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**REBUILDING
NEW YORK CITY'S
WATERFRONT**

1959 *PROGRESS*

**DEPARTMENT
OF**

MARINE & AVIATION

**CITY OF
NEW YORK**

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REBUILDING
NEW YORK CITY'S
WATERFRONT

1959 PROGRESS

DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND AVIATION
CITY OF NEW YORK

VINCENT A. G. O'CONNOR
Commissioner

ROBERT F. WAGNER
Mayor

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The Department of Marine and Aviation serves three major diverse functions, each of vital importance to New York City. First, it is a real estate operating agency of first magnitude, managing City-owned waterfront properties valued at \$350,000,000. Second, with its operation and administration of ferry services, transporting over 25,000,000 people a year, it is a principal municipal transportation agency. Finally, it is, in addition, a regulatory agency of City-wide jurisdiction, exercising supervisory powers over the entire 578 miles of waterfront within the City's limits, including both municipally and privately-owned sections. In addition to these basic spheres of activity, the Department is the City's voice in aviation.

The Department, established in 1870, is one of the oldest in the City. It is now in a period of activity unprecedented in its entire history. 1959 saw important progress in each of the Department's three major areas of operations.

1959's most spectacular advance was made in the Department's waterfront rebuilding operations. New York is the greatest port city in the world. One out of four of its residents depends for his livelihood directly or indirectly on the maritime industry. To maintain New York City's port supremacy the Department has well under way a five-year (1957-1962) program to construct \$200,000,000 of new piers on which great construction and leasing progress was made in the past year. This redevelopment program, involving as it does multi-million dollar investments in new self-sustaining waterfront terminal construction, is being financed by the City, pursuant to the State Constitution, outside the municipal debt limit. Thus these pier improvements proceed without hindrance to the development of the City's other capital needs, such as schools and hospitals, which, because they are not self-sustaining, must be financed within the debt limit.

To date, leases providing for \$75,000,000 in new pier construction have been negotiated by the Department and the port's leading steamship

lines and railroads. Of this total, the Board of Estimate has approved \$51,000,000 in new construction, which has either been built or is currently being progressed. The remainder of the \$75,000,000 total is presently before the Board of Estimate and is awaiting its early approval.

Within the next month or two, the total of new pier construction in the Department's current program under negotiated leases will total \$100,000,000.

1959 saw the completion of some of the major items in the five-year program. Two important Brooklyn steamship terminals were completed, the \$6,750,000 pier constructed for Moore-McCormack Lines, Inc., at 23rd Street and Gowanus Creek, and the \$3,600,000 35th Street, Brooklyn pier first occupied by Mitsui Lines, the present occupant, which will move to the presently building 36th-39th Street Terminal upon its completion. Farrell Lines will then tenant the 35th Street pier. Also completed were the \$300,000 office and warehouse building constructed for Farrell Lines at 33rd Street, Brooklyn, and the new \$1,000,000 upland cargo shed for the Luckenbach Steamship Company at 37th Street, Brooklyn. The \$840,000 modernization and rehabilitation of the 29th Street, Brooklyn pier for Isbrandtsen Company was completed, and nearing completion is the \$975,000 cargo shed to be integrated with the pier at that location to form a greatly enlarged terminal for Isbrandtsen.

In addition to completed terminals, 1959 saw substantial construction progress on uncompleted major developments. The Department's largest building project presently under way, the \$18,723,000 mammoth passenger and freight shipping terminal leased by the Holland-America Line at Houston Street, North River, Manhattan, advanced towards completion with the conclusion of the steel pile and concrete deck substructure and the start of the superstructure concrete framing contract. Contracts let to date total \$10,769,000, and the work progresses within the Department's cost estimates. A unique occurrence

in connection with this project was the berthing at the terminal of the new Holland-America ship ROTTERDAM as part of the ship's maiden voyage ceremonies in September. The second largest current construction project, the massive four berth \$10,600,000 Mitsui Line Terminal at 36th-39th Streets, Gowanus Bay, Brooklyn, advanced in the building of the solid fill substructure.

During 1959 other projects in the \$200,000,000 program were approved by the Board of Estimate, agreed on by the Department and shipping companies, subject to Board approval, or advanced in preliminary engineering planning and rental negotiations.

The Board of Estimate approved a lease with the Gulf Oil Corporation for the construction and leasing of a marina, seaplane base and a 500 car over-water parking garage at the foot of East 23rd Street, Manhattan, at an estimated cost of \$1,200,000.

Another exciting event culminating in 1959 was the development and approval by the Board of Estimate of the Department's \$40,000,000 plan to rebuild the lower East River waterfront from the Battery to Corlears Hook. This carefully worked out plan was developed by the outstanding port engineering firm of Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton after a lengthy study in collaboration with Department engineers at a cost of upwards of \$100,000, the expense of which will be returned to the City by allocations to the specific projects resulting from the plan. This lower East River mile and three-quarter section was for three centuries the traditional heart of the port. However, no substantial new construction has taken place in that area for over 50 years. It will now be completely rebuilt by the construction of new freight shipping terminals, a marina and a heliport.

Cargo handling and trucking operations at the new piers will be contained within the terminal areas. Traffic conditions in this sector will be

further improved by the addition of a 50-foot wide four-lane marginal roadway adjacent to the piers.

Leases have already been signed by important shipping companies and are before the Board of Estimate for two of the terminals: by Furness, Withy & Co., Ltd. for a \$2,500,000 newsprint terminal between Montgomery Street and Corlears Hook to be occupied by Bowater Paper Company, Inc.; and by the Belgian Line for a four-berth \$10,000,000 general cargo terminal extending from the Manhattan Bridge up river to Montgomery Street.

Also before the Board is a lease with the Port Authority for development by that agency of a public heliport at Pier 6, East River, just above the Battery at the foot of Coenties Slip, convenient to Manhattan's downtown financial district.

To further implement the East River plan active negotiations are also in progress for the leasing and construction of a three-berth freight terminal for the Venezuelan Line between the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges, at an estimated cost of \$7,570,000 and the development of a mechanized banana importing terminal on the site of Pier 9, for the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company, at an estimated cost of \$2,500,000. Leasing negotiations and engineering planning were progressed for a marina just upstream from the Battery.

The Department's East River plan was received with great enthusiasm and obtained the approval of shipping and business associations. The Board of Estimate and the City Council endorsed the plan by including \$3,516,000 in the 1960 Capital Budget for the progressing of the four major pier projects mentioned above, whose value, when completed, will aggregate \$22,670,000.

New leases were signed and negotiations developed in 1959 on Manhattan's North River, as well as the East River. The leases recommended to the Board of Estimate were executed by:

Cosmopolitan Shipping Company for construction of a \$2,000,000 modern cargo shed at presently unshedded Pier 26, Beach Street; the Erie Railroad for the construction of a \$1,550,000 wharf type carfloat terminal to be known as New Pier 43, at Christopher Street, North River; the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for another new carfloat terminal estimated to cost \$2,000,000 to be designated New Pier 65, West 25th Street, North River; and the Cunard Line for a new \$5,500,000 development at 54th Street, permitting Cunard to consolidate its freight and passenger ship operations at an integrated three pier terminal to consist of Piers 90, 92 and New 94.

All of these leases provide for an annual rental of 6½% of the construction cost, the rental approved by the Board of Estimate in earlier new pier construction leases. At the present time, in view of the general rise in bond interest rates which has occurred in recent months, the rental provisions of these most recent leases are the subject of discussions between the Comptroller, the Department and the shipping and railroad companies to insure that rentals to be approved by the Board of Estimate will make these projects self-sustaining like all other developments under the \$200,000,000 rebuilding program.

Serious negotiations on projects which are expected to develop into signed leases in the near future, advanced during the year. New facilities for the United States Lines freight shipping operations are to be developed by new pier construction in the West 30's on the North River and the modernization of the Chelsea piers occupied by this company. Negotiations and engineering planning progressed for the development of modern sightseeing and excursion boat terminals for the Circle Line and the Hudson River Day Line in the area from north of 41st Street to 43rd Street, North River. Special attention was devoted by the Department to the negotiating and engineering and architectural planning of several

new marina developments including the one above the Battery on the East River. These facilities would help meet the need for small boat moorings in the City.

Having actually under way at the present time as part of its rebuilding plan, projects on the North River and the complete reconstruction of a major section of the Brooklyn waterfront, and with the lower East River plan now about to move into full swing, the Department is also engaged in basic, long-range planning for other entire sections of the waterfront.

Presently before the Board of Estimate is a contract with engineering consultants for a Staten Island pier study. This study will appraise Staten Island's waterfront needs in view of the improved transportation situation to be created by the Narrows Bridge, and will propose terminal development plans to meet these needs.

Another study initiated in 1959 has as its objective the formulation of a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the six miles of North River waterfront between the Battery and 72nd Street that are the very heart of the port. Toward this end a contract for the professional services of an outstanding team of economic planning, engineering and architectural consultants has been recommended to the Board of Estimate. The consultants will take into account proposed Manhattan urban improvements and will weigh changes in ship design, ship propulsion and cargo packaging and handling techniques. The study will investigate means of improving waterfront and urban traffic flow and explore possible multiple uses of valuable waterfront property. The consultants will meet and confer with every group and agency, governmental or private, whose functioning bears to any degree on the study.

Taking into account projects completed, under construction, under lease or under serious negotiations, the mid-point of the \$200,000,000 rebuilding program is now in sight. Looking to-

wards imminent entry into the second half of the \$200,000,000 program, the Department intends to include in the North River study a long-range assessment of overall port needs and a determination of how new terminal developments can fill such requirements.

The Department during 1959 again received great encouragement from the Board of Estimate in the Capital Budget allocations made for the coming capital year. Some \$41,136,573.74 was allocated for specific projects during 1960, including \$3,516,000 for four lower East River piers. This is a continuation of the vastly increased capital support received by the Department since its proposal of the rebuilding program in 1955.

In 1954, the first year of the present City and Departmental administrations, the Department had an allotment of \$11,300,000, ranking ninth in the City. As the success of the Department's program developed its scope broadened and its capital support strengthened. Allocations rose dramatically in 1956 and 1957 and exceeded the 40 million mark in the 1958 and 1959 Capi-

tal Budgets. The Department's 1960 allotment places it fourth among City agencies in capital allocations.

Progress was also made in the Department's other areas of operations. In the Department's regulatory field a genuine advance was made in 1959 by the institution of new traffic and parking regulations along lower Manhattan's East River waterfront, soon to be redeveloped. This plan, evolved with the cooperation of the Traffic and Police Departments, has speeded up the flow of ordinary traffic on the marginal street, as well as improved the efficiency of truck loading and unloading operations inshore of and on the piers.

In the Department's transportation operations, 1959 saw the approval of tentative design plans calling for increased vehicular capacity in new ferryboats contemplated for the Staten Island-Manhattan service. A naval architectural design contract for new boats was progressed by consultants and Department engineers and consultations with interested Staten Island business and community leaders regarding the ferryboat design were held.



Plate 1. Pier 40, North River

1. Before.

North River waterfront showing five narrow, outmoded piers (37-41 inclusive) demolished to clear the site of New Pier 40.



2. During.

New Pier 40 on September 9, 1959 when the Holland-America Line's new passenger ship "Rotterdam" on her maiden trip to New York docked at completed substructure.

3. After.

New Pier 40 as it will appear on its completion in 1961. Central open truck court will facilitate cargo operations confined to the lower deck. Passengers will use the second deck, reached by auto and taxi via ramp from the street. Passenger car storage area on second deck will be a great convenience to passengers. Roof-top will be used for public parking.



1. AS IT WAS — 39th Street, Brooklyn area as it appeared when occupied by unused ferry terminal, Bush Terminal, Pier 8 and old upland buildings prior to the start of construction of new, \$10,600,000 ship terminal for Mitsui Line.



Plate 2. Mitsui Line — 39th Street, Brooklyn



2. TAKING SHAPE — Solid fill foundation for new terminal being put into place. Fill is retained by a sheet steel bulkhead.

3. AS IT WILL LOOK — The four-berth, ultra-modern terminal as it will look on completion anticipated in July 1961. Terminal is first to be leased and built in New York City for a Japanese shipping line.



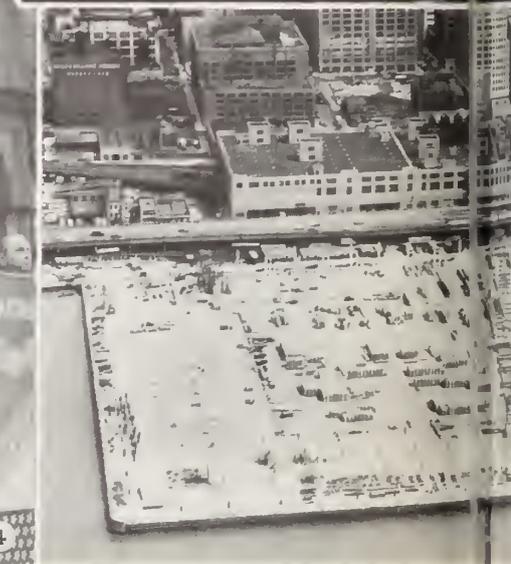


Plate 3. 35th Street, Brooklyn Pier — Mitsui & Farrell

1. OUT OF THIS — Mass of jumbled wreckage is all that remains of the old 35th Street, Brooklyn pier, then tenanted by Luckenbach Steamship Company, following fire and explosion of December 3, 1956.

2. CAME THIS — Completely rebuilt, longest finger pier in the port, improved with wide aprons and truck turnaround area to add another modern, efficient terminal to the City's waterfront facilities. The 1740 foot long pier, rebuilt at a cost of \$3,600,000, was opened January 8, 1960. Mitsui Line, interim lessee until their 39th Street terminal is ready, will be followed as tenant by Farrell Lines.





1. 35th Street, Brooklyn pier, the longest finger pier in Port, completed late in 1959 at a cost of \$3,600,000, is the third terminal completed in the Department of Marine and Aviation's five-year \$200,000,000 waterfront rebuilding program. Mitsui Line is tenant. Farrell Lines will follow as tenant when Mitsui moves to new 39th Street terminal now under construction.

2. (Left to right) Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Mrs. Wagner, Emmet J. McCormack, Chairman of the Board of Moore-McCormack Lines, Inc., and Commissioner of Marine and Aviation Vincent A. G. O'Connor at the official opening on September 16, 1959 of new, \$6,750,000 pier constructed for Moore-McCormack Lines at 23rd Street and Gowanus Creek, Brooklyn.

3. Aerial view of new Moore-McCormack pier. This 1,000-foot wide, can berth and work for 100 ships. It was completed seven months ahead of schedule at a cost of \$750,000 under the original estimate.

4. Commissioner O'Connor at the official opening ceremony of Marine and Aviation Day on May 22, 1959 as part of a series of public relations activities that focus public attention on the port in promoting world trade.



Baltimore-McCormack Lines 23rd Street Pier, 1460 feet long and 232 feet wide, for freighters simultaneously. The pier is being built ahead of schedule and at a cost of \$2,000,000, according to the estimate.

The Mayor presides at annual Marine Week observance on Custom House steps on the importance of the waterfront.

5. Aerial view of work in progress on superstructure framing of New Pier 40, North River at West Houston Street, Manhattan. The huge, \$18,723,000 terminal is being built by the Department for the Holland-America Line.

6. The "old" and the "new", completed and projected North River, Manhattan improvements for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. At far left is Pier 63 at West 23rd Street, a \$2,040,000 wharf-type, railroad carfloat terminal opened on May 7, 1958. The first facility completely under the Department's record-breaking waterfront rebuilding program, Pier 63 has an unusual roof top public parking feature. At far right is Pier 65 as it will look when rebuilt as a highly efficient railroad carfloat terminal at an estimated cost of \$2,000,000.



Plate 4. Moore-McCormack 23rd Street, Brooklyn Pier

1. Massive, \$6,750,000, four-berth 23rd Street, Brooklyn pier at which Moore-McCormack Lines has consolidated all its port freight operations.
2. Wide spacing of 23rd Street Pier shed-support columns permits free movement of trucks and cargo-handling equipment.
3. Mayor Wagner, Commissioner O'Connor, Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore, Moore-McCormack Lines officials and others at September 16, 1959 ceremonies opening the 23rd Street, Brooklyn pier.

MOORE - McCORMACK LINES

DEPARTMENT OF **MARINE & AVIATION** CITY OF NEW YORK

23RD STREET PIER

DEPARTMENT OF
MARINE & AVIATION
CITY OF NEW YORK



**Plate 5. Isbrandtsen 29th Street, Brooklyn Pier
and Added New Shed**

1. Freighter loads cargo at Isbrandtsen Company's 29th Street, Brooklyn pier, rehabilitation and modernization of which were completed in 1959 at a cost of \$840,000.

2. Construction of new \$975,000 cargo shed on upland adjacent to the 29th Street pier neared completion in 1959. The new cargo shed, physically joined to the 29th Street pier, will give Isbrandtsen Company a greatly enlarged and improved terminal when put into operation early in 1960.





Plate 6. Farrell and Luckenbach Warehouse Buildings

1. \$300,000 two-story office and warehouse building completed during 1959 and occupied by Farrell Lines. Building is located on the upland across marginal street from 33rd Street, Brooklyn pier and supports Farrell Lines operations at that pier.

2. New addition in 1959 to Luckenbach Steamship Company's extensive South Brooklyn waterfront facilities leased from the Department was this \$1,000,000 cargo shed and office building on Second Avenue between 36th and 37th Streets, Brooklyn.





Plate 7. East River Marginal Street Traffic Control

1. Establishment of truck waiting lines and limitation of vehicle parking to definite areas covered by permits issued by Department of Marine and Aviation and clearly marked by signs has resulted in substantial relief of East River marginal street traffic congestion. Plan, worked out in collaboration with New York City Police and Traffic Departments and with cooperation of shipping companies and longshore labor, was put into effect in 1959. Similar controls for the North River are now being advanced.

2. Clear marking with signs of marginal street cargo storage areas, another feature of East River traffic control plan, has greatly benefited East River pier operators. Vehicles shown in cargo storage area await export shipment to overseas destinations. Future East River pier terminals to be built by Department will be fully self-contained both as to trucking and cargo-storage operations.





Plate 8. East 23rd Street, Manhattan Marina

1. \$1,200,000 marina, seaplane base and over-water parking garage being built under Department supervision for tenancy by Gulf Oil Corporation at East 23rd Street, East River, Manhattan, as it will appear, looking south from the East River Drive.

2. Multi-use facility will provide 38 berths initially, with more to be added later. Parking garage will accommodate 500 cars.





Plate 9. East River Development Plan

1. Department of Marine and Aviation \$40,000,000 redevelopment of one and three-quarter miles stretch of East River commercial waterfront between Battery and Corlears Hook. The marina, heliport and modern, self-contained, self-sustaining shipping terminals will be served by a new 55 foot wide marginal highway inshore of the facilities.

2. The East River waterfront below the Brooklyn Bridge as it will appear upon completion of new four-lane marginal roadway and wharf type, self-contained shipping terminals. Leases have already been signed for several of the new East River facilities. Other tenancies are under active negotiation. Presentation of the favorably-received plan in 1959 followed a comprehensive lower East River waterfront planning study by engineering consultants.



Plate 10. Cunard Pier 94, North River

New \$5,500,000 Pier 94 and bulkhead shed to be built for the Cunard Steam-Ship Company Ltd. at West 54th Street, North River, Manhattan. Pier 94, together with Piers 90 and 92, will afford Cunard a three-pier North River passenger and freight ship terminal.

The new bulkhead cargo shed will connect Pier 94 with Pier 92 to the south. Pier 94 will approximate 775 feet in length and 140 feet in width. The bulkhead shed will extend 585 feet along the riverfront and will be 170 feet wide.

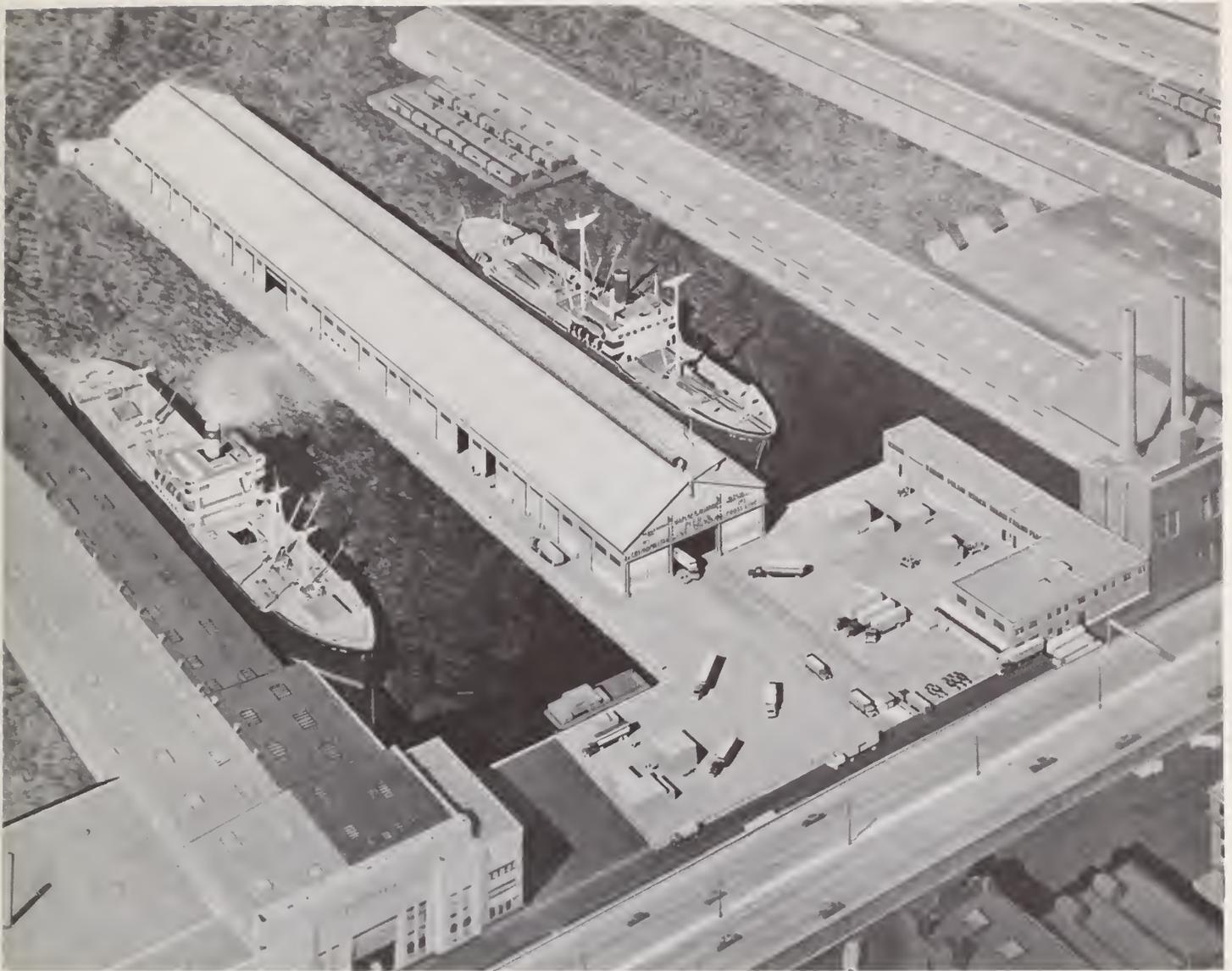


Plate 11. Cosmopolitan Line Pier 26, North River

The now unshedded Pier 26, North River at Beach Street, Manhattan will be rebuilt and shedded for Cosmopolitan Line at an estimated cost of \$2,000,000. A lease providing for construction of this modern pier and terminal service buildings is before the Board of Estimate. The pier will be 995 feet long and 135 feet wide. Broad aprons at both sides and at the outer end of the pier, the column-free interior and 48,000 square feet of cargo handling and trucking space at the inshore end of the terminal will make Pier 26 highly efficient operationally.



Plate 12. North River Piers

Redevelopment of this six mile sweep of City-owned piers along Manhattan's North River from the Battery, lower right, to 72nd Street, upper left, is now under study by an outstanding team of economic planning, engineering and architectural consultants. Consultants, working closely with top Department of Marine and Aviation officials and engineering personnel, will submit comprehensive plan for the best possible and most intensive use of this most valuable waterfront section in the world in the light of future overall port and City needs.



Plate 13. Staten Island Piers Under Study

White line marks one-mile long concentration of City-owned piers in Staten Island, with Pier 18 at Clifton on right and Pier 6 at Tompkinsville at left, to be subject of an engineering study launched in 1959. Completion of Narrows-Verrazano Bridge is expected to trigger resurgence of Staten Island's commercial waterfront. Study aims to produce plan to best adapt this Staten Island waterfront, while bridge is building, to serve and encourage expected commercial growth. Extensive upland pier support areas and pierside rail connections contribute to potential of area to meet unfulfilled port needs.



Plate 14. New Department of Marine and Aviation Headquarters

Early in 1959 the Department of Marine and Aviation moved from Pier A, North River, where its offices had been located since 1870. The Department's new executive, administrative and engineering offices are now located in modern, new quarters in the Battery Maritime Building, at Whitehall and South Streets, at the southerly tip of Manhattan Island.

Map shows location of the Battery Maritime Building. The structure, newly named, includes the Whitehall and South Street ferry terminals, convenient to the I.R.T. South Ferry and B.M.T. Whitehall Street subway stations.

