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SECONDARY LEVEL DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH
BLOCK 86 LOTS 1,6-8,22; BLOCK 72 LOT 80
LONG ISLAND CITY
QUEENS, NEW YORK

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
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LIST OF PERSONNEL

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Richard Clark	-	Documentary Researcher Co-Author
Mark Whitby	-	Word Processor



INTRODUCTION

This report provides a secondary level documentary research study of the Block bounded by Jackson Avenue, Crane and Davis Streets and The Long Island Railroad located in Long Island City, Borough of Queens, New York City. The project area for this study includes Lots 1, 6, 7, 8 and 22 on Block 86 as well as Lot 80 on Block 72. This block was part of the project area for the Long Island City Rezoning Preliminary Archaeological Assessment completed during March 2000. Further documentary study of the present project area was recommended. This purpose is to examine whether archaeological deposits from the prehistoric and historic periods could survive within the project area. Should historic period resources survive, it is necessary to establish the family or group of people that were responsible for the deposit, and to develop appropriate research questions that the resources could help to answer. This report would then recommend archaeological testing to search for the resources if needed. See Figure 1 for the location of the project area. The project area is presently nearly completely covered by structures. The only exceptions are a small courtyard facing Davis Street and a parking lot at the south end. See Plates 1 through 7 for current views of the project area.



HISTORIC SENSITIVITY

Cartographic Evidence

The series of maps presented here as Figures 2 through 10 illustrate the project area and vicinity from 1837 through 1980.

The earliest depiction is Figure 2, taken from the 1837 U.S. Coast Survey. This map shows the project area on the edge of a large marsh. There are no structures or streets shown within or adjacent to the project area. The nearest structure lies approximately 800 feet to the north at the end of a lane.

Figure 3 is taken from the 1852 Conner map. The project area is still shown as lying on the edge of the marsh. It is evidently part of the 136 acre farm of Jonathan Crane. His structures lie approximately 500 feet to the northwest. The lane to the north has become a road connecting Dutch Kills to the shore of the East River south of Ravenswood. A proposed street grid is shown to the west of the project area.

The 1865 Dripps map is the source of Figure 4. A few changes are evident since 1852. The line of the railroad is now shown to the south of the project area. The proposed street grid in Hunters Point is now shown as existing. The road from Dutch Kills now also leads to Hunters Point. The project area evidently remains undeveloped agricultural land.

The 1873 Beers Atlas does not include the project area block. It depicts the developed area of Dutch Kills to the northeast. This suggests that the project area remained undeveloped. The 1874 Dripps map does not show structures, but does indicate that the project area was owned by the Trustees of Union College.

Figure 5 is taken from the 1891 Wolverton Atlas. The three streets bounding the project area block are shown. The project area block has been divided into numerous small lots. The block is larger than at present since the railroad had not yet built the yards that exist today. The project area includes only two structures. Both are in lots facing Davis Street. The Jackson Avenue and Crane Street frontages remain undeveloped.

The 1898 Sanborn maps are the source of Figure 6. This map shows a 10 inch water pipe under Jackson Street, now Jackson Avenue. The project area block consists of 54 small lots. There are now 5 structures fronting Jackson. The Neptune Meter Company had a large structure covering nearly all of two lots at the corner of Crane and Jackson. East of this are two vacant lots, and then structures of 3 or more stories at the fronts of the next four lots. The rear yards of the eastern three are open, but the western structure is connected to two one story structures leading into the rear of the northernmost lot facing Davis Street. A three story structure is partly in the rear of this lot and the next lot to the south. This is attached to an "L" shaped one story structure used for storage. This abuts a two-story barn or stable at the front of this next lot to the south. The next two lots to



the south along Davis Street both have stables or barns at the rear and one story structures on or near Davis Street. The remainder of the block is vacant.

Figure 7 is taken from the 1915 Sanborn maps. Water pipes are now shown under Crane and Davis Streets as well as Jackson Avenue. The four structures facing Jackson Avenue near Davis Street remain at the front of these lots. The one story structures behind the westernmost three story structure have been removed. All four structures have open rear yards, and shops probably on their ground floors. The Neptune Meter Company retains their structure at the corner of Crane and Jackson. They have expanded into Lots 5 through 15, 40 through 50, and parts of Lots 16 and 39, as seen in 1898. Lots 46 through 50 are now the location of their foundry. All the one to three story structures seen here in 1898 have been demolished. They also have structures along all of the Crane Street frontage and along their southern property line. A yard has been left open fronting Davis Street. The southern end of the block is now the Nason Manufacturing Company, makers of plumbing and engineering supplies. They have a large one story structure as well as one story storage and pipe sheds. The railroad yard has now expanded into the southern end of the block. They have three small one story structures near Davis Street.

The 1936 Sanborn map shows a few changes since 1915. See Figure 8. The storage and pipe sheds used by the Nason Manufacturing Company have been removed but their main structure remains. Two of the three sheds by the railroad yard have been removed. The Neptune Meter Company has added a series of structures along Davis Street closing off their formerly open yard. They have also expanded into the former rear yard of 202 Jackson Avenue (now 2244 Jackson Avenue) completely occupying it with their boiler house. A garage has been erected at the rear of 208 Jackson Avenue (now 2252 Jackson Avenue) at the corner of Davis Street.

Figure 9 is taken from the 1950 Sanborn maps. There are only two changes evident since 1936. The Nason company property has been taken over by the Neptune Meter Company. All of their other structures remain. The garage at the rear of the lot at Jackson Avenue and Davis Street has been rebuilt and covers all of the former rear yard.

The most recent depiction presented here is taken from the 1980 Sanborn map. See Figure 10. The Neptune Meter Company is now gone. Their former structures all remain, with the exception of several of the storage buildings along Davis Street. The former Nason Company building is now a plumbing warehouse. The former Neptune foundry is now a wholesale food processor.

Documentary Evidence

The cartographic evidence shows that the majority of the project area developed after the water lines were available circa 1898. Since the sewer lines of the Borough of Queens are not shown on the maps, information was sought at the Sewer Department of the Borough of Queen. The map at the Queens Sewer Department showing this portion of Jackson Avenue has been "retired" and is not available for inspection, due to its fragile condition. There is no date for the



installation of the sewers on Crane Street, however the Davis Street sewer was installed in 1903. It is safe to say that the Jackson Avenue sewer predates 1903. This indicates that only the lots where structures appear on the 1891 and 1898 maps have the potential for preserving privies, and wells or cisterns. This includes the four shops/tenements facing Jackson Avenue, The Neptune Meter Company building at the corner of Crane and Jackson, and the northernmost five lots facing Davis Street. However, the maps also show that the Neptune Meter Company Foundry was built over all of these Davis Street lots prior to 1915, and that all the open areas adjacent to their structure at Crane and Davis are also built over by 1915. Information of the depths of basements in most of the structures within the project area was supplied by Matthew E. Lambert Architecture and Engineering. This shows that the former foundry has a basement floor three feet below the surface of Davis Street. Most of the structures adjacent to the original Neptune Meter Company building at Crane and Jackson have basements eight feet below Jackson Avenue. The structure to the south appears to have a basement to four feet below Crane Street.

The Buildings Department of the Borough of Queens was also consulted for more evidence on subsurface disturbance. A number of blue prints, plans and drawings concerning the construction or alteration of the Neptune Meter Company Buildings are on file at the Queens Department of Buildings. Basements, whenever shown, were six feet to 8 feet high, but their floors were only three feet to five feet below grade. Footings, even for sheds, are shown to average four to five feet below ground level. All foundations began with piles which were driven down to bedrock. Atop these piles were poured three to four foot concrete footings, which then supported the walls and interior columns. Interior columns were placed atop two foot by three foot footings which were supported by four pilings. Exterior walls were built on footings which were poured atop two staggered rows of pilings which were spaced approximately two feet on center. These plans indicate that the foundry seen on the 1915 Sanborn map facing Davis Street was built in 1905. The plans also show foundations extending below the basement floor. These foundations and pilings are under all four walls of the former foundry. In 1918 the building on Lot 5 was taken over by Neptune Meter Company. What had originally been a store and dwelling was altered by Neptune so that the ground floor became a boiler house with a tenement above it (Queens Department of Buildings, Blueprints). Neptune Meter Company continued to make additions and alterations to its property through much of the twentieth century.

The basements and foundations described above would most likely have destroyed or disturbed any privies or other shaft features that may have been in the lots under the foundry, surrounding the corner structure at Crane and Jackson, and under the boiler house behind the store and dwelling at 2244 Jackson Avenue. The only lots where such features evidently existed and could survive are 2248, 2250 and 2252 Jackson Avenue, Lots 6, 7 and 8 in 1898. Further information was then sought on these three lots to determine their occupancy during the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, when the water and sewer lines became available. Shaft features would have gone out of use at this time. They were probably filled with refuse shortly thereafter by those occupying the lots.



This search began with research into deeds at the Office of the New York City Registrar for the Borough of Queens.

We attempted to establish the chains of title for former Lots 6, 7 and 8. Due to the system in Queens, which utilizes thumbnail sketches instead of lot numbers to illustrate the property involved in a transaction, it is frequently difficult to identify the precise property involved without examining each deed. Due to the fact that most of the area was developed by Neptune Meter and Nason Manufacturing, the chain of title is not particularly relevant. Realty companies and holding companies also complicate the situation. Although individual names appear in association with ownership of the dwellings at Jackson and Davis, some of these people seem to have some relationship to the realty companies. It should also be noted that the dwellings on Lots 6, 7 and 8 appear to have been rental properties and therefore the titleholder is unimportant, since other people would have been in residence.

Since the deeds did not resolve the issue of who occupied these lots, the 1900 and 1910 United States Census were examined. It proved possible to establish the people living in these structures during both 1900 and 1910. This data is presented as Tables 1 and 2 covering the 1900 and 1910 censuses respectively.

Table 1
1900 Census

House#	Last Name	First Name	Rel.	Sex	Date of Birth	Age	Marital	Birthplace	Occupation
202	Goman	John	Head	m	Aug. 1869	30	m	NJ	Teamster
		Mary	wife	f	Sept. 1872	27	m	NY	
		Mary	d	f	April 1892	8	s	NY	
		John	s	m	April 1895	5	s	NY	
		Anna	d	f	Oct. 1896	3	s	NY	
		Gertrude	d	f	July 1898	2	s	NY	
		Robert	s	m	Aug. 1899	10/12	s	NY	
204	Barnore	John	head	m	1855	44	m	NY	Grocer
		Frances	wife	f	Jan. 1858	42	m	NY	
		Margaretta	d	f	Sept. 1882	17	s	NY	Typewriter
		Minnie	d	f	March 1884	16	s	NY	at school
		Henry	s	m	1886	13	s	NY	office boy
		Frank	s	m	Jan. 1890	10	s	NY	at school
	Rex	Henry	head	m	April 1855	45	m	NY	Pilot
		Annie	wife	f	Aug. 1855	44	m	NY	
		Ariel	d	f	June 1896	3	s	NY	



House#	Last Name	First Name	Rel.	Sex	Date of Birth	Age	Marital	Birthplace	Occupation
		Henry	s	m	Jan. 1888	12	s	NY	at school
206	Zons	Christina	head	f	Aug. 1851	48	Wd	Pa.	Confectionary
		Antoinette	d	f	April 1875	25	s	NY	
		Jennie	d	f	April 1878	21	s	NY	Saleslady
		Frederick	s	m	Sept. 1885	14	s	NY	at school
		Clara	d	f	Nov. 1887	12	s	NY	at school
	Ettig?	Peter	head	m	July 1870	29	m	Germany	Silversmith
		Wanda	wife	f	Aug. 1875	24	m	Germany	
	Petry	Sarah	head	f	Oct. 1837	62	Wd	NY	
		George	s	m	April 1866	33	s	NY	Plumber
208	Casey	Michael	head	m	March 1850	50	m	Ireland	Liquor dealer
		Elizabeth	wife	f	March 1859	41	m	NY	
		Mary	d	f	Aug. 1885	14	s	NY	at school
		Andrew	s	m	Dec. 1886	13	s	NY	at school
		Thomas	s	m	June 1888	11	s	NY	at school
		Elizabeth	d	f	Aug. 1894	5	s	NY	
		Irene	d	f	July 1899	10/12	s	NY	
	Miller	Henry	head	m	Feb. 1865	35	m	Pa.	Policeman
		Mary	wife	f	May 1867	33	m	NY	
		Henry	s	m	Sept. 1889	10	s	NY	at school
		Ruth	d	f	Feb. 1893	7	s	NY	at school
		Jennie	d	f	July 1895	4	s	NY	
	Feisel	John	head	m	July 1871	28	m	NY	Patternmaker
		Mary	wife	f	Aug. 1873	26	m	NY	
		Mary	d	f	Dec. 1895	4	s	NY	
		Catherine	d	f	Oct. 1897	2	s	NY	
		James	s	m	Sept. 1899	09/12	s	NY	
	McDougal	John	head	m	May 1866	34	m	NY	Watchman
		Catherine	wife	f	March 1866	34	m	NY	
		William	s	m	Oct. 1889	10	s	NY	at school
		Annie	d	f	Feb. 1892	8	s	NY	at school
	Marshall	Edward	head	m	June 1844	55	m	Ire.	
		Mary	wife	f	Sept. 1854	45	m	Ire.	Music teacher
	Gravius	Christopher	head	m	May 1844	56	m	Germany	Liquor dealer



House#	Last Name	First Name	Rel.	Sex	Date of Birth	Age	Marital	Birthplace	Occupation
		Mary	wife	f	July 1839	60	m	Sweden	
		Christopher	s	m	May 1874	26	s	NY	Fireman
		William	s	m	Nov. 1875	24	s	NY	Bartender
		Madaline	d	f	April 1878	22	s	NY	Dressmaker
		Lillie	d	f	Dec. 1879	20	s	NY	Dressmaker

Table 2
1910 Census

House#	Last Name	First Name	Rel.	Age	Marital	Birthplace	Occupation
202	Meyer	Henry	head	35	m	Germany	Retail Merchant/Grocer
		Anna	wife	33	m	Germany	
		Florence	d	3	s	NY	
		Lillie	d	3	s	NY	
	Heidorn	William	Boarder	21	s	Germany	
	Mathison	Margaret	head	56	Wd	Germany	
		Hector	s	29	s	NY	Bookkeeper, Iron Works
	Davis	Edward	Lodger	22	s	RI	Motorman, Streetcar
204	McGinniss	Henry	head	48	m	NY	Fireman
		Cecilia	wife	34	m	NY	
		Isabelle	d	12	s	NY	
		Henry	s	7	s	NY	
		Albert	s	2	s	NY	
	Steen	Alexander	Br.in law	32	s	NY	Chauffer, Automobile
206	Zons	Christine	head	58	Wd	Pa.	Retail Merchant, Confectionary
		Antoinette	d	30	s	NY	
		Jennie	d	28	s	NY	Bookkeeper, Art Lithograph
		Frederick	s	23	s	NY	Teacher, City College
		Clarissa	d	19	s	NY	
	Petry	Sarah	head	74	Wd	NJ	
		George	s	42	s	NY	Steamfitter (in shop)



House#	Last Name	First Name	Rel.	Age	Marital	Birthplace	Occupation
		Marsha	d	36	s	NY	
	Kruger	Ferdinand	head	57	m	Germany	Clerk, Sewer Dept.
		Lizzie	wife	51	m	NY	
	Trochelman	Henrietta	mother	76	Wd	Germany	
	Veit	Joseph	nephew	38	s	NY	Laborer, City
208	Marshall	Edward	head	65	m	Ire/Eng	Commission agent, Iron?
		Mary	wife	55	m	Ire/Eng	Teacher, Music
	Casey	Elizabeth	head	65	Wd	NY	
		Mary	d	25	s	NY	
		Andrew	s	23	s	NY	Bricklayer, Building
		Thomas	s	20	s	NY	Bricklayer, Building
		Elizabeth	d	17	s	NY	
		Irene	d	10	s	NY	
	Gravius	Christopher	head	66	m	Germany	Laborer, City
		Mary	wife	51	m	Sweden	
		Lillie	d	29	s	NY	Operator, Shirtwaist
	Siemering	Ludwig	head	51	m	Germany	Retail Merchant, Liquor
		Mary	wife	51	m	Germany	
		August	s	22	s	NY	Dispensor, Liquor
		John	s	20	s	NY	Driver, Automobile
	Callahan	Edward	head	25	m	NY	Carpenter, on Building
		Anna	wife	23	m	NY	
	Brazill	Mary	head	55	Wd	NY	
		William	s	27	s	NY	Driver, Stevedore
		Genevieve	d	19	s	NY	Milliner, Stevedore
		James	s	18	s	NY	Shipping Clerk, Importer



RESULTS

Historic Period

The cartographic evidence indicated that the only lots occupied prior to the existence of sewers and water lines were those facing Jackson Avenue (excepting Lots 3 and 4 in 1898) and the northernmost five lots facing Davis Street. Analysis of the disturbances caused by basements and foundations of subsequent industrial structures eliminated the lots on Davis Street and the two at the corner of Crane Street and Jackson Avenue. Further research was completed on the three lots facing Jackson Avenue nearest to Davis Street.

Data from the 1900 and 1910 United States Censuses showed that there is no continuity of occupation at 204 later 2248 Jackson Avenue. The Barmore and Rex families seen in 1900 are gone by 1910. Two Hundred Six, later 2250 Jackson Avenue is occupied by three families in 1900. The Zons and Petry families are still there during 1910. The Ettigs are gone, and the Krugers appear. There are also two other individuals not there in 1900. The structure at the corner of Davis Street, 208, later 2252 Jackson Avenue housed more people than the other two structures. Twenty-nine people are present in 1900 and 21 during 1910. Three of the six families there in 1900 remain in 1910: the Casey, Marshall and Gravius families.

The research conducted indicates that privies and possibly cisterns or wells likely existed in these three lots. The privies were probably filled around 1903 or shortly thereafter, and the cisterns or wells around 1898. The census data shows that it would be impossible to assign the fill of any shaft features in these lots to a particular family. There is no continuity from 1900 to 1910 for one of these lots. The other two lots show partial continuity of occupation, but replacement of those that left with other unrelated people. There is also the problem of trying to distinguish between the three families in one lot and six families in the other lot.

During the inspection of the project area, it was possible to see into some of the spaces, within the former Neptune Meter Company buildings. These spaces were all in use as factories or warehouses. No evidence of any of the heavy machinery that would have been used by Neptune was seen. It is logical to assume that all such machinery was removed prior to reuse of the structures.

Prehistoric Period

The previous report of this area suggested that archaeological remains from the prehistoric period could survive within the project area. These potential deposits would all be within five feet of the present surface (Kearns et al. 2000:21). It is very unlikely that these deposits would survive under the domestic and industrial structures built on the block over the last 110 years. Many of these structures have basements that extend to five or more feet below grade. The industrial structures have deep foundations resting on piles extending to bedrock. This leaves only small open yards surrounded by structures. The only large area without major structures is the southern end of the project area south of the former Nason building. Storage sheds formerly stood here in what is presently a parking lot. Research at the Subsurface Exploration Section of the Department of Design and Construction produced a soil boring from the southern end

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of Davis Street adjacent to the former Nason property. This boring shows five feet of fill mixed with clay over a layer of muds and sand. This indicates that this portion of the project area was probably within the former marsh (W.P.A. 1934: Queens Sheet 311). It would therefore have been too wet for occupation during late prehistoric times.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is our conclusion that the majority of the project area has no potential for significant historic period subsurface deposits. This is based on the fact that most of the development occurred after 1903 when both water and sewer lines were available. Most of the locations where development occurred by 1898 were later the locations of large industrial structures. The basements, foundations and services, such as sewer, water, gas and electric lines, for these structures would have destroyed or disturbed the earlier deposits. This left only three lots facing Jackson Avenue where the rear yards remained open or were the locations of later one-story garages. Census research failed to establish the people responsible for filling any shaft features in these lots.

It is also our conclusion that the project area has no potential for preserving prehistoric archaeological deposits. The domestic and industrial structures that still cover nearly all the block would have destroyed or disturbed any prehistoric remains. The southern end of the block was probably part of the marsh and therefore too wet to support prehistoric occupations.

We recommend no further work.



Plate 1 Structures on Crane Street looking north from the railroad.



Plate 2

Structures on Crane Street looking southeast from across Jackson Avenue.



Plate 3 Structures on Jackson Avenue looking east.



Plate 4 Structures on Jackson Avenue near Davis Street looking southeast.



Plate 5 Former Neptune Meter Company structures around the courtyard near Davis Street looking northeast.

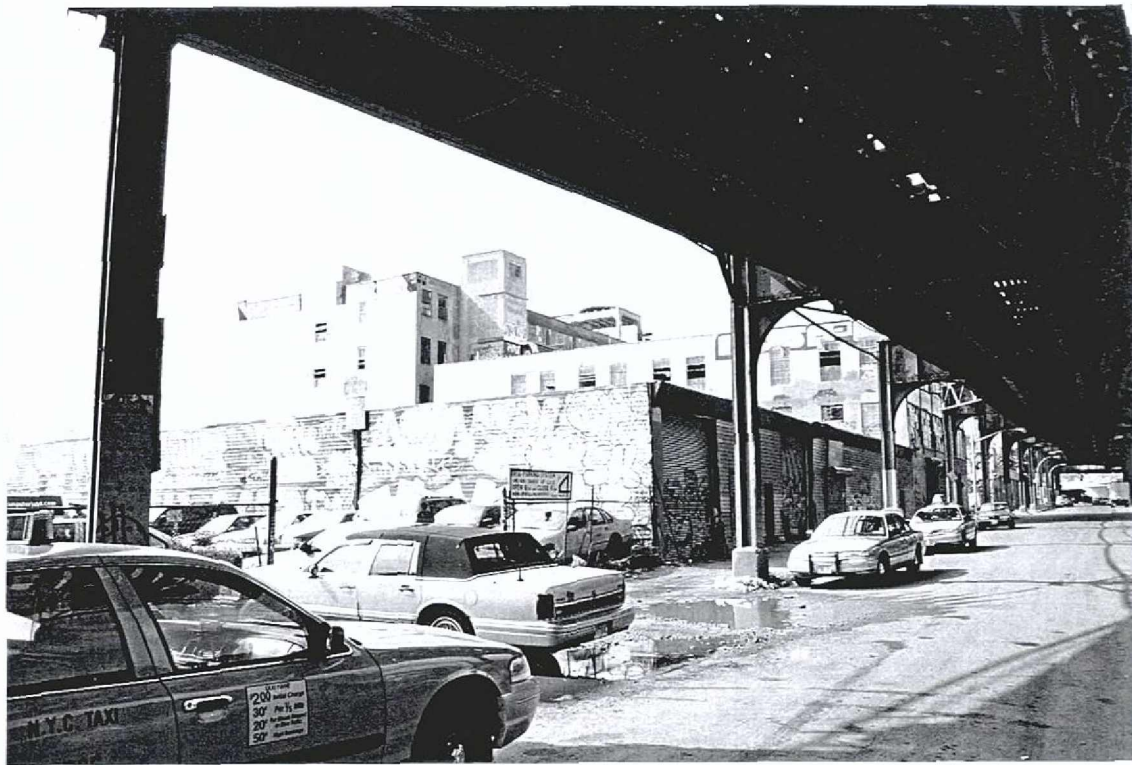
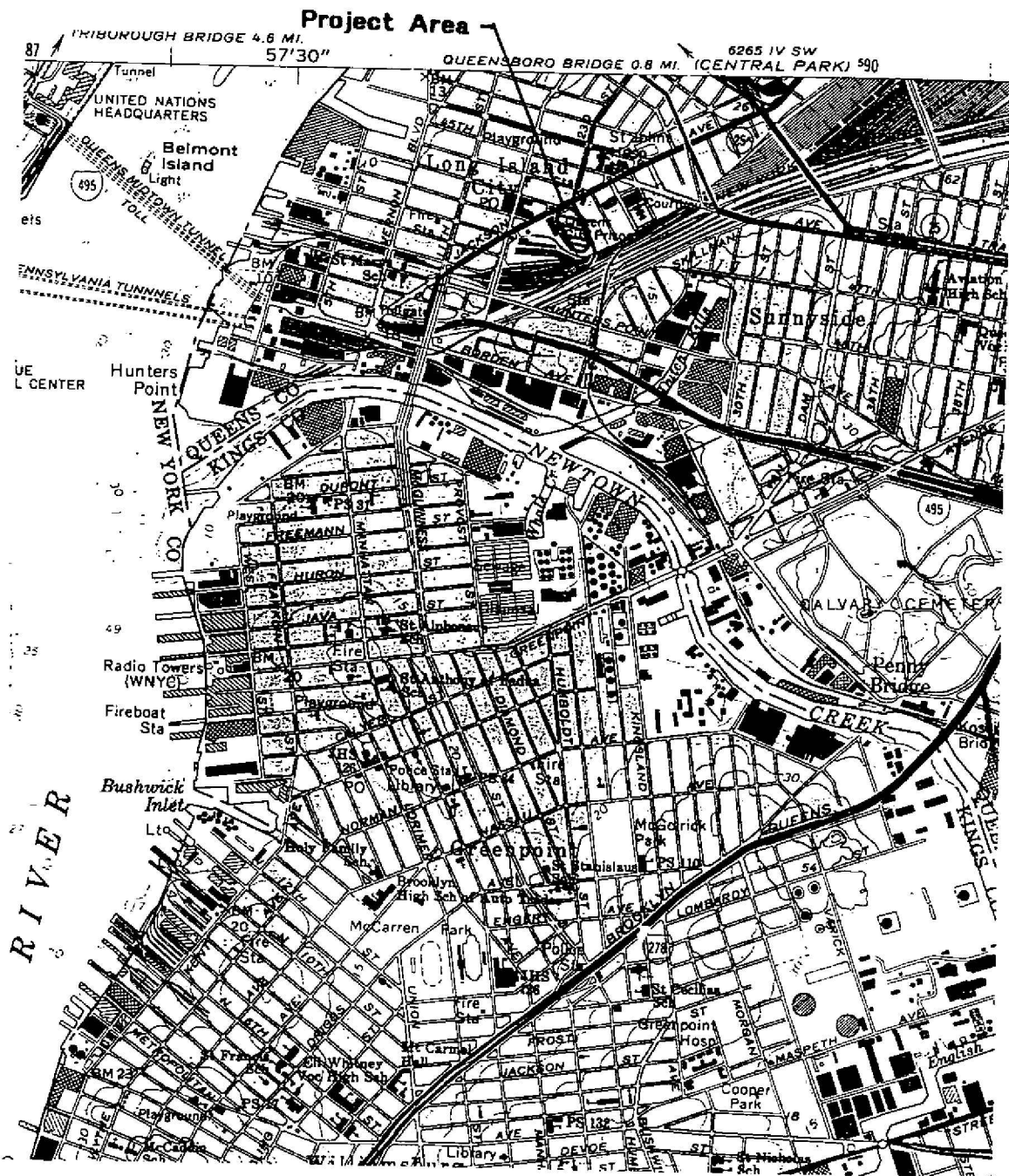


Plate 6 Structures on Davis Street looking northwest from the railroad.



SCALE 1:24 000

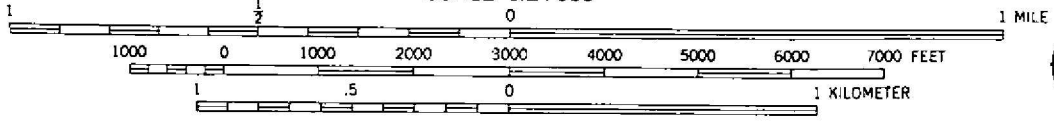


Figure 1

Project area location shown on portion of U.S.G.S 7.5 minute series Brooklyn, New York Quadrangle, 1967 photorevised 1979

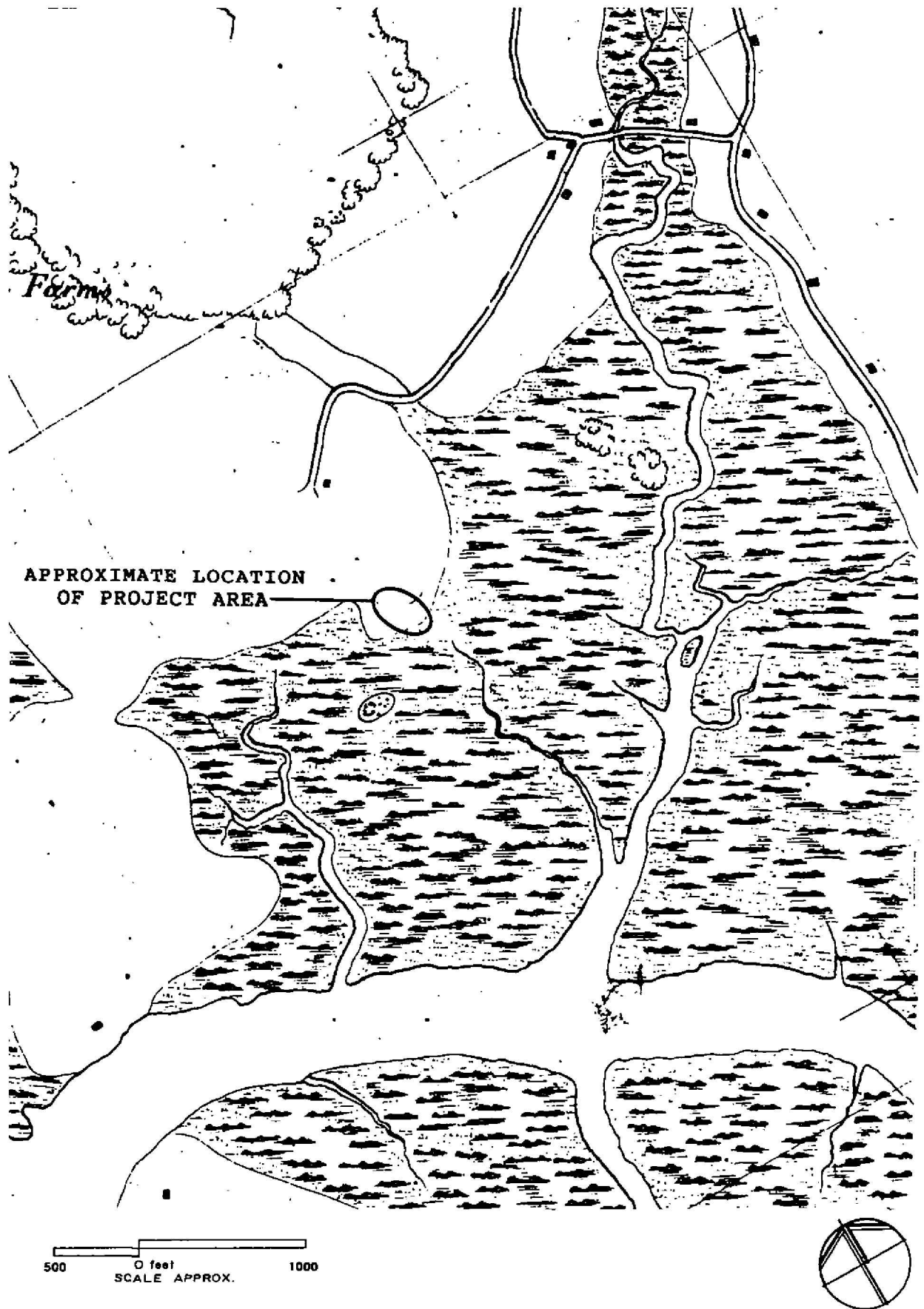


Figure 2

From the 1837 U.S. Coast Survey.

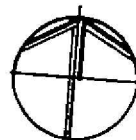
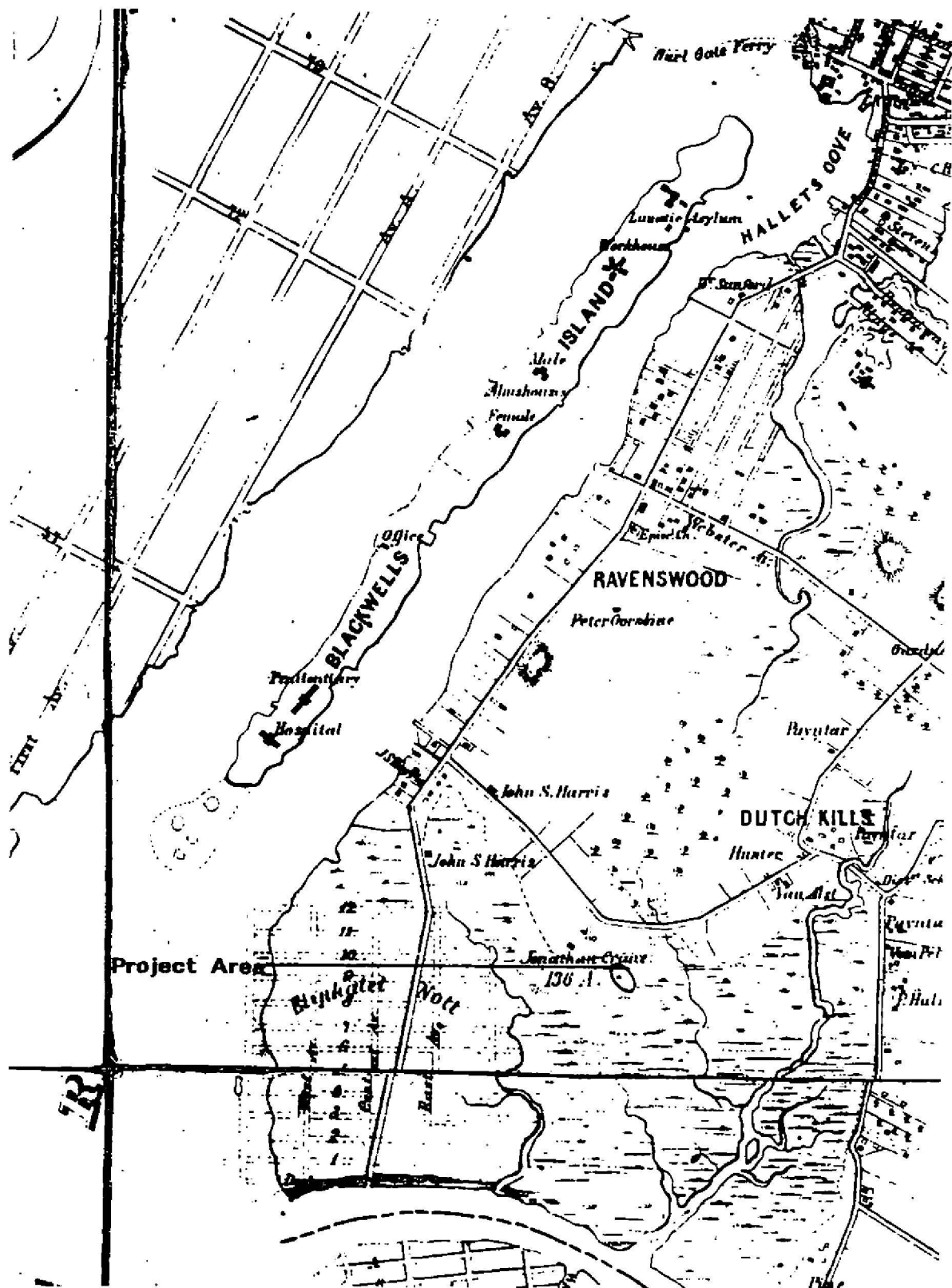


Figure 3

From the 1852 Conner map.

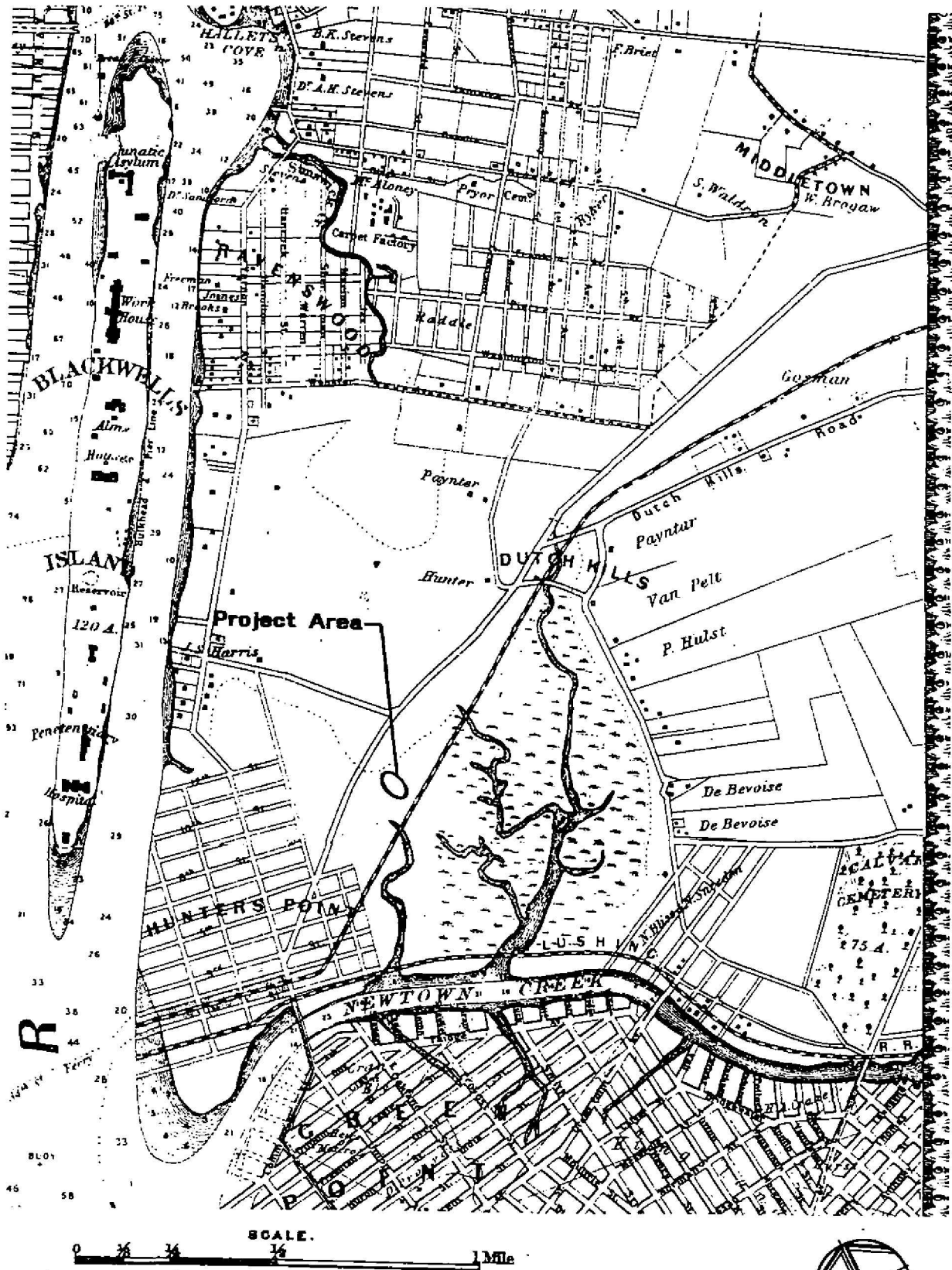


Figure 4

From the 1865 Dripps map.

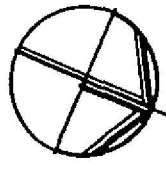
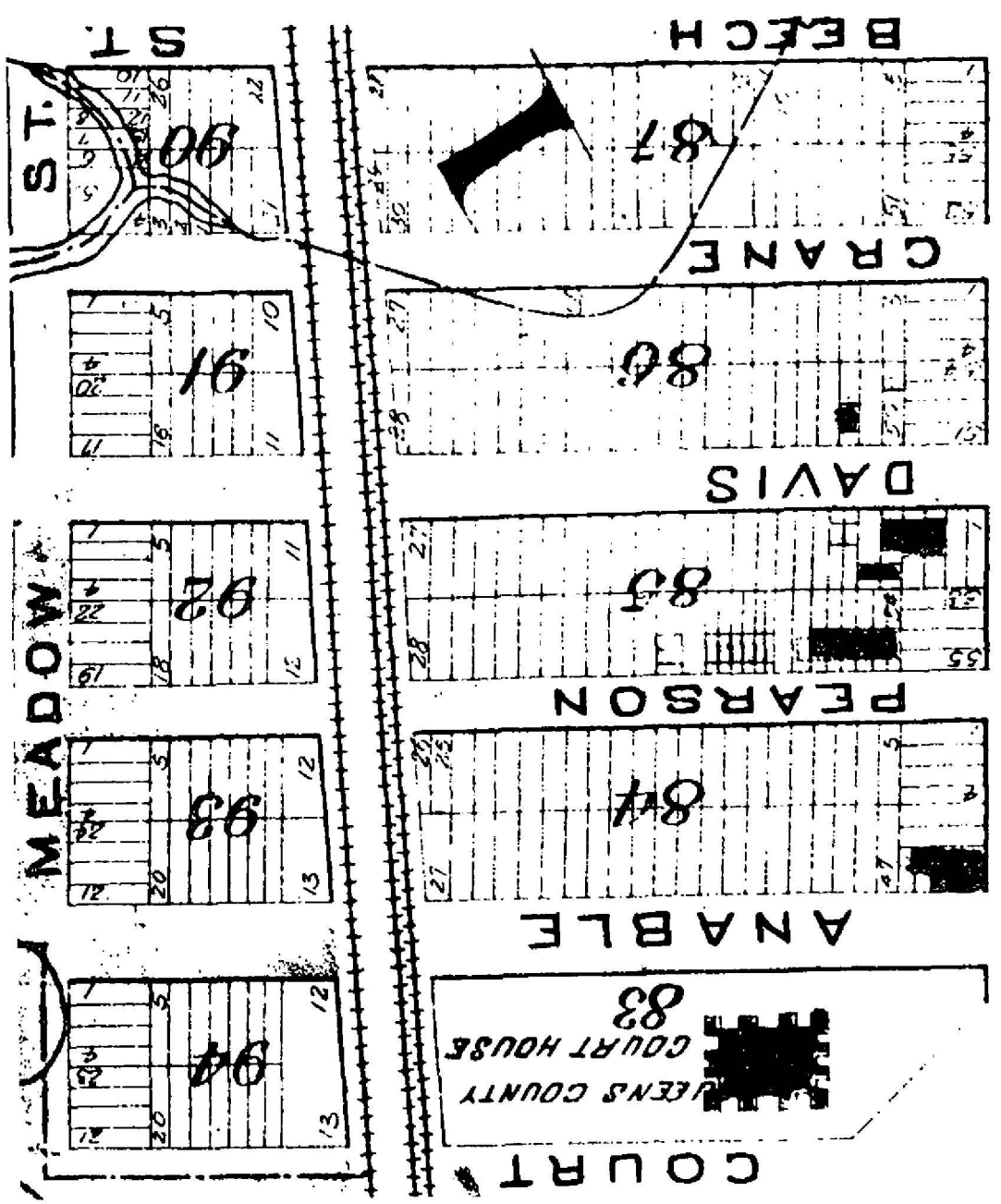
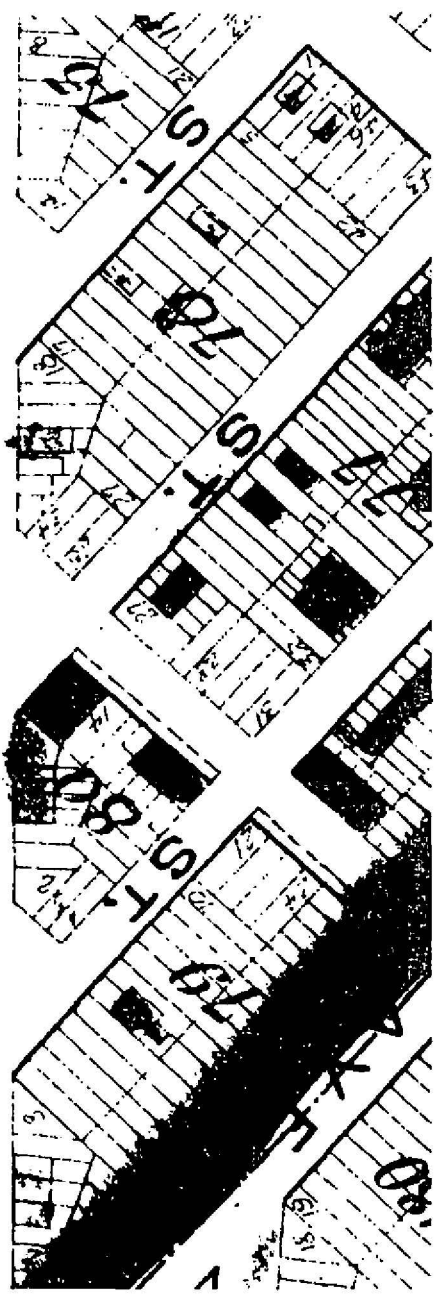


Figure 5 From the 1891 Wolverton atlas.

JACKSON ST.



WATERWORKS

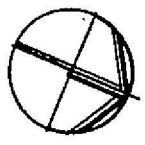
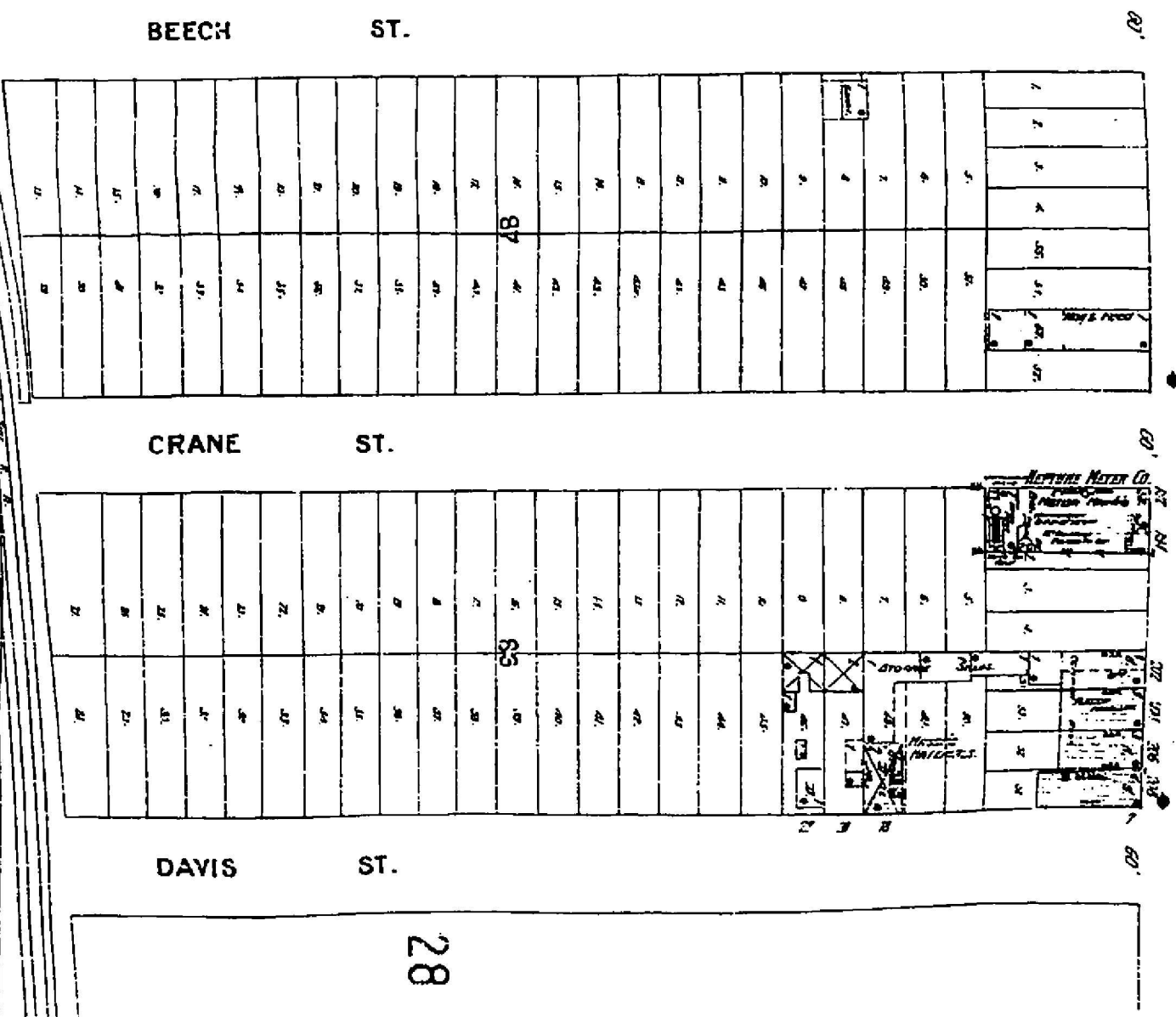


Figure 6 From the 1898 Sanborn maps.

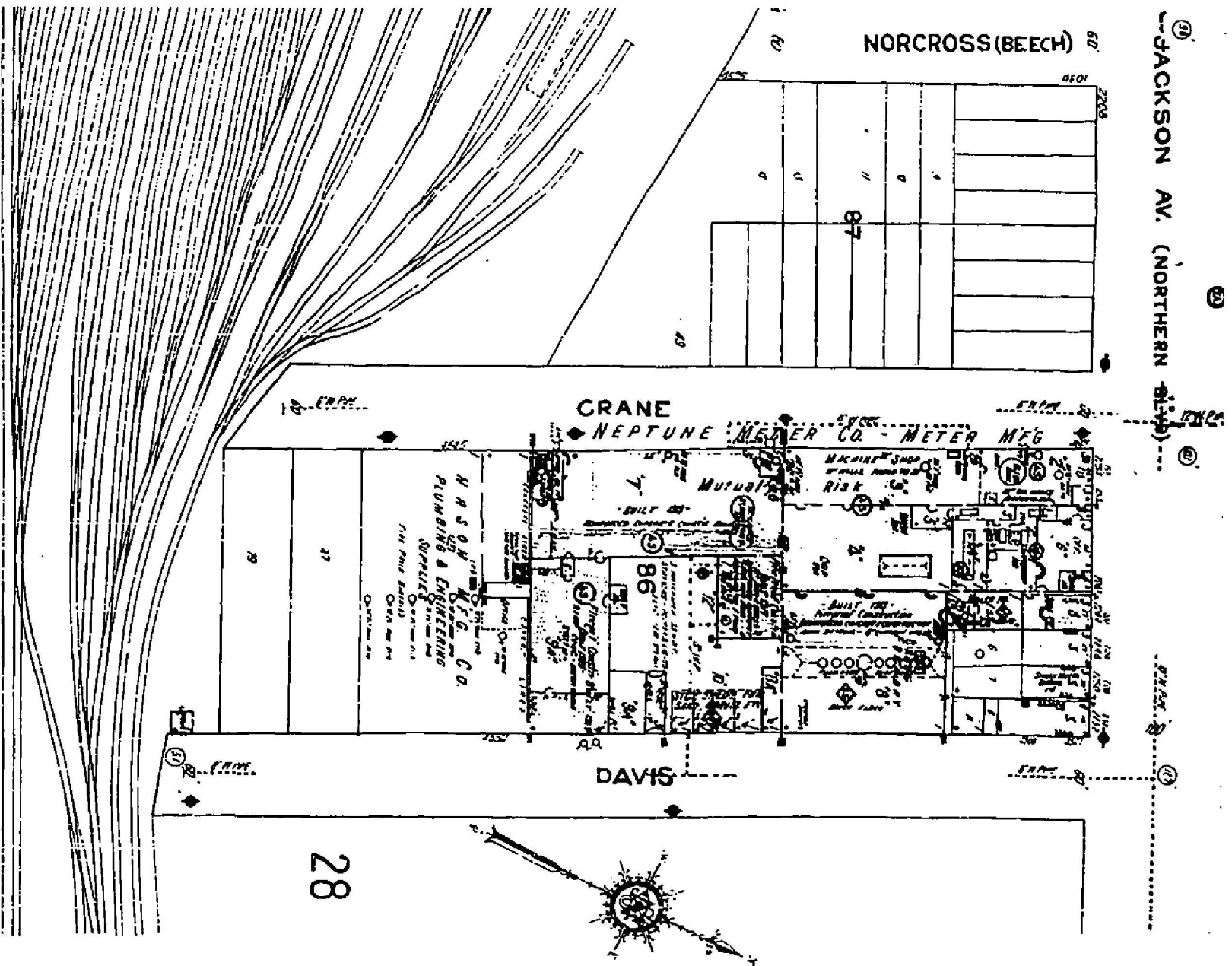


Figure 8

From the 1936 Sanborn maps.



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W.P.A.

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