

A detailed historical map of Staten Island and its surrounding regions, including parts of New York City, New Jersey, and the Hudson River. The map is color-coded with yellow for land and green for water. Major cities like New York, Jersey City, and Hoboken are visible. The title 'HOLDEN'S STATEN ISLAND:' is prominently displayed in large, bold, red letters across the top. Below it, the subtitle 'THE HISTORY OF RICHMOND COUNTY' is written in smaller, black, serif capital letters. At the bottom, the editor's name 'Edited & Compiled By RICHARD DICKENSON' is printed in black, serif capital letters. The map includes various geographical features such as the Hudson River, the Narrows, and the Great Kills. It also shows numerous smaller towns and villages, as well as the locations of various forts and military installations. The map is oriented with North at the top.

HOLDEN'S STATEN ISLAND:

THE HISTORY OF RICHMOND COUNTY

Edited & Compiled By
RICHARD DICKENSON

ry in Rosebank (later known as Bachmann's Clifton Brewery). They lived in a home which has been preserved at 420 Tompkins Avenue.*

Jewelry boxes were manufactured in Graniteville until the 1950s, the last owner being Louis Ettlinger and Sons. A carriage and wagon factory was built in Richmondtown in the 1850s by Marsh and Nolan and will be restored as part of the Richmondtown Village.

USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources of the Island resulted in some industrial development at this time. The trap rock (erroneously called granite) in an area from the Plaza of Bayonne Bridge to Victory Boulevard and Travis Avenue created the Staten Island Granite Company, organized in 1841. Trap rock for road and wall building was quarried there until 1896.

Natural clay gave rise to several firms which were engaged in brick-making by 1840. In 1854 Balthasar Kreischer, who had migrated here from Germany, began making firebrick for furnaces, stoves and ovens (1). This business continued in the family until the 1930s. The American Brick Company and Dolan Brick Company on Arthur Kill Road (around Fresh Kills section) also made common brick.

The Atlantic Terra Cotta Company* on Arthur Kill Road, Tottenville (at Atlantic Railroad Station) made terra cotta building ornaments until the firm closed during the 1930s.

Some open iron mining activities were undertaken in the areas of Todt Hill, Ocean Terrace* and at the southern end of Jewett Avenue, about the year 1833. This activity is remembered in the street name of Iron Mine Drive. The iron was used in the manufacture of red ochre paint and also as flux to be mixed with other ores. Many rocks containing iron ore are found on Staten Island today, some being used in rock gardens of the homes.

A rather ingenious use of a natural resource was the crushing of quartz pebbles from the beach sands at Tottenville by a sandpaper factory, operated by James Pike Gage near the shore at Page Avenue in the early 1860s. Horses were used to drag a millstone which crushed the pebbles. The finished sandpaper was shipped out from nearby docks (35).

Ice harvesting on many of the Island ponds was another lucrative industry. Clove Lakes (then Britton's Mill Pond), Silver Lake (before it came a reservoir), Crocheron's Pond at Bulls Head, Winant's Pond and

Prospect Streets, Stapleton* in 1874 on the site of the old Tompkins Lyceum. It was used for balls, entertainments, concerts, lectures, and political campaigns. During World War I the name was changed to the Stapleton Club Rooms. This old landmark was completely destroyed by fire in 1932 (65).

INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

The period from 1865 to 1898 was one of great industrial expansion on Staten Island as elsewhere in the country. However, some of the earlier occupations remained important to the economic life of the people.

FARMING

Farming continued to be a leading occupation after the Civil War. In 1886 there were over 300 farms, growing such crops as white potatoes, Indian corn, oats, wheat, rye, buckwheat, and sweet potatoes (72). In the Rossville section, strawberries, asparagus, and cabbage were raised. Milk, butter, cheese, and wool were also produced. Much of the produce was hand-packed into large wagons that were driven to market in Manhattan or Jersey City. This was the beginning of "truck farming" that was carried on extensively in the 20th century around Graniteville, Bull's Head and New Springville sections. A few such farms exist today. David J. Tysen, 2nd had a large tomato farm and canning factory in New Dorp near Tysens Lane.

In the 19th century, before the period of farm mechanization, horses were used behind simple ploughs. Many German and Italian immigrants worked as farmhands. Farm tools* typical of this era are displayed in the Historical Museum.

OYSTERING

Oystering* also continued as a profitable industry. By 1880 about 150 families on Staten Island depended upon the oyster trade for their livelihood. Since the local "beds" were exhausted, oysters were brought from bays around Long Island, Virginia, Maryland, "refreshed" by the waters of the Passaic and Raritan Rivers and then taken to wholesale market at the foot of West 10th Street, Manhattan. Oyster grounds for the planting of oyster seed and the raising of oysters were off Prince's Bay, Rossville, and

planters resided along the Shore Road (Ria Harbor as reported previously, and also in Tottenville and Rossville. Clamming was also successful and a livelihood for some families along the South Shore.

SHIPBUILDING

Another industry that has been important on Staten Island at times was shipbuilding. Many of the boats – boats, sloops, schooners, yachts – were built in shipyards for building and repairing were located particularly in Tottenville, where in 1886 there were 12 men engaged in this work (34). Some evidence of shipbuilding along the shore.* Other shipbuilders were located in the Port Richmond-Mariners Harbor area.

OLD FACTORIES

Prior to the Civil War, the industrialization of Staten Island. During this latter period, some factories, developed to prosper and others were developed.

Among those that had been organized prior to the Civil War and continued in business were: Hall's Gun Factory, established in the 1870s; Jewett White Lead Works; Crabtree and Wilkinson Factory, reorganized as the American Brick Company at 67 Jersey Street in 1881, making bricks and other summer goods (71); Louis Ettling jewelry boxes; Marsh and Nolan Carriage Factory; manufacturers of firebrick;* American Brick Company; Cotta Company;* Bachmann's Brewery, Beer Brewery (formerly Constanz). None of these factories are still in business.

However, the Louis De Jonge Company, manufacturers of fancy papers, is still in business. The paper-finishing plant in the United States was moved from Victory Boulevard to Tompkins Avenue, Rossville.

In 1895 Barrett Nephews Company,* established a plant on Cherry Lane (Forest Avenue), as did

Mariners Harbor. Negro oystermen lived at Sandy Ground. Wealthy planters resided along the Shore Road (Richmond Terrace), Mariners Harbor as reported previously, and also in Tottenville, Pleasant Plains, and Rossville. Clamming was also successful during this period, providing a livelihood for some families along the South Shore.

SHIPBUILDING

Another industry that has been important on Staten Island since colonial times was shipbuilding. Many of the boats used by the oystermen – cat-boats, sloops, schooners, yachts – were built on the Island. Numerous shipyards for building and repairing were located along the waterfront, particularly in Tottenville, where in 1886 there were at least eight actively engaged in this work (34). Some evidences of these boatyards remain along the shore.* Other shipbuilders were busy along the North Shore, in the Port Richmond-Mariners Harbor area.

OLD FACTORIES

Prior to the Civil War, the industrialization of Staten Island had begun. During this latter period, some factories, described previously, continued to prosper and others were developed.

Among those that had been organized before the Conflict and continued in business were: Hall's Gun Factory, adding hardware to its products in the 1870s; Jewett White Lead Works, reorganized in 1882; the Crabtree and Wilkinson Factory, reorganized as the Irving Manufacturing Company at 67 Jersey Street in 1881, makers of dress linings, tarlatans and other summer goods (71); Louis Ettlinger and Sons, manufacturers of jewelry boxes; Marsh and Nolan Carriage Factory; B. Kreischer and Sons, manufacturers of firebrick;* American Brick Company; Atlantic Terra Cotta Company;* Bachmann's Brewery, Bechtel's Brewery; and Eckstein's Brewery (formerly Constanzt). None of these industries exist today.

However, the Louis De Jonge Company,* organized in 1847, manufacturers of fancy papers, is still in business. It is considered the oldest paper-finishing plant in the United States (36). The firm moved from Victory Boulevard to Tompkins Avenue, Rosebank in 1918.

In 1895 Barrett Nephews Company,* which had been operating a plant on Cherry Lane (Forest Avenue), as described in the chapter on the

same name. The Staten Islander Building* still stands in Tomp-
sville at the junction of Bay Street and Central Avenue (called Persh-
Square). The paper became a daily in 1926 and was discontinued in
8. Microfilmed issues are in the Library of the Institute.

A Tottenville weekly newspaper was started in 1881. Originally named
Westfield Times, it later became the *Staten Island Transcript* in 1899 and
n consolidated with the *South Shore Times* in Great Kills, becoming the
es-Transcript with offices in both towns. Later a new building was erect-
it 5389 Arthur Kill Road, Tottenville. This publication, carrying only
th Shore news, appeared until 1962 as the *Staten Island Transcript and*
tfield Times. The Institute has copies from 1927 to 1941 on microfilm.

Before consolidation there were many other newspaper attempts, some
iem political organs, others printed in the German language. Old news-
rs remain as one of the finest sources of firsthand information about
le, community growth, and social and economic problems. Therein is
d a clear-cut picture of any given period of a community's development.

In 1887 Dr. George W. Frost gave the ho
Castleton Avenue. Many benefactors gave
began. Two years later the "tower" building
Smith Infirmary (34). George William Cur
the cornerstone. This original building of the
pital is used for offices, clinics, and interns' c

The growth of the Hospital has depend
erosity of those who could afford large mone
upon the service of the Women's Auxiliary.
group donated fruit, vegetables, linens, cloth
Gradually its services were extended. An earl
was Mrs. Thomas Melville, wife of the Govern
sister-in-law of Herman Melville, author of M

A two-year training school for nurses w
S. R. Smith Infirmary. In 1943 the training

and purposes.

LIBRARIES

A branch of the New York Public Library on Staten Island was opened in Tottenville in 1904 through the efforts of three local organizations including the Philemon Society, which is still active. Andrew Carnegie had offered funds for library buildings to small communities in the United States and the citizens of Tottenville had applied for this aid. At that time, there had been a public library in Tottenville on John-
street, formed by the Tottenville Association in 1899, with a stock of books. Earlier efforts have been described in a newspaper article. The Port Richmond Branch Library opened in 1905 and the St. George and St. George Branches in 1907. Today Staten Island is served by the St. George Library Center, branch libraries, and a bookmobile. A new branch in Meiers Cove will replace the *Todt Hill Houses* facility in late 1963. All branches have special programs for children and adults. The first public music lending library in New York City opened at the St. George Regional Public Library in 1952.

field trips are conducted at the
the Refuge (92). The Spring 1957 issue of the *Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences* was devoted to the history of the area.

It is of interest to note that Theodore Roosevelt's country home on land that is now part of the Staten Island Mall remained in the Roosevelt family until 1878.

THE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S GARDEN CLUBS

Eleven women's garden clubs on the Island belong to the Garden Clubs of New York State. These groups have attracted adults and children an interest in gardening and horticulture. They maintain a colonial garden on the grounds of the well-Perine House.* Flower shows and garden walks are held annually. In 1962 the Staten Island District, Federated Garden Clubs of New York State adopted the daisy as a motif for its seal. The daisy had been chosen as the official borough flower by the *Staten Island Advance*.

also raise strawberries and asparagus which were important crops here a century ago.

CLAMMING AND OYSTERING

Fishing and oystering* were important occupations along the South Shore, particularly in Pleasant Plains and Tottenville, during the early years. Oystering continued to prosper on Staten Island until about 1910 when the waters of New York Harbor became polluted from industrial waste from shipping, and from sewage. When typhoid fever was traced to eating oysters, the Department of Health condemned the oyster beds. Clamming was also prohibited.

By 1940 the clam beds were approved again. Very often 50 or 60 people would venture forth in small boats from South Shore harbors. However, during World War II the waters again were condemned. The Prince's

Bethlehem Steel Company

The Mariners Harbor yard of the Bethlehem Steel Company was a site that was used as a shipyard by R. C. Decker and other shipyard companies operated there in later years. In 1898 the Burlee Drydock Company of Port Richmond started to use the site for the construction of wooden vessels in 1900. They named the firm the Staten Island Shipbuilding Company. A foundry was added and steel ships were built. The plant had government contracts. In 1929 ownership was transferred to the Bethlehem Steel Company which became United Shipbuilding Company. Years later Bethlehem Steel purchased the Marine Shipbuilding Company. World War II the Navy acquired part of the property and awarded to Bethlehem for construction of destroyers.

Bay Clam and Oyster Association became reactivated in 1961 after eight years of inactivity and is urging the reopening of Raritan Bay for clamming. The United States Public Health Service, the New York City Health Department and the shellfishing unit of the New York State Conservation Department determine whether clamming may be resumed.

SHIPBUILDING

There were many small boatyards for building and repair along the Arthur Kill in and near Tottenville during the period when clamming and oystering were the principal occupations in that locality. The Ellis Shipyard built large schooners. Other yards bore the names of their owners - Brown, Butler, Rutyan, Latourette (48). Some of the old docks are still visible.

Inc. at 2385 Richmond Terrace, founded in 1927. Dry colors for the printing ink and paint industries are manufactured at the Elm Park plant which has about 10 employees.

Elm Park is also the site of a new building erected in 1961 by the Narva Labs, Inc., manufacturers of perfume, perfume oils, and flavoring for food products. Before moving into the new plant on Granite Avenue, near Wallerstein's, the firm had been located in Stapleton.

An interesting business born of a hobby during the depression of the 1930s is that conducted by the Howat family on Hopping Avenue, Totenville. Mr. Howat had been chief chemist at the Atlantic Terra Cotta plant, previously mentioned, and when his services were terminated he turned his hobby of making porcelain figurines, vases, and modern art reproductions into a business which has been most successful. Ceramic costume jewelry was added to the products. Some of the Howat pieces are in the contemporary ceramics collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

There are several greenhouses and garden centers on Staten Island. One of the largest is the Richmond Floral Company* in Richmondtown (48). This company and its predecessor have been growing flowers on the

Tottenville-Perth Amboy Ferry

In the early 1900s the Staten Island Rapid Transit took over the Tottenville-Perth Amboy ferry which had been operated by the Staten Island Road Company since 1867. The Rapid Transit's operation ceased in October 1948. The last trip was made by the double-ended sidewheeler, the *Charles W. Galloway*, that had been built in 1922 (74). The line was later taken over by the Sunrise Ferry Corporation which operated a diesel-powered screw propeller ferry, the *Piermont*, accommodating nine cars. At the present time Captain Elmer Johnson of Meiers Corners operates the line, but financial difficulties threaten to terminate the service. The Outerbridge Crossing carries most of the traffic from the southern end of Staten Island to New Jersey.

*Port Richmond-Bayonne Ferry**Holland Hook-Elizabethport Ferry*

Sailing vessels had operated between Staten Island and New Jersey prior to the American Revolution. The double-ended side-wheelers, such as the *Goethals*, were replaced in 1932 by diesel-propelled ferries. The *Goethals* was replaced on this line from 1954 until February 1960 by the *Goethals* B point. The *Goethals* B point.

St. George-Brooklyn Ferry

Ferry service between Staten Island and New Jersey has been discontinued for many days. Until a few years ago two ferry lines operated between Staten Island and New Jersey, terminating at 39th Street and the other at 10th Street.

p. 53 "Tottenville, known as Bently, was a fishing village with a few scattered farms.

p. 69 SCAN

p. 88 "Several Civil War Memorials have been erected on the Island. One of the largest is a marble shaft at Bethel Cemetery, Tottenville."

~~p. 100~~

p. 109 "Large homes were built also by oystermen in the area from Prince's Bay to Tottenville. Many of these are exceptionally well-kept today by appreciative residents, some of whom are descendants of the original owners."

p. 118-119 SCAN

p. 122 "...a silk factory in Tottenville opened by Owen Howard Barnard in 1890. Barnard Avenue, Tville, is a reminder of this family name."

p. 128 "The Tottenville Water Works, constructed in 1897, supplied the Tville ~~Section~~
~~Section~~ - Prince's Bay Section"

p. 130 SCAN

p. 142 "In 1867, the SI Railroad Company began operating a ferry between Perth Amboy and Tville. The sidewheeler *Maid of Perth*, placed in service that year, operated until 1905 when it was scrapped."

p. 158 "In 1962... the South Shore - Tville, Pleasant Plains, Charleston, Rossville Sections - remained the least thickly populated."

p. 163 Spanish-American War (April 21, 1898 - April 11, 1899)

"During this period the defenses at Ft. Wadsworth were strengthened and a fort constructed @ Ward's Point, Tottenville to guard the entrances to New York Harbor."

p. 190 SCAN

p. 194-195 SCAN

p. 200 1930 - "The Atlantic Terra Cotta Company of Tville, manufacturers of building ornaments, also closed."

p. 203 SCAN

p. 230 SCAN

Holden's Staten Island

The History of Richmond County

-Richard Dickenson

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