

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Branson City Park Historic District

other names/site number none

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number St. limas and Oklahoma not for publication N/A
city or town Branson vicinity N/A
state Missouri code MO county Taney code 213
zip code 65616

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Claire F. Blackwell 20 July 1993
Signature of certifying official Date
Claire F. Blackwell, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Branson City Park Historic District
Taney County, Missouri
Historic Taneycomo Lakefront Tourism Resources

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	__2__ buildings
__1__	_____ sites
__2__	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
__3__	__2__ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register __0__

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

__Historic Taneycomo Lakefront Tourism Resources of Branson , Taney County Missouri__

Branson City Park Historic District
Taney County, Missouri
Historic Taneycomo Lakefront Tourism Resources

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Recreation and Culture Sub: Outdoor Recreation

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Recreation and Culture Sub: Outdoor Recreation

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century
American Movements, Craftsman

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof _____
walls Limestone
other Limestone
concrete

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets, Section 7

Branson City Park Historic District
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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Branson City Park Historic District
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Period of Significance ca. 1934-1943

Significant Dates ca. 1934

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder WPA

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets, Section 8

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

All sources used in preparing this form have been cited on the Multiple Properties Documentation Form.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

- Primary Location of Additional Data
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other

Name of repository: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
Columbia, Missouri.
Southwest Missouri State University

Branson City Park Historic District
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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	480880	4055400	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheets, Section 10

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheets, section 10

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title David M. Quick, Architectural Historian and Linda Myers-Phinney,
Historian

organization Southwest Missouri State University date December, 1992

street & number 743 South Fremont telephone 417-862-8571

city or town Springfield state Mo zip code 65804

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The Branson City Park contains three contributing properties. Two are tourist development properties of the sub-type W P A facility as discussed in the Multiple Properties Cover Document, "Historic Taneycomo Lakefront Tourism Resources of Branson, Taney County, Missouri (Section F, pp. 7-8). The third is an historic site closely related to one of the properties. The Mang Field Bleachers, Mang baseball field and the Stone Bleachers, by their original function of providing for participation in sports, as well as by the accommodation of public gatherings, indicate their importance for recreation during the period of the depression in Branson and the Taneycomo area. Both bleacher facilities were built as W P A projects, of local materials and with building techniques which associate them with other New Deal projects built in the Ozarks during the Great Depression. Finally, both of the bleacher structures are good examples of the use of rustic native stone by means of the slab rock technique, and both are consistent with the picturesque aesthetic of the area. The Mang Field complex contains the contributing site of the baseball diamond and field, the contributing Mang bleachers structure and a recent non-contributing but visually and functionally consistent rest room facility building (photos 4 and 5). The baseball field area is surrounded by a chain link fence and contains a number of elements which are alterations of the baseball field site, but consistent with a baseball field and do not materially impair the overall integrity of the complex or the district as a whole. Home plate and the bleachers are in the northwest corner of the district, and the baseball field covers the greater part of the area. The contributing stone bleachers lie along the greater part of the eastern edge of the district facing Lake Taneycomo across a paved area. Part of the area along the southern border of the park has been excluded from the Historic district because it contains a recent swimming pool and changing building. While these properties are located partly between the southwestern edge of the baseball field and the stone bleachers they do not materially disrupt the overall integrity of the contributing resources. Neither does a small non-contributing rest room building just west of the stone bleachers within the District. While there have been a number of alterations and additions to the Mang Field complex and the stone bleachers, these have not altered the significant aspects of their appearance or their function; and they retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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The Stone Bleachers.

The contributing Stone Bleachers (photos 1-3) are comprised of a sequence of five bleacher seats built into the rising grade at the eastern edge of the district overlooking Lake Taneycomo. They rise from a walkway which is itself raised a step from a asphalt paved area. The bleachers run some 420 feet along that paved area and the eastern boundary of the district. The entire structure is constructed of irregular slabs of limestone set in concrete mortar. Adjacent to the stone risers of the bleacher seats at two intervals are sequences of stone foot steps made necessary by the uncomfortable stepping height of the seating. It was not possible to ascertain if these steps were part of the original construction. Clearly they have been in place for considerable time. Except for some color variation of mortar consistent with re-tucking and normal maintenance, the bleacher seats and walkway is as it was when it was constructed. It retains its historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Dispersed at irregular intervals along the bleachers are a number of planters. Some of these planters contain the bases of the trunks of large trees which shade the bleacher area. Others contain flower beds which may replace trees. Most of these planters appear to have been part of the original construction. Others, while consistent with the materials and methods of the earlier construction, clearly represent more recent construction. These more recent planters, being larger than those from the original construction, may represent enlargements of planters in the same location--enlargements made necessary by the growth of trees the earlier planters contained. If we consider the bleachers as a single structure, the modifications represented by the more recent planters do not materially effect that structure's overall integrity in any respect.

The southern end of the bleachers curves west and terminates against a coursed limestone retaining wall. While these are more recent than the original construction and were likely made necessary by the grading and paving of the street, they are also consistent in material and do not significantly effect overall integrity.

Just to the west of the Stone Bleachers is a small rest room building (photo 3) which was likely built during the 1950's. This unobtrusive non-contributing building is constructed of painted concrete block, is flat

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roofed and, of course, has an appropriate function for a place of public gathering.

Part of the area along the southern border of the park has been excluded from the historic district because it contains a recent swimming pool and changing building (Background of photo 2). These more recent additions to the park are consistent with its function and do not materially disrupt the overall integrity of the contributing resources.

Mang Field Complex.

The Mang Field Complex includes the contributing site of Mang Baseball Field, a contributing structure, the Mang Field Bleachers, and a non-contributing rest room building. The complex also contains a number of other elements typically found at a baseball field and are of a more or less temporary nature. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, these are considered alterations to the Mang Baseball Field Site and are not counted as contributing or non-contributing. These are not shown except in-so-far as they appear in photographs of the other parts of the complex, but they include such things as chain link fencing and backstop, light wood and metal dugout covers, batters cages and power and light poles. The exact nature and number of these frequently change some with the annual coming of the baseball season. All could be easily removed or replaced.

Mang baseball field (photo 4) (including diamond) has occupied this location from the early 1920s, before the time of the original construction of the current bleacher facility, until the present. Its importance to the resort community was acknowledged and enhanced with the W P A construction of the current bleachers to replace earlier wooden bleachers which had been washed away in a flood. While the baseball field pre-dates the construction of the Mang Field Bleachers its significance is integral with that of the bleachers and, therefore, its period of significance is here considered to begin with that of the W P A construction in the Branson City Park, ca. 1934.

The most prominent feature of the Mang Field complex is a curved rock and concrete wall some 12' high and about 132' long (photos 5 and 6). The wall, which is about 24" thick, is formed as a segment of a circle. The stone covering of the outer curved surface of the wall was set in two

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zones. The lower zone from the ground up to a height of about 4' is of rectangular limestone blocks of varying size laid in irregular horizontal courses. Some of these courses are interrupted at fairly regular intervals by stones set vertically. The second zone from the top of the coursed stone blocks to the top of the wall is of irregularly shaped limestone slabs laid in a typical "slab rock" fashion. That is, the slabs are laid vertically and set into a concrete core. On the east end of the curved wall is a high window opening within which nothing remains and a wooden door which is not original although the opening is. Both door and window opening are topped by concrete lintels. A door and what was once a window opening are also to be found on the west end of the wall. The letters W P A with the "P" reversed in the Greek Alphabet form are incised in the concrete window lintel. The window itself has been replaced by a memorial plaque inscribed to "Joe C. Alexander, 1981."

The rock wall of the Mang Field Bleachers is essentially as it was when it was constructed as a W P A project. And, therefore, it retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The attached bleacher seating has been modified (photo 6). This seating is attached to but is structurally independent of the wall. It has had its center section removed and now forms two 18' wide sections. The center area of the seating has been replaced by a recent concrete slab, this removal of the center section does not effect the structure of the two seating units which remain. These are of poured concrete slab and beam construction. Currently there is a light aluminum canopy over each of the seating sections which is structurally independent of the seating and easily removable.

The alterations to the seating area of the Mang Bleachers and the ball field do not obscure the original location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or association. They do to a small degree alter the feeling of the Mang Field complex; but taken as a whole, this alteration is not enough to impair its overall integrity as a district.

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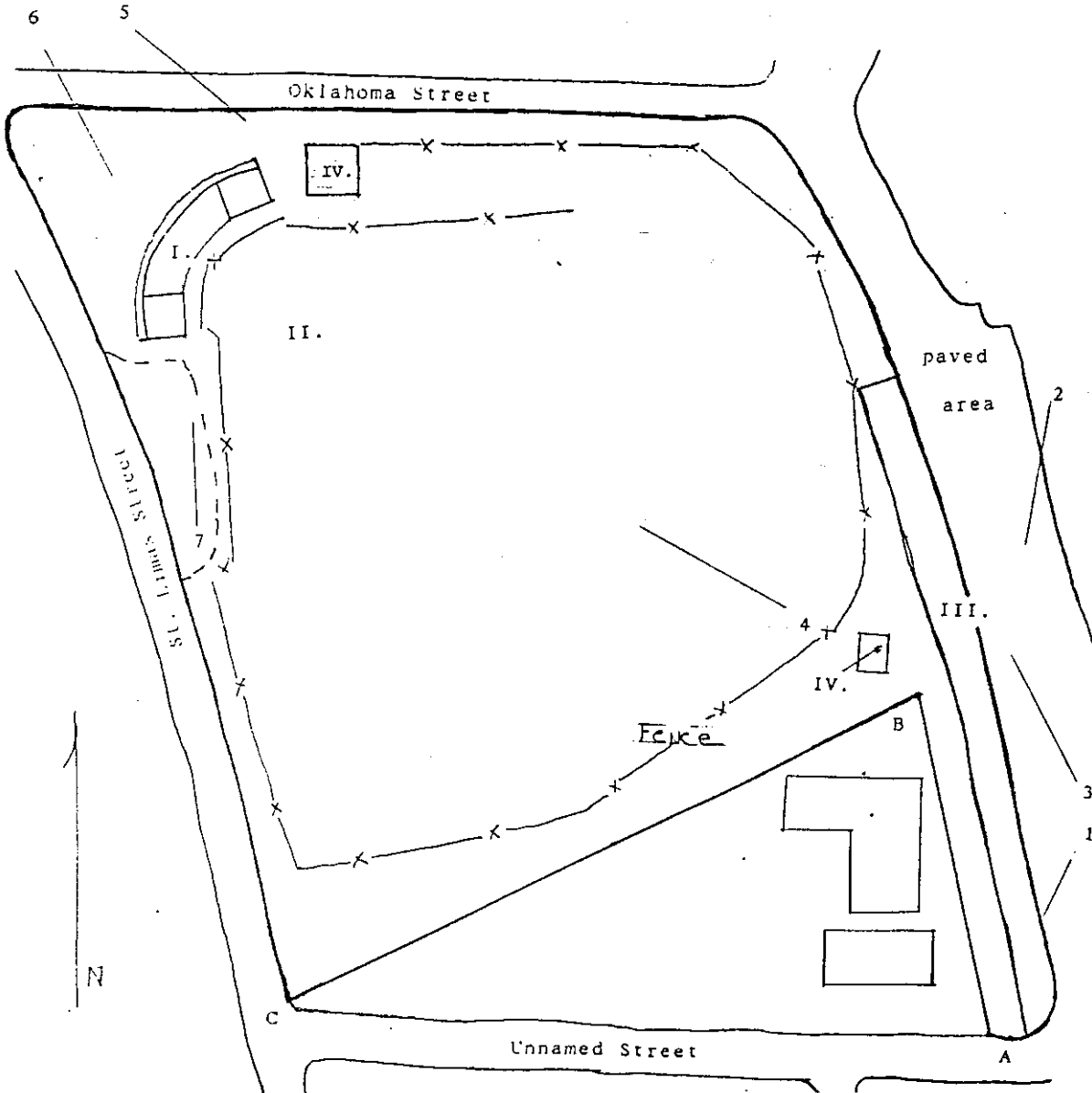
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BRANSON CITY PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT site map

- I. Mang Field Bleachers
 - II. Mang Baseball Field
 - III. Stone Bleachers
 - IV. Rest Rooms (non-contributing)
- 1-7 Locations from which photographs were taken.
(not to scale)



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Within the Branson Waterfront Park are two significant structures. These include the Stone Bleachers overlooking Lake Taneycomo and the Mang Field Bleachers both of which were tourist development properties constructed by the W P A to provide employment and to encourage tourist activities. These are activities for which they are still employed. Therefore, these conform to the property sub-type, "W.P.A. Depression Years Facilities," as discussed in the Multiple Properties Cover Document, "Historic Resources of Branson of Branson, Taney County, Missouri" (Section F. pp. 7-8) and are significant according to Criteria A in the areas of RECREATION and SOCIAL HISTORY. Furthermore, both exhibit the design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with the picturesque Craftsman aesthetic. The use of rustic local material, limestone, and the slab rock technique of construction is important both in picturesque resort construction and is associated with local WPA public projects. Therefore, both structures are also significant under criterion C, ARCHITECTURE. Adjacent to the Mang Field Bleachers is the baseball field itself which has formed an important focus for tourist and community public recreation and other activity. Consequently the field is a significant site under criterion A in the areas of RECREATION and SOCIAL HISTORY.

The history of development in the Lake Taneycomo area is synonymous with the history of tourism in the area, for it was tourism which precipitated the area's metamorphosis from frontier-like to modern. This change was evident in all aspects of life's fabric: commercial, social, economic, and cultural.

Lake Taneycomo's lakefront area has been a focus of tourism activities since the lake's impoundment in 1913. Riverside Park, the lake shore area north of present Oklahoma Street, was a popular gathering place for tourists and locals alike as early as 1907. There they caught rides on excursion boats, watched those same boats while they picnicked and visited, and promenaded along the scenic lake shore.

In 1917 Branson extended its park area to the south when it purchased the Mang Field property. The park was used as a ball field from the early 1920s on, hosting school, community, and even major league farm teams. As a stage for the great American pastime, the ball field brought together young and old, different communities, and both residents and tourists. In this manner it served as an important focus for local social identity. It

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became even more so in the future as it accommodated such diverse events as religious services, carnivals, rodeos, political rallies, picnics, and public meetings.

Mang Field was originally graced by a wooden grandstand, but this structure was destroyed in the catastrophic 1927 flood which inundated downtown communities all along the lake. The ruined structure was replaced circa 1934 by the WPA; and since the significance of Mang Baseball Field and the current Mang Field Bleachers are integral, circa 1934 is here considered to be the beginning of the period of significance for both. At about the same time the WPA also constructed bleachers along the eastern periphery of the park. These seats faced east toward Lake Taneycomo, separated from the lake only by Lake Shore Drive. While this area had traditionally been a place from which to view the lake and its activities, construction of these bleachers formalized and gave visual form to this use. In the mid-1930s they seated spectators at nationally publicized motorboat races which drew as many as 15,000 people.

Both the ball field and lake front bleachers are architecturally significant. They typify the construction method and illustrate the ideological base which distinguished the back to nature movement; Lake Taneycomo tourism was one expression of this movement. Both structures are picturesque and rustic, a look accomplished by the use of irregularly shaped fieldstone and concrete mortar. The lakefront bleachers, in particular, exhibit the irregularity of form consistent with "picturesqueness," following vertical ground contours and adorned only with roughly cylindrical planters.

Following World War II in 1946 the park hosted the local Kiwanis Club's annual rodeo and the County Fair, and in 1949 speed boat races resumed along Branson's lake front. Yearly races, which continued into the 1950's, were still viewed from the stone bleachers facing the lake front.

In 1947 the Leavenworth, Kansas Braves, a farm team of the Boston Braves, led by manager Joe Bowman, chose Mang Field as their spring training camp. In the fall of that year the New York Yankees held a base ball school at Branson for young men who had signed or wanted to sign a contract to play with the Yankees.

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In subsequent years the Yankees' interest grew; farm teams from Quincy, Illinois; Joplin, Missouri; and Grand Forks, North Dakota conducted spring training in Branson. (They were followed in 1948 by Max Lanier's All-Stars, an exhibition team.) The Yankees again held base ball school in the fall of 1949, and 1950 spring training at Mang Field expanded to include farm teams from Independence, Kansas and Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Among the trainees was rookie Mickey Mantle. The farm teams returned in the spring of 1951, but the death of a seventeen-year-old player in Lake Taneycomo, according to local tradition, marked the end of Yankee activities at Mang Field.

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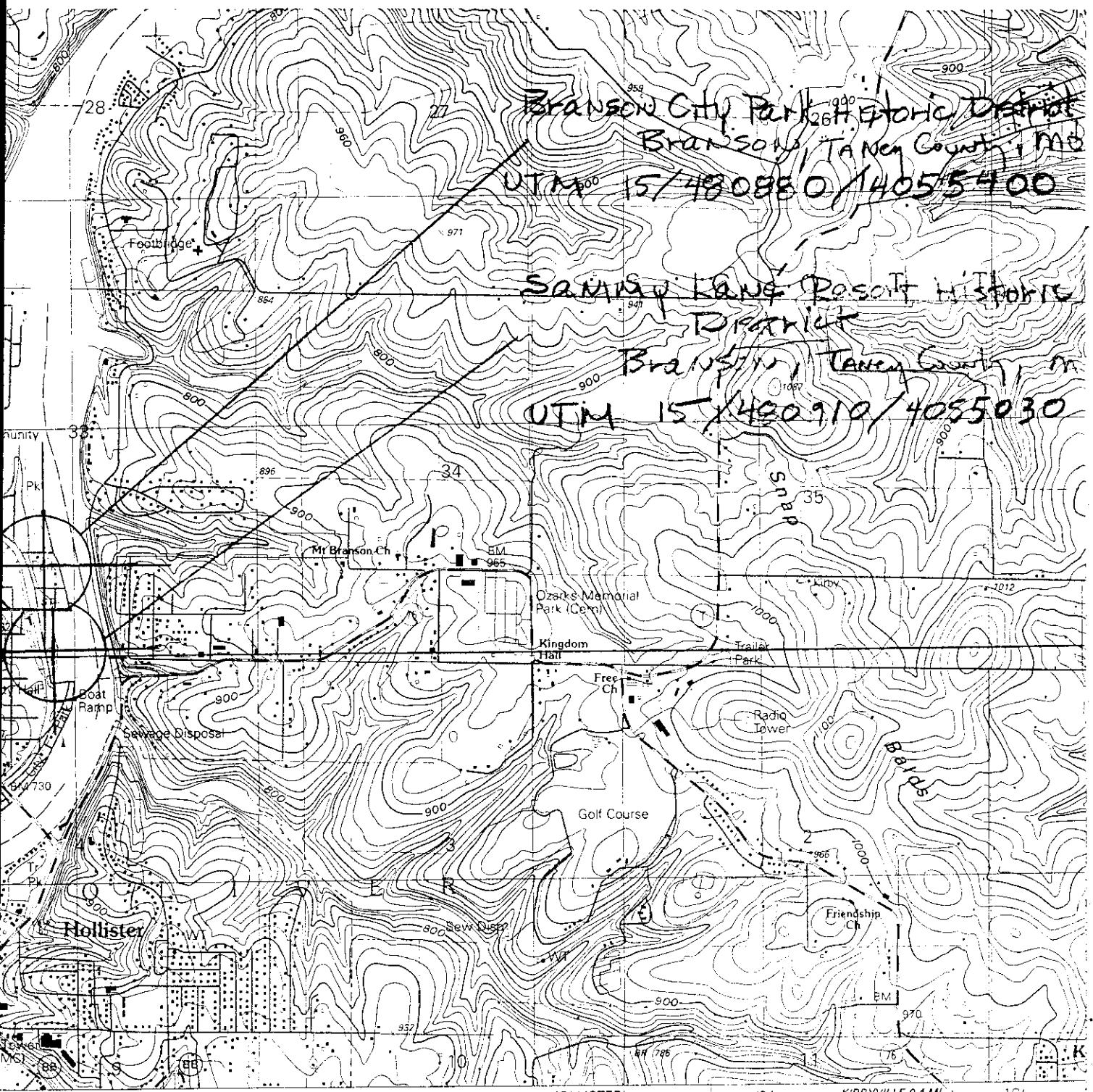
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Verbal Boundary Description.

The boundary of the Sammy Lane Resort Historic District is shown as a heavy dark line on the accompanying map entitled "Branson Lake Front Area," scale 1"=100' (approximate).

Boundary Justification.

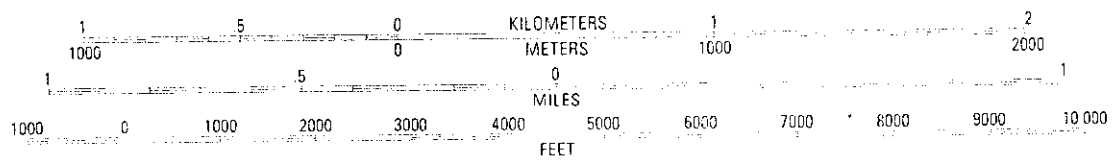
This area contains the significant structures and site in as simple a shape as possible within the existing pattern of streets. Part of the area along the southern border of the park has been excluded from the historic district because it contains a recent swimming pool and changing building. However, these more recent additions to the Branson City Park are consistent with the park's function and do not materially disrupt the overall integrity of feeling of the district.



481 12' 30" 482 (HOLLISTER) 7357 II SW 484 KIRBYVILLE 0.4 MI. 10'



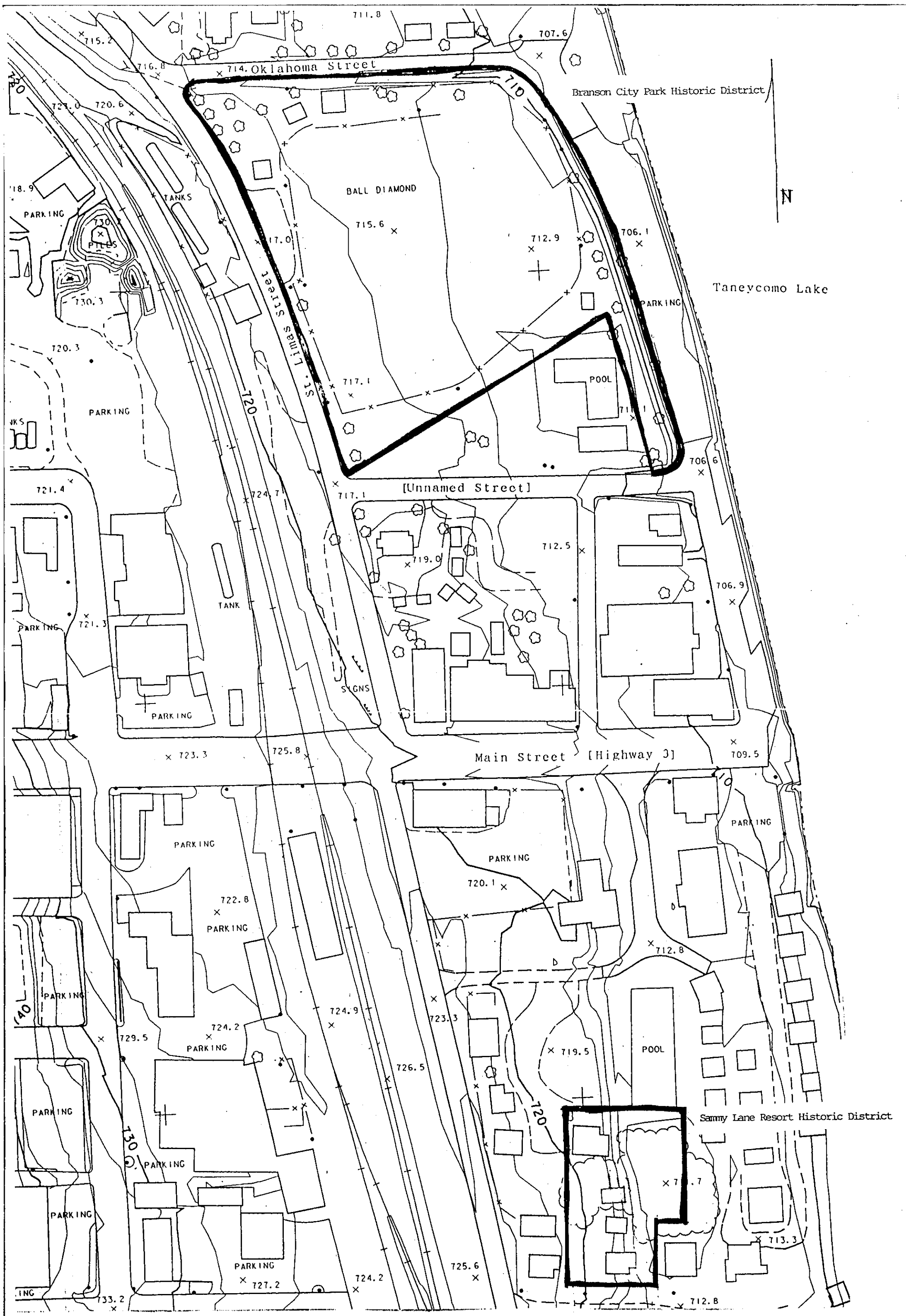
SCALE 1:24 000




CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND THE DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Historic Tanayoma Lakefront Tourism Resources of Branson, Tanay County, MO, MAPS



Branson Lake Front Area

Scale: 1"=100' (approximate)
 Historic District Boundary: 

This map is based upon one drawn for the Branson City Planning Office by M. J. Harden Associates, Kansas City, Missouri, 1991.















