

sounds plausible in a city where you never know what lost infrastructure might be discovered underground, like those actual discoveries of a rotating pneumatic subway at Broadway and Murray, the Atlantic Avenue Railway, or the abandoned Croton water conduits now used to store art under the Met. And if there is a cattle tunnel under Greenwich Street, I'm the one to find it.

I'm a utility infrastructure analyst for the engineering firm designing the Greening of Greenwich, and my job is to make sense of the spaghetti works formed by sewers, water mains, gas pipes, steam lines, electrical ducts, telephone conduits, Western Union vacuum tubes, abandoned refrigerant lines, trolley columns, streetcar tracks—and now cattle tunnels.

I've been trying to sort out this cattle tunnel business since Fred first told me about it, but when I pressed him for details of its whereabouts, he remembered that it was actually witnessed by another inspector who thought maybe the tunnel was at Beach or Harrison Street, but couldn't be sure. I looked at my composite utility map showing the web of utilities under Greenwich Street to see if there was some obvious parting of the infrastructure that might delineate the tunnel's path. But since I wouldn't see any swath through the tangle anyway a tunnel ten feet down would pass beneath practically every utility except sewers. And while the sewers didn't have any unusual gaps, the public works folk in 1870 might well have laid bricks right through the side of an abandoned wood tunnel.

My budding search ended here for a few years—until early 1996 when the Economic Development Corp. began the Greenwich Street final design. So I started asking my contacts at Con Edison and Nynex if they'd heard of this subterranean coral.

"Oh, yeah," most nodded. And a designer from Nynex's construction group added, "They ran into that up towards Canal Street. In fact, they found a musket leaning against the wall of the tunnel. They put it on a plaque. It's hanging in my boss's office with a little brass tag saying where they found it."

Egad! Now all I had to do was get into that office and read the plaque. But I couldn't exactly waltz into the venerable chambers of El Presidente del Nynex. So I asked my Nynex pal to take a closer peek at the plaque next time he

was in on a presidential pow-wow. Rick sketched it out and faxed it over. Under the rusty rifle it says: "This gun was found in the Empire City Subway Company trench, forty feet east of the northeast corner of Canal and Renwick Streets, at a depth of 5ft 6in under the sidewalk on Sept. 9, 1926."

Drat. Surely five feet is too shallow, and I can't imagine the plaque omitting mention of a cattle tunnel if, say, the musket were sitting on top of it.

A week later, an interference planner from Con Ed said, "Oh, yeah. One of our inspectors told me he ran into the cattle tunnel while putting in the high-pressure gas main on the west side of Greenwich. Next time he's in the office, he's going to take a look through his old notes." For weeks I needed him to prod his inspector, all for nought. "Nah. He couldn't find it. Doesn't remember where he saw it. Says it ran both north-south an' east-west. Made of steel, six feet by six feet."

Odd. Previous reports said it was made of wood. And how could it run in all directions? Foiled again, I expressed my disappointment to a colleague at Nynex.

"Oh, yeah. The guy you oughtta talk to is that guy at the City's permit section. He knows everything there is to know about it." Sensing my search might be turning into a snipe hunt, I reluctantly buzzed the City's permit section.

"Well, sure, I know about the cattle tunnel. But the guy you need to talk to works over at Con Ed. He's seen this tunnel." And his name?

"Gee, I don't exactly remember. It was the inspector that installed the gas main on the west side. Said the thing's made entirely of fieldstones."

Circles within circles. Serious doubts were setting in, and I began to wonder whether a heifer highway was historically feasible. Ensnored for hours at the New-York Historical Society with Stokes' "Iconography of New York," I found numerous references to regulations for herding cattle from the streets of Manhattan, mainly in the late 1600's.

It seems hogs once conspired with cows to trample the City's ram-parts, unbranded cattle were getting mixed up, and shrinking pastures meant cow traffic had to be managed by a City shepherd. At regular intervals, slaughterhouses popped up on both shores, burned down and were rebuilt, burned down again, and were

(continued on next page)

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