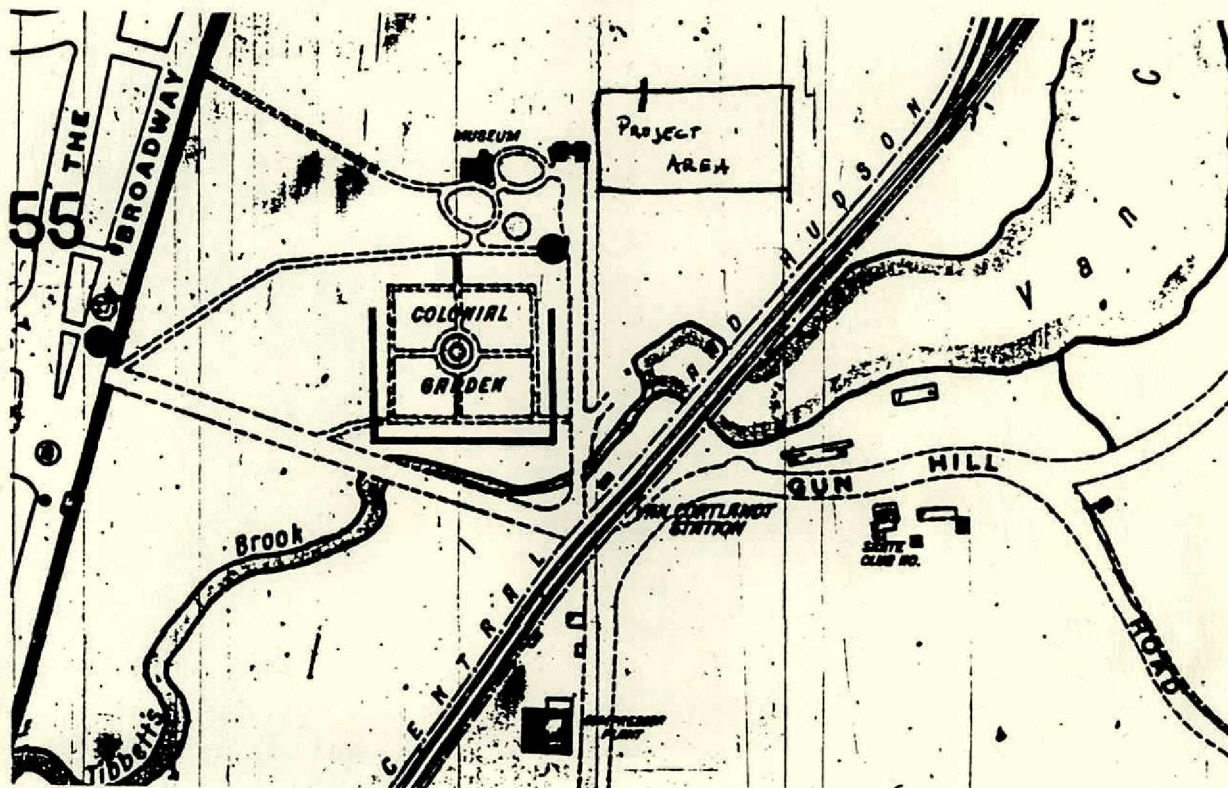


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*Phase IA-IB Archaeological Investigations of  
the Proposed Area for the Construction of Six  
Tennis Courts on the Parade Grounds of Van  
Cortlandt Park, The Bronx, New York.*



by

Nan A. Rothschild, Ph.D.  
and  
Christopher N. Matthews, M.A.  
Department of Anthropology,  
Columbia University

Report Submitted to:  
City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation  
Claire Dudley, ALA - Project Manager

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## I. Introduction

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation proposes to construct six tennis courts at the southeastern corner of the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds. Van Cortlandt Park is located to the east of Broadway north of Van Cortlandt Avenue in the northwest part of the Bronx, New York (see Figure 1). Since they are within the City of New York Parks System, the cultural resources of this site are protected by New York City environmental protection legislation (CEQR), and the effect of the proposed project on these resources needs to be assessed prior to construction. The construction work has been described by Claire Dudley of the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation as including excavation to three feet below the ground surface associated with the raising of fence posts and tennis court net supports. The assessment of the project impact on archaeological and historic landscape resources is presented in this report. This work is in partial fulfillment of the scope of work for contract X92-390.

A Phase 1A-1B survey of the site was undertaken in October and November of 1993 . This work included a thorough documentary review of known prehistoric and historic occupations and uses of the project area and its surrounding region. These findings were presented in a predictive survey submitted to the Department of Parks and Recreation on November 2, 1993 (Appendix A). A summary of this stage of research is presented in section II of this report. Field investigations following this documentary review were undertaken on November 6-8, 1993 at the project area. These included archaeological testing of the subsurface remains and field assessments of the historic landscape associated with the Van Cortlandt Mansion in which the project area is situated. These stages of research are reported in sections III and IV.

### Summary of Findings.

Our research has shown that the existing site of the proposed tennis courts has been occupied consistently since the Late Woodland period of the prehistoric era. Its use as a planting

field and village by Native Americans was followed by the establishment of the Van Cortlandt family plantation and milling enterprise in the early eighteenth century. The property remained with the Van Cortlandt family until 1889 when New York City acquired the area and began to develop Van Cortlandt Park.

Archaeological deposits were found in the grading of the Parade Grounds in 1890 (Skinner 1920), and others were noted in the areas adjacent to the Mansion (Bankoff and Winter 1991). This grading episode, however, appears to have significantly disturbed any of the archaeological deposits in the project area. No intact archaeological resources were identified in our field testing.

Apart from this grading, minimal construction and alteration of the landscape occurred in the identifiable period of occupation and use. As such, it can be recommended that the existing historic landscape of the Van Cortlandt Mansion, the Parade Grounds, and Vault Hill be formally assessed for its status as an expanded Historic Landmark accommodating the Mansion and its surrounding physical landscape. The proposed tennis courts will be intrusive into this landscape unless they are moved or sufficiently camouflaged by landscaping and design that incorporates them into the wooded backdrop south of the Parade Grounds.



## II. Human Occupation of Southeastern New York

The first stage of research involved gathering archaeological, ethnohistoric, and historic documentary information on all possible prior uses of the Van Cortlandt Park area. Literature on known historic and prehistoric cultural resources and land uses was reviewed at the Bronx County Historical Society, the Bronx County Register, the Van Cortlandt House Museum, the New York Public Library, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Butler and Avery Libraries of Columbia University. The following is an overview survey of these findings drawing from synthetic and site specific sources for the greater southeastern New York region. A specific review of previous investigations in Bronx County is included.

### Prehistoric and Contact Periods.

Typically the prehistoric Native American occupation of North America is broken down into three periods: the Paleo-Indian (13,000 to 8000 B.C.), the Archaic (8000 to 700 B.C.), and the Woodland (700 B.C. to AD 1600). These periods denote specific human-culture-environment relations determined through the recovery of past environmental and cultural remains. The following will include a review of the prehistoric human occupation of southeastern New York State through these periods with comments on the environmental contexts for these occupations.

#### A. Paleo-Indian (13,000 to 8000 B.C.).

Prior to 8000 B.C. New York State was experiencing the final phases of the Wisconsin glaciation. During this period southeastern New York was part of a band of mixed coniferous-hardwood forest with a good amount of parkland and meadow south of the tundra which abutted the ice-sheet (Salwen 1975:43-4). In this environment there were a number of large-size herding mammal species, or megafauna, including caribou, musk-ox, and bison as well as representatives of extinct species of elephantid, camelid, and horse. These species provided a

major component of the Paleo-Indian diet and demanded a hunting way of life that required a certain level of patterned mobility by the human inhabitants of the area. Associated with these early inhabitants were large size fluted projectile points which were effective tools for killing megafauna. Archaeological settlement studies have determined that inhabitants of this environment preferred elevated locations for camp sites. The benefits of this type of location were good-drainage and "good vantage points for observing movements of game in the terrain" (Ritchie and Funk 1973:335). Quarry-workshop sites for tool manufacture have been also identified in association with the Paleo-Indian occupation.

There have been very few Paleo-Indian sites identified in New York to date. It is thought that the rising sea level associated with glacial retreat may have inundated many sites over the last 10,000 years. However, in the vicinity of the project area at least one Paleo-Indian site is known at Port Mobil on Staten Island (Ritchie and Funk 1973, Funk 1983, Kraft 1977). It is suggested, following patterns analogous to those of present-day hunter-forager inhabitants, that Paleo-Indian inhabitants of New York consisted of groups of small bands of 30 to 60 individuals following a semi-nomadic lifestyle exploiting varied resources in differing locations as they were encountered, but concentrating on the exploitation of megafauna (Salwen 1975:45).

With the ultimate retreat of the glaciers and the subsequent extinction of many of the megafauna species, a radical shift in the adaptive strategies of Native American inhabitants of New York occurred.<sup>1</sup> Typical of this shift was the greater occupation of southern New York State and changes in technology to meet the demands of this new environmental context.

#### B. Archaic Period (8000 to 700 B.C.).

The general environment of the Archaic period is characterized as a very rich "oak-chestnut-deer-turkey biome" similar to the present (Funk 1983:320, Salwen 1975:49).

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<sup>1</sup> The possibility of migration of peoples from the south may also have contributed to the observed changes in archaeological record (Funk 1983:319).

This shift in environment caused a technological change from the assemblages characterized by large-size projectile points of the Paleo-Indian period to more varied tool kits. With smaller projectile points, a wider range of tools useful for the greater exploitation of plant foods, and the presence of "polished stone tools such as celts, gouges, and adzes" for wood processing, new techniques of environmental exploitation were brought into use (Funk 1983:320). This technological elaboration was not accompanied by a settlement pattern shift. Rather, Salwen notes, "no single resource, or for that matter, no single part of the habitat could yield a satisfactory year-round food supply when approached with the technologies available to these societies . . . . They became specialists in diversification" (1975:52). This pattern did lead to the development of a cultural division, based mostly on projectile point styles, between the inland and coastal groups in New York State as these areas made different localized demands on their inhabitants. Some of the specific phases of occupation on the coast will be discussed.

On Long Island, the Sylvan Lake phase (2500-1800 B.C.) of the Archaic period suggests a greater use of varied resources localized to certain areas: "Sylvan Lake groups subsisted heavily on white-tailed deer, but also ate a variety of other mammals, fished, and collected fresh-water mussels. During seasonal rounds they made use of backcountry (fall-winter) hunting sites as well as lake side or riverine (spring-summer) hunting and fishing sites" (Funk 1983:327). Following the Sylvan Lake phase was the Snook Kill phase (1800-1200 B.C.). Snook Kill sites show the persistence of most of the Sylvan Lake phase cultural practices with the addition of ritual burial practices. At sites such as Lake Montauk, Wier, and Vedder on Long Island, the evidence for burial practices includes cremation and the inclusion of red ochre, bird-bone flutes, shell beads, and projectile points with the dead (Funk 1983:331, Ritchie and Funk 1973:342).

This pattern of expression in burial is heightened in the subsequent Orient phase (1200-750 B.C.). Most prevalent on Long Island, the Orient phase built on the previous Archaic period phases by adding to the repertoire of activities a more intensive shellfishing practice and the production of stone pots and early ceramic vessels. The shift to shellfishing,



which correlates with the rise of sea levels, was a major transformation as it turned the focus of settlement and exploitation away from terrestrial sources and towards the coast. However, the burials are what stand out in the Orient phase. They are primarily distinguished by their separation from habitation sites, unlike the pattern in the Snook Kill phase. This pattern is interpreted as representing "a sacred precinct for the dead" where "only a small percentage of the total population" is buried, "comprising individuals accorded special funeral treatment because they possessed high status in the culture" (Ritchie and Funk 1973:345).

There are many Archaic period sites in the vicinity of the project area. Those identified are mostly extensive shell deposits along the major waterways in the New York City area. Based on the resources which were exploited, these were likely summer-fall residences. Sites are known on western Long Island (e.g. Kaeser 1978), Manhattan (e.g. Skinner 1909,1920; Parker 1920; Smith 1950), and in the Bronx (e.g. Brennan 1974; Rothschild and Lavin 1978; Skinner 1919; Parker 1920).

The Archaic period in southeastern New York saw the elaboration of Native American culture in many ways. The settlement pattern represents a growing population which was making use of more natural resources in different ecological niches than was previously the case. Evidence shows a greater emphasis put on maritime resource exploitation and tools used for wood processing. In the social realm, the evidence of growing complexity in burial seems apparent, notably on Long Island where the Orient phase burial pattern begins to suggest social ranking had developed.

#### C. Woodland Period (700 B.C. to ca. A.D. 1620).

This period is typically marked by the first extensive use of clay pottery in North America. The Woodland can be divided into three phases: the Early Woodland (700 B.C. to A.D. 0), the Middle Woodland (A.D. 0 to 1000), and the Late Woodland (A.D. 1000 to European contact). The manifestation of the first two phases in southeastern New York is limited. The former period has been related to the Adena and the latter to the Hopewell florescences in the

midwest of North America due to the presence of exotic items in burials and mound building in New England, North and Western New York, and Pennsylvania. Trade ties and shamanistic missionizing have been offered as explanations of the spread of these practices. Few signs of this activity, however, are evident in southeastern New York. The Woodland period does show the first significant signs of an agricultural economy, the growth of stylistic elaboration in pottery, and the construction of round, dome-shaped houses, yet an emphasis on shellfishing as a component of the economy continued for the most part uninterrupted (Ritchie and Funk 1973:359, Smith 1950:106).

Settlements tended to remain semi-permanent, but some grew to be village size (100+ individuals) as they became associated with more intensified agriculture. The first cultigens identified as being grown by Woodland period inhabitants of New York were such species as sump-weed, amaranth, goose-grass, and may grass, but these were either supplemented or supplanted by maize, beans, and squash by the time of European contact (Rothschild and Fenton 1985:7). Salwen notes that for southern New York there was a "village-horticultural complex" as villages tended to be adjacent to land suitable for cultivation such as "alluvial flats or in other areas with light soil" (1975:56-7). Village settlements became important in southeastern New York, but movement throughout the area through the annual cycle remained common throughout the Late Woodland. The combination of agricultural and hunting-foraging economies proved to be a very successful use of the local region of southeastern New York as the late prehistoric population density of coastal New York is estimated as the second highest north of Mexico, following the southwestern Pueblo groups (Salwen 1975:62).

There have been several Woodland period sites identified in the vicinity of the project area.<sup>2</sup> To the north of the project area, near Armonk, New York, two natural shelter sites were excavated by M.R. Harrington in 1900. The Finch Rock House and Helicker's Cave both have

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<sup>2</sup> These site reviews follow Smith 1950:163-6, 168-73, 185-86; Skinner 1920:140-46; Parker 1920:488-490; Bolton 1934:132-143; Ritchie 1980:268-272; and the Suffolk County Archaeological Association 1978.

East River aspect ceramics (post-A.D. 1100) in association with chipped stone points, knives, scrapers and a variety of rough stone artifacts. It appears that these upland shelters provided residence locations for temporary use by Native Americans who were hunting land mammals, notably white-tailed deer.

More intensive resource use has been identified at multi-component sites on the shorelines of Manhattan, Long Island, and the Bronx where several Woodland period shell heaps have been excavated. Typically these sites are on the "second rise of ground above high-water level on tidal inlets" (Ritchie 1980:271). Such sites as Dyckman Street, Pelham Knolls, Pelham Boulder, Clasons Point, Throgs Neck, Kaeser, and Oakland Lake follow this pattern (See figures 2 and 3 for location of these sites). Shell heaps were from one to five feet thick in depth and could cover an area as large as an acre. They tended to include the refuse of everyday life from the Woodland period in the Bronx including pottery, stone tools, antler and bone tools, ceramic smoking pipes, bone and shell beads, and burials of both humans and dogs. Frequently in the midst of the shell heaps and/or immediately adjacent were pits dug for hearths. Recent work (notably Kaeser 1978 and Rothschild and Lavin 1978) has confirmed that the use of land in the late prehistoric period continued the semipermanent use of sites in a transhumant annual cycle. At such sites as the Oakland Lake site in Bayside and the Kaeser site in Pelham Bay, the lack of evidence for sturdy winter housing in the archaeological deposits suggest that shellfishing was predominantly a summer-fall activity and that the coastal inhabitants of southeastern New York moved inland for the winter, possibly to rock shelter sites such as Finch Rock in Armonk or Inwood in Manhattan, or to larger village sites that were developing near rich agricultural soils. The existence of larger village sites is documented archaeologically by a concentration of several pits filled with the refuse of everyday life. Some of these pits are interpreted as hearths said to be dug into the ground so that winter fires, which would have been constantly lit on the interior of bark and frame residence structures, would be kept under control. By the end of the season they would have accumulated a good portion of the refuse of domestic activities. Such a village site has been identified in Van Cortlandt Park.



#### D. Known Prehistoric Sites in western Bronx County.

Several literature sources were consulted to document the previous use of the area of Van Cortlandt Park. Ethnohistoric and archaeological sources show an intensive occupation of the Bronx since the archaic period. The earliest recorded sites were those indicated by Europeans exploring and settling the area after 1609. The first Native Americans encountered by Europeans in southeastern New York were the Wiechquaesgeek Indians who were settled in the areas along the Hudson River north from Manhattan to Westchester County (Grumet 1981:59-60). At least five major settlements attributable to these people are identified in the Bronx on historic maps and other sources: Shorakapkok at 230 St and Broadway (Tieck 1968:56); Nipinichsen, a palisaded site at 231 St. behind Ewen Park (Bolton 1934:140); Gowahasuasing on Tibbetts Neck (Grumet 1981:69, *Historic Perspectives* 1987:8); Saperewack, formerly in the northern section of Manhattan, now part of the southern west Bronx (Grumet 1981:49,68); and Mosholu or Keskeskick in Van Cortlandt Park (Bolton 1934:141). See figure 2 for the location of these sites.

Archaeological sources have identified these villages and other sites, especially shell heaps along the waterways of the Bronx, and isolated Native American artifacts or other remains. Shell heaps have been found at Marble Hill, Spuyten Duyvil Hill, (*Historical Perspectives* 1987:9-10), and along the Hudson River in Riverdale Park (Rothschild and Fenton 1985). Prehistoric artifact finds have been identified at 232 St. at the Hudson River, Henry Hudson Parkway and Kappock Street, and Harlem Canal near Broadway (*Historical Perspectives* 1987:11). There is a possible quartz/quartzite quarry site at Chapel Farm Estate (CITY/SCAPE et al 1993), and petrographs and other prehistoric artifacts are noted along the Bronx River in the New York Botanical Gardens and the Bronx Zoo (NYCLPC 1991). These various sites indicate the presence of Native Americans in a variety of locations where they would have exploited a variety of resources and undertaken a variety of activities.

Because of its immediate location and pertinence to the present project the Van Cortlandt village site will be reviewed. It was excavated in 1890 by J. B. James where the Parade Grounds for Van Cortlandt park exist (see Figure 4 ). The site was discovered in the process of grading the open field to the north of the Van Cortlandt Mansion in order that it might be used as a suitable parade ground for the National Guard. In this process a series of bowl shaped pits were uncovered over an area of about fourteen acres. "They were composed principally of oyster shells, in which were mingled the shells of hard and soft clam, mussel, and occasionally of the scallop, together with the bones and teeth of animals, and fragments of potsherds, interspersed with charcoal and ashes . . . The hearths were made to serve a double purpose. They were the fireplace of the family, and after they were no longer of use for this purpose they became the graves for the burial of the dead" (New York Tribune 1890 cited in Skinner 1920:142-43). Thirteen skeletons were excavated. The ceramic artifacts of this site date it to a late phase of the Late Woodland period and the historic records indicate that this field was used by Native Americans for agriculture at the time the Dutch arrived in the region (Tieck 1968:3). Bolton (1934:141) calls this site both Mosholu and Keskeskick following information gathered from historic documents, but Parker (1920:169) notes that there were no "European trade goods in the collection from the site."

The importance of this site to the present project is paramount. Following the drawing in figure 4, it appears that this site might have been included within the chosen location for the six planned tennis courts to the east of the Van Cortlandt Mansion. However, more recent land use patterns, such as the very grading that discovered the site and other park development projects, may have disturbed any remains not found in the 1890 excavation. It should also be noted however that the location, as delineated in Figure 4, is not based on firm documentation.

A previous archaeological investigation of the project area by Bankoff and Winter (1993) excavated four 2 x 2 meter trenches and performed 36 auger tests. Findings included, among other materials, four pieces of chert and flint nodules and three pieces of Native American pottery. The context of discovery, however, was a secondary deposit associated with a

certain amount of filling recognized as "not inconsistent with what is known of other parts of Van Cortlandt Park and around the Van Cortlandt House" (ibid:1).

#### Summary of Prehistoric and Contact Period Occupations.

With this documentary survey, the prehistoric and contact period patterns of land use and settlement in the region of the project area are determined. At this point, it seems clear that the project area was either part of, or immediately adjacent to, a documented Late Woodland period Native American village site that may have been used in earlier periods in a semi-sedentary settlement pattern whereby the inhabitants would move between the coast and the inland from summer to winter respectively. Historic grading and other land use patterns may very well have disturbed or destroyed any archaeological resources which remain. Further, the 1890 excavation may have already removed them.



### Historic Period.

The historic period occupation of the project area can be traced from early explorations to specific site ownership. The project area has been owned and used by a small number of individuals since the middle of the seventeenth century. It was initially a part of several farms/estates from 1646 until 1889 when it was bought by the New York City Parks Department. It has since been part of Van Cortlandt Park. In order to understand the historic use of the project area several primary sources were consulted. These include site reports from previous archaeological excavations, the wills of the Van Cortlandt family, deeds for the property, the Minutes and Annual Reports for the Department of Parks and Recreation, and various histories of Van Cortlandt Park and the Bronx (Jenkins 1912, Tieck 1968, Grumet 1981, and Storch Associates 1986). The specific details of the historic occupation and use of the project area will be outlined in the following discussion.

The first European exploration of southeastern New York was a brief stopover by the explorer Verrazano. He was followed by Henry Hudson who explored the Hudson River as far as present-day Albany in 1609. This successful voyage encouraged his patrons, the Dutch, to establish themselves in the new world. By 1624 Dutch settlers were building two trading outposts in the New York region: at New Amsterdam, Fort Orange, and two others nearby on the Delaware and Connecticut Rivers. These were interaction points between entrepreneurial Dutch settlers and Native Americans who supplied the Dutch with furs. There were as many as 250 individuals by 1628 at New Amsterdam, the site closest to the project area. Though primarily traders and merchants of furs, by the 1660's the Dutch established a diversified economy including shipbuilding, brewing, and milling combined with middleman-transport activities in the greater Atlantic trade network. This pattern tended to limit the labor available for food production, yet the growing need for such products led to the granting of *patroonships* - large size land grants - to encourage Dutch settlers to farm. *Patroonships* were given to "any man who could secure fifty able bodied laborers" who would clear and cultivate the land (Rothschild and Fenton 1985:8). One such grant was given in the Bronx/Yonkers area to Andrien Van der

Donck in 1646 (Storch Associates 1984:34)<sup>3</sup>. This is the first documentation of European land ownership and use in the project area.

Van der Donck's tract, known as *Colen Donck*, extended 16 miles along the Hudson River north from Spuyten Duyvil to Yonkers and east to the Bronx River (figure 5). In this tract Van der Donck supposedly built a house and intended to "set about to erect a saw mill, lay out a farm, provide a barn and stockade, and bring in colonists" (Tieck 1968:7). Whether he actually undertook these projects is not known. There is a sketch map of the location of his house dated to 1667 which locates his holding in the approximate region of the project area (Figure 6). He apparently oversaw the tending of fields in the area of the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds. His occupation of the Bronx came to an abrupt end when the greater Dutch settlement there came under attack by displaced Native Americans in 1655. Though Van der Donck survived, his farmhands were killed, and his house may have been burned. In any case he left the area for Holland where he died in the same year.

Van der Donck left his tract to his wife, Mary Doughty O'Neale. She remarried and left the region, but made a claim to her property in 1666 after the English took over the region. The claim was made so that she could pass on the land to her brother Elias Doughty in two separate sales: October 30, 1666 and May 16, 1667 (National Society of Colonial Dames 1955:np). Doughty sold off the Van der Donck property in several parcels. The site of the project area was included in a sale to William Betts and George Tippet in July of 1668 (see Figure 7). A clue to the use of this tract comes from the inventory of Tippet's estate dating from September 29, 1675 where his farm was described as a "tract of land and meadow purchased of Elias Doughty with the dwelling house, orchard, and barn now standing" (ibid).

The sale of the Van der Donck tract also included the sale of a large piece of land along the Hudson River to Frederick Philipse in 1672. It was Philipse's daughter Eva to whom Jacobus

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<sup>3</sup> It also seems to be the case that Van der Donck purchased his tract from the local Weckquaskeck (Keskeskick ?) Indians who apparently occupied the area. This seems to represent his effort to secure his grant (Storch Associates 1984:34; Van Cortlandt House Museum 1992:10).

Van Cortlandt was married in 1691. This connection was a factor in the decision by the Van Cortlandts of New York City to invest in rural property. Both Jacobus and his older brother, Stephanus, purchased plots in Westchester county.<sup>4</sup> Jacobus's land holdings grew through a series of purchases beginning in 1694 and culminating in 1732, including 76.5 acres from his father-in-law in 1699. It was in 1718 that Jacobus acquired the area to the southeast of the project area where the Van Cortlandt mill was erected, and it was in 1732 that Jacobus purchased from George Tippet, the grandson of the original Tippet noted above, the plot where the Van Cortlandt Mansion now stands. This sale included the dwelling house of George Tippet and the Van Cortlandts may have occupied the Tippet house until the Van Cortlandt Mansion was built in 1748-49. It also included a plot which the Tippetts had been using as a cemetery.<sup>5</sup> The deed of sale stipulated that the Tippetts could continue to use this plot even though the family no longer owned it. This cemetery and an adjacent African burying ground still exist, though they are in poor shape. Jacobus died in 1739 leaving to his second son Frederick "a place called Little or Lower Yonkers . . . together with all houses, mills, dams, and ponds" (National Society of Colonial Dames 1955:np).

A three course stone foundation first identified by sewer trench diggers in 1910 has been suggested as the possible remains of either the Tippet house or the Van der Donck house. This foundation outlined a 19 by 14 foot house about 150 feet south of the present Van Cortlandt Mansion (Tieck 1968:4). Excavations by Bankoff and Winter (1991) have confirmed the location of this site. Associated with this foundation were Holland-made bricks, lead window frames, and Delft china, all of which are characteristic Dutch artifacts, yet nothing has identified the specific individuals who owned and/or occupied the structure that stood here.

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<sup>4</sup> Stephanus Van Cortlandt's tract of land near present-day Croton became the Van Cortlandt Manor and he was the progenitor the Croton line of Van Cortlandts.

<sup>5</sup> Jenkins (1912:301) notes that at this site "are buried several members of the Ackerman and Berrien families, descendents of Betts and Tippet and connections of the Van Cortlandts." We will refer to this site as the Tippet family cemetery in this report.

The Van Cortlandt Mansion (figure 8) was built by Frederick Van Cortlandt, the son of Jacobus, in 1748/9. This is a three story, fieldstone house built in the Georgian style with Dutch influences. The house is now an official New York City Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Frederick died presumably immediately after the completion of the house in 1749. The house and property then passed to his son Jacobus (a.k.a. James) Van Cortlandt. James and his brother Augustus were active in the Revolutionary War by helping to guard the city records of New York during the British occupation. It is known, as well, that George Washington used the house as a temporary headquarters during the war both in 1776 and in 1783. James died childless in 1781 and passed on the house and property to Augustus. Augustus managed the farming and milling operations of the Van Cortlandt estate into the nineteenth century, dying in 1823.

The property then passed onto Augustus' grandson, Augustus White, who in order to obtain the property had to adopt the Van Cortlandt name following the wishes stated in the elder Augustus' will. The Van Cortlandt family retained ownership of the house and the surrounding property until 1889 when the City of New York acquired it and constructed Van Cortlandt Park. During the period from 1748 to 1889, the Van Cortlandts ran a plantation and mill. An 1882 map (Figure 9) identifies several outbuildings used in this operation including several timber stables/sheds, ice houses, and the mill. The barn/outbuildings nearest to the project area have also been identified in the background of an 1844 portrait of the Van Cortlandt Mansion (Figure 8) and by archaeological excavations by Bankoff and Winter (1991) who have identified silage pits associated with these barns/outbuildings.

Upon acquisition by New York City, the mansion's immediate use was by the New York City Police as a barracks for those who guarded a herd of Buffalo kept in the Park. Seven years later, the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York obtained a lease for the Van Cortlandt Mansion and has operated it ever since as a museum house. The building acquired Landmark Status in 1966 (Berger 1987:5).

Documents of the City of New York Parks Department give no details for land use or alteration the specific project area, however they describe the demolition in 1889-90 of what were presumably the Van Cortlandt farm outbuildings and the grading of the Parade Grounds area (Storch Associates 1986:61). Details of this work were recorded in by the City Board of Estimates on August 7, 1889. Work was to include:

- 1st. The removal of foundation walls and filling cellars and areas under and around old buildings.
- 2nd. The filling of the roadway extending northerly from the carriage house.
- 3rd. The plowing and levelling of the old corn field northwesterly of the old mansion and old orchard easterly of the carriage house, about 5 acres.
- 4th. The excavation of a trench and temporary screens for closets and urinals.
- 5th. The laying out of about 200 lineal feet of 30-inch sewer pipe and tile drainage of about three-quarters of an acre adjoining Broadway. (Board of Estimates and Apportionment 1889:177).

This description and that given of the grading discussed above concerning the discovery of the Native American village site are the only details of the work undertaken by the Parks Department that might have impacted the project area.

A comparison of 1882 and 1893 maps (Figures 9 and 10) show that the Van Cortlandt outbuildings, with the exception of the old mill, are gone by the date of the later map, and that a road has been built into the Parade Ground following what was a path used during the Van Cortlandt era. By 1914 (Figure 11) this road has been cut short and the comfort station built at its northern terminus. Map documentation after a 1950 Sanborn map revision is limited as map making companies no longer included any depictions of Van Cortlandt Park. Yet, a comparison of the project area in the 1950 map (Figure 11) with the present (figure 1) status shows no change.

### Summary of Historic Occupations and Uses.

The documentary evidence demonstrates a continuous, but not intensive, historic use of the project area from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present. The earliest settlers were Dutch farmers who built dwellings of increasing size and permanence culminating in the still extant Van Cortlandt Mansion built in 1748-49. The Van Cortlandt family were the major private owners, holding the project area from 1732 to 1889. The project area was part of their plantation and milling enterprise during this time. The New York City Parks Department next acquired ownership following the Van Cortlandt family. They appear to have extensively impacted the archaeological resources of the project area in the construction of the Parade Grounds. This work involved grading so as to level the area for the Parade Grounds. It seems that the project area may have been scraped, for it was in this work that the Van Cortlandt Late Woodland period Native American Village site was revealed. Limited use of the project area other than as a Parade Ground and playing fields is noted in the documentary record.



### III. Archaeological Field Research

An archaeological investigation of the area where the construction of six tennis courts is proposed was the first, and major, part of the field research. This goal of this excavation was to identify any subsurface cultural resources in the project area which is located in the southeastern corner of the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds. This was a follow-up investigation to one performed at this site by Bankoff and Winter (1993).

#### Methods.

Our investigation consisted of the excavation of six test units and subsequent analysis of the artifacts and stratigraphy. It was determined that the main areas of impact by the construction of the tennis courts would be along three parallel lines where the outer fence poles and central net posts of the courts would be placed. It was along these lines that we placed our excavation units (Figure 12). If any intact significant archaeological resources were defined, we were to expand our excavations and incorporate auguring to identify the location of any other sites. As no intact remains were defined no such work was done.

The excavations were undertaken over three days (November 6-8) by a crew of five to nine excavators under the direction of Dr. Nan Rothschild, principal investigator, and Christopher Matthews, field director. Six 1.0 by 0.75 meter test units were excavated to a minimum depth of 85 cm. The location of the test units was determined by the identified location of the fence pole lines and the net post line as well as the surface identification of test units already excavated by Bankoff and Winter (1993). The Bankoff and Winter 2.0 by 2.0 meter test units were concentrated in the southwestern portion of the site so we chose our unit locations to complement their survey. Three test units (A, E, and F) were placed along the northern fence line, two test units (C and D) along the central net post line, and one test unit (B) along the southern fence line (see figure 12).

Units were excavated with shovels and trowels by teams of two and three people. Strata were identified by natural soil changes and levels within the strata were created every 20 cm. Soils were passed through 1/4 inch hardware cloth screens and all artifacts were bagged by levels. Notes were taken by the supervisor as the excavation proceeded, and excavators filled out standardized forms for each level identifying soil type, excavation depth, artifacts. They also made preliminary interpretations. Artifacts were washed, labelled, and identified at the Columbia University archaeological laboratory.

#### Excavation Summary.

The relative conformity of the six excavation units to a single stratigraphic scheme eliminates the need for a unit by unit description. Rather, the overall picture will adequately account for the individual test units. The general conclusion reached is that the project area was significantly disturbed by grading in the work undertaken to build the existing Parade Ground in the 1890's. This summary of the excavation will be divided into the artifactual and stratigraphic evidence to support this conclusion.

#### Artifactual Evidence.

The artifact distribution pattern of these excavations is uniform with one exception. Artifact assemblages in each unit predominantly came only from stratum A and dated the stratum to the mid-twentieth century (see Appendix B [artifact catalog]). In most units there was a mix of eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century, as well as some possible prehistoric artifacts, but with a pattern suggesting that these soils were accumulated only in the twentieth century bringing with them the older artifacts in redeposition.

The one exception to this pattern was Test Unit D in which older artifacts were found in stratum B without any modern intrusions. Although these artifacts, notably two large sherds of a brown and gray stoneware jug and a possible prehistoric flake and core, are potentially indicative of intact deposits, they were identified in a disturbed soil matrix associated with the

grading of the Parade Ground. It is believed that these artifacts were part of the filling and accumulation that combined the varied artifacts in stratum A, and they are not interpreted as evidence of intact deposits.

There were no artifacts found in such a way as to suggest they were located in their original context.

#### Stratigraphic Evidence.

The stratigraphy of this site is consistent from unit to unit with the exception of certain natural deposits found *in situ* below the surface in test units B and C. The basic scheme is a stratum of dark brown humus with artifacts, a stratum of mottled orange silty sand with few, if any, artifacts, and a stratum of an orange sand subsoil (see figure 13). In Test Unit B, a further level (stratum D) with a high concentration of 3 - 5 cm wide pebbles mixed with orange sand was uncovered.

A soil deposition pattern can be identified in the comparison of depths of the various levels as they move from west to east (Figure 13). It is noted that the surface of stratum C is relatively even from unit to unit, and that the depth of the strata above stratum C becomes increasingly smaller moving from units in the east towards units in the west. This pattern is interpreted to represent a particularly level natural deposit of sand (stratum C), possibly associated with Glacial Lake Hudson. On top of this a varying amount of soil was accumulated during and after the glacial retreat at the end of the Pleistocene (stratum B). However, this soil would have been buried again under an accumulation of richer soil associated with the natural processes of soil accumulation in a forested Holocene environment and cultural activity of Native Americans over several thousand years. It was this upper most layer and probably some of the middle layer that was scraped off in the late nineteenth century in the building of the Parade Ground so that it was not found during testing. In its place has accumulated, probably through typical maintenance by the Parks Department and through natural accumulation, a rich humus layer delineated in this excavation as stratum A.

This idea is supported by the clear stratigraphic distinctions found between strata A and B in several of the test units (compare Photos 1-3). A notable example of this distinction is visible in north wall of test unit C (Photo 2), where the distinction between strata A and B is marked by a sharp line sloping down towards the east. This kind of sharp distinction at such an angle may be the indication of cuts made in the grading process in 1889-90.

The excavation has also defined water deposited soil in Test Units B and C (e.g. see Photo 4), suggesting that the southeastern most part of the Parade Ground was once under water, possibly Glacial Lake Hudson. The relatively close proximity of these very old deposits to the surface (as close as 24 cm) also suggests that original top soils were scraped off in the grading process.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations.

The combination of artifactual and stratigraphic evidence show proposed construction in the project area as described above will not impact any intact significant archaeological resources. The excavation uncovered a variety of strata in their natural state of deposition, and has been able to explain the cultural deposition of the upper most strata as clearly a twentieth century accumulation, and not archaeologically significant. It is concluded that the planned construction of six tennis courts in this site will not disturb any significant archaeological deposits.

#### IV. Investigation of the Historic Landscape

A second line of field research was undertaken to consider in preliminary way the above-ground impact of the proposed tennis courts on the historic landscape in the vicinity of the Van Cortlandt Mansion. This is continuation of work initiated by the local community as represented by the Kingsbridge Historical Society and its President, Peter Ostrander. The recognition of the landmark status of the Van Cortlandt Mansion by the Landmarks Preservation Commission did not consider the surrounding landscape in its assessment (see Appendix D). Such a delineation of a structure and its surrounding physical situation as a combined historic landmark was done for the Bartow-Pell mansion in Pelham Bay Park in an amendment to this site's landmark status in 1978 (see figure 14). It is suggested that a formal delineation of such an expanded landmark status be considered for the Van Cortlandt Mansion.

The significance of the Van Cortlandt Mansion is defined by its integral part in the events of the American Revolution. The Revolutionary era events related to the house are its use by George Washington as a temporary headquarters, and the efforts of James and Augustus Van Cortlandt, while owners of the house, to hide the New York City government records in the family vault. The house itself is also an architectural marker as it represents Dutch stylistic influences on the popular Georgian style in the time of its construction (NYCLPC 1966, 1975). The presence of the already identified Native American village, the possible Van der Donck foundation wall, and the Tippet family and African American cemeteries also contribute to the historic resources in the vicinity of the mansion. The following discussion will show that an expanded historic landscape landmark designation is an appropriate task.

The discussion concerning the archaeological resources presented above notes the limited impact on the area surrounding the house since the events of the Revolutionary War period that mark its significance. It also notes only limited impacts to the area throughout the entire historic period. There were few transfers of the property and very little construction and alteration of the landscape. The creation of the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Ground is the most

significant identifiable impact. This work cleared the field to the north of the house of plantation outbuildings, yet did little else than grade the area. Considering that the present Parade Ground has been a cleared field used for planting from prehistoric times to the late nineteenth century, the extent of this work has made no significant impact on the visual character of the historic landscape.

Several ball-fields have been constructed in the Parade Ground in the twentieth century inserting backstops and goal posts into the level green plain (Storch Associates 1986). These intrusions have clearly altered the historic landscape of the site. The degree of these intrusions can, in part, be assessed in Photo 5. This photograph shows the Parade Ground as viewed from a rock outcrop on Vault Hill looking towards the Mansion. It demonstrates the relatively minimal impact of the ball-fields as the above ground constructions are poorly visible. This photo also demonstrates the physical situation of the Mansion in the changing landscape pattern from the open field into the wooded area further south.

It is suggested that this view, as it comes from the area of the Van Cortlandt family Vault, should be considered an important reflector of the historic landscape, and that this view emphasizes the transition from the field to the wooded area across the southern edge of the Parade Ground as a significant part of the Van Cortlandt historic site. This transition will be visually impacted by the erection of the tennis courts, as this kind of construction is much more intrusive than a backstop because of its extended length and paving. One alternative to be considered would be to paint the tennis courts and fencing green so that they more effectively blend with the landscape.

From another, and more immediate vantage point, Photos 6 and 7 show the view of the project area from the south door of the Van Cortlandt Mansion and the eastern edge of the Mansion's fenced-in area. It is clear from these views that the construction of the tennis courts here will impact the view from the south of the house to the eastern edge of the Parade Grounds. However, as these views also show, the Comfort Station is already a large part of this view, but it is painted green and situated within a wooded area that blends it with the surrounding

landscape. A similar landscaping pattern which would pull the south woods, at least visually, further into the Parade Ground would tend to minimize the impact of the proposed tennis courts.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations.

In the above discussion we note that historic landscape of the Van Cortlandt Mansion is, for the most part, intact. A consideration of the impact of the proposed tennis courts on this landscape shows that the two views most pertinent to the definition of the landscape, that from Vault Hill and that from the area immediately adjacent to the mansion, demonstrate how the tennis courts will impact the existing landscape pattern that defines the southern edge of the Parade Ground, an area of which the Mansion is very much a part. This transition from field to woods will be disturbed unless an alternative site is chosen or efforts are made to effectively blend the tennis court fencing and paving into the landscape. The landscaping around the existing Comfort Station to the east of the Mansion might be used as a successful example of this practice.

Ideally, a formal delineation of the historic landscape surrounding the Van Cortlandt Mansion would be undertaken by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. It is suggested that the visual interaction between the Mansion and Vault Hill, the site of the Van Cortlandt family Vault, be taken into consideration in a delineation of the historic landscape. As well, it is recommended that the site be recognized for its multiple components which more than just the Van Cortlandt facets also include the Native American village site, the possible Van der Donck foundation walls, and the Tippet family and African American cemeteries. The proposed construction of six tennis courts, unless moved to another location or sufficiently camouflaged by landscaping and painting that would incorporate them into the wooded backdrop, will impact these significant historic resources.



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## Figures and Photos

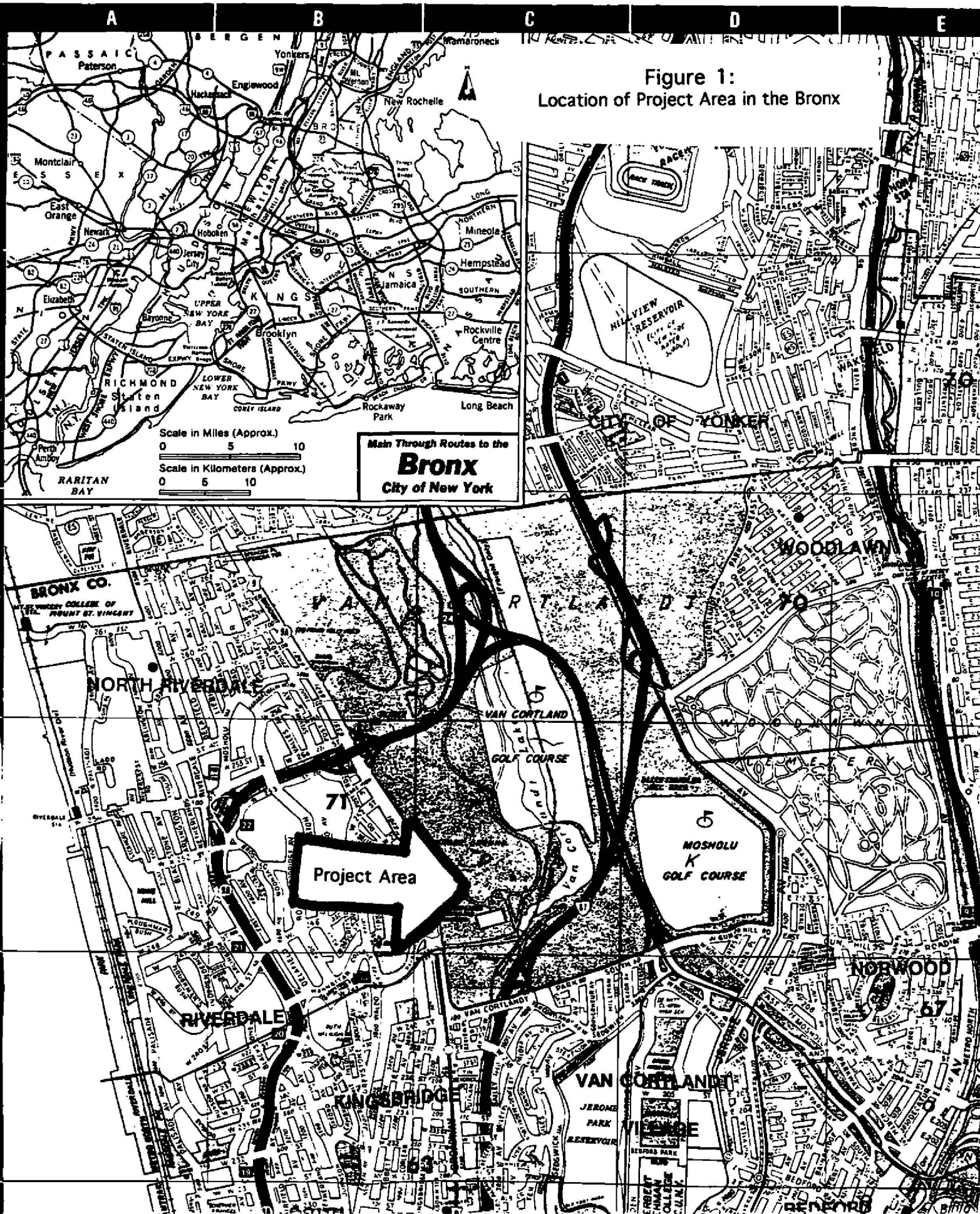
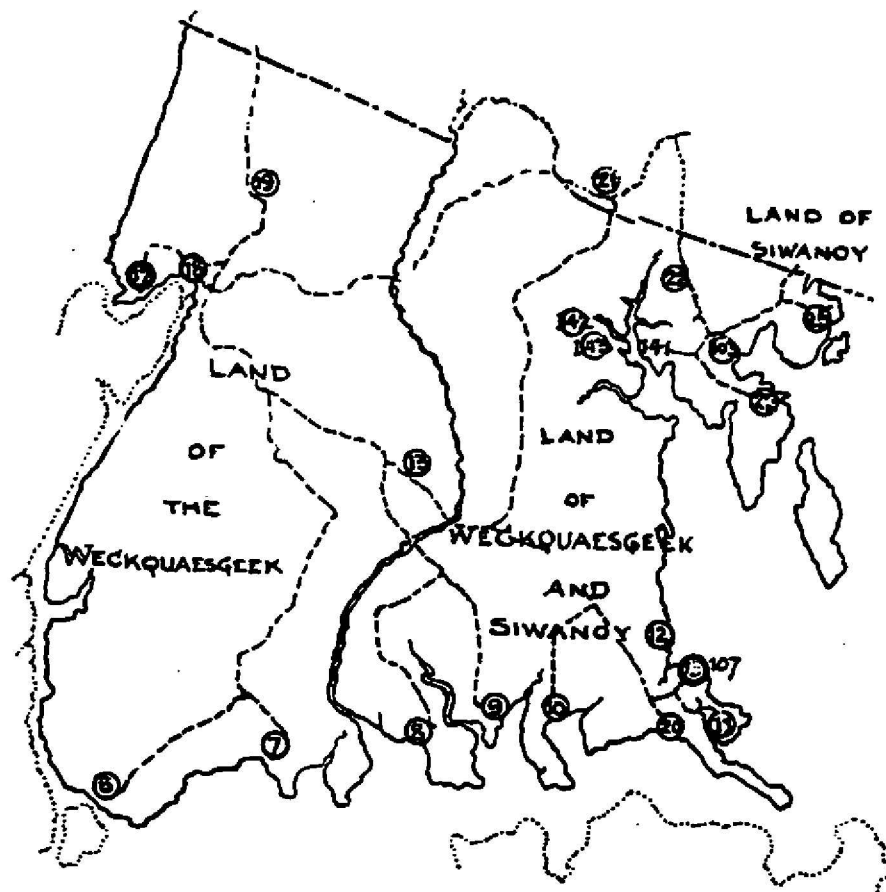


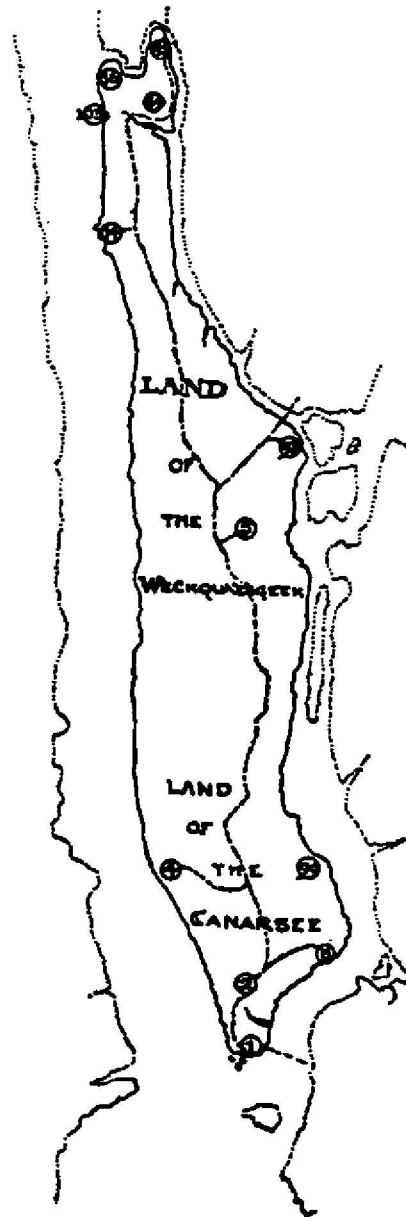
Figure 2



INDIAN SITES IN THE BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6. Ranachqua                    | 20. Throg's Neck               |
| 7. Quinnahung                   | 21. Eastchester                |
| 8. Snakapins                    | 22. The Split Rock             |
| 9. Castle Point or Castel Hill  | 23. Ann's Hook                 |
| 10. Brockett's Neck             | 25. Hunters Island             |
| 11. Locust Point on Throgs Neck | 103. Laaphawaching Pell Manor  |
| 12. Weir Creek                  | 107. Adee Point on Throgs Neck |
| 13. Bear Swamp Road             | 141. Hutchison River           |
| 17. Nipinchisen                 | 142. Baychester Avenue         |
| 18. Paparinemin now Kingsbridge | 143. Pinckney's Humack         |
| 19. Mosholu or Keskeskick       |                                |

Figure 3



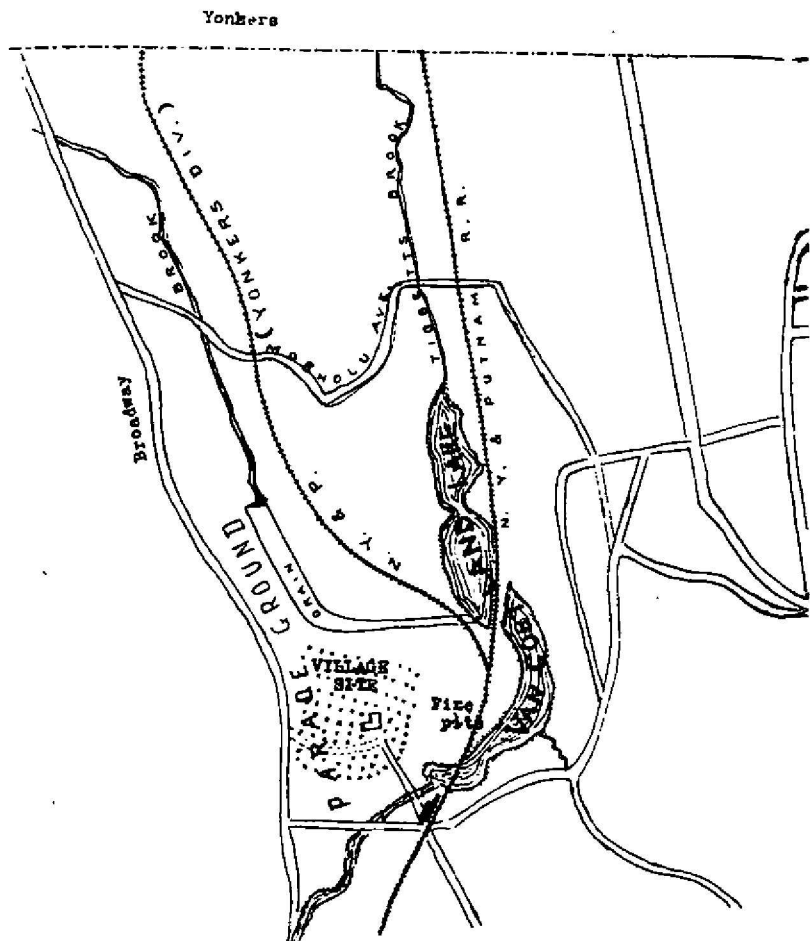
INDIAN SITES IN THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

- |                          |                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Kapsee                | 16. Shorakappok                     |
| 2. Werpoes               | 84. Muscoota                        |
| 3. Rechtank              | 85. Marble Hill                     |
| 4. Sapohankan            | 99. Shepmoes                        |
| 5. Konaande Kongh        | 103. Dyckman Street at Hudson River |
| 14. Fort Washington Park |                                     |

Source: Bolton (1934:132)



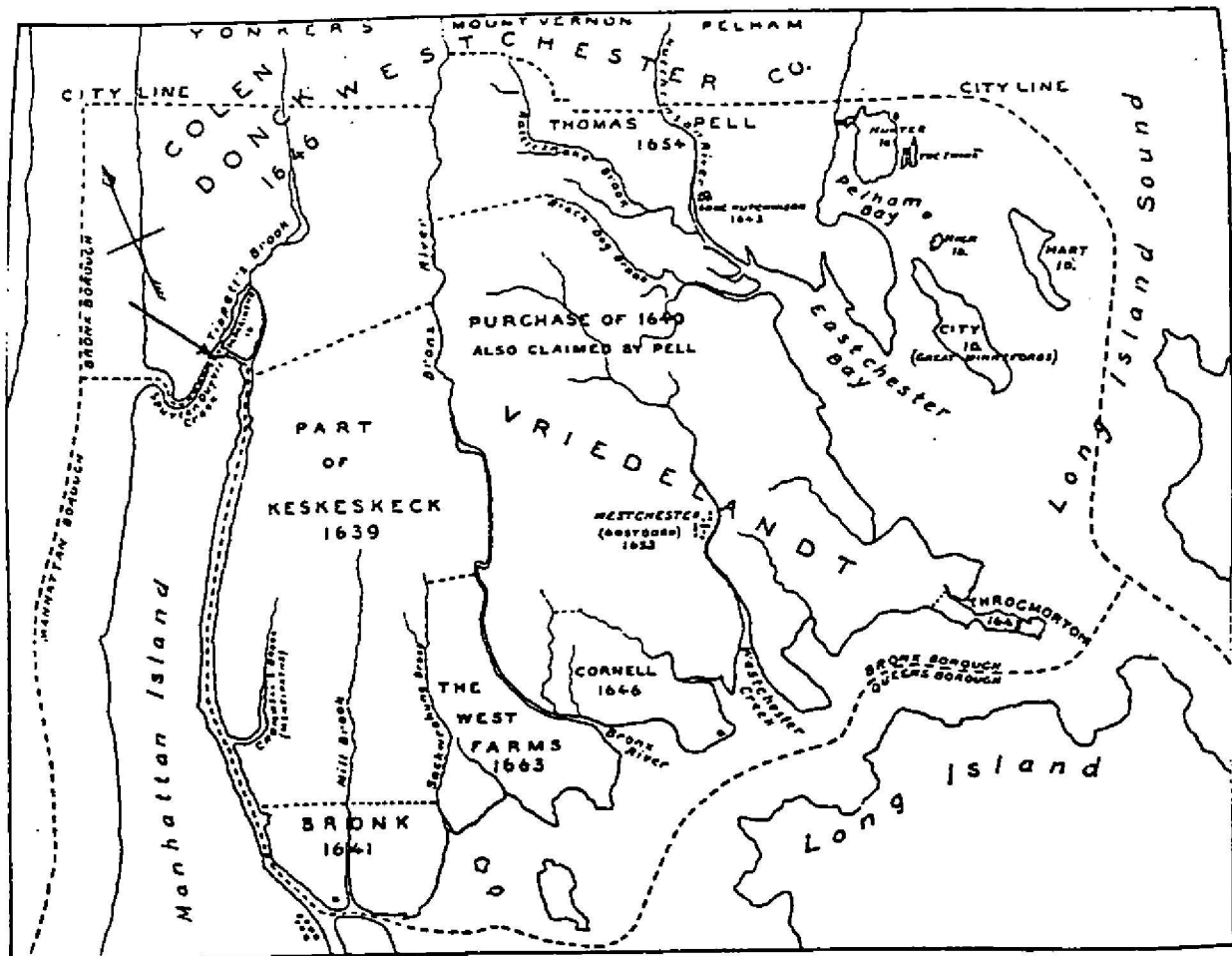
Figure 4



The Van Cortlandt lake site (after W. R. Blackie)

Source: Parker (1920: Plate 148)

Figure 5



The Borough at the End of the Dutch Period.

Photocopied from Jenkins,  
1912. THE STORY OF THE  
BRONX.

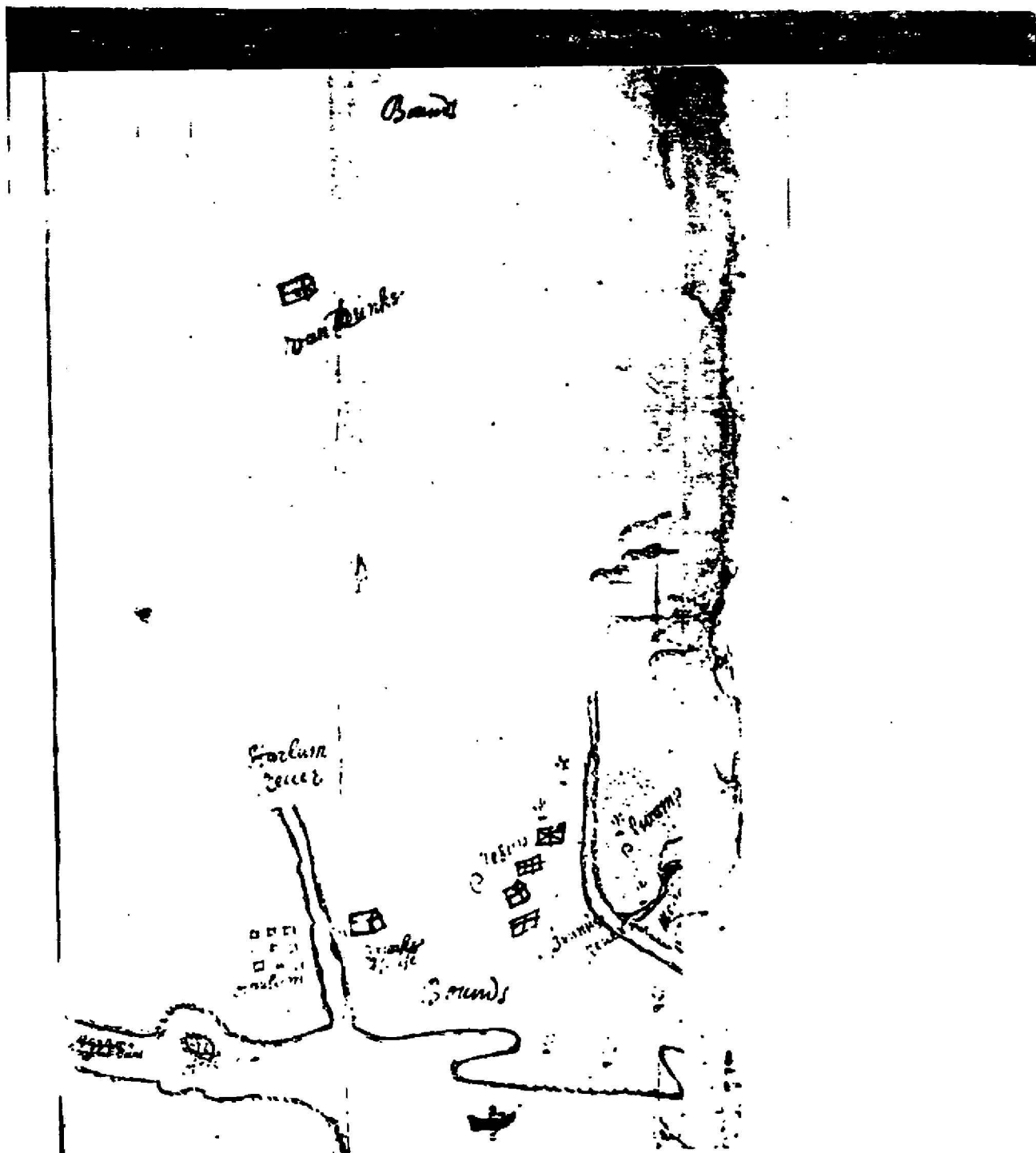
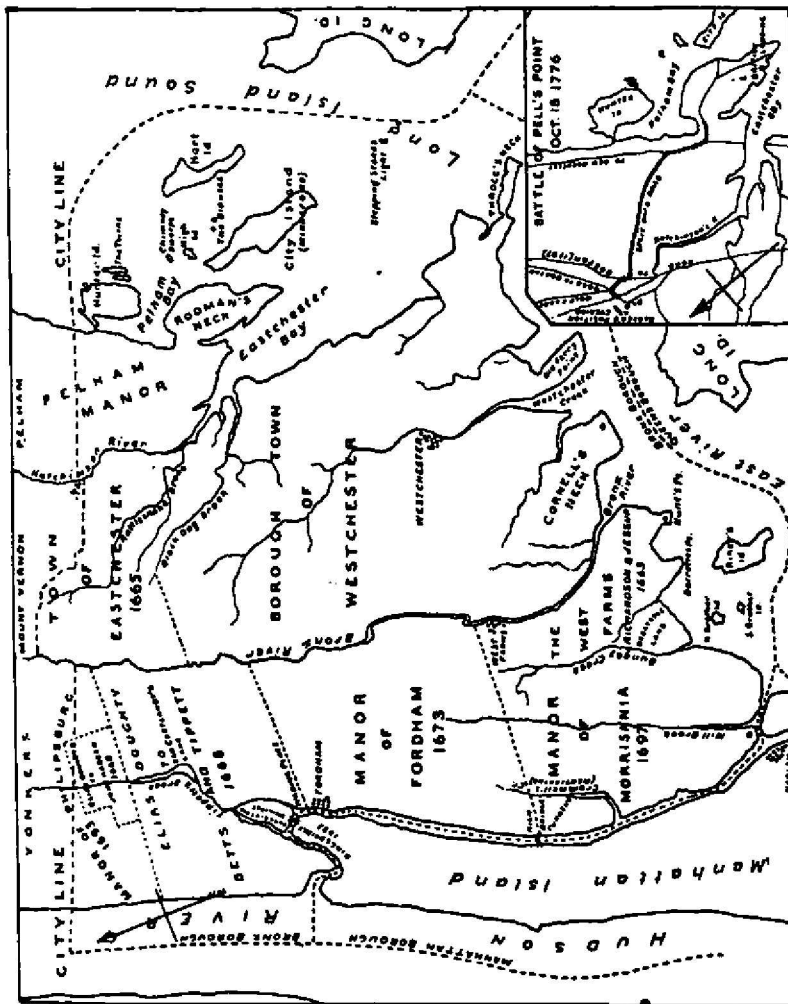


Figure 6: "Van Dunks" house is shown on a map dated about 1667

Source: Tieck (1968:9)

Figure 7



At the End of the English Period. [Insert:] Battle-field of Pell's Point, Oct. 18, 1776.

Source : Jenkins (1912)

Figure 8



"Van Cortlandt House in Winter"  
Oil on Canvass By George Harvey (c. 1844)

Source: Van Cortlandt House Museum

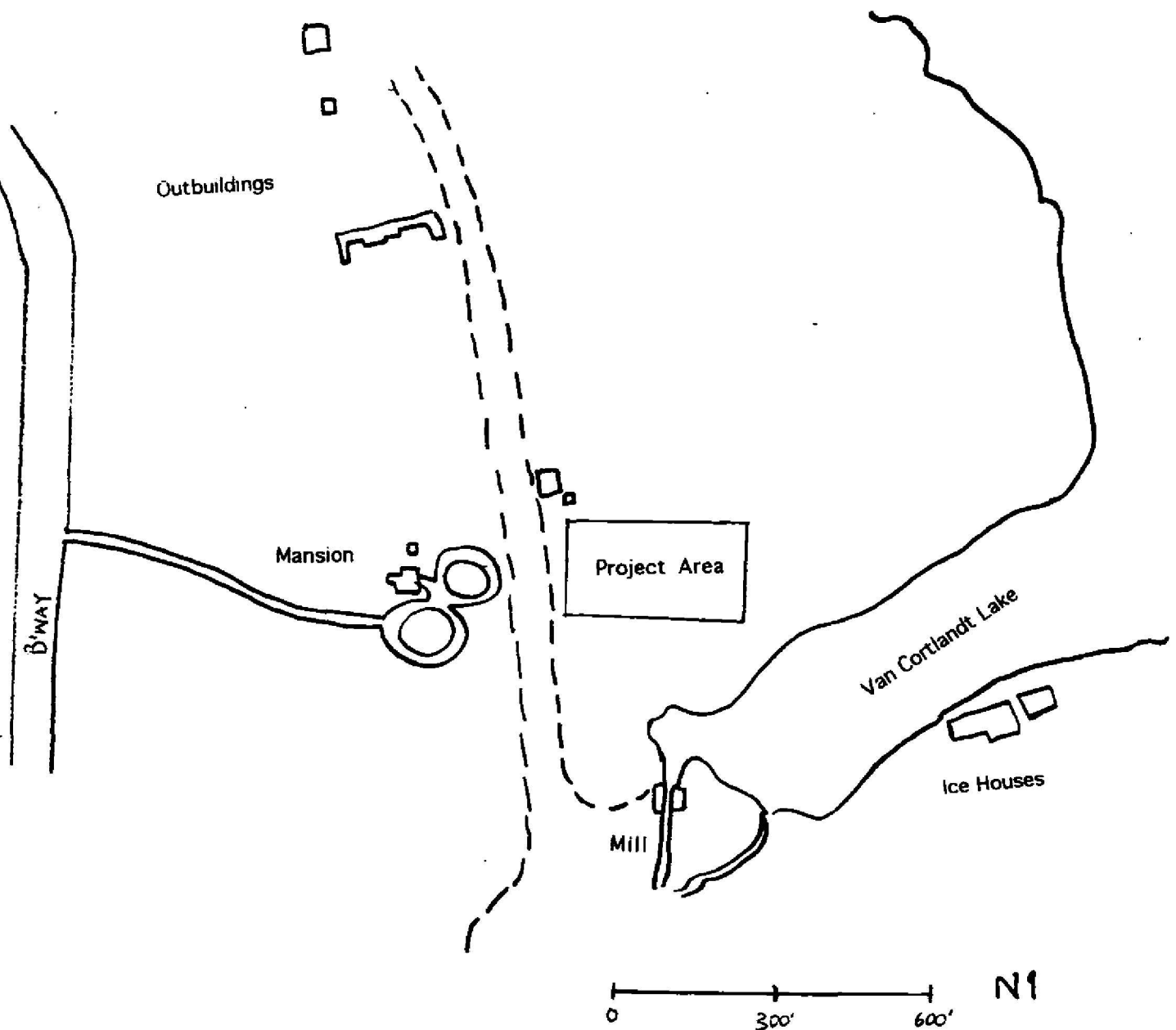


Figure 9:

Source: Atlas of the 24th Ward, Plate Q  
Bromley (1882)

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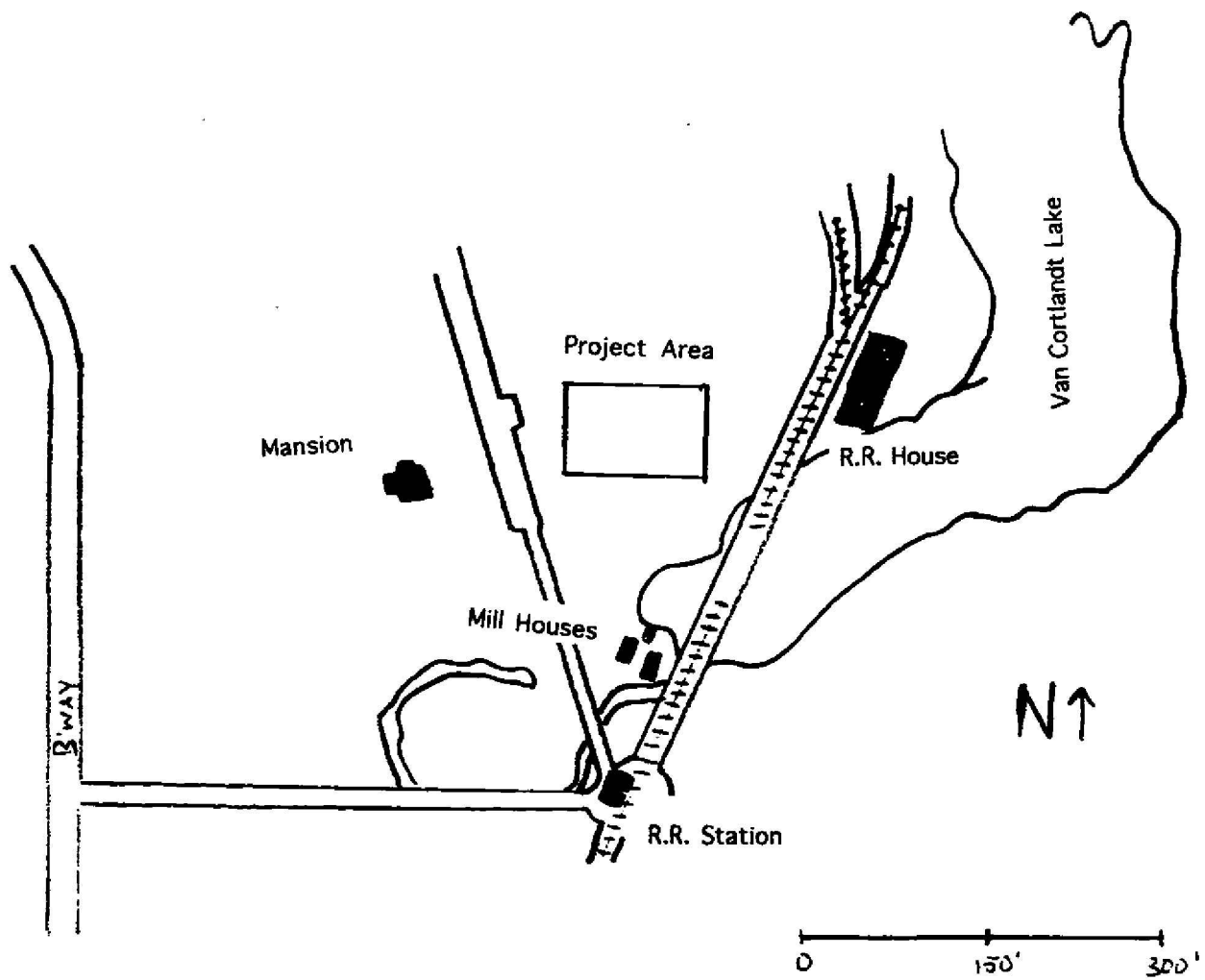


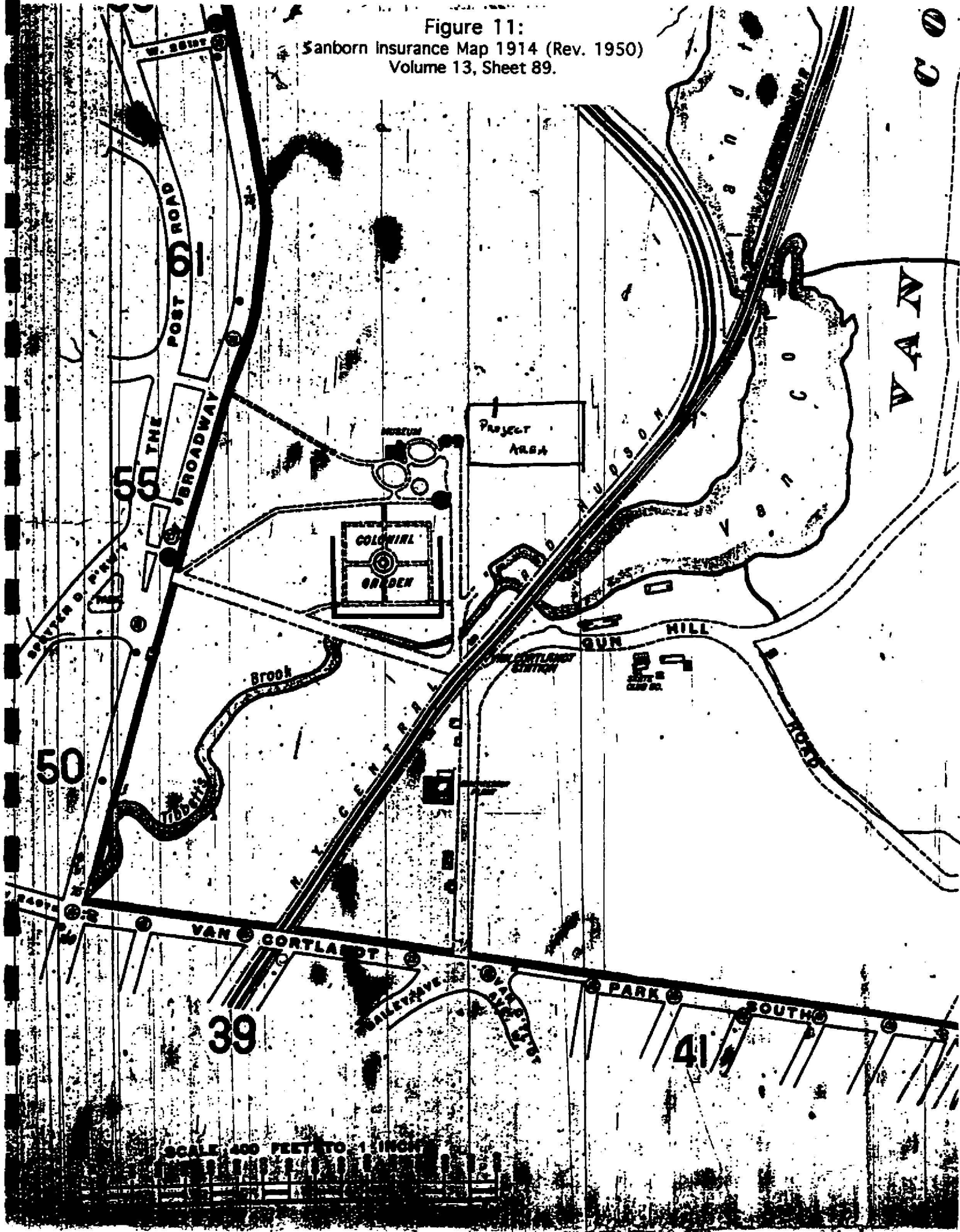
Figure 10:

Source: Atlas of the City of New York, Page 140  
Bromley (1893)

Traced From the Original



Figure 11:  
Sanborn Insurance Map 1914 (Rev. 1950)  
Volume 13, Sheet 89.

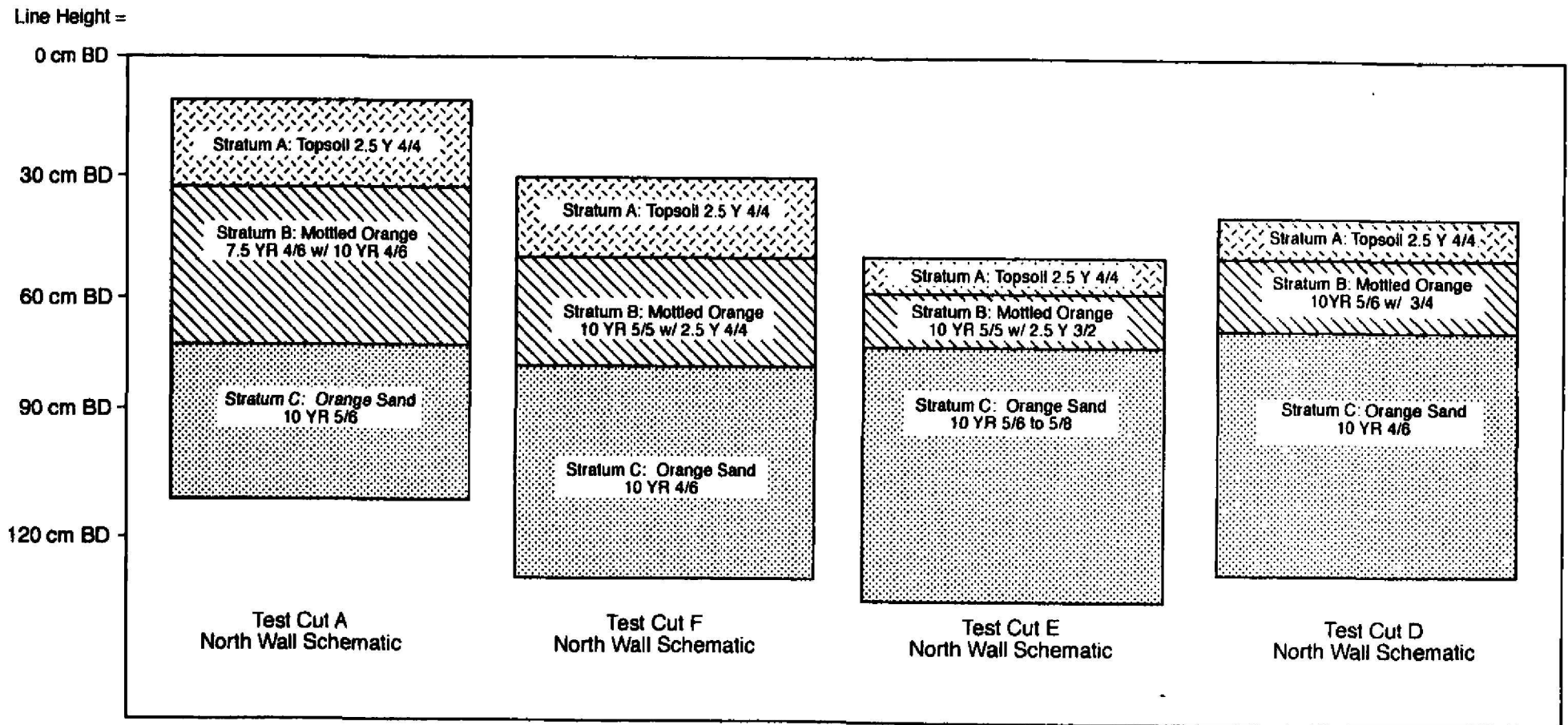


note: BW1 and BW2 indicate test excavations done by Bankoff and Winter (1993)



Figure 13:

# North Wall Schematics for Van Cortlandt Park Test Units



Scale: 1 cm = 15 cm

Note: Test Units B & C are not represented in this figure because of *in situ* natural anomalies

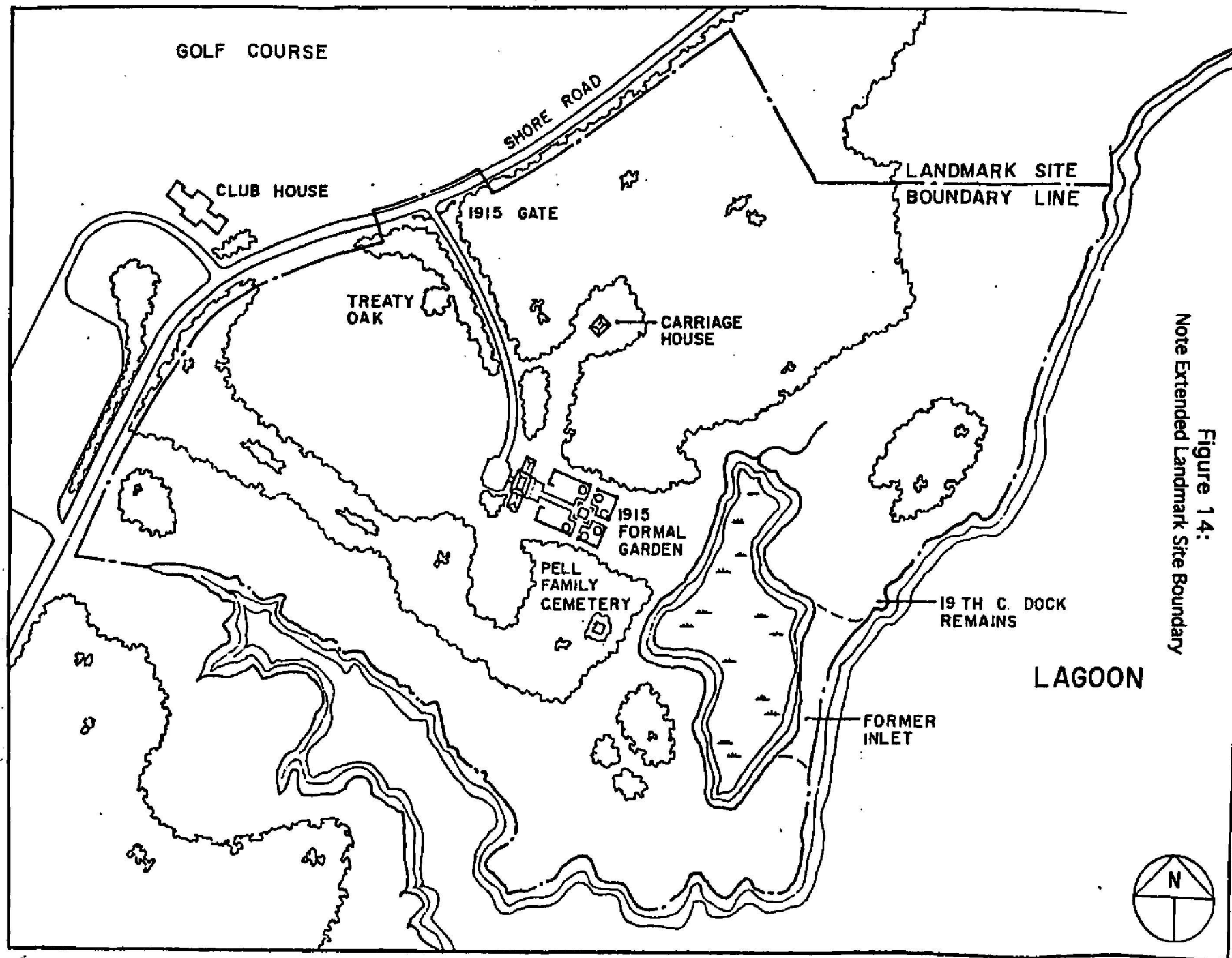


Figure 14:  
Note Extended Landmark Site Boundary

SOURCE: Bartow-Pell Mansion, Site Plan. HABS Survey No. 456,  
Detail of Sheet 1 of 10. 1986 (Drawn by Robert S. Burton)





Photo 1  
note sharp stratigraphic distinctions

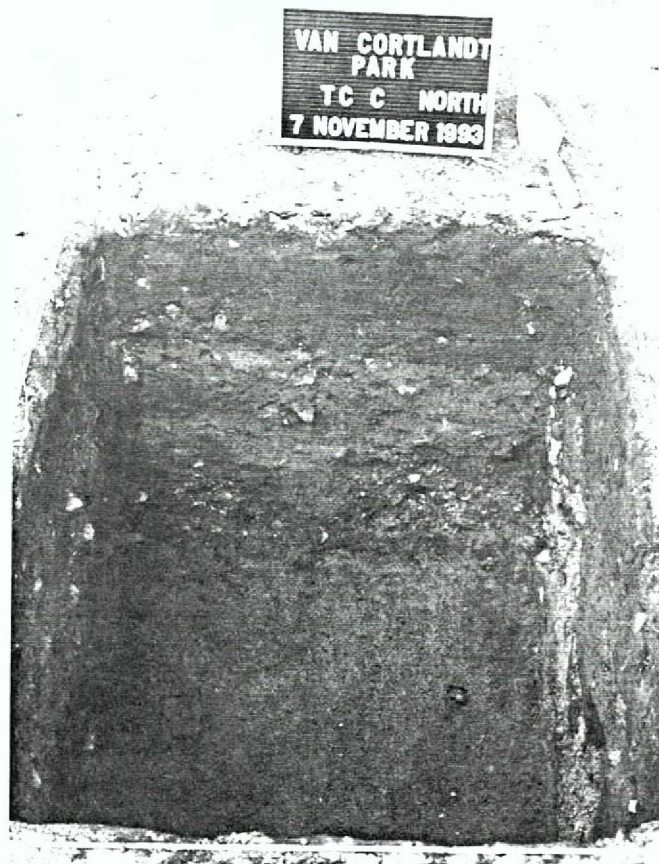


Photo 2  
note sharp stratigraphic distinctions

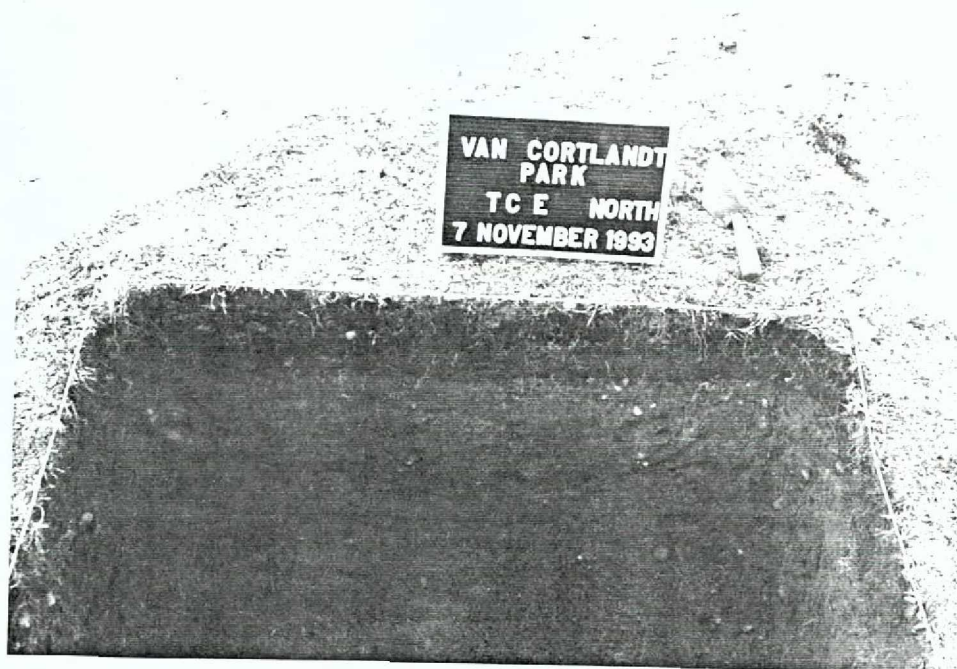


Photo 3  
note sharp stratigraphic distinctions

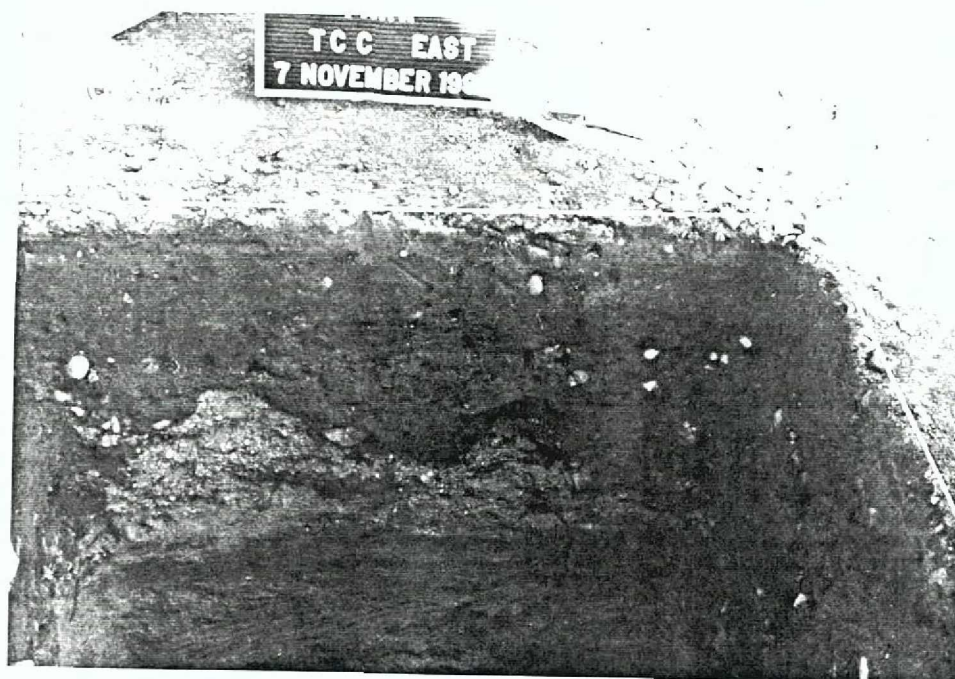


Photo 4  
note water-deposited soils



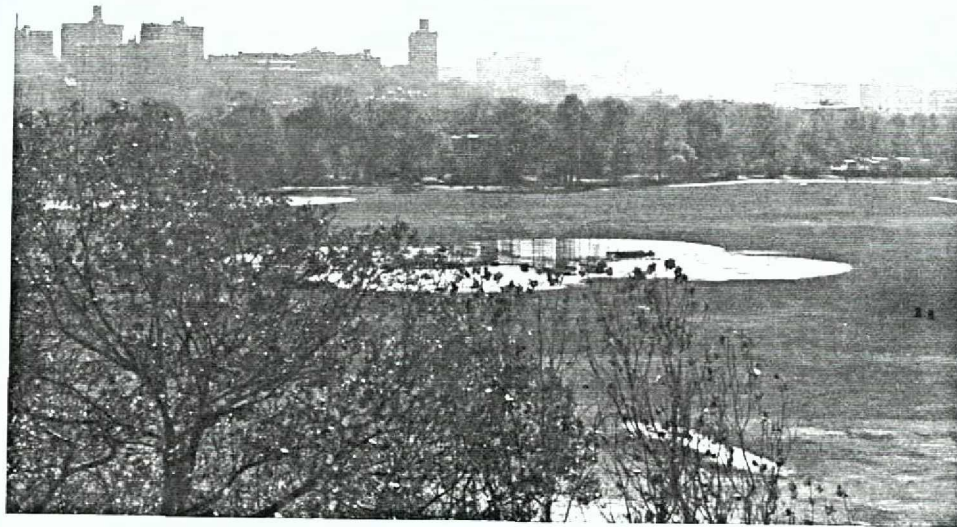


Photo 5  
Parade Grounds and Van Cortlandt Mansion  
looking south from Vault Hill



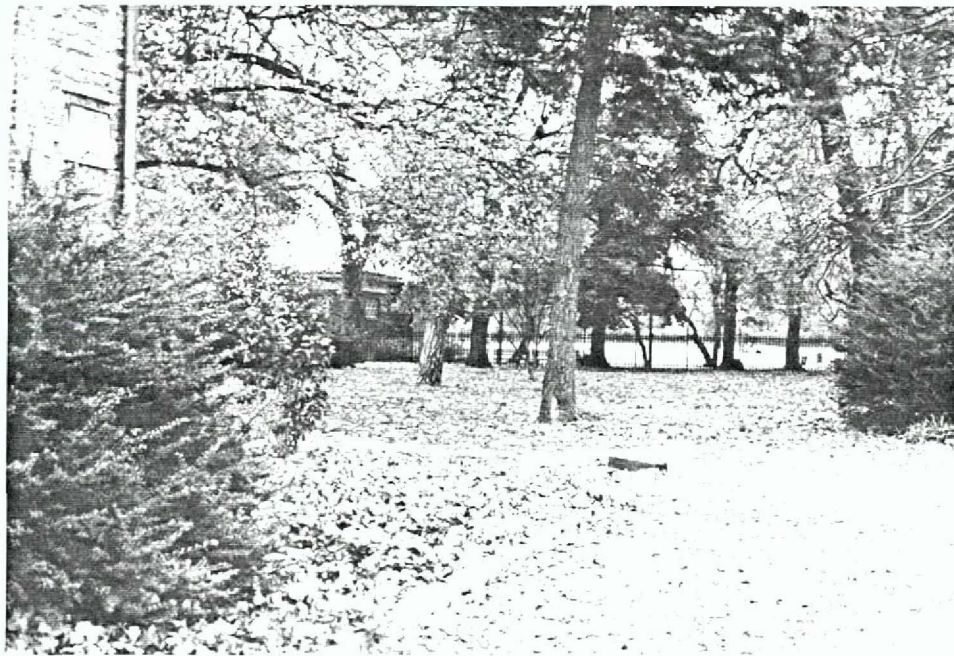


Photo 6  
Project Area as seen from the  
south steps of Van Cortlandt Mansion



Photo 7  
Project Area as seen from East edge of  
Van Cortlandt Mansion Fenced-in yard.

Appendix A:  
Predictive Survey Report

November 2, 1992

Claire Dudley, Project Manager  
Olmsted Center  
Flushing Meadows Corona Park  
Flushing, New York 11368

Dear Ms. Dudley,

Please find enclosed a final version of a predictive scheme for excavations planned for the south end of the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds. This work is submitted following Section IIB of the scope of work for contract number X92-390. This work is to be approved prior to any excavations.

The enclosed packet includes five pages of text, references, eight figures and a series of four overlay maps accompanied by a topographic view of the project area in its present physical state. The maps indicate those prehistoric and historic land uses determined from the documentary record. Sources consulted were archaeological site reports, wills, deeds, documents of the Department of Parks and Recreation, and various histories of Van Cortlandt Park and The Bronx.

Our conclusion after undertaking this review of documentary sources is that the specific project area has a *relatively low sensitivity to any archaeological resources*. Our proposed work then will be to confirm this prediction through the excavation of a minimum of 6 to 7 three foot deep test units in those areas determined to be the most susceptible to impact by the present construction project. This work is presented in fuller detail in the text of the report.

As we would like to begin excavations Friday, November 5, a rapid response to this report would be appreciated. Thank you for your help throughout this process so far.

Nan A. Rothschild, Ph.D.  
Christopher N. Matthews, M.A.

Department of Anthropology  
Columbia University  
452 Schermerhorn Hall  
New York, NY 10027

**Abstract of Land Use of the Southeast Portion of the Van  
Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds:  
A Predictive Survey prior to Archaeological Research  
for the Proposed Construction of Six Tennis Courts.**

**by  
Nan A. Rothschild, Ph.D.  
Christopher N. Matthews, M.A.**

**Submitted to:  
Claire Dudley, ALA  
Project Manager  
City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation**

**November 2, 1993**

Abstract of Land Use of the Southeastern portion of the Van Cortlandt Park  
Parade Grounds: A Predictive Survey prior to Archaeological Research for the  
Proposed Construction of Six Tennis Courts.

November 2, 1993

For the purposes of providing a predictive plan for excavations to be done in the southeast end of the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Ground several sources of information concerning land use and alteration were consulted. These include site reports from previous archaeological excavations, the wills of the Van Cortlandt family, deeds for the property, the Minutes and Annual Reports for the Department of Parks and Recreation, and various histories of Van Cortlandt Park and the Bronx (Jenkins 1912, Tieck 1968, Grumet 1981, and Storch Associates 1986). The summary of these data provide no clear documentary evidence for any significant use of the specific project area prior to grading done in the late nineteenth century associated with the creation of Van Cortlandt Park. The following review will elucidate these points and explain the accompanying plans. The sensitivity of the project area is therefore relatively low for any archaeological resources.

Map 1: Prehistoric Occupation.

The use of the project area by prehistoric populations has been confirmed. Both ethnohistoric (Bolton 1934, Tieck 1968) and archaeological (Parker 1920, Skinner 1920, and Bankhoff and Winter 1991) sources have identified that the Parade Grounds were used by a Late Woodland (A.D. 100 to European Contact) Native American group for a planting ground and a village site. Following the reconstruction of land use patterns for typical Late Woodland populations it appears that this site was occupied during the agricultural season. The archaeological investigation of the site was undertaken in 1890 by John B. James. The site was discovered in the process of land modifications involved in the creation of the Parade Grounds, when from two to five feet of soil was removed from the surface of the south end of the field.

Numerous shell heaps/pits were discovered in this grading process. "They were composed principally of oyster shells, in which were mingled the shells of hard and soft clam, mussel, and occasionally of the scallop, together with the bones and teeth of animals, and fragments of potsherds, interspersed with charcoal and ashes . . . The hearths were made to serve a double purpose. They were the fireplace of the family, and after they were no longer of use for this purpose they became the graves for the burial of the dead" (New York Tribune 1890 cited in Skinner 1920:142-43). Thirteen skeletons were excavated. More evidence of this site was found on the present-day west grounds of the Van Cortlandt Mansion by Bankoff and Winter (1991), however, no burials were identified in this excavation.

The approximate location of this site is noted in Figure 4. This is a 1920 map produced by Arthur C. Parker. It locates "fire pits" surrounding the Van Cortlandt Mansion and encroaching the present project area to the east of the Mansion. It should be noted that there is no scale on the Parker map to definitively locate the actual dimensions of the site, nor does Parker, nor any other source, identify a reference for their interpretation of this site. The probability of identifying this site in the planned excavation is low for two reasons. First, because the site was already excavated, it does not seem likely that there will be remains still intact. And second, the fact that the site was discovered in the process of grading also leads to the conclusion that any intact resources had already been seriously disturbed.

We have identified on Map 1 the approximate eastern boundary of this site (following the 1920 Parker map). It appears to overlay the present project area, but for the reasons outlined above the sensitivity of the project area to prehistoric archaeological resources is ranked as relatively low.

#### Map 2: Historic Occupation.

After the European arrival in the New Amsterdam/New York vicinity, the project area was first owned by the Dutch settler Adrien Van der Donck who acquired a large land grant in 1646. His tract extended 16 miles along the Hudson River north from Spuyten Duyvil to



Yonkers and east to the Bronx River (Figure 5 ). In this tract Van der Donck supposedly built a house and intended to "set about to erect a saw mill, lay out a farm, provide a barn and stockade, and bring in colonists" (Tieck 1968:7). That he actually undertook these projects is not known. The project area then passed through the ownership of Elias Doughty, William Betts and George Tippet, and finally in 1732 to Jacobus Van Cortlandt. Though Van Cortlandt apparently acquired Tippet's house, it is not known where this house was.

A three course stone foundation for a 19 by 14 foot house was identified by sewer trench diggers in 1910 about 150 feet south of the present Van Cortlandt Mansion (Tieck 1968:4). It has been suggested that this was either the Van der Donck or the Tippet house, and possibly that the Van Cortlandts stayed there until the mansion was built. Excavations by Bankoff and Winter (1991) have confirmed the location of this site.

Further documentation of land use in the vicinity of the project area comes from the will of Jacobus Van Cortlandt who died in 1739 leaving his second son Frederick "a place called Little or Lower Yonkers . . . together with all houses, mills, dams, and ponds." Again, though these structures certainly existed, their exact location is unknown. Frederick Van Cortlandt, however, built the Van Cortlandt Mansion in 1748/9 only to die as it was completed. The Van Cortlandt family retained ownership of this house and the surrounding property until 1889 when the City of New York acquired it and constructed Van Cortlandt Park. During the period from 1748 to 1889, the Van Cortlandts ran a plantation and mill. An 1882 map (Figure 9) identifies several outbuildings used in this operation including several timber stables/sheds, ice houses, and the mill. The barn/outbuildings nearest to the project area have also been identified in the background of an 1844 portrait of the Van Cortlandt Mansion (Figure 8) and by archaeological excavations by Bankhoff and Winter (1991) who have identified silage pits associated with these barns/outbuildings (see Map 4 for Bankhoff and Winter excavation units).

City of New York Park Department documents give no specific details for the project area, but they describe the demolition of what were presumably the Van Cortlandt outbuildings

and the grading of the Parade Grounds area (Storch Associates 1986:61). Details of this work were recorded in by the City Board of Estimates on August 7, 1889. Work was to include:

- 1st. The removal of foundation walls and filling cellars and areas under and around old buildings.
- 2nd. The filling of the roadway extending northerly from the carriage house.
- 3rd. The plowing and levelling of the old corn field northwesterly of the old mansion and old orchard easterly of the carriage house, about 5 acres.
- 4th. The excavation of a trench and temporary screens for closets and urinals.
- 5th. The laying out of about 200 lineal feet of 30-inch sewer pipe and tile drainage of about three-quarters of an acre adjoining Broadway. (Board of Estimates and Apportionment 1889:177).

This description and that given of the grading discussed above concerning the discovery of the Native American village site are the only details of the work undertaken by the Parks Department that might have affected the project area.

Visual resources offer little more. From an 1893 map (Figure 10) it can be seen that the Van Cortlandt outbuildings, with the exception of the old mill, are gone, and that a road has been built into the Parade Ground following what was a path used during the Van Cortlandt era. By 1912 (Figure 8) this road has been cut short and the comfort station has been built at its northern terminus. Map documentation after a 1950 Sanborn map revision is limited as map making companies no longer included any depictions of Van Cortlandt Park. Yet, a comparison of the project area in the 1950 map (Figure 11) with the present status shows no change.

Considering this varied evidence our Map 2 shows no known historic land-use in the exact project area. Map 2 does indicate the approximate location of the Van Cortlandt barn/outbuildings, the comfort station, and present-day asphalt paths. These features surround the present project area on all but the east side. Our map does not indicate the impact of the grading, but such work may certainly have seriously impacted any intact historic archaeological



resources that have gone undocumented. Following this review, we rank the sensitivity of this area to historic archaeological resources to be low.

#### Maps 3 & 4: Proposed Work.

The final maps in the overlay sequence indicate the location of the proposed tennis courts and archaeological excavations. Because we have determined the sensitivity of the project area to be relatively low for any archaeological resources (see above), our proposal for work is to excavate a series of units along the three lines of impact as described in the scope of work and in conversations with Claire Dudley, the project manager. This work will conclusively determine the presence or absence of any intact archaeological remains which might be impacted by the proposed construction.

The lines of impact are the areas defined by the fences proposed to surround the tennis courts and the net posts for each court (the two outer lines define fence post areas; the center line, the net posts). These construction efforts are proposed to intrude three feet below the surface. Our proposed work will be to systematically excavate a series of three foot deep test units along these lines (actual unit size will be determined as field conditions allow). A minimum of 6-7 test units (i.e. 2-3 units per line) should provide an appropriate sample of the underground resources as well as the nature of the soil stratigraphy. The data obtained from this testing will conclusively indicate the status of the project area's archaeological resources where intrusive construction is planned. The remainder of the site will not be tested as the construction methods do not require below ground excavation and thus will not impact any archaeological resources.

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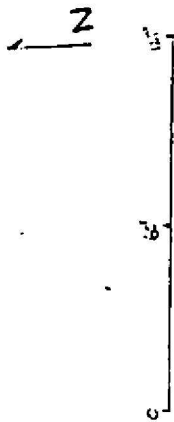
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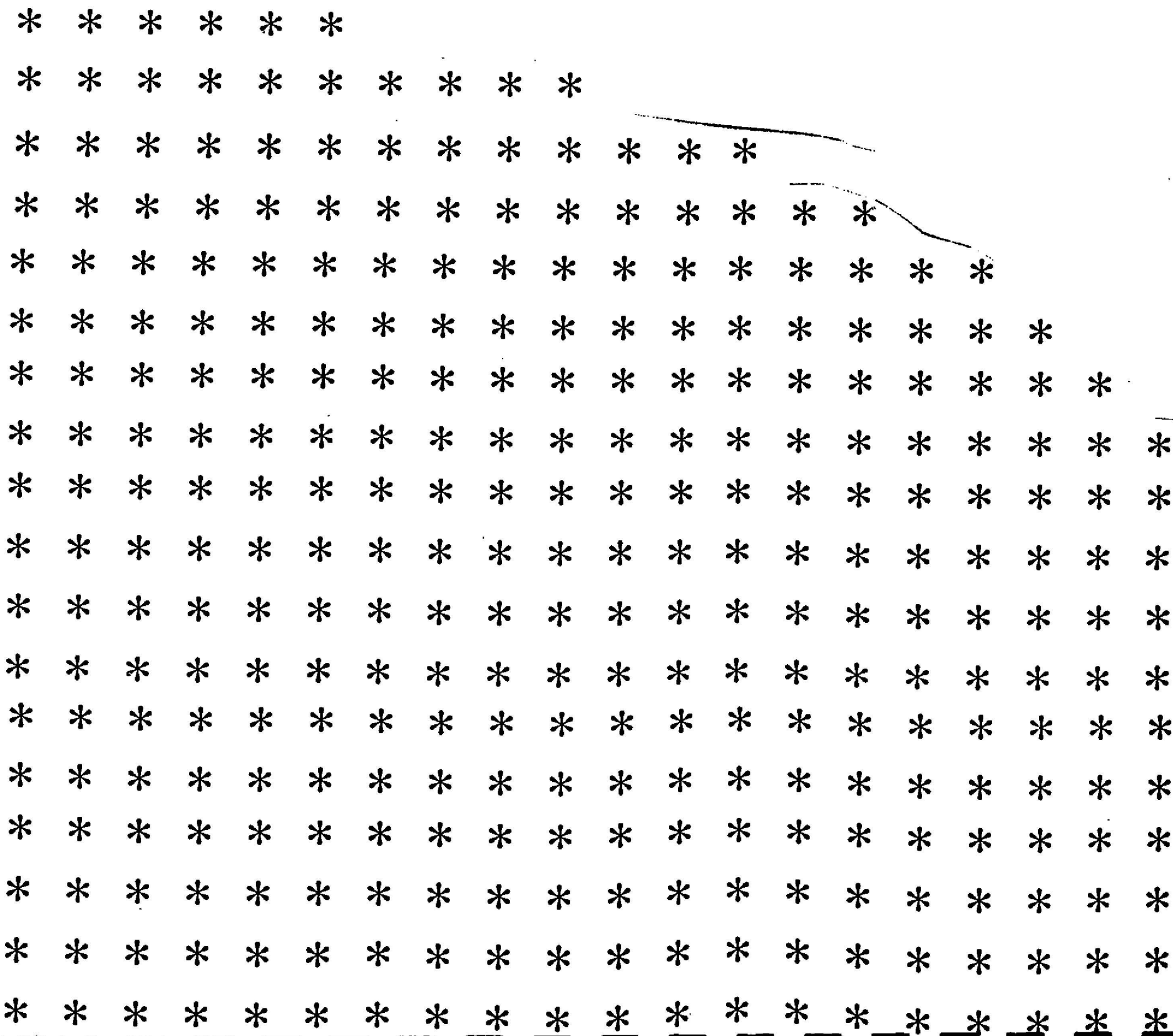
Tieck, William A.

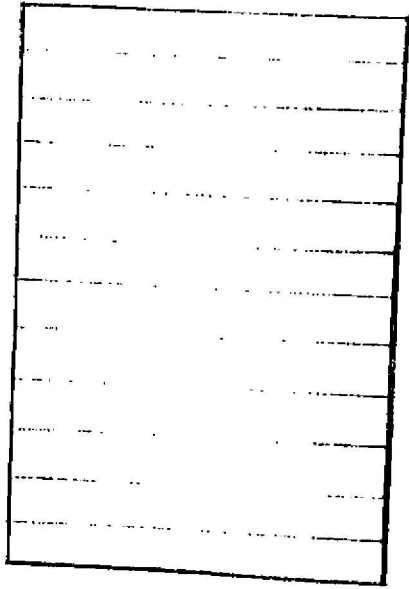
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## Maps

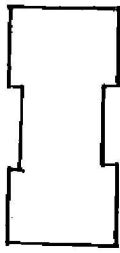


Map 1: PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION  
APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF PREHISTORIC  
ETHNOHISTORIC VILLAGE SITE

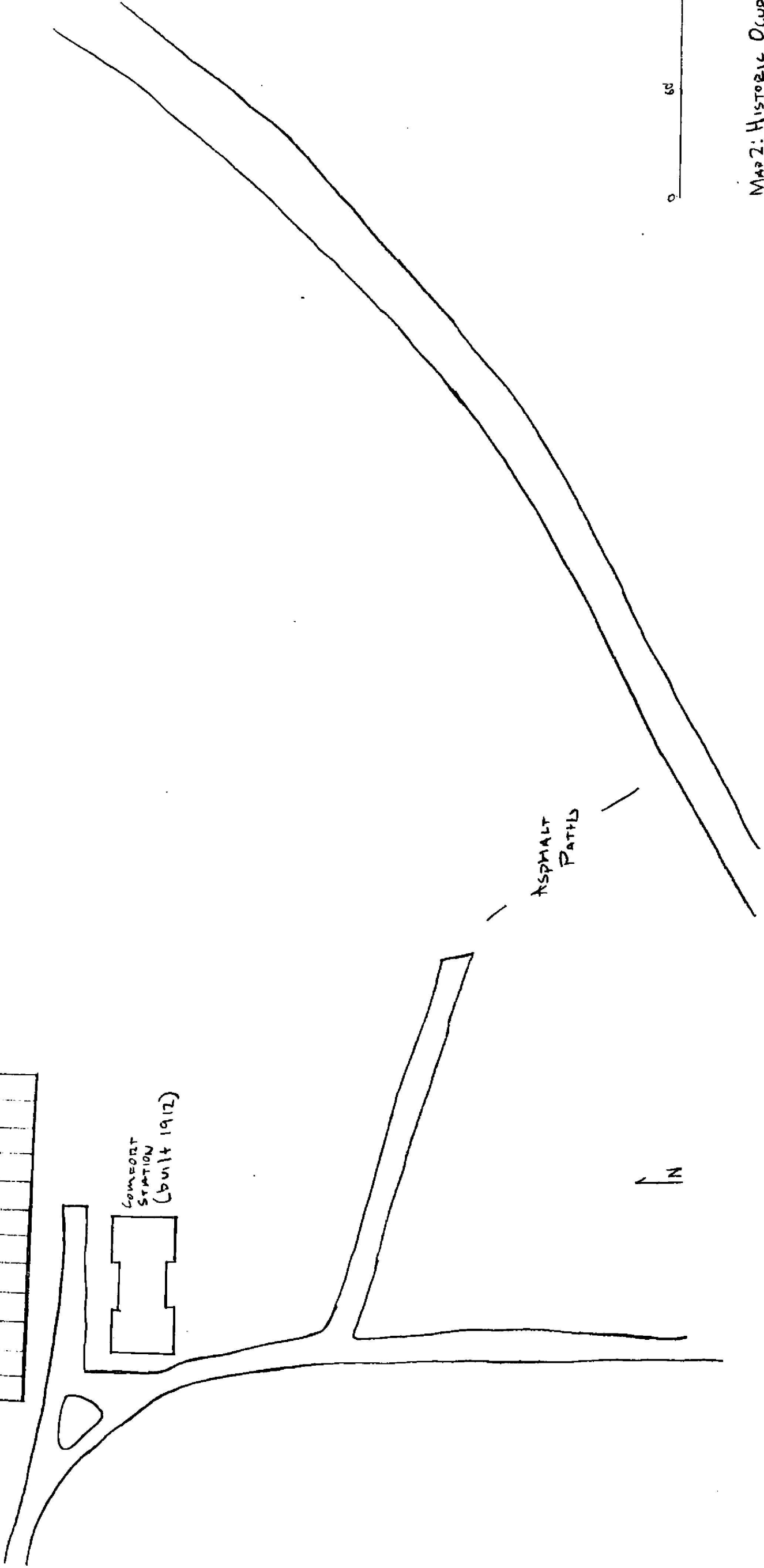




APPROXIMATE  
LOCATION OF  
VAN CORTLANDT  
BARN 1 OUTBUILDINGS  
(pre-1889)



COMFORT  
STATION  
(built 1912)

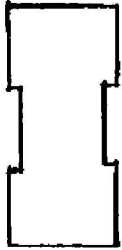
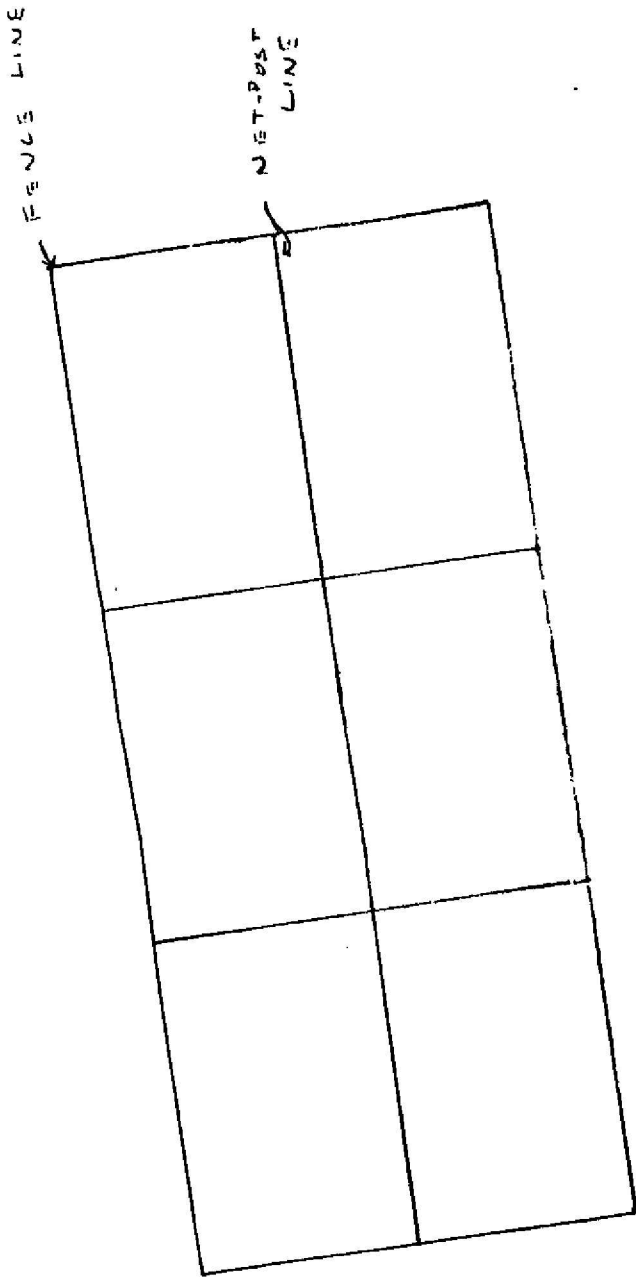


ASPHALT  
PATHS

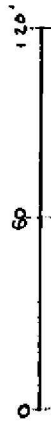
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0 50 100

MAP 2: HISTORIC OCCUPATION  
LOCATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES/  
LAND USES IN PROJECT AREA

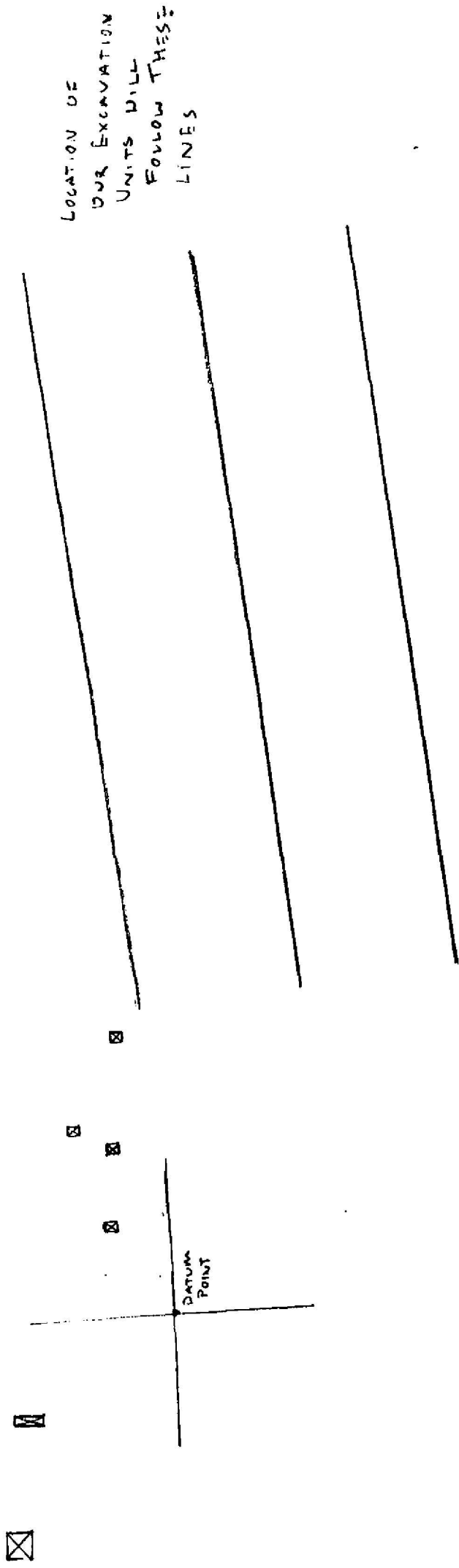


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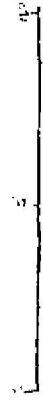


Map 3:

LOCATION OF PROPOSED  
TENNIS COURTS, WITH  
COMPOST STATION AS  
REFERENCE



1 N



☒ - EXCAVATIONS BY  
SANDAGE AND WINTER  
1991-1993 (APPROXIMATE)

MAP 4: LOCATION OF PREVIOUS  
AND PROPOSED EXCAVATIONS

**Appendix B:**  
**Artifact Catalog**



**Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds**  
**Artifact Catalog**  
December 1993

**Catalog 1: Test Cut A, Stratum A, Level 1 (TCA.A1).**

**Ceramics:**

- 14 creamware sherds, largest 2 cm length
- 2 whiteware sherds
- 1 unidentified earthenware sherd
- 3 blue on white porcelain sherds, hand painted

**Glass:**

- 50 brown bottle glass frags, recent casting marks
- 1 light green bottle frag
- 7 blue-green bottle frags
- 7 light olive green bottle frags
- 11 dark olive green bottle frags, including 1 very dark possible home-brewing vessel
- 16 clear bottle frags, 1 bottle neck
- 2 window glass frags

**Pipestem:**

- 1 stem frag (1/8" diameter)
- 1 bowl foot

**Prehistoric:**

- 1 quartz fragment, possible debitage (redeposited)
- 1 chert flake, dark and chunky (redeposited)

**Modern:**

- 1 crown bottle cap, plastic lined
- 5 unidentified copper fragments, 1 possible fastener
- 2 plastic pieces of cigar tip

**Other:**

- 30 nail fragments/metal bits
- 2 nails, 1 wire cut
- 1 oyster shell fragment
- 5 coal chunks

**Catalog 4: Test Cut A, Stratum B, Level 1 (TCA.B1).**

**Glass:**

- 5 light green possible window glass frags
- 1 dark olive green bottle frag

**Other:**

- 5 nail frags

Catalog 2: Test Cut B, Stratum A, Level 1 (TCB.A1).

Ceramic:

- 1 whiteware sherd
- 1 blue on white porcelain sherd, hand painted plate
- 3 red earthenware flower pot sherds, 2 mend

Glass:

- 1 green bottle frag, blown
- 4 clear bottle frags
- 1 window glass frags
- 1 decorative frag, clear cylindrical cup handle(?), 3 mm diameter

Modern:

- 1 pull tab frag (TPQ 1962)

Other:

- 7 nail frags
- 2 nail, unidentified form
- 2 clam shell frags, mend
- 2 coal chunks

Catalog 5: Test Cut B, Stratum A, Level 2 (TCB.A2).

Other:

- 1 oyster shell frag.

**Catalog 3: Test Cut C, Stratum A, Level 1 (TCC.A1).**

**Ceramics:**

- 1    whiteware rim sherd, blue transfer print design
- 2    red earthenware sherds, 1 flower pot, 1 unidentified
- 1    stoneware sherd, red/brown interior, tan exterior

**Glass:**

- 1    brown bottle frag
- 1    green bottle frag
- 4    clear bottle frags, 1 mouth

**Pipestem:**

- 1    pipestem frag (1/8" diameter)

**Other:**

- 2    oyster shell frags
- 1    brick frag

**Catalog 11: Test Cut C, Stratum B, Level 1 (TCC.B1).**

**Glass:**

- 1    clear bottle frag.

Catalog 13: Test Cut D, Stratum A, Level 1 (TCD.A1).

Glass:

- 10 brown bottle frags. 1 base with modern casting marks
- 12 green bottle frags., 1 partial mouth w. mold line over rim
- 20 clear bottle frags
- 2 window glass frags
- 2 clear decorative frags. 1 unidentified, 1 handle piece

Modern:

- 1 pull tab (TPQ 1962)
- 3 yellow plastic rim to toy vessel
- 1 blue plastic toy sherd
- 1 plastic utensil handle
- 2 wooden pencil frags w/ lead, mend.

Catalog 20: Test Cut D, Stratum B, Level 1 (TCD.B1).

Ceramic:

- 2 whiteware sherds
- 1 porcelain sherd
- 2 large stoneware sherds, dk brown interior, gray exterior, from large vessel (jug?), mend

Glass:

- 6 window glass frags

Prehistoric:

- 2 chunks quartz, possible cores (redeposited)
- 1 chert flake (redeposited)

Other:

- 2 nail, unidentified form
- 2 mica pieces
- 1 coal frag.

Catalog 14: Test Cut E, Stratum A, Level 1 (TCE.A1).

Ceramic:

- 1 porcelain sherd, blue on white

Glass:

- 2 brown bottle frags
- 1 bright green bottle frag
- 7 bright green bottle frags
- 4 dark olive green bottle frags
- 11 clear bottle frags

Modern:

- 1 metal washer
- 1 crown bottle cap, plastic lined
- 1 white plastic frag
- 1 green plastic frag

Catalog 25: Test Cut F, Stratum A, Level 1 (TCF.A1).

Ceramic:

- 4 porcelain sherds , cream colored

Glass:

- 1 bright green bottle frag
- 5 olive green frags.
- 3 light blue bottle frags, 1 is shaped
- 7 pieces clear bottle w/ lettering "IN O . . . H"
- 9 clear bottle frags.
- 5 sherds window glass

Modern:

- 2 crown bottle frags, 1 whole, 1 half
- 1 plastic bottle cap liner
- 5 U.S. Pennies (dates: 1982, 1981, 1969, 1967, 1964, 1951)
- 1 U.S. Nickel (date: 1943)
- 5 pull tabs
- 1 tinfoil frag.
- 1 Styrofoam frag.
- 4 thin bright green plastic frags
- 2 milk colored, medium weight plastic frags
- 2 lightweight clear plastic
- 1 heavyweight clear plastic

Other:

- 6 nails, 3 with round heads
- 3 metal scraps
- 4 brick frags
- 1 shell frag

Appendix C:  
Field Stratigraphic Profiles

Van Cortlandt Park November 1993  
North Wall Elevations Test Cuts A - F\*

Test Cut A: .41 ft BD = 12.45 cm BD

Stratum	NW	NE	Below Surface
surface	12.45	12.95	0.00
A1	33.45	34.45	21.00
B1	52.45	51.95	40.00
B2	71.95	71.95	59.50
C1	93.45	93.95	81.00
C2	111.45	110.45	99.00

Test Cut D: 1.29 ft BD = 39.16 cm BD

Stratum	NW	NE	Below Surface
surface	39.16	40.16	0.00
A1	49.16	51.46	10.00
B1	67.06	67.86	27.90
C1	87.16	87.66	48.00
C2	106.16	107.16	67.00
C3	127.16	128.16	88.00

Test Cut B: 1.96 ft BD = 59.50 cm BD

Stratum	NW	NE	Below Surface
surface	59.50	59.50	0.00
A1	79.50	79.50	20.00
A2	81.50	81.50	22.00
B1	98.50	103.50	39.00
B2	123.00	123.00	63.50
C1	N/A	118.50	59.00
B3	136.50	140.50	77.00
D1	159.50	159.50	100.00

Test Cut E: 1.65 ft BD = 50.1 cm BD

Stratum	NW	NE	Below Surface
surface	50.10	50.10	0.00
A1	59.10	57.60	9.00
B1	72.60	74.10	22.50
C1	95.10	95.10	45.00
C2	115.10	115.10	65.00
C3	135.10	134.10	85.00

Test Cut C: 1.40 ft BD = 42.50 cm BD

Stratum	NW	NE	Below Surface
surface	42.50	42.50	0.00
A1	62.50	61.50	20.00
A2	64.50	63.50	22.00
B1	52.50	83.50	10.00
B2	102.50	101.50	60.00
C1	122.00	123.50	79.50
D1	132.50	131.50	90.00

Test Cut F: 1.00 ft BD = 30.36 cm BD

Stratum	NW	NE	Below Surface
surface	30.36	34.36	0.00
A1	57.36	58.36	27.00
B1	76.36	81.36	46.00
B2	102.36	107.36	72.00
C1	128.36	131.36	98.00

\* Note: Elevations were taken using a transit  
and measured in feet and then transferred to metric here.  
BD = Below Datum Point



Van Cortlandt Park November 1993  
East Wall Elevations for Test Cuts A - F\*

Test Cut A: .41 ft BD = 12.45 cm BD

Stratum	NE	SE	Below Surface
surface	12.95		0.50
A1	34.45	35.45	22.00
B1	57.95	57.95	45.50
B2	71.95	71.95	59.50
C1	93.95	94.95	81.50
C2	110.45	111.45	98.00

Test Cut D: 1.29 ft BD = 39.16 cm BD

Stratum	NE	SE	Below Surface
surface	40.16		1.00
A1	50.46	50.66	11.30
B1	68.66	67.36	29.50
C1	86.66	87.16	47.50
C2	106.16	104.16	67.00
C3	127.16	128.16	88.00

Test Cut B: 1.96 ft BD = 59.50 cm BD

Stratum	NE	SE	Below Surface
surface	59.50		0.00
A1	79.50	79.50	20.00
A2	81.00	80.50	21.50
B1	103.50	103.50	44.00
B2	123.00	122.50	63.50
C1	118.50	N/A	59.00
B3	140.50	139.50	81.00
D1	159.50	159.50	100.00

Test Cut E: 1.65 ft BD = 50.1 cm BD

Stratum	NE	SE	Below Surface
surface	50.10		0.00
A1	57.60	57.10	7.50
B1	74.10	74.10	24.00
C1	95.10	96.10	45.00
C2	115.10	115.10	65.00
C3	134.10	135.10	84.00

Test Cut C: 1.40 ft BD = 42.50 cm BD

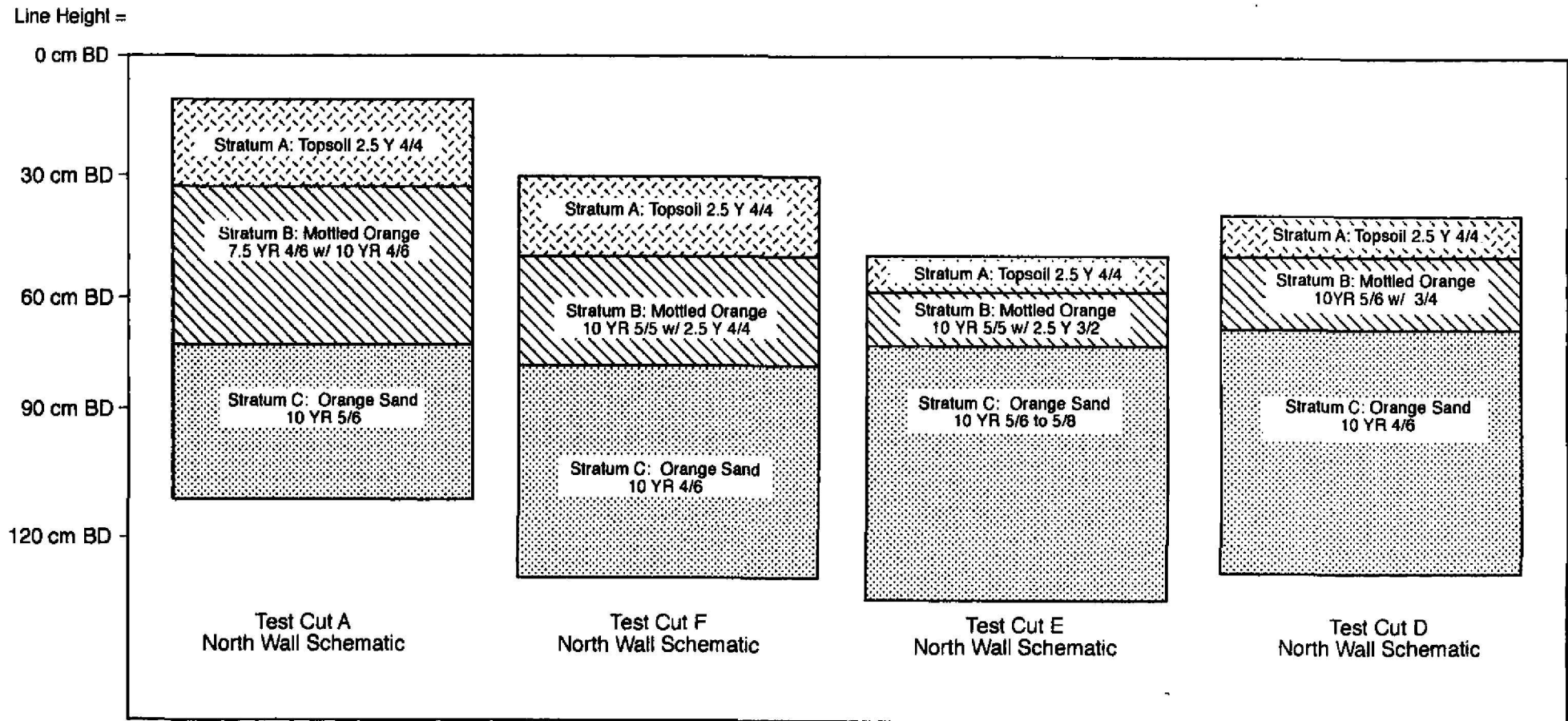
Stratum	NE	SE	Below Surface
surface	42.50		0.00
A1	61.50	62.50	19.00
A2	63.50	62.50	21.00
B1	83.50	83.00	41.00
B2	101.50	102.00	59.00
C1	123.50	122.00	81.00
D1	132.00	132.00	89.50

Test Cut F: 1.00 ft BD = 30.36 cm BD

Stratum	NE	SE	Below Surface
surface	34.36		4.00
A1	54.36	54.36	24.00
B1	77.36	78.36	47.00
B2	100.36	103.36	70.00
C1	125.36	127.36	95.00

\* Note: Elevations were taken using a transit  
and measured in feet and then transferred to metric here.  
BD = Below Datum Point

## North Wall Schematics for Van Cortlandt Park Test Units



Scale: 1cm = 15cm

Note: Test Units B & C are not represented in this figure because of *in situ* natural anomalies

TCA

TCA

TO THE LINE

1 inch = 20 cm

line 8.5 cm above vertical datum

E

stratum A

topsoil

2.5 Y 4/4

stratum B

mottled orange

7.5 YR 4/6

10 YR 4/6

stratum C

orange sand

10 YR 5/6

unexcavated



TCA

TCA

1" = 20 cm

line 5.5 cm above vertical datum

S

1/2

1/2

1/2

stratum A

topsoil

2.5 Y 4/4

stratum B

mottled orange

7.5 YR 4/6

10 YR 4/6

stratum C

orange sand

10 YR 5/6

unexcavated

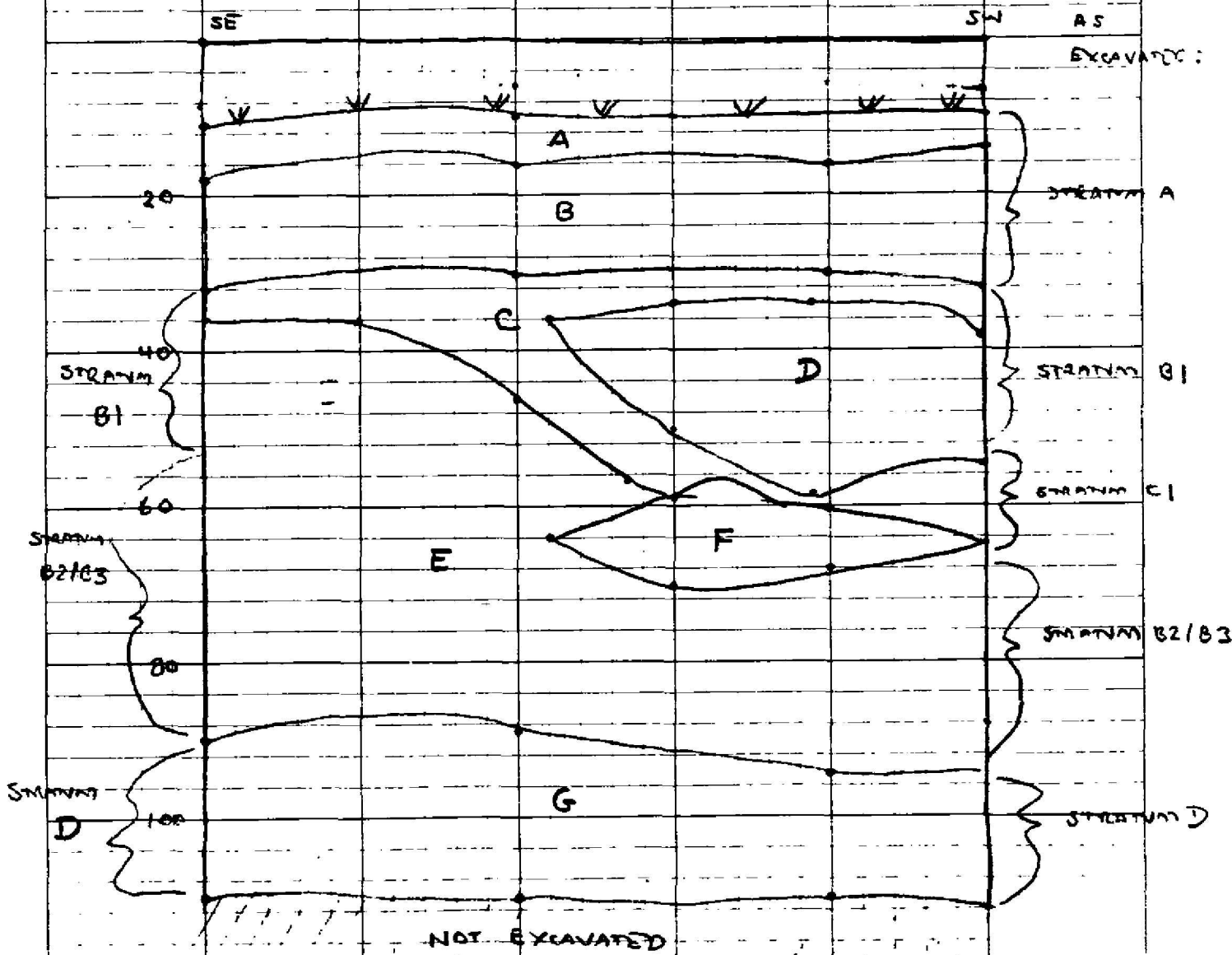


TCA

East Wall  
 TCA  
 11/7/93  
 N

7.60

VAN CORTLANDT PARK  
TEST CUT B  
SOUTH WALL  
100 CMBS  
7 NOVEMBER 1993  
S. YUM / K. JORDAN

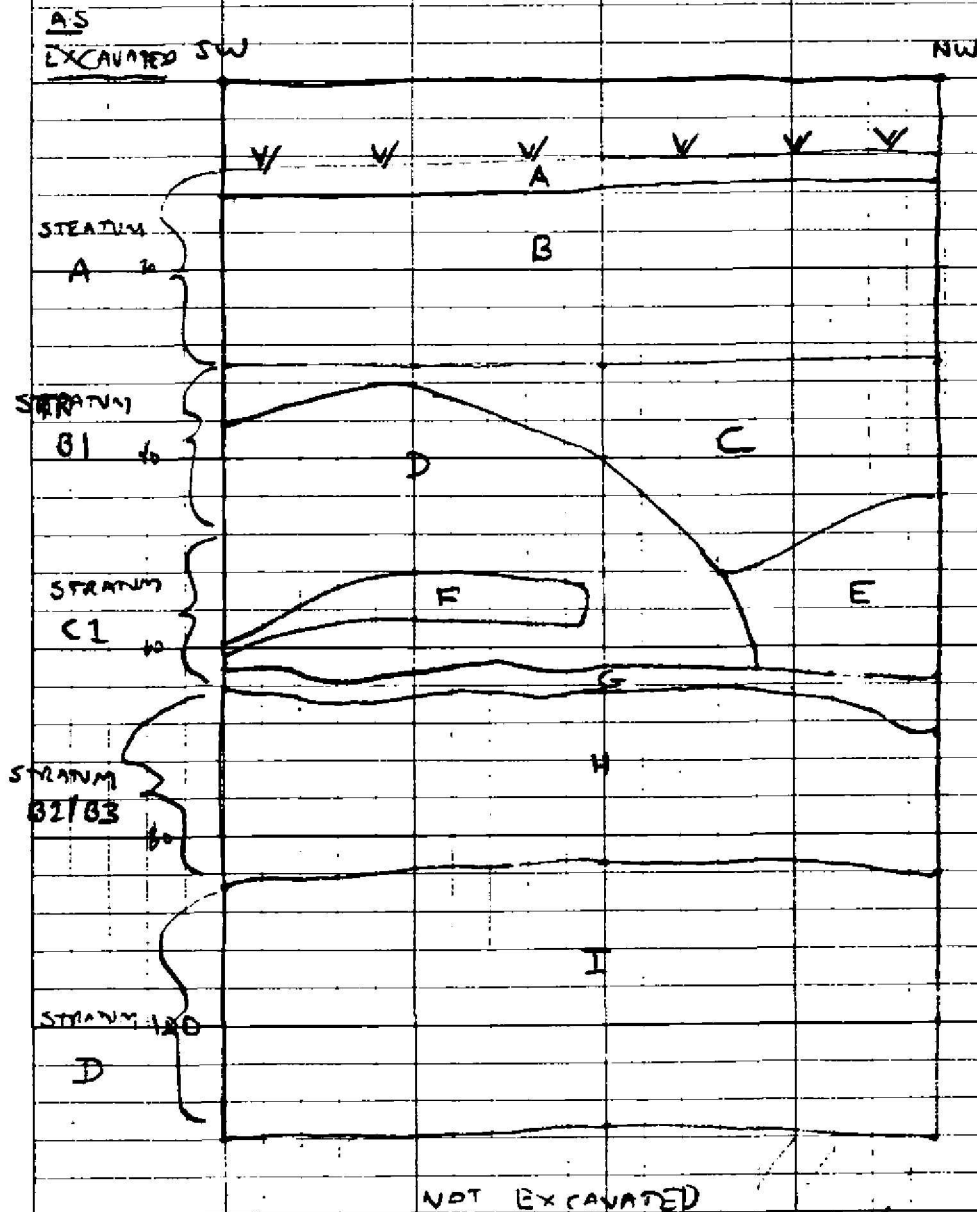


KEY:

- A = 10YR 3/2 VERY DARK GRAYISH BROWN SILT LOAM
- B = 10YR 4/4 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN SANDY SILT LOAM
- C = 10YR 4/6 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN SILTY SAND
- D = 10YR 4/4 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN FINE SANDY SILT
- E = 10YR 5/3 YELLOWISH BROWN MEDIUM SAND
- F = 10YR 4/4 DARK BROWN SANDY CLAY LOAM
- G = 10YR 5/8 YELLOWISH BROWN MEDIUM SAND w/ 60% GRAVEL

TCLIS

VAN CORTLANDT PARK  
EXCAVATION UNIT B  
WEST WALL  
100 CMBS  
7 NOVEMBER 1993  
S. YUM / K. JORDAN



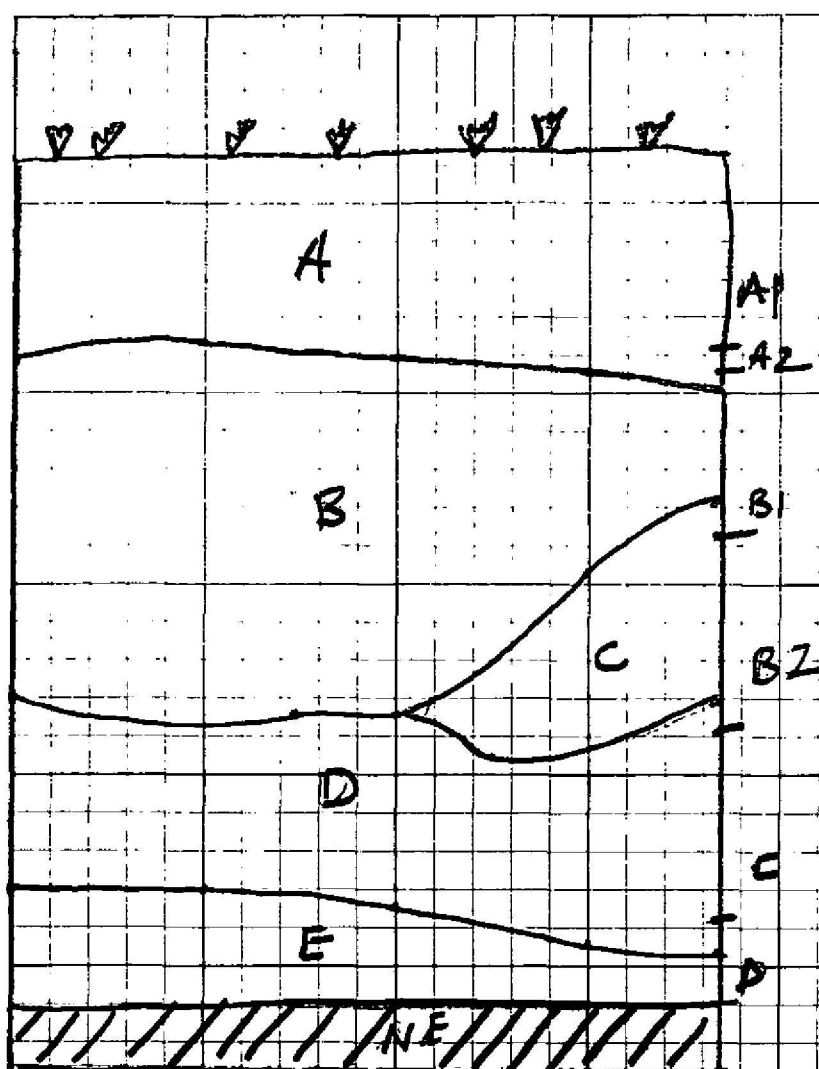
KEY

- A = 10YR 3/2 VERY DARK GRAYISH BROWN SILT LOAM
- B = 10YR 4/4 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN SANDY SILT LOAM
- C = 10YR 4/6 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN SILT SAND
- D = 10YR 4/4 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN FINE SANDY SILT
- E = 7.5YR 4/6 STRONG BROWN CHARGE SANDY CLAY LOAM
- F = 10YR 3/6 STRONG BROWN SILTY SAND (FINE)
- G = 10YR 4/4 DARK BROWN SANDY CLAY LOAM
- H = 10YR 3/6 YELLOWISH BROWN MEDIUM SAND
- I = 10YR 5/6 YELLOWISH BROWN MEDIUM SAND w/ 60% GRAVEL

SCALE

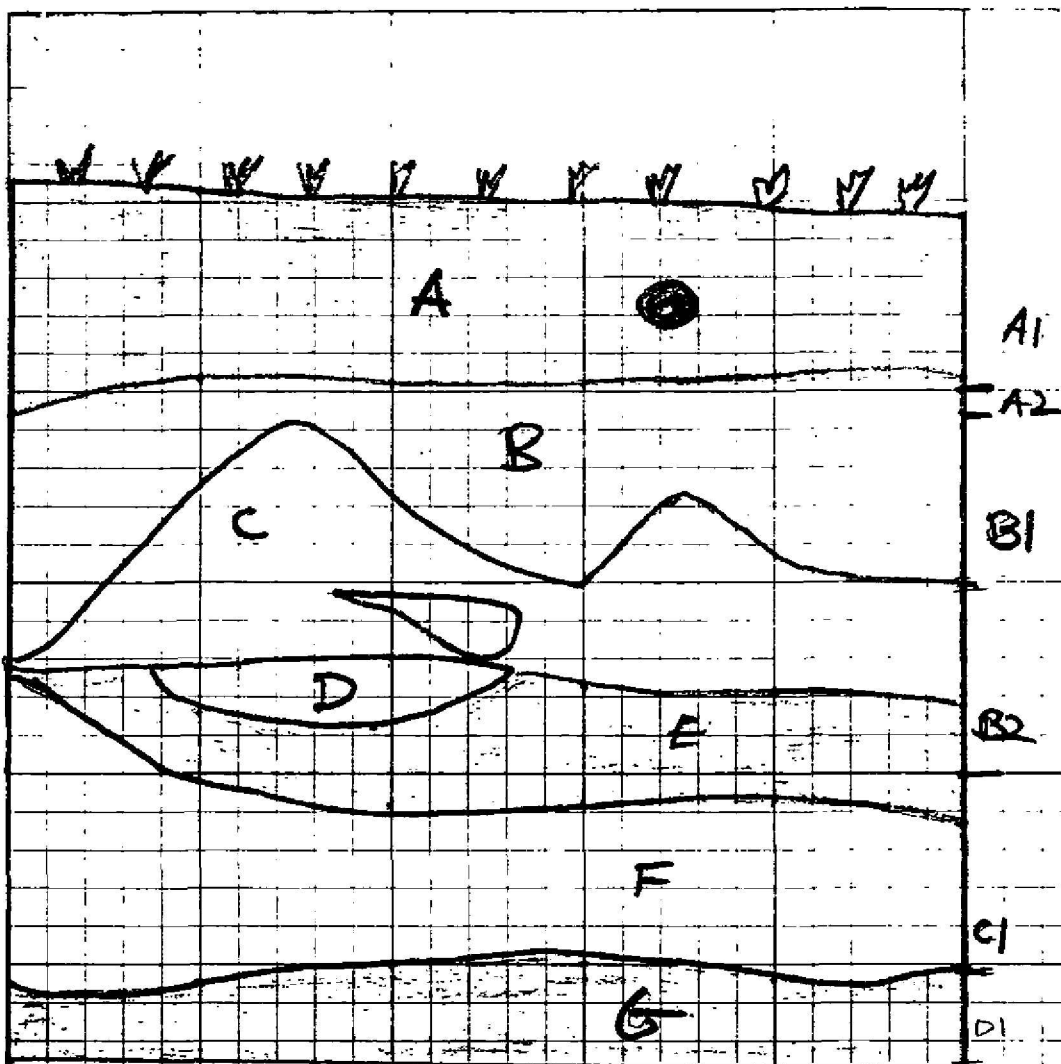


1 INCH = 20 CM



Van Cortlandt Test Cut C 0-90cm  
 11/7/13 LS, CF North Wall  
 1 in = 20 cm

- A = 10YR 3/4 topsoil brown
- B = 10YR 4/6 silty sand orange
- C = 10YR 5/6 sand with small gravel gray
- D = 10YR 6/6 sand, no pebbles v. gray
- E = 10YR 6/6 sand + gravel gray



Van Cortlandt  
 Soil Profile Test Cut C 0-90 cm East Wall  
 1/7/93 L.S., C.F. lin = 20cm

A = 10YR 3/4 topsoil brown  
 B = 10YR 4/6 silty sand, orange  
 C = 10YR 5/6 sand with small gravel gray  
 D = 10YR 6/8 sand, no pebbles gray  
 E = 10YR 6/6 clay yellow  
 F = 10YR 6/6 sand, no pebbles gray  
 G = 10YR 6/6 sand, gravel gray



Van Cortlandt

TCD Profile North Wall 11/8/93  
line 6.5 cm above vertical datum

West

stratum A-top  
3.5 YR 5/6  
olive brown

stratum B-mottled  
10 YR 5/6  
yellowish brown

10 YR 3/4  
dark yellowish brown

stratum C-coarse sand

10 YR 5/6  
dark

unexcavated

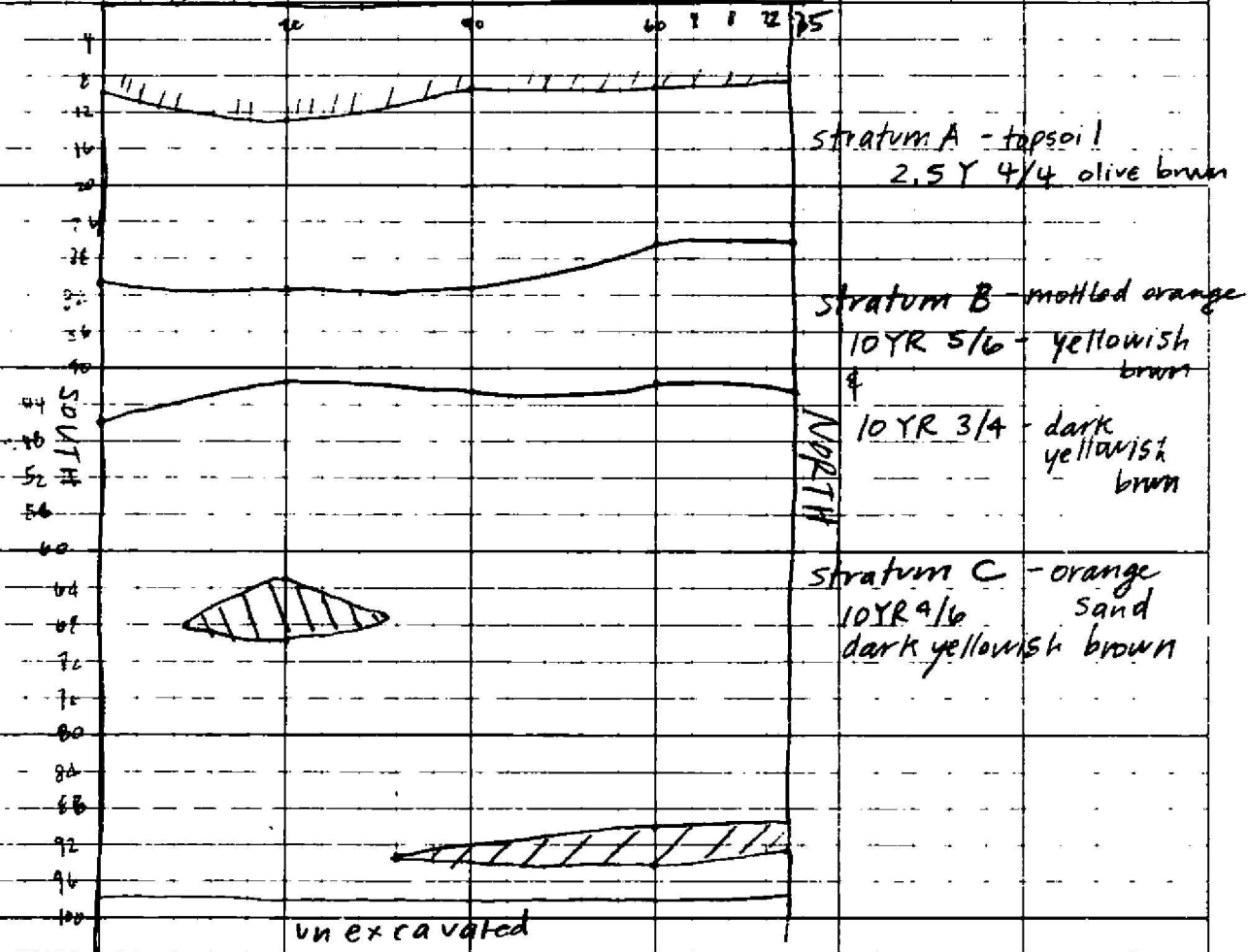
unexcavated


one square = 4 cm


10 YR 3/6 dark yellowish brown

10 YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown

Van Cortlandt TC D West wall  
line 9cm above vertical datum



 : 10YR 3/6

 : 10YR 3/6

TCE

5 squares  
to the inch

North Wall TCE 11/7/93 W

line 6.5 cm above vertical datum E

slr slr

stratum A  
topsoil  
stratum B  
mottled orange

stratum C  
orange sand

10 YR 5/6

10 YR 5/8

unexcavated  
↓

11/7/93  
TCE  
Last Wall

N

line 6.0 cm above vertical datum

slr

slr

stratum A  
topsoil

2.5 Y 4/4

stratum B  
mottled orange

2.5 Y 3/2

Stratum C

orange sand

10 YR 5/6

10 YR 5/8

TCE

~~TCF~~ TCF

Van Cortlandt 11/19/93  
TCF North No.

line 13cm Above Vertebral Datum

WEST

EAST

Stratum A - Topsoil  
2.5Y 4/4  
Olive Brown

Stratum B - Mixed soil

10YR 5/2 1/2  
5.5Y 4/4  
Olive Brown

Stratum C - Sandy Brown

10YR 4/6  
Dark Yellowish Brown

↓ Unexcavated ↓

One square = 4cm

TCLF

Van Corning  
TCLF West Wall

line 16cm Above Vertical Datum

500  
ft

11  
3  
2  
1  
0

Topsoil  
2.5 ft  
2.5 ft

Subsoil  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft

Subsoil  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft

Subsoil  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft  
1.5 ft

Unexcavated  
Les Sages 4cm

Appendix D:  
Van Cortlandt Mansion  
Landmark Designation Reports

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
July 22, 1975, Number 4  
LP-0890

VAN CORTLANDT MANSION, Basement Interior consisting of the Kitchen; First Floor Interior consisting of the Front and Back Halls, East Parlor, West Parlor, and Dining Room; Second Floor Interior consisting of the Hallway, the Washington Bedroom, and the Munro Bedroom; and the Stairway from the First Floor up to the Third Floor, Broadway and West 242nd Street, Van Cortlandt Park, Borough of the Bronx.

Landmark Site: Tax Map Block 5000, Lot 150 in part consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On May 27, 1975, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Van Cortlandt Mansion, Basement Interior consisting of the Kitchen; First Floor Interior consisting of the Front and Back Halls, East Parlor, West Parlor, and Dining Room; Second Floor Interior consisting of the Hallway, the Washington Bedroom, and the Munro Bedroom; and the Stairway from the First Floor up to the Third Floor, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York which administers the Mansion has given its approval of the designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Van Cortlandt mansion, designated a New York City Landmark in 1966, is one of the finest Georgian country seats remaining in New York. Built in 1748-49 by Frederick Van Cortlandt, it remained in the Van Cortlandt family until 1889 when it was sold to the City and temporarily used as a police barracks. The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York has maintained the house as a museum since 1897. Unlike other Georgian houses in the City whose interiors were updated in the 19th century, the Van Cortlandt Mansion retains most of its handsome original interior architectural features.

The land on which the Mansion stands has important historical associations, not only with the Van Cortlandt family, but also with some of the most important figures in colonial New York. Its first European-born owner was Adriaen van der Donck (1620-c.1655). Born in Leyden, Holland, he was appointed schout, or sheriff, of the Van Rensselaer patroonship in 1641. After the death of his patron Kiliaen van Rensselaer, he moved to New Amsterdam where he became a persistent critic of Governor Willem Kieft's Indian policies. A diplomatic blunder on Kieft's part in dealing with the Indians had led to a series of massacres between the Dutch and the Indians. Van der Donck, an advocate of detente, negotiated an important peace treaty with the Indians in 1645, and was rewarded by being allowed to set up a patroonship of his own in Westchester. It was called "Colen Donk," but was more commonly known as "de Jonkheers landt," hence the name Yonkers today. It extended as far south as Spuyten Duyvil, and it included all the land presently in Van Cortlandt Park. The remains of a Dutch house, believed to be the van der Donck farmhouse, were found in 1910.



After Kieft's departure in 1647, van der Donck continued to be critical of the way New Netherlands was administered. In 1649 he was made a member of the Board of Nine Men, and in this capacity he wrote the Remonstrance of New Netherlands, setting forth the people's grievances against Governor Stuyvesant. The next year he sailed to Holland to present it to the States-General, and while there he obtained a law degree at the University of Leyden. Thus, upon his return to America in 1653 he became the first attorney in New Netherlands. At this time he was already involved in writing his famous Description of New Netherlands, and so the directors of the West Indies Company in Amsterdam wrote to Stuyvesant ordering him to make the Company's records available to van der Donck, but Stuyvesant refused. Van der Donck died shortly before the publication of his book in 1655.

After his death, his widow married Hugh O'Neal of Maryland, and when the English took over in 1664 they confirmed his ownership of the land. Between 1672 and 1693 Fredericks Philipse (1626-1702), then the richest man in New York, acquired all of O'Neal's property, and this, along with adjoining Indian lands, were consolidated by a royal patent in 1693 to form Philipsburg Manor.

Philipse was a shipping merchant, dealing with the Netherlands, the East and West Indies, and Madagascar; he also manufactured wampum. He held many offices under both the Dutch and the English administrations. At the time of Leisler's Rebellion in 1689-91, he was co-administrator of the City, but yielding to public pressure he stepped aside. Later he voted for Leisler's execution. In 1693 he built a bridge at Spuyten Duyvil, the first to link Manhattan with the mainland. He continued to serve on the Council until 1698, when he resigned after being accused of dealing with pirates.

In 1692, Philipse's adopted daughter Eva, married Jacobus Van Cortlandt, and the next year Philipse married Van Cortlandt's sister Catherine. They were children of Oloff Stevensen Van Cortlandt (1600-1684), a brewer and the fourth richest man in New York. Like Philipse, Oloff Van Cortlandt held public office under the Dutch administration. He was orphan-master, "administrator of the monies," and a member of the Board of Burgomasters. In that capacity he presided over the court for a three month period in 1656. Later that year he and several other brewers were charged by the tax collector with refusing to have his cellar inspected for evidence of smuggling. Since Van Cortlandt was a member of the court, it was some time before the case was settled, but eventually he was convicted and fined. Thereafter, his position in New Amsterdam was ambiguous. On the one hand, he was denounced from the pulpit by Everadus Bogardus, the minister, but on the other hand he continued to hold high office in the colony, including treasurer. He negotiated with the Indians at Esopus, and with the British at Hartford in 1663 over the boundary with Connecticut; he also helped to draw up the articles of surrender by the Dutch to the British in 1664 and later served under the British as a member of the Council and as Deputy Mayor. Oloff's eldest son, Stephenus, became the first Lord of the Manor of Cortlandt in 1697, and built his manor house at Croton-on-Hudson.

When Jacobus Van Cortlandt married Eva Philipse, her father transferred to them a sizeable parcel of land, the "lower Yonkers" plantation. Here he built a farmhouse on the banks of Tippet's Brook. He dammed up the brook, creating the mile-long Van Cortlandt Lake, and set up a grist and sawmill, the first industry in the area. He continued, however, to maintain a house in New York, where he was active in civic affairs. He built a new wharf along Dock (now Pearl) Street, served on various commissions and on the Council, and was twice Mayor of the City of New York, in 1710 and again in 1719.

It was his son, Frederick, who built the Van Cortlandt Mansion in 1748-49. He died in 1749, leaving three sons, the most notable of whom was Augustus Van Cortlandt, who was Clerk during the Revolution, and a Tory sympathizer. Augustus inherited the mansion. In order to secure the safety of the City records, he had them moved to the family vault underneath Vault Hill, north of the house. At the war's end he turned them over to the new Clerk and, aside from being relieved of his position, no other action was taken against him.

During the Revolution, the house was on "neutral ground," although various skirmishes were fought in the area. Lord Howe, the British commander in New York, used it as his headquarters at one point. General Washington dined there in 1776 on his way to the Battle of White Plains. In 1781 he returned, along with Rochambeau, the French commander, to plan an attack on New York. Bad weather foiled them, however, and they decided to engage the British at Yorkville in Virginia instead, the battle that climaxed the war. False signal fires were kept burning at Vault Hill to make the British think that the Continental army was still there. In 1783--the war over--Washington again stopped at Van Cortlandt Mansion while waiting for the British to evacuate New York.

In the 19th century, the house was occupied continuously by the Van Cortlandt family. Because of a lack of male heirs, several men married to Van Cortlandt women changed their names to Van Cortlandt when their fathers-in-law died, to keep the family name alive.

The City acquired the park land from the family in 1889. For a few years, a herd of bison was maintained in the park, but they found the marshy soil unhealthy. In order to guard them, the New York State Police were quartered in the house, which they used as a barracks until 1896, when it was leased to the Colonial Dames for restoration and operation as a house museum.

The Van Cortlandt Mansion, is reputedly modeled after the Philipse Manor House in Yonkers, though on a smaller scale. Unlike the more typical Georgian design, with two rooms on either side of a central hall, the plan of the Van Cortlandt House, like the Philipse Manor, is L-shaped, which may reflect the influence of Dutch Colonial houses. The main entrance on the south opens onto a central hall and stairway with a parlor on either side. The wing or "ell" extends to the rear on the eastern portion of the house and contains a back parlor, or dining room, and secondary stair hall. The second floor corresponds to that of the first floor, with central hall, secondary hall, and chambers over the parlors. The kitchen, as was customary, is in the basement of the rear wing.

The interior combines the formal elegance and symmetry of the Georgian style with practical features incorporated to best withstand the climate. Each room has a fireplace on the north wall and windows on the south, west, or east walls to take advantage of prevailing breezes. The twelve-over-twelve sash windows, three or four in each room, are uniform throughout the house and provide ample light and ventilation. All the rooms have gracious proportions and the parlor floor ceilings are a generous 10' 6" high. The basement provided a cool space to store food and supplies near the kitchen.

Much of the original architectural detail has fortunately been preserved and, where necessary, restored. A major restoration was undertaken in 1913 under the direction of the distinguished architectural historian and restoration architect, Norman Isham, and more recently in 1960. This latest restoration has uncovered the original floor boards and restored walls to what is believed to be their original colors. The house is furnished with beautiful examples of 18th century English and American furniture, some of which belonged to the Van Cortlandts.

The entrance leads directly into the Front Hall. Its most prominent feature is the U-shaped staircase, which begins its rise against the west wall where it is gently curved outward toward the base. A conservative feature of the staircase is the closed string of the treads more typical of an earlier period. The handrailing is of curly maple with handsome turned balusters, a round newel post at the base, and square newel posts with applied spindles at the landings. A window is set into a niche at the first landing. A paneled wainscot runs around the hall and up the west wall of the staircase, following the incline of the stairs. The doorways leading from the stairhall into both parlors are enframed with "eared" moldings.

The West Parlor, the less formal of the two parlors, was the room used by George Washington as his headquarters in 1783. The north wall is completely paneled and contains the fireplace and flanking cupboards, an arrangement common in houses of this period. Blue and white tiles depicting Biblical scenes surround the fireplace opening, adding a rather Dutch quality to the room. Between the fireplace and each cupboard is a slender fluted pilaster. The round-arched cupboards have paneled double doors. They open to reveal a curved shell motif set into the arch above the shelves, now used to display porcelain. The paneled wall is painted Prussian blue, a popular color in pre-Revolutionary New York houses, and the cupboard interior red. In contrast, the other three walls are white plaster, and decorated only with blue baseboard, chair rail, and ceiling molding. The three windows, which retain the original twelve-over-twelve sash, are set above low paneled window seats and are protected by interior double folding shutters.

The East Parlor, the most formal room in the house, is of exceptionally fine Georgian design. All four walls are completely paneled and are crowned by an ornamental cornice at the ceiling. The magnificent fireplace with richly carved mantel and overmantle, thought to have been added sometime after the house was built, enhances the formal elegance of the room. The fireplace opening is framed with a facing of white marble and outlined with a carved "eared" molding. The marble hearth which extends into the room is edged by a wood molding. Below the shelf of the mantelpiece is a carved frieze having as its central feature a bird perched among foliate branches. The overmantle, the only one in the house, has an "eared" molding and carved foliate frieze, echoing the forms of the mantelpiece. It is surmounted by a "broken" Georgian style pediment with

central flower-filled urn. The paneling in the room was restored in 1913, following faint outlines which remained on the walls. In 1960 the original light straw color was discovered under six layers of paint and restored. This parlor was probably originally used for serving tea and playing cards, popular diversions of the leisure class in the mid-18th century America.

The Back Hall, entered both from the Main Hall and the exterior, provides access to the Dining Room and a servants' entrance to both the Kitchen and the East Parlor. The staircase in the Back Hall reflects the simplicity of Dutch Colonial antecedents.

The Dining Room, in the "ell" at the rear of the house, has a later 18th century character, both in its architectural detail and in its function. Although dining rooms were known before the Revolution in this country, they were not common. The differentiation of rooms according to function emerged only slowly; in the earlier period people ate in any room. Washington, however, is reported to have dined in this room with Rochambeau, commander of the French army in America during the Revolution. The chimney breast projects from the center of the north wall. The fireplace mantelpiece is an exquisite example of Adamesque design, with oval sunburst, quarter fans, and slender fluted pilasters. The walls have a paneled wainscot painted dark buff, with lighter plain plaster walls above. The prominent ceiling molding appears to be a 19th century addition.

In contrast to the elegance and sophistication of the parlors, the basement Kitchen has a more primitive quality. The room, although quite large, is rather cell-like; the ceiling is relatively low with exposed beams, the plaster-on-stone walls are thick, and the two windows are small and high. A great fireplace with wide, low-arched opening and hearth dominates the Kitchen. Built into the wall alongside the fireplace is a brick oven for baking bread.

On the second floor, the Hallway has wainscot and ceiling molding. A window with twelve-over-twelve sash, interior shutters, and window seat, is on the south wall. In 18th century Georgian mansions, halls were not merely for circulation, but often were comfortable, well-ventilated family areas, as this hall undoubtedly was. The staircase railing makes a gentle curve at hallway level and continues up to the third floor.

The architectural features of both bedrooms are similar. The walls are white and decorated only with Prussian blue baseboard, window cornices, and doorway moldings. The fireplaces have paneling above them, but do not have mantel shelves. White tiles surround the fireplace opening. As in the rest of the house, the windows have twelve-over-twelve sash and interior shutters.

The west chamber is known as the Washington Bedroom. Its north wall is completely paneled, with closets flanking the fireplace, similar to the one in the west parlor beneath it. Unlike the cupboards there, however, these closets are probably a later addition. Built-in-closets would be a most unusual feature of an 18th century chamber.

In sum, the interior of the Van Cortlandt Mansion reflects the high standard of taste, comfort and convenience enjoyed by wealthy families in the mid-18th century.

#### FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Van Cortlandt Mansion, Basement Interior consisting of the Kitchen; First Floor Interior consisting of the Front and Back Halls, East Parlor, West Parlor, and Dining Room; Second Floor Interior consisting of the Hallway, the Washington Bedroom, and the Munro Bedroom; and the Stairway from the First Floor up to the Third Floor, has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Van Cortlandt Mansion, a New York City Landmark, is one of the few remaining pre-Revolutionary country seats in the City, that the Interiors combine the formal elegance of the Georgian style, best seen in the East Parlor, with features

associated with the older, more conservative, Dutch Colonial tradition, that the L-shaped plan of the house is an equally interesting illustration of this amalgam, that the architectural detail is notable, that the house has historical significance as the residence of the Van Cortlandts, a family prominent in the history of the City since the 17th century, that it reflects their high standards of taste, that the mansion has significance for the role it played during the American Revolution, that it served as Washington's temporary headquarters in 1783, and that the restoration and maintenance of the mansion by the Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York is an early instance of effective preservation in the City.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an Interior Landmark the Van Cortlandt Mansion, Basement Interior consisting of the Kitchen; First Floor Interior consisting of the Front and Back Halls, East Parlor, West Parlor, and Dining Room; Second Floor Interior consisting of the Hallway, the Washington Bedroom, and the Munro Bedroom; and the Stairway from the First Floor up to the Third Floor, Broadway and West 242nd Street, Van Cortlandt Park, Borough of the Bronx and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of the Borough of the Bronx Tax Map Block 5900, Lot 150 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.



Landmarks Preservation Commission  
March 15, 1966, Number 2  
LP-0127

VAN CORTLANDT MANSION, Broadway and West 242nd Street, Van Cortlandt Park, Borough of The Bronx. 1748; architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 5900, Lot 150 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Van Cortlandt Mansion and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 29). One witness spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 28). At that time three speakers favored designation. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting. In a letter Park Commissioner Thomas Hoving recommended designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Truly one of the City's most notable mid-Eighteenth Century Georgian manor houses, Van Cortlandt Mansion is set in a tree-surrounded area of Van Cortlandt Park. Built of local field stone and brick, the restored building is operated as a house museum by The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York. The interesting combination of field stone and brick trim around the windows is to be found in certain Eighteenth Century buildings in this area. Carved masks serve as keystones over the windows. The heads of the men and women carved in this manner have not as yet been identified. Its roof is pierced by attractive regularly spaced dormer windows. Small wooden porches which shelter the south and east entrance doorways are doubtless additions of a later period.

The house is set on property long owned by the Van Cortlandt family. North of the mansion is Vault Hill, site of the Van Cortlandt burial ground and family vault. It was in this vault that the City Records of New York were said to have been hidden and preserved during the Revolution. Here in 1781, to deceive the British, General Washington kept campfires burning for several days while he gained time for safe withdrawal of his troops across the Hudson.

The architectural importance of this building lies in its straightforward expression of vigorous design, its beautiful stone and brick masonry and its excellent wood details in both windows and cornice. The mansion is in a fine state of preservation, with its original architectural character preserved as an outstanding New York manor house.

#### FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Van Cortlandt Mansion has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Van Cortlandt Mansion is an outstanding example of early domestic Georgian architecture, that it is well constructed of good materials, that it is beautifully restored and preserved and that it stands on a site having important historical associations.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Van Cortlandt Mansion, Broadway and West 242nd Street, Van Cortlandt Park, Borough of The Bronx and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 5900, Lot 150 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.