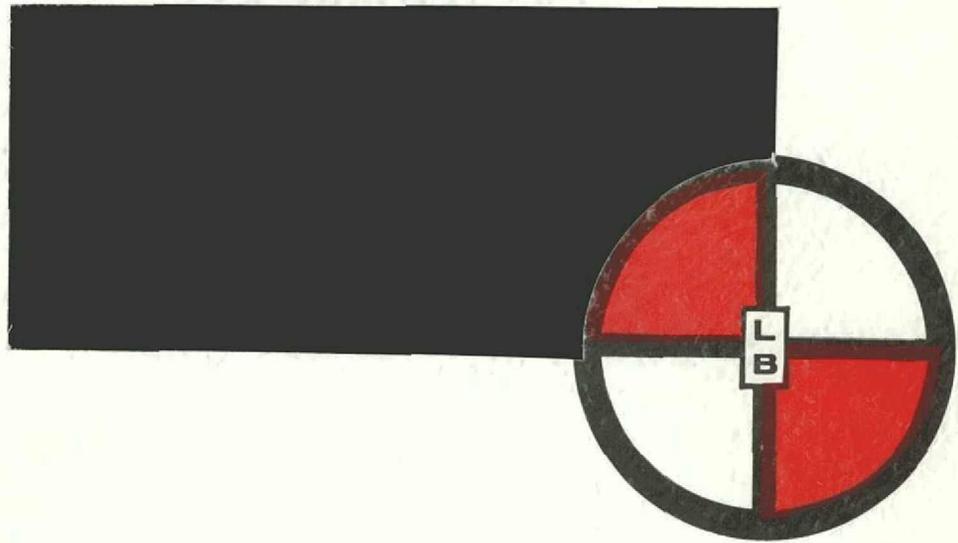


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A PHASE IA CULTURAL RESOURCE
ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED
CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IN ROSSVILLE,
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

CEQR NO. 88-071R

1988

PREPARED FOR:

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

PREPARED BY:

LOUIS BERGER & ASSOCIATES, INC.
EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

September 1988

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I. INTRODUCTION

The following is a cultural resource assessment of the proposed 105-acre parcel in Rossville, Richmond County, New York. This assessment complies with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and implementing regulations and with City of New York Executive Order No. 91 of 24 August 1977.

Based on a records check, limited historical research, and a preliminary field reconnaissance, this assessment will determine the extent and character of known cultural resources in the project area and its vicinity. It will also describe past and present environments of the area, so that zones of high archaeological potential might be correlated within the project tract. Recommendations will then be made on the need for future research, if required, to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects of construction on significant cultural resources.

The examination of site files and other cultural resource materials took place at the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The New York State Museum also provided information on documented archaeological sites in the project vicinity. Historical research, focusing on cartographic sources and local histories, was conducted at the Staten Island Historical Society. A visual reconnaissance of the project area served to identify standing structures, surface indications of archaeological sites, and the extent of ground disturbance.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. NATURAL SETTING

The proposed 105-acre tract borders the Arthur Kill on southwest Staten Island. Physiographically this area lies within the Atlantic Coastal Lowland (Thompson 1977:34). While the core of Staten Island consists of serpentine, the bedrock of the project area probably contains redbeds and diabase of the Newark Series (at a depth of 150 to 190 feet) (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 1981:54). Overlying sediments (from bottom to top) consist of preglacial clays, glacial till, varved clays and fine sands, younger glacial till, and loose fill with beach deposits.

The Wisconsin Glaciation's final advance covered the project area. This glacier's terminal moraine can be observed to the south at Harbor Hill. Glaciers in the New York City region began to retreat some 17,000 to 15,000 years ago. Glacial scarring created a variety of habitats including estuaries, salt and freshwater marshes, bogs, uplands, and midslope zones. Glacial soils contained a diversity of particle sizes allowing for good drainage and adequate water supplies for developing plant and animal communities.

At this time, pro-glacial Lake Hackensack deposited a mixture of clay, silts, sands, and gravels on western Staten Island. Furthermore, as the lake retreated, around 13,000 B.P., a stream began to cut through these sediments and other aeolian deposits to form the Arthur Kill Valley (Silver 1984b:2-5).

Humans first inhabited the New York City area about 12,000 B.P., when sea levels may have been 300 feet lower than those of today and when the Atlantic shoreline had regressed approximately 60 to 90 miles from its present position (Kraft 1977a). River and stream systems then exhibited different configurations, as did the plant and animal communities within these environments (Edwards and Merrill 1977). By 5,000 B.P., sea level rose to just 30 feet below its present level. While the sea rose, Arthur Kill was but a narrow, intermittent freshwater stream. Despite its location in a steep valley, the stream would not have been a great obstacle for east/west human passage (Silver 1984b:5).

The sea continued to rise to a point some 14 feet below the present level by 2,000 B.P. During this time, Arthur Kill gradually became a brackish estuary, lined with marshes and providing new possibilities for human subsistence (Silver 1984b:5). Over the 12,000-year course of human occupation of western Staten Island, the project area environment has changed from an upland and inland location of oak/pine forest and grasses into a coastal lowland zone, where marine resources could be readily obtained (Silvers 1984b:5).

B. POTENTIAL FOR PREHISTORIC CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archaeological investigations on Staten Island, and near the project area, have a long history. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Skinner (1909:11) documented numerous prehistoric sites from Rossville down to Kreischerville (present-day Charleston). He also noted that the Rossville and Woodrow area of Staten Island was a unique zone, where sites were found both inland on sandy soils as well as along the coast. Shoreline locations had the highest frequency of sites (Skinner 1909:3).

In all, a total of 17 prehistoric archaeological sites or site complexes are documented within a two-mile radius of the project tract (Table 1, Figure 1). None of these are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Prehistoric archaeological sites also exist on the New Jersey side of Arthur Kill (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 1981:85), but they will not be the focus of this discussion.

Table 1 reveals that the two-mile zone encompasses sites from the three major periods of Northeastern prehistory - Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland. The first fluted projectile point of the Paleoindian Period (10,000 to 8000 B.C.) found on Staten Island came from the Cutting Site (Sainz 1962:3). Southwestern Staten Island and especially the Port Socony/Port Mobil area seem to have had relatively significant occupations by Paleoindians (Pickman and Yamin 1978:II-13 - II-14). General characteristics of Paleoindian and later prehistoric lifeways for the New York City coastal area have been summarized by Kardas and Larrabee (1981) and Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. (1986a).

The localities occupied by Paleoindians in southwestern Staten Island would have been near the incipient stream, later to become Arthur Kill (see above). During the Archaic Period (8000 to 1000 B.C.), people still inhabited sites relatively close to Arthur Kill, but additional settlement occurred away from the stream to the southeast (e.g., Wort Farm, Harik's Sandy Ground in Table 1). Three sites with Archaic components are located on the western edge of the project tract: Smoking Point, Chemical Lane, and Pottery Farm. These localities have additionally yielded materials dating to the Woodland Period (1000 B.C. to A.D. 1685). Woodland occupation near the project area continued to be both adjacent to Arthur Kill and farther inland (Table 1).

The Smoking Point Site (A085-01-0076 or STD 14-13) is located at the extreme northwestern end of the project tract. Archaeologists have long known of the Native American occupation of this locality (Rubertone 1974:2). Skinner (1912-1913:91), for example, noted that the area was called Burial Point (elsewhere, "Burying Hill") for its supposed Native American graves. He also documented a small shellmound in the vicinity. Later in this century, avocational archaeologists began to frequent the site (Rubertone 1974:2).

TABLE 1

DOCUMENTED PREHISTORIC SITES WITHIN TWO MILES OF THE PROJECT AREA
(ROUGHLY NORTH TO SOUTH)

SITE NAME	PERIOD	DISTANCE FROM PRESENT DAY ARTHUR KILL (IN FEET)
1. Huguenot Site	Middle Woodland	2,500
2. Cutting Site	Paleoindian to Woodland	Adjacent
3. St. Luke's Cemetery	Prehistoric	600
4. Hammerstone Hill (Rossville Shell Heap)	Woodland	1,500
5. Harik's Sandy Ground	Late Archaic	2,100
6. Smoking Point	(Paleoindian?), Late Archaic, Woodland	200
7. Chemical Lane	Archaic, Woodland (?)	2,000
8. Pottery Farm Site	Archaic, Middle or Late Woodland	2,200
9. Port Socony Site - North	Paleoindian to ?	100
10. Gerike Organic Farm	Archaic to Late Woodland	2,500
11. Wort Farm	Late Archaic to Late Woodland	3,500
12. Rossville Campsite*	Woodland	4,500
13. Clay Pit Road Sites	Middle and Late Woodland	2,500+
14. Port Socony Site - South (Port Mobil Hill)	Paleoindian	200
15. Charleston Beach	Paleoindian to Late Woodland	Adjacent
16. Kreischerville Sites	Paleoindian to Woodland	Adjacent
17. Canada Hill	Prehistoric	2,500

* The New York State Museum files record a second "Camp Site" north of the Rossville Campsite and within eastern portion of the project tract. Arthur C. Parker noted the location of this "Camp Site" on unpublished maps in the early 1920s.

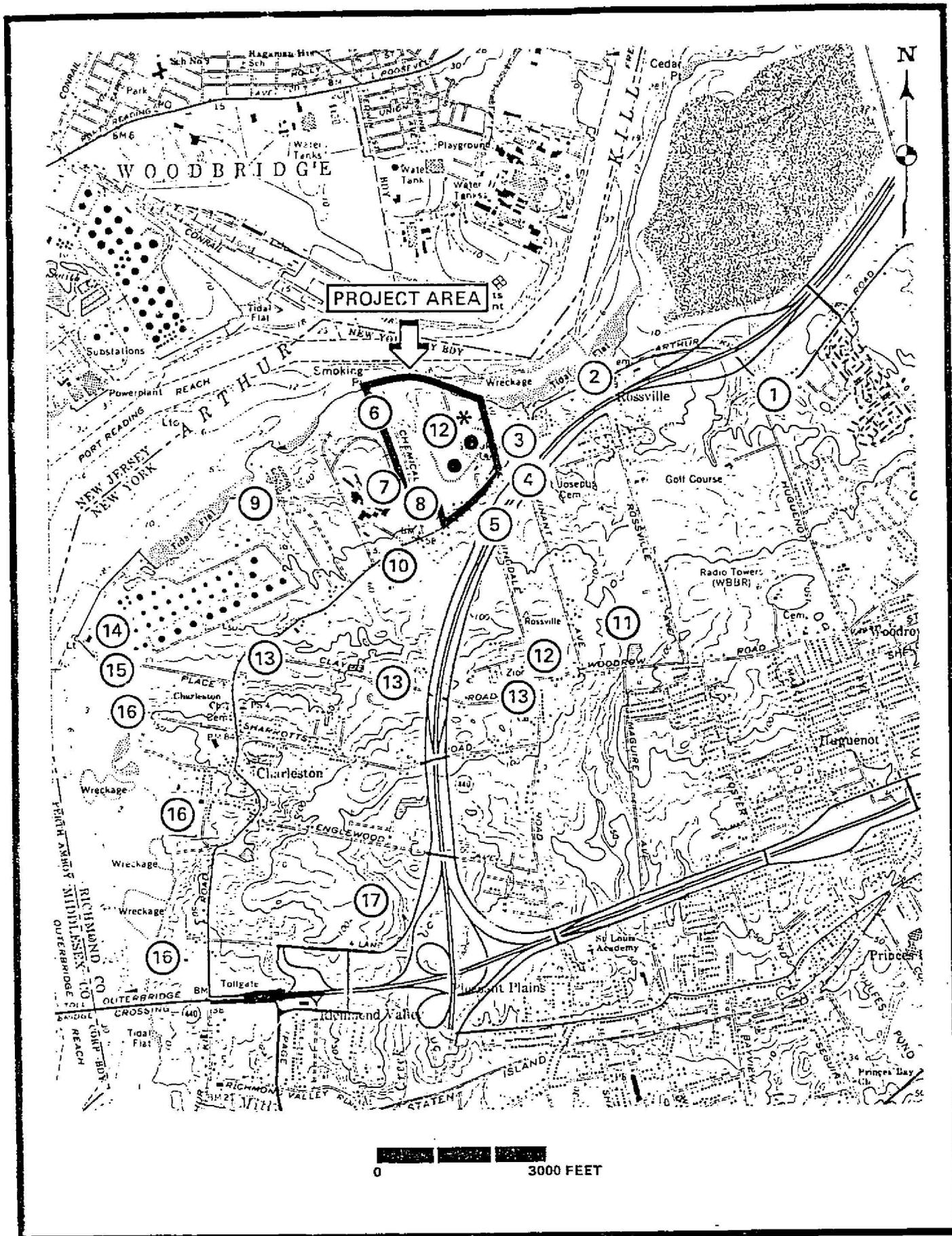


FIGURE 1: Documented Prehistoric Sites Within Two Miles of the Project Area. (after USGS 1981)
 Numerals Refer to Site Names in Table 1

Bert Salwen of New York University (NYU) initiated the first systematic archaeological research at Smoking Point in 1967 (Rubertone 1974:2-3). In that year and the next, personnel from NYU, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and the Staten Island Museum excavated three areas of the site. Silver (1984b) summarizes the 1967/1968 investigations; and Silver (1984a) and Amorosi (1984) provide analyses of recovered stone scrapers and vertebrate fauna, respectively.

Research determined that Smoking Point is a multi-component site predominantly with Late Archaic occupations (Silver 1984b). Some earlier Paleoindian artifacts may be present (Pickman and Yamin 1978:II-7; Silver 1984b:21-22). Diagnostic Late Archaic artifacts pointed to Normanskill/Poplar Island and Bare Island occupations from 3000 to 1000 B.C. (Silver 1984b). A Transitional Orient phase component (1000 to 700 B.C.) was associated with a shell midden. Oystering, the hunting of deer and turkey, and the gathering of nuts seemed to be the major subsistence strategies. In contrast to the stone tool assemblages from the Archaic strata, the later Orient phase revealed more of a reliance on locally obtained cherts than on argillite from western New Jersey. Apparently population movements or exchange between Staten Island and the west were changing (Silver 1984b:21). Rutsch (1968), from a petrological study of projectile points, has also documented the increasing use of chert on Staten Island during the Archaic to the Woodland periods.

Rubertone (1974) performed a surface survey and test excavation at the Smoking Point Site, as part of an archaeological assessment of 30 acres within the western section of the project tract. Her investigation recovered only evidence of Late Archaic occupations. The earlier excavations by NYU did, on the other hand, demonstrate the presence of a Woodland component, albeit with few diagnostic artifacts: two grit-tempered sherds and one Levanna bifacial tool (Silver 1984b:18).

The Chemical Lane Site (A085-01-0074 or STD 22-3) consists of two discrete loci at the western edge of the project tract. This portion is some 1,500 feet south of the Smoking Point Site. Most information on the Chemical Lane locality is recorded in the site files of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation in Albany. Several avocational archaeologists have worked at the site. Excavations by Donald Sainz from 1964 to 1966 yielded two stone atlatl weights, several burned stones, and a variety of Archaic projectile points. Evidence of Woodland occupation comes from a personal communication from Albert Anderson to G.O. Pratt, documenting Vinette I style pottery in association with Perkiomen points. Rubertone's (1974) intensive survey of the area noted only a couple of stone flakes from tool manufacturing. However, she did record a high frequency of historic ceramics around the Chemical Lane Site. She also noted, as had Salwen, that the soil was disturbed by relic hunters.

The Pottery Farm Site (A085-01-0075 or STD 23-3) is located approximately 500 feet east of the Chemical Lane locality. Similar to the latter site, it has experienced collection by several avocational archaeologists. Salwen's Metropolitan Area Archaeological Survey forms of 1967 noted that Donald Sainz had excavated a large quantity of prehistoric pottery from Pottery Farm. Rubertone's (1974) survey and test excavation of the site recovered additional ceramics, stone tools and lithic debris, and bone; her project also exposed a layer of shells. She found evidence for at least two occupations: one contemporaneous with the Orient culture of Long Island (1043 to 763 B.C.) and another, associated with the shell midden, dating to the Middle or Late Woodland (A.D. 350 to 1625). As part of a Stage 1B archaeological survey for the Oakwood Beach Water Pollution Control Project, Regensburg recovered several lithic artifacts and identified a hearth lying on the ground surface, within the Pottery Farm Site (Jacobsen 1980:178-179).

C. POTENTIAL FOR HISTORIC CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. Overview of Staten Island and the West Shore

From 1621 to 1664, Staten Island was part of the Province of New Netherland administered by the Dutch West India Company under whose jurisdiction the island received its name (Goldstone and Dalrymple 1976:471; Black 1982:9). Attempted development under David Pietersen DeVries (1639-41) and Cornelius Melyn (ca. 1641-43; 1650-55) was interrupted by resistance from native Indian populations, culminating in the "Peach War" of 1655, which so depopulated the island of Europeans that "settlement had to be recommended" (Black 1982:9; Bayles 1887:58).

In 1662, however, a handful of dwellings and a small blockhouse were erected on a site above lower New York Bay, a short distance south and west of the high ground at the point of the Narrows. This settlement became known as Oude Dorp, or Old Town. The area proved conducive to Euro-American occupation with flat fields for agriculture, a creek providing access through the salt marshes to the lower bay, and hills appropriate for pasturage of cattle and swine (Leng and Davis 1930:104).

In 1664, New Netherland, including Staten Island and various possessions in what is now New Jersey and Delaware, was taken over by Great Britain, which pressed its claim on the basis of John Cabot's "discovery" of North American in 1497 under the auspices of the English crown. The last Native American claims to Staten Island were extinguished in 1670, and in 1683 the island was organized as the County of Richmond. Migration to the island continued, and in 1788, the county was partitioned into the towns of Castleton, Northfield, Southfield, and Westfield. Westfield, in which the project area is contained, encompassed the west shore from Freshkills south to Tottenville and up through the Richmond Valley to Greenridge (Schneider 1977:13).

During the eighteenth century, Staten Island developed as a primarily agricultural and fishing area with the county seat at Richmond Town (established circa 1728) as its principal village. The products of a diversified farming economy included beef, pork, wheat, rye, and apples. Fish, oysters, and clams were commonly taken from the waters surrounding the island, and salt hay gathered from the extensive salt meadows in the towns of Northfield, Southfield, and Westfield (Smith 1970; Akerly 1843).

In July 1776, British forces landed on Staten Island and proceeded to establish a military rule that lasted until the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783. The island served as a staging area for British forays onto Long Island and into New Jersey, and as a source of produce, wood, and fodder for the increasing military and civilian population on Manhattan (Cohn 1962; Black 1982:22). The excavations undertaken at the Conference House suggest another side to the Revolutionary War and its impact on the civilian population. Baugher and Venables (1987:49-50) attribute the absence of items reflective of Christopher Billopp's high social status to social conditions that accompanied military maneuvers. Billopp, a loyalist, relocated his family from his Staten Island estate to a safer locale, presumably taking many of their possessions with them. Items left behind were subject to both British confiscation and American looting.

Between the end of the War for Independence and the turn of the twentieth century, this part of Staten Island was characterized by a series of ultimately incompatible land uses. Large estates were established on the shore overlooking the Arthur Kill, interspersed among older farms. At the same time, manufacturing plants were established in the older villages that had formed at ferry landings and transportation nodes. As the nineteenth century progressed, noisome industries gradually encroached upon the open spaces along the Arthur Kill, eventually forcing out the older agricultural enterprises and compromising the surviving fishing/oyster industry. The development of Rossville and its environs, which includes the project area, amply illustrates this transition.

The place-names of Smoking Point and Achterkull (Arthur Kill) appeared in the written record as early as 1621. Smoking Point was used as a landmark in many early land transactions beginning in 1670. Euro-American settlement probably occurred soon after the patenting of lands. Cattle marks were issued to landholders who recorded their residence as Smoking Point as early as 1680 (Leng and Davis 1930:124), and ownership of salt meadow tracts on the south and west shores was under dispute by 1682. Sections of the Arthur Kill Road were laid out in 1694. It was originally referred to as the Old Road and after 1764 as Fresh Kills Road (McMillen 1946:3,8). By 1720, the settlement of the western precinct (including the project area) was significant enough to warrant erection of public livestock pounds at Smoking Point and Port Richmond. Sometime prior to 1772, Dissoway's gristmill on

Mill Creek, opposite Perth Amboy, New Jersey and south of what is now Outerbridge Crossing, was constructed. Thus, although settlement had occurred by the end of the seventeenth century, it was obviously fairly thin since this mill is the only one known to have served a large part of the western section of Staten Island. The mill was razed shortly after 1900 (McMillen 1951).

The village nearest to the project area is Rossville. Rossville developed around the Blazing Star Ferry, which dates to the early eighteenth century. In 1722, Anthony Wright was granted a license to operate the ferry across the Arthur Kill to New Jersey. The first record of a ferry between Staten Island and New York was 1755 (Bayles 1887:678). Another ferry north of Fresh Kills, on the Arthur Kill was established in the 1750s. It was named New Blazing Star Ferry (now Travis).

In the early nineteenth century, Old Blazing Star Ferry became the nucleus for a small village, which thrived as the junction point for overland and maritime transportation routes. A dock, built in about 1822, allowed steamships to stop on their trips between New York and various ports in New Jersey including Perth Amboy, Keyport, and New Brunswick. A hotel, built in 1829, accommodated travellers and those seeking recreation. New roads were laid out to connect the dispersed farmsteads with Rossville, and Governor Tompkins laid out Richmond Turnpike (now Victory Boulevard) to New Blazing Star Ferry, thus providing a stagecoach-steamboat connection on the Philadelphia-New York route (Clute 1877:23-D).

In the village itself, members of the Winant family and other descendants of original families subdivided their large real estate holdings and built residences on lots of about one-half acre in the village during the second and third decades of the century. Just outside the village and immediately east of the project area, Colonel William E. Ross constructed a replica of Windsor Castle on the bluffs above the Arthur Kill. Known locally as Ross Castle and later as Lyons Mere, this extraordinary dwelling was one of several grand residences in this area; Ross Castle/Lyons Mere was demolished in 1922 (Leng and Davis 1930:946). To honor its most prominent citizen, Old Blazing Star changed its name to Rossville in 1837. A few years later, in 1841, Rossville was described as having 32 dwellings, 3 mercantile stores, and 181 inhabitants (Gilbertson 1982:4).

This area initially retained the agricultural basis that had characterized its development in the colonial period. Selection of crops shifted toward truck farming, and the area became known for its strawberry cultivation. Oystering also became an extremely profitable industry, and wealthy "oyster seed planters" resided at Richmond Terrace, Marriner's Harbor, Tottenville, Pleasant Plains, and Rossville. Locally, the naturally-occurring oysters were exhausted by the end of the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth-century industry was based on oyster populations transplanted from bays off of Long Island, Virginia, and

Maryland. This led to the formation of the community of Sandy Ground, located just south of the project area.

The organization of this community dates to the planned migration in the 1840s and 1850s of Black families from the Chesapeake Bay region. These families, who included the Bishops, Henmans, Landins, Purnells, Robbins, and Stevens, were joined by other Black families from Staten Island (e.g., Jacksons, Williams, and possibly the Holmes) and from the New York/New Jersey area (Harris, Holmes). The A. M. E. Zion Church, which signaled the organization of the Sandy Ground community and became its dominant social institution, was formed in 1850. Sandy Ground, comprising about 60 acres, two cemeteries, archaeological sites, a forge, and several structures, has been designated a National Register of Historic Places district (Florance 1982).

Oystering represented an extension of the fishing industry, which together with agriculture, had characterized economic organization in this area since the colonial period. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, new industries were introduced into or near older villages and towns where land was relatively inexpensive and transportation routes were well established. Balthasar Kreischer established a firebrick works at nearby Kreischerville (now Charleston) in 1874 and its associated company town for a work force of from 100 to 150 people enhanced Rossville's position as a mercantile center. To mark his economic success, Kreischer constructed an elaborate residence in 1885. Still standing at 4500 Arthur Kill Road, Kreischer House is one of New York City's rare examples of "stick-style" architecture (Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of New York 1979:78).

Among the first threats to the area's prosperity was construction of the Staten Island Railroad alignment from Tottenville to Clifton in 1860, thus bypassing Rossville and placing the town at an economic disadvantage. Also attracted to the seemingly vacant lands along the shore in the late nineteenth-century were newer dye and chemical industries, such as the plants which located on Smoking Point (see next section). These together with the copper and fertilizer factories situated across the Arthur Kill in New Jersey resulted in pollution of the local environment and threatened its agricultural/oystering base. Contamination of the oyster beds was noted as early as the 1880s and in 1916, the New York Department of Health condemned the Staten Island oyster beds (Board of Education 1964:181). The Black oystermen of Sandy Ground either found work in the factories or on local truck farms (Florance 1982). However, faced with a limited transportation capabilities and an increasingly noisome environment, truck farming was eventually abandoned.

In 1927, Kreischer's firebrick plant closed. The opening of the Outerbridge Crossing and Goethals Bridges in 1928 failed to reverse the decline of the Rossville area. Rezoning allowed construction of liquid natural gas tanks, petroleum storage

facilities, a marine junkyard, and a sanitary landfill along the Arthur Kill (Geismar 1985:38). This completed the transformation of this area from agriculture/fishing economic uses, defined by farms, estates, and small market villages to expansive industrial storage facilities adjacent to major transportation corridors.

2. Historical Development of Smoking Point

Eighteenth-century maps of Smoking Point and vicinity clearly show the presence of homesteads along the shoreline. Most of those owners identified with particular dwellings are descendants of original Westfield families: Wyant (Winant), one of the oldest Dutch families on Staten Island; Dusoway (Dissoway), a Huguenot family that purchased land in Richmond County as early as 1687; and Woglom, a Dutch family mentioned in Staten Island land records in 1696 (Clute 1877:375, 435, 437). The project area may contain those homesteads depicted as belonging to A. Wodgely, P. Wyant, and an unidentified member of the Woglom family as well as two unidentified structures.

Eighteenth-century occupation was clearly concentrated along the shoreline in the vicinity of Smoking Point (see Figure 2). By the mid-nineteenth century, house lots had been sold along the Arthur Kill Road (i.e., G. Dissoway), and rectangular tracts fronting the Arthur Kill divided (i.e., J. J. Winant and H. Mason) (Figure 3). Henry I. Mason was the son-in-law of Colonel William Ross, the proprietor of nearby Ross Castle/Lyons Mere. Mason built a mansion neighboring his father-in-law's estate that was reported to contain thirty rooms, a private dock, and a park landscaped by Frederick Law Olmstead (Leng and Davis 1930:927). The Mason Mansion Site is contained within the project area.

Industrial plants first appear on Smoking Point in the mid-nineteenth century. The A. W. Reading Chemical Works, the White Lead Company, and the International Ultramarine Works, Ltd., all seem to be situated at the same location along the shoreline southwest of the project area (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6). The ultramarine works, established in 1884 and closed in 1963, manufactured royal blue pigment from local clay resources. Between 1907 and 1917, the Winants, Crocheron, and Myers homesteads were sold to the Edison Electric Company of Brooklyn (Robinson and Pidgeon 1907; Bromley 1918; Figures 7 and 8). In 1905, the 42-acre Gabriel Dissoway Estate was sold to the Oakland Chemical Company, which erected a factory to manufacture hydrogen peroxide. The factory building burned in 1963 and was demolished five years later. Remains of this plant are contained in the project area.

3. Historic Structures

No New York City Landmarks or National Register structures are contained in the 101-acre project area. Both Rossville and Charleston have been covered by architectural surveys (Pickman and Yamin 1978; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

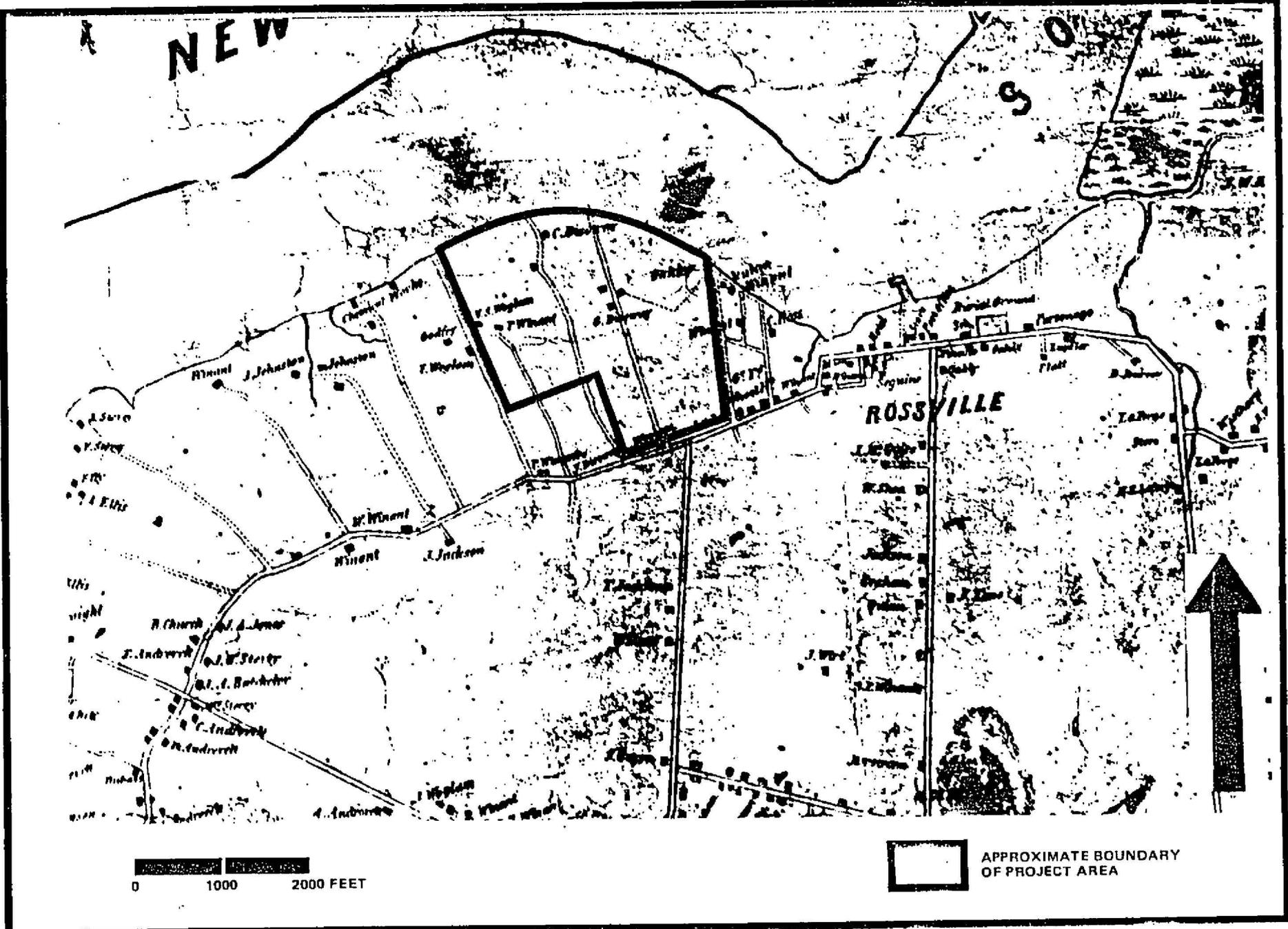


FIGURE 4: Project Area and Vicinity, 1853

SOURCE: Butler, 1853

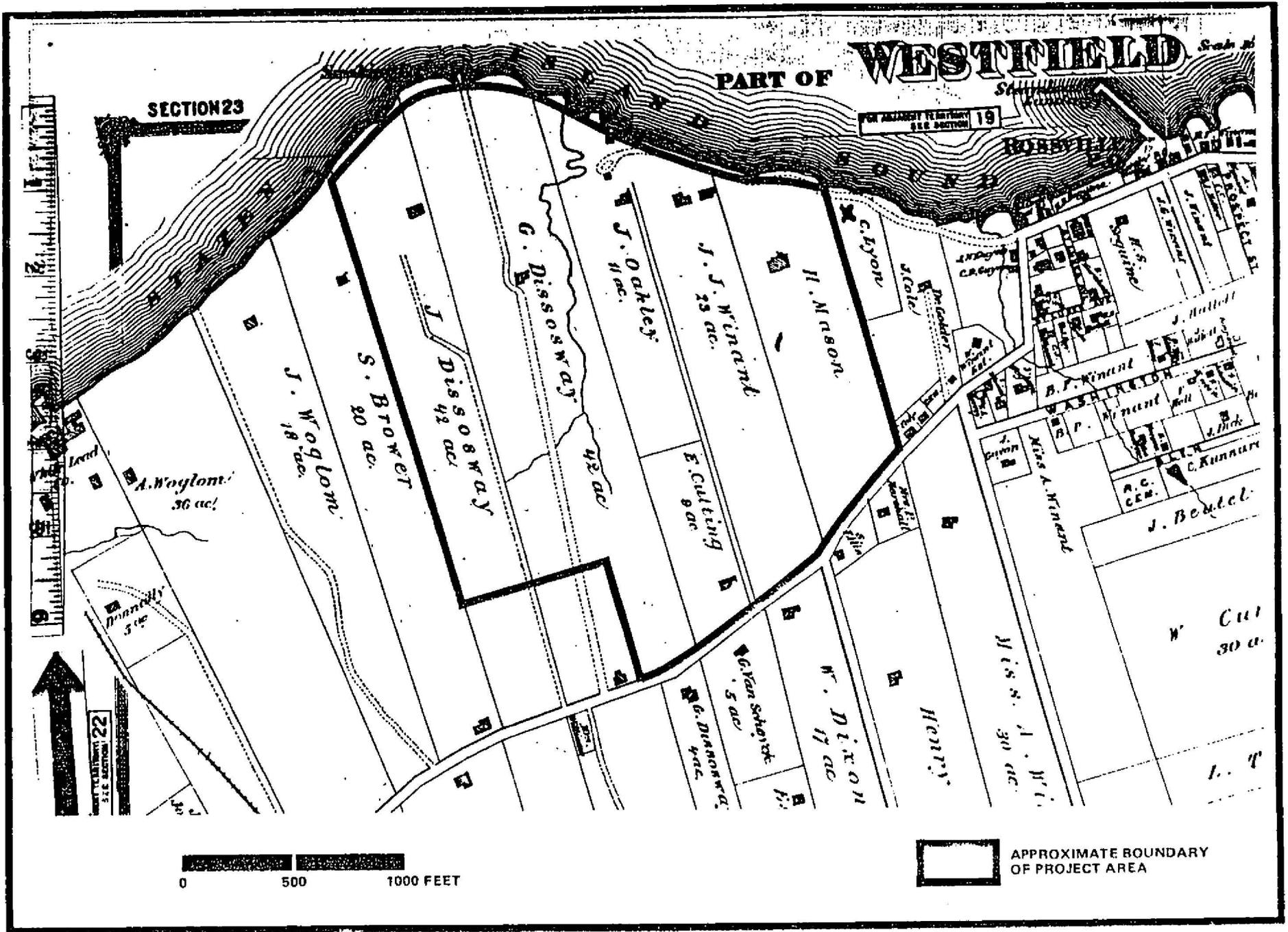


FIGURE 5: Project Area and Vicinity, 1874

SOURCE: Beers, 1874

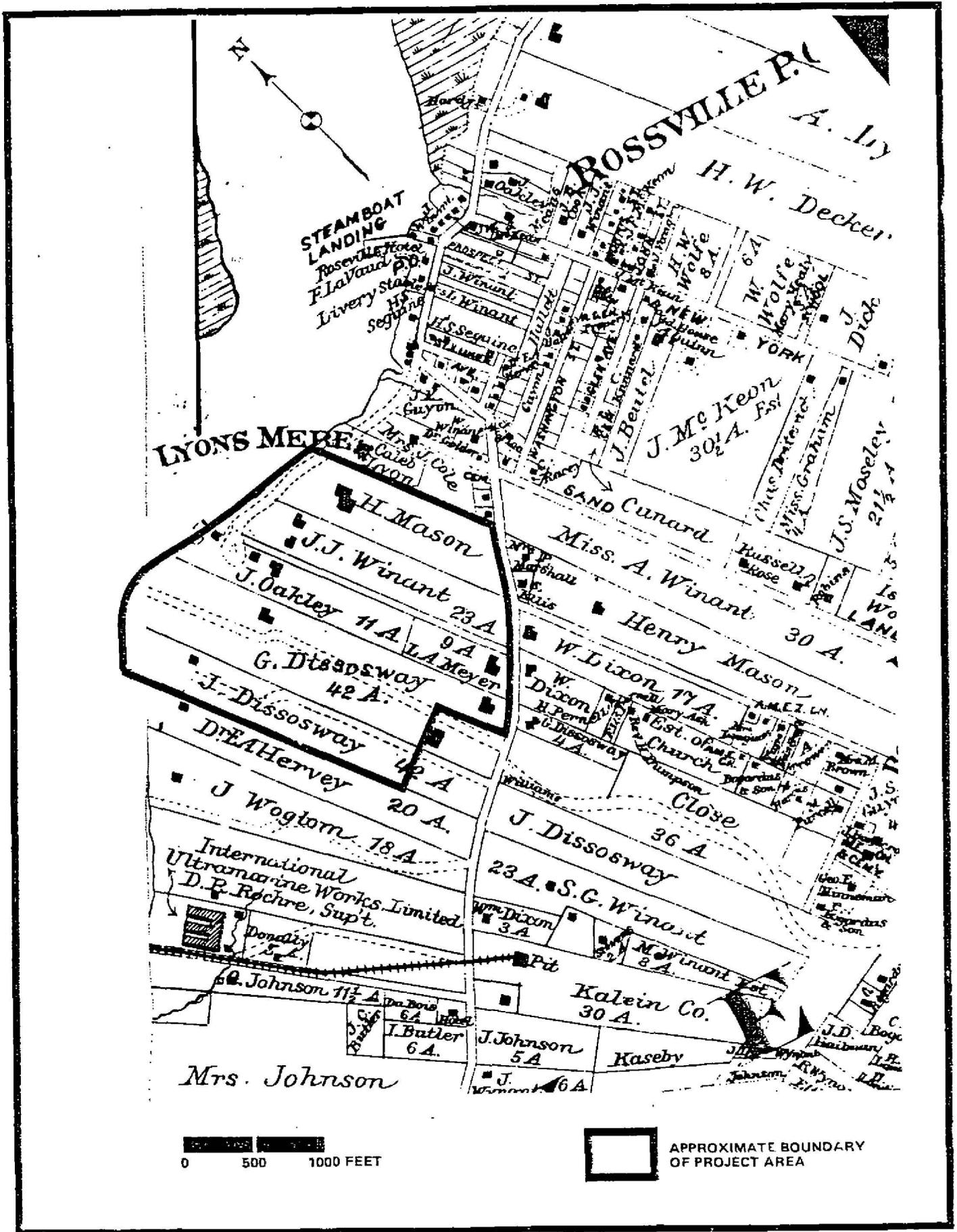


FIGURE 6: Project Area and Vicinity, 1887

SOURCE: Beers, 1887

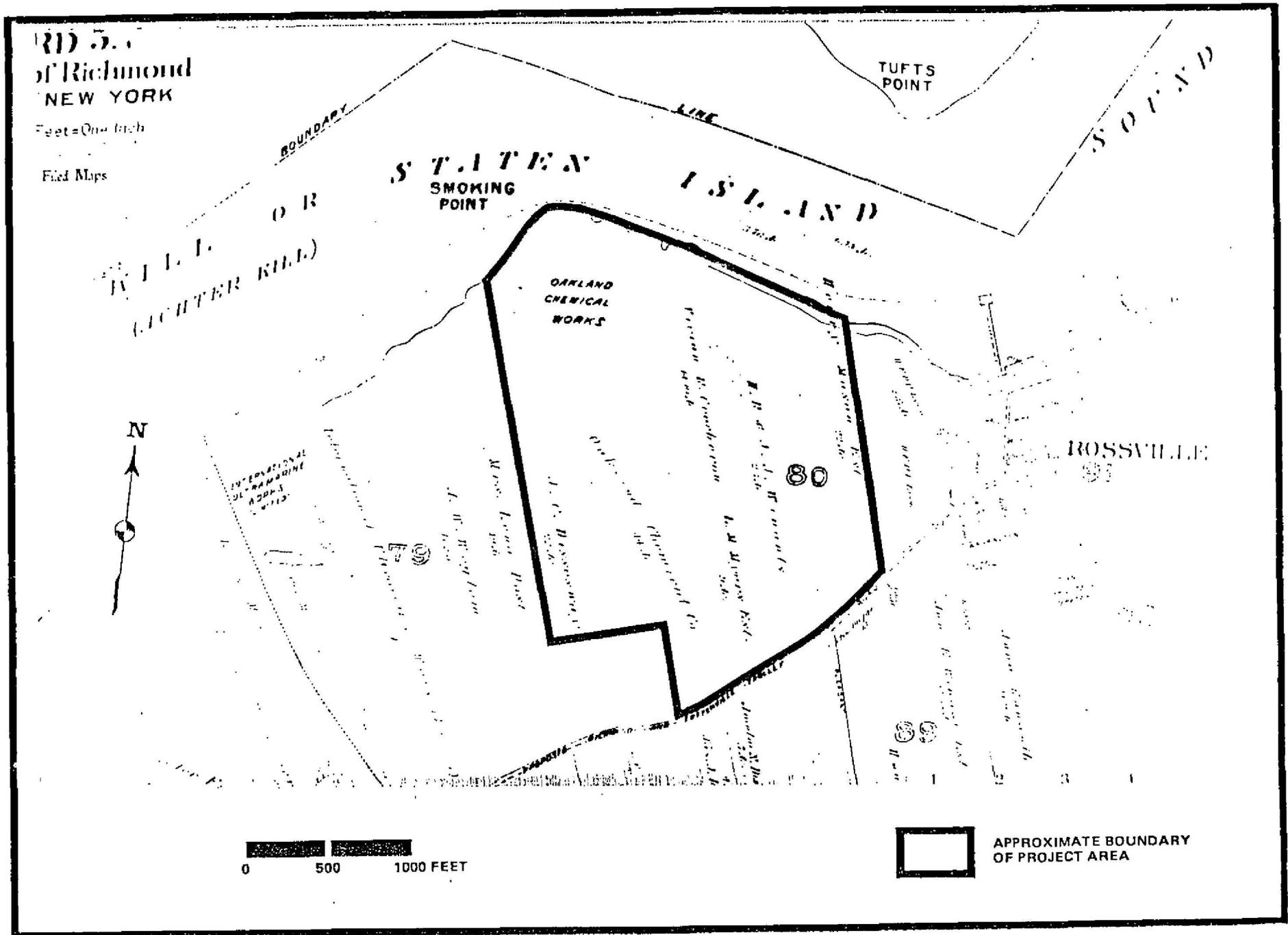


FIGURE 7: Project Area and Vicinity, 1907

SOURCE: Robinson and Pidgeon, 1907

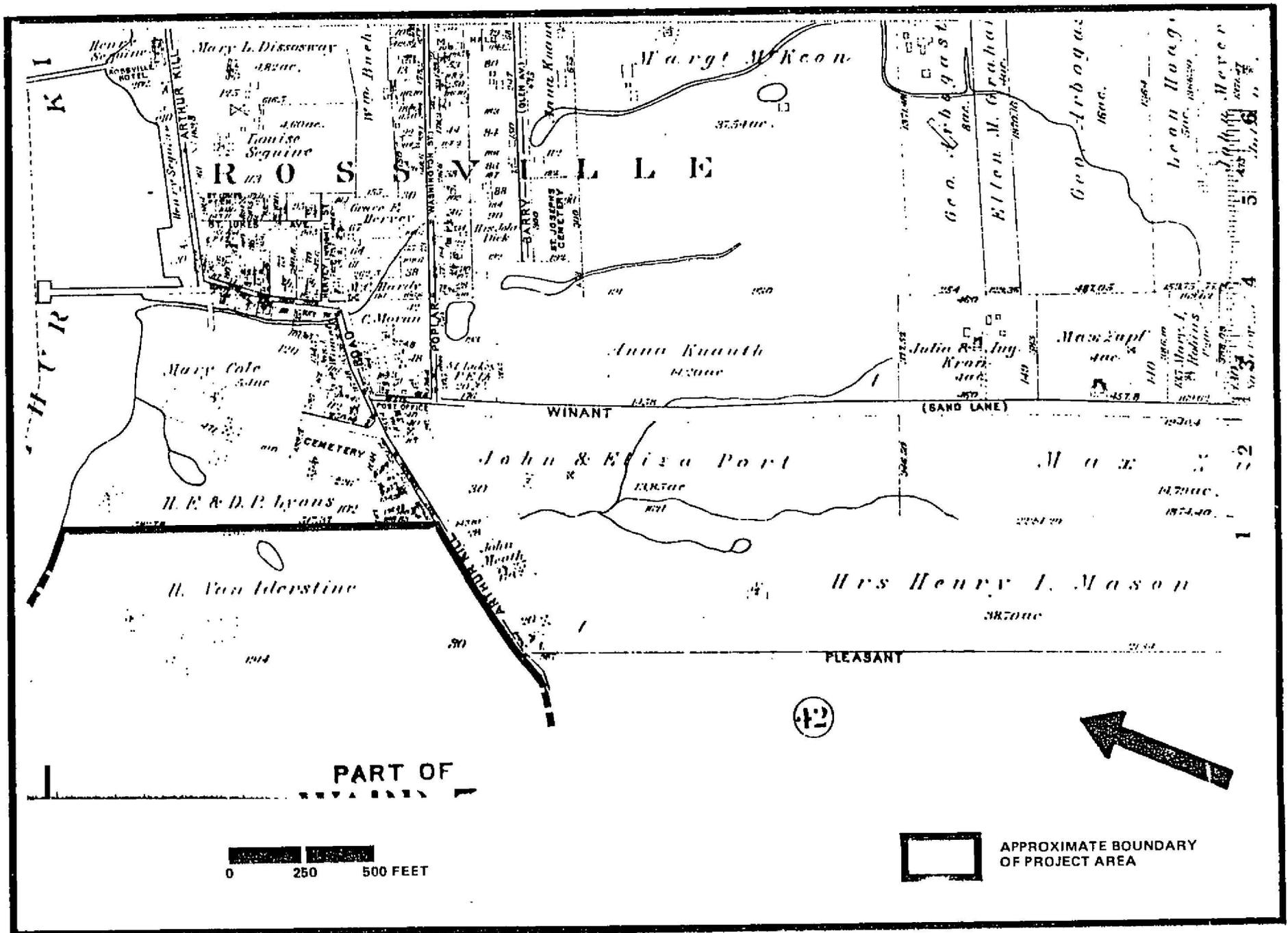


FIGURE 8: Project Area and Vicinity, 1917

SOURCE: Bromley, 1917

1979-80; Askins 1979); and numerous structures have been inventoried (Table 2). Four New York State inventory properties (12 Hervey Street, 18 Hervey Street, 2876 Arthur Kill Road, and 29 St. Lukes Avenue), and five structures that have been identified by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission as significant and potentially eligible for city designation (2571, 2547, 2522, and 2504 Arthur Kill Road and 39 St. Lukes Avenue) are immediately adjacent to the 101-acre project area and are potentially subject to adverse visual impacts as a result of the construction of the proposed facility.

State inventory properties consist of structures that have been documented through the completion of a historic structure site form, which is then submitted to the New York State Historic Preservation Office (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). Any individual or group may submit these forms to the state.

Figure 9 identifies the city -identified significant properties and state inventory properties that are within 1,000 feet of the project area boundaries. No New York City Landmarks or National Register properties are within this 1,000-foot area around the project tract.

D. SUBSURFACE CULTURAL RESOURCE POTENTIAL

A brief field reconnaissance of the project tract was conducted on August 18 and 22, 1987, to identify any standing structures and surficial evidence of archaeological sites. Additionally, the extent of any ground disturbance was recorded. The eastern portion of the project area (Figure 1) contains two large reinforced concrete tanks, and several maintenance and support buildings. These structures were built after 1970 and would not be considered historically significant. Several concrete floors or pads are present in the southwestern portion of this property; and concrete chunks and industrial slag were found in scatters across the tract. Modern trash was visible at several spots, but no prehistoric artifacts were seen. At the north center of the property a 5' x 10' scatter of oyster shells did lie on the surface; but they appeared to be of recent age and were mixed with industrial slag and an aluminum can. In general, the tank farm is highly disturbed. Only three small units of land appear to represent the original ground surface: a 20' x 60' area in the northwest section, adjacent to a spoil heap; and two 50' x 100' wooded areas adjacent to Arthur Kill Road. Construction of the tank farm involved massive grading of almost the entire property (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 1981:53). Any portions of the Pottery Farm Site that were once extant within the southwestern portion of the tract would most likely have been destroyed by the bulldozing. Grading and pond excavation may also have destroyed any remnants of the Mason Mansion and the Camp Site reported by Parker (see Table 1). Given the amount of

TABLE 2

DOCUMENTED HISTORIC SITES WITHIN TWO MILES OF THE PROJECT AREA

SITE NAME/LOCATION	CULTURAL AFFILIATION	STATUS OF RESOURCE		
		NR.-CL.-STATE INV.	-CITY INV.	
1. 53 Androvette Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
2. 6 Johnson Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.		X	
3. 71-73 Kreisler Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
4. 75-77 Kreisler Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
5. 81-83 Kreisler Street	Residential and Agricultural, 19th.-Cent.			X
6. 85-87 Kreisler Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
7. 121 Kreisler Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
8. 126 Kreisler Street	Commercial			X
9. 130 Kreisler Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
10. 133 Kreisler Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
11. 25 Winant Place (Free Hungarian Reformed Church)	Religious, 19th.-Cent.			X
12. 40 Winant Place	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
13. Charleston Reformed Church Cemetery				X
14. 4500 Arthur Kill Road (Kreisler House)	Residential, late-19th.- Century	X	X	X
15. Kreisler Brickworks	Commercial, 19th.-Cent.			X
16. Kreisler Rail Spur	Commercial, 19th.-Cent.			
17. 4414 Arthur Kill Road	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
18. 4312 Arthur Kill Road	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X

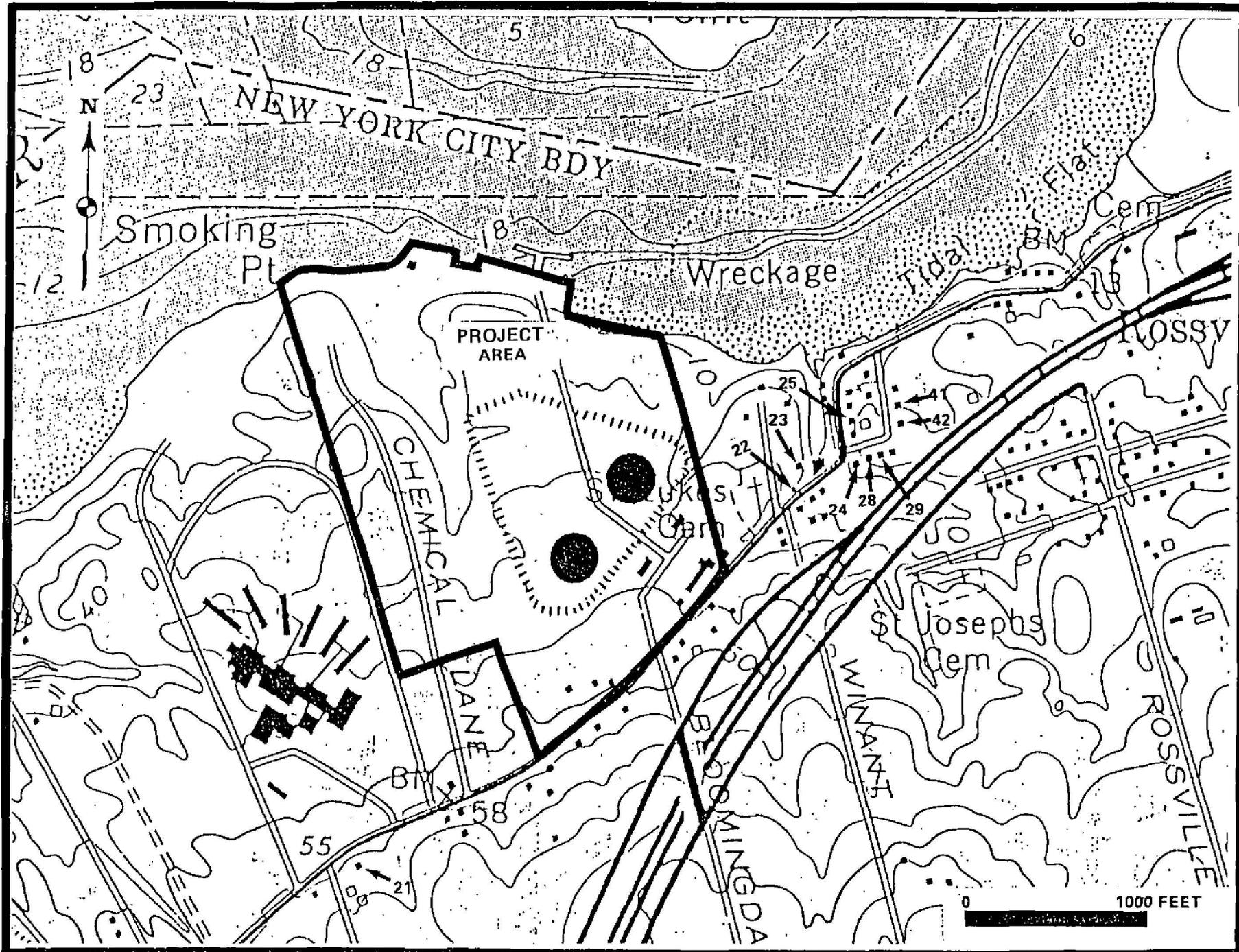
NR=National Register; CL=City Landmark; State Inv.=State Inventory;
City Inv.=City Inventory

SITE NAME/LOCATION	CULTURAL AFFILIATION	STATUS OF RESOURCE		
		NR.-CL.-STATE INV.	-CITY INV.	
19. 4256 Arthur Kill Road (Killmyers Hotel)	Residential/Commercial, 19th.-Cent.			X
20. 4210 Arthur Kill Road	Educational, Public School No. 4.			X
21. 2876 Arthur Kill Road (S.J. Winant House)	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		X
22. 2571 Arthur Kill Road (Dr. Golder House)	Commercial/Mercantile, 19th.-Cent.			X
23. 2547 Arthur Kill Road (Jas. Winant House)	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
24. 2522 Arthur Kill Road	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
25. 2504 Arthur Kill Road	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
26. 2351 Arthur Kill Road (Abm. Winant House)	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
27. 59 Barry Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
28. 12 Hervey Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
29. 18 Hervey Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
30. 21 Knesel Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X
31. 43 Morris Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
32. 53 Morris Street	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
33. 16 Poplar Avenue (St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church)	Religious	X		
34. 29 Poplar Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
35. 30 Poplar Avenue (St. Joseph's Rectory)	Religious			X
36. 39 Poplar Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.	X		
37. 50 Poplar Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X

NR=National Register; CL=City Landmark; State Inv.=State Inventory;
City Inv.=City Inventory

SITE NAME/LOCATION	CULTURAL AFFILIATION	STATUS OF RESOURCE			
		NR.	CL.	STATE INV.	CITY INV.
38. 60 Poplar Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X	X
39. 1063 Rossville Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.				X
40. Rossville Rail Spur	Commercial				X
41. 29 St. Luke's Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.			X	
42. 39 St. Luke's Avenue	Residential, 19th.-Cent.				X
43. St. Luke's Cemetary					X
44. 1109 Woodrow Road (Woodrow United Methodist Church	Mid-nineteenth Century	X		X	X
45. Sleight Family Graveyard Cemetery, (Rossville/Blazing Star Burial Ground)	Mid-eighteenth Century	X		X	X
46. Ultramarine Works	Commercial, Mid-nineteenth Century				X
47. Sandy Ground Historic District	Mid-nineteenth century	X		X	X
48. AME Zion Church	Religious, Mid-nineteenth Century	X	X	X	X
49. Eighteenth Century Midden					X
50. Ellis Rail Spur					X
51. Winant-Hendrickson House Site					X

NR=National Register; CL=City Landmark; State Inv.=State Inventory;
City Inv.=City Inventory



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FIGURE 9: Location of Historic Structures Within 1,000 Feet of Project Area.
 NOTE: Numbers Refer to Structures on Table 2.

subsurface disturbance that probably occurred within the tank farm, this area of the project tract has an extremely low potential for intact Middle Archaic to historic period archaeological remains. However, there is the possibility that deeply buried Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic deposits may be extant below the LNG tanks. Archaeological material dating to these periods was found in a tank farm two miles south of the LNG tank farm (i.e., Port Mobile area, Kraft 1977b). In order to determine if materials of this great antiquity (12,000 years ago) may exist beneath the LNG tanks, it will be necessary to examine soil borings from within the tank farm to verify age and depth of any paleosoils.

The western sector of the project tract corresponds with the 30 acres surveyed by Rubertone in 1974. Presently this sector lies north of a junkyard fronting Arthur Kill Road. Some 90 percent of the property is covered by dense weeds, grasses, or woods. The only standing structure observed was a concrete culvert in the central portion of the area from which a small stream flowed north. In the southeastern section, a clearing was present in a wooded area and exhibited evidence of several archaeological test units from previous investigators. This area would appear to correspond with the Pottery Farm Site. Some shells were seen at the northern end of this clearing, but no artifacts were observed: leaf cover precluded adequate surface inspection.

At the northeastern end of the property are the remains of the Oakland Chemical Company. These include concrete blocks, squared timbers, bricks, and metal from the 1907 factory (Silver 1984b:6). A former road, called Chemical Lane, was also present as a trackway of cinders.

Two clearings in the woods at the northwestern portion of the property appear to have been areas of archaeological excavation at the Smoking Point Site. A large quantity of shell was present on the sandy surface. While many angular pebbles were also observed, no prehistoric artifacts could be seen. On the other hand, brickbats, glass, and two historic ceramic sherds were present. These materials might have been from nineteenth-century houses of the Dissosway family (Silver 1984b). Eighteenth-century residential occupations are also possible, based on the historical research conducted for this project. Leaf cover prevented observation of the surface outside the clearings.

Rubertone's (1974) survey of this western tract of 30 acres was part of a cultural resource assessment for a new pipeline. The proposed construction, however, never came to pass (Pickman and Yamin 1978); and the most serious disturbance to the area is restricted to a drainage ditch and swath of approximately 50 feet adjacent to the fence of the tank farm. Remaining portions of the 30-acre property appear to be intact, except where previous excavation pits by professional and avocational archaeologists have removed materials. Based on this preliminary field reconnaissance, the New York University excavations at Smoking Point

(Silver 1984b), the Phase I survey by Rubertone (1974), and the cartographic research discussed in the preceding section, there is a high potential that buried historic and prehistoric archaeological deposits (e.g., the Smoking Point and Pottery Farm Sites) lie within the western sector of the 105-acre project tract.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Construction of the new correctional facility has the potential to impact significant subsurface archaeological remains. As already noted, the eastern sector of the project area, which contains a tank farm, appears to have been extensively graded. However, there is a potential for intact, deeply buried Paleo-Indian remains beneath the tank farm area. Construction activities within the western 30 acres of the project tract clearly have the potential to impact significant resources. Rubertone (1974) has already conducted an archaeological field assessment of this western property, recommending the salvage of buried prehistoric components prior to any future construction. Specifically, she called for excavation at the Smoking Point and Pottery Farm sites.

The remains of the Oakland Chemical Company appear to lack any physical integrity, and would probably not yield significant information through further study. No additional work is recommended on the factory ruins.

Following current New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission guidelines, a secondary level documentary study is required to address historic and prehistoric cultural resource concerns within the project area. The purpose of this secondary effort is to determine what specific historic archaeological sites are extant within the project boundaries in terms of the occupants of the buildings that were once extant in this area. This effort requires consultation of primary archival sources such as deeds, wills, census records, tax records, and business directories.

The potential for deeply buried Paleo-Indian remains beneath the LNG Tank Farm area is a special concern in terms of project impacts. It is not possible to evaluate impacts upon these types of cultural resources without examination of the soil deposits below the tank farm. The Landmarks Commission recommends that a geomorphologist and archaeologist evaluate soil borings to be taken from the tank farm area to verify the age and depth of soils underneath the farm. Comparisons would then be made with data from the Port Mobil site, to the south of the tank farm, where archaeological material from the Paleo-Indian period were recovered from another tank farm area. The result of this part of the secondary level study would be a discussion assessing the potential (or lack of potential) for recovery of early Native American material based on depth of grading and disturbance at the LNG site, and depth of archaeological deposits at the Port Mobil Site.

Based on the results of the secondary level study, a program of subsurface archaeological testing can then be developed in consultation with the Landmarks Commission. This program of

subsurface testing will result in a clear delineation of the boundaries, content, and significance of the archaeological sites. If the sites are determined to be significant, based on the results of the testing (i.e., Phase II), then it will be necessary to evaluate alternatives to mitigate any impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed facility construction. Alternatives would range from site avoidance, with preservation in place, to full-scale data recovery.

The construction of the new correctional facility also has the potential of visually impacting several historic structures located adjacent to the development site. These structures (12 Hervey Street, 18 Hervey Street, 2571, 2547, 2522, 2504, and 2876 Arthur Kill Road, and 29 and 39 St. Lukes Avenue) are recorded in the New York State and New York City historic structure inventories. This visual impact involves alterations to the historic setting surrounding, and the "view shed" in front of these historic structures. Specifically, evaluation of this impact would consider whether the proposed correctional facility would significantly detract from the historic setting of these houses, or would interfere with views from the buildings to distant features of the local landscape. If such impacts would occur, possible forms of mitigation may involve placement of trees and other vegetation to screen the historic structures from the facility buildings. However, given that the tanks from the LNG farm are being removed, the viewshed from the historic structures may in fact be improved.

The evaluation of visual impacts upon these historic structures would be conducted during the execution of the Phase II investigation.

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APPENDIX 1

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