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STAGE 1A ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL SENSITIVITY
EVALUATION OF THE SAVO CENTER PROJECT
BOROUGH OF RICHMOND, NEW YORK

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Paula M. Crowley	-	Word Processor



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this archaeological and historical sensitivity study is to document the potential prehistoric and historic sensitivity of the proposed Savo Center project through the review of existing archival, cartographic and published references and then to make recommendations regarding possible further testing. In order to provide a context for evaluating any identified resources within the parcel itself, this survey will provide a synthesis of published and unpublished prehistoric and historic sources in the immediate vicinity surrounding the project area. Materials on file at Greenhouse Consultants, compiled for other projects conducted in the Borough of Richmond were used in preparing this report. Acknowledgments are extended to the documentary research completed by Anna V. Farkas for previous projects.

The project area is located in south-central Staten Island, New York, in the vicinity of Amboy Road. The property consists of a roughly rectangular parcel located along the northwest side of Amboy Road. It is within Tax Block 4645 and consists of Lot 275. See Figure 1 for a map illustrating the location of the project area.

This study is organized in the following manner: first, a section describes the geography and physical setting of the project area; second, a section follows on the prehistoric sensitivity of the area; third, a review of the historic sensitivity of the area; and fourth, the conclusions and recommendations.

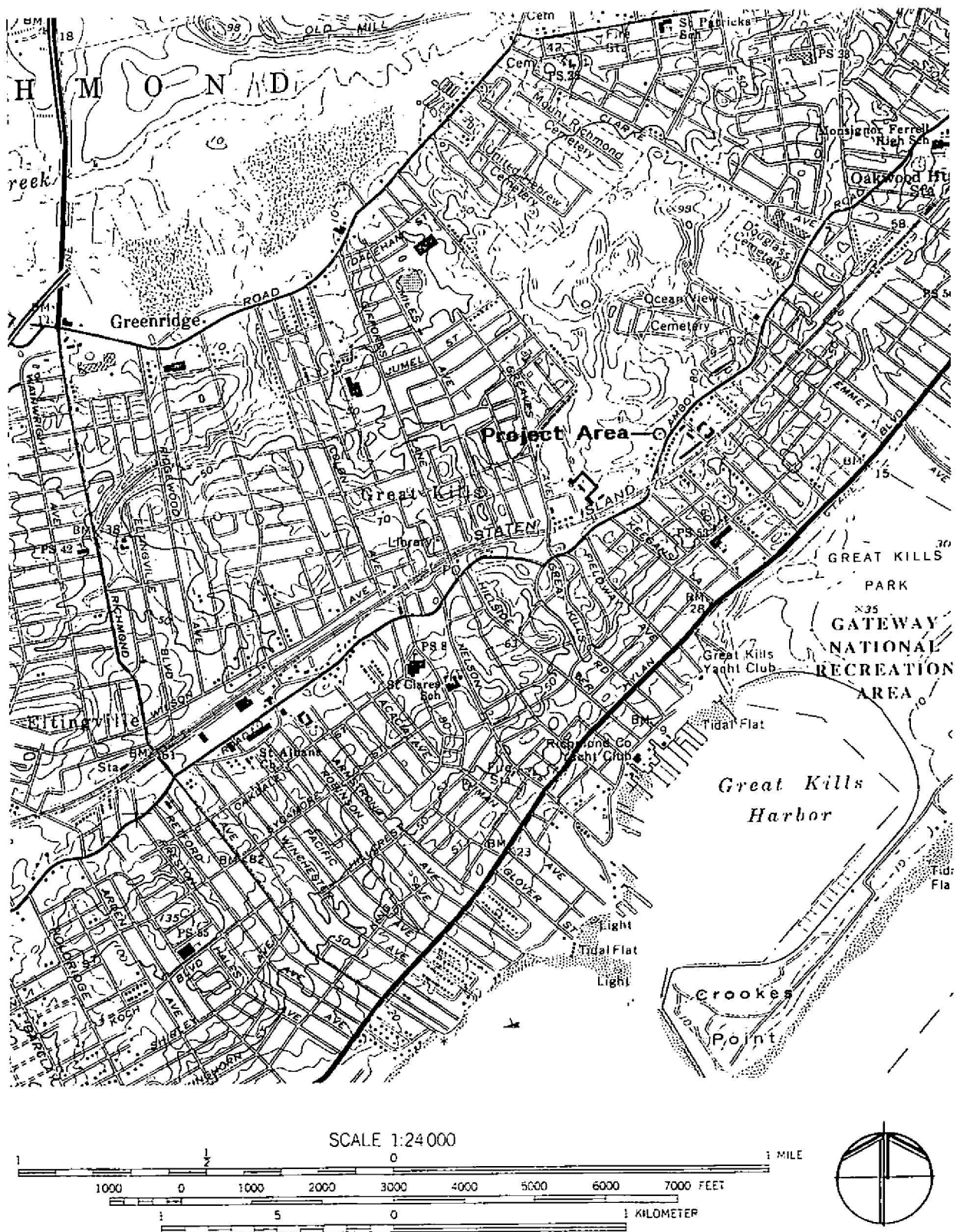


Figure 1 Location of the Savo Center project area shown on portions of the U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series Arthur Kill and The Narrows, New York Quadrangle, 1967, photorevised 1981.



GEOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL SETTING

The project area is located in the Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province of New York State. There is only one other location in the state, Long Island, where this province occurs (Van Diver 1985:34). Geographically, Staten Island is part of New Jersey from which it is separated by the Kill Van Kull and the Staten Island Sound (Skinner 1909).

The geomorphology of Staten Island consists of landforms and deposits of glacial origin. The sediments were deposited by the Wisconsin glaciation 55,000-10,000 years ago and generally consist of ground moraine, terminal moraine and outwash sediments (Jacobsen 1980:5). The shoreline area in this portion of Staten Island is comprised of sandy embankments of beach and adjacent to and at times overlying the area's geologically earlier glacial deposits of the Cretaceous formations of sand and clay (Weingartner 1967:41). Local glacial deposits may be overlaid by fill as well as beach, marsh, dune, swamp, and estuarine deposits (Jacobsen 1980:5).

During April 1998 the Principal Investigator visited the Savo Center project area. During this visit, a pedestrian survey was used to inspect the project area. Plates 1 through 3 illustrate the project area. There is evidence of the filling of the property. A large pile of fill exists presently near the center of the project adjacent to Amboy Road. See Plate 1. To the west and south the terrain is virtually flat and the surface is littered with modern debris indicating that the top deposit is recent fill. See Plate 2. The northeastern part of the project area is also covered with fill. This deposit appears thicker and includes obvious fragments of concrete. Plate 3 provides a view of this fill deposit. The property contains no structures.

Evidence of Cutting and Filling

Comparison of the 1913 Borough of Richmond Topographical Survey with a survey of the Savo Center property dated 1996 indicates that cutting and filling have taken place. See Figures 2 and 3. Elevation in 1913 was approximately 75 to 84 feet. The current elevations range from 72.7 to 80.0 feet. Since the course of Amboy Road has been modified since 1913, the final map for the present course of Amboy Road was consulted to place the parcel on the 1913 map. Analysis of these maps show that the southern third of the project area has been cut. At least four feet of soil has been removed. Since the inspection of the property showed this area to be covered by recent fill, more than four feet was evidently removed, followed by

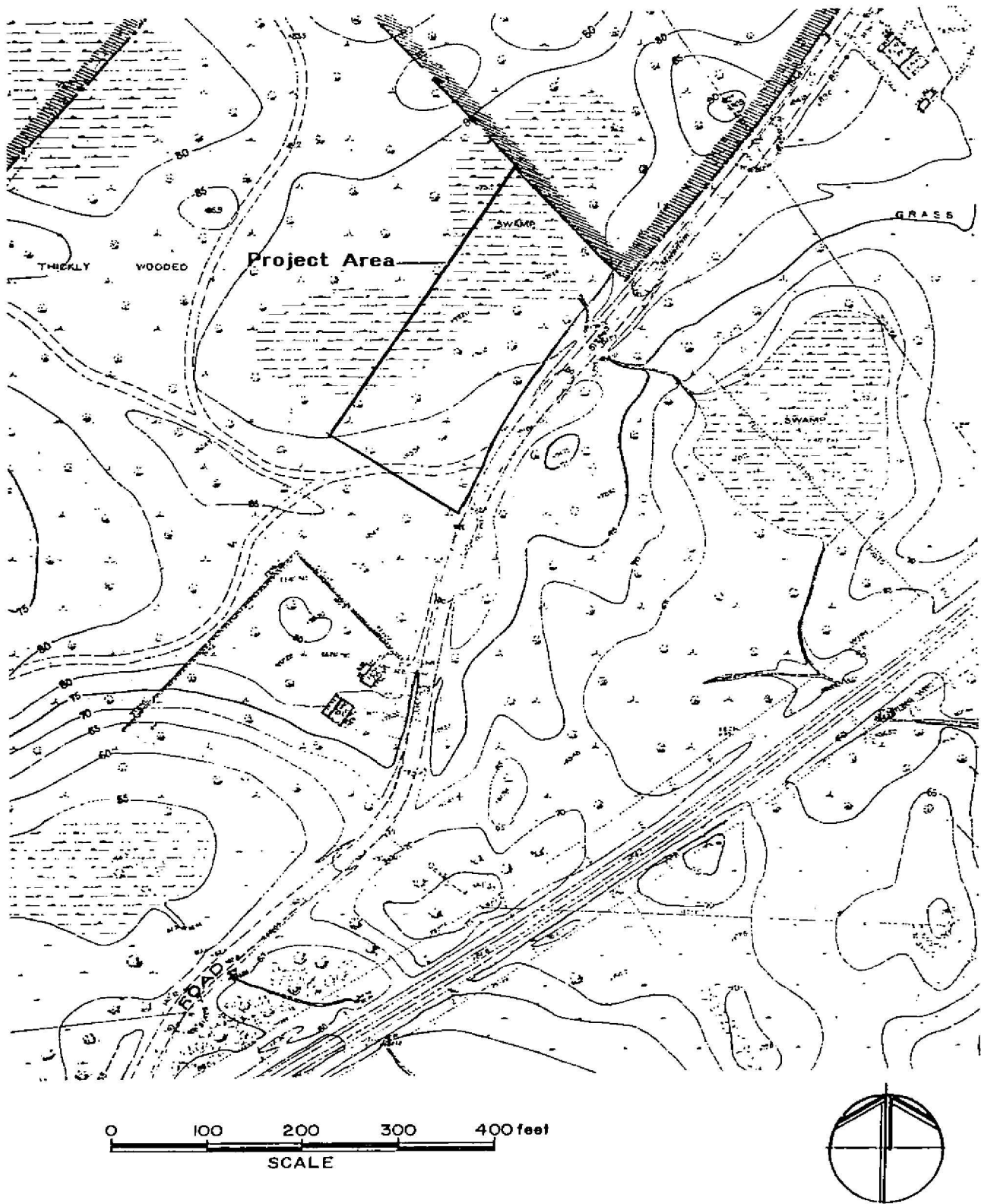


Figure 2 From the 1913 Borough of Richmond Topographical Survey.



the deposition of the recent fill. The west-central portion of the project area is at approximately the same grade as in 1913. This location is now covered by a layer of recent fill which indicates that at least some soil was removed from this location prior to deposition of the fill. The northeastern portion of the project area now has higher elevations than those shown in 1913. This indicates that between 0.5 and 2.3 feet of fill has been deposited over the 1913 surface.



PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY

As part of the project evaluation process, the sensitivity study has surveyed published and unpublished sources in the Archives and Library of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences (hereafter SIIAS), the library of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the files of the New York State Museum Division of Historical and Anthropological Services, and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO). Most documented prehistoric archaeological work undertaken by both professional and avocational archaeologists has historically concentrated on the southwestern portion of Staten Island (Baugher 1985, personal communication).

Table 1 presents the results of our search for prehistoric sites in the vicinity of the Savo project area. Included in the table are eleven sites located two miles or less from the project area. The locations of these sites are presented on Figure 4 with letter code identifiers which correspond to those in Table 1.

Of the eleven known occurrences of prehistoric occupation within two miles of the project area, only one was excavated recently under controlled conditions. These other data represent the work of professional archaeologists early in this century. Two professional archaeologists are included: Alanson Skinner and Arthur C. Parker. Skinner characterized the locations chosen by prehistoric populations as follows:

Throughout Staten Island, with very few exceptions, aboriginal sites are confined to the sandy spots (1912:90).

The nearest site to the Savo Center project area is the Oakwood Site originally reported by Skinner during the early years of this century. It is Skinner's site #23. He describes it as a shell midden. Former New York State Archaeologist Arthur C. Parker included this site in his 1922 report, but he repeats Skinner's information. Eugene Boesch includes it in his recent survey of prehistoric sites on Staten Island as Site N.A.83. He assigns the site to the Woodland Period. See **A** in Table 1 and Figure 4. The Oakwood site is located approximately 0.5 miles southwest of the project area.



The second nearest site is Boesch's site N.A.84, also registered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as A-085-01-0163. It is described as an isolated find of a projectile point from the Paleo-Indian period. It is located approximately 0.5 miles south of the project area. See **B** in Table 1 and Figure 4.

The third nearest site is Boesch's Site N.A.86 which is located approximately 0.6 miles south of the project area. It is described only as a shell midden. See **C** in Table 1 and Figure 4.

D in Table 1 and Figure 4 represents two small sites listed in the files of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences as STD-GK and STD-GF, representing Great Kills and Giffords. Lithics were found in these two locations which lie approximately 0.7 miles southeast of the project area.

Boesch's Site N.A. 89 is represented by **E** in Table 1 and Figure 4. This site is a Woodland period shell midden now within the Oakwood Beach Water Pollution Control Plant. It is located approximately 1.1 miles east of the project area.

Site **F** in Table 1 and Figure 4 is the Crooke's Isle site located on what is now Crooke's Point approximately 1.4 miles south southeast of the project area.

The sixth nearest prehistoric site to the project area, designated **G** in Table 1 and Figure 4 is the Richmond site reported by former New York State Archaeologist Arthur C. Parker. This site, which appears on Parker's map of Richmond County and in his text, is described as Site Number 26. It is located approximately 1.2 miles north of the project area.

The next nearest site is the Richmond Hill site numbered N.A.22 by Boesch and 30-RIC-5-AJA by avocational archaeologist Albert J. Anderson. This site is assigned to the Early Archaic period. It is located approximately 1.3 miles north of the project area. See **H** in Table 1 and Figure 4.

The eighth nearest site to the project area, designated **I** in Table 1 and Figure 4, is an unnamed site reported by Parker. This site, which appears on Parker's map of Richmond County but not in his text, is described only as a campsite with traces of occupation. It is located approximately 1.8 miles east of the project area. Since Parker provides no description of the artifacts recovered, no estimate of date range can be offered (Parker 1922:Plate 211).



The final two sites found during this research were both first reported during 1896 by the Natural Science Association of Staten Island as the Woods of Arden and Fiddler's Green sites. Boesch numbers them N.A. 95 and N.A. 79 respectively. No information on artifacts recovered or date range is supplied. Site **J**, the Woods of Arden, is located approximately 1.8 miles southwest of the project area. Site **K**, Fiddler's Green, is approximately 1.9 miles west of the project area.

In terms of prehistoric sensitivity, the project impact area was evaluated from two points of view:

1. the proximity of known prehistoric sites in or near the project area; and
2. the presence of fresh water drainage courses in general, and particularly the identification of river or stream confluence situations where two or more drainages come together, providing access to both the water and food supplies of both systems.

This survey has documented the recorded or published locations of eleven sites within a two mile radius of the Savo Center project area. Although sites have been identified in the general region of the proposed project impact area, none are known to exist within the project area itself. No evidence, positive or negative, based on previous survey work is available. It would be inappropriate, however, to characterize this region as without prehistoric sensitivity.

The 1913 topographic map shows a marsh drained by a small stream in the northeastern portion of the project area. Game would have been attracted to the stream and marsh. The project area would have included some relatively elevated land adjacent to the marsh and therefore has the potential to hold the remains of a hunting camp.

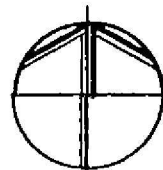
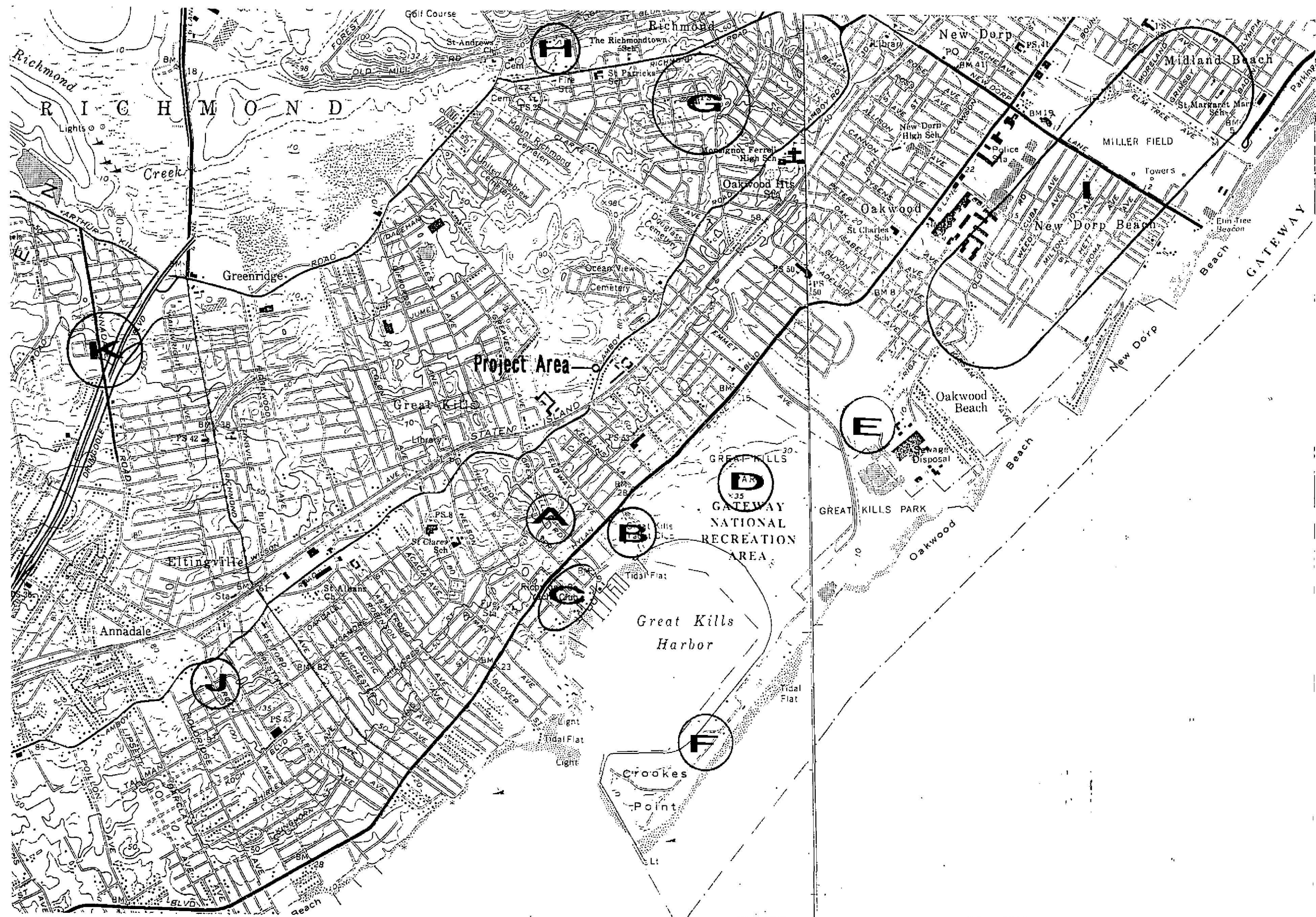


Figure 4 Prehistoric sites within two miles of the project area.

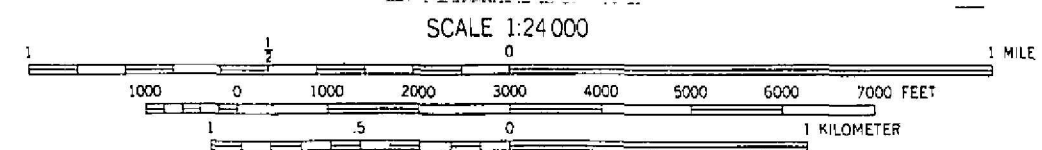


TABLE 1
Prehistoric Sites within Two Miles of the Project Area

Name	NYSM#	Parker#	NYSOPRHP#	Other#	NYCLPL#	References	Period(s)	Description
A. Oakwood	4617	ACP-RICH-27		Skinner #23	NA83	Skinner 1909:17 Parker 1922:685 Boesch 1994:117	Woodland	Shell midden
B.			A-085-01-0163		NA84	Boesch 1994:117	Paleo-Indian	Isolated projectile point
C.					NA86	Boesch 1994:117		Shell midden
D. Great Kills				STD-GK STD-GF	NA88	Bolton 1934:152, 156 Boesch 1994:118		Three lithics One lithic
E.					NA89	Boesch 1994:118	Woodland	Shell midden
F. Crooke's Isle			A-085-01-0162	STD-CI	NA85	Boesch 1994:117		One lithic
G. Richmond	4616	ACP-RICH-26		Skinner #22		Skinner 1909:16-17 Parker 1922:685		Camp
H. Richmond Hill				30-RIC-5-AJA	NA22	Boesch 1994:105	Early Archaic	
I.	4628	ACP-RICH			NA60	Parker 1922:Pl.211 Boesch 1994:113		Camp Traces of occupation
J. Woods of Arden					NA95	Boesch 1994:118		
K. Fiddler's Green					NA77	Boesch 1994:116		Camp





HISTORIC SENSITIVITY

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Staten Island was known as Aquehonga Manacknong by the bands of Lenape who inhabited it during the seventeenth century, although the variant, Eghquaons, is used in the earliest Dutch document (Grumet 1981:2). Other variations exist, but these two are found in seventeenth century documents.

In 1626 the island was bought from the natives by the director of the Dutch West India Company. Michael Pauw was given a patent of patroonship by the Director and Council of New Netherlands in 1630, but he relinquished it to the Dutch West India Company. The Dutch West India Company granted Cornelius Melyn all of Staten Island in 1641 (Historical Records Survey 1942:xiv). Ten years later, Melyn granted Hendrick van der Capellan a deed for one-third of the island (ibid.: xv). Upon the death of Capellan in 1656, Melyn sold his interest to the company thus ending the patroon system on Staten Island (ibid.: xvi).

The British assumed control of the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam from the Dutch West India Company in 1664. Governor Francis Lovelace made the final purchase of Staten Island from the Indians in 1670. Land surveys were initiated under Lovelace and completed under the governorship of Edmund Andros in 1677 (Historical Records Survey 1942:xviii).

Governor Dongan designated Staten Island as Richmond County. In March 1688 Richmond County was partitioned into four towns: Castletown, Northfield, Southfield and Westfield (Bayles 1887:95). The project area lies within the old town of Southfield (ibid.:map facing page 1). Amboy Road is an old road, known to exist since at least 1709 (Leng and Davis 1930:142).

Staten Island remained under British control throughout the eighteenth century until the end of the Revolutionary War. Approximately 29,000 troops under British command landed on the island during July 1776. Despite this large number of men, there is no evidence that any were stationed within or adjacent to the project area.

Late eighteenth century cartographic sources show that several farmsteads lined the northwest side of Amboy Road by the onset of the Revolutionary War (McMillen 1933; Plan No. 31 du Anglo-Hessois sans Staten Island).



Unfortunately, due to a certain degree of inaccuracy inherent in these early maps, it is not possible to ascertain the project area's exact location on them. The Savo Center project area appears to be located northeast of one structure shown on the above-mentioned maps. McMillen's map is provided here as Figure 5. The New and Correct Map of the County of Richmond completed during 1797 shows the project area as vacant. It is the earliest map to show the name Southfield for the town, including the project area. This map was not reproduced for this report.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The United States Coast Survey Charter of New York Harbor, surveyed from 1836-1839 and published in 1845, is the earliest available nineteenth century cartographic source. This map shows no structures in the vicinity of the project area. The Savo Center appears to lie northeast of a small farm within an area of forest. See Figure 6.

The next cartographic source presented here is the Butler map of 1853. This map shows that the Savo Center project area is within vacant land which is not labeled as to its owners or occupants. See Figure 7. The Butler map shows the proposed line of the railroad, that is not its present location. The 1852 Bacon and Barnes map was also consulted, but is not included as a figure in the report since it shows the same situation as Butler.

The 1874 Beers Atlas, presented here as Figure 8, is the earliest cartographic source to show property lines and structure locations with a fair degree of reliability. The project area consists of part of a large property owned by J.J. Crooke. No structures are shown within the project area, but a small stream is shown passing under Amboy Road.

Figure 9, taken from the 1887 Beers Atlas, continues to show the same situation. The project area is vacant. A stream exists near its northern end. The property is part of a larger parcel owned by J.J. Crooke.

The next nineteenth century cartographic source, presented here as Figure 10, is taken from the 1890 topographic map by Vermeule and Bien. No structures are shown within the project area. The small stream is shown. The location is illustrated as part of a clearing.

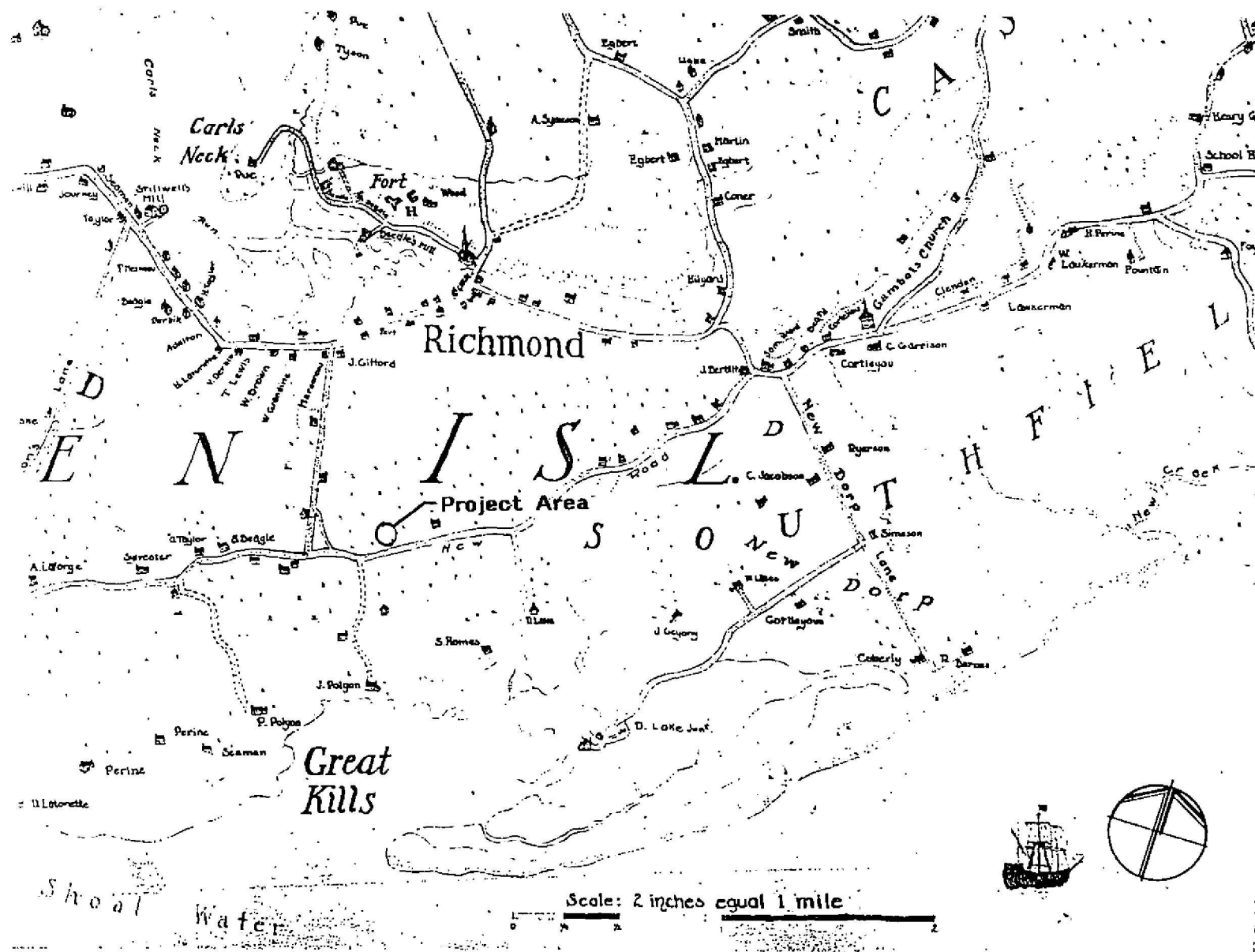


Figure 5 From McMillen's 1933 Map of Staten Island during the Revolution, 1775-1783.

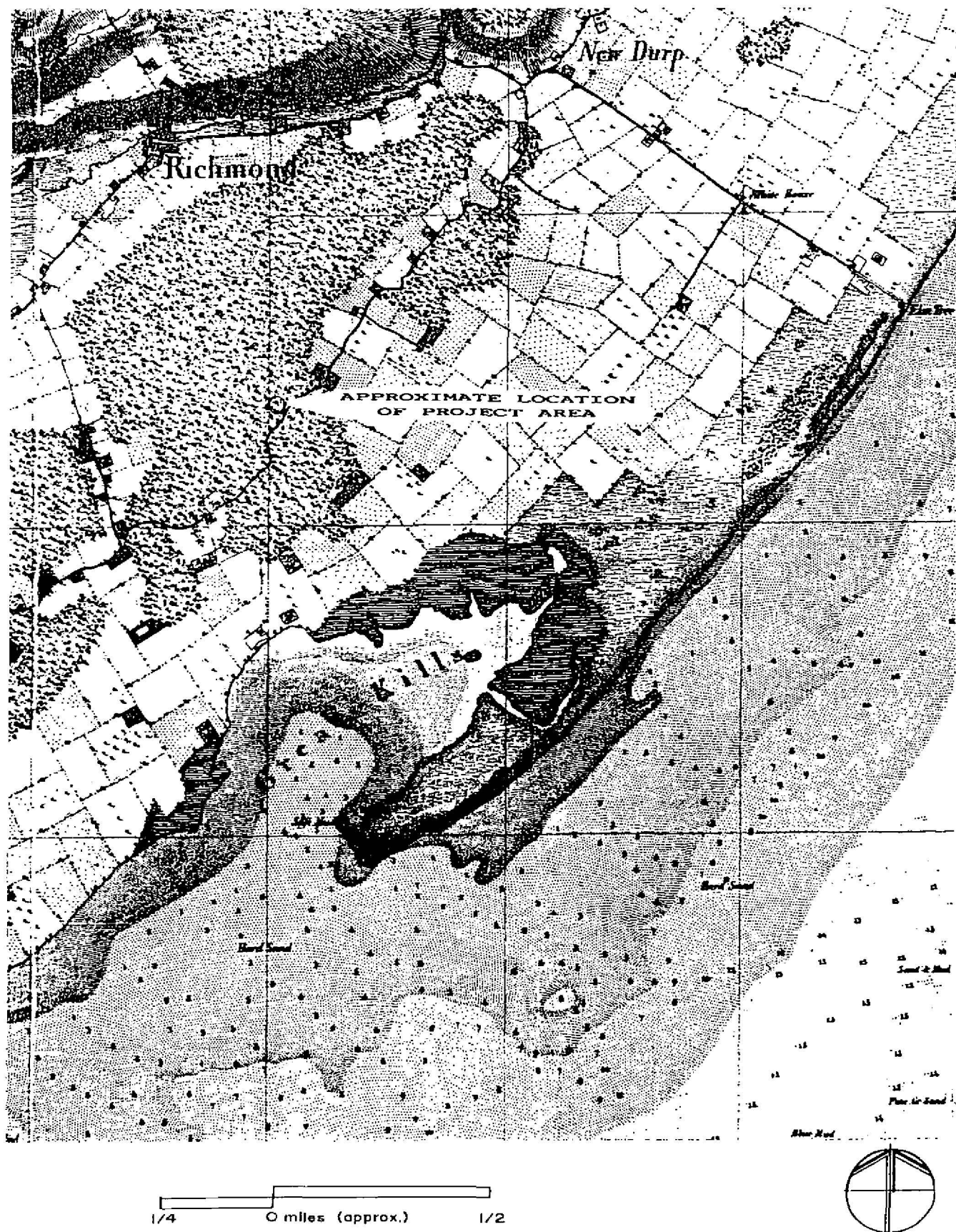


Figure 6 From the U.S. Coast Survey Charter of New York Harbor 1836-1839, published 1845.

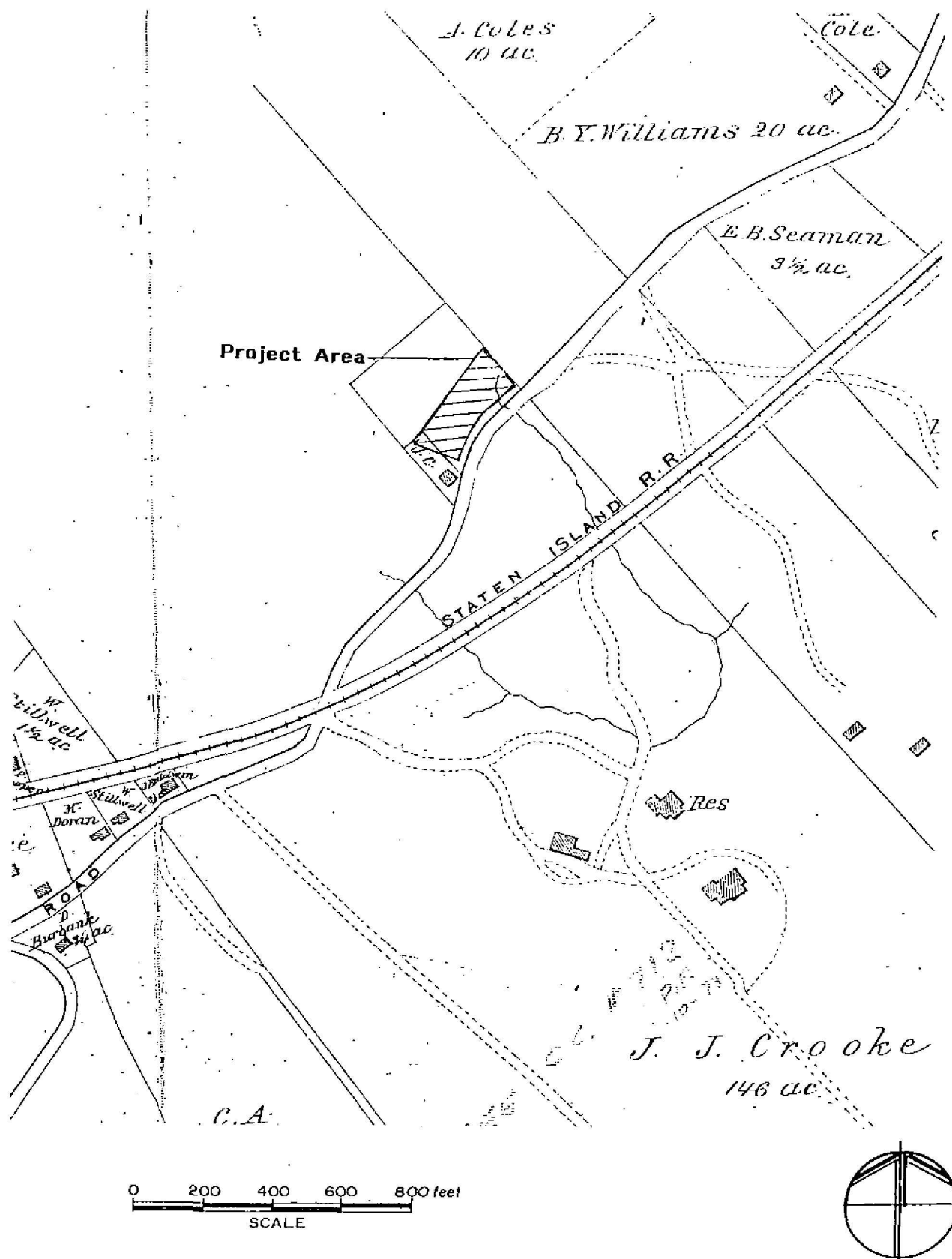


Figure 8 From the 1874 Beers' Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

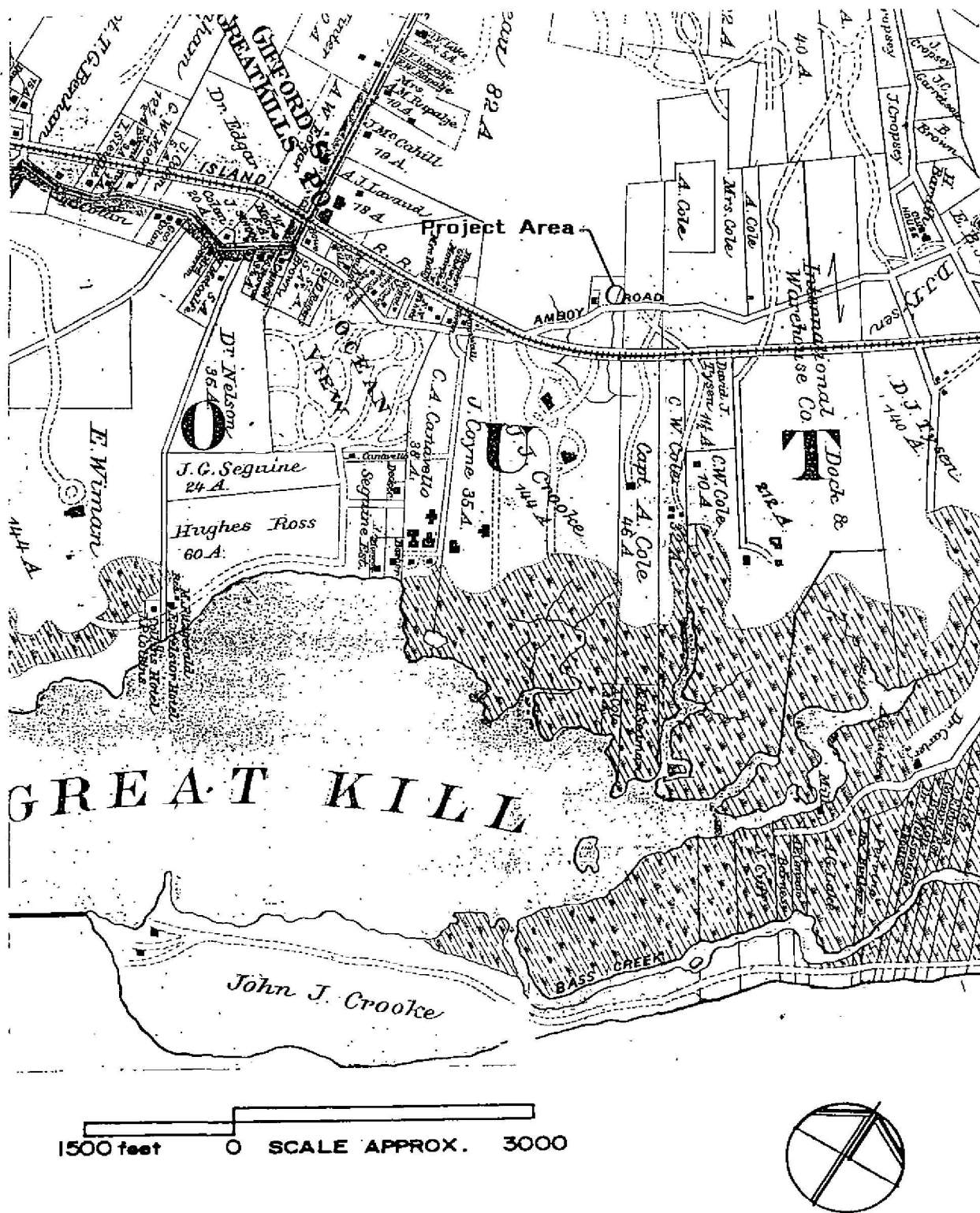


Figure 9 From the 1887 Beers' Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

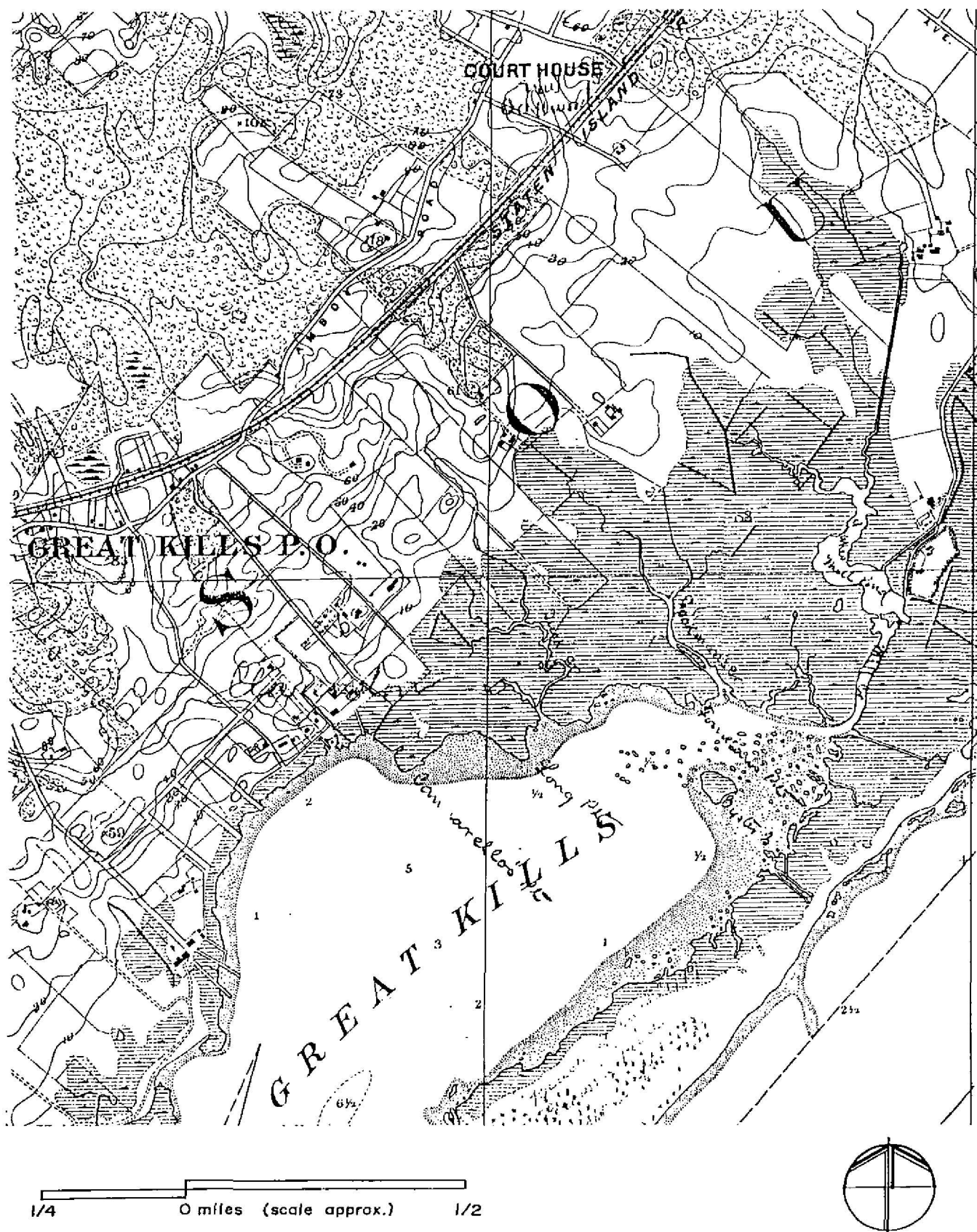


Figure 10 From the Vermeule and Bien's 1890 Topographical Map of Staten Island.



The 1898 Robinson Atlas was consulted. It continues to show the same situation shown in 1887. The project area is vacant land owned by John J. Crooke. His home, Liberty Hall, lies to the south.

The 1907 Robinson Atlas shows a change in ownership. The project area is now owned by the Willet Realty Company. The project area remains vacant. See Figure 11.

Figure 2 is taken from the 1913 Borough of Richmond Topographical Survey, which is probably the most accurate map of Staten Island ever made. This map shows a swamp covering the northern half of the project area. It is drained by a small stream which passes under Amboy Road. A lane or driveway passes through the southern end of the project area. No structures are shown. Elevations range from 83.8 feet at the southern end to 75.8 feet within the swamp.

Figure 3 presents the 1996 survey of the project area by Edward Lauria. No structures exist within the project area. Elevations range from 80.0 feet in the northeastern corner to 71.4 feet at the southern end. Most of the land is between 74.0 and 80.0 feet in elevation.

In summary, the historic maps and atlases do not show any structures within the project area. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the project area was forested. The northern end of the project area is the location of a stream and swamp. Property ownership was by J.J. Crooke from prior to 1874 until some time between 1898 and 1907. By 1907 the land was owned by the Willet Realty Company.

John Jeremy Crooke began purchasing land near the project area during the early 1860s. By 1866 he had amassed 320 acres all near Great Kills. Much of this was purchased from Edwin R. Bennett. The majority was forested and Crooke had to clear land for his house. He was born on January 22, 1824 at Stuyvesant in Columbia County, New York. His parents were Charles Crooke and Anna Neher Crooke, both of Dutchess County, New York. The family was related to the Livingston, Beekman, Jay, Astor, Fish, Roosevelt, Rutgers, Van Renssalaer, DePeyster, Hamilton, Schuyler and Stuyvesant families (Crooke Collection n.d.) (Davis 1911:169).

J.J. Crooke was well known on Staten Island. Although he was an investor in various silver mines in Colorado, he was better known locally as a



naturalist. His house included a fire-proof room for his natural history collection. He was instrumental in saving the original copper plates for many of the bird illustrations in Audobon's work. He assisted Thomas A. Edison with some of the early work on phonographic cylinders. J.J. Crooke died at his home near Great Kills on April 22, 1911. Crooke's Point is named for him (Davis 1911:169-172) (Leng and Davis 1930:831).

Although the project area was owned by Crooke, it was approximately 400 yards north of his house and outbuildings. There is no evidence that Crooke ever built on the project area.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above text has documented that the Savo Center project area may preserve archaeological evidence from the prehistoric period. The project area is within two miles of eleven prehistoric sites. Fresh water would have been available from the small stream in the northeastern corner of the parcel. This drained the swamp covering the northern half of the parcel. The swamp would have attracted game, making its margins a possible location for a hunting camp.

The section on historic sensitivity shows that the project area was largely forested until the mid-nineteenth century. There is no evidence that any structures were built on the project area. Despite ownership by the locally important J.J. Crooke, it appears unlikely that any deposits would exist here which relate to his ownership.

Analysis of the changes in topography since 1913 show that any potential for preserving archaeological deposits has been eliminated within the southern half of the project area. The northeastern portion of the parcel has been filled, and retains the potential for preserving archaeological deposits beneath the fill.

The proposed plans for the project area include a 10,000 square foot restaurant building covering the northeastern end of the parcel. This will require underground utility connections which could impact potential archaeological deposits. The remainder of the parcel is proposed for parking. Construction of the parking lot will probably not disturb any deposits beneath the fill. We recommend archaeological testing under the proposed new structure to search for possible prehistoric remains. Since this location is under fill, including concrete fragments, we recommend backhoe trenching as the method for the testing. Two trenches each five feet wide by 25 to 50 feet long should be sufficient to prove the presence or absence of prehistoric resources in this location.

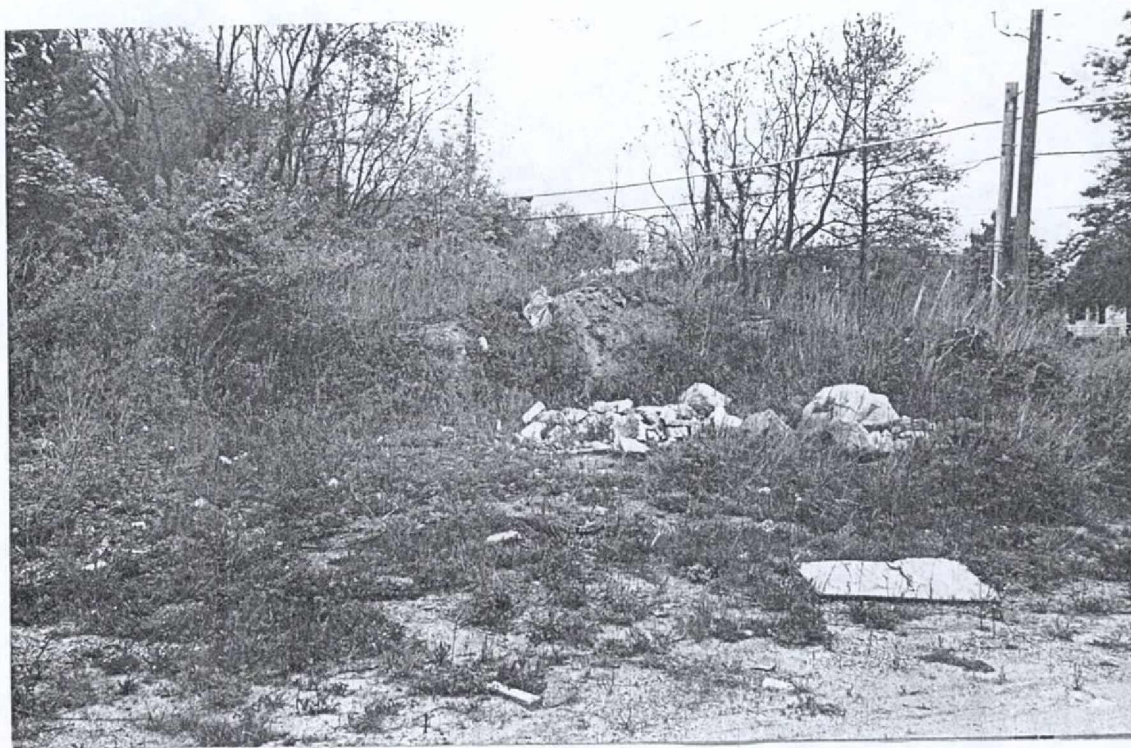


Plate 1 View of the center portion of the project area looking east, showing pile of fill near Amboy Road.



Plate 2 View of the southern end of the project area looking southwest, showing recent fill at surface.



Plate 3 View of the northern end of the project area looking east,
showing fill over old stream course.



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