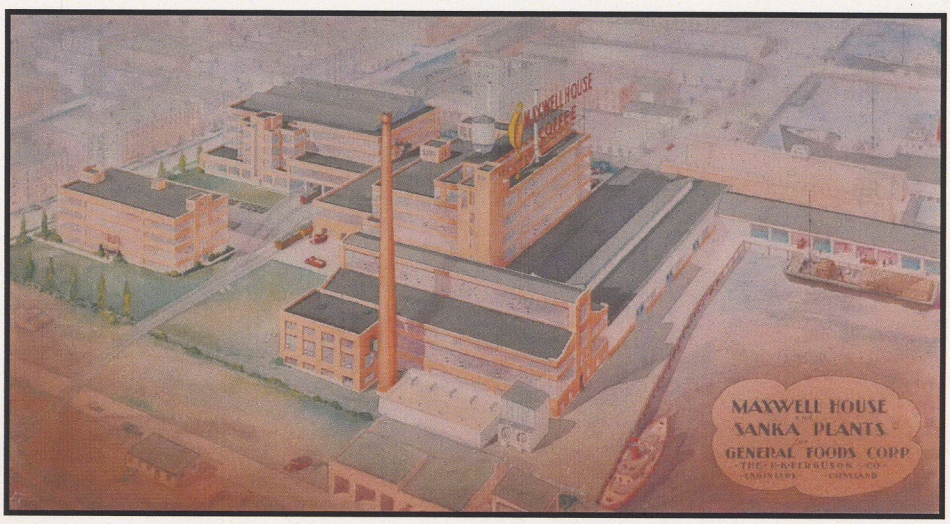
# HISTORIC BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAXWELL HOUSE SITE

## CITY OF HOBOKEN, HUDSON COUNTY NEW JERSEY

**MARCH 2005**




**Submitted by:**

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**Prepared for: Maxwell Place on the Hudson**

# Historic Background and Development of the Maxwell House Site

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New Jersey

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared for PT Maxwell, L.L.C., in connection with the development of the Maxwell House Site in the City of Hoboken, Hudson County, New Jersey. The 2003 report was performed in compliance with an NJDEP Waterfront Development Permit application and in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:22-10.8. The NJDEP subsequently issued the Permit (No. 0905-03-0001.1) on August 6, 2003, subject to special conditions. The purpose of this report is to fulfill Condition Nine of the Permit, which requires completion of an additional study to analyze the site history prior to Maxwell House and complete the historical documentation of the property. Pursuant to the terms of the Permit, copies of this report will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office and made available to local historical societies, libraries, and preservation organizations.

Primary- and secondary-source research for this project was carried out at the following institutions and repositories: Hoboken Historical Museum and Hoboken Public Library, Hoboken, New Jersey; Hudson County Registry of Deeds, Jersey City, New Jersey; New Jersey State Archives and New Jersey State Library, Trenton, New Jersey; New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey; New York Historical Society, New York, New York; and Special Collections and University Archives at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey. For their invaluable help, insights, and contributions to this project, special thanks go to James Lewis of the New Jersey Historical Society; David Webster and Robert Foster of the Hoboken Historical Museum; and Daniel Gans of PT Maxwell, L.L.C.

## 2.0 EARLY YEARS

Situated partly on original high ground and partly on fill, the site of the former Maxwell House Coffee Plant (Block 261, Lot 1) stretches along the Hudson River shoreline between Tenth and Twelfth Streets in the City of Hoboken. The same parcel once included key landmarks in the early history of Hoboken (Figure 1). Among these were pavilions, pathways, and open spaces marking the entrance to Elysian Fields, the great park to which the city owed its initial fame. The first home of the New York Yacht Club and its world-renowned "America's Cup" stood there too. The property is also generally regarded as the birthplace of modern baseball, a phenomenon of such significance, and one so inexorably tied to the American experience, that for the game alone the place deserves note.

This report recounts the early history of the Maxwell House Site. It pays special attention to the nineteenth century, when the land underwent its most dramatic changes, and it looks closely at the role of the Stevens family, the founders of Hoboken, in shaping the tract to suit their aims. The design of the Maxwell House Plant also figures into the narrative, since it transformed the site into its most recent form.

### *Settlement and Early Owners*

Hoboken in its earliest days consisted largely of marsh and salt meadow. The exception was a large promontory, or point, rising island-like out of the grass and mud on the Hudson River's western edge. This natural garrison commanded spectacular views up and down the river and across to the settlement of New Amsterdam on the tip of Manhattan Island. A Dutch settler named Michael Pauw acquired lands along the west bank of the Hudson River in 1630, covering all of present-day Hoboken (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 10; Winfield 1874: 315). In 1635, the lands passed to the Dutch West India Company, after which a period of conflict with the Native Americans left possession of the lands in constant dispute (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 10). A new indenture between the Native Americans and Petrus Stuyvesant of New Amsterdam finally secured title to the lands in 1658 (Winfield 1895). Stuyvesant's tract of approximately 276 acres extended along the west bank of the Hudson River from Weehawken Cove to Hoboken Creek, a meandering tidal stream formally located near Newark Street (Figure 2). Governor Stuyvesant conveyed the tract to his brother-in-law, Nicholas Varlett, on February 5, 1663 (Hammond 1947). This title was later confirmed by Philip Carteret on May 12, 1668 (New York Colonial Deeds 1668). One observer writing in 1680 described the tract as:

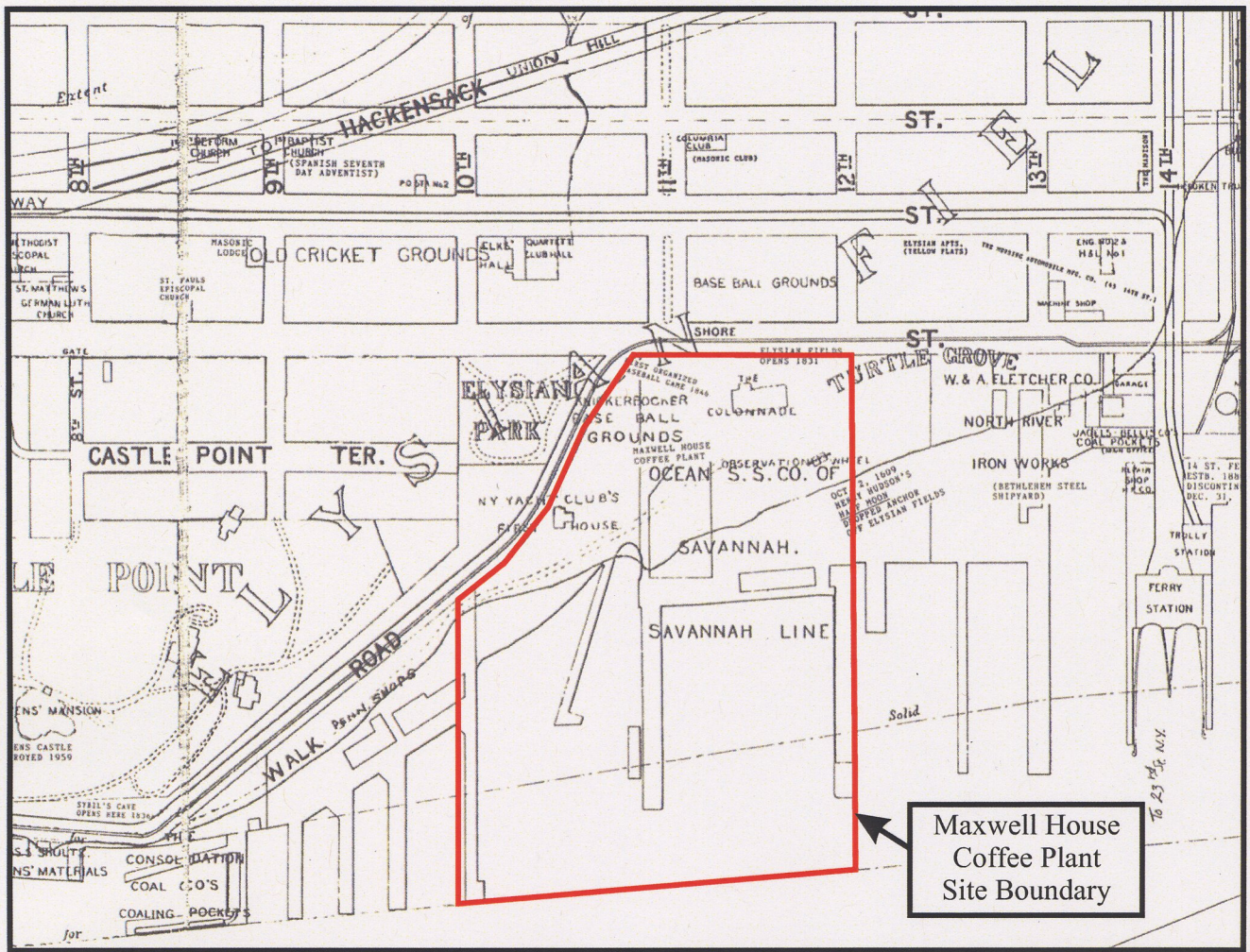



**Figure 1:**

1909 Robert C. Brelle, General and Historical Map of the City of Hoboken, New Jersey, According to the Official Surveys Embracing the History of Over a Century. Reprinted and Annotated in 1998. The map accurately overlays the historic features and landmarks of Elysian Fields onto the shoreline of 1909 (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).

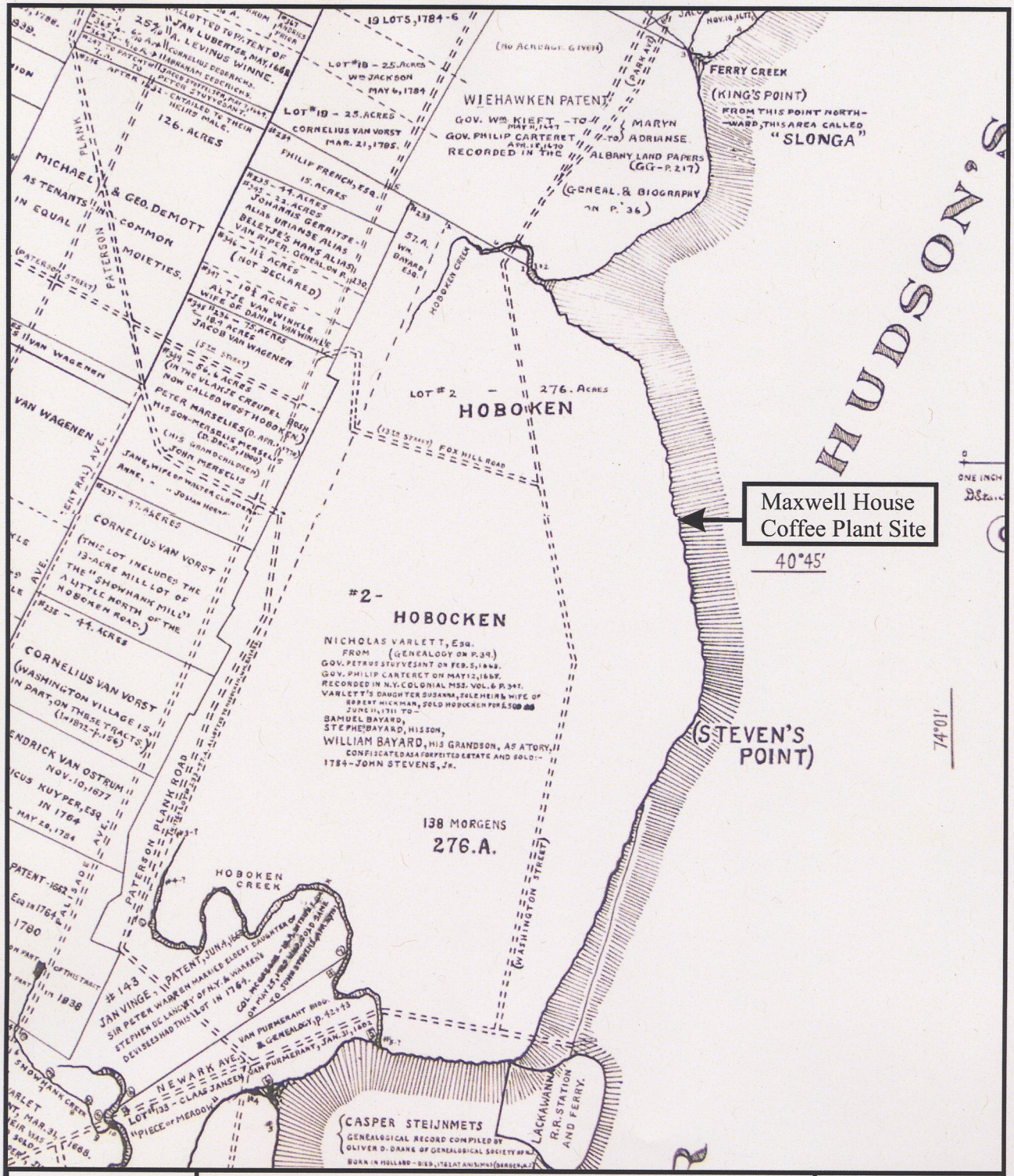



**Figure 2:**

1947 D. Stanton Hammond, Bergen Town and Township, Nov. 1660 - Sept. 22, 1668, Hudson County, New Jersey (Source: New Jersey Archives, Trenton, New Jersey).

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> a good plantation in a neck of land almost on an island called Hobuck. It did belong to a Dutch merchant, Aert Teunissen, who formally, in the Indian war, had his wife, children and servants murdered by the Indians, and his house, cattle and stock destroyed by them. It is now settled again, and a mill erected there by one dwelling in New York. (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 11)

Varlett died intestate in 1675 (Winfield 1895). Title passed to his daughter Susanna de Freest, then to her daughter Susanna Hickman, wife of Robert Hickman. The Hickmans sold the tract in 1711 to New York merchant Samuel Bayard. Bayard developed the property for farming and erected a comfortable summer residence on the promontory. So began a tradition of recreation and leisure that would continue with the property for 150 years.

By 1760, according to the *New York Mercury*, the land included all the buildings needed for a well-managed farm and contained a five-acre garden with peaches, pears, plums, cherries, nectarines, and apricots, as well as sizable apple orchards of nearly 1000 trees (Nelson 1898: 509). The property also offered unparalleled convenience for marketing and commerce between the two shores. Cornelius Haring started regular ferry service from the southern tip of Hoboken to New York City in 1774 (Shaw 1884). The 1778 map of the area by John Hills illustrates the ferry landing and the original road leading north through orchards and wooded groves along part of the present-day route of Washington Street (Figure 3).

Bayard's loyalist grandson, William, saw the land confiscated by the State of New Jersey in 1780. Abandoned, marauders fired the house and the fields went fallow for the remainder of the Revolution. At last in March 1784, the Bergen County agent of forfeited estates sold the Bayard tract to Colonel John Stevens, Jr. (1749-1838) for 18,360 pounds.

### *Colonel John Stevens and the Creation of Hoboken*

Colonel John Stevens was a man of means and a great inventor, whose life and contributions to New Jersey history are too numerous to recount here. Archibald Turnbull's (1928) biography of Stevens remains the seminal work on his life. Stevens began an immediate program of improvements to the estate, but neglect had taken its toll (Danforth 1977: 134).

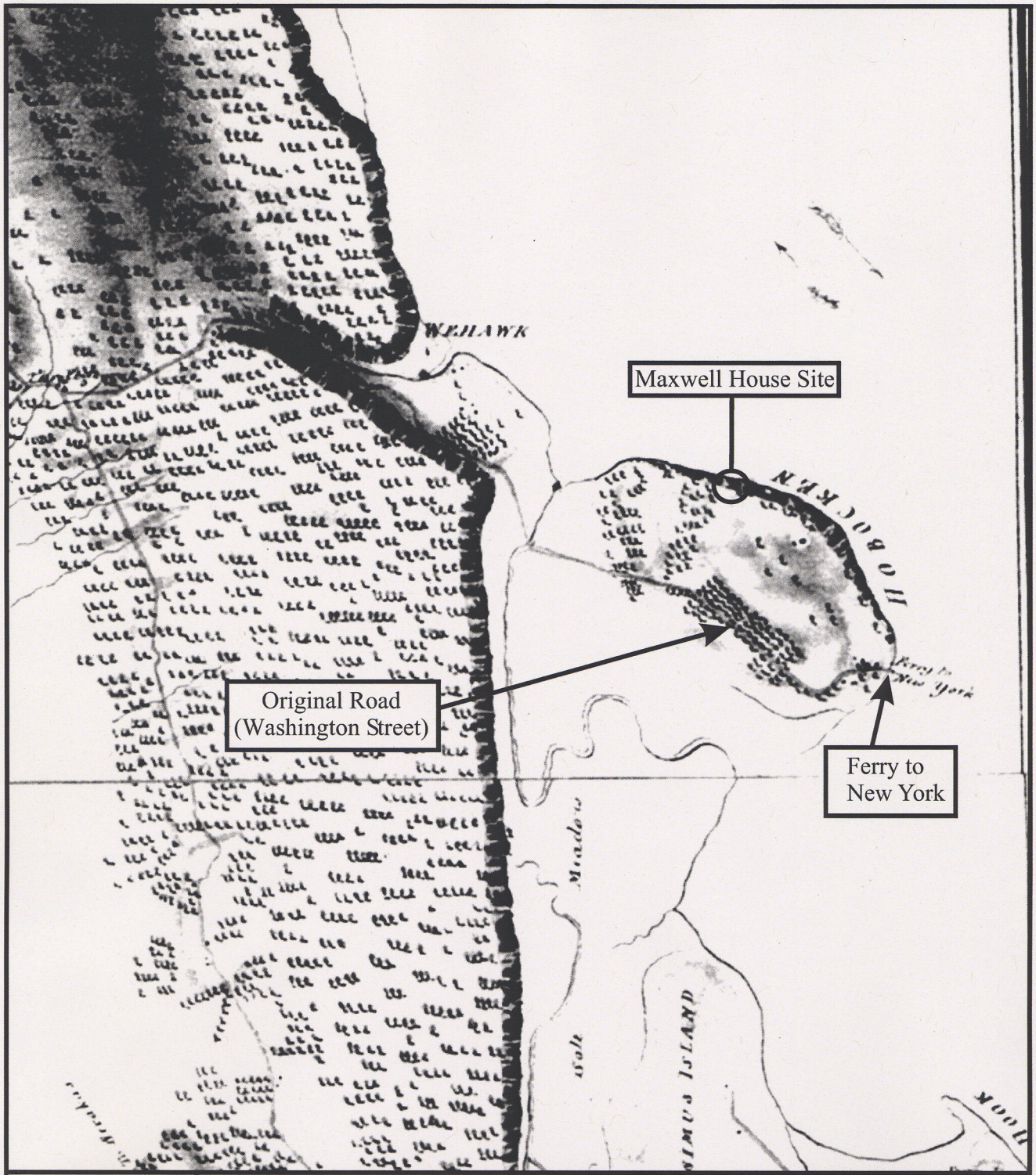



**Figure 3:**

1770 John Hills, Sketch of the Road from Paulus Hook and Hoboken to New Bridge. The ferry landing appears at the southern tip of the island of "Hobocken."

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Ruined fields needed clearing. "I have near 200 boats of wood cut at Hobuck," he wrote shortly after acquiring the property, "and hope to have 3 or 400 more by winter" (Moller n.d). He built a new country seat on the promontory, and by 1792 the Stevens family was spending the summer in the residence. The house was sufficiently grand and visible that some began to call it "Stevens' Castle" or "Castle Point." The name stuck. Large-scale improvements to Castle Point, including the planting of hundreds of new fruit trees and over 5,000 lombardy poplar trees, were well underway by 1797 to enhance the estate's salubrious air (Danforth 1977: 134). The painter William Dunlap described the place as "built in the Style [sic] of English nobility," undoubtedly a reference to the fashionable, naturalistic British landscapes created by such masters as William Kent and Capability Brown (Foster 1976a: 174).

With an eye toward development, in 1804 Stevens drew up a master plan to create a new seaport town at Hoboken. The plan, prepared by Charles Loss and titled "A Map of the new City of Hoboken," divided the lands south of Castle Point into house lots along a grid of streets aligned with the existing road to Weehawken (Washington Street). Stevens expended $50,000 "in making wharves, buildings, and other improvements at Hoboken" for the anticipated trade (Winfield 1895: 35: Petition n.d). The Hudson River's western bank, Stevens reasoned, offered a comparable location for the businesses of New York, but a more healthful prospect, free from the city's squalor and disease. Outbreaks of cholera, typhoid, and yellow fever shuttered New York commerce for long periods during the summer months and prompted a flurry of efforts designed to stem the spread. A yellow fever epidemic in 1803, for example, sent New Yorkers fleeing to the country (Danforth 1977: 134). Stevens latched on to this seasonal turmoil to help promote his new town. In March 1804, he petitioned the New Jersey Legislature to establish the Hoboken Company, citing the concerns of:

> sundry merchants, trades, manufacturers, and mechanicks [sic] who are at present inhabitants of the city of New York and of the other cities within the United States, together with many other persons who are necessarily dependent on them for their subsistence, are desirous of removing to a place where they may be able to pursue their respective vocations free from the danger of those epidemic disorders to which many of the Cities within the United States are at certain seasons subject, and where they will be exempt from the operation of certain laws and ordinances which they conceive to be impolitic and burdensome. (Petition n.d; Calendar of the Stevens Family Papers [hereafter Calendar] 1940: 44)

Such development would have the added benefit of attracting business "highly advantageous to the State by the consequent increase of population, commerce, and manufacturers..." (Petition n.d). The legislature failed to act, but Stevens pressed forward with his plans. On March 20, he advertised a sale of 800 lots to take place at public sale over the course of four days and placed advertisements in the region's principal newspapers (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 13; Danforth 1977: 134).

The results of Stevens' efforts were disappointing. Traversing the Hudson was less attractive and more expensive than migrating northward to Greenwich Village. Only low-cost transportation could help entice would-be settlers. Over the next two decades, Stevens devised various plans to improve communication between New York and Hoboken. These included plans for a tunnel, a floating bridge, and a permanent span (Danforth 1977: 135). His experiments in steam propulsion for boats must also be considered within this context. In 1811, Stevens secured the lease on the ferry operating between Hoboken and New York and developed a steam-powered service (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 15). Between 1817 and 1821, the family sublet the ferry franchise to others, but service proved so poor that Stevens sued to regain control. This also ignited his battle to overturn the New York state law granting Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston a monopoly on steamboat service across the Hudson. The case (Gibbons v. Ogden) landed in the United States Supreme Court, which struck down the New York franchise, arguing that only the federal government held the power to regulate interstate commerce. The ruling helped assert federal influence over the nation's economy. By 1825, some 43 steamboats competed to carry people and goods between New Jersey and New York (Norton et al. 1986: 242).

## 3.0 ELYSIAN FIELDS

### *New York's First "Central Park"*

Fast, regular, and reliable ferry service at last opened Hoboken to the great metropolis. But instead of coming to purchase land, people came for recreation, and they came in droves. As early as 1804, Stevens offered to make his private grounds around the estate available to purchasers to help entice settlement (Foster 1976a: 174). Visitors soon took advantage of the semi-public nature of Stevens' property (Figure 4), and by 1824 the ferries to and from Hoboken yielded, in Stevens' words, "an immense income, which [was] rapidly increasing as the population of the city and adjacent country increase[d]" (Winfield 1895: 34). He set about improving the land and a portion of the riverfront with a walkway to entertain the crowds. Stevens was immediately successful. Over time the demand from New Yorkers to visit Stevens' shores grew so great, and his profits from the ferry service increased so much, that by 1824 he thought of turning over the entire shoreline to the City of New York:

> ...as a place of general resort for citizens, as well as strangers, for health and recreation. So easily accessible, and where in a few minutes the dust, noise, and bad smells of the city may be exchanged for the pure air, delightful shades and completely rural scenery, through walks extending along the margin of the majestic Hudson to an extent of more than a mile. (Winfield 1895: 34)

His proposal also called for the erection of pavilions, "for affording every accommodation and refreshment, and also adequate protection against sudden showers of rain" (Winfield 1895: 35). For these structures he advocated the use of the best architectural styles, noting that "perhaps nothing could have a more powerful tendency to civilize the general mass of society...in such promiscuous assemblages of the rich and poor, in situations where nature and art are made to contribute so largely to the embellishment of every scene presented to their view" (Winfield 1895: 35-36). But when New York showed no interest in the envisioned park, an undeterred Stevens developed it himself.

At the ferry landing on the southern end of Hoboken, passengers emerged onto a wide lawn lined with elm trees. Stevens extended the waterfront path, now called the River Walk, around the base of Castle Point to the level ground at the property's north end. Here he created a clearing in the tree-lined shore called "Turtle Cove" where by 1824, hungry

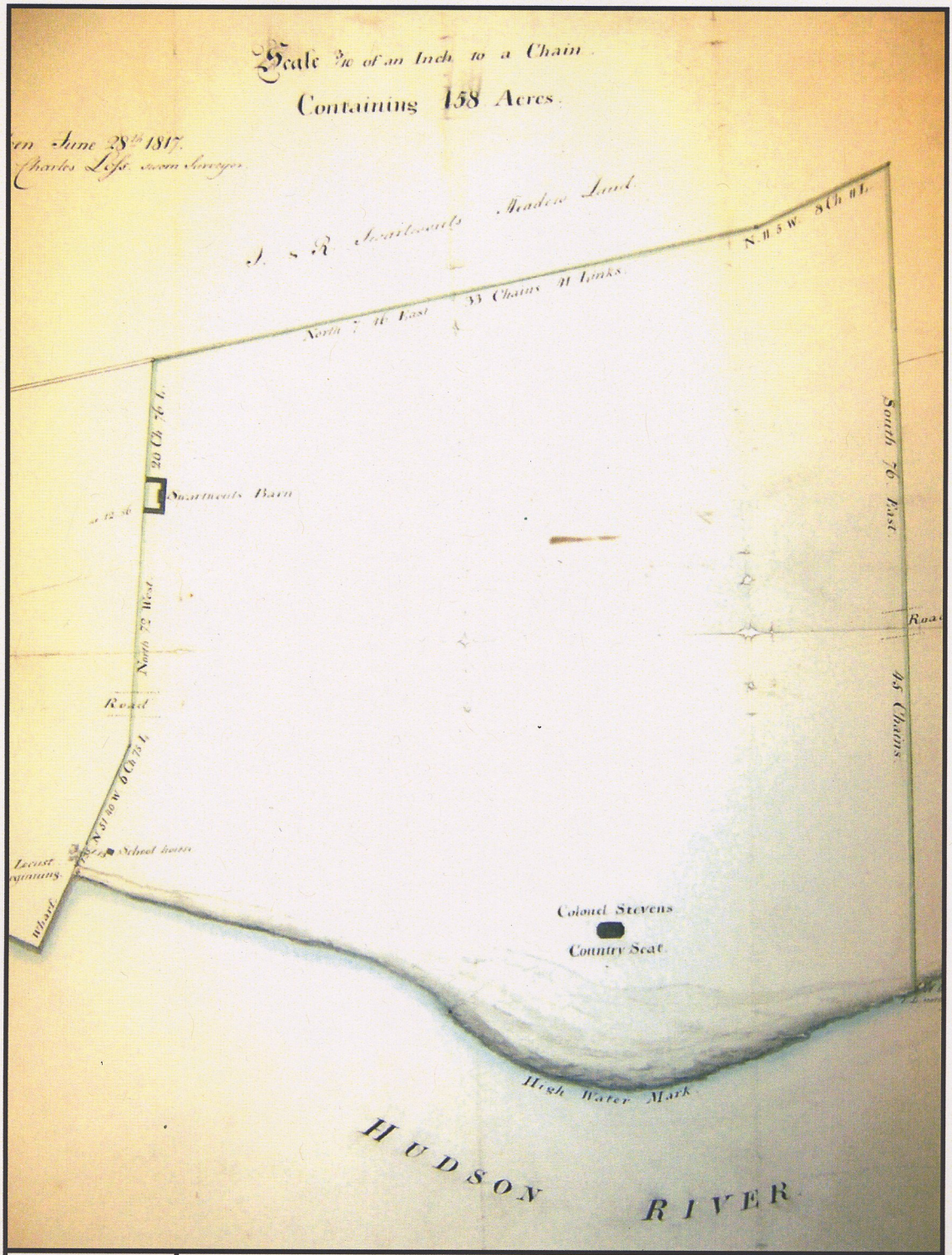



**Figure 4:**

1817 Charles Loss, Map of Col. Stevens Country Seat at Hoboken, June 28, 1817. Stevens marked off the bounds of his private grounds from the rest of the estate (Source: New-York Historical Society, New York, New York).

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picnickers enjoyed meals of turtle soup (Figure 5; Danforth 1977 137). In 1826, a visiting traveler on a tour through North America noted that "the beautiful walk extending for two miles along the Hudson is kept in the finest order, and commands a noble view of the city on the opposite shore" (Winfield 1895: 55). The Scotsman James Stuart, who spent the Winters of 1829 and 1830 residing in Hoboken, praised Stevens and his family for their accomplishments: "They have laid out their property adjoining the river for about two miles, in public walks, which the inhabitants of New York, who come over in prodigious numbers, enjoy very much" (Winfield 1895: 55). Stuart went on to note the corresponding increase in the value of the ferry, as well as the rent on Stevens-owned businesses, such as the hotel (Foster 1976b: 17).

Improvements to the park continued into the 1830s. Among the shelters and watering places Stevens constructed, were a grotto-like cave at the base of Castle Point called Sybil's Cave, and a large Grecian temple at Turtle Cove. On May 21, 1831, diarist Philip Hone wrote: " Messrs. Stevens have a large number of men employed in laying out the grounds in a very tasteful manner, and erecting a large, light airy building, which is to be called by the classic name of Tivoli, near the place formally known as Turtle Grove, at the extremity of the beautiful walk from the ferry" (Stevens n.d., hereafter Stevens Scrapbook). Called "The Colonnade," the structure stood east of present-day Hudson Street, between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, squarely on the former Maxwell House Coffee Plant Site (Figure 6). "It will be thronged every sultry afternoon through the summer," wrote an enthusiastic reporter in the *Intrepeiad* newspaper, "if it is kept up in the spirit of its commencement" (Stevens Scrapbook). In keeping with the classical nature of The Colonnade, Stevens renamed the area "Elysian Fields" for the sweet abode of the dead in ancient Greek mythology, and he opened it in a grand public celebration on July 11, 1831 (Foster 1976a: 177; 1977: 138). Elysian Fields, vast in its expanse with open ground, wooded groves, and meadows, extended from the northern base of Castle Point to the deepest reach of Weehawken Cove, and provided welcome space for an assortment of uses (Figure 7). Picnics, sports, and games let the New York multitudes stretch their legs in relative freedom (Rosenweig and Blackmar 1992: 100). Theodore Sedgewick Fay wrote in 1831 that a newcomer to Elysian Fields could react "with delight and upon the softness, the brightness and variety of this scene, the improvements of which... are laid out in great taste (Foster 1976b: 18). Frances Trollope, a visiting Englishwoman, pronounced it a "little Eden" and said it was:




**Figure 5:**

1824 Hoboken Turtle Club Season Ticket, June, 1824. Turtle Cove, the dining area for the club, was located near the foot of Twelfth Street (Source: Winfield 1895).



THE COLONNADE IN ELYSIAN FIELDS.

**Figure 6:**

1831 A. Dick, The Colonnade and the Elysian Fields, Looking Southeast (Source: Theodore Sedgwick Fay, 1831 *Views of New York and Its Environs*, reprinted in Winfield 1895).

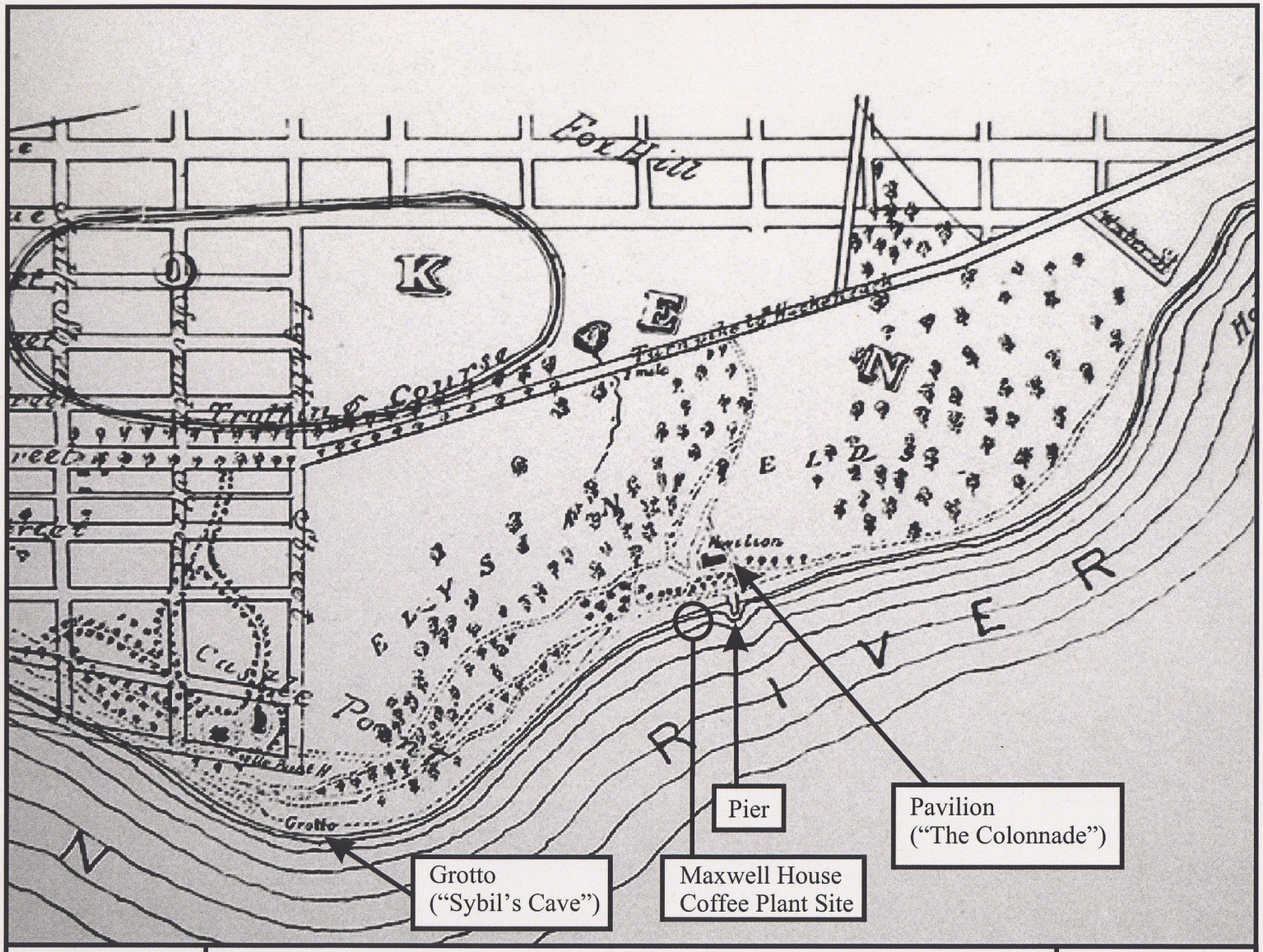



**Figure 7:**

1841 L. F. Douglas, Topographical Map of Jersey City. This map provides the most detailed picture to date of Elysian Fields and its layout. Note the winding paths, wooded glades, open fields, and beginnings of a small pier (Source: Winfield 1895).

> hardly possible to imagine one of greater attraction....[H]e has restricted his pleasure grounds to a few beautiful acres, laying out the remainder simply and tastefully as a public walk....a broad belt of light underwood and flower shrubs, studded at intervals with loft forest trees, runs for two miles along a cliff which overhangs the matchless Hudson: sometimes it feathers the rocks down to its very margin, and at others leaves a pebbly shore, just rude enough to break the gentle waves, and make a music which mimics softly the loud chorus of the ocean. Through this beautiful little wood, a broad and well-gravelled terrace is led by every point which can exhibit the scenery to advantage; narrower and wilder paths diverge at intervals, some into deeper shadow of the woods, and some shelving gradually to pretty coves below. (Trollope 1832: 343-345)

By 1832, Samuel Lorenzo Knapp estimated that as many as 20,000 visitors a day descended on Hoboken during the summer season, calling it "a most delightful retreat for a summer's day" (Foster 1976b: 17-18; 23). For all intents and purposes, Stevens and his family had effectively created New York's first central park (Foster 1976b: 17).

***Marketing Elysian Fields***

Hoboken's success rested in part on America's growing interest in its natural surroundings. Beginning in the 1820s and 1830s, architects and tastemakers such as Asher Benjamin, Alexander Jackson Davis, and Andrew Jackson Downing advocated the virtues of country living in their landscape plans, building designs, and popular treatises (Benjamin 1830; Davis 1837; Downing 1842). The origins of this movement, and the relationship between nature, Classical and Medieval-style architecture, and Christian virtue, had its roots in England but found fertile ground in the Hudson River Valley, where landscape painters of the period exulted in the raw, untamed qualities of the American wilderness. Many of New York's artistic and literary circle visited Stevens' park to find their own form of inspiration. Asher B. Durand, Robert Weir, William James Bennett, Jasper Francis Cropsey, Robert Havell, Charles Loring Elliot, and William Tylee Ranney were among the painters to visit and sketch in Elysian Fields (Figure 8; Foster 1976b: 22). Durand spent most Sunday's there, "strolling under the noble trees of the Elysian Fields" (Foster 1976b: 22). In 1830, William Cullen Bryant extolled the beauty of the wooded walks, particularly at May, "when the verdure of the turf is as bright as the green of the rainbow; and when the embowering shrubs are in flower" (Foster 1976b: 18). Robert Sands described the Elysian Fields in 1832 as "one of the prettiest places you may see of a summer's day," with wooded groves "worthy of being painted by Claude Lorraine [sic]" (Foster 1976b: 18). As late as 1844, Lydia Maria

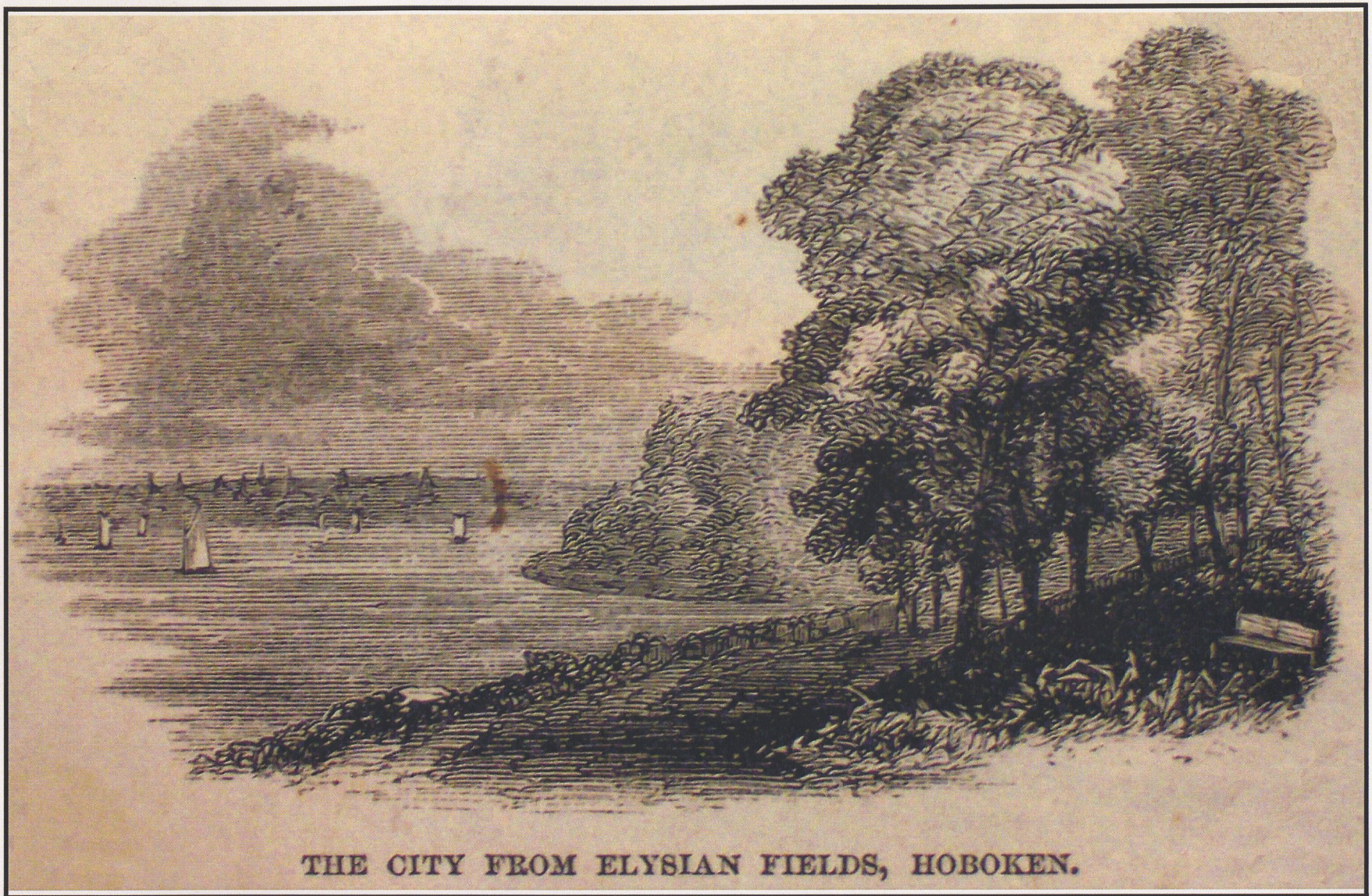



**Figure 8:**

n.d. The City from Elysian Fields, Hoboken, Looking Southeast.
(Source: Stevens Scrapbook, New Jersey Historical Society).




**Figure 9:**

Circa 1835 The Elysian Fields and Castle Point, Looking Southeast. (Source: Stevens Scrapbook, New Jersey Historical Society).

Child described moonlit nights in Hoboken "beautiful beyond imagining" (Figure 9) and Elysian Fields as a place "where a poet's disembodied spirit might well be content to wander" (Foster 1976b: 18). This picturesque setting was by one account among the earliest public or semi-public landscaped gardens in America (Foster 1976a: 175.)

To keep visitors coming, Stevens relied on three things: quality transportation, changing attractions, and advertising. Comfortable appointments on fast, reliable boats made the river crossing both pleasurable and affordable. Every few years, Stevens embellished the park with improvements or new attractions, and he rented out areas for various private affairs or public spectacles. Newspaper advertisements trumpeted Hoboken as the best "of all rural excursions that can be made from the city" (Figure 10) and appeared regularly for years in the city's press (*New York Evening Post* 1846). Fledgling city directories, such as Gavit's Directory, proclaimed places like the village of Hoboken "with its Elysian Fields, Sybil's Cave, serpentine walk, and shady retreats…the 'great park' and pic-nic ground for pleasure seekers from the great city on the other side of the river" (Gavit 1854: Appendix, 41). Other special amusements included a merry-go-round, a ten-pin alley, and wax figures (Danforth 1977: 138). A crude ferris wheel-like contraption near The Colonnade gave thrill-seekers a chance to take in the scenery from changing elevations (Figure 11).

Stevens supplemented these attractions with staged entertainments, such as horse races, ox roasts, and Indian war dances (Danforth 1977: 138). Rented tents, carnival booths, tables, and benches provided opportunities to watch the human parade in relative comfort (Rosenweig and Blackmar 1992: 105). As a venue available for rent, Elysian Fields also enjoyed free advertising from all those who hired the facilities. P. T. Barnum's 1843 announcement in the New York press of his "Grand Buffalo Hunt, Free of Charge" brought 24,000 spectators to the Trotting Course at Hoboken (Figure 12), where the animals ultimately broke the fence and sent the crowd running (Barnum 1855: 352-353; Danforth 1977: 138; Winfield 1895: 76-79).

***Boating***

Pleasure boating, yet another form of leisure, also took root in Elysian Fields. Jon Cox Stevens, an outgoing, energetic member of the Stevens clan, helped popularize yachting more than any other. In July 1844, Stevens gathered together a group of like-minded yachtsmen for a sail to Newport. This "saucy-looking squadron of schooner-yachts lying



THE MOST DELIGHTFUL OF ALL EXCURSIONS—A sail across the Hudson River to HOBOKEN, and then a walk to ELYSIAN FIELDS, along the exceedingly picturesque shores of the place, will prove the easily accomplished and attractive of all rural excursions that can be made from the city.

The ground now presents a charming aspect, the trees being in leaf and the soil covered with a rich turf.

The Walks are in excellent order having been considerably embellished the present spring.

The Ferry Boats from Barclay, Canal, and Christopher street, are completely fitted up with awnings and Seats.

Night boats run from Hoboken to Barclay street until 11 o'clock. Ferriage 6¼ cents. ap22 4mos.

**Figure 10:**

1846 Hoboken Ferry Advertisement, *New York Evening Post*, June 2, 1846. The notice was typical of the ads appearing in the New York Press.




**Figure 11:**

Circa 1850 View of Hudson River from Elysian Fields, Looking Northeast. The view of the shoreline between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets shows Stevens' observation wheel, built as one of the amusements to attract visitors to Elysian Fields (Source: Winfield 1895).



**Figure 12:**

1843 P. T. Barnum's Buffalo Hunt, Hoboken, New Jersey. The event was one of many that received wide publicity and attracted many to Elysian Fields (Source: Barnum 1855).

off the Battery...excited considerable admiration," wrote one New York diarist on July 29 (Stevens Scrapbook). The next day, Stevens summoned members of the party to his vessel *Gimcrack* and proposed they form a boat club (Parkinson 1975: 13). Organized under the name of the New York Yacht Club (NYYC), the group elected Stevens as their first Commodore. Later that year, Stevens commissioned their first permanent clubhouse on family lands at Elysian Fields, and on July 15, 1845 the club met for the first time in their new quarters near the foot of present-day Tenth Street (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 15). While the architect for the tiny Gothic-Style cottage (Figure 13) is unknown, the popular romantic designer Alexander Jackson Davis, then engaged in designing Stevens New York townhouse at College Place and Murray Street, may well have authored the building (Stevens Scrapbook; Peck 1992: 12). Davis favored historical models, drawing from classical antiquity and the English gothic for inspiration. John Cox Stevens maintained a long and fruitful professional relationship with Davis long after the clubhouse was built, adding credence to the attribution (Foster 1976a: 179-183).

Two days after their first meeting in Hoboken, the club members sailed their first "trial of speed." The course ran from Robbins Reef to Bay Ridge and Stapleton, through the Narrows to a point off Southwest Spit, and back to the finish off of the clubhouse at Elysian Fields (Parkinson 1975: 16). The "race" attracted thousands who chartered steamers and watched from both shores (Parkinson 1975: 17). Commodore Stevens placed third on board *Gimcrack*. From that time forward, the club began and ended its annual regatta off the clubhouse grounds at Elysian Fields until 1865. The club's most famous race, however, began overseas. While based in Hoboken, John Cox Stevens built the yacht "America," and in 1851 sailed it to England to race and win the first "America's Cup" against 14 British yachts on a course around the Isle of Wright (Parkinson 1975: 24; Heaney 1976). Stevens and the New York Yacht Club were henceforth forever tied to the yachting world's best known contest, although the actual cup stayed safely tucked away in the winner's private residence, not the clubhouse.

By 1868, the original clubhouse had outlived its usefulness and the membership voted to relocate to Staten Island (Parkinson 1975: 58). The smaller New Jersey Yacht Club, organized originally in 1871, took over the Hoboken clubhouse and remained there from 1875 to 1898 (*The Evening News of Hoboken* n.d.: 83). After acquiring the clubhouse site in 1899, the Pennsylvania Railroad presented the original NYYC structure to the NYYC for disposal (Parkinson 1975: 204). In 1904, the club loaded the building on a barge and



**Figure 13:**

n.d. View of First New York Yacht Club Clubhouse, Tenth Street, Hoboken, New Jersey. Note the cupola on top of the residence of John N. Crusius at far left. The house stood on the corner of Tenth and Hudson Streets (Source: Stevens Scrapbook, New Jersey Historical Society).

floated it from Elysian Fields to Glen Cove, Long Island, where it served as a station stop (Parkinson 1975: 536). Later it moved to the Mystic Seaport Museum, then to the grounds of the NYYC's Newport, Rhode Island clubhouse, where it remains to this day.

***Baseball***

Among the many sports played at Elysian Fields, pleasure seekers favored games with balls and bats from an early date. Fresh air and wide spaces offered clubs the ideal place to meet and play, away from the rapidly diminishing open lots of New York. Most historians agree that these matches resembled the English games of rounders and cricket (Figure 14; Di Clerico and Pavelec 1991: 6). As early as October 21, 1845, according to the *New York Herald*, teams of nine New Yorkers faced off with nine Brooklynites to play at Elysian Fields under the new rules devised by Mr. Alexander Cartwright (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 15). The New York team, called the Kickerbocker Ball Club, went on to compete in the more well known match against the New York Base Ball Club on June 19, 1846, where the New York team won 23 to 1 (Crouse 1930: 131). Also played at Elysian Fields, this game is the most often cited as the beginning of modern baseball. Subsequent games, both formal and informal, continued at the park. Many won special notoriety. The Kickerbockers played The Washington Club of Yorkville in 1851, winning 21 to 11 (Crouse 1930: 131). A match between the Eagles and the Gothams at Elysian Fields on September 8, 1857 was illustrated for a small magazine (Figure 15). On October 21, 1861, some 15,000 observers watched all-star teams from New York and Brooklyn compete for a silver baseball trophy (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 31). Another championship match between the Mutual Club of Manhattan and the Atlantic Club of Brooklyn on August 3, 1865 attracted 20,000 spectators to Elysian Fields and became the subject of a popular lithograph produced by Currier and Ives in 1866 (Figures 16 and 17). By mid-century, Hoboken served as one of the game's most popular venues (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 27).

The exact location of the first game, or later ones for that matter, is unclear. The Douglass Map of 1841 (see Figure 1) shows at least three clearings on the north side of Castle Point. One lay on the high ground behind Stevens Castle, between Tenth, Eleventh, Hudson, and Washington Streets. This was known as the St. George Cricket Ground (see and compare Figures 1 and 7; Stevens Scrapbook; Brelle 1909). Two others to the north and west of The Colonnade allowed for other sports. Many of the known ball clubs favored the northern fields, and in 1865, with permission from the Stevens family, three teams set about "enlarging and improving the grounds, cutting down several trees, removing rocks, leveling

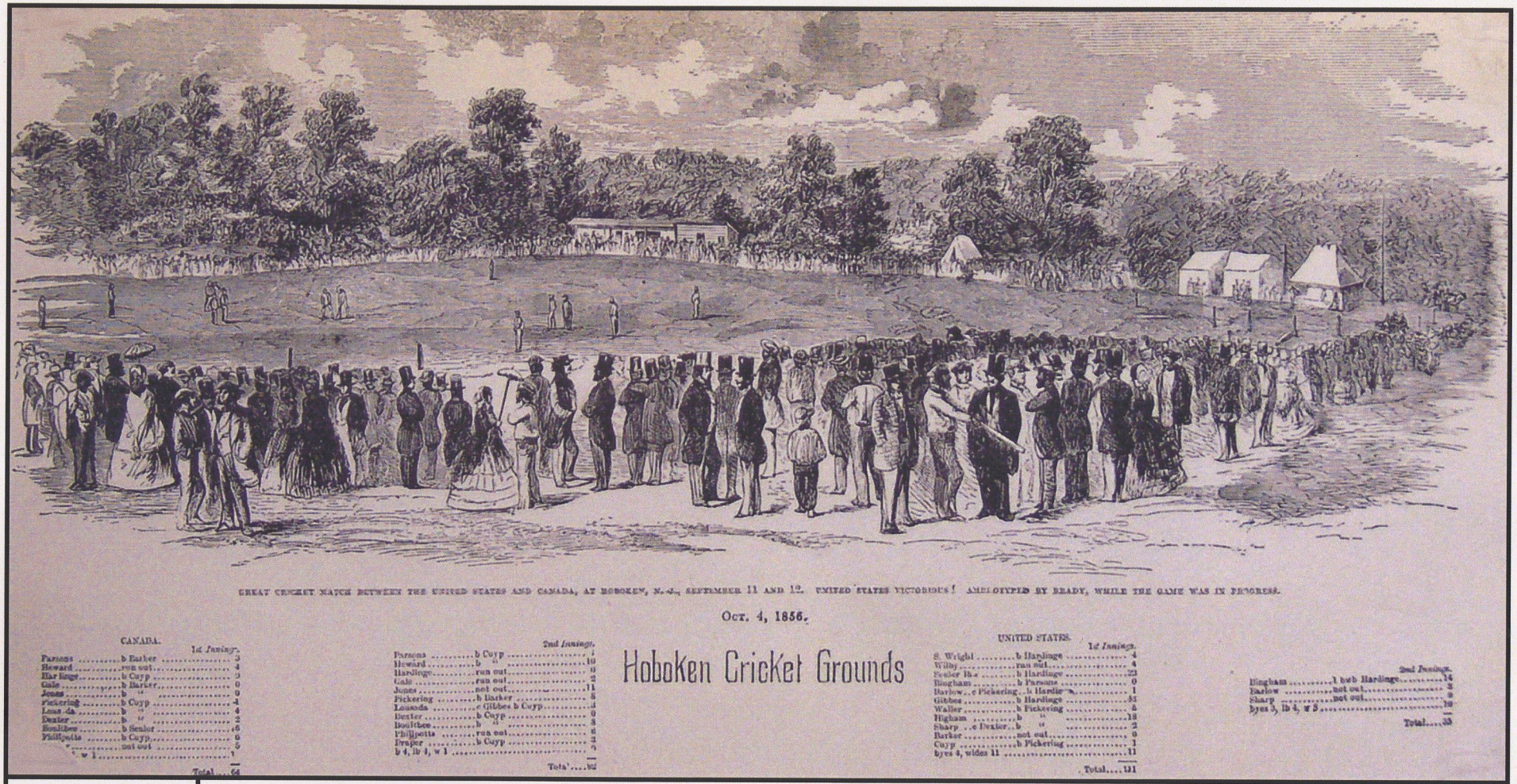



**Figure 14:**

1856 Hoboken Cricket Ground, Oct. 4, 1856. Games with balls and bats were widely played at Elysian Fields (Source: Stevens Scrapbook, New Jersey Historical Society).



(DRAWN AND ENGRAVED EXPRESSLY FOR "PORTER'S SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.")

BASE BALL IN AMERICA.

THE EAGLES AND GOTHAMS PLAYING THEIR GREAT MATCH AT THE ELYSIAN FIELDS, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH,

**Figure 15:**

1857 Base Ball in America: The Eagles and Gothams Playing Their Great Match at the Elysian Fields on Tuesday, September 8th (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).




**Figure 16:**

1865 Base Ball Match for the Championship Between the Atlantic Club of Brooklyn and the Mutual Club of New York, August 3, 1865. Many of the teams constructed small temporary clubhouses, visible here in the background (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).

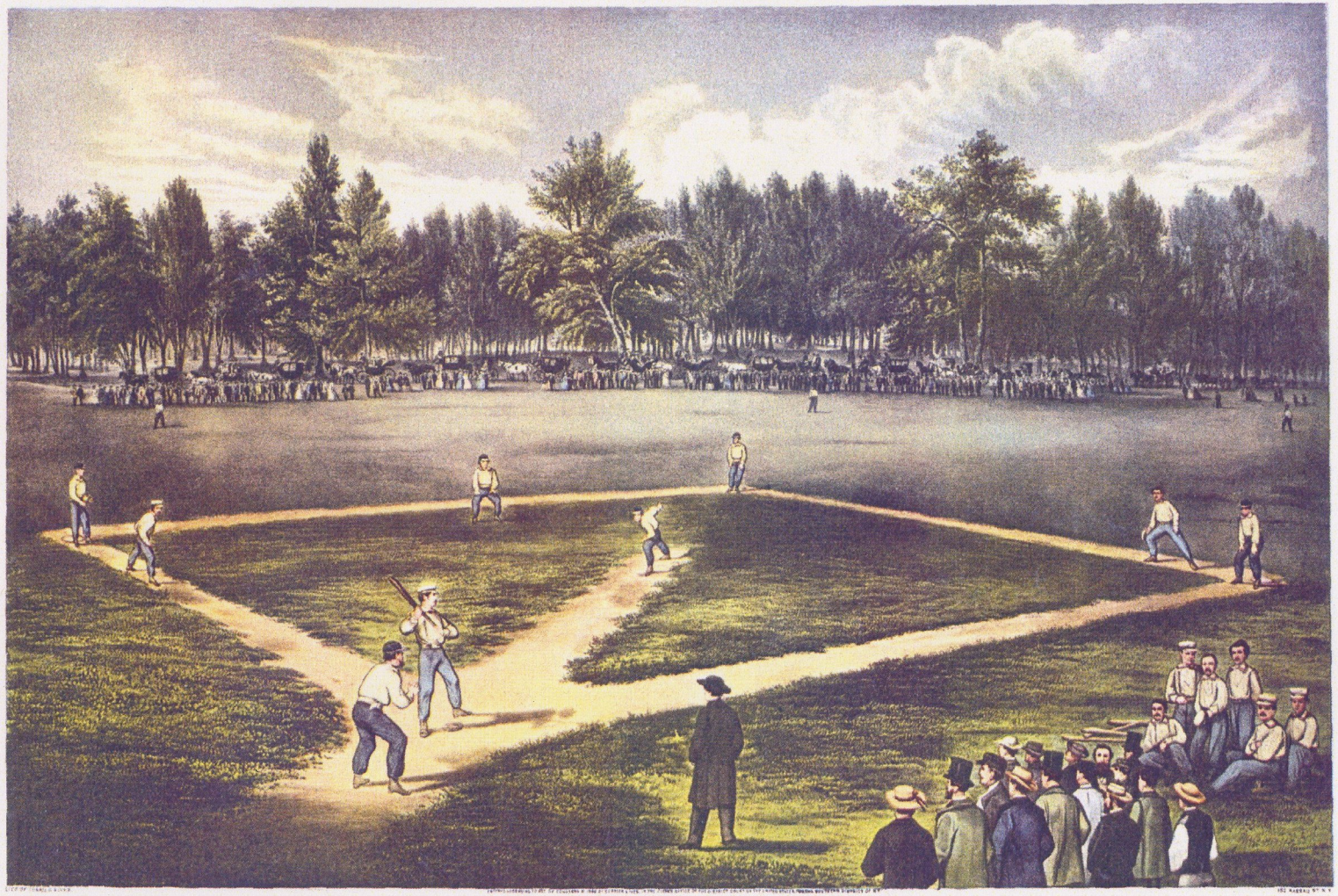



**Figure 17:**

1866 Currier and Ives, The American Game of Baseball, Grand Match for the Championship at Elysian Fields, Hoboken, New Jersey (Source: Crouse 1930).

and turfing, as well as erecting several rows of seats for spectators" (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 34). The newly improved northern fields opened on May 25, 1865 (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 34). Bachman's 1866 Bird's Eye View of New York City (Figure 18) illustrates the back side of The Colonnade and its surrounding grounds with a game of baseball underway in the northern clearing. Still another field seems to have existed to the south of The Colonnade, as seen in the Bachman view. Its approximate location was at the intersection of Hudson and Eleventh Streets (see Figure 1). William A. Shephard recalled his visits to what seems to be the southern field in the late 1850s:

> A walk of about a mile and a half from the ferry, up the Jersey shore of the Hudson River, along a road that skirted the river bank on one side and was hugged by trees and thicket on the other, brought one suddenly to an opening in the "forest Primeval." This open spot was a level, grass-covered plain, some two hundred yards across, and as deep, surrounded upon three sides by the typical eastern undergrowth and woods and on the east by the Hudson River. It was a perfect greensward [turf]. (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 28)

In 1946, the City of Hoboken installed a plaque at the foot of Eleventh Street to commemorate what they believed to be the site of the historic 1846 game (Figure 19). Their choice was based in part on the personal recollections of someone who played on the field, although the man had been born in 1864, long after the event (Colrick 1999: 122).

Baseball's great popularity, and the un-policed character of Elysian Fields, also brought with it drawbacks. Crowds took a heavy toll on the ferry boats, grounds, and facilities (Danforth 1977: 140). A brawl, well remembered for years to come, erupted among members of a German social club at Elysian Fields in 1851 (Rosenweig and Blackmar 1992: 51). In 1865, one ball match between the Mutuals and the Eckfords attracted so much betting and included so many unusual plays that team-members were accused of throwing the game (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 28). Affluent New Yorkers watched with growing alarm at the decline among "respectable" visitors to Hoboken (Danforth 1977: 139). These folk gradually left for quieter places, including Staten Island, Newport, and the Upper Hudson River Valley (Danforth 1977: 139; 140-141). Fed up with the general disorderliness, Stevens finally banned large championship games in 1867 (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 34-35). Two years later, they divided up the waterfront between Tenth and Thirteenth Streets to individual family members and their real estate holding company, effectively ending play on the lower fields favored by the Knickerbockers (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 35). Baseball continued, however, on the northern grounds favored by the Empire Club, and as late as 1870 the

Knickerbockers constructed a new clubhouse for themselves in the upper reaches of Elysian Fields (DiClerico and Pavelec 1991: 35).

New York's own Central Park, begun in 1857, quickly replaced Hoboken as the destination of choice for most New Yorkers (Foster 1976b: 22; Rosenzweig and Blackmar 1992). Elysian Fields rapidly gave way to residential and commercial buildings along extensions of the existing street grid (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 21, 25). In 1890, the Stevens family opened and dedicated Hudson Street between Tenth and Fourteenth Streets (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 25), so that by 1894, according to John Durand, the son of the famous landscape painter, "broad avenues had been created, existent trees fell under the axe, and the Elysian Fields vanished from the face of the earth" (Foster 1976b: 23-24).

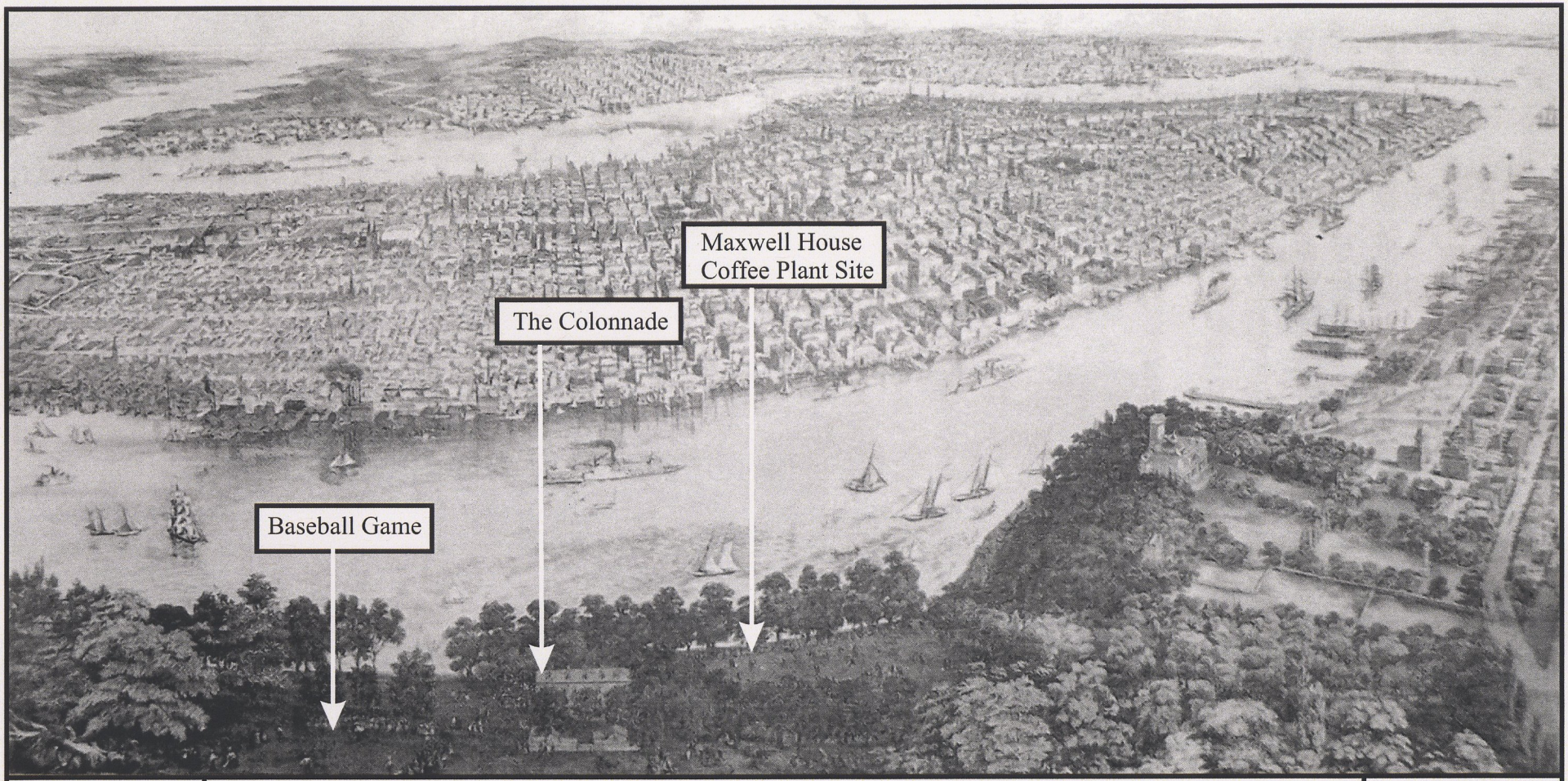



**Figure 18:**

1866 Bachman, Birds Eye View of New York City. The lower baseball field is visible to the right of The Colonnade. One of the upper fields appears to the left, where a game is in progress (Source: New York Public Library).




**Figure 19:**

1946 View of Original Baseball Commemorative Plaque with Maxwell House Central Office and Laboratory Building in Background, Eleventh and Hudson Streets. The photograph appeared in a commemorative pamphlet published by the General Foods Corporation to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first recognized baseball game (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).

## 4.0 INDUSTRIALIZATION

### *The Hoboken Land & Improvement Company*

After the improvements of the previous decades successfully opened Hoboken for large-scale development, the Stevens family sought to develop the area. At Colonel Stevens' death in 1838, his heirs formed, and the Legislature authorized, the Hoboken Land and Improvement Company (HL&I) with full powers:

> to improve all such lands as they are hereby authorized to own or purchase, by laying out that portion of the same which lies north of fourth Street in the village of Hoboken, into lots, streets, squares, lanes, alleys, and other divisions; of leveling, raising, and grading the same, or making thereon all such wharves, workshops, factories, warehouses, stores, dwellings, and such other buildings and improvements as may be found or deemed necessary, ornamental, or convenient. (New Jersey Legislature 1838: 92)

The act also granted the company the rights "to purchase, fill up, occupy, possess, and enjoy all land covered with water fronting and adjoining the lands that may be owned by them" (New Jersey Legislature 1838: 94). The HL&I served as a kind of real estate holding company for the Stevens family and became the principal force behind all future development in Hoboken (Figure 20). Between 1840 and 1870, the company focused its efforts south of Eighth Street, leaving the open spaces to the north in pastoral form. But by then a number of forces conspired to extend the town.

### *The Transformation*

The end of Elysian Fields coincided with changing attitudes toward health and nature, one of the principal reasons for its initial success. During the park's heyday, the miasma theory of disease held sway. This theory assumed that poisonous gases emanating from human waste and garbage caused deadly outbreaks of cholera and typhus (American Public Works Association 1976: 237). The cure was fresh air, afforded by places like Hoboken. But advances in the germ theory of disease, first shown by Louis Pasteur in 1857 and more firmly established by Robert Koch in the 1870s, led to a growing awareness of the correlation between contaminated water and disease. New Yorkers learned how to control outbreaks, and fewer and fewer people sought escape in the country. Heretofore, Hoboken's own water supply came from the Passaic River via Jersey City (Shaw 1884: 1217). But the identification of the microorganisms that caused cholera and typhus led to

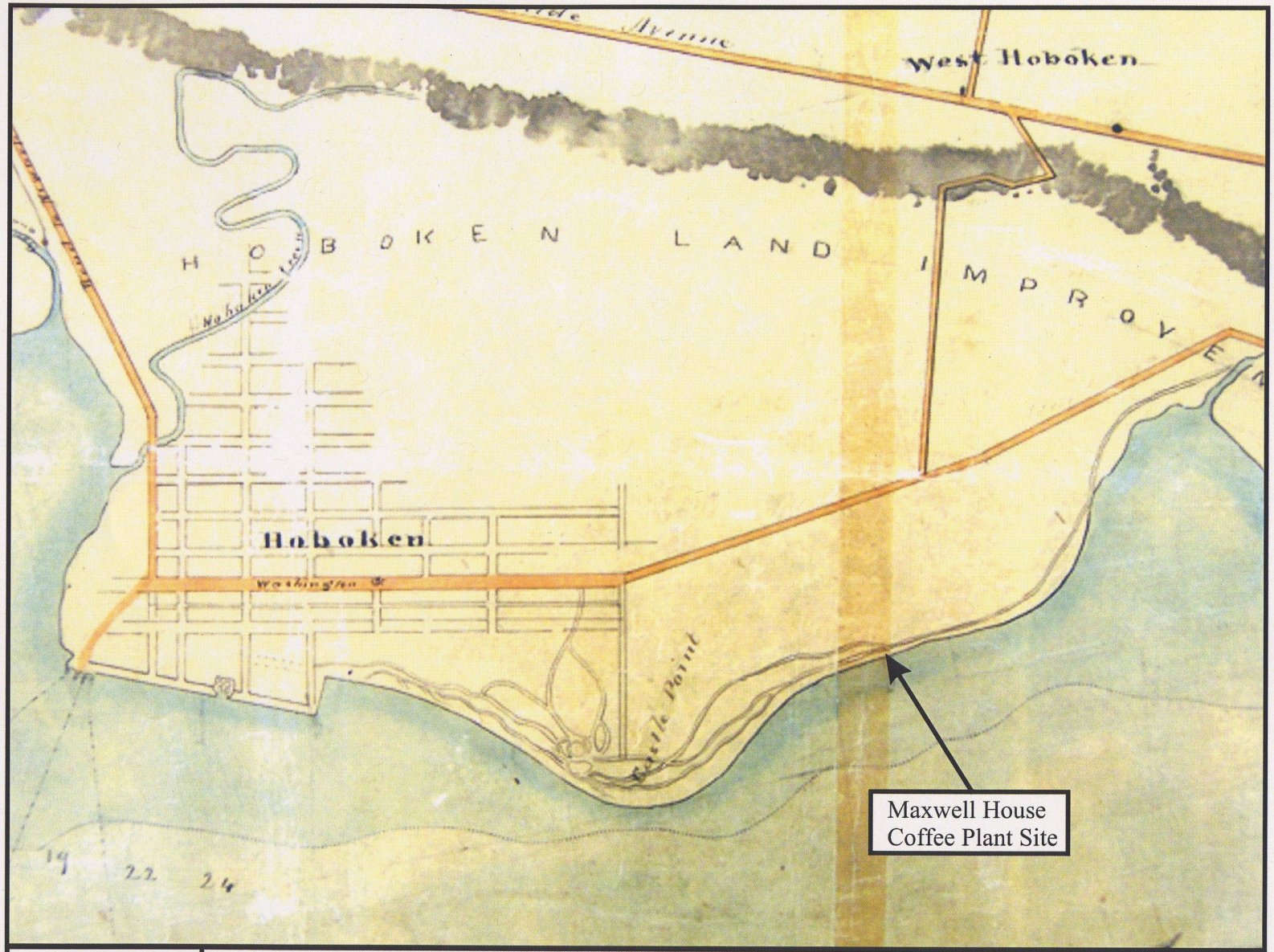



**Figure 20:**

1848 A. Clark, Map of Hudson County, State of New Jersey, Made for William H. Leupp, Martin J. Ryerson, George F. Fort, Commissioners Appointed Under Act of Senate, February 24, 1848. Department of War, August 22, 1848. The Hoboken Land & Improvement Company is identified as a major landholder (Source: New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey).

great advances in city water supplies and filtration. In part to safeguard their investment, the Stevens family acquired some 300,000 shares of stock in the recently reorganized Hackensack Water Company, and in 1881 the City of Hoboken contracted with the company to supply the city with fresh drinking water drawn from the Hackensack River at New Milford (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 72: Zink 2003: 5). Within two years, Hoboken's death rate dropped from 26.6 to 21.1 per thousand (Shaw 1884: 1217). Other municipal improvements in sanitation at last gave Hoboken the infrastructure it needed for full-scale urbanization (Shaw 1884: 1211-1212). This, along with spectacular increases in the value of riverfront property, ended most concern for fresh air and open spaces.

Changes in the Stevens family itself helped spur development north of Castle Point. Edwin Augustus Stevens, son of the Colonel (d. 1868), provided in his will for the establishment of a college focused on mechanical engineering: the Stevens Institute of Technology opened in 1870. A year after his death, Edwin A. Stevens' widow, Martha Bayard Dod Stevens (d. 1899), and her step-daughter, Mary P. Stevens (Garnett) Lewis (d.1903), exchanged shares in the HL&I for two adjoining tracts of land between Tenth and Thirteenth Streets (Hudson County Deeds [hereafter Deeds] 1869a, 1869b). Portions of these two tracts would eventually make up the site of the Maxwell House Coffee Plant. Martha's tract was the largest and included the New York Yacht Club clubhouse and other boathouses lining the shore, as well as the site of The Colonnade building at the north end of the River Walk, which traversed the property. By 1876, at least two sizable wharves extended from her tract into the Hudson (Spielmann & Brush 1876). One stuck straight out from the foot of The Colonnade and may have existed as early as 1841, according to the Douglas Map (see Figure 7), and almost certainly by 1857, when a similar pier, with connecting ferry service across the river, appeared on the Phelps map (1857) of New York City. The second pier projected from the shore at an oblique angle but parallel to Martha's southern property line (Figure 21). This line had been deliberately drawn to follow the course of Fourteenth Street in New York City, a clear indication of the symbiotic forces at play between the two shorelines. By 1881, the Lewis property featured a sizable Italianate-style villa as seen in a birds-eye view of the city by Bailey and Ward (1881). The same view captured both piers, as well as sundry buildings, ships, and pleasure craft moored in the coves (Figure 22).

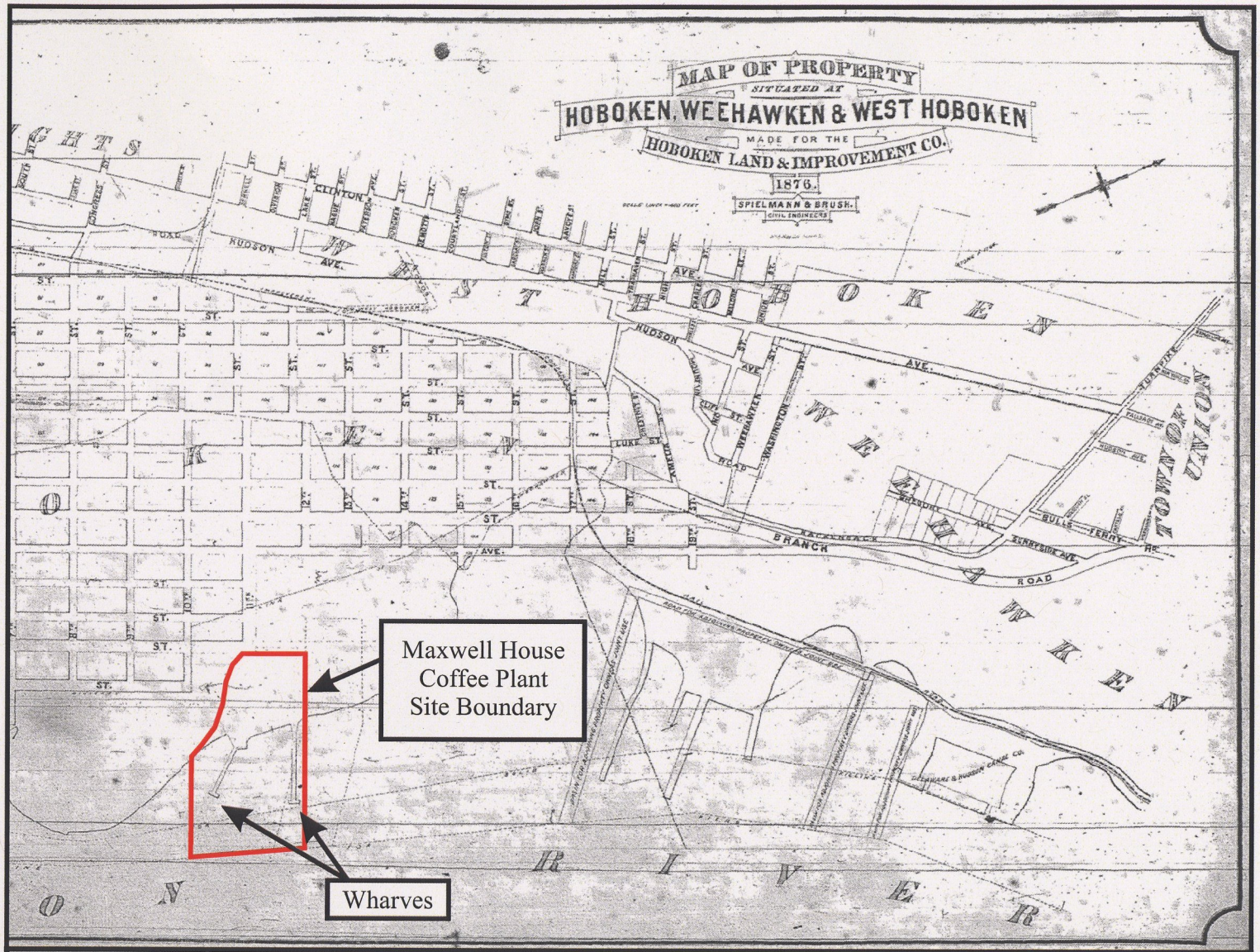



**Figure 21:**

1876 Spielmann & Brush, Map of Property Situated at Hoboken, Weehawken & West Hoboken. The wharves extend from Mary B. Stevens' tract of land (Source: Stevens Family Papers, New Jersey Historical Society).

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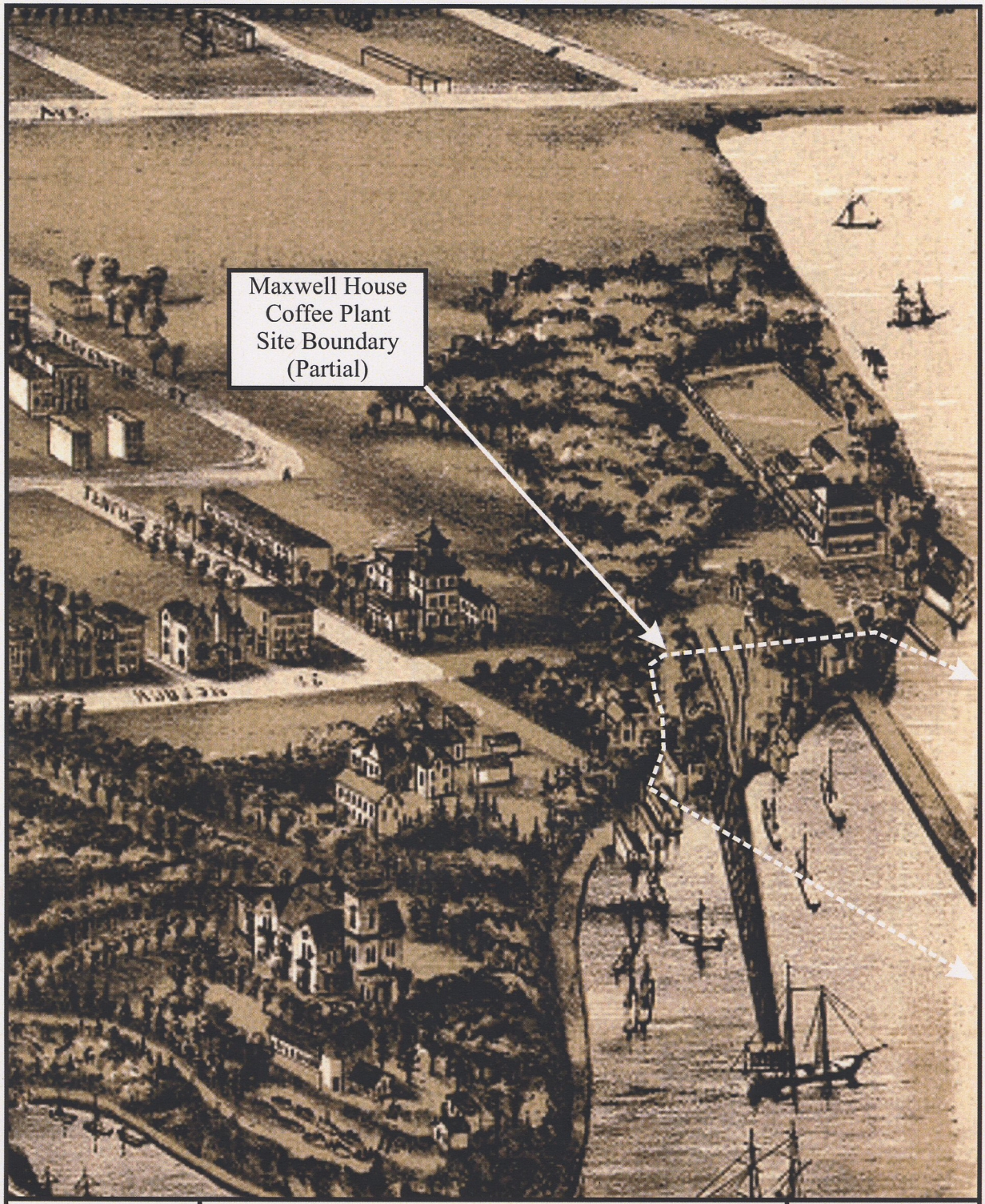



**Figure 22:**

1881 O. H. Bailey and Thomas Hughes, The City of Hoboken, New Jersey, 1881. Note the two piers, boathouses, and pleasure craft at their moorings.

Riparian rights - claims to land under water - played their own role in shaping the waterfront. The HL&I charter of 1838 granted the company all rights to fill the lands under water, but the State's claim to such lands in the 1860s forced the HL&I to secure a lease for the riparian rights in 1885 (Deed 1885). The grant extended as far as the solid fill line established by commissioners under an act of the legislature ascertaining the rights of the state and riparian owners to lands under New York Bay (Figure 23). The same act also created a pier line to control the reach of such structures. Martha B. Stevens and Mary P. Lewis acquired their riparian rights in 1886 (Figure 24), costing them $50,000 and $25,000, respectively, to secure the claims (Deeds 1886a, 1886b). Such sizable outlays offered one reason for developing the land.

Industrialization of the Elysian Fields shoreline began in earnest in the final decades of the nineteenth century (Figures 25 and 26). The HL&I launched a new ferry service from Hoboken's Fourteenth Street in 1884 and built new shops between Ninth and Tenth Streets to service the boats (Shaw 1884: 1218; Brush 1891). Five years later, Martha Stevens sold the north half of her waterfront tract to the Ocean Steamship Company of Savannah, Georgia (Deeds 1889). Within two years, the new owners reclaimed much of the land lying underwater and erected a series of sheds and outbuildings to conduct business (Figures 27 and 28; Sanborn Map Company 1891). The Ocean Steamship Company also built two new piers, the North and South Piers, at the extensions of Eleventh and Twelfth Streets and leased space to various concerns, including the Clyde Steamship Company and the Southern Cotton Oil Company (Hughes and Bailey 1904; Hopkins 1909). Mrs. Stevens leased the oddly angled pier on the southern half of her land to the firm of Tietjen & Lang, a ship repair and dry dock company (Figure 29; Deeds 1896a). Only the New Jersey Yacht Club's building and several related boathouses continued to offer a haven of leisure in the rapidly changing shoreline (Sanborn Map Company 1891).

Similarly, Mary P. Lewis turned over her adjoining waterfront property between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets to C. L. Bucki & Co., a yellow pine lumber dealer (Brush 1891). Most of this land was also filled in by 1891 (Sanborn Map Company 1891). Immediately north of Thirteenth Street, the HL&I leased lands in their control to the W. A. Fletcher & Co., manufacturer of steamship fittings (*The Evening News of Hoboken* n.d.: 179). By 1896, the entire waterfront between Castle Point and Weehawken Cove was almost completely transformed by filling and occupied with heavy industry (Figure 30).




**Figure 23:**

1865 R.C. Bacot and Thomas Hughes, Map Showing the Survey of Lands Lying Under Water of the Hudson River and Bay of New York and of Lands Adjacent Thereto, Section 5. The solid red line denotes the exterior line for solid filling; the dashed line the exterior line for piers.

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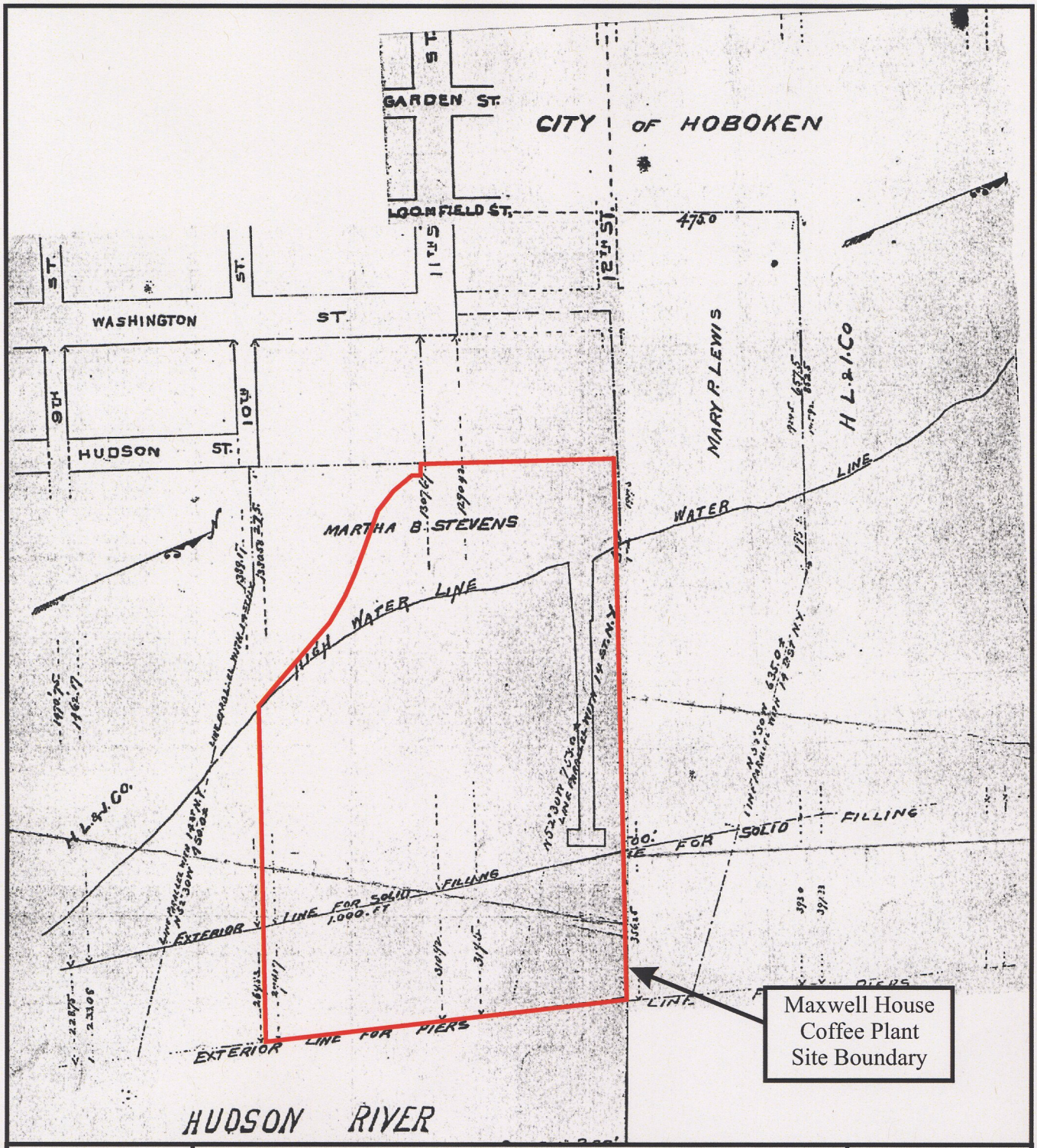



**Figure 24:**

1886 Survey of Riparian Grants to Martha B. Stevens and Mary P. Lewis (Source: Hudson County Registry of Deeds).

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**Figure 25:**

Circa 1885 View of New Jersey Yacht Club Anchorage. Note Fourteenth Street Ferry House in distance at right. The River Walk appears in foreground at lower left (Source: Hoboken Public Library, Hoboken, New Jersey).



**Figure 26:**

Circa 1890 View of New Jersey Yacht Club Anchorage. Note former New York Yacht Club clubhouse and recently completed stone bulkhead, visible at left (Source: Hoboken Public Library, Hoboken, New Jersey).

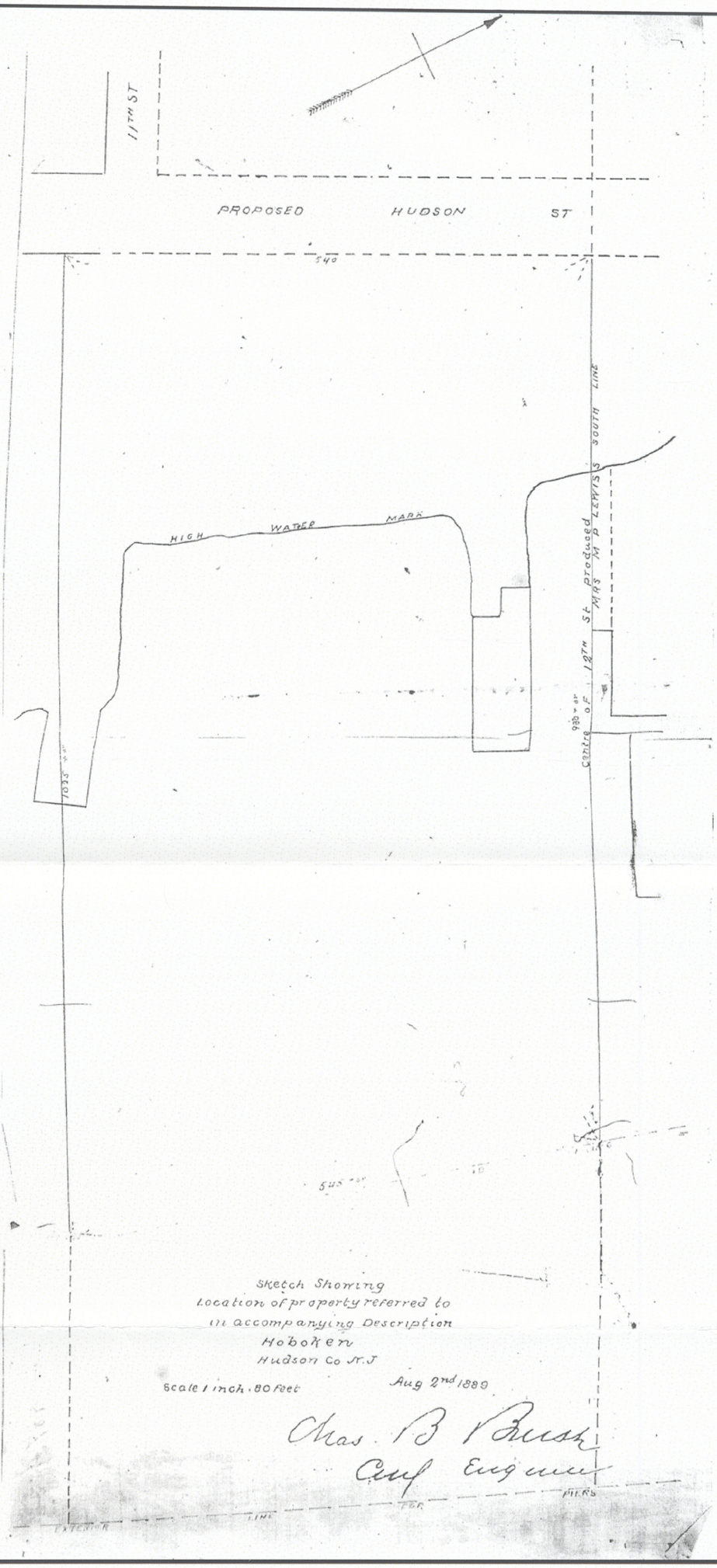



**Figure 27:**

1889 Charles B. Brush, Sketch Showing Location of Property Referred to in Accompanying Description, Hoboken, Hudson Co., N.J. August 2, 1889. When the Ocean Steamship Company acquired the land from Martha B. Stevens, it had not yet been filled (Source: Hudson County Registry of Deeds).

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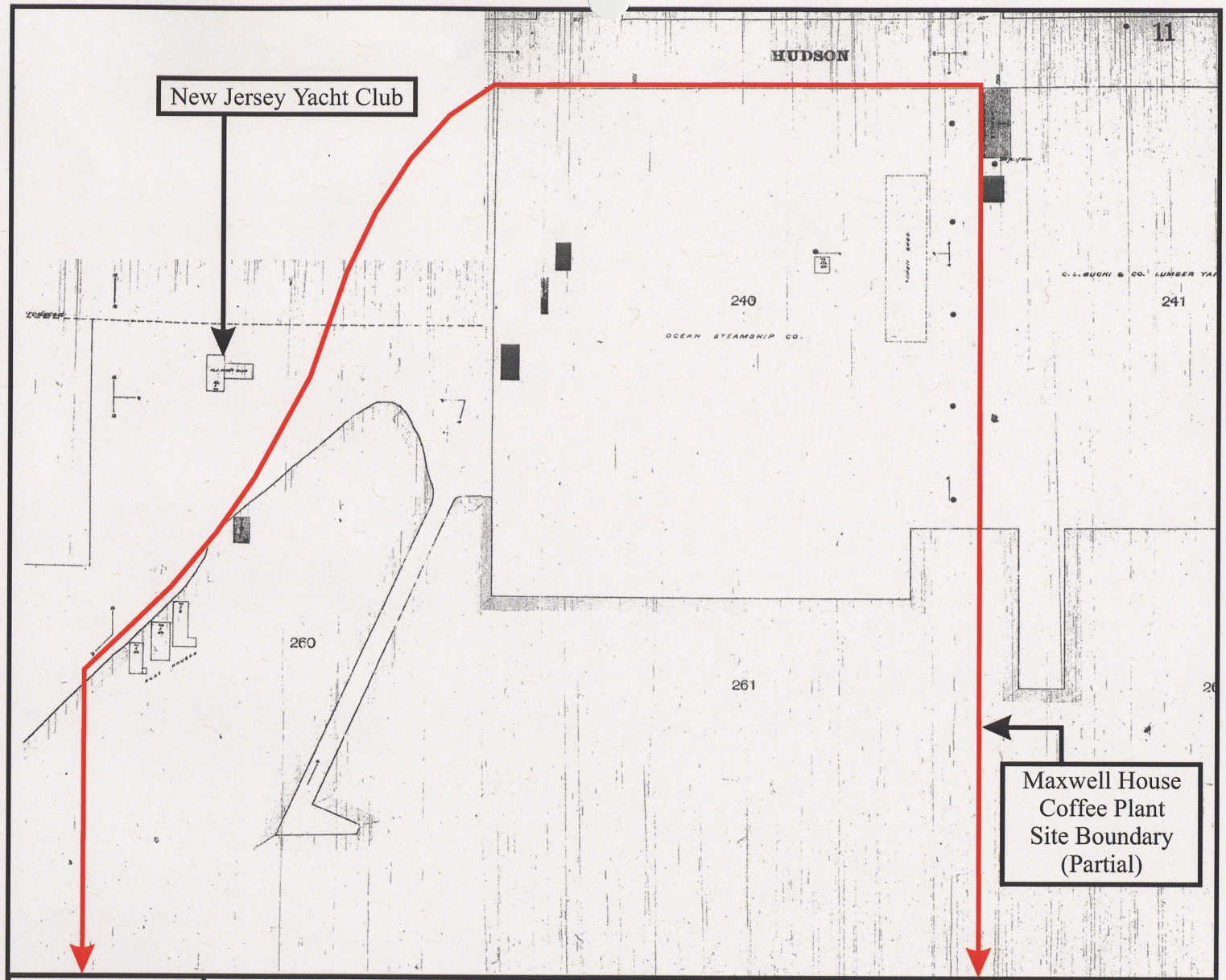



**Figure 28:**

1891 Sanborn Map Company, Fire Insurance Map of Hoboken, New Jersey. The Ocean Steamship Company moved quickly to build bulkheads and fill its land. By now the New Jersey Yacht Club occupied the original NYYC clubhouse (Source: New Jersey State Library).

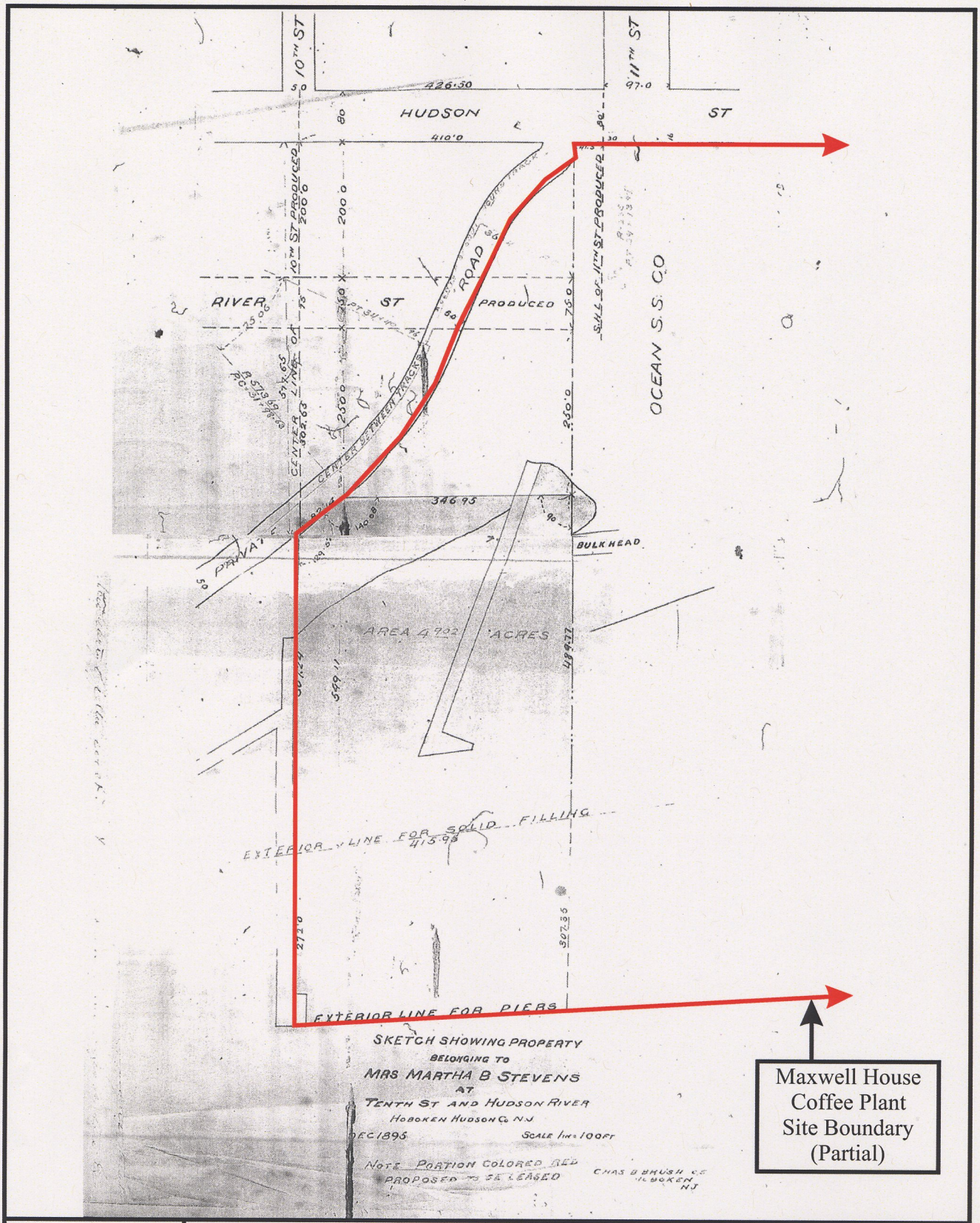


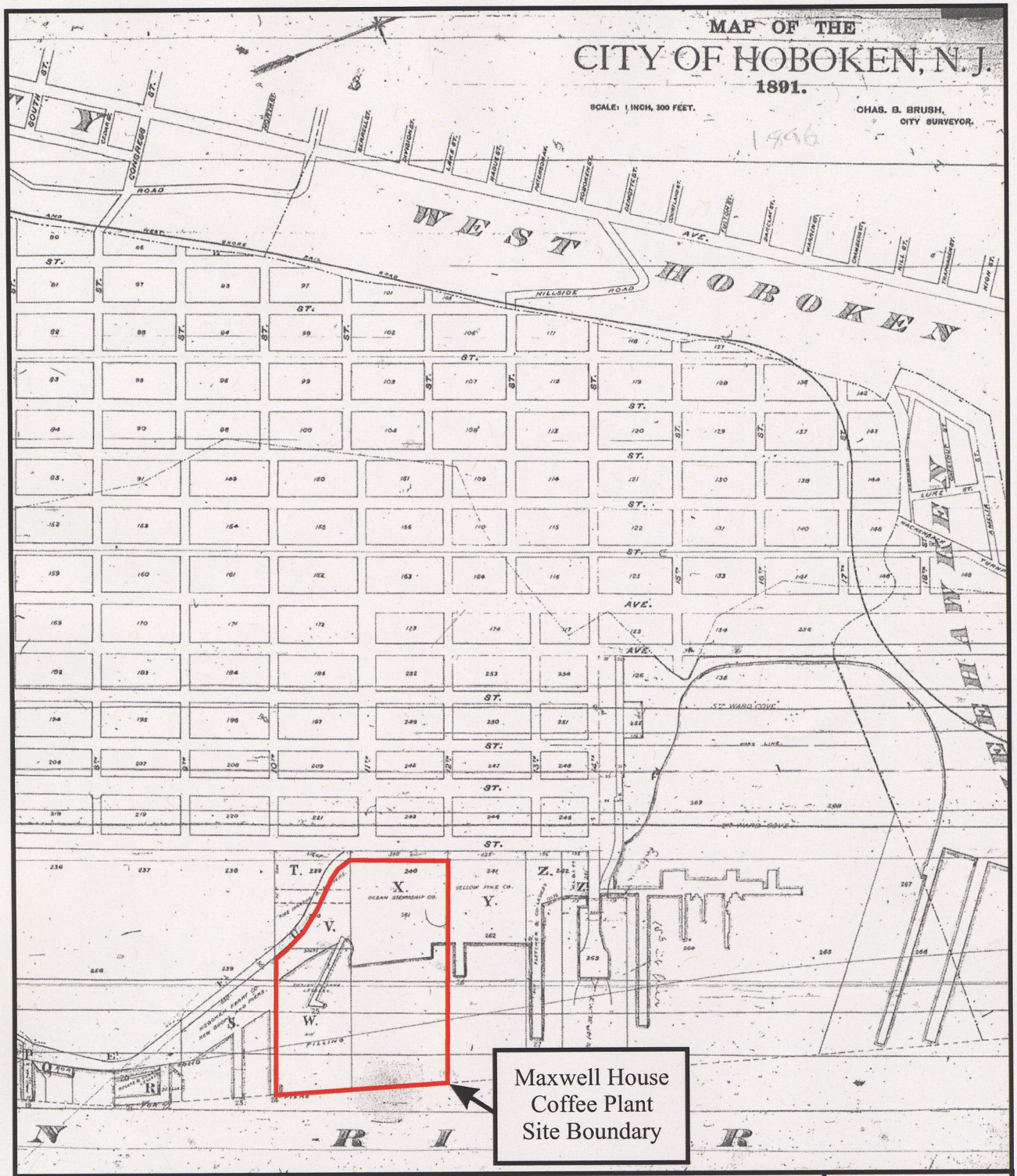

**Figure 29:**

1895 Charles B. Brush, Sketch Showing Property Belonging to Mrs. Martha B. Stevens at Tenth St and Hudson River, Hoboken, Hudson Co. N.J., Dec 1895. Stevens leased the pier and surrounding water only to the Tietjen & Lang Dry Dock Company (Source: Hudson County Registry of Deeds).

***Role of the Railroads***

The success of Hoboken's northern waterfront required not only easy water access to New York, but also reliable rail service (Hoboken Board of Trade 1907: 75). The Stevens family remained closely identified with railroading through their interests in the Camden and Amboy Railroad and the Morris and Essex Railroad (Cunningham 1997; Casey and Douglas 1951). In 1895, they formed the Hoboken Railroad Warehouse and Steamship Connecting Company (HRR), with a planned route along the old River Walk at the base of Castle Point (Figure 31). Spearheading the project were Edwin A. Stevens 2nd and Edwin A. S. Lewis, sons of Martha Stevens and Mary Lewis, the principal landholders (Corporation Records 1895a, 1895b, 1895c). Martha Stevens and Mary Lewis each deeded over land for the right-of-way in 1898, but by the time Martha died a year later, none of the line had been constructed (Deeds 1898a, 1898b & 1898c; Hudson County Surrogate Court [hereafter HCSC] 1899). The company at last filed a revised survey plan in 1901, indicating that construction was underway or about to begin. By 1904, the Hughes and Bailey view of the City of Hoboken pictured tracks running along the base of Castle Point and north up Hudson Street (Figure 32); by 1910, the principal line, branches, and sidings were all in place (State Board of Assessors 1910: 9-11).

A second important rail line formed shortly after construction commenced on the HRR. The new line, called the Hoboken Manufacture's Railroad Company (HMRR), was chartered on July 21, 1902 to build a rail line along the western edge of Hoboken near the base of Bergen Hill (Corporation Records 1902). The purpose of this five-mile-long series of branch lines and sidings was to encourage and service development in Hoboken's swampy northwestern quadrant and was intended to link with the Stevens' HRR and the much larger Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad (DL&WRR), whose eastern terminus ended in Hoboken (Corporation Records 1902). The new line's promoters included Robert M. Dickinson of the Campbell & Company warehouse concern in Hoboken (Morris County Surrogate Court 1912). In 1905, the Dickinsons formed the American Warehouse and Trading Company, which acquired the HMRR through majority stock purchase (Stevens Family Papers 1906b; Secretary of State 1914: 35). With little of its own tracks laid and most of the commercial traffic centered along the waterfront, the HMRR leased the HRR on June 12, 1906 (Corporation Records 1906a). The newly united company proceeded to develop the waterfront route of the HRR, completing only 365 feet of track in its own right-of-way before abandoning it altogether in 1924 (Corporation Records 1924). As early as 1907, the




RGA

**Figure 30:**

Circa 1896 Charles B. Brush, Map of the City of Hoboken, New Jersey 1891. Revised circa 1896. The waterfront was almost completely transformed by this time (Source: Stevens Family Papers, New Jersey Historical Society).

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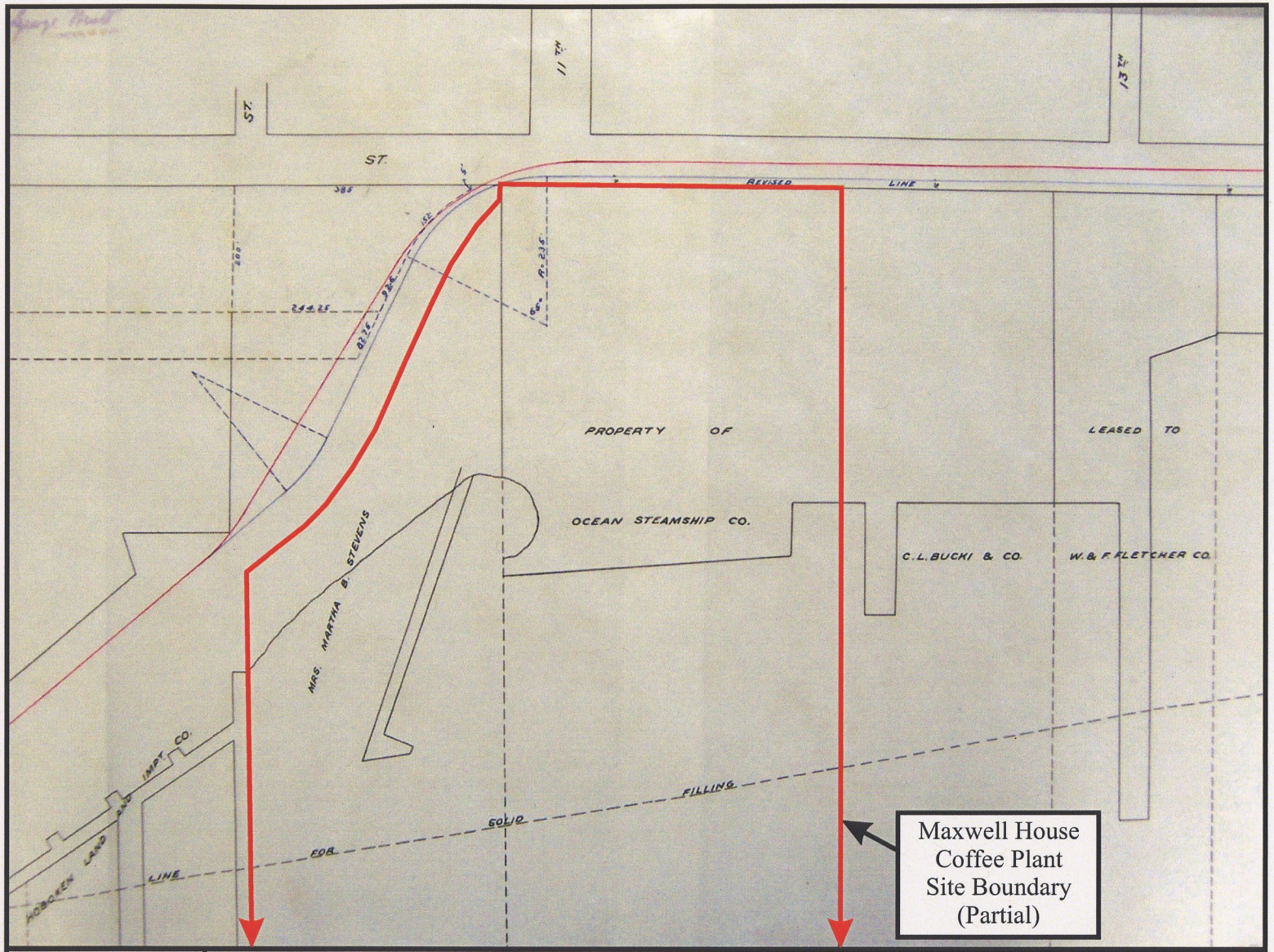



**Figure 31:**

1895 Hoboken Railroad Warehouse and Steamship Connecting Co., Survey of Route, September 17, 1895. The right-of-way extended along the former River Walk. Note the filling and new bulkhead line along the property of the Ocean Steamship Company (Source: Corporation Records, New Jersey State Archives).

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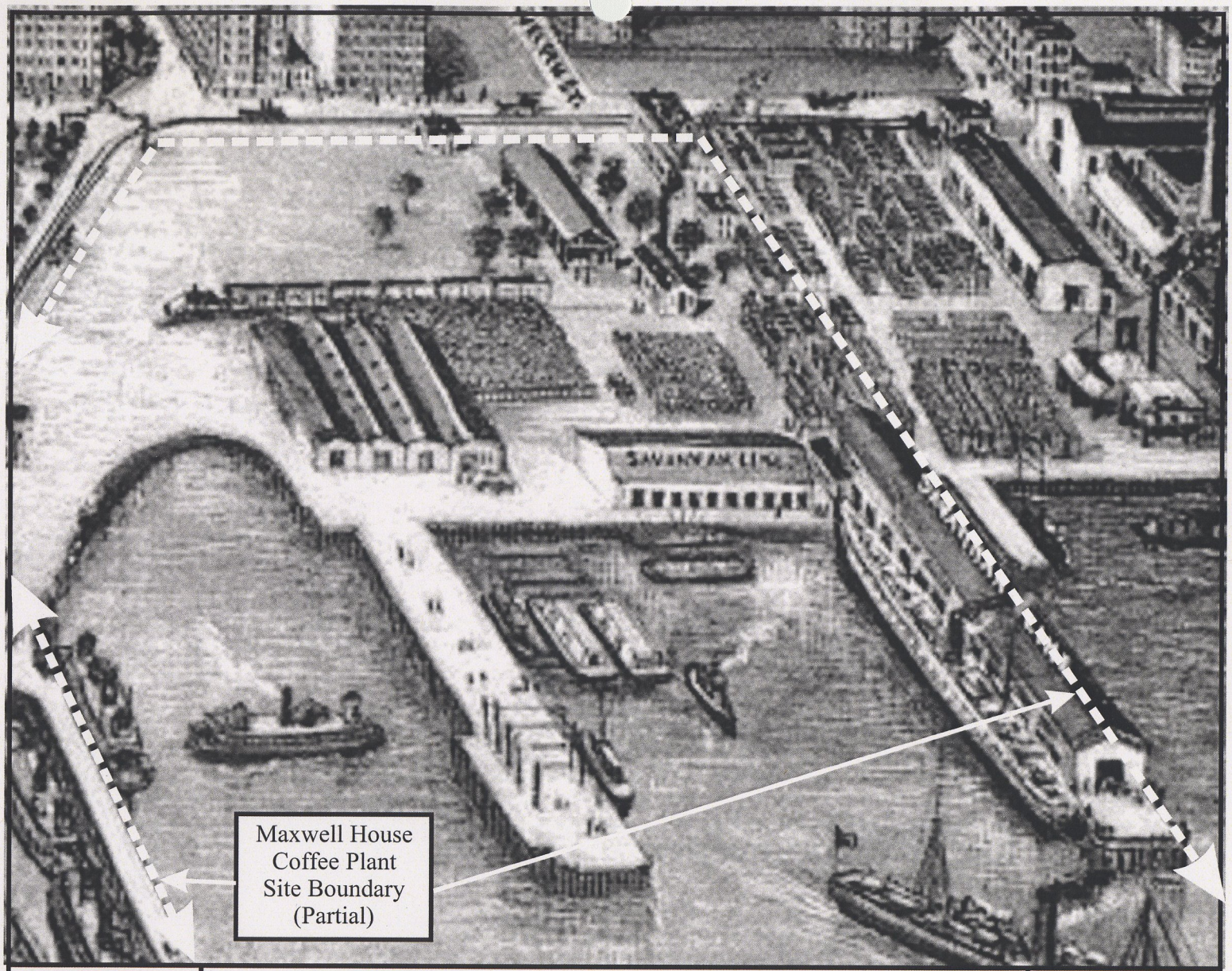



**Figure 32:**

1904 Hughes and Bailey, City of Hoboken, New Jersey. The Ocean Steamship Company filled in lands and constructed two new piers at the extensions of Tenth and Eleventh Streets. By this time, railroad tracks now ran along the former River Walk, visible at upper left.

joint company's letterhead called itself the "Hoboken Shore Road," but it did not formally adopt the name until 1954 (Corporation Records 1907, 1954).

Railroad interests continued to shape the north Hoboken waterfront. The DL&WRR, which relied on the Stevens ferries for access to New York, took over the Hoboken Ferry Company service at Fourteenth Street and Ferry Street on December 29, 1904 from the people who had acquired the franchise from Stevens in 1896 and 1897, respectively (Deeds 1896b; Casey and Douglas 1951: 194). After Martha B. Stevens' death in 1899, her executors and the Hoboken Ferry Company sold off her tract and the ferry repair shops to Benjamin W. Carakaddon, a frontman for the powerful Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) (Figure 32; HCSC 1899; Deeds 1899a, 1899b). Carakaddon in turn transferred the ferry shops to the United New Jersey Railroad Company and Martha Stevens' land to the Manor Real Estate and Trust Company, both subsidiaries of the PRR (HL&I 1899; Deeds 1899c, 1899d; 1899e; Board of Public Utility Commissioners 1918). The PRR went on to lease part of its lands to the American Warehouse and Trading Company, whom the HMRR helped move freight along the riverfront (Figure 34; Hopkins 1909). On the eve of World War I, the PRR and the Ocean Steamship Company sold portions of their lands to a DL&WRR subsidiary called the Hudson Realty Company (Deeds 1915, 1916). By 1916, the entire waterfront between Ninth and Twelfth Streets lay in the hands of three railroads: the Pennsylvania; the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western; and the Hoboken Manufactures Railroad.

With the nation's entry into World War I, the U.S. Government nationalized the railroads on December 26, 1917 and therefore most of the Hoboken waterfront (Figure 35). The Lawson & MacMurray lumber company property became one of many staging areas for the war effort (General Foods Corporation 1946). The federal government eventually returned control of the railroads to the stockholders, and by 1938 the DL&WRR was again leasing the property to a variety of building supply dealers. They included the Sheppard and Morse Lumber Company (main block) the Dodge and Leslie Terminal, Lawson & MacMurray, lumber dealers (North Pier) and Schultz Building Materials, dealers in mason's materials (South Pier). Long, one-story lumber warehouses on the west end of the property flanked two railroad spurs crossing the property from north to south. Offices with adjacent "stalls" were situated along the street. A lumber shed, a planing building, a wood works, a sawdust collector, and two small structures of indeterminate function separated the warehouses from the rest of the yard where lumber was stacked awaiting processing or shipment (Figures 36 and 37; Sanborn Map Company 1938). In 1938, the DL&WRR sold the land to the General Foods Corporation for their new coffee roasting and processing factory (Deeds 1938).

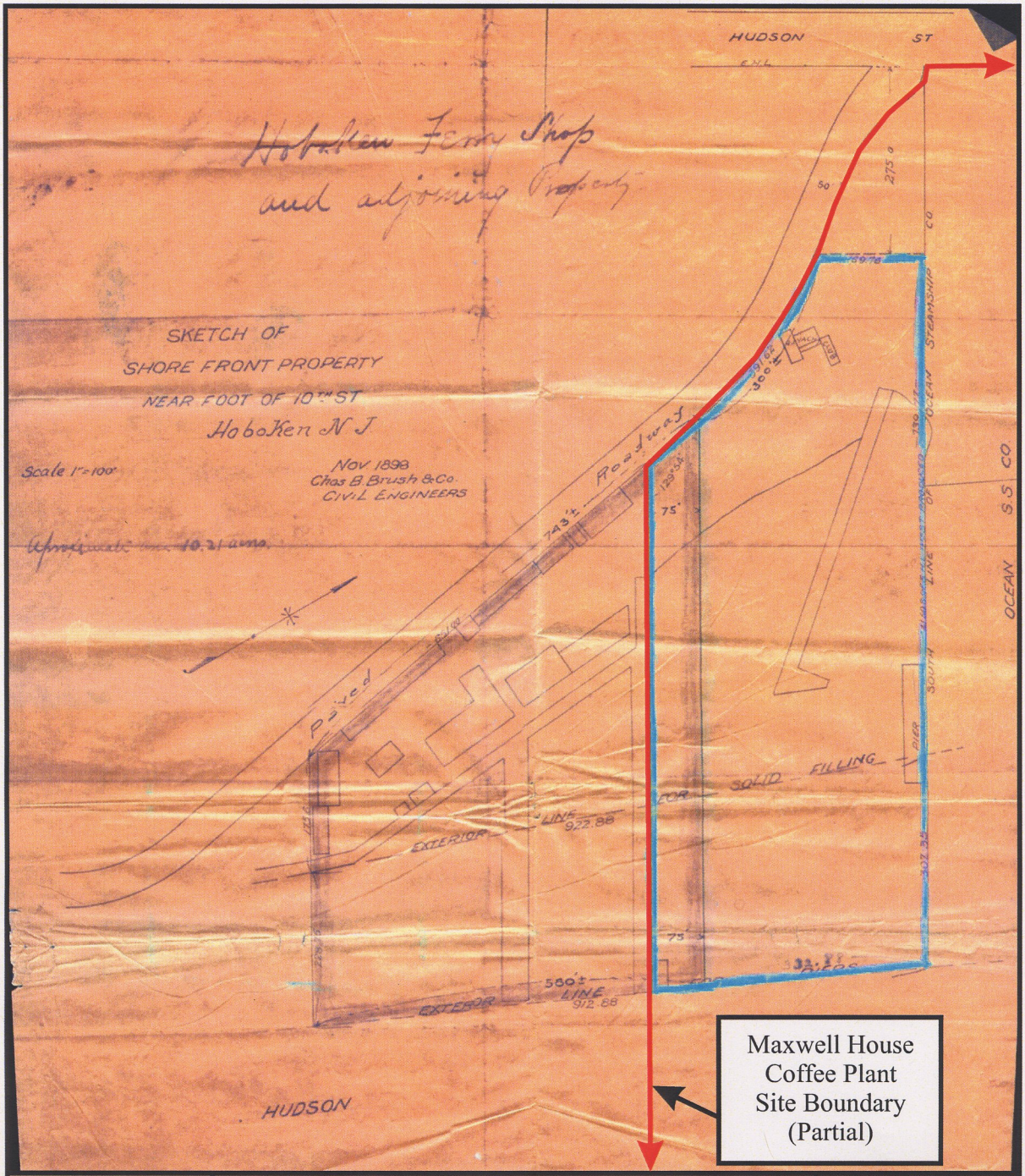



**Figure 33:**

1898 Charles B. Brush, Sketch of Shore Front Property Near Foot of Tenth Street, Hoboken, NJ November 1898. The map illustrates lands sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).

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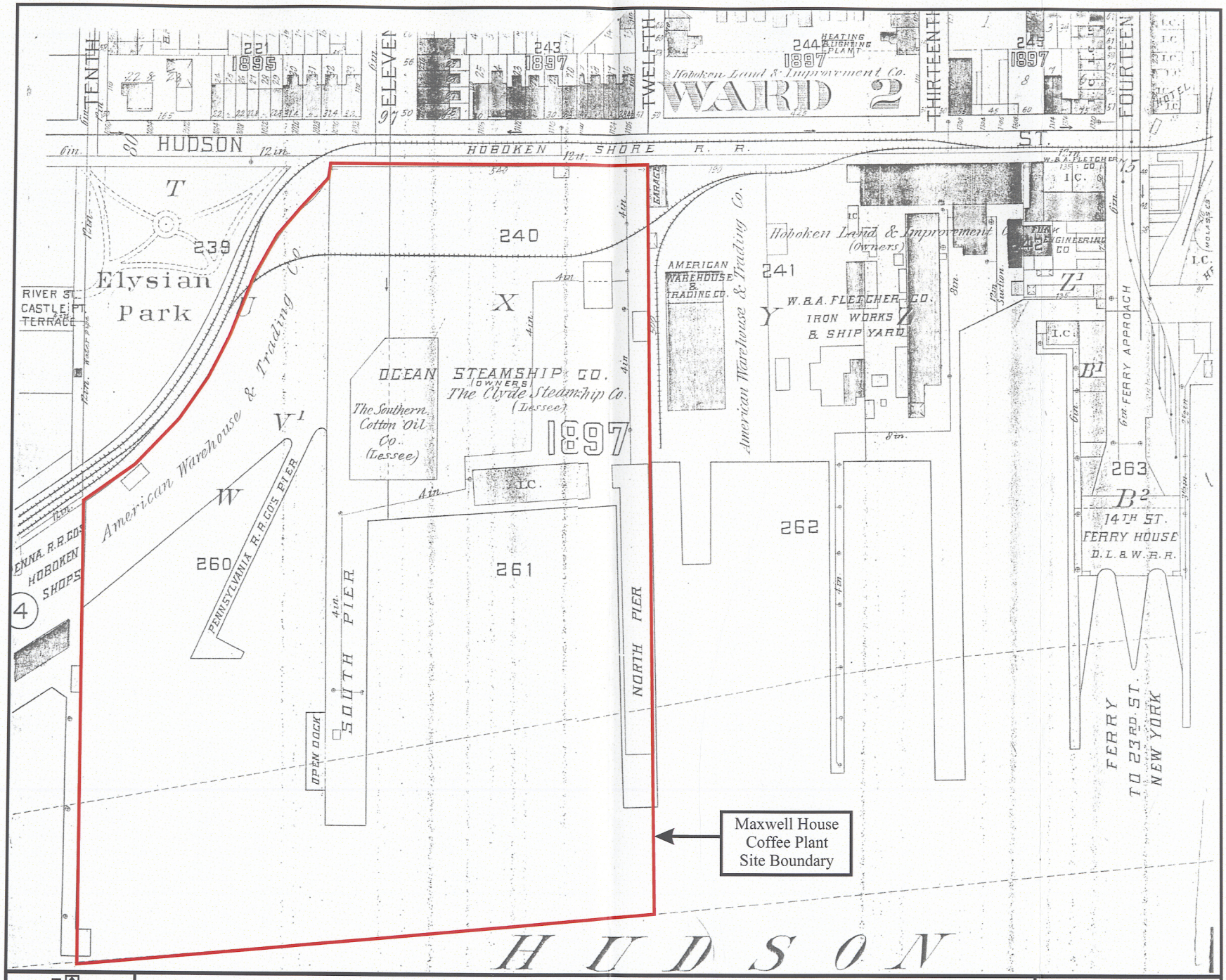



**Figure 34:**

1909 G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Hudson County, New Jersey* (Source: New Jersey State Library).

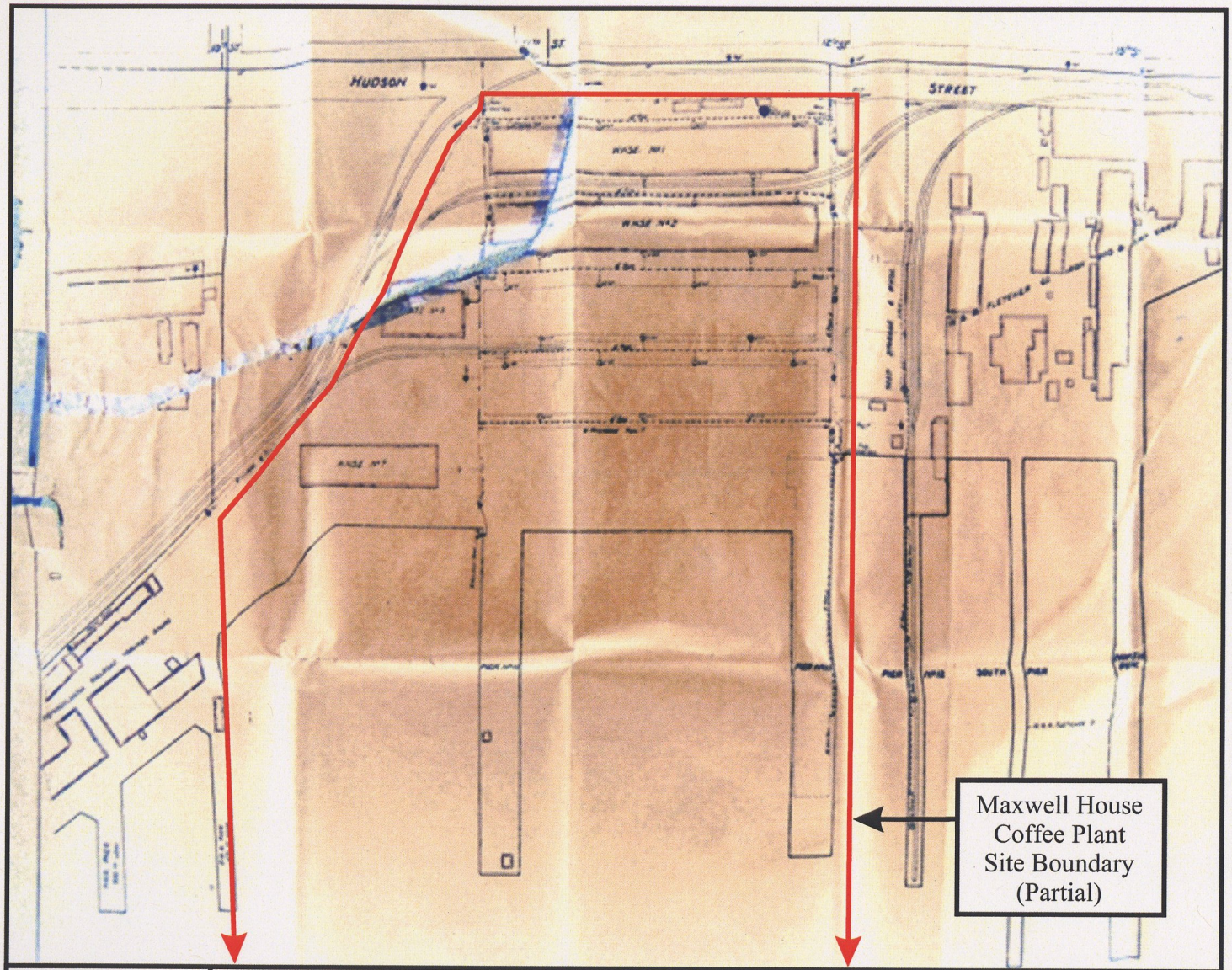



**Figure 35:**

1918 Hoboken Piers Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 and Warehouses Nos. 1, 2, 5, and 7, Traced From Map Dated August 6, 1918. Two large storage sheds were already in place with two more planned closer to the water (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum, Hoboken, New Jersey).

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**Figure 36:**

Circa 1935 View of Lawson & MacMurray Lumber Co., Looking Northwest. The site was relatively open by the time the General Foods Corporation purchased the land (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum, Hoboken, New Jersey).

## 5.0 MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE

### *Planning the Maxwell House Plant*

For the design and construction of the new facility, General Foods selected the H. K. Ferguson Company, an engineering and construction firm based in Cleveland, Ohio. The company had been founded by Harold K. Ferguson in 1918, and by the 1930s the H. K. Ferguson Company served as one of the country's leading builders of industrial facilities, constructing plants for Procter & Gamble, National Cash Register, Firestone Tire and Rubber, and Union Carbide. The firm's satellite offices could be found in New York, San Francisco, Toronto, and Mexico City (*Factory Management and Maintenance* 1940).

Harold K. Ferguson was born in 1883 in Albion, Michigan. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1905, Ferguson went to work for the Austin Company, a major engineering firm that would later rival Ferguson in the field of industrial design (*New York Times* 1943). While at the Austin Company, Ferguson developed the "standard factory" principle of building, a technique that called for the construction of factory buildings from stock plans (Bradley 1999; *Architectural Record* 1939). By using standard plans that could be easily adapted to different industrial processes, the H. K. Ferguson Company earned a reputation for its ability to mass produce standardized factory buildings in both a short time frame and at a competitive price. "Standard designs are necessary," wrote Ferguson, "because industrial buildings are always wanted in a hurry. Furthermore, some kind of a standard is necessary as a base upon which to make improvements. It is much better to refine a standard product than to attempt to embark upon a radically new, though theoretically improved product" (*Engineering News-Record* 1936).

To the engineer, the practical necessities of plant layout, internal arrangement of machinery, and adequate working light and air were tantamount to a well-designed factory. The arrangement of equipment ensured the smooth flow of raw materials to finished product. Industrial facilities also required flexibility. That is, the buildings on the site needed to allow for easy alteration, enlargement, or adaptability to purposes other than the original intention. Writing about the necessity of an efficiently planned and functional internal layout, H. K. Ferguson wrote in 1939: "My own high mark to date is making and testing thirty-four alternative layouts for one plant before arriving at the one and only one extremely simple and clean-cut arrangement which most nearly harmonized the ideal and practicable layout in all particulars" (after Bradley 1999: 81).

Plans for the new Maxwell House Plant were no exception. Surviving sketches from the firm of Francisco & Jacobus, consulting engineers for the project, show how the company experimented with layouts before settling on a final site plan (Francisco & Jacobus 1937a, 1937b). Each iteration tried to accommodate the need for straight-line assembly manufacturing - from green coffee to finished product - as well as to provide for a powerhouse and future expansion. At the same time, the exercise helped determine the needs for additional filling (Figures 38 and 39). But despite the flexibility afforded by the site, several pre-existing conditions helped determine the plant's final form. The property included ample wharf space for receiving and storing green beans. This dictated the location of the piers, warehouses, and processing facilities. Street access existed on just two sides of the tract at Hudson and Twelfth Streets, while the railroad operated existing spurs into the property from the adjoining tracts. Rails and roadway intersected at Twelfth Street, making for easy distribution via truck and train from that general location. This left Hudson Street - the site's principal public face - available for a detached combination office and laboratory building, complete with separate access for management and lab employees. Hudson Street also became the logical place to employ the building's more eye-catching architectural features (Ferguson 1939: 51).

***Operations***

The entire Maxwell House complex was built around the production process (*Factory Management and Maintenance* 1940). The seven original buildings, with over 500,000 square feet of floor space, consisted of the Pier Shed, Green Bean Warehouse, Manufacturing Building, American Can Company Factory Building, Extraction Building (for the decaffeinated Sanka brand), Offices and Central Laboratory, and Power House. Extending 522 feet into the Hudson River, the Pier Shed consisted of a steel-frame building situated atop the pre-existing timber piles. The Warehouse was attached to the end of, and at a 90-degree angle to, the Pier Shed. Along the west side of the Warehouse stood the four-story Manufacturing Building, where coffee was cleaned, roasted, and ground. Attached to the west side of the Manufacturing Building stood the American Can Company Factory. Here the coffee was vacuum-sealed for freshness. The three-story Extraction Building stood at the south side of the Warehouse, adjacent to the plant powerhouse, which provided all the energy needed for roasting, processing, and packaging the product. The Offices and Central Laboratory marked the only standalone building in the complex. Spatially, the Office and Central Laboratory reflected its role as a regional office for all of the General Foods

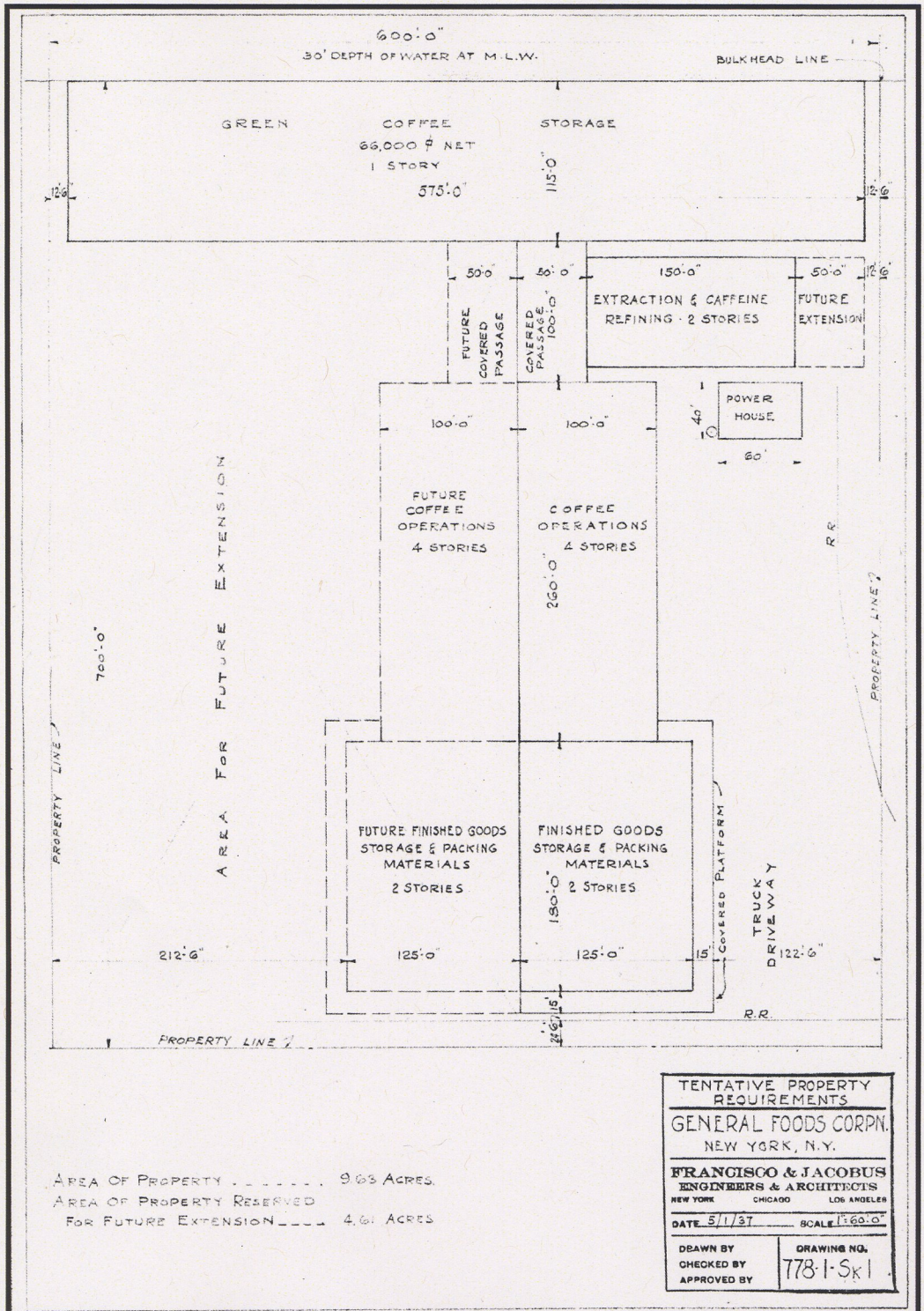



**Figure 38:**

1937 Francisco & Jacobus, Proposed Manufacturing Plant, General Foods Corporation, April 29, 1937. The plan is for a lot measuring 700 feet by 600 feet (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).

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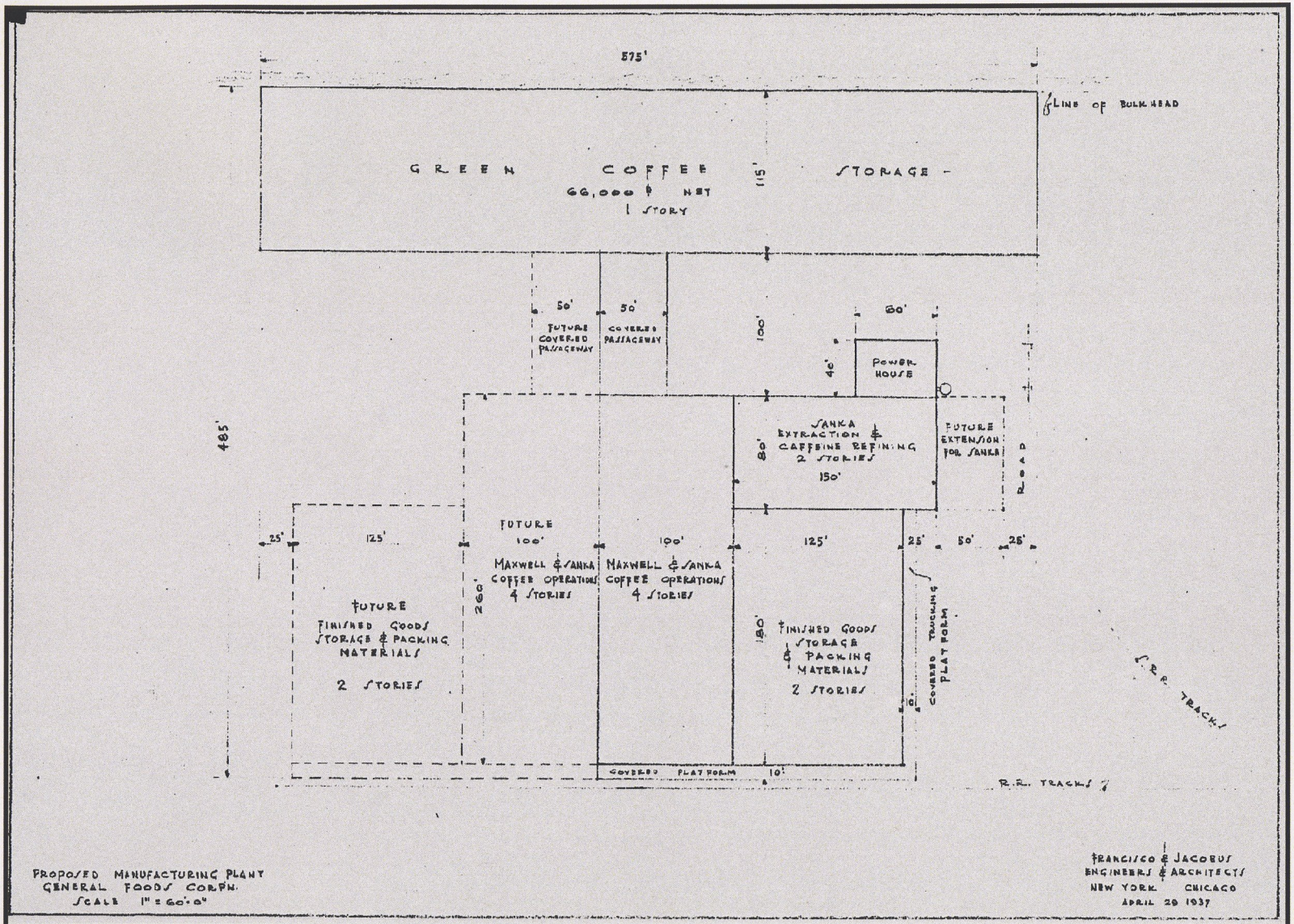



**Figure 39:**

1937 Francisco & Jacobus. Tentative Property Requirements, General Foods Corporation, New York, N.Y., May 1, 1937. This plan contemplates a lot measuring 485 feet by 575 feet (Source: Hoboken Historical Museum).

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Corporation, distinct from the factory. Open land around the site allowed for future expansion, and the Manufacturing Building was specifically designed to accommodate additional stories as space and demand warranted (*Factory Management and Maintenance* 1940).

The finished product was transported either by truck or by railroad to market. The DL&WRR built its own float bridge and railcar barge facility on its remaining property immediately south of the Maxwell House Plant (DL&WRR Annual Report 1939). The finished product could be floated directly across the river to New York City and points north or carried via the HMRR to markets in the south and west (Figure 40).

***Post-World War II***

During World War II, government rationing of coffee significantly reduced sales on the homefront. But the coffee industry still managed to prosper as the military supplied American GI's with all the coffee they could drink. Maxwell House converted its Hoboken facility to produce "10-in-1" rations, waterproof, shockproof packages that included enough food and coffee for ten people a day (Pendergrast 1999: 224). The Central Laboratories also experimented with different processes to dissolve coffee grinds in hot water to produce instant coffee. Instant coffee had been on the market since World War I, but due to its poor taste it had only limited appeal. In 1945, General Foods introduced Instant Maxwell House and Instant Sanka to compete with what was then the leading brand of instant coffee, Nescafe (Derdak 1993: 272). To process instant coffee, the company purchased an additional strip of land along its south border from the DL&WRR and constructed the Soluble Building in 1947 (Deeds 1947). Processing instant coffee required a substantial financial outlay for tall spraying towers and additional treatment processes, but the final product cost 1.25 cents per cup, 1 cent less than regular. By 1952, instant coffee accounted for 17 percent of all coffee consumption in the country, and the following year Instant Maxwell House surpassed Nescafe as the nation's leading instant brand (Pendergrast 1999: 240).

By wars end, the General Foods Corporation could boast of 77 plants and processing units, 66 in the United States, 7 in Canada, and 4 overseas (General Foods Corporation Annual Report [hereafter Annual Report] 1947). Of the four Maxwell House Divisions then in operation, it was the Hoboken plant that produced more than half of all Maxwell House Coffee. During the 1950s, with coffee consumption at an all-time high, the Maxwell House

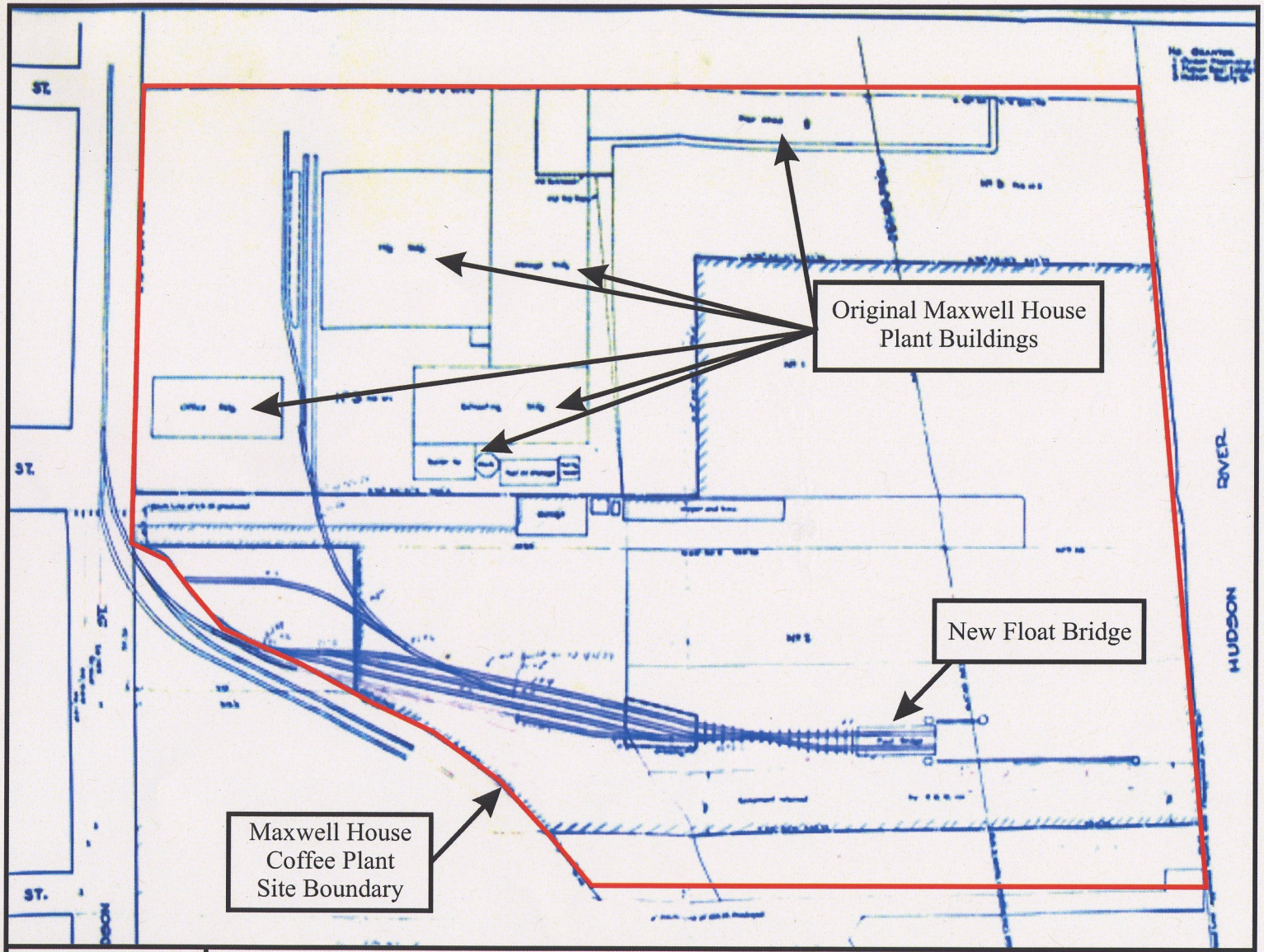



**Figure 40:**

1939 Right of Way and Track Map, The Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western RR Co., Twelfth Street, Hoboken, New Jersey. The railroad sold the north half of the land to the General Foods Corporation and constructed a new float bridge on the south half to transport cars across the Hudson (Source: DL&WRR Annual Reports, New Jersey State Archives).

Plant reached its peak period of production by employing 2,000 factory workers, scientists, and managers, five times the number when the plant opened in 1939 (*Jersey Journal* 1990). In 1957, the corporation purchased more land from the DL&WRR and built a large parking lot to accommodate the many employees (Figure 41; Caulfield 1956; Deeds 1957).

During the 1960s, General Foods coffee, represented by its Maxwell House, Sanka, and Yuban brands, still dominated the coffee market, accounting for over 1/3 of national coffee sales. Maxwell House coffee was described as "the well-advertised and low-priced giant," leading the pack with 24 percent of the coffee market (Pendergrast 1999: 271). Further expansion occurred in 1962 when a portion of the Process Building was constructed adjacent to the Central Laboratory, and tons of fill was deposited in the Hudson River to erect new Storage Silos and concrete piers in front of the Warehouse Building (Figure 42). General Foods built the Storage Silos to more efficiently store green coffee beans after unloading from ships. The 40 enclosed silos on either side of the building had a storage capacity of 20.5 million pounds of coffee beans.

The plant had by now reached it full build-out, with the exception of small additions to the Processing Building and miscellaneous changes to loading docks and service areas. But by this time, coffee consumption was on the decline, dropping from 3.1 cups a day in 1962 to 2.2 cups in 1974. In 1962, nearly three-quarters of all Americans drank coffee, a figure that dropped to little more than one-half by 1982, a drop of 39 percent (Pendergrast 1999: 314). By the late 1980s, it became clear that the declining trend in coffee consumption was not going to be reversed. As a drastic cost-cutting measure, a decision was made in 1990 to close the Hoboken plant by Spring 1992.

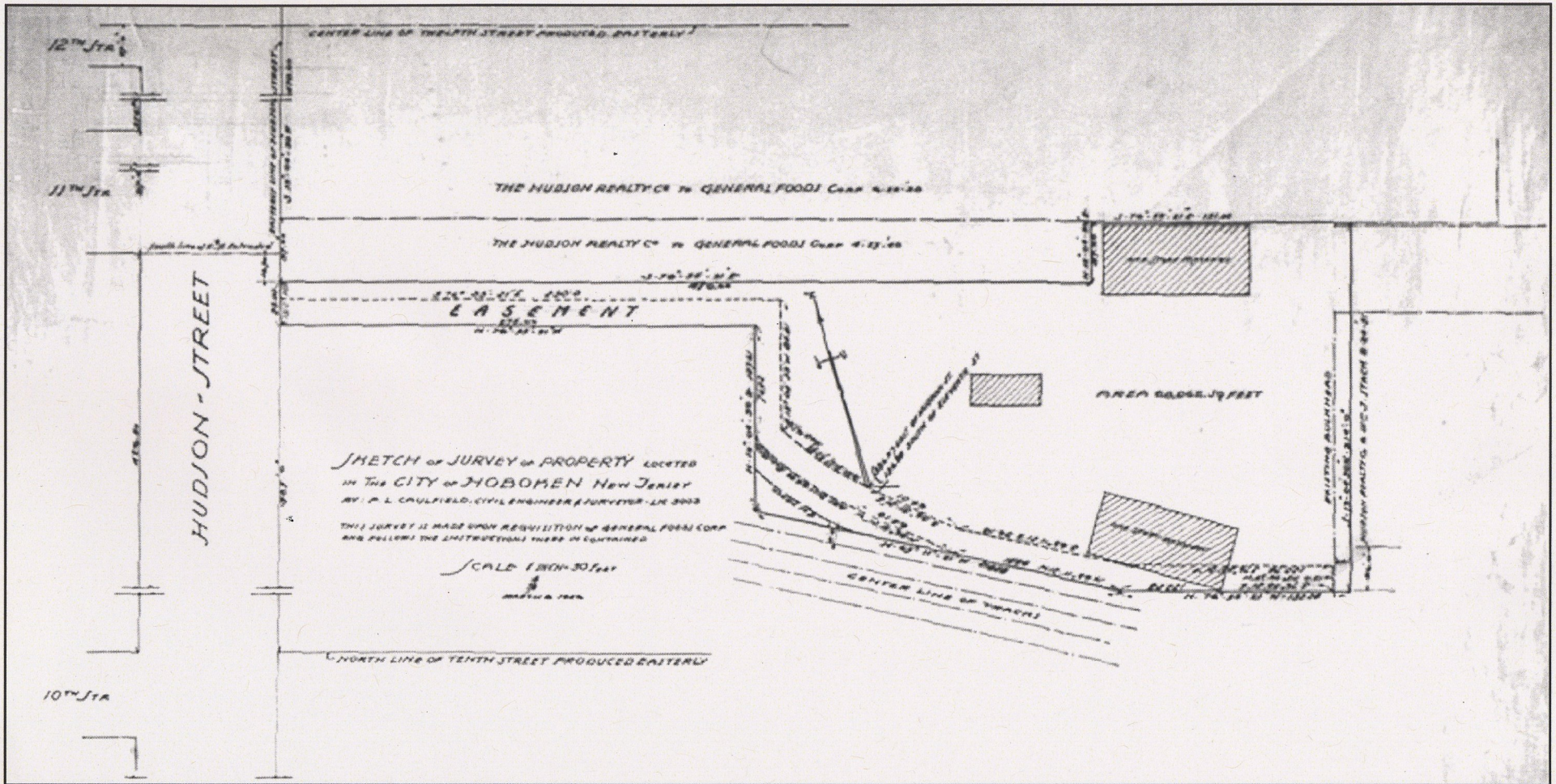



**Figure 41:**

1956 P. A. Caulfield, Sketch of Survey of Property Located in the City of Hoboken, New Jersey. The General Foods Corporation acquired the parcel shown and converted it into a parking lot for plant employees (Source: Maxwell House Drawing Collection, Hoboken Historical Museum).

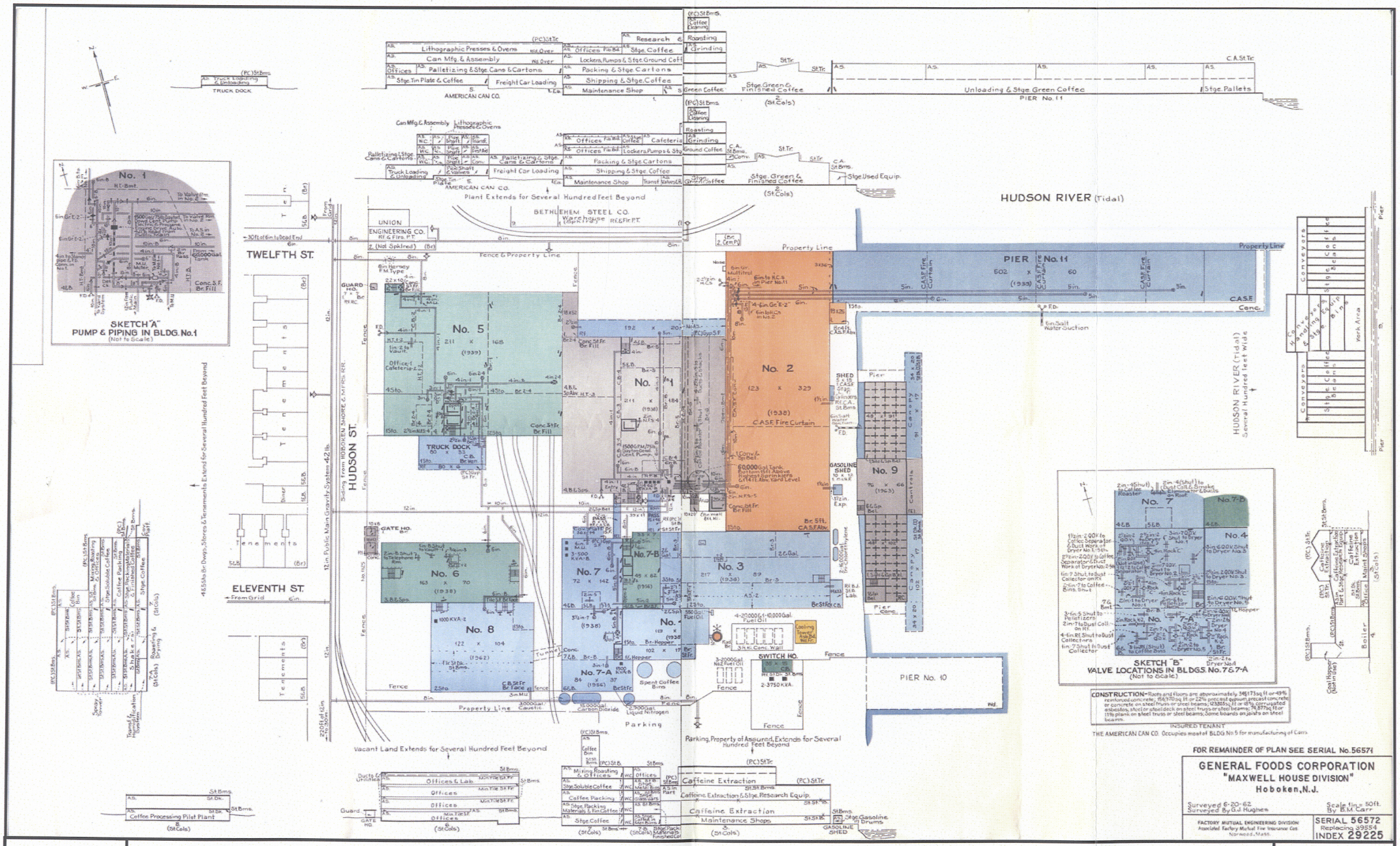



**Figure 42:**

1962 G. J. Hughes, General Foods Corporation, Maxwell House Division, Factory Mutual Engineering Division, Associated Factory Mutual Fire Insurance Companies, Norwood, Mass, June 20, 1962. The drawing provides a complete overview, in plan and elevation, of the operation of the Maxwell House factory (Source: Maxwell House Architectural Drawing Collection, Hoboken Historical Museum).

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: STATE OF NEW JERSEY, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PERMIT NO. 0905-03-0001.1

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
*(See Issuing Division below)*

# PERMIT*

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection grants this permit in accordance with your application, attachments accompanying same application, and applicable laws and regulations. This permit is also subject to the further conditions and stipulations enumerated in the supporting documents which are agreed to by the permittee upon acceptance of the permit.

| | |
|---|---|
| Permit No. 0905-03-0001.1 | Application No. Same as Permit No. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Issuance Date AUG 0 6 2003 | Effective Date AUG 0 6 2003 | Expiration Date AUG 0 6 2008 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name and Address of Applicant<br>Daniel Gans.<br>1101-1125 Hudson Street<br>Hoboken, NJ 07030 | Name and Address of Owner<br>Same as applicant | Name and Address of Operator<br>Same as applicant |
| Location of Activity/Facility *(Street Address)*<br>1101-1125 Hudson Street<br>Hoboken City<br>Hudson County<br>Lot 1 Block 261 | Issuing Division<br>Land Use Regulation Program | Statute(s)<br>NJSA 12:5-3<br>NJSA 58:10A-1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Type of Permit: Waterfront Development<br>Water Quality Certificate | Maximum Approved Capacity, if applicable: N/A |

This permit grants permission to:

Demolish all buildings on the property known as the former Maxwell House Coffee site and then construct 4 mixed-use commercial and residential buildings to be located to the west of the proposed North Sinatra Road. These 4 buildings will house approximately 832 dwelling units and approximately 213,000 square feet of commercial space. A waterfront park will also be constructed all along the waterfront portion of the property east of proposed North Sinatra Drive. The waterfront park will contain a waterfront walkway and emergency vehicle access.

This permit is authorized under and in compliance with the Rules on Coastal Zone Management, as listed below. 7:7E-3.5 Finfish Migratory Pathways, 7:7E-3.7 Navigation Channels, 7:7E-3.23 Filled Waters Edge, 7:7E-3.25 Flood Hazard Area, 7:7E-3.27 Wetlands, 7:7E-3.36 Historic and Archeological Resources, 7:7E-3.40 Public Open Space, 7:7E-3.43 Special Urban Areas, 7:7E-3.41 Special Hazard Areas, 7:7E-3.48 Hudson River Waterfront Area, 7:7E-7.2 Housing Use Rule, 7:7E-7.10 Commercial Use Rule, 7:7E-7.14 High-Rise Structure, 7:7E-8.4 Water Quality, 7:7E-8.5, 7:7E-8.7 Stormwater Management, 7:7E-8.11 Public Access to the Waterfront, 7:7E-8.13 Buffers and Compatibility of Uses, 7:7E-8.14 Traffic.

The plan hereby approved consist of one (1) sheet as prepared by Dean Marchetto & Associates, Architects, and entitled,

(1) "1101-1125 HUDSON STREET DEVELOPMENT aka FORMER MAXWWELL HOUSE SITE, 101-1125 HUDSON STREET, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY, WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PLAN" (DATED JUNE 18, 2001, LAST REVISED AUGUST 3, 2003)

Prepared By: Andrew J Clark
ANDREW CLARK

See page 5 for signature

| | |
|---|---|
| Revised Date | Approved by the Department of Environmental Protection<br>Name (Print or Type) _____ Title _____<br>Signature _____ Date _____ |

**The word permit means "approval, certification, registration, etc."*

(General Conditions are on the Reverse Side)

This permit is issued subject to and provided that the following conditions can be met to the satisfaction of the Land Use Regulation Program. All Administrative Conditions must be met prior to construction unless otherwise specified. The issuance of this permit does not relinquish any Tidelands claims, if any. All Physical Conditions are subject to on-site compliance inspection. Please notify the Bureau of Enforcement, (401 East State Street, P.O. Box 422, Trenton, New Jersey 08625), in writing at least 10 days prior to commencement of construction or site preparation.

**Special Conditions:**

1. Authorization for the above work may require an Army Corps of Engineers permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. The New York District of the Army Corp of Engineers should be contacted directly at 212-264-0182.

2. The plans approved with this permit are not full construction plans. The approved plans show the footprint and height of the 4 proposed buildings. Before the start of any on site preparation full construction plans must be submitted and approved by the Land Use Regulation Program.

3. A timing restriction of April 1 through June 30 is imposed on all demolition work, and any work that may introduce sediment into the Hudson River or Upper Bay. This timing restriction is imposed to protect anadromous fish during migration or spawning.

4. During the demolition work, no construction debris may be placed on either the pier or the peninsula in order to prevent demolition debris from possibly entering the Upper Bay or Hudson River.

5. The applicant must submit a detailed plan of the proposed waterfront walkway WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE ISSUANCE OF THIS PERMIT. This plan must contain details of the proposed railing around the pier and platform, signage allowing fishing access and public access, placement of seating, restoration of the "beach" area located just south of the peninsula and details of the block pavers used for the walkway and how they will be different from the pavers used for the special purpose road. It should be noted here that the proposed emergency boat ramp for Fire Department access to the river will require a separate Waterfront Development permit for work below Mean High Water.

NOTE ITEMS 6-9 MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE SITE DEMOLITION COMMENCES

6. The applicant must record the Maxwell House Site to HABS Level III documentation. Original floor plans and elevations of the site must be archivally duplicated displayed and interpreted in a public space on site. A copy of the drawings, along with the HABS Level III documentation will be given to the State Historic Preservation Office, Hoboken Museum, Hoboken Public Library; Special Collections and University Archived, Alexander Library, Rutgers University and the New Jersey State Library. Recordation of the surviving structures and surface remains should interpret their role in the industrial processes that occurred on the site and discuss the relationship of the physical development of the site with changing technologies of coffee production.

7. Archeological monitoring shall be conducted to identify and document features contributing to the significance of this historic property. The monitoring plan shall be developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office prior to demolition.

8. Effort shall be made to re-use original signs, machinery and historic elements from the site either by displaying in public space, such as lobbies or common areas, or offered to non-profit organizations for public education or interpretation.

9. A historic preservation consultant, who meets the qualifications under 36 CFR part 61, must be hired to augment the April 2003 Cultural Resource Investigation done by Richard Grubb and Associates, Inc. This additional study shall analyze the site history prior to Maxwell House and complete the historical documentation of the property. A copy of the two reports should go to the State Historic Preservation Office, local historical societies, libraries, and preservation organizations.

10. The applicant must publish and distribute a document (such as advertising material) that illustrates the historical development of the Maxwell House site. This document should be kept on site for public review and be distributed to the State Historic Preservation Office, local historical societies, libraries, and interested preservation organizations.

11. The applicant must develop a plaque or panel to commemorate the site. The text of this plaque or panel must be reviewed and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office.

12. In consultation with the City, the applicant must incorporate the design of the original New York Yacht Club built in 1864 into the final park-landscaping plan as the public building to be constructed there. The fact that on this site in New Jersey was the home of the first international trophy won by the United States "The America's Cup" will be mentioned on a commemorative plaque at the location. The applicant must document the history utilizing primary resources.

13. The site is also believed to be the location of the first organized game of baseball. The applicant has already agreed with the City to the landscaping of a recreation baseball field with a commemorative plaque at the location of the ball field on the open space of Block A. A plaque documenting the history of this site utilizing primary resources must be incorporated into the landscape plan. The State Historic Preservation Office must have the opportunity to review and comment of the text of the plaque. If a private owner opens the theme restaurant for baseball, it is strongly encouraged that an interpretive plan of the history of the site be part of the décor.

14. On the north pier, which will be landscaped for strolling, fishing and viewing, the large vessel tie down equipment must be preserved and the new railings provided will be outfitted with gates. The City is strongly encouraged to attract a historic vessel or museum ship to dock here as a cultural and educational attraction for the community.

15. The restoration of the beach along the south cove could serve to interpret the very early 19th century use of the site as a recreation area. Colonel Stevens in 1804 mapped out the city by creating the waterfront park known as Elysian Field. Primary research must be performed into Colonel Steven's

marketing of the site for its beaches and parks. Research should be documented on a plaque and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office and local library and preservation organizations.

16. Archeological monitoring shall be conducted to identify and document features contributing to the significance of this historic property. The monitoring plan shall be developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office.

**Standard Conditions:**

1. This permit is revocable, or subject to modification or change at any time, pursuant to the applicable regulations, when in the judgement of the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, such revocation, modification or change shall be necessary.

2. This authorization of activities includes a transition area waiver for work in the transition area determined by the Department, which is necessary to accomplish the regulated activity. In addition, this permit to conduct a regulated activity in a wetland or open water includes the Department's approval of a Water Quality Certificate for these activities.

3. The issuance of the permit shall not be deemed to affect in any way action by the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of New Jersey on any future application.

4. The works, facilities, and/or activities shown by plans and/or other engineering data, which are this day approved, subject to the conditions herewith established, shall be constructed and/or executed in conformity with such plans and/or engineering data and the said conditions.

5. No change in plans or specifications shall be made except with the prior written permission of the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of New Jersey.

6. The granting of this permit shall not be construed to in any way affect the title or ownership of property, and shall not make the Department of Environmental Protection or the State of New Jersey a party in any suit or question of ownership.

7. This permit does not waive the requirement of obtaining Federal or other State or local government consents when necessary. No work shall be undertaken until such time as all other required approvals and permits have been obtained.

8. A copy of this permit shall be kept at the work site, and shall be exhibited upon the request of any person.

9. Any construction, grading, removal of vegetation, or other activity at this site that affects a regulated area, other than specifically approved by this permit or as detailed by the approved drawings, shall require additional approvals from the Department. The commencement of such regulated activities without the appropriate approvals shall be in violation of State law.

**Method of Construction:**

a. All activities approved by this permit shall be performed under the supervision and direction of a

Professional Engineer licensed in the State of New Jersey, and shall be undertaken using the best management practices available. Furthermore, the site shall be subject to inspection at any time by representatives of the Department to ensure the continuous application of the provisions of this permit.

b. During the course of construction, neither the applicant nor its agents shall cause or permit any unreasonable interference with the free flow of the Upper New York Bay by placing or dumping any materials, equipment, debris or structures within or adjacent to the stream corridor. Upon completion or abandonment of the work, the applicant and/or its agents shall remove and dispose of in a lawful manner all excess materials, equipment and debris from the Bay and adjacent lands.

c. All activities authorized by this permit shall be stabilized in accordance with Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control in New Jersey (obtainable from local Soil Conservation District Offices), or equal engineering specifications, to prevent eroded soil and sediment from entering adjacent waterways at any time during and subsequent to construction. The Department reserves the right to order the suspension of any activity if unacceptable levels of erosion or turbidity result from the same.

**Responsibilities of Applicant**

a. The granting of this permit does not in any way relieve the applicant and/or its agents from the responsibility for damages caused by any construction or activities hereby approved, nor does the Department accept responsibility for any structural designs.

b. Within ten (10) days of the receipt of this permit by the applicant, this permit shall be recorded in its entirety in the office of the County Clerk or the Registrar of Deeds and Mortgages for each county where this permit is located. Verified notice of this action shall be forwarded to the Department immediately thereafter.

Approved by:

Robert B. Piel, Jr., Asst. Director,
Land Use Regulation Program

8/6/03
Date

c. Bureau of Tidelands, NJDEP
US Army Corp of Engineers, New York District

## APPENDIX B: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

| | |
|---|---|
| Author: | Philip A. Hayden |
| Title: | Historic Background and Development of the Maxwell House Site, City of Hoboken, Hudson County, New Jersey |
| Location: | City of Hoboken, Hudson County, New Jersey |
| Drainage Basin: | Hudson River, Atlantic Ocean |
| U.S.G.S. Quads: | Jersey City, NJ-NY and Weehawken, NJ-NY |
| Project: | Real Estate Development |
| Level of Survey: | Intensive-Level Architectural Survey |
| Cultural Resources: | Maxwell House Site |