



BIG DUCK RANCH
FLANDERS ROAD,
FLANDERS, NY

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FORM

MAY 2008

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7. DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Big Duck Ranch is located on the east side of Flanders Road (NYS Route 24) in Flanders, New York, in the northwest corner of the Town of Southampton, Long Island (Suffolk County). The nominated property – District 900, Section 146, Block 1, Lot 16 – encompasses 11.3 acres acquired for duck farming in the 1930s. It preserves four original buildings (all contributing), one structure (non-contributing), and an open meadow and mix of undeveloped woodland and tidal wetlands bordering Reeves Bay, an extension of the Peconic River.

The nominated property operated as a duck ranch and retail store that sold duck products from 1936 until 1984. Its boundaries are those of the historic Maurer farm on which the iconic Big Duck was situated until its donation and relocation for preservation to Suffolk County's nearby Sears Bellows Park in 1987. Acquisition of the nominated property by the Town of Southampton in 2001 made it possible to relocate the Big Duck to its former historic site, thus reuniting the celebrated landmark with its three associated farm outbuildings. One non-contributing structure – a small stone wishing well – remains standing on the property and appears to date from the 1976 Bi-Centennial celebration era.

The Big Duck, which is the principal building on the site, was entered on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1997 [**Appendix A**]. The building was relocated once again in 2007 to its original foundation on the nominated property, thus re-establishing its relationship to Flanders Road as the unique, eye-catching retail outlet that was the intention of Martin Maurer, its original owner. A small gravel parking field has been created at the site. The three contributing outbuildings, all of which were integral to Maurer's historic farming operation, represent three aspects of duck raising and processing that are central to the industry: the brooding of ducklings, storage of feed and machinery, and sale of products. The architectural integrity of the nominated resources ranges from good to poor; they all preserve a wealth of original detailing, however, and are slated for restoration and reuse as a Visitors' Welcome Center by the Town of Southampton.

Flanders, Long Island, is a small hamlet situated along the main historic road leading east and south from Riverhead to the East End resort of Southampton. Other notable historic buildings and resources are located along this corridor, including large Victorian-era dwellings used as summer boarding houses in the early 20th century, a one-room schoolhouse and adjacent cemetery dating from the mid-19th century, and several large private dwellings dating from the late 18th through the 19th century (including the National Register listed James Benjamin Homestead).

Building descriptions

Big Duck

The Big Duck is described in the registration form submitted in 1997 for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places [**Appendix A**]. Constructed of wood frame surfaced with concrete on a wire mesh substrate, the duck-shaped building sits close to the road and measures approximately 30 feet long, 15 feet wide and 20 feet high. Front and back doors are centered on the building and provide access to an interior space that measures approximately 11 feet wide by 15 feet long. The exterior “skin” has been refurbished and repainted periodically but preserves the essential form and material composition of its original fabrication, while the interior has been resurfaced with metal sheeting to simulate the appearance of its original white stove-pipe finish. The Big Duck continues to function as a retail store, and is operated by Suffolk County.

Brooder barn

The rectangular brooder barn is the last of six such buildings that once stood on the site. It is located near Flanders Road in the southwesterly corner of the property. As stated previously, this surviving building was an essential architectural component of the duck farm; in it, baby ducklings were hatched and propagated under artificially controlled conditions that promoted their health and survival. The building is of one story and measures approximately 140 feet long and 18 feet wide. It is wood-framed, clad with 1” by 8” vertical and horizontal board sheathing, and roofed with composite asphalt shingles applied over wood shingle. Distinctive exterior architectural features – in addition to its unusual elongated form and massing – are the large wooden ventilator caps placed symmetrically on the ridge along the length of the roof. Entrance doors are centrally placed at each end of the building (west and east), while window openings, clean-outs and fan openings are spaced along each side (north and south).

The brooder barn is supported on a foundation of cast cement blocks (CMUs or concrete masonry units). The masonry construction appears to begin well below grade; two courses of CMU foundation form a low knee-wall above the ground, and the lack of cracks between the blocks or other signs of deterioration suggest that they were built to withstand the seasonal effects of freezing and thawing. In one area of erosion on the south side of the building, one full course of CMU has been exposed below grade, and it appears likely that the entire foundation is of two courses below grade. Inside, the floor of the brooder barn is of poured concrete.

The wood frame building is constructed of dimensional 2” by 4” studs set on 24” centers; the roof frame consists of a 2” by 6” ridge beam and 2” by 4” rafters spaced 24” on center. Strengthening the roof frame are 2” by 4” collar ties. Shingle lath or nailers made of ¾” by 2” boards are spaced 6” apart; they supported the original wood shingle roof, which is now covered over with composite asphalt shingles. The siding is of two types, evidently the result of either expansion or repair. The westerly portion of the building is clad with vertical boards, whereas the easterly portion – now dilapidated as a result of significant roof failure – is clad with horizontal “novelty” wood siding. The

window openings measure approximately 3' wide and 2' high, and were originally built for sash windows, as evidenced by the triangular boards affixed to the interior that held them semi-open, but it appears that they were later modified.

The ventilator caps are distinctive exterior features of the brooder barn and architecturally significant because of their function of maintaining the flow of fresh air within the building. Constructed entirely of wood, the ventilator caps are rectangular in form with low peaked roofs. They are supported with corner "posts" composed of 2" by 2" framing members secured to adjacent roof rafters. They are sided with 1" by 6" horizontal shiplap boards and constructed with space beneath the roof overhang for ventilation. The openings are covered with galvanized hardware cloth. Evidence suggests that the boards beneath the asphalt roof covering were originally exposed as the finished roof material.

The architectural integrity of the brooder barn is poor. Severe roof and wall failure on its east end has resulted in the collapse of that portion of the building. Approximately 2/3 of the length of the building remains standing, however, and although surviving fabric is beginning to fail as well, it preserves all of its essential architectural elements and is a candidate for restoration.

Storage barn

The small rectangular storage barn situated between the brooder barn and the Big Duck appears to have been used for storage of farm machinery and feed. It is one and a half stories high, as defined by the structural roof plate that is positioned approximately 2' above the loft floor, thus allowing for expanded use of the upper story that is lit by windows placed in each end gable wall. The barn measures approximately 23'-4" long and 18'-3" wide and is gable roofed, retaining its wood shingle roof covering and overhanging eaves. The roof covering is wood shingle, with a 6" exposure. The barn is clad vertically with beaded, 1" by 10" tongue-and-groove boards that retain a center bead, thus simulating the appearance of narrower siding.

The front of the building, which faces west, retains a wide doorway in which three sliding doors are arranged in an overlapping series and hung on iron tracks. Each barn door is of the batten type, with decorative crossed battens in the top half over parallel battens below that simulate the appearance of panels or wainscoting typical of the late 19th century. The south elevation has a single door on the ground level as well as a loft door centered on the peak and the metal collar of a stove pipe on the right hand side. The north elevation has two window openings on the ground floor and a row of three windows centered on the peak, while the back (east) elevation has a single door. Decorative detailing indicative of the building's date of construction includes the scalloped boards in the west gable, the moldings employed in the eave overhangs, and the shaped brackets that terminate the tracking system on the front elevation – all late Victorian in design, suggesting an original date of construction in the 1880s or '90s. (In all likelihood, the barn had stood on the property long before its acquisition by Martin Maurer in the 1930s, and survives from an earlier farmstead.)

The walls are constructed of full 2" by 4" studs set 24" on center, and rest on a perimeter frame of 4" by 10" girders set on concrete blocks and locust posts. The girders

support a floor frame consisting of 2" by 10" joists spaced approximately 2' apart, on which lies a layer of 1" by 8" tongue-and-groove flooring. The upper loft floor is supported on floor joists measuring 1 3/4" by 6 1/2" while roof rafters measure 1 3/4" by 4 1/2". The barn retains an interior stair that rises against the north elevation; its thirteen steps are made of 2" by 8" treads attached to flanking 2" by 10" stringers.

The architectural integrity of the barn is relatively good. Roof shingles are weathered, but water has not as yet intruded and the frame appears sound. Decorative trim such as the brackets on the front façade are intact, and the distinctive rolling doors with their iron tracks are all sound.

Retail store

The small, stucco-clad building that stands close to Flanders Road to the north of the Big Duck was constructed by owner Martin Maurer as a second retail outlet for farm products in the 1930s. It may have been used primarily for the sale of chickens and feed – additional products of the duck farm – as well as fresh vegetables, which were added later to the operation. The main core of the building is roughly square in plan, with a small utility extension on the back (east) façade.

The store is built of 2" by 4" studs that are stuccoed on the exterior and plastered on the interior. The main core measures approximately 16' square, with a 4'-6" extension to the back that encloses a bathroom and utility closet. The gable roof retains a façade dormer on the front slope that projects above the front door, while the back roof slope is longer and carried further out to cover the extension. The roof is framed with 2" by 6" rafters and projects beyond the walls with overhanging eaves supported on 2" by 4" rafter tails. The front elevation (west) has a single door centered on the façade with flanking windows now boarded up. Windows are also centered on the north and south side elevations; each of these is of the 6-over-6 type, with 9" by 12" window panes. The north window is protected with a metal hood and a cast iron grille.

The interior of the main building is roughly square, undivided with a concrete slab floor. The back extension, which measures 4'-6" deep by 9'-9" long, is also set on a concrete slab. It is divided in half, neither section of which is accessible from the interior. On the right (south) is a small bathroom, on the left (north) a water heater. Due to a drop in grade, the back extension is set about 2' below the level of the front of the building.

The architectural integrity of the retail store is good. The asphalt shingle roof, while weathered, is secure and prevents water intrusion. The valleys formed by the front façade gable are especially weathered, however, and a section of the back extension appears to have been damaged by a superficial fire. The resulting loss of wood substrate and eave boards is easily repaired. The exterior stucco application is in good condition. The side windows are also sound, although the front door appears to have been replaced. Evidence of early paint finishes has been observed in the eave boards and exposed rafter ends, and will aid in the building's restoration.

Summary description

The Big Duck Ranch in Flanders, Long Island, preserves open space and four historic buildings – the iconic Big Duck and three contributing farm outbuildings – that represent the period of significance (1936-1952) for the nominated property. Previously listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (1997), the Big Duck was relocated in 2007 to the historic farm setting on the outskirts of Riverhead where it had operated for nearly fifty years as a retail store and popular landmark. The additional three outbuildings and the preserved 11.3-acre farm property are now proposed for nomination; their historical and architectural significance derives from their function as the agricultural and geographical context of the Big Duck, in which a retail operation was conducted that was tied closely to the productivity of the duck ranch surrounding it. Each of the three surviving outbuildings represents a significant activity or purpose associated with historic duck ranching: propagation of the young ducklings, storage of feed and farm equipment, and sale of farm products. Now reunited with the National Register listed Big Duck, the farm buildings and surrounding historic acreage provide a naturalistic setting for this renowned example of mimetic architecture.

The 11.3-acre Big Duck Ranch is the setting for a proposed restoration and interpretation of duck farming on eastern Long Island, and will thus serve as an ideal Visitors' Welcome Center for the Town of Southampton. The nominated property, which includes the Big Duck and its three contributing outbuildings, possesses state and regional significance and is therefore eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The collective importance of the buildings and their surrounding landscape is that they symbolize Long Island's historically significant duck industry and provide the Town with an opportunity to preserve this chapter in its history for future generations.

**National Register Nomination: Big Duck Ranch (a/k/a Maurer Farm)
Flanders Road, Flanders, NY**

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The Big Duck Ranch, established in 1936 in Flanders, Long Island, is historically and architecturally significant as the operational farm setting of the “Big Duck,” an internationally recognized icon of roadside architecture that was listed in 1997 on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Big Duck Ranch is the site of one of the last surviving duck farms in the region and represents an agricultural industry of great local, state and national significance that thrived on eastern Long Island in the first half of the 20th century. Three farm buildings remain standing on the 11.3-acre waterfront property in addition to the National Register listed “Big Duck” structure: a small commercial store, a storage barn and a brooder barn, all surviving from the duck farming business established on the site in 1936. The ranch was continuously operated until 1984. Acquired for development in 1987, the property was purchased by the Town of Southampton in 2001 for preservation and interpretation as a Visitors’ Welcome Center.

The site is significant under **Criteria A** and **C** of the National Register of Historic Places. Under **Criterion A**, the Big Duck Ranch is a rare surviving example of Long Island’s once renowned duck farming industry. Established in the 1870s among the scattered farms of coastal East End communities, Long Island duck farming became “big business” after 1900 with improvements in breeding, refrigeration and transportation that carried the birds to New York markets and nationwide. By the 1940s, the industry was in its heyday, exporting 7 million ducks per year for consumption worldwide. By the 1950s, however, over-production forced smaller producers out of business. With the formation of the Long Island Duck Farmers Cooperative in 1960, stability returned to the industry. The co-op’s unified promotional strategy enabled Long Island duck farming to recapture its global market, and 40,000 to 50,000 ducks were soon shipped every day. But the environmental impact of duck farming was enormous, and by the 1970s most of Long Island’s duck ranches were defunct. Today, only three such operations remain. The Big Duck Ranch is a rare survivor of an agri-business that once defined Long Island as the “bread – and duck – basket” of New York City and the nation for over a century.

The site is also significant under **Criterion C** of the National Register of Historic Places for preserving agricultural buildings that distinguish it as an historic Long Island duck ranch. Chief among these is the brooder barn, so-called for its function as a purpose-built structure in which the brooding of ducklings takes place under controlled conditions. The Big Duck Ranch brooder barn functioned in the earliest stages of duck production. Young ducklings, newly hatched, were propagated in this building and several other barns like it that once stood on the property, and then sold to nearby ranches for further growth and sale as mature ducks. The remaining outbuildings on the Big Duck Ranch provided necessary storage for the duck farming operations and the sale of eggs and ducklings, while the open space surrounding the buildings promoted the health and development of the birds. Architecturally, the Big Duck Ranch preserves the essential components and naturalistic setting of an historic duck ranch typical of this region.

Flanders, Long Island

Flanders, Long Island, is located in the northwesterly section of the Town of Southampton and is situated near the hamlet of Riverhead, which serves as both the county seat (Suffolk County) and commercial center of the adjoining Town of Riverhead. Historically, the locality is associated primarily with various forms of agricultural and maritime pursuits, notably with the harvesting of cordwood in the early to mid-19th century and later with duck farming, which gained prominence in the early 20th century.

Flanders was virtually uninhabited by white colonists until late Colonial times. Among its earliest settlers may have been the Dutch, who are known to have explored the area in the 18th century. They are said to have given the location its name because it reminded them of Flanders, a region of Holland¹. In the late 1800s, families from New York City and western Long Island summered in Flanders due to its picturesque shoreline and proximity to Riverhead. The community also continued to produce cordwood, and loggers used it as a rest stop on their way to woodlots on the South Fork. Before World War II, the few residents of Flanders had more in common with those of adjoining Riverhead than with the nearby resort town of Southampton further east, of which it is actually a part. In the 1950s and 1960s, small ranch-style homes were built in waterfront neighborhoods along Flanders Road (Route 24). Many of these modest homes began as summer places but most are now occupied year-round. Despite this development, a concentration of historic houses and other resources – notably the mid-19th century one-room schoolhouse and adjacent Flanders Cemetery – remain standing along Flanders Road. In the past twenty years, the locality has seen the addition of many new, costlier homes, particularly along Pleasure Drive that runs in a southerly direction from Flanders Road into the thick Pine Barrens that flanks the Sunrise Highway (Route 24A).

The original settlement of Flanders functioned as a satellite community in which its residents derived their livelihood either from the land or sea. Nineteenth century historians have commented on its appearance as follows:

Flanders, three miles southeast of Riverhead, where there are twenty-five or thirty houses within a square mile, some of them of respectable appearance. Most of the families are connected with the congregation of Upper Aquebogue, and a small house of worship was built here some years ago, but no distinct ecclesiastical organization has taken place.

(Thompson, History of Long Island, Vol. II, p. 206. 1843.)

About two miles from Riverhead is the village bearing the above name [Flanders]. The first settlement was made here about 1770, and the first settlers were Josiah Goodale (who was living here before the Revolution, and whose descendants still remain) and Ellis Squires. A Congregational church was built at the expense of Rev. Nathaniel Fanning about 1860. The population is 126.

(Munsell, History of Suffolk County, New York, The Town of Southampton, p. 30. 1882.)

¹ The origin of the name remains undocumented.

One important local landmark, the National Register-listed (1986) James Benjamin house of post-Revolutionary period, represents the sparse settlement pattern of 18th and 19th century Flanders. James Benjamin came from Southold on Long Island's North Fork and acquired a large property from the above-mentioned Josiah Goodale in 1782. Benjamin took advantage of the low, fertile land bordering Reeve's Bay that characterizes the region, and apparently pursued subsistence farming as a livelihood. The rural aspect of Flanders as reflected in the Benjamin homestead remained largely unchanged throughout the 19th century, by which time a secondary source of income emerged throughout the coastal communities of eastern Long Island: boarding houses for summer tourists.

The end of the 19th century had introduced a new kind of boarding house into American life; no longer offering year-round accommodations for the poor or for factory hands as in past decades, these homey, family-run facilities instead attracted more affluent city dwellers in search of a respite from the summer heat. Entire families took up temporary residence at Long Island's seashore to enjoy the bucolic atmosphere and salt-water pleasures. When possible, women and children stayed all summer, and the men joined them for weekends. Those of lesser means enjoyed such vacations, but of only a week or two duration. Many returned each summer to the same boarding house, enjoyed the continuity, and the social contact with the keeper's entire family. Several of these 19th century boarding houses are documented in Flanders; three such structures, while altered, remain standing today.

The mainstay of the Flanders economy remained subsistence agriculture until the modern era, however, when transportation networks were improved to the point that local residents could commute longer distances for work. As in other eastern Long Island communities, the family-scaled farming that had characterized the original settlement of Flanders evolved into production agriculture. Cordwood became Long Island's first major income-generated crop, and communities like Flanders that enjoyed extensive water frontage and protected inlets could profit from the cordwood trade. But after the Civil War, in Long Island's second major phase of agricultural development, larger scaled "truck farming" evolved due to the increased efficiency of irrigation, the invention of cast iron plows, and improved means of transportation, notably the Long Island Rail Road. The nearby Riverhead area emerged as a major source of Long Island potatoes, cauliflower and strawberries. As export markets increased, agriculture flourished; it became a booming industry on eastern Long Island, and truck farms produced a wide variety of fruits and vegetables for the New York City market and local consumers.

Flanders witnessed an expansion in agriculture during this late 19th century period as well, but its proximity to the commercial center at Riverhead and its preserved, rural landscape proved equally suitable for another type of farming – duck ranching – which had only grown to importance in the final decades of the 19th century. Its largely pristine waterfront landscape was suited for this newly introduced type of animal husbandry. More importantly, its location on the major thoroughfare leading from Riverhead to the more densely settled villages of Southampton to the east led to the establishment of the Big Duck Ranch in the 1930s, which enjoyed the advantages of its geography as well as the flow of seasonal traffic. Flanders was the ideal location for a roadside stand; the "Big Duck" originally built in Riverhead and moved to Flanders in 1936 became a landmark



A View of the Bay at Flanders



The Riverhead Road, Flanders

Flanders, photos from Long Island To-day by Frederick Ruther, 1909.

for weary travelers, and the first sign that their journey to the vacation destination of Eastern Long Island was nearly over.

Property history

Martin Maurer (1883-1963), a Riverhead duck farmer, began purchasing property in Flanders in the early 1930s. In 1936, he moved his duck ranch and retail store to Flanders from West Main Street in the Upper Mills section of Riverhead, where he began operations in 1930. The Big Duck Ranch opened in April 1936 and its retail store – the Big Duck – continued in business in Flanders until 1984. In its nearly fifty years of operation, the Big Duck Ranch grew to encompass ten buildings that were significant in the duck raising business: (1) the “Big Duck”; (2) a second retail store; (3) a storage barn; (4-9) six brooder houses; and (10) a slaughterhouse. Of these ten historic farm buildings, only four remain: the “Big Duck” and three others, including another roadside retail store, a storage barn and one of the original six brooder barns.² In addition to the “Big Duck”, whose significance as a rare example of mimetic architecture was substantiated by its listing on the National Register in 1997, the single surviving brooder barn is of particular importance because of its structural form and interior appointments, which are unique responses to its function of propagating young ducklings.

While the original idea for constructing the “Big Duck” was evidently “hatched” by Martin Maurer in the post-Depression Era as a way of attracting new customers to his Riverhead duck farming business, his unique roadside stand and surrounding duck ranch proved equally successful after moving to Flanders in 1937. The main road on which was located, leading east from Riverhead to Long Island’s south shore destinations, was heavily trafficked for many years, especially in the summer season, until the extension of the four-lane Sunrise Highway to Shinnecock Hills in the 1960s.

The relocation of Maurer’s ranch to Flanders Road had proved a fortuitous business decision in the 1930s, but with the construction of the Sunrise Highway extension and environmental pressures on the duck industry in the 1970s, the end of the Big Duck Ranch was inevitable. Maurer sold his ranch in 1952 to Leonard Desson, who kept it operating until 1970 when he ceased farming but kept the Big Duck retail store open for business. In 1980, Leonard Desson sold to Mario and Jean Colombo. Mario Colombo was a chef at the Ambassador Inn in nearby East Quogue, and sold roast duck from the store. In 1986, the Colombos gave up the business and sold the property to Kia and Pouran Esghi. One year later, the Esghis donated the Big Duck to Suffolk County, and in January of 1988, it was relocated to nearby Sears-Bellows County Park. The duck farm was sold for residential development, first to a Robert Shamis (1987) and then to Red Fire Associates of Hong Kong (1995), but building permits were never issued and the property remained unimproved and the farm buildings were not maintained.

The Big Duck Ranch was designated a Southampton Town landmark in 1987 due to its historic significance to the town and all of Eastern Long Island. It was one of three contiguous waterfront parcels containing nearly 40 acres of upland and wetlands acquired with Community Preservation Funds by the Town of Southampton in May 2001. By that

² Another surviving structure on the property – a wishing well – appears to have been constructed in 1976 and is a non-contributing structure unrelated to the historic duck ranch.

time, however, many of the farm outbuildings that remained standing on the property had deteriorated beyond repair. A campaign was nevertheless initiated by local citizens' groups and interested parties to relocate the "Big Duck" from Sears-Bellows County Park to its original Flanders site, and the effort culminated in moving the renowned roadside icon back to the former Big Duck Ranch in October 2007. Under a special arrangement with the town, Suffolk County retains ownership of the "Big Duck" while the Town of Southampton plans to preserve and restore the existing historic structures and maintain the farm property for public access and enjoyment.

Local and regional context: Duck farming on Long Island

Modern duck farming began on Long Island in the mid-1870s. The earliest effort to cultivate ducks in the region was documented in the 1820s by William Cobbett (*Cottage Economy*, 1824), although this expatriate Englishman then living in North Hempstead was evidently writing about common "puddle ducks" that were introduced from Europe and known from the Long Island's settlement period. The famed Long Island duck, by contrast, was introduced from China in 1873. According to LeRoy Wilcox, whose father Eugene O. Wilcox was a duck breeder in Speonk in the 1880s, the first mention of the Long Island or "Pekin" [also spelled "Peking"³] duck occurred in the November 1873 issue of *The Poultry World*:

"There is an illustration of two Pekins on the front cover of this issue; probably the first time they were illustrated in this country. (Wilcox, in Paul Bailey, *A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk*, 1949. p. 442.)

The author writes that the original Pekins were brought to America by a Capt. James E. Palmer of Stonington, Connecticut, who landed with his special cargo in New York on March 14, 1873. The July 1874 issue of *The Poultry World* gave credit to a Mr. McGrath of the firm of Fogg & Co., "engaged in the Japan and China trade," for having discovered the Pekins in China the year before. The breed was exhibited in Hartford at the Connecticut State Poultry Exhibition in December 1873 and in Buffalo at the Western New York Poultry Exhibition in January 1874. In 1875, a second shipment was received from China, and they were soon introduced throughout the country. Their introduction to Long Island is unrecorded, but believed to have occurred in the mid-1870s.

Considerable experimentation occurred in the early years to perfect the Pekin, and the activity was concentrated at first among a handful of breeders who were clustered in the Speonk-Eastport area along Long Island's ocean shore. Wilcox writes:

E. O. Wilcox marketed 775 ducks in 1883, his first season in

³ The origin of the official spelling – "Pekin" – remains somewhat baffling to historians. Although imported from China, hence the name "Peking," it appears that the pronunciation of the word soon after its introduction resulted in the phonetic spelling that soon became sanctioned by the American Poultry Association. Today, any confusion with "Peking Duck" – a Chinese delicacy and method of preparation – is avoided by spelling the world-famous Long Island duckling without the final "g."

business at Speonk; 1101 ducks in 1884, 1566 in 1885, and 3466 in 1886. By 1901 he was hatching 30,000 ducklings annually. By 1897 about 200,000 ducks were produced annually by all Long Island duck farms; by 1922 about 2,000,000 were produced annually by all the farms and in 1945 about 6,500,000 ducks were marketed. This great increase has been brought about mainly by the use of artificial methods of hatching and brooding.

Eastern Massachusetts and Long Island were the centers of the early duck industry. The Massachusetts raisers in those early days used the so-called dry duck farming – that is, they did not allow the ducks the use of creeks or streams. On the other hand, most of the Long Island growers allowed their ducks full freedom of ponds and streams.... Eventually, the Long Island method proved to be much more economical...

(Wilcox, in Paul Bailey, A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk, 1949. p. 443.)

The real breakthrough in duck farming occurred around the turn-of-the-century when artificial incubation was introduced. While smaller farms and family producers continued to use natural methods, large-scale duck farming looked to innovation to increase production. According to Wilcox, who was quoting from the December 1908 issue of *Farm Poultry*:

Until about 1890 natural methods of incubation and brooding were used by the L. I. duck growers and the output was thus limited. Growers were skeptical about incubators and brooders. J. L. Nix of the Prairie State Incubator Co. introduced incubators in this section and to do it he had to put incubators on a number of plants and stay with them, making the rounds daily with horse and buggy until he had practically demonstrated the advantages of the artificial hatcher. (Wilcox, in Paul Bailey, A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk, 1949. p. 443.)

The results in production were spectacular, as shown by Wilcox's statistics that are cited above.

The geographical range of Long Island duck ranches at their hey day stretched along Long Island's southern coast from Water Mill on the east to Rockville Center (Nassau County) on the west, but the greatest concentration was in the area between Eastport and Riverhead. Several were developed a little to the north in Aquebogue; in fact, there was even a duck ranch established on Fisher's Island, which evidently catered to the hotel trade there in the 1890s. One of the largest ranches was that of A. J. Hallock in Eastport, whose Atlantic Farm is said to have produced two hundred and fifty thousand ducks in one year. But rivaling Hallock's duck ranch as the largest on Long Island – in fact, in the world – was that of Hollis V. Warner in Riverhead, who raised nearly twice that of Hallock's in the 1950s. Neither of these farms are in operation today.

Warner's was not the first duck ranch in Riverhead. Credit for that is given to George Pugsley, who established his farm there in 1892. Several others followed, including those of Asa D. Fordham in 1894 and Luther Skidmore in 1897. According to Wilcox, Pugsley then sold his first ranch and moved a little out of town:

At Upper Mills, about a mile west of Riverhead village, is the farm of Carmine Bruno established in 1897 by George Pugsley. It is on the north side of the main road to Calverton and probably produces a heavier duck on an average for the entire season than any other farm, due to the fact, supposedly, that the ducks are not crowded as on many farms and have access to good water and shade during the hot months. Careful selection of breeders no doubt is another important factor. There are now eleven duck farms in Riverhead. (Wilcox, in Paul Bailey, A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk, 1949. p. 458.)

Prior to Carmine Bruno's ownership of the Pugsley farm, the duck ranch was owned by Martin Maurer, and it is there that the now famous "Big Duck" was built and operated between 1930 and 1936. Maurer sold his Riverhead property to Bruno in 1937 and moved his operations – including the "Big Duck" – to Flanders. Carmine Bruno continued to run the Riverhead farm until 1977.

The success of the duck industry led to overproduction in the 1950s, however, and by 1959 nearly all of the duck farms were losing money. In May of 1960, forty-four farmers formed the Long Island Duck Farmers Cooperative to analyze the market, create a joint promotional campaign, and build new processing plants. The strategy worked for a time, but environmental concerns predominated in the 1970s. The duck ranches polluted the streams that flowed into South Shore inlets and bays, spoiling them for fishing, bathing and other recreational uses. New York State established tough restrictions on duck farming in response to public pressure, and many of the smaller farmers went out of business. Today, only a few survive. Corwin's Crescent Duck Farm in Aquebogue and Massey's in Eastport are among them; the majority of the farms have gone out of business or moved out west, where environmental laws are less restrictive. The Maurer duck farm – known historically as the Big Duck Ranch – is therefore a rare example of an agricultural industry that once thrived on Long Island.

Summary statement of significance

The Big Duck Ranch in Flanders, Long Island, is historically and architecturally significant of Long Island's nationally renowned duck industry, which flourished for nearly a century from the 1870s until the 1970s. Following its introduction to America from China in 1873, the famed "Pekin" duck became the standard of duck consumption in this country, and Long Island quickly dominated the industry in the propagation and "branding" of the product. The "Long Island duckling" became known throughout the country and the world as a standard of excellence. The period of significance for the

nominated property – 1936 to 1952 – corresponds to the heyday of the Long Island Duck industry.

The geography, climate and proximity to New York markets all favored duck production on Long Island. Starting in the 1870s on small farms scattered along the streams and inlets of its ocean shoreline, duck farming grew into a regional, national and international industry in response to technical innovations and artificial methods aimed at increasing output. Electric breeders, improved packing and cold storage, and expanded networks of transportation all contributed to the spectacular rise and success of the industry by the 1940s. But with increasing environmental concerns and the expanding suburban population of the 1970s, the duck industry could no longer thrive on eastern Long Island. Martin Maurer's Big Duck Ranch in Flanders, Long Island, was one of the last to remain in business and its retail store ceased operation in 1986. It's iconic "Big Duck" remains an enduring symbol of the industry, and the 11.3-acre farm property surrounding the famous bird retains representative outbuildings and preserved open space that provide a lasting, naturalistic setting for the renowned landmark. Now planned for restoration by the Town of Southampton as a Visitors' Welcome Center, the Big Duck Ranch is designated locally as a landmark site and is worthy of recognition on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

National Register Nomination:

Big Duck Ranch (a/k/a Maurer Farm)
Flanders Road, Flanders, NY

ILLUSTRATIONS

Maps

Beers, Comstock and Cline. *Atlas of Long Island, New York*. New York, 1873.

Hyde, E. Belcher. *Atlas of North Shore of Suffolk County, L. I.* Brooklyn. 1917.

Suffolk County Real Property Map, *Town of Southampton, District 0900, Section 146*, 2001.

Historic views

“Big Duck” postcards (4), c. 1940 – 70.

Contemporary views

Brooder barn (3).

Storage barn (3).

Retail store (3).

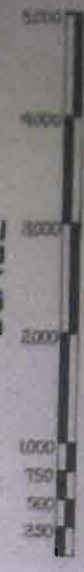
AMPTON

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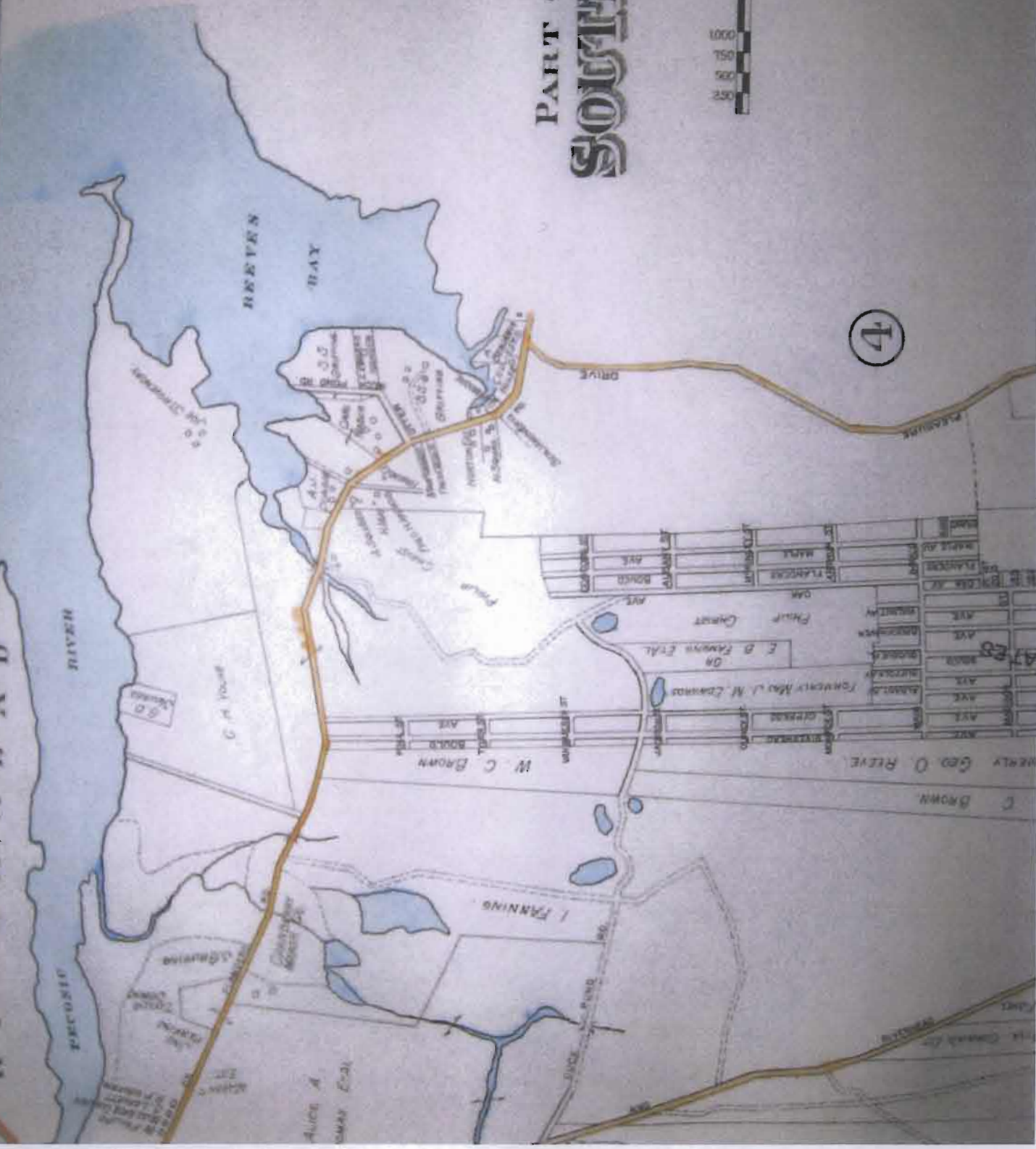


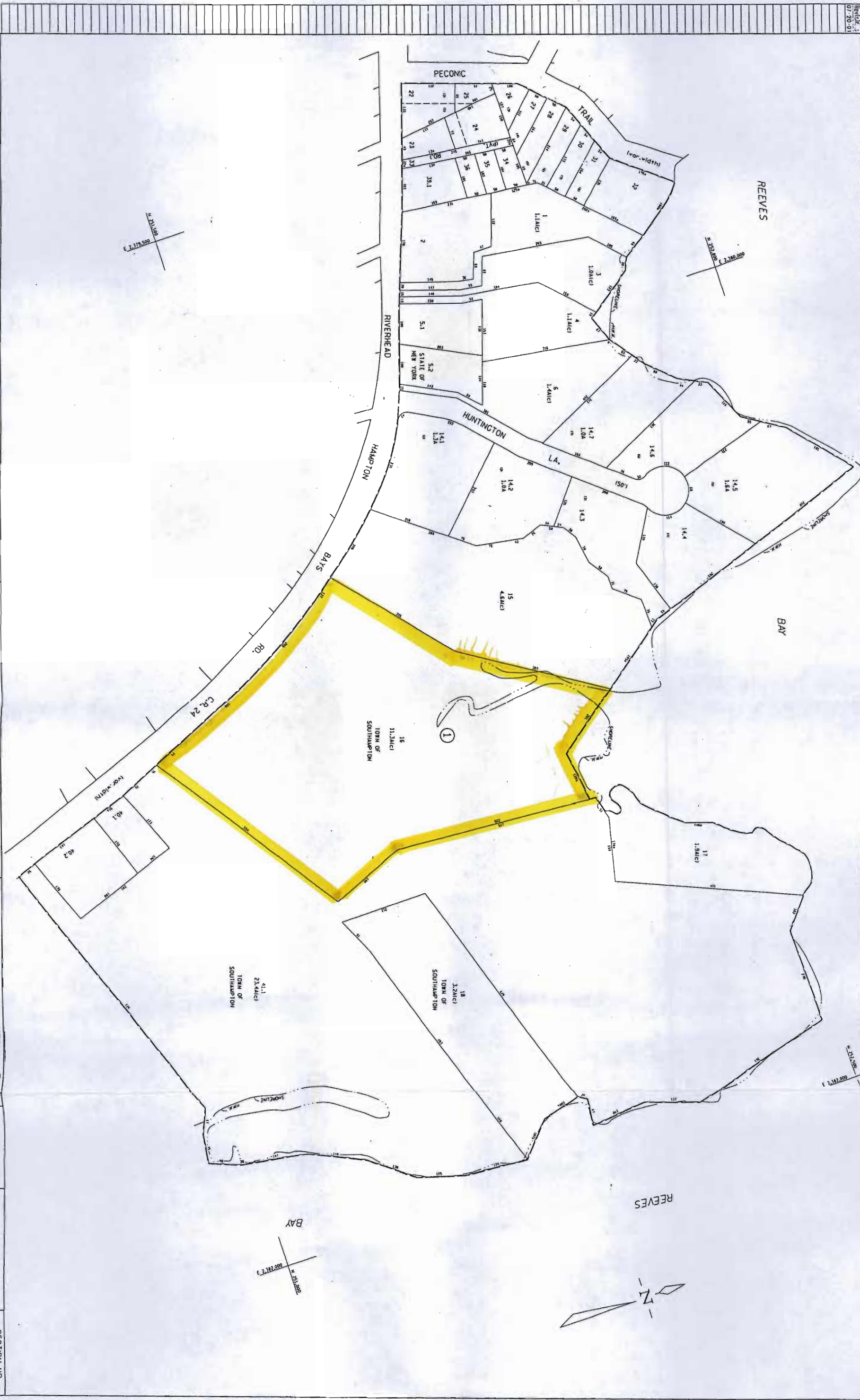
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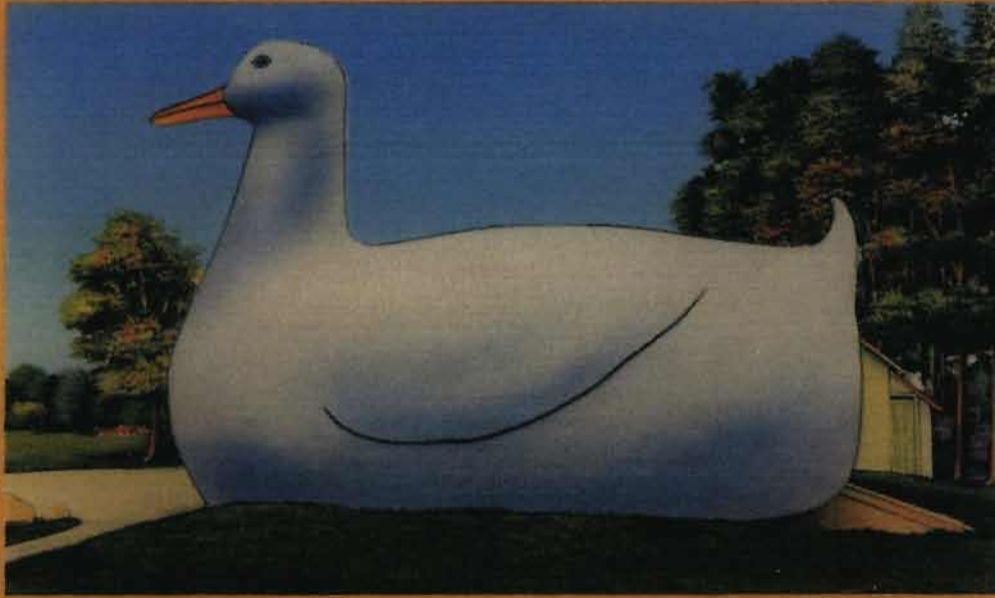


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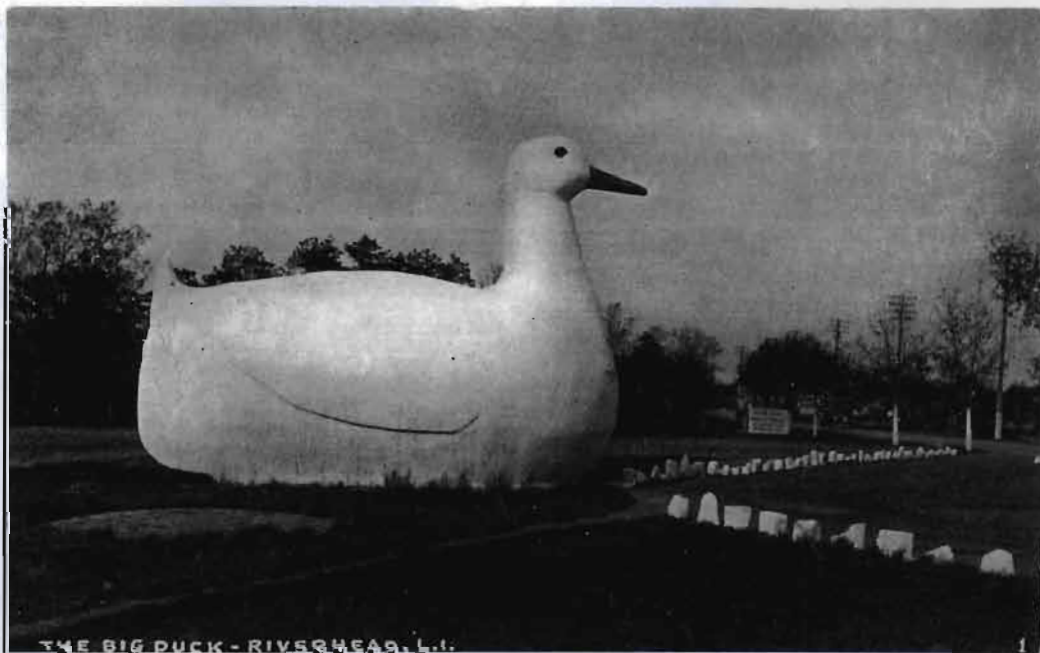
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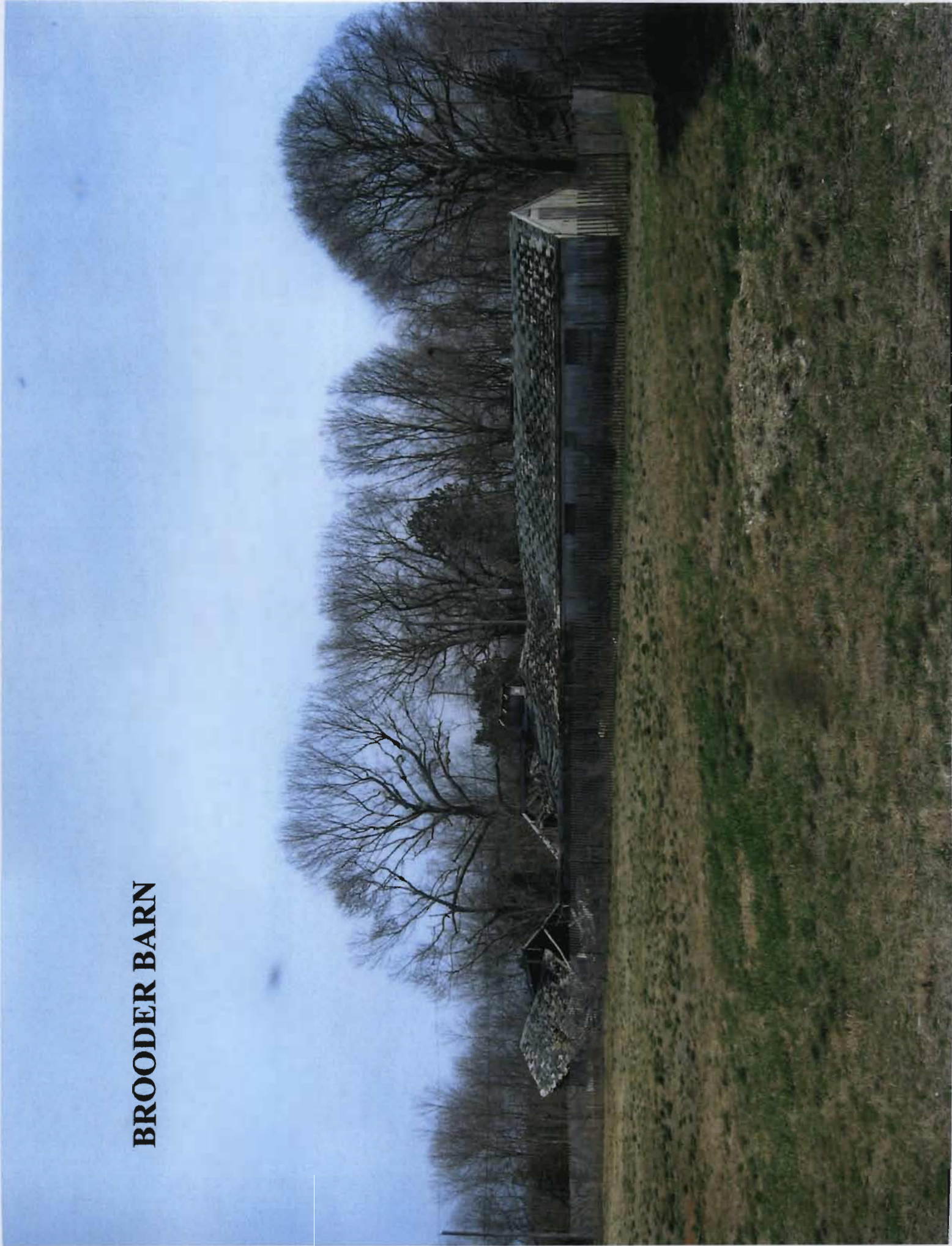


THE BIG DUCK, RIVERHEAD, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.



THE BIG DUCK - RIVERHEAD, L.I.

BROODER BARN



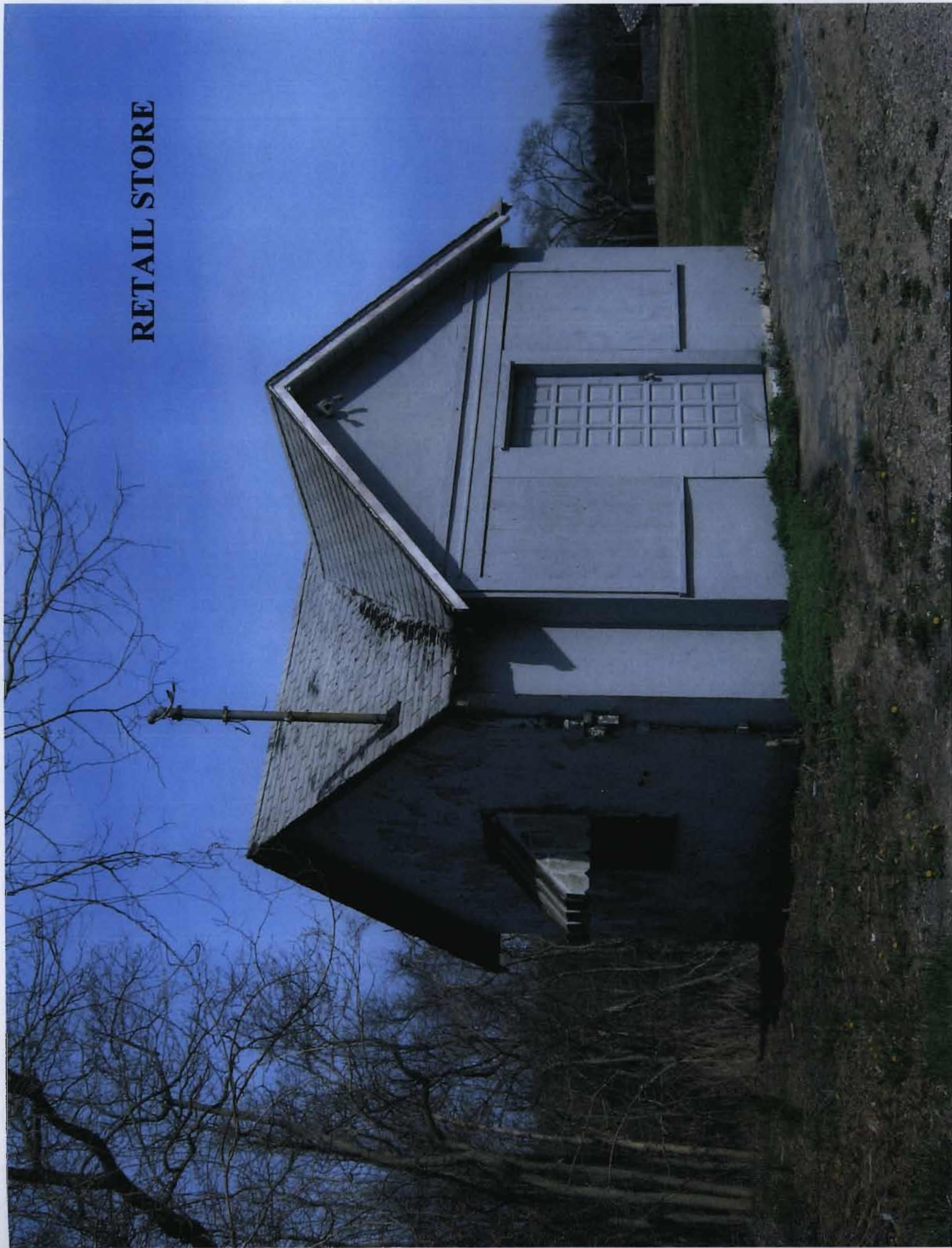


STORAGE BARN





RETAIL STORE





National Register Nomination:

Big Duck Ranch
Flanders Road, Flanders, NY

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**National Register Nomination: Big Duck Ranch (a/k/a Maurer Farm)
Flanders Road, Flanders, NY**

APPENDICES

- A. National Register Nomination Form: The Big Duck (1997).
- B. National Register Nomination Form: James Benjamin Homestead (1982).
- C. *The Riverhead News*, Riverhead, NY, June 26, 1931.
- D. *The Riverhead News*, Riverhead, NY, March 6, 1936. "The Big Duck Now Open."
- E. "The Big Duck," c. 1940. Advertising circular.
- F. *The New Yorker*, May 11, 1987.
- G. "Duck Industry," LeRoy Wilson. (In Bailey, Paul, ed. *Long Island. A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1949. Pp. 439-458.)
- H. "Preliminary Survey of the Flanders Duck Farm Which was the Site of the Big Duck from 1936 to 1988," Robert Hefner, February 28, 2002.

NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 18A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Big Duck, The

other names/site number _____

2. Locationstreet & number Riverhead-Hampton Bays Road (NY Route 24) ☐ not for publicationcity or town Flanders, Town of Southampton ☒ vicinitystate New York code NY county Suffolk code 103 zip code 11942**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☒ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

- ☐ removed from the National Register.

- ☐ other, (explain): _____

Big Duck, The
Name of Property

Suffolk County, New York
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE
OTHER: roadside architecture

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls concrete
roof concrete
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

The Big Duck
Suffolk County, New York

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

The Big Duck is located on the south side of Riverhead-Hampton Bays Road (NY Route 24) between Flanders and Hampton Bays in a heavily wooded area south of the Peconic Bay on eastern Long Island. Built in 1930-31, The Big Duck was moved in January, 1988 to its present site from the former Maurer duck ranch in Flanders, the building's location since 1937. The present site is within Sears-Bellows Pond County Park, a large expanse of pine barrens and wetlands. The only building in the near vicinity is the riding stable operated as part of the park at the rear of The Big Duck. Three early twentieth century-style streetlights front The Big Duck; these are not historically associated with the nominated property.

The Big Duck is a wood frame, wire mesh, concrete surfaced, white Peking duck-shaped building designed to house a retail poultry store. The building measures approximately 15 feet wide across the front, 30 feet long from breast to tail, and 20 feet to the top of the head. The frame of the building consists of wood ribs fastened with nails and covered by galvanized wire mesh. The exterior is finished in four coats of Atlas pure white cement with later patches, washes, and paint. The eyes are Ford Model "T" tail lights; two small hatches at the rear of the head provide access for changing the bulbs. The front door, located in the breast, is a vinyl clad, glazed replacement set in the original recessed opening. The rear of the duck, rebuilt along the lines of the original, contains a triangular recess with a vertical wall in matched board with a jalousie door. A reconstructed wood cellar hatch extends from the rear wall on a modern pressure-treated wood deck. The existing concrete cellar is a replacement built to approximate the former 1937 cellar.

The interior of The Big Duck, measuring approximately 11 by 15 feet, has been resurfaced in white-finished metal to approximate the appearance of the original white-painted stove-pipe interior. It now houses a retail gift shop operated by the Friends for Long Island Heritage.

Big Duck, The
Name of Property

Suffolk County, New York
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☒ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # 18.699970.4531240

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1930-31

Significant Dates

1930-31

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Collins Brother, designers

Smith & Yeager, masons

George Reeve, builder

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Suffolk County Historic Trust

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

The Big Duck
Suffolk County, New York

Section number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance

The Big Duck is historically significant in the area of architecture as a distinctive and widely recognized example of early twentieth century mimetic roadside architecture. Built in 1930-31 on West Main Street in the Upper Mills section of Riverhead, this building--the idea of duck farmer Martin Maurer--was designed to look like the Peking ducks that were sold inside it. The location of the store on busy West Main Street provided the ideal location where motorists entering Riverhead's downtown would pass the large, 20-foot high duck. The site was also a logical place for the store, since it was on the farm where the ducks were raised. In 1937, Martin Maurer moved The Big Duck four miles to Flanders, where it occupied a prominent roadside location alongside the duck barns and marshes of Maurer's new ranch.

By the early twentieth century, the Riverhead vicinity, including the hamlet of Flanders, was the center of Long Island's well-known duck industry. The numerous waterways in this rural area, namely the Peconic River and the many creeks running into the Moriches and Flanders Bays, provided an ideal location for raising ducks. The first white Pekings were brought from China during the late nineteenth century, and adapted easily to the Long Island conditions. By 1939, there were approximately 90 duck farms in Suffolk County producing more than 3,000,000 ducks annually. With environmental concerns and resultant regulations, increasing real estate values, and development of residential areas around the odoriferous ranches, many duck farms went out of business by the 1980s.

The final closing of The Big Duck store in 1984 was largely a result of the demise of its duck ranch and the general decline of the Long Island duck industry. Due to development pressures on the duck farm, The Big Duck was given to Suffolk County and moved in 1988 approximately three and one-half miles south-east to a wooded location on the same road. Although built within the context of the Suffolk County duck industry, The Big Duck today is removed from its historic duck farm context, and therefore no longer illustrates its connection to this important local industry. The current location, while maintaining the building's historic relationship with the road and still within the Flanders vicinity, was never associated with The Big Duck or duck farming in general.

According to historian Edna Howell Yeager in her account, Around the Forks, The Big Duck was the idea of its original owner, duck farmer Martin Maurer. In an attempt to attract customers on busy West Main Street to pull off and purchase his Long Island duckling, Maurer conceived of a store building in the shape of a duck. He contacted local carpenter George A. Reeve to build the duck, according to Lillian Beach, Reeve's daughter; Reeve in turn went to the Collins brothers to draw up plans for the building. The Collins, Samuel and William, lived close to Riverhead in Calverton, but were from New York City, where they had worked as set designers. It is William who is often credited with the design of The Big Duck. According to several

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

The Big Duck
Suffolk County, New York

Section number 8 Page 2

accounts, the Collins brothers tied down a live duck to use as a study for the store, and from this study developed full-scale plans for a wood-framed building with a concrete skin.

With the assistance of the Collins brothers, George Reeve built the frame of the duck from hand-sawn wood, which was fastened with nails and reinforced by a skin of galvanized mesh. Smith & Yeager, mason contractors, were hired to apply four coats of Atlas pure white cement. A front door was provided in the breast, and a secondary entrance was installed at the back. The Big Duck also featured illuminated eyes made of Model 'T' tail lights, an orange beak, and an upturned tail. The interior was finished in stove-pipe tin painted white, and included a counter and refrigerator.

While mimetic buildings have never been prevalent on the American roadside, Martin Maurer was certainly part of an early twentieth-century trend across the country to use architecture in innovative ways to draw the attention of speeding motorists. Most roadside commercial buildings were outfitted with larger and more eye-catching signs or architectural features. However, by the late 1920s, there were an increasing number of mimetic buildings appearing on the highway landscape--a giant milk bottle, tea kettle, dog, tepee, and, of course, a duck. Previously limited to amusement parks, the giant follies, by their bizarre scale and function, naturally attracted the attention of passers-by. Many, such as The Big Duck, were a giant sign that advertised the product sold inside.

The Big Duck apparently worked well for Maurer. At a size of approximately 20 feet in height, 30 feet in length, and 15 feet in width, The Big Duck proved to be an immediate attraction. The Riverhead News printed complete with a photograph the following account on June 26, 1931, soon after opening of the store:

"Motorists passing through Riverhead now have something else quite distinctive to remember us by: it is the big duck on the Maurer ranch at Upper Mills, and naturally it is attracting much deserved attention. This true-to-life bird, sitting so comfortably beside the road, and at night showing its electrically lighted eyes, is 28 feet high and has inside dimensions of 11 x 15 feet. It is the biggest duck ever 'raised' anywhere in the world."

The Big Duck was also a big hit with the Atlas Cement Company, whose executives came to Riverhead to inspect the novel concrete creation, and who featured a picture of The Big Duck on their calendar for the year 1931; they also awarded the building the company's "Most Spectacular Piece of Cement Work of the Year 1931" award. Popular Mechanics magazine also featured an article on the duck around the same time touting the bird as a do-it-yourself triumph.

Martin Maurer opened his store on a seasonal basis, usually beginning in March. A March 6, 1936 advertisement in the Riverhead News proclaimed in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

The Big Duck
Suffolk County, New York

Section number 8 Page 3

bold print and with a prominent photograph, "The Big Duck Now Open." Maurer called his farm "The Big Duck Ranch" (for which he received a U.S. trademark in June, 1932) and advertised that his ducklings were "Pellet-fed/The Sanitary Way/Broilers/Milk-fed, Freshly Killed."

In early 1937, Maurer moved The Big Duck to a new ranch he purchased south-east of Riverhead in Flanders on the main road leading east to the south fork of Long Island. The ranch backed up to Reeves Bay, providing an ideal waterside location for raising ducks. The reason for this move is not certain, but it may have been related to Maurer's success and need for a larger ranch. The old ranch on West Main Street was later bought by a Mr. Bruno. The Riverhead News printed the following account of the seasonal opening of The Big Duck in its March 12, 1937 edition:

"The Big Duck owned by Martin Maurer, which was a landmark on the main highway at Upper Mills, is now calmly roosting in Flanders. It will be opened for business on March 13, which will be good news to the housewives who want the most delicious duck or broiler that can be produced. Mr. Maurer raises all of the 'birds' he dispenses from the interior of the Big Duck, and all are reared under the most rigid of sanitary conditions, only the Petersine electric brooder being raised."

The Big Duck remained for many years a popular roadside landmark on eastern Long Island, situated as it was on one of the main roads leading east from New York City to the Hamptons. It was this location, according to historian Phil Patton in his 1986 book, Open Road, that led The Big Duck to become one of the most criticized buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s, and a focus of theories concerning the need for symbolism in modern architecture. The Big Duck's prime location, passed by many in New York City art and architectural circles to weekend retreats, garnered it attention on a national scale. One of the first among the critics to cite The Big Duck was Peter Blake in his 1964 work, God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape. Blake was concerned with the ruination of the landscape through commercial sprawl, and felt The Big Duck was a prime example of tacky roadside development. Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi early on used The Big Duck, such as in their 1968 essay, "A Significance for A & P Parking Lots on Learning from Las Vegas" (and thereafter in numerous articles and books) to illustrate that roadside strip architecture was not all bad. They found that The Big Duck clearly combined both functional and symbolic aspects of architecture, and therefore provided important lessons for modern architects. Scott Brown and Venturi used the term "duck"--in honor of The Big Duck--to illustrate their famous theory dividing architecture into "ducks" and "decorated sheds," where a "duck" described a building in which the architectural program, structure, and space are subordinate to the overall symbolic form. Perhaps The Big Duck's most enthusiastic supporter was James Wines, who wrote "The Case for The Big Duck" (Forum, April, 1972) noting that "The Big Duck has fantasy, humor, and a special fascination to which people react spontaneously . . .", and

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CONTINUATION SHEET

The Big Duck
Suffolk County, New York

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offering a "Duck Design Theory" whose first tenet is that "form follows fantasy, not function . . ."

The Big Duck attracted persistent interest into the 1980s, as the roadside architecture of the early and mid-twentieth century gained greater romantic appeal among the general public, and increased scholarly interest among historians as significant manifestations of the dominance of the automobile and suburban life in American culture. Chester Liebs' Main Street to Miracle Mile (1985) is one such work that cites The Big Duck. Liebs wrote that The Big Duck was probably ". . . the most publicized mimetic building in the country . . ." Today, according to the Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources, the Big Duck remains one of a very few extant examples of early twentieth-century mimetic roadside architecture in New York State.

The Big Duck continued to operate as a poultry store into the early 1980s. In 1970, Martin Maurer sold the farm to a Mr. Colombo, who continued to operate the farm until around 1980. The farm was then sold in 1983, and The Big Duck was closed for the last time in fall, 1984. The property was subsequently sold again, with a housing development proposed for the eleven-acre Big Duck Ranch in the mid-1980s. Local residents raised concerns over the fate of The Big Duck, and the Suffolk County Historic Trust worked with the property owners, Kiamarz and Pouran Eshghi, to donate The Big Duck to the county. The Eshghis agreed, provided they were allowed to retain trademark rights, and provided the county move The Big Duck off the property. The proposed preservation and relocation of The Big Duck garnered a great deal of attention in the local press, attesting to the public's interest in this unique building. In a 1987 article on The Big Duck, the New York Times called the building ". . . a 'pop icon' of roadside architecture" (August 26, 1987).

A new site was found for The Big Duck within Sears-Bellows County Park, and a new foundation was soon constructed to match the 1937 cellar, placed to maintain the same orientation to the road. The move occurred in January, 1988, and rehabilitation followed, including repair of the wood frame and cement exterior; painting; replacement of the front door; reconstruction of the rear; and resurfacing of the interior with new metal cladding similar to the original stove pipe tin.

Although Long Island duckling is no longer sold inside and the building itself is removed from its historic duck farm context, The Big Duck retains a high level of historic integrity, with its exterior largely unchanged except for cement repair and repainting. The building was carefully restored after its move in 1988, and is well maintained by Suffolk County and the Friends for Long Island Heritage, which operate a gift shop in the building. Still capturing the attention of motorists speeding by on the

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CONTINUATION SHEET

The Big Duck
Suffolk County, New York

Section number 8 Page 5

two-lane state road between Riverhead and Hampton Bays, The Big Duck remains a prominent example of early twentieth-century mimetic roadside architecture, recognized not only regionally, but across the state and country as well.

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)OMB No. 1024-0018
Expires 10-31-87United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic James Benjamin Homestead

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1182 Flanders Road not for publication

city, town Flanders vicinity of

state New York code 36 county Suffolk code 103

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Donald Brennan

street & number 1182 Flanders Road

city, town Flanders vicinity of state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Suffolk County Clerk's Office

street & number Suffolk County Center

city, town Riverhead state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle Statewide Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ noSurvey date 1982 federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Albany state New York

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date NA
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The James Benjamin Homestead is situated in the unincorporated village of Flanders on the north side of Route 24 (Riverhead-Hampton Bays Road). Flanders is a small, sparsely settled community just southeast of Riverhead (the Suffolk County governmental seat). It is located approximately 100 miles from New York City at the center of eastern Long Island's north and south forks. The Benjamin Homestead is surrounded by altered historic and modern buildings. The one-acre nominated parcel is relatively flat with scattered mature trees and is bounded on the north by Reeves Bay. The Benjamin House sits close to the road (facing south) and has a small barn behind it (two contributing buildings).

The Benjamin Homestead is composed of two primary building sections consisting of the main late eighteenth century, two-story, five-bay, center entrance residence and one and two-story rear additions which were built at the turn of the century (1900). Wood shingle sheathing covers both wood frame sections. The main section has a broad gable roof with center brick chimney and sits on a rubble stone foundation. This section retains a majority of its wide shingle sheathing, nine-over-six windows, and paneled entrance door with simple surround. The rear elevation and attached additions are covered in smaller, more recent wood shingles. The rear additions consist of a two-story flat roof section with two smaller one-story attachments (with low hip roofs). A variety of two-over-two double and single windows punctuate the rear additions. Despite circa 1900 alterations, the main residence retains numerous original interior finishes and details including its floor plan/room configuration, wood floors, some window and door surrounds, portions of wainscot, exposed timber framing in some rooms, and some paneled interior doors. Later nineteenth century period details also remain, including window and door surrounds, the main staircase, and paneled window aprons in two principal first floor rooms.

The small wood frame late nineteenth century barn behind the main house has vertical board sheathing and gable roof. Two large equipment openings with simple vertical board doors punctuate the main south facade. The nominated property's picturesque bayside location provides the Benjamin Homestead with a scenic historic setting.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates circa 1785 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The James Benjamin Homestead is historically and architecturally significant as a rare surviving example of a late eighteenth century residence which recalls the community of Flanders's settlement and agrarian growth, and reflects eastern Long Island's conservative local building tradition and craft practices. Constructed in circa 1785, the two-story, five-bay, center entrance residence is largely intact and retains numerous features which are distinctive characteristics of Long Island's settlement-era building practices and which continued to characterize regional architecture through the mid-nineteenth century. They include: rectangular plan and form; timber frame construction; wide wood shingle sheathing; single multi-paned double-hung windows; broad gable roof with center chimney; overall lack of decorative detail. The Benjamin family settled in Flanders in 1782 and owned the nominated homestead until 1864. It is the oldest extant residence in Flanders and, with its nineteenth century barn, is a well-known historic landmark in the area. Its intact survival recalls the community's eighteenth-century agrarian growth and subsequent development and is a representative example of Long Island's vernacular settlement-era building tradition.

James Benjamin was born in 1753 at Southold on Long Island's North Fork. He married Mary Phillips in 1773 at nearby Mattituck. In 1782, James Benjamin purchased land (a portion of which is the nominated property) near the head of the Peconic River on Reeves Bay from Josiah Goodale, Jr.. At the time, this land area was called Fifteen Mile Island. The unincorporated village of Flanders was first settled in the 1650's. During the seventeenth, eighteenth, and first half of the nineteenth centuries, the community remained sparsely settled and primarily agricultural. Farming and fishing were mainstays of the local economy throughout Flanders's historical development and farming still remains active in the village's outlying areas. Since its seventeenth century settlement, the community's broad, flat, and fertile landscape and extensive waterfront on Reeve's and Flanders Bays has provided the local population with rich farmland and ample fishing areas. At the turn of the century (1900), Flanders attracted small numbers of summer visitors as a result of its rural aspect and bayside setting. Flanders remains a somewhat isolated, primarily residential, and sparsely developed village in the town of Southampton.

The Benjamin residence is architecturally significant as a relatively intact eighteenth-century dwelling which illustrates eastern Long Island's conservative settlement-era building tradition. Its two-story, five-bay, center entrance, gable roof plan is typical of early settlement houses on Long Island. This plan was used widely on eastern Long Island from its seventeenth century settlement, through the eighteenth century, up into the mid-nineteenth century. The Benjamin residence retains numerous features which are characteristic of the region's settlement-era building and craft practices including

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(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Expires 10-31-87

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

The James Benjamin Homestead

Continuation sheet Flanders, Suffolk Co.

Item number 8

Page 2

timber frame construction (portions of which are visible in first and second floor rooms); wood shingle sheathing; multi-pane (nine-over-six) windows with simple trim; a single, paneled entrance door; broad gable roof with center chimney; undecorated rooflines; smooth plaster finishes on the interior; simple interior door and window surrounds; and an overall lack of ornamentation.

Despite some later turn-of-the-century alterations, the Benjamin Homestead retains many significant original features and recalls the area's early development. The residence and barn remain largely intact and represent important examples of historic domestic architecture in Flanders. The Benjamin Homestead with its intact historic setting and farm support building is a well-recognized local landmark associated with the community's settlement and subsequent growth.

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before the day of the tax sale.

At this time the County Treasurer's office is busy checking over the books and receiving such sums as taxpayers wish to leave in settlement of their taxes—and the sum is growing daily, so it is assumed, by the time the tax sale is published there will be very little difference in the usual amount of unpaid taxes.

FLOWER SHOW OF GARDEN CLUB GREAT SUCCESS

Riverhead's First Was Truly
Beautiful. Highest Award
to Mrs. Kaelin

The women of Riverhead scored another brilliant success last Friday when the Garden Club put on its first big flower show at Grace Church Parish House. It was a truly beautiful event and great interest was taken in it by the public as well as by the members of the club, which is doing much to make Riverhead more attractive.

The highest award in the show went to Mrs. Joseph A. Kaelin, whose beautiful and original arrangement for a bridge luncheon table won first place as the most outstanding exhibit and this also won first place in its individual class. Second place was accorded Mrs. Ira M. Young's arrangement with third to Mrs. John C. Stark.

Praises Mrs. Shafer

Mrs. Elwood W. Shafer also came in for merited praise by the judges—her miniature garden was pronounced the finest they ever had seen and of course it was accorded first prize in that class, with second going to Mrs. Kaelin.

All of the exhibits were so very good the competition was found by the judges to be very close, but after careful consideration they awarded the ribbons in the respective classes to the following:

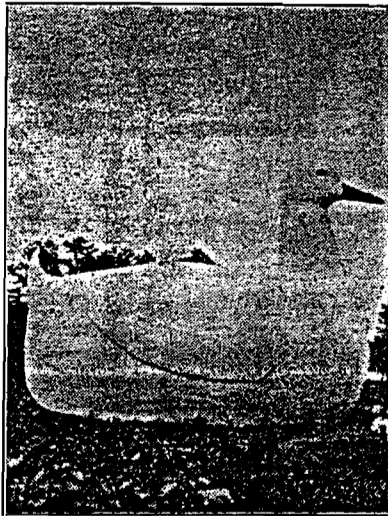
The best specimens of Canterbury bells, Mrs. Robert P. Griffing, first; Mrs. Timothy G. Griffing, second; Mrs. Nathaniel A. Talmage, third; Mrs. George C. Miller, honorable mention. Three best specimens of delphiniums, Mrs. Robert P. Griffing, first;

(Continued on Page 12)

Potato Sorting Regulations of Drastic Kind Suggested and May Be Enforced Soon

"Fancy" Must Be Fancy if Proposal of State Department
of Markets is Adopted. Public Hearings on
Moot Question to Be Held

Advertises Riverhead



Motorists passing through Riverhead now have something else quite distinctive to remember us by; it is the big duck on the Maurer ranch at Upper Mills, and naturally it is attracting much deserved attention. This true-to-life bird, sitting so comfortably beside the road, and at night showing its electrically lighted eyes, is 28 feet high and has inside dimensions of 11x15 feet. It is the biggest duck ever "raised" anywhere in the world.

MISS TUTHILL MARRIES

Announcement is made of the marriage of Miss Hilda Tuthill of Riverhead and George ("Brick") Gordon of West Hampton Beach, which occurred in the Catholic Church in West Hampton Beach on June 14, with the Rev. Father Joseph Slomski officiating. Miss Mae Gallagher was bridesmaid and Russell Tuthill of Mattituck was the best man.

(Continued on Page 12)

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Yet in Tentative Form

At present, it is stated, the regulations apply only to potatoes and are considered to be merely in tentative form. They are to be presented for discussion at a series of hearings to be held in potato grading sections throughout the State. If they meet with approval they will be put into effect for the coming potato shipping season.

The essential features of the proposed plan are as follows:

Grade specifications are set up and defined for "Fancy," No. 1, and "No. 2" potatoes, which are identical with the U. S. grades already promulgated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Under the provisions of the law as passed by the legislature the use of these grades is not compulsory, but if used, they must be used correctly. In other words, if any potatoes when sold are represented or labeled as "Fancy," "No. 1," or "No. 2," it is a violation of the law if they

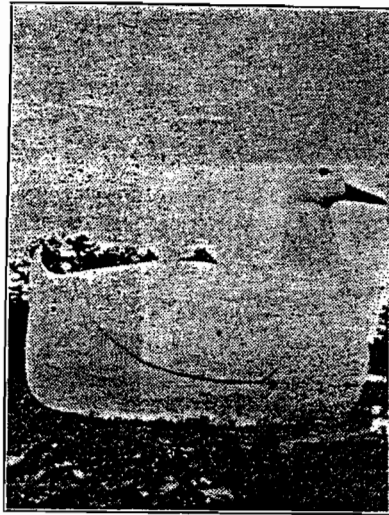
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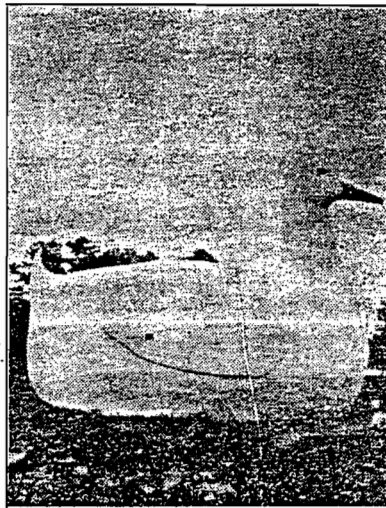
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Advertises Riverhead



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The
**BIG
DUCK**

NOW
OPEN

Ducklings - Pellet-fed

(The Sanitary Way)

Broilers - Milk-fed, Freshly Killed

THE "BIG DUCK" RANCH

West Main Street

Phone 2831

RIVERHEAD, L. I.

A Prize Recipe - Potted Duckling

As a change from our roast duckling, try this tempting dish: Singe duck; cut into desired pieces for serving. Wash and dry thoroughly; season with salt and pepper, and roll in flour. Put 1 tablespoon butter in Dutch Oven (or Iron Skillet having a tight cover), and brown carefully. Remove from pot, drain all grease. Replace pieces, sprinkle with 1 tablespoon minced onion and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon thyme. Add 1 cup heavy cream and simmer gently for $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours, or until tender, with pot tightly covered. Strain gravy and serve hot.

ALL OUR PRODUCTS ARE LABELED WITH
OUR TRADE MARK AND SOLD ONLY
AT OUR "BIG DUCK"

*Allow No One to Claim Them
for Sale Elsewhere*

THE BIG DUCK FLANDERS ROAD :: RIVERHEAD, L. I.

Located on Route 24
(State Highway between Riverhead and Hampton Bays)



Trade Mark Registered
U. S. Pat. Off.

FRESHLY KILLED DUCKLINGS - BROILERS
FRYERS - YOUNG ROASTERS

Dressed Ready for the Oven — *Our Specialty*

Phone: Riverhead 2831

OUR PRIME DUCKLING

As We Roast It at the BIG DUCK and Our Favorite Dressing

Singe, wash and drain duck thoroughly, standing it on end. Meanwhile take half a loaf of white bread, slice and soak for an instant in water, then squeeze as dry as possible. Put in mixing bowl, adding two beaten eggs. Through food chopper put one small green pepper, five pieces of celery and giblets. Add to bread, together with two tablespoons finely cut parsley, one teaspoon poultry seasoning, and salt and pepper to taste. Into your frying pan put three tablespoons butter, add an onion cut fine. Brown for a few minutes, then add bread mixture. Cook for about ten minutes, turning occasionally.

Stuff duck, dry and salt outer skin and sprinkle lightly with paprika. Tie legs and wings close to the body and place breast down in open roaster. Put into hot oven, 475 degrees, for one hour. Drain all of the grease and in its place add one cup hot water. Turn duck on its back and continue roasting for one and a half hours longer, lowering temperature to 400

degrees. Baste every twenty minutes during this last period. Remove duck from pan, thicken gravy and serve with apple sauce.

Time for roasting based on 6-pound duck. Heavier duck requires longer roasting period.

NOTE—Ducks require a hot oven and should not be roasted as chicken. They are best when roasted in an uncovered roasting pan.

OUR FAVORITE BROILER RECIPE:

Wash, dry, quarter and fry in heavy skillet with four tablespoons butter until golden brown. Season with salt and pepper and onion salt, then cover and let steam for about forty minutes—according to size. (Do not add water.) Remove pieces from pan, add one-half cup cream or top milk, stirring thoroughly. Pour hot over broiler.

TO BROIL:

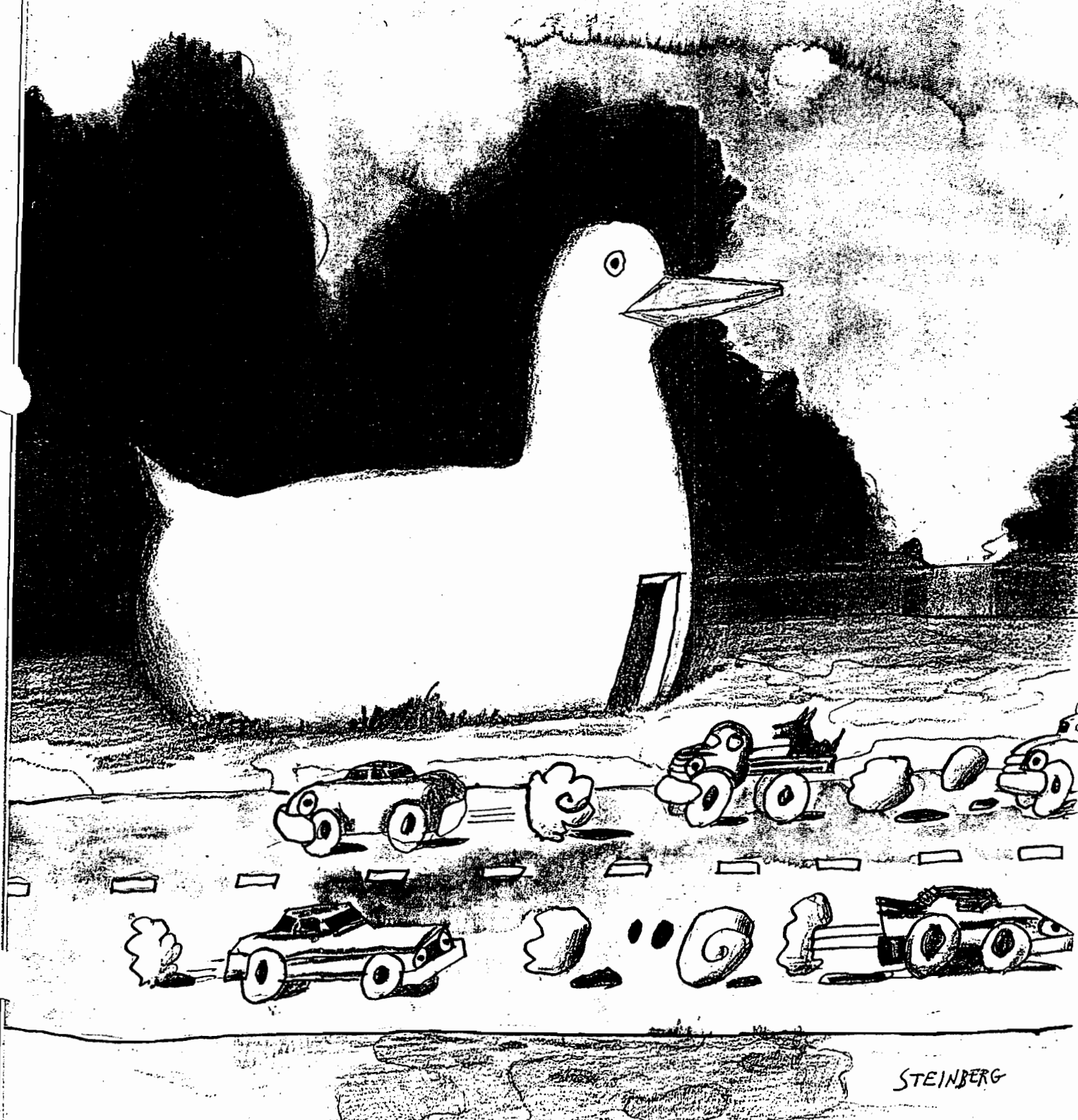
Wash and wipe dry. Spread inside liberally with butter, and put in pan of broiler—not on rack. Set thermostat at 450, brown chicken 15 minutes, keeping two inches from flame. Turn, and after 10 minutes, or when chicken starts to brown, add one-half cup hot water. Baste three times at five-minute intervals, add salt and pepper and remove from oven.

May 11, 1987

THE

Price \$1.75

NEW YORKER



CHAPTER XLIII

Duck Industry

LEROY WILCOX

DUCK raising is a highly specialized industry in Suffolk County, where over six million ducks, or about one-half of all the ducks in the United States, are produced annually. Much has been written about the present-day management of Long Island duck farms in books, magazines and newspapers. Booklets which cover the field rather thoroughly, have been published by the United States Department of Agriculture, State experiment stations and feed manufacturers. Therefore I propose to confine this article mainly to the early foundation of the industry on Long Island and especially to show the growth in each village. As far as I know this historical information has never been compiled and published before, with the exception of that dealing with one or two farms.

Probably the first recorded facts dealing with the raising of ducks on Long Island was published in the book *Cottage Economy* by William Cobbett, at London in 1824. Cobbett was a famous English radical who lived in exile the greater part of 1817 and 1818 at North Hempstead, Long Island. In his book under the heading of "geese" we find the statement: "How is it that you see such fine flocks of fine geese all over Long Island (in America)". Under the heading of "ducks" he wrote: "They are, in Long Island, fattened upon a coarse sort of crab, called a horse-foot fish, prodigious quantities of which are cast on the shores. The young ducks grow very fast upon this, and very fat; but woe unto him that has to smell them when they come from the spit; and as for eating them a man must have a stomach indeed to do that! When you come to fat ducks, you must take care that they get at no filth whatever. I buy a troop when they are young and put them in a pen and feed them upon oats, cabbages, lettuce and water and have the place kept very clean. My ducks are, in consequence of this, a great deal more fine and delicate than any others that I know anything of".

This "horse-foot fish" no doubt is the Horseshoe Crab, *Limulus polyphemus* (Linnaeus). Cobbett's statements would probably indicate that Long Island farmers were interested in growing market ducks as early as 1820. These first ducks were common or so-called "puddle" ducks of rather small size. Common domestic ducks of a variety of colors were brought over from Europe to the United States by the early settlers.

Micajah R. Cook in his *The American Poultry Book* published in N. Y. in 1843, states: "that of the 45 species of ducks found in Europe and America only two have been so completely domesticated as to be rendered subservient to the uses of man. These two are, 1. *Anas (Gymnathus) moschata*, Muscovy Duck, a native in its wild

state of the tropical regions of America and 2. *Anas boschas*, or Mallard, the stock of our common tame duck".

There are three classes of ducks. The meat class, the egg class and the ornamental class. Ducks in this country are used almost exclusively for meat. In the meat class are the well known breeds, Muscovy, Rouen, Aylesbury, Cayuga and Pekin.

The Muscovy was introduced into the United States about 1840 from South America where it is a native of Brazil. The incubation



One of Over Thirty Duck Farms on Long Island

period for Muscovy eggs is thirty-five days while it requires only twenty-eight days for other domestic species.

The Aylesbury is a white duck very similar to the Pekin and was introduced into the U. S. about 1849. This duck originated in Aylesbury, England about 1700. This is now the popular market duck in England.

The Rouen originated from Rouen, France and was introduced into the U. S. about 1850. It has similar color markings as the wild Mallard.

The Cayuga Duck originated in Cayuga County, N. Y. about 1850 and is solid black in color.

The Pekin Duck which is the renowned "Long Island Duckling" of today was introduced into the U. S. from China in 1873. The

Pekin has the same standard weights as the Aylesbury. In 1888 the following standard weights were adopted: Old drake, 8 pounds; old duck, 7 pounds; young drake, 7 pounds; young duck, 6 pounds. In 1910 the weights were increased one pound in each class.

Probably all domesticated ducks, with the exception of the Muscovy, are descended from the wild Mallard, since they are characterized by the recurved tail feathers of the drake, a feature which no wild species besides the Mallard possesses. Moreover the wild Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* is the most plentiful and best known species of the *Anatinae*, which are fresh-water or surface-feeding ducks, and is widely distributed in the north temperate countries of both hemispheres. When the Aylesbury, Rouen, Cayuga or Pekins are crossed with wild Mallards the offsprings are not sterile but perfectly fertile which would seem to be proof that these domestic breeds all came originally from the wild Mallard.

In the December, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry* (Boston, Mass.) an article on growing market ducks on Long Island states: "Long Island geese and ducks are said to have had a reputation in the New York market long before the great expansion of interest in poultry which began between 1840 to 1850. I recall several instances to the celebrity of the domestic aquatic fowl of Long Island in files of agricultural papers of that period".

Duck raising was not a full-time industry until about 1880 to 1885; before that, raising ducks was a side line to farming or fishing. Prior to 1870 there had been several farms partially devoted to the production of ducks for the market. These farms were mostly on Long Island or the territory immediately adjacent to New York City from which came the only demand worth serious consideration and that demand almost entirely from the foreign population which had brought from the home shore a taste for waterfowl. The flesh of these early ducks was of poor quality, the birds were small in frame and had very little flesh-carrying capacity. The better development of the industry was waiting first for a suitable duck which did not appear until the Pekin was introduced in 1873. Before that time the white Muscovy is said to have been the favorite. In January 1886 Eugene O. Wilcox of Speonk (the writer's father) had 39 Muscovy breeders and 67 Pekins. In January 1887 he only had 5 Muscovy breeders but had 165 Pekins. Warren W. Hallock of Speonk also had Muscovies in 1885 as he purchased six drakes from my father in September. Stephen B. Wilcox of Speonk (son-in-law of W. W. Hallock and brother of E. O. Wilcox) also had some Muscovies in 1885. Many of the early duck raisers in Remsenburg also had Muscovies. The Aylesbury was not unknown but it had the general reputation in America of being rather delicate. Crosses were made of the Pekin with Aylesbury and other breeds but the pure Pekin was found to be much better adapted for commercial duck farming.

After extensive research I believe that *The Poultry World* (Hartford, Conn.) in the November, 1873, issue was the first poultry publication to announce the introduction of the Pekin Duck into the United States. There is an illustration of two Pekins on the front cover of this issue; probably the first time they were illustrated in

this country. William Clift of Mystic Bridge, Conn., had a short article on the importation of the Pekins; he also had an advertisement which read as follows: "Imperial Pekin Ducks. A few pairs for sale, at \$20.00 per pair. Eggs in Spring, \$10.00 per dozen".

In the April, 1874, issue of *The Poultry World*, Mr. Clift had an article: "Pekins were brought to this country from China by Mr. James E. Palmer of Stonington, Conn., and landed in New York on March 14, 1873".

The July, 1874, issue of *The Poultry World* gives credit to "Mr. McGrath of the firm of Fogg & Co., engaged in the Japan and China trade," for having discovered the Pekin duck in China in 1873.

In the August, 1874, issue of *The Poultry World*, Mr. Clift reported: "Not far from thirty female birds are laying eggs this season. With the usual loss in hatching and rearing, there will not be more than 500 young Pekins raised and the number may not reach 400. A large number are already sold and the demand will far exceed the supply. The imported birds of last year began to lay in Feb. this season".

At the Connecticut State Poultry Exhibition at Hartford, Dec. 16-19, 1873, the first exhibit of Pekin Ducks in America was held. Pekins were exhibited at the Western New York Poultry Exhibition, at Buffalo, Jan. 14-21, 1874. Pekins were in the 1874 American Standard of Perfection, adopted ten months after their first appearance in this country. There is probably no other case of a breed of poultry being given such recognition within a year of becoming known in this country.

In April, 1875, Mr. Palmer received a second lot of Pekins, four drakes and six ducks. The lot is said to have contained several birds superior to any in the first importation. One of the ducks weighed, when she commenced laying, eight pounds nine ounces; and the largest drake weighed ten pounds two ounces. In July, 1875, Col. M. Eyre, of Napa, Cal., then the most prominent poultry fancier of the far West, received a consignment of six birds—what were left of a dozen secured for him in China by a brother-in-law. So far as can be learned these three importations, in which were brought only twenty ducks that survived to be used as breeders, constituted the entire foundation stock of Pekin ducks brought to America up to that time.

After their introduction into the United States Pekins spread quite rapidly throughout the East and Middle West. They were advertised for sale in Illinois and Iowa in the *American Poultry Journal* of August, 1880. In the June, 1882, issue they were advertised in Kansas and Ohio and in the October issue breeders were advertised for \$5.00 per pair in Indiana.

The writer's father, Eugene O. Wilcox, kept records of his early start in the duck business at Speonk in 1883. As far as I know these are the only records left by a Long Island duck raiser giving us information on such matters as the first incubators, price of ducks, feed and feathers and names of some duck raisers back in the early eighties. In his inventory of breeding stock for January, 1884, Pekins were listed as breeders, but just when the first ones appeared on

Long Island is unknown. We only know that they made their appearance on Long Island sometime between 1873 and 1883.

Henry Raynor of Speonk was the first raiser to obtain Pekins in the Speonk-Eastport area according to William M. Edwards, one of the oldest residents of Eastport, who was interested in the duck business as he worked on some of the early farms and also had his own duck farm. Mr. Edwards stated that Brewster Tuttle and D. Marshall Tuttle were the first raisers in Eastport to use Pekins. They secured their stock from Henry Raynor.

There was a long experimental period before the duck industry began its course of steady expansion. E. O. Wilcox marketed 775 ducks in 1883, his first season in business at Speonk; 1101 ducks in 1884, 1566 in 1885, and 3466 in 1886. By 1901 he was hatching 30,000 ducklings annually. By 1897 about 200,000 ducks were produced annually by all the Long Island duck farms; by 1922 about 2,000,000 were produced annually by all the farms and in 1945 about 6,500,000 ducks were marketed. This great increase has been brought about mainly by the use of artificial methods in hatching and brooding.

Eastern Massachusetts and Long Island were the centers of the early duck industry. The Massachusetts raisers in those early days used the so-called dry duck farming—that is, they did not allow the ducks the use of creeks or streams. On the other hand, most of the Long Island growers allowed their ducks full freedom of ponds and streams. For a great many years there was a great deal of discussion among the duck growers as to which method was superior. Eventually the Long Island method proved to be much more economical than the other and the Massachusetts growers gradually changed their system and location so as to avail themselves of water range for their ducks. There were a number of early duck farms on Long Island in the eighties and nineties located entirely upland; notably in what is now Rensselaer (but which was Speonk prior to 1895) where during this period there were about fifteen duck farms of which twelve were upland and only three located on streams. Today out of the seventy-seven Long Island duck farms only one at Center Moriches is upland.

In the December, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry* (Boston, Mass.) an article on growing market ducks on Long Island states: "Until about 1890 natural methods of incubation and brooding were used by the L. I. duck growers and the output was thus limited. Growers were skeptical about incubators and brooders. J. L. Nix of the Prairie State Incubator Co. introduced incubators in this section and to do it he had to put incubators on a number of plants and stay with them, making the rounds daily with horse and buggy until he had practically demonstrated the advantages of the artificial hatcher"

Although the Prairie State Incubator probably had a greater sale among the duck raisers in the nineties than any other make yet it was not the first incubator in a L. I. duck farm. Luther Skidmore, an early duck raiser in the nineties in Riverhead, built some incubators for hatching his duck eggs.

No doubt I could have obtained some valuable information from my father who died in 1926 had I known that some day I would be

compiling data on the history of the duck industry, L. E. Huber, duck raiser of Aqueduct, states that my father told him that he had built an incubator of his own which on one occasion hatched every duck egg set. I find in my father's records that he purchased a Perfect Hatcher Incubator on October 15, 1884, for \$140. This was probably the first incubator used on a Long Island duck farm.

The second incubator that my father bought was a Eureka Incubator, patented in 1879 and sold by J. C. Campbell, West Elizabeth, Allegheny Co., Pa., for \$100. This incubator received first prize Gold Medal at the Worlds Fair, New Orleans, La., in 1883.

The next incubator that my father purchased was a Monarch Incubator on October 10, 1887, price \$120. This incubator was invented, manufactured and sold by James Rankin, South Easton, Mass.

Later my father bought a Pineland Incubator, Jamesburg, New Jersey. The 1901 catalog of The Pineland Incubator Company states that that was the nineteenth season, which would mean that this incubator had been on the market since 1883.

By 1900 the Prairie State Incubator was probably the most popular incubator on the Long Island duck farms. My father wrote as follows on October 10, 1901: "I have used incubators for eighteen years and during that time have used several different makes. I have also seen most of the reliable ones on the market in practical operation and after all points have been considered, there is none that can compare with the Prairie State. I am using 47 of them and if I ever buy any more incubators you shall most assuredly get the order; but as I can get 30,000 ducklings from 47 machines I do not anticipate buying any more".

One of the largest raisers by 1900, W. H. Pye of Eastport, wrote under date of September 1, 1901: "I like the \$5 new special duck machines you sent me very much indeed. In the last season I have hatched 55,000 ducks and have used your machines almost exclusively". Another large raiser, A. J. Hallock of Speonk, had 30 Prairie States by 1901, purchasing his first ones in 1891. He also had 30 Cyphers Incubators. D. H. Tuttle & Son of Eastport had used several kinds according to letter of October 14, 1901, and found the Prairie State the best they had ever used or seen. They were using fifteen 288 egg special duck machines.

Mrs. Stephen B. Wilcox, of Center Moriches, wrote under date of October 10, 1901: "I can heartily recommend the Prairie State Incubator as being without a peer. I now have 50 of your incubators on my place and during the 15 years in which I have used them I have been unable to find another incubator that would equal them". D. G. and Wm. C. Rogers' duck farm at Remsenburg had 5 Prairie States from 1892 to 1901. E. F. Tuttle of Eastport in 1901 said: "I have used Prairie States for several years and had better hatches than in any other machines".

After the Prairie State, the Cyphers Incubator made its appearance on the duck farms. Cyphers were placed on the market in 1896-1897 and manufactured by Cyphers Incubator Company, Wayland, New York. In the 1900 catalog they state: "Up to three years ago when the Cyphers was first put on the market the highest general

average for the season of all eggs set made by the large L. I. duck breeders was 38 per cent and L. I. produces over 200,000 ducks each year. A. J. Hallock of Speonk is using thirty 300 egg Cyphers Incubators purchased in 1897. He produces each year from 15,000 to 25,000 ducks".

In the early summer of 1907 the incubator cellar of A. J. Hallock at Speonk, was destroyed by fire. This cellar contained eighty-three 300 egg Cyphers lamp machines having a capacity of about 25,000 eggs. The 1913 Cyphers catalog states: "The first Cyphers Mammoth Incubators (hot water) offered to the public were sold in 1907. These big machines were erected on Long Island, N. Y., and were for duck hatching. A 38,400 egg machine was installed in January, 1908, for A. J. Hallock, Speonk, and we installed an 8,250 duck egg machine at about the same time on Forge River Duck Farm, Center Moriches. T. V. Cox, Prop. Mr. Hallock ordered another Cyphers Mammoth of 12,000 egg capacity which we installed for him in the fall of 1908. On October 1, 1910, we were given an order to double the capacity of the Cox machine. Furthermore, E. O. Wilcox of Speonk watched the work of the Hallock machine and in November, 1909, had installed a 40 compartment or 14,000 egg capacity Cyphers Mammoth on his plant. After using this machine through an entire season, Mr. Wilcox, under date of September 12, 1910, gave us an order to install a second Cyphers Mammoth for him consisting of 24 compartments". These apparently were the first hot water mammoth incubators installed on the Long Island duck farms.

Another early hot water mammoth machine was the Candee Incubator. In their 1916 catalog they state: "The Candee has supplanted hundreds upon hundreds of lamp and other types of incubators. It has been the choice of as high as 95% of the duck raisers in many localities". They assert that the incubator cellar of C. H. Wilcox at Center Moriches was one of the largest in the world in which six Candee Mammoth Incubators were operated annually with total capacity of 44,400 eggs. A letter from Mr. Wilcox under date of May 2, 1913, reads: "This is our third year with your equipment which now consists of 62 sections or a capacity of 37,200 eggs. Will incubate this year about 120,000 eggs and have about 1200 breeders".

Later there was a number of other hot water machines placed in operation on the duck farms such as Newtowns, Wishbones and Perfections. A great many of these are still in use on the farms but are slowly being replaced by electric incubators. Just as the lamp machines replaced the original and very limited method of hatching duck eggs with setting hens, and the hot water mammoths in 1908 meant the end of the troublesome lamp machines, so too the electric incubator will probably mean the end of the present hot water machines in the near future.

The first electric incubator purchased by a Long Island duck raiser was a Petersime Mammoth bought by Roy E. Pardee of Islip in February, 1927, and a second Petersime was purchased in 1931. The next raiser to purchase an electric incubator was Carman River Duck Farm (Charles E. Robinson) at South Haven. In 1934 Mr. Robinson purchased a Bundy Incubator from the Bundy Incubator

Co., Springfield, Ohio. This was operated only one season and Mr. Robinson purchased a Petersime in October, 1935.

In order to secure a more complete coverage of the history of the Long Island duck industry it might be well to list the known early duck raisers in each village.

On the south shore of Suffolk County the easternmost farm is located on Mecox Bay at Water Mill. The present owner of this farm is William Kronshage who is the fourth owner since the farm was



World's Largest Duck Farm at Riverhead, Showing the Owner, Hollis Warner, Pointing

established about 1910 by George E. Jones. Mr. Jones started in the business by purchasing his breeders from my father. He raised about 500 ducks the first year and gradually enlarged the farm until he raised about 5,000 a year. This farm has always sold a good portion of its ducks to the local summer trade of Southampton.

A duck farm was in operation at Sag Harbor from about 1905 to 1915. The owner was James Grey, a city businessman who hired W. Frazer Young as manager. Later Mr. Grey gave up the duck business and went into the chicken business.

Another duck farm just west of Sag Harbor, at Noyack, was operated by Thomas Eldridge from about 1890 to 1910. He had an incubator room with about ten Prairie State Incubators; he also used hens for hatching duck eggs. He raised about 3,000 ducks annually; some were shipped to New York City and the rest sold to

local butcher shops. He also ran a wagon to Southampton twice a week selling his ducks to the large summer homes and hotels.

At Hampton Bays there have been four separate duck farms. The Holzman Farm, the only one in operation at present, is located at the north end of the Shinnecock Canal on the west side. This farm was started by Mr. Holzman in 1907. At present about 25,000 ducks are raised annually. Albert Mickler owned a duck farm a short distance south of the Canoe Place Inn on Shinnecock Bay. It was in operation from about 1900 to 1918. Some of the buildings are still standing. Mr. Mickler raised from 7,000 to 8,000 ducks a year. No doubt the first duck farm at Hampton Bays was that of George E. Foster located a short distance north of the Shinnecock or Ponquogue Light House. Some of these duck buildings were standing until recent years but at present all trace of them has disappeared. This farm was started about 1881 or 1882 and was in operation until about 1930. At its peak about 5,000 ducks a year were produced on this farm. Mr. Foster's daughter who at present lives just across the road from where the farm was located advised me that the duck pickers prior to 1888 were paid two cents a duck and that the ducks were dry picked. She well remembers picking ducks for several years before 1888 when she was married. Just across the road from the Foster farm was the duck farm of Gilbert Penney who started about 1885 but only raised ducks a few years.

Another early duck farm was located at East Quogue. It was owned by John Quinn who began to raise ducks about 1882. Mr. Quinn was Postmaster at East Quogue by 1910 so that he went out of the duck business some time prior to that date. This farm was located just to the north of the present duck farm of E. F. McCormack, the only duck farm now at East Quogue. From my father's records I find that he sold six Pekin drakes to Mr. Quinn on August 5, 1886.

Willard F. Davis raised ducks upland just west of the L. I. Railroad Station at Westhampton. He was raising ducks prior to 1905 and continued up to about 1915, producing about 5,000 a year. At Westhampton on Beaver Dam Creek, a short distance north of the bay, was located the duck farm of John Rogers. He was raising ducks as early as 1886 as he bought nine Pekin drakes from my father that year. Mr. Rogers retired about 1922 and the farm has been vacant since. This was a small farm and it was probably the last one to use setting hens for hatching the duck eggs, as I well remember taking setting hens in feed bags over to his farm about 1912 to 1915. Two duck farms have been in operation at Tanners Neck, Westhampton on the next stream west of Beaver Dam Creek. The first farm in this locality was that of Sid Raynor who was raising ducks upland as early as 1886 as he bought some Pekins that year from my father. At the peak he raised about 3,000 a year. His farm was located on the west side of Tanners Neck Road. After Mr. Raynor's death in 1904 his son Archie continued the business in the same place until 1913 when he started raising ducks on the stream east of Tanners Neck Road. Archie raised 5,000 ducks in 1907. Part of his farm is the present Culver & Raynor Duck Farm. Chester Raynor (brother

of Archie) started raising ducks in 1910 on the same stream adjoining to the north of Archie's farm, and it is still in operation.

The next farms to the west are the three farms located on Brushy Neck at Speonk. The north farm directly south of the Montauk Highway is that farm of Steve Kuczma, who is the fifth owner. This farm was started by Alexander C. Drogkamp about 1900. The next owner was E. Tichenor about 1910, followed by Faber, William Kronsage (who is present owner of the farm at Water Mill) and finally Steve Kuczma. The farm directly south of the Kuczma farm is the writer's farm started by E. O. Wilcox in 1883. This farm was called Sea Side Ranch in 1884; by 1889 it went under the name of Ensilage Duck Farm but soon after it was given the name of Oceanic Duck Farm under which name it is known today.

The book "Portrait and Biographical Record of Suffolk County" published in Jan., 1896, gives a sketch about my father as follows: "In the year 1883 the raising of ducks began to be discussed and tried as a side issue to farming. Mr. Wilcox experimented in that direction, and soon found that he had opened up a business that had no limits but capacity and cash. As his capital increased he went into it more largely, until it has now become an industry of great magnitude, he sending to market annually from 8,000 to 10,000 ducks, making him one of three men who stand at the very head of the duck business in the county. This industry is yet in its infancy, and in the near future a great improvement will be made in the flavor of the choicest ducks now on the market, which will be brought about by the scientific arrangement of their food, to which end Mr. Wilcox is experimenting".

My father came to Brushy Neck in 1883 from Ponquogue (Hampton Bays) where he and his father operated the Bay View Hotel just north of the Light House and adjoining the duck farm of George E. Foster. He may have come to Brushy Neck with the intention of starting in the duck business after observing the operation of the Foster farm, as he started in the business as soon as he arrived. From his records are taken the following numbers of poultry marketed in those early years:

Year	Chicks	Ducks	Doz. Eggs	Fowl
1883	321	775
1884	453	1101	2229	277
1885	1077	1566	1719	265
1886	271	3466	1710	105

He was hatching 30,000 ducks annually by 1901 and the farm reached its peak in 1940 with the production of 145,000 ducks.

The one L. I. duck farm that has had a continuous history running back into the period of primitive conditions is the Atlantic or Hallock Duck Farm which is directly south of the writer's farm and extends to Moriches Bay. Warren W. Hallock came to Brushy Neck in 1838 when twelve years old with his father Jonah. Warren Hallock began to make ducks an important product of the farm as far back as 1858. He divided his time between farming, following the bay and keeping summer boarders. By 1885 he was marketing annually between 4,000

and 5,000 ducks. In 1892 Warren Hallock died and the business passed into the hands of his son Arthur J.

The first published account of this farm was an article by M. K. Boyer in the February, 1893, issue of *Farm Poultry* (Boston, Mass.) as follows: "Hens were employed to do the hatching and brooding. Later on Mr. Hallock's son-in-law, Stephen B. Wilcox, was taken into partnership and his son Arthur J. (the present proprietor) was installed as 'feeder'. After Stephen Wilcox withdrew from the firm in 1894 to start a farm of his own at Center Moriches the son Arthur was taken into partnership and the firm name changed to W. W. Hallock & Son. Last year the senior member died. One thousand breeding ducks are kept and these are the cream selected from between 20,000 and 25,000 ducklings hatched". In 1900 this farm hatched 28,000 ducks and 4,000 chicks.

In the December, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry* an article states: "Capacity of Atlantic Farm was now 40,000 to 50,000 ducks a year. In addition Mr. Hallock was now operating a farm at Center Moriches belonging to his sister, Mrs. Stephen Wilcox, whose husband had been killed by the caving in of a well not long after he established the farm. The capacity of this farm was 20,000 to 25,000 ducks a year". In 1909 about 49,000 ducks hatched. In 1916 about 125,000 ducks were hatched - all hatched in 144 sections of Cyphers Mammoth. At this time this was considered to be the largest duck farm in the world. One writer made the statement: "Atlantic Duck Farm is doing today (1922) a business running between \$200,000 to upwards of \$225,000 a year and is without doubt by far the most profitable poultry farm in the world". This continued to be the largest duck farm until about 1938 when Hollis Warner of Riverhead became the largest raiser. At its peak, in 1938, Atlantic Farm produced about 260,000 ducks.

There were about fifteen duck farms in the eighties and nineties in what is now Rensselaer (but which was Speonk prior to 1895). Beginning in the eastern part of this village, about one-half mile west of Brushy Neck, was the farm of Gilbert Rogers located on the north side of the road. The next farms in order going west were those of Charles Smith, Henry Fordham, John Tuthill, Will Strong, Preston Tuthill and John Learie, all on the south side of the road. The next farm was that of Mott Tuthill on the north side of the road. All of the above farms were east of the present Rensselaer postoffice. Farms west and north of the postoffice were those of Byron Tuthill, Rensselaer Dayton, Oliver Raynor, William C. Rogers (directly west across the road from the schoolhouse), Ira B. Tuttle and Henry Raynor. Frank Ruland's farm was southwest of the church on Basket Neck Lane.

The only three farms that were located on streams were those of Charles Smith, Henry Fordham and Ira Tuttle; all the others were upland farms. Before 1900 the largest was probably Mott Tuthill. It is doubtful if any of these farms were in operation after 1900 except that of William C. Rogers who continued up to about 1920. The majority of these farms probably raised only about 1,000 ducks annually. Henry Raynor raised up to 2,000 a year - all hatched under hens. Charles Smith, Will Strong and William C. Rogers bought Pekins from my father in 1886. There are no duck farms at present

in Remsenburg and of these former duck raisers the only survivor is Ira B. Tuttle.

William H. Fordham raised ducks upland just west of Speonk railroad station. He started in 1897 and raised 6,000 ducks in 1899. The farm was no longer in operation by 1908. Another early duck farm at Speonk in the eighties, started by Lewis Raynor, is the present duck farm of Mike Stachnik. Alonzo Homan raised about 500 ducks a year upland from 1890 to 1893 at the western limits of Speonk on the south side of Montauk Highway. After going out of the duck business he caught fish and gathered eel grass for the duck raisers. During the coldest part of the winter when the bay was frozen over he got grass out of the fresh water ponds at Eastport, especially the upper part of Seatuck Creek where the pond did not freeze very much. He was paid one dollar a wagonload for the grass. The duck raisers especially desired the grass in winter to mix in the feed for the breeding ducks. At present there are seven duck raisers in Speonk but there are nine farms. Steve Kueznia has two, one on each side of Speonk Creek, and Murphy's Duck Farm of Eastport has a branch farm at Speonk.

Eastport has been the real center of the duck industry. It had a larger number of early farms than any other village and even at the present time there are more farms here than in any other village. Around 1900 there were about twenty-nine farms, of which many were small and several were upland farms. By 1912 there were about sixteen farms. Now there are fourteen raisers and fifteen farms. Harry Baker has two farms, one on each side of the east creek. Probably all the upland farms were out of business by 1900 or shortly thereafter.

I shall endeavor to list the early farms in Eastport prior to about 1912. Beginning at the eastern limits of the village there are two farms on the east side of the east creek. The first farm directly south of the L. I. Railroad is the Murphy Duck Farm established by Hugh Murphy in 1912. The next farm south is Harry Baker's farm established by his father-in-law, Capt. Gil Seaman, in 1903. Seaman raised ducks on the beach across the bay from Eastport from 1894 to 1903 while captain of the Moriches Coast Guard Station. On the west side of the east creek, just south of the L. I. Railroad, is the present farm of George Frey. This farm was started by Mrs. William H. Pye about 1906. From 1911 to 1917 it was operated by Chester A. Pitney & Brud Seaman (son of Capt. Gil Seaman).

Capt. Charles T. Gordon, while Captain of the Moriches Coast Guard Station, raised ducks on the beach from 1906 to 1922, when he came to the mainland and established a farm—the present Harry Baker farm on the west side of the east creek, directly south of Tuttle Bros.' farm. Between the Montauk Highway and the railroad, on the east side of the boundary stream between Southampton Town and Brookhaven Town, was the duck farm of Edgar F. Tuttle—the present Otto Sperling property and no longer used as a duck farm. Mr. Tuttle was in the business before 1900 as he wrote under date of Oct. 24, 1901, to the Prairie State Incubator Co.: "I have used Prairie State Incubators several years". There are seven illustrations of his

farm, including one of a duck picker entitled "The Champion Duck-Picker of L. I."

On the east side of this Town boundary stream, just south of the railroad, is the present Phillip S. Gordon farm. It is believed to have been established by David H. Tuttle and later operated by Wilson Gordon (father of Phillip S.). The next farm south is the present farm of Elizabeth Lubniewski established by Wilson Gordon, followed by Leonard Tuttle and then John W. Tutthill. The next farm south on this stream was the farm of Stafford J. Robinson who was operating there with his son-in-law, Wm. C. Newcomb, in 1910. This farm was between the present Lubniewski farm on the north and the Anczurowski farm on the south. This Robinson farm is no longer in operation. Directly south of this latter farm is that of Anthony Anczurowski established by Wilson Gordon who raised his first ducks on this farm before moving north to the other two farms. He lived in the north dwelling on the present Anczurowski farm. Fred P. Howland, brother-in-law of Mr. Gordon lived in the next house south and raised ducks. The next farm south on the stream was that of D. Parshall Tuttle who also raised ducks directly across the road on the east side of River Ave. All of the above farms south of the railroad are on the west side of River Ave. All of this land between the railroad and the bay west of River Ave. was owned by Daniel Gordon, father of Wilson.

The next farm south of Parshall Tuttle on the stream was the Archie B. Ketcham farm which was idle for a while until 1946 when Harry Baker raised some ducks there. Directly south of the Ketcham farm was that of David H. Tuttle who was in business here first before moving north on the same stream. Next south was the farm of William H. Pye. Both of these last two farms now comprise the present farm of Peter Kostuk. Mr. Pye began to raise ducks about 1890 according to "Portrait and Biographical Record" published in 1896, which states as follows: "Mr. Pye resigned his position, in 1884, on a vessel plying between New York and Florida and came to Eastport. In 1886 he bought land, where he now lives, erecting a cottage, which served him as a home until some two years ago, when it was disposed of and the present handsome residence erected. Some five years ago he established a duck industry, which has become an extensive business, putting into market each year between ten and twelve thousand ducks and chickens".

This was probably the largest duck farm on Long Island in 1900 as Pye wrote on Sept. 1, 1901, to the Prairie State Incubator Co.: "In the last season I have hatched 55,000 ducks". On September 4, 1907, he wrote to the Cyphers Incubator Co.: "I have been in the poultry business about 18 years and have had experience with four kinds of incubators". There are nine illustrations of his farm in the 1902 Prairie State Incubator Co. catalogue. There is an article on the Pye farm entitled "Duck Raising as an Industry" by Howland Gasper in the Jan. 7, 1905, issue of Scientific American Supplement with fourteen illustrations of the farm. The article states: "Mr. Pye was a bayman when he conceived the idea of starting a duck ranch. Being without funds he was obliged to secure credit for the lumber with

which the first buildings were erected. At the end of the first season his returns enabled him not only to pay all indebtedness, but afforded a substantial profit in addition. The capacity of the ranch was increased, a proportionate increase in profits being realized, and a few years later the output of one season exceeded 25,000 ducks. Mr. Pye's experience led many other parties to adopt the same occupation, and ranches of more or less pretentious dimensions arose throughout that section. Overproduction, as might be expected, was the result, and a number of ambitious raisers were practically ruined. The business was then, however, reduced to a substantial basis, and those now engaged in it are receiving an adequate profit".

From my father's records I find that he sold 14 Pekins to Mr. Pye on September 9, 1885. By 1906 Mr. Pye was retired from the duck business. Hubert Drosser began to operate the farm in 1906. South of the railroad, about south of the church, is a small stream that runs south to southwest into the Town boundary stream. At the north end of this small stream (east of River Ave.) is the present farm of G. Henry Frey, the northern part of which was established by John W. Tuthill. It was later operated by Leonard H. Tuttle who was in the grain business while raising ducks. My father bought some feed from him as early as 1906. Just to the north of G. Henry Frey's farm was the farm of Dubois D. Tuttle (brother of Leonard H.) located about 500 feet south of the railroad, east of River Ave. They were sons of David E. Tuttle, duck raiser on the west side of River Ave. The southern part of Henry Frey's present farm was the farm established by Luther Tuttle (brother of John W. Tuthill) in 1896 and continued in operation by him until 1922. The next farm south of Luther Tuttle was that of his brother Frank P., who owned the northern part of the present farm of Frank Lubniewski who stopped raising ducks about 1944. The southern part of this Lubniewski farm was established by D. Parshall Tuttle, father of four sons in the duck business—Luther, Frank P., and Richard C. Tuttle, and John W. Tuthill. It is believed that Parshall Tuttle and Brewster Tuttle, who were consins, were two of the first raisers in Eastport.

Just south of Parshall Tuttle's farm at the southern end of this small stream were the farms of Richard C. Tuttle and George Williams. The latter stopped raising ducks about 1924. In July 1910 R. C. Tuttle bought forty-four drakes from my father. On the west side of the boundary stream between Southampton Town and Brookhaven Town, just south of the railroad, was the farm of William P. Howland (father of Fred P. who had a farm on the east side of the same creek). William P. was one of the earliest raisers in Eastport, according to "Portrait and Biographical Record" of 1896. This sketch on his life states: "When seventeen years old in 1853 he determined to try life on the water and followed the sea for fifteen or twenty years. Although our subject has raised a large number of ducks for the past twenty years, he has not given this business his exclusive attention until within the past three years, and during 1894 raised over 2,000 ducks". He bought drakes from my father in Aug., 1901.

The next farm south was that of Fred Tuttle (son of Brewster Tuttle) who was in the business at least until 1912. The next farm

south was that of Elisha Cuffee, reported to be a Shinnecock Indian, who raised ducks before 1892. The next farm south is the present Eugene Warner farm established in 1893 by Capt. William H. Mott who was also a dealer in feathers and grain. Ben Seaman (brother of Capt. Gil) owned the next farm south. He was raising ducks before 1893. The farm was later operated by Stafford Robinson who came there soon after 1910 from directly across on the east side of this creek. This is now a part of the present Warner farm. South of the Ben Seaman farm was that of Jesse Rogers. The next farm south was that of Charles Steinke, who stopped raising ducks about 1913. He had raised up to 35,000 a year. Both the Jesse Rogers farm and the Steinke farm were operating prior to 1893. The Steinke farm is now the south part of the Eugene Warner farm. The present Mottus farm down on the end of this neck, on the bay, was started by Ben Seaman who later went north to establish the farm just south of Capt. Mott.

On Seatuck Creek, near the bay, was the farm of J. L. Tyler who bought some Pekins from my father in 1886. This is the present Z. Babinski farm. Tyler had a small farm; he was also a fisherman as my father bought fish from him in 1902. There were several upland farms in Eastport prior to 1900. John Edwards raised ducks north of the village, on the north side of the Country Road, at the extreme northern end of Bay Ave. Manasseh Penney established a farm north of the Country Road, west of the Eastport Country Club. Later John B. Keck and William J. Lukert were in partnership for about a year on the same farm in 1893. They bought incubators and ducks in April, 1893, and in March, 1895. Mr. Keck bought drakes from my father. In 1894 Mr. Lukert went to Moriches where he established the present Lukert farm. Mr. Keck worked on A. J. Hallock's farm at Speonk, presumably to get experience before going into business for himself. Mr. Keck went from Eastport to Amityville where he was manager of a duck farm for a city man, H. D. Klinker.

Pat Collins raised ducks for a while just south and east of the Keck & Lukert farm. Roy Ketcham raised ducks upland about 1895 on the north side of Montauk Highway, about one thousand feet east of the church, where H. S. Sorrell's garage now stands. Harry Ketcham raised ducks just to the west of Roy, his brother. They both had incubators. Frank Brown raised ducks just west of the church on the north side of Montauk Highway from about 1896 when he left the U. S. Life Saving Service until about 1901. He raised up to about 3,000 a year. Mr. Brown states that ducks were dry picked up to 1900 and that many farms went out of business at that time because the price went down to ten cents a pound. James Peterson raised ducks upland, just west of Mr. Brown, about where the school auditorium is now located. He started before Mr. Brown and had stopped raising ducks by 1900. He was the father of Mrs. A. K. Smith, duck raiser of East Moriches. Ralph Tuttle raised ducks upland, the third house west of the school house on north side of Montauk Highway. He was in the business before 1896 and had gone out of business by 1902. He was one of the largest upland raisers. Ralph and his father, George H., were the only ones in the grain business with a storehouse for feed

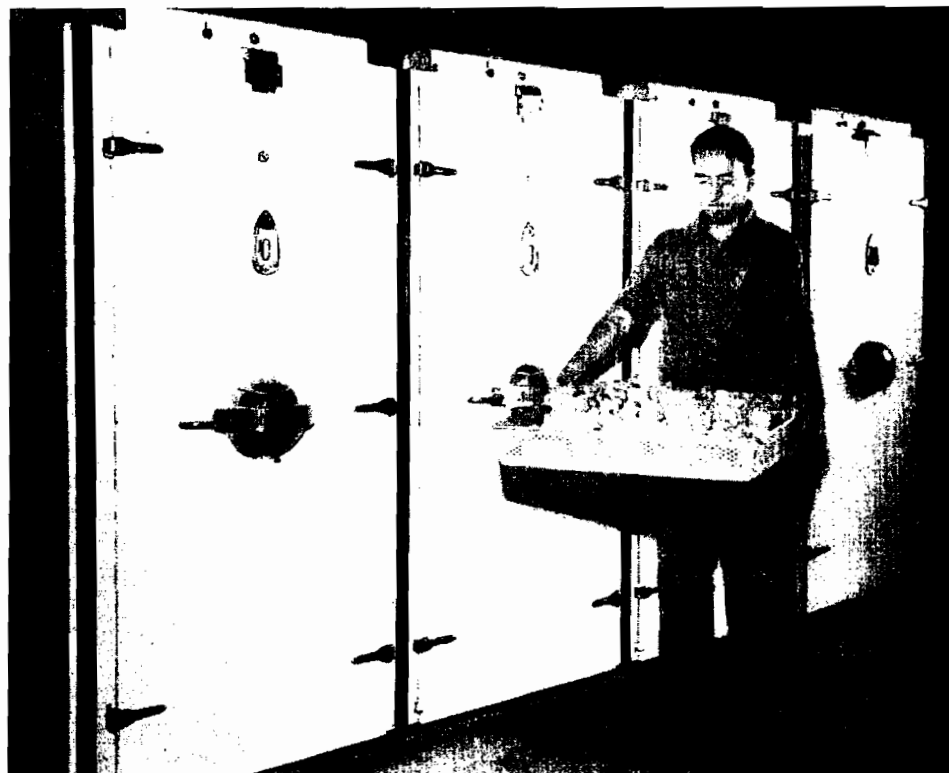
in Eastport prior to 1900. It was located on the duck farm. They delivered feed by horse and wagon to the duck farms and if they had any feed left over out of a carload they stored it in their warehouse so that they had a supply of feed on hand for the raisers. My father bought feed from them in May, 1903. Later they opened a warehouse south of the L. I. Railroad Station where the new duck packing plant is now being built. Later the Brooklyn Elevator & Milling Co. used this building to establish their Eastport branch warehouse there. This building has just been moved to the west of the new duck packing plant.

Another upland raiser was William M. Edwards and his father, Moses, who raised ducks on the north side of Montauk Highway in the western limits of the village a short distance east of the branch railroad to Manorville. Later Wm. M. Edwards raised ducks upland about 1891 on the Eastport Country Club grounds on the Country Road. Brewster Tuttle raised ducks upland on the south side of Montauk Highway, south of the school house, about one hundred feet east of River Ave., where Wm. M. Edwards now lives. Mr. Tuttle bought Pekin drakes from my father in September, 1888. He was probably out of the business by 1900. In 1906 and 1907 my father bought many wagonloads of grass for duck feed from him.

At East Moriches, southeast of the village near the bay, is located the present Stanley Ogeka farm, established about 1895 by H. D. Terry who was in business up to at least 1913 as he wrote a testimonial on May 20, 1913, to the Candee Incubator Company. At that time he had 10,200 egg capacity incubators. Later his son-in-law, Mayhew Tower, operated the farm. Samuel S. Overton had a small farm in the eastern part of the village, a short distance south of Montauk Highway, directly south of the present garage of F. D. Anton & Son. In addition to raising ducks he also had a blacksmith shop north of his duck pond and to the north of his shop was the wheelwright shop of George Baker. This entire property is now known as Frank Anton's Garage. Mr. Overton raised about 1,000 ducks a year from 1893 to 1895 when he moved to Center Moriches and established a duck farm on the west side of Senix Ave.

Directly south of East Moriches on the bay was located the duck farm of Edward E. Brown & Deforest Hulse, operated from 1907 to 1910. In 1910 Mr. Brown established his own farm in the western part of the village on Bay Ave., where the farm is still in operation. Mr. Hulse also started a farm on Bay Ave. in 1910, the present Stanley Chornoma farm. On Bay Ave. the first farm south of and abutting Montauk Highway is the farm established by A. K. Smith in 1914 and still in operation under Mrs. A. K. Smith. Directly south of this farm is one established in 1911 by his brother Robert who operated it until 1913 when he was killed. His brother Townsend took the farm over in 1913 and it is now operated by the latter's son Walter R. Directly south of this farm is that of Reginald L. Smith who established the farm with his brother Robert in 1905. It was operated by both until Robert established his own farm in 1911. The next farm south was established by Deforest Hulse in 1910. It was operated by Erving Robinson from 1912 to 1917 and is now operated by Stanley Chornoma.

George Sargent established the next farm south, buying the land in Aug., 1895. In 1906 Walter Chichester took the farm over and is still the owner although his son-in-law, John G. Leary, is operating it. Edward E. Brown established the next farm south in 1910 and it is still in operation under Mrs. E. E. Brown. Joseph Podlaski operates the next farm south. It was established by Dr. James Madden in 1912. All of these seven adjoining farms on Bay Ave. are



Electric Incubators Showing the Author

on the west side of the road. At present there are twelve duck farms in East Moriches.

Charles Warner (brother of Eugene, Eastport raiser) was probably the first one known to raise ducks in Center Moriches, beginning about 1885. He raised about 300 a year for two years, leaving Center Moriches in 1887. He raised ducks first in Center Moriches on the east side of Senix Creek about midway between Montauk Highway and the bay. Later he moved back to Center Moriches and after residing there some time he started to raise ducks again on the east side of the first stream east of Senix Creek, west of Ocean Ave. and east of Union Ave. He continued in business up to about 1924. In 1920 or 1921 Mr. Warner bought Purina chicken laying mash for his duck breeders; probably the first commercial mixed feed used on a L. I. duck farm.

On the west side of Senix Ave., on West Senix Creek, is the present farm of Clifford B. Bowditch, started by him and R. A. Tuttle (son of Brewster Tuttle, Eastport raiser) in 1912 and operated as a partnership until 1919. The next farm south is that of Victor Jaroszewicz. It was formerly two old farms; the north one owned by Isaac Smith from 1888 to 1911, then operated by R. A. Tuttle down to the present owner, and the south farm established by Samuel S. Overton in 1895, later operated by Eggeleston & Deary for about two years and by Merritt from 1914 for about two years. Below this farm was one established by Elkana Robinson in 1891 and operated until 1894. Another farm south of this was established by Al Seaman in 1897 and operated about two years; in 1913 Fred Edwards & Hamm operated it for about a year; Hamm & William Smith ran it from 1914 to 1915 and Walter Newins from 1915 to 1917, after which it was no longer used as a duck farm.

On the next stream west, a branch of Forge River, are located two adjoining farms. The north farm was established in 1891 by Stephen B. Wilcox who came from Speonk after raising ducks there for several years. He was killed shortly after by a well caving in. The farm is now operated by his son, Chester H., who is president of the L. I. Duck Farmers Association. There are twelve illustrations of this farm in the 1902 catalogue of the Prairie State Incubator Co. In 1908 the capacity of the farm was 20,000 to 25,000 a year. The farm produced 90,000 ducks annually by 1922. The next farm directly south was established by T. V. Cox about 1906 with R. A. Tuttle as manager. Before the advent of electricity (March, 1916, at Brushy Neck, Speonk) Mr. Cox, according to information available, was the only raiser to use lanterns at night in his duck buildings to quiet the ducks. About 1926 W. G. Matteson took over the farm and is still raising ducks there. These two farms are on the west side of Old Neck Road. At present there are five farms in Center Moriches.

In Moriches there are now seven duck farms but only one has been long established. It was started in 1894 by William J. Lukert who raised ducks at Eastport before going to Moriches. It is now operated by his sons.

At Brookhaven, just south of the railroad station, on the east side of Railroad Ave., is the farm of Egnatz Leszkowicz, probably the third largest duck farm on L. I. It comprises what were three separate farms. The southern part of the present farm was established by Victor T. Knies in 1905 who operated it for about a year or two. Tony Savage operated it later. The other two farms were started much later. An interesting side light on the originator of this farm, Mr. Knies, is that he came out to Speonk in 1899 to visit my father. Later he wrote to my father from New York City on Oct. 23, 1899, stating that he was still looking for land suitable to start a duck farm. He had been out to Lake Ronkonkoma but could not find a suitable tract of land. He wanted to locate on a creek and said he expected to go out soon to Patchogue.

There is a duck farm at South Haven on Carman River, between the Montauk Highway and the railroad, established in 1922 by Charles E. Robinson.

Gallo Bros. have a farm at East Patchogue, north of Robinson Blvd., established by them about 1920. They raise about 150,000 ducks a year. To my knowledge there are no farms at present west of Patchogue raising market ducks.

There was a farm at Islip established in 1920 by Roy E. Pardee, who is now Town Clerk of Islip Town. The farm was discontinued in 1936. He and I took the poultry course at Cornell University in 1919-1920. He worked on the Hallock farm at Speonk for a few months to learn the business, as other duck raisers had done before. He was the first L. I. duck raiser to have an electric incubator. In 1915 he spent six months in Pekin, China, "looking for outstanding white ducks, but found nothing to compare with those grown here on L. I. In fact most of the so-called white ducks were gray or had black spots or a few black feathers. They weighed about 3 to 3½ pounds". Mr. Pardee had two aunts at Baldwin who made quite a reputation with ducks in the 1890's. They bought drakes from my father in Feb., 1891.

There was a duck farm at Amityville established about 1895 by H. D. Klinker who bought 260 breeders from my father on Sept. 13, 1895. John B. Keck, manager of the farm, came from Eastport where he had a duck farm prior to that. He reported in the 1901 catalogue of the Pineland Incubator Co.: "that out of 22 Pineland Incubators he recently hatched over 8,500 ducks".

In the December, 1887, issue of *The American Poultry Journal* was an advertisement of Blithewood Poultry Yards, Parkville, Kings Co., which read as follows: "Long Island poultry and eggs are justly celebrated the world over. Pekin Ducks—Eggs in Season".

On July 27, 1905, a Mr. Harrington who, presumably, had a duck farm at Wantagh, bought 20 drakes from my father.

Since writing the above I have learned of the existence of two more early farms at Westhampton. They were located on the east side of Beaver Dam Creek. The first farm just south of the Montauk Highway was established by Frank Gordon who was out of the business by 1905. Just south of him was the farm of Daniel Skidmore who bought 18 drakes from my father on Oct. 15, 1895. He too raised ducks only a few years.

William Bonner had a duck farm at Rockville Centre established in 1902. He had an advertisement in the January 15, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry*, advertising Pekin ducks (eggs, ducklings and breeders). He introduced new blood in his flocks by imported Japanese ducks.

This completes all the old duck farms known to the writer on the South Shore of Long Island.

There was a farm on Fishers Island (part of Suffolk Co.), in L. I. Sound, operated by E. M. and W. Ferguson according to a letter of Oct. 3, 1899, written to the Cyphers Incubator Co. They raised Pekins mainly for the summer hotel trade there. At Flanders is the oldest known duck farm on the north side of Long Island. This is the present Thomas L. Havens farm established by his father-in-law, Samuel S. Griffin, about 1885. Mr. Griffin followed the sea from 1865 to 1885 when he came home to manage the farm. By 1895 he was raising 5,000 ducks a year besides large numbers of turkeys and

geese. The farm is located on Peconic Bay. Mr. Griffin obtained his first breeding ducks from his brother-in-law, George Foster, at Pon Quogue (Hampton Bays). This is still the only farm in Flanders at present.

In Aquebogue there are four farms. The L. E. Hulse farm on Peconic Bay Blvd. was established by Mr. Hulse in 1913 and is still in operation. Harry Corwin established in 1913 the present farm of Harry Corwin & Son. The present farm of Joseph P. Celic was established by John Warner (father of Hollis, Wesley and Olin—all duck raisers) in 1914. William Worm was the next owner and Mr. Celic came there in 1936. This is probably the second largest duck farm in the world.

Apparently the first duck farm in Riverhead was established by George Pugsley about 1892. It is now the eastern part of Hollis Warner's farm at the extreme eastern end of Riverside Drive, on the north side of the road, across from A. B. Soyars & Sons farm. Mr. Pugsley operated the farm until about 1897 when Joe Worm took it over. Dennis Homan was the next owner. Hollis Warner, the present owner, with the production of two other farms, now has the largest duck farm in the world with a yearly output of about 500,000 ducks. In 1897 Mr. Pugsley left this farm and went west of Riverhead to establish a duck farm, now owned by Carmine Bruno. Asa D. Fordham established in 1894 the present A. B. Soyars & Sons farm selling out to Mr. Soyars about 1902. Luther Skidmore started a farm south of Riverside Drive, about three-quarters of a mile west of the Pugsley and Fordham farms, about 1897. He operated it only a few years up until his death. Mr. Skidmore built and used some of his own incubators. It has never been used as a duck farm since.

At Upper Mills, about a mile west of Riverhead village, is the farm of Carmine Bruno established in 1897 by George Pugsley. It is on the north side of the main road to Calverton and probably produces a heavier duck on an average for the entire season than any other farm, due to the fact, supposedly, that the ducks are not as crowded as on most farms and have access to good water and shade during the hot months. Careful selection of breeders no doubt is another important factor. There are now eleven duck farms in Riverhead.

In Calverton the first farm was started by Porter Howell in the fall of 1914. This is the present farm of Olin F. Warner. There are now five farms in Calverton. There is a small farm, recently established, at Manorville by Stanley Horton.

This completes the history of the early duck farms in each village as far as known to the writer, who would appreciate additional information on any farms not mentioned.

PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF THE FLANDERS DUCK FARM
WHICH WAS THE SITE OF THE BIG DUCK FROM 1936 TO 1988

Prepared for:
The Town of Southampton

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February 28, 2002

The Big Duck was built in 1930-1931 to serve as the retail store for Martin Maurer's duck farm on West Main Street in Riverhead. In 1937 Mr. Maurer purchased this site in Flanders and moved his farm and The Big Duck to this location. The Big Duck continued to be the retail outlet for this Flanders duck farm until 1984. The significance of The Big Duck as a famous example of mimetic roadside architecture is described in the 1997 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.¹ In 1988 The Big Duck was moved to its present site within Sears-Bellows County Park. Since the duck farm was abandoned in 1984 the land has become overgrown and the farm buildings have deteriorated.

The Town of Southampton intends to move The Big Duck back to this site. This preliminary survey was written with the presumption that The Big Duck is returned to the exact site it occupied from 1936 until 1988.

The intent is to return The Big Duck to its historic context where it would be recognized for what it is: a duck-farm retail outlet. The components of the site which convey this historic context include the farm buildings, open land and the proximity to water.

While the farm buildings are obviously important as part of the setting of The Big Duck and for conveying the historic context, they are now all in disrepair and some are completely collapsed. Along with the goal of retaining the farm buildings for their contribution to the setting of The Big Duck, there are concerns for safety, cost of repairs, adaptive use and future maintenance costs.

At their November 10, 1987 meeting the Southampton Town Board resolved: "that the 'Big Duck' and the parcel on which it resides is hereby designated an historical district."² This preliminary survey is intended to begin the process of decision-making regarding the future of the farm buildings taking into account their significance to the setting of The Big Duck.

LIST OF STRUCTURES

The structures are identified by number on the attached site map. The accompanying photographs identify the structures by the same numbering system.³

STRUCTURE 1 (THE BIG DUCK FOUNDATION)

Description: This is the foundation which The Big Duck rested on from 1936 until 1988. It is a concrete block foundation with a top course of brick. In front of the foundation is concrete paving and to either side is concrete curbing.

Significance: Important as the foundation of The Big Duck

Condition: Good

Recommendation: If The Big Duck were returned to this site, it should be placed on this foundation. The concrete paving and curbing should be retained. The wood deck south of the foundation should be retained until any association with The Big Duck is determined.

STRUCTURE 2 (VEGETABLE STAND)

Description: This was built by Martin Maurer as a vegetable stand to augment The Big Duck poultry store. Maurer rented the store to local farmers to sell their produce.⁴ This frame building has a stucco exterior and an asphalt shingle roof.

Significance: This structure is less important than the farm buildings as part of the setting for The Big Duck.

Condition: It is in fair condition with missing windows and two holes in the roof, but the structure appears to be sound.

Recommendation: Since this building may be suitable for an adaptive use, it should be retained until potential uses are evaluated.

BUILDING 3 (BARN)

Description: This 18' x 23' barn was used for storing equipment. The frame barn has vertical, beaded siding and a wood shingle roof. Three sliding doors are on the west side. A garage was added at a later date to the east side of the barn. This two-bay frame garage has composition-board siding.

Significance: The barn appears to be an original or early building of the Maurer duck farm and is important as part of the duck farm setting. The garage addition appears to have been associated with the Maurer residence,

which stood near the southwest corner of the property, and is not an important farm building.

Condition: This building is in fair condition with missing windows, some missing siding and a leaking roof. It appears to retain some structural integrity. The garage addition is in very poor condition.

Recommendation: The barn is a good candidate for an adaptive use and should be retained. The collapsed garage is not significant and can be removed.

BUILDING 4 (BROODER HOUSE AND FEED STORAGE)

Description: This 20' x 53' building has a lower floor set partly into the grade which was used for feed storage. The upper floor, under the roof, was a warm brooder house for hatchlings which Martin Maurer purchased from the nearby Havens duck farm when they were two to three weeks old. The walls are constructed of 8" x 12" x 12" hollow structural clay tiles. The exterior is finished with a concrete plaster. The gables and the entrance porch are shingled. The roof is asphalt shingles over wood shingles. Two sheet-metal ventilators remain. With its stucco foundation, shingled walls and roof, roof overhangs with rafter tails and purlins, framed windows, and sheet-metal ventilators, this brooder house has a high quality of construction and must be one of the original duck farm buildings.

Significance: This brooder house appears to be an original farm building and clearly conveys the history of the property as a duck farm. It is important among the brooder houses as the most ambitious and finely constructed.

Condition: This brooder house is in poor condition. There are large openings in the roof covering, rafters have rotted and collapsed, flooring is rotted and the north foundation wall has bowed outward.

Recommendation: Despite the poor condition of this building, because of its significance, it should be retained until possibilities for an adaptive use and restoration are fully explored.

BUILDING 5 (BROODER HOUSE)

Description: This was a second warm brooder for hatchlings. This 18' x 140' building appears to be later than Building 4 and more simply finished. This brooder has a block foundation, a combination of vertical beaded boarding and novelty siding on the walls and an asphalt shingle roof over the original wood shingle roof.

Significance: This brooder house appears to be an early farm building and clearly conveys the history of the property as a duck farm.

Condition: The east third is completely collapsed. The west section retains an intact roof covering and appears to be structurally sound.

Recommendation: Removal of the collapsed portion would address immediate safety concerns and probably make it more likely that the more intact west half could be repaired.

BUILDING 6 (BROODER HOUSE)

Description: This 42' x 120' building was a brooder house for ducklings moved from brooder houses 4 and 5. This large building is of a later period and has the sparest construction of all the farm buildings. It has a block foundation, a light frame of 2x4s, prefabricated roof trusses, exterior walls of painted composite board and the original roof of asphalt shingles. Windows are simply openings in the 2x4 frame without any specific window frame.

Significance: This brooder house is a later addition to the duck farm. It is poorly constructed and would appear to be the least significant of the brooder houses and the least likely candidate for restoration.

Condition: The east two-thirds of this building is completely collapsed. The roof and composite wall panels of the remainder of the building are in poor condition.

Recommendation: To help address the serious safety concerns about this site, the Town could consider removing this building.

BUILDING 7 (BROODER HOUSE)

Description: This 18' x 100' brooder house was for older ducklings. The location on the edge of wetlands, that would have been maintained as an inlet, allowed the ducklings to take to water. This is an early brooder house with a brick foundation, vertical beaded siding, a roof of felt and corrugated sheet metal and framed windows fitted with sash screens.

Significance: This building clearly conveys the history of this property as a duck farm. This brooder house being close to the water also conveys the relationship of the duck farms to these water-front sites.

Condition: This building is in very poor condition. The roof and most of the walls have collapsed.

Recommendation: Despite the poor condition of this building, because of its significance, it should be retained until possibilities for an adaptive use and restoration are fully explored.

BUILDING 8 (SLAUGHTERHOUSE)

Description: The original 20' x 30' slaughterhouse may be one of the original farm buildings. It has a brick foundation, a combination of vertical beaded siding, clapboards and novelty siding on the walls, and a corrugated sheet metal roof over the original wood shingle roof. A later concrete block addition is to the west and a later insulated addition is to the south.

Significance: This appears to be an original farm building and it represents an important part of the operation of a duck farm. The two additions appear to have less significance.

Condition: This building is in fair condition and appears to be structurally sound.

Recommendation: The building should be retained for possible adaptive use. The Town could consider removing the additions.

BUILDING 9 (BROODER HOUSE FOR CHICKENS)

Description: "Broilers" or young chickens were also sold in The Big Duck. This was a brooder house for raising chicks. The original building is on locust posts, has vertical beaded siding and an asphalt shingle roof over wood shingles. To the north is an open lean-to and to the east is a later frame addition with a roof of felt and walls of painted composition board.

Significance: Young chickens were raised and sold as "broilers" in The Big Duck. This was part of the operation of the farm, although not as significant as the brooder houses for ducklings. The later addition to the east has no known significance.

Condition: The original building has an intact roof and appears to be in fair structural condition. The later addition to the east is completely collapsed.

Recommendation: Because the building is in fair condition it should be retained as a candidate for adaptive use. The collapsed east addition could be removed to help address safety concerns at the site.

BUILDING 10 (BROODER HOUSE)

Description: This 25' x 60' brooder house is close to the water and like brooder house 7 was for older ducklings. The building has a foundation of 8" x 12" x 12" hollow structural clay tiles which have plaster keys but the cement plaster as found on Building 4 was never applied. The gable walls have beaded vertical siding and the roof is asphalt shingles over the earlier wood shingles.

Significance: This brooder house appears to be an original farm building and clearly conveys the history of the property as a duck farm. Its location near the water is also important.

Condition: Much of the roof cover is deteriorated and rafters have rotted.

Recommendation: Despite the poor condition of this building, because of its significance, it should be retained until possibilities for an adaptive use and restoration are fully explored.

STRUCTURE 11 (WISHING WELL)

Description: This rubble well head has a roof supported by pipes coated with concrete to give the appearance of saplings. A stone is incised with the dates 1776 and 1976. This structure could be associated with the 1976 Bicentennial celebration.

Significance: This structure appears to have no significance as part of the duck farm setting of The Big Duck.

Condition: Good

Recommendation: Determine whether this is locally important as part of the 1976 Bicentennial celebration before determining whether or not to remove it.

STRUCTURE 12 (BARBECUE PIT)

Description: This brick barbecue pit would have been in the back yard of the Maurer residence.

Significance: The barbecue pit appears to be associated with the former Maurer residence and is not important to the duck farm setting of The Big Duck.

Condition: Good

Recommendation: The barbecue pit could be removed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CLEARING

Since the duck farm was abandoned the property has become overgrown with trees and vines. Removing the vast majority of this growth will accomplish a number of objectives: the land will be restored to its appearance when it was a duck farm; the farm buildings will become visible from The Big Duck site; the vista from the road to the water will be opened; the site can be better monitored for security; and the buildings can be better assessed.

Early photographs show The Big Duck on a manicured lawn setting with farm buildings and Reeves Bay clearly visible in the background.

It is recommended that the first step be to clear trees, saplings and vines in the area of the duck farm. The area of clearing would be bounded on the west by Route 24, on the south by the roadway to the Flanders Men's Club, on the east by wetlands and on the north by the edge of the grass meadow.

Within this area some mature trees along the roadways and some mature trees on the interior of the parcel may be retained. Charles Bellows has indicated that the Landmarks and Historic Districts Board would tag trees to be saved before April 1, 2002.

The process of clearing the land will give the Town time to plan for the future of the farm buildings.

2. DOCUMENTATION

Following clearing of vegetation, the buildings should be photographed. The buildings proposed to be demolished should be photographed and some basic measurements taken.

3. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The Big Duck is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The nominated property is a 150' x 65' parcel. Returning The Big Duck to this site would require an amendment to the National Register listing. Since The Big

Duck would be returned to its historic context, it is logical that the amended nomination would include the duck farm setting and the farm buildings which contribute to that setting.

National Register listing for the farm buildings would also make them eligible for New York State and other grant programs.

It is recommended that the State Historic Preservation Officer be included in the decision-making process about the future of the farm buildings. This would avoid any problems with the future potential National Register eligibility of this site.

The Town should immediately contact James Warren, the National Register representative for the Long Island region.

Mr. James Warren
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189
518-237-8643 extension 3283

4. SUFFOLK COUNTY HISTORIC TRUST

Suffolk County Historic Trust should also be included in the decision-making process about the future of the farm buildings. Suffolk County would continue to own The Big Duck and would also be concerned about its amended National Register status and the contribution the farm buildings make to the setting.

Mr. Richard Martin
Suffolk County Historic Trust
P.O. Box 144
West Sayville, New York 11796-0144
854-4970

5. SELECTIVE DEMOLITION

It appears reasonable that some structures be demolished and removed from the site following the clearing and documentation. Some structures are so deteriorated as to make repair impractical and in their present condition they pose a safety hazard.

Removing some of these structures now would make the job of securing the site for safety concerns much more manageable and would allow more attention to be directed at saving other structures.

The buildings listed here appear to be less significant than others as part of the setting of The Big Duck.

This list should be reviewed by the agencies listed above and by the Southampton Landmarks & Historic Districts Board.

- A. Garage attached to the east side of BUILDING 3
- B. The collapsed east half of BUILDING 5
- C. BUILDING 6
- D. Addition to the east side of BUILDING 9
- E. STRUCTURE 12 (BARBEQUE PIT)

6. SECURING THE SITE

The site should be secured to address safety concerns. Some buildings could be secured by covering open windows and doors. Others can be secured by fencing. The foundation of The Big Duck should be fenced as soon as the area around it is cleared.

7. RESEARCH

More information is needed on the history of the Maurer duck farm and on the individual farm buildings. Additional information is necessary in order to make decisions about the fate of individual farm buildings, to guide any restoration and as documentation for a National Register nomination of the site.

8. ADAPTIVE USE AND RESTORATION OF FARM BUILDINGS

It is important to retain a significant group of farm buildings that will clearly convey the historic context of The Big Duck and contribute to its setting.

This preliminary survey has identified four brooder houses for ducklings as being most important to conveying the historic use of this property. These are buildings 4, 5, 7 and 10. The slaughterhouse, building 8, was also an important building on the duck farm.

The brooder house for chicks (building 9) and the barn (building 3) are early farm buildings, played important roles on the Maurer duck farm and have a clear agricultural character.

The key to retaining and repairing the duck farm buildings will be to find appropriate uses for them in the new role of the site as a Town park.

The Town should develop a plan for the park that attempts to find uses for the farm buildings. The Town should discuss possible uses with the Friends for Long Island's Heritage, Suffolk County Historic Trust and with local civic groups and historical societies.

If attempts at finding uses are unsuccessful, then the Town should address the options of mothballing or demolishing buildings. Making decisions to mothball or demolish would include considering the importance and the condition of a building. As noted above more information on the history of the buildings may be needed in order to make these decisions. The State Historic Preservation Officer and the Suffolk County Historic Trust may also be helpful in this process and in determining any recommended recording of a building before it is demolished.

¹ The Big Duck was listed on the National Registers of Historic Places on April 28, 1997 at its present location in Sears-Bellows Park.

² Southampton Town Board minutes, November 10, 1987.

³ The photographs of each structure were taken and assembled by Charles Bellows.

⁴ Information on the history of the farm structures was provided by Mr. Edward Crohan, a Flanders resident, during an on-site inspection with Charles Bellows.

Remains of Original Foundation & Outbuildings

