

## Historical Geography:

### Long Island in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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## After the American Revolution

- Long Island began to develop quickly.
- People loyal to the Crown (Loyalists) left LI for Canada or went back to England.
- Patriots returned to find their land in near ruin.

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## After the American Revolution

- Forests had been cut down.
- British forces had sacked farmsteads.
- Farmland was overgrown from years of neglect.
- Trade, shipping and fishing started to return to normal in the first years of the 1800s.

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## After the American Revolution

- Embargo Act of 1807 hurt Long Island merchants and shippers.
- The War of 1812 interrupted coastal and trans-Atlantic shipping to and from LI.
- The British Navy blockaded Long Island.
- LI residents feared a British invasion.
- More trees were cut down.
- Peace returned in 1815 with the Treaty of Ghent.

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## Catalysts for Development

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Whaling</li> <li>• Trading</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steam engine</li> <li>• Long Island RR</li> <li>• Industrial growth</li> <li>• Resorts and summer homes</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

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## Catalysts for Development: Agriculture

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LI picked up as being a major regional supplier of agricultural products.</li> <li>• Not the best land, it drew farmers from New England.</li> <li>• About 60%-80% of the people were engaged in farming.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grains (corn, wheat, oats, rye) grew well on the Hempstead Plains.</li> <li>• Vegetables (peas, beans, carrots, turnips, pumpkins) were planted.</li> <li>• Berries (strawberries, cranberries, huckleberries) and Fruits (plums, grapes, apples) were picked.</li> <li>• Long Island led NYS in the production of hay.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

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### Catalysts for Development: Agriculture, <sup>2</sup>

- Cattle were kept for dairy and as a status of wealth, not for meat.
- LI was the main supplier of dairy products to NYC.
- Pigs were the major source of meat.
- Sheep were raised for wool.
- The "Long Island duckling" came from China in 1873 on a merchant ship. Hence its name: "Pekin duck."

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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing

- From the time of the Indians, fishing was an important source of food on LI and continued in the 1800s.
- Shallow coastal water and salt water marshes produced bountiful harvests of fish and shellfish (oysters, clams, scallops, mussels and crabs).

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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>2</sup>

- Along with seaweed, fish was used as a fertilizer to enhance LI soils.
- Fishing ports were established in most deep water inlets.
- North Shore, Peconic Bay and South Shore communities focused on the sea.
- Great South Bay, shallow with few deep water channels, could not support large vessels.

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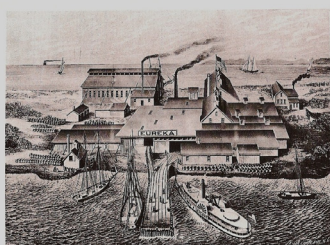
### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>3</sup>

- **Menhaden**, a non-edible type of herring, was abundant around LI.
- Ezra L'Hommedieu pioneered the use of menhaden to fertilize fields in the early 1800s
- After being processed for oil, the remains were sold to farmers who spread 8000 fish/acre.
- By the 1850s the fish was netted by the millions.
- By the 1880s menhaden processing was a million dollar industry, creating jobs and increasing farmers' profits.
- However, overfishing, odor (processing and use), and chemical fertilizers soon reduced its presence on LI.

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### Menhaden Processing Plant Orient, LI

1910-1911  
The conversion of menhaden, or mackerels, into fertilizer proved a boon to fishermen, farmers, and operators of fertilizer plants, such as this one in Orient.



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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>4</sup>

#### Oysters

- Oysters are native to LI Sound and Great South Bay and thrive in areas where clean salt and fresh water meet.
- For hundreds of years they were gathered and eaten by Indians and colonists.
- Oysters and most shellfish can be "cultivated."
- Shellfish are water-filtering animals.

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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>5</sup>

- 1815: City Island residents (at the west end of LI Sound) decided to harvest oysters commercially.
- This success was copied by residents on both sides of LIS and in Great South Bay.
- 1824: Patchogue on GSB was prized for its oysters.
- Every North Shore bay from Flushing to Mt. Sinai was planted with seed oysters.

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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>6</sup>

#### Pollution

- Sewage from urbanized areas along all the coasts made oysters grow fast but bacteria and viruses ingested were transmitted to those who ate them.
- 1880: polluted water from Connecticut oil refineries began to destroy LIS oyster beds.
- Between 1892 and 1924 there were illnesses nationwide traced back to LI oysters and the industry collapsed.

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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>7</sup>

#### Cow Bay Oysters

- 1835 oysters were planted in Cow Bay.
- It became a major supplier to NYC especially after the City Island beds were depleted in the 1860s.
- 1880s saw two-thirds of its residents engaged in oystering.

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### Catalysts for Development: Fishing, <sup>8</sup>

#### Fin Fishing

- A variety of bountiful fish (fluke, flounder, striped bass, snapper, eel, bluefish, and ocean fish) in LIS, Great South Bay and the Atlantic Ocean created a large food fishing industry on the North and South Forks.
- Montauk, Sag Harbor and the Hamptons were commercial fishing ports.
- Overfishing, pollution and habitat alteration reduced local fishing stocks.

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### Catalysts for Development: Whaling

- Originally whales found on the beach were butchered and used.
- Indians in dugouts learned to drive a whale to shallow waters where it beached and died.
- Colonists brought ocean-going whaling technology to LI.
- Whales rarely swam into LIS.

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### Catalysts for Development: Whaling, <sup>2</sup>

- Whales were hunted for their blubber, odorless spermaceti oil, meat and bone.
- A lucrative business, whaling ports grew on LI with the main whaling centers at Cold Spring Harbor on LIS and Sag Harbor in Gardiners Bay.
- LI whaling never surpassed that of the main ports of Conn and Mass., peaking from the late-1700s to the mid-1800s.

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## Catalysts for Development: Whaling<sup>3</sup>

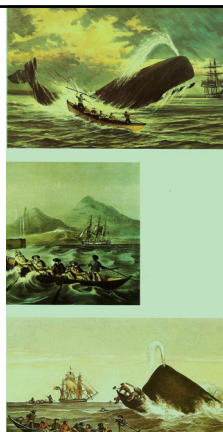
### Cold Spring Harbor

- Located 100 mi from the ocean, it developed into a whaling center because of the Jones family.
- In the 1700s their grandfather had the monopoly on towing whales to port.
- In the 1830s the company owned 9 whalers.
- Port activity fueled the town's economy making it one of the busiest shipping center on LI in the 1840s.

### Sag Harbor

- Located in a deepwater inlet on the north side of the South Fork in Gardiner's Bay.
- Designated the first east coast international port of entry in 1789.
- Thrived as a whaling center from 1760-1850. The last whaler left in 1871 and never returned.

## Catalysts for Development: Whaling



Prints showing whaling expeditions out of Long Island ports.

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## Catalysts for Development: Industry

As farming and fishing communities grew, the need for specialized workers increased.

Blacksmiths, carpenters, rope makers, sail makers, masons, coopers, tanners, glaziers, and millers set up shop.

Logging North Shore trees was economically important for most of the 1800s. Trees were cut to supply of wood for growing urban areas.

Older passenger ships were retrofitted for whaling in LI shipyards.

## Catalysts for Development: Industry<sup>2</sup>

The American Industrial Revolution began in the 1870s although in Brooklyn the terminus of the Erie Canal in 1825 had already spurred development there.

NYS and NYC were industrial leaders.

Many of the noisier, smellier and dirtier industries were pushed from Manhattan to the waterfront areas of Brooklyn and Queens.

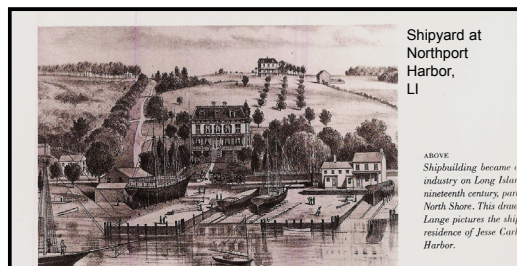
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## Catalysts for Development: Shipbuilding

- Because of its orientation to the sea, LI became a shipbuilding and repair center.
- Many LIS passenger and packet ships were converted to whalers when they were deemed unsafe for people and whaling crews needed to go to sea in search of whales.
- Port Jefferson, Northport, Stony Brook and Setauket had major shipyards and flourished in the mid-1800s.

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## Catalysts for Development: Shipbuilding



Shipyard at Northport Harbor, LI

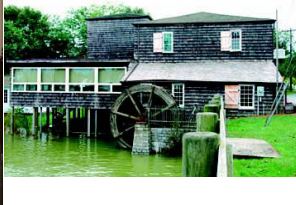
ABOVE: Shipbuilding became a major industry on Long Island in the nineteenth century, particularly on the North Shore. This drawing, from a 1900s postcard, shows the shipyard of Jesse Curll in Northport Harbor.

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### Catalysts for Development: Wind and water power

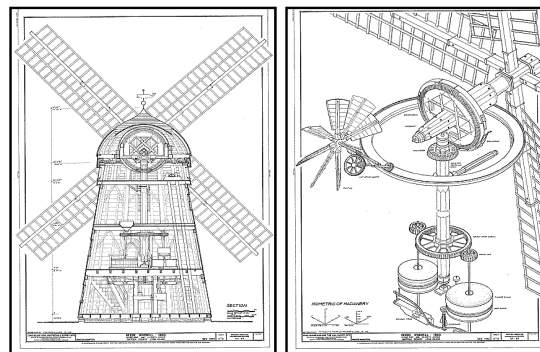


Hook Mill, East Hampton, 1806

Undershot water mill, 1644  
Bridgehampton,

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### Windmill Schematic



### Catalysts for Development: Recreation

- Toward the end of 1800s LI became one of the destinations of people seeking to get away from the hot and humid urban areas.
- Summer homes were built near the coast:
  - South Shore beaches (Hamptons and points east) lured people.
  - North Shore landscape favored the building of mansions (Gold Coast).

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### Catalysts for Development: Recreation.<sub>2</sub>

- The LIRR encouraged travel by train to the Long Island countryside.
- Bicycle riding, pleasure boating, sport fishing, lawn games, hunting, horse racing and polo became LI fixtures as did the rise of horse riding academies.
- 1891 golf was introduced to America via LI and the Shinnecock Hill Golf Course was the first American golf course

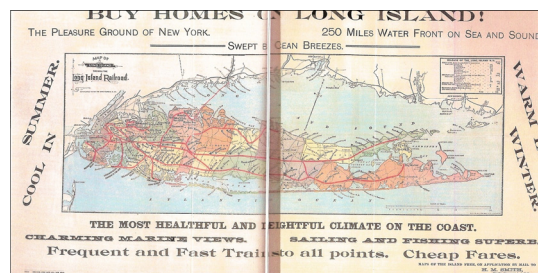
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### Question of the Day

***Long Island's  
Gold Coast Mansions:  
Should they be protected?***

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad



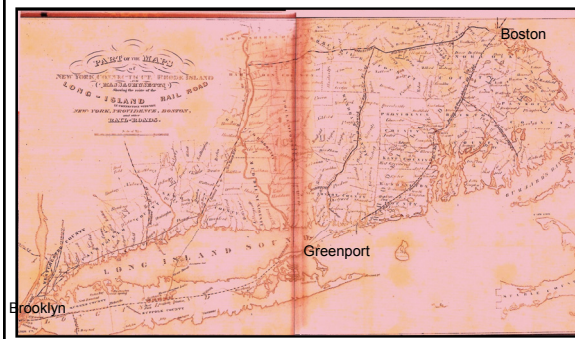
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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad

- In 1832 the Brooklyn & Jamaica Railroad Company was created and ran from Brooklyn (today's Brooklyn Hts.) to East New York to Jamaica.
- In 1834 the Long Island Railroad was conceived and built as a freight line to shorten the distance between New York City and Boston by connecting Jamaica with Greenport on the North Fork.

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad



### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad.<sup>2</sup>

- Finished in 1844 the Brooklyn-Greenport-Boston route would take only 12 hours, including the ferry, about half the time of a packet ship.
- To provide maximum speed, surveyors were instructed to design a route on the flattest land, and to avoid using bridges and curves.
- Since it was a freight line and because of popular fear of locomotives at the time, land for the right of way was purchased well away from the population centers, through the forests and did not offer a view.

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad.<sup>3</sup>

- In 1848, an all-land line from NYC to Boston via Connecticut was opened and cargo shifted to that line.
- With the main line located far from the population centers, the LIRR began to build branch lines to the north and south shores population centers.

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad.<sup>4</sup>

- With miles of track and no local customers the LIRR reinvented itself to create a demand for its service.
- As a result it was instrumental in the development of Long Island from Brooklyn to Montauk Point through the 1930s.
- It became a major hauler of LI agricultural produce to NYC and of people to LI towns.

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad



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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad.<sup>5</sup>

- The LIRR built spur lines into farms.
- It created special flat-bed cars that could haul farmers' wagons without unloading them. (They were ferried across the East River.)
- It created towns along its right of way for passenger service.
- Westbury in the center of the dairying region became a major depot.
- Patchogue: an oyster depot.
- Speonk: a duck depot

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad.<sup>6</sup>

- LIRR teamed with hotels in Brooklyn, Queens and Suffolk counties to deliver guests to seaside resorts.
- Baggage cars were equipped with hooks to transport bicycles the guests brought with them.
- Carriages would meet arriving trains.

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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad



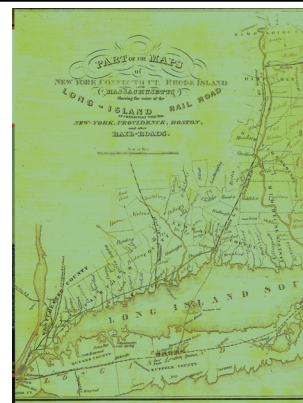
1855  
timetable



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### Catalysts for Development: Long Island Railroad

In 1900 the Pennsylvania Railroad bought the LIRR at a bargain price.



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