

2766R

Pickman

Rec'd 8/31/95, LPC
Anne Seel

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTARY STUDY
SOBEL COURT PARK
BLOCK 2877, LOTS 18 AND 105
BOROUGH OF RICHMOND
CEQR No. 95-DCP-015R

by
ARNOLD PICKMAN

Submitted To
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

August 1995

795

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	A. Procedures	1
	B. Site Description	2
II.	PREHISTORIC PERIOD	3
	A. Reported Sites	3
	B. Prehistoric and Project Site Topography and Physiography	4
	B. Analysis of Sensitivity - Prehistoric Period	5
III.	HISTORIC PERIOD	6
	A. Early History of Project Area: 17th - Early 19th Century	6
	B. 1830's - Early 1850's: Simonson Ownership of Project Site	7
	C. 1854 - 1879: The J.A. H. Britton Ownership and House Construction	8
	D. 1879 - 1907: The Schaible Ownership	10
	E. After 1909: The Thomas Nunley Ownership	12
	F. Analysis of Archaeological Sensitivity - Historic Period	13
IV.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	14
	A. Summary of Archaeological Sensitivity	14
	B. Analysis of Disturbance	14
	C. Recommendations	15
	REFERENCES CITED	17

FIGURES AND PLATES - FOLLOWING TEXT:

Figures:

Figure 1	-	Project Location Map
Figure 2	-	Project Site Plan
Figure 3	-	Skinner Site Location Map
Figure 4	-	Bolton Site Location Map
Figure 5	-	Davis "Ye Olde Names and Nicknames" Map
Figure 6	-	Skene Map of Staten Island Patents
Figure 7	-	1781 Taylor and Skinner Map
Figure 8	-	1780-83 "French Map"
Figure 9	-	1797 Sprong and Connor Map
Figure 10	-	1839 Property Ownership Map
Figure 11	-	1844-45 Coastal Survey Map
Figure 12	-	1849 Sidney Map
Figure 13	-	1850 Dripps Map
Figure 14	-	1853 Subdivision Map
Figure 15	-	Land Map from 1854 Deed
Figure 16	-	1854 Subdivision Map
Figure 17	-	1859 Walling Map
Figure 18	-	1874 Beers Map
Figure 19	-	1887 Beers Map
Figure 20	-	1898 Robinson Map
Figure 21	-	1898 Sanborn Map
Figure 22	-	1907 Robinson and Pidgeon Map

Figure 23 - 1907 Borough of Richmond Topographic Map
Figure 24 - 1917 Bromley Map
Figure 25 - 1917 Sanborn Map
Figure 26 - 1937 Sanborn Map
Figure 27 - 1951 Sanborn Map
Figure 28 - Site Plan Showing Archaeological Sensitivity Areas

Plates:

Plate 1 - Project Site Frontage on Vanderbilt Avenue
Plate 2 - View West from Top of "Bluff"
Plate 3 - Remains of Stone Walkway
Plate 4 - Blufftop Area
Plate 5 - Southeastern Portion of Site
Plate 6 - Central Portion of Site
Plate 7 - Concrete Slab
Plate 8 - Concrete Slab: Detail

I. INTRODUCTION

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation is planning to create a new park, to be known as Sobel Court Park, on an approximately 1.1 acre acre parcel located in the Fox Hills area of Staten Island (Figure 1). The site comprises Lots 18 and 105 on Block 2877 in the Borough of Richmond, and is bounded on the northwest by Vanderbilt Avenue and on the east by Oder Avenue. A small portion of the west side of the property is bounded by Targee Street (see Figure 2).

An archaeological assessment of the project site is being conducted in accordance with New York City's Environmental Quality Review procedures. The objective of the present documentary study is to review the history and prehistory of the site, assess its archaeological sensitivity and, if appropriate, make recommendations for archaeological field testing.

A. Procedures

The approaches taken to the assessment of sensitivity for the presence of prehistoric and historic period archaeological resources necessarily differ. For prehistoric resources, we have identified known archaeological sites in the vicinity of the project site which have been reported by both professional and avocational archaeologists. Most of the major sites were reported prior to the substantial 20th century land modifications which have occurred on Staten Island, and many sites no longer exist. However, a number of smaller sites, some of them disturbed, have been identified in recent years as a result of cultural resources investigations required under the provisions of Federal, State and City laws and regulations.

Since the identification of known archaeological sites have not, in general, been identified as a result of systematic surveys, the fact that sites have not been reported from a particular location does not necessarily mean that such sites are not present. Thus, to assess the sensitivity of the project site for prehistoric deposits we have also considered the topographic and physiographic characteristics of the locations of reported sites and compared these characteristics with those of the project site.

To determine the sensitivity of the project site for historic period deposits we have examined maps dating from the 18th through the mid-20th century. Many of these maps show both the locations of structures and the names of property owners. In addition we have reviewed other primary documents, including deeds, census records and directories, as well as secondary sources.

A pedestrian reconnaissance of the project area was conducted by

the principal investigator on August 22, 1995.

B. Site Description

The project site slopes upward fairly steeply for a distance of some 80-90 feet from Vanderbilt Avenue to the 80 foot contour. The ground surface in this area is covered with weeds (see Figure 2 and Plates 1 and 2) and the surface appears to have undergone some degree of erosion. Remains of a stone walkway were noted in the southern portion of this sloping area (see Plate 3). A small area at the top of the slope, formerly the site of a 19th century structure, is also covered with weeds and brush (Plate 4). The remainder of the site consists of open ground with small to medium sized trees (see Plates 5 and 6). The ground on the eastern portion of the site slopes upward from the 80 foot contour to approximately the 85 foot contour at Oder Avenue. Examination of the "old conc. foundation" shown on the site plan (see Figure 2) suggests that it is actually a large concrete slab, approximately seven inches thick, probably representing the floor of a former outbuilding (see Plates 7 and 8).

II. PREHISTORIC PERIOD

A. Reported Native American Sites

Brief descriptions of the prehistoric Native American sites on Staten Island known in the early portion of the twentieth century were compiled by Skinner (1909) and Bolton (1922, 1934). These authors' maps showing the site locations are included here as Figures 3 and 4. These maps do not show any sites in the immediate vicinity of the project site. The closest is the site shown at Silver Lake (Figure 3, site 17; Figure 4, site 78), some 4500 feet northwest of the project site. Skinner (1909:16) notes that there were several "camp sites at Silver Lake; one shell pit with pottery was opened by the writer. Scattered relics [also] appeared along the Shore Road near St. George."

Bolton notes the presence of a site at Stapleton (Figure 4, site 97). He states that "a station is recorded, but its position is indefinite." A site with reported Middle - Late Woodland Period affiliations has recently been identified not far from Stapleton shoreline during excavations at the VanDeventer-Fountain house site (Lockwood, Kessler, and Bartlett, Inc. 1990, cited in Boesch 1994).

Both Skinner and Bolton note the presence of a site near the shoreline at Arrochar (Figure 3, site 17; Figure 4, site 96). As shown on the maps the site would appear to be in the vicinity of Fort Wadsworth. Archaeological excavations conducted at the later location in 1985 encountered a Woodland Period occupation (Berger 1985, cited in Boesch 1984).

Since the early 20th century, additional sites have been reported as a result of the work of avocational archaeologists and collectors as well as more recent surveys conducted to meet the requirements of Federal, State and local legislation. A recent study conducted for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (Boesch 1994) summarized the results of these later studies as well as the earlier work noted above.

For the 1994 study, Boesch reviewed the archaeological site files of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. These files include a site designated as the Fox Hills site (STD-FH) and indicate its location as "east of the intersection of Vanderbilt and Hillside Avenue" (Boesch 1995, personal communication). Hillside Avenue joins Vanderbilt Avenue west of the intersection of the latter road with Targee Street (see Figures 1 and 2). The indicated location of the Fox Hills site would appear to place it at least partially within the project site. Aside from a notation that "Native American artifacts are reportedly frequently found" in this area and that the site may have Woodland period affiliations, the SIIAS file entry includes almost no information on this site (Boesch 1994; 1995). It is not known whether excavations were conducted on this site, or whether it represents

only surface finds of artifacts.

Another site noted in the SIIAS files as #STD-GC was located on the west side of a pond known as Grasmere Lake or Brady's Pond (Boesch 1994), some 3600 feet southeast of the project site. The site is listed as having Woodland affiliations.

The SIIAS files also include the Rosebank site (STD-RB), located along the shoreline approximately one mile east of the project site, near the intersection of St. Johns Avenue and Bay Street.

B. Prehistoric and Project Site Topographic and Physiographic Characteristics

Pickman (1988, 1991, 1995) has reviewed the locations of prehistoric sites in the southwestern portion of Staten Island. These studies indicate that "the majority of known prehistoric sites in western Staten Island are located either along the bluff tops overlooking the Arthur Kill and Princes Bay or in the vicinity of inland streams" (Pickman 1995:3). The inland sites "are typically located on high ground near streams and marshy areas" (Pickman 1995:9). Sites are associated with smaller streams and wetland areas as well as large streams. It is hypothesized that the inland sites

represent camp sites, possibly associated with larger sites located along the shore. The camp sites were most likely situated to take advantage of the resources of the nearby water sources and marshes. These would have attracted game and waterfowl, and the nearby higher areas would have been advantageous locations for hunting camps (Pickman 1995:9).

It is likely that a similar pattern exists along the eastern shore of Staten Island. Shoreline sites are represented by the reported sites at Arrochar, Rosebank and Stapleton. Inland camp sites would have been situated near lakes and ponds, such as Silver Lake and Brady's Pond, as well as along stream courses.

The area located east of the project site, known in the 19th century as the "Concord Downs" contained a number of small ponds (Davis 1896 - see Figure 5). The 1874 Beers map (Figure 18) as well as the 1907 Borough of Richmond Topographic map (Figure 23) show a small stream in the vicinity of the project site which had its origin in one of these ponds. The stream flowed to the northeast, entering the narrows at Stapleton. The 1874 map shows this stream flowing some 225 feet west of the project site. However, the more detailed 1907 map indicates that a branch of the stream flowed southward along the course of what was then known as Simonson Place (now Targee Street). As shown on the map, the ground east of the stream was located atop a low "bluff" some 10 feet above the stream elevation. The project site is located on this higher ground, some 120 - 150 feet east of the former stream location (see Figure 23).

C. Analysis of Archaeological Sensitivity - Prehistoric Period

As noted above, the project site is located on high ground which formerly overlooked a stream course, and there were also several small ponds located a short distance to the south. This location would have represented an advantageous camp site for the Native American inhabitants of the area. The SIIAS archaeological site files indicate that such a site was, in fact, present on the high ground in this area. A portion of this prehistoric site may have been located within the boundaries of the project site, as well as on the adjacent property to the southwest.

III. HISTORIC PERIOD

A. Early History of Project Area: 17th Century - Early 19th Century

At the time of the final purchase of Staten Island from its Native American inhabitants in 1670, there were already a number of French, Dutch and English settlers on the island. The English governor, Lovelace, ordered surveys to be made to define the boundaries of these settlers' lands. Although the surveying was interrupted by the brief resumption of Dutch rule in 1673, it was completed under the succeeding English governor Andros. By 1680, most of Staten Island was owned by numerous persons, most of whom had plots of 80 acres or multiples thereof. However, influential persons were able to obtain much larger parcels. In the 1680's, the governor who succeeded Andros, Thomas Dongan, acquired a large tract of land for himself, using John Palmer as an agent (Leng and Davis 1930 I:733).

The map of early land grants prepared by Skene (1907 - see Figure 6) shows the Palmer tract. It would appear that the project site is located within its boundaries.

In 1688, Richmond County, which had been established in 1683, was divided into four towns: Northfield, Southfield, Westfield, and Castleton (Historical Records Survey 1942). The study area lies within the boundaries of Southfield.

In 1703 the Richmond and Amboy Roads were laid out, forming a thoroughfare extending from Tompkinsville to Tottenville (McMillen 1946; Morris 1900:449). The Fingerboard Road, which branches off from the Richmond Road to the southeast was laid out in 1774 (McMillen 1946).

The first maps of Staten Island which show the location of roadways and structures with any degree of accuracy date to the latter part of the 18th century (see Figures 7-9). The Richmond Road is shown on these maps, with a few houses located on either side of this road west of the Narrows shoreline. The 18th century maps also show what became known as the Clove Road branching off from the Richmond Road to the north. Somewhat further to the southwest, the two maps dating to the 1780's show the Fingerboard Road described above. The 1797 map does not appear to show the latter road.

According to McMillen (1946:14-16) a review of old road records indicate that a road "approximating the present Vanderbilt Avenue" was laid out in 1722. However, the three late 18th century maps (Figures 7-9) do not show this road. These maps indicate that the area in which the project site is located remained unoccupied at that time.

B. 1830's - Early 1850's: Simonson Ownership of Project Site

In the 1830's the communities of Stapleton and Clifton were formed along the shore of the narrows (Leng and Davis, 1930 I:350; Morris 1900:440-441). By 1839, Vanderbilt Avenue, then known as Coursen Avenue, had been laid out. The road apparently passed, at least in part, through "the Coursen and Metcalf farms" (Davis 1896). The road is shown on an 1839 map filed in the office of the Richmond County Clerk (Cole 1839 - see Figure 10). This map shows the land south of Coursen (Vanderbilt) Avenue, which includes the project site, as owned by "Nathaniel Britten Senr." Morris (1900:59) as well as Leng and Davis (1930 II:999), note that it was Nathaniel Britton Jr. [emphasis added] who "owned all of the land on the easterly side of Broadway [i.e. Richmond Road] from the shore to Clove Road." The latter source adds that the Britton tract "was surveyed and sold in parcels after his death" in 1841. Presumably, the Britton tract extended south of Coursen Avenue as shown on the 1839 map. However, the date and/or extent of Nathaniel Britton's property ownership, as well as the accuracy of the 1839 map is called into question by the study of land records, discussed below, which indicate that the project site was owned by John B. Simonson after 1835.

An 1845 Coastal Survey map (Figure 11) shows a single farmstead south of Vanderbilt Avenue. These structures are well to the east of the project site, which remained unoccupied at this time.

Two maps dating to 1849 and 1850 (Figures 12 and 13) show a house occupied by J. Robinson located in the vicinity of the project site. However, as noted below, the land records indicate that this house was in fact located south of the project site. The house labelled "C. Vanderbilt" on these maps was located northeast of the project site. The documentary sources indicate that no structures were built on the project site prior to the 1850's.

On July 10, 1854 (Richmond County Deeds Liber 34:451) John B. Simonson of Southfield and Jane M., his wife sold a one-half interest in 21.07 acre tract of land to Jasper A. H. Britton, then described as "of the City of New York." This tract includes the present project site. The deed includes a map of the property, a copy of which is included here as Figure 15. The western boundary of the property conveyed ran along the line of Simonson Place. As noted previously, this street corresponds with the present Targee Street, and the street shown on the map east of Vanderbilt Avenue corresponds with the present Oder Avenue. This 1854 deed makes reference to two earlier mortgages on portions of this property.

The northern portion of the 21 acre tract, which includes the project site, had been acquired by John B. Simonson from Isaac Simonson on October 3, 1835 (Richmond County Deeds Liber Y:227). John B. Simonson subsequently mortgaged this tract to John Gore on November 18, 1835 (Richmond County Mortgages Liber T:486).

Isaac Simonson apparently retained the southern portion of the 21 acre tract until 1852. On August 3 of that year John B. Simonson, who already owned the northern portion as noted above, acquired a 17.45 acre tract from Isaac Simonson which included the southern portion of the property (Deed Liber 27:225). Later that same year he mortgaged this tract back to Isaac Simonson (Mortgage Liber 17:5). The boundary description of this 17.45 acre tract, included in the 1852 deed, indicates that it extended along the eastern side of Vanderbilt Avenue for a distance of 369 feet to a "stake at the north corner of "Mrs. Robinson's lot". From this point the property boundary ran to the southeast and south. The deed also describes the tract as bounded on the west by Vanderbilt Avenue and by lands of the party of the first part (i.e. Isaac Simonson). Analysis of the property boundaries indicates that the land referenced as "Mrs. Robinson's lot" was apparently located in the northern portion of the Isaac Simonson tract as shown on the 1853 property map discussed below (see Figure 14). Mrs. Robinson may have been leasing this portion of the Isaac Simonson property. This would appear to be the location of the structure labelled "J. Robinson" on the 1849 and 1850 maps.

The northern boundary of the 17.45 acre tract would appear to approximate the southern boundary of the project site. The "Robinson" house would thus have been located some 369 feet south of the project site.

On September 10, 1853, subsequent to J.B. Simonson's acquisition of the southern portion of the 21 acre tract, the entire tract was surveyed and divided into lots (see Figure 14). The project site includes the northern portion of the large lot designated as lot 15 on this map as well as the eastern portion of the adjacent lot 13.

Subsequent to J. B. Simonson's 1854 sale of the one-half interest in the 21 acre property to Jasper A. H. Britton, a new survey of the property was made, dated November 13, 1854 (see Figure 16). On this survey the former lot 15 is shown divided into two portions, designated as lots 15 and 15a. Lot 15 corresponds with the present lot 105, with the present lot 18 representing the eastern portion of lot 13.

C. 1854 - 1879: The J. A. H. Britton Ownership and House Construction

By means of two deeds dated November 25, 1854 (Liber 35:372; 376), J. B. Simonson and Jasper A. H. Britton divided the lots included within the 21 acre tract as shown on the 1854 map (Figure 16), between them. Both men were described in these deeds as residing on Staten Island. Lots 13 and 15, which include the project site, were among the lots acquired by Jasper A. H. Britton. J. B. Simonson acquired lot 15A, which adjoined the project site on the south, as well as lot 11, immediately to the north. These deeds state several conditions binding on the

parties, including the

express condition that whenever the said party of the second part or his assigns shall build or erect any buildings upon the aforesaid lots or any of them that he or they will place said building back from Vanderbilt Avenue or Grove Avenue [i.e. the present Oder Avenue] on a line designated for that purpose on the aforesaid map [the building line is shown on the 1854 map - see Figure 16]. And that the said party of the second part for himself and his assigns hereby covenants and agrees to erect such buildings and sit the same back from Vanderbilt Avenue and Grove Avenue on the line designated upon the said map.

This language confirms the above analysis indicating that no structures were present on these lots prior to 1854, and that construction on at least some of the lots was planned at the time of the division the property.

The 1859 Walling map (see Figure 17) shows two houses, labelled "A.H. Britton" and "J.B. Simonson" north of the intersection of Vanderbilt Avenue and Simonson Place (the latter roadway indicated by dashed lines on this map). Although the position of the structures as shown on this map would suggest that the one labelled "Simonson" was located on the project site, the allocation of the lots noted above as well as the later transfer of the property by J. A. H. Britton (see below) indicate that this map is somewhat inaccurate and that the "Britton" house was in fact located on lot 15 (the present lot 105). The "Simonson" house would have been located on the adjacent lot 15A.

Jasper A. H. Britton was the son of Nathaniel Britton by his second marriage to Margaret Bedell (Clute 877:348-349). His full name was Jasper Alexander Hamilton Britton, but he apparently used his first name, Jasper, only for legal purposes. Listings for Alexander H. Britton were located in the Federal census records for 1860 and the New York State census records for 1865 and 1875. Britton was married twice. By 1860 he was married to his second wife Harriet Lord. While the ages of Alexander Britton and his wife as given in the various census records are not consistent, in 1860 he was approximately 37 years of age and his wife was approximately 30. Their oldest child, Nathaniel Lord Britton, was born in 1859. J.A.H. and Harriet Britton had three other children: Marion, born in 1866; Harriet Lord, born in 1871; and Richard H. born in 1874. In 1881, the eldest son, Nathaniel Lord Britton became a founder of the Natural Science Association of Staten Island, predecessor of the present Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. In 1896 he became director of the New York Botanical Garden. Nathaniel, Harriet and Richard Britton were still living in 1930 (Leng and Davis 1930 IV: 479-480).

The census records indicate that the Britton household in 1860, 1865 and 1875 also included Harriet Lord, described in the 1875 census as an "aunt" of Alexander Britton; and Louise E. Turner, his "sister-in-law." The household also included three servants

in 1860 and 1865 and four servants in 1875, the latter listed as a cook, housemaid, nurse and laborer.

Jasper A. H. Britton is described in the 1860 and 1875 census records as being a farmer, with no occupation listed in the 1865 census. The 1865 and 1875 state census records include agricultural schedules which indicate Alexander Britton as owner of approximately 60 acres of land, fifty of which were indicated as being planted. The Britton farm land may not have all been contiguous with the Vanderbilt Avenue property.

The 1874 Beers map (Figure 18) shows the house which had been constructed on the project site. As shown on this map, the northern part of the structure is located on the portion of the property then designated as lot 13. However, this map is not consistent with later maps (see Figures 19-24) which indicate the house as being completely within the boundaries of lot 15 (the present lot 105).

D. 1879 - 1909: The Schaible Ownership

On August 30, 1879 Jasper A. H. Britton and his wife Harriet L. Britton transferred lots 13 and 15 "with the buildings and improvements thereon" to John Schaible. The deed describes Britton as "of New Dorp", indicating that he was not resident on the property at the time of the sale. It is possible that Schaible resided on this property prior to the sale, or that it was being leased by Britton to others. The deed notes that Schaible held the mortgage on the property at the time of sale, which was apparently made in lieu of payment of the mortgage (the sale was made for the sum of \$1 and "other valuable considerations").

A listing for "John Schible" (sic) was located in the 1880 census records. Schaible, who was seventy three years of age in 1880, had been born in Germany. The census lists no occupation for Schaible, suggesting that he had retired by 1880. Schaible's wife, Anna C., age 70, had also been born in Germany. The Schaible household also included the couple's 42 year old son, also named John, a watchmaker, who was a widower. The latter's six year old daughter also lived in the household. The census page preceding that on which the Schaible household is listed contains a listing for the family of Thomas Gunsel. Gunsel is shown occupying the property immediately south of the project site on maps dating to the 1880's and 1890's (see Figures 19 and 20). These data suggest that Schaible was, in fact, resident on the project site as of 1880. ✓

The project site property is labelled "J. Schaible" on the Beers atlas of 1887 (see Figure 19) This atlas also includes a directory which lists "Schaible, John, retired, 159 Vanderbilt Avenue, Clifton." The address numbering system in use at this time was apparently different from the one adopted in the early 20th century and shown on maps dating to 1917 and afterward.

The elder John Schaible died in 1888, his will being recorded on March 27 of that year (Richmond County Surrogates Court 1797-1919). After his death, his son continued to reside on the property. The 1888 Staten Island directory lists John Schaible, a "watchmaker," at the same address. A listing for John Schaible also appears in the 1890, 1895, and 1898 directories, with no occupation indicated in any of these listings. The 1895 directory also lists "Schaible, Miss Anna" (the daughter of the younger John Schaible) at the same address, 159 Vanderbilt Avenue.

The 1898 Robinson map (Figure 20) continues to show J. Schaible located on the property. This map is the first to show outbuildings. The two outbuildings shown correspond with the location of the larger of the outbuildings which appear on later maps. It is possible that the outbuildings were actually built earlier since examination of the 1874 and 1887 maps suggests that outbuildings were, in general, not shown.

John Schaible is listed in the 1900 census as a "jeweler." He had been born in New York in 1838. In 1900 the Schaible household included Anna C. Seyle, John Schaible's 23 year old daughter; her husband, Edward J. Seyle, a broker; and their infant daughter, Grace, who had been born in 1899. The couple had been married three years and Anna Schaible had apparently lived with her father prior to her marriage as indicated by the 1896 directory listing noted above.

The 1906 directory continues to list John Schaible at the same address. The listing indicates that by 1906, when he would have been 68 years of age, he was retired. The 1907 Robinson and Pidgeon map (Figure 22) shows him as still resident on the property.

The 1907 Borough of Richmond topographic map (Figure 23) provides the most detailed plan of the house and outbuildings located on lot 105. It indicates the house as a two-story frame structure with an attic. A later map drawn in 1917 (see Figure 24) indicates that the house also had a basement. The 1907 topographic map shows two larger and two smaller outbuildings at the rear of lot 105 along the southern edge of the property. An additional small outbuilding is shown on the northern portion of the property within the boundaries of the present lot 18. The two larger outbuildings were also shown on the 1898 and 1907 Robinson maps (Figures 20 and 22). The westernmost of these buildings is indicated on the 1907 (Figure 23) as being a 1 1/2 story frame structure. The building adjoining it to the east is indicated as a "shed." The location of the concrete slab noted during the reconnaissance and shown on the site plan (Figure 2) as an "old concrete foundation" corresponds with the location of the 1 1/2 story frame structure as shown on the 1907 map and could represent a slab floor of this building, possibly added subsequent to its original construction.

E. After 1909: The Thomas Nunley Ownership

In 1909, John Schaible transferred the property (apparently acting through an agent, Nathan Levy) to Thomas W. Nunley (Deed Liber 355:390; Liber 359:293). The 1910 census lists Thomas W. Nunley at 434 Vanderbilt Avenue, which is the address of the house on the project site as shown on maps dating after this year (see Figures 24-27). Nunley was 41 years old in 1910. He had been born in England and immigrated to America in 1871. His occupation is listed as "proprietor of carousel" (see below). His household consisted of his wife, Annie E., age 38, and eight children ranging in age from 7 to 20. His elder son, William, is listed as an "engineer, carousel."

According to Leng and Davis (1930 IV:559-560), Thomas W. Nunley's father, William Nunley, was proprietor of the Atlantic Hotel at South Beach, Staten Island "the first hostelry in that district", and also operated a bathing pavilion and a vaudeville playhouse there. William and Thomas Nunley "did much toward the early development of steeple-chasers, coasters and other apparatus." The latter apparently included a carousel, as noted in the 1910 census record. Thomas Nunley assisted his father, and upon the death of the latter in 1912, Thomas Nunley assumed control of the "amusement business" at South Beach. He subsequently also operated "amusement centers at Point Breeze, Philadelphia; Bayonne, New Jersey; and Rockaway." He died on October 2, 1930.

The 1917 Bromley map (Figure 24) shows Thomas W. Nunley as still resident on the property. This map indicates that Nunley had constructed a second building, designated as #424 Vanderbilt Avenue, on the portion of the property formerly designated as lot 13. The Sanborn map of the same year (Figure 25) shows two new structures on this portion of the property, designated as #424 and #428 Vanderbilt Avenue. Both of these structures are located on the western portion of the former lot 13, which is not included within the present project site. However, a new outbuilding shown on the 1917 maps is located within the boundaries present lot 18.

In a deed to property not in the vicinity of the project site dated April 15, 1919 (Liber 495:286), Thomas Nunley and Annie Nunley are described as resident at No. 424 Vanderbilt Avenue, and William Nunley and his wife Mirriam at No. 434 Vanderbilt Avenue. The latter couple were Thomas Nunley's eldest son and daughter-in-law (Leng and Davis 1930 IV:560). The addresses as given in this deed indicate that Thomas Nunley had moved into one of the new structures, with his son and his family residing in the old house on lot 105.

According to Leng and Davis (1930 IV:560), after the death of Thomas Nunley, his wife continued to reside "in the family home at No. 414 Vanderbilt Avenue, Stapleton." The address given is apparently an error as the 1937 Sanborn map (Figure 26) indicates that there was no such address. The correct address is most

likely either #424 or #434 Vanderbilt Avenue as noted above.

The 1937 Sanborn map indicates that all three of the houses shown fronting on Vanderbilt Avenue on the 1917 map were still standing. However, all of the earlier outbuildings had been demolished, with two new garages having been constructed immediately south of the house on lot 15/105.

The 1951 Sanborn map (Figure 27) indicates that the old house on lot 15/105, the two houses built ca. 1907-1917 on lot 13 and the ca. 1937 outbuildings continued to stand at that time.

F. Analysis of Archaeological Sensitivity - Historic Period

The documentary research indicates that a domestic structure was built on the project site in the 1850's and was occupied through the mid-20th century. Deposits of domestic artifacts on sites of this period are typically found within subsurface "features" such as cisterns, privies and/or wells. Such deposits usually represent refuse placed in the feature after it was no longer used for its primary purpose. In some cases, deposits are also found within such features which date to their period of use. These features were typically in use until the availability of a public water supply. In some cases, however, features were abandoned, and new features of similar type dug prior to the introduction of a water supply. In some cases, artifact deposits can also be present in the form of refuse middens deposited on ground surfaces.

The first water supply on Staten Island was provided to the Village of New Brighton by the Staten Island Water Company in 1881. This was followed by the completion of the Crystal Water Works in 1883. The latter company had installed mains into New Brighton, Northfield and Middleton by 1885 (Morris 1900:474; Bayles 1887:649). Therefore, through at least the mid-1880's there would have been no public water supply available to the residents of the project site. Two 1898 maps (Figures 20 and 21) indicate that by this year a 12 inch water main had been installed in Vanderbilt Avenue.

The above data suggest that the public water supply would have become available to the residents of the project site (John Schaible and family) during the 1890's. Although property owners did not necessarily connect to the public mains as soon as they were installed, it is likely that John Schaible would have made such a connection prior to his leaving the property in 1909. Thus any artifact deposits within features would most likely date to the occupation of the property by Schaible or by the previous owner, J. A. H. Britton or his tenants. ✓

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary of Archaeological Sensitivity

The results of this documentary study indicate that the project site is potentially sensitive for the presence of archaeological deposits dating to the prehistoric and/or the historic periods.

Prehistoric archaeological sensitivity is indicated by the presence of a reported Native American site within or in the immediate vicinity of the project site and by the topographic and physiographic characteristics of the site, which are similar to those of locations where prehistoric campsites have been found elsewhere on Staten Island.

Historic period sensitivity is indicated by the presence of a domestic structure and outbuildings on the site beginning in the 1850's. The house may have been occupied from this time through the 1870's by J. A. H. Britton, a farmer and a member of one of the old Staten Island families; from the late 1870's through 1909 by John Schaible, a retired German immigrant and by his son, a watchmaker; and from 1909 through at least 1929 by Thomas W. Nunley and his family. ✓ /11B

B. Analysis of Disturbance

Comparison of the ground surface contours indicated on the 1907 topographic sheet (Figure 23) with those shown on the site plan (Figure 2) indicates that major downcutting has not occurred on the site. The "blufftop" area in the western portion of the site would be the most likely location for any prehistoric remains on the site as well as the location of the mid-19th century house and any associated artifact bearing features. Most of this area is shown at approximately the 80 foot contour on both of the maps, with downcutting of less than one foot being indicated along the western edge of the bluff.

The elevations shown on the 1907 map as well as the site plan demonstrate an upward slope toward the present Oder Avenue which was also noted during the reconnaissance. Comparison of the existing contours with the elevations shown on the 1907 map suggests that some fill may have been deposited in this area.

The site reconnaissance suggests, however, that the existing visible ground surface does not represent the surface present in the 19th century. It is likely that in many portions of the site, a thin layer of "fill" may cover the previous topsoil layer, while in other portions this layer may have been removed. These modifications most likely occurred at the time that the house and outbuildings which stood on this site were demolished. The slight rise indicated on the site plan east of the former house site and noted during the reconnaissance (see Plate 6) may have resulted

from deposition of soil and debris from structural demolition.

In areas where removal of the former topsoil layer has occurred, most indications of prehistoric occupation would probably no longer be present. Where the former topsoil layer is present beneath fill, however, such indications would be preserved.

With the exception of the concrete slab noted previously, there are no visible remains of the house foundation, the other outbuildings shown on the historic period maps, or other subsurface features. Since comparison of the contour maps does not indicate that major downcutting has occurred it is likely that these remains remain largely intact beneath overlying fill.

It should be noted that two garages constructed between 1917 and 1937 were located in a portion of the area where earlier features may be present. However, these structures did not have basements and their construction would most likely have left any underlying features substantially intact.

C. Recommendations

It is recommended that a scope of work for archaeological field testing of the project site be prepared and implemented. The objective of the field testing will be to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and to assess the significance of any such deposits. If such significant deposits are present, impacts of the planned construction should be assessed and a plan for mitigation of such impacts be implemented.

The initial field testing should involve the excavation of manual shovel tests. Such tests will determine the presence on the site of any intact prehistoric remains and/or significant historic period midden deposits. Should such deposits be encountered it may be necessary to excavate a larger test unit to evaluate them. The manual shovel tests will also serve to identify portions of the site where downcutting may have removed such deposits and to confirm the presence of fill in other portions.

However, shovel testing of the site is unlikely to determine the presence of artifact-bearing sub-surface features. To detect these features, a second phase of archaeological investigation may be necessary. Such additional investigations would involve the use of a backhoe to strip off any overlying fill deposits. The need to conduct such a second phase would depend on two factors; the presence of fill in areas where features are most likely to be located, as determined by the shovel testing results; and the extent and depth of disturbance which will result from the planned construction on the site. If such construction will not involve a significant amount of excavation beneath existing depths of fill, this further archaeological testing may not be necessary.

Areas of relative sensitivity within the project site are shown on Figure 28. This relative sensitivity should be considered in structuring a plan and scope of work for subsurface testing. The portion of lot 105 at the top of the bluff (Figure 28, Area A) is considered to be the most archaeologically sensitive portion of the site. It was closest to the stream course discussed in Chapter II and is thus considered to be the most sensitive area for the presence of prehistoric sites. The most likely location for historic period features and other deposits would be in the area to the rear of the 19th century house site, which is also in this area.

The easternmost portion of lot 105 (Figure 28, Area B) was the location of 19th and early 20th century outbuildings, and artifact deposits could also be present in this area.

While tests should be placed in the lot 18 portion of the site (Figure 28, Area C) it is, in general, considered to have a lower degree of archaeological sensitivity than lot 105. Since this portion of the site is further from the edge of the bluff which overlooked the former stream course, it is considered to be less sensitive for the presence of prehistoric remains than the portion of lot 105 noted above. The early 20th century buildings fronting on Vanderbilt Avenue west of the lot 18 portion of the project site were not constructed until after the availability of a public water supply, and archaeological features would not have been associated with these structures.

The sloping westernmost portion of the site, adjacent to Vanderbilt Avenue (Figure 28, Area D), is considered to be unlikely to contain significant archaeological deposits.

REFERENCES CITED

- Bayles, Richard M., ed.
1887 History of Richmond County. New York: L.E. Preston & Co.
- Beers, J. B. and Company
1874 Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

1887 Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York
Collection of the New York Public Library.
- Berger, Lewis and Associates
1985 "Phase II Historical and Archaeological Investigations of
the Fountain-Mouquin House Site (A085-01-007), Fort
Wadsworth, Staten Island, New York." Report on File, New
York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- Boesch, Eugene
1994 "Archaeological Evaluation and Sensitivity Assessment of
Staten Island". Report Submitted to the New York City
Landmarks Preservation Commission..

1995 Personal Communication Regarding the Fox Hills Site.
August, 1995.
- Bolton, Reginald Pelham
1922 "Indian Paths in the Great Metropolis" Indian Notes and
Monographs. Miscellaneous #22. New York: Museum of the
American Indian, Heye Foundation.

1934 Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York. Port
Washington: Ira J. Friedman, Inc. (re-issued 1971).
- Borough of Richmond
1907 Topographical Survey Sheet #25. August 1907.
- Bromley, G. W. and Co.
1917 Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Richmond,
Staten Island, Vol. 2.
- Clute, J. J.
1877 Annals of Staten Island: From Its Discovery to the
Present Time. New York: Press of Charles Vogt.
- Cole, Thomas L.
1839 Map of Property Purchased by the Staten Island
Association Situated at the Narrows, Staten Island near
New York. Filed Map #22, Office of the Richmond County
Clerk.
- Davis, William T. Davis
1896 Map of Staten Island with Ye Olde Names & Nicknames. New
York: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences

Dripps, Matthew

1850 Map of Staten Island or Richmond County, New York.
Collection of the New York Public Library.

Hagstrom Map Company, Inc.

1989 Hagstom Map of Staten Island. Maspeth, New York

Historical Records Survey

1942 The Earliest Volume of Staten Island Records 1678 - 1813.

Leng, Charles W. and William T. Davis

1930 Staten Island and Its People. New York: Lewis Historical
Publishing Company. 4 vols.

Lockwood, Kessler and Bartlett, Inc. and the Cultural Resources
Group, Louis Berger and Associates

1990 "The VanDeventer-Fountain House Site Ca. 1786 to 1901,
Staten Island New York." Report on File, New York City
Landmarks Preservation Commission.

McMillen, Loring

1946 "Old Roads of Staten Island (Part 2)". The Staten Island
Historian VIII:14 - 16.

Morris, Ira K.

1900 Morris's Memorial History of Staten Island, New York
Vol. II. West New Brighton: the author.

New York State Census, Richmond County

1865 Census Records. New York Public Library

1875

Pickman, Arnold

1988 "Stage I Archaeological Survey, Joline Avenue Pool Parking
Lot, Tottenville, Staten Island, New York. New York: Quennell
Rothschild Associates.

1991 "Archaeological Documentary Study, New 123rd Precinct
Stationhouse, Borough of Staten Island, Capital Project
P0144-123, CEQR #91-038R". Submitted to New York City
Department of General Services, Division of Design and
Construction Management.

1995 "Archaeological Documentary Study, Block 6316, Lot 31,
Borough of Richmond, CEQR No. 95-DEP-223R. Report
submitted to Mr. Gino Tucci.

Plan (No. 31) du Camp Anglo-Hessois dans Staten Island (The
"French" Map)

1780- Map in the Collection of the New York Public Library.

1783

Richmond County Deeds, Office of the Richmond County Clerk

Richmond County Surrogates Court

1797- Index to Wills Book No. 1. Office of the Surrogates
1919 Court Clerk

Robinson, E. and Co.

1898 Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York.

Robinson, E. and R.H. Pidgeon

1907 Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York. 2nd
and Revised Edition. New York: E. Robinson.

Root, George M

1853 Map of Property Belonging to J. B. Simonson Esq.,
Clifton, Staten Island. Filed Map #337, Office of the
Richmond County Clerk.

1854a Map included in deed transferring property from John B.
Simonson to J.A.H. Britton. Richmond County Deeds Liber
34:419.

1854b Map of Property belonging to J. B. Simonson & J. A. H.
Britton, Clifton, Staten Island. Filed Map #144, Office
of the Richmond County Clerk.

Sanborn Map Company

1898 Insurance Maps of Staten Island, Borough of Richmond
1917 New York. Collection of the New York Public Library.,
1937

1951 Insurance Maps of Staten Island, Borough of Richmond,
New York. Updated from 1937. Collection of the New York
Public Library.

Skene, Frederick

1907 Map of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York Showing
the Colonial Land Patents from 1668-1712. Collection of
the New York Public Library.

Skinner, Alanson

1909 "The Lenape of Staten Island" in "The Lenape Indians of
Greater New York and the Lower Hudson", Clark Wissler, ed.
Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural
History, Volume III. New York.

Sprong, Bernard, and Richard Conner

1797 A New and Correct Map of the County of Richmond.
Collection of the New York Public Library.

Staten Island Directories

1888 Webb's Consolidated Directory of the North and South
1890-91 Shores of Staten Island

1895-6 The Standard Directory of Richmond County
1906

1898 Trows Business and Residential Directory of the Borough
of Richmond

Taylor, George and Abraham Skinner

1781 Map of New York and Staten Island and Part of Long Island
Surveyed by Order of His Excellency General Sir Henry
Clinton, K.B. Collection of the New York Public Library.

United States Census

1860 Census Records. New York Public Library

1880

1900

United States Coastal Survey

1844-45 Map of New York Bay and Harbor and the Environs. Survey
of the Coast of the United States. Map in the Collection
of the New York Public Library.

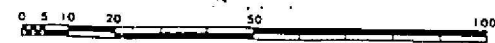
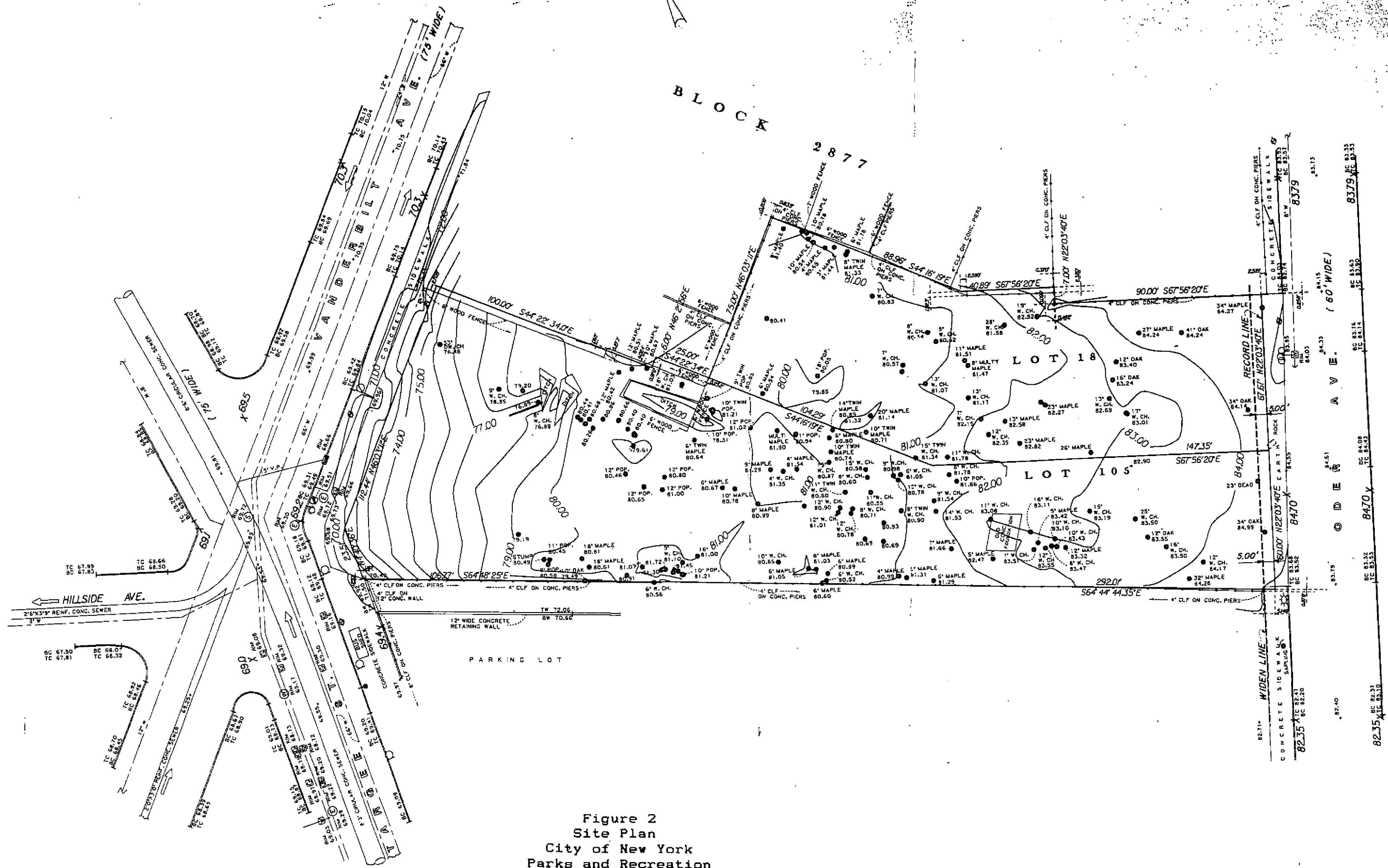
Walling, H.F.

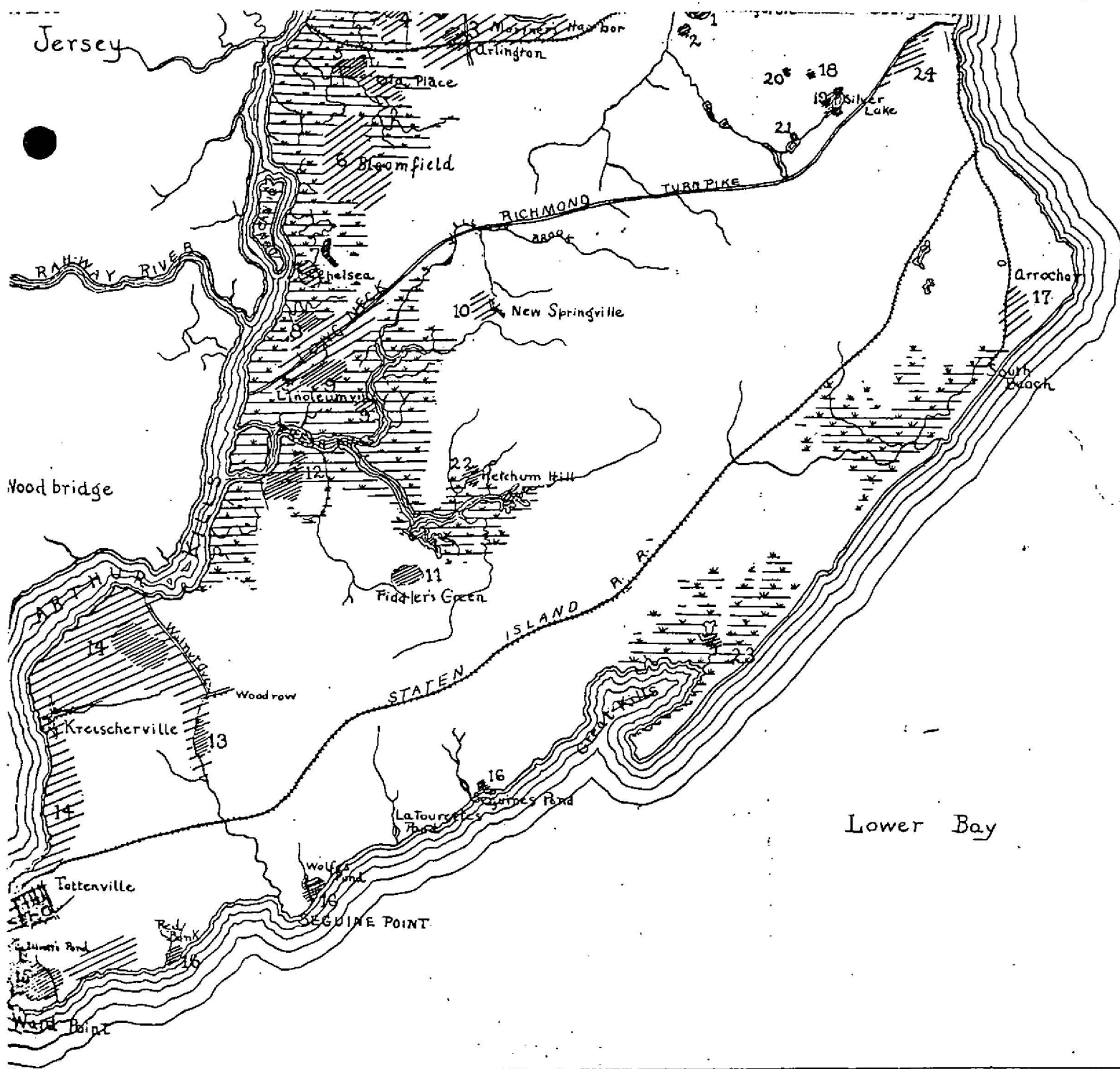
1859 Map of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York. New
York: D.A. Fox. Collection of the New York Public Library.

FIGURES



Figure 1
Site Location
Base Map: Hagstrom (1989)
Scale 1" = ca. 2000'

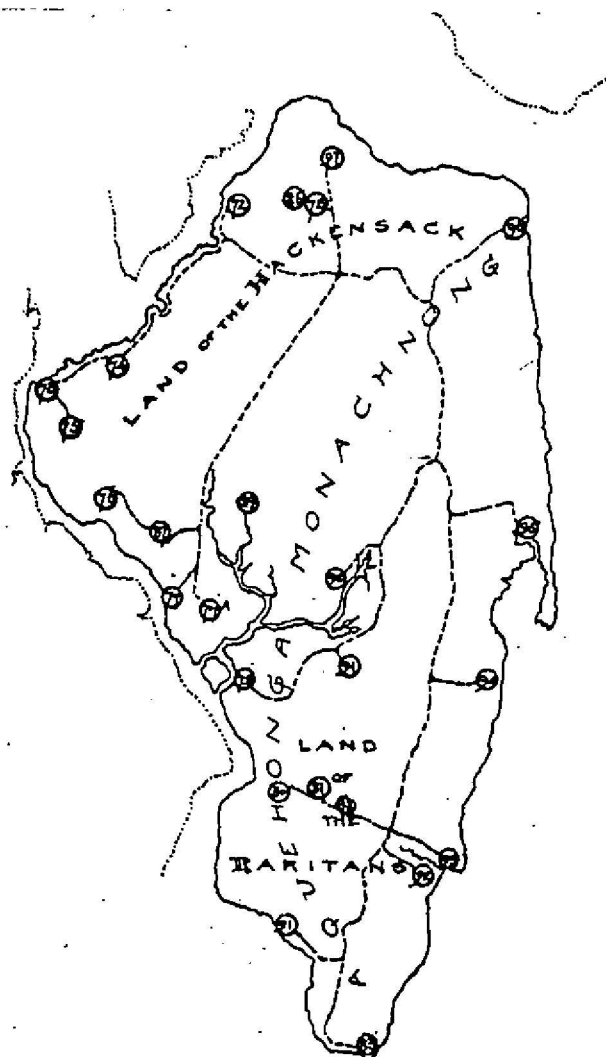




ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP OF STATEN ISLAND.

Figure 3

Source: Skinner (1909)



INDIAN SITES IN THE BOROUGH OF RICHMOND

Figure 4
Source: Bolton (1934)



Figure 5
Source: Davis (1896)



Figure 6
Colonial Land Patents
Source: Skene (1907)

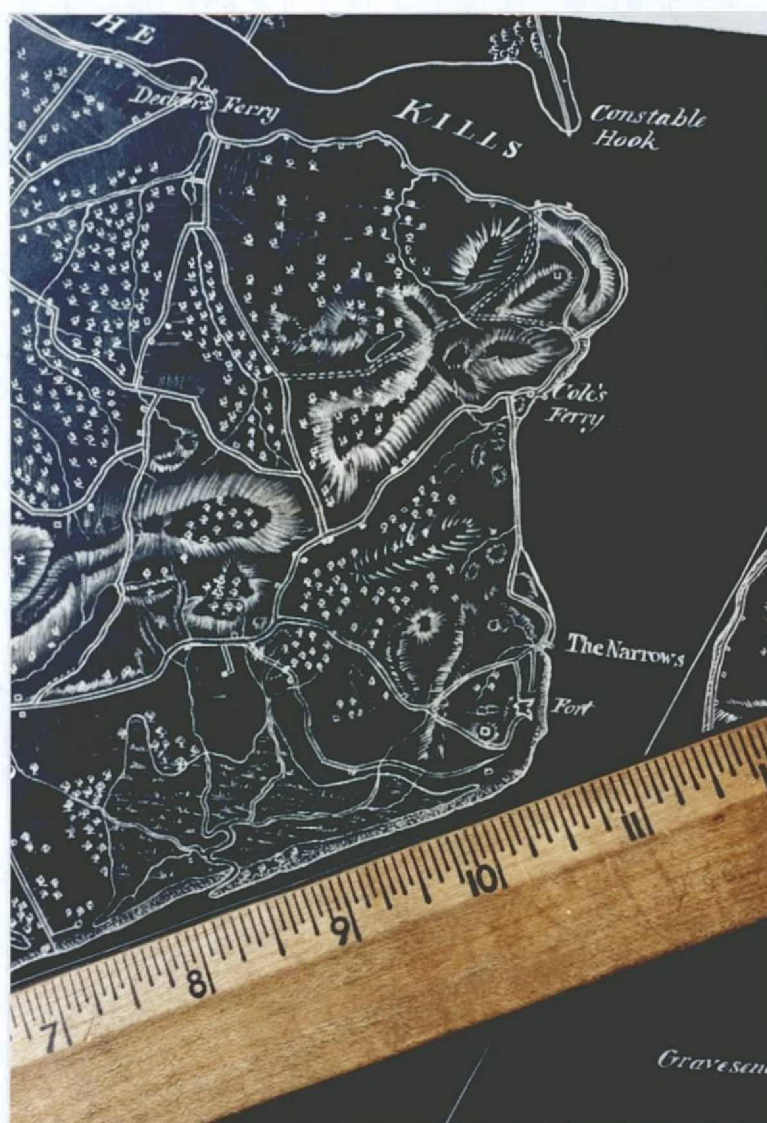


Figure 7
Source: Taylor and Skinner (1781)
Original Scale: 1" = 1 mile

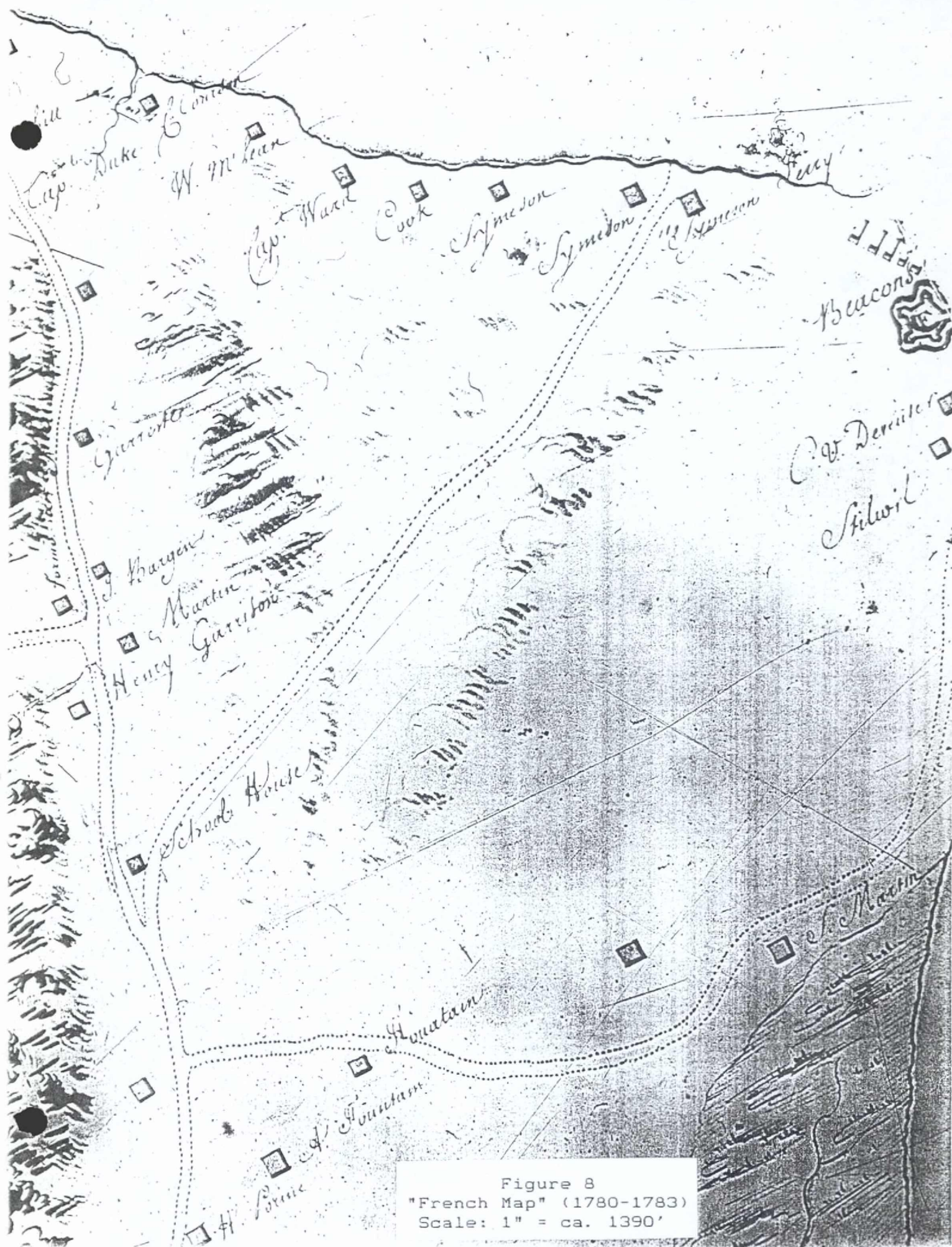


Figure 8
"French Map" (1780-1783)
Scale: 1" = ca. 1390'

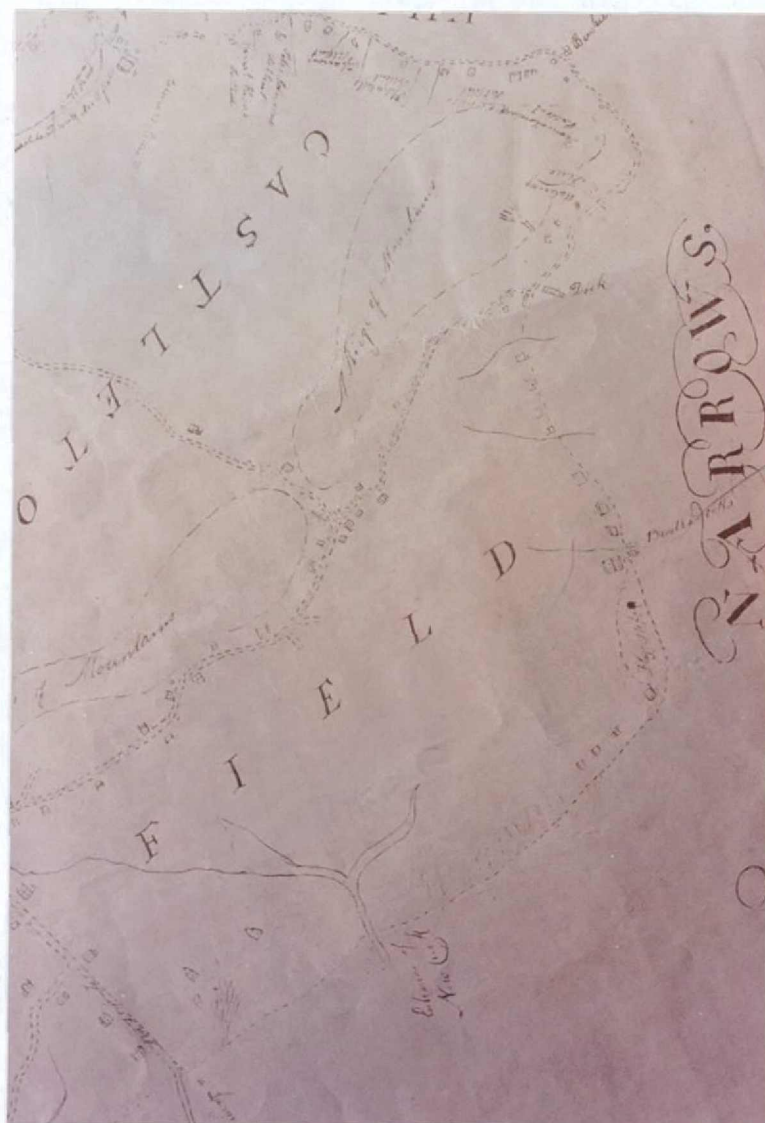


Figure 9
Source: Sprong and Connor (1797)
Scale of Original: 1" = 40 chains

MAP OF PROPERTY
Purchased by the
STATEN ISLAND ASSOCIATION

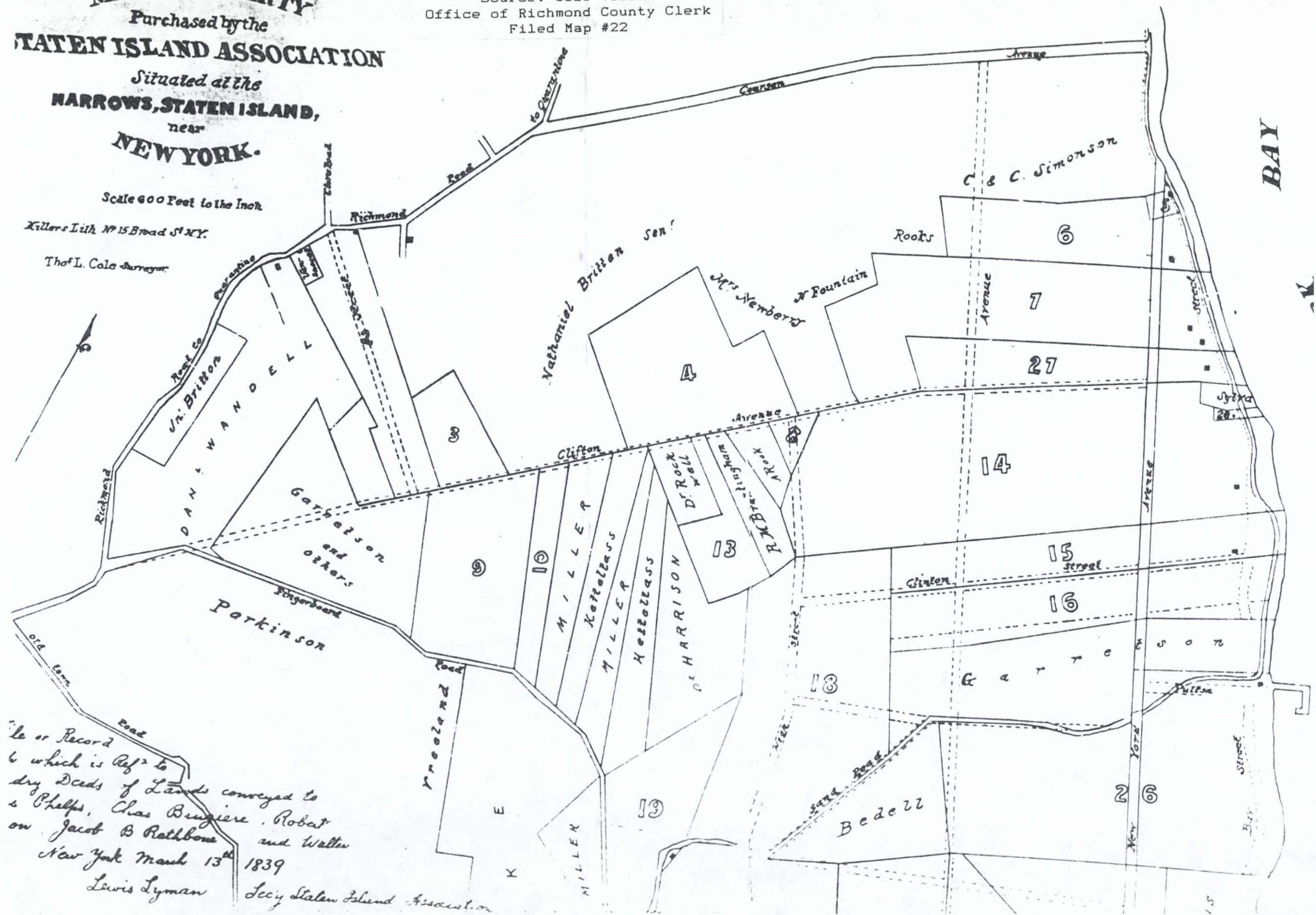
Situated at the
NARROWS, STATEN ISLAND,
near
NEW YORK.

Scale 600 Feet to the Inch

Killars Lick No 15 Broad St N.Y.

Thos L. Cole Surveyor

Figure 10
Source: Cole (1839)
Office of Richmond County Clerk
Filed Map #22



File or Record
to which is Ref^d to
dry Deeds of Lands conveyed to
s Phelps, Chas Brugiere, Robert
on Jacob B Rathbone and Walter
New York March 13th 1839
Lewis Lyman Secy Staten Island Association

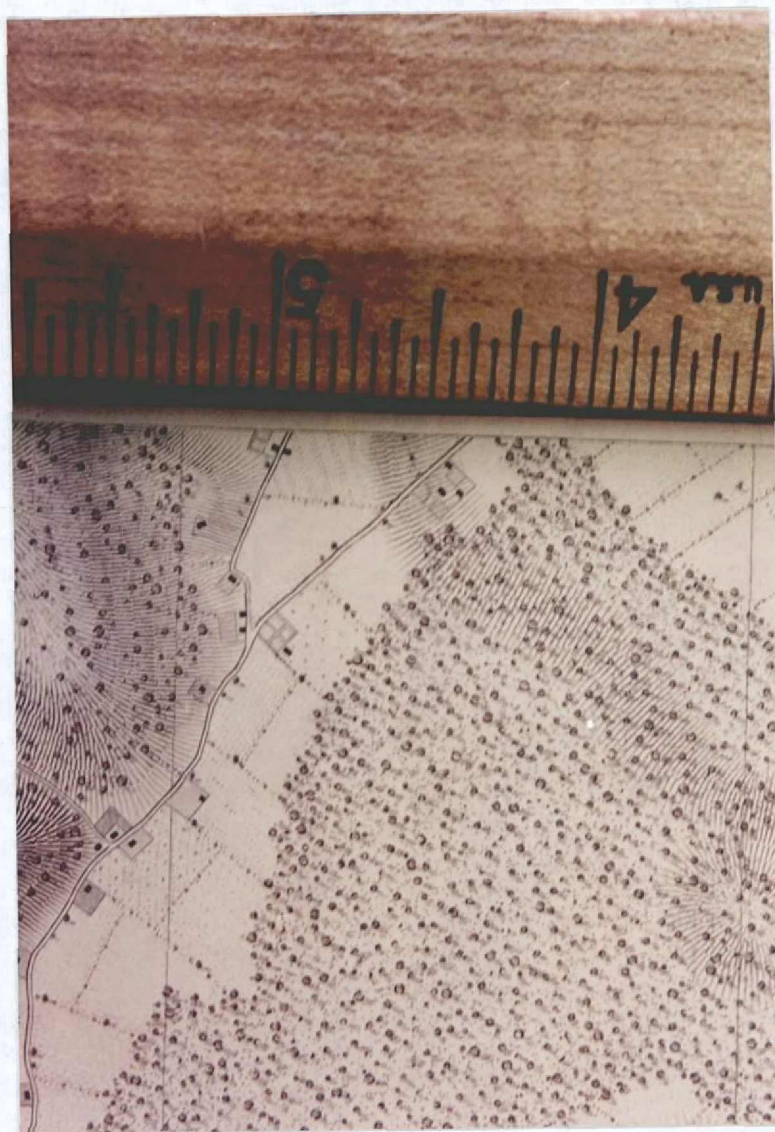


Figure 11
Source: United States Coastal Survey (1844-45)
Scale: 1/30000

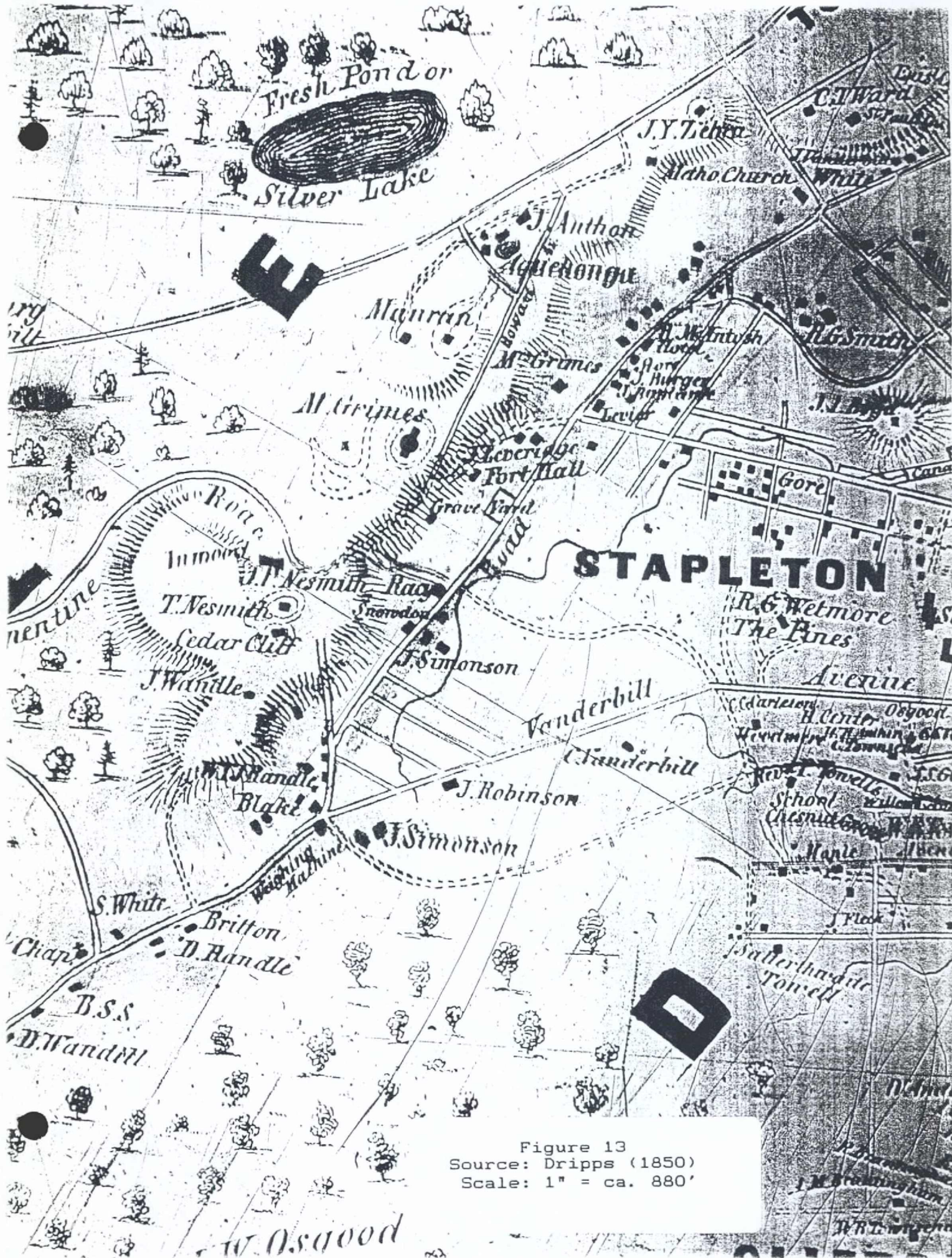


Figure 13
 Source: Dripps (1850)
 Scale: 1" = ca. 880'

C. Vanderbilt.

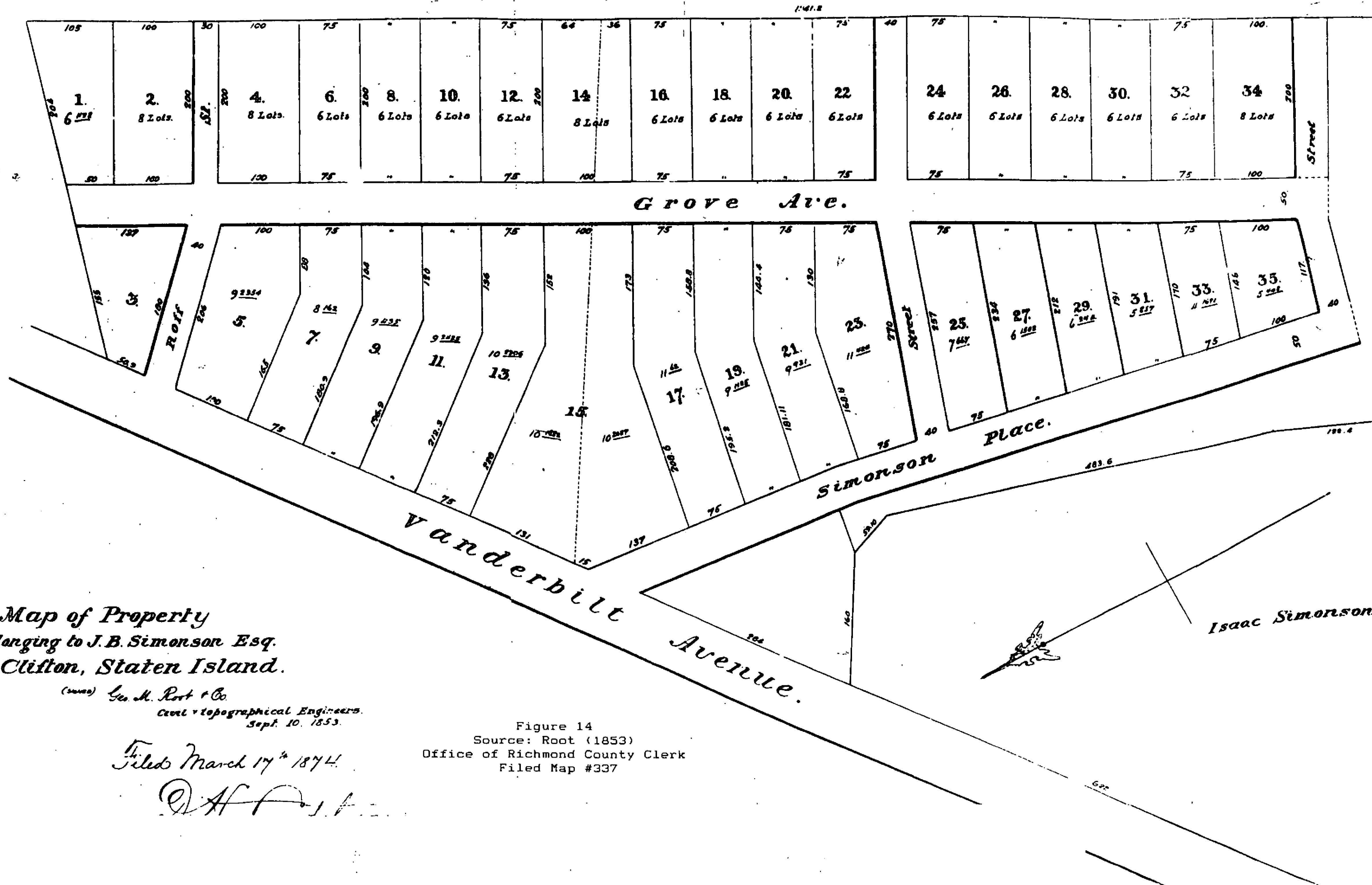
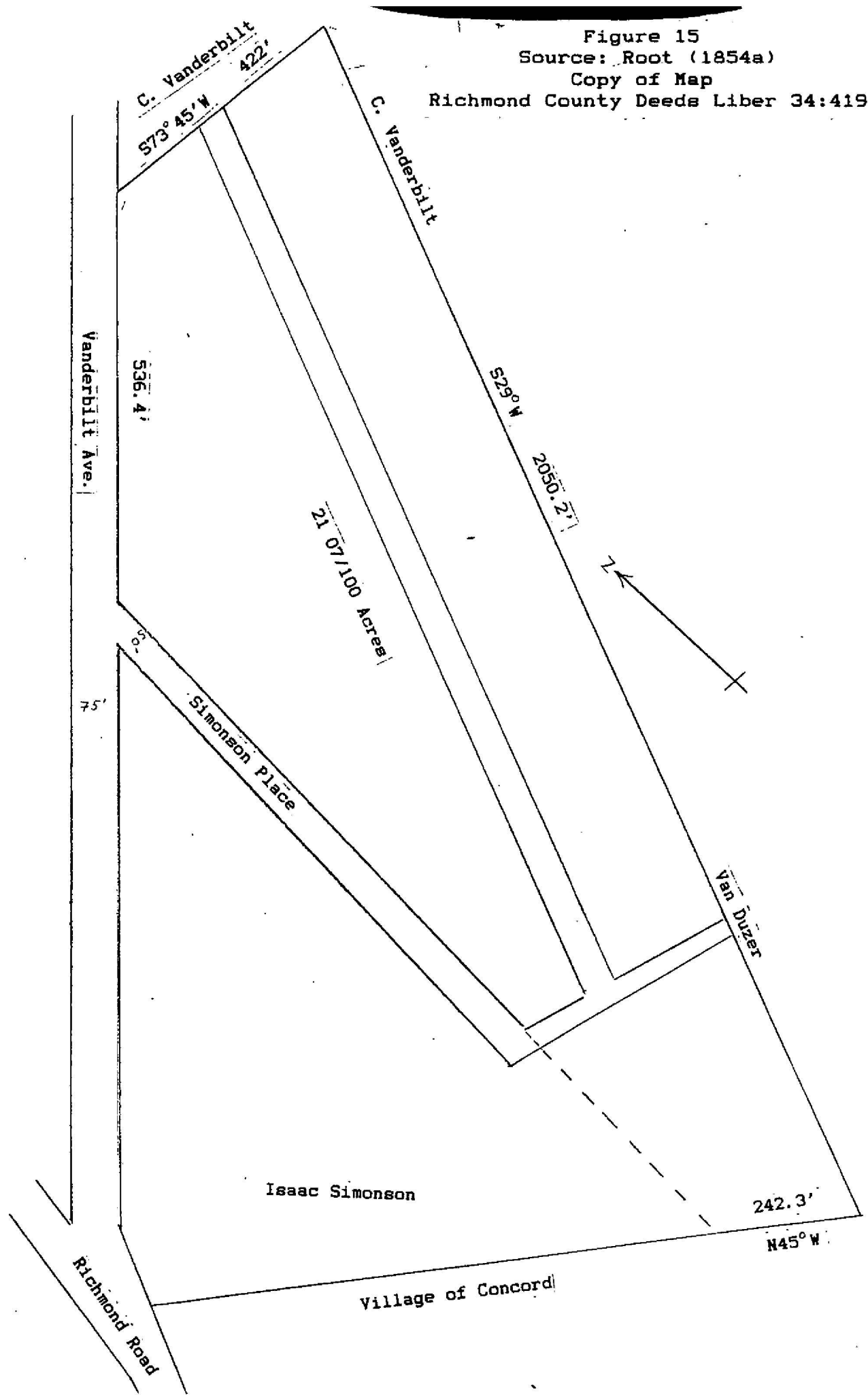


Figure 15
Source: Root (1854a)
Copy of Map
Richmond County Deeds Liber 34:419



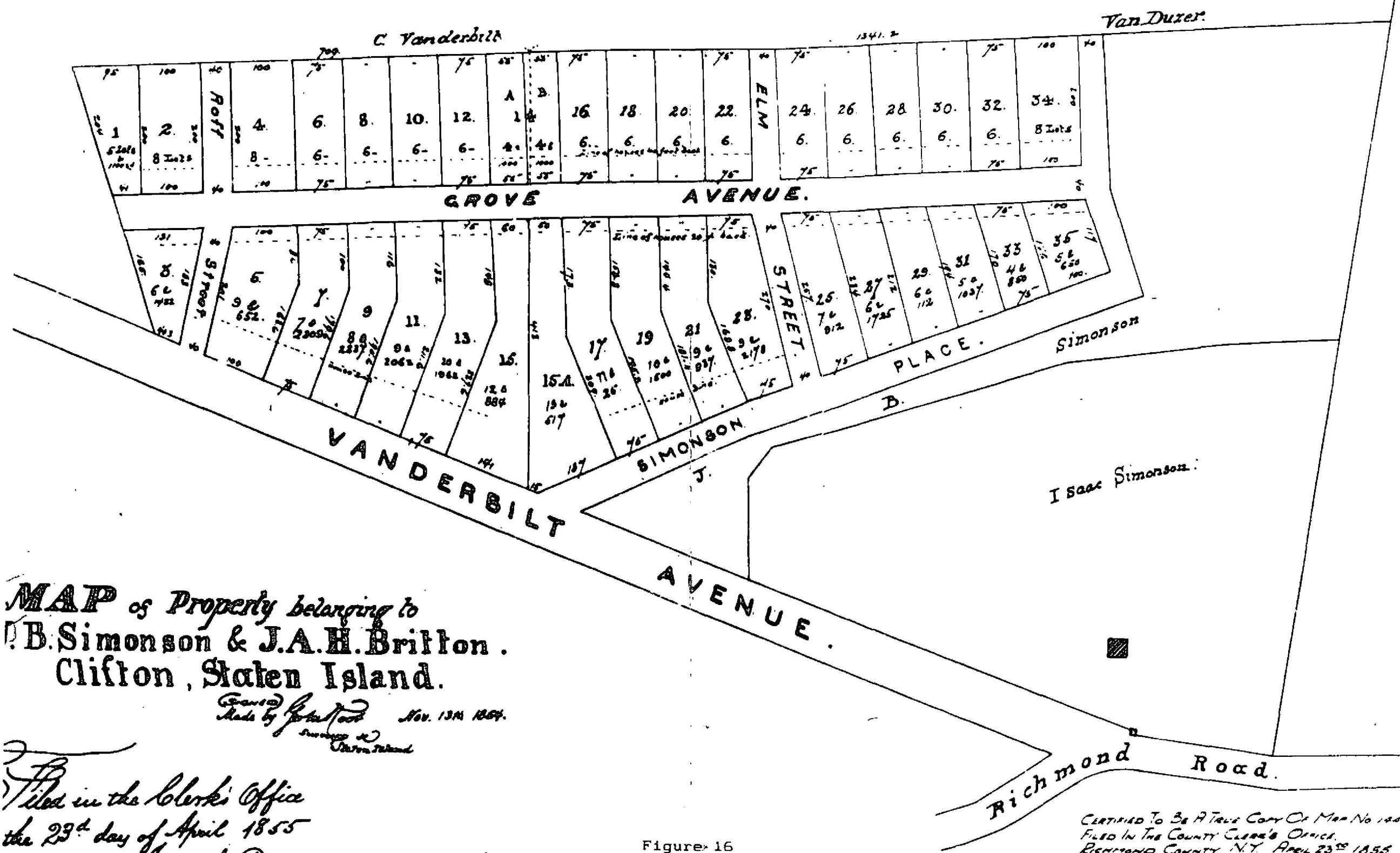


Figure-16
 Source: Root (1854b)
 Office of Richmond County
 Filed Map #144

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY OF MAP No 144
 FILED IN THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE,
 RICHMOND COUNTY, N.Y. APRIL 23RD 1855

North Allison Beckwith
City Surveyor
 DATED June 16, 1932

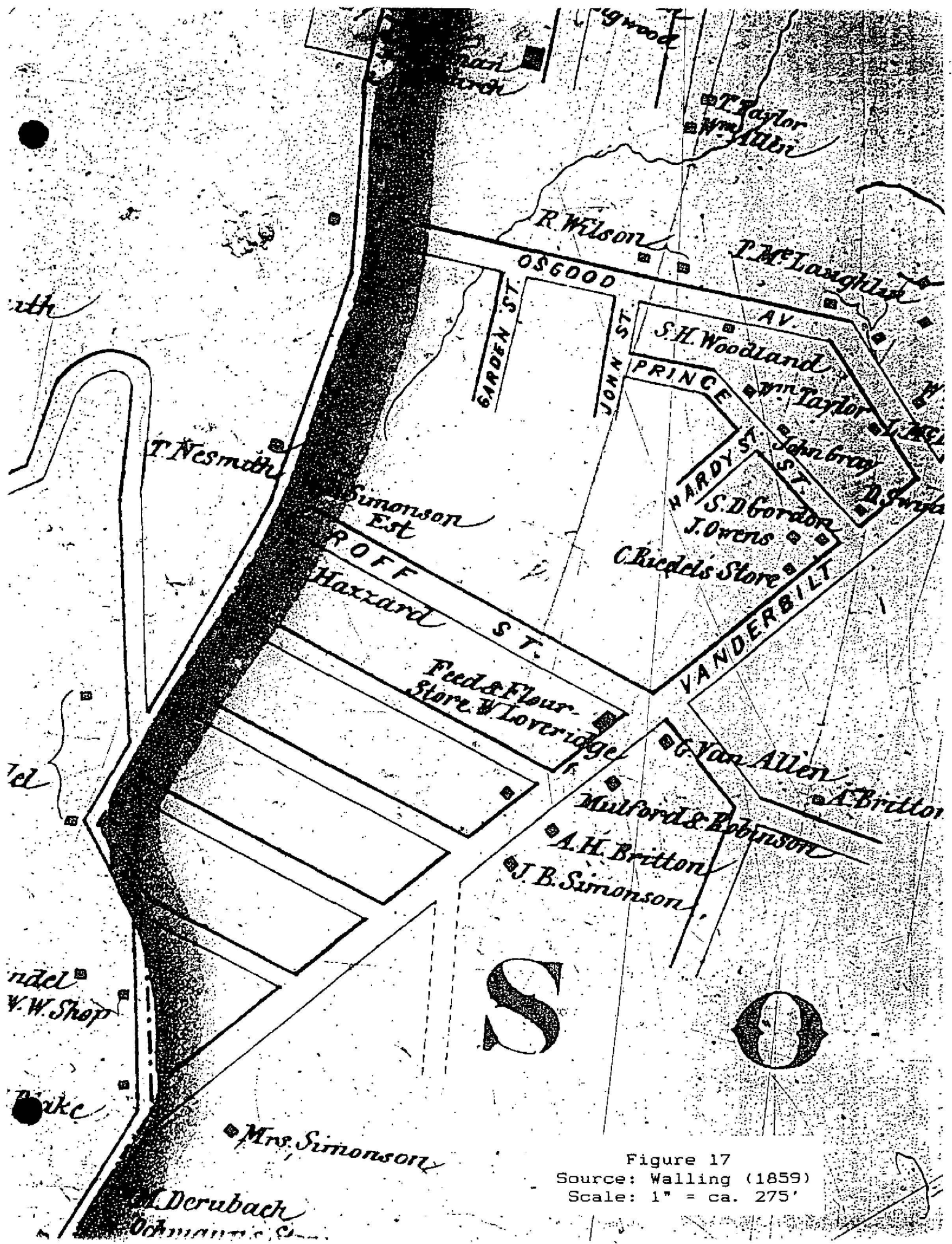


Figure 17
 Source: Walling (1859)
 Scale: 1" = ca. 275'

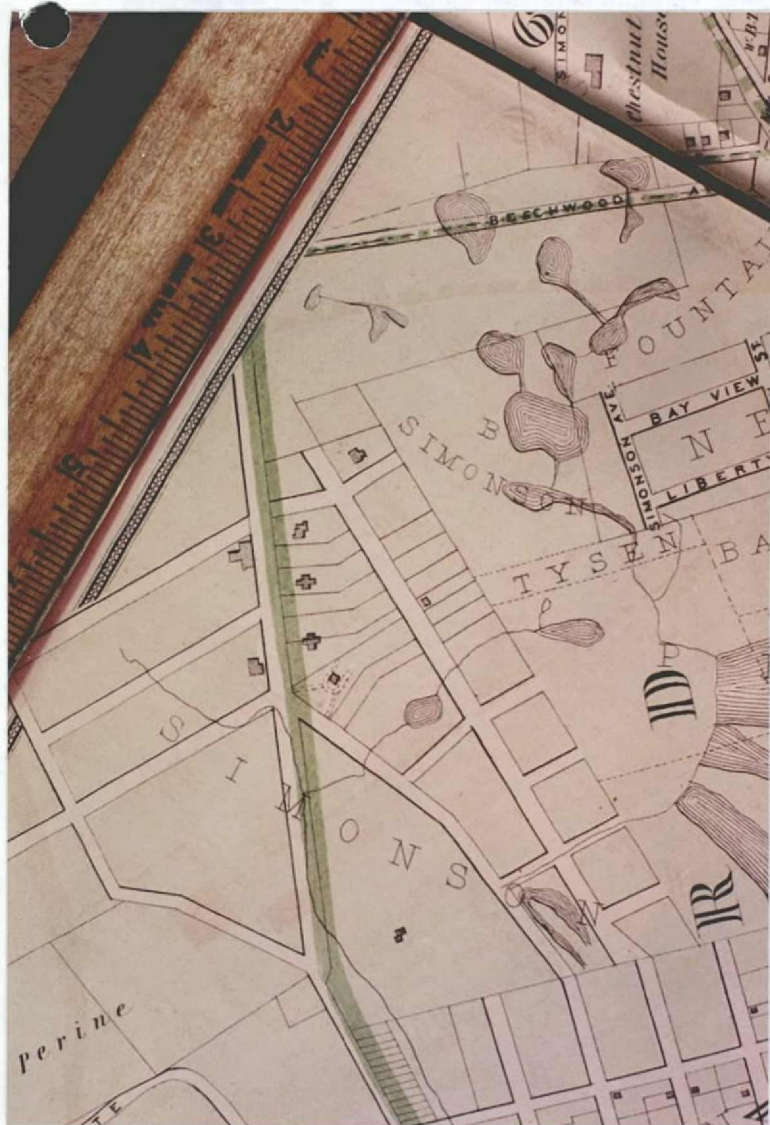


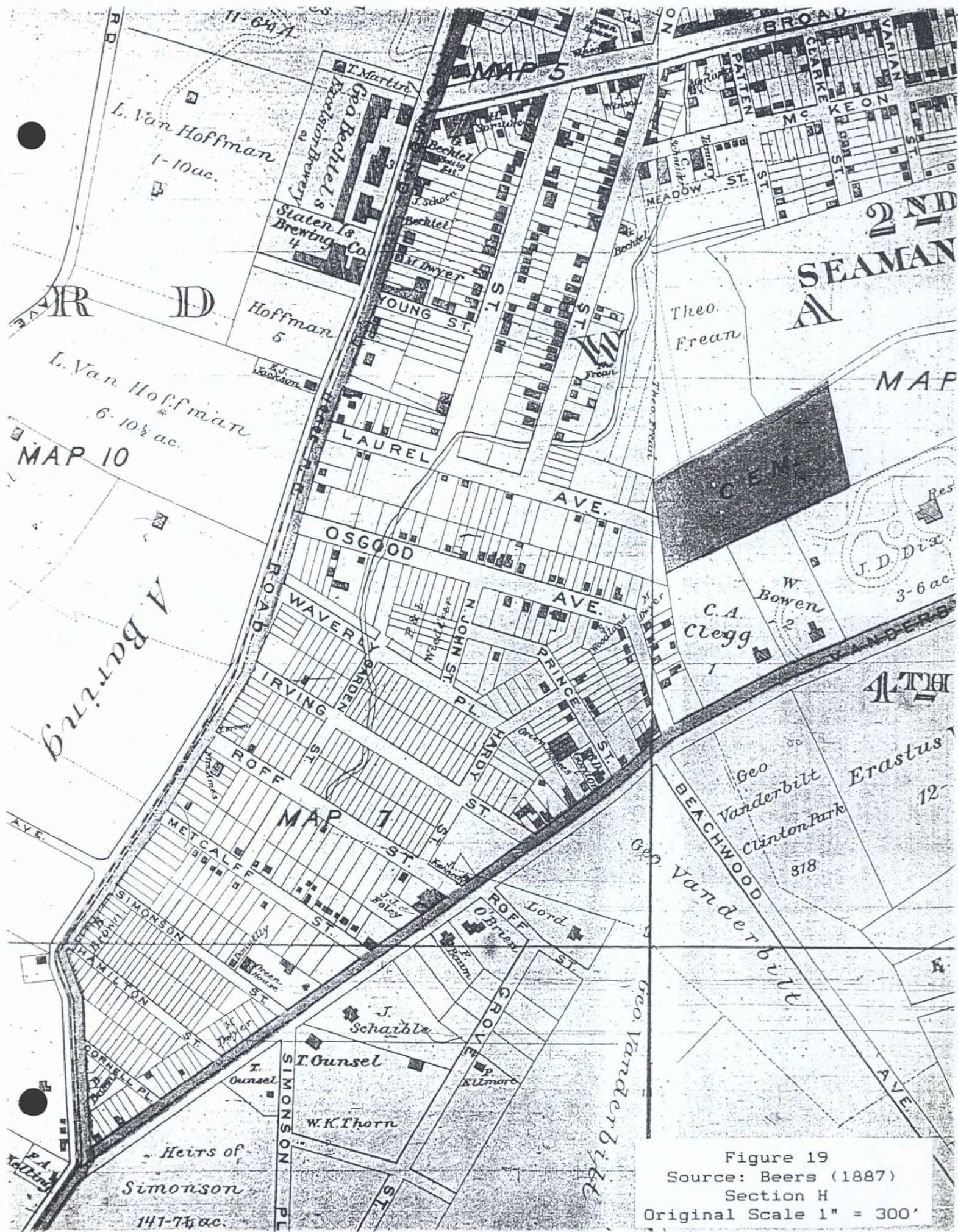
Figure 18

Source: Beers (1874:13)

Left: Vicinity of Project Site Showing Stream and Ponds

Right: Detail Showing House on Project Site

Scale: 1/5000



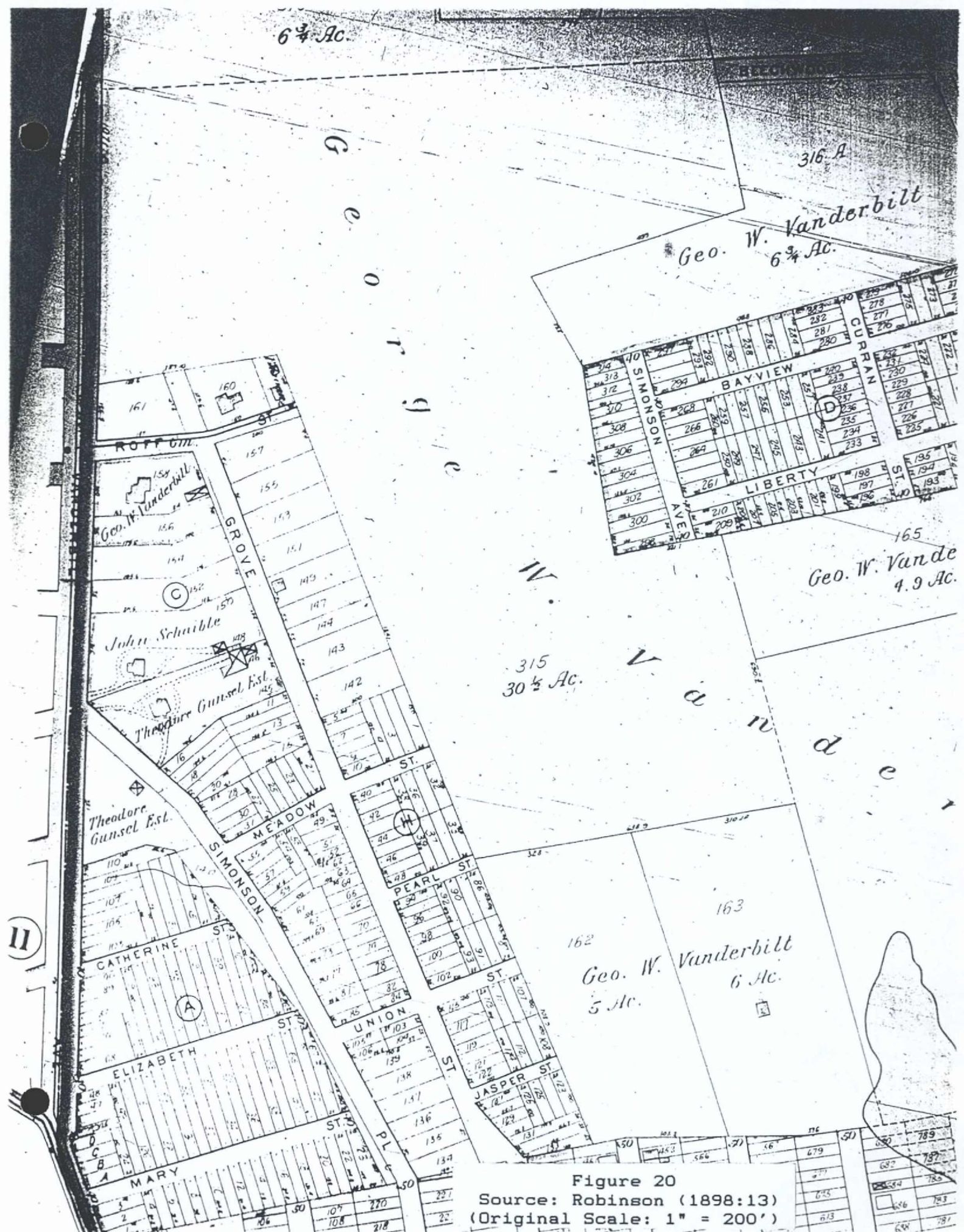


Figure 20
Source: Robinson (1898:13)
(Original Scale: 1" = 200')

13

Figure 21

Source: Sanborn (1898:70)

Vanderbilt Avenue Showing Water Main
(Project Site Not Shown on This Map)

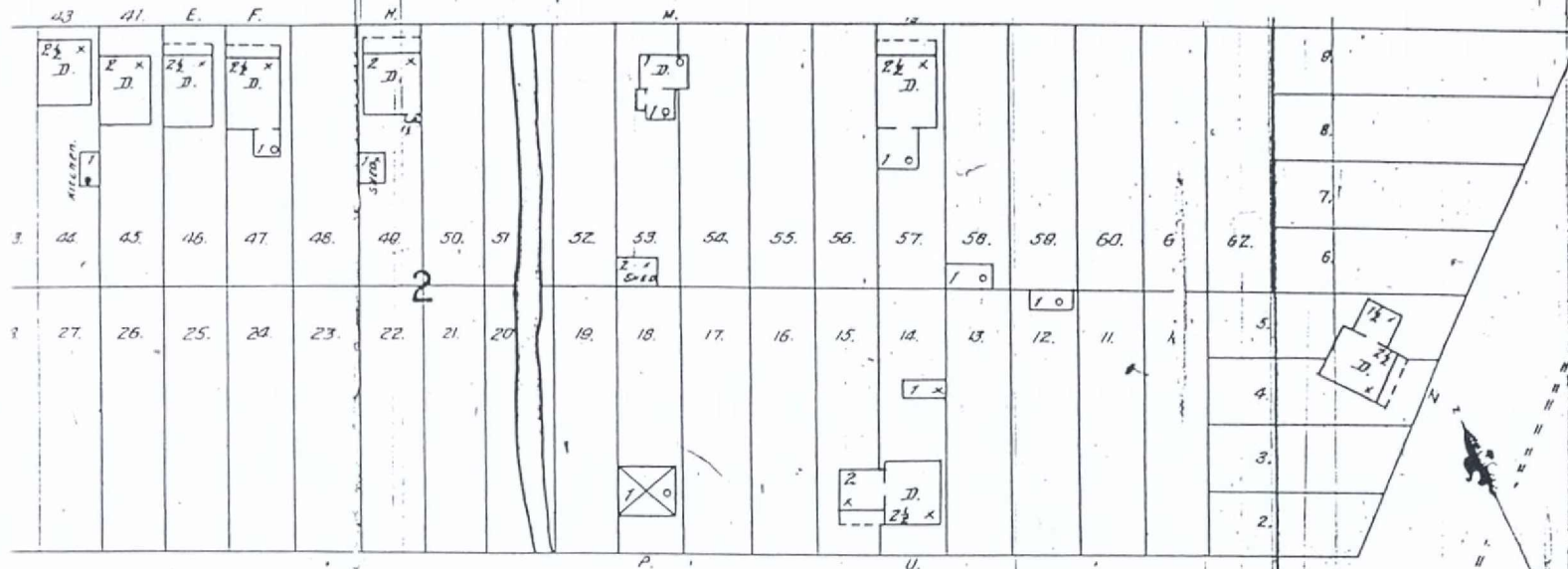
Scale: 1" = ca. 70'

70

70

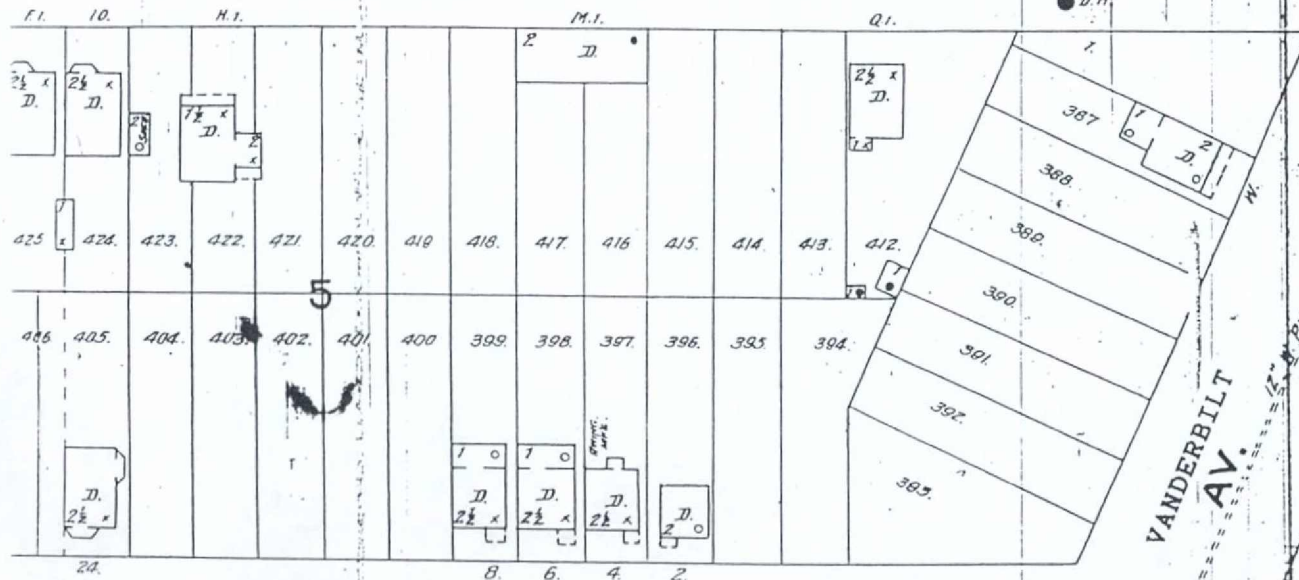
METCALF

6" W. PIPE



SIMONSON

4" W. PIPE



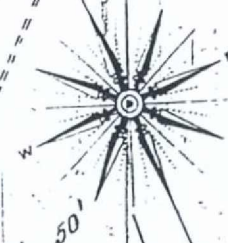
HAMILTON

6" W. PIPE



VANDERBILT AV.

SIMONSON AV.



N. Ohio River

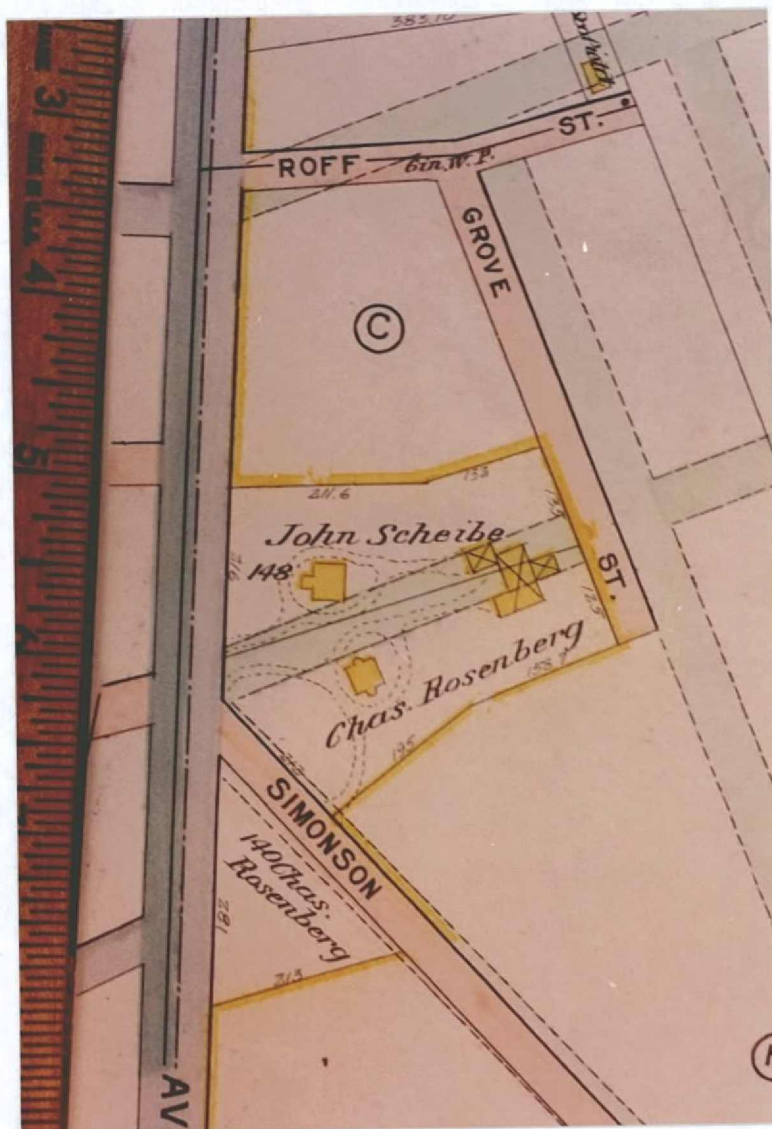
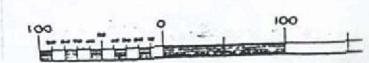


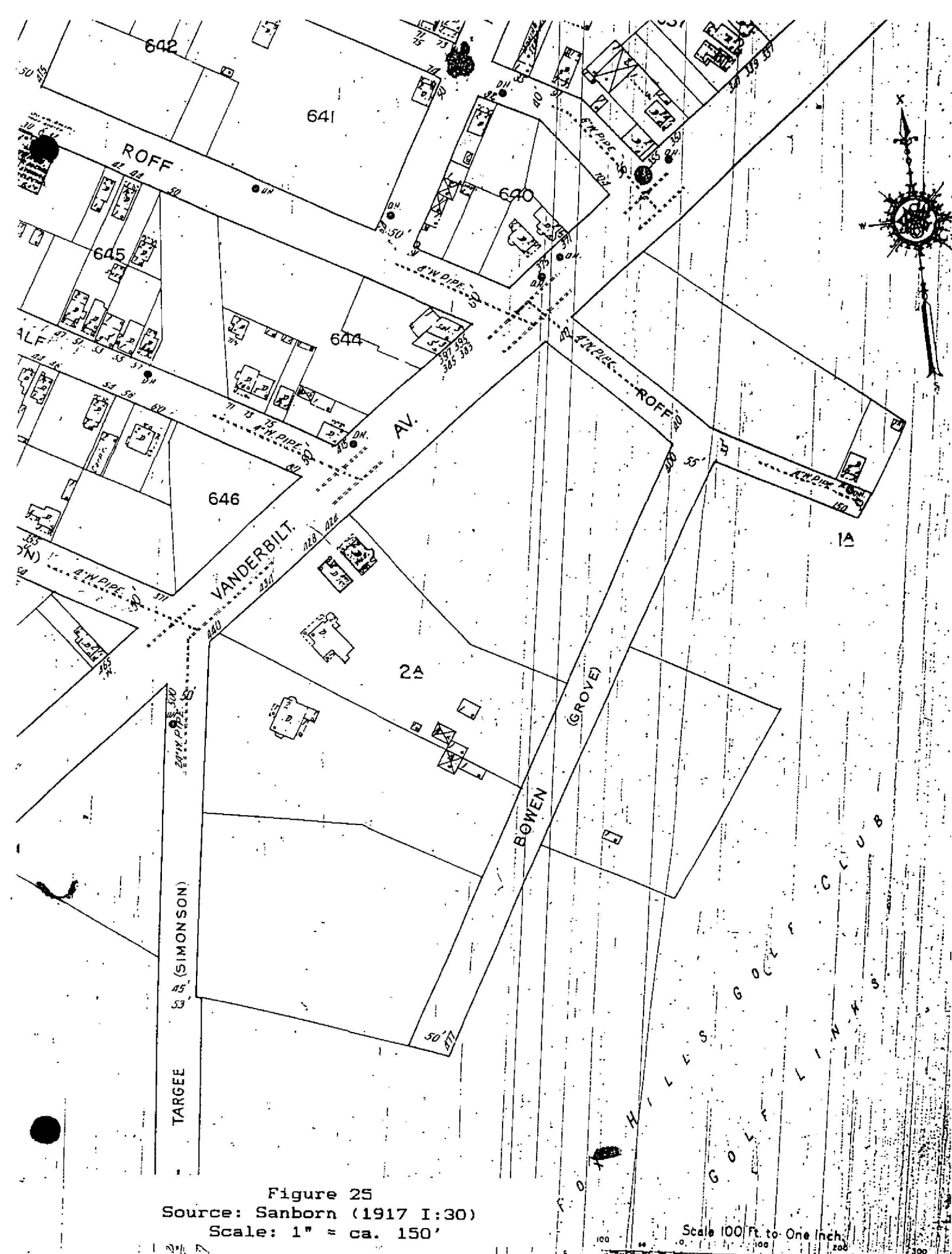
Figure 22

Source: Robinson and Pidgeon (1907 II:13)
Original Scale: 1" = 200'



Figure 23
Source: Borough of Richmond (1907)
Scale: 1" = 150'





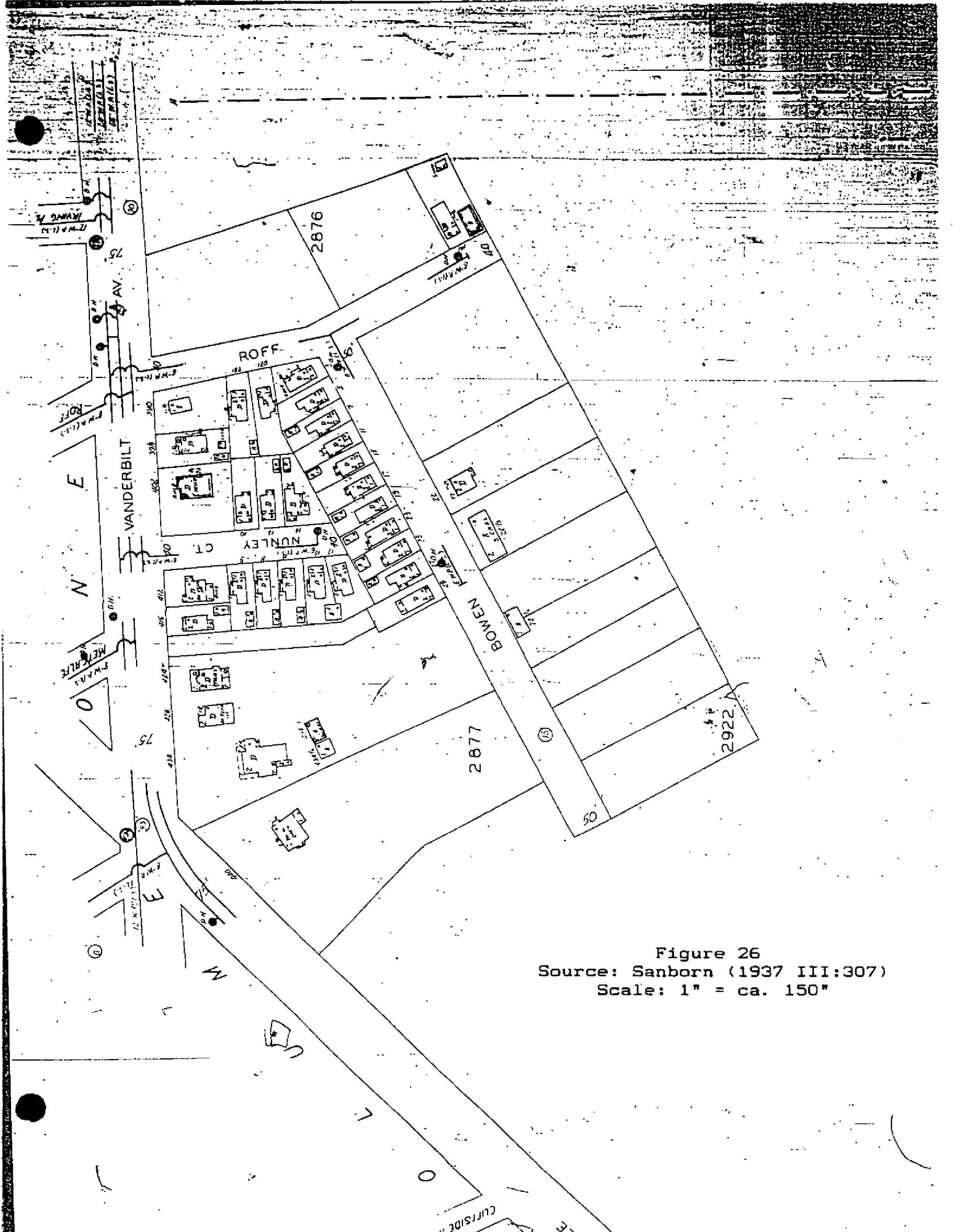
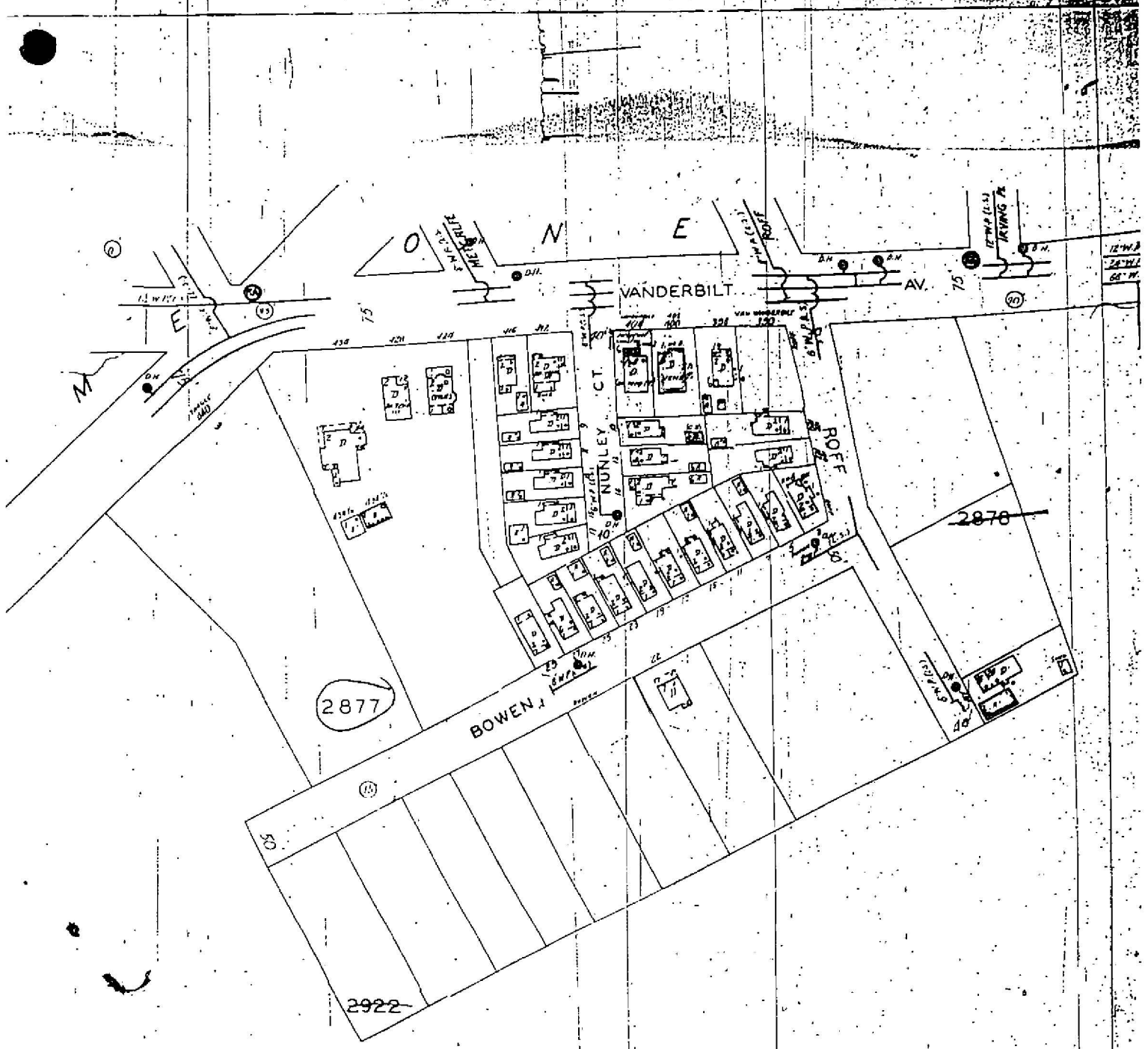


Figure 26
Source: Sanborn (1937 III:307)
Scale: 1" = ca. 150'

FOX HILLS COUNTRY CLUB GROUNDS
NOW U.S. GOVERNMENT OCCUPANCY

Figure 27
Source: Sanborn (1951 III:307)
Scale: 1" = ca. 150'

FOX HILLS COUNTRY CLUB



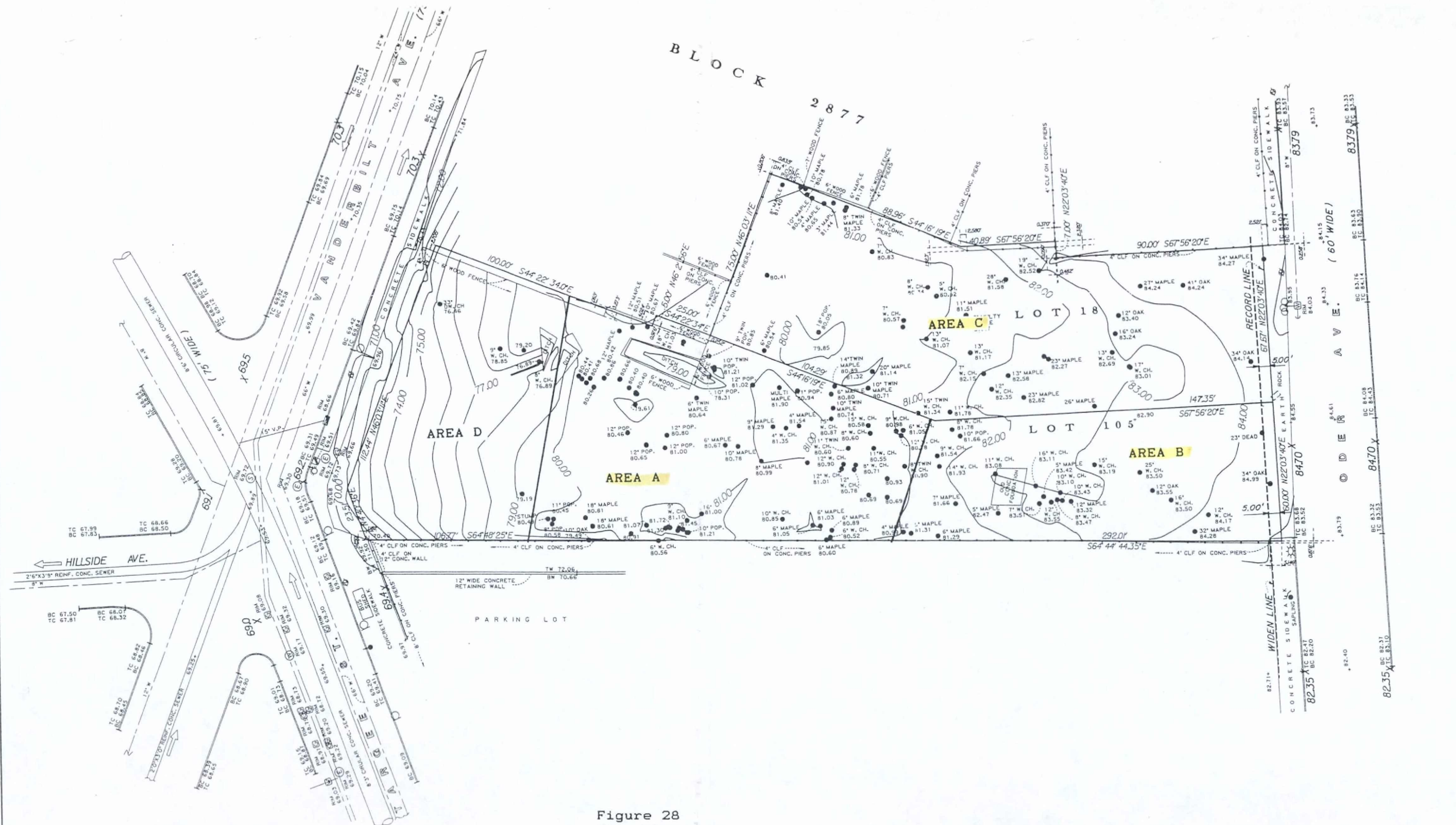


Figure 28
Site Plan
Showing Areas of Relative
Archaeological Sensitivity
(Boundaries Approximate)

0 5 10 20 50 100

MAP FILE • R-T-G-12250

REVISED BY D.P.R. 9/12/94
WIDEN & RECORD LINE ON ODD

PLATES



Plate 1
Project Site Frontage on Vanderbilt Avenue
View East from Southwest Corner of Hillside .
and Vanderbilt Avenue Intersection



Plate 2
View West Toward Intersection of Vanderbilt Avenue and
Targee Street from Top of "Bluff"



Plate 3
Western Portion of Site - Remains of Stone Walkway on Slope
(see Plates 1 and 2 for Location of Pathway)



Plate 4
Blufftop Area - Portion of House Site Located in
Area of Undergrowth in Center and Right of Photograph
View South



Plate 5
Southeastern Portion of Site
View Northwest from Southeastern Corner of Site Near Oder Avenue



Plate 6
Central Portion of Site
House Site in Area of Undergrowth in Background
Note Low Rise in Center of Photo to Rear of House Site
View West from Northeastern Edge of Lot 18



Plate 7
Concrete Slab in Southeastern Portion of Site
View Northwest



Plate 8
Concrete Slab in Southeastern Portion of Site
Detail of Northwestern Portion of Slab
View South