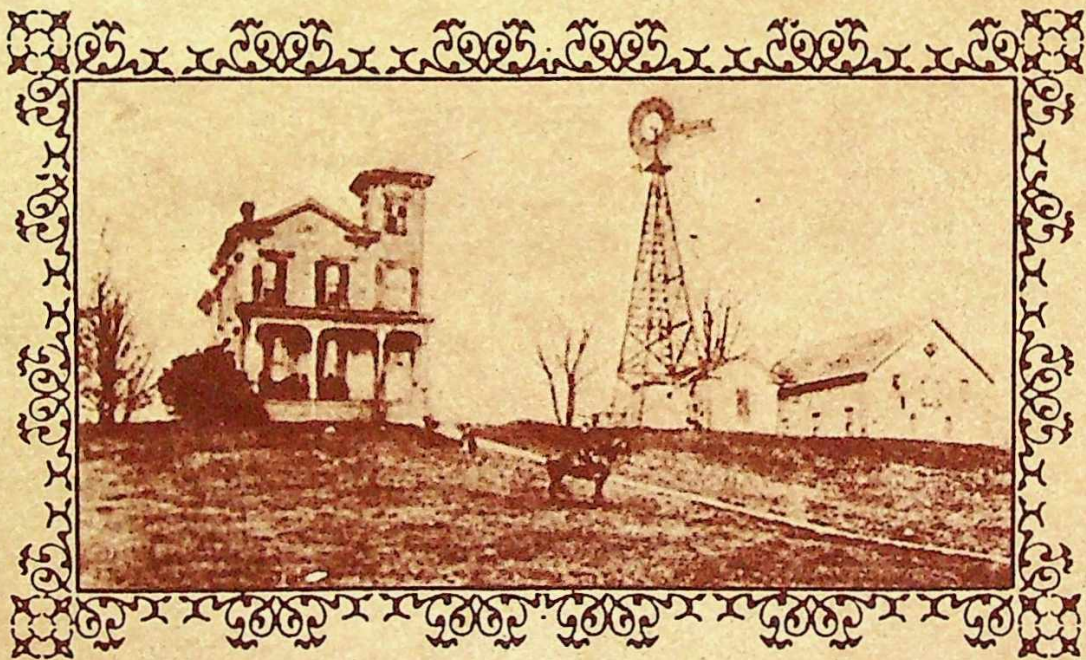


EARLY VIEWS OF



BOROUGH PARK

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Oldest house in Borough Park located at Linden Heights & 44th Street.

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Introduction

Borough Park was built up largely during the 1920s with numerous one and two-family houses as well as larger apartment buildings. This section was rural except for scattered villages at the turn of the century. Perhaps the most interesting of these settlements was Blythebourne, which lay southwest of the intersection of New Utrecht Avenue and 55th Street, along the Brooklyn, Bath Beach and West End Railroad, today's West End subway (B & M trains).

It was started in 1887 by Electus B. Litchfield, son of Edwin C. Litchfield of Prospect Park fame. He bought some land which covered several blocks on the west side of New Utrecht Avenue. He named it Blythebourne, which means "Happy Home." In order to develop the project, he opened a real estate office at 43rd Street and New Utrecht Avenue. He called it the West Brooklyn Land & Improvement Company of Blythebourne, Long Island (Brooklyn did not become part of New York City until 1898). Houses were built and a post office and stores were opened.

For some years, both sides of the New Utrecht Avenue were called Blythebourne, but around 1898 a Senator William H. Reynolds came and bought land abutting on the east side of the Avenue, calling it Borough Park. This tract extended from 43rd to about 60th Streets. The Senator sold lots and also built and sold several two-family houses. Soon, for the use of the people in the two growing communities, he had a large Club House erected at 13th Avenue and 51st Street. This was a boon to the neighborhood and many social affair was held there (The Borough Park Club was later converted into Yeshiva Etz Chaim).

A real estate agent at the time warned the Litchfield family to sell its holdings, explaining that the "pogroms" in Eastern Europe would soon cause a "mass migration" to the outskirts of Brooklyn, forcing land values down. Mrs. William B. Litchfield, who controlled the property at the time, decided not to sell. The prediction was partially fulfilled; The Borough Park section did become a heavily Jewish community but the land values, instead of falling, rose tremendously. As a result, Blythebourne was swallowed up by Borough Park and is remembered today only in the name of the local post office, Blythebourne Station.

The opening of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridges and the subway lines enabled thousands of people from the overcrowded Lower East Side of Manhattan to seek new homes in Brooklyn. The Jews spread over the face of the borough and converted mud roads into fine paved highways and shacks into modern apartments.

On June 6, 1916, the West End "El" opened. The Brooklyn Rapid Transit (BRT) charged only a single five-cent fare for the entire route which extended from Coney Island, through Borough Park, to

Manhattan. A realty boon was predicted for Borough Park. The Brooklyn Daily Eagle's Real Estate section described the neighborhood in the following article...

"One of the oldest and most historical localities in Brooklyn, Borough Park is particularly favored in natural advantages being supplied with beautiful trees in abundance. It is one of the highest spots in the borough, and is developed from farmland that supplied the people of old Brooklyn with vegetables and fruit. Some of the farms date back to the early Dutch settlers, bearing such names as Van Cowenhoven, Lefferts and Van Nuyse. The soil of this locality was famous for its productiveness, and many farms reaped substantial fortunes in the days when New Utrecht Avenue was a plank road over which ran Mayor Gunther's steam railroad, a single track line running from Fifth Avenue and 25th Street (Brooklyn) to Coney Island.

Modern buildings of every type may be found in the district. The detached, semi-detached, one and two-family and apartment houses in Borough Park compare with the best designs to be found in the city.

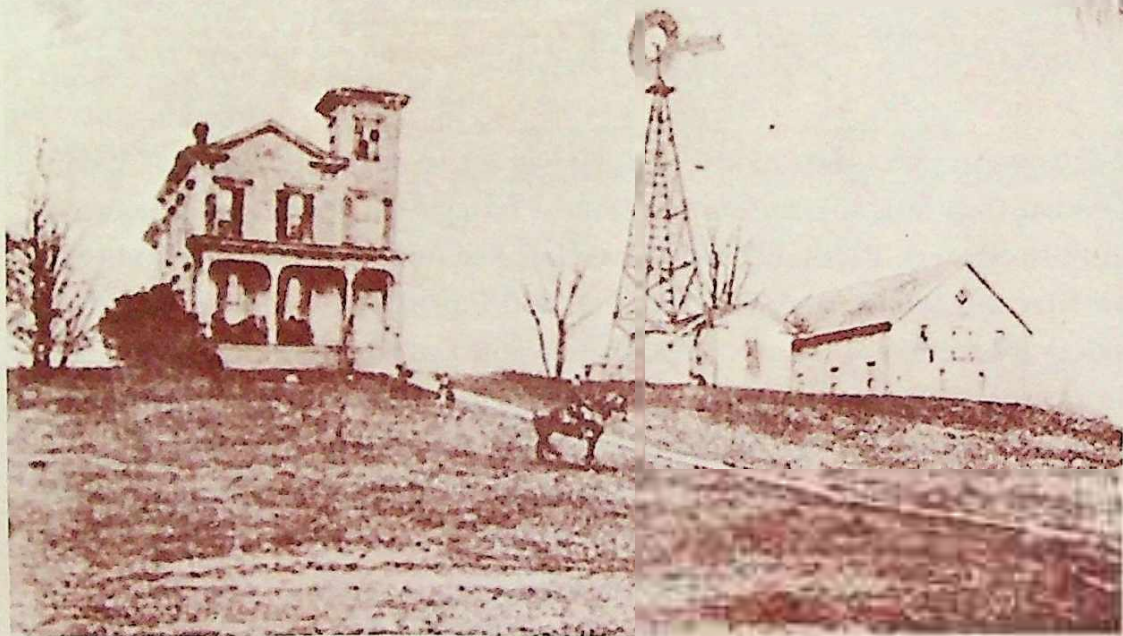
They have been built in abundance and are located convenient to the transit lines. The demand for houses there is increasing every day."

During the 1920s, Borough Park was one of the most affluent sections in the city. The elegant Art Deco apartment buildings all had doormen. Many of the residents in the area went to work in chauffeur-driven limousines. Top hats, tails and pin-striped pants were the attire during religious services in Temple Beth El, Shomrei Emunah, the Sfardische Shul and other large synagogues in Borough Park.

The chassidim arrived in Borough Park following World War II, mostly during the 1950s and 1960s. They established individual congregations, usually housed in private homes known as shteeblech. There are several dozen shteeblech throughout the neighborhood. In more recent years, the chassidim have constructed multi-million-dollar synagogues and yeshivas for their ever-increasing congregations. Some of these include the Bobover, Munkoch and Satmar chassidim.

Oldest House in Borough Park located at Linden Heights
(Ninth Avenue) and 44th Street. Circa 1880.

OLDEST HOUSE IN BOROUGH PARK
LINDEN HEIGHTS 44TH STREET.

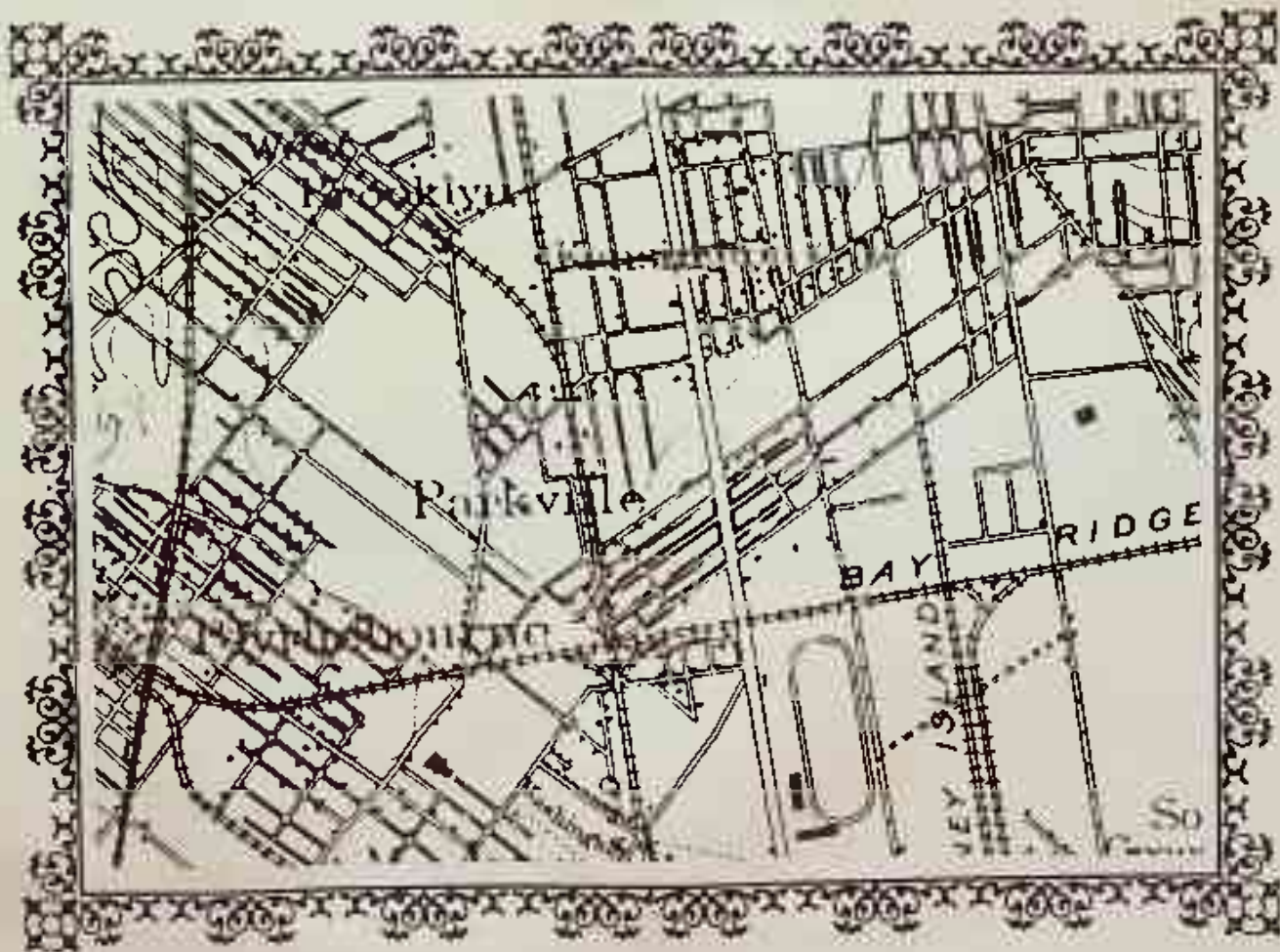


1897 Map of Borough Park

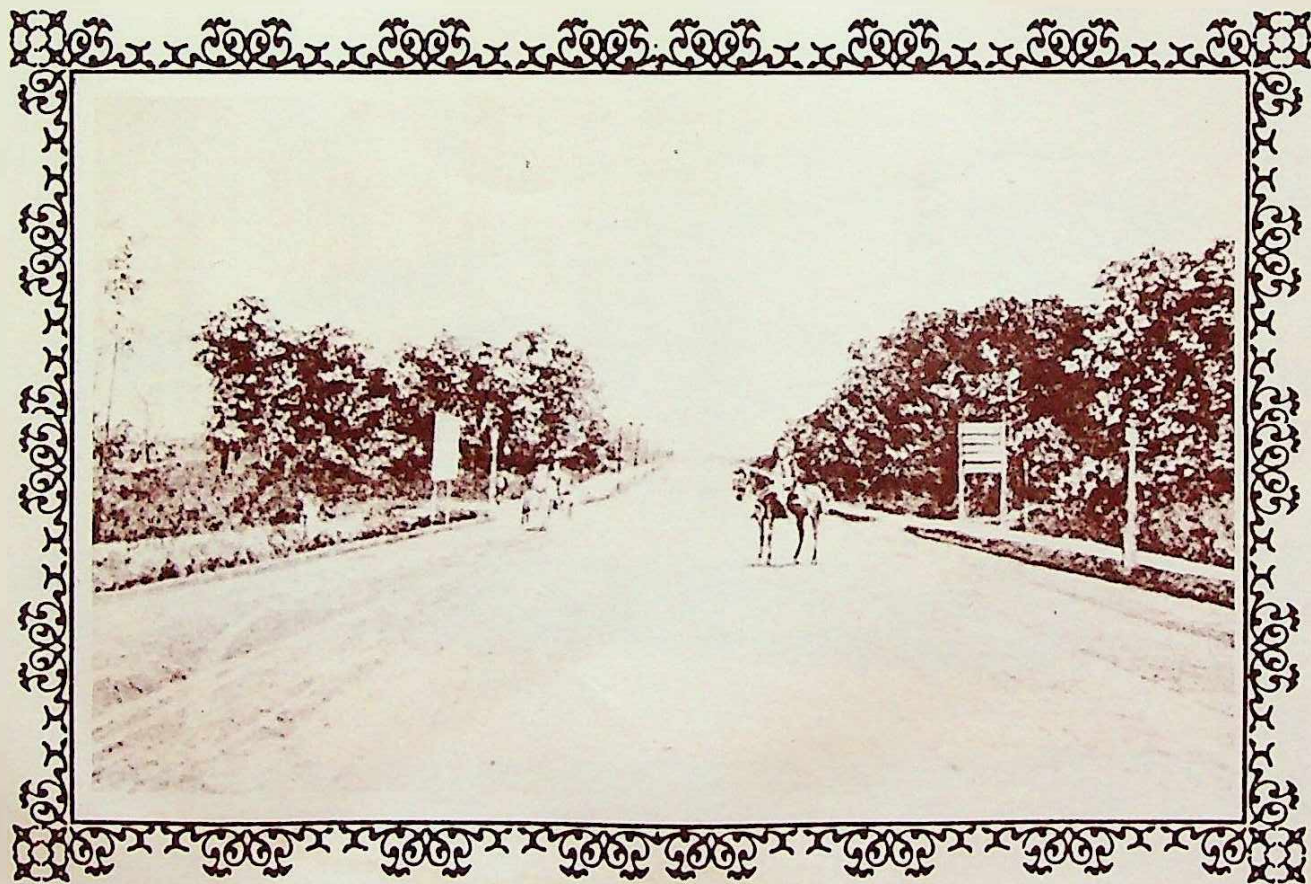
1897 Topographic Map of the neighborhood showing villages of West Brooklyn (top left, located at junction of today's Ft. Hamilton Parkway and 39th Street), Blythebourne (lower left, located at junction of today's New Utrecht Avenue and 55th Street), and Parkville (in center of map, located at junction of today's 18th Avenue and Dahill Road).

The railroad tracks from upper left hand corner are the West End Line which runs along the left hand side of map, the Culver Line which cuts diagonally down to the right, and the Long Island Railroad freight line at Avenue H, which runs horizontally near the bottom of the map.

The wide double lines in the center of the map running north-south is today's Ocean Parkway. The elongated circle to the right of Ocean Parkway (just south of Avenue H) was one of Brooklyn's race tracks.



Ft. Hamilton Parkway in the 1880s.



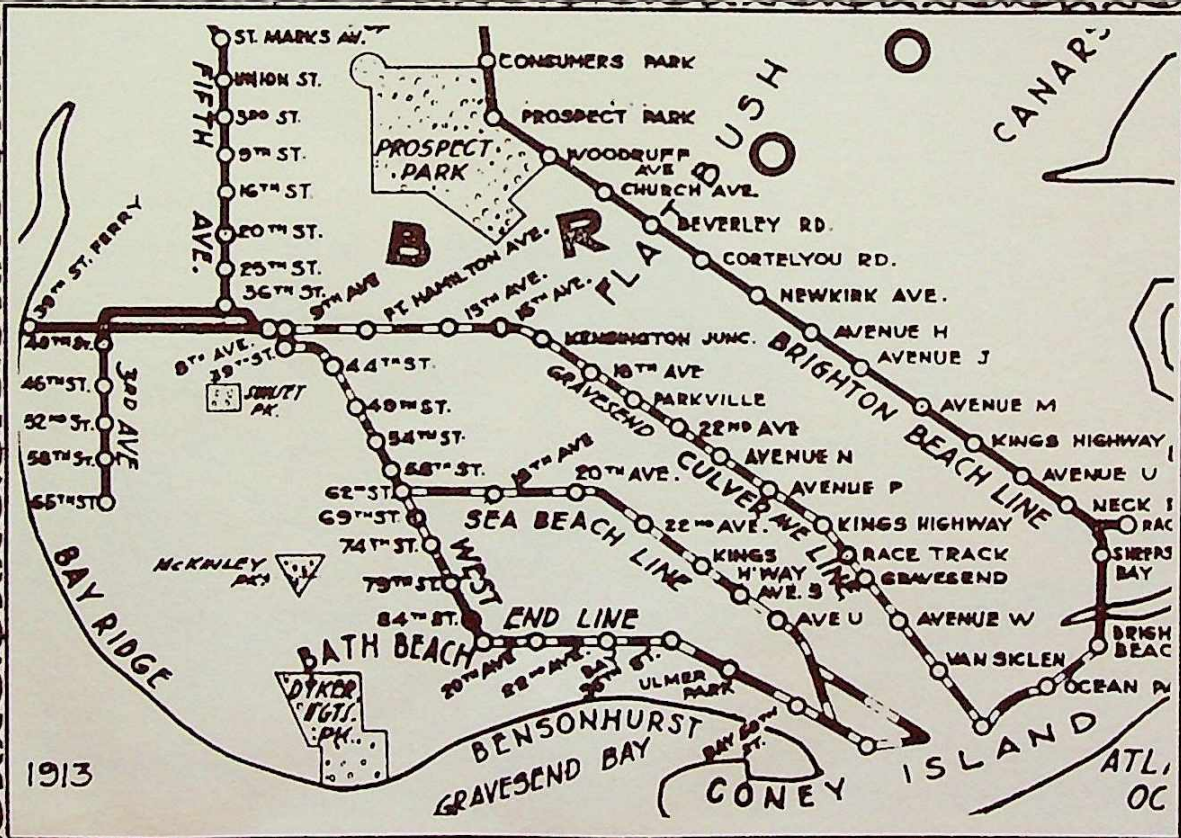
Brooklyn, Bath Beach & West End Railroad in the 1880s.



1913 Map of Brooklyn's Railroads

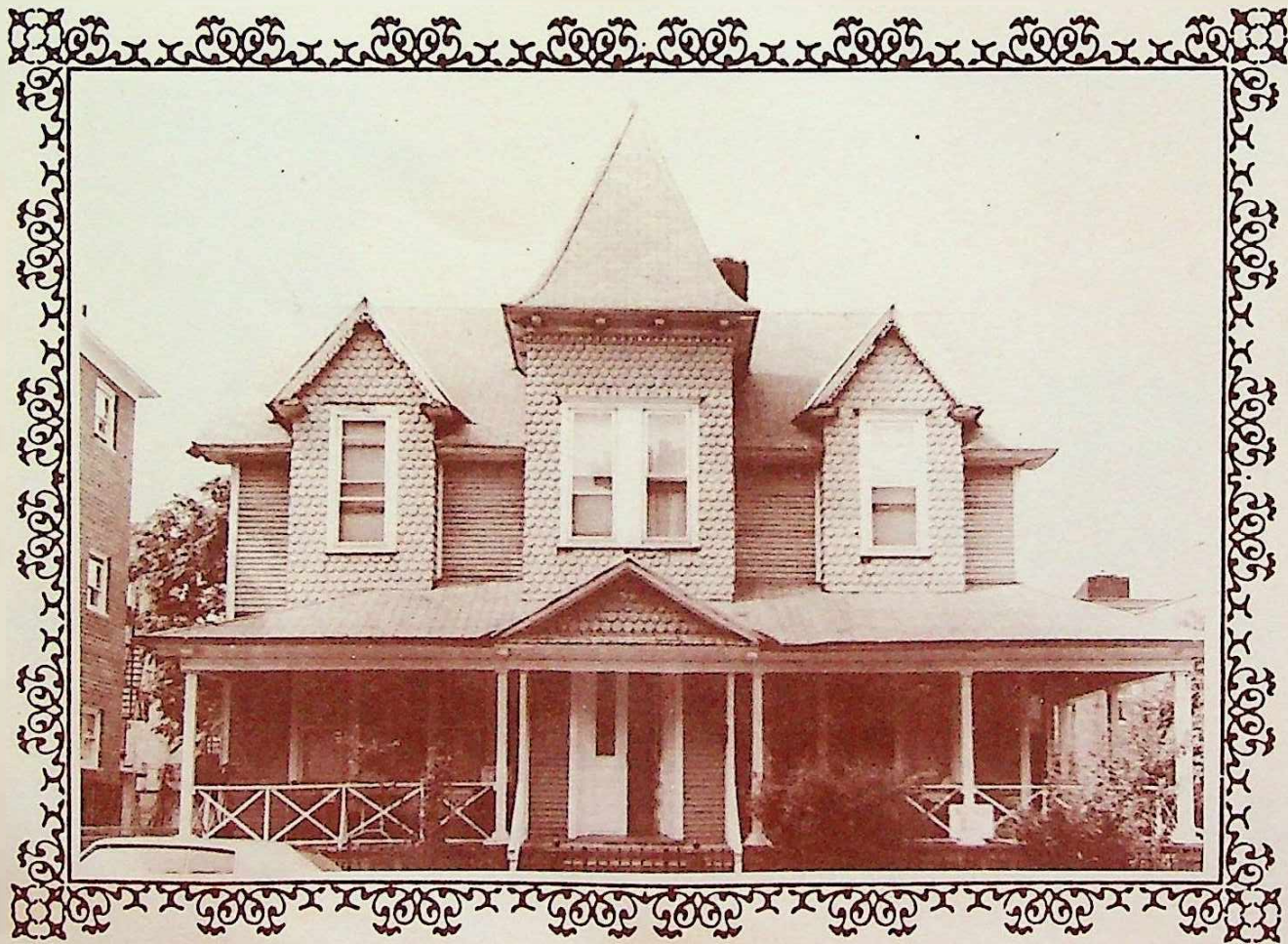
1913 map of Brooklyn's railroad lines. All of today's subway lines in the area, the West End Line, the Sea Beach (N) Line and the F Train were all running at street level (on grade). After the Ninth Avenue station the trains would either continue into the present-day tunnel but, instead of turning down into Fourth Avenue (36th Street Station) the train would continue straight to the 39th Street Ferry. Those original tracks are still extant.

Other trains would climb up the arched concrete ramps after the Ninth Avenue Station and continue onto either the Third Avenue or Fifth Avenue Elevated Railroads. Both of those lines have been removed.



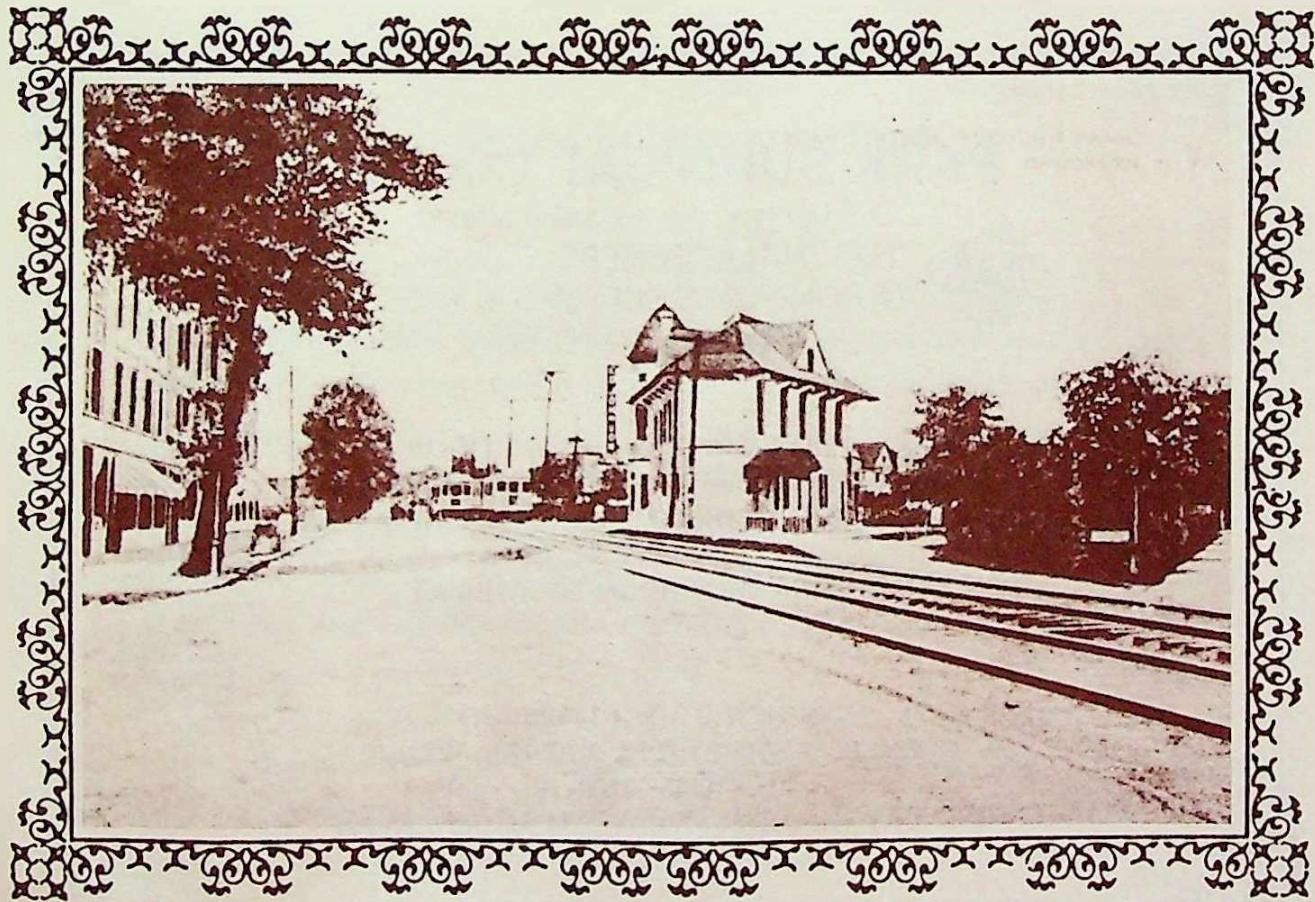
1913

Early Blythebourne homestead on 56th Street near 14th Avenue.
Demolished in early 1980s.





49th Street railroad station at New Ulrecht Avenue. Circa 1890.



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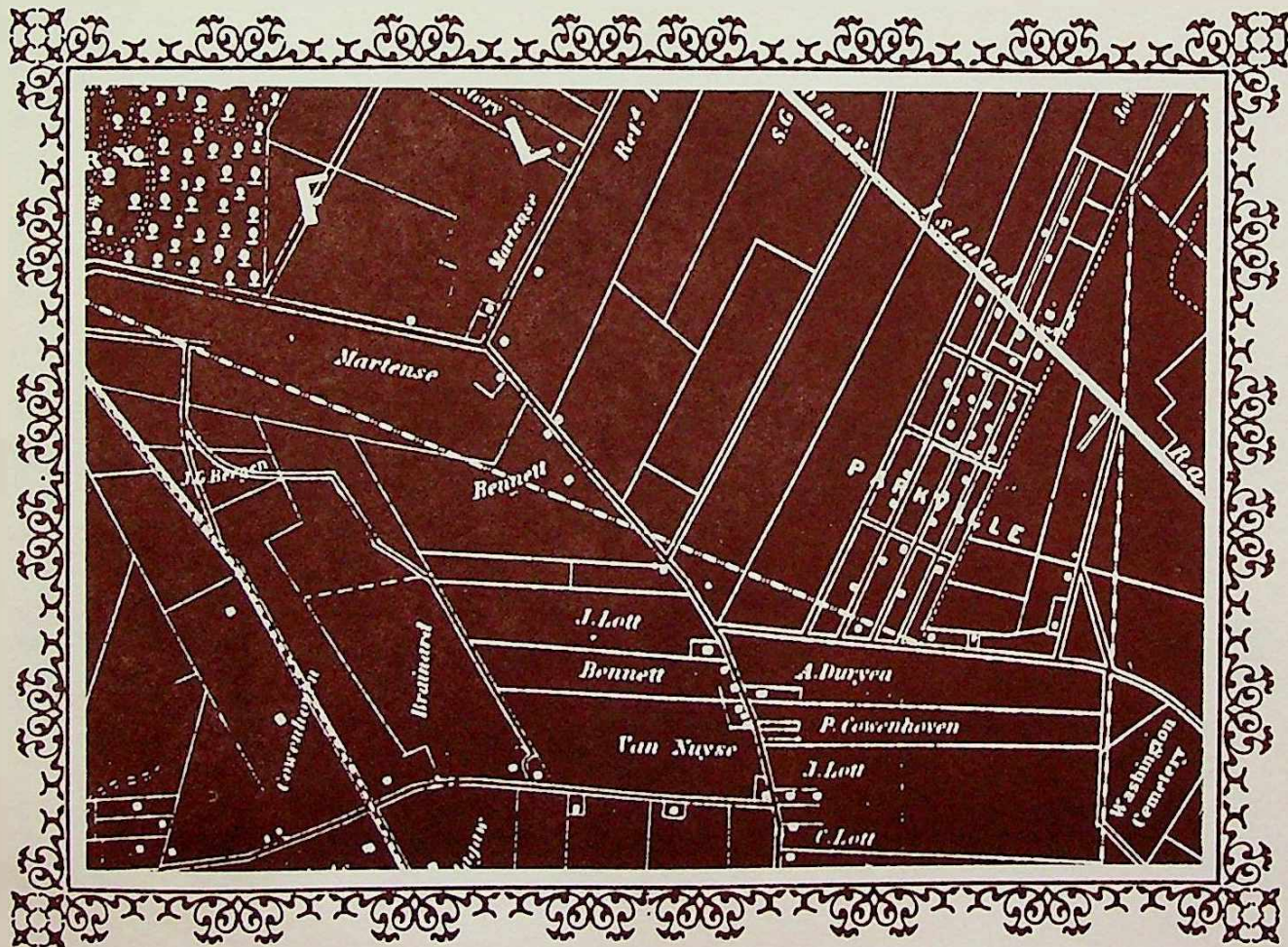
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Farms of Borough Park

This map from the 1870s shows the old farms which existed prior to the street-grids were established. The Brooklyn, Bath Beach & West End Railroad is portrayed as the dotted heavy line along the lower left of the map. This is today's New Utrecht Avenue. The other heavy dotted line running through the center of the map was the old Culver Gravesend Railroad. That line ran along today's 37th Street and then along McDonald Avenue. At the bottom right edge of the map is Washington Cemetery, located along Bay Parkway.

The double solid line along the bottom of the map (just below the Cowenhoven farm) was Cowenhoven Lane. Today's 54th Street more or less follows that old road. There is still a shift in the street-grid along 54th Street, between 15th and 16th Avenues.

The slightly curved road in the center of the map was Old New Utrecht Road which merged into McDonald Avenue (just above the Martense farm) and continued along Greenwood Cemetery (shown in the upper right corner of map). Today's New Utrecht Avenue was not a major thoroughfare but rather only the right-of-way of the Brooklyn, Bath Beach & West End Railroad. Old New Utrecht Road ran through the heart of the farm country down to the town of New Utrecht which was located near the junction of 18th Avenue and 86th Street. The old New Utrecht Dutch Reformed Church was built in 1828.



There are still a few remnants of Old New Utrecht Road at 17th Avenue and 48th Street and along 16th Avenue and 44th Street. The row of houses slightly offset from 16h Avenue were once fronting along Old New Utrecht Road.



First public school in Blythebourne was located on 14th Avenue and 53rd Street. It was known as the Third District School House of West Brooklyn. A new addition was built around 1915 on 14th Avenue. The building was later sold to Kamenitz High School and is presently owned by the Satmar Yeshiva. The original (back wing) structure was recently demolished.



The old Umbrella oak tree stood along today's 14th Avenue near 55th Street. It was planted before the American Revolution of 1776 and almost was blown down during the Great Blizzard of March, 1888.





Typical street scene in Borough Park. Circa 1920.



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Israel Hospital was organized in 1919. It later merged with Zion Hospital of Bensonhurst to become Israel Zion Hospital. In 1943, Israel Zion merged with Beth Moses Hospital, under the aegis of Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, and became today's Maimonides Medical Center.

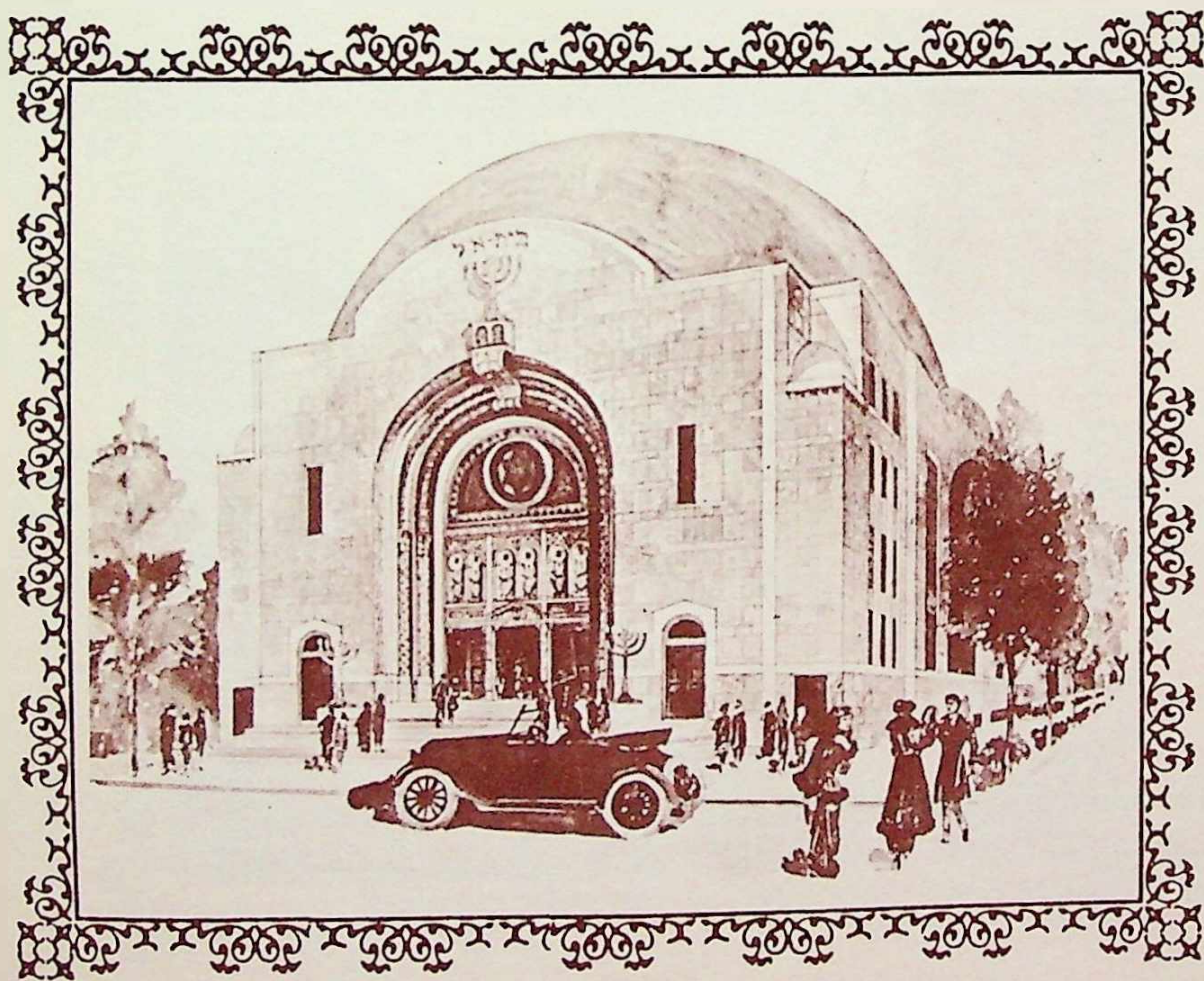


Temple Beth El's first building was located on 12th Avenue & 41st Street and was built in 1906. It was the first synagogue built in the neighborhood.





Architect's rendering of Temple Beth El in 1920, located at 15th Avenue
and 48th Street.



The old Toras Moshe Congregation on Tenth Avenue and 43rd Street was built in 1928. The building now houses the Yeshiva Beth Aaron of Chernobyl .



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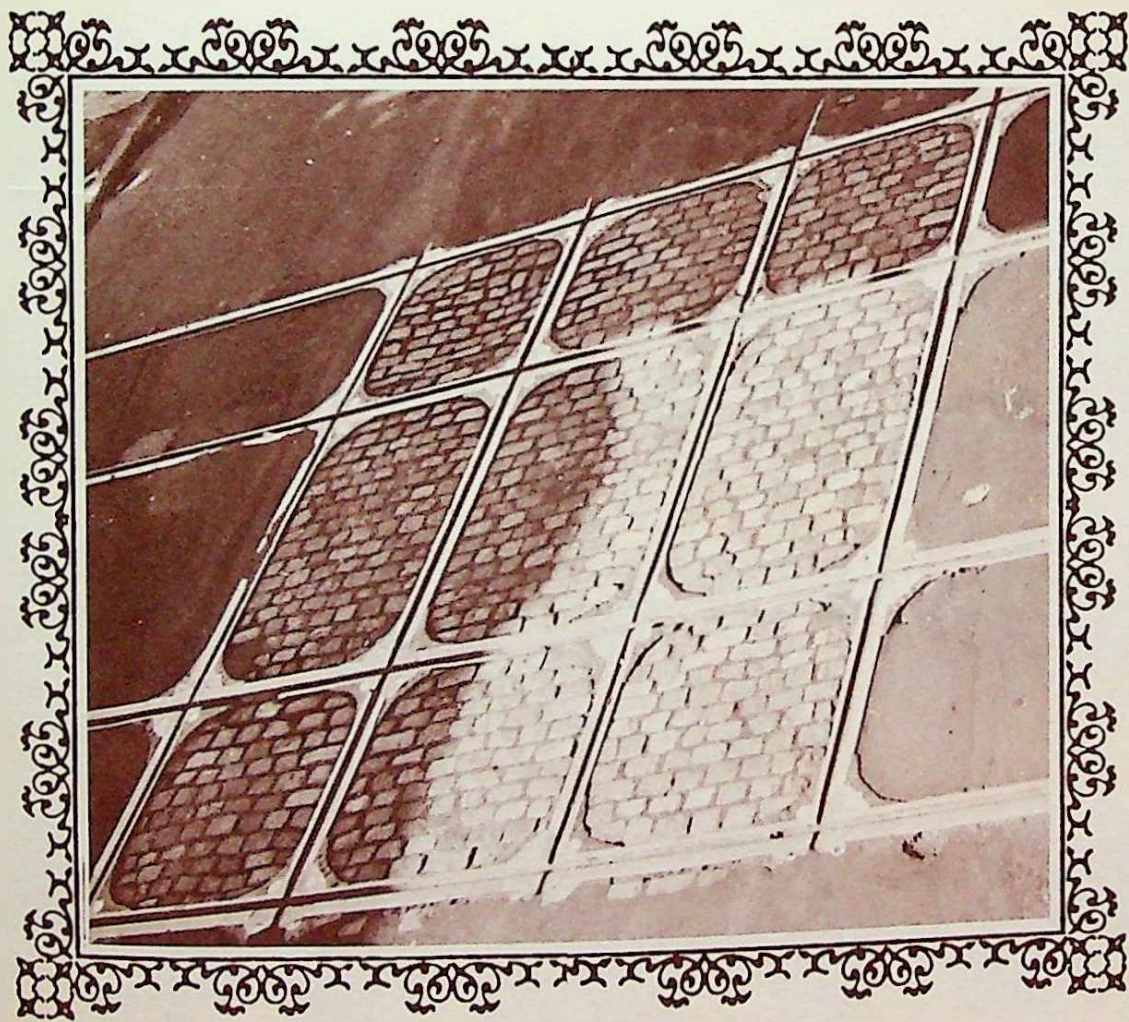
If you're like a lot of people, you may have occasional or persistent back pain and wonder what caused it. You try to think of some incident in which you may have strained your back, and come up with nothing. But there must be some reason why you have back pains. The truth is that even the simplest of incidents may be the cause, such as reaching high on a shelf to get something. Or stooping suddenly to pick up something that has fallen. Or maybe you need some tips on good posture.

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Railroad cross-tracks on 13th Avenue and 37th Street. The 37th Street tracks were used by the original Culver Gravesend Railroad (on grade) and later by the South Brooklyn Railroad. The 13th Avenue tracks were used by the 13th Avenue trolley line. Photo taken in the 1970s.

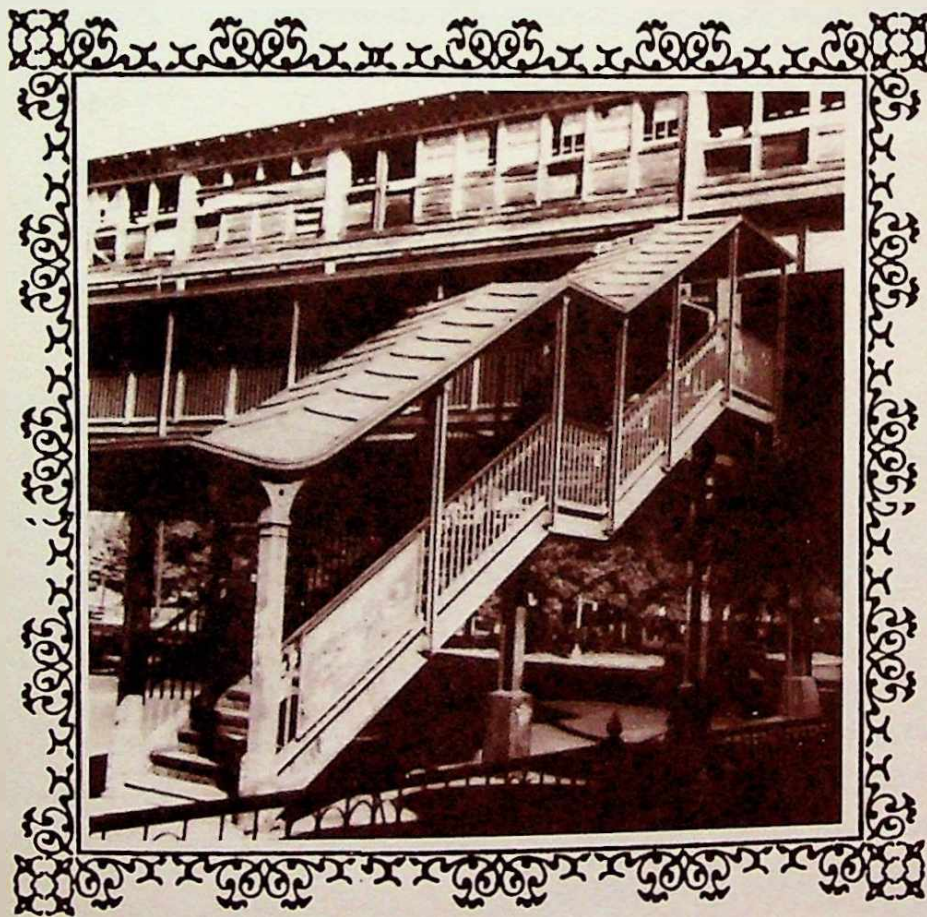




Entrance to the 55th Street station on the West End line. Note the spelling of Municipal Railway - the "u" is replaced with the Roman "v." The sign was removed in the mid-1980s.

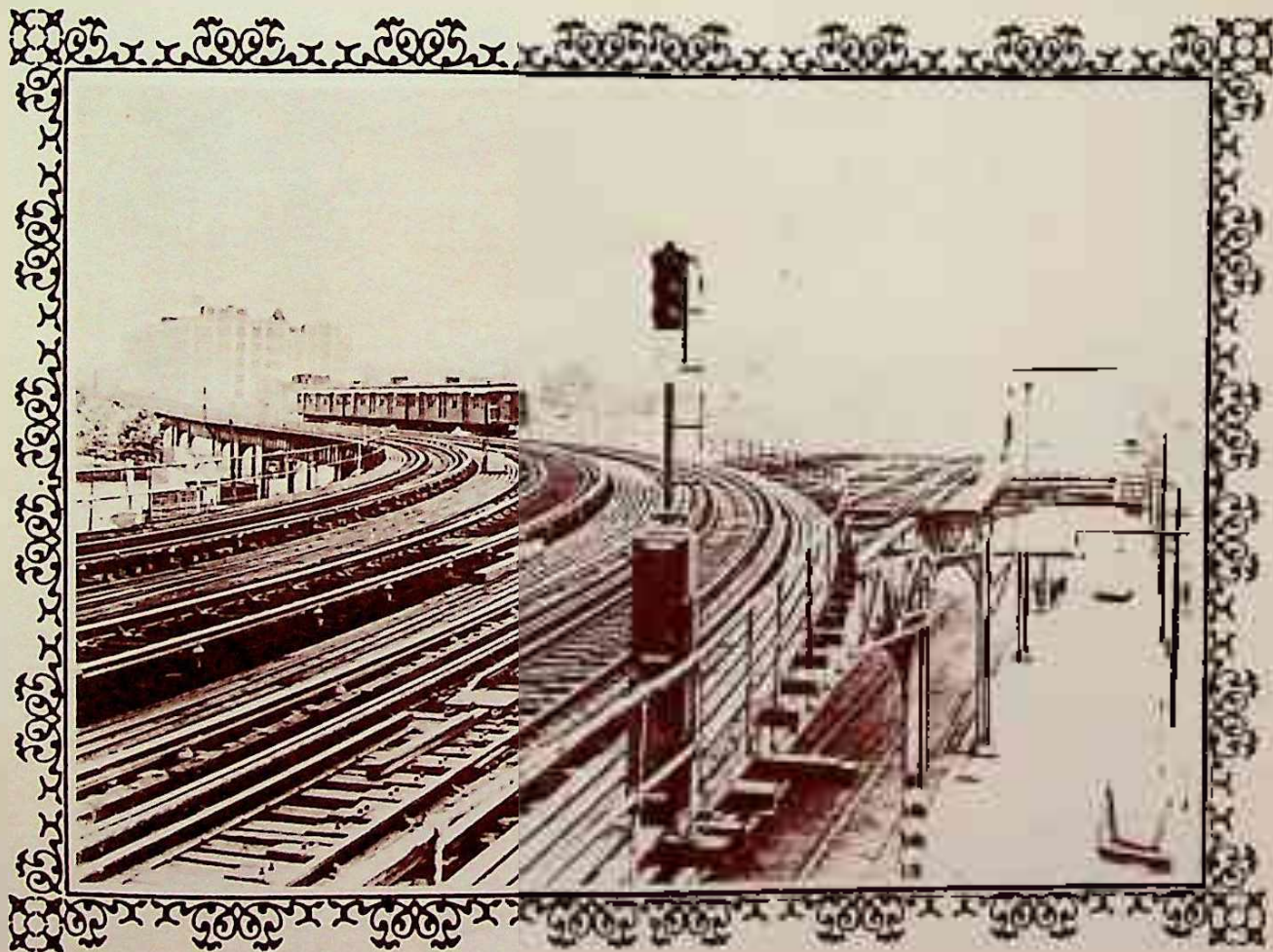


Ft. Hamilton Parkway entrance to the Culver El. Circa 1965.





Culver Avenue El looking from Ditmas Avenue Station towards 14th Avenue. Today's "F" train continues to Church Avenue on tracks which were extended in 1954, towards right side of photo. The old Culver El was demolished in the mid-1980s.

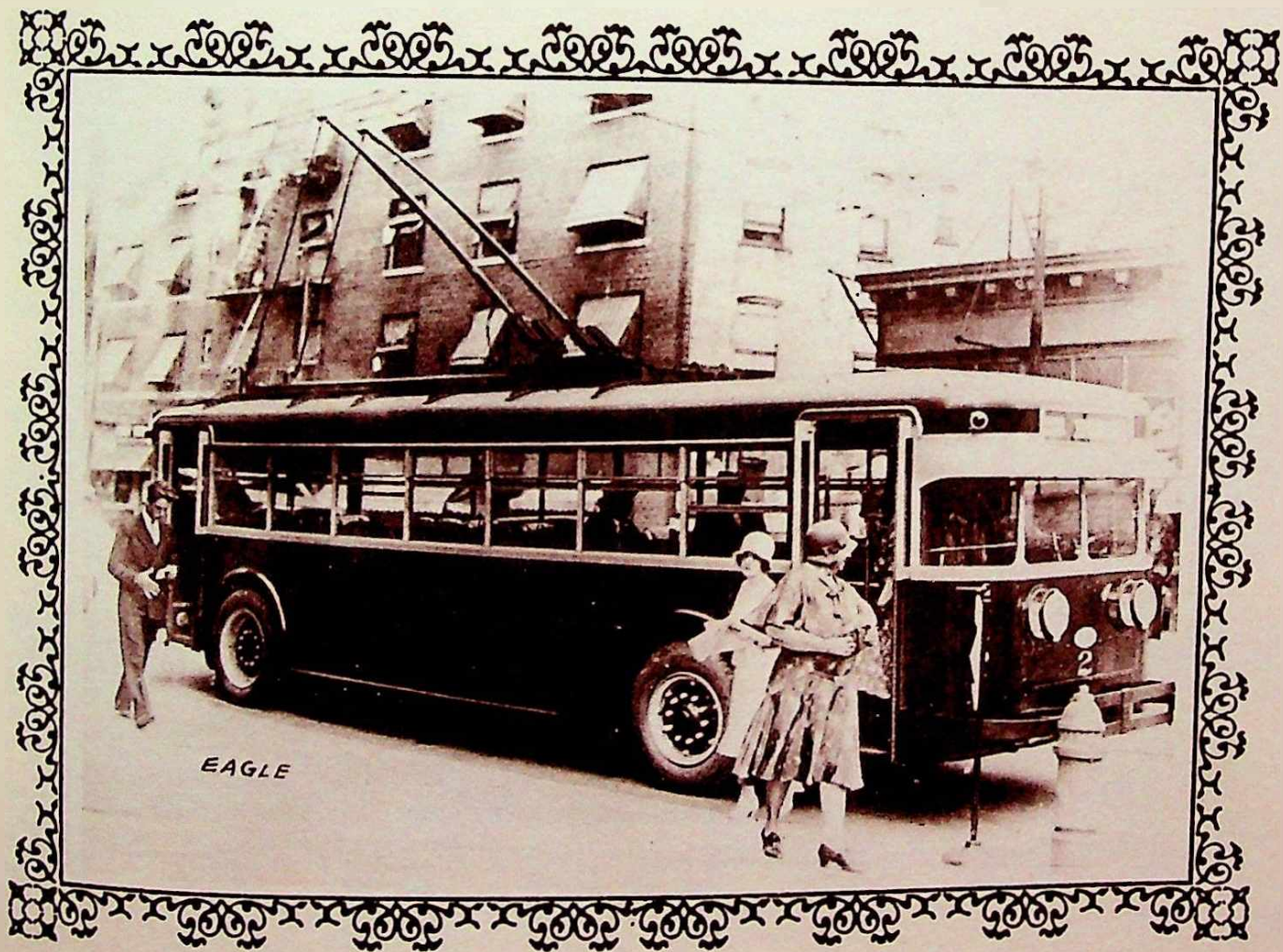


Early Parkville homestead from the late 1880s, located at Elmwood Avenue and East 3rd Street.



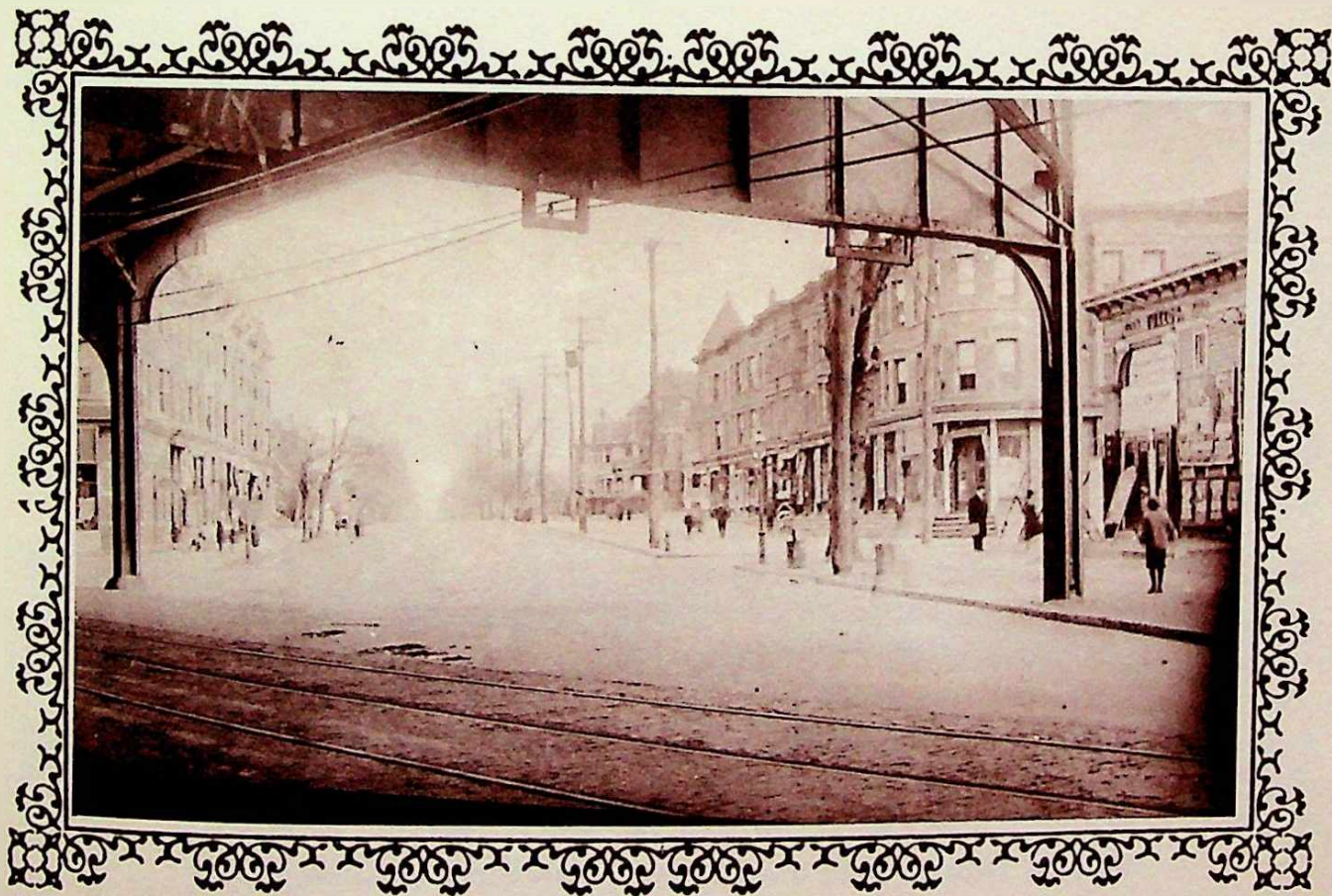


Electric bus on Sixteenth Avenue in the 1930s.





New Utrecht Avenue and 55th Street looking "down" 13th Avenue. Circa 1919. Note the movie theater on far right side, showing a film starring the silent movie star Lilian Gish.





View of 13th Avenue from 55th to 54th Streets. Circa 1920.





View of 13th Avenue looking from 51st to 50th Streets. Circa 1910.
Note the Borough Park Club on the left side of photo.



Borough Park Club located at 13th Avenue and 50th Street later became Yeshiva Etz Chaim. Salomon Plaza now stands on this site.

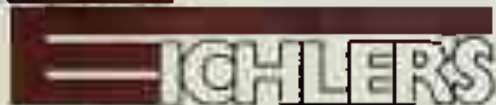


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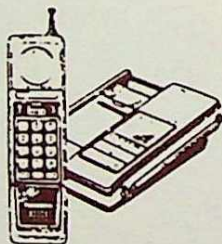


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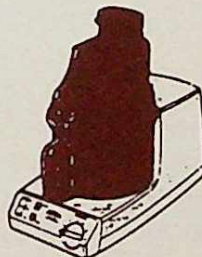
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New Utrecht Avenue and 57th Street looking towards 58th Street. Circa 1890.

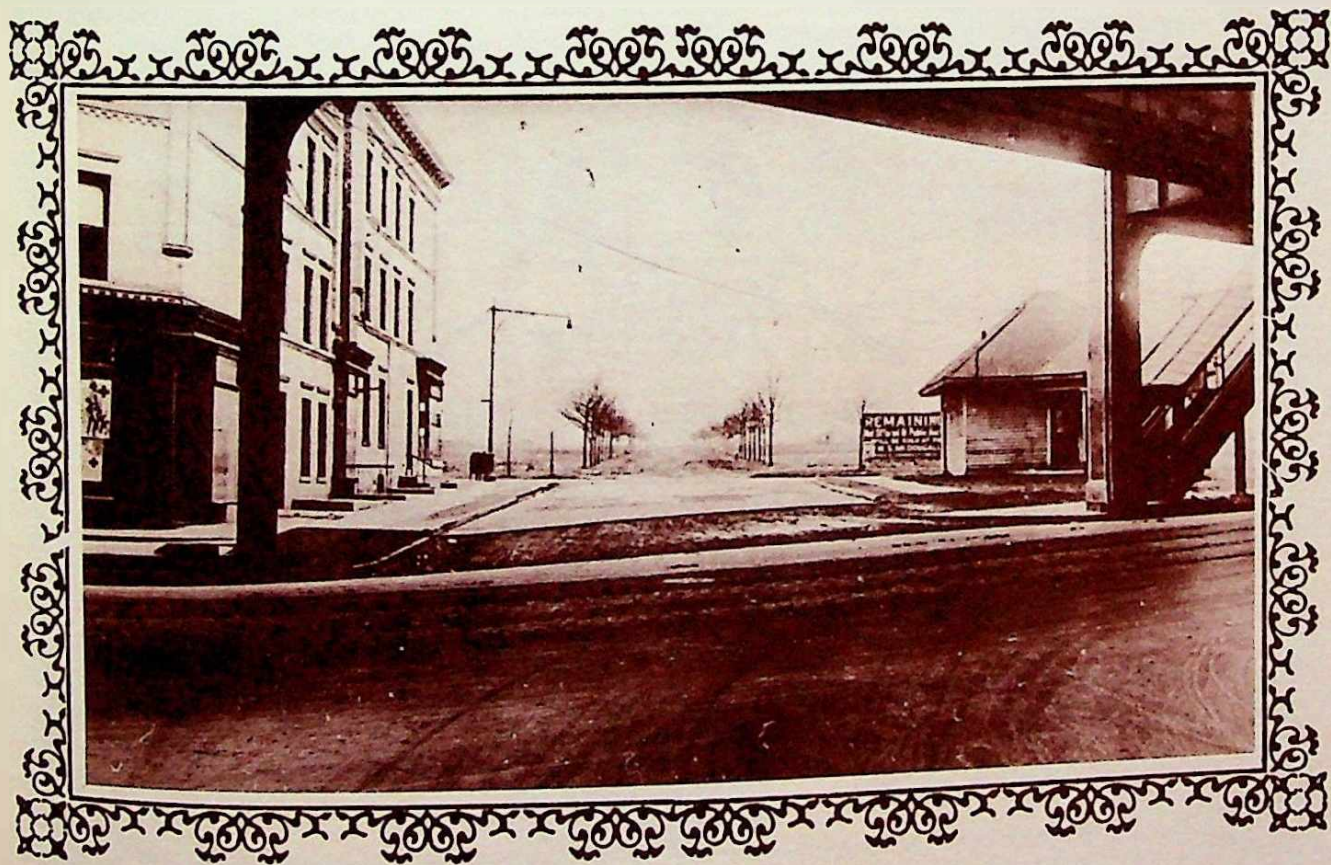


New Utrecht Avenue south of 54th Street. Circa 1890.



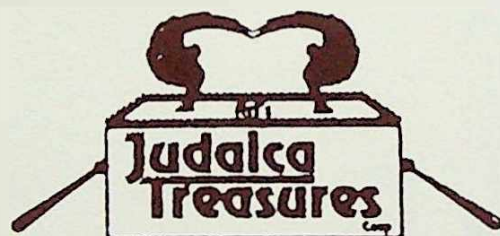


New Utrecht Avenue and 45th Street, looking "up the hill" in 1919.



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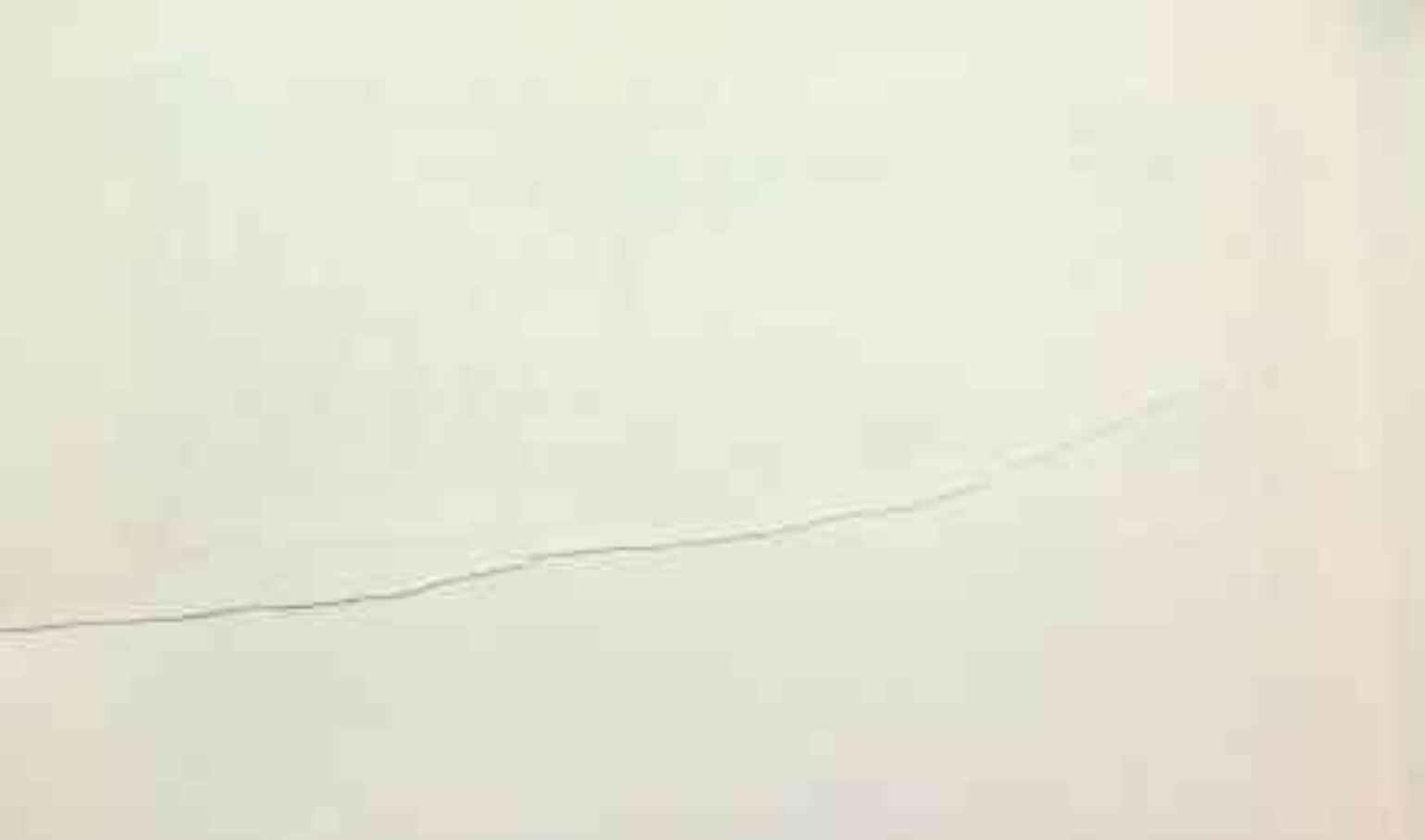
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New Utrecht and Eleventh Avenues in 1919



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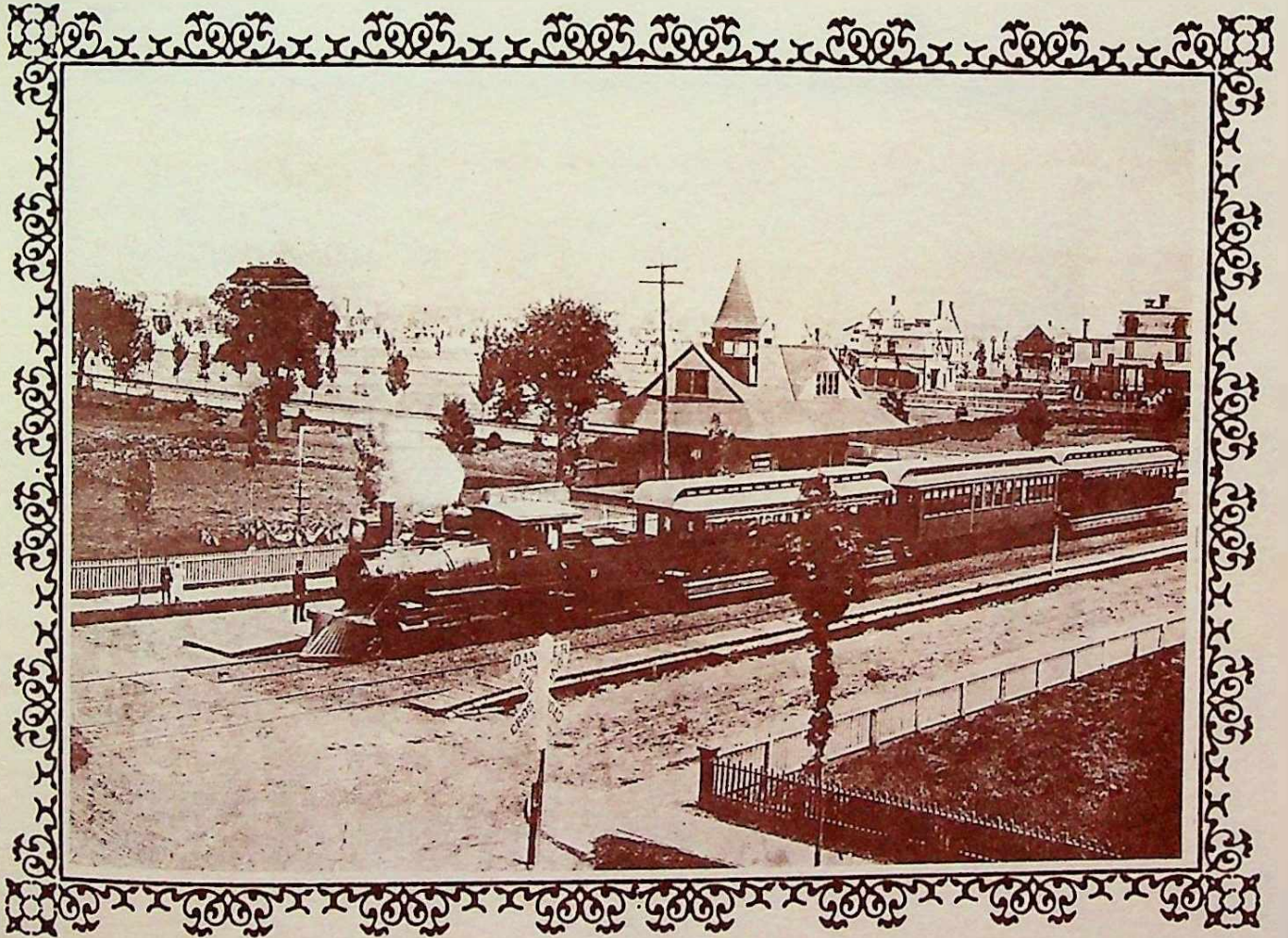
MUTTER



Ft. Hamilton Parkway and 47th Street. Circa 1910.



Bath Beach station of the Brooklyn, Bath Beach & West End Railroad.
Circa 1890.



New Utrecht Avenue and 43rd Street in 1919.
Note Public School 131 on Ft. Hamilton Parkway.

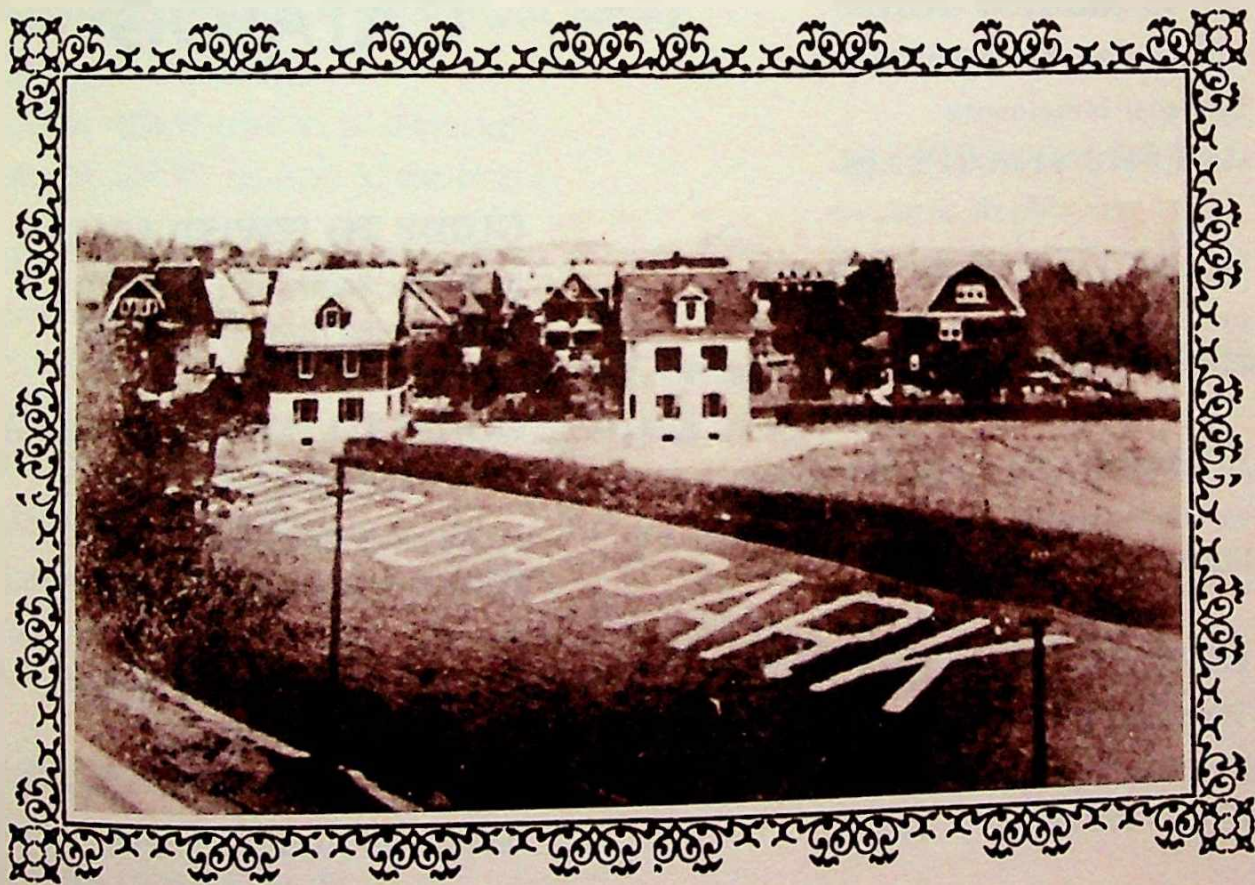


View of 12th Avenue and 60th Street. Circa 1900.



The image is a very low-resolution, pixelated aerial photograph. It shows a large, irregularly shaped area in the center, which is the 'Borough Park' mentioned in the caption. This area is filled with a dense pattern of small, light-colored shapes, which are the shells. The surrounding area is a uniform, light grayish-blue color. The overall image has a very grainy, blocky appearance due to the low resolution.

Aerial view of "Borough Park" spelled out in shells. New Utrecht Avenue
and 57th Street. Circa 1919.



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