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# FLUSHING CENTER

CEQR 86-337 Q

## PHASE 1A ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT 1988

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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PHASE IA ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT  
for the  
FLUSHING CENTER PROJECT, QUEENS, NEW YORK  
CEQR 86 - 337 Q

TO: AKRF, Inc.  
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DATE: June 7, 1988

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Project Directors and Primary Authors would like to express their gratitude to the staff of Allee, King, Rosen, and Fleming, Inc. and to Frances Wickham for their consideration and cooperation in this project. Audrey Braver of the Bowne House Historical Society and Mary Anne Mrozinski of the Queens Historical Society were most helpful in conducting the local history research. We would like to express our appreciation to the staff of the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library. In particular we want to acknowledge the documents, photographs, and memories that Cathy Williams and other members of the Macedonia A.M.E. Church were willing to share with us.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Project Description

Flushing Center Associates propose to construct a mixed-use project, called Flushing Center, on Municipal Parking Lot #1 in Flushing, Queens. (See Figures 1&2) This development, sponsored by the City of New York, through the Public Development Corporation, is intended to create a well-balanced and integrated complex that addresses the following objectives: (1) the increased availability of competitive primary office and back-office space; (2) the fulfillment of the need for market rate housing in an economically viable and growing community; and, (3) the addition of retail space which complements and fortifies the existing retail base. The current designs incorporate approximately 154,000 square feet of office space, 340 apartments in two residential buildings (private open space, a playground, sun decks, and a pool) and 170,000 square feet of retail space. The existing municipal parking garage is slated for reconstruction with a total of 1,933 vehicular spaces, a per centage of which will be underground. The Public Development Corporation has expressed its desire to avoid an exacerbation of the existing traffic and parking problems to the greatest extent possible.

The Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church owns approximately 12,000 square feet of land that is immediately adjacent to the project parcel and which will be surrounded on three sides by the proposed construction. A center for community activities, the Macedonia A.M.E. has been in the same location for one hundred and fifty years. The City is particularly sensitive that the environmental space needs of this Church be considered. Flushing Center Associates have plans to include a landscaped buffer zone between the multi-story complex and the two-story Church.

Specific actions, such as a "disposition of City property and a Special Permit for public parking," that are necessary for the completion of the proposed development, mandate ULURP and CEQR review. In accordance with City Environmental Quality Review regulations, an Environmental Impact Statement has been undertaken. In fulfillment of the EIS specifications, the following report, "Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Report for the Flushing Center Project," assesses both the archaeological potential of the project area and the impact on this potential by the proposed development.

B. Study Area

"The site is located in the center of Downtown Flushing, an active commerical area in a stable middle-class residential section of Queens. To the east, northeast and south of the site are one and two family homes and apartment buildings; to the west and northwest are manufacturing and industrial uses." (City of New York,n.d.:p. 1) Major City roadways are one block to the north of the site - Northern Boulevard - and one block to the west - Main Street. One block to the east of the project, fronting on Bowne Street, is the historic Bowne House Museum and a municipal playground. Until the 1950s construction of the parking lot and the de-mapping of 38th Avenue, the project site was two distinct residential/commercial city blocks. Currently the metered parking facility covers all of Block 4978 except for a (roughly) 108 ft. x 109 ft. parcel that fronts on Union Street and the obsolete 38th Avenue. The two-tiered section of the lot, reached by two ramps on the north and south sides of the parcel, fronts on 138th Street.

Immediate neighbors to the Municipal Parking Lot #1 include:

- across Union Street: New York Police Building  
neighborhood deli  
Chinese American Bank
- across 39th Avenue: neighborhood cleaners, liquor store  
medical services building  
Korea Commerical Bank of New York
- across 138th Street: National Bank of New York City  
Queens County Savings Bank parking lot
- across 37th Avenue: eleven-story apartment building  
Social Security offices  
IRS offices  
Community Board #7 offices  
American Legion offices
- within Block 4978: the Macedonia African Methodist  
Episcopal Church and day care  
facility

## II. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

This cultural resource sensitivity survey entailed four tasks. The standard methodology from which the following description was abstracted was written by Ed Lenik for Historical Perspectives Inc.'s "Resource Recovery Project: Barretto Point Site," a 1986 Phase IA documentary study.

### A. Archival Research

From the outset, the accumulation of historical documentation of all types pertaining to the project area was considered to be of primary importance. Maps of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries formed the basis for the start of the cultural resource survey. A file search on this area of Queens was conducted by the New York State Museum/Anthropology Services and the State Historic Preservation Office. Attempts to identify unrecorded prehistoric and historic cultural resources necessitated an intensive search of the holdings at the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library, The Bowne House, the Macedonia AME Church, and the New York Public Library.

### B. Local Informants

Interviews were conducted with architects, historians, archivists, area residents, archaeologists, and Queens Borough governmental agencies to elicit information about the location and nature of prehistoric and historic sites, and to determine land use in the project area.

### C. Photographic Survey

A field visit and photographic record were conducted in an attempt to locate and identify any existing cultural resources (such as architectural landmarks) and to evaluate the archaeological potential of the area.

### D. Environmental Analysis

These various kinds of information, including environmental, archaeological, historic, and ethnohistoric data, enable us to form predictions of prehistoric site locations. At the Flushing Center site, environmental and geomorphological conditions, as well as the historic disturbance record, were important criteria in developing a hypothesis regarding the presence or absence of prehistoric cultural resources. Specific environmental factors were considered:

Topography, geology, and soil conditions through time were studied.

Water resource availability (wetlands and/or springs and/or proximity to Flushing Creek) during Native American cultural periods was analyzed. "The environmental context in which prehistoric peoples lived must be considered in the search



for prehistoric occupation zones within the project area."  
(Lenik, 1986: p. 6)

Availability of floral and faunal resources within the project area would have been of crucial importance to prehistoric groups.

Availability of technological raw materials needed to fashion tools and other items is an important consideration in the assessment of an area for likelihood of prehistoric occupation. (Ibid.)

Subsurface disturbance records provided data on those areas of the Flushing Center Project Site that have been severely impacted by residential and commercial construction and utility installations and, therefore, are not considered to host intact potential prehistoric resources.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The surface of western Long Island consists of several interesting landforms. Each land feature originated through the action of some past geological process which led to the development of a variety of flora and fauna. In turn, these factors have had a tremendous impact on prehistoric peoples and their settlement and subsistence patterns in this area. However, the historic period land use, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has altered the original features of the landscape. The following narrative is a synopsis of the major natural environmental characteristics of the study area.

The Flushing Center Project site on the north shore of western Long Island is physiographically part of the Coastal Plain. Long Island is the top of a Coastal Plain ridge formation that is covered with glacial drift. In reality the plain is an elevated sea bottom demonstrating low topographic relief and extensive marshy tracts. (Eisenberg,1978:p. 7) Continental glaciation affected the surficial geology of Long Island as the glacier advanced and receded at least three times in the last million years. The Ronkonkoma and Harbor Hill were two sub-stages of glaciation, whose melting fronts left a series of ridges (moraines) across the length of Long Island. (Wisniewski, 1977:p. 1) As a result, Flushing's topography is moderately uneven and has a gentle inclination to the north and a low range of hills that extends along its southern border and separates it from Jamaica. Gratacap has placed Flushing on the southern edge of the retreating "ice front" and most probably the Project site was inundated and an extension of the Flushing Bay estuarine ecosystem at the end of the Pleistocene. (Gratacap,1909:Map III;See Figure 3 ) Glacial till and outwash, consisting of clay, sand, gravel, and boulders were deposited by the melting ice sheet. The fertile sandy loam, composed of fragments of decomposed boulders of granite, feldspar, and greenstone traprock, of the Flushing area was instrumental in the town's important horticultural development. (Valles,1938:p. 5)

Although the extensive Flushing Bay and Flushing River water system is approximately 2000-2500 feet to the west and north of the project parcel, there is no definitive indication that a substantial fresh water course or extensive wetland existed on or immediately adjacent to the project parcel after approximately 10,000 years ago. In 1816 a chalybeate spring was discovered near the head of the Flushing River marsh. It was named "Cheltenham Springs," and for a time the spring's curative powers attracted much attention. (French,1860:p.546) There is no reason to speculate that such a mineral spring existed within the proximity of the project area. The Innes 1908 "reconstruction" of early Flushing is the only depiction of a stream within the immediate project area. This is contradicted by all the additional cartographic evidence reviewed, such as the 1838 U.S.G.S.

topographic map. Throughout the twentieth century, the Block 4978 parcel has been mapped as a relatively flat terrace with a dominant elevation of 50-55 feet above mean high water. (See Figures 1 & 4)

#### IV. THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

##### A. Introduction

Long Island was first inhabited by man approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. These Native Americans, and their descendants, left us no written record of their lifestyles, beliefs, or settlement patterns. Our present knowledge and understanding of these past cultures is derived from three basic sources: (1) ethnographic reports; (2) Indian artifact collections; and, (3) archaeological investigations. The following discussion of prehistoric human occupation provides a basis on which to anticipate the kinds of cultural remains or sites that may be found in the Flushing Center area. A brief description of the three periods of prehistoric culture history is presented first. This information summarizes the ways in which prehistoric peoples lived in the northeastern United States in general and in coastal New York in particular. These prehistoric cultural sequences describe the particular technologies, lifestyles, and environmental contexts of the three time periods.

The prehistory of Queens has been researched extensively, and the available data provides excellent background material with which to assess the project area. A search of the literature on the project area, which includes Solecki 1941, Bolton 1922 and 1934, Ritchie 1980, Ceci 1980, Lightfoot 1985, and The Coastal Archaeology Reader 1978, has identified prehistoric sites in the north coastal area of Queens. These documented sites, although outside the project's primary impact zone, provide us with a good picture of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns. Furthermore, additional information was obtained from New York State agencies.

##### B. Prehistoric Culture Periods

###### Paleo-Indian Period

As the Wisconsinian ice sheet retreated, ending the Pleistocene Age approximately 12,000 to 11,000 years ago, Long Island's earliest inhabitants, the Paleo-Indians, entered the area. Hunters of big game, these nomadic Native Americans lived in a harsh environment, dominated by a spruce and fir forest, which was replaced by a pine forest as the climate warmed. The sea level of Long Island Sound during this time was much lower than today. "Most models suggest sea levels began stabilizing about 2000 to 3000 years ago. . . Bloom and Stuiver (1963) suggest a drop of .18m per century between the period of 3000 and 7000 years ago." (Cited in Lightfoot, et al, 1985:p. 77) The Paleo-Indian settlement pattern consisted of small, temporary camps and the diagnostic artifact of this period was the fluted projectile point.

There are very few recorded Paleo-Indian sites in southern New York and no reported finds of in situ points in Queens. This is partly due to their temporary nature and low population density but also due to the rise in the sea level which has inundated many of the earliest sites.

#### Archaic Period

The Early Archaic cultural period (c. 9,000 years ago) followed the Paleo-Indian period in the coastal and tidewater area of New York and "is represented by numerous, small, nearly always multi-component sites, variously situated on tidal inlets, coves, and bays, on Long Island, Shelter Island, Manhattan Island, Fishers Island, and Staten Island..., at various elevations having no consistent relationship to the particular cultural complex." (Ritchie, 1980: p. 143) Hunting and gathering were still the basic ways of life during this period, but the emphasis in subsistence shifted from the large pleistocene herbivores, who were rapidly becoming extinct, to smaller game and plants of the deciduous forest. The hallmarks of this period are grinding implements, ground stone tools, and, toward the end of this period, or Terminal Archaic, the use of stone bowls. (Lenik, 1986: p. 13)

#### Woodland Period

Approximately 3,000 years ago the sea level and exposed coastal regions were, in most respects, as they appear today. Although the Native Americans of this time period preferred occupation sites situated on well drained terraces or knolls overlooking bodies of water, they did take advantage of the natural richness of the low areas - water fowl, grasses, and tubers. Woodland Period Native American sites are associated with the introduction of ceramics (non-wheel formed clay vessels) and, by European colonization, with incipient agriculture (beans, maize, and squash).

#### C. Archaeological Sites in the Flushing Center Project Area

"On January 15, 1639 Dutch records tell us that Governor Kieft, by offering merchandise, obtained the lands of Long Island by conveyance from Mechswood chief sachem of Massapeague and Sintsinck, alias Schout's Bay. The chief reserved the right to remain there with his people under the protection of the lords of the company, and to plant, fish, hunt under the protection of the lords. The Matinecock tribe, belonging to the Delaware of the Algonquin family, and forming part of the Mohegan nation, claimed jurisdiction of the lands east of Newtown as far as the west line of Smithtown and to the west side of the Nesaquake River." (Valles, 1938: p. 5) Flushing "appears to have been the headquarters at one time of the leading sachem of this part of Long Island, for in 1664 Tackapoosa, son and survivor of the great Mechowodt, the Ancient One, was resident there." (Bolton, 1922: pp. 1182-183) Reginald Bolton's early twentieth century research into the Native Americans of New York City states that the

Matinecock were very numerous and occupied many villages with contiguous cultivated fields. The route of Northern Boulevard (historically known as Broadway) follows an old Indian trail that connected the prehistoric settlement at Flushing with camp and village sites on the North Shore. Steven Grumet's later publication (1981) on trails places the Indian pathway on a portion of Northern Boulevard but deviates from the current roadbed, bypassing the village center by a southerly route. (See Figures 5 & 6)

There is sufficient evidence of Indian artifacts and burials being uncovered in the Flushing Village area to substantiate the supposition that the general project area did host a prehistoric population. According to Bolton, Native American skeletons were uncovered on a tract of land north of "Broadway" during excavations for the Linnaean Gardens and, that one mile east of Flushing, "on the Duryea farm, objects of native manufacture evidenced the presence of the Indians." (Bolton, 1922: p.182)

In the late 1930s Ralph Solecki, and the Committee on American Anthropology of the Flushing Historical Society, investigated a prehistoric site on the old Lawrence estate which bordered Flushing Creek, approximately 3500 feet west, southwest of the project property. Destroyed by construction of the Van Wyck Expressway, this small site was located (roughly) at the terminus of Fowler, Avery, Maple and Sanford Avenues. According to Dr. Solecki's photographic record, it was apparently natural mineral springs at this location that were being exploited by the prehistoric population. (See Figure 7; Solecki, 1941:n.p.; Solecki, n.d.:p.2) It is unclear if the New York State Museum site #4524, which is based on Arthur C. Parker's record of a "burial site" (referred to as Queens' #1 by Parker) represents the Solecki or an independent locus. Parker's site is roughly mapped at Avery and Fowler Avenues and west of the Queens Botanical Gardens. (Kearns and Kirkorian, 1985:pp.69-70)

The vast majority of recorded sites in Queens are situated on extensive water systems (e.g., Jamaica Bay, Little Neck Bay, Newtown Creek). Flushing Bay and Flushing Creek represent such water resources. There are numerous published reports of aboriginal sites in this section of Queens. These include:

College Point Locations -

- Grantville (The Woods).....Woodland, Transitional  
Archaic  
excavated by Carlyle Smith, Ralph Solecki  
artifacts at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences
- Graham Court.....Woodland  
excavated by Smith, Solecki  
burial and house site
- Wilkins (14th Ave. & 142nd St.)....Woodland  
excavated by Smith, Solecki

Powell's Cove (numerous shoreline locations).....Contact excavated by Smith, Solecki

Tallman's Island (numerous shoreline locations).....Woodland, Transitional Archaic excavated by Smith, Solecki, and Julius Lopez (Kearns and Kirkorian,1985:pp.8-9)

It is difficult to ascertain if these published reports coincide exactly with Arthur Parker's bayside site locations or if they represent additional loci of aboriginal activity. Parker's sites, referred to as camp or burial sites (State Museum #4544, #4542, #4540, and #4527), can be seen on Figure 8 , as provided by the New York State Museum.

William Asadorian, Librarian of the Long Island Division, Queens Borough Public Library, has reported that Queens artifact collectors have concentrated their area activities on the Jamaica Bay coastline and immediately north of Shea Stadium. (Kearns and Kirkorian,1985:p. 11) Ken Lightfoot's recent (1985) review of all published archaeological reports from Long Island also reflects the above data - the preponderance of sites have been discovered adjacent to a coastline or large bay. This record may, in fact, reflect a bias toward the large-scale, highly visible sites that are often in public recreational areas. "The near exclusive study of shell middens may be perpetuating a skewed perspective of the functional range of sites present during the prehistoric period." (Lightfoot, et al.,1985:p. 63) Lynn Ceci, a Queens College archaeologist, maintains (1980) that the seemingly Late Woodland subsistence pattern changes (e.g., coastal zone concentrations and maize cultivation) were, in fact, adaptations to early contact with Europeans. Field testing of non-coastal prehistoric sites will yield valuable information to address the research questions raised by Lightfoot and Ceci. As quoted in Lightfoot, et al., Salwen has stated, "To balance this one-sided impression, it will be necessary to search for and to excavate types of sites in the immediate coastal zones other than the easily discovered shell middens which constitute only a part of the settlement system." (ibid.:pp. 63-64)

Southern New York archaeological records indicate that throughout the various prehistoric cultural stages there was a preference for well drained, elevated and/or river terrace sites, e.g., the "second rise of ground above high water level on tidal inlets." (Ritchie, 1980:pp. 264-265) The downtown Flushing area apparently afforded just this type of physiographic locale. North and east of the project property are two New York State Museum inventoried inland prehistoric sites that are also based on Parker's early twentieth century research. Museum #4526 - a Matinicock Indian settlement - is located immediately

north of Northern Boulevard and east of 174th Street. Museum #4526 - a prehistoric burial site - stretches between Northern Boulevard and 34th Avenue at approximately 149th Street. (Kearns and Kirkorian, 1986c; n.p.) These two locations are topographically very similar to the project site but further removed from the Flushing Creek estuarine and the mineral spring resources. Historical records and photographs reveal that the land immediately to the west of the project block was a raised knoll, although this may have been, in part, due to domestic landscaping.

The northern coastline of Queens and, specifically, the Flushing Bay and Flushing Creek banks are heavily developed and have been for many centuries. This development has obliterated, in most instances, any traces of the prehistoric settlements recorded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The areas where the Indians had their larger settlements, being prime locations, were generally the areas of first European settlement. Urbanization and industrialization have destroyed a large part of the prehistoric archaeological record, but sites may still exist in even the most developed area; the problem is one of identification and access. There are vital questions concerning the lifeways and settlement patterns of the Native Americans of southern New York that have remained only partially answered because of the lack of systematic investigations of inland sites. These research areas include, but are in no way limited to: (1) the definition of the annual habitation cycle through time stages and whether or not the coastal zone was or was not heavily used for large scale villages and year-round occupation before European contact; (2) the extent of ideological and sociological changes manifested by the arrival of Europeans; (3) the determination of time/cultural period for the introduction of cultigens (e.g., maize); and, (4) the variation in the exploitation of inland and coastal resources. The Native Americans of the Flushing area did not leave written records that we can study. They did, however, leave traces of their villages, tools, and foodstuffs that are retrievable. These bits and pieces of information must be gathered together and interpreted before they are lost forever.

It is very likely that the Flushing Center project parcel hosted, at some time in the past 10,000 years, an aboriginal population. Subsequent activities may have destroyed all or part of this past underground record. We know that the area was farmland. Studies have shown that although plowing activities do disturb subsurface resources, that disturbance is not so great that functionality and perimeters of an archaeological site cannot be ascertained. However, the deep foundation house construction that began in the eighteenth century undoubtedly destroyed a large percentage of the parcel's prehistoric resources. Taking into consideration the shallow soil build-up of the southern New York coastline and the documented 8 - 14 inch upper horizon soil layer in the downtown Flushing area (Ceci, 1985:p. 20), it is estimated that the below ground resources would not have survived



even shallow cellar excavations. Soil boring logs from five locations within Block-4978 reveal various depths of fill/over-burden that most probably reflect the cultural remains within the foundations of demolished homes and possibly trash pit deposits. It is possible however, that some prehistoric resources did survive in the unaltered yard spaces of the pre-1954 Block 4978.

## V. THE HISTORIC PERIOD

The first white men to inhabit that part of Long Island now known as Queens were fur traders under the administration of the Dutch West India Company. They came in the early years of the seventeenth century; the first permanent settlements were also made by the Dutch in about 1635. Toward the middle of the century, lands were opened to settlement by the English as well as the Dutch. These territories had been purchased by Governor Kieft from the Indians in 1639, but border disputes inexorably led to armed clashes between the Europeans and the Native Americans. The most serious of these were known as "Kieft's War" and occurred in 1643. The Dutch thereafter began to lose control of the Queens area even before the English Crown took over in 1664.

Flushing was among the earliest permanent villages established in Queens; it was granted a charter by the governor in 1645. All but one of the original patentees were Englishmen. But the name of the general area in which the town was situated was given prior to its settlement. According to Rev. Henry Waller, one of the earliest Flushing historians, it was named by a cartographer sent out by the West India Company in 1628 to record various bays and creeks of Long Island. The mapmaker, from a town in Zealand called Vlissingen (meaning "salt meadow" in Dutch), came upon lands and a body of water surrounded by salt marshes and promptly named them Vlissingen and Vlissingen Bay. (Waller, 1899:p. 15).

Flushing township was granted letters of patent in 1683 as part of Queens County (named for Charles II's Queen Catherine), one of three counties on Long Island which was part of the British province of New York. In the hundred years between the establishment of the Towns and the Revolution, Flushing grew considerably thanks to its position on Flushing Bay. "It was recognized as a town under the State Government, March 7, 1788." (French, 1860:p. 546). The population went up by natural increase and by immigration from Europe as well as other parts of the area. The Indian population rapidly declined through European introduced diseases, emigration to Jersey and the west, and battle with neighboring tribes in Connecticut. (Figures 9&10 are copies of early maps which show the location of Flushing).

During the Revolution the British occupied the village and kept troops stationed there until 1783. After Independence, growth mainly centered around agriculture and horticulture for which the fertile soil of north Queens was well suited. In fact "Flushing was the site of what was perhaps the country's first large-scale nursery - established by William Prince in 1737." (WPA, 1939:p. 556). After the 1850s, however, residential development was rapid. The railroad came in 1854 and the Flushing and North Side Railroad in 1868. Many wealthy New

Yorkers built country seats because daily commutation to the city was possible (only six miles) and cheap. After the Civil War (to which Flushing sent a company) expansion pushed the borders eastward and southward. By the 1880s the town was known for its large number of stately homes.

When Flushing entered New York City as part of the Borough of Queens, commercial development began. The trolley came in 1898 with a five-cent fare to Long Island City. The whole character of the village began to change with the opening of the subway in 1928. The low fare brought hordes of home buyers and heavy commercialization to Main Street. The 1939 World's Fair built on the Flushing Meadows further spurred this process.

After World War II Flushing rapidly lost its residential character. The large private homes disappeared one by one to be replaced by apartments. Impressive streets like Sanford Avenue lost their Mansard mansions almost overnight during the 1960s. Today ten and twelve story apartment houses are commonplace in downtown Flushing.

#### FLUSHING CENTER PROJECT SITE AND VICINITY

The project site is located in what was once the heart of the village of Flushing. Northern Boulevard began as an Indian path (See Figure 5) and remained an important artery from Colonial times up to the present. Until the modern era it was known as Broadway and the little village of Vlissingen naturally centered around the main road, gradually expanding from it. In 1908 J. H. Innes drew a reconstruction of the Colonial town which is reproduced in Figure 11; an arrow marks the approximate location of the project site. As for the actual layout of the town, there is little cartographic evidence before the Smith Map which was commissioned in 1841. However, several early structures as well as original records have fortunately survived which furnish documentation for the history of Flushing and in particular for the Flushing Center Project Site.

Between 1643 and 1645 a group of eighteen settlers made land purchases from the local Indians and were granted a charter for their village by the Dutch government in 1645. One of the patentees was Dutch and others of his countrymen followed him though they never made up a majority of the townspeople. The remaining seventeen were English Separatists who had left their native country seeking religious freedom. Apparently they lived on good terms with the Matinecock Indians, who, however, were mostly dispersed or destroyed for reasons stated on the previous page by the mid-eighteenth century. "Those who survived, inter-married with negro slaves, and gradually lost their racial characteristics." (Valles, 1938:p. 6).

Though not among the original Quaker settlers, perhaps the most illustrious of the early citizens of Flushing was John Bowne. He first visited the village in 1651 and shortly thereafter bought property on which he built a house in 1661. (Number 14 on Figure 11 shows the site of the house which is still standing and is both a New York City and National Register landmark.) Until Bowne offered them his home as a meeting place, the proscribed Society of Friends had met in the woods outside Flushing. Bowne and his compatriots mounted opposition to Dutch Governor Stuyvesant's religious intolerance which eventually resulted in the restoration of religious freedom in New Amsterdam.

The Quaker tolerance of religions and races different from their own encouraged the growth of another strain present in the population of Flushing from an early period which was Black people, both slaves and freedmen. The 1698 census recorded that of the six hundred and forty-three inhabitants of the town, one hundred and thirteen were Negroes. (O'Callaghan, E.B. THE DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK. Albany 1850: Vol. I, p. 432).

"In 1660, a new element found its way into local society. A group of Huguenots came to Flushing. They, too, were seeking protection from persecution. While here they proved respectable citizens, and started the horticultural industry which was later to make the town so famous. When the ban against the Huguenots was lifted in France, the majority of them returned to their homes. The few who remained intermarried with the English and Dutch, and soon lost their original racial identity." (Van Rensselaer, HISTORY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK: Vol. I, P. 416 is cited as the information source for this quote taken from Valles, 1938:p. 13).

For many decades religion and horticulture were important and pervasive components of the life of the village of Flushing. Tangible evidence of this fact is depicted on the composite map (Figure 12) showing locations which existed on or near the project site at various times (some continuously) from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries.

As for horticulture: "When George Washington wrote of visiting 'Mr. Prince's fruit gardens and shrubberies,' he was describing a horticultural establishment that has had a lasting influence on Flushing's appearance. The Linnaean Gardens [On Figure 11, Linnaean Gardens corresponds to the #6 locus.], established in Flushing by William Prince in 1737, was the first large nursery in the country." (WPA, 1939: p. 568). For many years Parsons' greenhouses and commercial garden occupied a large area east of the project site near the Bowne House. (On Figure 13 Parsons' nursery is marked by a star.) The Garretson Estate, which existed for over a hundred years until the early twentieth century, was located directly west of the southern half of the

project parcel. "The Garretson house stood in the center of the plot on the Main Street front. This plot of land comprised the entire block on the east side of Main Street from the corner of Lincoln Street (38th Avenue) to Locust Street (39th Avenue) and more than 200 feet in depth, running east on Lincoln Street and the same depth on Locust Street. Garret Garretson conducted a seed farm on the premises; steps on Lincoln Street led to the storehouse where seed was sold. [See Figures 12 & 14 for location of estate and seed store.] On these premises flowers were cultivated for the seed." (Lawson, 1952:p. 164-165) Flushing's reputation for its nurseries flourished and it became a center for every species of fruit tree, ornamental shrub, and exotic plant cultivated in America. By 1860 there were six nurseries operating in the town, occupying 246 acres and valued at \$124,000. (French, 1860: p. 546).

"St. George parish, established as a mission church of the Church of England in 1720, was the second religious organization in Flushing. Services were held in the old Guardhouse (at Main Street and Northern Boulevard) until 1746 when the first church was built on Main Street. The second church, erected in 1821, served until the present building was erected. Francis Lewis, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, served as a vestry man for many years for St. George Church." (Queens Historical Society, n.d.:p. 7-8). (See Figure 12 for location).

The Leggett-Fitch Mansion stood on what is now the north side of Roosevelt Avenue, 235 feet east of Main Street. It was two stories high with a wing on the east and faced Main Street. The house was on a knoll reached by a series of landscaped terraces. It was built in 1820 by the Rev. Mr. Thorne when he became rector of St. George's Episcopal Church. It was then noted for being the first in town to have outside venetian window blinds. Mr. Thorne resigned as rector in 1826 and in 1827 Benjamin Nicoll of Shelter Island became the owner. In the 1830s Thomas H. Liggett, a wealthy retail merchant of New York, (1787-1867) bought the estate for \$10,000 and added another wing. (Figure 12).

Eight years before his death - November 1859 - the local newspaper reported that Thomas Leggett was seriously thinking about cutting through a new street 60 feet wide just back of his home and to sell lots on the new street (Flushing Journal, Nov. 19, 1859 2:4). He pursued this idea and 39th Avenue came into being in 1875 as a result, eight years after his death.

Roosevelt Avenue had been opened just a few years earlier. This involved taking not only Leggett property but also the property of the landowner to the south, Elias Fairchild. A bill to open Roosevelt Avenue from Main Street to Union Street was submitted to the Legislature in the spring session of 1869 and the Governor signed the bill in April 1869. Commissioners were

appointed to award damages and these made their report at the end of July 1869. The new street (then called Amity Street), was laid out in 1870. The Leggett Estate put up at auction all the lots facing both sides of 39th Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue in 1874 and especially in October 1875. The Flushing Journal followed the proceedings and recorded all the buyers and the price paid. Within the next half dozen years, most of the purchasers erected houses on the new streets; the map of 1891 shows that almost every lot already has a dwelling on it. (Figure 15).

Leggett's widow, Frances V. Leggett, retained the mansion and two acres of grounds around it. She died in 1876 and her daughter, Avis Leggett, wife of Joseph Fitch, made it her home until her death in 1905 when it was inherited by her son Joseph Fitch, Jr. The mansion was torn down in 1924 and on its site was erected a modern brick four-story office building for the New York & Queens Electric Light & Power Company (still standing) west of the Municipal Parking lot.

"Construction of the Friends Meeting House began 1694. It was the first house of worship in the village of Flushing then called Vlissingen. The membership grew so rapidly that in 1714 it was enlarged by an addition as large as the original structure. The exterior has remained unchanged since that date." (Queens Historical Society, n.d.:p. 13). "Except from 1776 to 1783 when the British used it as a prison, hospital, and stable, the structure has served continuously as a meeting house." (WPA, 1939:p. 569. The City and National Landmarked building stands on Northern Boulevard opposite Linden Place). (Figure 12).

Other notable landmarks such as the site of the 1762 Aspinwall House, and the nineteenth century Town Hall, and the stone which marks the spot where George Fox, founder of the Friends Society, preached to local Quakers in 1672, attest to the rich history of this section of Flushing which surrounds the block of the Flushing Center project site.

#### Block 4978 - The Project Site

At the end of the eighteenth century the land south of Northern Boulevard and east of Main Street was in the possession of the Bayside branch of the Lawrence family. Around 1785, Effingham Lawrence, then head of the family, laid out 37th Avenue (Washington) and 38th Avenue (Liberty, later Lincoln) connecting Main Street and Union Street, and for decades these were the only side streets east of Main. These streets and the streets around St. George's Church were, in the early years of the century, the residential heart of the little village of Flushing. What little commerce there was was concentrated along the Flushing River bank or along the one business street, Bridge

Street, now the part of Northern Boulevard between Main Street and the river.

The square block bounded by Main, Union, 37th and 38th Avenues (now the upper half of the parking lot) was the first to be built on, and by 1841, the date of the Elijah H. Smith map, is already completely occupied by small frame houses. The lots on the north side of the block are the bigger one - 140 feet deep and 60 foot frontage; the lots on the south side are 100 feet deep and 25 to 400 feet in width. The lot owners are all old Flushing names - Silliman, Fowler, Lawrence, Loweree, Smith, etc. (Figure 16) The Walling Map of 1859 shows very much the same situation; a few of the wider lots have been sub-divided and a few of the 1841 owners have sold out to others. (Figure 14) The Beers Map of 1873 again shows the same dwelling, often in the same ownership. (Figure 17) The one feature that interrupted the uniform residential appearance of the square block was the presence of two churches: the Methodist Episcopal on the south side of 37th Avenue and almost exactly mid-block, and the Macedonia (sometimes mistakenly referred to as Zion A.M.E.) African Methodist Episcopal church on the north side of 38th Avenue, west of Union Street. Each had a graveyard on their grounds.

#### The Methodist Church

The White Methodists of Flushing built a small wooden frame church in 1822 on the south side of 37th Avenue. On July 6, 1822 Elizabeth Lawrence transferred title to the lot to the "Trustees of the Methodist Church of the United States of America" and Charles Peck. In 1843 the Methodists moved to a new site on the east side of Main Street just north of 37th Avenue and sold the lot the old church stood on to Mr. R. Smart, but not the cemetery lot in the rear, a lot roughly 58 X 70 feet. Mr. Smart used the old church building for public and political meetings; later, about 1860, he tore the old building down. The Methodist Church moved again in 1875 to Roosevelt Avenue; finally, in 1949, they moved again to the present site at 149th Street & 48th Avenue.

The net effect of all these removals was that the memory of the old cemetery was forgotten. To dispose of it would have required an Act of the Legislature and to secure this would have cost more than the property was worth. The earliest recorded burial in the old ground was in 1846 and the last in 1857. From time to time in the Flushing Journal of later years, there appeared articles about the refuse-strewn and neglected condition of the cemetery:

"Some of the residents of Liberty Street suggest that their friends bury thereafter in the Flushing Cemetery, as the church burying ground is full and

will some day be necessarily removed." Nov. 22, 1873  
2:2 Flushing Journal

"The old grave yard between Washington and Lincoln Streets east of Main Street is used as a common dumping ground for the rubbish of all the families in that neighborhood. It should be properly taken care of for its present condition is scandalous." April 25, 1875 Flushing Journal

The last time the yard attracted any attention was in 1900 when a reporter for the Brooklyn Eagle did a story on the place. By this date the site had degenerated to a baseball lot for neighborhood boys and in the underbrush only five stones remained, all for persons who had died between 1847 and 1853.

In the records of the Flushing Cemetery there are 24 entries scattered between 1853 and 1867 recording the removals of various persons from the old Methodist churchyard to family plots in Flushing Cemetery. There were supposed to have been 60 to 80 burials in the old yard; if this is true, it is now possible to account for only 30 names. (Records of the Flushing Cemetery - original ledgers).

The cemetery dropped totally out of public view for the next fifty years. Just after World War II, the City of New York, prodded by the merchants of downtown Flushing, decided to do something about the parking problem. The housing on the proposed site was now 100 years old and more and generally very run-down and so qualified for slum clearance.

On Oct. 18, 1949 the Corporation Counsel's office started condemnation proceedings. Demolition of the old houses began in 1950. By June 1953 the physical removal of the topsoil was under way and rumors began to reach the Public Works Department that there was a cemetery mid-block on 37th Avenue. Work stopped and an investigation of sorts began. There was no visible stone of any kind surviving and city agents quizzed the local inhabitants. A title search turned up the existence of the church but nothing about a cemetery. The pastor of the 148th Street Methodist Church was questioned and he confirmed that there was indeed a graveyard and that he had in his possession a record of the interments for 1846-1857. However, he had no deed and no record of any removals.

In the absence of anything concrete to go on, the Public Works Agency ordered a hand digging operation for the cemetery site in the last week of June 1953. After two weeks of patient work, nothing that would confirm the existence of a graveyard was turned up - no bones, no coffin plates or handles. By July 9th when the whole site had been shoveled out by hand with no trace of a body, the city felt justified in continuing



bull-dozing the surrounding area and in dismissing the "rumors" of a graveyard. On Feb. 3, 1954 the office of the Corporation Counsel officially declared the one-time Methodist burying ground non-existent. The Methodist Church received in settlement a condemnation award of \$500 from the Supreme Court in May 1950. In 1954 no one was sufficiently grounded in Flushing history to come forward with proof of names and dates of burials; this favored the city's position that the cemetery was a figment of local lore. (The above information obtained from issues of the Long Island Star-Journal)

#### Macedonia Methodist Episcopal Church

The church is the third oldest in Flushing having been organized in 1811. The Rev. Benjamin Griffin, a white preacher, officiated for this Negro congregation of the Methodist circuit. A church building was not erected until 1837. This was on the north side of 38th Avenue (Liberty, later Lincoln as of December 1873) and 52 feet west of Union Street. The church property itself was 104 feet deep and 75 feet wide. (See Appendix 1 for a full description of the lot history).

The fortunes of the Negro church were closely involved with the legal status of the communicants. On March 31, 1817 the New York State Legislature passed an Act freeing all slaves who had been born after July 4, 1797 once they reached the age of 28 for males and 25 for females. Every child born in slavery after the passage of the Act would be set free on reaching the age of 21.

Because Flushing was a heavily Quaker town, black slaves had been as a rule well treated. Quaker sympathy for the slaves and their interest in the Negroes' education and general well-being were widely known. As a result, Flushing had become the rendezvous of freedmen who had become very numerous. From this group the new Black church largely drew its membership. The Emancipation Proclamation by Lincoln some 40 years later during the Civil War further increased the black population of Flushing.

There were no public burial grounds in Flushing in 1811 for anyone, only churchyards and family cemeteries on farms. The need for a Black burying ground must have arisen almost as soon as the Macedonia Church was formed with part of the lot used for that purpose.

The Macedonia Church continued a quiet existence for a century and more; it is rarely mentioned in the local press because Negroes had little influence on the local scene; there were no prominent local Negroes and none in any position of power. The burying ground did attract attention in 1853:

"Our attention has been called to the smallness of the colored burying ground, the large number of interments in it and the situation in a compact part of the village. We think that the authorities should see to it that interments cease in that ground, and as the colored people have not the means of purchasing a burial spot for themselves, would it not be well for the Trustees of the Town to set apart a portion of the Public Burying Ground for their use, to be under their care, but the title to remain as it is. Something should be done as we know of no more efficient plan. It is too bad to have interments in a small lot in the midst of a dense population." (Flushing Journal, Aug. 13, 1853 2:3)

This suggests that the churchyard lot was already about filled as early as 1853. However, Rev. G.G. Crumpley stated in 1949 that the last interment took place in 1909. (Long Island Star-Journal, July 13, 1949). The request in the above quoted article was eventually fulfilled; a part of the Pauper grounds was set aside for Black burials and was used well into this century.

When the city decided after World War II to create the municipal parking field, the Macedonia Church was threatened for the first time in its existence. By this time its modern address had become 136-87 38th Avenue. When the city first aired its proposals to condemn two square blocks for a proposed parking facility in the spring of 1949, the pastor, Rev. G.G. Crumpley and his congregation members stormed Board of Estimate hearings until engineers agreed to build the parking lot without disturbing the old church or the bodies in the graveyard.

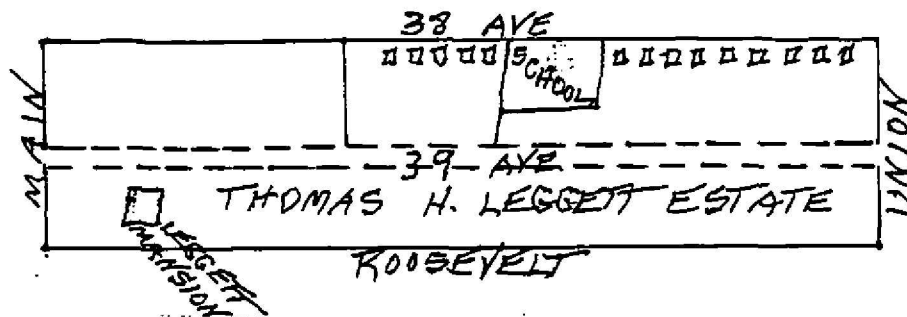
Although the church could, if necessary, be moved, it was the prospect of disturbing the burying ground that aroused the most concern and emotion. The truth was that the little cemetery was not as intact as many people supposed. As early as 1903 when an extension had been built to the church, the builders discovered bodies when they dug for a foundation and these were re-interred in a corner of the yard. In 1931 the pastor, Rev. Dr. William Dawkins added a \$20,000 wing to the church with a social hall and gym; the basement was dug out deeper and a new floor was put in. The new construction cut deeply into the yard and many bodies were disturbed even in places where none had been expected to turn up. The Rev. Dawkins applied for a plot in Flushing Cemetery to re-inter these bodies but the Trustees, echoing a long-time sentiment of the plot holders against Negro burial, refused on the excuse that Dr. Dawkins had no registration certificates to show from the original interments. Blocked from purchasing a Flushing Cemetery lot, Dr. Dawkins had all the remains enclosed in one box and reburied in a walkway alongside the church. There was

no problem with monuments because hardly any of the dead had ever possessed enough means to be able to afford a stone. (See Figure 18 ; See Appendix 3 )

The city and the church came to an agreement that proved a compromise. The church building was allowed to stay on its old site the only building so spared on the entire tract. Since 38th Avenue on which the church had always faced was now officially wiped off the map in order to construct the parking facility, the church had to provide a new entrance on the Union Street side. The result of the compromise of 1950 is that the Macedonia Church today is an island in a sea of cars; automobiles drive into the parking facility north of the church building and exit just south of it. (Figure 19)

#### Southern Portion of the Project Parcel

The lower half of the parking lot between 38th and 39th Avenues has a very different history from the upper half. For one thing, 39th Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue are far younger streets than 38th Avenue (once Liberty and Lincoln) and 37th Avenue (once Washington). For another, three fourths of the whole block (once bounded by Main, Union, 38th and Roosevelt-see drawing below)



was owned as a private estate by one man and no building lots were laid out until 1875. (The Leggett Estate and the laying out of these streets was discussed on page 16.) The only eighteenth century part of the block is the upper right quarter (northeast) This was settled and houses erected on small lots shortly after about 1785 when 38th Avenue was laid out.

The Flushing Female Association School: In the middle of this small group of fourteen houses on the south side of 38th Avenue was sited a school for Blacks run by the Flushing Female Association. Eighteen public-spirited Quaker women, moved by the

great need of the Negroes of Flushing for education, banded together and founded the "Flushing Female Association" on February 12, 1814. With their own money and with contributions they rented a private house on 37th Avenue and opened a school on April 6, 1814. It was "certainly the oldest non-religious organization in Queens County and one of the oldest charitable associations in the nation." (Long Island Star-Journal, April 24, 1940) The women aggressively pushed for donations and soon were able to buy two lots on the 38th Avenue site. "Two deeds are in possession of the Association for tracts of land bought in Liberty Street [38th Ave.], respectively in 1819 and 1821, the house of "Black Eleanor" being the boundary on one side, and the deed gives the impression that a few inches more or less in those days was a matter of small consequence. On this land they built a wooden building which served the purpose of a school until the erection of the present brick building in 1862, which cost \$1,869.02" (Murray, 1967:p.4) When the public school system of Flushing began in 1843, the village took over the little one-story building as an annex. In 1847 the school officially became the Colored School. The Quaker women continued to back the school financially, paying the salaries of teachers and doing volunteer work. In 1861 enough money was secured to build a brick building which opened in 1863. From newspaper remarks we know that sewing and singing were taught besides reading and writing. On Sundays a Negro Sunday School met in the building. This was helpful to the Macedonia church across the Street. After 1887 the brick building became inadequate as a public school and the FFA took back the building as the headquarters for a Colored Helping Association. During the twentieth century, various activities, most related to the Black population of Flushing, took place in the building. When the parking lot site was cleared in 1953, the venerable old brick school was demolished. No record of how the demolition was accomplished could be located. Figure 20 shows a steam shovel at work during construction; whether the building was shoveled out or bull-dozed in - or some combination of the two methods - is unknown.

Maps and atlases from 1841 through 1941 clearly indicate the size of the lot on which the two school buildings were successively situated. The plot was 60 feet across the front and rear; the depth measurements vary from 130 to 140 feet over time. (Figures 16 & 21 & 22 ) The size of the structures and how they were situated on the lot is also shown, although measurements were obtainable from only one Atlas - a 1917 Sanborn. (Figure 22 ) The building measures about 67½ feet in depth and about 34 feet across at the widest part of the cross. It is set back from 38 Avenue by about 8 feet. A circa 1930 photograph shows the brick building with the same configuration as recorded on the 1917 Atlas. (Figure 23 ) No alteration records could be located at the Queens Buildings Department. No out-buildings were shown on the atlases which were studied. Union Street, according to atlases, was apparently widened from 50

feet to 60 feet between 1904 and 1909. On the 1917 Sanborn Atlas, the Flushing Female Association lot line is about 390 feet from the Union Street curb as of that year. Today, Union Street is 80 feet which must be taken into account if any search should be made for remains of the schoolhouse.

Within the past decade there has been a great deal of interest and archaeological research on cultural groups frequently cut out of the documentary history. Archaeology offers the prospect of obtaining an independent source of data on minorities separate from written records that were in the main produced by a ruling majority. (Schuyler, 1980:p.viii) In fact, written information about nineteenth century Afro-American communities is sparse. The FFA schoolhouse site could produce tangible data about Black school-age children - and, by extension - their families and how they did or did not fit into the mainstream culture. Information about what they studied, what they ate, what they played with, what they wore, for example, might be gleaned from archaeological deposits on the lot such as privies, trash pits, or surface scatter.

Historical archaeology of individual lots which hosted homes, businesses, or institutions is often undertaken in urban settings. The cisterns, privies, wells, and trash pits which were ubiquitous in New York City during the seventeenth, eighteenth until early to late nineteenth century - depending on the locality - provide invaluable time capsules for the historian and anthropologist. As a common practice cisterns, privies, and wells - once their serviceability was exhausted - became repositories for refuse. Trash pits, of course, always functioned as such. An analysis of this detritus, in conjunction with a history of the inhabitants' ethnicity, occupation, and/or socio-economic status, can reveal details of and insights into the everyday life of the city's past. With the advent of water supply lines, sewage systems and municipal garbage collection, the backyards ceased to function as utilitarian extensions of the structures and the accumulation of potential archaeological data in the discrete, recognizable units of these receptacles ceased. As Lynn Ceci noted in her archaeological study of the Bowne House, which stands a few blocks from the Flushing Center Project Site, one may expect post-1898 dated cultural refuse in minimal quantities or absent due to the advances in urban sanitation systems c.1898 when the Borough of Queens became one of five counties of greater New York City. (Ceci, 1985:p.11) That general date corresponds with the approximate time of the decline of the FFA building's exclusive use as a Black school. Therefore, unless massive disturbance caused by the demolition/construction attendant on the building of the parking lot has destroyed all subsurface features such as those just discussed, over a half century's worth of cultural remains relating to a unique institution may exist on the school lot.

### Block 4978 in the Twentieth Century

Local residents of the project area can still recall the vitality and diversity of the neighborhood during the first half of the twentieth century. The tree-lined streets were filled with raised stoop, brick and frame, three and four-story, two family homes. Although many of the homes in the area were in bad repair, nineteenth century architectural details (slate fish-scale shingles, mansard roofs, Italianate trim) were extant, according to available photographs. These homes hosted family businesses on the street level - such as, Mrs. Crawford's Beauty Shop, Lincoln Scott's Funeral Home, "Uncle Sam's" Barber Shop, Footman-Whiting Printing Company. Fronting on the south side of 38th Avenue, diagonally across from the Macedonia Church, was the enterprise "Economy Chop Suey A.M.E. Dishes." The Union Street - 38th Avenue corner lot that is now occupied by the Macedonia chapel and side entrance was also, prior to 1953, a local store with residences above.

There were a few exceptions to this general neighborhood pattern. There was at least one boarding house which was considered by the Blacks moving north from the southern United States as a temporary home while they found jobs and established themselves. A few one-family homes existed in the project area. Certain plots contained a second house that fronted on the rear of the street-side building. Small alleys led to these rear houses, which were often separated from their rear neighbors by cement fences. Not all of the private homes were connected to municipal sewers during the twentieth century - privies were still being used on some locations.

## VI. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is evidence that the Flushing Bay shoreline and certain inland tracts in the downtown Flushing area were inhabited by Native Americans. The Village of Flushing was settled in the seventeenth century and became an early agricultural center. Through time it hosted extensive horticultural enterprises and became known as a haven of religious tolerance. The Flushing Center Project parcel, Block 4978, is situated in close proximity to National and New York City Landmarks that celebrate Flushing's past. There is no question that three centuries of cultural evolution have taken place in the "Village of Flushing." The proposed project will, by the nature of deep foundation construction practices, impact the present subsurface deposits on the Block. The integrity of such underground deposits - that is, the degree of post depositional disturbance - is not known at this time. It is not the practice of responsible archaeologists to recommend the excavation of an urban site just because something might be there. There must be the reasonable and demonstrably valid expectation of obtaining data which would fill an important gap in or make a substantive contribution to the existing archaeological record. For example, we know that the Bowne House was commandeered as barracks for Hessian soldiers during the Revolutionary War. (Ceci, 1985:p.4) Because this house site is only one block away from Block 4978 there is the possibility that the project site could yield random artifacts from the 1770-80s period. However, excavations designed to seek out such tentative resources would be untenable.

As discussed in the Prehistoric Period section, Native Americans exploited both the coastal and inland resources of Queens. We know that both mineral springs and the estuarine resources of Flushing Creek attracted Native Americans to sites just west of the project parcel. Although coastal sites are heavily represented in the published literature, settlement pattern data indicates that inland site functions were also important to the aboriginal cultures. Inland sites were often located on a raised, level terrace near a large body of water. Specific research questions concerning the prehistoric seasonal exploitation system and the introduction of cultigens can only be answered if non-shell midden, inland sites within the coastal zone are located and excavated.

It is possible that prehistoric resources did survive in small unaltered yard spaces of the pre-1954 Block 4978. The current lack of markers and historic topographic features would make the precise identification of such yard spaces extremely difficult. Although some potential does exist that could be tested through the monitoring of deep excavations in the areas that correspond to the pre-1954 backyard plots, we feel that the potential is severely limited. The documentary evidence in conjunction with the disturbance record does not seem to warrant a field investigation for prehistoric resources.

With these  
atlases  
why can't  
you survey &  
locate backyards  
Wolverton's  
1891

Bromley 1909 27  
Bears 1873  
Smith 1841

Why can't  
you  
reconstruct  
the  
lots?

That backyard deposits which could contain archaeological resources once existed on the many small lots is known from an examination of maps and land-use atlases spanning the early-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century when the area became a parking lot. No large structures were erected; instead, there were small buildings which must have functioned as homes or boarding houses or shops. In most cases the lots were not completely covered with structures, though outbuildings and a second generation of little houses were added on some plots. An aerial photograph taken in 1924 substantiates this description. (Figure 24) Public utilities, in most instances, replaced backyard means of water/waste management only at the end of the nineteenth century after many of the lots had been developed for decades. As discussed on the previous page, it is extremely difficult to precisely locate small backyards when physical lot features no longer exist. Historical Perspectives Inc. does not recommend field testing for these resources.

what  
happened  
in the  
1940s?

However, in order to justify fieldwork of pre-1954 backyard spaces (which may or may not have already been destroyed) on the Flushing Center site, a narrowed focus of research would need to be undertaken to identify what unique or significant information might be recovered. For example, if it can be proven that the Project Site homes were owned or inhabited by a particular ethnic or other affinity group over a long period of time, or if an extraordinary historical event took place on the site, then further investigations would be warranted. There is no indication from research done thus far that such a situation exists. Archives and records do show that institutions for Blacks were located on the project site and that during the twentieth century the block residents were at least partially Black. But the time duration and the size of the Black population - or any other affinity group is unknown and may be difficult to precisely define. To amass the necessary data to make a determination one way or the other would take exhaustive and time consuming study beyond the scope of this Phase IA report. It would involve, in part, the construction of a lot history for each parcel. That means that all property transactions, building records, and tax lists must be found and compiled for each lot over time. Census records would have to be combed for references to ethnicity, size of family, relationships (kin and otherwise) among building occupants, and so forth. It must be noted that data on renters and boarding house occupants is very limited. After this and other research was accomplished, a comparative assessment of the lots in the aggregate would have to be done. If this in-depth study is deemed warranted by the appropriate review agency, it could be accomplished in a Phase IB Documentary Study undertaken before or concurrently with Phase IB Field Testing.

The Phase IA Assessment Report of the Flushing Center Project site has identified two areas of historical archaeological sensitivity that require field testing. First is the lot on which stood for a over a century the two successive buildings which housed the Flushing Female Association school for Black



children. The size of the lot remained constant over time at 60 x c.135 feet. (The notations on maps of 130 to 140 feet most likely represent varying cartographic idiosyncracies.) The rear yard of the schoolhouse undoubtedly served as a playground and must also have contained a privy or privies. Cisterns, well, and trash pits are also likely to have existed. The value of such features with their stratified contents of material culture is well accepted by those who study past lifeways. Before construction activity for the proposed Flushing Center begins, Historical Perspectives Inc. recommends testing be conducted on the southern section of the FFA school parcel to ascertain the presence/absence of preserved or truncated nineteenth century schoolyard features. The actual research design must be approved by LPC, but it would, most likely, include the use of heavy machinery to remove the bituminous pavement and a blade-fitted bulldozer to scrape the surface of that percentage of the rear school lot that is designated for testing. At present there is insufficient data on the c. 1954 demolition procedures, parking lot construction, and landfill depths to precisely determine field procedures. (See Appendix 2 for an account of the unsuccessful archival attempts to ascertain the amount of disturbance caused by the parking lot.)

A second locus of certain archaeological sensitivity is the 60 x 140 foot area which was the original lot purchased by the Macedonia AME Church congregation in 1811. Church-member interments have been found at unsuspected places on this lot, and there is no way of knowing if all burials have been located. (See Appendices 1 and 3 for newspaper accounts of the unearthed burials and for the results of property and buildings records studies.) Archaeologists conducting excavations in Black and White cemeteries (Massachusetts, Arkansas, Pennsylvania) have reported the discovery of numerous, unrecorded and/or lost grave shafts within the graveyard plot and on the bordering properties. (Rose, 1982; Gumaer, 1986; Parrington and Wide, 1986) These discoveries may be the result of property boundary lines being unclear through time. Members of the Macedonia Church did not always have the option of local public graveyards and their church cemetery plot was crowded. It is not inappropriate to speculate that early Black burials may have been placed beyond the specific boundaries as recorded in mid-twentieth century city documents. Burial plot archaeology is costly, time consuming, and disruptive to the community. Therefore, it is recommended that the sensitive undisturbed preservation of any possible grave sites be implemented. We feel that all concerned parties would benefit from an established buffer zone of undisturbed land surrounding the Macedonia Church on the north, west, and south sides. This buffer zone, delineated after consultation with the project architects, LPC, Historical Perspectives Inc. and AME Church personnel, could be beautified with introduced soil, retainer beds, and raised palnters that would not further disturb any possible grave shafts.

The width of such a buffer can, in part, be determined by

the known disturbances on land abutting the AME lot, assuming those disturbances were of a scale and depth to destroy the integrity of possible graves. For example, the lot directly west of the AME plot hosted a substantial structure and several out-buildings in the twentieth century. According to photographs and atlases these structures were built on their extreme eastern lot line, possibly destroying any burials that would have encroached beyond the small alley/air way between the church and its neighbor. Also, on the south side of AME is the buried 38th Avenue roadbed. An archaeological concern is for possible graves in the front yard of the church that originally fronted on 38th Avenue - one newspaper account mentions a headstone at the front door. However, the 38th Avenue roadbed, itself a buffer through time, has undergone extensive changes, including widening and utility installations. Therefore, on the south side of the church the protective buffer would not need to extend beyond the disturbed roadway.

We feel that it will be necessary, regardless of the buffer width selected, to verify that, in fact, no graves are being impacted by the development. Historical Perspectives Inc. recommends establishing a reasonable buffer strip, that might very well coincide with development design, and testing the perimeter of that buffer strip for the presence/absence of grave shafts.

The archaeologists would not explore for burials but, rather, confirm that the development impacts will be sufficiently removed from possible AME interments so that the construction can proceed.

*What do you mean?*

*wouldn't you look for pres of burials?*

As with the FFA parcel, the actual research design would have to be approved by LPC, but most likely heavy machinery would have to remove a swath of the bituminous pavement from the outside edge of the buffer. A blade-fitted bulldozer, under the direction of a professional archaeologist, would then strip away modern landfill from the same perimeter strip. Hand excavation would be employed to locate possible grave shafts. Grave shafts, usually detectable because of unconsolidated soils, should appear within the top two feet of the pre-twentieth century grade. At present there is insufficient data on landfill depths to precisely determine field procedures. However, soil borings taken for a subsequent foundation design phase can provide necessary data on the overburden mantle.

*do you think this is enough?  
what if there are 19th C. land alterations?*

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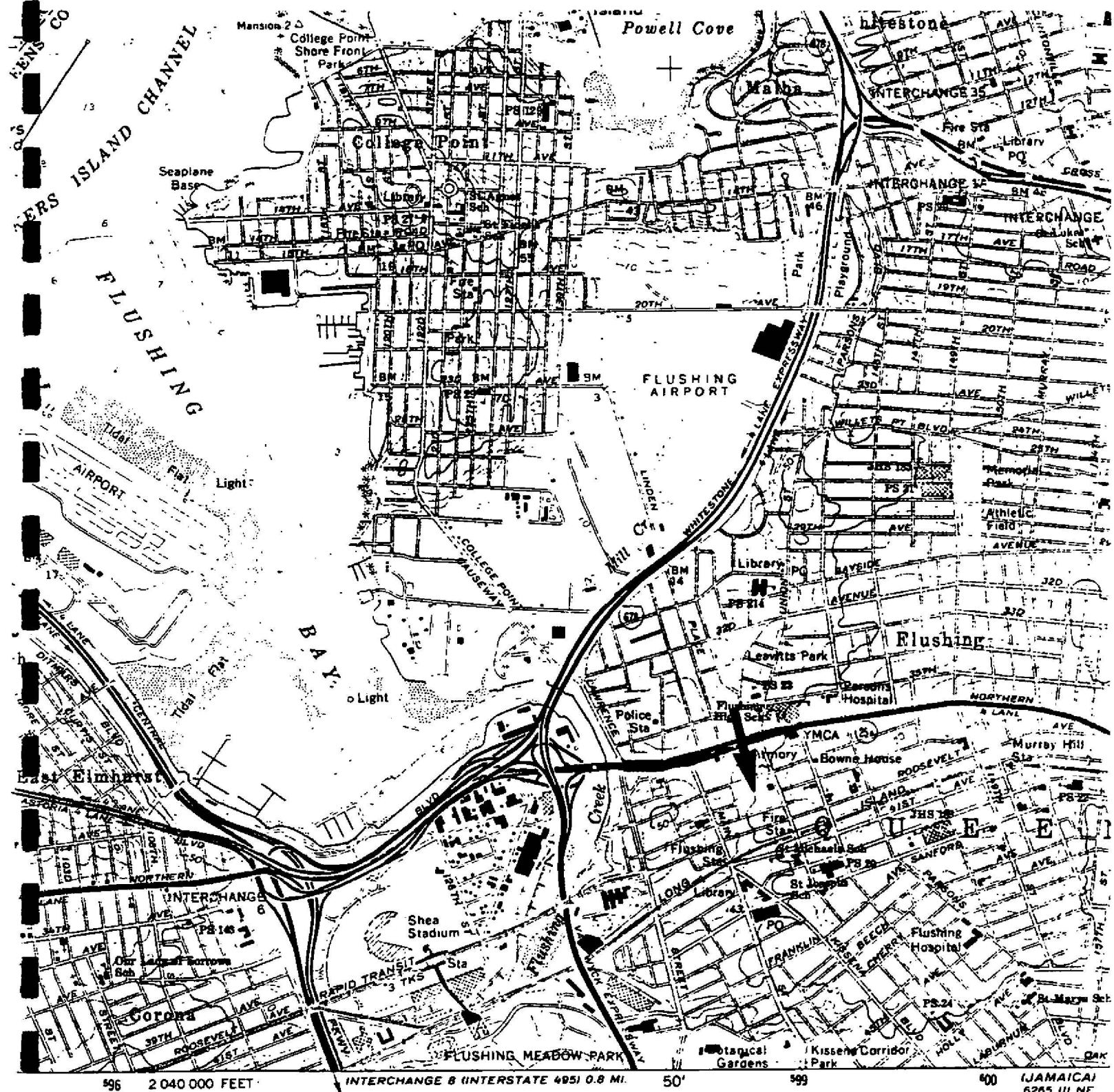
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U.S.G.S. Topographic Map - Flushing Quadrangle  
7.5' series

Figure 1

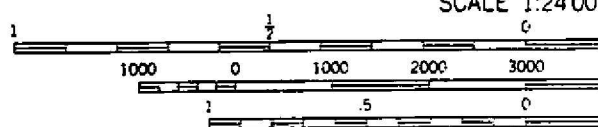


and published by the Geological Survey  
 in cooperation with New York Department  
 of Conservation  
 and Nassau County  
 derived from USC&GS Charts T-5089, T-5090,  
 and T-5091. Topography by photogrammetric methods  
 from aerial photographs taken 1954. Field checked 1955.  
 Data compiled from USC&GS Charts  
 T-5089, T-5090, T-5091 (1967). This information is not intended  
 for navigation purposes

UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

12° 21' 30" N  
 0° 47' 14" N

213 MILS  
 114 MILS

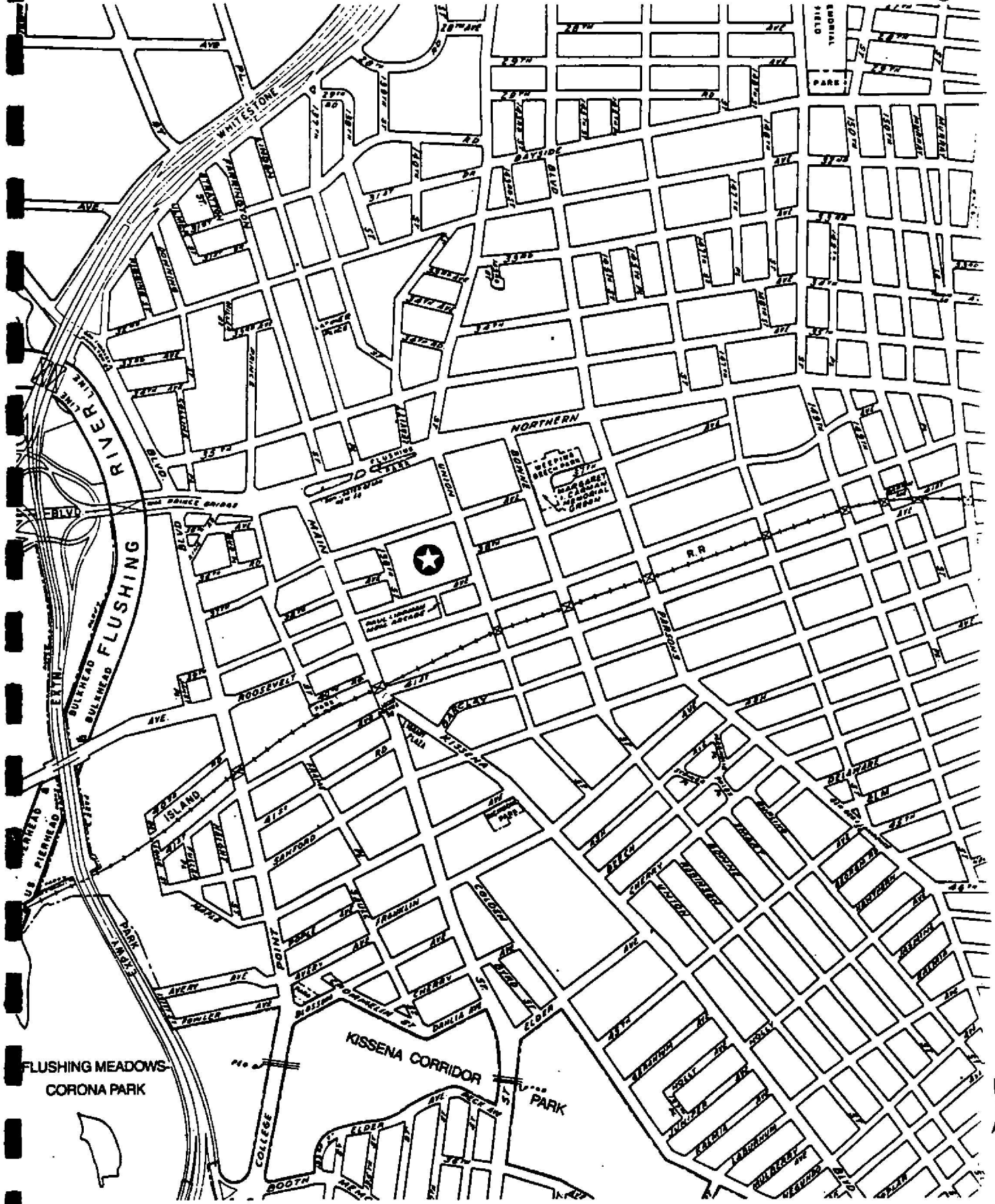


SCALE 1:24 000  
 (JAMAICA)  
 6265 III NE

CONTOUR INTERVAL  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL  
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO  
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE  
 MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATE

FLUSHING CENTER PROJECT SITE:

Figure 2

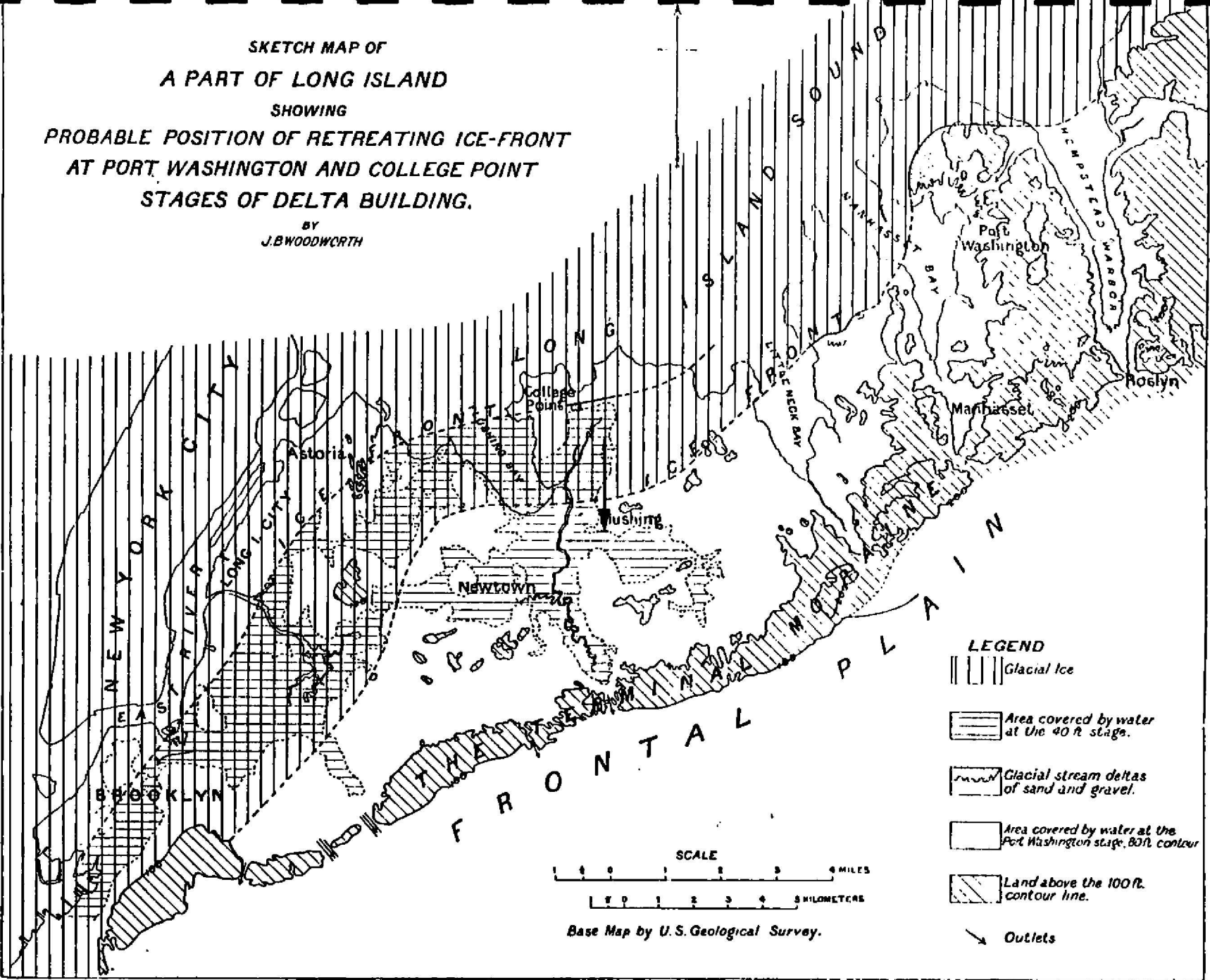


Map provided by AKRF, Inc.



SKETCH MAP OF  
 A PART OF LONG ISLAND  
 SHOWING  
 PROBABLE POSITION OF RETREATING ICE-FRONT  
 AT PORT WASHINGTON AND COLLEGE POINT  
 STAGES OF DELTA BUILDING.

BY  
 J.B. WOODWORTH



- LEGEND**
- Glacial ice
  - Area covered by water at the 40 ft stage.
  - Glacial stream deltas of sand and gravel.
  - Area covered by water at the Port Washington stage, 80 ft. contour
  - Land above the 100 ft. contour line.
  - Outlets

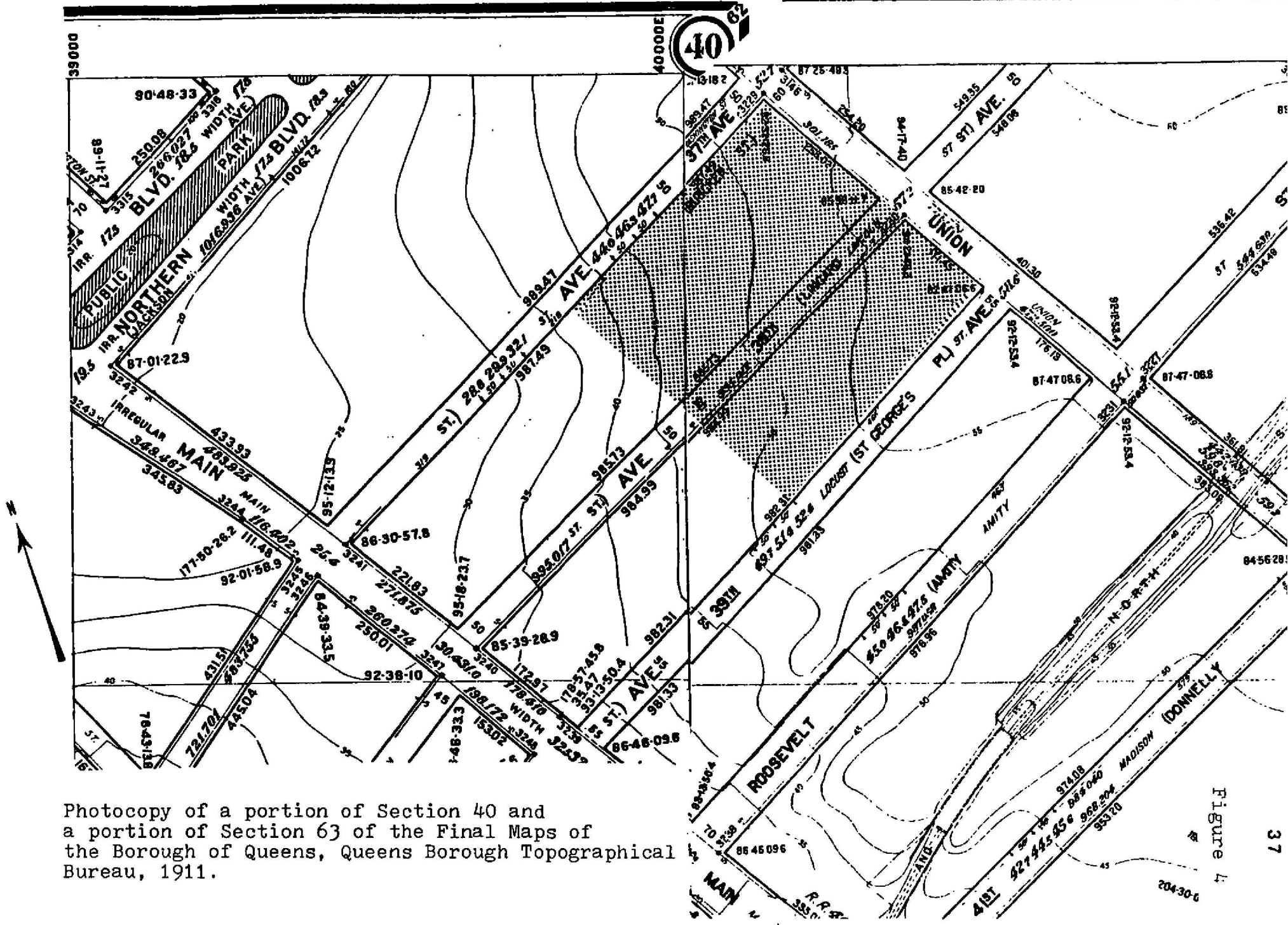
SCALE  
 0 1 2 3 4 MILES  
 0 1 2 3 4 KILOMETERS

Base Map by U.S. Geological Survey.

The map includes the area from Roslyn and Glen Cove on the east to Brooklyn and from the moraine to the north shore. The obliquely ruled black lined areas comprise land above the 100 foot line. The unruled area between the moraine and the heavy black line representing the Port Washington ice front gives the approximate extent of the fresh-water lake held in at the Port Washington stage. The dotted surface with lobate margins shows the position of the delta of that stage, and the arrow indicates the channel through which the Hempstead bay lake drained into Manhasset bay lake, from which in turn the water may have escaped into the Little Neck and Flushing bay region, and so spilled over the moraine in some one or more of the low passes marked by small arrows.

Photocopied from Gratacap, 1909: Map III

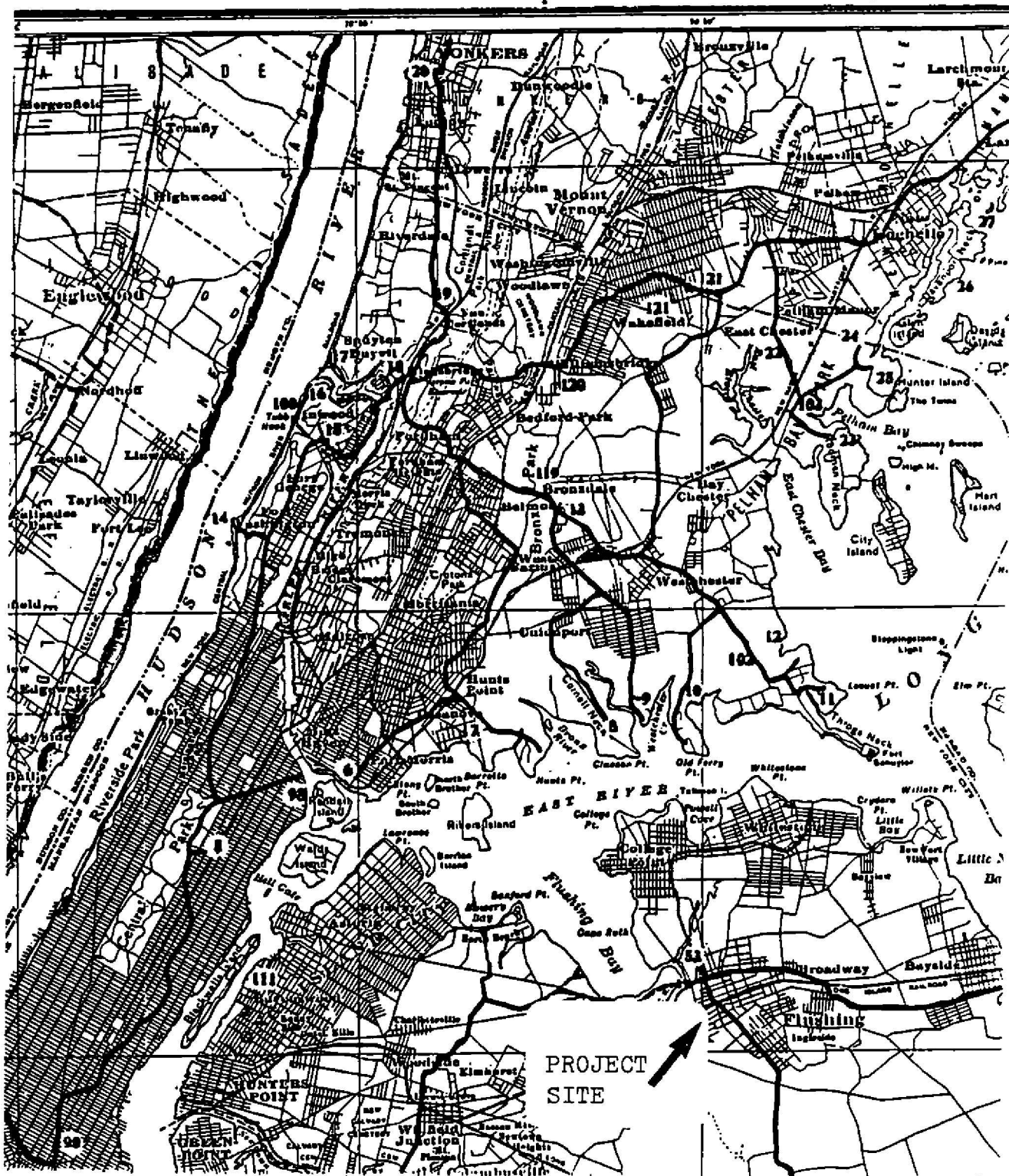
Figure 3



Photocopy of a portion of Section 40 and a portion of Section 63 of the Final Maps of the Borough of Queens, Queens Borough Topographical Bureau, 1911.

Figure 5

Photocopy of  
MAP DEPICTING INDIAN PATHS IN THE GREAT METROPOLIS,  
from  
Bolton, 1920: n.p.



Photocopied from:

Figure 6

Grumet, 1981: p. 71

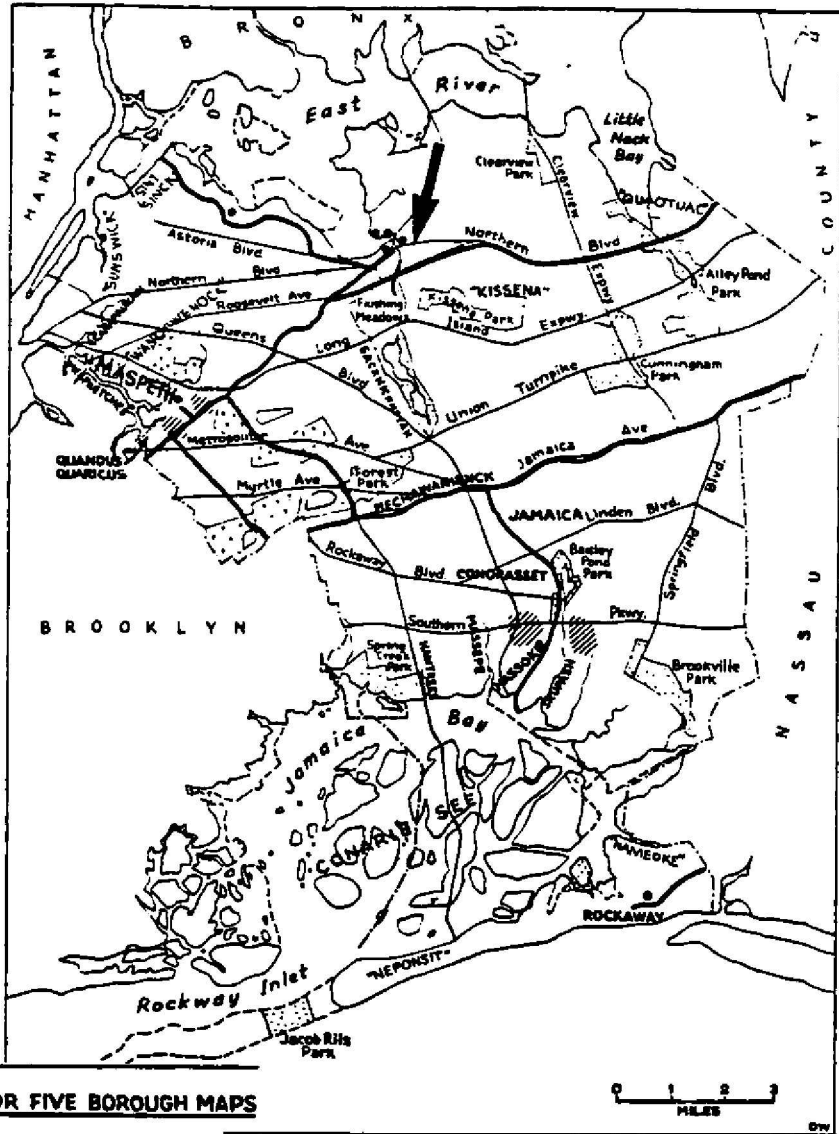
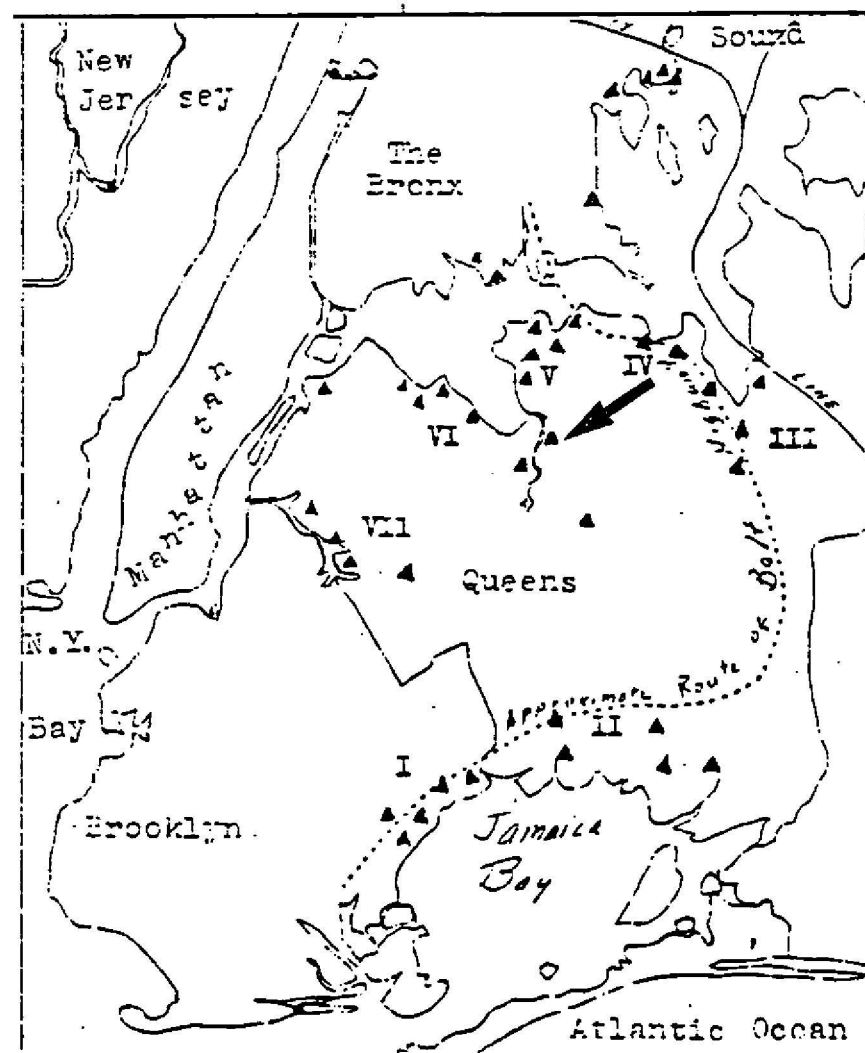


Figure 7

Photocopied from  
Solecki, 1941



**INDIAN VILLAGE SITES:** Triangles on diagram indicate sites explored by Committee on American Anthropology of the Flushing Historical Society. Important locations described in accompanying article are numbered.



Prehistoric site identification map provided by the New York State Museum.

Figure 8





Photocopy of  
Sir Henry Clinton's Map  
1781  
Provided by Gaynelle Levine

Figure 10





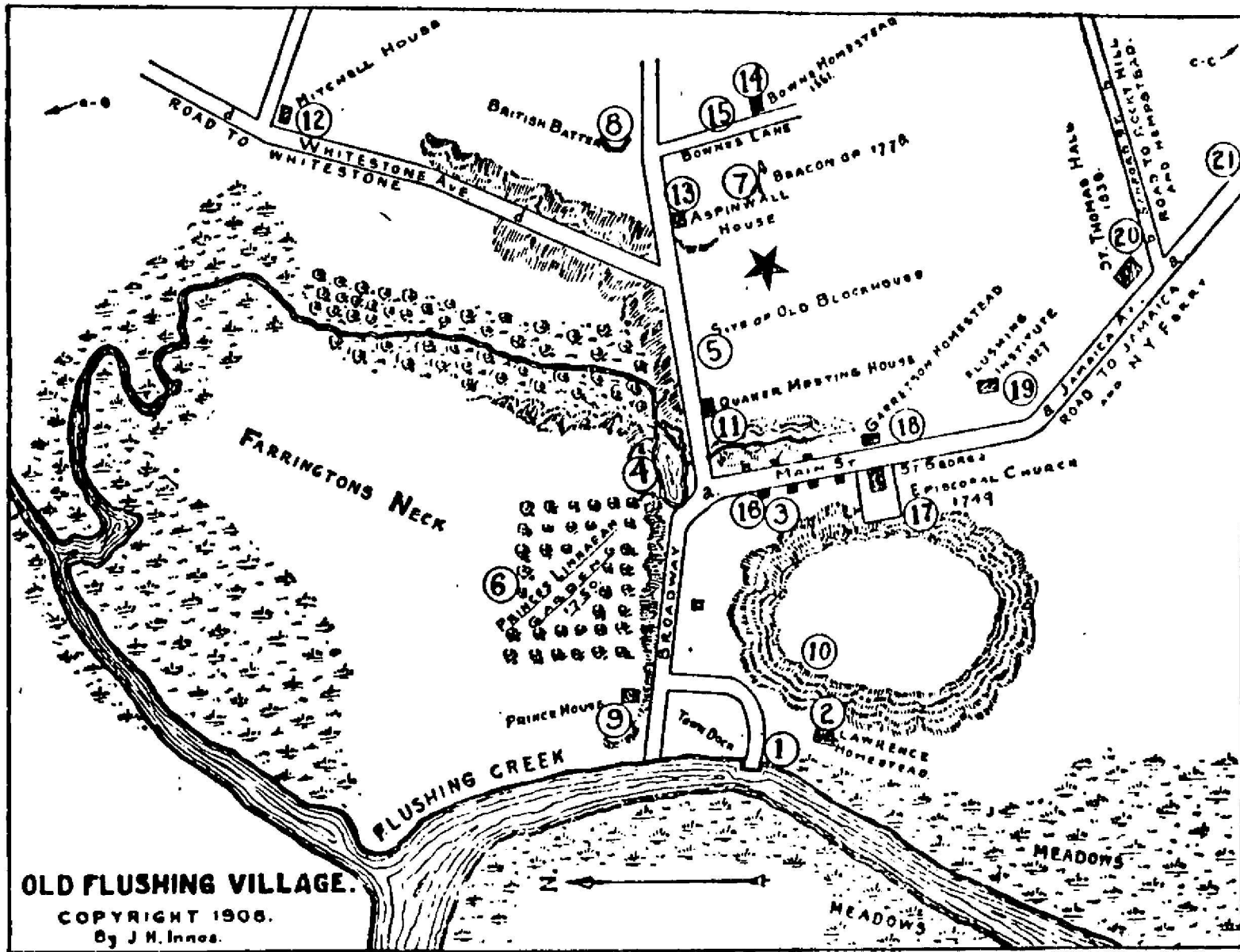



Figure 11

**FLUSHING CENTER PROJECT  
and  
HISTORICAL SITES IN FLUSHING**

**legend**

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Flushing Center Project</b>     |
| 1   | <b>Garretson Estate</b>            |
| 2   | <b>St. George's Church</b>         |
| 3   | <b>Legget Mansion</b>              |
| 4   | <b>Bowne House</b>                 |
| 5   | <b>Linnean Gardens</b>             |
| 6   | <b>Parson's Nursery</b>            |
| 7   | <b>Quaker Meeting House</b>        |
| 8   | <b>Town Hall</b>                   |
| 9   | <b>Female Flushing Association</b> |
| 10  | <b>Methodist Church</b>            |
| 11  | <b>Macedonia A.M.E. Church</b>     |

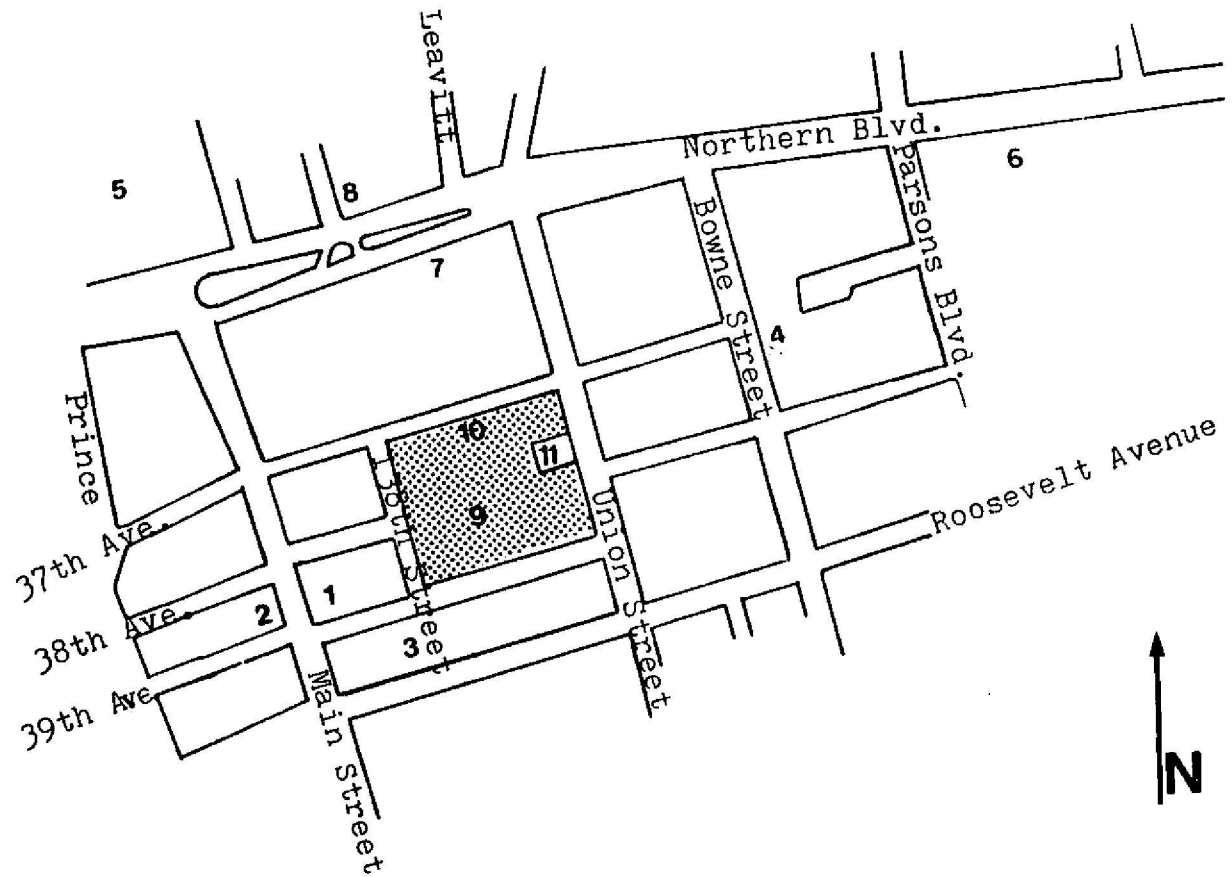


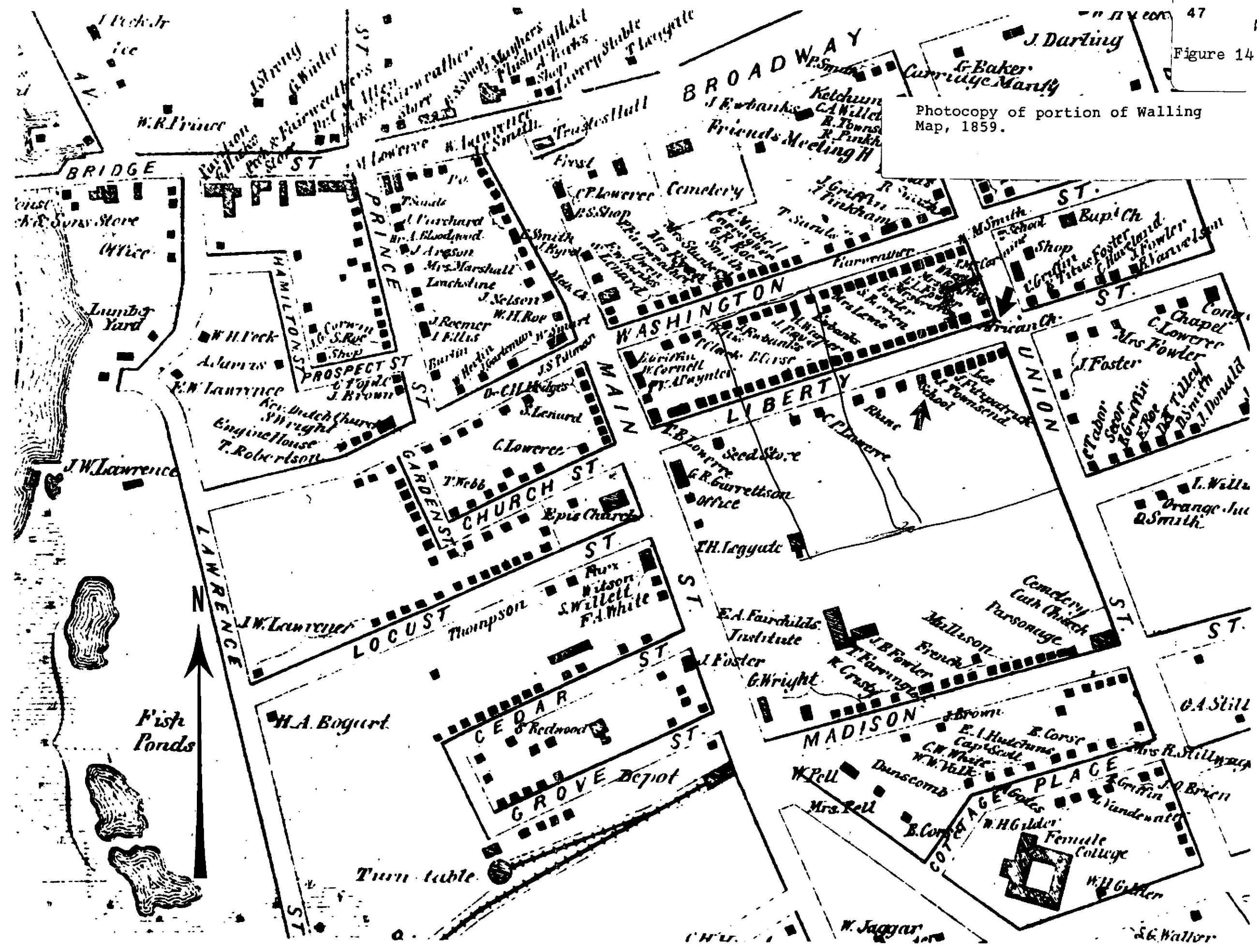
Figure 12

Figure 13

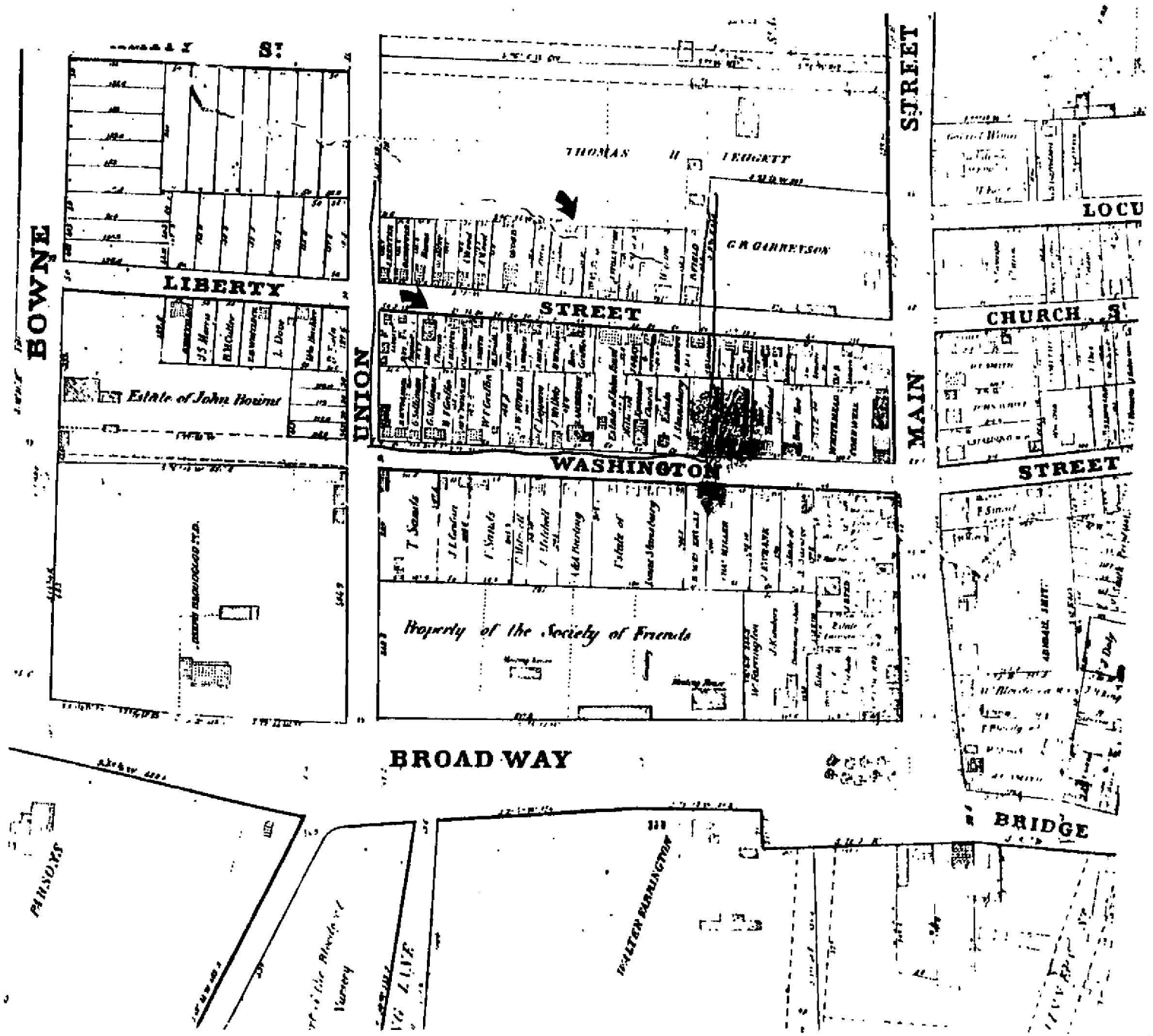
Photocopy of Conner Map of Long Island - 1852



Photocopy of portion of Walling Map, 1859.







Photocopy of Elijah A. Smith Map, April 1841

Figure 16

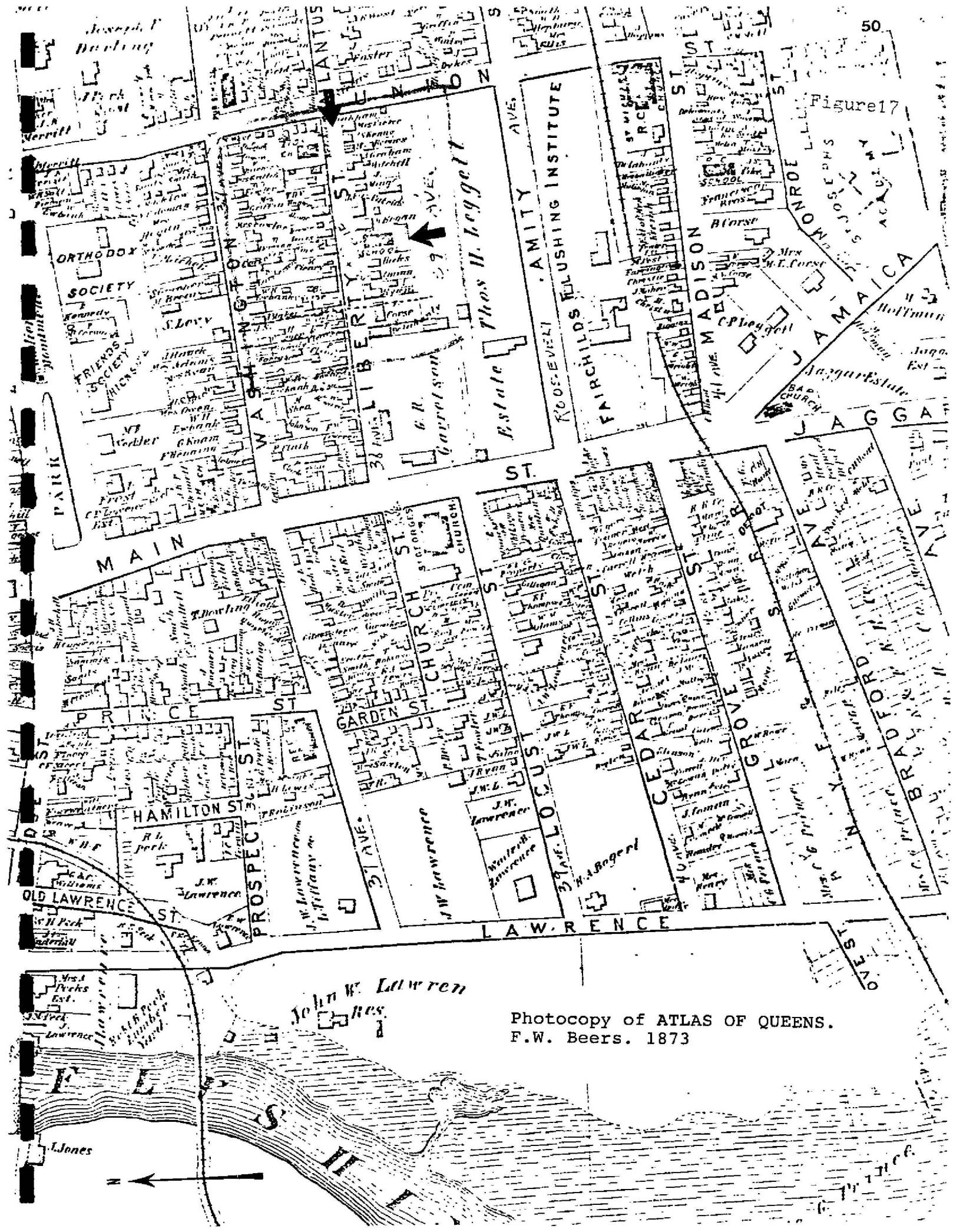


Figure 17

Photocopy of ATLAS OF QUEENS.  
F.W. Beers. 1873

John W. Lawrence  
Res.

L. Jones

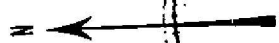


Figure 18

Copy of a photograph taken in 1930.  
Furnished by the Macedonia A.M.E.  
Church.

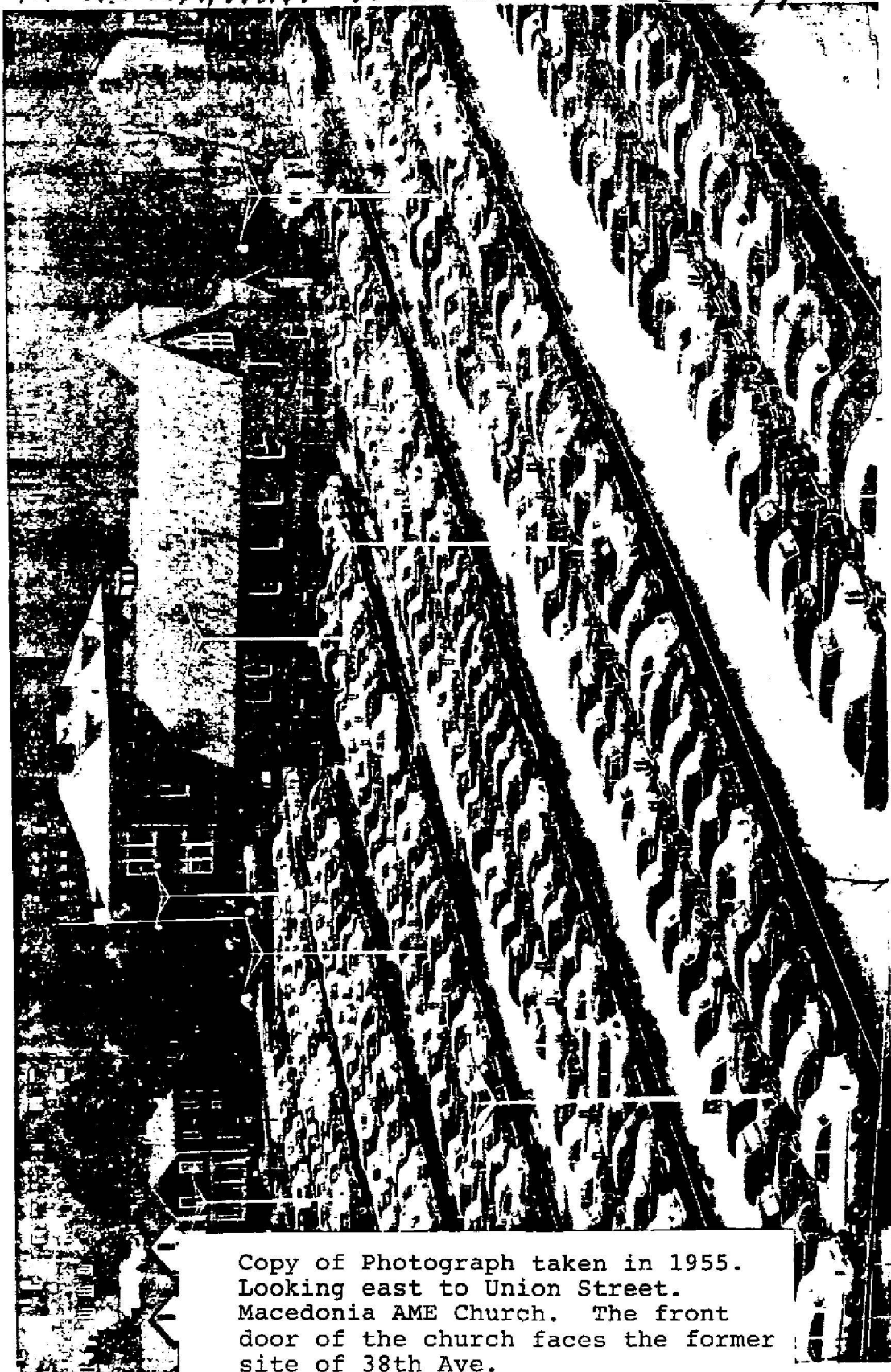


**BONES UNEARTHED DURING 1930**



## TRANSPORTATION. AUTOMOBILES. QUEENS COUNTY / PARKING

Figure 19

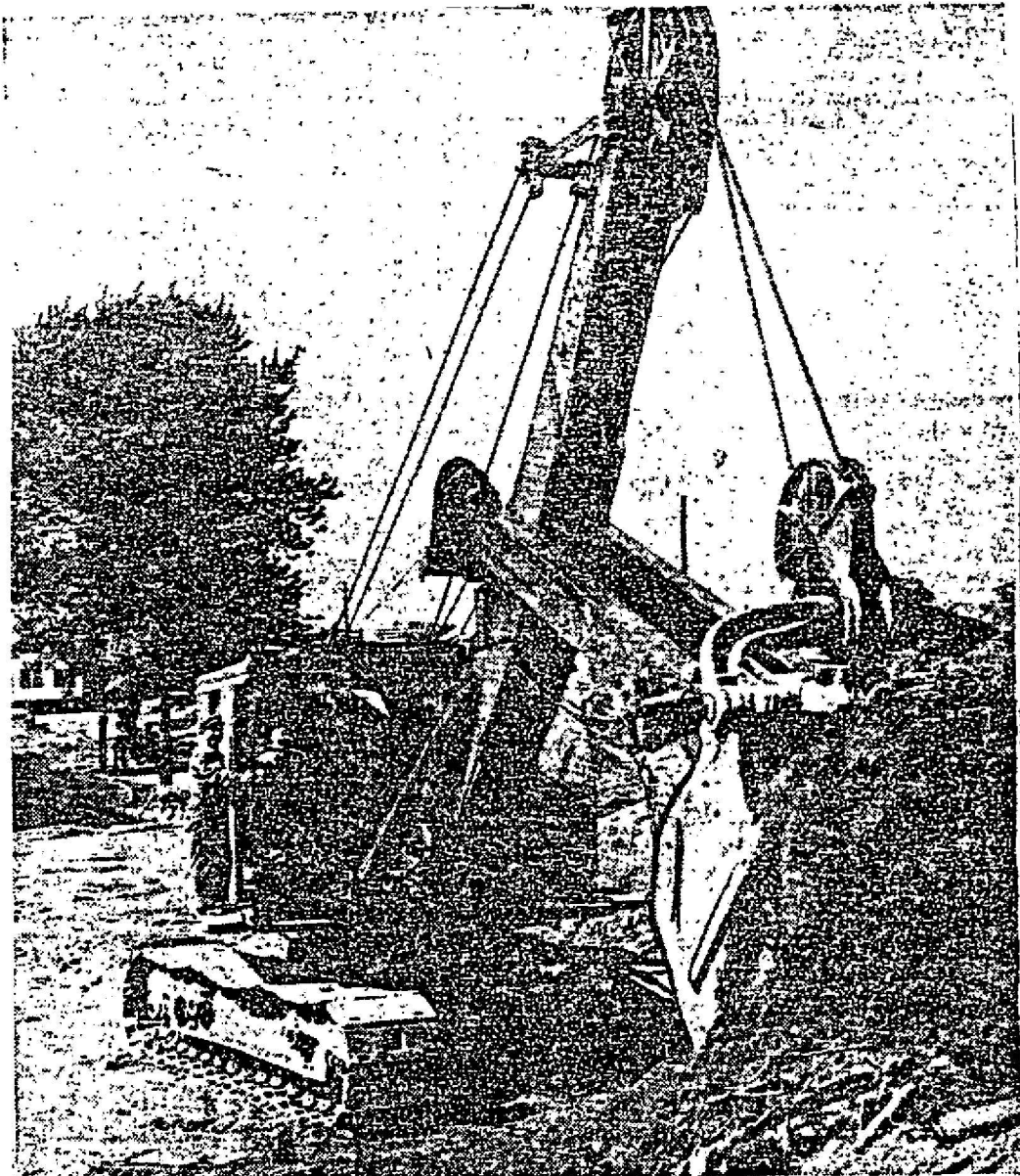


Copy of Photograph taken in 1955.  
 Looking east to Union Street.  
 Macedonia AME Church. The front  
 door of the church faces the former  
 site of 38th Ave.  
 Furnished by Vincent Seyfried.

Part of Flushing Parking Area, New York City's first municipal off-street parking facility. In heart of business center, the field is used by as many as 3,000 cars a day. On opposite side of field is Macedonia A.M.E. Church.

*BUSINESS + INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER; FLUSHING COMMENCEMENT May 1958*

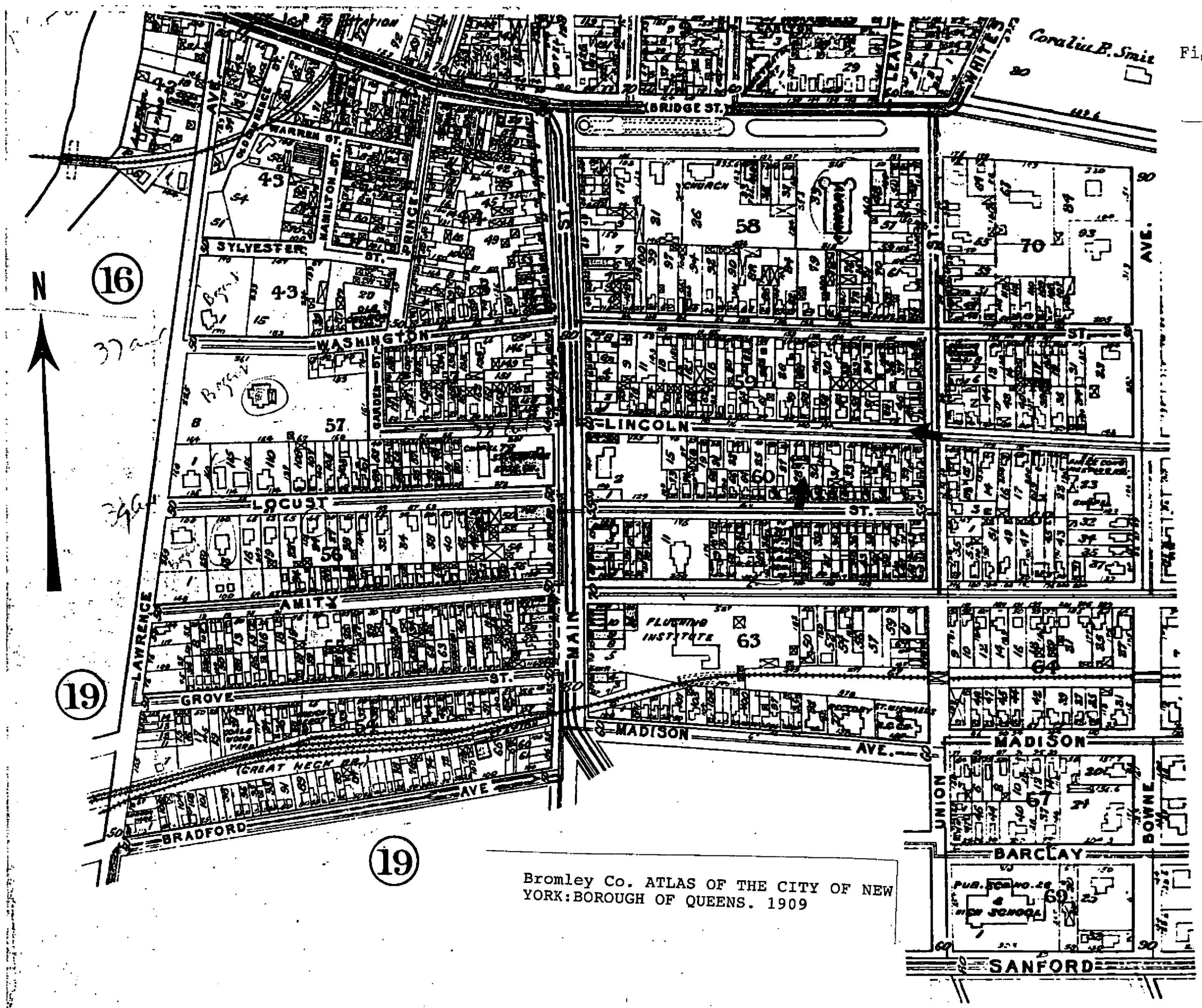
Figure 20



**BITING THE DUST** — Work on Flushing's municipal parking lot on 37th avenue between Main and Union streets moves ahead as a steam shovel operated by Edward Monaghan of 209-26 45th road, Bayside, (left) and Salvatore Dubato, an offer of 5-46 50th avenue, Long Island City, bites into the earth removing huge scoops of land.

Copy of a photograph from the  
Wednesday, June 24, 1953 edition  
of the LONG ISLAND STAR-JOURNAL

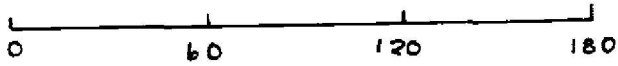
Figure 21



Bromley Co. ATLAS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK: BOROUGH OF QUEENS. 1909

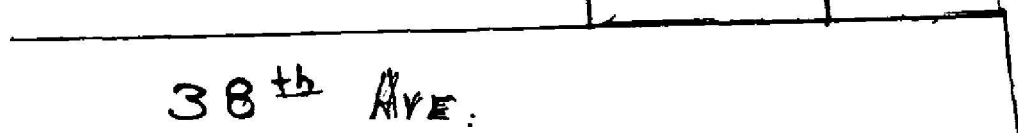
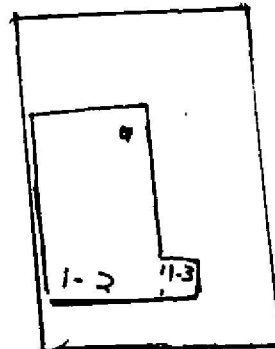
Figure 22

Tracing of Portion of Sanborn Map Co.  
ATLAS OF THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS  
SCALE: 1 inch = 60 feet

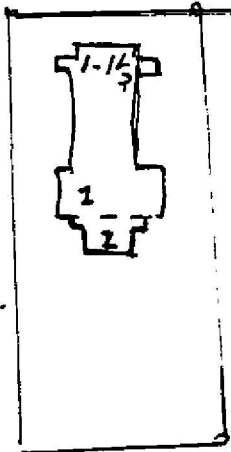


1917 (corrected)

"Macedonia M.E.  
Church"  
[shown as frame]



UNION AVE.



Flushing Female  
Association Hall  
[shown brick with  
frame extension  
on rear]

Copy of Photograph taken circa 1930.  
The Flushing Female Association  
School. Looking south from 38th Ave.  
Furnished by Vincent Seyfried.

Figure 23

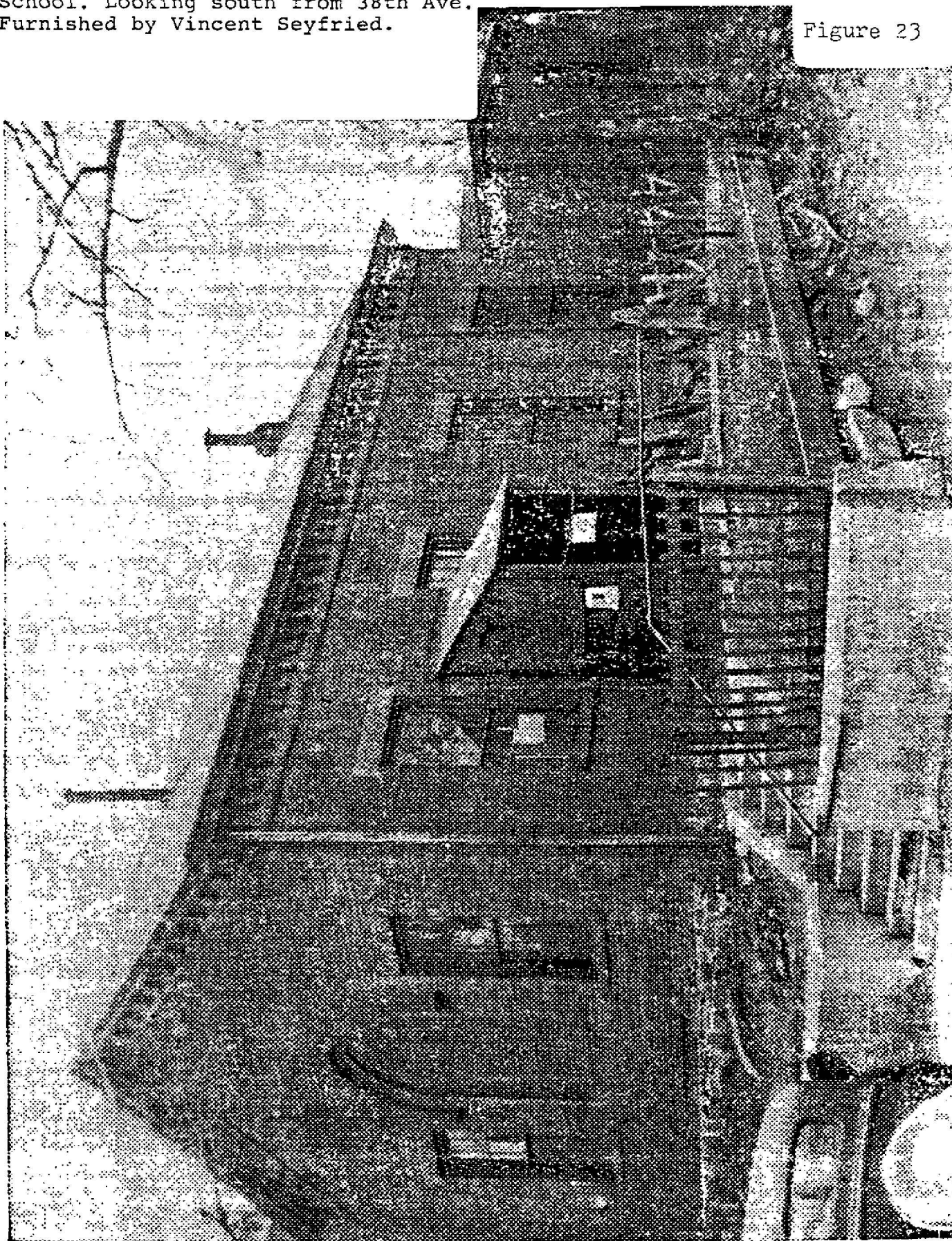


Figure 24



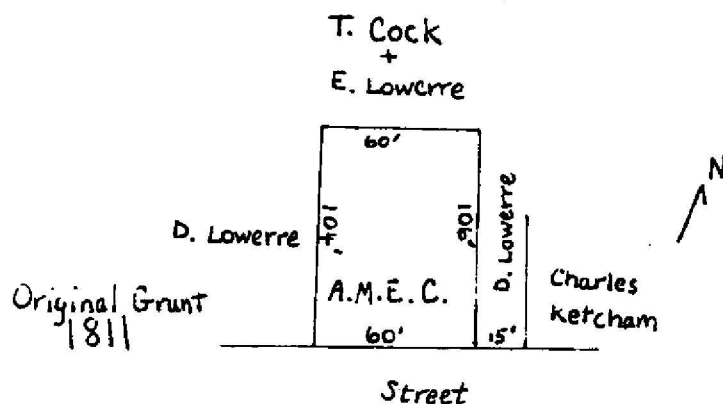
1924 Aerial Photograph  
Furnished by V. Seyfried.

## Appendix 1

The Macedonia African Episcopal Church purchased its first property in Flushing on April 27, 1811, through its trustees, Joseph Harper, Isaac Cafs, Jacob Townsend, Josiah Conklin, William Paul Williams, John Carpenter, James Fusman, Squire Philips and Abraham Marks, all of Flushing. The "Macedonia" Church bought for \$125:

All that piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the Town of Flushing County of Queens in the State of New York beginning about fifteen feet from the corner of a yard owned by Charles Ketcham running thence West sixty feet along the Street the North one hundred and four feet by land owned by Daniel Lowerre aforesaid the East sixty feet by lands of Elisabeth Lowerre and Thomas Cock the South one hundred & six feet by land of the said Daniel Lowerre to the place of beginning

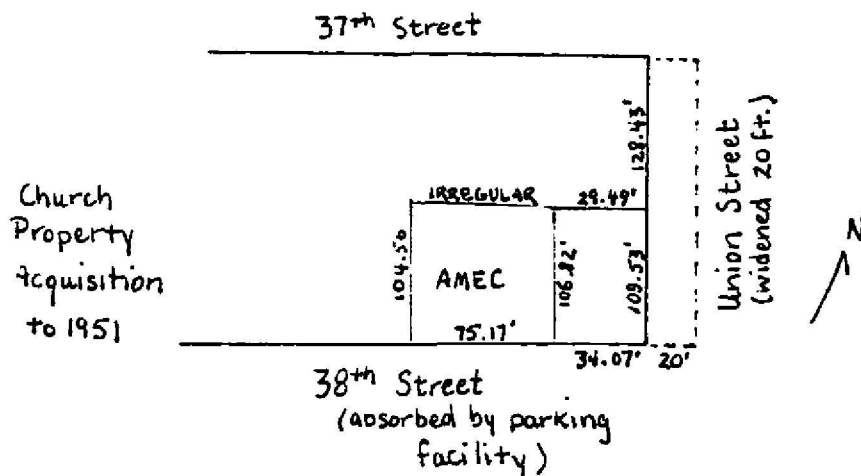
from Daniel Lowerre of Flushing, farmer.<sup>1</sup> The diagram indicates the size and placement of the property. According to the deed



(which was not recorded until 1819), the vacant 15 foot wide lot along the Eastern border of the Church lands remained in Lowerre's possession, perhaps for purposes of road access. In spite of the 1873 Beers Map which adds this lot to that of the AME Church,<sup>2,3</sup> the Church did not acquire this land during the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> This assertion is further supported by the plans for the new church building in 1902, which give the same property dimensions as the original deed.<sup>4</sup> The street on which the Church owned frontage, referred to in the 1811 deed was "the Street," underwent several name changes, being first Liberty Street, then Lincoln and finally 38th Street. The new frame church of 1902 appears on the Belcher Hyde Map of 1904 (Block 59, Lot 46),<sup>5</sup> in which the footprint shows the added tower and spire jutting out from the East side of the building.

The vacant 15 foot wide lot previously mentioned, was not legally acquired by the Church until July 2, 1929. The Rev. G.G. Crumpley, Pastor AME Church claimed (1954) that it had not been possible to purchase land previously. There are no records of this transaction at the Queens County Registrar. It was not long before the Church built on the new property - a wing was extended from the East wall at the rear of the building (1932).

The Church property reached its present size and shape in the 1950's. With the advent of the Flushing Parking Field which surrounded the church and absorbed 38th Street between 138th and Union Streets, as well as the 20 foot widening on the West side of Union Street, the AME Church was granted the parcels of land between its East property line and the newly widened Union Street (34.07 feet East, see diagram). The block on which the Church lot (\$46) is situated was number 4978 and includes the entire parking lot as well. The Church was anxious to expand on its new property. However, the Congregation met resistance from



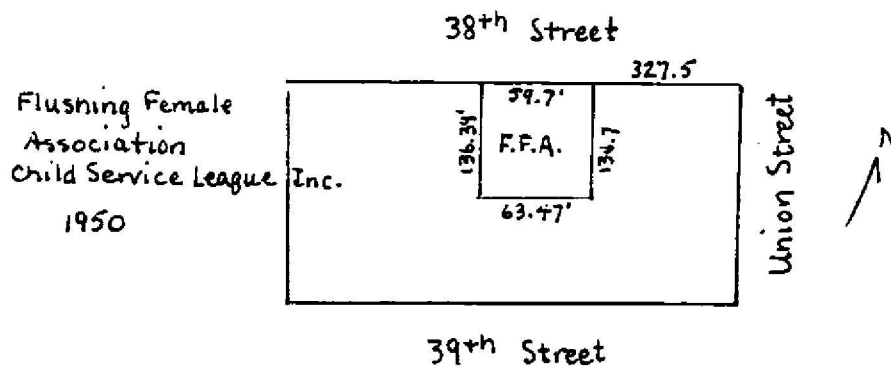
a former member who claimed that the new wing would disturb the Macedonia Burial Ground. Born in 1863, Mathilda Tredwell Coleman was 90 at this time. She claimed that her great grandfather, Anias Tredwell and Grandfather Anias Tredwell, who helped found the church, were buried<sup>9,10</sup> in this cemetery along with many others that she had known. This and other complaints initiated by her daughter, Anna Murdock, only postponed construction as Pastor G.G. Crumpley and the architect Carl H. Salminen protested the lack of proof on Tredwell's part. Crumpley pointed out that no graves were uncovered during the 1932 construction in which the workmen dug "4 to 5 feet" below the foundation for the removal of "form work." In fact, the Church had not even owned that land until 1929, and the bulk of



the building was to be constructed on the property acquired in 1951. The foundations of the houses on the site could still be seen since they had only recently been torn down. They are clearly present on the 1873 Beers Map as well as all later maps of the area.

Unfortunately, details of the construction of the Parking Field and its effect on Church property were not available from the Records Office of the Buildings Department in Queens Borough Hall.

In contrast to the many lot and building alternations of the Church, the Flushing Female Association lot remained unchanged. At the time of its transfer to the City from the Flushing Female Association - Child Service League of Queens Borough Inc., the cruciform-shaped brick structure retained its original lot on the South side of 38th Street, until demolished to make way for the Flushing Parking Lot.<sup>12</sup> Along with the Church property, the area covered by the parking facility (including the Female Association Lot, #28) was numbered 4978. This unfortunately, means that any inquiries into the history of lot 28 are inevitably misdirected toward the Church block, the original 4978. Records concerning building, alteration and eventual demolition of the structure on the Female Association lot (Queens Department of Buildings) are either misplaced, awaiting their chance discovery, or simply lost.



Notes

<sup>1</sup>Deeds, Liber Q, pp. 298-299 (microfilm), Queens County Registrar; Grantees Alpha Index, Liber A1, 10-13-1686 to 9-23-1896, QCR.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. G.G. Crumpley, Pastor, Macedonia AME Church to William Sauer, Bureau of Sanitary Inspection, August 14, 1954; in Folder; Block 4978 Lot 46 Alt 2555/53, Queens Department of Buildings.

<sup>3</sup>In 1872 a parcel of land was sold to the "African Methodist Episcopal Church and Society of Flushing" for \$150. It included land in Flushing "in the street called Colden being deserted by the number twenty nine in a map of the Bowne Estate made in the year 1954 by B.F. Willets . . ." A Colden Street still exists in Flushing, roughly parallel to Kissena Blvd., between Kissena and Main Street. Deeds, Liber 397, p. 76 (microfilm), QCR.

<sup>4</sup>Application for erection of a frame building, NB 816/02, in folder: Block 4978 Lot 46.

<sup>5</sup>The Church is consistently Lot 46, and the Female Association Lot 28. However, the block numbers undergo changes through time: 1891 Wolverton Map, Church Block 150; Female Association Block 149.

1904 Belcher Hyder

1909 Bromley                      Maps, Church Block 50; F.A. Block 60.

1917 Sanborn

1932 Belcher Hyde Map, Church Block 829; F.A. Block 844.

1979 Blocks formerly 829 and 844, become 4978.

<sup>6</sup>Crumpley to Sauer, August 14, 1954.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Grantor/Grantee Index, Sec. 19, Block 4607, recorded May 3, 1951. See also, Deeds Liber 6151, p. 69, QCR.

<sup>9</sup>Declaration by Mathilda Tredwell Coleman, August 6, 1953, in Block 4978 Lot 46 Alt 2555/53, QDofB.

<sup>10</sup>A possible relation, George Tredwell of Hempstead, sold land for \$20 to an AME Church to be established in North Hempstead, 1833. Deeds, Liber EE p. 44, QCR. Note that no Tredwells are listed on the original deed of the Flushing Church.

<sup>11</sup>Crumpley to Sauer, August 14, 1954; Carl Salminen to John T. Kelleher, Borough Superintendent, September 16, 1954; Walter

Gay, attorney, to Mr. Kelcher (sic), July 20, 1954; in: Block 4978 Lot 46 Alt 2555/53, QD of B.

<sup>12</sup>Grantor/Grantee Index, Sect. 19 Block 4613. See also, Deeds, Liber 5993, p. 290.

## Appendix 2

Attempts were made to find records pertaining to the demolition and subsequent construction processes for the parking lot in order to determine both what was destroyed and how destructive the processes would have been to subsurface deposits.

- 1) Buildings Department Block and Lot folders and Index folders: no information.
- 2) Department of Public Works: this department was in charge of the 1953 parking lot project, but has since been dissolved. The researcher was directed to the Office of Public Structures, the Bureau of Traffic, the Bureau of Parking, and the Division of Real Property. No information could be obtained.
- 3) Demolition Records: this department, located in Manhattan, keeps records for twenty year periods only (thus back to 1977). Researcher was referred to the NYC Archives, but was informed by Librarian Cobb that such information was instead located at the Records Center in Manhattan but would have to be requested by the Records Officer in Queens. The Queens Records Office employee stated that records prior to 1966 had been destroyed.
- 4) Construction Company: A newspaper article (LONG ISLAND STAR-JOURNAL, Wednesday, June 24, 1953) mentioned the name of the construction company, Frank Mascali & Sons Inc., in charge of the parking lot project. A telephone number and address was located in a 1976 telephone directory. The telephone had been disconnected, so a visit was made to the address at 120th Street and 31st Avenue in Queens. It is now the headquarters of Ferrara Brothers who bought out the Mascali firm about four or five years ago. The whereabouts of any of the Mascali Company employees were unknown.
- 5) Eyewitness accounts: the Macedonia AME Church archives contain no information of this kind. Mr. Mendenhall, long time resident on 37th Avenue near the parking lot, recalled only that he didn't think that there was much hauling of excavated material away from the site, but that it was pushed into foundation cavities and leveled.
- 6) Other: a photograph accompanying the newspaper article mentioned above shows a steamshovel excavating on the site. (See Figure 20) The western portion of the parking lot has an elevated second tier which probably would have required more subsurface activity to place its supports than the ground level portion to the east.

APPENDIX 3

# Graveyard Under Flushing Church Revealed July 13 As Reason for Fight on Parking Lot Project 1949

The wierd tale of a graveyard beneath a Flushing church was recounted today as parishioners of the historic Macedonian African Methodist Episcopal Church explained why they are unwilling to permit the demolition of the edifice to pave the way for a parking field.

They declared that use of the church site on 38th avenue, just west of Union street, for the parking facility would "violate the sacred and consecrated ground where more than 200 persons are buried."

The opposition to the combined parking lot and sium clearance program as advocated by Flushing civic and business leaders was originally regarded as stemming from a desire to save the church.

"As much as we love our building," said the Rev. G. G. Crumpley, church pastor, "our reasoning is not governed by thoughts of bricks and mortar.

"We are thinking of our consecrated ground . . . and the bodies of the faithful interred there."

Mr. Crumpley has asked that the sites for the parking lot and the housing project be switched and the homes then built around the church.

According to present plans, which have yet to get the Board of Estimate's approval, the low-rent apartment project will rise on a site bounded by Roosevelt avenue, Lawrence street, the Long Island Railroad and Prince street.

The 1,100-car parking field will be built between 37th and 39th avenues from Union street to a point about 100 feet east of Main street.

The latter area includes the 112-year-old church, which, despite its age, stands out as one of the few sturdy structures in Flushing's notorious "blighted area."

"Why must our church, which is in excellent condition, be demolished?" Mr. Crumpley asked.

It is Flushing's third oldest house of worship, predated only by the Quaker Meeting House on Northern boulevard and St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church on Main street. The present structure was built in 1931 atop the original century old foundation.

A feature of the 1931 renovation was the addition of a wing to the rear of the building and that is when the old graveyard lost its markers and other forms of identification.

In order to excavate for the wing's basement it was necessary to move several bodies. The bodies were buried in the rear of the church while others are still buried beneath what is now a small landscaped garden to the right of the church.

According to Mr. Crumpley, who came to the Macedonian Church last year, the pastor in 1931 tried to have the bodies reburied in Flushing Cemetery, but the request was denied because the church did

not have registration certificates on the deceased.

"So the pastor did the next best thing and had all the bones that had to be moved sealed in a box and placed in the ground under the church, practically beneath the spot where my office is located," he said.

"Several of the church's older members have relatives buried here and naturally they are opposed to having the site turned into a parking field."

Conceding that the 200 figure set on the number of bodies in the now vanished graveyard is merely an estimate, Mr. Crumpley pointed out the guess is conservative in view of the fact that the burial ground dates back to 1837.

He said the last burial was in 1909.

Just as the present membership of the church is predominantly made up of Negroes, he said, most of the bodies in the graveyard are those of Negroes. However, white persons, and Indians also were buried there.

When the Macedonian Church was first established in 1811, it was led by the Rev. Benjamin Griffin, a white clergyman.

He was the only white minister in the organization's long history, but even today there are several white persons among the 1,500 members from Flushing and surrounding communities.

"We believe that our houses of worship, the ground on which they stand and all burial grounds are sacred and consecrated," Mr. Crumpley said.

"And we feel that once a thing or place is consecrated it can't be unconsecrated by merely moving a building or digging up the remains of bodies and burying them somewhere else."

He pointed out that even if the bones had been acceptable to Flushing Cemetery back in 1931, the ground in which they formerly rested would still be used for a religious purpose as part of the church.

"However, the parking lot proposed for the site violated all of the things we hold dear," he said.

Emphasizing that neither he nor his congregation is opposed to the idea of clearing the area of sub-standard houses and alleviating Flushing's acute parking problem, the pastor said he doesn't understand why the sites can't be reversed.

"The present land slated for the housing development borders on the noisy railroad tracks and is not far from large industries," he said. "And youngsters who will live there will be forced to cross bustling Main street to get to school."

He pointed out that the families displaced from either site while the development is being built will need temporary shelter.

"Therefore arguments about first building homes and then clearing slums are invalid," he said. "There are slums on both sites, and some families are going to have to be relocated regardless of which is selected for the housing project."

The entire sium clearance-parking lot scheme is still in abeyance following Mayor O'Dwyer's recent attack on it as "nebulous" and "smart aleck" which led to the Board of Estimate's pigeonholing the plan.

Mr. Crumpley indicated that he and his congregation will appear at all future board hearings on the matter "until we succeed in getting the sites reversed."

"I owe it to the church members . . . as well as to the departed," he declared.

LONG ISLAND STAR-JOURNAL

# 200 Skeletons Unearthed

## Remnants of Bodies Buried in Flushing Exhumed to Make Way for Church Building

*NORTH SHORE DAILY FREE PRESS, 9-19-31*

Remnants of 200 bodies, many of which are the remains of prominent figures in the history of Flushing's colored population of the past century, were removed today from the old burial grounds at the rear of the Macedonia A. E. Church at 162 Lincoln street, of which the Rev. Dr. William McKinley Dawkins is pastor.

The ancient resting place has been removed to make way for an addition to the church, a social hall and gym for youthful members of the congregation, which was first formed in 1829, more than 100 years ago.

Twenty-eight years ago, when another extension to the house of worship was constructed, most of

the bodies being taken from the graveyard to a plot in Flushing cemetery today, were moved to a corner of the rear yard. This plot with all the land in the rear of the edifice, will be used in the new wing which will cost nearly \$20,000.

New bodies, the presence of which were heretofore unknown, were uncovered when work began on the foundation Tuesday. Among those moved was the remains of old Jesse Major, remembered by few on Lincoln street today, but whose gravestone on which was carved an open bible and stood next to the front entrance, has found a definite place in the quaint and colorful tradition of Lincoln street.

Violets and buttercups grew on Jesse's grave when they grew on none other. Thirty years ago, Jack Johnson one of the active members of the congregation says, he clearly recalls the grave and its flowers and says he often as a boy stood and gazed in wonder at the perfectly cut Bible. Tradition had it that the Good Book kept the flowers alive. Wise members of the parish, however, were of the belief that the flowers grew because no boy would dare tread on the grave overshadowed by the "Good Book."

Mr. Johnson, who recently retired from the Navy after spending 30 years in its service, and John Williams, one of the elderly parishioners, spent Friday afternoon retelling tales of famous characters and great periods in the history of the church.

Mr. Williams, himself the son of the famous Addison Williams a leading church member of a half century ago, lamented the fact that only a few of the graves could be identified because of the loss several years ago, of historical documents that had accumulated in the church.

It seems that one of the church members had been commissioned to compile facts about the history of the church for its 106th anniversary. After collecting the information the parishioner, according to Mr. Williams, lost the documents on a ferry boat crossing the Hudson River.

Besides the new wing, many other improvements are in the course of construction. The interior is to be redecorated and the basement enlarged. The Sunday School of the A. C. E. League holds its sessions there. New flooring and increased depth will be added to the basement.

*CENTINUES, QUEENS CO. FLUSHING*

## Photographs 1 and 2

Block 4978

view: east to west, note St. George's spire in left rear



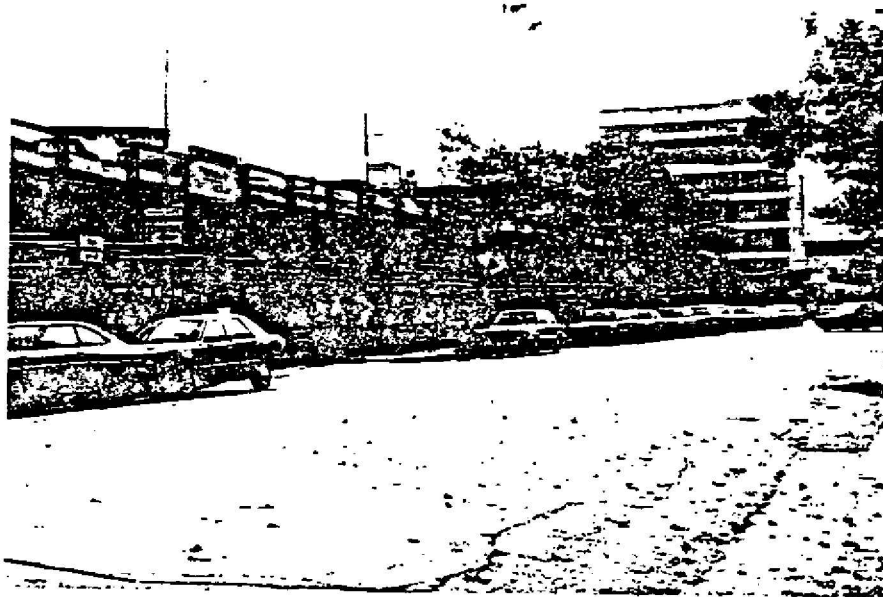
Block 4978

view: west to east from second tier of parking facility, intersection  
of Union Street and 39th Avenue in center of photo



## Photographs 3 and 4

138th Street, Flushing Center site on the left  
view: northwest to southeast

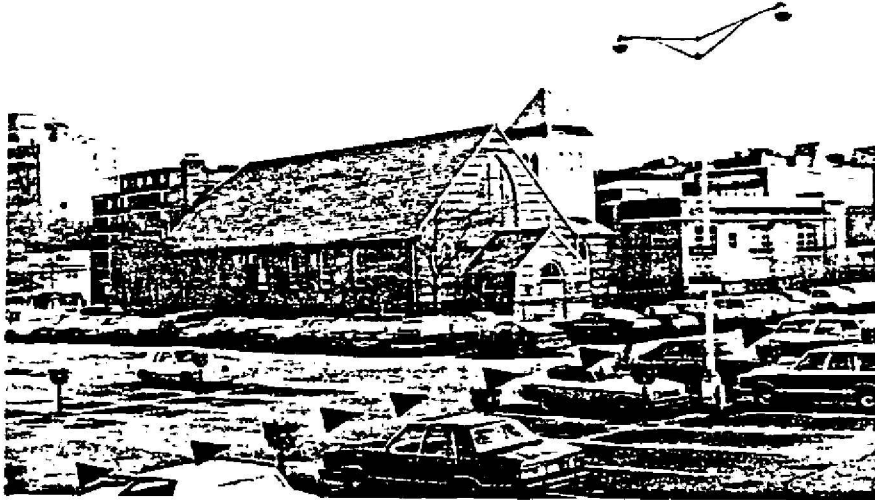


37th Avenue, Flushing Center site on the right  
view: west to east from intersection of 37th Avenue  
and 138th Street

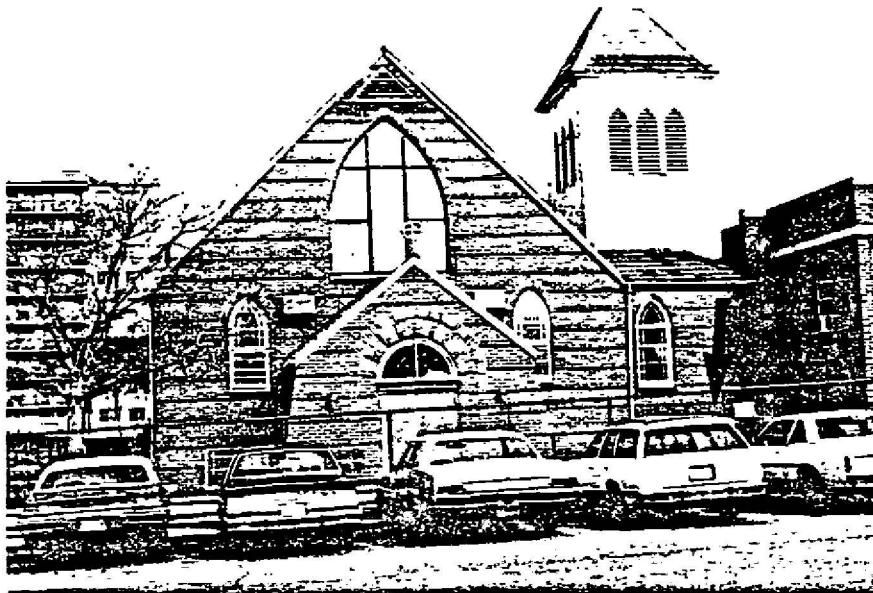


## Photographs 5 and 6

Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Black triangles indicate path of de-mapped 38th Avenue  
view: southwest to northeast from second tier of parking  
facility



Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Arrow indicates location of 1930 reinterred  
burials (on Church parcel).  
view: south to north



## Photograph 7

Bowne House, located on the east side of Bowne Street at the intersection of 37th Avenue and Bowne Street.  
view: southwest to northeast

