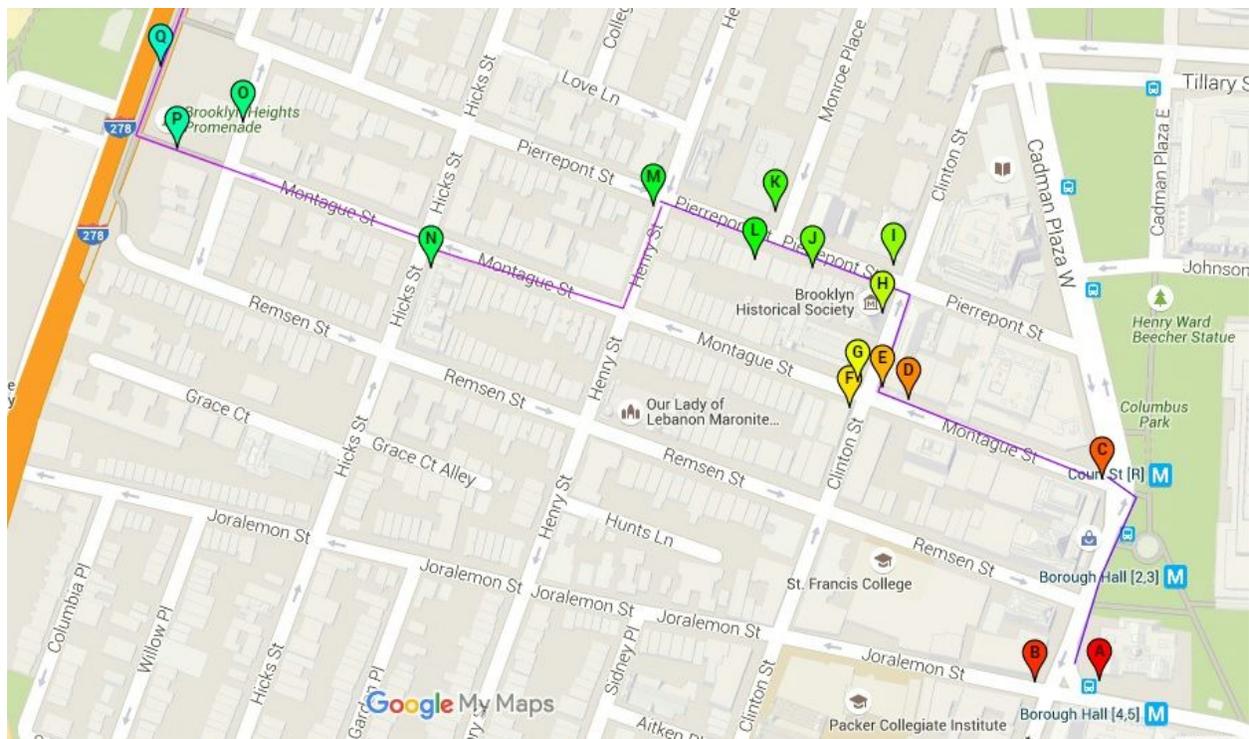


This self-guided tour can be used as a things to see in Brooklyn Heights guide. Brooklyn Heights is one of Brooklyn's oldest neighborhoods and is often referred to as America's first suburb. Enjoy a stroll through its tree lined streets, visit its historic churches and synagogues and enjoy one of the best views of Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty from the neighborhood's popular promenade. Check out our full list of [free, self-guided New York walking tours](#). Also, after finishing this tour, it's a good idea to walk across the [Brooklyn Bridge](#). The entrance to the bridge is at the very end of this tour.

**(Stop A)** - Start your self guided Brooklyn Heights tour at **Brooklyn Borough Hall** (1847). Until 1898, when the City of Brooklyn consolidated with the City of New York, this elegant Greek Revival building served as Brooklyn's City Hall and housed the offices of the Mayor, the City Council a courtroom and a jail. Today it holds the offices of the Brooklyn Borough President and his staff as well as the Brooklyn Visitor's Center.

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**(Stop B)** - Head away from the Brooklyn Borough Hall plaza and walk toward Court Street. Before crossing Court Street, stop and look way up to your left and you will see



the lavish aged-green copper cupolas of the Beaux-Arts style **Temple Bar Building** (1901) at the corner of Court Street and Joralemon Street. At 13-stories high, it was Brooklyn's tallest building for over a decade. In 1918, a simpler but slightly taller building was constructed at **32 Court Street** (corner of Court and Montague Streets) which – at 22

stories high -- took the title as Brooklyn's first true skyscraper. In 2011, these 2 buildings together with several others in the neighborhood became part of a new landmark district known as the "Brooklyn Historic Skyscraper District". The beautiful and historic buildings in this district that sit on prime real estate are no longer at risk of being torn down in favor of the generic skyscrapers rising rapidly throughout downtown Brooklyn.



**(Stop C) - Former Headquarters of the Brooklyn Dodgers** - Probably the coolest things to see in Brooklyn Heights for fans of American baseball. The corner of Montague Street and Cadman Plaza West is a sacred spot for baseball fans. The Brooklyn Dodgers'

office was located here in a 10-story building which was subsequently torn down and replaced by the current building housing TD Bank. It was here in 1947 that the Brooklyn Dodgers' president and general manager Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson to the team, making him the first African-American player in major league

baseball. On the side of the building is a plaque commemorating this important moment in American Civil Rights history.



**(Stop D) - Bank Row** - Head west along Montague Street. You'll notice many small bank branches in bland modern buildings, but 100 years ago Montague Street was a hub for Brooklyn's most prestigious banking institutions who commissioned the construction of grand buildings befitting their status. **The People's Trust** building (1904), now home to a local branch of Citibank, was designed by the firm of Mowbray & Uffinger and it combines elements of Greek, Roman and Renaissance architecture.

**(Stop E)** - Next to it is **The Brooklyn Trust Company** building (1915), now a Chase bank. This neo-renaissance masterpiece designed by York & Sawyer was modeled on a 17th century palace in Verona, Italy. Look up at the top of the bank to see simple frieze panels inscribed with the names of sections of Brooklyn served by the Brooklyn Trust Company: "Breucklyn-New Lots-Red Hook-Greenpoint-Flatbush-Wallabout." If the bank is open, step inside to see the captivating interior with its enormous vaulted ceiling, three massive bronze chandeliers, grand arched windows, and a floor of intricately patterned marble mosaic. The inside looks much like it did 100 years ago because the Landmarks Preservation Commission granted both the exterior *and* interior of the bank landmark status meaning that there can be no unnecessary alterations to the building's original design and décor.





**(Stop F)** - Catty-corner you will see the **Franklin Trust** building (1891) a Romanesque revival 10 story building which was converted into condominiums in 2009. As of 2014, a 1,200 square foot 2 bedroom/2 bathroom apartment will set you back \$4,000 a month.

**(Stop G) - St Ann's and the Holy Trinity Church** - This neo-Gothic jewel was designed by Minard LaFever, known for his Gothic revival churches around the Northeast United States. Four of his structures have been designated National Historic Landmarks including the Holy Trinity Church. This

ornamental church has a vaulted roof which was originally topped by a 275-foot tower making the church the most visible landmark in Brooklyn at that time and ships looked to the church steeple to navigate the harbor. The steeple was removed in 1906 when it was feared that it might crumble and fall due to the construction of the newly developed underground subway trains. The original Holy Trinity congregation dissolved in the 1950s and the church lay vacant until 1969 when the nearby congregation of St. Ann's, formed in 1778, purchased the building. The St. Ann's congregation decided to keep the spirit of the church's original congregation alive by including Holy Trinity in the official building name. Inside there is an elaborate suite of 54 stained glass windows designed by Jay Bolton who was way ahead of Tiffany! The windows are the very first stained glass windows installed in a church in America. They are considered so significant in American art that one suite of windows was removed and is on permanent display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**(Stop H) - Brooklyn Historical Society and Museum** (1881). This Queen Anne style building houses the largest collection of Brooklyn historical documents in the United States. The architect, George B. Post, was a dominant figure in late 1800s architecture. His most well-known buildings in New York City are the New York Stock

Exchange and the first Williamsburg Savings Bank. Sculptor Olin Levi Warner lined the



upper facade of the building with richly detailed terra cotta busts of innovators throughout history.

Looking down at you on the Clinton Street side are, from left to right, Johannes Gutenberg, Ludwig van Beethoven, Michelangelo and William Shakespeare. Turn the corner onto Pierrpont Street. On this side of the building there are two busts, Benjamin Franklin (without his spectacles)

and Christopher Columbus. Above the entrance to the building are two busts, a Norseman and a Native American. Working with terra cotta allowed Levi to sculpt delicate features on the busts and if you stare deep into their eyes you may get the feeling that they are staring right back at you.

**(Stop I) - St. Ann's School (1906).** This was formerly the Crescent Athletic Club House catering to the elite gentlemen of Brooklyn and beyond. Like many other clubhouses of that time, women and minorities were banned from joining. Today the building houses a highly selective and progressive school founded in 1965. Among the famous alumni are actress Jennifer Connelly, writer and actress Lena Dunham and musician Michael Diamond of the Beastie Boys.

As you continue on Pierrpont Street you will see that the street signs are brown instead of green, which indicates that the street is part of a landmarked district. In 1965, Brooklyn Heights was the first neighborhood in New York City to be given landmark status.

**(Stop J) - First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn (1944)**

Brooklyn was long known as the City of Churches for its many beautiful steepled houses of worship and Brooklyn Heights has its fair share of them. This neo-Gothic beauty (image



right) was also designed by Minard Lafever a year prior to his masterpiece Holy Trinity around the corner.

**(Stop K) - New York Appellate Division Court House (1936).** This squat limestone building looks somewhat out of place among the neo-gothic churches, Queen Anne houses and earthy brownstone homes of the neighborhood. But size isn't everything! This small courthouse serves 10 New York counties, making it the busiest appellate court in the nation.



**(Stop L) - 102 Pierrepont Street.** This unremarkable apartment building had some remarkable tenants: 20<sup>th</sup> century American authors Norman Mailer and Arthur Miller. Mailer lived here briefly with his parents upon his return from fighting in World War II. It was here that he began writing his first novel, the controversial but critically acclaimed *The Naked and the Dead*. Miller (*Death of a Salesman*) also lived in the building when he was just starting out. Though stories of a bitter rivalry have no basis, according to the book *Literary Brooklyn*, Mailer once said of Miller after having met him near the mailboxes, "I can remember thinking, 'This guy's never going anywhere.'"

**(Stop M) - Herman Behr Mansion (1888).**

This stunning Romanesque Revival building designed by Frank Freeman was the private family home of Herman Behr, a wealthy industrialist. Behr's son Karl, a renowned tennis pro, survived the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. In 1919 the family relocated to upstate



New York and the building was purchased, expanded and converted into the Palm Hotel, an addition to the Heights' small but successful hotel industry. By the 1940s the neighborhood had taken a turn for the worse and was no longer attracting tourists, let alone people of wealth. The hotel transitioned into a brothel for some time and in 1961 went in the completely opposite direction becoming a residence hall for Franciscan monks. In 1977, the Heights was once again attracting up and coming professionals and the Behr Mansion was bought by new owners who converted the building into rental apartments.



**(Stop N) - Hotel Bossert (1909).** This former hotel was known as "the Waldorf-Astoria of Brooklyn." It was here that the Brooklyn Dodgers' celebrated their only World Series victory in 1955. The Italian Renaissance Revival-style building had a glamorous two-level restaurant on the roof that provided diners with a breathtaking view of Manhattan. Like the Palm Hotel, the Bossert also suffered from the decline of the neighborhood and was converted into an apartment building whose owner let fall into disrepair. In 1983, the Jehovah's

Witnesses, whose headquarters were located in nearby Dumbo, purchased and renovated the Bossert to be used as a residence hall and hotel for their missionaries. In 2013, the Jehovah's Witnesses moved their headquarters to Warwick, NY and they have been selling off millions of dollars' worth of property acquired over the course of a century. As part of the exodus, the Witnesses sold the Bossert for a rumored \$90 million. The buyers are hotel developers and the Bossert will re-open as a boutique hotel and once again have a rooftop restaurant.

**(Stop O) - No. 2 & 3 Pierrpont Place.** Hezekiah Pierrpont, the 'father' of Brooklyn Heights, kept the best land for himself and his son Henry built a mansion at the intersection of their family's self-named streets but it was demolished in 1946 and

replaced with a playground. The Pierrponts were 'willing' to share their cul de sac, and in 1857 two of Brooklyn's most distinguished families moved into the twin Italianate style mansions at. In No. 2 lived Alfred Treadway White, a hugely successful businessman and philanthropist whose cause was to design and promote public housing for the poor that was "humane", with light, fresh air and green space. No. 3 Pierrpont Place was occupied by the Low family, first by Abiel Abbot Low who made a fortune on the Chinese tea trade and then his son Seth, who served as the mayor of Brooklyn and later, as mayor of the newly consolidated New York City.

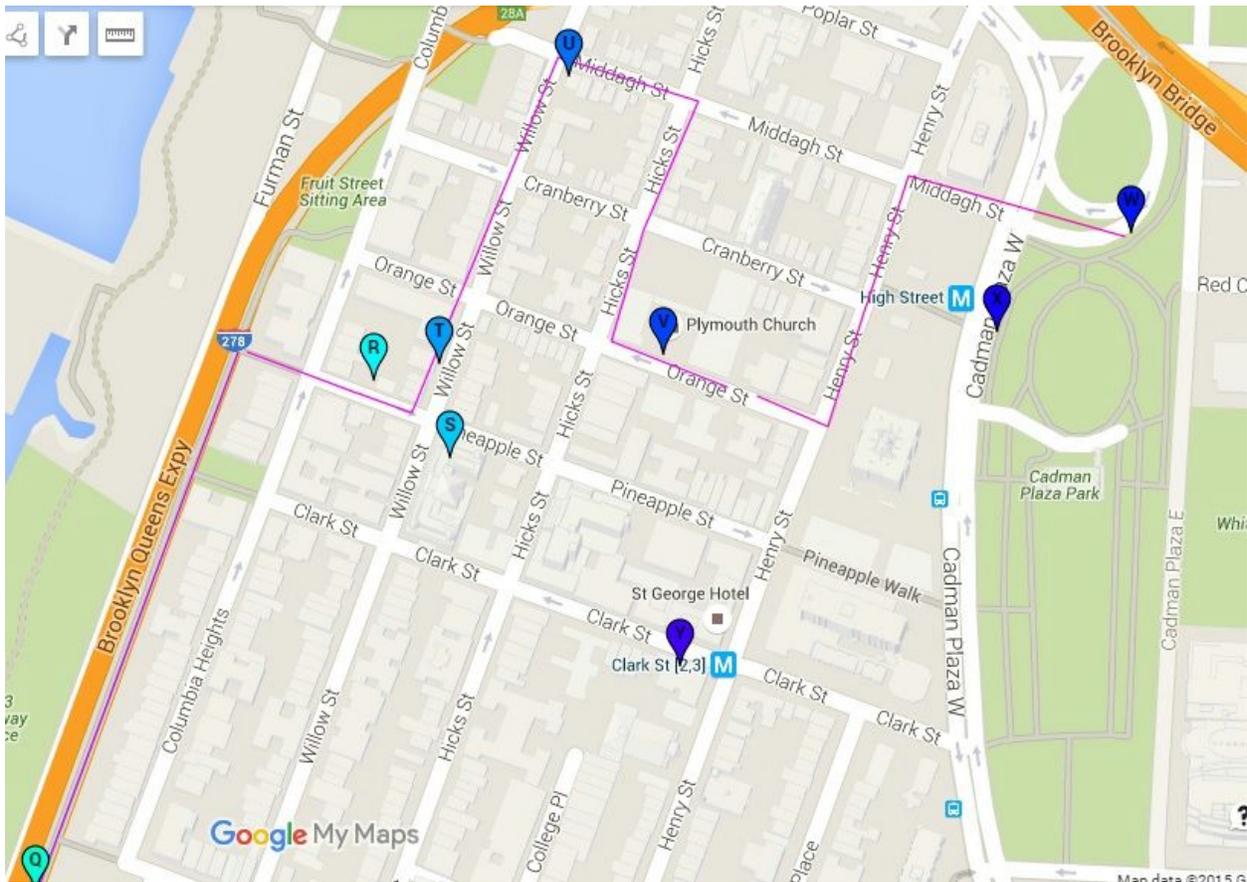
**(Stop P) - "Four Chimneys"** On your way onto the Promenade, you will pass a small gated patch of green with a flag pole and large rock with a plaque. You are standing at



one of the most important but lesser known sites in American History. A house called "Four Chimneys" once stood here and it served as General George Washington's Brooklyn headquarters in the first weeks of the Revolutionary War. His permanent headquarters were in lower Manhattan, just a short sailboat trip

across the East River. It was at Four Chimneys that Washington made one of the most significant decisions of the war. With British troops closing in on the Patriot soldiers stationed in the Brooklyn Heights area, Washington decided that a stealth evacuation during the night was the only way to avoid a probable defeat and massive casualties. On the night of August 29, 1776 in silence and under the cover of a sudden heavy fog, 7000 soldiers were shuttled from Brooklyn to Manhattan on anything that could float. The undertaking was so successful that the nearby British troops knew nothing of the evacuation until the following morning. Had this retreat failed, Brooklynites might be speaking with a British accent today!

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**(Stop Q) - The Brooklyn Heights Promenade (1950).** It's hard to believe that a public space so spectacular was an unplanned by-product of modernization and the need for an expressway to connect Brooklyn to Queens. The City's original proposed route would have

run through the heart of Brooklyn Heights, whose stately 100 year old brownstones were starting to crumble and the neighborhood was on the verge of becoming a slum. But heavy opposition from locals and preservationists forced the City to reconsider the

placement of the expressway. Instead the expressway was built into the bluff that runs along the waterfront and the 1,826 foot long Promenade was built on top.

**(Stop R) - 13 Pineapple Street (1830).** This private residence is a pristine example of a Federal style house, a style that was in fashion in the 1820s-30s in early American cities like Boston, Philadelphia and New York. Federal style houses typically are 2 ½ stories tall with an attic space ventilated by ‘dormers’, which are windows that project from a sloping roof. With 3 stories and an added modern garage, 13 Pineapple is unusually large. It does however have the common elements of federal houses: a raised foundation, double-hung sash windows arranged in symmetrical rows, clapboard siding and shutters.



**(Stop S) - Leverich Towers (1928).** This was the last of the great Brooklyn Heights hotels to be built before the neighborhood took a turn for the worse. It was designed by



Starrett and Van Vleck more famous for their Manhattan department stores: Lord and Taylor, Saks 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bloomingdale’s. The Leverich played host to the Brooklyn Dodgers who stayed their during home games. Be sure to look up at the Venetian-style towers that are now enjoyed by Jehovah’s Witnesses missionaries who are lucky enough to be land a room in this

residence hall.

**(Stop T) - 70 Willow Street** (circa 1830s) This yellow brick house is one of the largest remaining Greek Revival style houses in New York City. Its original occupant was a prominent lawyer. After changing hands a number of times, it was bought in the 1950s by the award-winning Broadway stage set designer Oliver Smith (*West Side Story, On The Town, My Fair Lady*). The most well-known tenant was Truman Capote. Contrary to popular belief, Capote never owned this house. As a fledgling writer in the 1950s, he surely could not afford such a marvelous house (now valued at \$12 million). He was however very fortunate to have been friends with Smith. Smith was popular in the 1950s artistic crowd and often had parties and guests visiting from out of town. When Capote asked Smith if he could stay for a few weeks while apartment hunting, Smith naturally said yes. Capote showed up – and stayed for 10 years! Smith gave Capote his own private studio on the basement level where he wrote *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.



**(Stop U) - 24 Middagh Street** (1824) This is the oldest house in Brooklyn Heights and though other homes on Middagh street are dated circa 1820s, only 24 Middagh has remained unaltered from its original state. Along Hicks Street you see the side of the house with its former carriage house on the right (now a separate apartment unit), a garden area and then the back of the house. The front of the house reveals just how perfect an example of a Federal style house this is from the dormer windows right down to the boot scrapers on the sides of the stairs leading to the entrance.

**(Stop V) - Plymouth Church (1849)** This church was a hub of the abolitionist movement in the 1850s and 60s, with a large and influential congregation vehemently opposed to slavery led by a charismatic preacher, Henry Ward Beecher. He was the



most popular and controversial Christian minister in the United States for more than three decades, yet Despite his fame in his own time, very few people today have heard of him. You may have heard of his sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Plymouth Church became known as the Grand Central

Depot of the Underground Railroad because it provided refuge to so many runaway slaves from the south. In the peaceful courtyard stands a statue of Beecher flanked by two runaway slaves sculpted by Gutzon Borglum best known for creating Mount Rushmore.

This completes your tour of Brooklyn Heights, one of our favorite neighborhoods! Just a few blocks away is the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge pedestrian walkway. We HIGHLY recommend that you walk over the Bridge as a perfect way to end your Brooklyn Heights tour. Be sure to check out our [Guide to the Brooklyn Bridge](#) which will help you make the most out of your walk to Manhattan.