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CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION

CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY  
for the  
ARVERNE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT  
QUEENS, NEW YORK

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CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY  
ARVERNE URBAN RENEWAL AREA PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Project Description

The New York City Department of City Planning proposes to redevelop the blighted Arverne Urban Renewal Area, Rockaway, Queens, into a sound residential community with supporting commercial and recreational uses. This report presents the results of a Phase IA Cultural Resource Survey of the proposed redevelopment Area conducted by Historical Perspectives of Riverside, Connecticut. As noted in the Appendix B - Scope of Work (August 19, 1986), TASK 7B - Historic Resources, this report assesses "the potential for historically, archaeologically, or architecturally significant resources being affected (disturbed or destroyed) as a result" of the proposed redevelopment, which includes rezoning action.

Archaeological remains and architectural landmarks are vital and irreplaceable resources for future research and for an objective approach to cultural interpretation of any community or region and its historical import. Prehistoric and historic sites represent the tangible remains of past ways of life, the study of which can provide us with a better understanding of human culture in this area of Queens.

The following report is divided into two sections. The archaeological assessment, complete with bibliography, figures, photographs, and appendices, is followed by the architectural historian's analysis.

## B. Study Area

The Arverne Urban Renewal Area is located on the south side of the Rockaway peninsula and extends from (approximately) Beach 84th Street on the west to Beach 32nd Street on the east and includes three Rockaway communities: part of Hammels, all of Arverne and most of Edgemere. (See Figures 1, 2) The City considers Arverne as bounded by Beach 58th Street and Beach 74th Streets; Hammels as running from Beach 74th Street to Beach 90th Street; and, Edgemere occupies the ocean front to the east of Arverne. The Renewal area is relatively narrow: only that part of Arverne, Hammels, and Edgemere below the present Rapid Transit elevated roadbed (former Long Island Railroad) to the Atlantic Ocean. The Urban Renewal Area covers approximately 310 acres, including 123 acres of cleared land. The boardwalk that extends along the Atlantic Ocean dominates the waterfront. Once a prestigious resort haven, the Area currently hosts a few distinctly separate enclaves that support any human activity (e.g., P. S. 106, Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue, Ocean Village, Pryme Community Health Center, Hook and Ladder Engine Company 265, and Loeb and Mayer, Inc.). See Photographs.

ARCHAEOLOGY

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

### II. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

This cultural resource sensitivity survey was carried out in three basic steps:

#### A. Background Research

In an attempt to identify known or potential prehistoric and historic cultural resources, an intensive search of the literature was carried out at the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library, the New York Public Library, and in the offices of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Requests for a file search on this area of Queens were forwarded to the New York State Museum/Anthropology Services and the State Historic Preservation Office. From the outset, the accumulation of historical documentation of all types pertaining to the project area was considered to be of primary importance. Maps of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries formed the basis for the start of the cultural resource survey.

Several contacts were made with individuals knowledgeable in the history and prehistory of the area. Interviews were conducted with historians, archaeologists, and Queens Borough engineering and sanitation personnel to elicit information about the location and nature of prehistoric and historic sites, and to determine land use within the project area. In summary, primary data was sought from all of the sources consulted including historical documentation, archaeological site reports, and personal knowledge of the area.

#### B. Photographic Survey

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

#### C. Environmental Analysis

The prediction of prehistoric site locations involves the use of various kinds of information including environmental, archaeological, historic, and ethnohistoric data. At this

particular site, environmental and geomorphological conditions were important criteria in developing a hypothesis regarding the presence or absence of prehistoric cultural resources. In making this determination, the following environmental factors were considered:

1. Topography: Variables within this category include landform and elevation. This information was primarily derived from historic maps, the U.S.G.S. topographic map, and the field reconnaissance.
2. Geology and Soils: The factors considered here are type and areal extent of beach formation.
3. Water: Under this category are variables concerning the nature and location of a fresh water supply.
4. Availability of Floral and Faunal Resources: The availability and utilization of the natural resources within the area would have been of crucial importance to prehistoric groups. Prehistoric peoples' search for subsistence resources was continual. They naturally chose those areas in which food resources appeared in greatest abundance.
5. Paleoenvironmental Conditions: The environmental context in which prehistoric peoples lived must be considered in the search for prehistoric occupation zones within the project area.
6. Availability of Technological Raw Materials: The availability of the raw materials needed to fashion tools and other items is an important consideration in the assessment of an area for likelihood of prehistoric occupation.
7. Historic and Current Land Use: As previously noted, known land alterations must be considered in order to assess the extent of potential disturbance to any cultural remains that may have been deposited over thousands of years by prehistoric peoples. Such environmental factors could equally affect the cultural deposits of the more recent historic populations as well.  
(Lenik, 1986: pp. 4-6)

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Rockaway peninsula is a post-glacial barrier beach approximately nine miles long. Such sandy formations along the southern coastline of Long Island are the result of the scouring action of the ocean waves as they break a considerable distance offshore and drop loosened sand just landward of the breaker line. "Soon a submarine bar of this material is built up parallel to the shoreline. Growing in height with continued deposition of wave-tossed sand, the submarine bar soon appears above the water surface in various places along its length. When these have joined to make one fairly continuous strip of sand, a barrier beach, or barrier island, is formed. Behind the barrier beach lies a lagoon or zone of quiet water which no longer is a part of the open sea. Tidal inlets separate the islands into several individual ones." (Schuberth, 1968: p. 200) Once formed, such barrier beaches as Jones Beach, Long Beach, and Rockaway Beach, are persistently being remolded and altered. (ibid: p. 201) As can be seen on Figure 3, the actual beach face of the Project Area has varied considerably since 1833.

The eastern portion of the Arverne Urban Renewal Area has historically been considered the boundary line of the Rockaway Peninsula. Norton's Creek, a now vanished inlet connecting Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean at approximately Beach 32nd Street, formed this natural marker. (Seyfried, 1975-84: Vol. V, p. 1) As is typical with barrier beach formation, the Rockaway Peninsula has acted as a fence against the ocean and, in turn, created Jamaica Bay. (Gratacap, 1909: p. 154) Until the late nineteenth century development of the Peninsula as a beach community, the uneven terrain of the Area was covered with high sand dunes and low marshy areas. The hollows were overgrown with dense thickets of cedar. (Seyfried, 1975-1984: Vol. 5, p. 2)

#### IV. CULTURAL BACKGROUND: THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

##### A. Introduction

The following discussion of prehistoric human occupation provides a basis on which to anticipate the kinds of cultural remains or sites that may be found in the Arverne Project study area. A brief description of the three periods of prehistoric culture history is presented first. This information summarizes the ways in which prehistoric peoples lived in the northeastern United States in general and in coastal New York in particular. These prehistoric cultural sequences describe the particular technologies, lifestyles, and environmental contexts of the three time periods.

The prehistory of Queens has been researched extensively, and the available data provides excellent background material with which to assess the project area. A search of the literature on the project area, which includes Solecki 1941, Bolton 1922 and 1934, Ritchie 1980, Black 1981, and The Coastal Archaeology Reader 1978, has identified prehistoric sites in southern Queens. These documented sites, although outside the project's primary and secondary impact zones, give us a good picture of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns. Furthermore, additional information was sought from both New York State and New York City agencies and from personal contact with local informants who have extensive knowledge of the area.

The absence of previous systematic field investigations has made it difficult to identify the study area's prehistoric cultural resources. Nevertheless, our survey and analysis evaluates the probable attractiveness of the study area for prehistoric peoples and the areas where they were likely to have lived and worked. We consider the archaeological potential of the area by correlating environmental and cultural history in the region.

##### B. Prehistoric Culture Periods

###### The Paleo Indian Period (c. 10,000 B.C. to 8,000 B.C.)

Early man arrived in the New World sometime before 12,000 years ago. These early Americans, who we call Paleo Indians, migrated from Siberia across the Bering Land Bridge to Alaska during the Late Pleistocene or Ice Age. They undoubtedly came down from Alaska during the Two Creeks Interstadial around 10,000 B.C. when an ice-free corridor opened up between two massive glaciers that covered Canada. During this period, the Indians relied heavily on large pleistocene herbivores for food, such as mammoth, mastodon, caribou, and musk ox. These Indians were hunters and gatherers, a nomadic people who roamed widely in



search of food, and their settlement pattern consisted of small temporary camps. The diagnostic artifact of the Paleo Indian period is the fluted projectile point. However, these people made other sophisticated tools as well, such as gravers, steep-edge scrapers, knives, drills, and other unifacial tools.

#### The Archaic Period (c. 8,000 B.C. to 1,000 B. C.)

The Archaic Period produced a major shift in the settlement and subsistence patterns of the Native Americans. Hunting and gathering were still the basic ways of life during this period, but the emphasis in subsistence shifted from the large pleistocene herbivores, who were rapidly becoming extinct, to smaller game and plants of the deciduous forest. The settlement pattern of the Archaic people indicates larger, more permanent habitation sites. These people were increasingly more efficient in the exploitation of their environment. The hallmarks of this period are grinding implements, ground stone tools, and, toward the end of this period, or Terminal Archaic, the use of stone bowls.

#### The Woodland Period (c. 1,000 B.C. to 1600 A.D.)

In general, the hunting and gathering way of life persisted in this period, but several important changes took place. Horticulture began during this period and later became well established with the cultivation of maize, beans, and squash. Clay pottery vessels replaced soapstone bowls, and tobacco pipes and smoking were adopted. Also, the bow and arrow replaced the spear and javelin during this period. The habitation sites of the Woodland Indians increased in size and permanence as these people continued to extract food more efficiently from their environment.

### C. Archaeological Sites in the Arverne Urban Renewal Area

The earliest accounts (c. 1645) of land transactions in the southern portion of Queens, corroborated by seventeenth century ethnographic studies, definitively state that Native Americans were present at the time of initial European contact. These Native Americans were Algonquian speaking Upper Delaware Indians. Anthropologists and linguists agree that the name Rockaway (Rackaway, Rahawacke) is derived from the Delaware language and means "sandy place" and originally referred to both a geographic location and a culturally similar associated group of Native Americans. "The Rockaway group lived on western Long Island in portions of southeastern Queens and southwestern Nassau Counties. Their main settlement of Rechqua Akie was probably located in the town of Far Rockaway, Queens." (Grumet, 1981: p. 47)

Although the record indicates that Far Rockaway was the site of prehistoric exploitation and it might be assumed that the neighboring lands to the south and southwest would also have hosted prehistoric peoples, there is no definitive evidence of prehistoric sites on the south side of the Rockaway Peninsula. Archaeological reports have identified numerous sites on the north side of Jamaica Bay and antiquarians have commented on the presence of shell middens on the north shore of the Rockaway Peninsula.\* The north and the south side of the Peninsula offered disparate sets of resources through time. The assessment of the archaeological potential of the Arverne Project Area must rest upon the resource options associated with the Area and the known settlement patterns of the Native Americans in all time periods.

In his History of the Rockaways (1917) Bellot noted that

"Up to twenty years ago there was a number of shell banks in the peninsula. There are still signs of the banks on the marshes of Woodmere Bay. Other banks existed at Inwood, Hog Island and Far Rockaway.

The Far Rockaway shell bank was enormous and must have contained many thousand tons of clam shells. It was located at Bayswater on Judge Healys' property, but was carted away and used for filling in purposes and road making." (Bellot, 1917: p. 90)

The presence of shell middens is an indicator of Native American exploitation of the shellfish beds in the Bay area. Settlement pattern data indicates that the Indians moved, in different time periods to a greater or lesser permanency, to the shore for a seasonal harvesting of this important natural food source. Such camps and semi-permanent villages were usually located near the harvesting station and large Indian villages were located inland within walking distance of the shellfish collection stations. (Lucianne Lavin, 11/4/1986, personal communication) Shellfish beds would not have formed on the southern, ocean shore of the peninsula. "Oysters [clams and mussels] live best in certain shallow bays, sounds, creeks, and estuaries where the salinity, temperature, food supply, and bottom provide favorable combinations for reproduction or growth. In the open ocean, however, the salinity is so high, 35 parts per thousand, that oysters do not ordinarily reproduce." (Kochiss, 1974: p. 33)

Secondarily, prehistoric settlement pattern research indicates a marked preference for elevated sites, particularly if in some way protected from buffeting winds (e.g., an embayment

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\* Shell middens or shell heaps are the physical remains of the Indian activity of harvesting, processing, and, in part, consuming shellfish.

or a rock outcrop). As discussed above and as illustrated on the 1918, 1922, 1925 Queens Borough Topographic Bureau Final Map sections, the contour elevations of the Project Area, notwithstanding the shifting dunes, were recorded at no greater than 10 feet above sea level in only one small area (on the north end of the block bordered by Beach 58th Street, Beach 59th Street, and the Rockaway Beach Boulevard; See Figure 4 ). The vast majority of the Project Area was recorded at an elevation of less than 5 feet above sea level.

Reginald Bolton's early twentieth century research into Indian sites and paths in Queens County also focused on the Far Rockaway area and the northern shore of Jamaica Bay. As can be seen on Figure 5, Bolton's "Indian Paths in the Great Metropolis" map depicts an Indian trail terminating at Inwood "thus reaching Rockaway neck, from which point the long stretch of Rockaway beach would have been accessible by a branch path." (Bolton, 1922: p. 181)

As documented in Frederick Black's study for the Gateway National Recreation Area (National Park Service), the archaeological record of the Jamaica Bay area reveals a long and complex aboriginal exploitation of the northern shore of the Bay and an absence of prehistoric archaeological sites for the peninsula. Dr. Ralph Solecki's intensive explorations in Queens during the 1930s and 1940s concentrated on the Aqueduct area which is north of Jamaica Bay. (See Figure 6 ) Recently Mary Anne Mrozinski of the Queens Historical Society photo-recorded a collection of Indian artifacts (Archaic, Woodland, and Contact periods) collected by John Reimels in the Springfield area, northeast of the peninsula. (J. M. Crane, 8/11/1986, personal communication)

Inquiries directed to professional and amateur archaeologists on Long Island (Stan Wisniewski, Mary Anne Mrozinski, Emily Brown, Ben DuBose, and Donna Ottusch-Kianka) revealed an absence of known and/or anticipated archaeological sites on the Rockaway Peninsula. William Asadorian, Librarian of the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, did report the discovery of one projectile point at Beach 86th Street but the context was dredged fill material of unknown origin. (William Asadorian, 10/30/1986, personal communication) Bob Ewing of the State Historic Preservation Office, Albany, reported "no inventoried archaeological sites" within proximity to the Project Area. (B. Ewing, 10/24/1986, personal communication) The Anthropological Services division of the New York State Museum responded to an archaeological file search request, noting only the location of a prehistoric campsite (#4050) at Inwood. (See Appendix 1 )

The environmental characteristics of the southern shore of the Rockaway Peninsula evidently did not pose sufficient resources to attract any concentration of Native American activity during the Paleo Indian, Archaic, Woodland, or Contact time periods.

## V. CULTURAL BACKGROUND: THE HISTORIC PERIOD

The first white men to inhabit that part of Long Island now known as Queens were fur traders under the administration of the Dutch West India Company who came in the early years of the seventeenth century. One of the earliest meetings of which history tells us was held in 1642 "in the woods" near "Rockaway" between 16 sachems representing Indian tribes and a number of Dutch envoys, headed by one DeVries. The Indians were there to complain of wrongs done them by the Dutch. Unsatisfied, the Indians exacted reprisals the following winter, but seeking peace in the spring, they sent three delegates to Fort Amsterdam to talk over their troubles with Governor Kieft. The Hollanders did not trust them and only two, DeVries and Jacob Olfertsen, could be induced to go back with the Indians to attend to the matter. This was held at "Reckouwacky" or Rockaway where 200-300 savages had pitched approximately 30 wigwams. (Grumet, 1981: p. 47).

In 1685 the Indians sold their interest in Rockaway Neck for 31 Pounds, 2 Shillings to Governor Dongan, the royal governor. A deed was drawn on October 6, 1685 and was executed with due ceremony two days later. The deed was a conveyance by the Indians through their chiefs, Tackapousha and Paman, of a tract commencing at a spot designated as Well's Line to a point on the beach slightly west of what is now Wave Crest, seven miles from the present point at Rockaway Point. Three white men and four Indians were witnesses.

One month later - November 1685 - Governor Dongan made a grant of the land to John Palmer, the consideration being a quit rent of five bushels of winter wheat annually. The original purchase of the land from the Indians by Gov. Dongan created a lot of trouble for him later and finally caused his removal, for he was charged with playing favorites by turning over the tract to Palmer. Another legal complication was the objection of the Town of Hempstead which claimed that the land belonged to it and not to Chiefs Tackapousha and Paman. Just two years before, in 1683, Queens County had been set up and divided into six towns. Rockaway was a peninsula of the Town of Hempstead. The Town commenced an action to upset the grant to Palmer but the suit was dismissed with costs against the Town. To straighten out the dispute over costs, a committee was appointed Nov. 27, 1699. (Town Minutes of Hempstead Town).

Two years after John Palmer had obtained his grant to Rockaway - 1687 - he sold the entire property to Richard Cornell, an ironmaster of Flushing. The name was also spelled

Cornwell and Cornwall. The family was one of the wealthiest on Long Island, possibly because in 1670 Cornell had obtained permission to sell liquor and powder to the Indians. Three years after the purchase the Cornell family moved from Flushing to the Rockaways and built a large frame house; it overlooked the Atlantic Ocean at Far Rockaway. In 1833 it was demolished to make way for the Marine Pavilion, Far Rockaway's first large resort hotel. (Bellot, 1917: p. 12).

In 1809, as a result of a partition suit brought by 16 of the great-grandsons of Richard Cornell, the land was divided. The case was heard in the Court of Common Pleas of Queens County. The commissioners appointed by the court divided the property into 46 parcels, 16 being known as the western division, 15 as the eastern division and 15 as marsh lots. An old road, corresponding approximately to the present Rockaway Beach Boulevard, marked the division between the beach lots and the marsh lots along Jamaica Bay. This partition is recognized as the common source of all the titles upon the Rockaway strip. (Brooklyn Eagle, August 10, 1904). The easterly strip of the Cornell tract was bought by John L. Norton in 1833 from the Cornell heirs and this was the first section to be developed. The western division was largely bought out by James Remsen in 1855 and was developed as Sea Side. William H. Amermann bought an 800 ft. wide strip from the heirs as a result of the cholera scare in 1832 in what is now Arverne but did not use it. His son later became a developer. Some of the Cornell heirs retained sections for themselves. (See Figures 7, 8 for a cartographic depiction of the Project Area prior to development.)

The Marine Pavilion, mentioned above, owed its existence to the discovery of Rockaway as a refuge from Manhattan during the great panic caused by the cholera epidemic in 1832. Hundreds of families fled the city and sought refuge at Far Rockaway, sleeping, many of them, in barns or wherever they could find shelter. In 1833 the Pavilion was built at a cost of \$43,000 and it opened for the accommodation of boarders in 1834. (See Figure 9). From that time until June 25, 1864 when it burned down, the Pavilion was a famous resort and many noted men were numbered among the guests - Longfellow, Washington Irving and the artist Trumbull. At that remote period the only means of reaching the beach was Brower's "Americus Stage Line", the vehicles of which were drawn by four horses. The office was in Pearl St., New York, and the stages would call at the doors of those who desired to visit Rockaway each morning and carry them over the Rockaway Turnpike to Far Rockaway. (Reminiscences of Wm. Caffrey; Hempstead Inquirer from Brooklyn Union, May 18, 1883. Note: Caffrey came to Rockaway in 1843.)



James Remsen purchased a major part of the peninsula in 1855 and by 1856 had erected one of the earliest public houses midway on the peninsula (Beach 103rd Street), calling it the "Sea Side House." "The house was a sort of refreshment stand for fishermen and boatmen serving chowder, clams, etc. Remsen also built a house far to the west near the Point in token of his possession of the land. He pastured cattle on the beach grass." (Seyfried, 1971: p. 2) For many years the Arverne Urban Renewal Project Area hosted a government life-saving station. This is indicated on a portion of the 1859 Walling Map. (See Figure 10 ). In the 1860s Remsen orchestrated the development of excursion boats that brought fishermen, bathers, and picnickers to the bay side of the peninsula. (ibid: p. 3) Remsen's initial enterprises mushroomed into a peninsula-wide phenomenon within 25 years. (See Figure 11 ) "Contemporary accounts tell us that no less than 50,000 people went to Rockaway Beach on June 12 and again on June 20, 1892. The steamboat General Slocum carried 1,000 persons on each trip. In these happy pre-pollution, pre-airport days, over 1,000 small boats anchored between Canarsie and Rockaway, each in a favorite fishing ground, but the majority at Broad Channel." (Seyfried, 1971: p. 60-61).

Arverne owes its existence to the efforts of one man, Remington Vernam. He was born in McConnsville, N.Y. in 1842 and moved with his parents to New York City in 1854 when he was 12. He was educated in the public schools and after a course in law school was admitted to the bar. He was a bright, hustling lawyer and within a remarkably short time succeeded in building up a very good practice. With the practice came long and hard work and at the end of each spring, the young lawyer found himself so worn out that it became necessary for him to go to the seashore to restore his energies.

Vernam went to Rockaway for several summers and in 1878 became so impressed with the desirability of the resort that he conceived the idea of laying out the wide expanse of sand dunes and meadows east of Rockaway Beach into a rival resort with streets, villa plots and all the other improvements that go towards the establishment of a "successful and healthy seashore town. (Brooklyn Eagle, July 6, 1907 2:3, Vernam's Obituary). As can be seen on the Clinton map of 1791, the Burr map of 1829, and the 1879 USGS map (See Figures 7, 8, 12), the Rockaway Peninsula did not have home lots or orchards or a road system at this time.

In April 1882 Vernam incorporated the "Ocean Front Improvement Company". The capital stock was \$500,000 and the object of the company was "acquisition of land, laying out villa

sites, erection of buildings, etc." There were five backers in the project along with Vernam and his wife Florence. (Kings County Rural Gazette, April 22, 1882, 3:5). Prior to 1882 Arverne had only two or three fishermen's shacks on it. Vernam first straightened out the meandering track that became Rockaway Beach Blvd. The sand hills, some of which were 20 feet high, were leveled off, streets were laid out, sewers and sidewalks built and then a few houses were erected. Real estate advertisements, see Figures 13, 14, extolled the virtues of this development. The South Side Railroad reached Far Rockaway in 1869 and had reached Remsen's Sea Side House by July 4, 1872. One of the problems Vernam encountered was the presence of these tracks which ran through all the blocks of his property about 200 feet south of the present Rockaway Beach Blvd. and therefore undesirably close to the ocean front. Vernam negotiated with the Long Island Railroad, which had assumed control of the line after the Southside bankruptcy and succeeded in having a new right-of-way constructed close to Jamaica Bay, joining the old roadbed at approximately Beach 53rd/54th Street. With the beginning of April 1887 work was begun on the new 1.6 mile link. On May 26, 1888 the first train passed over the new relocated right of way. Between August and December 1888 the old road was torn up, removing a major and unsightly impediment from Vernam's beach front. (Seyfried, 1971: p. 53).

A name for the new community was needed. It is said that one day Mrs. Vernam was observing her husband signing checks and by chance her eye fell on his signature, "R. Vernam". She read the name out loud and all at once it occurred to her that here was a ready-made and euphonious name for her husband's new village, "Arverne". Her husband could think of no objection to the novel designation and accepted it.

Over the summer of 1887 plans for a big showpiece hotel for the new community were prepared and in December contracts were let. (Weekly Star, November 25, 1887, 3:1). On July 4, 1888 the new Arverne Hotel opened on the west side of Beach 69th Street, the heart of the new development. Mrs. Florence Vernam who took a very active interest in the planning of the community, induced her husband to locate the hotel with its side to the ocean so that guests in both the front and rear rooms would have an equally excellent view of the beach. The huge new hotel was four stories high with a vast wrap-around porch on three sides. The roof was surmounted with three cupolas soaring upward another six stories. (See Figures 15, 16) The development of private cottages followed rapidly. In the first year - 1880 - seventeen cottages went up and in the next two years twenty more. An 1887 photograph taken at approximately Beach 59th Street shows the large frame houses and wooden sidewalks erected

in the 1880s, see Figure 17 . To obtain easy access to his new village, Vernam induced the Long Island Rail Road to open a station at Gaston Ave., now Beach 66th Street. (Bellot, 1917: p. 98).

The era from 1888 to 1908 was the golden age of Arverne. 40 handsome cottages were erected during 1890-92 and these were "cottages" in the Newport sense - large 2½ and 3-story frame houses in the popular Queen Anne style with a dozen rooms and an attic apartment for the help. Every house had broad, wrap-around porches facing the street. (See Figure 18 - one remaining example of this housing style that is located within the Project Area.) Nearly all the plots were 50 x 100 and 100 x 100 was not unusual. The property owners were all affluent people drawn from the ranks of Manhattan's professional classes: bankers, editors, insurance presidents, prominent politicians, successful businessmen, Wall Street investors, retired officers of the Army and Navy, society figures, etc.

Land in 1892 was worth \$1,000 a lot and cottages went for \$6,000 to \$50,000. The total valuation of Arverne, including cottages and sites, in 1892 was between ten and twelve million. The village had four miles of streets and water, gas, electric and steam facilities already installed. Even a sewer system had been put in running into the waters of the Amstel Canal, the waters of which were flushed by the tides. There was an ocean boardwalk a mile long and a half-mile causeway on the Jamaica Bay side leading to a dock 500 ft. long where a clubhouse was located for the use of yachtsmen. The great attraction of Arverne was ease of accessibility - only 45 minutes by train from New York, making commuting entirely feasible and easy; the other attraction was the climate - no rigorous winters and fresh breezes on the hottest day in summer. No business establishments were permitted inside Arverne. The Arverne Hotel offered a seasonal succession of dances and concerts and sports on the lawns and beach. Many of the well-connected residents made a lot of money by speculating in Arverne land. William Ammermann made over \$100,000 and William Scheer, builder of the first house in Arverne, another \$100,000. Many others earned lesser but still substantial sums. (New York Recorder, July 3, 1892) The prosperity and self-confidence of Arverne found expression in the incorporation of itself as a village - "Arverne-by-the-Sea" in September 1895; the census showed 1800 residents in the one-mile square resort. A resident Mr. B. Lichtenstein, had been the leader in the effort to incorporate. Part of the motive for incorporation was securing village services: a fire house, street repair and care of sidewalks. (New York Tribune, October 6, 1895) "The most important work accomplished by the village board was in 1897, when they raised, by issuing bonds,



the sum of \$200,000 with which they established grades at all street crossings, laid sewers, curbed streets, lighted them by gas lamps, and made and extended Ocean Avenue beyond Storm Avenue toward Edgemere. Arverne streets are laid on a model plan, running north and south, 200 feet apart." (Bellot, 1917: p. 100) In 1898 Arverne, which had been a village in the Town of Hempstead, entered the new Nassau County, but legislation passed in Albany during 1899 fixed a new border between Queens and Nassau Counties, and, as a result, the whole Rockaway Peninsula passed to Queens County, and therefore, New York City.

From its inception the Hammels development was not planned as a large scale luxurious resort like Arverne but rather an assortment of boarding houses and fishing facilities. Louis C. Hammel came to the Rockaways in the 1860's. He built a homestead for himself at Beach 83rd St. (Hammel Ave.) & Rockaway Beach Blvd. It was torn down Oct. 2, 1899. When the railroad across Jamaica Bay came in 1880, Hammel donated land for a station on condition that the station would always bear his name. In this way his name has been perpetuated down to modern times. His land extended from Jamaica Bay to the ocean and from Beach 80th St. to Beach 88th St.

Hammel never had the vision of Rockaway as a resort as did Vernam. He settled on the bay side of Rockaway with his Hammel Hotel at Beach 84th & 85th Sts. and he saw himself as the proprietor of a fishing station and summer hideaway for New York businessmen. (See Figure 11). In his day (pre-1900) Jamaica Bay was famous for its "Rockaways", the small, sweet clams that we now call "Little Necks" and for its flounders, bluefish, fluke, porgies and weakfish. When the sewage plant of Jamaica opened in 1914 on the Jamaica Bay shore, it spelled the end of the whole Jamaica Bay fishing industry.

According to Wolverton's 1891 Atlas of Queens County (Plate 13), between 58th and 69th Beach Streets there were (approximately) only 25 standing structures, all frame, at the time. For a short time period the land between the Arverne development and the more westerly Hammels development was labeled Atlantic Park. A large hotel, the Atlantic Park Hotel, was situated just outside the Project Area on the southwest corner of the intersection of Beach 74th Street and Rockaway Beach Boulevard. Hammels also hosted, at c.1890, the Crabbe Mill and Crabbe homestead at the intersection of Pleasant Avenue (Beach 80th Street) and the route of the railroad tracks (Beach Channel Drive). The Atlas also indicates that between what is now called Beach 79th and Beach 78th Streets, in the Hammels section, there was a lumber yard that fronted on the route of the track roadbed.

Edgemere is the segment of the Rockaway Peninsula from roughly Beach 32nd Street to Beach 50th Street. The community was developed by the Lancaster Sea Beach Improvement Co. which incorporated in October 1894. This company was the creation of Frederick J. Lancaster, who, like Vernam, toured the Beach 30's area when it was a sandy wasteland with only two or three houses, and saw the possibilities of a resort that money and effort could create. Mr. Lancaster first named his tract New Venice. He immediately put up a showpiece hotel, the "Edgemere" on the ocean between Beach 35th and Beach 36th Sts. It was five stories high and contained 300 rooms. There was a casino on the ocean front with 400 bathhouses. The hotel opened June 22, 1895. At the time "the beautiful Wave Crest Lake existed and connected Far Rockaway Bay with Norton's Creek and Jamaica Bay. The lake and the Inlet were later filled in to make more building lots. The early development of Edgemere was slow." (Bellot, 1917: p. 96; Atlas of the Borough of Queens, Vol. 1, Plate 24, E. Belcher Hyder, NY) The Edgemere Hotel did well for years but declined by World War I because of competition and the luring-away of the carriage trade. Lancaster sold the hotel & grounds in 1919. Edgemere became a community of residences - not quite as pretentious as those of Arverne, but bungalows built for the summer trade of the middle class. (See Figure 19)

With Arverne a part of the greater City, the old exclusiveness and aristocratic air of the former village began to decline. Commercial establishments could no longer be excluded and stores crept in. In May 1904, a new popular hotel, Shanley's, was built, the largest in Arverne, eclipsing the old Arverne Hotel. Shanley's, fronting the ocean, was at Beach 80th Street. The boardwalk was extended and reached two miles in length. In June 1904 the Halcyon Casino Co. outraged the old guard by building bowling alleys and a carrousel. When the Arvernites secured a temporary injunction, the manager brought in a wagon load of Blacks and conspicuously entertained them on the boardwalk to the horror of the old inhabitants. (New York Tribune, May 8, 1904 and June 28, 1904)

Stores began to be erected on the boardwalk at 64th St. and elsewhere (1904) and a theatre was built on a new 150 ft. pier at the foot of 67th St. (New York Tribune, April 12, 1905) Yet, even in the face of these disturbing trends, realty values advanced enormously within five years of annexation to New York City. A piece of oceanfront property sold in 1903 for \$8,500 brought \$31,000 in April 1904. Another piece of oceanfront property sold for \$37,000 in 1903 was resold for \$77,000 in 1904, a 100% increase in one year. (ibid) The demand for small houses at moderate rates became so pressing that Vernam reclaimed a large tract of land lying north of the tracks with

an extensive frontage on Jamaica Bay, and named it Vernam Park. (now Rockaway Community Park). It is one of the ironies of the Arverne story that although Remington Vernam has come down in history as the father of Arverne, the distinction brought him no enrichment. In March 1896, one of the members of the syndicate which had purchased the original acreage and had put up the money to build the hotel, William S. Rogers, applied to the courts to foreclose his mortgage, naming Vernam, his wife Florence G. Vernam and the Arverne Co. as defendants. The court appointed a receiver and an examination showed that there were mortgages on the property in excess of its value and that the income was insufficient to pay the interest and fixed charges. (Long Island Farmer, March 20, 1896, 1:6)

Another source of legal difficulty and expense for Vernam in 1896 was his fight with Franklin Norton, another purchaser of some of the Cornell estate lots. Vernam had bought lots 1 through 9 of the eastern division and had sold off most of 1, 2 and 3 and part of 9 but a dispute arose over the exact location of all the lots between 1 and 9. Norton claimed that the boundaries of all the lots except his own had been moved over 400 feet to the eastward of their true line. When Vernam attempted to fence in lot 9, Norton tore down the fence. Vernam ejected Norton by force and the matter wound up in the courts where Norton secured a warrant of ejectment against Vernam. Vernam appealed to the County Court but lost (May 23, 1896). Later, when a creditor of Vernam foreclosed a \$30,000 mortgage on lot 9, he discovered the disputed title and lost money on an attempted sale. Vernam had left lots 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 and 16 of the western division and all of lot 1 of the marsh lots, so he obviously retained some valuable assets. Lots 15 and 16 covered the village of Arverne. (Bellot, 1917: p. 21-22)

In January 1899 Vernam filed a petition of bankruptcy, his liabilities being placed at \$728,040. He asserted that his mortgages on his property and his holdings of about 5,000 lots would cover the major part of his liabilities. (Long Island Farmer, January 10, 1899, 1:6)

Immediately after his bankruptcy filing, Vernam liquidated nearly all his Arverne holdings and lost interest in Rockaway except for the brief return in 1904 to develop Vernam Park on his marsh lot. He then retired to Oakland, N.J. He began to fail physically and eventually died from a complication of diseases on July 3, 1907 at the age of 65. He left his widow, Elizabeth G. and one son, Clarence Vernam.

Two changes greatly affected Arverne in the 1905-08 era. The first was the electrification of the Rockaway line, the

first branch of the Long Island R.R. to be so upgraded. On July 26, 1905 regular electric service began between Brooklyn and Rockaway Park. The cars were all-steel, the first of their kind and on any American railroad. The retirement of the old steam engines made possible a great speeding-up of the service and more frequent trains. On Dec. 1, 1905 electric service began on the peninsula through Arverne and Edgemere to Far Rockaway. Property values rose considerably thanks to the new service. (Seyfried, 1971: p. 70)

The era of Arverne as a resort for the affluent came to an end about 1908. The first symptom of change was the decline of patronage at the exclusive Arverne Hotel due to competition from newer and less pretentious hotels and a general democratization of Arverne after its absorption into New York City. The hotel was sold in 1904 and again in 1915. The latest owner took off the cupolas and changed the name to the Hotel Prince. It burned down in 1935. Figures 20-24 are copies of a 1912 E. Belcher Hyde Atlas of Far Rockaway and Rockaway Beach, Queens (Fifth Ward); and, they clearly depict the residential boarding and public bathing facilities of the Arverne Project Area at the end of the first decade in the twentieth century.

Through the World War I years and the 1920's Arverne grew but the new construction was almost entirely small bungalows built for lease to summer tenants. Meanwhile, the big homes of an earlier era built on generous plots were either converted into rooming houses or were torn down altogether and replaced by much smaller rental units on 25 x 100 plots. Arverne's ocean breezes and clean streets for years attracted vacationers, primarily Jewish families from the steamy streets of Brooklyn and other parts of the City.

In 1922 Arverne suffered a disastrous fire. About 150 dwellings were destroyed: 83 residences, 53 bungalows and 10 hotels. Five blocks - 55th St. to 62nd St. - were wiped out. Because the land was valuable beachfront property, the tract was rebuilt but the new construction was almost entirely summer rental units built close together and lacking heating facilities. (Moss, 1972: n.p.)

A study of the 1933 Sanborn Insurance Maps of Queens (Queens Topographical Bureau, House Numbers and Report Division) reveals the diverse nature of development within the Project Area by this time:

- (1) Block 15861 hosted the Grand Hotel and a Children's Summer Home.

- (2) Block 15872, included 74 separate residential structures and a system of private lanes - Jefferson Court, Evelyn Court, Shirley Court, and Lester Court.
- (3) Block 15875, between Beach 43rd and 42nd, contained two brick two-family houses that fronted on the ocean and three to five large family houses back from the waterfront.
- (4) Block 15092's southern section, between Beach 70th and 69th, hosted a partially sunken swimming pool with a wooden platform and numerous rectangular north-south running frame bath houses.
- (5) Bader's Hotel was located at Beach 73rd just south of Rockaway Beach Boulevard, another hotel was located on the west side of Beach 70th near the Boulevard and the Atlantic Apartments, an art deco complex still standing, were located on Beach 68th.

The middle-class prosperity of Arverne continued for a long period all through the depression years of the 1930s and even into the first five years of the post-war era. Then a change, scarcely perceptible at first, began. This is traceable to five factors:

1. The movement of many city families into the suburbs.
2. The improved recreational amenities in residential developments pools, day camps, etc.
3. The greater freedom of movement given to vacationers by newer means of transportation - auto ownership increase and planes.
4. The increase in public recreational facilities.
5. The higher standards of resorts and the wider choice in vacation opportunities. (ibid)

When the summer boarders stopped coming in the 1950s, the landlords began to neglect their properties and too many began to sell or rent to slumlords who installed minimal heating facilities for all-year round use.

When the City began slum clearance in the Redern section of Far Rockaway, many of the displaced people moved to Hammels. Not long after, the City began urban renewal in Hammels and these people, once again uprooted, gravitated to the cheapest housing left in the area - Arverne. (ibid)

Another factor in the destruction of the Arverne Urban Renewal Project Area was the cooperative efforts of the new

Arverne, Hammels, and Edgemere property owners and the city welfare officials to house displaced families in the "winterized" summer bungalows. The city's relocation department began to send thousands of displaced families to Arverne. Often these were families the city had already moved three and four times from renewal sites in Harlem to what later had become new sites in East New York and Brownsville and finally Arverne. By 1964 the city had filled so many of Arverne's deteriorating buildings with so many poor people that it too was declared a renewal area. (Village Voice, August 19, 1971)

In 1967 the Arverne Branch of the Queens Borough Public Library issued a Community Profile that displayed, as it turned out, for the last time the pre-renewal aspect of Arverne:

100 shops & stores serving the 7470 inhabitants (1960 Census)

Housing: (occupied all year) one-third 1- & 2-family houses and two-thirds housing developments

There were 7167 housing units; of these 6659 were rated as "sound" and 508 "deteriorating"

Inhabitants: Very diverse. The principal ethnic group is Jewish, with 605 Negroes and 104 Hispanics.

Half of the families had incomes under \$5,000 a yr.

Most families had incomes \$4,000-\$8,000.

Religion: The community is overwhelmingly Jewish, many of them Orthodox. 15% of Arverne is Catholic, a sprinkling of Protestants.

Image: "The wealthy have gone, the great hotels have burned down or been destroyed but the people return each year for the boardwalk and the beach remains. There are no bath houses or similar facilities in Arverne; people come with bathing suits on under their street clothes. Beach wear is worn everywhere and you can get served in a restaurant wearing nothing else." (Mss. on file with the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica).



## VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As discussed in the above report, most probably the physical and environmental characteristics of the southern shore of the Rockaway Peninsula did not offer resources to the Native Americans sufficient to support a camp or village or processing site. Undoubtedly at one time or another Indians did roam across the sandy dunes of the Arverne Area; however, the possibility of recovering single artifacts and stray finds does not warrant the expense, time, and energy required for further archaeological research into its prehistoric past.

Historical archaeology of individual home lots is often undertaken in urban settings. The cisterns, privies, and wells that were a ubiquitous part of home lots in New York City during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early to mid nineteenth centuries are invaluable time capsules for the anthropologist and historian. As a common practice cisterns, privies, and wells - once their serviceability was exhausted - became repositories for the household trash, such as broken plates, wine bottles, and damaged tools. An analysis of this household detritus, in conjunction with a history of the household's ethnicity, occupation, and socio-economic status, can reveal details on and insights into the everyday life of the city's past. With the advent of water supply lines and sewage systems the home lot's backyard ceased to function as a utilitarian extension of the house and the accumulation of potential archaeological data in the discrete, recognizable units of cisterns, privies, and wells ceased.

By the late 1800s when Arverne, Hammels, and Edgemere were developed, municipal water and sewer lines were operative in a large part of New York City. As stated above in the history of the Project Area, a public water supply and drain system was considered of utmost importance to the developers and early residents of Rockaway Peninsula. Privately financed water supply and drainage systems were a part of the original development within the subject parcels. Although the Queens Borough Sewer Department (Queens Borough Hall, Room 304) does not have a permit record of the earliest privately installed systems in the Area, certain Plans and Profiles verify that a 12 inch private system existed in at least a portion of the Project Area prior to 1912. (#13-72/William Sheer Property: Edgemere, approximately Beach 41st Street to Beach 45th Street, Queens Borough Sewer Department) There are numerous other examples of private installations. In 1926 Sam Porcilla received a permit to install a private drain on a portion of Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Beach 36th Street and a 1952 permit extended the private water/sewer system in the Beach 36th, 37th Streets and Sprayview Avenue neighborhood. (P.D. - Beach 36th Street File, Queens Borough Sewer Department)

The residential development of Hammels, Arverne, and Edgemere was accompanied by the installation of a water supply and sewage drainage system. The existence of cisterns, privies, and wells in the Area prior to such installation is possible. However, the archaeological potential of such deposits - from late nineteenth century, secondary and seasonal housing - is not considered sufficient to warrant further archaeological investigations.

In conclusion, this cultural resource survey has determined that the Arverne Urban Renewal Area Project site is archaeologically non-sensitive. The development of the Area will have NO IMPACT upon the archaeological resource base of the southern coastline of Long Island.



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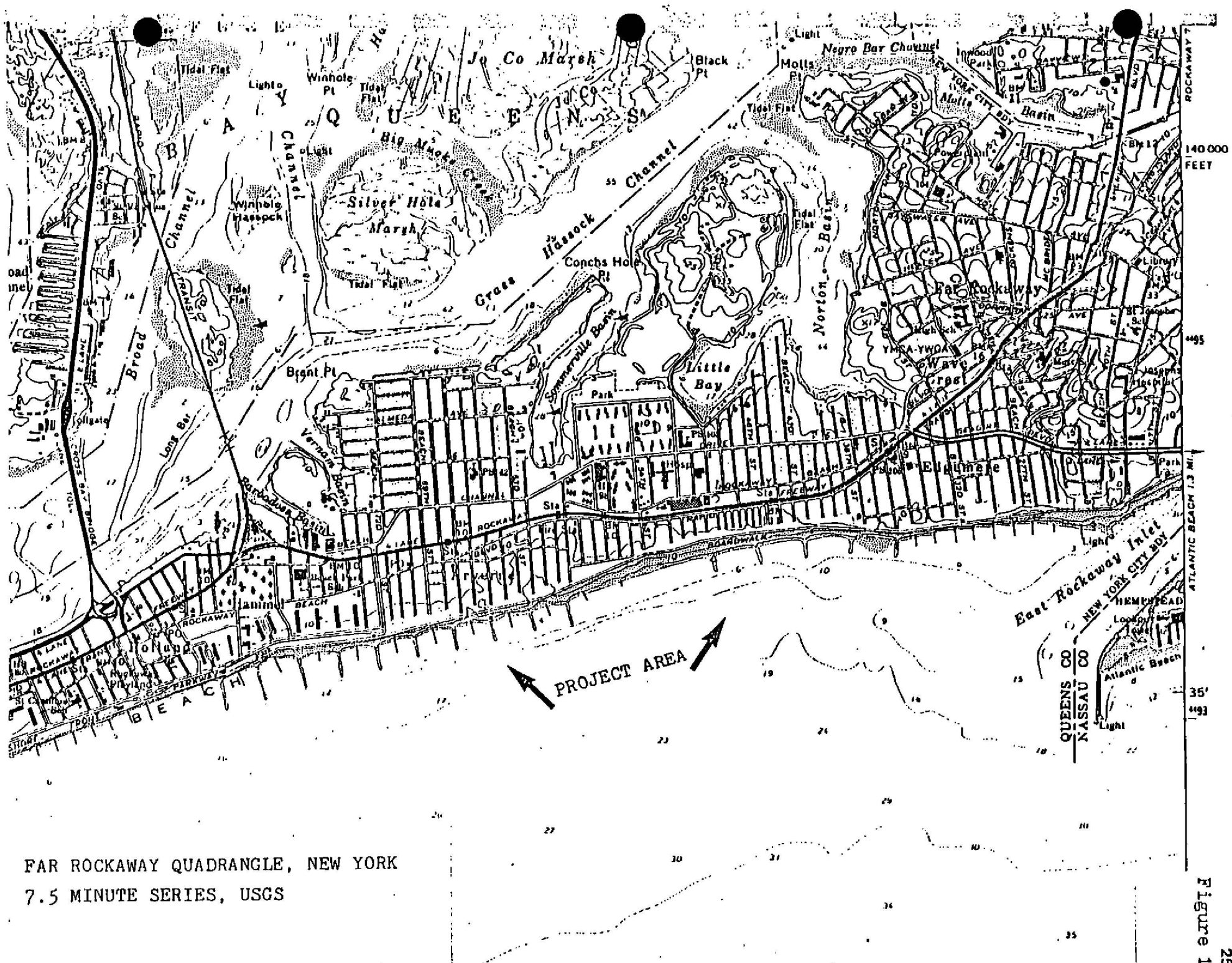
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FAR ROCKAWAY QUADRANGLE, NEW YORK  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES, USGS

PROJECT AREA MAP PROVIDED BY DRESDNER ASSOCIATES, INC

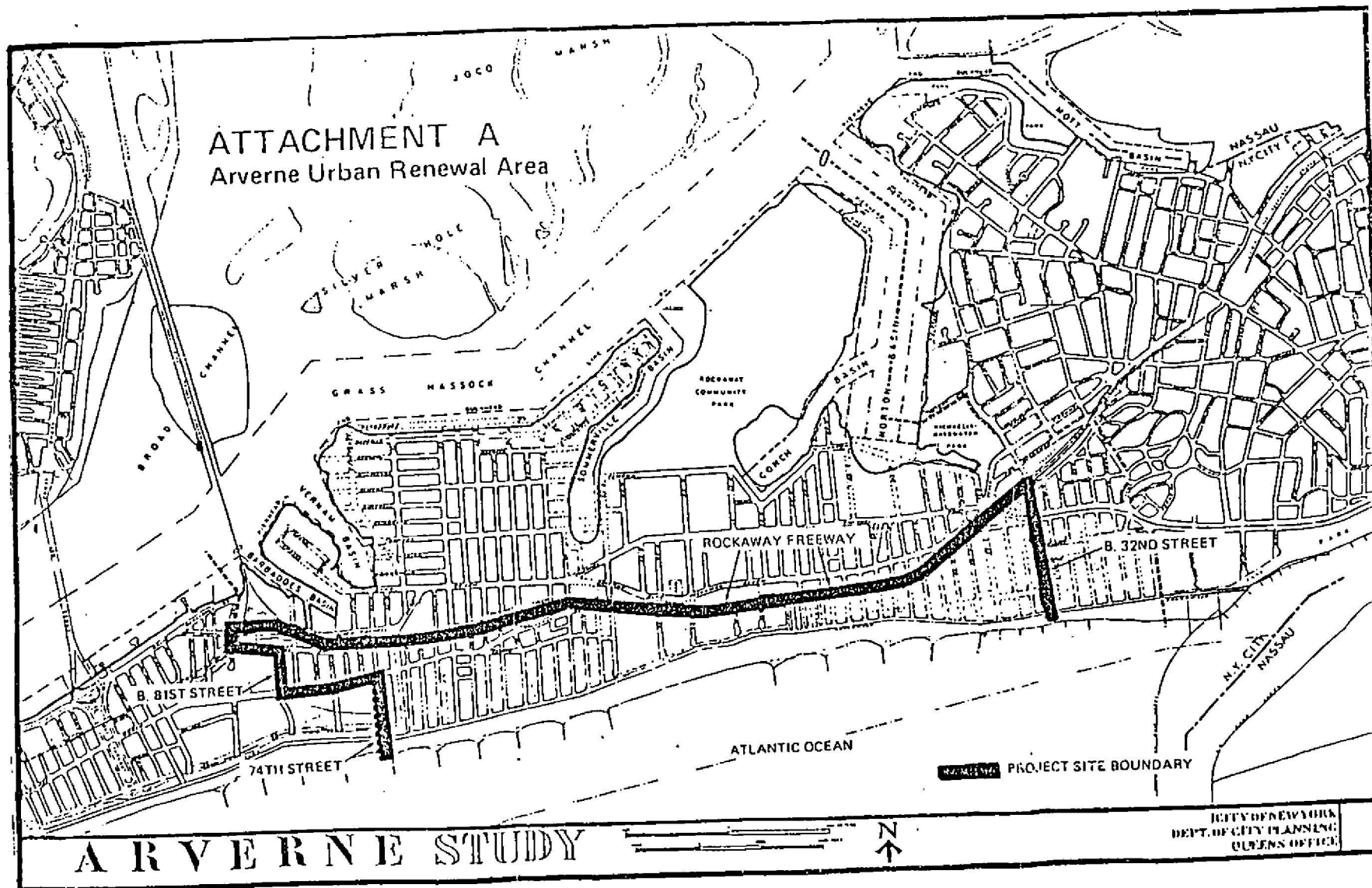
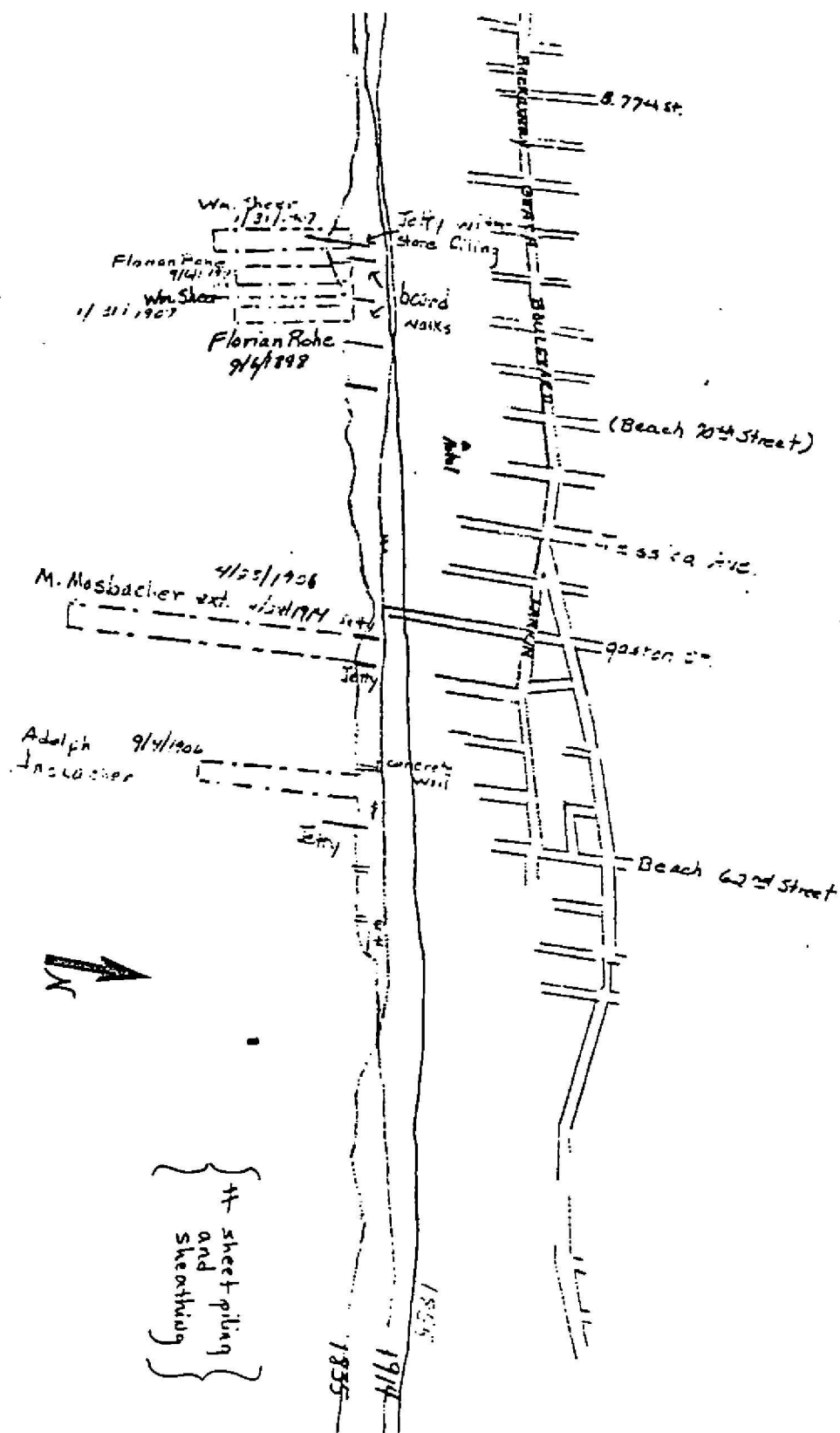


Figure 3

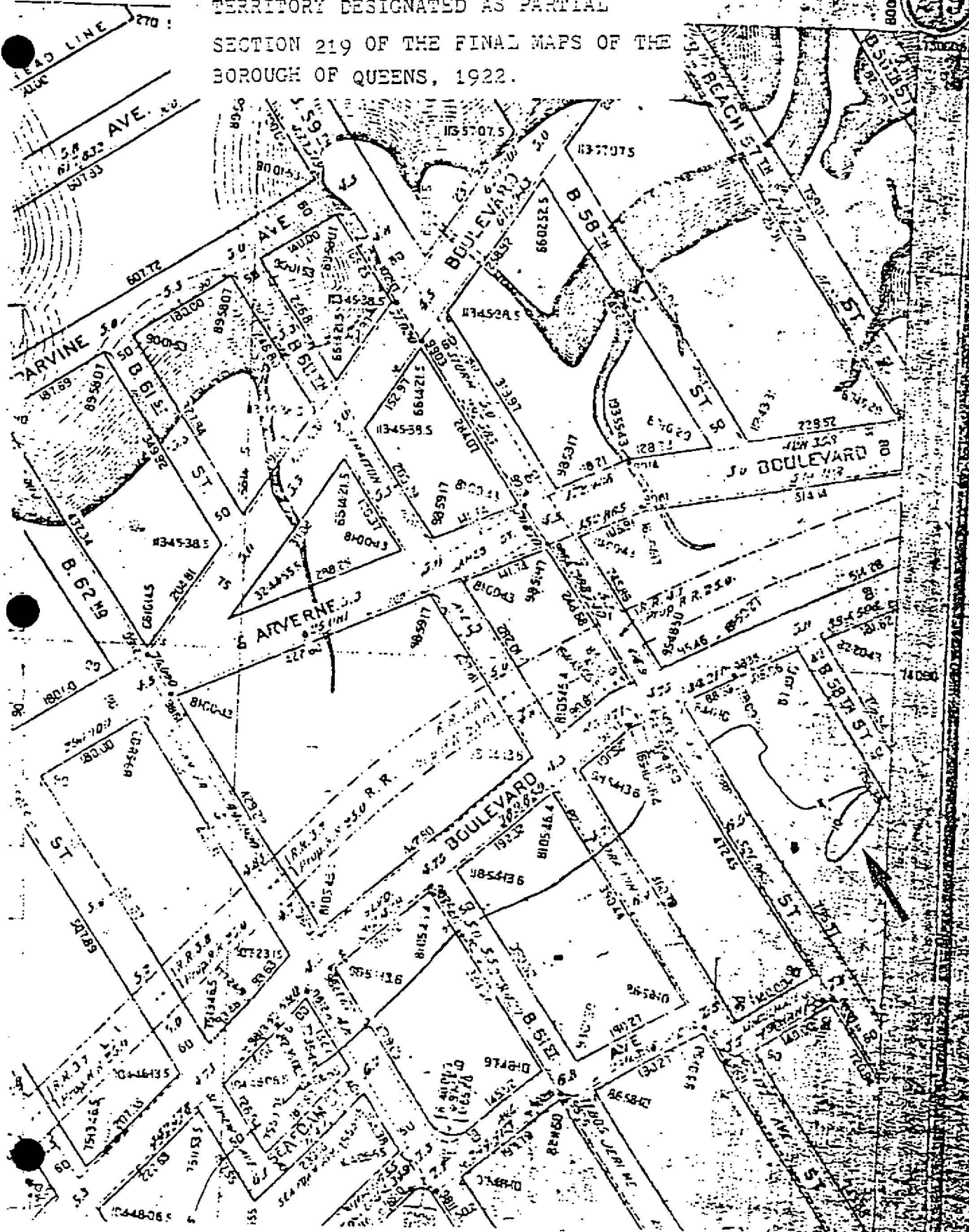
Tracing of "Map of Rockaway Peninsula Showing Change in Atlantic Coastline for Various Periods, Queens Borough Topographic Bureau," 1917.

repository: New York Public Library





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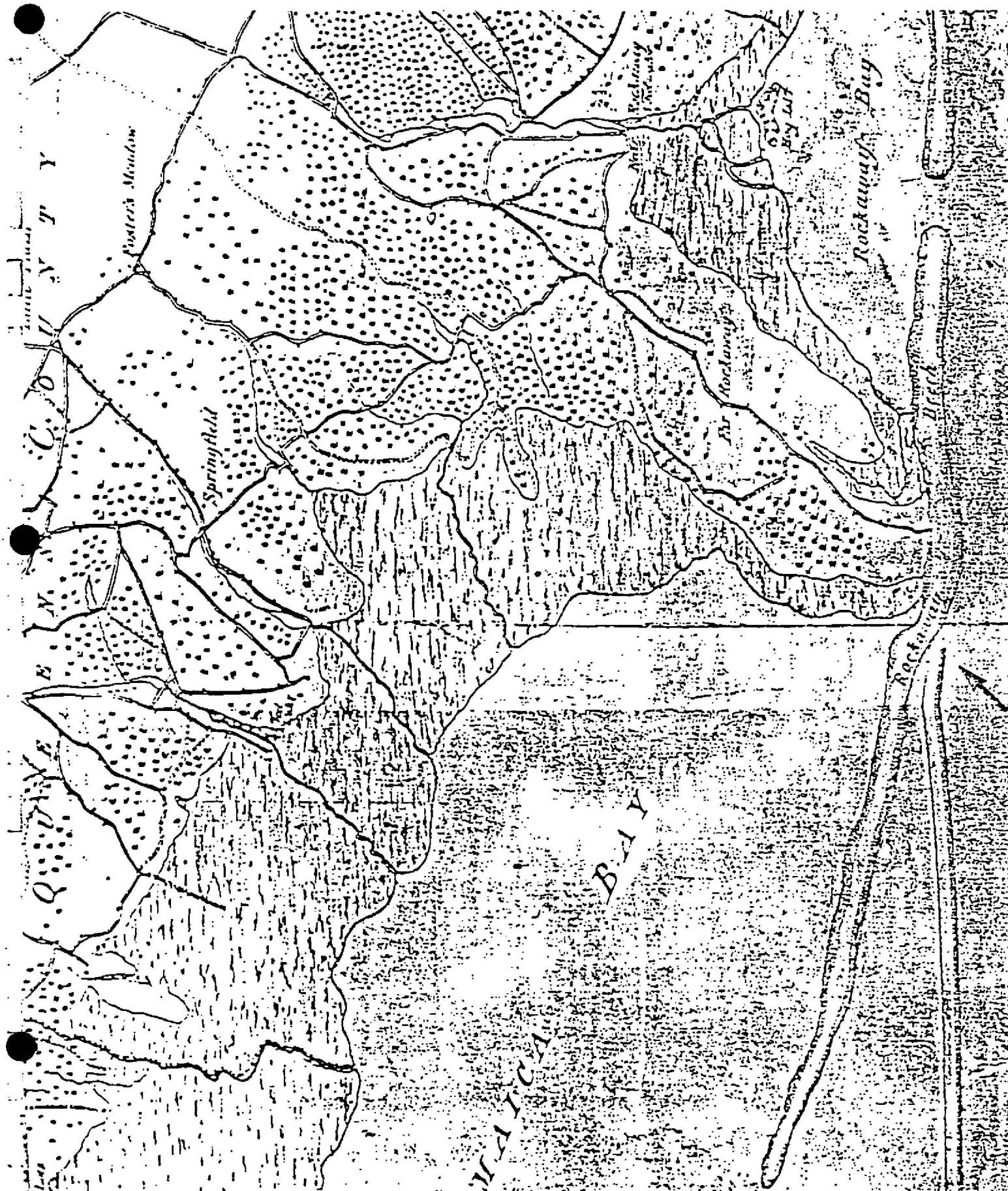
Photocopied from Bolton, 1922: Map 1.



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

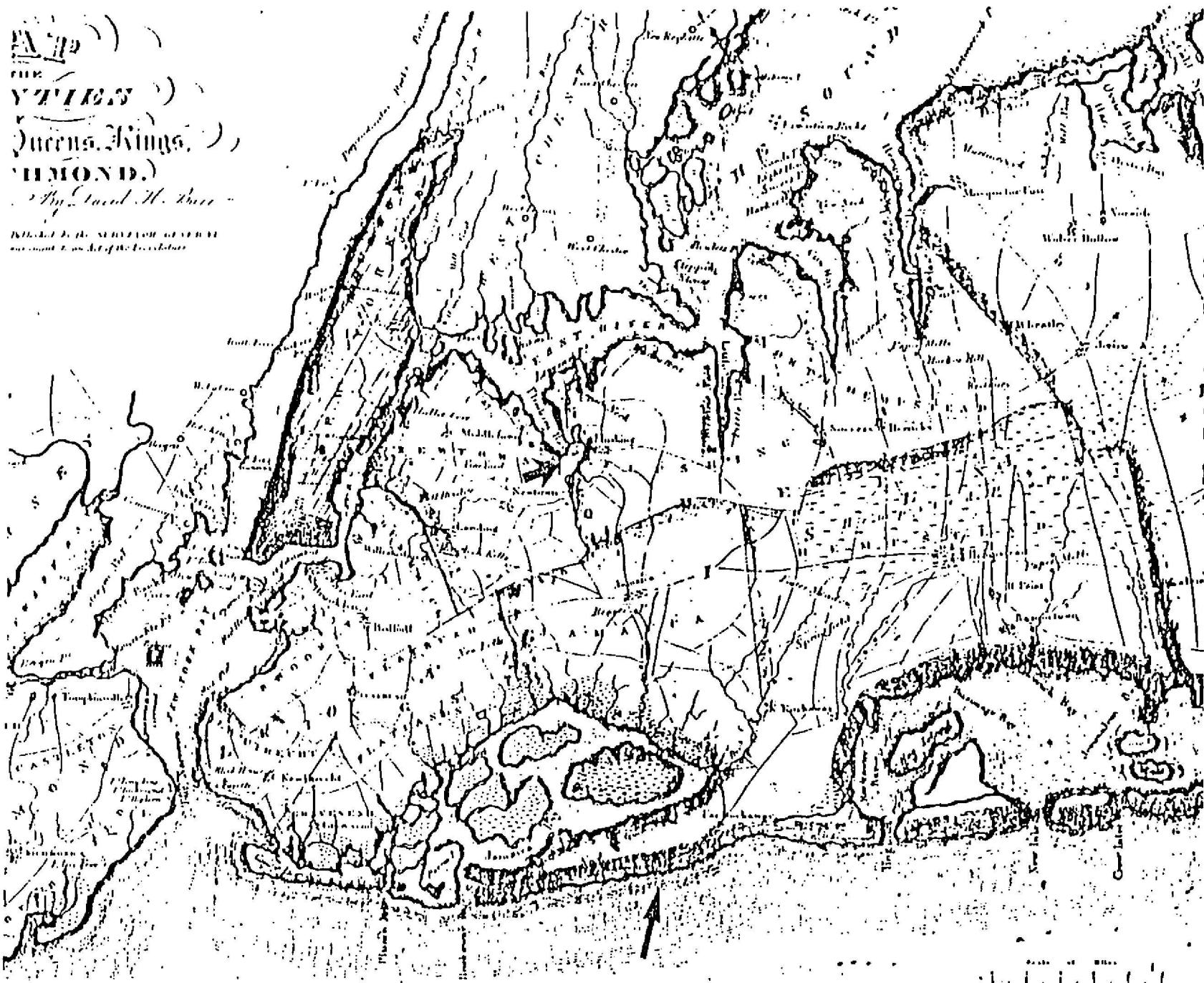


Photocopy of  
Sir Henry Clinton Map, 1781



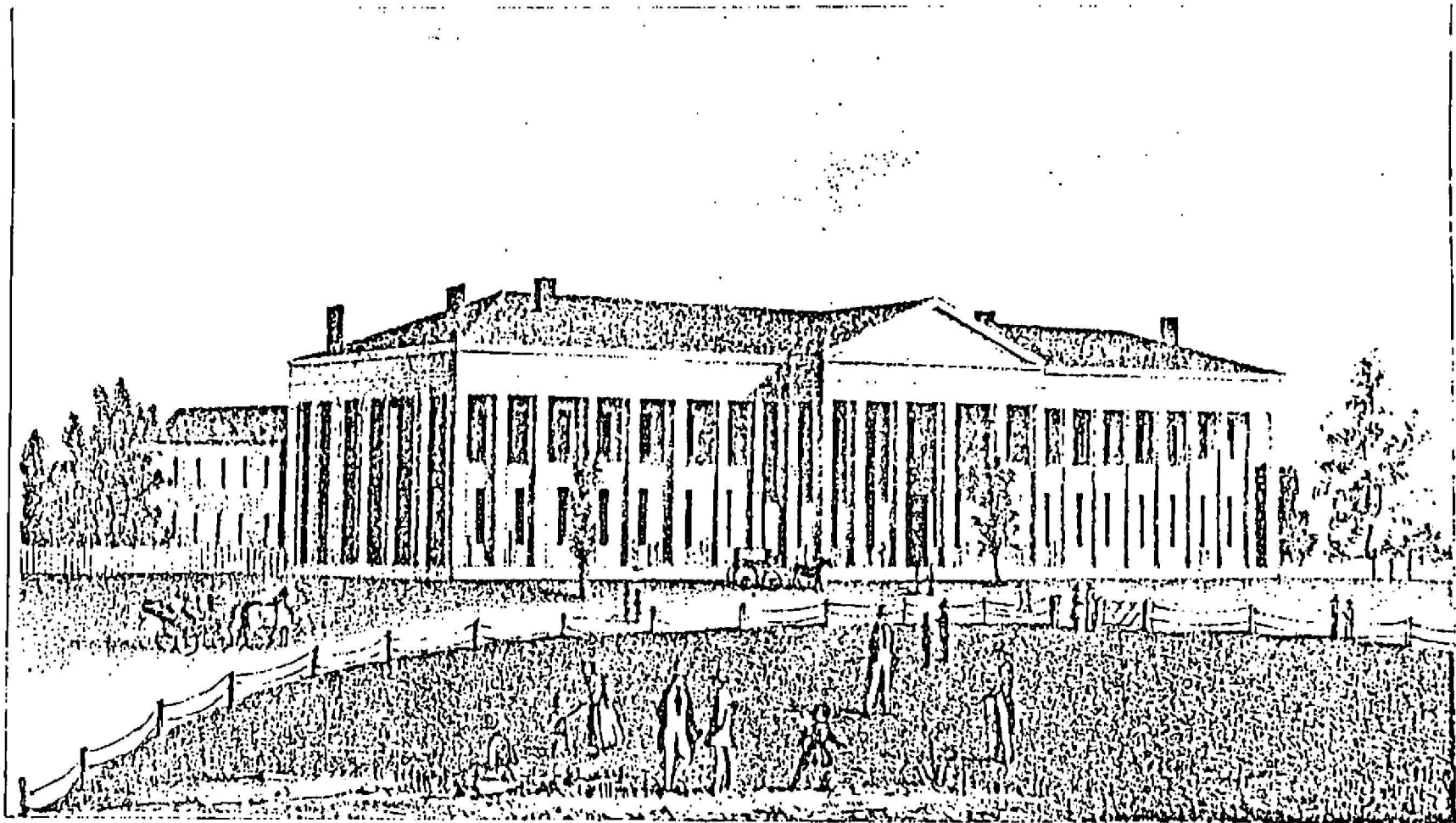
**ATLAS**  
**QUEENS, KINGS, & RICHMOND.**  
*By Isaac H. Burr.*

PUBLISHED BY THE SURVEYOR GENERAL  
 IN OBEYANCE TO AN ACT OF THE LEGISLATURE.



Photocopy of  
 MAP OF THE COUNTIES  
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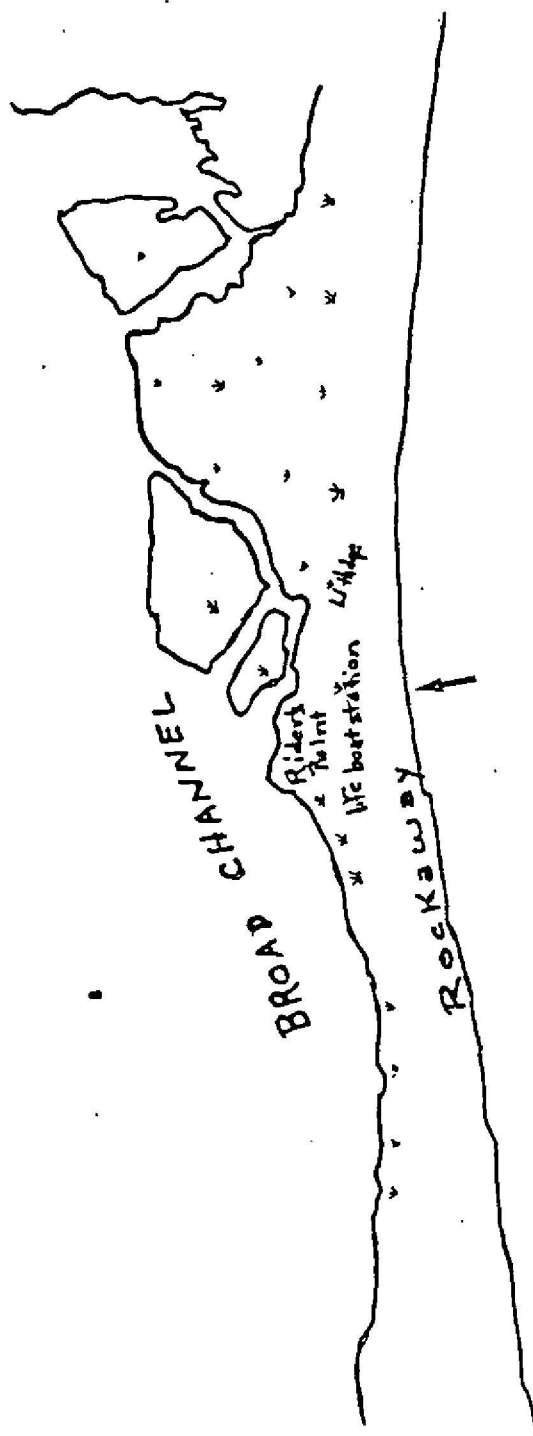
Photograph provided by V. Seyfried

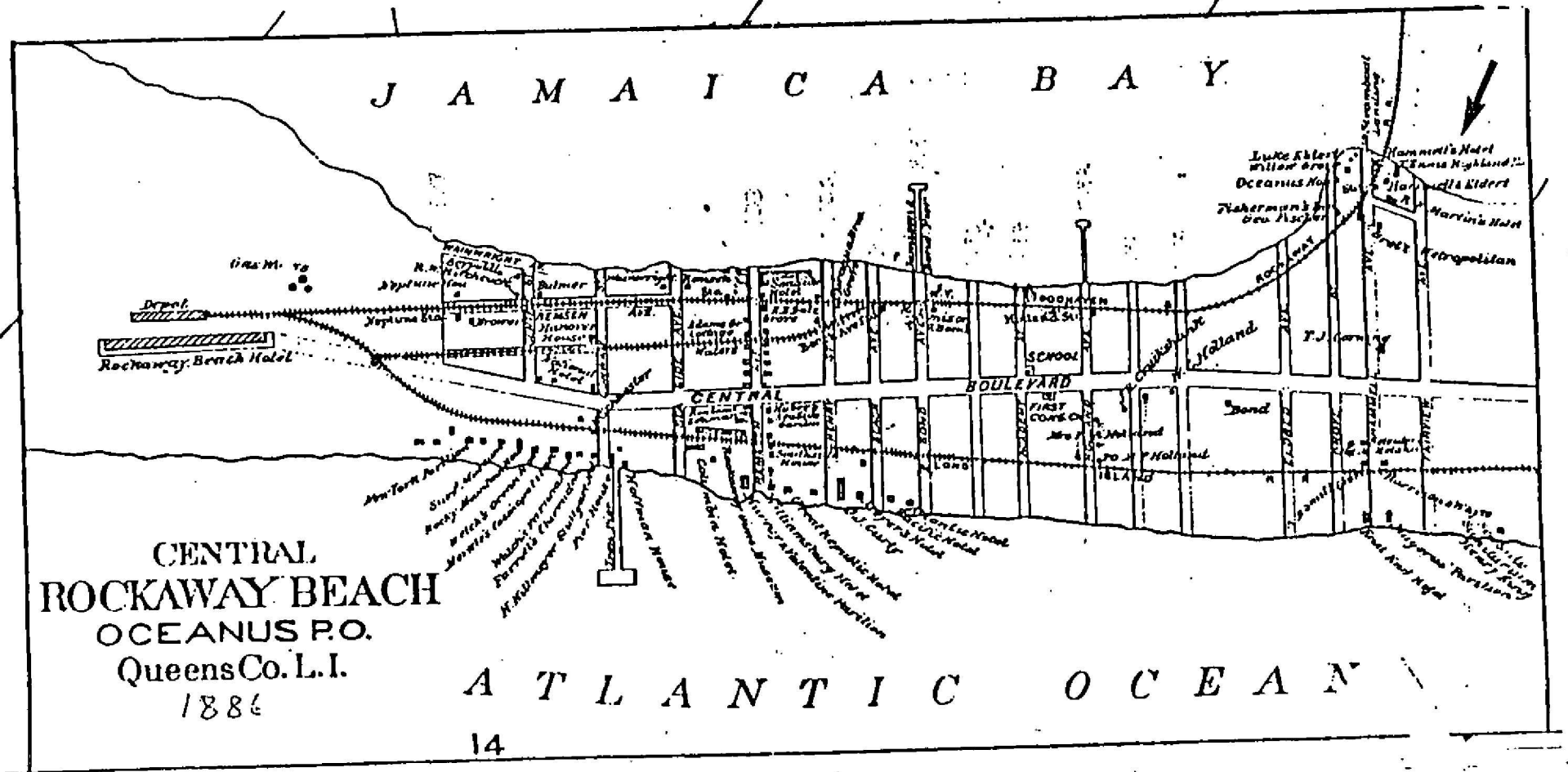


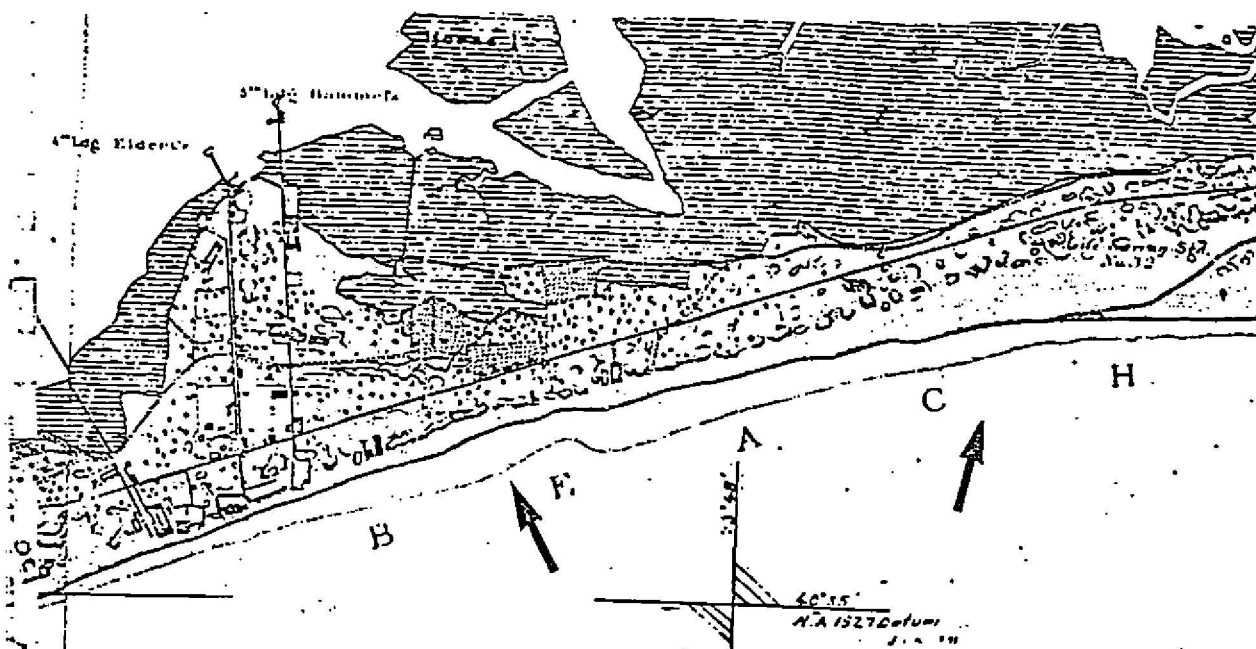
THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Hackaway & Co.

Tracing of  
"Walling Map"  
1859  
repository: New York Public Library







U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

Carlisle P. Patterson, Supt.

1877

ROCKAWAY BEACH

AND

MIDDLE PART OF JAMAICA BAY

LONG ISLAND

NEW YORK

Surveyed by J. W. Donn, Assist.



SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1909.

B

Long Island Real Estate for Sale. | Long Island Real Estate for Sale. | Long Island Real Estate for Sale.

# WE OF ARVERNE

Have Taken a Sane View of the Long Island Situation.

**L**ONG before the East River bridges and tunnels were thought of, Arverne was established.

Long before rapid transit was projected and its effect anticipated in land values, Arverne was a thriving community.

Its situation, between the Ocean and Jamaica Bay, made it the popular seaside suburb. Fashionable hotels and summer cottages sprang up. More elaborate residences followed, and the community developed a business section. Good stores, markets, etc., found patronage. Then came the annexation of Queens County by the City of New York. Police, fire protection and free mail delivery were extended and handsome schools erected by the city.

Arverne reached its capacity for population, and held it in the winter as well as in the summer. It stopped growing because of physical limitations, but its popularity never waned.

The Long Island Railroad then electrified its Rockaway Divisions from Flatbush av., Brooklyn. The Interborough Company extended the New York subway to Flatbush av. It became possible to reach Arverne from this point in TWENTY-TWO MINUTES BY EXPRESS TRAINS, and people came flocking, only to find that Arverne had no room for them.

The Rockaway section grew. Property was in demand. New communities were established and old ones revived. Values increased in proportion to the growth and often exceeded it. Arverne began to feel the necessity for expansion.

## ARVERNE'S NEW ADDITION.

An adjoining unimproved tract was then annexed; owners located; titles cleared, and the work of improvement started.

Energy and brains were not spared. Dwellings, from the pretentious villa to the modest little bungalow, were erected. The near-by shores of Jamaica Bay were subdivided to the interests of the community.

Everything that the skilled artisan and landscape gardener could suggest has been carried out in Arverne's new addition.

Broad streets and boulevards, with a 16-foot parking in centre, planted with shrubbery and flowers, form part of the ornamental scheme.

Side-walks, curbing, sewers, water, gas and electric lights have been installed.

It is doubtful whether there exists a more complete or artistic development. The artificiality employed is nothing in comparison to the beauty of the natural surroundings.

The Long Island Railroad, forecasting what would happen, has taken title to a portion of the new ground for the site of a larger station to replace the old one, just a few feet distant.

NOW the public was to have their long sought opportunity. The new tract, a veritable garden by the sea, is open for inspection. It will be sold to the right kind of people at the right kind of prices, and—

### Values Are Obvious.

Purchasers of this property SEE what they are paying for. Prices are based on actual values. The \$100,000,000 being expended for East River bridges and tunnels are going to increase these values, OF COURSE. But they won't have an effect until they are REALLY in operation. And we have too much to offer right now to allow the future to make any difference. PREPARE THIS THAT MAKE THEIR CLAIMS ON TO-MORROW KNOW THAT THEY ARE WEAK TO-DAY.

It's common sense, too, to argue that such places are getting FUTURE PRICES. We are not asking these, and that's why we don't dwell upon what will happen a year from now.

### The Improvement of Jamaica Bay.

This is something that affects us, as our property is so adjacent to this fine body of water. Partly municipal and partly private, the future of the enterprise is to make of this a harbor that will have no equal on the Atlantic Coast.

Millions are to be expended, and the benefits of this to our vicinity are too great to be estimated.

Moreover, this project has taken definite shape and will be pushed forward to completion as rapidly as possible.

### Get This Free Book.

You who contemplate buying realty, either for home-site or investment, will profit by reading the book "We of Arverne." This volume is a veritable gold mine of information, containing impartial advice of great value to the city dweller.

Artistically bound, handsomely illustrated and an actual find to any library table, this book is yours upon request. But it will interest you ONLY if Long Island interests you, and in order to secure a copy you must WRITE FOR IT TO-DAY.

SOMERVILLE & SOMERVILLE, Selling Agents,

"Arverne's New Addition," - - - - - Arverne, L. I., N. Y.

Brooklyn Office, 192 Montague Street.



8-1-07



## The Lack of Green Grass and Fresh Air

in which the children may romp and play is one of the handicaps of city life—a feature that has made many families seek the country and suburbs. You could not find a better place for them than at Arverne by the Sea. They may run around in safety on the beaches and breathe in the invigorating summer air and grow healthy and robust. They may obtain plenty of outdoor exercise in the warm winter sun.

## ARVERNE BY THE SEA

is an ideal place for children. A new schoolhouse, costing \$100,000, equipped with every up-to-date improvement, has just been completed. Macadamized streets, stone sidewalks, gas, electricity and every convenience. Ample police and fire protection within thirty minutes of the heart of New York upon completion of Belmont tunnel. Excellent train service. Illustrated booklet for the asking.

**SOMERVILLE REALTY COMPANY,**

192 Montague St., Brooklyn.

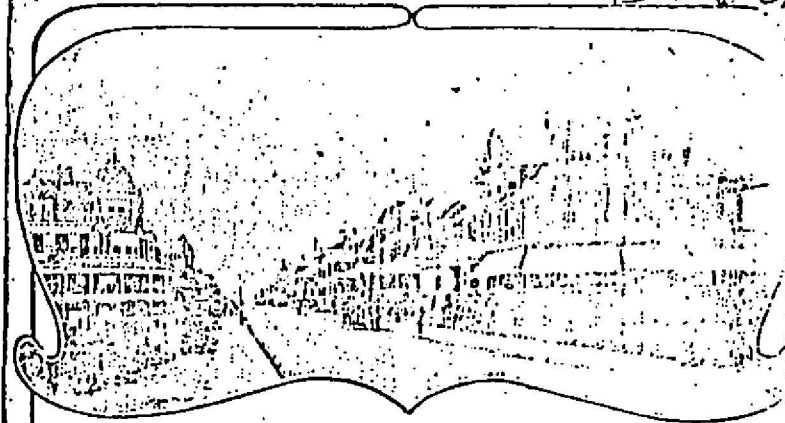
Edw. L. Somerville, Pres.



LONG ISLAND PROPERTY.

LONG ISLAND PROPERTY

E-3-6-6



## The Man That Lives In An Apartment

Thousands of people living in New York and Brooklyn are dissatisfied with the high rents and noise of the apartment. They would move if they could only find the place that appealed to them. If you happen to be among these thousands, you couldn't do better than to inspect the lots we are offering at

## ARVERNE BY THE SEA

One of the most superb residential propositions in or around Greater New York. Located on the line of the Long Island Railroad electric service, where the Belmont tunnel will bring it within thirty minutes of the heart of New York. Still water and surf bathing; boating and fishing. Cool in summer; warmer than the city in the winter. Macadamized streets, stone sidewalks, electric lights, gas, every up-to-date convenience. Schools, churches. Ample fire protection. Inspection welcomed. Illustrated booklet sent to you upon request.

**SOMERVILLE REALTY CO.**

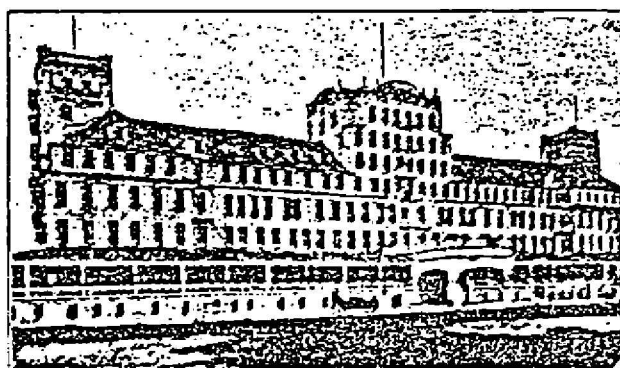
192 Montague Street.

BROOKLYN.

EDWARD L. SOMERVILLE, Pres.

Photocopied from the Brooklyn Eagle.

Photocopied from Bellot, 1917: p. 99.



THE ARVERNE HOTEL.

Photograph supplied by V. Syefried  
Rockaway: view north from Arverne Hotel.  
c. 1903  
Beach 70th Street at left and  
Beach 69th Street at right.

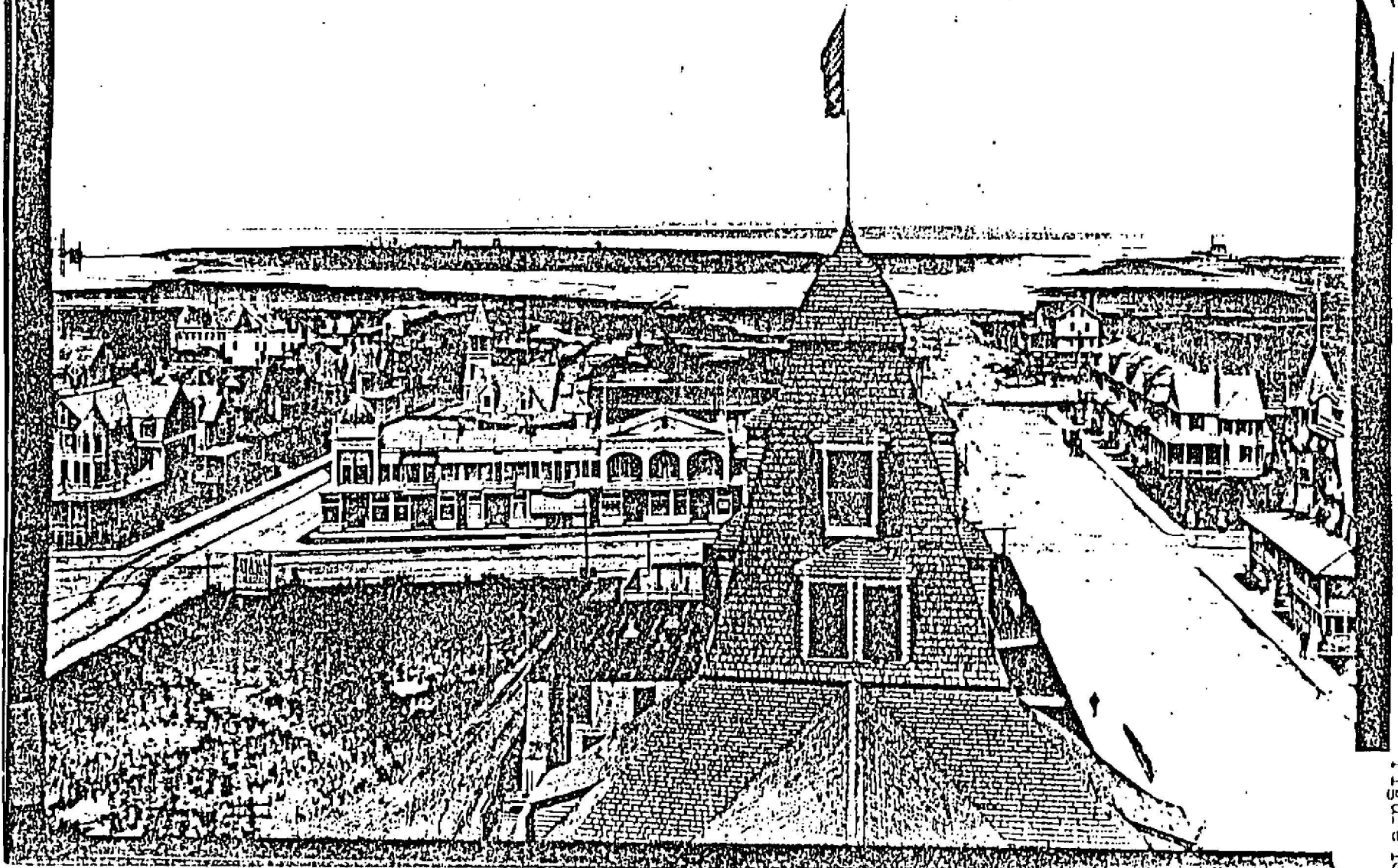


Figure 16

Figure 17

Photograph supplied by V. Seyfried

Ocean Avenue, Arverne: Road ran east behind the dunes  
from Beach 59th Street

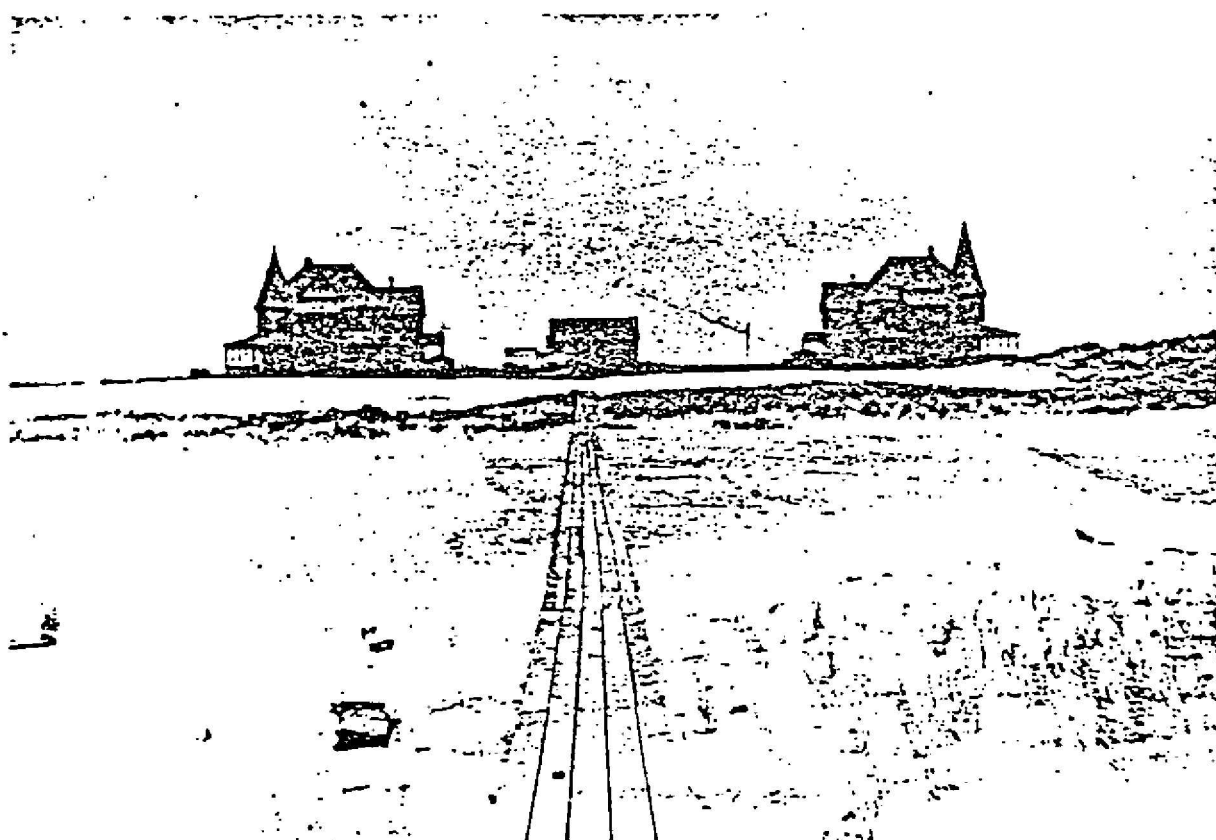
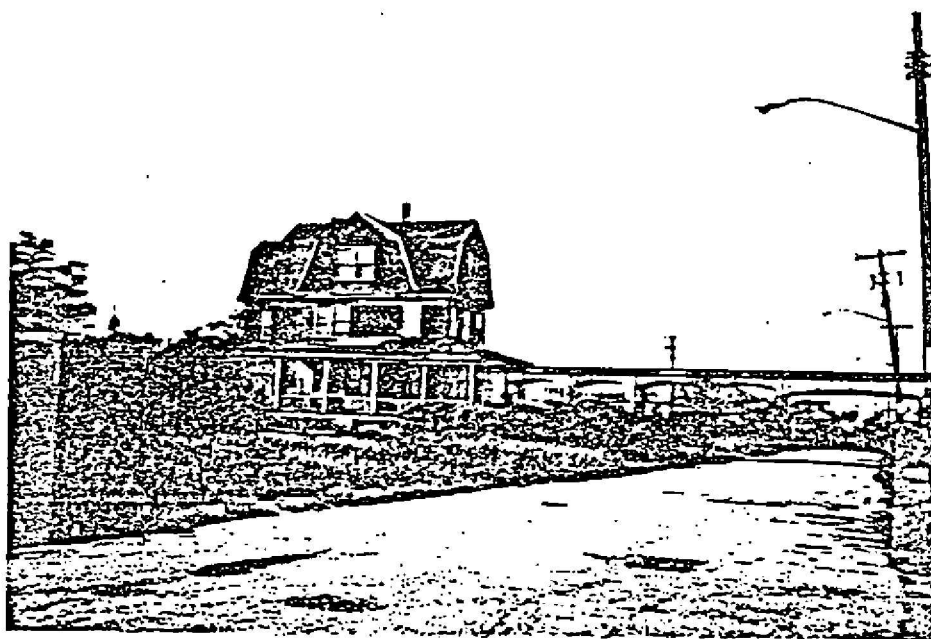


Figure 18

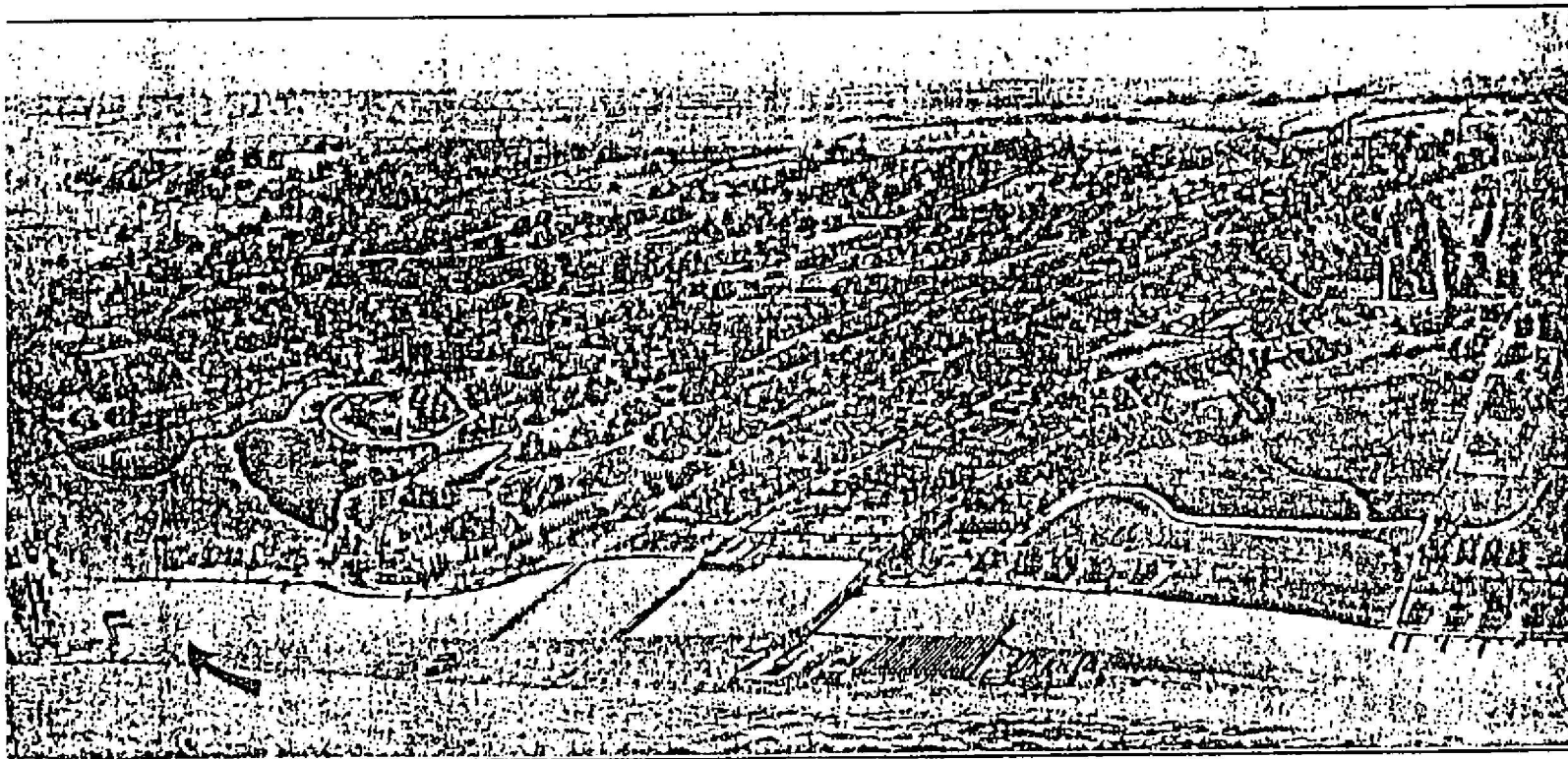
Photograph taken 10/1986, C. Kirkorian

Beach 74th Street, north of Rockaway Beach Boulevard

view: south to north



Photocopied from Bellot, 1917: p. 97



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF FAR ROCKAWAY IN 1900.

Observe the outer bench (Hog Island), since washed away, with its bath houses, restaurants and ferries. Also observe the inlet at Edgemere connecting Jamaica Bay with the ocean. Bayswater and east of Edgemere section was not then built up as it is today.

65

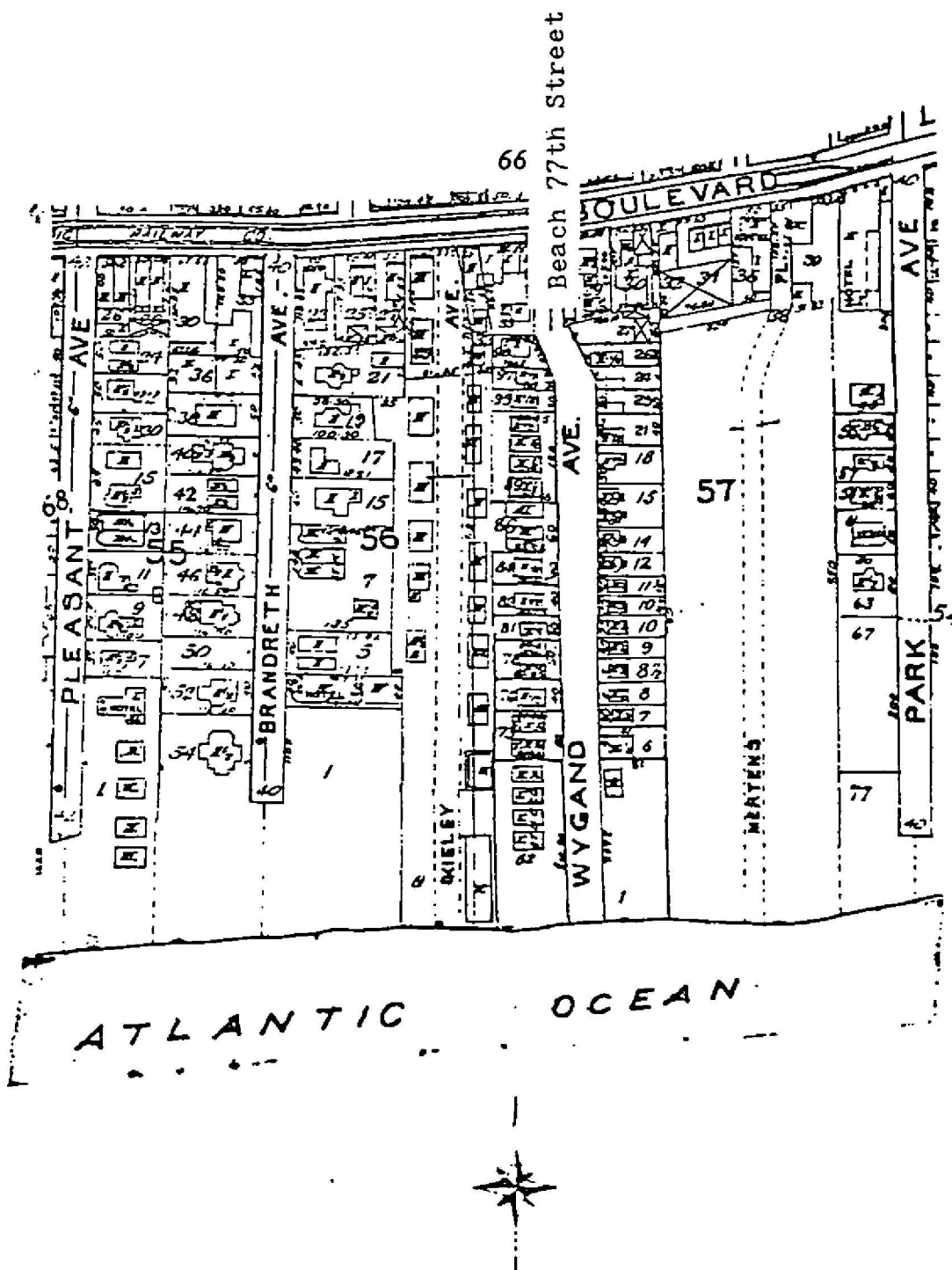
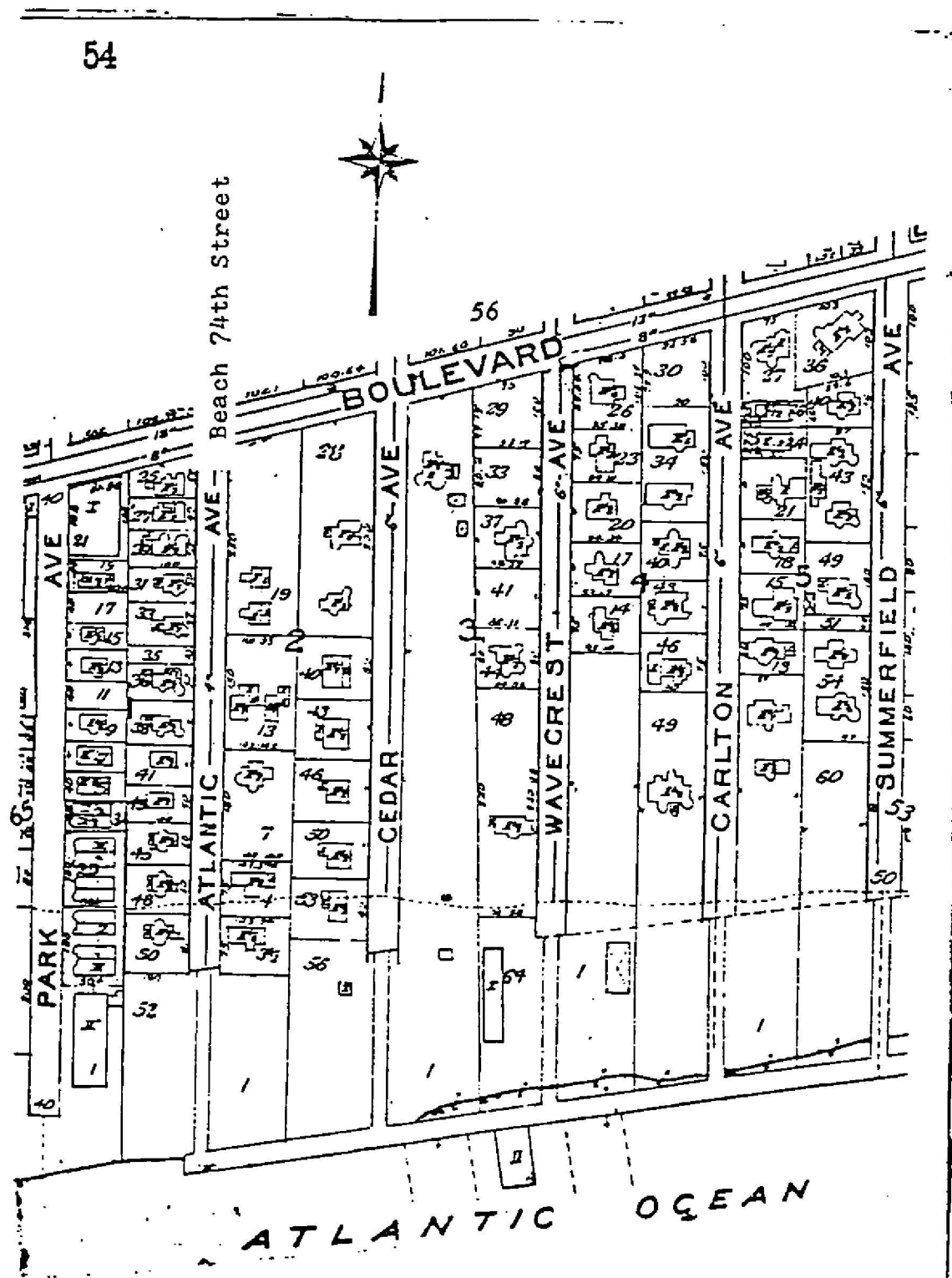


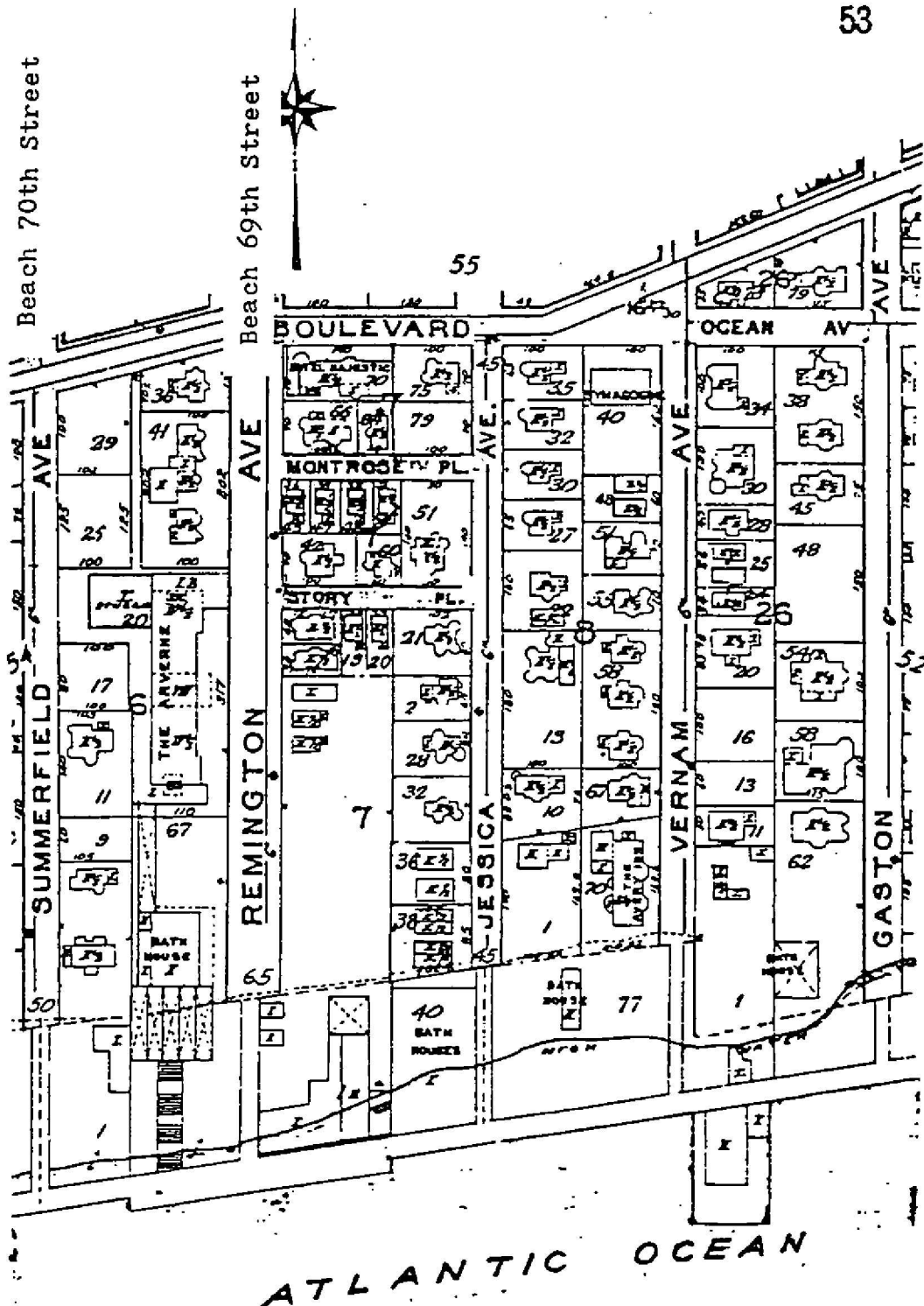


Figure 21

Photocopy of "Minature Atlas of Far Rockaway and Rockaway Beach,  
Queens (Fifth Ward)". E. Belcher Hyde Map Co., Inc. 1912  
repository: New York Public Library

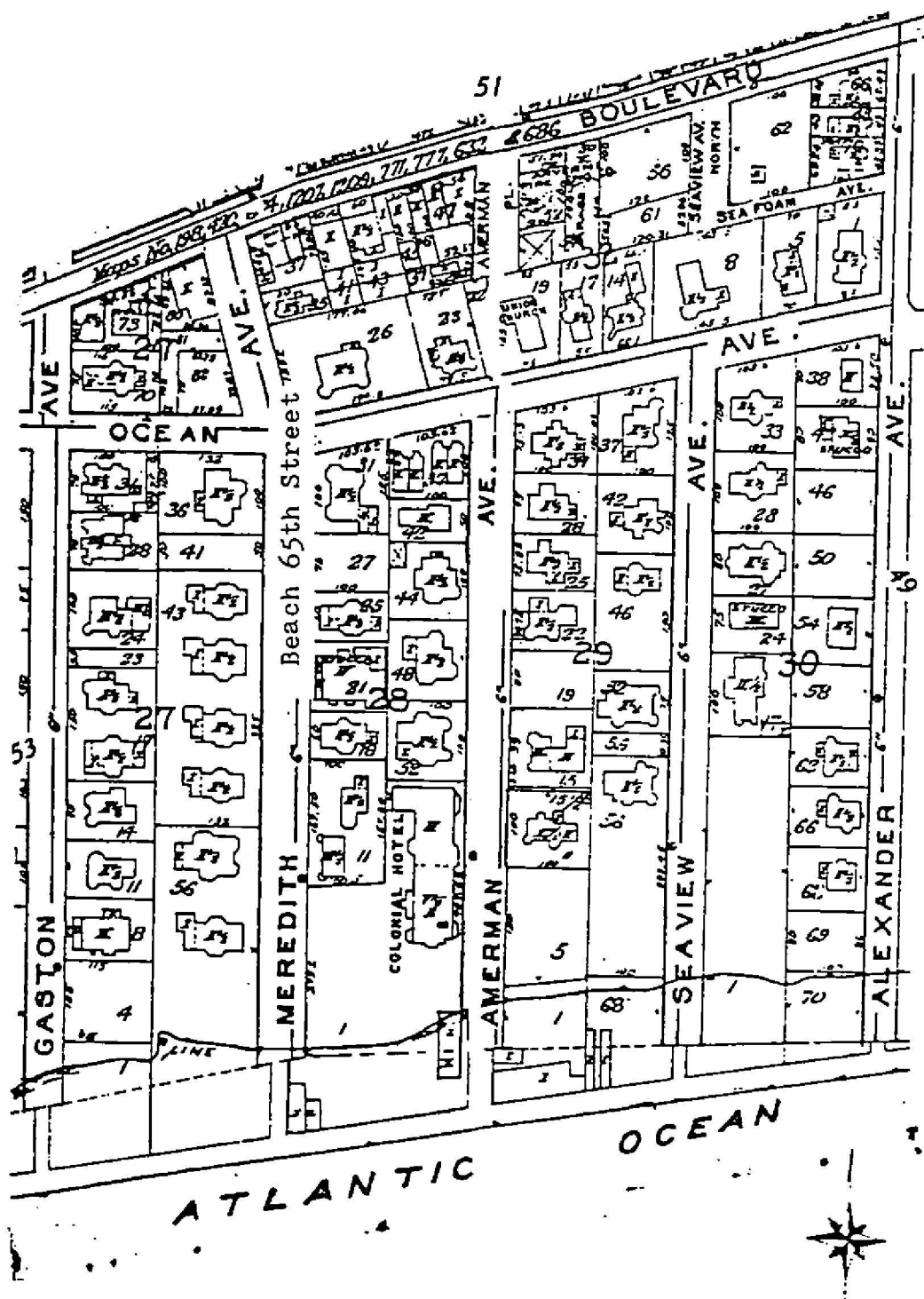


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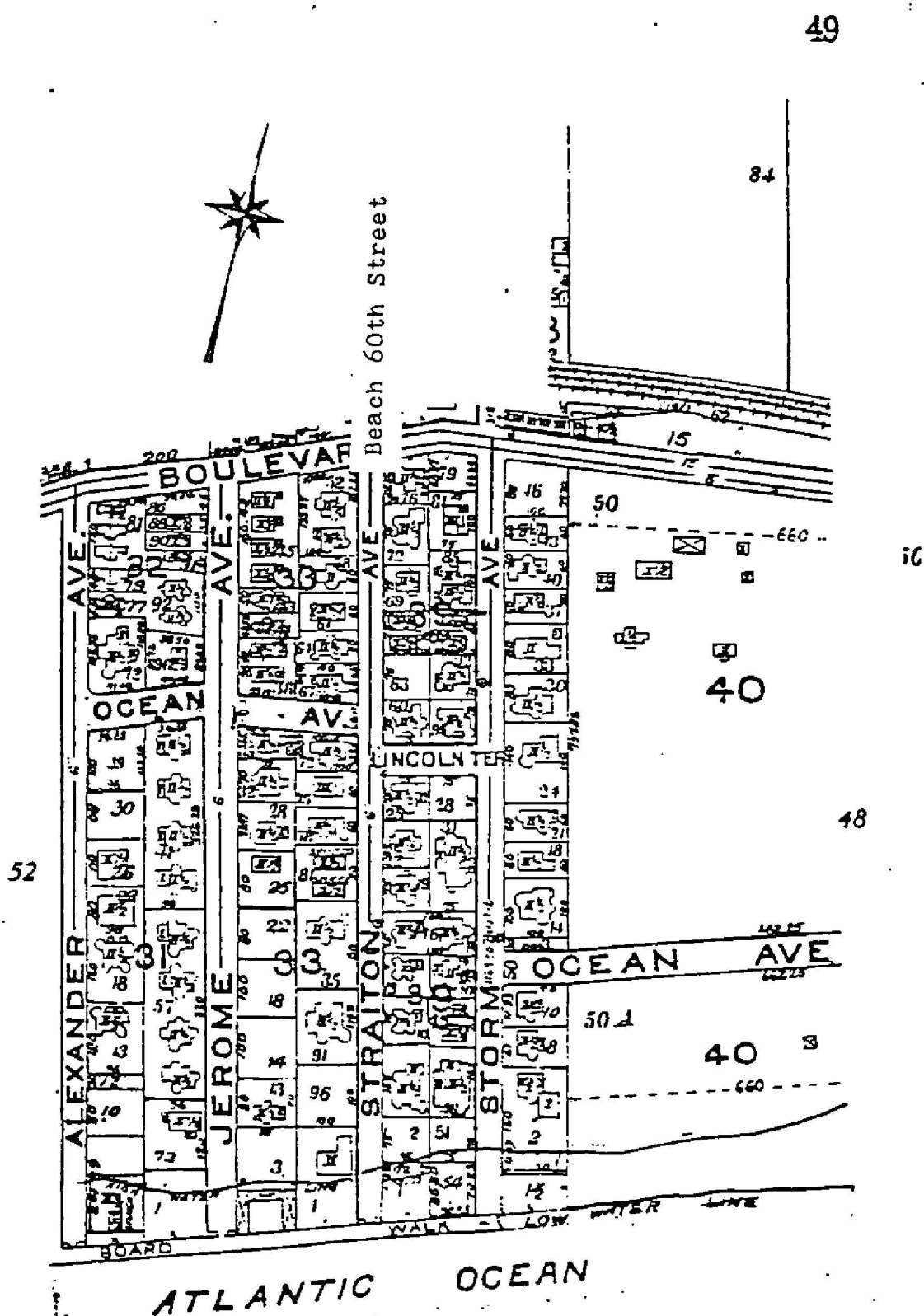


Photocopy of "Minature Atlas of Far Rockaway and Rockaway Beach,  
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repository: New York Public Library

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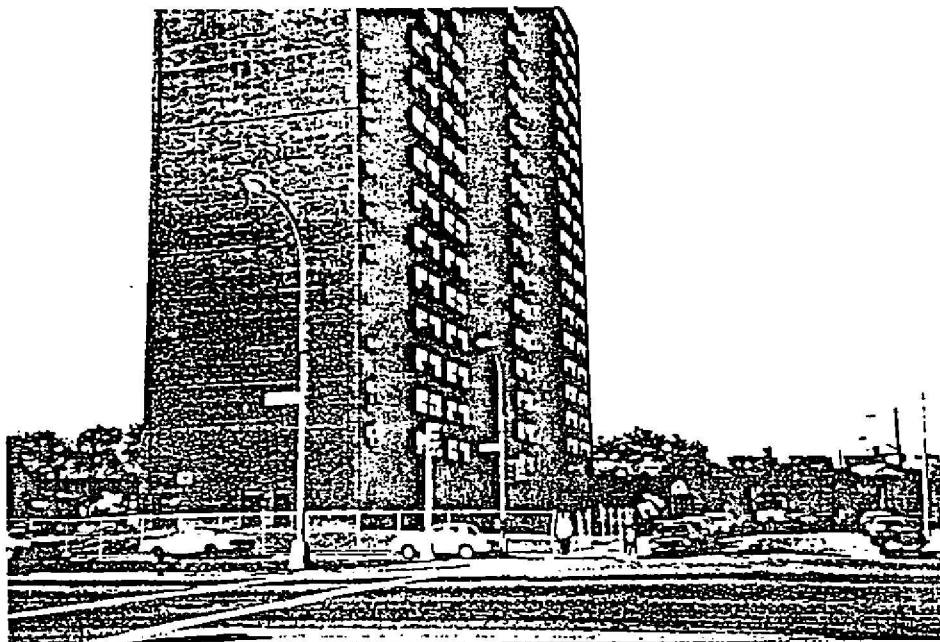


Photocopy of "Minature Atlas of Far Rockaway and Rockaway Beach,  
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repository: New York Public Library

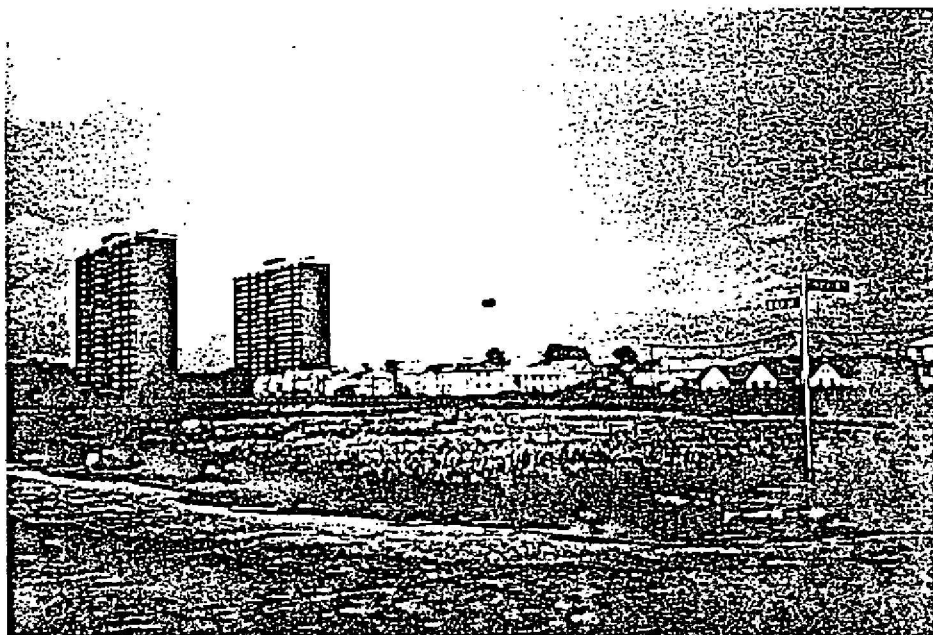


## Photographs 1 and 2

Sea View Tower. Northern limit of Urban Renewal Area at the intersection of Front Parkway and Beach 32nd Street. View: south to north.



Northeastern sector of Urban Renewal Area. Note the one and two story bungalows fronting on the eastern boundary of the AREA and the Sea View Towers in the rear. View: southwest to northeast, from intersection of Beach 32nd Street and Sprayview Avenue.



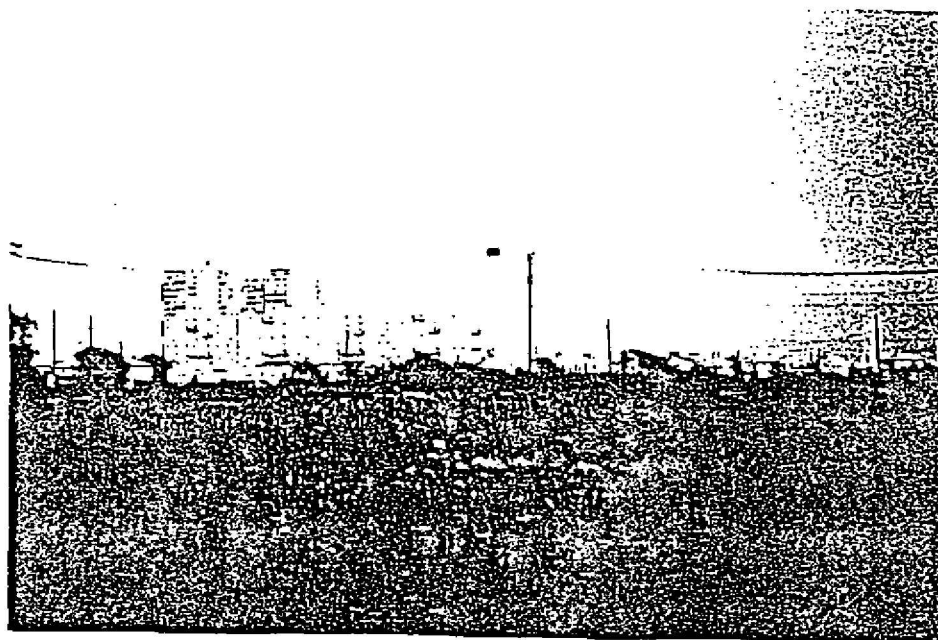
## Photographs 3 and 4

Boardwalk, cleared land, and beach at the terminus of  
Beach 43rd Street  
View: west to east



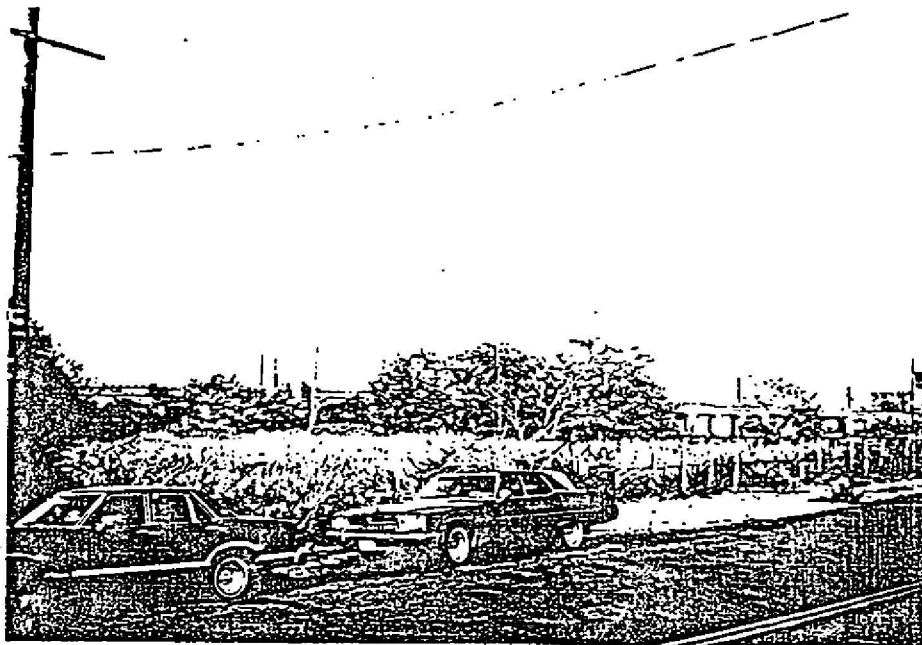
Cleared land at Beach 65th Street and Larkin Avenue. Note the  
Ocean Village complex in background and the one and two story  
private residences that front on Beach 60th, 61st, and 62nd  
Streets.

View: west to east.



## Photographs 5 and 6

Northwestern sector of the Urban Renewal Area, cleared land between Beach Channel Drive and the Elevated.  
View: southwest to northeast, at Beach 80th Street.



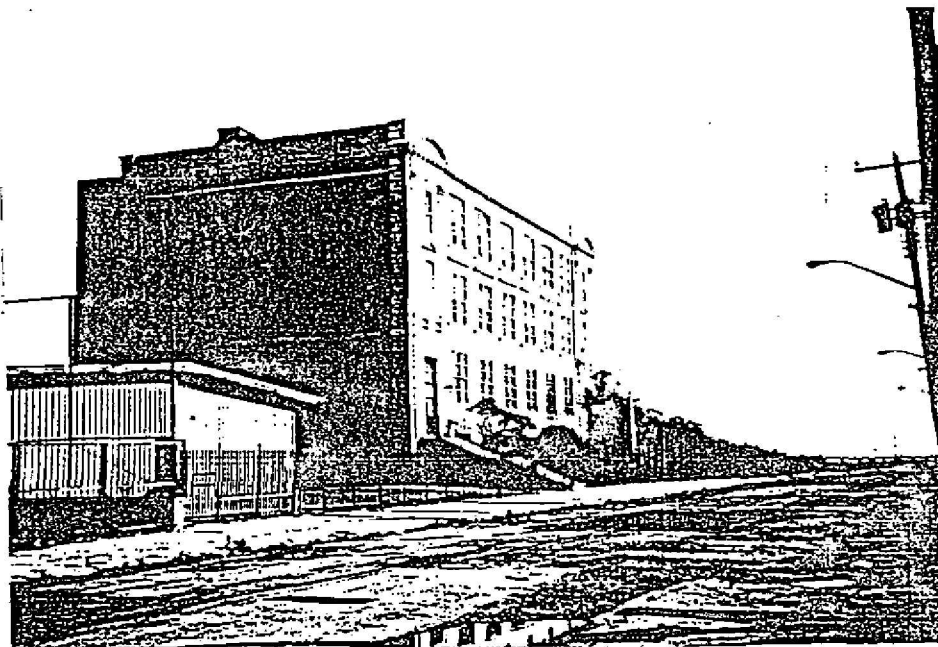
Beach Channel Drive, from Beach 80th Street.  
View: west to east





## Photographs 7 and 8

P. S. 106, between Beach 34th and Beach 35th Streets.  
view: northwest to southeast, from the intersection of Beach  
35th Street and the Rockaway Beach Boulevard.



Beach 38th Street with view of Elevated in rear.  
View: south to north





THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK ALBANY, NY 12234

Search Results:

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM  
Prehistoric Site File

Date: 8 October 1986

To: Ceca Kirkorian  
Historical Perspectives  
P.O. Box 331  
Riverside, CT 06878

Area Searched: Site Location as shown in your letter of Sept. 29th

Our staff has conducted a search of our data files for locations and descriptions of prehistoric archeological sites in New York State which are within the area indicated above, as requested.

The results of the search are given below. Please refer to the NYSM site identification numbers when requesting additional information.

If specific information requested has not been provided by this letter, it is likely that we are not able to provide it at this time, either because of staff limitations or policy regarding disclosure of archeological site data.

Any questions regarding this reply can be directed to Philip Lord, Jr., at (518) 473-1503 or the above address.

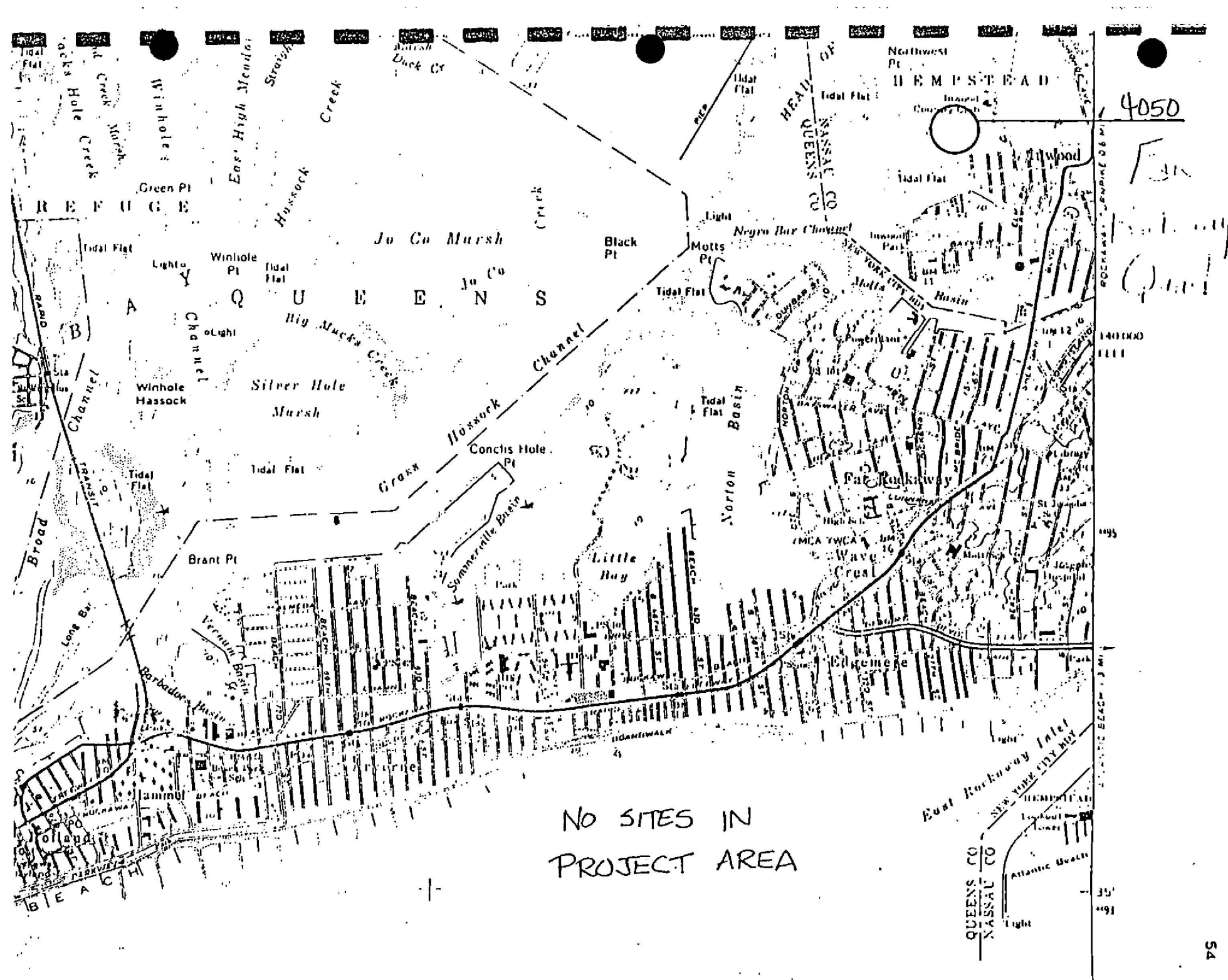
RESULTS OF THE FILE SEARCH:

4050 - ACP NSAU\*

Campsite

\*This notation refers to Arthur C. Parker's Archeology of New York State (1922).

SEARCH CONDUCTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)  
Staff, Office of the State Archeologist



NO SITES IN  
PROJECT AREA

ARCHITECTURE

## ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN'S ANALYSIS

### XI. ARVERNE URBAN RENEWAL AREA: HISTORIC BUILDINGS REPORT

The entire Arverne Urban Renewal Area, stretching from Beach 32nd Street, westward to Beach 81st Street, south of Rockaway Beach Boulevard, was surveyed during the month of November 1986. The survey was undertaken to identify any extant buildings of architectural and/or historical interest that would be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or would be eligible for designation as a New York City Landmark. Most of the area is now vacant and there were few buildings to review.

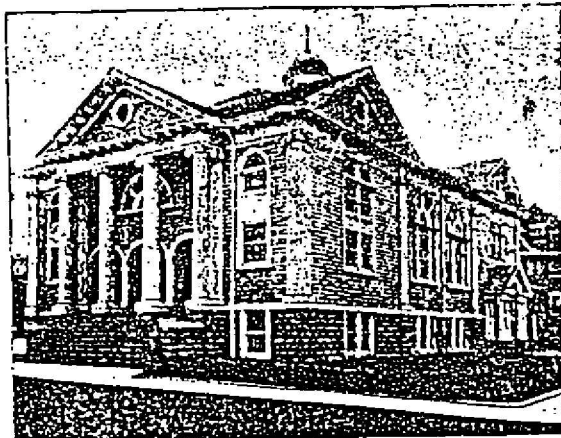
The area of Rockaway Peninsula now known as Arverne is a narrow strip of land set between the Atlantic Ocean on the south and Jamaica Bay on the north. This sandy tract was uninviting for permanent settlement and it was not until the 1880s that several summer homes appeared in the area. The neighborhood was named by and for an early landowner and resident [Remington] Vernam. Vernam was an active speculator who, with other local landowners, leveled the sand dunes, laid out streets, and sold off plots of land. The early residential development culminated in the construction of the Arverne Hotel in 1888. Arverne-by-the-Sea, as it was called in the late nineteenth century, began as a traditional summer colony, catering primarily to a middle class Protestant clientele. However, by the turn of the century, Jewish New Yorkers were vacationing here and many of the summer cottages were built by this community. By the first decade of the twentieth century, Arverne had become one of the leading Jewish resorts in the area. The houses erected here ranged from individually owned Colonial Revival style homes built on a substantial scale to small bungalows, many of which were rented for the season. The bungalows were known in the Yiddish vernacular as "kuchalane," literally meaning "cook alone"; that is, the tenants did their own cooking. After World War II, as people began to vacation farther from the city, Arverne and other areas of the Rockaway's lost popularity and began to deteriorate. In the 1960s the city declared Arverne an urban renewal area and most of the land was cleared.

Two buildings dating from Arverne's period as a popular resort are still extant. One of these buildings, Congregation Derech Emunah Synagogue located at 199 Beach 67th Street at the southwest corner of Rockaway Beach Boulevard, is unquestionably eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and, therefore, is also eligible for listing on the New York State Register of Historic Places. The building is also eligible for designation as a New York City Landmark, and was, in fact, so designated in 1978; this designation was rescinded by the New York City Board of Estimate. The second extant building is a Colonial Revival style house on the west side of Beach 74th

Street between Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Beach Channel Drive. This building may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue

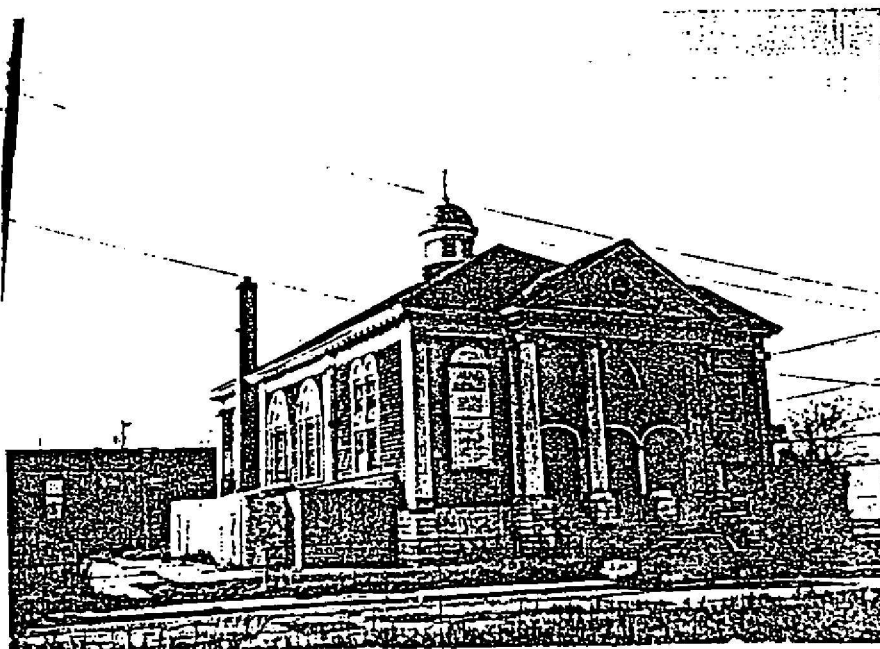
This synagogue is the most important standing building in Arverne and is one of the finest synagogues in New York City. The building was the religious and communal center of this Jewish resort community. The Colonial Revival style wooden building was designed by William A. Lambert and built in 1905-06. The Colonial Revival was the style most commonly used for resort architecture at the turn of the century. The style is often associated with houses and clubs, but it was also appropriate for a synagogue. America's oldest synagogue, the Truro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, is a Colonial structure. As Colonial architecture became a model for late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings the Newport building influenced synagogue design. The Arverne synagogue is a rectangular structure, but Lambert used a series of design motifs to give the buildings its special character and impressive sense of grandeur. These motifs include a series of large triangular pediments, an Ionic portico, Ionic pilasters, and large round arched windows filled with stained glass. A rooftop cupola called attention to the building from a distance and marked the structure as one of the major community facilities in Arverne. The importance of the building in its community is accented by the fact that it is one of only two buildings in Arverne illustrated in Alfred H. Bellot's discussion of Arverne in his History of the Rockaways. (See below, photocopied from Bellot, 1917, Bellot's Histories, Inc., Far Rockaway: p. 101.)



ARVERNE SYNAGOGUE—DERECH EMUNOH.

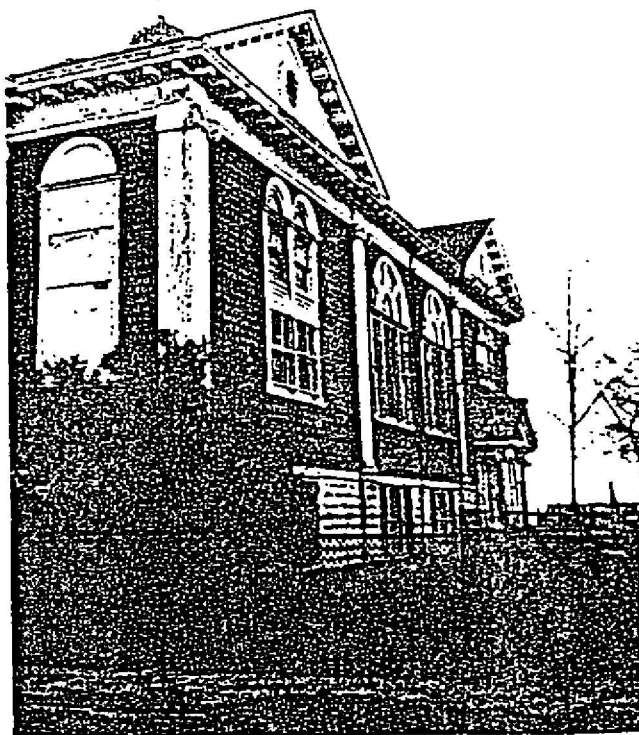
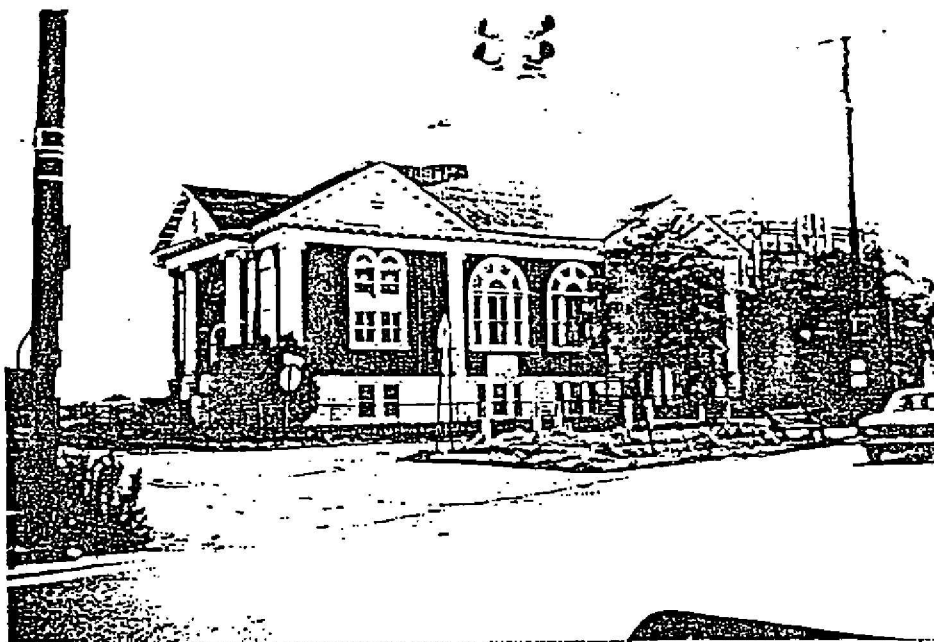
On November 15, 1977, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the designation of the synagogue as a landmark (LP-0978/see Appendix 2). On January 10, 1978, the synagogue was designated a New York City Landmark. The Commission found that the building has a "special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, history and cultural character of New York City" and commented in its findings on the design, the buildings social importance, and on its survival. Several weeks after the Commission's action, the Board of Estimate reversed the designation, citing the fact that the building was in an urban renewal area. The condition of the synagogue has deteriorated since 1978, but it remains a building of great distinction and is unquestionably eligible for National Register listing.

Photographs (10/1986-Kirkorian; 11/1986-Dolkart)

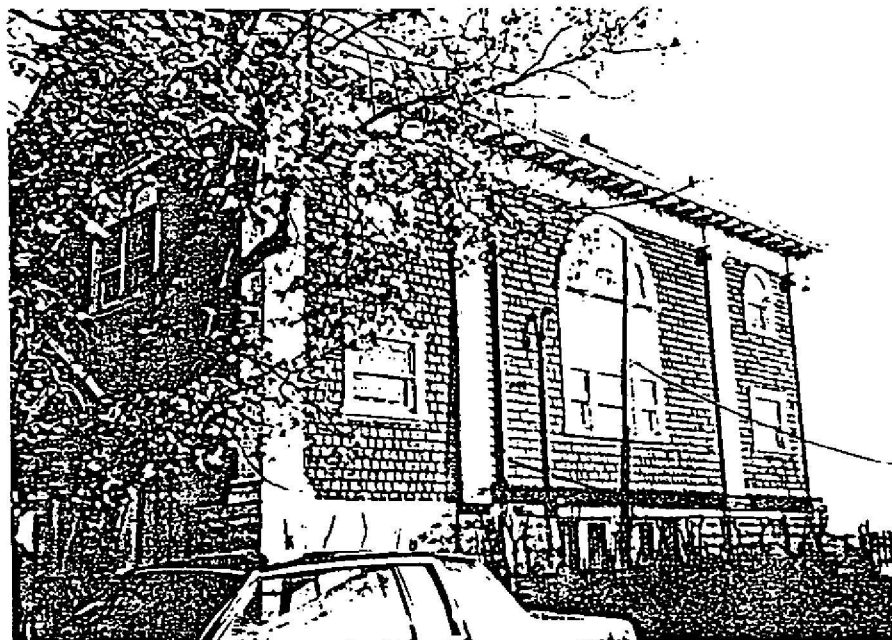
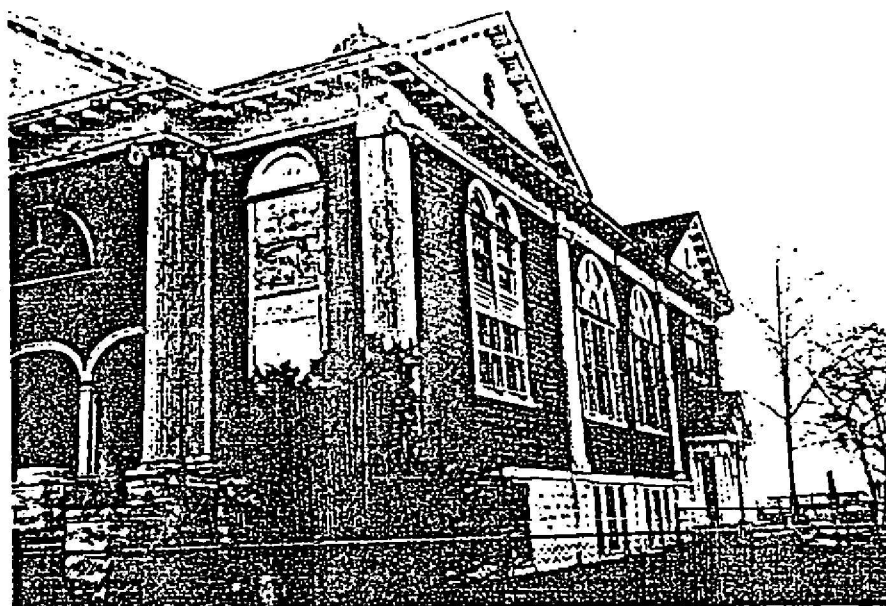




Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue



Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue



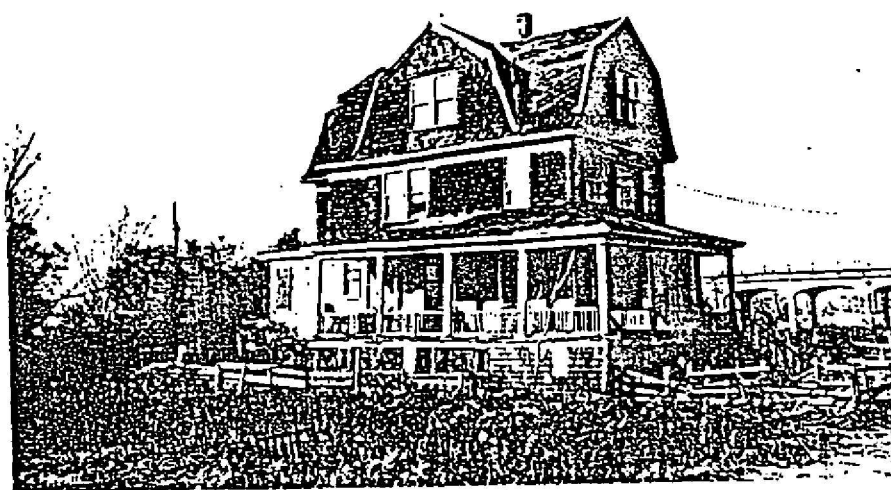
### Beach 74th Street House

The eligibility of this house for the National Register is somewhat problematical. The building is a three-story shingled Colonial Revival style structure with an L-shaped porch and cross gambrel roof. The house is typical of those erected in beach resorts in the northeastern United States at the turn of the century. The building is a handsome structure, but it is not an extraordinary work of architecture. It is, however, the only notable residential property surviving from Arverne's most important period of development. As a rare survivor it is of interest. Were the New York State National Register Board of Review to consider the building for listing on the National Register of Historic Places they would be interested in the integrity of the interior as well as the exterior. The building may be eligible for National Register listing, but it is difficult to make a final judgement. This type of issue was discussed with Kathleen LaFrank of the New York State Office of Historic Preservation and she also could not give a firm answer. It is doubtful that the building would be eligible for designation as a New York City Landmark.

### Photographs (11/1986-Dolkart)



Beach 74th Street House



Landmarks Preservation Commission  
January 10, 1978, Designation List 112  
LP-0978

CONGREGATION DERECH EMINOH SYNAGOGUE, 199 Beach 67th Street, Arverne, Borough of Queens. Built 1905-06; architect William A. Lambert.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 15939, Lot 1 in part.

On November 13, 1977, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Congregation Derech Eminoh Synagogue and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 6). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. The Commission has received several letters in favor of designation. There were no sneakers in opposition to designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Congregation Derech Eminoh synagogue is an impressive reminder of the importance of this section of the Rockaways during the early 20th century, when the area was a stylish Jewish summer colony known as Arverne-by-the-Sea. Designed in the elegant neo-Georgian style by the architect William A. Lambert, this shingle-sided synagogue was erected in 1905-06 to meet the needs of the rapidly growing Jewish community nearby.

The village of Arverne-by-the-Sea was founded by a prominent New York lawyer, Remington Vernam (d.1907), who purchased the land with the intention of creating a summer resort within a short commuting distance of Manhattan. Arverne, which was named in honor of its founder, was incorporated in 1895 and by 1907 it was described as "one of the most conspicuous seaside resorts ever erected ... it remains as a cluster of magnificent structures to mark the memory of the man who had lived to realize his fondest dream." (*The Wave of Long Island*, July 6, 1907). The summer colony consisted of several large luxury hotels, frequently visited by prominent New Yorkers, a long boardwalk, and many summer cottages which were erected throughout the early years of the 20th century.

The Ashkenazim Jews who had begun vacationing in the Rockaways during the 1880s, conducted what were probably the first formal Jewish worship services in Queens. The earliest services in this summer community were held above a local drygoods store until the Temple of Israel was erected on Beach 84th Street in 1900. Four years later, when the rapidly expanding Jewish population of the area needed another synagogue, services were held temporarily in the Arverne Hotel Casino. Shortly afterward, a building fund was begun for a new synagogue to be called "Derech Eminoh," meaning "The Way of the Just" in Hebrew.

The cornerstone for the new building was laid on August 13, 1905, and just less than a year later, on July 8, 1906, the handsome synagogue was formally consecrated. Israel Unterberg, a Manhattan shirt manufacturer, served as the first president of the trustees. The early years of the synagogue, when it was used only during the summer months, are described in *The Changing Face of New York Synagogues, 1730-1974* (Yeshiva University Museum, 1977):

...vacationers were known to attend Friday night services in their best dress. In years when the High Holy Days fell before summer's end, as many as 500 to 600 people would attend services and an overflow crowd would have to be accommodated elsewhere.

The architect of the synagogue, William A. Lambert, designed several other structures in the community during the early years of the 20th century, including a large hotel and a number of summer cottages. Lambert, a resident of Queens,

The shingle-sided Congregation Derech Emanoah synagogue is representative of what the prominent architectural historian, Vincent Scully, has termed the "shingle style." Popular in resort towns such as Newport and Nantucket during the late 19th century, the shingle style characterized many seaside residences and was typical of the Colonial Revival architecture of the period. The synagogue combines the use of shingles with a variety of elegant neo-Georgian details, creating a distinctive and handsome building which is reminiscent of American colonial architecture.

The Congregation Derech Emanoah synagogue is a large rectangular building set above a high rusticated stone basement. It is enriched by the contrast between the brown of the shingled walls with the white of the details -- the columns, pediments, cornice, door and window trim -- which gives the building a rather delicate character, counterbalancing its size.

At the narrow Beach 67th Street facade, a long flight of steps leads up to an impressive entrance portico composed of four Scamozzi Ionic columns supporting a deep entablature with a handsome modillioned cornice which extends around the entire building. A large triangular pediment, with modillions along the rake and central oculus enframed by a wreath, crowns the portico. Behind the portico, Scamozzi Ionic pilasters, which recur at the other sides of the building, flank either side of the central section, where a wide triple-arched entranceway creates a graceful rhythm across this facade. Above the central arch of the entranceway is a large semi-circular stained-glass window with radiating mullions above a smaller arch. This motif also occurs in the transoms of the large stained-glass windows at the other sides of the building. At either side of the entrance facade, which is articulated at the corners by Scamozzi Ionic pilasters, a narrow double-height stained-glass window unit is enframed by slender wood pilasters. A wood spandrel panel separates the two square-headed windows of this unit, which is surmounted above the transom bar by a round-arched transom. Variations on this double-height type of fenestration also occur at the sides of the synagogue.

At the long Larkin Street side of the building, four Scamozzi Ionic pilasters which carry an entablature below the deep modillioned cornice divide the facade into three sections. Above the two end sections are large triangular pediments, similar to that on the main entrance facade. At the far right, the double side doors have an arched transom with interlacing muntins and are flanked by paired Scamozzi pilasters with a long vertical panel set between each pair. The low paneled porch of this entrance is carried on paired columns and has an arch over the doorway. Directly above is a small, double square-headed window unit with blind round-arched transoms. At the center section of this long facade, two large stained-glass triple windows with wood mullions supporting transom bars have elegant round-arched transoms. At the left, paired double-height windows, a variation on those at the main entrance, add further diversity to this side of the building. At the other long side of the synagogue, the fenestration is somewhat similar to that of the Larkin Street side. Paired double-height window units with round-arched transoms flank the central section which also has two large stained-glass windows with round-arched transoms.

At the narrow rear facade, Scamozzi Ionic pilasters divide it into three sections of unequal width. At the wider central section, the single large stained glass window unit has three square-headed windows separated by three paneled spandrels from the round-arched transom above. At either end of this facade, the square-headed windows of the lower level contrast with the small round-arched ones above.

The hipped roof of the synagogue displays a variety of profiles, reflecting the three large pediments. Rising from the center of the roof is an elegant cupola with small Ionic columns set between louvered grilles and handsomely crowned by a dome with a finial topped by a Star of David.

The Congregation Derech Emanoah synagogue is one of the few surviving buildings of the fashionable Jewish architectural style of the late 19th century.



## 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 Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue 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 Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue is a handsome shingle-sided building elegantly designed in the neo-Georgian style and crowned by a cupola, that it was erected to meet the needs of the growing Jewish population of the summer community of Arverne-by-the-Sea, that it is an impressive reminder of the stylish Jewish summer colony which thrived in the area during the early 20th century, and that the synagogue still has an active congregation today and continues to play a vital role in the community.

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 a Landmark the Congregation Derech Emunoh Synagogue, 199 Beach 67th Street, Arverne, Borough of Queens, and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 15939, Lot 1 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.