



Flatlands



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Achternvelt was the first settlement in what would one day become the Borough of Brooklyn. Established in 1636, near present-day Jamaica Bay, Achternvelt was a large bouwerie (Dutch for farm) that grew beans, corn, squash, and tobacco. Oysters and clams were harvested from the Bay's surrounding marshes and basins.

Soon after **Achternvelt** was settled, a village began to form at the crossroads of two Native American trails. These would become Flatbush Avenue and Kings Highway. The developing town was named Nieuw Amersfoort, later renamed Flatlands.

Flatlands was one of the central growing areas in Kings County. A grist mill was constructed in the mid 1600s. Though technically in the town of Gravesend, it was situated on the town border. Established by a Hugh Gerritsen, the son of Wolphert Gerritsen, the founder of Achternvelt. The mill served many Flatlands' farms.

Native American groups occupied this area for more than a thousand years before Europeans settled here in the 17th century.

The local tribe in the area of Jamaica Bay were known as the Canarsee, a band of Munsee-speaking Lenape. They maintained semi-permanent settlements in the area of Marine Park and throughout southern Brooklyn.

Keskachauge was the main Canarsee settlement. It was centered at a crossroads—today's **Flatbush Avenue and Kings Highway**—on the south rim of a broad expanse of grassland known as the "Great Flats". It appears on the the 1639 Manatus Map just east of "Conyné Eylant". The Manatus Map is the earliest surviving map of New Netherland.

The Jamaica Bay area was important for wampum production. Archaeological evidence of **Native American** occupation and culture has been found within Marine Park and along the shores of Gerritsen's Creek.

1609

Henry Hudson sails to the New World aboard the Halve Maen (the Half Moon).

Hudson and his crew anchor near present day Coney Island before sailing up the North River, known today as the Hudson River.

1624

The Dutch West India Company settles New Amsterdam at the tip of Manhattan Island.

1636

Four men purchase lands that will become Nieuw Amersfoot (the Town of Flatlands) from Canarsee Chiefs Penhawitz and Kakapeteyno.

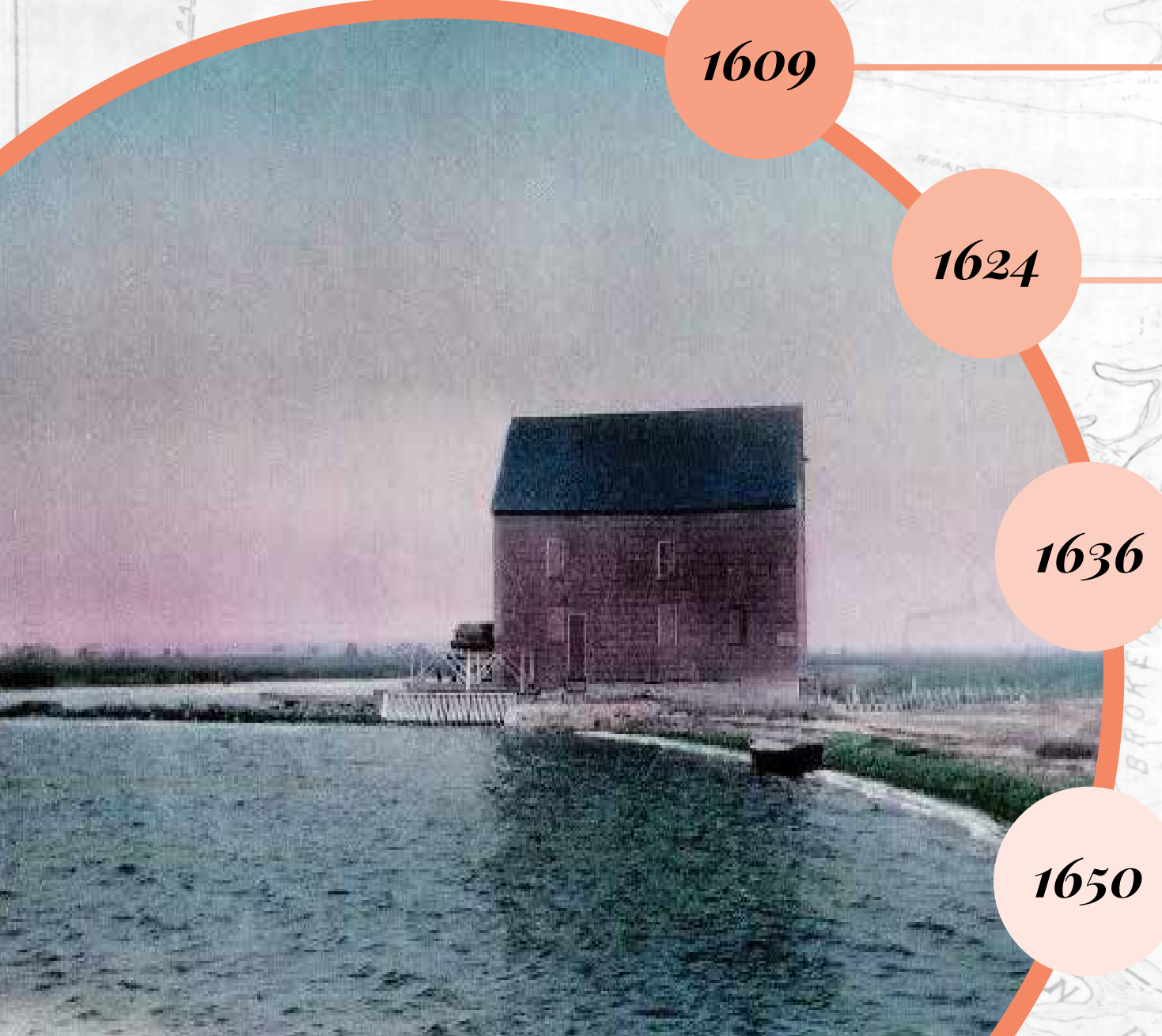
Two of those men, Wolphert Gerretse and Adries Hudde, establish a farm named Achternvelt. This farm provides food for the residents of New Amsterdam.

1650

A tidal mill is constructed along the western shore of Strome Kill, later known as Gerritsen's Creek.

The creek serves as the boundary line between the Towns of Flatlands and Gravesend.

In 1652 Pieter and Engelbartsen Lott, arrive in New Amsterdam from Drenthe, Holland. They settle in Flatbush.



Revolution

Throughout the 18th century Flatlands continued a slow, but steady growth. Life was peaceful until the arrival of British soldiers in the summer of 1776. The towns of Flatbush and Flatlands were used as a staging ground for the British troops leading up to the Battle of Long Island (Brooklyn).

August 22, 1776 – 15,000 British soldiers landed at Gravesend Bay. The troops marched in two formations toward Battle Pass to engage the Americans in the first major battle of the Revolutionary War.

Much of the local population of Flatlands were Patriots who supported the cause for Independence. However there were also Loyalists, those who supported the British, in Flatlands, including some members of the Lott family.



Slavery in Rural Kings County
Due to the incredibly fertile farmland, Brooklyn would become the second largest agricultural producer in the region. The large farms throughout Kings County, with thousands of acres of farmland, relied upon the labor of enslaved Africans.

In 1790 over 30% of the population of Kings County were enslaved. This was the highest percentage in New York State.

1719
Colonel Johannes H. Lott purchases property in the Town of Flatlands from the Voorhees family. He builds a small farmhouse where he lives with his wife Antje.

1775
Johannes E. Lott inherits his father's property. He continues to acquire land and will eventually own over 200 acres.

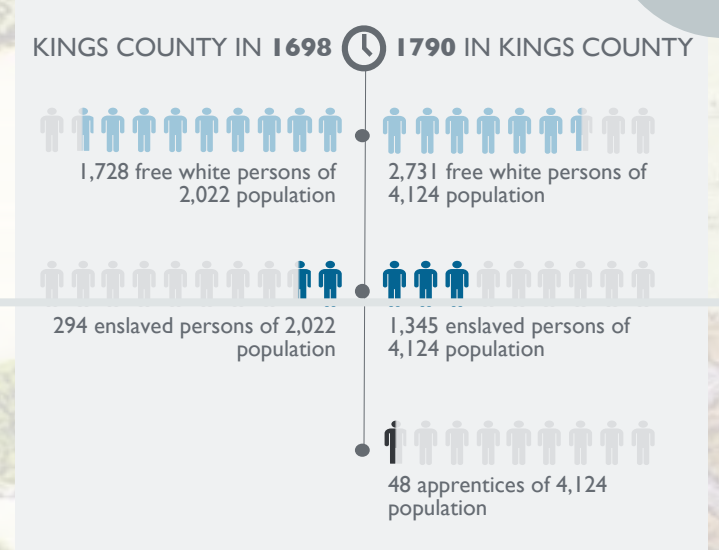
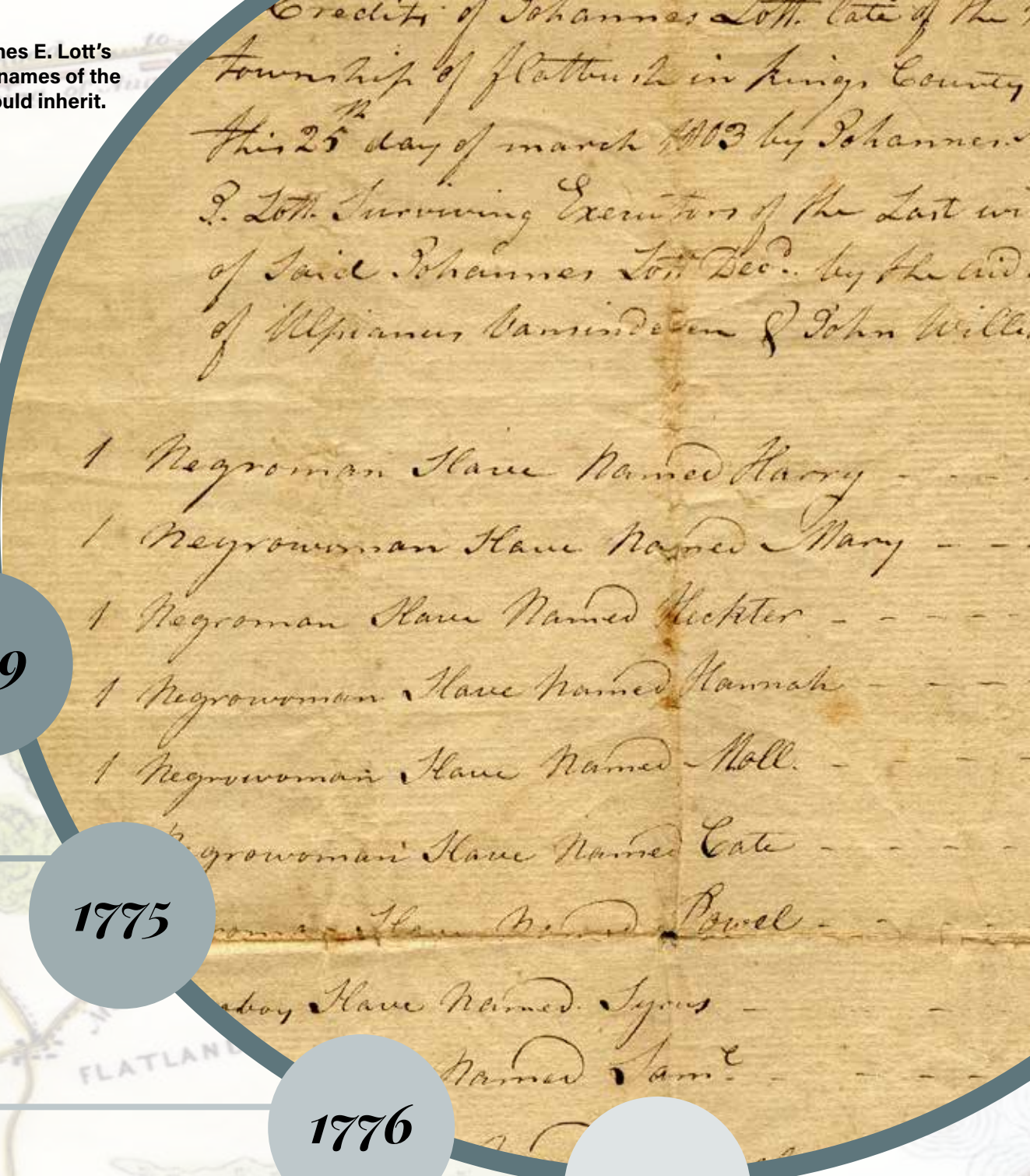
1776
British troops march along Kings Highway camping near Flatlands Avenue in August 1776.

British soldiers raid houses confiscating metals to make bullets. Jannetje Probasco Lott is rumored to have sunk the family's pewter in Gerritsen's Mill. She also gives monies to help support the American cause.

1790
Hendrick I. Lott is living in New York City (Manhattan) and working as a house carpenter. His brother Christopher is a merchant in the City.

In 1788 Johannes E. Lott dies. His son Hendrick inherits his estate, including 12 slaves.

A page from Johannes E. Lott's probate listing the names of the slaves Hendrick would inherit.



Emancipation

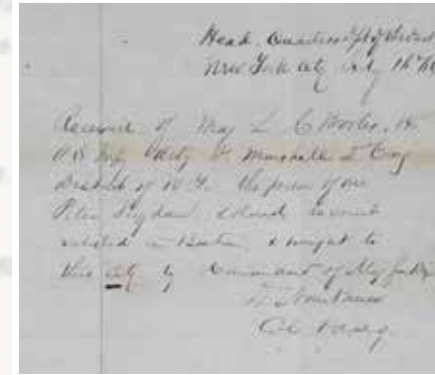
Kings County's farmers relied heavily upon slave labor. As northern Brooklyn became more industrialized (1800 -1820) the number of slaves fell by 57%. However, in agricultural Flatlands that number only fell by 19%.

After the Revolutionary War, slavery began to decline in parts of New York State. In 1799 New York State passed a Gradual Emancipation Act. Slaves born before July 4, 1799 would be freed in 1827. Children born to slaves after July 4, 1799, would be indentured until age 28 for males, and age 25 for females before gaining their freedom. Though a few farmers freed their slaves in the early years of the 19th century, Kings County remained a slave society.

Slavery was finally abolished in New York State in 1827. Many freedmen remained in Brooklyn, working for the same families that had enslaved them, or becoming fishermen on the coast, or working as a laborer in Brooklyn or Manhattan.

In Flatlands several freedmen and their families settled along Mill Road. Among them was William Paupaw who built a house in 1828 and Anthony Moore.

Slavery ended in the United States in 1865.



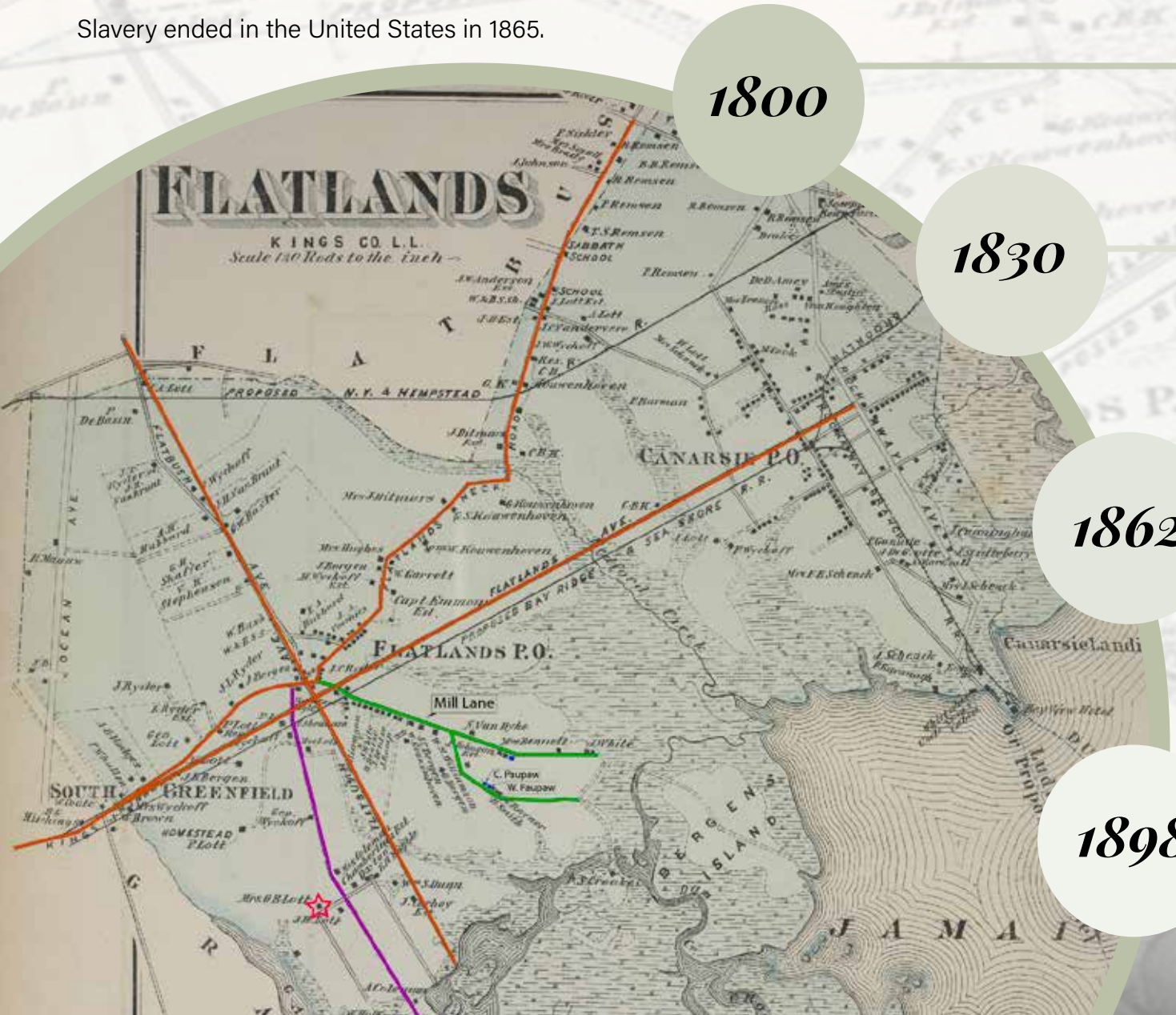
Peter Suydam was an African-American farm laborer living at the Lott House in the mid 19th century. By 1850, he and his wife Mary had a son and moved to their own home. They were neighbors of the Paupaw family. An 1864 letter refers to Peter as being a member of the New York Colored Troops during the Civil War.

Hendrick I. Lott and his wife Mary move from Manhattan to Flatlands. Hendrick uses his skill as a house carpenter to expand the house built by his grandfather in 1720.
Hendrick frees all the enslaved persons he inherited from his father before 1810.

There are 13 "free colored" families living in their own homes in Flatlands.

The Civil War rages from 1861 – 1865. After the war many former slaves migrate north.
By the 1880s many immigrants from Germany and Ireland arrive and areas north of Flatlands begin to develop.

Flatlands remains rural throughout the remainder of the 19th century. As competition from Long Island and New Jersey farms increases, the Lott farm focuses on vegetables and fruits.
The former towns of Kings County are incorporated into Greater New York City as Brooklyn.



1800

1830

1862

1898

Development

The former Town of Flatlands became several new neighborhoods in the early 20th century including Mill Basin, Flatlands, and Canarsie. The farms rapidly disappeared in favor of new roads and houses. The area that would become Marine Park remained rural throughout the first two decades of the 20th century. The Lott family owned the majority of what would become the Marine Park neighborhood.

Broad fields which have been cultivated by generation after generation of Lotts burgeon serenely in the sunshine amid the yellow tawdriness of a cheap suburbia. As a farm the Lott place is doomed. It is perhaps the last remaining piece of agricultural acreage within the metropolitan district.

New York Herald Tribune - September 6, 1925



Born circa 1863, Julia lived on Mill Lane in the home her grandfather built in 1828. The PauPaw family were of African and Shinnecock (Native American) descent. Julia was a trained nurse who married Englishman John Teare in 1880. They raised their 8 children in her ancestral home.



Cornelia Lott and her boyfriend Jimmy

Plans for a new "marine" park along Jamaica Bay, west of Flatbush Avenue, are being discussed.

April 1917 the United States enters World War I. Many young men would die or come back shell shocked. Among them, Milton Teare. His cousin Charles Paupaw would be awarded the Croix de Guerre medal by France.

On the home front citizens were asked to ration and preserve food. Victory Gardens were established by homeowners so produce grown, on farms like the Lott Farm, could support the troops.

The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 leads to many deaths including the boyfriend of Cornelia Lott.

The last crops are harvested from the Lott farm. All but $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre has been sold to developers and construction of new housing begins.

Andrew and Jennie Lott Suydam, along with their daughter Ella, continue to live in the Lott House.

"Marine Park" becomes the name of the neighborhood developing around the new park.

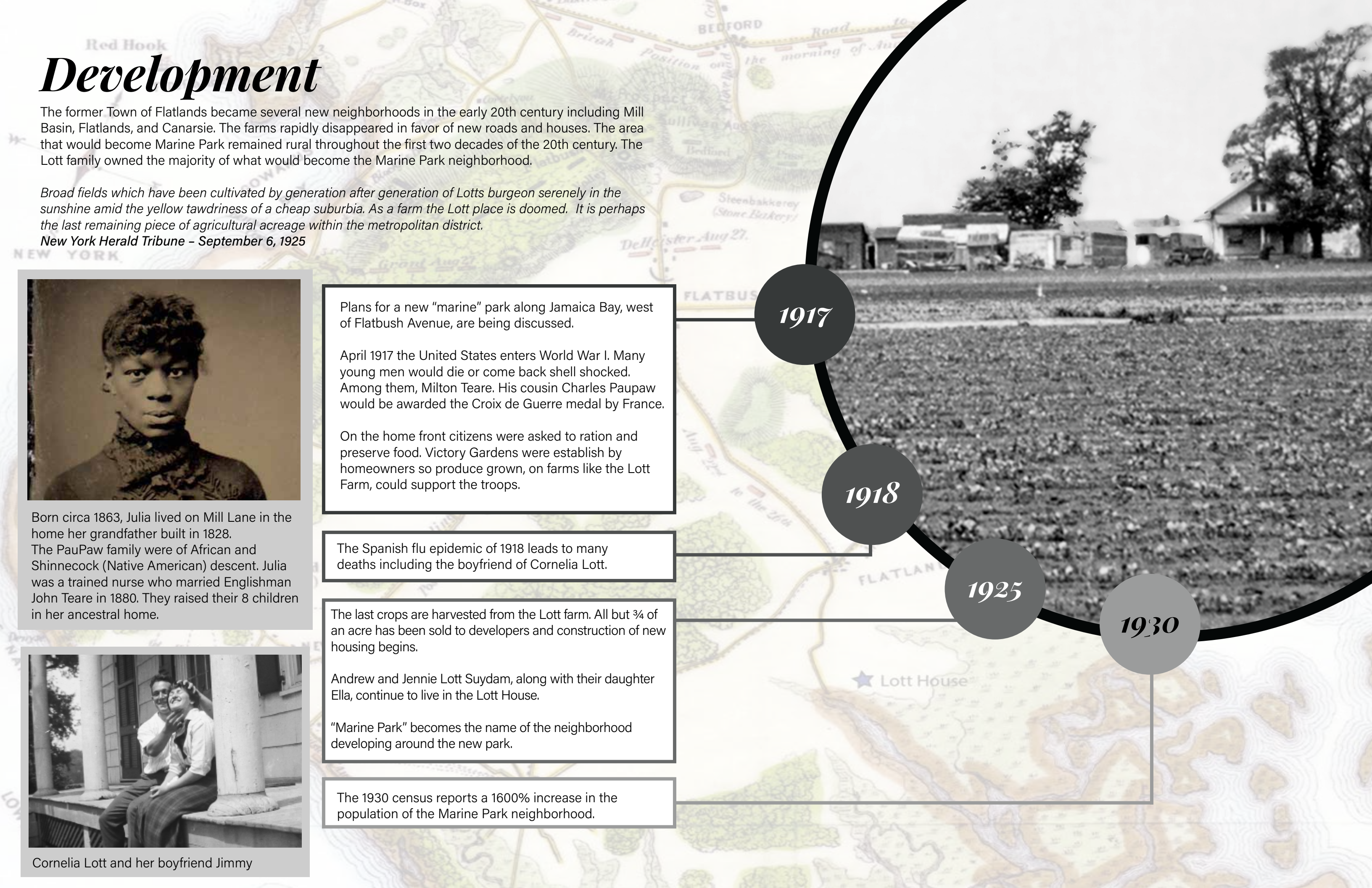
The 1930 census reports a 1600% increase in the population of the Marine Park neighborhood.

1917

1918

1925

1930



highways recorded in 1704 or subsequently thereaf.
The names of localities are taken from ancient
maps, unrecorded instruments or instruments of

The Hendrick I. Lott House

The Hendrick I. Lott House is a rare survivor of Brooklyn's agrarian past. Occupied for nearly 300 years by a single family it is a physical embodiment of every important era in the history of the United States, New York City, and Brooklyn. The house bears testament to our nation's and our city's development.

Hendrick I. Lott, the second great-grandson of Dutch immigrant Pieter Lott, who built the large portion of the house in 1800 incorporating the house that his grandfather Colonel Johannes Lott had built in 1720. Thus, the Lott House that we see today is an amalgam of two Dutch farmhouses, representing different periods in the Lott family's trajectory of upward mobility.

Hendrick was a house carpenter working in Manhattan's Collect District at the end of the 18th century. By the time Hendrick and his wife Mary Brownjohn built the main part of their home in 1800, the family was prosperous and socially prominent, and the house they built reflected their wealth and standing. Hendrick freed all but one of the enslaved people whom he had inherited from his father. Several of the former enslaved individuals continued to work on the Lott farm as paid labor.

For the duration of the 19th century the Lott family continued to farm the land. In the early part of the 20th century, the family began selling off portions of their significant holdings to developers and the development that ensued became the neighborhood of Marine Park.

In 1989, Miss Ella Suydam, a direct descendant of Hendrick I. Lott and the last Lott to inhabit the home, died. The house was designated an individual landmark by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission that same year. In 1994 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The City of New York purchased the house from Ella Suydam's estate in 2002, ending the longest continual ownership by a single family in New York City history.

Friends of the Lott House, incorporated as Hendrick I Lott House Preservation Association, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to preserve and interpret the history and material culture of the 1720 and 1800 Hendrick I. Lott farmhouse in Marine Park, Brooklyn. It aims to educate and engage the public about this historic structure; the Lott family; the farm community of enslaved, immigrant and native-born workers; and the history of southern Brooklyn through interpretive programming.



Thank you:
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