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HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVES INC.



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PHASE 1A ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

FOR THE

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA WEST PROJECT

MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

CEQR #88-264M

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 Correspondence from the New York State Museum

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INTRODUCTION

The Rockefeller Plaza West project entails the construction of a 57 story office building between 49th and 50th Streets, on the east side of 7th Avenue (Figure 1). The application procedure for the proposed development required review by a number of city agencies, including the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYCLPC). As a result of this review, the NYCLPC has requested that an Archaeological Assessment of potential cultural remains be conducted for Lots 3, 4, 5 and 104 within the development area (Figure 2). Specifically, the potential for recovering nineteenth century homelot features is to be addressed.

Prior to development within the project area, the parcel was located on a small knoll sloping west to a stream which ran through the block in a north-south direction. The stream itself is not within the archaeological study area, but is within the development site. An early nineteenth century farmstead on the west side of 7th Avenue belonging to A. Hopper encompassed the project parcel. The first development to take place within the research area did not occur until the middle of the 1860s, when a row of three story dwellings were constructed along 49th Street. Possible features from these original dwellings may have remained undisturbed.

The research conducted by Historical Perspectives, Inc. during this Archaeological Assessment entailed a documentary and cartographic analysis of historic and prehistoric horizontal and vertical land use within the project area. The detailed analysis sought to determine the potential for recovering nineteenth century homelot features from the back yards of dwellings constructed during the 1860s on the lots in question. This report presents sufficient information to satisfy the requirements and research questions posed by the review agency.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Manhattan island was once characterized by hillocks, streams and marshes. The surface of the island was broken by ridges of gneiss and hornblendic slate, with immense masses of rock and earth often rising 80 feet above the surface (French 1860: 418). Historic development and road construction prompted grading and filling which obliterated most remnants of such topographic features. Few can still be observed on the island.

In 1836 the project area was located on a small knoll sloping in a south-west direction, terminating at a north-south running stream which ran through Lot 1 (Figure 3). The top of the knoll appeared to be in the middle of the block, slightly east of the project area. To the east of the knoll were two more streams draining small ponds, one of which was located at the east end of the project area block (Figure 3).

The streams surrounding the knoll ran south and joined with another stream at the corner of what is now 7th Avenue and 47th Street. Together, the streams joined with another and formed the "Reed Valley" at about 10th Avenue and 40th Street. Here it was known as the "Great Kill" which drained into a deep bay in the Hudson River at about 42nd Street and 11th Avenue (Stokes Vol.4: 131). The Reed Valley was still in pristine condition when surveyed by Randel in the early nineteenth century, and the Great Kill was commonly referred to when designating early land grants.

In 1859 the topography of the project area appeared to be as it was in 1836 (Figure 4). Although Viele's 1859 map did not record elevations, the knoll topography was still depicted. According to the 1807 Commissioner's Map of the City of New York, the closest elevations recorded were along 43rd Street. At the corner of 43rd Street and 7th Avenue the elevation was 50'7", while at the intersection with 6th Avenue, the elevation was 59'11". To the north along 58th Street, the elevation at 7th Avenue was 87'9" while at 6th Avenue it was 29'4". The earliest elevation given at the corner of 49th Street and 7th Avenue was 50.3" in 1883. The corner of 50th Street and 7th Avenue had an elevation of 53" at that time. These elevations remained consistent on atlases through the twentieth century, and are currently the same. The current U.S.G.S. Topographic Map shows a gradual incline from 50 to 60 feet above sea level between 47th Street and 50th Street, fairly consistent with the rise depicted by Colton and Viele (Compare Figures 1, 3 and 4).

Presently Lot 1 (formerly Lots 3, 4, and 104) is vacant, while Lots 5 and 6 together possess a brick four story building with a two story addition on the north end, and a one story addition to the north behind that (Photos A-E). The "Progress" building spanning all of Lots 5 and 6, has a stone facade and fronts onto 49th Street.

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

Established models of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns for the metropolitan New York area are based on regional models developed by years of archaeological investigations. These patterns varied through time with the availability and diversity of resources, environmental fluctuations, and numerous other factors. In order to attempt to predict the likelihood that the project site was utilized prehistorically on an extended basis, it is necessary to reconstruct the prehistoric environment.

During the last episode of the Pleistocene in the Northeast, the Wisconsin, ice reached its maximum advance between 18,000 and 16,000 years ago. Following this, glaciers slowly retreated north, depositing gravel along their melting margins. By 13,000 years ago the ice had retreated north, leaving the New York area open for the re-establishment of flora and fauna. Shortly thereafter, between 12,000 and 9,500 years ago, Paleo Indians occupied the area, settling on high bluffs, river edges and along lowland swamps. No settlements have been identified within Manhattan.

Settlement pattern studies show that the following Archaic Period (7,000 to 3,000 years ago) is "represented by numerous, small, nearly always multi-component sites, variously situated on tidal inlets, coves and bays, particularly at the heads of the latter, and on fresh-water ponds on...Manhattan Island...and along the lower Hudson River on terraces and knolls, at various elevations having no consistent relationship to the particular cultural complexity." (Ritchie 1980: 143). This preference for settlements to be located on well drained soils in close proximity to fresh water resources indicates that the project area topography, a knoll adjacent to a stream, could have supported such an occupation.

During the subsequent Woodland period (3,000 to 500 years ago) Native Americans had a preference to occupy knolls or well-drained terraces in close proximity to fresh water resources. Sites of this period are often located near lakes, streams and rivers (Ritchie 1980: 201). The diverse and abundant array of terrestrial and aquatic resources that would have been available in the pristine environment of the project area, would have been attractive for prehistoric hunters and gatherers during this period.

At the time of European Contact, northern Manhattan was occupied by a large number of Munsee Delaware speaking Indians, identified by the colonists as Wiechquesgeck (Grumet 1981: 60). A map of known Indian land use in Manhattan based on research by numerous historians and archaeologists (Figure 5), shows that the closest Indian trail is the Wiechquesgeck Road which ran in

a north south direction about six blocks east of the project site. In addition, the closest habitation site is shown south of the project area in Greenwich Village.

According to Alanson Skinner's research in the early twentieth century, the only Indians remains left on Manhattan Island at that time were located at the northwestern end of the Island (Skinner 1926: 51). This may be a result of the earlier development on the southern end of the island, and the later occupation by Native Americans at the northern end, and thus higher site visibility. No settlements were identified by Skinner within close proximity to 49th Street.

A site file search conducted by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation revealed no prehistoric sites within one mile of the project area (Bob Ewing- Personal Communication to Faline Schneiderman-Fox, March 3, 1989). The New York State Museum, which maintains files on reported and recorded prehistoric sites throughout the state, documents that the closest site reported is site #4061 on 57th Street at the East River (Kearns and Kirkorian 1988:50). Arthur C. Parker in 1922 reported that only traces of an occupation site were present at this 57th Street location. Based on models of prehistoric land use developed by the New York State Museum, they have rated the project site as having an average probability of producing prehistoric materials (See Appendix A).

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission created a "Predictive Model" of prehistoric land use, based on the known availability of resources, distances to fresh water and established regional models of settlement and subsistence. According to this study (Figure 6), the project site is located directly within the high sensitivity zone for prehistoric utilization. The adjacent stream would have provide abundant resources. The knoll topography adjacent to the stream may have been ideal for settlement however, the top of the knoll appears to be slightly east of the project site. The site itself appears to be located on the western slope of the knoll (Figure 3). Unfortunately, historic cartographic inaccuracies make it difficult to ascertain the precise nature of the topography prior to development, that is whether the site was on the knoll, or on the western slope of it.

While prehistoric utilization may have taken place on this site, nineteenth century development probably destroyed any remnants of these activities. Since prehistoric remains tend to be shallow beneath the surface, the construction of row houses with basements along 49th Street during the 1860s probably obliterated any remains. While the houses only covered the southern halves of the lots, the vacant back yards must have experienced subsurface disturbance with routine nineteenth century activities. The installation of wells, privies, and cisterns would have sufficiently disturbed any shallow remains

of prehistoric occupants. Later construction of additions in the back yards would have probably disturbed any areas previously left untouched.

In addition to the destructive effect of dwelling construction, it is probable that prior to this development the block experienced a degree of grading and filling. The knoll topography that appeared so clearly in early maps (Figures 3, 4) does not show up on current topographic maps (Figure 1). While there still appears to be a gradual slope from the north to the south, the western slope is not clearly depicted. It is plausible that the construction of dwellings necessitated leveling the knoll during the 1860s, obliterating any potential prehistoric cultural materials.

HISTORIC PERIOD

The following historic documentation of land use and development of the lots in question has been compiled from a number of sources. The Buildings Department, Division of Blocks and Lots was reviewed, as were early Records of Assessments, Directories, Voter Registration lists, Police Census records and numerous cartographic resources.

Colonial and Farm Period

The seventeenth century settlement on Manhattan was concentrated at the southern tip of the island, while the northern section of the island was used for farming. "Bloomingdale," the farmland used by the Dutch for over one hundred years, included the land between 14th and 125th Streets. In 1667 Governor Nichols granted a patent to Jans Vigne which included land north of the "Great Kill" located at what is now 42nd Street along the Hudson River (WPA 1939:146). The upper most part of the patent, known as Upper Great Kill, was acquired by the Hopper family and became known as "Hopperville." The Lower Great Kill, also owned by the Hoppers, became known as the "Hermitage" or "Norton" farm (Ibid). The project area fell within the upper tract.

Early nineteenth century maps indicate that the project parcel fell within the farm owned by Andrew Hopper (Figure 7). In 1819, Randel's Map of Farms shows that the main structure on the Hopper farmstead was located between 50th and 51st Streets, on the west side of 7th Avenue (Figure 8). An outbuilding stood on the farmstead, on the east side of 7th Avenue between 49th and 50th Streets. The structure is clearly closer to 50th Street, probably where Lot 61 currently is, outside of the archaeological study area. Hoppers Lane ran from here, starting between 50th and 51st Streets at 7th Avenue, and terminated at the Hudson River at about 53rd Street (Stokes Vol.3: 1002).

By 1836 the outbuilding previously located within the project block, had been removed (Figure 3). Although 49th Street is shown on maps at that time, it was not until much later that the road was actually constructed. In 1855 49th Street was only opened from the Hudson River to 7th Avenue, and construction was slow due to the "formidable impediments to be overcome" (Stokes Vol.5: 1862). It is not made clear whether this implies that the route required grading or filling. By 1856 the extension had been complete and the first buildings in the vicinity were erected (Stokes Vol.6: 603). The construction of 6th Avenue was equally delayed due to the large number of rocks along the route. Here too buildings were being constructed near the intersection of 49th Street by 1856 (Stokes Vol.5: 1864).

As increased transportation routes made upper Manhattan more accessible, the area grew. In 1851 the 8th Avenue Rail Road was open from 51st Street to Chambers Street, facilitating commuters (WPA 1939: 146). In 1855, the Fannings Map of New York shows the northern boundary of the most densely populated district in New York to be along 47th Street at 7th Avenue. The "Tenderloin" district, between 24th and 42nd Streets from 5th to 7th Avenue, was one of the most notorious sections of the city, known for organized vice (Ibid: 147). The project area neighborhood was generally occupied by brownstones, shops and livery stables (Ibid: 170). The need for housing prompted the construction of tenement buildings. The 1st Class houses were meant for well-to-do working people, while 2nd Class structures were available for the poor (McCabe 1882: 560).

The date of the availability of municipal sewer and water hook up remains undetermined. The earliest date for water availability in the surrounding area was the turn of the century, according to the the Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Supply. However, an 1879 atlas shows a fire hydrant on 49th Street mid way between 6th and 7th Avenues (Figure 12). The date of sewer availability remains unknown as well, however they were probably also available by at least the 1890s.

While the parcel remained in the Hopper family through the first half of the nineteenth century, by 1855 Samuel Townsend owned Lots 1 through 8 on the block, and continued to own them through 1864 (Record of Assessments). At that time, development began on the lots in question, and titles to those lots changed hands relatively quickly.

According to New York Historian I.N.P. Stokes' work of 1915 to 1926, the nearest landmark to the project site at that time was the Church of St. Mary the Virgin located three blocks to the south (Stokes Vol.3: 1023). East of the site were the Elgin Gardens, 14 acres of public botanical gardens run and leased by a professor at Columbia College during the early and mid-nineteenth century (Ibid). No significant historic structures were noted by Stokes within the project block at that time.

Lot Histories

The lots referenced are those numbered on the 1957 G.W. Bromley Atlas of the City of New York (Figure 19). The following information is presented in numerical and temporal sequence.

Lot 3

165 West 49th Street: An 1815 map showed that the entire block, including Lot 3 was vacant at that time (Figure 7). The

lot remained vacant through at least 1859, and first showed a structure on it by 1868 (Figures 9, 10, 11). An 1868 map depicted a structure covering the southern half of the lot, fronting 49th Street. The Record of Assessment indicated that this lot was vacant in 1864 (Ward 22, Vol. 1). New building and alteration permits started to be recorded in 1866. Between the years 1866, when the first records were kept, and 1868, when a structure was shown on the lot, there are no permits for this address. Therefore the building shown on the lot was probably built between 1864 and 1866.

By 1879 Lot 3 which had been 100 feet deep, was reduced (Figure 12). Lot 64, fronting 7th Avenue, had been created and was placed at the southern ends of Lots 1, 2, and 3. The structure on Lot 3 still fronted 49th Street. In 1883 the lot depth was recorded as 80.01 feet, with approximately one-third of the lot, the northern end, vacant (Figure 13). Although earlier atlases showed a stream running in a north-south direction directly west of this lot, the 1883 atlas placed the stream within Lot 3 (Compare Figures 12, 13).

In 1891 the structure on the southern portion of the lot was listed as a three story building with a basement (Figure 14). The northern third of the lot still remained vacant at that time. The lot remained virtually the same through 1911 (Figure 15), and 1920 (Figure 16). By 1932 a two story addition had been built attached to the north end of the structure on the southern half of the lot, which was then listed as a four story building with a store (Figure 17). There was no indication that the two story addition had a basement. However, this does not necessarily indicate that a basement did not exist, as the one known to exist in the building on the southern portion of the lot is no longer listed either.

In 1950 a structure still covered the entire lot, although the building height was not indicated (Figure 18). A 1957 atlas depicted the lot exactly as it was shown in 1932, still with no indication of a basement under the two story addition at the north end of the lot (Figures 17, 19). There was no Block and Lot file for this lot to confirm development. Currently the lot is vacant and has been incorporated into Lot 1.

In 1874 C. Sares owned the lot. By 1884 R. Comins (Cummings) owned the lot and retained possession for at least ten years. Neither of the owners lived in the building. Census records showed that the only registered voter, Samuel Hatfield, resided in the house from at least 1874 until the mid-1880s. This was the longest residence by a single person that could be established. By 1890 six people lived in the dwelling, while only two were related. By 1901, the occupants had changed again. Between 1901 and 1947 the property changed hands eight times, and in 1947 was owned by the Lehigh Realty Company. The ownership and occupants appeared to be transient, as no long term habitation could be established.

Lot 4

163 West 49th Street: Lot 4 remained vacant through the first half of the nineteenth century (Figures 7, 9, 10). The first development appeared on an 1868 map, when a structure of unknown size was shown on the south half of the lot fronting 49th Street (Figure 11). As is the case with Lot 3, an 1864 Record of Assessment indicated this lot was vacant, and there were no New Building permits issued during 1866 and 1868. Therefore it is probable that this building as well, was built between 1864 and 1866.

The lot appeared the same through 1879 (Figure 12). In 1883 the depth of the lot was 100.5 feet while the width was 20.1 feet. A structure was still shown on the southern half of the lot (Figure 13). In 1891 the structure was shown as a three story building with a basement, with a stream traversing the northwestern corner of the lot (Figure 14). The lot appeared the same, with the exception of the stream which was shown west of the lot, through 1911 (Figure 15). In 1920 a small dome shaped addition was shown on the northern end of the structure (Figure 16). Block and Lot records indicate that this was a rear bay-window (ALT 728, 1874).

By 1932 a two story addition had been built on the north end of the structure, and a one story addition had been built north of the two story addition. The structure on the southern end of the lot was listed as a four story building with a store. Together with the additions, the entire lot was covered (Figure 17). While the four story building had a basement, the atlas did not indicate whether or not the rear additions had basements. In 1950 the lot appeared to have a two story structure on the south end, with a three and two story addition behind on the north end (Figure 18). A 1957 atlas indicated the lot was much as it was in 1932 with a four story structure and two and one story additions (Figures 17, 19). The 1957 atlas did not show the changes on the 1950 atlas, which may be due to cartographic error. Regardless, the lot was shown covered by a building at both dates. Currently the lot is vacant.

Block and Lot records indicated that in 1874 the structure operated as a first class dwelling for one family. The stone and brick building measuring 20'x50' had three stories and a full basement (ALT 728, 1874). By 1924 the building had a store and office, while the remainder had non-housekeeping apartments, indicating there were no kitchens or cooking facilities (ALT 2761, 1924). In 1931 Tenement house approval was obtained, and floor plans of the basement show it was 8' below grade with footers at each end below the 6" concrete floor. The plans also indicated that the basement spanned the entire lot, extending within inches of the lot boundaries, with an oil storage area located below the sidewalk along 49th Street (Drawing 188, 1928).

In 1874 A. Morgan sold the dwelling to M. Gassoit. In 1883 Miss M.L. Gassoit willed the property to Stephen Weaver. The property remained in the Weaver family until 1944. Miss Gassoit was listed in the elite directory for the same address in 1880, and in 1890 ten occupants were registered in the building, five were Weavers. Between 1874 and 1890, four people not related to the Weavers were either registered voters or on the elite directory for this address. In 1901 another non-Weaver was listed for this address. While there was ownership by one family and occupation by the extended family between at least 1874 and 1890, after that it is not known if the family remained in the dwelling.

Lot 4 1/2 (104)

161 West 49th Street: Lot 104, previously known as Lot 4 1/2 remained vacant through the first half of the nineteenth century (Figures 7, 9, 10). In 1868 the first development appeared as a structure on the southern part of the lot fronting 49th Street (Figure 11). As is the case for Lots 3 and 4, Lot 104 was vacant in 1864, and had no new building permit dating between 1866 and 1868. The structure on the lot was also probably built between 1864 and 1866.

The lot remained the same through 1879 (Figure 12), and 1883 (Figure 13). In 1891 a small rear addition of unknown size had been built on the north end of the building. The building fronting 49th Street was then listed as a three story building with a basement (Figure 14). In 1911 the lot was shown as 100.5'x 20.1', with the structure covering about half of the lot (Figure 15). The lot remained the same in 1920 (Figure 16), and in 1932 (Figure 17). At that time, the building was shown as a four story structure with a store. The basement previously listed no longer showed up. In 1950 the entire lot was covered by a two story structure, although there was no mention of a basement (Figure 18). The 1957 atlas shows the lot exactly as it was in 1932, although the structure was listed as a two story building with a store (Figures 17, 19). The lot is currently vacant, and there were no Block and Lot files to clarify development.

Between at least 1874 and 1894 Agnes Lewis owned the lot. A. Lewis was listed as a registered voter for this address between 1874 and 1875, but was not listed in 1880. On the Elite directory for 1880 the Churchill's were listed, while in 1890 the Bestons, a family of 6 were listed. At that time, seventeen people lived at this address, three families and six unrelated individuals. By 1901 the Bestons were no longer listed, and Miss E. Blackstone was on the elite directory. It is not known how long A. Lewis owned the lot after 1894. It appeared that the population was rather transient during the end of the nineteenth century.

Lot 5

159 West 49th Street: Lot 5 remained vacant through 1868, when it first showed development (Figures 7, 9, 10, 11). At that time, a structure was built on the south half of the lot fronting 49th Street. The 1864 Record of Assessment listed the lot as vacant and no building permits were issued for this lot between 1866 and 1868. The building was probably built between 1864 and 1866 as were those on Lots 3, 4 and 4 1/2.

The structure on the south end of the lot appeared the same in 1879 (Figure 12), and 1883 (Figure 13). At that time the lot measured 100.5' deep and 20.1' wide. In 1891 a small rear addition, paralleling the one on lot 4 1/2 bordering to the west, was present (Figure 14). The building appeared as a three story structure with a basement. The lot appeared the same in 1911 (Figure 15), and by 1920 a one story addition with a basement was shown on the north west rear of the building (Figure 16). By 1932 Lot 5 had joined with Lot 6 and a two story addition was shown directly behind the four story building on the north end of the lot. Behind the two story addition, was another one story addition. The entire lot was covered at this point (Figure 17). The lot appeared the same in 1950 (Figure 18), and 1957 (Figure 19). The structures shown on the 1950 atlas currently stand on the lot.

According to plans and permits, in 1924 the existing building was 52' deep on the lot (ALT 330, 1924). An alteration at that time extended the building to cover the entire depth of the lot. The building was then used as a restaurant with several rooming apartments. At that time the foundation was made of stone and was 11' below the curb and 4'6" below at the rear, sitting on sand and clay (CO9208, 1925). According to a cellar plan, the basement did not cover the entire lot, as the cellar did not extend to the northern end (Figure 20). Although there was an extension over the northern end of the lot, it may not have caused extensive subsurface disturbance.

Henry Pratt owned the parcel between at least 1874 and 1894. While he was the owner, he was only listed as an occupant in 1874 and 1875. By 1880 another family was listed at the address, and in 1901 a different tenant was present. In 1924 Andrew Robinson sold the property to a development company, many of which have owned the lot since. No long term habitation by a single family could be established.

Lot 6

157 West 49th Street: Lot 6, now part of Lot 5, did not experience development through the first half of the nineteenth century (Figures 7, 9, 10). By 1868 the first development on the lot appeared, as a building was constructed on the southern portion of the lot fronting 49th Street (Figure 11). The 1864

Record of Assessment indicated the lot was vacant at that time, and no building permits were obtained between 1864 and 1868. Therefore, as were the rest of the buildings within the project area, the first development probably occurred between 1864 and 1868.

The lot appeared the same in 1879 (Figure 12), and in 1883 the dimensions appeared as 20' wide by 100' deep. The structure fronting 49th Street was not as deep as the one on Lot 5 adjacent to the west (Figure 13). By 1891 the building was listed as a three story structure with a basement (Figure 14). The lot appeared the same in 1911 (Figure 15), and 1920 (Figure 16). By 1932 Lot 6 had joined with Lot 5, and a four story building with a store was listed spanning both lots. Probably this was the same building previously showing on the lot. In addition, a rear two story addition had been constructed directly behind the north end of the building (Figure 17). There was no mention of a basement under the addition. By 1950 the two story addition extended to the northern end of the lot, and the lot appeared the same through 1957 (Figures 18, 19). The 1957 configuration remains on the lot presently.

While no Block and Lot files were available for Lot 6, those available for Lot 5 included Lot 6 after the two lots were consolidated. The cellar plan (Figure 20) indicated that the northern end of the lot did not have a subsurface basement, and may not have been disturbed by construction of the two story addition.

Charles Townsend owned the property between at least 1854 and 1894, although his name never appeared as an occupant. Census records and directories listed a different occupant for each entry spaced five to ten years between 1874 and 1901. By 1904 Charles Meade owned the property, and in 1906 Andrew Robinson owned it. No long term habitation by a family or individual could be established for this address.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential for significant cultural resources to exist at the proposed development site depends on a number of variables 1) the likelihood that cultural remains were deposited; 2) the probability that such remains were not significantly disturbed and 3) the potential for such remains to provide valuable and significant information for understanding prehistoric and/or historic lifeways. Each lot has been examined to determine the potential for such resources to exist.

Lot 3, the western-most lot, was once within twenty feet of a stream (Figure 3). Although the site is within a high sensitivity area for prehistoric utilization, as designated by the NYCLPC (Figure 6), potential remains have probably been disturbed. The original knoll topography was probably graded with construction in the 1860s, as only a slight incline reminiscent of the knoll can be seen on current topographic maps (Figure 1).

By 1868 the southern half of the lot was disturbed by the construction of a three story dwelling with a full basement. The building was 52' deep on an 80' deep lot (Figure 16). Behind Lot 3, Lot 1 1/2 had a building covering almost the entire lot, leaving only 30' vacant between the buildings on each lot. By 1932 (Figure 17) the vacant 30' at the north end of the lot was covered by an addition. The lack of any indication of a basement does not preclude the fact that one may have existed. On the 1932 atlas, no basements were listed for any of the buildings on the block, even those known to have them.

The back-yard remained vacant between the building's construction in the mid 1860s, and when the addition was put on between 1920 and 1932. The normal back-yard activities that would have taken place during the late nineteenth century, probably disturbed any potential prehistoric remains left within the vacant 30'x 20' yard. Since it can not be established that sewer and water lines were available until some time after construction, the back-yard probably housed historic features such as wells, privies and cisterns. The presence of these would cause significant subsurface disturbance. The construction of the twentieth century addition would have caused further disturbance to potential prehistoric remains.

In addition to the disturbing effects of the addition construction, it may have had the effect of capping in previous nineteenth century features. If no basement was in fact present, then twentieth century features would be left intact. However, a transient population inhabited the dwelling at the time such features would have been in use, and subsequently filled during the latter part of the nineteenth century, when public water was definitely available. No long term habitation by an individual or family during this period could be

established. In view of this, the potential to recover features from this lot does not guarantee that significant or valuable information on historic lifeways could be acquired.

Lot 4 has no potential to yield prehistoric cultural materials. While the initial construction of a dwelling on the lot in the 1860s may have resulted in grading of the knoll, even if prehistoric remains were not disturbed, by 1928 plans of the building on the lot show a full cellar spanning the entire lot beneath the building (Drawing 188, 1928). What had previously been a vacant back-yard associated with the dwelling, was completely disturbed by a one and two story addition (Figure 17).

Although long term ownership and habitation by one family has also been established between at least 1874 and 1944, the additions on the northern end of the lot would have obliterated any nineteenth century features present such as wells, privies or cisterns. Lot 4 has no potential to yield prehistoric or historic cultural remains as a result of subsurface construction of a cellar.

Lot 4 1/2 was also numbered as Lot 104 historically (Figure 18). The initial construction of a dwelling with a basement in the 1860s may have entailed grading the knoll that once characterized the parcel. Grading would have removed or significantly disturbed prehistoric cultural remains. If such remains were not disturbed, the construction of the building and subsequent additions and activities would have probably caused subsurface disturbance.

The three story dwelling originally built was 50' deep on the 100' lot (Figure 17). By 1950 the entire lot was covered by a two story building, although there is no indication of a basement present beneath the northern half of the lot, which was previously vacant. In 1957 a 58' deep building is shown covering the southern portion of the lot, and the northern section is vacant again (Figure 19). The activities that would have taken place in a back-yard during the latter half of the nineteenth century, prior to municipal water and sewer availability, include the use of privies, cisterns and wells. If such features did exist, they would have disturbed prehistoric subsurface remains in the vacant back-yard.

The historic features that may have been present in the nineteenth century were probably capped when sewer and water lines became available. Although the lot was owned by the same person for at least twenty years between 1874 and 1894, there was no long term occupation by a single family or individual. The population was transient, changing rapidly. The possible presence of historic features would not provide significant information on a known group or individual, as it would probably reflect the transient population inhabiting the building.

Lot 5 was also probably graded when it was originally built on in the 1860s, disturbing any prehistoric cultural materials. At that time a three story dwelling with a basement was constructed on the south half of the lot (Figure 15). By 1920 a one story addition with a basement had been built on the north end of the building (Figure 16), and by 1932 another extension had been built, covering the remainder of the lot (Figure 17). If prehistoric remains had not been disturbed with initial grading and construction, nineteenth century back-yard activities, and subsequent construction of additions probably did cause disturbance. A cellar plan for the lot, after extensions were added, shows that on Lot 5 only 27' at the northern end of the lot did not have a basement.

The vacant back-yard that existed during the nineteenth century probably housed historic features that would have caused subsurface disturbance to prehistoric remains. The vacant yard was eventually covered by additions to the building on the southern end of the lot. The 27' x 20' vacant section that was covered by an addition without a basement probably sealed in historic cultural materials. However, the materials that were probably sealed in do not appear to be culturally significant, since the population that inhabited the dwelling at the time such features would be filled in was transient. No long term habitation by a single individual or family could be established for this address. Therefore, there is no potential to recover significant prehistoric or historic cultural materials from this lot.

Lot 6 was also probably graded with initial construction during the 1860s, disturbing potential prehistoric remains. The original 50' deep building with a cellar on the 100' deep lot remained on the lot through at least 1920 (Figure 16). By 1932 a two story addition had been built on the northern end of the building, and eventually covered the entire lot (Figure 18). A cellar plan for the lot shows that only the northern 15' of the lot did not have a subsurface basement (Figure 20), leaving little room for intact prehistoric remains. Nineteenth century back-yard activities, and the construction of the two story addition undoubtedly disturbed any potential prehistoric cultural materials.

The back-yard of the 1860s dwelling remained vacant until it was covered by 1932 (Figure 17). It is possible that nineteenth century features associated with the dwelling were capped by the northern addition that did not have a basement, covering a span of about 15' x 20'. However, the fact that such features may have been sealed in does not mean they have the potential to yield significant information on historic lifeways. Extensive research could not establish either a long term owner or occupant of this dwelling during the time that historic features would have been filled in. The transient nature of the occupants would not provide a definably significant archaeological deposit.

SUMMARY

While it is possible that the site location would have been attractive for prehistoric habitation, and may have indeed been the locus of such habitation, documented nineteenth and twentieth century development has undoubtedly disturbed any potential remains. Based on the exhaustive research conducted it is determined that the lots in question do not have the potential to yield either significant prehistoric or historic cultural resources. The original knoll topography of the site was probably disturbed with initial construction, removing or severely mixing any potential prehistoric remains. If the knoll was not graded, and remains persisted, the nineteenth century events including initial building construction, twentieth century additions and normal back-yard activities would have caused sufficient disturbance to render prehistoric cultural materials insignificant.

In several cases the additions to the original dwellings may have sealed in historic features. However on those lots that have the potential to yield such remains, the occupants of the associated dwellings were transient and unrelated. In only one case, Lot 4, could long term habitation be established. In this case, however, the later building spanning the entire lot had a subsurface basement, which destroyed the potentially significant historic resources.

The prehistoric and historic use of the project parcel has been exhaustively researched and adequately documented. This analysis has determined that the construction of the proposed office building will not disturb any potentially significant prehistoric or historic cultural resources. No further archaeological research or activity is warranted.

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FIGURE 1

USGS Topographic Map: Central Park Quadrangle, 1979

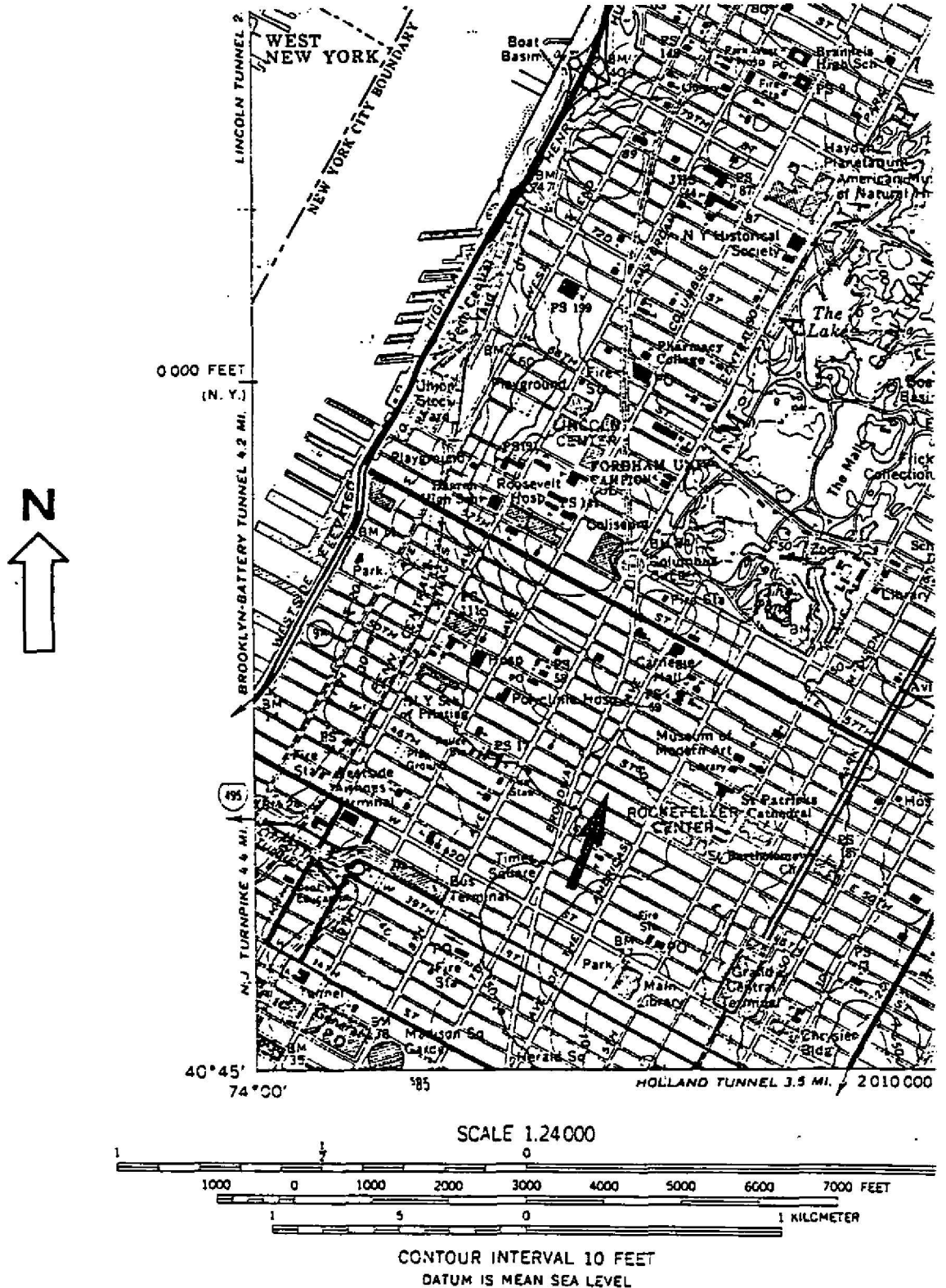
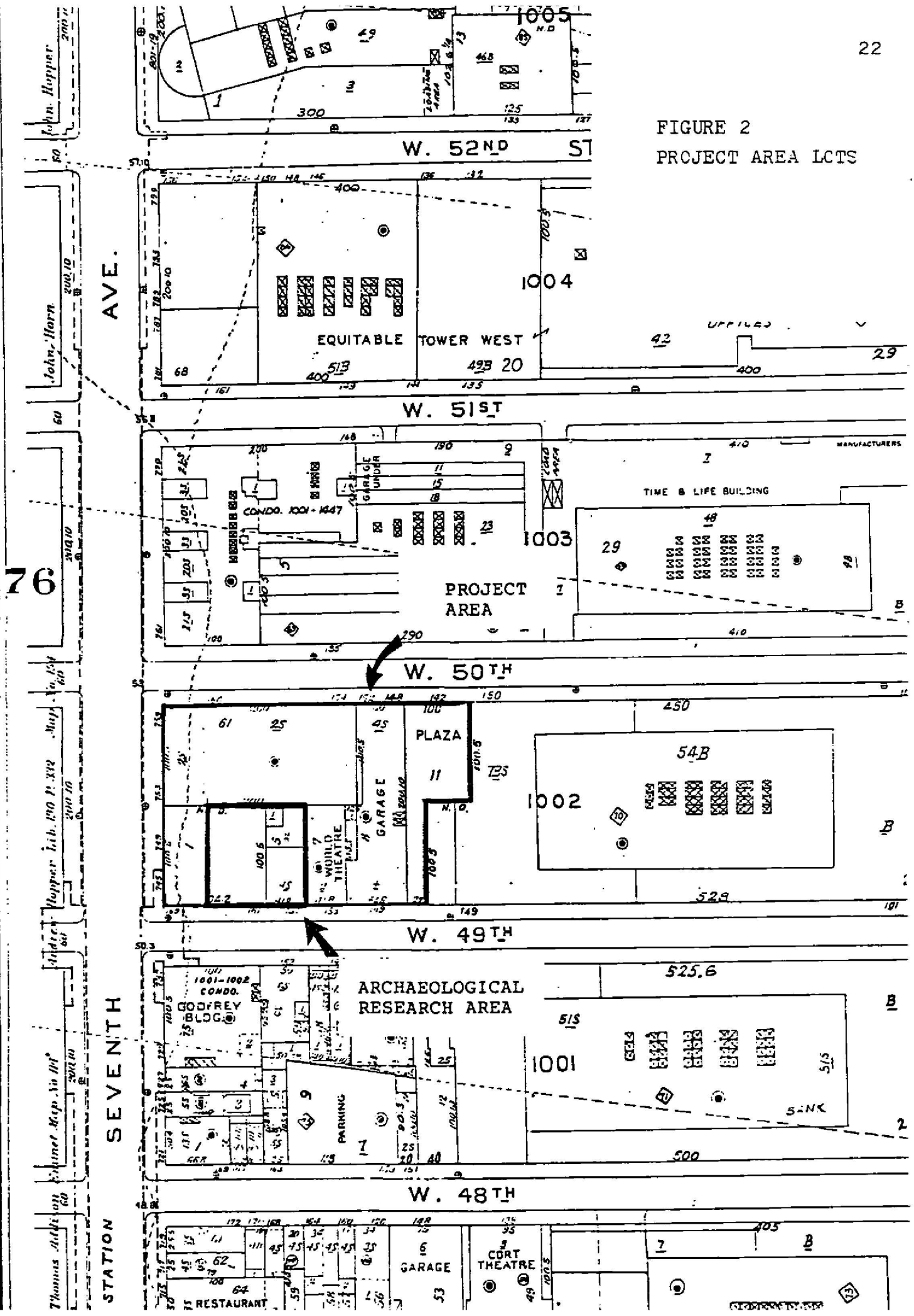


FIGURE 2
PROJECT AREA LCTS



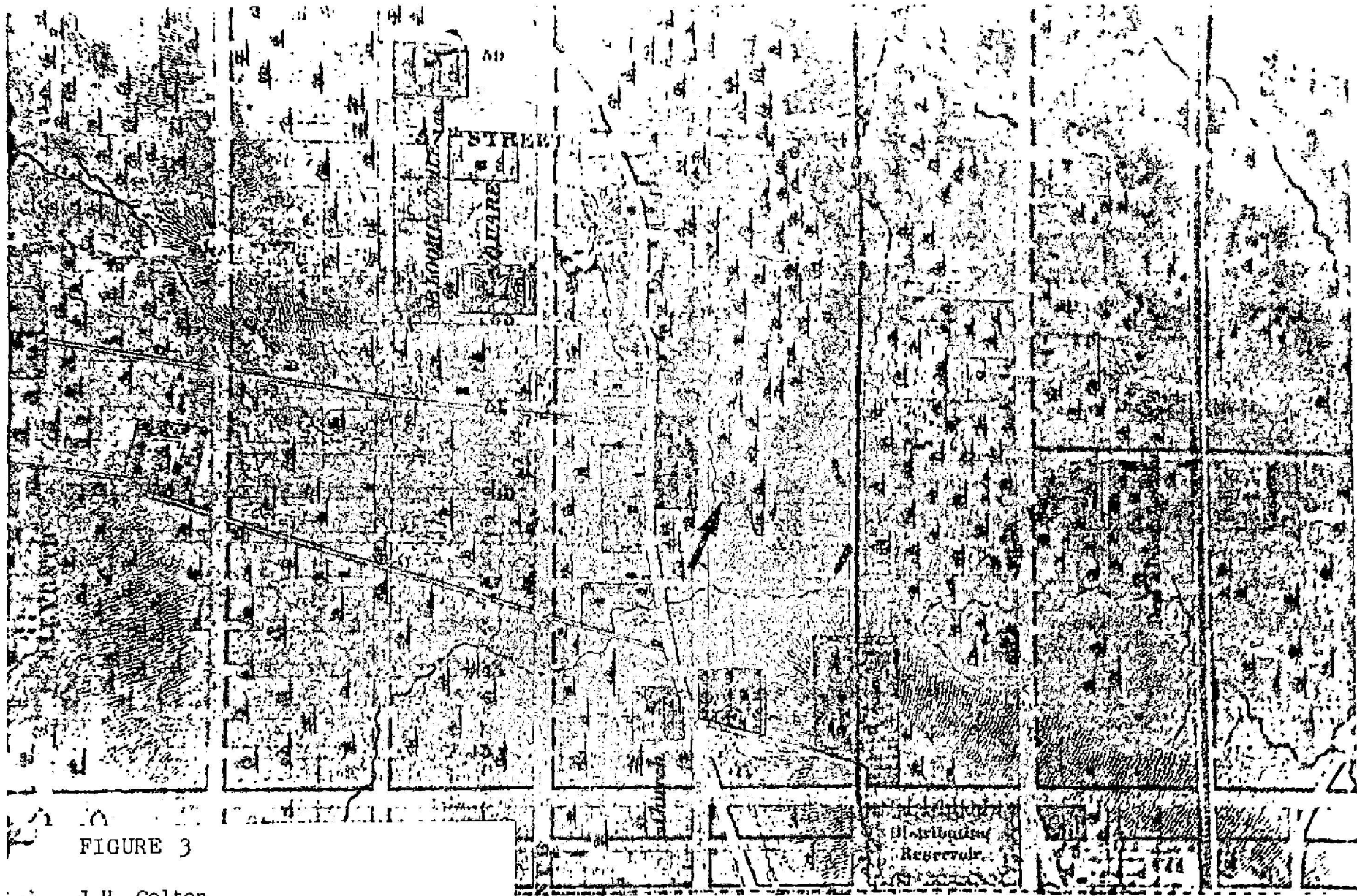


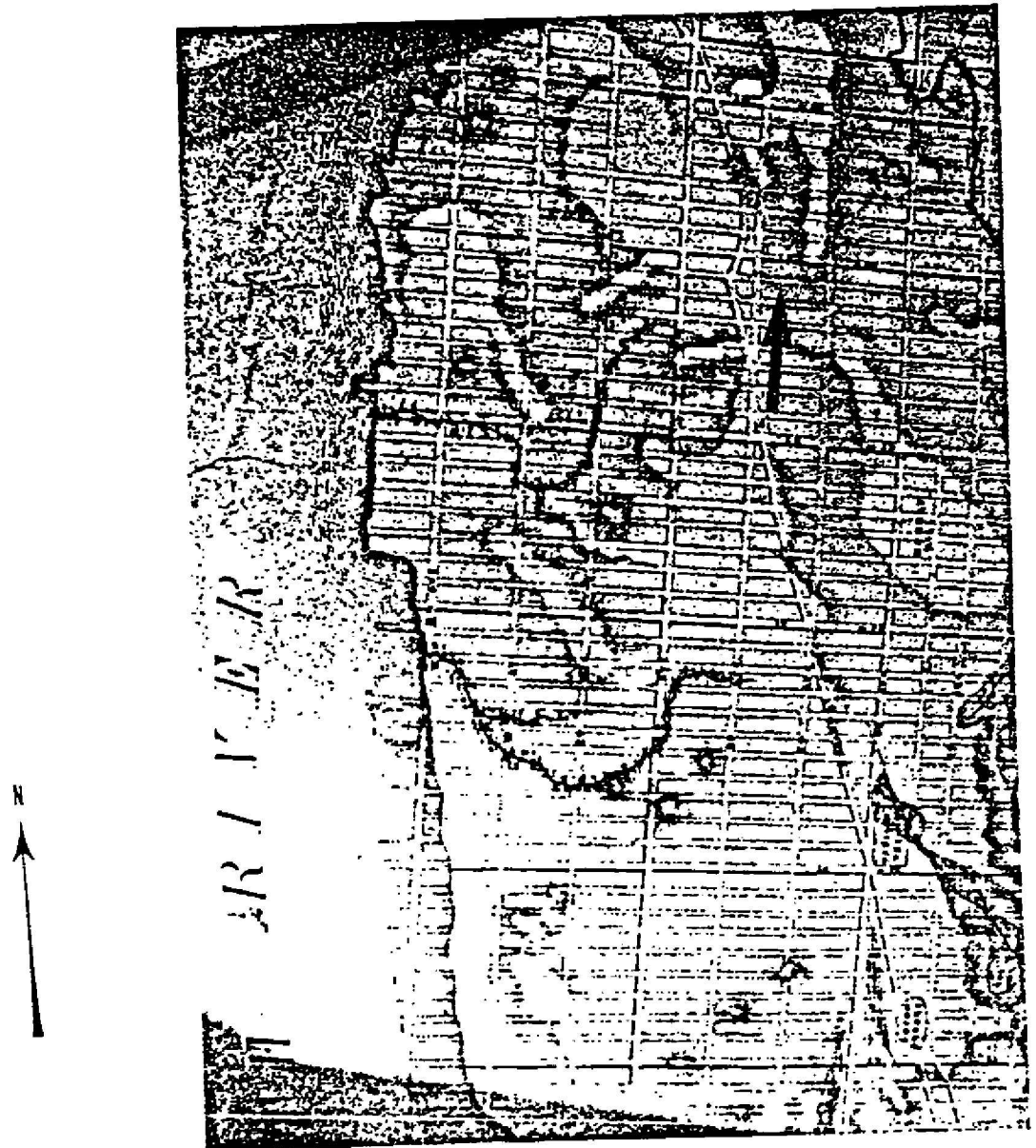
FIGURE 3

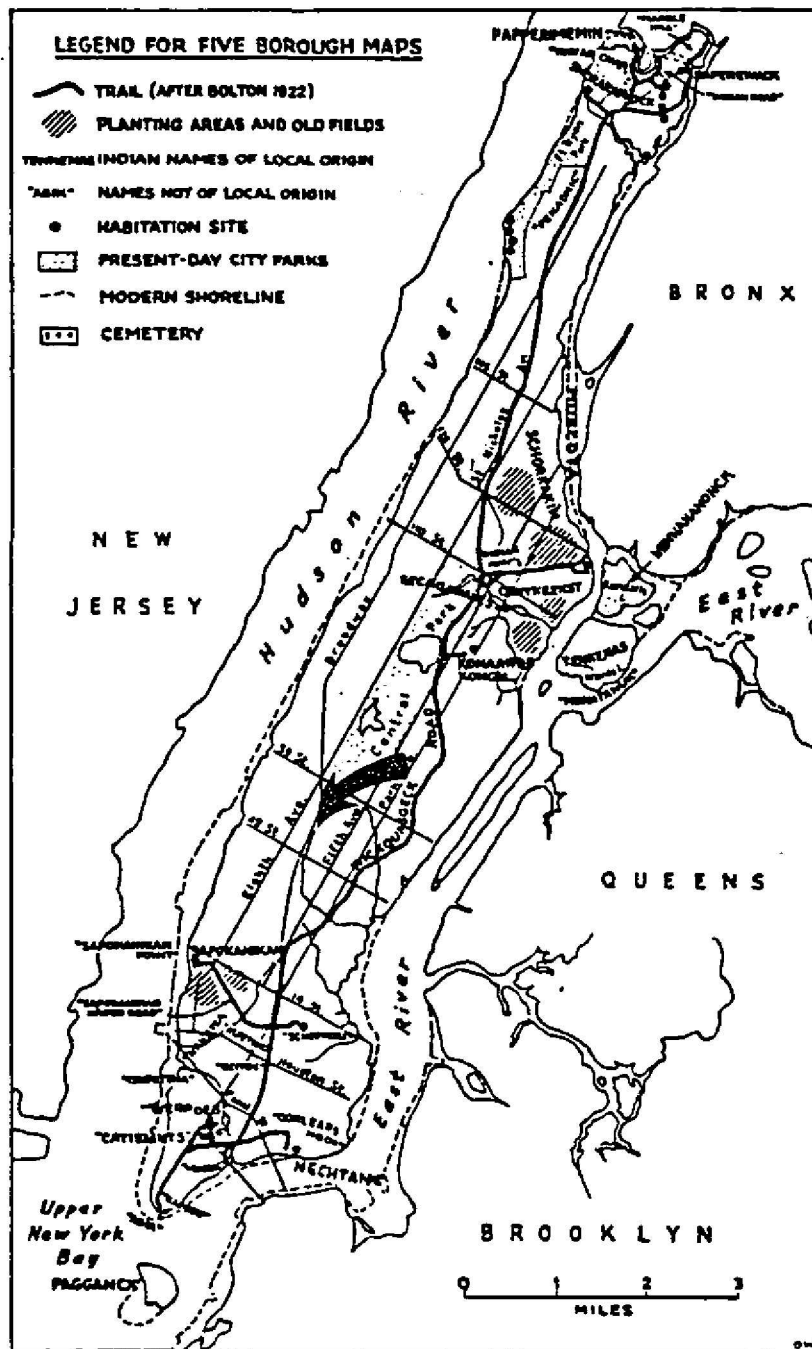
J.H. Colton
"Topographical Map of the City and
County of New York" - 1836



1859 Viele Topographic Map of New York City

Map Room, NYPL

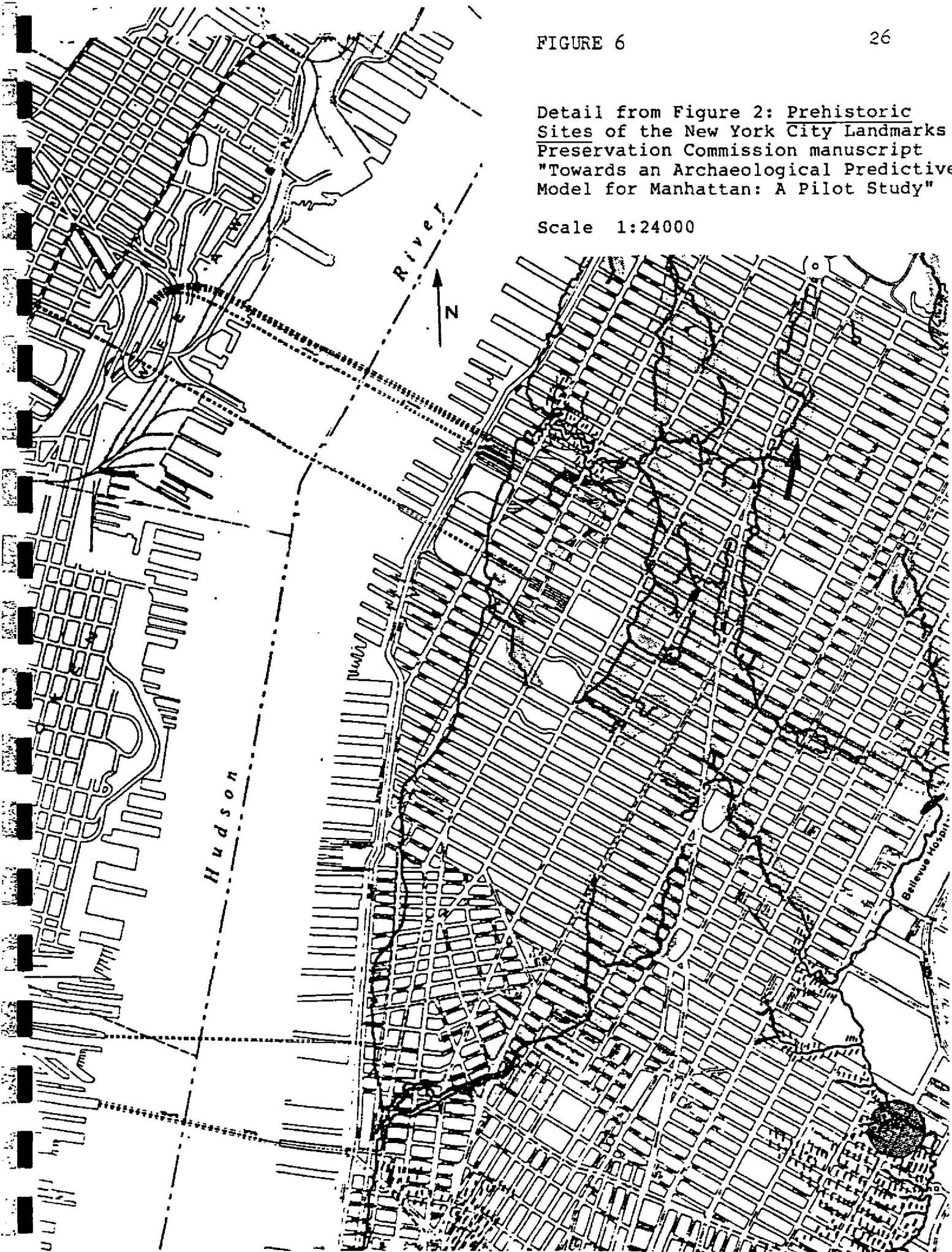




Robert Grumet, 1981

Detail from Figure 2: Prehistoric Sites of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission manuscript "Towards an Archaeological Predictive Model for Manhattan: A Pilot Study"

Scale 1:24000



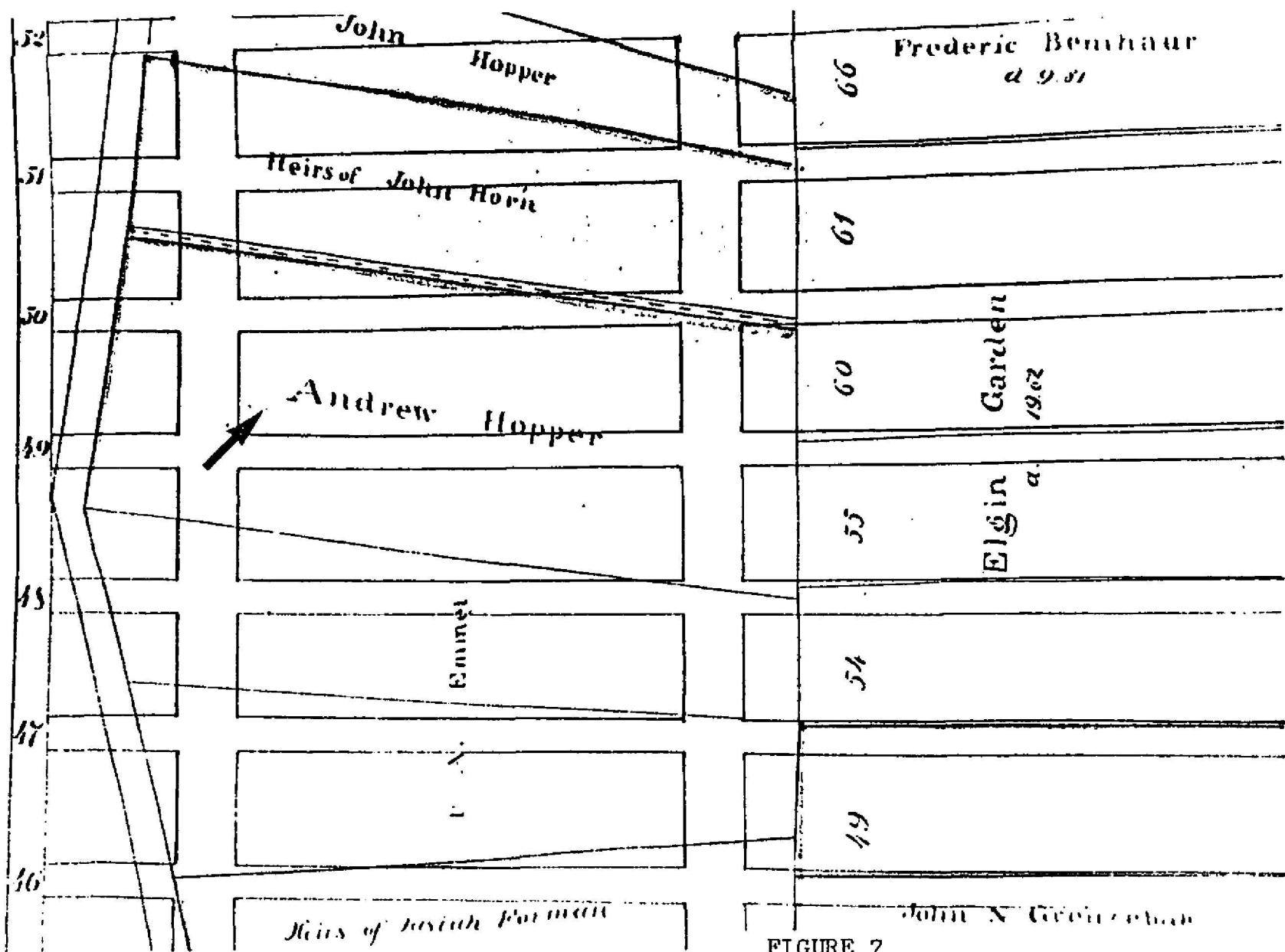


FIGURE 7
 Otto Sackersdorff
 "New York Map of Farms" (The Blue Book)
 1815

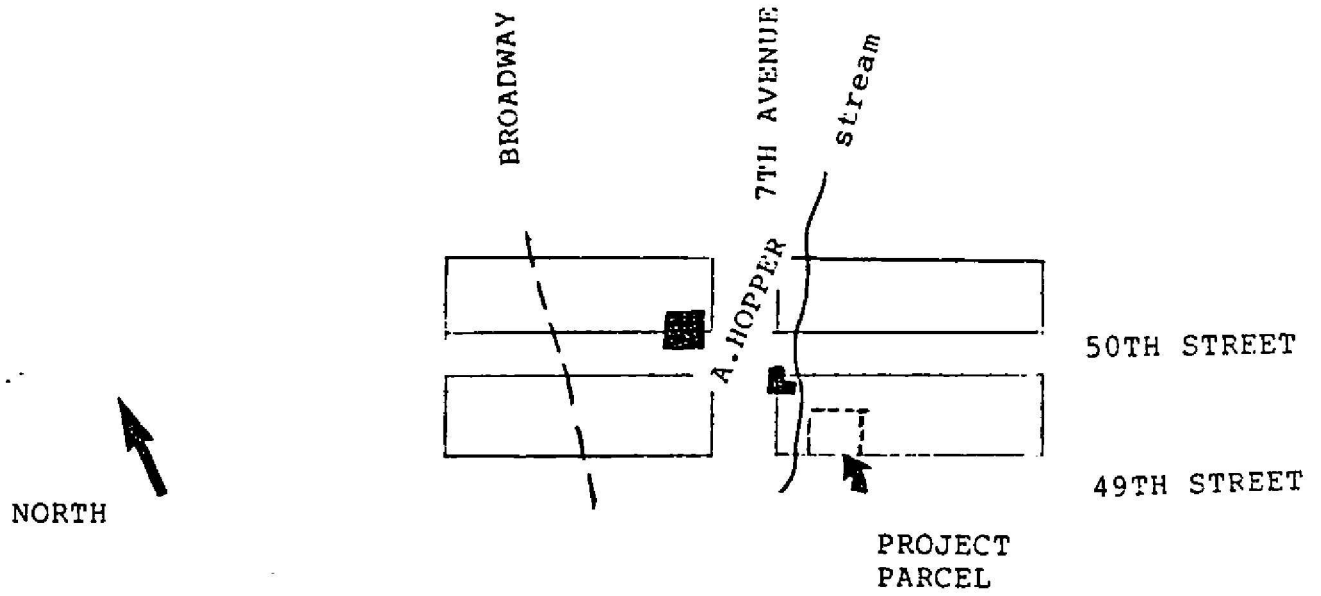
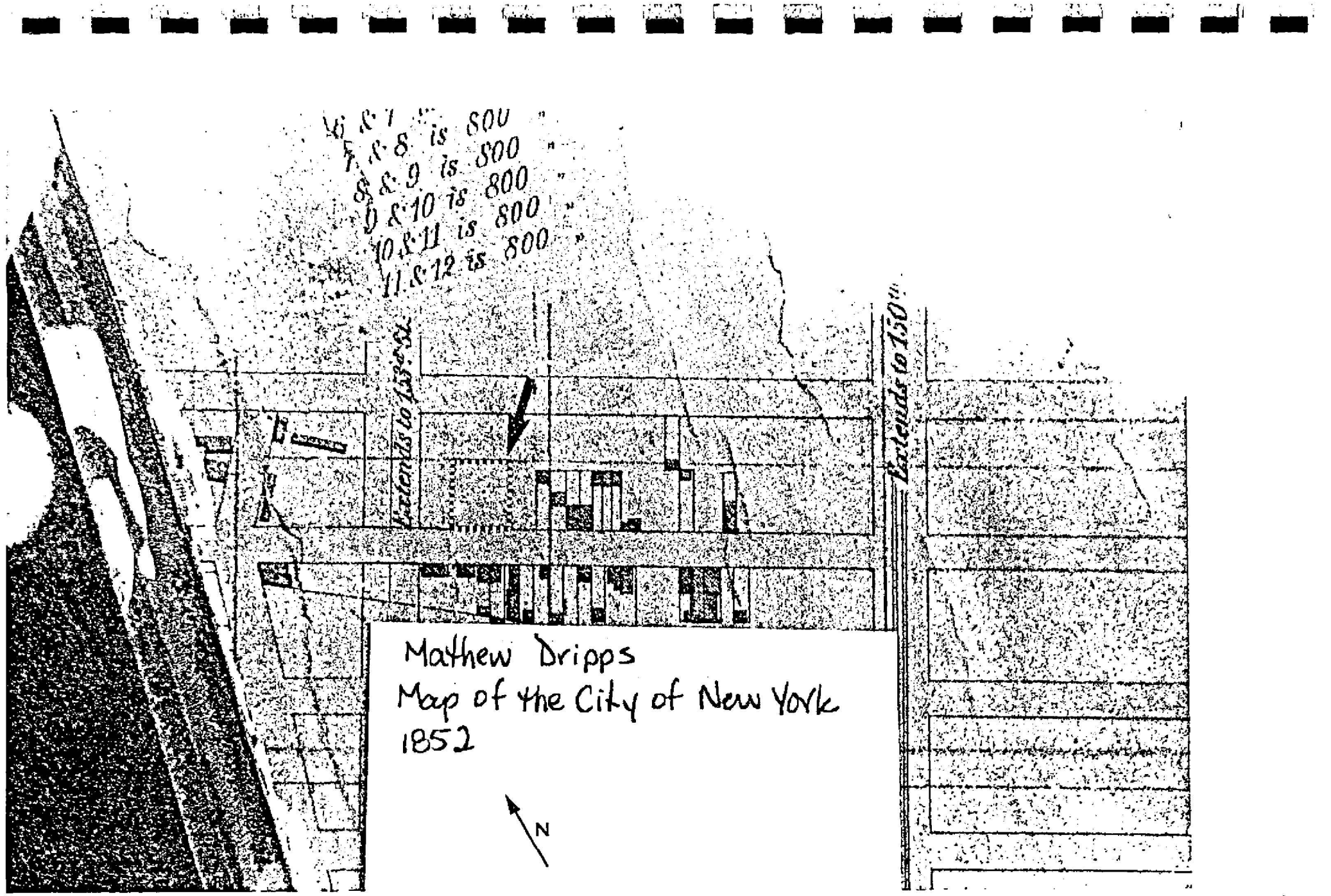


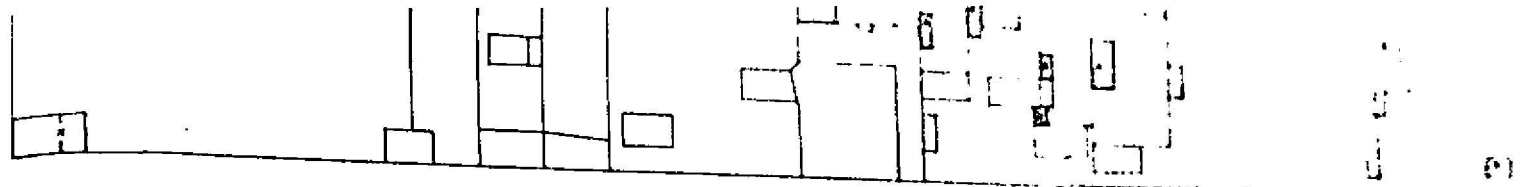
FIGURE 8 Tracing of J. Randel's Farm Map 1820. Not to scale.



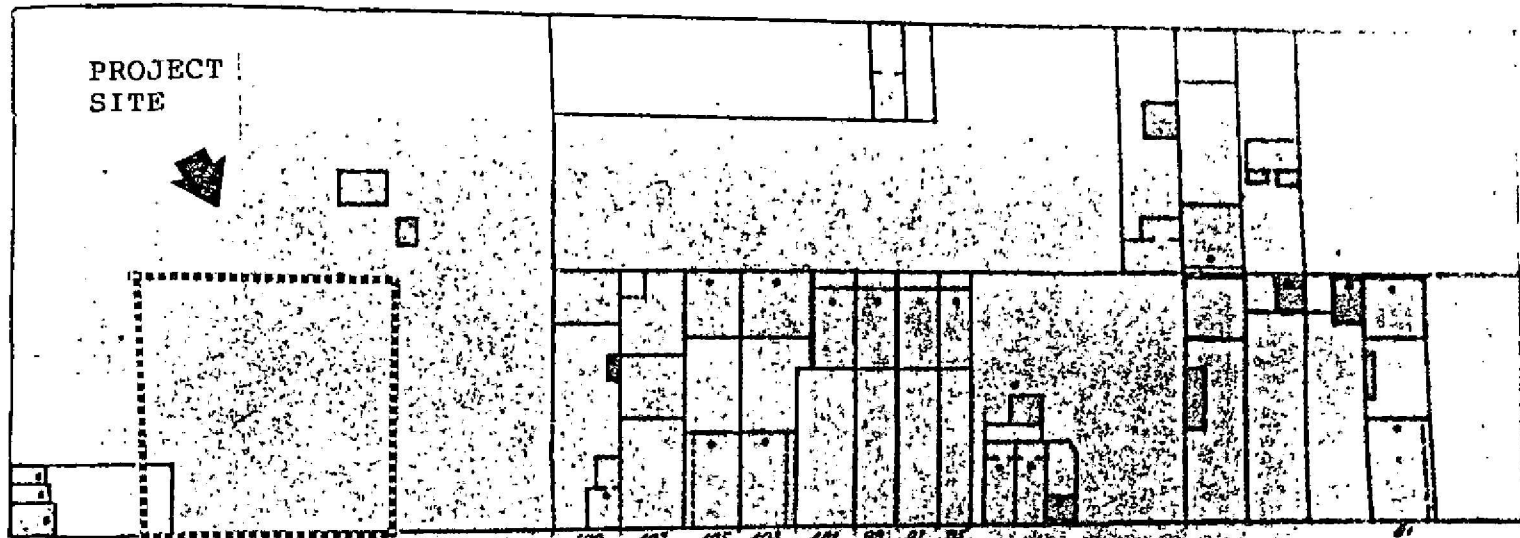
Mathew Dripps
Map of the City of New York
1852



FIGURE 9



WEST 50TH STREET



**PROJECT
SITE**

WEST 49TH STREET

Wm. Ferris
Map of the City of New York
1859 Vol. 6

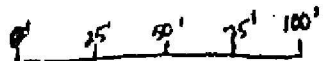
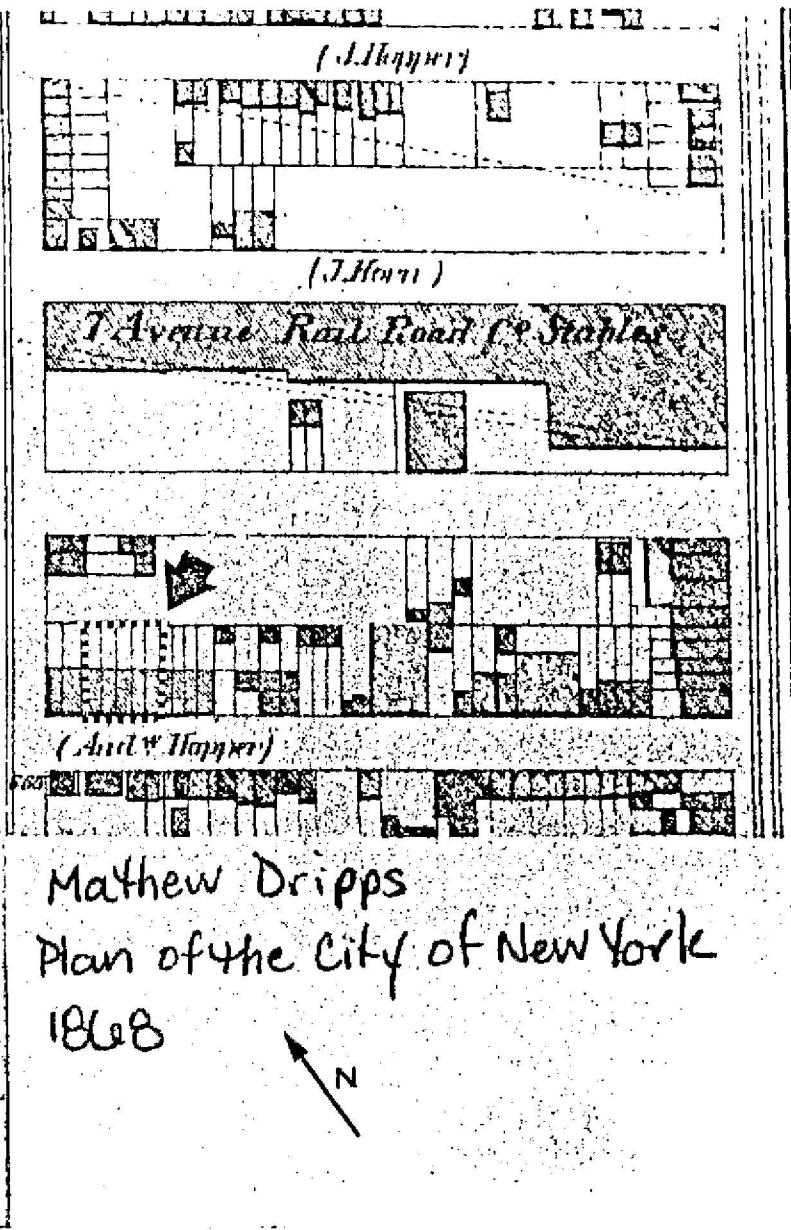
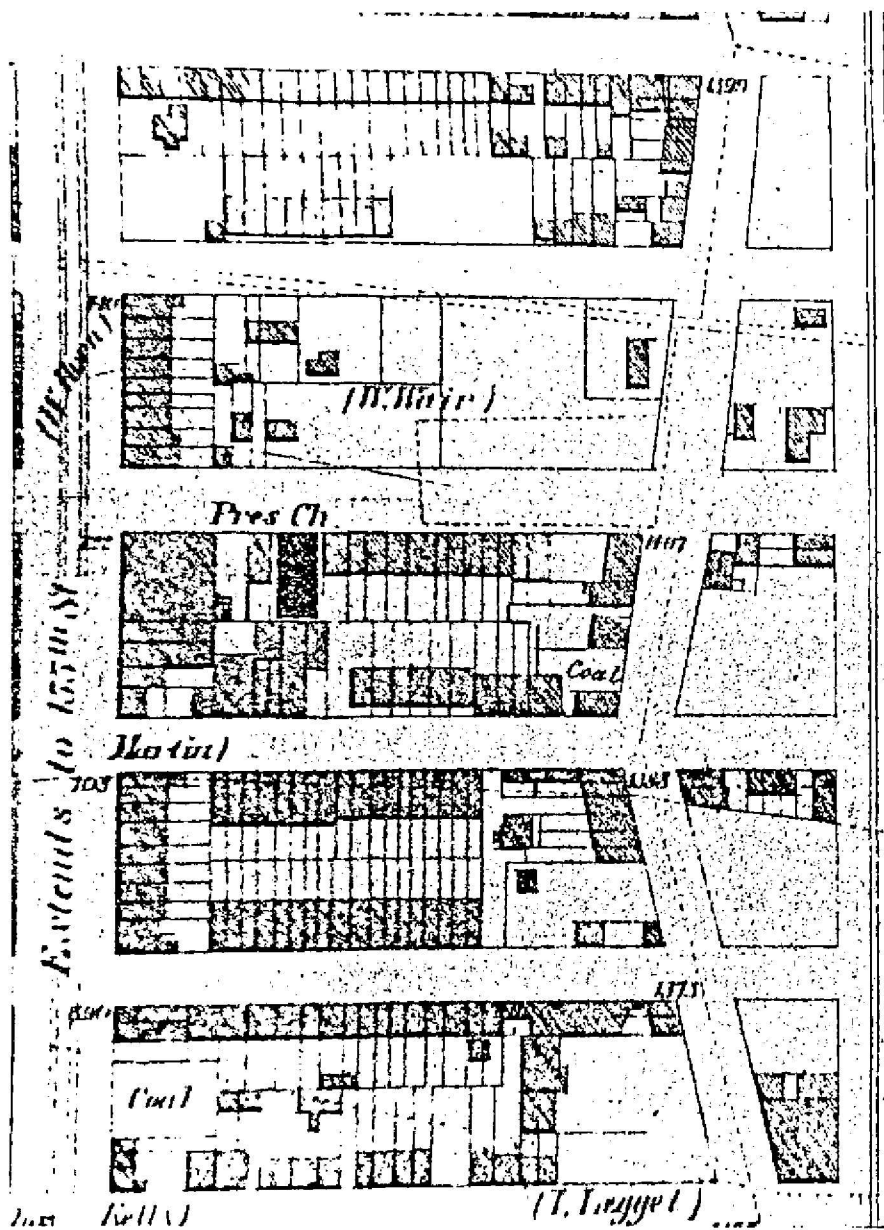


FIGURE 10



Mathew Dripps
 Plan of the City of New York
 1868



FIGURE 11

PLATE 15.

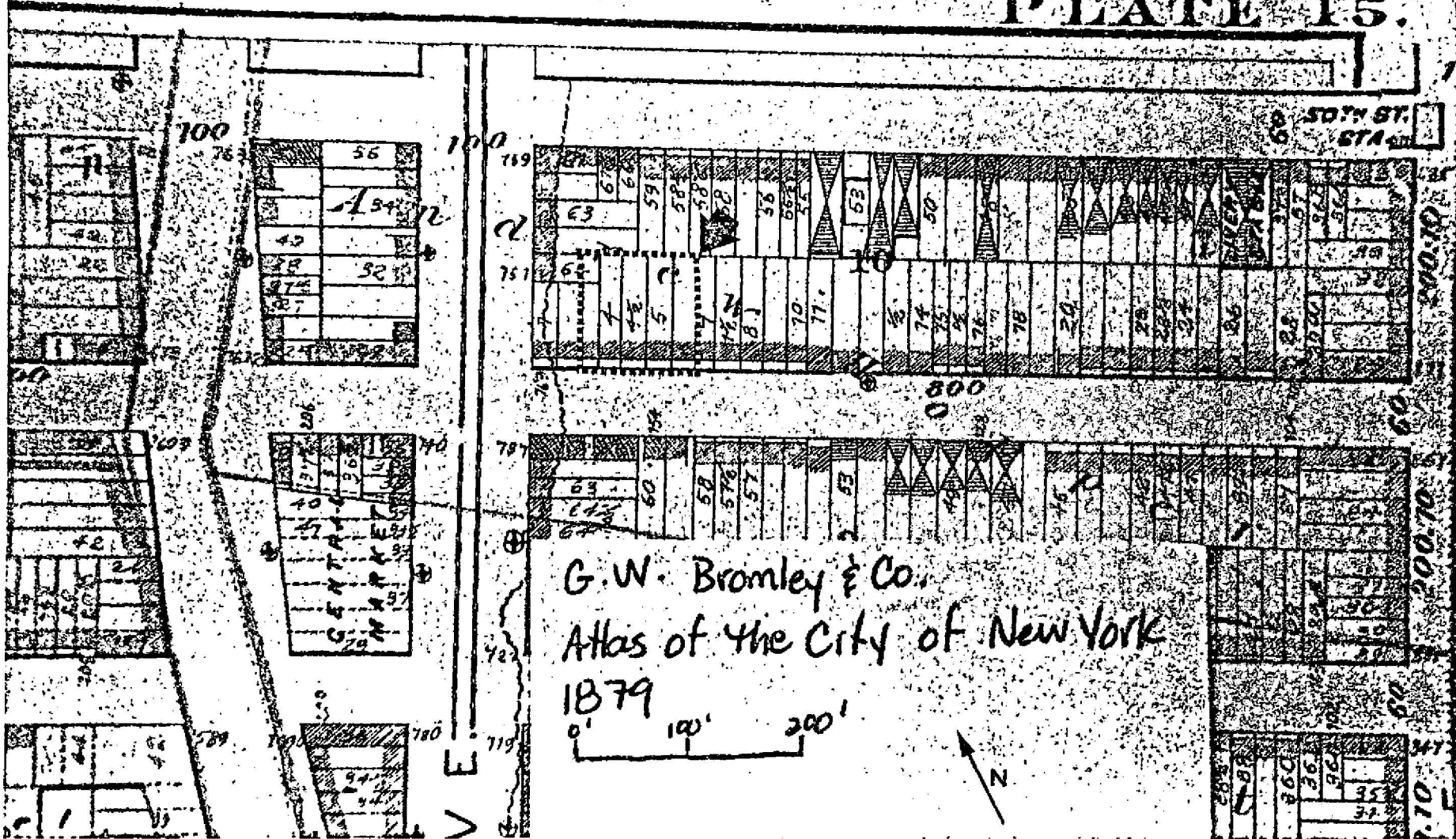


FIGURE 12

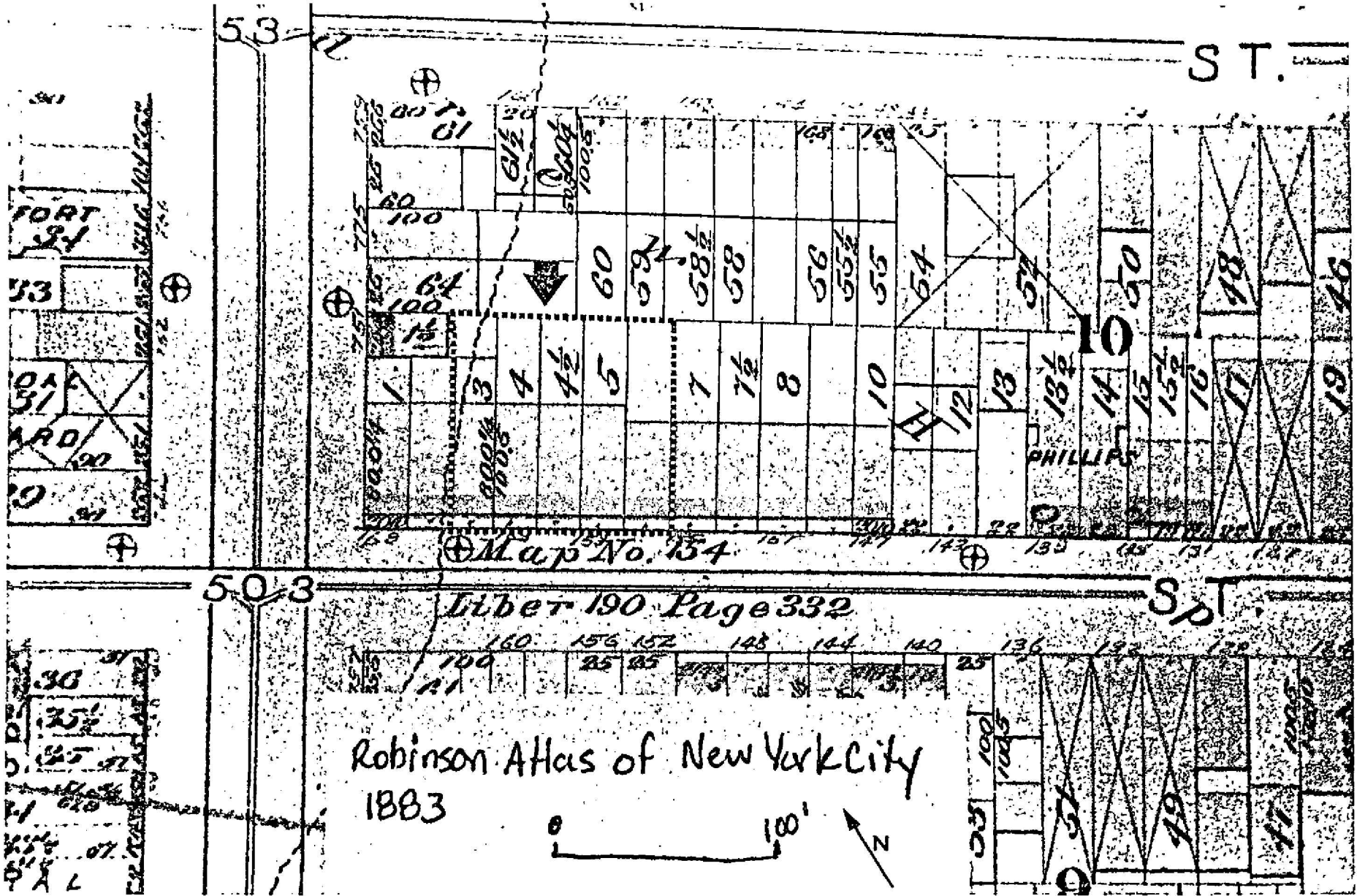


FIGURE 13

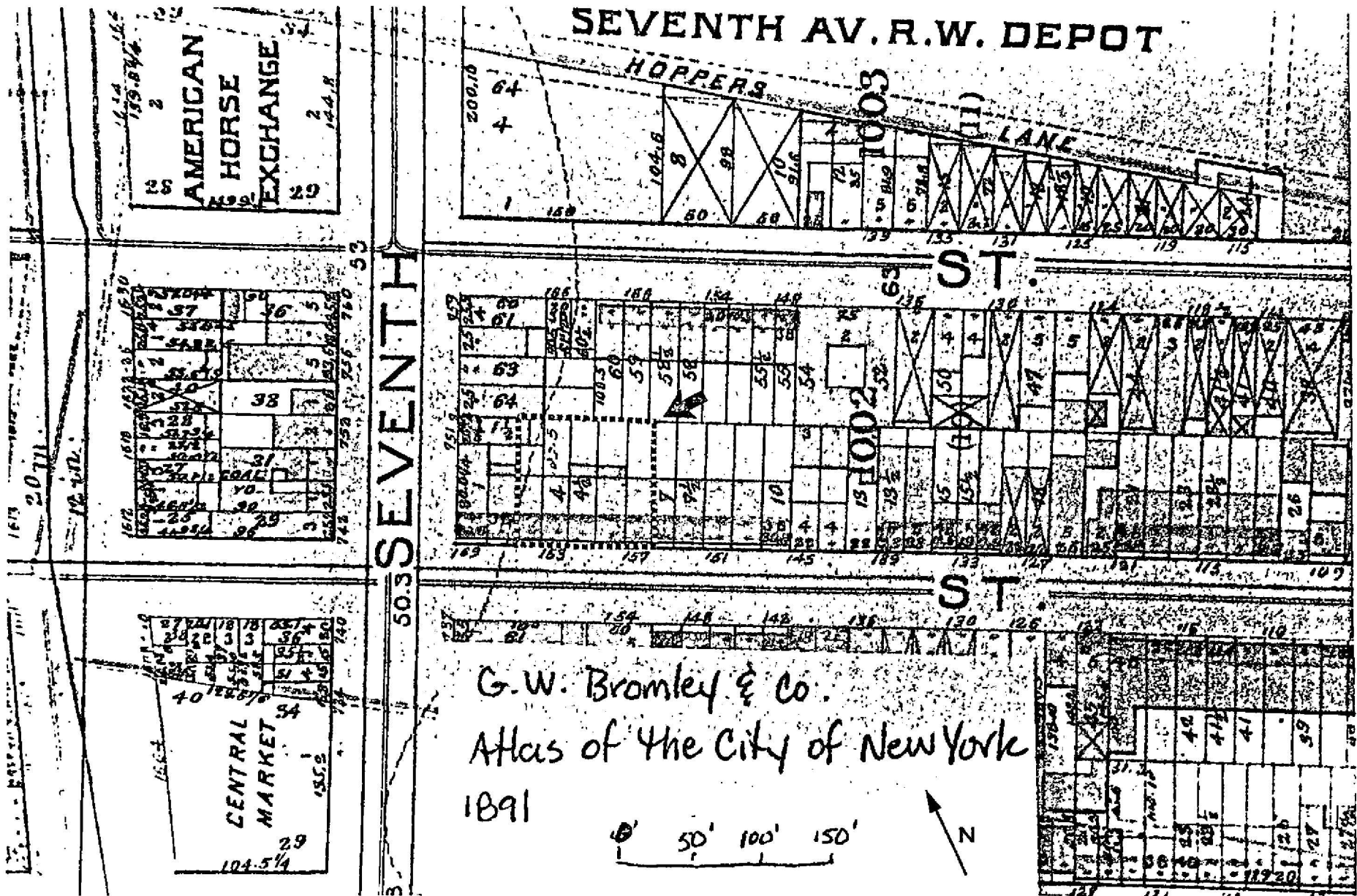
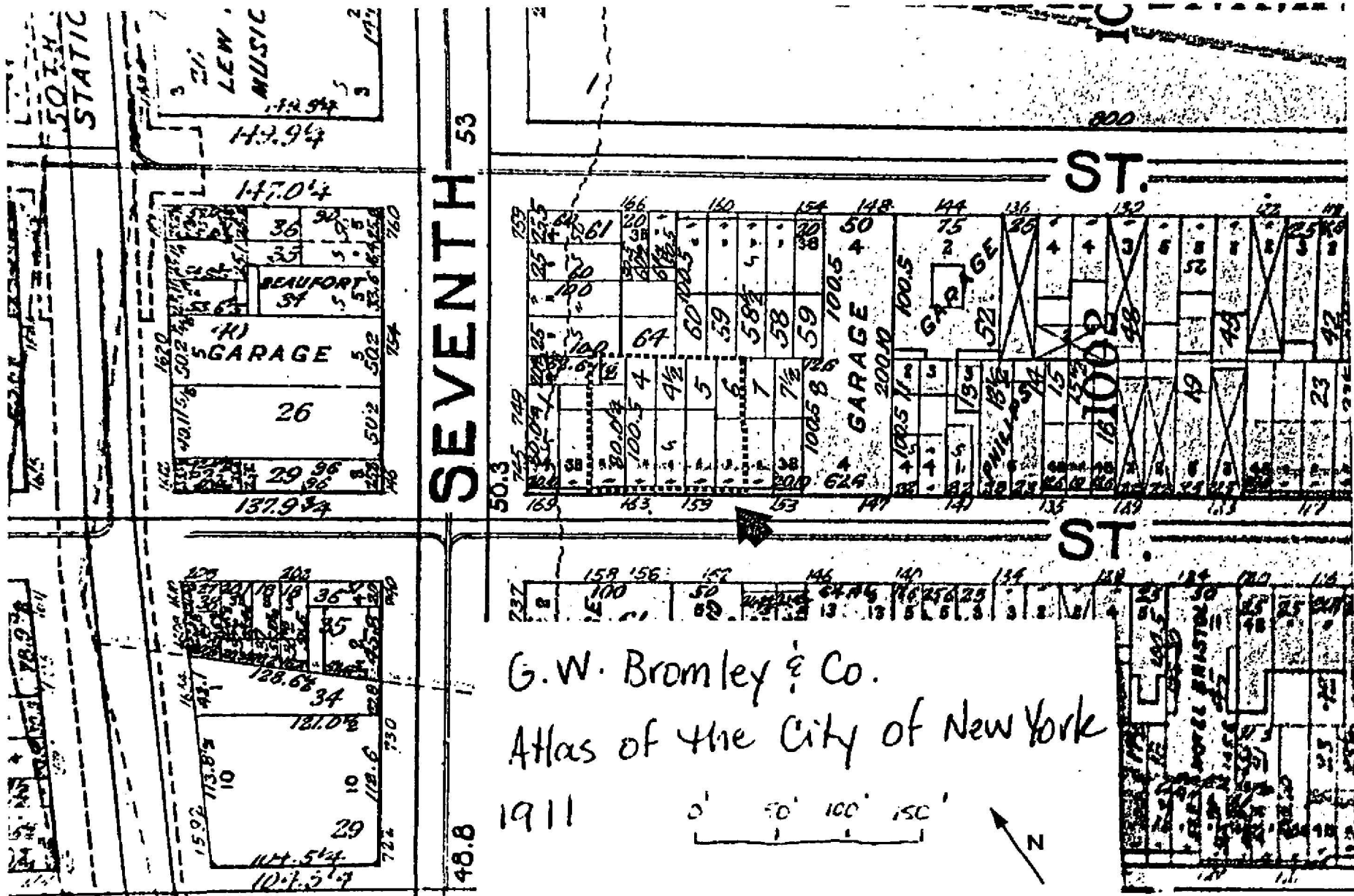


FIGURE 14



G.W. Bromley & Co.
 Atlas of the City of New York
 1911

FIGURE 15

width, the weight of buildings is restricted to two times the width of the street or avenue on which they front

Address: Upper Lib. 190 P. 332 Map No. 154
 60 200.10

N 11th

G. W. Bromley & Co.
 Atlas of the City of New York
 1932

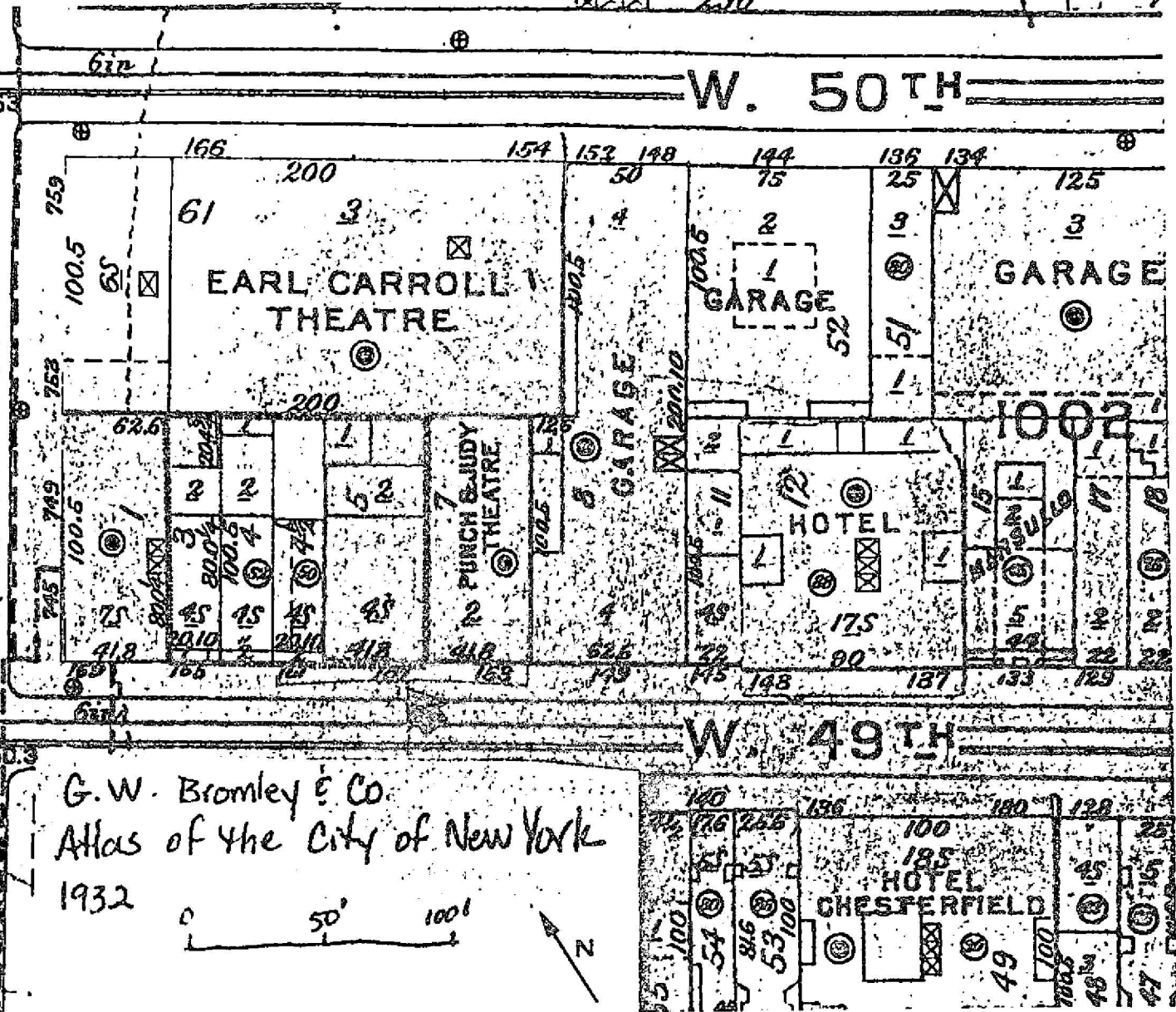
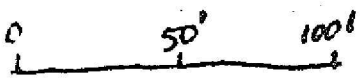
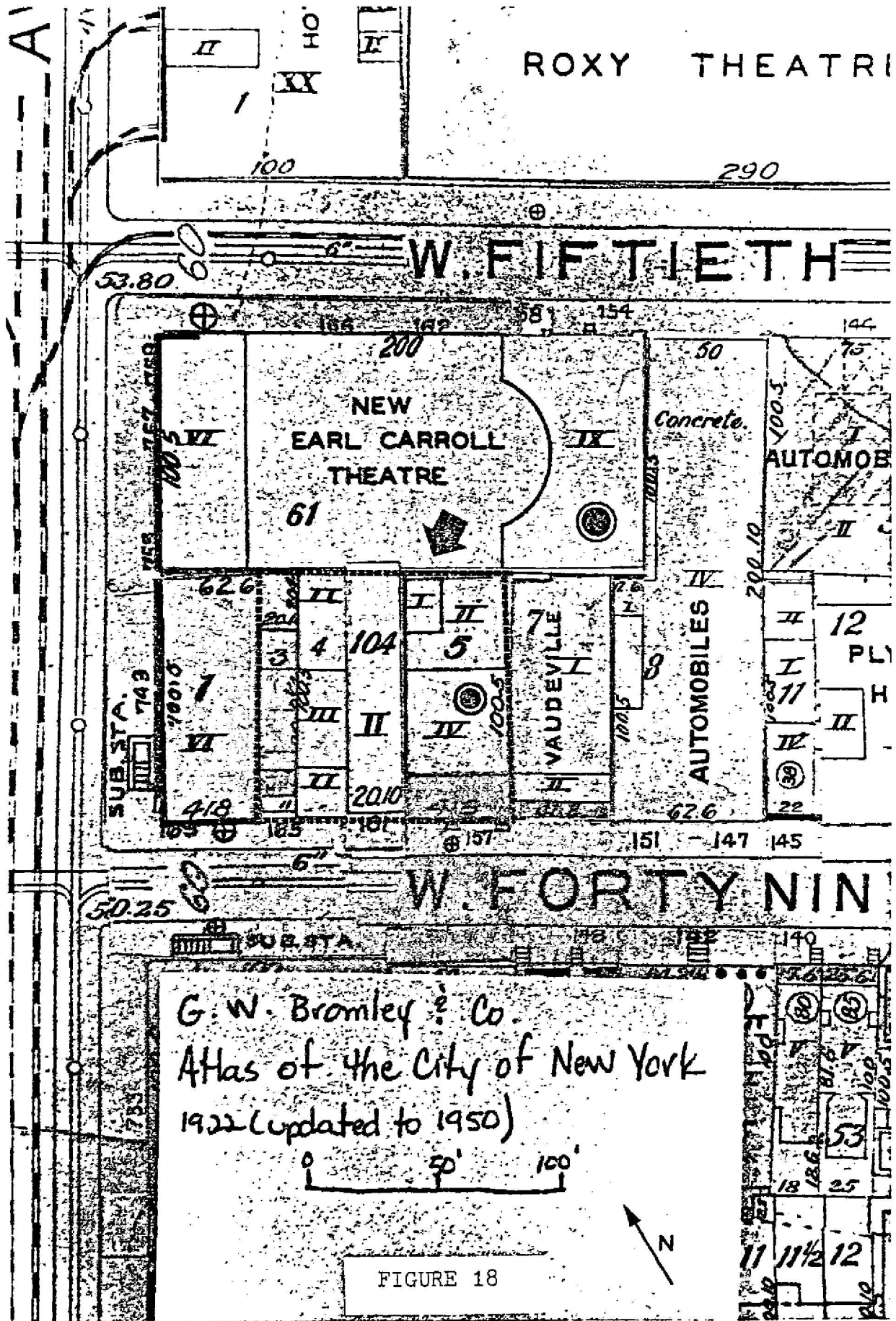


FIGURE 17



SEVENTH

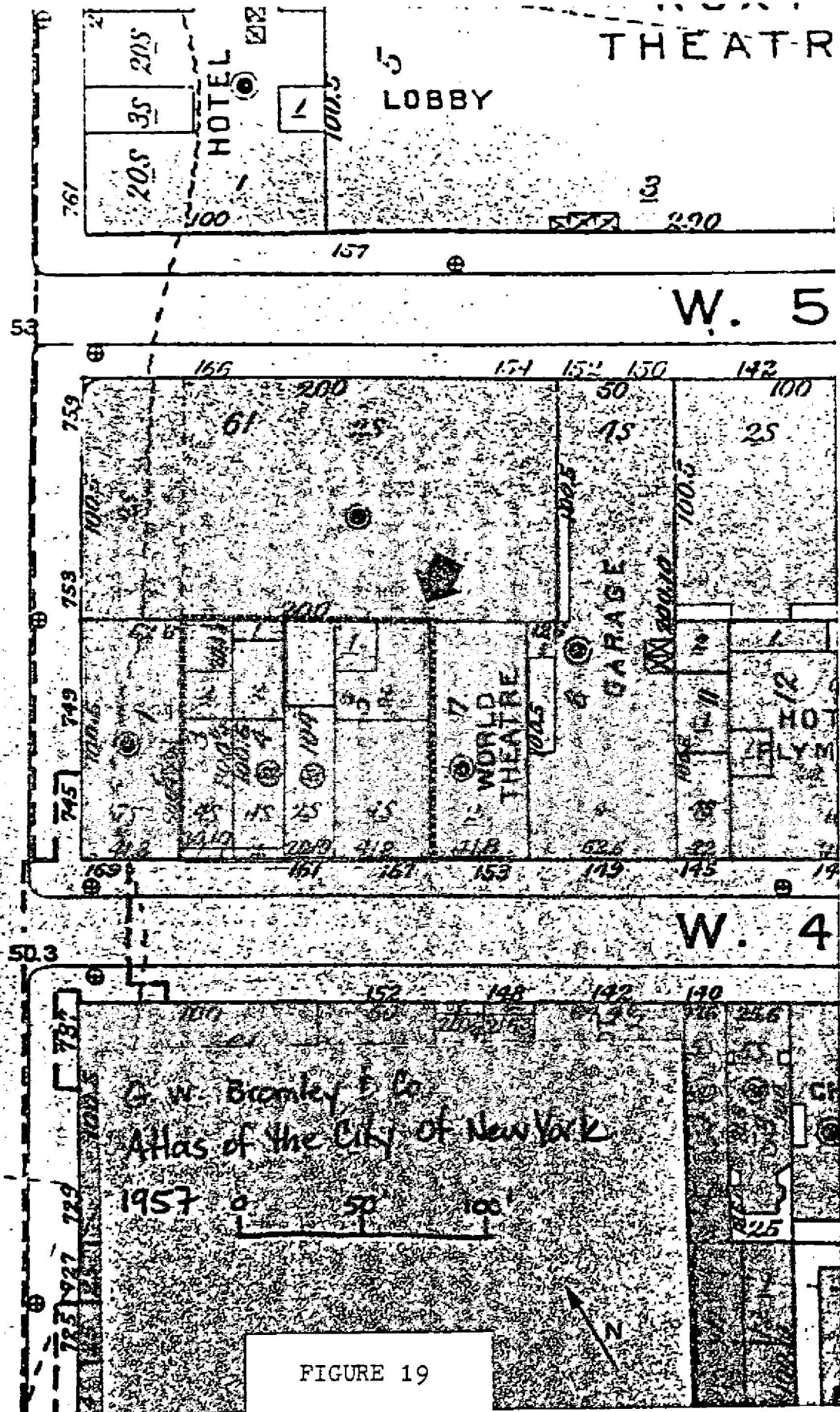
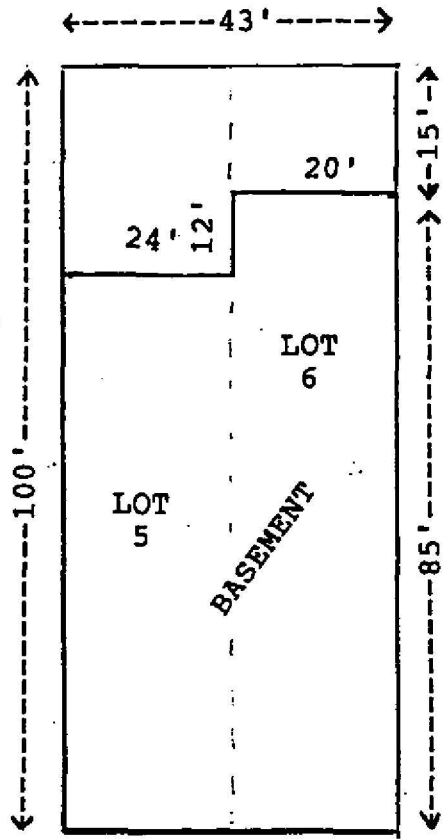


FIGURE 19



12' DEEP
BELOW GRADE

FIGURE 20 Cellar plan of Lots 5 and 6
Building's Department, Division of
Blocks and Lots



PHOTO A: Facing east from west side of 7th Avenue. Project parcel is within fence. "Progress" building spans Lots 5 and 6.

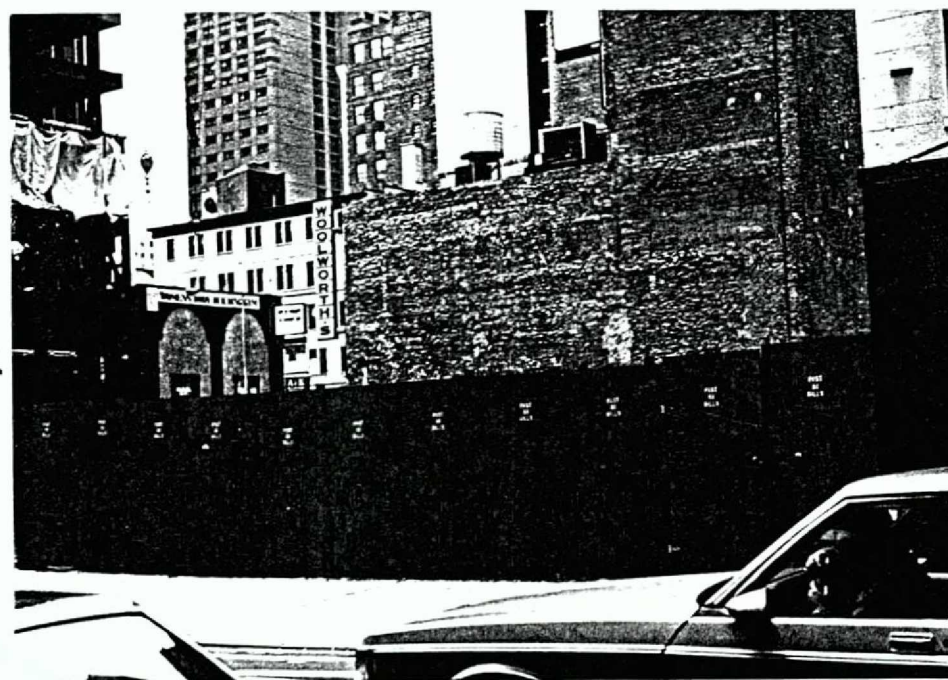


PHOTO B: Facing northwest from 49th Street, towards vacant Lots 3, 4 and 4 1/2 (104).

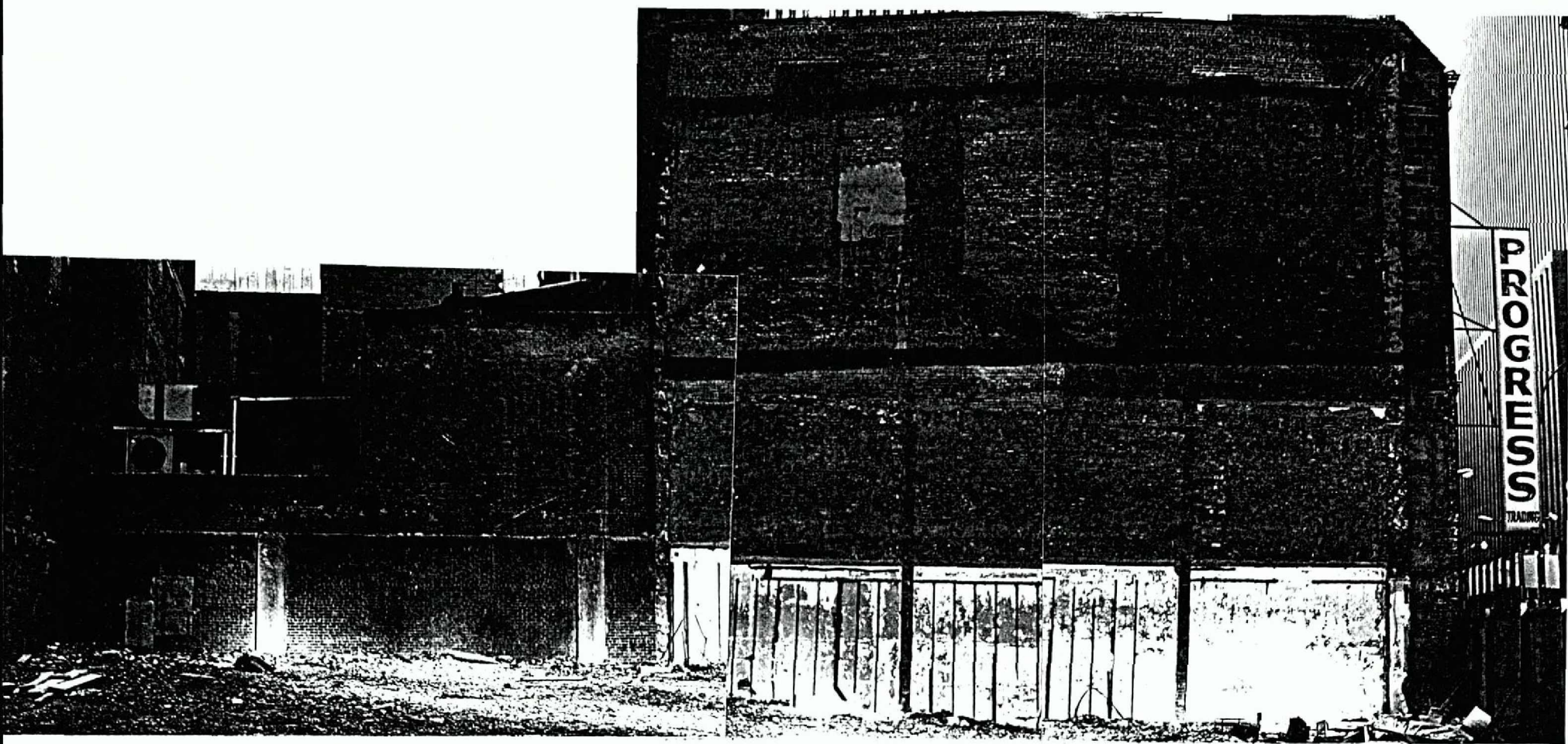


PHOTO C: Facing east from Lot 3. West side of "Progress" building on Lot 5 and 6, with northern two and one story addition.

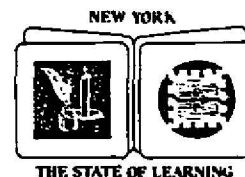


PHOTO D: Facing south from north end of Lot 3,
towards 49th Street.



PHOTO E: Facing east from Lot 2, towards vacant Lots
3, 4 and 104.

APPENDIX



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK ALBANY NY 12240

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM
DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS

Please direct correspondence to:

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM
Prehistoric Site File
Cultural Education Center, RM 3122
State Plaza
Albany, N.Y. 12230

Search Results:

Date: February 2, 1989

To: Faline Schneiderman-Fox
Historical Perspectives Inc.
P.O. Box 331
Riverside, Connecticut 06878

Area Searched: Central Park 7.5', (see attached map).

In response to your request our staff has conducted a search of our data files* for locations and descriptions of prehistoric archaeological sites within the area indicated above.

The results of the search are given below. Please refer to the NYSM site identification numbers when requesting additional information.

If specific information requested has not been provided by this letter, it is likely that we are not able to provide it at this time, either because of staff limitations or policy regarding disclosure of archaeological site data. Any questions regarding this reply can be directed to Beth Wellman, at (518) 474-5813 or the above address, mark as Atten: Site File.

*[NOTE: Our files normally do not contain historic period sites or architectural properties. Contact: The Survey Registration & Planning Unit, Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Agency Building #1, Empire State Plaza, Albany NY, at (518) 474-0479 to begin the process of collecting data on these types of sites.]

RESULTS OF THE FILE SEARCH:

The following sites are located in or within one mile of the project area:

None.

Code "ACP" = sites reported by Arthur C. Parker in The Archeology Of New York, 1922, as transcribed from his unpublished maps.

SEARCH CONDUCTED BY: B.W. (initials)
Staff, Office of the State Archaeologist

EVALUATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY FOR PREHISTORIC (INDIAN) SITES

Examination of the data suggests that the location indicated has the following sensitivity rating:

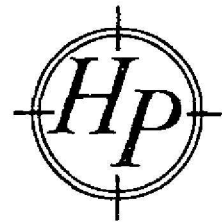
- HIGHER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.
- AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.
- LOWER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.
- MIXED PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.

The reasons for this finding are given below:

- A RECORDED SITE IS INDICATED IN OR IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE LOCATION AND WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE IT COULD BE IMPACTED BY CONSTRUCTION.
- A RECORDED SITE IS INDICATED SOME DISTANCE AWAY BUT DUE TO THE MARGIN OF ERROR IN THE LOCATION DATA IT IS POSSIBLE THE SITE ACTUALLY EXISTS IN OR IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE LOCATION.
- THE TERRAIN IN THE LOCATION IS SIMILAR TO TERRAIN IN THE GENERAL VICINITY WHERE RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ARE INDICATED.
- THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION SUGGEST A HIGH PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE.
- THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION SUGGEST A MEDIUM PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE.
- THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION ARE SUCH AS SUGGEST A LOW PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE.
- EVIDENCE OF PRIOR DESTRUCTIVE IMPACTS FROM CULTURAL OR NATURAL SOURCES SUGGESTS A LOSS OF ORIGINAL CULTURAL DEPOSITS IN THIS LOCATION.
- THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION ARE MIXED, A HIGHER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE IS SUGGESTED FOR AREAS IN THE VICINITY OF STREAMS OR SWAMPS AND FOR ROCK FACES WHICH AFFORD SHELTER. DISTINCTIVE HILLS OR LOW RIDGES HAVE AN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF USE AS A BURYING GROUND. LOW PROBABILITY IS SUGGESTED FOR AREAS OF EROSIONAL STEEP SLOPE.
- PROBABILITY RATING IS BASED ON THE ASSUMED PRESENCE OF INTACT ORIGINAL DEPOSITS, POSSIBILITY UNDER FILL, IN THE AREA. IF NEAR WATER OR IF DEEPLY BURIED, MATERIALS MAY OCCUR SUBMERGED BELOW THE WATER TABLE.
- INFORMATION ON SITES NOT RECORDED IN THE N.Y.S. MUSEUM FILES MAY BE AVAILABLE IN A REGIONAL INVENTORY MAINTAINED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION(S). PLEASE CONTACT:

COMMENTS:

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES INC.



0021/27

January 24, 1989

Phil Lord
Room CEC 3118
New York State Museum
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12230

Dear Phil:

We are conducting a Phase 1A archaeological assessment on a tract of land in Manhattan. I have enclosed a U.S.G.S. topo map with the block in question noted.

Could your office please conduct a site file search for sites or information pertinent to this area of Manhattan. Thank you very much for your assistance. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Faline Schneiderman-Fox

Enc.

USGS Topographic Map: Central Park Quadrangle, 1979

