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Schaeffer Brewery

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Historic Sites Research  
Susan Kardas +  
Edward Lashlee

Stage I-A Cultural Resource Survey  
Royal - Certified Realty Company  
Tract  
(Former F+M Schaeffer Brewery)  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

1983

219

COPY WITH ORIGINAL PHOTOPRINTS

STAGE IA CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
ROYAL-CERTIFIED REALTY COMPANY TRACT  
(FORMER F & M SCAHEFER BREWERY)  
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Prepared by

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SEPTEMBER 1983

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Purpose of Study	1
B. Research Methodology	3
C. Description of the Tract	4
D. Prehistoric Cultural Development	11
E. Historic Development	17
F. Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion	
1. Summary	36
2. Recommendations	37
3. Conclusion	38
References	40
List of Maps Consulted	43

## FIGURE AND PLATE LIST

1. Location Map	2
2. Project Map	5
3. Divisions of the Delaware Speakers in the 17th Century	14
4. Ethnohistorically Recorded Villages	16
5. 1767 Ratzer Map	27
6. 1767 Ratzer Map (enlarged)	28
7. 1846 Coast & Geodetic Survey Chart	29
8. 1874 Beers Map	30
9. 1886 Robinson Map	31
10. 1887 Coast & Geodetic Survey Chart	32
11. 1928 Sanborn Pier Atlas	33
12. 1974 Coast & Geodetic Survey Chart	34

## PLATES

1. View looking northwest, main building on Kent Avenue	6
2. View looking south, Schaefer complex with 7 story building	7
3. View looking southwest, detail of Schaefer complex	8
4. View looking west, carved symbol on Office Building	9
5. View looking north, Schaefer complex behind lumber yard	10
6. Historic View, 1916	35



## **A. PURPOSE OF STUDY**

Historic Sites Research was engaged to perform an archaeological reconnaissance on a parcel of City owned waterfront property in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. The site, which abuts the East River, is part of the former Schaefer Brewing Complex west of Kent Avenue and north of Division Avenue in Brooklyn (Figure 1). It is an irregularly shaped parcel of land consisting of approximately 100,000 square feet of land, and 60,000 to 80,000 square feet of vacant and deteriorating buildings. As part of the approval process for UDAG the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of New York has determined that the project site may be of archaeological significance. The purpose of this study is to assess the degree of disturbance to the site, and to conduct documentary research relating to the history of the site, and its uses.



## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to assess the degree of disturbance to the portion of the former site of the Schaefer Brewery Complex west of Kent Avenue and north of Division Avenue in Brooklyn; and conduct other research necessary to obtain federal approval of the UDAG funding, the consultant performed the following procedures:

1. consultation of local histories and archaeological surveys and reports regarding historic uses of the site/area. This included reports in Landmarks Commission, the Brooklyn Public Library, Princeton University and New Jersey Archives. The Brooklyn Borough Topographic Engineer's Office was in the process of moving during the period authorized for this study, and its maps and card file were inaccessible.
2. development of a history of the site from insurance atlases and maps.
3. examination of nautical charts and atlases, and other topographic maps of the area to determine the historical development of the shoreline and landfilling along this section of the waterfront.
4. physical examination of the site and photodocumentation of the site in its present setting.

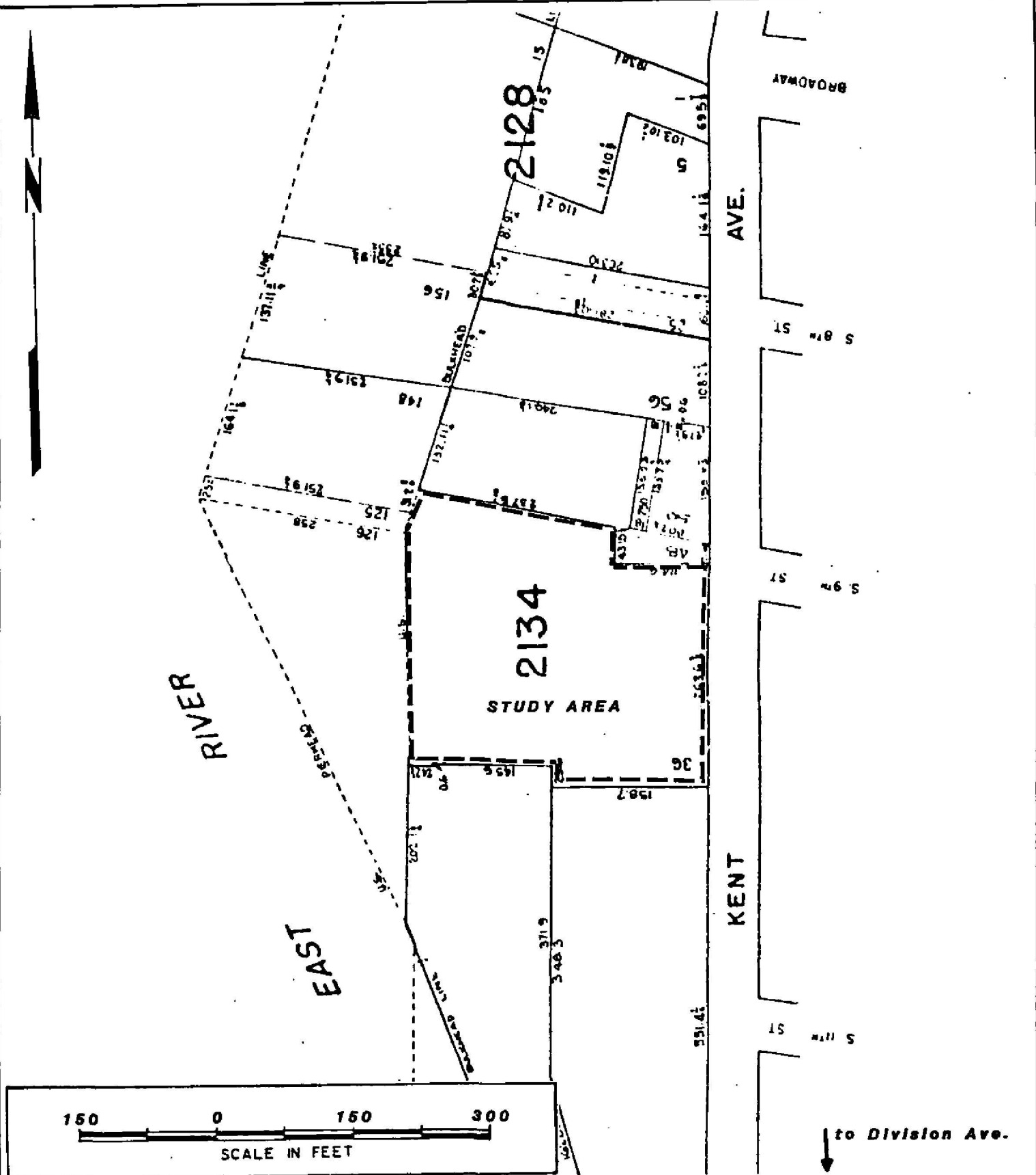
This report summarizes the results of this reconnaissance and documents the site history with relevant historical maps, views and plans and photographs of the as-is condition.

### C. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The site is an irregularly shaped parcel consisting of approximately 100,000 square feet of land and approximately 60,000 to 80,000 square feet of vacant and deteriorating buildings. The largest of the buildings is seven stories high and still contains many of the aluminum brewery tanks used in Schaefer's production of beer. The project will involve demolition of the buildings to enable two Brooklyn based firms, the Royal Wine Corporation and the Certified Lumber Corporation, to undertake an expansion of their respective businesses by constructing a new 50,000 square foot industrial facility. The developer plans to demolish the buildings, which were taken by the City of New York in August 1982 for non-payment of taxes. The following description was supplied by the client:

Royal Wine and Certified Lumber are located on either side of a City-owned parcel of land containing approximately 100,000 square feet. The parcel consists of several deteriorated buildings ranging from one to seven stories in height. The property's last owner apparently purchased the site from the Schaefer Brewing Company when Schaefer moved out of the City in 1975. After removing all of the salvageable material from the structures, the previous owner abandoned the property and allowed the City to take the property in rem by not paying taxes.

The seven story building, now missing an entire exterior wall on one side, still contains about two dozen aluminum tanks left over from the Schaefer operations. The buildings have no economic value because of their deteriorated condition and unique use. Moreover, although the building that occupies a major portion of the site is considered to be seven stories high, there are no floors to separate each level as most of the space was used to store beer tanks that were held in place by open beams.



**FIGURE 2 PROJECT MAP**  
*Base map supplied with Request for Proposal*

**STAGE 1 CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY**  
**SCHAEFER BREWERY SITE**  
**KENT AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.**  
*Historic Sites Research Sept. 1983*



Plate 1. View of the Schaefer Brewing Co. main building adjacent to Kent Avenue, which is in the foreground. View looks northwest. 20 September 1983.

STAGE 1 CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
SCHAEFER BREWERY SITE  
KENT AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.  
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Plate 2. View of Schaefer Brewery complex as seen from the north. Aluminum tanks are visible in the seven story building on the right, from which the north wall has been removed. Kent Avenue runs along the east side of the structures. The East River is immediately to the right of these buildings. View looks south. 20 September 1983.

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Plate 3. Detail of the northeastern end of the Schaefer complex shown in Plate 2. The Office Building is partly hidden behind the trees at the left of this picture. View looks southwest. 20 September 1983.

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Plate 4. Art Deco style carved symbol on the front of the Schaefer Office Building facing Kent Avenue. View looks west. 20 September 1983.

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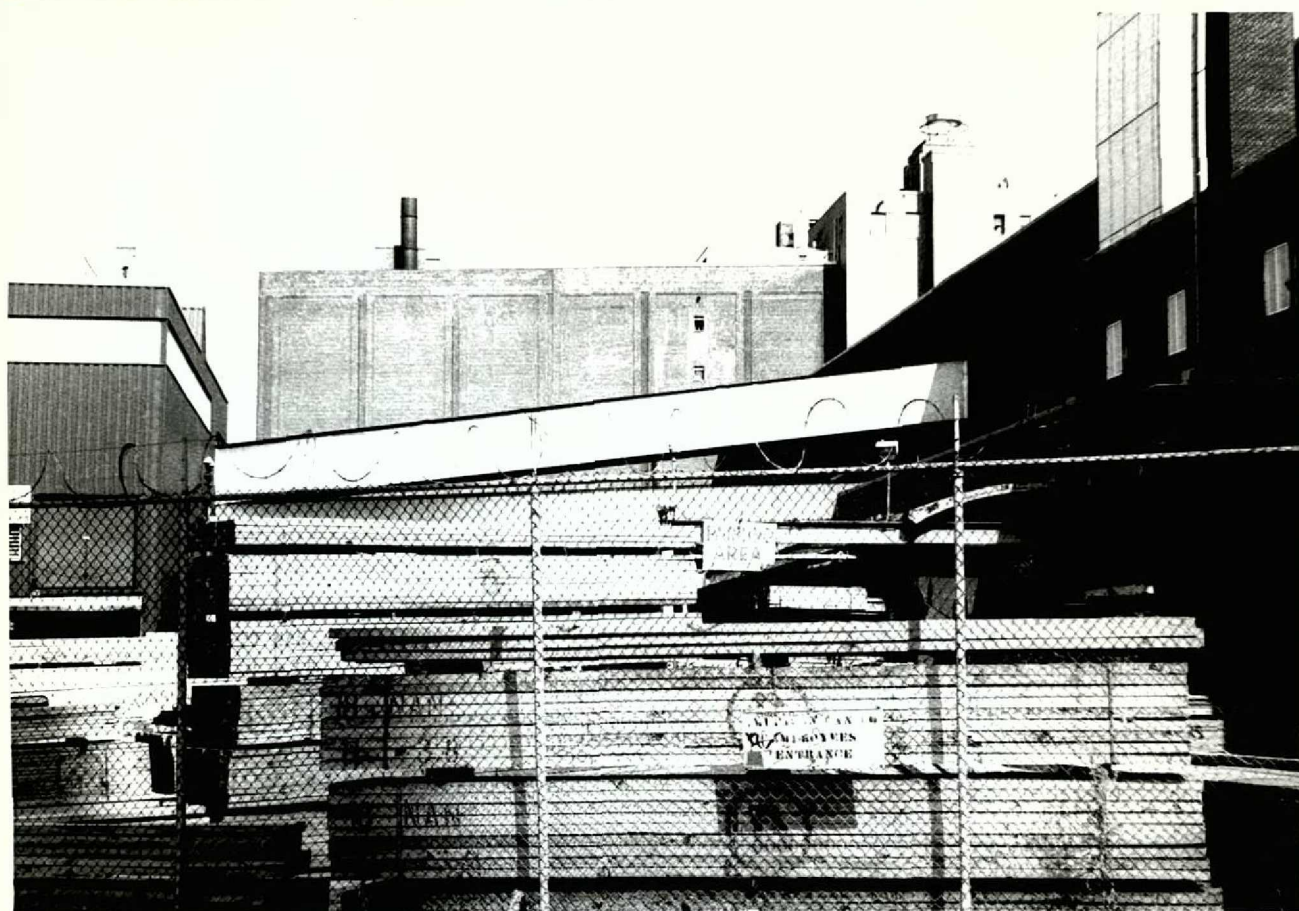


Plate 5. View of the Schaefer Brewery complex from the south, looking past the Certified Lumber Company yard. View looks north. 20 September 1983.

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#### D. PREHISTORIC CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Prehistoric sites in northeastern North America are categorized as falling within three major periods of cultural development (Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland).

##### 1. Paleo-Indian

An early cultural tradition is known as Paleo-Indian. The Paleo-Indian tradition lasted from circa 10,500 B.C. to 8,000 B.C. It was a hunting and gathering adaptation using a specific fluted point technology frequently associated with extinct Pleistocene fauna (Bison antiquus, mammoth, mastodon, and caribou) and other smaller tundra -taiga animals. Sites of this tradition are known in small numbers from much of North America. In the northeast, Paleo-Indian sites have tended to be found on elevated locations and near low swampy ground formerly occupied by lakes (Ritchie 1965: 1-8). A few sites of this period and some isolated finds are known for the Hudson and Delaware River Drainages. Paleo-Indian material has been reported from Long Island by Saxon (1973) and Smith (1952). However, in terms of the study area, sites of this period would be unlikely because the shoreline in the recent historic period would not have been the shoreline 10,000 years ago and hence would not represent a desirable topographical setting.



## 2. The Archaic Period

The Archaic Tradition is associated with post-Pleistocene boreal spruce-pine forest and later with mixed deciduous forest. These newly developed ecozones were inhabited by modern animal species and localized species of fish, shell-fish and wild vegetable foods, all of which were exploited by man during this time.

Expected tool typologies for the Early and Middle Archaic (circa 8,000 B.C. to 4,000 B.C.) elsewhere in North America included parallel flaked lanceolate points (Plainview, Angostura, Scottsbluff, Eden in the Western United States), and corner and side notched specimens (Palmer, Kirk, Stanley, circa 6,500 B.C. to 5,000 B.C. in the Carolina Piedmont). A few specimens similar to these styles are known from the Mid-Atlantic States; however, it appears that post-Pleistocene boreal forests supported very sparse populations (Fitting 1968; Kinsey 1972: 332).

Late Archaic (circa 4,000 to 1700 B.C.) is a cultural adaptation associated with oak-hickory forest inhabited by deer, turkey and other small game animals. Tool industries consisted of stemmed side-notched and corner-notched projectile points made of local argillite, shale, quartzite, flint and jasper. Also present in typical assemblages are bannerstones (atlatl weights used on dart throwers), fish spears, netsinkers, milling stones, mullers, mortars and pestles, chipped/pecked adzes, celts, choppers and grooved axes, indicative of hunting, fishing and wild food exploitation (Kinsey 1972: 355-361). This period is well represented in the northeast. Sites of this period are known from Staten Island and the eastern and northern shore of Long Island, but not

from the immediate study area.

The Transitional Period is a term used sometimes to describe a Late Archaic to Early Woodland continuum (circa 1700 B.C. to 1000 B.C.). It is characterized by the presence of broadspears and fishtail points of which several regional styles exist, sometimes in association with steatite vessels, drills and knives made on flakes (Kraft 1974: 16-23).

### 3. The Woodland Period

Early Woodland (circa 1000 B.C. to 250 B.C.) is similar in adaptation to the Late Archaic and Transitional Periods, but made distinct from them by the presence of a new complex of traits; clay pottery vessels tempered with steatite, tobacco smoking pipes, horticulture, and possible the introduction of the bow and arrow. Late in this period there is an indication of Adena influence at some sites (Kinsey 1972: 361-364; Kraft 1974: 23-27; Ritchie and Funk 1973: 346-349).

Middle Woodland (circa 250 B.C. to 800 A.D.) is a continuation of the horticultural adaptation begun in Early Woodland times. During this period there was refinement and stylistic change in pottery, and the construction of subterranean storage pits.

The Late Woodland (circa 800 A.D. to 1700 A.D.) is known from material found in storage pits and house structures along the Hudson, the Upper Delaware, and from surface finds elsewhere. The Late Woodland is differentiated from the Middle Woodland primarily on the basis of projectile point types and pottery

styles. Coastal sites are characterized by large quantities of shell and bone in middens or pits. Burial sites are also characteristic. Large village sites are known for the coastal area.

The Indians of western Long Island during the proto-historic/historic period were closely linked to those of the circum Manhattan area. These included the **Nayack**, **Marechkawreck** and **Carnarsee** in Brooklyn. On Long Island it is especially difficult to distinguish between Village names and those of larger local groups. A sharp linguistic and political division between the western and eastern Long Island Indians is clear and archaeological sites cluster at the two opposite ends of the island (Goddard in Trigger 1978: 213-216).



Fig. 2. 17th-century bands and dialects, interior areas poorly known.

Figure 3. Division of Delaware Speakers in the 17th Century (from Goddard in Trigger 1978: 215)

In the early 20th century several studies were issued by R.P. Bolton describing various aboriginal sites in the New York Metropolitan area, largely on the basis of ethnohistoric and legal records (1920, 1922). His map shows the location of historic/protohistoric village sites (numbered) and geographical place names. Church and Rutsch place one of these villages (Werpos) near the head of Gowanus Creek about three miles south of the project site (1982: 15). There are no recorded sites associated with the project site, which is shown on the Bolton Map at Rinnegokonk.

[REDACTED]





## E. HISTORIC OCCUPATION OF THE STUDY AREA

The first Dutch purchases from Canarsee or subgroups of the Delawaran speaking Indians in what is now Brooklyn occurred in 1636, and by 1637 a Walloon named Joris Jansen de Rapelie had purchased the southeastern part of what came to be called Wallabout Bay from Kakapeteyno and Pewichaas, who acted as proprietors or spokesmen for the local band of Amerindians. The tract, and the stream which flowed into it, was called "Rennagaconck" (see Bolton map, Figure 4), but the farm and the bay on which it was situated was soon referred to by the Dutch as the "Wall-boght", or the land purchased by the Walloon (Stiles 1867: 24, 44-45, 85-87). Rapelie's descendants and heirs were joined by other farmers, and by the 1660's there were six or seven plantations "in or about the Walle-boght", when the residents petitioned for permission to maintain isolated dwellings, rather than remove to the establishment at Brooklyn (Stiles 1867: 114-117). At that time the residents of Wallabout Bay stated their intent to lay a bridge 2 or 3 planks wide over the Kil (Runnegackonck or Wallabout Creek) to provide communication between farms, even in times of high water. This indicates that there were Dutch farms located on both sides of the creek as early as 1660.

Maps exist which show the general area of Wallabout Bay from the latter 17th century, but these show no significant detail. A map of "The Towne of New York" dated to the period 1664 - 1668 includes the western tip of Long Island, and shows a stream or inlet labelled "Walbout", and to the northeast of that approximately opposite the eastern point of Manhattan referred to on later

maps as Corlear's Hook, is an unnamed settlement of some half-dozen structures, which is evidently the predecessor of Williamsburgh.

Mark Tiddeman's map "A Draught of New York from the Hook to New York Town" dated 1755, is very schematic. The bight or inlet which is Wallabout Bay is shown but not named, and the only settlements shown are "Brookland" to the south and "Bushwyk" to the north. It is not until the detailed Ratzer map was made in 1767 that any of the early features of the study area can be determined (Figures 5 and 6). At that time Wallabout Bay was a "U-Shaped" inlet about one thousand yards across from east to west, and extending south from the East River about the same distance. It was fed by a small stream at its southeast corner, and by a larger stream (which is not named here, but is later called Wallabout Creek) on its east side. A long dike or mole along the west side formed a mill dam and enclosed a pond for Remsen's Mill which was worked by the tides. About 2 miles north of Wallabout Bay is Bushwick Inlet.

The most important aspect of the depiction, from the viewpoint of this study, is that it shows a broad strip around Wallabout Bay as marshland or mud flat, even at high tide, and a line entitled "Outward Boundaries" which is evidently the outer edge of mud flat exposed at low tide in this shallow bay. North of the creek, the marshland ends, and a bluff is shown running along a narrow strip of mud flat, exposed by the tide. There is one farm shown on high land on each side of the creek near its mouth, and three farmsteads along the shore immediately north of the creek. Going farther north on the shoreline, there is an

unoccupied strip about 1600 feet long, and then another cluster of seven or eight farmsteads up to Bushwick inlet.

By plotting back from later maps on which the modern street grid exists, it is possible to approximately place the Schaefer Brewery site study area. It is a rectangular block of land west of the central of three farmsteads north of Wallabout Bay, falling within the area of mudflat exposed at low tide, and extending to the edge of the bluff, but not onto that higher ground.

The Battle of Long Island (or Brooklyn) and associated military actions in August 1776, took place well to the south of Wallabout Bay, and the only defensive works in the vicinity were a line of entrenchments with several redoubts and bastions, which ran from Fort Box near Gowanus Bay on the south to Fort Putnam near Wallabout Bay on the north. This line was designed to defend Brooklyn from potential attack coming from the southeast. Fort Putnam (refortified during the War of 1812 as Fort Greene) was in what is now Fort Greene Park, two or three long blocks south of the nearest part of the Navy Yard, and about one and a half miles southwest of the Schaefer Brewery site study area at the foot of 9th and 10th streets. No action took place here, and no defenses were closer than this to the study area (Stiles 1867: 250-252, 400 & Maps). The bay was used throughout the Revolution as a mooring place for British prison ships. Many of the Colonial prisoners died here, and were buried on the nearest shores, along the west and southwest edges of the bay (Stiles 1867). Some of these burials have been unearthed by various construction work throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century, but none

have been reported on or near the east side of Wallabout Bay. Given the extensive mud flats which filled most of the bay, and the ship mooring locations near the west side of the bay, it is not likely that any of the prison ships or hospital ship fatalities were brought ashore for burial in the vicinity of the study area which was about 4,000 feet northeast of the moorings.

At the end of the 18th century a small shipyard was started by the Jackson brothers near the southwest corner of Wallabout Bay. In 1801 the U.S. Navy bought this at auction, and began the New York or Brooklyn Navy Yard. This facility grew throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th century, reaching peak size during World War II (Church and Rutsch 1982: 20-31). Major periods of expansion were during the 1840's, during the Civil War, the "New Navy of the '90's" era at the end of the 19th century which included the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. The Navy Yard was officially closed and title transferred to a City Corporation in 1966 (New York Times 1966).

The next detailed map is one made in 1846, by which time both Brooklyn and Williamsburgh existed as towns with modern street grids and all of nearby Manhattan was built up (see Figure 7). Between the two towns at this western end of Long Island there were still farms and wooded areas around the south and east sides of Wallabout Bay. The Navy Yard is shown at the west side of the bay where Remsen's tidal mill once stood. There were still broad mud flats, but a semi-circular navigation channel had been dredged around the bay, and a sandy island created at its mouth, evidently from dredge spoil.

At the mouth of Wallabout Creek, no significant changes had occurred in topography. A row of three or four farmsteads existed along the northeast side of a track which was the predecessor of Kent Avenue, and one farmstead was on the southwest side of the creek, where a tongue of higher ground extended into the bay. This shows that very little change has occurred on the east side of Wallabout Bay in the two centuries since the first Dutch farms were established, despite the intensive urban buildup already existing to the north and southwest, and across the East River, and despite the development of the Navy Yard at the west end of the bay.

The later Schaefer Brewery site study area, at the southern edge of Williamsburgh, seems to have been in transition in the 1840's. The modern street grid had already been extended over the area, but what is actually shown existing south of Broadway, are three small structures which are at the locations of the farmsteads shown on the 1767 map. This suggests that the landscape here in 1846 was still rural, much like that immediately to the south, but that paper streets existed, and may have been laid out on the ground. The study area was still unimproved tidal mudflat west of the shoreline, lying on the west side of Kent Avenue, which had been laid out to run along the top of the shoreline bluff.

The residual rural nature had changed by the time of the Civil War. In 1853 the Navy bought more than 36 acres from the City of New York (James H. West Short History of the New York Navy Yard 1941: 10-11, cited in Church & Rutsch 1982: 24). Subsequent to this, the Naval Hospital was built on the high ground adjacent to the west side of Wallabout creek. The original part of this structure still stands, and is on the National Register. Navy construction in the late 1840's and 1850's gave impetus to the development of this area between Brooklyn and Williamsburgh. This situation is depicted on a map of 1864, which shows the Naval Hospital near Flushing Avenue and north of it a Laboratory. At this time a street grid had been projected directly over the study area, crossing Kent Avenue, and with the modern street names given, but there is evidence from subsequent maps to show that 9th and 10th streets were only partially built on the southwest side of Kent Avenue in the study area. Also by the end of the Civil War, the shoreline within the study area had been filled to approximately its present shape.

This situation of 1864 is shown unchanged on maps of 1865, 1866, and 1871. By 1874 (see Figure 8) 9th and 10th Streets are shown as extending about 200 feet west of Kent Avenue, and the filled block between them extends nearly 400 feet west of Kent. The study area was part of the previous Jacob Berry farm. This situation is confirmed in a map dated 1876, showing the original high ground and salt marsh of the pre-urban and industrial situation, which indicates that landfill now had created the study area, and which places the bluff or edge of high ground along Kent Avenue.

The detailed appearance of the study area about a century ago can be determined from an 1886 city atlas (Figure 9). The property along the west side of Kent Avenue is occupied by a Sugar Refinery. There is a "Peoples Gas Light Co." to the south. Further south, along the waterfront, were another sugar refinery, an ice and coal yard, another gas works, a grain elevator, the Empire State Flint Glass Works, and a series of open yards of coal, lumber, lime, brick, and sulphur. Immediately north of the study area was an iron foundry, six ferries to Manhattan, and extensive sugar refineries and warehouses.

Sugar refining became one of the major industries of Brooklyn, and these refineries were a dominant factor in the east coast food market. In 1884 there were thirteen sugar refineries in Brooklyn, eight of which manufactured pure sugars and syrups. This represented an industry which produced 2,600 tons of sugar per day, which was more than 60% of the United States annual production at that time. One of these establishments, described as a "structure of giant proportions," covered the waterfront block at the foot of South 9th Street, in the study area. It was known as the DeCastro and Donner refinery, but in 1884 was controlled by the firm of Havermeyers and Elder, then the largest sugar refining company in Brooklyn. The major components of the Havermeyers and Elder establishment ran from South 2nd Street to South 6th Street, and consisted of a boiler house and filtering plant between 11 and 13 stories in height, various supporting shops, and large capacity storage facilities. This main refinery of Havermeyers and Elder had been newly constructed in 1883,

following a fire in 1881 or 1882, and covered the waterfront north of the complex of ferry docks between 6th and 9th Streets, on both side of Broadway (Stiles 1884: 670-671).

The smaller refinery in the study area, immediately south of the ferry docks, extended over the block between 9th and 10th Streets on landfill, with an iron foundry squeezed between it and the ferry docks to the north, and a Gas Light Company to the south (see Figure 9). Evidently this DeCastro and Donner refinery was not new in the 1880's, but was still considered a funtional addition to the Havermeyers and Elder holdings. The new refinery north of the ferry docks could produce 1,250,000 pounds of sugar per day, while the several DeCastro and Donner refineries could add another 1,200,000. The DeCastro and Donner buildings must have been at least half a century old when the Schaefer Brewery was built in 1915-1916. None of the sugar refinery buildings appear to have been re-used by the Schaefer Brewery.

The character of this block of made-land became established in the latter 19th century, and there was only one significant change in the ensuing hundred years. The shoreline is shown in detail on a harbor chart of 1887 (Figure 10). Three structures of the sugar refinery appear in the study area. A map of 1893 shows the same businesses as shown in 1886. In 1898, 1901, and 1909 maps indicate no change.

Major construction at the site did occur just as World War I was starting in Europe. The most notable occupant of the site was the F & M Schaefer Brewing Company who constructed a facility at this location between 1915-1916. The "ultra new and modern plant"

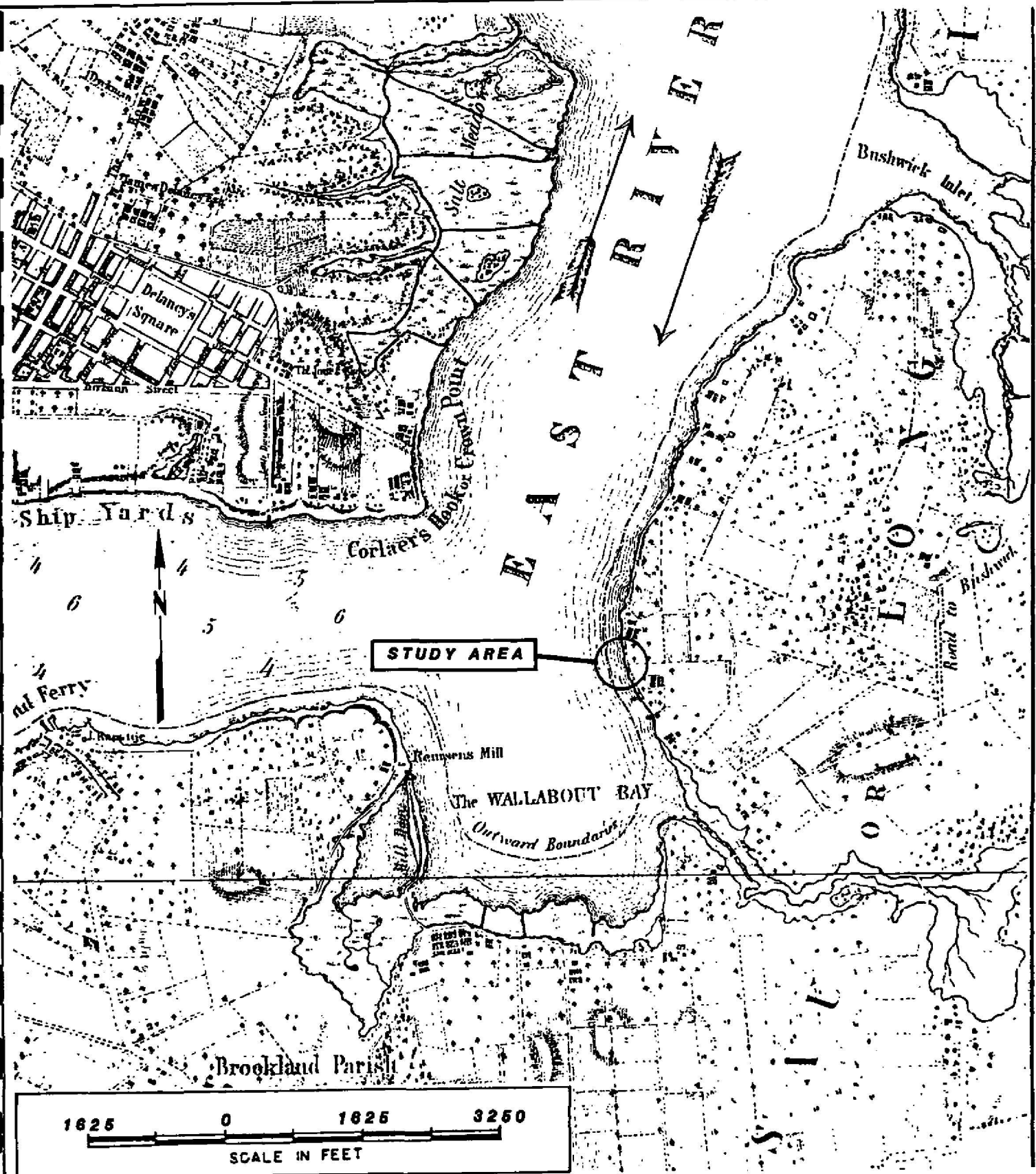


(see Plate 6) represented the best in pre-Prohibition breweries. Four years later the passing of the Volstead Act caused them to change production to "near beer", dyes, and artificial ice. Following the repeal of prohibition, the facility was up-graded and expanded during the 1930's and '40's, and operated until January 22, 1976 (New York Times 23 January 1976).

F & M Schaefer was the longest operating brewery in New York City, and America's oldest lager beer brewing company. The Brooklyn facility was the last of several expansions and moves within the City by Schaefer. The founding brothers, Frederick and Maxmillian, emigrated to the U.S. in 1838/39, bringing with them a formula for lager, a type of beer popular in Germany, but unheard of in the U.S. They originally operated a brewery on Broadway between 18th and 19th Streets which they purchased from Sommers in 1842. In 1845 they developed a new plant on 7th Avenue, Between 16th and 17th Streets (now Barney's). In 1849 they moved to another facility which they built on Fourth (Park) Avenue and 51st Street which they operated for the next 67 years. In 1914 they sold their Manhattan property and relocated in Brooklyn. The plant here operated from 1916-1976. They closed one week before the Rhinegold Brewery, the last operating brewery in New York City. The closing of these plants heralded the end of a three hundred year old tradition begun by the Butch in 1629 (Anderson 1976: 113-119, Miller 1979: 134). Plates 1 through 5 show the present condition of the site.

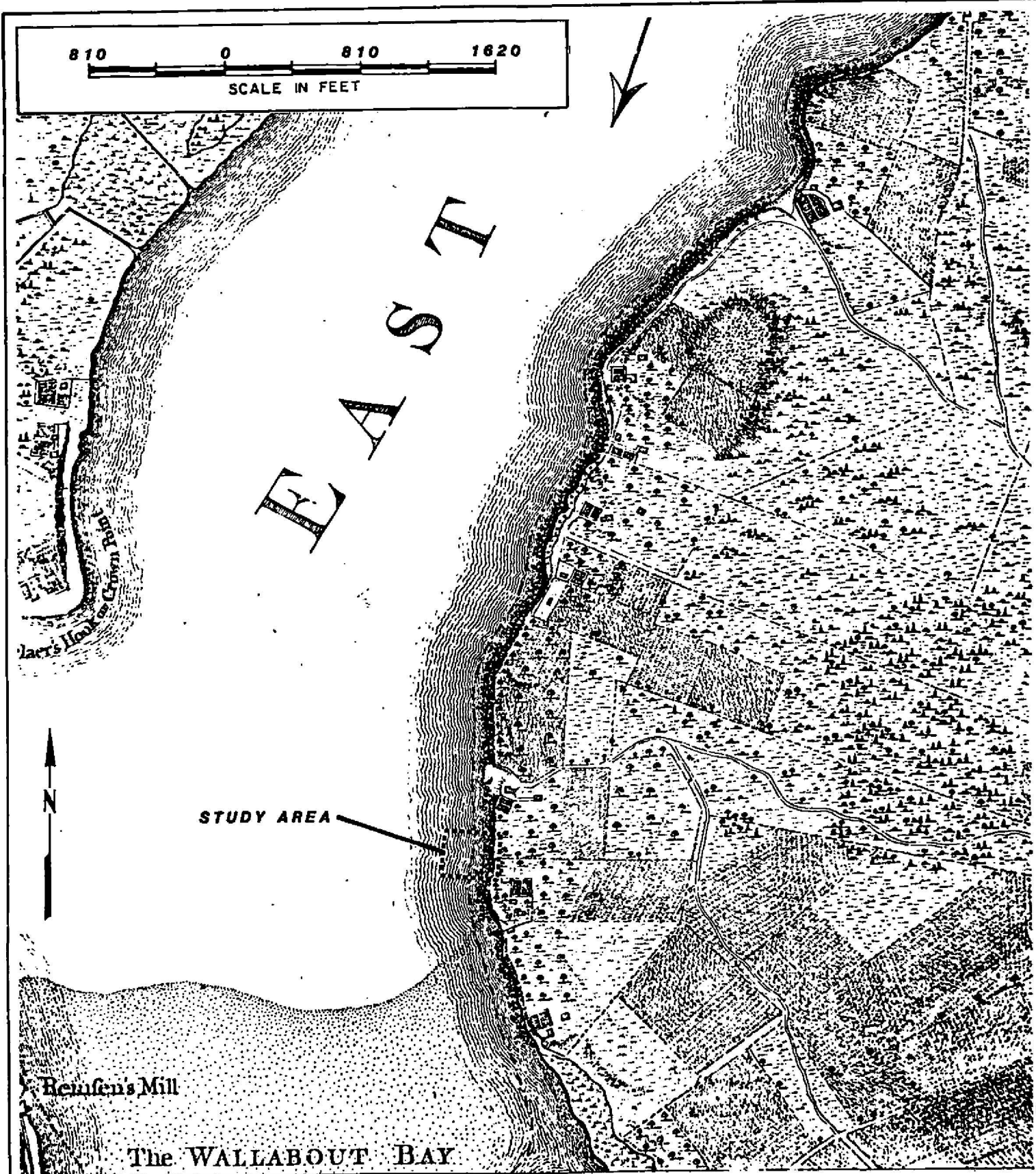
A detailed depiction of the site in the period between World War I and World War II is given in a 1928 Pier Map of New York Harbor (see Figure 11). At that time, "F.M. Schaefer Co." is shown in the study area. To the south were the "So. 11th Street Storage and Warehouse Corporation," the "Brooklyn & Manhattan Transit Co. Power Station," and "Brooklyn Union Gas Company." North of the Schaefer Brewery was the "Columbia Steel Tube Corp'n." and the ferry piers to Manhattan, with the "American Sugar Refining Co." occupying the extensive plant built by Havermeyers and Elder in 1883.

Comparison of two Coast and Geodetic Survey harbor charts from 1887 and 1974 shows many changes in the shoreline of the Navy Yard in Wallabout Bay, and shows that the ferry piers of the 1880's were in ruins by the 1970's (Figures 10 and 12). However, it also shows that there has been no significant change in the landfill of the study area. The waterfront structures on the 1887 chart, which are those identified in the 1886 atlas (Figure 9), had been replaced by other structures in 1974, but the shoreline itself has remained constant since the major land-making operations of the mid-19th century.



**FIGURE 5** 1767  
**"Plan of the City of New York In North America"**  
 based on B. Ratzer map  
 reprinted in 1864 by G. Hayward

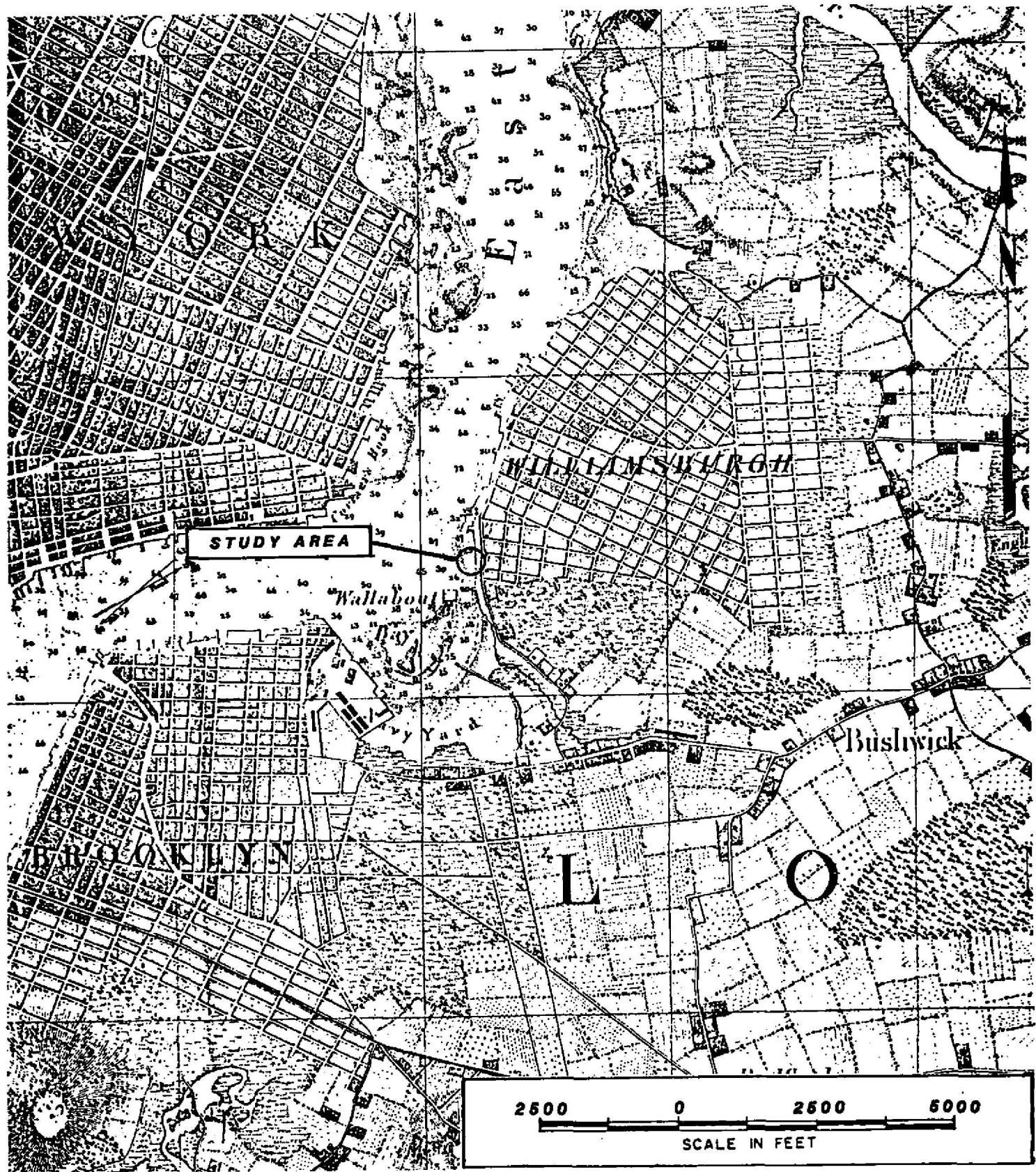
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**KENT AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.**  
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**FIGURE 6** 1767  
*"Plan of the City of New York and Its Environs"*  
 B. Ratzer  
 Reprinted in 1776 by Jefferys & Faden

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**FIGURE 7**

**1846**

**"Map of New York Bay & Harbor"**

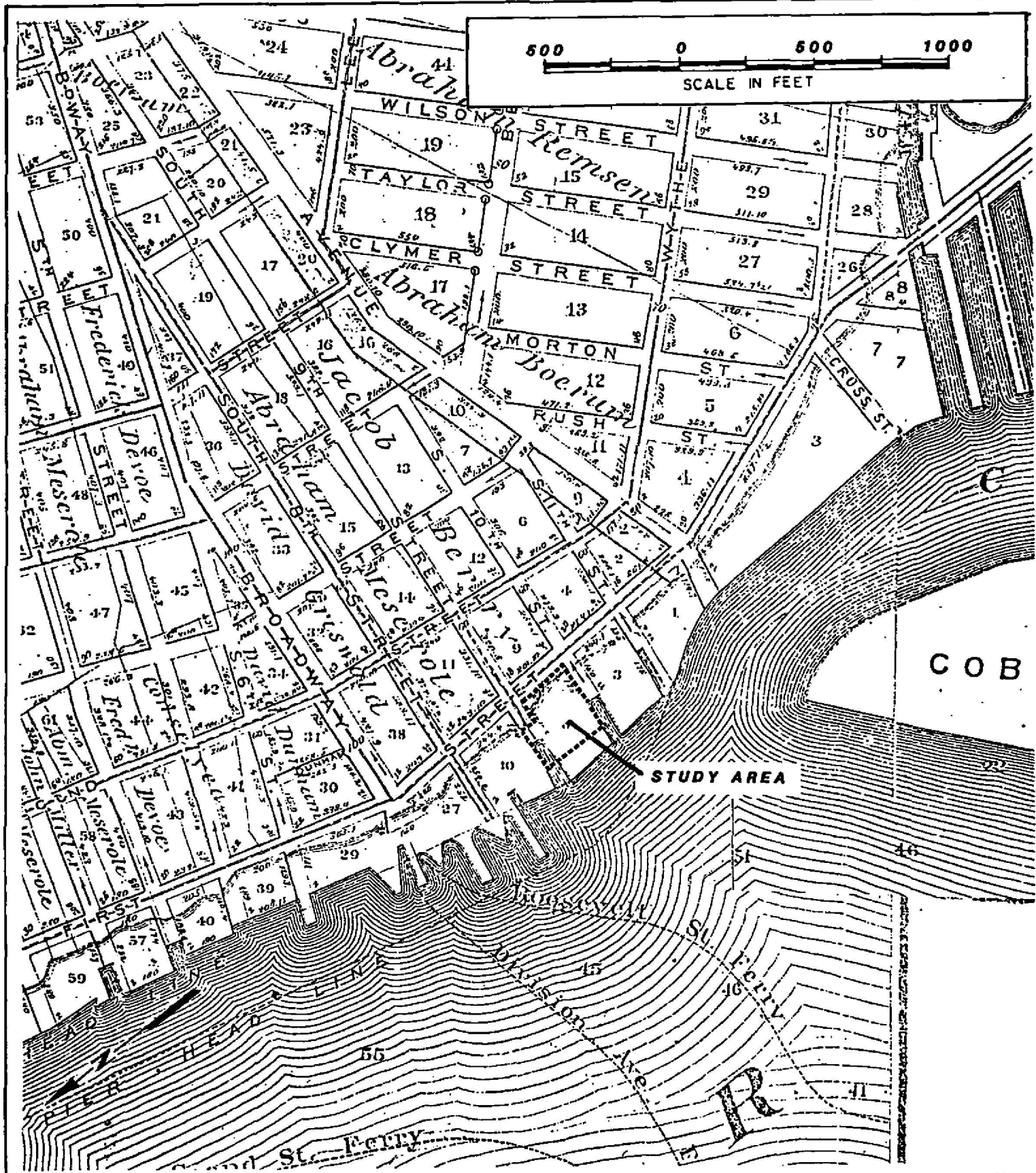
**Survey of the Coast of the United States**

**STAGE 1 CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY**

**SCHAEFER BREWERY SITE**

**KENT AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.**

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**FIGURE 8**                      **1874**  
**"Farm Line Map of the City of Brooklyn"**  
**J. B. Beers**

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**FIGURE 9**

**1886**

**Sheet 14, Atlas of the City of Brooklyn**

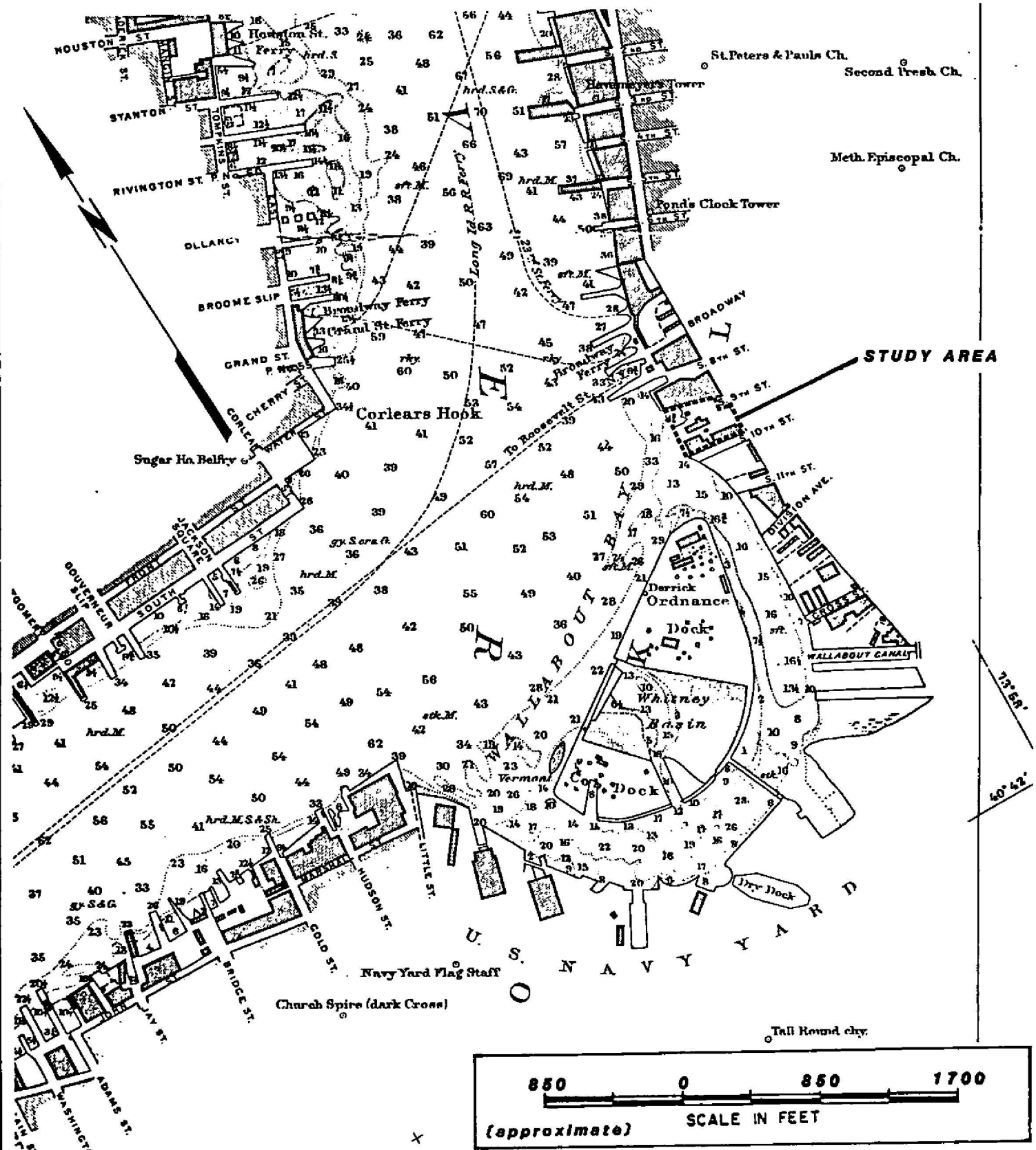
**Robinson**

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**FIGURE 10** 1887  
**"Hudson & East Rivers"**  
 United States Coast & Geodetic Survey

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**KENT AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.**  
 Historic Sites Research Sept. 1983



(3484)

NEW YORK HARBOR PIER MAP

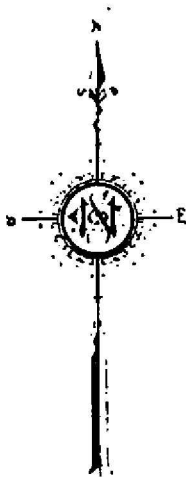
43

BROOKLYN

S. 9<sup>TH</sup> ST. TO FLUSHING AV.

5 1/2 Miles to Bayridge Av

SCALE 300 FT. TO AN INCH



COB DOCK

Channel

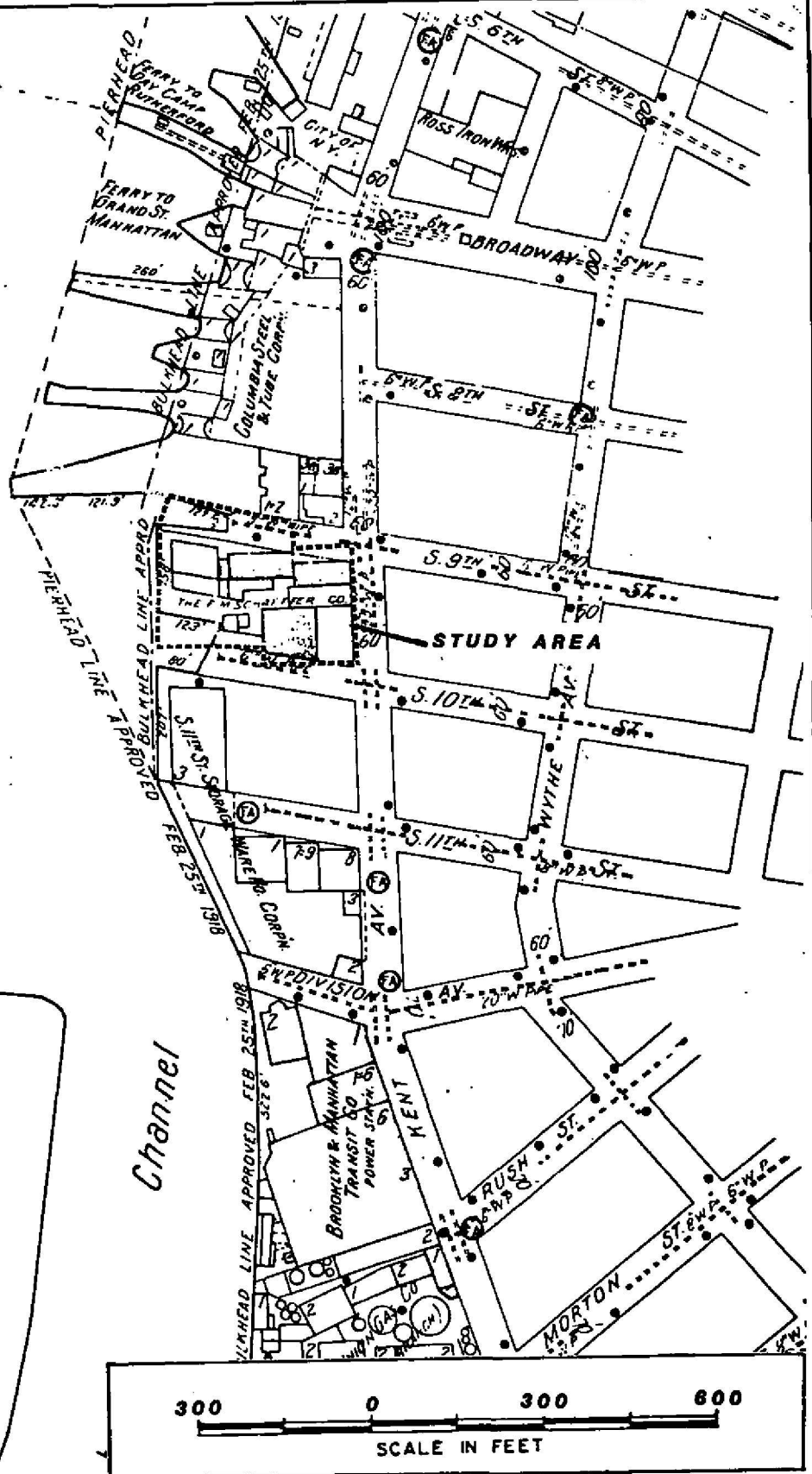


FIGURE 11

1928

Plates 42 & 43

Pier Map of New York Harbor

Sanborn Map Co.

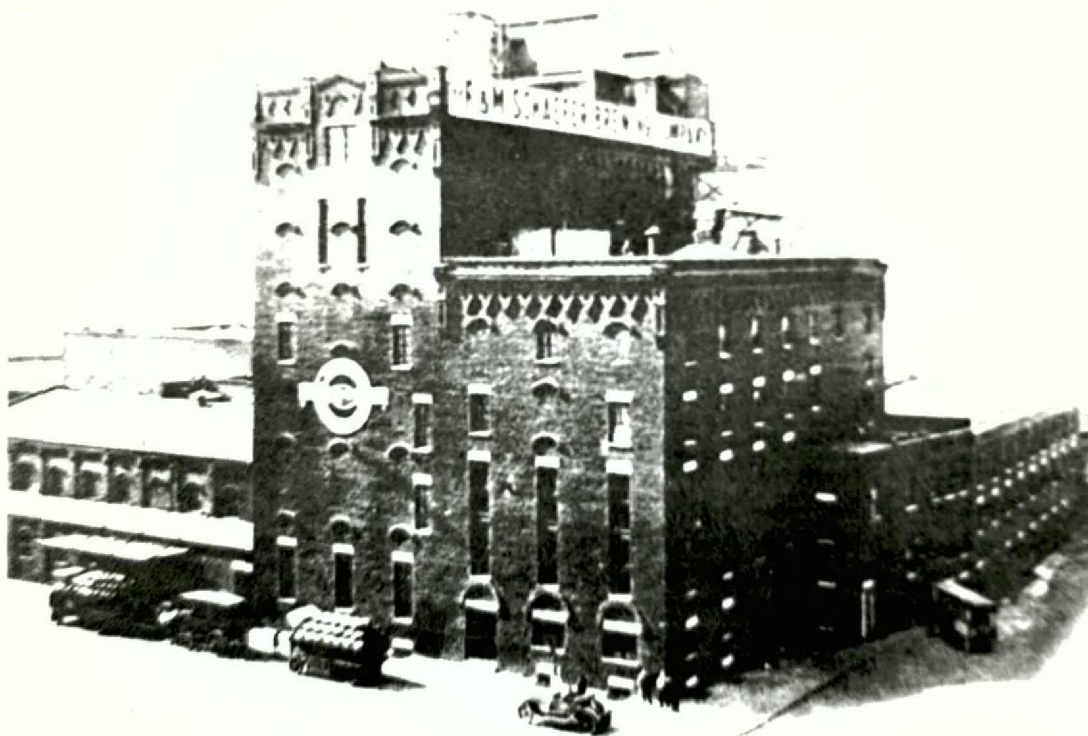
STAGE 1 CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

SCHAEFER BREWERY SITE

KENT AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Historic Sites Research Sept. 1983





*The Brewster Brewery, a magnificent structure, was built in 1916. It was the first building to be built in the area of the present-day Schaefer Brewery site. The building was later replaced by the unadorned vertical brickwork seen in Plates 1 and 2. View looks southwest.*

Plate 6. Historic view of the Schaefer Brewery as it appeared when new, in 1916 (reproduced from Anderson 1976). The facade of these structures was later replaced with the unadorned vertical brickwork seen in Plates 1 and 2. View looks southwest.

STAGE 1 CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
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## F. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

### 1. Summary

This analysis of available historic and cartographic information and visual observation indicates that the study area covers land which was tidal flat below the shoreline bluff from the period of earliest Dutch settlement (1637) for more than two centuries, until the 1850's. The rural landscape evidently stayed much the same throughout this time, while the metropolitan area was growing up around it. Throughout this period there were three farmsteads nearby, scattered along the high ground on the east side of Kent Avenue. None of the high ground was within the study area. Modern elevations along Kent Avenue (21 to 23 feet, Fig. 1) indicate that the bluff was about 20 feet high.

Change came rapidly around the 1850's as Williamsburgh expanded. During this time, the urban street grid was extended to the study area, and landfill raised it to street level. Having become a levelled, artificial waterfront area during this period, there came another long period of stability, with the study area occupied by a sugar refinery, sharing the waterfront with other refineries and industries, and separated from a neighborhood of residences and light industry by Kent Avenue. This situation existed from the 1860's until the F & M Schaefer Brewery was built in 1915-1916. Ownership and structures changed between the late 19th century and the 20th, but the function of the area was much the same and no significant change was made in the shoreline. In 1976, the Schaefer Brewery closed, and the land passed into other ownership. At present the land is occupied by the empty brewery buildings, stripped of salvagable material.

## 2. Recommendations

It is clear from the summary that the study area was originally tide flat at the foot of a shoreline bluff, and that during the 1850's and 1860's the tide flat was filled. Thus the area is not one in which early historic occupation would have existed, and it is one in which major landmaking and industrial construction has disturbed any early features that may have been nearby. The evidence of the nearby mid-17th century to mid-19th century farmsteads east of Kent Avenue was apparently largely destroyed by intensive urban construction as early as the 1870's. Additional disturbance has occurred with brewery construction in 1915-1916. It can be safely predicted that no intact or in situ archaeological evidence is likely.

Widely scattered small deposits of debris associated with the few farms that existed east of Kent Avenue from the 17th to mid-19th centuries were near the houses, and not several hundred feet away, based on what is known from colonial residential trash dispersal (South 1977). A few examples of work done at such structures in the metropolitan area tend to confirm this pattern for Dutch as well as British sites (Salwen, Bridges & Klein 1974, Kardas 1975, Kardas & Larrabee 1977). In any event, an attempt to look for any scattered deposits under the massive recent landfill on the west side of Kent Avenue would not be cost-effective, and is not likely to locate any concentrations, particularly since there are no known structures or features to look for. It is also unlikely that deep backhoe trenching, using coffer dams, pumps and other available techniques for probing into tide flat buried

under about 20 feet unstable sandy fill could find any prehistoric evidence on this property. This is further precluded by the the massive structures which entirely cover the site.

There remains the question of whether the landfill itself may be a significant archaeological resource. There have been several reports recently on historic urban landfill in Manhattan, and a symposium was held on this subject at the Council for Northeastern Historic Archaeology in Amherst, Massachusetts, in October 1982. It has been postulated that a predictable sequence could exist, in which landfill of urban expansion would contain certain recognizable proportions of archaeological material from previous stages of urban growth (Larrabee 1982). However, in this case, the historic evidence indicates that this was not a waterfront on which gradual expansion or land-making occurred. It was explicitly stated that tide lands on the east side of Wallabout Bay were filled with sand "from the excavations and draining required in the improvement" of Wallabout Canal and basin, which begins opposite the study area (Stiles 1884: 644). Therefore, the landfill under the brewery buildings is apparently made with dredged sand.

### 3. Conclusion

The complex of structures present covers the entire land surface of the tract and does not present the opportunity for archaeological examination prior to demolition of the buildings. The buildings themselves are brick industrial structures primarily from the 1930's and '40's. Their interiors were not examined. However, the project tract description supplied by the

New York City PDC, dated 4/18/83, states that they contain no artifacts other than the two dozen aluminum tanks which are associated with the Schaefer Brewing Company. Although the brewing industry itself is of historical interest to the culture of New York City, and this is the next-to-last brewery to operate in the city, it is unlikely that these particular buildings represent a maintainable resource. The buildings are empty, so this no longer represent an intact brewery. We suggest that an effort be made to salvage the art deco carvings which marked the Schaefer Period of expansions, and that it would be appropriate to keep them associated with the site (e.g., incorporate them into the new facility). We do not feel that archaeological sub-surface testing would be productive.



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