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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

1998



William Floyd Estate  
Fire Island National Seashore

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## **Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan**

### **Inventory Summary**

#### **The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:**

##### **CLI General Information:**

###### **Purpose and Goals of the CLI**

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

###### **Scope of the CLI**

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

**Inventory Unit Description:**

The William Floyd Estate is located on the south shore of Long Island, in the town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York. Although not physically located on Fire Island, it is one of two cultural landscapes that have been identified within the boundaries of the Fire Island National Seashore. The original Estate extended seven miles north from the shore of Narrows Bay and was a mile wide. Today, the size of the Estate is greatly reduced but it remains one of the largest tracts of open-space in an otherwise densely developed and heavily populated region.

The 613-acre William Floyd Estate is the remnant of a larger 4400-acre historic plantation that was occupied and used by a single family for over 240 years for agriculture and recreation. The family established an elaborate grid of fields that were utilized continuously until early in the 20th century for crops and grazing, and afterwards for recreational hunting and conservation. These uses protected the property from development. At the time of its donation to the NPS in 1965, the family was regularly maintaining eleven fields and five man-made ponds. Outside these areas, the historic field grid had been somewhat obscured by woody succession.

The Estate's agricultural fields and wooded areas surround a 33.8-acre historic residential core near the northwest boundary of the property. This is the location of the primary structure on the property, the Floyd family house known as "Old Mastic House." The house was listed on the National Register under this name in 1980 for its significance as the home of General William Floyd, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Old Mastic House is a 25-room, two-story, white frame structure built around 1724 with 18th, 19th and 20th century additions. Surrounded by an informal landscape of lawn, ornamental trees and shrubs, and gardens and orchards; the house faces south overlooking a large field called the Pightle, a British term for a small meadow. On the southwestern edge of the Pightle, a narrow vista is cut through the woods allowing for a view of Narrow Bay.

North of Old Mastic House is a cluster of historic outbuildings that were used to manage the plantation. One of these buildings is now used for NPS operations, while the other ten remaining buildings are part of the permanent exhibit. South-west of the main house, a small dirt road leads along the forest edge to the Floyd Family Graveyard. Surrounded by a white wooden fence, the 1 ½-acre Floyd Family Graveyard is L-shaped and has been the burial ground for 50 Floyd family members and two family servants. Adjacent to the Floyd Family Graveyard is a small clearing containing seven simple white crosses marking the graves of slaves and servants who worked for the family.

The woods around the property extend down to the salt marsh, enclosing a series of open fields and dirt or grass roads. Large hedgerows of autumn olive, black locust, pine and cedar trees planted by the Floyd family divide the fields that are in various stages of natural succession. Throughout the woods are a series of mounds and ditches called Lopped Tree Fence Lines, once used to border cultivated land, which provide evidence of the former field system.

A quarter of the Estate is salt marsh bordering Narrow Bay. The salt marsh is bisected by the Great Ditch, which was built to dry out the upper marsh. Just within the inner bounds of the Great Ditch are five man-made ponds. An elaborate system of mosquito ditches run throughout the salt marsh. Most

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likely created in the thirties, these ditches were cut through the berm perpendicular to the main ditch to drain the marsh. By design, they permit flooding of the salt marsh improving the water quality via more frequent turnover. The Great Ditch provides predatory fish greater access to mosquito larvae and serves as a fish reservoir. The ponds located near the Great Ditch provide additional fish refuge during periods of lowest water levels. Remnants of Corduroy Road, constructed from logs laid parallel to one another, exist along its original course which began in the upper marsh and terminated in the bay.

#### History Overview

The Estate is best known as the ancestral home and plantation of General William Floyd, the first of four signers of the Declaration of Independence from New York. The plantation was productive until 1880, producing a wide range of commodities that included cattle, crops, cordwood and boats. After the agricultural use was discontinued, the family maintained the fields and trails, utilizing them for recreation and hunting. As such, the Estate retains its historic character and provides a rare glimpse of Long Island's land use history.

In 1965, 613 acres of the William Floyd Estate was donated to the National Park Service to be administered as a unit of Fire Island National Seashore. A leaseback agreement was established at this time between the Floyd and the National Park Service. In 1976, the Estate's heirs relinquished their use and occupancy rights to the 33.8 acres that comprise the core of the property, including all the structures and the family graveyard. The family continued to use the property for seasonal hunting until the original terms expired.

#### Significance Summary

The William Floyd Estate derives significance under Criterion B for its association with General William Floyd, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Criterion C, architecture, for the buildings, as stated in the existing documentation, and for its pattern of land use. The National Register lists the period of significance broadly as 1700-1900 with the following areas of significance: agriculture, architecture, military, politics and archeology. In addition to being the birthplace of William Floyd, the William Floyd Estate also derives significance under Criterion A, representing a broad pattern of America's history, as a prime example of private land-use management by a single family, from working plantation to hunting area. For this criterion, the period of significance is 1724-1965 with the added areas of significance: conservation and agriculture. The end date 1965 is the year the majority of the estate was transferred from private ownership to the NPS. The William Floyd Estate "offers the unique opportunity to understand the evolution of a family and cultural life and of private land use management over a 250-year period of American History." (Linck, 1988)

#### Condition Summary

Overall, the condition of the William Floyd Estate is fair. The agriculture fields have not been productive since 1881. Currently the NPS maintains the fields through annual mowing to suppress growth of woody species in attempts to preserve the circa 1965 field dimensions as described in the Description of Alternatives and to continue the land use management patterns of the family at that time. . Important landscape features such as the Lopped Tree Lines and Corduroy Road are threatened by agricultural succession and lack of maintenance. The extensive woodland is gradually becoming choked with understory growth and requires regular brush removal to preserve maintenance accessibility and reduce

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threat of fire. The house, outbuildings and grounds in the historic core are in good condition, while the vast acreage of the park overall would be characterized as only fair. Due to maintenance challenges caused by its size and conditions such as mosquito infestation, the property overall is somewhat neglected.

Integrity Summary

The William Floyd Estate retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association to the life of William Floyd and its continued occupancy by his descendants for over 240 years because the extant buildings and landscape continue to illustrate the Estate's use as the plantation of a prominent Long Island family. In addition to these aspects, it retains integrity of workmanship for plantation agriculture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and conservation practice in the first half of the twentieth century as remnants of these uses remain evident and intact. The Estate also retains integrity of design, under Criterion C, including field patterns, system of roads, and remnants of hedges and ditches although some aspects of design and materials have been altered or compromised during the long period of significance. Overall, while there have been incremental changes subsequent to the historic period, the analysis indicates that the overall character of the William Floyd Estate cultural landscape does retain integrity to its period of significance.

Site Plan



*William Floyd Estate, Fire Island National Seashore, Mastic Beach, NY, Existing Conditions 2005.*

William Floyd Estate  
Fire Island National Seashore



William Floyd Estate- Fire Island National Seashore- Mastic, NY, detail 2005. Drawn by Maciej Konieczny, March 2006 for OCLP.

**Property Level and CLI Numbers**

**Inventory Unit Name:** William Floyd Estate  
**Property Level:** Landscape  
**CLI Identification Number:** 650026  
**Parent Landscape:** 650026

**Park Information**

**Park Name and Alpha Code:** Fire Island National Seashore -FIIS  
**Park Organization Code:** 1750  
**Park Administrative Unit:** Fire Island National Seashore

**CLI Hierarchy Description**



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In the Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Northeast Region, the William Floyd Estate is one of two identified cultural landscapes located within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore, although it is located on Long Island. Fire Island Light Station is the other cultural landscape in the park and is located at the western end of Fire Island.

## Concurrence Status

**Inventory Status:** Complete

### Concurrence Status:

**Park Superintendent Concurrence:** Yes

**Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:** 07/18/2006

**National Register Concurrence:** Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

**Date of Concurrence Determination:** 08/31/2006

### National Register Concurrence Narrative:

This CLI and its findings received concurrence from the New York State Historic Preservation Office on August 31, 2006.

## Geographic Information & Location Map

### Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

Formed in the late-Pleistocene epoch, Long Island, New York demarcates the glacial advance in the eastern part of North America. Most of the topographic features of Suffolk County were produced by its retreat, after which more recent geological developments further shaped the barrier islands and tidal marshes of the south shore.

The 613-acre William Floyd Estate is the remnant of a larger 4,400-acre privately owned historic plantation which was protected from the dense development in the neighboring area. Located on the south shore of Long Island, in the town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York it is bounded by Narrow Bay to the south, Home Creek and Forge River to the east, and Lawrence Creek to the west. The Estate is adjacent to the residential neighborhoods of Shirley and Mastic to the north and Mastic Beach to the west. Its northern boundary extends in a north-south direction parallel to and roughly 250 yards south of Washington Ave.

### State and County:

**State:** NY

**County:** Suffolk County

**Size (Acres):** 613.00

**Boundary UTMS:**

<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Point
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	683,124
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,515,888

**Location Map:**



*The William Floyd Estate is on the south shore of Long Island, in the town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, NY. The Poospatuck Reservation is located north of the William Floyd Estate below the town of Mastic (see tan rectangular shaded area on map).*

**Management Unit:** William Floyd District

## Management Information

### General Management Information

**Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 07/18/2006

#### Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

In 1965, Congress added the William Floyd Estate, which was the birthplace and residence of General William Floyd (a signer of the Declaration of Independence). The property is located north of Moriches Bay near the eastern end of Fire Island to the Fire Island National Seashore, as a unit of the NPS. The Old Mastic House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and determined to be nationally significant. This nomination included mention of several of the site's associated buildings, structures and features, but it concentrated on the main house. In 1996, the New York SHPO concurred with the findings of the List of Classified Structures, which identified additional contributing buildings and structures on the William Floyd Estate.

### Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

#### Management Agreement:

**Type of Agreement:**

#### NPS Legal Interest:

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

#### Public Access:

**Type of Access:** Unrestricted

#### Explanatory Narrative:

Public access to the site is open.

### Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** No

## National Register Information

### Existing NRIS Information:

<b>Name in National Register:</b>	Floyd, William, House
<b>NRIS Number:</b>	71000066
<b>Other Names:</b>	Old Mastic House
<b>Primary Certification:</b>	Listed in the National Register
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	10/15/1980

<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

### Period of Significance:

<b>Time Period:</b>	AD 1724 - 1965
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Developing the American Economy
<b>Subtheme:</b>	Agriculture
<b>Facet:</b>	Plantation Agriculture
<b>Time Period:</b>	AD 1724 - 1965
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Shaping the Political Landscape
<b>Subtheme:</b>	The American Revolution
<b>Facet:</b>	The Declaration Of Independence
<b>Time Period:</b>	AD 1724 - 1965
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Transforming the Environment
<b>Subtheme:</b>	Conservation of Natural Resources
<b>Facet:</b>	Fish, Wildlife, And Vegetation Preservation

**Area of Significance:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Politics - Government

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Area of Significance Category:** Military

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Area of Significance Category:** Architecture

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Area of Significance Category:** Conservation

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Area of Significance Category:** Agriculture

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Statement of Significance:**

The William Floyd Estate is significant under Criterion B for its association with Declaration of Independence signer and Revolutionary War General William Floyd, William Floyd. The main house is significant under Criterion C, design, as an example of Georgian and Greek Revival style architecture. The east wing dormers and front porch columns reflect the Colonial Revival architecture style. The landscape is also significant under Criterion C for its pattern of land use with distinctive boundary demarcations consisting of hedges, lopped tree fences and drainage ditches, representative of traditional practices (based on English precedence) on southeast Long Island, vegetation related to land use, including the orchard, pastures, forests and ornamental trees, and circulation networks. The William Floyd Estate also derives significance under Criterion A, for its association with 200+ years of continued agricultural use and from the 1890s on, game bird and waterfowl habitat conservation management compatible with historical agricultural practices. Consideration of archeological significance under Criterion D is outside the scope of this CLI. The property is significant at the national level.

Although the total acreage is diminished from its historic original 4,400-acres to 613 acres, the spatial relationship of the William Floyd estate, including buildings and field patterns together with historic vegetative features such as the Lopped Tree Lines, Pightle, Fields and Salt Marsh, and its system of farm roads, retain sufficient integrity to convey the property's significance throughout its 241 year period of significance.

Based on the findings of this CLI, we recommend the following issues be addressed when the National Register documentation is amended:

1. All contributing resources should be fully described.
2. All areas of significance, specifically agriculture, conservation, architecture and the distinctive characteristics of the landscape should be fully supported in the narrative.
3. The period of significance should be clarified to include the entire period the Estate was being actively managed by the family for agriculture or conservation (1724-1965). The end date 1965 is the year the estate was transferred from private ownership to the NPS.
4. Based on the significance of the landscape, the nomination should include one site as a contributing resource.
5. The NRIS Number should be corrected from 71000066.

### **State Register Information**

<b>Identification Number:</b>	90NR01772
<b>Date Listed:</b>	06/23/1980
<b>Name:</b>	William Floyd House

### **Chronology & Physical History**

#### **Cultural Landscape Type and Use**

<b>Cultural Landscape Type:</b>	Historic Site
<b>Current and Historic Use/Function:</b>	
<b>Primary Historic Function:</b>	Farm (Plantation)
<b>Primary Current Use:</b>	Interpretive Landscape



**Other Use/Function**

Education-Other  
 Single Family House  
 Outdoor Recreation

**Other Type of Use or Function**

Both Current And Historic  
 Historic  
 Both Current And Historic

**Current and Historic Names:**

**Name**

Old Mastic House  
 William Floyd Estate

**Type of Name**

Historic  
 Both Current And Historic

**Ethnographic Study Conducted:**

No Survey Conducted

**Ethnographic Significance Description:**

There are limited known ethnographic resources within the park’s boundaries. However, the William Floyd Estate is located near the Poosepatuck Reservation, a non-federally recognized Native American community. The Floyd family had a long term relationship with members of the Poosepatuck community who served as indentured and paid servants and workers throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

**Chronology:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Annotation</b>
AD 1656	Settled	Richard and Susanna Floyd, William Floyd’s great grandparents, settle in Setauket, Long Island, emigrating from Brechnochshire, Wales.
AD 1657	Purchased/Sold	Town of Brookhaven purchases the area south of the future Old Mastic House from the Montauk Sachem. This land was distributed among 55 proprietors, whose ranks included Richard and Susanna Floyd, who become owners of a large Estate.
AD 1691	Purchased/Sold	The northern section of the future William Floyd Estate, including the site of Old Mastic House, is purchased by Colonel William “Tangier” Smith from Sachem Tobacus.

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AD 1718	Purchased/Sold	Richard Floyd II, William Floyd's grandfather, a 4,400-acre property from the Smith Family. The 4,400-acre property stretches seven miles north from Moriches Bay and one mile west from the Forge River to the middle of the island on the north (Route 25). The tract borders on "Poosapatuck" and includes much of the former territory of the Unkechaug and the transaction initiates a relationship between the Floyd family and the indigenous people living nearby.
AD 1720	Land Transfer	Richard Floyd II gives the property to his son, Nicoll.
	Cultivated	Nicoll Floyd, utilizing slave and free labor, clears the land turning it into a prosperous plantation producing corn, flax, grains, wheat, cattle and sheep. Wheat, rye, corn and flax become the dominant cultivated cash crops on Long Island.
	Built	Around 1720 and during the next twenty years, the Great Ditch is built to drain wet salt marsh areas for use as agricultural fields, restrict animal movement and delineate the salt marsh from croplands.
AD 1724	Built	The oldest part of Old Mastic House is built by Nicoll Floyd, William Floyd's father.
AD 1724 - 1733	Built	The first roads are authorized and built from New York City to this part of Long Island.
AD 1733	Paved	Around 1733, South County Road (Route 27) is established, running through the northern part of the Floyd property. (NR Form, Section 7:1)
AD 1750	Altered	During a second phase of construction, the East Wing is added to Old Mastic House as a service wing.
AD 1750 - 1760	Altered	An addition is added to the west side of Old Mastic House, consisting of two-stories including the 1st floor and 2nd floor Halls.
AD 1755	Farmed/Harvested	William Floyd ships 40 bushels of flax seed. Flax seed is sold as late as 1828.

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	Land Transfer	At 20, William Floyd assumes responsibility for the Estate and his seven living siblings when both his parents die of typhoid.
	Established	William’s parents, Nicoll and Tabitha Floyd, are the first members buried in what will become the Floyd Family Graveyard.
AD 1776	Abandoned	In late August, British forces win the Battle of Long Island, while William Floyd is serving as a member of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. His wife and children are driven from the Estate and flee to Connecticut. During the Revolutionary War, British forces control virtually all of Long Island, and it is believed that the William Floyd Estate is occupied by British troops.
AD 1783	Rehabilitated	William Floyd returns triumphantly from the war to the Estate with his children. “When Floyd returned to Mastic...he found the Estate despoiled: desolate fields, uprooted trees, charred remains of fences and a house that was uninhabitable. Eventually the house was restored and Floyd plays host to many famous men including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Marquis de LaFayette.”(Fire Island National Seashore, 1982: 16)
AD 1785	Farmed/Harvested	At age 22, William Floyd’s son Nicoll takes on increasing control of the William Floyd Estate.
AD 1790	Altered	William Floyd “carries out further extensive construction work on the house according to receipts of purchases made.” (NR Form, S. 7:2) This marks the third addition to the house including a two-story addition to the west of the present 1st floor Main Hall, the present day 1st floor Parlor and Office Library, and most likely two 2nd floor bedrooms and the continuation of the attic. Evidence suggests that these alterations may have also included the addition of the basement. (Dickey 1977: 22, Czarniecki 2006)
	Farmed/Harvested	Eight bushels of “cloverseed” sold. Ezra L’Hommedieu, William Floyd’s brother-in-law, reported red clover seed as becoming an important Suffolk County export in 1792. (Kesselman, 1983:2)

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	Retained	Floyd employs free skilled labor in managing his Estate, but he also depends on slaves and Native American labor from the Poosapatuck village nearby.
AD 1793	Domesticated	William Floyd buys nine steers. (Kesselman, 1983: 3)
AD 1796	Farmed/Harvested	Oats first appear in the records as a 20 bushel purchase by William Floyd. (Kesselman, 1983: 2)
AD 1799	Established	Manumission, the act of freeing slaves by will of their owner, begins in New York State.
AD 1803	Farmed/Harvested	Nicoll II, a successful farmer, begins shifting investments from farming and local area to businesses in New York City, amassing a substantial fortune. His is the last era in which the Estate itself is a major source of the family's wealth.
	Land Transfer	William Floyd gives his only son, Nicoll II, the William Floyd Estate after building and moving to a new home in Westernville, NY. Nicoll Floyd moves to Taupeonk by 1849.
	Established	After Nicoll II takes over complete control of the farm, he lives continuously at Old Mastic House and holds responsible positions in the county.
AD 1806	Farmed/Harvested	Rye appears as a cash crop in Nicoll Floyd II's ledger. (Kesselman, 1983: 2)
AD 1819	Ranched/Grazed	Nicoll Floyd II buys 40 Merino sheep in an effort to upgrade the quality of his wool. (Kesselman, 1983: 2)
AD 1820	Ranched/Grazed	Around 1820, Nicoll Floyd II is urged by his son Augustus to increase his flock because it "is the only stock with which you can come in competition with farmers who have better land."
AD 1822	Farmed/Harvested	Burning the meadows for vegetation management is a regular practice at William Floyd Estate. (Kesselman 1983:6)
AD 1823	Farmed/Harvested	Nicoll Floyd II ships 19 ½ loads of oak and seven loads of hickory.

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AD 1827	Planted	Nicoll Floyd II is sent locust seed by his son Augustus who advises him to plant some of it “in the woods where you cut off the cord wood” (AF to NFII). At this time, black locusts ( <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> ) are common on Long Island and are often used for hedgerows.
AD 1830	Ranched/Grazed	Nicoll Floyd II’s son Augustus remarks that in Suffolk County as a whole, “the cattle range is more extensive than the crop land.”
AD 1831	Farmed/Harvested	Nicoll Floyd II sells 1300 pounds of wool on September 8.
AD 1831 - 1834	Planted	Augustus Floyd sends additional seeds of the “thorn or honey locust” ( <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> ) and the “yellow locust,” also known as black locust ( <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> ).
AD 1840	Planted	A number of deciduous species are planted on the Estate including acacias (black locusts or <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> ) in front of the house; and aspens ( <i>Populus sp.</i> ) along with oaks ( <i>Quercus sp.</i> ), willows ( <i>Salix sp.</i> ) and walnuts ( <i>Juglans sp.</i> ) in the lot east of the lawn, near the pond.
AD 1840 - 1850	Ranched/Grazed	There were reports of 500 sheep on the property in 1861; 300 in 1876. (Ross, 1913) No location for the pasturing is mentioned. (Kesselman, 1983: 2)
AD 1843	Retained	John G. Floyd, Jr. and family arrive from Utica to assume responsibility of the Estate. By 1849 Nicoll II and his daughter Katherine move to Taupeonk.
AD 1850	Altered	Around 1850 a 2-story addition is constructed to northeast section of the main house. The 1st floor contains a full-service kitchen, laundry, and another room. The second floor contains two bedrooms. Additionally there are extensive interior renovations including, a water closet/bathroom added to the 1st floor, a front porch and columns are added as well as Greek Revival architecture features. All the windows (with the exception of one) are changed.

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	Farmed/Harvested	The Federal Agricultural Census shows John G. Floyd as owner of a 3,000-acre farm with a value of \$30,000. Seven hundred acres are cultivated for livestock, orchards and crops.
AD 1852	Land Transfer	When Nicoll II dies, his son, John Gelston Floyd Sr. is granted title to the Estate.
AD 1852 - 1860	Altered	Between 1852 – 1860 modifications are made to the main house including adding a second story to the house’s east section, changing all but one of the windows, and adding a front porch and columns in the Greek Revival architecture style.
AD 1857	Altered	After needing repairs for years, the dam is said to have broken through in June leaving the pond dry. (Kesselman 1983:9)
AD 1860	Farmed/Harvested	5000 bushels of corn are harvested. (Kesselman, 1983: 2)
AD 1861	Farmed/Harvested	130 head of cattle and 500 sheep are grazed on the property. Cattle are routinely grazed on the lands north of the current William Floyd Estate property as well as the lower acreage closer to the bay. (Kesselman 1983:3)
AD 1862	Altered	A major fire burns most of the property but no buildings are lost. This fire is occasionally referred to as “the great fire,” even as late as the 1930s.
AD 1870	Farmed/Harvested	The farm is in decline and wheat is growing on Lane’s Neck, not on the Estate. (Kesselman, 1983: 1)
	Farmed/Harvested	The Federal Agricultural Census shows John G. Floyd as owner of a 4,400-acre farm with a value of \$30,000, equal to that of 1850, indicating a decline. Five hundred acres are “improved” and the value of the livestock is half what it was in 1860. Produce values have declined slightly and forest products appear for the first time as a source of income. Forest products were an early part of the agribusiness income of the estate, beginning in the 1820s, but were not recorded prior to 1870.

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	Farmed/Harvested	Around 1870, Floyd’s Pond is used as a source of ice. “I had to drive the cattle down to the pond east of the house (in the 1870s and 1880s), when it was frozen over, I had to cut holes along the shore, no other way to water them. I filled the ice house two years off that pond.” (Ross, 1913: 2)
AD 1876	Farmed/Harvested	Six yoke of oxen, 80 head of cattle and 300 sheep are on the Estate. (Kesselman, 1983: 3 and Ross, 1913: 1)
	Farmed/Harvested	In his first fall as caretaker at the Estate, Charles Ross slaughtered eighteen 200-300 pound hogs, reaping “quite a pile of pork and a share of it went up north.” (Ross, 1913: 2) Ross continues to manage the farm until 1913, during which time he is valued as next to kin.
AD 1876 - 1877	Farmed/Harvested	During this winter, the last cordwood is cut and shipped from the Estate, about 200 cords. At that time, none of the three Floyd cordwood landings are on the present-day William Floyd Estate.
AD 1880	Farmed/Harvested	The majority of the property is maintained at the “old field successional level”, meaning the fields are no longer cultivated but are mowed periodically to limit plant growth to forbs and grasses, preventing natural succession to woody species.
	Farmed/Harvested	The Federal Agricultural Census lists Charles Ross in lieu of an owner, stating that he “rents for share of products.” The property is described as 600 tilled acres, 800 acres of meadows, orchards, etc. and 1500 acres of woodland with a value of \$40,000. Production values in all categories are down from the 1870 census.
	Altered	During the 1880s, Squirrel Lane (part of the road that now leads toward the Floyd Family Graveyard) was “a dense wood of hickories that were killed one year by a blight.” (Mastic Records, c. 1935)
AD 1881	Farmed/Harvested	The farm has declined in value and half (2200 acres) of the land has been sold by the time of John G. Floyd's death on October 6.
	Land Transfer	The remaining 2200-acre Estate is divided among John Gelston Floyd’s five children after his death with John Gelston Floyd, Jr. inheriting the house and 687 acres.

AD 1884	Altered	With a teenage son and two daughters, John G. Floyd, Jr. moves from the Estate to live in New York City for eight months of the year. The house is no longer used as a year-round residence by John G. Floyd and his family. Concerned about upkeep of the property during his absences, he builds the carriage house and undertakes various projects.
AD 1890	Farmed/Harvested	By 1890, the Estate is no longer actively farmed by the family although a portion of the property is rented by Charles Ross for farming. During John Gelston Floyd's tenure, land holdings were reduced and the house became encumbered with mortgages. The house becomes the family's summer home and the woods are used as a family hunting ground for the winter. Cattle continue to be pastured on the lower acreage until about the 1920s by a local farmer leasing the pasturage from the Floyds. (Kesselman, 1983:4)
	Farmed/Harvested	During the 1890s, the Vista is created to view Moriches Bay as part of a more formal landscape. The land was originally cleared down to the bay (except for hedgerows and orchards) so the early Floyds could monitor farm and bay activities.
AD 1898	Altered	Two-story rear extension (North wing) is built by John G. Floyd, Jr. primarily to accommodate guests with the addition of a bathroom introducing "running water" to the house, which is fed by gravity from a 1000-gallon water tower atop the Old Cow Barn (now the New Barn). A windmill is also added to the Old Cow Barn in 1898 and the grounds are made more habitable for various game species. (Fire Island National Seashore, 1988: 19, Czarniecki 2006)
AD 1898 - 1900	Built	Between 1898 - 1900 the "Camp" is constructed on the east side of the northeast kitchen wing.



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AD 1900	Built	John G. Floyd, Jr. puts in the Meadow Ground Path around 1900 where a ditch-and-mound already existed. He places fence rails on top of the mound and bridges over the gaps with planks so that guests can visit the salt marsh without getting their feet wet. (Mastic Records, oral history) Circa 1898 to 1900 "The Camp" (now called the Caretaker's Workshop) is constructed on the east side of the northeast kitchen wing.
AD 1903	Land Transfer	Upon the death of John G. Floyd, the Estate is transferred to his three children, Cornelia, William and Rosalie.
AD 1904	Damaged	A fire, which reportedly began at the railroad, spreads south and east to the Estate. The Floyd Estate's hands first fight the fire at the Woodhull (relatives by marriage) property before returning to the Estate to fight it there. Evidently, hundreds of acres of timber were devastated and wildlife perished. "The firefighters saved the buildings by wetting down the grass in the path of the flames and by plowing all around the structures." (NY Herald, 5 April 1904)
AD 1905 - 1910	Altered	John G. Floyd's son William and some friends accidentally start a fire on the front lawn that "got away from us and rushed wildly towards Home Creek...it was stopped in the Lot-Before-the-Door." (Kesselman, 1983:7)
AD 1910 - 1913	Altered	Around this time, a formal garden area is installed on west portion of the yard adjacent to the house. The garden is designed by Rosalie D. Floyd and includes a brick walkway, sundial, flowers, and benches around the fruit trees.
AD 1911	Platted	Property is surveyed showing the main farm roads, fields and pastures, as well as the extent of the forest. (NR Nomination, Section 7:2)
AD 1913	Altered	The Floyd Pond has ceased to be a source of ice; brush has grown up in the area. (Ross, 1913)

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	Altered	A building referred to as the "Pumpkin Barn" is fitted as a tiny cottage for a poor family from the city "selected by a clerical relative from among his East Side flock." "Floor, windows, screen doors, partition, stove pipe and new roof shingles" are put in plus extra furnishings from the attic. It is unclear if this building is the same as one referred to as the Old Sheep Barn and Merrifield. The Pumpkin Barn building burned down in 1975.
AD 1916	Land Transfer	Rosalie Floyd relinquishes her share of the property (approximately 73 acres) inherited from her father and William Floyd and Mrs. John Nichols divide her share equally.
AD 1920	Altered	Around 1920 "The Camp" is moved to its present location and used as the Caretaker's Workshop.
AD 1926	Land Transfer	William Floyd sells 76.07 acres on the west part of the property, the area includes Peasepunk.
AD 1928	Altered	Cornelia Floyd Nichols adds a modern kitchen (called the New Kitchen) and new pantry to the rear of the New Dining Room in the western half of the house as well as the New Pantry. A small area is also added to the New Dining Room at this time.
AD 1930	Land Transfer	Cornelia Floyd Nichols' sister and brother, Rosalie and William, with whom she has shared the Estate, give up their interests.
AD 1930 - 1940	Built	Four man-made ponds with sluiceways and a windmill are created for wild game habitat on the Estate by David Weld, Cornelia Floyd Nichols' grandson. These were (from east to west) Folly Pond, Rye Pond, South Pond and Teal Pond. The "old" field is cleared and cultivated for upland game.
AD 1931	Damaged	A series of 15 incendiary forest fires in various locations on the Estate are set by an arsonist.
AD 1934	Altered	The federal government constructs drainage ditches in the salt marsh for mosquito control, possibly accounting for the permanent removal of the watercress that was once abundant along the brook leading to Home Creek. (Mastic Records and R. Hulse)

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AD 1938	Destroyed	The Hurricane of 1938 destroys “all” the great oaks on the Estate, according to oral history reports. (Kesselman, 1983:4)
AD 1942	Damaged	A major fire starts at the railroad, probably near Mastic Station in the Town of Brookhaven, approximately seven miles west of the Floyd property. The fire sweeps south and east, spreading among the pitch pines and burning the woods. It burns the meadows, but the house is protected by fire engines drawn up around it.
AD 1949	Altered	Electricity is installed in Old Mastic House.
AD 1952 - 1972	Established	Heavy equipment is used to reclaim 40 acres from natural succession to be kept as eleven fields and five man-made ponds for hunting and habitat.
	Planted	The Floyd family plants native and exotic species to provide food and cover for wildlife. The fields and ponds are used to entertain affluent business associates and family friends. At this time the land is a licensed class “B” shooting preserve (non-profit) with New York State, allowing the family to extend upland game bird hunting season.
AD 1960	Built	Around 1960, a new irrigation system is installed , which included four or five upright pipes with attached faucets protruding out of the ground. That location of three pipes are known. One is near the flower bed running north from the new kitchen door; one near the north fence; one SW of the garden near the beech tree (still evident).
	Altered	The West Garden is "informalized" by Mrs. David Weld and the open side carport is added to the garden area just south of the Ice House.
AD 1964	Damaged	A large, intense fire burns the uplands (northwest corner) of the property but is contained and does not reach the meadows. (Kesselman, 1983: 8)
	Established	Public Law 88-587 establishes an area to be known as the "Fire Island National Seashore" for the purpose of conserving and preserving it for use by future generations.

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AD 1965	Established	Public Law 89-244 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to accept a donation of property Suffolk County, New York, known as the William Floyd Estate for addition to the Fire Island National Seashore and for other purposes.
	Land Transfer	Rights to 34 acres of the property are given to the NPS for preservation as a historic site and sanctuary for plant and animal life. In authorizing acceptance of the donation, Congress designates that the Estate become a detached unit of Fire Island National Seashore and provides a 25-year use and occupancy agreement to the Floyd descendants to allow the family extended hunting seasons.
AD 1965 - 1972	Farmed/Harvested	Under the lease, the fields continue to be actively maintained by the family utilizing a system of rototilling followed by a planting of rye ( <i>Elymus condensatus</i> ), bush-clover ( <i>Lespedeza spp.</i> ) or vetch ( <i>Cicia spp.</i> ) No field is allowed to grow unimpeded for more than two growing seasons. (Stavdahl, 198 :2)
AD 1970 - 1980	Altered	Between 1970 and 1980 chain-link fencing is installed along the boundaries of the site.
AD 1972	Altered	Now under NPS direction, field maintenance is restricted to annual mowings by the family caretaker. As a result, woody plants quickly began to reclaim the fields and with previously planted exotics such as autumn olive and black locust compounding the problem. (Stavdal, 198:-15)
AD 1975	Land Transfer	Cornelia Floyd Nichols surrenders 33.8 acres of the property to the NPS including the Main House, eleven outbuildings and the family graveyard.
AD 1976	Developed	Thirty-four acres of the property are opened to the public.
	Established	The Brookhaven Town Flood Hazard Boundary Map establishes that there are three flood zones on the Estate including a low-lying area most affected by floods of an intensity occurring every 100 years.
	Altered	The “Old Sheep Barn” is converted and used as a Maintenance garage and storage area. A subsequent electrical fire destroys the barn.

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AD 1978	Established	Management of the William Floyd estate as a historic site and natural area is designated in The General Management Plan for Fire Island National Seashore.
	Established	The Final NPS Environmental Statement asserts that the “vegetation of William Floyd Estate will be managed to preserve the historic environment, which included mature forest, successional forest, salt marshes, old fields and cultivated fields.” It also maintains that “continued mowing of fields and related maintenance of the grounds will ensure that the authenticity of the historical environment is not lost through neglect.”
	Explored	An archaeological survey of the Estate found that “surface features are not adequate to provide information about possible buried remains.” Due to this, any work done with high disturbance equipment will have to proceed slowly and under the supervision of a trained archaeologist.
	Land Transfer	Fire Island National Seashore assumes limited liability for the lower acreage.
AD 1979 - 1983	Developed	Main House and a number of outbuildings treated in accordance with the Development Concept Plan and Interpretive Prospectus for the site. First floor is opened to the general public in 1983.
AD 1980	Built	In the 1980s, four wells are sunk in the area near the house for fire suppression.
	Built	In the 1980s, Fire Break trails installed along northern and western boundaries of property, approximately 1,000 feet in length.
AD 1981	Maintained	Controlled burning of brush piles is utilized by the NPS after manual clearing by the Youth Conservation Corp.
AD 1983	Developed	“Old Mastic House,” the William Floyd Estate main house, is opened for tours. Second floor stabilization is completed and opened to the public.

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AD 1984	Maintained	A Youth Conservation Corp program tries to eliminate brush and olive trees from two of the fields by hand. Lacking equipment to remove the extensive root system, the stumps quickly give rise to sprouts. During the winter, sumac trees are scraped out by the roots with a tractor bucket and olive and locust saplings cleared from other fields.
	Restored	The “West Garden” exhibit is installed, based on 1913 planting list. A number of plants and trees are installed in the West Garden area including 7 dwarf Crabapple trees to “recreate” the apple and pear tree orchard located in the garden area.
	Built	Around 1984 a high board fence separating the outbuilding area from the house is installed.
AD 1985	Built	Around 1985 a “well” house facility is constructed in the “maintenance” area and a 300 foot well is dug.
AD 1987	Built	Visitor ingress, egress and parking lot constructed. Board walk from parking lot to front lawn constructed.
AD 1990	Developed	Entire property is opened to the public, although only the northern historic core is interpreted.
AD 1991	Restored	Hurricane Bob uprooted and destroyed two mature historic black locust trees located in front of Old Mastic House. The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation assists with coordinating and supervising the transplantation of two large in-kind replacements into the historic locations.
AD 1992	Altered	Around 1992, municipal water supply tapped near Washington Avenue for potable water and fire suppression.
AD 1995	Built	Collection Storage building constructed in Maintenance area
AD 1995 - 1996	Built	Duplex housing unit constructed in Housing area.
AD 2003	Maintained	Open Water Management Plan cleans sluiceways and ditches in marsh area.

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	Restored	An historic landscape maintenance crew supervised by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation re-open the Vista, after it had become blocked by natural vegetative succession.
AD 2005	Built	Bathroom constructed in Visitor parking lot area.

**Physical History:**

Pre-history – European Settlement: 1000 B.C.-1724

Long Island, known as Paganack by Native Americans of the Manhattan area, was a small, hilly island at the confluence of what would later be known as the Hudson and East Rivers. Members of the Algonquin groups living in the Mastic-Moriches area of Long Island, on its central southern shores, were known as Unkechaugs. These groups roamed its shores for thousands of years, farming, fishing and hunting. The Mastic-Moriches area would later become the site of the William Floyd Estate. It is believed there were about 20,000 in number from eastern Long Island west to the Moriches area. Beginning in the Woodland period (generally viewed as about 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000), Long Island Native Americans cultivated maize, beans and squash in addition to hunting and collecting of wild resources. Two other tribes, the Montauk and the Shinnecock, inhabited eastern Long Island at this time, and were likely affiliated with the Unkechaugs. (Fire Island National Seashore Archeological Investigation 1978-1986:10)

The first European settlers arrived around 1640 and appear to have had an amicable relationship with the Native Americans, probably because they were outnumbered. The Europeans traded muskets, powder and shot for the Native Americans' land. It is possible the Native Americans thought they were exchanging the use of their land for protection against their enemies from across the Devil's Belt, as the Long Island Sound was called on early charts. Native American customs did not recognize private ownership of land.

In 1657, Richard Woodhull, acting on behalf of the Town of Brookhaven, purchased 55 lots of meadow land in the southern part of Mastic along Narrows Bay (south of the Floyd house) from the Montauk Sachem (meaning Chief or Leader). This land was to be distributed among 55 proprietors, whose ranks included Richard Floyd and his wife Susanna, William Floyd's great grandparents. The Floyds had arrived from Wales a year earlier, settling in Setauket, Long Island. Richard and Susanna Floyd became the owners of a large Estate where they raised their family (number of children is unknown), including a son named Richard II.

In addition to their unfamiliar notions of property ownership, the white Europeans had brought their diseases. An outbreak of smallpox decimated the Native American population, which had no immunity to it. Large numbers of Native Americans contracted the often-fatal disease and were banned from the towns because of it. Eventually, the town of Brookhaven voted to disarm the Native Americans, forcing them to leave their arms at Captain Woodhull's in Mastic.

Claiming use of unfair practices in the white purchase of their land, the Unkechaug made a formal plea to the governor of New York in 1677. Despite the governor's assurances that their welfare would be protected, the land continued to be sold and in 1691, Colonel William "Tangier" Smith purchased from an enormous tract of land from Sachem Tobacus, a Native American who called himself John Mayhew. This tract would later be known as the Manor of St. George and included the Unkechaug territory and the future Floyd property. The Colonel and others employed the Unkechaug on their whaling ships, but also counted the natives among the Estate's slave population. (Gonzales, 1983:7) Prior to his death, the Colonel deeded 175



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scattered acres to the Native Americans and their heirs. The land was reserved for the Unkechaug Native Americans for their continued use, in return for annual rent of two ears of corn. This land, "Poosepatuck," known today as the Poosepatuck Reservation, was west of the Forge River at Poosepatuck Creek, adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the present-day William Floyd Estate. Currently, the Poosepatuck Reservation has a population of about two-hundred fifty and is administered by a chief, land trustees and a tribal council. (Guillaume, 2006)

Upon his death in 1700, Richard Floyd passed the paternal Estate to his son Richard II who later became both a judge and a colonel of the county. Richard II married Margaret Nicoll, daughter of the first English secretary of the colony. They had seven children of whom the final two were boys, Richard III and Nicoll. Shortly before his death in 1718, Richard Floyd II purchased another property, deemed a "large tract of wilderness," from the Manor of St. George (the Smith Family). The 4,400-acre property stretched north from Moriches Bay to the middle of the island on the north and west from the Forge River for a width of 1 mile. This tract bordered on "Poosepatuck," the territory of the Unkechaug Native Americans and included much of their deeded 175 acres. The transaction initiated the relationship between the Floyd family and the indigenous people. (Gonzales, 1983:7)

Within two generations of landing on Long Island in 1640, European settlers had made Mastic their own. By the early 1700s, the Floyds, the Nicolls, the Woodhulls and the Smiths had carved huge Estates out of the ragged- edged peninsula jutting into Moriches Bay. As a result, the Algonquin-speaking groups became economically dependent upon the Europeans because they were no longer able to continue their traditional use and occupancy of the land for subsistence activities.



*This detail of Blaeu's 1635 map of New England depicts the story as Richard and Susanna Floyd likely experienced it in 1656, arriving by boat to a wilderness populated by Native Americans and wild animals.  
Note the map's north arrow points right.*

Nicoll Floyd - Creation of the Estate: 1724-1755

Upon his death, Richard Floyd II's land was split between his two sons: Richard III, who inherited the land Richard and Susanna had purchased in Setauket; and Nicoll (William Floyd's father) who inherited the land recently purchased from the Smith family. Richard III would later be forced to surrender his property due his status as a loyalist. Nicoll's property would become the William Floyd Estate.

Only twelve at the time of his father's death, Nicoll Floyd did not take possession of the property until around 1720. Four years later, he settled on his Estate at the age of nineteen. He used slave and free labor to clear the land and began to develop a prosperous plantation producing corn, flax, grains, wheat, cattle and sheep. The Estate spanned the three southern necks of land, the middle was chosen as the site for his home (west of Home Creek).

The Floyds employed members of the Unkechaug/Poosepatuck tribe as general help, farmhands, cooks, child caretakers, etc. Female members of the Floyd family took responsibility for the education and religious life of their servants and family members often developed long and affectionate bonds with their family retainers.

After 1724, the first roads from New York City were authorized and built. Soon after, South County Road (Route 27) was established, running through the northern part of the Floyd property. (NR Nomination, Section 7:1) An important duty of landed gentry was to maintain the public highway where it crossed their property. The Town records stated that "this road is to continue as long as Nicoll Floyd, his heirs and assigns shall keep up a sufficient road across his dam for people to pass...with teams, cars and carriages." (Nichols, 1952:60)

Nicoll Floyd and his wife Tabitha had nine children. In 1750, an addition was added to the west side of the building to accommodate their growing family and an east wing was added as service wing. In 1755, both Nicoll and his wife died during a typhoid epidemic. Their landholdings and other possessions were divided among the surviving two sons and six daughters. While William Floyd received all the Mastic lands and holdings, his younger brother Charles inherited an equal inheritance to the west. The will also bequeathed to his son William "all my Whaling Tackling with all my Indians for that design with all my Negro or Indian Servants on the Farm at South whether male or female." (Torres-Reyes 1974:29) These slaves were considered part of the "property" at each plantation, in addition to outbuildings and associated business shares. Each of the six daughters was left with 650 pounds currency and a black maid. (Linck 1988:18)

Existing documentary evidence of cultivation began in 1754 shortly before Nicoll's death. At the time, wheat, rye, corn and flax were the cultivated cash crops dominant on Long Island. It is believed that Nicoll Floyd had successfully cleared the property and established a farm as indicated by his sale of 50 bushels of wheat in 1754. His will mentions cattle, sheep, hogs and horses.



*Richard Floyd II's land was divided between his two sons. Richard III inherited his great-grand parents property in Setauket (on the north central portion of the island) and Nicoll Floyd received the land recently purchased from the Smith family (located o*

William Floyd - Making History at Old Mastic House: 1755-1803

With Nicoll and Tabitha Floyd's sudden death early in 1755, responsibility for the large Estate and seven surviving younger children fell to the eldest son, William. Only twenty at the time, William had been the first of the Floyds to be born at the Estate. His parents were first Floyds to be buried in what would become the family burial ground.

William had received a liberal education and developed a passion for game hunting. With his parents' death, however, William quickly assumed management of the property. His natural business acumen combined with his social status and practical training allowed him to rapidly advance to a position of prominence. In 1760, William married Hannah Jones, daughter of a well-to-do Southampton couple. The couple had 3 children including Nicoll Floyd II, born in 1762.

William Floyd's Estate encompassed over 4,000 acres at a time when most farms generally ranged in size from 100 to 150 acres. During this time, farms produced food, fuel and clothing. Any surplus was shipped from the nearest landing and the sea was still the best highway from Long Island to New York and New England.

As the political climate became more charged during the reign of King George III, William made his foray into politics. He served as a trustee for the Town of Brookhaven from 1769-71. By 1774, William Floyd's political prominence was sufficient to enable him to become one of 55 representatives of the First Continental Congress. Floyd and the other representatives met in Philadelphia to discuss relations with Britain and the possibility of independence. King George III declared the colonies to be in a state of open rebellion and the American War of Independence began in 1775. When the Declaration of Independence was drafted in 1776,

Floyd was the first of four New Yorkers who signed it on August 2nd.

Soon after, the Americans were engaged in the Battle of Long Island at Brooklyn on August 27. Most prominent Long Island families were forced to flee as British troops moved in to occupy Long Island. William Floyd could not return home from Philadelphia. Floyd's first wife, Hannah Jones, and left Long Island for refuge in Connecticut, remaining there until the end of the war. Hannah died in Connecticut in 1781. During the whole revolutionary period, the British forces controlled virtually all of Long Island and the Floyd House and entire property were occupied and used by British troops who were stationed at the nearby Manor of Saint George, a British fort. In the colonial militia, Floyd was given the honorary title of Colonel. While his brother's alliance to the crown may have protected the property from complete devastation, "few of the leading patriots of the Revolution suffered more severely than he." (Thompson, 1962: 364) The produce and stock of his Estate were seized to furnish provisions for the British army and his woods cut down for their use. As a result, William derived no benefit from his lands while his family was safely sequestered in Connecticut. During this period of exile, Floyd was appointed a senator in the newly created state of New York and took his seat in its first constitutional legislature. After the war, William Floyd became a major general in the state militia and was granted a large tract of land in Montgomery County by Governor George Clinton, his good friend and his daughter's future father-in-law. The land was given to him in recognition of his services.

In 1784, after the signing of the second Treaty of Paris in 1783 (the first was signed in 1763), General William Floyd returned triumphantly from the war to the William Floyd Estate with his children. His first wife had died in 1781 during this exile. "When Floyd returned to Mastic...he found the Estate despoiled: desolate fields, uprooted trees, charred remains of fences and a house that was uninhabitable. (Assessment of Alternatives, p. 16) In 1784, he remarried and he and his new wife, Joanna Strong, had 2 more children. He immediately commenced repair and enlargement of Old Mastic House so that it was suitable to reflect his sudden national prominence and growing family. According to receipts of purchases made, William Floyd "carrie(d) out further extensive construction work on the house." (NR Form, S. 7:2) Evidence suggests that both the west wing and basement were added. (HSR, Dickey, 1977:22) In 1784, dissatisfied with the sandy soil of Long Island, William Floyd also purchased a large tract of land in the fertile Mohawk River Valley of upstate New York.

William Floyd's continued involvement in public affairs after the war resulted in frequent extended absences. In 1789, William was appointed to a seat in Congress under the new Constitution where he served for several years. To compensate for his father's absences, his son Nicoll II took on increasing control of the Estate at 22.

William Floyd's wealth was far greater than the average farmer's. Although severely decimated during the American Revolution, his father had built up a large Estate that was restored under William Floyd's management and continued to prosper. By 1790, the Estate was productive and supported many persons.

Floyd employed free skilled labor in managing his Estate, but he also depended on slaves, as did

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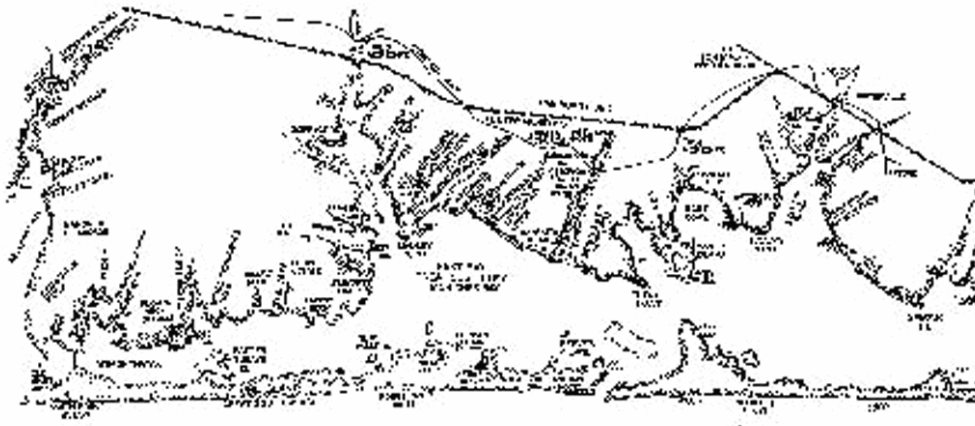
other landowners. In addition, Native American labor came from a Poosepatuck village, located about 2 miles north of the Floyd house. The isolation of the peninsula, the lack of opportunity and the sentiment of the times limited Poosepatuck employment to subsistence laborers for the Floyds and other white settlers. Prior to 1799, some Poosepatucks remained enslaved by the Floyds and other wealthy landowners.

When the house was ready, William Floyd played host to many famous men including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Marquis de LaFayette. (Assessment of Alternatives, 1978:16) Jefferson and Madison visited in 1791. It is likely that this visit coincided with Jefferson's visit to Poosepatuck to collect and translate examples of Unkechaug vocabulary. He expressed an early ethnological interest in the tribe.

In addition to his political involvement, William Floyd resumed his agricultural pursuits as evidenced by sales of produce from the farm during the 1780s and 1790s. During this period, records also reveal that Floyd bought several steers and oxen, while cattle and beef appeared repeatedly as an export from the Estate. (Kesselman, 1983:3)

In 1799, New York State passed the Manumission law requiring the registration of every slave born to be freed upon reaching the age of twenty-one. In response to the new legislation, some property owners chose to free their slaves, feeling it was inconsistent to deny slaves independence after they had fought in the war for the country's independence. The Floyds chose to keep their slaves in service and, between 1799 and 1834, William Floyd registered two slave births and his son, Nicoll II, seventeen. (CFN 1938:45)

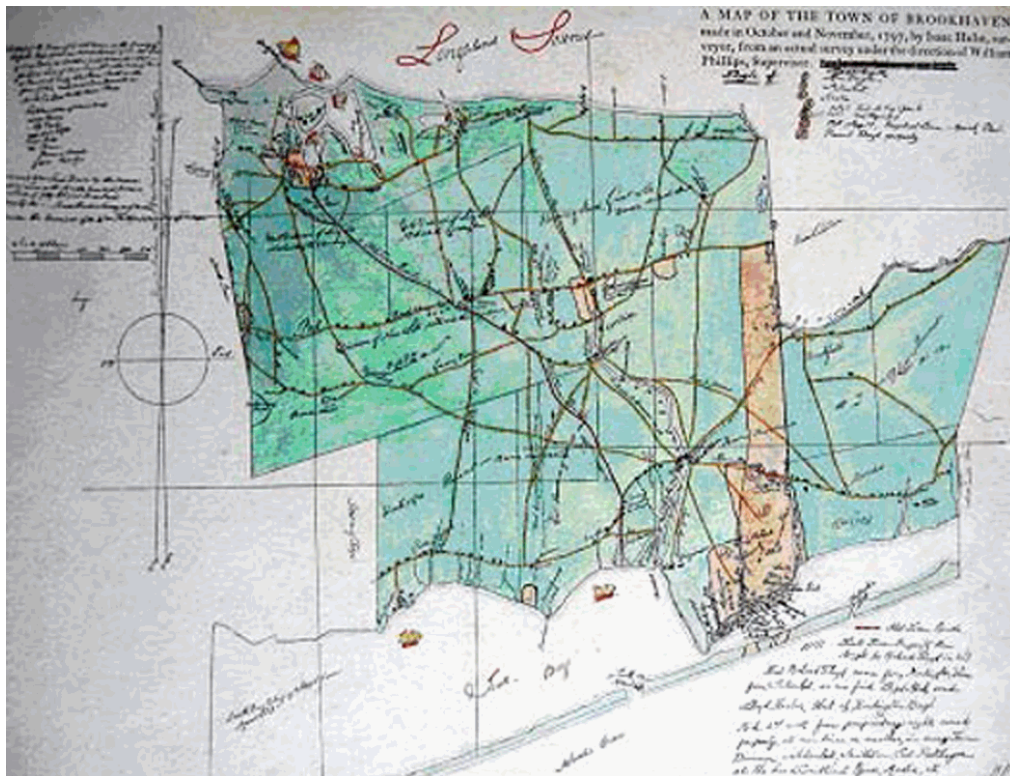
Despite the substantial alterations he had recently made, General William Floyd gave Old Mastic House to his only son Nicoll in 1803. He and his wife moved to the new home he had built in Westernville, New York.



*Map shows the location of William Floyd Estate relative to Moriches Bay, Fire Island and the 1881 Railroad line. Early deeds used the Native American names for the area. Land was apportioned usually by rivers or necks between the rivers. (Field, 2005)*



*Portrait of William Floyd by Ralph Earl 1784 (LOC). The house that Madison and other political allies visited is visible in the portrait of William Floyd painted by Ralph Earl in 1792.*



*Reproduction, Map of Brookhaven, 1797, by Isaac Hulse. The Estate (in orange) spans across the island toward Long Island Sound. Notes along edges relate to place names for structures and areas on the property.*

#### Nicoll Floyd II - William Floyd Estate as a Prosperous Plantation: 1803-1852

After Nicoll II took over complete control of the farm in 1803, he lived continuously at Old Mastic House and held responsible positions in the county until 1848-1849 when he moved to Taupenock. The property reached its point of highest productivity during Nicoll II's time. The farm developed gradually into a great Estate that resembled a southern plantation, with many Native Americans and slaves working in the fields.

Nicoll II went less far afield than his father and focused on operation of the Estate. He began shifting investments from farming and the local area to businesses in New York City, amassing a substantial fortune. His non-farm business activities may have insulated the family from economic stress after slavery was abolished between 1799 and 1827. His was the last era in which the Estate itself was a major source of the family's wealth.

Under the management of Nicoll Floyd II, the Estate was busy during this period with a wide variety of agricultural pursuits. Cattle, sheep, hogs, oxen and horses were raised as livestock on the Estate, although the last two were kept purely as utility animals. Cash crops that showed up in the plantation's ledger included corn, oats, potatoes, wheat, flax, rye hay, mutton, and orchard fruit. Nicoll Floyd II bought 40 Merino sheep in 1819, in an effort to upgrade the quality of his wool. (Kesselman 1983:4) His peers had urged him to increase his flock stating it "is the only stock with which you can come in competition with farmers who have better land." His son Augustus, with whom he frequently consulted on agricultural matters, remarked that in Suffolk County as a whole, "the cattle range is more extensive than the crop land," a remark that most likely relates to the weak soil of this region. Between the late 1840s and the early 1850s, a great deal of "labour, time and money" was expended to make sheep-raising more profitable, but the result seems not to have been a success. (SBF to NFIII, 8 June 1850) There were reports of 500 sheep on the property in 1861, but only 300 in 1876 (Ross, 1913).

The Estate's proximity to Forge River and the Great South Bay factored into its business success at this time. Fishing and boat making were commercial ventures for the farm. He invested in the construction of a number of trading vessels that were built on an Estate lot near Home Creek called "Great Boat Place." All trade with New York City was carried out principally on boats shallow enough to navigate the Bay's many shoals. These schooners carried livestock, farm produce and cordwood for city homes and businesses. (Nichols, 1938:54)

Resourcefulness was needed when market trends would shift. With the development of the first cross-island railroad during the first half of the 19th century, the need for sea transport became less critical and competition from farmers throughout the island increased. At the same time, the success of mid-western farms made cultivation of wheat unprofitable. Yet, population growth in the cities increased demand for cordwood and the Floyd's crop mix shifted accordingly. Wood appears to have been a major cash crop when the farm was at its most productive. (Kesselman 1983:4) In 1823, Nicoll Floyd II shipped 19 ½ loads of oak and 7 loads of hickory. At this time, black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) were common on Long Island. Augustus sent locust seed and advised to plant some of it "in the woods where you cut off the

cordwood.” The white thorn, which was also used as hedgerows had been decimated by a blight or insect in the late 1780. Agricultural reformers had recommended hawthorns as an alternative. This systematic replanting was a practice Nicoll II followed. Augustus also advised his father against use of Hawthorns stating “I do not like them and doubt whether they are as profitable as walnut or oak.” His father planted them anyway. Fruit trees became an emphasis of the farm. In correspondence with his father, Augustus referred to a number of fruit trees on the Estate including Early May Duke Cherry, Blackheart Cherry, Dr. Coopers Early Peach and other peach varieties. Locusts, hawthorns and oaks were also being used for hedgerows and Lopped Tree Lines. A blight in the 1880s killed the bulk of the Estate’s “dense wood of hickories (WF, “Mastic Records: 1935) revealing how fragile the economics of farming could be. During its long tenure as a productive plantation, the Floyd Estate’s output varied based on market factors and on the business judgment of the family member then managing the Estate.

The status of the Floyd’s servants was evolving throughout this period. The Native American population of the 17th century was, by this time, well mixed with that of the free blacks. (Fire Island National Seashore, 1988: 12) “New York declared a statewide program for eventual manumission in 1799, effectively curtailing slavery. Yet, Black and Native American help were employed at the farm until at least the end of the 19th century. (Fire Island National Seashore, 1978-86) Bound to the Floyd’s in her youth, Martha, a half Native American/half black servant was given her freedom in the early 1850s, according to a family member.

Nicoll Floyd II also held an office that gave him work at the edge of the sea—Office of Wreck Master. Shipwrecks occurred quite often near Mastic Beach and it was up to the wreck master to get to the spot rapidly and provide assistance, in addition to being responsible for salvage operations.

In 1827, Augustus sent Nicoll Floyd II locust seed and advised Floyd to plant some of it “in the woods where you cut off the cord wood” (AF to NFII). At this time, black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) were common on Long Island and often used for hedgerows. The white thorn, which was also used in hedgerows had been decimated by a blight or insects in the late 1780 and agricultural reformers had recommended hawthorns as an alternative. Augustus also advised his father against planting hawthorns, stating “I do not like them and doubt whether they are as profitable as walnut or oak.” However, Floyd planted hawthorns anyway.

In addition to their shared interest in agricultural practice, Nicoll II clearly valued the advice of his son Augustus, a lawyer, on business and legal matters. Augustus was cautious and concerned about foreign political concerns as well as weak domestic markets and some alarming contemporary trends such as highway robbery and counterfeiting. Despite their close association, Nicoll Floyd II did not leave the farm to Augustus, perhaps due to the pressing business demands of Augustus’ New York City life. In fact, for unknown reasons, Nicoll II bypassed all three of his older sons, giving the farm to John Gelston Floyd.

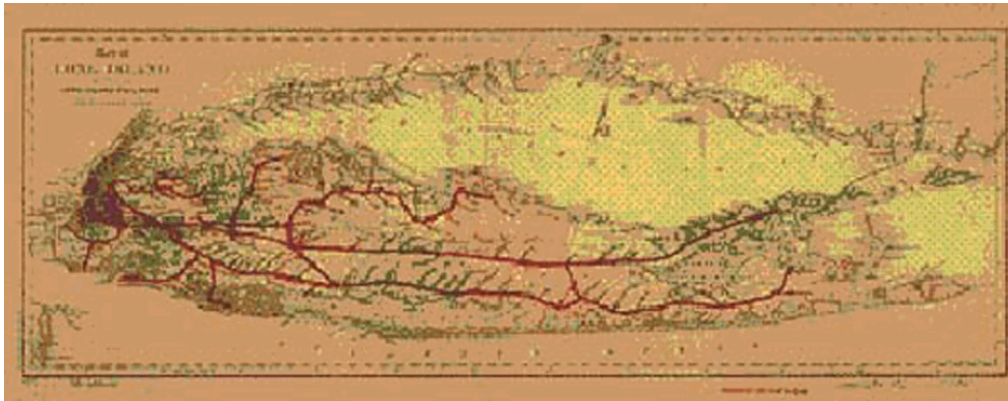
Nicoll II was certainly aware of his youngest son’s fondness for the property, having received a letter from him in 1835 describing his disappointment with a visit to Detroit: “After all, there is something wanting here to a Long Islander. I am inclined to doubt whether any man born and



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brought up on Long Island was ever really contended above tide-water. The dark forests and rich soil and luxuriant growth of grass and grain which western New York and this more western country exhibit do not present the attraction to me which I find in the sound of the surf and smell of salt water which are found on dear Long Island, albeit her oaks are somewhat stunted and her plains sterile.” Perhaps aware of the bequest and with Nicoll II in his early eighties, John Gelston Floyd and his wife Sarah moved to the Estate from Utica, NY in 1843.



*Long Island, 1882. The red lines indicate the newly developed rail lines.*



*Katherine Floyd Dana's (great granddaughter of William Floyd) painting of the Wreck of the Mary and David. The Estate's proximity to the trade routes was important to its success as an operating farm and business.*



*“The Silent Dawn at Mastic” by Katherine Floyd Dana (daughter of John Gelston Floyd)*

#### John Gelston Floyd - The Decline of the Plantation: 1852-1881

John Gelston Floyd arrived at the Estate from Utica with his family in 1843 and immediately became involved in the management of the property. Nicoll Floyd moved out of the Old Mastic House by 1849, leaving the house to John G. Floyd, Sr. and his family. The 1850 Federal Agricultural Census shows John G. Floyd as owner of a 3000-acre farm with a value of \$30,000. The 700 cultivated acres accommodated livestock, orchards and crops. Corn remained a major crop through the 1850's with mention of 5000 bushels in 1860. (Kesselman 1983:2)

John G. Floyd may have suffered a stroke in 1858 and his active management of the plantation is reduced and he is involved in other activities, including investments in the far west. Though the farm declined gradually, it was still in prime condition in 1860 when the Agricultural Census showed John G. Floyd as owner of a 2500-acre farm with a value of \$45,000. The crop output was comparable to that of the 1850 census, but the value of livestock had tripled. In 1862, the Estate had 130 head of cattle and 500 sheep on the property in 1862. It is not clear who was managing the farm at this time.

During John G. Floyd's tenure, the plantation was still stable. Cattle were grazed on the lands north of the current Estate property as well as the lower acreage. (Kesselman 1983:3) At the time, a barn was down at the lower end of Great Boat Place. Cattle were driven to a pond which had been created by damming a creek. At the time, the pond, which was east of the house, was free of brush. Several years later, the dam broke through and left the pond dry. (Kesselman 1983:9)

At this time several changes to the Old Mastic House occurred, including the addition of the northeast kitchen wing, the changing of the windows, the addition of the front porch and the Greek Revival Architectural details. Additionally, a water closet was installed in the east wing, which was serviced by a cistern and ram.

There was no water at the barns, just a well down at the sheep yard. Correspondence between John G. Floyd and his son Nicoll Floyd III point to the use of fire as a vegetation-management

tool used to maintain the meadows. (Kesselman 1983:6) In 1853, cuttings from willows located near the outbuildings are to be used along a new ditch in an unidentified location, possibly near the pond east of the house. (JFG:1852)

In 1862, a major fire burned most of the property, but no buildings were lost. This fire was occasionally referred to as “the great fire,” even as late as the 1930s. Later in that decade, agricultural reformers used it as an argument against keeping large tracts of land in Suffolk County uncultivated. (Kesselman, 1938:7)

The 1870 Agricultural Census still showed John G. Floyd as owner of a 4,400-acre farm with a value of \$30,000 matching the value as 1850. Five hundred acres were “improved” and the value of the livestock was half what it was in 1860. Produce values had declined slightly but forest products appear as a category of income for the first time. By this time, the farm was in decline and wheat was no longer grown on the Estate. (Kesselman 1983:1) Around 1877, 200 cords of wood, the last to be cut, was shipped from the Estate in the winter. The Estate’s livestock had been reduced to 6 yoke of oxen, 80 head of cattle and 300 sheep. (Kesselman 1983:3) Sale of wool remained a source of income.

Recognizing the void left by John G. Floyd’s stroke, Charles Ross was hired as caretaker for the Estate in 1876. He would hold this position until 1913. During his tenure, it is believed that he resided in the cottage known as Briarpatch, which burned down in the 1960s. During his first fall as caretaker at the Estate, Charles Ross slaughtered eighteen 200-300 pound hogs, reaping “quite a pile of pork and a share of it went up north.” The horses were pastured on the lawn, which “was fenced all around” (Ross, 1913:1) Cattle were pastured south of the house and sheep were kept in the sheep yard just south of the sheep sheds. Geese were sheltered in the goose house and turkeys roosted on black walnut trees near the ice house (built on the site of a former blacksmith’s shop). Most of the lots on the Estate were bounded by a system of ditches and hedge fences, know as Lopped Tree Lines, effective for containing livestock in pasture lots.

At the time of Ross' arrival, the farm utilized a number of other outbuildings including a corn crib, a storage crib, an old shop, a boathouse (believed to have stood at Great Boat Place), a well house (15 ft from the kitchen door), a hog pen, a wagon house, a calf barn, a smoke house, the overseer’s house, the Robinson Barn and a privy. A horse barn had just been demolished and the horses moved to another barn.

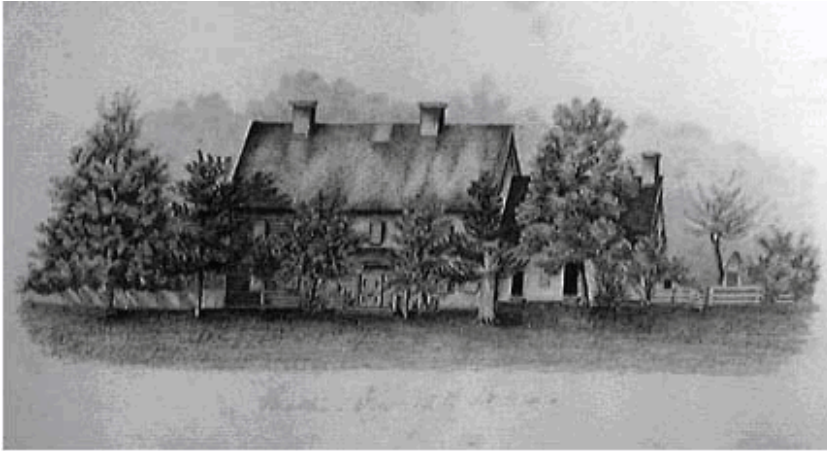
In the 1870s, the pond was still used to water the cattle but was also a source of ice. “I down to the pond east of the house (in the 1870s and 1880s). When it was frozen over, I had to cut holes along the shore, no other way to water them. I filled the icehouse two years off that pond.”(Ross, 1913:1)

The 1880 Federal Agricultural Census listed Charles Ross in lieu of an owner, stating that he “rent(ed) for share of products.” “Ross operated in cattle and horses, repaired the buildings, maintained the grounds and was an extraordinary gardener.”(Torres-Reyes, 1974:13) The census described the property as 600 tilled acres, 800 acres of meadows, orchards, etc. and

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1500 acres of woodland with a value of \$40,000. Production values in all categories were down from the 1870 census.



*1856 drawing of Old Mastic House, by Katherine Floyd Dana (John G. Floyd's daughter) showing some of the historic trees in the vicinity of main house. It's possible that the large tree at the right was lost during the 1938 hurricane. (FIIS)*



*Katherine Floyd Dana's drawing of the Blacksmith Shop. Charles Ross later built the Ice House on the same plot. (Fire Island National Seashore )*

John Gelston Floyd, Jr. - Plantation retired, Estate as Summer Home: 1881-1965

During this period, the property was encumbered with mortgages and approximately 2,200 acres had been sold. By the time of Floyd's death on October 6, 1881, half (2200 acres) of the land had been sold. The remaining Estate was divided among John Gelston Floyd's five children with John Gelston Floyd, Jr. inheriting Old Mastic House and 687 acres. John G. Floyd, Jr. had served in the Civil War and was an avid outdoorsman but had limited interest in the Estate's agriculture use. It was during his tenure, that the Estate ceased to be a working farm and became a summer home. A portion of the property was still used by Charles Ross for farming though, and he recorded that during 1896, there were 80 cattle, 300 sheep, 6 yoke of working

oxen and 18 colts at the Estate. Horses were watered at the house and cattle pastured south of it. Turkeys, geese and sheep were kept nearby in the vicinity of the house. In the 1890s a 1000 gallon tank water tank was installed on “the old cow barn” (where the new barn is now). This provided water for bathing and toilets and the water was fed from the tank to the house by gravity. Water for drinking came from a hand pump in the northwest corner of the new pantry. A gas pump was not installed until the sixties.

In the 1870s the Floyd's began using the Estate as a summer residence and moved permanently to New York City. Trips to the Estate were still elaborate and exciting adventures for the children. In the 1880s and 1890s, the journey required an early rise, a carriage ride to the ferry, a ferry ride to catch the train on Long Island and a train ride to Mastic where Charles Ross would greet with them with a carriage for the ride to the house. (C. Nichols 1934:6)

Some of the Floyd's valued servants maintained their ties with the Native American reservation nearby and the children would often visit "Pece-punk," the former site of the Native American's sweat lodge within the Estate's original boundary. Many of the Floyd's servants remained at the Estate and occupied “little cabins... within a mile of the ‘big house.’” (Nichols, 193-:15) Their names were given to these places such as Red's Orchard and Lon's Creek (shown on the 1911 survey).

John G. Floyd, Jr. enjoyed passing on his love for the old home to his children, fostering it by providing plenty of entertainment for them. He was a keen sportsman and developed use of the Estate for hunting. The house had become the family's summer home and refuge and the woods, a family hunting ground for the winter. To aid the transition, John G. Floyd, Jr. made alterations to accommodate guests including the addition of a two-story rear extension (north wing) and made the grounds more habitable for various game species. During the 1890s, he created the Vista to better view Moriches Bay as part of a more formal landscape. The land had originally been completely clear down to the bay (except for hedgerows and orchards) so the early Floyds could monitor farm and bay activities, but thick woods beyond the Pightle had obscured this view. To create the Vista, John G. Floyd cleared a wide break extending due south through the woods at the southern edge of the Pightle to Lawrence Creek, providing a clear view to the shore of the Bay. Around 1900, John G. Floyd, Jr. put in the Meadow Ground Path, which commenced at the end of the Vista, so guests could visit the salt marsh without getting their feet wet. To construct the Meadow Ground Path, he placed fence rails on top of the ditch and mound system that already existed and bridged the gaps with planks. (Mastic Records, oral history) A journalist from the Brooklyn Times described the salt marsh in 1903: “There were miles of dykes and ditches, between marshland and upland to keep off tidewaters and restrain cattle. Some of the dykes were more than six feet high with sluice gates every quarter mile.”

With John G. Floyd, Jr.'s death in 1903, William II, Rosalie and Cornelia were left equal shares of the Estate. By this time, the Estate was no longer actively farmed by the family but was still used by Charles Ross for farming until 1913. Cattle continued to be pastured on the lower acreage until about the 1920s by a local farmer leasing the pasturage from the Floyds. (Kesselman 1983:4) Without regular maintenance through regulated burns and mowing, the

landscape was cycling into typical succession. By 1914, the Pond had ceased to be a source of ice and brush had grown up in the area. (Ross, 1913)

In 1926 William Floyd sold 76.07 acres of the west part of the property, including Peasepunk, to William S. Dana. Dana served eviction papers to the residents on the grounds that they were no longer of pure-blood ancestry. The Poosapatuck lost their schoolhouse, which had been present for fifty years, but retained their right to live on the reservation land, because “they have apparently lived on this particular reservation for over two hundred years.” (Gonzales, 1983:7) The case eventually went to the Supreme Court and was decided in favor of the tribe.

In 1916, Rosalie relinquished her share of the property (encompassing approximately 440 acres), and William Floyd and Mrs. John Nicolls split her share equally. More alterations to the property were made to enhance the enjoyment of the relatives and their numerous guests during their stay at the Estate. Cornelia Floyd Nichols (John G. Floyd’s daughter) often had as many as 25-30 people staying for the weekend. In 1928, Cornelia Floyd Nichols added a modern kitchen to the rear of the new dining room in the western half of the house.

Cornelia Floyd Nichols’ brother, William, gave up his interest in the house as “the discomfort of changing conditions loomed larger and the call of the city prevailed.”(CFN 1952:45) William Floyd may have sold his interest to Cornelia at the same time he sold 76 acres of the west part of the property around 1926. For the first time, the name of Floyd disappeared from the tax rolls of the town of Mastic. During the remainder of her time at Old Mastic House, Cornelia Floyd Nichols continued to modernize the house, although it always remained somewhat “behind the times.” Due to its sheer size and the expense of upkeep and taxes, the landscape was largely overlooked.

During this period, the Estate was plagued with a number of fires. A fire, which reportedly began at the railroad in the town of Mastic, spread south and east to the Estate with staff first fighting it at neighboring property before returning to the Estate to fight it there. Evidently, hundreds of acres of timber were devastated and wildlife perished. “The firefighters saved the buildings by wetting down the grass in the path of the flames and by plowing all around the structures.” (NY Herald, 5 April 1904) Sometime between 1905 and 1910, William Floyd III reported a fire that he and some friends accidentally started on the front lawn “got away from us and rushed wildly towards Home Creek.” (Kesselman 1983:7) At this time, the neighborhood of Mastic Beach where the Estate resides was still comprised of largely uninhabited swampy and wooded land. As the Floyd family and other neighboring large landowners began to sell off portions of their property, development began to occur.

In 1939, a new fire department was established by the town of Mastic Beach in response to an increase in arson and other fires causing damage to the community. A major fire started at the railroad in 1942 and swept southeast, spreading among the pitch pines and burning the woods all around. The new fire department proved especially valuable in protecting the Old Mastic House during this fire. Fire was prevented from reaching the house by the fire department’s engines, however the meadows were burned, and pockets of peat and brush on the property continued to smolder for many weeks. (Kesselman, 1983:8) In the 1960s, a large, intense fire burned the

northwest corner of the property but was contained and did not reach the meadows.  
(Kesselman 1983:8)

Other natural forces took a toll on the Estate's population of trees as well. The landscape in the area of Squirrel Lane (the road that leads to Floyd Family Graveyard), which had been a densely wooded with hickories during the 1880s, was decimated one year by a blight that killed off the entire stand. (Mastic Record, 1935) A few years later, the Hurricane of 1938 destroyed "all" the great oaks on the Estate, according to oral history reports. (Kesselman 1983:4)

After a quarter century of little or active upkeep, the Floyd family spent two decades reclaiming 40 acres from forest beginning in 1952. Roy Hulse hired as caretaker and with wife and family move into Briarpatch. They designated eleven fields and four ponds to be maintained for hunting and habitat. The fields were actively maintained by utilizing a cycle of regular rototilling, followed by planting rye (*Elymus condensatus*), bush-clover (*Lespedeza* spp.) or vetch (*Cicia* spp.) None of the fields were allowed to grow unimpeded for more than two growing seasons. (Stavdahl, 198 :2) Afterwards, the land was used principally as a wild game habitat where the family hunted and fished. Four of the ponds were first created by David Weld in the 1930s and 1940s and called Folly Pond, Rye Pond, South Pond, and Teal Hole. The fifth pond, Floyd Pond, is the only natural pond on the property and was identified as early as the 1840s. Active conservationists, the Floyds planted native and exotic species to provide food and cover for wildlife. Due to generally good land use throughout the better part of nine generations, the Estate became a rare and outstanding sanctuary of plant and animal life, supporting several species that had disappeared elsewhere on Long Island.



*This map depicts the end result of the division of the original Estate dictated in John Gelston Floyd's will.*



*A group of the Floyds in the 1880s sitting on a tree "lopped" to make a boundary earlier in the century. (Fire Island National Seashore)*





*Old Mastic, circa 1910. (Fire Island National Seashore)*

NPS Tenure: 1965-Present

During this period, the Floyd descendants began to explore the notion of donating the property to the National Park Service (NPS). In 1965, Public Law 89-244 was enacted, enabling the Secretary of the Interior to accept a donation of the 613-acre parcel of the William Floyd Estate in Suffolk County, for addition to the Fire Island National Seashore (FIIS) and for other purposes. Just the year before, Public Law 88-587 had established the "Fire Island National Seashore" for the purpose of conserving and preserving it for use by future generations.

With this legislation in place, rights to the property were given to the NPS in 1965 to preserve the historic site. In authorizing acceptance of the donation, Congress designated that the Estate become a detached unit of Fire Island National Seashore. With this donation, the NPS accepted responsibility for the main house and grounds in need of stabilization and maintenance. A 25-year use and occupancy agreement was granted to the Floyd descendants.

The transition from summer home to an active NPS site occurred in increments over several years. The family exercised their rights to the property until the early surrender of 33.8 acres in 1975. (Stavdahl, 198 :15) They continued to maintain the fields at a limited level, though rigorous field maintenance ceased around 1972 and was restricted to simple annual mowing by the family caretaker. As a result, woody plants quickly began to reclaim the fields and with previously planted exotics such as autumn olive and black locust compounding the problem. (Stavdal, 198 :2) As the Floyd's were well aware, the salt marsh created a serious mosquito problem. This prompted the federal government to create drainage ditches as an attempt to control the infestation, but the method more likely succeeded in permanently removing the watercress that was once abundant in the area. (Mastic Records, R. Hulse)

In 1975, fifteen years prior to the agreed end of occupancy, Cornelia Floyd Nichols surrendered the remaining Old Mastic House, its contents and approximately 34 acres immediately

surrounding the house along with 11 ancillary buildings and the graveyard area. This 34-acre historic core was opened to the public in 1976 while rehabilitation and cleaning began on the rest of the property including Old Mastic House. A number of environmental and archeological studies were done and the William Floyd District was divided into two management zones: the 34-acre historic core, and the remainder of the acreage. The Old Mastic House opened for tours in 1983 and the remainder of the property's lower acreage was opened to the public in 1991 after the family's lease back agreement was completed.

Since assuming full responsibility for maintenance in 1975, the NPS has taken several measures to stabilize the William Floyd Estate's landscape. In 1979, the National Park Service developed a series of plans relevant to the development of the Estate, including the Assessment of Alternatives and the Description of Selected Alternatives also called the Development Concept Plan (DCP) and Interpretive Prospectus (IP) for the site. The Description of Alternatives is the primary reason for the maintenance of the fields and trails as it specifically states the field will be maintained to their present (1978) dimensions. In 1981, the Youth Conservation Corp manually cleared portions of the property to prepare for controlled burning of brush piles. Three years later, the Youth Conservation Corp participated in field reclamation efforts by hand removal of locust, sumac and olive trees from some of the fields. Later efforts utilized a tractor bucket to remove the extensive root systems in some cases. Ongoing measures have been made to clear saplings from the fields through annual mowing, but the park continues to struggle with woody succession.

In 1993, Hurricane Bob uprooted and destroyed two mature historic black locust trees located in front of Old Mastic House. The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation assisted with transplantation of two large in-kind replacements into the historic locations. In 2003, an historic landscape maintenance crew supervised by the Olmsted Center re-opened the Vista, after it had become blocked by natural vegetative succession.

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The William Floyd Estate retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling and association to the life of William Floyd, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Revolutionary War General. It also retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, association and workmanship for continued use by his descendants for over 240 years. The property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance throughout its 241-year period of significance.

Based on the definition of historic integrity as the authenticity of a property's identity evident in historic physical characteristics, the William Floyd Estate retains integrity. Although the total acreage is diminished from its historic original 4,400 acres, the overall spatial relationship of the Estate, including buildings and field patterns together with historic vegetative features remain similar to what was in place during the period of significance. The Estate's circulation features follow their 18th and early 19th-century alignments and the extant buildings continue to illustrate the Estate's initial use as a working farm and later recreational use. The historic Vista, constructed water features and small scale structures such as the graveyard markers have been preserved and are intact.

Significant vegetative features including the Lopped Tree Lines, Pightle, Fields, Corduroy Road and Great Ditch and drainage ditches are representative of traditional agricultural practices and patterns of land use. Other important extant features including the Vista, Ponds, salt marsh, orchard, forests, circulation networks, and ornamental trees all relate to the Estate's historic land use and contribute to its historic character. Old Mastic House, the Barn, Corn Crib, Storage Crib and Old Shop are all original to the site, as are all of the buildings not constructed by the NPS. The family did not construct any building on the site after their 1975 early surrender of the property. Many of the nineteenth-century structures, including the Caretaker's Workshop, and Carriage House, have been preserved and are still evident today. The only building that has been moved from its original location is the Gazebo, while other buildings were adapted as their functions changed or needs dictated, illustrating the property's evolution.

This section provides an evaluation of the landscape's physical integrity by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance with current conditions. Each characteristic or feature is classified as contributing, non-contributing or undetermined to the site's overall historic significance. For those features that are listed as undetermined, further primary research, which is outside the scope of this CLI, is necessary to determine the feature's origination date.

### Aspects of Integrity

#### Location

This aspect of integrity refers to the place where the landscape was constructed. The original size of the William Floyd Estate was nearly seven times larger than the current 613 acres. Yet while the boundaries have changed somewhat as portions of the Estate were sold, the location of all aspects of the historic core remains intact. Therefore, the site retains integrity of location.

#### Setting

As the setting or physical condition for the William Floyd Estate has remained consistent during the period of significance, the Estates' landscape retains integrity of setting. The site retains its proximity to Home Creek and Narrows Bay and the Vista and Pightle reinforce the sense of prominence and scale for which this site was chosen.

#### Feeling

A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time period is evaluated under this aspect of integrity. William Floyd Estate has integrity of feeling to the historic period. At the height of operations this site was an active and productive agricultural landscape. The Estate's historic core and vast grid system of fields reflect this historic use. Though the site as a whole is no longer used for agriculture as it was during the period of significance, the landscape retains characteristics consistent with its use for conservation and recreation during the later part of its historic period. In addition, all of the buildings from the historic period exist, except for the Old Sheep Barn.

#### Association

This aspect refers to the direct link between the significant historic event or person and the cultural landscape. The remaining landscape design, characteristics and features primarily date to the historic period. The Estate's grounds reflect the association with William Floyd illustrates more than 240 years of private land-use management, from working plantation to hunting area and nature preserve. Overall, the property maintains integrity of association.

#### Workmanship

This aspect of integrity refers to the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular period. While the workmanship used to create Old Mastic House and outbuildings is fairly well-documented, few examples of the workmanship used to create the cultural landscape remain. Two important exceptions to this are the extensive system of Lopped Tree Lines and the Corduroy Road. Remnants of the Lopped Tree Lines remain intact throughout the site and are increasingly rare examples of this Long Island agricultural practice. The corduroy road also remains intact providing an ingenious method of traversing salt marsh land. Historically, these features are particular to this type of agricultural site on Long Island. Owing to these important features, the site retains integrity of workmanship.

#### Materials

All types of materials, including those used for the construction of circulation, vegetation and other landscape features, as well as the materials' placement in the landscape, are included under this aspect of integrity. The quality and placement of the existing materials found at the site is mixed. In areas that have not been rehabilitated, original construction materials remain, including foundations and buildings that have been preserved. In areas that have already been rehabilitated some of the original materials remain, but some were replaced by necessity during renovations even though great care was used. Vegetation is nearly all the same but in some cases historic but invasive species have become dominant and threatened to overgrow areas not kept regularly maintained. Overall, the site does not retain integrity of materials.

### Design

The grounds of the William Floyd Estate are significant as an example of a planned agricultural plantation, reflecting land-use and agricultural practices that addressed the challenges of eighteenth and nineteenth century farming on Long Island. Distinctive boundary demarcations consisting of hedges, loped tree fences and drainage ditches, representative of traditional practices on south east Long Island are representative of traditional practices and patterns of land use. Vestiges of these agricultural practices proved compatible with the Estate's game bird and waterfowl habitat conservation management, and use as a wild game habitat and hunting ground. Although somewhat obscured by maintenance neglect and vegetative progression, the site retains integrity of design.

### Integrity of the Property as a Whole

As stated above, the William Floyd Estate retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, workmanship and association. It does not retain integrity of materials, although extensive efforts can be made to reverse this. Even though there have been incremental changes subsequent to the historic period, the above analysis indicates the William Floyd Estate cultural landscape does retain integrity to the period of significance established by this CLI (1724-1965).

<b>Aspects of Integrity:</b>	Location
	Setting
	Feeling
	Association
	Workmanship
	Materials
	Design

### Landscape Characteristic:

#### Natural Systems and Features

##### Historic Period

The William Floyd Estate was established on three joined necks of land jutting gently into Narrow Bay. The ground slope of the site rises gradually from mean sea level to an elevation rarely exceeding 20'. Approximately 25 percent of the land area lies in tidal salt marsh, with the remaining land composed of mature timber forests and cultivated fields. Most upland soils are sandy loam, loamy sand, or sand. (McCormick, 1975:180-81) The upland vegetation was somewhat adapted during the first half of the 20th century to improve habitat for small game and other wildlife and the salt marshes, though relatively undisturbed, were altered with mosquito ditches.

##### Existing Conditions

The William Floyd Estate contains a variety of natural habitats formerly typical of South Shore Long Island. In view of the scarcity of such relatively undisturbed natural areas in the region, the tract is a significant biological area and no hunting is allowed on the property. (McCormick, 1975:275) Following the historic practices of the Floyd descendants, the NPS has continued to mow or cultivate scattered fields, which are interspersed among the upland and lowland forests and thickets.

### **Spatial Organization**

#### **Historic Period**

The original Estate ran about six miles north from Moriches Bay and one mile west from the Forge River. Creation of the Estate required extensive clearing of the tract's 4,400 acres. The Estate spanned across three southern necks of land (from northeast to southwest): 1) Lane's Neck (between Poosepatuck Creek and Long Creek, also known as Lon's Creek); 2) John Wood's Neck (between Long Creek and Home Creek, now a private development known as Mastic Acres); and 3) Great Neck (between Home Creek and Lawrence Creek, now known as the William Floyd Estate). Old Mastic House was built on Great Neck, about one mile north of the bay, but only 150 feet from the spring-fed upper reaches of Home Creek. (Linck 1988:13) Because the land was cleared and was actively farmed during the first 150 years, house occupants could easily view the bay and passing ships.

Though there is no physical evidence suggesting the orientation of the original 1700s entrance of Old Mastic House, later evidence does exist about entrances to the south and the bay. Most early 18th century manor houses were oriented towards the waterway, the bay in this case, that was the major route of transport. The outbuildings were dispersed in a broad ring west, north and east of the house, at a sufficient distance to avoid odors and mud, but close enough to provide easy access to the house, which was the epicenter of operations. (HSR, Dickey: 9) Just 1000' southeast of the Old Mastic House was the Floyd Family Graveyard, accessed by a winding trail. During the historic period, a wooden fence was constructed around the graveyard, gated on the north side where the trail approached it from the house. The Floyd Family Graveyard was established in 1755 and was divided in five sections: one for each child of the first family giving it a distinctly familial character. Just outside the fence to the south were seven wooden crosses marking the graves of the family's slaves and servants.

Beyond the approximately 34-acre residential core, the remaining vast acreage of the property was actively incorporated into the plantation's production. During the early formation of the plantation, the property was divided by the Great Ditch, a structure built to separate and drain the upland meadows grounds from the tidal lower salt marsh and restrict animal movement between the two. The upland portion of the property was further divided into an elaborate system of field lots. While there is some evidence of early wood fences, Lopped Tree Lines were used extensively to delineate the massive grid into agricultural fields, orchards, meadows and pasture. Many of the original cartways of the William Floyd Estate were bounded by Lopped Tree Lines on both sides. Sometimes no more than the ditch was constructed. Later, post and rail fences were built along many of the mounds. The 1911 survey showed the various lots and their tree fences. (McCormick 1976:15-16) A grid work of trails skirted the fields providing access between the various lots, as well as the far reaches of the Estate, river,

seacoast, Floyd Family Graveyard, servants quarters and nearby Native American reservation. The lower acreage of salt marsh formed the Estate's southern boundary with Narrow Bay.

As the Estate transitioned to a summer house and hunting lodge, the spatial organization of the property did not change, but its use did. The agricultural grid of fields remained useful to the family's interest in hunting wild fowl and small game. This prompted the family to alter some of the vegetation and constructed a number of spring-fed duck ponds in the salt marsh to encourage conditions conducive to successful hunting. When the Estate ceased to be an operating farm, delineation of the numerous fields, meadows, pastures and ponds began to blur as natural field succession quickly erased distinct edges. Many of the fields that were once utilized for grazing or crops became overgrown with grasses and shrubs. For twenty-five years beginning in 1952, the family took action to reclaim eleven fields and five man-made ponds, significantly restoring the historic character of the property.

#### Existing Conditions

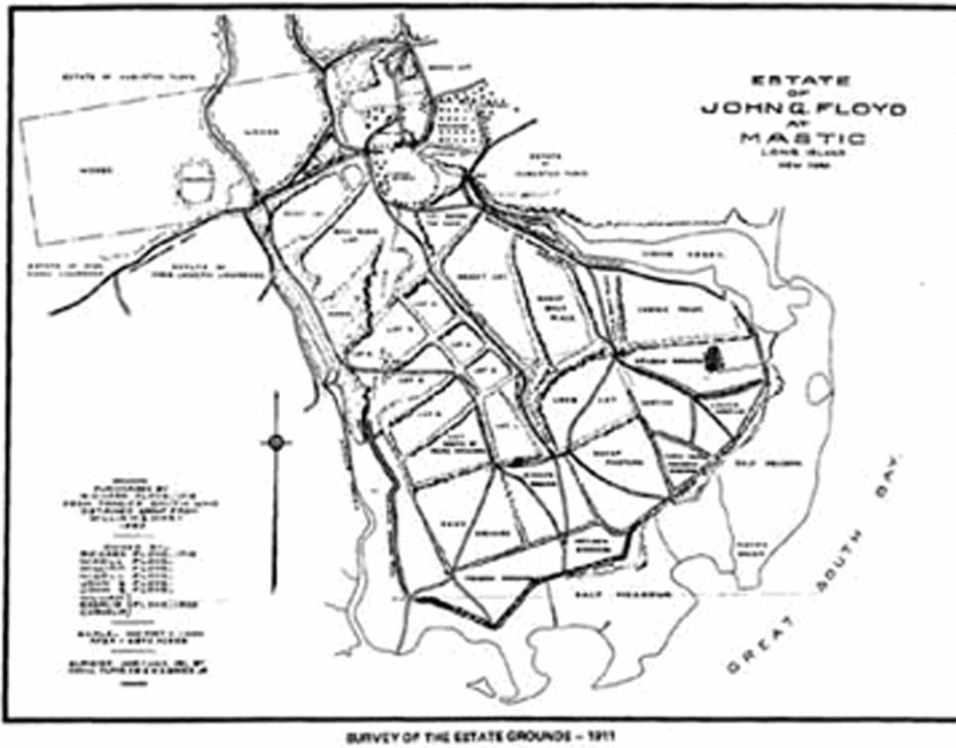
While the original size of the William Floyd Estate was nearly seven times larger than the current 613 acres, the overall spatial organization remains similar to what was in place during its early development. Today, the Estate is a roughly bell-shaped parcel bordered on the east and west by creeks and on the south by Narrow Bay. The core of the William Floyd Estate occupies 34 acres in the central north quadrant of the park's 613 acres and still reflects its historic condition with the historic Old Mastic House remaining in its original location. Its orientation remains southerly, although the view to the bay from the house's second floor is easily obscured by vegetation. In 1994, this vista was trimmed and cut back by a group of volunteer arborists. The remaining outbuildings are still clustered in a semi-circle north of the house and most roads and trails remain and appear to follow their early 19th century routes. The Floyd Family Graveyard remains intact in its original location. The graveyard is managed by the NPS and through a Cemetery Association agreement, the burial rights of the graveyard are restricted to Cornelia Floyd Nichol's children and their spouses.

The eleven reclaimed fields remain reasonably well-delineated due to annual mowing by the NPS. The five ponds remain in the salt marsh, but vegetative succession has reduced their size and some of the barriers and dikes that once protected these fresh water ponds from the salt water tides have deteriorated.

#### Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Floyd Estate - Floyd Family Graveyard
Feature Identification Number:	112778
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	40932
LCS Structure Name:	Floyd Estate - Floyd Family Graveyard
LCS Structure Number:	WF 208

#### Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

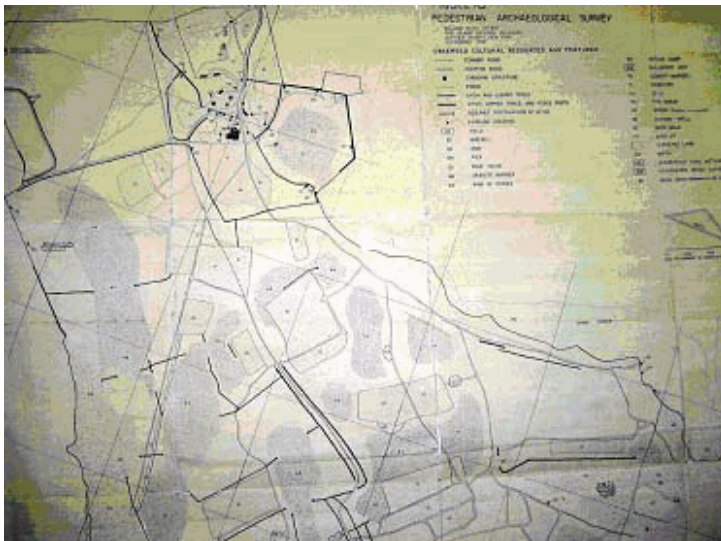


*The 1911 Survey showing the extensive field grid developed for the property's use as a plantation (McCormick, 1976) and delineated by vegetative Lopped Tree Lines (FIIS).*





*The Floyd Family Graveyard viewed east from the entrance. Note the small white crosses at the right, just outside the Floyd Family Graveyard Fence. These are the grave markers for the family's slaves and servants. (OCLP, 2005)*



*Map of the northern half of the William Floyd Estate with historic core at top center. The dark lines indicate Lopped Tree Lines located on the site, including several in the vicinity of Old Mastic House.*

## **Vegetation**

### Historic Period

The vegetative cover of the Estate grounds varied over the 240 years of management by the Floyd family, but the variation has consistently related to its use for agriculture, ornamentation and conservation. While there is some archeological evidence of prior use by Native Americans, it is likely that the property first inhabited by Nicoll Floyd was covered with extensive deciduous forests, which was cleared by slaves and servants. During the first 150 years of use, field maintenance left the vegetative cover cleared sufficiently to allow views from Old Mastic House to the southern shore. Surrounding the house, a 1 1/2-yard was tended and generally grassy. Descendants planted a number of linden, locust, cedar, walnut and beech trees, as well as numerous ornamental trees and shrubs and flowering plants. (Nichols 1934:12)

The Floyd family utilized the Estate's proximity to the sea, which provided access to whaling and fishing, and the ocean's "vegetation." Ezra L'Hommedieu, General William Floyd's brother-in-law, was known for his experimental use of seaweed and shells to improve soil fertility. Family records suggest the General and subsequent members of the family incorporated some of these methods into their routine.

Directly southeast of the house was an area known as the Pightle, one of the Estate's important landscape features. An old English term for "a small enclosed piece of land or paddock", the William Floyd Estate's Pightle was an open meadow of rough-cut lawn that provided a setting for the Old Mastic House. It was several acres in size and enclosed by woods to the west, south and east.

The Plantation had over a dozen fields used for crops or grazing in rotation, along with an orchard, ice pond area for boat building. The produce raised varied by generation and market factors. The grid of fields was elaborate and delineated and bounded by miles of lopped tree fences. Perhaps based on Native American models, Lopped Tree Lines are one of the Estate's most distinctive vegetative features relating to the William Floyd Estate's agricultural heritage.

Comprised of a system of man-made ditches and hedges, these structures were essentially "living fences" used on early Long Island's vast Estates to define their field boundaries. They would be created when a settler was clearing a field by leaving a line of trees in place when the tract of woodland was cleared. It was customary to dig a ditch 2-3' deep and wide around the sides of the field. The dirt from the ditch was thrown up alongside creating a mound. The trees growing along this mound were then "lopped" or partly cut so that they could be pushed over. Often the man doing the work would have a boy assistant whose job was to climb the tree and bend it over so that the tree would fall in the right direction. The trunks of the trees were cut only half-way through, so that the tops could continue to send up new shoots. When young trees grew on the soil mound, these too were lopped. As the lopped trees continued to grow, their upright branches were also lopped. Gradually a thick barrier of vegetation developed. Such

fences could be maintained for centuries.

In addition to marking the boundaries of the fields, they also provided an impenetrable fence that effectively restrained livestock from straying off-property or into the wrong field. Once established, the vegetative fence would eventually become very dense. George Washington made entries in his diary about this method of fencing during his visit to Long Island in 1790, but wrote that he felt they were not efficient because they were not “hog tight.”

Locusts, hawthorns and oaks were being used for Lopped Tree Lines and hedgerows as well as cordwood. Records show that Augustus Floyd later sent seeds of the “thorn or honey locust” (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) and the “yellow locust,” also known as black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). By 1840, a number of deciduous species had been planted on the Estate including black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) in front of the house. Aspens (*Populus* sp.), oaks (*Quercus* sp.), willows (*Salix* sp.) and walnuts (*Juglans* sp.) had been planted in the lot east of the lawn, near the pond.

When the Estate transitioned from a productive farm to a summer home and recreational hunting retreat, natural forest succession began to reclaim some vast acres of inactive fields, rapidly filling in with extensive deciduous forest growths. The view to the shore was no longer clear until John G. Floyd, Jr. decided to create the Vista in 1890. The Vista opened southward towards the bay and led to the Meadow Ground Path that he had created to enable visitors to navigate their way through the salt marsh en route to the beach without getting their feet wet. He also maintained the Estate’s Pightle. During this period and throughout the first half of the twentieth century, family members kept a vegetable garden directly behind the house that utilized an irrigation system tied into the water tower and windmill situated on top of the barn. In conjunction with its use as a recreational hunting retreat, the Estate was also managed at to increase its attractiveness to wildlife species. Fields, meadows and access roads were mowed at intervals to prevent encroachment by forests and high thicket. Rye was planted annually in some fields; others contained hedgerows, lespedeza and multiflora rose for wild game habitat. (McCormick 1975:230) To attract waterfowl and small game, ponds and fields were reclaimed and native vegetation planted, chosen because it would provide food and cover for wildlife. In certain fields, the northern section was mowed for hunting. The practice encouraged released game birds from leaving the safety of the southern side when flushed. If the game elected to fly over the mowed field, hunters were posted to take advantage of the easy shots. (Stavdahl, 198 :13)

The Hurricane of 1938 is said to have had a particularly devastating impact on the Estate, having come ashore nearby at Fire Island. It destroyed all the old red oaks in the upland section of the property, along with elms nearby and the locusts at the front of the house. The locusts were replaced in kind and the old basswood (*Tilia cordata* v. *americana*) and beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) trees were spared by the storm.

Existing Conditions

The residential area surrounding Old Mastic House remains generally open and grassy. Historic trees surrounding the house have been actively maintained and are in good condition. A small orchard and a number of ornamental trees and shrubs remain, but show the negative impact of frequent deer-browsing. In recent years, the west garden area has suffered losses due to deer browsing and some storm damage. In-kind replacements have been made with limited success. New plantings are especially vulnerable to the deer. The mature beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and Basswood (*Tilia americana*) located just southwest of the house remain in good condition.

Due to their pronounced topographic character, remnants of lopped tree fences (called Lopped Tree Lines) that were such a distinctive feature of the Estate are still in evidence in the form of several peculiarly shaped large trees and extensive physical remnants of ditches and mound remnants are scattered throughout the Estate. Where evident, they often mark the original boundaries of the fields rather than dividing one pasture from another as they did historically. Left un-maintained, the new growth of the Lopped Tree Lines has quickly grown into large trees and in many instances, become unrecognizable as historic features. A particularly attractive Lopped Tree Fence remnant runs along the northern edge of Squirrel Lane, the road that leads to the Floyd Family Graveyard.

Today, oak forest covers about 50% of the Estate. The dense canopy of the upland forest is generally taller than 30'. The dominant species are red and white oak, while other species present include hickories, additional oak species, red maple, black locust, sassafras and black cherry. The locust-black cherry canopy, considerably lower and more open than the oak forest, is comprised of younger, smaller caliper trees. This exotic invasive vegetation, especially locust species, has become dominant within the forest growth. The maintained fields are mowed no less than annually in an attempt to control woody succession of locust and olive saplings. Left alone, even two-year-old saplings have proven too big to mow.

A lowland bush swamp forest now forms the transition between salt marsh and the upland portion of the Estate. It grades into a swamp thicket of groundsel bush (*Baccharis halimifolia*) and marsh elder (*Iva imbricata*) growing along the mosquito ditches and along the banks of the artificial ponds. (McCormick 1975:230) Cordgrass is the dominant species in the salt marsh grasslands where the NPS is utilizing Open Water Marsh Management (OWMM) which entails plugging mosquito ditches with plywood and organic fill to prevent the salt marsh from draining at low tide. OWMM seeks to encourage native plants to re-establish and small ponds to form, allowing for a natural food cycle to evolve supporting fish and invertebrate communities with the goal of improving the diversity of the salt marsh. The impact of residual DDT in the salt marsh ecosystem was studied in 1986 concluding that, while contaminated, the salt marsh may be in the process of restoration.

In 1991, Hurricane Bob uprooted and destroyed two mature historic Black Locust trees located in front of Old Mastic House. The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation assisted with coordinating and supervising the transplantation of two large in-kind replacements into the historic locations. The Pightle has been maintained in its historic condition with rough-cut grass

and an opening to the Vista. In 1995, an historic landscape maintenance crew supervised by the Olmsted Center re-opened the Vista, after it had become blocked due to natural vegetative succession.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Pightle

Feature Identification Number: 111208

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Locust Trees (4)

Feature Identification Number: 111210

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Beech Tree (*Quercus gradiflora*)

Feature Identification Number: 111212

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Basswood (*Tilia cordata* v. *Americana*)

Feature Identification Number: 111214

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Fields and Woodland

Feature Identification Number: 111216

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Salt marsh

Feature Identification Number: 111218

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Lopped Tree Lines

Feature Identification Number: 111222

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40913

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Lopped Tree Lines

LCS Structure Number: WF 202

Feature: Floyd Family Graveyard

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Feature Identification Number: 113320  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 40932  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Floyd Family Graveyard  
LCS Structure Number: WF 208

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*The view north to Old Mastic House from the southern edge of the field the family referred to as the Pightle. (OCLP, 2005)*



*A remnant of a Lopped Tree Fence at William Floyd Estate. (Fire Island National Seashore)*



*A large basswood (*Tilia cordata* v. *Americana*) tree directly in front of the southwest corner of Old Mastic House is one of several historic trees planted near the house. (OCLP, 2005)*

### **Circulation**

#### Historic Period

In its early years, circulation at the William Floyd Estate clearly relied on the main house's proximity to Home Creek and in turn, access to the Bay. Once carriages, trains and automobiles became more efficient modes of transport, circulation pivoted around to rely on connections to the new roads and train lines. The original vehicular entrance to the Estate was from Squirrel Lane (which passes the Floyd Family Graveyard as it enters the property from the northeast). From this entrance gate, the house and outbuildings were visible. Family members fondly recalled the experience of approaching the property around 1900 after the

lengthy trip from the city. (Mastic Recollections, Paul, 1982:5)

Given the vast size of the William Floyd Estate, a system of Dirt Roads and Paths was developed early in the property's history to navigate around it. Many of the original cartways of the William Floyd Estate were bounded by Lopped Tree Lines on both sides. Around 1900, John G. Floyd, Jr. put in the Meadow Ground Path, where a system of ditches and mounds already existed. He placed fence rails on top of the mound and planks as bridges over the gaps so that guests could access the salt marsh without getting their feet wet. (Mastic Records, oral history) The Corduroy Road was constructed in the salt marsh to enable carriages to pass through the area. It was created by laying timbers side-by-side and strapping them together, creating the effect the nap of corduroy.

Near Old Mastic House, a Brick Walk ran for 35' west from the lilac bush to a small round terrace that used to hold a sun dial (now in the museum collection). The SHPO concurred that it was a contributing resource to the national significance of the site because it "illustrated the continued evolution of circulation and contributed to the visual history of the development of a rural 18th century estate over two centuries." The Brick Walkway, 30"-wide and composed of red brick laid in running bond, was built in 1910 on the site of the garden's most spectacular feature: a double row of English boxwood. It is believed that the boxwood possibly dated to the time of William Floyd and formed a canopy over the Brick Walkway. At the time the CLI was conducted the brick walkway was difficult to view given the amount of duff that had accumulated over the path.

#### Existing Conditions

Today, the William Floyd Estate possesses 8.5 miles of wooded trails including a marked trail system consisting of three interconnecting loop trails. Generally, these paths follow the 18th- & early 19th-century alignments. The trails lead through a variety of habitats, including woods and fields with views of Home Creek estuary. All of the circulation features on the William Floyd Estate are included under the category Dirt Roads and Paths. Some extant features are named including: The Brick Walkway, Corduroy Road, Meadow Ground Path, Squirrel Lane, Service Entry Road, and West Gate Visitor Entrance. The Corduroy Road and Meadow Ground Path remain in fair condition but are not in the interpreted zone. The Brick Walkway was downgraded to poor condition in 2001 due to invasion of weeds and is no longer visible.

#### Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Corduroy Road
Feature Identification Number:	108452
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Meadow Ground Path
Feature Identification Number:	111202
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing



Feature: Brick Walkway  
Feature Identification Number: 111204  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 40910  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Brick Walkway  
LCS Structure Number: WF 200

Feature: Dirt Roads and Paths  
Feature Identification Number: 111206  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 40911  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Dirt Roads and Paths  
LCS Structure Number: WF 201

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*The entry drive to the Estate from the new Visitor Parking Lot. (OCLP, 2005)*



*Terminus of Corduroy Road at Narrow Bay. (Fire Island National Seashore, 2002).*

### **Buildings and Structures**

#### Historic Period

Most of the buildings and structures at the William Floyd Estate were built in the core area of the Estate. Old Mastic House has evolved continuously since the first section was built by Nicoll Floyd in 1724. All outbuildings post-date William Floyd and many have been moved or modified, but overall, they reflect the evolution of the Estate's agricultural heritage and provide a visual history of the development of a rural 18th century main house over two centuries.

Old Mastic was built in several stages over 240 years and is a mixture of architectural styles, from Georgian to Colonial Revival. The two-story-plus-attic main block was enlarged several times since its initial construction in 1724. Each generation altered the original structure according to the needs of the family. As early as Nicoll Floyd's tenure, additions were made to the west side of the original structure and the first of three service wings was added at the east to accommodate the family's growth in size and prominence. Following the American Revolution, General William Floyd repaired damage to the house caused by occupying British soldiers and augmented it to suit his newly elevated status. In the portrait of General Floyd painted in 1792, the present white house is clearly shown in the background with 1 ½ story wings (painted brown) at each end. The west wing was removed prior to 1852.

When General Floyd left the property to his son Nicoll II in 1803 and moved to upstate New York, the house remained the main house of the plantation. In the mid-19th century, a 1 ½ story rear extension was added north of the 18th century configuration consisting of the main section of the house at the west and the large east service wing. It served as the kitchen, larder, and servants' quarters. The south entrance porch is thought to have been added around 1855. Its roof is slightly pitched and supported by four square wooden columns.

A two-story rear extension from the center of the main block was added in 1898 by John G. Floyd, Jr., William Floyd's great-grandson. This addition included the construction of an eating area behind the kitchen. In 1928 a 2-story addition was added to the north of the 1898 wing, consisting of a pantry and kitchen on the first floor, "Sleeping porch" on the second floor and an 8' X 17' alcove area on the west side of the New Dining Room. Except for the addition of the north wings, the main house and east wing are basically unchanged from their 18th century appearance

The exact number of outbuildings and their uses during William Floyd's ownership is unknown and it is likely that some buildings were moved from one site to another. During the second half of the 19th century, there were at least fourteen auxiliary buildings north of the house, "that formed a veritable settlement." (Torres-Reyes, 1977:19) This extensive complex of auxiliary farm buildings was separated from the Old Mastic House by a high board fence. The main gate was northeast of these outbuildings and provided access to these outbuildings and Old Mastic House. (Alternatives: 5)

During its most productive phase, the plantation had a blacksmith shop located just north of the house. As the farm declined and reduced its livestock holdings, the services of the blacksmith were less needed. The Estate's resourceful caretaker Charles Ross built an Ice House on the site of the Blacksmith Shop. In it, the ice was layered with salt hay from salt marsh and would keep most of year.

Several of the outbuildings reflect the family's changing use of the Estate. Some were moved within the historic core, others were adapted to be used for a new purpose based on the farm's operations or economic trends.

A windmill-driven water tank was erected atop the Old Cow Barn (now called the New Barn) in 1898 to supply water for the main house. The Gazebo was erected around 1910. It is not referenced in the National Register nomination but was in this location prior to 1965. The LCS indicated that it was relocated from the former formal garden west of the house in 1960.

Five existing outbuildings do not appear on the 1911 survey and were either built later or omitted. These include the Caretaker's Workshop, Pump House and Incinerator that were built after 1911. The Wood Shed and Carriage House were likely omitted. The Caretaker's Workshop initially a storage building called "The Camp" was located on the east side of the northeast kitchen wing. Based on family memoirs, the Wood Shed was adapted from the pigsty that had stood on the same site and provided storage for cordwood needed for the many fireplaces. The Carriage House was erected by John G. Floyd, Jr. in 1884. It was built to hold two carriages and was constructed after the Estate had become summer home only. In the 1930s the Pump House was located near the Old Cow Barn and provided water to the house from this location. The Pump House was moved to its present location in the 1960s to irrigate the informal garden installed by Mrs. Weld. The Incinerator was also built early in the twentieth century to replace earlier use of refuse pits. The Windmill located in the lower acreage was

erected in 1952 to support wild game habitat conservation management in connection with the system of sluiceways and ponds. The windmill generated power to a pump to supplying the ponds with water and is a rare remnant of this use.

Outbuildings existing during this period give some indication of the functional needs and layout of the 19th century operating farm. Evidence of their existence is drawn from the William Floyd portrait by Ralph Earl, historical documents, oral accounts and field reconnaissance. There is ample evidence to suggest that many of the buildings were used for multiple purposes and were moved and rebuilt and that other building sites are still undiscovered. (Linck 1988:13)

#### Existing Conditions

Extant buildings continue to illustrate the Estate's two main uses: first, as a working farm; and later, for leisure and recreation. The historic core consists of Old Mastic House, and eleven outbuildings including the Caretaker's Workshop, Carriage House, Wood Shed, Corn Crib, Ice House, Storage Crib, Old Shop, Barn, New Barn, Pump House and Incinerator.

Today, Old Mastic House is comprised of a 2-story-plus-attic main block, a 1 1/2-story east wing, and 1 1/2- & two-story north (rear) wings. The house has a fieldstone foundation and clapboarded walls (shingles on the main block's exposed east wall), and deep projecting cornices on the main block and east wing. All principal roofs are gabled and wood-shingled. There are two large brick chimneys on the main block and a smaller brick chimney on each wing. There are gable-roofed pedimented dormers on the east wing and shed dormers on the north wings. The main entrance is a six-panel Dutch door centered on the south facade of the main block and protected by a wide shed-roofed porch. The south facade of the east wing has a vertical-board Dutch door with a three-light transom. South-facade windows have 12/12 double-hung sashes and shutters (paneled on the 1st story and louvered on the 2nd story). Windows on the remaining elevations are of varying sizes.

Most of the outbuildings remain in the same location as at the end of the period of significance. At least four of the existing outbuildings are in part original structures or at least are built on the site of original structures erected most likely during the first half of the 18th century. These include the Corn Crib, which had been used to store corn in 18th & 19th centuries; the Storage Crib, which was originally a corn crib; the Old Shop which was originally a grain house; and the Barn, which was probably originally used as a shop.

Others were moved and/or rebuilt (in kind) as use or condition changed. For example, the Pump House was moved to the southwest of the Old Shop when the pump location was changed. The Windmill remains but its pump no longer functions.

In some cases alterations were a matter of necessity, such as the Corn Crib, which had to be rebuilt by the Floyd family after it collapsed in 1972. The Old Sheep Barn (listed on the 1911 survey) burned down in 1979 and was replaced by the New Barn used for maintenance, repairs and storage. The New Barn was re-constructed by Roy Hulse in the 1950s with re-used beams

and timbers from the Old Cow Barn. Some of the planking of the Barn has been replaced by NPS and its loft floor is subject to sagging. The Gazebo is no longer screened but sits in its original location during the period of significance adjacent to the fence gate, near the Ice House.

During the NPS period, some buildings have been adapted for practical use at the park. For example, the Caretaker's Workshop now serves as the administrative office for the site while many of the outbuildings serve storage and maintenance functions. A new restroom facility has been recently added near the public parking lot.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Caretaker's Workshop

Feature Identification Number: 111164

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 7479

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Caretaker's Workshop

LCS Structure Number: WF 191

Feature: Carriage House

Feature Identification Number: 111166

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 7480

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Carriage House

LCS Structure Number: WF 190

Feature: Corn Crib

Feature Identification Number: 111168

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 7482

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Corn Crib

LCS Structure Number: WF 188

Feature: Gazebo

Feature Identification Number: 111170

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40930

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LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Gazebo  
LCS Structure Number: WF 192  
Feature: Ice House  
Feature Identification Number: 111172  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 7483  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Ice House  
LCS Structure Number: WF 182  
Feature: Incinerator  
Feature Identification Number: 111174  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 22692  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Incinerator  
LCS Structure Number: WF 193  
Feature: New Barn  
Feature Identification Number: 111176  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 7487  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - New Barn  
LCS Structure Number: WF 185  
Feature: Barn  
Feature Identification Number: 111178  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 7486  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Barn  
LCS Structure Number: WF 186  
Feature: Old Shop  
Feature Identification Number: 111180  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

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IDLCS Number: 7485  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Old Shop  
LCS Structure Number: WF 184

Feature: Pump House  
Feature Identification Number: 111182  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 22691  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Pump House  
LCS Structure Number: WF 194

Feature: Storage Crib  
Feature Identification Number: 111184  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 7484  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Storage Crib  
LCS Structure Number: WF 183

Feature: Visitors' Restroom  
Feature Identification Number: 111186  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Windmill  
Feature Identification Number: 111188  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 40931  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Windmill  
LCS Structure Number: WF 212

Feature: Wood Shed  
Feature Identification Number: 111190  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 7481  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Wood Shed

William Floyd Estate  
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LCS Structure Number: WF 189

Feature: Old Mastic House

Feature Identification Number: 111192

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 291

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Old Mastic House

LCS Structure Number: WF 181

Feature: Well House

Feature Identification Number: 111194

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Collection Storage Building

Feature Identification Number: 111196

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Duplex Housing Unit

Feature Identification Number: 111198

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Visitor Parking Lot Bathroom

Feature Identification Number: 111200

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**





*The front entrance of Old Mastic House faces south. (OCLP, 2005)*



*The Corn Crib (OCLP, 2005)*



*Caretaker's Workshop, now used as administrative office for the site. (OCLP, 2005)*

### **Views and Vistas**

#### Historic Period

During the 1890s, John G. Floyd, Jr. created the Vista to better view Moriches Bay. The land had originally been clear down to the bay (except for hedgerow and orchards) so the early Floyds could easily monitor the bay and farm activities. With the Estate's transition from a productive farm to a summer home and hunting grounds, vegetative succession reduced the visibility of the previously open and expansive view. The 1911 survey shows the Vista extended due south from Old Mastic House entrance, connecting to the natural vegetation break etched out by Lawrence Creek.

#### Existing Conditions

By the time the Estate was donated to the NPS, the Vista John G. Floyd had created had again succumbed to vegetative succession. In 2003, a historic landscape maintenance crew supervised by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation re-established the Vista's historic view shed, pruning new growth back to the historic edge. No other views from the Estate core still exist, but views of the bay exist in the salt marsh area.

### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature: The Vista  
Feature Identification Number: 111224  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

### **Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*The Vista, created by John G. Floyd, Jr. in 1890. An historic landscape maintenance crew widened it back to its historic edge in 2003. (OCLP, 2005)*

### **Constructed Water Features**

#### Historic Period

The William Floyd Estate's most unique constructed water feature is the Great Ditch, an extremely lengthy berm created between 1720 and 1740 to restrict animal movement and to separate the meadow grounds closer to the house from the salt marshes near the ocean's edge. Beyond the Great Ditch, an elaborate system of mosquito trenches, most likely established some time in the early 20th century, attempts to address the property's serious mosquito infestation during all but the cold-season months. In 1903, a journalist from the Brooklyn Times described some of these features located near the salt marsh: "There were miles of dykes and ditches, between salt marshland and upland to keep off tidewaters and restrain cattle. Some of the dykes were more than six feet high with sluice gates every quarter mile.

Historic records indicate that it is likely that naturally occurring spring-fed ponds existed within the salt marsh meadows of the William Floyd Estate. Perhaps due to agricultural use and an increase in vegetative cover, many of these natural springs gradually dried up during the Floyd family ownership. These known wet areas were chosen as ideal locations for the five man-made ponds that were created during the first half of the 20th century. Floyd (or Old) Pond, a large pond located in the eastern section of the Estate, is the only naturally occurring pond on the property in an area that was once a very wet salt marsh with a drain running

through it. The drain was dammed and the area flooded. During the 1930s and 1940s, four man-made ponds were created on the Estate by David Weld, Cornelia Floyd Nichols' grandson. These were (from east to west) Folly Pond, Rye Pond, South Pond and Teal Hole. Folly Pond was created in a low wet spot with a small drain and was so named because it was predicted that it would silt in. Teal Hole was put in as a bird sanctuary with the understanding that hunting was not to take place there. South Pond was created by damming a drain running from Rye Pond. The ponds were sited just inside the Great Ditch for conservation purposes and to attract waterfowl. A related system of sluiceways was also constructed.

#### Existing Conditions

Today, five artificial ponds are located in the salt marsh and lowland forest area. Lack of maintenance (during the historic period) and climatic factors have altered water control devices. Folly Pond, Floyd's Pond and South Pond are all tidal and in danger of disappearing through siltation. Rye Pond and Teal Hole have brackish and fresh water respectively and are deeper and protected from the tide. There has been discussion of restoring of South Pond and Folly Pond and allowing Floyd's Pond to return to salt marsh through siltation and natural succession. Along with these problems, vegetative succession has caused the ponds to shrink in size. Early aerial photographs suggest the ponds were two-thirds larger in the 1930s. The Great Ditch remains one of the most striking features of the William Floyd Estate.

All the water features are used for sanctuary by waterfowl and wildlife. Bird counts and journals of wildlife observations have been conducted and maintained on a regular basis during the 20th century. The park staff continues some of these projects.

#### Character-defining Features:

Feature:	The Great Ditch
Feature Identification Number:	111226
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	40914
LCS Structure Name:	Floyd Estate - The Great Ditch
LCS Structure Number:	WF 203
Feature:	Floyd's Pond
Feature Identification Number:	111228
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	40936
LCS Structure Name:	Floyd Estate - Ponds
LCS Structure Number:	WF 204
Feature:	Folly Pond

Feature Identification Number:	111230
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Rye Pond
Feature Identification Number:	111232
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	South Pond
Feature Identification Number:	111234
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Teal Pond
Feature Identification Number:	111236
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

### **Small Scale Features**

#### Historic Period

Numerous small scale features provide insight into different phases of the William Floyd Estate's historical evolution. Several are associated with the Floyd Family Graveyard. Established in 1755 with the graves of Nicoll and Tabitha Floyd, it grew to just under a 1/4-acre during the long period of significance, with 58 gravestones and two memorial benches (three gravestones, numerous footstones and pet stones are in storage on the property). Of the over 50 gravestones, most notable is that of the signer, General William Floyd which originally marked his grave in Westernville, NY. The gravestone was moved from upstate New York to his birthplace around 1895. Other headstones mark the graves of Floyd descendants. The Floyd Family Graveyard also includes the graves of two servants and/or slaves inside the fenced area of the family graveyard. The Floyd Family Graveyard Fence was initially erected sometime prior to 1911 and has been replaced in-kind since that time.

One of the small scale features, a High Board Fence separated the outbuildings from the Old Mastic House and was associated with the Estate's agricultural history. In addition, cisterns and wells were added to the Estate in various locations.

#### Existing Conditions

The features that existed during the historic period remain largely intact, although in some cases they are reconstructions, repaired or replacements in-kind. The Floyd Family Graveyard fence, in a state of disrepair when the property was donated to the NPS, is a reconstruction by Youth Conservation Corp & NPS. The Servant or Slave Grave Markers were reconstructed during the 1970s after the originals were lost in a fire. The grave of Tabitha Floyd was damaged by the limb of a white pine during a storm in 1999. This tree continues to threaten the historic grave markers and will be pruned to limit further impacts on the gravestones. A remnant of the

High Board Fence remains intact.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: High Board Fence

Feature Identification Number: 111238

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40927

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - High Board Fence

LCS Structure Number: WF 205

Feature: Floyd Family Graveyard Fence

Feature Identification Number: 111240

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40928

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Floyd Family Graveyard Fence

LCS Structure Number: WF 206

Feature: Cisterns/Wells

Feature Identification Number: 111242

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40929

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Cisterns/Wells

LCS Structure Number: WF 207

Feature: Nicoll & Tabitha Floyd Gravestones

Feature Identification Number: 111244

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40933

LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Nicoll & Tabitha Floyd Gravestones

LCS Structure Number: WF 209

Feature: Servant or Slave Grave Markers

Feature Identification Number: 111246

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40934  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - Servant or Slave Grave Markers  
LCS Structure Number: WF 210

Feature: William Floyd Gravestone  
Feature Identification Number: 111248  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40935  
LCS Structure Name: Floyd Estate - William Floyd Gravestone  
LCS Structure Number: WF 211

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*The Pump House, High Board Fence, Old Shop and Storage Crib (OCLP, 2005)*

**Archeological Sites**

While the Native American history of this entire region is rich and undisputed, there has not been sufficient study to establish historic or prehistoric Native American occupation at the William Floyd Estate. There are numerous instances, however, where vestiges have been found, including reports from Roy Hulse, caretaker at the Estate 1941-77, that he found a variety of Native American artifacts in the plowed fields as a child. (Torres-Reyes 1974:7) One area near the mouth of Home Creek is still referred to as “Indian Point.” The place received its name as early as the 1st half of the 19th century because evidence of Native American habitation was often found there.

William Floyd Estate

Fire Island National Seashore

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During an excavation program in the 80s, flakes of chert and calcined bone bits were found in this area. During these excavations, some aboriginal artifacts were also found around Old Mastic House. These were few and in a disturbed context. Post molds, possibly from a Native American habitation, were also found during testing. (Linck 1988:13)



## Condition

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Fair  
**Assessment Date:** 07/18/2006

### Impacts

<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Adjacent Lands
<b>External or Internal:</b>	External
<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Deferred Maintenance
<b>External or Internal:</b>	External
<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Exposure To Elements
<b>External or Internal:</b>	External
<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Release To Succession
<b>External or Internal:</b>	Both Internal and External

## Treatment

## **Treatment**

**Approved Treatment:** Preservation  
**Approved Treatment Document:** General Management Plan  
**Document Date:** 09/01/1977

### **Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:**

The following objectives for management of the William Floyd Estate were established by the 1977 GMP:

1. To interpret the history and to preserve the historical resources of the Estate as a continuum of the William Floyd family.
2. To maintain the features of the existing landscape and current land-use practices, and to stabilize structures until use/occupancy agreements expire and future public uses are determined.

The park applied for program funding to improve the condition of the William Floyd Estate grounds, which include such cultural features as lawns, graveyard, lopped tree fence remnants, ponds built by the Floyds to attract wildlife, pikel, and fields. Currently, we are simply awaiting Olmstead Cultural Center for its completion of this application. In the meantime, the grounds are continuously maintained by park staff to their appearance at the time of donation to the park (the interpretive period, approximately 1974.)

### **Approved Treatment Costs**

**Cost Date:** 09/01/1977

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