

Malus sylvestris, Morus alba, Morus rubra, Myrica pensylvanica, Nyssa sylvatica, Ostrya virginiana, Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Parthenocissus tricuspidata, Paulownia tomentosa Picea abies, Pinus echinata, Pinus rigida, Pinus strobes, Pinus sylvestris, Pinus thunbergii, Pinus virginiana, Platanus occidentalis, Populus alba, Populus balsamifera, Populus deltoids, Populus grandidentata, Populus nigra, Populus tremuloides, Prunus avium, Prunus maritime, Prunus pensylvanica, Prunus persica, Prunus serotina, Prunus virginiana, Pueraria lobata, Pyrus communis, Quercus alba, Quercus macrocarpa, Quercus palustris, Quercus phellos, Quercus prinoides, Quercus rubra, Quercus stellata, Quercus velutina, Rhamnus cathartica, Rhamnus frangula, Rhododendron periclymenoides, Rhododendron viscosum, Rhodotypos scandens, Rhus copallinum, Rhus glabra,, Rhus hirta, Ribes americanum, Ribes aureum, Robinia pseudo-acacia, Rosa multiflora, Rosa rugosa, Rubus allegheniensis, Rubus flagellaris, Rubus laciniatus, Rubus occidentalis, Rubus phoenicolasius, Salix alba, Salix babylonica, Salix bebbiana, Salix discolor, Salix exigua, Salix fragilis, Salix humilis, Salix nigra marsh, Sambucus canadensis, Sassafras albidum, Smilax glauca, Solanum dulcamara, Symphoricarpos orbiculatus, Taxus canadensis, Thuja occidentalis, Tilia americana, Toxicodendron radicans, Tsuga canadensis, Ulmus Aamericana, Ulmus glabra, Ulmus minor, Ulmus pumila, Ulmus rubra, Vaccinium corymbosum, Vaccinium stamineum, Viburnum dentatum, Viburnum opulus, Viburnum prunifolium, Vitis aestivalis, Vitis labrusca, Wisteria sinensis, and Yucca filamentosa.



### **ANIMAL LIFE**

An 1895 *The New York Times* article explained that many “wild dogs” lived not far from Boerum Hill, along the “odiferous” Gowanus Canal. In 2007, the canal also lured a fifteen-foot minke whale, which was soon nicknamed “Sludgy.” Sadly, Sludgy beached himself and died soon after his swim in the canal.

Today, there are numerous raccoon sightings in the neighborhood. One resident, on Pacific Street, recently found a raccoon high up in his peach tree, shaking the fruit down to the ground.

Opossums have also been sighted. One State Street resident, who frequently spotted a large opossum in his yard, surmised that the animals “were commonly brought in by the Irish workers who built the neighborhood.” Black squirrels are seen from time to time, and albino squirrels have been spotted in nearby Park Slope.

Birds of prey are known to visit the neighborhood as well. One Boerum Hill resident spotted a kestrel in her backyard garden a few years ago. She said it was “devouring a pigeon.” Recently, the same resident wondered if the bird was back when she found three of her “largest and handsomest” goldfish— who were swimming in tubs outside while the pond was cleaned— decapitated. Five more of her goldfish went missing completely soon afterward.

While backyard gardens are havens for cardinals and blue jays, more than 270 bird species have been spotted in nearby Prospect Park, including a large number of eastern warblers.

Of course, there are many cats and dogs in the neighborhood. A few notables are “Mister Bob,” the watchful Shih-Zu of Bergen Street, and “Maxi,” a small white fluffy dog with an unmistakable, high-pitched, throaty bark. Many cats wander through the backyard gardens, perching atop fences and staring down at dogs locked indoors, taunting them with their swishing tails. It is not uncommon to hear the cries of cats fighting, or perhaps, mating.

In the summer of 2009, several cats seemed to be missing, as evidenced the number of signs posted throughout the neighborhood. One in particular was described as “gray with white paws.” Whether it is the same cat is unknown, but a cat of similar appearance was spotted in the backyards of 217 Bergen and 241 Bergen in June and July.



## **CLIMATE**

On average, the warmest month in Boerum Hill is July, with a highest recorded temperature of 105°F in 1966. January is the coolest month, on average; the lowest recorded temperature was -4°F in 1985. July is also the rainiest month.

## **CRIME**

Boerum Hill is served by the NYPD's 84th Precinct and Captain Mark DiPaolo. The area also includes Brooklyn Heights, Vinegar Hill, the Farragut Residences, the Downtown Brooklyn Business district, the Federal, State Supreme, Criminal, Civil, Bankruptcy and Family courts, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Manhattan Bridge.

A recent crime report from the 84th Precinct revealed that as of July 12, 2009, there had been zero murders, two rapes, 67 robberies, 53 felony assaults, 52 burglaries, and 250 cases of grand larceny.

In 2009, two separate incidents were witnessed by the author on Dean Street, between Bond and Nevins streets:

**1. (January 2009) Dean Street**— An African-American male was witnessed leaving the garden level of a brick townhouse, carrying several pieces of mail. A Caucasian male, walking with a Caucasian woman, approached him on the sidewalk and asked, "Hey, is that your mail?" The African-American male did not respond but moved quickly away, toward Bond Street. The Caucasian male again asked, this time more enthusiastically, "Hey! Mother F---er! Is that your mail?" And then again, yelled, "Mother F---er! That's not your mail!" The African-American male then dropped the mail in the middle of Dean Street and toward Bond Street, heading toward Pacific Street. The Caucasian female then called 9-1-1 on her cell phone to report the incident.

**2. (June 2009) Near the corner of Dean and Nevins streets**— a Caucasian male on a bicycle, who was riding in the Dean Street bicycle lane, was heard repeatedly yelling, "Pull over!" to the driver of a blue minivan, who was driving in the same direction (toward Nevins). Approximately thirty feet from the stoplight, the driver of the minivan came to a stop, at which point the cyclist opened the driver's side door, pulled the driver (who was an African-American male) out of the car, and began punching him repeatedly in the face. The men fought aggressively until another Caucasian cyclist came upon the scene and, seemingly, separated them. It is unknown to the author if police were notified.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD MYSTERIES**

As reported on the *Gowanus Lounge* website on January 27, 2009: "Boerum Hill has a mysterious nighttime diesel fume smell in the area around Pacific Street and Fourth Avenue." The smell was later surmised to either have come from an oil storage facility along the Gowanus Canal or construction at a nearby school.



### **CLAIMS TO FAME**

*Clockers*, a 1995 film by Spike Lee, was filmed in the Gowanus Houses, located at 211 Hoyt Street.

Boerum Hill is featured in two novels written by longtime resident Jonathan Lethem: *The Fortress of Solitude* is set primarily on Dean Street, between Nevins and Bond streets; *Motherless Brooklyn* is centered on Bergen Street, between Smith and Hoyt streets.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Boerum Hill is accessible by:

#### ***Subway***

**Bergen Street Station** (entrances at Bergen and Smith streets and Bergen and Warren streets): F and G

**Hoyt-Schermerhorn Station** (entrances at Hoyt and Schermerhorn streets and Bond and Schermerhorn streets: A, C, G

**Atlantic Avenue–Pacific Street station** (entrance at Pacific Street and 4th Avenue; Atlantic Avenue trains accessible via underpass): B, Q, D, N, R, 2, 3, 4, 5, and LIRR

#### ***Air***

Boerum Hill is most easily accessed from LaGuardia Airport. Driving directions are as follows: Take the Brooklyn Queens Expressway to Exit 29, merge onto Tillary Street. Turn left onto Flatbush Avenue Extension, continue on Flatbush Avenue. Turn right onto Nevins Street.

### ***Car***

(From Manhattan)

Go over the Brooklyn Bridge and continue on Boerum Place. Turn left onto Atlantic Avenue.

### ***Boat***

(via New York Water Taxi)

Take the water taxi to Fulton Ferry Landing in D.U.M.B.O. Walk to the York Street subway station (at the corner of York and Jay streets) and take the F train to Bergen Street.

(via Gowanus Canal)

Follow the canal until it ends. To your left is Douglass Street. After securing your rowboat, kayak, or canoe, walk to Douglass Street and turn right on Bond Street. You will enter Boerum Hill at Warren Street.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

**Escape Guest House**, 168 Bergen Street, 718-243-1171, [escapeguesthouse.com](http://escapeguesthouse.com). The mother and daughter who live there converted this Italianate brick townhouse, built in the 1850s, into a bed and breakfast in 2006. There are five rooms, priced from \$80 (single); some have a shared bath.

**Nu Hotel**, 85 Smith Street, 718-852-8585, [nuhotelbrooklyn.com](http://nuhotelbrooklyn.com). Opened in 2008, this is the area's newest hotel and features modern amenities such as flat-screen televisions, eco-conscious cork flooring, and Aveda bath products. Some rooms have bunk beds. Doubles are priced from \$209.

## **EVENTS, FESTIVALS, & CELEBRATIONS**

(Visit websites to confirm upcoming dates)

**Bergen Street Sidewalk Sale**, May. Proceeds from this massive cooperative sidewalk sale benefit the David Foulke Memorial Garden. [boerumhillbrooklyn.com](http://boerumhillbrooklyn.com)

**Hoyt Street Association Plant Sale**, May. Proceeds from the sale of geraniums, hostas, herbs, and vegetables and many other plants benefit the Hoyt Street Garden and the Hoyt Street Association. [boerumhillbrooklyn.com](http://boerumhillbrooklyn.com)

**Boerum Hill Association Greening Day**, May. Free compost and mulch for those who purchase plants at the Hoyt Street Plant Sale; available at the Mugavero Center (Hoyt and Dean streets). [boerumhillbrooklyn.com](http://boerumhillbrooklyn.com)

**Atlantic Avenue ArtWalk**, June. This self-guided tour of artist studios and art projects and exhibitions along Atlantic Avenue also includes a block party, film screenings, and music. [atlanticavenueartwalk.com](http://atlanticavenueartwalk.com)

**Boerum Hill Pub Walks**, June–August. The walk's inaugural summer pub walk (in 2009) included stops at The Brazen Head, The Brooklyn Inn, and Hank's Saloon. [boerumhillbrooklyn.com](http://boerumhillbrooklyn.com)

**Smith Street Festival**, June. Smith Street is closed to cars from Atlantic Avenue to Union Street for this, the neighborhood's largest festival. Offering more than just typical street fair food, neighborhood restaurants and shops bring their fare outdoors, where the crowd mingles and listens to live music. The festival is also known for its popular cheese-eating contest, hosted by Stinky Bklyn. *stinkybklyn.com*

**Bastille Day Celebration**, July. During the celebration, Smith Street (from Bergen to Atlantic) is closed to traffic and converted into a strip of sandy Pétanque courts. Neighborhood restaurants, such as popular French bistro Bar Tabac, bring tables outdoors, offer food and drink specials, and give away festive straw hats. Local skateboarders and breakdancers also entertain the crowd. *bartabac.com*

**BoCoCa Arts Festival**, July. Music, theater, and visual and performing art is presented by local artists in nontraditional venues, such as clothing stores, Irish pubs, and a doggie daycare facility. *bococaartsfestival.com*

**Atlantic Avenue Tree Lighting**, December. This annual event draws residents of all ages to witness the lighting of the tree at the Belarusian Church. Atlantic Avenue restaurants provide free food and drinks; children from the local public schools sing Christmas carols, and Santa Claus makes an appearance. Belarusian Church, Atlantic Avenue and Bond Street. *boerumhillbrooklyn.com*

**Caroling in the Park**, December. Volunteers sing to those who are new to the neighborhood, and to others who are ill or have suffered a loss. Santa hats, jungle bells, and song sheets are provided. (Meet at the Mugavero Center, at Hoyt and Dean streets). *boerumhillbrooklyn.com*

## **Part II. Points of Interest in Boerum Hill**





*The Ex-Lax Building*

### **HISTORIC LANDMARKS**

**Cuyler Presbyterian Church**, 358 Pacific Street. Before this home, which was built in the 1890s, was converted into a residence in the 1980s, it was one of the most vibrant churches in the neighborhood, most notably known as the community gathering place of the area's Mohawk Indians in the 1930s. The Mohawks moved to Brooklyn to be close to Manhattan, where many of them were building the city's skyscrapers. Reverend David Munroe Cory arranged annual pow-wows and encouraged the Mohawks to continue their native traditions. They remained until a lull in construction in the mid-to-late 1950s, when they moved out of the city. The parsonage, where Reverend Cory lived, is next door.

**The Ex-Lax Building**, 423 Atlantic Avenue. This former laxative factory is where all those "Smooth Move" jokes started. It was converted to a sixty-unit co-op in 1981.

**New York Times Warehouse**, at Third Avenue between Dean and Pacific streets. This beautiful neo-Classical building once held inventory for *The New York Times*.



## **CHURCHES**

**St. Cyril of Turau Cathedral**, 401 Atlantic Avenue. This building, built in 1850 and formerly home to an Episcopalian church, is the worldwide seat of the Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Founded in 1950 by Belarusians fleeing the Soviet Union after World War II, the church purchased the building in 1957. Today, the church hosts community gatherings and an annual Belarusian festival in the fall.

**Bethel Baptist Church**, 265 Bergen Street. Established in 1907, this church seems to always have a crowd outside, whether its church ladies donning fancy hats or a group of teenagers practicing the “Cupid Shuffle.”

**The Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)**, 110 Schermerhorn Street. While the building was constructed in 1857, the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting moved here in 1975.

**Saints Constantine & Helen Cathedral**, 64 Schermerhorn Street. Founded in 1913, this was the first Greek Orthodox Church on Long Island.



*The Hoyt Street Garden*

## **PARKS, GARDENS, AND RECREATION**

**David Foulke Memorial Garden**, on Bergen Street, near Nevins Street. This garden has a picnic table in the shade and beautiful pink hydrangeas. Open Saturdays and Sundays from noon–4 p.m., or, as the sign on the gate reads, “May through October, whenever someone is in the garden.”

**Hoyt Street Garden**, at the corner of Hoyt Street and Atlantic Avenue. This community garden was established in 1975 with the planting of one small cherry tree. In July 2009, the gardens hosted free storytelling every Tuesday evening, complete with free lemonade and cookies.

**North Pacific Playground**, on Pacific Street, between Dean and Nevins streets. This tiny pocket of a park has a small playground and shady sitting area with benches. It is a popular spot for mothers and nannies with young children.

**Sixteen Sycamore Park**, on Schermerhorn Street, near Third Avenue. This is the oldest and largest park in Boerum Hill, opened in 1935. It was named for its many sycamore trees, which still tower over the park today. There are two play areas with climbing equipment and slides, three handball courts, water fountains, and swings.



*The Brooklyn Inn*

## **RESTAURANTS & BARS**

**Apple Gourmet Farm**, 402 Atlantic Avenue. A gourmet grocery store disguised as a bodega, this market has European chocolate, fresh fruits and veggies, and a great selection of inexpensive flowers. A neighborhood favorite when Trader Joe's is too far away.

**Bar Tabac**, 128 Smith Street. You should do three things here: 1. Order the \$14 mussels and frites, 2. Sit at the bar in front of the window, and 3. Chat with the bartender, who will likely be either Magda or Francois.

**Bedouin Tent**, 405 Atlantic Avenue. "Best falafel of my life" is often said about this place. Order the falafel plate and a side of grape leaves for less than \$10.

**Building on Bond**, 112 Bond Street. The food here isn't nearly as great as the free WiFi (which attracts every freelance writer in the neighborhood) and the occasional standup comedy nights. Well, except the truffled mac 'n' cheese.

**Blue Marble Ice Cream**, 420 Atlantic Avenue. Organic, but pricey ice cream in an adorable spot. You'll want to take home a photo of their Golden Guernsey cow, Frosty.

**Brooklyn Fare**, 200 Schermerhorn Street. This 6,000-square-foot gourmet supermarket has prepared foods, fancy cakes, and imported cheeses, but the best thing about it is that it's right across from the Hoyt-Schermerhorn subway station.

**The Brooklyn Inn**, 148 Hoyt Street. Chances are, if you're approached near the Bergen Street station by someone looking for Hoyt Street, they want to end up here. The carved

wooden bar was delivered here from Germany in the 1870s, relics from Prohibition are still around, and nothing but beer is served at this more-than-a-century-year-old bar.

**Camp**, 179 Smith Street. You'll find many of the neighborhood's restaurant workers here after their late shifts, most likely roasting marshmallows and making S'mores by the backyard fireplace.

**Coco Loco**, 139 Smith Street. Here, the owner will dance with you during the Peruvian restaurant's free salsa lessons on Thursday nights. Order a caipirinha to sip between breaks.

**Elberih Deli Corp.**, 196 Bergen Street. A favorite for egg sandwiches and coffee on the way to the beach.

**Hanco's**, 85 Bergen Street. Bánh mì and bubble tea—the best Vietnamese in the neighborhood.

**Hank's Saloon**, 46 Third Avenue. This dive bar, once a popular spot (under a different name) for Boerum Hill's Mohawk residents, has free, live country music on Sunday nights.

**One Girl Cookies**, 68 Dean Street. Mini cookies and cupcakes so good you'll wish they were the size of your hand.

**Pacific Green Gourmet Market**, 151 Court Street. The constantly refreshed display of fresh fruits and veggies will lure you from Trader Joe's across the street. Always has a special sale on pomegranate juice.

**Paisano's Meat Market**, 12 Smith Street. Find organic meats, homemade pasta (and sauce) and surprisingly friendly Italian butchers at this family-owned neighborhood favorite, which has been in the same spot for more than 45 years.

**Sample**, 152 Smith Street. This tapas bar's happy hour (4–8 p.m.), when well drinks are \$5 and beers are just \$3, is the best in a neighborhood that should have a whole lot more of them. Even better, big hunks of cheese are just \$6.

**St. Clair Restaurant**, 93 Smith Street. Above-average diner food and plenty of people-watching are the draws at this historic restaurant, which has been open since 1920, and recently underwent a shiny, new facelift.

**Stir It Up**, 514 Atlantic Avenue. This Caribbean restaurant has a large and loyal following.





*The Horsemen Antiques*

## **SHOPS**

**Acorn**, 323 Atlantic Avenue. Expensive but oh-so-pretty toys, clothes, and books for kids.

**Annie's Blue Ribbon General Store**, 365 State Street. The neighborhood's best spot for gifts, whether you're looking for a Brooklyn Bridge puzzle or a wiffle ball set.

**Artez'n**, 444 Atlantic Avenue. The owner of this shop recently designed Coney Island's famous "Mermaid Parade" T-shirts.

**BookCourt**, 163 Court Street. Neighborhood residents bypass the newer chains to support this family-run bookstore, which often hosts readings by local bestselling authors.

**The Brooklyn Circus**, 150 Nevins Street. Everyone who walks in and out of this store just looks so cool. Also sells Brooklyn-themed T-shirts.

**Darr**, 369 Atlantic Avenue. What a vintage store would be like if a scientist ran it.

**Enamoo**, 109 Smith Street. Industrial flea market finds and "Bruekelen" T-shirts.

**GRDN**, 103 Hoyt Street. Pricy but beautiful accessories and plants— \$15 pot of moss anyone?— for the garden and gardener.

**Homage**, 151 Smith Street. This is the neighborhood skate shop.

**Horseman Antiques**, 351 Atlantic Avenue. Five floors of antiques. Their sign outside is the best on the street.

**Iglesia Del Cristo Vivo Sidewalk Sale**, near the corner of Hoyt Street and Atlantic Avenue. There's someone selling something outside this Presbyterian church just about every day, whether it's a collection of Yanni CDs, a vacuum cleaner, or a half-set of

champagne glasses. The best stuff tends to be out on Fridays and Saturdays, and prices are usually rock-bottom.

**Madina**, 568 Atlantic Avenue. This Muslim parfumerie is a neighborhood favorite for African soaps, herbs, incense, and naturally scented oils.

**Melting Pot**, 492 Atlantic Avenue. Here's where you'll find Brooklyn onesies for your baby.

**New York Transit Museum Store**, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street. If you happen to love your neighborhood train, you'll find it emblazoned on everything from socks and makeup bags to Christmas tree ornaments here.

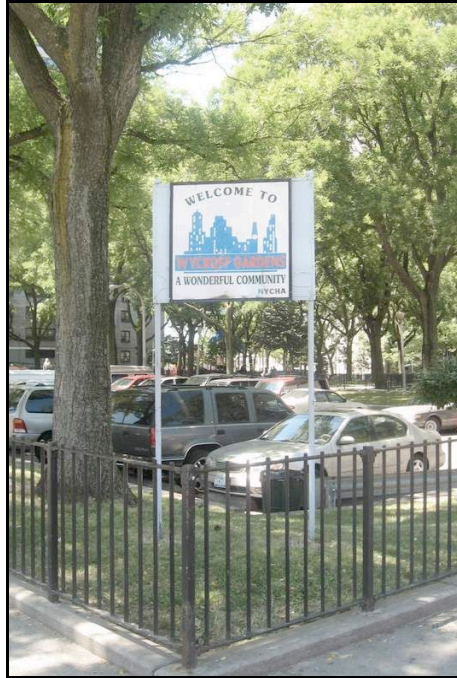
**Re/Dress**, 109 Boerum Place. This plus-size vintage boutique is the first of its kind in the country.

**Salvation Army Thrift Store**, 436 Atlantic Avenue. The shoe selection is particularly good.

**Silk Road**, 313 Atlantic Avenue. The only place to find antique Chinese art and home-furnishings in Brooklyn.

**Tony's Hardware Store**, 181 Smith Street. Find drain stoppers, sunflower seeds, sand paper— most likely, anything you would need for a brownstone renovation— at this tiny Target/Lowe's/Home Depot alternative. Tony and his wife are all business but eager to help.

**Vintage Signage**, 334 Atlantic Avenue. The owner of this tiny shop brings her wares outdoors every day, and every day, passersby stop to see her new collection of signs— from subways, gas stations, streets in Paris— and other flea market finds.



*Wyckoff Gardens*

## **OTHER NOTABLE LANDMARKS**

**108 Wyckoff Street.** Artist Susan Gardner has decorated her row house with an array of sequins, sparkles, mosaics, mirrors, and more. Shiniest house in the neighborhood.

**The Brooklyn House of Detention,** 265 Atlantic Avenue. This jail closed in 2003 because there weren't enough bad guys around to fill it up. Now, the city wants to reopen it and fill it with 759 inmates— and possibly more— making it one of Boerum Hill's most debated topics. The exterior of the building was recently featured in the popular *Saturday Night Live* skit, "Mother Lover," starring Andy Samberg and Justin Timberlake.

**The Gowanus Houses,** located between Wyckoff, Douglass, Bond and Hoyt streets. Completed in 1949, this more than twelve-acre complex incorporates fourteen buildings, the tallest of which is fourteen stories high. There are 1,134 apartments here, housing an estimated 2,836 residents. In 1994, thirteen-year-old Nicholas Heyward was shot and killed by a housing police officer in the Gowanus Houses while he was playing cops and robbers with his friends.

**"Lady Barrow Tours to Europe" and "Romantic Times Magazine" Signs,** 55 Bergen Street. These signs adorn the real-life office of Kathryn Falk, who is founder and CEO of *Romantic Times Magazine*, which reviews paperback romance novels. She was given the title "Lady of Barrow" after moving to the village of Barrow (in the county of Suffolk) in England.

**Wyckoff Gardens,** located between Third Avenue, Nevins, Wyckoff and Baltic streets. Opened in 1966, Wyckoff Gardens includes three buildings containing 528 apartments, housing 1,226 people.



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**About the author**

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