

E A S T   L O N D O N  
AND   ITS  
G E O G R A P H I C A L   S E T T I N G .

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A Dissertation Presented For  
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Plates 1 - 24 are used by kind permission of the Industrial and Air Photographers, Durban.

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INTRODUCTION

Along the South African coast between Cape Town and Durban, a distance of 822 miles, are the two major ports, Port Elizabeth and East London. These two ports, rivals in some ways, have histories that are closely linked. Their harbours have been built at two of the most favourable spots along a coastline poorly endowed with natural harbours. East London, the fourth harbour of the Union of South Africa, is the only river port of any consequence, and had to win the mechanical fight against nature and the fight against prejudice that contended that her position was too close to a troublesome frontier. (1)

After a hundred years of growth, East London is a mature town, with the residential and industrial areas clearly defined. Her expansion will be along the lines of planned zoning. (2) Her population in 1950 was 90,195,

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(1) East London, its foundation and early development as a port. M.A.Thesis, B.C.Gordon. P. 58.

(2) Town Planning Scheme. East London City Council.  
21st September, 1949.



of which 43,195 were European and 39,698 Native. (1) Besides being a port, East London is a prominent holiday resort and, of recent years, is developing as an industrial town. A striking feature is the clean aspect of the town.

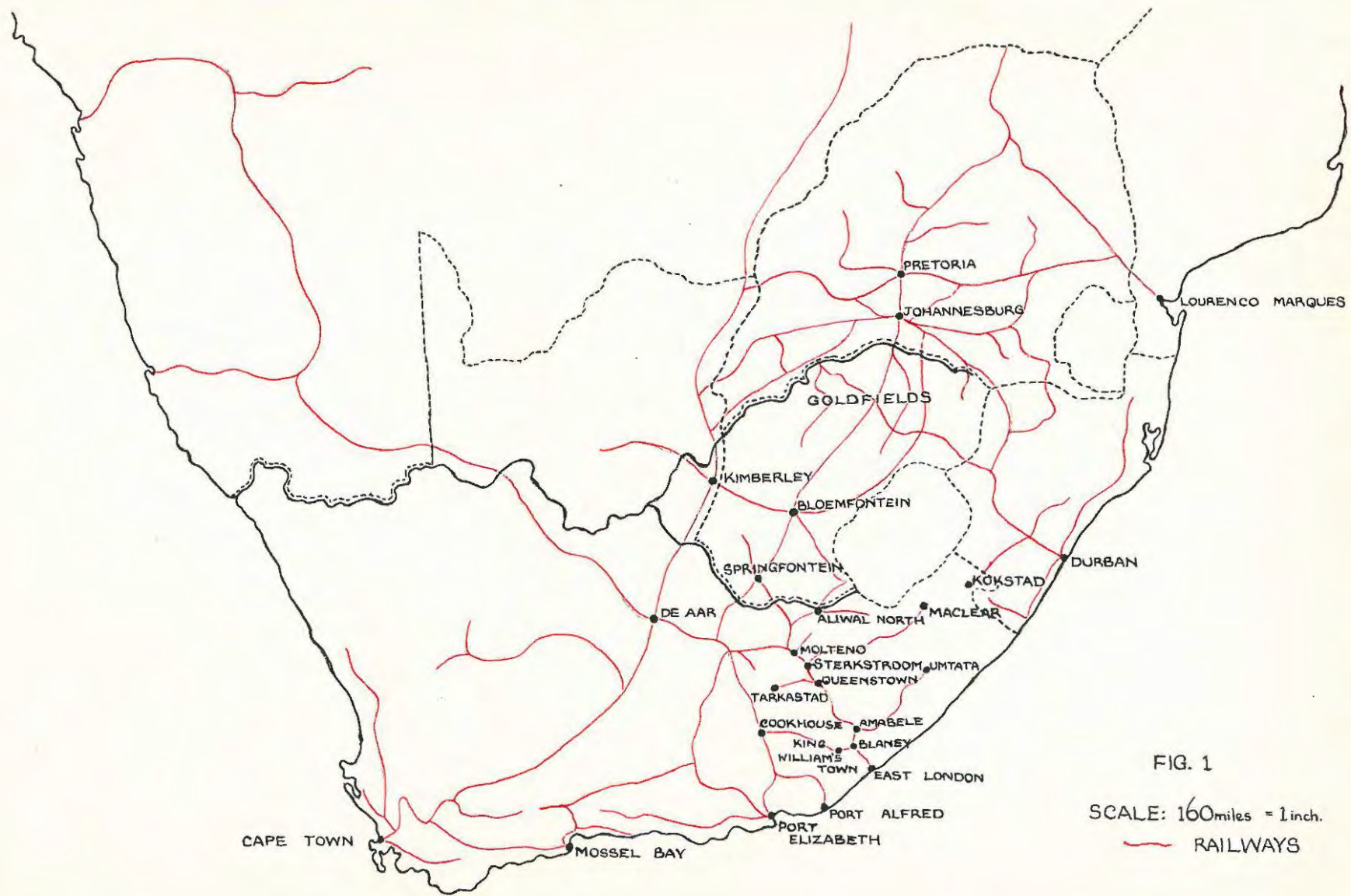
Those two "miracles" of South Africa, the discovery of diamonds and the discovery of gold, stimulated the growth of East London; especially the discovery of diamonds since Kimberley was about 450 miles from this, its nearest harbour. But the river mouth at East London had very little natural advantage over the other river mouths along the coast. There was at the Buffalo Mouth no outstanding, decisive merit. In many matters, such as the railway, the bridge, the water supply, there was doubt, uncertainty and bickering, with subsequent decisions to shelve the matter or make use of a temporary expedient, because there were many mediocre alternatives but none which was supremely suitable.

In 1852, Bishop Gray wrote, "East London .....has as few natural advantages as any place I have seen claiming to be a port. I could have walked across the river without getting wet above the knee." (2)

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(1) Town Clerk's Department, East London.

(2) "Journal of a Visitation Tour." Bishop Gray. 1852. Pp. 108-9



## Chapter 1

## THE NATURAL MILIEU

The broad mass of elevated, mountainous country behind the Great Escarpment from Basutoland to Barkly East and Dordrecht obtrudes into the hinterland of East London so that two areas that come within the sphere of influence of the port, may be distinguished. The eastern wing, below the high escarpment of the Drakensberg and its continuation towards the Stormberg, reaches to just beyond Umtata in the Transkeian Territories and merges beyond that with the um-land of Durban. The western wing, less clearly defined, includes the basin of the Great Kei and through it an ascent on to the plateau towards the Orange Free State around the west of the high country, together with coastal districts as far west as the lower Great Fish River.

East London is the gateway to a hinterland which includes Peddie, Fort Beaufort, Tarkastad, Molteno, Bethulie, Smithfield, Rouxville, Barkly East, Maclear, and Umtata. The larger towns of King William's Town, Queenstown and Aliwal North lie within this hinterland.

This region is characterised by nearly horizontal Karroo rocks over the greater part of the area. That important orographical feature, the Great Escarpment, passes through the region in an arc sub-parallel to the coast.



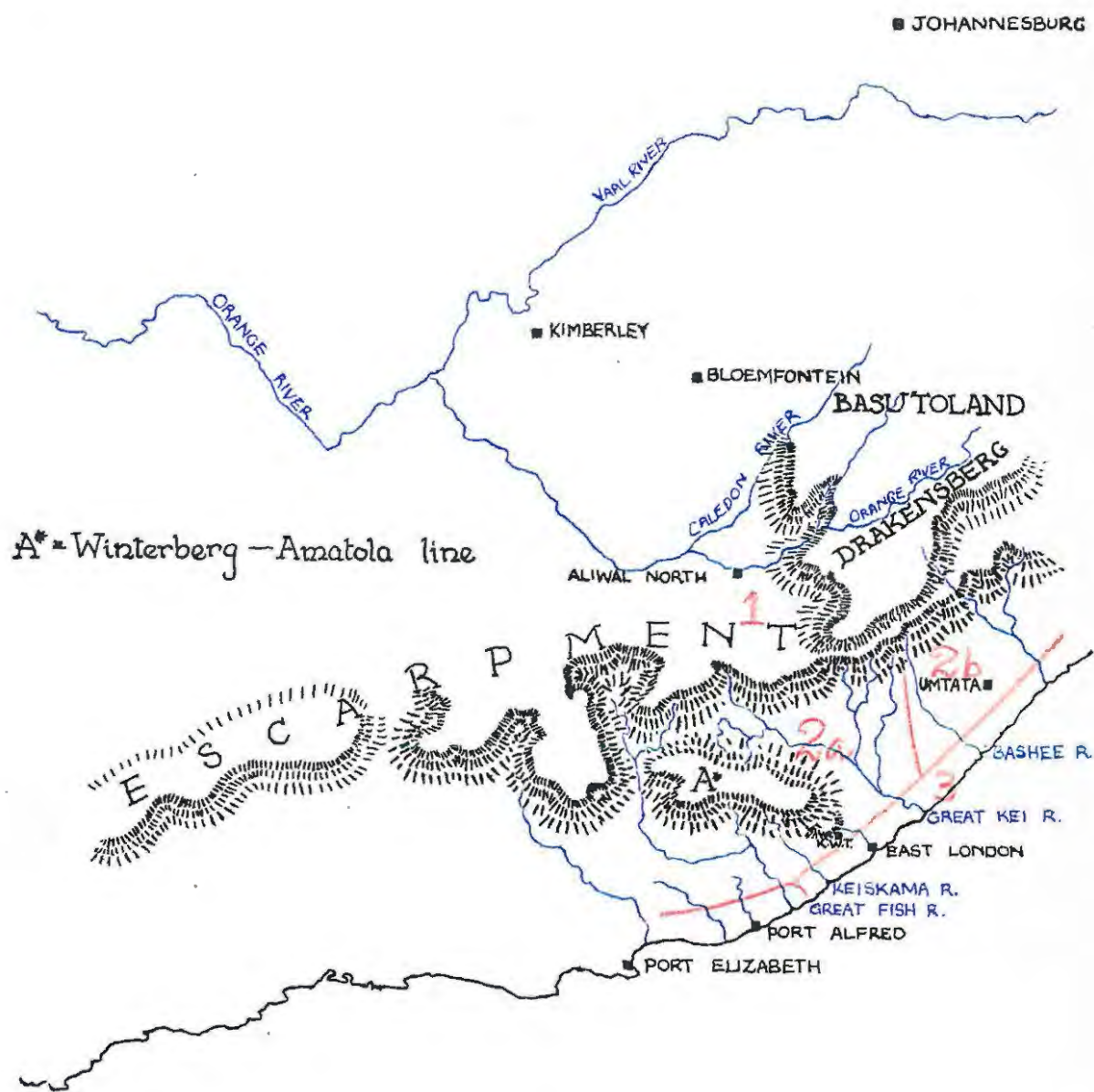


FIG. 2.  
SCALE: 1:6,000,000

It marks the approximate limit of headward erosion of the rivers, in the hinterland of East London, that flow to the coast, and the tract of land below the Great Escarpment is a dissected region about 150 miles wide in the west but not above 90 miles wide in some parts of the Transkei. The marginal land is diversified and includes the "Winterberg-Amatola" line (1) which is a former position of the Escarpment. Between the Escarpment and the Winterberg-Amatola line are the upper parts of the basins of the Great Fish and Kei River systems. This Winterberg-Amatola line forms a barrier 180 miles long except where the Great Fish River cuts through it below Cradock, and it includes the Great Winterberg, 7,778 feet. It terminates in Dohne Peak, (4,777ft), 37 degrees West of True North of East London and 44 miles from the port in a straight line.

The hinterland of East London may be divided into the following physical divisions:

1. The Plateau.
2. The country below the Escarpment
  - a. The Uplands of the Eastern Province.
  - b. The Uplands of the Transkei.
3. The Coastal Belt. (fig. 2)

#### 1. The Plateau.

The Plateau lies north of the Escarpment and all

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(1) "A Physiographic Regional Classification of South Africa." J.H. Wellington. S.A. Geog. Jour., April, 1946, p.79.

drainage, except where the streams are tributaries of the Great Fish River, is towards the Orange River. It is a country of plains from which rise flat-topped hills.

2a The Uplands of the Eastern Province.

These are the elevated lands between the Great Escarpment and the Winterberg-Amatola line. They are structurally similar to the lands above the Escarpment and only slightly lower. (1)

2b The Uplands of the Transkei.

These Uplands are intensely dissected and an arbitrary boundary between these Uplands and the Uplands of the Eastern Province might be the Kei-Bashee watershed. In this region of intricate topography, there is much high and steep ground unfit for cultivation, some elevated mountain masses and only minor developments of well-defined basins.

3 The Coastal Belt.

The Coastal Belt lies to the east of the Cape Fold Belt which terminates just east of the Great Fish River mouth, and extends along the coast into Natal. Seen from the interior, the Coastal Belt presents a comparatively flat, even surface. It rises gradually

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(1) "The Eastern Province as a Geographical Region". J.V.L. Rennie. S.A. Geog.Jour., April, 1945 p. 5

from low altitudes near the coast to about 2,000 ft on its inner margin some 35 to 65 miles inland. The surface is deeply trenched by the rivers, flowing in fairly regular courses coastwards. Between the valleys (better described as kloofs because of their restricted width) are broad, comparatively smooth interfluves, irregular here and there because of the rocky outcrops of dolerite intrusions. There is no low-lying coastal plain and very little in the way of alluvial flats. The coastline is remarkably even. (cf. plate 1 - this shows a short but typical stretch of coastline). Narrow, entrenched, drowned valleys are a feature of the coast, but they have sandbars across their mouths.

To illustrate the temperature conditions of the hinterland of East London, the data for four towns are given below: (1)

	Latitude South	Altitude Feet	January		July		Year Average.	
			Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
			degrees Fahrenheit					
East London (Signal Hill)	33° 01'	149	77	64	69	49	73	57
Umtata	31° 35'	2278	81	60	70	36	77	50
Queenstown	31° 54'	3532	86	58	64	36	76	48
Aliwal North	30° 42'	4367	86	57	62	29	75	44

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(1) Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa. No. 24 1948. p. 24.

# ANNUAL RAINFALL ———

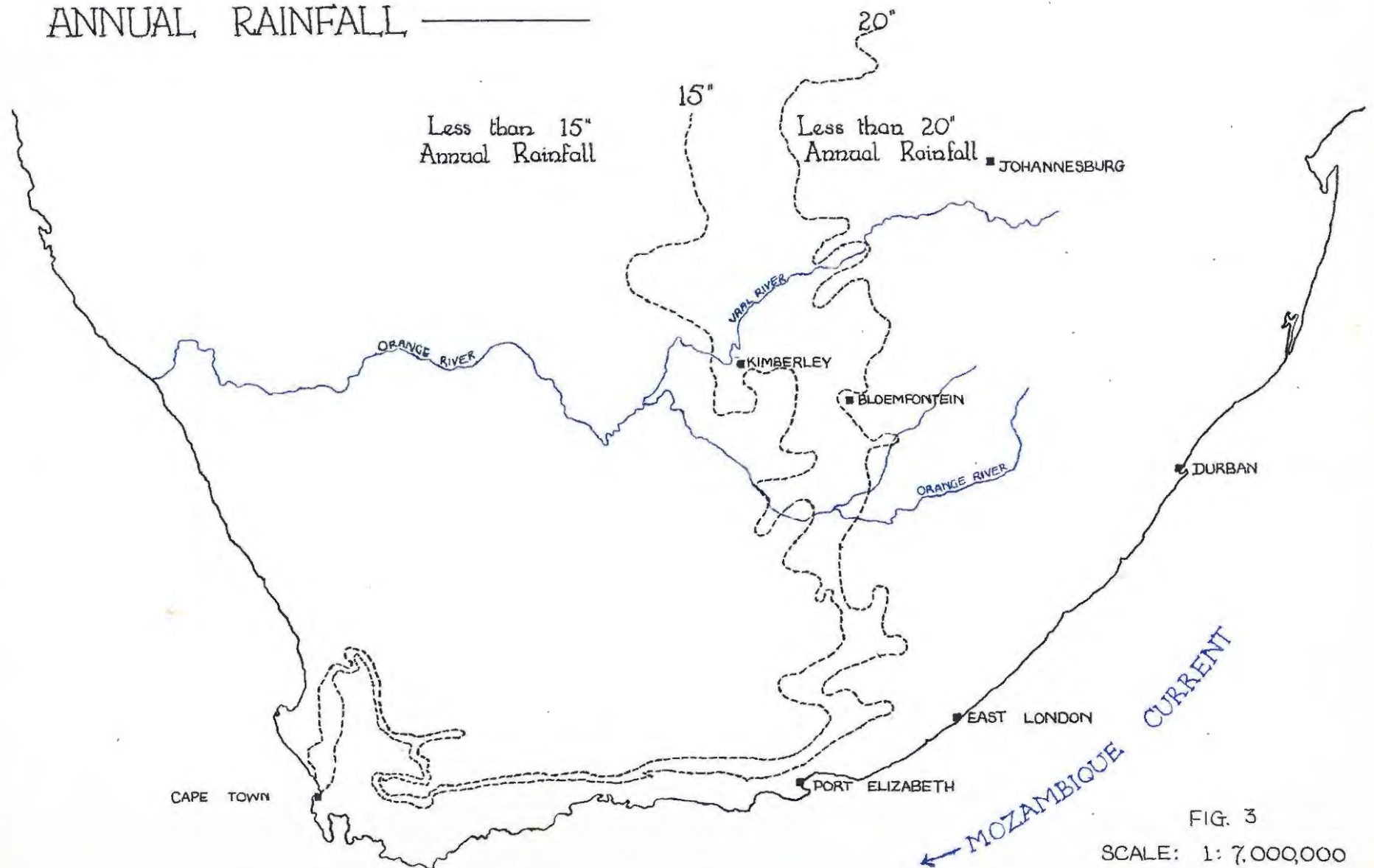


FIG. 3

SCALE: 1: 7,000,000



The maritime influence at East London causes it to have cooler summers and warmer winters than the three inland towns. Umtata (50 miles from the sea and 2278 feet above sea-level), Queenstown (100 miles and 3532 feet) and Aliwal North ( 170 miles and 4367 feet) have warmer summers and very much colder winters. There is a narrow coastal zone free of winter frosts but at Queenstown, for example, the average number of days per annum when the temperature of the air four feet above the ground falls to 32 deg. F. and below, is 40. (1)

The figures given above show a progressive increase in the annual range of temperature away from the coast.

The hinterland of East London falls in that half of the Union of South Africa, which receives on an average more than 15 inches of rain each year. (2) (cf. fig. 3) From East London (32.51 ins. annual average rainfall) (3) the amount of rainfall increases progressively along the coast north-eastwards until the region around Port St. Johns, which has 40-50 inches of rain. The coast from East London to a point west of Cape St. Francis receives an average annual rainfall of 25-30 inches. In the Transkeian Territories the precipitation decreases progressively away from the coast until the vicinity of Umtata (25.65 average annual) (4)

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(1) Official Yearbook. No. 24. 1948. p. 27.

(3) idem. P. 28 (4) idem. P. 28.

(2) Official Yearbook. no. 12. 1929-30. P.48.

after which it increases to a maximum in the elevated mass of Basutoland. In the remainder of the hinterland of East London the amount of rain decreases progressively towards the west. Queenstown has an average annual rainfall of 22.29 ins. (1) and Aliwal North 20.39 ins. (1) Tarkastad lies in the region receiving 15-20 inches. The Winterberg-Amatola line provides the exception to the decrease in precipitation westward. Here there is increased rainfall with the Evelyn Valley receiving 72.78 inches on the average and in some years exceeding 100 inches. (2)

The hinterland of East London receives most of its rain in summer, October to March. (3) This summer incidence is illustrated by the following figures: (4)

East London	61% in summer
Umtata	74%
Queenstown	77%
Aliwal North	75%

The yearly amounts of rain in the hinterland fluctuate considerably. Aliwal North which has an average annual rainfall of 20.39 ins., has received the following amounts: (5)

1891: 35.77;	1897: 11.04;	1903: 9.92;
1904: 15.34;	1905: 16.54;	1919: 8.68.

- 
- (1) Official Yearbook of Union of S.A. No.24. 1948. P.28.  
 (2) idem. P.27.  
 (4) idem. P.28.  
 (5) idem. Pp. 31 et seq.  
 (3) Official Yearbook. No.11. 1928-29. P.48.

Drought is always a possibility. The Rainfall Reliability figure for East London is .88, (1), for Queenstown .87, and for Umtata .85. The average rainfall for East London is 32.51 inches, yet in 1927 only 18.79 ins. fell and in 1945 14.03 ins; on the other hand 40.90 ins. fell in 1935. (2)

The region is covered with grass. In places Acacia trees, other thorn bush, and succulents, such as Aloes and Euphorbias, invade the grass. On the seaward slope of the Amatola and the Pirie Mountains which form a spur of the Winterberg-Amatola line, forests are found. While the interfluves are grass-covered with scattered bush, the steep walls of the valleys are covered with a thick tangle of bush.

On the more northerly grassy areas, bontebok and springbok roamed, while towards the coast, hippopotami, buffaloes, lions and, with more significance, elephants formerly occurred.

#### THE EAST LONDON MUNICIPAL AREA.

The Buffalo River begins its 60 mile course to the sea in the Evelyn Valley of the Pirie Mountains, where the average annual rainfall is 72.78 ins. There is only one important tributary, the Yellowwoods River, which joins the

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(1) Calculated from the following formula:

$$R = \left(1 - \frac{Vr}{2}\right)^2, \text{ where } R \text{ is Rainfall Reliability and } Vr \text{ is } \frac{\text{Mean Deviation}}{\text{Average Rainfall}}$$

Rainfall data 1921-1950 - Weather Bureau, Pretoria.

(2) Weather Bureau, Department of Transport, Pretoria.

Buffalo from the north-east, before the larger river has completed half its course. (cf. fig. 16). The basin of the Buffalo and the Yellowwoods together does not exceed 25 miles in width at its greatest extent and gradually becomes narrower towards the coast. During the latter half of the course of the Buffalo, a good deal of the rainfall that falls within a mile or two of the river itself, drains off into minor streams, such as the Nahoon on the left and Hickman's River on the right. Eight miles from the mouth, at the Buffalo Pass, the river, in normal times, trickles like a misfit river in a deep gorge-like valley with steeply sloping banks 400 feet high. The river banks maintain their steep angle of slope, though losing in height, almost to the very mouth of the river. (cf. plates 18, 22).

At the mouth of this river lies East London, covering an area of 33.8 square miles, (1) the greater proportion of which lies to the east of the river. The Nahoon River forms a ten mile long boundary on the east side of the Municipal area, except where the little village of Abbotsford lies across the river. The Municipality stretches along the coast from the Nahoon Mouth, across the Buffalo, as far as the Invobokazi River, just west of Leach's Bay, a distance of some nine miles. The third side of the roughly triangular area follows an irregular course, bounded by farms

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special 1848-1948. P.25.

and crown lands, from the Invobokazi River mouth to the higher reaches of the Nahoon. (cf. fig. 4)

#### SUBMERGENCE, EMERGENCE AND SUBMERGENCE.

During early Cretaceous times there was a slight subsidence of this part of the coast and encroachment of the sea, resulting in marginal marine deposition.(1) Near Need's Camp (lower Need's Camp quarry), on the right bank of the Buffalo River, about 20 miles from its mouth, occurs a small patch of chalky limestone at a height of 1,120 feet above sea-level. (2)

During late Tertiary times the Union underwent a doming movement which tilted the marginal regions outward.(3). As the zone of no-change was off-shore, the coasts were emergent. The marine plain thus raised above the level of the sea had a gentle seaward slope. (4) The rivers were extended across this slope to reach the sea. (5) Active erosion began near the mouths with the rivers trenching their way across the marine plain.

One of the most recent movements along the Eastern coast of South Africa was the submergence of about 150 ft.(6)

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- (1) Geology for South African Students. Hamilton & Cooke. P. 195.
  - (2) Geology of East London. F. D. Mountain, Transactions of Geol. Soc. of S.A. Vol. XLVIII, 1945. P. 31.
  - (3) South African Scenery. L. C. King. Pp. 179-180.
  - (4) idem. P. 157.
  - (5) idem. P. 160.
  - (6) idem. P. 174.



The rivers were still engaged in cutting very young valleys (or canyons) and had not yet opened their valleys to any appreciable extent. (1) This accounts for the comparative straightness of the coast: that an uplifted marine plain had been partially submerged again before the rivers had carried out extensive dissection. The lower courses of most of the rivers, including the Buffalo, were drowned. Across the narrow mouths sandbars were built. In the lower drowned section of the Buffalo River course there has been much infilling of alluvium. In 1905 when drillings were being made for the foundations of the road and rail bridge across the Buffalo River about a mile from the mouth, it was discovered that the rock floor at its deepest was 124 ft 3 ins below Low Tide.(2) The channel had been filled in with mud, sand and shelly material, leaving a depth of some 14 ft of water.

Yet near Green Point, only about two miles above the bridge, the rock floor of the river bed is exposed. This is probably the "knickpoint" (3) where the newer profile of the rejuvenated river meets the old profile, and it was at this stage of its passage upstream when the coast was submerged.

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(1) South African Scenery. L.C.King. P. 303.

(2) "The Rock Channel of the Buffalo River" E.H.L.Schwarz. Rec. Alb. Mus. 1907. Vol. 2. Pp.1-5.

(3) South African Scenery. L.C.King, P. 162.

HEIGHT  
in feet

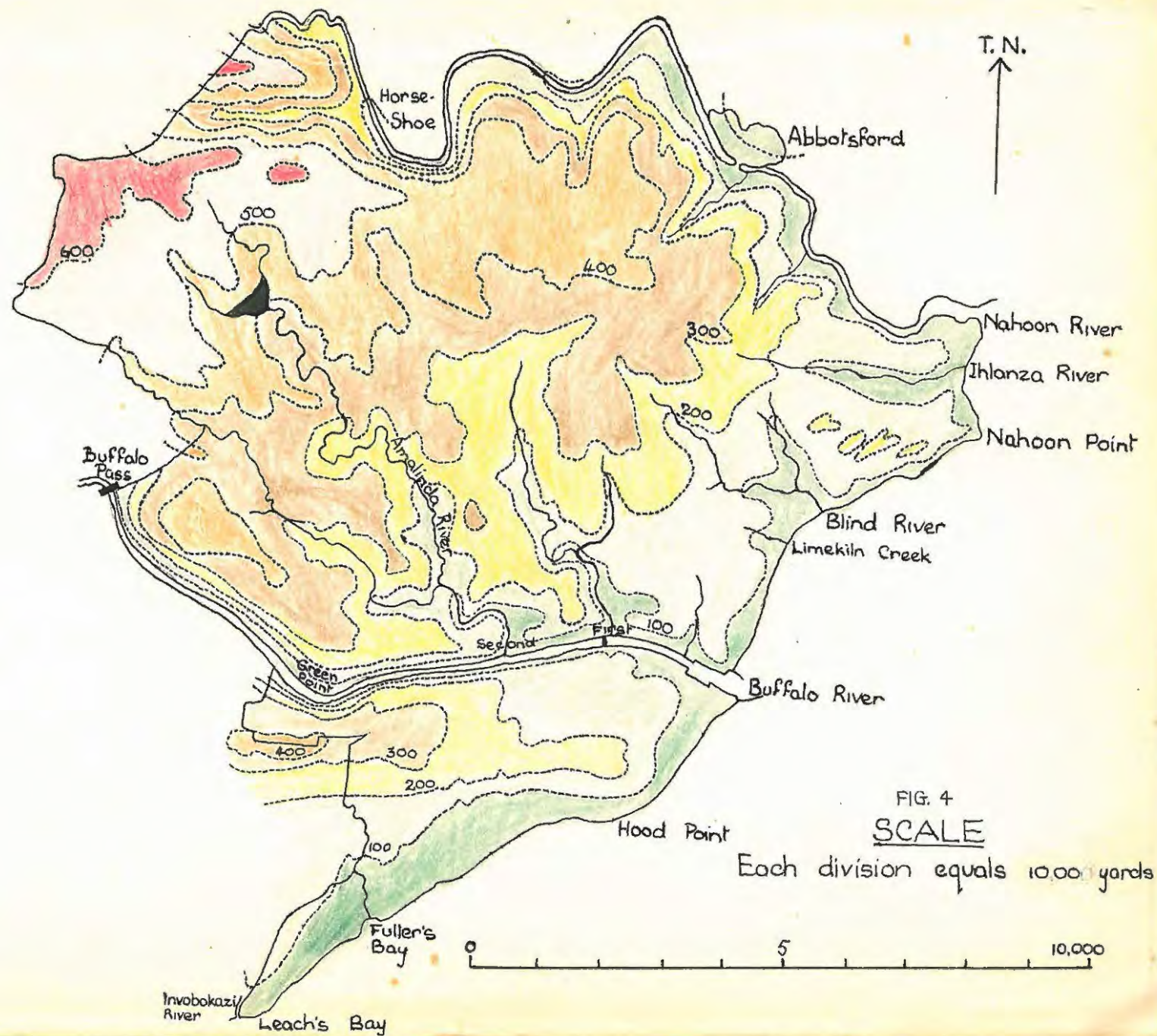
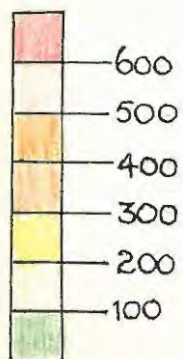


FIG. 4  
SCALE

Each division equals 10,000 yards

## THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE EAST LONDON AREA.

(cf. fig. 4)

The outstanding topographical feature is the deep, almost canyon-like valley of the Buffalo River. Only at the mouth of the river on the West Bank does the land slope relatively gently away from the river. Between Green Point and the bridge, the river follows a straight course, evidently following a line of weakness in the rocks.(1) The river has a tidal estuary with the mouth originally about 1,100 feet wide. The tide reaches four miles up the river.

Further to the east, the Nahoon has a meandering course though here again the banks of the river are high and steeply sloping except on the inside curve of a meander. Nevertheless the Nahoon valley is wider and more open than that of the Buffalo.

The interfluvium between the Nahoon and Buffalo Rivers has a surface sloping fairly uniformly down to the sea, though below the 150 ft. level, the slope increases considerably. At the furthestmost point of the boundary line, about 7 miles inland, the land is above 600 feet high.

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(1) Geology of East London, C.P. F.D. Mountain. Transactions Geol. Soc. of S.A. Vol. XLVIII, 1945. P.40.



The crest of the watershed lies closer to the Nahoon which receives tributaries of negligible size, though two steeply-graded streams just downstream from Abbotsford have valleys of importance in communications. The wider area between the watershed and the Buffalo is the catchment area of the Amalinda drainage system and that of the First Creek or Ngcabanga River. These two rivers have cut deep valleys and both enter the Buffalo River as creeks or inlets between high walls, the mouth of the Amalinda River being known as Second Creek. Near the mouth of the river the Quigney Stream enters the Buffalo - again, a negligible stream in a significant valley.

The flat interfluvium between the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers is narrowest above the Horseshoe, being under 100 yards wide. It broadens out towards the coast and approaches closely the mouths of both the major rivers. Near the coast it has a width of approximately four miles. (cf. fig 5) This front towards the sea has been cut into by three streams, the Limekiln Creek, (a), the Blind River and the Ihlanza or German River.

On the West Bank, the dominant feature is the high right bank of the river, which crosses the Municipal boundary at a height of 400 feet. It slopes gently towards the sea except at Hood Point where the high ground

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(a) So named because in the early days of the town, a limekiln operated there. This stream now drains through an underground tunnel.

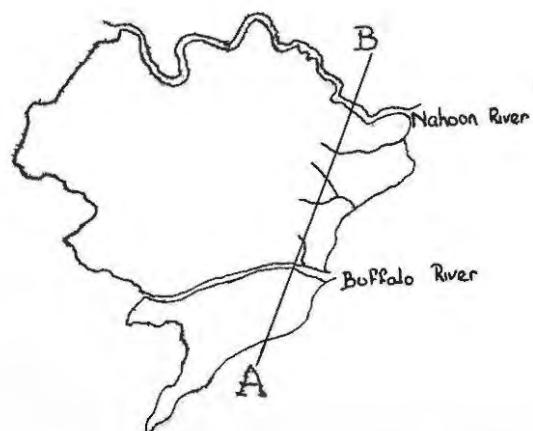
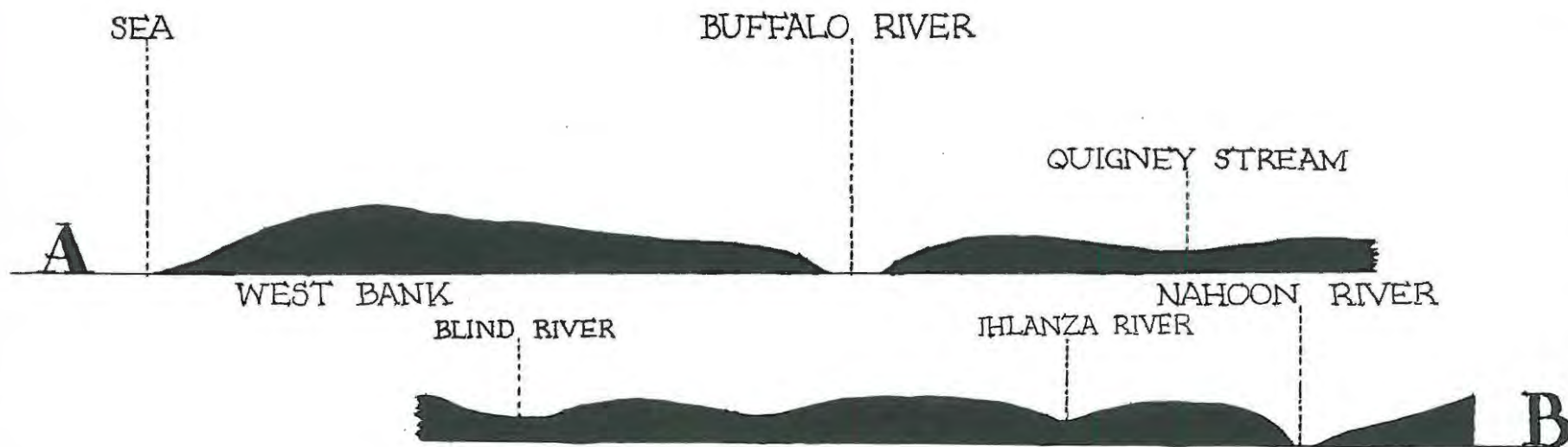



FIG. 5

# SECTION ON LINE **A-B**

VERTICAL SCALE THREE TIMES  
HORIZONTAL SCALE

Horizontal Scale:— 0  1000 yards.

approaches the shore. At the mouth of the river, the west bank is lower and more gently sloping than the east bank. South of the high right bank, sloping towards the sea is a low-lying shelf, drained by a minor stream.

### THE GEOLOGICAL FORMATIONS (1)

(cf. fig. 6)

The geological formations may be dealt with under the following headings:

1. Beds belonging to the Beaufort Series.
  2. Intrusive dolerite.
  3. Later formations.
1. Rocks belonging to the Beaufort Series or consisting of dolerite make up all the rocks in this area except those of a superficial origin. The Beaufort beds are exposed almost continuously along the shore from the Orient Beach at the mouth of the Buffalo to the Eastern Beach at the mouth of the Limekiln Creek. (cf. plate 1). On the West Bank their appearance is interrupted by the dolerites at Hood Point. The Beaufort beds are mainly mudstone in this region and they are the only rocks in the many quarries on the East Bank.

2. The dolerite intrusions consist of sheets and dikes.

The Hood Point sheet reaches the sea at Hood Point and

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(1) Geology of East London, C.P. F. D. Mountain. Geol. Soc. of S.A. Transactions. Vol. XLVIII, 1945. Pp. 35-39.

is also exposed in the quarry at Potter's Pass. In the Buffalo Valley, it appears on both banks above Second Creek. The Cambridge and Vincent sheets appear to be related to the minor headward erosion of the tributaries of the Nahoon. The Nahoon Point consists of dolerite.

The dolerite dikes run roughly east-west and are almost vertical. There are four dikes in the area: one across the railway line between Cambridge and Vincent; the second is near the Nahoon River mouth and is on the average 40 ft. wide; the third is near the mouth of the Buffalo; and the fourth is just east of Fuller's Bay.

### 3. Later formations.

Along the shore on either side of Nahoon Point there are outcrops of calcareous sandstone forming kranses or cliffs, the only cliffs along this stretch of the shore.

From Fuller's Bay to the mouth of the Nahoon, the surface for about half a mile inland is covered with sand deposits, with dunes prominent in places. The sand is generally yellowish in colour, though in the region just landward of the sand dunes, there is frequently a zone of reddish sand, such as occurs behind the Eastern Beach at the Blind River, at the Railway quarries at Nahoon and especially across the Nahoon River at Bonza Bay. (cf. plates 1,2,3.)



# THE GEOLOGY of EAST LONDON

- Sand (partly consolidated)
- Calcareous Sandstone
- Sheets } Dolerite (D)
- Dikes }
- Lr. Beaufort series

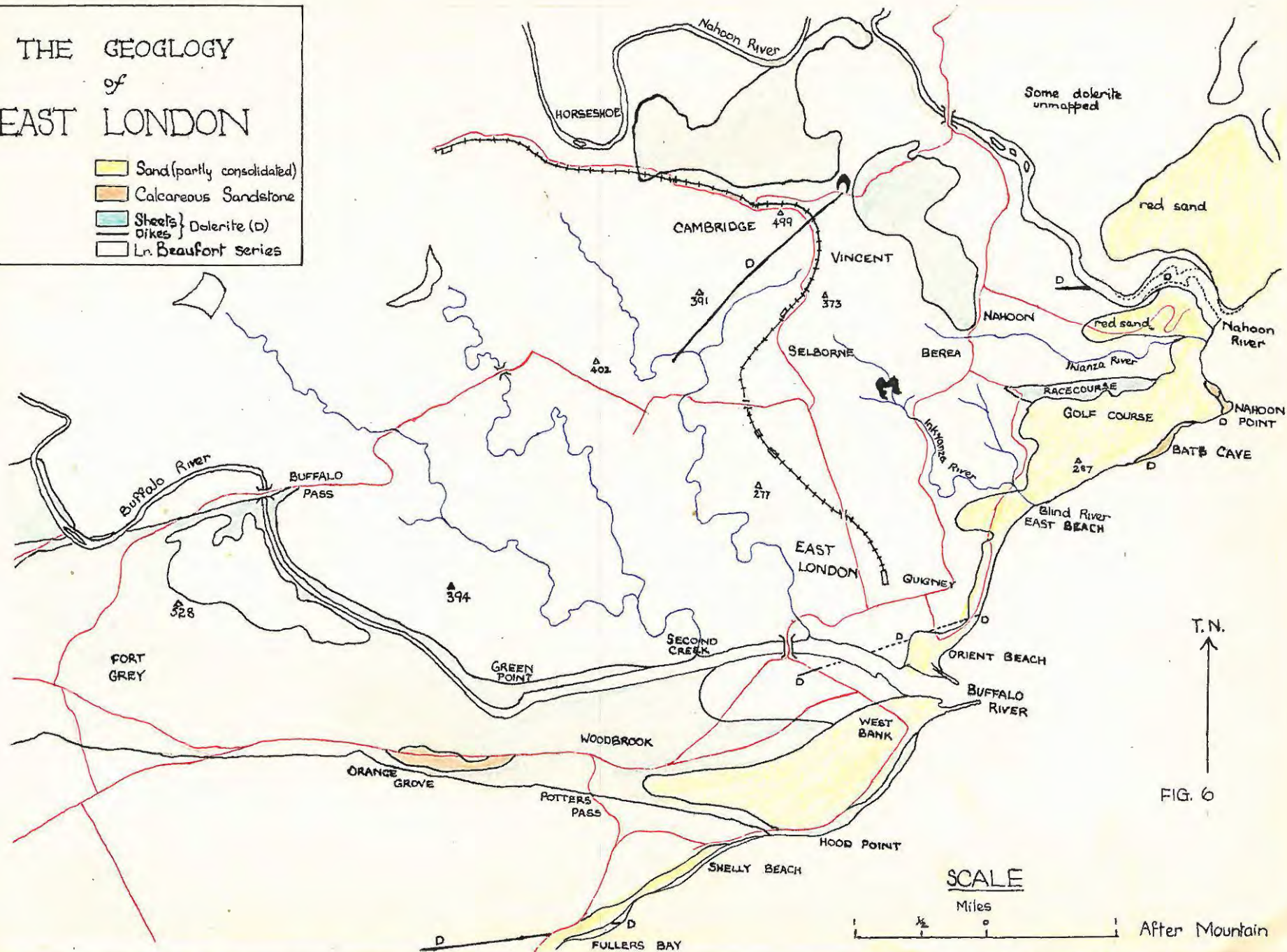


FIG. 6

SCALE

Miles

After Mountain

A PHYSIOGRAPHICAL REGIONAL CLASSIFICATION  
OF THE EAST LONDON MUNICIPAL AREA

On the West Bank. (cf. fig. 7)

1. West Bank Strand.
2. West Bank Heights.
3. Leach's Bay Lowlands.
4. Sandy Foreshore - West.

On the East Bank.

4. Sandy Foreshore - East.
5. Grassy Water Divide.
6. Rough Dissected Region.
7. Buffalo Valley.
8. Nahoon Valley.

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1. West Bank Strand. (cf. plates 8 and 25b)

This is a grassy slope (largely built-up) 700 yards wide from its rocky shore where the beds of the Beaufort Series are exposed, to the 100 ft. contour. It is bounded on the east by the Buffalo River and on the west by the approach of the dolerite of the Hood Point sheet to the sea at a higher elevation. (cf. figs. 4 and 6).

2. West Bank Heights. (cf. plate 8)

These heights are a continuation of the high right bank of the Buffalo, based on a dolerite sheet (cf. fig. 6)

and maintaining its height until it drops steeply to the sea. The Heights constitute the greater part of the West Bank that falls within the municipal area. Its crest, 400 ft. high at the boundary, is grassy and its flanks bushy and scored by numerous small ravines. In the early days it was of considerable importance to the military authorities who built Fort Glamorgan and the military road to King William's Town on it.

### 3. Leach's Bay Lowland.

This Lowland is a grassy slope, irregular in shape, stretching from where the "West Bank Heights" reach the sea at Hood Point to the mouth of the Invobokazi River beyond Leach's Bay. It is bounded to the north by the "Heights" and to the south by the "Sandy Foreshore". There is no other lowland within the city limits, and it has the only marked and extensive concave slope.

### 4. Sandy Foreshore - West.

Here sandy bush-covered dunes line the shore just inside the outer fringe of exposed beds of the Beaufort series. In some cases sandy beaches - at Shelly Beach, Fuller's Bay and Leach's Bay - are present. The Sandy Foreshore is not continuous; there is a considerable stretch between Fuller's Bay and Leach's Bay where the "Lowland" reaches right to the rocks at the shore.



#### 4. Sandy Foreshore - East.

On the East Bank, the Sandy Foreshore is more pronounced. (cf. plate 1). Although the present aspect shows considerable change effected by man, there were originally high, sandy, bush-covered hills, stretching from Signal Hill at the mouth of the Buffalo to the mouth of the Nahoon and beyond, along the coast. From a point just westward of the Blind River, this region begins to broaden out towards the Nahoon River, and has its greatest width behind Nahoon Point. Over this section the region has an inner zone of red sand.

The seaward fringe of this region is of considerable interest. At the base of Signal Hill at the mouth of the Buffalo, beds of the Beaufort series were originally exposed, (cf. fig. 12), but with the building of the Breakwater, these rocks were covered with sand, forming the present-day Orient Beach. From the Orient Beach rocks of the Beaufort series fringe the shore until just past the mouth of the Limekiln Creek. The Eastern Beach (earlier known as the Sandy Beach) lies on both sides of the Blind River Mouth, and for most of the time during the year, is continuous across the mouth, rendering the river blind, the short course of the river and the consequent lack of volume of water being insufficient to remove the considerable barrier of sand thrown up by the sea.



Towards Bat's Cave rocks of the Beaufort Series again occur. At Bat's Cave (a) and at Nahoon Point, there are cliffs, though not above 40 ft. high, which are composed of calcareous sandstone at the former place and of dolerite and some calcareous sandstone at Nahoon Point. From here there is a broad sandy beach, with isolated outcrops of rocks of the Beaufort series, right into the mouth of the Nahoon which normally has only a narrow channel of water cutting through the barrier of sand.

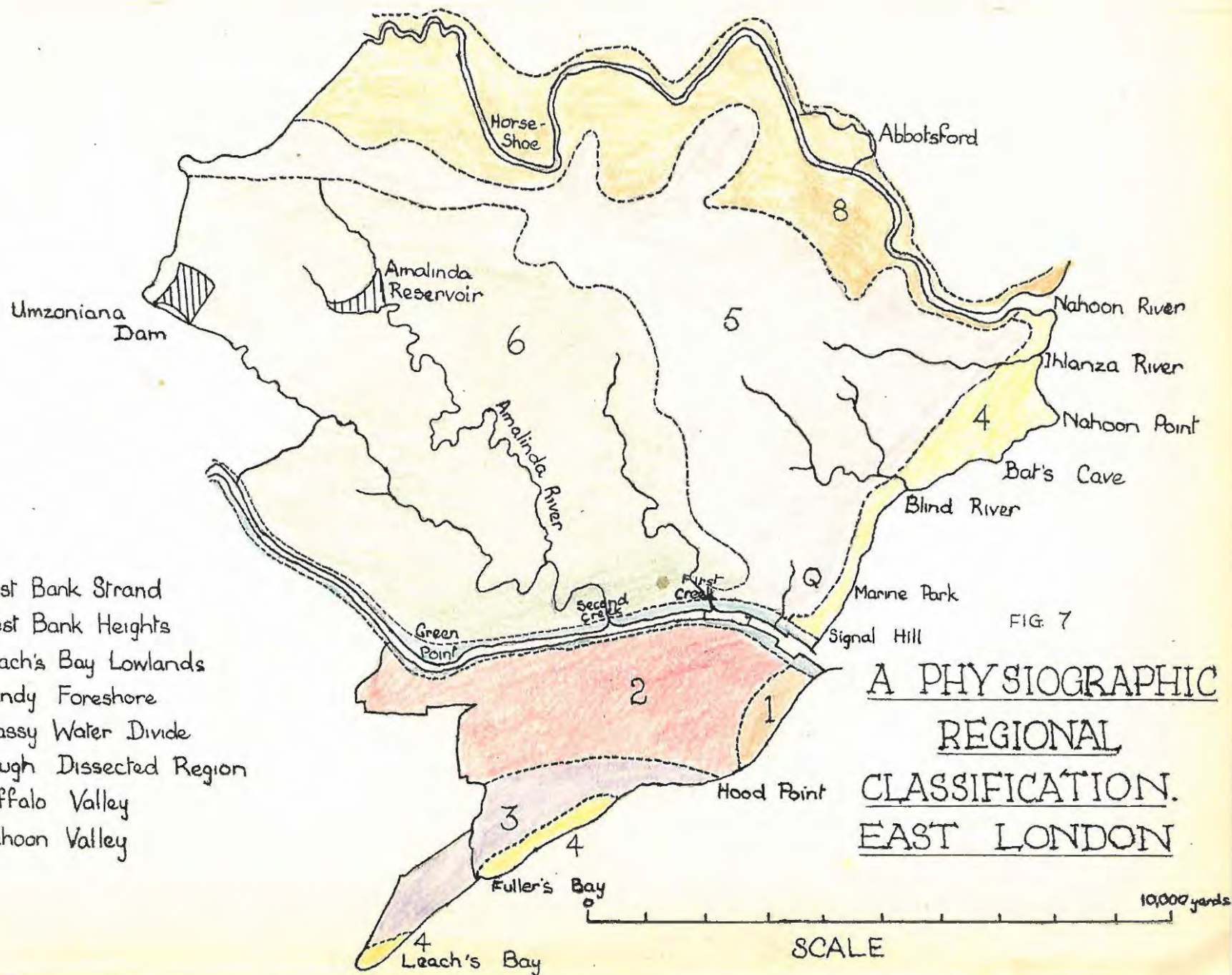
The line of sandy hills on the East Bank is interrupted by the Ihlanza River, the Blind River and the Limekiln Creek. There was originally another small stream which cut through the sand dunes at the site of the present Marine Park. Its existence can only be inferred from the configuration of the terrain and from historical data. Although of some significance in the early days, it is today completely absent.

The East Bank sandhills are considerably more pronounced than those of the West Bank. Signal Hill reaches a height of 150 ft. and the beacon behind Bat's Cave is at 287 ft. These latter high hills, though largely covered with bush, have patches of sand, (the largest of which is roughly Y-shaped), which give the hills a distinctive appearance, sufficient to act as a

---

(a) Bat's Cave - a small cave in the headland, to be approached only at low tide.

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 | West Bank Strand       |
| 2 | West Bank Heights      |
| 3 | Leach's Bay Lowlands   |
| 4 | Sandy Foreshore        |
| 5 | Grassy Water Divide    |
| 6 | Rough Dissected Region |
| 7 | Buffalo Valley         |
| 8 | Nahoon Valley          |



landmark for mariners of earlier times. (cf. plate 1).

#### 5. Grassy Water Divide. (cf. plate 5).

This is the divide between the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers and is labelled grassy to indicate that it is more free of bush than the surrounding areas. From a broad four mile base near the sea-front, it sweeps in an arc to the north and east, closely approaching the Nahoon. After an initial rapid rise from the sea-front to the 150 foot contour approximately, it rises fairly uniformly for the next six or so miles, though flattened locally in parts by the headward erosion of minor streams. On the seaward slope, important streams, the Ihlanza and Blind Rivers, have cut deeply into the divide. (cf. plate 5). Along the banks of these streams and at the headwaters of all the streams that cut into the divide, thick bush is found. While the slope away from the divide to the Buffalo is comparatively gentle, the slope towards the Nahoon is much steeper; at the Horseshoe, the slope is almost vertical.

#### 6. Rough Dissected Region.

The Amalinda River and its tributaries and the First Creek River traverse this region. It is a patchwork of minor watersheds and winding stream-courses, of thick bush and grassy patches. (cf. plate 18).



#### 7. The Buffalo Valley. (cf. plates 14, 22, 25a).

This region comprises the narrow, trench-like valley of the Buffalo River from the mouth upstream as far as the vicinity of Buffalo Pass where the municipal boundary leaves the river. Although at the mouth the right bank is lower and more gently sloping than the left bank, (cf. plate 20 and fig. 4), there is no major interruption in the continuity of its wall-like appearance; whereas the left bank is breached in three places - by the Quigney Stream, (cf. plate 8), the First Creek, (cf. plate 19), and the Second Creek (Amalinda River). In addition, three miles upstream from the mouth, the river changes its direction of flow and on the inside curve, the left bank, is Green Point, (cf. fig. 4), the only patch of natural lowland in the valley. The tide, which has a range of 4 ft. 6 ins., reaches the Ebb and Flow just beyond Green Point.

#### 8. The Nahoon Valley.

The region which can be regarded as that of the Nahoon Valley is much broader than that of the Buffalo. Not only does the meandering of the river open up the valley, but the short, steeply graded tributary streams and the area drained by them can be considered to be part of the Valley region and not a distinct region of their own as in the case of the main tributaries of the Buffalo.

The meandering of the Nahoon gives rise to many low

terraces, (cf. plate 2 and fig. 4), of which the most pronounced is that at the Horseshoe where the left bank is about 300 ft. lower than the right. Other such terraces on the left bank are at Abbotsford and near the mouth of the river. On the right bank, just downstream from Abbotsford is a terrace, and there is a terrace, though much smaller, just over a mile upstream from the mouth below Bonnie Doon.

#### THE CLIMATE OF EAST LONDON.

The location of East London on the coast and the proximity of the warm Mozambique Current give the region a warm, fairly uniform climate, with small diurnal and seasonal ranges. (cf. fig. 8) In winter, cold periods occur when polar water intrudes from the south or when winds blowing coastwards, travel over snow-covered mountains inland. But there is never frost along the coast, nor is it necessary during the winter to heat school classrooms by means of stoves, a marked and necessary feature of inland classrooms.

There is a marked difference between summer and winter rainfall - 61% of the annual rainfall falls during the summer months. During winter the rainfall is low, but usually during September, October and November, there is a rainy period which restores the green vista before the arrival of the summer visitors. The rainfall is highest

at the equinoxes. At times the rain falls as heavy downpours, in some cases as much as ten inches in 48 hours. (1) Should a downpour of this magnitude occur over the catchment areas of the First or Second Creeks, there is a strong spate of water rushing out to sea. When the Buffalo, Nahoon and Blind Rivers are in flood, not only do they clean out their channels, but the sea over a wide area is coloured brown with their discharge.

The wind blows frequently in East London, sometimes with gale force. The following figures are based on observations taken on Signal Hill at the Signal Station. (2)

Average velocity for year.....14.7 m.p.h.  
 Windiest month .....October  
 Stilltest month .....April  
 Approximate direction of prevailing winds  
 on Earth's surface: N-E 29.5%; S-W 34.6%  
 Winds over 20 m.p.h. ....22% of hours.

The majority of the winds blow roughly parallel to the coast line.

The coastal districts near East London and the inland districts near the foot of the escarpment are affected by Berg Winds. These winds, blowing towards the coast and descending as they go, are heated by compression

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(1) Souvenir of Storm and Freshet. Daily Dispatch, 10th October, 1905.  
 (2) South and East African Yearbook. 1948. p.110.

# MEAN MONTHLY RAINFALL - EAST LONDON

LAT.  $33^{\circ} 01' S$ .

LONG.  $27^{\circ} 54' E$

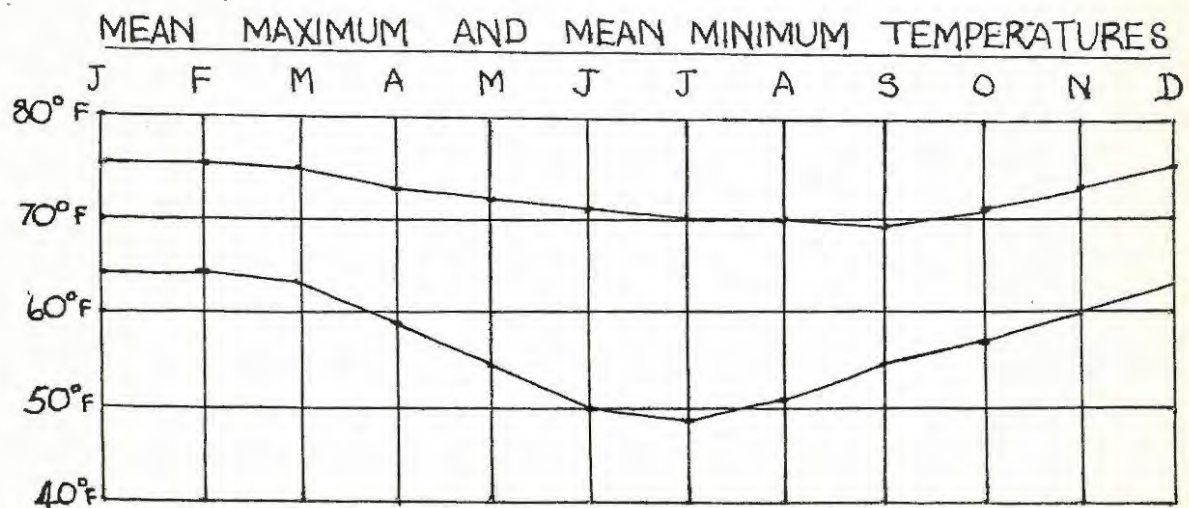
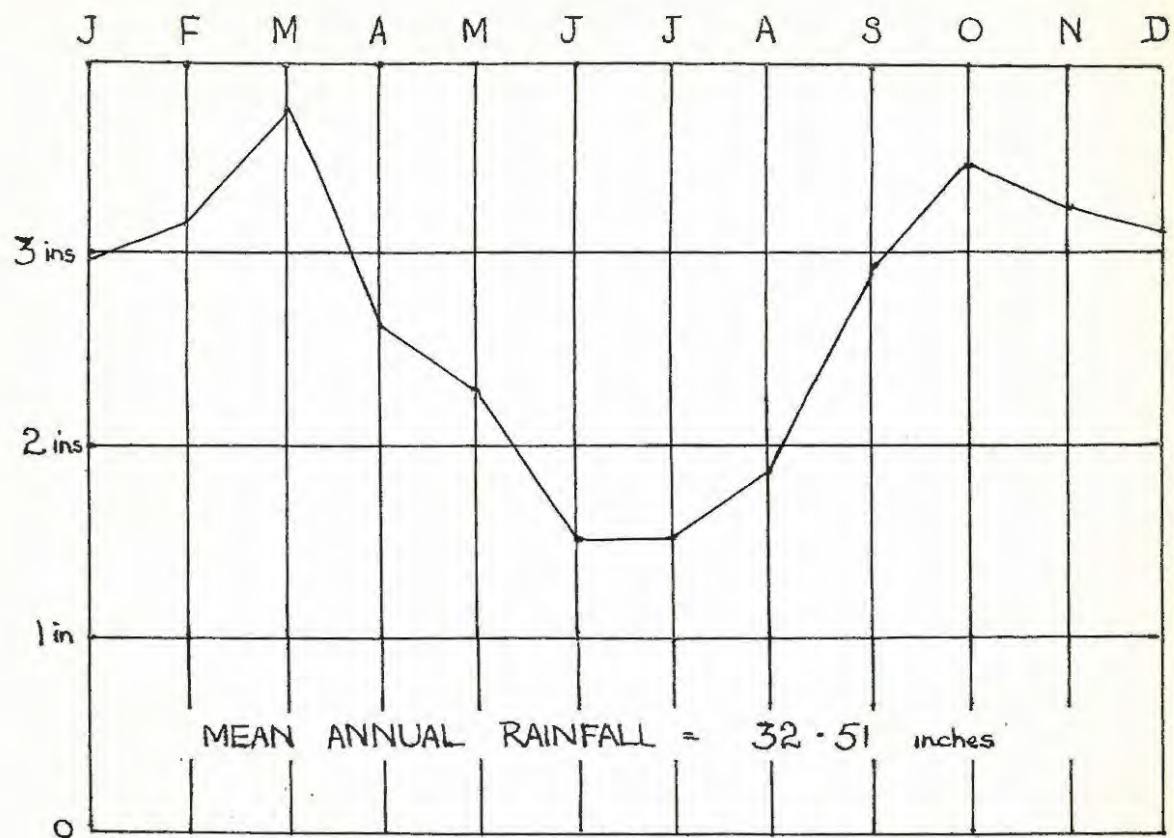


FIG. 8



and arrive as hot, dry winds. They may blow only for a few hours or for two or three days, causing a feeling of great depression. When these northerly or north-westerly winds change their direction, a period of cool, cloudy weather follows, with occasional rain. East London has two periods during the year when the berg winds reach maximum frequency; one in late spring and the other in early autumn. (1)

#### GENERAL

The slope to the sea, together with the headlands provided by the meanders of the Nahoon, gives many sites which command a view of either the sea or the Nahoon River. These sites are eagerly sought after for the purpose of building residences.

Gravel roads in early East London were readily damaged by stormwater on the slopes. Furthermore, the frequent winds raised considerable dust. Consequently, many of the streets in East London are tarred.

In some places, notably at the top of Oxford Street, patches of trees were planted to fix drift sand. The expanding town has overrun these patches and their function has largely ceased.

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(1) Official Yearbook of Union of S.A. No.12. 1929-30.  
P.54.



Several vleis, fed by underground water, are found in the Municipal area, two historic ones being those obliterated by the Market Square and the City Hall.(a) The City Hall, in common with other large buildings, has to maintain a pump to pump the seepage water out of the basement.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP OF EAST LONDON TO THE MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

Travel eastward or westward along the coast is impeded by the numerous deep river valleys. The smoothest route from East London is north-west, following the watershed between the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers, which runs initially north-west but later northward. This watershed continues nearly fifty miles inland and in its final stretch is close to and directed towards Dohne Peak which is the end of the Winterberg-Amatola line. As will be shown in Chapter 2, East London had its origin as a convenient landing place for supplies for the military base at King William's Town. When the interior of the country was opened up, the position of East London in relation to Dohne Peak was a matter of good fortune. There was no need for

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(a) The City Hall was built in 1897 on Waterloo Square which had been established to enclose the vlei. Churchgoers at the Wesleyan Church which faced the vlei, had frequently to close the church doors owing to the incessant chatter of the frogs in the vlei. (Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1948-1948. P.9)

a great detour in order to circumvent the obstacle that the Winterberg-Amatola line might have presented.

The Great Escarpment presented no great obstacle to the approach to the interior since easy ascents were provided by the Bushman's Hoek Pass between Sterkstroom and Molteno and by the Penhoek Pass between Queenstown and Jamestown.

## Chapter 2

### THE CULTURAL MILIEU

#### Section 1 Early Inhabitants

Prior to the arrival of the Bushman and the Hottentot in the coastlands of the Cape Province, a primitive people, known as the Strandlopers, (1), eked out an existence by feeding on shell-fish. Fringing the coast for hundreds of miles are extensive shell-mounds which are the accumulated refuse of these Strandlopers. (2) In and near these shell-mounds are pieces of broken pottery and simple stone implements. The Strandloper made and baked an egg-shaped clay pot which was somewhat pointed at the closed end. Thus he was able to wedge the pot firmly in the loose sand and, after building up brushwood round the pot, kindle a fire.

Although the Strandlopers have long since died out, they have left their mark in the shell-mounds along the coast. In the 1880's a quarry was opened up on the left bank of the Quigney Stream at its junction with the Buffalo and a very large mound of shells was discovered, composed principally of the remains of limpet, mussel, oyster, bones

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(1) Cambridge History of the British Empire: South Africa  
p. 22

(2) Notes on the Eastern Province in Pre-Settler Times.  
John Hewitt. In Souvenir of Centenary of 1820 Settlers  
p. 30.

of fish and birds, antelopes, hippopotami and other animals; layers of ash, fragments of charcoal and pieces of coarse pottery.(1) It was evident, judging by the size of the mound, that many successive generations of human beings had occupied this spot. (a)

Higher up the Quigney valley, above the place where the stream is crossed by Fleet Street, traces of occupation by primitive man were also found - stone implements, spear heads and fragments of pottery. (b) There are innumerable shell-mounds or "kitchen-middens" in the "Sandy Foreshore" in those parts that are still in their natural state, undisturbed by man's engineering; that is, from the Blind River towards Bat's Cave. The middens are interlaced with sand or, in some cases, even buried to a shallow depth so that they become exposed only when excavation is carried out, as was the case in the construction of John Baillie Road just after it crosses the Blind River.

So well advanced are these cultural relics of the

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- (1) "East London, its foundation and early development as a port." M.A. Thesis. B.C.Gordon. P.2.
- (a) The Harbour Works engineers at the time removed thousands of cubic feet of these shells to fill up the lagoon behind the East Training Wall. (See later section on the Harbour.)
- (b) The Quigney Valley above Fleet Street has since been filled in with material taken from the excavation of the Turning Basin. It seems that material taken from the Quigney mouth to fill the lagoon has now been dumped in the upper valley of the Quigney River.



Strandlopers on their return to dust, that to the uninitiated they make no mark on the landscape.

The Bushman who apparently came south from East Africa over a thousand years ago, was a hunter and followed the eastern, well-watered coast southwards.(1) The Hottentots who also apparently had their origin in East Africa, (2) arrived in the south later than the Bushman by way of the west coast. The Hottentots were a pastoral, nomadic people with herds of long-horned cattle and flocks of fat-tailed sheep. They were interested in seeking new pastures in the land where the Bushmen hunted, and the Bushmen, in turn, hunted the Hottentots' animals as game. There could be no peace between the two peoples and the more advanced Hottentots either exterminated the Bushmen or drove them into the mountains. As the Hottentots moved from west to east, at different stages along the route, sections of the people remained behind, each of which in time grew into a separate tribe. Thus although they were widespread, they were thinly scattered and therefore much more free to follow their nomadic mode of life.

Neither the Bushmen nor the Hottentots have left any cultural mark in the East London area, except perhaps in

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(1) Cambridge History of the British Empire: South Africa.  
p. 21.

(2) idem p. 28.

the names of the rivers, Buffalo and Nahoon. The Buffalo derived its name from the Hottentot words /gaob, a buffalo; !ab, a river. The Hottentot name was made Kauka by the Europeans and this was translated by the Dutch into "Buffelsrivier". Subsequently, the name received its English form - Buffalo River. (1)

From the Great Lakes region of East Africa came the Bantu tribes, travelling along the east coast. (2) As pastoralists with cattle and goats, they sought land and so moved on. This movement was further accelerated by the depredations of warlike tribes behind the fore-runners. The Bantu reached the area of the Buffalo River during the 18th century, having come into contact with the Hottentots and either mingling with them or turning them back. Near the Great Fish River the Bantu met the European trekboers who, being pastoralists, were also seeking new land. This meeting between land-hungry peoples was the spark of a long-drawn-out conflict, during which East London had its origin as a strategic base in military operations.

The Bantu appear to have taken very little interest in the sea. There is no evidence of any tribe in this area ever having sailed upon the sea or having had a boat. Although there was an abundance of fish in the river mouths along the coast, it was of no use to the Bantu for they did

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(1) "South African Place Names" Rev.C.Pettman.

(2) Cambridge History of the British Empire: South Africa.

p. 36.

not eat fish - regarding it as unclean. (1) Consequently, they could have been little interested in river mouths from the point of view of a source of food or of voyaging. In one respect though they would have found a river mouth of assistance to them. Since the deep, trench-like valleys of the rivers towards the coast offered considerable obstacles to the movement of cattle, the coastal Bantu would make use of the sand-bar across the mouth of the river. But it is unlikely that they would have sited their kraal at the river-crossing since it would be a zone of passage, easily located and difficult to defend against attacking or avenging enemies.

In 1835 there were Kaffir gardens on the West Bank about a mile from the mouth.(2). They were probably on the West Bank so as to place their huts with an eastern aspect, as was their custom.(3). Of these gardens no sign exists today. Their circular huts of sticks, mud and long grass thatch are not a feature of the East London municipal area. Yet, in unhappy circumstances, the Bantu have their place in the cultural pattern of the modern city.

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(1) Thompson's Travels in Southern Africa, Vol. 11, p. 368

(2) Excursions in Western Africa and Narrative of a Campaign in Kaffirland on the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief. Capt. J.F.Alexander. Vol. 11, p. 197.

(3) The Story of My Mission. William Shaw. p. 410.

## Section 2. The First Recognition of the Buffalo River as a Port.

Between Algoa Bay and Port Natal is an "ironbound" coast so lacking in natural harbours, that many of the river mouths with their sand-bars were inspected and enthused over with a view to their development as ports. In each case it was the enthusiasm of a person or persons who had an interest in the river mouth and who sought to attract government and public attention to the possibilities of the particular mouth. The Sundays (1), the Kowie (2), the Great Fish (3), and the Buffalo (4) Rivers all received the attention of enthusiastic persons - Capt. John Baillie who later directed attention to the Buffalo Mouth, was at first interested in the Great Fish River mouth where his party of 1820 Settlers were located. (3,4).

The rise of the port at the Buffalo Mouth and the waning of the importance of the other rivers is the result of the natural advantages the Buffalo had compared with its rivals, and of the historical development in the Border areas of the Cape.

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- (1) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis, B.C.Gordon. p. 61.
  - (2) Thompson's Travels in Southern Africa. Vol. 11. P.308
  - (3) idem P.325.
  - (4) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.3.



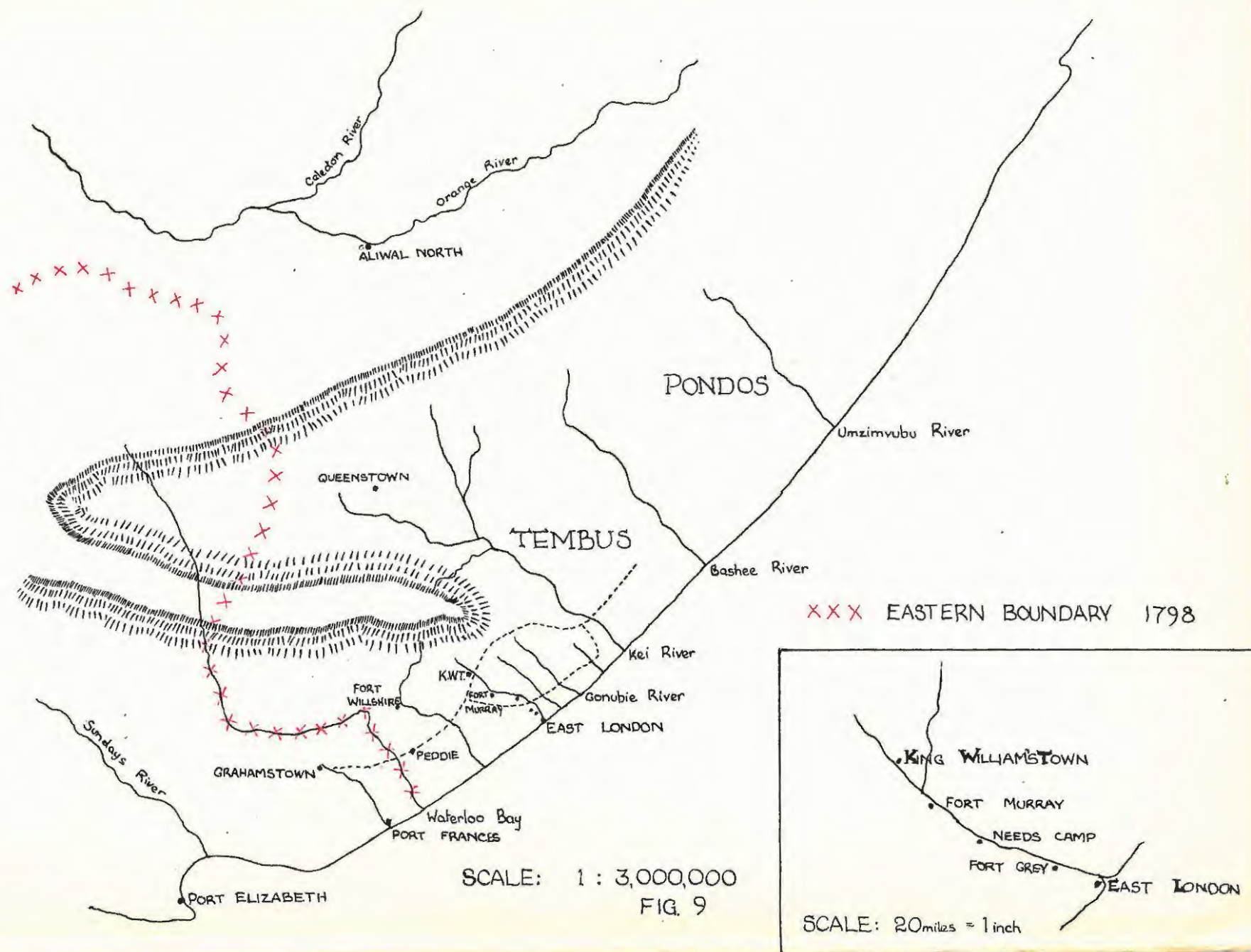
The Dutch East India Company, adversely impressed by the nature of the South African coast and the reputation of its inhabitants, contrived for half a century to do without a half-way station on its route to the East, before the "Haarlem" incident induced them to send out van Riebeeck to establish a station at Table Bay. It is certain that the Company was not interested in the development of a second harbour anywhere along that coast. The Trekboers who moved away from the Cape, following the line of the well-watered strip along the coast, were pastoralists, interested only in subsistence farming. When these trekboers came into contact with the Bantu near the Great Fish River, with the consequent friction and checking of eastward movement, the Governor of the Cape in 1778 proclaimed the Great Fish River as the boundary. (cf. fig. 9), (1).

Nevertheless something was known of the country beyond. In 1736 a party of elephant hunters headed by Hubner travelled eastward to Kaffirland and obtained ivory from west of the Kei River. A number of this party were massacred and as a result elephant-hunting beyond the eastern border was prohibited in 1737 but was soon afterwards allowed on a licence, provided that the natives were not molested and no trading was carried on. (2)

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(1) Junior Certificate History. de Villiers, Gronum and Muller.  
P. 354.

(2) Notes provided by Dr. A. W. Burton, King William's Town.



In 1752, Ensign Beutler led an expedition which reached the land of the Tembus beyond the Kei. He crossed the Buffalo in its upper reaches and recorded, "Ten groot lopend rivier de welke de Kaffers ofte Buffels Rivier noemden." He does not appear to have approached the coast except near the Nahoon. (1)

During the search for the survivors of the "Stavenisse", the "Centaurus" in 1688 was at Cove Rock ("Coffin Rock"), 6-7 miles westward from the Buffalo, and then dropped anchor at the mouth of the river which was then called "die Eerste Rivier". As the surf was so high at the mouth, it was not found possible to enter the river with a boat. In 1688-9 the "Noord" was at the Buffalo mouth on two occasions and was able to "land" a letter and rescue some survivors by having men swim through the high surf. Men of the "Stavenisse" in their wandering along the coast from Natal, "could discover no profit for the Company, and still less, any harbour or river fit for the reception of the Company's smallest packet." (2)

Following the taking of the Cape by the British in 1806, the Governor wished to stabilise the eastern frontier. The

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(1) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis, B.C.Gordon. P. 11.

(2) idem P. 6.

1820 Settlers arrived to settle in the Zuurveld and along the Great Fish River. In catering for their needs, the ports of Port Elizabeth and, to a minor extent, Port Frances on the Kowie River, developed. Intended as farmers, many of the settlers failed on the land when faced with the natural disadvantages of the situation and handicapped by their own lack of skill. Turning their hand to other efforts, a great many settlers were attracted by the possibilities of trading with the Kaffirs. Although such trading had been banned previously, in 1824 regulations for the proper control of trading were promulgated. (1) Fairs were held on specified days during the week at Fort Willshire on the Keiskama River. (cf. fig. 9). The settlers as emigrants newly arrived, were in close touch with an England developing as an industrial country and seeking new markets for her goods. Many traders obtained licences and were soon conducting an extensive and lucrative trade. (a) The natives exchanged ivory, hides, gum, basketware, reed mats and, at a later stage, even cattle, for beads, wire, trinkets and later, metal implements, tools, cotton goods and coloured blankets. The two seaports, Port Elizabeth and Port Frances, developed a considerable export and import business, while Grahamstown quickly became a distributing

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(a) In the first seven months of trading at Fort Willshire, there were received: 50,000 lbs of ivory, 17,000 lbs of gum and 15,000 hides. (2)

(1) Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa. H.E.Hockly. P.128.

(2) idem P.131.



centre (1) for wholesale merchants whose large buildings are a feature of that city today. From 1824 until the present day, the "Kaffir trade" has been an important factor in the economic development and life of the eastern part of the Cape Province.

Within a few years the form of the Kaffir trade changed.(2) Beyond the Xosas who inhabited the land across the Great Fish River, lived the Tembus who were desirous of trading but were some distance from the Colony. Therefore, numbers of traders applied for licences to travel into Tembuland with waggons for the purpose of conducting an itinerant barter trade. Later, this system of "interior private trading" was allowed in Kaffirland (Xosas) itself and the Fairs at Fort Willshire dwindled in importance and ceased in 1830. Then the private trading system was further extended; licences to establish permanent trading stations beyond the boundary of the Colony were granted. Some of the traders advanced great distances into unknown country with loaded waggons and established permanent trading stations in Kaffirland, Tembuland and Pondoland. Even in Natal trading stations were established. (3)

After 1816 missionaries began to work in Kaffraria and

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- (1) Story of the British Settlers of 1820. H.F.Hockly. P.131.  
 (2) idem pp. 138, 141.  
 (3) Annals of Natal. J.Bird. Vol.1. P.103.

through their civilising efforts and through their activities as political agents, the natives' desire for more of the traders' goods was increased. One missionary, John Brownlee, in 1825, established a mission station on the Buffalo River on the present site of King William's Town. (cf. fig. 9) (1)

Thus in the country behind the mouth of the Buffalo there was a thriving trade, with trading stations scattered throughout.(a) The traders received their goods from Port Elizabeth by way of Grahamstown. From Grahamstown there was a definite trade route, known as the Great Kei Road. (2) From Grahamstown it passed through Peddie, crossed the Keiskama, passed along the base of the Pirie Mountains, through the Brownlee Mission (later King William's Town), then turned north-east along the valley of the Yellowwoods River, named the "Valley of Peel". The route continued north-eastwards as far as the present day railway station of Kei Road, (the origin of this name is obvious), in order to move along the watershed above the rough valleys of the Nahoon and Gonubie Rivers. Thereafter it crossed the Kei River in the vicinity of the present Komgha.

There was a lower road to the Kei which by divers routes

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- (a) According to the manuscript diary of a German naturalist named Drege who in 1832 travelled through Kaffirland to Natal and back, there was a comparatively large number of traders and missionaries on the line of his travels.(3)
- (1) The Story of My Mission. William Shaw. P. 216.
- (2) East London, its Foundation and Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis, B.C.Gordon. Map.
- (3) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.5.

reached the Buffalo and crossed it at Bridle Drift, some 16 miles from the mouth. There-after it maintained this average distance from the coast in crossing the Nahoon and the Gonubie and Kwelegha where it turned northwards to join the Great Kei Road before crossing the Kei River.

In 1827, a missionary, Rev.W.R.Thomson, paid a visit to the mouth of the Buffalo and crossed the river in his waggon. (1) Mr. Thomson followed a track - and this was used by occasional travellers for many years afterwards - which ran near the foot of the present-day Oxford Street on the East Bank, edged into the valley of the Quigney Stream towards its mouth and from there it kept along the side of the Buffalo for about a hundred yards keeping close under Signal Hill, and then turned diagonally across the sandbanks and the river. (cf. fig. 12)

After the outbreak of the Fifth Kaffir War of 1834-35, British troops, in prosecution of the campaign, advanced from the Great Fish River far into the country towards the Kei River. When the war came to an end, Governor D'Urban proposed to retain the country between the Keiskama and the Kei Rivers as the Province of Queen Adelaide. As headquarters for the troops, the town of King William's Town was founded on the banks of the Buffalo near Brownlee's mission. (cf. fig. 9) (2)

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(1) Souvenir of Centenary of 1820 Settlers. P. 65.

(2) The Story of My Mission. William Shaw. P. 216.

This large military post had lines of communication and supply stretching over 150 miles from Port Elizabeth. Waggon bringing supplies and ammunition had to cross many rivers, two of the biggest being the Great Fish and the Keiskama, and during heavy rains, the waggon trains were likely to be held up by floods for days; while in times of drought, the lack of grazing along the route would make the journey an arduous one. Furthermore there was always the danger of attacks on the waggons while they were passing through such places as the Great Fish River bush. Consequently, the supply position at the new Headquarters was unfavourable, and the arrival of supplies irregular.

An expedition under Col. H. Smith galloped down from King William's Town to inspect the mouth of the Buffalo River and soon afterwards a survey of the mouth with a view to its capabilities for maritime purposes, was ordered by the Governor. The report of this survey was favourable and was as follows: "Vessels of 10 ft draught of water, and even 12 ft, if properly managed, may enter at the spring tides. The place possesses every requisite of easy roads and plenty of fresh water. There is good grazing, a fine open sea and no sandhills". The report obviously referred to the right or west bank of the river. (1)

Accordingly, a ship, "Knysna", was loaded with military

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(1) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A. Thesis, B.C. Gordon. P. 16.



stores at Cape Town and dispatched to the Buffalo, while troops were sent down the West Bank to camp at the mouth and assist with the landing of the cargo. An advertisement appeared in the Grahamstown Journal, 6th October, 1836, prior to the arrival of the "Knysna", addressed to the traders within the Province of Queen Adelaide and its vicinity, stating that the ship had a cargo of assorted articles for the Kaffir trade, for which produce would be received in barter. It pointed to the short distances from the different trading posts to the mouth of the Buffalo and to the "goodness of the roads and pasture". It invited persons disposed to ship their produce for the Cape market, to avail themselves of the ship which would receive goods on freight. Thus it will be seen that though military needs initiated the use of the Buffalo Mouth, trade, which is the mainstay of a port, instantly became a factor because of the development of trade in the interior, described in the preceding pages.

The ship did not enter the river but remained at anchor for seven weeks, during which time she rode out one or two severe gales. The cargo was landed on the western side of the river in the ship's boats, and the Lt.-Governor of the Province, Capt. Stockenstrom, witnessing the landing, was so impressed, that he named the mouth "Port Rex" after the owner of the ship which returned to Cape Town with a cargo of horns, skins and hides. There was a ledge of flat rocks near the landing place, forming quite a natural quay. Nearby

was a supply of fresh water for the use of the military post; while ships could be watered from the river, above the ebb and flow.

The East Bank, while not the scene of the landing activities since the bushy Signal Hill occupied that side of the river mouth, nevertheless played a part, for the Union Jack was planted on the summit of the Hill, either by Capt. Bailie as a gesture, or by Capt. Biddulph to attract the attention of the "Knysna" which was in danger of bypassing the mouth of the river. (1)

When the Buffalo Mouth was at this promising stage of development, orders were received from England that the Province of Queen Adelaide was to be abandoned and the land handed back to the native chiefs. Consequently the military authorities no longer needed the Buffalo Mouth as a port, and it fell into disuse for the next eleven years. It is quite possible, though, that during that time small ships called at the mouth for trading purposes, but such visits are not recorded.

During those eleven years events took place in the interior of the country, which had a profound effect on the subsequent development of East London. After 1834, with the advent of the Great Trek, the country beyond the Orange

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(1) Time and the River. M.H.Taylor. East London Centenary Pageant Book. P.11.

and Vaal Rivers was opened up, with an increase in the white population in the hinterland, and the subsequent increase in the demand for supplies from the ports. At this time too the experiment to introduce merino sheep in the Cape Colony was beginning to bear fruit. (1) At first it met with objections from the farmers further west who favoured the fat-tailed Cape sheep which had hair instead of wool; and with little success since the wool was much clogged with sand and small decayed pieces of vegetable matter. But in the eastern districts, merino sheep were more successful and wool began to form an article for export.

### Section 3. A Permanent Port at East London.

The War of the Axe, 1846-7, saw fighting that extended to the Kei River, and a settlement at the close of the war somewhat similar to that at the close of the earlier war. (2) The land between the Keiskama and the Kei was to be established as British Kaffraria, a dependency under military control, with King William's Town as the capital.

Again in the prosecution of this war, it was realised that Port Elizabeth was not suitable as a supply base and, furthermore, that the soldiers had a long march to reach the scene of hostilities. Notwithstanding the earlier

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(1) Souvenir of Centenary of 1820 Settlers. P.52.

(2) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis. B.C.Gordon. P.33.

success of the Buffalo Mouth and the fact that the attention of the Governor was drawn to this success by an officer who had been present in 1836, the Governor decided to land stores and troops at Waterloo Bay, a small bay three miles east of the Great Fish River mouth. After an initial success in landing cargo, using surf-boats, it was found that weather and sea conditions were not always favourable and that the landing of men and stores was a risky business; in addition, the anchorage was rocky. It was necessary to find a safer landing-place.

Meanwhile the enemy had been driven east of the Buffalo. A survey of the mouth of this river was ordered. From a complicated pattern of reports, orders, changes of governors and of commanders in the field, and events, the essence of the matter was, that, to secure a speedy and satisfactory termination of the war and stability on the frontier, a fortified line along the Buffalo River was to be established. The Buffalo Mouth had been reported to be a suitable landing-place for troops and at the western side of the mouth - known as Camp Point or Castle Point - Fort Glamorgan was to be built. Seven miles inland was Goolah Heights (later Fort Grey) and twenty miles inland was a post known as Need's Camp. Further up the river was Fort Murray which had been established in 1835. Finally there was King William's Town itself. Linking these posts, from Buffalo Mouth to King William's Town, was a military road.



The choice of the west bank of the river for the line of posts is interesting. This bank was the obvious choice since the enemy was east of the river and it was reasonable to have the river between the two opposing forces. Yet this bank had additional advantages. The crest of the watershed which is the more open country, on the west more closely parallels the river, while on the east it is at a greater distance from the river with considerably rough and bushy country between. Thus from the west bank the drifts could be more closely watched for signs of enemy movements.

At the mouth of the river there are again distinct advantages in selecting the west bank as the site for Fort Glamorgan. It has already been pointed out that a landing could more easily be made here as the land approached the sea at a much lower elevation, and, further, there were no sandhills here - the nearest being beyond Hood Point. (cf. fig. 6). In addition, there were the following factors. Castle Point - to give it a name - juts out much further into the sea than Signal Hill and so was reached much sooner by boats from the ships at anchor. It offered the "West Bank Strand" prominently as a more favourable place for settlement than anything on the east bank. When the sandbar was across the mouth of the river, as it mostly was, the channel skirted the west bank and this was obviously the entrance to the deeper water beyond the sandbank. From a military point of view, the Castle Point was the more easi-

ly defensible bank as it was the acute angle formed by the river and the coast-line, the east bank opening to a wide perimeter. (cf. fig. 4)

The troops entrusted with the task of establishing Fort Glamorgan, camped on the "West Bank Heights" near the sea. It had been recognised that this plateau "would allow of any sized work to cover the stores from attack." (1) On this high ground were built barracks to house 300 men and a magazine (cf. fig. 10). This position not only controlled the "West Bank Strand" but it afforded a view up the Quigney Stream which was the recognised approach to a crossing of the mouth from the east. Today these buildings have been incorporated in the Fort Glamorgan Convict Station and only the magazine remains intact - as a national monument. Closer to the river and on lower ground was built a Commissariat Yard for the protection of stores landed, prior to their removal by waggon. Half of this Commissariat Yard remains today, though the foundations of the complete Yard are intact. All these buildings were built of rubble stone laid in clay. As thatch was not obtainable at the Buffalo Mouth, the roofs were formed of deal scantling and boarding, covered with asphalted felt.

Cattle were sent at certain times for water to the numerous small valleys and pools. A spring on the slope of

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(1) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis, B.C.Gordon. P. 26.

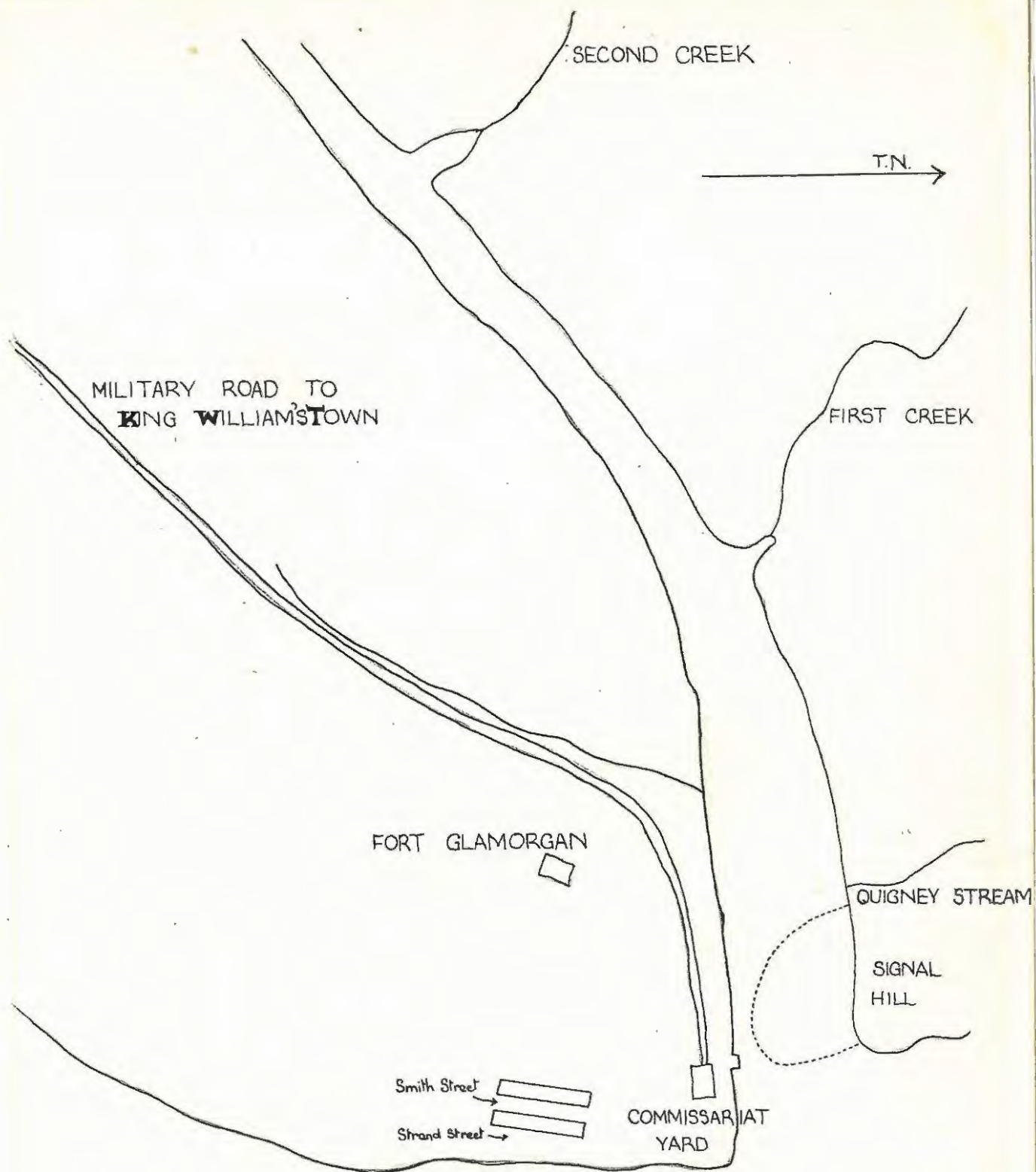


FIG. 10

# TRADERS' SETTLEMENT 1849

0 1000 2000 3000 feet

Its growth was slow. In 1875, 28 years after the birth of the town, the population, both European and Native, was 2,134. (1). Although the town was looked on with favour by the administration of the Cape Colony as an ameliorating and civilising influence in Kaffraria, and though the Governor, Sir Harry Smith, had given it the official name of East London in 1848, (2), there were many factors that contributed to a feeling of uncertainty at this border port for the next twenty years. It was very much on the frontier where the European population was very thin and where the more numerous Bantu lived. Detractors of the port indicated that its use involved considerable risk to goods in transit. In fact, in 1850 the Eighth Kaffir War broke out and lasted until 1853. In this war East London proved its worth as a forwarding base for troops and supplies; but this it was able to do because the chief Pato who occupied the land through which the supply road to King William's Town ran, remained loyal and friendly throughout the war.

Further to the north the Governor was occupied with negotiations with the two Trekker republics and also with the expensive Basuto Wars. At this time, too, the Cape Colony was not a rich country and, largely on account of the many wars, was regarded by the Imperial Government as a liability.

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P. 25.

(2) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis, B.C.Gordon. P.38.



It was recognised that to clear the mouth of the Buffalo of its sandbank and to maintain it so, would involve considerable expenditure.

Sir Harry Smith, when he created the frontier dependency of British Kaffraria, annexed the port of East London to the Cape Colony, together with an area of land two miles round the mouth. He did this to establish a customs office at the port as he was well aware that many adventurers were planning to land their goods duty-free at East London, from where, he had learned by his own inquiry, most traders in the hinterland now desired to draw their supplies. Yet soon afterwards British Kaffraria agitated for the incorporation of East London, and in 1860 this was accomplished, with British Kaffraria becoming a Crown Colony. In 1866 British Kaffraria was annexed to the Cape Colony and the colonial boundary was established along the Kei River. (1)

From the early days of the port there were wrecks, ships being driven ashore, and some loss of life and goods when surf-boats capsized when crossing the bar.

The majority of the traders in East London were supported by merchant houses in Cape Town and were not direct importers. As a result, most of the goods arrived coastwise from Cape Town where customs duties had been paid, and East London

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(1) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A.Thesis. B.C.Gordon. P. 78 - 79

derived little revenue for the development of the harbour. For this reason, too, direct importers in Grahamstown, already established in practice, were able to furnish goods at rates cheaper than those at East London.

Mention must be made of the political developments in the Cape Colony at this time. Representative government was granted in 1854 and responsible government in 1872.

However, to offset the uncertainties of the times, East London had geographical advantages over the other ports of the Cape, that could not be gainsaid. It was nearer to the bulk of the traders and to the Trekkers across the Orange River, who by now had established systems of government. There were very few mountain passes to be negotiated and the roads were generally well supplied with water and good grass as the east side of the country has a greater rainfall than the west. (cf. fig. 3). In addition, Queenstown had been established, (1853), and there were increasing numbers of European farmers settling in the border districts. More wool was being produced and exported through East London.

In 1856 Xosa population and power decreased considerably owing to the "Suicide of the Amaxosa".

King William's Town, with the momentum of being situated on the trade route to the Kei, and favoured with the presence of large numbers of troops, with the prestige of being the capital and with the nearness of East London, took on the

role of a distributing centre, with the rapid development of what might be termed "merchant princes", who had large premises in King William's Town for the "kaffir trade", and agents in East London.

#### Section 4. The Use of the East Bank.

Between the Quigney Stream and the First Creek River, the "Grassy Water Divide" approaches close to the Buffalo and while the steep slope towards the river was covered with bush, the crest was open. It had soon attracted attention. It was higher than the "West Bank Strand" where the houses, being low-lying and close to the sea, were apt to be damp and moist. For this reason, the higher ground, which was further from the sea, was considered to be healthier. (1) The surface water in streams and vleis on the East Bank was thought to be superior to that on the West Bank, where it was inclined to be somewhat brackish. Covering the broken country on the East Bank was more wood for fires and houses than on the West Bank. The distance to King William's Town along the East Bank was six miles shorter and, moreover, free from bush the whole way.

A waggon track did exist on the East Bank between King William's Town and East London, (2), and with the increase of settlers on this side, the track gained in importance

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(1) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A. Thesis. B.C. Gordon. P. 68.

(2) idem. P. 65.

until in 1866 it was proclaimed the main road and the West Bank road was called "the old line of road". From King William's Town the main road crossed the Yellowwoods River to reach the watershed between the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers and it then passed down along the watershed to the Buffalo Mouth.

In order to maintain the security of the frontier and yet allow the garrisons to be reduced, the number of settlers in this area was increased. During the period 1856-1858 2,000 German legionaries, 2,000 German agricultural workers and 153 Irish girls were landed at East London and distributed over the East London-King William's Town area at various posts. (1) This accounts for the numerous towns and villages with German names, e.g. Stutterheim, Hamburg, Berlin, and the numerous German surnames to be encountered - Bohmke, Ahlschlager, Frauenstein, Meyer, Kopke and Lundstrom for example.

Of these German settlers, about 250 settled on the East Bank opposite East London. The preparations made to grant them allotments of land, fixed the lay-out and the direction of the streets for a great part of the town, including the important central business area.

The waggon track passed down along the "Grassy Water

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.11.



Divide" and when the slope began to steepen towards the Buffalo River, the track veered to the left and cut diagonally down the right bank of the Quigney Stream to reach the Buffalo. Lt. G. Colley, (a), charged with the task of laying out a settlement on the East Bank, chose the waggon track as the line of his main street. (cf. fig. 11) (1). He continued this line down the slope towards the river as far as was feasible. On either side of this main street, he planned a symmetrical arrangement of blocks, except where the configuration of the land allowed blocks on one side only. On the right-hand side of the waggon track, just before it veered to the left, was a vlei. Colley left this vlei untouched and laid out blocks beyond it. To maintain the symmetry, he planned a similar open area on the opposite side of the track, so that the two open areas formed a considerable square.

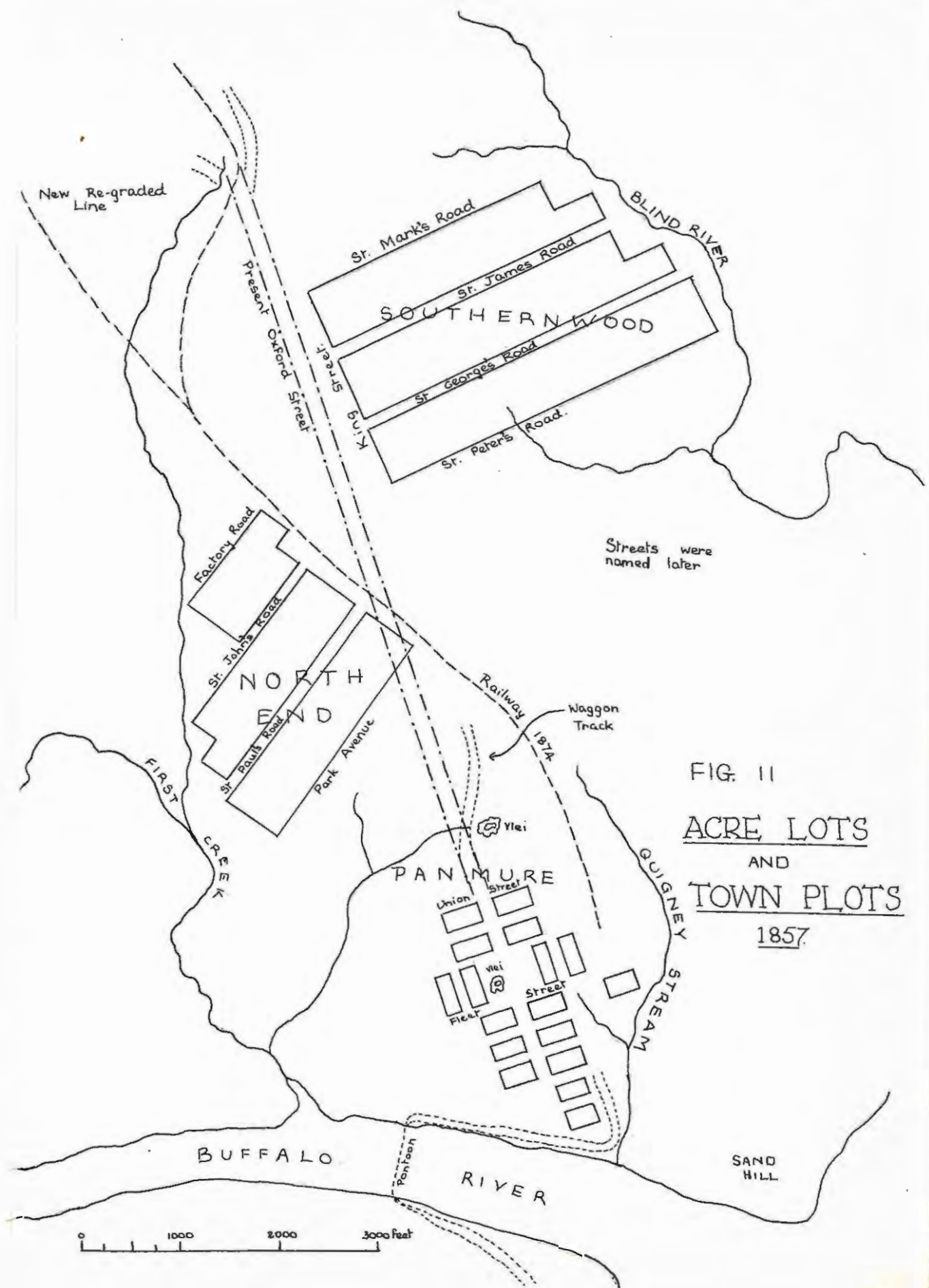
A town-planner of today, given the same task on the same terrain, would probably avoid the rectangular plan of Colley and run the streets along the contour and so establish a more natural relationship between the lay-out and the configuration. Further, it would have made the maximum use of the land that was not too steep.

The main street of the town became Oxford Street which was

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(a) Killed at Majuba Hill, 1881.

(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.11.



extended in a straight line up along the water-divide through the years as the town grew, until it reached its present length of two miles. The presence of the railway on its line of progress prevented the extension of Oxford Street further than its present length, but with the removal of the railway to another site as part of the railway re-grading scheme commenced in 1936, (1), the way is open for a longer Oxford Street.

It is interesting to note the little relationship between Oxford Street and the river and the sea. It does not run parallel to either or even at right angles. It is articulated directly with the river only by a small footbridge at the foot of the street, and this is used by comparatively few people.

The square in Colley's lay-out became Commercial Square or the Market Square. In its heyday of sixty years ago, it was the centre of community life, not only being used as a market, but having as a building facing on to it, the Mutual Hall, at one time the seat of the Municipality, the Library and the concert hall for visiting and local artists. The Square is still used as a market, with a subsidiary use as a parking area for motor cars, and at various times, displays and parades are held there. It has been reduced in size owing to the construction of a market-house and a

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(1) East London Centenary 1848-1948. Official Souvenir. P.39.

building-block containing offices and a bioscope.

German settlers were allotted to these blocks of land and to land in the present Berea and Vincent in an area bounded by the present Vincent Road, Transkei Main Road, Stewart Drive, Blind River and Union Avenue. (1) In this latter area settlement was not as close, probably as they must have relied on the streams for water and were looked upon as a farming community. About twelve men settled there, and some of their stone farmhouses, surrounded by old trees, usually wild fig, still exist in the modern pattern of houses around them. (cf. plate 26b). It is worthy of note that these farmhouses are near stream-courses and, generally, are so situated as to provide a view of the sea. This settlement, together with another early settlement near the present Cambridge Station, developed over the years into the Municipality of Cambridge, which in 1942 was amalgamated with the City of East London. (2)

Another group of German settlers was supposed to be located at a post along the road to King William's Town, to be called Panmure. The location was found to be unsuitable because of the scarcity of water and the precipitous slopes. (3)

(1) 75 Years German Baptist Church, East London. 1864-1939. P. 46

(2) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P. 25.

(3) East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port. M.A. Thesis. B.C. Gordon. P. 70.



Pending a decision, the settlers were left at Cambridge but, preferring to be nearer the settlement at the river, they moved and settled on what was virtually an extension of Colley's lay-out, with these reservations: firstly, that they settled between Oxford Street and the river, that is, on the slopes towards First Creek; and, secondly, that this settlement, named Panmure, was not contiguous with Colley's settlement, called East London East. When the two villages did link up, the street between them was named Union Street.

Settlers in East London East in 1857 and 1858 were granted a town lot on which to build a house. As there were no building regulations, most of the houses constructed consisted of sticks and daub. (1) In addition, the settlers were granted acre lots for farming purposes. These acre lots were laid out in large blocks with roadways between, running from the waggon track to the First Creek River in the one case and to the Blind River in the other. (cf. fig. 11) (2)

These acre blocks have had considerable influence on the lay-out of the surrounding areas and on the rateable value and standard of living of these areas; hence it is necessary to look at them in some detail.

The first group of blocks is that now called North End. As seen from the river end of the waggon track, this group lay to the left of the track and covered the piece of the

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P. 9.

(2) Map of the East London area by Geo. Mackay. In the Public Library, East London.

"Grassy Water Divide" between the track and the First Creek River. The longitudinal roadways, now known as Park Avenue, St. Paul's Road, St. John's Road and Factory Road, were not laid down at right angles to the waggon track - at this point it was probably considered a country road. They were aligned along the crest of a minor watershed between the streams running into the First Creek River. When the railway was built in 1873 (1) to run from the valley of the Quigney Stream to the valley of a tributary of the First Creek River, it passed closely by the front provided by these acre blocks on their higher edge. Consequently, the railway, in reaching the latter valley, cut off the North End from further extension along the "Grassy Water Divide". The later extension of Oxford Street trimmed off a corner of one of the blocks since the whole group is aligned at an angle to Oxford Street. It is only at this trimmed-off section that the North End is "open" to the main traffic thoroughfare.

The second group of blocks constitutes the main portion of Southernwood. This group lay to the right of the waggon track and covered that stretch between the track and the Blind River. The longitudinal roadways, later named St. Peter's Road, St. George's Road, St. James Road and St. Mark's Road, were marked off at roughly right angles to the waggon track and the whole group of blocks was to cover an exten-

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.25.

sive patch of land sloping fairly gently towards the sea and towards the Blind River. The width of the group was probably governed by the presence of the deep and bushy kloofs of two tributaries of the Blind River. (cf. fig. 11). The position of this group of acre blocks higher up the general slope than the North End group, and further away from the river, had important effects on its subsequent development when related to the railway line, Oxford Street and the gradual growth of the town.

The railway line from the East London station could have been planned to run from the valley of the Quigney Stream over towards the valley of the Blind River, and up this valley to Cambridge. It would have been a saving of distance but would have been much steeper than the chosen route which climbed 314 ft in less than four miles. The route chosen made use of the valley of the tributary of the First Creek River, as has been indicated already. Thus the railway, while cutting off the North End group from expansion over the "Grassy Water Divide", left the Southernwood group of acre blocks as the dominant functional plan of a wide grassy area over which it could expand in a southward, westward and especially in a northward direction.

The extension of Oxford Street up the slope was a process that took nearly half a century. The Southernwood blocks lay to the right of the line of Oxford Street and about 100

yards from it at the first block reached; consequently, King Street, very nearly parallel to Oxford Street, and building blocks were laid out on the intervening ground. But it is important to note that the roadways could intersect Oxford Street almost at right angles, so that the whole area was "open" to the main traffic artery. Two of the roadways, St Peter's Road and St George's Road, became thoroughfares, both being used as main roads to the Transkei.

North End, much nearer to the centre of the town, became, in the days when there was no municipal transport, a residential area of considerable density and importance, before Southernwood which had to wait for the introduction of electric trams in 1899. (1) By that time, when residences came to be built in Southernwood, there were stricter building regulations, larger private fortunes to afford bigger houses and larger grounds, and better building materials of brick instead of the wood and iron which characterised much of the North End. (2)

The modern aspect of these two groups of acre blocks will be dealt with in the next chapter. Suffice to say here that though originally designated as farming blocks, only the German agricultural settlers, accustomed to tilling the infertile fields of North Germany, could have wrested a

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.34.

(2) Mayor's Minute. 28th Feb., 1902. P.2; 28th Feb., 1903, P.1 and 2; 29th Feb., 1904, P.4.



living from them. Today these areas are not noted for flower gardens of beauty.

At the time of the arrival of the German Settlers, East London - on the West Bank - had a population of 124 Europeans, excluding the military. (1) It increased slowly in size. Its population, cosmopolitan in character and including many runaway sailors, included all those who were connected with the harbour and its landing operations, from the Port Captain down to the rough and ready surfboatmen.

Contact between the two banks of the river was by pontoon. (2) A timber pile bridge came into being in 1908. (3) The pontoon (cf. fig. 11) was reached by roadways cut into the steep banks. The charges were early reduced to induce people to use the East Bank road to King William's Town. Probably this route had been avoided owing to the steep climb up the East Bank. Only when the road had numerous settlers along it, did it become popular.

In 1873 the three villages, East London West, East London East and Panmure, were united into one municipality. (4). Relations at first were troubled. The West Bank regarded the East Bank villagers as "upstarts". But with new generations, new relationships altered perspectives, and the West Bank declined in importance. In 1914, (5), East London was

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.7.  
 (2) idem. P.11 (3) idem. P.48 (4) idem. P.9.  
 (5) idem. P.34.

raised to the status of a city.

Section. 5. Factors that have influenced the Growth  
and Development of East London.

The cultural complex of the City bears the marks recording the stimulus of events of country-wide and world-wide magnitude. Some of these stimulating forces, such as the discoveries of gold and diamonds, have maintained their influence through the years; others, such as the Anglo-Boer War and the First and Second World Wars, have ceased to be, but their event is recorded in the city complex and the impetus they gave has continued to exist. Inventions, too, have played their part in varying the pattern. Internally, the changing policies of the authorities have had a profound effect on the make-up of the city.

The "merchant princes", established in the "kaffir trade" at King William's Town, realised that their town through its fortuitous position on the Kei trade route, was obscuring the advantages of East London as a distributing centre, for not only could East London supply the Transkei trade, but it could be a forwarding port direct to the border districts and to the Orange Free State without the intermediate position of King William's Town and its consequent unnecessary uneconomic overheads being introduced. They apparently

watched the development of the railway at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and saw that King William's Town, being in the basin of the Buffalo River and so off the watershed which must be the railway route to the interior, would either be on a detour or left off the main railway entirely. Furthermore, these merchants, finding during the earlier days of the port that the military authorities who carried out the landing of goods from ships, were not as expeditious as they might be, formed Landing Companies of their own on their own enterprise. (1) This meant that they already had commercial establishments of their own at the port and, when the considerations mentioned earlier in this paragraph became more pertinent, the merchants first opened up branch warehouses in East London, and later transferred their head offices thither. Consequently, we find warehouses of the distributing merchants in the centre of the city, early established in a young village.

In 1867 diamonds were discovered along the banks of the Vaal River and soon afterwards at Kimberley. (cf. fig. 1). Not only did this discovery lead to a considerable increase in population in the interior with a consequent increased demand for supplies and machinery, but it brought wealth and confidence to a backward agricultural country. It led the Cape Government to explore the possibility of a whole-

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(1) Kaffrarian Watchman. 5.12.1867; 4.6.1868; 25.10.1869;  
22.12.1875.

hearted effort to make a first-class harbour of the Buffalo Mouth; and it led them to build a railway line from East London to Queenstown, for not only was the eastern region well-grassed for the transport waggons that were to carry on from where the railway left off, but East London was the nearest port to the Diamond Fields, being less than 500 miles away. That railway had manifold effects on the town. East London benefitted from the increased trade (in 1866 74 ships entered the harbour or called at the port.) (1) In 1876 this number was 154 (2)), and this was reflected in the improved houses and shops and the more rapid expansion of the town. Yet it had direct effects on the pattern of the town, some of which have been discussed in the section on the North End and Southernwood acre blocks. The major effect was that, as the railway was sited on the East Bank, the West Bank sank into near-oblivion for many years and the East Bank became the core of commerce, government, society and education. (3) The railway led to the development of Cambridge and Vincent into the Municipality of Cambridge, though they were really dormitory suburbs of East London. (4) In these suburbs the line of the railway appears to have been the base-line for the lay-out of the streets.

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(1) Blue Book AA12/1867

(2) Blue Book N12/1877

(3) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.9.

(4) Blue Book G34/1903



The effect of the diamond industry has naturally continued, re-inforced and superseded by the effect of the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1887 with the consequent increase in population and trade. (In 1894 47 sailing vessels and 169 steamers entered the river and 220 steamers discharged into lighters in the roadstead, making a grand total of 436 vessels calling at the port.(1)). The development of the Orange Free State Goldfields must benefit East London, for here the port is better placed than Durban as regards distance; whereas the Transvaal Goldfields are closer to Durban.

The Railway and the Harbour which naturally affected the town pattern considerably, will be discussed later.

During the 1880's the habit of holidaying by the sea began to develop and people from inland areas, especially King William's Town, trekked down during the summer in ox-waggons to camp out along the stretch of shore between Signal Hill and the Limekiln Creek. (2) Thus began the holiday resort function of East London. Although waggons, seaside cottages and tents (a) provided the accommodation, hotels and boarding-houses became an inevitable feature of the Quigney and Beach area. Amenities for holiday-makers were developed along the sea-front.

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(1) Blue Book G37/1895

(2) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.25

(a) Tents at one time completely covered the seafront but have a minor role today, tucked behind the sanddunes at the Eastern Beach.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 was a further stimulus to the development of the port of East London. (In 1901 a total of 546 vessels called at the port.(1)). Large numbers of men, horses, mules and supplies were landed. A camp was established at the Recreation Ground (2) and a Remount Camp on the site now occupied by Selborne College.(3) Refugees from the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were received in great numbers and were given shelter in Southernwood and on the Quigney. (4) Relief works, in the shape of street construction, were made available to them.

But the war has left traces of its effect on the city pattern. Just before the outbreak of this war, there had been a bubonic plague scare at the Cape ports and East London prepared for the plague which did not eventuate, by building a special plague hospital on the high left bank of the Buffalo near the mouth of the Amalinda River at Second Creek. (5) These buildings were used during the war to provide shelter for the Boer refugees (6) and became known as the "Boer Camp"; and for many years afterwards it provided homes for indigent European families until their dire straits led to the construction

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- (1) Blue Book G60/1902
  - (2) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1900. P.2.
  - (3) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1903. P.2.
  - (4) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1900. P.1.
  - (5) Blue Book G49/1902
  - (6) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1902. P.2.

of the sub-economic housing scheme, Milner Estate, beyond North End, on the opposite slope of the valley of the tributary of the First Creek River, near the railway line.

The activities of the supply port during the war gave opportunities for private wealth, and at the conclusion of the war, numerous people were able to move from the hitherto fashionable North End to the newer residential areas of Southernwood and Belgravia - the area between Oxford Street and the railway line, opposite Southernwood - there to erect large houses, sometimes with the date, 1903 or 1904, decorating the facade. (cf. plate 28a) These two-storeyed buildings are a distinctive feature of Belgravia and Southernwood. (cf. fig. 23).

Memorials and clubhouses of ex-soldiers' organisations appear to be the only influence on the culture pattern of the city of the First World War, 1914-1918. But the Second World War, 1939-1945, involved the extensive use of aeroplanes, necessitating a world-wide scheme of pilot-training. There were campaigns in the Middle East, Greece and Italy and the Mediterranean-Suez route was closed for many years. The Japanese struck swiftly through South-East Asia and were a threat to East and South Africa. Lastly, there was the danger of attack by German raider ships and submarines.

On the "West Bank Heights" along the old military road,

Defence Camps and Air Force Schools were established. (cf. plate 9). These are used today as residential villages and for various welfare schemes. The early small aerodrome at Woodbrook, on the "West Bank Heights", opposite the mouth of the Second Creek (cf. plate 25a) was inadequate for the new demand, and the Collondale aerodrome, (cf. plate 23 and 24), further along the Military Road and outside the Municipal boundary, was developed. This aerodrome is now the airport for East London, while the extensive camp attached to it, is used as a Government Village.

To protect the harbour against ships and aircraft, gun emplacements were located on Signal Hill and on Hood Point, with lighter guns near the bridge. On the sand-dunes near Fuller's Bay and Nahoon, Observation Towers were erected to assist in the training of bomber crews.

In 1899 electric trams came to be used in East London, having as the traffic centre, the Market Square. (1). From there the track ran up Oxford Street to St George's Road junction, with a short branch line along Park Avenue. This branch line was intended to serve North End but was never an economic proposition. After the construction of a bridge to allow Fleet Street to cross the Quigney

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P. 25



and the railway line to the harbour, the tramway was extended along this street from the Market Square to reach the area beyond, which became known as the Quigney. Much later, when considerable construction work had been done along the sea-front to form an esplanade, the tramway ran from the Orient Beach to the sandhills behind the Eastern Beach. In upper Oxford Street the tramway extensions were, a branch line down the length of St George's Road until the slope to the Blind River became too steep; and up Oxford Street until the railway line was reached, when the tramway paralleled the railway for a short distance. In 1923 a circular scenic drive was built by leading the Oxford Street tramway through Beſea and past the present racecourse, so that the main part of the basin of the Blind River and its tributaries was enclosed, to join up with the Esplanade line at the Eastern Beach. (cf. fig. 24). (1)

The first tramway system, though only 5.9 miles long, (2) made it convenient for people to settle in Southernwood and on the Quigney where close settlement had been retarded by the distance from the centre of the town. The circular drive brought the golf course and race course within easy reach of the town. Today, the track of this line is well

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.25

(2) idem. P.34

within the spread of the further suburbs. In 1935 the whole tramway system was scrapped and buses came into use. (1)

The increasing use of motor cars not only led to the use of remote but favourable sites for building houses, but also gave rise to the garage as a feature of house construction and to commercial garages as part of the commercial complex.

The size and significance of East London has been increased by the process of amalgamation with contiguous communities. (cf. fig. 21 f). In 1942, East London, 7,987 acres in extent, added to herself Cambridge, a municipality with an area of 4,689 acres and a population of 12,000 Europeans and 4,000 Non-Europeans. (2) By dint of surviving on rainwater storage tanks at each house, of not tarring the streets and of not installing waterborne sewerage, Cambridge remained for years a town of cheap rates, (3), attracting many pensioners and workers from East London who found the railway service suitable. In 1944 the boundaries of East London were extended to incorporate two small villages, Woodbrook on the "West Bank Heights", 433 acres, and Abbotsford, across the Nahoon where the Main Transkei Road crosses the river, 121 acres. (4) In 1948 Amalinda, an area of 11.9 square miles,

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.34

(2) idem P.25. (4) idem. P.25

(3) Official, City and Water Engineer's Office, East London.

under the jurisdiction of the Amalinda Village Management Board, and a region of small farms, was incorporated.

(1) The area then, of the entire East London Municipality is 33.8 square miles. (2)

For many years, it was the policy of the Municipal Council to maintain East London as a clean, neat holiday resort. Just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, a policy of industrialisation began. This policy was prosecuted with greater vigour after the conclusion of the war. Great efforts were made to provide an adequate and reliable water supply (3) and townships were laid out where industrialists were able to obtain land at cheap rates. (4) Consequently, East London has been able to share in the considerable industrial progress of the post-war era of South Africa. Industries are the youngest factor in the cultural pattern.

The drift to the towns from the country has been for long a gradual process, accelerated in the post-war period. In East London the composition of the European population is changing from a predominantly English-speaking population, to one with a high percentage of Afrikaans-speaking persons. The greatest influx has been that of Africans, (5)

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.25

(2) idem.

(3) idem. P.34

(4) Official Guide, East London. P. 179-181

(5) Town Clerk's Department, East London Municipality.

whose arrival has increased the industrial labour force but has increased the dismal conditions in the locations where squalor and overcrowding make these areas the black spots in the city complex. (cf. plate 15) (1). Inevitably, health, moral and humanitarian considerations must force a change in the pattern with extended boundaries to the locations and improved housing and amenities.

#### Section 6. The Harbour.

The use of the river mouth as a port was the reason for East London's establishment. That the river mouth has risen from a primitive state to rank as a major port of the Union of South Africa is a tribute to man's ingenuity, labour and perseverance in adapting the few gifts of nature to his need.

The sandbar across the mouth of the river was the chief obstacle. Above the sandbar there was adequate depth of water and the bar itself was of fine sand which could be raked; while boring had shown that it could be cleared away to a depth of 30 ft. (2) But while it was there, only the smallest vessels could enter the river. Unless a freshet had cleaned out the mouth, vessels calling at the port had to remain anchored in the roadstead about half a mile from

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(1) Report by Commission of Inquiry into the Conditions and Administration of the East London Urban Locations, 4th October, 1949. P.2 et seq.

(2) Kaffrarian Watchman. 21st October, 1869.



the shore and in about 12 fathoms of water. The anchorage was not rocky but consisted of clay in which the anchors held even during the "black south-easters". Most of the many wrecks between Hood Point and Nahoon Point, were caused by the cables parting. (1) The anchorage eventually became fouled with abandoned anchors and tackle - no captain having lowered his anchor, could be sure of being able to hoist it again - and in 1869 the Cape Parliament provided a sum of money for clearing the roadstead of its encumbering anchors. (2)

To enable the ships to land and ship cargo when they were anchored in the roadstead, a main warp was fixed in the river to run out to a buoy in the roadstead, from which a branch warp reached out further. (3) Surf-boats of about 30-50 tons, equipped with rollers to contain the warp, were hauled along the warp by crews of the Government Surfboat Establishment standing on the boats. The surf-boats took a long time to make their way along the warp and could only operate in fine weather. (4) Consequently ships had to take the risk of remaining at anchor for a lengthy period. Eventually the Government was compelled by the number of wrecks and accidents to the surf-boats in crossing the bar, to order the steam paddle tug, "Buffalo". (5)

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(1) Kaffrarian Watchman, 13th August, 1870

(2) idem. 21st October, 1869.

(3) idem. 13th August, 1870

(4) idem. 20th July, 1868.

(5) idem. 9th December, 1874

It was realised by astute merchants, especially by those in King William's Town, that the Government, by charging private parties for goods landed, not only paid their own expenses for landing Government and Imperial stores, but cleared a considerable profit. In 1868 (1) and 1875 (2) two private landing, shipping and forwarding companies were formed. Through their agencies came the tugs to pull the surf-boats (3) and they commenced boat-building near the site of the present bridge, building their own surf-boats, using skilled labour imported from Scotland. (4)

In 1860 a lighthouse came into use at Castle Point, a few yards from the sea and the river. Its base was a square of rubble masonry with a truncated cone of timber standing above it. The light was at 45 feet and could be seen from eleven miles in fine weather. A commission on South African lighthouses in 1890 found that this lighthouse could not be seen by ships approaching from the south-west, as the high ground at Hood Point intervened. Accordingly, a new lighthouse was built at Hood Point where the "West Bank Heights" come close to the sea. (5)

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- (1) Kaffrarian Watchman. 4th June, 1868.  
 (2) idem. 22nd December, 1875. (3) idem. 8th April, 1874.  
 (4) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.42.  
 (5) Blue Book G23/1889 Report of Harbourmaster, East London.  
       G2/1891 Report of Commission on Lighthouses.

Figure 12 shows the state of the river mouth in 1847.(1) The inner sandbank was considerably larger than usual. The waggon track from the Quigney Stream and the rough stone jetty on the right bank are indicated. Attention must be drawn to the absence of beach development on the seaward base of Signal Hill.

Many schemes were mooted for the opening up of the river mouth. The majority of them sought to increase the outward flow of the river at ebb-tide by narrowing the channel, and to turn the flow in the same direction as the inshore current which runs up the coast in a north-easterly direction. It was believed that the sandbar occurred because the weak river current met the inshore current at right angles. (2)

One scheme that found favour and finance was that of the Civil Engineer, Pilkington. (3) In 1856, he commenced to build a western training wall, using stone quarried from the banks. The pontoon was moved further upstream to a site at the First Creek. The western training wall was well out in the river bed, advanced from the bank which had served as a landing base. (cf. fig. 13) Some years later, Pilkington began the eastern training wall and the eastern breakwater. Figure 13 shows the state of the harbour works in 1872. Pilkington's scheme was not completed. Although in 1872

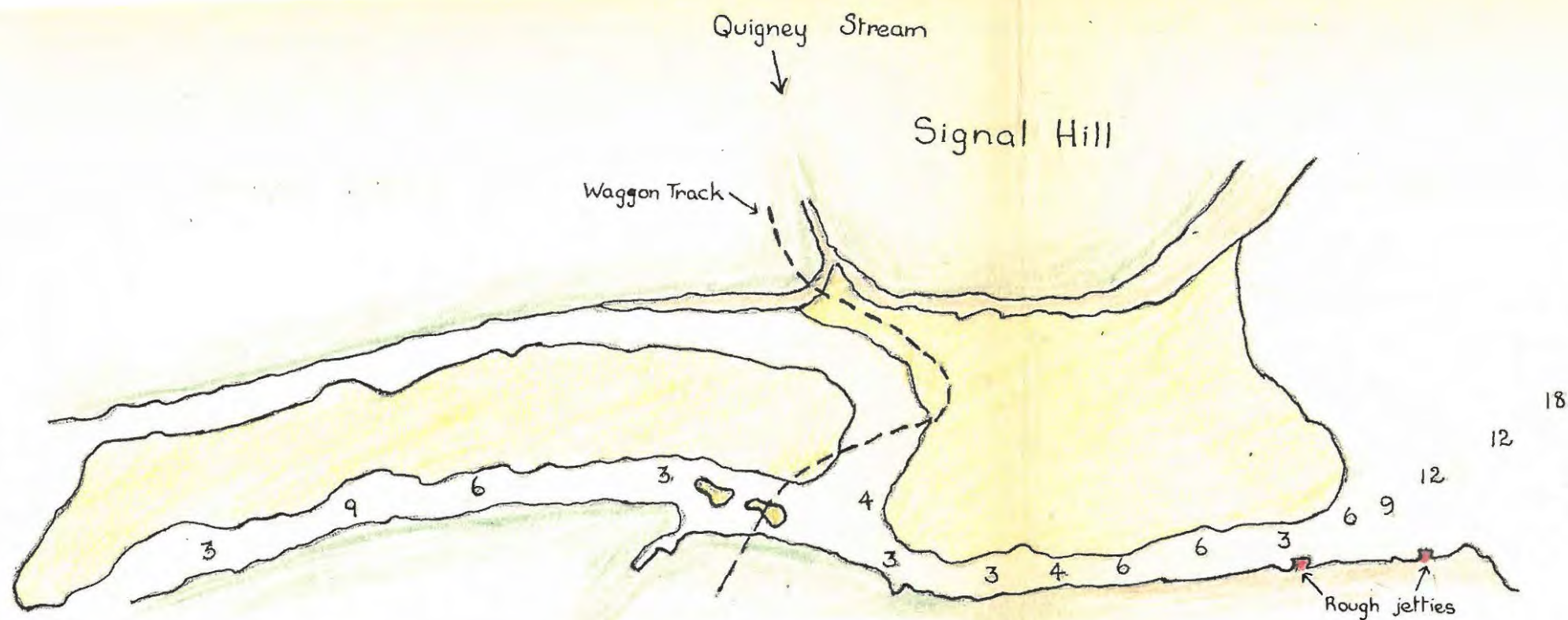
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(1) Series of contemporary maps of the harbour.

(2) East London, Foundation and Early Development. Gordon. P.66.

(3) idem. P.64.

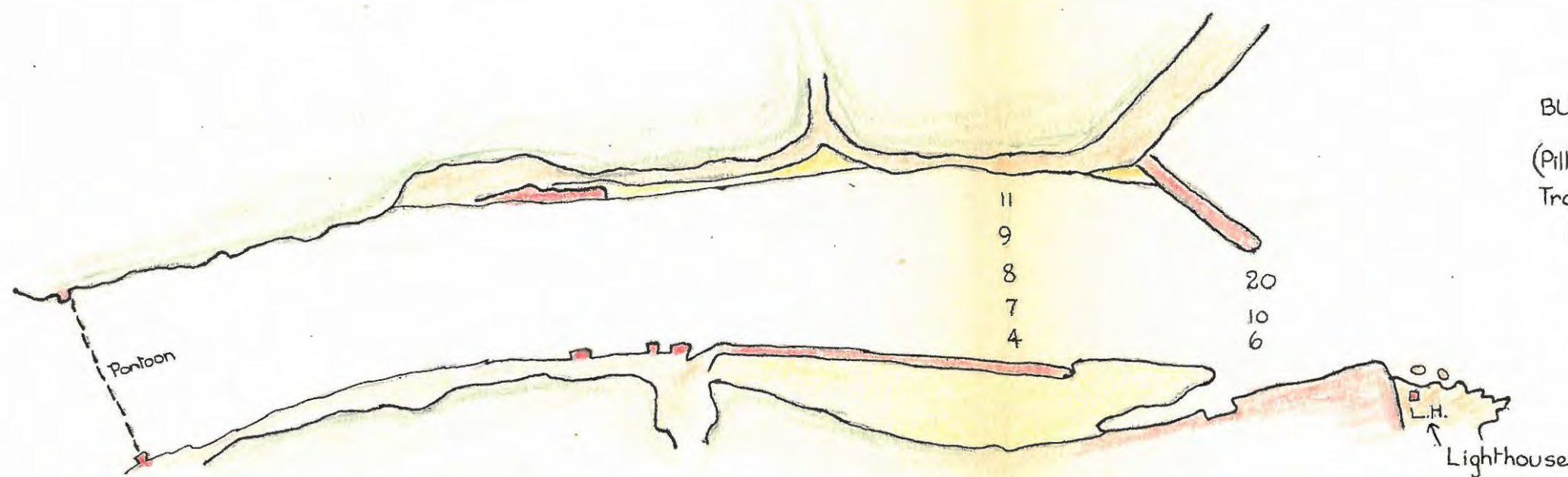




1847

FIG. 12

BUFFALO MOUTH



1872

FIG. 13

BUFFALO MOUTH

(Pilkington's Incomplete  
Training Walls and  
Breakwater.)

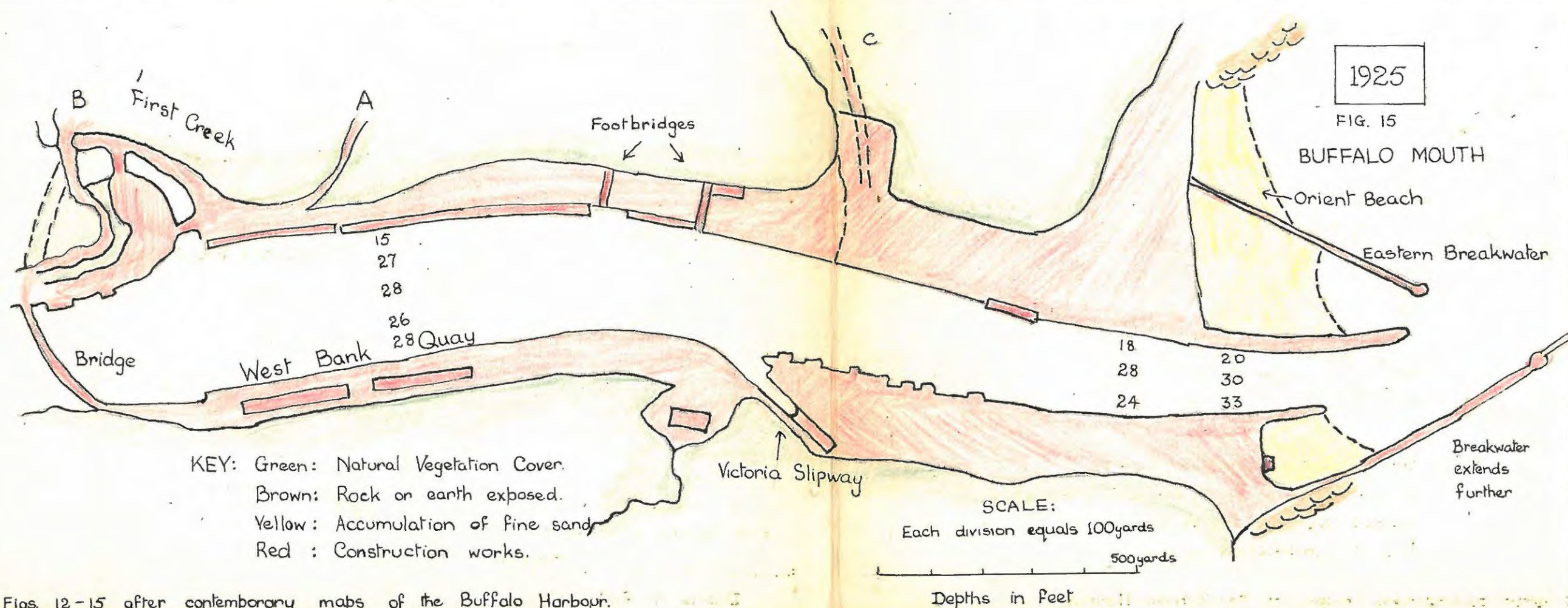
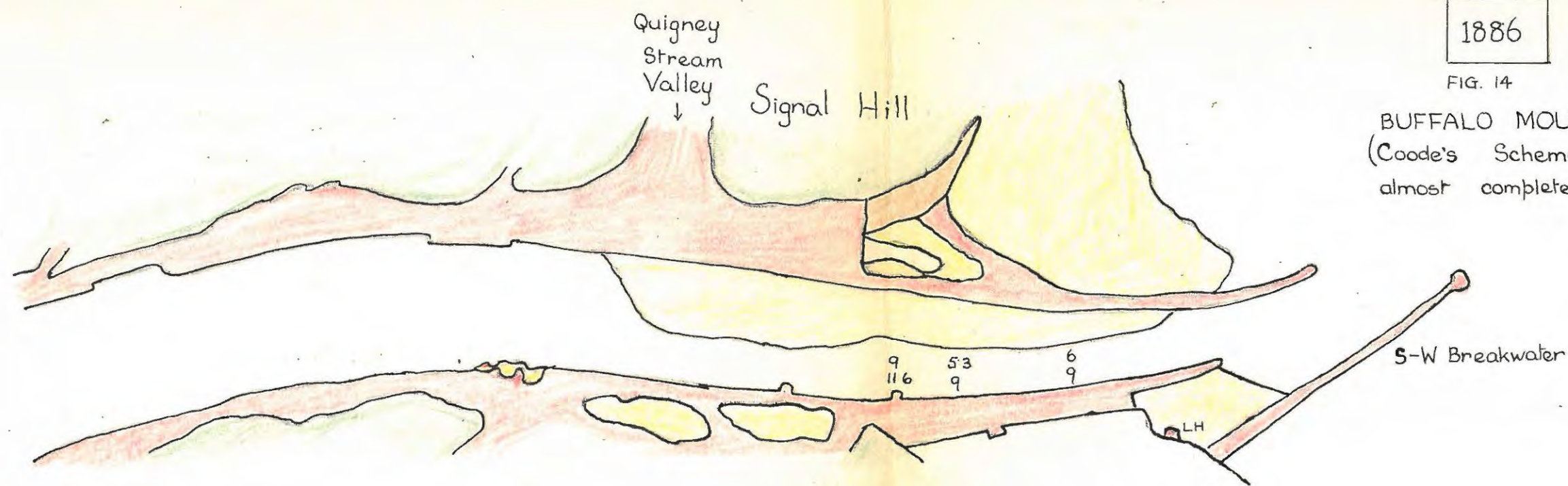
KEY: Green: Natural Vegetation Cover  
Brown: Rock or earth exposed  
Yellow: Accumulation of fine sand.  
Red: Construction works

SCALE:  
Each division equals 100 yards.

500 yards

Depths in feet





Figs. 12-15 after contemporary maps of the Buffalo Harbour.



the river was cleared by a freshet, the eastern breakwater usually lay surrounded by a sandbank. It had its root at the foot of Signal Hill and it appears to have been ineffective.

In the late 1860's there was a feeling of despondency at the port when it was realised that Pilkington's harbour works would not achieve the removal of the sandbar. But the discovery of the Diamond Fields and the increase in trade induced the Cape Government to call in the services of a competent engineer. The scheme of Sir John Coode is the fundamental basis of the harbour works today. (1)

He planned eastern and western training walls to narrow the river channel - at the mouth, from 1110 feet to 420 feet. The banks of the river were quarried back and the material used for infilling behind the training walls. By this process of cutting back and infilling, a considerable area of level ground was obtained adjacent to the river, a factor of great value. The training walls stemmed from the line of the left bank of the First Creek and protruded a considerable distance beyond the shoreline, especially in the case of the Eastern Training Wall. Pilkington's eastern breakwater disappeared under the infilling.

Coode designed a South-West Breakwater to rise from

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(1) Blue Book G/24/1870. Report of Sir John Coode on the Harbour at the Buffalo Mouth.

the West Bank and run in an easterly direction. This was to prevent the sand from drifting into the river and to set the river current in the same line as the inshore current. The Breakwater was to go round the head of the Eastern Training Wall like a cap or shield.

Coode considered that there was less danger to wharves from freshets, if they were placed on the east bank. The wharves - of timber - were placed adjacent to the First Creek - upstream where sandbank formation was unlikely. Consequently, the railway line was laid down on the East Bank, with the resulting change in the town pattern described above.

Figure 14 shows the nature of the Harbour Works in 1886. The South-West Breakwater is at its planned length of 1,200 ft. The training walls are complete except for some infilling on the east side where Pilkington's breakwater is still visible. The valley of the Quigney Stream has been widened by quarrying (a) and almost directly opposite on the West Bank is a large quarry, enlarged considerably throughout the years. It is important to note the natural extension of the land surface, which resulted from these Harbour Works. Between the Western Training Wall and the Breakwater, a sandy beach developed. On the opposite bank a considerable stretch of sandy beach appeared behind

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(a) Mentioned earlier.

the Eastern Training Wall. This fortuitous creation came to be named the Orient Beach, after the sailing vessel "Orient" which was wrecked there in 1907. (1)

The Coode Scheme was not completely successful (a) and in 1886 a suction dredger "Lucy" was purchased to dredge the channel. (2) Since that time there have been many dredgers (b) working through the year, not only on the sandbar and the depth in the river itself but also on the shoal which forms during July, August and September at the head of the Breakwater (3) which after two extensions is now 3,400 ft long. (cf. plate 20) This considerable length of breakwater was required in order to provide a large area of smooth water before a ship made the turning into the river. (4)

In the 1890's, encouraged by the development of the Transvaal Goldfields, thoughts turned to further harbour improvements. (5) At times, especially during the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902, ships had to be double-banked at the wharves (6) and it was recognised that additional wharfage accommodation was necessary. The Hely-Hutchinson Wharf was built on the East Bank across the opening, as it were,

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- (a) Coode had hoped for a permanent navigable depth but forecast that dredgers might have to be used. In 1885 the entrance had a depth of only 2-3 ft at low water.  
 (b) "Sir Gordon", "Agnes", "Success", "Sir Thomas Price", "Kate", and "Rietbok",  
 (1) Daily Dispatch, 30th July, 1907.  
 (2) idem. 3rd March, 1947.  
 (3) Blue Book. G18/1894 Report Chief Inspector Public Works.  
 (4) UG29/1935, Report Railway Board; UG62/1937 Gen.Man.S.A.R.  
 (5) G39/1891, Rept. Gen.Man.Railways. (6) F.L. Centenary. P.143.



of the Quigney Stream Valley. This wharf was completed in 1903 and has a depth of 27 ft. 9 ins. alongside L.W.O.S.T. (1). In 1908, the West Bank which had had to be content with minor jetties and a slipway, came into its own again with the completion of a concrete wharf, the West Bank Quay, opposite the First Creek and with 28 ft. of water. (2) Simultaneously with the building of the Quay, the construction of a temporary timber bridge progressed as the railway had to be brought across the river to serve the Quay. This bridge was opened in 1908 and remained in use until the steel bridge became available in 1935. (2)

A fish jetty was constructed on the bank between the bridge and the First Creek, (cf. plate 19), but above the bridge, there are no harbour works although the banks form a Harbour Reserve. Figure 15 shows the state of the Harbour Works in 1925. The extension of the South-West Breakwater is shown. The head of the Eastern Training Wall was clearly superfluous and was soon removed.

Of great interest are the three roads from the Harbour to the "Grassy Water Divide". The earliest one, marked A, constructed c.1858, took the shortest route from the pontoon landing up the steep slope to the top of the "Grassy Water Divide". Today it is but an overgrown scar on the bank. (cf. plate 19)

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(1) G 38/1903 Report Harbour Board.

(2) West London Centenary Souvenir. P.143.

Road B, constructed in c. 1880, was related to the wharves and landing stage near First Creek and the pontoon landing first on the left bank of the Creek and then on the right bank when a timber bridge was built across the Creek to carry the road. (1) Road B, named Pontoon Road, and known as such today, used the valleys of the First Creek and its tributary in the Queen's Park to reach the Market Square. Between Queen's Park and the river is a spur of the "Grassy Water Divide", which allowed a road, gentler in slope than Road A, to be built.

Road C, Hely-Hutchinson Road, constructed c.1920, was related to the building of the Hely-Hutchinson Wharf in front of the opening of the Quigney Stream Valley. (a) This road uses the valley of the Quigney Stream to reach the higher ground, although not the same line followed by the old waggon track. (cf. plate 8) Today it is the main entrance to the docks.

The dependence of the harbour on dredgers and not upon the narrowing of the channel, was shown when the Turning Basin was constructed in the 1930's to enable the largest ships on the South African run to enter the harbour. Both the Eastern and Western Training Walls near the mouth were removed and the old infilling dug away, in order to obtain

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(a) The Quigney Stream reaches the river by means of a tunnel in the dock area.

(1) Photograph, East London Museum.

a basin 1,000 ft. wide. Thus the river was restored to its original width. (cf. plates 20 and 25a) The West Bank side was fitted out as an Oil Tanker Jetty, to supply oil tanks recently established on that bank. The East Bank side was finished off as the Charl Malan Quay, 1,000 ft. long and with 35 ft. of water alongside. (1) This Quay was almost immediately extended by a further 600 ft. so that two large mail vessels could be accommodated at the same time. (2) Backing the Quay are pre-cooling chambers for the export of citrus fruit, and in order to obtain space for this project, a considerable portion of the side of Signal Hill was removed.

In order to improve the entrance to the river, an Eastern Pier was built in 1927. The Municipal Council assisted in its construction, so that it was adapted as a promenade pier. It stemmed from near the foot of Signal Hill, where the sand had been consolidated with heavier material, and cut across the Orient Beach, thus restricting its area. (cf. fig. 15)

In 1894 borings were made in First Creek to ascertain the nature of the bottom and the depth at which bed-rock was reached, in order to asset the suitability of this site for a graving dock. (3) The Princess Elizabeth

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(1) East London Centenary Souvenir. P.146.

(2) idem. P.148.

(3) Blue Book.G52/1895. Report of East London Harbour Board.

Graving Dock was opened in 1947. (1) The decision to provide a graving dock at East London was hastened, but not entirely dictated, by conditions arising out of the war. With its strategic position on South Africa's East Coast, between the graving docks at Cape Town and Durban, its growing significance as a manufacturing and distributing centre, and its safe and sheltered harbour, East London was being favoured to an increasing degree as a port of call, and ship-repair facilities were a demonstrable need. The need for a dry dock had been raised in 1924. It was only during the Second World War that the demand for dry-dock accommodation by the many ships forced by the war conditions to use the Cape route, spurred on the decision to construct a dry dock.

Within the area of the harbour there was only one possible site, the gap in the left bank of the Buffalo made by the First Creek. (cf. plates 10, 19, 20). The dock was not to interfere with the turning area of 750 ft. between the First Creek and the West Bank Quay, and it was not to cut the road and rail communications with the West Bank. (a)

The dock was placed just upstream of the First Creek in solid rock, with the pumphouse built in the bed of the Creek. The rock channel of the First Creek was some

Road

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- (a) Pontoon had to be diverted to some extent.  
 (1) "Princess Elizabeth Graving Dock" Brochure. All Graving Dock details taken from this book.



fifty feet deep and filled in with ooze and rubble; this caused engineering difficulties.

The First Creek River itself had to be diverted, since it could do great damage in times of flood, attaining discharges of some 3,000 cu. ft. per second. As the city expands there will be an increased run-off from the fully built-up area, and in order to cope with this run-off, the diversion works were designed to carry away some 7,790 cu. ft. per second. The diverted stream passes by means of culvert and tunnel through the high interfluvial, into the river above the bridge.

The Graving Dock can take ships up to 17,000 tons. Its length is 651 ft. 3 ins., its breadth at the entrance 89 ft. 3 ins., and the depth on the sill H.W.O.S.T. 33 ft. 6 ins. Owing to the prevailing westerly winds, which blow across the entrance of the dock, it was necessary to provide a landing quay alongside which vessels could be brought before being warped into the dock.

The rough stone jetty of a hundred years ago has been replaced by wharves which can accommodate eight normal sized freighters and a tanker, provided there is no mailship in port - a mailship occupies the space of two freighters. (1) On the East Bank, the Harbour Works, considering them from the bridge towards the mouth, are:

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(1) Daily Dispatch. 31st May, 1950.

a fish jetty, the Graving Dock, the Hely-Hutchinson Quay and the Charl Malan Quay. The Harbour Works on the West Bank consist of the West Bank Quay, a slipway and an oil tanker wharf. There are plans (1) to double the present shipping capacity of the harbour by linking up the Graving Dock with the Hely-Hutchinson Quay, and continuing the West Bank Quay to join up with the tanker wharf.

#### Section 7. The Railway.

After the discovery of diamonds in the interior in 1867, there was great activity at the Buffalo Mouth. In 1872 East London was "swarming with waggons for the Diamond Fields"(2) and each month an immense number of transport waggons left the port for the north. During the first three months of that year more than 2,000 waggons of all types made use of the pontoon to cross the river to reach the road to the interior. (3) It was essential to have a better mode of transport. Already agitation for a railway had started.

East London was well placed. It was just opposite the terminal point, Dohne Peak, of the "Winterberg-Amatola" line which might have proved an obstacle. At the Great

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(1) Daily Dispatch. 31st May, 1950

(2) Kaffrarian Watchman. 8th March, 1872.

(3) idem. 28th April, 1872.

Escarpment, Bushman's Hoek provided a comparatively easy climb to the plateau. Just beyond this was Molteno where coal could be had. This was not of good quality and by 1893 Transvaal coal was preferred. (1)

The land use in the harbour did not, because of the constricted nature of the area and the remote articulation of the town with the harbour, directly and of itself bring variations within the town complex. Yet the harbour, through the railway, had a part in the most outstanding re-orientation of the town's pattern that has occurred.

Despite warnings that in times of freshets, the river current swept strongly along the east bank, Coode determined to place the wharves there. Consequently, the railway, which was largely a parallel development to Coode's harbour construction, had to be on the east bank. The need for accommodation and supplies for the large number of artisans and labourers engaged on railway construction during the 1870's, resulted in the rise of shops and hotels on the East Bank in the village laid out by Colley. Shopkeepers deserted the West Bank to move across the river to the new centre of commercial activity and the West Bank began its long sixty year sleep. The East Bank flourished. Commercial, wool-broking and shipping firms were situated around the railway terminus and towards the harbour. As the railway

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(1) Blue Book, A23/1893. Economy in Working Eastern Line.

line extended northwards, increasing numbers of holiday-makers made their way to the port.

The railway ended behind the wharves near the mouth of the First Creek and got out of the Buffalo valley by following the valley of the Quigney Stream. (cf. plate 8). Between the upper reaches of this valley and the village laid out by Colley was a stretch of ground fairly level and about half a mile long which was used as a railway station. (cf. plate 8). From there the line followed the crest of the waterdivide between the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers to beyond Kei Road, thus by-passing King William's Town. Along this line, and especially at Cambridge and Vincent, communities began to grow which had easy contact with East London.

In order to ease the gradient from the East London station, the line curved from the Quigney Valley to the valley of the tributary of the First Creek River and then swung eastward again along the crest. Although the line is today in a new position, following the re-grading of the main line between East London and Queenstown, the old railway track influenced the lay-out and development of much of the city. (cf. plate 16). It cut off the North End, headed off Oxford Street and in the newer sections of the town, its line influenced the orientation of the street network.

The main line, keeping to the watershed between the



Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers, passed eight miles to the east of King William's Town which, owing to its position in the Buffalo basin, was not on the shortest, convenient route to the interior. It would have added to the freight charges for goods travelling further inland if the main line had been built to descend to King William's Town and then to climb back on to the crest of the waterdivide (1). This former capital of British Kaffraria had to be satisfied with a branch line, later extended to pass along the foot of the "Winterberg-Amatola" line as far as Cookhouse, where it joined the line from Port Elizabeth to the interior. (2)

In times of good rains, transport waggons gave the railway authorities cause for concern by skimming the cream of the high-rated freight, (3) and leaving the railway to struggle with low revenues until the next prolonged period of dry weather brought the railway back into its own again.

In order to avoid taking goods destined for inland towns through East London, a line was built up the valley of the First Creek River, from the newly-built bridge over the river and from the East Bank wharves, to join the main line at Chiselhurst. (4) During its con-

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- (1) Blue Book. A5/1874. Proposed Railway East London-Queenstn.  
 (2) Blue Book. A4/1902. Report General Manager Railways.  
 (3) Blue Book. G5/1909. Report General Manager S.A.R.  
 (4) idem. idem.

struction this branch line was damaged after a storm ( $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches of rain fell) when the First Creek River came down in flood and exerted great destructive force. (1) No great use was ever made of the line and after further severe floods in the First Creek River, it was abandoned not many years after its completion. Only its viaducts and the overgrown track give evidence of its former existence. (cf. plates 10, 11).

The building of the West Bank Quay in the 1900's led to the erection of a road and railway bridge across the Buffalo River - a timber bridge, with one level for both railway trains and waggons, a temporary bridge which was in use nearly thirty years later. (cf. plate 25a).

With the later development of industrial sites on the "West Bank Heights", it was necessary to run the railway there. In order to ease the gradient from the river to the "Heights", the line was taken to the root of the Breakwater from where it reversed up the slope. Thus this industrial line runs from the industrial area, to the Breakwater, then back to the bridge and from the bridge to the Quigney Valley where it begins its fourth leg to the main station.

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(1) Daily Dispatch Souvenir. "Souvenir of Storm and Freshet."  
10th October, 1905.

## Section 8. The Water Supply.

The severe water restrictions imposed during the water shortage of 1949 served to emphasize the fact that though East London and the surrounding areas are generally regarded as being well-watered, the months of low rainfall during the winter, plus the rapid run-off, make it necessary for a town of the size of East London to have huge supplies of water stored. After the early use of local wells and the damming of water in small kloofs, the town relied on water caught from the roofs of houses in large tanks. Until recent years this system prevailed in Cambridge and Vincent where the water tank was a feature of the house.

In 1883 a reservoir was built in the valley of the Amalinda or Second Creek River in its upper reaches. (1) This site provided not only the necessary defile, but also the elevation above the town of East London. Its capacity was 300,000 gallons per day. Its chief fault was that it had a very small catchment area, and fourteen years later, a small barrier was thrown across the Buffalo River near the Buffalo Pass and a pumping station established to pump water to the Amalinda Reservoir. In 1917 this scheme was elaborated. The valley of the chief tributary of the Amalinda was used to accommodate the Umzoniana

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(1) "Fort Murray Water Scheme". October, 1945. A pamphlet issued by the East London Municipality. From it most of the details of this section are taken.

Storage Dam which stored water before passing it to the Amalinda Reservoir, and a new Pumping Station was constructed about three miles further up the river from the old one. A rising main, one and a half miles long, carries the water from the river to the Storage Dam, which is about 700 feet above the level of the pumping station. (cf. fig. 16)

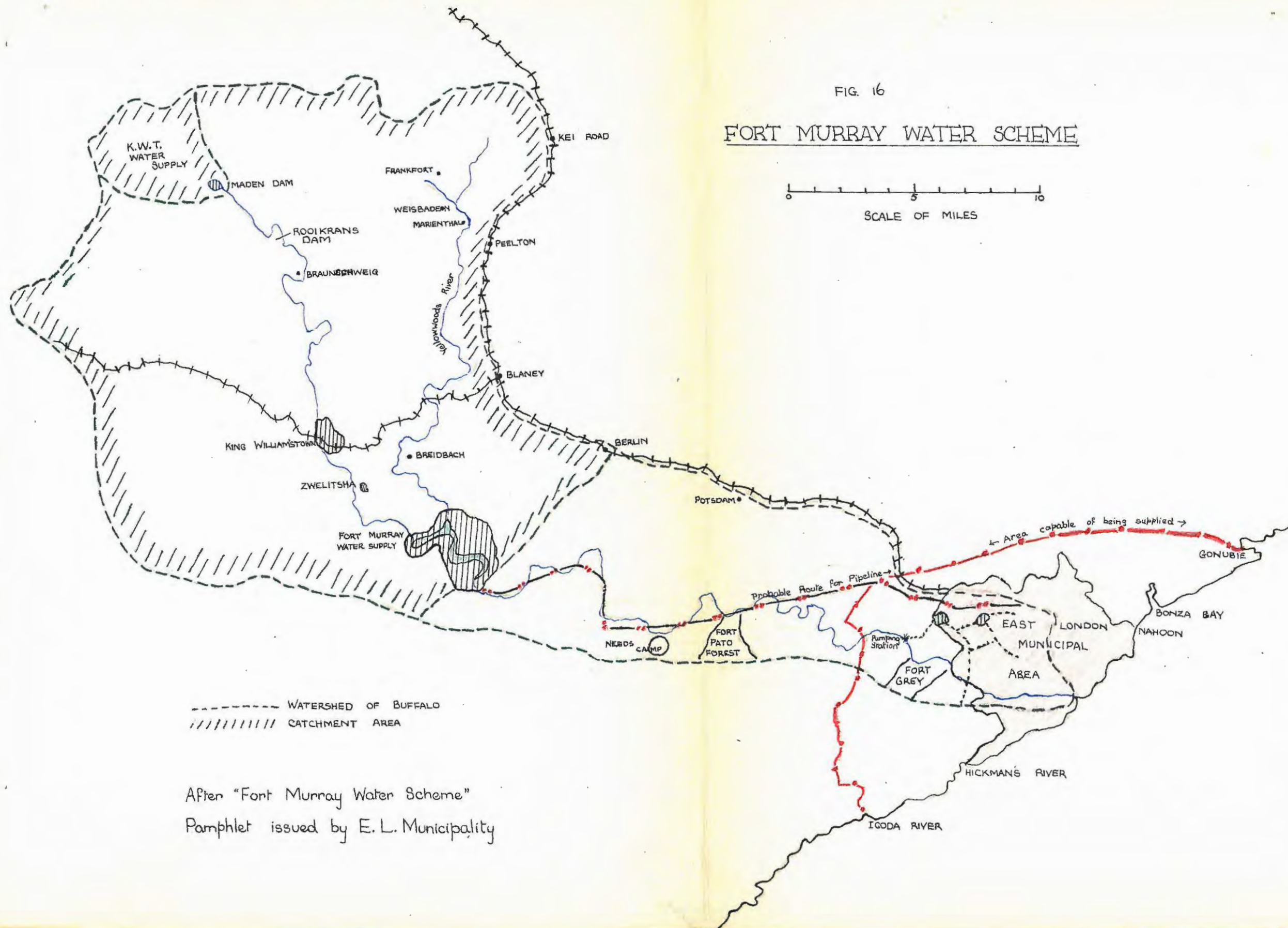
This system was recognised as inadequate (a), and for forty years after 1900, many schemes were proposed, adopted and found wanting, schemes that included the Nahoon, the Gulu, the tributaries of the Buffalo and various sites along the course of the Buffalo.

The Fort Murray Scheme (cf. fig. 16) eventually found favour. It was urgently needed, as the increased population, the sewerage installation and the proposed industries needed an assured water supply. The site of the dam is about 29 miles from East London, in the Buffalo Valley. The wall, 123 feet above the river bed, stands on a dolerite dike which crosses the river at that point. Throwing water back  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles, the dam, named Iaing Dam, has a total storage capacity of 5,450 million gallons, with an assured gross supply of 11 millions per day.

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(a) In 1927-8 a severe drought disclosed the limitations of the system and showed a capacity of about 750,000 gallons per day.





The situation of the Laing Dam is not perfect, largely because King William's Town is included in the catchment area and is not above ten miles upstream from the dam. Yet it is sited below the confluence of the Buffalo and Yellowwoods Rivers and the latter river, hitherto regarded as a minor contributor to the dam, showed its value during 1949 when, while the Buffalo was not running, it filled the dam within 24 hours, to bring a serious water shortage in East London to an end.

Water is let out from the dam to run down the valley to the pumping station from where it is lifted into the Umzoniana Impounding Reservoir. In about 1960 a pipeline will be laid down to convey water, filtered at Laing Dam, to East London. This splitting of the financial burden by delaying the pipeline, was only possible because the use of the Buffalo Valley makes it possible to run water down to the pumping station. Had the dam been built in any other river valley not in the Buffalo basin, a pipeline would have been immediately necessary.

The consumption of water today is above 3 million gallons per day.

#### Section 9. The Economic Activities.

The economic activities may be defined as those activities of the inhabitants, which, either directly or

indirectly, bring wealth to the town for its continued prosperity. East London has the advantage of having a harbour both for communications and for the supply of raw materials. Similar advantages accrue from its position as the terminus of a main railway line, where the railway has the additional function of bringing coal from the Transvaal coalfields. A large power station in the harbour area supplies electricity for industrial consumers. Following the construction of the Laing Dam, a sufficient water supply is assured not only to the town but to industrialists. Close to the town is an almost inexhaustible supply of native labour. Markets for manufactured and imported goods are not only close at hand in the Border districts and the Transkei, but can be reached over the railways inland.

The fundamental industry of the port is landing, shipping and forwarding goods. Closely allied are the wholesale and distributive merchants whose early energies gave the town its impetus. Goods shipped are mainly produce, wool, citrus and more latterly pineapples, being examples.

The wool trade is the principal industry of the town, with many firms established for the buying and selling of wool. This trade is highly organised and extremely efficient, with a cultural pattern of road and rail transport, woolstores, woolbrokers' offices, a Wool Exchange for



the public auction of bales of wool, loading activity in the harbour and even sun-tanned farmers in town during the season, September to March, (1) to see their wool sold.

The four ports, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, conduct wool sales during the season. The number of bales of grease and scoured wool shipped from each port during the last four seasons, is as follows: (2)

	1947-1948	1948-1949	1949-1950	1950-1951
Port Elizabeth	308,448	304,814	275,605	290,455
East London	235,563	214,331	164,764	182,585
Durban	154,975	132,339	114,359	136,212
Cape Town	91,100	91,443	77,088	96,792

These figures are represented graphically in figure 18.

The season 1947-1948 saw the greatest number of bales sold in each port except Cape Town considering only the four seasons under review. (2) This reflects the post-war recovery of industrial areas overseas. France, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. bought vast quantities of wool. (3) Although the number of bales offered at each port continued to rise, over the four year

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- (1) Federation of S.A. Wool and Mohair Buyers, Sales Programme, July 1951. Pp. 3-6  
 (2) idem. Pp. 7-10 (3) idem. Pp. 17-20.  
 (a) In 1932 East London shipped 388,314 bales, Port Elizabeth 369,961. (Statistical Review, July, 1939, Wool and Mohair Trade of S.A., Pp. 78-79).



period, (1), the quantity of wool shipped declined in 1948-1949 and especially in 1949-1950 - during the latter season, France, Belgium and Italy bought far less wool from South Africa than in the earlier two seasons. During this four year period, the United Kingdom continued to buy large quantities of wool, so that the rise in number of bales shipped, in 1950-1951, was mainly because of the increased buying of the U.S.A., Italy and Germany. (2)

The main destinations of the wool shipped from East London during the 1950-1951 season were: (3)

U.S.A.	51,014 bales grease and scoured.
U. K.	40,128
France	24,368
Belguim	22,231
Italy	17,518
Germany	17,515

East London is the second wool port of the Union and is a close rival to Port Elizabeth for the reputation of being the premier wool port. For the period 1910 to 1933 East London could claim this distinction but since 1934 Port Elizabeth has shipped a greater number of bales each year. (4)

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- (1) Federation of S.A. Wool and Mohair Buyers. Sales Programme, July, 1951. Pp. 7-10  
 (2) idem. Pp. 17-20. (3) idem. P. 18.  
 (4) idem. Pp. 8-9  
 Statistical Review, July, 1939, Wool and Mohair Trade of the Union of South Africa. Pp. 78-79.

It would be impossible to separate into distinct regions, the sheep-farming areas which send wool to East London, to Port Elizabeth to the west and to Durban to the north-east. (1) Port Elizabeth and East London are great rivals in encouraging farmers in the Eastern Cape and the South Eastern Free State to forward their wool to the respective ports. Many sheep-farmers change their allegiance. Some are attracted by offers of bigger advances on the next wool clip. The advice of fellow-farmers, the persuasiveness of woolbrokers, the varying prices obtained at the respective ports, all influence the farmer to choose to send his wool to this port or that. Thus it happens that there are cases where farmers to the east of East London rail their wool to Port Elizabeth although East London is closer. There are cases where the reverse is true.

The following districts are prominent contributors to the wool sales at East London: (2)

Border: Kei Road, Amabele, Dohne, Toise River, Cathcart, Komgha, Queenstown and King William's Town.

North Eastern Cape: Sterkstroom, Molteno, Stormberg, Dordrecht, Jamestown, Aliwal North, Barkly East, Lady Grey, Elliot, Indwe and Maclear.

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- (1) Secretary, Wool Exchange, East London. Also for the remainder of the paragraph.  
 (2) Daily Dispatch. 23.1.1950, 2.6.1950, 20.6.50, 15.9.1950, 10.10.1950, 13.10.1950, 20.10.1950, 3.11.1950, 13.4.1951, 3.5.1951.

Eastern Karroo: Tarkastad, Steynsburg, Burghersdorp.  
 Transkei: Butterworth, Engcobo, Idutywa, Tsomo, Umtata.  
 South Eastern Orange Free State: Bethulie, Rouxville,  
 Zastron, Smithfield, Edenburg, Reddersburg,  
 Trompsburg, Springfontein, Dewetsdorp, Bloem-  
 fontein, Fauresmith and Jagersfontein.

These districts are indicated in figure 17. The region thus roughly outlined is well served by rail and road motor transport.

In the 1880's boat-building on the banks of the Buffalo was a flourishing industry carried on by the Landing and Shipping Companies, who imported Scottish craftsmen to build lighters. (1) This industry lasted until the close of the century, but there have been intermittent spells of boat-building with the construction of small fishing boats on open patches of ground in the harbour area. (2) During the recent war there was considerable activity in connection with ship-repairs and the building of motor launches. (3)

Another economic activity which earns the town a considerable income and has a cultural pattern in the town, is the catering for holiday-makers. East London has a reputation as a holiday resort with a fine climate, beaches,

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(1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.42.

(2) Daily Dispatch, 19.9.1950

(3) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P.42.

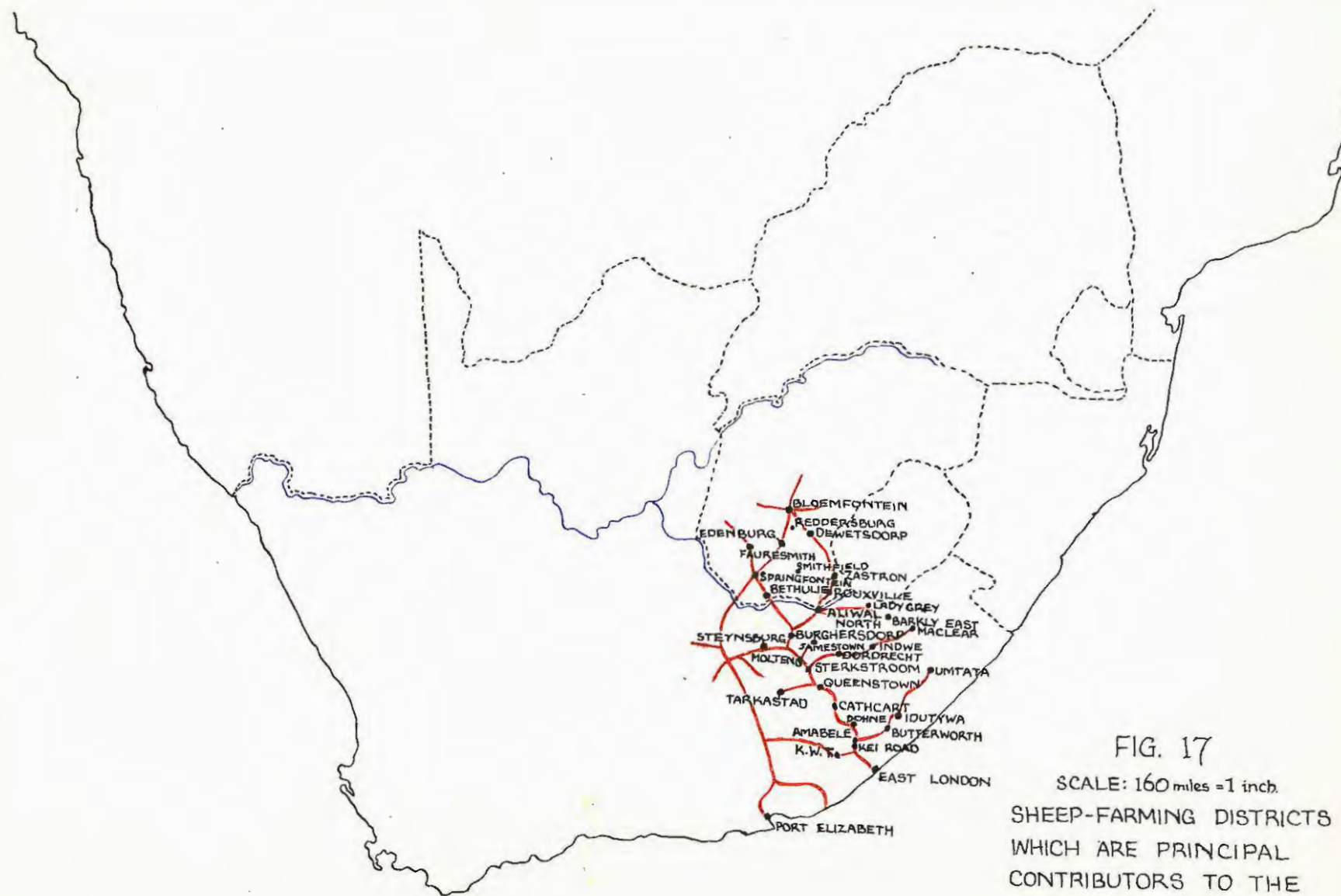


FIG. 17

SCALE: 160 miles = 1 inch.

SHEEP-FARMING DISTRICTS  
WHICH ARE PRINCIPAL  
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE  
WOOL SALES AT  
EAST LONDON.



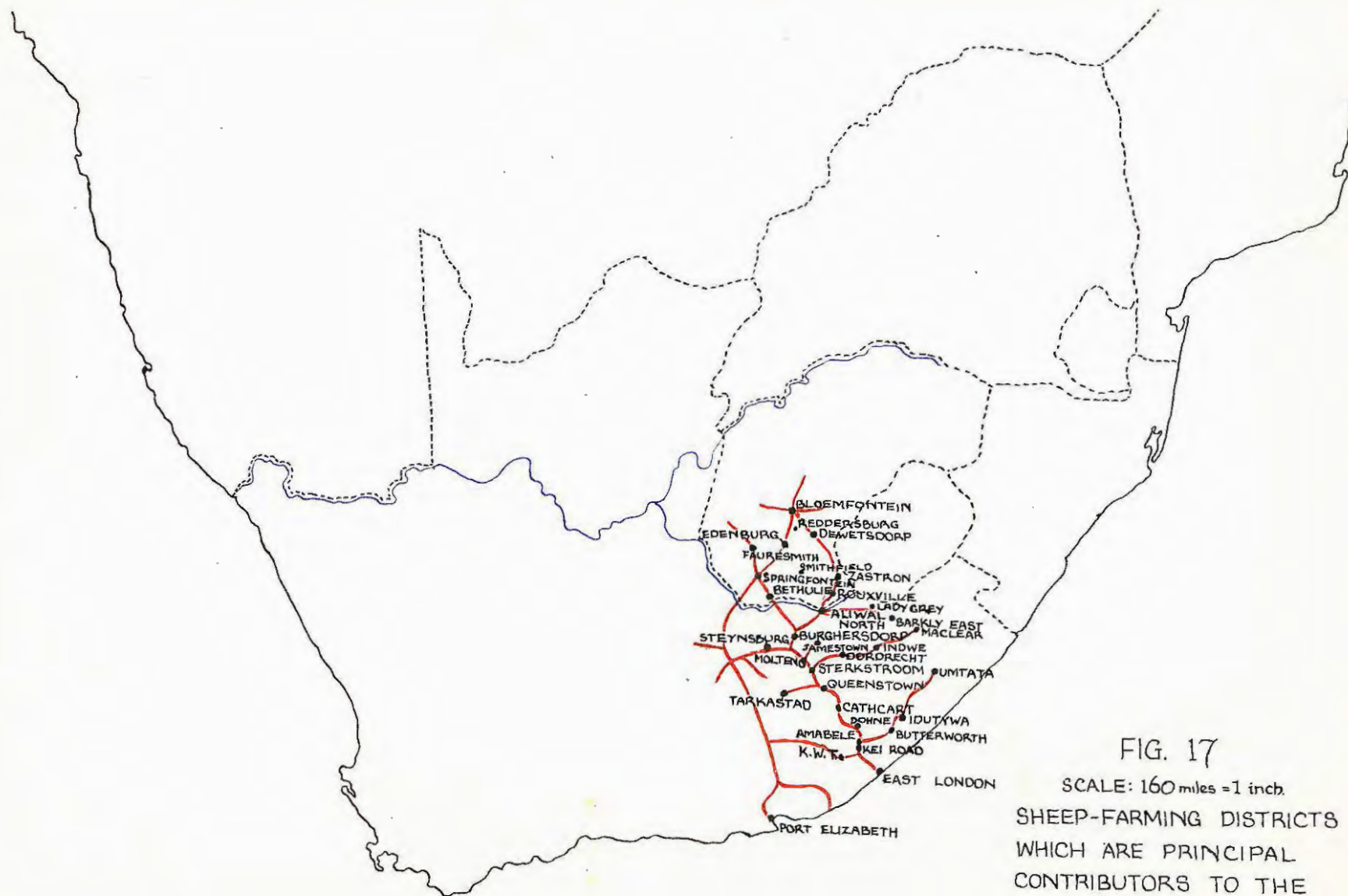


FIG. 17

SCALE: 160 miles = 1 inch

SHEEP-FARMING DISTRICTS  
WHICH ARE PRINCIPAL  
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE  
WOOL SALES AT  
EAST LONDON.

beautiful surroundings and a holiday atmosphere.

While East London cannot be compared with the industrial regions of the Witwatersrand, Durban and Port Elizabeth, it nevertheless has increasing manufacturing activity. Following the more recent policy of the Municipal Council to welcome industries, land has been set aside for industrial areas, and water and power provided at low cost. (1) The present manufactures include iron and steel products, soap, blankets, cotton sheeting, perfumes, medical preparations, cattle feed, chocolate, sweets, paint, furniture, motor cars (assembly), car batteries, synthetic resins and stockings.

#### Section 10. Population.

Since the Municipality of Cambridge (cf. fig. 21) was largely a dormitory suburb of East London, its growth was integrated with the development of the larger municipality. Hence the population of the Cambridge Municipality has been included in the following population figures for East London, although the amalgamation of the two municipalities took place only in 1942. In 1926 Cambridge had a white population of 4,555 (2) and at the time of the amalgamation, its population consisted of 12,000 Europeans

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(1) Official Guide, East London. Pp. 175 and 181.

(2) South and East African Yearbook for 1929. P. 535.

and 4,000 Non-Europeans. (1) In a period of 14 years then Cambridge had trebled its population.

The population of the village of Amalinda is in like manner included in the total population figures. In 1926 Amalinda had a white population of 849. (2) and in 1948 when the village was incorporated within the East London Municipality, there were 1,178 Europeans and 1,626 Non-Europeans. (1)

The villages of Woodbrook and Abbotsford, incorporated in 1944, (1), made only minor contributions to the city's total population.

#### POPULATION OF EAST LONDON 1921-1951.

<u>Year</u>	<u>European</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>Coloured</u>	<u>Asiatic</u>	<u>Total</u>
1921	21,010	12,210	2,053	692	35,977 (3)
1926	23,210(4)	14,832(5)	2,394(5)	559(5)	40,995 (5)
1931	27,801(3)	20,400(5)	?	?	48,201 plus.
1936	31,311	24,388	4,011	853	60,563 (6)
1941	WAR PERIOD (FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE)				(5)
1946	40,118	32,656	5,193	1,238	79,205 (7)
1951	43,195	39,698	5,757	1,545	90,195 (5)

- 
- (1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948. P. 25.  
 (2) South and East African Yearbook for 1929. P.535.  
 (3) Official Yearbook Union S.A. No.13. 1930-31. P.793  
 (4) Official Yearbook Union S.A. No.11. 1928-29. P.883  
 (5) Town Clerk's Department, East London. Mainly estimations.  
 (6) Official Yearbook Union S.A. No.20. 1939. P. 1044.  
 (7) Official Yearbook Union S.A. No.24. 1948. P. 1083.

In 1875 the total population of East London (all races) was 2,134. (1) Thirty years later (1905) it had increased by 23,086 to 25,220. (1) In 1921 the population figure was 35,977 - an increase of 10,757 in 16 years. The last period of thirty years (1921-1951) has seen the population increase by 54,218.

The population of the city has been increasing steadily since 1875. The last thirty years have seen the greatest growth. An analysis of the population figures given on P. 95, (a), shows a fairly uniform increase in the European population, the average annual rate of increase being approximately 700. Thus the European population has doubled in the last thirty years. During the same period the Native population has trebled, having an average annual increase of approximately 900. This rate of increase is due in part to the influx of Natives to the city, a movement which has been especially rapid during the postwar period. (2) The large Native populations of the Ciskei and Transkei regard East London as one of their natural places of employment. (3) The figures for the Coloured and Asiatic populations show natural increases without any great influx from other areas.

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- (1) Daily Dispatch Centenary Special. 1848-1948. P.25
  - (2) Town Clerk's Department, East London.
  - (3) Report Commission of Inquiry into Conditions and Administration of East London Urban Locations, dated 4th October, 1949. P.2.
  - (a) When one considers the development and expansion in industry and housing in East London during 1946-1951, one feels that the 1951 figures will be corrected to higher figures.



## Chapter 3

## THE CULTURAL MILIEU

## THE MODERN CITY PATTERN

The gross shape of the city pattern may be said to be triangular, roughly equilateral. (cf. fig. 19). The sides of this built-up area would be from Hood Point to the Nahoon Mouth, from there to the edge of the Horseshoe at Cambridge and, thirdly, from the Horseshoe to Hood Point, each leg approximately four miles in length. This triangular shape is based on the shape of the "Grassy Water Divide", which includes the major portion of the built-up area. The "Grassy Water Divide", reaching northward from the Buffalo Mouth on its coastal side, has its northern side sub-parallel to the Nahoon River, while its south-western side, defined roughly by the valley of the First Creek River, swings away from the Buffalo to approach the northern side closely. The water divide, now restricted in width, continues inland. (cf. fig. 7). The extension of Cambridge West (a) along this continuation is in line with the East Bank Location beyond the First Creek and the industrial growth on the West Bank, thus pushing the south-western side of the triangle further inland.

The outstanding feature of the shape of the city pattern

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(a) For names of suburbs and townships, see fig. 20

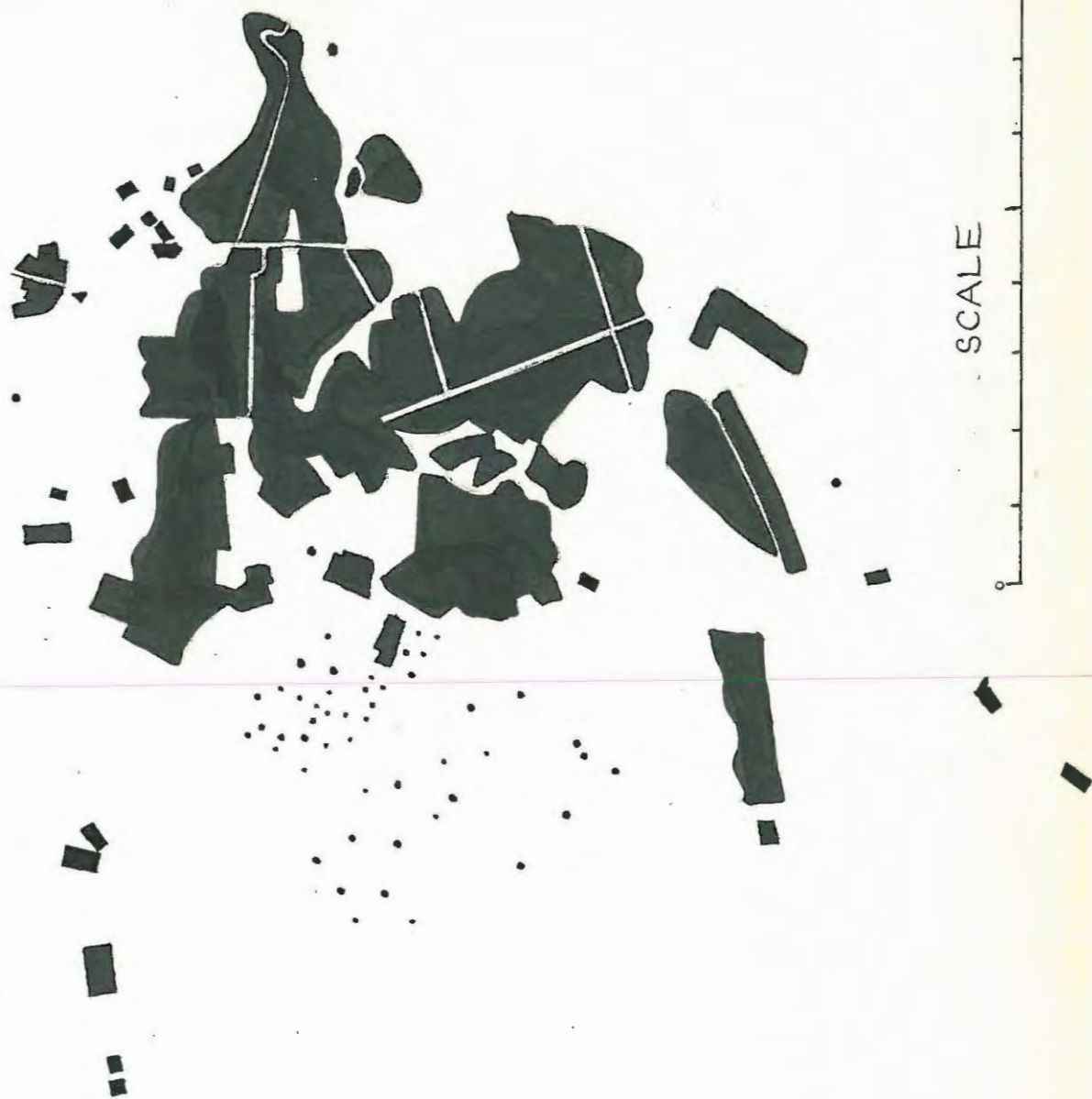
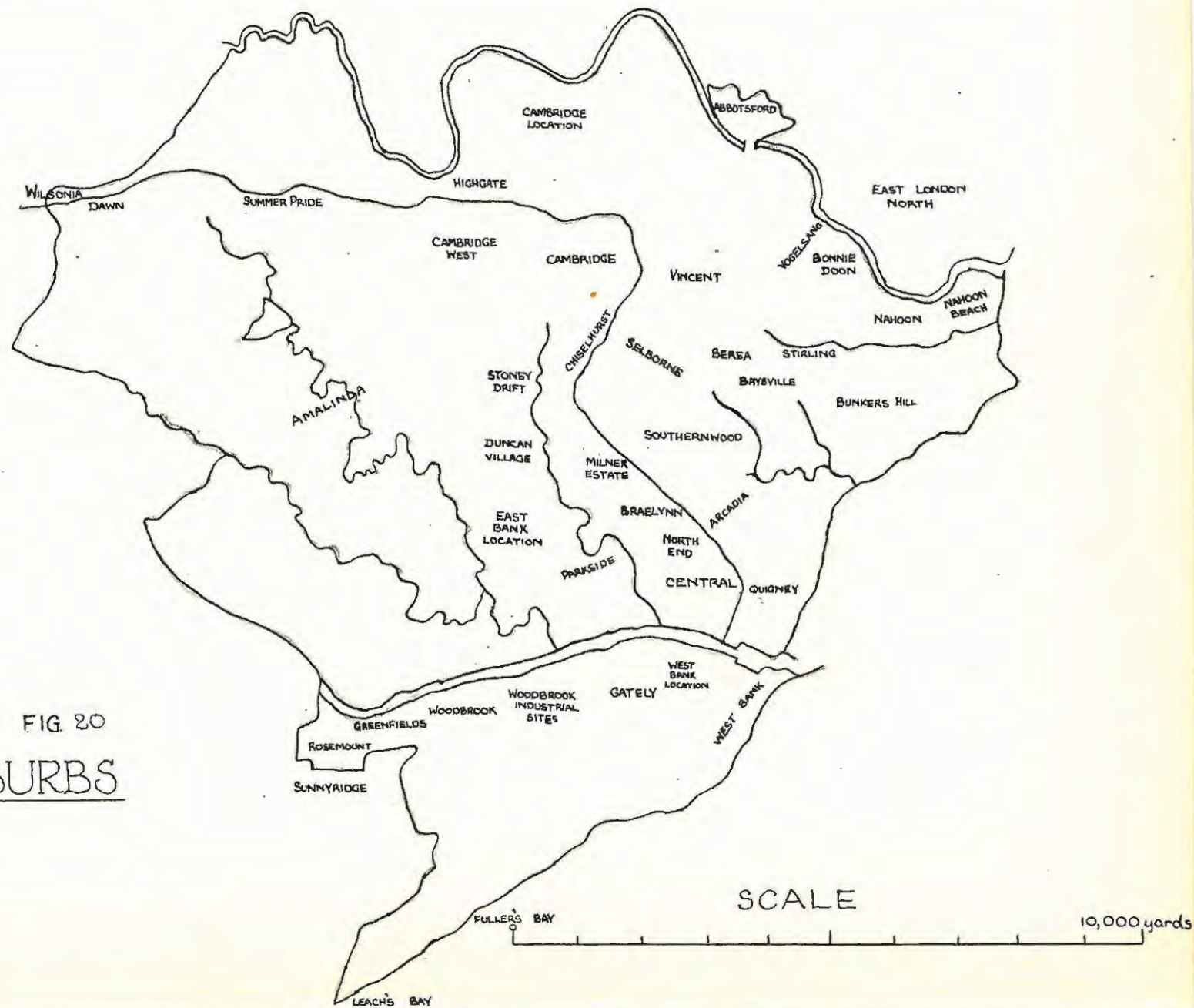


FIG 19  
SHAPE

FIG 20  
SUBURBS





is its extremely asymmetrical arrangement about the mouth of the Buffalo.

Within the triangular shape, the main core of the built-up area, which is continuous, is T-shaped. On the seaward side, the valleys of the Blind River and its tributaries, and the broad belt of sandy hills have hindered building development. Between the river and the sand is a broad rise, Bunker's Hill, which is slowly being built-up. There is scope too for the advance of Baysville down the slope between the Blind River and its main tributary. In the lower reaches of the Blind River, refuse is being dumped and the resulting level ground, in ten years time, will provide space for a sports field.

The inland side of the T is influenced by the First Creek River. Cambridge which bends round the headwaters of this river, developed from the crest of the main divide down the gentle sea-ward slope of the interfluves between the various streams that run to form the First Creek; (cf. plates 16, 17) the streets which run across the grain, as it were, are switchback. This interfluvial development is planned to continue down the slope, thus filling in the gap between Cambridge and Chiselhurst. (1)

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(1) Town Planning Scheme. East London City Council,  
21st September, 1949.



The valley of the Nahoon in the main defines the northern side of the T. At Cambridge, beyond the railway line the land is suitable for building but this has been reserved for railway extension. (1)

#### THE GROWTH OF THE CITY

The nucleus of the city was the small settlement on the West Bank in 1847. (2) (cf. fig. 21). With the arrival of the 1856-8 German Settlers (2), cores of settlement were established on the East Bank (3), close to the river, and further along the water divide at Vincent. (4) The siting of the railway on the East Bank had three effects: it left the West Bank to remain stagnant for years; (5) the settlement on the East Bank close to the river developed into a commercial centre with shops to supply the needs of the increased population of railway and other workers; (6) and communities such as Cambridge and Vincent developed along the line.

The chief settlement on the East Bank (East London East and Panmure) gradually climbed up the slope of the water divide, its line of growth being influenced by the existence

- (1) Town Planning Scheme. E.L.City Council. 21st September, 1949.
- (2) "East London, its Foundation and Early Development as a Port". B.C.Gordon, M.A.Thesis. Pp. 68 - 69.
- (3) "With Sword and Statute" Hook, 1905, R.U.C.Library. P.57
- (4) Souvenir "75 Years German Baptist Church, East London" P.46.
- (5) Letter, Daily Dispatch, East London, 11th September, 1909.
- (6) Reports, Kaffrarian Watchman, King William's Town, 23rd November, 1874; 3rd March, 1875.

of the Acre Blocks at North End and Southernwood. During the 1880's and 1890's houses were constructed on the opposite side of the Quigney Stream (1) and towards the sea. Wealthier persons built fine houses at the edge of the crest before the final steep slope to the sea. In addition, there arose the development of holiday shacks, built of wreckage and corrugated iron and in the fashion of present day shacks at river mouths all along the coast, at the small stream which reached the sea at Marine Park. (1) (cf. plate 1)

The incidence of rates in East London induced many people to settle outside the boundaries. This movement spurred on the growth of Cambridge and Vincent where the Municipality of Cambridge maintained a low level of rates. (2) On the West Bank beyond the boundary, Woodbrook grew.

Amalgamation processes during the period 1942-8 united East London, Cambridge, Woodbrook, Abbotsford and Amalinda into one large municipality. (3)

The establishment of industries on the West Bank in recent years has brought new development to that part of the city. Bus services have aided the postwar growth beyond Cambridge towards the Horseshoe, and from Vincent towards the mouth of the Nahoon. This latter region includes the

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- (1) Dr A.W.Burton, King William's Town: Personal recollection.  
(2) City Engineer's Office, East London.  
(3) Pamphlet issued by the East London City Council, October 1945, "The Fort Murray Water Scheme".

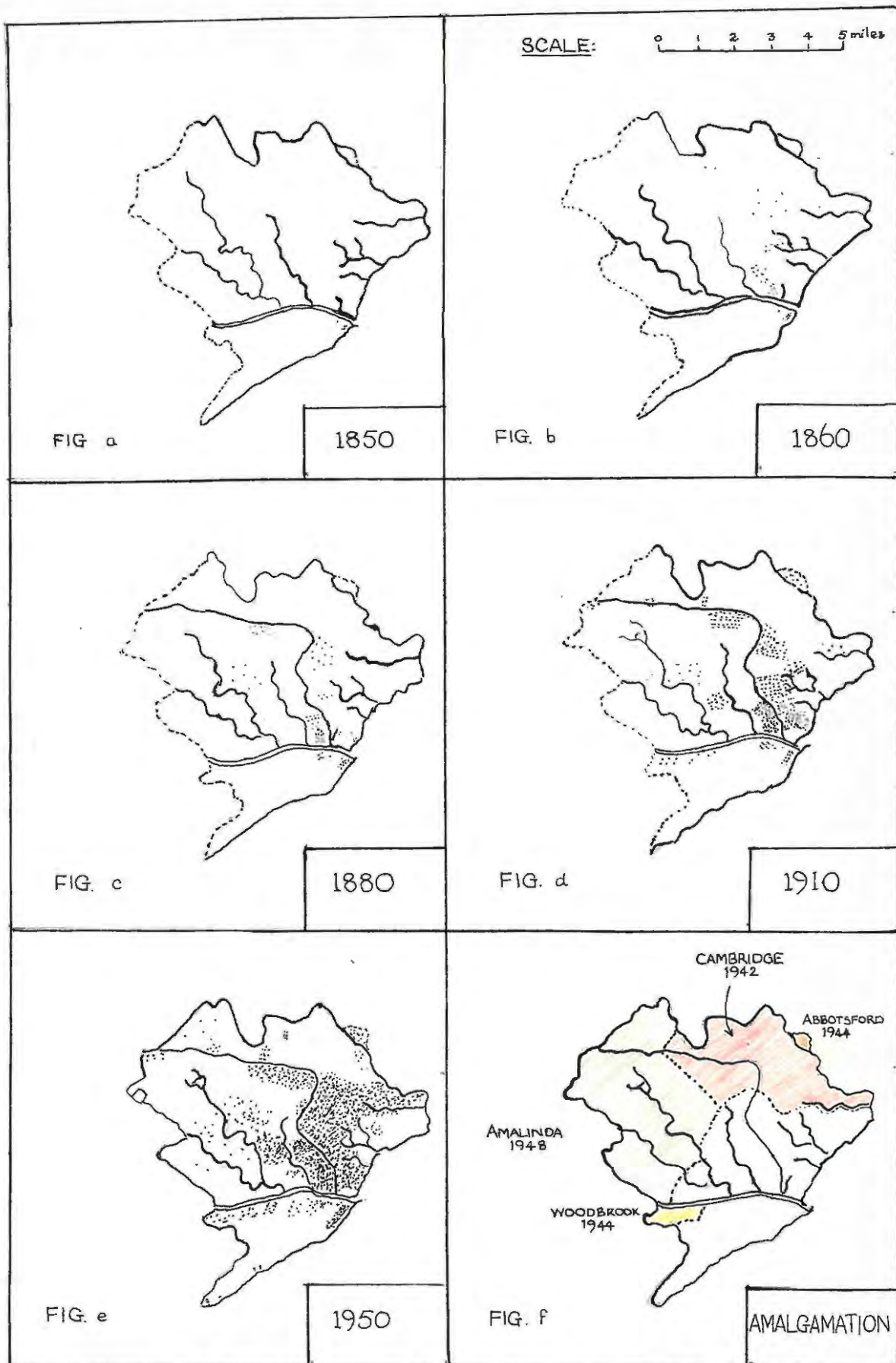


FIG. 21

suburbs of Nahoon, Nahoon Beach, Woodleigh, Stirling Extension, Vogelsang and Bonnie Doon.

Two new townships, outside the municipal boundary, have been planned, namely East London North, across the Nahoon and downstream from Abbotsford, and Sunnyridge on the West Bank and adjacent to Woodbrook. (1)

It is pertinent to mention that the municipalities inherited from the Crown large tracts of commonage. (2) With this public ownership of land, the Municipality can now plan new townships to its own satisfaction and that of the Townships Board, without the hinderance of private ownership such as obtains in older countries. (3)

#### CULTURAL USE IN THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC REGIONS THE WEST BANK STRAND. (plates 8, 25b)

This is a residential area, with its main streets parallel to the coast. Bounded by the sea, the river, the prison and Hood Point, it is unlikely to change its character, except to have better houses replacing the old wood and iron ones. (cf. plate 26a). The growth of this area has been slow. Ever since the centre of gravity moved to the East Bank, the West Bank has been an outpost, reached by a pontoon and later by a bridge. In both cases, the cir-

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(1) Advertising pamphlets issued by the Estate Companies.

(2) "Daily Dispatch Centenary Special, 1848-1948".

Daily Dispatch, East London. P.5.

(3) "Towns and the Land" Hans Bernoulli, Zurich. P.7.



cuituous route around the harbour works made the nearest homes on the West Bank more than a mile from the Market Square. The lack of population along this mile decreases the frequency of the bus service.

The open space between Strand Street (cf. fig. 10) and the sea, contains an old cemetery, the first ever in East London and long since closed, and a recreation ground. Very little levelling was required for this recreation ground. It is a delightful place, right against the sea, but entirely devoid of any trees.

#### THE WEST BANK HEIGHTS. (cf. plates 9, 14, 21, 22, 23, 24)

The high approach of these heights to the sea at Hood Point provided an excellent site for the lighthouse. A golf course (cf. fig. 28) also occupies Hood Point. Fort Glamorgan developed into a large penal institution, (cf. fig. 22) through its use for housing convicts when the harbour works were carried out. Convicts nowadays work in the quarries in the harbour and close to the prison.

The West Bank Location (cf. plate 22) is on the site of the original "kaffir gardens" and alongside a fairly faithful stream. The location provides labour for the West Bank and for the harbour. It has never been very large and today there is little room for expansion, though much for improvement.

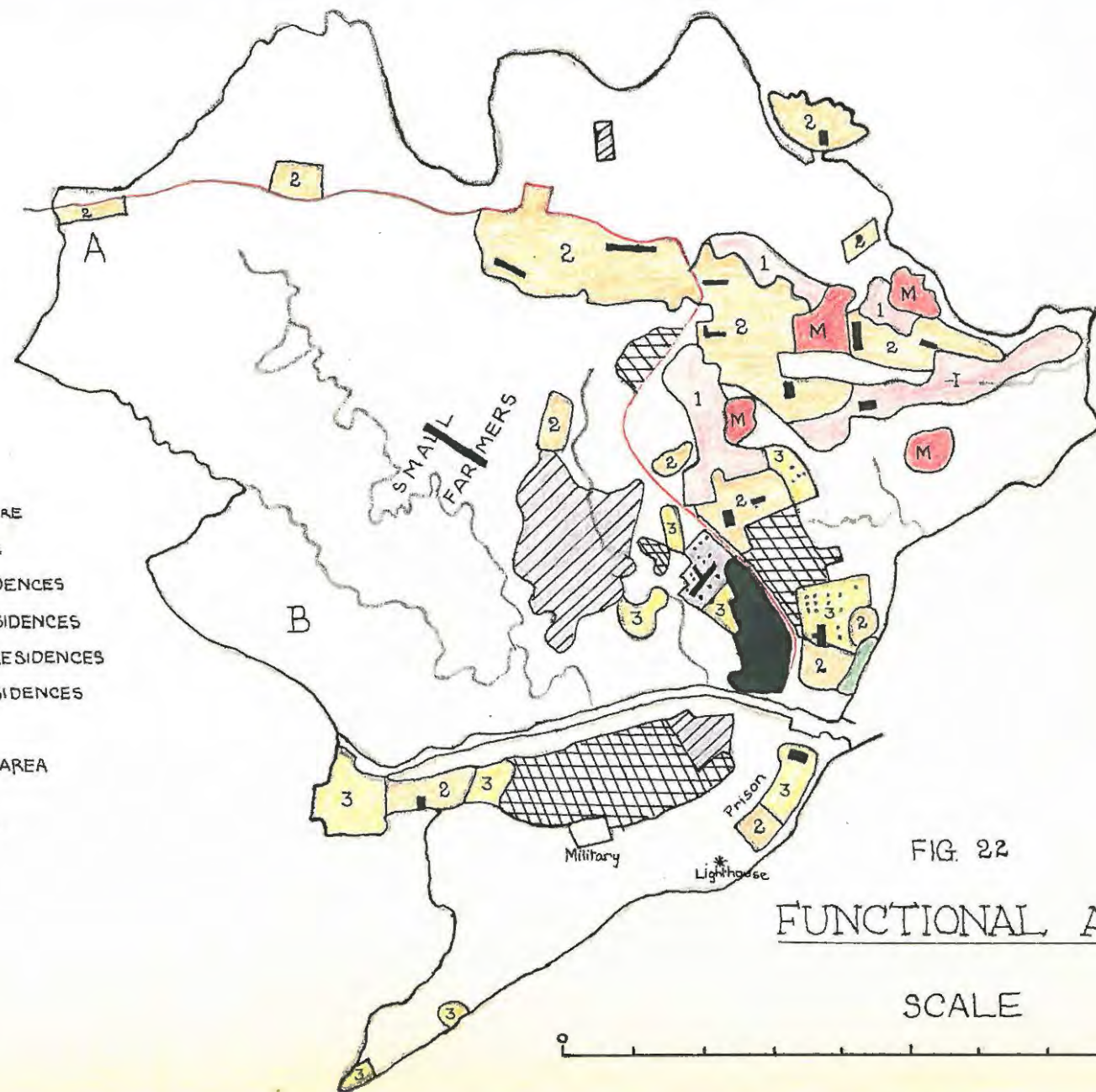
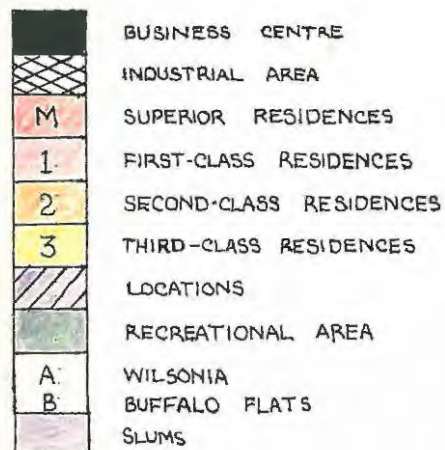


FIG. 22

## FUNCTIONAL AREAS

SCALE

10,000 yards

Adjacent to the prison and along Military Road are the Oil Tanks (plate 9) which, when first constructed in about 1930, brought the first new development to the West Bank in sixty years. (1) Cheap land close to the harbour, which was readily available for an oil wharf, was the advantage. The East Bank could not provide a very large area of level ground at the low elevation, and at that short distance from the harbour. The length of the pipeline and the cost of the pumping were less on the West Bank.

The industrial area (plates 9, 21 and 22) (cf. fig. 22) consists of Gately Township, Gately West and the old Woodbrook aerodrome. This area is largely a post-war development, following the policy of the Municipal Council to foster industries by providing cheap land carrying low rates. (2) Not only is Gately Township served by the railway, but the whole area is close to the harbour on which most of the industries depend either for import or export of their goods.

With the introduction of improved bus services and the prospect of work close at hand in the industrial area, the Municipality has been able to lay out and develop the new township of Greenfields in the old village area of Woodbrook. (cf. plate 23). The peculiar advantage of this site is the

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(1) Official of Petrol Company.

(2) Official Guide, City of East London. P. 181.

view it affords, not only of the Buffalo Valley, but also over the major portion of the town.

Collondale Aerodrome, the Municipal Airport, is on the West Bank Heights, although outside the municipal boundary. (cf. fig. 24 and plate 24). The existence of adequate level land for aerodrome purposes, only on the West Bank Heights, is related to the presence of the underlying dolerite sheet. (1) (cf. fig. 6) The siting of the aerodrome close to the Fort Grey Forest Reserve (cf. fig. 6) necessitated the trimming of a large number of trees. The military camps near the industrial area were constructed for use as flying schools and were, naturally, closely connected with the aerodrome.

#### TEACH'S BAY LOWLAND

This triangular area remains largely untouched, though with the industrial development on the "West Bank Heights", its value as a residential area must increase. Indeed, a township has already been planned at Fuller's Bay. (2)

At the moment the use of this Lowland is largely recreational. A marine drive skirts its seaward edge. As this road was used as a Grand Prix track, a road, Potter's Pass, (cf. fig. 6) was built to connect the drive with the Military Road on the Heights. (3) Large camps and dirt-

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(1) "The Geology of East London, C.P." by F.D. Mountain.

Transactions of the Geological Society of S.A.,

Vol. XLVIII, 1945, P.36.

(2) Town Planning Scheme adopted E.L. City Council, 1948.

(3) "East London Centenary 1848-1948" P.129.



track races have been staged on the broad, open grassland of this lowland. A shooting range of considerable size makes use of the gentle slope towards the sea and of the fact that a sand dune terminates the slope.

#### SANDY FORESHORE - WEST

The sand dunes in this region are still largely in their natural state; yet they have been fenced in to prevent further destruction by picnickers.

At Leach's Bay shacks of wood and iron and a tearoom have been tucked into the sand dunes, to take advantage of the sandy beach there. Making use of the rocks of the Beaufort series, a bathing pool has been constructed by the simple expedient of throwing a concrete wall around an area of rock, the height of the wall allowing the sea to enter the pool at high tide.

At Fuller's Bay is the same pattern of wood and iron shacks, a river and a sandy beach. The dunes here are extensively used for picnicking.

#### SANDY FORESHORE - EAST. (plates 1,2,3,4,6,25a)

Of the line of sand dunes from Signal Hill to Limekiln Creek only Signal Hill remains, its height and position affording a view over the sea and over the harbour and thus suggesting its use as a signal station. But the rest of the sand has been levelled and terraced to provide a broad esplanade

skirting the sea from the Orient Beach to the Eastern Beach.

(plate 1)

The fortuitous creation of the Orient Beach following the construction of the Breakwater, is naturally a recreational asset. Close by, the outcrop of rocks, belonging to the Beaufort Series, has been used in the construction of a paddling pool and a swimming bath. Further along, an aquarium makes use of the same outcrop and of the height of the Esplanade above these rocks.

Between the Limekiln Creek and the Blind River, the sand dunes stand fairly high and back the Eastern Beach which is an original beach that has been eroded gradually by the currents changed in their courses by the Breakwater.(1) The area has not been commercialised to any extent, though in the future the sand dunes might be removed entirely to create a large open space. At present, the land immediately behind the sand dunes provides a camping ground. These tents are the shrunken representatives of the host that covered the sea-front from Signal Hill to the Eastern Beach, during the years between 1900 and 1920. (2)

At its mouth the Blind River took a large horseshoe bend when within the sand dune belt. By straightening the river course and filling in the deserted bed, a grassy park with a central island of bush, was obtained as Marina Glen.

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(1) Official of the City Engineer's Department, East London.

(2) East London Centenary 1848-1948, P.119 and other photographs

The breadth of the sandy foreshore behind Nahoon Point has allowed a golf course to be laid out. The golf club had two former courses, closer to town: the first one on the Quigney; the second on the slope below Baysville. The club moved to its present position because the City Council advised it that the land below Baysville would be required for building purposes. Further, on the old course, golfers were greatly troubled by worm casts on the fairways; these are not encountered on the present site. (1) In 1923 a circular tram route was constructed to run from Oxford Street through Selborne, Berea, over Bunker's Hill, along the Esplanade from the Eastern Beach to Signal Hill and thence back to Oxford Street. (2) This made it feasible to utilise the secure advantages offered by the sandy area, since golfers could travel by tram to Bunker's Hill which is close to the course.

The Nahoon Mouth with its wide expanse of sandy beach has long been an attractive spot for campers and picnickers. The improvement of transport and the congestion in East London has led in recent years to the construction of residences and a hotel there.

From near the mouth of the Nahoon, the railway authorities

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(1) Executive member of East London Golf Club.

(2) "Daily Dispatch Centenary Special 1848-1948" P.25

have for long removed sand for foundry purposes. (1)(Plate 2)

At all points along this coast, where the rock beds are exposed, angling is possible.

GRASSY WATER DIVIDE. (plates 5,6,7,8,10,12,16)

This is the region that contains the business centre, the residential areas, the railway and the government buildings. It is, in effect, the city, and much of its land use has already been described. The factors that give it prominence are its uniform slope, the large areas of fairly level land, mostly continuous, and its continuance as a feature inland and in the general direction of the end of the "Winterberg-Amatola" line.

ROUGH DISSECTED REGION. (plates 10,11,13,14,15,18)

The upper portion of this region contains the catchment areas of the two reservoirs built into the valleys of the major streams, although both reservoirs are now fed by pumping from the Buffalo River. (2)

Lower down the slope, small farmers occupy a large area with fields tucked into the irregularly shaped interfluves. These farmers find a ready market for their vegetables in the city.

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- (1) "Mineral Resources of the Union of South Africa" P.467.  
(2) Pamphlet on Fort Murray Water Scheme, October, 1945.  
Issued by East London City Council.



After several moves caused by the expanding town, the East Bank Location was finally established in the rough country with the First Creek River as its main axis. A slum area of poverty and congestion, housing more than 25,000 natives, it covers 521 acres and consists of wood and iron shacks in unattractive array. (1) (cf. plates 13 and 15). In 1939 an improvement was begun with the adjacent Duncan Village with brick houses. (1) Two difficulties hinder progress. Firstly, there is need for the boundaries of the location to be extended, and as this must be at the expense of Amalinda, such expansion is not favoured by the inhabitants of that region. (2) Secondly, the drift to the town from the Native districts constantly maintains the degree of congestion and largely negates the advances made. (2)

In an attempt to improve conditions, the township of Parkside was established for Coloured people, nearer the town and the river. (cf. plate 14)

The industrial township of Braelyn lies between the location and the town. It contains light industries, such as the manufacture of mineral waters and panel-beating. The situation of this township has a twofold advantage. It taps the labour resources of the adjacent location and it removes these industries from valuable space in the centre of the city.

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(1) Report by Commission of Inquiry into the Conditions and Administration of the East London Urban Locations, dated 4th October, 1949. Pp. 2 and 3.

(2) Official of City Engineer's Department, East London.

Just before the First Creek River enters the Buffalo, it is joined by several small tributaries, and their combined erosive efforts have produced a low-lying bowl. This was marked off early in the town's history as the Queen's Park. (cf. plate 10) Noted for its indigenous bush, it was further enhanced by gifts of trees, animals and gates. When the town was smaller and before the widespread ownership of motor cars, Queen's Park was the centre of social life, with band concerts at the week-ends. (1) Another factor leading to the decline in importance of the Park was the moving of the passenger landing stage. Tugs bringing passengers from the ships in the roadstead, landed them at the stage near the mouth of the First Creek, and the approach to the town was in horse-drawn cabs along Pontoon Road, which skirts the Park. The Quigney Valley now contains the road to and from the harbour.

#### BUFFALO VALLEY

Much of the land use in this region was dealt with when the development of the harbour was described. It remains to refer to activities somewhat unrelated to the harbour works.

In 1898 the East London Municipality decided to have an electric power station. (2) The first such station was placed on the right bank of the mouth of the First Creek. Its position proved to be untenable as the flood waters of the First Creek damaged the plant. (3)

In 1911 the old power station was closed down as it was no longer capable of supplying the increasing demand for light and power. (2) Consequently, a new power station was erected in the large quarry being developed on the West Bank side of the harbour. (cf. plate 8) The power station makes use of the river water for cooling purposes.

Above the bridge the river has a convenient width and a long straight stretch as far as Green Point. This is a recreational area, catering for picnicking, several forms of boating and long-distance swimming.

#### THE NAHOON VALLEY

In this valley there are residential areas at Abbotsford and on the lower ground just downstream from this suburb. Much of the land at river level cannot be settled as there is considerable danger from flood waters.

The river is bridged at the ebb and flow at Abbotsford. At this point, too, the dolerite sheet (cf. fig. 6) is high above the river, thus allowing quarrying activities to be carried on with comparative ease.

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These refer to the previous page and to this page.

- (1) Old established resident of East London.
- (2) "Daily Dispatch Centenary Special 1848-1948" P. 34
- (3) "Souvenir of Storm and Freshet" 10th October, 1905  
Published by the Daily Dispatch, East London.

The lower reach of the river is at present used by the yachting club. This club started its activities on the Buffalo River but found that the constricted nature of the valley did not favour satisfactory winds. (1) The Nahoon Valley is more open and yachting is firmly established there.

## THE FUNCTIONAL AREAS

(cf. fig. 22)

### 1. The Business Centre

When it is considered that East London's prime function from its earliest times, was the forwarding and distribution of goods; that Oxford Street was the original waggon track to the interior; and, further, that the Queen's Park and the railway system restrict the particular area, it is not surprising that Colley's lay-out and its extension constitute the business centre of the town. (cf. plate 7)

Retail shops have for long been found only along Oxford Street, a pointer to its dominance as a line of communication. In recent years the shopping area has spread to the two adjacent parallel streets, i.e. Cambridge and Buffalo Streets.

Within the restricted area of this business centre are not only the usual offices, cinemas, hotels, government buildings and the like, but also woolstores and warehouses

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(1) Executive member of East London Yacht Club.



of wholesale distributors. (cf. plates 26d and 28c) These last two institutions are typical of the city and have grown with it. The present tendency is for wool stores to move to lower-rated areas, as, for instance, the industrial areas on the West Bank. The distinct smell of wool that pervades a wool store is another factor causing the move away from the centre of the town. (1)

Hemmed in, as it is, on three sides, the business centre can expand in three ways. Firstly, it re-fashions for new uses old buildings which housed activities which have moved out, for example, the wool stores. Secondly, it builds upwards, the limit in this area being seven storeys, not exceeding 100 feet. (2) Thirdly, it expands horizontally into the old residential area on its only open side - towards the Queen's Park. (cf. plate 26c) The age of the old homes there and their low value make their demolition economically possible.

Throughout the various suburbs, though not in the first class areas, there are minor shopping centres, comprised of retail shops. Although Cambridge and Vincent formed a separate municipality and had a town hall, (cf. fig. 26), they contained no commercial centre of any importance, so much was this municipality dominated by the neighbouring East London.

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(1) Secretary, Wool Exchange, East London.

(2) Municipal Regulation, Town Planning Scheme. 21st Sept., 1949.

The exploitation of valuable corner sites for shops is most marked in the poorer areas of the Quigney, North End and the lower end of Southernwood. These developments must be attributed to the loose regulations and rapid expansion of the town during the 1890's and early 1900's.

## 2. The Industrial Areas.

There are four main industrial areas: Arcadia, Chiselhurst, West Bank and Braelyn. The first three are all served by the railway. Braelyn does not require close railway articulation as it makes use of motor transport.

Arcadia had its origin as a storage area for timber and the like, where level ground was wanted and where the adjacent railway yard was an advantage rather than a deterrent. (1) While its present function is still storage, it now contains furniture, ironware and paint factories. (cf. plate 12) Its labour arrives largely by train from the suburbs or on foot from the locations.

Chiselhurst (cf. plate 16) appears to be a "clean" industrial area, separated from the first class residences (the industries were there first) by a railway line. It contains soap, blanket, cosmetics and textile factories. A good proportion of its labour, European girls, travel from the centre of town by rail.

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(1) Mayor's Minute, 29th February, 1904, P.17.

On the West Bank, the industrial areas of Gately, Gately West and the old Woodbrook aerodrome were planned by the Municipality to attract industries to the town. (1) Here was land, cheap, not in demand, close to the harbour, easily capable of railway articulation and, moreover, likely to give a better balance to the town pattern about its centre, and to give new life to the West Bank. Further, with industries close at hand, the open spaces at Woodbrook could be used as a residential area.

Here on the West Bank are wool stores, (cf. plate 28d), and factories for paint, cattle feed, cars, batteries, hosiery and resin products. Much of the labour for this area passes over the Buffalo Bridge, causing dangerous congestion at certain peak times. This has raised the question of a second bridge higher up the river - this matter will be dealt with in later pages.

These West Bank industrial sites are still in the process of development. (cf. plate 21)

Braelyn is a new development, so placed near the location that it has a ready source of labour and is able to provide work for the inhabitants of the location.

Attention must be drawn to two future industrial areas.

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(1) Town Planning Scheme. East London City Council,  
21st September, 1949.

The Municipality has about 500 acres of industrial land at Wilsonia Station (A in fig. 22) and this area may be developed within 5-10 years. (1) The second area, Buffalo Flats (B in fig. 22) would only then be developed. (1) The whole matter, however, is bound up with the extension of Duncan Village, in the East Bank Location, a matter which is still under consideration by governmental authorities. (2)

### 3. The Locations.

As with other towns in South Africa, the locations are attached to the town, and are sources of domestic labour. Their situations are interesting. The largest, the East Bank Location, is just off the "Grassy Water Divide", thrust aside, as it were, by the vigorous growth up this slope. The West Bank Location had no such fate on the dormant West Bank, but, at Cambridge, the location was safely placed on a spur in the Nahoon Valley.

The East Bank Location has a strategic position. It is in the centre of a semi-circle of residences, businesses and industries from Cambridge, through the centre of the town, to Woodbrook, thus ensuring comparatively short journeys to places of work.

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(1) Town Planning Scheme. East London City Council, 21st September, 1949.

(2) Official of City Engineer's Department, East London.



#### 4. The Residential Areas.

In the older parts of the town, the houses were built in times when there was little control, when people were less wealthy, when architectural ideas were varied and when wood and iron were the chief materials of construction. Following the expansion of the town, newer and better houses constantly sought the outskirts.

During the 1890's (1), there was a pressing demand for houses to be built on the Quigney. As the land was not yet properly drained, permission was given to build temporary houses only. Thus wood and iron houses were built over this area, and the proximity of the sea caused deterioration. Were it not for the width of the streets, carried over from Colley's lay-out, (2), it is likely that the Quigney would have become a slum area. The early holiday shacks built near the Marine Park, (cf. plate 27c), carried this standard of residence down to the sea. However, with the sea so close, the Quigney has an attraction for residents and holiday-makers, with the result that the old houses are gradually being replaced by blocks of flats and hotels. (cf. plate 27d).

On the "West Bank Strand" there are a great number of

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(1) Mayor's Minute, 28th February, 1894. P.5.

(2) Official of City Engineer's Department, East London.

third class residences, (cf. plate 26a), with the wood and iron house dominant. There has been some improvement with brick houses towards Hood Point, but the distance from town, the moist climate, the infertile soil and the nature of the neighbourhood have mitigated against considerable improvement.

The present aspect of the two groups of Acre Blocks, at North End and Southernwood, are widely different. This is owing to the factors that have been discussed earlier: the effect of the railway in cutting the North End off from expansion along the "Grassy Water Divide"; the more open aspect of Southernwood and the later development of this area when money was more plentiful and materials, architecture and building regulations were of a higher order.

In the North End, during the 1890's, landowners, taking advantage of the demand for houses and the lack of proper municipal regulations, laid out narrow streets (about 14 feet across in some instances) down the centre of their acres and crowded six houses on either side of these streets. (cf. plate 27a). As a result, the North End today may be regarded as verging on the slum area. Largely abandoned by Europeans, it is the residential area for Indians and Coloureds.

The close settlement of the North End is in marked contrast to the more spacious aspect of Southernwood where the Municipality, by buying portions of the Acre Lots, cut the long blocks into blocks of more convenient size, with streets

in conformity with the width of those in the centre of the town. (1) Along a great many of these streets, good brick houses are fairly closely spaced, (cf. plate 7), but many acres are still intact with fine houses built thereon. (cf. plate 27b). The new blocks carved out of the original Acre Blocks are still rather large, and, being square, contain a large amount of open ground in their centre. Some of this ground is used for tennis courts and for gardens, but a lot of it is unkempt. Where the acre lots of Southernwood dip with the slope to the Blind River, the dead-end appearance lessened the residential value, and here we have another example of close building with inferior materials.

During 1900-1902, the open ground about the Southernwood group was cut up into blocks of oblong shape and of reasonable size. (2), (3). They were available after the Anglo-Boer War when there were many men with fortunes. A great number of two-storeyed houses were built, easily recognisable today by their old-fashioned appearance and the two-storeyed balconies. (cf. plate 28a) (a). They are a characteristic feature of the Southernwood and, particularly, of the Belgravia areas. (cf. fig. 23). A great many of these two-storeyed houses have today been converted into flats or boarding-houses.

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(1) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1894 P.3.

(2) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1900 P.3.

(3) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1902 P.2.

(a) The date 1903 can be discerned on the facade.

79/100

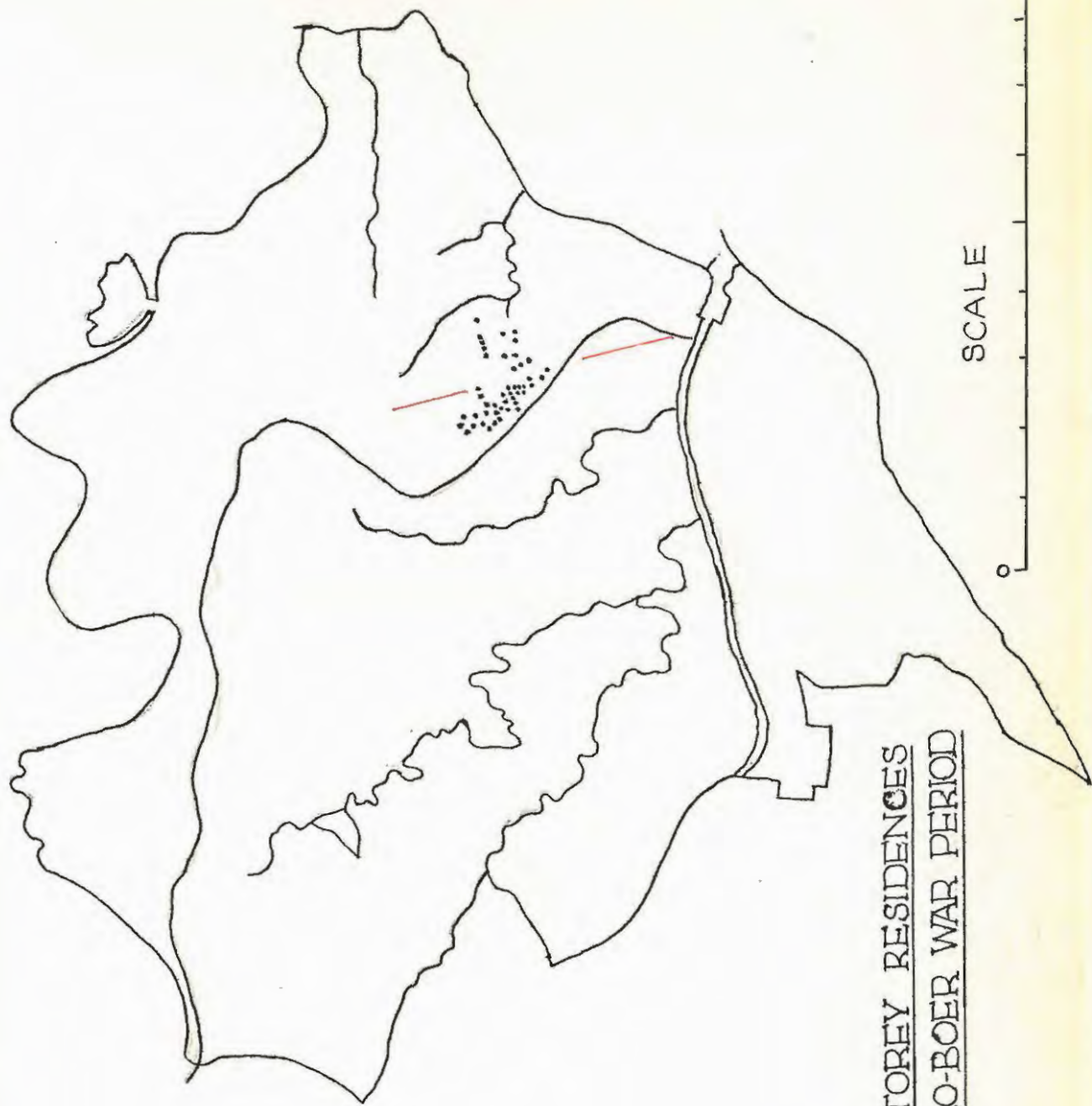


FIG 23

LARGE TWO-STOREY RESIDENCES  
OF POST-ANGLO-BOER WAR PERIOD



The edge of the Nahoon Valley provides attractive views of the river and of the distant sea. The area of superior residences in Vincent was first established to exploit the high ground with the deep valley of the Ihlanza River in front of it. In later years, this area was extended northward to the valley of the Nahoon.

#### 5. The Recreational Area.

That area of the Quigney which approaches the Orient Beach and the Esplanade, is different in character from the rest of the city, since it contains a great number of hotels for the holiday-makers. (cf. plate 1 and fig. 29).

### COMMUNICATIONS

(cf. fig. 24)

Both the road and the railway to the interior follow the crest of the water divide, the railway swinging more to overcome its chief hinderance, the gradient. The road and the rail reach the harbour by way of the Quigney Valley. On the West Bank the railway climbs out of the Buffalo River valley by means of the small stream valley which assisted the original military road; but since motor cars have greater climbing powers, the road has also a steeper route out of the harbour by way of a small ravine close to the new two-decker steel bridge. (a) The main road

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(a) Completed in 1935 - "Daily Dispatch Centenary Special 1848-1948". P. 48.

along the West Bank is still the old Military Road along the crest of the "Heights".

The main road to the Transkei turns off Oxford Street at the first point upwards along the slope that it becomes possible to have an easy crossing of the headwaters of the Blind and Ihlanza rivers. To have avoided these entirely, would have entailed a climb to Cambridge and thus a long detour. The main Transkei Road and the Scenery Drive from Cambridge make use of tributary valleys to have a gentler slope (both are in any case steep) to the bridge across the Nahoon at the ebb and flow.

During the Second World War the danger of having the Buffalo Bridge as the only means of crossing the Buffalo River became apparent. The nearest crossing of the river was at Bridle Drift, 16 miles inland. Thus the Buffalo Pass was built some 6-7 miles up the river. This makes use of the bend of the river to get a gentler gradient. The proposed development of extensive areas of the West Bank for industries raises the question of a second bridge across the Buffalo. Normal growth may compel the Municipality, say in 25 years time, to build a bridge in a position about a quarter of a mile above Green Point. Here the banks are more than 200 ft. above the river. The bridge would probably be a compromise on economic grounds between a high level bridge and one with graded approaches.(1)

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(1) Official of City and Water Engineer's Department. E.L.

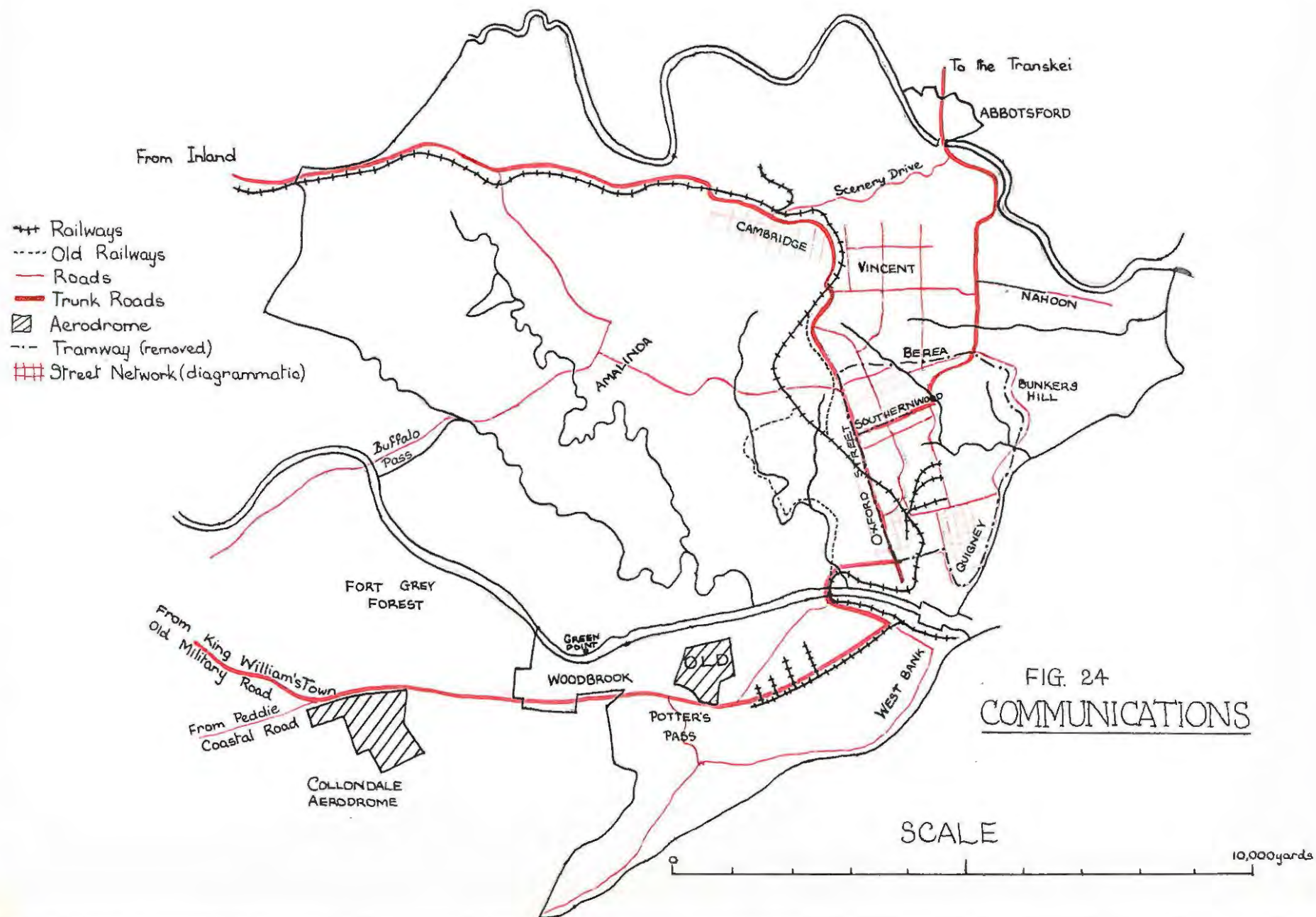
The centre of the town, with the City Hall and the Market Square and shopping centre, is by no means in the centre of the city. If anything, it is at the apex of a northward spreading V. It can be approached within a narrow sector only - if the West Bank where the position is obvious, is not taken into account. Within that sector lies the Quigney Stream which is crossed only at the Fleet Street bridge. Then the railway cuts across the "Grassy Water Divide" and further restricts access to the town centre, since only three crossings are made to the residential areas beyond the rail. One of these is a detour and insignificant. The main one is Oxford Street and this carries the bulk of the traffic. The third crossing leads to a route which twists through several minor streets and this route has been popularised by removing all stop signs along its length, in order to divert some of the flow of traffic in Oxford Street.

The broad streets laid out by Colley were carried across the Quigney Stream by way of Caxton Street, next street to Fleet Street, and the Quigney area's rectangular lay-out over most of its surface is a result of Colley's original plan. (1)

As has been mentioned earlier, the Aerodrome is located on the West Bank where the only suitable large area of level ground is to be had.

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(1) Official of City and Water Engineer's Department, E.L.





- O WOOL STORES
- WOOL STORES  
NOW ADAPTED  
FOR OTHER USES
- WOOL EXCHANGE
- X WOOL WASHERY

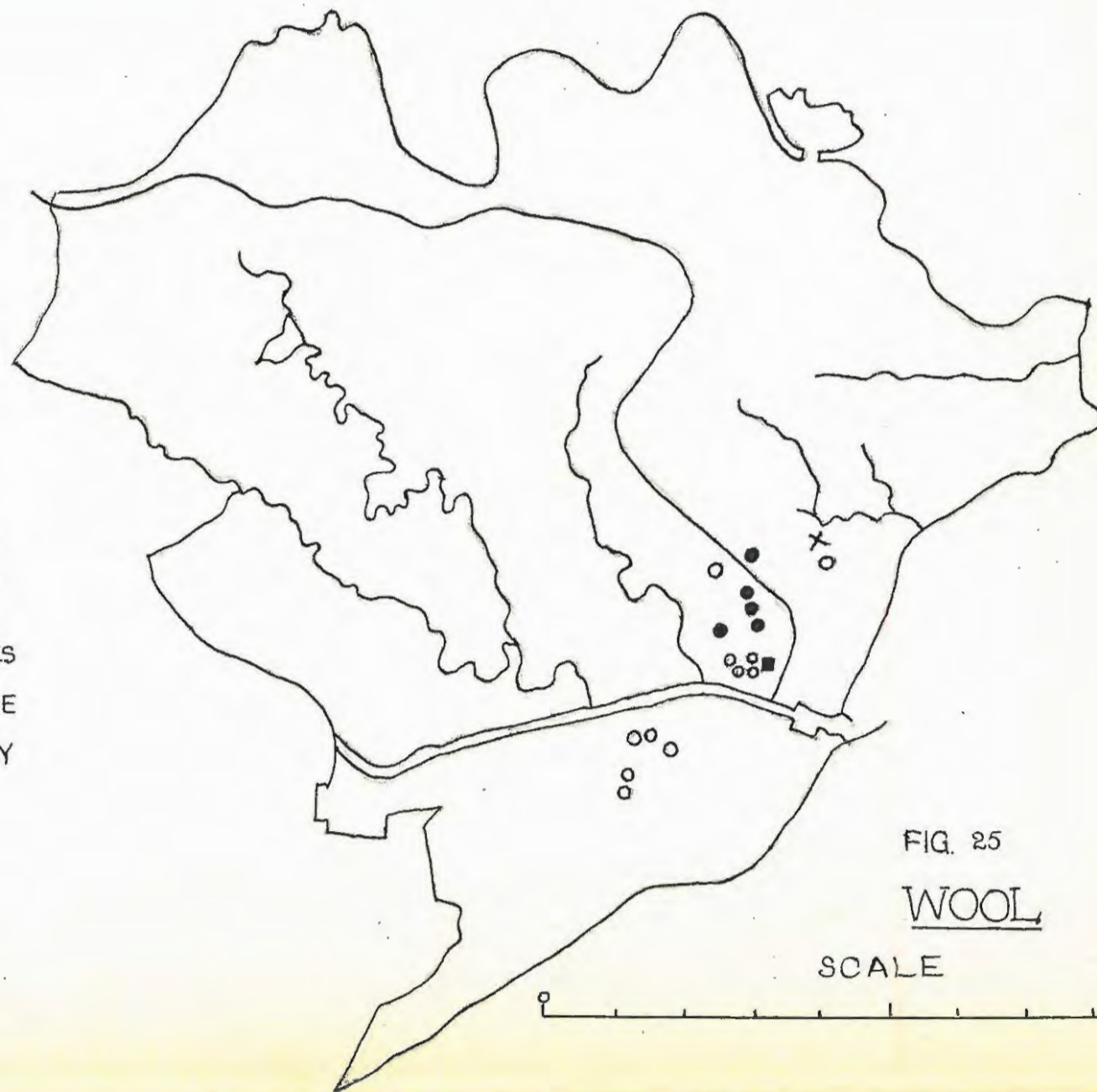


FIG. 25

WOOL

SCALE





## VARIOUS PATTERNS

## 1. Wool. (cf. fig. 25)

The prominence of the Wool trade in East London is reflected in the number of wool stores - which cover a large area of valuable land - in the business centre. Now that wool may be moved by motor transport instead of by animal-drawn transport, wool stores can move further from the railway and seek the advantage of lower rates in the Gately industrial area.

Wool is delivered to the wool stores where it is prepared for inspection by the buyers. The bales are then sold by auction at the Wool Exchange on the basis of a catalogue.

## 2. Government and Education. (cf. fig. 26)

The major governmental institutions are all located in the business centre. The City Hall and the Market Square, usually places of great social importance for a town, are not, as has been shown in the section on communications, in the centre of the built-up area. The City Hall, built on Waterloo Square left vacant because of a vlei, (1), lacks the ample open surroundings to make it a concourse for citizens.

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(1) The "Daily Dispatch Centenary Special 1848-1948". P.25.

The older part of the city, that is, the business centre, lacks schools since the early schools were make-shift, transitory and the property of individuals. (1) By the time that schools were organised on a sound basis, they were required in the area close to North End, and here we find our first cluster of schools. The next cluster is across the railway, in Oxford Street where the town was developing. (2) Increasing numbers forced a third move - to the top of Oxford Street where ample land was made available for playing fields. The prestige of the major schools is such that many children travel to them from the suburbs of Vincent, Nahoon and the Quigney, and the schools in these areas suffer.

### 3. Churches. (cf. fig. 27)

The outstanding feature of the pattern of churches is the great cluster of churches on and about Park Avenue, between Oxford Street and the Queen's Park. Again it is a case of early small churches, some well-built, some make-shift. (3) By the time that the town was well developed and worshippers could afford larger churches, (1890-1900), the population was centred in North End and thereabouts. Consequently the large churches were built nearby - Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholic, German Baptist, Lutheran, (4), and in

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(1) "East London Dispatch and Frontier Advertiser" 5th Jan., 1881. P.1.

(2) Mayor's Minute, 2nd March, 1896, P.4.

(3) Souvenir "East London Centenary, 1848-1948". P. 53.

(4) idem P. 57.



later years churches of many sects and, more recently, mosques. This cluster of churches caters for much of the Southernwood and Selborne areas, so that churches are absent there except in lower Southernwood.

#### 4. Recreation. (cf. fig. 28)

The three main recreation grounds on the East Bank owe their location in some way to the railway. The main ground in Arcadia, (cf. plate 12), was established in 1890 on a broad stretch of level ground beyond the railway line from the old town. (1) At the top of Oxford Street is a newer recreation ground occupying a fine high stretch of ground which was once the Agricultural Showground laid out on the opposite side of the old railway, away from the Southernwood residential area. (cf. plate 16) (2). The Cambridge Recreation Ground lies on the open ground where the railway curves away from the road, Western Avenue, which runs parallel to the rail for most of its length.

The recreation ground between the railway and the First Creek River is that of the East Bank Location.

None of the recreation grounds measures up to the standard required for a modern sports arena with accommodation for many sports and for many spectators. For such a stadium

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(1) Mayor's Minute, 28th Feb., 1891, P. 1.

(2) Mayor's Minute, 29th Feb., 1904, P. 1.

there are two possible sites. One is the Southernwood Quarry in the Blind River Valley, about a mile upstream, and between Southernwood and Berea. This quarry, though large, is still being developed. The second site is the large bowl just behind the mouth of the Second Creek. This natural amphitheatre, known locally as the "Elephants' Playground", has the present obstacle of being difficult to reach by road. (cf. plate 14).

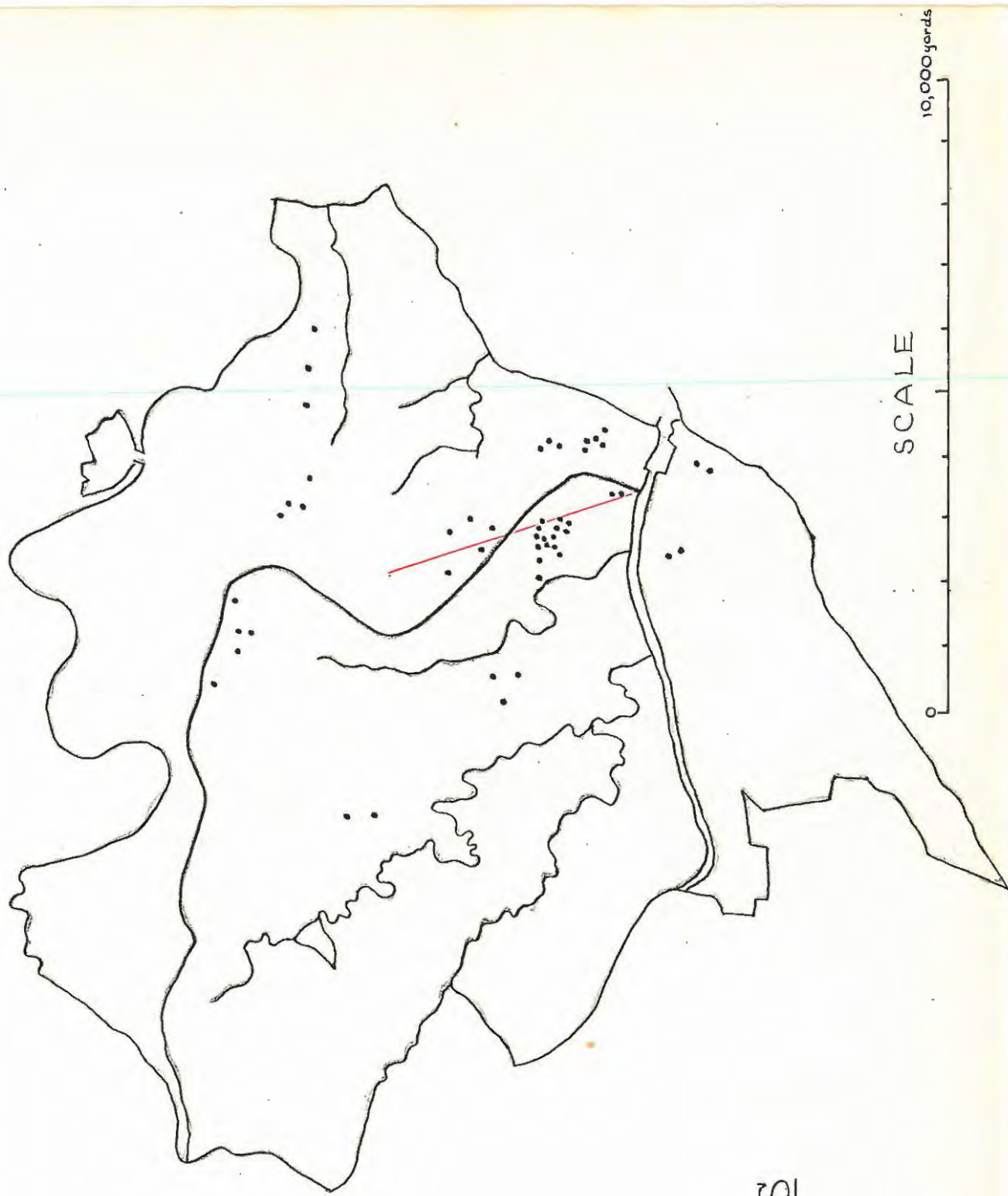
The numerous tennis courts in Southernwood must be related to the open spaces in the Acre Blocks and to the wealth of the residents. Further northward, most of the tennis courts coincide with wealthy homes.

The only swimming bath in the town is near the beach, and contains salt water. There is agitation for a freshwater bath to be built in the Clarendon Park, the undeveloped upper stretch of the Blind River between Selborne and Vincent.

#### 5. Hotels and Boarding Houses. (cf. fig. 29)

The map shows two dominant areas of hotels and boarding houses. The Quigley and Beach area reflects the zone of the holiday-maker. This group is attracted more towards the Orient Beach than towards the Eastern Beach, though proximity to the centre of town probably plays a big part. The Southernwood group reflects pleasant surroundings close to the centre of town, large houses suitable for conversion

FIG. 27  
CHURCHES



- A = Yachting  
 B = Bathing  
 C = Boating  
 Q = Queen's Park  
 T = Tennis  
 ■ = Parks and Recreation Grounds.

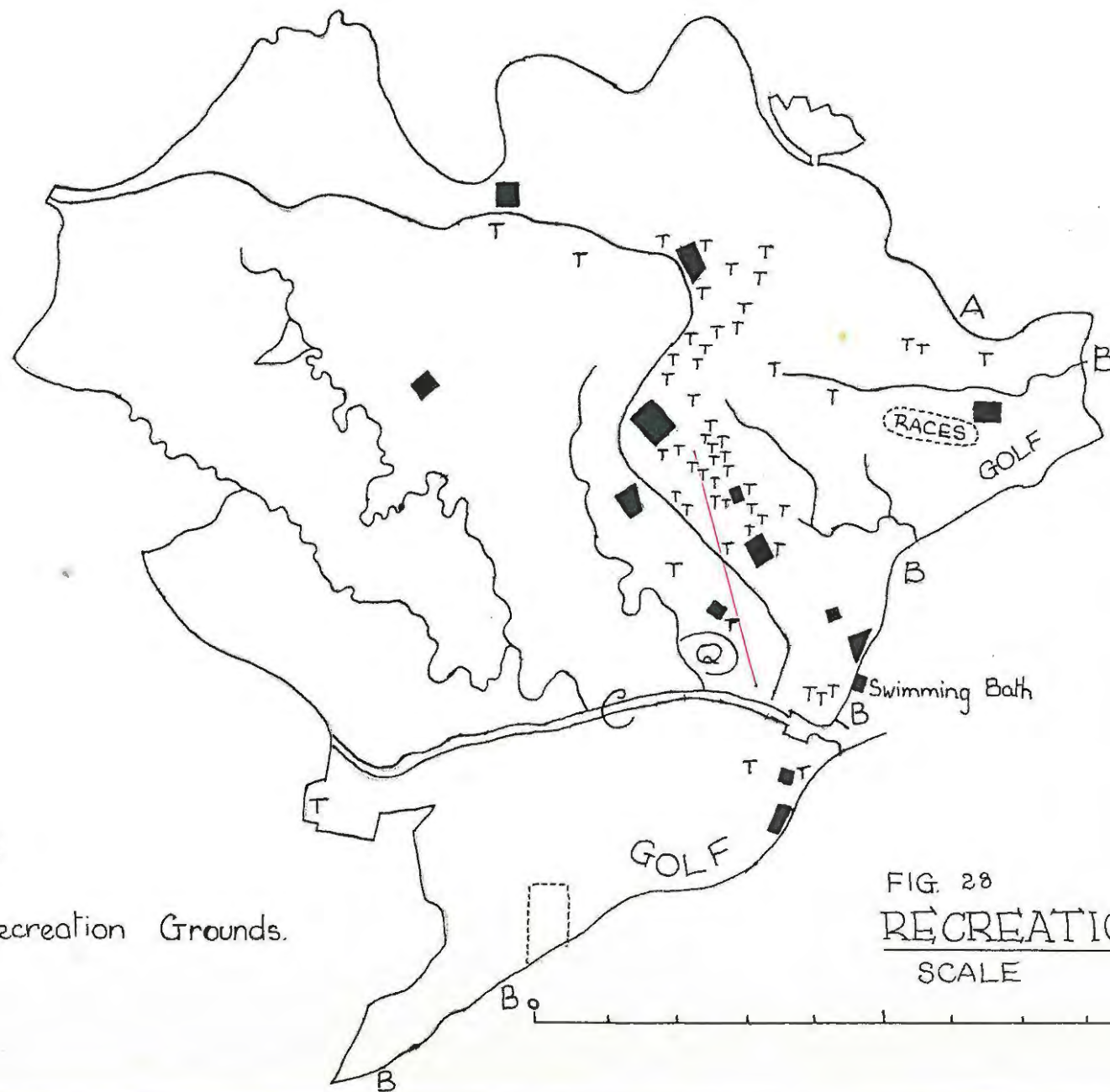


FIG. 28  
RECREATION  
 SCALE

10,000 yards



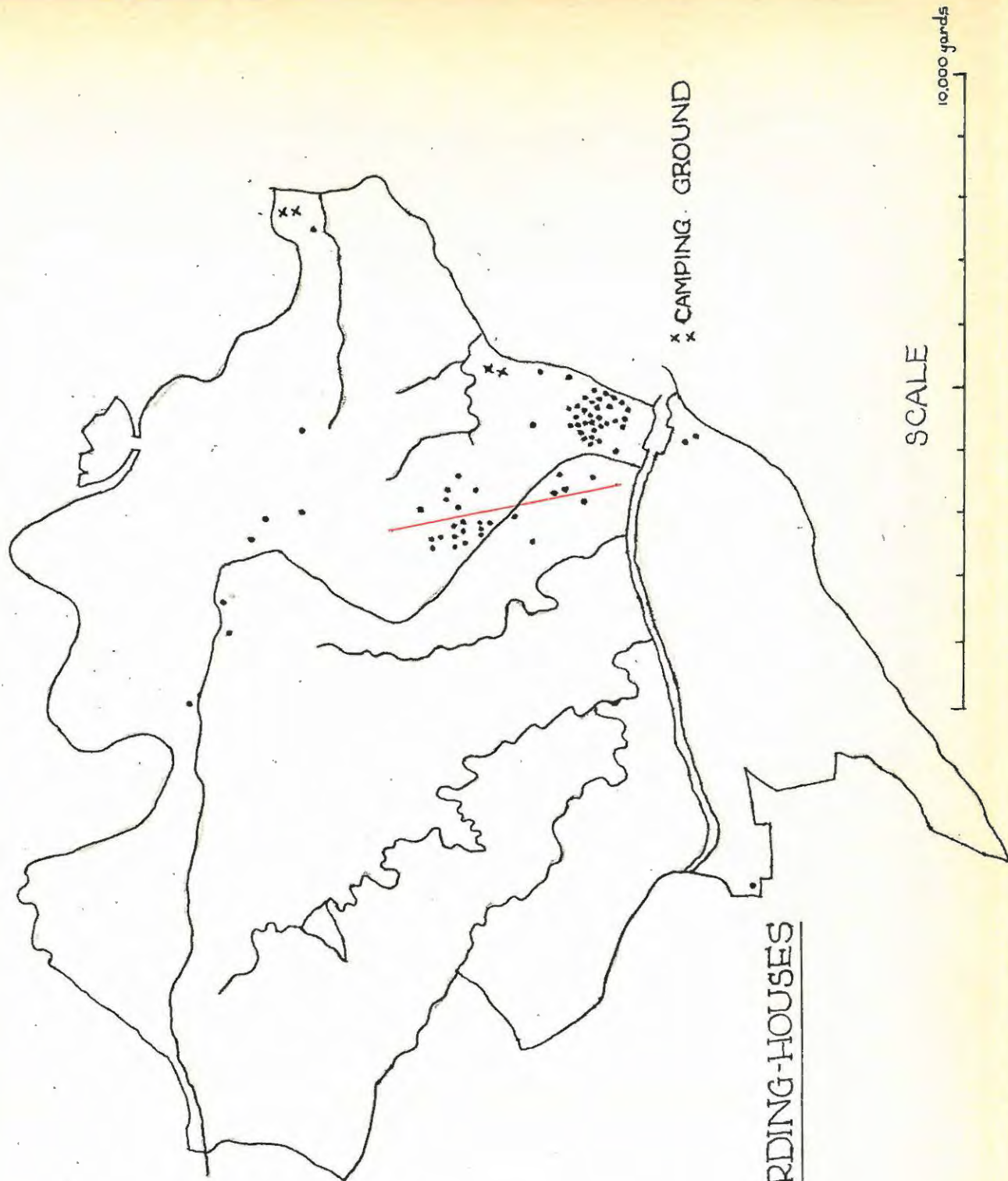


FIG. 29

HOTELS AND BOARDING-HOUSES

into boarding houses, wide grounds, and good lines of communication. A similar large group gives promise of developing at the Nahoon Mouth, but whether the West Bank will become prominent in this respect, considering its industrial development, is problematical.

#### CONCLUSION

For a century the growth of East London, Cambridge and Amalinda was slow and conservative. Industries were not encouraged, for it was considered that they would introduce the inevitable smoke and slums into a quiet community. But in the postwar era East London's views have changed. Electric power has eliminated the smoke nuisance and it is now believed that secondary industries are desirable to give employment to the rising generation in their home city.(1)

The late start of East London in the industrial sphere is fortunate since the city can call upon the services of expert town planners, and so preserve the clean appearance of the town, and avoid mistakes in the siting of industries, residences, commercial centres, schools and recreational facilities, which would <sup>be</sup> extremely expensive or impossible to correct at some future date.

It is largely to industry that East London must look

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(1) Daily Dispatch, East London. 27.2.1950

for prosperity. The ground available for industrial expansion is limited, largely by the undulating nature of the surrounding terrain and the difficulty, and costliness of providing essential services. On the West Bank, in addition to the industrial area already described, there is the possibility of obtaining about 100 acres of land at Fort Glamorgan Prison, now used for the cultivation of vegetables, for industrial purposes. (1) On the eastern side of the river, the only land suitable for industrial expansion is on the Amalinda Commonage and about 150 acres at Wilsonia. (2)

The built-up portion of the town on the East Bank has been, in the main, confined to the "Grassy Water Divide", so that with the widespread "Rough Dissected Region" intervening, the town makes contact with the Buffalo River only in between the bridge and the mouth.

Before the industrial expansion on the West Bank, development here was largely restricted to the "West Bank Strand" near the mouth. Consequently the Buffalo Bridge, the sole link for vehicular traffic between West Bank and East Bank, sufficed. But with the growth of Gately, Gately West and Woodbrook industrial areas and of the Greenfields residential suburb, the congestion, especially at certain peak periods, at the Buffalo Bridge, is such that the construction of a second bridge at or just above the ebb and

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(1) Daily Dispatch, East London. 28.4.1950

(2) Daily Dispatch, East London. 28.4.1950 and 26.8.1950

flow of the Buffalo River, is well nigh imperative, even before the industrial areas of the Amalinda Commonage and Wilsonia are developed.

The large native populations of the Ciskei and Transkei regard East London as one of their natural places of employment, (1), and with this immigration and the natural growth of the population, the East Bank Location is overcrowded. The City Council has sought to extend the boundaries of the Location by the addition of about 350 acres of land to the westward of Amalinda's main street. (2) This proposal has met with opposition from those who live in Amalinda, and from those who believe that the location should be sited about ten miles from the city on the railway line to the north. (3) But this latter plan is out of the question as it would be impossible to run subsidised transport, and in consequence the cost of travelling to and from the city would be prohibitive for the average native worker. The better plan appears to be that of extending the location to the west of Amalinda. This would result not only in the natives being close to both residential and industrial areas, but would provide the natives with a sector, giving an approach to the centre of the city, and having a widening hinterland.

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(1) Report of Commission of Inquiry into Conditions and Administration of East London Locations. P. 2.

(2) Daily Dispatch, East London. 26.8.1950.

(3) idem.



Furthermore, this would bring the populated area of the town closer to the Buffalo River at the point where the new bridge is most likely to be constructed.

A problem which faces a municipality, is to carry out its duties to the town without placing a heavy financial burden upon its citizens. During the year ended 31st December, 1949, the ordinary expenditure of the East London Municipality was £1,283,000, and the capital expenditure £700,000. (1) For the same period the ordinary revenue was £1,189,000, of which £330,486 (2) was obtained from rates assessed on the total rateable value of the town, £18,089,000. (1) (a)

The spread-out nature of the city serves to increase the municipal expenditure in East London. This spread-out nature is largely owing to the topography since many small rivers break up the city area. Further, the city has not been developed from the centre outwards. This is partly owing to a tendency to hold on to commonage by the Municipal Council, (4), and partly because of the development at a very early stage of Cambridge and Amalinda as separate entities at the circumference. These factors serve to increase all

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(1) Official Year Book. No. 26. 1950. P. 120

(2) idem. P. 142.

(3) S.A. Municipal Year Book, 1949-50. P. 59.

(4) Official, City Engineer's Department, East London.

(a) The 1946 rate was 15.76d on site, plus 1.75d on total valuation of land and buildings - equivalent to 5d in the £ on total valuation. (3)

service costs, including long lengths of connecting roads, water pipes, electricity cables and sewers. In addition the Cambridge Municipality, which was a large built-up area, prior to the amalgamation in 1942 followed a policy of maintaining low rates and as a result did not provide adequate services. (1) The majority of the streets remained untarred and there were no sewerage facilities, whereas by 31st December, 1941, the whole of East London had been sewered. (2) When a new area is developed, the sale of land helps to pay for the provision of services. But in the case of Cambridge no such money was available and the backlog of work has had to be paid for by increasing the financial burden on the rates.

The case of Cambridge sounds a note of warning. Since 1942 the boundaries of East London have been extended to include Cambridge, Amalinda, Woodbrook and Abbotsford, and there is no reason to believe that they will not be extended further. High land prices in the city and the desire for a country atmosphere are driving people to buy large country plots well outside the city. (3) A number of peri-urban landowners are considering future townships (3) but as yet there is no broad master plan to control township and road planning outside the municipal boundaries. In order

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(1) Official, City Engineer's Department, East London.

(2) S.A. Municipal Year Book, 1949-50. P. 59.

(3) Daily Dispatch, East London. 27.2.1950.

to attempt some form of control, it appears desirable that fixed limits should be set to the future boundaries of East London and that beyond these limits, a green belt some ten miles wide should be demarcated in which no further township development would be allowed. The limits of the future boundaries are suggested by the limits of the area which could be supplied with water from the Laing Dam. (cf. fig. 16).

But further factors, such as the provision of fresh food, traffic and parking problems, time and fuel wasted in long-distance transportation of workers to and from their homes, must be taken into account in order to make for a healthy, happy and contented community.

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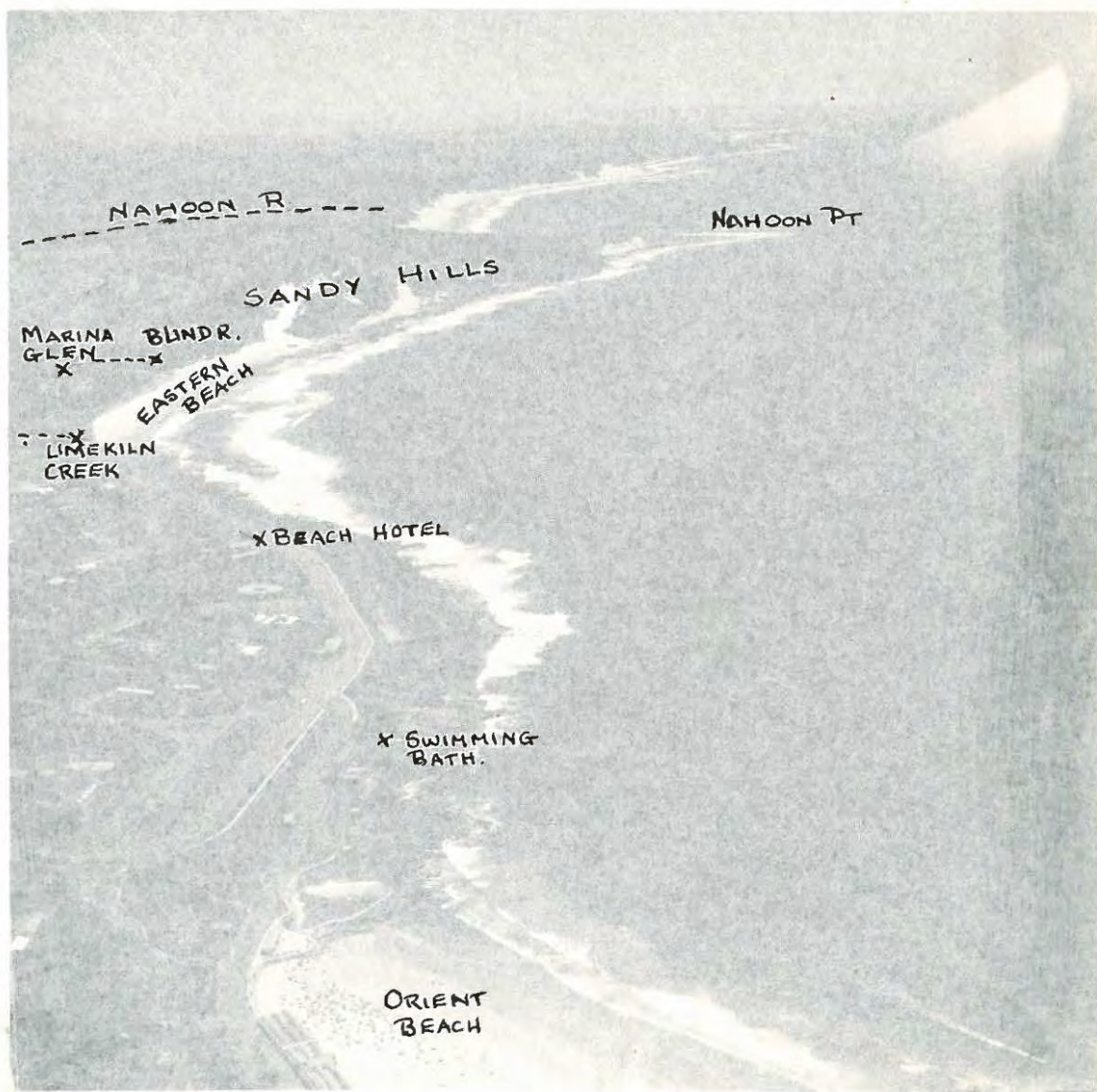
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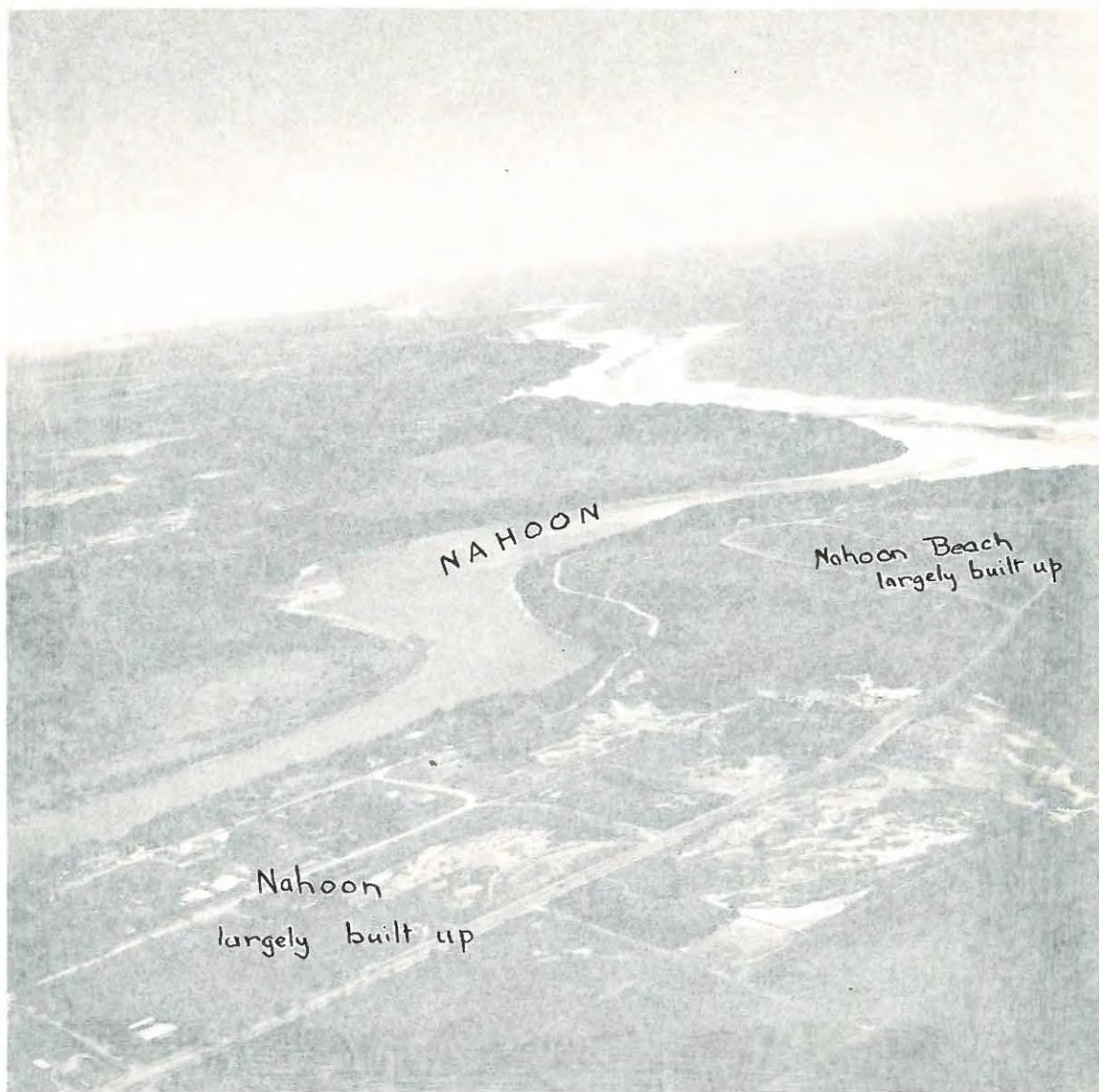
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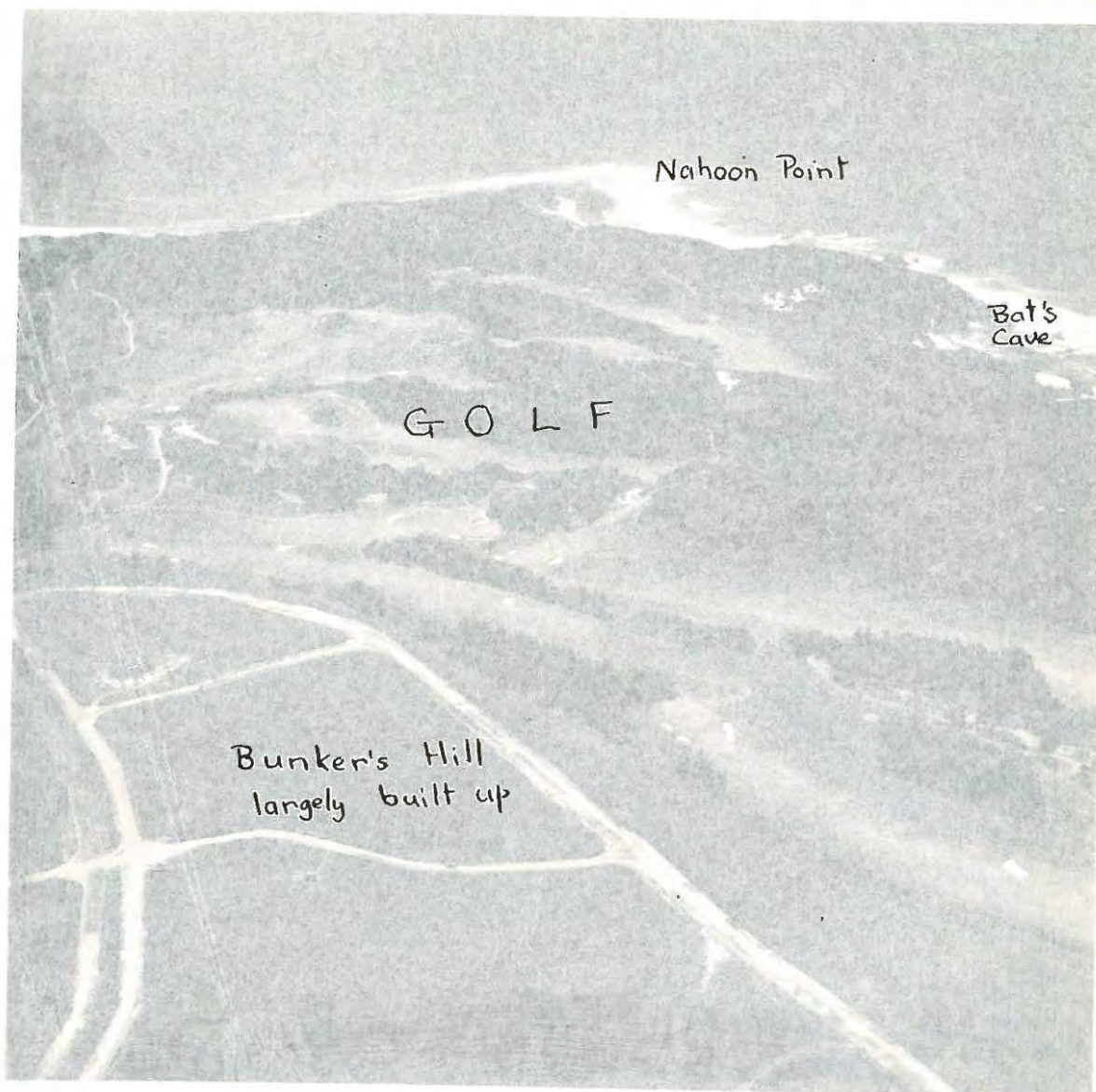
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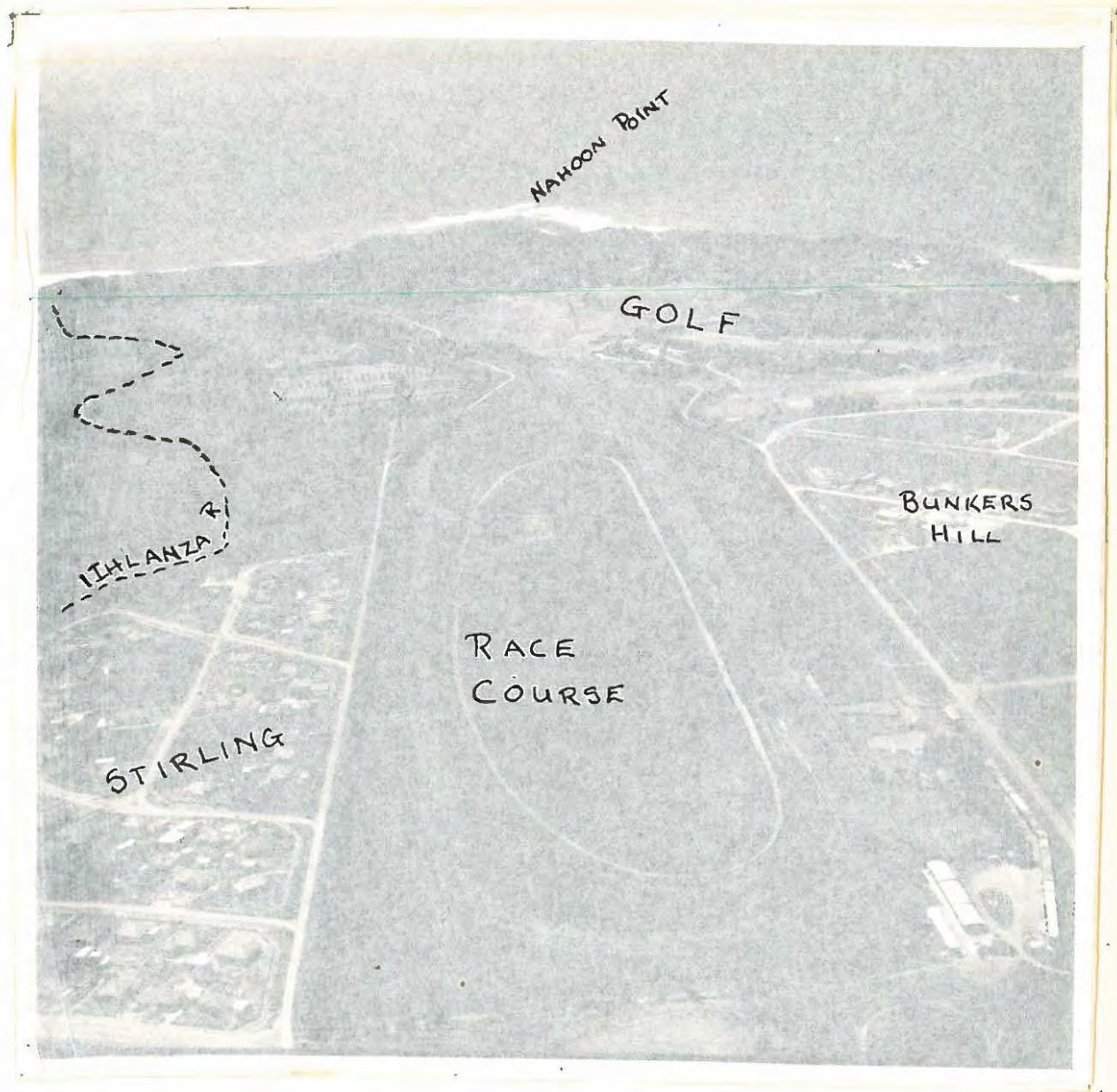




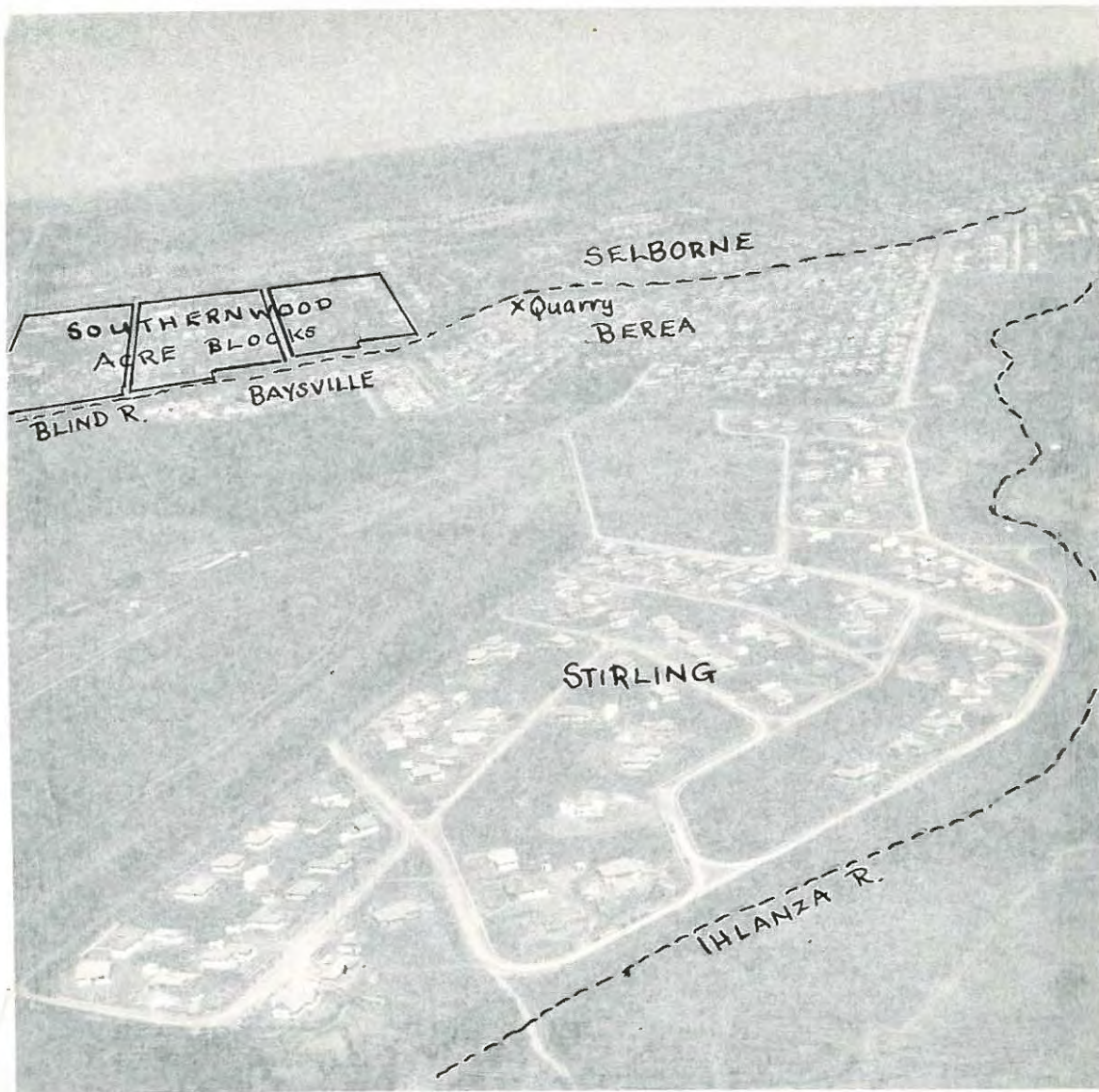


















Water Station  
X  
Willow Road  
West Bank Street  
Location  
Bank  
West















































Aerial View, Harbour, East London.

S.A.R./E.L. 4

25 a



AERIAL VIEW, EAST LONDON.

S.A.R./E.L. 5

25 b



a



b

26



c



d



a



b

27



c



d



a



b

28



c



d



