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A Brief History of the Anacostia
Water Park and the W.B. Shaw, or Kenilworth,
Aquatic Gardens

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1. Pre-History and Archeology:

The first white man known to have visited the junction of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers was Captain John Smith, who arrived here in 1608, in the course of his exploration of the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. At the time of his visit there was a thriving Indian village with "80 able men [warriors]" located at the mouth of and on the east bank of the Anacostia River. "This village, which Smith called "Nacotchtank," was the home of an Algonkian-speaking people, who were peaceful and well-disposed towards the whites. By the end of the 17th Century, however, the Nacotchtank or Anacostia Tribe were forced to abandon their village and their lands as white settlers encroached on their territory and developed farms on the forested land.

Archeological sites yielding Indian artifacts left by these people have been found along the entire length of the Anacostia River from its mouth at Giesboro Point to its headwaters in the upper regions of Prince Georges County, Maryland. The sites in the upper reaches of the river usually represent pre-pottery cultures of the Archaic Period while along the wide sandy terraces on the east side of the river in the 8 and 3/4 mile stretch from Bladensburg, Md. to the junction with the Potomac, the sites are of later Woodland peoples who had pottery and engaged in agriculture.

No deep or concentrated sites suggesting villages have been discovered along the Anacostia River. The situation seems to have been one of many single houses or small groups of structures occupying favored spots along the entire river bank rather than the development of large villages.

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All known archeological sites along the river have been destroyed by urban development, and, except for several sizeable surface collections made during the last third of the 19th century, nothing remains of the Indian occupation. Only two archeological sites have been excavated. In 1936, during the enlargement of Bolling Field, two Indians burial pits were excavated and a number of skeletons were salvaged by archeologists of the United States National Museum.¹ In 1957, Mr. Howard A. MacCord, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, tested a small one-acre site located on low ground on the left bank of the Anacostia River, just downstream from and bordering on Everdam Creek at the Washington suburb of Kenilworth. This site had been farmed for many years and much modern debris was found on the surface and in the plow-disturbed topsoil. MacCord's excavations on this site, which was owned by National Capital Parks, produced numerous Indian artifacts, including pottery, stone projectile points, and other stone tools. These objects have been placed in the collections of the United States Museum. The total area uncovered was 500 square feet. No pits, burials, or postmolds were found. The artifacts found suggested that the Kenilworth site saw repeated occupancy by the Indians during the last 3,000 years, ending about A.B. 1,650.²

2. Cont.

Howard A. MacCord, "Archeology of the Anacostia Valley of Washington, D.C. and Maryland," Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences, Vol. 47, No. 12 (December 1967), 393-397.

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1. Drs. T. Dale Stewart and Waldo R. Wedel. Bolling Field is located at the mouth of and on the east bank of the Anacostia River.
 2. Powell, Benjamin B., and Howland, Benjamin C., Archeological Base Map Part of the Master Plan, National Capital Region, N.C.P., 3003. dated Dec. 6, 1963, sheet 1 of 1, Revised February 24, 1966. and

2. History- The Anacostia River to 1898:

During the early growth of Washington in the 19th century, extensive plans were made for harbor development of lower Anacostia. But the development of the city moved westward, so that the swampy Anacostia region remained a wild area, with only a few farms located on the highlands. The wide swampy reaches of the river were divided into channels that ^{ran} between bush-covered islets and vast expanses of wild rice and these conditions prevailed down into the first third of the 20th century.

The extensive area of tidal flats along the Anacostia River was a breeding place for the malarial mosquito and this discouraged home building in that area. On the best or higher land along the west side of the marshes were placed the Congressional Cemetery, jail, hospital, crematory, and ^{also the} dumps of the growing Capital. The Anacostia River, originally navigable by sailing craft ^{for 8 and 3/4 miles} up to Bladensburg, Md., by 1890 had become choked by washings from the clearings and cultivated fields.

A joint resolution of Congress, approved April 11, 1898, directed the Secretary of War to have a project prepared for the improvement of the Anacostia River and the reclamation of its flats from the line of the District of Columbia [with Maryland] to the mouth of said river, with an estimate of the cost of the same and a report on the area and ownership of the land to be reclaimed...." The Chief of Engineers transmitted the requested study, prepared by Lieut. Col. Charles J. Allen and dated December 1, 1898, to the Secretary of War on December 12th of the same year.

2. U.S. House Documents, 56th Congress, 1st Session (1899-1900) Appendix K-16 to "Report of the Chief of Engineers," comprising Report of Lt. Col. Charles J. Allen, "Survey of Anacostia River," dated December 1, 1898, (Serial No. 3905), p. 143. Hereafter cited as Allen, 1898.

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3. State of the Anacostia River to the District Line in 1898:

Col. Allen described the river as follows:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

The Anacostia River was formerly known as the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River, and has this designation on many recent maps.

The main stream has its rise in Prince George County, Md., and, flowing in a general southwesterly direction, enters the District of Columbia, and empties into the Potomac River at the southernmost extremity of the city of Washington, Greenleaf Point being on the right or northerly bank and Giesboro Point on the left or southerly bank at the mouth of the river. The former head of navigation for small craft on the Anacostia was Bladensburg, Md., $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles, by the channel of the river, above the mouth. The range of tides at Bladensburg is 2.1 feet, the width of the stream at that point being 135 feet and the depth at low tide from 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet.

Between Bladensburg and the District boundary line, a distance of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the course of the river is quite tortuous, and the banks, at first firm, gradually become marshy. The depths in the upper part of this section range from 1 to 2 feet, gradually increasing to about 4 feet at the District line. From the District line (the upper limit of the survey) to Bennings Bridge the distance is about 2 miles. At points between these localities the depths range from 3 to $13\frac{1}{4}$ feet and the widths from 115 to 250 feet. This section of the river is bordered by wide marshes or flats with some swamp area, the extreme width of these

flats between high-tide lines, and including the river channel, ranging from a minimum of 190 feet to a maximum of 2,520 feet. The flats are covered for many months of the year with a dense growth of wild rice and coarse grasses; also, in one locality, with trees. They are intersected with numerous small streams and are overflowed at high tide. The range of tide at Bennings Bridge is 3 feet, while the width of the channel here is 180 feet and its maximum depth $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Below Bennings Bridge the river, flowing south, follows the firm ground on the left, then turns abruptly to the right and flows west, and soon resuming its southerly course, flows along the comparatively firm ground of Reservation No. 13, on which the District workhouse and jail are located, and below which the river is crossed by the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad bridge. The depth in the channel between these two bridges ranges from 9 to 19 feet, while the low-tide width, where the channel is well defined, varies from 150 to 270 feet. The channel is bordered on the right, below Bennings Bridge, by flats from 1,000 to 2,700 feet wide, composed of extremely soft mud and covered with a dense growth of wild rice. Their average height is 1.1 feet above low tide. At high tide they are, of course, overflowed. The boundary sewer discharges upon this marsh and the ebb and flow of the tide has distributed the sewage over it, where it ferments and gives forth offensive gases.

On the lower part of this section there are flats on the left of the channel near the railroad bridge, which are generally below low tide, depths of water upon them reaching nearly 2 feet. These flats have also a growth of aquatic grasses which facilitates the lodgment of silt and sediment, and is causing rapid shoaling.

The width of the entire river between the lines of high tide ranges in this section from 1,600 to 3,300 feet. " ..."

"The total distance from the District boundary line to the mouth of the river, measured along the channel, is 36,300 feet, or about 6.9 miles." 2

2. Allen, 1145-1146.

5

In making the field survey, Col. Allen reported:

It was necessary for the field party to traverse the flats above low tide on foot to take measurements and levels along the various lines in order to determine elevations. The mud was so soft in many places that a man would sink into it to a depth of 1 or 2 feet from his own weight, while the wild rice had attained such a growth that it was with difficulty that sights could be taken and signals exchanged. In addition the sewage from the great boundary sewer rendered the surroundings almost intolerable for the party.

Under such conditions the field work could not be carried forward rapidly, but it was nevertheless continuously prosecuted, and on July 31, 1898, the survey of the section between the line of Massachusetts avenue and Benning's Bridge had been completed and considerable work had been done on the survey of the section between the bridge and the District boundary line. On this upper section also a traverse line was run completely around the area surveyed. Above Benning's Bridge the flats were somewhat higher, but still covered with a growth of wild rice and aquatic plants. The ground was still very soft and the flats were intersected with numerous "drains" or beds of small streams through which the tide ebbed and flowed. On a part of the area a swamp was found with a heavy growth of timber through which the survey lines had to be cut. The flats here were free of sewage, but with this exception the difficulties of prosecuting the field work were quite as great as below Benning's Bridge.

The survey of the section of river between Benning's Bridge and the District boundary line was completed September 1, and a partial survey made of the section between Massachusetts avenue extended and Poplar Point. A

Col. Allen urged that the Anacostia River be improved to provide better access to the Navy Yard, to increase facilities for commerce and navigation, and to remove existing unsanitary conditions. Of this last item, he commented: "Along the Anacostia front of the city there are reported no less than eight sewer outfalls, commencing with the large boundary sewer on the

north and ending with James Creek Canal, near Buzzards Point. These sewers carry a large volume of sewage into the river each day. In the lower part of the river and during ebb tide much of the sewage is carried into the channel, gradually reaching the Potomac. But in the upper part of the river, and particularly on the flood tide, the sewage is carried over the flats and widely disseminated, and as the tide falls it remains lodged in the aquatic grasses, where it ferments in the summer and autumn heat, constituting an active source of disease. The flat at the outlet of the boundary sewer, already described, probably represents the maximum of the existing unsanitary conditions. These same conditions prevail, though in a lesser degree, on the flats below, and particularly on those in front of the navy-yard and the reservation of the Government Hospital for the Insane, as the projection of Poplar Point and the fill made here in accordance with the plan of 1891 tend, as reported, to retard the already slow tidal current.

The result of this unsanitary condition is, as reported, the prevalence of malarial diseases in the portions of the city and District which border the river. Reports of the Surgeon-General of the Navy show that diseases of this character have been prevalent at the navy-yard, while the officer in charge of the Government Hospital for the Insane has frequently called attention in his annual reports to the condition of these flats as the cause of malarial disease in that institution.

In summarizing the data for his estimates, Col. Allen wrote:

"The proposed Anacostia River improvement covers about 7 miles of river, and the area of reclamation would be about 1,389 acres (including reservoirs above Bennings ^{off} Bridge). The estimated cost of the low-grade filling would be \$ 2,839,320, or the high grade \$ 6,967,180.

If the work be limited to the part below the Bennings Bridge, the area reclaimed will be about 843 acres, at a cost to low grade, of \$ 2,194,720, or about 6 cents per square foot." Allen also calculated that the project would affect about 548 acres of privately owned agricultural land and 1,695,877.10 square feet of privately owned sub-divided land. The assessed value of this property was about \$ 22,987.⁵

There the situation stood when the McMillan Commission began to study the improvement of Washington, D.C. in 1900.

4. The McMillan Plan for a "Anacostia Water Park," 1901:

The McMillan Commission, a Senate sub-committee named after its Chairman, Senator James B. McMillan, was established in 1900 to prepare a general plan for the development of a public park system for the Nation's Capital. Four outstanding American artists were engaged by the commission to help prepare a master plan; included were Architect Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago, Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., landscape architect from Brookline, Mass., architect Charles Follen McKim of New York City, and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, also of New York City.

4. Allen, 1898. O. 1457.

5. Ibid., 1458-1463.

7

In the McMillan Commission report, submitted in 1901, the commission remarked: "The present outrageous condition of the Anacostia River has been so fully discussed before the Congress in various reports during the last several years that there is no occasion for us to describe it in detail again. Suffice it to say that within the District of Columbia the Anacostia is a fresh-water estuary with a normal tide of about three feet, which alternately covers and exposes to the sun a great area of reeking mud flats upon which the aquatic plants constantly entangle additional deposits of mud, slime, and purtifying organic matter... No conditions could be more favorable to the development of malaria, and because of these conditions the disease had made havock with the inmates and officers of the Government Hospital for the Insane, of the jail, and of the workhouse, and with those occupied at the Navy Yard, and the Washington Barracks...

"The pressing sanitary problem is simply to do away with the low amphibious area which are alternately flooded and exposed, and to convert them either into deep water or into dry land; but incidentally the improvements may be made to provide increased commerical water frontage, while a part of the reclaimed lands may be used as a park. Plans and estimates for the improvement of the river, with a view to commerical occupancy below Bennings Bridge, were prepared by Colonel Allen and submitted to Congress in 1898. For the portion above Bennings Bridge the time and ^{the} appropriation did not suffice for complete surveys and estimates, and the possibility that this section would ever be used for commerical frontage, even if improved, was thought to be so slight as not to be worth considering.... In the upper section, above Bennings Bridge, a similar treatment [dredging and filling marsh lands] was proposed, but with the channel widened into tidal basins,

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"the shores of which were to be parked."

The MacMillan report proposed creating a park and great lake above the commercial section of the Anacostia River by means of a dam located either at Massachusetts Avenue or the Benning Bridge. ^{proposed}

"The result of this treatment," the Commission wrote, would be a great lake, deep enough to be clean and free from vegetation, refreshed by a sufficient flow of water, kept free from mosquitoes and malaria by its depth, by the unobstructed sweep of the wind, and by its clean shores, and surrounded by natural meadows and groves that need only to be cultivated and protected from inundation [from the Potomac River] to become a charming park. The lake would provide opportunities for boating,....and the meadows, beside their landscape beauty, would provide the best of playing fields. To protect and inclose this landscape and to give points from which it could be adequately commanded, ^{we} should propose to include the faces and crests of some of the bordering hills [or west] on the Washington side, one of which is already owned by the District Reform School, while a large part of the marsh land is claimed by the Government. The total area of the proposed park is 1,143 acres, of which 535 would be occupied by water..."

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"In addition to the border streets, there would be a main drive within the park on each side of the water, generally near the boundary, in order to leave the central area unobstructed, and in order to keep upon the higher ground overlooking the meadows and ^{the} lake, but sometimes running close ^{along} the shore. Secondary drives and cross connections would be required in places, and of course, a series of paths. Boathouses

6. The MacMillan Commission Report, in U.S. Senate Reports, 57th Congress, 1st Session (1901-1902), Vol. 3, Report No. 166 (Serial 4258), Charles Moore, ed., "The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia," p.105-106.

7. The MacMillan Report, 106, 108.

"arranged so as to accommodate skaters in winter, should be important features at the points where the park is reached by main lines of

transportation, and bathing facilities should be freely provided." ⁸ 1935
of the Anacostia River and Development of a Park, 1912 at the

5. Reclamation The Corps of Engineers began the task of reclaiming land

month of the August
Anacostia River in 1912, having then just completed the project of reclaiming land for East Potomac Park. In 1917 the Corps of Engineers, Congress, and the Commission of Fine Arts agreed upon the projects for the treatment of the river from the Benning Bridge north to the District Line. Adopting a suggestion of Lieut. Col. William W. Harts, Corps of Engineers, the Commission of Fine Arts recommended in 1918 that the present site of the National Arboretum on the west bank of the river be acquired for the purpose of developing such an arboretum. The land for this purpose, which includes Mount Hamilton and Hickey Hill, was acquired by the Government in 1927. The project of reclamation of the Anacostia River had progressed from the mouth as far north as the Benning Bridge by 1925. ⁹

Extensive dredging and filling operations were carried on from 1912 . The original meandering stream was changed into a broad channel and the marshes reclaimed, thus providing 1,305 acres of park land and 468 acres of protected water areas. Two lakes on either side of the upper section of the river, containing numerous islands, were formed to maintain water at a constant level, thus providing clean shores and promoting water activities. By 1932 it had been decided that the W.B. Shaw Lily Ponds, located on the east bank of the river,

8. McMillan Report, 1901, p. 108-109.

9. "The Plan of the National Capital" from the 9th Annual Report of the Commission of Fine Arts (Washington, D.C., 1925), p.31. Federal Writers' Project, Washington, City and Capital (American Guide Series) (Washington, D.C., 1937), 587.

10. Some 370 acres of the Army Bolling Airfield were created 1912-1917 by this reclamation project.

and privately owned, should

be acquired and included in the Anacostia Park to form a water garden of some 180 acres.

The reclamation work was carried on by hydraulic pipeline dredges filling in spoil basins bounded on the water side by levees thrown up by the clamshell derrickboats. Masonry seawalls six feet high, built on riprap stone foundations, bordered all channel water areas while lake and island shores either had a low wall one foot above the water level on a similar foundation or were left in their natural condition.

-Lake Kingman-

A sliding gate lock gave access to the larger lake on the west side and over which Benning Road was carried on a concrete girder bridge. Four twin conduits with mitre gate chambers maintained a constant water level in the lakes and provided for the periodic water renewal.

Supervised by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the project was 74 % complete by the end of 1931; the total cost, if completed in 1937, as planned, was to be \$ 4,275,000. As sections of reclaimed land were completed, they were transferred to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks for final landscaping development for park purposes.

While the Army Engineers were conducting this work, the municipal government through the operations of its Engineer Department in the disposal of city refuse was also rapidly filling in the adjacent lowlands with ashes, covered by dirt from excavation.

14. Newell, Frederick Hargnes, ed., Planning and Building the City of Washington (Society of Engineers, Randell, 1932), 102-104.

11.

In describing the Anacostia Parks in 1937, the Federal Writers' Project guide, Washington, City and Capital reported:

"Newest of the major park systems, its development was long delayed because of special financial and labor problems involved. Work.... is still continuing....." This [wild or natural] aspect of the region is being preserved north of Pennsylvania Avenue...

Between Pennsylvania Avenue and Bolling Field, on the eastern shore, the park is more completely developed for recreational use. Here are golf links, baseball and football fields, tennis courts, croquet and quoits grounds, and a field house with locker rooms and a refectory available to the public. A concrete driveway follows the eastern edge of the river southward from the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, passing under the Anacostia Bridge to the boundary of Bolling Field. Above Pennsylvania Avenue additional golf links are being developed, but the upper reaches of the river are being left as largely as possible as nature made them."

"Anacostia Park ends at the District boundary line. Along the upper western side of the park is the National Arboretum

The lowlands surrounding the Anacostia River opposite the Arboretum are being turned into a bird sanctuary, which occupies 80 acres. A great wild-rice swamp here makes such a plan exceptionally feasible." ¹²

The Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, which had administered the Anacostia Parks since 1925, was abolished and the parks were transferred to the National Park Service on August 10, 1933.

12. Washington, City and Capital (American Guide Series), 585-587.

In 1938 the National Park Service acquired the W.B. Shaw Lily Ponds as an addition to the Anacostia Park.

Located just south of the District Line on the eastern side of the river, these ponds, in 1937, covered 90 acres and " were divided into 40 pools, from which over 400,000 lilies are cut during the summer.

"The roots and bulbs are shipped all over the world," the ^{Washington} Guide Book

^{Common Pool} continued. Some rare variants of waterlilies have been produced in

these waters by hybridizing. Among the hundreds of distinct varieties are the Giant Victoria Regina, whose leaves often reach 6 feet in width, and the night-blooming waterlily."

6. History of the W.E. Shaw Lily Ponds or Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens :

The Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens are located in the northeast section of Washington, D.C., in the marshland on the east shore of the Anacostia River at a point just south of the District Line and 7 miles north of the mouth of the river. The gardens were founded by Walter B. Shaw of Rockland Harbor, Maine. Shaw fought in the Union Army and lost his right arm in the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, May 1864. After the Civil War, he came to Washington, D.C., to work as a clerk in the Treasury Department. He married and in 1880 purchased a 37-acre farm, which included the future site of the aquatic gardens, from his father-in-law. Shaw also pursued his hobby, - the growing of water lilies, on the marshy sections of his land. In 1882 he imported 12 hardy American white lilies from his native Maine and grew them in an abandoned ice pond. As the lilies thrived, he had his farm workers dig additional ponds and Shaw also began to experiment in hybridization and the importation of exotic varieties.

He began to sell his lilies commercially and daily shipped thousands of hand-picked lilies of 63 different varieties to Boston, New York, and Chicago. In 1912 he turned the management of this business over to his daughter, Helen Shaw Fowler. She imported the great Victoria Regia from the Amazon, a plant with a leaf six feet in diameter. She also imported blue lilies from the Nile and lotus flowers from Africa, China, and Japan. Her hybrid lilies won silver medals at the Newport Horticultural Show at Newport, R.I., in 1913 and at the New York show in 1922.

Mr. Interview of George Kennedy with Helen Shaw Fowler, "Internationally-Famous Lily Ponds Give Kenilworth Its Deserved Reputation," in Washington Star, April 30, 1951.

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Prior to his death in 1921, Walter B. Shaw was responsible for developing many new varieties of lily, among them the Pink Opal and the W.B. Shaw and the Helen Fowler water lily varieties, all still grown commercially today. The "W.B. Shaw Gardens" produced lilies available nowhere else in the country.

Mrs. Fowler continued to run the business from 1912 to 1938. She agreed to permit the public to view the lilies on Sunday mornings during the height of the season. During the 1920's and 1930's visitors numbered as many as from 5 to 6,000 per day. Plans to include the famous W.B. Shaw Lily Ponds in the Anacostia Park were formulated in 1924. Initial attempts for government purchase were unsuccessful, and in 1929 a court decree was required to prevent their outright condemnation ~~by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who~~ were still dredging the Anacostia River. The Government contended that the marshy land had always belonged to it, because it was land located within the high water mark of a tidal estuary of the Potomac River. Title to such land had been conveyed by royal grant to Lord Baltimore of Maryland, then to the State of Maryland in 1776, and by Maryland to the Federal Government when the District was established in 1790. The fact that the Shaw family had paid taxes for the land for 50 years was held ^{by the Federal Government} to be irrelevant. The court decided for the Fowler family when it was established that a number of types of water lilies cultivated at the Shaw Gardens could not live in tidal ^{salt} waters.

The issue of purchase was revived in March 1937, by the Kenilworth Citizens Association in hearings before the House Sub-Committee on

Appropriations. In 1938, the gardens were purchased from Mrs. Fowler by the Federal Government for \$ 15,000 and included as part of the Anacostia Park.

7. The Gardens under the National Park Service, 1938-78:

The Shaw Gardens were renamed the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens by the National Park Service after the adjacent Kenilworth subdivision.

The extent of the gardens, about 14 acres, remains essentially unchanged from 1938, the year they ceased operation as a commercial venture and became a part of the Park system of the Nation's Capital. The gardens are composed of a series of irregularly sized and shaped ponds, formed by diking parts of the Anacostia River flood plain, a wetland habitat of swamp marshes. Some dikes have been added since 1949 inside the two largest pools in the northwest section to facilitate their use with limited Park personnel. Another addition of seven tiny pools have also been constructed in the marshy area along the southwest corner. (See Map of Gardens).

In all, about 75 varieties of lily are on display at the gardens. In mid-June the hardy, day blooming lilies are at their peak; in July and August, the night-blooming tropical water lilies open.

Among a number of unusual exotic water lilies is the giant tropical waterlily with immense leaves, up to six feet in diameter and capable of floating a child, from the Amazon basin. Also found at Kenilworth is the Egyptian lotus, reputed to have been a favorite of Cleopatra. Two ancient lotus plants, perhaps 1,900 years old, were

16. About 1895 a real estate developer purchased much of the James Marvin, Fowler 140-acre farm and the David A. Miller 100 acre farm to lay out the subdivision now known as Kenilworth. The name was taken from Sir Walter Scott's novel of this name.

germinated at the Aquatic Gardens in 1951. These seeds were unearthed in an ancient lakebed near P'u-lan-tien, by a Japanese botanist in the 1920's.

The Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens also houses ¹⁴⁰ other species of pond and marginal plants, both exotic and native. They include yellow-blossomed waterpoppy, bamboo, umbrella-plant, elephant ear, and waterhyacinth.

In the gardens are also such swamp and marsh plants as golden club pickerelweed, arrowhead, ~~144~~ cardinalflower, rose-mallow, loosestrife, waterprimrose, tuttlehead, buttonbush, wildrice, and cattail. Many native trees grow around the pools, including an immense willow oak. Several other species of oak are present- as well as river birch, willow, red maple, elm, ash, sweet and black gums, sweetbay magnolia, and sycamore. These trees create a forest setting for the pools and provide welcome shade in summer for visitors.

The area is also a refuge for waterfowl, fish, and forest animals. Least bitterns, long-billed marsh wrens, green herons, and red winged blackbirds nest in the marsh. The waterfowl arrive during their spring migration in February and the last of the warblers pass through in June. Muskrat, raccoon, and opossum inhabit the park. Musk, mud, painted, spotted, red-bellied, and snapping turtles live on the banks and in the ponds. Green frogs, bullfrogs, swamp cricket and ^c cricket frogs, leopard and pickerel frogs, spadefoot, Fowler's and American toads lay their eggs in the water and call early and late both spring and summer.

Located to the south of the ponds are three structures that were used by Walter B. Shaw and Helen Shaw, Fowler in their commercial aquatic plant operations from 1912 to 1938. These original buildings consist of an Office or Administration Building erected in 1912 and two

two greenhouses that were both built in 1913. To the rear of the southern greenhouses stands a rectangular-shaped concrete tank for water lilies that was also erected prior to 1938.

The Administration Building or Office is a small board-and-batten two-story structure with a gable roof. Three one-story shed-like wings extend from the main house to the southeast, the southwest, and the northeast. The exterior is painted brown and the trim is white. The main building now contains the public restrooms.

The two greenhouses are built into the side of a gently sloping hill and both have concrete walls and floors; ^{interior} concrete tanks for water plants are located around their walls. The roofs of both structures, once covered with glass, are now covered with translucent plastic material in which vandels persist ~~to~~ tear^{ing} holes. During the cold months the tubers are stored in wet sand in these greenhouses to avoid winter frost kill. The hardy lilies are left out the year round.

The North Greenhouse, the larger of the two structures, is divided into three sections: these consist of a large and a small greenhouse room. The latter adjoins on the southwest side and is covered by a shed roof. The third section is an adjoining one-story board-and-batten shed that houses the boiler for the building. The South Greenhouse has one long narrow room and the boiler for this structure is located in a small board and batten shed addition.

The Administration Building is now used by the National Park Service as a interpretive center for visitors and the two functioning 1913 greenhouses are also open to visitors.

The National Park Service has added picnic areas, restrooms, and two new greenhouses to the Park since 1949. The two newer greenhouses provide flowers for the White House.

The Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens were added to the National Registry of Historic Places in August 1978. Included in the designation are the ponds and the 1912-13 Administration Building and North and South Greenhouses. The later greenhouses, picnic areas, and other improvements added by the National Park Service since 1949 are excluded.

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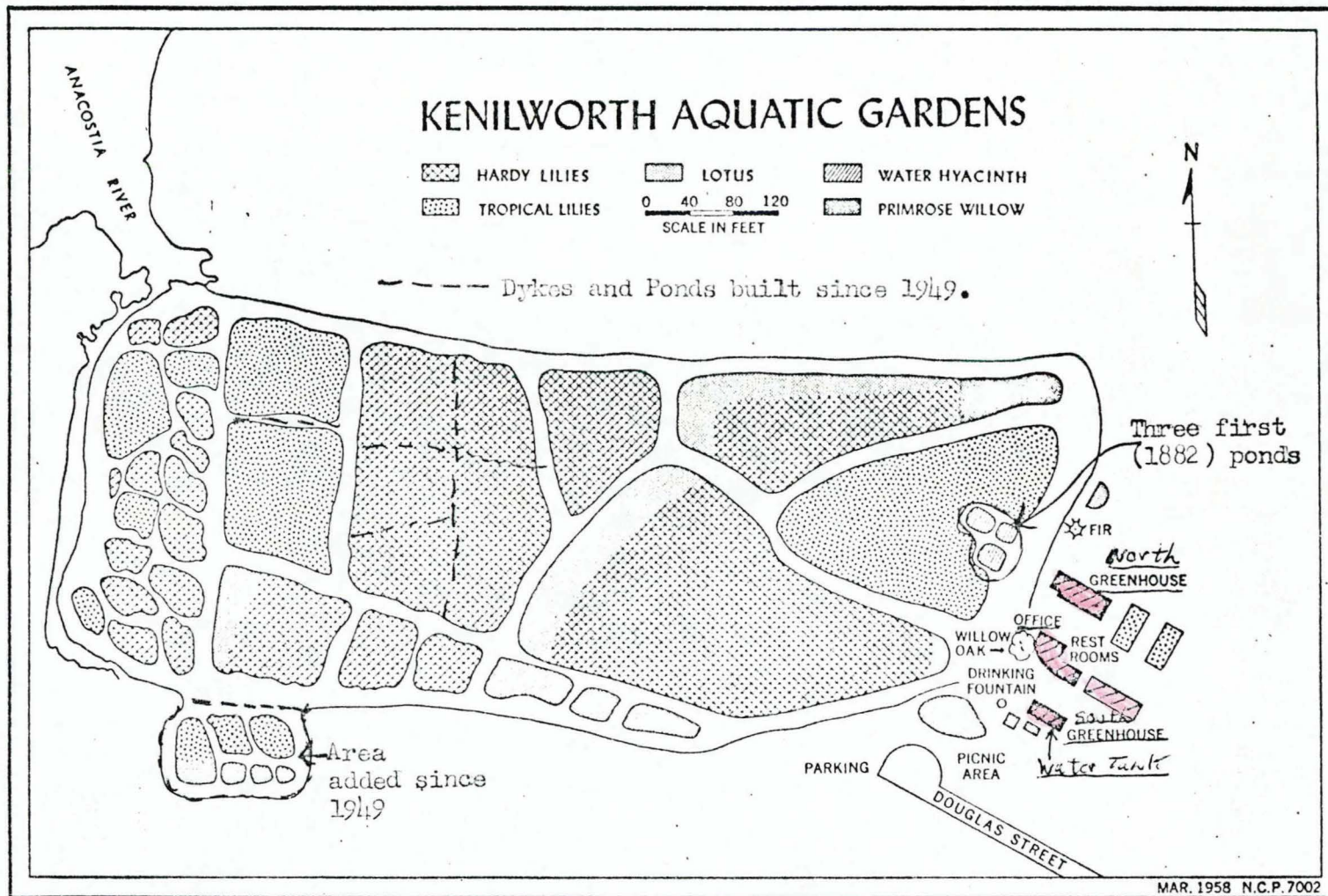
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Revised February 24, 1966.



MAR. 1958 N.C.P. 7002

About 14 acres

Historic Structures, 1912-13.

Kensilworth Subdivision

1901 Plan

W. B. Shaw's Tilly Ponds

Benning Bridge

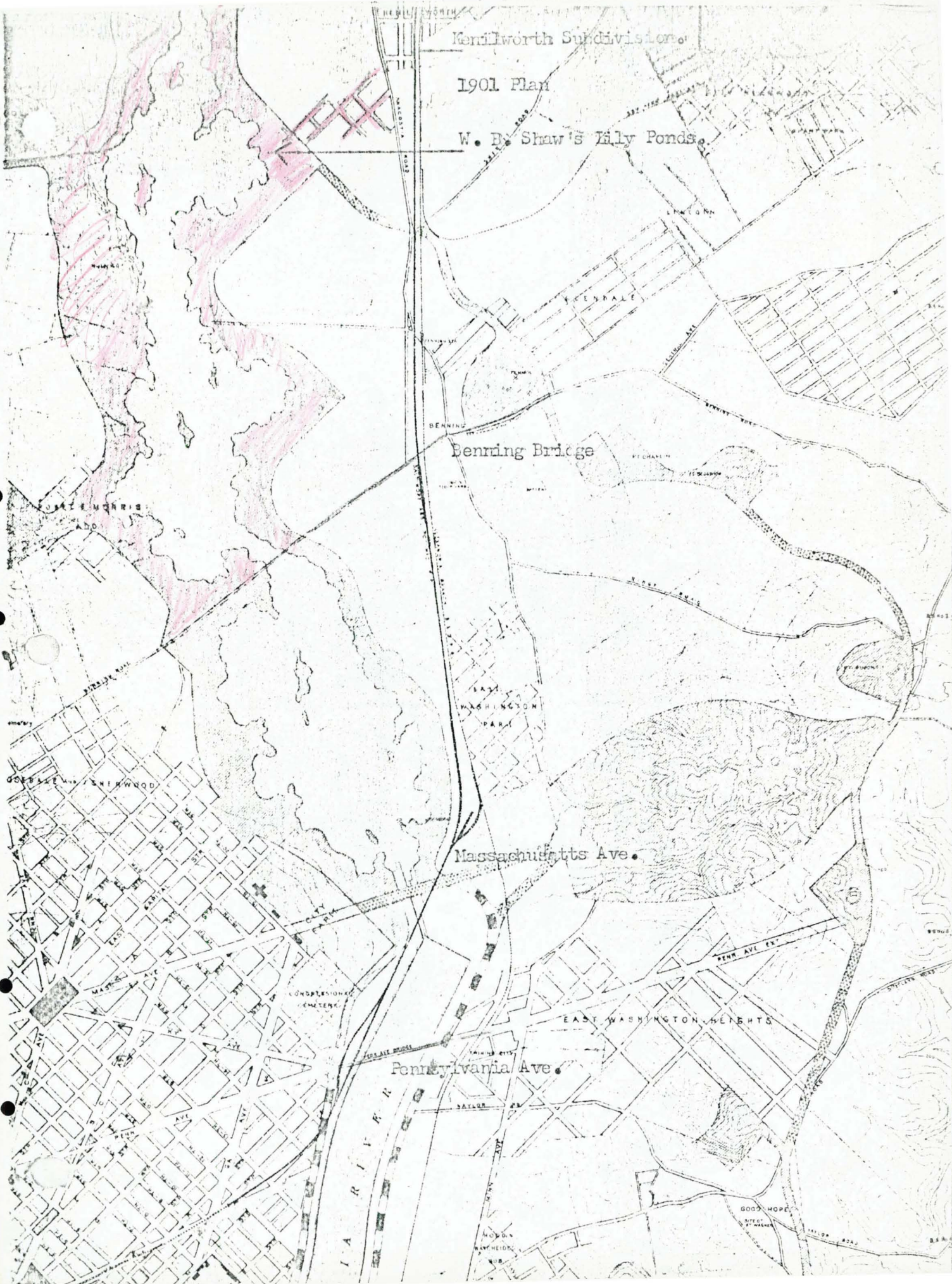
Massachusetts Ave.

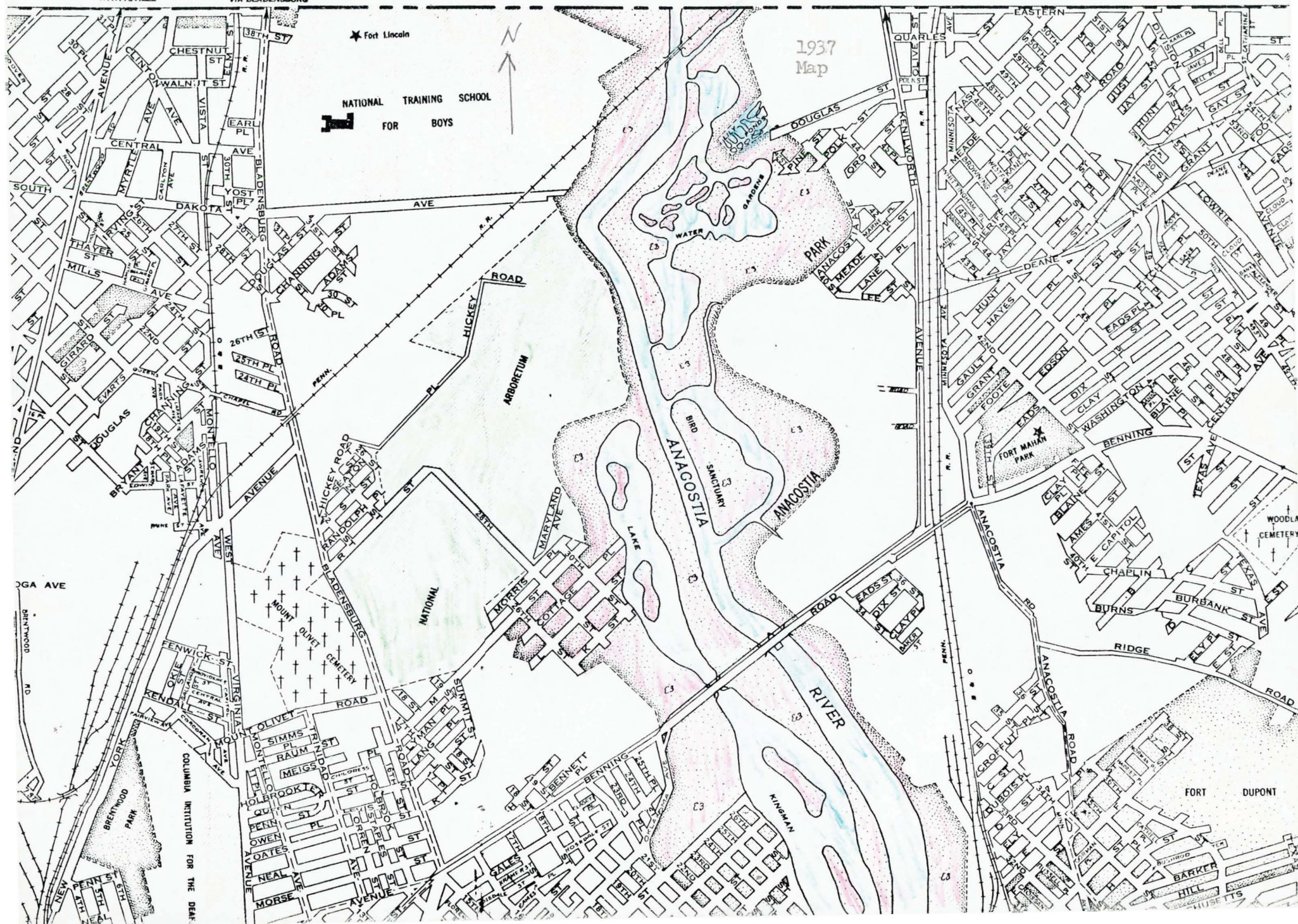
Pennsylvania Ave.

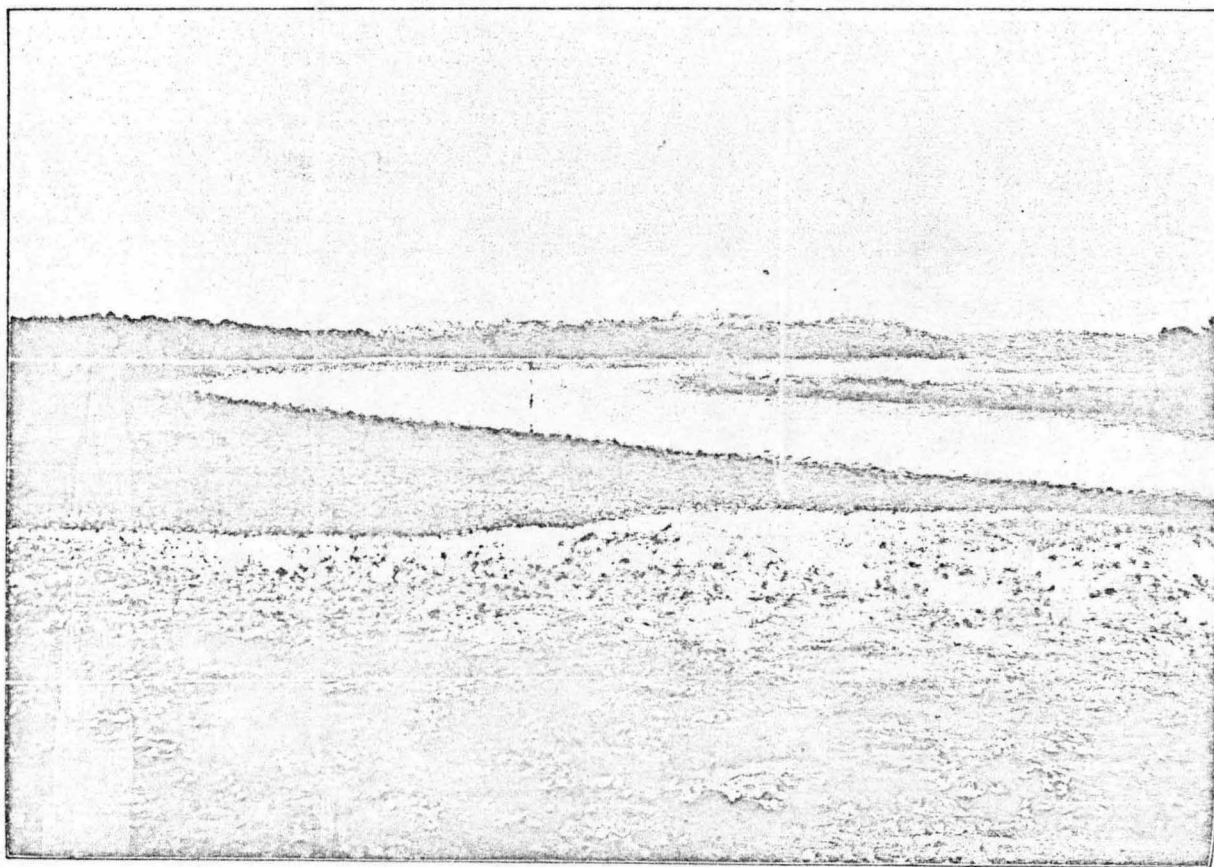
LA RIVER

EAST WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

GOOD HOPE



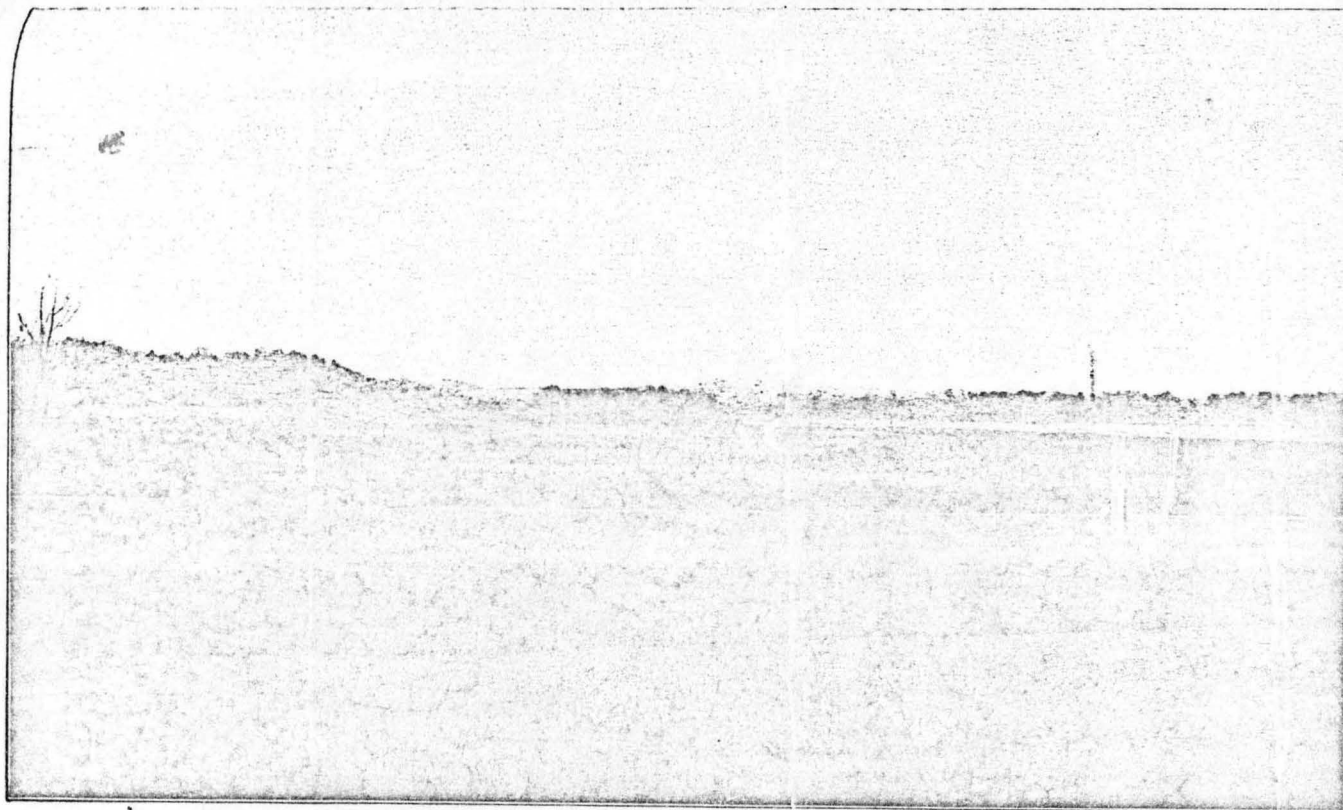




ANACOSTIA MARSHES FROM BENNING BRIDGE, LOOKING NORTH, SHOWING MALARIAL FLATS TO BE EXCAVATED.

From the McMillan Report of 1901, 104.

^
Anacostia Marshes from Benning Bridge, looking North, Showing
^
Malarial Flats to be Excavated.



ANACOSTIA MARSHES, SHOWING ISLANDS OF FREE GROWTH TO BE SAVED BY THE PROPOSED METHOD OF IMPROVEMENT, FROM BENNING BRIDGE,
LOOKING NORTH.

Anacostia Marshes, Showing Islands of Free Growth to be saved by
the Proposed Method of Improvement, From Benning Bridge,
Looking North.

View from the McMillan Report of 1901, p. 107.

