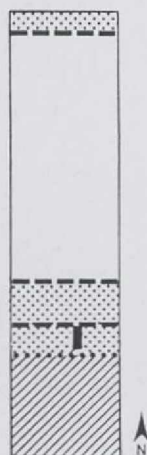


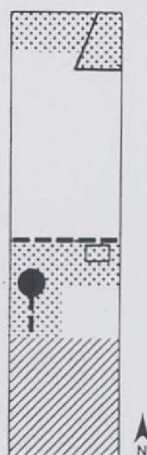
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Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area, Brooklyn, New York

Field Testing October 1993



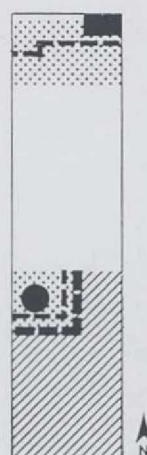
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Block 1514
Lot 56



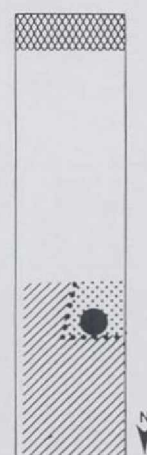
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Lot 49



111 MacDougal
Block 1525
Lot 48



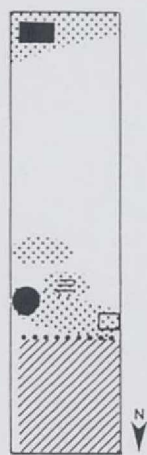
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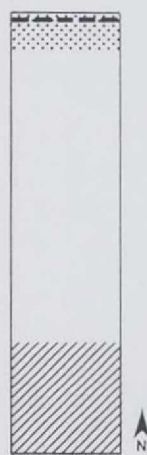
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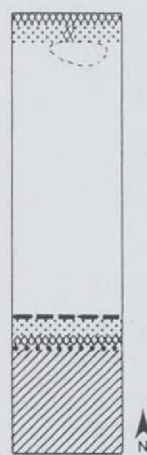
43 MacDougal
Block 1524
Lot 48



78 MacDougal
Block 1531
Lot 15



133 MacDougal
Block 1526
Lot 60



147 MacDougal
Block 1526
Lot 52



141 Thomas Boyland
Block 1527
Lot 1

CEQR No. 89-232K

Prepared for the City of New York
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Prepared by Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D.
December 1993/March 1994

163

Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area, Brooklyn, New York
Field Testing October 1993

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals who helped make archaeological field testing at the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area site possible. Among them are Beverly A. Reith, Director of Environmental Review, Division of Architecture and Engineering, Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), as well as Mitchell Kaplan, City Planner, and Peter Taras, General Supervisor of Building Maintenance, Environmental Review of the same division. Also very helpful and key to expediting the testing program were Charles Curry, Associate Staff Analyst, and Paul Davis, General Building Supervisor of Brooklyn HPD, one or another of whom were available throughout field testing. I am also extremely grateful to Joe L. Parker, Pastor of the Wayside Baptist Church, who provided overnight parking for the backhoe throughout the testing program. I also thank Mr. Carlton, Mrs. Vincente, Mr. Walker, and Mrs. Williams, neighborhood residents who provided information, and, in the case of Mrs. Williams, amenities that helped make testing possible. I also thank Bob Wogish, the backhoe owner/operator who kept his equanimity through two flat tires, and of course, my field crew--Shelly Spritzer, John Killeen, and Cas Stachelberg. All of those mentioned were integral to a successful testing program.

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Graphics: Amy Geller

Photographs: Joan H. Geismar

INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY

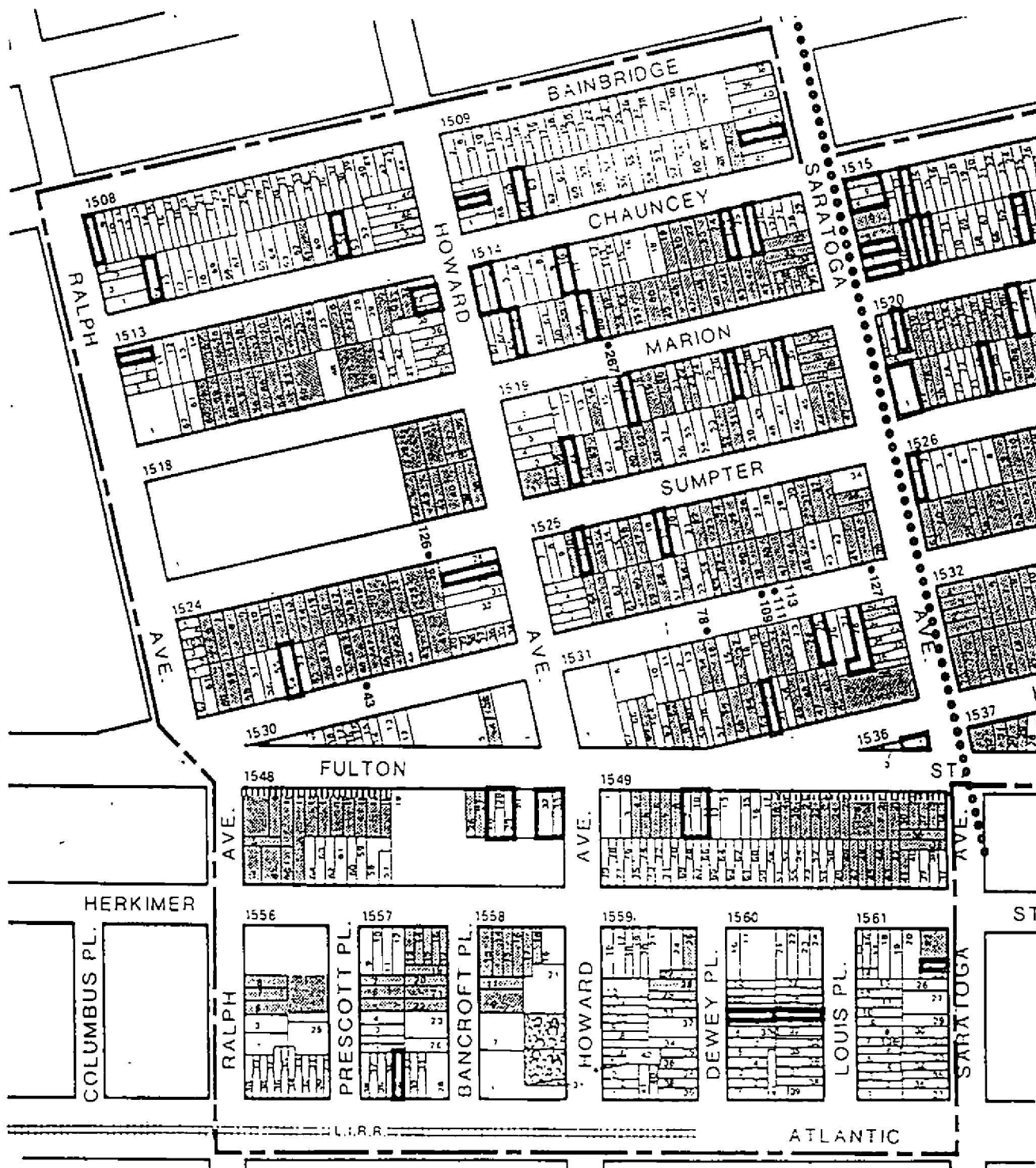
This report presents the results of archaeological field testing undertaken at the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area project site in October 1993. Testing was done under the auspices of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). It was directed by Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D., the author of this report, assisted by Shelly Spritzer, John Killeen, and Cas Stachelberg; Robert Wogish was the backhoe owner/operator.

The project site is a thirty-block residential development that combines new construction and the rehabilitation of existing structures. Of the more than 1000 building lots included in the site, fifteen were selected for testing based on documentary research (Geismar 1993a; Exhibits 1a and 1b). Fourteen of these were chosen for their historical potential: the yards of these lots were likely locations for abandoned water cisterns and outhouse privy pits that often yield household debris that provide historical information. In this case, the original houses on these lots were part of the village of New Brooklyn, a mid-nineteenth-century settlement developed and promoted by German-born entrepreneurs. It was a community of tailors, tradesmen, and merchants, most of them also of German origin although other nationalities and occupations are represented in the historical record. The remaining lot was selected for its potential for evidence of Native American use based on the nearby location of a fresh water spring. The rationale for these choices is outlined in a documentary study and its addendum (Geismar 1993a). According to city records, each of the tested lots was 25 by 100 ft. although field measurements varied somewhat.

Field testing, which began on October 18, 1993, was based on a scope of work approved by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). This scope (Geismar 1993b; see Appendix A this report) included the caveat that field testing was contingent upon unlimited access to the selected lots; it also noted the possibility that field conditions might limit the number of lots tested. As it turned out, ten of the fifteen lots were tested during the six days spent in the field between October 18 and October 28. The goal of testing was to locate and identify the above-mentioned backyard features; artifact recovery was not part of the scope.

A total of seventeen test trenches and eight test pits were excavated by machine (backhoe) and hand (shovel and trowel). Testing identified seventeen features, among them two dry laid stone privy pits, four brick cisterns, one unidentified rectangular brick feature, two unidentified rectangular stone features (one of them possible the remains of a privy pit), seven foundation walls of brick, stone, cement, and cinder block and cement-faced brick steps. See Table 1 for feature identification by address.

Although data recovery was not part of the testing program, a compressed car body found just under the ground surface in the rear yard of 147 MacDougal Street was the most spectacular artifact noted. Also noteworthy was the lack of any discernible pattern for the loca-



- | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 1506 | project boundary | | open space |
| | block and lot numbers | • 111 | tested lots |
| | new construction site (incomplete) | 113 | lots to be tested (historical) |
| | rehab site (incomplete) | • • • • • | match line |
| | commercial site | | |

no scale





project boundary
block and lot numbers
new construction site (incomplete)
rehab site (incomplete)
commercial site



open space
tested lots
lots to be tested (historical)
lot to be tested (Native American)
match line

no scale

tion of cisterns and privy pits. At other Brooklyn sites, and at those in Manhattan, these features are situated in an identifiable pattern (Geismar 1992; 1989). For example, at the Bishop Mugavero Geriatric Center Site in the Boerum Hill section of Brooklyn, either by design or chance, mid-nineteenth-century privies were found in the rear right of the backyard, near but not on the property line, and the cisterns on the left side of the yard just behind houses where water from roof run-off could be collected (Geismar 1992). This was not the case at the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area site. Privy pits are in the rear portion of the yard but are not located uniformly in regard to the property line, and, while cisterns are situated near rear building walls, their location also varies (see below).

The test excavations and identified features were plotted on lot maps (see Exhibit 2), photographed, and then backfilled.

Of the five lots not tested, three were privately owned and access was not available (113 MacDougal Street, 153 Thomas Boyland, and 313 Sumpter Street). A fourth lot (309 Sumpter Street) was strewn with building rubble that made access impractical with the rubber-tired backhoe needed to maneuver between the various lots (two flat tires had been incurred at 78 MacDougal Street, a tested lot covered with building rubble and debris). Building rubble strewn throughout the access to 194 MacDougal, the lot to be tested for Native American potential, as well as a variation in yard levels made it impossible to test this lot with a backhoe. A backhoe-dug pit was to have been the means of determining the stratigraphy, and therefore the archaeological potential, of this yard.

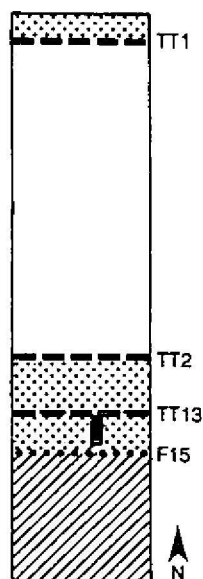
A brief summary of the field testing program and its results are presented in the following sections.

FIELD METHOD

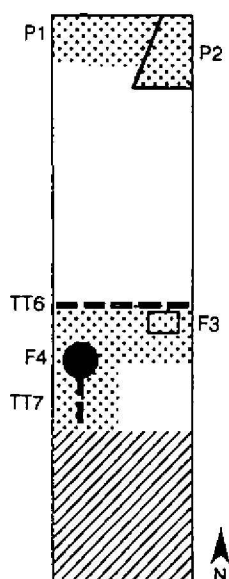
The tested lots are discussed in order of excavation. The field findings are illustrated in Exhibit 2 (see also Table 1). Although trench profiles were not called for, one was drawn (see Exhibit 3; only the pit proposed at 194 MacDougal Street was meant to be profiled [see Appendix A this report], but this lot was not tested). Field findings were documented with 35mm slides.

267 Marion Street (Block 1514, Lot 56). This vacant lot, which served as a "Green Thumb" (a neighborhood vegetable garden), was the first lot tested. At the time of testing, many of the plants were still producing, and two neighborhood residents were on hand to harvest some of the vegetables. Two machine-dug test trenches were opened: TT1, an east-west trench at the rear of the yard, the most likely location of a sought after privy pit, and TT2, another east-west trench thought to be located behind a former structure where a water cistern might be located.

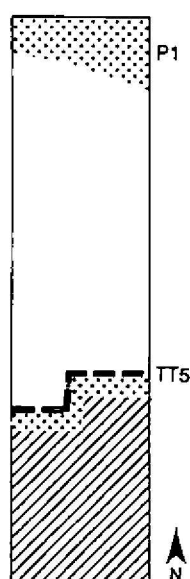
Several ash pits with modern debris were noted in TT1, but neither a privy pit nor any other structured feature was found although the trench was dug into sterile yellow soil. The trench was profiled (Exhibit 3), photographed, and backfilled.



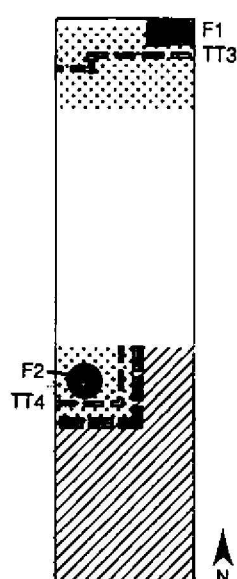
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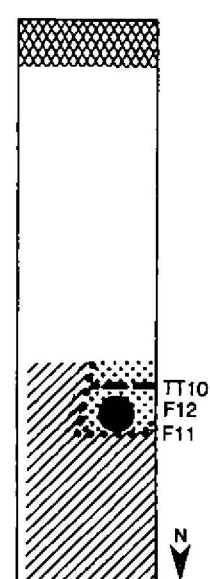
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Lot 49



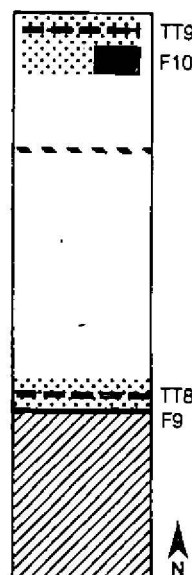
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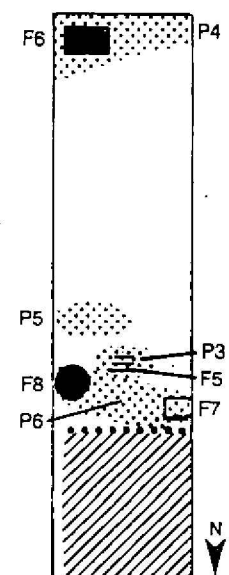
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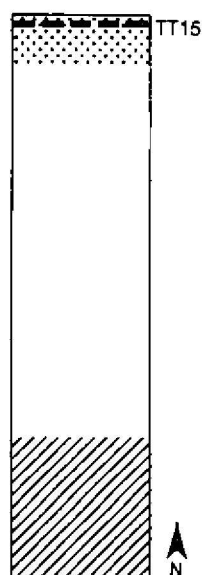
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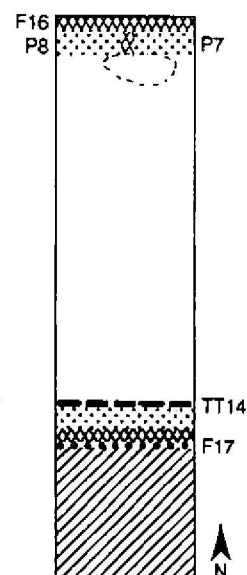
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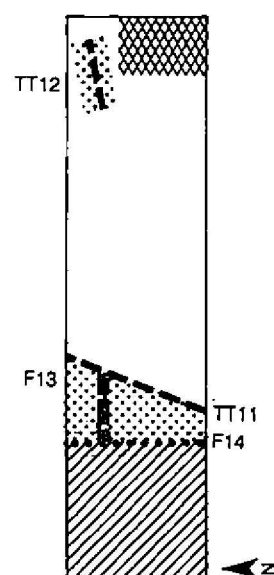
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Lot 15



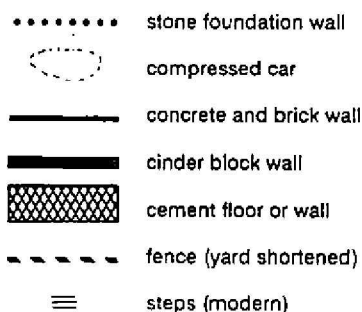
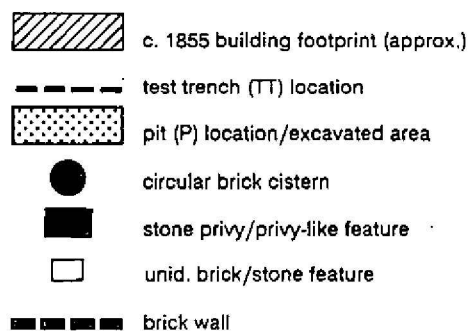
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Block 1526
Lot 60



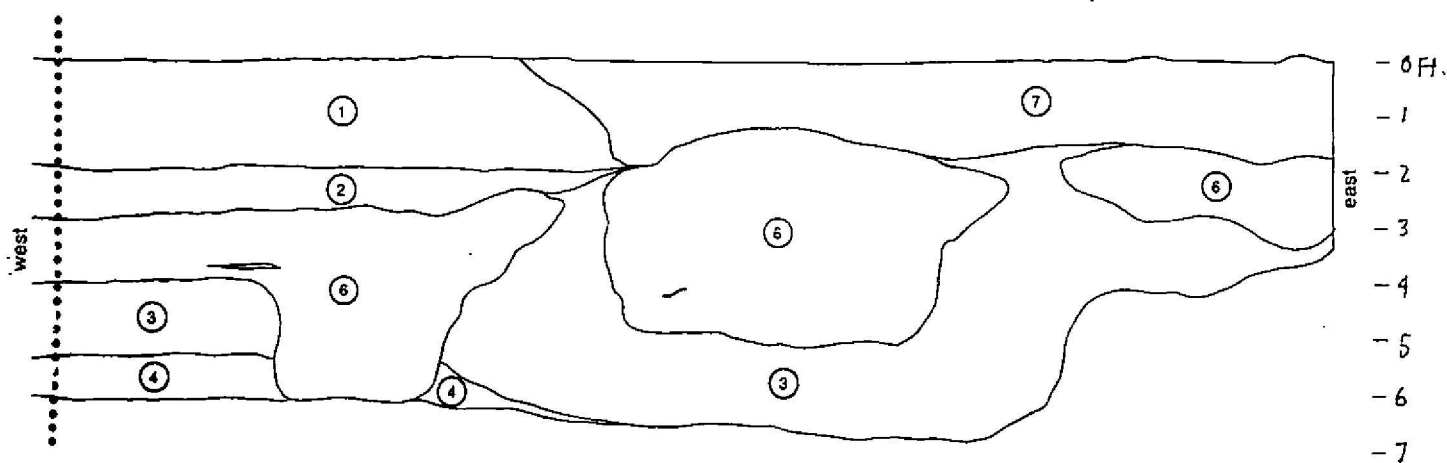
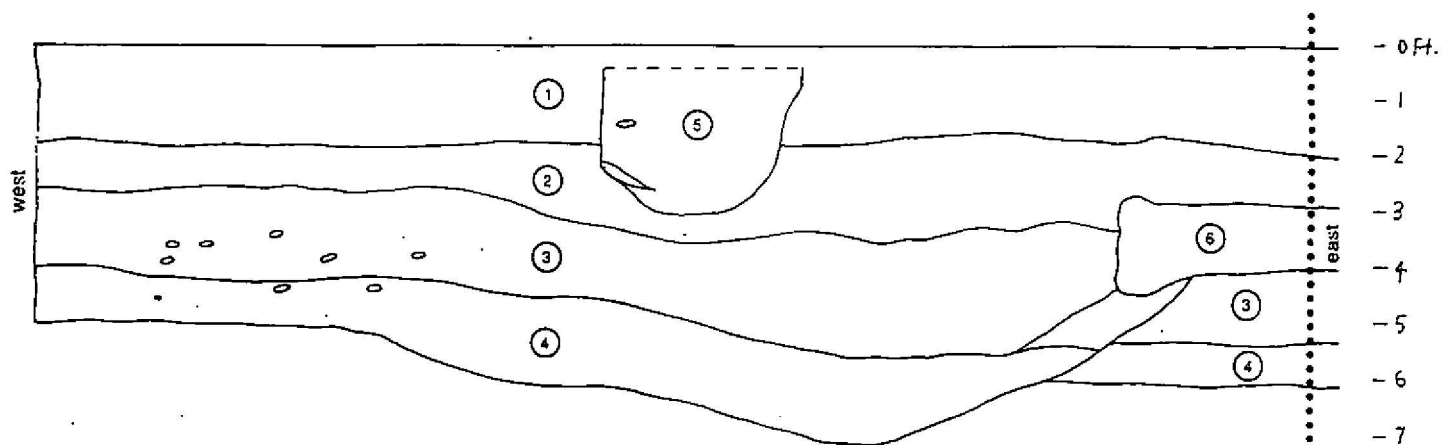
147 MacDougal
Block 1526
Lot 52



141 Thomas Boyland
Block 1527
Lot 1



note: scale of features is approximate



- ① dark brown humus
- ② yellow sand fill/rubble
- ③ yellow hard pan/sterile
- ④ tan hard pan to west, grading to yellow/sterile
- ⑤ dark brown with ash/bldg rubble, modern trash
- ⑥ ash pit with clinkers/bldg rubble, modern trash
- ⑦ gray ashy soil

..... match line

Backhoe trenching in TT2, located about 40 ft. north of the Marion Street property, revealed a cluster of large stones in the eastern part, but hand excavation did not define any feature. During this excavation an unidentified neighborhood resident informed us that the last building on the site was an apartment building that extended north of the trench, making excavation of the trench less valid. As it turned out, this information was incorrect, and on October 28, the last field day, another trench (TT13) was excavated closer to the original small building on the lot. The rear wall of this building (F15) was exposed and was found to include brick, stone, and cinder block components. Extensive testing outside this foundation wall did not reveal any cistern feature (see Figure 2).

127 MacDougal Street (Block 1525, Lot 40). This lot, and its neighbor, 129 MacDougal (not one of the test lots) are part of an auto repair yard. Nonfunctioning cars were towed by those working there to clear the lot for testing. In 1851, both properties had belonged to August Haege, a Baden-born grocer, in 1851, and, according to the 1855 State census, 127 MacDougal was one of the few brick houses then in the neighborhood (Geismar 1993a:72).

TT3 was opened just south of a large Ailanthus tree situated near the western property line in the rear part of the lot, and extended eastward. Excavation included the northern property line where the top of Feature 1 (F1), a dry-laid stone privy, was exposed just beneath the surface in the northeast corner of the lot, directly on the property line. Only the very top of the northernmost stones (a line about 7 ft. long) and the northeastern corner of the feature were uncovered. It did not appear that this feature had been disturbed. It should be noted that its location directly on the rear and eastern property lines does not conform with nineteenth-century Brooklyn ordinances requiring that privy pits be at least 2 ft. from these lines. This may in part reflect the fact that the adjoining lot to the east was also owned by Haege. The explanation for placement on the rear lot line has not been explored. F1 was photographed (Exhibit 4), plotted, and backfilled.

Test Trench 4 (TT4) traced the western part of the rear building foundation, beginning about 28 ft. north of MacDougal Street with an extended area of excavation. It exposed a circular brick cistern (F2) about 3 ft. north of the building foundation (Exhibit 5). This feature may originally have been beehive shaped, but the cap is now missing. F2 was plotted, photographed, and backfilled.

127 MacDougal is one of two tested lots where a cistern and privy were both located (the other is 78 MacDougal, see below).

111 MacDougal Street (Block 1525, Lot 48). While this lot is vacant (as is 109 MacDougal to the west), the building next door at 113 MacDougal still stands (this privately owned building was also scheduled for testing, but a large flatbed truck and other vehicles in the yard made this impossible). It appears from map data that the building formerly at 111 MacDougal Street was a mirror image of its neighbor at 113.



4 Top of north wall of Feature 1 (F1), the stones of a privy pit at 127 MacDougal St.



5 View of Feature 2 (F2), upper bricks of cistern exposed (arrow), looking north. Backhoe and car to north.

Based on the location of F1 at 127 MacDougal Street, a test pit (P1) was excavated in the northeastern corner of the 111 MacDougal Street lot in the hope that it might reveal a pattern that placed the privy in the far right corner of the property. Although many scattered privy-sized stones were found, there was neither a structural pattern nor soil differences to suggest an intact or former privy. With one small break, this pit was extended west across the yard of 109 MacDougal Street, the neighboring lot that was also vacant and scheduled for testing. Although excavation was taken into sterile yellow soil (at depths of 3.5 to 5 ft.), no features were located in the rear portion of either yard (see 109 MacDougal below). This may reflect a reduction, perhaps a matter of 5 ft., in the original property line (the adjacent rear lots were not available for testing).

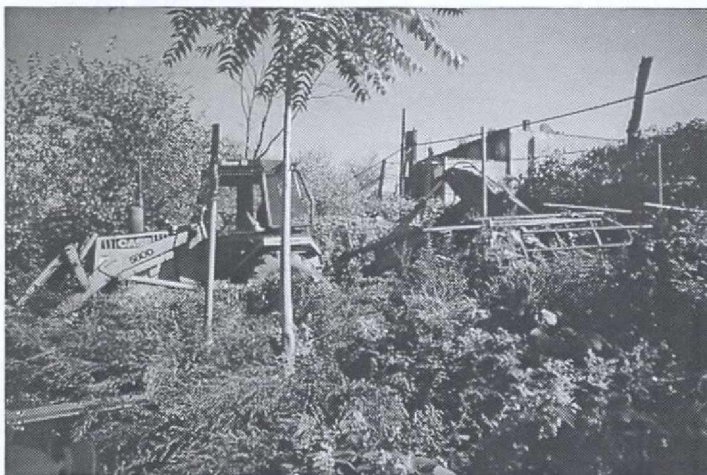
In an attempt to locate a water cistern, TT5 was excavated in the vicinity of the former rear building foundation of 111 MacDougal, but again, nothing was found (see Exhibit 2). Excavations on this lot were plotted and backfilled.

109 MacDougal Street (Block 1525, Lot 49). As noted above, test Pit 1 (P1) crossed both the 111 and 109 MacDougal Street yards. During testing of 109, another test pit (P2) was extended southward from the rear part of the yard about 13 ft. along the eastern property line to include and go beyond the area where a break in excavation had originally occurred, but no privy pit was found (this test pit was excavated to a depth of 8 ft.). Although no features were located in the northern part of the yard, a lens of dark brown or black sterile sand was noted in the sterile yellow sand in the western part of Pit 2 at a depth of about 5 ft. (see Exhibit 7). A similar deposit at a depth of about 4 ft. had been noted a little further east in this yard. Bob Wogish, the backhoe operator, suggested it was a meadow mat deposit, but this is a question and the stratum remains unexplained.

Based on map data, excavation was started about 40 ft. north of MacDougal Street, but wood and rubble encountered almost immediately below the surface indicated we were still within the confines of a former building. Excavation was moved 2.5 ft. north (TT6) where a rectangular stone feature (F3) was uncovered about 1.5 ft. west of the eastern property wall. This shallow 3.5 by 5 ft. feature (exterior measurements) was basically dry-laid stone, but traces of mortar were noted on some of the upper stones. It was two stone courses high and 3 ft. from the ground surface to the bottom stone. This small shallow feature was virtually excavated during clearing. Only a few artifacts were noted --a small blue Bromo Seltzer bottle, an Armour milk glass meat jar, and a clear bottle with an applied neck rim embossed "C.H. SLICK/NEW YORK"--and none were collected. Sterile sand was found at the bottom, and no difference was noted between the soil inside and outside the feature. Its function and original height remain unknown, but from all indications it may have been a shallow foundation for a small, unidentified structure. The feature was photographed (see Exhibit 8) and plotted.

Test trench 6 was extended to the western property line and TT7 was run perpendicular to it in the western part of the yard. A relatively small circular brick cistern (F4) was exposed in this trench. Its walls were two bricks thick and its exterior diameter 5.3 ft. The cistern was photographed (not illustrated) and plotted, and both TT6 and TT7 were backfilled.

78 MacDougal (Block 1531, Lot 15). This vacant lot was the most overgrown of the lots tested (Exhibit 6). It was also strewn



6 Backhoe clearing dense vegetation in rear part of 78 MacDougal St. lot.

with building debris and concealed trash that punctured the tires of the backhoe on two separate occasions. The two flats caused frustration and expense to the backhoe owner/operator and delays for repair (the first flat occurred at the end of field work on a Friday which was an inconvenience and expense to Bob Wogish, the backhoe operator, but did not affect field testing; the second, which occurred during the middle of the day while backfilling the lot the following Monday, was time consuming as well as being expensive and frustrating).

Pit 3 (P3), a small oval test pit, was excavated just beyond the structure that formerly stood on the lot. This location was suggested by a building "shadow" on the house standing at 80 MacDougal and by Mrs. Vincente, the owner and occupant of 74 MacDougal Street, a house located just west of the lot being tested and its vacant neighbor at 76 MacDougal. The size of the building formerly at 78 MacDougal according to Mrs. Vincente and the building shadow on the wall of 80 MacDougal was larger than what was shown on historical maps.

Excavation through building rubble exposed a series of cement-faced brick steps (F5) in the center of the yard that apparently provided access to a shallow basement or cellar of a later extension to the 78 MacDougal Street house. These steps were photographed (not illustrated) and plotted and the pit backfilled. The backhoe was then moved to the rear part of the yard.

Excavation of test Pit 4 (P4) was begun near a chain link fence in the southwest corner of the lot where a privy pit might have



7 Lens of dark (brown/black) sterile sand (arrow) in test Pit 1 (P1) at 109 MacDougal St.



8 Unidentified shallow dry-laid stone feature (F3) center of yard at 109 MacDougal St.

been located. The backhoe cleared about 1.6 to 2.6 ft. of building rubble and dark soil, but no feature was found, and the irregular test pit was extended across the rear of the lot. A dry-laid stone feature (F6), identified as a privy pit, was exposed just below the ground surface in the southeastern part of the test pit, approximately 5.5 ft. west of the eastern property line and 2 ft. from the rear fence. This feature was small--its outside diameter 5.5 ft., its inside only 4 ft.--and the soil within it appeared very loose. An upright piece of plastic hose extending out of the soil (see Exhibit 9) suggested the feature may have been looted and backfilled. F6 was photographed (Exhibit 10), plotted, and backfilled (it should be noted that this feature was basically round although it is shown as rectangular in Exhibit 2, the convention used in the graphic to depict a stone privy).



9 Top of stone privy pit (F4) at rear of 78 MacDougal (inadvertently labeled Pit 3). Note plastic hose (arrow) and loose soil that seem to indicate backfilling after looting.

After backfilling P4 and F6, test Pit 5 (P5) was opened beyond and east of the brick and cement steps noted above (F5), but no cistern was located (a remnant of a walkway, one brick high, may have been exposed in the eastern part of the pit, but if so, it had been tumbled). The pit was backfilled, and, on the chance that the original structure was only 38 ft. long as suggested by historical maps, an attempt was made to find features closer to MacDougal Street. Test Pit 6, an irregular excavation, was opened and a small segment of a stone foundation wall for the earlier building and an adjacent, unidentified rectangular mortared brick feature (F7) were exposed.

At first, it seemed possible that the brick feature was the remnant of a small cistern, but, although the bricks were mortared, there was no mortar seal inside the feature to make it water tight as is usually the case. Mortar on the top course of brick indicated the feature had once been higher. It was filled with building debris and one animal longbone was noted, but no "old" artifacts were found. The depth of the feature was undetermined, as was the nature of its bottom. It was photographed (Exhibit 10), and excavation continued to the east where a 9-ft. diameter, intact brick beehive cistern (F8), with a .9-ft. diameter central drain, was located east of F7. This large feature, which was only partially exposed during testing, extended almost to the eastern property wall. It was photographed (Exhibit 11), and it and F7 were plotted and the test pit backfilled.

As noted earlier, privy pits and cisterns are often placed in identifiable patterns. This was not the case at 78 MacDougal Street where not only did the features not fit a neighborhood pattern, both the cistern and privy were on the same side of the yard, a particularly uncommon configuration. It is perhaps noteworthy that the lot's probable mid-nineteenth-century developer and long-time owner/occupant was a Bavarian-born carpenter (Geismar 1993a:74-75).



10 Unid. rectangular brick feature (F7) behind demolished building at 78 MacDougal St.



11 Large (c.9.5 ft. diameter) brick beehive cistern (F8) at 78 MacDougal St.

43 MacDougal Street (Block 1524, Lot 48). Like 267 Marion Street, this vacant lot was a Green Thumb garden at the time of testing. Although it is cited in the city's property listing as being 100 ft. long, it only measured 75 ft., suggesting that the rear fence now defining the lot was not on the original property line (adjoining properties were also only 75 ft. long). An attempt was made to find a cistern near the former house structure (see TT 8 below), but testing for a privy pit was undertaken on part of an adjoining Sumpter Street lot (112 Sumpter Street) that, based on measurements, was apparently once part of the MacDougal Street property. The Sumpter Street lot, which is vacant, is also included in the project site, but was not selected for testing.

Test Trench 8 (TT8) was run 38 ft. north of the MacDougal Street property line, at and just beyond the rear part of the former dwelling on the lot. A .5-ft. wide concrete and brick wall complex (F9), apparently a rear building wall, was located in this trench, but no cistern was found during extended excavation. The excavation and wall feature were documented, and the trench backfilled.

Testing in what appears to have originally been the rear part of this yard continued the next day when TT 9 was opened 100 ft. north of MacDougal Street, or 25 ft. north of the above-mentioned

fence. Ultimately, this trench covered almost the entire width of the 25-ft. wide lot and extended 11.5 ft. north to south. The center of the trench was filled with modern debris, documenting severe disturbance and alteration to the yard. Grading and filling is suggested by this debris and by a steep drop found beyond the MacDougal Street lots (the Sumpter Street lots in this area, including this part of the test area, are approximately 4 to 5 ft. lower than those adjoining them on MacDougal Street).

Excavation of TT9 exposed a rectangular dry-laid stone feature (F10), or what remains of this feature, in its eastern part, about 2.5 to 3.3 ft. below the ground surface. It extended another 2.5 ft. into sand. The 5-ft. long feature was located approximately 1 ft. west of the eastern property line. The feature, which is similar to F3 at 109 MacDougal Street, incorporates a large rock into its eastern side, and, although privy-like in construction, it is shallow and contained few artifacts. Since this part of the yard is well below the 43 MacDougal Street lot and is filled with modern debris, this feature could be a remnant of a former privy pit mainly destroyed during yard alterations. If so, it has been cleaned out, but this is conjecture. Like F3, clearing virtually excavated the feature which was found to contain very few artifacts. Those that were present--including a large metal wrench--appeared to be modern. The vertical position of the wrench in the fill suggested backfilling and the possibility of looting prior to destruction of the feature. F10 bottomed out on the same sterile sand found throughout the lower part of the trench. It was photographed (Exhibit 12), and the trench and feature were plotted and backfilled. No further excavation is recommended in this area.



12 Remnant of privy-like feature (F10)
(arrow) in what appears to have been
part of the 43 MacDougal St. yard.

126 Sumpter Street (Block 1524, Lot 43). During the mid-nineteenth century, the former building on this lot was home to transient German-born immigrants and, in the 1870s, also to at least two African-American families (Geismar 1993a: Addendum 5-6). During the first

day in the field, an attempt had been made to test the rear part of this vacant lot where a privy pit might be located, but a thick cement slab made this impossible (the slab was later identified by a neighbor as the floor of a demolished shed [Carlton 1993:personal communication]). Several days later, testing resumed in the vicinity of the former house structure with the running of TT10 approximately 28 ft. south of the Sumpter Street property line. At that time, stone foundation walls (F11) and a basically circular, 6.5-ft. diameter, brick water cistern (F12) were revealed not far beneath the ground surface (F11 was 1.5 ft. below the ground surface, the top course of brick in F12 was 2.3 ft. beneath the surface). It appeared from a curvature in the bricks that the cistern may have originally been the classic beehive shape, but its top brick courses are now missing. The wall and cistern feature were partially exposed, plotted, and photographed (Exhibit 13); the excavation was then backfilled.



13 Outline of brick cistern (F12; arrow) at 126 Sumpter St. Part of stone foundation (F11) visible above story board.

141 Thomas Boyland (Block 1527, Lot 1). Testing on his vacant lot, which is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of MacDougal Street and Thomas Boyland Avenue (formerly Hopkinson Avenue), began with TT 11, a 2-ft. diagonal trench that crossed the lot in a northeast-southwesterly direction (it was located between 27.8 and 37.8 ft. east of the Thomas Boyland Avenue property line). Excavation extended west from this trench and exposed a wall complex comprising an east-west brick wall (F13) and one of stone running north-south (F14). The stone foundation wall was located about 25 ft. east of Thomas Boyland Avenue, indicating a somewhat smaller structure than is shown on a 1951 Sanborn Insurance map. Based on fragments of bathroom fixtures found in the rubble and on the evidence of some exposed cast iron pipes, the brick wall appears to define a bathroom addition to the house, but not one of great age. No cistern feature was found.

After documenting the foundation walls, an attempt was made to test the rear part of the lot, but a cement slab, possibly a shed or garage floor (an unidentified one-story structure is indicated here on

the 1951 Sanborn Insurance map), was found that made testing impossible. The backhoe was used to try to break through the concrete or lift it, but this was unsuccessful here as it was at 126 Sumpter Street. A diagonal 9.5-ft. long and 3.5 to 5.5-ft wide test trench (TT12) was run in a confined area just north of this slab, but, except for a few fragments of modern ceramics, virtually sterile soil was encountered.

Both trenches and all the features were photo documented (not illustrated) and plotted, and the excavations backfilled. Charles Curry of Brooklyn HPD (either he or Paul Davis from the same office were available throughout testing) then informed us that this lot was not a priority, so no further testing is recommended.

147 MacDougal Street (Block 1526, Lot 52). 147 MacDougal (and 133 MacDougal discussed below) was one of the two vacant lots scheduled for excavation on October 28, the sixth and last field day. In addition, it had been decided to return to 267 Marion Street to check an area closer to the street for evidence of a cistern (see this address above).

Testing at 147 MacDougal Street began with two test pits, P7 on the eastern side and P8 to the west, located in the back of the yard where a concrete retaining wall was encountered (F16) under fairly dense vegetation. A segment of this wall extended between the two pits, and a most spectacular artifact was found about 1 ft. below the ground surface. This was a compressed car body mainly located in P7 but it also extended into P8. P7 was excavated to a depth of about 4 ft., but the car hampered the backhoe's efficacy; much of the excavation in P7 was done by hand shovelling, but the soil under the car was densely packed, making its removal very difficult. P8 was excavated by machine to 5.7 ft., well into sterile soil. Soil changes were not very distinct.

The fill history of this part of the yard is unclear. The car and other modern debris suggest recent filling, and the ground surface in the rear of the yard is approximately 2 ft. higher than the surface of the adjacent yards to the north. The Sumpter Street lots that back onto this and other adjacent vacant MacDougal Street lots also suggest yard alterations that include grass-covered fill and then a drop to the level of Sumpter Street to the north. Although it appears that excavations in the test pits at 147 MacDougal Street extended into sterile soil, no evidence of privy features were found.

These test excavations were documented and plotted, but, to save time, the pits were temporarily left open while testing continued to the south, near the demolished building.

TT14, opened approximately 29 ft. north of the MacDougal Street property line, exposed the stone foundation of a former house structure and a cement "floor" that extended northward from it, perhaps a patio floor (this complex was designated F17). Bricks embossed "FISHER BROS." were found under this cement floor and as part of the debris in P7 and P8. Although some large stones were also found

in the rubble under the cement floor in the vicinity of the stone foundation wall, no identifiable features, such as a cistern, were located.

TT14 was documented and plotted, and this trench and P7 and P8 were backfilled after testing was completed at 133 MacDougal, the last yard to be tested (see below).

133 MacDougal Street (Block 1526, Lot 60). Time only permitted testing the rear part of this lot. TT15 was excavated across the yard just south of the northern (rear) property line into what appeared to be sterile sand, but no features were found. A great deal of relatively modern building debris and rubble was encountered throughout the excavation, and a long-time resident, Mr. Walker who lives at 139 MacDougal, informed us that the city had bulldozed and graded the yard several years ago, moving debris into the rear part.

Excavation in TT15 was taken into what appeared to be sterile soil and was photographed (not illustrated), plotted, and backfilled.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the findings of archaeological field testing and the dimensions of test units will be found in Tables 1 and 2. It should be noted that the two identified privy pits (F1 and F6) were located within 2 ft. of the ground surface (F1 was uncovered less than 1 ft. below ground level). The brick cisterns were usually found somewhat deeper. F4 was exposed 3 ft. below ground level while F12 was 2.3 ft. beneath the surface, but this may be because their beehive caps were missing. F8, a large, intact beehive cistern, was located just below the surface, and F1, which did not have a beehive-shaped top, was found directly beneath a cement (outdoor?) floor.

Of major concern are the two dry-laid stone features identified as privy pits (F1 and F6, the latter one probably looted) and the four brick cisterns (F2, F4, F8, and F12). Both F1 and F6 (the privy pits) were located on lots that also had brick cisterns (F2 and F8), but, as noted previously, their lot locations did not follow any obvious pattern (F1 was located directly on lot lines in the eastern part of the yard at 127 MacDougal while F2 was behind the rear structure wall on the west side of the yard; at 78 MacDougal, F6 was on the east side of the yard, but 5 ft. from the eastern property line [2 ft. from the southern one] and the lot's cistern was on the same side of the yard). As already mentioned, the lack of a discernible pattern in the placement of these yard features is directly opposed to what has been found elsewhere in Brooklyn, but it is not known if this is more often the case than would be expected. It does tend to indicate individual choice in the placement of these features rather than planned patterning.

It is recommended that the contents of identified cisterns (F2, F4, F8, and F12) be tested and, if warranted, excavated. At another Brooklyn site, cisterns constructed in the mid-nineteenth century were found to be filled in one episode, mainly with ashes and

Table 1. SARATOGA SQUARE FIELD TESTING Summary of Testing

Address/Block/Lot	Testing Status/Features Located
*267 Marion/Block 1514/Lot 56	(F15) stone, cinder block, & cement foundation wall complex
309 Sumpter/Block 1521/Lot 63	litter strewn, no access 10/93, to be tested
313 Sumpter/Block 1521/Lot 60	privately owned, no access 10/93, to be tested
*126 Sumpter/Block 1524/Lot 43	stone foundation wall (F11), brick cistern (F12)
* 43 MacDougal/Block 1524/Lot 48	concrete & brick wall (F9), privy-like shallow stone feature (F10)
*109 MacDougal/Block 1525/Lot 49	unid. stone (F3), brick cistern (F4)
*111 MacDougal/Block 1525/Lot 48	nothing found
113 MacDougal/Block 1525/Lot 47	privately owned, yard littered 10/93, to be tested
*127 MacDougal/Block 1525/Lot 40	stone privy (F1), brick cistern (F2)
**133 MacDougal/Block 1526/Lot 60	limited testing; no features found
*147 MacDougal/Block 1526/Lot 52	concrete yard wall (F16); stone foundation wall (F17); compressed car
*141 Thomas Boyland/Block 1527/Lot 1	(partially tested) brick foundation wall (F13), stone foundation wall (F14)
* 78 MacDougal/Block 1531/Lot 15	steps (F5), stone privy (F6), unid. rec. brick (F7), brick cistern (F8)
153 Thomas Boyland/Block 1533/Lot 4	privately owned, no access 10/93, to be tested
194 MacDougal/Block 1533/Lot 16	access litter strewn 10/93, to be tested

*tested October 1993 **only rear part of lot tested October 1993

Note that Thomas Boyland Ave. was formerly Hopkinson Ave.

Summary of Table 1

17 features documented in ten yards:

- 4 brick cisterns (F2, F4, F8, F12)
- 2 stone privies (F1, F6 [probably looted])
- 1 possible stone privy (F10 [devoid of artifacts, excavated during testing])
- 1 unid. rectangular stone feature (F3 [devoid of artifacts, excavated during testing])
- 1 unid. rectangular brick feature (F7)
- 1 cement faced brick steps (F5 [modern])
- 7 walls or wall complexes (F9, F11, F13, F14, F15, F16, F17)

Table 2. SARATOGA SQUARE FIELD TESTING Test Unit Dimensions (see Exhibit 2 for Locations)

Address/Block/Lot	Unit	Dimensions (in ft) [LxWxD]	Soil Description/Remarks
267 Marion/Block 1514/ Lot 56	TT1	45*x3x5.5(W)-7(E)	Rubble & sand fill w/ ash over sterile yellow hardpan (see profile Exhibit 3); tested area extended 4 ft N-S beginning c 3ft S of rear property line. Rocks in E part, but no discernible feature; yellow/orange sand under rubble, no evidence of hardpan. Rubble-filled to yellow/orange sand; building rubble in eastern extension. To be tested.
	TT2	18x3x5-6	
	T13	21x6(irr)x4.5-6	
309 Sumpter/Block 1521/ Lot 63			To be tested.
313 Sumpter/Block 1521/ Lot 60			
126 Sumpter/Block 1524/ Lot 43	TT10	25xc9.5x1.5-2.5	Clinkers & ash under later fill**; F12, brick cistern, 2.3 BGS; rear yard to be tested after cement slab removal. Rubble & ash fill beyond former structure; reached yellow sterile sand. Rubble fill in center of TT; orange/yellow sand to E and W; this test area c5 ft below part of lot on MacDougal St; (TT8); F10, a rec stone feature, perhaps a truncated privy; top of stones in SE corner 2.5 ft BGS; no artifacts. Top of F3, shallow stone feature, .6 ft BGS (bottom of feature c3.10 ft BGS) excavated; few artifacts. TT7 forms L with TT6; top of F4, brick cistern, c3 ft BGS. Sterile yellow/orange sand; a dark brown/black stratum at 5 ft BGS. Trapazoid shaped pit; yellow/orange sand; ash & cinder in F3. Same as P1 above; dark brown stratum, comparable to that found in P1 but at 4 ft BGS. Dug to sterile yellowish sand. To be tested.
43 MacDougal/Block 1524/ Lot 48	TT8	25x9(irr)x4.9-5.5	
	TT9	25x11x3-5	
109 MacDougal/Block 1525/ Lot 49	TT6	25xc9xc4	Dug to sterile yellowish sand. To be tested.
	TT7	c9xc9xc3	
	P1(E)	c25xc7x3.5-5	
	P2	c13x6xc8	
111 MacDougal/Block 1525/ Lot 48	P1(W)	c25xc3-13x8	Dug to sterile yellowish sand. To be tested.
	TT5	25xc4xc3.5	
113 MacDougal/Block 1525/ Lot 47			F1, a rec (?) stone privy just BGS on property line in NE corner of lot.
127 MacDougal/Block 1525/ Lot 40	TT3	c8x7x7.7x? near W property line; extended across back of yard c22x13x? (variable) to form L	
	TT4	Excavated area c12x12 variable	F2, brick cistern just under cement paving 3 ft N of rear building wall. C1ft from N (rear) property line; dug through rubble to sterile soil; cistern to be tested for.
133 MacDougal/Block 1526/ Lot 60	TT15	25x10x5.5 (variable)	

(continues)

Table 2. **SARATOGA SQUARE FIELD TESTING** Test Unit Dimensions (continued--see Exhibit 2 for Locations)

Address/Block/Lot	Unit	Dimensions (in ft) [LxWxD]	Soil Description/Remarks
147 MacDougal/Block 1526/ Lot 52	P7	9.5x4.8x4.3 (variable)	Compressed car c1ft BGS (a wall, F15, on rear property line; pit extends S of wall). Pit extends S of wall (F15) into sterile sand.
	P8	11xc13x5.7 (variable)	
	TT14	25x6.73x3.6 (variable)	FISHER BROS bricks and rocks under cement just outside former rear building wall. Originally 12x2.2x?, extended to become triangular excavation area that exposed remains of rear building and an extension not shown on Sanborn map. Excavated into sterile soil, no depth recorded; adjacent area to be tested after cement slab removal.
141 Thomas Boyland/Block 1527/ Lot 1	TT11	triangular trench 25x14/5x 4.8	
	TT12	diagonal trench 13.5x5x? c8x12(irr)	
78 MacDougal/Block 1531/ Lot 15	P3	c8x12(irr)	Beyond former building, near yard center; steps (F5) uncovered just BGS in rubble. F6, a circular stone privy, in SE part of pit; dark soil with debris; yellowish sand at 2.4 ft.
	P4	Rear yard, 25xirr x4.1 (SW corner)- 1.6 (5ft from E property wall)	
	P5	Oval c12x6x?	C44-48 ft S of MacDougal St property line, extending from E property line; rubble fill; possible remnant of brick walk. Two features (F7, unid rec brick 1.5 ft BGS & F8, circular intact beehive brick cistern just BGS on/adjacent to E property line); dense rubble; P6 on a diagonal. To be tested.
	P6	c25 x irr, just beyond former rear building wall;	
153 Thomas Boyland/Block 1533/ Lot 4			To be tested (pit).
194 MacDougal/Block 1533/ Lot 16			

BGS = Below Ground Surface; irr = irregular; rec = rectangular; TT = Test Trench; P = Test Pit; unid = unidentified

Notes

Test trenches (TT) were initially c 2.5 ft wide, but almost all were widened in the course of testing, many of them irregularly (see Exhibit 2). It should be noted that features were usually located quite close to the surface (F10, which was truncated, is an exception); where no features were located, excavations extended into sterile soil (a yellow/orange sand) approximately to depths of 5-6 ft. See Exhibit 2 for locations of trenches, pits, and features listed here as well as others not indicated.

*This test ran into the neighboring yard (269a Marion St), a project lot also part of the Green Thumb; it should be noted the current Sanborn map indicates that the 267 Marion St lot is wider than 25 ft.

**A neighbor, Mr. Carlton, informed us that debris had been dumped on this and adjacent vacant lots in 1986.

clinkers (burned coal) and a few artifacts with a terminus post quem (the date after which the deposit was made) in the late 1940s or early 1950s (e.g., Geismar 1992). While cisterns are more likely than privy pits to be filled in one episode, it is not known if this is the situation at the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area site.

It is recommended that the privy pit at 127 MacDougal Street (F1) be excavated as soon as possible. This feature, associated with one of the more affluent residents of the village of New Brooklyn, did not appear to have been looted (unfortunately, privy pit features, a source of saleable antique medicine and beverage bottles, are often looted, destroying the invaluable social and economic information these features can provide). It is also recommended that F6, the privy pit at 78 MacDougal Street, be tested to determine if in fact it has been looted.

In addition, it is recommended that testing proceed on the five selected lots that have not yet been tested. It is also recommended that the cement slab in the rear yard of 126 Sumpter Street be removed so that this part of the yard can be tested. Its removal should be followed by testing as soon as feasible so that any privy pit features located under it can be identified and, if necessary, excavated.

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Walker, Mr., 1993. Personal communication. 139 MacDougal Street, Brooklyn, New York.

Appendix A
Proposed Scope of Work for Testing
the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area
Brooklyn, New York

CEQR No. 89-232K

Prepared for The City of New York
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Prepared by Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D.

May 1993

PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

Introduction

A documentary study of the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area (Geismar 1993) identified the village of New Brooklyn as a mid-nineteenth century settlement developed by German-born entrepreneurs. It became a community of tailors, tradesmen, and merchants, most of them also of German origin although other nationalities and occupations are represented in the historical record.

Of the hundreds of lots included in the project site, forty-nine (originally fifty, but with one deletion) have potential for providing information about the daily lives of those living in the village. Of these, a sample of fourteen lots is proposed for archaeological testing (Exhibits 1a and 1b), ten of them occupied by identified long-term residents. The other four provide a sample of more transitory occupancies, two of them lots located on a long-gone roadway.

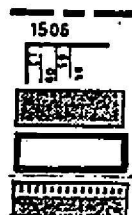
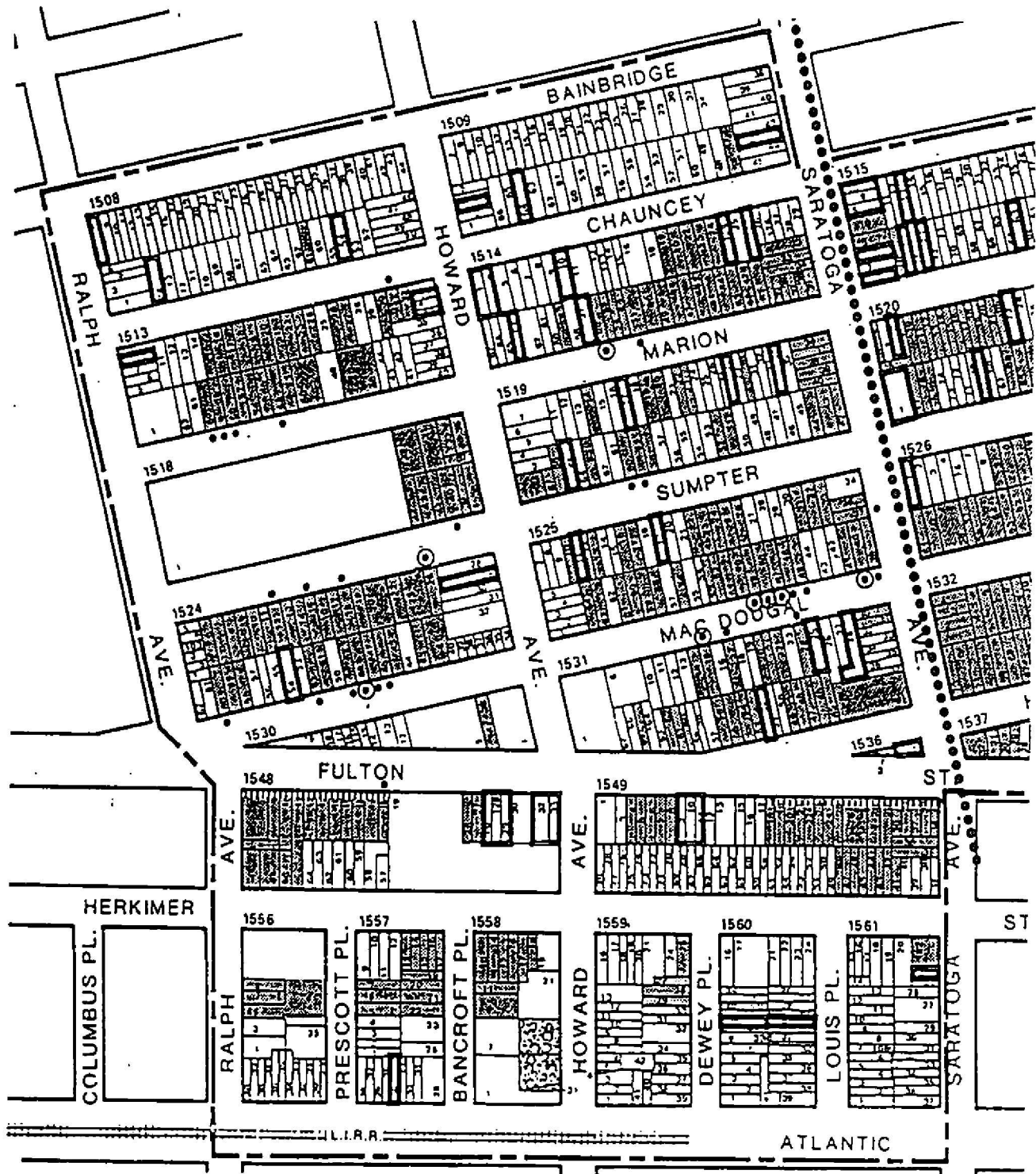
The proposed testing calls for monitored backhoe trenching to locate yard features--mainly water cisterns and, most sensitive of all, outhouse privy pits--that often contain household trash. The deposits in these features have the potential to provide information about the residents of this Brooklyn settlement populated by immigrants adapting to a new country and culture. They will undoubtedly also furnish information about sewer hookups. On the blocks west of Saratoga Avenue this is available for some lots through sewer records. This information will either be confirmed or refuted through archaeological investigation; for those buildings east of Saratoga Avenue, and for those where there are no sewer records, it will provide information that is unavailable elsewhere.

While cisterns are most often found just beyond rear building walls where they collect water from roof run-off (e.g., Geismar 1992), privy pits are usually located near rear property lines (e.g., Geismar 1989, 1992). These latter features have proven to be receptacles for household deposits that reveal facets of daily life not found in any written record (e.g., Bodie 1992; Geismar 1989, 1992; Salwen & Yamin 1990; Wall 1991). Given the data base from other excavations, archaeological material from selected yards in the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area will offer information that allows comparison with other urban residential sites and populations as well as between specific households within the community. These data will provide unique information about many aspects of the immigrant and developing urban experience. Backhoe trenching will undoubtedly uncover yard features to provide this information in at least some of the fourteen lots selected for historical data recovery.¹

¹ 267 Marion St. (B1514, L56), 309 Sumpter St. (B1521, L63), 313 Sumpter St. (B1521, L60), 126 Sumpter St. (B1524, L43), 43 MacDougal St. (B1524, L48), 109 MacDougal St. (B1525, L49), 111 MacDougal St. (B1525, L48), 113 MacDougal St. (B1525, L47), 127 MacDougal St. (B1525, L40), 133 MacDougal St. (B1526, L60), 147 MacDougal St. (B1526, L52), 78 MacDougal St. (B1531, L15), 141 Hopkinson Avenue/187 MacDougal St. (B1527, L1), 153 Hopkinson Avenue [now Thomas Boyland] (B1533, L4).

SARATOGA SQUARE FIELD TESTING Lots Proposed for Archaeological Testing (4/93)

1a



project boundary

block and lot numbers

new construction site (incomplete)

rehab site (incomplete)

commercial site



open space



project lot with archaeological potential



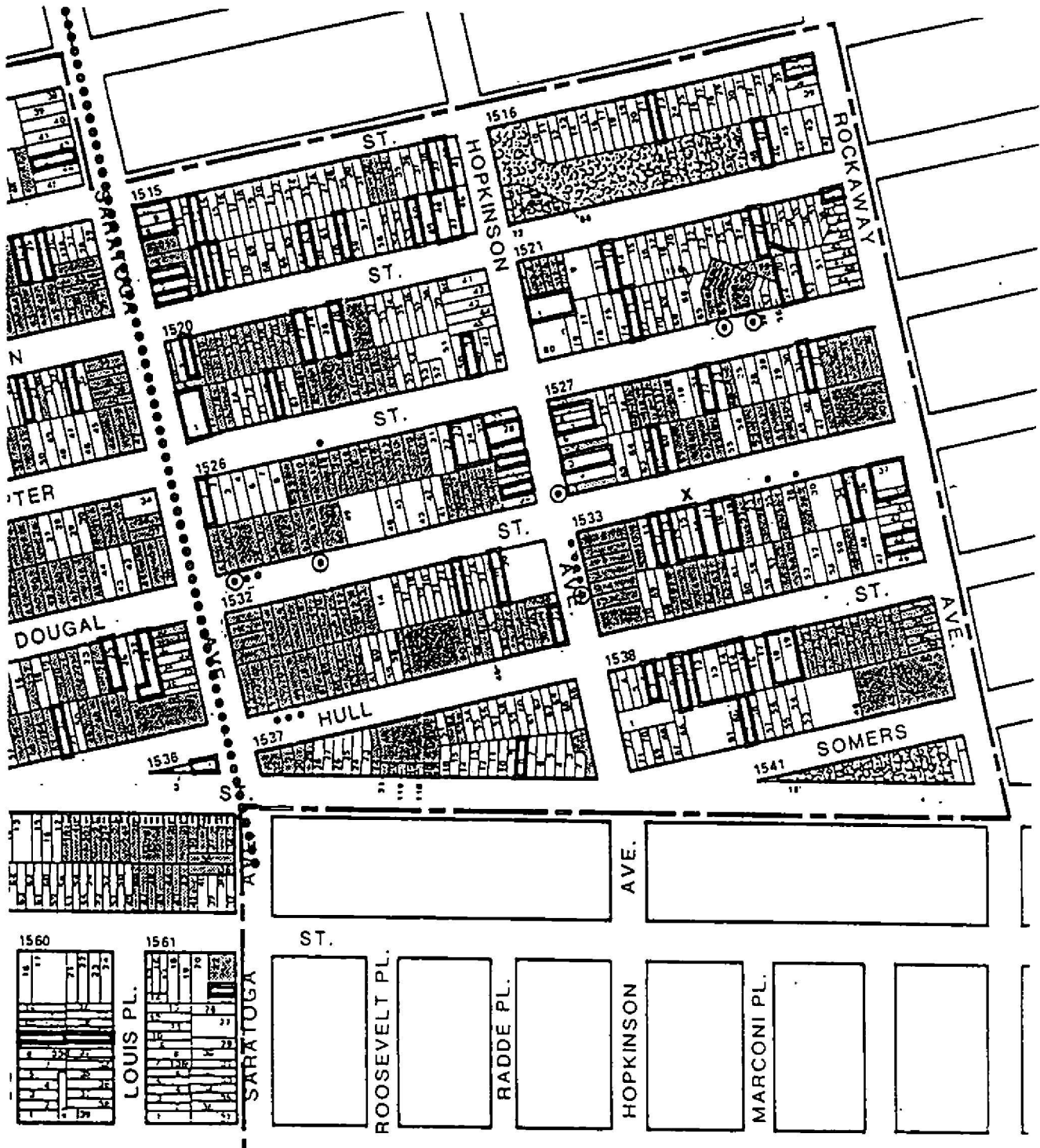
project lot selected for test sample (historic era)



match line

no scale





- | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------|--|----------|
| | project boundary | | open space | no scale |
| | block and lot numbers | • | project lot with archaeological potential | |
| | new construction site (incomplete) | ⊙ | project lot selected for test sample (historic era) | |
| | rehab site (incomplete) | X | project lot selected for test sample (Native American) | |
| | commercial site | ••••• | match line | |

In addition, one lot (194 MacDougal Street, Block 1533, Lot 16; see Exhibit 2C) is recommended for preliminary testing to determine if there could be evidence of Native American use. Testing is proposed because the lot was once the site of an historically documented fresh water spring. Although a three-story apartment building now covers the spring site, the backyard appears relatively undisturbed. A carefully monitored backhoe pit dug in this yard will reveal subsurface conditions and suggest whether evidence of Native American use associated with the spring could remain. At this writing, there are no soil borings available to provide this information.

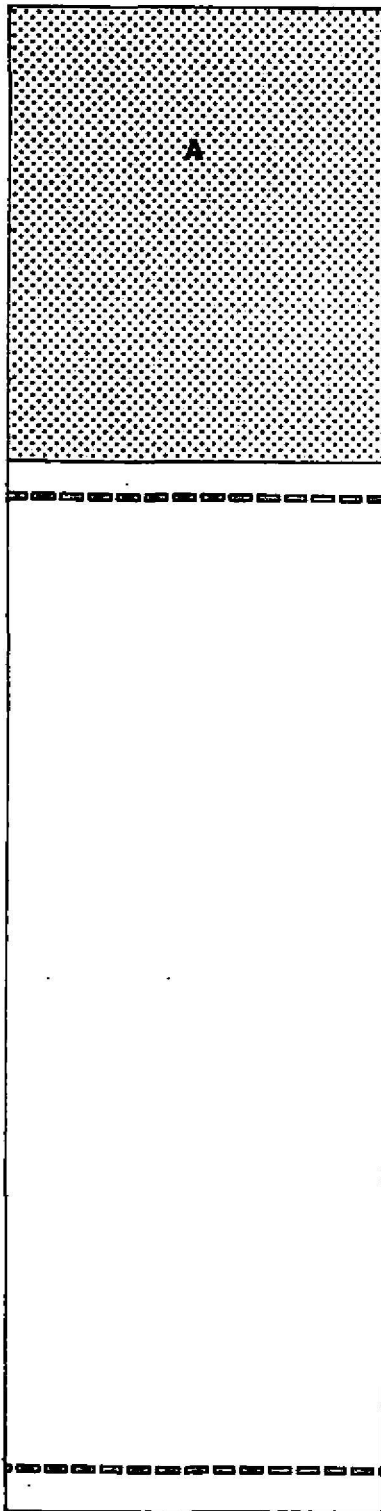
Field Method

At the Bishop Mugavero Geriatric Center site in Brooklyn, where houses date from the same time as those built in the early years of the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area development, cisterns were found adjacent to rear house walls of all five row houses and two smaller, individual structures that were tested (Geismar 1992). Privy pits at this and other urban sites in residential neighborhoods have usually been located near rear property lines (e.g., Geismar 1989, 1992). This was the adaptation made to keep outhouses as far from the dwelling as possible while following municipal directives in both Brooklyn and Manhattan that required them to be at least 2 ft. from adjoining lots (e.g., Laws and Ordinances of the City of Brooklyn 1854:253; New York City Board of Health Code 1833).

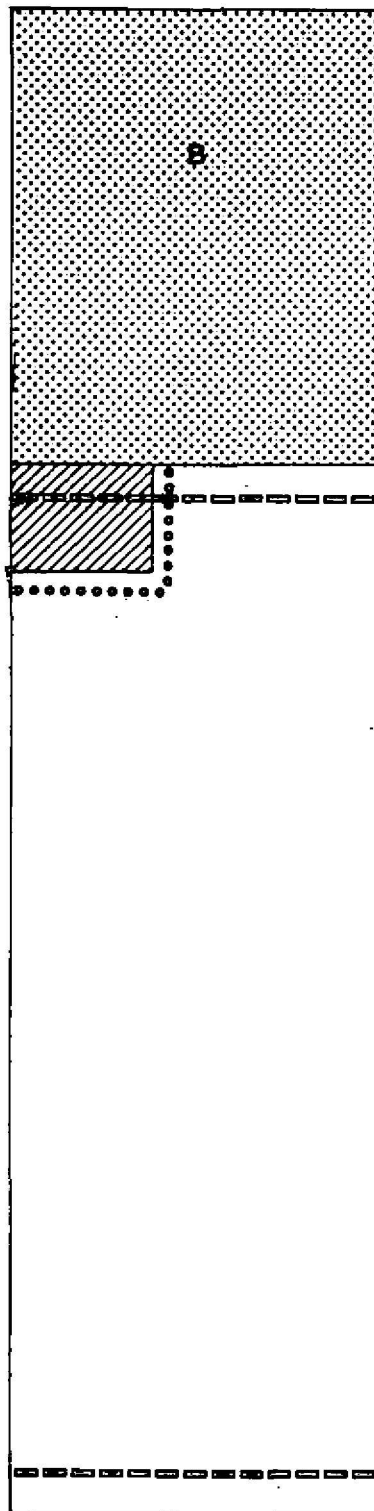
Based on this information and map data, backhoe trenches in all but one of the fourteen yards will concentrate in two areas in each yard. To locate water cisterns, they will be placed just beyond the back walls of former buildings and the two standing structures that remain on the lots selected for testing (only at 153 Hopkinson Street [Block 1533, Lot 4] was a larger structure subsequently built on the lot that would have eliminated a cistern feature; no test for a cistern will be made here).

Exhibit 2 (A and B) presents schematic testing plans. Since most of the yards are now vacant, the test trenches meant to locate cisterns will be based on map measurements of demolished houses while those to locate privy pits will be near rear lot lines. In some cases, where there are no apparent divisions between lots, these too will be calculated from map data. Almost all dwellings on these lots in 1869 (Dripps) are also found on the 1888 Sanborn Insurance map. These are mainly small structures, most of them only 25 to 35 ft. deep. In some cases, subsequent maps (Robinson & Pidgeon 1886; Hyde 1898; Hyde 1929) document extensions not found on all maps or later Sanborns. If extensions postdate 1886, trenches will cut across them; if it appears they are from an earlier time, the test trench will trace their configuration (see Exhibit 2B). In all cases, conditions will be assessed in the field and trenches will be modified to reflect what is found.

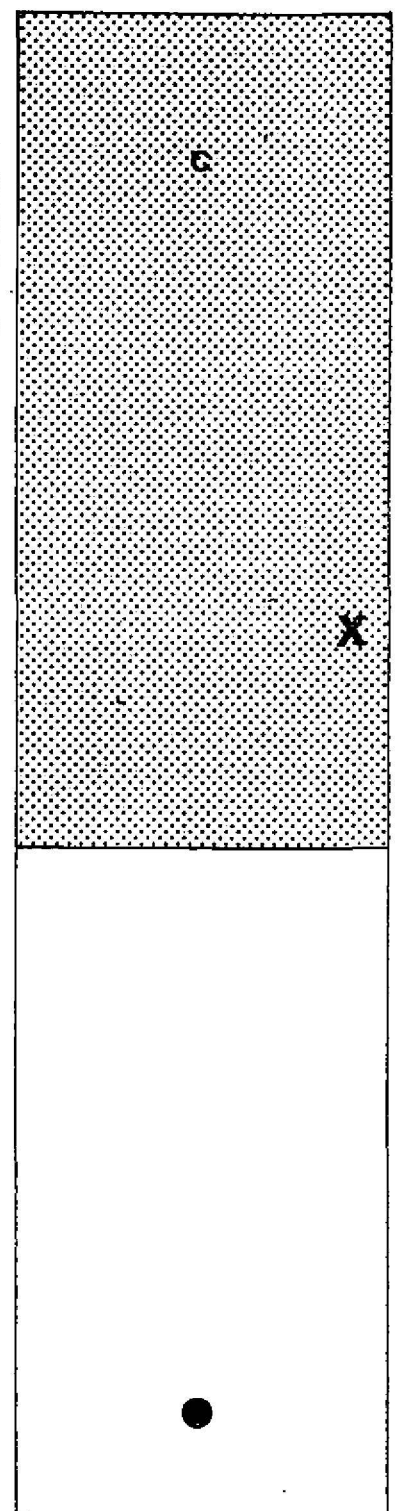
Two lots, 309 and 313 Sumpter Street (Block 1521, Lots 60 and 59), are the sites of buildings oriented on the former Brooklyn Jamaica Plank Road. These require a somewhat different approach to testing. The 1869 Dripps map shows an unidentified building (a






Lots with No Known Extensions




Lots with Extensions



194 Sumpter St. (Block 1533, Lot 16)

-  former/standing early dwelling (schematic)
-  extension (schematic)
-  proposed test trench, no extension or extension post-1888, not to scale

-  proposed test trench, extension pre-1888, not to scale

-  spring

-  proposed test pit, not to scale

0 10
ft.

second house or stable?) situated on the back property line of 309 Sumpter Street that, in this case, would have been on Sumpter Street. This suggests the privy pit would have been located somewhere between the dwelling and this structure. The 313 Sumpter Street address appears to have been a double lot that included 311 Sumpter Street from at least 1852. The size of the combined lot, its configuration, and its exposure to Sumpter Street, make location of the privy pit a question. Therefore, testing on these two lots is more problematic than on the others. The proposed test trenches for these two lots are illustrated in Exhibit 3. It should be noted that field conditions on these lots, even more than on others, may call for deviation from the proposed plan based on field findings and conditions.

To determine subsurface conditions, the test pit at 194 Sumpter Street (Block 1533 Lot 16) will be dug in the rear center of the yard (Exhibit 2C). This part of the lot is least likely to have been disturbed by construction of the three-story apartment house built on the lot in the 1890s and would tend to best reflect pre-construction conditions.

Implementation of the proposed testing is predicated on certain conditions. For example, it is based on full access to yards (that is, fences or other barriers will not be deterrents) so that time will not be lost removing fences or gates, the backhoe will be able to move freely from lot to lot, and work can proceed without interruption. This is to avoid bringing the backhoe to and from the site more than once and to maintain a tight testing schedule. It is also predicated on finding "typical" subsurface yard conditions, that is, 1-5 ft. of rubble fill that can be removed easily with a backhoe. Should these conditions not be met or encountered, a rethinking of the proposal may be called for. If necessary, testing may require more than one phase (for example, to test most of the yards under one contract and any that could not be completed at that time under another). Since subsurface conditions are unknown, this type of flexibility is a fall-back measure introduced as a possibility before testing begins. It should also be noted that the personal safety of the crew while working in the project area may need to be addressed (this may be something to be handled through the local police precinct). Another issue is potential vandalism of identified features and deposits. While all trenches or pits will be backfilled after being recorded, the nature of the exploration may attract bottle collectors and the like.

Data recovery is not a facet of this testing phase; its purpose is mainly to locate and identify two types of buried backyard features in the fourteen designated lots, and to determine underground conditions in the remaining lot. Any features located, including those other than cisterns and privy pits, will be recorded on a field map and documented through photographs. The soil strata in the pit will be profiled, and the backhoe trenches and pit will be back-filled.

Progress will be reported to Beverly Reith, Director of Environmental Review at HPD, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission



archaeologists. The test findings will be presented in an illustrated report and recommendations made for further investigation as warranted.

Goals

Testing of the Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area will allow the selection of a sample for further archaeological investigation that may offer information about this part of Brooklyn in regard to Native American use, and undoubtedly will reveal yet another facet of the urban experience: The historic-era features will provide material to determine what life in the village of New Brooklyn was like in the second half of the nineteenth century, and to learn how these households resembled or were different from each other and other comparable households. It will reveal what was eaten; what was selected and used as household items; what products were chosen for use or consumption; and what illnesses were treated or suffered. This is only a sample of the many components of this lifeway that may ultimately be recovered through archaeological investigation. Moreover, it will be possible to correlate the information with several identified, long-term, mainly immigrant households--a rare opportunity. It will also permit comparison between the households of long-term residents and those that were more transient. In the case of 126 Sumpter Street, material may later be recovered that will reveal what life was like for the African-American residents of this community, and how their material goods compared with those of the German-born residents. Testing will determine if the archaeological data to address these issues are potentially available.

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