

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** U.S. POST OFFICES IN NEW YORK STATE -- 1858-1943-- THEMATIC  
HISTORIC RESOURCES  
U.S. Post Office, Patchogue, Suffolk County  
AND/OR COMMON  
Patchogue Post Office

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

170 East Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Patchogue

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New York

VICINITY OF  
CODE

036

COUNTY

Suffolk

CODE

103

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service, Northeast Region, F.R.E.B.O.

STREET & NUMBER

90 Church Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

VICINITY OF

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Suffolk Co. Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

County Center

CITY, TOWN

Riverhead

STATE

New York

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

U.S. Postal Service Inventory

DATE

1984

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Albany

STATE

New York

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Patchogue Post Office is located at 170 East Main Street on the most important street of the Suffolk County village of Patchogue, New York. The post office is surrounded by residential and commercial buildings. To the west is a long row of one-story commercial buildings; to the east is a two-story frame residence now converted for commercial use. Across East Main Street is a five-story brick apartment house. The post office is set back from the sidewalk on a modestly landscaped plot. A parking lot at the rear of the building is entered through a driveway on Terry Street, which runs parallel to East Main Street. The post office retains its integrity to a high degree on both the exterior and interior. This nomination includes one contributing building.

The Patchogue Post Office is a symmetrical limestone-clad building that is dominated by a projecting entrance pavilion that rises above the remainder of the building. This temple-like pavilion has a shallow peak roof. The entrance is reached via a flight of four granite steps (replaced in 1956) flanked by original aluminum lamps set on granite pedestals. The original aluminum doors were removed in 1964 and replaced by the present aluminum doors. These inappropriate doors are set within an aluminum grille with an ornate, stylized Neoclassical border. Above the entrance is a magnificent clock with complex aluminum detail. The entrance ensemble is flanked by narrow colonnettes and is topped by a refined splayed lintel with alternating projecting voussoirs. A flat band with raised aluminum lettering reading "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" and two stars runs above the lintel. Above this is a deeply carved relief frieze with three scenes representing modes of transportation. Each scene is separated by a sculpted coin. To the left is land transportation with a train engine and a truck; in the center is air transport with a dirigible and airplanes; to the right is water transport with an ocean liner being directed by a tug. Shields are carved on the side facades. The parapet of the central pavilion has a carved eagle with outstretched wings which holds a shield.

To either side of the entrance pavilion are five rectangular window bays, each outlined with an ornate aluminum grille and featuring vertical bars which cover multi-paned double-hung wood sash. Each window has a subtle splayed lintel with a modest keystone that supports a refined cornice and parapet. There is a subtle quoining effect at either end of the front facade. On the side elevations are single large windows flanked by narrow slit windows; another window is set to the rear of these groups. Beyond the front section of the post office is a recessed five-bay-deep brick wing. It has large windows with multi-paned sash. The rear facade has a projecting two-story central section with an open loading platform on the first floor.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

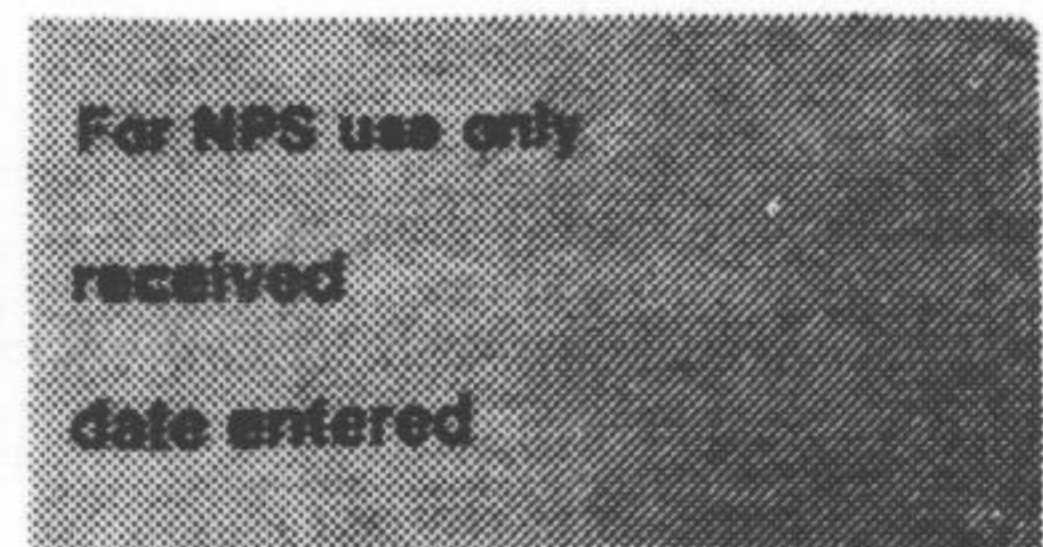
Patchogue Post Office, Patchogue, New York,  
Continuation sheet Suffolk County

Item number

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The building is entered through a modest vestibule of mahogany and glass. The lobby is rectangular and extends across the seven central bays of the main facade. Its floor is of quarry tile; its wainscot is of dill green faience tile with a black tile base and chair rail; and its walls, ceiling, and cornice are plaster. Aluminum vents and radiator grilles are located throughout the room. Over the main entrance is a bas relief sculpture of a stylized eagle. Other original features include one large customer table with a three-pedestal base, woodwork, and lock boxes. The screenline has been altered and the lighting is a later addition.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1932-3

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John V. Van Pelt

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Patchogue Post Office is architecturally significant as an extremely fine example of a public building designed in a monumental Neoclassically derived style with refined Art Deco ornamentation. Although the building is rather small, its austere massing, dominated by a highly ornamented entrance pavilion, gives it a sense of grandeur not often seen on buildings of its size. The post office is one of a small number of architecturally distinctive federal buildings designed by private architects as consultants to the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. In this case, the post office was the work of John Van Pelt. It was designed in 1931-2 and constructed in 1932-2 during the time of a major increase in public buildings programs which were initiated in order to alleviate unemployment caused by the Great Depression. The basic form of the Patchogue Post Office follows the Neoclassical tradition of most other post offices built in the 1930's, with its symmetrical composition and projecting central pavilion, but this somewhat simple design was transformed into a modern composition by the oversized window openings and Art Deco embellishments. Although Art Deco-inspired ornamentation was used occasionally on New York State post offices, it was rarely as fully developed as that of the Patchogue Post Office. The elaborate cast-aluminum grilles over the entrance and windows and the crisply carved frieze around the entrance pavilion are of exceptionally high quality and contribute to the building's uniqueness and importance.

Patchogue, located on the south shore of Long Island facing Great South Bay, was settled before the Revolutionary War. Early industry in the town included oystering, fishing, and shipbuilding. Later, mills, forges, and tanneries opened in the vicinity and the community prospered. The first post office was established in Patchogue in 1802. The Long Island Railroad and Long Island Expressway linked Patchogue to New York City and caused major growth in the community in the twentieth century.

A permanent post office for Patchogue was first authorized under the Public Buildings Act of 1926, but no building was erected and it had to be reauthorized in 1931. The building erected with this authorization was located in an area adjacent to both commercial and residential structures and replaced two houses. R.W. Erickson of

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Philadelphia was the general contractor. The Patchogue Post Office was one of the first buildings authorized after the Public Buildings Program was expanded in 1931 in response to the extensive unemployment caused by the onset of the Great Depression. It was among 13 New York State post offices on which construction began in 1932 (only five post offices had been built in the previous year). The building was also one of the first designed in New York by a consulting architect and not by the office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. A 1930 amendment to the Public Buildings Act of 1926 permitted the Supervising Architect to hire outside consultants to design buildings. This measure was planned to alleviate unemployment among architects. The consulting architects had to work within the guidelines set by the Post Office Department. The detail of these buildings, including that at Patchogue, is often of exceptional quality, but in plan, they follow the traditional post office layout of a modestly sized public lobby entered through a vestibule, a postmaster's office, and a large work room. Besides the Patchogue building, other notable New York State post offices designed by consulting architects include those at Scarsdale (Schultze & Weaver, 1937-38), Glen Cove (Delano & Aldrich, 1931-32), Jamaica (Cross & Cross, 1932-34), Hempstead (Tooker & Marsh, 1931-33), Oyster Bay (Bottomley, Wagner & White, 1935-36), and Garden City (Walker & Gillette, 1936). These are all included in the thematic nomination.

The New York architect John V. Van Pelt was commissioned to design the new Patchogue Post Office. John Vredenburg Van Pelt (1874-1962) was born in New Orleans and studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Ecole des Arts Decoratif in Paris. In 1895 he became the first American to receive the title of Architect Diplome par le Gouvernement and in 1896 and 1897 he won additional honors. In the United States Van Pelt taught architecture at Cornell, Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania, and Cooper Union. He designed many public and institutional buildings including the Church of the Guardian in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, sanatoria in Otisville and Liberty, New York, and the village hall and the library in Patchogue. The two Patchogue buildings were designed prior to the post office, and the success of these works undoubtedly led to Van Pelt's receiving the post office commission.

The exterior of Van Pelt's building is unusual for a small post office. Its boldly scaled and austere form highlighted with relief sculpture, aluminum grilles and a clock have a monumentality that is more closely akin to the design of contemporary banks, such as the East River Savings Bank on Church Street in Manhattan and the Dollar Savings Bank on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. The limestone building is symmetrically massed. Although it is only one story tall, the scale of the large window and doorway openings and the massing of the entrance pavilion lend it a grandeur that belies its modest dimensions. The Neoclassical features of the exterior, such as the splayed window lintels, the projecting voussoirs of the entrance, the colonnettes that flank the entry and templelike central pavilion are all executed in the

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refined manner that was popular on late Classical Revival buildings of the 1930s. The refined, almost stylized, quality of the design lends it a somewhat Art Deco character which can be compared with similarly refined detailing on the Hempstead and Garden City post offices (both included in the thematic nomination.) The sculpted frieze on the entrance pavilion, designed by the New York firm Saldarini & Pucci and produced by the Indian Hill Stone Co. of Bloomington, Indiana, has an Art Deco flavor. The frieze represents aspects of land, sea, and air travel. Each of the scenes is separated by coins (the heads of Mercury dimes and Buffalo nickels are among the coins used). The use of sculpted relief panels was popular during the 1930's and can be seen on the Hempstead, Scarsdale, Malone, Church Street Station and Bronx Post Offices. (These are all included in the thematic nomination except the Bronx Post Office, which is National Register listed.) The theme of various modes of transportation, and, thus, of various ways of shipping mail, is also found on the relief panels at Scarsdale. Of special interest on the Patchogue Post Office is the stylized aluminum grille and its related clock, located at the entrance. This metal work is extremely sophisticated and is unique on New York State's Post offices. These elements were manufactured by Northern Studies of Astoria, New York.

The interior of the post office is laid out in a utilitarian fashion with no ceremonial spaces. The public lobby, where postal business is transacted, is rectangular, large in size, but restrained in decoration. It is entered through a vestibule and is flanked by a postmaster's office and a money order and registry room. A large work room is located to the rear. The interior detail is extremely simple. The most notable feature of the interior is a bas relief sculpture of an eagle over the entrance.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See cover form and continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	6 6 7 8 3 0	4 5 1 4 4 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached site map

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA			

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY See also continuation sheet

NAME / TITLE Larry E. Gobrecht

National Register and Survey Coordinator

ORGANIZATION New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation DATE July 1986

STREET & NUMBER Empire State Plaza, Agency Building One TELEPHONE (518) 474-0479

CITY OR TOWN Albany STATE New York

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NONE \_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is \_\_\_ National \_\_\_ State \_\_\_ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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Suffolk County

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History of Suffolk County, New York, with Illustrations, Portraits and Sketches of Prominent Families and Individuals. New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1882.

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Haw, Osborne. "History of Brookhaven." 250th Anniversary Souvenir Program for Suffolk County, 1933.



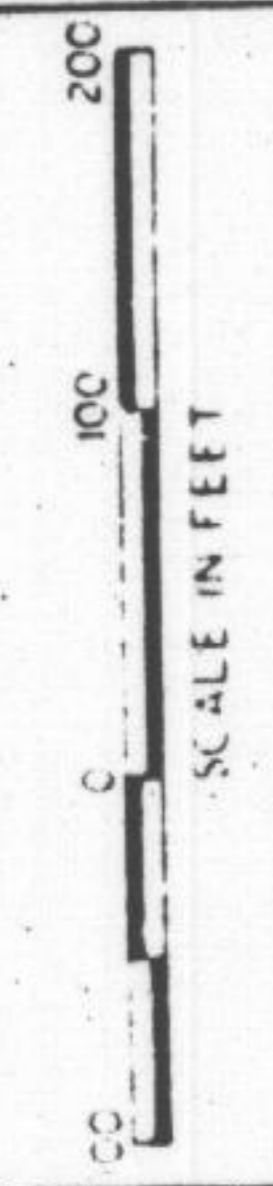


United States Post Offices in New York State -- 1858-1943 -- Thematic Resources  
 Patchogue, Suffolk County, New York  
 170 E. Main Street

1" = 150'

KEY MAP

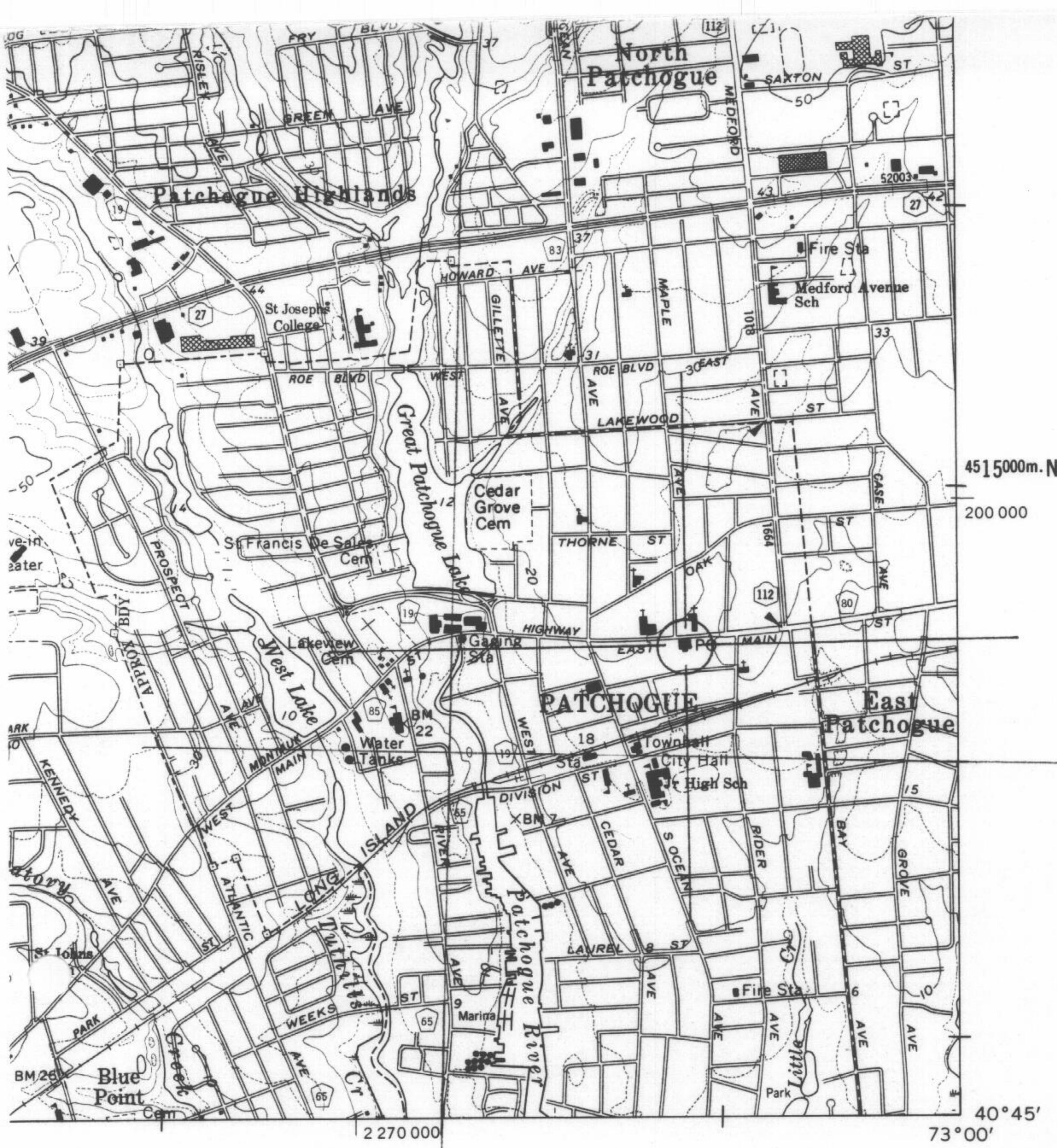
005	009	013
	019	013



© COUNTY OF SUFFOLK  
 Real Property Tax Service Agency  
 County Center  
 Riverhead, L. I., New York

TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN  
 VILLAGE OF PATCHOGUE  
 DISTRICT NO 0204  
 Date of Completion

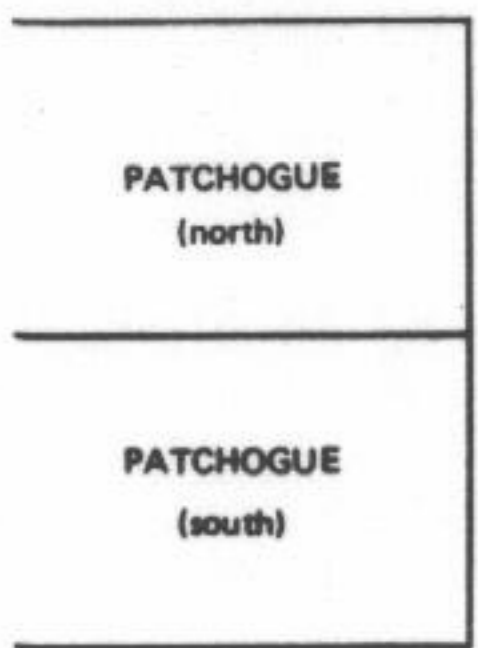
SECTION 00  
 PROPERTY



HOWELLS POINT

**BOUNDARIES:**  
 State.....  
 County.....  
 Town or City.....  
 Incorporated Village.....

INDEX TO  
 1:9600 (1" = 800')  
 MAP COVERAGE



**ROADS:**

Touring Route markers:	Divided highways and streets:
Interstate..... 87	Wide mall.....
U. S. .... 20	Narrow mall or barrier... ..
State..... 36	Undivided highways and streets:
County..... 54	4 or more lanes.....
State Highway number and limit..... 8020	Less than 4 lanes.....
County road..... 72	Vehicle tr
Interchange number... 31	

United States Post Offices in New York State -- 1858-1942 -- Thematic Resources  
 Patchogue, Suffolk County, New York  
 UTM Reference Points  
 Patchogue Quad, 1:24000, Zone 18  
 667830/4514400

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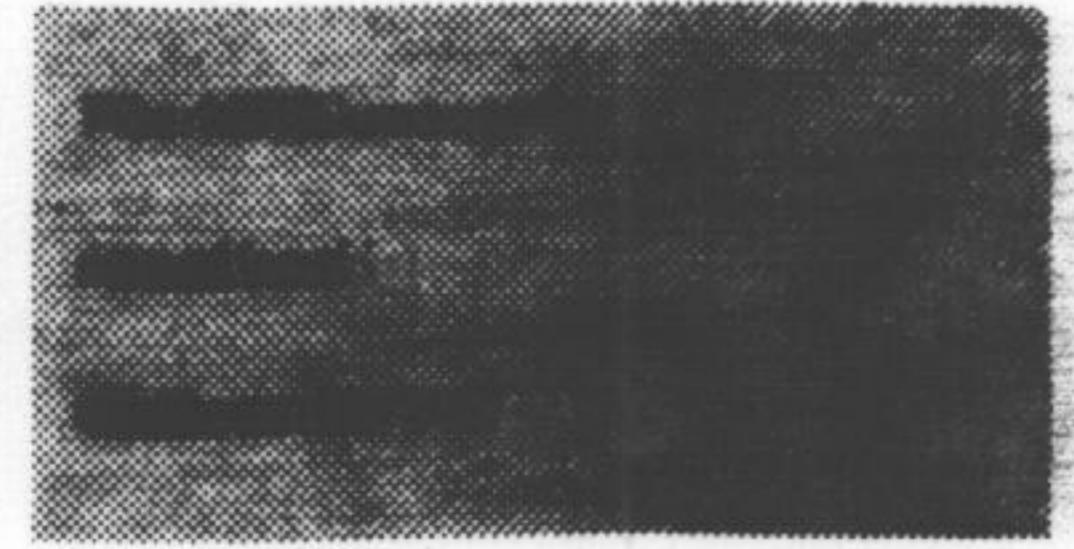
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