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**A BACKGROUND STUDY OF HISTORIC LAND USE
OF THE GATEWAY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA,
STATEN ISLAND UNIT**

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the Interior.

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Introduction

The study of historic land use of the Gateway NRA, Staten Island Unit was conducted under Contract number IFB-NARO-9-0047 Boston Regional Office, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The purpose of this study was fourfold: (1) to provide an historical narrative of the land use of the park property from the 17th century to the present; (2) to predict, through documentary research, where known or potential historical archaeological features and/or sites are located; (3) to draft maps showing the documented historic structures on each section of the Gateway, and (4) to include an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources, cartographic material, and print, postcard and photographic collections.

The primary goal of the study was to present a documented report of historic land use of the Staten Island Unit. The report was designed to present both an accurate chronology of the area's historical developments from the 17th through the 20th century and socio-economic political framework for understanding these events. Some of the historical developments were only important in terms of Staten Island's history while others reflected changes or

events that had taken place in Manhattan, in New York State or in the United States in general. We did not provide detailed information on the historic structures, instead we focused on the people and/or events that led to the construction and demolition of these buildings.

This property should not be viewed as a whole unit, but rather as five distinct sections each with their own history. Therefore, this report is divided into five chapter-like sections, i.e., Fort Wadsworth, the Beaches, Miller Field, the Britton Cottage and Great Kills Park. Each section contains all the historical and archaeological data, maps, prints and photographs that pertain to that unit.

The land in each of these five areas was developed (over the last 300 years) in a variety of ways ranging from private to commercial and military uses. The maps in the report show the major documented historic structures. There were colonial buildings on Gateway land, which do not appear on the maps because we do not have their exact locations.¹ Furthermore, we have had

¹In the documents it is noted that there were structures on this property but their locations are not given.

to consider all the features that we know existed, such as wells and privies, but were not mentioned in the written records. Without being too general, we tried to predict (on the bases of our documentary research) where the archaeologically sensitive zones are located.

The report contains two bibliographies; one is simply a bibliography of the works cited in the report and the other is an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources, cartographic, print, postcard and photographic collections pertaining to the Gateway. The annotated bibliography is designed to be used as a guide for anyone (especially park interpreters) who wishes to do further research. In order to have a comprehensive list of documentary material on the Gateway, we included all sources that were readily available. Unfortunately, some secondary source books and articles, that have fairly wide circulation (in the island's libraries) contain many inaccuracies. We felt that these sources should be included in the bibliography to alert the researcher to their flaws.

In the course of the research we tried to use primary sources whenever possible. When doing the

research on Fort Wadsworth and Miller Field during the military years, we did not have access to any of the government records.² We, therefore, had to rely mainly on secondary sources. We found that the history reports issued by the Public Information Office at Fort Wadsworth consistently contained erroneous data, especially on the Colonial Period. In checking this information with other secondary sources we found further discrepancies in names, dates, locations and events (especially for the Dutch era). In some cases one author would cite inaccurate data from other secondary sources. A number of these sources painted a romantic but untrue picture of Staten Island's early history.³ In reviewing the sources on Staten Island's history, especially the Fort Wadsworth material, it was a slow process of sorting facts from fiction. By including all of these sources (the romantic histories, the ones marred by errors and the well researched articles) with our comments on their specific values and flaws, the annotated bibliography should be a useful guide.

²These records are in the National Archives in Washington. We did not have money in the budget for out of town research.

³Hugh Powell's manuscript, "History of Government on Staten Island, 1496-1898", is a meticulously researched report. It is an excellent reference.

Fort Wadsworth

Fort Wadsworth is the northernmost section of the Staten Island Unit. From the lowlying plains of South Beach the land area of Fort Wadsworth rises to an average of 130' above sea level. This high ground juts out toward Long Island forming the Narrows (see figure # 1). From the very first sightings of Staten Island by European explorers the strategic importance of Fort Wadsworth has been its primary characteristic.

The Dutch and later the English maintained military outposts on Fort Wadsworth. When the shipping trade and its corresponding problems of privateering developed, the vantage point at Fort Wadsworth became a semaphore relay and lookout. The lookout station is reputed to have warned of the coming of the British at the start of the Revolution and subsequently watched the last of them leave when the war was won.

Guarding the entrance to one of the more important cities and trading centers of young America, a continual effort to effectively fortify and strengthen the defenses at the narrows was made and was continued through the major portion of the 20th century.

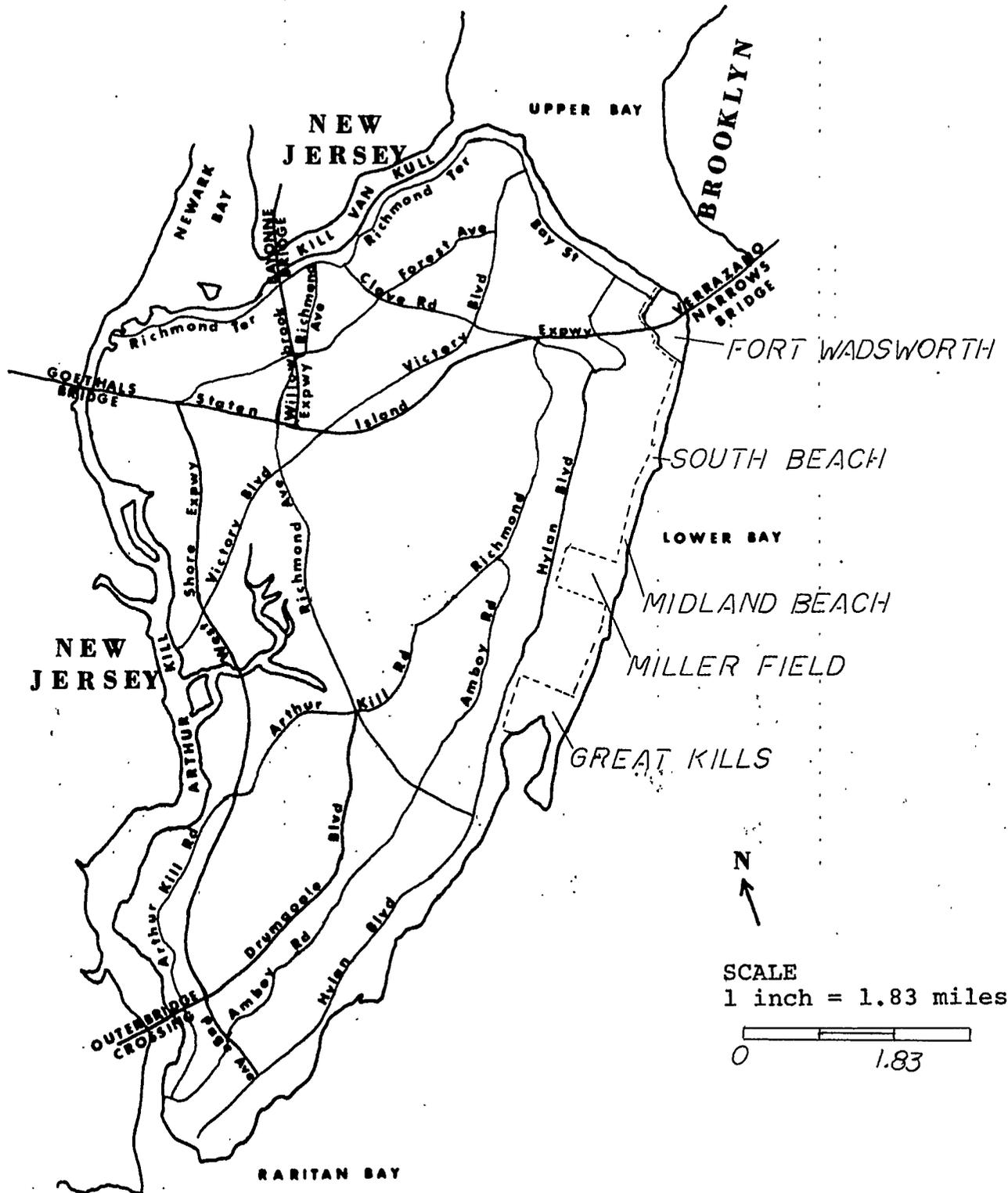


Figure 1 : A map of the Gateway property on Staten Island. Map was drawn by S. Baugher-Perlin and F. Bluefeld.

The history of Fort Wadsworth, military and otherwise can be explored with an eye to show its evolution from a meager Dutch outpost to placement of the Nike missiles. The historic land use of the military reservation at Fort Wadsworth is the most complex of all the Gateway property.

The historical importance of Fort Wadsworth is evident in the records of colonial Staten Island. Some accounts place the first settlement on or near the military reservation. Unfortunately many of these articles present a romantic but inaccurate account of the settling of Staten Island. Although the Dutch were granting patroons on Staten Island as early as 1629, settlement of the Island was sporadic and short lived¹ (Powell 1979; Leng and Davis, 1930). The first notable attempts to colonize Staten Island were made at the Watering Place, believed to be in the present day section known as Tompkinsville, which is roughly 3 miles north of the Fort (Leng & Davis, 1930 Vol. I:92-93). The history pamphlets from the Fort Wadsworth Public Information Office state that the settlers used the high ground on the Fort property as a lookout over the Narrows. There is no documented proof to substantiate this claim.

¹The early Staten Island settlements were destroyed by the Leni Lenape Indians.

Furthermore, the major threat to the settlement was from the Leni Lenape Indians on the island, not from foreign attack from the sea. Hills in Tompkinsville that were only a five to ten minute walk from the settlement provide an excellent vantage point to view both the surrounding land and the harbor. It is unlikely that any blockhouse or lookout existed at Fort Wadsworth in 1630 to 1640.

Peter Stuyvesant notes that in 1662 a hamlet was established which was about a half hours walk from the Narrows (Powell 1979:211). Seventeenth and eighteenth century maps of Staten Island indicate the location of this community, known as Oude Dorp or Dover (see figure # 2). On April 26, 1664 in a Letter from Director Stuyvesant to the directors of the West India Company he states:

"A hamlet, not yet named, was begun on Staten Island about two years ago and has now about 12-14 families of Dutch and French from the Palatine; it lies about half an hours walk from the Narrows... Both these places (referring to New Utrecht on Long Island and Oude Dorp, Staten Island) were provided with commodious blockhouses as a defense against the attacks of the savages last summer... the hamlet on Staten Island, being the weakest and too far to be relieved in time is garrisoned with ten soldiers for its greater safety" (Powell, 1979:238).

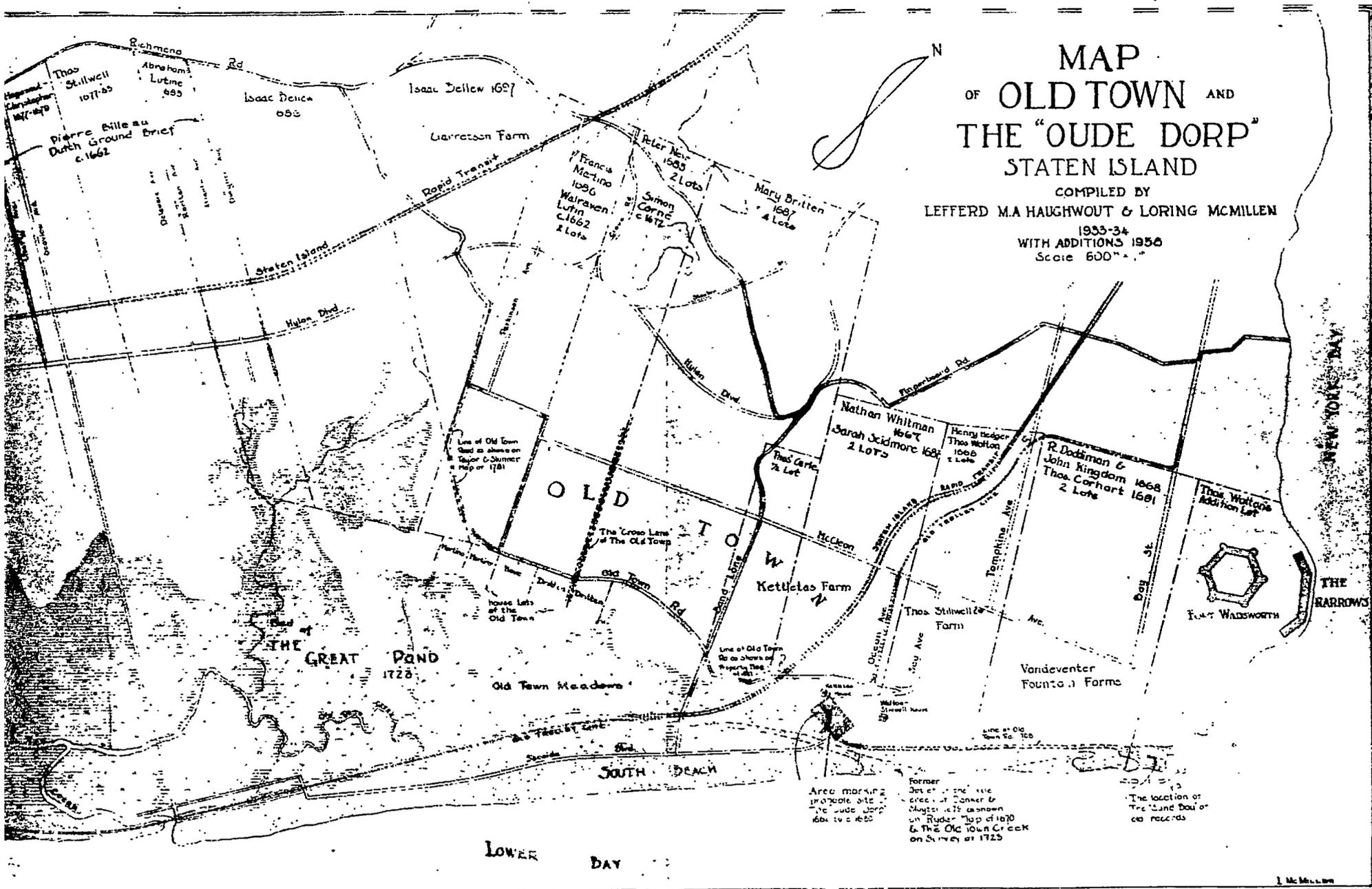


Figure 2: Map of Old Town (McMillen, 1958), This map contains data from: Ryder's Map, 1670; Taylor and Skinner's Map, 1781; Tuttle's Map, 1921; 20th century street map and atlases, and some some 18th century land surveys.

The description of the blockhouse suggests that it was a log cabin. Each blockhouse was also provided with 2-3 pieces of ordinance (Powell, 1979:237). An accurate record of the placement of the blockhouse could not be found. The most accurate description states that the blockhouse was convenient to the settlement (Powell, 1979:237). Logic would place it on high, commanding ground, most likely toward the center of the current military reservation.

In 1961 a group of local amateur archaeologists carried out an excavation on an area located at the southwestern corner of the military reservation.² From the map drawn by the participants in this dig (Anderson and Sainz 1965) the excavation appears to be on the border of Fort Wadsworth and South Beach (see figure #3). Significant amounts of 17th and 18th century artifacts

²Albert J. Anderson and the majority of the people who participated in the dig with him are still active amateur archaeologists living on Staten Island. Although an article was written about the excavation, no formal field records or maps were deposited with Staten Island Institute or the Staten Island Historical Society. An important step in documenting this work would be to interview these people and record any and all information they can provide.

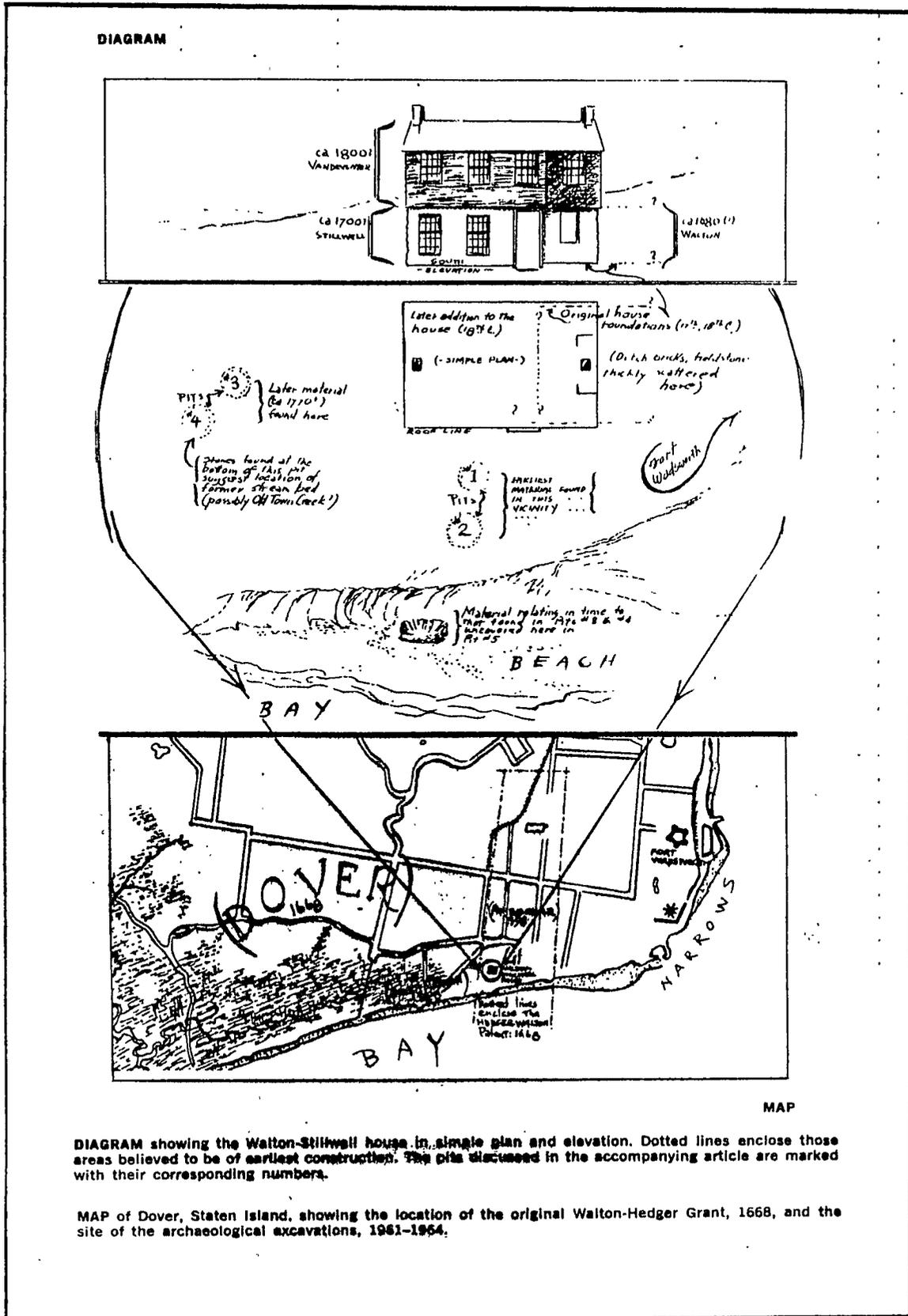


Figure 3 : Diagram of the excavation area at Oude Dorp (Anderson and Sainz, 1965:82).

were uncovered. The archaeological and documentary data both indicate the existence of a 17th century settlement.

In the early 1960's excavation units were placed around the extant Walton House (see figure #3). The house is also shown on a Map of Old Town (see figure #2). A section of this house was built in the late 1600's (Anderson and Sainz, 1965:82, 84). A number of pre-1650 artifacts were unearthed. Anderson and Sainz (1965:94) believe that these Dutch artifacts are not debris from the Walton House and that they can "be linked to Melyn's first attempt at colonization." Some reliable sources, such as Leng and Davis (1930), note that according to oral tradition Melyn established a community in the 1640's near the later community of Oude Dorp. There is no documentary evidence to either support or deny this claim. All we know is that Melyn's settlements were destroyed by Indians (Powell, 1979; Leng and Davis, 1930; Clute, 1877). Archaeological work in the southwestern border of the Fort may be able to resolve this question.³ At this time, all

³Anderson and Sainz left out some crucial data in their report, for example, there is no information regarding what level and context these pre-1650 objects were found. While the house was occupied up through the 20th century, no 19th or 20th century artifacts were mentioned in the report. One wonders how disturbed this area was and whether these pre-1650 artifacts truly represent an early settlement.

we can say with certainty is that in the 1660's there was a community and a blockhouse in this section of the Staten Island Unit.

From the take over by the English in 1664 through the Revolution, New York was spared the military involvement the rest of the colonies were experiencing due mainly to the declared neutrality of the Iroquois Nation (Peckham, 1964:60). The deplorable financial situation of New York, inaction on the part of the privateering French, and the resistance of the English to place a governor in New York all contributed to New York's inaction and lack of formidable defenses (Kamen 1975:144-5).

Concern for the defenses on the island did not progress much beyond the 'blockhouse' throughout the 18th century. On October 12, 1706 the General Assembly of the Colony of New York in a bold attempt at securing the entrance to New York Harbor, passed a bill to levy a 3,000 pound tax for the purposes of fortifying the Narrows.⁴ There is no evidence that the taxes were collected and subsequently put to use. The defenses at the Narrows in the later part of the 18th century consisted of an earth and timber redoubt containing about 12-20 24 pound armaments (Dr. Gilmore, Personal

⁴This information is from the Journal of the General Assembly of New York, 1706:215-216.

communication). The general lack of information about the use of Fort Wadsworth militarily is a strong indication that little or no military activity beyond the basic manning of the post was taking place.⁵

A number of local historians writing on the war years during the Revolution dwell upon the use of Fort Wadsworth as the lookout and first line of defense against the approach of the British army. No documentary evidence is available to substantiate this claim. At that time the Americans possessed 19,000 untrained, undisciplined, untried, amateur soldiers, poorly armed, meagerly equipped and supplied who were led by amateur officers and were divided along the expanse of New Jersey, New York and Long Island (Ward, 1952:209-210). The probability that Staten Island (as inaccessible as it was) would have been defended is very slim. It is no wonder that General Howe and Lord Howe⁶ were able to land 32,000 troops on Staten Island and amass a fleet of over 500 ships in the lower bay with no opposition at all (Ward, 1952:209-210). At this time Staten Island became a staging area for the British troops. A lookout may have been stationed at Fort Wadsworth, although there were no ships to support the American forces and all the ships anchored around the island were

⁵See Hugh Powell's manuscript for more details.

⁶They were brothers

British. The command post for the British forces was set up at the Rose and Crown Tavern in New Dorp, indicating that there were no extensive buildings around the forts to house the commanders. The sudden influx of troops, nearly tripling the population of Staten Island wreaked havoc upon the population (Leng and Davis 1930 Vol. I: 177-183). Every civilian resource was commandeered. Fortunately the bulk of the British troops were to leave a month later for the invasion of Long Island (Clute, 1877:84-86).

Staten Island was to play an uneventful role in the Revolution. It remained under British occupation, and the military investments were minimal. On November 25, 1783 the British evacuated New York and Staten Island. An eyewitness to the departure, recounts the procession of ships leaving through the Narrows, with the high ground of fortifications being lined with jeering crowds. So loud were these demonstrations that one large seventy-four gun ship fired a shot which struck the bank a few feet beneath the place where people were standing (Clute 1877:126). This is reputed to be the last shot of the Revolutionary War.

From the end of the Revolution to the oncoming of the War of 1812 Staten Island's defenses were maintained in much the same manner as before. A lasting peace was not to be had after the Revolution. Constant trouble in the Michigan area and the British impressment of American seamen were foreshadowing the outbreak of war. Daniel D. Tompkins was governor of New York at this time and it was he who initiated the major military buildup to protect the Narrows.

A popular misconception at this time concerns the credit given to Tompkins for actual design and construction of the forts at the Narrows. A mural in Borough Hall, St. George, Staten Island, depicts Tompkins at the construction site. Chief credit for that work, however, should go to Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Williams of the United States Corps of Engineers (Irwin, 1968:131). Restoration of the forts began in 1808 with Lieutenant-Colonel Williams' comprehensive plan for the Defence of the Narrows (Williams' letter to Gov. Tompkins, Oct. 21, 1808). Appropriations from the state budget completely paid for the work on Fort Richmond, now known as Battery Weed.

It is interesting to note that construction of the forts, although a major operation, was conducted as an in-

house military operation. Building materials, laborers, equipment etc. were brought in from military supply depots and arsenals. A major expense of the budget was for dock expenses, further indicating that all materials for construction were arriving from off island by ship. (Clinton's report to Gov. Tompkins, Feb. 16, 1809). Although Staten Island possessed all the raw materials for construction of these forts the state did not take advantage of these resources (Dr. Gilmore, personal communication).

In addition to the increased fortification, a system of relay-signal stations to relay shipping information from Sandy Hook to Staten Island, and then on to the Merchants Exchange in New York City was installed. Consisting of tall poles, the system signaled with white and black balls or kegs that were raised and lowered on ropes (Irwin, 1968:184).

Fort Richmond was completed in the summer of 1810 and the fortification of the yet unnamed fort and batteries was in an advanced state at the time of Gov. Tompkins' address to legislature, Jan. 30, 1810. With constant increases and strength buildups, the defenses at the Narrows were taking on major military importance. The closest these fortifications were to come in participating in the

War of 1812 came on January 22, 1813 when British war vessels were sighted off Sandy Hook. Using the 'telegraph' the city was alerted and the furnaces for heating the cannon balls were made ready. However, the British did not approach or engage the forts (Leng and Davis, 1930:219). In April 1814, \$50,000 was appropriated to complete Fort Tompkins, previously only a temporary earth work. On August 24, 1814 the British burned the capitol at Washington and this spurred the appropriation of another \$50,000 on October 17 (Leng and Davis, 1930:220). With the completion of this work New York Harbor was defended by forts, batteries and blockhouses having a total of 900 cannons.

On Christmas Eve 1814 the Treaty of Ghent officially ended the War of 1812 and began a period in American history sometimes called the 'Thirty Years Peace' (Matloff, 1969:148). Conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars centered world attention in continental Europe. America, therefore, was not menaced by any foreign power until well into the 1830's. One result of this inaction was the neglect of the forts at the Narrows, specifically forts Tompkins and Richmond and the various batteries.

A long process of proposals by the Federal Government requesting the State of New York to cede the fortifications and adjoining military lands began about 1811 under Governor

Tompkins (Gov. Tompkins to Col. Williams, Dec. 29, 1810). On February 6, 1836 the state legislature passed an act entitled "An Act authorizing the sale to the United States of certain lands on Staten Island"; the agreed upon price was \$33, 284.87. Actual transfer of funds for property did not take place until Feb. 1847.⁷ During the interim, correspondence and a series of agreements between state and federal authorities took place. These negotiations led to the upgrading of the defenses prior to the land transfer in 1847.⁸

On April 10, 1841 Captain of Engineers Robert E. Lee was transferred to Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, to oversee the improvements to Forts Hamilton and Lafayette in Brooklyn and Batteries Hudson and Morton on Staten Island (Freeman, 1942: vol. 1: 186). The separate jurisdiction for Fort Tompkins and Fort Richmond by New York State, and Batteries Hudson and Morton by the Federal Government is apparent in 1842 when Captain Lee made an appeal to his supervisor, Colonel George Totten, for the acquisition of Fort Tompkins to better secure the strategically important Batteries Hudson and Morton. (Freeman, 1942, vol. I:189).

⁷Appendix to the Fort Wadsworth public information report titled, "A History of Fort Wadsworth", anom., no date.

⁸Tony P. Wrenn, having had access to records in the National Archives, presents a comprehensive account of the transaction.

Construction of the forts progressed steadily. After 14 years construction was completed and troops were garrisoned in Fort Richmond on August 8, 1861 (see figure #4). Fort Tompkins, still under construction, was completed a few years later.

In the Civil War the forts were garrisoned by a strong force from the 5th Regiment New York Volunteers Artillery (Leng and Davis, 1930:279). As in previous wars, the forts at the Narrows never saw action. Instead, Staten Island served as a staging area for troops being sent to the war zones.

Construction within the walls of the forts and batteries at this time included walls, moats and parapets. Although the surrounding land belonged to the army, it was developed along the lines of park land and was accessible to the public. The military reservation did not extend beyond New York Avenue. A map of Fort Wadsworth in 1874 clearly indicates this limited land area (see figure #5). The majority of this land comprised a steep slope that was unsuitable for civilian construction.

The present reservation name, Fort Wadsworth, was given in 1865. Naming of specific forts and batteries followed in later years. The exact dates and order numbers

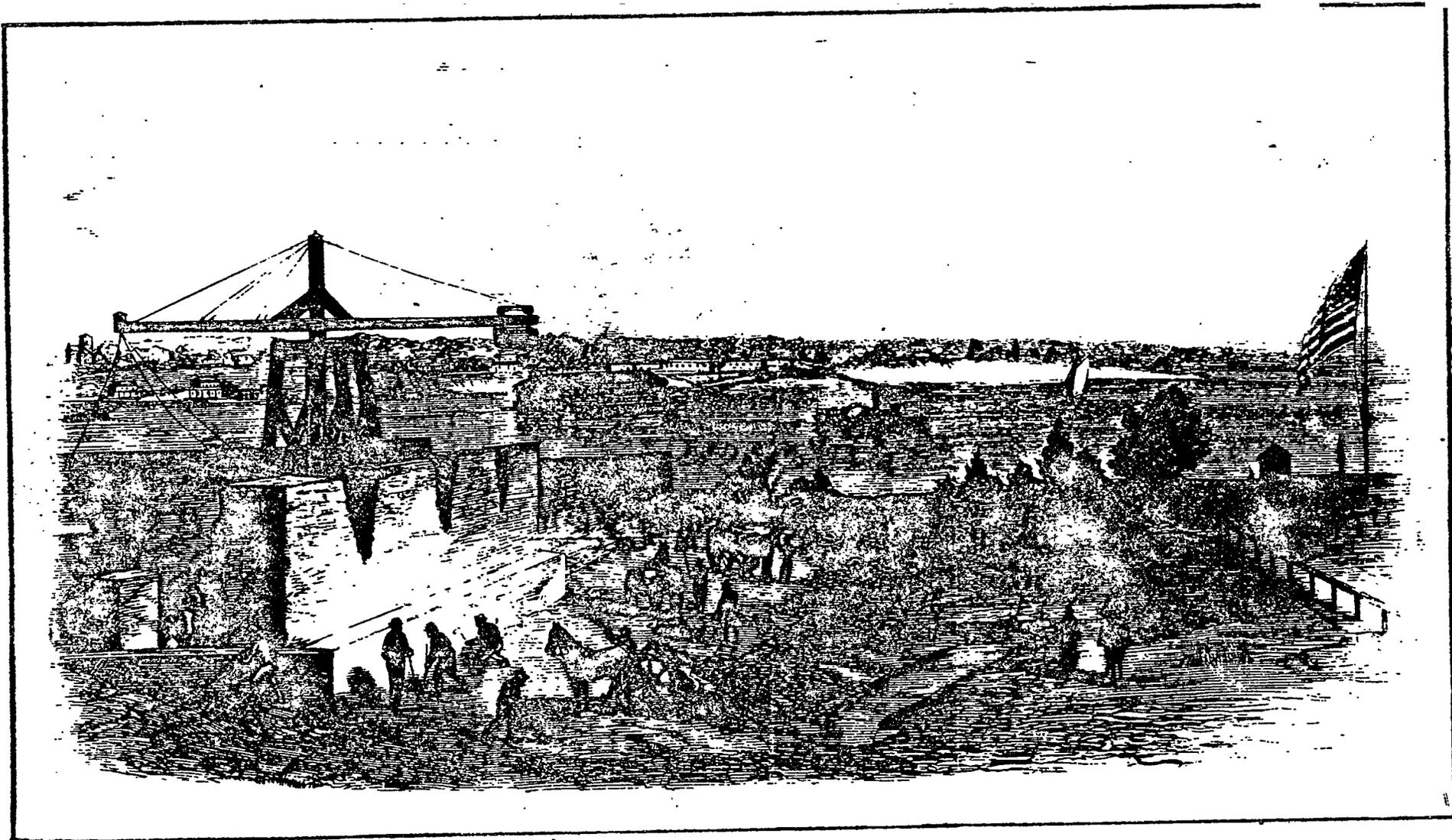
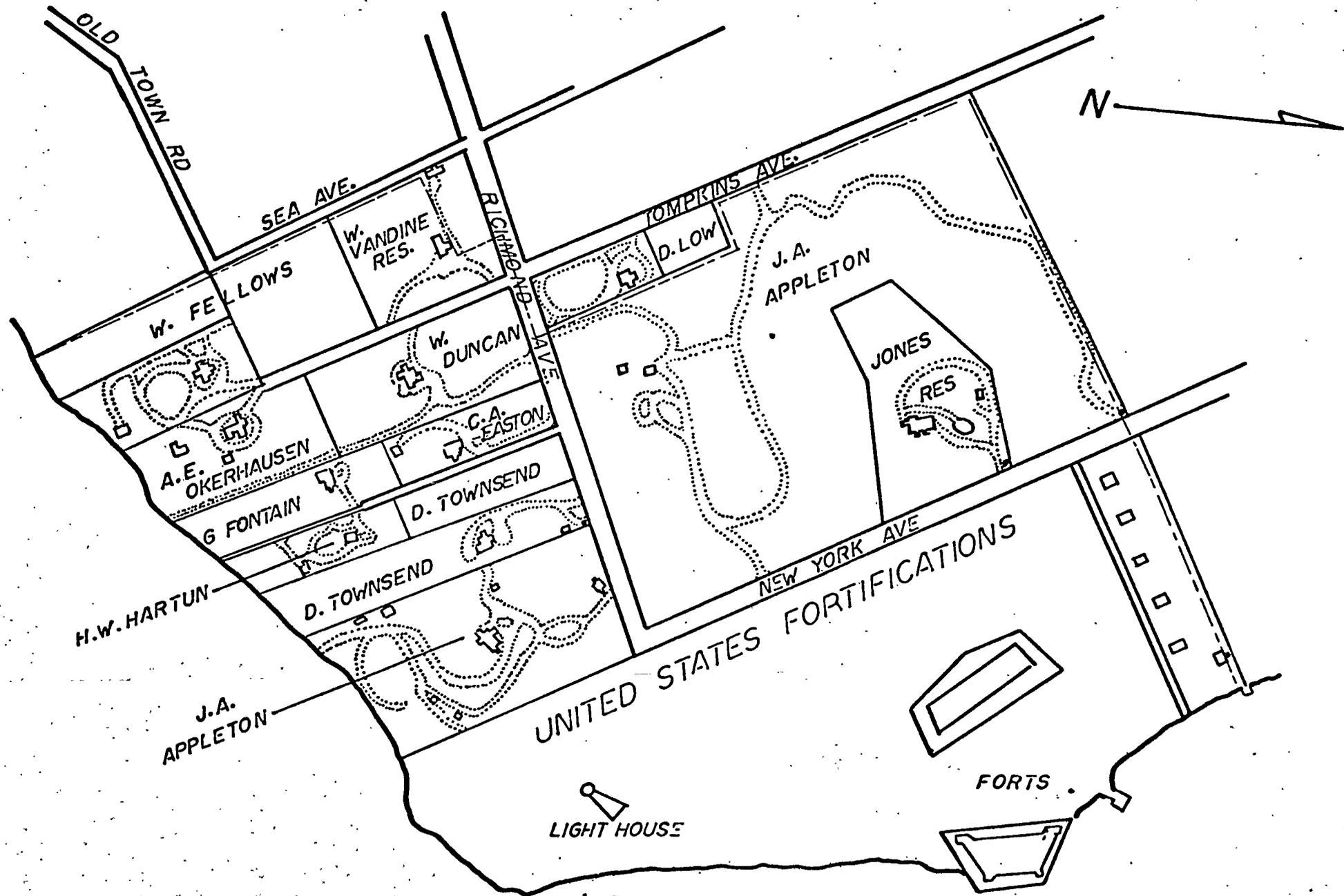
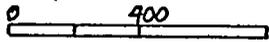


Figure 4 : Drawing of Fort Richmond under construction, 1861 (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Print Collection). Originally published in Leslie's Monthly, June 1861, with the title "View of Fort Lafayette, New York Harbor, looking from Fort Richmond, Staten Island".

FORT WADSWORTH 1874



SCALE 400' = 1 INCH 
 --- CURRENT RESERVATION

BEERS' ATLAS OF STATEN ISLAND
 NEW YORK 1874

Figure 5: A map of Fort Wadsworth in 1874. The estates were later incorporated into the reservation. The dotted line represents the current reservation boundary. The map was adapted from Beer's Atlas of 1874 by F. Bluefeld.

for the naming of the structures are given chronologically in the 1936 "History of Fort Wadsworth", prepared by William G. Walker, Major in the 18th Infantry.

Land patents filed with the county clerk indicate that the Federal Government began an extensive campaign to enlarge the military reservation surrounding the forts just prior to the turn of the century. In 1880 the military reservation comprised some 90 acres and by 1901 it had grown to 226, the current land area (U.S. Military Reservations, National Cemeteries and Military Parks, etc., U.S. Army, 1916).

Fort Wadsworth was enlarged in response to the Spanish American War. The land area annexed by the government was a part of the island known as Arrochar. An 1854 lithograph depicting a birds eye view of the Narrows clearly shows the palatial, exotic estates and manor houses surrounding the forts (see figure #6). Arrochar attracted not only wealthy Staten Island residents who built mansions reminiscent of European villas as their permanent homes (see figure #7) but also wealthy families from the south who built summer estates to escape the south's summer heat.⁹ Descriptions of Arrochar during its height include "...a

⁹ Detailed information on the people who owned these estates was beyond the scope of this study. Further research could be done on this community and on the circumstances surrounding the government acquisition of this land.

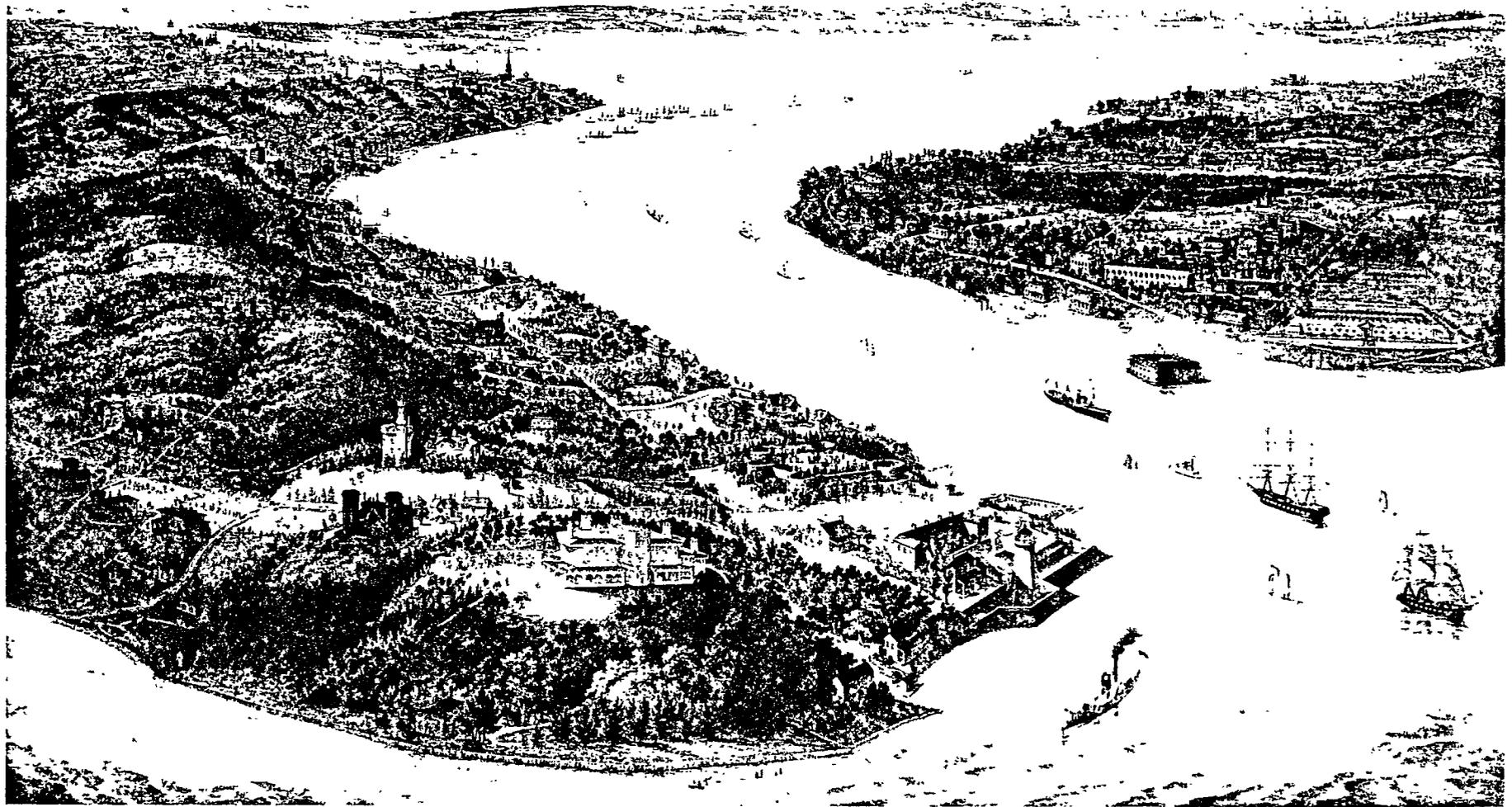
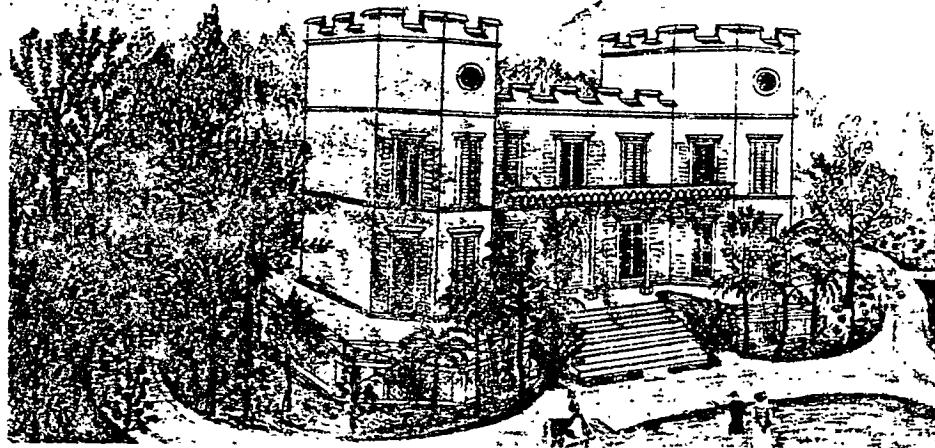


Figure 6: A view of the Narrows looking north. The Arrochar villas are to the left of the fort; a part of Brooklyn and Fort Hamilton are on the right side of the picture. This view and two close-up versions are in the S.I.I.A.S. Archives Print Collection.



Townsend Castle, near Fort Wadsworth.

Figure 7 : A mansion in Arrochar, no date
(S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Print Collection).
Townsend's home was typical of the structures
on the estates that were incorporated into the
military reservation, now Gateway property.

favorite resort for summer residences, many are the stately chateaux and cosy cottages which crown its beautiful heights..." and "the American Isle of Wight" (Hunt, 1958:26). In the 1890's a number of these estates were bought by the military. Robinson's Atlas of 1898 (see figure #8) shows the location of the estates incorporated into the reservation.

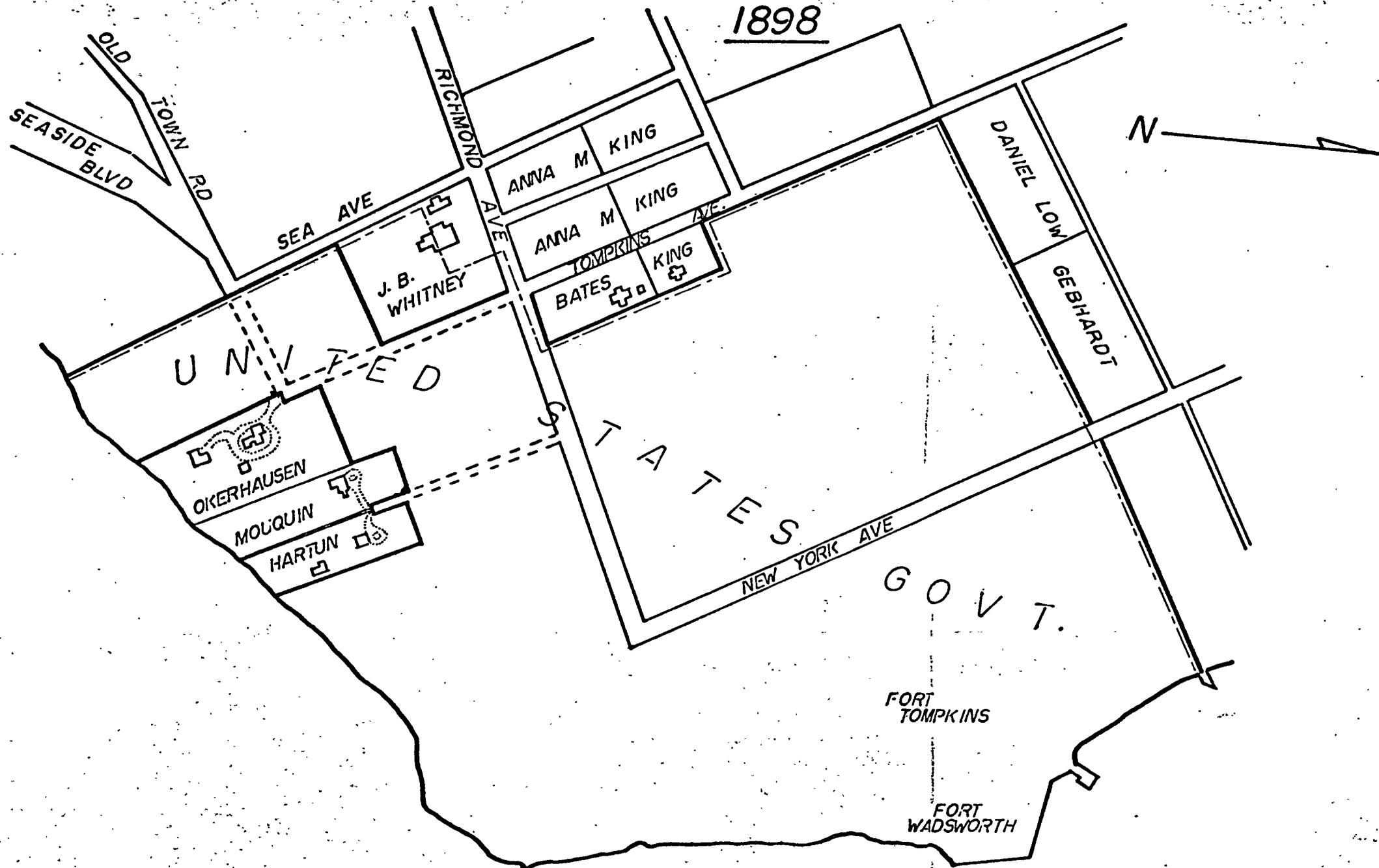
Prior to World War I Fort Wadsworth was listed as a Coast Artillery Post of the First Magnitude. However, military technology took a leap forward during and after WWI which completely changed the use and importance of coastal defenses. The advent of aviation and long range guns eliminated the need for the short range coastal artillery fortress of Fort Wadsworth.

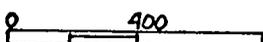
With this change in military technology, the importance of Fort Wadsworth shifted. No longer needed to defend the Narrows, the reservation became the focus of extensive WPA building programs prior to WWII. During WWII the expanded Fort served as a military shipping and receiving staging area for various infantry divisions proceeding overseas.

The buildup and development of Fort Wadsworth from the WPA days to the present is contained in the Wren Report (1975) which deals very effectively and accurately with the

FORT WADSWORTH

1898



SCALE 400' = 1 INCH 
 CURRENT RESERVATION

ROBINSON'S ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND
 CITY OF NEW YORK 1898

Figure 8: A map of Fort Wadsworth, 1898. Most of the estates were incorporated into the military reservation by 1898. The dotted line represents the current reservation boundary. The map was adapted from Robinson's Atlas of 1898 by F. Bluefeld.

military reservations' last 50 years of history. The present size and form of Fort Wadsworth can be seen on the 1962 U.S. Army map (see figure #9).

Some information relating to Fort Wadsworth's pre-WWI history could be gleaned from the local archives. However, most pre-WWI and all post WWI military information on Fort Wadsworth is available in either the National Archives in Washington, D.C. or in the military library in Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

We did not have access to information on construction and demolition work at the fort. Further research in the military records in Washington and Pennsylvania may indicate the extent of subsurface disturbance in the 20th century. Since we did not have money in our budget for out of town research, we do not know exactly how the 19th century estate buildings were demolished. Some remnants of their foundations or their outbuildings, wells and privies may remain buried underneath lawns and sports fields in the southwestern portion of the reservation. In this same area there may be artifacts and features from the early settlement of Oude Dorp.

FORT WADSWORTH

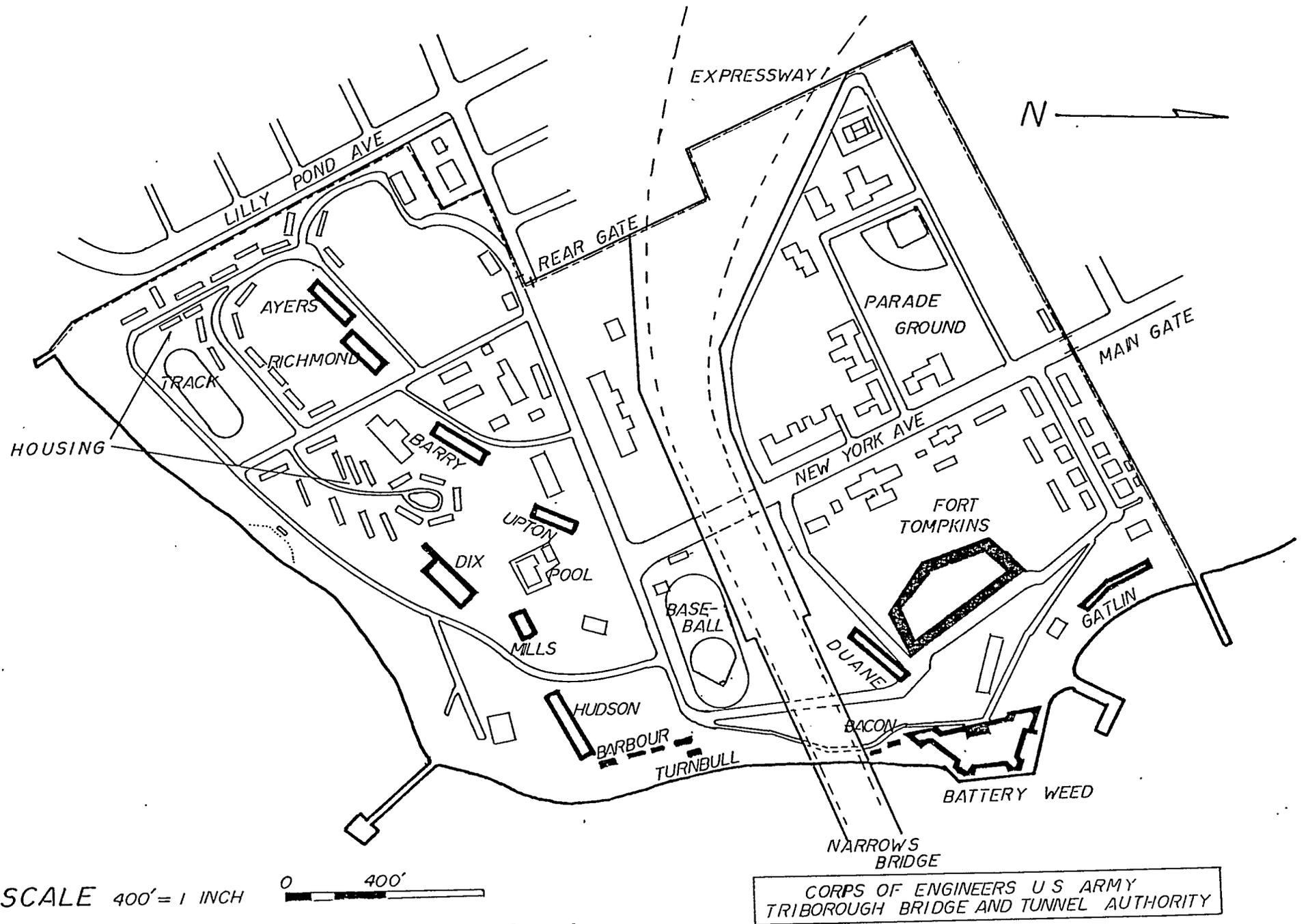


Figure 9: A map of Fort Wadsworth in 1962. This map, drawn by F. Bluefeld, was adapted from an Army Corps of Engineers map.

The Beaches

The beaches comprise the largest stretch of property for the Staten Island Unit (see figure #1). The beaches going from north to south, are: South, Midland, Woodland and New Dorp Beach and Cedar Grove. The physical characteristics of the land along the beach did not change significantly. However the closing of the mouth of Old Town Creek and the opening of New Creek sometime between 1723-83, completely drained some of the adjacent wetlands (McMillen, 1958:4). Early accounts of the beaches describe it as a low lying plane of lush wetlands behind a sandy red strand (see figure #10).

The development of the beaches did not begin until the late 19th century. Some of the early communities, Oude Dorp and Nieuwe Dorp, were located near the beaches but not on beach property. On the Map of Old Town and the 'Oude Dorp' (see figure #2) one notices that the Gateway area was composed of sand with salt meadows boarding on the north west side of the Seaside Boulevard.¹ The Walton-Stillwell House (mentioned is the Fort Wadsworth

¹The salt meadows on Staten Island were used for growing salt hay (Leng & Davis, 1930).

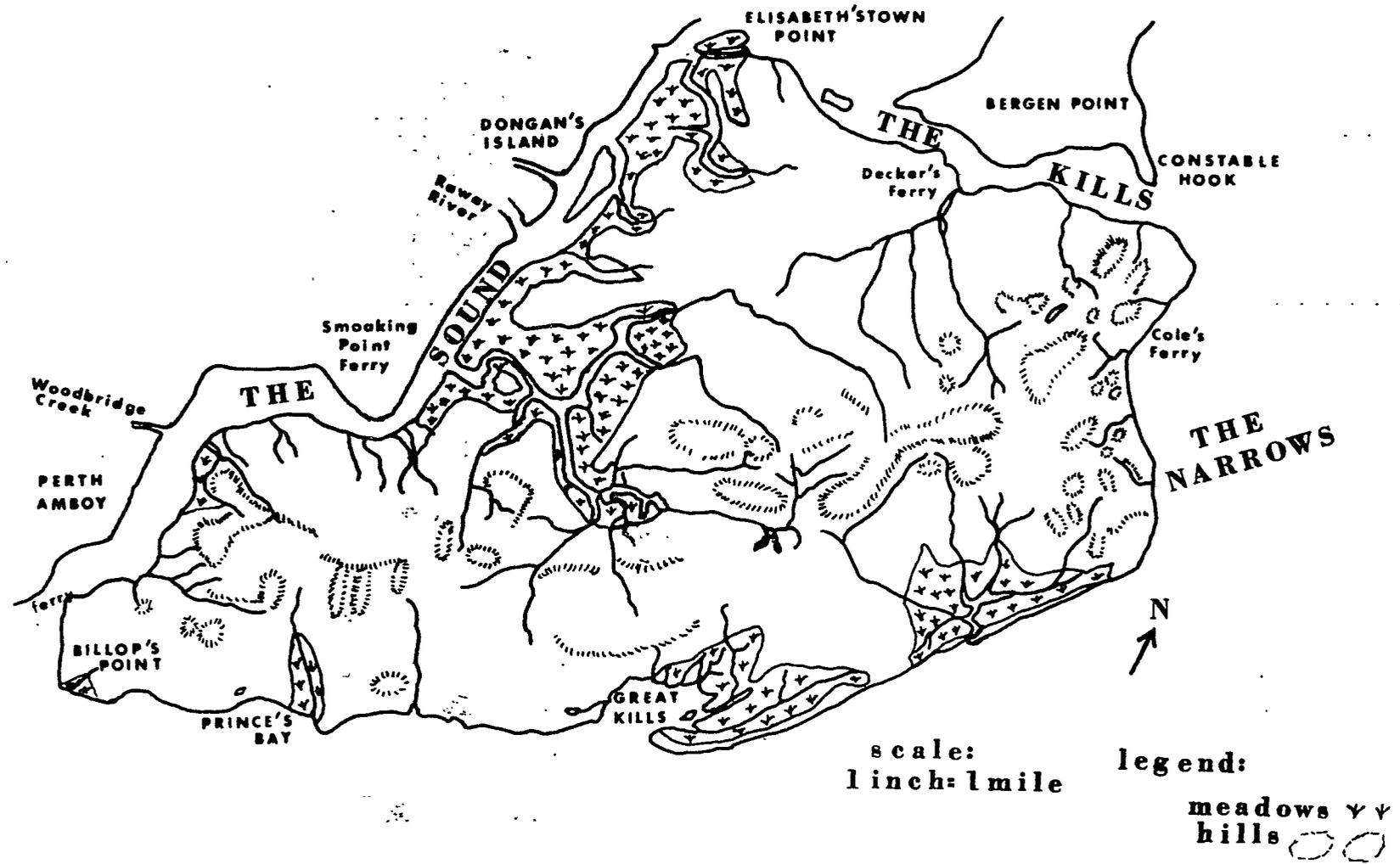


Figure 10: Historic map of Staten Island's terrain. This map, drawn by S. Baugher-Perlin, was adapted from McMillen's map, "Staten Island in 1781".

section) borders on the northernmost portion of South Beach (Anderson and Sainz, 1965). The town of Nieuwe Dorp also did not extend down into the beach land. During the 18th and 19th centuries people working near the beaches and surrounding salt meadows suffered from a high rate of pestilence and malaria (Staten Island Improvement Commission's Report, 1871). Another drawback from developing this land was the lack of available transportation. Although the entire length of the Island's Beach area was eventually developed in varying stages, the two most prominent areas were South Beach and Midland Beach. With the opening of the new railroad line from Saint George to Arrochar in 1866 the rush to acquire building sites along South Beach was on.² Steinmeyer (1958:181) states that the initial buildup of small hotels and amusements along the boardwalk was decidedly lower class and attracted a "Bowery beer crowd." Despite the unpretentious, haphazard development of the beach area, by 1896 South Beach on a good Sunday would have as many as 100,000 visitors (Steinmeyer 1958:18). With this great influx of tourists the railroad extended its tracks one more stop to South Beach (see figure #11).

²Most of the data on South Beach comes from articles written by Steinmeyer.

SOUTH BEACH RESORTS 1898

SCALE 300' = 1 INCH

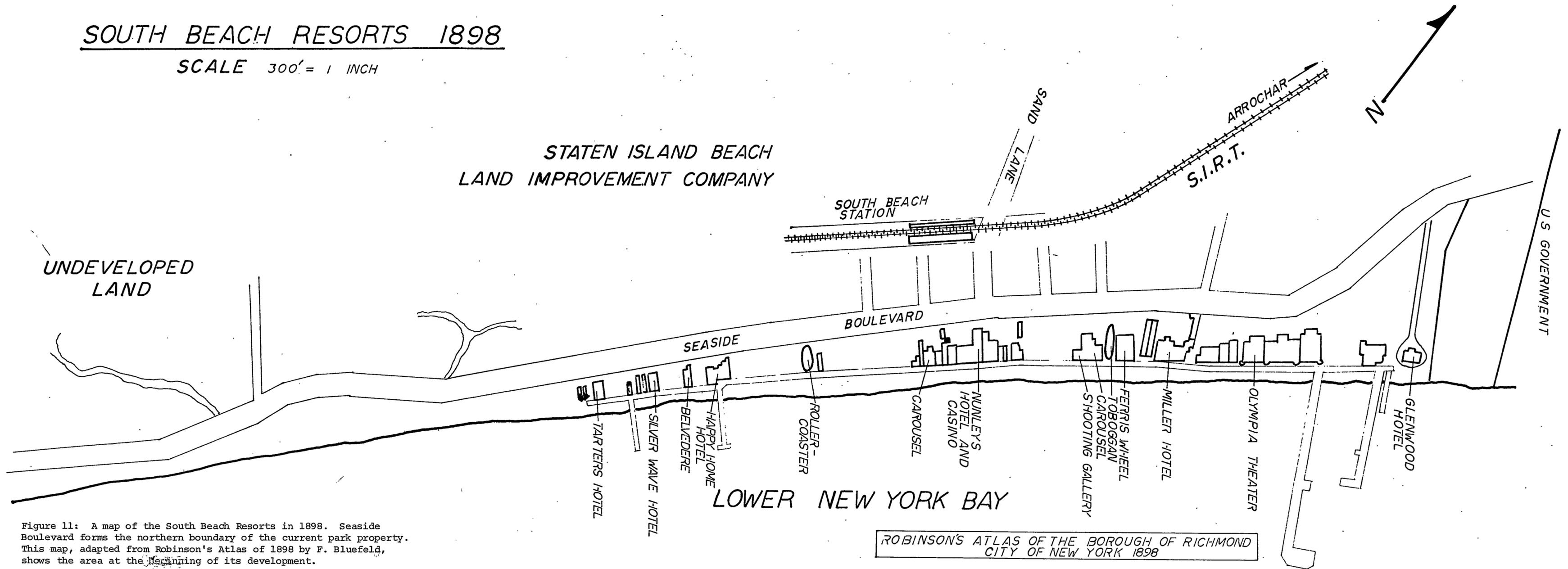
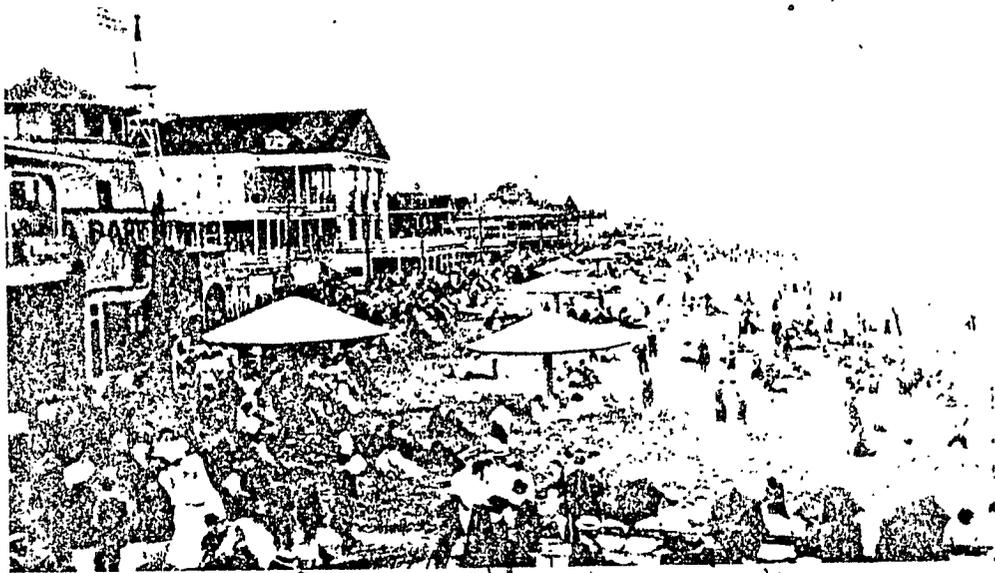


Figure 11: A map of the South Beach Resorts in 1898. Seaside Boulevard forms the northern boundary of the current park property. This map, adapted from Robinson's Atlas of 1898 by F. Bluefeld, shows the area at the beginning of its development.

ROBINSON'S ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND
CITY OF NEW YORK 1898

An alternative to the train was to come by boat. The boats docked at a long pier which extended out from the boardwalk. This boat trip took only three quarters of an hour from Whitehall in Manhattan to the beach. These excursions were to become so popular that eventually boats ran from Whitehall, Newark, and Brooklyn. The piers that were constructed serviced enough people to warrant narrow gauge miniature steam trains to transport people from the boats along the length of the pier to the boardwalk (see figure #12). According to Steinmeyer (1958) the development of South Beach was tied to the expansion of the railroad and the ferry; as transportation service increased, the resorts expanded.

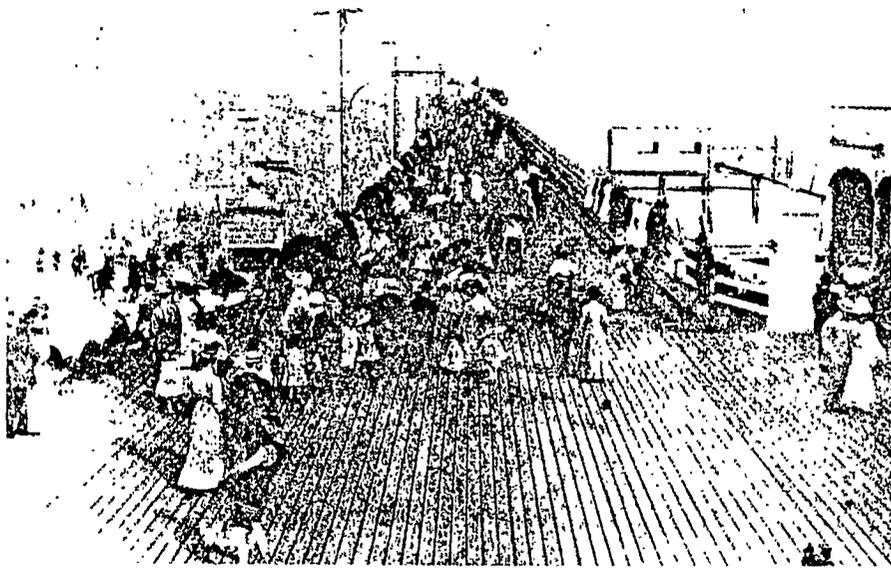
Nineteenth century photographs depict hugh, elaborately decorated casinos, hotels, stores and resturants (see figure #13). Even though these buildings had elaborate facades, they were constructed of nothing more than pine boards on posts set into the sand. These structures, covered with flammable lead and oil paint, were tinder boxes and just after the turn of the 20th century these structures were destroyed by fire (Steinmeyer, 1958:20).



Midland Beach, Staten Island

Do you like this view?

Figure 13: Hotels at Midland Beach, post-1907 (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection).



Souvenir of MIDLAND BEACH, Staten Island, N. Y.

Figure 12: Pier at Midland Beach, post-1907 (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection). The train tracks can be seen on the right side of the pier.

After the fire at South Beach a group of Staten Island businessmen issued \$100,000 of common stock on the Happyland Corporation (Steinmeyer, 1958:20). By opening day June 30, 1906 the park construction cost was estimated to be \$200,000. Happyland Park was an amusement area with: a restaurant, a bar, a dance hall, an ice cream parlor, booths for salt water taffy and popcorn, live animal shows, a roller skating rink, a shooting gallery, a fun house, side show acts, and a Japanese tea garden. With the completion of Happyland Park, it was able to handle literally thousands of people at any one performance (see figure #14). Unfortunately the audience did not come in large enough numbers and Happyland went bankrupt in 1909. It was kept in operation, however and limped along for a few years as just another section of the beach. Finally in May 1917 the resort gave up the ghost in a gorgeous blaze (Steinmeyer 1958:21).

By 1898 South Beach was competing with a new resort about a mile down the coast called Midland Beach. The new Midland Beach was established as an elite amusement center. On August 29, 1896 a subsidiary of the Midland Railway Company bearing the name Midland Terminal Company opened an amusement center called Midland Beach (see

SOUTH BEACH RESORTS 1917

SCALE 150' = 1 INCH
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50 150 450

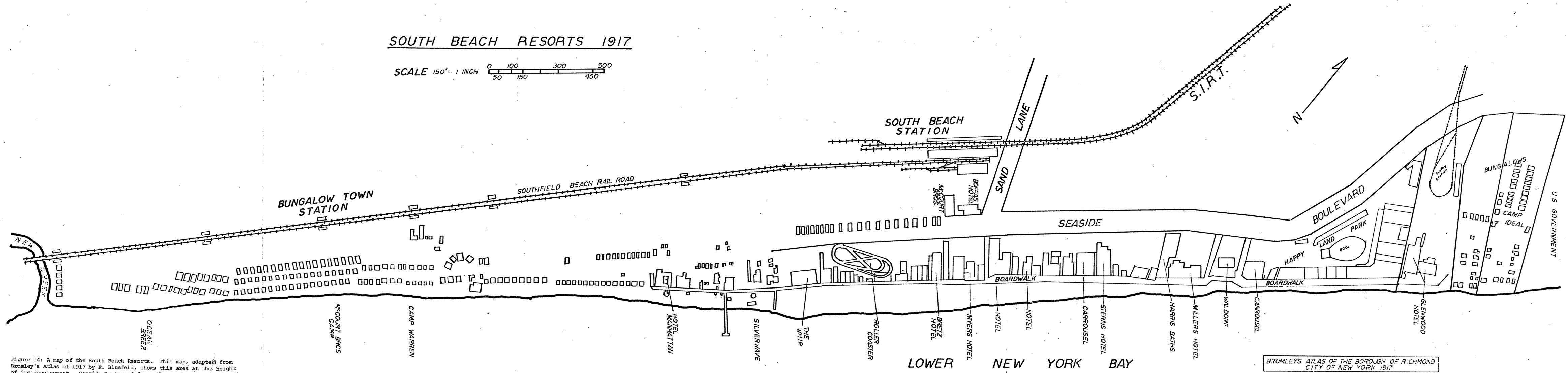


Figure 14: A map of the South Beach Resorts. This map, adapted from Bromley's Atlas of 1917 by F. Bluefield, shows this area at the height of its development. Seaside Boulevard forms the northern boundary of the current park property.

figure 14

BROMLEY'S ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND
CITY OF NEW YORK 1917

figure #15). From the very beginning and unlike its neighbor South Beach, Midland Beach set out to be a "high toned and genteel" amusement center (Steinmeyer 1954:1). Signs along the boardwalk read "This is a respectable place, be respectable." Indeed if this were an upper class resort, these types of signs would not have been necessary. This resort catered to a middle class and perhaps upper middle class audience. However, the hotels in Saint George (on the North Shore), truly were upper class establishments with some European aristocrats among their clientele. The Midland Beach hotels were mere boarding houses when compared to the elegant Saint George structures. During the early years of Midland Beach the resort attempted to provide a sophisticated and elegant atmosphere at middle class prices. This quality may have been maintained initially because transportation to Midland Beach was very poor. It was not until the end of 1896 that trolley tracks were laid down Lincoln and Midland Avenues from Richmond Road. With the availability of trolleys and boats arriving at the piers, Midland Beach and its concessionaires enjoyed some prosperous seasons. As the crowds increased so did the size and number of attractions. In 1901 the Southfield Beach Railroad began service between South and Midland

MIDLAND BEACH RESORT 1898

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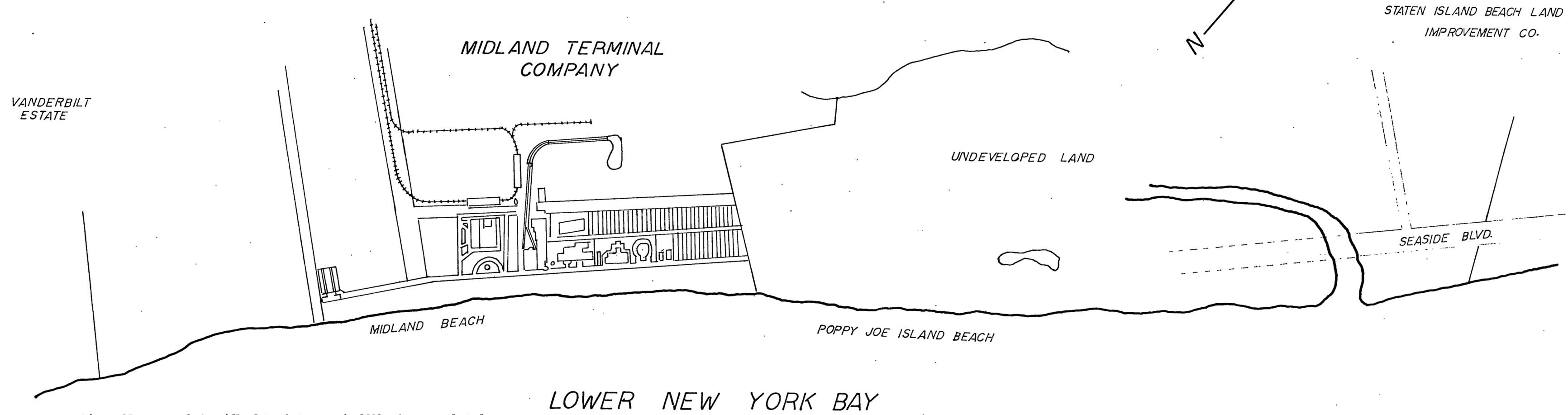
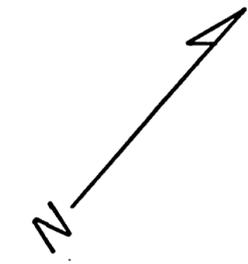


Figure 15: A map of the Midland Beach Resorts in 1898. The map, adapted from Robinson's Atlas of 1898 by F. Bluefeld, shows the area at the beginning of its development. The resorts were all on Gateway property.

LOWER NEW YORK BAY

ROBINSON'S ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND
CITY OF NEW YORK 1898

Beaches. With the increase in and ease of transportation a more lower class crowd frequented this resort.

Steinmeyer (1954:3) feels that with the larger crowds and more lower class clientele that the management was not able to maintain the same standards and as a result the quality of service declined. The resort, though, remained in active use until 1924 when a fire destroyed virtually every building (Steinmeyer, 1958:3).

It is interesting to note that financial failure seems to have been unknowingly built into the plan of Happyland as well as Midland Beach. Certainly the salt air, the view of the ocean and the rising moon were there to be enjoyed. The resort developers were also kind enough to provide (for free) the boardwalk for strolling, open air bandstands with constant serenading, and pavilions for dancing to popular music. One had to pay for food, drinks, rides, and amusement stands. Conceivably a family carrying their own picnic lunch (which could be eaten on the beach or more comfortably in the picnic areas provided by the resort, at no charge) were able to enjoy a day outing for the cost of their transportation (about 10¢ per person) and a cool drink or ice cream. This beach resort was doomed and eventually gave way to the small amusement operators

and concession stands that eeked out an existence through the 1940's and 50's with remnants still visible today in South Beach though not on Gateway property (Steinmeyer, 1958).

The people frequenting the resort were drawn from the urban areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Newark and not from the island itself. Today many Staten Islanders work in Manhattan; however, in the 19th century most islanders worked on Staten Island. Many of the mainstays of very day life from breweries to manufacturing to agriculture were produced here (Leng & Davis, 1930). As a result, Islanders lived and worked in the conservative atmosphere of small town community. The development of the resort areas initiated a very superficial participation by Islanders.³ According to Steinmeyer, (1958) the idea that a Staten Islander should be seen by his neighbors while enjoying "manifestations of mild

³Steinmeyer (1958) presents all of the following general observations of the involvement of Staten Islanders in the resorts. At this point in time there is no sociological study on the socio-economic attitudes of Staten Islanders. From our professional work on Staten Island we believe these generalizations to be true although we do not have documentary data to support these opinions. This could be an area for future research.

abandon" on an amusement ride, would have been an embarrassment. A trip to the resort by these conservative islanders consisted of either enjoying dinner at home and later taking a stroll along the boardwalk or, taking a swim, if the tide was right, in the morning so they could be on their way home before the hordes arrived. The great crowds that were drawn from the surrounding urban areas were not as conservative and reserved as the residents of Staten Island. A large portion of the weekend visitors to the beach resorts were those participating in an organized outing.⁴ The 'company' picnic' at the beach was a time to relax and enjoy themselves on the rides, at the amusements, and in the water.

Other than the major resort developments of South Beach and its neighbor Midland Beach, the entire length of the shore developed to varying degrees. Woodland Beach and New Dorp Beach were developed, according to the Atlas of 1917, with hotels and amusement areas (see figure #16

⁴From advertisements in a pamphlet Picturesque Staten Island (Harrington 1899:63) liberal inducements are offered to: Picnic and Beach Parties; Excursions; Lodges; Societies; Trolley Parties; Target Excursions; Bowling Clubs; Churches; Schools, etc.

MIDLAND BEACH RESORTS 1917

SCALE 150' = 1 INCH
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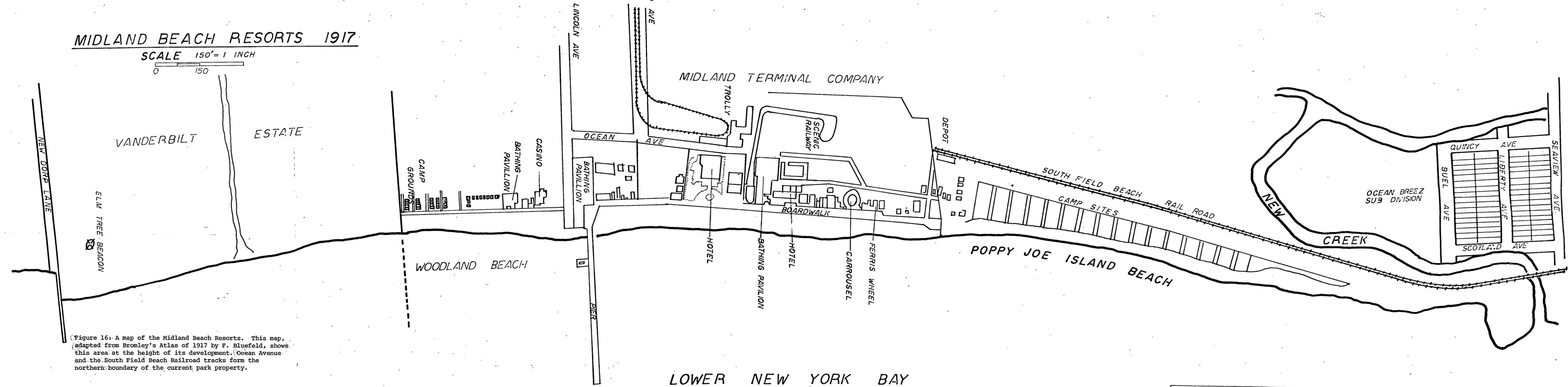


Figure 16: A map of the Midland Beach Resorts. This map, adapted from Bromley's Atlas of 1917 by F. Bluefeld, shows this area at the height of its development. Ocean Avenue and the South Field Beach Railroad tracks form the northern boundary of the current park property.

LOWER NEW YORK BAY

BROMLEY'S ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND CITY OF NEW YORK 1917

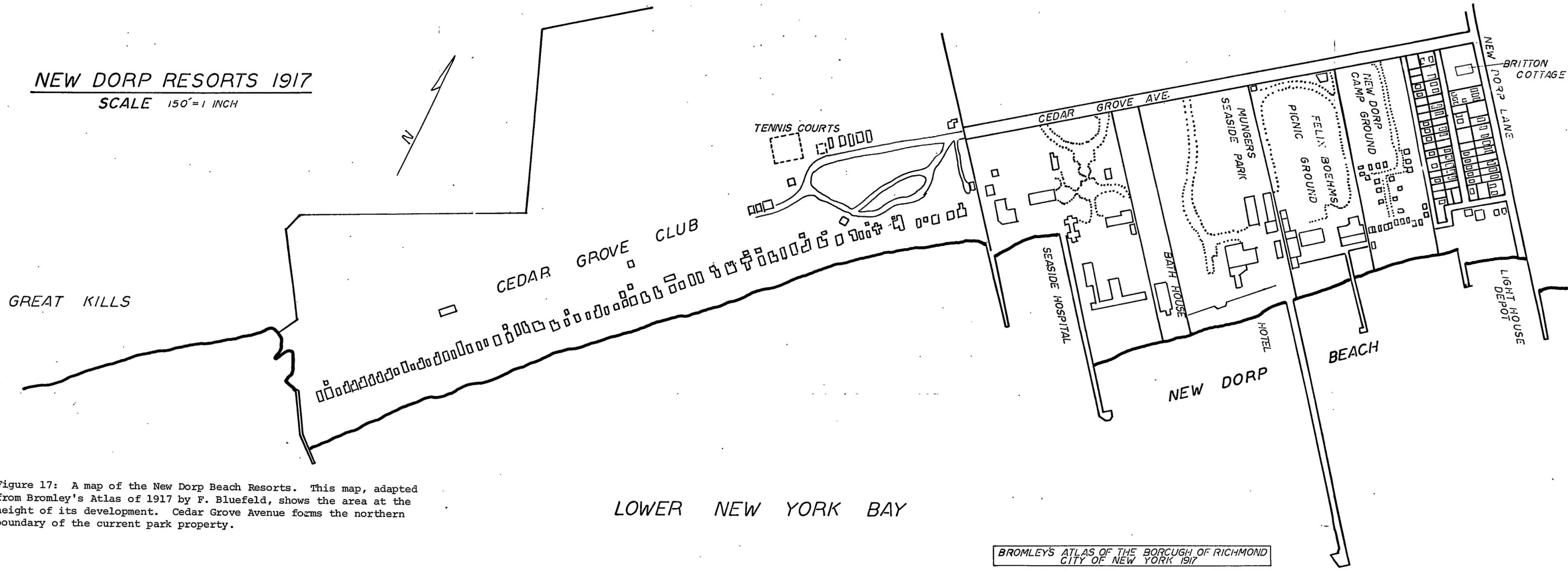


Figure 17: A map of the New Dorp Beach Resorts. This map, adapted from Bromley's Atlas of 1917 by F. Bluefeld, shows the area at the height of its development. Cedar Grove Avenue forms the northern boundary of the current park property.

and 17), while other areas (of which Cedar Grove⁵, Poppy Joe Island and Ocean Breeze are the most prominent) developed into bungalow communities and tent sites (see figures #18 and 19). A family was able to spend from a week to the entire summer at the beach for a very reasonable price. The opportunity of roughing it for the summer in a bungalow or tent must have appealed to many city families since a portion of the Southfield Beach Railroad's success was due to commuters to this area.

(Reifschneider 1951:6) The Southfield Beach Railroad ran from the terminus of the Rapid Transit on the South Beach line, 1.87 miles to Midland Beach (Reifschneider 1951:6). The entire route was on private right of way. At certain points the tracks were set virtually at the waters edge. Every spring, extensive repairs were needed along these sections.⁶

The beach resorts of Staten Island, according to figures during the 1890's, were certainly one of the

⁵Cedar Grove looks much the same today as it was in the early 1900's.

⁶An interesting note is that the Southfield line was referred to as the "Mexican Rail." The 60 pound rail used on the double track was said to have come from an abandoned railroad in Mexico. (Reifschneider 1951:8)

Camping Grounds, Woodland Beach, S. I.

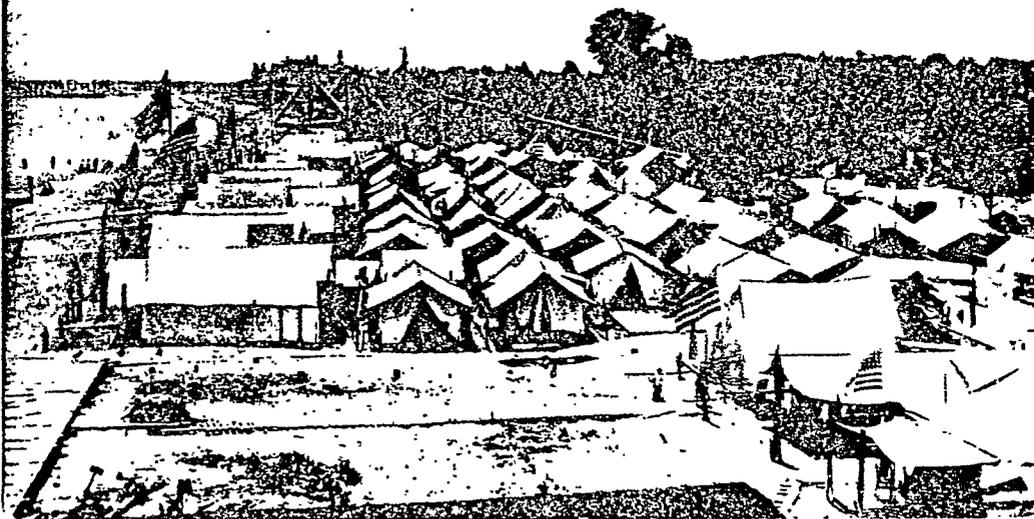
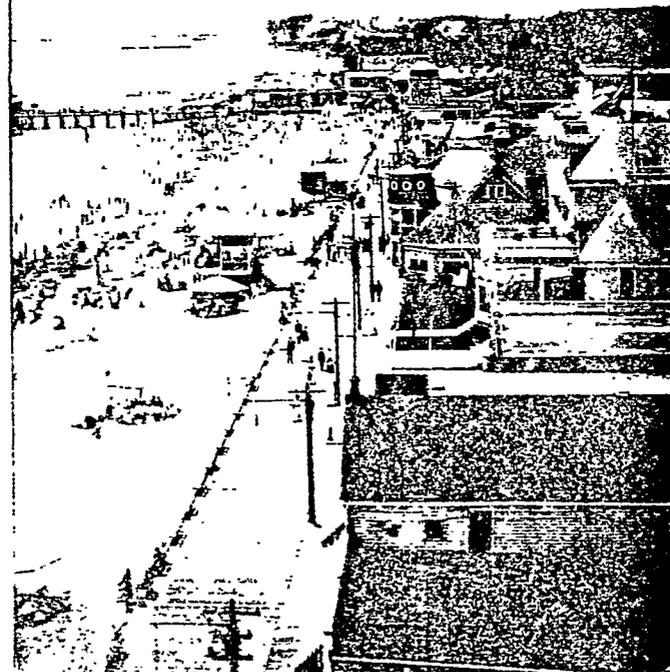


Figure 18: Woodland Beach Tent Camp, post-1907
(S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection)

Figure 19: A view of Midland Beach, post-1907
(S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection)

Midland Beach, S. I.



most popular resort areas of its day (Steinmeyer 1958:18). Even considering the financial and economic shortcomings of the resorts (see pages 38 & 40), they managed to withstand devastating fires and storms to open the next season for the summer residents and weekend crowds. However, the cancer that slowly but so completely consumed the resort area was water pollution. The first declaration of unsafe swimming was as early as 1917 when the Commissioner of Health reported to municipal authorities that "due to inadequate sewerage, bathing was not safe at either of the two south shore beaches." Even with limited access, people from the metropolitan area still came by the thousands to enjoy the sun on the beach, although few went into the water. As the water became more foul and access to the New Jersey and Long Island beaches became easier, the beaches of Staten Island slid further into decay and economic depression.

By the middle to end of the 1920's a number of major fires swept the boardwalks of Staten Island. With the country's economy changing and with pollution eliminating use of the water at the beaches, the once grand and extensive amusement parks and summer resorts had withered to a few tawdry arcades and scattered groups of rundown bungalows. In 1935 the Roosevelt

administration advanced funds for a public works project to rebuild the boardwalk at South Beach. The Wrenn report provides an excellent history of the beach area starting at this point. Today if one rides or walks along Father Capadano Boulevard (formerly known as Seaside Boulevard) one sees a scene of neglect. The WPA Roosevelt Boardwalk is in a sad state with holes and weak spots, the bath houses and concession buildings are covered with graffiti and are badly vandalized. The parking lots and playing fields on the other hand, although marked with potholes and overgrown with weeds are being used for express bus parking and community football and baseball games, respectively.

Because of the major beach fires and the method of building construction (and materials used) it is unlikely that much structural material lies buried in the ground. Any artifacts that were discarded either haphazardly or placed in refuse pits (prior to 1898)⁷ on the beach property are now underneath the WPA parking lots and playing fields. We believe that more information about the beaches can be gleaned from the documents rather than from the archaeological data.

⁷On Staten Island garbage collection service was started in 1898 when the island became incorporated as a borough of the City of New York.

Miller Field

Today looking at Miller Field one sees a few ex-military buildings and a large field. One might quickly assume that it has little or no archaeological significance. On the contrary, buried below the playing field there may be building foundations, wells, and privies that cover over 300 years of Euroamerican activity. Miller Field has had a complex history with the land being used for a variety of purposes from farming to flying. Our documentary research has uncovered much information on the site's occupants and varied (and sometimes colorful) history.

The first mention of the tract is the land patent taken by John Dalley (Dally or Daley) in 1677 (Wrenn, 1975: 77-78).¹ John was the son of a French sea captain who purchased a plantation in Virginia and then relocated to the north. He was a farmer and carpenter and lived on Staten Island from 1672 to 1708 (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II: 884). The Dalley tract fronted on the bay. It was the southeastern portion of what would become Miller Field. The lot was bounded on the northwest by the land of John

¹There is a dearth of information on the structures and land use for the early history of Miller Field. All of the available material has been incorporated in the text.

Stillwell and on the southwest by the highway or New Dorp Lane in New Town and on the northwest by the land of William Brittian whose patent dated from 1691. While he owned the farm, Dalley improved it by building a house and a number of structures including a barn and a stable.² In the fall of 1685, Dalley and his wife Elizabeth sold their land to Paulus Richards, a New York merchant, for 82 pounds, 4 shillings (Liber of Deeds B: 27-28). The Dalleys then took a seven year lease on the property for a rent of 4 pounds, 2 shillings, 6 pence a year (Liber of Deeds B:29-31).

William Britton, a yeoman of French origins, apparently acquired the Richards estate although records of the transaction have not survived (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:869). He and his wife Rachel sold the two estates of 140 acres along with several other plots to Henrich Van Lawa, a yeoman from Raritan, East Jersey in May 1719 for 570 pounds (Liber of Deeds C:107-110). Henrich and his wife Charity held the property for 29 years, until 1749 when they sold it to Johannes Simmeson (Simonson) of Staten Island (Liber of Deeds D:264-266).

²The documents do not give the location of these buildings. The records simply state that these structures are on the property.

The Simmesons, of French Huguenot ancestry, sold a portion of the beach front to R. Barnes prior to the American Revolution (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:953; Morris, 1900, Vol. II:113-114; Compilation of Taylor-Skinner Map 1781 & Hessian Map 1777). The rest of the tract was willed to James Egbert, an ancestor of Govert Egbert an early Dutch immigrant to the island, in 1797 (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:894). Egbert died intestate in the late 1820's, and the partitioners of the estate continued the process of dividing the tract (Liber of Administration 1:Envelop A279).

Through a complex process the southernmost portion of the plot was gathered up by William B. Wendle (Windell), a basket maker, from New York. In February 1829, Wendle purchased a 30 acre plot for \$1,600 from Agnes B. Read the daughter of John Spear (Liber of Deeds R:186-190). Ms. Read got the land in a will from George W. Barnes. The plot was bounded by New Dorp Lane in the west, by land of James Egbert in the north, by George W. Barnes' land in the east, and by the beach in the south.

At the end of the next summer, on August 30, 1830, William B. Wendle purchased a 40 acre plot from Thomas Willis a Master of the Court of Chaucery (Liber of

Deeds S:334-337). The plot was one of several purchased by Wendle as high bidder in an auction held at the New York City Merchant's Exchange. Willis supervised the sale, giving the required six weeks notice of the time and place of the sale in at least two newspapers. The purchase price of the several lots was \$1,217. The 40 acre lot was bounded on the southeast by the bay, on the southwest by lands of George W. Barnes and James Egbert, on the northeast by land of Robert Barnes, and on the northwest by other property of George W. Barnes, a so-called 20 acre plot that had been left to Sampson Ried.

The last portion of Miller's Field that was purchased by Wendle was a 30 acre lot he bought from the Egbert estate on October 29, 1830 for \$1,400 (Liber of Deeds S: 324-327). The last was sold under direction of the court to highest bidder after the required notice had been given in the Richmond Republican and posted in three places in the town of Springfield. This lot was contiguous with the other two and was bounded on the northeast and southeast by Wendle's lands on the southeast by New Dorp Lane and on the northwest by other lands of James Egbert.

To the north of Wendle's property was the remainder of the Egbert estate, a 73 acre plot. This property was the

site of the Egbert home as well as a number of out-buildings including a barn, a wagon house, a granary, a cider house, a hovel or open shed and a barracks or large building that housed a number of people.³ The 73 acre lot was acquired by Richard Conner Jr. one of the Egbert heirs for \$10 (Liber of Deeds T:307-308). Conner was the son of a successful Irish immigrant. A wealthy landowner who owned slaves, he was called Colonel because of his role in the militia. Conner held a number of public offices, and, as a surveyor, made the first map of Richmond county in 1787 (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. V:72; Morris, 1900, Vol. II:67-68). The lot was bounded on the northwest by the land of Ruben Clawson, another Egbert heir on the northeast by land of George W. Barnes, on the southeast by William B. Wendle's property, and on the southwest by New Dorp Lane. Conner bought the land in September 1831 and held it for five years when he sold it to the Commodore (Cornelius) C. Vanderbilt on November 18, 1836 for \$14,000 (Liber of Deeds 2:184-187). Thus, the northern part of the estate had come into the hands of the Vanderbilt family.

³Since the 17th century New Dorp Lane has been a major road on Staten Island. Even though the documents do not give building locations, it is likely that these structures (and the earlier homes) were near New Dorp Lane.

The story of the southern portion of Miller's field was even more complex. On March 30, 1835 William B. Wendle and his wife Sophia sold their land to John O. Woodruff, a gentleman, from New York City (Liber of Deeds Y:12-17). The three contiguous plots went for \$8,000. Woodruff sold this property plus some pieces of woodland and salt meadow to another gentleman from New York City, Walter Livingston for \$30,000 on December 14, 1837 (Liber of Deeds 4:371-377). Livingston, in turn, sold the three plots of 40, 30 and 30 acres to James J. W. Valentine Esq. on November 16, 1842 for \$10,000 (Liber of Deeds 9:405:411). Valentine sold the property to Cornelius De Motte within the month, on December 10, 1842 for \$10,000 (Liber of Deeds 9:582-587). Cornelius and his wife Sarah sold the land back to Livingston a few months later, on April 29, 1843 for \$10,000 (Liber of Deeds 9:689-694). At this point, Livingston sold a portion of the land, a plot a bit less than 25 acres ($24 \frac{3}{10}$), to the Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt for \$2,187 on May 1, 1843 (Liber of Deeds 10:103-105). This small plot was bounded on the northeast by the land of George W. Barnes on the southeast by land owned by Walter Livingston on the southwest by Cornelius Vanderbilt's 73 acres and on the northwest by the property of Daniel L. Clawson. That fall, on

September 30, 1843 Walter Livingston sold the remaining Wendle plot for \$1,376 to a lawyer from New York City named Francis B. Cutting (Liber of Deeds 10:309-316). The next month Cutting sold the estate back to the omnipresent Walter Livingston for \$1 and on the very same day, October 17, 1843 Livingston sold the land to Cornelius Vanderbilt for \$14,500 (Liber of Deeds 10:332-338; Liber of Deeds 10:338-344). The Vanderbilts were now in possession of the bulk of the property later known as Miller Field.

In January 1, 1850 the Vanderbilts (Cornelius and his wife Sophia) sold a beachfront area of 20 acres to Laura White, the wife of a Joseph S. White, a New York City lawyer for the munificent sum of \$10,000 (Liber of Deeds 27:255-258). The property was bounded on the southwest by New Dorp Lane, on the southeast by the ocean, and on both the northeast and northwest by the Vanderbilt property.

While the Commodore was purchasing an estate in rural New Dorp his son William H. Vanderbilt was developing the skills to manage it. In 1839, at the age of 18 William went to work as a clerk for the prestigious Wall Street banking firm of Drew, Robinson & Co. William got married and within three years he became seriously ill. To protect his son's apparently fragile health, the Commodore urged William to move to New Dorp and the 73 acre farm

and take up husbandry. William and his wife moved to the farm in 1842 (Croffut, 1886:40-42, 57). While the young Vanderbilt learned the rudiments of farming and estate management, the Commodore added to the size of the establishment and eventually on February 26, 1855 sold to William for \$1 the lands he had purchased from Conner Jr. and Walter Livingston, minus the 20 acres he had sold to Laura White (Liber of Deeds 37:562-567). The senior Vanderbilt regained the White plot, at a profit, when he offered a high bid of \$9,700 on the property to Sheriff Abraham Lockman in September 13, 1858 (Liber of Deeds 42:504-506). William did not get this last plot until his father passed away in the summer of 1876 (Croffut, 1886:286-292).

William H. Vanderbilt and his wife Maria Louisa transferred the New Dorp property to their son George W. Vanderbilt for \$1 on November 28, 1885 (Liber of Deeds 162:50-52). Two years later, on February 15, 1887 George came into possession of the 20 acre, Laura White, beachfront property (Liber of Deeds 173:214-219). Under the management of George W. Vanderbilt the estate procured 26 acres of underwater beach front property from the state of New York in September 7, 1888 for the purpose of constructing a dock (Liber of Deeds 184: 149-150). Two years later,

on June 14, 1890, George transferred the Elm Tree Light House Reservation to the United States of America for \$1 (Liber of Deeds 209:589-592). And, finally, the rest of the Vanderbilt farm was transferred to the United States of America, the Department of War, on March 12, 1919 for the price of \$420,041.48 (Liber of Deeds 491:34-38; Wren, 1975:75).

Prior to the sale of Miller Field to the Army, the estate was used as a farm. The earliest records, dating back to the end of the seventeenth century, describe a dwelling place (farm house), a stable and an assortment of sheds and outhouses including a granery and cider house. The presence of such structures plus references to pastures, salt meadows, orchards and fences mean that the property was a working farm similar to those that dotted the Staten Island landscape.⁴

The Vanderbilts continued using the land as a farm. When William and his wife moved to New Dorp in 1842 they

⁴The earliest deeds mentioned: houses, barns, stables, fences and fields, pasture, orchards, and additional lots containing salt meadow and meadows (Liber of Deeds B:27-29; Liber of Deeds C:107-110; Liber of Deeds D:264-266). By the 1830's the number of structures had grown significantly. In addition to the previously described structures and improvements, hovels, barracks, a wagon house, a cider house and a granery had been built (Liber of Deeds T:307-308; Liber of Deeds 2:184-187; Liber of Deeds 37:562-567).

occupied the modest Egbert residence. This house was a small, square, two story building with a lean-to-kitchen and probably, five rooms. The house was located on New Dorp Lane towards the western (interior) end of the plot and it faced the sea (Bayles, 1887:597; Croffut, 1886:57; Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:966).

Like most of the farmers on Staten Island, William H. Vanderbilt concentrated on hay (Akerly, 1843:191; Olmsted, 1850:289). He grew timothy and used the newly developed steamship lines to transport it to markets in New York City. In addition to selling hay on the open market, William sold it to his father when the Commodore purchased a horse railway. In later years, during the Civil War, he sold hay to the government. At various times, William also sold oats, potatoes and cabbages to the government and in local markets such as Clifton (Croffut, 1886:61-62).

In addition to growing the same crops that most Staten Island farmers did, William adopted many of the horticultural practices that were common in the area. Because of the sandy soil most farmers found it necessary to make heavy use of manure. At the same time most farmers did not keep adequate numbers of livestock to produce their own manure. The proximity of New York City and the availability of cheap

transportation made it practical for farmers, William included, to purchase street manure produced in New York City (Akerly, 1843:191, 193, 205-211; Olmsted, 1850:289, Croffut, 1886:57-58, 62-63).

Yet, despite the fact that his initial dwelling place was modest and his farming practices resembled those of most of the island's farmers, William Vanderbilt was not a typical farmer. Once he moved to New Dorp, he began transforming the farm into the estate of a gentleman farmer. William did little of the farm labor himself, limiting his activities to supervising the hired help (Croffut, 1886:58).

Over the course of time, William managed to turn the farm into a highly profitable enterprise. When he left Staten Island to work for his father in New York City the farm was earning \$1,000 a month. The fact that he was a Vanderbilt played no small part in his success. Thus, when William decided that he needed capital to expand his operations he was able to borrow \$6,000, a sum well beyond the resources of most farmers owning a farm of only 73 acres. Then, to further ease matters, when the Commodore heard about the loan he, after first chastising William, gave him the entire sum and demanded that he repay the loan

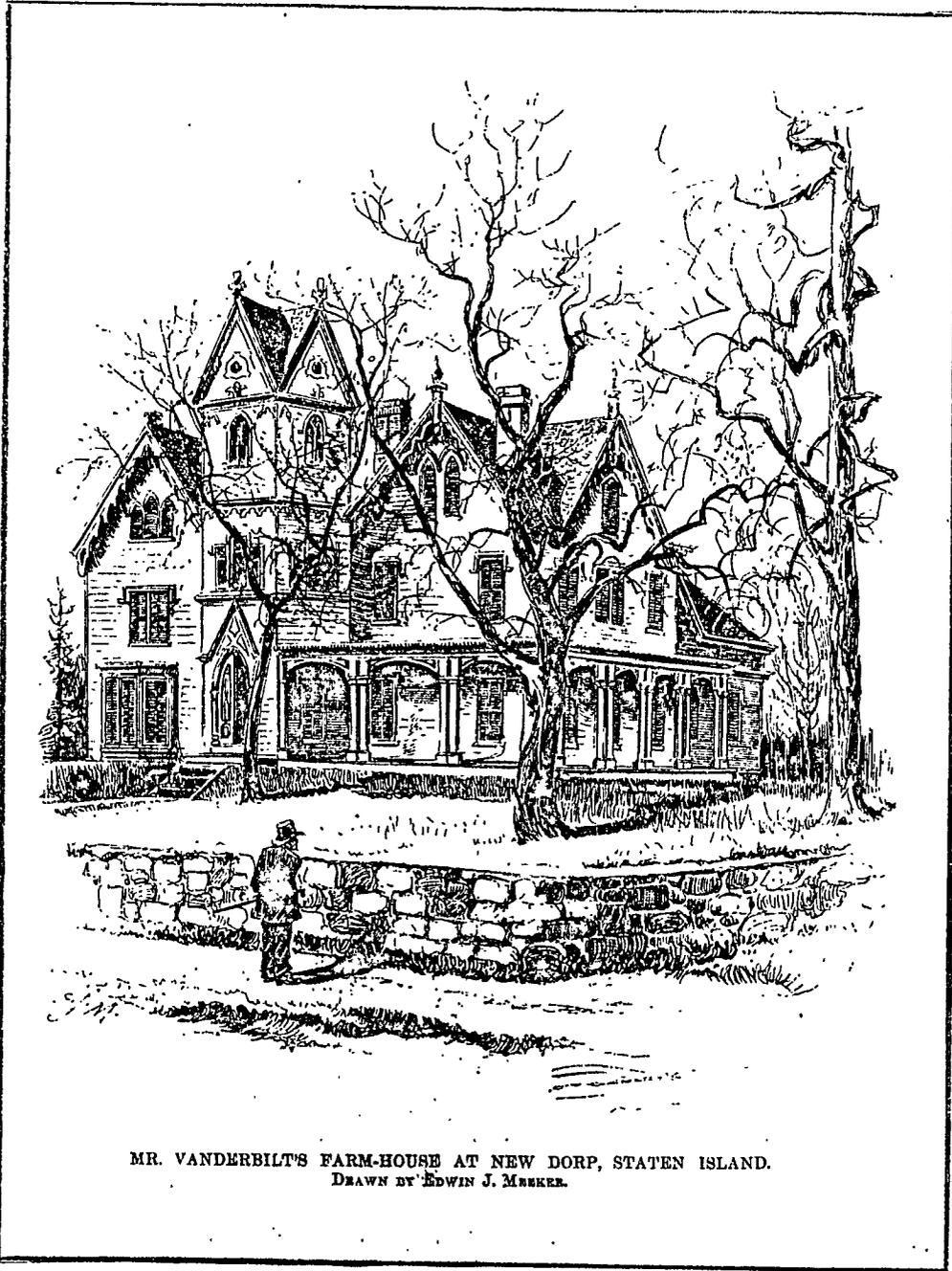
(Croffut, 1886:60-61, 65).

William used his capital and his profits to improve his life style and to enlarge the farm, eventually owning 350 scattered acres much of which were beyond the bounds of Miller Field. In 1855, William began rebuilding the old Egbert place. The result was a home more than twice as large.⁵ The new house was three stories high and it was in the style of an Italian villa. It was replete with towers, bay windows, walls and piazzas. The interior reflected the early results of what was to become a life long interest in art. William already owned several Italian paintings which he had purchased in the early 1850's. The Vanderbilts gave lavish parties, hiring a New York caterer and decorating the trees with Chinese lanterns. To complete the image of a country gentleman, William purchased fine horses and the necessary carriages and coaches and hired a coachman (Croffut, 1886:64-65, 163-164).⁶

Like his father Cornelius, William road as often as he could and loved horse racing. William's interest in

⁵See figure #20 for a drawing of the Vanderbilt home.

⁶Also see the following paragraphs: "Vanderbilt Home Gives Way To Airport," Davis Notebooks 22; "Vanderbilt Homestead And Stables," Whitlock, 1902, Hugh Powell Collection.



MR. VANDERBILT'S FARM-HOUSE AT NEW DORP, STATEN ISLAND.
DRAWN BY EDWIN J. MERRER.

Figure 20: Print of the Vanderbilt Home,
no date (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Print Collection).

racing was undoubtedly stimulated by the fact that New Dorp Lane, about a mile long and straight, was used as a track by local 'aficionados.' In any event, William became president of a private club devoted to racing. The club was located at the end of New Dorp Lane on William's land along the bay (see figure #21). The club's facilities included a three quarter mile trotting track, a grand stand, a stand for the judges, several sheds and stables and D. R. Ryerson's Hotel (Beer's Atlas, 1847: Croffut, 1886:63-64; Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II: 651).

Before the Army came into possession of the property, the estate was improved in a number of ways. The barnyard was paved and a corral for horses and mules was built. A number of small stone and wood structures were constructed including a dairy and an ice house. A system of roads was built and paved and greenhouses were erected (see figure #22). The most impressive structure on the estate was 75 foot high water tower and windmill (see figure #23). The tower was built in 1891 and it generated sufficient power to supply the entire establishment with artesian well water. When George W. Vanderbilt inherited the farm he had the family mansion moved away from the Lane and towards the ocean

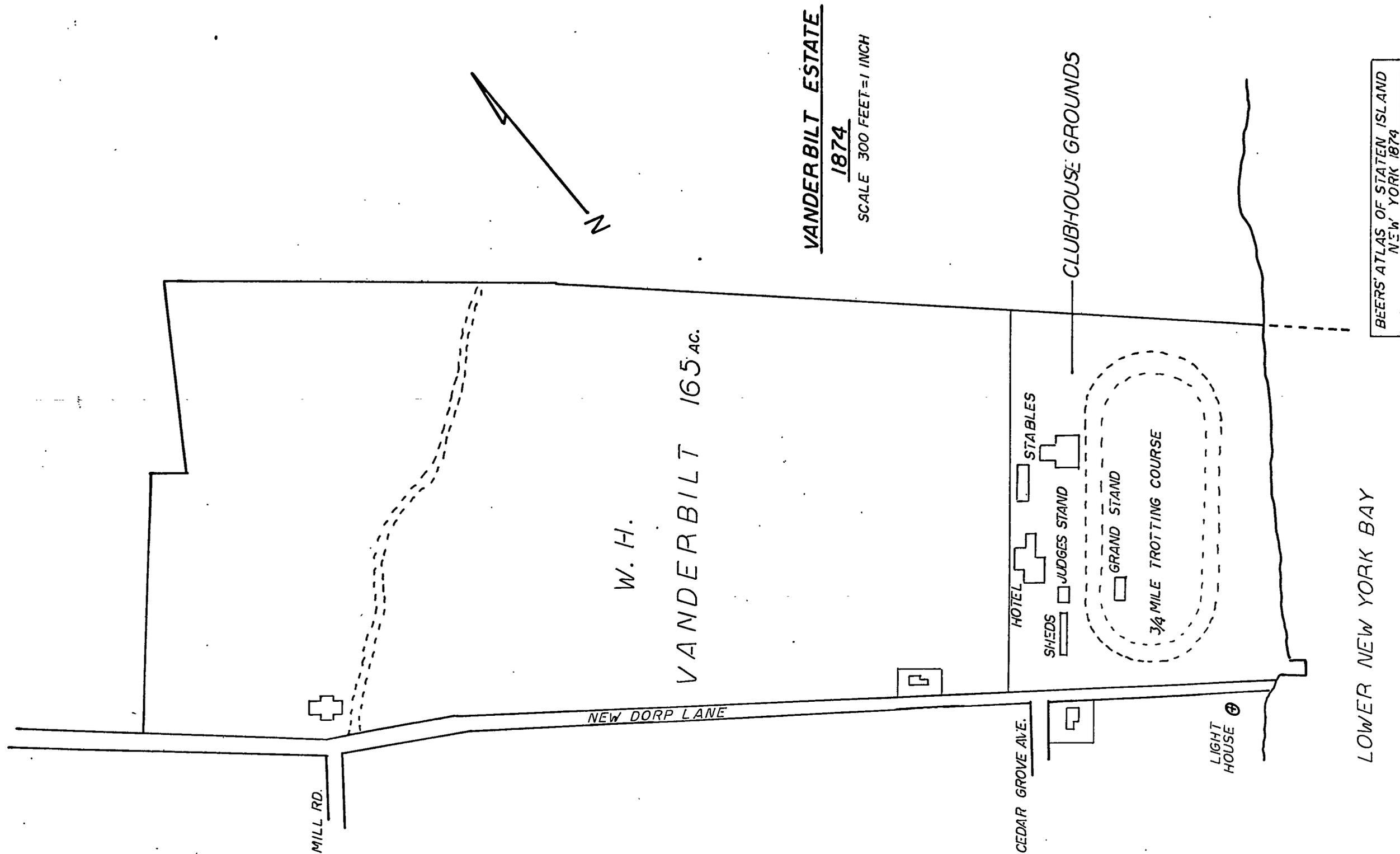


Figure 21: A map of the Vanderbilt Estate in 1874. The Vanderbilt home is located near Mill Road. The Clubhouse property reflects Vanderbilt's interest in horse racing. Miller Field's boundary is the same boundary as the Vanderbilt Estate. The map was adapted from Beer's Atlas of 1874 by F. Bluefeld.

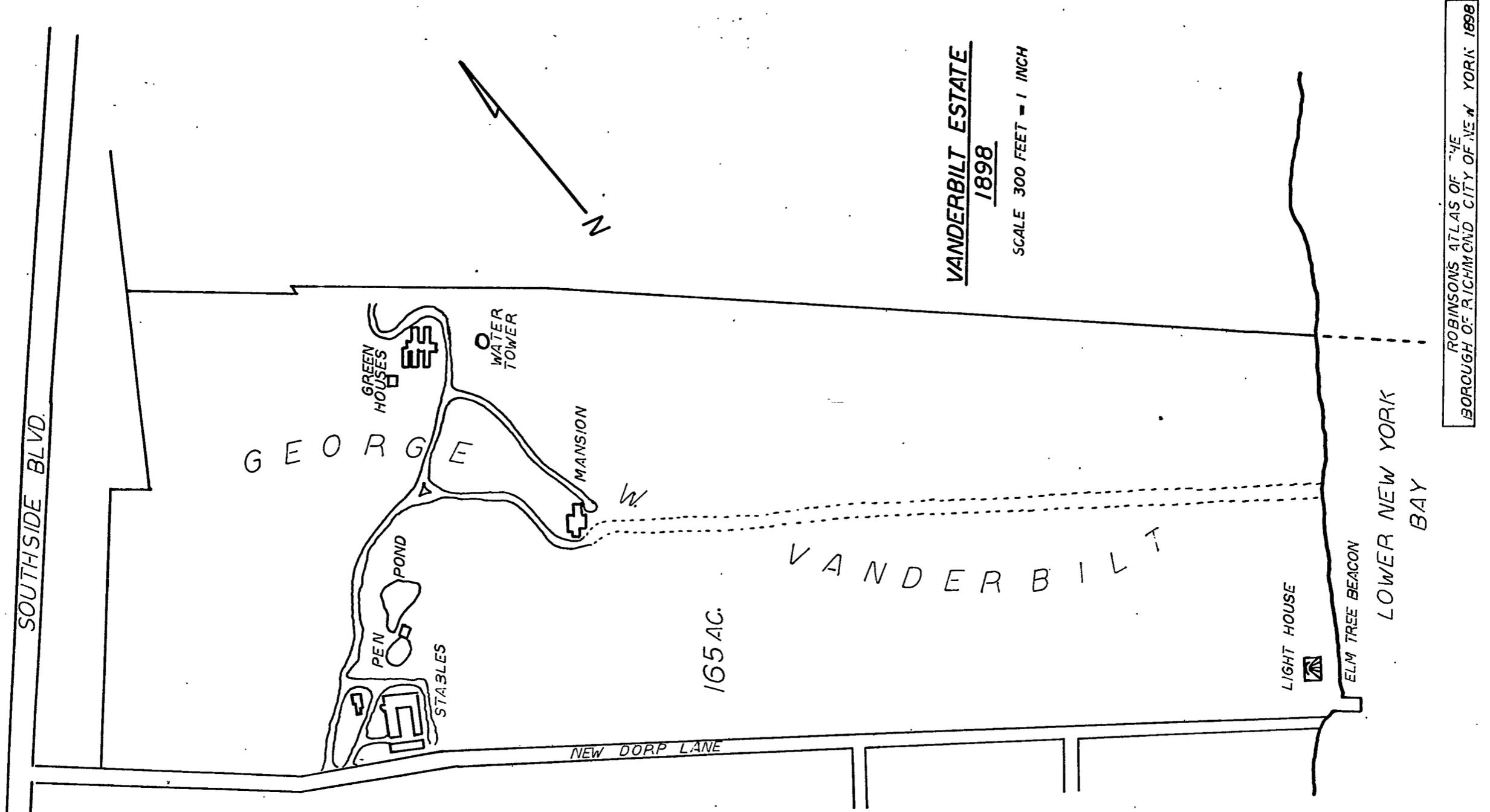


Figure 22: A map of the Vanderbilt Estate in 1898. This map shows the estate at the height of its development. Miller Field's boundary is the same boundary as the Vanderbilt Estate. The map was adapted from Robinson's Atlas of 1898 by F. Bluefeld.

Vanderbilt Homestead, New Dorp, Richmond Borough, N. Y.

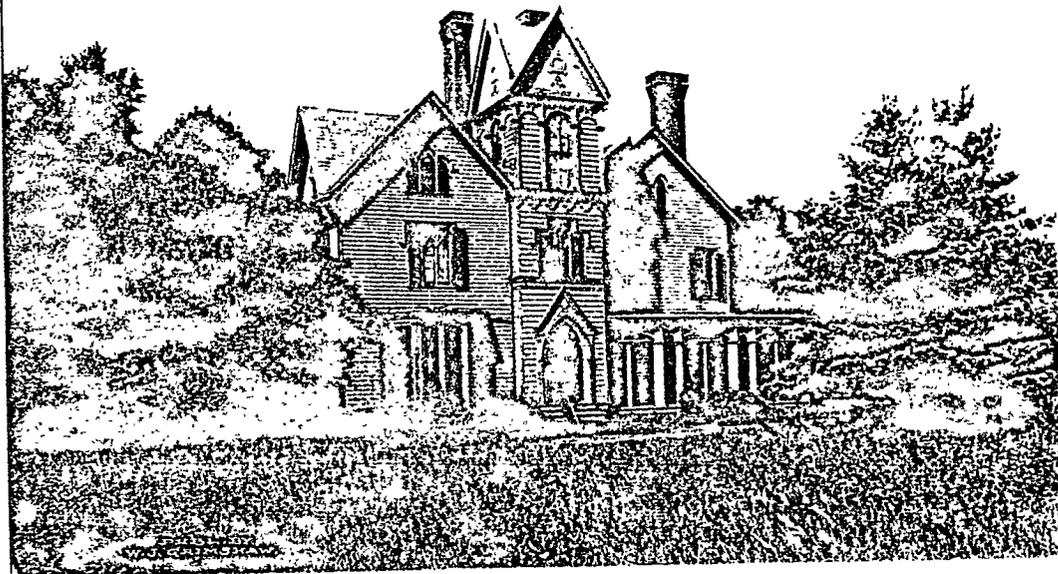
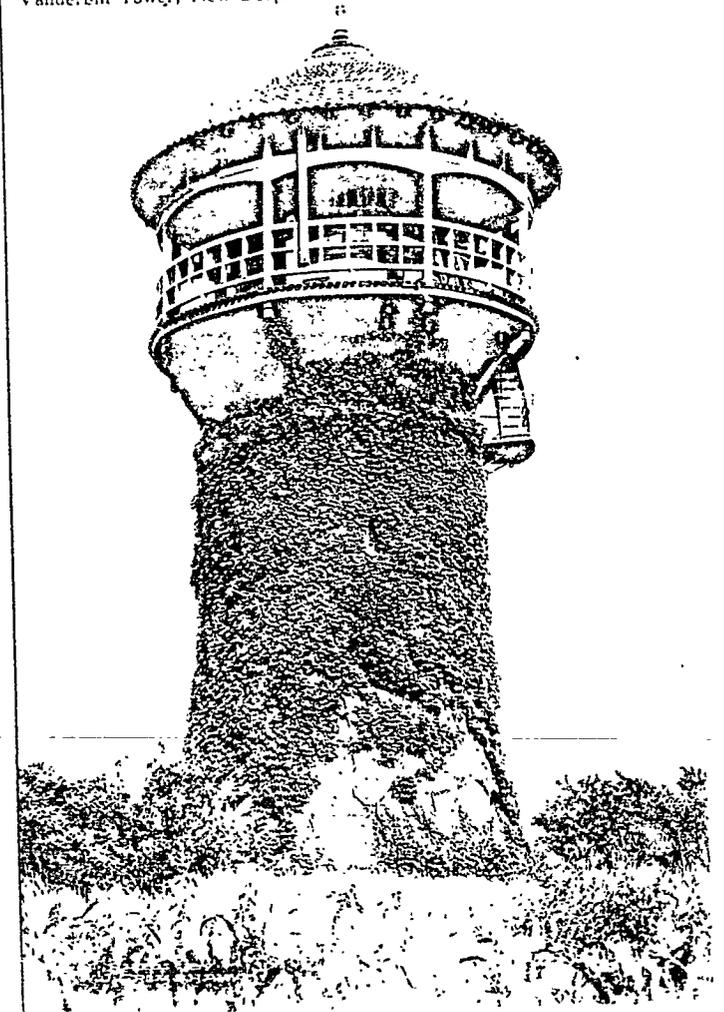


Figure 24: The Vanderbilt Mansion, post-1907
(S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection).

Figure 23: The Vanderbilt Tower, post-1907
(S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection).

Vanderbilt Tower, New Dorp.

Staten Island, N. Y.



front (see figure #24). Also on the plot were a Catholic and an Episcopal church (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:966; Robinson's Atlas, 1898 & 1907; Wren, 1975: 79-80).⁷

In 1919 the Army took possession of the Vanderbilt Estate. Changes had to be made by the Army in order to convert the Vanderbilt property into an airfield.

In adapting the Vanderbilt farm to air-station use, trees, shrubbery, and fences were removed from the field; the stable was converted into a garage, its paved barnyard into a parking lot, and its wings into store-rooms; the mansion was converted into an officers mess and the dairy into a radio receiving station (Wren, 1975:80).

Even though the Army tried to utilize existing buildings some structures, in this case the two churches, had to be demolished (Wren, 1975:80).

In the 1920's the field was used frequently by private companies for testing aircraft. However, the original runway presented some problems in landing and changes had to be made. Some of the old buildings had to be demolished

⁷Also see "Old Vanderbilt Mansion To Make Way for Planes," "High Miller Field Tower To Be Raised as Menace," Davis Notebooks 22; "The Lamp in the New York's Window," Davis Notebooks 63.

in order to lengthen the runways. In addition, a number of new buildings were erected including the air and sea-plane hangers (see figure #25).

One structure that was not demolished was the Elm Tree Lighthouse (see figure #26). In the late 1700's and early 1800's a large tree at the foot of New Dorp Lane served as a mark for passing ships (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I:341). According to Wrenn (1975:96) by 1852 there was a lighthouse at the foot of New Dorp Lane known as the Elm Tree Light Station. In 1890 the lighthouse had to be moved slightly because of a change in the coast line and channel (see figures #21 and 22). However, it still stood on the edge of the Vanderbilt property. Wrenn (1975:97) believes that the light identified on a 1960 Army site plan of Miller Field is a "twentieth century enclosure of the old light".

Miller Field is an archaeologically rich area. Certainly a variety of buildings from the 17th through the 20th century stood on this property. In addition to the foundations to these structures, many wells and privies may be still intact and undisturbed in the ground. The Army records, which are housed in Washington, D.C. and in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, should be checked to see

Miller Field U. S. Air Service New Long, Staten Island, N. Y.



Figure 25: Miller Field Hangers, 1933 (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection).

Light House, New Dorp Beach, Staten Island, N. Y.

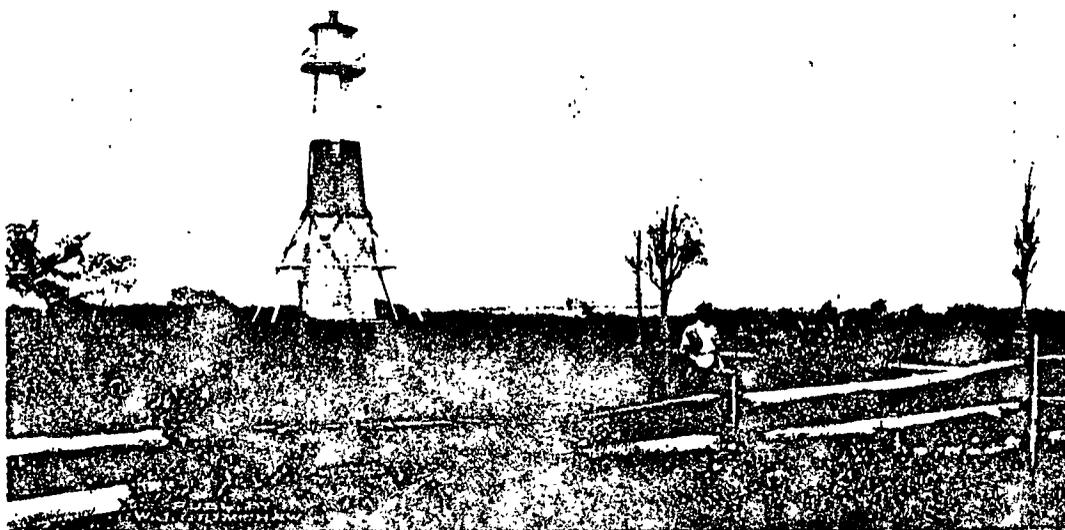


Figure 26: Elm Tree Lighthouse, post-1907 (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Postcard Collection). The lighthouse was located near the waters edge on the Vanderbilt property.

exactly how the pre-20th century structures were demolished. In addition, one should check the records to see how much subsurface disturbance there was in building the runways and military buildings. If construction work is done on Miller Field, especially on the portion of the field that bordered on New Dorp Lane, then some archaeological testing should be done.

The Britton Cottage

Immediately adjacent to Miller Field is another sea front plot. This land was occupied from the late 1660's to the middle of the 20th century. The Britton Cottage, a famous Staten Island home, was built on this property. It was owned by a number of families, descendants of early immigrants to Staten Island, who later became well known in the community (see figure #27). These 17th and 18th century owners represent, in many ways, the typical early immigrants to Staten Island.

On September 29, 1677 Governor Edmund Andros granted by patent to Obadiah Holmes a tract of land known as the Governor's Lot (Leng & Davis, 1930, II:908). The lot was 96 acres. It was bounded on the southwest by the bay and by New Dorp Lane on the northeast. The original patent also granted Holmes another piece of land, 12 acres of meadow. This second lot bordered the larger one on the southwest and fronted on the bay. The most striking physical feature of the property was the famous elm tree, standing on Governor's Lot, which was later used as a beacon to warn mariners that they were approaching land (McMillan, 1940: 6-8).¹

¹Also see the Britton Family Correspondence, U38, 65, A.

Obadiah Holmes was, apparently, the descendant of a Baptist Minister from Salem. He moved to Staten Island from Gravesend Long Island. The date of his arrival is not known but there are records of his presence in the county in 1670 (Leng & Davis, 1930, vol II:908). Holmes was chosen constable in 1674 and, some five years later town clerk. He seems to have held the latter position through the 1680's, serving under Governor Leisler. The job of clerk was of some importance. At that time, the town's government only consisted of a constable, five overseers and a clerk. (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol I: 125, 132, II: 534, 536).²

In the 18 years he owned the property Holmes and his wife Elizabeth established a working farm. They built a modest fieldstone house around 1677. The house was situated on New Dorp Land towards the center of the plot. The ground floor consisted of a kitchen and a smaller room, most likely, the master bedroom. On the north side of the house was a hall which contained the entrance and a stair to the second floor. The two rooms on the second floor were probably bedrooms for children (McMillan, 1940: 8-10).

²There is a suggestion that Abraham Lincoln descended from a branch of the Obadiah Holmes family (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II: 908).

The original fieldstone walls are twenty-two inches thick. They are "laid up without coursing in clay" and are protected inside and outside with an oyster shell mortar. In general, the construction is not noteworthy except for two features. On the roof of the house there is a difference between the front and rear roof pitch. The reason for this irregularity is not clear. It may have resulted from a change in the plans during construction. The inside of the house, moreover, contains a lovely example of colonial craftsmanship; a door and doorway between the two rooms on the first floor of the cottage.

A solid beaded door frame is set in the stone partition wall and completed with molded trim. The shelf over the doorway, designed for the silver tandard or pewter plate, is a continental touch not usual in our early houses. (McMillan, 1950: 8-10).

The Holmes' also built a barn and a stable and planted a garden and an orchard. Eventually they decided to relocate in Salem, West New Jersey, and they sold their homestead to Nathaniel Britton on October 28, 1695 for 90 pounds (Liber of Deeds B: 608).³

³It is not altogether clear which Obadiah Holmes sold the property. In 1679 Obadiah Holmes conveyed the title to the homestead to his son Obadiah Holmes (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II: 908).

The Britton family name was probably originally Le Briton. They came from Brittany (France) and, according to the family, moved to England along with William the Conqueror. In 1635, the first of the family, a James Britton, moved from London to the New World.⁴ According to John O'Connor (1966:17-20), Nathaniel Britton and his brother William immigrated in 1652 and settled in New Hampshire. From there they moved to Long Island and then in 1660 to Flatlands, Brooklyn. In Brooklyn the brothers married daughters of Nicholas Stillwell. Both had sons named Nathaniel and both families moved to Staten Island in 1664 or shortly thereafter (O'Connor, 1966: 17-20). Once they settled in, the Brittons appear to have prospered and become respected members of the community. Nathaniel I owned land in Dover (Old Town) and near New Dorp where he held tracts of 40 and 144 acres.⁵ Governor Lovelace appointed Nathaniel to a committee to negotiate with Staten Island Indians⁶ in 1670, while his brother William was elected constable in 1678 (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I: 115, 144; Vol. IV: 480). Nathaniel I died in 1683 and one of the next

⁴Nathaniel Lord Britton, "The Governor's Lot And The Britton Cottage," Britton Family Corr., U38, 65, A.

⁵Nathaniel Lord Britton, "The Governor's Lot And The Britton Cottage," Britton Family Corr., U38, 65, A.

⁶The Indians were an Algonkian group known as the Leni Lenape (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol.1:71).

generation of Nathaniels, it is not clear which one, purchased Governor's Lot from the Holmes' (O'Connor, 1966:17-18).

Around 1700 the Brittons enlarged their cottage. They added a two story extension on the south side. The lower room was a kitchen and the upper a sleeping chamber. In the kitchen was a large open fireplace spanned by an oak mantel. To the rear of the fireplace was a semi-circular brick "Dutch" oven (McMillan, 1940: 11-12).

In April 9, 1714, Nathaniel and his wife Elizabeth of the third generation of Brittons on Staten Island sold the lot to Thomas Walton for 129 pounds (Liber of Deeds C: 48-50). Either just before the sale or just after it, Britton or Walton built a lean-to for storage purposes immediately adjacent to the kitchen (McMillan, 1940: 12, Plate IV, Fig. C).

Thomas Walton was a yeoman and the owner of a number of plots of land (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I: 120). He got one of them as early as 1668 (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I:113). Walton was one of the earliest English immigrants to settle on Staten Island. A rather pugnacious man, he apparently had difficulties with his French and Dutch neighbors. When the Dutch reconquered the

province in the summer of 1673, the Dutch magistrate-sheriff, a neighbor, saw fit to disarm him, seizing two guns (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I:118; II:534, 972). Ten years later, after the English had retaken New York, Walton was elected constable (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II: 972). Unhappily, this did not end his problems. In 1687 authorities were badgering him for payment of taxes which were in arrears (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I:133).

Walton's reluctance to pay taxes may have been part of a wider protest. The 1680's were difficult times. Governor Thomas Dongan, following instructions from the Proprietor the Duke of York (later James II), called New York's first General Assembly. When the Assembly met it passed the "Charter of Liberties" and, unsurprisingly, new taxes. Three years later the Duke reversed himself. He revoked the Charter and dissolved the Assembly. But, again, unsurprisingly, the taxes which the Assembly passed were not revoked. At the same time, Governor Dongan decided to recall the land patents issued by Governor Andros and replace them with new ones requiring higher quitrents. To make matters even worse, the French were intervening in in the Albany region and there were threats from the Iroquois. In 1687 the Governor felt

compelled to put the militia in readiness. The Governor's actions triggered local protests in Staten Island and Jamaica, Queens. These local protests apparently took the form of withholding taxes and threats by the militia (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. I:133). Thus, Walton's tax arrearage was probably part of a larger movement.⁷

The protests on Staten Island did not remain localized for long. In 1687 Governor Dongan was removed and New York lost its charter and was incorporated in the ill fated Dominion of New England, ruled by Governor Edmund Andros. The next year an Indian war broke out and the province suffered through a rebellion known by the name of one of its leaders, Jacob Leisler.⁸

Thomas Walton's son Thomas II was, like his father, a freeholder. He was also a sergeant in the militia of 1715 (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:972). In February 19, 1728, Thomas Walton II inherited the house from his father. He then proceeded to purchase the legacies of his brothers and sisters, keeping the lot intact (McMillan, 1940:6).

⁷For an overview of the whole episode see Kammen, 1975: 102-111.

⁸For Leisler's Rebellion see Kammen, 1975: 118-127. There is a large literature on the rebellion. For a useful bibliography on the subject see Kammen, 1975: 38-38.

Thomas's son Thomas Walton III sold the lot to Isaac Cubberly on June 20, 1761 for 1400 pounds (Liber of Deeds E:84).⁹

The Cubberlys were of English descent. The family name was originally Caverly.¹⁰ They came to Staten Island from New Jersey in 1769 (Clute, 1877:368). Since the Cubberly family and their slaves occupied the house for 86 years, it was popularly known as the "Cubberly House." Nevertheless, the family called the property "The Cedars" because of the presence of the beautiful trees in the area (Hollick, 1915:68, 73).

The last major addition to the house was made about 1790, probably by James Cubberly. He modified the building by adding an extension on the north side. On the first floor were two rooms. The front room was a formal parlor with exposed beams, four paneled doors and a fireplace. Above, in the second floor, space was created for an eventual expansion. About 1830 the second floor

⁹The Will is recorded in "Abstracts of Unrecorded Wills Prior To 1790," XI, 71. Also see Nathaniel Lord Britton, "The Governor's Lot And The Britton Cottage," Britton Family Corr., U38, 65, A.

¹⁰Cubberly was spelled in a variety of ways (Clute, 1877: 368; Hollick, 1915, Vol. V:73-74).

was subdivided into two rooms. In addition, the east elevation was improved by adding four dormer gable windows on the second floor (McMillan, 1940:9, 12-13).

On June 26, 1847 the executors of the estate of Isaac Cubberly II sold the house to David J. Tysen for \$8,700 (Liber of Deeds 16:272). The Tysens were of Dutch origins. The American founder of the family was probably Thys Barentsen of Leirdam who came to Staten Island in 1661. His son changed the family name to Tysen (Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. II:963-964). By 1672 Thys Barentson was applying for land grants and over the course of time the family (under the name of Tysen) prospered in real estate (Bayles, 1887:584). David J. Tysen's handling of the Cubberly estate suggests why the family did well. Eleven days after purchasing the lot, he sold it to Harriet Lord of New York City for \$12,500, netting a profit of \$3,880 or almost 50 per cent. Tysen also reserved for himself and his heirs the right to fish and use the beach (Liber of Deeds 16:163-164).

When Harriet Lord died she willed the estate to her niece Harriet Lord Britton, the mother of Nathaniel Lord Britton. He came into possession of the house and a small portion of land surrounding it when his mother's estate was

divided in 1912. Thus, a bit less than two centuries after it had passed through their hands, the Brittons regained the lot.¹¹

Nathaniel Lord Britton was born in New Dorp in January 15, 1859.¹² Educated at Columbia University, he became active in scientific circles. Upon graduation from the School of Mines in 1879, he was appointed an Assistant in Geology at Columbia. In the 1880's, Britton worked with the Geological Survey of New Jersey and with the United States Geological Survey. He also earned a Ph.D. from Columbia and helped organize the Natural Science Association, the forerunner of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. Over the course of time, Britton's interests broadened. In 1886, Columbia appointed him instructor of botany and a year later instructor of zoology. In 1896 he became the first director-in-chief of the New York Botanical Garden, a post he held for 33 years. During his directorship the Gardens became the third largest institution of its kind in the world. These activities did not stand in the way of an

¹¹Nathaniel Lord Britton, "The Governor's Lot And The Britton Cottage," Britton Family Corr., U38, 65, A.

¹²For biographical material on Nathaniel Lord Britton see: Howe, 1934; Leng & Davis, 1930, Vol. IV:479-480; Leng, 1934.

active scientific career. Dr. Britton published notable works on the Flora of Northern United States and Canada, on the rose, and upon the cactus. After 1913, he helped organize large-scale surveys of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Dr. Britton died on June 26, 1934 at the age of 75.

In December 1914 Nathaniel Britton donated the Cubberly house and garden to the Staten Island Association of Arts and Sciences, (later to be known as the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences) so that the building could be preserved as an example of old colonial cottage architecture (Liber of Deeds 443:503). After the Association took over the property the building was used for museum purposes. The upper floor was occupied by the custodian and the first floor was furnished by the Daughters of Pennsylvania (Rundlett, 1949). Dr. Britton maintained the property until his death in 1934; from then until about 1939 the house decayed and was in need of extensive repair. Through donations and aid from a WPA project the roof, front and rear porches, windows and siding were repaired (McMillan, 1939:19, 23). In the 1940's the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences planned and constructed a memorial garden on the Britton property (see figure #28). The garden was to be built in honor of

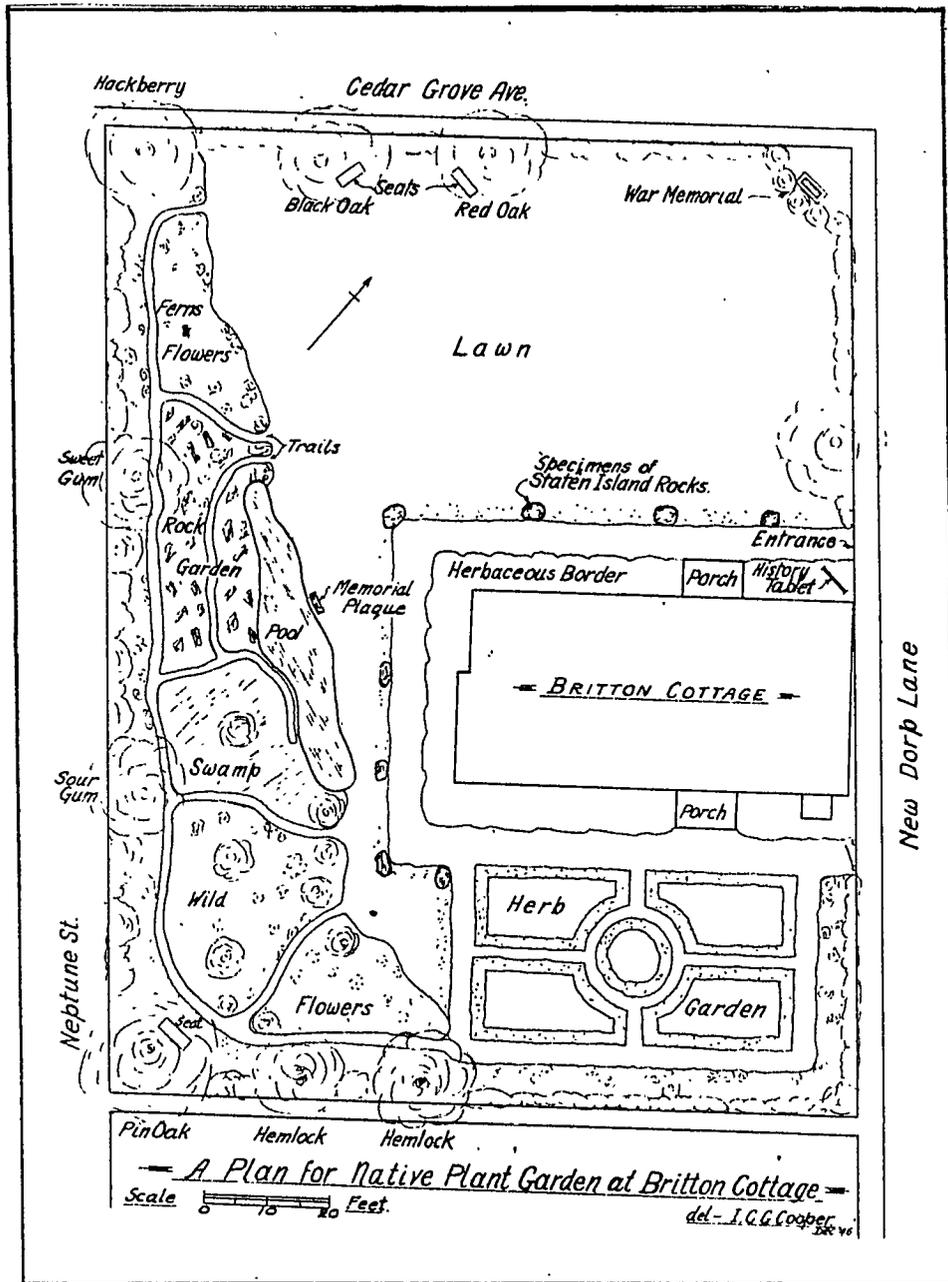


Figure 28: A plan for the Memorial Garden at the Britton Cottage (Cooper, 1947).

Dr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Lord Britton (Cooper, 1947). Except for the installation of the water supply and the pool, the planting and building of the garden probably did not cause major disturbances to the in-ground archaeological material. Since then no new structures have been erected on the plot. The ownership of the Britton Cottage was transferred in 1951 to the Staten Island Historical Society for inclusion in the Richmondtown Restoration Project. In 1964 when the house was threatened by urban development in the New Dorp Beach area, the stone portions of the house were disassembled and the wood portions moved to Richmondtown. To date the shell of the house has been re-constructed and the Society is planning the refurbishment of the interior.¹³

While we know that the plot was used as a farm we know little about the land use patterns. Aside from the deed of Obadiah Holmes which described a barn, stable and garden (Liber of Deeds B:608), the only other record we have is the water color painting by Adam Spies circa 1848-1850 (see figure #29). The painting portrays a small structure near the property line which was probably

¹³Personal communication with Mr. Charles Sachs of the Staten Island Historical Society, Feb. 1980.

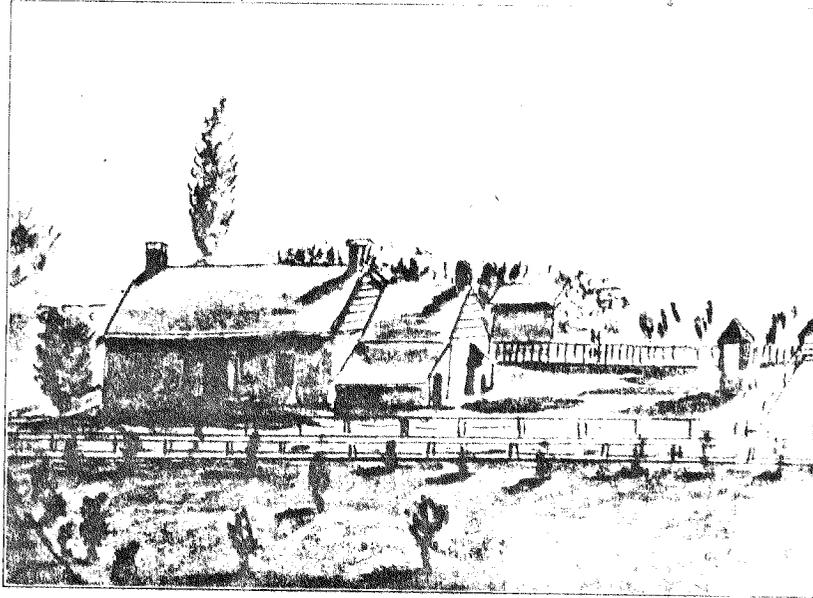


Figure 29: Watercolor sketch of the Britton Cottage by Adam W. Spies about 1840-50 (S.I.I.A.S. Collection)

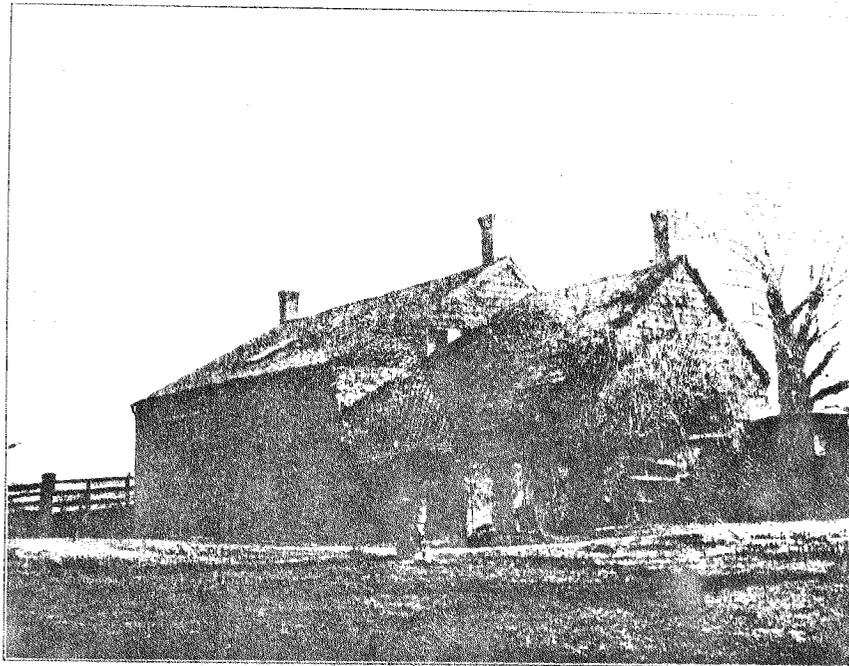


Figure 30: Photograph of the Britton Cottage by Arthur Hollick Jan. 5, 1915 (S.I.I.A.S. Davis Collection).

an outhouse. It also shows a building, beyond the fence that enclosed the house and garden, which was either a shed or a small barn or a stable. The 20th century photographs of the property show only close-up views of the cottage and they provide no additional information on land use (see figure #30).

Even though the house has been moved, the wells, privies, refuse pits, and possibly some outbuilding foundations are probably still under the ground. The most important and useful archaeological data on the Britton property will undoubtedly come from these in-ground features and not from the house itself.

Great Kills Park

Great Kills Park is located on the southernmost portion of the Gateway property in Staten Island unit. This section of the unit contains a well sheltered harbor that is protected to the south and east by a long peninsula known as Crooke's Point. This natural harbor has been used by fishermen since the late 1600's (Hill, 1958: 31). In addition to fishing, clamming and oystering were done until the waters became polluted in the early 20th century. Today clam beds are still present in the harbor, although it is illegal to harvest the shellfish (Dames and Moore, 1976:115). In the 20th century the harbor was developed as a marina for both fishing boats and pleasure crafts. In the 1930's the City of New York planned to build a public park; work was carried out in the 1940's and the park was opened (on a limited basis) in 1949 (Wrenn, 1975:75).

For most of its history, there has only been a minimal amount of construction in Great Kills.¹ Prior to the 20th century the only structures (excluding the

¹After a brief perusal of the land transfers via a map search, we felt that a title search would be too time consuming in proportion to the amount of data that it would yield.

docks in the harbor) on this property were Lake's grist mill and three houses on Crooke's Point (see figure #31). Lake's mill, located off Great Kills Harbor, was one of 19 mills on Staten Island (McMillen, 1949:3). McMillen writes that "four generations of Daniel Lakes' were in possession of the property and one of them in all likelihood built the mill, for frequent mention is made in the records of 'Daniel Lake's Mill' and 'Daniel Lake, miller, living at the mill'".² On Dripps' map of Staten Island, published in 1850, the mill on Mill Creek is listed under the name of Loveridge not Lake. On Butler's map of 1853 the mill is still listed under Loveridge. It is not clear whether Dripps and Butler meant that Loveridge owned the mill or merely operated it. On Beer's Atlas of 1874 the mill is shown as Lake's grist mill. On subsequent atlases and insurance maps the mill is not listed. Davis (Davis Collection) notes that in 1890 he visited the Lake family and saw the mill that had not operated for some years. In an article written in 1942 Davis mention the 1890 visit and that the mill had been demolished about 1895 or 1896. He added that "for a

²The 17th and 18th century maps do not show a mill on this land. McMillen, unfortunately, does not indicate where he obtained this information.

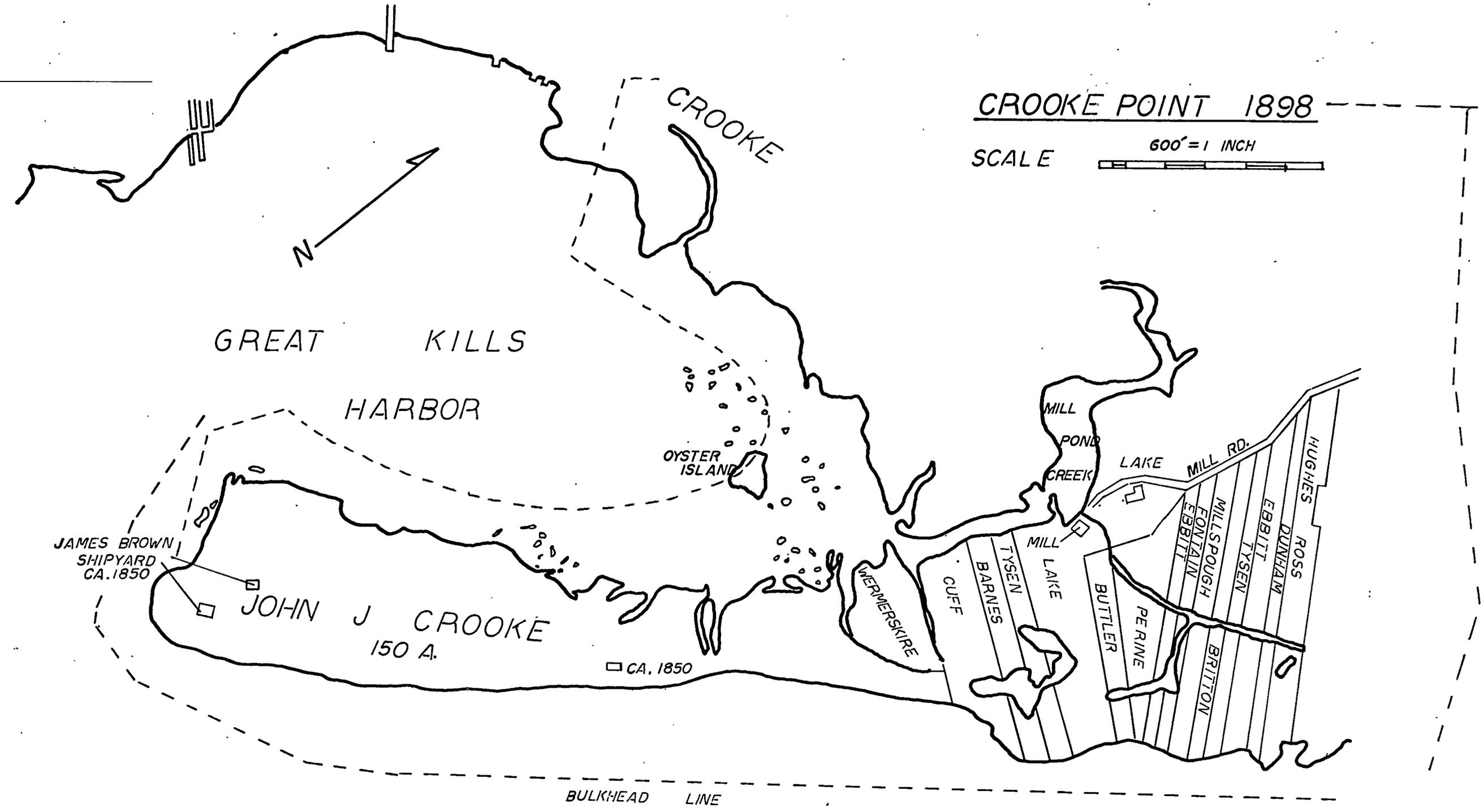


Figure 31: A map of Crooke's Point in 1898. This map, drawn by F. Bluefeld, was based on Robinson's Atlas of 1898 and Dripp's Map of Staten Island in 1850. The dotted line represents the current park boundary.

ROBINSONS ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND CITY OF NEW YORK 1898

number of years the old mill-stone and a portion of the old wheel were on the meadow near the one-time site of the mill, but what remained of the wheel was cut up for fire wood during the cold winter of 1933-34" (Davis, 1942:137).³ In a watercolor sketch of the mill made in 1891, it is shown as a small frame structure situated in an almost marsh-like meadow (see figure #32). The mill was run by tidal power. Balch (1923:2) states that it had "a dam and a tidal gate and water was stored up during flood tide for use during the ebb." Given its size (assuming the sketch is accurate) it does not appear to have been a large commercial mill. McMillen (1951:4) states that it was merely a local country mill "which ground only for farmers in the neighborhood of the mill." The site where the mill once stood was disturbed in the 20th century when New York City carried out a major land-filling operation during the building of Great Kills Park. The construction of the Park probably obliterated any remnants of the mill.

Crooke's Point is named after its 19th century owner John J. Crooke, scientist, naturalist and businessman.

³Photographs of the broken mill-stone and wheel were taken by Davis in 1925 and 1926 are now in the Davis Collection.



Figure 32: Drawing of Lake's Mill, 1891 (S.I.I.A.S. Archives, Print Collection). This sketch of Lake's Mill was drawn by William Rickarby Miller in Aug. 1891.

Crooke had a year round residence near Amboy Road which is about a mile or so from the harbor. The Crooke Collection provides a clear view of the 19th century land use of his property. Most of the land was simply farm land with salt hay being grown near the water. In 1840 Crooke's Point was described as being part salt marsh and part beach land whose "only production is sedge (beach grass), which is of little use" (Crooke Collection, Land Papers, 1840). The Dripps' map of 1850 shows three structures on Crooke's Point (see figure #31). However, J. Browns name is listed by two of the buildings with no name by the third one. These buildings appear again on Butler's map of 1853 with the same caption. According to the land papers in the Crooke Collection, Crooke still owned the land, but the buildings belonged to other people. James Brown, a shipwright, lived on the point and owned and operated a shipyard near his house. The third building near Bass Creek was occupied by a fisherman (no name given). We could not find any information on the size, shape, construction and condition of these buildings.⁴ Only one building appears on Beer's Atlas of 1874, and

⁴On both Butler's and Dripps' maps, the locations of the buildings are marked by black dots, and no other information is given.

this structure does not show up on any later maps. Davis (1911:170) writes that "the place where Brown lived was afterwards used as a clubhouse, and because of some disagreement between the clubmen and the natives the house was set on fire, and now only the hole in the ground, where the foundation was, remains." There is no exact date for this fire, nor do we know how, when or why the other two buildings were destroyed.

From the 1880's until the 1920's no buildings existed on Crooke's Point.⁵ In the 1920's squatters moved onto Crooke's Point and built bungalows. We know that in 1930 the New York City Park Commissioner John J. O'Rourke granted an 8 month lease for the 78 bungalows on the Point (Staten Island Advance, May 12, 1930). In the summer of 1930 the City Health Department inspectors declared that more than 1/3 of the bungalows were inhabited in violation of the sanitary code, but the buildings were not demolished until the lease expired (Staten Island Advance, Dec. 9, 1930).

On the various 19th century maps Crooke's point appears to be fairly stable (in size) but on the 20th

⁵Crooke sold his land to Morris Jesup in 1900 (libre of Deeds 278, pp. 59-160). The land went through a series of transfers until the City of New York acquired the land, which it developed into a city park.

century maps one can see a rapid decrease in its length and width. In 1923 engineer Glen Balch wrote a report on the problem of erosion in Great Kills Harbor.

With the dredging of Ambrose Channel there appears to have been a decided change in the wave and tidal action along the Staten Island shore and Crooke's Point was an area that soon felt the effects of it. The outside beach began to scour away and within a few years the sea broke through the point at high water...and the gap widened and deepened more and more rapidly as greater volumes of water passed through and the larger part of the sand of which the point had been composed was carried through and spread out over the harbor, and the point which once contained 180 acres has shrunk to an island of approximately 30 acres (Balch, 1923:3).

Balch's report recommended that the harbor and the point (now owned by New York City) could be saved by a combination of dredging, land filling, and the adding of new bulkheads. From 1923 to 1937 various studies were done on the harbor and recommendations were made, but the actual land filling did not begin until 1940. (Wrenn, 1975:75). Figure #33 taken from the city pamphlet, *The Implement of Marine Park*, shows the difference in Crooke's Point before and after the filling and dredging had begun. Salt marshes and some areas of the harbor (including parts of the Point) that were underwater were covered with



Figure 33: Aerial view of Great Kills (Improvement of Marine Park, 1940). The 1934 photograph was taken prior to the reclamation work on the harbor. The 1940 photograph was taken after a major portion of dredging and landfilling was completed. The 20th century erosion caused a major transformation in Crooke's Point.

sanitary land fill (see figure #34). Once the desired size was reached, the ground was covered with an artificial topsoil which was simply clay mixed with sludge reclaimed from the city sewage (Wrenn, 1975:75). This soil was quite fertile and plants and grasses are growing here today. This whole area was designed as a city park and recreation area with a marina, bathhouse, and parking lots, and it is still being used as a park today. In terms of the archaeological data, it is unlikely if any traces of the 78 bungalows, the 19th century buildings, or any archaeological material relating to either will be found. The erosion of the Point in the early 20th century probably destroyed some data (refer to figures #31 and #33 to see the extent of the erosion). The dredging of the harbor, building of the new bulkheads, and reshaping the Point destroyed other material (see figure #34). Whatever was left is now underneath tons of sanitary landfill. Our knowledge of Crooke's Point must come solely from the documents.

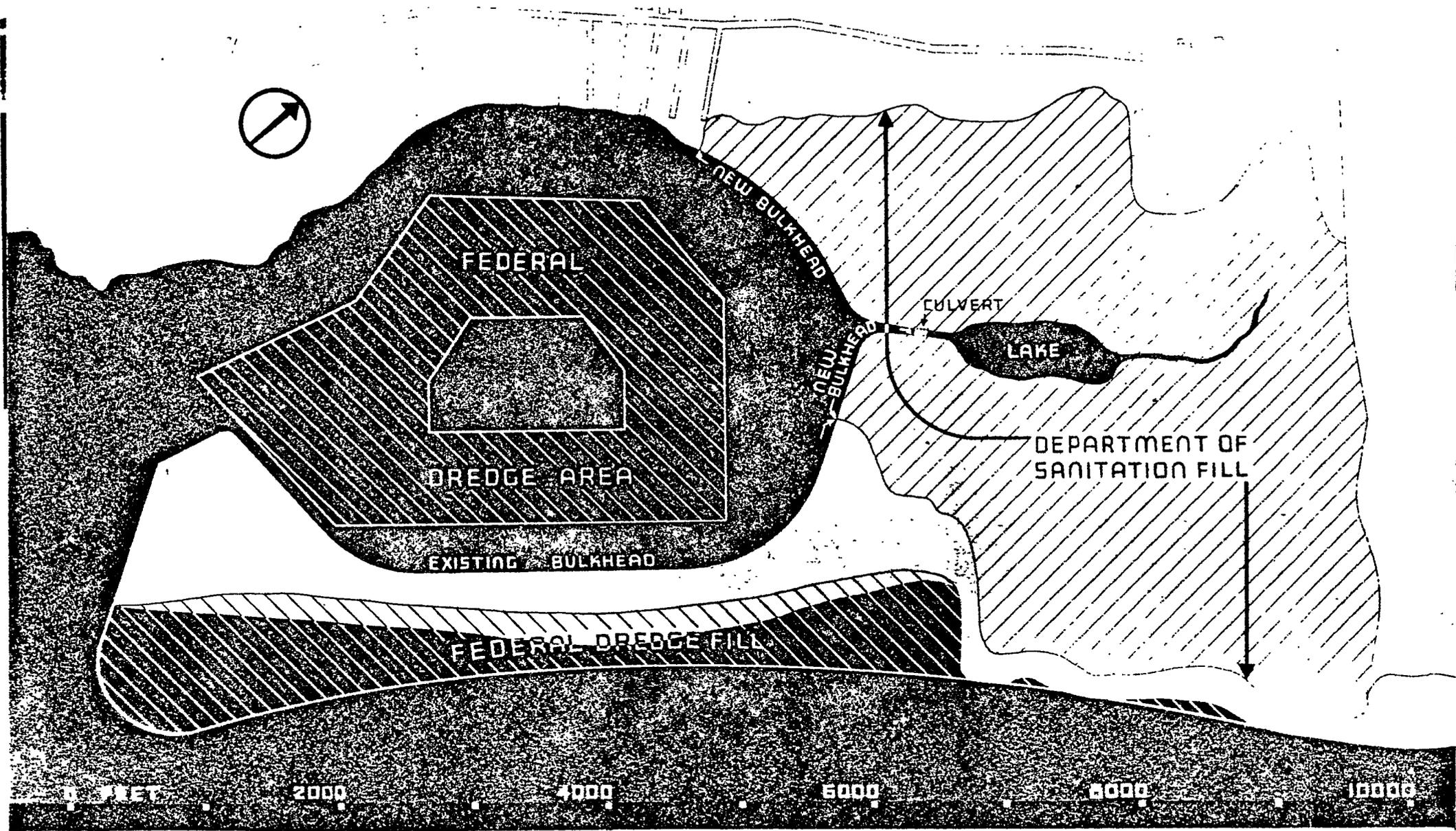


Figure 34: Reclamation Plan for Great Kills Park (Improvement, Marine Park 1940)
 This drawing shows the joint city and federal plan for dredging and land filling the park. Crooke's Point has been partially reconstructed in this drawing.

Recommendations

We believe that much more research can and should be done on the Fort Wadsworth area. Because of the limited budget of this project we were not able to utilize the material in the National Archives in Washington or the military library in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. At this point we have no information on the nature of the sub-surface disturbance during the Fort's various construction phases. Without this information we do not know if a great deal of archaeological data (from the 19th century estates and the 17th century Dutch settlement) are undisturbed and buried underneath lawns and sports fields in the southwestern portion of the reservation.

Due to time limitations we were only able to devote a small portion of the report to the Arrochar estates. More research should be done on the estates, the people who lived there and the reasons for the estates demise.

In addition, further research can be done on the fortifications, in general. It would be useful to have a better understanding of the people who utilized the Fort, e.g., did these men live here for long stretches of time, were there families living at the Fort, what was the socio-economic, educational background of these 19th

century soldiers, etc. Further research on the actual construction of the fortifications can be done in the military library in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Miller Field is an archaeologically rich area. A variety of buildings from the 17th through the 20th century once stood on this property. In addition to the foundations of these structures, many wells and privies may still be intact and undisturbed in the ground. The military records in Washington and Pennsylvania should be checked to see exactly how the pre-20th century structures were demolished. In addition, the documents should be reviewed to determine the extent of subsurface disturbance during the building of the runways and military structures.

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and Clifton, 1845

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Butler's Map of Staten Island or Richmond County, 1853

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General Site and Building Use Map, Miller Army Air
Field, 1961

General Site Map, Fort Wadsworth, 1962

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Land Surveys, 1676-1680

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Notes on the Annotated Bibliography

The archives of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences has, in our opinion, the island's most valuable collection for historic research. The island's public and college libraries do not have extensive resources on the island's history; in fact, most of their material is of a fairly general nature. The relevant holdings in these libraries are also found in the Institute's archives. The majority of the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography are available at the Institute. Some of these documents can also be found in the Staten Island Historical Society's (S.I.H.S.) library. It should be noted that it was difficult to work efficiently in the S.I.H.S. library because only a portion of the documents are catalogued and the library is not manned by a professional staff. The S.I.H.S. library, as of February 1980, is closed. The Institute also has more primary and secondary source material about Staten Island than larger libraries in NYC such as New York Historical Society and New York Public Library.

The Institute has 71 cubic feet of maps. Surprisingly, the Institute's collection of maps, dealing with the Gateway area, is more extensive than the collection found in the Topographic Office in Boro Hall, Saint George, Staten Island and in the County Court House, Saint George. Except for

four recent maps, all of the Gateway related maps in these County Offices are also found at the Institute. The Institute's maps are all catalogued and cross-indexed. We have not utilized the Staten Island Historical Society's map collection since it was not catalogued.

Both the Institute and the Staten Island Historical Society's library have print collections. The Institute's prints take up 60 cubic feet of space and the collection is catalogued and cross-indexed. The S.I.H.S. collection is not catalogued.

The Institute has 50 cubic feet of photographs. The photographs provide data on architecture, topography and geography. The S.I.H.S. library also has a photographic collection including Alice Austin's material. Both collections are catalogued.

The Institute and Hugh Powell, a former Institute staff member, both have postcard collections. These collections contain scenes of houses, hotels, streets and events on Staten Island that are not illustrated in any other form.

The Institute has a collection of clippings (called the "shirtbox collection") from the Staten Island Advance,

the major local newspaper. The material is catalogued. The clippings are filed in folders by their geographical location, e.g., South Beach, Great Kills and Midland Beach, and by topics, e.g., aviation, military, and summer resorts. After reading a wide variety of the articles pertaining to the Gateway we found that, for the most part, they contained only general information. Unfortunately, we did find some inaccuracies in the ones that we read.

The County records are all housed in the County Court House in Saint George, Staten Island. The county owns the following records: census records, Federal 1830-1900; census records, State 1855-1925; deeds 1670 to present; mortgages 1670 to present; wills 1787 to present, and letters of administration 1787 to present. The City Directories are located in the S.I.H.S. library, which is now closed.

Primary Sources

Maps

All the maps, unless noted, are located in the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences' Library.

Armament Sketch, Fort Wadsworth, 1902

These military maps show the batteries and provide data on their construction, their gun placement and their firing power. Map is filed in the Fort Hamilton Library.

Bay and Port of New York, 1764

Houses are marked by dots (no owners are listed) but the exact number and placement of buildings should be questioned.

Beers' Atlas of Staten Island, 1874

These excellent maps not only show property lines, owners and houses, but they provide structural information on the buildings.

Beers' Atlas of Staten Island, 1887

Excellent maps. See comments above.

Blood's Map of New Brighton, Tompkinsville, Stapleton and Clifton, 1845

The map shows property boundaries and owners. Fort Wadsworth is the only park that appears on this map.

British Empire in North America, 1733

The section of Henry Popple's map showing New York and Perth Amboy Harbor is inaccurate. All the towns are placed in the wrong locations.

Bromley's Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, 1917, vol. 2

These excellent maps not only show property lines, owners and houses, but they provide structural information on the buildings.

Butler's Map of Staten Island or Richmond County, 1853

This map locates some buildings and owners but does not provide the detailed information that one would find in a late 19th century atlas or insurance map. The map does not provide a completely accurate representation of the south shore coast line, so one should regard the placement of all buildings near the water as simply approximate locations.

Chart of the Entrance of Hudson's River, 1776

The British map shows New York harbor with banks and water depth. The coastal outline of Staten Island is accurate but the island was not drawn in scale with the other boroughs.

Chart and Plan of the Harbour of New York, 1781

This British map is more concerned with the water (depths and channels) than with the land. A few towns on Staten Island are noted by black dots but the drawing of the whole island is inaccurate.

Chart of the Port of New York and the Surrounding County, 1690

The map is very inaccurate and presents a distorted view of Staten Island. Dots marked the location of Old Town and New Town.

Chart of Staten Island Waters, no date

Map indicates the island's meadows, marsh, cultivated ground and forests. It shows the placements of; the estates in Accochar (now Fort Wadsworth); Fort Tompkins; Fort Richmond, and a few batteries.

Colton's Map of Staten Island, 1884

This map contains almost as much information as Beers' atlas of 1887.

County Miles Round the City of New York, 1828

This map by I. H. Eddy was revised and corrected by W. Hooker and E. Blunt. It is a good geographic map but does not provide any historical information.

Crooke's Point, 1902-1914

The map shows the changing shore line and high waterline, 1902-1914.

A Draught of New York from the Hook to New York Town, 1705

The map, drawn by Mark Tiddeman, gives a distorted view of Staten Island. There are markers for Old Town and New Town but they seem to be in the wrong place.

Dripps' Map of Staten Island or Richmond County, 1850

Buildings and owners are marked on the map, but it is not as informative as an atlas. The south shore line (as in Butler's map) is not quite accurate so the structures near the waterfront are probably just approximate locations.

Early Map of Great Kills, Staten Island, 1675

This simple, poorly drawn map shows the Guyon property and buildings in Great Kills.

Electrical and Street Lighting Distribution System, Miller Army Air Field, 1962

Map shows the placement of all underground and overhead wires along with buildings, parking lots, roads, and airplane runways. Map is filed in the Fort Hamilton Library.

Emplacement des Tropes en quartier d'hiver sur Long, York, et Staten Islands, 1770's

This not very informative map shows only the north and east shores of Staten Island with a fort situated at the narrows. The map is housed in the New York Public Library.

General Site and Building Use Map, Miller Army Air Field, 1961

This excellent Corps of Engineers map shows all temporary and permanent buildings, roads and airstrips. Map is filed in the Fort Hamilton Library.

General Site Map, Fort Wadsworth, 1962.

This excellent Corps of Engineers map shows all the temporary and permanent buildings, parking lots, roads, athletic fields, picnic areas, bridge and bridge entrance and exit ramps. Map is filed in the Fort Hamilton Library.

General Water Map, Miller Army Air Field, 1962

This military map shows where all the underground waterlines are located. In addition, permanent buildings, parking lots and two sod airstrips. Map is filed in the Fort Hamilton Library.

Great Kills, Staten Island, New York, 1938

This Army Corps of Engineers map deals with the geological aspects of the harbor.

Land Surveys, 1676-1680

This map was made as part of a WPA project on Staten Island's history. The map simply shows land boundaries. The original map is in the State Library in Albany and a copy is on file in the Institute.

Laying out lines and grades, Seaside Blvd, 1964

Map, with a series of overlays, shows property boundaries on Seaside Blvd. from 1900-1964. Map is housed in the Topographical and Survey Office, Borough Hall, Staten Island.

Map of the Borough of Richmond, 1906

This street map lists major streets and only occasionally shows a property owner's name.

Map of Colonial Land Grants, 1668-1712

Frederick Skene drew this map in 1907. This is a very good reference map to use when one is starting a title search. The only inaccuracies are the land patents on the west shore near Smoking Point.

Map of Counties of New York, Queens, Kings, Richmond, 1840

This is a very general map which separates Staten Island into four divisions, they are, Northfield, Castleton, Westfield and Southfield (all gateway property is in this area). The location of Forts Tompkins and Richmond are given in this map by David Burr.

A Map of the County of Richmond in the State of New York, no date

This not very useful map is filed in the Staten Island Historical Society Library. Houses are indicated by squares but owners are never listed.

Map of Manhattan, Staten Island, Long Island and Vicinity, 1670

Robert Ryder's map is not very informative. Dots mark the placement of Old Town and New Dorp.

A Map of New Jersey, 1675

Staten Island appears on the three parts of this John Seller's map. In "First State", 1664 the island is inaccurately drawn with no details given. In "Second State" 1668-1670 the names of seven plantations are given although the island is still drawn improperly. In the "Third State", 1677 the island is shown as being square and contains no other information. These maps are housed in the New York Public Library.

A Map of New York and Staten Island and Part of Long Island, 1781

This large map, which is housed in the New York Public Library, shows the physical features of the city, e.g. hills and marshland, along with roads. Property owners and boundaries are not given. The map was surveyed and drawn by George Taylor and A. Skinner in 1781.

Map of Staten Island, no date

The map shows major roads and the south shore railroad line. It is not very helpful.

A Map of Staten Island and New York Harbor, 1690

This map by Phillip Lea presents a very distorted view of the shape of the island. Dots mark the approximate locations of Old Towne and New Towne.

Map of Staten Island Showing Transit Lines and Automobile Roads, no date

This map is very inaccurate and not very helpful. Even Miller Field and Fort Wadsworth are not placed in their proper locations.

Master Plan for Redevelopment of Fort Wadsworth, 1956

This map packet contains 44 sheets showing specific proposed building changes. Map is filed in the Fort Hamilton Library.

A New and Correct Mapp of the County of Richmond, 1797

This map, commissioned by the State of New York, marks houses with black dots but does not list owners or property boundaries.

A New Mappe of a part of Hudson, 1700

This English map shows the forest and marshland in the city. Unfortunately, it presents a very distorted view of Staten Island.

Plan du Camp Anglo-Hessois Dans Staten Island, 1783

The only buildings shown on the gateway property are the: Britton Cottage, 2 houses near Fort Wadsworth and the beacon at the Fort.

Post War Planning, Fort Wadsworth, 1946

The map packet contains 12 maps showing the over-all fort layout and specific buildings. Data sheets are included which provide information on the buildings' condition, age, construction material and function. Maps are on file at Fort Hamilton Library.

Robinson's Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, 1898

These excellent maps not only show property lines, owners and houses, but provide structural information on the buildings.

Robinson's Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, 1907

Same as above.

Sanborne's Insurance Maps of Staten Island, 1885

These excellent maps not only show property lines, owners and various buildings, but provide structural data on the buildings. The maps were updated in 1891 and they contain information for both time periods.

Sanborne's Insurance Maps for Staten Island, 1917, vol. 1 and 2

Excellent maps. See comments above. These maps were updated in 1932 and they show data for both time periods.

Staten Island in 1781

This map was drawn by Loring McMillen in 1933. It is based on a larger map titled "A Map of New York and Staten Island and A Part of Long Island" (see listing under that title). The McMillen version contains the island's physical features such as hills and marshes, along with roads and black dots marking house locations (not shown in the original version).

Staten Island Expressway Map, 1957

This map shows all of the approaches to the bridge near Fort Wadsworth. Not very useful except for looking at specific land use and alteration on that small area of the fort that was used in building the bridge.

Staten Island Names, Ye Olde Names and Nicknames, 1896

This map by William Davis and Charles Leng is a must for anyone doing research on Staten Island. It contains the various (and often obsolete) names for the island's towns, hills, streams, rivers, lakes, and surrounding.

Topographical Map of the North End of Staten Island, 1890

Map gives elevation readings, show placement of buildings but does not list property owners.

Topographical Map of the South End of Staten Island, 1890

Same as above.

Topographical Map of the Borough of Richmond, 1908-1911
Excellent maps. These maps provide elevation readings and show both major and minor buildings, (with construction data on the buildings) driveways, cultivated land, and even large trees. This map must be consulted if any archaeological work is done.

U.S. Geological Survey, Richmond County, 1947
The maps "The Narrows" #6165 11 SE and "Arthur Kill" 6165 11 SW cover the gateway territory. They provide building locations and elevation readings. However, the map scale is so small that information on buildings and land use is minimal.

U.S. Geological Survey, Richmond County, 1955
Same map as listed above but updated for 1955.

Whalling's Map of Staten Island, 1859
On this map all major building locations are shown by a black dot. The owner's name is sometimes placed next to the mark. Not all large structures appear on the map and some of the locations are simply approximations.

Personal Records

All collections are located in the library of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.

Britton Family Correspondence

The collection contains family correspondence and some business papers. There is a fairly complete history on N. L. Britton, who was a founder of the Institute. The letters provide genealogical data on the Britton family.

Crooke Collection

The collection contains business papers, personal correspondence, family papers, photographs and maps. Unfortunately, only 1 cubic foot of the collection pertains to the gateway property.

Cubberly/Poillon Correspondence

These family letters contain data on the Cubberly family genealogy.

Davis Collection

The collection contains printed material, professional and personal correspondence, journals, notebooks, scrap-books, and photographs dealing with Staten Island's natural science and history. It is an overwhelming wealth of material.

Topographical Map of the Borough of Richmond, 1908-1911
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U.S. Geological Survey, Richmond County, 1955
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Whalling's Map of Staten Island, 1859
On this map all major building locations are shown by a black dot. The owner's name is sometimes placed next to the mark. Not all large structures appear on the map and some of the locations are simply approximations.

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Primary Sources

Printed Material

Anom.

- 1871 Report of a Preliminary Scheme of Improvements, 1871. Richmond County, NY: Staten Island Improvement Commission.
This pamphlet is useful reading when researching the beach area. It covers information on the malaria outbreak in this area.
- 1892- Abstracts of Wills, Vol. 1-16. New York: New
1908 York Historical Society.
The volumes contain abstracts of all wills filed in New York City prior to 1790. Staten Island wills are found in these volumes.
- 1898 Industries of Staten Island before consolidation, 1897. New York: Richmond Publishing Co.
This Staten Island government pamphlet gives a list of businesses on Staten Island; material is listed by towns and streets names. In addition to a short, general description of Staten Island, it has some information (though not much) on Midland Beach and on the Midland Electric Company (Trollies).
- 1902- Annual Yearbooks - Staten Island Chamber of Commerce.
1976 Staten Island, New York: Staten Island Chamber of Commerce.
The yearbooks are short pamphlets which provide data on real estate development, industrial and population growth and changes with general statistics on the transformation within the communities, e.g. population shifts, numbers and types of school, churches, and recreational facilities.
- 1902 Calendar of Council Minutes, 1668-1783, New York State Library Bulletin 58, History 6. Albany, N.Y.: University of the State of New York.
Good primary source for governmental events during Dutch and English period in New York State.

- 1905 Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York 1675-1776. 8 vol., New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.
There are some references to early patent holders on Staten Island.
- 1905 Report of the New York Bay Pollution Commission, 1905. Albany: State of New York.
The report focuses on the problems of pollution in the harbor, especially in the lower bay. It discusses the industries that will be effected by the pollution, i.e., oystering (mainly on the south shore of Staten Island), shad fishing, and the summer resorts of Coney Island, South and Midland Beaches.
- 1907 The Report of the New York City Improvement Commission. Government pamphlet.
The report discusses the need for a seashore park on the south shore of Staten Island. On a map of Staten Island (enclosed with the report) it shows parks from South Beach to Great Kills.
- 1916 U.S. Military Reservations, National Cemeteries and Military Parks, Etc. Ms. filed in Judge Advocate General's Office, U.S. Army.
This is a useful reference for specific data on Fort Wadsworth.
- 1942 Inventory of the County Archives of New York City - Staten Island. The Earliest Volume of Staten Island Records, 1678-1813. New York, New York: Historical Records Survey Service Division, WPA.
This is an invaluable source. It contains some court records, road records and a few church records.
- n.d. Journal of General Assembly of N.Y. State, selected minutes re: fortifications of Narrows. It was typed (no date) and on file in the New York State Library. Gives exact dates of tax levies for fortifying the Narrows and it indicates that the money was never collected.

Borough President of Richmond County

1902- "Report of the President of the Borough of
1960 Richmond." Government pamphlet.

These are general yearly updates on changes on Staten Island. It covers recent construction, list of street openings, sewers installed, street improvements, (including photographs which show houses along the street). These reports are a useful reference because of the statistics and photographs.

Dankers, Jaspas and Peter Sluyter

1867 Journal of a Voyage to New York in 1679-1680.

Translated from the Dutch and edited by Henry C. Murphy, Brooklyn: Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society.

Pages 140-148 deal with their voyage to SI. It is a journal of people and places they saw during their four days on SI. On the whole, it is not helpful.

Irwin, Ray W.

1968 Daniel D. Tompkins Governor of New York and Vice
President of the United States. The New York
Historical Society, New York

Excellent work providing insight into the personality and actions taken by Tompkins during the construction of Narrows' Forts.

Palma, Joseph A.

1937 Your Island Home. Staten Island Borough President's
Office. Pamphlet.

This short political publication provides facts and photographs on the building of the current boardwalk.

Paltsits, Victor Hugo (ed.)

1910 Minutes of the Executive Council of the Province of
New York, Administration of Francis Lovelace, 1668-
1673, Vol. 1 & 2. Albany, New York: State of New
York.

These volumes, which were edited by the State historian, contain some of the early surveys of Oude and New Dorp.

Pelletreau, William S.

1907 Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Family History of New York, 4 vol. New York: Lewis Publishing Co.

It is a good reference book when doing genealogical work.

State Historian

1897 Second Annual Report of the State Historian of the State of New York. Albany, N.Y.: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford C.

The report lists the colonial records for the State of New York from 1664 to 1671 that are housed in the New York State Library. It also lists the muster rolls and military commission issued for the colony of New York between 1664 and 1760. Staten Islanders are listed in these records. The report is useful only as an index for research.

State Historian

1898 Third Annual Report of the State Historian of the State of New York. Albany, N.Y.: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford, Co.

The report contains a list of the colonial archives from 1673 to 1675 in the New York State Library. The muster rolls for 1673-1770 are given. Again, this is only useful as an index, not as a reference.

Stillwell, John E., M.D.

1906- Historical and Genealogical Miscellany. Data

1916 Relating to the Settlement and Settlers of New York and New Jersey, 4 vol. New York: no publisher's name.

These are good reference books for genealogical work. Vol. I contains: the first record book Richmond County 1680's-1813, the Baptismal records of the Dutch Reformed Church of Port Richmond, census of Staten Island 1706. There are some items relating to Staten Island and its residents in the other three volumes. Stillwell served simply as a compiler of these primary sources.

Tompkins, Daniel D.

- 1902 Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor of New York, 1807-1817, vol. 2 & 3 (military) Introduction by Hugh Hasting. Albany, N.Y.: J. B. Lyon Co.
Excellent primary source for dates and conditions surrounding the 1812 construction of the forts at the Narrows.

Secondary Sources

Akerly, Samuel

- 1843 "Agriculture of Richmond County," Transactions of the New York State Agricultural Society Together With An Abstract Of The Proceedings Of The County Agricultural Societies, For The Year 1842, Albany: E. Mack, Printer To The Senate, vol. II, pp. 188-214.
Excellent essay on agriculture and farmers on Staten Island.

Anderson, Albert J. and Donald R. Sainz

- 1965 "Excavations at Oude Dorp." The New Bulletin, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 14, no. 9:82-95.
This is the only known excavation on Fort Wadsworth property. Very useful photographs, drawings and artifact descriptions. It does provide evidence for Dutch occupation of this site.

Anom.

- 1896 Handy Guide to New York City, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and other suburbs included in the Greater New York. New York: Rand, McNally and Co.
Contains very general information on the south shore of Staten Island, and on Fort Wadsworth.
- 1964 Staten Island: A Resource Manual for School and Community. New York: The Board of Education of the City of New York.
A general introduction to Staten Island's history. It has no index and the footnoting technique is poor.

- Bailey, Rosalie Fellows
 1968 Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York. New York: Dover Press
 The chapter, houses in Richmond County, contains general information on the Britton Cottage and its colonial owners.
- Balch, Glen E.
 1923 "Report on Great Kills Harbor, Staten Island, New York" Ms. filed with the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army.
 The report covers a brief history of the harbor and focuses on the problems caused by erosion.
- Bayles, Richard M.
 1887 History of Richmond County (Staten Island) New York, From its Discovery to the Present Time, New York: L.E. Preston & Co., 1887.
 Excellent local history. Less complete than Leng & Davis.
- Blond, Barney
 1974 "Vanderbilt Estate - Miller Field - 1919, Now Gateway Park - 1974" Report on file at Miller Field, Office of the Gateway, NPS, SI.
 A 3 page reminiscence of the history of Miller Field in the 20th century. Contains inaccuracies. This should be regarded as an oral rather than documented history.
- Brodhead, John Romeyn
 1874 History of the State of New York. 2 vol. New York: Harper & Brothers
 This is the best history of the Dutch and colonial periods in New York.
- Campbell, Reau
 1889 Rides and Rambles on Staten Island. New York: Staten Island Rapid Transit Railroad, New York.
 Gives general physical descriptions of areas of Staten Island.

Clute, J. J.

1877 Annals of Staten Island. New York: Press of Chas. Voigt.

A collection of oral traditions and personal reminiscences that are documented by church records and family genealogies.

Cooper, I. C. G.

1947 "Native Plant Garden for the Britton Cottage" Museum Bulletin, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 29, no. 5:40-41.

The article shows the plan for the garden and discusses what will be planted.

Croffut, W. A.

1886 The Vanderbilts and the Story of Their Fortune. Chicago: Belford, Clarke and Company, Publishers.

Among other things, it provides information on the Vanderbilts during their Staten Island years.

Dames and Moore

1976 Resource Inventory for the Gateway National Recreation Area. Ms. on file at National Park Service Boston Office.

It is a useful reference when studying environmental and geological conditions within the Gateway.

Davis, William T.

1896 "Staten Island Names, Ye Olde Names and Nicknames" Proceedings of the Natural Science Association, vol. 5, no. 5:20-76.

The list and map contain many references to land now owned by the National Parks Service. This article is necessary reading for anyone doing research on Staten Island.

1911 "John J. Crooke: A Staten Island Naturalist."

Proceedings of the Staten Island Association of Arts and Sciences, vol. 3:169-172.

There are references to Crooke's house on Great Kills and his ownership and use of the land now known as Crookes Point. The article deals mainly with personal anecdotes about Crooke, the man.

- 1937 Days Afield on Staten Island. New York: Staten Island Historical Society originally published in 1892, revised 1937.
It is a pleasant, easy reading introduction to Staten Island, however, it is not useful as a reference text for in-depth research. It does provide some excellent descriptions of South Beach.
- 1942 "The Old Lake Tide Mill." Proceedings, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 9, 137-138
Excellent article on the destruction of the mill.
- Deckinger, Nancy
1968 "John J. Crooke: An Engineer and Naturalist of the Nineteenth Century in New York and Colorado" Proceedings, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 19, no. 4:56-68.
The article gives a good sense of the attitudes that shaped the Crooke family.
- Falls, Cyril
1961 The Art of War from the age of Napoleon to the present day. A Hesperides Book, (Oxford University Press), New York.
Contains background and information about military technology used in re-fortification of Tompkins and Richmonds batteries.
- Flick, Alexander C., ed.
1933- History of the State of New York, 10 vols., New York: Columbia University Press.
1937 The most detailed scholarly history of New York.
- Freeman, Douglas Southall
1942 R. E. Lee: A Biography, vol. 1, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
Excellent reference. Contains valuable data on Lee's work on rebuilding work at Fort Wadsworth.
- Gruber, Ira D.
1972 The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution.
Provides insight into the British occupation of Staten Island and its problems.

Hill, Howard R.

- 1958 "History of The Great Kills." Staten Island Historians, vol. 19, no. 4:31-32
A good but very brief history of Great Kills Harbor.

Holden, Edna

- 1974 "Crooke's Point." Report on file at the Miller File Office of the Gateway, NPS, SI
A 1 1/4 page, very superficial history of Crooke's Point, marred by errors.

- 1974 "Notes on Miller Field." Report on file at the Miller Field Office of the Gateway, NPS, SI.
A 2 page, very superficial history of Miller Field and the Britton Cottage. It contains a number of inaccuracies.

Hollick, Arthur

- 1915 "The Old Cubberly House at New Dorp." Proceedings. Staten Island Association of Arts and Sciences, vol. 5, no. 4:68-74.
The author provides information on some of the former owners and explains why N. L. Britton donated the house to the Institute (S.I.I.A & S). Photos of house in 1903, 1900, and 1915 and a watercolor sketch in 1848 are included in the article.

Hunt, Hamlen

- 1958 "A Villa in Arrochar". Staten Island Historian, vol. 19, no. 4:25-27
The subject of the article, Barrett Manor, is outside the Military Reservation but the general descriptions of Arrochar are helpful.

Kammen, Michael

- 1975 Colonial New York, a history. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
Standard scholarly history providing an understanding of the political climate during Queen Anne's War in New York.

King, Eric T.

- 1959 "Arrochar Recollections." Staten Island Historian, vol. 20, no. 2:9-12.
The first few paragraphs provide some descriptions of the houses and the surrounding area. The balance of the article is simply family recollections.

Kobbe, Gustav

- 1890 Staten Island, A Guide Book, with Illustrations and a Road Map. New York: Gustav Kobbe.
This pamphlet contains general descriptions of Fort Wadsworth, South, New Dorp and Cedar Grove beaches. It also has a list of hotels with weekly rates.

Krist, Robert

- 1957 "Fort Wadsworth part I." Staten Island Historian, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 17-21.
Poorly documented work having many inconsistencies and inaccuracies.
- 1957 "Fort Wadsworth part II." Staten Island Historian, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 25-28.
A poorly documented work having many inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

Leng, Charles W. and William Davis

- 1930 Staten Island and Its People, 5 vol. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co.
Excellent local history by amateur historians. Volume I is the best modern history of Staten Island. Volume II is an institutional study and III-V offer biographical sketches. The work is well documented. The elaborate index makes it easy to use.

Letts, Thomas

- 1909 "List of 18 Titles of Old Maps on which Staten Island is shown", Proceedings, vol. 2:195-197.
This is a bibliography of Staten Island maps filed in the American Geographical Society, New York City. Maps are from the 17th and 18th century and are of New York Harbor.

Lynd, Margaret Louise (ed.)

1909 Staten Island and Staten Islanders. New York:
The Grafton Press.

Contains interesting general and historical descriptions of the entire Gateway area with emphasis placed on South and Midland Beach.

McMillen, Loring

1939 "The Britton Cottage Repaired." Staten Island Historian, vol. 2, no. 3:19 and 23.

Specific information on the repair work on the Britton cottage that was done by the WPA.

1940 "The Britton Cottage - The Story of its Construction." Proceedings, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 9, :5-15.
A useful series of drawings and photographs of the Britton Cottage with out-buildings. The essay is marred by an occasional mistake but it is the best essay on the subject.

1949 "Old Mills of Staten Island." Staten Island Historian, vol. 10, no. 1:1-3.
A good overview of the types of mills that existed on Staten Island.

1951 "Lake's Tide Mill." Staten Island Historian, vol. 12, no. 1:1 and 4.
A good over-all article of the history of Lake's tide mill. The documentation of the article is poor, so it is difficult to check the accuracy of his statements.

1958 "Oude Dorp (Old Town)." Staten Island Historian, vol. 19, no. 1 and 2:1-12
This article provides only a general history of the town. The map of Old Town by McMillen shows the land patents for this area.

- Matloff, Maurice (ed.)
 1969 American Military History, (Washington, D.C.)
 Army Historical Series, Office of the Chief
 Military History, United States Army.
 Provides good frame of reference for the time
 between the War of 1812 and the Spanish
 American War.
- Millis, Walter
 1956 Arms and Men, a Study in American Military
 History. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
 Scholarly work providing information on the
 importance of coastal fortifications.
- Milner, John and Assoc.
 1978 "Cultural Resources Study at the Gateway, NRA
 New York & New Jersey." Ms. on file with the Boston
 Office, N.P.S.
 This chapter on Staten Island is embarrassment and
 represents inept archival research. It contains no
 references to primary sources or major maps. Material
 is often quoted out of context or paraphrased to
 convey a different meaning than the original author
 intended. The Milner report contains so much mis-
 information that it is useless even for obtaining
 an accurate general history of the Gateway.
- Morris, Ira K.
 1900 Morris' Memorial History of Staten Island. New York,
 Staten Island: Published by the Author.
 Amateur history. Unreliable, especially for the
 earlier period. Use with care.
- Morris, Richard B. (edited by)
 1953 Encyclopedia of American History. New York: Harper
 & Brothers.
 Excellent for placing major events in a time line.
 There are no major sections dealing specifically
 with Staten Island.
- Nash, George W., M.D.
 1908 Excursion Planned for the City History Club of New
 York, vol. 10, Historical Richmond. New York:
 City History Club.
 This pamphlet contains brief descriptions of South
 Beach, Fort Wadsworth, Great Kills and New Dorp
 and Oakwood Beaches.

O'Callaghan, E. B., M.D.

1856- Documents Relating to the Colonial History of
1861 the State of New York, 16 vol. Albany, NY:
Weed, Parsons and Co.

It was compiled from records of the States general in Holland in the 1840's. It is a very useful reference for the Dutch period in New York, especially for Staten Island.

1850- The Documentary History of the State of New York.
1851 Albany, New York: Weed, Parsons and Co.

These volumes contain much of the material that was later published in the series, Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York, but it also contains some items not to be found in that series. It is a good reference book.

1848 History of New Netherland or New York under the Dutch. New York: Appleton and Company.

It is written by a 19th century amateur historian, and it is not a bad history although there are errors throughout it.

O'Connor, John J.

1966 "Nathaniel Britton of New Dorp" Staten Island Historian, vol. 27, no. 2:17-20.

It contains recent photograph of the Britton Cottage (on the original site) and general history of the Britton family. He makes a few unsupported statements but the quality of the research is excellent.

Olmsted, F. L.

1851 "Richmond," Transactions of the New York State Agricultural Society, With An Abstract of the Proceedings of the County Agricultural Societies, Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, Printer to the Legislature, vol. X, pp. 288-292. Useful data on farming.

Peckham, Howard H.

1964 The Colonial Wars 1689-1762. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Provides insight into the political background and general conditions during colonial period.

Powell, Hugh

1979 History of Government on Staten Island, 1469-1898, Ms. on file at the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.

Excellent reference work on early Dutch to post revolution period. He provides day by day account of early S.I. History with complete documentation.

Reifschneider, Felix E.

1951 "Staten Island Trolleys", Staten Island Historians, vol. 12, no. 1:6-8.

This very technical article on the railroad line to Midland and South Beach has good references to the equipment used and to the plan and building of the lines.

Rideing, W. H.

1878 "A Spring Jaunt in Staten Island." Harpers Monthly Magazine, September 1878: 545-557

The article provides a good description of South Beach.

Rundlett, Edwin

1949 "Britton Memorial." Proceedings, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 11, no. 4: 137-138.

This article provides general information regarding the alterations to the Britton Cottage and the surrounding grounds.

Scofield, Julia H.

1895 "The Cliff Walk", S. I. Historian, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 25-32.

A description of a pedestrian walk starting in Tompkinsville and continuing through the Fort Wadsworth area. Mention is made of buildings, wells, lighthouse, etc.

Shapiro, Arthur

1972 New York City's Last Frontier, Staten Island, NY: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.

This is a good geology-naturalist book. The sections dealing with the makeup of the beaches and south shore coastal line is useful reading.

Smith, Dorothy Valentine

- 1970 Staten Island, Gateway to New York. Phila.: Clifton Book Company
General non-scholarly introduction to the history of Staten Island. Not well documented.

Steinmeyer, Henry G.

- 1950 Staten Island, 1624-1898. Staten Island, N.Y.: Staten Island Historical Society.
This is a very general introduction to Staten Island's history. It contains almost no citations or footnotes.

- 1954 "Too Late the Phoenix." Staten Island Historian, vol. 15, no. 1:1-3
This article (describing the Midland Beach Casino and Amusement Park) was compiled from the personal correspondence of the promoters of the resort. Steinmeyer gives excellent insights into the development, operation, life and decline of the resort.

- 1959 "South Beach: The Resort Era". Staten Island Historian, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 17-22.
This useful article traces the development of the South Beach resorts from 1874 thru 1936. He provides good descriptions of the buildings and the phases of construction. Since Steinmeyer interviewed the developers and administrators of the resorts, he was able to discuss their aims and goals in developing these resorts.

Talese, Gay

- 1964 The Bridge. New York: Harper and Rowe.
While the book focuses on the construction of the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, it does contain some photographs of Fort Wadsworth.

Tuttle, George W.

- 1921 "The Town of Dover upon Staten Island", Proceedings, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, vol. 1, pp. 37-42.
A general history of the town. The map, though, is more informative than the article.

- 1924 "A Seventeenth Century Map of Staten Island." Proceedings, vol. 2, pp. 91-107.
The article is about a map but no reproduction of the map is given in the article. The reference points are useless since all the points have disappeared, e.g., a house foundation is 30 ft. from the old cherry tree. The paper does give some sense of 17th century land use in the South Beach area.
- Walker, Major William G.
1936 "History of Fort Wadsworth", Ms. on file at the Fort Hamilton Library.
A public information office issue that is poorly documented.
- Ward, Christopher
1952 The War of the Revolution, Vol. 1 and 2, New York: MacMillan Co.
Excellent work. It provides detailed accounts of the British landing and occupation of Staten Island and of the American defense of New York.
- Waugh, E. D. J.
1944 West Point, New York: MacMillan Company.
Work provides some information about the strategic value of the Forts at the Narrows.
- Wei, Damon
1974 "A History of Fort Wadsworth", Staten Island Historian, vol. 35, no. 17, pp. 145-152.
A poorly documented, non-professional work filled with conjecture.
- Weighley, Russell F.
1967 History of the United States Army, New York: MacMillan Company.
Excellent reference for background information concerning the development of armed forces and the need for coastal defenses.
- Wren, Tony P.
1975 "General History of the Jamaica Bay, Breezy Point, and Staten Island Units, Gateway National Recreation Area, New York, N.Y.," Ms. submitted to the National Park Service, Denver Service Center.
Excellent professional job of studying standing structures. It is well documented and is a valuable reference for researching the 20th century buildings on the Staten Island Unit.

Yancy, Major General Thomas R.

1967 "Fort Wadsworth" Staten Island Historian.

Vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 17-21.

Composed as an address. It relies on the poorly documented public information office data.