POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL INVENTORY

SURVEY REPORT

THOMASON AND ASSOCIATES HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANTS NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI - HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Poplar Bluff (pop 17,139) is located in the far southeastern section of Missouri. The city is the county seat of Butler County and is the major commercial center of the region with the economy based on manufacturing and farm products. The city is at the junction of US Highways 60, 160, and 67. Built on a series of bluffs, the city's terrain is characterized by rolling hills on the west side of the Black River and flat land on the east side of the river..

Poplar Bluff is located on land that has been claimed by the French, Spanish, and finally by the Americans. The Indian tribes that originally inhabited the area included the Casquina, Capahas, Osages, and the Cayas. The French were the first to claim territorial rights to southeastern Missouri in 1653 by establishing posts on the Mississippi River. They sold the land to Spain in 1770 who then resold it in 1802 back to the French. The Americans acquired the land in 1804 as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

Although the French and Spanish had established forts on the Mississippi River in the eighteenth century, the first permanent settlement in the area did not occur until 1819, when Solomon Kittrell came from Kentucky and set up a tanning yard, distillery and trading post on Cane Creek. Kittrell later became one of the first property owners in Poplar Bluff. Settlement in the southern and eastern part of future Butler County was hindered by the uninhabitability of the swampy lowlands near the river. The lack of passable roads also made settlement difficult.

Butler County grew out of Wayne County to the north and was organized in 1849. The county was named for William Butler of Kentucky, a prominent landowner and politician. Settlement was sparse throughout the mid-19th century with few farmsteads created in the dense woodlands. After the county was organized new roads were built which attracted hundreds of settlers by the late 1850s. Most of the early settlers came from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Illinois, and supported themselves by farming, hunting, and trapping.

Although most of the population lived on Cane Creek, Poplar Bluff was selected as the county seat because it was the geographic center of the county and the navigational head of the Black River. The city is named for a grove of tulip poplars that grew on the banks of the Black River and gave the appearance from a distance of being a bluff. Land was purchased in 1850 and the town was laid out in a grid plan bounded by Oak, Eighth and Henderson Streets and by the cast bank of the Black River. The courthouse square was located on a hill two blocks west of the river. The first courthouse was a log structure and in 1855, a small frame structure was built on the opposite corner. A permanent courthouse was finally constructed of brick in 1859 and this building was later replaced with a larger courthouse in 1887.

A ferry was placed across the river and a post office was established with mail coming in once a week, weather permitting. The first business in Poplar Bluff was a mercantile store owned by Charles Henderson. It was located in a log cabin on the corner of Second and Vine Streets. By 1850, Poplar Bluff could boast of two saloons and a general store. The first substantial structure in the city was a store built by James Ferguson in the southern part of town* It was a two-story frame building that served as a hospital during the Civil War.

The city grew slowly until the close of the Civil War. Prior to the war, there were a dozen families living in Poplar Bluff. By the end of the war, there were only four. There was no fighting in the area, although accounts of some guerilla activities have been recorded. Troops from both armies occasionally moved through the tom.

Settlement of the area was primarily in the western part of the county; however, by the 1870s, significant development of the areas in and around Poplar Bluff began to occur. The city incorporated in 1870 and two railroads came into the city by 1872: the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway from the north, and the Cairo and Fulton Railroad from Cairo, Illinois, from the east. The railroads provided Poplar Bluff with ready transportation and made the rich timber areas in the region more accessible.

The area in and around Poplar Bluff contained large stands of virgin timber in the 1870s. Saw mills and lumber factories were drawn to the city due to its location on the railroads. By the early 1880s, several companies were at work logging the trees in the surrounding forests and transporting them to Poplar Bluff. The Poplar Bluff Lumber and Manufacturing Company built a large plant that employed many workers and produced a variety of lumber products. The F.G. Oxley Stave Company established itself south of Henderson Avenue in a large complex of buildings adjacent to the railroad. It later became the American Stave and Cooperage Company, then the H.D. Williams Cooperage Company, said to be the largest plant of its kind in the world. Later, the Brooklyn Cooperage Company established a plant in the east section of the city. Altogether over a dozen major timber companies were in operation in the late 19th century and provided employment to over a thousand workers.

The development of the timber companies spawned steamboat operation on the Black River. The "Bull of the Woods" was one of the earliest boats, followed by the "Belle of Carola", the "Alma Jane", and the "Louise", The steamboats carried logs, staves, and other timber products and operated successfully for many years. A wharf was built along the river and warehouses were also built for the river trade.

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The timber companies opened up hundreds of acres of farmland by clearing the forests that surrounded the city. This increased settlement in Butler County and the new farms produced corn, wheat, cotton, oats and potatoes, as well as fruits and other produce. As farming grew in importance to the economy of Poplar Bluff, efforts were made to reclaim the swamplands and floodplain between the St.Francis and the Black Rivers. Levees were built and ditches were dug. Although the drainage plan was not as successful as many had hoped, the system opened up more farmland, which brought more people into the area.

The 1880s began several decades of rapid growth resulting from the establishment of the railroads and the economic success of the timber industry. Poplar Bluff became the urban center for this region of Missouri and a substantial commercial district grew around the courthouse. Residential areas expanded to the north and west of the commercial area while most timber industries occupied large plants to the south of the city. From 1880 to 1900, the population grew from 791 to 4,321 residents. Poplar Bluff was also an important railroad stop in Missouri and by 1895 there were nearly one dozen hotels or boarding houses located within a few blocks of the passenger depot.

The community of Poplar Bluff continued to grow and in 1892 voted to become a city of the third class. The first telephone system in the city was implemented in 1893 by Dr. George Bartlett, who ran a radio wire from his office on South Fifth Street to his home on Oak Street. By 1895, the city created a waterworks station on Second Street, thus becoming no longer dependent on wells and cisterns for their water supply. In 1902, the city built its first city ball and in 1913 decided to pave three and one-third miles of streets with paving bricks. Many sections of these original streets are skill intact.

Between 1900 and 1910, Poplar Bluff grew to a city of 6,916 residents. The lumber industries remained prominent in the community but several had already closed as the region's timber became exhausted. Other manufacturing plants opened in these years, most notably the Hamilton Brown Shoe Factory which built a large brick building east of the downtown area in 1912. In 1913, the city undertook a reclamation project to drain the lands east of the city. The drainage system enabled better roads to be built, and with the coming of the automobile, many of the roads were paved.

With the decline of the timber industry after 1910, Poplar Bluff's growth slowed dramatically. From 1910 to 1920, the population increased by just over 1,000 residents to 8,042. Many factories closed but a diversification of manufacturing companies provided a steady economy for local residents. The downtown area continued to build and expand in these years and many new brick buildings were constructed. Construction of modern Bungalow style residences occurred throughout the city and it continued to expand to the north and west. Poplar Bluff remained the leading urban area for this region of Missouri into the 1920s.

A major disaster occurred on May 9, 1927, when a tornado struck Poplar Bluff. This tornado was one of the deadliest and most destructive to ever strike the midwest. It touched down in the afternoon on the south side of the commercial district. In the course of one minute, the tornado had damaged every business block on Main Street and Broadway. The tornado struck first on South Fifth Street before curving to the east into the business district. It crossed the river near Vine Street and proceeded to damage more homes and businesses on the east side. Eighty-two people were killed, almost four hundred were injured, and damage was estimated at over four million dollars.

The tornado had a dramatic effect on the appearance of downtown. Many of the city s most imposing Victorian and early 20th century buildings were destroyed or so badly damaged that they were razed. Many buildings were rebuilt but with simple brick facades of the period. The city s courthouse was damaged beyond repair and a new courthouse was completed in 1929. The downtown area never fully recovered from the tornado. By the late 1920s most timber companies closed and with the Depression little construction occurred in the city. In recent decades a number of projects have resulted in the razing of several sections of the commercial area for parking lots and all but one of the original hotel buildings have been lost.

Growth in the residential areas also slowed in the 1930s and there was little expansion of the city until the 1960s. The city's streets retain many of its original late 19th and early 20th century residences and most new construction has occurred in suburban areas to the north of the city. Industries such as Briggs and Stratton and other manufacturers have opened plants in new industrial parks and the city's population has grown to over 17,000. Today, Poplar Bluff continues to be a major manufacturing and commercial area in Southeast Missouri.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF POPLAR BLUFF

Residential Architecture in Poplar Bluff

The majority of historic architecture in Poplar Bluff dates from its boom years of ca. 1880 to ca. 1910. During these years the city experienced rapid growth and development as a railroad center and manufacturing center of timber products. The momentum of these years carried forward into the 1920s and many excellent examples of the Craftsman and Bungalow styles were built. in these years. Since 1940, construction in the older areas of the community has been limited with most new construction taking place to the north and west. Changes and alterations to the city's historic architecture have been extensive and demolition has also been intense in several sections.

The earliest residences in Poplar Bluff were log cabins which were built in the 1840s and 1850s. These structures were later replaced by small frame and brick residences in the two decades following the Civil War. With the construction of the railroad and establishment of the lumber companies, the prosperity of the city resulted in many property owners remodeling or rebuilding their original houses. Residences dating prior to 1880 are extremely rare and none were inventoried which retained their original character.

The boom years of the late 19th century resulted in rapid growth and expansion of the city. Poplar Bluff was originally laid out in a grid plan on the west side of the Black River with the central business district at the center. With the construction of the railroads in the 1870s and establishment of timber companies in the 1880s, Poplar Bluff grew in all directions. By 1890, the city expanded to the north and west and many of these streets became the home of the city's merchants and professionals. To the south of downtown a large industrial area was developed adjacent to the railroad with some working class housing also constructed. To the east of the river, streets and lots were laid out in these years and a large working class district arose.

The oldest remaining residences which retain their original character are Italianate style homes from the 1880s. Only a few residences from this decade are known to exist. Houses from this period include the two-story frame house built in 1886 at 809 N. Main Street, and the McGuire House at 917 Hickory. The McGuire House is a two-story, three bay, rectangular plan, frame I-House built in 1884. The house is sited on a large lot and faces towards N. Main Street which is a half block east. The Greer House at 422 Lester is a particularly good example of a towered Italianate residence. Built ca. 1890, many original features remain but extensive additions have taken place at the rear of the house.

The "Irish Castle" at 303 S. Sixth, is a two-story, tlhree-bay, stone Italianate house built in 1884. The house is one of the

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oldest in Poplar Bluff and the only late 19th century **stone** house surveyed. This residence was the home of the Quinn family and was built on the crest of a hill overlooking the downtown area. The house has had a new porch added in recent years on the primary facade but is still significant for its architecture.

The boom years of the city at the turn of the century coincided with the popularity of the Queen Anne style and examples of this style are found throughout the older sections of Poplar Bluff. Common details include asymmetrical plans, large porches with milled columns, eave vergeboard, wood shingles in gable fields, and bay windows. The influence of the Queen Anne style is also found on more modest structures of the period such as gable front and wing, or T-plan forms. These influences are generally restricted to the use of decorative woodwork or shingles at porches, gables, and eaves.

Exuberant Queen Anne designs with large towers and turrets are rare and most examples are more modest structures. The eclectic Williams House at 848 Vine was built in 1892 and combines Queen Anne and Gothic forms. This residence has been altered but retains much of its original character. Another notable example of the Queen Anne style is the Phillips House at 522 Cherry which was built in 1891. The house has had minimal alterations and retains much of its original design. Other large Queen Anne residences are located at 621 Cynthia, 618 Poplar, and 437 N. Main Street. An example of the speculative building of the era are the three identical plan Queen Anne residences built in the 700 block of Lester. These two-story residences were built at the same time and originally had similar designs and detailing.

The most common historic house in Poplar Bluff is the balloonframe gable front and wing, or T-plan. Most examples in Poplar Bluff are one-story, two-bay structures with shiplap siding and either gable or hipped roofs. The T-plan is evident in almost all neighborhoods and are particularly common in the worker housing area on the east side of the river. The houses on the east side of the river were built by the various lumber companies that located in Poplar Bluff. The streets are laid out in a uniform grid pattern and lettered A Street through F Street, and the houses are similar in style and plan. For the most part, they are one-story balloon frame T-plan houses with shiplap siding and gable roofs. Some are decorated with jigsaw vergeboards or gable trusses, but decoration is, for the most part, minimal. A good example of a one-story Tplan is the residence at 409 N. C Street. Other examples on the west side of the river can be found at 534 Cherry and 926 Tremont. Exceptional exterior millwork decorates the T-plan residence at 723 N. Ninth Street,

Two-story T-plans are more common in the residential areas to the north and west of the business district. These residences have porches on the main facade and have Queen Anne or Colonial Revival influences. Good examples of two-story T-plan residences are found at 647 Charles, 808 Kinzer, and 622 Relief.

Another common form are one-story houses with Pyramidal or hipped roof plans. These residences were also built in working class areas and are generally simple structures with exterior decoration confined to the porches and eaves. Good examples of this house form are at 701 Arthur, and 928 Cherry. Another vernacular variation is the "prow house' which is distinguished by its projecting central bay. This house form is uncommon in the city but a good example is located at 925 Nickey Street.

A few examples of what is called a Cumberland style house were found in neighborhoods inhabited by the factory workers at the turn of the century. A Cumberland house commonly known as a one-story, four-bay frame dwelling with two main entrances on the primary facades, a side-gable roof, and central interior chimney. The Cumberland house form is not common in Poplar Bluff but examples can be found at 912 Nooney, and 1344 Spring Street.

By the early 1900s, the Queen Anne style began to decline in popularity as the influence of the Colonial Revival style grew. Several residences were built in these years which show traits of both styles in one house. These residences often have the asymmetrical massing of the Queen Anne style but have classical columns and eave details such as dentils as decorative details. Examples of these house forms include the residence at 451 N. Main Street, the Moore House at 435 Lester built in 1899, the residence at 515 Kinzer, and the house at 936 N. Riverview which was built in 1904.

Several brick residences were built in Poplar Bluff ca. 1900 which are reflective of dense urban rowhouse or townhouse designs. These buildings are similar in design and located at 708 Sanders, 710 Sanders, and 814 Tremont. All are two-stories in height, have rounded arch windows, corbelled brick cornices, and are rectangular in design. Their construction in Poplar Bluff is unusual and it is not known which builder or developer had these three residences erected,

A few of Poplar Bluff's more prominent citizens built large homes at the turn of the century in the Colonial Revival and Neo-Classical styles. The Moore House at 421 N. Main Street-was remodeled into its present design in these years, and with its twostory portico is a fine example of the Neo-Classical style. This building is presently used as the community's art museum and is a contributing structure in the proposed N. Main Historic District. Another good example is the Bacon House at 808 N. Main Street which retains much of its original design despite its stuccoed exterior. The related Dutch Colonial style is rare in Poplar Bluff with the best example located at 312 Euclid. The Colonial Revival style was also expressed in a simpler house form commonly referred to as Foursquare plans. These houses are rectangular or square in massing and form, have one-story porches on the primary facade, hipped roofs, and details such as eave dentils and Tuscan columns. This house form is found throughout Poplar Bluff and a good example can be seen at 1024 Riverview. Substantial two-story brick Foursquare houses were also built in the early 20th century. Examples of these residences are at 635 N. Main, 917 N. Main, and 942 Vine.

The predominant house styles after 1910 in the city were the Bungalow and Craftsman styles. These residences follow designs popularized by pattern books and mail order companies such as Sears and Alladin and are typical of Bungalow and Craftsman designs built across the country. Most are one-story structures with a low pitched gable or hipped roof supported by extended rafters, purlins and brackets. Many are constructed of brick, although there are some frame and stone veneer houses. Bungalows are characterized by porches that rest on battered piers of stone or brick.

Craftsman design residences with stucco exteriors include the houses at 912 Lester, 1353 Barron Road, 620 Cynthia, 109 Elm, and 425 Rio Vista. A particular type of exterior stucco and stone material known as "pebble dash" can also be found on residences in Poplar Bluff. An example of this type of wall treatment can be found at 839 Cedar. Brick Craftsman residences are found on many streets of the city. Good examples of two-story Craftsman residences include the house at 433 N. Main Street, 714 N. Main Street, and the Roland House at 906 Kinzer.

Multi-family dwellings such as apartments and duplexes were also built to house the growing population of the city in the 1910s and 1920s. A good example of a brick Craftsman duplex is the residence at 336 N. Main Street. The largest pre-1940 apartment building in the city is the three-story building at 1124 N. Main Street built ca. 1930. This building was constructed with minimal detailing and has since been altered. No other significant example of an early 20th century apartment house remains.

The city also retains a few residences which show the influence of the Tudor Revival and Spanish Revival or Mission styles of the 1920s. Tudor Revival residences are often symmetrical in form but have exteriors of stucco and half-timbering. Clipped gable roofs are also common. Examples of this style include the house at 931 Cynthia built in 1928, and the Robinson House at 906 Fairmount. Spanish influences can be found on a few residences most notably the stuccoed house at 801 Arthur.

The Moore House at 445 N. 11th, is an excellent example of the International Style. Built ca. 1935, the house has a flat roof, rectangular plan, uniform stucco wall surface, and little or no decoration. The window openings contain structural glass block or casement windows set flush with the wall surface. This residence is the only notable example of a residential International style building in Poplar Bluff. Another residence with **International** style influences is located at 724 Maud but is more imodest in design.

Commercial Architecture in Poplar Bluff

Downtown Poplar Bluff was a thriving commercial area in the late 19th and early 20th century. Historic photographs and maps show that downtown possessed many fine buildings constructed with Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival detailing. A fire in 1909 destroyed many buildings but the greatest transformation to the downtown area occurred with the tornado of 1927. This tornado touched down on the southern edge of the downtown area and totally destroyed or damaged the majority of the city's buildings in the business district. The tornado caused extensive damage to the courthouse causing it to be razed and replaced. While some commercial buildings were totally rebuilt, others were repaired with new brick facades and storefronts. The result was the loss of much of the downtown area's Victorian character.

The 1892 Sanborn map of the city shows a busy commercial area of one and two-story brick buildings centered adjacent to the courthouse on Vine and Main Streets. Over fifty buildings are located in and around this area with two-thirds of brick construction. These buildings contained businesses such as stores, saloons, offices, and other retail establishments. There was an opera house at the southeast corner of Vine and Main built in 1881 and a three-story building at the southwest corner of Poplar and Main. In addition to these businesses, Poplar Bluff was also the home for at least eleven hotels. These hotels served the many passengers and travelers of the railroads passing through Poplar Bluff and most were located within three blocks of the passenger depot. These hotels included the Southern Hotel, Gifford Hotel, Poplar Bluff Hotel, Riverside Hotel, and Davidson Hotel. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century Poplar Bluff continued to be a rail center with numerous hotels serving rail passengers.

Buildings in downtown Poplar Bluff became lined with one-, two- and three-story brick buildings by the early 1900s. :Buildings which remain from this time period are typical two-part commercial structures of the era. Buildings were constructed with large storefronts of plate glass with details such as brick piers or cast iron pilasters. Masonry upper facades were often embellished with brick corbelling at the **roofline** and had arched or rectangular **one**over-one sash windows. The buildings at 207-215 S. Broadway, 208-210 S. Broadway, and 309-315 S. Fifth Street are typical of commercial structures from this period. Storefront remodeling has been extensive in the downtown area and few structures retain **original** storefront elements. The commercial area also grew to the north of Pine Street in the early 20th century along N. Broadway and N. Main Street. The Nance Building at 315 N. Broadway is a fine example of an early 20th century two-part commercial building and has not been extensively altered. At 218 N. Main is the two-story Jewel Theater which was built between 1918 and 1920. This theater building is one of only two which remain in the downtown area but has been extensively altered.

Notable commercial buildings in the downtown area include the Knights of Pythias Building at 117-119 S. Broadway and the Begley Block at 401 Vine Street. The Knights of Pythias Building was constructed as a commercial building and lodge hall and is a threestory brick building with Colonial Revival influences. The present building was completed ca. 1928 following the tornado. The Begley Block built in 1908, is a three-story, six-bay brick commercial building with Colonial Revival influences. The two separate store-fronts on the main facade retain their original cast iron columns and recessed entrances. Although the entrances and bulkheads have been altered, the original upper facade design has been retained. Both buildings are contributing buildings in the proposed Downtown Poplar Bluff Historic District.

Commercial buildings with Colonial Revival and Neo-Classical influences were also built in the early 20th century. The Ozark Hotel at 203 Poplar Street was built with Colonial. Revival influences ca. 1905 and is the only remaining hotel building in the downtown area. One of the best examples of the Neo-Classical style is the temple front Bank of Poplar Bluff at 200 S. Main. This two-story building was completed in 1914 and has imposing engaged Ionic columns on the main facade. Although the original section has not been extensively altered there have been numerous additions to the bank. Following the 1927 tornado, the State Bank constructed a Colonial Revival influenced building at 101 S. Main. This building retains much of its original detailing but additions have also been extensive.

The influence of the Art Moderne style can be seen in two buildings constructed in the 1930s and early 1940s. The office building at 601 Vine Street was constructed with a rounded brick corner on its main facade and has other streamlined elements of the Moderne style. The Rodgers Theater was built later on N. Broadway and is a more restrained example of this style with its rounded concrete panels. No other significant commercial 'buildings from this period remain in Poplar Bluff.

The only other historic commercial area located outside of downtown Poplar Bluff is a small commercial district on the east side of the river on Bartlett street. These buildings were built from 1910 to 1930, are of brick and frame construction, and retain much of their original upper facade decoration. The two-story building at 122 Bartlett is especially notable for its Art Deco concrete panels on its main facades. The influence of the Art Deco style in Poplar Bluff is extremely rare and the decorative panels on the storefront represent the best expression of Art Deco decoration inventoried in the city. The building has not been extensively altered and retains its original design.

Commercial buildings constructed in the residential sections of the city are not numerous and those which exist are primarily small grocery stores located at street corners. Those which were inventoried are typical two-part vernacular designs of the early 20th century with large storefronts and simple upper facade detailing. Alterations to these buildings have been extensive and none possess particular architectural significance. Examples of corner commercial stores include the store at 901 N. Main, 701-703 Maud, and 914 N. D Street.

Two intact gas stations from the 1920s were inventoried in the city. The station at 205 E. Pine was built ca. 1925 with Spanish Mission influences and retains much of its original character. The gas station at 421 S. Fifth is a vernacular commercial building with a hipped roof and drive thru bay. This building may date as early as World War I and has not been extensively altered. Neither building is currently used as a service station.

With the exception of these two gas stations, no other examples of notable roadside architecture from the 1920s or 1930s were inventoried. The city no longer retains any original tourist courts or motels from this period, drive-in theaters, or other highway buildings with unusual or significant detailing.

Public Building Architecture in Poplar Bluff

Public buildings which survive in Poplar Bluff include schools, government buildings, lodge halls, and churches. All of these buildings were constructed in the early 20th **century** and most remain in use. The most significant government building is the Butler County Courthouse which was built in 1929 to replace the courthouse destroyed by the tornado. The courthouse is a good example of the Neo-Classical style, and has three stories over a raised basement, nine bays in each facade, and is constructed of concrete. Monumental Ionic columns are located on all four facades in the upper two stories. The building is significant for its architecture and its role in county government in the early and mid-20th century.

The Poplar Bluff Public Library at 318 N. Main Street is a notable example of the Colonial Revival style and is associated with the federal building programs of the Depression. Completed in 1936, this building was the result of federal and local funds and is one of the few major structures built in Poplar Bluff in the 1930s. It retains its original character and is significant for its architecture and role in the social history of the community.

Most existing churches were built in the early 20th century to replace original frame or brick structures. Churches from this period include the Holy Cross Episcopal Church at 420 N. Main, the First Presbyterian Church at 301 N. Main, and the Brown Chapel at 417 Oak Street. The Brown Chapel was originally built in the Gothic Revival style in 1885 but has been altered and remodeled several times in the 20th century. It presently has an exterior stucco surface.

Holy Cross Episcopal Church was constructed of **rusticated** hollow core concrete blocks in 1902. The steeply gabled roof extends low over the wall buttresses. There is an arch over the rectangular door surround and multi-light arched windows in the nave and bell tower. The church is a contributing building in the proposed N. Main Street Historic District.

The First Presbyterian Church is a good example of the Gothic Revival style of the early 20th century. The L-plan church was constructed in 1929 of brick on a concrete foundation. In the main gable field on the facade of the church is a tri-part arched window with arched hood molding. There are double tre-foils in the hooded arched entries located in the bell-tower. The church has not been extensively altered and retains its original design. No other significant church from the early 20th century was inventoried.

The oldest remaining school building in the city is the Mark Twain School on N. Main Street. The school was built in 1910 with Colonial Revival influences and is two stories in height with a raised concrete block basement. There are thirteen bays in the front facade and windows are triple-hung wood sash with singlelights. Concrete steps with metal rails lead to the original entrance which has been replaced by double metal doors. Despite the alterations the school retains much of its original architectural character and is significant in the educational history of the city.

In the 1920s, the city school system embarked on an ambitious building program and many existing school buildings date from this period. All of the schools built during the 1920s were built with Colonial Revival influences such as classical detailing at the entrances, wall pilasters, and dentils and modillion blocks. Schools which remain from this period include the Williamson-Kennedy School on Lindsay Street built in 1922, the Wheatley School on Garfield Street built in 1928, and the Kenyon School on Vine Street built in 1925.

The Williamson-Kennedy School, is an eight bay, rectangular plan, three story brick building. On the main facade the north and south bays project slightly from the main block and contain the primary entrances. Each entrance has an original concrete surround with Doric pilasters, a frieze with triglyphs and guttae, and cornice. The Kenyon School and Wheatley School were built with similar Colonial influences although the plans and detailing are somewhat different. All three schools retain their original design and continue to be used by the school system.

Industrial Structures in Poplar Bluff

Poplar Bluff's growth and development was spurred by the construction of a railroad through the city in 1872. The construction of this, and other rail lines in the region, provided a means of transportation to exploit the natural resources of southeastern Missouri. Numerous timber and lumber companies moved into the area in the 1870s and 1880s. Poplar Bluff became a manufacturing and shipping point for lumber products. Important companies of the late 19th century included the Oxley Stave Company, J.M. Roberts Manufacturing Company which produced baskets and butter dishes, the Poplar Bluff Lumber Company, and the H. Alfrey Heading Company. The majority of these companies were located to the south of the downtown area in an industrial section adjacent to the Black River and railroad lines.

By the early 1900s, the H.D. Williams Cooperage Company built a large plant on the southern edge of Poplar Bluff which sprawled over several acres. In addition to this company other large manufacturing companies also opened in this area such as the L.B. Walker Planing Mill, and Lowell Palmer Stave and Heading Factory. By 1907, there were fifty-seven manufacturing plants in the city which employed over 1,300 workers.

As the timber resources of the region were exhausted in the early 20th century most of the manufacturers closed or moved. A notable exception was the Brooklyn Cooperage Company located on the eastern edge of the city. Only five manufacturers of wood products are shown on the 1928 Sanborn map and several of these also went out of business during the Depression. In recent decades lumber and timber products have been a small part of the Poplar Bluff economy.

A review of the city s Sanborn maps show that the overwhelming majority of the structures erected by the manufacturing companies were one-story frame buildings. As these businesses closed or moved the plant buildings themselves were demolished and sold for their lumber. Not a single intact industrial building associated with the timber manufacturing district on the south side of the city remains standing. The only extant complex of buildings in this area is the office, concrete silo, and ancillary buildings of the Forbridge Feed and Produce Company. This company began operation in the early 20th century and the extant buildings were built ca. 1915. The structures are typical industrial structures of the period and do not possess notable architectural significance. The Hamilton **Brown** Shoe Factory opened its doors in 1912 in a large building just to the east of the downtown area adjacent to the Black River. The shoe factory is a two-story, 31 bay brick industrial building constructed with reinforced concrete and eight inch curtain walls for fire prevention. The building is the only pre-1940 factory structure remaining in Poplar Bluff and retains much of its original form. The building has simple detailing and several additions have been added to the building in recent decades. It is presently used by a container company.

Poplar Bluff retains two original electrical and water power company buildings, one of which is still in use. Located on S. Second is a building that was originally built as a power plant for the city and was operated by the Missouri Utilities Company later in the 20th century. The plant is presently **vacant** and the buildings are not used, but it is one of the more prominent industrial buildings located adjacent to the Black River:. The building is composed of three separate buildings constructed during the early 20th century. The original section appears to have been built ca. 1900 and is a one-story brick, three-bay building. The windows and door openings are arched with four courses of brick relief arching. Each bay is separated by a brick pilaster. The building rests on a concrete foundation and has a gable roof of concrete construction.

To the north of this building is a one-story building of hollow core concrete block erected ca. 1915. This building has had its door and window openings enclosed or covered with plywood. Its exterior wall surface is of rusticated hollow core concrete blocks. The main section of the complex is a one-story, twelve-bay building of brick and concrete construction built ca. 1930. The building has a concrete foundation, flat roof of rolled roofing and exterior of five course common bond.

The Municipal Water Light and Power Plant is located northeast of the commercial district on the banks of the river at 108 Johnson Street. The main building is a one-story, ten-bay, brick industrial building constructed ca. 1910-1917. The rectangular plan building has a concrete foundation, hipped and flat roof of clay tile shingles and rolled roofing, and exterior of stretcher bond brick. The building has four primary entrances on the main (w) facade, two of which retain original glass and wood doors. Windows in the south section are arched multi-light casement design with each arch containing three courses of brick relief arching and concrete shoulders and keystones. Each bay of the building is separated by brick pilasters. The building continues to be used by the city. The adjacent City Water Plant building is a two-story, brick, sevenbay industrial building constructed after 1928.

Two train depots still stand: the Frisco depot on Moran Street built in 1928, and the Iron Mountain depot at 400 S. Main built in 1910. The Iron Mountain Depot (also known as the Union Pacific depot) was built in similar plan to other train stations of the period. The building has a large hipped roof, wide eaves, and is of brick construction. The building continues to be used as a freight office and has not been extensively altered. The Frisco depot was built in 1928 in the Spanish Mission style, and is to be renovated as a train museum. The building is constructed of yellow glazed brick and decorated with random red brick courses. The tiled gabled roof has two cross gables at each end with baroque arched pediments. The building retains its original character and both depots are significant for their role in transportation.

The Iron Mountain depot is connected to Second Street by way of an elaborate concrete staircase consisting of double stairways which make quarter turns to a common landing. A large single **stairway** then extends to the street level. The stairs have square **concrete** newel posts, a large concrete railing, and balusters. At the street level is an original section of cast iron fencing. The iron Mountain Stairway was constructed ca. 1905 to provide pedestrian access from the depot to buildings along **Second** Street. Several major hotels were located on Second Street adjacent to the depot and this staircase was the major access point. The staircase is deteriorating but remains usable and intact. This structure is unique in Poplar Bluff and is significant for its **association** with the adjoining depot.

Two steel truss railroad bridges which cross the Black River into Poplar Bluff remain standing. An active bridge is located in the vicinity of South 2nd Avenue, adjacent to the Missouri Light and Power Plant. This bridge is a Pratt Truss railroad bridge of steel construction erected by the American Bridge Company of New York in 1904. The bridge has three major vertical posts and a diagonal bracing system. It was constructed to serve the Cairo branch of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway.

To the west of the 700 block of Riverview Drive is an abandoned Pratt Truss railroad bridge that was erected ca. 1910 along the Frisco Railroad line. The bridge is of steel construction with five diagonal posts and rests on rock-faced limestone piers. The floor of the bridge has been removed. There is no ready access to the bridge and no manufacturer or nameplate is visible. The original tracks crossed the Black River and carried the railroad across Riverview Drive and through the eastern section of Poplar Bluff. In recent decades, the tracks have been **removed** and the bridge has been abandoned and is no longer accessible. Both bridges are typical Pratt Truss designs of the turn of the century.

SURVEY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The historical and architectural inventory of Poplar Bluff was completed in 1989 and 1990 as a project of the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission. The project used federal funds through a matching grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The first phases of the project were completed by a consultant and volunteers under the guidance of the Planning Commission. In January of 1990, Thomason and Associates of Nashville, Tennessee was hired to refine the existing data and complete the survey. Field work continued throughout January and February of 1990 with the Planning Commission providing assistance in the typing of forms and photography.

To complete the inventory every street and road in the city was driven and all properties were analyzed for their architectural character. Missouri inventory forms were completed for each property and data was also recorded on a portable lap top computer. Final products for each property were an inventory form, continuation sheet with architectural and historical information, street map showing the property location, and a 5x7 black and white photograph. Sanborn Insurance maps for the city were utilized which covered the city in 1892, 1895, 1901, 1910, 1917, 1924, and 1928. Local histories were reviewed such as Deem's <u>History of Butler</u> <u>County</u> Valuable research was provided by members of the Butler County Historical Society under the guidance of Doris Ann Shelton.

A total of 413 properties were inventoried in the course of the Poplar Bluff survey. The majority of these properties were oneand two-story frame residences which were built during Poplar Bluff's boom years from 1890 to 1910. Many Bungalows built from 1910 to 1930 were also recorded. In addition to the residential structures over fifty commercial buildings in the downtown area were inventoried as were numerous schools, churches, and government buildings. Although Poplar Bluff was a center for manufacturing at the turn of the century, very few industrial structures from this period were found to exist.

Although many pre-1940 residences were inventoried in Poplar Bluff only a one block area along N. Main Street appeared to retain integrity as an historic district. The lack of additional or larger residential historic districts is unusual for a city the size of Poplar Bluff and is due to several factors. Lack of integrity on many streets has been the result of zoning practices in recent decades which allow for multi-family dwellings. Several streets such as Poplar, Cynthia, Kinzer, and Lester retain dozens of pre-1940 residences but in the midst of these dwellings are often modern apartments and duplexes. The two apartment buildings in the 600 block of Kinzer Street are good examples of this type of intrusion. Many other blocks have federally assisted low-income housing units which were also built with little regard for a street" historic character.

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An additional factor is the loss of integrity of many pre-1940 residences themselves. Throughout the older residential areas of Poplar Bluff are homes which have been altered or remodeled with materials and designs which deny the original character of the building. Artificial siding materials, modern additions on primary facades, porch enclosures and alterations, and modern doors and windows are common changes. The results are often blocks where the majority of residences are pre-1940 structures but only half could be considered as retaining their original design and character.

Demolition and the construction of new residences has also been a major factor on some streets, especially in the eastern section of Poplar Bluff. Vacant lots are found on many streets and some of the city's most architecturally significant structures were demolished to make way for new buildings or parking lots. The overall result of these factors are streets which retain good examples of pre-1940 architecture but do not have sufficient cohesiveness to meet National Register district standards.

The historic commercial area of Poplar Bluff appears to have an historic district centered around the intersection of Vine and S. Broadway Streets. This district is anchored by the Begley Block and Knights of Pythias Building and includes masonry buildings constructed between ca. 1900 and 1930. While other pre-1940 buildings in the downtown area remain, they are separated from this potential district by surface and above ground parking lots and altered structures. Sections of several blocks have been demolished in recent years and no other area of downtown presently retains its original character. It is possible that a separate district or enlargement of the proposed district could occur in future years if altered buildings along S. Main and adjacent streets were to be rehabilitated to their original appearance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

National Register Historic Districts

1. North Main Historic District: This district is located in the 400 block of N. Main Street in a residential area to the north of downtown, The district contains houses built between ca. 1890 and 1930 and there are several fine examples of the Queen Anne and Bungalow styles. Important buildings include the Neo-Classical style Moore House at 421 N. Main, and the Gothic Revival style Holy Cross Episcopal Church at 420 N. Main. Of the seventeen buildings in the district all could be considered contributing. To the north and south of the district's proposed boundaries on N. Main Street are modern apartments and commercial buildings.

Contributing Buildings

405 N. Main Street.
406 N. Main Street.

3. 411 N. Main Street.
4. 412 N. Main Street.
5. 415 N. Main Street.
6. 418 N. Main Street.
7. 420 N. Main Street.
8. 421 N. Main Street.
9. 422 N. Main Street.
10. 426 N. Main Street.
11. 427 N. Main Street.
12. 432 N. Main Street.
13. 433 N. Main Street.
14. 437 N. Main Street.
15. 443-447 N. Main Street.
16. 451 N. Main Street.
17. 455 N. Main Street.

2. Poplar Bluff Commercial .Historic District: This district is located in the downtown section of the city and includes buildings in the 300 and 400 blocks of Vine Street and 100 and 200 blocks of S. Broadway. Buildings in the district were built between ca. 1900 and 1930 and represent the largest intact collection of historic commercial buildings in the downtown area. Although most storefronts have been altered, the upper facades of the majority of buildings retain their original character. Within the proposed district are twenty buildings of which seventeen could be considered contributing.

Contributing

1. 105-109 S. Broadway. 2. 117-123 S. Broadway. 3. 201 S. Broadway. 4. 203 S. Broadway. 5. 205 S. Broadway. 6. 207-215 S. Broadway. 7. 311-317 Vine Street. 325-327 Vine Street. 8. 9. 400 Vine Street. 10. 401 Vine Street. 11. 407-411 Vine Street. 12. 413-415 Vine Street. 13. 416 Vine Street, 14. 424 Vine Street. 15. 426-430 Vine Street. 16. 432-442 Vine Street. 17. 446 Vine Street. Non-Contributing

1. 111-113 S. Broadway.

2. 406 Vine Street.

3. 408 Vine Street.

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National Register Individual Properties

1. Phillips House, 522 Cherry Street, architectural significance.

2. 917 Hickory Street, architectural significance.

3. Greer House, 955 Kinzer Street, architectural significance.

4. 422 Lester Street, architectural significance.

5. Moore House, 435 Lester Street, architectural significance.

6. Public Library, 318 N. Main Street, architectural and social significance.

7. Hearne House, 714 N. Main Street, architectural and commercial significance.

8. Bacon House, 808 N. Main Street, architectural significance.

⁹. Mark Twain School, 1012 N. Main Street, educational significance.

10. Butler County Courthouse, Courtsquare, architectural and governmental significance.

11. Union Pacific Depot, 400 S. Main Street, transportation significance.

12. Frisco Depot, 303 Moran Street, transportation and architectural significance.

13. Ozark Hotel, 203 Poplar Street, commercial significance.

14. Elks Lodge, Daily American Building, 208 Poplar, social and architectural significance.

15. Williams House, 848 Vine Street, commercial significance.

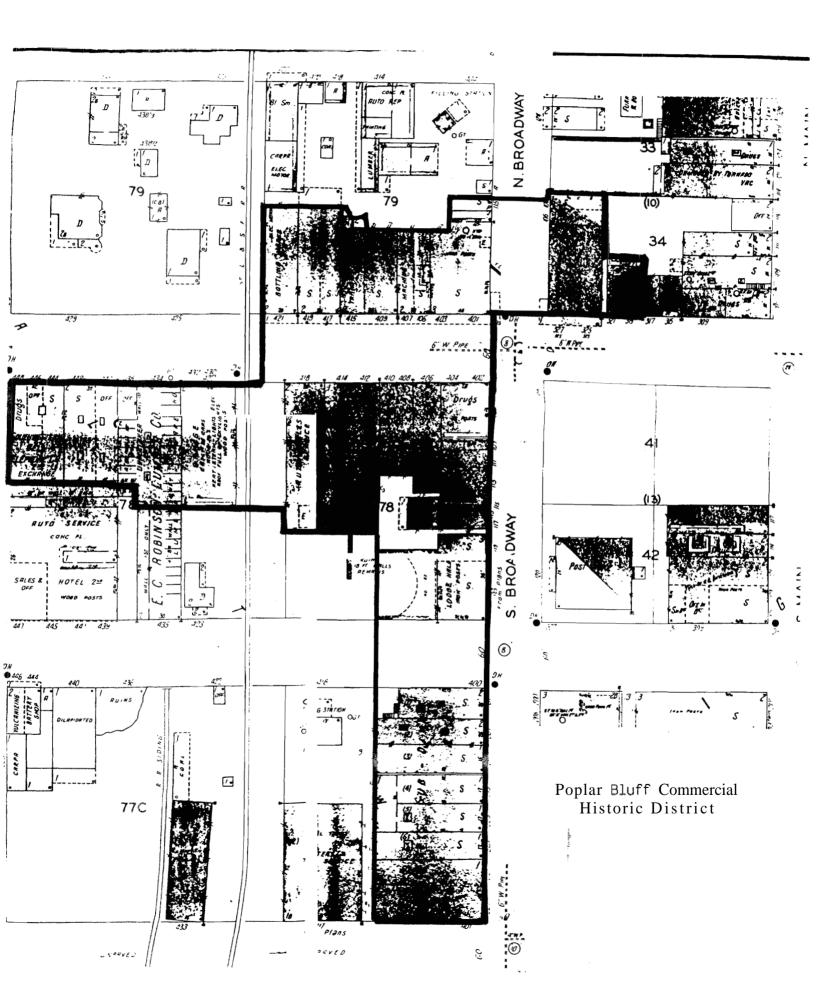
16. Iron Mountain Staircase, 400 S. Main Street, transportation significance.

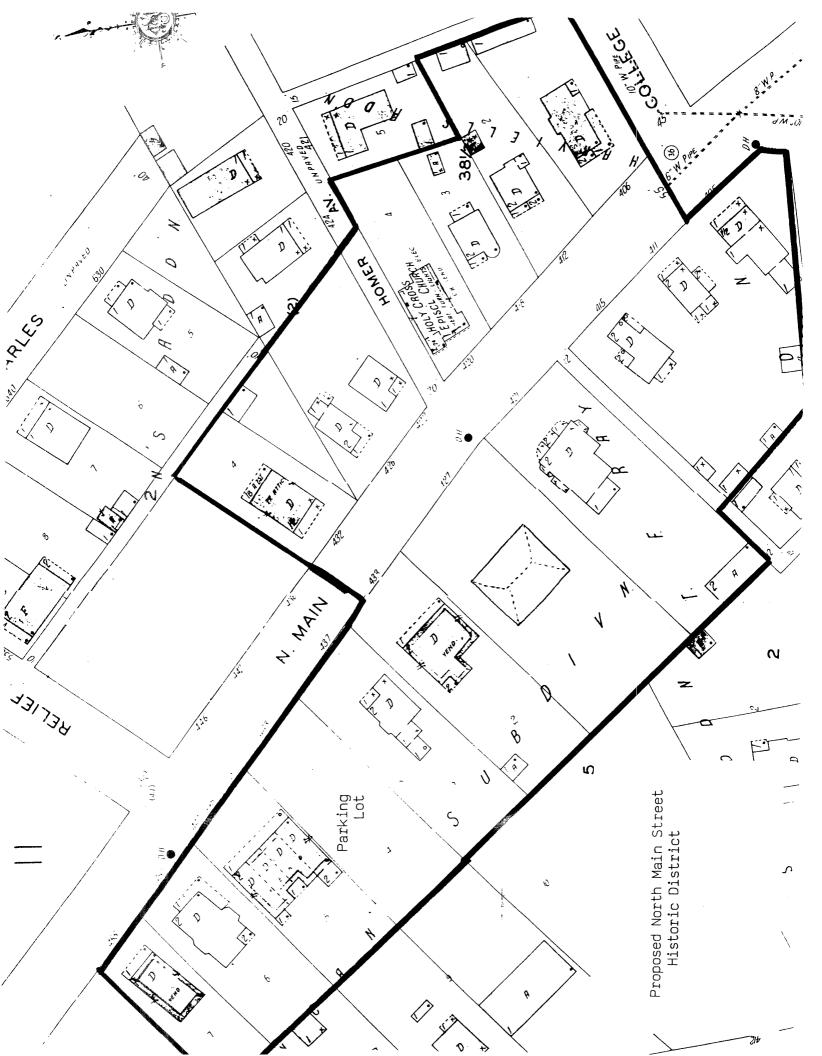
17. Randall House, 205 S. 6th Street, architectural significance.

18. Corrigan House, 225 S. 6th Street, architectural and commercial significance.

19. Quinn House, 303 S. 6th Street, architectural and commercial significance.

20. Moore House, 445 N. 11th Street, architecture.





These properties are recommended based upon present **information** concerning Poplar Bluff. Further research on other properties may find other properties to be eligible.

PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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During the past year interest in preserving Poplar Bluff's historic and architectural resources has greatly increased. The most important actions which have dealt either directly or indirectly with historic preservation are as follows:

- Creation of the Downtown Development Corporation. This Corporation was formed in early 1990 to promote the revitalization of the downtown area. While its emphasis is on economic development, the reuse and rehabilitation of existing pre-1940 buildings is also a priority. Buildings in the recommended Poplar Bluff Commercial Historic District would be eligible for the investment tax credit and their rehabilitation would be in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Corporation. Another goal is for Poplar Bluff to become part of the state's Main Street program.

- Development of the Frisco Depot. The Frisco Depot is one of the **community's** most notable properties and appears eligible for listing on the National Register. The Depot is presently being developed for a railroad museum by the Railroad Museum non-profit organization. The ultimate creation of such a museum would attract tourists and visitors to the downtown area and be an important part of the city's tourism.

- Development of a Riverfront Park. Interest is growing in developing a riverfront park along the Black River adjacent to downtown. There is presently little access to the river and there has been no attractive site development. The creatnon of a riverfront park would be of benefit to the downtown area and could stimulate new uses for vacant buildings and upper floor areas.

- Creation of the Poplar Bluff Historic Commission Manual. A manual is presently being prepared for the Historic Commission which shall include information on commission operation and preservation policy. This manual should benefit the commission in its planning and operation.

Other preservation planning efforts for Poplar Bluff which should be considered include:

- Review of existing zoning in the historic residential areas. The present zoning for much of the residential area around downtown allows for multi-family dwellings. This has resulted in the loss of numerous historic single family dwellings for apartment buildings. While it may not be realistic to downzone large sections of these areas it may be beneficial to have different criteria for

certain blocks or streets. Without a review of zoning and its impact on historic structures losses may continue.

- Historic district zoning for N. Main Street. The city's preservation ordinance allows for the creation of locally designated districts and review of work by the Commission. The 400 block of N. Main Street should be designated a historic district due to its architectural and historical significance to the city.

- Funding and creation of a Multiple Property Nomination. The city should seek matching funds from DNR to prepare a National Register nomination for eligible properties in Poplar Bluff. This nomination could include both recommended historic districts and the recommended individual properties. This would heighten public awareness of the community's resources and make income-producing properties eligible for the investment tax credit.

Poplar Bluff's boom years of the turn of the century are mirrored in its residential and commercial architecture. Despite demolition in recent years many resources remain and are significant to historic development of the community. Preservation efforts in Poplar Bluff now have broad based community support and future efforts should concentrate on nominating eligible properties to the National Register, preserving and protecting resources through local designation, and including preservation in future downtown development and overall land use plans. Through these and other efforts, Poplar **Bluff's** heritage can be maintained and preserved for future residents and visitors.

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19 20	205 South Broadway 207-215 South Broadway
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150 151	600 block Lindsay (Williamson-Kennedy School) 629 Lindsay
151	633 Lindsay
153	641 Lindsay
154	317 Magnolia
155	201-203 North Main
156	218 North MainJewel Theater
157	301 North MainFirst Presbyterian Church
158 159	318 North Main 336 North Main
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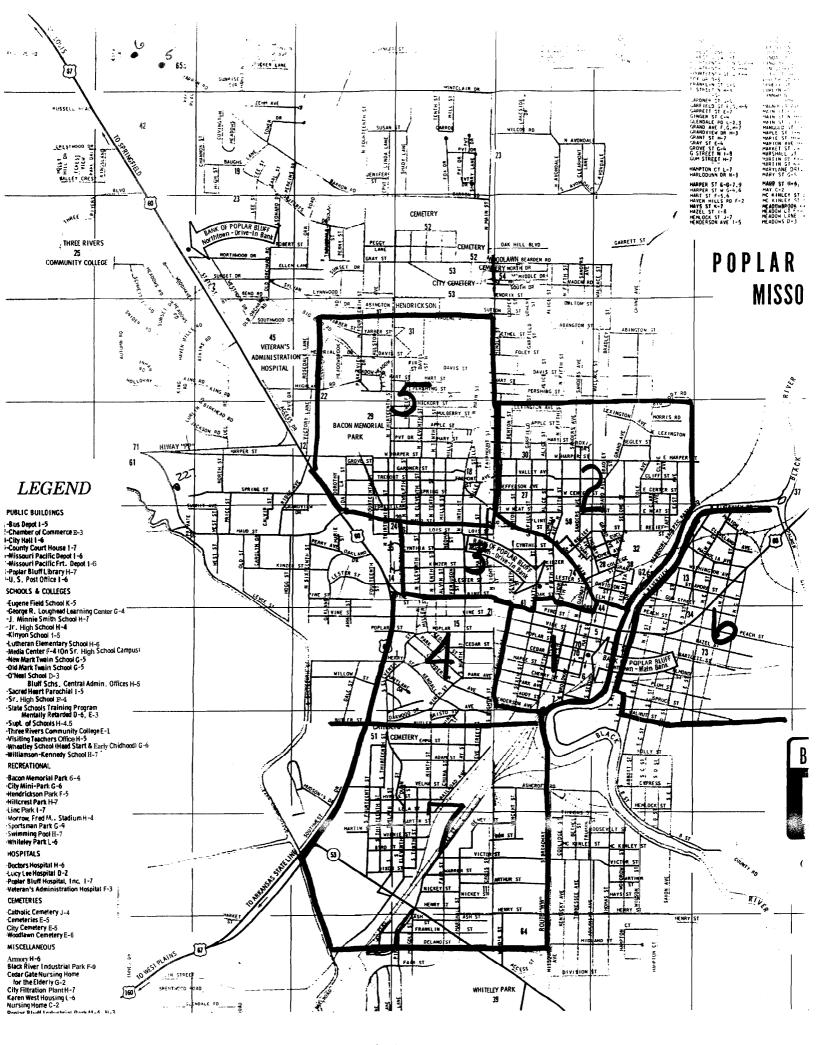
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219	414 Marion
220	419 Marion
221	519 Marion
222	938 Mary
223	1106 Mary
224	1206 Mary
225	724 Maud
226	1018 Maud
227	2233 West Maud
228	Mill (b/w Tremont & Gardner)
229	303 Moran (MOPAC Depot)
230	303 Neat Street
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270	957 Poplar

271	960 Poplar
272	317 Relief
273	322 Relief
274	622 Relief
275	425 Rio Vista
276	626 North Riverview
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282	936 North Riverview
283	1024 North Riverview
284	708 Sanders
285	710 Sanders
286	812 Sanders
287	407 Selma
288	614 Selma
289	1003 Spring
290	1318 Spring
291	1344 Spring
292	1012 Stella
293	213 Sycamore
294	216 Sycamore
295	814 Tremont
296	926 Tremont
297	1020 Tremont
298	825 Valley
299	713 Victor
300	716 Victor
301	311-317 Vine
302	319-321 Vine
303	400 Vine
304	401-405 Vine
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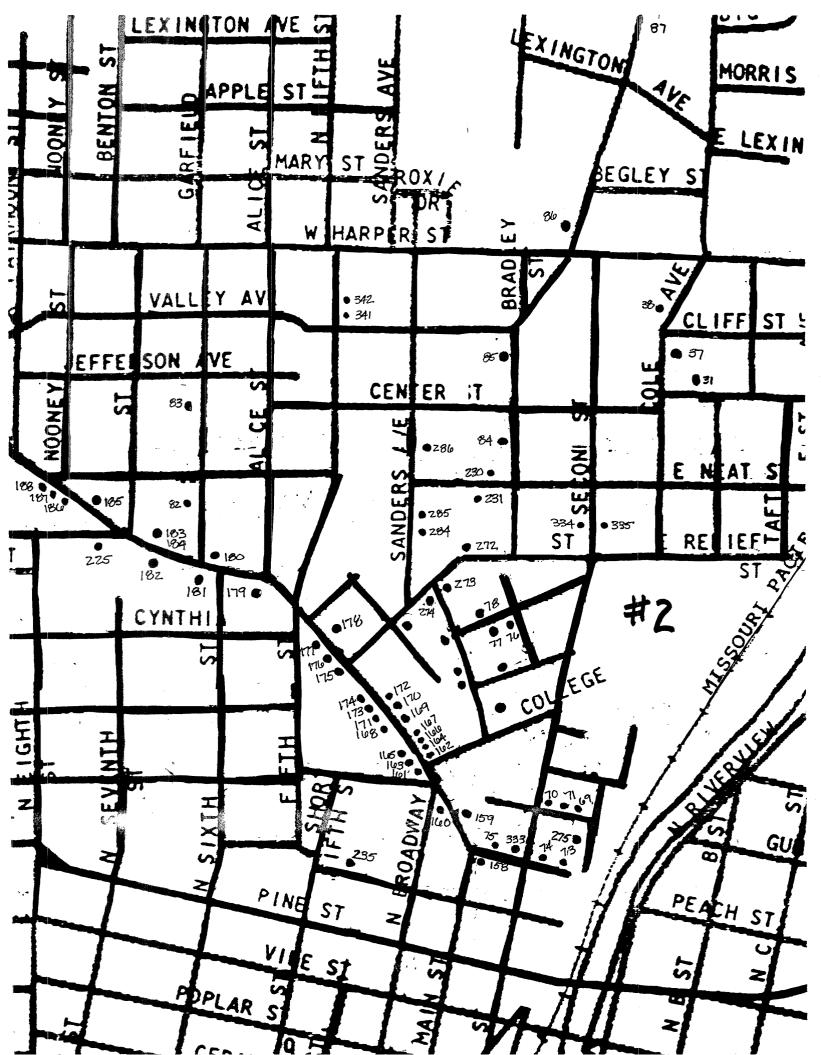
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389	320	North	В
390	405	North	В
391	244	South	В
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394	310	North	С
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396	320		С
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398	401	North	С
399	409	North	С
400	414	North	С
401	422	North	С
402	505	North	С
403	114	South	C
404	325	North	D
405	401	North	D
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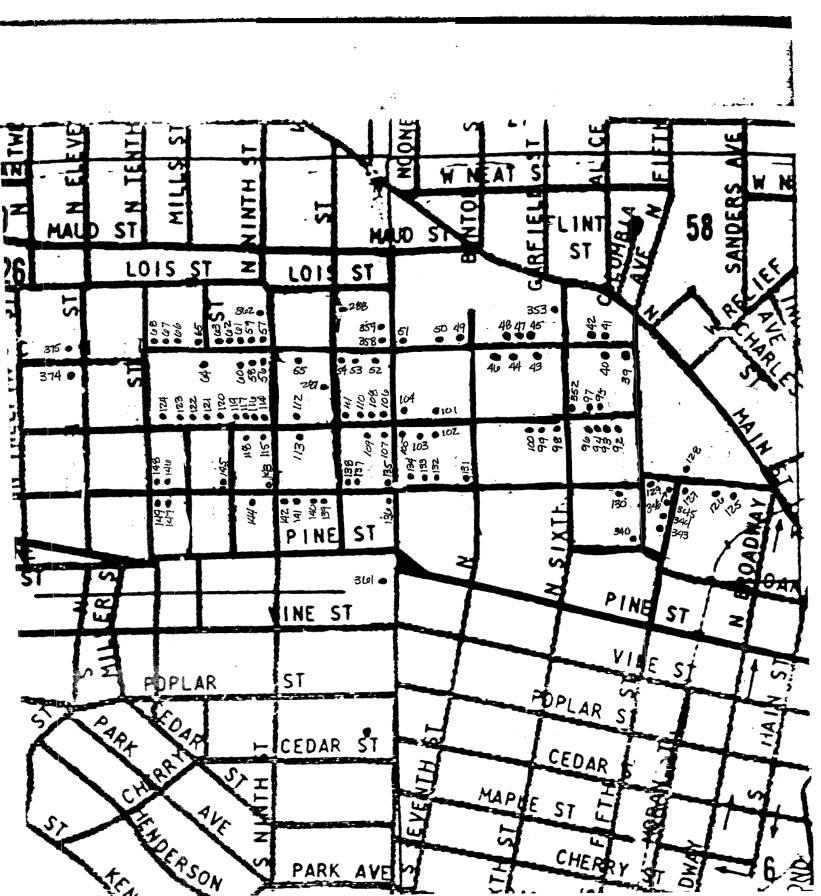
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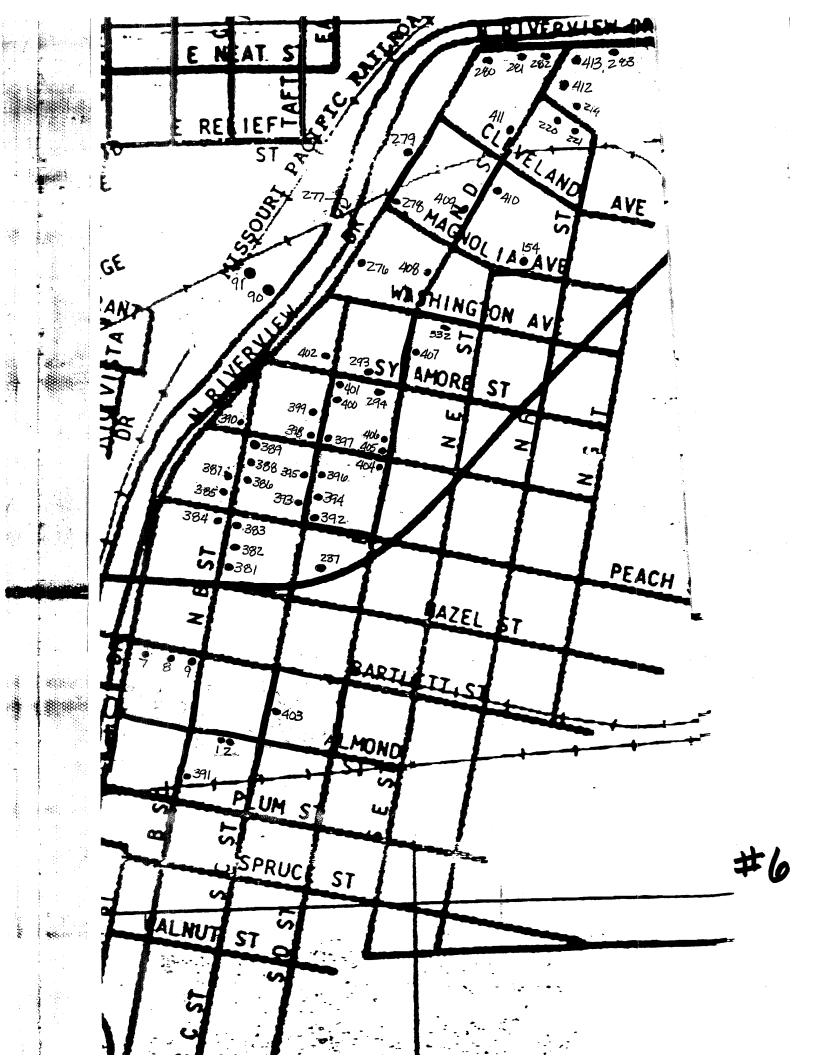


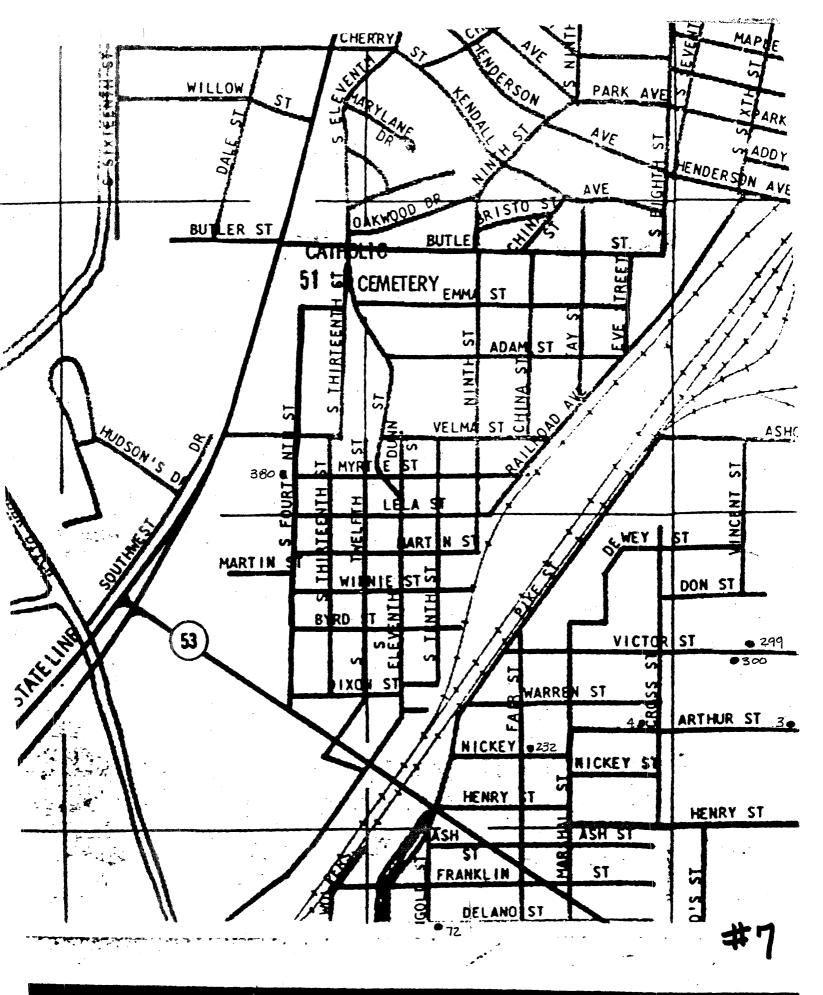


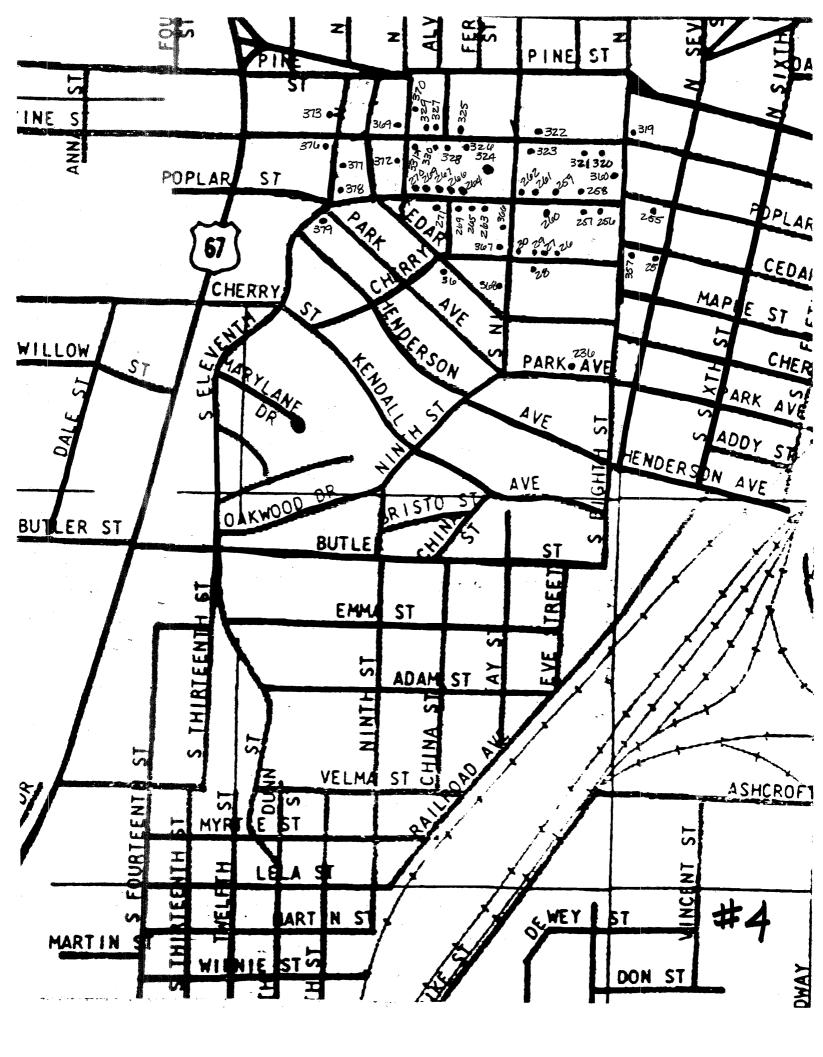


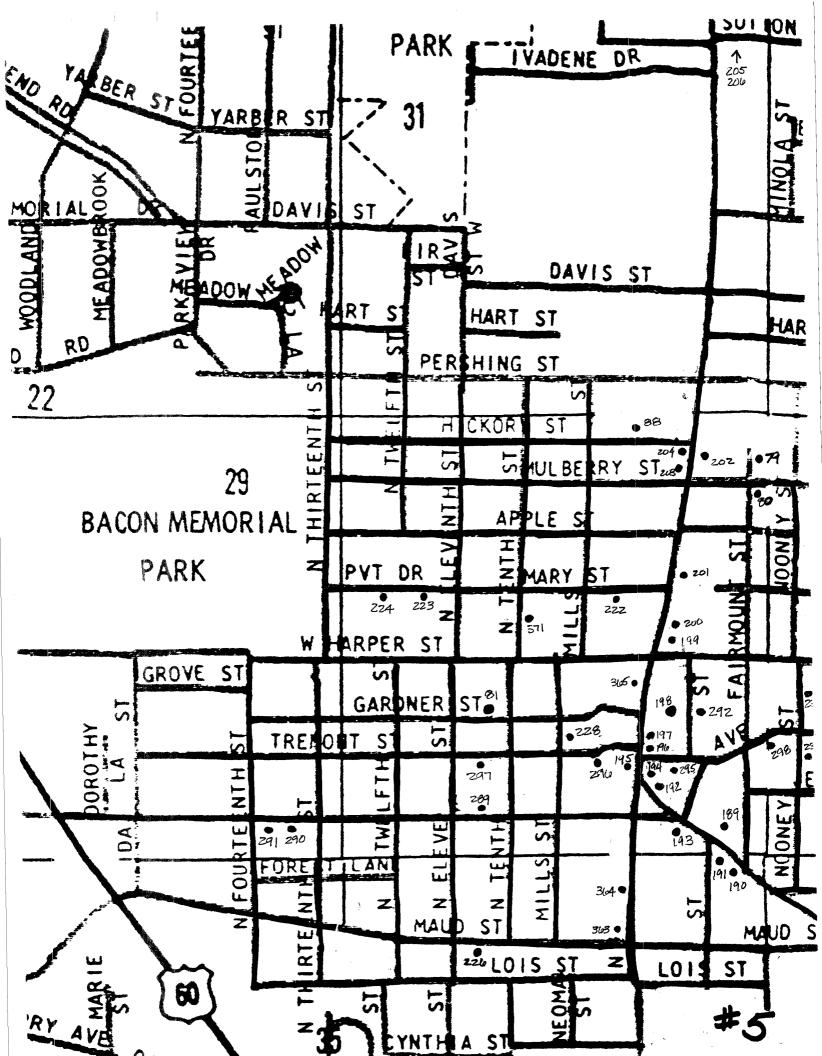
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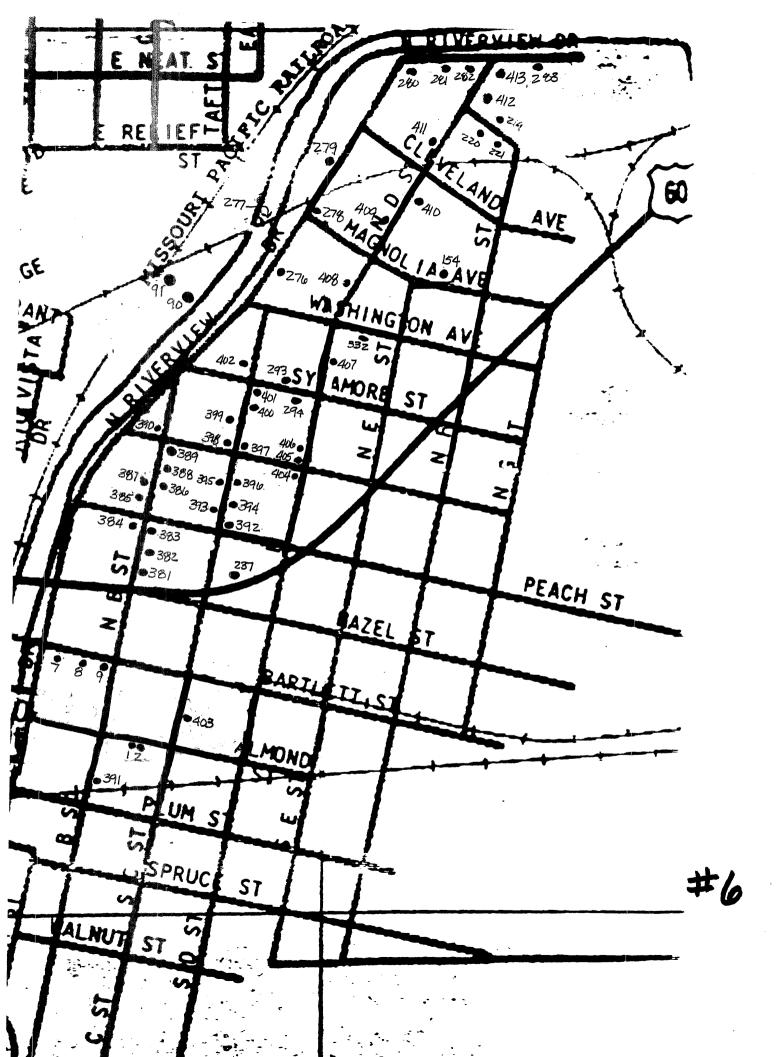


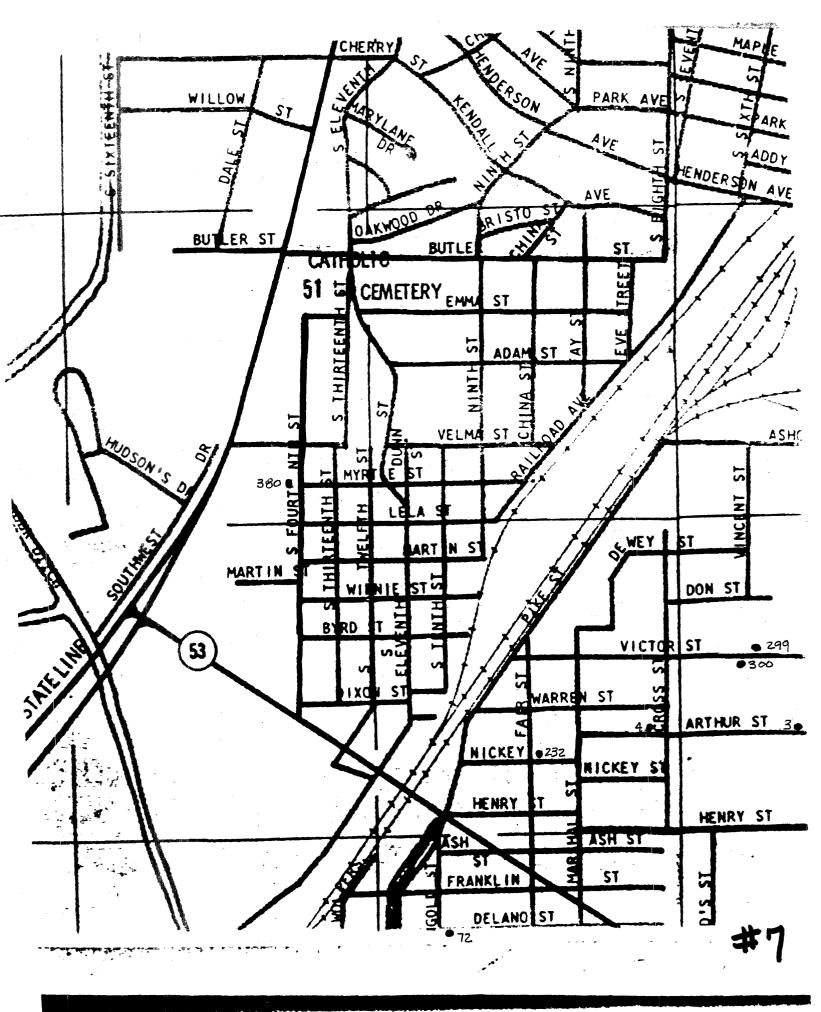












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