

<http://www.nycago.org/Organs/NYC/html/NorwegianSeamens.html>

The first Norwegian Seamen's Church was started in New York on July 1st 1878, although the Seamen's Mission itself dates back to 1864. Seamen's missionaries were active in New York at several locations for a number of years even before that time. But it was in 1878 that the Seamen's Mission in Bergen sent Ole Bugge Asperheim to establish a church in New York. He bought a large church on Pioneer Street in Brooklyn, which became the home for the church for the next 50 years.



In 1928, the church moved to the former Westminster Presbyterian Church, located on First Place at Clinton Street in Brooklyn. It was a big, beautiful Romanesque building from 1856, and popular with the large Norwegian community in the Bay Ridge area, as well as with sailors from Norwegian ships in the Brooklyn docks. Then came the Depression in the thirties, when many Norwegian sailors were without food and shelter. The church was there to help them, especially "Tante" Klara Brevik, who became well-known among sailors around the world during that period. During World War II the church – in many different ways – helped thousands of people who were separated from their families in occupied Norway. After the war, the church continued to grow, and peaked in the sixties, when yearly visits to the church were over 100,000, and ship

visits to New York area harbors were over 1500 a year. But by the early seventies the number of Norwegian ships calling in to New York fell to under 400. With fewer Norwegian crews, and shorter stays, it became difficult for seamen to visit the church, and it became more important for the pastors to visit the ships, instead.

At the same time, the colony in Brooklyn began to disperse, with families moving to the suburbs and newly arriving Norwegians settling in other parts of the metropolitan area. Ships rarely docked in Brooklyn any longer, and the beautiful Brooklyn church became too big and expensive. The heating bill alone amounted to over \$25,000 per year. That's when the move to Manhattan was recommended ... as a more central point from which to serve the area. The first move, in 1983, was to the brownstone building on 49th Street at 2nd Avenue. There the number of visitors gradually increased from only 11,000 in 1985, to over 25,000 in 1989, at which point the church building became too small! So it was decided to sell the single brownstone on 49th Street, and buy two adjoining brownstones on 52nd Street, with the plan of converting them to a better and bigger church.

The church was originally a home away from home for the many Norwegian sailors manning ships that carried goods and passengers around the world, and it still is so today. As the Norwegian Church Abroad, it is also a welcoming haven for many young students and au pairs, and for business people here on long or short assignments. It serves also as a cultural center with performances and exhibits by artists of Scandinavian background. A connection with their roots, culture and religion is important for people away from home – and Norwegians can find it at the Seamen's Church.

<http://maggieblanck.com/Brooklyn.html>

Churches in "Red Hook", Brooklyn

In the 1893 and 1898 directories for Brooklyn there were three listings for Norwegian churches in Red Hook.

- The Norwegian church at Van Brunt and William Street, Jacob Bo, pastor.

This church building still exists and is being used as a residence at 111 Pioneer Street (formerly Williams Street)

This was the Norwegian Seamen's church. The Norwegian Seaman's Church mainly catered to seamen but also ministered to the immigrant community. The church moved to 33 First Place (Corner of Clinton and Henry) in 1928. It is currently a condo.

See images of both of these buildings below.



The Norwegian Seamen's Mission in New York dates to 1864. In 1878 The Seamen's Mission in Bergen Norway send Ole Bugge Asperheim to establish a Seamen's church in New York. The first church was at 111 Pioneer Street in Red Hook Brooklyn. It was the home of the Seamen's church for 50 years.

In July 2009 Lars Nilsen informed me of the location of this church. It is currently used as a residence.