

Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture Survey Phase Two



Prepared by
History and Archives Consulting
for
South Central Ozark Council of Governments
June 1993

OZARK ROCK MASONRY ARCHITECTURE SURVEY

PHASE TWO

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SURVEY REPORT

prepared for

South Central Ozark Council of Governments

by

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History and Archives Consulting

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Cover photograph: Roy Denny Home, Mountain Grove,
Missouri.

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Introduction

In June 1989 historical consultants Kalen and Morrow completed a survey plan for the seven Ozarks counties served by the South Central Ozarks Council of Governments. The Kalen and Morrow plan, with historical context written by Dr. Robert Flanders, identified the Ozarks expression of the American arts and crafts movement in the form of rock masonry architecture as an important theme for future survey projects in the region. Ultimately, the aim of these survey projects is to identify properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places within the broad theme of Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture.

Initially, SCOCOG planned a thematic survey of rock architecture in seven counties: Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Shannon, Texas, and Wright counties. However, preliminary investigations revealed a high concentration of resources in the cities of Thayer, Alton, and Koshkonong, all located in Oregon County. Survey consultants Linda Becker and Cydney Millstein, therefore, completed a study of properties in these cities in Phase One of the Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture Survey.

Phase Two of the survey includes properties in the remaining six counties: Douglas, Howell, Ozark, Shannon, Texas, and Wright. In all, the survey includes 103 properties located in various communities in these counties. Additional properties were identified, but not documented. A list of all identified properties is included in this report.

The purpose of this report is to place survey data in its historical context and to recommend procedures for listing eligible properties on the National Register of Historic Places. The section entitled "Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture (Description)" describes and categorizes the surveyed properties. The section entitled "Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture (Significance)" evaluates the significance of Ozark rock masonry architecture according to National Register standards. The section entitled "Craftsmen" lists the names of stonemasons and the geographical area in which they worked. The section entitled "Communities and Properties Surveyed" contains brief descriptions of the communities surveyed and a list of properties identified in those communities. The "Recommendations" section outlines a plan for listing eligible properties on the National Register. A

complete list of sources is included for use in the preparation of National Register nominations. Maps, inventory forms, and photographs have been submitted in connection with this report.

The survey plan and both phases of this survey have been supported by grants-in-aid from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Methodology

Site Visits

In the early stages of this project, the consultant visited numerous towns and conducted reconnaissance survey in order to form a general impression of the types and quantity of resources in each community that fall under the general category of Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture. Because of financial and time constraints, it was not possible to complete the documentation of every property identified. However, the results of the reconnaissance survey may be useful in future planning.

According to the plan for this project, a total of ninety (or more) properties would be carefully examined and documented. Visual inspection of these sites made it possible to describe the characteristics, condition, and integrity of the properties and determine their eligibility for Register listing.

Photography

Black and white record photographs are an essential part of the documentation required by both the Keeper of the National Register and the State Historic Preservation Office. The consultant,

therefore, photographed each of the selected properties and provided two black and white prints of each image. For informational purposes, the consultant also made one color slide of each building. These will be useful for public presentations and also for documenting the characteristics of polychromatic buildings.

Bibliographic Research

Integral to this project has been a study of the literature available on Ozark rock masonry, the American arts and crafts movement, the public architecture of the New Deal era, and the towns, cities, and counties included in the survey. A bibliography is included in this report.

Archival Research and Oral History

The most useful primary sources for this study have been oral interviews with local residents, property owners, and craftsmen. Written records documenting the construction of rock masonry buildings in the Ozarks have proved to be rare indeed. Published sources, such as city directories, gazetteers, and telephone books helped to identify past and present builders and craftsmen.

Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture (Description)

Properties documented in this survey include houses, commercial buildings, public buildings, and churches constructed of native stone between 1912 and 1954 in six counties on the central Ozarks plateau in southern Missouri. The map on the following page shows the location of the Ozark region in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. The shaded counties are the ones included in this survey.

The earliest examples of Ozark rock masonry architecture were craftsman bungalows constructed of rough fieldstone, also called cobblestone or rubble stone.¹ Designs for these bungalows came from The Craftsman Magazine and other magazines and pattern books, inspired by the California bungalow movement. Two excellent examples of these craftsman style fieldstone houses are the Roy Denney House, built in 1913, and the Wells Richards House, built in 1912. Both located in Mountain Grove (Wright County).

In the 1920s, builders continued to employ fieldstone in constructing high-style bungalows (such as the John Doane House in Douglas County) as well as

¹ David Quick and Lynn Morrow, "The Slab Rock Dwellings of Thayer, Missouri," Past, Pioneer America Society Transactions 13 (1990), 35.

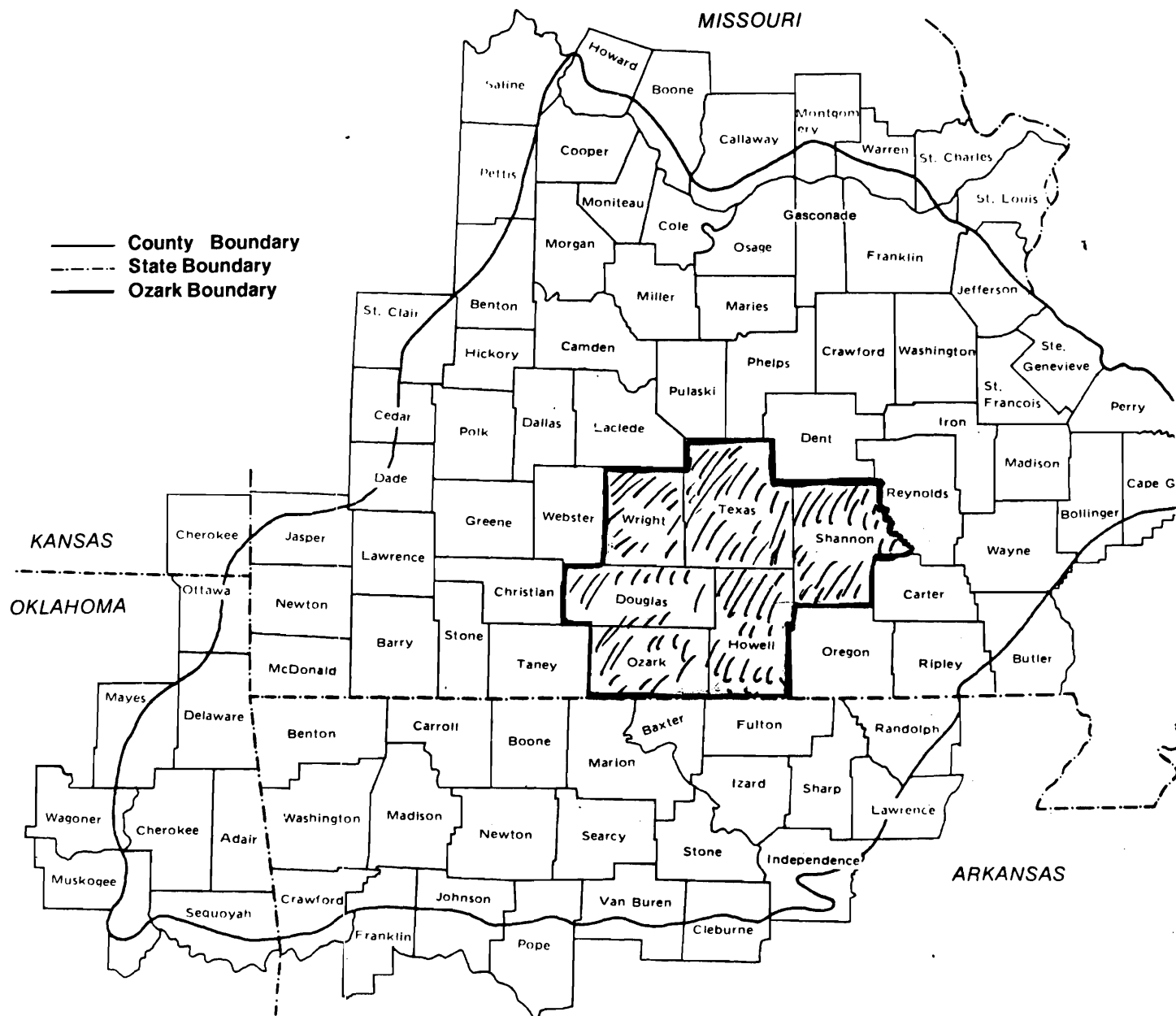


Figure 0-1. Counties in the Ozark Region.

Milton D. Rafferty, The Ozarks Land and Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1980), x.

commercial buildings. The Rock House (Old City Garage) in Eminence (Shannon County) is a fine example of a large rock masonry structure erected as a service station and auto repair shop. The Vera Cruz Store in Douglas County is constructed of rubblestone or cobblestone and also dates from the 1920s.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal government sponsored the construction of many public buildings in the Ozarks, and many of these featured rock masonry architecture. Local craftsmen, who had already learned the techniques of building with fieldstone, found their way into the WPA (Works Progress Administration) relief work program. In some cases, they also worked as supervisors on construction projects carried out by young unskilled workers in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). These government work relief programs had a startling impact on the cultural landscape of the Ozarks. The CCC built many structures in the Mark Twain National Forest, including administrative buildings in Houston, Willow Springs, and Ava. The WPA constructed numerous public buildings and schools in many Ozarks communities. Examples from this survey include the Gainesville (Ozark County) City Hall, high school buildings in

Cabool (Texas County), and a gymnasium in Willow Springs.

The golden age of Ozark rock masonry architecture occurred in the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, local builders learned and perfected the techniques of facing frame buildings with sandstone slabs arranged in interesting patterns. To create the slabs, craftsmen split sandstone along its natural fissures. Stonemasons often created polychromatic and textured surfaces by using a variety of slabbed rocks. During this period, craftsmen developed the famous Ozark giraffe rock buildings with multi-colored rocks, raised joinery, and painted mortar.² In the south central Ozarks, craftsmen often used brick articulation around window and door openings in native stone buildings, creating an interesting polychromatic effect. (See Figure 1 and Figure 2 on page 14.)

This survey contains many examples of slab rock buildings of the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, many local residents built small homes of the open gable, pyramidal, and bungalow type, using slab sandstone. At the same time, businessmen, who

² Linda Becker and Cydney Millstein, Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture Survey, Phase One (June 30, 1992), 30.

gradually emerged from the Depression, constructed service stations, such as the rubble stone service station that now serves as the Ava Chamber of Commerce, and retail stores with concrete and rock walls, such as the Old Midway Store in Douglas County. A few outstanding examples of the Ozark rock masonry of this period include the Alta Kubie Bungalow, Cabool (Texas County), Deason Electric and Plumbing, Licking (Texas County), and the Jack Owens House, Willow Springs (Howell County).

From its beginnings until its decline in the 1950s, Ozark rock masonry architecture embodied the ideals of the craftsman movement. Ozark rock buildings utilized native materials that placed them in harmony with the landscape. The buildings were generally small in scale and low in profile. Builders paid attention to detail, adding whimsical flourishes that personalized the structures. In general, the buildings gave an impression of sturdiness and practicality, rather than grandeur and affluence.

Ozark builders constructed many types of buildings in the craftsman style, using native rock. Religion has consistently been a prominent aspect of Ozarks life, and Ozark craftsmen built many churches of rock



Figure 1: Faith Rock Church, Ava

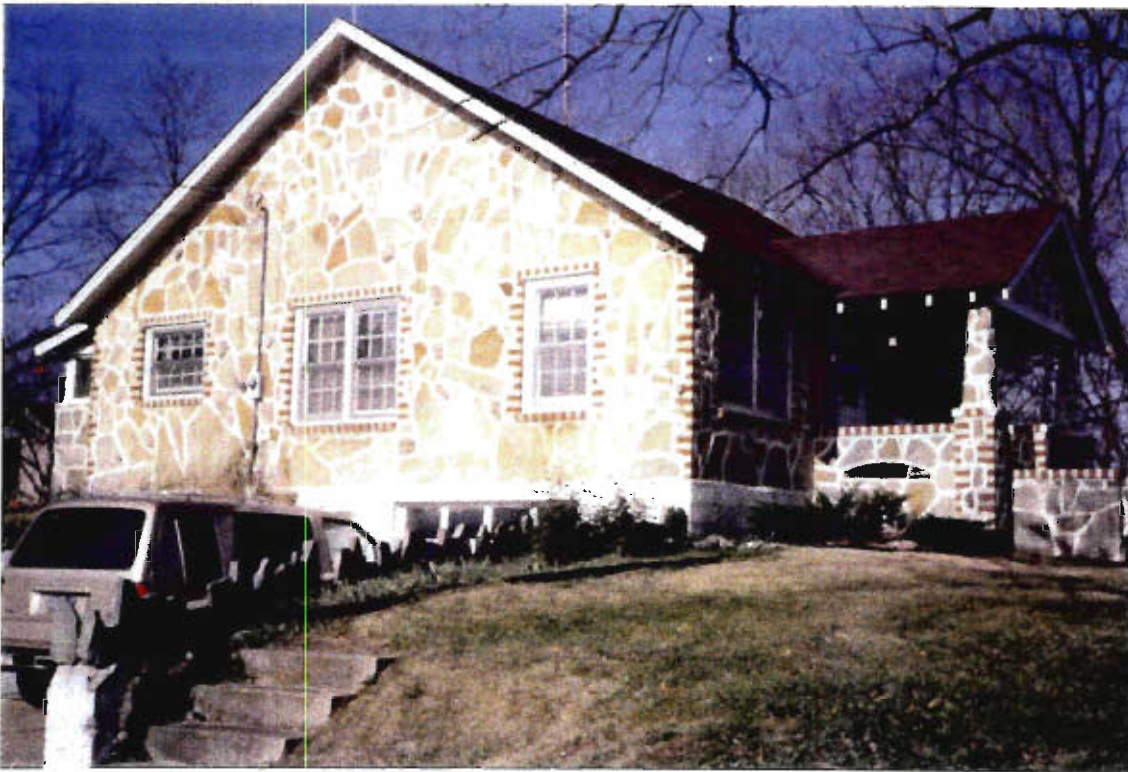


Figure 2: N. Main and W. Ramey St., Hartville

masonry. Congregations often participated actively in the construction of these churches. Among the best examples in this survey are the Faith Rock Church, Ava (Douglas County), and the Sacred Heart Church, Mountain Grove (Wright County).

Tourism is essential to the economic life of the Ozarks, and so it is not surprising that rock masonry architecture also appears in tourist cabins and motels. According to historian Robert Flanders, the Wells Motel, which is still in operation in Cabool, was constructed to serve the road trade between Springfield in western Missouri and Poplar Bluff at the eastern edge of the Ozarks.³ Entrepreneurs built many tourist structures along major highways during the 1930s and 1940s. Some of these ventures, such as the Gentryville (Douglas County) Tourist Cabins, did not succeed. Others, such as the old Gulf Motel, now the Budget Motel, which was built in 1954 in Mountain Grove (Wright County), have struggled into the 1990s, but are endangered.

³ Robert Flanders, "Stone Craft Architecture of the Southern Missouri Ozarks," OzarksWatch 5 (Fall 1991): 39-41.

Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture (Significance)

Many of the buildings included in this survey are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The areas of significance are architecture and social history. The period of significance is between 1912 and 1954. These buildings are representative examples of a type of construction, utilizing native rock and embodying high ideals of the American craftsman movement. These buildings also have strong associations with the lifeways of the Ozarks. Specifically, they express the traditions of hard work, self-reliance, and attachment to the land that are hallmarks of Ozarks culture.

Rock architecture flourished in the south central Ozarks in part because of the abundance of natural resources in the form of limestone, sandstone, and dolomite. Field stones, which can be readily harvested from the surface or just below the top level of the soil, are loose and plentiful in the region.¹ Quarried stone also became available to builders by the 1930s, as local entrepreneurs began to dig below the surface

¹ Mildred Hicks, "Ozark Fieldstone - Built to Last," Ozarks Mountaineer 28 (February 1980), 26-28.

to provide materials for a growing market.²

Native stone buildings in the south central Missouri Ozarks are examples of a true folk architecture. Owners often built their own houses, with the help of friends and relatives, calling upon craftsmen for assistance and advice. Congregations donated their labor to build churches, again, enlisting the services of skilled craftsmen when needed. Who were these craftsmen? Even the homeowners and pastors who relied upon their expertise sometimes have trouble remembering their names.

Owners, friends, and neighbors participated in the building of the early high-style rock bungalows. Mrs. Wells Richards related in an interview that people from all around brought rocks for the rubble stone walls of the Richards House, constructed in 1912 in Mountain Grove.³ The Denney House, built in the same neighborhood in 1913, also contains examples of people's favorite rocks, including many geological

² Interview with Floyd Lansdown, 29 November 1992.

³ Interview with Mrs. Wells Richards, 1 December 1992.

oddities and stalactites from local caves.⁴

The tradition of participation in building one's own house developed in part from economic stagnation in the Ozarks. People who had little ready cash could build a house only by contributing their labor. During the 1930s and 1940s, a time of economic distress, many Ozark residents built small homes using slab sandstone. These were well-built modest homes, erected at low cost, using local materials and often using the labor of their owners.

Religious congregations, short of cash, often helped build their own churches. The Faith Rock Church, formerly the Assembly of God Church, in Ava (Douglas County), Missouri, is a case in point. Rev. Carl Willis, who was pastor in the 1940s, when the church was built, vividly remembered the construction process. Members of the congregation went out to the forest, he said, cut the logs, and took them to the mill. The frame of the church was solid oak. Volunteers went out to Cold Springs, east of Ava, and split the rock for the walls. A man named Mr. Luckes and his boys laid a lot of the stone. There was

⁴ Interview with Judy Bell and Mrs. Roy Denney, 1 December 1992.

another man, too, a stonemason. Rev. Willis struggled to remember his name, but did remember that he really knew what he was doing. It was Yiesley, he finally recalled. Harmon ... no Claude, Claude Yiesley.⁵

During the 1950s, Catholic families in Mountain Grove contributed labor, rather than cash, to the construction of a new church. Glen Horton, who was a member of the congregation, recalled that:

Since we were all as poor as the proverbial Church Mice, we decided that we would do all the work as far as we had the necessary skills. We sort of formally agreed that 500 hours of work would be the norm for families that had an able-bodied man, but nobody that I know of really kept track whenever a man or family could get away to work they came and worked at the church [until it] was done.⁶

Farmers provided the slab rock for the outer walls. Anyone who had rock outcroppings on his land used picks, wedges, and sledghammers to pry out stones. The congregation hired a mason to lay up the rock, but Glen Horton did not remember his name.⁷

While many Ozark residents built their own homes,

⁵ Telephone interview with Rev. Carl Willis, 7 December 1992.

⁶ Glen Horton, A Common Man in the Twentieth Century (Kansas City: The Fine Print, n.d.), 147-148.

⁷ Ibid.

places of business, and churches, they often called upon expert craftsmen to supervise the work or lay the stone. Active craftsmen in the 1930s and 1940s included the Greens in Thayer, Henry and Tommy Dye in Douglas County, Cleave Osborn in Licking, the Lansdowns, Loy Carter, Sid Williams, and James Davis, throughout southern Missouri, A.J. Anderson in Springfield, Tom Bristol, Claude Yiesley and the Luckes family in Ava, Missouri, and Elmer Bridges and Charlie Trapp in Houston. The work of these men is spread throughout southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. However, the lack of written records and the passage of time have made it difficult to attribute specific buildings to specific craftsmen.

The tradition of Ozark rock masonry construction faded in the 1950s for a number of reasons. First, there was an urgent demand for housing after World War II, as returning soldiers rushed to resume their lives and start raising families. The development of "instant" housing in the form of mobile homes and prefabricated homes answered this demand and reduced the market for rock homes. As the economy boomed, both the cost of living and the price of labor soared, and people became unwilling to pay a fair price for the

work of stone masons.

The craft continued to decline in the 1960s, but began to revive in the 1970s. During the past two decades, stonemasons have demanded wages commensurate with their skills and have received them for work done on upscale houses. As stonemason Floyd Lansdown reported in 1992:

But the native stone now, it's really coming back. For the wealthy people. They're the ones that are buying stone. It's coming back, and there's a lot of young masons that are getting back into the business, because they're starting to get paid for their craftsmanship.*

The tradition of stone construction may have come full circle, with a return to the use of rock masonry for high-style residences, as in the years between 1910 and the early 1920s.

* Floyd Lansdown interview.

BUILDERS AND STONEMASONS (1920s-1950s)		
Names	Places where active	Source of information
Tom Bristol & Everett Beck	Ava Ava	Lois Rush Ruby Beck
Eders	Highway 63 corridor	Morrow, Becker & Millstein
Greens	Thayer, Hwy. 19 Alton, Ava	Morrow, Becker & Millstein, Stepenoff
Aldridges	West Plains	Morrow
Simpsons	Alton	Morrow
Henry and Tommy Dye	Douglas County	Gordon Dye, Ava
Mr. Euler	Douglas County	John Doane
Steve M. Hughes	Eminence	Juanita Reary
Cleave Osborn	Licking	J.D. Deason
John W., Bill, & Floyd Lansdown	So. Missouri and northern Arkansas	Floyd Lansdown
Lov Carter	Southern Mo., No. Arkansas	Floyd Lansdown
Sid Williams	Southern Mo.	Floyd Lansdown
James Davis	Southern Mo.	Floyd Lansdown
A.J. Anderson	Springfield	Floyd Lansdown
Claude Yiesley	Ava	Gordon Dye
Lukes fam.	Ava	Gordon Dye
Elmer Bridges & Charlie Trapp	Houston	Opal Bridges

Communities and Properties Surveyed

Included in Phase Two of this survey are eleven communities in six counties in the south central Missouri Ozarks. Selection of the properties was based on local recommendations and the judgment of the consultant. Factors considered in the selection of these properties included age of the building, integrity, craftsmanship, and function. The goal of the selection process was to identify a representative sample of building types and styles. In general, the survey covered properties in Ozark towns. Only a small number of rural properties (all located in Douglas County) have been included, due to constraints of time and funding. The communities and properties surveyed are, as follows:

Ava

In 1870, the citizens of Douglas County in the central Ozarks voted to move the county seat to the center of the county. Accordingly, the county commissioners acquired a tract of land and established the village of Ava. County commissioners laid out lots, blocks, streets, and alleys around a central square. The present courthouse, constructed in the

1930s, is the fourth courthouse to occupy a prominent position in this square. Ava prospered as a county seat and an agricultural market center in a rural county.

Properties surveyed in Ava include, the following:

- OZ2-AV-1 Chamber of Commerce building
- OZ2-AV-2 Cottage at 627 NE 2nd Ave.
- OZ2-AV-3 Georgia Norman house and garage, 805 NE 2nd Ave.
- OZ2-AV-4 Calvin Ross house, 909 NE 2nd Ave.
- OZ2-AV-5 Fay Sims house, E. Washington Ave.
- OZ2-AV-6 Lou's Lounge (old hatchery)
- OZ2-AV-7 Bruffet implement shop, N. Jefferson St. and NW 5th Ave.
- OZ2-AV-8 Faith Rock Church
- OZ2-AV-9 C.E. Evans Home, N. Jefferson St.
- OZ2-AV-10 Purtle Home at 1407 NE 5th St.
- OZ2-AV-11 George Olson home and garage, NE 6th Ave. and NE 6th St.
- OZ2-AV-12 Cobb home, NE 4th St.
- OZ2-AV-13 Open gable house, NW 34d Ave. & NW 7th St.
- OZ2-AV-14 502 SW 3rd Ave.
- OZ2-AV-15 Spurlock home, 209 SE 3rd Ave.
- OZ-AV-16 Nall house, 509 SE 5th St.

OZ2-AV-17 Thurman Home, Route 14

OZ2-AV-18 Thurman Outbuilding, Route 14

Stone masonry buildings identified but not inventoried include the following:

Newspaper office

Gable-end cottage, 400 NE 2nd Aven

Bud Norman house, 811 NE 2nd Ave.

Jerry Green property, 522 E. Washington Ave.

House at 622 NE 3rd Ave.

House at 701 NE 3rd Ave.

Teal house, 515 SE 5th St.

Craftsman bungalow, SE 4th St.

Rhoades Beauty Shop, S. Jefferson and SE 5th Ave.

Bungalow, SW 4th Ave. and SE 2nd St.

City Well House

Denny's Flowers on the square

Pitts house on North Jefferson Street

Bungalow next to Clinkingbeard Funeral Home

House and ancillary building at 906 N. Jefferson

Cabool

Cabool was platted in 1882 and incorporated in 1884 in Texas County. A third-party newspaper, the Texas County Populist, was started there in 1894. From the 1880s through the 1920s, the town's largest

industry was lumbering. In the twentieth century, the town developed a diverse industrial base, including a shoe factory and Mid-America Dairymen, Inc.

Properties surveyed in Cabool include the following:

OZ2-CA-1 Wells Motel

OZ2-CA-2 Tod's Motel

OZ2-CA-3 Bungalow, Cedar and Ozark streets

OZ2-CA-4 1919 War Monument

OZ2-CA-5 Bungalow, 513 Cedar Street

OZ2-CA-6 619 Pine Street

OZ2-CA-7 Cabool High School Historic District

A. High School

B. Grade School

C. Industrial Arts Building

D. Gymnasium

E. Playing Field

OZ2-CA-8 House, 619 Garst

OZ2-CA-9 Alta Kubic Bungalow, 709 Garst

OZ2-CA-10 Assembly of God Church

Douglas County, rural

Douglas County, in the heart of the Ozarks, consists of approximately 500,000 acres of table land, broken by rocky hills, swift streams, and fertile

valleys. The county, which was organized in 1857, is rich in excellent building stone, both limestone and sandstone. Its first county seat was Vera Cruz, a town that suffered greatly in the Civil War. In the 1870s, when portions of Webster and Taney counties were added to Douglas County, the seat of government moved to Ava.

Properties surveyed in rural Douglas County include the following:

OZ2-DO-1 Old Gentryville Tourist Cabins, Rt. 14

OZ2-DO-2 Pleasant Home Church, Gentryville vicinity

OZ2-DO-3 Old Pamperine House, Grntryville vicinity

OZ2-DO-4 Midway Store, Ava vicinity

OZ2-DO-5 John Doane House (Euler House), Ava vicinity

Eminence

Eminence, the seat of government in Shannon County, is located on Highway 19 near the Jack's Fork River. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the principal industry was lumbering. At present, Eminence is a tourist town, located near the federally owned Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

Only one property in Eminence has been included in the survey.

OZ2-EM-1 Rock House (City Garage)

Gainesville

Gainesville, the county seat of Ozark County, is a trade and banking center in an area of prosperous resorts and livestock farms. Located on a hill above Lick Creek, east of the headwaters of Bull Shoals and west of Lake Norfork, the town is a popular spot for fishermen. Ozark County is famous for its many nineteenth century water mills, which also attract tourists.

Properties surveyed in Gainesville include the following:

OZ2-GA-1 City Hall

OZ2-GA-2 Ozark County Library, 200 Elm Street.

OZ2-GA-3 House, 126 2nd St.

OZ2-GA-4 H & R Block, 108 Main St.

OZ2-GA-5 J.O. Wood Building

Additional properties identified but not inventoried include the following:

Hambleton's Flowers

Walker and Walker Title

House, 207 N. Main

Gainesville Elementary School

House, 303 4th St.

Business Row on Main Street

- A. Wiles Abstract and Title
- B. Skeeter's Cafe
- C. Johnson's Clothing

Hartville

Hartville, located near Wood's Fork of the Gasconade River, is the seat of Wright County. William Tucker established a store at Hartville in the early 1840s. The town was the site of a destructive Civil War battle. A fire in 1885 and a tornado in 1888 also did severe damage, but the community always managed to rebuild.

Properties surveyed in Hartville include the following:

OZ2-HA-1 Worthey House, Hwy 5, s. of Hwy 38

OZ2-HA-2 House, N. Main and W. Ramey St.

OZ2-HA-3 House with free-standing arch, S. Tate St.

OZ2-HA-4 Arched bridge and retaining walls, S. Mabon St. at East Marshfield

OZ2-HA-5 Farmhouse south of town

Houston

Houston was established in 1846 as the seat of Texas County. The town was well situated near Brushy Creek with access to several Ozark springs. In the 1890s, harvesting of ginseng in the vicinity gave the

town a brief economic boost. In the twentieth century Houston gave birth to Emmett Kelly, a famous circus clown.

Properties surveyed in Houston include the following:

OZ2-HO-1 First Church of God, Grand Ave. and Chestnut

OZ2-HO-2 Bungalow, Grand Ave. and Mill St.

OZ2-HO-3 Evans Funeral Home, Grand Ave.

OZ2-HO-4 Piney Inn, Grand Ave.

OZ2-HO-5 House, 924 Chestnut

OZ2-HO-6 Two-story House, Hamrick at Chestnut

OZ2-HO-7 Open gable, 217 Chestnut

OZ2-HO-8 Ranch, 104 N. 2nd OZ2-HO-9 House, 411 Main

OZ2-HO-10 Bungalow on 63 N across from Chevy dealer

Properties identified but not inventoried include the following:

Commercial buildings, 111-113-117 Grand Ave.

Leavitt's

Oriental Hut

Commercial Building, Grand Ave. and Walnut

Commercial Building, Pine St.

House, 626 Hawthorne

House, 411 Hamrick

House, corner of Bryan and Mill

House at Hawthorne and Davis

House on 3rd St. opposite park

Ranch house, 2nd and Spruce

Old service station, 500 2nd St.

Bungalow on Highway 17 next to Chevy dealer

House, 506 2nd St.

Ranch house, 514 Airport Rd.

House, 1002 Highway 17

Licking

Licking, historically known as "the Lick," took its name from a buffalo lick in the vicinity in the early nineteenth century. Early settlers of that period carried on a lively trade with the Indians. Like many Ozark towns, Licking suffered badly from marauders during the Civil War. In 1878, the town was incorporated. It prospered as a milling community and marketing center. Lumbering and charcoal manufacturing have been its most important industries. Throughout the twentieth century, Licking has prospered as a manufacturing, marketing, and recreational center.

Properties surveyed in Licking include the following:

OZ2-LI-5 Bungalow and outbuildings, end of Main St.

OZ2-LI-4 Commercial building, jct. 137 and 32

OZ2-LI-2 Fox Funeral Home (Smith-Ferguson Funeral Home)

OZ2-LI-3 Deason Electric and Plumbing, 132 Main

OZ2-LI-1 United Methodist Church, Main St.

Properties identified but not inventoried include:

House, 304 Main St.

Licking High School

Lane farmstead, Box 20

Mansfield

Famous as the home of writer Laura Ingalls Wilder, Mansfield began its life as a railroad town in the mining district of southern Wright County. The town, located thirteen miles southwest of the county seat, was incorporated in 1886. In the twentieth century, it has become an attraction for tourists from all over the world who come to visit Rocky Ridge Farm, where Wilder wrote her famous "Little House" books.

Properties surveyed in Mansfield include the following:

OZ2-MA-1 McLaughlin House, Nettleton St.

OZ2-MA-2 Cabool Oil Co., 201 Commercial

OZ2-MA-3 House, 407 Commercial

OZ2-MA-4 House, 409 Commercial

OZ2-MA-5 House, Commercial and Ash

Properties identified but not inventoried include

the following:

Mansfield Christian Church, Maple and Phelps
House next to church on Maple St.

Mountain Grove

Mountain Grove, formerly Hickory Springs, is a railroad town located twenty miles southeast of Hartville in Wright County. In the nineteenth century, it prospered as a trading center between Springfield and West Plains. Its location in the Ozarks near a summit called Bald Knob has attracted tourists in the twentieth century.

Properties surveyed in Mountain Grove include the following:

- OZ2-MO-1 Roy Denny House, 605 E. State
- OZ2-MO-2 Wells Richards House, 528 Dorris
- OZ2-MO-3 House, 804 Dorris Ave.
- OZ2-MO-4 House, 809 Dorris
- OZ2-MO-5 "This Ole House," 308 Greene
- OZ2-MO-6 Cottage, 315 Greene
- OZ2-MO-7 Gertie Worsham Property, 320 Talcott
- OZ2-MO-8 Blake Buntell Property, 312 E. 4th
- OZ2-MO-9 Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration
- OZ2-MO-10 Fairchild House, 418 E. State St.
- OZ2-MO-11 Budget Motel, 400 N. Busch

OZ2-MO-12 Regional Juvenile Justice Center, 301 E. 1st

OZ2-MO-13 Sacred Heart Church, 308 E. State

OZ2-MO-14 Sacred Heart Church Parsonage

OZ2-MO-15 Microbase Systems, E. 1st

Properties identified but not inventoried include
the following:

House, 804 E. 9th

House, 907 E. State

Arly Ellis Used Cars

State Farm Insurance office

Earl's Body Shop

Cornerstone Transportation

House, 928 Maple

House, 930 Maple

Unique Beauty Shop

House, N. Main and E. 13th

House, 936 Maple

Peter Medlin property, 610 Dorris

Stone cottage, 721 E. State St.

Stone cottage, 723 E. State St.

West Plains

In 1857, when Howell County was formed from Oregon
County, West Plains became the county seat. According
to local historian and pioneer, Alice Carey Risley,

West Plains had 150 inhabitants in the 1850s. But raiding parties and local conflict during the Civil War reduced the population to zero. West Plains is located in Howell County in extreme southern Missouri. The lumber industry revived the town in the late nineteenth century. The picturesque town, nestled in the hills, prospered as a marketing center and, more recently, as a tourist destination.

Properties inventoried in West Plains include the following:

OZ2-WE-1 People's Park

- A. Pavilion**
- B. Barbecue Pit**
- C. Small pavilion**

D. Barbecue pit

OZ2-WE-2 House, 1302 Webster

OZ2-WE-3 House, 1218 Webster

OZ2-WE-4 House and outbuildings, 1301 Main St.

OZ2-WE-5 Bungalow, 236 Harlin

OZ2-WE-6 House, 1202 Main St.

OZ2-WE-7 House, 802 Main St.

OZ2-WE-9 House, 214 E. Maple St.

OZ2-WE-8 Cottage, 204 W. Maple St.

OZ2-WE-10 Ruby Utly, Broker. House, 1211 Main St.

Properties identified but not inventoried include:

Bungalow, 407 S. Hill

Faith Ministries, 219 W. Leyda Ave.

House, 534 Summit St.

House, 1130 Cass Ave.

House, 1126 Cass Ave.

House, 1118 Cass Ave.

Armory, Porter Wagoner Blvd.

House, 115 Porter Wagoner Blv.

House, 220 Pennsylvania Ave.

Willow Springs

After the Civil War, James W. Harris purchased land in what is now Willow Springs and established a residence and store. A post office was established in 1869. Additional settlers came from Southern states east of the Mississippi River. A railroad came through Willow Springs in the 1880s, and large lumber companies moved in to cut the pine forests. By the turn of the century, timber resources became scarce, and population declined. The development of a state highway system and encouragement of tourism gave Willow Springs a rebirth in the middle of the twentieth century.

Properties surveyed in Willow Springs include the following:

OZ2-WI-1 Sherrill House on Park St., east of Pine

OZ2-WI-2 House, 214 N. 2nd (across from Casey's)

OZ2-WI-3 Jack Owens House on Springfield Road

OZ2-WI-4 Cottage, 403 Campbell

OZ2-WI-5 High School Gymnasium, W. High

Properties identified but not inventoried include:

Real Estate Office, 107 W. 2nd

Curtis Clothing Store, 2nd St.

Hillcrest Motel

House, 708 Second St.

House and garage, 615 Pearl St.

House, 507 Center St.

House, 401 E. 6th St.

House, 405 E. 6th St.

Highway and Transportation District Office

Willow Springs Ranger Station (Forest Service)

Fisher House, east of town

Willow Motel

Recommendations

With the conclusion of this thematic survey (Phase One and Phase Two), the next logical step is the preparation of a thematic nomination of Ozark rock buildings to the National Register of Historic Places. The survey plan and the Phase One and Phase Two survey reports provide a basis for preparing cover domination, defining the historical context for evaluating eligible properties. The criteria for evaluation should be A (history) and C (architecture). The areas of significance should be Architecture and Social History. Minor areas of significance that would apply to some properties would be Entertainment/Recreation, Religion, and Transportation.

A consultant should be retained to prepare cover documentation and begin the work of nominating districts and individual properties. Top priority should be given to the districts identified in Oregon County during the Phase One Survey. Next, the Cabool High School District should be nominated. After preparing the cover documentaion and the district nominations, the consultant should begin the work of nominating individual properties. High on the list of priorities should be the Denney House and the Wells

Richards House in Mountain Grove, the Ava Chamber of Commerce Building, and the Rock House in Eminence. The inventory sheets from the Phase One and Phase Two survey provide a catalog of additional eligible properties.

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FLOYD LANSDOWN INTERVIEW
TRANSCRIPTION

Date: 29 November 1992

Time: 2:30 pm

Place: Wright County Livestock Auction, Mountain Grove

Interviewer: Bonnie Stepenoff

B.S.: Is it true that you, your father, and your grandfather have all been stonemasons?

F.L.: Yes.

B.S.: What was your father's name?

F.L.: My father was J.W. -- Johnny William Lansdown.

B.S.: And your grandfather?

F.L.: His name was William "Bill" Lansdown.

B.S.: During what time period did your grandfather work?

F.L.: Well, it would have been in the early twenties.

B.S.: And your father?

F.L.: Well, he opened up the first building stone quarry in Douglas County in about 1944.

B.S.: But your grandfather built stone buildings in the 1920s?

F.L.: Yes. Well, he built out of what we call Burlington limestone and just flagstone and fieldstone back in those days.

B.S.: How did he learn his craft?

F.L. Well, my dad told me my grandfather learned it from a Swede that came to this part of the country. I guess it was way back. I don't know just when.

B.S.: So they built with stone in the twenties, thirties, and forties?

F.L.: Yes, and we still do.

B.S.: The craft was passed from father to son?

F.L.: Yes.

B.S.: Was your father or grandfather involved in the CCC or WPA building projects?

F.L.: Well, I think that my granddad worked on this one down here by Willow Springs. I can't think of the name of that place, but there's some sandstone down there. And the lady that's in charge there, the interior decorator, called me oh a year or so ago and she'd been all over the country trying to get some stone to match it.

B.S.: Was that for the National Forest?

F.L.: Yes.

B.S.: So your grandfather worked with the CCC?

F.L.: He was there. I think he was with the CCC camp. And there's old bridges all over the country that they worked on.

B.S.: They did a lot of stone work.

F.L.: A lot of retaining walls and stuff. I don't know if my grandpa was in on this or not. But you've seen the flagstone up there at the junction of what used to be [Highway] 5 and Mansfield? That big sandstone wall there. I'm not for sure, but I think my graddaddy might have worked on that.

B.S.: Then they opened up a quarry in the 1940s?

F.L.: Yes.

B.S.: And stone buildings became a lot more popular in the 1940s?

F.L.: Yes. We furnished stone in Mountain Home, Arkansas, Bull Shoals [AK], Thayer, Mo., Mammoth Springs [AK]. We sent some to Santa Barbara, California. Lots of it in Springfield. Springfield was our main source where we sold it. We also sent a lot in to a little old place called Lone Jack out of Kansas City. And we sent a lot of cut sandstone into Kansas City. Theodosia, Mo., Branson. All the local towns within a 200-mile radius.

B.S.: Can you give me the names of some builders?

F.L.: Well, Dwight Richards, that owns Richards Brothers groceries, he built houses in West Plains, and we furnished him stone.

B.S.: Do you know of Cleave Osborn in Licking?

F.L.: No. There's an old stone quarry over at Licking. But now I don't who all was out of there. But now Loy Carter out of Republic was one of the main masons that we sent out on jobs to lay our sandstone because he done such a good job. A.J. Anderson, he was a big contractor in Springfield. He laid lots of our cut sandstone. Sid Williams, he was a stone mason. A.J. Davis, he laid a lot of stone that came out of the old CCC [camps]. I supplied him with lots of that -- your old limestone that was hand-cut. Gosh it would take me forever to think of them all.

B.S.: What were some of the things you built?

F.L.: Now some of the stonework that I done it was on national tv. You know where Rivermont Memorial Gardens is in Springfiled? That's a cemetery. There's a beautiful big building that sits up there, and then there's some mausoleums. That's some of the work I did. And we built this church at Theodosia. The Methodist Church in Theodosia, and also the First Baptist Church in Rodgersville, Mo. That's some of the

work I done, before I quit, before I stopped doing masonry work.

B.S.: You're not doing it anymore?

F.L.: Just special jobs. Something real fancy. I just don't do it every day.

B.S.: What about your father and grandfather?

F.L.: Well, you know the old rock buildings just south of the [Wright] county line? My dad worked on the old Midway Store building. My dad worked on that. He finished the stone for that. My dad he's got jobs scattered all over the country.

B.S.: The Midway Store was built in the 1940s?

F.L.: Yes. Early 40s.

B.S.: What about houses?

F.L.: Well, my dad didn't build too many houses. He just worked on them, you know, done the masonry work on lots of houses, too numerous to mention.

B.S.: Did he build some in Mountain Grove?

F.L.: Yes. My dad done several out here in Mountain Grove. Just go through the old highway, go right through town, and go west. You know that motel out there? That's one of our jobs. Just go right square into town and turn right. We built several houses out through there. Then the pre-cast stone, most of them I

furnished. I made all the pre-cast stone you see in Mountain Grove.

B.S.: What is pre-cast stone?

F.L.: It's an artificial stone, that's made to look like stone. That plant that I run in Springfield run for seventeen years, the Ferguson Stone Manufacturing Plant. We sent stone all around.

B.S.: You'd furnish the stone and the masonry work?

F.L.: We'd furnish the stone and the masonry work. I built a few houses, but not many, mostly just subcontracting.

B.S.: You furnished rough cut stone?

F.L.: It was rough cut out. We cut it, split it into layers, and then run it through the saw.

B.S.: When did people start using the pre-cast stone?

F.L.: In the late forties and early fifties. But the native stone now, it's really coming back. For the wealthy people. They're the ones that are buying the stone. When you get up to the \$250,000 home on, well they start buying stone. It's coming back, and there's lots of young masons that are getting back into the business, because they're starting to get paid for their craftsmanship.

B.S.: Where do they learn their craft?

F.L.: Well, there's still some old masons in Kansas City. Kansas City has always been a stone town. There's a few older guys in Springfield yet, and some of the younger guys are learning it from them.

B.S.: Do you train any young masons?

F.L.: No I haven't, not in several years.

B.S.: Why did people stop using stone for average-type houses?

F.L.: Well, the labor got too high, too expensive. It about killed the business for several years. But it's going strong now. Most of the stone masons now are getting from \$6.60-7.50 a square foot for laying stone. Back when I started we got 35 cents.

B.S.: When did you start?

F.L.: In 1951.

B.S.: And they were still building quite a few stone buildings?

F.L.: It was going good then. Motels. Trail's End Motel in Springfield, I think it's still there. Then along the old highway, what used to be Route 66, there's still a lot scattered in that part of the country. The Allison buildings in Springfield, Allison Insurance Company. The big stone job in Rodgersville, the First Baptist Church, and the one in Theodosia.

And you'll see lots of sandstone around the lake area.

B.S.: Then it declined in the mid-50s?

F.L.: After the FHA and GI trailer houses. The people started buying trailer houses and quit building the homes. And nowadays people have found out that they can put money in a home and it don't depreciate.

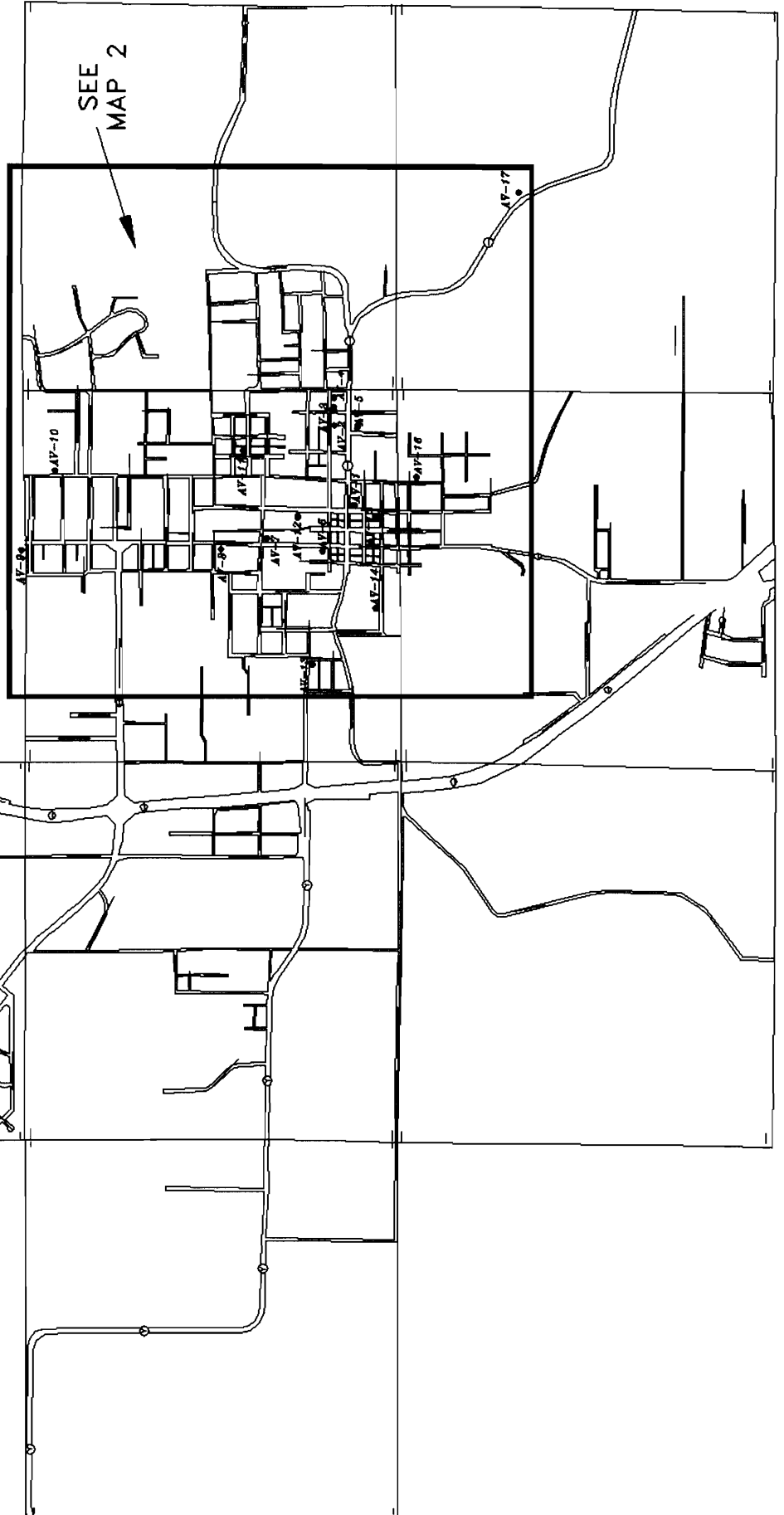
B.S.: Thank you.

F.L.: You bet.

AVA,
MO

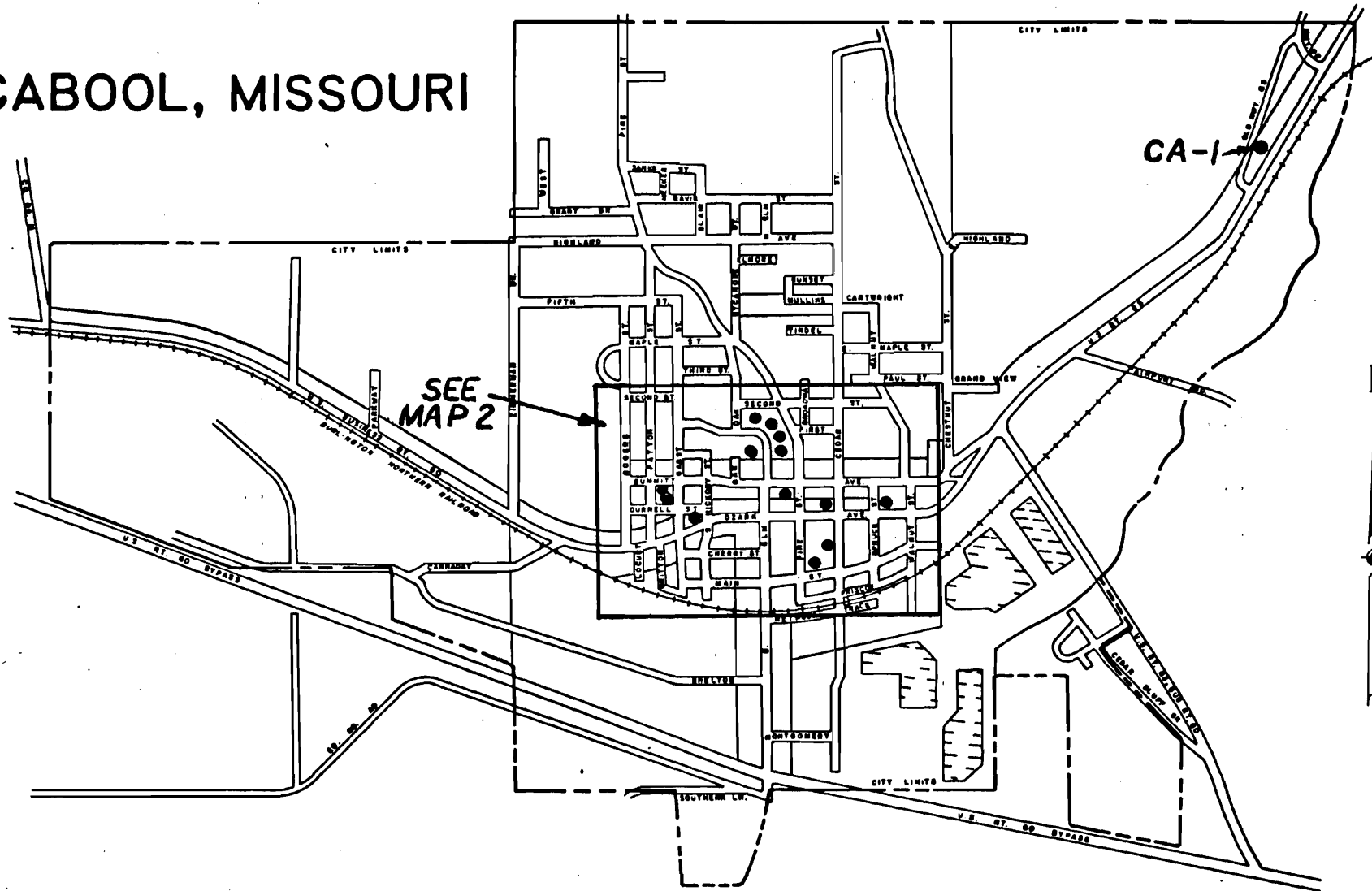


SEE
MAP 2

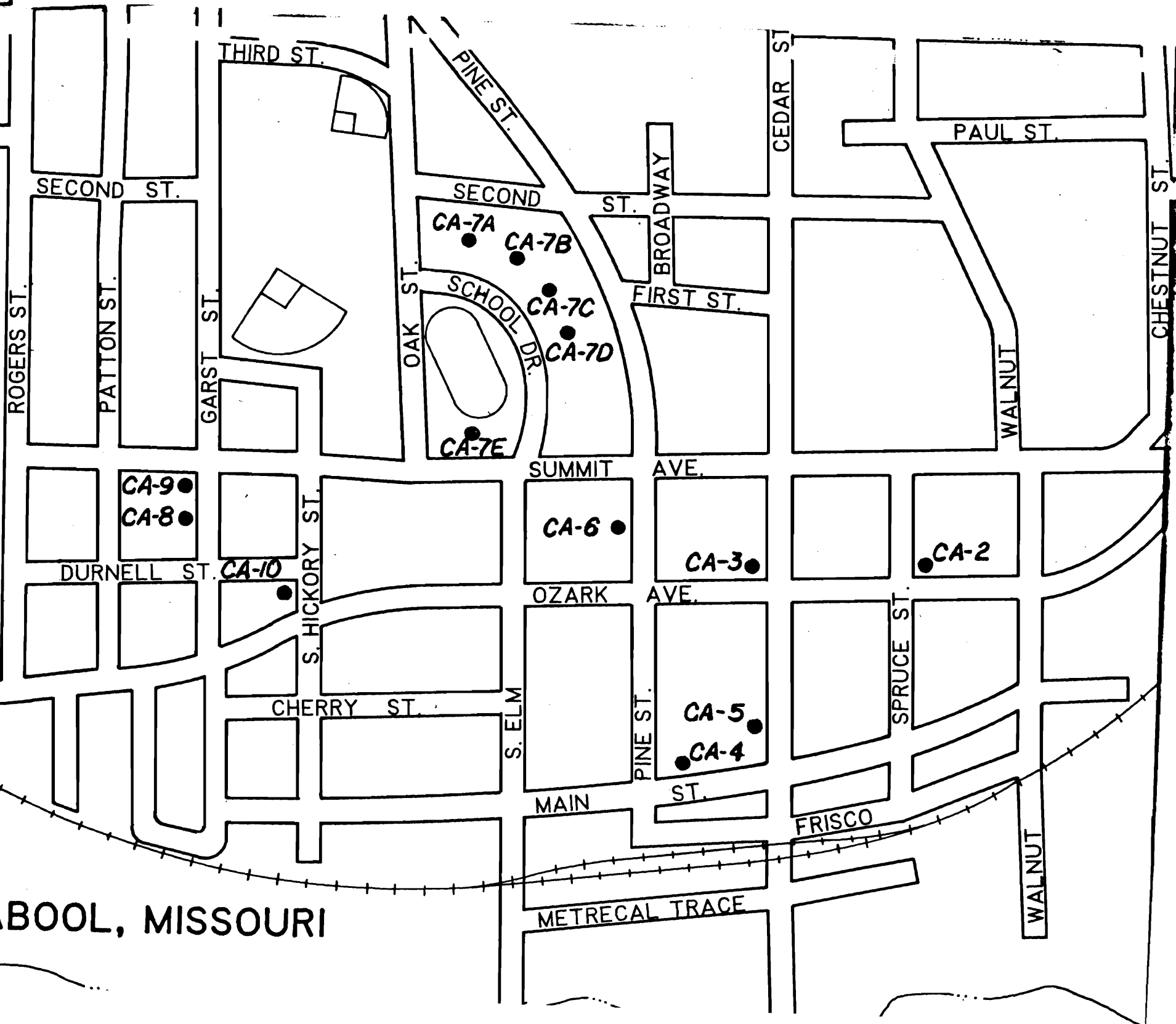


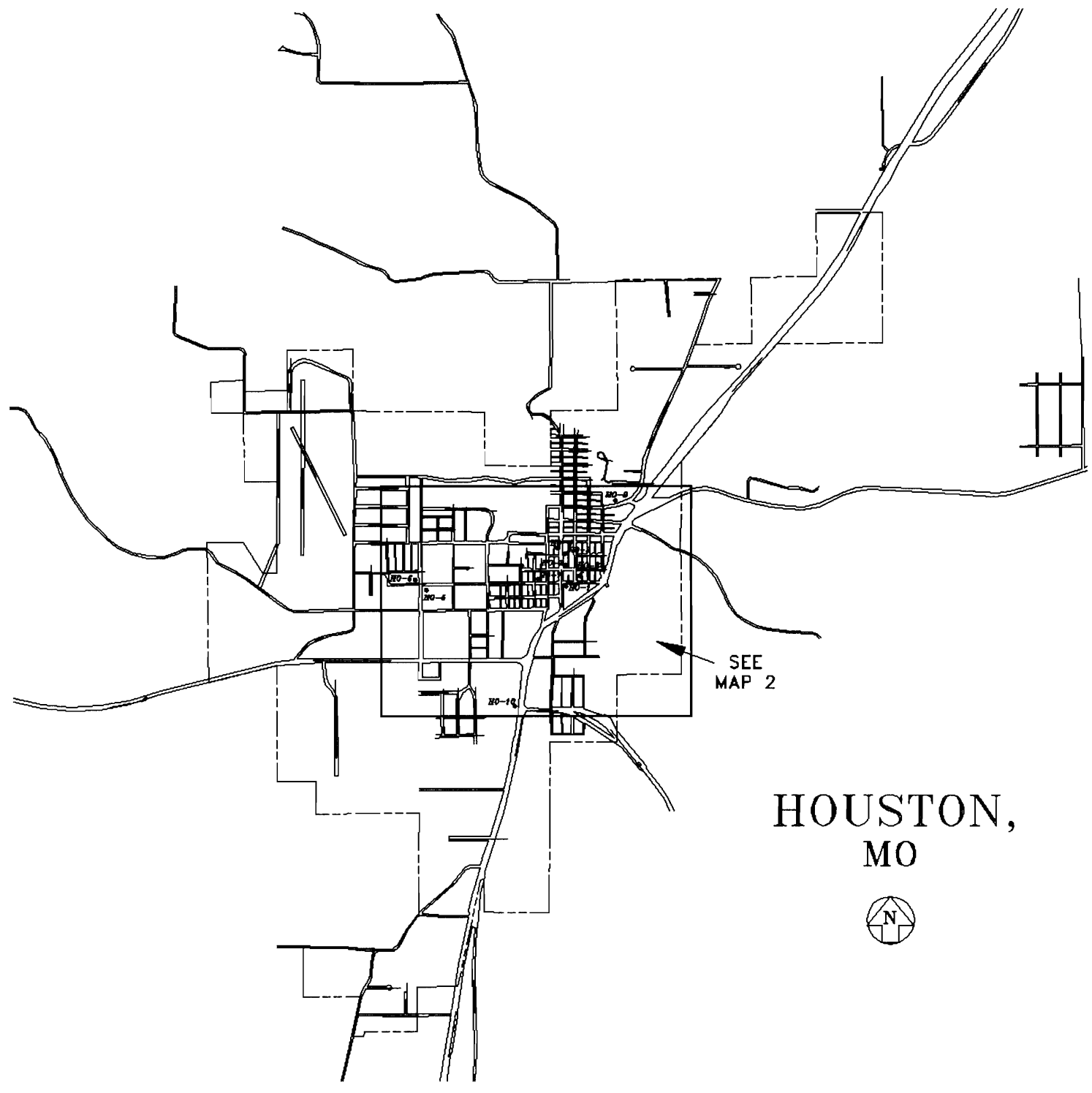


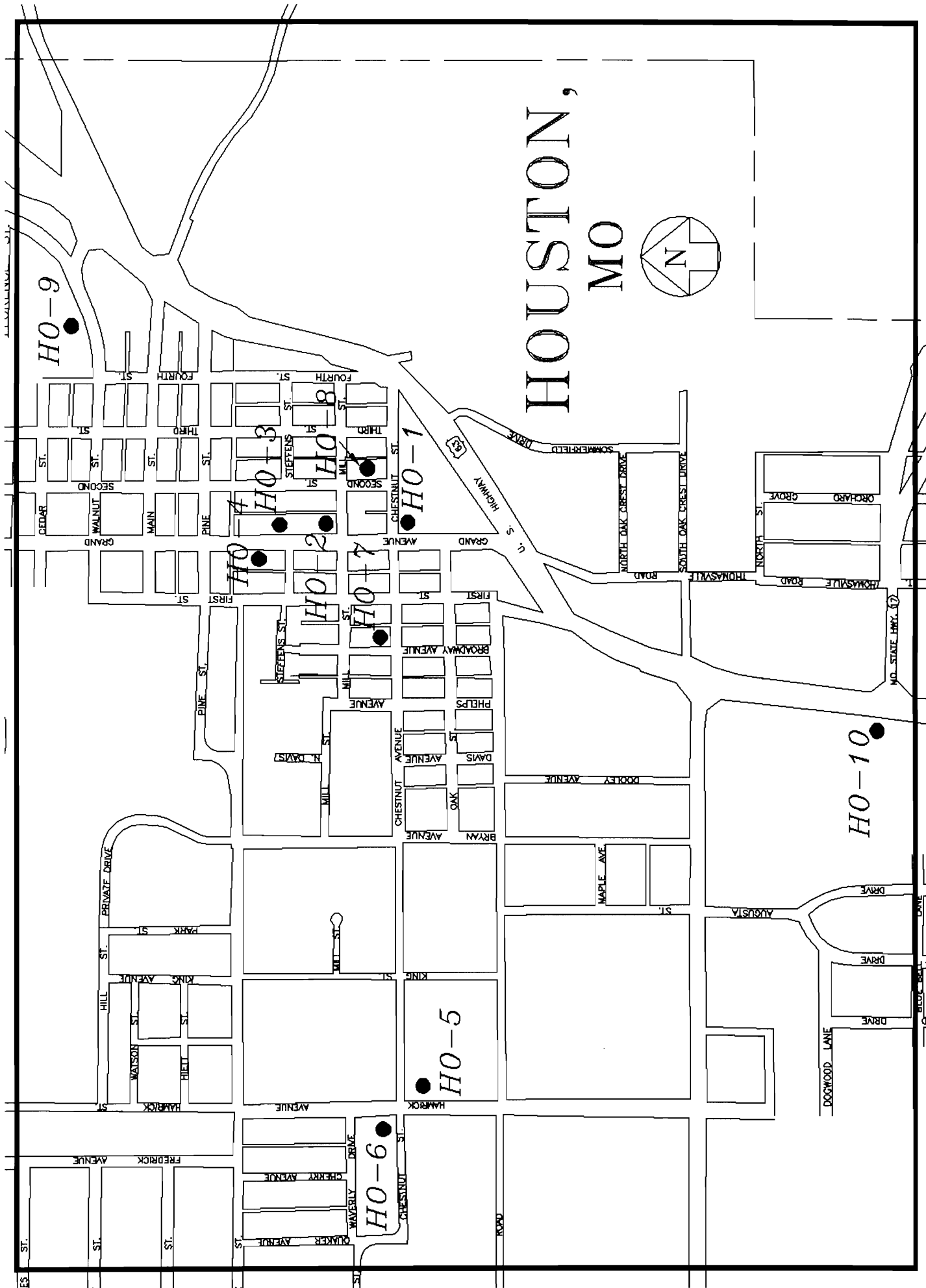
CABOOL, MISSOURI

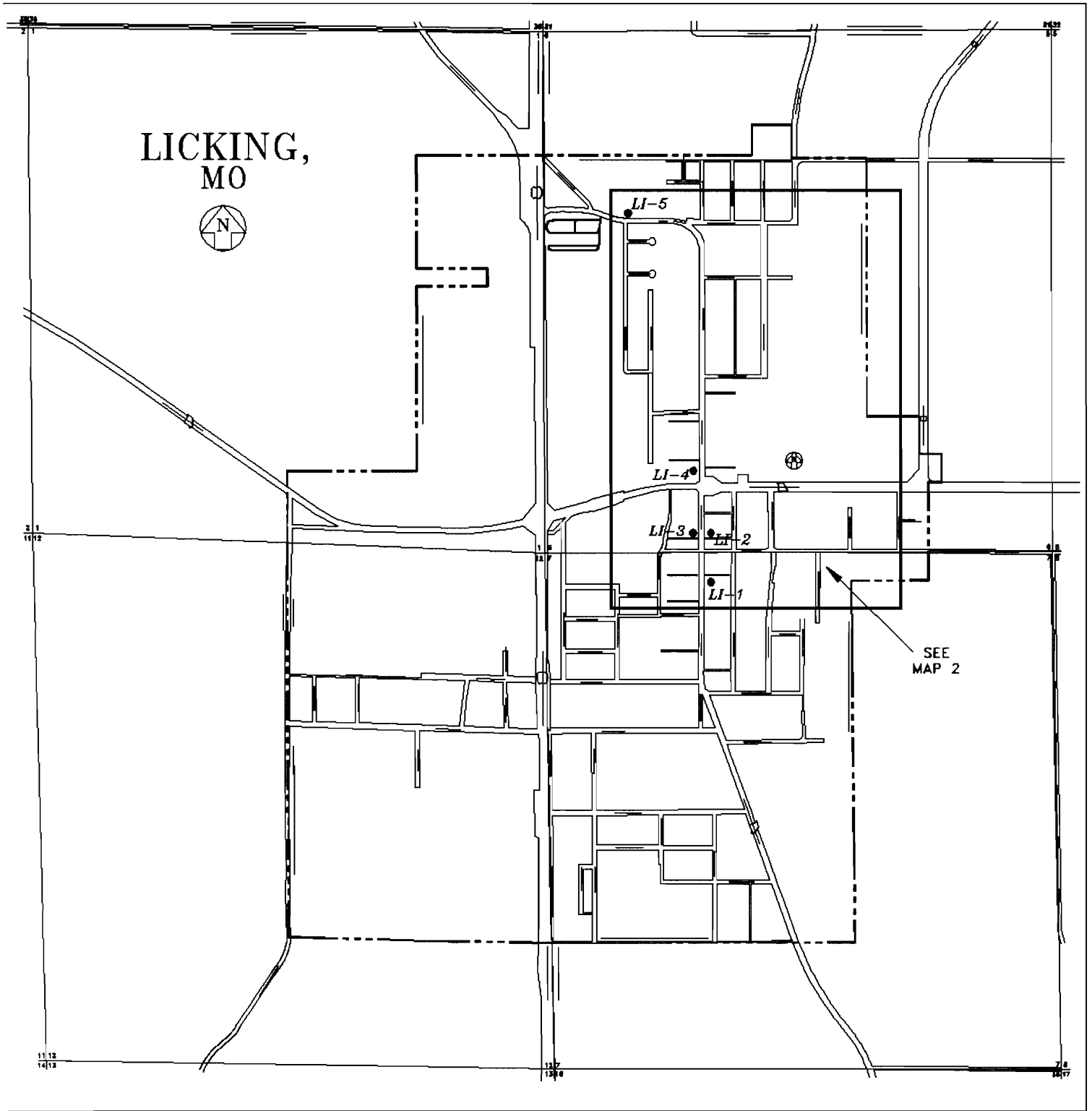


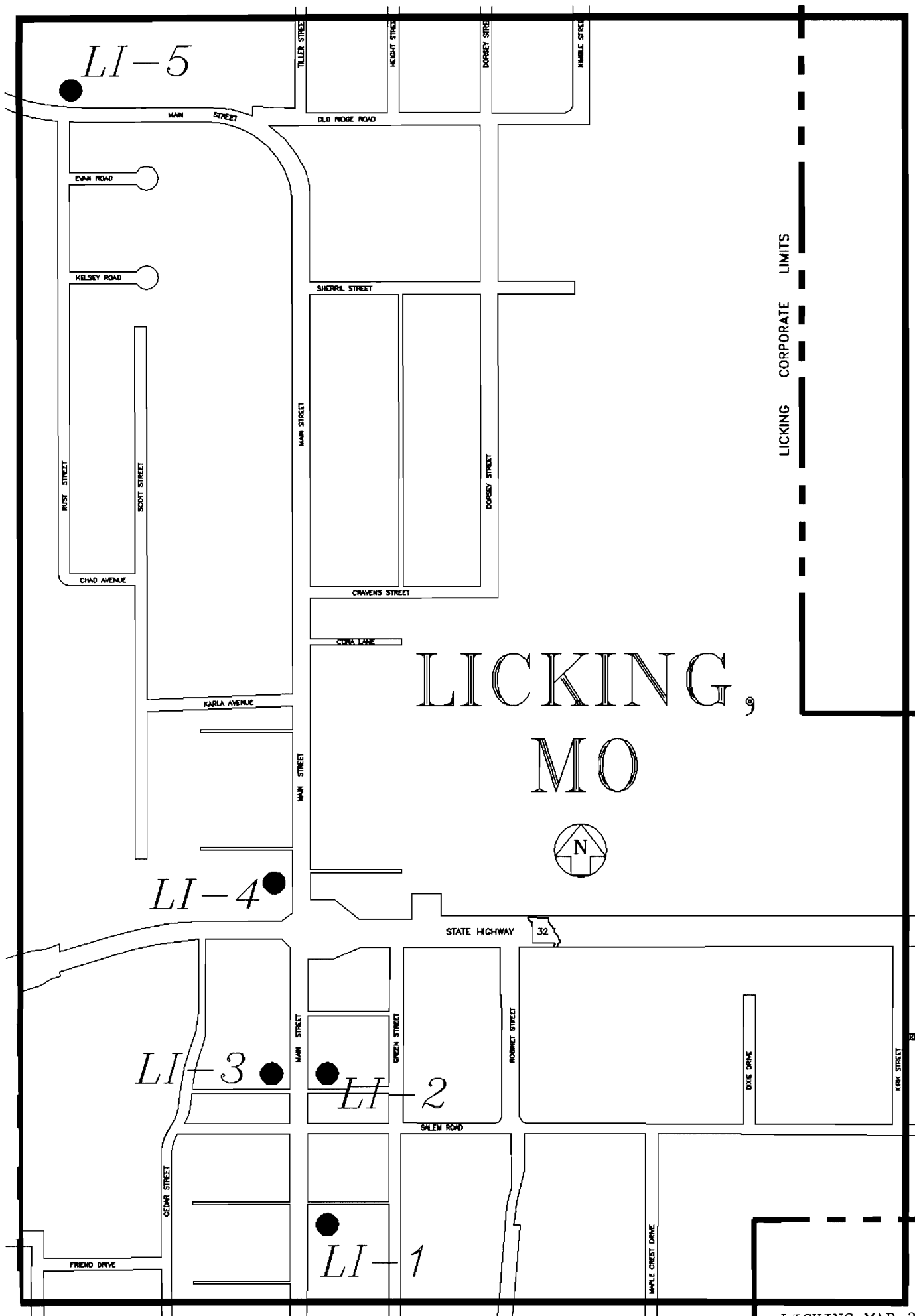
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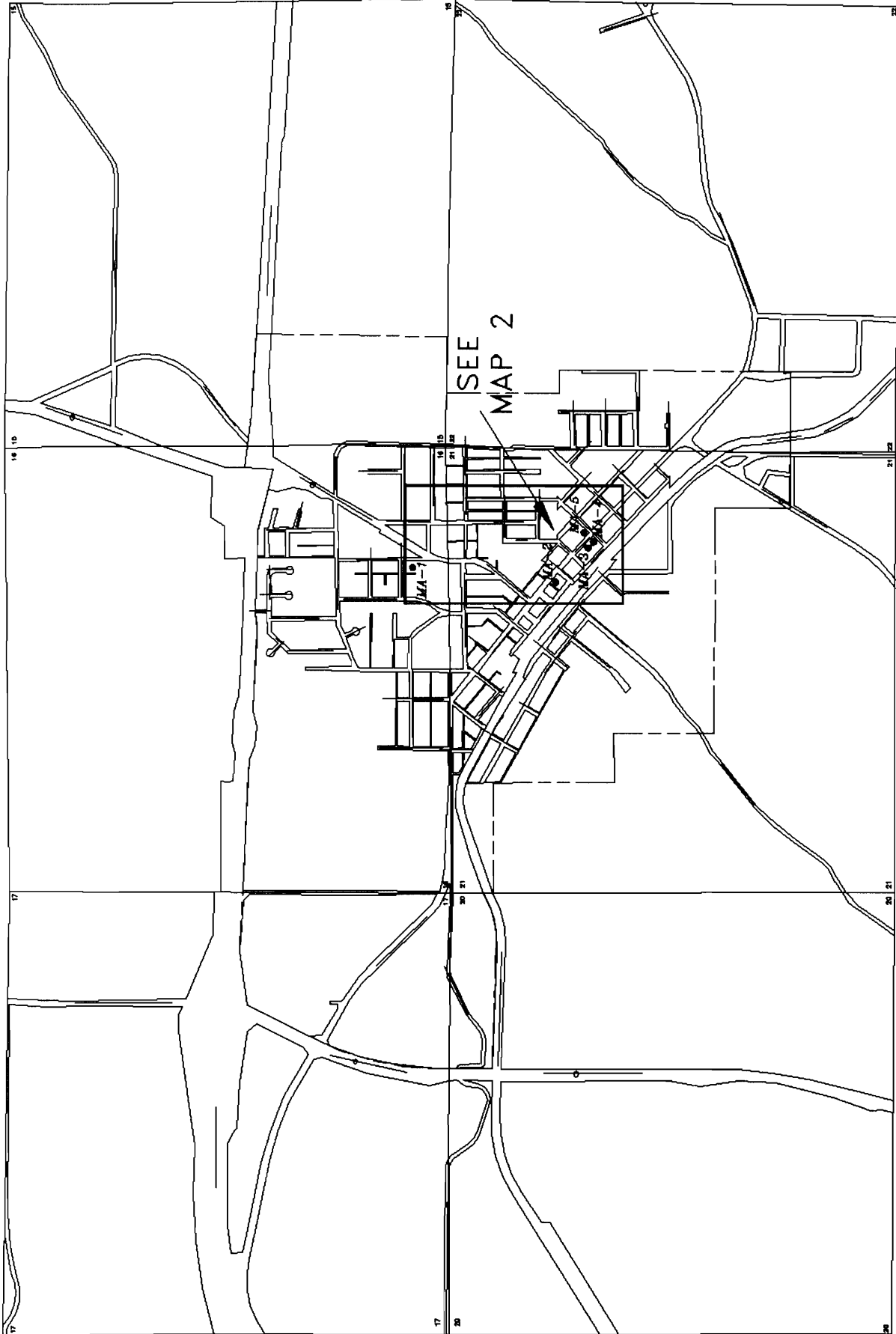




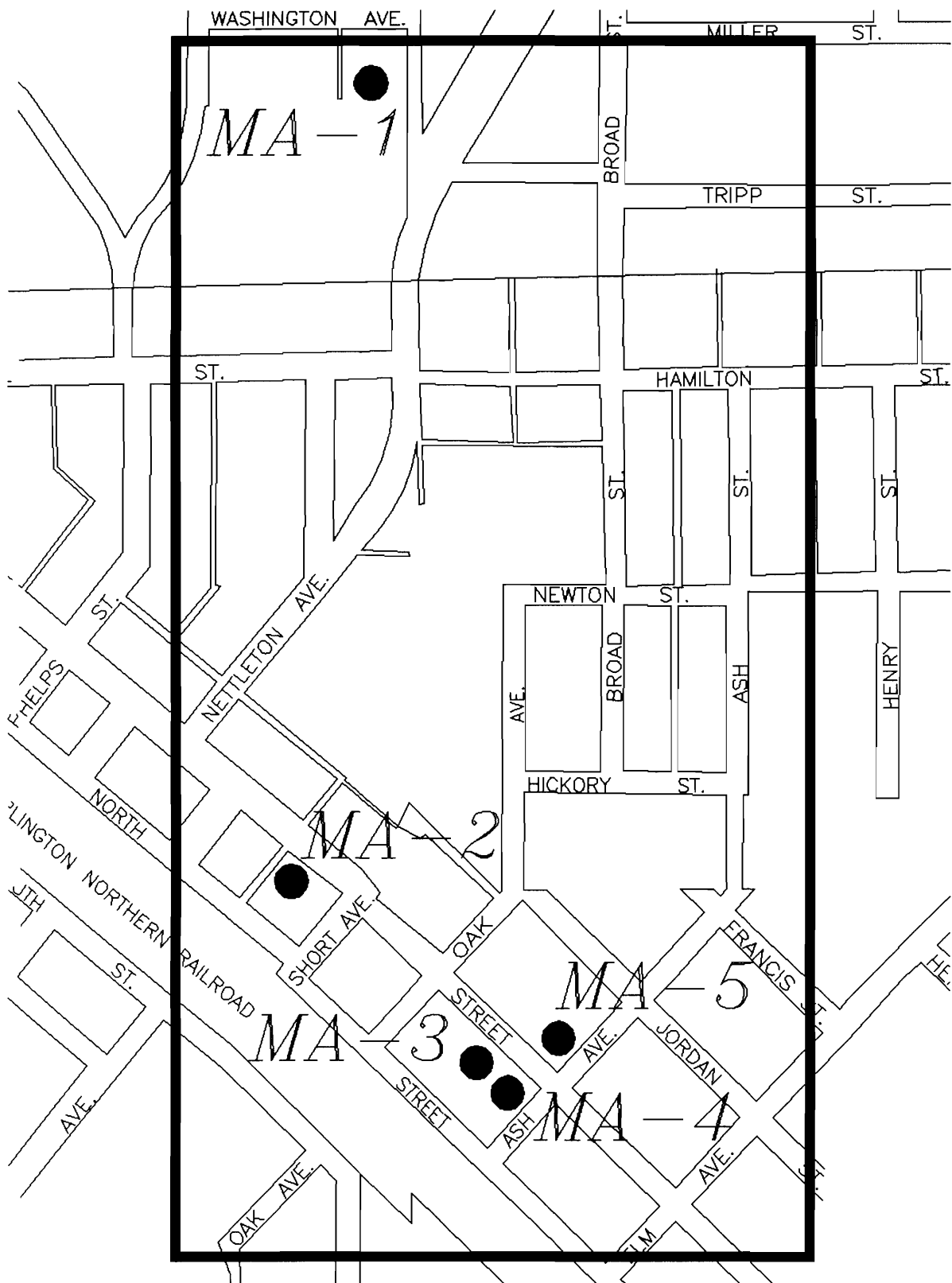




LICKING CORPORATE LIMITS



MANSFIELD, MO

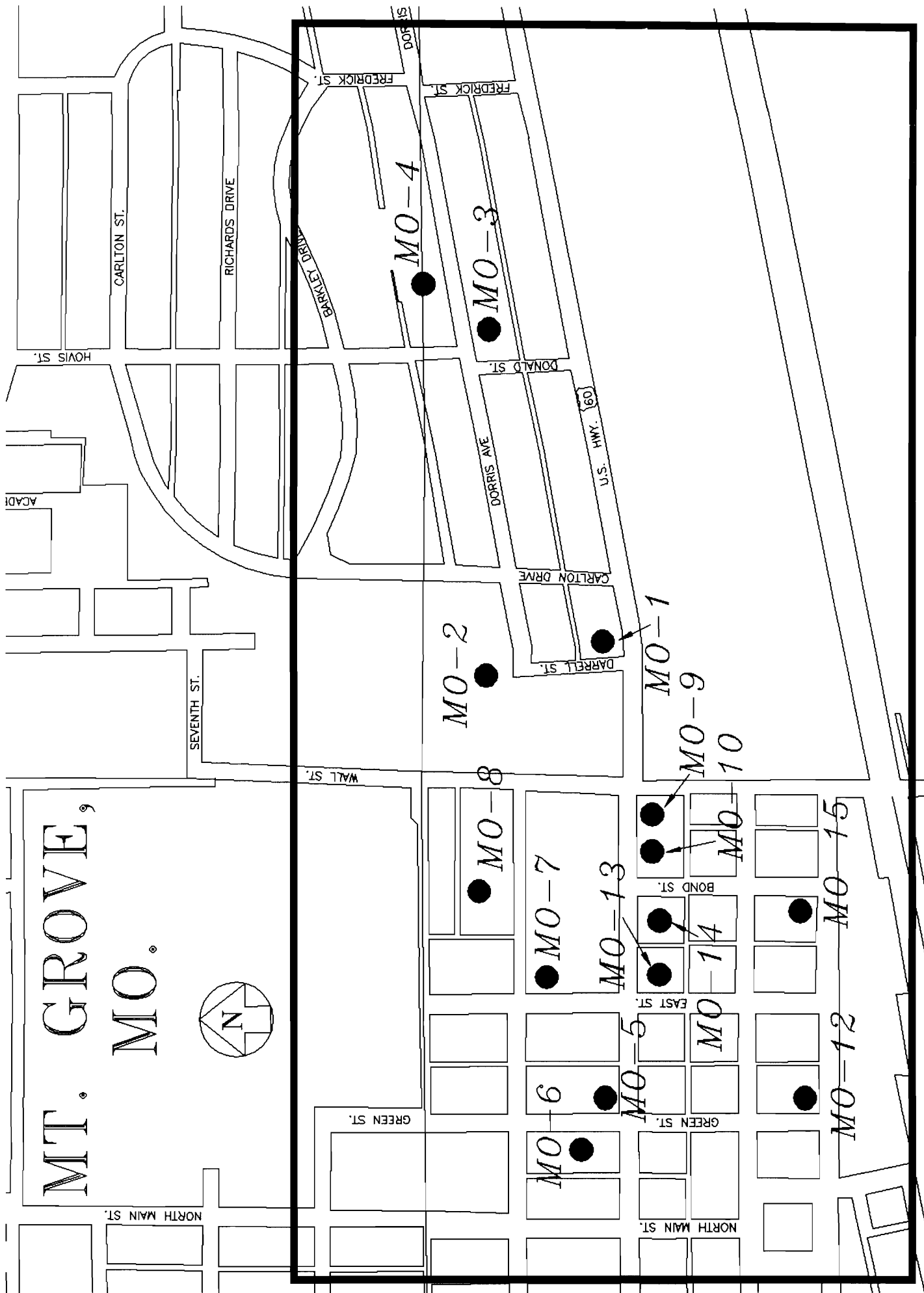


MANSFIELD,
MO

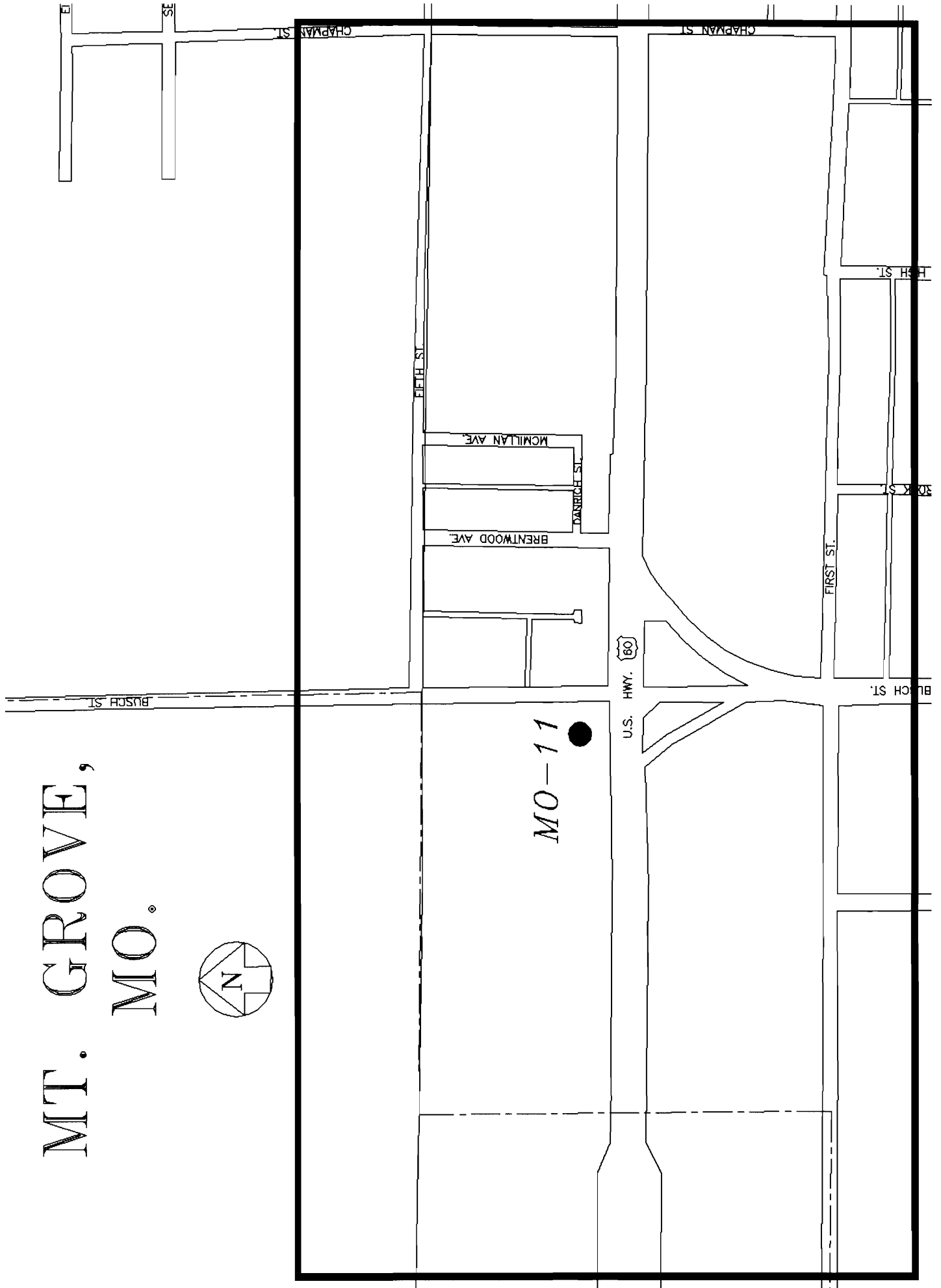
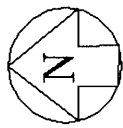


MT. GROVE, MO.

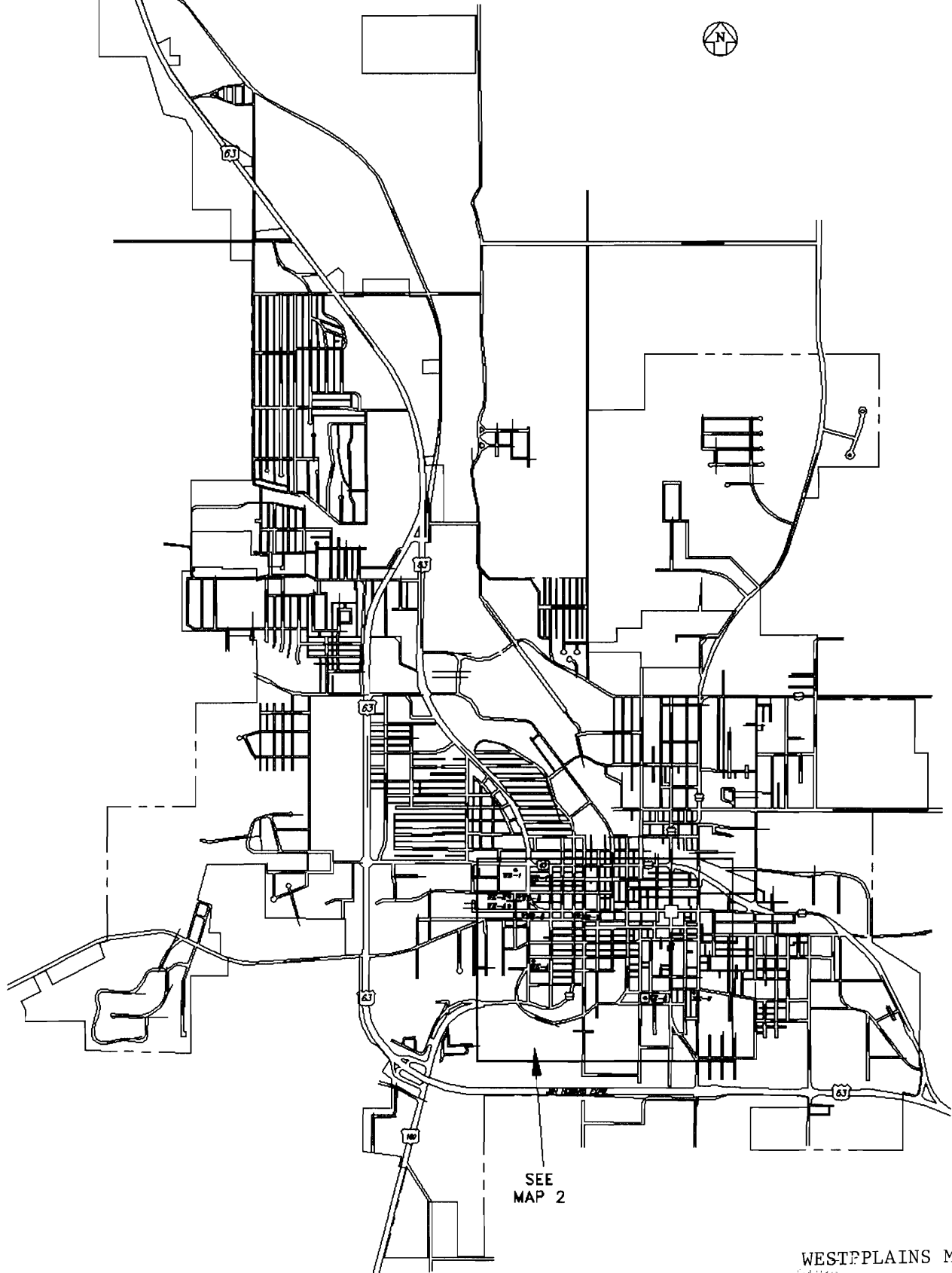


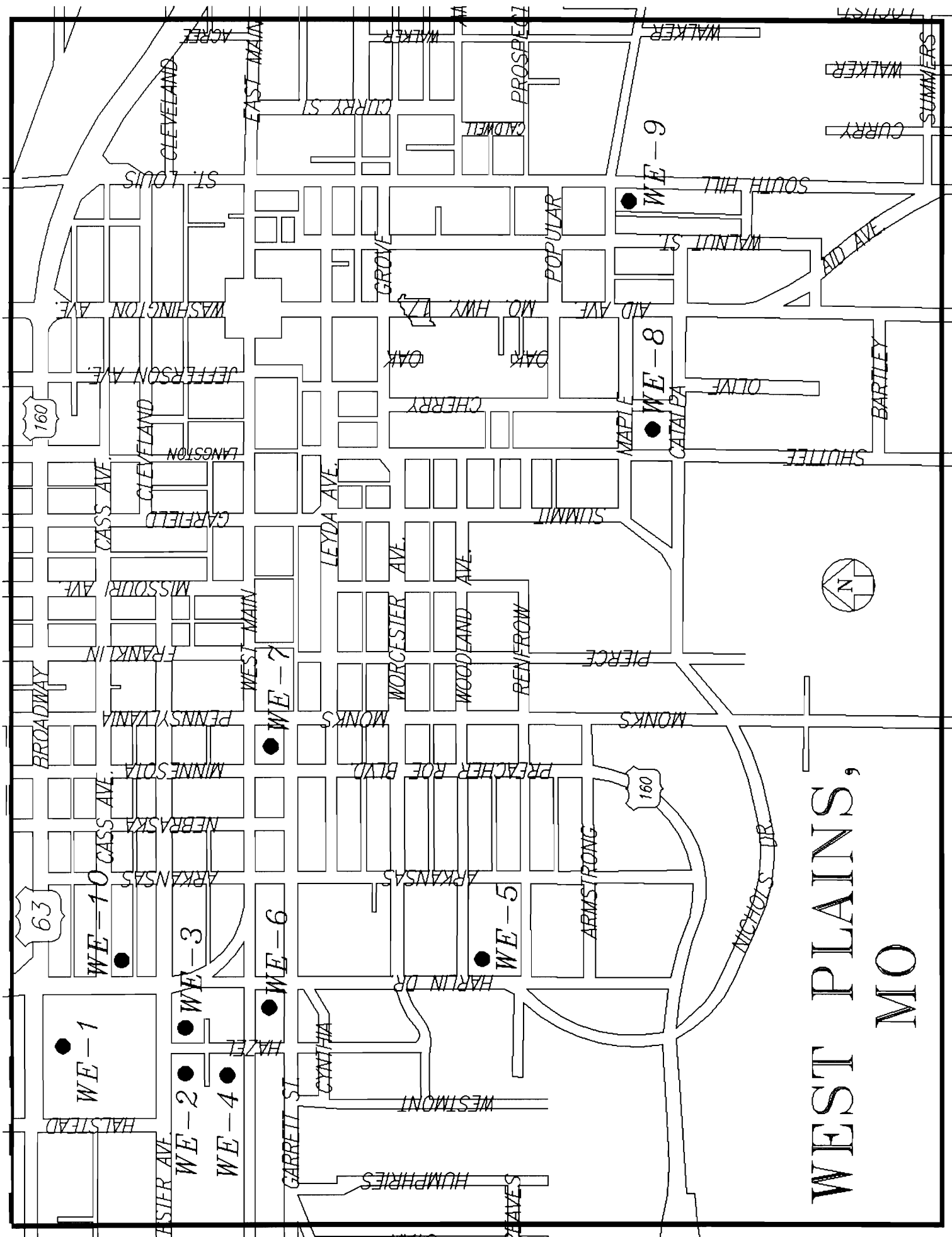


MT. GROVE, MO.

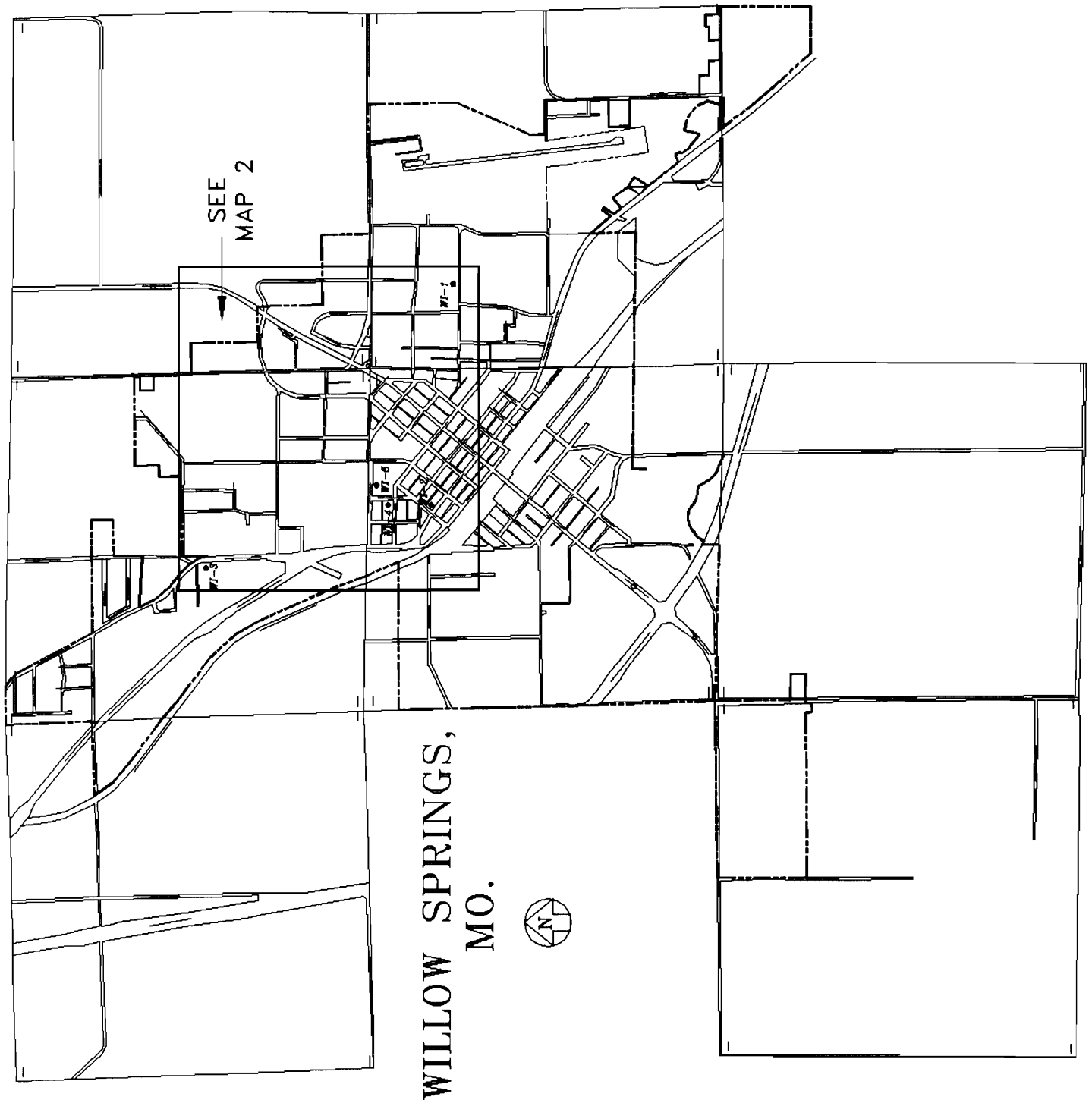


WEST PLAINS, MO



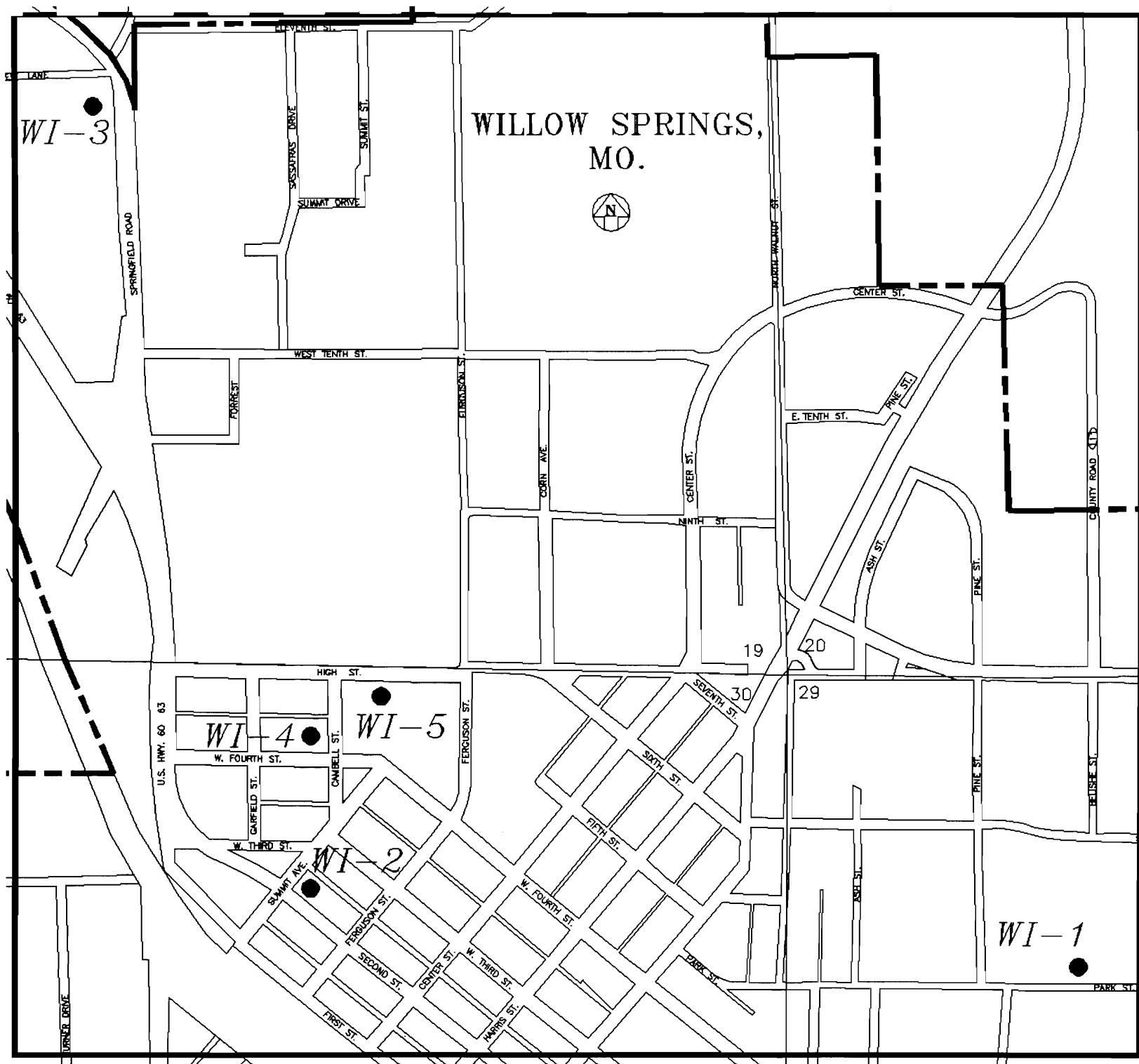


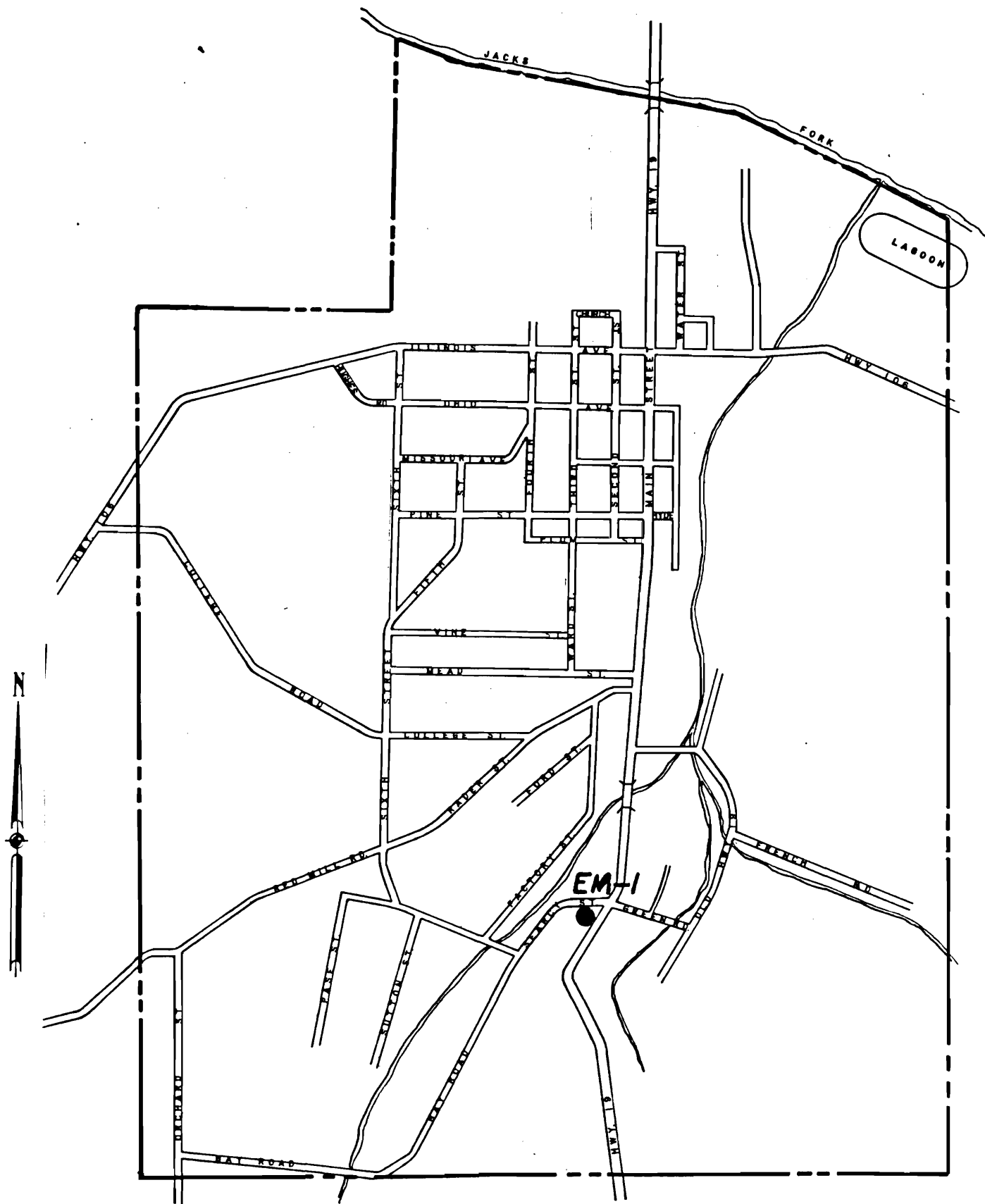
WEST PLAINS, MO



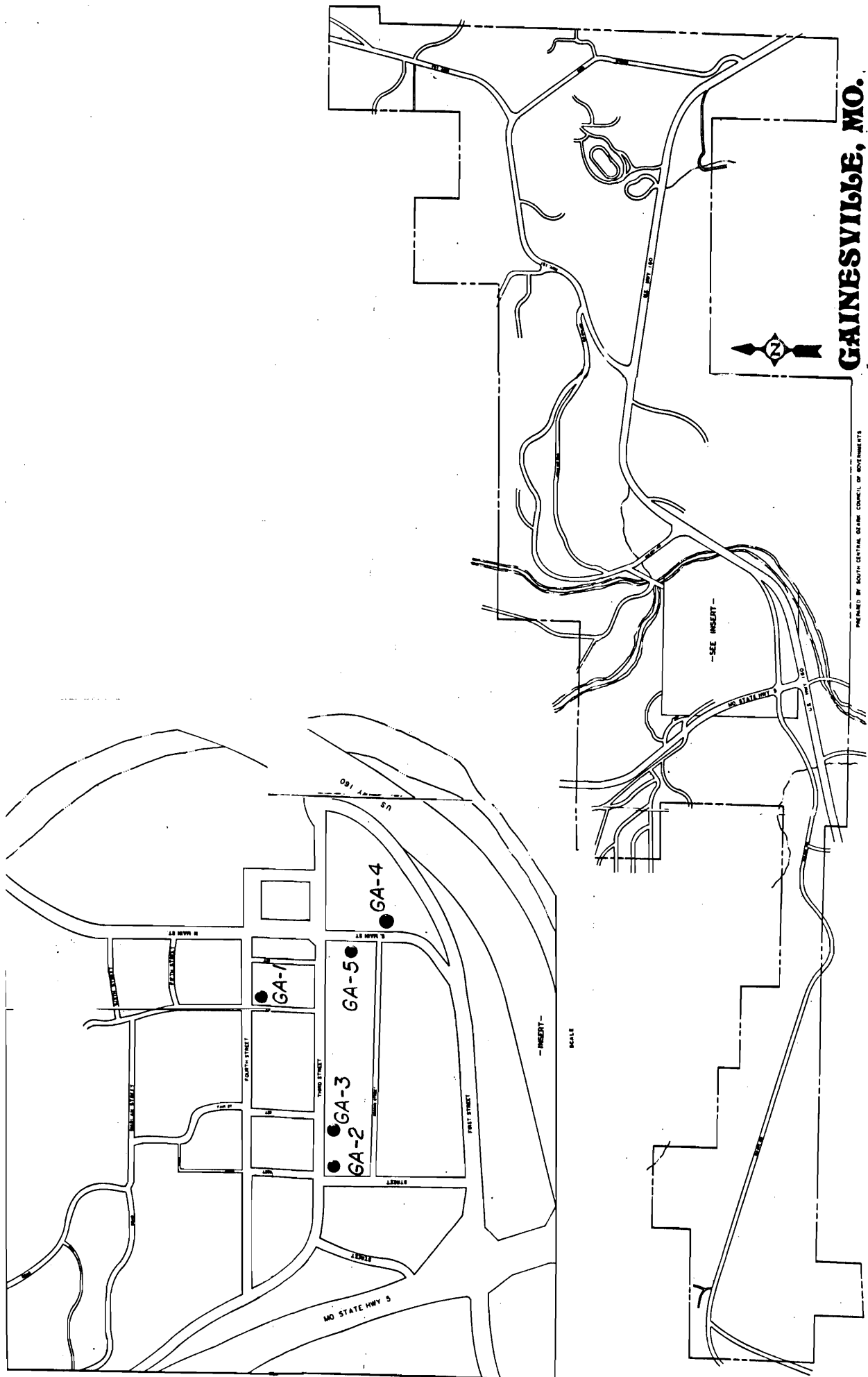
WILLOW SPRINGS,
MO.



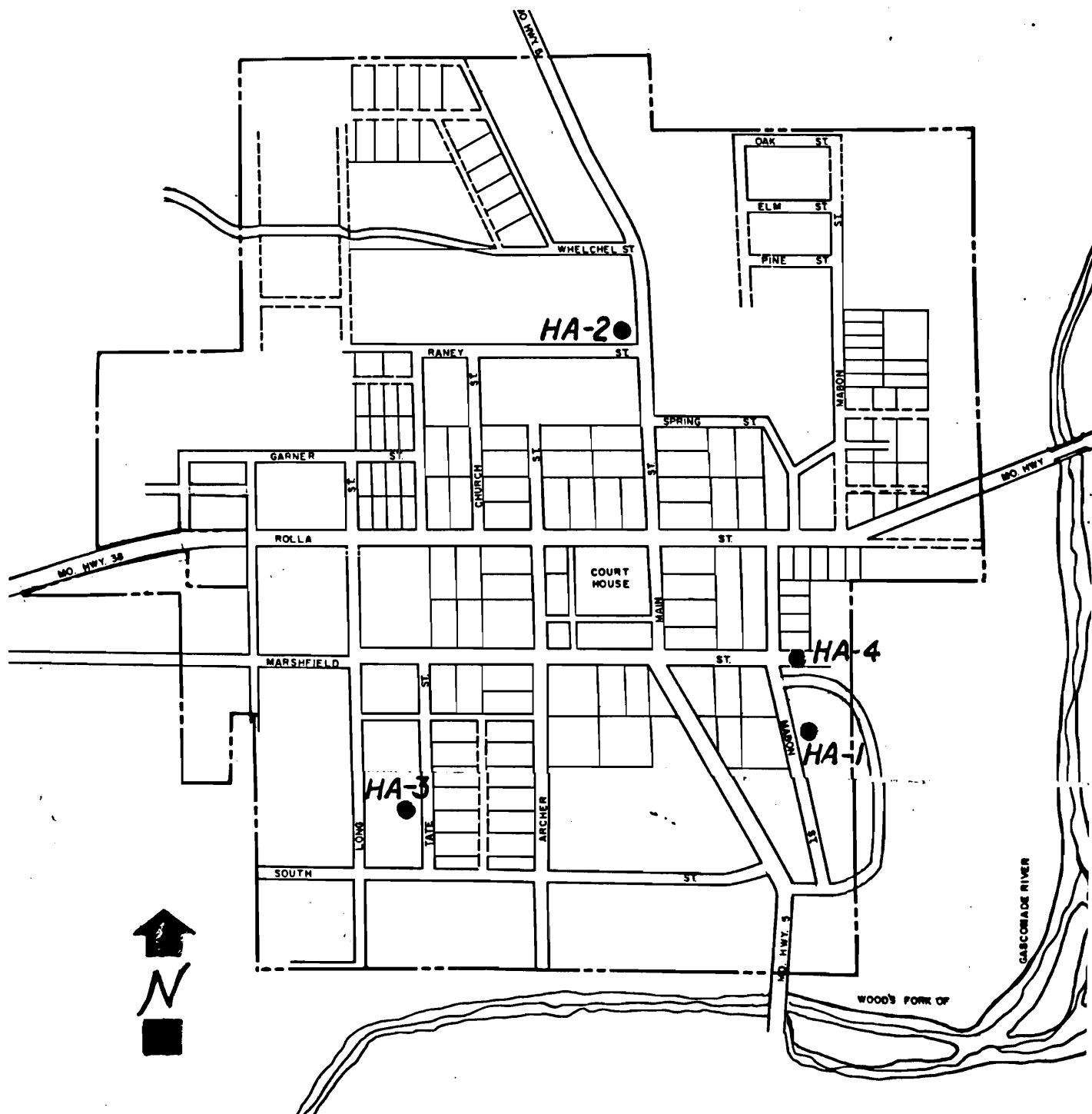




EMINENCE, MO.



GAINESVILLE MAP 1



HARTVILLE, MISSOURI