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**PHASE 1A
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION**

**NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT
EMS STATION / FIREHOUSE SITE
ROSSVILLE, STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK**

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

A Phase 1A cultural resources sensitivity investigation was conducted within Block 7067, Lot 252 in the Rossville section of Staten Island, New York. This investigation was in response to the New York City Fire Department proposal to construct a new firehouse and EMS facility within the property. Documentary research and field reconnaissance were the methods employed in this investigation.

There is no evidence to indicate that prehistoric people occupied or utilized the land within the project area. No historic period structures, cellar holes, foundations, stone fences, or other cultural features were found within the project area. Indeed, the background research indicates that this property was always undeveloped land.

Focusing on possible historic period resources adjacent to or near the Area of Potential Effect (APE), this investigation has identified five structures that are listed as potential New York City landmarks. These structures include four residential dwellings and one church located on Poplar Avenue. The proposed construction of the firehouse and EMS facility will have no adverse impact on these structures.

Lot 252 has been extensively disturbed and the original landscape severely altered. The property is not sensitive for the present of prehistoric or historic period cultural resources. Therefore, no further archaeological investigation is necessary.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The New York City Fire Department proposes to build a 6000 square foot EMS station and a new fire house on an undeveloped lot located in the Rossville section of western Staten Island, New York. The proposed fire house is estimated to be a two to three story structure encompassing approximately 20,000 square feet which will house an engine and ladder company (Michel 2000).

This report presents the results of a Phase 1A cultural resources sensitivity investigation conducted within the project area. This study was conducted in accordance with the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) regulations. The objectives of this cultural resources investigation was to evaluate historical and archaeological sensitivity of the proposed project site.

B. PROJECT SITE LOCATION

The proposed project site is an undeveloped lot located at the intersection of Rossville Avenue and Veterans Road East in Staten Island, New York. A triangular-shaped lot, the property is bounded on the north by Veterans Road East, Rossville Avenue on the east, and private dwellings on the south. The site is designated as Block 7067 Lot 252.

The regional location of the project site is indicated on the Arthur Kill, NY-NJ quadrangle, United States Geological Survey map, 7.5 minute series, 1966 (FIGURE 1). The project area is also indicated on a portion of the Hagstrom Map of Staten Island (FIGURE 2).

II. ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

A. LANDSCAPE HISTORY

The historic land use of the project site is inferred from the examination of historic period maps and our intensive pedestrian reconnaissance.

Cartographic evidence between the years 1776 to 1781 characterizes the area as lightly wooded (Sauthier 1776; Anonymous 1777; Clinton 1777; Masi 1777; Taylor and Skinner 1781). By 1853, the project area is depicted as open, clear, and undeveloped land (Butler 1853). Subsequent nineteenth century maps (Walling 1859; Beers 1874, 187; Mueller 1898) also show the project area as open undeveloped land.

The 1913 Topographic survey of the Borough of Richmond (sheet 6) clearly delineates the property. The project site is shown as open, undeveloped, gently sloping land. Finally, the 1932 edition of the topographic survey map of New Jersey and Staten Island also depicts the site as upland and undeveloped (New Jersey 1932).

The construction of the West Shore Expressway, Route 440, in the late 1960s significantly impacted the north side of the proposed project site. A service road, now called Veterans Road East, extends along the north side of the property.

B: PHYSICAL SETTING

The present topography of the project site can be characterized as flat along its south side and sloping downward to the north terminating at Veterans Road East. The on-site elevations range from thirty-eight feet above mean sea level at the extreme southeast corner of the property to approximately thirty feet above m.s.l. along its northern side. There are no streams, springs or ponds within the property.

The project site lies within the Coastal Plain physiographic province with underlying deposits of sands and clays called the Raritan-Magothy formation laid down during the Cretaceous period some seventy million years ago. Glacial deposits consisting of sands, silts and gravels once overlay those of the Cretaceous period and date to about 14,000 years ago (Britton 1882; Schuberth 1968).

The project property is an upland area. The vegetation presently found on the site is typical of disturbed places. The site is overgrown with young trees,

brush, and weeds. A stand of reed grass or phragmites (*Phragmites communis*) is present within the eastern portion of the property. The site also contains young maple and birch trees, butternut trees, Queen Anne's Lace, wild grasses, ragweed, poison ivy and cat brier. No fauna was observed within the property.

The project site is in an area that has undergone extensive landscape change and development. The property is undeveloped land surrounded by paved roads and residential structures. There is abundant evidence of landscape disturbance within the property. These disturbances are discussed in the field survey section of this report.

III. BACKGROUND RESEARCH: PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A. CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Paleo Indian Period (c. 10,500 B.C. -8000 B.C.) represents the earliest known human occupation of Staten Island. The Paleo Indians were hunter-gatherers who roamed widely in search of food, and their settlement pattern consisted of small temporary camps on high well-drained land. They traveled in single or multiple family bands and evidence of their presence has been found in Rossville and Kreisherville (Kraft 1977:6). The material remains of the Paleo Indians includes their stone tools such as Clovis-type fluted projectile points, bifacial knives, drills, graters, burins, scrapers, flake cores, and flake tools.

During the Archaic Period (c. 8000 B.C. - 1000 B.C.) a major shift occurred in the settlement and subsistence patterns of Native American bands. Hunting and gathering were still the basic ways of life during this period, but the emphasis in subsistence shifted from hunting large animals species which were becoming unavailable to smaller game and collecting plants in a deciduous forest. The settlement-pattern of the Archaic people consisted of small bands that occupied larger and relatively more permanent habitation sites along the coast of Staten Island, its estuaries and streams and inland areas. Typically such sites are located on high ground overlooking water courses.

The tool kit of the Early Archaic people (c. 8000 B.C. - 6000 B.C.) included bifurcated or basally notched projectile points generally made of high quality stone. Evidence of Early Archaic sites on Staten Island is sparse. One site, known as the Richmond Hill site, was located adjacent to the southern foot of Richmond Hill and contained Early Archaic projectile points (Ritchie and Funk 1971:53-55).

The archaeological record suggests that a population increase took place during the Middle Archaic Period (c. 6000 - c. 4000 B.C.). In addition to projectile points, the tool kits of these people included grinding stones, mortars, and pestles. Such artifacts have been found throughout Staten Island.

Late Archaic people (c. 4000 - 1000 B.C.) were specialized hunter-gatherers who exploited a variety of upland and lowland settings in a well-defined and scheduled seasonal round. The projectile point types attributed to this period include the Lamoka, Brewerton, Normanskill, Lackawaxen, Bare

Island and Poplar Island. The tool kit of these peoples also included milling equipment, stone axes and adzes. During the Terminal Archaic Period (c. 1700 - c. 1000 B.C.) new and radically different broad bladed projectile points were developed including Susquehanna, Perkiomen and Orient Fishtail types. A large number of Late Archaic Period sites have been found on Staten Island.

During the Woodland Period (c. 1000 B.C. - 1600 A.D.) of prehistory, Native American subsistence practices continued to be hunting, gathering and fishing. However, several important changes took place. Clay pottery vessels gradually replaced the soapstone bowls during the Early Woodland Period (c. 1000 B.C. - A.D. 1). The earliest ceramic type found on Staten Island is called Vinette 1, an interior-exterior cordmarked sand tempered vessel. The Meadowood type projectile point is a chronological indicator of the Early Woodland Period. Cord marked vessels became common during the Middle Woodland Period (c. A.D. 1 - c. 1000 A.D.) Jacks Reef and Fox Creek type projectile points are diagnostic of the Middle Woodland. During the Late Woodland Period (c. 1000 A.D. - 1600 A.D.) collared ceramic vessels, many with decorations, made their appearance. Large triangular projectile points known as the Levanna type became common, and smaller triangular forms known as Madison appeared near the end of the Late Woodland.

Horticulture began at some point during the Woodland Period and included the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash. However, evidence of horticultural practices on Staten Island remain ill-defined. Tobacco pipes and smoking were also adopted and the bow and arrow replaced the spear and javelin during this period. The habitation sites of the Woodland Period Indians increased in size and permanence. A large number of Woodland Period archaeological sites have been found on Staten Island in a variety of environmental settings. A favored situation for occupation during this period was well-drained ground near stream drainages and coastal waterways.

The settlement of New Amsterdam (New York) by the Dutch in the early 1600s initiated the Historic Contact Period between the Indians of Staten Island and the Europeans. A regular pattern of Indian-European trade developed and the Indians began to acquire European-made tools, ornaments, and other items of material culture. At the time of European contact, the Indians who inhabited Staten Island were Munsee speaking groups known as the Lenape or Delaware (Goddard 1978a, 1978b). Journal accounts by European explorers, settlers and travelers described Indian settlements and lifeways. However, only

a few Historic Contact Period sites have been found on Staten Island: at Wards Point, Old Place, Corsons Brook, Travis, New Springfield, and at the PS56R Site in Woodrow (Boesch 1994; HP Inc. 1996).

B: PREHISTORIC SITES IN THE PROJECT AREA

In order to assess the potential for prehistoric cultural resources within the project area we reviewed the archaeological site files maintained by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. The relevant prehistoric archaeological literature and previous cultural resource survey reports were consulted to ascertain the presence of known prehistoric sites within the project area. There are no recorded prehistoric archaeological sites located within the proposed EMS / Fire House property.

According to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's records, there are several documented prehistoric sites located near the project area (Boesch 1994). Those sites located within ONE MILE of the project site are listed here in order to provide a context for the project area. We note that some of these sites are based on early or old, and often incomplete records; therefore their geographic location may be imprecise and the descriptions of cultural remains vague or general at best.

TABLE 1: PREHISTORIC SITES IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROJECT AREA

<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type / Cultural Remains</u>	<u>Culture Period</u>
Huguenot	Intersection of Huguenot Ave. and Arthur Kill Rd.	dec. ceramics, and diagnostic lithics	Middle Woodland
Cutting	Intersection of Arthur Kill Rd. and Rossville Ave.	Campsite; proj. pts.	Paleo, Archaic, Woodland
Benedict Cr.	Fresh Kills	scattered artifacts	no data
Saint Lukes Cemetery	Arthur Kill Rd. near Winant Ave.	multicomponent; lithics, ceramics	Archaic to Late Woodland
Hammerstone Hill	Winant Ave.	Lithic debitage, ceramics	Woodland
Harik's Sandy Ground	Bloomington Rd. at Intersection of Rt. 440	campsite; lithics	Archaic
Unnamed	Bloomington Rd. north of Arthur Kill Rd.	campsite; shell midden; lithic debitage, ceramics	Late Woodland
Rossville Campsite II	Bloomington Rd.	campsite	Woodland
Rossville Campsite I	Intersection of Bloomington Rd. and Woodrow Rd.	F.C.R., ceramics, lithic debitage	Woodland
Wort Farm	N.E. of intersection of Woodrow Rd. and Winant Ave.	campsite; diverse assemblage, features	Late Archaic to Late Woodland
P.S. 56R	N.E. of intersection of Woodrow Rd. and Winant Ave.	Seasonal hunting, food proc. camp	Early Archaic to Historic Contact
Smoking Point	Along Arthur Kill	Village; shell midden, burials	Paleo Indian to Late Archaic, Woodland
Chemical Lane	Chemical Lane	Hunting, fishing, shell fish gathering camps. Shell middens, burials, lithics, ceramics	Archaic - Woodland
Pottery Farm	Chemical Lane	shell midden, lithics, ceramics	Late - Term. Archaic, Middle/Late Woodland
Gerike Organic Farm	south side of Arthur Kill Rd.	proj. pts., lithic debitage, ceramics	Archaic to Late Woodland
Clay Pit Pond Rd. Sties	Clay Pit Pond Rd.	no data	Archaic - Woodland
Ultramarine	grounds of Ultramarine Works	lithic debitage, ceramics	Woodland

C. POTENTIAL FOR PREHISTORIC CULTURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE PROJECT SITE

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission archaeological sensitivity map rates the Rossville area in general as having "HIGH SENSITIVITY" for the presence of prehistoric resources.

IV. BACKGROUND RESEARCH: HISTORIC RESOURCES

A. ROSSVILLE / BLAZING STAR

Edgar Sleight, a descendant of an old Rossville family, wrote in 1967 in the *Staten Island Historian* of the view from Rossville Avenue north over the village and sound:

From this road in 1775 could be seen one of the most pleasant views to be found on Staten Island. Along Arthur Kill Road, long known as Fresh Kills Road, were lined the many buildings – stores and houses – of Blazing Star. Here lived and worked the Winant, Sheas, Seguines, Woglums, the Wrights and others. Beyond the road and buildings were the acres of lush green salt meadow, the blue waters of the Sound, and the pretty Jersey shore.

The proposed firehouse, sited near Sleight's viewpoint, will not have the same view. Much has changed.

Staten Island has been the New York City borough most slow to settle. In 1664, when the British took Manhattan from the Dutch, very few settlers made their homes here. Under British rule, settlement was encouraged, land was patented and various groups and families moved onto the island. The last Indian claims were extinguished in 1670. In 1683 the island was organized as the County of Richmond and in 1788 the county was organized into five towns (Schneider 1977:13).

Labadenist missionaries Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter visited the island in 1679, reporting that "there are now about a hundred families on the island of which the English contribute the least portion and the Dutch and French divide between them about equally, the greater portion" (Dankers and Sluyter 1867:142). The settlers, then, were not the patentees, but Dutch who remained after the English takeover and Huguenot French who sought religious freedom in the New World.

The Skene map of land patents on Staten Island granted between 1668 and 1712 shows a William Johnson and a Peter Johnson as holding land not patented running down to the shore near the mouth of Sandy Brook in what will

become Rossville. Much of the shore line is unclaimed. The Johnsons actually lived on their land and their descendants appear in the historic record.

As the British colonies developed, Philadelphia to the south became an important town. The seat of the East Jersey Proprietors was in Perth Amboy across the Arthur Kill from Staten Island. More and more people found it necessary to travel between Manhattan and these seats of power. Developing commerce found Staten Island an important part of the route connecting these towns. In 1722, Anthony Wright gained a license to operate a ferry across the Arthur Kill to New Jersey. The original ferry ran from Smoking Point on the Staten Island side to a similarly named point on the Jersey side. There, the Fitz Randolph family also supported this venture (Leng 1940:13).

Soon the operation had moved east along the shore to Rossville, then known as Blazing Star. Historian Charles Leng traces this name to 1727 when a tavern here was given this name. Ira Morris provides Smoking Point and Blazing Star as both early names for this old settlement. In 1900 he noted that the village had two or three houses considerably over 100 years old (Morris 1898:440).

Staten Island was occupied by the British for most of the American Revolution. This produced a spate of maps useful for assessing settlement at Blazing Star. Historian Loring McMillen produced a composite map using the Taylor & Skinner map of 1781, the Hessian Map of 1777 and the Plan No. 31 du Camp Anglo-Hessiois dans Staten Island de 1780 a 1783 (FIGURE 3).

On this map Smoking Point has become the point on the Jersey side opposite unnamed Blazing Star. The word "Ferry" is written in the Sound at this point. The shore road runs in front of six buildings, from east to west, "Jo. Wright," "Old Blazing Star," "F. Sim," "Jo. Beadle," "Cole" and "Widow Cole." In the interior is one dwelling, that of H. Johnson. West of the shore road are five buildings with the names among them Woglum, W. Wynants and A. Wogley (FIGURE 3).

H. Johnson on this map is, most likely, a descendant of William or Peter Johnson noted among the early patents. The site of this dwelling appears to be where Rossville Avenue developed later, perhaps half way between the present Arthur Kill Road and Woodrow Avenue. This dwelling's location would be south of the current project area.

The American Revolution produced not only maps, but narrative as well. This excerpt from a soldier's journal recounts a raid from New Jersey into Staten Island in August 1777. From the *Diary of George Ewing 1775-8*:

so ended this day
here we remained for two to three
days and the Enemy embarkd from
Amboy the first and Third Jersey Regts
Marchd for Elizabeth Town here we
remaind a few days and the first
Marchd to Newark the Third still
remaining at Elizt a few Regts
of the Enemy lying on Staten Island
Augt 20 This day we receivd orders
to March to join the Grand Army
then in Pennsylvania we accordingly
marchd as far as Spanktown where we
halted a short time and then marchd
to the Old Blazing Star at the side
of the sound being joind by the first
Regt and a few Melitia we crosst.
and all landed about brak of day
we then marchd up surprisd and
took chief part on the Picket
gave Battle and routed Colls
Lawrence Bartar & Buskirks
Regs took the two former with
one handred and twenty privates
and several Commissiond Officers
prisoners took two sloops and a great
deal of plunder after pursuing
the fugitives to a height near Princes
Bay we returned and recroost the
Sound just after which Genl Sullivans
Division who had crossed at the Old
Point came down and just as the rear

of them were crossing there being
about eighty of on that side a strong
party of the Enemy came down
Attackd killd and took them

Blazing Star prospered in the years after the Revolutionary War. The formation of the United States with its early capitol at New York and the importance of communication between the growing cities of New York and Philadelphia required expansion and standardization of the stage and ferry service through Staten Island and over to New Jersey. Confiscation of property owned by those loyal to the British during the war gave opportunities to other Staten Island families. In particular the Seguire family extended its holding to include land at Blazing Star and west at Tottenville, a second ferry site.

The 1797 Sprong partition map for Richmond County illustrates that the Blazing Star Ferry continued to be the most important feature on this side of the island. It and its dock are the only features both illustrated and named in this area on this map. What will become Arthur Kill Road meets and blends with what will become Huguenot Avenue to cross the island and connect the ferry to the one road that runs the length of the island. A number of dots indicate houses and buildings, unnamed, along this route (FIGURE 4).

In 1814 the road that is now Rossville Avenue was built parallel to and west of Huguenot Avenue (Liber H6). The early families living along Arthur Kill Road began to subdivide their properties and sell building lots to the south. A residential area developed on the higher ground overlooking the waterfront. Between 1810 and 1820 the Winant family built several houses for sale on half acre lots. In 1822 Seguire's Dock was built to accommodate steamboats running between New York and points south (Clute 1877:23-D).

Westfield, the town in which Blazing Star was located, had 182 families in the census for 1800. In the 1820 census, 259 families were reported resident here, reflecting a growth trend for all of Staten Island. A reading of both census lists uncovers many familiar Blazing Star names including the Wrights, Winants, Johnson, Oakleys, Seguines and Coles.

In 1852 John Eddy and Robert Seguire built the Rossville Hotel, first managed by Israel Oakley. Oakley, who died in 1881, also worked during his long life as a farmer, surveyor, dock builder and lawyer. His residence, Oakley House, was built by James H. Bradley at the foot of Rossville Avenue. Elizabeth

Johnson, born at Blazing Star in 1807, was the daughter of Fanny Oakley. The Oakley family came to Blazing Star from Long Island (Leng and Davis 1930:933-II).

Colonel William E. Ross, who bestowed his name on the village, was attracted to the area and built Ross Castle, a replica of Windsor Castle. Ross Castle sat on high ground just west of the village overlooking the harbor. Frederick Law Olmsted designed its park-like grounds that featured rustic bridges crossing a picturesque pond. Ross later sold the property to Caleb Lyon, President Lincoln's appointed Governor of the Idaho Territory. Ross retired to his native Albany, New York. Lyon lived here renaming the estate Lyon's Mere. The castle was razed in the 1920s (Sleight 1967:np). Ross Castle was one of a number of elegant estates and homes that graced the western shore in the nineteenth century.

Blazing Star became Rossville about 1837 according to an article in the *Mirror*. "Rossville!, Now did you ever! This is the new name of Old Blazing Star" (Sleight 1967:np). The subdividing of large residential lots continued. In 1841, Rossville was described as having 32 dwellings, 3 mercantile stores and 181 inhabitants (Gilbertson 1982:4).

Maps of Staten Island are scarce for the first half of the nineteenth century. The 1853 Butler "Map of Staten Island" provides a view of Rossville that shows growth since that 1841 depiction (FIGURE 5). Churches and cemeteries are shown as well as mercantile, commercial and residential buildings. Curiously, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, built in 1848 on Washington Street near its intersection with current Rossville Avenue, is not shown. This church, near the project area, celebrated its 150 anniversary in 1998. An associated cemetery nearby on Barry Avenue was established in 1862.

The 1859 Walling map names the merchants along Arthur Kill Road: Jacob M. Guyon, tinsmith; H.S. Seguire, merchant; J. Winant's property with a blacksmith shop; J. Cortelyou's coalyard; the Liberty Stable; Seguire's Dock and Store and furniture warehouse, among others (Leng and Davis 1930:652). It shows the development of a grid of streets in Rossville.

Historian Charles Leng reported that three steamboats a day stopped at Rossville in 1861, running between New York City and Perth Amboy and New Brunswick in New Jersey (Leng and Davis 1930:704). While shipbuilding and servicing the ferries and steamboats stopping at the dock provided the major commercial focus for this area, fishing of the rich oyster beds just west of the

docks and the establishment nearby of several factories contributed to the continuing expansion of this part of the island. Kreischer's firebrick works and the Ultramarine Works, established in 1884, were prominent nineteenth century industrial ventures here.

Although Rossville had an air of prosperity and growth at mid-nineteenth century, forces were at work by 1860 which would contribute to the decline of the village. The construction in 1860 of the Staten Island Railroad bypassed Rossville, making Tottenville the choice for transportation by rail and ferry and the shipping industry shifted westward. Contamination of the oyster beds was reported as early as the 1880s starting a gradual decline that ended in 1916 when the New York Department of Health condemned the beds. Pollution from the factories along the shore killed this industry (Board of Education 1964:III-49).

A glance at the 1887 Beers Map of Richmond County belies this decline, showing how Rossville had grown from 1853 (FIGURE 5). Commercial properties line Arthur Kill Road near the "Steamboat Landing" and residences sit at the front of long narrow yards on this road and on "New York Avenue" (Rossville Avenue) (FIGURE 6). Some twenty years later Section 66 of the Richmond County Topographical Survey still showed an area with many extant structures, mostly residential (FIGURE 7). Ira Morris commented in his history written in 1900 that Rossville was for many years prior to the establishment of the Railroad a thriving village. It was one of the main landings for boats that ran between New York and South Amboy in connection with the Camden and Amboy Railroad. Continued prospects of rail connections let it retain its commercial importance (Morris 1900:440).

Edgar Sleight attributes the eventual decline of Rossville to industrial conditions and decisions of the early twentieth century. Expansion of industry on the New Jersey side of the sound as well as on Staten Island produced fumes and pollution, making Rossville an unpleasant place to live. Boat traffic ceased; the fishing was condemned. Gas and oil storage tanks were built and Fresh Kill landfill to the east added the final insult. Sleight notes that Rossville in 1967 was one of the few places on the island that a traffic light was removed rather than installed that year, so ghost town-like had it become (Sleight 1967:np).

Sleight ended his article on an up-beat note. Perhaps the just-about-to-be-built West Shore Highway would give Rossville a new lease on life.

Today, the West Shore Highway slices the Rossville waterfront from Rossville uplands where the project area lies. Edgar Sleight's view show little more now than the highway, activity at the Fresh Kills Landfill, aging gas and oil tanks, and a bit of the Arthur Kill. Witte's Marine Equipment Company yard houses wrecks of tugboats and other vessels just off the dock.

B. THE PROJECT AREA

The site of the proposed firehouse lies immediately south of the West Shore Highway viaduct over Rossville Avenue. It is part of a block that backs onto Poplar Avenue.

The project area lies within the unpatented land held by William and Peter Johnson as illustrated on the Skene map of patents. It is north of the H. Johnson House that appeared on maps from the Revolutionary War years and south of the early commercial and residential development at Blazing Star.

Rossville Avenue was established in 1814 according to county records noted earlier. This road between Arthur Kill Road to the north and Woodrow Road to the south was first called Shea's Lane, later New York Avenue and finally Rossville Avenue.

We have noted that by mid-nineteenth century landowners at Rossville had begun to subdivide their lots into smaller residential lots. The 1853 Butler map (FIGURE 5) does not show the 1848 St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on what was first called Washington Street and later Poplar Street. This street, running from Rossville Avenue on the east to Bloomingdale Avenue on the west, is first apparent on the 1859 Walling map. St. Joseph's Church is labeled between two houses on the south side of the street with a third shown just to the west. These buildings would have stood in the present parking lot to either side of the church. No buildings are found on the north side of the street across from the church, but a row of three starts just to the west. Four houses also appear on the east side of Rossville Avenue across the street from the project area. No structure is illustrated within the project area.

On plate 23 of the 1874 F.W. Beers Atlas of Staten Island the same configuration is apparent. J. Hallett own several houses on the north side of Poplar Avenue as well as a large open lot that includes the project area. No buildings are shown within the project area.

The A.M. Mueller 1898 Atlas of Staten Island shows one new house built directly across Poplar Avenue from the church, but no structures in the project area. This map notes some of the sheds and barns at the rear of several of the Poplar Avenue and Rossville Avenue lots.

The 1907 E. Robinson Atlas of Staten Island presents the same picture. One new building is a church hall on Glen Street (Barry Street) south of Poplar Avenue. The project area is now owned by Wm. Boehl and shows no structures present. One interesting note is that a trolley line proposed to run along the West Shore is shown following a route very close to that taken by the West Shore Expressway sixty years later.

The 1913 Section 66 of the Borough of Richmond Topographical Survey provides minute details on the conditions of the project area and its surroundings in that year. No structures exist within the project area. The sheds and barns that back onto the western portion are drawn in detail as are the houses and the church, the hall and the carriage shed. Across Rossville Avenue from the project area is a cluster of buildings, apparently residential and derived from buildings on earlier maps (FIGURE 7).

No historical structure has been recorded within the project area on any maps examined. Nearby structures of historical interest date from 1848 onward. Two, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and the residence at 29 Poplar Avenue, retain some essence of their historic origins in spite of remodeling and restoration with modern materials. A third has been demolished, a fourth abandoned and two others severely changed by remodeling. Although Poplar Avenue might be regarded as an enclave of old Rossville, the neighborhood shows no effort to maintain its historic character in spite of the listing of structures on city and state inventories of historic places. It is possible to stand in the parking lot that replaced 30 Poplar Avenue, look at the church and 29 Poplar Avenue and the view beyond to the West Shore Highway, the Fresh Kill landfill and the old tank farms and understand what Edgar Sleight mourned in 1967. Old Rossville / Blazing Star is still gone.

V. PEDESTRIAN SURVEY OF THE PROJECT SITE

A. INTRODUCTION

The field investigation of the project site was conducted in July 2000 and consisted of an intensive pedestrian inspection of Lot 252 in Block 7067 (FIGURE 8). The walkover and observation of the landscape was hampered to some extent by the presence of a dense stand of phragmites and underbrush. Nevertheless, the property was carefully examined by two archaeologists during the pedestrian survey in a search for cultural features, artifacts, and areas of landscape disturbance.

B. CULTURAL RESOURCES

There are no standing structures, foundations, cellar holes, fences, or other cultural features within the property. A few historic era artifacts were found scattered throughout the site including fragments of cement, ceramic tiles, metal cans, bottle fragments, pipe, plastic, and pieces of sawn lumber. These items represent sheet and roadside trash and date to the late twentieth century.

No prehistoric artifacts or cultural features were found during our reconnaissance investigation.

C. LANDSCAPE DISTURBANCES

Several areas of previous landscape disturbance are evident within the property. The major areas of disturbance are enumerated here:

1. North Side of Property (FIGURE 9)

The north side of the project area, which is adjacent to Veterans Road East, has been machine graded for a distance of twenty to twenty-five feet into the property. Soil was removed from this area most likely during the construction of the West Shore Expressway and adjacent service road. No topsoil or loamy soils are present within this zone. Instead, we observed reddish brown sand with a clay texture and gravel, the natural subsoil in this region.

2. Northeast Corner of Project Area (FIGURE 10)

This corner of the property at the corner of Veterans Road East and Rossville Avenue has been cleared and graded with soil removed from the site. The natural subsoil consisting of reddish brown sand, gravel and lay is visible on the surface at this location.

3. East Side of Project Area along Rossville Avenue (FIGURE 11)

Near the southeast corner of the property, bordering the road, the landscape has been cut away and the soil removed. The depth of soil removal ranges from one to three feet and is clearly visible in the soil profile at roadside.

The landscape extending along Rossville Avenue has also been altered and disturbed. The ground surface is rough and uneven and piles of reddish-brown soil are present here.

4. Clearing

There is a cleared open area located directly behind and to the north of the property at 29 Poplar Avenue. This area measures approximately fifty feet by fifty feet and is situated within the western half of the project site. The landscape here is highly disturbed; it has been excavated and the reddish-brown sand and gravel subsoil is visible. Trash dumping has also taken place here including the disposal of household material and construction type items. An extensive deposit of horse manure is also present in this location.

5. Machine Tracks

Vehicle tracks which disturbed the landscape were observed within the property.

D. HISTORIC STRUCTURES IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROJECT AREA

Six buildings in the immediate area of the project area have been listed on state and local historic site lists. One, St. Joseph's Rectory at 30 Poplar Avenue, has been demolished and replaced with a parking lot. The other five are still extant and are discussed below. Together they form the historic context into which the firehouse will be placed.

1. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, 16 Poplar Avenue (FIGURE 12)

Sensitivity: This church, according to a 150th anniversary plaque placed on the building, was built in 1848. It does not appear on the Butler 1853 map (FIGURE 5), but is indicated on the 1859 Walling map. It is listed on the 1996 "State and National Register Listings in the Borough of Staten Island" from the New York City Landmarks Commission with no register action recorded.

Current Condition: The church has been recently refurbished for its anniversary with modern siding, probably vinyl. It was a simple frame building that has retained its original lines. Today it sits between two landscaped parking lots rather than two residences and provides a note of grace and continuity in a rapidly modernizing neighborhood. It is an active institution.

2. Residence, 50 Poplar Avenue (FIGURE 13)

Sensitivity: This building first appears on the 1859 Walling map. It is listed on the Landmarks Commission 1996 list with no register action recorded.

Current Condition: This house has been resided and remodeled. The original roof line can be discerned, but many new "Victorian" touches have been added. It is occupied and in good condition.

3. Residence, 60 Poplar Avenue (FIGURE 14)

Sensitivity: This building first appears on the 1850 Walling map. It is listed on the Landmarks Commission 1996 list with no register action recorded.

Current Condition: This building has been severely remodeled, encasing the original structure in additions surfaced in variegated fake stone exteriors. It is occupied and in good condition.

4. Residence, 29 Poplar Avenue (FIGURE 15)

Sensitivity. This building first appears on the 1850 Walling map. It is listed on the Landmarks Commission 1996 list with no register action recorded.

Current Condition. This building has been resided with wide board aluminum siding and appears to have had no additions made to it. It retains its original lines and exterior configurations. It is occupied and in good condition.

5. Residence, 39 Poplar Avenue (FIGURE 16)

Sensitivity. This building first appears on the 1850 Walling map. It is listed on the Landmarks Commission 1996 list with no register action recorded.

Current Condition. This building is aluminum sided and remodeled, but appears to retain some of its original lines. It is abandoned in an overgrown weed-choked lot and is in poor condition.

6. Residence, 1088 Rossville Avenue (FIGURE 17)

Sensitivity. This building does not appear on any maps we examined. It was built after 1913. It is not on any historic structure lists or surveys. It appears to date to the 1920s.

Current Condition. This small frame cottage has not been resided or altered by additions. It is adjacent to the project area. It is occupied and in fair condition.

7. West Shore Expressway

To the north of the project area lies the West Shore Expressway. This structure was built in the late 1960s. The roadway effectively cuts the project area off from any historic context in this direction.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The documentary research and field inspection of the project site have failed to locate any evidence of prehistoric occupation. Although several prehistoric sites have been documented in the region, none are adjacent to the project site. The documented sites listed in Table 1 are clustered in two areas: at or to the north of Arthur Kill Road and north of the project site and in the Sandy Ground area south of the project site.

Lot 252 has been extensively disturbed by construction activity associated with the building of the West Shore Expressway and Veterans Road East as well as roadside cut-away work along Rossville Avenue. The property has been graded by machine, and soil removed from the site. Various forms of dumping have taken place on the property including soil piles, household trash and construction debris and horse manure. Vehicle tracks are also visible on site, and further disturbed the present landscape.

In summary, we conclude that the proposed firehouse / EMS site has very low potential for containing evidence of prehistoric occupation.

B. HISTORIC PERIOD RESOURCES

Background research indicates that the project site was always open undeveloped land. No historic structures were built within the property. Our field inspection of the property supports the documentary record: No foundations, cellar holes, stone fences or other structural features were found within the site.

Recent trash and construction debris was found scattered throughout the property. These materials are of very recent twentieth century date, lack any association with the site, and are not historically significant specimens of material culture.

We examined several residential structures and a church located on properties adjacent to or near the project site, namely 29, 39, 50, and 60 Poplar Avenue and St. Joseph's Church on the south side of Poplar Avenue. These structures were listed on the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission inventory as potential historic resources. We conclude that the residential structures have been dramatically altered and remodeled which has changed any historic character they may have had. St. Joseph's Church has been recently refurbished but retains its small town character. We conclude that the

proposed construction of a firehouse and EMS facility on Lot 252 will have no adverse impact upon these historic period resources.

C. SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This cultural resources investigation has determined that the proposed construction of the NYC firehouse and EMS facility will have no impact upon any cultural resources. Therefore, no further archaeological investigation is necessary.

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MAPS

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FIGURE 1: Portion of U.S.G.S. map Arthur Kill NY-NJ quadrangle showing location of project area. Scale 1"=2000'

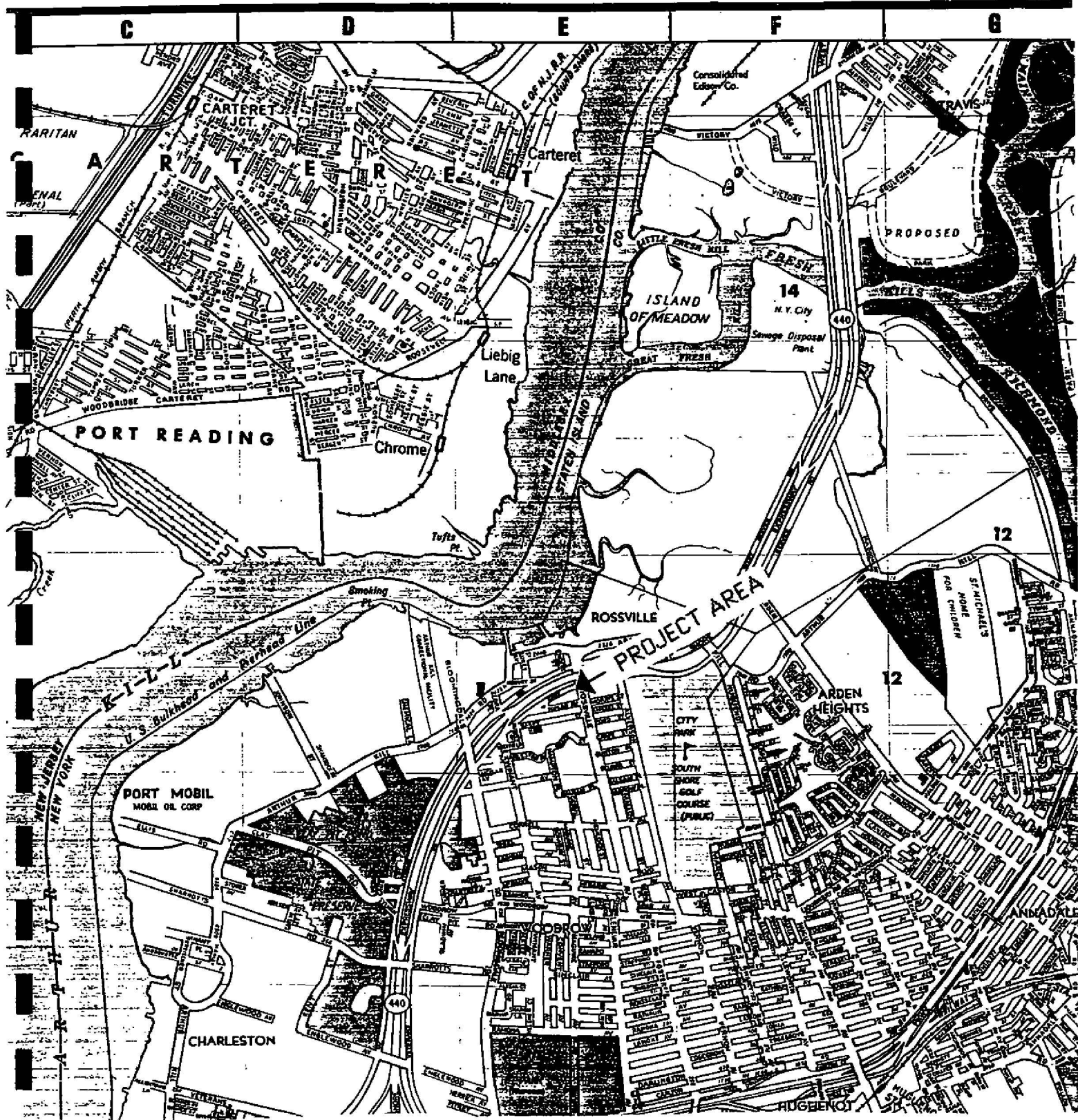


FIGURE 2: Portion of Hagstrom map showing location of project area.

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LEGEND

- a. Richmond: Headquarters of Col. Von. Lassberg
 Capt. Selig with 100 men
- b. Amboy Ferry: Col. Von Wurmb with 2 Companies.
- c. Sandy Ground: Maj. Von Wurmb with 2 Companies.
- d. Capt. Waldenberg with 1 Company.
- e. Old Blazing Star, Lt. Col. Von Schuler with
 2 Companies.
- f. New Blazing Star: Col. Von Boos with
 3 Companies.
- g. Spicer's Farm: Capt. Scher with
 1 Company.
- h. Elizabeth Town Ferry: Col. Dieshausen
 with 3 Companies.
- i. Flaming Star: Lt. Col. Van Langerke
 with 2 Companies.
- k. Deckers Ferry: Col. Schreiber
 with 2 Companies.
- l. Maj. Lowenstein
 with 2 Companies.
- m. New York: Col. Dalrymple with
 200 Englishmen.



FIGURE 3: Portion of McMillen's 1933 Map of Staten Island During the Revolution. No scale.

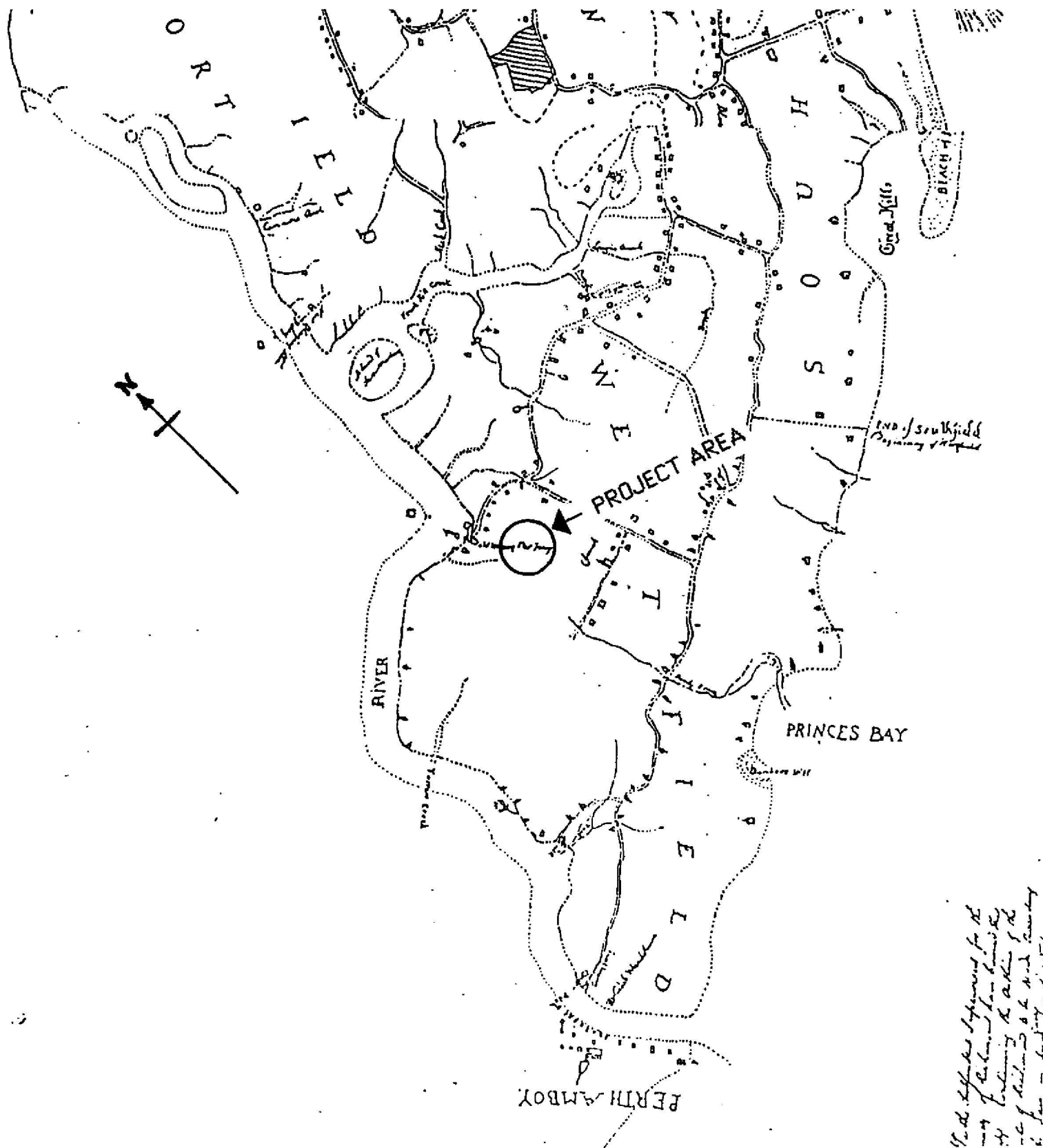


FIGURE 4: 1797 Map of Staten Island by Sprong and Connor. No scale.

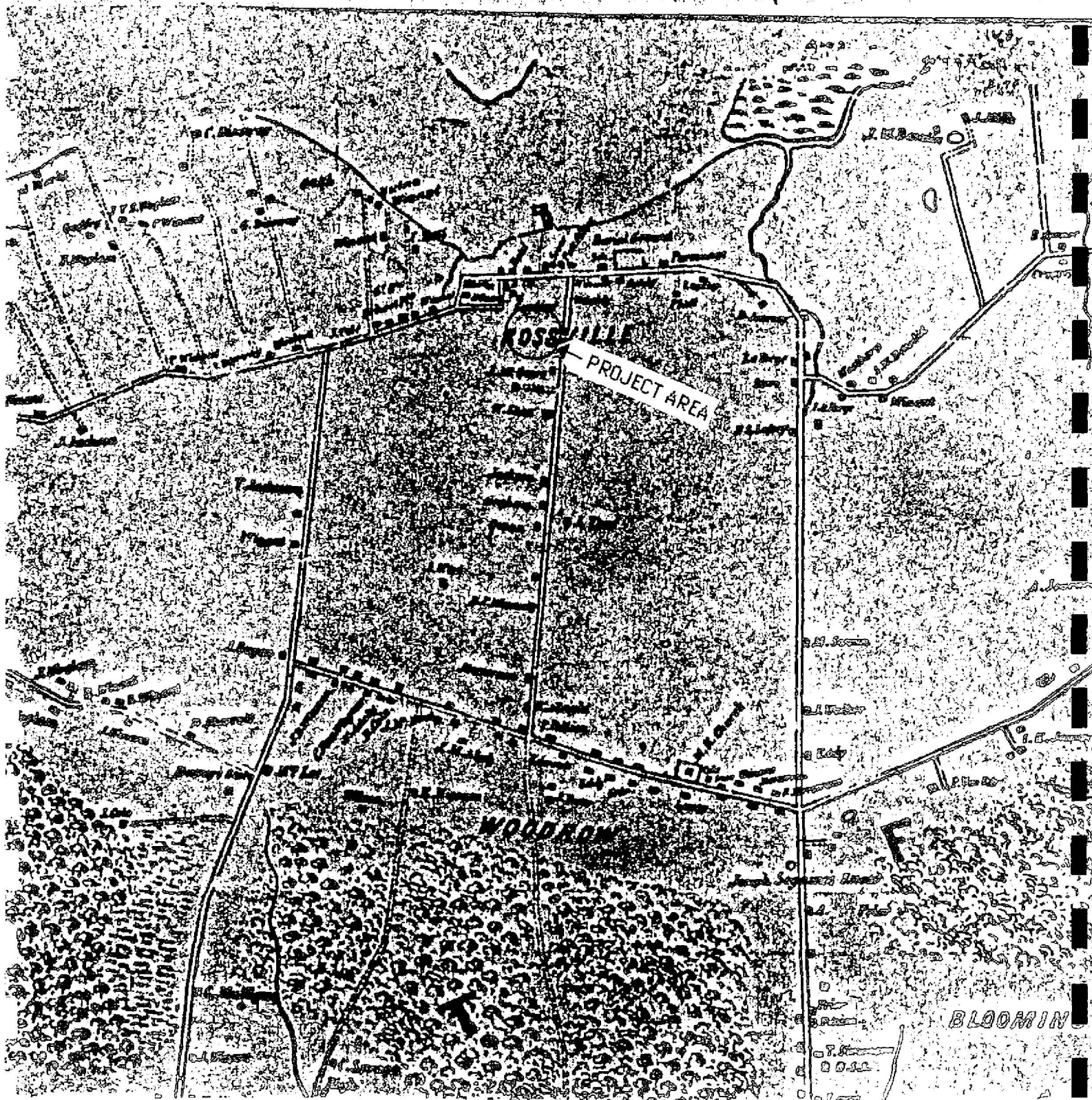


FIGURE 5: 1853 Map of Rossville, Staten Island by J. Butler. Scale 1"=0.3 miles

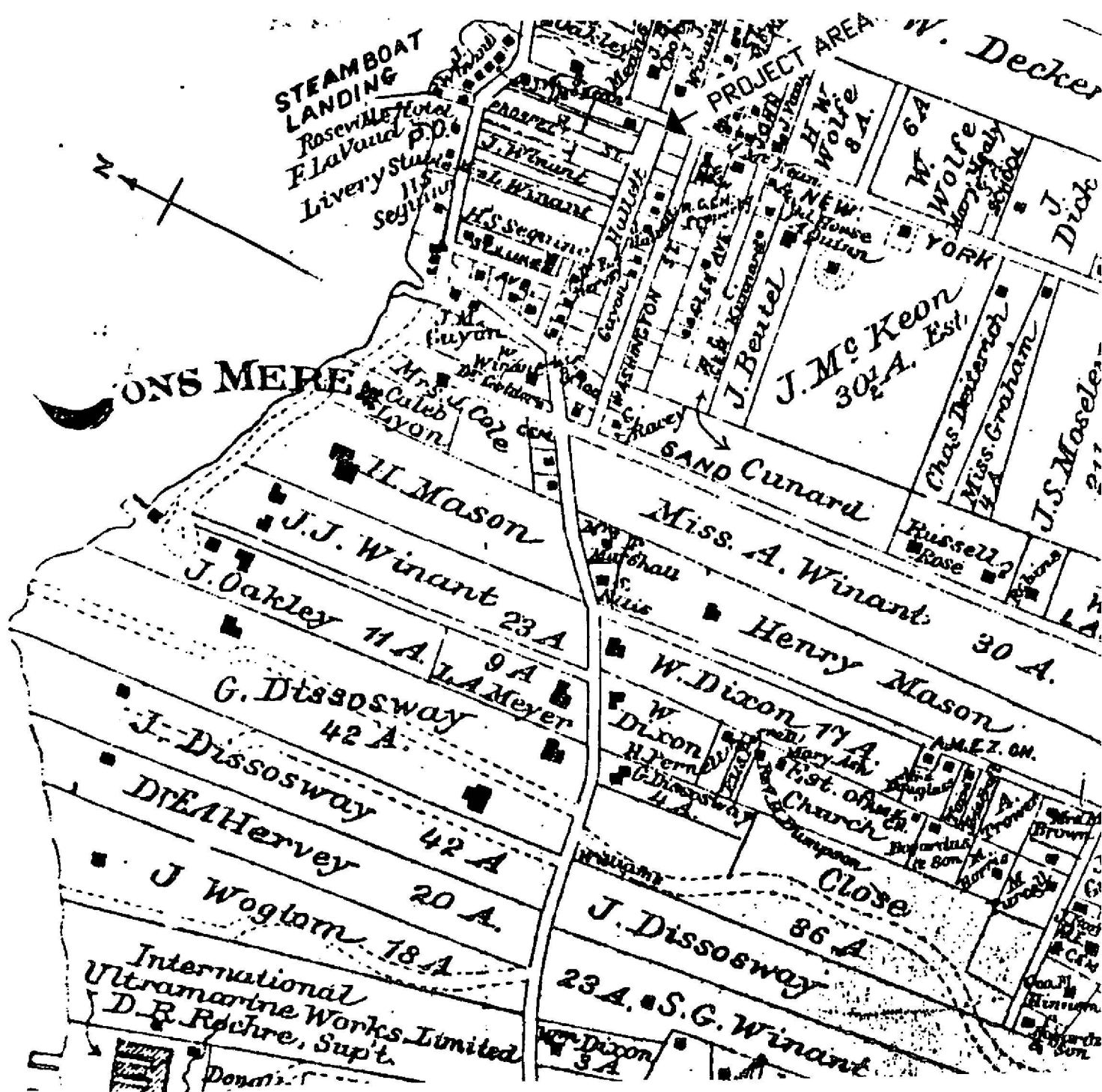


FIGURE 6: Portion of 1887 Map of Staten Island by J.B. Beers. Enlarged to show project area. No scale.

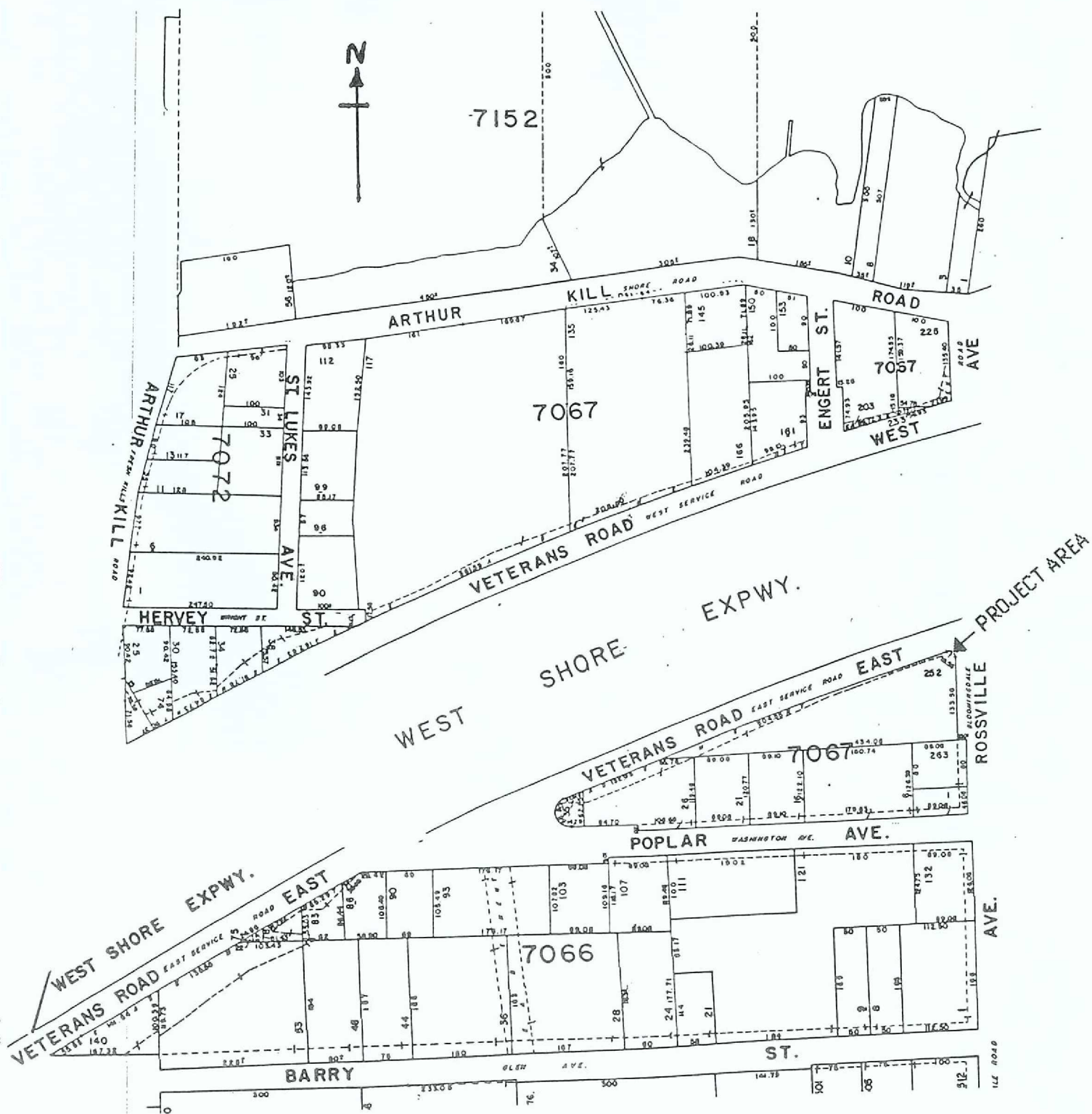


FIGURE 8: Map of Project Site, Block 7067, Lot 252. No scale.



FIGURE 9: North side of project area, looking southwest. Note open disturbed area beginning at curbside and extending into the property. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 10: Northeast corner of project area, Rossville Avenue at Veterans Road East. Note open disturbed area at roadside. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 11: View of east side of project area along Rossville Avenue. Note cut and disturbed area at roadside. Looking west-northwest. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 12: St. Joseph's Church on south side of Poplar Avenue. View looking southwest. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.

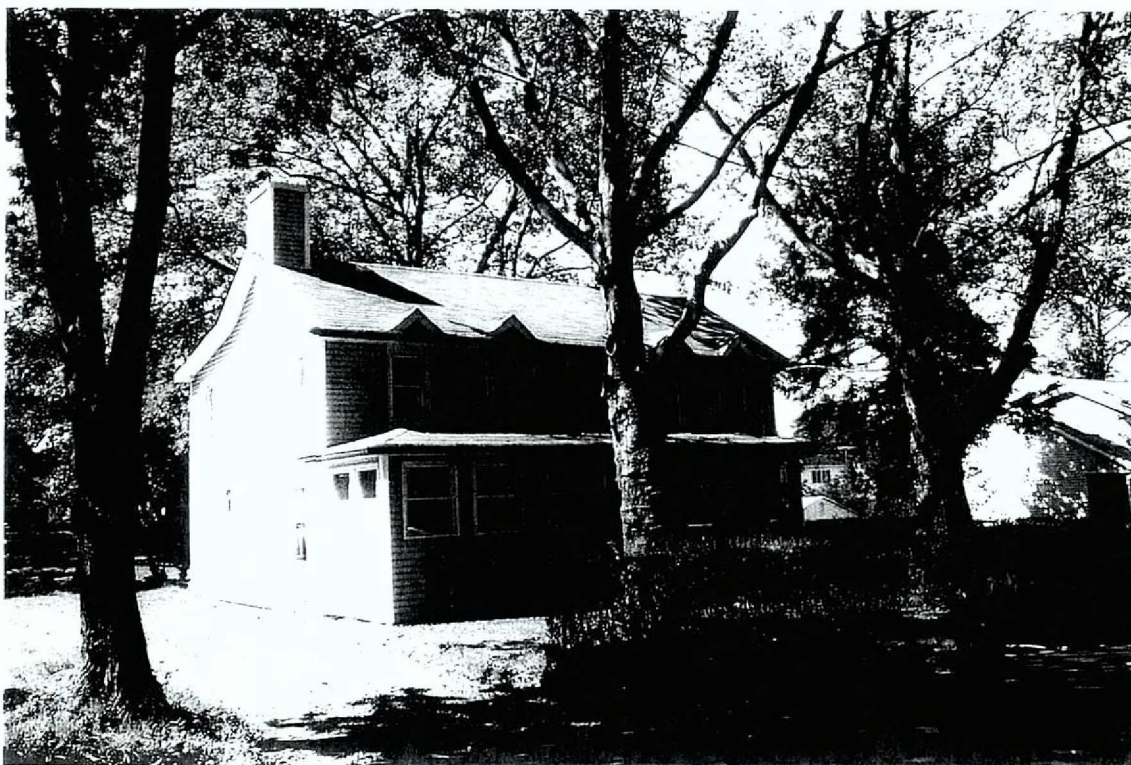


FIGURE 13: Residence at 50 Poplar Avenue. View looking south-southwest.
Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 14: Residence at 60 Poplar Avenue. View looking south-southwest.
Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 15: Residence at 29 Poplar Avenue. View looking north. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 16: Residence at 39 Poplar Avenue. View looking north-northwest. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.



FIGURE 17: Residence at 1008 Rossville Avenue at corner of Poplar Avenue.
View looking northwest. Photo by E.J. Lenik, 2000.