BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip   DATE: 2 September 1976
Town Hall
YOUR ADDRESS: 655 Main Street   TELEPHONE: 516 581-2000
Islip, L.I., N.Y. 11751
ORGANIZATION (if any): Department of Planning, Housing & Development

* *

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME(S): St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church
2. COUNTY: Suffolk   TOWN/CITY: Islip   VILLAGE: East Islip
3. STREET LOCATION: 118 West Main St., East Islip, south side of street
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐   b. private ☒
5. PRESENT OWNER: _____   ADDRESS: _____
6. USE: Original: Church _____   Present: Church
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒   No ☐
                                 Interior accessible: Explain _____

DESCRIPTION
8. BUILDING   a. clapboard ☐   b. stone ☐   c. brick ☐   d. board and batten ☐
   MATERIAL: e. cobblestone ☐   f. shingles ☒   g. stucco ☐   other: Asbestos shingles

9. STRUCTURAL   a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☐
   SYSTEM: b. wood frame with light members ☒
   (if known)   c. masonry load bearing walls ☐
                     d. metal (explain) _____
                     e. other _____

10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☒   b. good ☐   c. fair ☐   d. deteriorated ☐
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒   b. moved ☐   if so, when? _____
                  c. list major alterations and dates (if known):
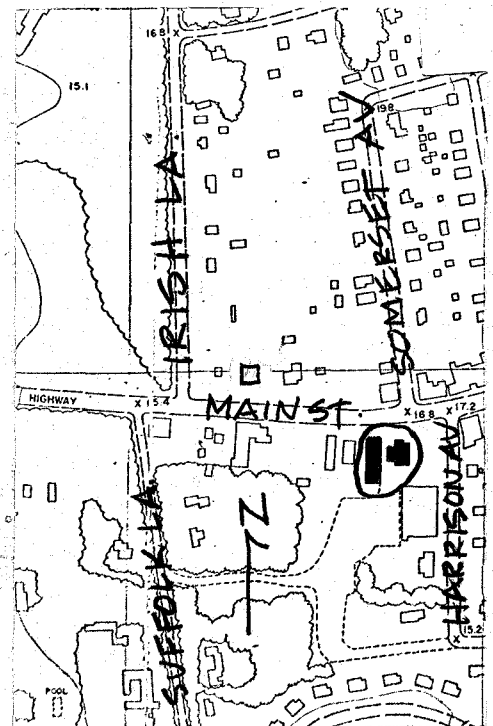Asbestos shingles on Parish Hall and Church; Front porch of Parish Hall
probably remodelled.

ROLL ISL-BAN-II-6A NEGATIVE II-8   SEWER MAP Q-11

12. PHOTO: LOOKING SW   13. MAP:

HP-1

14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☐   b. zoning ☐   c. roads ☐
                          d. developers ☐   e. deterioration ☐
                          f. other: _____

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
                          a. barn ☐   b. carriage house ☐   c. garage ☐
                          d. privy ☐   e. shed ☐   f. greenhouse ☐
                          g. shop ☐   h. gardens ☐
                          i. landscape features: _____
                          j. other: Parish Hall _____

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING   (check more than one if necessary):
                          a. open land ☐   b. woodland ☐
                          c. scattered buildings ☒
                          d. densely built-up ☒   e. commercial ☒
                          f. industrial ☐   g. residential ☐☒
                          h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
    (Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):
Parish Hall: Paired Tuscan columns; dentils; Palladian windows in the
gable (may be later); original 12/12 windows; windowheads with Gothic
return; original brick chimney; moved in 1879 to present site.
Church:Colonial Revival Style structure; clock tower modelled after
Independence Hall, Philadelphia.

SIGNIFICANCE
19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: Church:1902 or 1898? _____

    ARCHITECT: _____

    BUILDER: _____

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:
In November 1879, a group of East Islip and Islip Catholics bought the
old St. Mark's Episcopal Church building for $510 and moved it to its
present site. This building is now St. Mary's Hall. The cornerstone
of St. Mary's Church was laid on March 25, 1901 and was completed for
public worship in the summer of 1902.
1915 map: Roman Catholic Church, 2 story Rectory, 2 story Parish Hall,
          2 story school, 2 related outbuildings.

- "A Brief History of East Islip". Islip Bulletin, June 22, 1967.
- Babylon Beacon. July 22, 1976.
- Bailey, Vernon Howe. N.Y. Sun. April 27, 1936.
    21. SOURCES:
- East of Islip-An Early History. Friends of the East Islip Library.
          1969, p. 7.
- Hyde, E. Belcher. Atlas of the Ocean Shore of Suffolk County, L.I.,
    22. THEME: Westerly Section. Brooklyn-Manhattan, 1915.
Research by: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities
             Barbara Nadel, Research Assistant

PARISH HALL   BUILT ca. 1847

ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

118 W. MAIN STREET

EAST ISLIP, N.Y.

AUGUST 1976

ROLL ISL-BAN-II-6

NEGATIVE II-7

LOOKING SE

MOVED ca. 1880 FROM ISLIP

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EAST ISLIP

"Fide sed cum vide" (Trust but look out in whom) is the motto on the Nicoll coat of arms and crest. This was bestowed in 1467 and confirmed in 1601 in the "raigne of souveraigne Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France & Ireland, Defender of the Faith"...

The Nicoll family were of English ancestry, influential men who participated in the early Colonial history of New York. Matthias Nicoll was the first Secretary of the Province of New York, lawyer, judge and compiler of the famous "Duke's Laws" of the Province of New York. His only surviving son, William Nicoll was granted the first patent for land within the Town of Islip. He was a successful lawyer who entered a career in public service when he was appointed Register of the Court of Admiralty in 1683. In 1687 he was commissioned Attorney General of New York by Governor Dongan. On November 29, 1683, Winnaquaheagh, Sachem of the Conetquot Indians sold to "William Nicolls of the City of New York, Gent." the neck west of the river Conetquot (now more generally known as Great River) on which Nicoll and his descendants made their home. Altogether William Nicoll secured four patents -- the last purchased on September 20, 1697. He built his estate Islip Grange, named for the Nicoll ancestral home in Northampshire, England, when he was denied a seat as a non-resident representative of Suffolk County to the Colonial Assembly in 1701. From October 20, 1702 until his death he represented Suffolk County in the Colonial Assembly, serving as speaker of the house for many years. It is probable that the earliest Nicoll residence stood on the large neck of land known as Nicolls Neck on the grounds of Heckscher State Park.

The original Nicoll grant was about 51,000 acres and was larger than any of the patents on Long Island. It was situated on the south side of Long Island between Islip and Patchogue and extended inland to the center of the Island embracing Lake Ronkonkoma and the present villages of Bayport, Sayville, Oakdale, Great River and East Islip ⁄ but not the village of Islip. Andrew Gibb, a gentlemen, and originally a tenant farmer and friend of William Nicoll became patentee of the present village of Islip on March 25, 1692. Perhaps their friendship developed when Andrew Gibb succeeded William Nicoll as Clerk of Queens County - Nicoll was Clerk in 1683. On February 17, 1701 William Nicoll and Andrew Gibb drew up an agreement concerning their equal ownership and expense in a grist mill and fulling mill that they had built on the Winanhappague River (on Gibb's side), each being entitled to buy out the other for $20

For 223 years, the Nicoll family owned property in the Islip area. In the nineteenth century the estate was partitioned between William Nicoll, seventh and last owner of the Islip estate and Frances Louisa Nicoll, wife of General William H. Ludlow The Conetquot (or Great River) formed the line of division. By 1849 the Nicoll property had dwindled to 40,000 acres and by 1906 the executors of Mr. Nicoll's estate sold the last 1100 acres. This terminated the entailment of seven generations of a family outstanding for their service to their town, to their country and to their church. ➡

Community Needs

In the course of time the community expanded. The East Islip Postoffice, established on January 16, 1890 gave East Islip its official name. Formerly it had been called "east of Islip."

From the original one-room school, the East Islip school enrollment increased through the years. In 1885, $8100 was appropriated for a three room building and $500 for two acres of land on South Country Road (today's Main Street). Between 1892 to 1902 additional rooms were added so that by 1905 it had grown to a nine room school. In 1924 the district approved the construction of the present three story building. It was with these new facilities that East Islip began to offer a full four year high school program. The impact of home development caught up with East Islip and this increase in population resulted in further school construction. The District at present consists of a Senior High School, a Junior High School and five elementary schools.

There are two private schools in East Islip. St. Mary's School was opened in September 1914 under the tutelage of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Recently the Parish built a new 24 classroom school to accomodate the 1100 students enrolled. In 1941 the Hewlett School moved from Hewlett Park, Long Island to "Woodland" the Aymar Johnson estate on Suffolk Lane in East Islip. The original purpose of the school was to educate young ladies to take their place in society. Today students are educated from preschool through high school

Places of Worship

St. John's Episcopal Church in Oakdale is included in this history of East Islip because it was built in 1765 on the property of "Lawyer" or "Clerk" William Nicoll, grandson of the Patentee. This is the oldest church on the south shore of Long Island. William Nicoll, the seventh and last owner of Islip Grange gave the land on which the Emanual Episcopal Church in Great River was founded in 1862. He is buried in the cemetery close to the Church. On November 5, 1879, a small group of East Islip and Islip Roman Catholics purchased the old St. Mark's Episcopal Church building for $510.00 and moved it to its present site on the Main Street of East Islip. This is now St. Mary's Hall. The cornerstone of St. Mary's Church was laid on March 25, 1901. There are 3500 families in St. Mary's parish today. The Christ Lutheran Church in Islip Terrace was organized by 20 persons who signed the charter in February 1915. Services (in German) were held each Sunday afternoon in a building which was a reconverted chicken coop on the property donated by Richard Wolpert, Sr. The first Sunday school was organized in February 1915. There are now four additional places of worship in the East Islip area. They are: The East Islip Christian Reformed Church, the Full Gospel Assembly, the Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and B'nai Israel Temple.

Expansion

Whether the accumulation of large tracts of land by a few owners was responsible for the slow increase in the population of Islip is not known. There were only 31 freeholders at the first Islip Town Meeting held the first Tuesday in April 1720. By 1790 the population of Islip was 609 however, it rose from 1909 in 1840 to 11,073 in 1890. The Southside Railroad reached Islip in 1868, and this convenience, together with the new resort hotels no doubt attracted many new people to the Great South Bay. Prior to the 1860's, Eliphalet Snedecor was the proprietor of Snedecor's Inn - on the grounds of the well-

known South Side Sportsman Club in Oakdale. There were three prominent hotels in East Islip - The Pavillon, with accomodations for 125 guests and stable room for 50 horses, the Lake House, built in 1856 and known for its fine cuisine, and the Somerset House, opened about 1854.

It was at a meeting in the Somerset House on October 31, 1888, that 77 citizens of East Islip met to request a charter for a local bank. On January 20, 1889, the First National Bank of East Islip commenced operations with two officers and one cashier in a small rented store on the corner of Harrison Avenue and Main Street. This property now is part of St. Mary's School. In 1926 the Bank moved across the street to the opposite corner. In 1960 a spacious modern building with ample parking was constructed. It is located on the north side of Main Street near the Junior High School on land formerly known as the Silver Fox Farm. Today the Bank is one of the fastest growing independent country Banks.
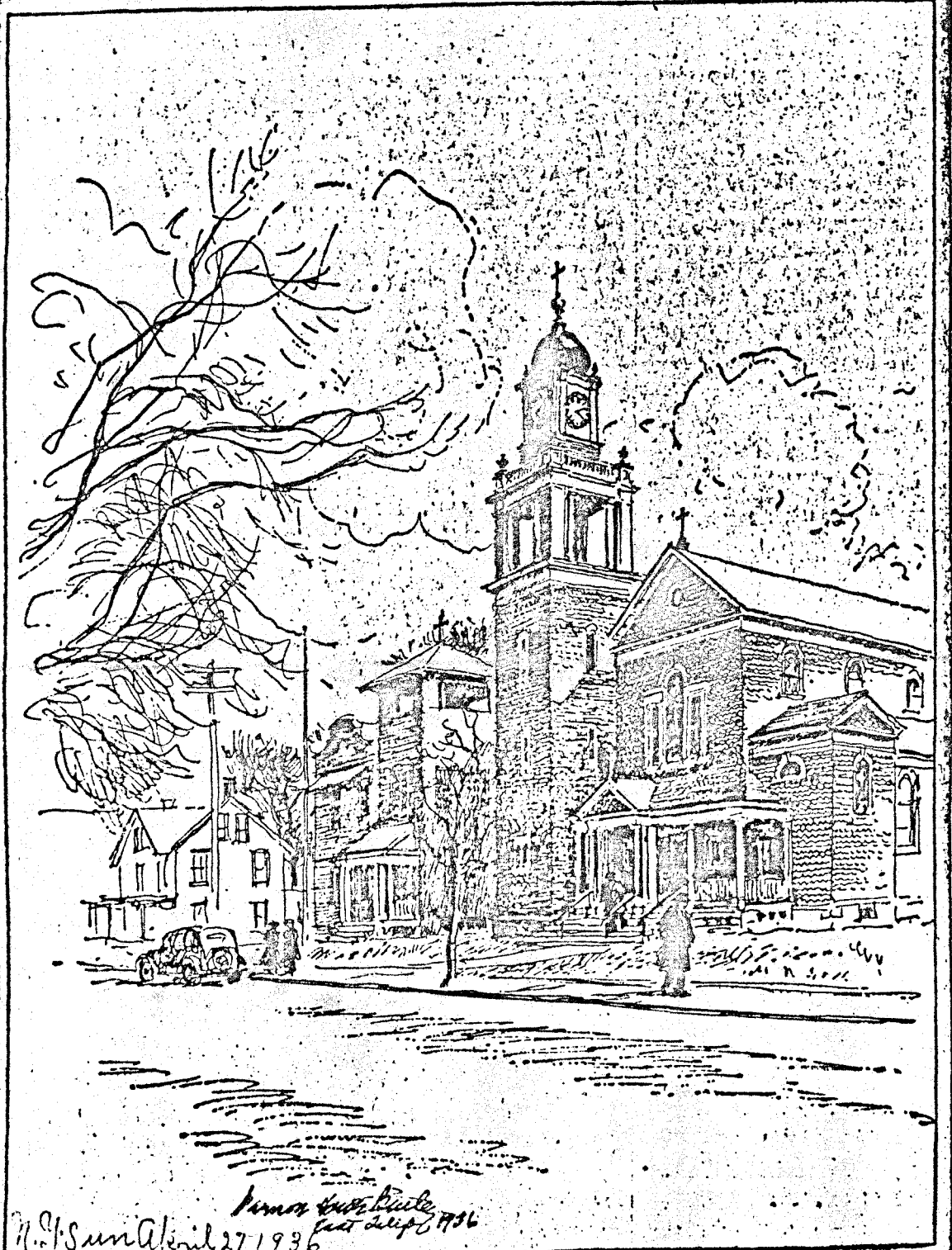
In 1969 the East Islip Public Library opened its doors for the first time in the old East Islip Bank building at Harrison Avenue and Main Street.

SKETCHES OF NEW YORK'S SUBURBS—No. 286
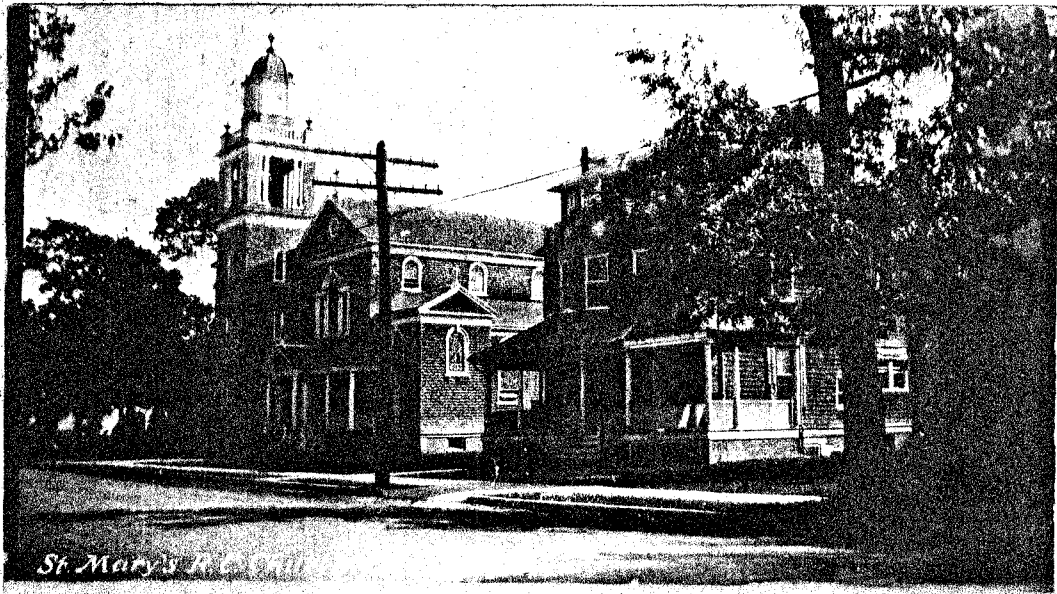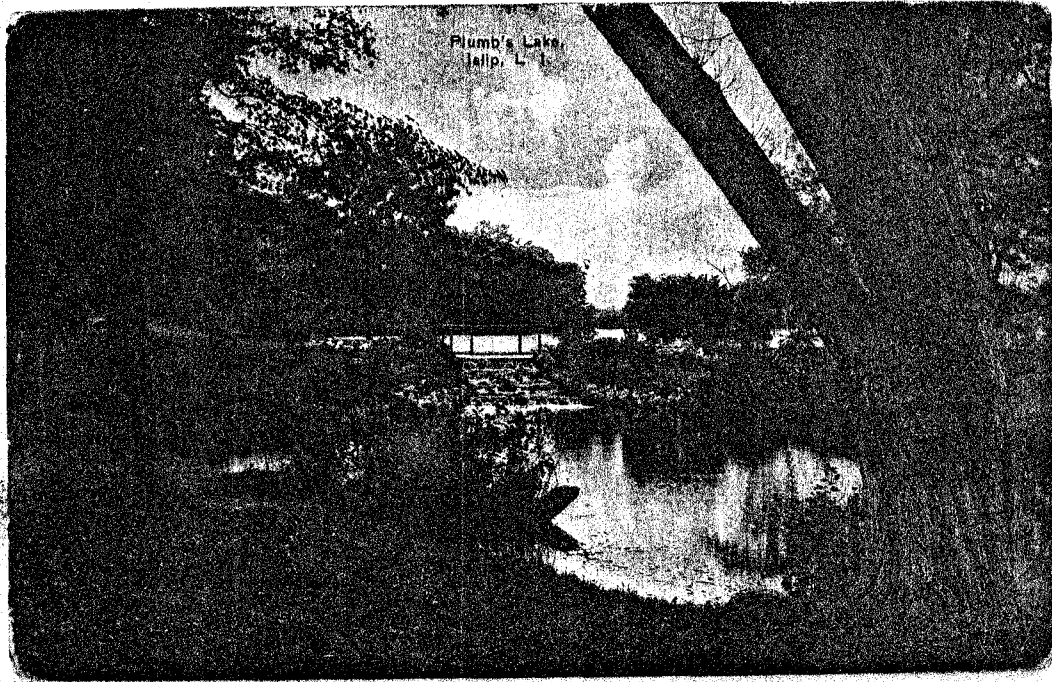## By VERNON HOWE BAILEY

East Islip, L. I.—St. Mary's Church.

Here is a view of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church of East Islip, Suffolk county, L. I. The church, which is connected with the Diocese of Brooklyn, was organized thirty-eight years ago. It has a parochial school conducted by Sisters of Notre Dame.
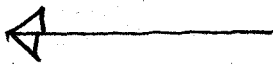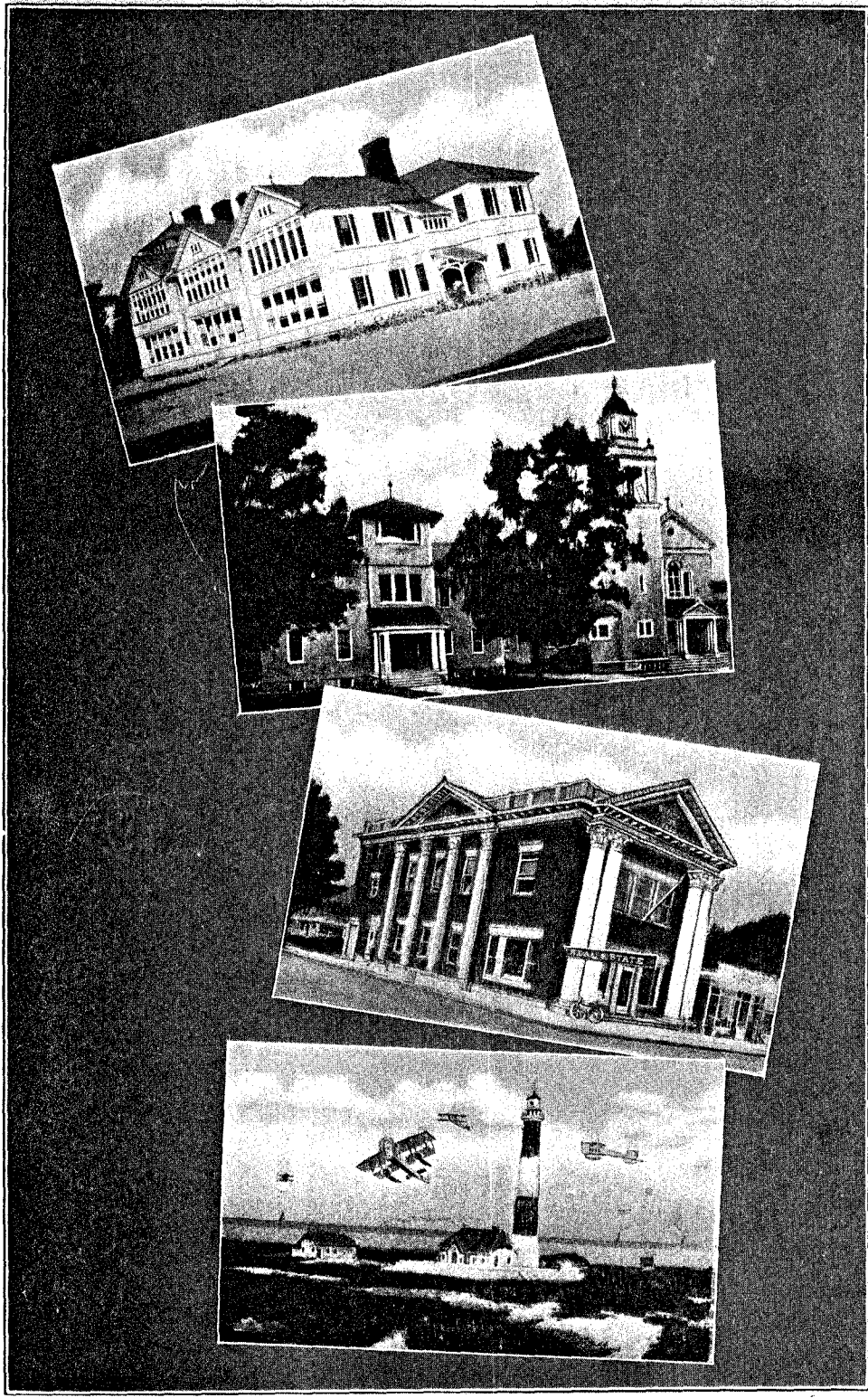
By-Gone Days In Islip

ST. MARY'S CHURCH of East Islip was built in 1902, although services had been held in what is now the Parish Hall since 1879. In its early years the now-familiar white landmark was decked out in brown shingles.

Babylon Beacon 7/22/76

Plumb's Lake,
Islip, L. I.

St. Mary's R. C. Mill

1908

Thomas F. Schweitzer Postal Collection

H.I. Hazelton, The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Counties of
Nassau and Suffolk, Lewis Publishing Co., vol.II, 1925

ISLIP

SCHOOL HOUSE

MASONIC TEMPLE

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL AND CHURCH

FIRE ISLAND LIGHT HOUSE

One of the old-time institutions of Islip was the Olympic Club, located at the foot of Saxon Avenue. It was organized in 1854 by volunteer firemen of New York City and by 1874 owned seventeen and a half acres with five buildings. It was disbanded in 1909 and in the 1920s the main building burned down.

The first newspaper in Islip was the *Index*, started in 1875. It was followed in 1900 by the *Islip Herald* which was finally absorbed by the *Bay Shore Journal*. The *Press* was first printed in 1912 by Edward Gorton. It was owned and controlled by him and his family until it was sold in 1925 to the *Consolidated Press*.

East Islip was considered a part of Islip village until 1896 when its own post office was established. Its growth was long retarded by the large acreages held by the Taylors, the Johnsons and the Nicolls. The principal business enterprises were three large hotels which were the summer havens of wealthy people. They were located on Main Street, the Pavilion on the corner of Suffolk Lane; across the way, the Lake House, and farther east, the Somerset House. The swankiest of these was the three-story Pavilion which accommodated 125 guests and had stables for fifty horses. The guests owned their own horses and coaches. The Lake House began its existence in 1856. It was more old fashioned and depended upon good cooking to draw its clientele. It had bath houses on the lake for guests. When the Pavilion burned down and the Lake House was moved to make a store, many of their wealthy patrons built summer homes near at hand.

The youth of East Islip at first had to walk two miles to a one-room school near Great River. In 1858, it became a two-room school. In 1872, there were 101 students. The teachers' wages were $614.64 and the value of the building was $1500. In 1883, the school burned down and a three-room building was built on the present site of the East Islip High School. The present High School was erected in 1926.

A hook and ladder company was organized in East Islip in 1889. Its apparatus was a hand-drawn truck which was housed in a little building just west of St. Mary's Hall. The department began its existence in 1892. The fine firehouse which was built in 1928 still has the old bell which was given in 1891 by George Taylor.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic is the only church building in East Islip. It was built in 1898 by the Rev. Edward H. Duffy, the first resident priest. Erected since are the rectory, the school and the Sisters' home.

Sayville, a thriving village of 3950 people, the second largest in Islip Town, was until 1795 a part of the Nicoll estate. At that time, Willett Green and John Edwards purchased the land which the village occupies. John Edwards took the eastern part because he and his brother were already living there, having had some arrangement with the Nicoll family. John Edwards built his house in 1761. It stood on the corner of Edwards Street and Foster Avenue. Willett Green came from Huntington. These tracts of land were divided and sub-divided.