

An aerial photograph of Rikers Island, showing a large, complex of prison buildings and structures. The island is surrounded by water, and a bridge is visible in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, bold, red font with a yellow outline.

Which, if any, was NEVER  
a mode of transport  
on Rikers Island:  
horses,  
bicycles,  
motor vehicles,  
railway trains?



Horses were used there for cultivation and transport in the Rikers ownership era & later by Correction at its inmate farm. The isle was a Civil War Union camp. Then too horses provided pull-power and transport. **Above:** Mounted officer at landfill leveling site looks at penitentiary-hospital construction progress back in the '30s. **Image right:** Captain Fred Bacchi, now retired, at special Rikers Island event for families.

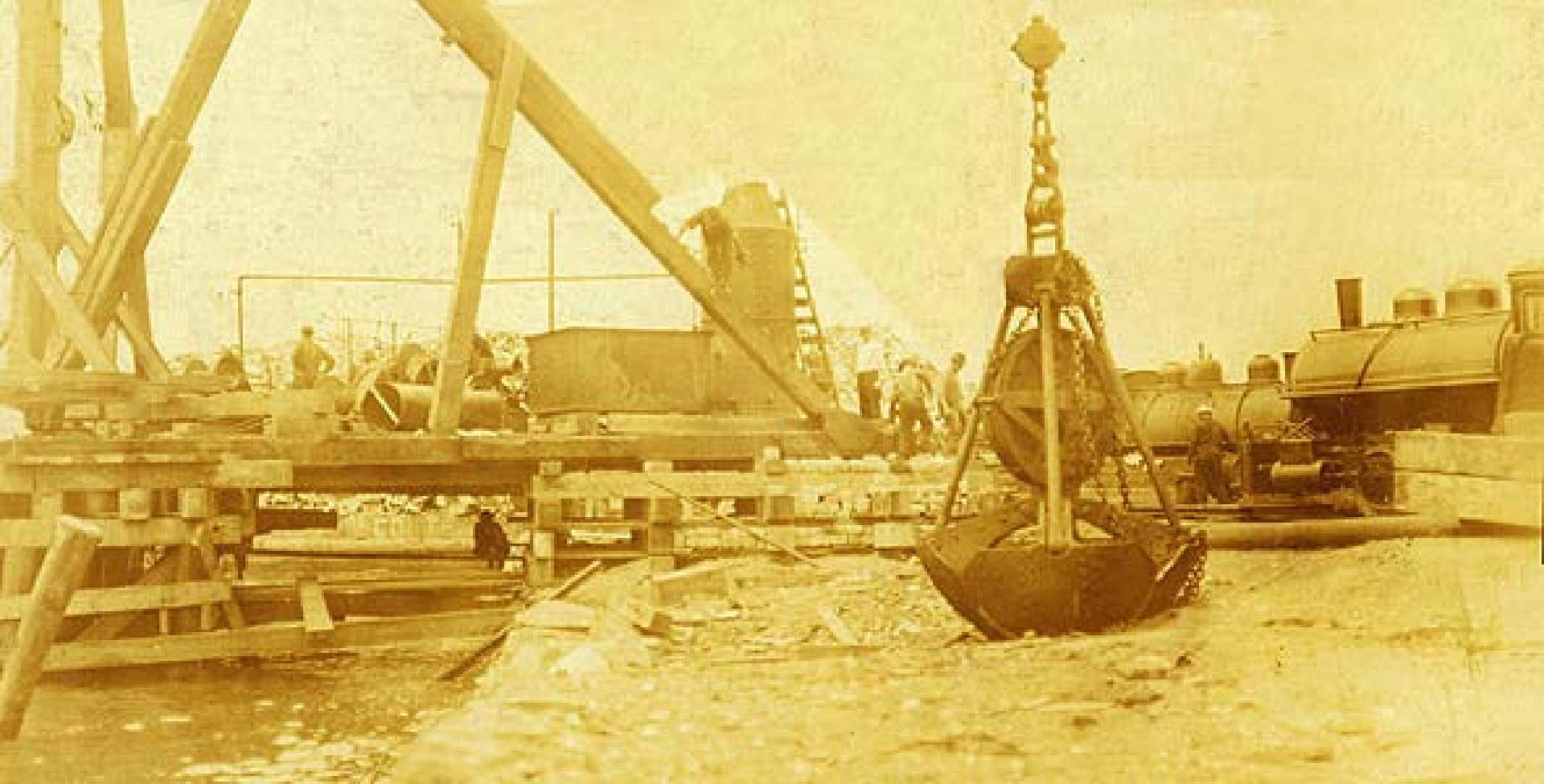




NYCPD group photo from the past, showing diversity of people and variety of assignments including fire arms unit, boot camp, K-9, harbor and bicycle patrol. Bernard Kerik, then Commissioner, introduced the bike patrols.



From Ret. Assist. Chief Richard Pagan's collection, a 2002 ESU group pix taken by CO Ralph Smith, shows various NYCD Rikers vehicles. We see that horses, bikes and vehicles have provided transport on the island. So who ever heard of trains running on Rikers? But they did.

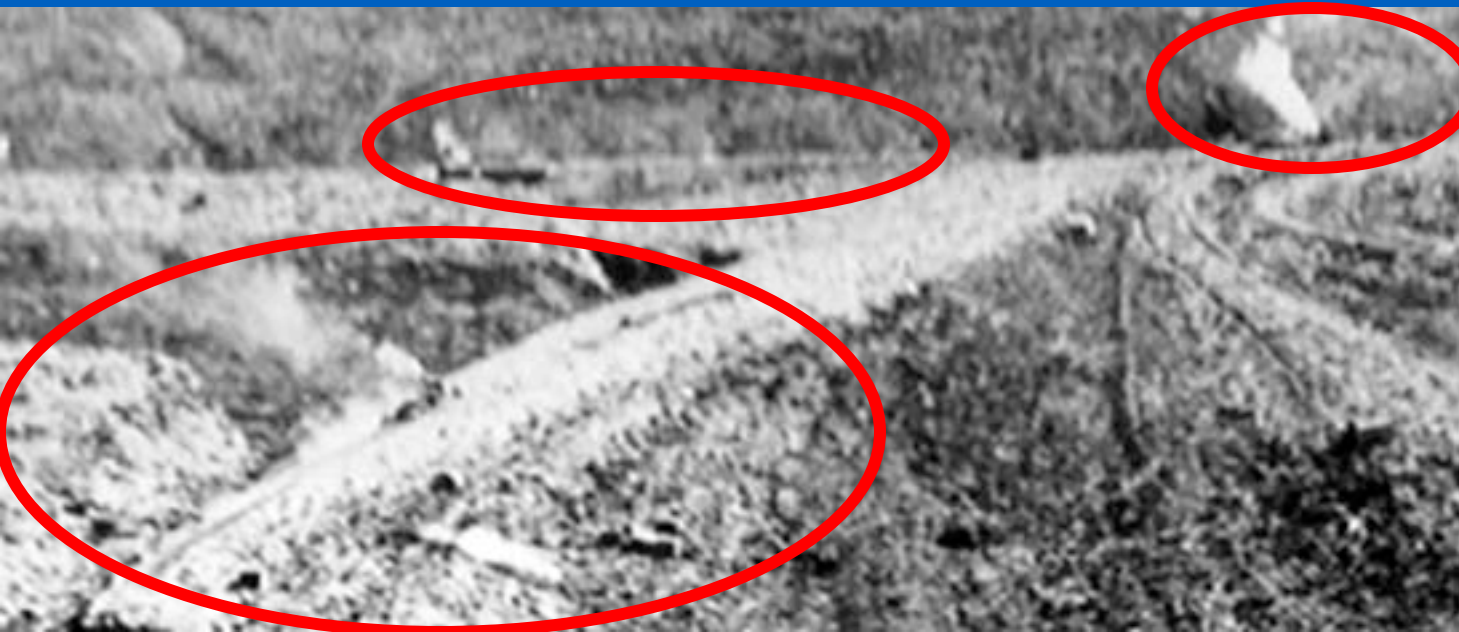


Rail trains certainly did provide transport on the island. Without them its 87+ acres couldn't have been expanded to its present 415+ acres. Rail tracks crisscrossed Rikers transporting landfill to work sites. The image above from CorrectionHistory website's Hertzendorf digital collection.

A 1930s  
aerial  
photo  
detail  
shows  
waters  
edge

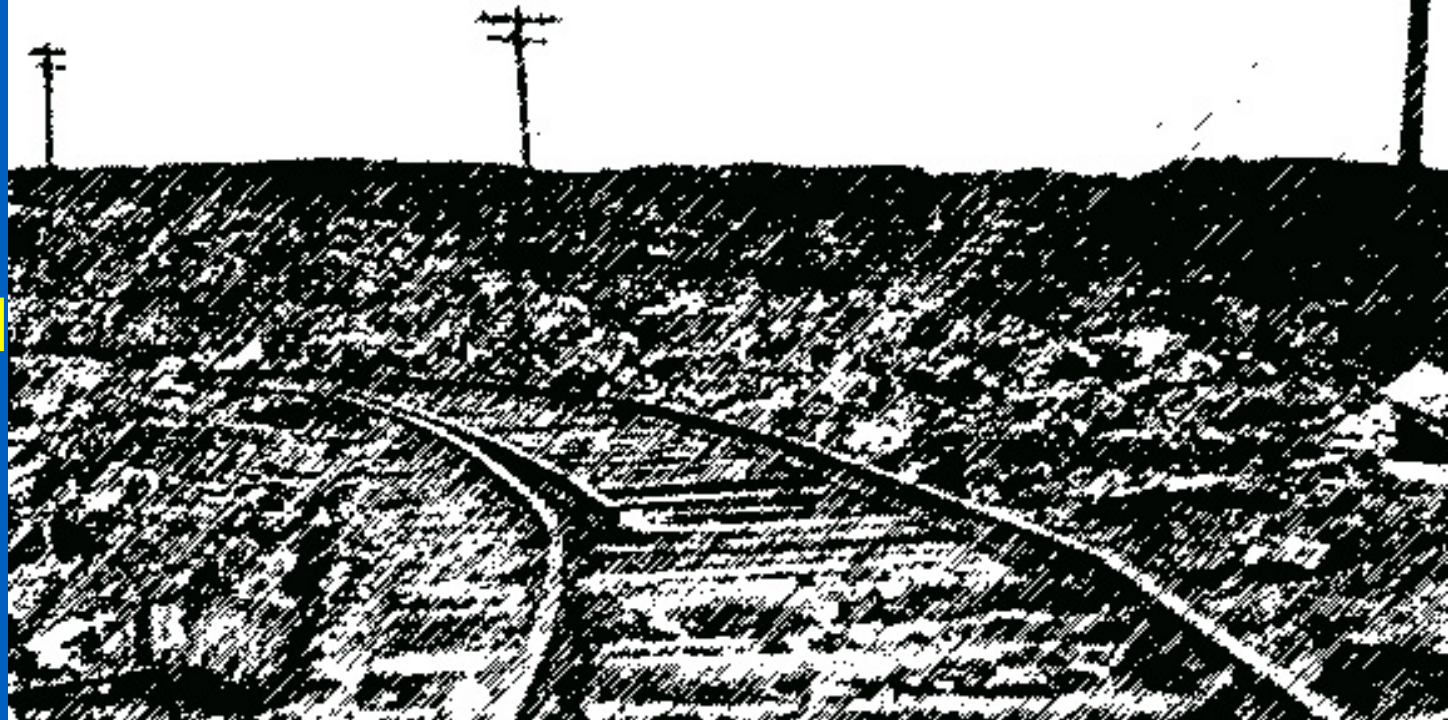


steam shovels billowing plumes but note 3 smaller ones  
on the island's interior roadbeds. Below an enlargement

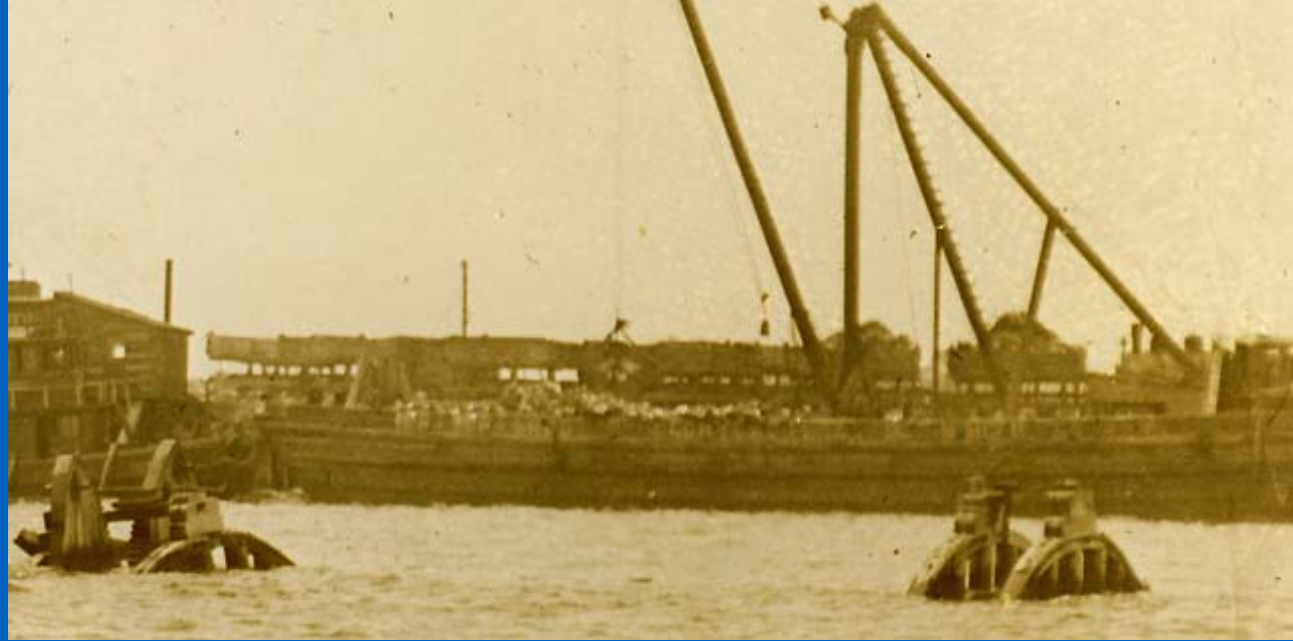


helps to  
pinpoint the  
train tracks  
and steam  
locomotives  
pushing or  
pulling cars.

Graphic pen sketches of Rikers landfill scenes based on NYC's Municipal Archives pix. Top right: rail track through the rubble. Bottom right: parking for the little train engines that could . . . and really did.

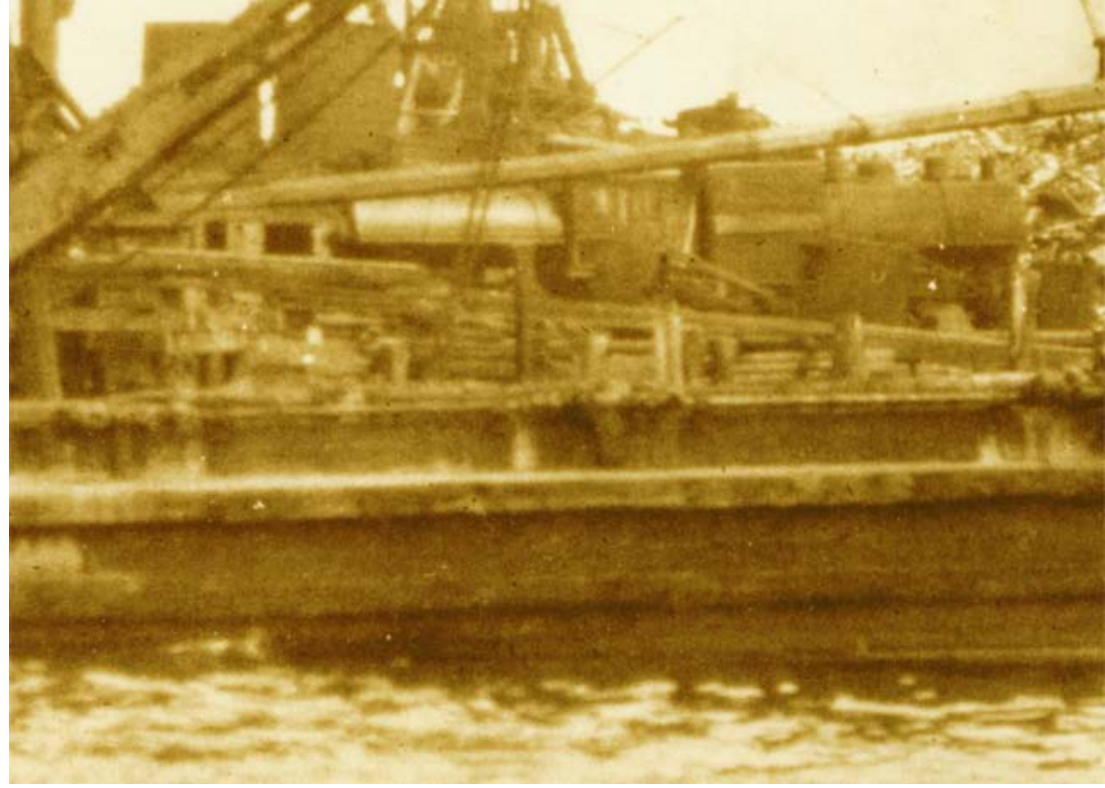


Images right and below show rail cars with their locomotives at landfill off-loading area near the river edge.



Both images come from Correction History website Hertzendorf collection.





2 more Correction History website Hertzendorf collection images show Rikers landfill locomotives about to push their loaded train cars along the railway tracks to work locations. To access our website presentation which includes dozen more image close-ups, go to

***1920s Scenes of Rikers Rising from the River***

2 images here are from NYPL photos (P.L. Speer) that show rail tracks on Rikers. See them too on Philip M. Goldstein's very excellent page



about “industrial & off-line railroads” in NYC. For nitty-gritty details on Rikers locomotives, visit his page on [trainweb.com](http://trainweb.com) via this [link](#). [click]



Above image appears on Page 2 of this website's *"Rikers Island Had a Farm E-I-E-I-O."* The 1930 NYCD annual report caption reads *"Inmates Reclaiming Large Quantity of Valuable Land, Municipal Farms, Riker's Island."* Note a rail car's bin is tilted at an angle so the contents can be removed and spread. Click image to access that page.

# Panorama of Riker's Island, N.Y.

Thomas A. Edison, Inc.  
©May 20, 1903



0:08 / 2:44



Edison's 2 minute 44 seconds movie of May 1903 landfill operations at Rikers Island, filmed from slow moving boat, opens and closes with scenes of work trains in motion. In it locomotives and train cars also visible. [Click to access.](#)

[www.correctionhistory.org](http://www.correctionhistory.org)

The web  
resource  
for NY  
correction  
history



**7.000+ files**

of text &  
images

totaling 70+  
megabytes.

**NY Correction History Society**