Redevelopment of the naval port in Philadelphia

Rose Nagele

Context

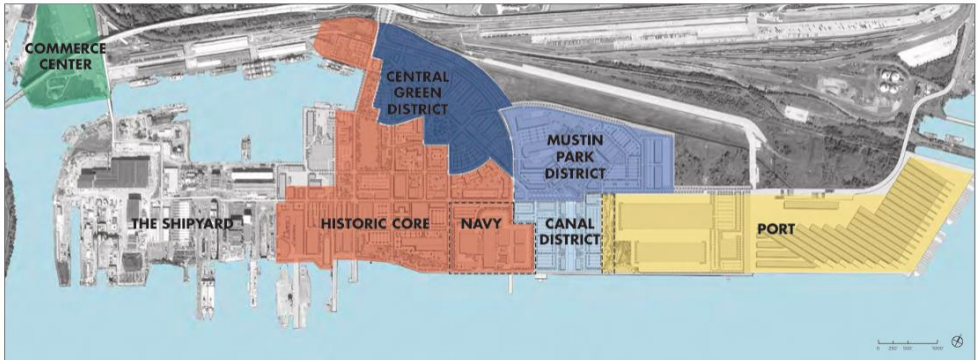




- Marshy island in the Delaware River converted to a U.S. naval base
- Filling in wetlands and creeks to create solid ground
- Operation as a naval station for 120 years
- Reformulated as a “waterfront business campus” in 2000

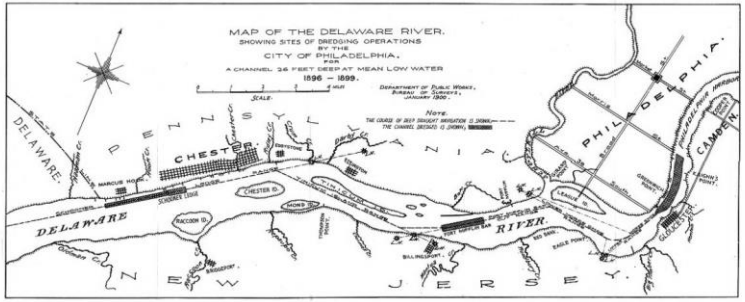
What can we learn from the past two hundred years of activity at League Island?

What does this mean the land, water, and people occupying this space in the future?



Methodology

1. Historical documents
    a. Congressional Hearings and Acts
    b. Plans and diagrams
    c. Maps
    d. Images
2. Current sources
    a. Site visits
    b. Social Media

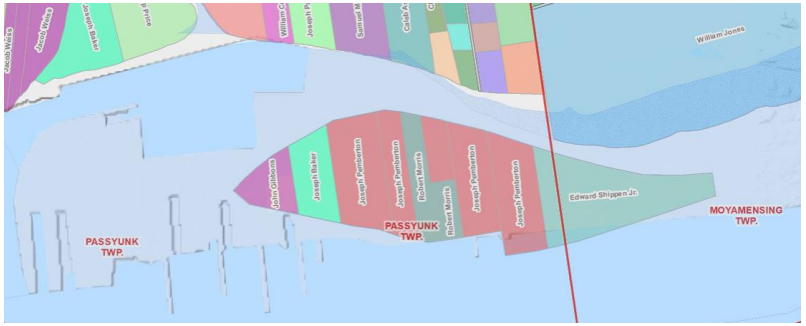


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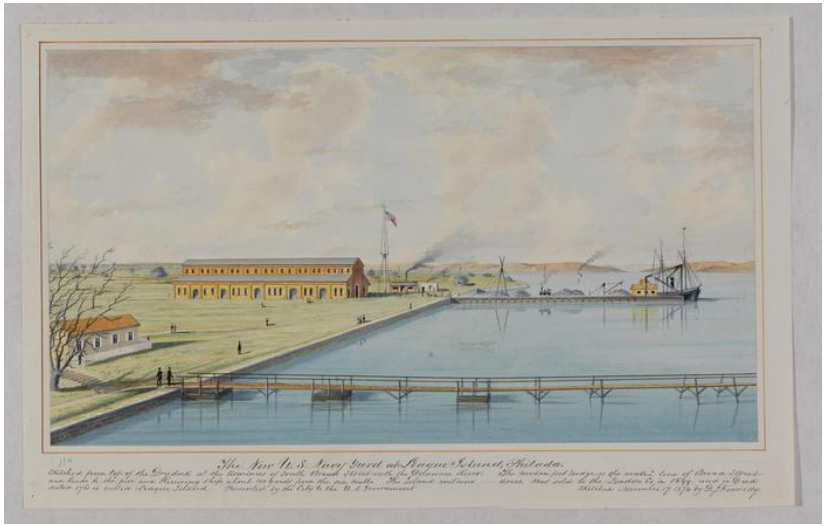
An Act to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to accept League Island, in the Delaware river, for Naval purposes, and to dispense with and dispose of the site of the existing yard at Philadelphia.



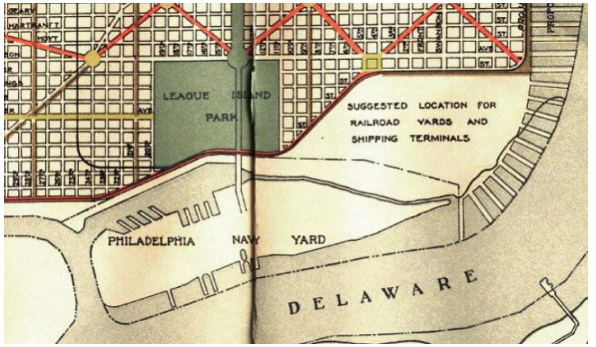
Preliminary Findings



- Ownership of League Island
  - Divided into 15-30 acre lots by 1777; docking ships, agriculture
  - First bridge to the mainland built in 1837; State government approval, for public use
  - Transferred to federal government -- 1862-1868
  - Naval station closure, city ownership -- 1995
- Property rights -- land vs. water
  - Land private, river public
  - Boundary lines of a tidal waterfront property
  - Right to build structures that extend into the river



Preliminary Findings



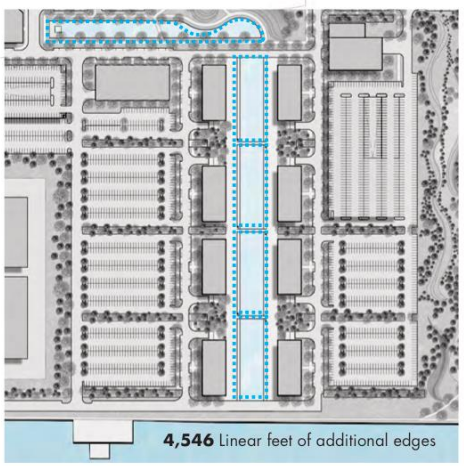
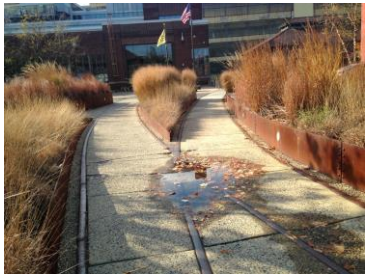


Figure 3.20 Proposed Water Edge: Linear Water Bodies

- Water, marsh, and land
  - Planning for dredging and filling projects began immediately
  - League Island fully connected to the mainland by 1920
  - League Island Park
- Infrastructure
  - Docks, wharves, and piers
  - Buildings, barracks and warehouses
  - Airfield and rail
- Green space







Existing: 44.5 acres of open lawn



Proposed: 3.4 acres of open lawn (93% total reduction)

Figure 3.5 Existing and Proposed Open Lawn Spaces

Challenges and Next Steps



- People
  - Bringing findings about the environment, infrastructure, and law in conversation with the experiences of those living or working in these spaces
- Nonhuman agents of change
  - Influenza outbreak, 1918
  - Water erosion
- Potential futures
  - Push to develop residential capacity--sustainable?
  - Energy





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Public Engagement

- Example of a broader trend
- How should the public engage with these changed and changing spaces?
  - Is the PIDC/Navy Yard's current social media strategy effective? What is their message? What aren't they conveying?





