

A Nassau County Park at Salisbury



Proposed by
J. RUSSEL SPRAGUE
County Executive

What Salisbury Has to Offer

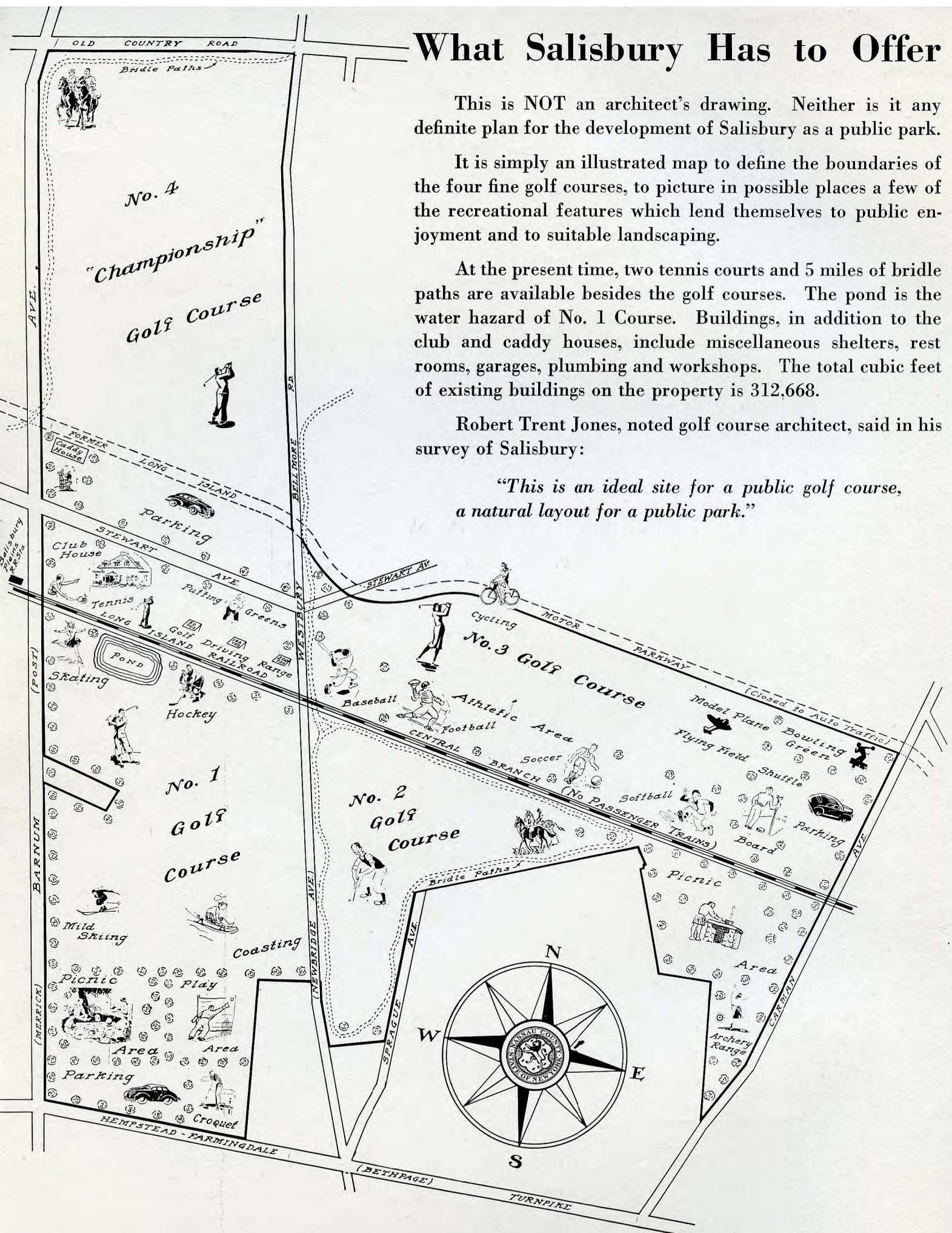
This is NOT an architect's drawing. Neither is it any definite plan for the development of Salisbury as a public park.

It is simply an illustrated map to define the boundaries of the four fine golf courses, to picture in possible places a few of the recreational features which lend themselves to public enjoyment and to suitable landscaping.

At the present time, two tennis courts and 5 miles of bridle paths are available besides the golf courses. The pond is the water hazard of No. 1 Course. Buildings, in addition to the club and caddy houses, include miscellaneous shelters, rest rooms, garages, plumbing and workshops. The total cubic feet of existing buildings on the property is 312,668.

Robert Trent Jones, noted golf course architect, said in his survey of Salisbury:

"This is an ideal site for a public golf course, a natural layout for a public park."



*“ . . . Nassau Plans a People’s Park for the
Recreation of Generations . . . ”*

J. Russel Sprague



'A NASSAU COUNTY PARK AT SALISBURY'

There are 820 acres in the exact geographical center of Nassau now owned by the people.

This valuable tract of improved property has been called at various times: "Salisbury Plains," "Salisbury Links," and "Salisbury Golf Club."

The Nassau County Administration is ready to announce the projected creation of a Nassau County Park at Salisbury.

It will be recalled that the people came into possession of these 820 acres in 1940 for uncollected taxes amounting to \$190,000. This is but a suggestion of their actual value, a mere fraction of their potential value. Development of Salisbury in 1918 and upkeep through the years are estimated to have cost private operators more than one million dollars!

As farmland, this property is said to be worth in the vicinity of \$560,000. *It is already off the assessment rolls; its conversion into a park will not affect taxes.* The highest courts have ruled on the validity of the County's title.

THE TIME TO CREATE A NASSAU COUNTY PARK IS NOW! SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY MUST BE GRASPED WHILE IT PRESENTS ITSELF! WE CANNOT WAIT FOR INEVITABLE POPULATION DENSITY TO CLOSE IN AROUND US!

Nassau has been operating from two to four of Salisbury's golf courses to preserve them as the valuable asset they are and to prevent their reversion to common acreage. This operation has paid all expenses, all maintenance costs, all repairs and improvements. Income has been the sole source for disbursement!

War which cut receipts of the L. I. State Park Commission's Bethpage Courses by 43 per cent, reduced Salisbury's receipts by 22 per cent. Were it not for the gas and tire shortages, Salisbury's four courses would now be yielding a handsome, seasonal profit.

WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW ?

The future is of great concern to everybody. Businessmen are preparing to return to peacetime production. Plans for their private expansion are already on drawing boards.

Government, too, is looking beyond the horizon. Scores of needed projects are on our postwar construction program. Prominent in plans for the "Greater Nassau of Tomorrow" are those for the development of our recreational resources.

Public recreation for our county's nearly half million residents is just as much a governmental responsibility as their health—to which it is a most important contributor.

The County Administration has devoted extensive study to Salisbury as a future recreational center. It has weighed carefully the following possibilities for Salisbury's disposal:

1. Sell the 820 acres to builders for development.
2. Sell portions to interested corporations for burial grounds.
3. Preserve them in their entirety, dedicate them for use as a County Park, operate the golf courses for the public at modest fees, expand present facilities, establish additional ones, make them all a self-supporting enjoyment to the people for all time to come.

REASONING

The County Administration has had much experience in the disposition of tax delinquent lands. It knows that *experience in such matters is a far better guide to success than is theory.*

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1. There are abundantly available in the County large areas of undeveloped property in private ownership, located within easier commuting zones, nearer existing transportation lines.

When building resumes and real estate again starts on the move, construction of approximately 3,200 low cost homes on Salisbury would prove no immediate boon in assessed valuation to *reduce* County taxes. Rather would such a mushroom growth *increase* taxes by impositions on government for highways, sewers, drainage, schools, etc.

2. The people of Nassau have repeatedly demonstrated their opposition to the creation of any more cemeteries!
3. The third possibility—preservation of Salisbury for a public park—calls for a brief review of pertinent facts.

In the first ten years after the last war, Nassau's population increased 140 per cent or from 126,000 to 303,000. It is now about 450,000. FIGURES BASED ON RATION BOOK NO. 4 PROVE NASSAU TO HAVE THE GREATEST PERCENTAGE OF WARTIME RESIDENT POPULATION INCREASE IN THE UNITED STATES! Even the suspension of building—except for defense housing—has been unable to retard our county's constant growth. It is estimated that Nassau's population will double in the 20 years following this war.

Nassau has an area of 274 square miles. Brooklyn and Queens together have only 179. We boast numerous village, town and special district parks which contribute admirably—in a limited way—to the recreational enjoyment of their respective communities.

At the eastern extremity of Nassau, the State of New York provides *its* people with splendid facilities for golfing at Bethpage and for bathing at Jones Beach.

BUT NOWHERE DOES NASSAU COUNTY HAVE A CENTRAL PARK FOR THE USE OF *ITS* PEOPLE !

There were 284 municipal golf courses built in the United States from 1920 to 1930. The upsurge of golf after this war, according to professionals, will be "tremendous."

They point to the use of driving ranges by the United States Army as only one of the many encouragements for a whole new crop of golfers.

SURVEYS OF SALISBURY

Two independent surveys of Salisbury were made recently at my suggestion. One was by Robert Trent Jones, nationally known golf course architect; the other, by Charles H. Mayo, internationally known golfer, manager of many clubs here in the United States and in Great Britain.

Wrote Mr. Jones in part:

"... Salisbury is ideal for a recreational center for Nassau County. It is centrally located and its proximity to New York City and to Brooklyn could offer it a tremendous reservoir of potential players. . . . These courses are a public asset and they should be brought up to the highest standards for maintenance as municipal courses. . . . A valuable property has been kept from becoming defunct and is in a position where it can be brought to flourish in the future. . . ."

Agreed Mr. Mayo in different words:

"... Nassau has acquired for a ridiculously low price what well might be turned into one of this country's finest public golf courses. . . . I visualize Salisbury as a great municipal course for future Nassau and as such, a wonderful investment in the health and happiness of thousands now playing golf and the many thousands more who will take it up after the end of the war. . . ."

Within the past few weeks, Gene Sarazen, veteran golf star, was quoted by the Associated Press as follows:

“ . . . After this war, golf is really going to become the peoples' game. There'll be more public golf courses, lower greens fees and cheaper golf equipment. . . . ”

CLUBHOUSE — FACILITIES

Successful golf course operation depends on a clubhouse and attendant facilities. Salisbury HAS A CLUBHOUSE, right where it should be—where all four courses begin and end! It was built and furnished by the County from collected greens fees. It cost \$45,000; it is in American Colonial architecture and was purposefully designed to permit future expansion. A large parking area is conveniently adjacent.

For those who may not necessarily be interested in golf, this is what Salisbury has more than ample space to offer:

Tennis
Horseback Riding
Skating, Hockey
Baseball, Softball
Handball
Golf Driving Range
Archery Range
Model Plane Flying

Picnic Areas
Bowling Greens
Putting Greens
Bicycling
Winter Coasting
Beginners' Skiing
Football
Soccer

WHAT PRICE PARK ?

The County already owns Salisbury. There will be NO costs of acquisition, NO expensive condemnation proceedings which many municipalities face in *belated* creation of public parks.

IN FACT, THERE SHOULD BE LITTLE OR NO EXPENSE TO MAINTAIN SALISBURY BECAUSE IN NORMAL TIMES, INCOME FROM THE GOLF COURSES WILL SUPPORT THEM, WILL MAKE A PROFIT FROM THEM !

Under private ownership, these courses had a record day of 1,685 players who paid \$5,055. in three dollar greens fees !

Naturally, the County's fees will be as small as possible to permit as many as possible to play golf. Special seasonal rates could be worked out for residents of Nassau, and the courses reserved for their use.

It is evident, from the foregoing facts, why the County Administration believes so sincerely in the preservation of Salisbury. Its dedication for a public park is the only farsighted, provident way of reaping ever-increasing public benefits from it !

Postwar plans for our County would not be complete without envisioning County-owned recreational facilities.

The Nassau Administration is acting on the principle that it is the duty of government—all government—to husband the resources of the people, not to squander them. It makes no difference whether those resources are for work or play. Health and happiness are dependent on both.

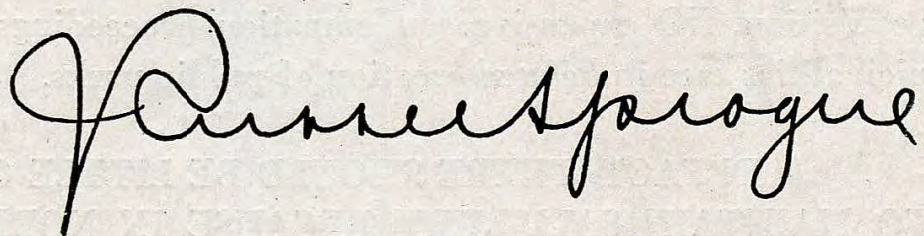
Accordingly, we propose to proceed with the establishment of

"A NASSAU COUNTY PARK AT SALISBURY"

We propose to develop a public park which one day will be to Nassau County what Central Park is today to New York City.

Nassau County plans a PEOPLES' PARK for the recreation of generations.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James Sparoque". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the "Respectfully submitted," text.

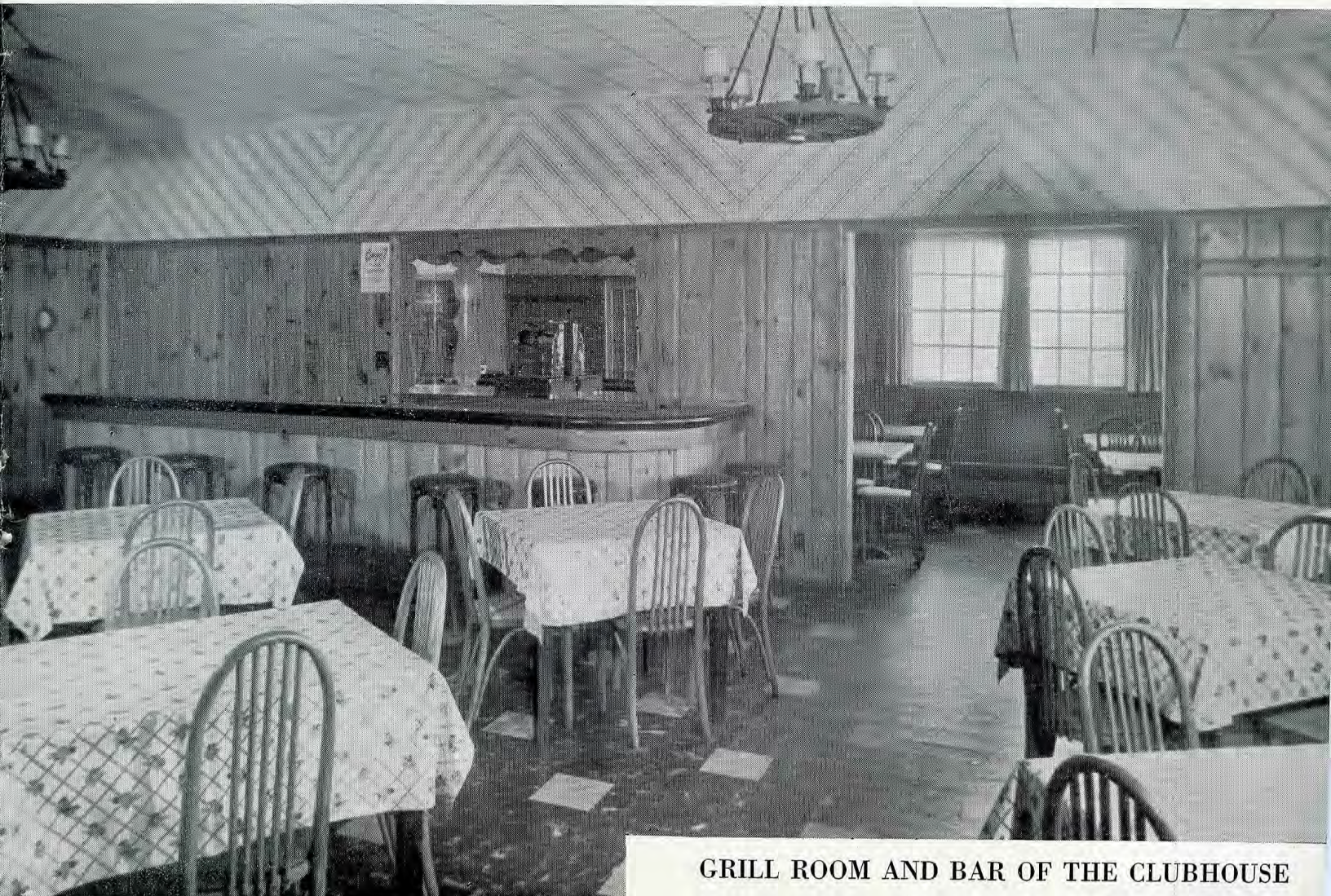
County Executive.

Old County Court House,
Mineola, New York,
April 24, 1944.

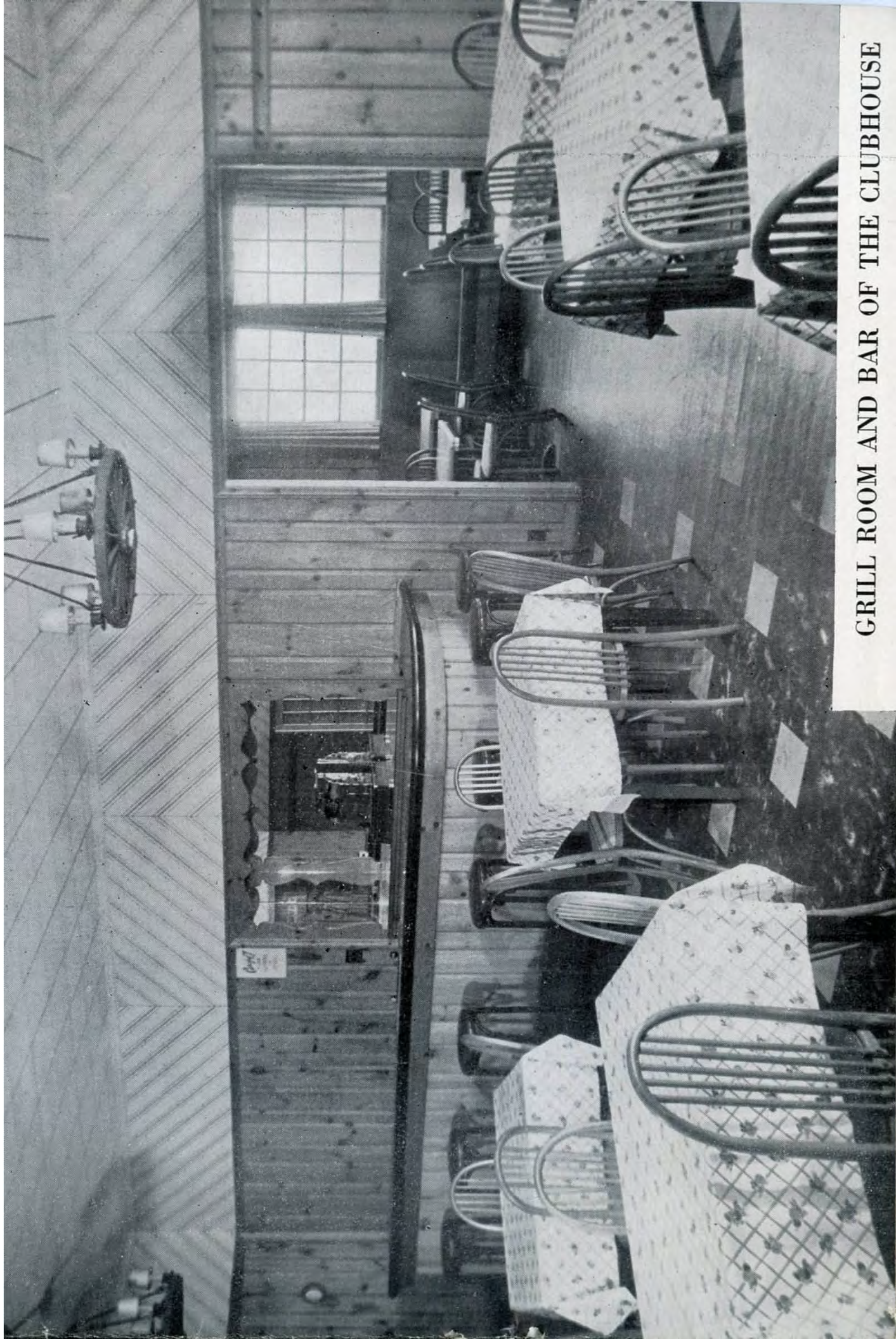
'Where Salisbury's Four Golf Courses Begin and End'



FRONT VIEW OF NEW COLONIAL CLUBHOUSE



GRILL ROOM AND BAR OF THE CLUBHOUSE



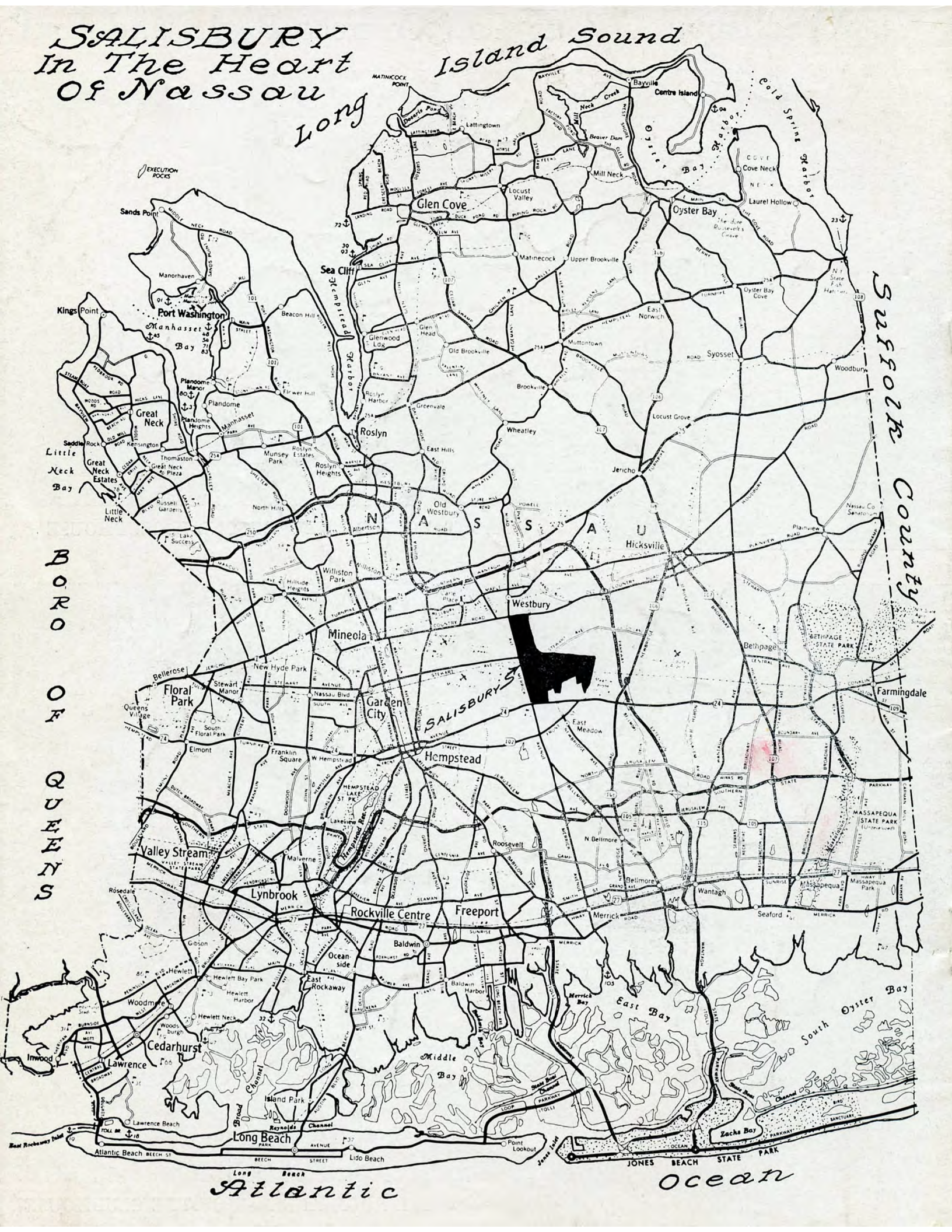
GRILL ROOM AND BAR OF THE CLUBHOUSE

SALISBURY In The Heart Of Nassau

Long Island Sound

*BORO
OF
QUEENS*

Suffolk County



Atlantic Ocean

Jones Beach State Park