



FORT RODMAN MARINE EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

d/b/a LOW TIDE YACHT CLUB

- 1930 -



To: Councillor At Large
Mr. Ian Abreu
Chairperson of New Bedford
Memorials & Dedications

Vice Chair: Councillor At Large Naomi R. A. Carney
Councillor At Large Debora Coelho
Ward 1 Councillor William Brad Markey

Dear Mr. Abreu and Committee Members

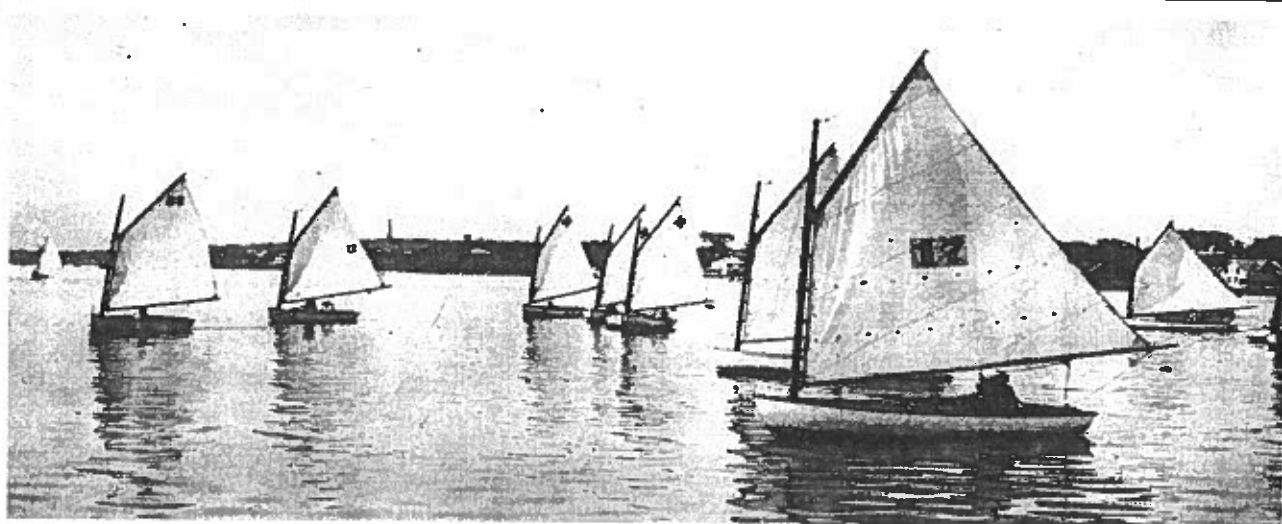
A number of the South End Clark's Point Neighborhood residents of New Bedford are requesting a memorial plaque or information board to be placed at the location (info in packet) of what was the "Beetle Boat Yard". This boat yard was a vital part of the maritime history of New Bedford. This year (2021) marks its 100th Anniversary of its founding. The original owner James Beetle had built over 1000 whaleboats in New Bedford. This includes the last whaleboat requested by the Colonel Edward H.R. Green owner of the famous whaleship "Charles W. Morgan". The Beetle Boat Yard was one of the first in the area to use mass production for its boatbuilding. One of the sons, Charles Beetle built the last whaleboat in 1933.

After the era of whaling, the Beetle family then decided to go into designing. They planned and made a 24-foot gaff rigged sailboat for local families called the "Beetle Cat Boat". They had their unique boat yard for this purpose near the water of the South End of New Bedford on east Rodney French Boulevard. Presently, the Low Tide Yacht Club, of New Bedford, and other yacht clubs far and near still race beetle cats. President John F. Kennedy use to take his wife and children out in their beetle cat boat "*SCALLOP*" in Hyannis every time he visited his parent's estate. Today, the "Beetle Cat Boat" is still made in Massachusetts.

We need to commemorate this boat yard and its accomplishment of boat building and the recognition it brought to New Bedford as a seafaring city of importance.

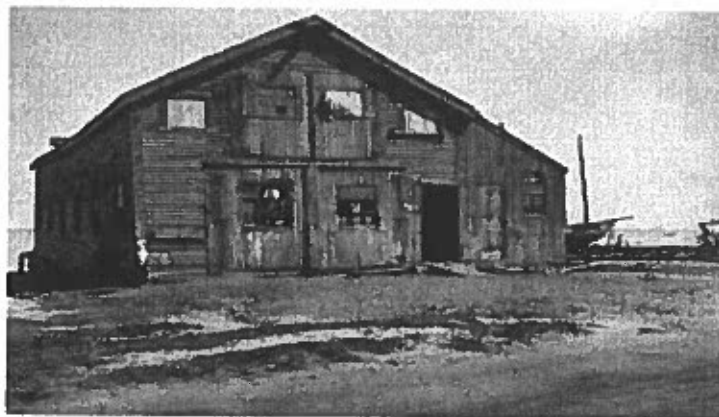
For further information, please contact:

Sincerely,
Joseph Pacheco
President/Commodore
Fort Rodman Marine Educational Association, Inc.
d/b/a Low Tide Yacht Club
774-328-2451



Located at this site was
The Beetle Family Boatyard

The Beetle Cat Boat was named after the Beetle family of New Bedford, MA., who originally designed and built the small 12-foot gaff rigged wooden sailboat for their children in 1921. Famous for their Beetle Whaleboats, they used some of the same mass production techniques that enabled them to build quality whaleboats in record times. During Col. Green's restoration of the whaleship "Morgan" he had asked Charles Beetle to build a whaleboat for the ship as his father did in the past. With interest growing in the Beetle Cat, and the demise of the whaling industry, the Beetles shifted production to the Beetle Cat boat. The 1938 hurricane swept the company boat shed; World War II interrupted production and a 1945 fire destroyed key patterns and buildings.



James Beetle began building whaleboats while working for the Hillmans. From 1834 – 1854 he built over 1,000 whale boats (or about 50/year), including some for the *Charles W.*

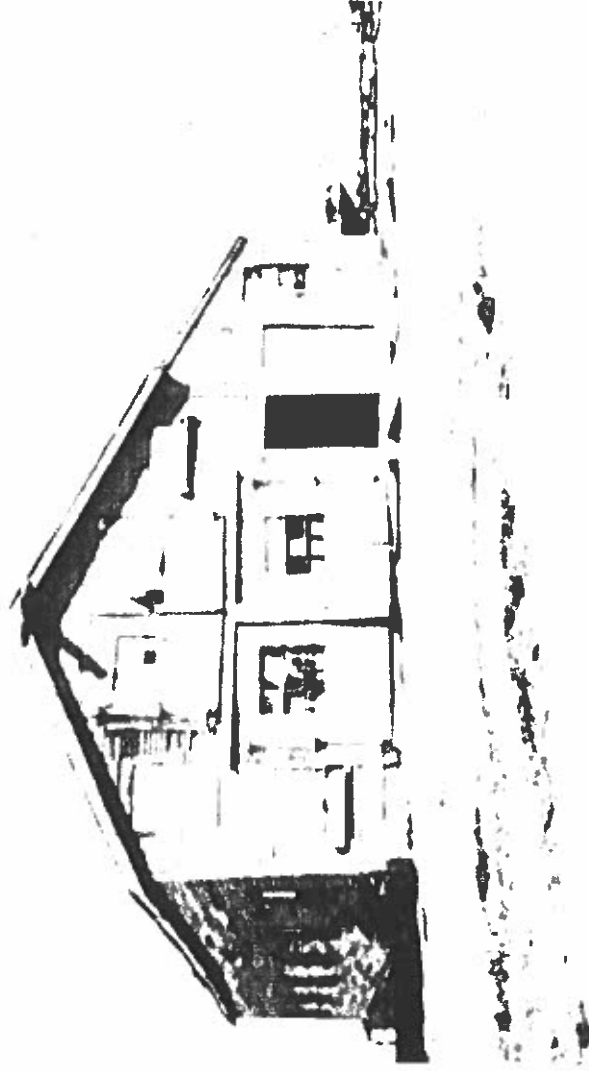
Morgan. **James Beetle had three sons; Charles and John ran the Beetle shop on Rodney French Boulevard in New Bedford**, while James Clarence Beetle moved to San Francisco to expand the business for the west coast fleet. As the industry began to decline after the Civil War, the Beetle family parlayed their expertise into designing and constructing pleasure crafts.

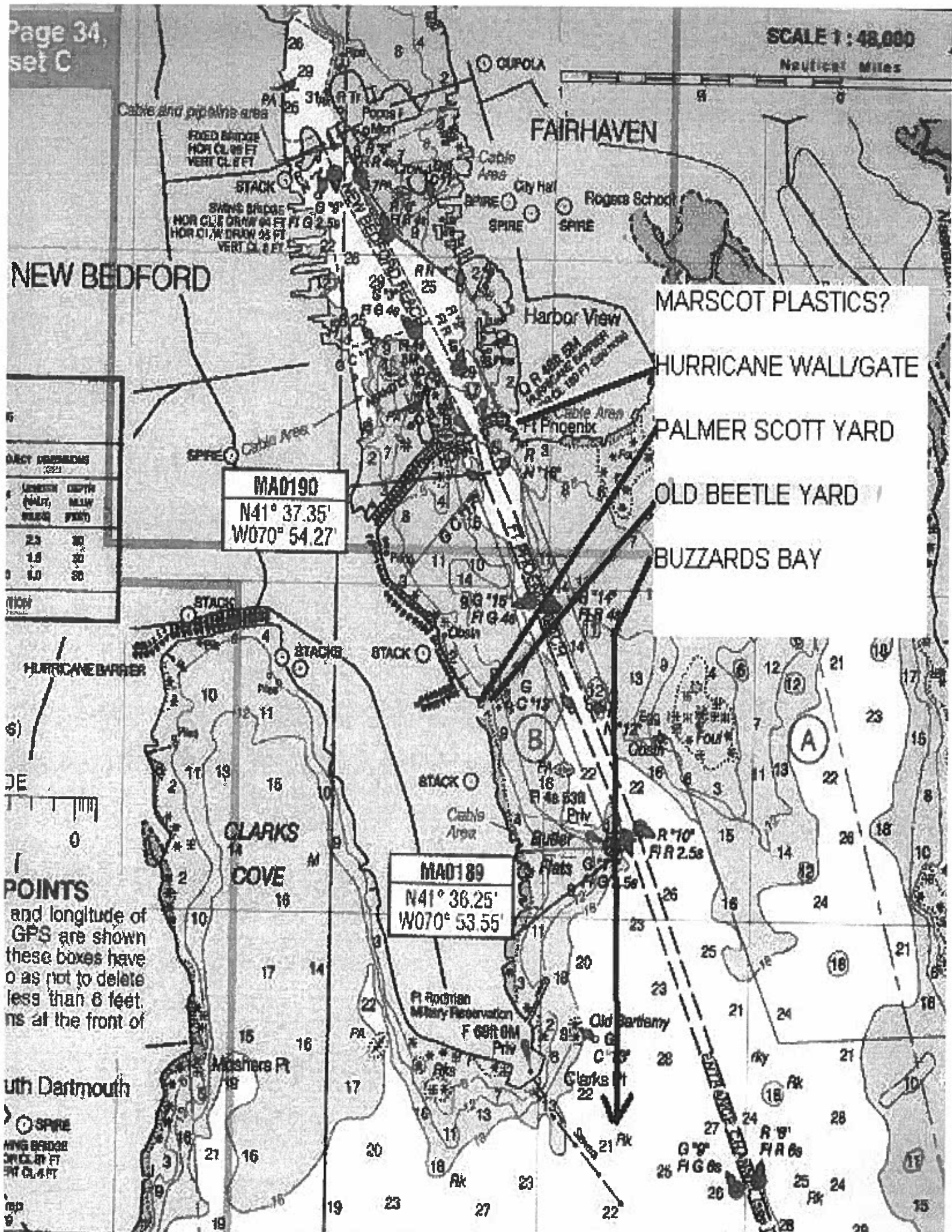
In 1921 the Charles W. Morgan embarked upon her last sail and retired at Colonel Edward H.R. Green's estate at Round Hill in South Dartmouth. Ironically, it was that same year that John Beetle built the first 12' Beetle Cat sailboat; still a popular design today and built locally in Wareham. Using cedar and oak, the same materials Beetle whaleboats were composed of, the sailboat quickly caught on as a one design racing fleet at yacht clubs across New England.

During Col. Green's restoration of the *Morgan* in 1924, he asked Charles Beetle to build a whaleboat for the ship as his father had done many years before. **The last Beetle whaleboat was built by Charles in 1933 for the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, VA.** This whaleboat would become significant later, as its lines and construction plans became part of the Mystic Seaport plan collection in 1973 and were used by the Beetle Boat Company to construct our new whaleboat.

On September 8th, 2013 an historic race between the Beetle whaleboat and Azorean whaleboats took place during the 7th Annual International Whaleboat Regatta.

**Beetle Boatyard shed at 1555 East Rodney French Blvd, looking
East. Whaleboat shop was on second floor. #2000.100.3426**





SOUNDINGS (2023)

DEPTH (FATHOMS)	DEPTH (METERS)
2.5	30
1.5	20
0.5	30

MAD190
N41° 37.35'
W070° 54.27'

MAD189
N41° 36.25'
W070° 53.55'

MARSCOT PLASTICS?
HURRICANE WALL/GATE
PALMER SCOTT YARD
OLD BEETLE YARD
BUZZARDS BAY

POINTS
and longitude of
GPS are shown
these boxes have
0 as not to delete
less than 8 feet.
ns at the front of

uth Dartmouth

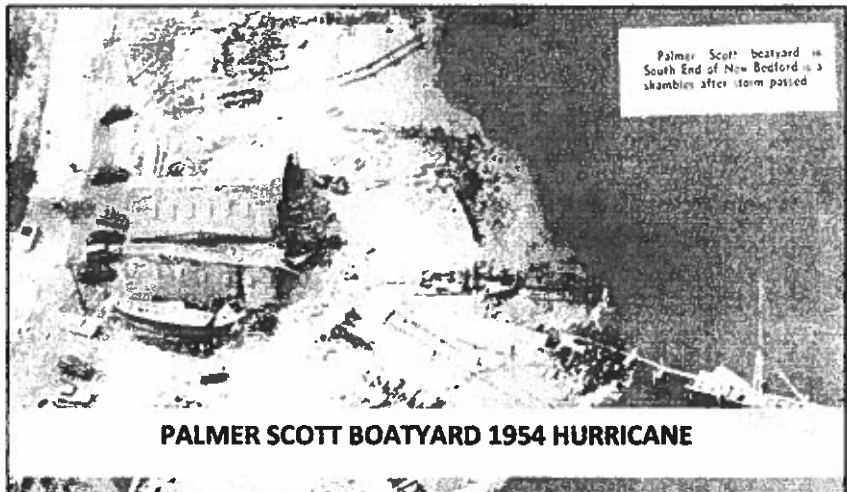
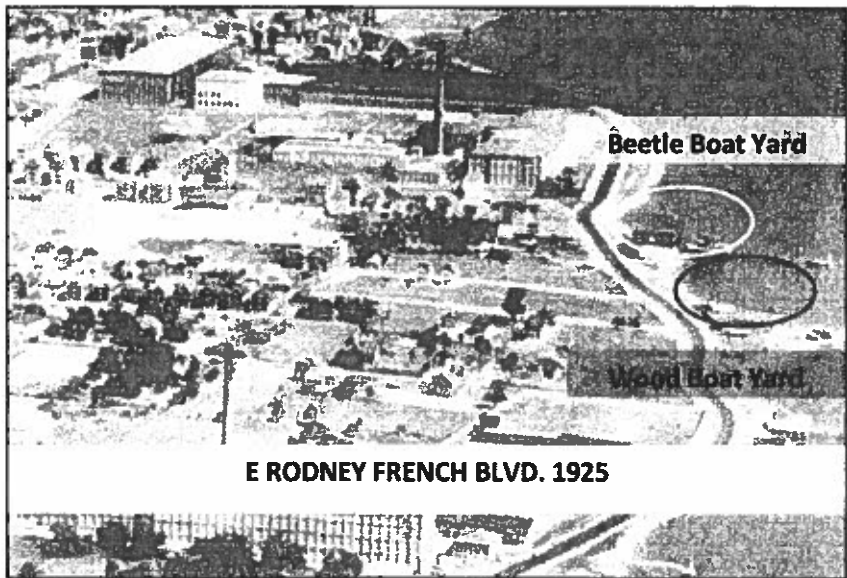
SPIRE
HURRICANE WALL
ON CL. 8 FT
VERT. CL. 4 FT

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

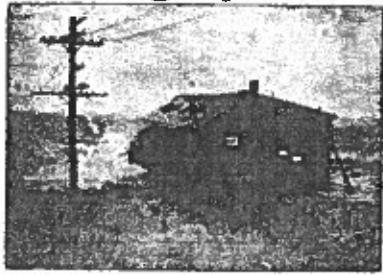
New Bedford's rich history of boatbuilding dates to the early 18th century when boats were initially constructed at the Head of the River. In the first half of the 19th century, the whaling trade spurred an industry that built substantial vessels, but by the latter half of that century, New Bedford's shipwrights turned more to repairs. By the 20th century, the City's ship building industry focused on small boats, pleasure crafts and government contracts. Twentieth century innovative boat design and manufacturing techniques made several City boat yards famous, such as the Beetle and Palmer Scott Boat Yards located adjacent to each other on the water's edge on E Rodney French Blvd.

Wood & Palmer Scott Boat Yards

William Wood Sr. and Ann Higgins Wood immigrated to New Bedford from England with six of their thirteen children in the late 19th century. In 1905 when William and Ann Wood purchased waterfront property along E. Rodney French Boulevard, the peninsula was sparsely populated and they began a boat repair business in a small wooden shed. The Beetle family boatyard was already established and located just north of the Wood property. William Sr. died in 1905, and in 1918, William Jr., better known as Billy, and his sister Carol purchased the estate, continued the



Photographer Catches Last of Beetle's Boathouse



Standing on the second floor of a house a few yards away, an amateur photographer obtained these remarkable pictures of Carl Beetle's boat house surrendering to the surf. The boathouse once stood on East Rodney French Boulevard.

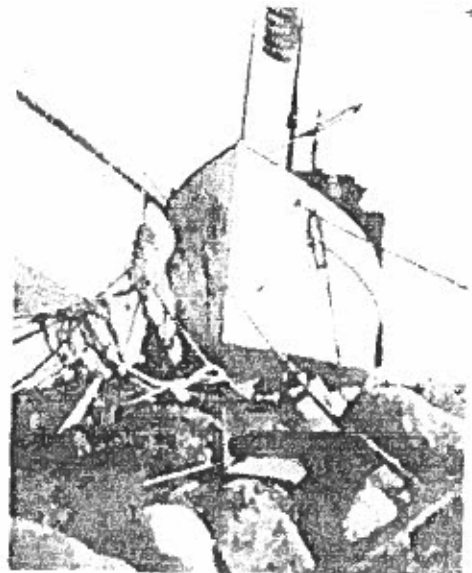


Upper — Debris, auto with auto and boat, made a mass of junked debris at War-ham. This picture was taken the day following the hurricane and for several days later the area was not open to traffic.



Left—The boat was forced to escape the waves and piled up against the rocks along the Padanaram Bridge.

Right—This is a close-up view of the house that were stranded in Marine Park, upright among piles of rocks.

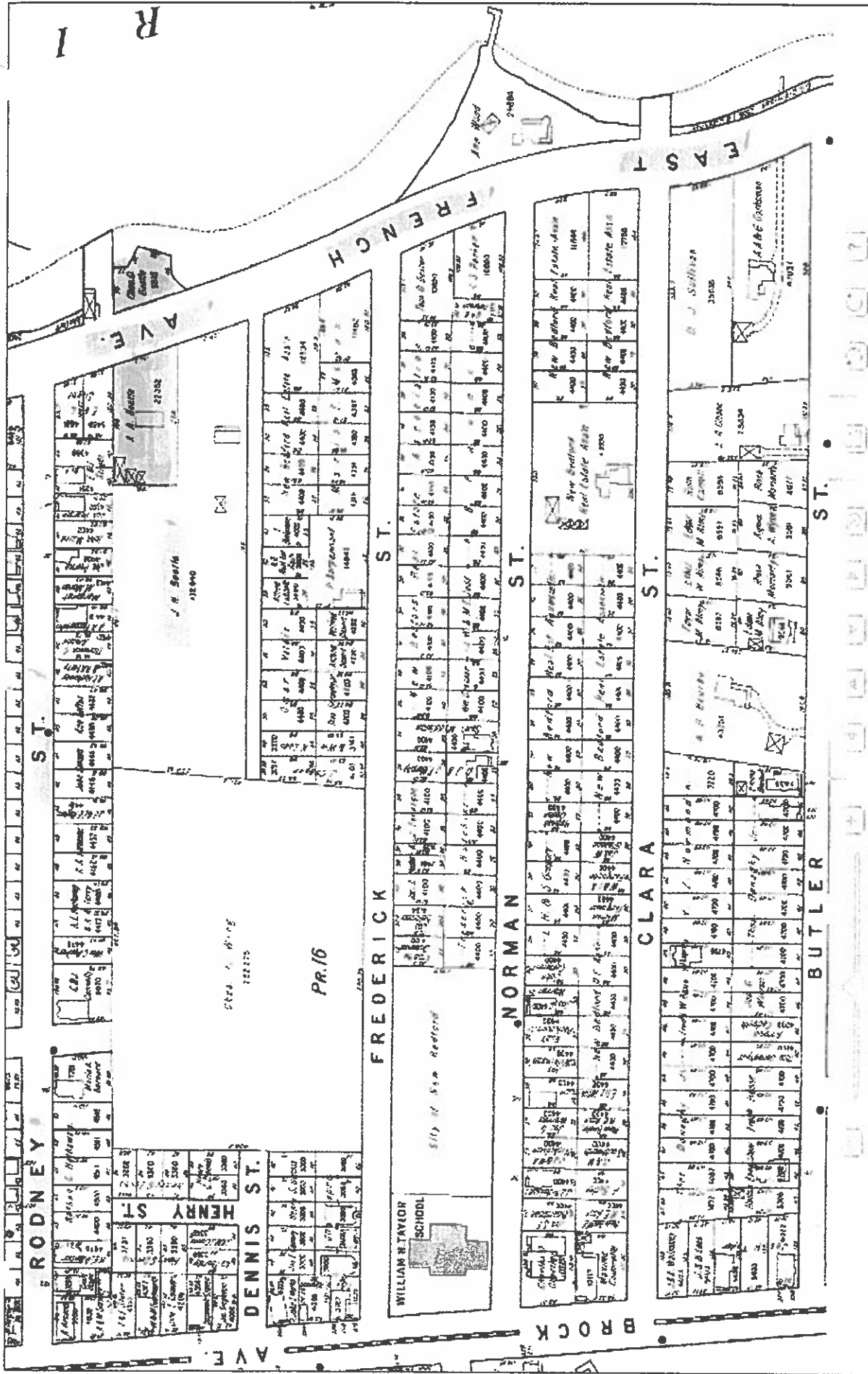


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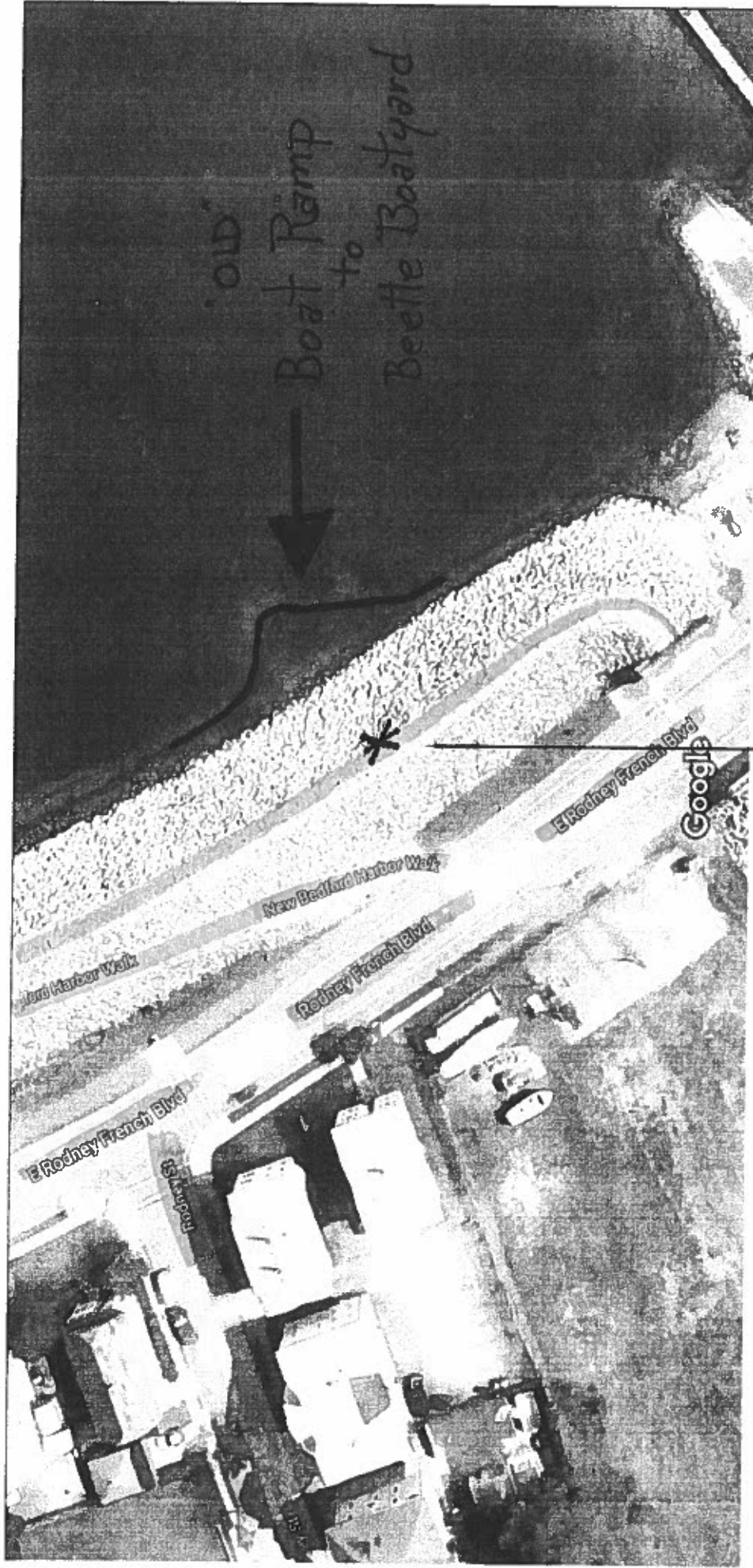


OVERLAY THIS MAP

HISTORIC EARTH FREE BASIC

HISTORIC EARTH PREMIUM

Google Maps



Imagery ©2019 Google, Map data ©2019 Google 50 ft

Requesting plaque or sign.
1921-2021

1/8/2019

Google Maps



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Requesting plaque or sign.
1921-2021

<https://www.google.com/maps/@41.6115583,-70.9072799,104m/data=!3m1!1e3>

IN CITY COUNCIL, February 25, 2021

Referred to the Administration, Special Committee on Memorials and Dedications - Yeas 10, Nays 0.
Dennis W. Farias, City Clerk

a true copy, attest:

Dennis W. Farias

City Clerk