

V-19

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
UNIQUE SITE NO.	<u>103-05-0215</u>
QUAD	_____
SERIES	_____
NEG. NO.	_____

JUN 21 1977

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip DATE: 14 Feb. 1977
Town Hall
 YOUR ADDRESS: 655 Main Street, Islip TELEPHONE: 516-581-2000
L.I., N.Y. 11751
 ORGANIZATION (if any): Department of Planning, Housing and Development

IDENTIFICATION

- BUILDING NAME(S): Hollins Estate (off Schoolhouse Road)
- COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: Great River **EAST ISLIP**
- STREET LOCATION: Schoolhouse Rd; west side
- OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
- PRESENT OWNER: R.L. Hollins ADDRESS: same
- USE: Original: residence Present: residence
- ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain permission of owner

DESCRIPTION

- BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
- STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
b. wood frame with light members
c. masonry load bearing walls
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
- CONDITION: a. excellent b. good c. fair d. deteriorated
- INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____

12. PHOTO: neg. roll MFS 3-0

13. MAP: N.Y. State D.O.T. map

ATTACHED

NEGATIVES DEPOSITED AT
SOCIETY FOR PRESERVATION OF
L. I. ANTIQUITIES



HP-1 From Southeast

- 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: 24 acres
 j. other: octagonal root cellar; pond
- 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: _____

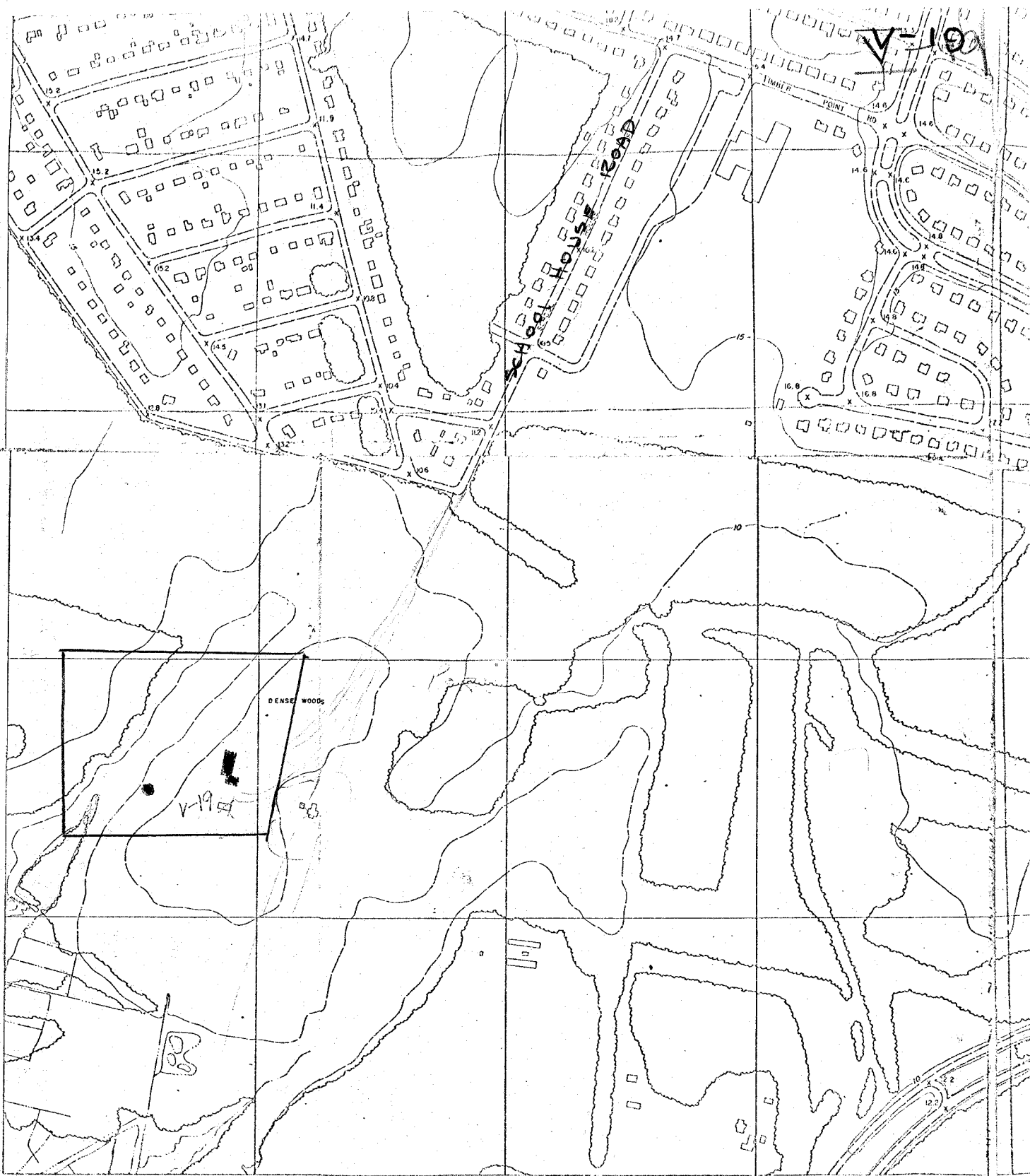
- 17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
 (Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)
 Rambling 1 story wood shingle gable-roof house on 24 acres, built in 1966 from materials from old barn. Barn was moved and made part of house. Octagonal root cellar remodeled as a cottage and moved to site by pond. Official Town Landmark, approved 5/4/76.
- 18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):
 See George H. Peters The Trees of Long Island, 1973

SIGNIFICANCE

- 19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1966
- ARCHITECT: _____
- BUILDER: _____

- 20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:
 House is near the site of one of "recent" William Nicoll dwellings which stood on the extreme western end of the 1684 Wm. Nicoll Patent, just east of the head of Nicoll Creek. The house and 1100 acres were sold in 1906. The main house was torn down about 1910.

- 21. SOURCES:
 Interview, Mrs. R.L. Hollins, 31 Aug. 1976
 Hyde, E. Belcher, Atlas of a Part of Suffolk County, L.I., N.Y. South Side Ocean Shore, Merritt Hyde, pub. by E.B. Hyde, Bklyn. 1915, vol. I, pl. 5.
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
 Bailey, Rosalie Fellows, The Nicoll Family and Islip Grange, published by Colonial Lords of the Manor, 1940.



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THIS MAP FINANCED BY A GRANT FROM
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1567 MARION ST. DENVER, COLORADO

SCALE 1" = 200'
200 0 200
CONDUIT INTER

NEW YORK STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, AS DEFINED BY THE U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

R-12

R-12

Boundary is approximate

Bowe Albertson sewer map

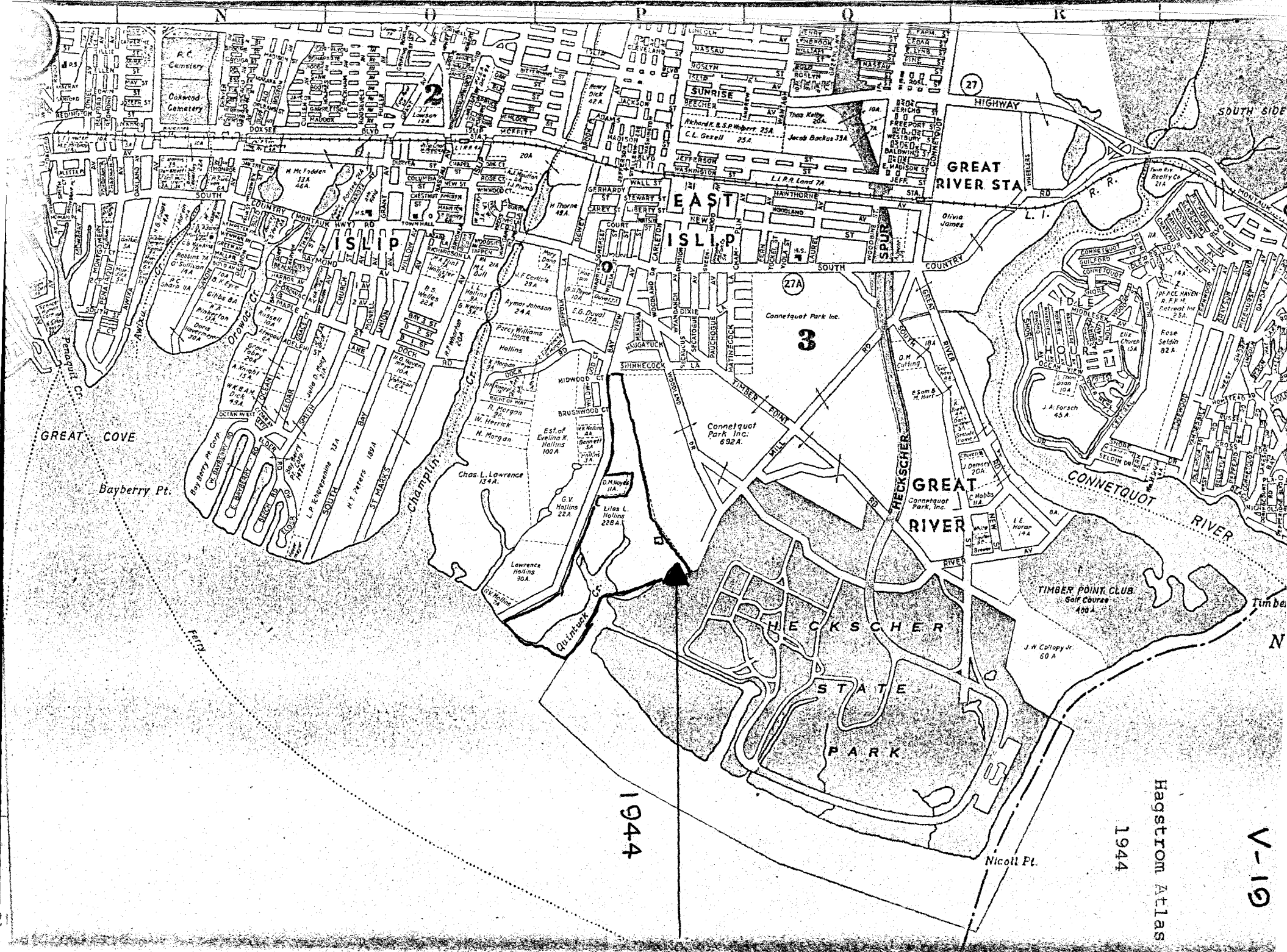
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V-19

NYS DOT
 BAY SHORE EAST QUAD 10

FERRY 10

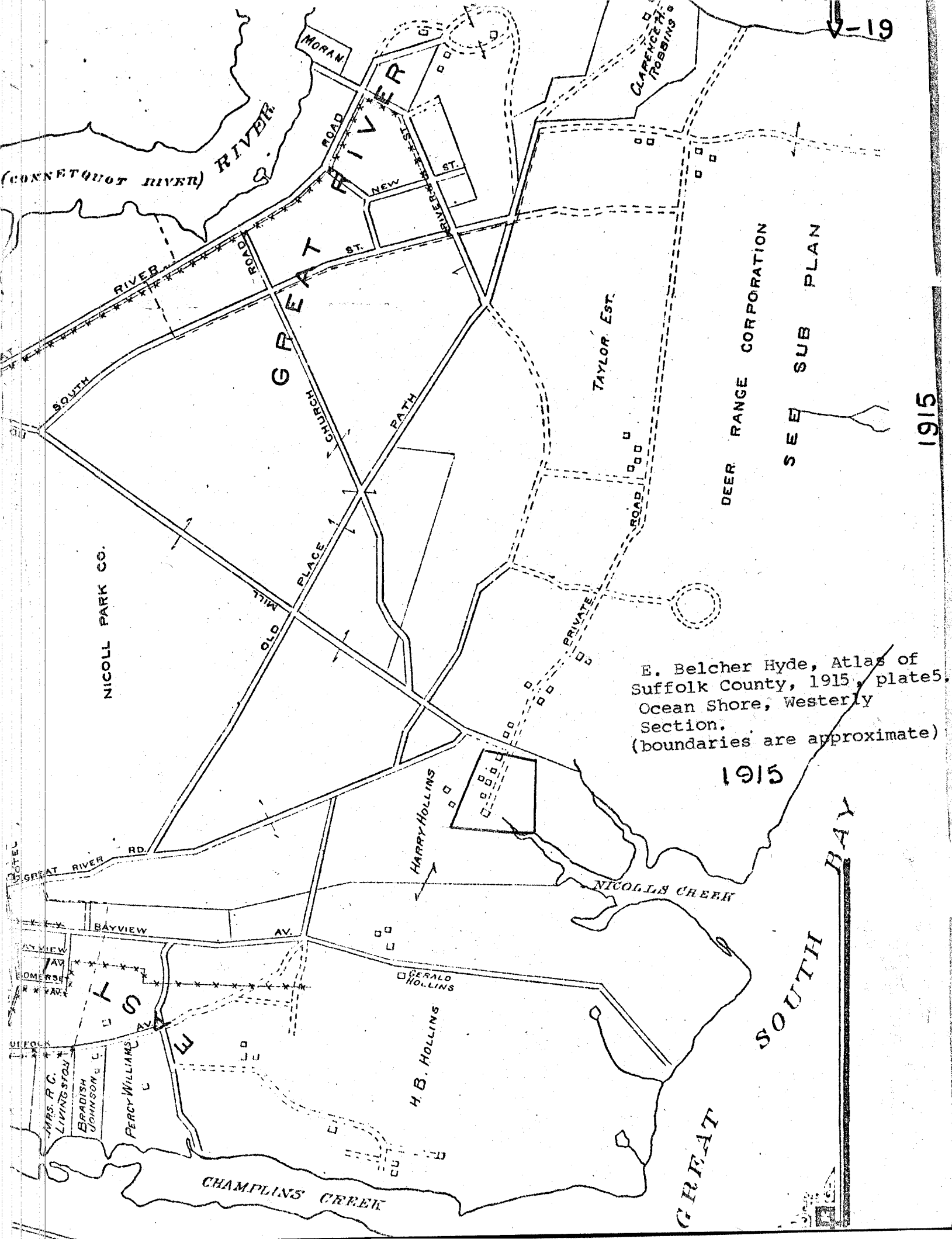


1944

1944

Hagstrom Atlas

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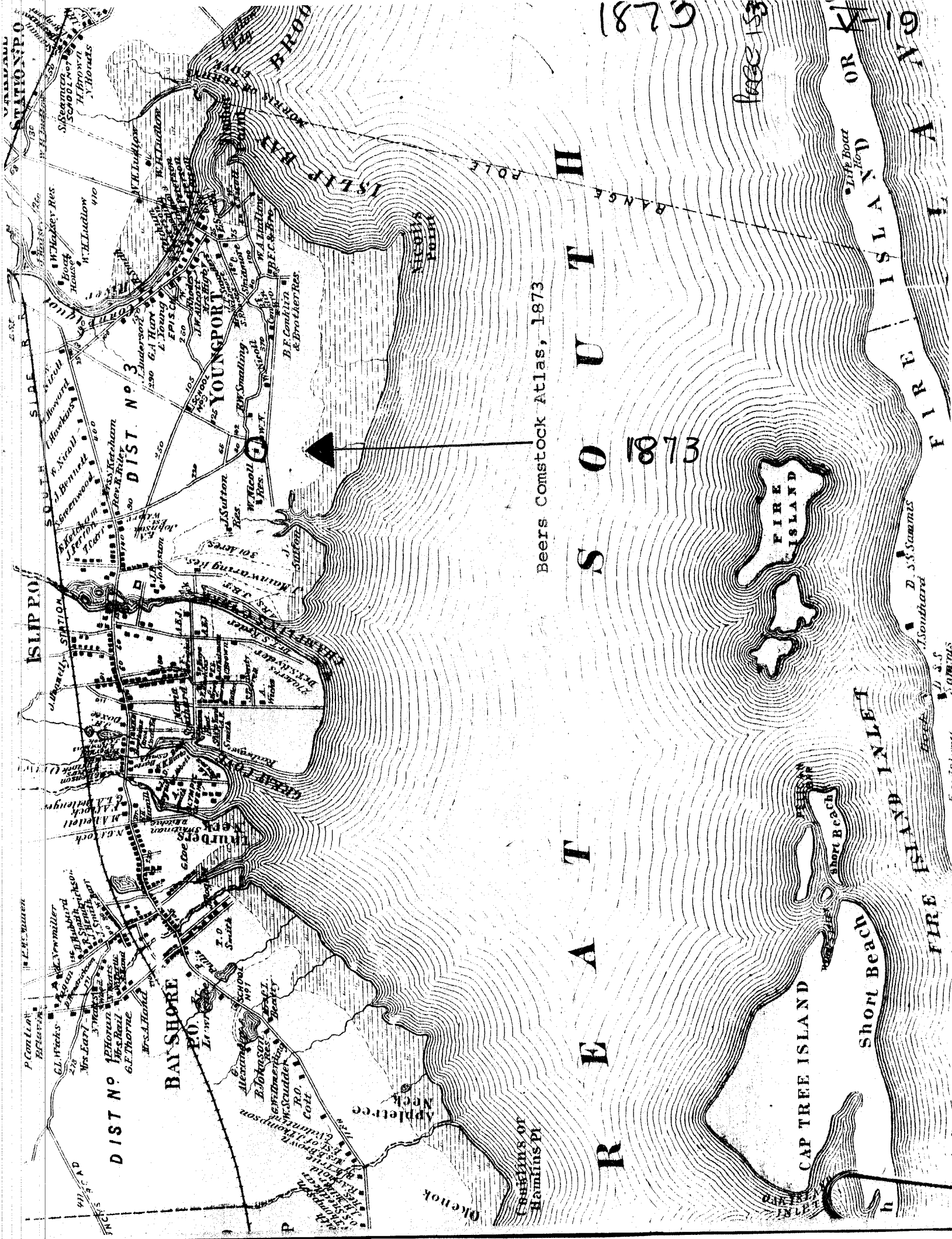
1915

DEER RANGE CORPORATION
SEE SUB PLAN

E. Belcher Hyde, Atlas of Suffolk County, 1915, plates 5. Ocean Shore, Westerly Section. (boundaries are approximate)

1915

GREAT SOUTH BAY



Beers Comstock Atlas, 1873

ADIRONDACK

6281

PAGE 153

OR K-119

CAP TREE ISLAND

SHORT BEACH INLET

SHORT BEACH

FIRE ISLAND

FIRE ISLAND

FIRE ISLAND

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DIST NO 3

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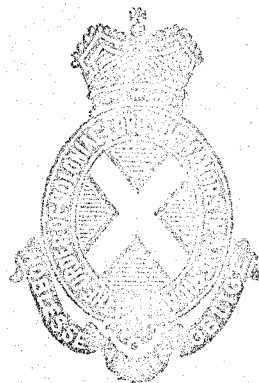
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No. 29

Publications of the
ORDER OF COLONIAL LORDS
OF MANORS IN AMERICA



THE NICOLL FAMILY
AND
ISLIP GRANGE

BY
ROSALIE FELLOWS BAILEY

1940

bilt, and the La Salle Military Academy, are on the portion east of the river that was inherited by the daughter Frances Louisa Nicoll, wife of General William H. Ludlow. The Atlas of 1873 shows their residence near the old church and Ludlow's Landing at the point. The portion west of the Conetquot River, including Nicols Neck and the old home, was the share of the son William.

This William Nicoll was the seventh and last owner of the property, and occupied the old home here until the autumn previous to his death at Babylon, on March 11, 1900. A charming portrait of him as a boy of nine years, painted by William S. Mount in 1829, is reproduced in this monograph. His neighbor, Mr. Hollins, writes me: "He was a very kindly, fine old gentleman, but I think, confined his activities particularly to local affairs, such as the school board and his farming. He had a school-house on his property, which burned down in the 1880s and, subsequently, I believe, donated part of the land on which the present East Islip Public School stands." He graduated from Columbia College, A.B. 1840, and was educated for the law but never practised. He was appointed School Commissioner for the 2nd District of Suffolk County in November 1859, served many years. He was vestryman and warden 1868 of St. Mark's Church, Islip, to which he gave land in 1862. He also gave land to Emmanuel Church in the village of Great River, and was warden there for twenty two years. He lies buried in the cemetery close to this church, his death bringing to a close an occupancy of the Nicoll Patent by the Nicoll family for one hundred and ninety eight years.

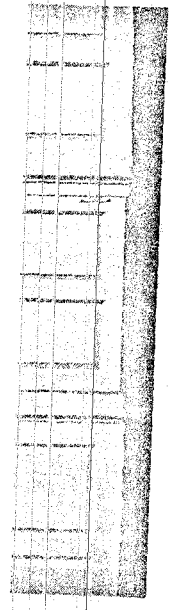
There remains considerable uncertainty concerning the dwelling houses on the Nicoll Patent, despite research on my part and that of Mrs. Guion Thompson. There were at least two main residences — apart from numerous farm buildings.

Nothing definite is known concerning the home of William Nicoll, the Patentee, who resided here from 1701 until his death 1722-23. Pelletreau states that his mansion was on the Great South Bay; Bayles, that he fixed his residence in 1701 at Great Neck, Islip, on what was in 1874 known as the Deer Range Farm. These statements suggest the same site, if not the same house, as that owned by the grandson *Clerk* William during the Revolution. Certainly according to present topography, the desirability of that site is obvious as it is the only rise in the land (even though very slight) near the shore line, and is in full view of the bay and beach. Nearby are springs and a pond for ice.

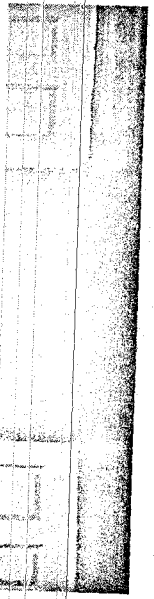
It is very probable that the Patentee's house fell into ruin, as the place was vacant (unless occupied by a tenant) for thirty years after his death. Did *Clerk* William, who returned to Islip

Ashuey.

PANELING FROM NICOLL HOUSE, GROUND FLOOR
(Cupboards from East Room, Wainscoting from Hall)



PANELING FROM NICOLL HOUSE
SOUTHWEST ROOM GROUND FLOOR.



1754-55, redecorate his grandfather's house or build a new one? Did William Junr. receive one of the minor houses on the property as a young man about 1779, or did he build his own? Did William Nicoll 6th build the recent house 1820-23 or inherit it?

Both *Clerk* William and his son William Junr. had homes at Islip according to the 1779 newspaper notice. These accounts of plundering by Connecticut men infer that both houses were accessible from the shore.

Accumulation of various items locates the home of *Clerk* William (during the Revolution and presumably since 1754-55):— the accessibility from the water, the legend of the nearby family burying ground within an old man's walking distance from his home, the distance between house and burying ground mentioned in an old family diary, the location of the road used by him to travel to New York, and the unearthing of silver candle snuffers, etc. when the cellar of the Plumb house was dug about 1874, this silver evidently being marked since it was turned over to the William Nicoll then living.

The present Hecksher State Park is on the large neck (called variously Nicoll's Neck or Point and Great Neck) and includes much of the bay frontage in Nicoll's first patent, 1684. Less than half a mile from the beach by the parkway drive are the few remaining clues to *Clerk* William Nicoll's residence. Here a remnant of the Nicoll Road (still so called) starts northward, passing in one tenth of a mile a path by the old unmarked grave mounds. Planting and lay of the land show that the Nicoll Road formerly crossed the parkway drive on its own way to the water, and that southwest of the intersection was a tree-lined driveway to a residence. This was the house built about 1874 by James Neal Plumb evidently on the very site of the old Nicoll house. Lack of definite knowledge concerning the latter suggests it had disappeared many years previous, by fire according to various descendants; the late Matthias Nicoll of Shelter Island, born 1840, inferred that it had burned before his time.

The recent Nicoll dwelling stood on the extreme western end of the 1684 Patent, just east of the head of Nicoll Creek (formerly called the Cantasquantah River), in the East Islip section. This was the dwelling of William Nicoll 7th until 1890, sold by his executors together with 1100 acres in 1906. Two of the old farm buildings, with handhewn beams, still stand on the back portion of the estate of Mrs. Harry B. Hollins Jr., the present owner, but she tore down the Nicoll dwelling about 1910. Some of its excellent panelling was incorporated in a nearby house built by Miss Frances Livingston on Bay View Avenue, East Islip,



V-19

now (1940) owned by Joseph Magliocco.

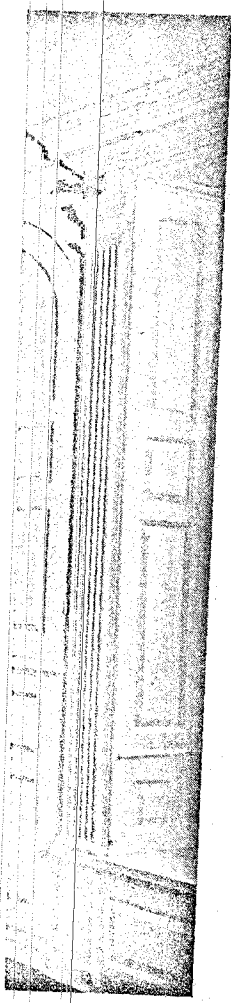
The creek on which stood the dwelling is long and winding, and not practical for boats except at high tide. Any other approach to the house from the shore would have been across miles of salt marsh. The site was undoubtedly chosen for the protection thus afforded.

A water color sketch of the recent Nicoll dwelling as it appeared about 1850 shows a square cupola and third floor gables, typical of Victorian improvements, but also the squat "lie on your stomach" windows in the attic of the west wing and the long, narrow sidelights flanking the front door, both typical of the half century following the Revolution. The floor plan shows an unusually wide hall and corner fireplaces in all but the wing and original kitchen. These had large stone fireplaces with narrow stairs curving up behind.

Mrs. Guion Thompson, granddaughter of the last William Nicoll, writes of the house as she remembered it:

"My theory is that the main part, as sketched, together with the extension marked Grandfather's office, was all built at one time, later the west wing (which was more Victorian in style) was added, the large veranda and the two big dormers on the third floor. All this is guess work but Grandfather's office I believe was the original kitchen. It had a big stone fireplace, and the large closet off it, was pantry, the room unmarked was never used at all in my day and I believe that there was a doorway into it from the small hall or passage and that it was originally the dining room. I am quite certain the big room (i.e. the west wing) marked Great-Grandmother's room was built on about 1843 when Grandfather married. The two vile small-windowed rooms above were always used for the children and were typical of that era. There were two bedrooms on the third floor, one in each large dormer and between them a tiny winding stairway led to the cupola. As far as I can remember there was no plaster used in the walls of the first floor and the three bed rooms of the second floor. All was paneling. There were deep recessed windows with window seats beneath in dining room and parlor, built-in cupboards and book cases with wooden paneled doors . . .

I believe the main part of the house was built between 1810 and 1820. My guess is that it was built for or by William Nicoll 6th at or around the time of his marriage to Sarah Greenly. He died at the age of 24 and when his son William married in 1843, the wing was added, as when I was a child the large room in this wing was used by my great Grand-



mother and I believe she turned over the main part of the house to the son and his wife. Another reason I think the house I knew was not older than the date I have given is that all the furniture was of the Empire period . . . I think you will agree with me that its architecture dates it, and that it does not belong to a period earlier than 1800."

The panelling from the recent Nicoll dwelling is a superb example of the period about 1750, according to Miss Frances Livingston's architect and other architects. I think we would be misled to infer therefrom that the recent Nicoll house was built by Clerk William when he settled at Islip 1754-55. That house is not so old, and it is probable that he always lived near the shore and the road that bears his name. Possibly the panelling was transferred from his home after his death, 1780.

Testimony in the suit of 1836, elsewhere referred to, is interesting in the information it throws on the roads of the period:— Richard Udall, one of the witnesses, stated he was born 80 years ago in Islip, where he now lived on the present South Country Road 6 miles west of the Winganhappagh brook. When he first remembered it, this road was only passable as far east as the brook where there was a swamp. Before the people of Islip made this road passable, there was a road called Nicoll's old road, leading from Nicoll's house North to the Conklin road, which Lawyer Nicoll used to travel to New York. His father told him the Conklin road was called the Old Country Road and the King's highway. The testimony of various witnesses concurred that the Old Country Road ran about 3 miles back of Patchogue across the Conetquot River to Conklin's tavern.

The early maps of New York State are illuminating. De Witt's Map of 1804 marks the neck (east of the Conetquot River) as *Nicols*. Calvin Smith's 1844 Map of Long Island called it *Nichols Point*, shows *Islip* east of the Conetquot River, and also *Islip P.O.* (the present town of that name) far to the west on *Smith's Neck* between Champlin and Orowoc Creeks. Beers' 1873 Atlas shows *W. Nicoll's Residence* above *Nicolls Creek*, and the village of *Oakdale* (where Islip had appeared on the maps of 1829 and 1844). David Burr's 1829 Atlas of New York State shows a road running north on the east part of *Nichols Neck*, from the shore to the middle of the island. Calvin Smith's 1844 Map shows the roads in greater detail; this one is seen to continue as far as the Branch at Smithtown.

The sale in 1906 ended an ownership of two hundred and twenty three years by the Nicolls, during which the property had

PANELLING FROM NICOLL HOUSE
SOUTHWEST ROOM GROUND FLOOR.

been the family home for one hundred and ninety eight years. Only one grandson of the last owner bears the name of Nicoll. He lives in the South and has no children, so the line may be said to have died out with the property.

This senior line of the Nicoll family was remarkable in its continued characteristics. In England, the family was "county" and supported the Episcopal Church; some were ministers or lawyers. During their first century in America, the Nicolls attained great prominence in social, political and legal fields, and made brilliant marriages. Almost without exception they were lawyers and always staunch Episcopalians, builders or supporters of churches. Such a history over the centuries is remarkable and should be of interest to believers in heredity, and to all those who feel that every leading family in any neighborhood can be and usually is a constructive and important rallying point for the other people for miles around.

"Happy Hunting Ground"

By Harry Hollins

My earliest recollection of the Southside Club is of my mother and grandmother Morris telling me how my great uncle, Archibald Coles, used to drive four in hand from Dasoris, now Glen Cove, to Liff Snedecor's Tavern at Islip taking my grandfather and grandmother Morris with him. It was from her I learned of the parties made up for the deer hunting and how Morris's stand was situated below the upper brook, about 100 yds from the present hatchery, and Mr. Lorenzo Delmonico's (the original Delmonico) farther down. After one of these deer drives, Mr. Delmonico was found dead on his stand from a heart attack from deer excitement.

Liff Snedecor's Tavern stood where the South Side Club now is and from the early part of the 19th century was the rendezvous for sportsmen and their families from New York City and vicinity. When Liff became too old to run the tavern, he turned it over to his son Obi who, with the help of his wife, a famous cook, made this place more popular than ever. Mrs. Obi was recognized as the mother of all good cooks in that part of L. I. and her waffles, clam fritters, clams (known now as Clams South Side), fried eels and broiled fish, were celebrated not to speak of her broiled chickens and griddle cakes.

The tavern was on property originally granted by Queen Ann to the Nicoll family. This property extended from Sayville to Champlain's Creek for which the Indian name was Wingenhaupaugh, and from the Great South Bay North to the main line of the L. I. R. R. which was located early in the 19th century. After Liff turned over his tavern to his son, he lived in the house that was afterwards George L. Lorillard's and still later W. Bayard Cutting's place.

When I first moved to Islip permanently in 1877, I knew Mr. Wm. C. Nicoll and we became friends and neighbors. Mr. Nicoll was an honorary member of the S. S. C. and one of nature's noblemen. He lived in an attractive Colonial house on Nicoll's Creek between my son Harry's place and the Taylor place, but was land poor. He used to get ready cash by cutting his own woods and supplying the community with cord wood. I can see him now sitting on top of his pile of cord wood and selling it from door to door for \$4.00 a cord. With all this, no one could ever mistake him for other than a gentleman.

After he sold the Plum place and the 1,000 acres to George L. Lorillard, he was more comfortable. Mr. Fred C. Neilson, a member of the S. S. C. bought 400 acres of what became part of the Taylor property, the balance belonging to the Nicoll estate. After Mr. Nicoll's death, I bought the old house and 40 acres of land from the estate and gave them to my son Harry.

Mr. Nicoll was not only a very fine man, but a very interesting one, and he kept up his interest in local affairs. He served on the East Islip School Board for many years and I had the honor of being with him there for ten years

W.K. VANDERBILT HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

"Happy Hunting Ground"

before he died. Mr. Nicoll told me a great deal about the Indians of S. C., of whom old Steve Murray was the survivor then, his nephews being half Indian and half colored. Mr. Nicoll remembered all those old times and the evidence in the Indian Arrow heads and such found on his property and ours, bore witness to how numerous they were at one time. The old whipping post on the Nicoll place was removed after his death to the Brooklyn Museum, but the slave quarters which I remember seeing remained on the place until a much later date.

The other honorary member I knew well was Mr. Herbert R. Clarke, a fine fisherman and genuine sportsman. He lived to be with us a long while and died universally regretted. Mr. John H. Purdy, one of the earliest patrons, and his son-in-law, George S. Nicholas, and the latter's wife and sisters used to spend a great deal of time there in the summer.

The L. I. R. R. in the early days of the S. S. C. only ran the main line. Suffolk station, near which is now Central Islip station, was where the patient club members took horse and buggy and ploughed through sand a foot deep in places and, with the gunny bags over the horses and nets over their heads, fought the clouds of mosquitoes which followed them to the door of the S. S. C.

Mrs. Murray Livingston, Miss Purdy, that was, told me that once when a little girl she started from the S. S. C. alone in a wagon to meet her father at the Suffolk station and half way on the road, which went by the present hatchery, her wagon was stalled by the sand. Being only eight or nine years old, there she would have stayed, had not a man coming from the Suffolk station happened along. After unharnessing his horse and pulling his wagon to one side, he dug her out and she went on her way rejoicing.

The club was a wild spot then and for years later. The grounds, not so extensive as at present, were covered with large trees and scrub oaks and were almost impenetrable swamps. There were no paths and only the cord wood loads and deer trails. At that time the present hatchery was the northern limit, but it was years later before we had a hatchery, the one on the East Brook not being a success when tried some time later.

What really made the present club what it is was the exchange of property opposite the late Wm. K. Vanderbilt's house. He was reimbursed \$1,500 for the cost of the upper brook from the hatchery to the L. I. R. R. This Brook just above the hatchery teemed with wild trout which, however, never ran very large but one could always be safe to fill one's creel with twenty-five bright fish weighing five to six ounces each. Occasionally a half pounder would be picked up and sometimes two or three on a favorable day. Notwithstanding want of protection, extermination of vermin and so on, the Brook yielded the same return year after year. (the same may be said of the black ducks) Later some crazy man turned out some brown trout and ruined the stream. I believe now, owing to the efforts of the present fish committee, the situation is improving.

W. K. VANDERBILT HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
UNIQUE SITE NO.	<u>103-05-0018</u>
QUAD	_____
SERIES	_____
NEG. NO.	_____

NYS DPW
APR 3 1975
REC'D NYS DPW

YOUR NAME: Betty Kuss DATE: 2/21/75
 YOUR ADDRESS: 226 Idlewood Blvd. Oandale TELEPHONE: LT 9-2731
 ORGANIZATION (if any): W K Vanderkier Hist. Soc. - Do College

IDENTIFICATION

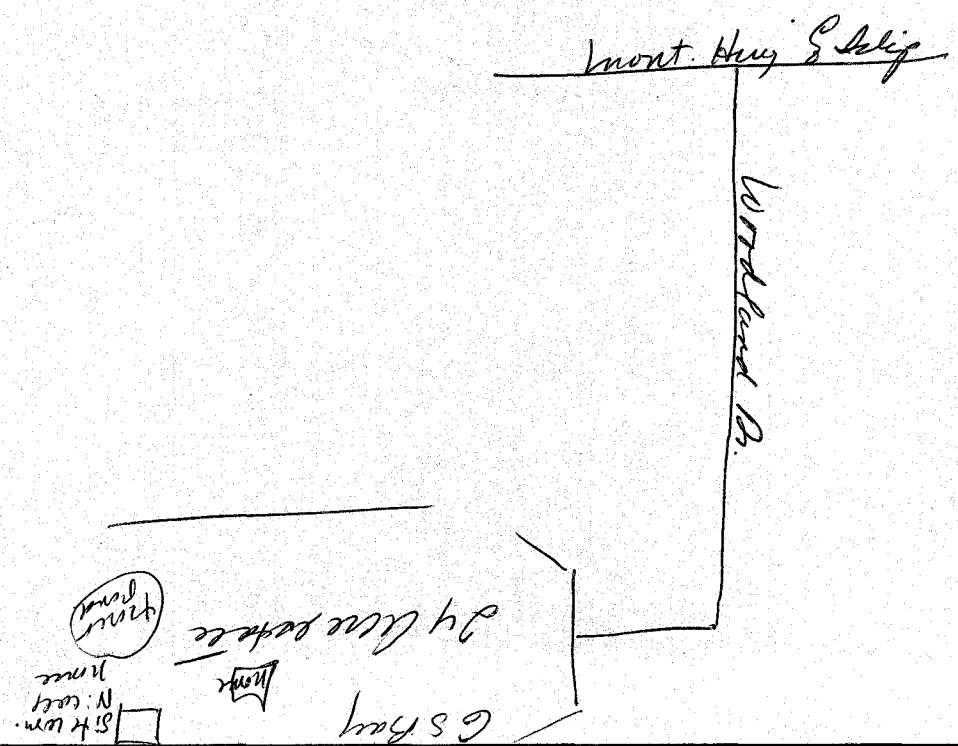
1. BUILDING NAME(S): Wm. N. call barn
 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Isip VILLAGE: E. Isip
 3. STREET LOCATION: off Woodland Ave on Walling property
 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
 5. PRESENT OWNER: Robert L. Hollins ADDRESS: Woodland R. E. Isip
 6. USE: Original: Barn Present: private home
 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
 Interior accessible: Explain private estate

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
 e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
 b. wood frame with light members
 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): _____

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:



BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
UNIQUE SITE NO. 103-05-7018
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

NYS DHP
APR 3 1975
Rec'd N.P.R.A.

YOUR NAME: Betty Kuss DATE: 2/21/75
YOUR ADDRESS: 226 Idlewood Blvd. Oandale TELEPHONE: LT 5-2731
ORGANIZATION (if any): W.K. Vandewater Hist. Soc. - Ad College

IDENTIFICATION

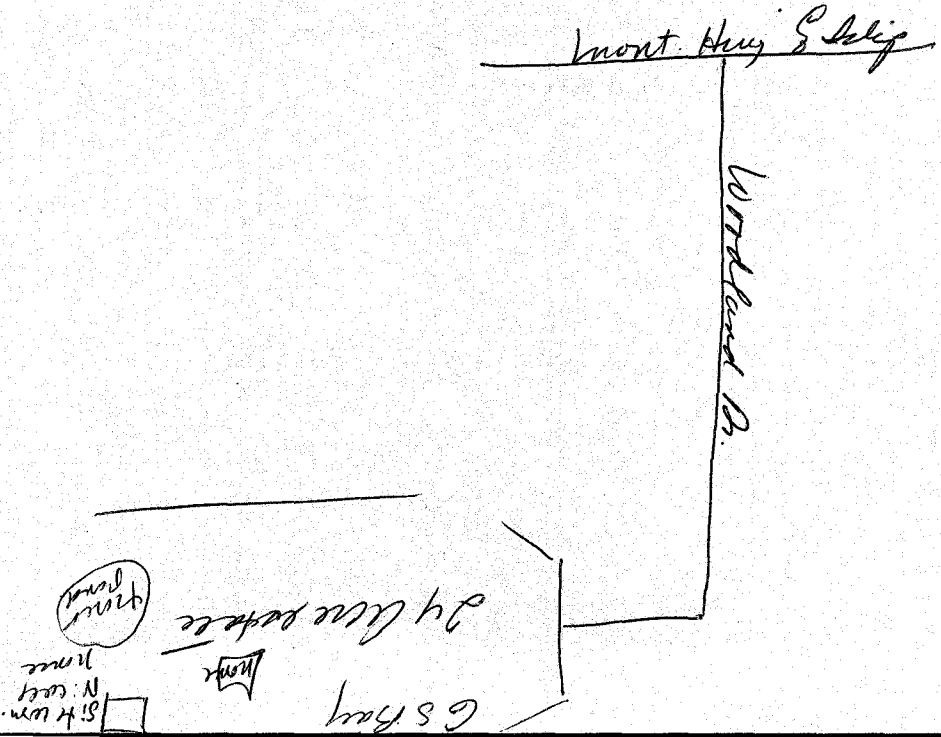
1. BUILDING NAME(S): Wm. Nicoll barn
2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: E. Islip
3. STREET LOCATION: off Woodland Ave on Hallen property
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
5. PRESENT OWNER: Robert L. Hollins ADDRESS: Woodland Dr. E. Islip
6. USE: Original: Barn Present: private home
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain private estate

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
b. wood frame with light members
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): _____

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:



SKETCH OF WILLIAM NICOLLS, ESQ.

William Nicholls was the son of Matthias Nicolls, who was descended from an ancient and honourable family at Islip in Northamptonshire in England, and came over with Col. Richard Nicholls who commanded the expedition which was sent to reduce the Dutch in New-York in 1664, and who was the governor of the colony under the duke of York, until 1667.

Matthias Nicholls was a relation of the governor, and was by him appointed secretary of the colony and member of the council.

He was also authorized, by virtue of his office, to sit with the justices of the peace in the courts of sessions in the several ridings that were then organized. In 1672, he was mayor of the city of New-York. After the act of 1683, remodeling the courts of justice, he was appointed one of the judges of the colony. He officiated in his judicial capacity in Queens county, September 12th, 1687.

It is supposed that he died about the year 1690.

Matthias Nicholls made several purchases of valuable lands at Little Neck and Cow Cove, in Queens county. In 1687, he conveyed his lands at Little Neck to his son William, and those at Cow Neck to Joseph Latham, with a reservation of sixty feet square, where he states "his father Matthias Nicholls lies buried."

It is supposed that William Nicholls was born in England, and came over a lad with his father in 1664. He received a legal education at the bar in New-York and became a lawyer of good standing. He was clerk of Queens county in 1683, and held the office till 1688.

In 1684, he made a purchase of lands at Islip, in Suffolk county. After this period, he made several purchases of large tracts of land, adjoining his first purchase, the whole of which was confirmed in 1697 by a patent of Col. Fletcher, who was distinguished for his extravagant grants of public lands.

In 1704, Mr. Nicholls became the proprietor of a tract of land on Shelter-Island, by virtue of a devise in the will of Giles Sylvester, comprehending a large proportion of that Island.

Mr. Nicholls was a warm friend of liberty, and friendly to the revolution in favor of William and Mary, but was opposed to the arbitrary and impolitic measures which were adopted by Leisler, rather it would seem to secure his authority than to advance the interests of the revolution.

In consequence of his disapprobation of the course pursued by Leisler, he imprisoned him and others who had courage and honesty enough to avow their sentiments relative to public affairs.

In March 1691, Governor Slaughter arrived, called Leisler to account, liberated Nicholls and other state prisoners, and settled the foundations of the future government of the colony.

March 23rd, the governor appointed Mr. Nicholls a member of the council.

Nicholls (cont.)

In 1695, Mr. Nicholls was sent to England by the assembly, as the agent of the colony, in order to solicit the interference of the crown to enforce the contributions which had been allotted to the other colonies for the defence of the country against the encroachments of the French, which fell with unequal weight upon the colony of New-York; and for which they allowed him 1,000.

In 1698, he was suspended from the council by the new governor, the earl of Bellamont, who on his first arrival seems to have embraced the views and adopted the feelings of the Leislerians, and exerted his official influence to crush their opponents.

In 1701, Mr. Nicholls was elected a member of the assembly for the county of Suffolk; but not being a resident of the county, as was required by law, he was not suffered to hold his seat.

To avoid a similar result, it is supposed that he then fixed his residence permanently on Great Neck, in Islip, which afterwards became the principal seat of the family.

In 1702, he was again elected a member of the assembly for Suffolk, and was by the house elected to the speaker's chair.

He was from that time regularly elected a member of every succeeding assembly till his death, and by every assembly was elected their speaker. In 1718, he resigned the speaker's chair on account of ill health, which seems wholly to have prevented his attendance a few of the last years of his life.

He was a member of the assembly twenty one years in succession and speaker sixteen years of the time.

Mr. Nicholls was a lawyer of considerable distinction.

March 30th, 1690 Mr. Nicholls, with James Emmet and George Farrawell, were appointed king's council, to conduct the prosecution against Leisler and his associates.

He was one of the council employed by Nicholas Bayard in March, 1702, in his defence against a political prosecution instituted by John Nanfan, the lieutenant governor, and pursued with all the violence and bitterness of party rancour, for circulating and signing petitions to the king and parliament, in which the abuses of power by his honour and his friends were enumerated: a report of which case is published in the state trials of that year.

Mr. Nicholls was also one of the council employed in the defence of Francis McKemie, a presbyterian clergyman, in June, 1707, who was indicted for preaching, which was brought about by the bigotry of the governor, Lord Cornbury: a narrative of which is contained in a pamphlet published in New-York in 1755.

Mr. Nicholls was twice married. One of his wives was Anna Van Rensselaer, daughter of Jeremiah Van Rensselaer esq. and widow of Killian Van Rensselaer, who was the heir of the original proprietor of the manor of Rensselaerwick.

Mr. Nicholls served in the assembly at a period when the colony was divided into bitter parties, and when a variety of interesting questions occurred between the governors and the assembly, which affected the rights and independence of the assembly. On all these questions, Mr. Nicholls was on the side of the assembly. He appears to have been uniformly friendly to the principles of freedom; and both in his professional and political employments seems to have been a firm

Nicholls (cont.)

and decided friend to the rights of the people and the best interests of the colony.

Mr. Nicholls died in 1723 or '24. He left a number of children; and several of his descendants have been distinguished by public stations. His eldest son Benjamin settled at Islip, and married Charity, a daughter of Richard Floyd esquire, by whom he had two sons, William and Benjamin. He died young, and his widow married the Rev. Doctor Johnson, of Hartford, who was afterwards president of the college at New-York, under whose care her two sons received a liberal education; and they afterwards both received a legal education. William inherited the estate of his father, and remained at Islip; Benjamin settled in New-York, and acquired a distinguished rank at the bar.

William Nicholls the second, the second son of Mr. Nicholls, to whom he devised his setate on Shelter-Island, was educated a lawyer, and was a man of talents. He was a member of the assembly of the county of Suffolk for twenty-nine years in succession, and during the last nine years was speaker of the house. He was first elected in 1739, and was re-elected a member every succeeding assembly till his death.

It is supposed that he died in the spring of 1768. The governor, Sir Henry Moore, dissolved the assembly February 6th, 1768; and it is a tradition that he was taken sick on his journey home, and died at a house on Hempstead plains.

The second William Nicholls resembled his father in his political sentiments, and was a decided friend to the rights of the colonies. He is supposed to have concurred in the addresses to the king, lords, and commons, respectively, which were adopted by the assembly in 1764 and 1765, and which he signed as their speaker.

These addresses abound with patriotic sentiments. In that of 1764, they say that "It would be the basest vassalage to be taxed at the pleasure of a fellow-subject." In that of 1765, they say that "An assumption of power by the British parliament to tax the colonies, if acquiesced in or admitted, would make them mere tenants at will of his majesty's subjects in Britain."

W^m Nicholls the second, died a bachelor, and his estate descended to William Nicholls the third, the eldest son of his brother Benjamin Nicholls. William Nicholls the third was appointed clerk of the county of Suffolk in 1759, and continued to hold that office till his death in 1780. During the last four years of his life, the administration of justice was suspended by the war, and the office was without profit.

It is also said that Mr. Nicholls, some time before his death, laboured under a partial paralysis, which disqualified him for business. His last entry on the records was made November 8th, 1776.

In March, 1768, William Nicholls the third was elected a member of assembly for the county of Suffolk, with Eleazer Miller, to supply the vacancy occasioned by the death of his uncle. That assembly was dissolved January 2d, 1769.

Mr. Nicholls was again elected in March, 1769, with Col. Nathaniel Woodhull, a member for Suffolk.

This was the last assembly under the colony government, and continued until it was superseded by the provincial congress or convention, which met May 22d, 1775.

During the period of this assembly, the disputes between the mother country and the colonies arrived at a crisis.

The British parliament determined that their claim to tax the colonies at their pleasure should be exerted. The colonies exhausted every effort of remonstrance and supplication without effect; and no further alternative was left but submission or resistance. Further delay was useless. The time for action had arrived; and the question, whether the colonists were to be vassals of the British parliament or to enjoy the rights of freemen, was to be decided by force. The prospect of a conflict so unequal, in which the result was so doubtful, staggered many who were friendly to the colonies. The occasion required all the zeal and energy of the most ardent patriotism. Col. Woodhull was qualified for the crisis, and met it without dismay; Mr. Nicholls was less energetic and decisive.

Mr. Nicholls, on several important political questions, that might be deemed tests of principle, that were agitated by that assembly left his colleague and voted with the ministerialists.

Possibly he had flattered himself that the king and parliament would abandon its exercise; and that, when he found the reverse to be the case, he was taken by surprise, and was unprepared for the event; and that the caution and timidity of advanced years may have prompted him to adopt a course he believed adapted to delay, or to prevent what he may have apprehended would prove to be a fruitless contest with overwhelming power of Britain.

Admitting that he was decided in his opposition to the measures of parliament, it must be conceded that he wanted the energy and boldness of his grandfather and uncle, either of whom, judging from the course they took on minor occasions involving similar principles, would have been at the head of the opposition.

Wm Nicholls the 3d left two sons, William and Benjamin. He devised his estate at Shelter-Island to his son Benjamin, who is now living, and his larger estate of Islip to his son William; which, with the exception of a few farms which the legislature of the state of New-York thought proper to take out of the course of the law, by limitations in his will, after passing three descendants, continues undiminished in the hands of the elder branch of the family.

The limitation expired in the person of the late Wm Nicholls of Islip, deceased; and, in consequence of his dying intestate, the estate descends to his three infant children, a son and two daughters, as tenants in common. This estate, on the arrival of these children at age, will have been in guardianship, with the exception of five years, for forty years in succession.