1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

Other Name/Site Number: Negro Burying Place and Negros Burying Ground; Site No. A06101.006980

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Vicinity of Broadway and Reade Street Not for publication: ____

City/Town: New York Vicinity: N/A

State: NY County: New York Code: 061 Zip Code: 10007

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-local:	X	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	X
Public-Federal:	X	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
___	6	buildings
1	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
1	6	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the _____
National Register
____ Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Funerary	Sub:	Cemetery
Current:	Government Commerce	Sub:	Government office Business

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

MATERIALS:
Foundation:
Walls:
Roof:
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

SITE LOCATION AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Throughout the eighteenth century, New York's free and enslaved Africans buried their dead in a parcel of land which now is part of the city's civic center area. The African Burial Ground site is located on block numbers 153, 154 and 155 in the Borough of Manhattan, New York City (Figures 1 and 3). The site is bounded by Duane Street on the north, Chambers Street on the south, Centre Street and Lafayette Street on the east, and Broadway on the west (Figure 2). Reade and Elk Streets and Manhattan and Republican Alleys traverse the site. The total area is approximately seven acres. The site is currently characterized by a nineteenth- and twentieth-century built environment including buildings, a construction site, parking areas, and city streets (Figures 4 through 7), under which a large portion of the African Burial Ground is preserved. Archaeological excavations have been conducted on a portion of Block 154, in advance of a major federal construction project. These excavations revealed the presence of the Burial Ground over a large part of the project area (Figure 17). The site's preservation in this area was due to sixteen to twenty-five feet of fill which has protected the original ground surface and an intact stratum of burials. The basements of buildings subsequently erected on the site penetrated only the fill, except on the lots on Broadway where the original ground surface was higher.

The current topography of the site is the result of extensive grading and filling, much of which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[1] Current elevations (Figure 15) barely suggest the original landforms (Figure 14). The major feature of the original topography in the immediate area was a ravine leading east-northeast from Broadway toward the "Collect Pond" or "Fresh Water," a deep, spring-fed pond formed by a geologic rift which cuts across Manhattan Island (see historic maps, Figures 8 through 11). The ravine and pond were filled in during the final years of the eighteenth and the first decade of the nineteenth century. Most of the fill came from the concurrent leveling of nearby hills and the high ground along Broadway. Today, the only traces of these natural features are a slight descent in elevation to the north of Chambers Street and chronic flooding problems in building basements on the site of the old pond.

During 1991 and 1992 archaeological excavations at Block 154 of the African Burial Ground site exposed fill to depths of sixteen to twenty-five feet beneath Republican Alley and the surrounding city lots. The foundations and basements of the late nineteenth-century structures which stood on the lots until the late 1970s had been dug through this fill, and in some cases did not reach the level containing graves. The original ground surface appeared to be intact in only a small section of the fully excavated portion of the site, at the western corner of Republican Alley. This old surface was encountered at an elevation of approximately nine feet above mean sea level, sixteen feet below grade. In the eastern portion of the excavation, the ground surface was not preserved. Grave pits are intact, however, and it is believed that the later construction had disturbed only the upper two feet of the original ground.

As shown in Figure 17, burials were densely distributed. Very few multiple burials were found, and the exceptions involved women interred with infants. The rest of the graves contained single individuals. The Burial Ground was used intensively, however, resulting in superimposed burials and, in some cases, disturbances of earlier graves by later interments. Over 400 burials were fully excavated by professional archaeologists. Because the archaeological fieldwork was halted prior to complete excavation of the proposed construction site on Block 154, a large area of the eastern portion of the block are known to contain unexcavated burials. This area is indicated by shading on the site plan (Figure 17). Based on the density of burials in fully recovered areas, it is reasonable to project the presence of two to three hundred additional burials in unexcavated and

[1] See the record of street gradings in the area in New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council, 1784-1831* [*MCC, 1784-1831*] (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917), 2:327-328.

partially-excavated areas of Block 154 shown on site plans (Figures 16 and 17). Historically, the Burial Ground extended over what is now several city blocks. Because of the great depth of fill recorded during archaeological testing of Block 154, the African Burial Ground is thought to be preserved well beyond the bounds of this block.

HISTORY OF THE BURIAL GROUND

The area of the African Burial Ground was known and used as part of New York's "common" land (Figure 9) until the late eighteenth century, despite its having been granted to Sarah Roeloff's husband Cornelius Van Borsum in 1673.[2] The Van Borsum patent comprised approximately 6.6 English acres at the northern limits of the colonial town, extending eastward from the line of Broadway. Its exact boundaries were the subject of legal dispute in the eighteenth century, and the eastern boundary is difficult to reconstruct.[3] It is clear, however, that the patent (Figure 12) covered most of the area within the proposed National Historic Landmark boundaries of the African Burial Ground as defined herein (Figure 2).

Reconstruction of the historical topography is important in understanding the physical and social context of the Burial Ground. A useful source is the Viele map of 1859 (Figure 11), which provides an overlay of the street grid on the original land formation. According to this map, the ground sloped down to the Collect Pond north of present-day Chambers Street and east of Broadway. The drop-off has been confirmed through study of geologic test borings conducted in the area, which also provide information on the elevations of the old surface (see below). Both the borings and the archaeological excavations at the Burial Ground site establish that the ravine was quite deep, at least twenty-five feet below present grade at its bottom. Africans thus appropriated a burial place then remote from the colonial town by virtue of its location in a low-lying area between hills, as well as its actual distance.

It is not known precisely when the African community began using the area for burying its dead. The earliest document mentioning the ground is from 1712/13. In that year, military chaplain John Sharpe wrote that "Negros" were being buried in the Common by "those of their country."[4] The "common" land stretched to the north of the eighteenth-century town, beginning at the southern end of present-day City Hall Park. Sharpe gives no indication of the exact location of the ground which Africans were using, but a clue is provided by a 1722 law prohibiting night

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[2]For a short history of this site see I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909,* 6 vols. (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-28), 6:123, 4:394. A copy of the Van Borsum patent is in the Colve Papers, Colonial Mss. vol. 23, 433-20; see also the confirmation of title of 1696, in Liber Patents, 7:111-113, both in the New York State Archives, Albany, N.Y. Despite these documents, the government of New York City continued to dispute the Van Borsum heirs' claim to the property until the end of the eighteenth century, forcing two of the heirs to enter into an agreement in December 1760 to lease from the city the "three lots of ground contiguous and adjoining to the Negroes Burying place on part of which Lotts, their Father Built a Potting House, pot oven and sunk a well supposing at that said Time the said Lands were his property." New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council, 1675-1776* [*MCC, 1675-1776*] (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1905), 6: 238. Contention among the heirs about their respective shares in the Van Borsum estate, which was not resolved until 1795, may have prevented them from mounting a successful challenge to the City's claim to the property as common grounds. (See New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 245, p. 405; and Smith, *ex dem.* Teller, v. G. & P. Lorillard, 10 Johnson Reports 338 (N.Y. Sup. Ct., 1813).

[3]In 1784 the heirs to the Van Borsum patent retained Evart Bancker, Jr. to survey the patent lands. He recorded preparing a plan of the Van Borsum property, the Common grounds (the present-day City Hall Park), and the adjoining lands of George Janeway showing how these properties "interfered with each other." Bancker Survey Books, vol. 1, item 309, Manuscripts Collection, New-York Historical Society. See also Murray Hoffman, *A Treatise upon the Estate & Rights of the Corporation of the City of New York as Proprietors* (New York: Edmund Jones & Co., 1862), 2: 205-207.

[4]John Sharpe, "Proposals for Erecting a School, Library and Chapel at New York," (1712-13), *New-York Historical Society Collections,* 13 (1880):355.

funerals of slaves south of the Collect Pond.[5] By 1732 a piece of ground north of the city and just south of the Collect Pond had become well enough known as the "Negro Burying Place" to be labeled as such on a map of the city (Figure 8). It is likely the area indicated on this map is the same part of the "common" land referred to by Sharpe in March 1712/13.

Between April 7 and 21, 1712, a group of New York city slaves had revolted, burning houses, killing nine whites, and wounding about fifteen others. As a result, twenty-one Africans were executed and may have been interred in the Burial Ground. During 1741, thirteen African men were burned at the stake and seventeen were hanged after being charged with conspiracy against the colony before Judge Daniel Horsmanden. According to Horsmanden's account, these executions took place by the powder house between the Large and Little Collect Ponds, and it is likely that the bodies were also buried in the nearby African Burial Ground.[6]

The Burial Ground is clearly labeled on the 1755 Maerschalck Plan of New York (Figure 9). Here it is shown north of the palisade (built in 1745), thus just outside the town. The palisade was near the line of present-day Chambers Street. According to this map, the "Negros Burial Ground" extended east from Broadway to the "Little Collect" (a small extension of the Collect Pond). The northern boundary of the Burial Ground is shown as a line running northeastward from Broadway. This line corresponds to the northern boundary of the Van Borsum patent. The heirs to the patent were attempting to assert their claim to the land in the mid-eighteenth century, and this boundary line may have been laid out with a fence at that time.[7] A direct reference to the acknowledged link between the Van Borsum patent and the Burial Ground is also made in the heirs' 1753 request to the Common Council to exchange their interest in the "Negroe burying place" for other city lands.[8]

The British Headquarters Map of New York in 1782[?] (Figure 10) shows a burial ground immediately north of the Revolutionary War barracks (long, narrow structures along the south side of what became Chambers Street). It is likely that the map maker was depicting the area of the African Burial Ground used for the interment of prisoners of war and possibly soldiers during the British occupation of the city.[9] The map indicates that the southern part of the Burial Ground, an area now crossed by Chambers Street, was used for that purpose. It is possible, however, that some prisoners or loyalist soldiers, including Africans, were interred in the portion of the Burial Ground that has been excavated archaeologically. Africans fought on both sides of the revolutionary conflict. The promise of freedom was offered to runaway slaves as enticement to fight on the loyalist side at the outset of the war although the revolutionary army did not actively solicit their participation until 1781.[10]

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[5] *MCC, 1675-1776*, 3:296.

[6] For accounts and discussions of the 1712 revolt and 1741 "conspiracy," see Kenneth Scott, "The Slave Insurrection in New York in 1712," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly*, 45 (1961): 43-74; Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *American Historical Review* 85 (1980):44-78; Thomas J. Davis, *A Rumor of Revolt: "The Great Negro Plot" in Colonial New York* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

[7] Smith, *ex dem.* Teller, v. G. & P. Lorillard, 355.

[8] *MCC, 1675-1776*, 5:416. The request was not granted at that time.

[9] See Stokes, 3:927.

[10] See Mary Beth Norton, "The Fate of Some Black Loyalists of the American Revolution," *Journal of Negro History* (1966): 402-426; Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 1961).

No city maps surveyed after 1755 explicitly label the Burial Ground. It is clearly labeled, however, on a series of surveys related to the division of the farm patents in the area in the 1780s and 1790s. Abutting the Van Borsum land to the north was the "Calk Hook" Farm owned by the Barclay/Rutgers family. In 1785 a survey was made for the purpose of dividing this property into blocks and lots for sale and subsequent development.[11] The survey map clearly indicates that the Barclay/Rutgers land was bounded on the south by the "Negros Burial Ground" (Figure 13). The Van Borsum patent itself was divided into lots in 1795.[12] It is clear that the old ground could no longer have been used as a burial place, as construction of houses on the lots began almost immediately after each survey was completed. In the same year that the Van Borsum tract was subdivided, the Common Council assisted in the purchase of lands on Chrystie Street for a new African cemetery.[13] In 1796, the Common Council arranged to acquire a part of the "Negros Burial Ground" for laying out Chambers Street east of Broadway.[14] In exchange for this land, the Council granted the Van Borsum heirs city lots further to the east.

The earliest development of Blocks 153, 154, and 155 subsequent to their division probably involved construction at original grade. Several backyard privies related to the first structures on the lots in the archaeological project area have been excavated, and these features cut through burials. The fact that these privy shafts were dug into the same soil levels as the burials indicates that substantial filling had not yet taken place. By 1812, testimony in a lawsuit involving the Van Borsum heirs includes the following description of the area:

> The lots adjoining, and including the premises, and including the African burying ground, for many years since the American war, were regarded as uninviting suburbs. The streets have since been widened, the face of the ground wholly changed, and it is now covered with a flourishing population, and elegant improvements.[15]

By the time larger brick buildings with single or double basements were constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, the entire vicinity had been leveled through the grading and filling discussed above. References to the leveling of Broadway just north of the site indicate it was graded some four to fifteen feet.[16] As shown on the Viele map (Figure 11), the Burial Ground ravine cut across Broadway near Chambers Street. While a portion of the Burial Ground along Broadway north of Chambers Street may have been graded and destroyed in the early nineteenth century, filling may have occurred when Chambers Street was laid out in 1796. To the east, sixteen to twenty-five feet of fill covered and protected the burials.

The excavations in Block 154 uncovered preserved burials beneath Republican Alley, as was expected, since the alley was within the area historically known as the Burial Ground and had remained relatively undisturbed since 1795 when it was laid out. The bottoms of grave shafts beneath the alley were at depths of from 6.53 feet above sea level at the west end to -.23 feet

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[11] Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 46, p. 139.

[12] Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 195, pp. 405-420 and Map File 76J and Evart Barcker, Jr., Partition Map of the Van Borsum Patent, 1795, Box 1, Folder 44, of the "Barcker Plans," in the Manuscripts Collections of the New York Public Library.

[13] *MCC, 1784-1831*, 2:137.

[14] *MCC, 1784-1831*, 2:250-53.

[15] Smith, *ex. dem.* Teller, v. Burtis & Woodward, 9 Johnson Reports 182 (N.Y. Sup. Ct., 1812).

[16] *MCC, 1784-1831*, 2:359-61; Peter Gassner, "Recollections of an Old Citizen," *Manual of the Common Council of New York* (New York: D.T. Valentine, 1859), p. 588.

below sea level at the eastern end. Burials were also found extending north of the alley beneath the basements of some Duane Street lots (see site plan, Figure 17). Bottoms of grave shafts were at a maximum elevation of 7.13 feet above sea level beneath the westernmost excavated lot and as deep as -1.52 feet below sea level further east. The area covered by burials spread slightly north of the boundary of the Van Borsum patent. It is likely this boundary was not clearly marked throughout much of the Burial Ground's history, and there is no reason to suppose that those who used the ground always knew its exact location. However, a series of post-holes was discovered running from west to east in a line roughly corresponding to the old patent boundary. This may be the remains of a fence which marked the northern extent of the Van Borsum property (or the southern boundary of the Calk Hook Farm). This indicates that even though burials extend at least thirty to thirty-five feet further north, at one time the burial ground may have been contained south of the fenced line, within the patent boundary. In the westernmost lot that was excavated, archaeologists also exposed a ditch to the north of the presumed fence line. The ditch also runs in a line parallel to the old patent boundary, and may have been another marker of the property line and of the burial ground's northern limit. This evidence suggests that the northern boundary definition varied slightly in the eighteenth century.

Artifacts found in the coffins themselves as well as in the grave-shaft fill confirm the historical evidence for the eighteenth-century use of the burial ground. The African-American community must have ceased to bury its dead here by 1795. The earliest use of the ground cannot be determined, either through documentary research conducted to date or through archaeological excavations. David Valentine, writing about the Burial Ground in the 1860s (see below), assumed its origin was during the Dutch colonial period, but offered no supporting evidence for this assumption. The suggestion of an origin for the Burial Ground in the Dutch period is supported circumstantially, however, by the ground's location near the farms granted to Africans by the Dutch West India Company.[17] These farms were north of the town, around the Collect Pond and extending northward as far as present-day 34th Street. While analysis of the artifacts may help to bracket individual burials, it will be more difficult to assign an overall beginning date to the entire site.

DESCRIPTION OF EXCAVATED REMAINS[18]

Demolition debris from recent structures covered much of the area excavated by archaeologists within Block 154. In some places, nineteenth-century deposits were encountered, notably beneath Republican Alley and beneath buildings with shallow basements. Once these layers were removed, roughly rectangular soil stains representing grave pits were sometimes clearly visible. In the area where the early ground surface was preserved, several graves were marked. In two or possibly three cases, headstones remained *in situ*, and several graves were outlined in cobbles and fieldstones (see Figures 17 and 23).

The soil which filled each grave shaft contained material that had either been placed in the grave or had lain in or on the surrounding soil at the time of interment. This material, which included fragments of brick, nails, glass, ceramics, animal bone, shell, seeds, and tobacco pipes, was recovered for further analysis. In the central and eastern portions of the archaeological site, the grave shaft fill contained significant amounts of pottery wasters, kiln furniture, and shards of

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[17] On the Africans' farms, see Stokes, 6:123-24.

[18] Howard University and John Milner Associates, Inc., "Draft Research Design for Archeological, Historical, and Bioanthropological Investigations of the African Burying Ground and Five Points Area, New York," prepared for Edwards & Kelcey Engineers, Inc. and the General Services Administration, Region 2, 1992, and Edward S. Rutsch and staff, "A Draft Research Design for the Broadway Block, Including an In-progress Fieldwork Summary Report," prepared by Historic Conservation and Interpretation, Inc. for Edwards & Kelcey Engineers, Inc. and the General Services Administration, Region 2, 1992. Information about the African Burial Ground site has been provided by the staffs of John Milner and Associates, Inc. and the General Services Administration; the staff of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has conducted many site visits.

locally-produced stoneware. Potteries were located in the immediate vicinity of the Burial Ground in the eighteenth century, one just north of the site to the west of Broadway and others to the southeast, where "Pot Baker's" or "Potter's Hill" (Figure 9 and 13) is depicted on historic maps. The important early Crolius pottery may have overlapped with a portion of the Burial Ground during the eighteenth century. At one time it appears to have stood east of Elk Street within the bounds of the Burial Ground as currently defined. Several brief references to the Van Borsum land (in deeds and in Common Council minutes) indicate the presence within its boundaries of a pottery or potteries.[19]

Only a few of the grave shafts contained human remains that had been placed directly in the ground. In the vast majority, remains of wooden coffins were found. These remains consisted of decayed wood stains in the soil and occasional small wood fragments. Coffins were of three types: hexagonal (the majority), rectangular, and four-sided tapering (Figure 24). Iron coffin nails were recovered, but little additional coffin hardware was found. In a few cases, metal handles or decorative cover plates were found on the coffins. Tacks spelling out the initials "H. W." and a date of 1758 or 1738 decorated one coffin lid (Figure 25).

In all but a few cases, the deceased had been laid supine with arms folded over the pelvic area or placed at the sides, and oriented on an east-west axis with the head to the west. Burial artifacts were scarce, mainly consisting of items of personal adornment when identifiable. Approximately 140 glass beads, 130 buttons made of pewter, copper alloy, bone, and shell, nine coins, four rings, four shells, and one fragment of coral were recovered from the coffins. One man's remains were found with five buttons, two of which matched and were gilt-decorated with an anchor design (Figure 28). Perhaps the most spectacular interment was of a woman who was buried wearing a belt or girdle of over one hundred glass trade beads and cowrie shells (Figure 29). In three cases, coins had been placed over the deceased's eyes. One of these pairs of coins were King George II pennies, minted in the 1730s. The other coins await conservation and identification. The most frequent items found in the coffins were brass straight pins, often near the head and upper torso, indicating that many of the dead were at least partially wrapped in shrouds. Infants and very young children appear to have been completely shrouded. In many cases small fragments of hair, and in a few cases small fragments of fabric, were recovered.

Preliminary forensic assessments were conducted in the field but the firm assignment of gender and age to individuals awaits further study. Ninety-three percent of the individuals whose graves have been excavated are thought to be of African origin or descent. Evidence of pathologies such as arthritis was noted in some individuals. An ossified pelvic tumor indicates one individual who suffered from tapeworm; such a discovery is extremely rare. A ball of lead shot was found in one woman's rib-cage, and steel shot was found with another individual. In most cases, based on observations made prior to the exhumation of burials, there is little evidence of traumatic injury or death.

Anomalous burials included several graves containing coffins but no human remains. One burial held the remains of an individual of European origin who had undergone an autopsy. These burials point to the possibility that the Burial Ground was occasionally robbed for cadavers and perhaps used for disposal of remains by physicians or students from the nearby New York

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[19] Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 97, p. 158; Liber 75, p. 118; Liber 75, p. 125; *MCC, 1675-1776*, 5:416, 6:227, 6:238; *MCC, 1784-1831*, 2:218, 2:220-21. See also Arthur W. Clement, *Our Pioneer Potteries* (New York: printed privately, 1947), pp. 8-9, 21-24; John E. Stillwell "Crolius Ware and its Makers" *New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 10 (1926):52-66; William Ketchum, Jr., *Early Potters and Potteries of New York State* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970), pp. 23, 25-26, 28; Jane Van Vleck, *Ancestry and Descendants of Tielman Van Vleeck of Niew Amsterdam* (New York: printed privately, 1955).

Hospital. In addition, three burials were oriented north-south rather than east-west, and one individual was buried head-to-east instead of west.

SITE INTEGRITY

The African Burial Ground site saw intensive nineteenth and twentieth-century development. However, in some areas, due to the presence of deep fill, this development has not obliterated but preserved the Burial Ground. Within the bounds of the site as currently defined, some areas are known to have good preservation of burials, and others have good potential. In some areas, however, there is little potential for preservation. Through analysis of boring logs and building plans, it is possible to predict those areas where the burials are likely to remain and those which have been destroyed by later construction.

Figure 14 shows hypothetical original contours of the site area. This map is the result of analysis of a series of borings conducted in the area in the 1960s along with elevations taken at the archaeological site, and examination of historic maps. Borings placed in street beds and in City Hall Park were used, and the appearance of silt in each core was used as an estimate of the depth of buried natural strata, possibly the original ground surface. A comparison of this map with the current elevations (Figure 15) suggests that the old surface is buried several feet below grade along the north side of Chambers Street, and that it slopes sharply to the north down to sea level. The archaeological site map indicates elevations of 9.5 feet above mean sea level for the old surface at the western end of the excavation and as deep as -1.5 feet for the bottom of burial shafts at the easternmost point, near Elk Street. Elevations at or below sea level are due to compression; the original surface would have been above sea level.

It is necessary to assess the potential for preservation beneath the basements of both standing and now-demolished nineteenth and twentieth-century buildings. In Figures 18 through 22, below-ground cross sections through the blocks on the site are shown. These sections schematically depict the conjectural location of the grave-bearing stratum beneath the building basements and streets. The depth of this stratum is projected from archaeological site elevations and boring data. In some areas, such data are lacking or difficult to project. For example, it is assumed that the original grade of Broadway in the northern part of the site was near its present level, and that "Potters Hill" in the southeast part of the site was graded so that the original surface was higher than at present.

Figure 16 is a plan of the African Burial Ground site indicating areas of archaeological sensitivity. Many areas beneath standing or former buildings are deemed to have good potential for preservation of burials. These areas include:

- beneath 14-26 Reade Street (the City Planning building). It is clear, based on adjacent archaeological excavations, that the stratum containing burials is below the level of the building's basement at Republican Alley.

- beneath the parking lot between Elk Street and the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank. Borings indicate that the original ground surface was near sea level, below Reade Street adjacent to this location. The basement of the building which once stood here is sufficiently that it is probable that burials are preserved beneath it.

- beneath the shallow single basement of the Jones Building.

- beneath the northern portion of the Court Square Building. Although the structure has a double basement, the ground originally sloped down to the north and east, and the original ground surface was probably at a level deeper than the basement disturbance in this location.

- beneath the northern portion of the A.T. Stewart Store building. Burials in the westernmost portion of the archaeological excavation were at depths at or below the level of this building's sub-basement garage. Due to the original slope, however, excavations for the southern part of the basement probably destroyed burials (see below).

- The streetbeds of Chambers, Reade, Duane and Elk Streets are all considered to have some potential for preservation of the Burial Ground, as they had been disturbed only for utility lines. Although there are some sewer lines in these streets (shown in section), excavation of the sewers would not have disturbed the entire width of the streetbed. The Subway lines beneath Centre Street and Lafayette Street have probably destroyed any remains to the east of the lot lines of Blocks 153 and 155. A similar condition occurs along Broadway, where there is also a subway tunnel. The portion of Elk Street between Chambers Street and Reade Street was once a city lot on which a building stood. It is likely that burials have survived beneath the level of the basement which is now filled.

Areas unlikely to contain preserved burials include:

- the area covered by the southern portion of the A.T. Stewart building. It is likely that the ground level in this area sloped up in a southwesterly direction. Burials in higher ground would have been obliterated by the sub-basement (now a garage), while to the north, where the original elevation was lower, intact burials are likely to be found.

- the area covered by the southern east-west portion of the Court Square building. The sub-basement of the building probably has obliterated all burials. The original grade sloped down to the north, however, and intact burials are likely to be found beneath the northern portion of the building.

The site includes an excavated area which has yielded information of scientific importance:

- the current construction site for the tower portion of the federal office building (roughly the northwest quadrant of the Burial Ground as currently defined). Approximately 300 burials were archaeologically excavated and removed from this area in 1991 and 1992. Deep basements of nineteenth and twentieth-century buildings had already destroyed the burial ground beneath the lots along Broadway.

Unshaded areas within the historic boundaries of the African Burial Ground but considered to no longer have potential to contain preserved burials include:

- The eastern portion of Block 153, near or on "Potters Hill" (graded in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century) and now the site of the Hall of Records. This building has an extremely deep sub-basement (40 feet below grade at Chambers Street and 30 feet at Reade Street) and has vaults under the sidewalks that extend to the sub-basement level. The construction of three buttresses beneath Elk Street (see section) may have necessitated excavation of the eastern portion of the streetbed.

- the majority of the site of the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank building, which has a sub-basement and vaults extending below the depth of potential burials except along Reade Street.

A portion of the archaeological site on Block 154 (Figure 16 - Pavilion site and Figure 17) was only partially excavated and is known still to contain burials. In the northeasternmost portion of the site, nineteenth-century buildings had relatively shallow basements which may have cut only into fill. Here, the original ground surface may still be preserved, and grave markers may be *in*

situ, as was the case in the western end of Republican Alley. However, this area was graded to a depth of approximately 25 feet during recent construction work for the federal office building. While that work may have destroyed any remnant of the original surface on Block 154, an estimated 200 to 300 burials are thought to be well-preserved below the graded surface.

Several other disturbances have occurred due to construction work which took place concurrently with the archaeological excavation. A concrete perimeter wall was constructed around the site during fieldwork in 1991, disturbing burials along its trench. In addition, four 10 foot by 10 foot concrete footings were poured in the western end of the site. One of these is shown on the site plan, and three more (currently covered by soil) are aligned with it to the north, under the construction ramp. The excavation for each of these footings disturbed a 15 foot by 15 foot square area containing burials. Footings were also poured along the north edge of the site. Despite these disturbances, it is estimated that burials are still preserved at the eastern end of Block 154.

Construction of the 34-story tower portion of the federal office building is currently underway in the western portion of Block 154. The portion of Block 154 immediately to the north of 14-26 Reade Street is, as originally designed, the location of the "pavilion" portion of the office building. No construction is currently taking place in the pavilion area of the site, but the northern portion is still being used for an access ramp for the construction site. The General Services Administration has submitted a conservation plan to the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for protection of the Burial Ground in the pavilion area. In order to avoid further compromise to the integrity of underlying deposits, this area will not continue to be used as a staging area for the adjacent tower construction.[20]

Figures 4 through 7 show the site's present appearance above ground. Figure 3 also indicates current structures on the blocks within the site.

[20]The future of this parcel will be determined after recommendations have been made to GSA from the Mayor's Committee on the African Burying Ground and the Federal Advisory "Steering" Committee on the African Burying Ground.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide:___ Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A_X_ B___ C___ D_X_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D_X_ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: 1 and 6; Criteria Exception: 5

NHL Theme(s):

III. D. Development of the English Colonies, 1688-1763 -- Social and Economic Affairs
XXX. A. American Ways of Life -- Slavery and Plantation Life
XXX. D. American Ways of Life -- Urban Life
XXX. E. American Ways of Life -- Ethnic Communities

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage - African-American/Black
Archeology - Historic - Non-Aboriginal

Period(s) of Significance: Eighteenth Century

Significant Dates:

1673 Land which became the African Burial Ground (immediately to the north of the portion of the Commons that later became City Hall Park) granted to Sarah Roeloff in the name of her husband, Cornelius Van Borsum (however, land continued to be used as common ground).

1697 Trinity Church banned burial of Africans in its graveyard and it is assumed that Africans began to use the land in the Van Borsum patent as a burying ground around this time.

1712 First historical reference to burial of Africans in the Common.

c.1795 Burials in the African Burial Ground appear to have ceased around the time that the Van Borsum tract was subdivided, Chambers Street was opened east of Broadway, and initial development occurred on the site.

1991 Archeological work undertaken in conjunction with the General Services Administration, Foley Square project includes archaeological excavation of a portion of the site with scientific recovery of burial remains from over 400 individuals.

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation: African-American

Architect/Builder:

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The African Burial Ground is of national significance due to its unprecedented potential to yield information about the lives of Africans and African Americans in an eighteenth-century urban context. A portion of the site has been excavated (Figures 16 and 17) and has yielded information of major scientific importance.[1] The site held sacred meaning and profound social and cultural importance for this predominantly enslaved population, and the survival of the Burial Ground provides a unique opportunity to acknowledge and preserve their history. This site may well be the only preserved urban eighteenth-century African burying ground in the Americas. The more than 400 individuals whose remains have been recovered from the African Burial Ground represent a much larger population whose role in the formation and development of American society is critical.

Theme III.D Development of the English Colonies, 1688-1763 -- Social and Economic Affairs

The slave trade was integral to the development of the eighteenth-century British colonial system. This system was based on the establishment of settler colonies in the West Indies and North America, on the use of coerced labor to extract wealth from the land, and on the profitable trading of enslaved peoples. The institution of transatlantic chattel slavery is one of the tragic consequences of the European conquest of the New World. The African diaspora constitutes one of the most significant demographic, cultural, and economic events in world history, and it was a key element in the British colonial structure and in the development of the Americas.

During the eighteenth century, New York was one of four important Northern shipping points in the Atlantic trading system, along with Philadelphia, Boston, and Newport. As labor was scarce throughout the colony and free immigrants preferred to earn their livings by farming, New York merchants depended on slave labor to operate the port and supplement the pool of skilled craftsmen in such trades as ship carpentry and printing. Slaves also were employed in heavy transport, construction work, and domestic labor, as well as in farming and milling.[2]

At least 6,800 African slaves were imported into New York between 1700 and 1774.[3] Approximately 2,800 (41.2 percent) were brought directly from Africa, while the other 4,000 were brought via the West Indies or one of the other American coastal ports, typically Charleston. Until the early 1740s, 70 percent of all enslaved Africans who entered New York were from these American sources. However, the outbreak of the Anglo-Spanish War of 1739-

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[1]Howard University and John Milner and Associates, Inc.

[2]See Thelma W. Foote, "Black Life in Colonial Manhattan, 1644-1783," (Ph.D. diss., American Studies Department, Harvard University, 1991), cited in Howard University and John Milner Associates, Inc., "Draft Research Design," p. 12; Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 20; Edgar McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970), pp. 114-33; Samuel McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1935), pp. 64-70, 114.

[3]This section on the demographics of the slave trade in New York is based on Vivienne Kruger, "Born to Run: The Slave Family in Early New York, 1626 to 1827" (Ph.D. diss: Columbia University, 1985), pp. 79-85. Most of the data were compiled by James G. Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700 to 1774," *William and Mary Quarterly* 35 (1978):375-394. It should be noted that these numbers are, at best, approximations based on the incomplete records of the South Seas Company and the port of New York, with an allowance made for smuggling. Since it is known that captains routinely off-loaded slaves in New Jersey or on Long Island to avoid paying import duties and that English and American privateers frequently sold slaves in New York who had been transported on French and Spanish vessels, the number of slaves entering New York may have been much higher.

48 closed Spanish colonial markets to British slave traders, sharply increasing the supply and reducing the price of people enslaved in Africa. Since the duty in New York on these African-born slaves was considerably lower than that on what were called "seasoned" slaves from other colonies, the proportion of directly imported to indirectly imported slaves reversed after 1742. The influx of enslaved Africans declined only in the 1770s when a dwindling supply of slaves pushed prices beyond the demand of the New York market and the American Revolution interrupted trade. Problems of social control in the urban environment may have contributed to a decline in demand for enslaved Africans.[4]

In addition to enslaved Africans, there were numerous free Africans in New York, some of whom were descendants of people who had been freed by the Dutch West India Company during its tenure of New Amsterdam. Many privileges and rights accorded to enslaved and free Africans under the Dutch were rescinded within forty years of the switch to British rule. Historian Edgar McManus draws a basic contrast between the policies of the Dutch in the seventeenth century and the British in the early years of the New York colony:

> From the start of the English occupation the creation of a commercially profitable slave system became a joint project of both government and private interests. Unlike the Dutch West Indies Company, which used slavery to implement the colonial policy, the [British] Royal African Company used the colony to implement slavery.[5]

New York's African slaves became subject to a highly restrictive legal system, one which was put in place to secure England's valuable colonial possessions in the Western Hemisphere and which resulted in severe physical and social coercion. In the meantime, along with the established and growing population of free Africans, enslaved Africans seized all available social and economic opportunities to build a distinct community.

Because the Burial Ground was used for nearly one hundred years, analysis of archaeological remains from the excavated portion of the site will allow researchers to address questions about changes in American social and economic life during the colonial period and the period of the early Republic. For this site, such questions include: How did the treatment of enslaved Africans (or the quality of life of free Africans), as evidenced in nutritional profiles, disease, mortality, and injury, change over the course of the eighteenth century? Did the funerary practices of Africans in New York change over time? Is the process of cultural transformation visible in the material record?

Examination of burials from this site in some cases will allow physical anthropologists to distinguish African-born from American-born individuals, and to begin to develop a base-line biological profile of the first generation of the diaspora. With advanced analytical techniques, it may be possible to determine the regions of origin in Africa of some of the individuals who died in colonial New York. This will provide a rare glimpse into the geography of the colonial trade in human beings in terms of actual individuals, as well as a potential opportunity to study origins of cultural practices. The African Burial Ground represents an entire people, those who came to America in bondage rather than by choice, and who lived, died and were buried among a community heretofore largely unacknowledged in the history of the colonial world.

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[4]The decline of urban slavery in the mid-nineteenth century is discussed in Claudia Goldin, "A Model to Explain the Relative Decline of Urban Slavery: Empirical Results" in *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman and Eugene D. Genovese (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 427-450. Some of the factors affecting antebellum Southern cities may have arisen in New York City by the late eighteenth century.

[5]McManus, p. 16.

Theme XXX.A American Ways of Life -- Slavery and Plantation Life

By the time of the Revolution, slavery was firmly imbedded in American life. But the common image of bondage on Southern tobacco and later cotton plantations needs to be substantially adjusted, for in the North, too, slavery was a way of life. Although American slavery has been the subject of a vast historical literature, slave communities in the North have received less attention than those of the south.[6] And as a rule, slave life in the eighteenth century is much less well understood than the nineteenth. This is partly due to the extreme scarcity of accounts written by enslaved Africans themselves in the early period, whereas for the late antebellum period historians can turn to the recorded narratives of ex-slaves.

The African Burial Ground, because of its size, age, and preservation, is exceptional among African cemetery sites that have yet been discovered in the Americas. The only other eighteenth-century urban slaves' burial ground ever excavated is St. Peter's Cemetery in New Orleans, where 29 individuals were recovered.[7] Nineteenth-century urban African burial grounds, usually associated with churches, are better known, though few have been excavated. The most important archaeological example yet reported is Philadelphia's First African Baptist Church cemetery, dating from the 1820s through 1840s. The site was excavated in 1983-84, yielding over 140 burials.[8] Eighteenth-century African burial ground excavations have involved rural sites, mainly plantations. Of these, the seventeenth through nineteenth-century Newton Plantation cemetery in Barbados is by far the largest site reported to date, with recovery of 101 individuals.[9] Other rural sites excavated have produced only very small samples.

The richness of the record from New York City's African Burial Ground is clearly extraordinary compared to other African burial sites that have been studied. Thus, the information that will be obtained from the burials and skeletal remains is significant well beyond the local context. Archaeologists and physical anthropologists from around the world have expressed interest in the finds. The site will provide new insights into the biological life-course of people who were

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[6]Some of the contributions to scholarship on Northern slavery have been collected in Paul Finkelman, ed., *Slavery in the North and West*, Articles on American Slavery, vol. 5 (New York: Garland, 1989). For New York see also Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), and sources complied in Sherrill D. Wilson, *A Beginners Resource Guide to "Doing" Black History In New York City* (New York: Reclaim the Memories, 1992).

[7]Douglas Owsley et al., "Demography and Pathology of an Urban Slave Population from New Orleans," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 74 (1987):185-197.

[8]Michael Parrington, Daniel G. Roberts, Stephanie A. Pinter, and Janet C. Wideman, "The First African Baptist Church Cemetery: Bioarcheology, Demography, and Acculturation of Early Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Blacks," vol. 1, "Historical and Archeological Documentation" and vol. 2, "Artifact Catalog/Faunal Analysis." Report prepared for the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: John Milner Associates, Inc., 1989); Jennifer Olson Kelly and J. Lawrence Angel. "The First African Baptist Church Cemetery: Bioarcheology, Demography, and Acculturation of Early Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Blacks," vol. 3, "Osteological Analysis." Report prepared for the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1989); and Michael Parrington et al., "The First African Baptist Church Cemetery: Bioarcheology, Demography, and Acculturation Amongst Early Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Blacks," report submitted to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, by John Milner Associates, Inc., 1986; Michael Parrington, "Cemetery Archaeology in the Urban Environment: a Case Study from Philadelphia" in *Living in Cities: Current Research in Urban Archaeology*, ed. Edward Staski, Society for Historical Archaeology Special Publication Number 5, pp. 56-64.

[9]This cemetery is the best-reported of any to date. Some of the more important publications are Jerome S. Handler and Frederick Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1978); Jerome S. Handler and R. S. Corruccini, "Plantation Life in Barbados: A Physical Anthropological Analysis", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14 (1983):65-90; Handler, Jerome S., with M.P. Conner and K.P. Jacobi, *Searching for a Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies: A Biological and Ethnohistorical Investigation* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Center for Archaeological Investigations, 1989).

enslaved and transported from Africa or born into slavery in America. It will provide one of the most important bodies of data ever made available for comparative research.

Physical anthropologists will be able to learn about nutrition, disease, physical stress, injury, and even the occupation of individuals because, in many cases, these aspects of life leave traces on the bones and teeth which are preserved. Measurements of skeletal trace elements, dental enamel development, skull base height, stature, and bone histology and lesions provide data which are important in reconstructing individuals' biological histories. Age and sex distributions will be correlated with pathological information. Taken together, such data will be used to address questions about the population as a whole, and change over time in its biology. Through studying these aspects of the biological population, questions about certain social changes, such as increased restrictions or shifts in the demographic/occupational structure of New York's African population can be addressed.[10] The excavated remains from the African Burial Ground have already undergone preliminary assessments which point to specific trends, such as high infant and child mortality.

In addition to the biology of individuals and populations, study of human remains from intact burials can yield information about funerary practices and even religious belief. For example, the position and orientation of the graves at the African Burial Ground is very uniform, pointing to strong religious precepts. Finally, social relations within the community may be indicated by the spatial arrangements of burials and apparent relationships between some of the interments. The discovery of women buried with newborns or still-born babies is an example of how the site evokes the poignancy of family life and death in a long-vanished community.

Funerary practices embody core aspects of cultural and symbolic systems, and for enslaved people in the colony of New York this may be all the more significant because funerals offered a chance to express cultural identity in an unsupervised context. Even though laws prohibited night funerals and gatherings of large numbers of Africans,[11] the evidence from the Burial Ground indicates that it continued as a focus of community identity for nearly a hundred years. City Clerk David Valentine, writing in the 1860s, provided the following account of the Burial Ground:

> Beyond the Commons lay what in the earliest settlement of the town had been appropriated as a burial place for negroes, slaves and free. It was a desolate, unappropriated spot, descending with a gentle declivity towards a ravine which led to the Kalkhook pond. The negroes in this city were, both in the Dutch and English colonial times, a proscribed and detested race, having nothing in common with the whites. Many of them were native Africans, imported hither in slave ships, and retaining their native superstitions and burial customs, among which was that of burying by night, with various mummeries and outcries....So little seems to have been thought of the race that not even a dedication of their burial-place was made by the church authorities, or any others who might reasonably be supposed to have an interest in such a matter. The lands were unappropriated, and though within convenient distance from the city, the locality was unattractive and

[10]Michael L. Blakey, "Research Design for Temporary Curation and Anthropological Analysis of the 'Negro Burying Ground' (Foley Square) Archaeological Population at Howard University," Washington, D.C., Howard University, 1992, and Howard University and John Milner Associates, Inc., "Draft Research Design," pp. 96-101.

[11]*MCC, 1675-1776*, 3:30, 296; 4:86, 88.

> desolate, so that by permission the slave population were allowed to inter their dead there.[12]

Though Valentine may have been speculating on many points, he evokes the image of a place where cultural distinctiveness was acknowledged, as well as the social conditions which led to the burying ground's existence.

Theme XXX.D American Ways of Life -- Urban Life

As noted above, rural slavery on plantations has been the focus of most historical study. Recently, however, historians of African America have increasingly turned their attention to the cities and towns of North and South America and the Caribbean.[13] In these places the lives of slaves and free Africans, and their interactions with European and Native populations, were often quite different from their contemporaries on the plantations. This was certainly the case in New York where urban life during the eighteenth century was characterized by a remarkable mix of peoples, and was much more diverse than in other American cities. Divisions based on "race" and national origin were overlaid by constant close contact. It has been suggested that New York's unique diversity and high level of ethnic factionalism resulted in particularly harsh social conditions for Africans, as competing Europeans closed ranks against them.[14]

During the eighteenth century, New York had a much larger African population than either Philadelphia or Boston, and a slightly higher population proportionally than Newport. In 1703, there were approximately 700 Africans in New York, or 14.4 percent of the population. The numbers grew to 2,444 by 1746, representing 20.9 percent of the population, and peaked at 3,137 by 1771, though by then Africans were again only 14.3 percent of all New York residents.[15] It should be noted that prior to 1756, all Africans, enslaved or free, were counted simply as "negroes" or "blacks" in the New York censuses. Most Africans lived in the small area of the city proper, at the southernmost tip of Manhattan, and this concentration increased as the century progressed and African ownership of farmlands to the north of the city constricted.[16] Enslaved Africans were owned by people in all walks of life, including artisans, merchants, clergy, mariners, and gentlemen.[17]

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[12]David T. Valentine, "History of Broadway," *Manual of the Common Council of New York* (New York: D.T. Valentine, 1865), p. 567.

[13]See Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Philip D. Morgan, "Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston," in *Colonial Southern Slavery*, ed. Paul Finkelman, vol. 3, Articles in American Slavery (New York: Garland Press, 1989), pp. 305-35; Barry W. Higman, "Urban Slavery in the British Caribbean," in *Perspectives on Caribbean Regional Identity*, ed. Elizabeth M. Thomas-Hope (Liverpool: Centre for Latin American Studies, 1984); Mary Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). For New York City, see Wilson.

[14]Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 119-120; Thomas J. Davis, "These Enemies of Their own Household: A Note On the Troublesome Slave Population in Eighteenth-Century New York City," *Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society*, 1984, pp. 133-47. See also Foote, 1991, cited in Howard University and John Milner Associates, Inc., "Research Design," p. 12.

[15]This data on population is taken from Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790* (1932, rpt. Gloucester, Mass., 1966), pp. 94-104; and Thomas J. Davis, "Slavery in Colonial New York," (Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 1974), p. 2.

[16]Thomas J. Davis "New York's Long Black Line: A Note on the Growing Slave Population," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 2 (1978):47; idem, "These Enemies, p. 134.

[17]Kruger, p. 93.

On plantations, quarters for enslaved Africans were normally set apart, and they can be easily identified for archaeological study. In cities, however, most slaves lived in their masters' houses, and a separate material record cannot be readily isolated. The material culture of a slave neighborhood or household in New York cannot be studied in the same way as for most other ethnic groups.[18] For this reason, it is, ironically, the burying place of such a community that provides the clearest opportunity to observe a distinguishable material record of their lives.

The African Burial Ground and nearby Common were important in other aspects of the culture of African New York in the eighteenth century. In the novel *Satanstoe*, James Fenimore Cooper described the "Pinkster" Day celebrations held in what is now City Hall Park (the exact location may have been the Burial Ground itself).[19] Africans from as far as forty miles away joined residents in "beating banjos, singing African songs, drinking, and worst of all, laughing in a way that seemed to set their very hearts rattling within their ribs."[20] Pinkster Day was Christian Pentecost or Whitsuntide, derived from Shavuot, the Jewish festival which celebrates the receiving of the commandments by Moses and early summer harvest, but its celebration in New York, Philadelphia, and other Middle Atlantic colonies and states was distinctly African in practice.

The location of the African Burial Ground itself was symbolically and socially significant in the life of early New York. Forbidden to inter their dead in most church cemeteries, and probably wishing to attain a degree of privacy and autonomy in their funerary practices, New York's Africans appropriated a parcel of ground outside the town, in a "remote" place. Thus today this site symbolizes both the oppression under which enslaved peoples lived in America, and their ability to persist in honoring their African heritage while forging a new culture. It is also significant that many of those buried at the site probably helped materially in the building of the city which throughout the eighteenth century refused to formally acknowledge their final resting place. The subsequent history of this sacred ground symbolically underscores European-Americans' systematic denial of the importance of the contribution of African-Americans to the development of our nation toward an urban, industrial world power.

Theme XXX.E American Ways of Life -- Ethnic communities

Ethnic groups in America each have individual histories of arrival, encounter, struggle, assimilation, and persistence of cultural heritage. The relationship between Africans and the larger society in the British colonies and the newly formed nation during the eighteenth century was largely determined by the legal institution of slavery and its economic and social correlates. Thus the experience of the ethnic group "African Americans" needs to be understood as different from that of other immigrant groups.

Most studies of African-American history focus on either slaves or free Africans. But the African-American ethnic community was comprised of both enslaved and free people. Evidence from the Burial Ground will not reveal whether any individual was enslaved or free. Yet this very inability to distinguish legal status points up the ethnic unity of this population. That unity was not a given -- Africans who were brought to America came from a great many diverse ethnic groups. A number of individuals recovered from the Burial Ground site have filed teeth, in either hourglass or pointed shapes. Such tooth-filing is practiced in several African ethnic populations,

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[18] See Nan A. Rothschild, *New York City Neighborhoods: The 18th Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1989).

[19] This discussion of Pinkster is taken from Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Random House, 1976), pp. 333-334.

[20] Quoted in Gutman, p. 334.

and is used to signify membership in particular social groups.[21] Similar practices were observed in slaves buried at Newton Plantation in Barbados, where they are attributed to African-born members of the community. It is possible such practices lost their significance as the social distinctions brought from Africa were transformed in the American setting. On the other hand, when individuals were buried with African adornments (such as beaded jewelry and cowrie shells) a deliberate expression of identity was made. The Burial Ground offers a chance to ask how diversity was expressed and how it was contained within an overarching ethnic identity vis-a-vis European-Americans.

[21] See Jerome S. Handler, R.S. Corruccini, and R.J. Mutaw, "Tooth Mutilation in the Caribbean: Evidence from a Slave Burial Population in Barbados," *Journal of Human Evolution* 11 (1982):297-313; T. D. Stewart and J. Groome, "The African Custom of Tooth Mutilation in America," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 28 (1968):31-42.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #_____
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #_____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
X Federal Agency -- General Services Administration
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other: Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 7

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
A 18 584987 4507248

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the African Burial Ground site are defined as follows:

South: The northern lot line of Lot 1 of Block 122 on the south side of Chambers Street.

West: A line extending along the eastern curbline of Broadway, crossing Chambers, Reade, and Duane streets.

North: The southern lot lines of Lots 1 and 50 of Block 156 on the north side of Duane Street.

East: A line extending northerly from the northeast corner of Lot 1 of Block 122 across Chambers Street, along the eastern lot line of Block 153, Lot 24, across Reade Street, along the eastern lot line of Block 155, Lot 1, across Duane Street, to the southeast corner of Lot 1 of Block 156.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries for the National Historic Landmark site are based on the described historical expanse of the burying ground. In contrast to most archaeological sites, the much-publicized African Burial Ground, as an entity, has come to have indisputable significance to the African-American community in particular, as well as obvious importance to the public at large. For this reason, excavated and unexcavated portions of the site, and also areas where no burials are thought to remain, are included within the boundaries. Conditions on the edges of the site have also influenced the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark site. Existing city streets and surveyed lots, easy to reference and define, have been used; the presence of intrusive below-grade subway tunnels helped to determine the east and west boundaries. Therefore, the boundaries represent both the historic and present-day conception of the site, as well as the extent of the preserved Burial Ground, although the integrity of the site varies. A number of lines of evidence were used to delineate the extent of the burying ground:

The Van Borsum patent is repeatedly linked to the Burial Ground in historic documents, and late eighteenth-century sources tend to assume the equivalence of the two. Survey maps clearly label the patent lands as the "Negros Burial Ground." An overlay of the probable bounds of this patent on the current street grid is provided in Figure 12.

It is possible that the original patent was a geographically defined entity, corresponding to the low area between the plateau of the Common and the fresh-water pond. This topography probably made the patent lands unsuitable for farming and its remoteness from the urban center may help to explain why the patentee's heirs did not more actively pursue their claim to the land. The use of the patent for potteries, grazing, and as a burial place for Africans, contributed further to its marginal character in relation to the colonial town.

The slope down to the north from the high ground of the Common (the present-day City Hall Park) began roughly at Chambers Street. This probably marks the southern edge of the area used for burials. The northern lot line of Lot 1 of Block 122 (City Hall Park) is used for the boundary

in order to be as close as possible to the southern edge of the Van Borsum patent. The line of the mid-eighteenth century palisade (see Figure 9) is rejected as a boundary, since the Burial Ground is known to have been used prior to its construction. The entire area north of Chambers Street was outside the town through at least the 1730s.

Archaeological and utility excavations in City Hall Park have uncovered human remains in the past.[1] Reports of these finds were studied to determine whether the Burial Ground might have extended south of Chambers Street. Human bone found in the archaeological excavations between City Hall and the Tweed Courthouse (Figure 2) was not from burial contexts. The examination of skeletal material found during repair of a water main break indicated that it probably came from burials. The bones were found near the northeast corner of City Hall Park. Three to eight adult individuals were represented by the commingled remains. Two individuals were identified as of European descent. The date of interment is unknown.

The remains from City Hall Park sites are probably associated with New York's almshouses rather than the African Burial Ground. The eighteenth-century almshouse was located on the current site of City Hall, and the later almshouse was where the Tweed Courthouse now stands. Alternatively, the burials may have been of Revolutionary War prisoners or British soldiers housed in barracks located along present-day Chambers Street. In any case, at this time these finds do not warrant extension of the boundary of the African Burial Ground into City Hall Park.

Archaeological investigation of the site has shown that burials occurred to the north of the northern boundary of the Van Borsum patent. They did not extend as far north as Duane Street in the western portion of the site, however, and it is likely they were contained south of the patent line for part of the ground's history. To the east, the patent boundary crossed present-day Duane Street in a northeasterly direction. Burials may have occurred slightly to the north of the boundary line, beneath Duane Street and possibly under the southern edge of the block to the north. However, excavations for Federal Plaza and for the subway line running beneath Lafayette Street would have destroyed any remains in this small area. The southern lot lines of Lots 1 and 50 of Block 156 on the north side of Duane Street are a reasonable northern boundary for the African Burial Ground site.

To the east, both historical geography and recent construction help to define the site. The Little Collect pond was immediately to the east of Block 155, and may have actually extended into the block at one time. Burials at the immediate water's edge would have been difficult. The tracks for two subway lines are beneath Centre Street, between Chambers and Reade, and one subway line runs north below Lafayette Street. The subway tunnels would have obliterated earlier deposits.

On the west, a subway tunnel runs beneath Broadway. It is also likely this thoroughfare, a recognized roadway along high ground, formed the western edge of the Burial Ground from at least the 1730s.

It is possible that further physical evidence will demonstrate that the historical boundaries of the Burial Ground extend beyond those drawn for the National Historic Landmark Site. If such physical evidence links areas outside the site to the African Burial Ground, the boundaries should be expanded. It should be noted that the Burial Ground is located in an area of intensive urban development that began during the eighteenth century. Numerous other historical and

[1] Joel W. Grossman, "The Buried History of City Hall Park: The Initial Archaeological Identification, Definition and Documentation of Well-Preserved 18th. Century Deposits and the Possible Structural Remains of N.Y.C.'s First Almshouse," prepared by Grossman and Associates, Inc., prepared for the New York City Department of General Services, 1991; Sherene Baugher et al., "The Archaeological Investigation of the City Hall Park Site, Manhattan," prepared by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, prepared for the New York City Department of General Services, 1990; Leslie Eisenberg, "Final Case Report, M87-2891, Archaeology/Scene Search/Forensic Recovery Information" (on file at the New York City Office of the City Medical Examiner).

archaeological resources have sites which may coincide with that of the African Burial Ground, and this nomination in no way precludes the eligibility of other resources in or near the established boundaries of this site for the National Register of Historic Places.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Organization: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Street/#: 225 Broadway, 23rd Floor

City/Town: New York

State: New York

ZIP: 10007

Telephone: (212) 553-1100

Date: November 9, 1992

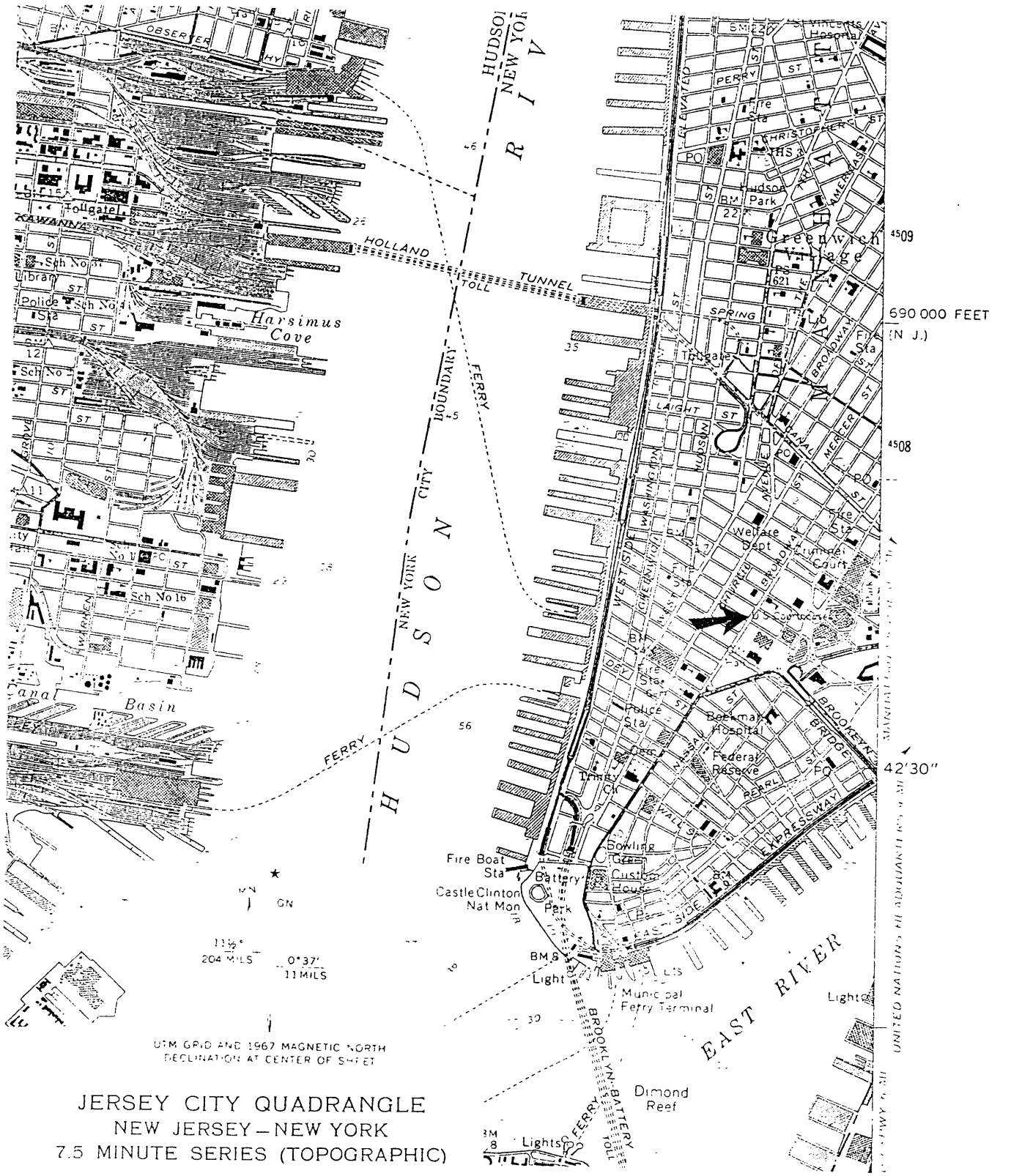


Figure 1. Portion of USGS Jersey City Quadrangle.

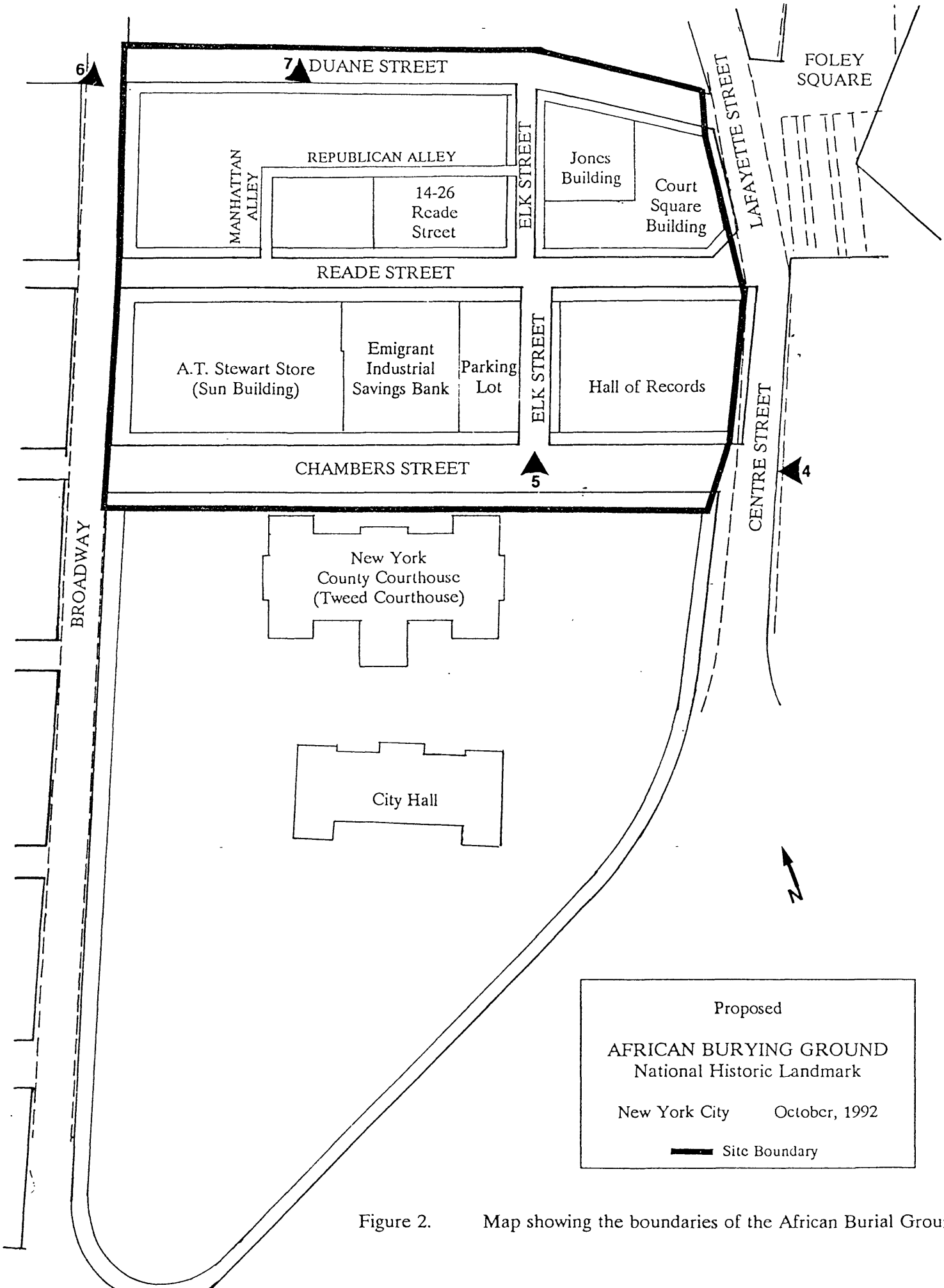


Figure 2. Map showing the boundaries of the African Burial Ground.

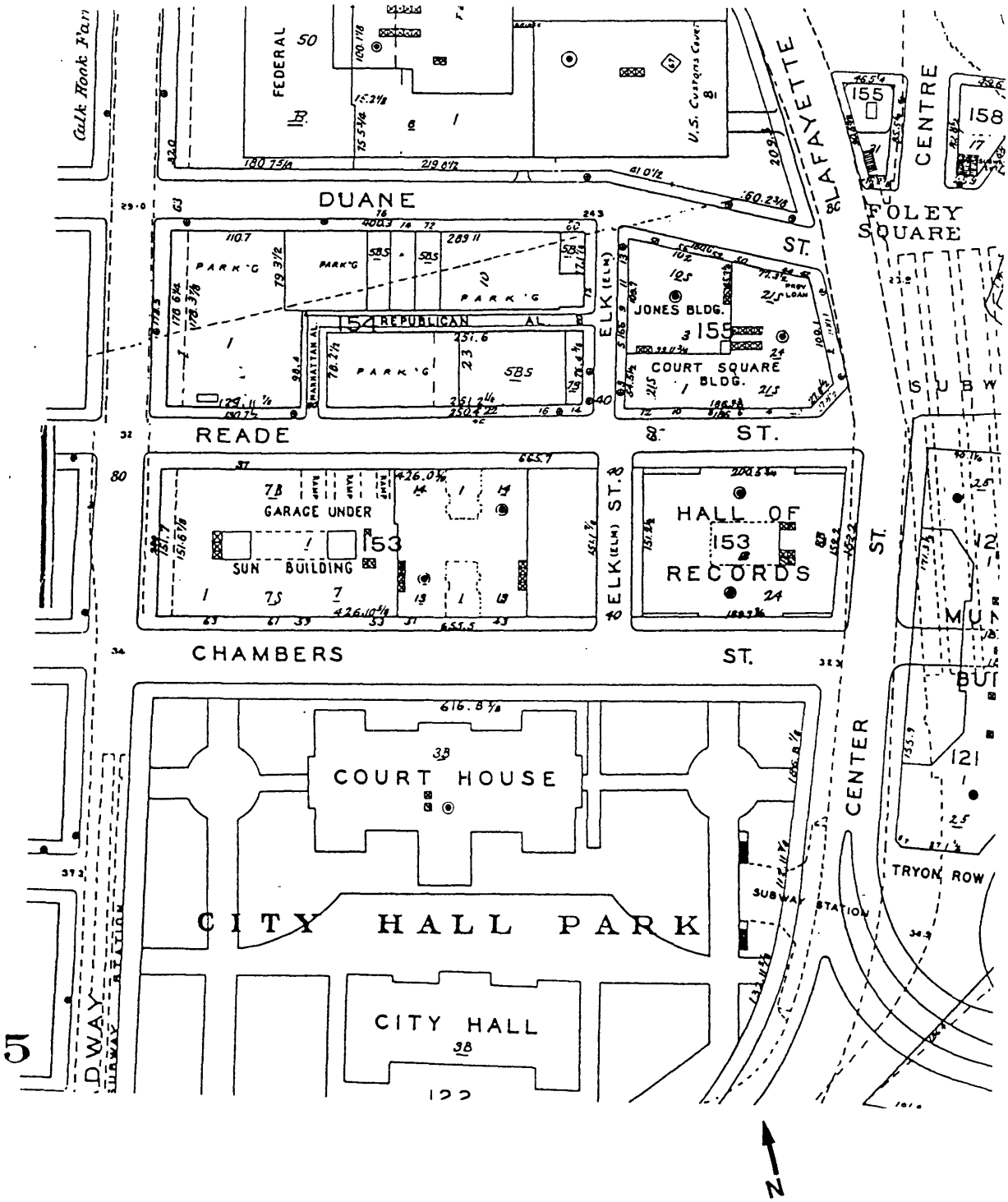


Figure 3. Property map showing blocks 153-155 from REDI/Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book*, 1991-92.

Note: Dashed line in the south half of Block 154 indicates actual western edge of 14-26 Reade Street.

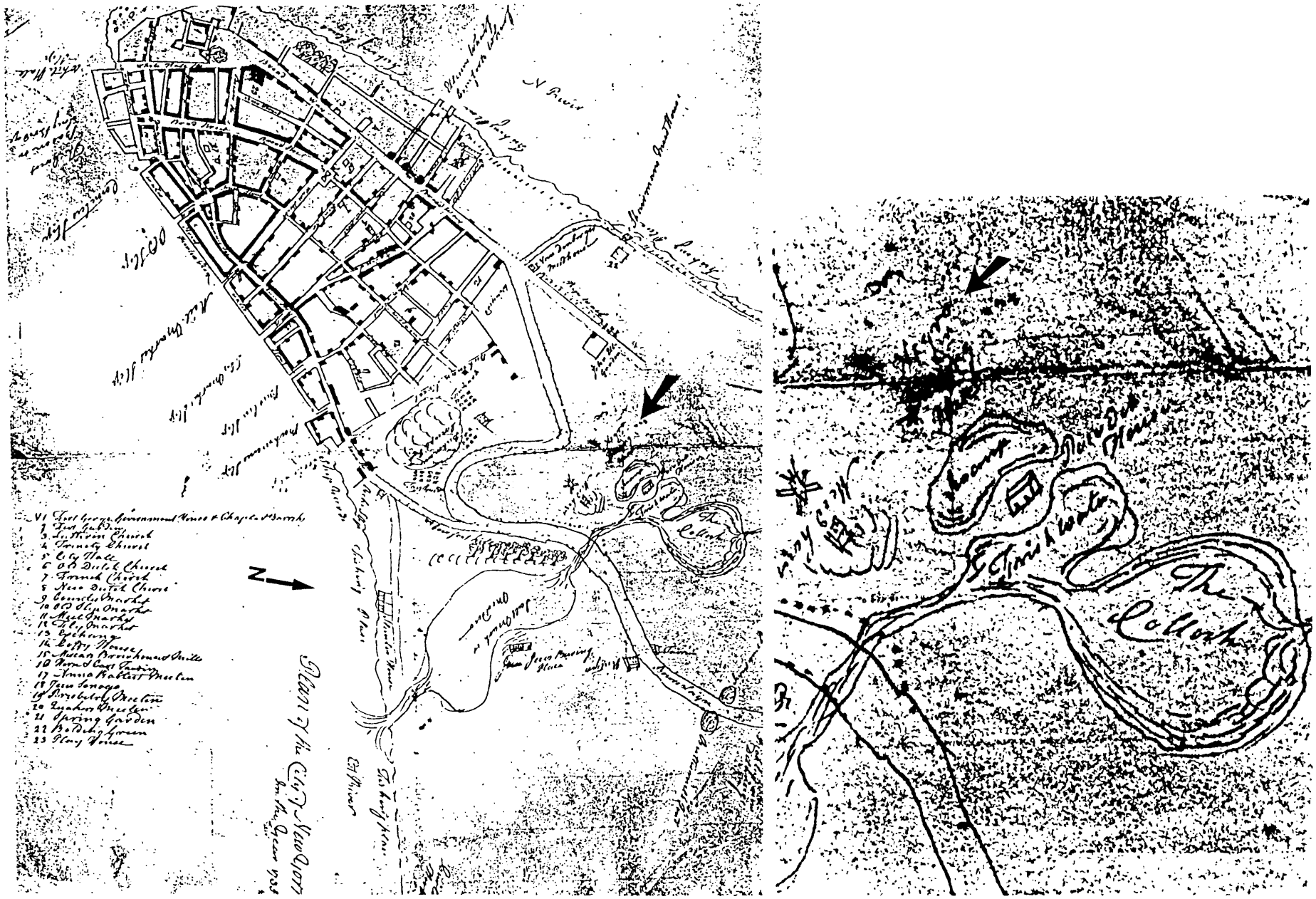


Figure 8. Plan of the City of New York in the Year 1735, cartographer unknown, 1735, depicting 1732-35 (Stokes, vol 1, pl.30). Arrow points to "Negro Burying Place"

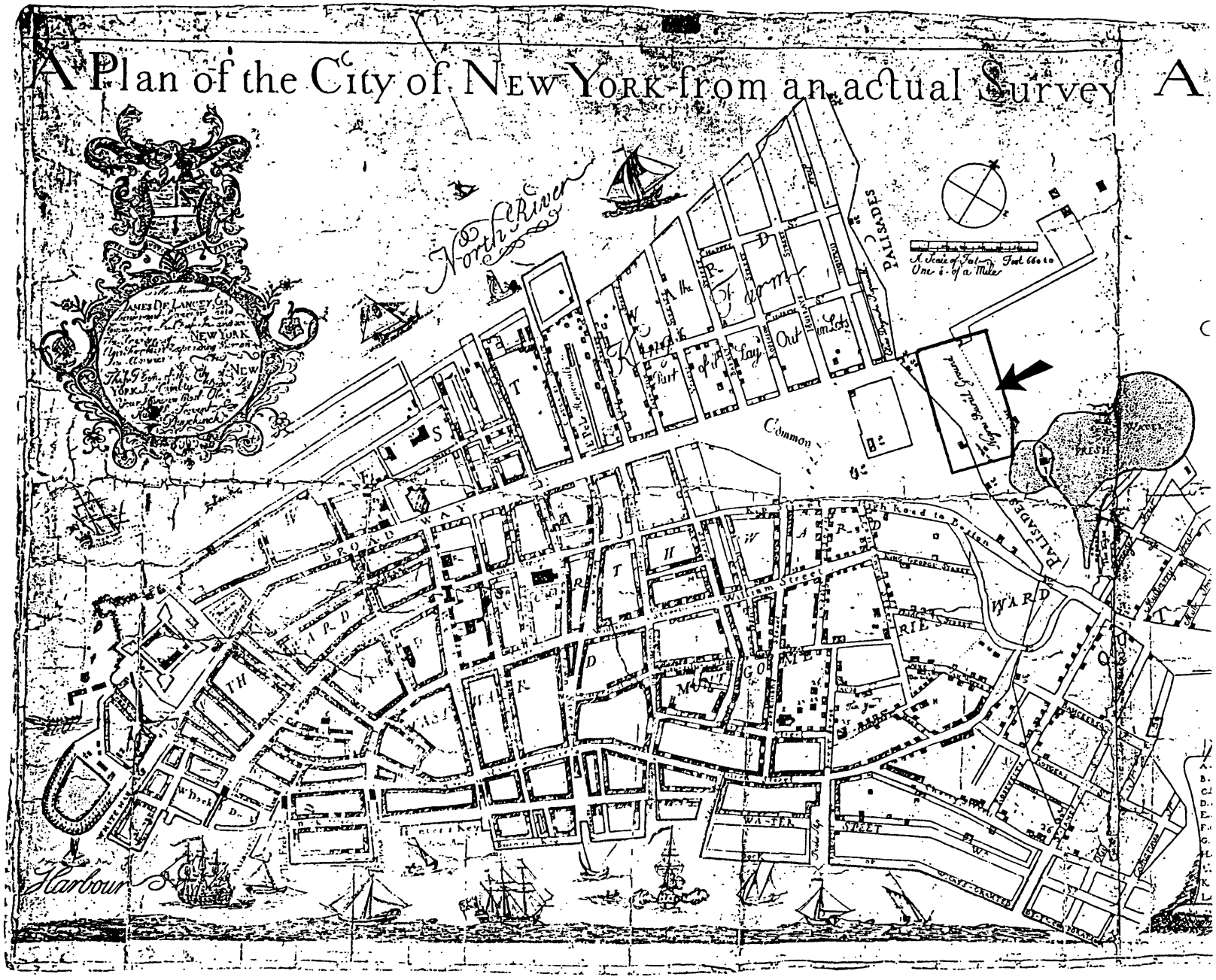


Figure 9. *A Plan of the City of New York from an Actual Survey Anno Domini M,DDC,LV* (The Maerschalck or Duyckinck Plan), by F. Maerschalck, 1755, depicting 1754 (Stokes, vol. 1, pl. 34).

Figure 10. *British Headquarters Manuscript Map of New York and Environs*, [1782?]. Sheet 2. Map Division, New York Public Library.

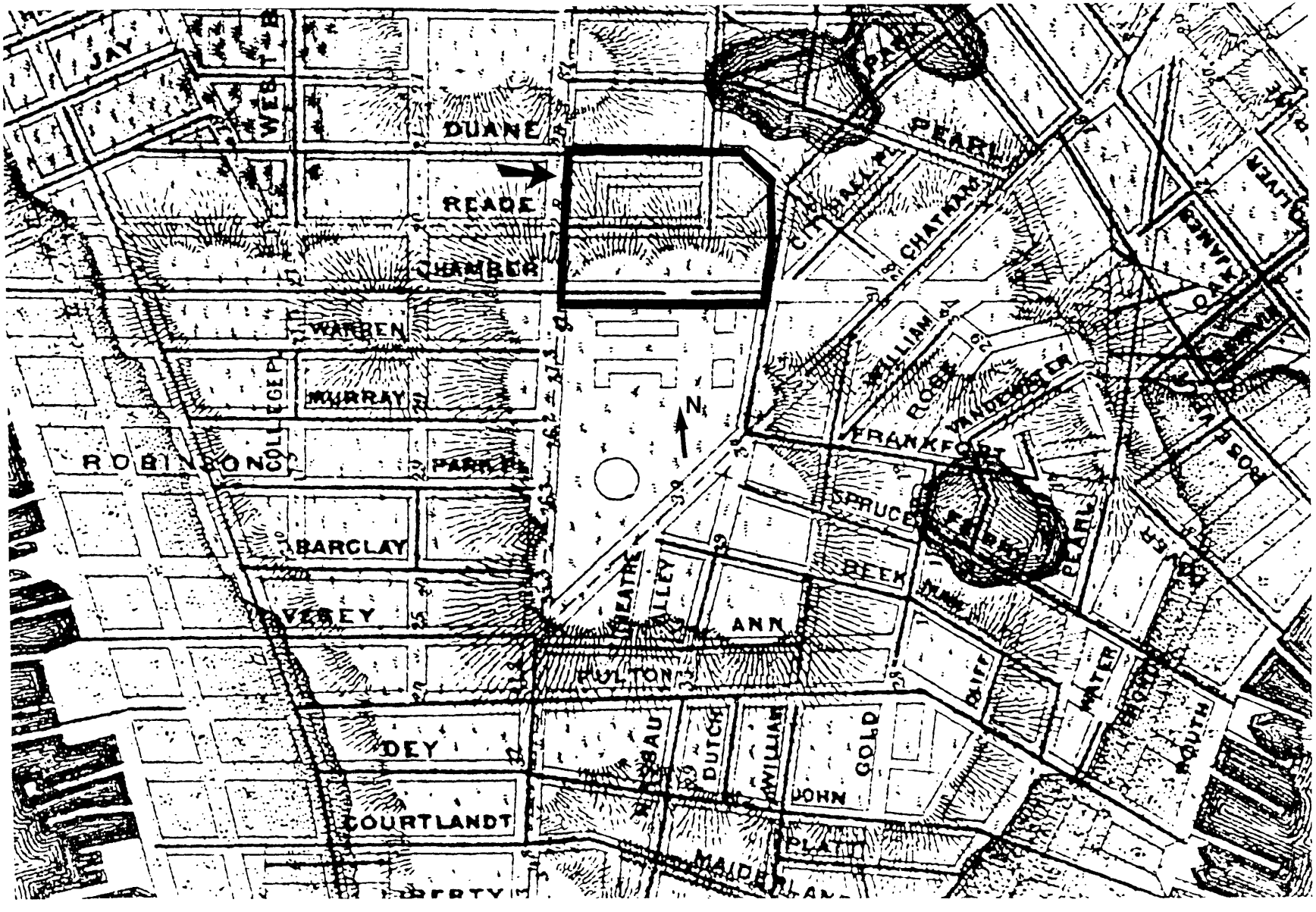


Figure 11. *Sanitary and Topographical Map of the City and Island of New York*, (The Viele Map) by Egbert L. Viele, 1865, depicting 1864 (Stokes, vol. 3, pl. 155b).

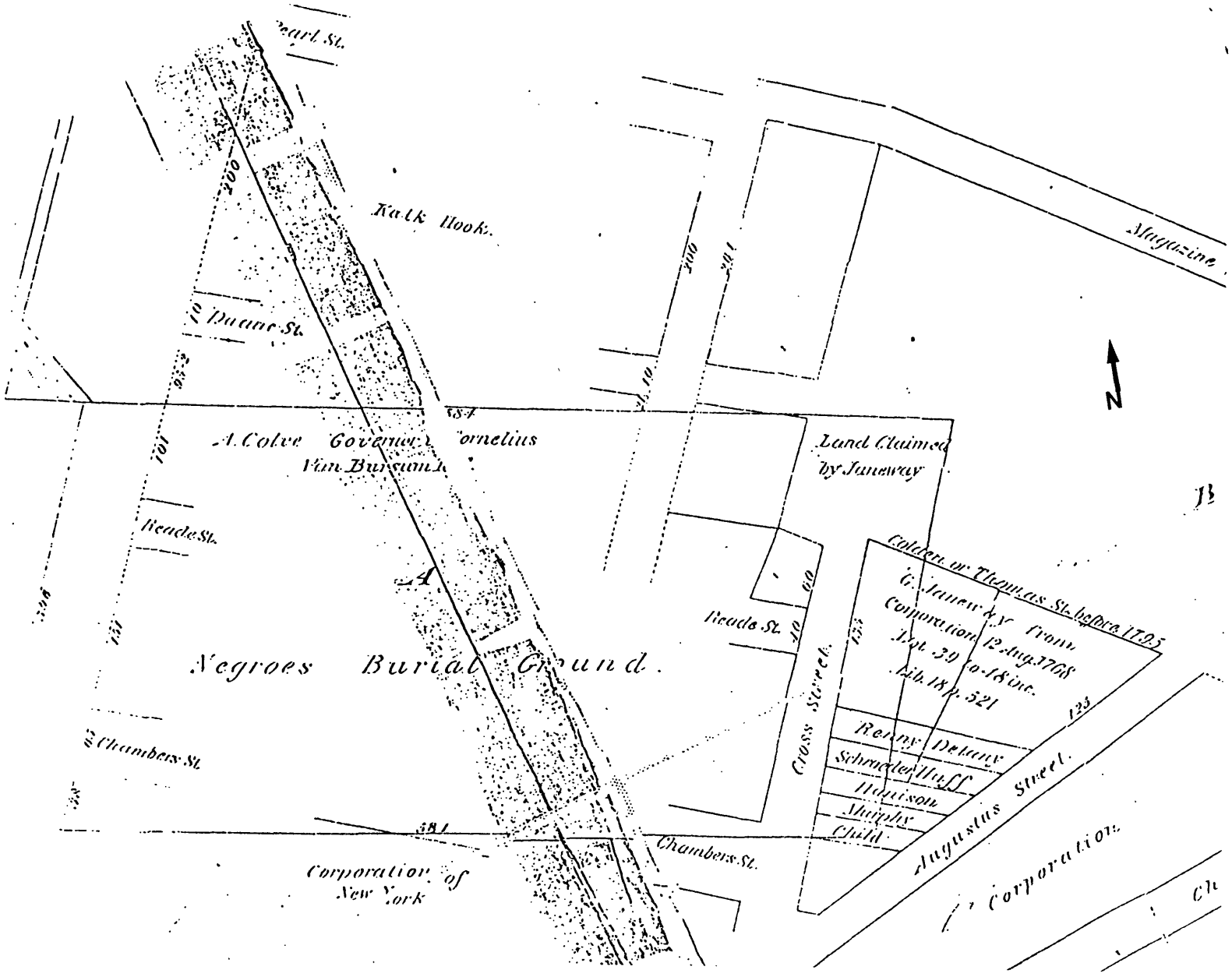


Figure 12. Survey map of the Van Borsum Patent/"Negroes Burial Ground" showing location in relation to Chambers, Reade, and Duane Streets. From Murray Hoffman, *A Treatise upon the Estate & Rights of the Corporation of the City of New York as Proprietors*, 1862. Vol. 2, Diagram 8. (Map provided by Christopher Moore)

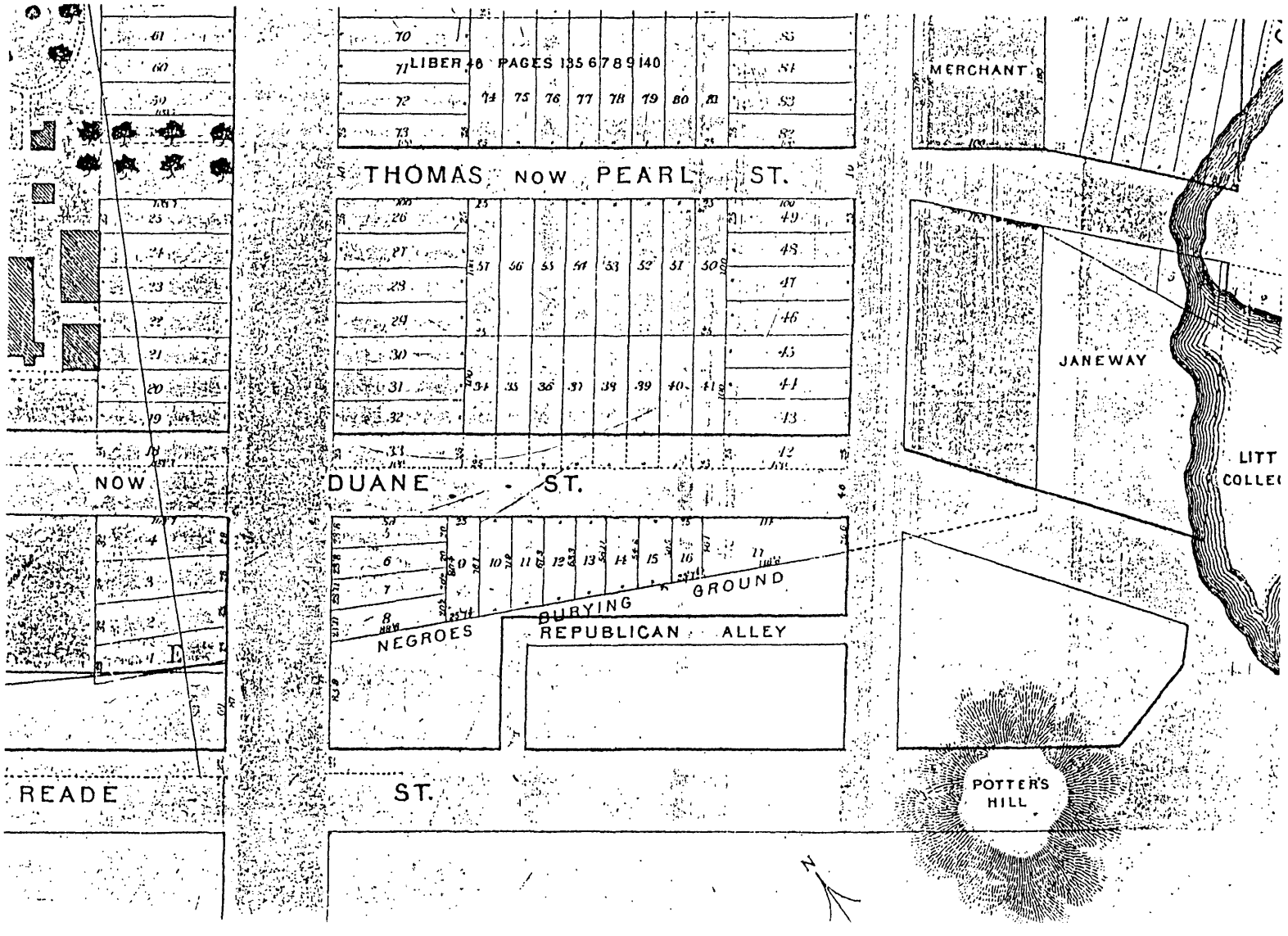


Figure 13. Detail from *Map of the property formerly known as the 'Calk Hook'...*, compiled by John B. Holmes, C.E. and City Surveyor. Municipal Archives, Farm Map Number 6. This map was based on the 1785 survey of the Calk Hook property, filed with the partition deed (New York County, Liber 46, page 139).

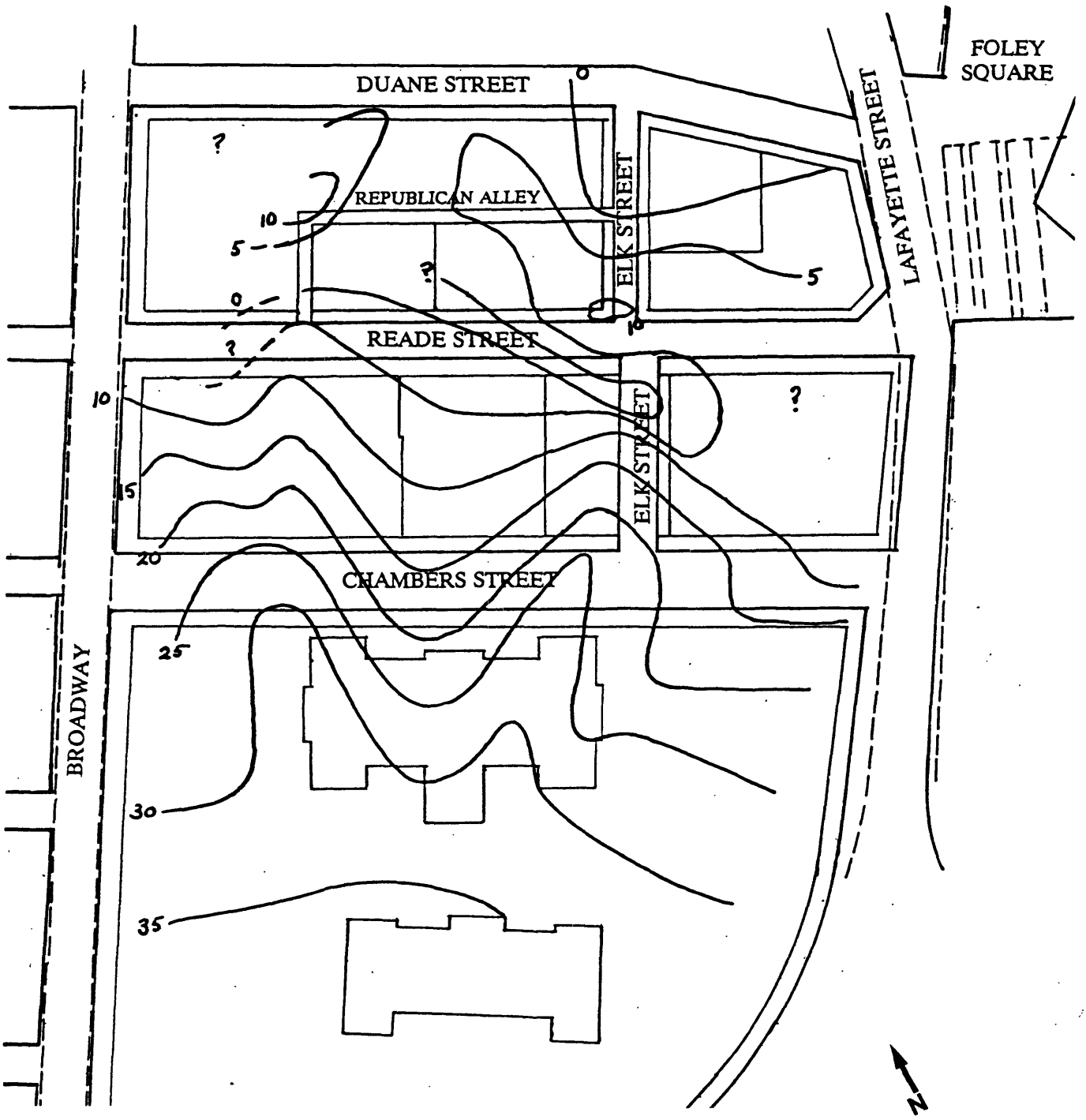


Figure 14. Map of the area of the African Burying Ground showing projected original contours.

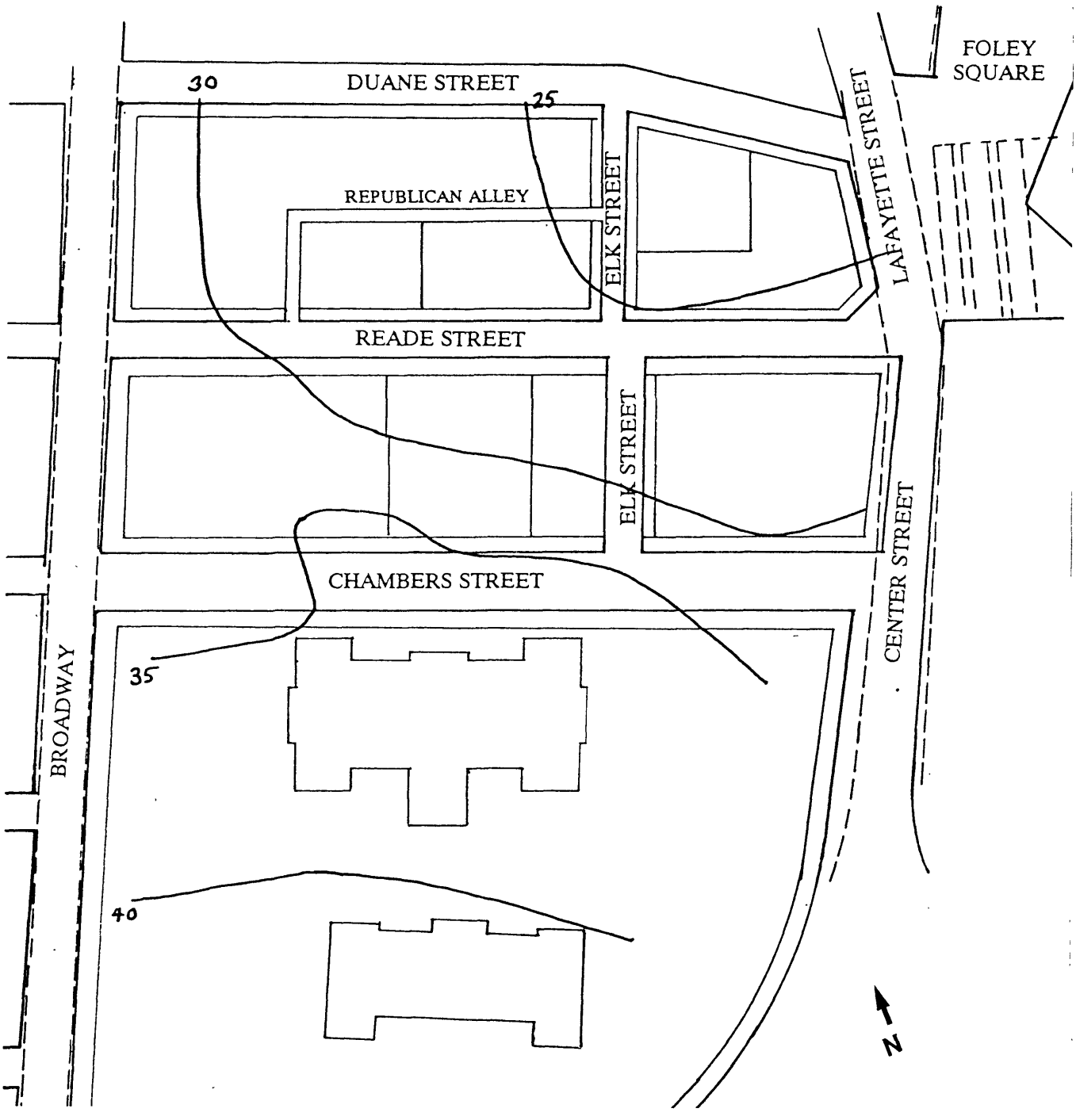


Figure 15. Map of the area of the African Burying Ground showing present contours.

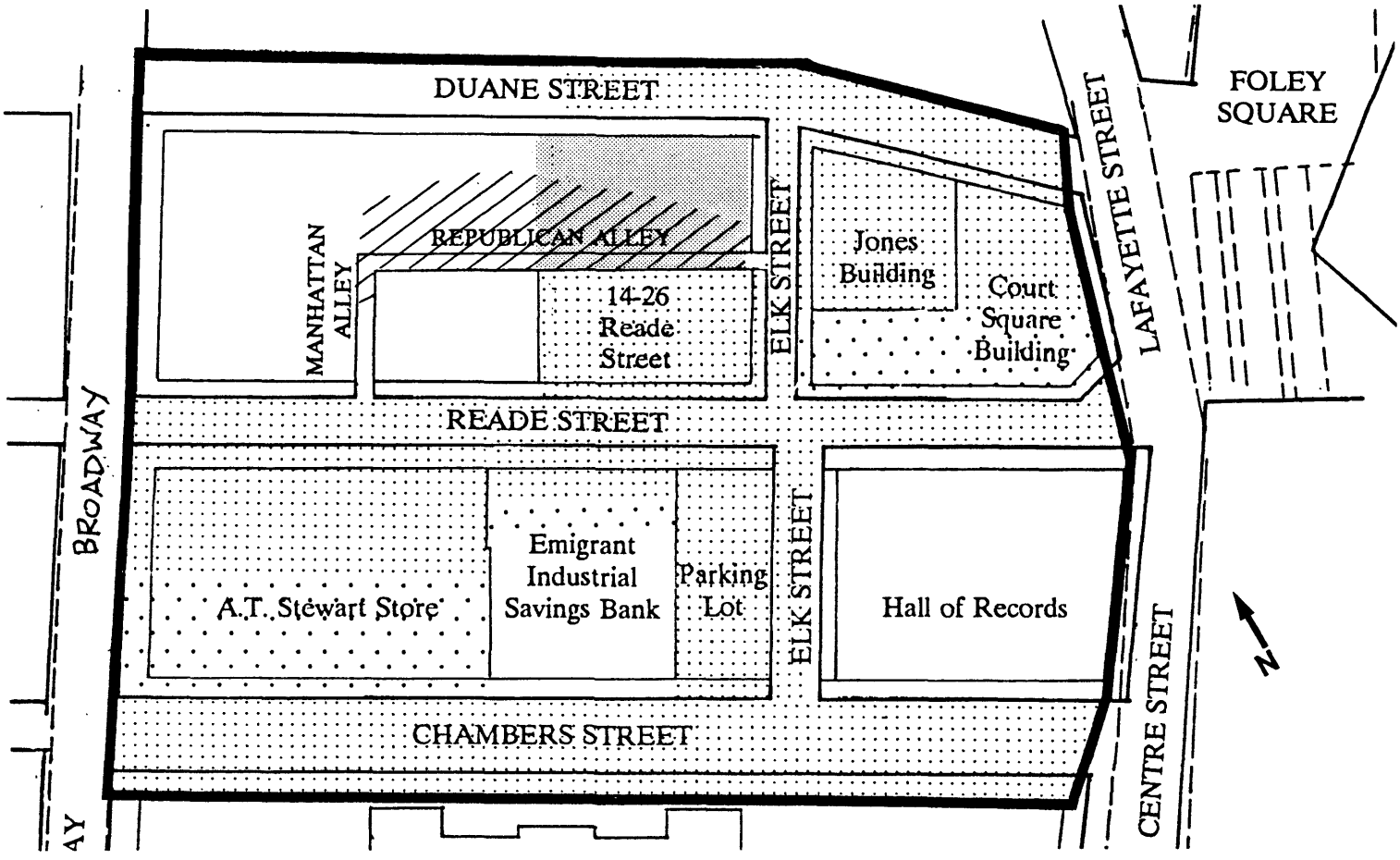


Figure 16. Plan showing sensitive areas of the African Burying Ground Site

area known to contain intact burials (Pavilion site)

areas most likely to contain intact burials

areas unlikely to contain intact burials

area excavated that has yielded information of major scientific importance

unshaded areas within the historic boundaries of the African Burying Ground (See Figures 9 and 12) but have no potential for preservation of intact burials

Note: Subway tunnels indicated with dashed line

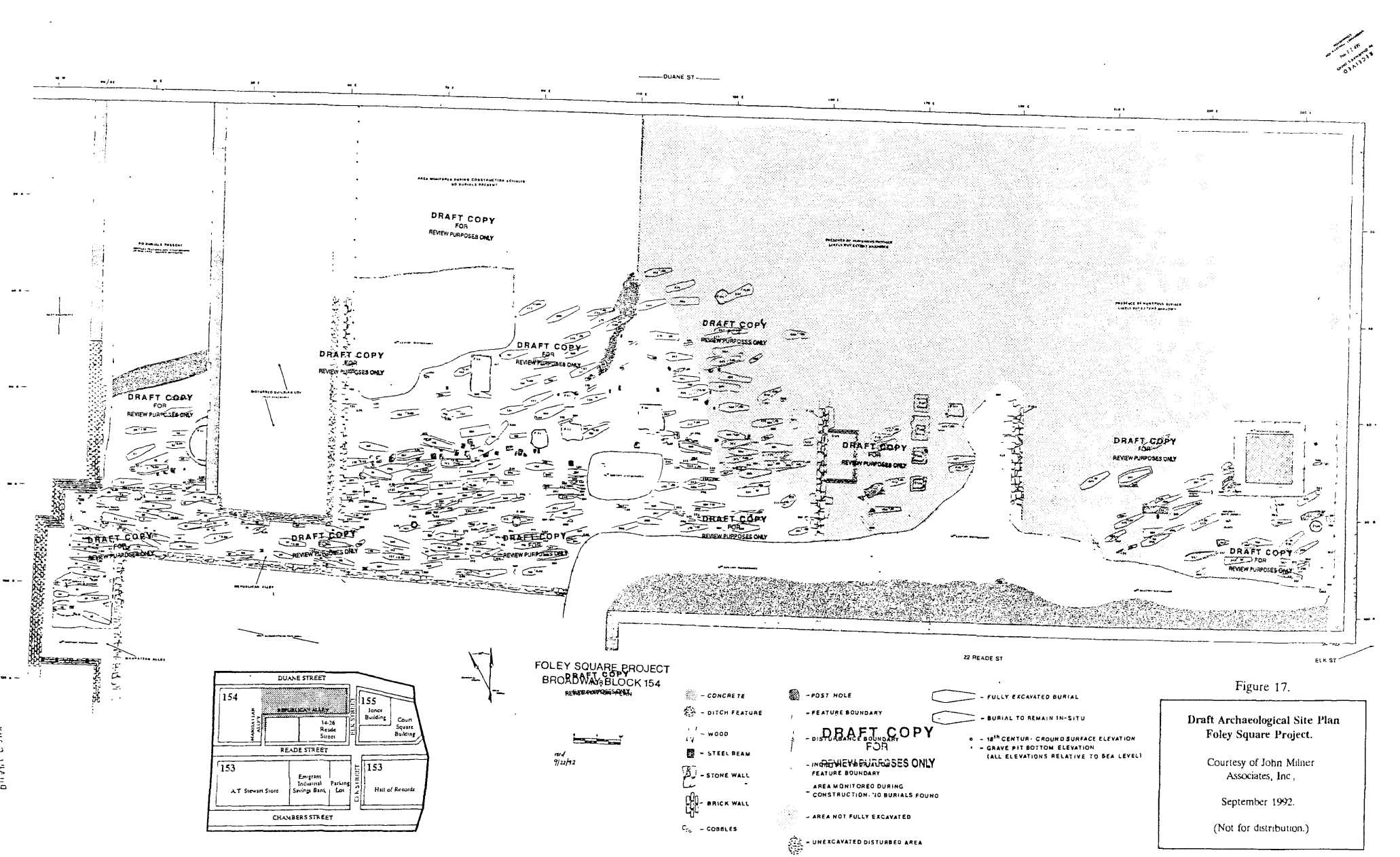


Figure 17.

Draft Archaeological Site Plan
Foley Square Project.

Courtesy of John Milner Associates, Inc.,

September 1992.

(Not for distribution.)

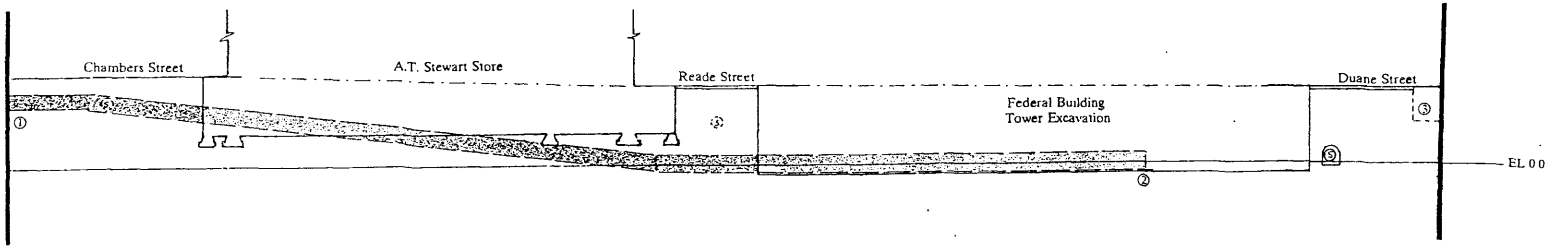


Figure 18. Section A-A. South-north view through blocks 153 and 154.

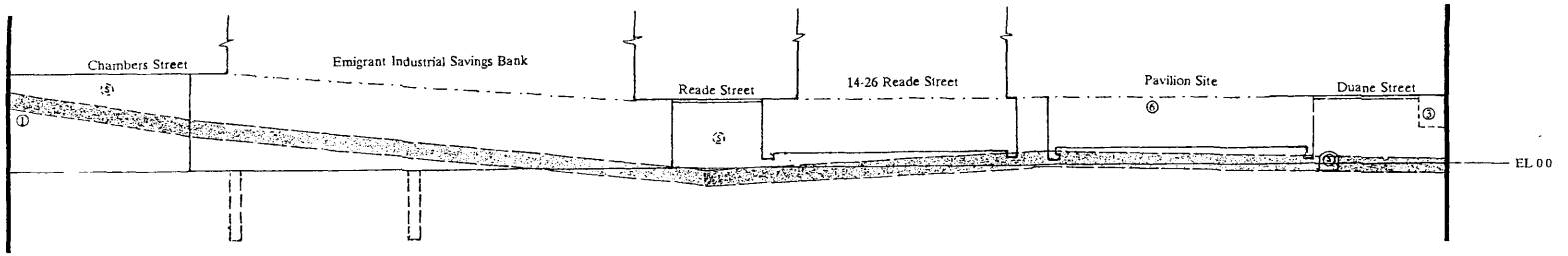
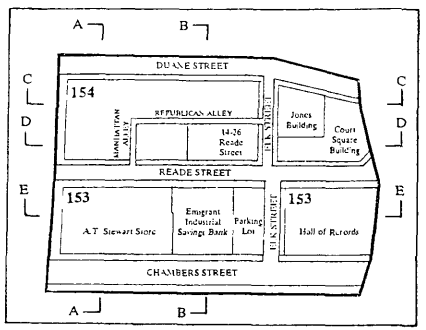


Figure 19. Section B-B. South-north view through blocks 153 and 154.

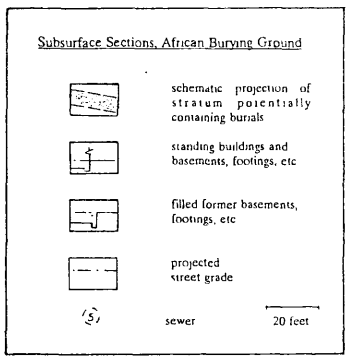


Source.

These sections are based on those provided by Edward Durell Stone & Associates and Eggers & Higgins, Associated Architects to the New York City Department of Public Works (Capital Project PW-162, Manhattan Civic Center, 1970), borings logs provided by the City of New York Department of Public Works Subsurface Exploration Section (Job No. 444, New York Civic Center, 1968); and the Draft Archaeological Site Plan (Figure 4).

Notes:

1. As discussed in the text, the African Burial Ground is not thought to extend south of Chambers Street.
2. Based on information from the archaeological site plan (Figure 4) and the known boundary of the Van Borsum patent, burials in this area probably did not extend further north than this
3. Buildings which formerly stood on the north side of Duane Street are presumed to have had vaults extending beneath the sidewalk.
4. It is assumed the original ground surface sloped up toward Broadway in this area. Data from borings and building records indicate disturbances from former basements as deep as or deeper than current basement of tower building (under construction)
5. Ground level when excavation commenced
6. Sections of former building basements are indicated for the "Pavilion" area, even though this portion of the site has already been excavated. Approximately twenty feet of fill was removed in this part of the site during archaeological fieldwork. The north half of the "Pavilion" site has been re-covered with soil, however, for a construction access ramp.
7. Chambers Street curb level.
8. A building stood on this lot before Elk Street was cut through from Chambers to Reade. It's filled basement is beneath the street bed. Three buttresses for the Hall of Records extend beneath Elk Street (shown with dashed line).
9. A stratum of burials is not projected through this block. This location is thought to have been a hillside, graded in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The original ground surface and probably any burials in this area would have been destroyed at that time. Excavation of the deep sub-basement of the Hall of Records would have obliterated any that did survive.



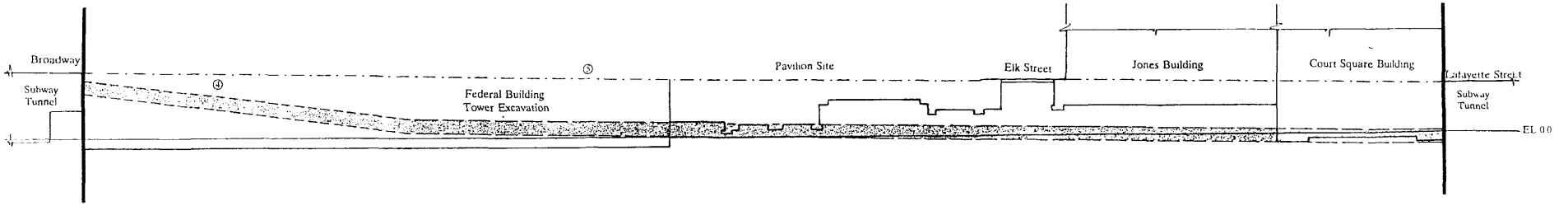


Figure 20. Section C-C West-east view through blocks 154 and 155.

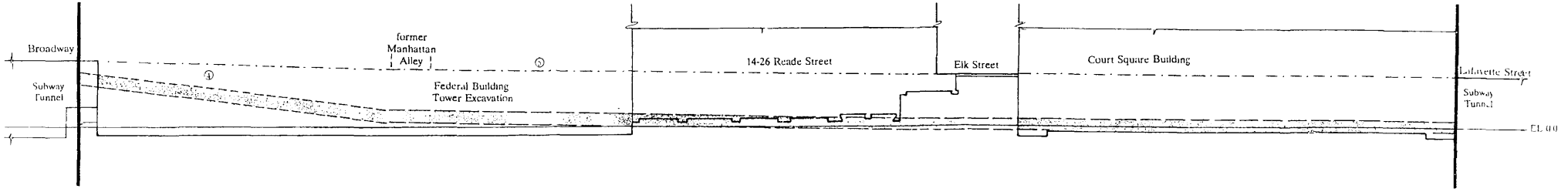


Figure 21. Section D-D. West-east view through blocks 154 and 155.

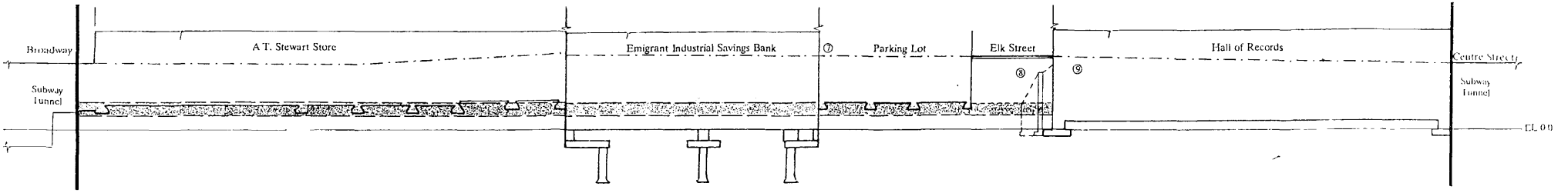


Figure 22. Section E-E. West-east view through block 153.