

enterprise along the water front of the Litchfield estate,¹ will eventually reclaim and make valuable for commercial and manufacturing purposes an immense area of the city, hitherto quite valueless.

¹In 1852, Mr. Edwin C. Litchfield purchased the old Cortelyou estate, extending from the lower half of the block between Tenth and Eleventh avenues down to Second avenue and the Gowanus canal, and bounded on the sides by First and Fifth streets. For this property he paid \$150,000, and by subsequent purchases of adjoining owners, at a cost of about \$100,000, became the proprietor of nearly a square mile within the limits of the city. Upon a high bluff, between Ninth and Tenth avenues and Third and Fifth streets, he erected a superb mansion, at a cost of \$150,000, which was known as Litchfield's Castle, and has since been incorporated within the Prospect park limits. In considering plans for the improvement of his great area of unproductive city lots, he saw that the first necessity was a good roadway across the meadows. His square mile of land consisted of about half upland and half meadow or swamp, Fifth avenue being the boundary line between the two. From Fifth avenue down across the meadows toward the canal, there was not one street made in the whole mile, not one in a mile and a half, in fact, from Ninth street to beyond Warren street. Third street, as it stood on the map, was about midway. But the expense of building that street across the meadows would evidently be enormous, it would require at least a quarter of a million of dollars, and this, the property wholly unproductive as it was, and eating itself up in taxes, would not bear. Availing himself therefore of the sudden mania for commissions which the Atlantic boulevard project inaugurated, Mr. Litchfield secured the appointment by the legislature of a commission for the improvement of Third street. He had previously improved at his own expense, First street from Ninth to Fifth avenues; Fourth avenue, across the meadows on his property; Fifth street, from Ninth to Fifth avenues; Second street from Seventh to Eighth avenues, and graded and paved Fourth street from Eighth to Fifth avenues. Thus he got the upland part of his estate into fair condition for building, and this section of the city within the past three years, has entered upon a rapid career of improvement. The water front of the Litchfield estate is 1,000 feet; but, not content with the dock and wharf space thus afforded, Mr. Litchfield organized and obtained an act of incorporation for the *Brooklyn Improvement Company*, of which he is president. This company are now making three slips or branch canals, leading out of the Gowanus canal proper. The first leaving the Gowanus canal at Fourth street, runs in a slanting direction nearly up to Third avenue, is one hundred feet wide, and has twelve feet depth of low water and sixteen or more at high water. It extends six hundred and seventy-five feet from the canal, and affords one thousand four hundred feet of water front, at which a dozen canal boats can discharge at once, leaving navigable room for others to pass in and out. The two other branch canals are each six hundred and fifty-seven feet in length also. One leaves the main canal at Eleventh street, and the other at Sixth street, and both run up almost to Second avenue. Each is to be one hundred feet wide and the same depth as the first. Mr. Litchfield also had docked the side of the Gowanus canal along his property, and has filled in and graded the wharf for two hundred and fifty feet back from the canal, and on

this wharf, between Second and Third streets, one of the largest lumber yards in the country has been established. The total cost of this land improvement, has exceeded a million dollars, including interest; and until the last two or three years, when houses began to be built, there was literally no return. Not a single lot has been sold by Mr. Litchfield, below Fifth avenue; and it depends on the commercial future of Brooklyn to determine whether the vast outlay being made for docks on the meadows will be remunerative within the life-time of this sanguine and indomitable believer in the future commercial greatness of Brooklyn. The bare cost of the three docks and wharves now being built will amount to nearly half a million dollars; and the total outlay contemplated in the improvement of these meadows, the fellows of which, right and left, are wholly useless and impassable in the hands of less enterprising owners, approaches another million besides. With this enormous expenditure, it is hoped to make the whole estate habitable, down to Fourth avenue, and to convert the portion below into a thriving commercial locality, adding immensely to the wealth and trade of the city as well as, at last, returning a tardy but ample interest on the vast amount of capital invested in the improvement of this part of South Brooklyn.—*Brooklyn Eagle*, January 29, 1869.

¹The improvement of the East river approach to New York city, by removal of the rocks from Hell Gate channel, which is now being earnestly prosecuted, will undoubtedly have the most momentous results upon the future of Brooklyn. It will reverse the location of the commerce of both cities, and convert the shores of Green-